

**Does it Make a Difference? An Exploratory Study into  
the Reflections and Perceptions of the Longer-Term  
Effects of Participation in New Zealand High School  
Students' Overseas Study Tours**

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## ABSTRACT

School children in Aotearoa/New Zealand have participated in formal learning activities outside the classroom for many years, and over time, these learning opportunities have diversified to include international study experiences. Since parents, caregivers, students, staff, and educational establishments make significant investments in international study tours, knowledge about the longer-term effects of the tours on high school students is needed, especially in a New Zealand context. This qualitative study explores the effects on high school students involved in such experiences, five to 25 years after their tour.

This research was positioned in a qualitative paradigm and guided by Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory to focus closely on participants' meaning. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 ex-high school students, to explore the longer-term effects of participating in international study tours. Seven teachers were also interviewed, to add context and valuable insights into the organisation of these study tours.

The research findings revealed that high school international study tour experiences had a range of lasting influences on participants. These effects were largely related to the development of a range of life skills that participants reflected were valuable for them as they transitioned into adulthood. For example, individual '*voyages of discovery*' were closely connected to the sharing of experiences and '*learning from and with each other.*' The findings suggested that participants' school groups were influential in the overall experience and enabled the students to '*learn for life,*' developing important life skills and strategies. These outcomes influenced educational choices and contributed to longer-term employability and career success, ensuring the students were '*going places.*' Furthermore, the findings suggested the responsibilities placed on teachers influenced the design and restrictive nature of the study tours, which conflicted with the students' ideological expectations of freedom, influencing longer-term travel behaviour. The findings also emphasise the significance of affordability.

This research gave a voice, for the first time, to ex-students of study tours, by providing opportunities to reflect on their experience, all offering views that participation in the international tour had made a difference to their life, and the perspectives shared offered important insights into their lived experience.

The findings resulted in the development of the theory, "It's the difference that makes a difference," which contextualises the international study tour experience and longer-term

effects on students, demonstrating what had happened to them, why it had happened, and what it meant to their later life. The theory reflects the different individual and collective experiences of dealing with difference in the process of learning, by depicting the adolescent journey and progression in later life.

This thesis makes an important contribution to the wider literature on educational tourism. It provides in-depth insights into the experiences of adult New Zealanders who participated in high school study tours earlier in their lives and provides evidence of the effects on their lives longer-term. The research acknowledges that international study tours are spheres for personal transformation, cultural understanding, and opportunities to define identity, and that longer-term these attributes and life skills are sustained. The data and analysis provide in-depth insights into educational choices, identifying the effects of study tours on formal educational pathways and establishing the rationale for subject choices, which were linked to career aspirations or programmes that incorporated opportunities to travel. They also reveal that international study tours are fundamental in determining the direction of many students' career choices. The findings reflect the complexities, challenges, and uniqueness of the international study tour experience from both an ex-student's and teacher's perspective, highlighting the pressures and practicalities of organising an international study tour, and providing important insights into the significance of affordability.

This research was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **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 previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgement), 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.

Signed

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## **Dedication**

Most of all I would like to dedicate this thesis to my two children, Elle, and Grace. One day I hope you realise I did this all for you.

## **Ethics Approval**

Formal ethics approval to conduct this research was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix A), in accordance with university policy, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, reference 16/384.

# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

My interest in educational tourism stems from both my personal and professional life. I participated in an international study tour in 1983 in my third year at secondary school. The study tour travelled from the United Kingdom and around Europe, visiting France, Belgium, Germany, and Netherlands. It was my first experience of camping and travelling as part of a school group. The study tour was arranged by two members of staff, a husband and wife team, who worked together in the sports department at my secondary school. Although the study tour was supposed to be educational, as a sports department tour, it was not related to curriculum learning and I was not part of any school sports team travelling internationally to participate in any sporting competitions. In many ways, when I reflect back on the experience, I feel the opportunity was used as a free holiday for the teaching staff involved. Although I learned a little independence from travelling on this international school trip, I remain dubious about the purpose and intentions of the trip even now, many decades later.

In addition, I have other personal experiences of participating in international study tours. I am a single parent who now resides in New Zealand with two children, aged nine and 13. Although my children have not participated in any international study tours, my 13-year-old daughter experienced her first school camping experience last year, so I am aware of the demands placed on parents for their children to participate in school trips, and the financial pressures on parents to fund these trips. Moreover, I am conscious that it will not be long before both my children are attending high school and likely wanting to take part in international study tours. As a single parent, I am concerned about the significant costs for them to participate in international study tours from New Zealand. After discussions with my daughters' friends' parents and caregivers, it became clear that my apprehension about the costs and educational value of these trips was shared by other parents/caregivers of high school age children. Since the cost of many international school trips are greater than the cost of a family holiday, many parents make personal sacrifices to prioritise their children's participation in an overseas study tour, placing the needs of their children in front of their own personal desires for a family holiday (Carr, 2011). However, not all parents are willing or able to make participation in an overseas school trip a priority; nor should they be expected to (Brando & Schweiger, 2019; Carr, 2011; Elers, 2020; Young & Carville, 2013).

Certainly, the cost of international study tours has been a point of much debate, with many parents evaluating the costs against the perceived benefits (Elers, 2020; Ibbotson, 2014; Stock, 2018; Weale, 2018). Indeed, as a parent who worked in the tourism sector for over 10 years, it is difficult to justify the costs involved. Since international study tours represent a significant investment by students, parents, and educational establishments, I was curious about whether such study tours have the benefits for participants that they claim. More specifically, do they make a difference longer-term to the individuals who participated?

On a professional level, before pursuing a career in education, I was involved in a variety of roles within the tourism industry. Since I am passionate about both the tourism industry and teaching and learning, my interest in educational tourism brings the overlapping areas of my tourism industry career and educational teaching career together.

From a professional perspective, I can relate to the perceived benefits of these experiences, because as a tourism lecturer I often take students outside the classroom to enhance their engagement and learning. Nevertheless, I am sceptical about the marketing claims of international study tours. International study tours are unequivocally portrayed in a positive light, with many media organisations making extravagant claims about the benefits of participation. For example, a number of newspapers reported that visits to China were “life changing” for students (Neale, 2017; “Shanghai Youth Camp Helping Grow International Education”, 2018), whilst others claimed trips to France, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam were the “experience of a lifetime” (Redmond, 2017). An *experience of a lifetime* has been defined as “the best or most important chance or experience that you are ever likely to have” (Collins, 1981, p. 175). Consequently, the promotional efforts for these tours imply that they are unrivalled experiences that create exclusive opportunities to influence the mind-sets of adolescents, through such things as cultivating multiculturalism and creating a global perspective, to enhance career opportunities. Whilst I can appreciate that some may see these trips as an exciting one-off opportunity for the adolescents involved, tourism is now something that most people, including adolescents, are generally exposed to. Travel and tourism have become for many in the developed world, a normal part of life, and is not necessarily dependent on travel opportunities offered at school level. The idea of travelling abroad is no longer seen as rare or unusual (O’Reilly, 2006), given that innovations in transport technology have significantly increased mobility and connectivity on a global scale, widening social accessibility (Hall, 2004; Kellerman, 2020; Williams, 2009). Since educational tourism is one of the fastest

growing areas in the tourism sector (Gaol et al., 2017; Ritchie, 2003), it is important to investigate the speculative claims in the media promotions and marketing to ascertain if international study tours do in fact make a difference to an individual's life.

Educational tourism takes a variety of shapes and forms in New Zealand, and school children here have participated in formal educational experiences outside the classroom (EOTC) for many decades (Rivers, 2006). Educational experiences outside the classroom are supported by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand, and schools at all levels, from primary through to secondary/high school, are encouraged to provide these experiences for their students to enrich their learning (Ministry of Education, 2018b).

While domestic school excursions still dominate the school sector, for many students, secondary school is a time when they wish to broaden their horizons. Increased emphasis on global awareness and global exposure means more students are setting their sights not only on domestic tourism locations, but also on international destinations. Consequently, demand for international school tourism in New Zealand and in other developed countries is currently expanding, with around 97% of secondary schools providing opportunities for school students to travel overseas (Campbell-Price, 2014; Ritchie, 2009; Xplore Camps, 2017).

Many trips focus on curriculum related learning, whilst an increasing number also focus on extra-curricular learning (Ogden et al., 2020; Tarrant et al., 2013). Extra-curricular or co-curricular learning takes many different forms and normally incorporates activities and learning experiences that complement and enhance student experiences. These experiences are usually an extension of formal learning and can include activities such as musical performances, language learning, sports or athletics, and service learning through volunteer activities, and are often intended to broaden students' abilities (Andrews, 2001; Ogden et al., 2020). Secondary school study tours are becoming increasingly diverse, and further differentiation can be made in relation to the length of stay, with international study tours ranging from short-term stays of between one and four weeks and longer-term study tours extending for up to a year (Arenson, 2003; Bretag & Van der Veen, 2017; Campbell-Price, 2014; Donnelly, 2007). Still, it is the short-term (one to four weeks in duration) study tours abroad that continue to gain popularity, as they usually occur during school breaks and are frequently promoted as opportunities to change students' outlooks on life and inspire personal change; hence they are often perceived as transformative learning experiences (Bain & Yaklin, 2019; Dorsett et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2012).

*Transformative learning* implies a change in thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, which develops autonomous thinking in adolescents.

Whilst these opportunities are available throughout the educational sector in New Zealand, the focus of this research is on international study tours organised by secondary schools, since this is an area of educational tourism that has received little attention in the literature.

Limited research exists on educational tourism. Research, discussions, and debates, have predominately focused either on international travel by adults or university students, or domestic tourism such as school daytrips/ field trips linked to the curriculum (Campbell-Price, 2014; McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017; Stone & Petrick, 2013), omitting international study tours by the secondary school sector.

## **1.2 The Research Gap**

Although educational tourism has been around for centuries and is complex in nature, research predominately focuses on two key areas: *tourism first*, where tourism is the main motivation, and learning is secondary; and *education first*, where travel is primarily for learning (Ritchie, 2003). Consequently, scholars have examined the topic of educational tourism from two different perspectives: education and tourism.

Even though it is vital to understand educational tourism from both perspectives, discourse in the field of tourism reveals that the “tourism first” perspective predominantly focuses on economic benefits to the tourism industry and tourism destinations. In contrast, the education discourse has an “education first” focus, in which travel is primarily for learning; discussions here are dominated by the benefits of international study tours as a means of justifying the experiences (Campbell-Price, 2014). Many research projects have focused on the positive benefits and learning opportunities for students (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Falk & Dierking, 1997; Forsey et al., 2012; Heras et al., 2019; Penning et al., 2019; Saitow, 2009; Wakeford, 2013), whilst others have discussed the benefits from an organisation and teaching perspective (Coll et al., 2018; R. Johnston, 2015; More, 2011). Although many disadvantages of study tours, such as language difficulties (Ferrante, 2013; Zhang et al., 2018), loneliness and isolation (Eckert et al., 2013), and culture shock (Cushner, 2004; Reisinger, 2009), are acknowledged in educational literature, these negative experiences are often discussed as providing valuable learning experiences for those involved, and often perceived as beneficial.

From a teaching perspective, I can relate to the perceived benefits these experiences bring to the students involved. However, concerns over inequality between schools and students, financial pressures on parents, the costs of study tours, and difficulties in fundraising, have caused a great deal of controversy around the relevance of participating in international study tours. This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of educational tourism that exist in the school community.

Educational tourism continues to grow in popularity, with the scope, nature, and range of trips significantly expanding (Campbell-Price, 2014). Schools are placing greater emphasis on the importance of international study tours as a means of enriching the curriculum, and providing opportunities for learning and personal development.

Previous research in the field of education has generally focused on assessing educational benefits (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Carr & Cooper, 2003; Saitow, 2009), students' motivation (Wakeford, 2013), and teaching practice (Coll et al., 2018; Johnston, 2015; Stirling, 2006). The focus of many studies in educational literature has been on university students immediately after their return from overseas or domestic day trips as part of the curriculum, thus little is known about participating in overseas school trips, the longer-term effects, and their impacts on individual lives.

In addition, no differentiation has been made between the higher education sector and secondary schools, leaving international educational tourism in the secondary school sector under-researched and poorly understood, especially in New Zealand (Campbell-Price, 2014; Dale et al., 2012; McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017). In addition, previous research in both sectors of higher education and secondary school education has assessed and provided insights into just the short-term or immediate benefits of these experiences to students. Few studies have moved beyond examining the short-term effects of the experience on students, to examining the longer-term effects, thus little is known of the longer-term effects of the student experience, leaving a research gap in this area.

Since educational tourism is one of the fastest growing areas within the tourism sector and the number of high schools engaging in international study tours has increased over the past two decades (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017; Nagai & Kashiwagi, 2018; Tarlow, 2014), it is appropriate to address the increasing diversity of school study tours and the experiences offered, by comparing the different types of study tours and destinations.

### **1.3 Research Question, Aims and Objectives**

Although educational tourism takes many different shapes and forms, the focus of this research is on international study tours organised by high schools in New Zealand. This exploratory study aimed to gain insights into the claims and assumptions made by an increasing number of schools, teachers, and organising entities, that participation in short term (i.e., one to four weeks in duration), secondary school international educational tours, has longer-term benefits for students. This qualitative study, therefore, explored the effects on ex-students involved in such experiences five to 25 years after their tour.

This research was particularly interested in exploring how short-term international experiences affected individuals' perspectives on life, education, and society. In addition, the research sought to examine whether the informal and formal learning gained from the international school tour experiences was sustained and whether this influenced future endeavours. To explore and examine the longer-term effects of participation in short-term international study tours, the following research question(s) were formulated to incorporate and achieve the research aim and objectives.

#### ***1.3.1 Research Question***

Does it make a difference? What are the influences of high-school international study tours on students' subsequent lives?

#### ***1.3.2 Aim***

To examine the effects of participating in high school based international study tours and gain insights into the longer-term effects for the high school students that participated in them.

#### ***1.3.3 Objectives***

More specifically the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of the influences of the study tours on the participants' subsequent educational and career choices.
2. To gain insights into the effects of the study tours on the participants' sense of self-identity and their relationships with others.

3. To explore the participants' perspectives on the influences of the study tours on their personal growth.
4. To explore participants' perspectives on other influences and longer-term effects that the study tours may have had.

#### **1.4 Educational Tourism**

Educational tourism dates back to the Grand Tours that took place in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when elite, aristocratic young men, travelled around Europe to explore and absorb cultures and improve their language skills (Brodsky-Porgess, 1981; Collier, 1999; Falk et al., 2012; Seeler, 2019). The *Grand Tour* can be described, and is often recognised, as an opportunity for experiential learning (Sprake, 2012), a learning process that is actively adhered to today as a means of engaging students through personal experiences.

Today, educational tourism comprises many different types of study tours, such as domestic and international school trips, language immersion programmes offered by language schools (Carr & Cooper, 2003), university students participating in foreign exchanges, study abroad, or domestic field trips (Smith, 1982), and includes the adult and senior market (Patterson, 2006). However, due to the complexity and diversity of the subject it remains under-researched, and consequently, misunderstood (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Ritchie, 2009).

Educational tourism takes a variety of different forms and is complex in its own definition (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Ritchie, 2003), leading to confusion and misunderstanding, meaning educational tourism is insufficiently researched.

#### **1.5 The Aotearoa/New Zealand Context**

Since this research was undertaken in Aotearoa/New Zealand, is it important to understand and place New Zealand and its educational system into context. Located in the South Pacific, New Zealand is an archipelago comprising two main islands and hundreds of smaller islands, totalling around 267,000 square kilometres, and similar in size to Japan and the United Kingdom (Rawlings & Atkinson, 2010).

At the time of writing, New Zealand had a population of approximately five million people (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). However, most parts of the country are sparsely populated, with the majority of people living in urban areas. The largest cities of

Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, and Tauranga are densely populated (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Auckland is the largest city both in terms of geographic size, and population (1.5 million), with one in three New Zealanders living in the Auckland region (Statistics New Zealand, 2020).

Today, New Zealand is a multi-cultural society that has become more ethnically diverse over the last few years, mostly due to an influx of immigrants from Asian countries (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). New Zealand is traditionally bicultural, comprised of two main cultures: Māori (14%) and Pākehā (74%). The Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand, and the Pākehā are mostly of European descent (Harper et al., 2002). The Treaty of Waitangi (*Te Tiriti o Waitangi*) signed on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1840 is an agreement between the two cultures that commits them to a partnership (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020). The principles and articles of the treaty are reflected in a range of legislative policies and initiatives underpinned by a range of important cultural constructs and Māori values such as; *whanaungatanga* (kinship), *arohatanga* (compassion), *manaakitanga* (hospitality) and *utu* (reciprocity) (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020).

## **1.6 New Zealand School System**

The formal schooling system in New Zealand takes 13 years and is compulsory from age six, when children start in year one at primary school; however, most children start when they turn five years old. Children then continue in primary or intermediate school until year eight, aged 12, then remain in secondary education until year 13, aged 17 - 18 (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2020; Ministry of Education, 2019a). The Ministry of Education considers secondary school an important step in adolescent life, establishing the foundations for later life and career development (Ministry of Education, 2019a).

In 2018, there were 2,531 schools, of which 374 were secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2018a), divided into three types; state schools (owned and funded by the Government, state integrated schools (with a special character, that usually have their own religious or philosophical beliefs) and private (that charge set fees for a term or year). (Ministry of Education, 2019a). Most children in New Zealand attend state schools, which are often referred to as “public schools” and which are free of charge. However, although state education is considered free, many parents are required to contribute to the costs of

books and stationary, technology for learning (such as ICT [information and communications technology] and devices), uniforms, and learning experiences outside the classroom (Ministry of Education, 2017a). Secondary schools can be further categorised as “co-ed establishments which cater for both sexes or single sex schools catering for either boys or girls” (Valentine, 2018, para. 17). In addition, secondary schools are often referred to by different titles, such as “secondary school,” “high school,” or “college” (Ministry of Education, 2017a).

The schooling system in New Zealand is ranked with a decile grading system, which measures the socio-economic position of schools based on factors such as household incomes, occupations, and qualifications of the school community (Ministry of Education, 2017c). Each school is assigned a number between one and ten, with a lower number reflecting the lower socio-economic status of the school community (Ministry of Education, 2017c). While the decile ratings are supposed to be used for the schools to target funding, the system is often misinterpreted, and many parents think of it as an indication of the quality and calibre of the school. This can create a stigma for lower decile schools, creating a divide in the educational system and reflecting social inequalities (Dooney, 2017).

New Zealand has been ranked as having one of the best education systems in the world (Mason, 2014; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2020; Tapaleao, 2012). This is probably because over the last few decades, the New Zealand educational system has undergone a variety of educational reforms, which have impacted on the management of the schools, teaching, and curriculum.

Agendas such as Tomorrow’s Schools and changes to the Education Act in 1989 relinquished control of schools from central government, making them self-managed by boards of trustees and parents. This meant that schools were run more like businesses, making them more competitive, and allowing parents the opportunity to select specific schools for their children. Schools in New Zealand are generally zoned by area, and only those children who live in the school zone are guaranteed a place, although those outside a zone can still apply to enrol (Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2020).

Like many other countries around the globe, New Zealand has an educational system that is under regular review, and often amended to reflect educational priorities and/or the changing needs of society (Swarbrick, 2012). The National Curriculum applies to all state

and integrated schools and “provides a framework within which young New Zealanders gain the knowledge, competencies, and values to be successful citizens in the modern world and understand how they can contribute to the development and well-being of society” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 2). The principles of partnership, participation and protection as outlined in the Treaty of Waitangi, underpin the curriculum, and “form the foundations for school decision making” (Ministry of Education, 2012). In addition, the National Curriculum is also underpinned by National Standards. In secondary schools these are part of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), which regularly assesses and measures student ability.

Over the last decade there have been numerous changes to the curriculum to offer greater flexibility and diversity of subject choice. In the new millennium, the New Zealand Curriculum 2007, enabled schools to design their own learning programmes based on what they considered appropriate to the needs of their communities and students (Ministry of Education, 2007b). This allowed teachers the flexibility to design and develop their own programmes of study, including experiences outside the classroom.

Experiences outside the classroom continue to expand and diversify, with teachers providing opportunities for secondary school students to travel internationally (Campbell-Price, 2014). Therefore, it is timely to conduct research to better understand the influences of international study tours on life-long learning, personal development, and career choices of participants.

## **1.7 Methodological Approach**

The methodological framework for this research was underpinned by the interpretive/constructive paradigm and the premise that knowledge of reality is obtained through social construction (Saunders, 2007). The interpretive paradigm was appropriate for this research as it facilitated an understanding of the meaning of adolescent experiences and the relevance of study tour experiences to them in later life. Within the interpretive paradigm, the grounded theory methodology (GMT) is an exploratory technique that seeks to explain the phenomenon being studied. Grounded theory creates an inductive understanding of the views and perceptions of participants (Charmaz, 2006). The constructivist grounded theory approach used in this research focuses on what happened to the individuals, why they think it happened, and what the experience meant to them. Hence, constructivist grounded theory offers a new level of understanding, generating

explanations of events, processes and relationships making it relevant to the experiences of ex-students who have been on international study tours.

The 16 individuals interviewed in this study had travelled on international study tours whilst at high school in New Zealand, between five to 25 years ago. Individual face-to-face interviews combined with auto-driven photo elicitation (see Hurworth, 2003; Meo, 2005; Schänzel & Smith, 2011) were used to gauge an understanding of the individuals' experiences and enabled the data generation process to be fun and interesting, creating opportunities for participants to construct meaning by interpreting their own experiences. Life history research is used for capturing individuals' perceptions of their own lives (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) and used in this study to understand whether decisions taken in adolescence to participate in international study tours, had any effect on participants' later lives.

The study used two rounds of semi-structured interviews, conducted two weeks apart. The first interview placed the international study in context, and the second was used to reflect and clarify understandings and meanings in relation to the experiences that had taken place five to 25 years prior.

### **1.8 Contributions of the Study**

This research provides an important opportunity to advance understandings of the longer-term effects of educational tourism on students. In doing so, it addresses the uncertainty that still exists around the relationship between international study tours and the long-term effects on personal and professional development, education, and career choice.

This research is important because secondary school students, parents, and teachers, are increasingly encouraged to invest significant amounts of money, time, and effort, in international study tours. Furthermore, to date, no research has specifically addressed the secondary school context with regard to the longer-term effects of international study tours on students.

### **1.9 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is presented in seven chapters, and divided into two parts:

Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) clarifies the theoretical context of the research, evaluating the nature, scale, and significance of educational tourism. This part places educational tourism, international study tours, and learning, into context.

Chapter 2 is divided into three sections:

The first section examines and reviews the nature and scale of educational tourism, defines educational tourism on a global scale, and conceptualises the significance of international study tours. The second section places learning in context and evaluates the benefits and issues associated with participation in international study tours. The third section addresses the educational learning theories that have been applied to international study tours.

Chapter 3 describes the methods used to collect the data in order to meet the research aims and objectives, and explains the techniques employed for data analysis.

Part Two (Chapters 4 - 7) discusses the categories that emerged from the data, from the ex-students' and teachers' perspectives.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the ex-students' and teachers' perspectives, by focusing on the adolescent experience and the relevance of the study tours in later life.

Chapter 5 presents the discussion in relation to the findings, drawing on the academic research and learning theories outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 presents the grounded theory developed from the data, entitled: "It's the difference that makes a difference."

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by reviewing the findings in relation to the research aims and objectives. It provides a synthesis of the findings, implications, and future considerations.

## **1.10 Summary**

This chapter presented a brief insight into the concept of educational tourism and placed this in a New Zealand (Aotearoa) context, setting the scene for the research. The chapter explained the aim, objectives, and rationale for completing the study, and outlined my personal and professional interests in this research. It also identified the uncertainly

around the longer-term personal effects of participating in international study tours and that further research is needed to address this gap in academic knowledge, highlighting the study's significance. In the next chapter, I position the use of literature in grounded theory, and review literature relevant to educational tourism, to form the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the study.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature on educational tourism and develop an understanding of international study tours. The literature presented in this chapter contextualises the research topic and presents the extant knowledge of educational tourism. As the timing and use of literature in grounded theory differs from that of other research methodologies (Birks & Mills, 2015), it is important to explain how grounded theory influenced the use of literature in this study.

The chapter comprises three different sections. Firstly, the use of literature in constructivist grounded theory is reviewed (section 2.2), then theoretical elements underpinning the study are outlined, followed by an outline of the conceptual framework (section 2.3). The final section presents a review of the literature in three parts. The first reviews educational tourism, examining the development, diversification, scale, and significance of international study tours both globally and within New Zealand (section 2.4). The second part provides a review of the literature, placing learning in context by reviewing the connection between education and travelling (section 2.5). The final section explores the learning theories applied to international study tours and the effects of study tours on personal development (section 2.6).

### **2.2 Reviewing Literature in Grounded Theory**

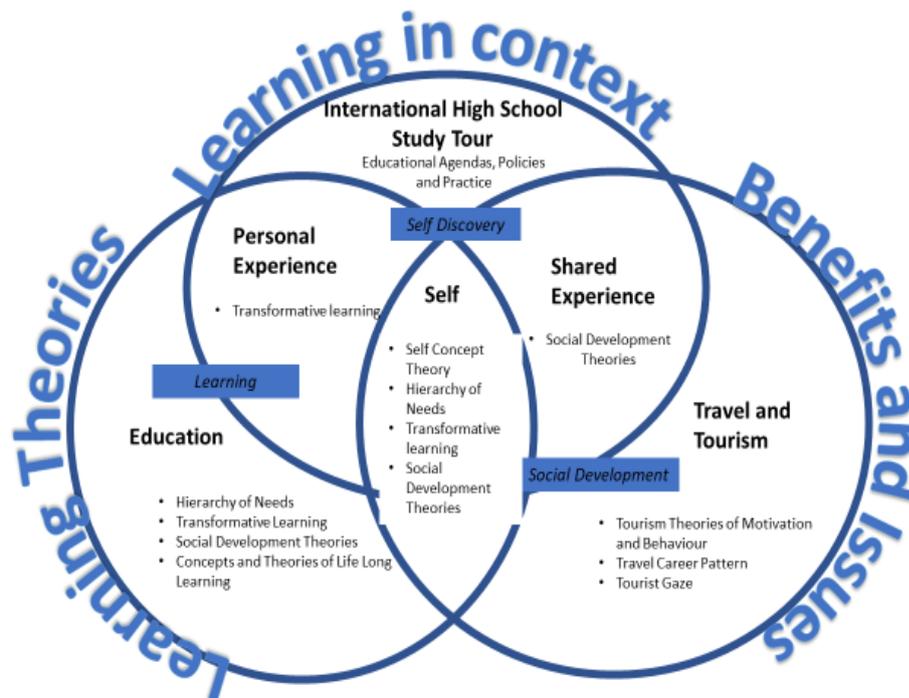
The use of literature in grounded theory has been the topic of much controversial debate, and been challenged by many scholars (e.g. Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2006; Dey, 1993). Traditionally, grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that a literature review should not be conducted until the analysis had commenced, allowing researchers to “stay open to what is happening” (Glaser, 1978, p. 3) to avoid contaminating the data with pre-conceived thoughts and ideas. However, as grounded theory has evolved and different versions emerged, scholars have since argued that “no researcher enters the field with a blank slate” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 22) and many now advocate the use of literature. For example, Charmaz (2006) recommended tailoring the literature review for contextualisation, and to provide a rationale for conducting the research. The present study adopts Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory approach, which perceives existing theoretical literature as possible historical, ideological, and

socio-cultural sources of inspiration (Thornberg, 2012). Following Charmaz’s approach, the initial literature review focuses on understanding the conceptual foundations that underpin the study.

This study draws on insights from many academic fields, including education, psychology, sociology, and tourism, thus it is necessary to indicate how research in each of these fields is connected. Figure 1 demonstrates these connections and shows the structure of the literature review. The elements that are drawn on in this study are presented in Figure 1, and discussed in sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptualising the Connections to Academic Literature*



## 2.4 Introducing Educational Tourism

The review of literature begins by defining the concept of educational tourism, examining the existence and development of education outside the classroom, and how this concept has diversified to include international study tours within the high school sector in New Zealand. In addition, this section reviews the scale and significance of international study tours both globally and in New Zealand. The section then reviews the rationale, motivations, and other factors that influence participation in international study tours.

### ***2.4.1 Educational Tourism - International Study Tours***

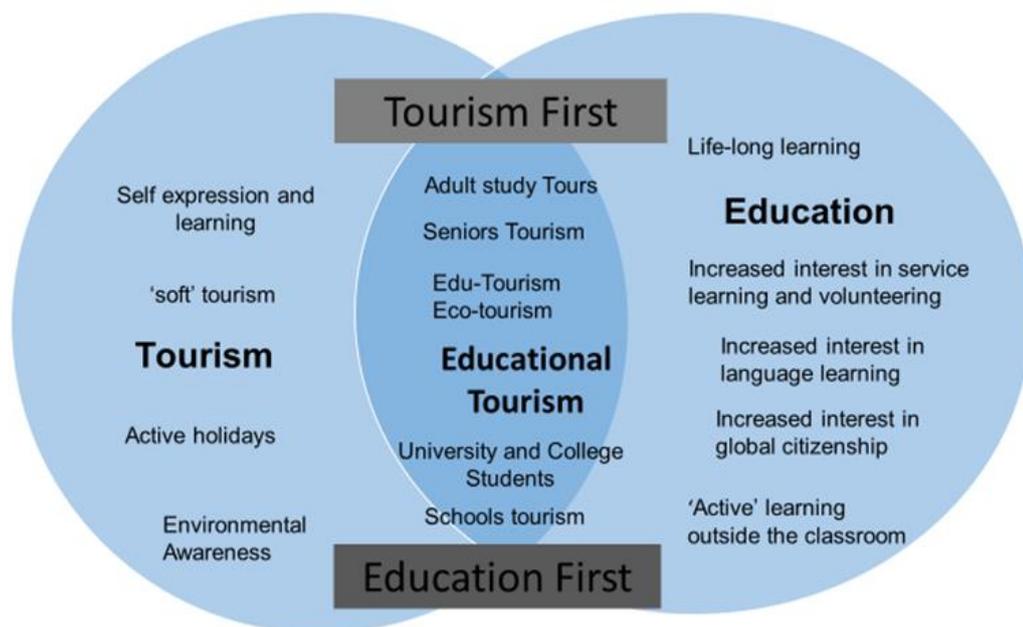
Educational tourism is now one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017; Nagai & Kashiwagi, 2018; Tarlow, 2014), and an important contributor to the economies of many countries. Although exact numbers of students studying abroad are not formally counted, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated that in 2017 there were 5.3 million students studying overseas (UNESCO, 2019), and this figure continues to grow at an exponential rate (Redden, 2018). However, this accounts for only those studying in formal educational establishments, yet educational tourism comprises many different types of study tours, such as school trips, language schools (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016), university students participating in foreign exchanges, study abroad, and domestic field trips (Canovan, 2020; Novelli, 2005; Velliaris, 2019), and also includes the adult and senior market (Patterson, 2006, 2017). Hence, the true size of this segment is likely to be under-estimated due to the diversity and range of products (Ritchie, 2003). Campbell-Price (2014) suggested another rationale for the tourism industry's lack of awareness of this market, that educators do not explicitly use "tourism" in their terminology for travel experiences outside school, labelling them as "educational tourism," "study abroad," "field trips," "school trips," or "education outside the classroom" (EOTC). Consequently, measuring educational tourism is problematic, since a clear and concise definition is elusive, due to the complex and diverse nature of tourism itself, and the many ways in which tourism is characterised or described (Page & Connell, 2006; Sharpley, 2006).

Furthermore, there are many different definitions of educational tourism (e.g. Gaol et al., 2017; Germann Molz, 2017; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016; Miller et al., 2011; Patterson, 2017; Ritchie, 2003; Smith & Jenner, 1997). For example, Bodger (1998) defined it from a general perspective, concluding that *educational tourism* is "travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience related to the location" (Bodger, 1998, p. 28). Pitman et al. (2010) similarly discussed *educational tourism* as travel "involving a deliberate and explicit learning experience" (p. 221). Carr (2011) and Campbell-Price (2014) viewed it from an educational perspective, stating that *educational tourism* is "travel experiences outside the classroom designed and organised by the school" (Carr, 2011, p. 95), and "travel experiences outside of the school that are approved, organised and facilitated by adult members of the school" (Campbell-Price, 2014, p. 9).

Ritchie (2003b) examined the range of definitions of educational tourism and produced a model that demonstrated the relationship and connections between education and tourism. Today, it is still considered the benchmark for defining educational tourism (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017). Figure 2, adapted from Ritchie's (2003) original model, identifies the overlap between education and tourism. The original model utilised demographic information such as age and the characteristics of the tourism product, to establish the nature and motivation for learning, and the rationale for travel.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptualising Educational Tourism*



Reprinted from *Managing educational tourism* (p. 13), by B. Ritchie, 2003, Channel View Publications. Copyright (2003) by Channel View Publications. Reprinted with permission.

The model enabled two areas of educational tourism to be identified: The first area, tourism first, can be defined as general travel for education, where tourism is the main motivation and learning is secondary; the second, education first, comprises school excursions, language schools, universities, and colleges, primarily motivated by education and learning (Carr & Cooper, 2003). This model goes some way towards simplifying the concept of educational tourism, demonstrating the multifaceted aspects of educational tourism, and explaining why so many definitions exist. However, it is important to understand both concepts of tourism first and education first. This research draws on the concept of education first, which is travel primarily for learning, as learning,

and placing learning in context, is the justification for most international study tours, and tourism is second (Ritchie, 2003).

International study tours can also be categorised as either curriculum-based or extra-curricular. Curriculum-based trips are subject-specific and aim to support classroom learning by providing students with real-life contexts in order to conceptualise and consolidate learning; hence, they could be considered an integral and compulsory part of the cognitive learning process. Curriculum-based study tours offer experiential learning opportunities that can stimulate interest in particular subjects. For example, language immersion programmes provide opportunities to practise foreign language skills, concentrating on the acquisition of language and awareness of other cultures (Burns et al., 2018; Lai, 1999; Ritchie, 2003). The experiential learning opportunities offered on international study tours have long been the main justification for overseas study tours.

In comparison, extra-curricular learning, or “co-curricular learning” as it is also known (Hota, 2000), focuses on student enrichment activities that are not necessarily linked to the curriculum, but complement classroom learning and contribute to main syllabus activities (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Dash & Dash, 2008; Gray et al., 2017; Hota, 2000; Munger, 2011). These activities can be broken down into indoor or outdoor activities, and include, but are not limited to, sport, culture, art, performing arts, and music. Extracurricular activities foster personal skills that are different from those associated with cognitive curriculum learning and are selected according to personal interest, often creating experiences that are more meaningful, as participation in such activities is voluntary and generally outside regular school hours (Munger, 2011). Many extracurricular learning opportunities include time away from family and school environments, and can be domestic or international (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Ellmers, 2015; Munger, 2011).

Campbell Price (2014) pointed out that both curricular and extracurricular activities play an important part in school life and school values. International study tours are increasingly recognised as markers of prestige and distinction, and a means of improving and enriching student learning. Consequently, many high schools in New Zealand often use these activities to promote the reputation of the school.

Educational tourism, especially high school study tours, is becoming increasingly diverse, and further differentiation can be made using temporal dimensions (Campbell-Price,

2014). Several authors have suggested that short-term study tours range between one and four weeks, and longer-term tours can extend to up to a year (Arenson, 2003; Donnelly Smith, 2009; Hulstrand, 2006; Lai, 1999; Velliaris, 2019). Paige et al. (2009) defined *short-term* studies as being for a year or less after the international experience, *near-term* studies as being one to five years after the international experience, and *longer-term* studies, for five or more years after the international experience.

For the purpose of this research, *educational tourism* is defined as international study tours organised by high schools. Since, teachers and educators often use the terms “high-school based study tours”, “high-school overseas educational tours”, “student exchanges” “overseas school trips” and “international study tours” interchangeably to describe educational experiences outside the classroom. The term international study tours embodies a multitude of concepts which includes staying with host families, staying in holiday accommodation, student exchanges, and pre-planned tours of a destination. For the purpose of this research these experiences are referred to as international study tours and defined as group travel experiences outside the classroom, organised and led by teaching staff in educational establishments for stays of two to four weeks, with the primary purpose being learning and enrichment of the classroom experience. Having conceptualised and defined educational tourism, the next section discusses the influences on the development of international study tours within the high school sector in New Zealand.

#### ***2.4.2 The Development and Growth of International Study Tours***

For over a century, schools in New Zealand have been taking students outside the classroom to learn (Ministry of Education, 2009). Education outside the classroom is still a significant part of primary and secondary school life in New Zealand (Haddock, 2004, 2007; Hill & Irwin, 2020). Since 1994, the Ministry of Education has worked in conjunction with organisations to encourage educational experiences outside the classroom for New Zealand schools and students (Rivers, 2006). The Ministry has stressed that opportunities to participate in EOTC are expected to be inclusive and available to all students, regardless of their age, ability, or circumstances (Ministry of Education, 2018b). The Education Outside the Classroom Guidelines (EOTC), *Bringing the Curriculum Alive*, clearly underpin and support the relationship between the curriculum and learning outside the classroom (Ministry of Education, 2018b). This is demonstrated in statements such as: “EOTC can support learning in real life contexts

across and within all learning areas of the national curriculum” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 6) and “experiences outside the classroom reinforce learning by enabling students to make connections between what they have learnt in the classroom and the world beyond” (Ministry of Education, 2016, para. 2).

In addition, teachers are responsible for thinking outside the square, and offering alternative pedagogies in the design and delivery of the curriculum (Ministry of Education, n.d). In recent years, a number of EOTC-focused text books have emerged that relate directly to the curriculum, covering traditional subject areas such as geography, history, and science, giving teachers advice on preparing and planning visits outside the classroom (Beames et al., 2012; Johnston, 2015; Porter, 2018; Taras & Gonzalez-Perez, 2016). The production of these resources has encouraged and increased participation in EOTC and as a consequence, teachers have become more confident and experienced in the planning processes for EOTC, and are venturing further afield.

The New Zealand school curriculum has also been affected by the growing trend towards globalisation and internationalism. Awareness and respect for others are now considered essential elements of secondary education, with New Zealand Government education policies reflecting notions of global citizenship and internationalism (Ministry of Education, 2017b). The National Curriculum, for example, provides a framework to ensure adolescents are equipped with the skills, values, and knowledge, to adapt and thrive within a multicultural society, embedding global citizenship in learning experiences within the classroom and education outside the classroom (Ministry of Education, 2017b). The International Education Strategy promises international students enrichment, and integration into New Zealand’s educational establishments, increasing their global knowledge, understanding, and respect for other cultures (Ministry of Education, 2019b). Furthermore, international education is recognised by the New Zealand Government as a means to strengthen international relations, bringing New Zealand both social and economic benefits (Ministry of Education, 2019b).

This increased emphasis on global awareness has prompted schools and educators to develop learning opportunities that include travelling overseas to facilitate classroom learning with unique and authentic real-world experiences. The next section reviews the scale and significance of international study tours, both globally and within New Zealand.

### ***2.4.3 The Scale and Significance of International Study Tours***

Although research exists on international study tours, no differentiation has been made between the higher education and school sectors, leaving international educational tourism in the high school sector under-researched and poorly understood, especially in New Zealand (Campbell-Price, 2014; Dale et al., 2012; McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017). Consequently, the scale and significance of international high school study tours has remained unrecognised and neglected in educational tourism research.

Over the last decade, an increased emphasis on global awareness and global exposure throughout society, has encouraged schools to promote learning programmes that involve international travel. The global predominance of international study tours is evident from internet and social media material that promulgates the positive and negative aspects of international study tours (Neale, 2017; Stock, 2018). Consequently, students are setting their sights not only on domestic tourism locations, but also on international destinations. This has resulted in international study tours becoming a global phenomenon with around 97% of secondary schools in the United Kingdom, 20% in the United States of America and 24% in China, providing opportunities for secondary school students to travel overseas (Campbell-Price, 2014; Chinadaily, 2017; McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017; Ritchie, 2009; Singmaster, 2018; Xplore camps, 2017). In addition, parents want to provide their children with the best educational experiences available, including opportunities to travel overseas as part of their learning (Carr, 2011; Ritchie, 2009); Paige et al. (2009, p. 41) argued that this is “one of the most important experiences students can have.”

Despite the considerable growth and diversification in overseas travel by schools, obtaining data on these activities in New Zealand is difficult, because authorities do not need to approve the international travel arrangements of individual schools (Campbell-Price, 2014). Nevertheless, it is evident from media coverage, that high schools are actively engaging in a diverse range of tourism experiences both domestically and internationally (Campbell-Price, 2014), and have done so for many years. This is illustrated in media coverage at both national and local levels. For example, the national daily newspaper, *The New Zealand Herald*, reported on a school group from West Auckland visiting Europe for a month on a cultural musical tour, revolving around the composer Mozart (Bilby, 2013), and the Wellington-based daily newspaper, *The Dominion Post*, reported on a choir visiting an international festival in South America (Ling, 2008). In a recent article, *The New Zealand Herald* reported on high schools

offering overseas trips to a variety of places such as Greece, Argentina, New York, Japan, China, and Europe (Gerritson, 2020). Similarly, Redmond (2017) reported on New Zealand high school children venturing to a variety of places such as France, for language courses, United States of America (USA) space camps for science students, and Italy and Greece for classical studies students.

At regional and local levels, media coverage in *The North Shore Times* reported on a group of students embarking on a visit to Cambodia for six weeks to build homes for the local people (Coddington, 2010). The *Taranaki Daily News* reported on students fundraising for a visit to Japan (McIlraith, 2019), and *The Timaru Herald* reported on school children visiting Israel to be educated about the Holocaust (Brunton, 2017). In another article, the *Taupo Weekender* reported on a *kapa haka* (performing dance) group travelling to Hawaii to share the Māori culture and language (Arnott, 2018). Ten years ago, Anderson reported that overseas trips were considered invaluable for students, and most secondary schools in the Nelson region had international study tours planned, ranging from visits to Europe to visits to Samoa (Anderson, 2010). In a recent article, Redmond (2017) suggested there was an increase in the number of study tours high schools were providing, pointing out that “schools might have offered one or two tours abroad ten years ago... but now there is an endless cycle of overseas travel serving academic, artistic, sporting or charitable ends” (para. 6). Newspaper articles not only publicise the extent of the trips, but also reaffirm the global diversity, nature, and scope of the tours in relation to school life in New Zealand.

In addition to commercial media and newspaper coverage, the extent of international school study tours is also highlighted on individual school websites and Facebook pages. For instance, a high school in Auckland actively promoted international study tour opportunities as a way to enhance cross-cultural understandings and a greater awareness of global diversity (Westlake Boys High School, 2016). Participation in international study tours was encouraged and valued by the school as a means of enhancing its reputation through enrichment activities and celebrating student success. Information on study tours is easily accessed by students and parents on the school’s website. Cashmere High School promoted international study tours in conjunction with both curriculum subjects and enrichment activities, outlining six possible study tours available to students on its website (Cashmere High School, n.d.), emphasising that the diversity and number of overseas trips offered to students is increasing. Another school, Takapuna Grammar, publicised the classics department’s fundraising for a study tour to Greece and Italy in

2017 on its website, not only raising funds, but encouraging wider school participation in support of the study tour (Takapuna Grammar School, 2017). Similarly, Otago Boys High School promoted future international study tours by counting down the days, hours, minutes, and seconds to departure, triggering exciting and curiosity about the importance of the international study tour in relation to school life (Otago Boys High School, n.d.).

Accompanying the rapid growth in high school international study tours, is the emergence and expansion of specialist tour operators and the commodification of educational products. International study tours have become a lucrative sector of the tourism market, with specialised organisations managing and facilitating the planning and organisation of study tours both domestically and internationally. Many of these specialist operators offer to design study tour experiences around the New Zealand curriculum (Defining Moments, 2019; Haka Educational Tours, 2019; Travelbound Education, 2019).

Although the exact number of specialist educational tour operators is difficult to gauge, both globally and within New Zealand, their existence and commodification of educational products is recognition of the size, scale, and significance of international study tours. Having identified the development and significance of international study tours, attention now turns to rationales for participation in such tours.

#### ***2.4.4 Participation in International Study Tours***

Literature from the fields of education and tourism, acknowledges that education outside the classroom makes learning relevant, and has benefits for the educational establishments and individuals involved. Over the last few decades, EOTC has expanded to include student travel experiences overseas.

International study tours are increasingly recognised as markers of prestige and distinction, and often used to enhance the reputation of the school (Pisanu, 2012). In New Zealand, for high schools engaging in international study tours, guidelines are set out by the Ministry of Education and boards of school trustees to ensure legal, ethical, safety and welfare issues are appropriately addressed (Ministry of Education, 2018b). Given the legal responsibility placed on the schools, extensive planning and preparation is essential to ensure study tours are structured effectively, enhance learning, and have educational significance and value (Ritchie, 2003, 2009; Williams & Best, 2014). Subject leaders and teachers have the authority to decide on the destination and curriculum, with educational agendas often used as the justification and purpose for participation in international study

tours. Moreover, teachers usually have the power and responsibility to select student participants. Plews and Misfeldt (2018) found some schools had developed formal criteria for the selection and management of students, which included positive academic records, exemplary behaviour, and the ability to fund the trips.

The average cost of a high school trip was recently highlighted by the New Zealand media, with long-haul trips to the USA costing in the region of NZD6,500 (Reidy, 2020) and those to Europe, averaging around NZD8,000 per student (Collins, 2020b). This can sometimes be more expensive than a family holiday, placing some parents in the difficult position of having to decide whether to make personal sacrifices and give up their own desires for a family holiday to meet an individual child's needs, at the expense of missing social opportunities and memories for the whole family (Carr, 2011; Schänzel et al., 2012). Subsequently parents may experience financial pressure to provide for their child's education.

Many parents are unable to afford overseas school trips, and worry that their children will feel disadvantaged and left out as a result (Brando & Schweiger, 2019; Carr, 2011; Daly & Kelly, 2015; Elers, 2020; Young & Carville, 2013), whilst others may be unwilling or unable to prioritise their child's participation in an overseas school trip (Brando & Schweiger, 2019; Carr, 2011; Elers, 2020; Young & Carville, 2013). For example, Bell (2016) pointed out that in New Zealand society, "Māori and Pacific Islanders are in a lower socio-economic position, earning less than their Pākehā counterparts. In addition, they have extensive financial commitments to family and church, so are therefore unlikely to have money to spare for international travel" (p. 155). Consequently, over the last few years, the idea of expensive overseas school trips has been criticised in the media (Eclair, 2018; Elers, 2020; Fox, 2011; Gausden, 2018; Morse, 2014; Stock, 2018; Weale, 2018). Indeed, financial costs seem to be the main obstacle hindering participation in overseas study tours (Presley et al., 2010; Vernon et al., 2017). Petzold and Moog (2018) reiterated that students with a higher socio-economic background are more likely to participate, with parental financial support playing an important factor in participation. They found that parents' decisions were influenced by evaluations of the benefits and costs associated with the international experience (see Amani & Kim, 2017; Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Goel et al., 2010; Pimpa, 2003). Goel et al. (2010) pointed out parents' willingness to pay was usually linked to their own experience and expectations. Goel et al. (2010) found that those parents who had not had the opportunity to travel themselves, were more likely to provide their children with overseas experiences. In addition, parents who perceived the

international experience as beneficial for career enhancement, were more likely to be supportive.

Debates on international study tours, highlight cost and affordability as controversial, with arguments about the expense of international school trips causing divisions in schools between those who can and cannot afford to go (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Elers, 2020). This highlights a tension between affordability and educational inclusion, and the actual accessibility of study tours. Tourism literature suggests these barriers to participation are not new, and over the last few years there has been a move towards “tourism for all” or “social tourism” as a way of promoting social inclusion (Diekmann et al., 2018; McCabe, 2009; Minnaert, 2012). *Social tourism* is defined as “tourism that is designed for persons who are economically or otherwise disadvantaged” (Minnaert et al., 2012, p. 28). A criticism in the literature on social tourism is that many authors have not addressed the financial implications faced by governments in implementing socially inclusive strategies, but instead focus on the positive effects to justify tourism as a means of developing society. In many ways, the concepts behind social tourism shift the burden of affordability from the individual level to the societal level, raising a question around the benefits of participating in tourism experiences outweighing the financial cost. Minnaert et al. (2012) suggested that social tourism can be viewed from different perspectives, providing opportunities for personal enrichment, as well as economic growth and development.

In many countries such as Spain, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and the USA, social tourism agendas are supported by government policies and initiatives from charity organisations, as they are deemed to have long-term advantages for society (Cheung Judge, 2017; Minnaert et al., 2012). This point was emphasised by Cheung-Judge (2017), who suggested that volunteering overseas can be seen from the dual perspective of helping people abroad, as well as of helping individuals at home, altering the attitudes of at-risk youth towards education and employment, thereby improving human capital and economic growth. Schänzel and Yeoman (2014, p. 356) pointed out that “social tourism a needs wider acceptance as a form of social inclusion.” However, social tourism initiatives in New Zealand appear to be limited, with only a few schools able to benefit from Air New Zealand’s Airpoints for Schools scheme (Air New Zealand, 2020), suggesting a need for government invention to widen participation and address the inequalities between different socio-economic groups. This point was emphasised by Schänzel and Carr (2020), who suggested the need for social tourism initiatives is going

to increase and “that New Zealand has as much need to engage in the concept of social tourism as countries elsewhere in the world” (p. 263).

From an adolescent’s perspective, the desire to travel overseas is perceived as more important than is its affordability (Faulkner, 2014). Participation in international study tours offers adolescents the opportunity to escape from their home environment, everyday classroom routines, and parental control. Richie (2003, p. 141) identified that school trips were “cherished for their rarity and freedom.” Several studies in the tourism literature support the adolescent expectation of freedom associated with study tours. For example, Lai (1999) acknowledged that students appreciate the freedom from the classroom, and Gibson and Yannakis (2002) suggested that time away from families enabled adolescents greater choice and freedom. Small (2008, p. 784) found that adolescent girls associated the development of “independence, self-esteem and being in control” with positive holiday experiences away from their parents. Carr’s (2011) research noted that holidays without parents enabled adolescents to explore adulthood without the restraints imposed by parents. Moreover, the importance of peer relationships increases during adolescence, as they spend less time with their family and more time with peers (McElhaney et al., 2008; Meuwese et al., 2018). Research suggests that adolescents worry about their popularity status and show greater recognition for peer opinions, which influences their individual decision making (McElhaney et al., 2008; Meuwese et al., 2018). Furthermore, numerous studies have attempted to explain how gender affects behaviours influenced by peer pressure (Heinzen & Goodfriend, 2017; McCoy et al., 2019; Nies & McEwen, 2013). Heinzen and Goodfriend (2017) suggested there is greater pressure on boys to conform to masculine stereotypes of behaviour and the unwritten rules of their male peers, to maintain their popularity status. This point was also made by McCoy et al. (2019), who found males were more likely to prioritise status goals as a means of preserving close relationships, whereas female adolescents sought greater support from family and friends, and defined their identity in relation to how they were similar or different to others. Consequently, for many adolescents, participation in international study tours serves as a status symbol, because it is viewed as a once in a lifetime experience (Hoon Park, 2018). Deforges (2000) pointed out that some students often join volunteer projects to appear adventurous and cool, while other students see volunteer opportunities as exotic escapes to less developed destinations (Conran, 2006).

Many authors have examined the relationship between gender and travel behaviour, finding that adolescent girls tended to become more anxious, homesick, and frightened

when travelling alone (e.g. Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013; Kinginger, 2009; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). Research suggests parents and caregivers still consider girls more vulnerable than boys, and in need of greater protection and supervision, and that this is inculcated by the parents (e.g. Bancroft, 2008; Boseley, 2017; Kendall, 2016; Stangor & Walinga, 2019). Furthermore, due to societal “pressures to conform and follow the rules as part of the definition of femininity” (Bettie, 2003, p. 145), girls generally take less extreme risks when travelling, and often seek the support of their friends. Conversely, Jackson and Goossens (2019) suggested that adolescent males are more likely to seek out adventure and sensation-seeking experiences, since males are not averse to risk-taking behaviour. Many authors have argued that this is due to societal pressures to conform to prescribed definitions of masculinity (e.g. Nies & McEwen, 2013; Shakya et al., 2019; Stangor & Walinga, 2019). Nies and McEwen (2013) suggested that gendered beliefs and behaviours are indoctrinated by parents from one generation to the next, and reinforced by peers through socialisation. For example, Brody (2009) and Dowker (2019) found that from an early age, boys are given greater freedom to explore and engage independently in unsupervised activities, and are consequently more able to take risks.

Another important consideration for adolescent participation in international study tours, is the social aspects of the study tour, and travelling as part of a group. Extensive research has been conducted into group travel and the influence of group dynamics on the overall experience. Numerous studies have focused on the positive aspects, such as making new friends, sharing experiences, and socialising. Carr’s (2006) research, for example, found adolescents ranked being with friends and making new friends as an important part of the holiday experience. Similarly, Beeton and Morrison (2018) found forming new friendships for social enjoyment were considered essential. Richmond et al. (2018) discovered that sharing experiences and social belonging cultivated a positive mind set, and Larssen and Jensen (2004) found that Scandinavian students considered the company on school trips more important than the place. Socialising and having fun were both concepts drawn upon by both Carr (2011) and Small (2008), who suggested that fun, enjoyment, excitement, and unstructured learning opportunities, were perceived as more important than were education and learning. Hoon Park (2018) discussed the challenges and strategies employed by a group of students visiting a remote African village in Cameroon, and found that students relied on peers to help them cope and gain rapport.

Despite these positive findings in the literature, there is also evidence of problems, particularly because adolescents tend to want to fit in and be liked by their peers (Rice &

Dolgin, 2008). For example, both Small (2008) and Larssen and Jensen (2004) found that some adolescents experienced embarrassment, guilt, fear, and shame, when trying to fit into a group.

#### ***2.4.5 Summary***

This section provided an overview of educational tourism and how it is defined in this study. The section explained the concept of “education first” and the importance of learning as part of the travel experience. Furthermore, it provided an understanding of how educational tourism and international study tours have developed globally, and in relation to government policies and agendas in New Zealand, emphasising a move towards globalisation, global citizenship, and cultural understanding. In addition, this section has clarified the scale and growing significance of school study tours in the tourism sector, demonstrating that international study tours are becoming increasingly diverse in the range of experiences they offer at high school level in New Zealand. The rationale for participating in international study tours was presented, showing from an educational perspective, that international study tours are increasingly recognised as markers of prestige and distinction, and often used to enhance the reputation of a school, and from an adolescent perspective, an important opportunity to travel and socialise with friends. This section also demonstrated how cost and affordability influence participation, and that this is a controversial point, with parental financial support playing an important factor in participation. The next section discusses learning in context and the potential benefits and issues associated with participation in high school international study tours and travelling overseas.

### **2.5 Learning in Context**

#### ***2.5.1 Introducing Learning in Context***

Before placing learning in context, it is necessary to point out that there is significant interplay between the concept of learning and the concept of personal development. This section addresses each concept separately, however, both learning and personal development are interconnected. (Cottrell, 2015). Although the concepts of learning and personal development are interwoven there are subtle differences between the two concepts, with many scholars making distinctions between the two based on the acquisition and application of knowledge (Curzon, 1997; Gray et al., 2000; Walkin, 1990). For example, Gray et al (2000) contends that learning is just the recall of facts,

whereas personal development is more deep and meaningful where students engage with knowledge to make links and comparisons in order to improve themselves. Similarly, Hayes et al (2020) suggested school field trips had encouraged ‘deep learning’ and the application of classroom knowledge in a way that personal development occurred. However, all personal development requires learning. However, not all learning results in personal development and not all personal development results in learning. This is because learning takes place on two levels ‘surface’ learning and ‘deep’ learning (King & Lawley, 2016; Robinson et al., 2003). In essence, learning can occur without personal development being an outcome.

While the concept of learning is very complex it can be defined as “permanent or relatively permanent changes in knowledge that is acquired through study, experience or instruction” (Krause et al., 2010, p. 255). School and educational learning is intended learning inside educational systems and establishments This is generally experienced as formal learning directed by explicit goals and educational standards, such as school subjects in a formal curriculum and assessment that test some skill or competence as a reflection of the learning (Illeris, 2018).

Everyday learning is informal multifaced learning that takes place in everyday life as a part of the environment in which the individual is living. In this context learning is not specifically directed or shaped by any particular activity or assessment (Illeris, 2018). Koskein (2010) suggests that individual learning may occur as part of education or personal development. Hence, learning, and personal development incorporates both aspects of formal and informal learning.

The purpose of this section is to develop an understanding of the potential benefits and issues associated with participation in high school study tours. Since educational tourism in high schools is under-researched, the discussion draws on empirical research conducted on education outside the classroom, study abroad, and travel experiences, to demonstrate the potential benefits and issues associated with participation in high school international study tours and travelling overseas, and place learning in context.

### ***2.5.2 Travelling***

Due to advancements in technology, improvements in airline connectivity and greater affordability, people are travelling more than ever (United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2019). People travel for many different purposes, visiting

friends and relatives (VFR), holidays and leisure, business, religion, and education (Collier, 2007). Although the majority of reasons for travel may not be explicitly linked to education or learning, Campbell-Price (2014) noted that travel experiences can act as informal qualifications, with passports acting as records of knowledge, experience, and achievement. It is frequently claimed that travel broadens the mind and that people learn from these experiences (Smith & Jenner, 1997; Urry, 1990). Hence, it is widely claimed that travel has the potential to generate dynamic situations for learning (Roberson, 2018).

This connection between travel and learning is not new. For centuries, travel has been perceived as educational; indeed, tourism originally grew out of the desire and search for knowledge, with Chinese and Western philosophers travelling with the primary purpose of learning (Lee, 2000). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, privileged students in Asia and the USA were travelling overseas to learn languages through contact with other cultures (van Berg, 2007). Similarly, the British male aristocracy were venturing across Europe on Grand Tours to learn about the arts, culture, languages, and foreign affairs of other nations. For many individuals, especially, young men, educational travel in Europe was seen as a rite of passage, an expectation, and part of adolescent education and a sign of growing maturity (Burk, 2005; Collier, 2007). Leed (1991) described the *Grand Tour* as a “journeyman’s scholarly year” emphasising the importance of travel as part of a young man’s development. As Leed (1991) pointed out, participation in a Grand Tour was highly gendered and traditionally reserved for males to prepare them for life; it was not until the earlier 19th century that the Grand Tour evolved to include women, and middle class women began to participate to learn foreign languages and confirm their place in society (Roberson, 2012; Seeler, 2019; Tosi, 2020). Together, these studies outline that educational travel experiences were predominantly for young men and only recently included young women.

Similar to the Grand Tours of the past in Europe, over the past 50 years, many young New Zealanders in their 20s, have travelled to gain overseas experience (OE) (Wilson, 2014). Wilson (2014) suggested that OE is a young New Zealander’s rite of passage, and for many, their first major experience outside New Zealand. Although Spoonley (1991) concurred, he made the distinction that the OE is “part of an important coming of age Pākehā ritual” (p. 148) for young white New Zealanders, emphasising the point that there are ethnic disparities in the way the OE is viewed, and that generally speaking, it is a Pākehā concept. This point was also made by Bell (2016), who observed that “Māori and Pacific Islanders are less likely to venture off on an OE” (p. 154). Nevertheless, Wilson

(2014) argued that the concept of the OE is ingrained into New Zealand popular culture, and commonly referred to in everyday conversation (Bell, 2016). Consequently, OEs are a Kiwi cultural icon, a symbol of adulthood, and a source of national pride that enables individuals to acquire and develop new career competencies by travelling overseas (McCarter, 2011; Myers & Inkson, 2003). Furthermore, Bell (2016) pointed out that since “New Zealand is geographically isolated from the rest of the world, experience of immersion in other cultural environments is possible only by travelling” (p. 145). Bell’s point emphasises the significance of travelling overseas for New Zealanders.

Hence, travelling is still seen as a means of personal development and a way of instigating wellbeing, with the benefits of travelling being widely noted (e.g. Chen & Petrick, 2013; Petrick & Huether, 2013; Phillips, 2019; Roberson, 2018). Over the last decade, a growing number of scholars has investigated the educational benefits of travelling and learning, covering a wide range of perspectives. Urry (1990), for example, viewed learning from a general tourism perspective. The *tourist gaze* outlines the importance of seeing and doing as part of the personal learning experience. Yang and Lau (2019) proposed that travel is the best form of education, to deepen knowledge of history and culture whilst nurturing the growth of enlightenment. Phillips (2019) similarly proposed that long-term independent travel allows individuals to learn about themselves. This point was also made by Ricci (2017), who examined the effects of travelling on identity. Roberson (2003) and Jarett (2009) identified the benefits of travel for seniors, and found they all learned something new or surprising from travel, improving their personal growth and tolerance, and having aspects of lifelong learning. Rojek (1993) suggested that travel leads to the accumulation of experience and wisdom, while Pearce and Foster (2006) considered that travel represents a parallel to formal education, referring to this as the “University of Travel” (p. 1268). Carr (2011) proposed that children’s learning through travel is a quintessential part of educational experiences, and that the holiday environment can act as a learning tool. Similarly, the Student and Youth Travel Association (2008) reported that travel forms an essential part of children’s educational experiences. Likewise, Byrnes (2001) suggested that parents who provide opportunities to travel are providing learning experiences that broaden their child’s world view. Wearing (2001, p. 10) suggested that travel experiences during adolescence can “provide a clearer understanding of how an individual goes about developing a sense of self.” Myers and Inkson (2003) suggested that independent travel by students on their OE, improved interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and cultural awareness.

