Continuum of an Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality – Explorations of the experience levels of German and New Zealand tourists

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A mind that is stretched by a new experience
can never go back to its old dimensions.
(Oliver Wendell Holmes, U.S. judge)

ABSTRACT

The improved global mobility, growing middle class, and sustained importance of travelling for hedonic and eudaemonic reasons contributed to a growth in international tourist arrivals. This has also resulted in tourists becoming increasingly experienced. Although the creation of memorable experiences has remained the central focus in strategic destination management, today's tourists seek engaging and interactive experiences that go beyond memorability. Instead, today's tourists want to accumulate experiences that contribute to self-development and act as a catalyst for personal growth. This study proposes a conceptual framework that indicates the continuous progression of tourists towards these desired personal transformations.

The ongoing debate around the concept of experience in the tourism literature reveals a duality of the term *experience*. Most studies focussed on the creation and consumption of immediate experiences (*German Erlebnis*). The accumulated experiences over time expressed as a level of prior experience (*German Erfahrung*) functioned as an antecedent to predict decision-making, travel behaviour and motivation. A clear understanding of the process of experience accumulation remains undervalued and past research fails to comprehensively identify the dimensions of an experienced tourist.

The aim of this study was to fill research gaps associated with an experienced tourist. An exploratory sequential mixed methods research design was applied in Germany and New Zealand. The research approach encompasses semi-structured interviews with representatives from 15 destination marketing organisations and an online survey conducted with 500 German and 500 New Zealand tourists. The multi voice and holistic approach adopted to explore the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective expands research designs and contributes methodologically to tourism academia.

Industry experts suggested eight dimensions of an experienced tourist, yet emphasised that identifying as an experienced tourist is highly subjective. The subjectivity of being experienced was addressed through self-rated scales in the online survey. Multiple linear regression analysis was implemented to explore the statistical predictability of experience levels. The accumulation of experiences is suggested as a complex and multidimensional process deeply imbedded in the tourist's subjective consciousness and is related to the individual's country of origin. Despite the identification of country-specific factors to explain the German and New Zealand experienced tourist, overarching themes were explored and previous studies that referred to countable factors were challenged.

Predictors of experience levels range from static, mostly retrospective factors related to the general and travel profile of respondents, to more dynamic factors that are related to the stages of the travel journey and expand into future travel intentions. The key results are synthesised in a generally applicable model and the *Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality* (CETM) is proposed. The model depicts factors that positively or negatively contribute to the self-assessed experience level of German and New Zealand tourists. Theoretical contributions are achieved as the CETM model enhances the holistic understanding of transformations that lead to becoming an experienced tourist. In identifying experienced tourists as a promising market segment, the study suggests managerial implications for the tourism industry. The empirical CETM model requires future research and further testing to become a theory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
AR	Augmented reality
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
DMO	Destination marketing organisation
DV	Dependent variable
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
eWOM	Electronic word-of-mouth
FIT	Free independent traveller
GDP	Gross domestic product
IV	Independent variable
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure
M	Arithmetic average/mean score
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
NZD	New Zealand dollar
OSN	Online social networks
PCA	Principal component analysis
POI	Point of interest
QDA	Qualitative data analysis
RTONZ	Regional Tourism Organisations New Zealand
SD	Standard deviation
S-D logic	Service-dominant logic
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TCL	Travel career ladder
TCP	Travel career pattern
UGC	User-generated content
UNDESA/PD	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
U.S.	United States
USD	United States dollar
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
VIF	Variance inflation factor
VR	Virtual reality
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
WOM	Word-of-mouth

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 acknowledgments), nor material which to substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

S Seeler

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April 2018

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After having written almost 300 pages in academic language it seemed an easy task to write my acknowledgements. However, looking back and thinking about the many people that walked beside me on this journey, finding words for the endless support I received turned out to be almost as challenging as writing the thesis itself.

Thirteen years ago I celebrated my first graduation – I graduated from high school. Among the 70 graduates there were many that everyone expected to shine bright with academic achievement in the future. With my quirky nature and restless mind I was not necessarily on the list of people that were predicted to have anything to do with higher education or living overseas for an extended period – I liked my safe nest too much. In fact, I doubt that anyone would have bet a single dollar that I might submit a document like this. But then I started travelling overseas on my own, accumulated experiences, got infected with the travel bug, became hungry for knowledge and my journey began. And here it is, my PhD thesis, a big surprise to many around me, maybe the biggest surprise to myself! I am astonished and proud that I did it on my own, 17,797 km away from home in a language that sometimes did not allow me to express myself as accurate as I wanted to.

When you move overseas to start a journey like this you do not really know what to expect. You do not really know who *survives* this journey with you. You do not even realise it is a question. You find yourself several months later and the most important thing you learnt is not necessarily related to research methods and academic knowledge, it is knowing who stands beside you, who has your back and supports you. I am incredibly grateful for all the love and support I received. I learnt that physical distance is not always easy to overcome, but it triggers a willpower you did not know existed inside of you.

The list of people I would love to acknowledge is endless, but I know you are all really excited to read this little document of mine and I will try to keep my acknowledgments as short as I can. Who else would know this statement '*I try to keep it as short as I can'* better than my two amazing supervisors *Prof Michael Lück and Dr Heike Schänzel*! They did not only fully encourage and support me throughout this journey, they trusted me, gave me the freedom to spread my wings by myself, challenged me and stopped me when I wanted to go overboard, yet pushed me gently to leave the safe and secure nest of an early researcher. I could not have done this without them! I will not only keep them in my heart as the best supervisors I could have asked for, but also as good friends in the future – I am looking forward to future projects.

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Thank you all for your support spreading my wings – now it is time to fly and give back. To all the beautiful people I met in Aotearoa – I will miss you deeply. To all my friends and family in Germany – I am coming home (for now). ***Thank you, Kia Ora and Danke!***

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CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

The content of consciousness is experience, that is, the sum of all the information that enters it, and its interpretation by awareness.
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 17)

1.1 Introduction

The term *experience* is widely used in academic, professional and everyday language. While once in a lifetime experiences are promoted to tourists and *destination marketers address experienced tourists*, conceptual questions around the notion of experience in tourism remain unanswered. This research project explores the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective in two case study countries – Germany and New Zealand. The relevance of the concept of experience in the context of tourism is underpinned by the plethora of studies elaborating on this topic from different perspectives and scholarly disciplines. Past research primarily focused on the creation of experiences from a marketing/managerial perspective. Researchers addressed the objective meaning of experience, which refers to the countable, immediate and partaking experience. The process of experience accumulation, which encompasses the recollection and reminiscence of experiences lived through over a lifetime and addresses the subjective meaning of experiences, has been rarely covered to date. In addition to research gaps related to the unbalanced coverage of the topic, methodological constraints were found. Most studies investigated either the supply-side or the demand-side of tourism, while macro-micro approaches that incorporate both perspectives are lacking. By incorporating the voices of the supply-side and demand-side of tourism and developing an integrated model of the dimensions of an experienced tourist, important methodological and theoretical contributions to the field of tourism and beyond are made in this study.