It is evident from the literature that education and travel are intrinsically linked, and travel has the potential to enhance learning whether or not the learning objective is explicit. The literature demonstrates that tourists acquire knowledge through the experience of travelling, exploring, and making sense of destinations. Having now drawn on past research to identify the role of travel in the learning process, the next section reviews research on educational tourism from an educational perspective.

### ***2.5.3 Educational Perspectives***

High schools in New Zealand understand the importance of offering students the opportunity to participate in international study tours. This is because the New Zealand curriculum places a strong emphasis on learning experiences outside the classroom as a means of supporting and enhancing learning (Ministry of Education, 2017b, 2018b). Ultimately, educators and teachers are expected to convey the seriousness of EOTC experiences and define learning outcomes in relation to the experience (Ministry of Education, 2018b; Rivers, 2006).

International study tours can range from one week to a full year, and it is usually the responsibility of teaching staff to determine the appropriate length, based on the study tour's purpose and the costs involved (Bain & Yaklin, 2019). Many academic debates revolve around the length of stay and effectiveness of learning. Bachner and Zeuschel (2009) found there were more benefits associated with longer-term programmes. Similarly, Ingraham and Peterson (2004) indicated greater increases in intercultural awareness and intellectual growth for American students who had spent a full year overseas. Similarly, Andrade et al. (2019) found longer-term immersion programmes aided students' language abilities and cultural awareness, and David and Amey (2020) found that students in higher education (i.e. tertiary studies) were able to benefit from internships and networking. Whilst it is evident that immersion in longer-term programmes is advantageous, short-term study tours serve to develop students' skills, and many shorter experiences offer the same advantages as do the longer-term counterparts. Several studies have shown that effective learning can also be gained by participation in short-term international study tours (Beeton & Morrison, 2018; Bretag & van der Veen, 2017; Dwyer & Peters, 2012; Perry et al., 2012; Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018; Williams & Best, 2014). Short-term international study tours are intensive experiences with long busy days incorporating many activities, thus can be physically and mentally demanding (Dayton et al., 2018; Ludham et al., 2013).

Out of classroom learning has been studied from a variety of different educational viewpoints with authors examining the preparation and planning process of school trips (Coll et al., 2018; Stanley et al., 2019), teaching practice (Johnston, 2015; Stirling, 2006), learning (Griffin, 1998; More, 2011; Waite, 2017), student motivation, personal development, and social development (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Burns et al., 2018) and the benefits to educational organisations (Saitow, 2009).

A growing body of research has explored teachers' roles in relationship to EOTC. Stirling (2006) for example, analysed her own understanding of geography and the meaning of field trips in relationship to her teaching practice. Although the study focused on domestic secondary school field trips, the findings emphasised that field trips are now an expectation of both staff and students as part of the New Zealand curriculum. Similarly, Johnston (2015) reviewed his experiences of domestic field trips, discussing the preparation, planning, and stress involved with such trips, and evaluating factors that deter teachers from embarking on field trips. Johnston (2015) dismissed negative views of field trips, explaining their numerous hidden benefits, some of which are not necessarily related to the curriculum. This is a point that many academic texts neglect, focusing purely on academic skills and improving academic achievement. More's (2011) research focused on year 11 secondary school food technology students, and how a visit to an historical village provided the opportunity to build academic skills through experiential learning.

Much of the literature on the teachers' role focuses on the factors teachers consider when planning and preparing for an out of classroom experience. For example, Anderson and Zhang (2003), found the most important factor when planning, was curriculum fit, which was needed to secure the legitimacy of the visit. Coll et al. (2018) researched secondary school teachers taking students outside the classroom, and emphasised the need for proper planning and preparation so learning opportunities were not missed. Faulkner (2014) found parents and students were more comfortable with participating in programmes that were well structured and left little room for customisation. However, Scharoun (2018) argued that there should be a balance between planning and self-exploration if a study tour is to be successful.

Effective planning and organising out of classroom experiences can be time consuming for teaching staff (Harvey, 2018), who are subjected to many pressures, constrained by government legislation, policies and agendas, the expectations of parents, and the

expectations of students (Carr, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2018b; Ritchie, 2003). Hence, teaching staff preparing and participating in international study tours are expected to not only manage students' learning experiences through appropriate pedagogical approaches, but also be responsible for students' wellbeing and safety (Carr, 2011; Ritchie, 2003).

Parents (and indeed society in general) are often concerned with the safety of children, who are viewed as vulnerable and in need of adult supervision (Carr, 2011). "*In loco parentis*" is a Latin phrase meaning "in the place of a parent" (Bultinck & Bush, 2009). In New Zealand it is a legal requirement for school boards of trustees, teachers, and staff, to comply with the doctrine of *in loco parentis* both at school and during organised school activities (Capel et al., 2020; Hall, 2004; Lind-Carroll, 2010). *In loco parentis* outlines the obligations and responsibilities of teachers to provide adequate supervision for students entrusted by their parents into the school's care. The legal interpretations of *in loco parentis* make it explicit that if teachers fail to meet the duty of care, legal action can be taken against them and the Board of Trustees, for negligence (Lind-Carroll, 2010). Consequently, the legal obligations and personal responsibilities teachers accept can be stressful, as they can be held personally responsible for students' wellbeing, so breaches of the duty of care can have repercussions for their professional career.

Activities and education outside the classroom have to be organised in accordance with the Ministry of Education's guidelines. As international study tours involve taking students overseas, they are classified as high risk and needing approval from the school principal (Ministry of Education, 2018b). Legislation restricts the number of students that teachers are permitted to take on international study tours, and outlines the expected teacher to student ratio (Ministry of Education, 2018b). This is not surprising, as several incidents and accidents have been reported in the media (e.g. Blackstock, 2015; Leask, 2013; Rangi, 2018; Television New Zealand, 2001), for example, three people were killed in a bus crash, whilst volunteering in Kenya (Leask, 2013). Teachers take personal risks when taking students overseas, and if anything goes wrong, they face the threat of legal action and criminal charges (Carr, 2011; Ritchie, 2003). Consequently, teachers are in vulnerable positions, however, as Hudson (2008) noted, the benefits are considered to outweigh the risks. Mitchie (1998) described the advantages and disadvantages of taking students out of the classroom and found that teachers believed the experiences were valuable for students' cognitive and affective development. However, they were also often disillusioned by the bureaucracy of paperwork and the experience when students

misbehaved (Mitchie, 1998). Consequently, a number of authors have advocated that it is important for teachers to engage in continued professional development to make them better motivated and more confident to take students outside the classroom (Heras et al., 2019; Waite, 2007).

Table 1 summaries some of the key literature reviewed from an educational perspective, it acknowledges that limited research has been undertaken in the high school sector.

**Table 1**

*Summary of literature from an educational perspective*

Table 1 Educational Perspective		
Teaching practice	Johnston(2015), Stirling (2006)	School field trips
Planning and preparing	Anderson and Zhang (2003), Collet et al ( 2018) , Mitchie (1998), Stanley et al, (2019)	School field trips
Health and safety	Carr (2011), Ritchie (2003)	School trips
Learning	Griffin (1998), Pitman(2010), More (2011), Waite (2017)	School field trips
Student motivation	Ballantyne & Packer (2002)	School field trips
Adolescent development	Peacock (2006)	School field trips
Personal development	Ballantyne (2002), Dwyers & Peters (2012), Otten (2003), Paige et al. (2004), Terzuolo (2018) Wakeford and Orams (2018)	University Students School field trips High-school overseas study tours
Identity	O'Callaghan ( 2006)	University students
Social responsibility and cultural awareness	Wakeford (2013)	High-school overseas study tours

Having demonstrated the role of the teacher in the learning process, the discussion now addresses the perceived benefits for students; a growing body of research suggests that educational tourism experiences are “deliberate and explicit learning experiences” (Pitman et al., 2010, p. 221) with anticipated benefits for involvement, such as personal development, enhanced cultural understanding, linguistic competence, educational attainment, and improved career prospects (Dwyer, 2004; Forsey et al., 2012; Otten, 2003; Paige et al., 2004; Perry et al., 2012; Terzuolo, 2018).

#### **2.5.4 Personal Development**

Personal development is a very broad concept consisting of activities that enable individuals to develop skills, capabilities and qualities that allow both personal and professional growth (Cottrell, 2015). Examples of personal developments skills include,

but are not limited to; verbal and written communication skills, , interpersonal skills, cultural understanding, self-confidence, self-awareness, identity, adaptability, integrity, problem solving, work ethic, and working with others, aspirations, dreams, (Cottrell, 2015; Masters & Wallace, 2010).

Before discussing personal development, it is worth noting that there is significant interplay between personal development, self-awareness, language learning, and cultural understanding. Although this section addresses each separately, they are interconnected in the adolescent learning process, and the primary goals of educational tourism and international high school study tours.

From an educational perspective, personal development and learning are measured by utilising the cognitive (increases in knowledge), affective (changes in attitude and thinking) and behavioural (skills development) domains to determine the effectiveness of learning (Phillips, 2014). In addition, personal development is a way for individuals to evaluate their skills and consider their aims for life, in order to maximise their potential (Hash, 2019; Webb & Grimwood-Jones, 2004). According to Hughes and Youngson (2009), personal development encompasses activities that improve self-awareness, knowledge and identity, facilitate employability, and through these, enhance quality of life. Participation in international study tours has been demonstrated empirically to have positive impacts on adolescent student development. Importantly, international study tour experiences are particularly seen to support the development of personal traits and behaviour. For example, Wakeford and Orams (2018) found changes in students' attitudes and an increased desire to be socially responsible occurred as a result of an international study tour. Similarly, Ballantyne and Packer (2002) found EOTC could alter attitudes and behaviours towards the environment. Peacock (2006) suggested that these educational experiences develop positive attitudes and improve behaviour and maturity.

Furthermore, Darby (1994) reported that participants developed self-confidence and an awareness of other people and environments through EOTC. In a more recent study, Pearce and Foster (2006) examined improvements in self-confidence and found they were linked to gains in interpersonal skills and social skills, highlighting the importance of social and cultural awareness; Grigg and Lewis (2016) similarly noted improvements in social skills, personal confidence, and longer-term knowledge retention. A number of studies have examined the relationship between self-confidence and independence. For example, Ludlum et al. (2013) discovered that confidence gained from short-term study

tours enabled students to engage in other foreign travel experiences. Cushner (2004) also explained that overseas experiences engage students holistically, reporting that students made affective gains in independence and decision-making. Saitow (2009) claimed that educational travel provides the opportunity to improve self-awareness, build confidence, and transform relationships within a group. Heras (2019) also highlighted the importance of the role of relationships in confidence building and personal development, explaining how experiences outside the classroom can strengthen bonds and improve social skills.

In addition, many authors have investigated the connection between personal development emotions, and learning. For example, Scoffham and Barnes (2011) found learning outside the classroom could create feelings of happiness, which impact on individual lives and learning. Similarly, Burt and Thompson (2020) reported that EOTC inspired students to be curious, caring, and passionate about the world. Likewise, Littledyke (2008) reported that EOTCs allow students to explore, which leads to feelings of responsibility and empathy towards the environment. Volunteer tourism experiences have also been reported to trigger emotions such as sadness and guilt, which have encouraged individuals to reflect on their own priorities and values as a way of understanding themselves (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). Research suggests that navigating the cultural transition and being away from the home environment often results in negative feelings such as loneliness and isolation (Eckert et al., 2013; Wiseman, 1997). Nevertheless, these experiences are often viewed as beneficial, eliciting personal growth and development whilst developing an understanding of oneself.

Understanding oneself is a fundamental human concept that continues throughout life and is particularly significant during adolescence (Damon & Hart, 1991). Adolescence is often described as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, and a critical time for learning and development (Crone, 2016). During adolescence, individuals go through different stages of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development, which facilitates independence and maturity, encouraging adolescents to engage in more self-exploratory processes (Taylor, 2013). Stone et al. (2018, p. 110) pointed out that as part of the self-exploration process, “identity exploration and formation are key development tasks of adolescents, affecting adjustment and well-being in later life.” Erikson (1968) associated identity with exploration, discovery, adventure, and play in both childhood and adulthood, focusing on freely chosen self-enhancing experiences. Saitow (2009) pointed out that during adolescence, individuals are more likely to participate in new activities such as independent travel, and Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) suggested that participants

in international study tours are more likely to try out new things. They reported that “being an outsider and being away from home enables more risk-taking behaviour and creates an opportunity to experience a new or different identity” (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011, p. 1146). Hence, international study tours organised by high schools provide unique opportunities for self-exploration, allowing adolescents to discover who they are and how they fit socially into the world (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Self-awareness and the concept of *self* are discussed in more depth later in this section.

In connection with personal development, a considerable body of literature has focused on the student learning experience. For example, Griffin (1998) suggested that learning in an informal setting, such as in museums, drives curiosity, exploration, and a sense of wonder. This is consistent with the findings of Heras et al. (2019), who explored the views of children and found learning outside the classroom triggered a sense of wonder, allowing students to learn in new and different ways. Penning et al. (2019) discovered university students from Australia were inspired and amazed by their surroundings as they marvelled at the geography and landmarks of Spain. Johnston (2015) made a similar point, explaining that real-life geography experiences can turn dry classroom topics into fascinating experiences, and that some students remember their trips for the rest of their lives, predicting that this could even affect their future careers.

Falk and Dierking (1997) examined the long-term effects of trips by asking individuals to recall memories from domestic school trips; the findings demonstrated the importance of field trips and the lasting impressions made on school-aged children; even a museum experience resulted in unforgettable, meaningful memories. Research by Pine and Gilmore (1999) found that the experience of “being there” is essential for learning and personal fulfilment. Furthermore, studies suggest that EOTCs made students more involved, sharing discoveries and experiences with others, creating a community of learners (Burns et al., 2018; DeWitt & Storksdieck, 2008). Coll (2018) pointed out that informal learning settings and collaboration in groups encourages students to ask questions that help scaffold their learning. A number of studies have identified that EOTCs are more exciting than classroom, study, noting improvements in student motivation, with teachers reporting re-engagement in learning activities, while at the same time uniting the class and expanding the students’ circles of friends. (Heras et al., 2019; Saitow, 2009; Williams et al., 2018)

#### ***2.5.4.1 Language Learning***

There is a plethora of studies demonstrating the effect of international study tours on language acquisition. International language schools provide international travel experiences as a way of encouraging and motivating individuals to learn foreign languages, providing personal opportunities in a foreign speaking environment, affecting cognitive learning that cannot be duplicated in a classroom (Carr & Cooper, 2003; Houser et al., 2011). A large body of research demonstrates that international study tours can have positive impacts on language competence, noting improvements in language proficiency, with students developing greater autonomy as conversationalists, and broadening their vocabulary, thus changing their attitudes towards language learning (Fisher & Evans, 2000; Kinginger, 2011; Pizziconi, 2017). Interesting, Forsey et al. (2012) found that university students in Australia reported improvements in their verbal language skills, however, the skills varied according to the country visited. Wilson (2009) suggested that communicating with someone from a different culture speaking a different language is hard and scary, and misunderstandings are common, but pointed out the importance of persevering. Similarly, in terms of socio-cultural adaption, Zhang et al. (2018) found a lack of language proficiency inhibited Chinese students from joining conversations, and they were less eager to participate in leisure activities.

Research suggests that student engagement is influential on language learning. For example, Kinginger (2009) reported that home-stay students who participate in family meals and conversations showed the most gains in language proficiency. However, the extent of engagement is largely dependent on student personalities and confidence. In another study, Miao and Harrison (2012) examined personal traits and characteristics and their roles in language acquisition on international study tours. Their study compared the personality types of extraverts and introverts, and outlined their learning needs for successful language learning. They found that extraverts worked well in groups and encouraged discussion, whereas introverts needed quiet time to reflect, but that their exposure to language was essential for improvements in language proficiency and personal confidence. Consequently, international study tours are often seen as a successful means of language learning, and for developing language ability and awareness, and improving intercultural competence (Kinger, 2011). Student language experiences can also be conceptualised as opportunities for intercultural development. *Intercultural competence* is defined as a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills that lead to appropriate interactions with people of other cultures (Deardorff, 2009).

#### ***2.5.4.2 Cultural Understanding***

Over the last decade there has been an increased emphasis on intercultural development, intercultural competence, cultural awareness, and intercultural sensitivity, with increasing numbers of educational establishments embedding international elements into learning to stimulate a more global perspective in students. Academic literature refers to this process of global learning as “global citizen education” (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017). In New Zealand Government policies, global citizenship education has become a priority for student learning, reflecting an increasing interest in global citizenship and internationalism (Collins, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2017b, 2019b). Global citizenship education has been seen as a way to develop human capital and equip learners with the cognitive skills needed to recognise diversity and view the world from different perspectives, along with social and communication skills for interacting with people from different cultures (Collins, 2017; Education First, 2013). International organisations such as Oxfam believe that education for global citizenship is essential (Oxfam, 2014) and define a *global citizen* as “someone who is aware of and understands the wider world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make our planet more equal, fair and sustainable” (Oxfam, n.d., para. 1). The United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization defines global citizenship as “a sense of belonging, empowering learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies” (UNESCO, 2018, para. 1). Whilst a considerable amount of literature has been published on global citizenship, and there is a general consensus on what this is, there are subtle differences and ambiguities in understanding and meaning, and therefore, the construct of global citizenship generates many controversial debates.

Many tourism scholars are critical of this construct and argue that global citizenship does not exist, and practices surrounding the idea are contradictions in themselves, merely emphasising the differences in equality between those involved (Butcher, 2017; Gardner-McTaggart, 2016; Hermann et al., 2016). For example, Hermann et al. (2016) suggested that global citizenship is “at its best a contested and uneven form of modernity... that reflects a Eurocentric role influenced by privilege” (p. 135). Cheung-Judge’s (2017) study emphasised that international study tours are generally elitist, and for the privileged and middle classes. Faulks (2000) pointed out that citizenship has “always been an uneven experience, [and] even within one country there is privilege and dominant classes” (p. 39). More recently, there has been an increasing amount of research on the assumptions

of Western superiority and the reinforcement of stereotypes that portray developing countries as needing Western help (Caton, 2012; Cheung Judge, 2017; Crossley, 2017; Mostafanezhad & Hannam, 2014). It is this notion of help and global citizenship that is often portrayed to students in Western society as a means of doing good and becoming a socially responsible citizen, whilst at the same time cultivating cultural understanding. Hermann et al. (2016) pointed out that many higher educational establishments promote the (mis)use of global citizenship, implying that it will give students a competitive edge when seeking employment. This turns global citizenship into a commodity, with the risk that students may not be committed to the underlying principles of global citizenship.

In a recent study exploring global citizenship, it was found that students lacked an understanding of what it is, with just 10% having a sense of the ethical and moral responsibilities associated with this concept (Cotton et al., 2019). Cotton et al. (2019) discovered the main concerns were in relation to the terminology, and called for changes in its use, as students related better to the terms “global awareness” and “cultural understanding,” that focused on living and working with other cultures. Similarly, Bruce et al. (2019) found that before student-teachers embarked on their teaching career, they had difficulties defining the concept of *global citizenship*. Bruce et al. (2019) identified that limits in personal understanding could be traced to individuals’ limited experiences of travelling and limited multi-cultural experiences within New Zealand. Their study highlighted the need for young New Zealanders to travel overseas in order to improve their cultural awareness and understanding. As Blanchard and Higgins-Desbiolles (2013) suggested, this would “awaken the consciousness through the act of travel” (p. 27).

Nevertheless, a number of tourism scholars have called for a revision of travel practices, and a more ethical approach to global citizenship education that includes the welfare and sustainability of the community (Caton et al., 2014; Wearing & Wearing, 2001). For example, Caton et al. (2014) suggested that individuals should reflect on tourism encounters with others and take responsibility for positive change, pointing out that “our students need to learn how to take other people’s interests and feelings seriously and to treat them with respect... only when we have cultivated an outlook that dissolves the barriers between ‘us’ and ‘them’” can global citizenship be achieved (Caton et al., 2014, p. 126). Indeed, if tourism experiences such as international study tours are going to be utilised for change, a more equitable and sustainable approach needs to be developed towards global citizenship.

Despite these criticisms and debates around global citizenship, global citizenship education continues to grow through travel experiences. Since the principal goal of international study tours is the attainment of intercultural competencies and global awareness, this may explain the increase in demand for international study tours that are both curriculum and non-curriculum related. Similarly, the focus on social responsibility goes some way to explaining the increase in demand for volunteer tourism.

#### ***2.5.4.3 Volunteer Tourism***

Volunteer tourism projects operate in many countries and are often linked to curricular and non-curricular service learning, encouraging high schools to participate, in line with government agendas (Mostafanezhad & Hannam, 2014). Advocates of volunteer tourism suggest that participants are usually from richer Western nations, travelling to developing poor nations to help with community development (Crossley, 2017; Wearing, 2001), implying that volunteering overseas is more valuable than is volunteering at home (Jakubiak & Iordache-Bryant, 2017). Coghlan and Gooch (2011) argued that volunteer tourism can be interpreted as a form of transformative learning, in which social position and ideologies are re-evaluated through shared experiences. This sentiment was echoed by Cheung Judge (2017), who found that international trips “help change people into being good citizens” (p. 169). Crabtree (2008) suggested that “international service learning enables improvements in participants’ global awareness and the development of humane values, building intercultural understanding and communication, and enhancing civic mindedness and leadership skills” (p. 18). Hence, volunteering is considered as a way to develop cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, and promote a sense of global citizenship (Curtin & Brown, 2019; King, 2011; Wearing, 2001).

Conversely, volunteer tourism is often criticised, and critical tourism scholars have argued that achieving global citizenship through volunteer tourism is questionable (Bauer, 2017; Butcher, 2017; Gray et al., 2017). Germann Molz (2016) pointed out that volunteer tourism is paradoxical, perpetuating the very inequalities it is ostensibly trying to alleviate. Critical voices have argued that volunteer tourism is more beneficial to the visitors than for the host community. Wearing and McGehee (2013) for example, found that volunteer tourism does not always provide the promised social and economic benefits for the host communities. In their study of volunteer tourism in Romania, Jakubiak and Iordache-Bryant (2017) observed that it was the visitors who benefited most from the experience, as their limited professional skills, lack of knowledge and language barriers, meant they were restricted in what they could do or achieve, so they mostly played with

the children. They concluded that volunteer tourism “did not address the communities’ material needs or teach volunteers about Romania” (p. 212). Crossley (2017) argued that volunteer tourism is “a self-indulgent experience allowing the tourists to discover themselves and make them feel better about themselves, as a means of reconfirming their identity” (p. 152). This point was reiterated by Bidy (2015), who suggested the most productive thing that university volunteering students had achieved, was taking selfies and posting them on social media, hence reinforcing stereotypes of impoverished communities being poor but happy (Khoo-Lattimore & Yang, 2018). Tourism literature suggests that volunteer tourism has become a social status symbol with so-called “white saviours” emerging (Cowden, 2020; Wearing et al., 2018). The term “white saviours” is often used interchangeably with “white saviour complex” to define white Western individuals helping struggling nations or people of colour and feeling superior in doing so (Bakar, 2019; Collins, 2020a; Willuweit, 2020; Zane, 2016). The term is “now widely associated with volunteer tourism” (Wearing et al., 2018, p. 502). Raymond and Hall (2008) suggested that volunteer tourism encounters are shallow and meaningless, and treated by visitors as nothing more than creating fond memories. However, these experiences allow “participants to experience first-hand the hardships and realities of people in other countries” (Curtin & Brown, 2019, p. 192); therefore, participating in learning opportunities that relate directly to an overseas location, creates authentic cultural experiences – something these educational endeavours have in common.

#### ***2.5.4.4 Intercultural Experiences***

In examining the cultural effectiveness of international study tours, Velliari (2019) concluded that educators should learn from cultural insiders, utilising local knowledge to enhance the authenticity of study tour experiences. Similarly, Cushner (2004) considered that cultural learning should focus on meaningful travel experiences, describing cross-cultural experience in two ways: *objective cultural experiences* occur when groups stay in tourist class hotels, and *subjective cultural experiences* occur when groups are immersed in and engage with the local community. For culture learning to be effective “the lived experience is a critical element in gaining understanding of other cultures as well as one’s own place in the world” (Cushner, 2004, p. 12).

Extensive academic discourse has considered both the positive and negative aspects of an overseas experience and the cultural effect on students. For example, Scharoun (2018) found students had a solid understanding of how to work in a multi-cultural team from travelling overseas, and Bretag and van der Veen (2017) observed that students

established personal and professional networks for future overseas work, by gaining cultural insights and local knowledge. Miao and Harris (2012) described how students from Taiwan acquired knowledge of host countries' cultures, such as of their sport, history, and geography, as a consequence of a study tour. Williams and Best (2014) discovered that food was frequently discussed, with students expressing the desire to experiment with local cuisine in order to make cultural connections. Research suggests that reflections on national identity are significant to cultural understanding. For example, Williams and Best (2014) suggested that experiencing Bastille Day enabled students to understand the strength of French culture. O'Callaghan (2006) found that students viewed their own country from a new perspective, and developed an appreciation for their own national identity after cross-cultural experiences. Thus, students can gain insights into their own cultures by stepping outside their comfort zones to look in, changing their understandings and worldviews.

Previous studies have reported that effects of studying overseas varies considerably from one person to another, and are dependent on the individuals' own culture, personality and upbringing (Coleman, 1997; Fischer, 2009). Dolby's (2008) comparative study between Australian and American students emphasised the difference in nationalities, finding that Americans had a weak understanding of themselves whilst studying overseas, whereas Australians were inclined to pay less attention to their own nationality when studying abroad, which influenced their personal development and cultural understanding. However, Stronkhorst (2005) was cautious on this point, asserting that benefits should not be taken for granted, because intercultural learning is only an ideal, and exposure does not automatically provide learning opportunities. Several studies have found that students often form groups with their own nationality, thus reducing intercultural contact (Hoon Park, 2018; Otten, 2003). This was emphasised in Hoon Park's (2018) research, which found that students from the USA visiting Cameroon, sought comfort with peers from the same cultural background, and did not make a conscious effort to explore the local culture; this manifested as Western ethnocentrism and an uncomfortable dynamic of "them and us," and superficial interactions. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2018) reviewed the experiences of Chinese students in the USA, finding that the students felt isolated and neglected, resulting in more socio-cultural interactions with their Chinese peers, who felt the same. Such brief interactions between hosts and visitors reinforced stereotypes and misunderstandings.

Although many disadvantages of study tours, such as language difficulties (Ferrante, 2013; Kinginger, 2009; Zhang et al., 2018), loneliness, isolation (Eckert et al., 2013), and culture shock (Cushner, 2004), are acknowledged in the educational literature, these negative experiences are often portrayed as providing valuable learning experiences for those involved, so are often perceived as beneficial, and having a positive effect on personal growth. Therefore, it is evident that there is a significant overlap between intercultural learning and self-awareness in relation to intercultural competence and global citizenship. As awareness and the acquisition of self-knowledge are important aspects of global citizenship, intercultural experiences can provide unique learning opportunities that can lead to individual growth and personal development.

#### ***2.5.4.5 Academic and Career Success***

International study tours are perceived to foster academic success, and create better attitudes towards study. For example, Cavanagh (2012) found student attitudes towards education became more positive, appreciating the British educational system and consequently working harder. Bolling et al. (2018) found that students were motivated to complete coursework faster, and Ruth et al. (2019) described the international study experience as having a cumulative effect on students, improving their academic performance and enhancing interest in study, influencing subject choices and study directions. This point reinforced the work of Buckley (2015), who found that international study experiences had enhanced the students' lives to the extent that education played an important role, with some students subsequently completing master's and doctoral degrees. Ruth et al. (2019) also explained that the international experiences created a bond between students and their educational institution and its staff, which significantly improved student retention, benefitting the educational organisation.

International study tours are also considered to support career success and enhance employability; research has noted that they help students develop soft skills, self-confidence, and independence, that helps in their professional roles (Bretag & Van der Veen, 2017; Buckley, 2015). For example, Nunan (2005) examined the long-term effects of international study tours on university students in Australia, and found many thought the experience had enhanced their level of employability, and that the skills they acquired had influenced their career path. In addition, research suggests that international experiences result in increased self-confidence, enhanced career ambitions, and clarification on career directions (Ruth et al., 2019). Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011),

found some students altered their choice of career after a study trip, changing their major to incorporate a more international flavour.

International experiences can give students a competitive advantage and enhanced future opportunities for career advancement (Tucker et al., 2011). However, Methanonpphakhun and Fernandez (2016) suggested that teachers who volunteered to teach in Thailand were not motivated by their career prospects or their love of teaching, but rather, by their desire to travel. McRae et al. (2016, p. 377) discovered “having an international experience does not necessarily lead to the development of capabilities that result in career success.” Thus, there is a great deal of ambiguity regarding the direct effects of participating in overseas study tours, particularly on longer-term career success. Table 2 summaries the some of the key literature reviewed highlighting the perceived benefits for students, it acknowledges that limited research has been undertaken in the high school sector.

**Table 2 Summary of perceived personal benefits and learning**

Table 2 Personal Development and Learning (cognitive, affective and behavioural domains)		
Behaviour	Ballantyne and Packer (2002), Griffin (1998), Peacock (2006), Scoffham and Barnes (2011),	School field trips
Maturity and responsibility	Littledyke(2008), Peacock (2006), Heras et al. (2019)	School field trips University students
Self-confidence and independence	Cushner (2004), Darby (1994), Grigg and Lewis( 2016), Kontogeorgopoulos(2017), Pearce and Foster (2006) Saitow (2009)	School trips
Social skills	Grigg and Lewis( 2016), Saitow (2009), Williams et al. (2018)	School field trips
Identity and self understanding	Eckert (2013), O’Callaghan (2006), Trioekar and Kukar (2011), Wiseman(1997),	University students
Social responsibility and cultural understanding	McGladdery and Lubbe (2017), Wakeford (2013), Wakeford and Orams (2018)	High-school overseas study tours
	Cotton (2018), Cushner (2004), Dolby(2008), Miao and Harrison (2012)	University students
Knowledge retention	Longer–term retention Grigg and Lewis (2016), Faulk and Dierking (1999)	School field trips
Language Learning	Carr and Cooper (2003), Fisher and Evand (2000), Houser et al (2011), Kinginger (2011), Miao and Harrison (2012), Pizziconi (2017), Wilson (2009), Zhang et al (2018)	
Academic success	Bolling et al. (2018)	Schools outdoor education
	Cavanagh (2012)	Higher education
	Ruth et al (2019)	University students
	Buckley (2015)	University students
Career Success	Bretag & Van der Veen (2017)	University students
	Buckley (2015)	University students
	Nuan (2005)	University students
	Rowan-Kenvon and Niehaus (2011)	University students

### ***2.5.5 Summary and Conclusion***

This section provided an overview of the connections between travelling, learning, and personal development. It explained how knowledge can be gained from the experience of travelling, exploring, and making sense of a destination. Importantly, it highlighted the teachers' role in the development of education outside the classroom in connection with the New Zealand curriculum, and the associated challenges.

The review of literature highlighted the immediate personal benefits of participating in international study tours, particularly in terms of improved self-awareness, language learning, cultural understanding, and career development. However, there is limited reliable evidence to confirm that these personal benefits are sustained longer-term. In addition, it is evident that scholars have tended to focus on specific demographic elements, such as being university students, adult learners, or on domestic school trips, rather than studying adolescent high school students. However, research suggests there are differences in the effects of international study tours according to nationality, reinforcing the need to understand the international experience from a New Zealand perspective.

So far, this chapter has focussed on the educational benefits and issues associated with participation in international study tours. The next section reviews the learning theories that underpin knowledge acquisition and personal development.

## **2.6 Learning Theories**

### ***2.6.1 Introducing Learning Theories***

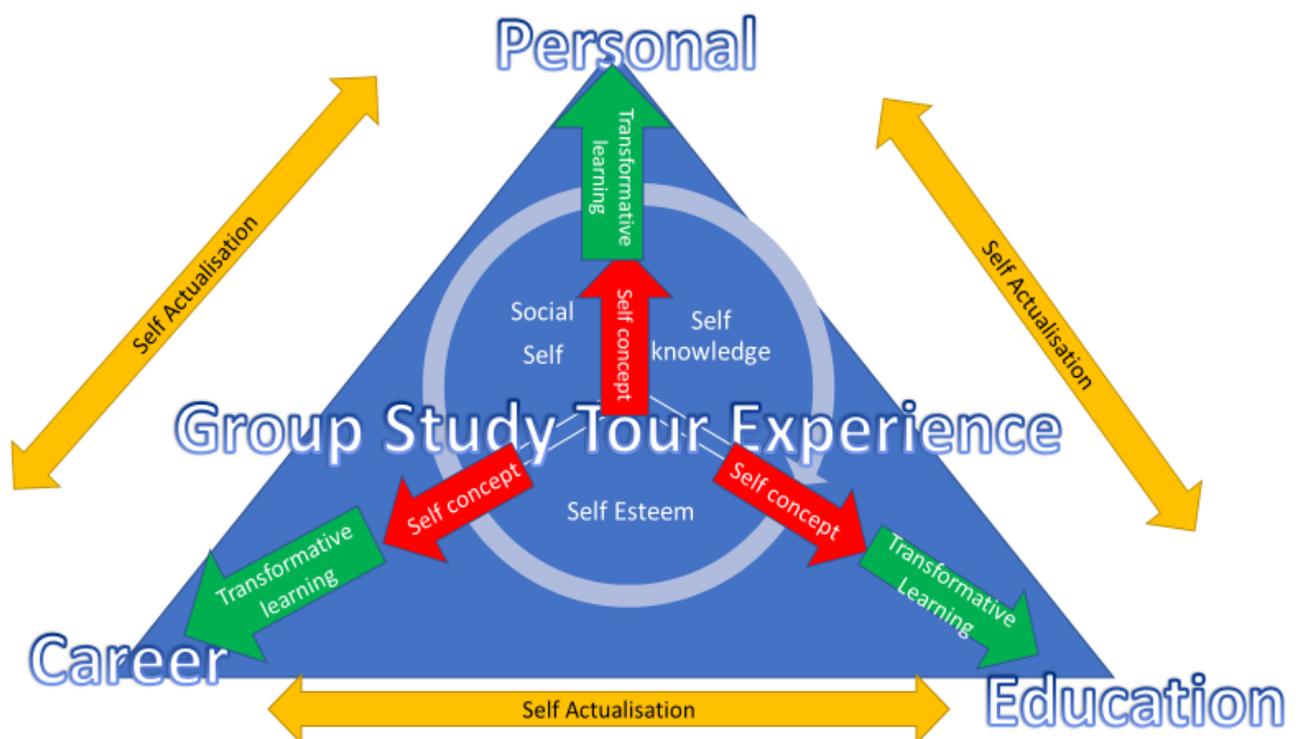
The literature supports the notion that international study tours are instrumental in the process of personal development (Beeton & Morrison, 2018; Carr & Cooper, 2003; Cushner, 2004; Saitow, 2009; Wakeford & Orams, 2018). In recent years, a growing number of scholars have applied learning theories to international study tours and student travel behaviours, to illustrate how the experiences initiate changes in individuals, and have the potential to create opportunities for life-long learning (Pitman et al., 2010).

As learning and personal development are considered major benefits of international study tours, psychological theories of development and learning are often incorporated into educational and tourism settings to conceptualise the process of adolescent learning.

The literature on international study tours has highlighted the application of several psychological theories; Kolb’s learning cycle or experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), self-concept theory (Rogers, 1959) and Maslow’s 1940 theory on the hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 2019) have all been utilised to explain theoretical development. Many theories overlap or are closely interlinked, incorporating elements from other theories, many of which are multi-dimensional, demonstrating how knowledge is constructed from personal experience or the social environment, often incorporating interactions as part of the process. Since many of these theories are entwined and complex entities in their own right, Figure 3 demonstrates the connection between the theories in relation to educational tourism and international high school study tours.

**Figure 3**

*The Connections between Learning Theories, International Study Tours, and Personal Development*



This model draws on the aforementioned theories to explain the nature of self-concept in order to characterise the individual and learning from the international study tour experience. Although this section addresses each separately, the learning process and

personal development are very complex, and there are many different relationships and interactions between the parts that produce the combined effects on student learning and behaviour.

The following section discusses Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, Kolb's learning cycle, experiential learning, transformative learning, sociocultural theory, and Rodger's self-concept theories of self, to provide a framework for evaluating and understanding how learning can be attained from travel experiences, and sustained in later life.

### ***2.6.2 Hierarchy of Human Needs***

In the 1940s, Maslow proposed a now widely referenced theory of personal motivation, the Hierarchy of Human Needs. Maslow (1970) suggested that individuals have a built-in need for growth and personal development and that everyone strives to reach the ideal self. Maslow's hierarchy outlines five stages of development, which have now been extended to incorporate cognitive and aesthetic needs. The model is often depicted in the shape of a triangular pyramid with "physiological needs" (food, drink, and shelter) and "safety and security needs" (protection and freedom from physical danger) as the largest sections at the bottom of the pyramid, as they are required for human survival. "Social needs" (love, belonging, friendship, family, and a sense of connection) are at the next level, followed by "self-esteem/ego needs" (achievement, independence, and status), "cognitive needs" (to know, understand, and explore), "aesthetic needs" (symmetry, order, and beauty), and finally, "self-actualisation" (personal growth and development, and self-fulfilment). The model works on the premise that humans are motivated by personal fulfilment and once a set of needs is met, they develop and try to satisfy those on the next level (Huitt, 2007; A. Maslow, 2019).

Due to the simplicity of the model, Maslow's hierarchy of human needs can be used to explain educational needs, career needs, and travel behaviour (Dixit, 2020; Gray et al., 2000; Page, 2019; Prebensen et al., 2018; Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Although not specifically developed for tourism, the premise of Maslow's hierarchy is applicable and extensively utilised in tourism research to explain the needs and experiences of travellers (Ivanovic, 2008; Kellerman, 2020; Page, 2011, 2019). For example, Marvell and Haywood (2005) viewed travel as a need and want satisfier, and demonstrated how Maslow's model ties in with travel motivations. Sharply (2006) related Maslow's model to travel motivation by discussing intrinsic desires and egotistic needs, and extrinsic

pressures from family and friends on travel decisions. Similarly, Dann (1977) applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to travel decisions, relating them to push factors such as desires to escape everyday routines, and pull factors such as perceptions of a destination. Reisinger's (2009) research tested Maslow's theory in relation to cultural experiences, exploring how individual motivation can influence cultural understandings. Jackson (2019) integrated Maslow's hierarchy of needs into tourist experiences, reviewing both the positive and negative experience. Jackson (2019) found positive experiences were associated with social experiences such as visiting friends and relatives and exploring host cultures, and negative experiences were associated with failures of the industry to provide basic physiological needs. Huang and Hsu (2009) suggested that Maslow's theory is "key in travel motivation research" (p. 288).

From an educational tourism perspective, the addition of cognitive and aesthetic needs is particularly important, as participation in international study tours incorporates travelling to learn something new, while being exposed to the aesthetics (landscape and environment) and culture of a destination. Swarbrooke and Horner (1999a) for example, discussed Maslow's needs in tourism as aesthetic needs and the need to know and understand, which suggest a form of not just travel, but also of learning. In considering Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is apparent that the motivation to travel and educate oneself manifests on many levels. Humans can become more concerned with higher-level needs and motivations once the basic survival needs have been met. Motivation for educational tourism arises mainly out of the need for belonging (social need), self-esteem, and self-actualisation. "Self-actualisation" represents the need for individuals to reach their full potential (McLeod, 2007), and is therefore based on self-fulfilment and change through personal growth and development. To self-actualise, a person needs to find meaning and identify what is important in their life (McLeod, 2007). Scholars have suggested that volunteer tourism experiences provide the opportunity for self-fulfilment through the desire to help people and behave altruistically (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Paraskevoidis & Andriotis, 2017; Proyrungroj, 2017).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been adapted and modified to have a tourism-oriented focus. For example, Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) modified the hierarchy of needs by developing the Travel Career Ladder (TCL) which also took into account the life-cycles of tourists and their prior travel experiences. This model proposed that tourists have identifiable stages in their holiday taking and progress upward as they accumulate travel experiences (Pearce, 2005). However, the model has been heavily criticised, as scholars

have argued that travel experiences do not necessarily follow a linear process. Pearce and Lee (2005) subsequently adjusted the model to a Travel Career Pattern (TCP) “which emphasised patterns of motivation and their structure rather than steps on a ladder” (Pearce & Lee, 2005, p. 228). As the current longitudinal study evaluates the effects of international study tours on adolescents and how this continues into later life, the travel career pattern model may be useful for explaining how individual motivation changes over time, based on the travellers’ needs.

### ***2.6.3 Self-Concept Theory***

Self-concept theory is a knowledge representation of the self that includes beliefs about personal traits and physical characteristics, as well as the idea that we exist as individuals (Burnard, 1997; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Rogers, 1959). In psychology discourse, self-concept theory is often used to understand the self, and involves both cognitive and effective judgements about the self (Ackerman, 2018; Hattie, 2014; Wylie, 1974). As there are many different ways to describe and think about the self (i.e. self-esteem, self-image, ideal self, self-efficacy, self-worth, and self-awareness), self-concept theory is complex, encompassing many interrelated ideas about the self (Ackerman, 2018; Hattie, 2014).

In considering the dimensions of self-concept, Shavelson et al. (1976) proposed a multi-faceted, hierarchical model of self-concept that consisted of the “academic self” (beliefs about ability and skills), “social self” (peer and family evaluations), “emotional self,” and “physical self” (physical appearance). The humanistic approach adopted by Rogers (1959) held that self-concept comprises three dimensions - self-esteem, self-image, and the ideal self - each interacting to create an awareness and understanding of the self as a whole. According to Myers (2015), this includes the notion of the past self, and one’s abilities connected to the present self, to represent individuals’ ideas of what they may, or may not become, creating a possible future self. In essence, self-concept “gives rise to possible selves, and it is it the possible selves that create the motivation for behaviour” (Franken, 1994, p. 443). Hence, self-concept theory operates on two levels: a personal level and a social level. Goulding (2002, p. 127) suggested that literature on the concept of self “also serves to enhance theoretical understanding of the nature of interactions.”

On a personal level, many scholars have acknowledged that the self-concept evolves over time, and comparisons have been made in the stages of individuals’ lives in relation to

the self (Cherry, 2019; Morrison-Valfre, 2016; Smith, 2020; Vallacher, 2019). For example, Erikson (1968) found adolescence was an optimal time for understanding the self and develop identity. This point was reiterated by Gross and Kinnison (2017), who suggested that during adolescence, cognitive structures start to mature, making this a critical time for self-development. Whilst Moonie et al. (2003) noted differences within age groups, finding that during adolescence “self-concept starts to be explained in terms of beliefs, likes, dislikes, and relationships” (p. 98), Coleman and Hendry (1999) suggested that self-concepts develop and change, giving “adolescents the ability to see the self from a different view point” (p. 54). However, Morrison-Valfre (2016) suggested that during adolescence, self-concept becomes a more individual process, influenced by the physical and emotional changes that teenagers face.

Self-concept comprises complex, dynamic systems of learned beliefs, attitudes, and opinions that each person holds to be true about their personal existence (Purkey, 1988). Thus, personal traits are an important component of self-concept, as they not only describe the individual, but also determine behaviour and form part of social identity. It is believed that no-one is born with a self-concept, but that it emerges, develops and is reshaped through experience and social interactions (Purkey, 1988). Many scholars have noted that the self-concept incorporates elements of self-awareness, which is a unique human trait that enables individuals to consciously understand themselves by understanding their own thoughts, feeling, values, and background, in relation to others and the world (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Smith, 2017). Consequently, a self-concept is a combination of both internal and external factors.

At a social level, the external aspects of a self-concept can be related to cultural upbringing. Cross and Gore (2003) found cross-cultural differences in self-concept, especially in more Western individualistic cultures. For example, in Western cultures, greater significance is placed on independence, whilst in collectivistic cultures, greater emphasis is placed on interdependence. The cultural aspect of self-concept was also compared by Watson et al. (1998), who found strong cultural differences in gender in collectivist societies in relation to the social self. Hence, the development of a self-concept is reliant on both the identity of individuals and their constructed position in society (social identity). “Symbolic interactionists argue that self-concept is a looking-glass reflection of the perceptions of others” (Marsh, 1990, p. 81). In other words, it reflects our ability to think about how other individuals think about and perceive us.

Bandura (1993) also emphasised the importance of cognition in personal development, discussing the individual and society, and the continual influence they have on each other.

The external influences on self-concepts were demonstrated in Linville's (1985) social model of self-complexity. This model highlighted how aspects of the self, develop according to meaningful events in one's life. The model evaluated the differences in individual behaviour based on past experiences, and found that those with a wider range of experiences, were able to adjust to new situations better, whereas individuals with a narrow range of experiences took longer, or had difficulty adapting.

From an educational perspective, the concept of "self" is associated with self-perception and is linked to individuals' personal beliefs about their academic ability and skills (Smith, 2020). Self-perception has been linked to student success and motivation, with two areas of self-perception dominating educational research: self-efficacy and self-concept. Some authors utilise these terms synonymously (Pajares & Schunk, 2001), whilst others differentiate between them. For example, *self-concept* is based on comparative judgements with others and self, whilst *self-efficacy* judgements focus on the individual ability of the self to perform a task (Marsh et al., 1991). However, it is worth noting that self-efficacy drives the theory of self-concept and the two are closely linked, and continually influence one another. Smith (2020) pointed out that sometimes these self-perceptions are reinforced by a school environment by streaming and clustering students together based on academic ability.

Like Maslow, Carl Rogers (1959) focused his research on humanistic psychology, developing theories that emphasise an individual's drive and instinct to succeed at their highest level. In the development of self-concept, Rogers believed that people are motivated by self-actualising tendencies. In describing the self, Rodgers identified that the *ideal self* is what a person would like to be, and the *real self* is the person they are. Hence, self-actualisation is viewed as an ongoing and continuous process towards the ideal self (Nicholas, 2009).

The term "self" is often utilised to describe the reflection of one's own being or identity (Huitt, 2011). Therefore, the self and identity are closely related concepts and understanding oneself is both a conscious and unconscious process (Hattie, 2014). Identity development occurs through the process of self-awareness when individuals are exposed to a diverse range of experiences that create internal and external stimuli (Cherry,

2019; Harter, 1999; Jones & Abes, 2013). In addition, Tajfel (1981) noted that identity is formed through understanding oneself through group affiliations, and the emotional self enables the individual to create a sense of belonging and form a social identity, by understanding oneself and one's own personal identity, in order to fit in.

In his theory on psychosocial development, Erikson (1968) observed that adolescents face an ambiguous time of life, an identity crisis of sorts, and start exploring their personal beliefs such as religion, career choices, likes, and dislikes, in order to discover their adult self and ideological identities. Erikson (1968) noted that a sense of personal autonomy is required to achieve individual aspirations and goals at this time of life, and pressures to conform to parents' expectations create a weak sense of self, which can lead to personal confusion in later life. Erikson (1968) believed it is essential that parents allow children to explore their abilities and encourage them to become independent, as this results in improved self-confidence and the ability to survive in the world; over-dependency can lead to a lack of self-esteem and doubts regarding oneself. Morrison-Valfre (2016) had a similar view, that although self-development in adolescence is challenging, individuals need to define their self and become strong and independent, if they are to succeed in later life.

In conclusion, self-concept theory describes the ways individuals organise and interpret their world of personal existence. Since self-concept theory is constructed by personal conscious reflections, it allows individuals to reflect on past experiences and consider how their expectations influenced their future success and individual development. Self-concept theory, therefore, provides a lens for looking at personal development, educational learning, and social development, and the longer-term effects, from an individual perspective.

#### ***2.6.4 Kolb's Learning Theory / Experiential Learning***

The epistemological foundations of experimental learning lie in the works of Dewey, an educational theorist who believed that learning was best achieved by doing (Aubrey & Riley, 2018). Kolb, like Dewey, believed that learning was a dynamic cyclical process that constantly evolves through the generation and modification of thoughts, ideas, and experiences (Kolb, 2015). Although Kolb's (1984) learning theory is often described as a circle or cycle, it is actually a learning spiral of a continuous process of thinking and

transformation that explains how learning from experience can lead to personal development.

Kolb's learning cycle has four distinct stages: concrete experience, reflection and observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Students' learning can appear to begin at any stage in the model, however, for learning to be successful, each stage must be completed (Kolb, 2015). According to Kolb (2015), in stage one of the cycle, individuals have to be openly involved in new experiences. In other words, students acquire knowledge by choosing to participate in the activities. Stage two involves thinking and reflecting on the experience from different perspectives and thinking about different approaches for the implementation of ideas. Reflection is the foundation of the transformative process that leads to learning and development. During stage three, individuals construct meaning by assimilating the knowledge of the experience into what was already known, in order to make a decision and implement changes in stage four (Kolb, 2015; McCarthy, 2016; Thompson & Spenceley, 2019).

#### ***2.6.5 Experiential Learning in Practice***

Kolb's (1984) learning cycle and experiential learning theory have been utilised by teachers in a formal classroom setting to develop appropriate learning opportunities. Its practical application can provide a theoretical framework for evaluating and understanding how learning can be attained from travel experiences.

Since Kolb's model is associated with practice, it essentially works on the principle that individuals learn through discovery and direct experience. Consequently, experiential learning theories explain how individuals learn and react to their experience based on their environment (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). Kolb (2015, p. xviii) defined *experiential learning* as "a particular form of learning from life experience; often contrasted with lecturer and classroom learning." Hence, *experiential education* refers to learning experiences in which knowledge is constructed in a real-life context, enabling the student to have authentic experiences on which to reflect (Fedesco et al., 2020; Xie, 2004). Many educational establishments, including high schools, offer a variety of educational programmes such as EOTCs and international study tours, which add an authentic component to traditional academic studies. Hence, EOTCs and international study tours are often viewed as experiential learning opportunities. In educational discourse, authentic educational experiences allow students to develop skills in a meaningful and

relevant context. For example, Green et al. (2018) found taking students to a live theatre performance enabled them to develop social skills and be more tolerant of their surroundings. Gilbertson et al. (2006) discussed an ornithological field trip, and how seeing a rare bird made a trip distinctive and memorable. International study tours provide differentiation of these opportunities. Allen and Young (1997) suggested that first-hand engagement enables students to develop a deep appreciation and understanding of the culture and environment in which they are immersed, especially when all five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch are engaged. This observation was substantiated by Howard and Gulawani (2014), who suggested that international study tours provide more natural and unconscious opportunities to understand and engage in the local cultural environment, expand views of reality, and encourage personal and academic growth. Furthermore, a consensus of research suggests that participation in hands-on experiences enables students to retain information for longer periods, develop meaningful skills, and apply knowledge to new situations (Chong, 2017; Howard & Gulawani, 2014; Ishiyama et al., 2015). Experiential learning is therefore a process in which the personal knowledge of students is continually adapting through the transformation of experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2008).

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory links personal development to education and careers, examining the relationship between education and personal development. In Penning et al.'s (2019) study, students in the creative industries found the concrete experience provided by an international study tour offered valuable insights into real-world projects and careers. Similarly, Gomez-Lanier (2017) found exposure to industry professionals, business practice, and design trends, enabled students to connect classroom theory to business practice.

Importantly, drawing on Kolb's ideas and on the role of past experience in learning, this model has been widely used in the field of educational research to define *holistic learning*, which is the learning that takes place between an individual and the environment (Armstrong & Fukami, 2008). The holistic process involves individuals' reflections on themselves as part of the development process and discovery of self.

Reflection can either be an individual or collective process (Reynolds, 2017). Given the importance of reflection in the learning process, it is evident that international study incorporates many opportunities to reflect. Many authors have suggested writing reflective journals as part of the learning process. Schmidt and Brown (2016) outlined the

importance of reflection as a teaching strategy, and stressed that educators align reflection activities with learning goals and objectives, since reflective writing helps students make the most of an experience. Personal journals and writing logs are important tools for ensuring a clear understanding of the overall learning experience (Jones & Leacock, 2019) as well as been essential for understanding personal values, beliefs, and expectations (Duke, 2014). Gomez-Lanier (2017) found students viewed writing reflective journals favourably and important to learning, rather than as a burden or arduous task.

Short-term international study tours can be intensive experiences with busy itineraries and tight schedules. Younes and Asay (2003) emphasised the importance of giving time to participants to reflect, however, as Howard and Gulawai (2014) pointed out, this can be difficult to implement due to the restricted time frames on short tours. Even so, Qualters (2010) suggested that after the study experience, students can actively engage in collective reflection, which enhances their individual experience. In addition, Watson and Kinsel (2003) suggested several ways to foster collective reflection, such as assembling a collection of photographs or mementos, or storytelling. “Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 7). Reflection is considered an important aspect of both personal and professional development, and if managed correctly, international study tours can provide opportunities for individual development, self-reflection, and personal transformation.

### ***2.6.6 Transformative Learning***

International study tours are regularly described as transformative learning experiences (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Dixit, 2020; Dorsett et al., 2018; Hall et al., 2016; Nada et al., 2018; Phillips, 2019; Stainton, 2019; Wearing, 2001) and Mezirow’s transformative learning theory has become the predominant framework that is drawn upon to explain the process of personal development and transformation. According to Mezirow (1990), *transformative learning* is linked to change, and works on the premise that individuals alter their frame of reference according to their experience. Mezirow and Taylor (2009, p. 22) defined a *frame of reference* as a “predisposition with cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions.” Mezirow’s (1978) transformative process challenges individuals to change their perspectives through self-reflection, disorientation, and adaption to unfamiliar situations or surroundings, and reintegration into society.

Clearly, international high school study tours expose students to unfamiliar settings in which they encounter different cultures and unfamiliar places that can disrupt their individual perspectives and can cause culture shock. Often, frames of reference can be altered by experiencing culture shock or by individuals stepping outside their comfort zones. Chang et al. (2012) described these factors as “triggers,” - the contrasts between existing conditions and the conditions of home. Mezirow (1990) referred to this experience as the “disorienting dilemma” and considered this the first stage in the transformative process and the catalyst for change. Previous studies have reported how disorienting experiences instigate changes in thinking and behaviour. For example, Brown (2009) found that a change in living conditions caused students stress and anxiety, and by adapting to this disorienting dilemma they experienced improved self-confidence and character building. Yu et al. (2020) concurred with these points and found that students confronted with a disorienting experience, developed a personal sense of social responsibility. In a similar manner, Kontogeorgopoulous (2017) found that volunteering experiences in Thailand changed individuals’ philosophies on life, changing their priorities and values to focus on things that really mattered. Phillips (2019) examined encounters with nature that triggered a rush of emotions in travellers, and a new appreciation for the aesthetics of the natural landscape previously unnoticed.

Another factor that contributes to transformative learning is critical self-reflection. Personal knowledge is seen as continually changing, so the theories of Kolb and Mezirow are closely linked to reflection as a key concept. Although reflection has already been discussed in a personal sense, Coghlan and Cooch (2011, p. 721) identified the importance of peers in the process of self-examination, pointing out that they “play a role in questioning and challenging a learner” providing opportunities for exploration and self-internationalisation. Similarly, Dorsett et al. (2018) discovered that students gained “reassurance from the fact that they were not alone in struggling to make sense of their experience ” (p. 59) and that group debriefing sessions and support from lecturers helped students to reflect. Similarly, Ritz (2011) proposed that group discussions and socialisation facilitate intellectual development opportunities, and learning from other people’s experiences validates beliefs and self-knowledge. It is thus the openness of the group and personal reflection, that are instrumental in the transformation process (Onosu, 2020)

The final factor in the transformative process is that of reintegration into society. This concept has been examined by many scholars immediately after students have returned

from international endeavours. For example, Rowan et al. (2011) found that on returning home, students had different views towards non-English speakers in the USA, and by reflecting on their own struggles and difficulties with language, they found greater respect, and were more patient and understanding when trying to communicate. Dorsett et al. (2018) found students reported a newfound gratitude for their life and increased motivation to pursue their studies. Similarly, Wakeford and Orams (2018) discovered changes in attitudes after time away, with students becoming more grateful for their way of life and a desire to be socially responsible. Yu et al. (2020) supported this, finding students' attitudes had changed them into responsible citizens, offering to help people in their local community. Nada et al. (2018) identified changes in behaviour and increased personal confidence, with students defending their own points of view more readily. Interestingly, Nada et al. (2018) noted that not all students noticed or acknowledged the transformation, but that the changes were visible through interactions with family and friends, highlighting that their experiences had altered individual behaviours, either consciously or unconsciously.

Despite the wealth of research examining the transformative learning process, scholars have predominantly focused on the short-term effects of travel, and not considered whether learning was sustained or utilised in later life. Research on short-term study tours is important for demonstrating the potentially transformative effects on intellectual and personal development, and cultural understanding. However, with the exception of Dwyer and Peters' (2012) examination of the longer-term effects on university students' education, careers, and worldviews, and Asada's (2019) exploration of the effects of longer-term study abroad on university students from the USA travelling to Japan, it is evident that longer-term effects have been overlooked, and research gaps still exist regarding high school educational tourism experiences.

### ***2.6.7 Socio-Cultural Theory***

Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work on cognitive development, suggested that the social context in which individuals live (i.e. socio-economic conditions, status, education, and community) help shape and contribute to their understanding of the world and their worldviews. Vygotsky's theory recognises the importance of interactions in a cultural context and describes the contribution society makes to individual development (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018; Krause et al., 2010).

According to Vygotsky (1978), individual learning takes place on two levels. Firstly, it occurs at a social level through observation and participation, and secondly, through self-internalisation. Importantly, at the first level, Vygotsky's work emphasises the need for social interaction. The impact of social interactions encourages and contributes to the construction of knowledge, as individuals acquire new language skills and new concepts from each other (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018; Krause et al., 2010). As do many other psychologists, Vygotsky believed children learn from new situations and discussing new ideas, and this process contributes to the construction of knowledge (Bergin et al., 2018; Phillips, 2014; Stevens-Fulbrook, 2020). Vygotsky highlighted the importance of collaboration in learning, guided by peers or teachers as a means of scaffolding to enhance student development. Mooney (2013) pointed out that interactive experiences allow students to stretch and grow mentally.

Like Mezirow's transformative process, which challenges individuals to change their perspective through self-reflection, Vygotsky stressed the need for collaboration and reflection, looking inwardly (internalisation) to evaluate and inform individual actions. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that individual learning at the second level involves the two fundamental concepts of self-internalisation (Krause et al., 2010) and self-regulation (Mooney, 2013), allowing individuals to respond to the ideas of others, and to adapt and apply thinking to new situations.

A fundamental aspect of international study tours is the opportunity for social interactions (Dorsett et al., 2018; Greene et al., 2018; Heras et al., 2019; Ritz, 2011). Therefore, Vygotsky's theory is often drawn upon by scholars in the disciplines of education and tourism, to explain the influence of group travel behaviour and group dynamics on individual learning.

Extensive academic discourse has considered both the positive and negative aspects of group travel on learning, such as enhancing and supporting learning, sharing experiences, ethnocentrism, and cultural stereotypes. These were discussed in relation to international study tours in section 2.5, Learning in Context.

### ***2.6.8 Summary and Conclusion***

This section reviewed educational, psychological, and social learning theories, to explain how learning occurs in adolescents and how these theories underpin teaching practices that encourage educators to move beyond the classroom. The section began by explaining

that many of the theories are closely interlinked, incorporating elements from other theories, and that learning is both an individual and social process. It then proceeded to examine the nature of each theory in relation to learning that can be acquired from travel experiences. It is evident from the literature, that although these theories were not developed for tourism, scholars have drawn on them extensively, to explain how personal travel experiences influence cognitive, behavioural, and social development. Many of these learning theories have been applied to international study tours to explain the immediate impact on learning and development. The literature review revealed that although international study tours are instrumental in the process of personal development, and offer potential for personal transformation, there has been little discussion as to whether learning is sustained or utilised in later life. Having established how learning occurs within the context of educational tourism, the discussion next addresses the focus of this research, and the research gap.

## **2.7 Conceptual Framework**

The foundations of this study have drawn upon research in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, and tourism. This literature review has reflected on insights gained from these academic disciplines and the wider body of academic literature that has assessed the potential benefits and issues of participation in international study tours, and how this has contributed to personal and professional development, and educational and career choices in later life.

Conceptual frameworks differ in grounded theory from those in traditional research methods, as they build a baseline of understanding that provides direction in order to analyse ideas that emerge from the data and provide theoretical sensitivity. The conceptual framework designed for use in this study was utilised during data collection to interpret the findings, gain theoretical sensitivity, and interpret new areas or categories that emerged. The elements that are drawn upon in this study are presented in Figure 1, and were discussed in sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.

## **2.8 Conceptualising the Gap in Knowledge**

The review of literature in sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6, has demonstrated that international study tours have been extensively researched in the fields of both education and tourism, and that research has identified a range of personal benefits for participants in international study tours. Despite the extent of and claims in the extant research however,

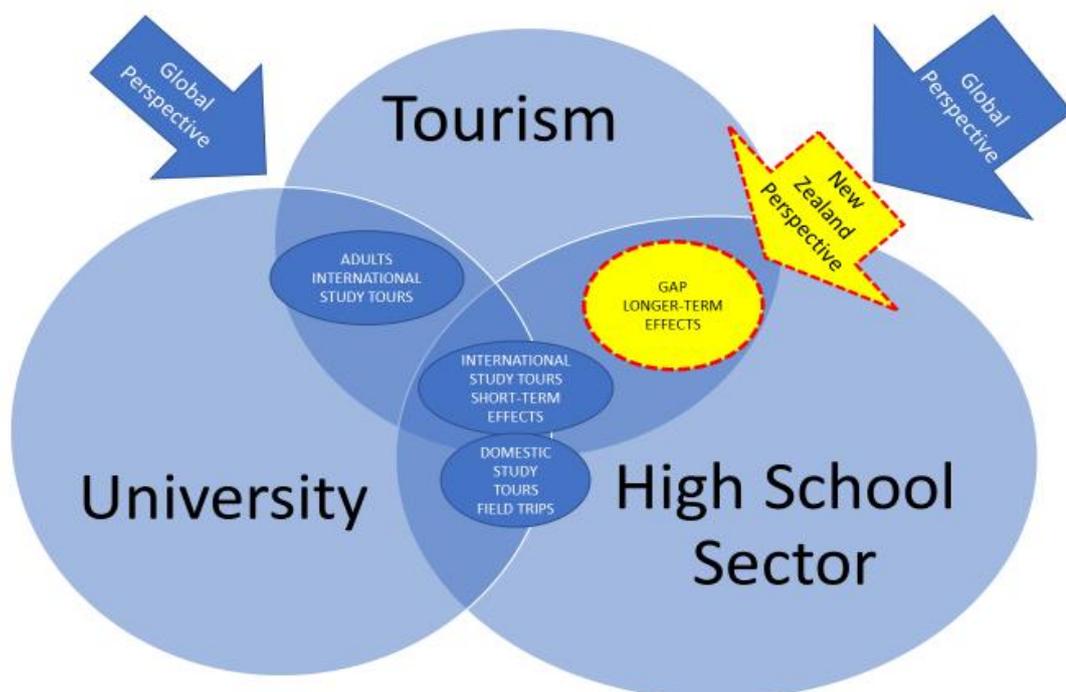
the majority of scholars have provided insights into only the immediate or short-term (i.e. weeks or months afterwards) effects of these experiences. Missing from the literature, is an exploration of the longer-term (i.e. years) effects on participants, and in particular, an assessment as to whether the promotional claims made of life-changing and transformational educational experiences, actually occurred, or were sustained longer-term and/or influenced choices in later life.

In addition, most studies predominately focused on university students or adults, with little attention paid to high school students. Because high schools are encouraged through both government educational strategies and commercial educational tour companies who promote international study tours as a means of personal development, it is timely to conduct research to better understand the longer-term effects of these experiences.

Figure 4 summarises the approaches of research on educational tourism, and illustrates that tourism research linked to holidays and learning has predominantly focused on adults, whilst educational research has either emphasised the immediate short-term effects on university students, or focused on school domestic day trips. Although educational tourism research is gathering momentum in the high school sector, it is still clear that a gap exists in the research.

**Figure 4**

*The Research Gap in Educational Tourism*



This research contributes new knowledge within this realm of educational tourism by presenting data that provide insights into the reflections and perceptions of adult New Zealanders who participated in high school study tours earlier in their lives. This is the first empirical investigation of this type for New Zealand, and it contributes to the wider literature on educational tourism by exploring the influences international study tours had on participants' subsequent educational and career choices. In addition, this research presents data on the perceived effects of international study tour on participants' sense of self-identity, personal growth, and their relationships with others. It also provides a context to the study by including the voices of the teachers who organised and participated in the study tours.

## **Chapter 3. Research Design, Paradigm, Methods, and Analysis**

### **3.1 Introduction**

My own philosophical ideas influenced the choice of paradigm and methods selected for this study. While the literature accepts that study tours are beneficial, most educational tourism research has focused on adults, university students, or domestic school field trips, and the immediate short-term effects on the students. Instead, this study investigates the benefits associated with participating in international study tours, to determine if the short-term benefits are sustained longer-term.

This chapter begins by presenting a visual overview of the research design and continues by explaining the paradigm adopted, and justifying the interpretive research approach chosen. I then explain why I selected constructivist grounded theory and the way in which qualitative research was used to understand the influences of the adolescent experience later in the participants' lives. This section continues by describing my stance as a researcher and outlining my reflexivity and positionality within the research. This is followed by an explanation of the research methods applied in this study and techniques used to recruit and collect data. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the techniques used to interpret and analyse the data and an outline of the process undertaken to ensure academic rigour.

### **3.2 Overview of Research Design**

The visual representation of the overall research design presented in Table 3, shows how the research strategies and methods were integrated in this study, and includes a brief outline of how the data were collected and analysed. The discussion now addresses the choice of research paradigm.

**Table 3***Paradigm, Strategies, and Methods Utilised in this Research*

<b>Paradigms and perspectives</b>	<b>Strategies of qualitative inquiry</b>	<b>Methods</b>
<b>Constructivism/interpretivism paradigm</b>	<b>Grounded theory method (GTM)</b>	<b>Individual interviews: Ex-students</b>
<p>Reality is socially constructed (ontology)</p> <p>Multiple realities (Epistemology)</p> <p>The researcher is part of the research setting</p> <p>The researcher's position is subjective</p> <p>Investigations must be reflexive, self-critical</p> <p>Aims to reveal hidden realities and initiate discussion</p>	<p>Theory is grounded in data and systematically gathered and analysed. Continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (Strauss &amp; Corbin, 1994)</p> <p>Purposive sample</p> <p>Volunteer tourism, extracurricular learning, usually conducted in the less developed world;</p> <p>Language immersion programmes around the curriculum;</p> <p>The classics and curriculum learning usually conducted in European destinations such as Italy or Greece with an emphasis on historic and cultural learning;</p> <p>Geography study tours around the curriculum.</p>	<p>Two sets of face-to-face, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews incorporating elements of life histories research</p> <p><b>Photo-elicitation</b></p> <p>Own photos as interview stimuli</p> <p>Auto driven interviews</p> <p><b>Individual interviews: Teachers</b></p> <p>One semi-structured interview to add context and background to the study</p>

**Adapted from *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (p. 70), by Phillimore and Goodson, 2004, Routledge. Copyright (2004) by Taylor and Francis. Reprinted with permission.**

### 3.2 Research Paradigm

Although philosophical ideas generally remain hidden in research, they still influence the practice and design of a study (Slife & Williams, 1995). Personal philosophical ideas are important because they determine assumptions about the world. Individuals have a conceptualisation of reality based on their own beliefs, which are influenced by their unique histories and cultural upbringing.

Researchers have different worldviews that provide a framework and guidance for their individual thinking, understanding, and interpretation of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These worldviews are referred to as “paradigms” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). *Paradigms* are human constructions that consist of theoretical ideas and procedures that researchers adopt based on their particular worldview (Creswell, 2008; Guba, 1990). The term “paradigm” was first introduced by the philosopher of science, Kuhn (1970) who proposed new ways of viewing reality, providing insights into different approaches to social science research. The choice of paradigm is underpinned by the researcher’s own philosophical perspective and is seen as a framework that focuses the direction of the research in a particular way. Phillimore and Goodson (2004) argued that research needs to be grounded in an appropriate paradigm, since paradigms contain the researchers’ ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations for their study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) noted that *ontology* refers to the nature of reality and how reality is perceived and constructed. *Epistemology* refers to the study of knowledge and ways of knowing, and *methodology* refers to the theoretical assumptions and principles that underpin the approach to a study (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Birks et al. (2006) pointed out that “researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality” (p. 2). It is therefore essential that researchers understand and differentiate between various paradigms, to connect an appropriate paradigm with their own personal epistemological position.

Generally speaking, there are four broad frameworks classified as *paradigms*: positivist, critical, interpretive, and pragmatic (Creswell, 2008). Each is underpinned by epistemological assumptions about knowledge and how it can be obtained (Creswell, 2008). The main methodologies used in social science research are underpinned by one of these paradigms (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

The interpretive paradigm is considered constructivist (Crotty, 1998), and the ontology of the interpretive paradigm is relativist. Stokes (2011) suggested that relativism is an ontological approach, and seeks the truth from different theoretical perspectives. Gergen (1985) suggested that the interpretive paradigm acknowledges that as individuals experience reality, they construct it, and each experience is unique. Hence, the interpretive paradigm views individuals as actively involved in creating their own subjective representations of an objective reality (Hickerman et al., 2009). However, these epistemological assumptions work on the premise that reality is either given or socially constructed through interactions. This understanding is *social constructivism* (Crotty, 1998), and allows a researcher to interact with participants in order to understand meaning. With such an approach, assumptions are shared regarding the truth, in order to understand the experience; hence, the truth is acknowledged as subjective.

Many academic texts, e.g. those of Bryman and Bell (2007), Carson et al. (2001), Denzin and Lincoln (2011), and Silverman (2013), differentiate between the positivist, critical, interpretivist and pragmatic paradigms discussing concepts of ontology and epistemology in relation to research projects, and the positions taken by researchers. Phillipmore and Goodson (2004) reflected on the importance of the researcher in identifying and clarifying the position taken within the research project, as the researcher can be considered either part of the research or as a separate entity. It is this relationship between the researcher and participants that determines the epistemological position of the researcher and assumptions on how knowledge can be obtained. Laverly (2003) suggested that in order to frame a research question concisely, researchers must be explicit about their ontological and epistemological position, since philosophical questions about ontology, the researchers' view of reality, affect the way in which the research is conducted.

Given that researchers' actions are underpinned by the philosophical beliefs that define their worldviews or paradigm (Creswell, 2008) it is important that I provide my own ontological and epistemological position. The following section therefore outlines my choice of paradigm and ontological and epistemological position.

### **3.3 My Choice of Paradigm**

Since social science research needs to be grounded in an appropriate paradigm, I reflected on and considered my own philosophical ontological stance, and in the context of this study, I considered that multiple realities exist, and that knowledge is constructed socially

by individuals. This relativist, constructivist viewpoint, underpinned my strategy and approach to the study (see Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Furthermore, I considered it essential that my paradigm as a researcher was appropriate to meet the primary goal of this study, which was to better understand the influence of adolescent experiences of high school-based study tours later in their lives.

Therefore, I adopted an interpretive approach to this research, underpinned by an interpretive paradigm. The term “interpretivism” is derived from the Greek word “*hermeneuein*” which literally means “to interpret” (Carson et al., 2001). The interpretive approach is often referred to as “constructivism” and originates from the social sciences of anthropology, sociology, and psychology, and often credited to Max Weber, although other European philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty have also been influential in the development of interpretivism (Creswell, 1994; Jennings, 2001; Selby, 2003). In recent years, constructivism has been widely used in social science research, including in the areas of education and tourism.

### **3.4 My Ontological and Epistemological Position**

The ontological position related to the interpretive paradigm, suggests there are varied and multiple realities that are dynamic in concept and contextually dependent, valuing subjectivity (Saunders, 2007; Searle, 1995). Therefore, views on the nature of reality affect beliefs on the nature of knowledge and how knowledge can be obtained (Klenke, 2008).

My ontological assumptions are that multiple realities exist, and individuals experience reality in different ways. Consequently, I believe that social reality is constructed and interpreted by individuals through their actions, interactions, and social situations (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, I believe that reality is a temporal dimension that is likely to differ and change over time, depending on the context of the situation (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The epistemological stance related to the interpretive paradigm, is that knowledge of reality is obtained through social construction (Saunders, 2007). I relied upon participants' views of the situation studied, to enrich understanding, leading to interpretations of my own meaning. Consequently, knowledge of reality is obtained through social construction through the process of shared meaning, manifested as culture, linguistics, and symbols (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Both the participants and I played important roles in the

interpretive process, negotiating meaning and understanding through dialogue, meaning that I was always implicated in the phenomena being studied (see Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Hence, my position was subjective, and personal understanding was constructed through my own beliefs and prior knowledge, which influenced my interpretation of the individuals' experiences. Having clarified my ontological and epistemological position, I will now explain the rationale for adopting my specific research approach.

### **3.5 My Choice of Research Approach**

I considered several research approaches as potentially appropriate for this study, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenology explores lived experiences and is closely linked to a descriptive approach (Richards & Morse, 2007), hermeneutics expands on the nature of understanding, and symbolic interactionism deals with human interaction and meaning in people's lives (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Fundamentally, each of these approaches is related to the others, all having the same primary aim of exploring and understanding the behaviours and experiences of people, and what lies at the core of their lives (Creswell, 2008). However, while any of these approaches could be considered appropriate for this research, the method that resonated most with me was that of grounded theory.

Grounded theory is one of the most common qualitative research strategies utilised in the social sciences (Charmaz, 2006) and is now widely adopted as part of educational research (Charmaz and Bryant (2007). For example, Collins (2020) explored children's outdoor educational experiences and believed ground theory was useful in developing an understanding of the children behaviour whilst gaining insights into the context of the school camping experience. While Che Arr (2021) examined Asian women's study experiences in New Zealand and believed a grounded theory approach deepened understanding and provided insights into their lived experiences. Grounded theory studies are usually situated in the experience in which change is expected and where understanding of the change and process is central (Richards and Morse, 2013). Matteucci and Gnoth (2017) specifically called for tourism researchers to utilise a grounded theory methodology for these reasons grounded theory appealed to me

Grounded theory is appropriate when little is known about an area of study, and a theory or explanation of a process is required (Creswell, 2008). Grounded theory was originally designed to study social processes, and essentially focuses on human behaviour and the

social environment that shapes it. It appealed for this research because it allowed me to examine the meanings (processes, actions, and interactions) the participants assigned to international study tours, explored through their memories, recollections, and perceptions, and placed in the context of their own lives. In this research, grounded theory allowed me to explore the complexity of life whilst seeking to explain the strategies (processes) individuals used to make sense of their experiences. Since little is known about the longer-term effects of New Zealand secondary school study tours and the relevance of the study tours to later life (five to 25 years after the tour) on participants in the tours, the use of grounded theory was supported, as it would allow a richer and more diverse understanding to be obtained from the ex-high school students taking part in this research.

### **3.5 Grounded Theory Methodology**

Grounded theory methodology (GTM) is a systematic method that allows flexibility in collecting and analysing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006; Gibson & Hartman, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Grounded theory differs from other approaches to research because it seeks to explain the phenomenon being studied by developing a theory that is grounded in the data (Birks & Mills, 2015; Lichtman, 2010).

The origins of grounded theory date back to the Chicago School of Sociology, based within a pragmatist philosophy, and influenced by John Dewey and George Mead (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz & Bryant, 2007). Originally GTM was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, when they became disillusioned with traditional scientific methods, and the epistemological assumptions of objective truths and verifiable theories. In their seminal book, *The discovery of grounded theory*, Glaser and Strauss proposed an alternative approach that enabled researchers to “discover” theories generated directly from the data using a systematic process (Gibson & Hartman, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

Over time, the first generation of grounded theorists, Glaser and Strauss, followed different directions, and the grounded theory methodology began to evolve. Figure 5, adapted from Morse et al.’s (2016, p. 14) *Genealogy of grounded theory*, provides an understanding of how grounded theory diversified and continues to evolve.



elements of Glaser's, Strauss's and Corbin's approaches to develop a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015; Gibson & Hartman, 2013; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Although Charmaz acknowledged their influence on her approach, she considered the requirements of Strauss's approach too rigid, and disagreed with Glaser's positivist approach, believing that the researchers' pasts, personal perspectives, and interactions with participants, were influential in knowledge creation (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz's version of grounded theory is considered more subjective, implicating both the researcher and participants in the construction of knowledge (Timonen et al., 2018). Constructivist grounded theory seeks to develop a theory about the participants and the world they have constructed (Charmaz, 2006). According to many scholars, the evolution of grounded theory represents a shift in paradigms from positivism to constructionism (Birks & Mills, 2011; Gibson & Hartman, 2013; Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

In evaluating the similarities and differences in these approaches, grounded theory is predominantly broken down into three divergent configurations: Glaserian or classic Straussian, and constructivist grounded theory, each underpinned by an ontological and epistemological position, but all sharing the same fundamental grounded theory tenets - simultaneous coding, coding and analysing data, theoretical sampling until saturation is reached, constant comparison, and memo writing (Birks & Mills, 2015; Breckenridge, 2009; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). The difference between the approaches lies in three distinguishing areas: firstly, the philosophical position of the researcher, secondly, the coding conventions and procedures, and thirdly, the use of literature within the research (Birks & Mills, 2015; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Since the various approaches to grounded theory influence the way in which data are collected and analysed, before commencing with my research I assessed the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Understanding the similarities and differences in approaches to grounded theory enabled me to consider my own ontological and epistemological position before selecting the most suitable approach for my research.

### ***3.5.1 My Rationale for selecting Constructivist Grounded Theory***

As previously mentioned, my ontological and epistemological positions were influenced by the interpretive paradigm, and the view that multiple subjective realities exist. Based on these assumptions, the constructivist grounded theory approach introduced by Charmaz appeared the most suitable for this study, as it is situated within the interpretive paradigm, therefore enhancing my theoretical position.

In addition, Charmaz (2006) claimed that the constructivist grounded theory approach enables the researcher to focus on meaning (Gibson & Hartman, 2013). It is therefore appropriate when focusing on what has happened to individuals, to understand why they believe it happened, and what it meant to them (Mertler, 2015). For this reason, I found this approach fitted well with my study, since I sought to understand ex-students' perspectives on the effects of international study tours and what these meant to them later in life.

Furthermore, the constructivist approach to grounded theory seeks to give a voice to participants in order to understand their world by analysing their thoughts, feelings, and actions, in relation to a situation (Birks et al., 2006; Breckenridge, 2009; Gibson & Hartman, 2013). Hence, constructivist grounded theory can offer a new level of understanding, generating explanations of events, processes, and relationships. The ability to provide these insights into how meaning is derived from within a social setting is considered to be a strength of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The approach "fosters openness and encourages an empathetic understanding of participants meanings, actions and worlds" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 184). Constructivist grounded theory recognises diversity, assuming a relativist ontological position and that multiple realities exist (Ryan, 2014). Therefore, constructivist grounded theory allows an interpretive understanding of the participants' meaning and a view into their world (Breckenridge, 2009).

The subjectivist epistemology of constructivist grounded theory acknowledges the involvement of the researcher (Gibson & Hartman, 2013). Constructivist grounded theory arises from the interaction between the researcher and participant, with the researcher being an integral part of the process (Charmaz, 2006). Constructing a grounded theory begins with reconstructing and discovering the reality of the participants' experiences and understanding that these are influenced by the researcher's own perspectives. Charmaz's constructivist approach to grounded theory assumes that reality and social realities are co-created by the viewer and viewed, drawing out meaning, values, and situations (Charmaz, 2006). In this study, it was assumed that the reality of the experiences was co-created by the participants and me, as the researcher.

Since the researcher is implicated in the research, constructivist grounded theory requires the need for self-awareness and personal understanding. Therefore, constructivism encourages researchers to self-reflect and become self-aware in order to examine their

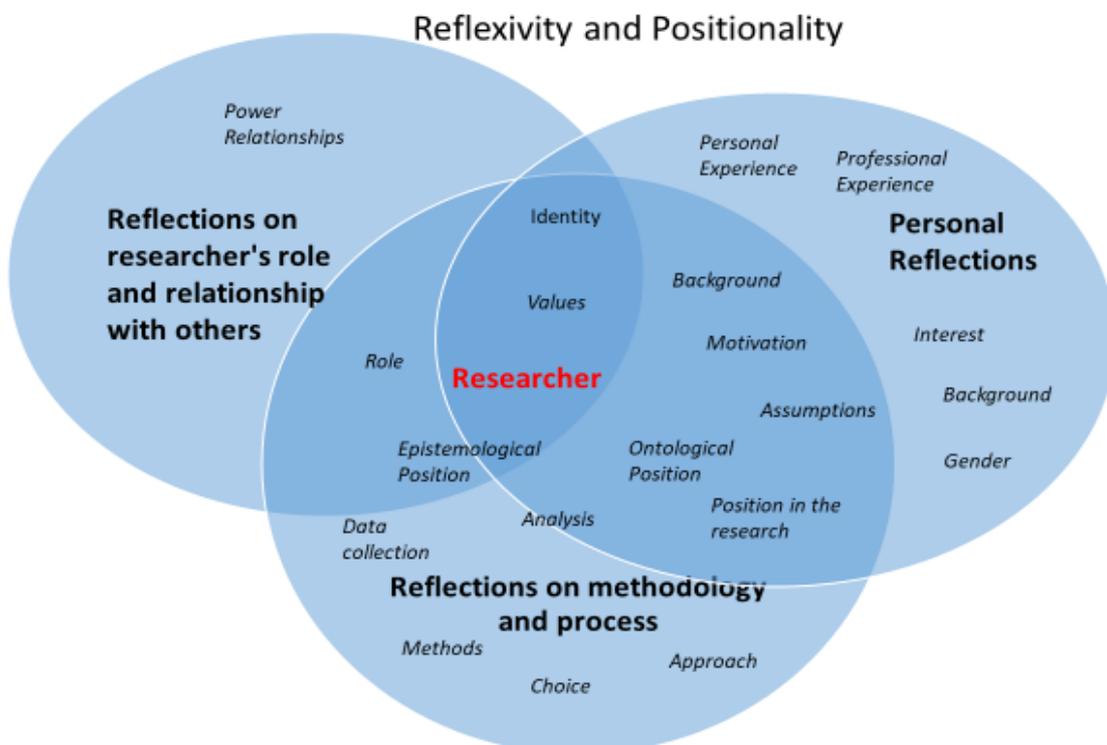
own interpretations (Charmaz, 2006). This process of reflexivity is discussed in the following section.

### 3.6 Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

*Reflexivity* describes the relationship between the researcher and the research project, and is an essential part of the researcher’s identification of positionality (Gray, 2018). Reflexivity is considered an integral aspect of qualitative research (Corlett & Mavin, 2019; Patton, 2004; Richards & Morse, 2007). This section explains my stance as a researcher and gives an overview of the concept of reflexivity and its influence on the research process. Generally speaking, reflexivity suggests that researchers should be reflective in their research practice (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The concept of reflexivity contains three main areas that researchers need to reflect upon. Many of the aspects are intertwined and are overviewed in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**

*Model Illustrating the Process of Reflective Practice*



Adapted from *The globalisation of higher education: Developing internationalised education research and practice*, by T. Hall et al., 2018, Palgrave MacMillan, and *Reflexivity and researcher positionality*, by S. Corlett and S. Mavin, 2019, Sage. Copyright (2019) by Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission.

Reflexivity enables a researcher to reflect on their individual role within the research, on the research process, and on the influence they may have on the empirical research project (Corlett & Mavin, 2019; Gray, 2018; Patton, 2004). Jamal and Hollinshead (2001) called for researchers in tourism to acknowledge this, and develop their research accordingly. With this in mind, I decided it was important to personally reflect on myself, my background, culture, personality, experiences, gender, and training, in order to identify my position within this research and consider my influence/s on the research process.

### ***3.6.1 Personal Reflections and Reflexivity***

In Figure 7, I outline a range of factors that shape and define who I am as a person and as a researcher. In constructing this reflection, I have considered five key questions:

1. Who am I?
2. What do I know?
3. How do I know this?
4. How does this influence me?
5. What are my preconceptions/assumptions?

**Figure 7**

*The Process of Individual Reflection and Reflexivity: Who am I?*



This reflection was important, because it allowed me to reflect on my past and cultural background. However, as Remenyi (2012) pointed out, it is often difficult for researchers to be aware of their own preconceptions or assumptions. In order to better understand my own position relating to the research, I therefore arranged a preconception interview to establish what was already known from a personal and professional perspective. Preconception interviews are a recommended way of establishing one's interests or individual attitudes in the research process (Gray, 2018). Dr David Healey, Auckland University of Technology, a researcher experienced in reflexivity and an expert in grounded theory, conducted an hour-long interview to establish my positionality within the research and uncover any of my presuppositions.

It was necessary to critically reflect on my own background in relation to the research, because inevitably, my personal background, assumptions, and disciplinary training, all shaped the conduct of this research and my interpretations of the data.

### ***3.6.2 My Background***

I am from a small industrial town called Scunthorpe, in the north of England. I am a white European female from a British working-class background. I was born in 1969, which demographically labels me as belonging to Generation X.

I grew up in Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Britain, which was a time of transformation and change. Thatcher's ideologies and policies were collectively known as "Thatcherism" and changed many aspects of British life, including attitudes in feminist circles and in LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) cultures (Ball, 2013). Thatcher's political policies were controversial and met with a diverse range of responses ranging from strong support to violent resistance. Thatcher's political initiatives of de-industrialisation included the reduction of regional and national industrial activities and the privatisation of public services and assets. I experienced living through the miner's strike in 1984-1985, which was one of the major industrial disputes in British history, and the privatisation of the local steel works, which led to mass unemployment in my town. These experiences left me with a sense of empathy for the working poor and a moral objection to socio-economic inequalities in which society has a few who are extremely wealthy and many who struggle to have a decent standard of living. Nevertheless, according to Ball (2013), Thatcher's children, of which I am one, "have grown up more individualistic and more accepting of people of other races" (p. 53). I have therefore grown up with a sense of independence, personal resilience and open-mindedness.

Although I might categorise myself as a Christian of the Church of England, I am not a practising Christian and am sceptical about religious beliefs. Additionally, I am a single parent who now resides in New Zealand with two small children aged nine and 13, who have not participated in any international study tours. However, my nine-year-old daughter experienced her first school camping experience in 2019, during the write-up of this thesis, so I am aware of the pressures placed on parents to fund school trips. In addition, as a mother I remain protective of my children, and worry about their safety if they are away from home.

I was educated in the United Kingdom at my local comprehensive school, going on to study in Further Education in my hometown and later completing a bachelor's degree in Education at Huddersfield University (United Kingdom). In December 2012, I was

awarded a Master of International Tourism Management degree at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland, New Zealand. I have limited knowledge of the secondary school system and curriculum requirements in New Zealand. However, for the past 20 years I have taught tourism in several educational establishments, firstly in Further Education in the United Kingdom, and now at university level in New Zealand.

From a professional perspective, this research draws on my role within the tourism sector and my experiences as an educator. During my career in tourism, I travelled extensively, not only on personal holidays, but also engaging in what the travel industry refers to as “educationals” or “famils.” *Educationals* are overseas trips for travel agents to increase their product knowledge of a destination. As a former travel professional, I was, therefore, familiar with the benefits of travelling overseas, both personally and professionally.

### ***3.6.3 Reflections on the Role of the Researcher, Methodology, and Process***

The role of the researcher describes both the individual’s world-view and the stance adopted in relation to the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A reflexive approach is an ongoing process that enables researchers to clearly identify and contextualise their role within the research. The role of the researcher is underpinned by ontological and epistemological assumptions, and it was these that determined the approach I took in this research and influenced the research process (see Gray, 2018).

Since qualitative research is dependent on human judgements and the discipline of the researcher, prior knowledge, assumptions, and preconceptions take many forms, and are often derived from everyday knowledge gained from society, cultural upbringing, or specialist research knowledge (Witzel & Reiter, 2012). Phillimore and Goodson (2004, p. 17) noted that “a researcher’s standpoint, values and biases - that is, their cultural background, ethnicity, age, class, gender and so on – play a role in shaping the researcher’s historical trajectory, and the way in which they interpret phenomena and construct texts”. Hence the values, views, and beliefs of the researcher are present in the research, and the researcher is part of the research setting. In adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach, I understood this and accepted that I was an integral part of the research process. Consequently, some aspects of myself, my experiences, gender, background, culture, and personality, were inevitably an influential part of the research process. However, as Reisinger (2009) pointed out, this does not necessarily mean these individual personal influences lead to predetermined views or perspectives. Nevertheless,

I needed to be aware of the potential influence my background, experience, and preconceptions had in relation to the research.

Preconceptions may emerge during the interpretation, analysis, or conclusion phases of the research process and are usually influenced by the characteristics of a person, organisation, or situation (Remenyi, 2012). It is considered essential that qualitative researchers identify their own role within the research and consider how this may influence the collection and analysis of data (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Reflexivity emphasises the importance of self-awareness and ownership of one's individual perspective (Patton, 2004).

In understanding my own role within this research, as a white, European, middle-aged female, I was aware that my experiences and personal values may have impacted and influenced my interactions with the participants and the understanding of their views, perceptions, and experiences, and that unconsciously I would bring subjectivities and biases into the research.

### **3.7 Research Methods and Data Collection Instruments**

#### ***3.7.1 In-Depth Face-to-Face Semi-Structured Interviews, Ex-Students - Primary Data set***

Although a variety of different research methods can be utilised in grounded theory, individual interviews are commonly used, and can provide sources of rich data (Birks & Mills, 2011). Holstein and Gubrium (2008, p. 204) defined interviewing as a technique to “generate empirical data about the social world by asking people about their lives.” Seidman (2006) proposed that the main purpose of interviewing is not to answer questions, but to gain an understanding of individuals' experiences, through the stories they tell and the meaning they make of their experience. In addition, interviewing is a powerful way to gain insights into educational issues and understand the experience; it affirms the importance of the individual through collaboration of meaning (Seidman, 2006). While face to face semi-structured interviews appear to be informal conversations, they are in fact well defined, systematic activities (Patton, 1990). Face-to-face semi-structured interviews are a flexible approach that allow individuals to give an insights into a particular topic (Bell, 1999; Jennings, 2001; Patton, 1990). Furthermore, it is easier to build up rapport with the participants and observe understanding through body language (Hill et al., 2007).

However, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews can be time consuming and costly (Bell, 1999; Saunders, 2007; Silverman, 2013). Veal (2006) points that time can be lost travelling, going through notes and through unexpected interruptions. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews have geographical limitations and can often restrict the accessibility to the participants (Gray, 2018; Jennings, 2001; Veal, 2006).

In examining face-to face interviews Bell (1999) points out that both the interviewer and interviewee can suffer from interview fatigue, and it can be difficult for interviewers to cope with more than a couple of interviews per day. “Interviewing is a skill that is acquired through practice” (Cramb & Purcell, 2001, p. 45) and some common mistakes for novice researchers include questioning technique and the use of leading and ambiguous questions (Bell, 1999; Gray, 2018; Silverman, 2013; Veal, 2006). Traditionally, it has been argued that face-to-face interviews can cause research bias (Bell, 1999; Smith, 1995; Veal, 2006). Denzin (2001) points out that “interviews are performance texts and speech is performative. Therefore, the act of speech, the act of being interviewed, becomes a performance itself” (p.27). Barber and Mather (2014) noted that participants purposely altered and adjusted their stories to suit the audience. They argue that story-telling to entertain involved the use of more emotional-related words, and that story-telling to convey information of an original event tended to contain more verbatim quotes. Batty (2009) added to this by reporting that interviewees had consciously and unconsciously over exaggerated some aspects and underplayed other aspects of their experience. There are, therefore, a range of authors who show that self-reported perceptions, memories, and narratives may be unintentionally performatively narrated as part of the qualitative interview process.

In a similar way, response bias is evident in many areas of research where self-reported data are used and it particularly occurs when individuals self-assess the phenomenon (Hadinejad et al., 2018; Rosenman et al., 2014). For example, Smith (2007) reports that memory bias can both enhance or impair recall and can alter the content of the memory. Similarly, Braun et al. (2006) suggest that autobiographical memories are malleable; they are (re)interpreted and (re)constructed based on information, and context. Baber and Mather (2014) add to this by pointing out that as we get older the ability to recall memories and details diminishes and the way in which we retell experiences and events gets distorted. More specifically, they found that younger adults were able to more accurately recall their experiences when compared with older adults who tended change

details. Tung et al (2017) also show that memories can be distorted from a range of outside sources and everyday life.

Furthermore, many scholars have noted that self-reported narratives are inherently biased by an individual's mood and feelings at the time of the interview. It is important, therefore, that researchers note that the narratives reported during an interview are subjective, contextual and variable reflections of moments in time and these reflections are subject to change overtime (Barber & Mather, 2014; Bowlby & Day, 2018; Johnson, 2009). Indeed, as Johnson (2009) points out "emotions play a role in all dimensions of life and influence how we make sense of the world and our interactions with others, including throughout the research process" (p.195). In the context of this research the key issue is not whether the participants consciously or unconsciously describe the events accurately, rather, it is how and why the participants construct meaning from their own experiences that is important. The constructivist grounded theory approach seeks to give a voice to participants in order to understand their world and sees both the data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data (Charmaz, 2009).

In examining interviews as a method of data collection, Seidman (2006) and Gubrium and Holstein (2002) discussed various approaches to interviewing, pointing out the dangers of conducting single interviews, and warning about the dependability, trustworthiness, and generalisations of participants' recall. Seidman (2006) suggested using a series of interviews, and recommended utilising the first interview to focus on the participant's life history, as a way of placing the experience in context, and the second interview, to discover the present lived experience.

Since grounded theory takes the perspective that "reality is negotiated between people, always changing and constantly evolving" (Richards and Morse, 2013 p.61). Constructivist ground theory interviews generally begin with "what" and "how" to learn from the participants how they understand the process or situation (Richards and Morse, 2013). The interview questions were developed and designed around "how" and "why" the participants constructed meaning from the study tour experience. Open ended questions were used to elicit meaning in relation to the research objectives, for example to understand, objective 1, the influences of the study tour on the participants' subsequent educational and career choice, the ex-students were initial asked "Tell me about your choice of career", "What influenced your decision". "Tell me about your career".

Questions were quickly followed with prompts to elicit deeper understanding and meaning. This questioning technique was utilised for each of the objectives (see Appendix B.F, Interview prompts).

With these points in mind, this research combined two sets of semi-structured interviews with prompting questions, which allowed participants to discuss and reflect on their individual experiences, memories, and perceptions to provide self-reported accounts and personal stories of the international study tour. The first interview was used to place the international study experience in context by asking participants as much as possible about themselves in relationship to the study tour, and up to the present time (see Seidman, 2006). Interviews began with a few common questions and photographs provided by the participants (See Appendix B.f, Interview Prompts).

I developed the questions with the intention of providing a starting point for the participants to tell and recall the stories of their international study tour. The questions were semi-structured so I could build up a picture of the participant at high school, and during the overseas experience. Furthermore, having a common line of enquiry for each interview assisted the comparative data analysis (see Charmaz, 2006).

The purpose of the second interview was to give the participants the opportunity to reflect on their international study tour and consider if the tour had made any difference to their choice of education, career, or self-identity, or influenced any other aspect of their later life. The two interviews were spaced two weeks apart, based on the assumption that this would be enough for participants to think over the previous interview and reflect on the meaning and relevance of their study tour. Reflecting on meaning allows participants the opportunity for increased individual understanding, making sense of how certain factors interacted and affected the present (Seidman, 2006).

Before each second interview, I listened to the audio tapes and adapted questions to focus on memories of individual experiences triggered by the first interview, to confirm my individual understanding and clarify meaning, as well as to encourage participants to elaborate on what they had said previously. As the interviews progressed, I added, altered, and adapted questions, to explore and elicit meaning, develop new categories, and explore ideas (i.e. in terms of theoretical sampling). This allowed me to explore a range of ideas whilst emphasising key points the participants considered important. The process of theoretical sampling encouraged me to follow leads, whilst providing insights and

guidance on the direction of the research (see Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sampling is discussed in section 3.10.5.

### ***3.7.2 Photo Elicitation, Ex-Students - Primary Data set***

Photo elicitation is a technique based on using photographs in research to stimulate meaningful responses and prompt memory (Harper, 2002). This technique is useful in tourism research because taking photographs is considered an inherent part of the tourism experience (Cederholm, 2004). While photo-elicitation has been widely used in the field of early childhood education, its use is now significantly increasing in other areas of educational research, to promote reflection and engagement (Haultain, 2012).

Photo elicitation has three main approaches: auto-driven, reflexive, and photo voice/photo novella (Hurworth, 2003). For this study, auto-driven photo elicitation was utilised. This technique used participants' photographs as a stimulus, with the participants driving or leading the interview by reflecting on their own behaviours through the use of the photographs (Schänzel & Smith, 2011).

Auto-driven photo elicitation enables the data generation process to be interesting and fun, creating opportunities for individuals to be actively involved in constructing meaning by interpreting their own experiences, prompting memories, and driving the discussion (Schänzel & Smith, 2011). Auto-driven photo elicitation is considered more effective than using text and speech alone, encouraging participants to verbally reflect on their views and individual perspectives (Hall et al., 2007). Collier and Collier (1986) noted that images elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews, sharpening the informants' memories whilst reducing misunderstandings. In addition, Meo (2005) stated that auto-driven photo elicitation offers a closer look at what and who the participants consider important. Photo elicitation helped participants re-live the experience and key events of five to 25 years ago, whilst allowing me to question them in different ways and examine their responses, allowing their personal experiences and feelings to be explored (Bell, 1999; Cousin, 2009).

Whilst there are many benefits to using photo elicitation, consideration must also be given to its limitations. Various authors have raised concerns over privacy, sampling, and validity; as Mahurf et al. (2007) pointed out, photographs contain only a partial story. Harper (2002) pointed out that although mundane images give a more authentic representation of individual experiences, they do not result in exciting photographs, hence

participants may select more dramatic images to discuss. It is therefore essential that the researcher recognises the context and limitations of photographs in relationship to the study. In the context of this study the photographs were used to jog the memory of the participants who had travelled 5-25 years prior to the interview and build rapport. The photographs in this study were not used for their visual content, thus the quality and range of images was unimportant, as it was the significance of the photographs, enabling the individuals to deconstruct experiences and reflect upon them, that mattered (Harper, 2002).

### ***3.7.3 In-Depth Face-to-Face Semi-Structured Interviews, Teachers – Second Data set***

To provide a context and background to the study, it was deemed necessary to obtain a second data set. One interview was conducted with each of the teachers that had organised the international study tours discussed with the ex-students. This semi-structured interview was used to place the international study tour experience in context by asking participants as much as possible about organising and conducting international study tours. Interviews began with a few common questions about the rationale and justification for the study tours (See Appendix B.g. Interview Questions). The questions were semi-structured to gain personal insights into the teachers' experiences and to provide a context for the study. As the interviews progressed, I added, altered, and adapted questions to explore and elicit meaning, developed new categories, explored ideas, and sought clarification on points raised by other teachers and ex-students, consistent with theoretical sampling conventions.

## **3.8 Data Collection**

### ***3.8.1 Ethics Approval***

*Ethics* are morals or principles that influence behaviour, integrity, and personal values. Codes of ethics in research not only protect the reputations of researchers and organisations, but also the rights of participants, reducing the risk of any emotional, psychological, or physical harm. Hence, ethics approval safeguards both the interests of the researcher and of the participants. Although obtaining ethics approval can be a long process, it does encourage the researcher to scrutinise their role and position as a researcher. In New Zealand, ethics approval is underpinned by the Treaty of Waitangi, covering the principles of partnership, participation, and protection.

Formal ethics approval to conduct this research was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix A), in accordance with university policy, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, reference 16/384. The ethics application outlined both the design and practices of the research, explaining the methods and processes utilised and clarifying the benefits of the research to the participants, the researcher, and the wider community. To comply with ethics requirements, participants' identities were kept confidential, and the data kept secure. Written material was stored in a locked cabinet and electronic data were password protected.

### ***3.8.2 Recruitment Strategies***

Since the effective recruitment of participants can be challenging (Boudah, 2010), recruitment was facilitated with insider assistance, utilising personal teaching contacts and high school alumni co-ordinators. The recruitment process generally comprises three stages: identifying, approaching, and gaining consent (Preston et al., 2016). Initially, discussions were held with teaching contacts and high school alumni co-ordinators to establish which high schools had a long history of organising and participating in international study tours, and to establish the destinations that the international study tours visited.

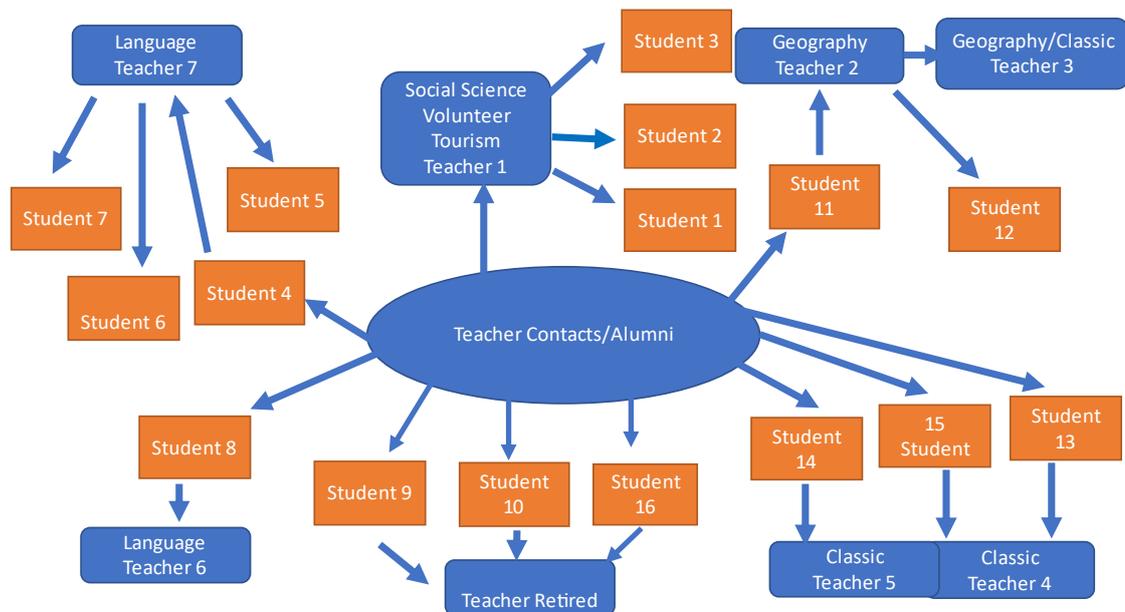
Teaching contacts and alumni co-ordinators were then able to identify appropriate ex-students that met the research criteria. Utilising insider contacts has a number of benefits. Firstly, it facilitates contact with potential participants; secondly, the insider becomes an advocate for the research project; and thirdly, the insider can negotiate access to the organisation (Boudah, 2010; Given, 2008; Silverman & Patterson, 2014). Potential participants were recruited by the teaching staff either on the school website or via e-mail, and interested potential participants then contacted me directly. Individuals could decide whether to participate in the research project, as part of a self-selection sample (Creswell, 2008; Saunders et al., 2000). In other words, the ex-students volunteered and chose to take part in the study in response to requests from the teaching staff, in line with the inclusion criteria. This simplified the recruitment process and shortened the time needed to find suitable participants.

Once the ex-students had been identified and agreed to participate, teachers who had organised the international study tours were approached to add some context and background to the study. Figure 8 outlines the process of teacher recruitment, with the

blue arrows depicting how the teachers were selected in relation to the ex-student participants.

**Figure 8**

*Recruitment of the Teachers*



### 3.8.3 Inclusion Criteria

The selection criteria for inclusion in this project were:

- Participation in high school overseas educational tours;
- Participation in short-term tours (1–4 weeks in duration); and
- Participation as a student five to 25 years ago.

The timeframe of five to 25 years post tour was selected to correspond with educational strategies, such as the New Zealand Schooling Strategy 2005–2010, and the launch of the revised New Zealand curriculum, implemented in schools by 2010 (see Ministry of Education, 2005, 2007a, 2007b), which encouraged education beyond classroom learning, and which included short-term international study tours.

The broad criteria allowed for a wide range of study tours to be included. Since the intent of participant recruitment in qualitative research is to collect information-rich data on the experiences of participants, the sample sizes are often small (Charmaz, 2006). Since this

study followed the principles of constructivist grounded theory, the number of participants required was determined through theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation was reached after the 16<sup>th</sup> interview, when the ex-students' interviews revealed no new insights. Hence, in total, 16 ex-student participants were recruited for the study, along with seven teachers that had organised the study tours. The number of teachers interviewed was determined by the theoretical saturation of the ex-student participants.

#### ***3.8.4 Sampling***

In this qualitative interpretive study, there was no intention to capture data that were representative of the whole population. Rather, the intent was to select individuals who could give a depth of insight and level of understanding of the issues being explored, to deepen understandings of the research topic. Through discussions with teaching contacts and high school alumni co-ordinators, I was able to establish which high schools had a long history of organising and participating in international study tours, and the destinations the study tours had visited.

Therefore, the study purposively selected a sample of ex-students from these schools, as they had travelled on high school study tours of between one and four weeks in duration, between five and 25 years ago, with the teachers who had organised those study tours.

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use judgements to select participants who have experienced a particular phenomenon, so they are able to answer the research questions (Saunders, 2007; Veal, 2006) and articulate their views of the experience (Creswell, 2008). In the context of this study, purposive sampling facilitated insights into different types of high school international study tours.

The first purposive sample focused on volunteer tourism and extra-curricular learning, which is usually conducted in less-developed countries, with an emphasis on the competencies, knowledge, and values, that contribute to the well-being of a multicultural society (see Ministry of Education, 2007b). The second sample focused on language immersion programmes based around curriculum learning, which concentrate on the acquisition of a second language and awareness of other cultures. The third focused on the study of the classics and curriculum learning, which is usually conducted in European destinations such as Italy or Greece, with an emphasis on historical and cultural learning. The fourth sample focused on geography study tours, and curriculum learning in a variety

of world-wide destinations, focusing on understanding society and comparing destinations to New Zealand. *Purposive sampling* is sometimes called “selective sampling” (Bryman & Bell, 2007), and allows the researcher to strategically select participants with personal knowledge of a topic. I had no prior knowledge of the participants, other than that they had travelled on an international study tour and fitted the inclusion criteria. I did not know what they would say or how they would contribute to the study. Each sample was selected on the basis of geographical, political, and cultural differences, to add diversity to the study.

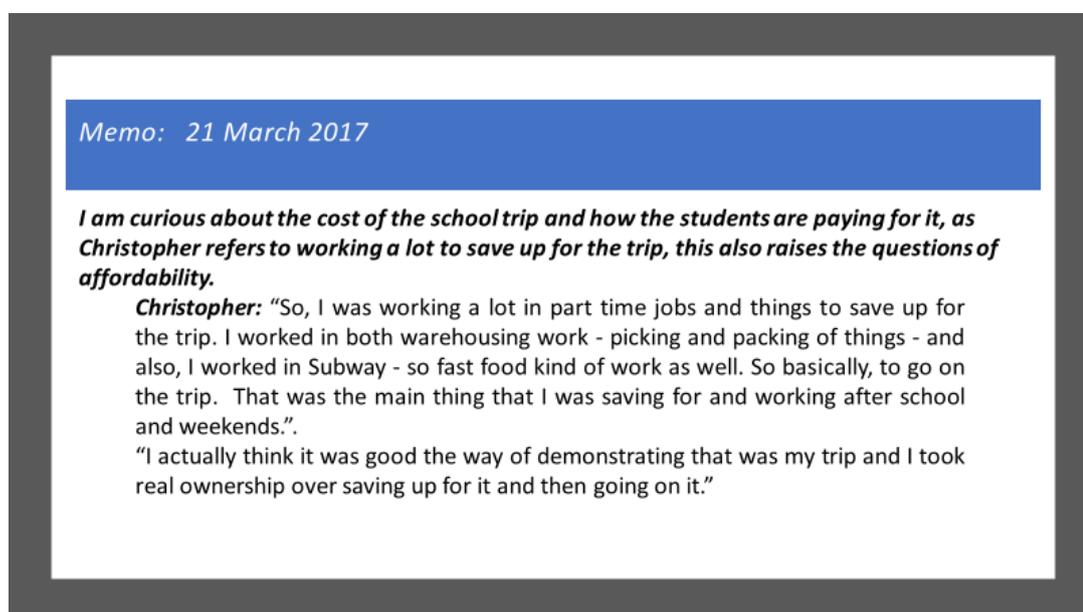
### ***3.8.5 Theoretical Sampling***

*Theoretic sampling* is “a central tenet of classic grounded theory and is essential to the development and refinement of a theory that is ‘grounded’ in data” (Breckenridge, 2009, p. 1). Theoretical sampling is implicit in the grounded theory process, providing the sampling process with a purposeful direction guided by the categories that emerge from the data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sampling is deliberate, specific, and systematic, and part of the constant comparison process of analysing data and comparing existing and newly collected data, to establish patterns or gaps (Charmaz, 2006).

Once data collection had commenced with the first ex-student participant (Christopher), I identified some initial codes (“cost,” “working,” and “saving”). These codes made me curious, as outlined in the memo (Figure 9) written shortly after the first interview. The memo demonstrates that I needed to investigate and expand on the cost/affordability of study tours.

## Figure 9

*Memo Composed after the First Interview*



By utilising theoretical sampling techniques, I was able to include questions on how the study tours were funded, so subsequent participants could inform me about paying for their tours. Birks and Mills (2015) discussed theoretical sampling as "making you aware of issues that require expansion, clarification and confirmation" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 68). They explained that it should be "undertaken from the first-time data is generated" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 69) as it directs decisions about who to recruit and which questions to ask. Indeed, theoretical sampling encouraged me to follow up on analytical leads (Charmaz, 2006). Analytical leads enable the researcher to identify clues that emerge from the data and probe to extract ideas/words associated with initial thoughts and feelings to confirm or refute the significance of the data. In grounded theory, sampling and data analysis are undertaken simultaneously through the process of constant comparison (Charmaz, 2006), which is discussed in more detail in section 3.10 on data analysis.

### ***3.8.6 Sample Characteristics***

Ex-student participants in this study had travelled on international study tours whilst at high school in New Zealand between five and 25 years ago. Upon their expression of interest to participate in the research, each was emailed an information sheet outlining the

purpose of the study, and contact information should they have any questions regarding the study.

### ***3.8.7 Participants - Ex-Students (Primary Data set)***

Participants had attended high school in the North Island of New Zealand. As mentioned in section 3.8.4 on sampling, the ex-students selected for this study had attended schools with a history of organising and participating in international study tours. The ex-students were purposively selected, as they had participated in international study tours and met the inclusion criteria of travelling between five and 25 years ago and staying for between one to four weeks. In addition, they had travelled on international study tours relating to volunteer tourism, language immersion programmes, the classics, or geography, which had been purposely selected to add diversity in terms of geographical, political, and cultural differences. Table 4 provides an overview of the individuals; it highlights the type of study tour undertaken and a summary of the schools' demographics. Participants were given pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

**Table 4***Ex-Student Participants*

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Category of School</b>	<b>Decile</b>	<b>Type of Study Tour</b>	<b>Destination</b>
<b>1</b>	Christopher	Co-ed	State	10	Social Science	Cambodia
<b>2</b>	David	Co-ed	State	10	Social Science	Cambodia
<b>3</b>	Steph	Co-ed	State	10	Social Science	Cambodia
<b>4</b>	Jackie	Co-ed	State	10	Social Science	Cambodia
					Language	Japan
<b>5</b>	Michelle	Co-ed	State	10	Language	Japan
<b>6</b>	Andrew	Co-ed	State	10	Language	Mexico
<b>7</b>	Holly	Co-ed	State	10	Language	Mexico
<b>8</b>	Jane	Co-ed	State	5	Language	New Caledonia
<b>9</b>	Emma	Single-sex	State	10	Language	Germany
<b>10</b>	Harriett	Single-sex	State	10	Language	Germany
<b>11</b>	Paul	Co-ed	State	10	Language	Japan
					Geography	Hawaii
<b>12</b>	Steven	Co-ed	State	10	Geography	Amazon
<b>13</b>	Bella	Co-ed	State	5	Classics	Greece, Italy
<b>14</b>	Courtney	Co-ed	State	5	Classics	Greece, Italy
<b>15</b>	Karen	Co-ed	State	5	Classic	Greece, Italy
<b>16</b>	Brenna	Single-sex Catholic	State	10	Language and Cultural	Taiwan

**3.8.8 Participants - Teachers**

To add context and background to the study, a second data set was obtained. A series of seven interviews was conducted with the teachers that had organised and participated in the international study tours that the ex-students in this study had travelled on between five and 25 years ago. Three teachers were excluded, as they had retired and were unavailable. Teachers were also given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Table 5 provides an overview of the teachers who participated.

**Table 5***Teacher Participants*

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decile</b>	<b>Destination of Study Tour</b>	<b>Years Organising Study Tours</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>1</b>	Andrea	Social Sciences	10	Cambodia	12 Years	Co-ed
<b>2</b>	Claire	Geography	10	Various Hawaii Amazon	20 Years	Co-ed
<b>3</b>	Edward	Geography Classics	10	Various Italy Turkey Greece	5 years	Co-ed
<b>4</b>	Debbie	Classics	5	Italy Turkey Greece	6 Years	Co-ed
<b>5</b>	Frank	Classics History	10	Various Italy Greece Vietnam United Kingdom	11 Years	Co-ed
<b>6</b>	Helen	Language(s)	5	Various Noumea France Germany	17 Years	Co-ed
<b>7</b>	Brooke	Language(s)	10	Various Cambodia Mexico Japan	11 Years	Co-ed

**3.8.9 Data Collection and Management**

To create a pleasant interview environment, interviews were conducted in an informal setting in public spaces such as cafes, libraries, and common rooms, which provided a safe environment for both participant and researcher to relax in, and encourage openness. The times and dates were mutually agreed with the participants. Interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed for ease of analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Transcriptions were undertaken by a professional service, and to comply with ethics requirements, the data were kept secure, and transcribers signed a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix D).

### **3.9 Summary**

This section provided an outline of my research design, explaining that the interpretive paradigm I selected was underpinned by my ontological and epistemological position. It presented my justification for selecting the constructivist grounded theory methodology as this was suited to better understanding the influences of adolescents' study tours' experiences later in their lives. The analytical process of using GTM enabled the interview process to be guided by theoretical sampling, and included two sets of semi-structured interviews and auto-driven photo elicitation to prompt memories and recollections in the ex-student participants. All 16 ex-student participants had travelled on international study tours between five and 25 years ago and discussed whether the tour had affected or made any difference to their lives. The seven teachers were selected in conjunction with the ex-students' study tours, adding context and theoretical sensitivity to the research. So far, this chapter has focused on my approach and design to this research. The next sections explain the research process and analysis.

### **3.10 Overview – Data Analysis**

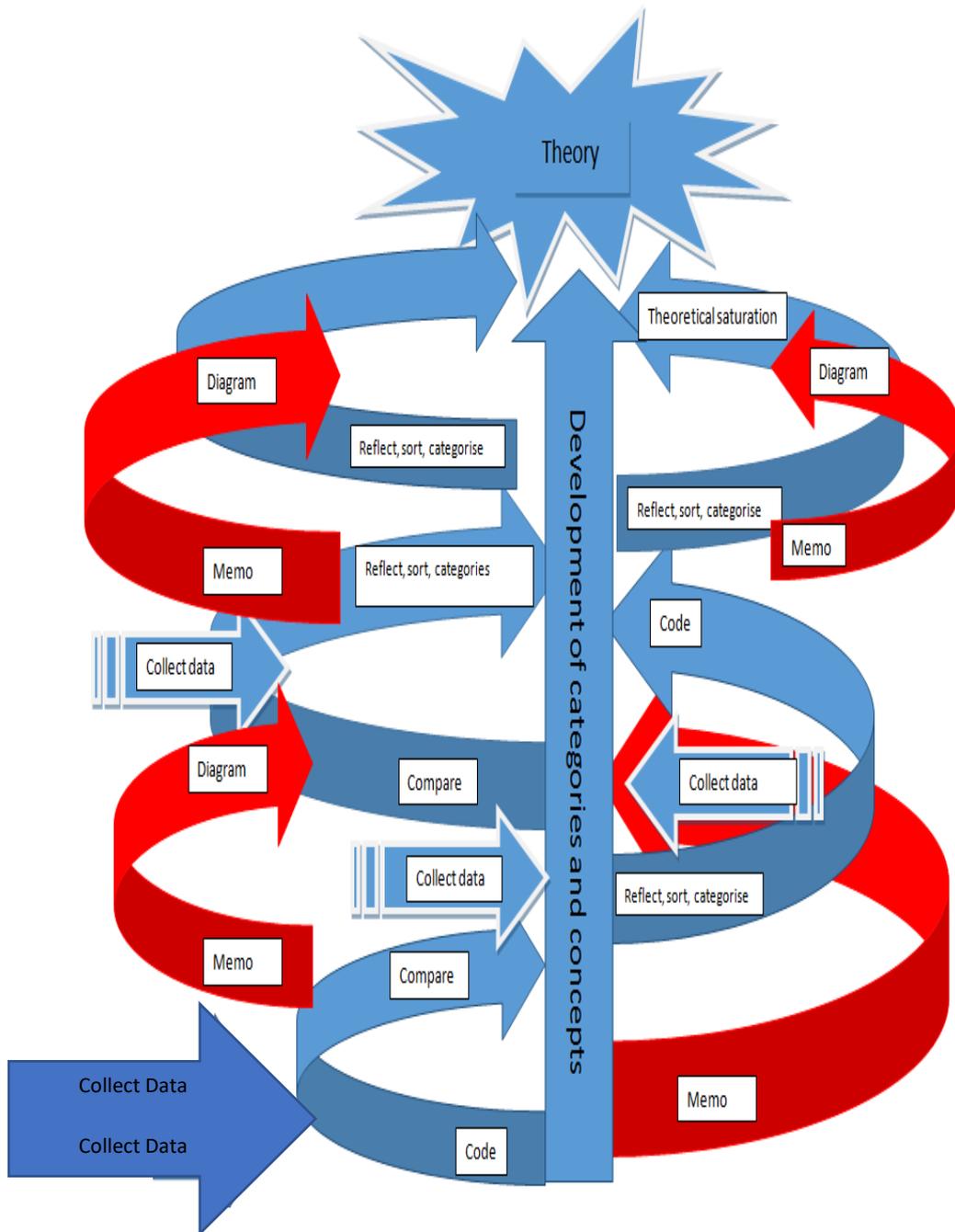
Before discussing the data analysis, it is important to note that the primary data set is used to explain this process, as this formed the basis of the grounded theory. The second data set collected from the teachers was used to add context and inform the development of the grounded theory. The supplementary data provided in the second data set added to the theoretical sensitivity of the research, enabling me to view the experience from a different angle, make comparisons, follow leads, and build on ideas.

The following section provides an overview of the processes and techniques used for data analysis. Tools and strategies to aid data analysis included NVivo computer software, diagramming, memos, and constant comparison, all of which are common techniques in grounded theory data analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011). In grounded theory, data collection and analysis are undertaken simultaneously, and theory development is a continuous process (Charmaz, 2006). Lichtman (2010) described the process of analysis as a continual simultaneous process that is difficult to describe in a linear format, as the process contains both linear and circular dimensions that allow for deliberation and examination of one's conscious thoughts. The concurrent process of data collection, coding, and analysis, is outlined in Figure 10.

I have produced figure 10 to demonstrate the process of grounded theory, since this is a continually process of movement between data collection and analysis and movement backward and forward. Figure 10 provides a framework that demonstrates the interplay and continual movement between data collection, data generation, and data analysis. It shows the iterative process of coding, constant comparison, and memoing undertaken at the various stages of coding until theoretical saturation is reached and a theory developed.

**Figure 10**

*Framework Demonstrating the Process of Analysis using Grounded Theory*



**3.10.1 The Interview Data**

In grounded theory, data collection and analysis are undertaken at the same time. To aid my memory and the analysis process, notes were taken during and straight after each interview. I noted my own initial thoughts and feelings about the participants' non-verbal body language and made a note of questions or comments that required further

investigation during the interview process, or that I felt were important codes or categories.

After each interview, the verbal data were transcribed into a verbatim account. To maximise my use of time, a professional transcriber was hired. To ensure both quality and accuracy of the transcripts, I read through the transcripts whilst listening to the audio recordings. This enabled me to become immersed in the data, check the transcripts, and become familiar with their content. Bird (2005) pointed out that transcripts offer the first stage of becoming immersed in the data and better acquainted with the content. This immersion is essential for grounded theory analysis. Once the interview(s) had been transcribed, I initially adopted a manual approach to data analysis, and the transcripts were examined, and data analysed through the process of coding.

### **3.10.2 Initial Coding**

Initial coding or open coding, is the first stage in data analysis, providing the researcher with analytical leads (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). Initial coding involves breaking the raw data into small parts to examine them for meaning, whilst looking for similarities and differences within the text (Saldana, 2012). Through this initial examination, data are coded and given appropriate names or labels. Charmaz (2006) suggested that researchers remain open to all theoretical possibilities during this stage of coding, and Saldana observed that “initial coding is an opportunity for researchers to reflect deeply on the content and nuances of your data and begin taking ownership” (Saldana, 2012, p. 100).

Since the aim of qualitative research is to capture individual experiences, *in vivo* codes, the words and phrases used by the participants, are an important part of the initial coding process (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). *In vivo* codes give a voice to participants, acting as “symbol markers of participants speech and meaning... exploring these codes allows the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of what is happening in the participants world” (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 55–56). I kept the *in vivo* codes where possible; participants provided codes such as “solo traveller” and “travel bug,” which encapsulated both meaning and behavioural actions. Although some *in vivo* codes were amalgamated into categories, the code “travel bug” remained and eventually became the subcategory “getting a travel bug,” initially under the main categories of “travelling” and “further travel” which were collapsed into the main category of “going places.”

My initial data analysis began manually by coding the data line by line, which allowed me to stay close to the data (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). During the initial coding I searched for patterns and keywords that recurred within the data. Coloured highlighter pens proved useful to emphasise words whilst I moved quickly through the transcripts, gaining ideas and insights into the participants' experiences and noting in the margin any points I thought might be relevant, or words that jumped out at me. However, after analysing the first transcript manually, I decided to revisit the transcript and utilise computer software, as dragging and dropping keywords and sentences enabled me to focus in more depth on the text in the transcripts, and make connections. I used NVivo software to store, organise, manage, and sort the data into initial categories. Although it was time consuming utilising both methods, it proved invaluable, as it enabled me to challenge my own thoughts and assumptions and encouraged new interpretations of the data and new codes (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, the use of the computer software enabled me to place the initial codes into emerging categories.