In addition to the introduction section, this chapter comprises seven sections. Firstly, the research topic and the theoretical background are introduced and the phenomenon under study is put into context (section 1.2). Hereafter, the research aims and objectives are presented (section 1.3), the methodological approach that was adopted to achieve the research aims is introduced (section 1.4) and the rationale and significance of this study are outlined (section 1.5). This introductory chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis (section 1.6) and an overview of the key terms that are used throughout this thesis (section 1.7).

1.2 Background of the study

The 21st century is defined by global political turmoil that influences the way people think, changes the way people act, and shapes a new generation in a digitalised world. The fast pace of global consumers brings disruption and unpredictability that challenges the competitiveness of companies across sectors (Yeoman, 2012). The tourism industry, however, has demonstrated resilience in times of global economic downturns, uninterruptedly grew in terms of tourism demand and supply, and became a decisive driver of global economic growth (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017; 2018; World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2017). With the vital importance of tourism as a driver for socioeconomic wealth, tourism research gained in significance. Research questions largely evolved from within the tourism industry and most studies had a managerial focus regarding tourists as consumers of commercial activities and experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004; Selstad, 2007). Although tourists have been defined as a unit of analysis in several studies, the primary goal of these studies has been to estimate the economic and environmental impacts of tourism on the tourist destination, industry players and hosts, and to a lesser degree, the social impact of tourism on host communities. Less emphasis was given to estimate the impact of tourism on tourists themselves (Björk, 2014; Moscardo, 2009) and how the consumption of tourism experiences potentially leads to transformation and maturation of a tourist

Understanding tourists has become vitally important for tourism providers' strategic decisions in an ever increasing competitive tourism environment. The tourist's centrality in the realisation of the tourism product and their importance for the tourism industry's success has resulted in an increasing interest in behaviour research. With the aim of attracting tourists to visit a particular tourist destination, research interests around aspects such as travel motives, travel decision-making, travel behaviour, and patterns of movement emerged. Several studies reflect on the constantly changing demand, elaborate on the evolving maturity of tourists and identify tourists as increasingly experienced (Decrop, 2006; Sonntag, 2006). Scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds have developed tourist typologies and classified tourists into internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous groups to predict travel motives and trip behaviour.

Many typologies refer to prior travel experience as the key indicator to predict travel motivation and behaviour and several measurement models were developed to determine the degree of prior travel experience. The travel career ladder (TCL), later refined as travel career pattern (TCP) and coined by Pearce and colleagues (1983, 1985, 2005) is one of the most cited and used frameworks relating particular travel motivation to an individual's level of prior travel experience. Like other models measuring the level of prior travel experience, the countable moment by moment lived experiences were considered (e.g., number of international holiday trips) and the level of prior travel experiences has been treated as an antecedent to predict travel motivation and trip behaviour. This study goes beyond the previously limited predefined countable indicators to identify an experienced tourist and argues that the underlying constructs of being experienced need to be fully understood first in order to predict travel motivation and behaviour based on the level of prior travel experience. This study explores the drivers behind experience accumulation and examines the factors that positively or negatively contribute to higher experience levels of tourists. Thereby, the level of experience is interpreted as an outcome while the accumulation of different factors reflects the antecedent. Once a comprehensive understanding is achieved, the impact of higher experience levels on travel behaviour are free to be explored.

A review of the lexical definition of the term *experience* indicates that semantic differences and linguistic subtleties exist. A major distinction lies in the objective (partaking) and subjective (reminiscing) meaning of the term. The objectified and quantifiable interpretation of experience replicates the moment by moment lived experience. The term is also defined from a more process-oriented and subjective perspective. Here, experiences are regarded as knowledge or skill accumulated over time through the participation in events or activities (Seeler, Lück, & Schänzel, in press). Several scholars discussed the interdependencies between the objectified and subjectified meanings of experience (Jantzen, 2013; S. Larsen, 2007; Smed, 2012). As the German translation of the term provides more clarity and an unambiguous understanding, the German terms have often been applied in academic research (Smed, 2012; Volo, 2009). Jantzen (2013), for example, used the German terms *Erlebnis* (partaking) and *Erfahrung* (reminiscing) to describe the mutual dependencies of the two meanings: "Erlebnis is the origin of Erfahrung […] Erfahrungen are also the sources of new Erlebnisse" (Jantzen, 2013, p. 153). However, the industry-led and managerial focus of past research resulted in a prevalence of studies looking at experience creation (partaking experience) which is strongly related to the e*xperience economy* coined by Pine and Gilmore (1999).

With the critical turn in tourism research and the shift from an objective functional perspective to a more subjective phenomenological perspective, researchers regarded experiences as a psychological construct deeply rooted in an individual (Bosangit, Hibbert, & McCabe, 2015). Research slowly shifted towards the reminiscense of experience and the process of experience accumulation and it was acknowledged that more attention is needed to understand experience as *Erfahrung*. Tourism experiences were identified as central for identity formation as they possess developmental qualities that positively influence personal growth, self-realisation, and transformation (Boswijk, 2013; Y. Li, 2000). Although research from a social science perspective grew and tourists themselves were put into focus, studies predominantly reflected on the tourists' immediate lived experiences. The accumulation of experiences and related changes over time were accepted but which experiences possess the transformational qualities that contribute to personal change and are decisive in determining an experienced tourist remains unanswered. This lack of research was noted by Cutler and Carmichael (2010) who stated that "[s]tudies in tourism indicate that experiences do change over time, demonstrating this multiphase framing. […] models tend to focus on outside forces only, separating phases based on time and location" (p. 6).

Empirical research that goes beyond output-driven goals and adopts an individualistic process-oriented perspective is still lacking and little is known about the factors that contribute to experience accumulation and reflect the dimensions of an experienced tourist. Previous measures and models supported the estimation of travel motives and travel behaviour in relation to prior travel experience; however, addressing an experienced tourist through tourism marketing and promotion requires that the sender (tourism provider) and the receiver (tourist) share the same understanding of the phenomenon. Identifying as an experienced tourist is a form of self-expression and can only be subjectively evaluated by tourists themselves. This subjective evaluation from a tourist's perspective has been neglected thus far. In addition, there is little knowledge whether the supply-side's perceptions of an experienced tourist correspond to the demand-side's realities.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

By critically questioning the underlying constructs and dimensions of an experienced tourist and asking '*Who is an experienced tourist?*' several assumptions guided the development of the research aims and objectives of this study. The research did not aim for statistical hypothesis testing of these assumptions, they were purely informing, inspiring, and guiding the researcher in defining the research aims. Seven underlying assumptions were proposed and used as reference points in the formation of the research aims and objectives (Figure 1.1).