Since many authors have noted that the coding phase in grounded theory is often time consuming and tedious (e.g. Holton & Walsh, 2016; Thornberg, 2012) memos were utilised during the initial coding stage to record the trail of my thoughts and ideas as they occurred.

After a couple of interviews and during the initial coding stage, I noticed that the participants spoke about similar experiences. For example, when discussing participating in an international study tour, they referred to other members of the group as "like-minded people," or a "good bunch," and thoughts and expectations of "travelling without parents" and of "sharing experiences." Moreover, the participants described other common experiences related to "travelling" on the international study tour: "very organised," "rare that we would go off individually," "opened the eyes," and "wanted to see more." As the interviews progressed, the ex-students continued to provide rich data that related to these initial codes.

**Table 6** provides an example of line by line coding.

**Table 6**

*Example of Line by Line coding*

Transcript	Initial codes line by line
<p>Michelle: I think it was also very structured. Usually when I go with my family, we're just kind of improvising everything, but this was my first structured, very well-planned trip, with people other than my family. So I had to oblige more to rules and stuff, whereas with my family I think I was freer to do whatever I want.</p>	<p><i>very structured</i> <i>family improvised</i> <i>first structured</i> <i>well planned</i> <i>people other than my family</i> <i>oblige to rules</i> <i>with my family I think I was freer</i></p>
<p>Holly: I think it was just a bit too structured in a way that they wanted us to go and see and experience so many different things in such a short amount of time, that you almost didn't get a chance to settle into it. I think staying with a host family should have been a priority of the trip just because you know it was a Spanish language trip and we were all Spanish students, but we didn't really get that chance to really practise it</p>	<p><i>bit too structured</i>  <i>so many different things</i> <i>such a short amount of time</i>  <i>with a host family</i>  <i>didn't really get that chance</i> <i>to really practise it.</i></p>

I continued coding and constantly made comparisons to the existing data as new codes emerged.

### **3.10.3 Constant Comparison**

*Constant comparison* is part of the process of concurrent data collection and analysis and an essential component of grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2011). It involves making comparisons between data, codes, and categories, and is conducted through all stages of the analysis to advance conceptual understanding and generate a theory (Charmaz, 2006). In accordance with Charmaz's (2006) recommendations, I looked for differences and similarities within the transcripts, comparing existing codes to new data to establish and identify emerging patterns. This process deepened my understanding of emerging concepts as well as directing the process of theoretical sampling. The following sections



for travel,” “can’t stay here,” “travel bug,” “just want to travel,” and “want to see the world,” were grouped into the category of “travelling.”

As focused coding progressed, and tentative categories emerged, I referred back to my research question and thought about how the international study tour had affected the participants. To make connections to the category “travelling,” and between categories, I asked myself: “where did the ex-students travel or want to travel to?” “why were they going and who with?” and “what were their personal reasons for returning?” By shuffling, sorting, and reassembling the data, I was able to expand the categories and identify the properties of individual categories. This process identified “travelling,” and “doing it differently,” as key categories from which the sub-categories of “returning,” “exploring,” “expecting,” “experiencing,” and “reliving” emerged.

Since one of the main tasks of focused coding is integrating and linking the categories, and as I am a visual learner, I produced mind maps (see Figure 12) to enhance my thought processes and make connections within the data, and to understand the relationship and significance of each category. This approach emphasised how the categories and sub-categories were linked and allowed me to maintain analytical momentum in developing and understanding the categories fully (see Birks & Mills, 2015).

**Figure 12**

*Mind Map Illustrating the Connections in the Data*



Whilst rearranging and playing with the data, I also jotted down my personal thoughts and general ideas for developing theoretical categories.

### ***3.10.5 Theoretical Coding and Theory Development***

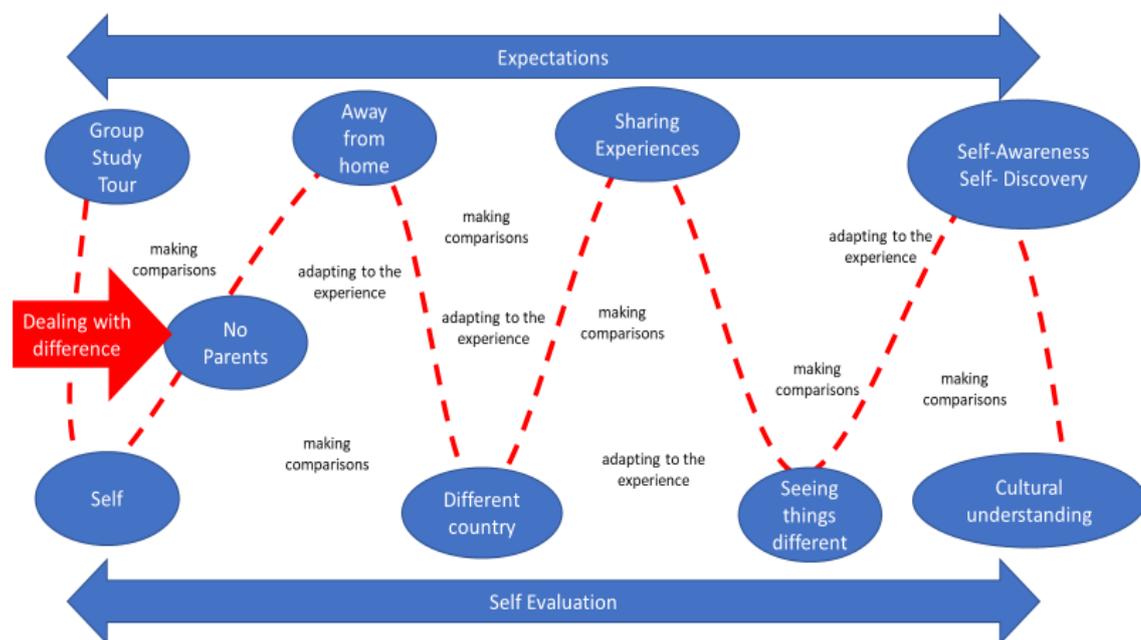
*Theoretical coding* is the process of linking, merging, and refining categories, and used in the later stages of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). “Theoretical codes are advanced abstracts that provide a framework for a potential theory” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 119). Theoretical coding utilises theoretical sensitivity, which relates to the ability of the researcher to recognise and extract relevant possibilities to build a theory (Birks & Mills, 2011). According to Charmaz (2006) *theoretical sensitivity* “involves seeing possibilities, establishing connections and asking questions” (p. 244). Since theoretical sensitivity incorporates my personal experiences, I drew on my background as an educator and tourism professional and used abductive reasoning to think logically about the construction of categories and subcategories. I also drew on insights from the second data set as analytical possibilities emerged. The category “learning from and with each other” is used in Figure 12 to demonstrate this process.



related to the participants' beliefs and expectations about the study tour and themselves. Many of these beliefs and expectations related to the ex-students' perceptions of themselves and expectations about a place; these expectations appeared to have influenced their behaviour and actions during the study tour in relation to the group, the destination, and interactions with local people, and were influential in later life.

**Figure 14**

*The Process of Learning From and With Each Other*



By reviewing the main categories I was able to understand the participants' meaning, and learned how they had navigated their way through different experiences, guided by the group in the process of self-discovery, self-awareness, and cultural understanding. Figure 14 demonstrates the process of dealing with difference, including making comparisons and adapting to new situations.

This was a continual process that had allowed the participants to discover themselves and become more self-aware during the study tour whilst enhancing their cultural understanding. Through the process of theoretical coding and making connections between the lower level subcategories (concepts), I was able to raise the codes to a conceptual level, as it became apparent that the participants had learned from and with each other. Hence, "learning from and with each other" became a core category.

The process of theoretical coding and conceptualisation enabled me to question connections. This process of redevelopment was conducted in conjunction with memo writing and diagramming to produce a theoretical framework (Figure 24). Thornberg (2012) pointed out that the relationship between abstract concepts describes a theory, and the process of theorising enables a researcher to explain what is happening in the data. Hence, through the process of theorising, I was able to develop the theory “It’s the difference that makes a difference,” based on the study of ex-high-school students’ international trips (see Figure 30 page 219).

### ***3.10.6 Theoretical Saturation***

*Theoretical saturation* is “what grounded theorists should aim for” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 114) and is traditionally understood to be an integral part of grounded theory. Theoretical saturation occurs during the data collection process and identifies when collection should cease as no new theoretical insights can be gained from the analysis and no new codes generated (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). At the start of this study, the sample size (i.e., number of participants) needed to reach theoretical saturation was unknown. I ceased collecting data after the 16<sup>th</sup> interview, as the examination of data revealed nothing new and all data could be placed into existing categories or subcategories; hence the study had reached theoretical saturation, and no further analysis was required. Once theoretical saturation was reached in the primary data set, this determined the number of teachers to be interviewed; thus seven teachers were interviewed as they had organised the study tours for the ex-student participants

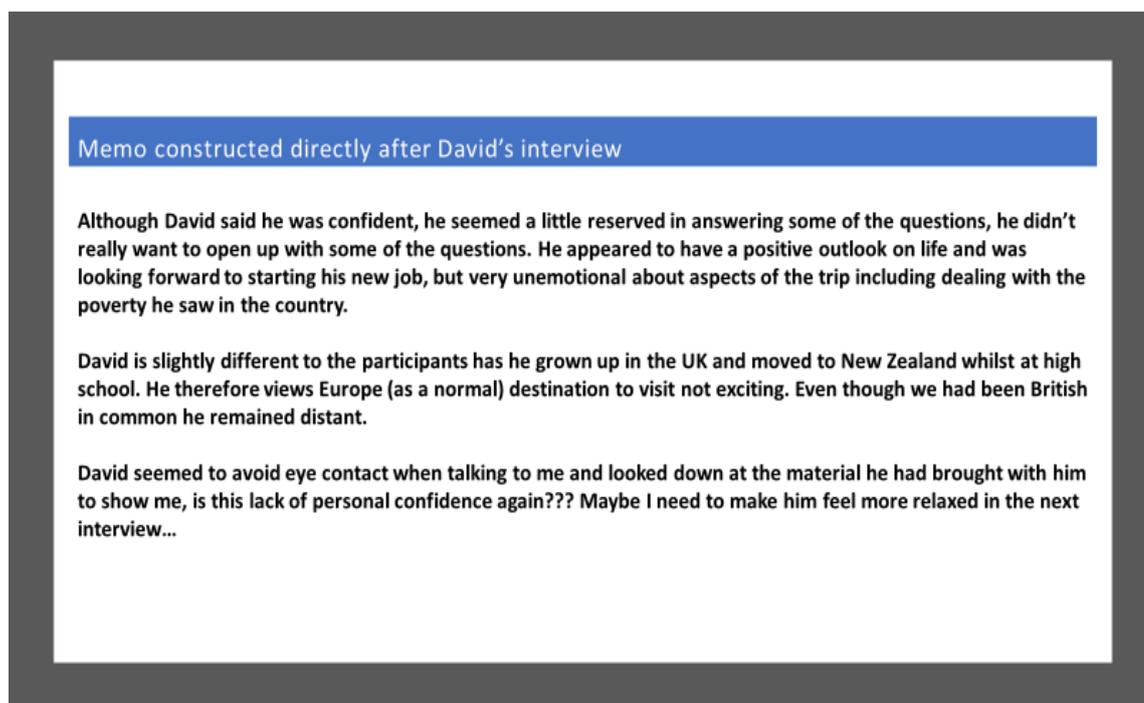
### ***3.10.7 Memos***

Charmaz (2006) considered personal memo writing a crucial and integral part of the grounded theory process. Used throughout the analysis process, memo writing aids development and provides insights into the links and relationships between categories, supporting decisions, refining meaning, and helping to develop a theory (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2012). Charmaz (2006, p. 72) referred to memo writing as “thinking time,” a time for researchers to catch their thoughts and have “conversations with yourself” in order to engage, reflect on, and clarify material and ideas. Hence, memos are personal accounts of thoughts and ideas leading to further exploration.

Memo writing started at the initial interview stages and notes were kept on the participants, based on my first impressions, body language, and questions for follow-up interviews. An excerpt of a memo is presented in Figure 14.

**Figure 15**

*Memo Depicting the Process of Memo Writing and Use in Grounded Theory*



The comments in this memo proved useful, as I later found out in interview 2, that the participant David, worked for a government agency and had learnt to distance himself as part of his role, which accounted for some of his behaviour during his first interview.

Writing memos helped me focus on the analysis and reflect on meaning, generate ideas, and make connections. Memo writing was often conducted in conjunction with mind-mapping or diagramming to facilitate the thought process. Memo writing contributed to the theoretical development of codes, categories, and an overall theory.

### ***3.10.8 Diagramming***

Since I am a visual learner, diagramming also proved to be a valuable tool in the analysis and thought process, as it aided category development. Diagramming, especially the technique of free-hand mind-mapping, was utilised throughout the analysis phase as a creative way of working and playing with the data. As a visual learner, diagramming was

essential to me in establishing the scope and direction of analysis (Charmaz, 2006) and enabled me to identify any gaps in the development of the theory.

Initially, I experimented with computer software, colour coding categories in order to differentiate between concepts and illustrate relationships. Appendix C shows a computer-generated mind map I produced, but as I was not familiar with the software it took longer to produce than I anticipated. I felt the use of software restricted the creative thought process and I reverted back to manual diagrams.

At the beginning of the analysis process, my diagrams were messy, containing doodles and scribbles and comments on connections (see Appendix C – an example of a messy diagram), but as analysis progressed, the diagrams evolved and became more refined, with an emphasis on building a theoretical framework and developing a theory.

### ***3.10.9 Analysis of the Second Data set***

The analysis and coding of the second supplementary data set obtained from the teachers followed the same process as in the first data set, starting with manual coding of data line-by-line, which allowed me to become immersed in the data in order to elicit meaning, develop categories, explore ideas, and determine the direction of later interviews. During the initial coding I searched for keywords and patterns, noting any points of interest to me. As data collection continued, it became apparent that the teachers discussed similar points and experiences regarding the organisation of and participation in the study tours, resulting in codes such as “tradition,” “school ritual,” “safety,” “wellbeing,” “lack of time,” “reputation,” “student behaviour,” “cost,” “expectations,” “conduct,” “risk,” “learning,” “responsibility,” and “paper-work.”.

During the second phase of analysis, which was focused coding, the second supplementary data were sorted, and codes grouped together to establish categories based on similarities and differences. Again, mind-mapping was utilised to aid the process and establish connections, and memos produced to support decisions and help me reflect on ideas. The main categories of “expectations,” “experience,” and “challenges,” emerged at this stage.

In the third phase of analysis, as categories emerged, I was able to identify the properties of the individual categories and explore them from a different perspective. For example, from a teaching perspective, the category of “expectations” revealed that expectations

placed on teachers came from a variety of different stakeholders such as students, boards of trustees, and parents. This category informed me about the personal pressures, workloads, and responsibilities placed on teachers organising and participating in study tours, and gave deeper insights into the planning and structure of the tours. It also clarified that there was an expectation from students, that their school would be organising international study tours.

As outlined in Figure 10, data collection and analysis were simultaneous, and in conjunction with the primary data set, as this informed the interview process. Nevertheless, initially the second data set was kept separate, and comparisons were made only within each data set. However, once categories were established in the second data set, constant comparisons were made between both data sets in order to deepen my understanding, add context, and inform the development of the grounded theory.

### **3.11 Quality and Rigour**

In qualitative research there is a need for credibility, reliability, validity, and transferability in order to authenticate the findings. (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Jennings, 2001; Shank, 2006). Birks and Mills (2015) pointed out that quality is influenced by both the research process and the researchers' attributes. These factors are outlined in Figure 16. To ensure academic rigour, a number of measures were taken. As mentioned in section 3.6, my position as the researcher was clearly defined and through the process of reflexivity, I acknowledged my potential influence on the research process. Yin (2016) stressed the importance of this personal exposure and transparency in qualitative research, to ensure credibility of the researcher and to validate the research.

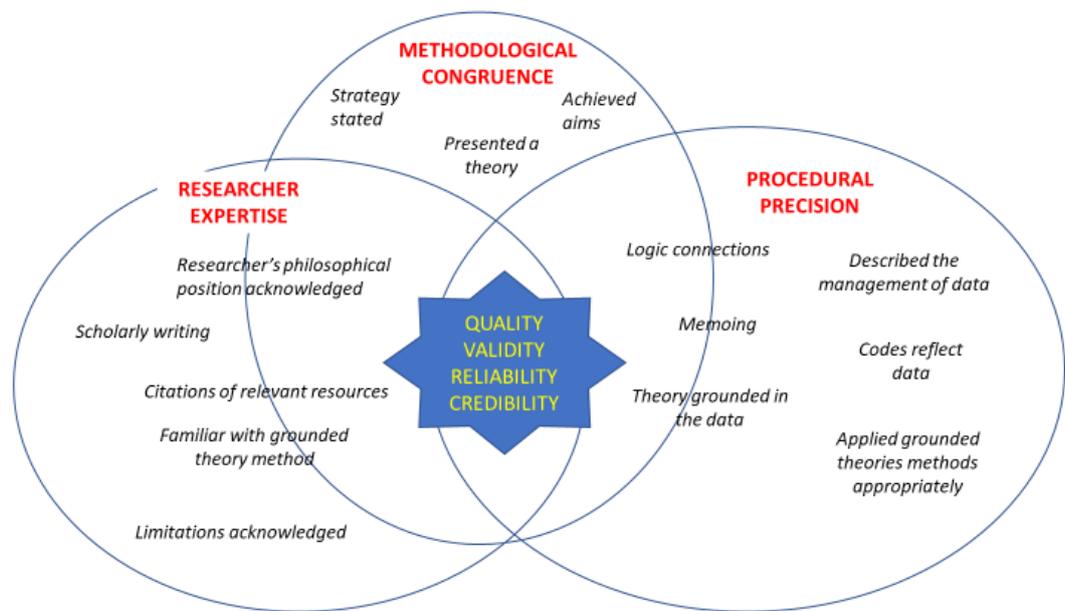
Secondly, to strengthen the credibility of the research, I used supervision and monthly grounded theory meetings to reflect on the research process. Adopting a reflexive approach enabled me to avoid using subconscious codes, and instead, make logical connections and build theoretical sensitivity whilst developing my theory.

Thirdly, to ensure reliability and validity from a participant's perspective, the second interview was utilised to clarify points, expand on details, and confirm my understandings. To ensure reliability, grounded theory requires a description of the data to reflect the participants' experience. Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed out that this should be vivid, "so like the researcher, the reader can almost literally see and hear its people" (p. 228). By adhering to the recognised principles of grounded theory and

ensuring my codes were representative of the participants' views, following up with a second interview to seek clarification of understanding, moving back and forth between the data through the use of constant comparisons, and keeping analytical memos, I ensured the credibility, reliability, and validity of this study.

**Figure 16**

*Factors that Influence Quality in Grounded Theory*



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Since qualitative research often utilises a small number of participants, the notion of validity is often associated with transferability - that is, that the findings can be transferred to another setting or other individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Shank, 2006). Charmaz (2006) pointed out that transferability relates to resonance and usefulness in relation to knowledge development and practical application. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested that researchers provide thick descriptions of the participants to enable others to make judgements about the possible transferability of the findings. To enhance the transferability of the findings, a clear overview of the ex-students, the types of international study tours undertaken, length of stay, and prior travel experiences of participants, were all provided to enable others to make judgements about the compatibility of the study in relation to other settings.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter provided insights into the methods used in this study for the data collection and analysis. The constructivist grounded theory approach was outlined, drawing on the guidance of Charmaz to develop codes, categories, and eventually, a theory. The recruitment strategies, methods of sampling, semi-structured interview techniques employed with both the ex-students and teachers, and how theoretical sensitivity and theoretical saturation influenced the study were also explained, and how reflexivity was used to promote rigour.

These methods resulted in the refinement and creation of a number of major categories, each supported by a number of sub-categories. This formed the basis of the theoretical framework and the development of the theory, “It’s the difference that makes a difference,” based on the study of ex-high-school students’ experiences of international trips and the effect of these on their later lives. The next chapter presents an overview of the main categories that emerged through the use of grounded theory.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of participating in short-term international study tours and determine if participation in these tours has any longer-term effects for the students.

To understand the context of the research, it is useful to present an overview of the ex-student interviewees. Therefore, the first section of this chapter (entitled “participants”) provides insights into the ex-students, and introduces the type of study tour in which they participated. In addition, this section presents data relating to how the ex-students perceived themselves before their study tour, contextualising their life histories and outlining their previous travel experiences. All interviewees were given a pseudonym to protect their identity, and all attended a high school in the North Island of New Zealand with a long history of organising international study tours.

In addition to the primary data set derived from interviews with the ex-students, interviews were also conducted with the teachers who organised and led these study tours. These interviews provided important secondary data from the perspectives of key informants who were able to share additional perspectives on the experiences being explored. The second section of this chapter provides an overview of these teachers so that their perspectives can be considered in the context of their roles, experiences, expectations, and backgrounds. Teachers were also given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

The chapter then presents the data from the interviews using the four main categories (“learning from and with each other,” “voyages of discovery,” “learning for life,” and “going places”) that emerged from the analysis. These categories (and sub-categories) provided the basis for the development of the grounded theory presented in Chapter 6.

### **4.2 Participants - Ex-Students**

The primary data set from ex-students came from five male and 11 female ex-students. All ex-students participated in international study tours between five and 25 years prior to participating in this study. A summary of the numbers of ex-students and types of

international study tours follows, and Table 7 provides an in-depth profile of the ex-students. Two had participated in two international study tours.

- Language study tours: 9 ex-students (2 males, 7 female)
- Volunteer tourism tours: 4 ex-students (2 males and 2 females)
- Geography study tours: 2 ex-students (2 males)
- Classics study tours: 3 ex-students (3 females)

**Table 7***Ex-Students' Profiles*

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age during study tour School year</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Length of study tour</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Motivation for participating in study tour</b>	<b>Prior travel experience</b>
1	Christopher	Age: 18 Year: 13	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described himself as shy at school	14 days	2007	Cambodia	Social Sciences Curriculum Volunteer tourism House building	An altruistic desire to make a difference in the world	Family holidays to Fiji Australia, USA
2	David	Age: 18 Year: 13	Emigrated to New Zealand from the United Kingdom New to the school First experience overseas without parents Described himself as fairly shy at school	14 days	2007	Cambodia	Social Sciences Curriculum Volunteer tourism House building	Cambodia was viewed as an exciting adventurous destination	Family holidays travelling extensively around Europe whilst living in the UK. New Zealand family holidays to Fiji, Australia Malaysia
3	Steph	Age: 17 turning 18 Year: 12	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents, but had travelled with New Zealand on Christian camps without parents Initially not accepted on the study tour, however a student pulled out so was accepted Described herself as a quiet religious Christian girl	14 days	2008	Cambodia	Social Sciences Curriculum Volunteer tourism House building	An altruistic desire to help people "Gods will" Felt privileged to be selected	Family holiday to Vanuatu Christian camps in New Zealand without parents
4	Jackie	Age: 15 Year: 11  Age: 17 Year: 13	Originally from Korea Jackie had participated in two international study tours	14 days  14 days	2010  2012	Japan  Cambodia	Language immersion Curriculum learning  Social sciences Extra-curricular	Her friend was going on the trip, but pulled out, so her parents encouraged her to travel on her own  She wanted to go to Cambodia because she	Family holiday to visit friends and relatives in Korea

	Pseudonym	Age during study tour School year	Background	Length of study tour	Year	Destination	Type	Motivation for participating in study tour	Prior travel experience
			First experience overseas without parents to Japan Described herself as shy and hard working				House building	thought it would be interesting to volunteer	
5	Michelle	Age: 15 Year: 11	Originally from Indonesia but had grown up in New Zealand since the age of nine. First experience overseas without parents Considered herself young when travelling on the study tour as most of the students were in year 13. Described herself as shy and responsible	21 days	2010	Japan	Language immersion Curriculum learning	Her parents saw it as an opportunity to travel	Family holiday to Hong Kong
6	Andrew	Age: 14 Year: 12	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described himself as fun with a close-knit group of friends	28 days	2009	Mexico	Language immersion Extra-curricular	To visit a “different” country and it was the first time the school had run a trip to Mexico To practise Spanish	Travelled without parents on school camps in New Zealand
7	Holly	Age: 17 Year: 13	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described herself as fun, outgoing, a student rep, house captain, very sporty and on the school council	28 days	2009	Mexico	Language immersion Extra-curricular	To learn about a different culture and practise her Spanish	Family holidays to Europe, Malaysia, Australia School camps in New Zealand whilst at primary and intermediate school without parents
8	Jane	Age: 14 Year: 10	Born in New Zealand Described herself as a shy, hardworking, studious person with interest in drama and the theatre	28 days	2012	New Caledonia	Language immersion Extra-curricular	To learn French and it was the only study tour the school was offering	Extensive family holidays, to Europe, Asia, USA, Australia International study tour to Australia whilst at intermediate school
9	Emma	Age: 15 Year: 11	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described herself as a person who did not try too hard, passing exams	28 days	1997	Germany and France	Language learning Curriculum learning	To visit places she had seen on television and travel with friends	School camps in New Zealand First time travelling overseas

	Pseudonym	Age during study tour School year	Background	Length of study tour	Year	Destination	Type	Motivation for participating in study tour	Prior travel experience
			without doing much work, preferring to socialise						
10	Harriett	Age: 14 Year: 10	Emigrated to New Zealand from the United Kingdom First experience overseas without parents Described herself as caring, chatty, and always willing to help	28 days	1985	Germany via Japan outbound via Singapore inbound	Language learning Curriculum learning	To travel back to Europe. It was the overseas first trip the school had organised	Emigrated to New Zealand
11	Paul	Age: 14 Year: 10	Born in New Zealand Had participated in two study tours First experience overseas without parents Described himself as studious and hardworking, but found school life hard as he was teased, as he often used crutches because of his spina bifida	14 days	1997	Japan	Language learning Curriculum learning	Paul knew of the study tours before starting at the school so selected subjects based on those that had study tours Visit to Japan was to visit a non-English speaking country	Family holidays within New Zealand Flown to Australia Unaccompanied to visits relatives Travelled domestically on school trips
		Age: 16 Year: 12		14 days	2001	Hawaii	Geography Curriculum learning	Love of geography	
12	Steven	Age: 17 Year: 12	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described himself as a diligent student who studied hard, but at the same time was a bit of a rascal and often the class clown, with a lot of friends. Participated in several sporting activities, with football as his favourite	17 days	2010	Amazon Brazil	Geography Curriculum learning	An overseas adventure, especially to Latin America	Family holidays to numerous destinations. His most memorable was to Thailand

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age during study tour School year</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Length of study tour</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Motivation for participating in study tour</b>	<b>Prior travel experience</b>
13	Bella	Age: 16 Year: 11	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described herself as a self-motivated and studious person. Outside school she was a busy energetic person, dancing. Considered herself young when she participated in the study tour	16 days	2012	Greece, Italy, Turkey	Classics Curriculum learning	It sounded amazing, visiting Europe, and had always wanted to travel Although the study tour was linked to the curriculum Bella wasn't studying the subject but was considering history for the next year. One of the teachers was a close family friend so she was permitted on the study tour	Family holidays to Australia
14	Courtney	Age: 15 Year: 11	Born in New Zealand Permitted on the study tour as her mother was one of the teachers Described herself as an awkward in-betweener who never actually fitted into one group. She described her personality as outgoing, confident, cheerful, and busy, dedicated to dancing, dancing for up to 20 hours a week.	16 days	2012	Greece, Italy, Turkey	Classics Curriculum learning	To learn about the history	Family holidays to Australia USA, France, United Kingdom, Hong Kong
15	Karen	Age: 15 Year: 11	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described herself as a "goody-goody" never in trouble, an enthusiastic student always willing to learn. She made friends easily	16 Days	2012	Greece, Italy Turkey	Classics Curriculum learning	Karen joined the school halfway through the school year and had a passion for history, achieving good grades, and was invited by the history teacher to participate	Family holidays to Australia and Thailand to visit friends and family

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age during study tour School year</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Length of study tour</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Motivation for participating in study tour</b>	<b>Prior travel experience</b>
16	Brenna	Age: 14 Year: 10	Born in New Zealand First experience overseas without parents Described herself as a studious person involved in sporting activities, but an introvert.	28 days	2007	Taiwan	Language learning Cultural exchange Extra-curricular	Previous applications for school trips to Australia, South Africa, and Scotland had been unsuccessful so was offered a place on the first school trip to Taiwan. Brenna's motivation was to learn about a different culture.	Family holidays to Australia Business trips with her father to Hong Kong and Singapore School camps in New Zealand

### 4.3 Participants - Teachers

Information provided by the teachers contextualised the international study tours, giving insights into the rationale and justification for international study tours and understandings of the factors motivating the teachers to organise and conduct the tours. It also provided insights into the personal challenges teachers faced to make the trips successful. The teachers' profiles outline the length of time they had been involved in organising the study tours, subject taught, and choice of destination. Information was also collected on decile ranges of the schools, as literature suggests the socioeconomic status of schools can influence participation in international study tours (Simon & Anisworth, 2012).

**Table 8**

#### *Teachers' Profiles*

Participant	Pseudonym	Subject	Decile	Destination of Study Tour	Years Organising Study Tours	Type
1	Andrea	Social Sciences	10	Cambodia	12 Years	Co-ed
2	Claire	Geography	10	Various Hawaii Amazon	20 Years	Co-ed
3	Edward	Geography Classics	10	Italy Turkey Greece	4 years	Co-ed
4	Debbie	Classics	5	Italy Turkey Greece	6 Years	Co-ed
5	Frank	Classics History	10	Various Italy Greece Vietnam United Kingdom	11 Years	Co-ed
6	Helen	Language(s)	5	Various Noumea France Germany	17 Years	Co-ed
7	Brooke	Language(s)	10	Various Cambodia Mexico Japan	11 Years	Co-ed

Having placed both the ex-students and teachers in context, the next section presents the four categories that emerged from the data analysis. These categories provide insights into the effects of the study tour on participants in later life, by reviewing events before,

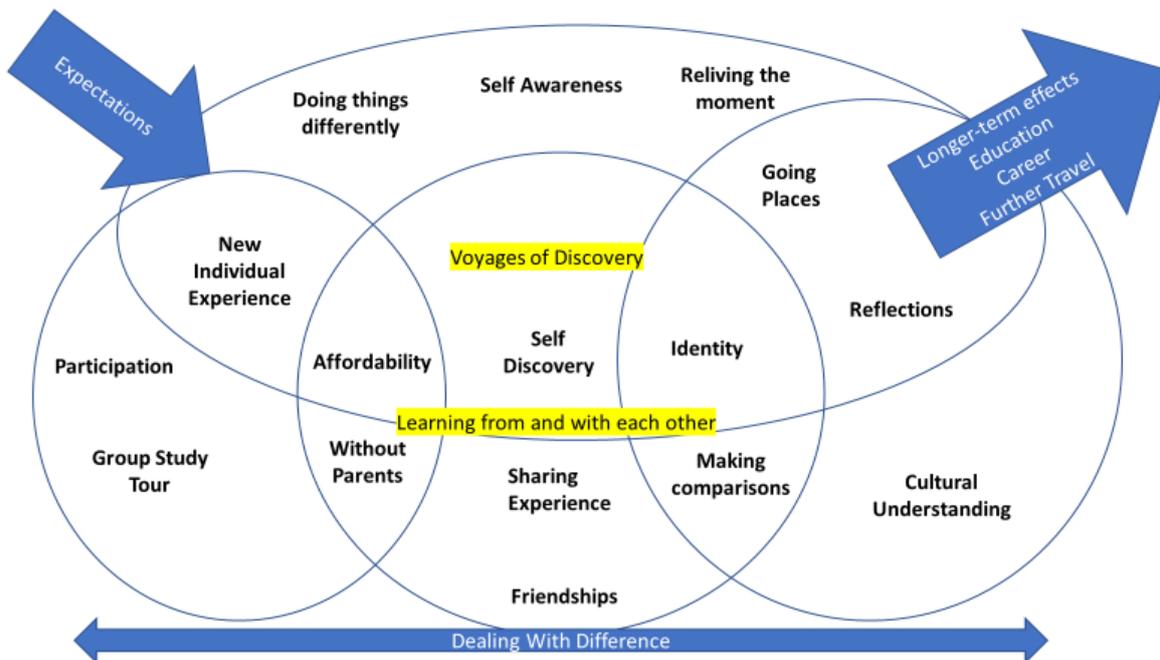
during, and after the tour. To distinguish between the ex-students' and teachers' comments in the findings section, indented ex-students' comments are in *italics*, and teachers' comments, in **bold**.

#### 4.4 Introduction to the Categories

Although the theoretical framework that emerged in the data analysis is explained later in this chapter (see section 4.9), to aid understanding, figure 17 provides an overview of the emergent categories. Although the categories are discussed separately, it is worth noting that what occurred was not a linear process, but had many overlapping aspects. Figure 17 illustrates the interplay and connections between these categories, demonstrating the complexities of the ex-students' experiences and effects on later life.

**Figure 17**

*Overview of Categories Showing Connections Between Tour Experiences and Effects on Later Life*



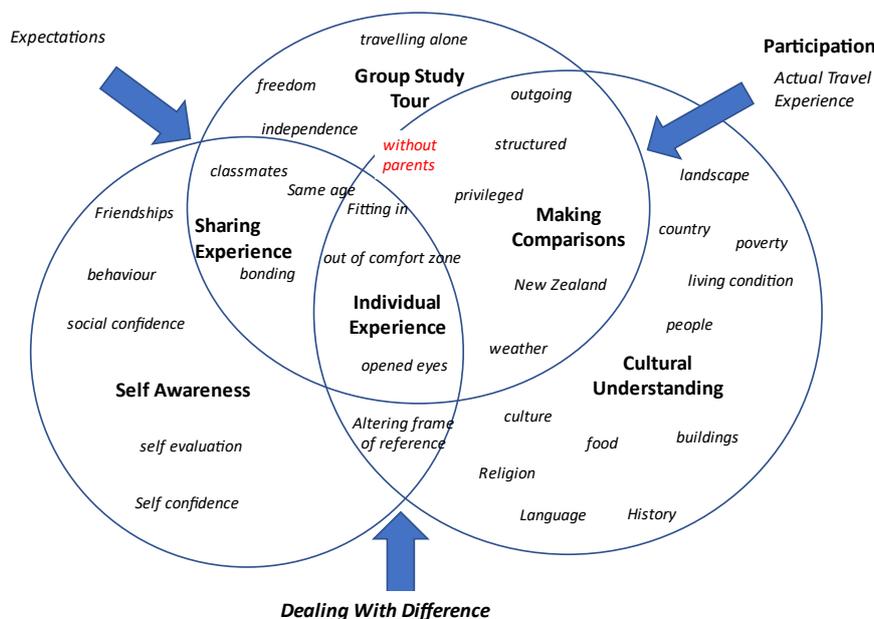
#### 4.5 Learning From and With Each Other

The data revealed that learning from and with each other was a complex process that involved relationships and interactions in shared and individual experiences. The cluster diagram (Figure 18) demonstrates the connections between these experiences, showing

how the ex-students had dealt with difference by making comparisons between their own expectations and the actual travel experience.

**Figure 18**

*Conceptualising the Process of Learning From and With Each Other*



#### 4.5.1 The Group Study Tour Experience

##### 4.5.1.1 Participation and new individual experiences

Travelling on an international study tour had been a new experience for all the ex-students involved, expressed with words such as “excitement,” “uncertainty,” “hope,” aspirations for “learning,” and an “eagerness” to travel. Analysis of the interview data revealed that participation in international study tours was viewed from multiple perspectives, firstly affecting how the ex-students had thought about themselves (cognitive domain), and secondly, how they had felt (affective domain) about participating in the tour and their general expectations and assumptions around study tours.

For many ex-students, travelling on an international study tour was considered a point of difference and they had felt privileged to have been selected and given the opportunity to travel overseas. This was echoed in the following sentiments:

*I mean, they had too many people that wanted to go, and then they had to choose people based on their academic results, and I’m sure they chose people based on their behaviour as well. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France, 1997)*

*I remember [teacher name] telling me I was going. We had to walk down the stairs from class just being like, oh my gosh - I want to jump up and down. Yeah, it didn't really faze me that I wasn't first picked. I was just happy to be going. I felt really privileged I was selected. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia,2008)*

This point was also demonstrated in a teacher's comments. For example:

**In the 2008 and 2009 trips, one of them - I can't remember, but I believe we got 50 applications and we only had space for 25. So, we had to select students. (Andrea, Teacher)**

The data revealed that regardless of the type of study tour, the selection process had made the ex-students feel special, eliciting emotional reactions of happiness and joy at being one of those chosen.

Analysis of the teachers' second data set, highlighted that the selection process was complex, based on student behaviour, academic records, and ability to pay for the study tour. These points were evident in the following teachers' comments.

**As a secondary school teacher, you kind of get a pretty clear idea about the ones that have got their head screwed on... You see them at school, their behaviour, attitude to learning in the classroom. Respect for others, those kinds of things. So, we felt confident that they would manage being away from home. (Debbie, Teacher)**

**We run them through a check system at school. So, they basically have to fill certain requirements at school, like attendance at school, behaviour, etc. (Brooke, Teacher)**

Further analysis of the teachers' secondary data set revealed gender differences in student participation. This point was illustrated in this teacher's comment:

**We only had mostly girls applying for the trip...but yeah so it was very few boys applied, and one year - I think it was 2011, they only had girls go on the trip. There were no boys who applied. I don't truly understand why. Maybe teenage boys are too busy worrying about being tough. I would imagine for some boys saying you're going to Cambodia to build houses and thinking your mates might not be respecting what you're doing or getting harassed by your mates about it would be enough to put you off even just thinking about it. (Andrea, Teacher)**

The data suggested that during adolescence, the female ex-students had been eager to travel and experience the world, whereas the males were more susceptible to social peer pressure.

#### **4.5.1.2 Expectations**

Further analysis of ex-student participation in the international study tours was useful, revealing general expectations associated with the study tours. The analysis revealed that expectations both prior to and during the study tour were significant. Prior to departure, the ex-students had expected that the school would offer an international study tour each year and assumed that the teaching staff would organise these. Codes emerged in the data reflecting this, were “tradition,” “ritual,” and “custom,” as exemplified in teachers’ comments.

**The next generation of students know, oh there will be a trip. You have to have it as an institutionalised thing if possible. So, they know when they start in Year 9, there is a prospect of a trip for Year 11.** (Helen, Teacher)

**The Hawaii trip for geo has become a school institution. It’s become a tradition; every two years they go to Hawaii, it’s kind of an expectation. I’d like the same thing for classics; every two years in classics we go.** (Edward, Teacher)

Expectations about participation of schools in international study tours were apparent in this comment from an ex-student:

*That’s why I did history and geography because they alternated between who did the trips... and because you didn’t know until that year or halfway through the year who was doing the trip history or a geography trip, I studied both.* (Paul, geography study tour, Hawaii)

In addition, analysis of the subcategory “expectations” found differences within the ex-students’ expectations, which were divided into general expectations about the group, the place, the people, and the learning experience. For example:

*I was really excited about it, and the idea of going away and learning a whole new culture and being really immersed in it.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

*I was really looking forward to the actual house-building day, and some of the things like visiting the orphanage, it was the purpose of the trip, and that was the goal; to be there and to give back - not just to be tourists looking on, but to actually learn something and give back in return.* (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)

The ex-students had tended to form expectations based on information they had received from the school or their prior personal knowledge of a subject. This was particularly evident in the following excerpts:

*We had some meetings beforehand to talk through what to expect, like food hygiene, and water, and what immunisations we needed to get. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia,2008)*

In the second example, the ex-students compared their expectations with the reality of the actual study tour experience. The data suggested that the structure of international study tour differed from expectations, and there were negative comments regarding the experience, with codes such as “restrictive,” “controlled,” and “constrictive” emerging. For a few ex-students, the international study tour had not met their expectations. A variety of perspectives were expressed around this point:

*I think I was expecting that I would get a lot more opportunities to be able to practise my Spanish, because it was such a big group of us. I don't think we really got the opportunity to speak Spanish. I mean, everyone we came across wanted to practise their English. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

*They went to the opera, they went snorkelling, they went to the markets, they went to the cultural centre ...in comparison to what others have done, we felt a bit cheated. It was a whole day, and all we did was go to the supermarket. (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia)*

The disappointment of the ex-students was related to their search for self-fulfilment in later life influencing further travel, education, and career choices. This is discussed in greater depth in section 4.8 (Going Places).

The role of expectations also emerged from the teachers' perspectives, with an emphasis on the expectations and responsibilities placed on teachers. The data revealed a range of specific expectations from the school management team, including the boards of trustees, parents, and students.

Expectations of teachers, both prior to and during the study tour, were significant, and included preparing and planning, student learning, workload, and the health and safety of the students.

The data suggested that expectations were also placed on teachers to obtain permission to travel from boards of trustees. This meant the study tour had to be demonstrably linked to the curriculum and paperwork completed to get the tour started. This was expressed in sentiments such as:

**The only way that the Board of Trustees would allow a trip of that nature to take place was it had to be related to the curriculum which is taught. (Frank, Teacher)**

**Now there's so much paperwork that has to be done before I can even advertise a trip. So, before I advertise a trip now, I have to go to the Board of Trustees. Before I approach them, I have to have an itinerary, a costing, risk management - I have to have fundraising programme; all of that has to be all in place before you even can get permission to go on a trip. That's just the beginning of the paperwork.** (Brooke, Teacher)

Permission to travel often depended on meeting health and safety requirements to comply with government legislation, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and The Education Act 1989. This generally included assessing risks using a Risk Assessment Management System (RAMS) and managing student behaviour. As one teacher explained:

**Over the last 15 odd years that I've been doing it, the expectations of covering your butt, and doing the paperwork have got worse and worse, but you have to do it.** (Frank, Teacher)

The data suggested that parental expectations were placed on both teachers and boards of trustees to ensure the safety and welfare of the students and uphold the reputations of the schools.

The data also revealed that before travelling on an international study tour, ex-students were expected to be safe and secure, since they were travelling as part of a school group. However, in contrast, the ex-students had expected freedom, independence, and adventure, as they were travelling without parents. This dichotomy was reflected in the following examples:

*My dad's funny in that he doesn't like travelling as much, so he worried ...you're going to be safe, aren't you?... I said, oh yeah, I'll be in a group and we'll be fine - don't worry so much.* (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)

*I hadn't done it before, but again it was a school trip; there's not that much that can go wrong. At least you're with friends, and the school had already done it before.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

*I guess you assume that everything is going to be fine as the school has organised it and if anything happens my parents were only a phone call away, so I wasn't worried, and it was only a month. I was with the other girls and I was fairly independent.* (Brenna, language study tour, Taiwan, 2007)

All these responsibilities influenced expectations of the teachers and their associated workload. Codes such as "time" emerged from the data, as demonstrated in the following teachers' comments:

**Teaching a full load and trying to organise everything was tough. You really need somebody who really wants to devote a lot of time and energy to it, and I mean it's quite a heavy burden on your shoulders. (Helen, Teacher)**

**We did some fundraising, and I tried to say that I wasn't going to be involved in that, but of course I ended up facilitating a lot of it, and it's more time that I'm doing that instead of other things, while I'm teaching a full schedule at the same time. (Edward, Teacher)**

The juxtaposition of these findings demonstrated the disconnect between the ex-students' expectations of an amazing trip and the reality of the experience for teachers, who had to ensure the absolute safety of their students first. It was striking that so many comments revealed the assumption that teachers bore responsibility for health and safety, finances, planning, and being *in loco parentis*, the teachers felt the weight of this responsibility.

The data suggested that organising an international study tour was an extensive undertaking, with many teachers expected to give up personal time, and commit to extra-curricular activities such as fundraising to ensure the success of the tours. In addition, it appeared that the teachers were considered responsible for the behaviour and pastoral care of the adolescent students whilst travelling overseas, and for ensuring their physical and emotional wellbeing. The data also suggested there was a great deal of pressure and personal responsibility placed upon the teaching staff, evidenced in the following excerpts:

**We went to Salzburg and we hop off the bus, and I shouted to the bus - okay, that's our stop. We always had jackets - the same jackets with big "New Zealand" on the front, and [name of high school] on the back. So, we hop off the bus and then I counted at the bus stop - one is missing. So, we all went across a river in Salzburg and we waited half an hour and then one bus came from the distance, and the driver was grinning, because luckily, he knew exactly where we got off, because of our jackets, and he was sitting right behind the bus driver. Imagine if I'd lost him. The consequences are unimaginable. (Helen, Teacher)**

**We didn't know what we had was swine flu until I landed in New Zealand. I thought I was going to lose my job, because the principal was furious until it became a major worldwide media circus that benefited the school. (Brooke, Teacher)**

Consequently, teaching staff felt the weight of these expectations and their assumed responsibilities. Therefore, expectations and assumptions were significant, as they influenced the actions of the ex-students and teaching staff, prior to, during, and after the study tour.

#### **4.5.1.3 Without parents**

Most ex-students agreed that travelling on international study tours was different from travelling with parents on a family holiday, and were perceived as an important opportunity to travel alone. The following excerpts revealed some of thoughts and feelings of the ex-students on this:

*It was very structured. Usually when I go with my family, we're just kind of improvising everything, but this was my first structured, very well-planned trip, with people other than my family. (Michelle, language study tour, Japan)*

Michelle continued to explain:

*I think [it was] the first time that I had to sleep with other people, like schoolmates, snoring and stuff. So, it made me a little apprehensive.*

*I guess we were all a little bit apprehensive and didn't really know what to expect; do I fit here, do they want to spend time with me or are they just being polite, that kind of thing. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

*Just the whole going to the Amazon rainforest, and probably just the whole idea of overseas adventure, and especially to Latin America - Third World country - and it wasn't a really standard high school trip to Australia. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil, and the Amazon)*

Although most of the ex-students had been excited at the prospect of travelling without their parents, analysis of the sub-category "travelling alone" revealed gender differences in expectations. Female ex-students appeared to have been nervous about travelling away from home, whilst their male counterparts appeared more comfortable with the prospect of going alone and seeking adventure. An important finding was that anticipation and expectations had played an important part in the ex-students' experience prior to departure and during the study tour. At first, they had created mental constructs of what they thought the study tour would be like, anticipating what it would be like to travel and leave New Zealand without their parents, as part of a school group, discussing aspects such as missing home and family and placing expectations on themselves in terms of acceptance into the group, as the following excerpts demonstrated.

*I was just really excited. I was nervous, because like I said, I wasn't really close to anyone in that trip, to begin with, what if something happens to me? I was shy, so what if I feel a bit left out? (Michelle, language study tour, Japan)*

*It was the first time away from home - away from friends. I was worried I would miss Mum. I knew we couldn't contact her immediately. (Jackie, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

#### **4.5.1.4 School group**

Analysis of the interview data revealed that group dynamics had been an important aspect of the study tour and the social side was an important part of the individual experience. Group dynamics were discussed in relationship to the group prior to departure, during the study tour, and in later life.

Prior to participating in the international study tour, the ex-students had tended to make assumptions about the group and tried to evaluate how they would fit in to the group, by examining themselves and others that were travelling on the study tour. Codes such as “loner,” “classmates,” “didn’t really know them,” “same age,” and “like-minded people,” emerged from the data. These assumptions tended to be based on the ex-students’ own beliefs. For example, Steph described the girls on her study tour as:

*A-type personality and naturally quite confident and loud and boisterous and just outgoing. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia,2008)*

For Steph, like many other ex-students on the international study tours, these prior assumptions influenced their actions on the study tour. As Steph recalled:

*I just made a conscious effort to make myself a part of conversations and when I wanted to go sit on my bed and do nothing, I went and hung out with them instead. Yeah, it was a conscious effort. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia,2008)*

Her response showed the significance of the broader theme of “shared experience.” The comments demonstrated the connections between the shared and individual experience, highlighting how the attitudes and behaviours of group members can affect other individuals within the group.

#### **4.5.1.5 Sharing experiences**

A variety of perspectives were expressed around the theme of “shared experience.” Sharing experiences was an important aspect of the bonding process and was linked to the activities and interactions with other members of the group, teachers, tour guides and host families, and communities:

*I remember we pulled over and there was this football goal on the riverbank and there was big bits of wood and a fishing net, like a full-sized goal, and I remember walking up to it and then this Brazilian kid turned up out of nowhere. I think he was about 14 and he didn’t speak English and I spoke a tiny bit of Portuguese on the trip, but I remember he came, and I was kind of pointing at it trying to be like, is that yours? He was like, yeah. He disappeared and came back with a football,*

*and so we were like shooting - taking turns - taking shots at each other, and I remember it being an incredible experience, because the kid was so talented, because we were playing with his goal which was made of a fishing net and bits of wood. (Steven, Geography study tour, Brazil, and the Amazon)*

*I feel like when you go with more people you have more perspectives on the environment. I'm not really into plants and climbing trees, but the boys were really into that, and they were climbing up coconut trees. I would have been like, oh it's a coconut tree - big whoop! It was little experiences other people could give you that was really important. (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia)*

Jane believed the shared group experience gave her opportunities that she would not have had if she had travelled on her own, and this enhanced her learning experience. This point was echoed by Karen:

*So our teachers would question the tour guides, or - not in a bad way at all - just be like, did this happen? They would just think of the questions that we wouldn't have thought of, obviously, being the teachers. I learnt so much from that. (Karen, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

Karen believed that learning from and with the teacher was a valuable part of the group experience and contributed to her learning.

For Paul, the shared experience resulted in a sense of psychological freedom and belonging, as travelling on the international study tour allowed him to escape from the stigma of his disability, improving his social confidence.

*I was teased a bit at school, but on the trip it was kind of nice because I felt like I fitted in more, because instead of me being the follower or the loser - the loner - I was able to say, no it's okay, we can do this, or oh have you seen, or do you know about? They were like, oh wow you actually do know something - your brain actually does work. (Paul, geography study tours, Hawaii)*

A variety of perspectives were expressed around the association between a shared experience and friendship. For some ex-students, sharing the experience of fundraising prior to travel had created a sense of unity and companionship.

*The fundraising, and then I think we got together - it was almost like a school club where we got together, and talked about it and planned it; what we need to take - there was a really good supportive atmosphere I think for actually it not just being a tourist trip, but really trying to get us in that headspace of thinking what it is that we're doing - how it is that we need to act when we're over there. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

This sense of belonging through a shared experience was also noted by some teaching staff:

**Although they all came from different places, they all knew each other very well when we set off which was very important. It was interesting to see some students actually becoming the interveners and the helpers, the older ones responsible for the younger ones.** (Helen, Teacher)

Participation in an international study tour enabled the ex-students to form connections and bonds. Relationships, socialising and becoming friends, seemed to be an important concept during participation in the study tour. This was exemplified in the following comments:

*So, it was like another family that we had. We hung out all day every day and some close bonds were made, and everyone became really close friends.* (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)

*I hung on to my roommate. I wasn't about to go off on my own and try speaking French. I was reliant on someone else who knew it a bit better than me. We became so close.* (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia)

*Most of us hadn't been in the same class - we were all different years, so we were unfamiliar with one another, but it didn't last long, being thrown into all these shared experiences made us gel together. Just from experiencing the same things, and I guess we kind of had - our thoughts about what we'd experienced were quite similar, so we were able to relate better to each other.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

Although the ex-students seemed to have fond memories of the international study tour and enjoyed reminiscing about the past, in later life, the friendships gained from the international study tour seemed insignificant, as most had not remained close and had limited or no contact with the other members of the group.

Deeper analysis of notions of 'friends' and 'friendship' suggested that the ex-students' relationships had become superficial, and engagement was only facilitated through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, so over time they had become more like acquaintances than friends. The following responses exemplified this:

*Still in contact on Facebook, but I wouldn't say that I've maintained close friendships. We see what each other are doing on the other side of the world. We're still in contact if we ever wanted to be. So, it's possible to see what's going on with their lives.* (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)

*We're all at university and gone to different places, but I still contact them. Not like, oh we should catch up and hang out, and that sort of contact, but just friends on Facebook sometimes - just like that - comments, liking people's photos and that.* (Michelle, language study tour, Japan)

For some ex-students, sharing the experience continued after they returned, with many becoming advocates, encouraging other high school students to participate in international study tours. For example:

*I remember sitting with a guy in one my classes who was very interested in going on that Cambodia trip, and I just said to him, yeah you should a hundred per cent do it - I went on the Mexico trip last year and absolutely loved it - I wish I could go on this Cambodia trip as well. Yeah, I remember talking to him about it. He went on it, absolutely loved it. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

For other ex-students, the importance of sharing their experience continued not just at school, but in later life, encouraging university students to participate in overseas study tours. For example, Brenna recalled:

*It'll be the best decision you ever make. I've convinced a lot of friends to go on exchanges at university since.*

Brenna continued to explain, that as a PhD student and part-time lecturer at [xxx University]:

*We have taken groups of students on overseas cruises, and because of my experience on the school trip, I try to encourage them to take the Disney internships or take a semester abroad. I just think the trips can help you in learning about different cultures and ways of life.*

The comments demonstrated the connections between shared and individual experiences, and the ability of shared experiences to bring people together, whilst still enhancing each person's individual experience.

#### **4.5.1.6 Making comparisons**

For many ex-students, the international study tour opened their eyes to a variety of new experiences. Codes such as “amazing,” “incredible,” “awesome,” “shocking,” and “unbelievable” emerged, implying that what the ex-students saw had been surprising and unexpected, causing emotional reactions. For example, one ex-student encountered environmental issues she had not experienced before. Karen, who had grown up on a farm in New Zealand recalled:

*I remember driving into Turkey, and I remember, being a bit of a country bumpkin, I saw the city and I said, I think there's a fire or something in the city - that doesn't look alright. They said, no that's all the polluted air around the city. I just remember it being this dark, kind of a misty burgundy grey kind of colour - and I was pretty scared to go in there and actually breathe in that air.*

As her comment demonstrated, Karen made visual comparisons between Turkey's and New Zealand's natural landscapes and physical environments. The differences in the physical environment were also a point of difference and comparison for other ex-students, with many being overwhelmed by their surroundings:

*We went to Paris first, and it was quite intense to see just how different it was. I remember standing on the top of the Arc de Triomphe and looking down at that big - it's sort of like a big roundabout, and just; this place is crazy. It's unlike anything I'd ever seen before. (Emma, language study tour, Germany, and France, 1997)*

*Mayan pyramids in Oaxaca, and that was just incredible, the size of it. They look big in the photo, but then even just climbing up them was a huge trek, and just that ancient history and everything around, all the places that we saw were just amazing to take in. Something that we had nothing to compare with in New Zealand. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

*It was the first time I saw cherry blossoms. We saw deer and things in the wild and it was just really different to here. (Jackie, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

As these excerpts demonstrated, many ex-students had compared the destinations' physical landscape to the landscape of New Zealand. The data showed they had made comparisons with the natural and man-made features of New Zealand, as they had been generally overwhelmed by the differences in size, scale, colours, and historical architecture of buildings, as visiting a foreign destination had been a new experience for many of them. This was evident in the following response:

*It really does open your eyes to not only different cultures, but also the great experiences of the history, because New Zealand - we don't realise how young we are until we go to somewhere where we're looking at something that's 2500 years old. (Paul, language study tour, Japan)*

This point was also evident in one of the teacher's comments:

**They go over there and they get the scale of the things. It finally hits them that they're standing next to this thing that's 2500-3000 years old, where before it was a picture on a page. I think that really opens their eyes and I think it's different to be able to stand next to them and see them, in terms of their real scale and know what they are studying is real. (Edward, Teacher)**

Since some of the ex-students had been studying history and culture, prior knowledge appeared to be important, as what they saw on their study tour was used to make direct comparisons with what they had studied, and on which the expectations of their experience had been based. For example:

*The Hagia Sophia in Turkey. This was probably the first that I had seen of such a dramatic and large building like this one. I was just really taken away - we had studied a fair bit on it, so, I just thought that was quite cool, but nothing like what I imagined. (Bella, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey)*

*This photo was in Gallipoli. So, this was the Anzac Cove part; found this part really cool, because the ground that we were actually standing on was the bit that they had done - that we had studied, about the Anzacs coming up the hill against the Turks. I hadn't had any expectations or thoughts on what it might be like, but when I got there it was quite an eerie feeling. I had two relatives that fought, but neither of them died in war, so yeah - to hear the stories and it kind of made it more real. (Karen, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

Expectations appeared to define how the ex-students made sense of the experiences they encountered on their international study tour.

*There's a lot of poverty there - a lot of people live on less than a dollar a day - are lucky if they have mosquito nets. Then I guess actually going there, I did see elements of that but it also challenged my own perception because I saw there were also - there's a French quarter of Phnom Penh and there's villas there, and there's people living in thatched huts as well, and then there's people on foot, people in very nice cars; just that whole contrast was something that I wasn't expecting. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

*It's almost different to what a lot of people expect Mexico would be like as well. A lot of people imagine poverty and not so educated, but these students were very educated and well-off, friendly, sociable, very good English; it's not what anyone expected. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

Poverty was often associated with expectations about travelling to under-developed destinations such as Cambodia, Mexico, and Brazil, and the difference in socio-economic conditions became an important topic of comparison for many ex-students:

*Yeah, it was so poor. I knew that it was a broken country, and that's why we were going; there was a need. It was probably the first real significant exposure I'd had to a third world country. It was definitely eye-opening, and exhausting as well, because you're taking on so much information. We did a whole lot of touristy things, which was like oh yeah this is interesting, but did we really come all this way to spend money on tourism - especially in a country that we were seeing was so poor - it felt like we were showing off our wealth. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

*Just seeing incredible poverty, and just seems crazy circumstances and living conditions, and it went on into the horizon, and just how vast it was. It went to the horizon - just kind of that level of - not poverty, but you know. It was unlike anything I'd ever seen. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil, and the Amazon)*

As first-hand exposure to different countries creates an awareness of difference, observing poverty had contributed to changes in the ex-students' perspectives on life.

Analysis of interview data on poverty, emphasised that it was the different levels of poverty that impacted on the ex-students so significantly, with many witnessing extreme poverty for the first time. This included seeing the deprivation of basic human needs such as shelter, drinking water, and health. Seeing the effects of these deprivations on local people accentuated their perceptions of these differences and the harsh reality of living in such conditions. For example, Christopher recalled:

*We went to a rubbish dump site in Cambodia, which was quite different. There were people whose job it was to scavenge for recyclables in the dump. So yeah, walking around there - probably a dump site in any place is not a nice experience, but the fact of actually people living on and within the site with the sorts of smells and sites that are there, and a lot of them kids, that kind of left an impact on me. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

This was also exemplified in a teacher's comment:

**It is really confronting, because it's nothing like they've been exposed to before. They suddenly realise that travel isn't just picture postcards; there's actually real people's lives going on in the background and that sometimes real people's lives are pretty miserable. (Claire, Teacher)**

For one ex-student, this dramatically altered the direction of her life and career, as the following extracts from her conversation demonstrated:

*Jackie: Just the poverty in general, and the general wellbeing of people's health, and that they don't kind of see it as priority. Just to survive; food on the table kind of level. Even if they did have a disease or cold or injury or something, they would just kind of put it off because there's priority of those things.*

Interviewer: So, the poverty side of it sort of affected you, did it?

*Jackie: Yeah; it raised questions on what can I do to help.*

Interviewer: Just explain to me what you're doing now, and what you've done since you left school.

*Jackie: Okay, so I actually studied chemistry. I don't know why. It's because I was - I felt I was good at chemistry. Because I didn't know jobs like midwifery existed, yeah, so after doing chemistry for two years I decided to start my midwifery. So I was like, okay I can do something to help. It's been going really good. So, my ultimate goal is to volunteer in those countries.*

Interviewer: Where would you like to go?

*Jackie: I was thinking Cambodia, but not many placements are placed there, so may be Fiji or...so it kind of gives you a step into rural midwifery and...I've actually been to Fiji before on a mission trip actually - for a health mission trip*

*and I wanted to see what they do. So, I didn't do much; I just did blood pressure checking, cholesterol and that. It was interesting.*

Interviewer: What did you learn from that?

*Jackie: Oh, that? I want to do more. It was so fun, and even though we don't speak their language like we were in Cambodia, you can tell that they're so appreciative and you can see a change, just seeing them smiling and things, because I just - what did I do, and then I just put like ointment on things, and also because I'm not qualified in anything, I was quite borderline, like what am I doing there kind of thing, but I really wanted to go. (Jackie, volunteer study tour, Cambodia, 2012)*

Jackie had been concerned for the well-being of the local people and believed that being exposed first-hand to extreme poverty influenced the steps she took in her career to become a midwife. For Jackie, training as a midwife was a major life choice that involved intensive study at university, which enabled her to build a meaningful career. This allowed her to make deep personal connections with people, especially mothers, and make a difference to people's lives, helping her gain a sense of contributing to a better society. This desire to help people was also echoed in the following excerpt.

*Because you are there and you are seeing people who are struggling ...so you have compassion for them, you want to help. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

Steph had a genuine desire to help and support the local community, but was sceptical about the level of help the group provided:

*We were supposed to put on the corrugated iron wall and the bamboo flooring but because the wood was just so hard from being so hot and dry, none of us - not even the guys or the male teachers - could cope. So, the local builder did all the nailing. He was just so much more efficient and capable than we were. I don't think we achieved anything significant for them... I don't think that we had to be there to give that gift. We could have given it to them. I understand the value of meeting physical needs, and I very much know that we have so much to give in terms of financial support and I'd be more than happy to continue giving that, but to be honest we're not very good builders, so let's go in and provide them money for the builders to do the building and us work with the community... person-to-person interaction, and show we care, and use the skills that we do have. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia)*

The findings suggested that the ex-students had seriously questioned the value and relevance of their international study tour experience and felt the experience was superficial both for themselves and the local host community. This raises questions about the importance of these types of study tours and the limited skills that high-school students have to offer underprivileged communities.

Further analysis of the data showed that for many ex-students, dealing with poverty had been associated with witnessing other inequalities and social divisions:

*You see some wonderfully nice cars driving around, and very well-off families dropping their kids off, and then just down the road you've got slums and homeless. It's a big clash, whereas in New Zealand it doesn't occur like that. Everyone's more or less middle class, and everyone's on the same page more or less. So, to see that divide like that was definitely eye-opening. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

Andrew's comment revealed that many ex-students had been confronted by issues of deep inequality for the first time, during their international study tour. These issues included vast disparities in wealth, social class, and social status. As Andrew explained, comparisons with New Zealand society showed that New Zealand was perceived to be a fairer and more equitable place to live.

Differences in living conditions, lifestyles, food, traditions, history, and cultural behaviour, also emerged as points of comparison for the ex-students. For example, several made comparisons with their homes in New Zealand.

*Their apartment was tiny, probably about the size of my garage at home, it only had one bathroom, two bedrooms and a kitchen, maybe even smaller. I am used to it being bigger. I grew up on a farm - so completely different. (Brenna, language study tour, Taiwan, 2007)*

Andrew explained the reality of staying in Mexico for part of his international study tour:

*I think it was a bit overwhelming seeing that much wealth suddenly. It's not something you're used to being surrounded by in New Zealand as well, and you do appreciate that they've got all that. They've got this money and things like that, but we also have just a great way of living; we've got a lot of freedom, and we can just walk around the street so easily, whereas they can't. They don't have that security. So they've got to be protected, and they all lived in nice condos, and they had the protection - the private neighbourhoods that had security guards; Segregated communities that had a big wall to get inside, and lovely on the inside, just to keep out the crime. So if you don't have that, you've got people breaking into these neighbourhoods and going to these houses, but once you're inside these neighbourhoods, it's an artificial world, and it was just like an upper class America. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

This sense of difference in living conditions was echoed in the following excerpt:

*I think it was called an "eco-lodge." So, it was focused on sustainability, and I don't think there was electricity. It was focused on fresh food and it was quite complementary, and everything was very basic. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil, and the Amazon)*

This comment suggested that the room was inferior in quality, containing only the essential necessities, and that Steven was used to a higher standard of living in New Zealand. Furthermore, the data suggested that the experience had been humbling for him, and he had started questioning his materialistic and comfortable lifestyle. However, the data also showed that the inferior (different?) environment and experience gave Steven a sense of adventure.

Taken together, these responses indicated a broader theme of cultural difference, implying that living in New Zealand offered greater personal freedom, safer communities, and better material standards of living.

Analysis of the interview data showed a variety of perspectives on the topic of “food,” and “cultural habits,” or differences they had experienced:

*In Japan it's actually a culture to finish all your food. I remember at this restaurant we were having food, and then my friends, they had just left their food because it was very big - they couldn't finish it. Then they just wandered off to somewhere else. Then the waiter actually told them to go back, sit down and eat it, as it's disrespectful for the cook and restaurant. (Michelle, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

The ex-students had used dining opportunities to learn, and eating together had been an important way to connect with host families and other students while on tour. Many had realisations about the relationship between food and a cultural experience and had experimented with local cuisine. For example, Steven recalled:

*We arrived in the jungle by canoe and then hiked ten mins into the rainforest. There was a kind of make-shift table there, and there was a fire pit. So, we went there, and they cooked us a whole fish on the fire, and a whole chicken. I remember it just being kind of on sticks, like big skewers, and the fish was the same - was wrapped in tinfoil, and it was basically just cooking on the fire with it burning. I think we just had chicken, fish, and rice, and I guess some vegetables. We ate it off some kind of waxy big palm leaf. I think we had cutlery that might have been carved out of some kind of wood, but I remember at the time and a few years later, every day I was like, that was one hundred percent the best meal of my life. It was so magical kind of being there, and hammocks everywhere, and just cooking in the rainforest. (Steven, geography study tour, Amazon rainforest)*

Steven's comment demonstrated the uniqueness of the individual experience and how the ambience and atmosphere of the rainforest had enhanced the cultural dining experience.

Andrew recalled:

*I definitely tried the food. It was a lot of burritos and tortillas... going to different restaurants and a famous restaurant. I forgot what it's called but had some famous chocolate chilli chicken. I came back with an absolute love for Mexican food that never went away.*

Andrew's love of Mexican food was something that he still associated with the international study tour and continued in his life today. Another ex-student had observed the eating habits of her German host family, which had influenced a change in her diet and lifestyle for opposite reasons. Harriett talked about what she referred to as her "vegetarian epiphany moment":

*The eating habits of the host family were disgusting, Overkill; everything was meat. It was meat, meat, meat, meat, and I just thought, no. It was steak tartare. Host family fed me steak tartare; that was it. "You do not like? Nein?" So yeah, she just dumped it in front of me like it - and the whole family were just troughing. I was a vegetarian by the end of the trip, and I've stayed vegetarian since then. (Harriett, language study tour, Germany, and France)*

Harriett believed that participation in the international study tour had impacted on her life by turning her into a vegetarian. As she explained, "going vegetarian, it's a big milestone for somebody." She was still a vegetarian and explained that "for a number of years I was vegan as well. I'm incredibly pro-choice when it comes to that sort of thing."

For many ex-students, participation in the international study tour highlighted cultural differences and similarities, as evidenced in these excerpts:

*We went to the museum in Delphi and there was something about how the statues of Greek gods - when they have the eyes - everything about them as a statue is so detailed, but the eyes are just full, enclosed kind of eyes, and I thought that was kind of like the spirits and the gods, and the importance to them, and I kind of saw that in a cool way to New Zealand because that's the same traditions as Māori. (Karen, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

*Especially in Turkey is where I noticed it the most; walking down the streets, and the clothing we were wearing compared to the ladies, and then the men and their reactions, Yeah, it was just really different. I had to be covered up, so we had to be conscious of where we were going, and what we were wearing. I feel like that's very different to New Zealand. (Bella, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey)*

*The culture in Greece is probably more similar to New Zealand; friendly, happy, relaxed people - well, most. Then, Turkey is just completely different; the women don't come out, it's all men. I think some of the men were a little bit too friendly. (Courtney, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

These excerpts demonstrated both positive and negative features of an international study tour. The association between observing cultural differences in living conditions,

lifestyles, food, traditions, history, cultural behaviour, and religious beliefs, were significant, as exposure to unfamiliar experiences resulted in many ex-students suffering from culture shock. For some, culture shock had a deep, meaningful, and lasting effect and instigated changes in their lives. For example, Paul recalled being shocked at the beliefs of the local people when visiting Japan, and how this influenced Japanese society:

*It was a bit of an eye-opener for the Japanese public to sort of see a foreigner in a wheelchair in public. They stared at me. I remember a conversation with a hotel owner or a manager, with our group, to a leader in Japanese and it was around this boy shouldn't be here. I found out their beliefs sometimes affect the way they perceive disability. The Buddhists, they believe in reincarnation, and as a result, if you come back as disabled, you've done something wrong in a previous life. In Japanese society, it's expected that the disabled people go into sheltered environments, so they're actually excluded from everyday society. (Paul, language study tour, Japan)*

Participation in the international study tour to Japan allowed Paul to experience his disability from a different perspective. He reflected that this experience made him curious about his own thoughts and feelings about religion:

*I was born an Anglican - in an Anglican family, and I did Sunday School and went to church. The only religion that was sort of around in a teenager's face was Christianity, so after the trip I started digging into these other areas of different societies. I was like, well we're all right - why can't we all be right - why do we have to assert our religion on other people? That's how society's always been about conquering; through religion and belief, and it just doesn't make sense to me. So I'm agnostic.*

Consequently, Paul felt his visit to Japan had permanently changed his philosophical outlook on life,

*...developing me as a person, being more open to the world, being more open to customs, being more open and not so Eurocentric.*

This comment illustrated that Paul was developing a greater sense of self as he started questioning his identity and religious upbringing.

Experiencing different cultures and ways of life highlighted for many ex-students, the different living conditions and economic and social challenges faced by many people around the globe. Since the ex-students in this study all resided in New Zealand, the socio-cultural and natural differences they experienced on the international study tour were

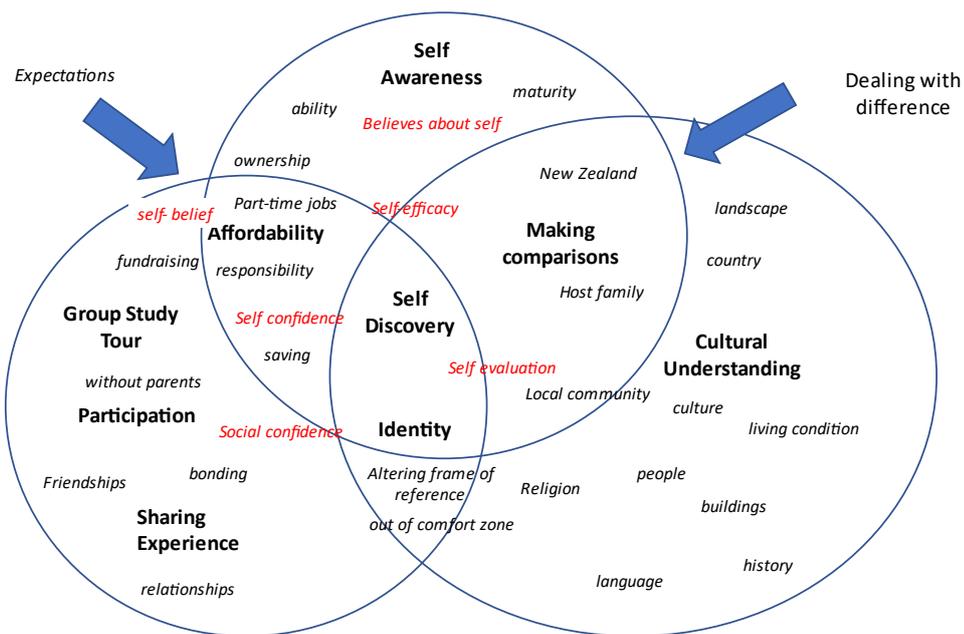
generally compared to growing up in New Zealand and their everyday living conditions, which was in a safer and more sheltered environment.

#### 4.6 Voyages of Discovery

For many ex-students, the international study tour had created opportunities for individual learning. The data revealed that this was complex, and there was significant interplay between learning from each other and self-discovery. The data showed that this was a multifaceted approach encompassing interactions between the ex-students and others, which resulted in learning essential and interpersonal skills. These skills were utilised prior to departing on their international study tour, whilst on tour, and in later life.

**Figure 19**

*Voyages of Discovery*



The cluster diagram (figure 19) demonstrates that individual voyages of discovery began before the ex-students had departed on the tour and continued during the international study experience. The diagram shows that the connections between affordability, part-time jobs, and fundraising, prior to the international study tour, were significant in presenting learning opportunities for self-discovery. This enabled the ex-students to reflect on who they were, by taking ownership and becoming more self-aware. The diagram emphasises that the ex-students became more self-aware during the international

study tour by dealing with difference, sharing experiences, and making comparisons, which enhanced the process of self-discovery.

#### ***4.6.1 Affordability***

Since international study tours typically cost thousands of dollars, the predominant category of “cost” emerged in relation to the international study tours. Analysis of the “cost” category proved invaluable for identifying issues around affordability and managing the price expectations of parents. From a teaching perspective, notions of cost and affordability presented the teachers with several challenges. For example:

**We try to keep the cost down. This year, because the prices are so much cheaper, we’re actually going back to what we did in the first trip. So yeah, I mean, you are governed a lot by price.** (Brooke, Teacher)

**For some families I felt really sorry - the expense - because when we started it was \$5500. I used my private connections... mainly staying with host families. First it was cost-cutting, but it made it more personal.** (Helen, Teacher)

For some ex-students, cost and affordability had not been an issue, as their parents paid for them to participate in the study tours. For example:

*My brother had been on a French trip to Noumea previously, so I think they thought it was a lot of money, but my mum never got to travel, so she always wanted us to travel.* (Emma, language study tour, Germany, and France, 1997)

*Mum was the traveller. Mum knew the benefits of seeing the world, so basically said, yes, he’s going.* (Paul, language study tour, Japan)

This sentiment was echoed by the teachers:

**Parents pay, mostly. I mean, it always astounds me. We’re lucky in this environment of this school. It’s a fairly wealthy area, a decile ten school. I mean, you go to the meeting with a deposit in mind and you get some parent saying, can I pay in full now?** (Claire, Teacher)

For other ex-students, the cost of the study tour had been an opportunity to take responsibility, and ownership. This was particularly highlighted in the following excerpt:

*I had it saved away when the trip came up, and I think that was a big factor in being able to go to my parents and say, I want to go on this - it’s not going to be a burden - I’m paying for it, I promise.* (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)

Other responses echoed this sentiment:

*I had a bit of savings. I definitely had a bit of savings, and then Mum and Dad did pay the rest. I did pay them back. Working on the farm, and also, I got a job that summer, started paying them back from like \$50 a week until I started earning a bit more. Yeah, it was good. I think it's a good way for me to do it; learn how to pay for things. (Karen, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

*Raising all the money was probably the tough part. I worked three days a week; I think I did Saturday, Sunday and then an afternoon job. I ended up quitting my job because I didn't like it, which was a bit stressful, but then I got a housekeeping job at a motel, just to pay for the trip. (Courtney, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

Courtney believed that participating in the international study tour had instilled in her some valuable life skills:

*I think getting a job and saving for it has set me up to have those habits now, as well; knowing that hard work does pay off and that you do need to - if you want something you have to earn it.*

For other ex-students, participation in the international study tour had required a commitment to fundraising,

*It was a hell of a commitment. You did your schoolwork and then pretty much Saturdays were spent making pizzas, pickling onions - I think we fundraised over 18 months. (Harriett, language study tour, Germany, and France)*

The notion of taking responsibility and ownership was reiterated in the teachers' comments. For example:

**Some of them have worked for ages. Some of them work in retail - a couple of the girls work in clothing shops and malls and various other things. I know one kid - one young lady who's coming on the next trip, has been baby-sitting and saving up all her baby-sitting money, because she heard about the trip in Year 9 and wants to come. So, she's been saving up money for the last three years. (Edward, Teacher)**

**I think some of the years past, probably for one or two of those kids their parents have just paid the eight grand, and they've gone on the trip, and, that's what happened, but for the far majority of them, they had to work really hard for it. So, every dollar they spent, and everything that they did was a product of their hard work, and I think that's much better than just being given a ticket. (Debbie, Teacher)**

The data indicated that the part-time jobs, fundraising activities, and saving, had helped the ex-students take ownership of their responsibilities, and make informed decisions about their levels of commitment and responsibility. The data suggested that they had demonstrated self-motivation and self-determination, and participating in activities

before travelling appeared to have instilled a positive work ethic in many, and encouraged a sense of autonomy. For many ex-students, this had allowed them to become more self-aware and realise their capabilities and potential.

For many ex-students, the work ethic and self-determination skills gained from the part-time jobs, fundraising activities, and participation in the study tour were important skills and attitudes which had been sustained, and were considered to have contributed to the success of their careers. Courtney, for example, was a single mother studying for a bachelor's degree in teaching. The following response illustrates how self-motivation and her work ethic had become embedded in her later life:

*So, along with my degree, I'm bringing an initiative to New Zealand called "Babes and Picnics." It's been going in Australia for a year and it's for monthly picnic-style gathering where mums can come and connect with other mums in their local areas. So, I'm the New Zealand managing director of all the locations, and we've already got a community of over 700. It's all totally voluntary, none of us are getting any income from it, but I really appreciate what the ambassadors do, and they all share the same passion. It takes quite a lot of time, because of the training and everything that comes with it, it's quite time consuming...but it's exciting. (Courtney, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey,2012)*

Taken together, the data suggested an association between cost, taking ownership, and developing a positive work ethic, and that this combination made the international study tour experience personally extremely meaningful for the ex-students.

For many students, participation in the international study tour had created important opportunities for self-awareness, personal development, individual growth, and improvements in confidence, captured in codes such as "maturity," "confidence," and "responsibility."

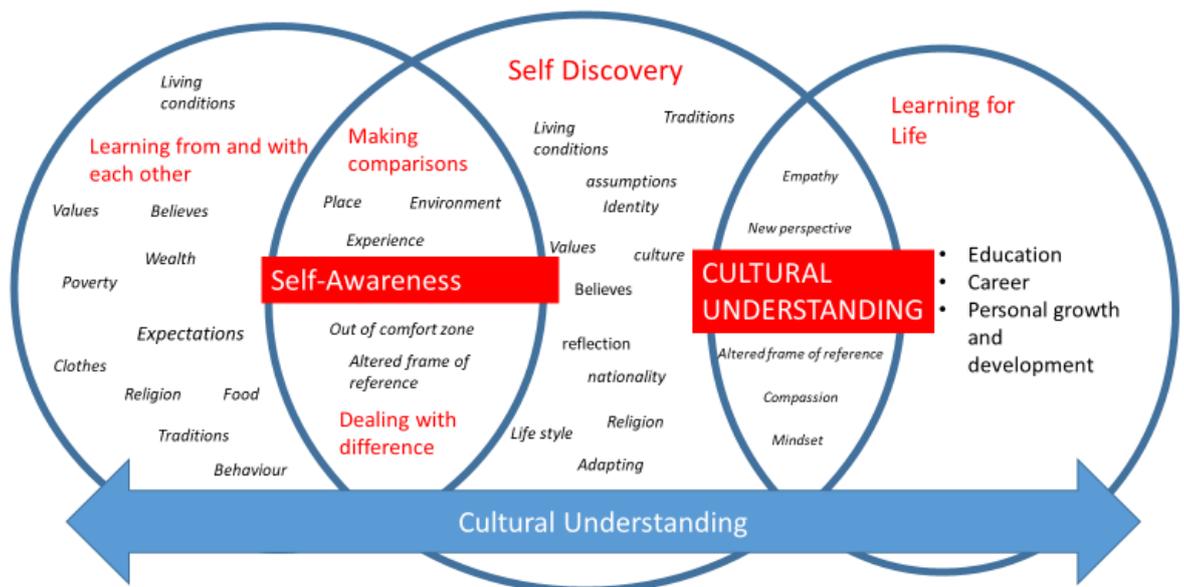
In addition, the international study tours had been opportunities for the ex-students to escape from their daily lives and school routines, allowing them to distance themselves from their parents and parental control. This had created opportunities for self-discovery by stepping outside their individual comfort zone. The international study tours had presented the ex-students with multi-faceted experiences, allowing them to make comparisons to their own lives in New Zealand.

#### 4.6.2 Cultural Understanding

The data indicated that cultural understanding was complex and occurred through the combined processes of becoming more self-aware, dealing with difference, making comparisons, and learning from and with each other. These processes are outlined in Figure 20 and indicate that many of the ex-students made comparisons to their own lifestyle and living conditions in New Zealand during and after their tour, altering their frame of reference, which instigated changes in their cultural understandings.

**Figure 20**

#### *Cultural Understanding*



The findings supported the notion that cultural differences generated a range of different pedagogical approaches to learning in relation to cultural understandings, and that this learning took place in variety of different ways. For example, the international study tours opened the eyes of many of the ex-students, as they observed cultural differences and made comparisons to their own lifestyle.

*We saw how some other people live. We go to work all day and sit in an office; they go out on the boats sitting exposed to the sun all day, floating around finding people to buy their produce, trying to sell whatever they have in order to make a living. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia,2008)*

*So, we got to this intersection, and even though there were lights and lines on the road it tended to be optional. So, the guide sort of said to us, right follow me and do exactly what I do. He broke us into groups, and he said, you step out confidently on to the road, you keep an eye - make eye contact with the vehicles coming towards you and you keep going and you do not stop, It was just so foreign, because of course coming from little old New Zealand where people obey the traffic lights and things like that – we were all okay. All the vehicles - the little road scooters veered around us– we were buzzing. I would have paid just for this experience - this is awesome. (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

For other ex-students, first-hand exposure to the sounds and smells of a foreign destination created a cultural understanding of different lifestyles. An excerpt from Christopher’s interview exemplified this:

*I think the biggest experience for me was really just being in a vehicle or on foot, walking around, noisy traffic, experiencing the markets, the sites, the sounds, lots of people shouting at you, the smells of the fish and chicken on the grills, stalls with dried fruit and insects all of that. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

These data demonstrated that it tended to be the simple, ordinary things, such as walking around or crossing the road, that became extraordinary, emphasising the cultural differences between New Zealand and the foreign destinations. The data suggested that the ex-students had drawn on a range of different cultural and sensory stimuli (e.g. sights, sounds, and smells), and that these had prompted improved cultural understandings and an ability to relate to the host communities. The data further indicated that cultural understanding was an important aspect developed during a study tour, and was sustained in later life, with the ex-students having increased cultural sensitivity and cultural appreciation of their own culture in New Zealand. As one teacher explained:

**Travel is so worthwhile. It breaks down cultural barriers and all sorts of things, and I think particularly for Kiwis - it’s almost an obligation. Because we’re a long way away from so many other places, we need to expose ourselves and experience other cultures, and ways of doing things, and beliefs and systems, and ethnicities - to grow and understand perspectives of other people, as well as ourselves. (Frank, Teacher)**

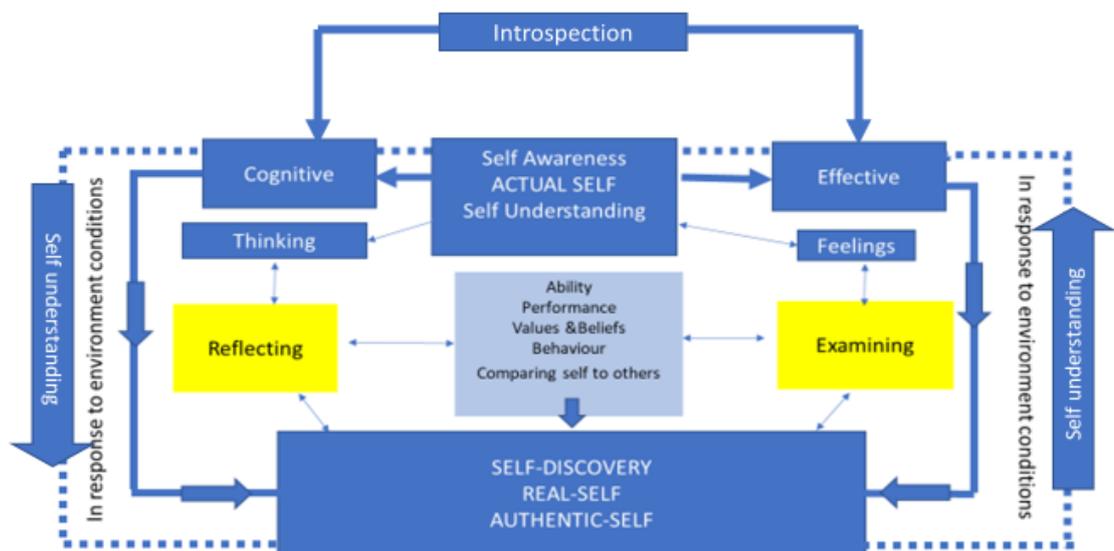
The international study tour had presented the ex-students with multi-faceted experiences, allowing them to make comparisons to their own life in New Zealand. This resulted in improvements to intercultural awareness and an increased appreciation of their own country, culture, and lifestyle.

### 4.6.3 Self-Awareness

It is important to note that the findings showed distinct relationships between making comparisons, self-awareness, and self-discovery, and although they are discussed separately, they are complex interwoven concepts that encouraged personal autonomy. Figure 21 illustrates the process and connections between “self-awareness” and the process of “self-discovery.” In simple terms, self-awareness led to self-understanding, which in turn led to a process of self-discovery. This is discussed in greater depth in the section of self-discovery (4.6.4).

**Figure 21**

*The Process and Connection between Self-Awareness and Self-Discovery*



Individual learning appeared to have occurred because of the differences and dealing with difference. Dealing with difference came from many different aspects of the study tour, including travelling as part of the group, travelling without parents, experiencing different cultures, and making comparisons with their own lifestyle and living conditions in New Zealand. Since all the ex-students had grown up in New Zealand society in a similar cultural environment, there were commonalities in their cultural frames of reference, expectations, attitudes, behaviour, interpretations, and understandings of the world. Consequently, the experience of difference had made the ex-students more self-aware, changing their perspectives on life, and altering their cultural frame of reference and ability to understand others.

For most ex-students, altering their individual cultural frame of reference had allowed them to cope and deal with many different aspects of their later life. The following excerpts demonstrated how understanding cultural differences had influenced individual thinking in relation to the participants' careers:

David discussed working for the Ministry of Social Development.

*The first part of it was working as a case manager to the front-line staff, so dealing with people in the very bottom of the socio-economic scale who are on benefits and living with \$131.00 a week to support themselves. Yeah, I think it wasn't as shocking when I first saw those people and saw how much they were living on, because I'd seen a lot worse in Cambodia, so it put things into perspective. Yeah, I just wasn't as shocked as I might have been if I'd never seen any of that. (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

Steph discussed her role as an engineer of healthcare products.

*I think it gives me a real appreciation for the products that we are thinking about for third world markets, and also, some of our products are non-reusable, so they're disposable, because in Western society that's an infection risk, and so we would throw it out after every patient, but in a third world country that's not really possible. In Cambodia we actually went to a performance one evening run by a doctor, and he played his cello, and then he gave the speech about the hospitals that he's working in and the needs of the hospitals, and the needs for supplies and just the lack of funding, and lack of expertise and lack of equipment, and everything else, and that kind of understanding appreciation that there is another world other than this Western perfect hospital. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

For other ex-students, dealing with difference meant re-evaluating their own identity and their perspectives of the world around them, including an increased appreciation for the New Zealand way of life. What stood out for many ex-students was how sheltered, protected, and privileged they were in New Zealand.

*We were quite sheltered little schoolgirls. I came from a place that was very much like just white middle-class people in Devonport. I didn't have a lot of experience with other people and other cultures. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France, 1997)*

*I definitely think I would have come back more mindful of my life in New Zealand and thinking wow, we have an incredible country, a really privileged life, and I think I definitely would have been grateful about it. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil and the Amazon, 2010)*

For most ex-students, this social consciousness, cultural awareness, and increased appreciation of New Zealand, had become an integral part of their personal or

professional life, and part of their lifelong learning process. Furthermore, the findings support the idea that self-awareness was linked to the development of social skills and communication skills, and individual improvements in self and social confidence were linked to participation in the international study tour. Travelling as part of a group and sharing experiences had been an important part of enabling many ex-students to feel confident in social situations, and being surrounded by other ex-students 24 hours a day, meant they could not put up a façade, but had to be themselves, their real and authentic-self.

#### **4.6.3.1 Social and self-confidence**

For many ex-students, social confidence had emerged from being part of the study group and becoming more self-aware. This was exemplified in the following excerpt:

*I was the leader for the kapa haka, so I think that definitely made me more confident towards performing, because that was the very first time that I actually performed - well, sang in front of people. (Michelle, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

This excerpt demonstrated that Michelle had made judgements about her ability to sing and perform, becoming more self-aware and prouder to lead the Māori cultural *kapa haka* group, showing New Zealand's traditional heritage and culture through performing arts. The data suggested that this positive social experience improved her self-esteem and boosted her self-confidence. Michelle believed that taking part in the group cultural performance in Japan as part of the study tour instilled in her more self-belief, and influenced her choice of career:

*I am actually a piano teacher, now. That was the very beginning of my music - performing career. I think since then I was becoming more confident with myself. Like I said, I was very shy, and then it just made me more open - more extroverted. I think that was challenging for me, but that was really good. (Michelle, language study tour, Japan)*

Similarly, Jackie believed that her social confidence and self-confidence had improved in the group environment and travelling without her parents:

*I was really shy before the trip. I didn't like public speaking – speeches. I hated them, but because you have to kind of fend for yourself on the trip, because your mum's not there it made me more confident of these areas as well, in public speaking especially, and kind of getting out of your comfort zone. (Jackie, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

The excerpt from Jackie's interview showed she had gained confidence in her own personal abilities, by becoming more self-aware, and she was willing to make informed personal choices, take risks, and change her behaviour to overcome her fear and embarrassment of public speaking. Furthermore, Jackie considered the social confidence and self-confidence she gained were still important in her current studies, enabling her to make presentations in front of her class at university without being self-conscious. For many ex-students, improvements in self-confidence had enabled them to take more risks and feel less insecure, facilitating success in many different areas later. The following excerpts revealed some of the thoughts and feelings of the ex-students:

*I probably learned a lot about myself in that I like to have an adventure, and I like to go and try new things or do new things, or any experiences, it made me more resilient. (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

*It gave me a lot more confidence to travel to other places as well and know that I could be comfortable in different cultures. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

During and immediately after the study tours, teachers also noted changes in students' social and self-confidence. For example:

**I think for a lot of kids they come back much more confident people than they went away. You can see an openness in the face that wasn't there before when they were a little bit more introverted, shoulders hunched up, face down, eyes down; now they're looking at people, they're chin up, and engaged and happy, more confident. (Brooke, Teacher)**

As these responses illustrated, participation in international study tours boosted personal confidence, which was evident to others through changes in behaviours, such as displays of positive body language and use of eye contact.

Collectively, the excerpts from the ex-students and teachers demonstrated the profound effects the international study tours had on building social confidence and self-confidence, and how the ex-students had maintained this in later life.

#### ***4.6.3.2 Social and communication skills***

Analysis of the data revealed a continuum of interplay between individual confidence, social confidence, and developing social skills and interpersonal skills. For many students, self-awareness, sharing experiences, and dealing with difference, were important parts of the learning process.

One student's encounter with a tour guide had helped him reflect on his own ability. Steven had been shocked at the reaction of a tour guide to his inability with languages, and his self-confidence was affected, making him doubt his language ability and have feelings of inferiority. This contributed to changes in his perspective on life, altering his choice of further education, as the following extract demonstrated.

*Tita, the tour guide, he could speak about six languages including Portuguese, Spanish, German, English and Italian. I remember him asking us how many languages we could speak, and he was going on, oh can you speak three - four? We were like, no. Two? He's like, not even two - not even a little bit? I remember him just saying, you're so stupid. Kind of joking, but not really. I could see while we were talking to him that he was genuinely surprised that in New Zealand that we weren't taught to speak more than one language....Following the Amazon trip, I was going to take Spanish- entry at NCEA Level 3...that was definitely a conscious decision I made on the trip that I would learn another language, that didn't work out because of the career advisor, and also my parents. Career-wise I'd say it may have influenced my academic trajectory, so when I came to university, I ended up studying physical geography in a Bachelor of Science, majoring in geography, minoring in Spanish. So, the Amazon trip definitely would have had an influence on me. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil and the Amazon, 2010)*

Furthermore, this excerpt suggested differences in cultural thinking in relation to language learning, as Steven had not considered learning another language before travelling on the study tour, as this was not considered a priority by his parents. However, the tour guide viewed languages as essential skills for effective communication. It is worth noting that despite New Zealand having two official languages (*te reo* [Māori language] and English), Steven did not appear to consider New Zealand bilingual society, and was either naïve or narrow-minded in his thinking about language learning before the study tour. These data illustrated the complexities around cultural language thinking, and as the excerpt demonstrated, Steven established a purpose and direction by identifying that he wished to learn a language. He is now fluent in Spanish and dreams of living permanently in a native Spanish-speaking country.

For other ex-students, social and communication skills developed during the study tour enabled friendships, connections, and confidence. This was exemplified in the following excerpt:

*I am now more confident socially... because when you realise how much effort goes into communicating with someone when you have very limited vocabulary, it really forces you to do the best that you can and use things like expressions and body language and tone and voice. You realise that it's not just the words that you need to get your point across. So I think that really helped my communication*

*skills, by realising that you don't always need the words, but when you've got them, you've got everything at your disposal to really communicate. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

This excerpt suggested that Andrew had been determined to communicate, and re-evaluated his communication abilities and skills, realising the importance of non-verbal communication as a way to add a new layer of meaning, and accentuating his ability. In addition, the data also suggested that he appreciated the importance of a second language and was proud of his ability, which gave him self-confidence, reinforcing his own language proficiency.

Andrew believed his experience of speaking Spanish on the study tour had not only improved his self-confidence, but influenced his life in several ways. Firstly, it encouraged him to continue learning Spanish:

*After the Mexico trip I absolutely loved it. To be honest, in fourth form when I was studying Spanish, I didn't have a lot of motivation. I sat at a table where there were six of us; out of six of us I was the only one that tried. I had lost motivation because I was around with them, and I was very close to dropping Spanish. If it wasn't for the trip I wouldn't have continued. So, I fell in love with Spanish and then realised that I needed to do something else like that again. So, I did a year in Uruguay, part-time English teaching, and then part-time as a student in the school that I was teaching.*

The data suggested that the international study tour was life changing and instrumental in changing the way in which Andrew thought and felt about languages, renewing his interest and excitement in Spanish. Furthermore, the data also suggested that he had become more self-motivated and committed to language learning than before, which had altered his educational trajectory, encouraging him to travel and learn overseas.

Secondly, Andrew believed he developed important communication skills whilst on the study tour, which he later utilised in his role as a sale representative for a leading New Zealand beverage company:

*The conversational skills by far - I use it every day when you're talking all the time, 9am to 9pm pretty much some days. I do a little bit of emails, but apart from that it's pretty much conversational all day, and it can be exhausting, but having had skills overseas, practising - really putting effort into conversational skills - pay off dividends when you're in a job that requires so much mental concentration. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

The self-confidence and communication skills that Andrew gained on the international study tour had been maintained, and over time, Andrew had realised that learning a

language had changed the way he thought and interacted with others, expanding his capacity to communicate, and making it easier to verbally communicate in everyday life.

In the same way, Paul believed the successful management of his work force was partly due to his communication skills and the cultural understandings developed on the study tour(s):

*Well, I've got a team of 42 people that report into me directly and indirectly, and as I'm going around and talking to the various team members, and I know how to interact with them - I've got a couple of guys from India, I've got a couple of guys from China, I've got a couple of guys from Thailand - it's about I guess inter-cultural communication. It's about how they might speak to me, and rather than me react because that's not the way we speak to people in New Zealand, I've got more of an understanding that that's the way that they've been brought up... I've got to, as a manager, respect and understand that. (Paul, geography and language study tours, Hawaii, 2001 and Japan, 1997)*

This excerpt illustrated that Paul recognised the importance of inter-cultural communication for effective communication in the workplace, and suggested that the cultural differences Paul experienced on the international study tour had had a lasting impression on his life.

For other ex-students on international language study tours, trying to communicate and speak another language had been problematic:

*The first family, they didn't really speak much English, but they really tried their best, and I tried communicating with words – nouns - and they kind of praised me for trying so hard to try and talk to them. We tried to have conversations, and I showed her pictures and things of New Zealand and tried to explain it through nouns; "big tree." We kind of tried learning about each other. (Jackie, language study tour, Japan, 2010)*

The data indicated that through the process of self-awareness, some ex-students had assessed their own ability, learning to be patient and persevere. The ex-students had started to believe in themselves, resulting in improved communication and social skills, which were still being utilised in later life. One reported:

*I feel like it sort of cemented French for me; I sort of remembered it more. I can still speak enough French to hold a basic conversation. So, going into working in the airport and dealing with French passengers, I was able to at least say "thank you" and "hello" and "morning" and converse with them. (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia)*

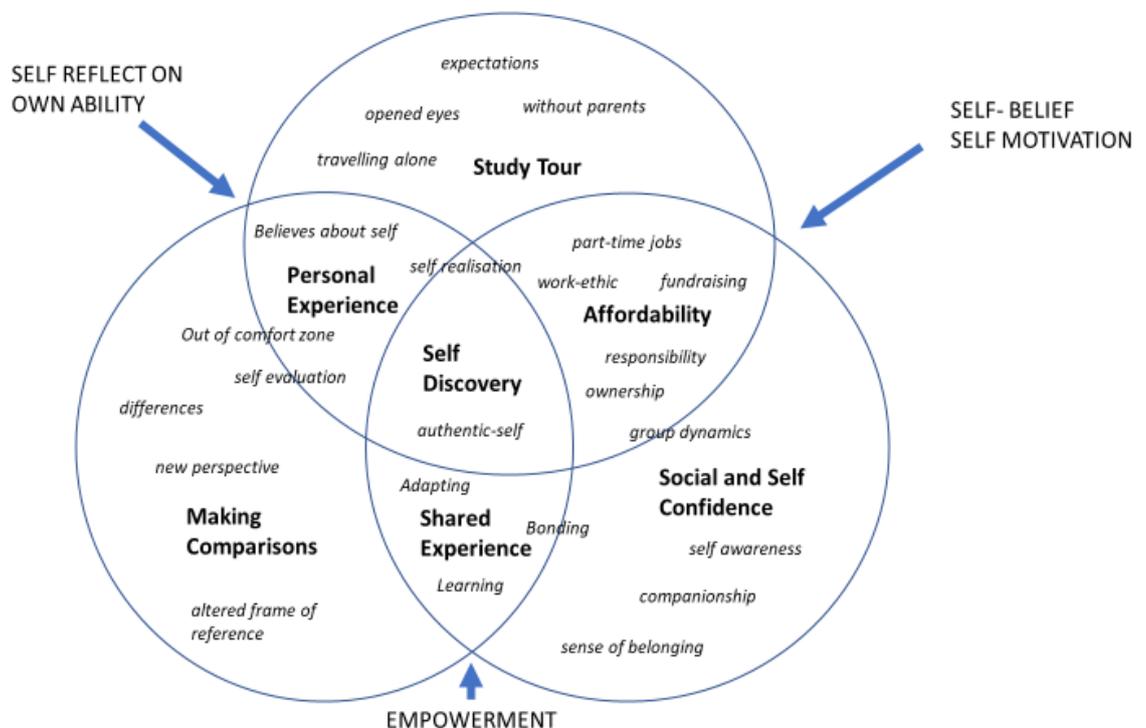
Jane believed that the language skills she had learnt on the international study tour had improved her self-confidence and reinforced her language ability. She felt that French people she came into contact with appreciated the personal touch she provided by speaking their language when they arrived to or departed from New Zealand, and this gave her a sense of personal pride and job satisfaction.

#### 4.6.4 Self-Discovery

For many ex-students, travelling on an international study tour had been an opportunity to travel without parents and a chance for transition - the opportunity to take responsibility and ownership and reflect on their own thoughts and ability. This had empowered them to develop improvements in their personal autonomy, self-confidence, and discover themselves by experiencing cultural and societal differences.

**Figure 22**

*Factors of Self-Discovery*



Analysis of the categories outlined in Figure 22 was important in identifying self-discovery as a central link that combined the categories, revealing it was more than self-awareness, or self-evaluation. It was searching for the real self that had instigated change

in the ex-students. Hence, one of the most important findings to emerge from this research was that the international study tour experience cultivated the process of self-discovery and the search for an authentic self. Participation in an international study tour allowed the ex-students to detach themselves from their home environment, relinquish parental control, and view the world from their own personal perspective. This was exemplified in the following excerpts:

*The whole experience felt like we were free in a different country, and Mum and Dad weren't there, and even [though] there were teachers there, we still felt like we could do things, we could be ourselves, and it wouldn't get back to our parents. (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil and the Amazon, 2010)*

The data suggested that the ex-students had been excited about breaking the boundaries imposed on them by their parents, and questioned the need to conform, creating a sense of freedom, personal autonomy, and self-discovery.

*I think because we had been studying about it, what we saw was somewhat expected, but then it's a different thing when you're confronted with it in person or think about the ethics of giving an amputee or a beggar money. They need to survive, but also are they being exploited by somebody else. Who's the pimp? So actually, as a child still I guess, or a teenager, having to make that decision and thinking, well am I affecting whether this person will eat or not - is it the right thing to do to give them money or to not give them money - how much do I give them - those sorts of things - thinking about, which was yeah I guess brought the reality of it home. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

This excerpt demonstrated that for some ex-students, the process of self-discovery had meant examining their inner-self, reflecting on their own personal beliefs and values in order to justify actions and encourage understanding of self. This was evident in the actions that a variety of ex-students undertook. Examples included: Christopher questioning his moral and ethical values; Steven examining his ability to speak a different language and desire to live in a Spanish speaking country; Paul re-evaluating his religious beliefs; Emma assessing her privileged and sheltered life in New Zealand; Steph reaffirming her Christian values and beliefs; Harriett questioning her eating habits; Jane realising "I don't like to be an individual, I like to fit in;" and Michelle coming out of her shell and realising her career aspirations to become a music teacher. The findings suggested that the international study tour presented opportunities for personal autonomy and social development, which were closely linked to improvements in self-awareness and self-realisation, which supported the development of an authentic self. As one ex-student pointed out:

*I think it's probably good for character-building, getting to know who you are, what you can and can't cope with. (Holly, language tour, Mexico, 2009)*

The data indicated that self-discovery and the development of an authentic-self, were important components of individual growth. These important life skills of self and social confidence, communication skills, and independency, appeared to have been permanently embedded into the later life of the ex-students. For many of them, self-discovery was the initial step towards formulating educational, career, and life choices.

## **4.7 Learning for Life**

### ***4.7.1 Reflections Short-term and Long-term***

One of the most significant findings to emerge from the data was that prior to travelling on the study tour, most ex-students had not even considered the long-term benefits the international study tour may or may not provide. As one ex-student explained:

*I think it was just more of jumping at the opportunity and being opportunistic, rather than going, okay, how is the going to affect me in ten years, or my studies or anything. It was more like, yeah, okay let's just do this. (Courtney, classics study tour, Greece, and Turkey, 2012)*

This sentiment was echoed in the following response:

*I just chucked up my hand and said I'd been interested, and next minute I had signed up about a week later after my parents' permission. So, it was very impulsive. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

Taken together, these excerpts demonstrated the excitement and eagerness of the ex-students to participate in the international study tours, implying there was probably a great deal of exposure to the international study tours within the schools. Consequently, there was no evidence that career advancement had influenced the students' decisions to participate in an international study tour. Further analysis of the reasons for participation revealed that the ex-students had been divided in their motivation to participate; some had thought about and reflected on the short-term benefits, relating this to classroom learning, expressed as "good grades" in class or "doing well in exams." Others discussed the opportunity to practise their language skills:

*I was doing German as a language, to go there and experience another culture, and hopefully be able to pick up a bit more of the language. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France, 1997)*

For others, participation in the study tour had been linked to personal reasons and interest:

*So I was really interested in social studies, that being my favourite subject, then I guess the motivation of wanting to make a difference. I think I'd always had an interest in things like questions of poverty; why does it exist, how does it exist, how does it get addressed? So, I guess that had led into wanting to partake in the trip. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

For most ex-students, the main motivation to participate in an international study tour, appeared to have been the opportunity to travel outside New Zealand. This was emphasised in the following responses:

*It was an interesting one, because I heard of the trip and I went, wow that would be an amazing experience, first of all to travel, and to travel to do something, like really engage. I just loved the idea of getting to know a different culture and being there and doing the house-building and being hands-on. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

*At that time, I'd never been to Latin America, and I just loved Spanish. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

Even though previous research suggests that international study tours are assumed to enhance careers, it was evident from the findings that most of the ex-students in this research did not consciously think about or even consider long-term educational or career benefits.

When interviewed in later life, although the ex-students reminisced about their international study tour and shared travel experiences, most had not reflected on the international study tours' meaning until prompted. For example:

*No, I don't think the trip fulfilled the purpose. I mean, I really enjoyed it, and it was a lot of fun, and at the time I was probably absolutely stoked with it, but now that I look back on it, I think it would have been a lot more beneficial to have actually been forced to learn the language and talk to people in the language, whereas they - yeah, we didn't get the opportunity. I think maybe have realised it when I started studying Spanish at university, because a lot of the people that you talk to who studied it at school had also been on school trips. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

The data suggested that the way in which the international study tours were structured and organised, did not allow for a formal opportunity for them as students, to reflect on and consolidate the learning experience. This was reflected in a comment made by one of the teachers:

**Because it's an extra-curricular activity... we asked them to write a little journal and to take notes on the trip, but we never formalised that or made it really meaningful.** (Andrea, Teacher)

Moreover, most adolescent students are not used to reflecting on their experiences in a formal structured manner because this is something that develops in later life. However, when reflecting on the formal educational benefits after the international study tour in later life, a variety of different perspectives were expressed:

*You don't need to go overseas to really learn something for NCEA exam. It wasn't educational; it was more just the experience of travelling and being overseas and being in a foreign country, especially being a third world country, without Mum and Dad.* (Steven, geography study tour, Brazil and the Amazon, 2010)

*Geography; I think it helped educationally from an examination point view. You could actually visualise being on that beach, or being on that street, and being able to describe it. It was so much more real.* (Paul, geography study tour, Hawaii)

*I loved the trip and learned a lot from it. Educationally it's prompted me to be more enthusiastic about history as a subject.* (Karen, classics study tour, Greece and Turkey)

The data showed different views about the perceived benefits in later life, of participation in international study tours.

It was an important finding that when prompted to reflect on their overall experience, all the ex-students in this study considered that the study tour had made a difference to their life and continued to do so either directly or indirectly. This was highlighted in the following excerpts:

*I think it was a great gateway to other experiences, which then in turn shaped my life.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

*Had I not gone on that trip, I would have dropped Spanish. I wouldn't have gone to Uruguay, then I wouldn't have met the professor. So, I wouldn't have travelled to Uruguay, and from travelling to Uruguay, that was what really influenced my travel to Canada as well. So, had I not done that, I probably wouldn't have headed to Canada so, yeah, it always stays with me. I always think about how different my life would have been had I not gone on that trip. So, it definitely led me down a completely different pathway.* (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)

*It is interesting reflecting back on the sorts of things that directly or indirectly that trip spurred or led to. It is difficult to say that it's the one factor, and to isolate that, and say that was what changed everything but I think the fact that I still reflect back on it now kind of shows that it did have some impact and has definitely led me in the way that I have gone on now, and I think a number of other people that have been on the trip have either followed with the similar work path or study*

*path, or has become part of their lives in some way or another. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

Taken together, these comments showed that subconsciously, the international study tour had left a positive psychological impression on the ex-students. For many, it appeared the study tour had started a process of events in their lives, stimulating changes to educational, career, and travel choices in later life. There was also a sense that this had made the international study tour experience more meaningful.

## **4.8 Going Places**

### **4.8.1 Education**

Educationally, the data showed that participation in international study tours had not directly influenced the educational pathway of most of the ex-students, since some had already planned on going to university prior to their study tour. However, the experience of travelling overseas opened the eyes of many of the ex-students and appeared to have directly influenced their decisions about which courses to select. This was particularly highlighted in the following excerpts:

*I was going to do communications originally, but the trip opened my eyes to the world, so I figured out tourism - after leaving school I just went straight into a tourism degree - Bachelor of International Tourism at AUT. (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia, 2012)*

*It helped me decide on what subjects I wanted to focus on, and to an extent what I wanted to do when I got to university. (Paul, geography and language study tours, Hawaii, 2001 and Japan, 1997)*

After travelling to Mexico on an international study tour, Holly believed the trip had affected her educational choices:

*I went to Auckland University and I did a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Arts in commerce and international business and marketing, and then my arts degree was in Spanish. So, I minored in Latin-American studies to continue learning about the fascinating culture. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

For one ex-student, the need to obtain a degree became urgent, as this impacted on what she had wanted to do in later life:

*The trip probably made me more determined that I wanted to go on an OE out of school. So in my mind it was like, well if I want to go on an OE I have to get my qualifications and I have to get a degree. I got a Bachelor of Education and then*

*I went to Brazil with some friends, and then I went to live and teach in London. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France,1997)*

It was interesting to note that although international study tours are often linked to the curriculum and formal educational learning, for many ex-students, it was the informal learning opportunities that had greater significance, imparting a passion for travel, and inspiring learning that influenced decisions in later life. Consequently, the data emphasised the importance of real-life experience and learning that encourages self-understanding. The data also revealed that self-understanding was motivational, empowering the ex-students to make autonomous decisions in line with their abilities and interests.

#### **4.8.2 Career**

From a career perspective, the data indicated that international study tours helped create important opportunities for self-awareness, personal autonomy, and social development, which had directly or indirectly influenced the career paths of many of the ex-students.

The findings also suggested that before embarking on a career, some ex-students consciously saw a direct connection between the international study tour and their choice of career. This was evident in the decision Jackie took to become a midwife after exposure to extreme poverty in a third world country, and the desire for Michelle to become a music teacher after realising her potential in the cultural performances on a study tour.

What stood out for other ex-students was that participation in the international study tour had confirmed their intended career path. The following excerpts illustrated this point:

*I've sometimes thought, would I have done what I've done if I hadn't have gone on the trip? I think possibly the question might still be yes, but at least the trip was my first kind of real experience of somewhere like that, and really affirmed that direction and it's definitely shaped what I've actually done since then. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

*I think the trip just solidified my plan for the next little part of my life, which was just to finish school and get my teaching degree and then work until I had enough money and experience to travel. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France,1997)*

International study tours created an opportunity for the ex-students to reflect on their future goals and aspirations. For example, Emma established a purpose and direction by identifying her own interest in travel and teaching, and the experience of a study tour had

persuaded Christopher to formulate a plan for his education and career, in order to achieve his goals. This was evident in the path that Christopher followed, as the following excerpt demonstrated:

*Following the trip, I started with university and I started studying law and politics and that was what the degree was that I graduated in; so that's where I really focussed on the politics and history of places like Africa and South America. I had an interest more in those sorts of areas, and how they came to be that way, and what's kept them poor and those sorts of things. Then later on in my degree I found out the subject of International Development, and then that's what I went on to do my post-graduate diploma and my masters in and I did that part-time over three years, as I was working interning at the place where I'm now working, which is a non-profit organisation. (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)*

Christopher established his purpose and direction by identifying his motivation to help others in an attempt to alleviate poverty. Christopher is now employed by a non-profit organisation in Auckland that focuses on community development and disaster relief.

Although for other ex-students, the connection to the international study tour was not apparent, a plausible explanation for this finding is the length of time that had passed since the ex-students had participated in the international study tours; also, career choice decisions are complex, influenced by many different factors. Consequently, when discussing career choices, some ex-students could not definitely attribute the study tour as a direct influence, as the following responses showed.

*I think the study tour combined with other experiences shaped and gave me an interest in travel and this industry and made me want to travel and experience new places and other things, but I think the influence is more indirect. (Brenna, language study tour, Taiwan, 2007)*

*I don't know if it would have made a difference, to my career. I definitely think it planted a seed for a lot more compassion for other cultures and countries, but it's hard to say how much of an impact it made, because it has been ten years since, and so there are so many things in my life over those ten years that have changed me into the person I am today. So, yeah it definitely is one of those many things. (Steph, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2008)*

Nevertheless, the data suggested that an international study tour experience was one of the factors that stimulated ideas and intrinsic desires relating to career aspirations, which emanated from self-awareness, personal understandings, and personal interest. It is therefore important to note that an international study tour was only one aspect of a student's life, and a range of other influences may impact their decisions about careers.

Whilst considering the effects of an international study tour on later life, many ex-students felt that participation in the tours had enabled them to prepare for different aspects of their current role, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required. The findings suggested that communication skills, cultural understanding, self-awareness, and improvements in self-confidence, were all important qualities that empowered the ex-students in their current roles. This was evident in the description of communication skills Andrew utilised in his role as a sales representative, and Jane's description of conversing with French travellers at the airport. Fostering global awareness had allowed relationships in the workplace to prosper, evident in the relationship that Paul had developed with his staff, and the coping strategies David utilised in his role at the Ministry of Social Development.

For some ex-students entering the teaching profession, their own recollections of learning outside the classroom helped them make conscious connections to the curriculum and learning, which influenced their roles and decisions as teachers. This was particularly highlighted in a comment by Karen:

*Field trips I feel are extremely beneficial, I've taken a few field trips now already. The kids learned a lot. The one I remember most was an end of year trip based on all the science and social science topics we did in class throughout the year. They were just learning about photosynthesis, so we went on an Auckland gardens trip... So that was quite cool, because I saw similar clicks for them, like I had seen on my trip, talking about what they discussed in class with me throughout the year, and seeing it for themselves. They're like, oh I remember this, or we learned about this. (Karen, classics study tour, Greece and Turkey)*

Karen believed that her positive experience of participating in an international study had influenced her understanding of learning, and that learning was enhanced through real-life experiences. This insight had impacted on her decisions as a teacher to organise out-of-class experiences for her students, to facilitate their learning. The data suggested that the international study tour had had a long-term effect on Karen, shaping her behaviour.

For another ex-student entering the teaching profession, the knowledge gained from travelling on the international study, was still being utilised in her role as a primary school teacher, to educate her own students. For example:

*I teach Year 3 and 4, so they're seven and eight-year olds. I do tell them when we're looking at something - if I've been there, I do talk to them about my experience of going there, and they're always quite interested in what you say. "Oh I've been there - I've been to the Eiffel Tower." So, I've shown them photos*

*before of places - it is quite visual for them.* (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France,1997)

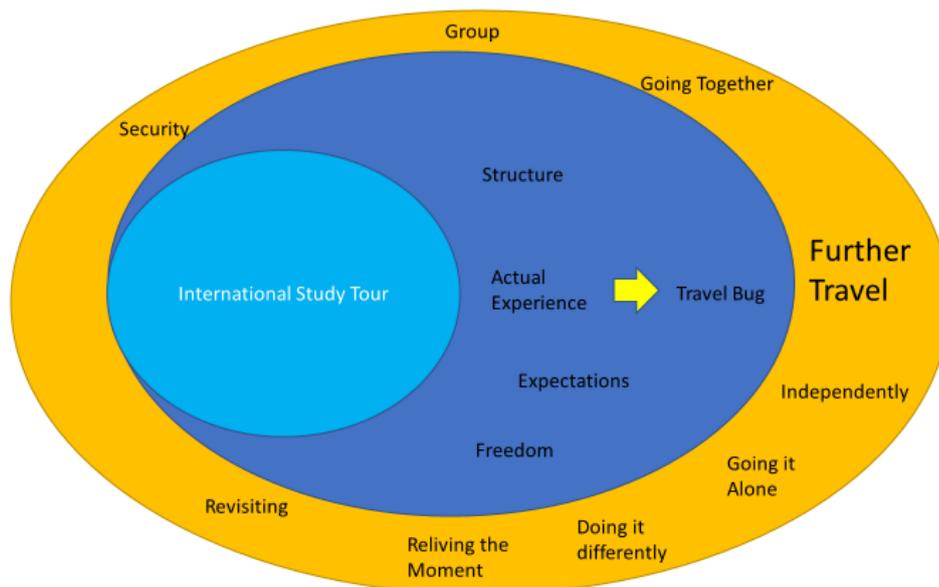
Emma’s interview data indicated that she and her students all benefitted long-term from the international study tour experience. Emma was able to draw on her overseas experience as a valuable teaching resource, bringing excitement and relevance to the class, influencing her students learning. Taken together, the experiences of Karen and Emma demonstrated that participation in international study tours had long-term effects on their decisions, behaviours, and attitudes towards their teaching roles.

The findings enhance understandings of how international study tours directly and indirectly influenced the choices of career. They demonstrate how international study tours helped the ex-students prepare, cope, make decisions, and sustain skills for later life. Furthermore, they illustrate that prior experiences, such as participation in international study tours, can not only have a direct long-term effect on the participants, but also indirectly, on people around them.

#### 4.8.3 Further Travel

**Figure 23**

*Factors Influencing Future Travel Plans*



Participation in international study tours at high school created opportunities for many ex-students to travel overseas for the first time without their parents. These experiences

had opened the eyes of many ex-students who wanted to see more, creating a desire to continue travelling globally. Although the desire for future travel was personal to each of them, numerous factors from the international study tour influenced how the ex-students decided on future travel arrangements. The interplay between the codes and categories in Figure 23 shows how the ex-students were led to decisions about their future travel plans.

Analysis of the category “further travel” was significant in identifying the destinations that the ex-students wanted to travel to, who they would travel with, and the purpose of their visit.

#### **4.8.3.1 *Becoming a travel bug***

The desire to continue travelling was referred to as “getting itchy feet” and getting a “travel bug,” and was a prevalent theme in the data. This desire for further travel was differentiated into those who wanted to travel and explore, and those who specifically wanted to return to the destination of their study tour.

The desire to continue travelling was exemplified by Harriett, who recalled the desire to travel that occurred immediately on her return from the international study tour:

*You sort of go back into a very important year in your scholastic life; couldn't settle, I just couldn't settle down. I was just always thinking, oh my God I can't stay here - things to do - countries to see. (Harriett, language study tour, Germany and France, 1985)*

These data indicated that although Harriett realised she was at an important time in her academic life, the international study tour had given her a sense of personal freedom and self-awareness, which made her view her life from a different perspective. Harriett was torn between her obligations and pursuing her hopes and dreams, so consequently felt unfulfilled in her life in New Zealand, and craved the need to travel more.

Furthermore, Harriett believed the international study tour had affected her ability to settle in later life. A plausible explanation for this finding is that she had to make a compromise between her desire to travel and ability to do so, driving her wanderlust and urge to travel even more. Subsequently, after completing school, she spent 18 months travelling and continues to travel with her family:

*It changed my perspective on life, I did feel unsettled when I got back. I don't think I have lost that, I really don't think I have lost that, I just couldn't settle down. Lots of travel in Asia, Thailand, States, New York. Where else did we go? Italy - been to Italy a couple of times now - no, a few times now, actually. ...Oh, it's a*

*great opportunity to share experiences with my family.* (Harriett, language study tour, Germany and France, 1985)

This comment showed that although Harriett's aspirations to travel had continued, over time, her motivation to travel appeared to have changed. The data showed that whilst at high-school, Harriett viewed travelling as a means of independent escapism, whereas in later life, her motivation for travelling revolved around her family. This desire to continue travelling was echoed by other participants:

*At 34 years old I've been to about 46-47 countries. I'm trying - now that I know that I'm up to 47, I'm saying, right, okay if I live till I'm 80, I want to be up to at least 80 countries. So I'm trying to - every year from now on I'm trying to do at least one country.* (Paul, geography and language study tours, Hawaii, 2001 and Japan, 1997)

*This year I went to Argentina and Uruguay with my sister. I'd just been made redundant from my job in the States, had a little bit of redundancy money and so I said, [name of sister] it's your 30th birthday next year - how about I shout you a trip to Argentina? So that's what I did.* (Paul, geography and language study tours, Hawaii, 2001 and Japan, 1997)

Taken together, these excerpts demonstrated Paul's addiction to travel, which developed from the international study tour and continued in later life. Travelling became an important aspect of Paul's life, and his interview data suggested that he found happiness in anticipating travel experiences. Furthermore, Paul's comments showed that his passion for travel directly impacted on the people around him, encouraging them to travel as well.

Paul believed that his desire for travel also stemmed from living in New Zealand:

*Because we're so isolated being in New Zealand – geographically isolated, I mean ... unless you travel and understand the world around you, we're not going to grow as a society, especially not down in the middle of nowhere.* (Paul, geography and language study tours, Hawaii, 2001 and Japan, 1997)

Paul recognised and appreciated the educational value of travelling and placed personal importance on the need to continue travelling, believing it was beneficial for both himself and society. For other ex-students, the travel bug extended into their academic life and influenced their choice of educational pathways:

*After the trip - when I finished school I then went and studied anthropology and archaeology, but I was like, no this is not what I want to do, and then I switched to tourism. The trip kind of opened my eyes to the world, and then it made me – like realise - travel was something I always wanted to do. Then I saw this tourism degree and I was like, oh my gosh that sounds absolutely amazing. So*

*that's how I decided, and I love it. (Bella, classics study tour, Greece and Turkey, 2012)*

Bella's comments showed that travelling had given the ex-students a clear vision, and that some had planned and shaped their life around this to facilitate further opportunities to travel. Some ex-students participated in foreign exchange programmes whilst at university.

*I travelled a lot in Canada. So, I was at university for a year, and then I spent two months travelling the country afterwards. So I went all the way from east to west, travelled all the way across, had a van which I got with a very close exchange student friend from Scotland, and both of us travelled across the country from east to west, and I suppose in about two months we explored pretty much every nook and cranny in the country. So, it was absolutely wonderful. I absolutely loved Canada. (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)*

These data showed that travelling had become an integral part of many ex-students' lives, and they had become enthralled with travel experiences.

Whilst many ex-students sought out and explored new destinations, others expressed a desire to return to the destination of their study tour. For many, the main motivation was to satisfy their curiosity:

*I want to go back. I want to see if it's any different through our eyes now, as it was when I was younger, and not as experienced as I am now. (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia, 2012)*

*So I really wanted to go back, and I wanted to go and see the girl that I stayed with, and go and see a few things and see if [they] had changed since I'd last been. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

The data showed that the ex-students had a desire and interest to know if things had changed from their initial experience. This suggested that they had matured and consciously grown as individuals, and wanted to revisit the destination and view it from a different perspective.

For others, returning to the same destination revolved around the need to travel independently and view the destination from a different perspective. The motivation for wanting to return independently was linked to the structure of the study tour. This is explained in greater detail in the next section.