I.	The individual's prior travel experience (GER: *Reiseerfahrung*) is an accumulation of several independent factors.
II.	There are different levels of prior travel experience that distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist.
III.	The levels of being experienced are defined by different accumulation sets.
IV.	Different geographical settings can result in different accumulation sets that determine an experienced tourist.
V.	Being an experienced tourist influences the travel behaviour and destination choice.
VI.	The changes in travel behaviour associated with experienced tourists impact a destination's success.
VII.	In order to remain competitive, destination marketers are required to understand the underlying constructs of being an experienced tourist.

Figure 1.1: Preceding assumptions guiding the formation of the research aims

These initial assumptions and the development of the research aims were further triggered by the researcher's German background and the realisation of linguistic ambiguity associated with the term *experience* in the English language. Although the same English term is used to express the moment by moment lived experience (GER: *Erlebnis*) and the experience accumulated over time (GER: *Erfahrung*), the German language clearly differentiates between the two meanings of experience. Against the background of linguistic subtleties and related potential differences regarding subjective interpretations of the term, the researcher questioned whether the classification of being an experienced tourist is generalisable (Assumption 4). The first four assumptions lead to a perspective that goes beyond seeing prior experiences as antecedents for travel motivation. Instead of a performance-linked perspective, this research project sought for a more process-driven view. Accepting that tourists are experienced (outcome) requires an understanding of the influencing factors that lead them to being experienced (process). Once the underlying dimensions of an experienced tourist are fully comprehended, their influence on travel behaviour and destination choice can be investigated (Assumptions 5-7).

Guided by these assumptions, the overall purpose of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective. Based on this comprehensive understanding, the research further aimed to develop an integrated model that synthesises the factors that significantly contribute to the individual's process of experience accumulation and provide guidance to understand changes in travel behaviour that have an impact on the destination's success. To satisfy the overall purpose of this research project, the two research aims were broken down into five objectives that were underpinned by several research questions (Figure 1.2). As indicated in Figure 1.2, the research aims and objectives are situated in a broader perspective, are interrelated, dependent on each other and require a sequential approach to research. Research Aim 1 includes objectives that are directly reflected in the exploratory sequential mixed methods research design. Research Aim 2 is dependent on the satisfaction of Research Aim 1 and requires abstraction of the research findings into an all-encompassing and synthesised visualisation of the key results. The research design implemented and the methodological approach adopted in this study are introduced in the following section.

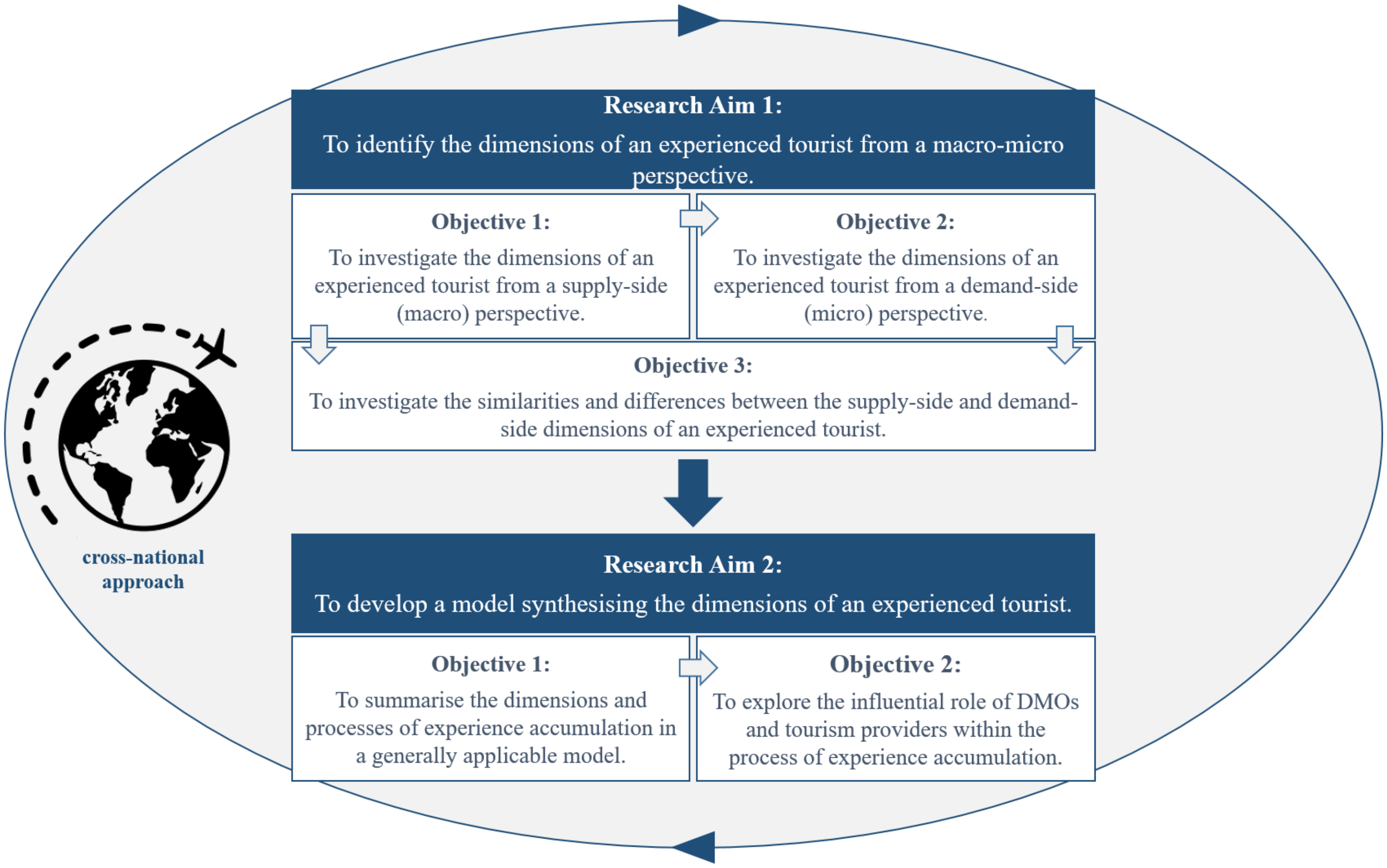


Figure 1.2: Research aims and objectives of this study on the experienced tourist

1.4 Methodological approach of the study

This study followed a process-driven approach where the key elements ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods were integrated holistically. Within a post-positivist paradigm, researchers pursue the critical examination of a phenomenon. Post-positivists aim to achieve the closest possible estimation of truth while bearing in mind the dynamic nature of the phenomenon under research, the subject's influence and changeability of reality. Uncovering the ultimate truth is constrained due to the individual's imperfect intellectual capabilities (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Thus, a closest approximation of reality and realistic research outcomes are the major goals. This worldview reflects a critical realist ontology that was adopted for this study. Critical realists are epistemologically leaning towards objectivism, yet, their acceptance of subjective meaning in the approximation of reality identifies them as modified dualists/objectivist (Bhaskar, 1975). As an absolute distance between the researcher and the researched subject is believed impossible, subjectivity in uncovering the truth is acknowledged. At the same time, objectivity is aimed to be maintained leading to the acceptance that the two epistemologies are not incommensurable and a dualistic perspective is employed.