#### 4.8.3.2 *Going it alone*

The ideological expectations the adolescents had developed regarding international study tours were usually developed in advance of the actual experience. For most, the appeal of the international study tours was to travel without parents and gain a sense of freedom, however, there was a sense that in reality, the experience was different:

*It was quite filled every day and we didn't have many free days...the itinerary it tells you everything.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

*We could have done so much with that day on our own, but we weren't allowed to.* (Jane, language study tour, New Caledonia)

*I wouldn't say independent travel but travel without family, but still in a fairly - I guess - controlled environment.* (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

In the analysis of the organisation of the international study tour, codes such as “organised,” “planned,” and “structured,” emerged. The findings from the teachers' data set showed that international study tours usually require meticulous planning, and follow strict itineraries and timeframes to ensure teachers and schools adhere to health and safety policies guidelines to protect the safety of the staff and students. A recurrent theme in the interviews was the sense amongst the ex-students, that the international study tour was seen as restrictive and constraining, contradicting their initial hopes about experiencing a sense of freedom. The data showed a conflict between the ex-students' ideological expectations and the reality of the lived experience.

The disconnect between ideological expectations and actual experience was a significant influence on further travel plans and arrangements. Various perspectives were expressed using terms such as “solo traveller,” “travelling alone,” and “unplanned.” The following excerpt demonstrated this influence:

*I'm very much a solo traveller. So when you're travelling by yourself, you have so much flexibility - so much freedom - what you want to do, you don't have to debate about anything with someone; If you want to do something you want to do it - if you want to have a chilled out day, do it. So, for me it's been great; I can go at my own pace, and for me it's not always just about going and sight-seeing every day. I'm very much interested in settling in one area for a while, getting to feel the culture, meeting the locals, things like that. Some people want to just see as many things as they can, whereas for me that's not my priority. I would much rather just go very slowly, and just meet some locals and get a taste of what their culture's like.* (Andrew, language study tour, Mexico, 2009)

The data revealed that Andrew placed no time constraints on travelling, suggesting that he had developed personal strategies to ensure a sense of freedom and explore his personal interests. Andrew clearly felt liberated by his unstructured approach to travelling alone, and had fun interacting and engaging with locals. This sentiment was echoed in the following excerpt:

*When you're going on your own you can sort of do what you want and go where you want, and you don't have to worry about a whole lot of other people or being chaperoned by someone the whole time. So, it's definitely a lot more fun when it's not as structured.* (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)

Both excerpts showed that the ex-students emphasised tactics they had adopted to ensure their sense of freedom as an independent traveller, psychologically, not worrying about others, and focusing on their individual needs to gain a sense of personal fulfilment.

#### **4.8.3.3 Reliving the moment**

For other ex-students, participation in international study tours enabled them to have the confidence and resilience to travel independently, yet many decided to return to the same destination. Comparative analysis was important in recognising that this was often associated with self-confidence or self-belief in terms of the beliefs the ex-students held about themselves.

*I think getting that first taste in Cambodia, there were enough things that we felt comfortable with that we knew in a sense that we could go and experience other things, but then if we needed to, we could sort of come back to that comfort zone of the things that we've done or places that we've been. So, yeah it definitely I guess was that base or that support that was there for us.* (Christopher, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

*It's quite a personal thing for people, but some of it might be to travel independently and have a tourist experience, but also for some maybe from what they'd experienced on the trip, and the memories from that actually leading them to go back there.... I just sort of moseyed around and went to Bangkok and Cambodia again, because I was sort of in the area and didn't know where else to go.* (David, volunteer tourism study tour, Cambodia, 2007)

The findings demonstrated that these ex-students had the confidence to travel on their own, but also needed to reinforce their self-confidence by remaining in their comfort zones. They sought reassurance by returning to the same destinations, suggesting that they understood their personal boundaries, and the memories and familiarity of the destinations enabled them to feel at ease, secure, and in control.

Participation in an international study tour had facilitated positive memories of the destination, and the ex-students felt somehow connected to it, influencing them to visit and explore further. The physical and emotional connections they experienced appeared to be intrinsically linked to their self-confidence. Returning to a destination appeared to reinforce their own ability, and improve their levels of self-confidence.

#### ***4.8.3.4 Doing things differently***

Self-confidence and self-belief were influential factors motivating participants to return to a destination to do things differently. For some, this related to their language ability, and it became apparent that their self-perceptions influenced their interactions with others.

*I think my Spanish probably wasn't good enough at that point to be able to have a full conversation in Spanish. Yeah, maybe it's a bit too young, because I feel like at that age you don't appreciate it as much, whereas when I went in university, I tried a lot more to put myself out there and talk to people and do different things. Whereas, at school you're still a little bit shy and it was such an organised trip that you didn't really get that opportunity to step outside of your comfort zone. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

This excerpt indicated that age was influential on self-confidence, and that in adolescence, Holly had less confidence in her own language ability. The data indicated that over time, she realised this had restricted her interactions and language proficiency during her international study tour. In later life, Holly became more confident of her language ability, and this self-assurance had a positive effect on her behaviour, as she became committed to developing and maintaining her language skills.

Holly believed that increased confidence in her language ability motivated her to return to the same destination, where she continued improving and practising her language skills:

*I went back in 2016, and went and volunteered over there, and I'd finished university and I'd stopped studying Spanish, and I just want to make sure I don't lose it. So, I thought, oh I'll go over for a month or two months. So, I lived with someone and just immersed myself in it again. (Holly, language study tour, Mexico)*

This excerpt showed that Holly developed personal strategies to do things differently, in order to enhance language acquisition through authentic interactions with native speakers.

“Doing things differently” was a recurrent theme and surfaced mainly in relation to the gap between ex-students’ ideological expectations, and the actual experience of the study tours. Furthermore, the findings suggested that further travel decisions were influenced by both positive and negative experiences. The positive aspects have already been discussed in relation to the sub-categories of “*becoming a travel bug*” “going it alone,” and “reliving the moment.” The negative experiences were more prevalent for the ex-students who had participated in international study tours for languages, as they had expected that they would be speaking the language:

*I went to Germany and I was really disappointed, because I tried practising my German, but because Germans speak English, we tried to use German, we'd ask somebody in the shop where the toilet was, and they'd answer you in English. It was like, aw I'm trying to learn something here. Yeah, there wasn't a whole lot of language, and the German kids that we stayed with, they just wanted to practise their English. Their English is so much better than our German. (Emma, language study tour, Germany and France, 1997)*

The data demonstrated that the ex-students had been constrained by the interactions, as both student parties had expectations to learn the other’s language during the study tour. This left the ex-students unsatisfied with the experience, which impacted on later travel decisions.

The findings enhance our understanding of how the constraints of the international study tour combined with personal expectations and improvements in self-confidence encouraged and directly influenced future travel plans. The data indicated that most of the ex-students had developed travel bugs, and continued travelling in later life. The data further demonstrated that both positive and negative experiences of the international study tour were drawn upon in later life and influenced decisions and travel behaviour, encouraging the ex-students to travel alone, revisit destinations, and do things differently.

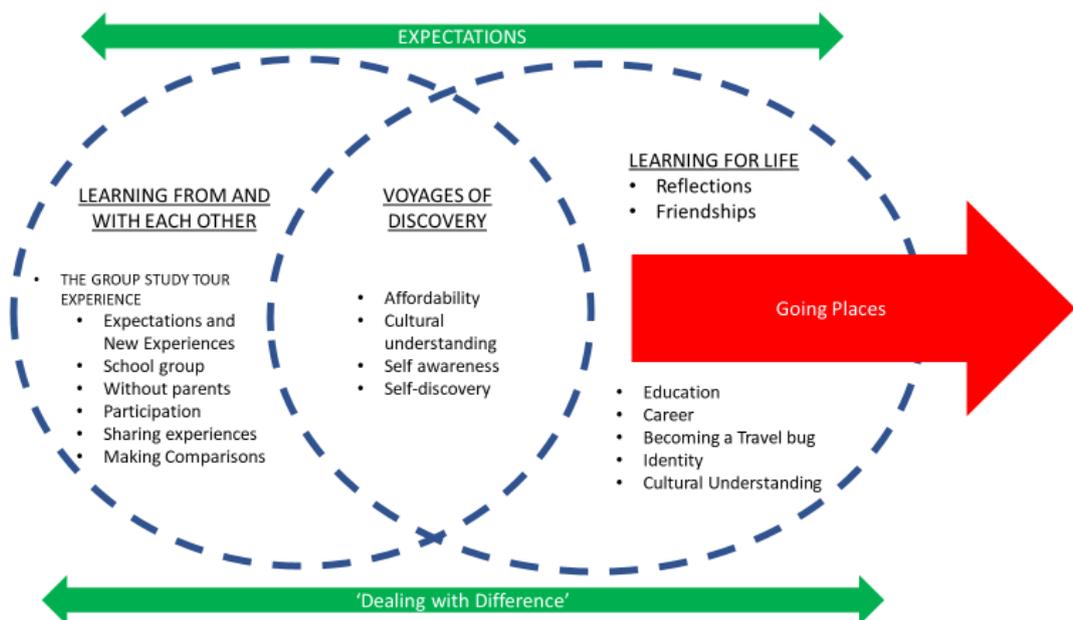
#### **4.9 Theoretical Framework for the Longer-Term Effects of Participating in International Study Tours**

The theoretical framework highlights the key categories (learning from and with each other, voyages of discovery, learning for life and going places) that emerged from the data analysis and illustrates the interplay and connections between categories. The data showed that the effects of the international study tours on the ex-students should be viewed holistically, as events leading up to and during the study tour experience emerged as important, creating opportunities for life-long learning. The first main category of

“learning from and with each other,” shown in the circle to the left of Figure 24, highlights the relationships and interactions between the shared and individual experiences, and incorporates “travelling without parents” on the group study tour, “sharing experiences,” and “making comparisons,” which resulted in the category, “voyages of discovery,” and the sub-categories of “self-awareness” and “self-discovery.” At the centre of the framework, the category “voyages of discovery” focuses on the individual experience and incorporates “affordability” and “cultural understanding” within the dynamic processes of “self-discovery” and “self-awareness.” As the framework demonstrates, this overlaps the category “learning from and with each other.” These two main categories (“learning from and with each other” and “voyages of discovery”) provide the first steps in explaining the effects of the study tour on the ex-students prior to and during the tour. The last two categories are shown in the circle to the right; “learning for life” and “going places,” explain the effects of the study tour on the ex-students’ later lives.

**Figure 24**

*Theoretical Framework for the Longer-Term Effects of Participating in International Study Tours*



The arrows running along the top and bottom of the diagram are the conditions, specifically “expectations” and “dealing with difference,” that influenced the process of “learning from and with each other,” and “voyages of discovery,” and influenced longer-term decisions and behaviour in later life.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the four main categories (learning from and with each other, voyages of discovery, learning for life and going places) that emerged from the data. The findings highlight how the international study tour influenced the participants in later life, represented by four categories. The category “learning from and with each other,” emphasised the group and individual experiences, with ex-students going on voyages of discovery, discovering themselves and becoming self-aware, gaining a sense of cultural understanding. The sub-category “group study tour experience” emphasised how the ex-students had shaped their expectations prior to travel and how the actual experience differed from these expectations due to the constraints of the international study tour, leading to independent travel in later life and the sense of fulfilment as the ex-students continued going places, and learning for life. The findings highlight that this was a dynamic process encouraging individual learning and the development of life skills that were sustained for life.

In determining if the international study tour had influenced or made a difference to the participants’ lives, it was apparent that the significance and scale of the difference varied considerably between participants. However, it is worth noting that all participants believed that the study tour had made a difference in their life, either directly or indirectly. The following chapter discusses the key aspects of this analysis by interpreting the theoretical categories and the effects of the international study tour on participants, and making connections to the literature.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the key aspects of the findings presented in Chapter 4 and the Grounded Theory proposed in Chapter 6 in the context of the extant literature, which suggests that international study tours are influential in providing opportunities for learning and development (e.g. Carr & Cooper, 2003; Cushner, 2004; Ogden, 2010; Ritchie, 2003). It is helpful to consider the findings of this study in light of the widespread claims made by schools and educators, that participation in short-term international study tours has longer-term benefits for students. Given the lack of empirical research into the longer-term effects of participating in international study tours, the findings from this research and the grounded theory derived from these findings, provide important new data for comparison with the limited data reported from other international study tour research. By drawing on the results and theory in this research, and comparing the findings with those from other studies, new insights can be obtained on the benefits of formal or informal learning from international study tours, and whether this is sustained, or influences future endeavours.

This chapter is structured around the categories (learning from and with each other, voyages of discovery, learning for life and going places) identified in the theoretical framework (Figure 24) and illustrates the interplay and connections between the key categories. The findings suggest that the effects of the international study tours on participants should be viewed holistically, because events leading up to and during the international study tour, emerged as influential. The first two categories, “learning from and with each other” and “voyages of discovery,” capture the data explaining the effects of the study tours on the ex-students prior to, and during the study tour. The final two categories, “learning for life” and “going places,” explain the effects of the study tour on the ex-students’ later lives.

### **5.2 Learning From and With Each Other**

The findings presented in Chapter 4 suggest that learning from and with each other was a significant aspect of international study tour participation. In the context of this study, it can be inferred that learning was a multifaceted approach that encompassed both formal and informal learning opportunities from travelling companions, such as the peer group,

the teachers, and also from the host families and exchanges with the local people in the host community. “Learning from and with each other” emphasised that interactions between the ex-students and others had been instrumental in the process of self-awareness, and that this was a continual process that had enabled the ex-students to understand the world around them, affecting their understandings and evaluations of themselves.

These findings are consistent with those in a range of educational literature that recognises individual learning takes place on two levels: firstly on a social level, and secondly, through self-internalisation (Vygotsky, 1978). The significance of shared experiences and travelling as part of a group became apparent in three key areas, which were considered the social dimension of the study tours. More specifically, this relates to interactions with others, the supportive aspects of the study tour, and the sense of belonging to the group. It was found that these social factors enhanced learning experiences. These findings align with those of Rubin et al. (2011), who noted that experiences with peers form an important part of their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Pearce (1990) noted that “meeting new people, making friends and expanding one’s view of the world through these contacts was an integral aspect of tourism” (p. 32). This was certainly true for the ex-students in this research, who talked of positive travel experiences that had made these experiences more meaningful and memorable, and fostered personal and social development.

For many of the ex-students, the process of self-awareness began prior to departure, with the role of expectations becoming explicit in relation to how they would fit into the group. Events such as fundraising prior to departure had enabled many of the ex-students to interact and establish connections before departing. This suggests that the relationships, socialising, and becoming friends, formed an important part of the international study tour. This is not surprising, as fitting in and belonging are important aspects of adolescence (Beeton & Morrison, 2018; Carr, 2011; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Small, 2005). In this study, interviewees revealed that when they were high school students, they had placed enormous emphasis on forming relationships and fitting-in to groups, and that these efforts resulted in friendships that were important to them. The development of these friendships in later life is discussed later in this chapter (section 5.4.2).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the international study tours presented the ex-students with shared experiences and challenges when they were overseas, and that these

had enabled them to navigate the dynamics of their group, bringing them closer together and forging bonds as a result of these intensive experiences. This finding is consistent with the work of Wakeford (2013), who found that important social connections were established as a result of the shared experiences on international high school study tours. One of the most important influences of the shared experience, was the effects of sharing amongst the group, and the supportive atmosphere from being part of the group, which created feelings of trust, safety, and a sense of dependence on the group. This finding resonates with the work of Hoon Park (2018), who found that students relied on their peers to cope, and as a means of comfort and support. Similarly, Younes and Asay (2003, p. 145) recognised “that a unique form of kinship had emerged within the group as students faced challenges in a foreign country.”

From a teacher’s perspective, the supportive aspects of the shared experience were also noted, and although the teachers were legally responsible for the health, safety, and well-being of their students, they felt many of the ex-students were attentive to the needs of others, taking responsibility and developing life skills by supporting one another. In addition, the teachers acknowledged that through shared experiences and having pastoral care of the students, they had become better acquainted with them on a personal level. Heejung (2016) noted that “building and maintaining a positive relationship with students, takes time...but it’s time well invested” (p. 25). These findings also align with those of Orion and Hofstein (1994), who acknowledged that bonds are formed between students and teachers during experiences outside the classroom, and that these are significant influences on the learning process.

Shared experiences and interactions with others were also viewed as opportunities for learning. The findings suggest that shared experiences with other students had a profound effect on learning, allowing for opportunities that would otherwise be missed, triggering curiosity and self-awareness. This is not surprising, as previous studies have noted the valuable lessons learned from travelling with other students. For example, Bretag van Veen (2017) noted that a buddy system encouraged a greater understanding of cultural knowledge. Similarly, Ruth et al. (2019) suggested that students with a studious demeanour and intellectual minds, inspired their peers to learn more. This implies that collaborating with other students in an informal environment had enabled them to view situations from others’ perspectives, and with the support of their peers, this enhanced their learning experience. This study corroborates the long-understood role of social interaction in learning, such as in the ideas of Bandura (1977) who suggested that as

people learn from other people, social interaction is an important aspect of human development.

Learning from other people is especially important in language learning, and for the ex-students participating in language-related study tours, as there were high expectations of formally interacting with the host community to improve their language skills. This implies that there was a genuine interest from these ex-students to acquire and develop language skills. However, evidence from this study suggests that this did not always occur, as the students in the host country had similar expectations of practising their language skills, and consequently wanted to converse in English. This highlights an immediate conflict of interest in the quest for language acquisition, as both parties tried to prioritise their own learning. Furthermore, interview data suggested that the host communities' and local students' English language skills had been better than the foreign language skills of the visiting students. A plausible explanation for this is the prevalence of English, which is considered a global language. Drozdova and Larionova (2020) found that "80% of young people who learn a foreign language choose English" (p. 115). Similarly, McKay (2002) pointed out that one billion people were learning English as a foreign language at the start of this century, and English competencies were high, and have remained high, throughout the world. It could therefore be argued, that because the ex-students were native English speakers from New Zealand, this had a detrimental effect on their foreign language learning, resulting in an unequal language exchange experience for the students. This had produced feelings of disappointment and unfulfilled expectations for the ex-students, and the findings suggest that this had an impact on their decisions in later life.

For those ex-students who did have an opportunity to enhance their language learning, it is evident from the findings that expectations played a large role, and this influenced how they had interacted and engaged with the language. For example, expectations of speaking a foreign language were firmly connected to their feelings of self-efficacy and how they had perceived their ability to communicate in another language. The ex-students who felt confident in their language ability had been more actively involved than those with negative perceptions of their ability. This finding aligns with the work of Zhang et al. (2018), who suggested students were less eager to test their language skills if they had limited language abilities. Similarly, Bandura (1977) found students with high levels of self-efficacy outperformed those with low levels of self-efficacy. This implies that a key

aspect of language learning involves the understanding of self and a realistic self-awareness of one's abilities.

The findings also confirmed that immersion in a foreign language not only improved the ex-students' language skills, but had a positive effect on their self-confidence. Improved self-confidence had occurred as a result of positive and negative interactions with locals. For ex-students who initially felt confident speaking a foreign language, positive interactions had resulted in a sense of empowerment, and becoming more self-assured in their own ability, with increased self-esteem and self-confidence. For other ex-students, the most challenging part of the international study tour had been the interactions and the realisation of their inadequacies in speaking a foreign language. Informal moments often became significant moments for these ex-students, and casual interactions with locals improved their language ability over time, as the environment became more familiar and less threatening; in addition, they reported that they had become more self-aware, especially in relation to their potential. This suggests that those who had at first struggled with learning a language, treated their social experiences as learning opportunities, learning from their mistakes, and improving their fluency. In many ways, this had made them more resilient and given them the ability to cope in what they perceived as difficult life situations. It is therefore suggested that resilience was an important life-skill which developed during the study tour and was sustained in later life. Findings from this study model Kolb's (1984) learning theory, highlighting areas of personal growth and self-understanding.

For the ex-students who were less confident speaking a foreign language, "learning from others" had a dual meaning, as the host communities had assured them of their language abilities, which encouraged them to persevere, and their school peer group had given social and emotional support, instilling in them a sense of self-belief and improving their confidence. Findings from this study are consistent with those in other studies that identified links between language competence and engagement, and effects on personal confidence. For example, Fisher and Evans (2000) focused on improvements in students' attitudes and levels of confidence after using foreign languages and foreign accents. Similarly, Kinginger (2011) identified a connection between self-regulated strategies and the local social environment as a way to improve confidence and ability. Kinginger's (2011) work supports the notion that learning from and with each other is an important aspect of personal development. Hence, the interactions that took place during the study

tours formed a significant part of the learning process and demonstrated the significance of the social group in the learning process.

Overall, it is inferred that learning from and with each other was meaningful and memorable for the ex-students, in the sense that travelling as part of a group and sharing experiences, had a profound effect on self-awareness and personal learning.

Table 9 makes comparisons to some of the existing literature. Since, no previous studies have examined the longer-term effects on the high school sector, understanding the differences and similarities is an important aspect of this research. The research offers new insights into the longer-term effects on high school students which allows comparisons to be made.

**Table 9**

*Comparison of literature*

Table: 9 Learning from and with each other				
Group Experience	Wakeford (2013) Hoon Park (2018) Orion and Hofstein (1994)	Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects	Bonding Coping strategies Teacher/student bonding	High-school students University students School trips
Without parents	Carr (2011) Ritchie (2003) Kinging (2009) Bergin et al (2018)	Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects	Expectations of freedom Cherished for freedom Girls anxious Gender differences	Child only experiences School trips University students Adolescents
Relationships Socializing Friendships	Beeton and Morrison (2018) Bretag van Veen (2017) Carr (2011)  Larsen and Jenssen (2004) Small (2005)	Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects  Short-term effects Short-term effects	Fitting in Buddy system belonging  Belonging Belonging	University students School trips Child-only tourism experiences School trips Women and girls holiday experiences
Language learning	Fisher and Evans (2002)  Kinging (2011)	Short-term effects  Short-term effects	Proficiency in language learning Self-regulating strategies	School exchange  University students

### 5.3 The Group Study Tour Experience

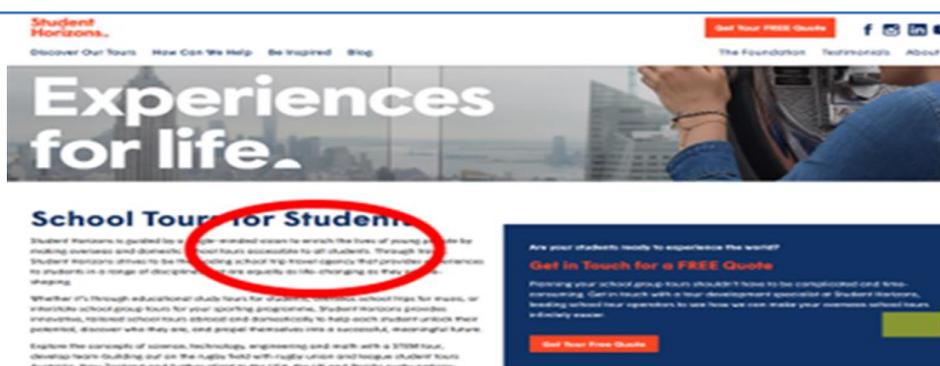
#### 5.3.1 Experience and Expectations

International study tours are heavily promoted and sold to parents and students as beneficial, both by schools and by private tour operators, as illustrated in Figure 25.

**Figure 25**

*Promotional Material Utilised by High-Schools and Tour Operators*

***Some examples of promotional materials utilised by High-Schools and Tour Operators have been removed from the digital copy of thesis, as permission could not be gained for its use.***



From *Experiences For Life*. <https://student-horizons.com/>. Copyright year (2020) by the Student Horizons, *Educational Travel Experiences*.

As Figure 25 demonstrates, high school students are made aware of the potential to participate in a study tour many years in advance, with schools promoting study tours internally by the subject teachers through newsletters, and externally on the schools' websites. The findings showed that this was certainly the case in this study, with many ex-students having been aware of the possibility of participating in an international study tour prior to attending their school. Furthermore, for some ex-students, these expectations were accentuated, as their siblings or family members had already travelled on a study tour, raising expectations of travelling to the same destinations.

As a result, the ex-student participants had a general expectation that their schools and subject teachers would organise an international study tour, and these expectations were reiterated in the interviews with the teachers. In many ways, this finding was not surprising, as the increased emphasis on global awareness, in line with government policies and agendas, has resulted in the majority of secondary schools around the globe providing opportunities to travel (Campbell-Price, 2014; Ritchie, 2003; Xplore camps, 2017).

As Figure 25 highlights, many high schools utilise international study tours to enhance their reputations, proclaiming that these trips are 'life-changing' (Lewis, 2018a; Neale,

2017; Piddington, 2016). However, such claims tend to overlook the fact that many international study tours are developed and promoted by private organisations who profit from packaging and selling the tours, so claims about their benefits are utilised to persuade parents that it would be advantageous for their children to travel. The main problem with these claims, is that the term “life-changing” in this context is subjective, and usually based on the organisation’s own view. Nevertheless, speculative claims that participation in international study tours are life-changing, are reinforced in commercial media, newspapers, and social media (Bateson, 2013; Coddington, 2010; J. Wilson, 2018), whilst ignoring the lack of empirical research to substantiate them.

From a teacher’s perspective, the findings revealed that high expectations prior to and during the international study tours were significant, placing considerable pressure on teaching staff. Specific expectations were placed on teachers in terms of their roles and responsibilities for preparing and planning, student learning, and health and safety requirements, all of which had implications for the planning and structure of the study tours. Although the teachers had recognised the need for careful planning to ensure the study tours were successful, one of the biggest concerns around planning was the workload expectations. The findings support those in previous research (e.g., Johnston, 2015; Mitchie, 1998; Ritchie & Coughlan, 2004) confirming that organising a study tour is an extensive undertaking requiring a great deal of commitment. Furthermore, the findings revealed that stringent health and safety requirements often affected the organisation and structure of international study tours. This is also consistent with findings of other studies (e.g., Carr, 2011; Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999) suggesting that health and safety are paramount when travelling, and a determinant of the opportunities, experiences, and attractions offered to students. Teachers in New Zealand are generally aware of health and safety requirements as a number of tragic incidents have been reported in the media; in 2008, six students and a teacher lost their lives on a field trip to Mangatepopo Gorge, and in 2013, three students from Christchurch died in a bus crash in Kenya (Leask, 2013; Television New Zealand, 2008). Despite this, statistics show that students are more likely to be hurt at school than out of school, with the chance of a fatal accident occurring outside the classroom being estimated at about one in eight million students (Andalo, 2008; Garside, 2013; Revell, 2002). However, ensuring the safety of students on international study tours can place emotional strain and personal pressure on the teaching staff involved.

The findings from interviews with teachers suggest that monitoring and managing student behaviour on international study tours is a major concern. This was especially the case with regard to students' expectations of travelling without parents, and experimenting with alcohol. These findings align with those in other studies (e.g., Carr, 2011; Connolly, 2011; Grant, 1998) that found alcohol consumption on school trips is common in adolescence. As a consequence, the legal obligations of being *in loco parentis* can be stressful for teachers, who can be held personally responsible for students' well-being; thus, incidents involving students can have repercussions for their teachers' professional careers. Taking students overseas on study tours places teachers in a vulnerable position where they are ultimately responsible for both the welfare of the students as well as their school's reputation.

It is evident from various newspaper and television reports, that many teachers have become disillusioned with heavy workloads, and left the profession (Dudley-Marling & Michaels, 2015; Lewis, 2018b; O'Connor, 2018). One question that needs to be asked, is whether teachers who are already considered overworked and underpaid in New Zealand (Marriott, 2019) should be expected to shoulder the responsibility of taking students on overseas trips. Research suggests that expectations placed on teachers to assume this responsibility stem from society, with parents making judgements about individual teaching practice in relation to student success (Dudley-Marling & Michaels, 2015; Kell, 2018; Saracho, 1991). In many ways, the expectations of a school community place additional pressure on teachers to continue organising international study tours.

For those who teach, this causes a number of personal and professional dilemmas, as shouldering this responsibility is a decision often subject to pressures and challenges at the institutional level, while placing demands and pressures on their personal lives. Although extensive research has examined the factors influencing teachers to organise international study tours (e.g., Campbell-Price, 2014; Cohen, 2016; Johnston, 2015; McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017), a criticism of much of the literature is that it generally highlights the benefits to teaching and students, rather than any personal benefits to the teachers. Whilst there is some overlap between the benefits to teaching and the personal benefits to teachers, the findings from this study revealed that it was personal factors such as job satisfaction and the teachers' own experiences as adolescents travelling on school trips, that motivated them to accept the extra responsibility. Furthermore, it emerged from the findings that expectations placed on teaching staff had influenced the overall

international study tour experience for the ex-students, with implications for their later lives. These are discussed in more depth in sections 5.5 and 5.6.

Prior to their departure, students had expectations and assumptions based on prior personal knowledge or information obtained from their school; it is inevitable that people will make assumptions and have expectations in relation to a new and exciting travel experience. However, in the context of high school study tours, this was extremely complex and involved multi-dimensional thinking, which involved placing expectations on, and making assumptions about the school group, the self, the destination, and the learning opportunities available. Consequently, there was a great deal of interplay between these factors, which had a significant effect on the overall student experience, and impacted on future life events, such as travel decisions, careers, friendships, and cultural understanding.

### ***5.3.2 School Group***

Firstly, both expectations and assumptions appeared to have influenced the ex-students' thoughts and feelings about travelling as part of a school group. It is evident that the ex-students had made predictions about themselves and other members of the group about what would influence acceptance into the group and affect interactions whilst on the study tour. The notion that individuals make predictions about themselves suggests that prior to embarking on an international study tour, many ex-students had subconsciously engaged in a process of self-evaluation, assessing their ability to fit in and interact socially in a group context. Although the literature has explored the connection between travelling and the process of self-discovery, studies have generally focused on the actual travel experience, and not on the events leading up to travel (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Pearce, 2005; G. Stone et al., 2018; Urry, 1990). Findings from this research support the idea that the process of self-discovery had already begun prior to departure, and the assumptions and expectations held by individuals formed a valuable part of their learning process. These findings extend the work of previous authors (e.g., Campbell-Price, 2014; Carr & Cooper, 2003; Ritchie, 2003) who explored only the travel experience, as well as authors (Saitow, 2009; Wakeford, 2013) who applied learning theories to demonstrate transformative change within people as a result of travel. Instead, this research recognises that events both prior to and during an international study tour, are catalysts for learning and development, and it is the holistic nature of the experience that is important in creating opportunities for life-long learning.

The findings also confirm the association between adolescence and a sense of belonging, consistent with other research recognising that peer acceptance is the primary objective of many adolescents (Crone, 2016; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). The discovery that the ex-students had made predictions about themselves (self-evaluation) in relation to the other members of the study group is important, as this meant they had considered and adapted their behaviour to fit in. This was likely to influence group dynamics, instilling a sense of belonging and social participation within the group. Tourism literature exploring adolescent development, stresses the importance of social acceptance, peer groups and making new friends (e.g. Beeton & Morrison, 2018; Carr 2011; Larsen & Jensen, 2004; Small, 2005) as key social aspects of learning and development.

### **5.3.3 Without Parents**

Secondly, the factors of expectations and anticipation appeared to have influenced the ex-students' thoughts and feelings about travelling without parents and venturing overseas on their own. The international study tour represented an opportunity to engage in novel and exciting experiences, and afforded a reprieve from parents and everyday routines. The findings suggest that the study tours were perceived as important opportunities to experience freedom and independence. This implies the ex-students had constructed an ideological view of freedom and independence and were expecting the experience to be completely different to the constraints of travel on family holidays with parents. This discovery was not surprising, as extensive tourism studies support this adolescent expectation of freedom in relation to school study tours (e.g. Carr, 2011; Lai, 1999; Small, 2005). Previous studies examining adolescent behaviour have linked the desire for freedom and independence to this stage in life (Blakemore, 2018; Erikson, 1968; Hannam & Echeverria, 2009). Wearing (2001), for example, drew on the experiences of volunteer tourists to demonstrate the adolescent need to feel independent and be able to deal with unforeseen difficulties without the help of others. Although school trips are "cherished for their rarity and freedom" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 141), the findings indicated that the levels of freedom did not meet many students' expectations; indeed, it is questionable how much freedom and supervision students need to obtain a sense of independence and fulfilment. Findings from this study are consistent with those of Paris et al. (2014), who found that students in the United States felt unfulfilled because of the structured constraints of their study tour programme, which focused mostly on academic goals. However, previous studies have demonstrated the need for teachers to plan and structure learning opportunities outside the classroom (e.g. Anderson & Zhang, 2003; Coll et al., 2018;

Faulkner, 2014). Certainly, the restricted levels of freedom and imposed structure of international study tours are understandable, given the legal responsibilities of schools and teachers to ensure the welfare and safety of students, as well as link learning to the curriculum. Neumann's (1992) comment encapsulates this conflict well; "travel straddles an unclear division between freedom and captivity as individuals try and make sense of the experience" (p. 177).

A significant finding of this research was the conflict between the structure of the international study tour experience, and the expectations of the ex-students as adolescents, with the ex-students wanting freedom, and the teachers needing structure. The ex-students had felt controlled and restricted by the narrow and controlled learning environment, which affected individual learning, missing opportunities for self-exploration. This had repercussions for many of the ex-students in later life, who sought to return to the same destination to fulfil their expectations and view the destination from a more independent perspective. Hence, the tension between the actual structure and ex-students' ideological expectations has important implications for the planning and development of international study tours. Teachers on international study tours are faced with the difficult task of trying to balance the safety and welfare of students with the students' desire for independence, freedom, and autonomy.

Results showed that the ex-students had mixed feelings about the concept of independence, and it is evident that before departure, there were gender differences in the expectations of travelling alone. The female ex-students had been more apprehensive about travelling, which suggests they were influenced by societal messages that suggest the risks for women travelling are greater than for men (e.g. Barrett & Douglas, 2020; Bates, 2016; Kour & Gupta, 2019; Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008). There are similarities between the feelings of apprehension expressed by the females in this study and those described by Knight and Rinehart (2002), Kinginger (2009), and Heimtun and Abelsen (2013), who found girls from close-knit families tended to become more anxious, homesick, and frightened when travelling alone. "Female travellers have long been subjected to restrictions and double standards, with their gender emphasised over their capability and strength" (Bates, 2016, para. 11) Historically, this dates back to the *Grand Tour* when taking risks and being adventurous was seen as a bold activity for men (Seeler, 2019) but a "risky or frivolous pursuit for women" (Bates, 2016, para. 12). According to Wilson and Little (2008), historical stigmas and fears associated with female travellers have not been dispelled and continue to influence societal perceptions.

Traditionally, parents and caregivers still consider girls more vulnerable and in need of greater protection and supervision (Bancroft, 2008; Boseley, 2017; Kendall, 2016). Verbalised or not, parents of teenage girls are often concerned with the risks of sexual assault or rape. Parents of teenage girls feel this risk and have concerns about their daughters' naivety and inexperience in dealing with risky situations such as strange men and/or males known to them, preying on them (De Vaus & Wise, 1996; Mmari et al., 2018). This is accentuated in some cultures who have different attitudes to those in the West, in relation to young women/girls. Young Western girls, especially those with lighter coloured hair, are seen as desirable, exotic, and sexually available, placing them in a vulnerable position (Bettie, 2003; Graham & Hall, 2012). Socio-cultural conditioning has resulted in rigid thinking around the safety of females travelling, this has led to parents inculcating the importance of personal safety and advice on risks to girls. Consequently, adolescent girls' attitudes to their personal safety have implications on actual and planned travel behaviour. Furthermore, due to societal "pressures to conform and follow the rules as part of the definition of femininity" (Bettie, 2003, p. 145), girls generally take less extreme risks. Traditionally, educational travel experiences were predominantly for young men, and it was not until recently that they included young women (Roberson, 2012; Seeler, 2019; Tosi, 2020). International high-school study tours, therefore, provide opportunities for young women to venture out and explore the world. This may explain the gender differences in participation in this research, as the female ex-students had been keener to seek international study tour experiences than had their male counterparts, but as the findings suggest, they also needed the psychological reassurance and safety net provided by the female teachers on the study tours.

In contrast, the males appeared to have had more positive expectations, with the prospect of travelling alone giving them a sense of adventure and the urge to explore. This finding resonates with the ideas of adolescent development discussed by Jackson and Goossens (2019), who suggested that adolescent males are more likely to seek out adventure and sensation-seeking experiences. A possible explanation is that boys from an early age are given the freedom to explore and engage independently in unsupervised activities (Brody, 2009; Dowker, 2019). These findings also match those of British psychologists who believed the differences in male/female risk tolerances were genetic, with females being more cautious than were males (Trickey, 2012). However, many academic arguments exist about gender differences, with experts divided as to whether these are biological

differences or societal expectations (Bergin et al., 2018; K. Parker et al., 2017). Indeed, societal pressures to conform to prescribed definitions of masculinity were also evident in this study, with males being more susceptible to peer pressure both prior to and during the international study tours. This had important implications on participation, as the effects of peer pressure were evident in the comments from the teachers, who noted that male participation in international study tours was often restricted; the male ex-students had attempted to conform to masculine stereotypes of behaviour and the unwritten rules of their male peers, in order to maintain their popularity.

These findings support those of Heinzen and Goodfriend (2017), who suggested there is greater pressure on boys to conform to stereotypes, and of McCoy et al. (2019), who found males were more likely to prioritise status goals as a means of preserving close relationships. Since young men and women have different perspectives and attitudes towards travel experiences, gender is an important aspect of a study tour experience, and had influenced motivations to participate in the study tours, as well as actions during the tours. However, an alternative explanation for the predominance of females on the tours is that good academic progress and personal behaviour were criteria for inclusion on a study tour, and it is widely reported that females do better at school than do males (e.g., Brookes, 2016; Chen & Kwan, 2020; Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018; Levine & Munsch, 2010). This highlights the broader societal issue of decreasing rates of academic achievement amongst males in high schools.

#### ***5.3.4 Participation***

Thirdly, the factors of expectations and assumptions appear to have influenced thoughts and feelings about the study tours. The findings suggest that prior to departure, the students' general expectations were divided into three key areas: 1) "travelling," 2) "the place," which encompassed the travel and tourism aspect of the international study tour, and 3) "the learning experience," which encompasses the educational aspect of the international study tour.

Notably, expectations around travelling were closely linked to a motivation to participate in an international study tour. For some of the ex-students, travelling had been the main motivation to participate in an international study tour - the educational purpose was secondary. This is a somewhat predictable finding, as the ex-students had been excited about travelling outside New Zealand. These findings are connected to the adolescent

desire for freedom, as previously discussed, and raise questions about the educational value that is placed on the study tours by adolescents themselves.

In relation to expectations about “place,” the study found that prior to departure, the ex-students had formed mental representations of the destination and their travel experience connected with it. Indeed, the tourism literature has extensively addressed the image of tourist destinations and the attitudes and intentions of tourists to visit based on their individual impressions (Dann, 1981; Kock et al., 2016, 2016; Sharpley & Harrison, 2019; Urry, 1990). Prior to departure, the ex-students had a wide range of expectations about the destinations, with many considering travelling to developing countries such as Mexico and Brazil as exotic, adventurous, cool, and exciting opportunities. For these ex-students, their motivations to participate in an international study tour were overt, and intrinsically linked to the uniqueness and excitement of the destination. These findings support those of older studies as well as in more recent research. For example, MacCannell (1973) suggested that tourists seek out or anticipate something new or different, and Jackson and Goossen (2019) suggested that adolescent travel behaviour is linked to curiosity and the need for novel and exciting experiences. Similarly, Marvell and Haywood (2005) viewed travel as a need and want satisfier, and Dann (1977) related travel decisions to push factors, such as the desire to escape everyday routines, and pull factors, such as attractive elements linked with perceptions of a destination.

For other ex-students, the findings suggest that a motivation to participate was to visit a specific destination, and that this was connected to extrinsic motivation and the desire to help people or learn a language. The motivations for these ex-students were easily identified, and the ex-students had formed expectations of the learning opportunities available whilst on an international study tour. The findings suggest that expectations revolved around the subjects they were studying, and short-term goals. This is consistent with prior research emphasising language proficiency as an expected outcome of studying overseas, and improving the welfare of the local community whilst volunteering overseas (Kinging, 2009; Wakeford, 2013; Watson & Wolfel, 2015). The expectations of the ex-students around learning opportunities prior to the study tour, were closely linked to formal academic goals, and they initially appeared to have given no thought to the soft skills or life skills they may have developed from participating in the study tour. Hence, these ex-students did not appear to consciously think about how an international study tour might affect their future careers. The section on careers (5.5.2) discusses the implications of this in more depth.

## **5.4 Voyages of Discovery**

### ***5.4.1 Affordability***

Since international study tours can cost thousands of dollars, the findings revealed the sub-category of affordability was a key factor affecting participation in a study tour. Over the past few years, media coverage has reported on the exorbitant costs of international study tours, and their detrimental effects on student participation, causing divisions in schools, placing financial pressures on parents, and excluding students whose parents cannot afford the cost of the tours (Eclair, 2018; Gausden, 2018; Sanusi, 2018). One criticism of this media attention is that it has tended to focus on the negative aspects associated with the expense of such trips. However, in this study, debates criticising the high costs of international study tours can be viewed from a different perspective, since the notion of affordability had both negative and positive connotations.

From a negative perspective, the findings support the criticism that high costs excluded some students from participating in an international study tour. Consistent with findings of previous studies (Presley et al., 2010), this study confirms that affordability was the main obstacle hindering participation in studying overseas. The complexity of affordability and the link to participation in international study tours was also apparent in the New Zealand school system. Firstly, there were differences in financial constraints between students, even in higher decile schools. Secondly, as Johnson (2015) pointed out, “opportunities at decile 1 and decile 10 will show a vast disparity - where at 1, only a quarter of children could afford a school camp, while at the other, large groups of children were taking overseas trips” (para. 9). The consequence of this, is a lack of lower decile school participation in these types of international experiences. Thirdly, since a high percentage of Māori and Pasifika students attend lower decile schools (Jones & Singh, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2019c) there are fewer Māori and Pasifika students on international study tours. These points raise several issues regarding the inclusivity and equality of access to international study tours in the New Zealand education system. In many ways, international study tours challenge the spirit of the Education Act of 1989, because they do not strictly conform with the statement that “inclusive education means all children and young people are engaged and achieve through participating” (Education Act, 1989, para. 1). Fundamentally, international study tours contradict the law’s purpose of alleviating discrepancies in high schools where some students have access to better educational opportunities than do others. Even so, the findings advise of the need to focus

on social issues in education, and develop tourism opportunities, such as international study tours for all students, as a means of widening participation and becoming educationally inclusive, so everyone, and not just a minority, can benefit.

Although tourism and education literature is useful for emphasising the connection between affordability and participation in international study tours, research exploring affordability has generally focused on the negative aspects associated with cost, affordability, and the reliance on parents' financial support for participation.

The findings show a division between the adolescents who had received financial support from parents, and those who had to contribute to the cost of the international study tours themselves. This highlights the need for a better understanding of the role of adolescents in paying for an international study tour. Research has tended to focus on the role of the parents rather than that of the students, suggesting that scholars have assumed that paying for an international study tour is the parents' responsibility, and that parents come under financial pressure to provide for their children's education. Indeed, this was apparent in comments from the teachers in this study, who appeared to have made similar assumptions; a major challenge perceived by teachers organising international study tours, had been managing the price expectations of parents.

In general, therefore, it seems that there is an expectation that parents will fund the study trip. Consequently, research has concentrated on their willingness to pay, and tended to emphasise their decision-making processes, which have often been linked to their own travel experiences and the expected benefits of an international study tour (Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Goel et al., 2010). In this study, only five out of the 17 ex-students had received financial support from their parents. Findings in relation to the ex-students who had received financial support, agreed with those of Goel et al. (2010) and with Bodycott and Lai (2012), who suggested that the past experiences of parents influenced decision-making processes, as the ex-students had recalled their parents' limited travel experiences.

For the 11 ex-students who had not received parental financial support, the high cost of an international study tour had not been seen as a barrier to participation but embraced as an opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions. It could therefore be suggested that the ex-students had turned the disadvantages of the cost into a positive learning opportunity. Their personal desire to participate in an international study tour had

influenced changes in personal behaviour and self-motivation, as the ex-students had been determined to raise the money to meet the costs of the study tour. On the surface, the motivation would appear to be extrinsic, that is, there is a cost to be able to participate in the tour, there is a need to meet the cost and so raising the funds is needed. It can, therefore, be suggested that participation in the international study tour, was a strong intrinsic motivational force, with the student able to see the personal benefits, this helped them set a saving goal and prompted them to stay focused. The findings revealed that for many of the ex-students, financing the cost of the trip had entailed taking part-time employment for the first time, or undertaking school fundraising activities. This suggests that the prospect of participating in an international study tour had altered the adolescents' attitudes to work and employment, improving their mindset, and making them more optimistic and resilient when faced with challenges. The importance of cultivating a positive mindset was emphasised by the psychologist Dweck (2006), who noted that the "view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be" (p. 6). Dweck continued to explain that those who embrace new challenges have a "growth mind-set." A *growth mind-set* works on the premise that personal qualities can be cultivated through experience and individual effort. Dweck (2006) explained that such mind-sets usually develop during adolescence and are the key to future success. However, Azri (2019) pointed out that developing a positive mind-set is a life skill that is often taken for granted and overlooked. The ex-students in this study had stretched themselves to succeed, which had encouraged them to develop the necessary ability to foster the development of a growth mind-set and essential life skills.

Tabel 10 makes comparisons to existing literature. Since there is a paucity of research relating to high school international study tours, little is known about how they are financed, and it appears there is no research on adolescents financing or contributing to the cost of an international study tour themselves or on the positive effects this can generate. This research therefore goes beyond the work of other authors, as the findings indicated that part-time jobs and fundraising activities had enabled the ex-students to save and take responsibility for funding and participating in international study tours. In addition, on examining the events prior to the international study tour, it was evident that the opportunities for work experience had a positive effect on the ex-students and their personal development.

**Table 10***Comparison of literature*

Table: 10 Voyages of Discovery				
Affordability	Bodycott and Lai (2012), Goel et al. (2010)	Short-term effects	Parents role and decision making	Children study abroad University students
	Eclair (2018), Gausden (2018)	Short-term effects	Financial pressures on parents	School students
	Johnson (2015)	Short-term effects	Disparities between schools	School students
	Presley et al. (2010)	Short-term effects	Obstacle hindering participation	University students

Notwithstanding the apparent lack of research on this topic in the educational tourism literature, it is beneficial to explore work in the field of sociology, as this identifies the relationship between patterns of adolescent employment and individual motivation, which have been related to the building of human capital essential for successful school to career transition. In this respect, this study's findings are consistent with those of Mortimer (2010), who found that adolescent employment encouraged positive traits such as independence, responsibility, interpersonal skills, and a good work ethic. In addition, this study substantiates the findings of Steinberg et al. (1982), who suggested that part-time employment helps develop personal responsibility, and promotes the development of autonomy. The findings support the idea that part-time jobs and fundraising activities affirmed the students' views of their own capabilities, providing opportunities for them to develop a strong sense of self, self-efficacy, and improved self-esteem.

Importantly, many of the ex-students were able to build on the experiences and skills gained from part-time jobs and fundraising activities, and notably, it was these life skills such as self-reliance, independence, effective communication, self-efficiency, and empathy, which were sustained in later life, in various aspects of their personal lives, and contributing to their career success. It is therefore suggested that the high costs of the

international study tours somehow benefitted the adolescents, influencing them to seek employment, which in turn enabled them to develop valuable habits and life skills that were sustained in later life.

#### ***5.4.2 Cultural Understanding***

In New Zealand there is a growing awareness that cultural competency is the key to understanding global diversity, and this is reflected in many government policies and agendas (Ministry of Education, 2011). The construct of “global citizenship” has been identified by the New Zealand Government as a priority to equip learners with the cognitive skills needed to recognise diversity and develop human capital. Many scholars have acknowledged that intercultural competency and global citizenship can be gained through international travel experiences (e.g., Caton et al., 2014; Stoner et al., 2014; Trede et al., 2013). This was confirmed in this study, as participation in international study tours had a positive effect on cultural understanding. The findings corroborate the ideas of Reisinger (2009), that tourism promotes understanding, and individuals can learn to respect other cultures as well as their own. These views were also expressed by the teachers interviewed in this study, emphasising the need for New Zealand students to travel to create awareness and cross-cultural understanding.

For many ex-students, the process of cultural understanding had begun by learning from and with each other. The findings suggest that the international study tours had presented the ex-students with several personal challenges, such as dealing with social, economic, and environmental differences. This had allowed them to make comparisons between themselves (i.e. develop self-awareness) and others, which developed intercultural competence and global awareness. The findings show the complexities involved in the process of cultural understanding, many of which were discussed in the section 5.2, on learning from and with each other, or addressed in the following section on self-awareness.

#### ***5.4.3 Self-Awareness***

Before discussing self-awareness and self-discovery, it is important to differentiate between the two concepts. *Self-awareness* is defined as “the ability to see yourself clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection” (Ackerman, 2020, para. 1) and is part of the process of self-discovery, and the beginning of self-understanding. *Self-discovery* is defined as “the process of gaining understanding of one-self and one's

motivations and needs” (Collins English Dictionary, 2020). In this study, self-awareness involved the exploration of the inner self, which resulted in the search for the real authentic self, and the true self. In simple terms, self-awareness leads to self-understanding, which in turn leads to the process of self-discovery. However, many scholars are critical regarding the essentialist position that one’s true self exists. For example, Cohen (2010) suggests there is a theoretical tension between one’s true self and academic viewpoints that the self is open to multiple performances. Indeed from a sociological perspective Goffman (1999) argues that there is no true self, instead individuals perform and the performance fabricates the self. Winnicott (1960) argues that there is a true self being protected by the false self. Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2014) point out that “the self in Goffman’s view is the mask the individuals wear in social situations, but it is also the person behind the mask who decides which mask to wear” (p.111). Goffman’s work therefore presents a dualistic view of the self. Hence, from a sociological perspective the self has many parts. However, many authors criticise Goffman’s work and his unwillingness to identify a ‘core’ self (Jacobsen & Kristiansen, 2014; Johnson Williams, 1986; Swartz & Lacobucci, 1999) since, the idea that everyone has a real-self is a common assumption in everyday life (Swartz & Lacobucci, 1999).

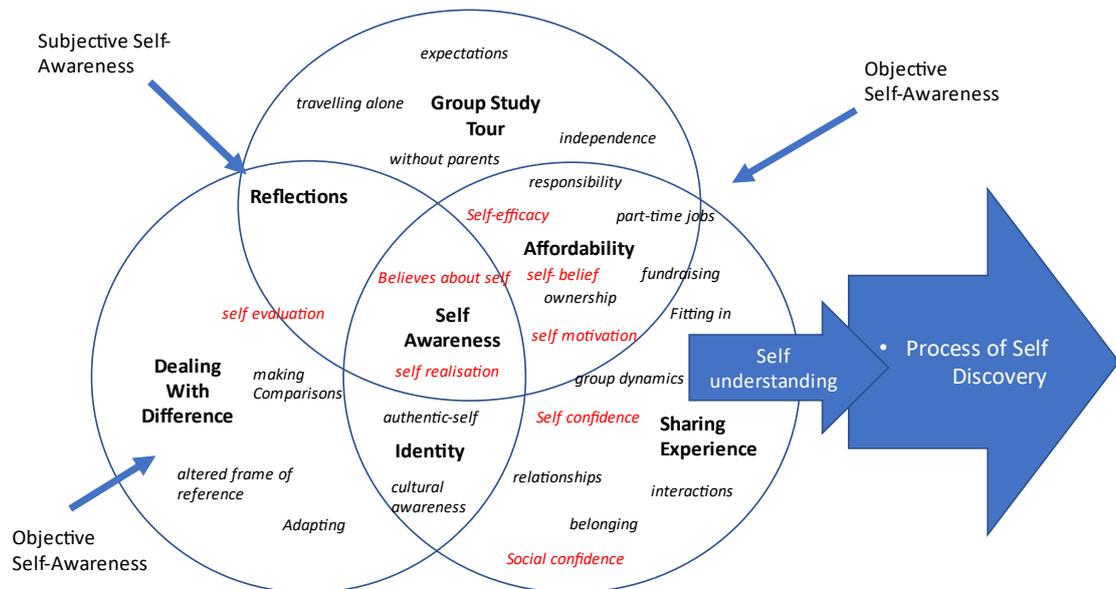
Perceptions of the self vary in the different approaches to research and are affected by disciplinary influences, for example the view of self from a social constructionism perspective revolves around the individual’s thinking and behaviour that come to be internalized and maintained through the process of socialization (Lean, 2015). Whilst the Symbolic interactionism view of the self, places considerable emphasis upon social structural positions and the influence of others in the social process. Goffman (1999) suggests “without something to belong to we have no stable-self” (p.320.) Symbolic interactionists view the self as a product of society. Noy (2004) and Mead (1934) both observed that a sense of self, developed through the role taking process. Lee (1990) conceptualises the self as “an object (structure) of various identities and attributes, with their evaluations, developed out of the individual’s social, and symbolic activities” (p.386). Had a symbolic interactionism approach been adopted in this research it may have provided different interpretations with regard to the perceptions of self, self-awareness, and self-discovery.

The findings showed a relationship between the concepts of self-awareness and self-discovery. Although these are discussed separately, it is worth noting that they are linked, as different aspects of self, underpin the process of self-understanding in relation to personal development. Figure 26 illustrates the connection between self-awareness and

the process of self-discovery. The process of self-awareness involves comparing, reflecting, and being objective and understanding.

**Figure 26**

*Self-Awareness and Self-Discovery*



As Figure 26 demonstrates, understanding oneself is closely linked to sharing experiences and understanding the relationships between different people and dealing with difference by making comparisons to self. Scholars have noted that self-awareness is a unique human trait that enables individuals to consciously understand themselves by understanding their own thoughts, feelings, values, and background, in relation to others and the world (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Smith, 2017). In simple terms, *self-awareness* is a cognitive skill that allows individuals to assess and understand their own ability, performance, and behaviour, and respond appropriately to different social environments (Burnard, 1997; Krause et al., 2010; Rogers, 1959). Self-awareness usually starts with the process of self-reflection (Cherry, 2019). Generally speaking, psychologists acknowledge the dual nature of self-awareness that involves subjective self-awareness, as well as the ability to focus attention on ourselves through internalisation, reflecting on values and beliefs and objective self-awareness, comparing ourselves to others and knowing how they view us (Cherry, 2019; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Lewis, 1991). The relevance of this process was evident in this study, both prior to and during the international study tours.

Prior to the international study tours, the ex-students had reflected on themselves and their ability to fit in to the group, whilst examining the behaviours and feelings of others in the group (i.e., group dynamics), demonstrating the process of self-awareness on two levels. It is therefore considered that the ex-students had undertaken both a process of self-examination, and one of conscious personal reflection, which led to a process of self-discovery. This concurs with the findings of Hopkins (1999), who noted that students often reflect inwardly on themselves as well as outwardly on their experience, as they establish a sense of self.

During the international study tour, the process of self-awareness had been stimulated when the ex-students were taken out of their comfort zones and started dealing with differences (socio-cultural, economic, and environmental). This revealed new perspectives, changing their outlooks on life. Participation in the international study tours had enabled the ex-students to stop, consciously think, and focus on who they were, by exploring their interests, assumptions, values, and aspirations for later life. By focusing their attention on themselves (i.e. the “one-self”), a state of more objective awareness was realised (see Duval & Wicklund, 1972). This resulted in an awareness of the differences between their ideal selves and actual selves. By examining the inner self, the ex-students had been able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and gain an understanding of their career goals, influencing later decisions about their choice of education or career. This aligns with Rogers’ (1959) belief that people are motivated by self-actualising tendencies, and strive to reach their full potential. As Fenigstein (1987) pointed out, “self-awareness is an emerging process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires” (p. 324). This self-examination encouraged the development of critical thinking, with the ex-students becoming more critical of their thoughts and actions. These findings on New Zealand high school ex-students substantiate research by Ritz (2011), who noted short-term study tours were instrumental in extending critical thinking processes. The international study tours, therefore, had provided opportunities for the ex-students to develop self-awareness skills and discover their capabilities.

Tourism scholars have suggested that travel experiences can develop a strong sense of self and identity (e.g., Morgan, 2014; Neumann, 1992; Pearce, 2005; Ross, 1992; Wearing, 2001). Neumann (1992) noted that tourism experiences “are places where people find themselves working towards self-realization and meaning” (p. 177). Wearing (2001) suggested that a volunteer experience can be a “nodal point in identity formation

and construction” (p. 87). This was evident in this study, as dealing with cultural difference and becoming more culturally aware had led the ex-students to re-evaluate their identities. For some ex-students this had meant examining their sense of self, culturally conditioned values, and beliefs in relation to their national identity. Morgan et al. (2010) pointed out that most individuals utilise their identity as an anchoring device to help make sense of a situation. By examining their inner selves and making comparisons, the ex-students had improved their cultural awareness and cultural appreciation of their culture in New Zealand. These findings align with those in previous studies, that found studying abroad allowed students to develop a stronger attachment to their regional or national identity (Brown, 2009; Jackson, 2018), and reinforced a more coherent sense of identity (Morgan et al., 2010). Nevertheless, Hogan and Beilharz (2002) pointed out that “we are given a basic map of our self and the world, but we must revise and change that map as we move through different social and cultural spheres of life” (p. 70). It is evident that the sense of self and identity changes as individuals mature and gain life experiences. In general, therefore, it appears that travel experiences such as international study tours, provide opportunities for self-discovery and help establish a sense of personal identity.

Many scholars have acknowledged that self-awareness is a powerful trait and a skill that must be developed, as it empowers individuals to develop emotional intelligence: empathy and compassion for others (e.g., Beilharz & Hogan, 2002; Jeffrey, 2017; Rose, 2007). This was evident in this study, as exposure to poverty in developing countries and dealing with difference gave the ex-students a deeper understanding of what others in the world experienced, enabling them to become culturally aware, and more sympathetic. For many ex-students, this had involved altering their frame of reference, by “stepping out of one’s personal frame of reference into another’s” (Noddings, 2003, p. 24), viewing the world from a different perspective.

The ex-students who had participated in study tours that included volunteering, had developed a genuine sense of empathy and compassion, wanting to help and support the community they visited, by building houses to enable them to have a better life. However, for one student, self-awareness was the realisation that she did not have the required building skills to meet the needs of the local community, leaving her with a sense of frustration and personal unfulfillment. Similarly, recent studies on volunteer tourism have been highly critical of the help that unskilled students can provide. For example, Wearing et al. (2017) described a local community “tearing down the buildings and rebuilding

them properly” (p. 513), and Bidy (2015) declared the most productive thing that university students had achieved, was taking selfies and posting them on social media. Indeed, the tourism literature points out that volunteering has become a social status symbol, with so-called “white saviours” emerging, as commercial organisations capitalise on and exploit the concept of helping (e.g., Everingham, 2017; Rotabi et al., 2017; Wearing et al., 2017). However, in their more recent work, Wearing et al. (2018) argued that the notion of helping is not restricted to the aid model, but also incorporates partnerships to help generate cultural understanding.

Several ex-students in this research emphasised the importance of nurturing relationships with the local communities, as a means of deepening cultural understanding to create more meaningful short-term experiences. To some extent, this outlook can be attributed to the ex-students’ increased self-awareness, with pragmatic and realistic views of their own skill sets, combined with a genuine sense of caring, empathy, and compassion. In later life, empathy and compassion were influences on the career choices of many of the ex-students.

The importance of self-awareness has been recognised by many scholars (e.g., McCabe & Timmins, 2013; O’Toole, 2012; Rose, 2011; Thelwell et al., 2016), who have noted that self-awareness equips individuals for life, and is beneficial for careers. McCabe and Timmins (2013) suggested that individual benefits include coping strategies, enhanced communication skills, and more meaningful relationships, whilst Thelwell et al. (2016) found that self-awareness improved performance and enhanced leadership capabilities. This was certainly true for the ex-students involved in this study, many of whom exhibited these attributes in later life. This is discussed in greater depth in the section on careers (5.6.2).

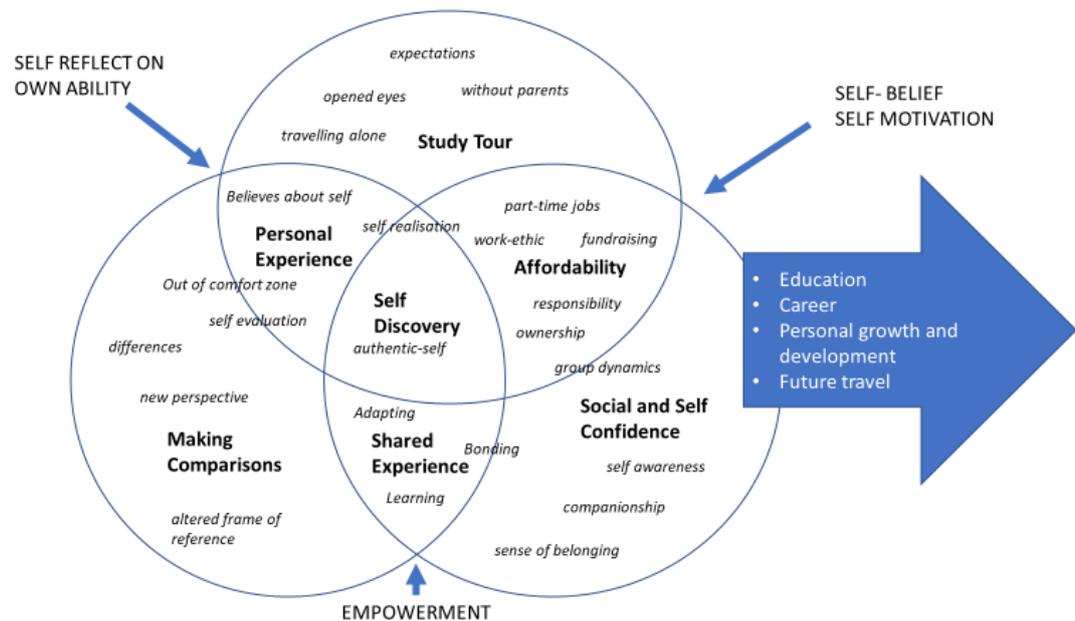
#### ***5.4.4 Self -Discovery***

As Figure 27 demonstrates, the concept of “self-discovery” emerged from the data analysis, and was a central link that united the categories, encompassing all aspects of the international study tour, before, during, and after the experience. A fundamental concept of human behaviour is the ability to understand oneself (Damon & Hart, 1991), and it is widely acknowledged in the tourism literature that travel experiences have the potential to broaden the mind and present opportunities for self-discovery (e.g., Beames, 2004; Hughes & Youngson, 2009; Wakeford & Orams, 2018; Wilson, 2006). The students’

journeys of self-discovery were complex multifaceted processes, and emphasised in Figure 27, which highlights the interplay between the student experience and the process of self-discovery.