The critical realist's flexibility regarding research methods legitimises the adoption of a mixed methods research design. Although tourism research has long been dominated by positivistic approaches using quantitative methods, several scholars postulate that the diverse and fractured nature of the tourism industry and resulting complexity as a social phenomenon generates research questions that support mixed methods research (Iaquinto, 2018; Killion & Fisher, 2018). As little is known about the dimensions of an experienced tourist and the research's purpose was to discover meaning and explore relationships, the study was driven by inductive thinking while allowing for deductive logics. Saldaña (2014) summarised inductive thinking as follows:

> Induction is an exploratory and emergent enterprise, consisting of making decisions and discoveries as you go along. [...] Thinking inductively is a willingness to have a minimalist agenda beforehand so that the investigative experience itself is like on-the-job training. (p. 26)

In inductive approaches, explanations and theories are generated from the investigation itself, therefore the data are in the foreground and the explanation is induced (Veal, 2011). As mixed methods researchers accept vacillation between data and ideas, different research lenses to derive inferences are allowed and the utilisation of both inductive and deductive logics encouraged (Morse, 2003). An exploratory sequential mixed methods research design was employed in this study, encompassing a qualitative first research phase and a quantitative second research phase. This suited the macro-micro perspective of this research project and the aim to ensure that equal attention is paid to the supply-side and demand-side of tourism.

Addressing the assumption of an expected influence of the geographic background in the process of experience accumulation, a case-based approach was implemented and the primary data collection took place in Germany and New Zealand. The selection of the two case studies was based on a comprehensive criteria catalogue ranging from factors related to incoming and domestic tourism within the two countries, international outbound travel by German and New Zealand residents, general sociodemographic and economic factors as well as practical considerations (Appendix B). Selecting Germany and New Zealand as case studies supported the investigation of an experienced tourist from a global perspective and encouraged the exploration of the previously addressed linguistic differences associated with the term *experience* between the German and English language.

In the first qualitative research phase, a voice was given to the supply-side of tourism and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Industry experts from 15 destination marketing organisations (DMOs) were selected using a purposive sampling strategy. All interviews were completed face-to-face between May and August 2016. Based on the perceptions of an experienced tourist from a supply-side perspective, an online questionnaire was developed and the second quantitative research phase was initiated. The total population for this research phase was defined as German and New Zealand residents who were aged between 20 and 69 years old and had any past travel experiences. Using a nonprobability quota sampling strategy, 1,000 respondents were recruited across the case studies. Respondents were accessed through an established web access panel and data collection was completed in January 2017. Post-stratifying weights were developed and realised after data collection to approximate the proportionate distribution of the actual population and encourage representativeness of findings. It is important to note that respondents were not recruited while travelling and either in transit or in a particular tourist destination, but at home in their respective source market.

This exploratory sequential mixed methods research design supported the generation of different data sets addressing the same research problem from a different entry and viewpoint. The rich and extensive data pool was further expanded by the case-based approach and the implementation of the study in two countries. Convergences and divergences between and within the research phases were discovered and the cross-national analysis empowered comparisons that further contributed to the satisfaction of the research aims.

1.5 Rationale and significance of the study

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in in the world, contributing significantly to socioeconomic progress, economic prosperity and national as well as individual wealth. The global significance is reflected in key economic indicators: In 2016, the tourism industry supported 292 million jobs (directly, indirectly and induced), representing one out of ten jobs globally and contributed 10.2% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (WTTC, 2017). The sustained growth is accompanied by an increasing diversification induced by the increasing number of destinations opening up for tourism and an intensification of competition among tourist destinations. Subsequently, there is a growing need to strategically manage destinations in order to align product development and experience creation in order to remain attractive and manage visitor flows.

Tourist destinations are not only the heart of the tourism product and experience creation, but also the physical spaces for individuals to gather and accumulate experiences. In the complex process of tourism production, destination marketers take a dual role. On the one hand, they need to evoke interest and stimulate potential tourists to visit a particular destination. On the other hand, destination marketers are required to ensure that stakeholders within the complex destination network are collaborating and creating positive memorable experiences for tourists (Eisenstein, 2014). The interconnectedness and mutual dependence between the tourist and the tourist destination are highlighted. While a tourist destination provides access to the geographical space for tourists to consume tourism experiences, the physical body and mind of tourists are needed to create and realise these experiences. A comprehensive understanding of today's tourists and changes on the demand-side are essential for strategic destination management.

Experiences during the trip need to meet or exceed pre-trip expectations to create meaningful and memorable post-trip experiences. These memorable experiences contribute to personal growth and maturation as a tourist. With the continuous growth of international tourist arrivals globally reaching 1,322 million in 2017 (+7% compared to 2016), the estimated annual growth rates have been exceeded and the industry is expected to grow faster than proposed in the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) long-term forecast (UNWTO, 2018). With this sustained growth, it is also expected that tourists continue to mature and the tourism industry faces increasingly experienced tourists in the future.

The maturity of tourists is closely related to changes in travel motivation, behaviour, and patterns (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). Today's tourists are expected to be increasingly experienced and as they are central in realising the tourism product and occupy a decisive role for the tourism industry's overall success, empirical research is required to assess today's experienced tourists more holistically. Despite being addressed in several models predicting travel motivation and behaviour, there is a lack in understanding of what *being experienced* actually means. This is confirmed by Jensen, Lindberg, and Østergaard (2015) who critically noted that tourism research on tourist experiences is often limited and fails to provide knowledge about what tourist experiences are epistemologically.

Many studies simplified the concept of experience and being experienced was taken for granted while treated as an antecedent (cause) for a particular outcome without providing unambiguous definitions, distinctions, or theories. Studies used the term "experienced tourist" in their titles, however, evidence was limited regarding a clear explanation of what *being experienced* means. To name selected recent examples, Rezaei, Mazaheri, and Azadavar (2017) investigated determinants of experienced tourists' satisfaction and spending behaviour by including respondents that had stayed in a hotel in the past. The authors simplified being experienced by reducing the classification to the usage of hospitality services. Lee, Chen, and Huang (2014) defined an experienced cyclist tourist based on their duration of recreational cycling (minimum of five years) and Guiry, Scott, and Vequist IV (2013) classified experienced (medical) tourists based on their prior international travel for medical care.

In these examples, being experienced was linked to quantifiable measures and discussed in relation to specific tourist activities or travel forms. Although models such as the

TCP regard prior travel experience more broadly, the underlying constructs were limited to a few measurable facts. In this regard Volo (2009) critically raised the following question: "How can we measure something that we have not clearly defined?" (p. 115). When taking into consideration the complexity of the term *experience* and the dual, interconnected meaning between objective (partaking) and subjective (reminiscing) experiences, a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to higher experience levels is required. The significance of this study has arisen from this gap in the literature. By fulfilling the research aims, this study sought to contribute to the closing of knowledge gaps and expand the body of existing literature.

In addition, many tourism scholars in the context of tourist motivation, travel behaviour, and experiences based their investigations either on the supply-side or demand-side of tourism and examined one particular source market and/or tourist destination. Several scholars pointed to the lack of macro-micro approaches in tourism research and asked for more cross-national studies (Jamal & Lee, 2003; Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010). Despite this call for more research, empirical outputs are still limited. Considering the mutual dependence between the supply-side and demand-side of tourism while acknowledging that international source markets are expanding and tourists are increasingly multicultural, cross-national and macro-micro approaches are of critical importance. These research gaps were addressed in this study as a cross-national, macro-micro approach was adopted. The approach was realised through the implementation of two research phases in two case studies, Germany and New Zealand. The mixed methods research design encouraged to give a voice to both, the demand-side (tourists) and the supply-side (DMOs) of tourism. Thereby, this study goes beyond theoretical significance and is of great importance for methodological advancements in social sciences research.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters (Figure 1.3) that are further subdivided into smaller sections and subsections. The main body is substantiated by in-text tables and figures as well as appendices at the end of this document.

The first introductory chapter defines the scope of this research project and puts the overall research purpose into context. This is followed by an overview of the current and historical literature relevant to the research aims and objectives in Chapter 2. Tourists as consumers of the tourism product and tourist destinations as places of value creation are comprehensively explained and dynamics and changes in the tourism landscape addressed. This is followed by a thorough examination of the concept of experience in tourism. The literature review culminates in a conceptual framework of experience in tourism (Figure 2.2). Providing a holistic understanding of existing literature related to the concept of experience in tourism leads to the uncovering of research gaps that shaped and substantiated the research aims and objectives.

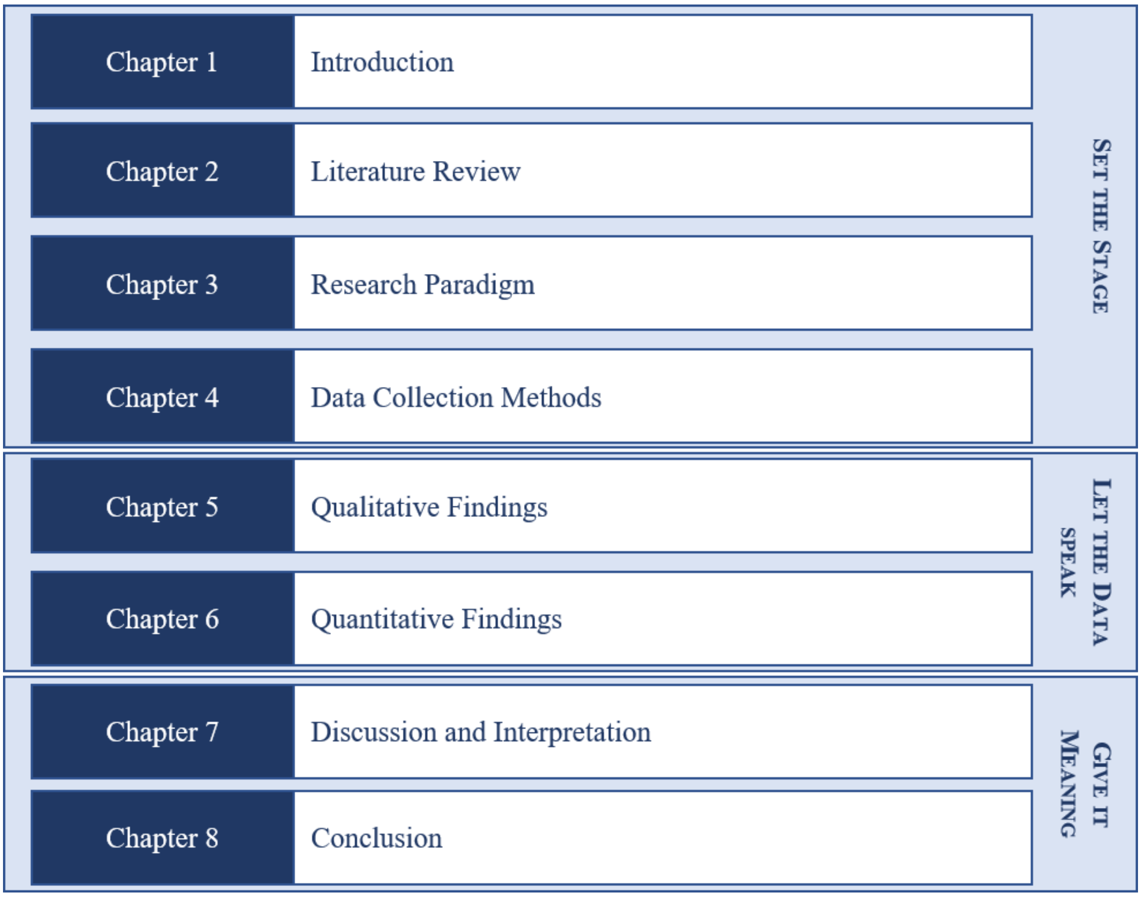


Figure 1.3: Outline of the thesis on the experienced tourist

The philosophical viewpoint that underpins this research project is introduced in Chapter 3. The ontological and epistemological standpoints of the researcher are explained and the adopted methodology and case study selection presented. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive introduction of the data collection methods applied in this study. Following the exploratory sequential mixed methods research design of this research project, the qualitative inquiry is discussed first. The implementation of semi-structured interviews, qualitative data analysis methods and data validation techniques are described. The collection of empirical data through an online survey was central to this study and the data gathering techniques are thoroughly introduced. Pre-analytical requirements and data processing steps are discussed, quantitative data analysis methods particularised and implemented tests for validity and reliability of the data delineated. Chapter 4 also covers research ethics and methodological limitations of the study.

In line with the research methodology, the research findings of this study are reported in two chapters. Based on results from the thematic analysis, the qualitative findings from both case studies are introduced in Chapter 5. This is followed by the depiction of the quantitative results derived through statistical analyses. The country-specific findings from the web survey are separately introduced in Chapter 6. Taking themes identified in Chapter 2 into consideration, the overall findings are discussed and interpreted in Chapter 7. The discussion and interpretation chapter of this thesis is subdivided into three major parts. Firstly, the industry experts' perceptions of an experienced tourist are presented and similarities and differences between and across the two cases studies illustrated. Secondly, results from the web surveys are discussed by case study and the development of the model explained. Lastly, the qualitative and quantitative results are drawn together and the overall message of this study is synthesised.

The conclusion of the thesis is provided in Chapter 8. The research aims and objectives are revisited, the key findings summarised and the definition of an experienced tourist is proposed. Chapter 8 also illustrates conceptual, methodological and theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications for the tourism industry drawn from the study, outlines limitations and suggests opportunities for future research. The chapter ends with closing thoughts and the researcher's reflection on her PhD.