**Figure 27**

*The Relationship between the Student Experience and Self-Discovery*



Participation in an international study tour was meaningful in the process of self-discovery, as it presented an opportunity to travel without parents, detach from the home environment, and provide a contrast to the ex-students' everyday routines. This had enabled the ex-students to come out of their comfort zones and view the world from a different perspective, giving them the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs, which encouraged self-understanding and identity development. In addition, the international study tours presented opportunities for learning from and with each other and adapt to the environment; therefore, understanding one-self and becoming self-aware were continual processes involving aspects of self-internalisation and shared experiences with peers.

The findings of this study support those in previous research that has examined the short-term effects of travel and participation in international study tours, and noted changes in individual perspectives of both the self and the self's worldviews. For example, Stone et al. (2018) described the liminal experience of travelling as "a condition out-side or on the peripheries of everyday life, characterised by ambiguity and disorientation,"(p.112), producing insights that can change within the individual. Similarly, Mezirow's (1978)

transformative learning theory drew on the same principles, that individuals change their perspectives through disorientation and adaptation to unfamiliar situations. In discussing the tourist gaze, Urry (1990) examined the comparisons tourists make between themselves and the physical and cultural environment, and suggested that these comparisons between the familiar and unfamiliar in relation to the self, lead to identity development. The findings of this study support Urry's (1990) notion, as many of the ex-students had made comparisons to living conditions in New Zealand and the environment in which they had grown up. It could therefore be suggested, that experiencing difference created the effect of learning, making the ex-students more self-aware and more aware of the world around them, whilst developing more personal autonomy. This is consistent with the work of Wearing (2001), that showed personal awareness and learning were attributed to cross-cultural comparisons. Table 11 makes comparisons to some of the existing literature. However, while previous studies are useful in explaining how changes in behaviour occurred short-term, they do not address longer-term effects.

**Table 11**

*Comparison of literature*

Table: 11 Voyages of Discovery				
Self-Awareness	Cherry (2019) Duval and Wicklund (1972) Krause et al (2010) Smith (2017) Hopkins (1999)  Morgan et al. (2014)	Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects  Short-term effects	Self concept In relation to others Educational Psychology Social environment Inward/outward reflection identity	Sociology and Psychology Educational Psychology  Study abroad Adult Tourism Experiences
Self-Discovery	Brown (2009) Beams (2004) Hughes and Youngson (2009) Wakeford and Orams (2018) Wearing (2001) Urry (1990)	Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects Short-term effects	Transformative effects Rite of passage Personal development Personal development Personal development Personal development	International exchange British Youths Adults High-school students Adults Adults
Identity	Brown (2009)  Neumann (1992) Morgan (2014)  Wearing (2001)	Short-term effects  Short-term effects Short-term effects  Short-term effects	Attachment to regional and national identity People find themselves Self and identity as an anchoring device Transformation and construction	Adults Adults  Adults  Adults

Many theorists believe the search for the ideal self is a continual and life-long process (e.g., Kolb, 1984; Maslow, 1970), which is certainly reflected in this study’s findings. Campbell-Price (2014) realised this in her research on high school students, noting that the initial changes were subtle, and that real changes took longer to manifest. Boud et al. (1993) pointed out that “while the experience may be the foundation, learning occurs over time and many take years to become apparent” (p. 9). Campbell-Price (2014) suggested that “kids won’t even click until they get to twenty five, or thirty and then they will look back and realise how it has affected them” (p. 139). These points emphasise the importance of the current study in determining the longer-term effects of study tours.

Although differences were evident in the unique longer-term changes that took place within each of the ex-students, it is considered that participation in international study tours initiated the process of self-discovery through the process of developing self-awareness and personal growth. For some ex-students, this meant assessing their own life in relation to the wider world, which affected their purpose in life and the trajectory of their education and career. For others, the international study tour was character building, and the process of self-discovery was a soul-searching experience that involved examining their inner selves, including their conscious and subconscious beliefs, morals, and ethical values, which led to changes in personal behaviours in later life. These are discussed in more detail later, under the sections discussing education (5.6.1), career (5.6.2), and identity (5.6.3).

## **5.5 Learning for Life: Influences on Later Life**

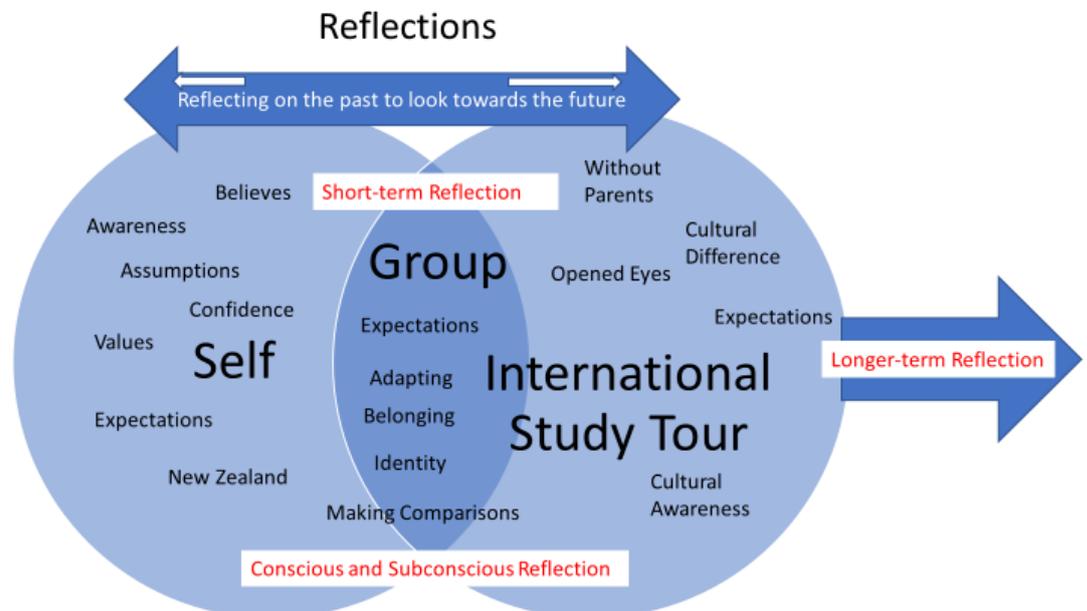
So far, this chapter has examined aspects of the ex-students' experiences prior to and during their international study tour; the discussion now shifts to addressing how these experiences affected them in later life. Firstly, it is worth noting that all the ex-students in this study considered that participation in an international study tour had affected their life in some way or another. It is therefore considered that the study tours had positive longer-term psychological effects on the participants. Secondly, the study's findings suggest that participation in an international study tour enhanced the ex-students' learning, independent of time spent at the destination. However, it is worth noting that the scale and significance of these influences varied, and is a topic for future research.

### ***5.5.1 Reflections***

Extensive research has reviewed the role of reflection and its importance in relation to personal understanding, development, and learning. Reflection is considered an essential part of the learning process, and often utilised to examine short-term experience (e.g., Boud et al., 1993; Cottrell, 2003; Curzon, 1997; Petty, 1998; Reece & Walker, 2000). Data in this study indicated that reflection can also be utilised over longer periods to ensure learning is sustained, or to identify learning opportunities that were missed during the international study tour. Scholars have highlighted that reflection is a multifaceted concept (Allan & Poulsen, 2017; Boud et al., 2005), which was also evident in this study. Although the ex-students did not consciously distinguish between different aspects of the study tours, the findings reveal that reflection took place from a variety of perspectives (see Figure 28).

**Figure 28**

*The Role of Reflection*



The ex-students recognised that informal personal reflections took place on both a conscious and subconscious level during the study tour, in order to make sense of a situation. This reflection involved questioning and reviewing their assumptions, values, and beliefs, in relation to their experience. Grundy and Kemmis (1982) described self-reflection as a genuine purposeful choice that can add significant value and enhance learning. Moreover, many of the ex-students modelled components of Mezirow’s (1978) transformative theory, “the disorienting dilemma,” and in doing so, discovered themselves, and built self-awareness and self-confidence. For some, the process of self-reflection helped them make informed decisions about their future careers and education, but this was not always the case. This process is explained in more depth in the section on careers (5.6.2).

In addition to personal reflection, Grundy and Kemmis (1982) considered the place of reflection within a group, pointing out that each group member brings reflections and ideas to an event, and this further reflection develops deeper personal insights. According to Schmidt and Brown (2016), recalling stories is “a commonly used educational method to engage ex-students in reflection” (p. 5). Taken together, these suggest that reflections can be interpreted in various ways, and do not have to be a solitary process. The informal learning opportunities the ex-students had gained through personal reflection and group

discussions, support the earlier work of Grundy and Kemmis (1982), and confirm that learning from and with each other was a significant aspect of the international study tour.

The ex-students' data revealed a distinct lack of formal reflection opportunities during the international study tour. This was substantiated in the teachers' comments, which showed that reflection opportunities were never formalised, and often deemed an unnecessary part of extra-curricular activities. This lack of formal reflection may have been a consequence of constraints on time, and the intensive schedules of international study tours, that typically have long days incorporating many different activities. A second possible explanation is that the teachers did not formally ask the ex-students to reflect. Thirdly, the reflective process is complex, and during adolescence, reflection does not naturally occur, thus it should not be assumed that it will, as reflection is a skill that needs to be developed. The findings from this study contradict those in previous research that found formal reflection opportunities were incorporated into the international experience for university students (Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Le & Raven, 2015; Scharoun, 2018). Le and Raven (2015), for example, observed that journals were used for critical reflection, whilst Schmidt and Brown (2016) found portfolios and collections of photographs were used to engage students in self-reflection during study tours. Gomez-Lanier (2017) found that students valued "writing reflective journals as important to their learning rather than an arduous task" (p. 137). A differentiation can therefore be made, between the ex-high school students in this study and university students, in relation to the practice of reflection on international study tours. Kolb (1984) argued that for learning to be effective, reflection has to take place, and Dewey pointed out that "people learn not by doing, but by thinking about what they are doing" (Goodman et al., 2008, p. 213). These are important points to consider, as they stress the importance of incorporating reflective practices into students' experiences to increase their value. Hence, students need time, a purpose, and a formal framework, to analyse and reflect on the effect of an experience on themselves.

For several ex-students, formal reflection opportunities occurred within the first year of returning from their study tour, when they presented to peers interested in participating in future study tours. However, the depth of this reflection is questionable, as generally these reflections involved sharing memories and reminiscing on the positive aspects of the study tour, rather than reflecting on the personal benefits of their international study tour. Research suggests memories of travel experiences are adjusted over time to reflect

a “rosy view” (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. x) and could explain why all the ex-students viewed the international study tours as influential in later life.

However, most ex-students had not formally reflected on their study tour until prompted to do so by participating in this research. Boud et al. (1993) observed that “experience without critical analysis can be little more than anecdotal reminiscence, interesting, but unconnected, travellers’ tales” (p. 30); it is likely that this study provided participants with a valuable opportunity for self-reflection on the shorter-term and longer-term effects of their international study tour.

When reflecting on formal educational benefits in later life, a variety of perspectives were expressed around the short-term benefits in relation to schools’ National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) examinations. Researchers (e.g., Houser et al., 2011; Lai, 1999; Ruth et al., 2019) have suggested that participation in study tours improves cognitive learning, yielding better results in tests and exams. The ex-students involved in this study, however, were divided on whether their international study tour had yielded better exam results short-term. Nevertheless, it emerged that the study tour had facilitated intellectual and personal growth.

In examining personal reflections in later life, a temporal theme emerged that was linked to the stages in an individual’s life, as a differentiation was apparent between the ex-students who had children and those who did not.

The two ex-students who had become parents reflected on the international study tour in relation to their own children and their beliefs about their own parents’ feelings at the time of the study tour. Although these ex-students had fond and positive memories of participating in the study tour, they were unsure if they would let their own children participate in a similar tour, due to safety concerns, and entrusting the protection of their children to the teachers. This corroborates Carr’s (2011) findings, that children are largely viewed by society as vulnerable. Despite the lack of literature addressing the longer-term effects of international study tours, these findings are consistent with those of other short-term studies that identified parents’ experiences and expectations as key factors in decision-making processes around sending children away to study abroad (e.g., Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Faulkner, 2014; Huang & Li, 2018). The findings confirm Goels et al.’s (2010) notion that parents who have not travelled, are more likely to provide their children with international travel opportunities. In addition, the findings reveal a paradox around

one's own expectations of travel and expectations for one's children, highlighting how expectations around participating in international study tours have changed over time. Furthermore, over time, the ex-students' attitudes to the organisation of the international study tour had changed, and since becoming parents, they were more comfortable with a structured environment that ensured the safety of their children.

### ***5.5.2 Friendships***

The lack of research into the longer-term effects of international school study tours, limits insights into whether friendships formed on study tours are maintained in later life. In this study, the ex-high school students placed much emphasis on forming relationships within their group, and fitting in during the international study tour, with many assuming these relationships would last a life-time due to the intense experiences they had shared. One explanation for this is that during adolescence, friendships tend to be more meaningful, and play a major role in adolescent life, offering emotional support and a sense of belonging (Hojjat et al., 2017; Rubin et al., 2011). However, over time, these friendships, and the sense of connectedness, seem to become less meaningful.

It is evident from the findings that in the short-term, for between one and three years of returning from the international study tour, friendships were maintained, but as time passed, less emphasis was placed on face-to-face contact and keeping in touch with other members of the group. One possible explanation is that in the short-term, immediately after the study tour, the ex-students attended the same school, were in day-to-day personal contact, and lived in close proximity of each other, thus friendships were easy and convenient to maintain, whereas in the longer-term, changing personal circumstances made friendships more difficult to maintain. Similarly, many of the teachers were no longer in touch with the students and had limited knowledge of how the students had progressed in later life.

Although many ex-students had not remained close and had limited or no contact with other members of the group, reasons for this were evident, such as the time that had passed since participating in the study tour, and the ex-students' stages of life. More specifically, most of the ex-students who had travelled five years ago, and were still in young adulthood, had moved away from home to attend university or work, thus distance had limited face-to-face contact and maintaining close friendships. For those who travelled 10-25 years ago, the majority were married or in long-term relationships, so personal

obligations and priorities had changed in relation to school friendships, with more emphasis being placed on family relationships, such as with partners and children. This meant the friendships from the international study tours had gradually weakened, and group members became acquaintances more than close friends. This point emphasises the notion of friendships as a dynamic concept conceptualised by events and time (Blieszner, 2015; Hassan et al., 2011), and even though the international study tours were instrumental in the creation of friendships, maintaining them takes personal time and effort (Beck, 2015; Hojjat et al., 2017).

Indeed, in this study, personal decisions to maintain friendships were influenced by a lack of time (due to transitions into education, work, and family) and the personal commitment needed for the relationship, which was often affected by external factors such as distance and frequency of contact. As identified by many scholars, one of the most important distinctions between friendship and close friendship, is the strength of the personal connection (e.g., Derlega & Winstead, 1986; Hendrick & Hendick, 2000; Wrzus et al., 2016). It can therefore be inferred from the data, that the connectedness and sense of belonging associated with the group and the international study tour, had diminished over time, and the ex-students were no longer willing or able to invest personal time or effort into nurturing the relationships. This finding contradicts the work of Dwyer and Peters (2012) conducted in the USA, who found that the US students had maintained long-lasting friendships over a significant timeframe. A problem with their study, however, is that it did not give a comprehensive account of how the relationships had been sustained. Furthermore, although Dwyer and Peters (2012) found 50% of the participants were still in touch with each other, their explanation tended to overlook the regularity of the contact and the closeness of the friendships.

Even so, for the ex-students in this study who had remained in contact, although they were not close, the findings revealed that digital technology, such as the internet, played an important part in retaining friendships, especially in early adulthood. Whilst specific age data were not directly collected from all participants, all of the ex-students who travelled five years prior, were in their last years at school when they took the international study tour, and could therefore be categorised as Generation Ys or Millennials. Previous research has noted that Millennials are the first generation to grow up immersed in information communication technologies (ICT), resulting in a strong affiliation to the digital world (Fitzgerald, 2013; Treat, 2011; Veiga et al., 2017). The findings suggest that for this group of ex-students, friendships were facilitated through

social media platforms where they could directly view what was going on in each others' lives. While social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, offered quick glimpses into the lives of the other students, and were a convenient way of communicating, allowing interactions to take place, research suggests that online interactions are not as deep or meaningful as conversations in person (Bhamare, 2018; Prado, 2016). This suggests that the friendships gained from the international study tour, although fondly remembered, became insignificant in later life to the ex-students. It is worth noting that although "social media and the internet are an integral part of the lives of people of all ages" (Lizardi, 2017, p. 117), the ex-students who had travelled 10 to 25 years prior, did not mention the use of technology as a means of retaining friendships.

Since friendships are relationships voluntarily entered into, spending time together is a critical component of maintaining these relationships (Hendrick & Hendick, 2000). Furthermore, maintaining friendships involves reciprocal engagement, interaction, and mutual bonds (Hojjat et al., 2017; Wrzus et al., 2016). The relevance of spending time together is clearly supported by the findings and explains to some extent why the friendships had not been reinforced over time.

In addition, although friendships seemed to be an important aspect of the international study tours, the research found there was no reference to friendships formed overseas. One explanation for this is the international study tours had very structured itineraries which could have created more casual relationships and acquaintances with the local host communities. Since, friendships take time to develop, it was difficult for the ex-students to form meaningful and lasting relationships within such a short amount of time.

## **5.6 Going Places**

### ***5.6.1 Education***

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of research on the educational benefits of participating in international study tours; the majority found that international study tours create improved attitudes to particular areas of study (Buckley, 2015; Cavanagh, 2012; Ruth et al., 2019). However, most studies focused on university students shortly after their international study tour. Although this is useful in identifying that after a study tour, ex-students are more appreciative of educational systems and work harder to complete their course work quickly, such short-term studies do not show whether these attitudes are sustained or if they change in the longer-term.

Before discussing the longer-term educational effects of participating in an international study tour, it is worth noting that prior to departure, the ex-students in this study had mixed feelings about the educational benefits of international study tours. The findings suggest that for many, the educational benefits were insignificant, as the ex-students had focused on the excitement of travelling overseas without their parents. While some ex-students had focused on short-term goals, such as improving language skills and doing well in their exams, none had consciously thought about the longer-term effects on their education.

*Education* in the context of this discussion refers to the formal educational pathways undertaken by the participants, and their academic success within these formal educational settings. Educationally, data from the current study suggest that participation in international study tours did not directly affect decisions about further education at university level. This finding is not surprising, as most ex-students had been selected on the merit of their academic records and personal behaviour. Furthermore, research shows that 61% of school leavers progress to further education in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2019).

However, the data showed that participation in the international study tours had a direct influence on the selection of educational programmes, subjects, and courses. This selection was influenced by their experiences overseas, with international study tours opening the eyes of many ex-students to the possibilities available, whilst bestowing an interest in international travel and cultural understanding.

Although not demonstrated for all the international study tours, the effect of a study tour on educational choice was clearly evident for those who had participated in volunteer tourism and language study tours. For example, during the international study tour, many of those who had participated in volunteer tourism, had developed a sense of personal autonomy and realisation of the possibilities of suitable careers, which influenced their choices of subjects and courses. Furthermore, the relevance of an international study tour on educational choice was more prevalent for those who participated in language study tours, as the majority pursued further education that included elements of language learning to improve their linguistic competence.

Nevertheless, a distinction needs to be made on the effects of an international study tour, and the rationales for the ex-students' decisions. Firstly, some study tours did not provide

the level of immersion the ex-students had anticipated, as the host communities wanted to practise their English skills. This aligns with research on university students from Western Australia by Forsey et al. (2012), who found students visiting Japan spoke less Japanese than they expected, as they were able to socialise and study in English. The detrimental effect of this was discussed in the section on learning from and with each other (section 5.2). Their findings suggested that variations in intensity of language immersion depend on the English language ability of the host community, and the confidence levels of the visiting students. Consistent with the present findings, previous research also demonstrated that levels of engagement influence language learning (e.g., Fisher & Evans, 2000; Kinginger, 2011; Miao & Harris, 2012). This may explain why the ex-students in this study undertook further programmes of study to improve their linguistic competence and continue engaging with the foreign language.

Secondly, some of the international language study tours had a positive impact on the ex-students' language competencies, improving their confidence, and inspiring them to undertake more study. This finding supports education research highlighting changes in students' attitudes to language learning, and demonstrating ways to encourage and motivate students to learn a foreign language (e.g., Fisher & Evans, 2000; Houser et al., 2011; Kinginger, 2011). In addition, in terms of influencing educational choice, the language skills appeared to have been maintained and developed by the ex-students, many of whom expanded their knowledge with high level language programmes of study.

Although research on this topic in the high school sector in New Zealand is limited, the findings of this study are aligned with the work of Ruth et al. (2019), who found that overseas experiences had a cumulative effect on university students, influencing subject choice and direction of study, and subsequent educational experiences. This suggests that regardless of age during a study tour, the international study experience remains meaningful and can impact on educational subject choices in later life. Since, no previous studies have examined the longer-term effects on the high school sector, understanding the differences and similarities is an important aspect of this research. The research offers new insights into the effects on high school students which allows comparisons to be made between the two experiences. The current findings thus suggest there is little difference between the higher education sector and high schools in terms of the effect of international study tours on students. The present study on New Zealand ex-high school students therefore validates the longer-term effects on educational subject choice.

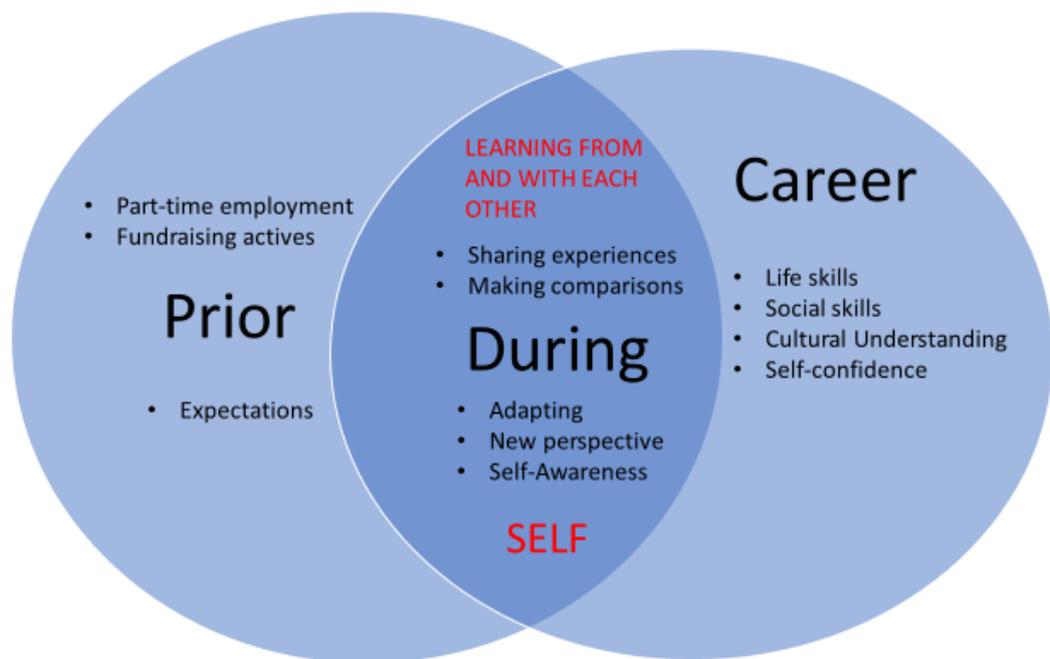
Although international study tours are linked to curriculum and formal learning opportunities, for many ex-students, informal learning opportunities had been just as significant and supported their individual learning longer-term. This observation confirms Johnston's (2015) point, that school trips have numerous hidden benefits, which are not necessarily related to the curriculum. This is a valid point which many teachers fail to address when planning, focusing instead on academic goals and student achievements, and explaining why so many ex-high school students were unaware of the soft skills or life skills they may develop from an international study tour for use in later life and in their careers.

### ***5.6.2 Career***

Although there is research on the effects of international study tours on student careers, no differentiation has been made between higher education contexts and those of high schools. Consequently, the findings from the present study are important because they enhance understandings of the high school sector. The findings suggest that an international study tour should be viewed as an holistic experience, since experiences prior to and during the tour, contributed to and affected the development of skills and knowledge utilised in later life and in the ex-students' careers. There was a notable interplay between learning from the group and self-discovery, as learning and personal development took place on many different levels.

**Figure 29** emphasises the connections between the ex-students' experiences prior to and during the international study tour, and the effects on their careers in later life. This forms the basis for the following discussion incorporating elements of the student experience prior to departing on a study tour.

**Figure 29** *Connections between Student Experiences and Careers*



International study tours are often portrayed in the media as influencing future careers and depicted as enhancing employability and supporting career success. However, these portrayals ignore student experiences prior to leaving for their international study.

#### ***5.6.2.1 Prior to the international study tour***

The findings show that before departing on a study tour, career goals had been of little consequence to most of the ex-students. At the time, the ex-high school students had not consciously thought about how the study tours would affect their future careers. Generally speaking, participation was linked to short-term goals and not consciously associated with

longer-term effects on later life. This finding resonates with the work of Wakeford (2013), who found that high school students did not mention career prospects as a motivational factor for a study trip. In comparison, research on university students considered career success an influential motivational factor for students, as they specifically chose to participate in international study tours to advance their careers (e.g., Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Paris et al., 2014; Williams & Best, 2014). A differentiation is therefore apparent between high school and university students' motivations for participating in international study tours, in relation to future career ambitions. A possible explanation for this difference, is that the students are in different stages of their academic lives, with high-school students not imminently transitioning into their chosen career, whilst university students are close to embarking on their intended career paths.

Furthermore, for many adolescent students, their first career choice is often difficult; they may be uncertain and indecisive about their career choice (Marcionetti, 2014). One possible explanation for this, is that career decisions are influenced by many factors, such as parents' expectations and levels of education, peers, socio-economic status, schools, career advisors, and culture (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Sawitri et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2004). The association between career goals and participation in international study tours would be difficult to gauge for high school students, as at this stage many would not have selected their career before embarking on an international study tour, even though they may have engaged in part-time employment or fundraising activities to finance their international study. The findings indicated that prior to departure, many ex-students had not consciously noticed the connection between these employment roles, and the development of life- skills for future employment.

Evidence from this study therefore suggests that before departing on an international study tour, many ex-students had been uncertain of their career choice. Several studies have examined factors that can increase career decision-making capabilities amongst high school students, and include job shadowing, internships (Rowland, 2004), career courses, counselling (Yuen et al., 2019), and participating in international study tours (Kronholz & Osborn, 2016; Park et al., 2018).

#### ***5.6.2.2 During the international study tour***

The data indicated that during their international study tour, many of the ex-students' individual attitudes towards careers changed. This was extremely complex, involving learning from and with each other, explorations of the self (with self-awareness and self-

understanding), and self-discovery. These findings support the work of Kronholz and Osborn (2016) and Park et al. (2018), who pointed out that international study tours can increase career decision-making amongst adolescent students, as many of the ex-students had made decisions about further education and careers based on their personal experiences, particularly the “difference” they experienced during their international study tour. This also aligns with the work of Nuaun (2005), who found university students in Australia felt their overseas experiences had influenced their career paths. This is not surprising, as international study tours are often described as transformative learning experiences (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Dorsett et al., 2018; T. Hall et al., 2016; Nada et al., 2018; Wearing, 2001) in which social position and ideologies are re-evaluated (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011), and as Rojeck (1993) pointed out, travel leads to an accumulation of experiences, and potentially, wisdom. Consequently, it is suggested that the international study tours in this study were influential in determining the direction of individual careers. This was especially the case for the ex-students who had participated in study tours that contained an element of volunteer tourism. The ability to help people and gain a cultural understanding of the host community gave them an opportunity not only to learn about themselves and become self-aware, but also to identify or reconfirm career ambitions and choices linked to helping people, such as working in the medical profession or for aid organisations.

Whilst this study confirms that ex-student involvement in volunteer tourism projects had positive effects on their personal development during school and in later life, it also confirms that volunteering experiences can be self-indulgent experiences in which volunteers accrue more benefits than does the local community. Many scholars attribute this to the power imbalance, with the host community deemed as poor, needy, helpless, and dependent on aid and support, exacerbating inequalities (e.g., Hernandez-Maskivker et al., 2018; Khoo-Lattimore & Yang, 2018; Wearing et al., 2018). In reality, as Zane (2016) pointed out, many people in underdeveloped nations find the attitudes of volunteers patronising and offensive. Recent literature has started to question self-indulgent motivations, such as study tour experiences for curriculum or service learning, raising ethical concerns over the exploitation of local communities for personal gain (Everingham, 2017; Lyons et al., 2012; Rotabi et al., 2017).

In an effort to avoid negative encounters, Wearing et al. (2018) suggested that the concept of helping in volunteer tourism needs to move away from a foreign development aid perspective, and focus on opportunities for intercultural exchanges in which the host

community and visitors can form mutually beneficial partnerships. The literature raises a number of concerns over benefits to the local community and ethical questions regarding the best ways to teach students about poverty and socio-economic inequalities. However, it is not the purpose of this study to address these issues, but to focus on the longer-term effects of those who participated in such study tours. In this respect, the findings align with previous research that identified volunteer experiences as opportunities for identity formation (Wearing, 2001), personal transformation (Germann Molz, 2016) and opportunities for empowerment (Liu, 2019).

### ***5.6.2.3 After the international study tour***

Although there are various similarities between the studies by Wearing (2001) and Liu (2019), research to date has tended to focus on university students and adults. These short-term studies have focused on the career choices available rather than whether participants pursued their intended career goals/aspirations. The current study is different to previous research offering insights into the careers of high-school students in late life. The present study can enhance our understanding of post-tour effects, as it reveals that students who had ambitions to help people after participating in international study tours actually followed their aspirations, turning them into a reality and embarking on careers in helping professions (i.e., human support careers), such as midwifery, health engineering, social work, music therapy, and teaching. The interest and desire to help people and make a difference was sustained long-term.

These findings contradict those in previous studies that considered volunteer tourism experiences as shallow and meaningless, often giving visitors nothing more than fond memories (Crossley, 2017; Raymond & Hall, 2008); to the contrary, volunteering had a lasting impression on the ex-students in this study. Whilst it is important to understand career aspirations and goals, embarking on a specific career is complex, and influenced by many factors such as individual ability, qualifications, and society itself. Since many of the ex-students were selected to participate in the study tours on their academic records and achievements, it could be inferred that they had both the motivation and ability to follow their selected career path.

This study on New Zealand ex-high school students validates the positive longer-term effects on students, and reflects the notion that exposure to poverty and developing countries fosters humanitarianism and a more conscious cultural understanding, which in this case, was maintained in later life.

Having established that the international study tours were influential in determining the direction of careers for many of the ex-students, the discussion now addresses the longer-term effects. Despite the gap in research pertaining to the longer-term effects on high school students' careers, there is prior research assessing the impacts of an international study experience on university students' careers. A longitudinal study carried out between 1950 and 1999 on university students, found that studying abroad made a positive difference to the lives and careers of the participants (Dwyer & Peters, 2012). A major criticism of Dwyer and Peters' (2012) work however, is that their quantitative study did not provide in-depth insights into the lived experiences of participants. Furthermore, critics have also argued that their research surveyed alumni about their lives as students 50 years prior, so is likely to have different findings from those in research on more recent tours, as educational policies, systems, and lifestyles have changed.(Crhanova, 2007; Engel, 2010). Furthermore, travelling overseas and studying abroad are no longer considered elite experiences (Crhanova, 2007; Engel, 2010). The current research goes beyond the work of Dwyer and Peters (2012), providing in-depth insights into the effects of international study tours in later life, and generating understandings in a contemporary context, and aligned with government policies and agendas.

Studies assessing the longer-term effects of international study tours on university students have outlined the acquisition and development of soft-skills and independence as important in supporting career success (e.g., Bretag & van der Veen, 2017; Buckley, 2015; Nunan, 2005). The current findings substantiate research conducted in a context of higher education, as the students who had embarked on their careers reported many positive aspects of participating in international study tours in relation to their current roles. These positive aspects were generally linked to personal development and the acquisition of transferable life-skills such as self-confidence, interpersonal skills, communication skills, social skills, and cultural understanding that the ex-students considered they had developed during their international study tour. The findings of this study also show that these factors were interrelated in their contributions to career success.

Prior studies have used theories of experiential learning to explain the development of the afore-mentioned skills as a direct result of an international study tour experience (e.g., Arodia & Dickson, 2013; Tiessen et al., 2018; Tovar & Misischia, 2018). Previous studies exploring the use of these theories were useful in providing a rationale for effective learning and changes in student behaviour. However, none of these studies, nor the

experiential model, could account for the development of self-efficacy or the influence of travelling as part of a group. The notion of self-efficacy has informed extensive educational literature emphasising an individual's drive and instinct to succeed (Bandura, 1993; Guay et al., 2015; Tang, 2018). When the theories of experiential learning and self-efficacy are put together, they explain the positive learning experiences and knowledge gained from participating in international study tours, and the significance of learning from and with each other.

In general, it appears that the international study tours created important opportunities for self-awareness, personal autonomy, and social development, which were directly or indirectly linked to the longer-term careers of many students. This seems consistent with other research that recognises the importance of self-efficacy and self-concept in career development (Betz, 2000; Powell, 2009). Furthermore, Camacho (2016) identified a link between self-confidence in Australian school children, and career success in adulthood. Hence, developing a strong sense of self and self-confidence is considered essential for success (Powell, 2009).

There was strong evidence from many of the ex-students in this study that their self-confidence had been sustained and played an important part in their careers, enabling them to perform their daily duties more effectively. The conscious belief in their own ability resulted in the power to gain additional professional knowledge and positively contribute to their organisations' cultures. It is evident from the findings that the acquisition of transferable life-skills was a continual process that contributed to the career success of the ex-students and formed the basis of life-long learning. This observation is aligned with Kolb's learning cycle (1984) and the notion that we learn from and build on our own personal experiences.

Whilst the international study tours created important opportunities for the development of self-confidence and transferable life-skills, it is worth noting that these skills can be gained from other educational experiences, training, and employment. However, it is important to reiterate the point that the ex-students attributed the development of these skills to participating in international study tours. Furthermore, participation in the study tours whilst at high school, enabled the ex-students to gain many of these skills early in their adolescent life, providing a deep understanding of the skills in both a practical and cognitive sense, and helping them to integrate them into their life longer-term.

The literature supports the notion that self-confidence and transferable life-skills are essential skills, and employers actively seek out those who possess these attributes (Butterfield, 2012; Krizan et al., 2007). This goes some way to explaining why these skills are considered important and need to be maintained. Furthermore, given the rapid emergence of globalisation, which has led to wider competitiveness around the globe, and the need to keep pace with the changing environment, greater emphasis has been placed on the importance of transferable skills. The present study on New Zealand ex-high school students therefore supports the positive longer-term effects on participants and acknowledges the importance of transferable life-skills for long-term employability.

Since a principal goal of international study tours is the attainment of intercultural competencies, it was not surprising to find that “cultural understanding” was a predominant category to emerge from the analysis, and an important factor utilised in relation to the ex-students’ careers. Previous research conducted in the higher education sector by Scharoun (2018), found that university students had a solid understanding of how to work in a multicultural team. Despite the gap in research pertaining to the longer-term effects on high school students, the relevance of intercultural understanding is clearly shown in this study, as it was sustained and embedded into the ex-students’ lives. Evidence from this study suggests that the acquired intercultural understanding had a positive effect on relationships in the workplace, enabling the ex-students to effectively communicate and interact with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds, thus facilitating better collaboration. This suggests that the study tours equipped the ex-students with the ability longer-term, to recognise diversity, and interact with people from other cultures. After the Christchurch terror attacks in March 2019, the need for cooperation between cultures became more pronounced in New Zealand than ever before. The findings suggest that participation in international study tours facilitated cultural understandings and the ex-students had attained a greater cultural sensitivity than they would have otherwise developed, not only in the workplace, but also in their personal lives.

Participation in the international study tours had a sustained and positive effect on the ex-students’ careers, equipping them with coping strategies and the ability to make decisions using the skills of self-confidence, communication, and cultural understanding, helping to cultivate their professional identity. None of the ex-students mentioned the international study tour in relation to effective career progression. In contrast, studies on university students have noted the networking potential of overseas contacts in early

career success (Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Tiessen et al., 2018). However, other researchers have noted that the value of international experiences on career progression remains unclear (Collings et al., 2018). Consequently, this is an area of debate and uncertainty, requiring further research.

In relation to the current study, most ex-students appeared settled in their chosen careers. However, for one participant, the international study tour had left a sense of unsettlement and a feeling that there was more to life; this began when she returned from the school trip. Tourism literature refers to this as *reverse cultural shock*, which occurs when there are problems adjusting back to the home environment (e.g., Pearce, 2005; Reisinger, 2009; Ross, 1998). As Reisinger (2009) explained, “people feel the home culture has changed, they are unable to cope and feel confused” (p. 218). For one participant, the feeling continued into later life following a variety of different roles and career directions, and although she was employed as a human resources manager, at the time of her interview, this role was not aligned with her future career vision.

Whilst this study confirms various positive benefits of international study tours, it is worth noting that employability and longer-term career progression are dependent on the extent to which an employer values overseas experience. Research on university students suggests that 71% of employers value overseas experience (Giolando, 2016) and are willing to increase salaries for students prepared to have an international study tour experience (Lonsdale Institute, 2017). However, such claims seem to ignore the fact that the research was conducted by organisations with a commercial and financial interest in the tours, thus should be viewed sceptically. As yet, there is limited research on the relationship between international study tours and their value to employers, the employers’ perspective therefore remains unclear, and an area for further research.

### ***5.6.3 Becoming a Travel Bug***

Previous research in the field of tourism and education has identified that travel experiences can be life-changing (e.g., Li, 2000; Neale, 2017; Piddington, 2016; Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011). Although some claims are overstated and need to be viewed with caution, the findings of the current study indicate that participation in an international study tour was a positive and meaningful life experience, opening the eyes of many of the ex-students to the world, and creating the desire and motivation to continue travelling globally.

Many tourism scholars have sought to understand why people travel, and recognise the importance of the experience (e.g., Ivanovic, 2008; Patterson, 2006; Pearce, 2005; Sharpley, 2006; Wearing, 2001). Since people travel for a variety of purposes, scholars have realised that individual motivations underpin motives for travel, and usually reflect individual wants, needs, and desires (e.g., Collier, 2007; Pearce, 2005; Sharpley, 2006). Although all the ex-students in this study acknowledged a desire for further travel, different factors influenced future destination choices and motivations to travel.

Firstly, it was the travel experience itself that created the desire for independent travel, as prior to travelling on the study tours, many of the ex-students had travelled on family holidays, with the choice of destination and planning generally controlled or partially controlled by their parents. For many therefore, having the first experience of travelling without their parents resulted in improved self-confidence, resulting in the ability to travel independently longer-term.

Furthermore, the travel experience itself created a motivation to further explore other countries and cultures, and many ex-students acknowledged that the international study tour had been a positive life experience. These findings align with Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus' (2011) work on university students in the USA, who found the experience "had sparked their interest in future travel" (p. 221). Nevertheless, Rowan-Keyon and Niehaus commented on only the first year of the students' return, and did not address the longer-term effects. The current findings therefore provide important insights into the longer-term effects of international study tours, as the desire to continue travelling was maintained by the ex-students, describing themselves as having travel bugs (i.e., having a strong urge to travel). According to Lexico (2020) "becoming a travel bug" is an informal expression describing "a strong desire to travel; an obsessive enthusiasm for or addiction to travelling" (para. 1). In later life, the ex-students in the current study expressed a desire to get away, and their behaviour was self-oriented, with travel forming an important part of their lives. Some ex-students even had specific ambitions to visit a different country every year or planned to visit every continent in the world. The desire to travel again after a study tour is not surprising, as the tourism literature acknowledges that "holidays are a crucial element of modern life" (Urry, 1990, p. 5). The significance of this is evident in global tourism statistics that show there were 1.5 billion international arrivals in 2019 (UNWTO, 2020).

For other ex-students becoming a travel bug extended into their academic life and influenced their educational choice, actively seeking out educational courses related to travel and tourism, or educational institutions that offered opportunities to travel overseas as part of their qualifications. Evidence from the interviews showed that the ex-students' behaviour was affected by participation in an international study tour, and the desire to continue travelling. Motivational researchers believe that "behaviour is a direct result of subconscious or even unconscious desires" (Collier, 2007, p. 297). Murray (1938) pointed out that "need is an emergence from the past, a push from the past rather than a pull from the future" (p. 238). Collectively, these quotes suggest that the travel experience was significant and opportunities to travel were specific motivators impacting on future educational choices.

Secondly, as discussed in section 5.3.4 on participation, many of the ex-students felt restricted and controlled by the structure of the international study tours. It was these constraints that created the need and desire to return to the destination again, in search of freedom and to experience the destination differently. The findings indicate this was closely related to the ex-students' ideological expectations prior to participating in the international study tour, and unfulfilled personal expectations that impacted on their travel decisions in later life, creating the need to travel independently and relive the moment differently, so they could engage in the experience differently and with greater personal autonomy and freedom.

The tourism literature has identified the importance of expectations in the overall travel experience and how personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction can influence an individual's travel decisions (e.g., Collier, 2007; Morgan et al., 2010; Pearce, 2005; Ross, 1998). Many scholars have acknowledged that travel behaviour is generally driven by individual needs that have to be fulfilled (e.g., Collier, 2007; Dann, 1981; Maslow, 1970; Pearce, 2005). This was reflected in this study, with many ex-students '*going it alone*' to satisfy their need for '*freedom*' and individual '*curiosity*.' On returning to the same destination independently, the ex-students had found greater flexibility and taken their time in getting to know the destination. For many ex-students this had resulted in the ability to explore places in more depth, revisiting opportunities that were missed on the international study tours, and satisfying their personal needs for '*freedom*.'

In addition, the female ex-students' attitudes and expectations towards '*freedom*' and independence had changed over time, as in later life they had become more adventurous,

no longer requiring the security of travelling as part of a group, but having the '*self-confidence*' to travel alone. It is thus considered that the female ex-students were able to escape the pressures and traditional expectations that parents had around gender norms, thus creating a greater sense of independence and '*freedom*' by travelling alone. Travelling independently in later life gave the ex-students a sense of gratification and empowerment, and improved their self-confidence to continue travelling. Indeed, research has suggested that there is significant growth in female solo travellers, who are in "search of adventure, social interactions, education and self-understanding" (Wilson & Little, 2005, p. 157). However, personal safety still remains a concern for many women travelling alone (Christoff, 2018; Porter & Schänzel, 2018; Wilson & Little, 2008; Xie, 2019; Yang et al., 2018). Concerns over risk and personal safety whilst travelling, therefore made many of the female ex-students reluctant to travel to unfamiliar places in later life.

Thirdly, the familiarity of a destination created the desire to return to the same country in later life, instilling in the ex-students a sense of comfort and safety with familiar places, cultures, and languages. For the female ex-students, travel choices made in later life still demonstrated the indoctrination from gendered lessons on personal safety and risk, which influenced their choice of destination. As feminist and tourism researchers have found, there are still gendered in-equalities and discrepancies in how females and males perceive the risk at destinations, with females constrained by the fear of dangerous situations such as harassment or sexual attacks (Carr, 2011; Khoo-Lattimore & Wilson, 2017; E. Wilson & Little, 2008; E. Yang et al., 2019). It is evident from the findings that by returning to familiar destinations, the female ex-students gained a sense of physical and psychological safety. This imparted a sense of '*freedom*,' empowering them with the '*self-confidence*' to continue travelling.

For other ex-students, this familiarity was linked to emotional connections and personal memories that led them back to the destination of their study tour. This was more prevalent for ex-students who had participated in international study tours that contained an element of volunteering. One possible explanation for this is that volunteering creates a sense of purpose. and as Wearing (2001) pointed out, this provides the motivation to continue helping those less fortunate. Hence, this may explain why these ex-students returned to the destination again. With the exception of those who had taken part in volunteering, rationales for visiting a familiar destination were more self-centred, and linked to personal levels of self-confidence and self-belief. For example, the ability to

speak the language instilled in the ex-students a psychological sense of safety and the confidence to converse in another language. For other ex-students, being able to quickly navigate around the destination and explore obscure places and view it from a different perspective also provided a psychological sense of safety, as a connection to the place and people had already been formed. The findings therefore suggest that psychological safety was an important factor affecting future travel decisions.

The concept of familiarity can also be applied to the travel experience itself, which resulted in improvements in self-confidence and the ability to travel independently longer-term. This finding confirms the work of Ludlum et al. (2013), who found short-term programmes gave university students the confidence to participate in other foreign travel experiences and a greater sense of independence.

The current findings resonate with Pearce's (2005) travel career pattern (TCP), as this concept examines the importance of past international travel experiences in relation to further travel behaviours. Although the model has been heavily criticised, many scholars (e.g., Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Lew et al., 2004; C. Ryan, 1997; Woodside & Martin, 2008) have argued that travel experiences do not necessarily follow a linear process. However, the findings from this study reflect longer-term stages of behavioural change resulting from participation in the study tours, making the ex-students more self-centred in their approach to further travel, and emphasising the need for personal fulfilment. Arguably, the international study tours initially provided opportunities to experience the first three stages in the travel career pattern (TCP) model: "relaxation" (escape), "safety" (group travel), and "relationships" (learning from and with each other). In the longer term, the ex-students had built on this and become more experienced travellers, seeking out different experiences (development) to fulfil their curiosity and better understand themselves (fulfilment).

Whilst this study confirms that participation in international study tours was instrumental in creating the desire and motivation to continue travelling globally, it is worth noting that alternative travel experiences, such as family holidays and overseas experiences (OE) can also create the desire and motivation to continue travelling globally. However, this study focuses on the importance of the first travel experience without parents and during adolescence, as a means of gaining personal autonomy and influencing destination choice. This study has gone some way toward enhancing understandings of the longer-term effects of international study tours on ex-high school students' travel decisions in

later life, by highlighting the importance of the travel experience itself, the familiarity of destinations, and the desire to travel independently.

#### ***5.6.4 Identity***

Tourism literature acknowledges that international travel experiences are opportunities for self-discovery and have the potential to transform individuals (e.g., L. Brown, 2009; Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Ritz, 2011; Wearing, 2001). Hence, travel experiences can affect an individual's life through changes in self-understanding, self-awareness, and personal identity development (Morgan et al., 2010). This was reflected in this study's findings, as participation in international study tours initiated a process of personal growth and self-awareness, with the ex-students growing up, and gaining self-confidence and maturity.

In general, the ex-students in this study acknowledged that the process of self-awareness involved examining their inner self, reflecting on their personal beliefs, morals, and values, in relation to their identity. For a few ex-students, this process formed an important part of the international study tour and was life-changing with longer-term consequences, whereas for others it was not so explicit.

Data showed that the exploration of the inner self involved reflecting on personal beliefs and religion, and was an important aspect of self-awareness, self-discovery, self-understanding, and identity development. This provided new insights, as religious beliefs are often neglected in relation to international high school study tours. For many ex-students, religion was an influential part of their life and underpinned many core values, beliefs, and personal decisions. Erikson (1968) acknowledged the role of religion and its potential in adolescent development, suggesting that religious beliefs and values provide the ideological setting from which adolescents can make sense of the world. Youniss et al. (1999) found religious values and beliefs gave interpretive meaning and significance to an experience. Consequently, experiencing cultural differences in unfamiliar settings made some ex-students re-evaluate their faith and question their beliefs.

For a few ex-students, the international study tour experience reaffirmed their faith and deepened their relationship and belief in God. This suggests that participation in an international study tour solidified their faith and understanding of themselves. Furthermore, those ex-students who reaffirmed their faith and belief in God, all followed the Christian faith and had participated in international study tours that contained an

element of volunteering. Ron and Timothy (2018) observed that “one of the edicts of Christianity is to serve others” (p. 85). Indeed, research into the Christian faith suggests that Christian missions of volunteering are faith-building experiences that bring people closer to God (Greening, 2015; Ron & Timothy, 2018). Howell (2012) pointed out that the timing of such an experience is imperative, as this can influence how the experience impacts on individuals. Indeed, “short travel experiences for Christian purposes such as charity, service, or evangelism” (Howell, 2012, p. 20) are often encouraged by parents in a Church community as a means of strengthening religious beliefs amongst their adolescent children (Ron & Timothy, 2018). This suggests that adolescence is considered an ideal time for fostering religious beliefs. For some ex-students, their affiliation with God continued in later life, and they remained active members of a Church community.

In contrast, one student became sceptical about his religious upbringing as an Anglican, eventually abandoning his affiliation with the Church. His scepticism arose from the prejudices and hostility he encountered towards his disability during a study tour to Japan. In Japanese society there is a negative attitude towards people with disabilities, who are often viewed as inferior (Gething et al., 1994; Watanabe, 2003). The religious beliefs and cultural differences he encountered in relation to the Buddhist concept of reincarnation, left the student confused about his personal values, disability, religious beliefs, and identity. Scholars have suggested that cultural differences manifest in many different ways, and can cause problems between individuals from different backgrounds (e.g., Hoon Park, 2018; Otten, 2003; Reisinger & Turner, 2003). This suggests that religion plays an important role in identity formation and has a central part in cultural upbringing and understandings. Hofstede (2001, p. x) referred to culture as “mental programming,” and a way of organising society and reinforcing values. Cultural differences can therefore result in culture shock (Reisinger & Turner, 2003), which was reflected in this study.

Tourism literature has identified the psychological effect of culture shock and how this impacts on people’s behaviour as they try to adjust to a different culture (e.g., Hall, 2004; Pearce, 2005; Reisinger, 2009). Oberg (1960) outlined four phases of culture shock: the “honeymoon phase,” when individuals are fascinated, optimistic, and excited by the new environment, the “hostility phase,” when they develop negative attitudes towards their host, the “recovery phase,” when they find the ability to cope, and the “adjustment phase,” when they finally accept the new environment. Boud et al. (1993) pointed out that “we can never underdo what has happened and reinterpret events with new ways of thinking” (p. 13). These are important points, as the ex-students’ experiences of culture shock and

hostility on the study tour facilitated the process of self-internalisation, affecting their own concepts of self. The international study tour was a turning point in the life of one ex-student, making him self-aware and enabling him to reflect on his assumptions, including his religious beliefs. This altered his perspective on life and his understanding of himself, influencing his behaviour in later life. These findings corroborate the ideas of Albrecht and Cornwall (1998), who identified connections between life events and changes in religious beliefs. In later life, this particular student became intrigued with cultural understandings and religions, researching the spiritual ideologies of other religions, which resulted in his becoming agnostic.

Cultural differences were also the motivation for one female ex-student to examine her eating habits. This was not surprising, as food plays an important role in our lives, and “food like language exists as a vehicle for expressing culture and is central to our identity” (Shah, 2018, p. 2). Many tourism scholars have extensively researched the connection between cultural traditions, attitudes to food, and the effects of these on tourists’ behaviour (e.g., Campbell-Price, 2014; Cushner, 2004; Marvell & Hayward, 2005; Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Nevertheless, most studies focus only on the short-term effects on tourists’ behaviour relating to cultural adaption or culture shock. Although this was evident in the current study, the theory of culture shock still applies. When the ex-student reached the “hostility” phase of the culture shock cycle, she expressed feelings of annoyance, irritation, and disgust, with what she perceived as self-indulgent eating habits of her German host family. However, the effects of this were deep and prolonged, with the eating habits of her host family having a longer-term psychological effect on her own behaviour, shaping her eating habits and food choices. Longer-term, this resulted in the ex-student’s becoming a vegetarian. This notion resonates with the work of Shepherd and Raats (2006), who suggested that food choice and eating patterns are influenced by past experiences and life events. They explained that life events represent transitions, or turning points in a person’s life, that solidify a continuation of behaviours and develop food choice trajectories. This was evident in this study, as this particular ex-student eventually became a vegan; participation in the international study tour had a lasting effect on her life and identity. Self-identity therefore involves “connections between individuals and society as well as individualistic senses of person” (M. Morgan et al., 2010, p. 21).

For another ex-student, an encounter with a multilingual tour guide during the international study tour made him reflect on his own linguistic ability (through developing

self-awareness). Through the process of self-discovery, he felt inferior, and wanted to learn a new language upon his return to New Zealand. This resonates with Mezirow's (1978) theory of transformative learning, which explains how individuals alter their frame of reference according to their experience. This ex-student also modelled components of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and Rogers' (1959) self-concept theory, suggesting he was motivated by self-actualising tendencies, searching for the ideal self by learning to speak another language. The findings concur with scholars in the fields of education and psychology, suggesting learning, including understanding one's self, does not occur in isolation, but is socially constructed within a cultural context (see Bandura, 1977; Kinginger, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

Although initially dissuaded from studying a language upon his return, at university he fulfilled his ambition, and is now fluent in Spanish; being bilingual forms a valuable part of his identity. The barriers that he faced initially, and the pursuit of language learning, are important points to emphasise. Firstly, it demonstrates the notion that change is not always instantaneous, and secondly, that learning is a lifelong process. Previous research by educational scholars has argued that the process of self-discovery is a life-long journey that entails the exploration of the inter-self (e.g., de Valverde et al., 2017; Kolb, 1984; Maslow, 1970). Secondly, participation in the international study experience had a powerful influence longer-term on this ex-student's life, instilling in him a sense of self-determination that was sustained. This study of New Zealand high school ex-students therefore validates the positive longer-term effects of international study tours on participants, and strengthens the argument that participation in international study tours is beneficial for students.

### ***5.6.5 Cultural Understanding***

Although the attainment of cultural understanding was discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.4.2, it is important to emphasise that cultural understanding was sustained in later life, as the ex-students had increased cultural tolerance and an appreciation of their own culture in New Zealand, creating a sense of cultural connectedness. Consistent with the findings of this study, Nunan's (2005) research on Australian university students noted that cultural learning was beneficial in the longer term. Similarly, Buckley (2015) found university students in the USA were more sympathetic and had more respect and empathy for individuals who had permanently moved to another culture. It is thus suggested that international study tours provide valuable opportunities to nurture global citizens, as

cultural differences generate a range of learning opportunities, self-awareness, and changes to the students frame of reference. These findings align with those in previous research identifying the cultural benefits of travel (e.g., Cushner, 2004; Desforges, 2000; Morgan et al., 2010; Reisinger, 2009). In addition, the present findings suggest that participation in international study tours improved cultural understandings, and the ex-students attained greater cultural sensitivity, permanently changing their perspective on life and New Zealand society, and enabling the development of many personal attributes which were used in later life. Many of these aspects were discussed in the relation to careers, self-awareness and identity.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the key aspects of the findings and elaborated on the four theoretical categories outlined in Chapter 4, by discussing the extant theories and knowledge to show the relevance of this study's findings on international study tours and the effects on ex-students in later life.

Firstly, it is important to note that although international study tours have been extensively researched, previous research has focused only on participation in the study tours, and there is no single study viewing the experience holistically. Therefore, a significant new finding of this research, is that events leading up to and including the study tour contribute to learning and the development of new personal skills. These life skills such as self-reliance, independence, effective communication, self-efficiency, and empathy, were sustained and built upon in later life.

The category of "learning from and with each other" was significant, highlighting the intricacies of both formal and informal learning. Sharing experiences and interactions fostered development and was instrumental in the process of self-awareness, self-discovery, and cultural understanding. It demonstrated the complexities of learning, highlighting a dichotomy in relation to immersive language learning. Furthermore, "learning from and with each other" offered some important insights into the needs for belonging and fitting in. A main finding of this research, however, was that despite the inherent friendships gained from the experience, the value of these relationships diminished over time and were not maintained in later life.

The sub-category of "the study tour experience" explored the ex-students' expectations and assumptions about participating in an international study tour and travelling without

their parents. A main finding of this research is the role that individual expectations played, and their influence on behaviour. This was demonstrated in the ideological expectations the ex-students had prior to and during the study tours. Data revealed the tensions and complexities between expected levels of freedom and the actual structure of the study tours, and the important influence of the differences on travel decisions in later life. The findings also identified that expectations were placed on teachers to organise the study tours, placing them in a paradoxical position of balancing the needs for structure and safety of a study tour and the students' needs for freedom and autonomy to learn.

The main category of "voyages of discovery" included concepts of "self-awareness" and "self-discovery." "Self-discovery" emerged as a central link, leading to discussions on the interplay between the ex-students' experiences and the process of self-discovery, and explaining how beliefs, morals, and ethical values, led to changes in personal behaviour that were sustained in later life. Furthermore, the concept of "affordability" was explored, as research to date has tended to focus on problems associated with the costs of international study tours. In contrast, this study identified several longer-term benefits related to the affordability of the study tours, and identified that the ex-students took financial responsibility by obtaining part-time jobs to pay for their international study tour. This inculcated a positive work ethic in the ex-students, which was retained in later life.

The categories of "learning for life" and "going places" expanded on the longer-term effects of the international study tour. The data showed how the ex-students' careers, education, and identity, had been influenced by participating in an international study tour. A key finding was that the educational pathway of the ex-high school students had not been directly affected, but instead, participation in the international study tour had influenced their subject choice, contradicting the findings of previous studies on university students. The data revealed important differences between high school students' and university students' rationales for participating in international study tours. Previous studies suggested that university students were motivated by career goals, and that high school students were not. Nevertheless, during the international study tours, the ex-high school students' attitudes towards careers and career decision-making changed as a result of their experiences. In later life, many of them followed their career aspirations, and embarked on careers influenced by the international study tour experience, utilising skills and cultural understandings gained from the tours. This

research therefore provides important insights into the longer-term effects of study tours on individual careers.

The sub-category “*becoming a travel bug*” emphasised the longer-term desire to continue travelling, and provided important insights into rationales for returning to the study tour destinations again, influenced by past experiences, and giving a sense of purpose.

This research provided opportunities for the ex-students to reflect, and identified different attitudes around expectations of participation in international study tours for oneself and for one’s children, highlighting how individual expectations towards international study had changed longer-term.

Finally, in reviewing the effects of the international study tour on identity, the research offers important new insights into the role of religion and how it gave meaning to the international study tour experience, with some ex-students reaffirming or abandoning their faith during the process of self-discovery. In addition, the research offers an important insight into the effects of travelling on individual eating behaviour. The findings showed that formal reflective practices had been omitted from the international study tours, and that this research created opportunities for self-reflection into the shorter-term and longer-term effects of an international study tour.

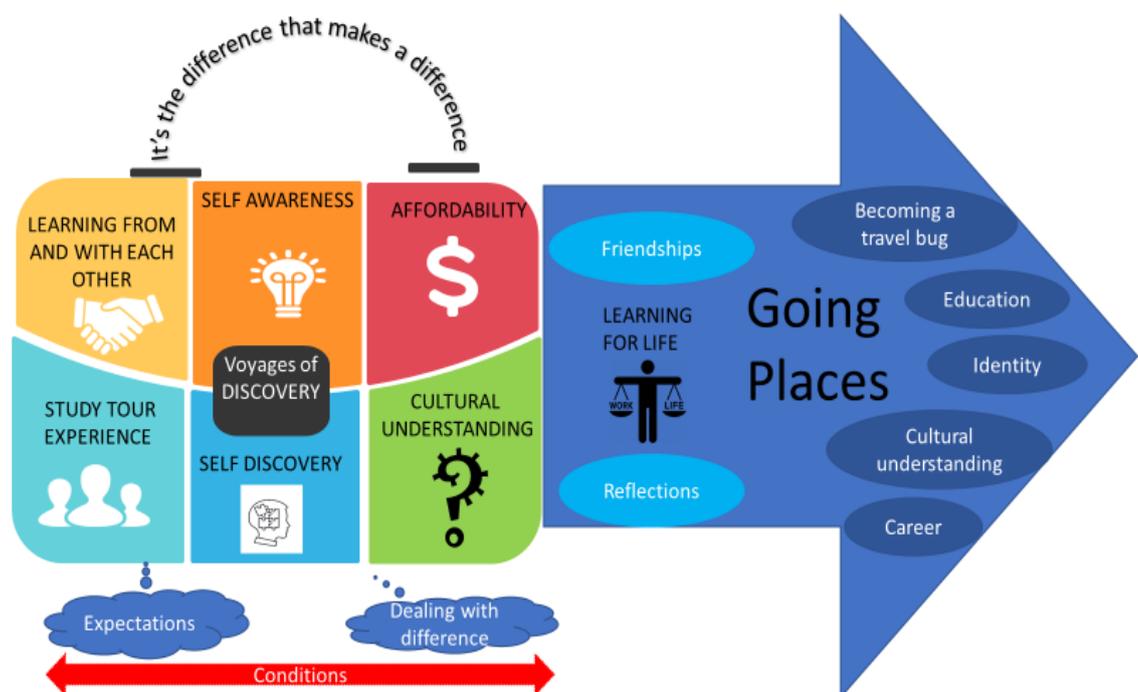
# Chapter 6. The Theory: It's the Difference that makes a Difference

## 6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to determine if participation in international study tours had any longer-term benefits for New Zealand high school students. This chapter provides an overview of the theory “It’s the difference that makes a difference” that has been derived from the research and data collected to answer this question. The theory is represented in the form of a diagram (Figure 30) depicting the categories and subcategories, and the relationships between them. In order to explain the theory and what is happening to the ex-students, why it is happening and the effects on their later life, a storyline technique, which is often used in grounded theory, is utilised (see Birks & Mills, 2011).