1.7 Concept clarification

The terms *tourist*, *tourist destination*, *destination marketing organisation (DMO)* and *tourist experience* are frequently used throughout this study. A review of the literature demonstrates ambiguities and inconsistencies in defining and using these terms. For reasons of clarity, the definitions employed in this research project are introduced in the following paragraphs.

The tourist

A ***tourist*** is central to the realisation of the intangible and perishable tourism product. As the co-creators and consumers of the tourism product, tourists represent the demand-side of tourism. Although several attempts were undertaken to define a tourist comprehensively and models were developed to classify tourists, scholars challenged an unambiguous terminology of the term due to the complexities and multifacetedness of the tourism phenomenon itself (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Cary, 2004; McCabe, 2015). By incorporating the movement (travelling to and staying at places outside the usual environment), the time dimension (more than one night but less than a year) and the purpose of travel (leisure, business or other personal purposes), the UNWTO (2008) provided a pragmatic and simplified definition of the term that is universally accepted. Furthermore, a distinction between domestic (travelling within the home country) and international tourists (travelling outside the national borders) was drawn.

For several decades, scholars challenged and disputed the definition of the term opposing the often interchangeably used notions tourist and traveller (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; McCabe, 2015). Generally, tourists have been linked to the mass tourism experience, while travellers were used in the context of individual and independent travel experiences. This study used the globally accepted terminology provided by the UNWTO. A minor adjustment to the UNWTO's definition was made as emphasis was given to tourists travelling for leisure purposes and business travellers were not acknowledged in this study. This study understands a tourist as an individual that has undertaken at least one overnight stay outside of the usual everyday environment for leisure purposes in the past (domestic or international). Tourists represent the demand-side and thus micro perspective of tourism in this research project.

The tourist destination

From a tourist's perspective, a ***tourist destination*** is a geographical location that reflects the physical space of travel consumption. A tourist destination can be of any size ranging from micro destinations (e.g., cities), to macro destinations (e.g., countries) to human-made artificial destinations (e.g., Disney World) (Bieger & Beritelli, 2013). The further the tourist travels, the wider the classification of the destination in the tourist's understanding. The more focussed the purpose of the trip and proximity to the home country, the smaller the destination in the tourist's mind.

While tourists perceive the tourist destination as a closed entity, a tourist destination does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, it is an amalgam of different industry players that uniquely and independently contribute to the destination's offerings. Subsequently, a tourist destination corresponds to a strategic network of tourism suppliers that are both co-producers and competitors (Eisenstein & Koch, 2015; Fischer, 2009). These complex strategic networks are managed and governed by DMOs.

The destination marketing organisation

A ***destination marketing organisation (DMO)*** symbolically acts as an orchestra conductor for the multiple stakeholders within the complex tourist destination network. It is a DMO's responsibility to foster collaborations and act as a coordinating body to create seamless tourism experiences that positively impact on the destination's overall performance and competitiveness (Lewis-Cameron & Roberts, 2010). As DMOs are the creators, facilitators and promoters of the destination offerings, they represent the supply-side of tourism and thus are the macro perspective in this study. In the New Zealand context, the term *Regional Tourism Organisation* is widely used when referring to representative entities of tourism destinations (Regional Tourism Organisations New Zealand (RTONZ), 2016). In Germany, the destination landscape is very fragmented and different terms are used for organisations on different destination levels, such as *Regional Tourism Organisation* on regional levels of any size (e.g., Black Forest, Ruhr area) or *Landesmarketingorganisation/Landestourismusorganisation* for the tourism marketing organisation at the federal state level (Seeler & Böhling, 2016). For reasons of consistency and to avoid ambiguity, the term DMO is used throughout this study when referring to any destination level in both case studies.

The tourist experience

In the tourism context and from a managerial perspective, ***experiences*** are understood as the locus of value creation and are conclusively of critical importance for destination competitiveness (Jensen et al., 2015). The multifacetedness and ambiguity of the lexical meaning of the term *experience* were previously presented and the objective and subjective meanings of the term discussed. In tourism research, a distinction between ***tourism experiences*** (experience creation, objective) and ***tourist experiences*** (experience consumption, subjective) needs to be drawn and the interconnectedness considered. This study investigated an individual's condition of being an ***experienced tourist***. The subjective meaning of experience in form of accumulated knowledge was explored and tourist experiences were put at the fore.

As tourist experiences are complex psychological processes, the derivation of an all-encompassing definition is difficult (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). This study borrowed a definition of the term from the social scientists Stephenson and Papadopoulos (2006) who summarised that, "[e]xperience takes on an authenticating function; it is the grounds from which knowledge is developed and the yardstick against which it can be evaluated" (p. 7). The definition highlights the centrality of experience in an individual's life (authenticating function) and acknowledges the element of time by grounding experience on the past (yardstick for evaluation) but allowing for change in the future (ground to develop knowledge).

Chapter 1	Introduction	SET THE STAGE
Chapter 2	**Literature Review**	
Chapter 3	Research Paradigm	
Chapter 4	Data Collection Methods	
Chapter 5	Qualitative Findings	LET THE DATA SPEAK
Chapter 6	Quantitative Findings	
Chapter 7	Discussion and Interpretation	GIVE IT MEANING
Chapter 8	Conclusion	

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The tourist is seeking to make sense of their life by developing a coherent,
socially acceptable identity – tourists travel to find themselves.
(Moscardo, 2014, p. 83)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of existing literature related to the study. The chapter highlights the major contributors in the field and addresses advances and discoveries related to the phenomenon researched. The chapter reflects on ongoing debates and supports a comprehensive and critical understanding of the body of knowledge related to the topic. In order to avoid becoming a prisoner within a single discipline and to ensure that the complexity of the studied phenomenon is acknowledged, other disciplines such as behavioural sciences, business studies and psychology were taken into consideration and theories and concepts from these have been included. The literature review is concept-centric, thematically organised from a broader to a narrower view and structured in two major parts.

A general overview of today's tourism landscape is provided and existing literature related to tourists as consumers of the tourism product, tourist destinations as places of value creation in tourism, and dynamics and changes in today's tourism landscape is presented (section 2.2). The concept of experience in tourism is explored, the term *experience* is introduced and the two concepts of creating and consuming experiences in tourism are addressed (section 2.3). Although concepts are individually discussed, the structured review of the literature reveals the interrelatedness of these concepts. The relationships and dependencies between the concepts culminate in a conceptual framework of experience in the tourism context (section 2.4). This conceptual framework also depicts the interconnectedness between the demand-side and supply-side of tourism and addresses the stages of experience consumption in the usual and non-usual environments of the tourist (Figure 2.2). Through the identification of knowledge gaps, the aims and objectives of this study are justified and evidence is provided that supports the discussion of knowledge gained.