**Figure 30**

*The Theory “It’s the Difference That Makes a Difference”*



The “It’s the difference that makes the difference” theory is graphically depicted as a travel suitcase to illustrate how the international study tour affected the ex-students. The travel suitcase metaphor is intended to convey the idea that just like clothes and objects in a suitcase that get entangled during travel, the individual experiences of ex-students overlapped and became entwined with the group experience. This entanglement of

experiences demonstrates the complexity of the international study tour, as the ex-students attributed meaning to their different experiences, and in doing so, gained insights into themselves and become more self-aware. The process of self-awareness meant the ex-students had to distance themselves from their home environment, placing expectations on themselves, as well as on the study tour experience, as they dealt with different experiences. These differences are analogous to the clothes and items in the suitcase that are all different shapes, sizes, and colours, holding different individual interpretations, memories, and meanings. The study tour experience, just like the suitcase, is reinforced by its structure, as the ex-students set out on a journey of self-discovery, navigating their way through the experience, guided by and learning from and with each other and encountering different ways of living, doing, and being, which enhanced their cultural understandings and sense of identity. This process resulted in their learning, growing, and changing, which in turn influenced their subsequent choices and life journeys. The phrase “going places” conceptualises the varied influences of participating in an international study tour, including future travel plans, as well as depicting the adolescent journey and the ex-students’ ability to progress in later life.

### ***6.1.1 Difference***

The construct of difference is central to the theory and conceptualised as an experience that contrasts with what was the norm for the ex-students, and especially with situations that they had never experienced before. In the adolescent life stage, these new and different experiences are juxtaposed with the transition from childhood to adulthood, which involves a complex array of processes such as separation from parental influence, desire for autonomy and independence, uncertainty, insecurity, a growing sense of self-identity and self-confidence (or not), and a finding of a pathway to a future self who is no longer under the direct influence of parents (or other adult caregivers). Thus, the phrase “it’s the difference that makes a difference” is intended to convey the relationship between the influence of new and unfamiliar experiences on the adolescent study tour participants, and their reflections that became catalysts for further change and differences in their lives.

### ***6.1.2 Conditions***

Along the bottom of Figure 30, the conditions that influenced ex-students’ decisions in later life are depicted: “expectations” and “dealing with difference.” All the ex-students

had expectations of the study tour experience, either in relation to themselves, and/or the study tour experience itself. For many ex-students, the international study tour had not met their ideological expectations. Subsequently, in later life, these unfulfilled expectations guided the ex-students' decision-making processes and personal behaviour, influencing travel plans on where to go and who to travel with.

The ex-students had to deal with differences such as: travelling without parents, travelling as part of a group, travelling away from home experiencing the difference of a new country and cultural differences. They accepted these differences as learning opportunities and made comparisons with life at home. These comparisons altered their frames of reference and challenged their beliefs about themselves, which in turn, influenced cultural understandings, self-awareness, and instigated processes of self-discovery. In later life, this influenced their sense of identity, educational choices, and careers.

## **6.2 Categories**

### ***6.2.1 Learning From and With Each Other***

The concept of “learning from and with each other” explains student learning and vindicates this was complex and involved many different aspects of relationships and interactions. It symbolises the social side of the international study tour and the supportive aspects of belonging. For the ex-students, the importance of relationships within the group was emphasised and emerged strongly from the data. The ex-students' ability to fit in to the group and form friendships was an influential aspect of the international study tour, and data revealed that the ex-students considered these social aspects contributed to improvements in both social-confidence and self-confidence.

“Learning from and with each other” also encapsulates the cultural differences encountered by the ex-students as they interacted with the local host community and experienced social and cultural differences. Sharing experiences with teachers and peers enabled the ex-students to question, share, reflect, adapt, and establish connections as they navigated their way through different cultural experiences, and these processes enhanced their cultural understandings. Thus, by making comparisons with their own country and culture, the ex-students became more self-aware and developed a greater sense of cultural connectedness and appreciation of others.

### ***6.2.2 Group Study Tour Experience***

The study tour experience explains the ideological expectations the ex-students had placed on the study tour experience, the group, the self, the destination, and their learning opportunities. It symbolises the ex-students' personal sense of escape from home and parents and their thoughts and feelings about travelling on the study tour itself. The study tour experience explains the expectations, responsibilities and pressures placed on teachers in organising and participating in international study tours. Primarily, the restrictive structure of the study tour resulted in barriers that restrained ex-students from fulfilling their personal desire for freedom and independence and potentially limited their learning experiences. The study tour experience highlighted the tension between the needs of the teachers to have structure, and the ex-students' ideological desire for freedom.

### **6.3. Voyages of Discovery**

“Voyages of discovery” describes the ex-students' journey of self-understanding, which helped them gain a greater sense of self; it symbolises independence and the process of self-exploration. “Voyages of discovery” encapsulates the process of greater self-awareness, journeys of self-discovery, and self-empowerment, enabling the ex-students to recognise and understand their own abilities in more depth, view the world from a different perspective, and gain greater cultural understanding, which influenced personal decisions and behaviours in later life.

#### ***6.3.1 Affordability***

The concept of “affordability” emerged from the analysis of data and it is used in the model to represent the experiences prior to departing on an international study tour. Although it can be viewed from a dual perspective, it particularly denotes the positive effects of cost on the ex-students, as the cost of international study tours can be a challenge for many families and an obstacle to participation. Many ex-students utilised the opportunity to take responsibility and contribute to the cost. For most ex-students, this entailed taking a part-time job or fundraising for the first time to raise and save money. Primarily the ex-students' desire and determination to participate in the international study tour instigated positive changes in personal behaviour. This developed self-efficacy, life skills and personal habits, that were sustained in later life.

### ***6.3.2 Self-awareness and Self-discovery***

The categories of “self-awareness” and “self-discovery” are closely interlinked. The concept of “self-awareness” is the first step in the process of self-discovery. “Self-awareness” represents the realisation of one-self, which for the ex-students, included insights into their subconscious beliefs and understandings of themselves and the world around them, based on their cultural upbringing in New Zealand society. The category of “self-awareness” emphasises the changes that occurred within the ex-students as a result of consciously dealing with difference and making comparisons, allowing them to come out of their psychological comfort zones and the familiarity of their New Zealand cultural upbringing, to see the world from a different perspective. This resulted in their altering their cultural frames of reference to reflect on their beliefs and individual abilities to understand themselves better and become more self-aware.

The category of “self-discovery” represents the process of self-examination combining “self-awareness” with “self-evaluation” and “self-reflection” to examine the more authentic inner self. “Self-discovery” is a central link that encompasses all aspects of the international study tour and signifies the intellectual transformations that enabled the ex-students to determine and plan their future goals.

### ***6.3.3 Cultural Understanding***

The concept of “cultural understanding” emerged from the analysis of data and is utilised to represent how the ex-students adapted to difference to understand other cultures better. For the ex-students this was both a collective and individual process. They viewed culture as language, religion, living conditions, food, architecture, and landscape and tried to understand these to make sense of their experiences and deal with difference. The ex-students made comparisons to their culture in New Zealand, which fostered a greater sense of national awareness, self-identity, and cultural connectedness with their own culture. This category signifies the notion of seeing things differently through shared experiences and changing individual perspectives on life, by establishing a sense of self and gaining a new understanding and appreciation of others. This sense of cultural tolerance and cultural sensitivity was maintained in later life.

## **6.4 Learning for Life**

This category signifies that participation in international study tours was instrumental in “learning for life.” “Learning for life” involved a combination of personal and collective challenges that enabled the ex-students to develop transferable life skills and decision-making strategies that influenced educational choice and contributed to longer-term employability and career success. This category symbolises the positive sustained effect on the ex-students’ lives, cultural understandings, and personal identities. In addition, the category characterises the changes everyone goes through in their lives and the way life stages influence friendships and decisions, such as those to participate in international study tours.

## **6.5 Going Places**

The category “going places” represents the longer-term effects on the ex-students. Firstly, it signifies the ex-students’ desire to continue travelling and exploring the world by becoming a travel bug. It outlines that travelling *independently*, *reliving the moment*, and *wanting to do* things differently, were desires that the ex-students identified had been created (or at least enhanced) as a consequence of their participation in the international study tour as an adolescent. For some ex-students, this was also influenced by the growth in their own sense of self, and self-confidence to travel. For other ex-students, it was influenced by fulfilling their personal need for freedom and independence. Secondly, the concept of “going places” signifies the longer-term effects on educational pathways, careers, personal identity, and cultural understandings, and encapsulates the ex-students’ abilities to progress in later life.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to determine if participation in international study tours had any longer-term benefits for New Zealand high school students. This chapter has outlined the theory of “It’s the difference that makes the difference,” which was developed as part of the constructivist grounded theory process. The theory of “It’s the difference that makes the difference” was generated to theoretically explain the longer-term effects of participating in high school international study tours in New Zealand.

The chapter outlined the theory demonstrating the interplay between the main categories. It emphasises the complexities of the ex-students’ experiences both prior to and during

the international study tours, and how a combination of these experiences and dealing with difference, influenced the process of self-discovery. It also explains the short-term effects on both the individual and the group, acknowledging that the interactions between individual experiences and each other were significant to the learning process and improved cultural understandings longer-term. The theory recognises the responsibilities placed on teachers and the rationale for the restrictive structure of international study tours, and how these influenced strategies for self-fulfilment that were adopted by ex-students in their later lives. The theory symbolises the process of self-discovery and lifelong learning by capturing the idea of “the difference that makes a difference” longer-term in students’ lives; it emphasises that the strength of the experience is in the perceived level of difference. The discussion chapter (Chapter 5) provided a deep understanding of each of the main four categories (learning from and with each other, voyages of discovery, learning for life and going places) depicted in this theory.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusions**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The rationale for this research stemmed from my interest as a sceptical parent, tourism scholar, and the lack of empirical research on the effects of international study tours, longer-term. The research focused on understanding these effects and provided an insight into the longer-term influences on ex-students who participated in international study tours whilst at high school in New Zealand. The research process and data were used to develop the constructivist grounded theory, “It’s the difference that makes a difference,” to conceptualise understanding and provide insights into how the international study tour affected the ex-students, from their reflections in later life.

This conclusion chapter begins by revisiting the main research question, along with the aims and objectives of the study. I reflect on the important findings and insights into the influences of international study, and how these contribute to new knowledge. In addition, I offer views on the implications for teachers planning international study tours. I also consider the limitations of the research, offer some recommendations, identify potential areas for future research and provide some concluding remarks.

### **7.2 Research Question**

Research Question: Does it make a Difference? What are the influences of high-school international study tours on student’s subsequent lives?

Does it make a difference? For the ex-students in this study, the simple answer is “yes.” All the ex-students interviewed explained that from their perspective, their participation in an international study had made a difference to their life.

The perspectives shared offered important insights and subtleties of real value, when reflecting on the findings related to the research question. Specifically, the scale and significance of the longer-term effects varied from individual to individual. Each ex-student reflected in different ways on the influence of their experiences, which were related to the complexities and challenges of participation in international study tours. For example, while this study asked interviewees to reflect on their experiences individually, an important finding was the influence of others within the study tour group. Findings showed that the processes of self-awareness, self-discovery and cultural

understanding were closely connected to the sharing of experiences and learning from and with each other. These important social interactions facilitated processes of learning from and with each other, which contributed to the development of a sense of self-understanding. In addition, other learning outcomes such as improved cultural understanding, along with developing life skills, which were utilised and sustained in later life, were also identified as key outcomes for participants. These outcomes were shown to have influenced educational and career choices, and impacted on personal decisions.

This research has developed an understanding into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand high-school international study tours and the individual difference it made to participants' lives. International study tours have multiple influences and meaning, reflecting the complexities, challenges, and uniqueness of the experience.

### **7.3 Revisiting the aims and objectives**

The aim of this study was to examine the effects of participating in short-term international study tours and determine if participation had any longer-term effects for the high school students that participated in them. This was achieved through the following objectives:

#### ***7.3.1 Education Choice***

*Objective 1: To develop an understanding of the influences of the study tour on the participants' subsequent educational and career choices.*

The first component of this objective sought to examine if the international study tour influenced the ex-students' choice of subsequent education. The findings showed that the international study tour did not directly affect the general intent of students to undertake further education at university level, because the majority were already committed to going to university. However, the findings did reveal that the international study tour had a direct influence on the subject and courses selected at university. In addition, educational choice was also influenced by desires to continue travelling, and choosing university courses that incorporated opportunities to travel overseas as part of the study programme.

Because the high-school international study tours were linked to formal curriculum learning, achieving this was the initial and primary justification for many students to participate. The interviews conducted with them in later life revealed that the ex-students were divided as to whether their NCEA results had improved as a result of the study tour. However, the longer-term reflections on the importance of this expected outcome revealed it was considered unimportant. Instead, it was the informal learning opportunities and life skills that were developed during the international study tour that were considered to be more valuable and influential in later life.

### ***7.3.2 Career Choice***

In addition to educational choices, the first objective also sought to examine the influence of the international study tour on students' career choices. The findings showed that high school international study tours were instrumental in the career decisions made and often determined the direction of many of the ex-student's career choices. Interestingly, this was especially the case for ex-students who participated in study tours that contained an element of volunteering. This finding contrasts with those of scholars who have criticised volunteer tourism as a self-indulgent endeavour that is frivolous and has few long term benefits for either the visitor or the host community, because the activities are shallow and meaningless encounters (e.g., Crossley, 2017; Jakubiak & Iordache-Bryant, 2017; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Wearing & McGhee, 2013). The findings from this study showed that the process of growth in self-awareness, was related to the tour's prompting the ex-students to reflect on their individual strengths and weaknesses and enabled them to contemplate their choices of careers.

The meaning and influence attributed to participation in the international study tour was complex, multidimensional, and personal, involving both self-understandings and altruistic behaviour towards the local community. In later life, the ex-students shared a deep commitment to helping people and tended to have careers in professions that focused on helping others. These findings are important, because they suggest that short-term high school international study tours are influential in terms of career choices, at least from the retrospective perspective of those interviewed for this study.

To date, most research in this area has tended to focus on the increased employability of participants. The findings of this study have provided evidence that supports the arguments of researchers such as Liu (2019), that international study tours can provide

opportunities for the empowerment of participants. More specifically, the data from this study provides new insights into the career choices made by New Zealand high school students who tended to choose careers within helping professions.

Additional important findings are that transferable life skills, self-confidence, and cultural understanding, contributed to the longer-term career success of many of the participants. Interviewees reflected on the benefits the tour gave in terms of equipping them with coping strategies and resilience, and helping them cultivate their professional identity.

### ***7.3.3 Personal growth and self-identity***

*Objective 2: To gain insights into the effects of the study tour on the participants' sense of self-identity and their relationships with others.*

*Objective 3: To explore the participants' perspectives on the influences of the study tour on their personal growth.*

The second and third objectives sought to gain insights into the personal growth and sense of self-identity of the participants. The findings of this study show that international study tours can be spheres for personal transformation and development. The findings corroborate other research showing that travel experiences such as international study tours, can be opportunities for self-awareness and self-discovery (e.g. Brown, 2005; Ritz, 2011; Wearing, 2013).

The concept of self-discovery emerged as a key category, revealing the complexity of the ex-student experience in connection with the international study tour, and highlighting that there are many different aspects involved in the process of self-understanding and identity development.

The group nature and social aspects of the international study tour were shown to be important influences on the development of self-awareness of the ex-students, as they explained that the tour prompted them to reflect on themselves and their ability to fit in to the group.

Whilst away from their home environment, without parents, and their everyday lives in New Zealand, the ex-students were given a different perspective on which to reflect, make comparisons, and better understand themselves and reflect on their beliefs. A combination of these factors meant they became disoriented, altering their frame of reference. This

initiated a process of personal growth and self-awareness as they grew up, acquiring a sense of maturity, better understanding their own abilities, gaining self-belief, social confidence, and self-confidence. Longer-term, these attributes and life skills were sustained and played an important part in the success of their careers. Moreover, dealing with difference and becoming more culturally aware was a substantial part of the international study tour and influential in their identity construction. For a few ex-students, this was life-changing, altering their religious beliefs, eating habits, and beliefs in their abilities.

Although the ex-students acknowledged that informal self-reflection took place, there was a distinct lack of opportunities provided for formal reflection during the international study tours. Nevertheless, self-awareness influenced the ex-students sense of self in later life in relation to careers, education, identity, and cultural awareness. The international study tour affected their subsequent travel patterns because the increased self-awareness and enhanced personal confidence encouraged independent travel and a search for personal fulfilment. All the participants viewed the international study tour as influential in terms of personal growth and autonomy; however, the scale and significance of these influences varied from individual to individual. This study reiterates what many other scholars have suggested, that establishing a sense of self and identity, is a complex and multifaceted process (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Erikson, 1968; Lewis, 1991; Morgan, 2010).

#### ***7.3.4 Relationships with others***

The findings from this study show that learning from and with each other encompassed learning at many different levels. Interactions, sharing experiences, fitting in, and becoming friends, contributed to a better understanding of one-self (self-discovery) and nurtured greater cultural understandings. The findings of this study provide evidence that supports the arguments of researchers such as Rubin et al. (2011), that a sense of belonging is important during adolescence, and Bandura (1977), that learning is a social process.

Longer-term, however, the findings did reveal that friendships formed on the international study tour had not been maintained, with personal obligations and priorities changing, and individuals only staying in touch via social media platforms. However, interviewees reflected on a greater sense of cultural understanding in relationships with others, that had

been permanently embedded into their life, improving cultural tolerance and cultural sensitivity, and creating a sense of cultural connectedness and cultural appreciation towards their own culture in New Zealand. For many ex-students, this improved communication helped in both their workplace and their personal lives. The findings of this study provide evidence that supports the arguments of researchers such as Penning et al. (2019), that international study tours can provide a means of developing intercultural competencies and a sense of global citizenship.

### ***7.3.5 Further influences***

*Objective 4. To explore participants' perspectives on other influences and effects that the study tour may have had.*

The fourth objective sought to gain insights into any other influences and effects that the international study tour may have had, although it was not the intention to examine events prior to participating in the international study tour. This revealed an important finding, the connection between the desire to participate and issues of affordability, which instigated positive changes in the ex-students' behaviour. Taking ownership, responsibility, and obtaining part-time jobs to finance the international study tour, bestowed a positive work ethic and valuable life-skills on the ex-students, which were sustained longer-term.

This study made a distinction between the ex-students' ideological expectations of freedom, and the restrictive structure of the actual study tour. In doing so, it demonstrated the dichotomy, complexities, and tensions of international study tours. These findings are important, because they have implications for teachers planning future international study tours, and suggest a need to strike a balance between the need for structure and freedom of international study tours to create opportunities for greater self-exploration to enhance personal autonomy. The findings showed that the restrictions imposed on students had implications longer-term on the ex-students' motivations and desire to travel independently, and the choice of destination selected.

Additionally, the travel experience had opened the eyes of many ex-students to different countries and cultures. Longer-term, most felt the need to continue travelling, and this had become an important part of their life.

This study has extended the arguments of tourism and educational scholars who suggested that international student tours are beneficial for the students that participate in them (e.g. Cushner, 2004; Forsey et al., 2012; O’Callaghan, 2006; Ogden, 2010). In addition, the study goes beyond previous research in both sectors of higher education and secondary school education that examined only the short-term or immediate effects of international study tours, by examining the longer-term effects. In doing so, this study addresses some of the gaps noted by Campbell-Price (2014, p.242), who argued that “sustained learning relies on anecdotes rather than evidence.”

This research, therefore, contributes to the argument that international study tours are opportunities for experiential learning and for personal transformation (see Chang et al., 2012; Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Dorsett et al., 2018; Nada et al., 2018; Ritz, 2011). It offers new insights into the longer-term effects on New Zealand high-school students, by showing that learning had been sustained in relation to the students’ educations, careers, and personal lives.

#### **7.4 Further Insights**

Whilst the international study tour had a positive effect longer-term on the ex-students in this study, the study also highlights the complexities and tensions of organising and participating in international study tours.

From a teaching perspective, the study provides insights into the practicalities of international study tours. Important insights were obtained on the socio-political, practical, and emotional pressures placed on teachers, and the paradoxes around expectations, which at an institutional level, were influenced by the school communities (staff and students), and on a personal level, were influenced by the demands and pressures on their own personal life. A particular issue that emerged related specifically to the teachers’ management of additional workload pressures and responsibilities. For example, being *in loco parentis* recognised their responsibility for and accountability to others, which accentuated the vulnerability of the teachers and their careers in taking students overseas. Given the escalating pressures on teachers and difficulties in recruiting teaching staff in New Zealand (see Education Central, 2019; Redmond, 2019), it is therefore questionable why educational institutions, parents, and general society, place these extra demands on teachers. Yet, despite the personal pressures, teachers continue to

show commitment to their role and passion for teaching by facilitating international study tours, as they view the experiences as beneficial.

In addition, this research provided important insights into the significance of affordability. As previously alluded to, the financial costs of international study tours restrict access, and not all high-school students are able to participate in these types of activities. From a political and educational perspective, the tension between affordability and participation emphasises an enigma in educational policies and practice, with many schools' decisions to promote and support international study tour experiences for a select few students, seemingly counter to stated educational policies supporting equity and inclusion.

The complexity of this tension is reflected in New Zealand in many ways, and particularly, through the inequity of international study tours and the experiences they offer. Firstly, it is apparent through the predominance of participation by more affluent New Zealanders, who can better afford the privilege of overseas travel. Secondly, it is apparent through the lack of lower decile school participation, and relatedly, the limited inclusion of Māori and Pasifika students participating in international study tours (see Johnston, 2015; Jones & Singh, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2019c). Indeed, it is widely reported that New Zealand has one of the most unequal educational systems in the world (e.g. Gromada et al., 2020; Rapira O'Connell, 2020; Walters, 2020). However, participation in international study tours appears to exacerbate these inequities and potentially adds legitimacy to the claims of hypocrisy regarding the disconnect between the stated objectives of fair and equitable access to high quality educational experiences and the practicality of achieving this. In fact, there are vastly different opportunities available to New Zealand high school students as a consequence of the different socio-economic situations of families, communities, schools and ethnic groups.

Globally, advocates for "tourism for all" have stressed the wider benefits of travelling for people, businesses, and governments with many supporting social tourism agendas as a means of promoting inclusivity (Cheung Judge, 2017; A Diekmann et al., 2018; Eusébio et al., 2017; Kakoudakis et al., 2017; Minnaert et al., 2011). Hence, social tourism is designed to facilitate participation amongst disadvantaged groups and have longer-term benefits for society, and could help in New Zealand to bridge socio-economic gaps and increase participation amongst students from lower decile schools. However, this is not an obvious priority for the New Zealand Government, since a quarter of a million New

Zealand children still live in material hardship and deprivation, lacking basic needs such as housing, food, and clothing (Bennett, 2018; Satherley, 2019; Variety, 2019), hence it does not appear on any social care agendas in New Zealand.

Furthermore, whilst insights into the individual benefits of international study tours were clear in the findings of this study, it is important to emphasise that alternative travel experiences may create personal benefits longer-term. International study tours could cost as much, if not more than a family holiday, and a family holiday overseas could provide a cost effective alternative to participating in an international study tour; learning is a significant reason why parents take their children on holiday” (Carr, 2011, p. 80) and allows for creating family memories and longer-term social connections (Schänzel & Smith, 2014). However, this type of travel experience would eliminate the opportunity for adolescents to gain a sense of personal autonomy and “escape the controls imposed upon them from within the family” (Carr, 2011, p.139-140), and as Moorhead (2007) noted, adolescents like to spend time away from their parents and family controls, preferring to travel independently. Even so, as previously noted, the financial cost, lack of disposable income, and living in material hardship, prevents many New Zealand families from travelling, either domestically or overseas.

Alternatively, for young New Zealanders, in later life, OE’s (Overseas Experience) or “gap years”, as they are sometimes referred to in other countries, can create an independent way of travelling (King, 2011). Such travel is usually for longer periods of time, often lasting up to a year, but can be inaccessible to many young New Zealanders (Bell, 2016; Gourley, 2018; Inkson et al., 1999). Furthermore, research suggests caution towards gap year travel, highlighting the detrimental effects longer-term on both education and careers, such as the increased risk of dropping out from university and insurmountable wage deficits longer-term (Clark, 2020; Parker et al., 2015).

This research provides valuable insights into the monetary costs of international study tours. In evaluating the monetary cost of the international study tour versus the personal benefits, the findings identified several advantages and disadvantages associated with affordability. However, the question about whether personal benefits outweigh the financial cost still remains a difficult question to answer, as many benefits identified by the participants are intangible, difficult to measure in monetary terms, and prone to accusations of subjectivity and ambiguity. I therefore wish to emphasise that whilst

international study tours provide unique and individual experiences, the return on the financial investment for individuals is highly variable.

In addition, this research provides insights into the connections between activities before and during the international study tour as an essential part of the learning process. These emphasise the many different interactions between the components of a study tour that produce a combined effect on students, impacting on learning for life and the development of personal skills and learning, all of which are sustained in later life.

This research also provides insights into the lack of formal reflection opportunities available on tour, and in a similar manner to Wakeford (2013) and Raymond and Hall (2008), recognises the need to formalise reflection opportunities that might embed the learning and enhance personal meaning.

Further insights recognised the need for a less structured approach to international study tours and the need to widen participation. In recognising these points, it is hoped that this study will stimulate debate on the planning of and participation in international study tours. As Charmaz (2006) points out, the analytic insights of grounded theory research are significant if they can provoke further thinking and research.

### **7.5 Methodological Contribution**

The key methodological contribution this research makes is in the application of grounded theory to the context of longer-term reflections on high school overseas study tour experiences. Many scholars have called for tourism research to adopt different methodological approaches. For example, Phillimore and Goodson (2004) suggested that tourism research requires a qualitative approach to enhance a richer and deeper understanding of tourism experiences. Wilson and Hollingshead (2015) recommended that scholars embrace “different methods and approaches that are offered elsewhere across the broader (soft) social sciences” (p. 1), Matteucci and Gnoth (2017) specifically called for tourism researchers to utilise a grounded theory methodology, and Jennings (2001) considered grounded theory under-represented in tourism studies.

Grounded theory proved useful for exploring the effects of participating in international study tours, generating rich data and highlighting significant events and important moments that influenced the ex-students in later life. Furthermore, the constructivist approach to grounded theory gave a voice to participants. Hence, this research provided,

for many of the ex-students, the first opportunity to formally reflect on and interpret past events, enabling them to draw meaning from their experiences and better understand the effect of the study tour on their later life. Furthermore, utilising the constructivist grounded theory approach enabled me to explore the relationship between past and present events, and determine the effects of what had actually happened and their influence on the future. By moving away from the positivist paradigm that has dominated in tourism research for the last decade (see Nunkoo, 2018), this study has gone some way to address calls to adopt different research and methodological approaches in tourism studies.

The use of constructivist grounded theory facilitated the co-creation of categories through the interaction with literature and theoretical sensitivity, and from this, a conceptual framework was developed. This framework provided the basis of the conceptualisation of the findings that led to the theory “It’s the difference that makes a difference.”

## **7.6 Theoretical and Practical Contribution**

This study makes a number of original theoretical contributions to academic knowledge. It is the first empirical investigation of this type for New Zealand, and contributes to the wider literature on educational tourism by providing insights into the experiences of adult New Zealanders who participated in high school study tours as adolescents, and the effects on their lives longer-term.

The theoretical model, “It’s the difference that makes the difference,” makes an original and important contribution to educational tourism knowledge. This theory might be applied to other school or university study tour programmes globally, or other tourism experiences. In developing the theoretical model, it emerged that individual study tour experiences were complex and multifaceted, representing both change and structured stability, as well as differences and similarities. The theory emphasises the interplay between individual experiences that were embedded in the group experience. The theory outlines these concepts along with expectations and dealing with difference, as important and influential in later life.

This theoretical understanding of the longer-term effects of participating in international study tours in New Zealand, contributes to new knowledge in the realm of educational tourism, by providing insights into the longer-term effects of participating in international study tours.

Specifically, the first of these contributions relates to longer-term effects on education and educational choices by New Zealand high school students. This study contributes by identifying the effect of study tours on formal educational pathways and establishing a rationale for subject choices. The effects were linked to career aspirations, which in turn were related to self-fulfilment, and choosing programmes of study that incorporated opportunities for travel. In addition, this study revealed how formal and informal learning, including the development of life skills and cultural understanding, was sustained and utilised in later life.

The second contribution into the longer-term effects, pertains to the importance of affordability. The findings showed a clear connection between activities before and during the international study tour that produced a combined effect on the ex-students, impacting on their learning for life. This was apparent from the part-time jobs or fundraising activities the ex-students participated in, prior to departing on their international study tour. Through these activities/experiences, they gained a strong work ethic and valuable life skills, which were sustained in later life. In addition, the study contributed to knowledge by highlighting the similarities in the skills obtained by high-school ex-students and university ex-students from participation in international study tours, confirming that transferable life skills, self-confidence, and cultural understanding, all contributed to longer-term career success. The findings also showed the longer-term benefits and development of human capital developed from the study tours, consistent with government agendas and policies around notions of global citizenship. The study makes a differentiation between high school and university level participation, as motivations and rationales for participating varied between the age groups.

The third contribution is in viewing the effects of study tours on the self and identity formation, highlighting the personal attributes acquired during international study tours, such as self-awareness, self-confidence and cultural understanding, all of which were influential and sustained in later life.

The fourth contribution is in relation to high school ex-students' friendships, which although important at the time of the study tour, were of little consequence longer-term, as personal obligations and priorities changed.

The fifth contribution is in understanding the effects of participating in international study tours under the control of adult (teacher) supervision, and the role of ideological

expectations and tensions around the organisation of international study tours. These explained the influences on personal motivation and decisions about travel choices and destinations in later life, and the desire to travel independently.

A further contribution this study makes is to recognise the lack of formal reflection opportunities available to New Zealand high school students on international study tours and the need for teachers organising the study tours to incorporate these into the tours' schedules.

## **7.7 Limitations**

The previous section outlined the contributions this study makes to academic knowledge. However, it is also important in empirical research to identify and acknowledge the limitations of a study. Three specific limitations were identified:

1. While this study followed Charmaz's principles for developing a grounded theory, like all interpretative qualitative studies, the findings were influenced by a variety of factors, including that of the researcher. The findings are unique, but necessarily limited to my personal interpretation of the data. As a consequence, the results need to be interpreted in the context of my own personal lens as a researcher and parent (as outlined in Chapter 3).
2. The study was limited in terms of participant representation, with interviewees limited to 16 participants from six schools, all from the North Island of New Zealand, and did not include any Māori or Pasifika students. Extending this study nationally and including students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds may develop greater insights into the longer-term effects of study tours within New Zealand, as they may offer alternative interpretations.
3. The findings were limited to exploring the international study tour experience in isolation, and did not consider other factors in the students lives that may have influenced personal growth, relationships, and educational or career choices. This limitation is important. An individual's development, particularly from adolescence into early adulthood, is influenced by a multitude of factors, so it is difficult to simplify the complexity of the human experience to clearly link cause and effect relationships with regard to such personal and esoteric attributes as self-awareness, self-confidence, life-skills, and global citizenship.

4. Some of the study's claims need to be viewed with caution, bearing in mind the possible bias in the responses. After all, who would want to spend thousands of dollars on an international study tour and reflect that they had not gained any personal benefits?

## **7.8 Recommendations**

This research provides educational establishments, teachers, parents, and students, with insights into the longer-term effects of participating in international study tours. In consideration of the important contribution made by the findings, it is recommended that teaching staff organising study tours make changes to enrich learning experiences and enhance the personal benefits of participation.

The following key recommendations are made:

1. Teachers planning international study tours need to recognise the need for a less formalised structured approach and create opportunities for self-exploration during the international study tour, to enhance personal autonomy that can be sustained in later life.
2. Teachers participating in international study tours need to build in opportunities for the students to formally reflect. This could include formal debriefing sessions at the end of each day to explore and reflect on the day's activities and events, or compulsory daily self-reflection in a diary or personal journal to support student learning. Longer-term it is recommended that high schools hold study tour reunion events as a means of reflection and reinforcing friendships that were established during the tours.

While it is recommended the teachers allow for greater freedom when planning and organising the study tours in order to create opportunities for self-exploration. It should be noted that in practice, if students are left to have greater freedom and autonomy this reduces the ability of teachers to closely supervise and manage risks and consideration has to be given to the health and safety requirements and duty of care to the students, otherwise teachers may be placed in a vulnerable position.

Furthermore, although international study tours continue to expand as a way of bringing the curriculum alive, in many ways, participation is still elitist, with only a small section of students from each class able to travel. In addition, and most obviously, there are entire

sectors of the community, some in impoverished areas, for whom the costs of international study tours is out of reach, and such educational experiences are not an option.

3. Social tourism initiatives therefore need to be promoted, and partnerships formed with charity organizations as a means of widening participation and educational inclusion, so individuals from lower socio-economic groups can also benefit from participation in international study tours.

## **7.9 Future Research**

This study provides important insights into the longer-term benefits for students participating in international study tours. Future research could build on these insights by addressing similar issues on a wider scale and focusing on specific areas identified as important in this study, such as the following:

1. It is recommended that future research is conducted on a national scale. This could include a quantitative study with larger sample size to further explore the longer-term benefits identified in this study.
2. It is important and would be interesting to explore international study tours from a Māori or Pasifika perspective, to acquire deeper insights into cultural understandings gained from participating in an international study tour.
3. Further research could examine the effects of study tours over longer periods of time, revisiting the same participants iteratively to explore the effectiveness of an international study tour on career progression; career progression was not mentioned by the participants in this study.
4. Since international study is promoted as beneficial for careers, it would be interesting to explore employers' perspectives to determine if participation in international study tours affects recruitment or promotion of employees longer-term.
5. As international study tours are now extending into intermediate schools in New Zealand, these could be another area for exploration, and could offer insights into the effectiveness of learning on a different age group of students.
6. Parents' perspectives on the longer-term effects of their children's participation in international study tours from New Zealand could be explored, as this would provide a different perspective on the longer-term effects.

7. As teachers are expected to organise international study tours, it would be useful to explore the personal benefits to the teachers, rather than to the teaching.
8. Affordability was a significant finding of this study, so it would be advantageous to explore the effects of international study tours on students from lower socio-economic groups and explore arguments for widening participation.

### **7.10 Concluding Remarks**

In many ways, this research has painted a rosy picture of the benefits of participating in international study tours. This reflects the underlying assumption that all the participants (including the teachers) believed the international study tours to be beneficial. Some of the study's claims need to be viewed with caution, bearing in mind the possible bias in the responses. After all, who would want to spend thousands of dollars on an international study tour and reflect that they had not gained any personal benefits?

Further to this, a long-standing concern of mine has been the financial cost. On the one hand, this research has demonstrated that many personal benefits are experienced by participants, which is evidence of a positive return on investment. On the other hand, the study also provided evidence that affordability is a problem, so issues about equitable access to educational opportunities arise. As I have previously alluded to, many international study tours are still considered expensive and beyond the reach of many students. I also note that this is increasingly influenced by the commercialisation of international study tours. More specifically, high schools, their teachers, students, and families have become viewed as a lucrative market for commercial tour companies. As a consequence, the promotion of the study tour product has become a key aspect of their business model, and sales are typically based on promises of significant benefits to potential clients. As an educator, I encourage schools to be careful when allowing commercial operators to gain access to the schools and their students. Education, and its important role for adolescents and society, should not be exploited by the private sector for the benefit of their financial bottom lines. Rather, decisions regarding educational offerings should be based on the best interests of the students, and their growth and development.

On a personal note, when I started this research, I was very sceptical about the longer-term benefits of international study tours. However, listening to the ex-students' personal stories of participating in international study tours, gave me the opportunity to reflect on

my own experiences and to compare mine with theirs. The ex-students' learning experiences were very different to my own, and as a consequence, my personal opinions were altered. As a parent, I am now more comfortable with the prospect of my children participating in these types of school tours, as the evidence from my study has shown me that they can offer unique and different individual experiences with benefits for personal growth and development.

On a professional level I have always seen the personal advantages of travel, but not the benefits of travelling as part of a school group, as I have always thought benefits could be more readily gained from alternative travel experiences. However, the group nature and social aspects of the international study tour was shown to have an important influence.

This study identified that participation in international study tours is beneficial both short-term and longer-term, substantiating some of the claims made by schools and educators. However, I suggest that international study tours should not be over-stated as being "life-changing" but more accurately described as "leaving a lasting impression" and potentially "making a difference" to an individual's life.

This research was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic. It will, therefore, be interesting to see the effect that COVID-19 pandemic has on schools and teacher's planning and organising of international study tours and if the pandemic has affected student's and parent's decisions to participate in international study tours. Parents and caregivers maybe more apprehensive and risk averse to permitting their adolescent children to travel for some time to come. In addition, the tourism industry has gone through many changes, private companies offering these experiences may have struggled to stay in business and further it is likely that international travel will become relatively more expensive. This will exacerbate the differential of opportunity between the wealthy and less so in terms of the affordability of such experiences for adolescents.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Ethics Approval



### AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology  
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T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
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5 December 2016

Mark Orams  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Mark

Re: Ethics Application: **16/384 Does it make a difference? An exploratory study into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand secondary school student international study tours.**

Thank you for your request for approval of amendments to your ethics application.

I have approved minor amendments to your ethics application allowing changes to the recruitment and data collection protocols.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC):

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 12 October 2019.
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 12 October 2019 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

All the very best with your research,

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

Cc: Donna O'Donnell; Heike Schanzel

## **Appendix B – Tools**

### ***B.a Interview Guidelines and Questions***

#### ***Guidelines***

All interviews will follow these interview guidelines to ensure you are safe and comfortable before, during and after the interview. **The guidelines are as follows:**

##### ***Before the interview:***

- You will be consulted in advance about an interview time and I will do my best to find a time that suits you.
- We will agree on a public location you are comfortable with, in a quiet area where our conversation cannot be overheard by others.
- I will send you the interview questions before the interview to help you prepare and to allow you to seek clarification if you are unsure about what is being asked.
- You are welcome to contact me and to withdraw from the research at any time.
- I will contact you before the interview to remind you about our appointment and to answer any questions you may have.

##### ***During the interview:***

- I will show you the audio tape device and I turn it on when we are ready to proceed.
- I will ask a variety of questions about your experiences on the international study tour.
- You should feel free to ask me to clarify any question or to revisit your answers at any time during the interview.
- If you feel any discomfort about any question please just let me know and we can omit that question.
- You are free to end the interview at any time. However, it is expected that the interview will take around 60 minutes.
- At the end I will ask if you would like to add or say anything else, not covered by my questions.
- When the interview is finished, I will turn the audio tape machine off.

##### ***After the interview:***

- I will send you an email thanking you and asking if there is anything further you wish to add or share with me.
- The interview recording will be typed up in a transcript. I will send this to you to read and check. You will be asked to confirm the accuracy of the transcript and to amend any

incorrect information. You may, at this time, ask me to delete any material you do not want me to use in the research.

- All recorded data (written or audio taped) will be stored in a designated locked cabinet in my department at my university. All information shared in the interview will be confidential and not discussed at any point with anyone but my supervisors and research assistant, who will be assisting with transcribing and analysing the interviews.
- You can contact me at any time to request information about the research or to ask any questions that may have arisen.

## *Interview Questions- Ex-students*

### **Appendix 5: Individual Interviews**

#### **Interview 1**

##### **Discussing life before the school trip – to add context to the study**

The first interview will focus on the participants' life history, as a way of placing the experience in context.

1. Can you please tell me why you selected these photographs?

#### **▲ Questions**

1. How would you describe the person you were back in school?
  2. Can you describe the events that lead up to the school trip?
  3. Why did you choose this particular study tour? Was anyone else involved in the decision to go?
  4. Had you ever done anything like this before?
  5. Tell me about the trip?
    - What did you do?
    - What were you looking forward to?
    - What challenges or problems did you encounter?
  6. Is there any-thing else to add?
-

## Interview 2

The following questions for the second interviews are only indicative, as themes that emerge from the first interview will be followed up and questions altered accordingly.

1. Can describe/ tell me about the person you are now? Did anything change? What do you think contributed to this change? How has this influenced you?
2. Could you describe what you learnt from the study tour experience?
3. Can you tell me about your choice of education? What influenced your decision?
4. Can you tell me about your career? Tell me about your relationship with your work colleagues.
5. Tell me about your family and friends? How would they describe you?
6. What are your thoughts and feeling now about the study tour?
7. Having had this experience what advice would you give to someone else who has this opportunity?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## *Interview Questions – Teachers*

### **Appendix 3: Teachers interviews**

#### **Interview**

#### **Questions**

1. Who selects the destination for the international study tour? Why?
2. How are the study tours promoted within your school?
3. How long have you been organising the overseas study tours?
4. What is the motivation for organising the trips?
5. What challenges or problems do you encounter? How did you overcome them?
6. Tell me about the trip?
  - What are your expectations about the study tour? You? Students? Parents?
7. Can you tell me if you noticed any changes in the students? If so what have you noticed?
8. Could you describe what you learnt from organising and participating in the study tour experience?
9. Would you change anything about the study tour? What?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## B.b. Participant Information Sheets

### Participant Information Sheet - Ex-students

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet		AUT TE WĀHANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU
<b>Participant Information Sheet</b>		
Date Information Sheet produced: 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2016		
Project Title Does it make a difference? An exploratory study into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand secondary school student international study tours.		
<b>Kia ora</b> My name is Donna O' Donnell; I am a full time member of staff and PHD student at AUT University undertaking research into educational tourism. I would like to invite you to participate in this research as your experience and knowledge of international study tours is important to this study. Your participation in this research is voluntary and, should you wish, you are able to withdraw from the research project at any time.		
<b>What is the purpose of this research?</b> The aim of this study is to explore how secondary school international study tour experiences affected individuals' perspectives on life, education and society. This research seeks to understand and explore the effects on students involved in such experiences five to 10 years post tour. This project will contribute to a Doctor of Philosophy thesis. The research may also be used for the publication of articles in academic journals, research papers, conference papers and conference presentations.		
<b>How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?</b> You were invited to participate in this research because of your participation in a (insert secondary school name and insert international study tour name) between five and 10 years ago.		
<b>What will happen in this research?</b> You will be invited to participate in two personal face to face interviews with me, lasting approximately 60 minutes each. During the first interview you will be asked to share your memories and experiences through the use of personal photographs. The purpose of using the photograph is just to help prompt your memories and reflect on the experience. If you could therefore select three photographs that are significant to you and that will help you recall information from the trip. Please bring these photographs along to the first interview, so we may discuss what the photographs mean or represent to you now? The photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without your written permission. The location of these interviews will be in an agreed public place and at a time that is convenient to you. I will make direct contact with you to arrange this. The interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcription for you to check for accuracy and to make any adjustments or deletions you may wish to. Once this is complete the information will be used for this study.		
<b>What are the discomforts and risks and how will they be alleviated?</b> The information sought is based on your everyday activities and is therefore not controversial so you should not experience any discomfort, be exposed to any humiliation or face any repercussion or risk. Furthermore, your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. You will not be able to be identified from the results of the research. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw up until the end of the data collection process. All questions are optional and you may choose not to answer some questions. The personal interviews are designed to gain an understanding of your experience and the effects on your life. Therefore, there are no right or wrong answers and any information you provide will be of value to this study. We are strictly bound by our University's ethics procedures and we will not pass on any information to others.		
<b>What are the benefits?</b> This research will make an important contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the longer-term effects of secondary school study tours on the students who were involved. You will receive a gift voucher of NZD\$40 as a gesture of appreciation for volunteering to participate in this research project.		
26 November 2020	page 1 of 2	This version was edited in July 2015

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers you provide will be treated confidentially and no information in the findings can be linked to you personally. In order to further protect your privacy and to ensure confidentiality, the collected data and consent forms will be securely stored separately. Electronically stored data will be deleted, confidential paper based material will be destroyed and shredded via the safe and secure facility at AUT.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to you is around 120 minutes of your time over the two interviews. It is my hope that this will be offset by the enjoyment of the experience of participating and sharing your reflections.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I would be grateful if you would accept my invitation to participate in this research. I will seek to contact you again after two weeks if I have not heard from you, to see if you would like to be interviewed.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research I will ask you to sign a consent form (copy attached) that gives your written consent to participate in the interviews.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

On completion of this research a summary of the findings will be e-mailed to you if you wish. Remember to mark this area of the consent form.

**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 Donna O'Donnell.

[Email.Dodonnell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Email.Dodonnell@aut.ac.nz) Ph (09) 921 999 ext 6452.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) Ph (09) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Researcher:

Donna O'Donnell  
Email: [dodonnell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dodonnell@aut.ac.nz)  
Ph (09) 921 999 ext 6452

Project Supervisors:

Professor Mark Orams  
Email: [mark.orams@aut.ac.nz](mailto:mark.orams@aut.ac.nz)  
Ph (09) 921 999 ext 6410  
School of Sport and Recreation  
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Private Bag 92006  
Auckland

Dr Heike Schanzel  
Email: [hschaze@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hschaze@aut.ac.nz)  
Ph (09) 921 9999 ext 6973  
School of Hospitality and Tourism  
Auckland University of Technology  
Private Bag 92006  
Auckland

## Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet produced:

27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Project Title

Does it make a difference? An exploratory study into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand secondary school student international study tours.

**Kia ora**

My name is Donna O' Donnell; I am a full time member of staff and PHD student at AUT University undertaking research into educational tourism. I would like to invite you to participate in this research as your experience and knowledge of international study tours is important to this study. Your participation in this research is voluntary and, should you wish, you are able to withdraw from the research project at any time.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

The aim of this study is to explore how secondary school international study tour experiences affected individuals' perspectives on life, education and society. This research seeks to understand and explore the effects on students involved in such experiences five to 25 years post tour. This project will contribute to a Doctor of Philosophy thesis. The research may also be used for the publication of articles in academic journals, research papers, conference papers and conference presentations.

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

You were invited to participate in this research because of your involvement in organising international study tours in secondary schools with in New Zealand.

**What will happen in this research?**

Your participation involves a personal interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. You will be asked to reflect on organising the overseas study tours in a secondary school and give your views on the potential benefits and effects on the students involved in those tours. These reflections will provide background information on the overseas study tours.

The location of these interviews will be at a place and time that is convenient to you. The interview will be recorded and then transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcription to check for accuracy and to make any adjustments if required. Once this is complete the information will be used for this study.

**What are the discomforts and risks and how will they be alleviated?**

The information sought is based on your everyday activities and is therefore not controversial so you should not experience any discomfort, be exposed to any humiliation or face any repercussion or risk. Furthermore, your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. You will not be able to be identified from the results of the research. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw up until the end of the data collection process. All questions are optional and you may choose not to answer some questions. The personal interviews are designed to gain an understanding of your experience and the effects on your life. Therefore, there are no right or wrong answers and any information you provide will be of value to this study. We are strictly bound by our University's ethics procedures and we will not pass on any information to others.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will make an important contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the longer-term effects of secondary school study tours on the students who were involved.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers you provide will be treated confidentially and no information in the findings can be linked to you personally. In order to further protect your privacy and to ensure confidentiality, the collected data and consent

forms will be securely stored separately. Electronically stored data will be deleted, confidential paper based material will be destroyed and shredded via the safe and secure facility at AUT.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to you is around 60 minutes of your time in the interview. It is my hope that this will be offset by the enjoyment of the experience of participating and sharing your reflections.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I would be grateful if you would accept my invitation to participate in this research. I will seek to contact you again after two weeks if I have not heard from you, to see if you would like to be interviewed.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research I will ask you to sign a consent form (copy attached) that gives your written consent to participate in the interviews.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

On completion of this research a summary of the findings will be e-mailed to you if you wish. Remember to mark this area of the consent form.

**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 Donna O'Donnell.

[Email.Dodonnell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Email.Dodonnell@aut.ac.nz) Ph (09) 921 999 ext 6452.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) Ph (09) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Researcher:

Donna O'Donnell  
Email: [dodonnell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dodonnell@aut.ac.nz)  
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Project Supervisors:

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School of Hospitality and Tourism  
Auckland University of Technology  
Private Bag 92006  
Auckland

## Appendix 3: Consent Form

*Project title:* Does it make a difference? An exploratory study into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand secondary school student international study tours.

Project Supervisors: Professor Mark Orams and Dr Heike Schanzel

Researcher: Donna O'Donnell

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.
- 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 understand that the photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without my written permission.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes  No

Participant signature: .....

Participant name : .....

Participant contact details:  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

Note: The participant may retain a copy of this form.

**AUT**

**Did you take part in an international  
study tour when you were at high  
school?**

(5-10 years ago; between 2007-2012)

**My name is Donna O'Donnell and I am a PhD student  
at AUT University.**

**I am researching the effects on ex-students who  
participated in such tours.**

**I would love to chat to you about your experiences  
and have you share your reflections on the tour's  
effects on your life since.**

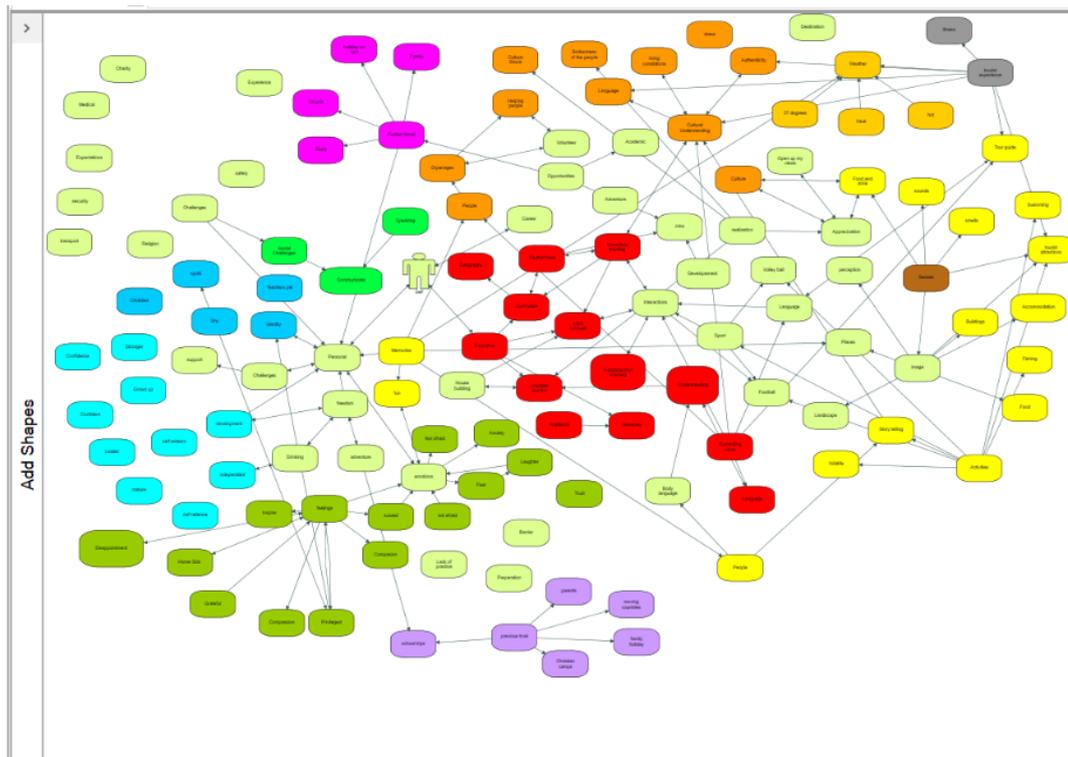
**This research will involve you agreeing to meet with  
me and be involved in two semi-structured interviews  
of around an hour each.**

(Note: Your identity will remain confidential and you will not be required to share  
anything you do not wish to)

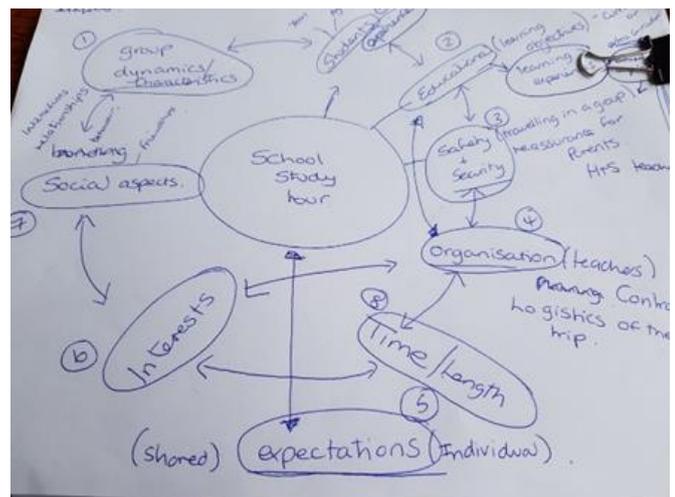
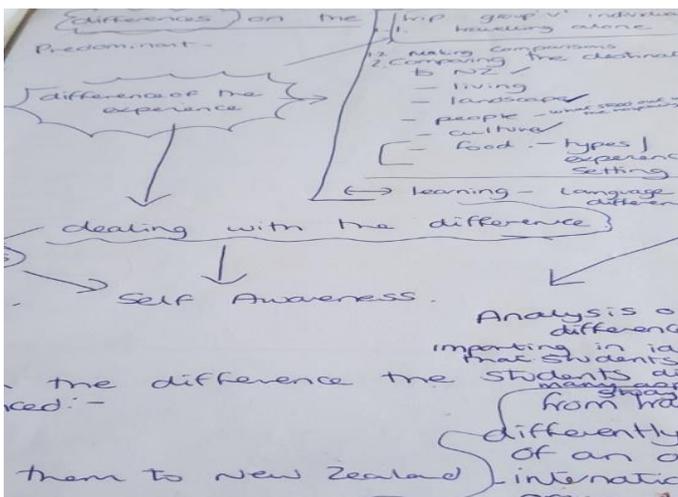
**Please contact me, Donna O'Donnell, via email:  
dodonnell@aut.ac.nz**

## Appendix C- Sample of Coding

### C.a Example of coding in Nvivo



### C.b Example of messy mind maps



## Appendix D - Transcriber confidentiality agreement



### APPENDIX 1

#### Confidentiality Agreement

**Project title:** Does it make a Difference? An exploratory study into the longer-term effects of participation in New Zealand secondary school student international study tours.

**Project Supervisor:** Mark Orams and Heike Schanzel

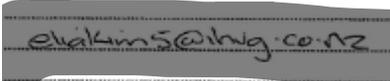
**Researcher:** Donna O'Donnell

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researcher.
- I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

**Transcriber's signature:** 

**Transcriber's name:** Megan Cole

**Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):**

  
dualkin5@iwi.govt.nz

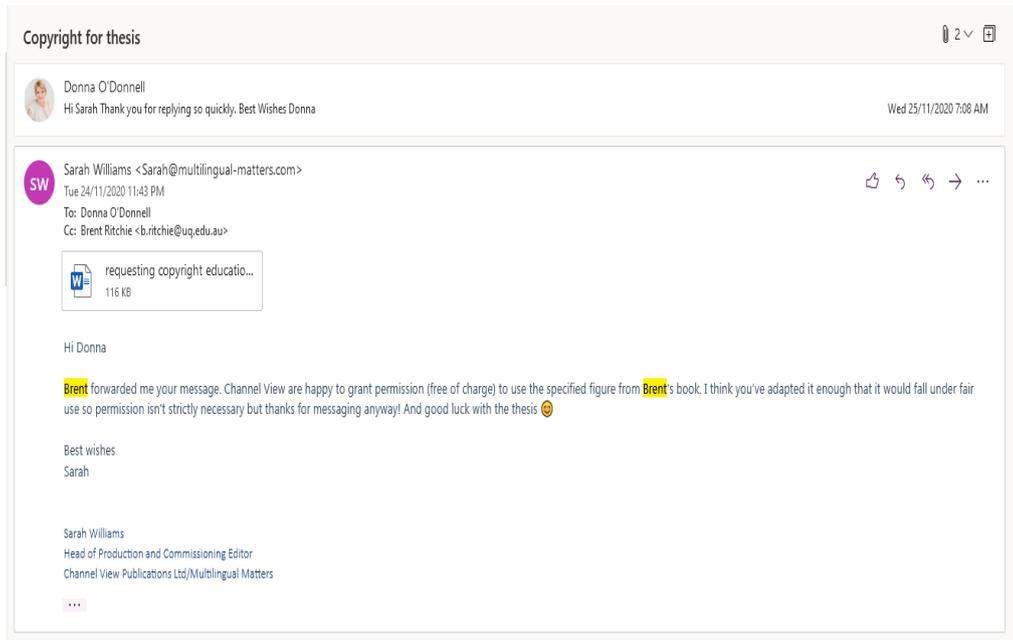
**Date:** 7/6/17

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number**

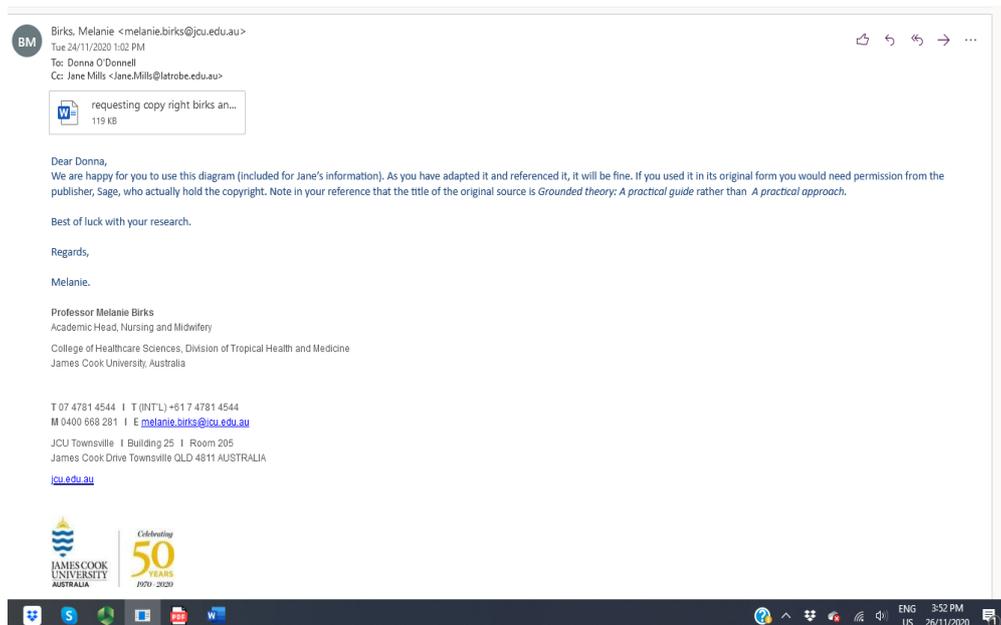
**Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.**

## Appendix E – Copyright Permissions

### E.a Figure



### E.b Figure



*E.c Figure*

A digital copy will be made available online via the University's digital repository [Tuwhera](#). This is an open access research repository for scholarly work, intended to make research accessible to as wide an audience as possible. A small run of print copies will also be made.

I am seeking from you a non-exclusive licence to include these materials in my thesis. The materials will be fully and correctly referenced.

If you agree, I should be very grateful if you would reply to me via email, or alternatively sign the form below and return a copy to me.

If you do not agree, or if you do not hold the copyright in this work, would you please let me know.

I can most quickly be reached by email at [dodonnell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dodonnell@aut.ac.nz). Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Donna O'Donnell

---

Jenny Phillimore agree to grant you a non-exclusive licence for an indefinite period to include the above materials, for which I am the copyright owner, in the print and digital copies of your thesis.

Date: 17/12/20



### Appendix F – Abbreviations and Terminology

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Board of Trustees Poari Whakahaere	BoT	The board is entrusted to work on behalf of all stakeholders and is accountable for the school’s performance. It emphasises strategic leadership, sets the vision for the school, and ensures that it complies with legal and policy requirements. Policies are at a governance level and outline clear delegations to the principal. (New Zealand Trustees Association, 2020)
Education Outside the Classroom	EOTC	Education outside the classroom are curriculum-based and extra-curriculum activities that go beyond the walls of the classroom. This includes any activity that takes place outside the school ranging from a museum or marae visit, to a sports trip, field trip, or outdoor education camp. (Education Review Office, 2020)
National Certificate of Educational Achievement	NCEA	This is the main national qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand. NCEA is recognised by employers, and used for selection by universities and polytechnics (New Zealand Qualification Authority, 2020)