2.2 The tourism landscape

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing and most resilient industries with sustained growth since the 1950s (UNWTO, 2018). Despite its global and socio-economic importance, a universally accepted and all-encompassing definition of the complex tourism concept is lacking. The UNWTO stated that tourism is to be defined according to the minimum (24 hours) and maximum (one year) of trip duration, the distance travelled (minimum 160 km), the purpose of travel (leisure, business or other) and further emphasised that the places visited are outside of the tourist's usual environment. Thereby, the UNWTO provided one of the most accepted and cited definitions used in tourism research.

Several attempts were undertaken to define the term *tourism* more comprehensively and scholars from different fields of study provided interpretations of the term. Tourism has been defined as an "industrialisation of a delusory methodology" (Turner & Ash, 1975, p. 151), a "language of modernity" (Dann, 1996, p. 4) an "illusion" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 224),), a "mirage" (Craig-Smith & French, 1995, p. 2), an "element of contemporary lifestyle" (N. Wang, 2000, p. VII) and a "modern-day consumption" (Smed, 2012, p. 131). Franklin (2004) argued that tourism is not merely a by-product of consumption but a process with its own dynamics and described tourism as "an active ordering of modernity" (p. 278). Assuming tourism as an ordering, the sociologist provided the tourist a more central position within the complex tourism concept.

The interrelationships and dependencies between the tourism spaces, tourism offerings and tourists themselves need to be understood to fully comprehend the underlying complexities of the tourism concept. In addition to the interdependencies between tourism providers and tourists as consumers, a holistic understanding of the dynamics and complexities needs to go beyond the tourism industry and incorporate other economic sectors (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009; Darbellay & Stock, 2012). Understanding tourism as a subconcept of economics and politics, more precisely as a consequence and booster of globalisation, requires one to incorporate both external and internal relationships to approximate a comprehensive picture of the complex tourism concept. With the majority of research investigating *how* tourists travel, criticism emerged remarking that the question *why* people travel and the fundamental reasons behind travel were largely neglected. Subsequently, a plethora of tourism studies emerged that focused on the tourists themselves and investigated the underlying motives and behaviour of tourists.

2.2.1 Tourists as consumers of the tourism product

Tourists gain centre stage in the creation and realisation of the tourism product and are of critical importance for the tourism industry's overall success. Thirty years ago, Jafari

(1987) proposed that "(t)ourists are among the least understood collectivities, despite their ubiquitousness and still growing number worldwide" (p. 151). Both statements continue to be valid; the concept of the tourist is still one of the most discussed, discordant, and misconceived in the tourism literature without an unambiguous definition of the term (Bowen & Clarke, 2009), and tourist arrivals continue to grow (UNWTO, 2018). P. L. Pearce (2005) provided a critical perspective on an unambiguous definition concluding that the word tourist itself is "its own definitional problem child" (p. 4) and further acknowledging that the "figure of the tourist will never be easily grasped" (p. 62). The need to understand tourists more holistically has attracted researchers from different disciplines and translated into a pletophera of theories and models. Despite various approaches, past research shares the understanding that tourists are diverse, which has impeded a unifying conceptualisation. Tourists differ in terms of aspects such as their sociodemographic and psychographic profiles, their travel biographies, travel behaviours, motivations, and roles when travelling.

With the growth of mass tourism and packaged holidays, the discussion emerged to differentiate the often synonymously used terms *tourist* and *traveller*. Buzard (1993) summarised that "[t]he traveller exhibits boldness and gritty endurance under all conditions […], the tourist is the cautious, pampered unit of a leisure industry" (p. 2) and Rojek (1993) similarly assumed that travellers endeavour self-realisation while tourists are consumers of predefined realities. In earlier research, E. Cohen (1974) discussed the distinction between travellers and tourists and suggested seven dimensions to identify different tourists roles. He summarised that "[a] 'tourist' is a voluntary, temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round-trip" (E. Cohen, 1974, p. 533).

The supply-side of tourism does not generally differentiate between travellers and tourists and considers consumers of touristic products commonly as tourists. From a demand-side perspective, however, the conceptions of a tourist and a traveller evoke different images, reveal a specific status and create impressions the person makes on others. Tourists themselves no longer want to be labelled as such but distance themselves from the terminology and want to be considered as travellers. As a result, the use of the term was given new importance and anti-tourist attitudes emerged (Jacobsen, 2000). Galani-Moutafi (2000) questioned this academically discussed definitional dichotomy. Rather than seeing tourists and travellers at opposite and contradictory ends, the author pointed to the processual nature expressed in the individual's stage in the travel career in which travellers pave the ways for tourists. McCabe (2005) provided a similar viewpoint and proposed that "the construct 'tourist' is deployed as a rhetorical apparatus" (p. 95). The author further summarised that "[t]he word 'tourist' is not an ossified, megalithic container of 'primordial meaning' but precisely a concept, an ideological, moral and political construct used to achieve interactional goals" (McCabe, 2005, p. 96). Critical thoughts related to the distinction between tourists and travellers go beyond academic discussions and are widespread in the everyday language. Narratives and other forms of consumer-generated writings, particularly blogs, afford a more emic perspective on the tourists' self-assessments. Jacobsen (2000) and McCabe (2005) identified in their research two major distinguishing factors between tourists and travellers reported by anti-tourists and travel bloggers: experience and behaviour.

2.2.1.1 Tourist behaviour and motivation

The tourism product has a unique character that makes purchasing decisions much more complex than in most other consumer goods. Researchers and practitioners need to grasp the underlying tourist behaviour to better understand the rationale and the *whys* (and *why nots*) behind tourism purchases (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Not only are tourists influenced by the ever-changing external environment, their increased expectations and changing demands encourage changes in the external environments as well. The importance of the topic was recognised, research in the field has increased and numerous models have been developed to display the relationship of various determinants and motivators influencing consumer behaviour and eventually decision-making processes (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009; Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016).

The majority of consumer behaviour models was established from a marketer's perspective emphasising the roles of actors within the buying process and focussing on products rather than services. Most models neglected the fact that purchasers are not necessarily consumers and ignored the thought that purchasers may buy products or services for others. In addition, consumer behaviour models were unable to capture the tourism products' specific characteristics, such as the heterogeneity, inseparability, intangibility and perishability. Several attempts were undertaken to formulate more comprehensive and specific models constituting behavioural traits in tourism purchases (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Middleton, Fyall, & Morgan, 2009; P. L. Pearce, 2011). None of these models was able to incorporate the multiple layers of tourism consumption and the complexity of purchasing processes in tourism. However, several influential factors were identified and a strong relationship between motivation, personality traits and travel behaviour was established.

Motivation is the key determinant why people wish to travel, the driving force behind the dynamics of tourist behaviour and the starting point to understand destination choice. Tourist motivation is heterogeneous, subjective, multidimensional and multidisciplinary and was described as "basic tapestry, the prototype, the DNA structure or the geological bedrock which informs and integrates the related concepts" (P. L. Pearce, 1993, p. 115). Principles of tourist motivation have been researched and debated from different perspectives without delivering commonly accepted and interdisciplinary conceptualisations. What remains is an amalgam of different, partly contradictory contributions and a definitional fuzziness. Scholars share the assumption that motivation to travel is predominantly driven by the inner tension to satisfy unfulfilled needs. Destination choice and travel behaviour were previously ascribed to the destination's attributes, attractions, offerings and promotions. Tourists were extrinsically motivated and stimulated by pull factors initiated by the tourism industry. These factors were associated with the satisfaction of the cultural disequilibrium defined as "the desire to see new places or do things in a different environment" (Crompton, 1979, p. 422). Sociologists and psychologists accentuated the importance of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of the individual's subjective and psychological disequilibrium.

The foundation of tourism motivation studies can be attributed to frameworks introduced by Dann (1977), Crompton (1979) and Iso-Ahola (1980). Dann (1977) contended that tourist motivations to travel lie on a continuum between *anomie* and *ego-enhancement* and individuals are motivated by push factors and intrinsic needs. Crompton (1979) theorised that individuals attempt to break out from routine as soon as a state of disequilibrium in the motivational system is reached. In his *push and pull model* the author distinguished socio-psychological from cultural motives. Iso-Ahola (1980) introduced the *Social-Psychology Theory* and postulated that the realisation of the optimal level of arousal is the driving force and the stimulus behind tourist motivation. Although these frameworks are often referred to, criticism emerged as they are static and study frozen moments while dynamics of tourist motivations and changes in travel behaviour are mostly overlooked.

As a response to this criticism, Pearce and colleagues proposed the travel career ladder (TCL) (P. L. Pearce, 1993; P. L. Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; P. L. Pearce & Moscardo, 1985). The TCL acknowledges the multidimensionality and dynamics of individual change and considers the linkages between individual changes, life span, family career and life cycle. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954) the TCL hypothesised that changes in travel motivation and behaviour are driven by the individual's accumulated travel experiences and the drive towards self-actualisation. Strongly related to the individual's prior travel experience and incorporating a developmental component, five different levels were identified to determine the dominant need behind travel motivation. These five needs are: relaxation, safety/security, relationship, self-esteem/development, and self-actualisation/fulfilment. Despite its popularity, the model was criticised for the missing empirical evidence and validity, statistical veracity, as well as the general phrasing of being a *ladder* (H. Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Ryan, 1998). As a response, P. L. Pearce and Lee (2005) re-conceptualised and modified the TCL, proposed the travel career pattern (TCP) and defined three variables to measure prior experience: number of domestic trips, number of international trips and age.

The models introduced in this section focus on factors that energise demand and motivation from within the person and are attributable to content theories. Witt and Wright (1992) implemented a process theory based on expectancy-value theory and examined the relationships between dynamic variables and the mechanisms behind motivation. Although believed to be more comprehensive and accurate in delivering a framework for the examination of tourist motivation, the complex nature and multidimensionality impedes the utilisation of process theories in motivational studies. In conclusion, several attempts from different, mainly westernised perspectives were undertaken to define tourist motivation. Most theories and models date back to the 1980s and 1990s, are based on theoretical findings and lack empirical evidence. While current research still heavily relies on these theories and concepts, an updated, globally applicable and more contemporary perspective is lacking.

2.2.1.2 Tourist roles and identities

Several typologies have been devised to understand the intricacies of the tourists' motivations to travel (Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 2013; H. Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). Typologies classify tourists into internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous groups and segment them according to predefined criteria.

Despite the nonexistence of a generally accepted definition, classification and segmentation are regarded prerequisite to understand, explain and predict tourist behaviour. Early models referred to sociodemographic variables to segment tourists as these factors are accessible, measurable and intelligible. However, sociodemographic factors are unable to display the dynamics of modern societies and deliver no direct insights into consumer preferences and future behaviour. As a consequence, socio-psychological and behavioural approaches gained in importance and tourist typologies were implemented that supported market segmentations based on psychographic (e.g., travel motivation, personality), or behavioural factors (e.g., type of travel) (Dolnicar, 2008; Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Baloglu, 2017).

An overview of the most prominent tourist classifications and typologies is provided in Table 2.1. Criticism emerged that the introduced typologies are based on theoretical knowledge, circular arguments and etic, heuristic devices (Dann, 2014). Widely adopted typologies referred to similar criteria (e.g., novelty and familiarity) and proposed similar typologies (e.g. mass tourist and free independent tourist (FIT)) but they were differently phrased and failed to incorporate the *why* behind motivation. Furthermore, the unique nature of the tourism product and multifacetedness of tourists correspond to a paradox deploying tourist typologies: typologies are established to understand the complexities but are criticised for being too static (Decrop, 2006). Scholars challenged whether the multidimensionality and increasing hybridity of tourists allow one to define *typical* tourists and segment them into homogenous groups based on particular characteristics (Boztug, Babakhani, Dolnicar, & Laesser, 2015). In addition to the multifacetedness of tourists, tourists themselves are constantly changing without following a predefined path – neither between trips nor during a particular holiday (Csikszentmihalyi & Coffey, 2017). However, due to its central function in decision-making and travel behaviour, tourist motivation gained an important role in creating effective and targeted destination marketing (Jamal & Lee, 2003).

Table 2.1 Overview of prominent tourist classifications and identified tourist roles

Author	Tourist roles	Criteria
Gray (1970)	▪ Wanderlust ▪ Sunlust	▪ Desire to explore and discover the world (cultural experience of the unknown) ▪ Desire to relax and rest at the sun, sea and sand (relaxation in familiar surroundings)
Cohen (1972)	▪ Organised mass tourist ▪ Individual mass tourist ▪ Explorer ▪ Drifter	▪ Relationship between the guest and the environment ▪ Novelty-familiarity continuum
Plog (1974)	▪ Allocentric ▪ Midcentric ▪ Psychocentric	▪ Personality traits ▪ Non airline travellers
Cohen (1979)	▪ Recreational ▪ Discovery ▪ Experiential ▪ Experimental ▪ Existential	▪ Tourist experience ▪ ‘Other’-‘Centre’ continuum
Smith (1989)	▪ Explorer ▪ Elite tourist ▪ Off-beaten tourist ▪ Unusual tourist ▪ Incipient mass tourist ▪ Mass tourist ▪ Charter tourist	▪ Tourist’s impact on the destination

Although models and theories support DMOs to comprehend travel behaviour and motivation, the complexity and multidimensionality of the constantly and dynamically changing tourist challenges destination marketers to create, deliver and promote tourism experiences for tourists. The longevity of tourist typologies is challenged and while the definition of internally homogenous groups provides necessary information for tactical decisions most typologies are less valid for strategy formation. A more holistic, interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach is required that encompasses macro and micro levels of tourism, addresses the dynamics of change and qualifies for destinations' strategic processes.

2.2.2 Tourist destinations as places of value creation

As tourists are continuously searching for new experiences in non-usual environments to meet unsatisfied needs, they are asking for places outside their everyday lives where they can gather the experiences desired. A tourist destination of any size portrays an *experiencescape* and is considered the heart of the complex tourism system (Mossberg, 2007; O'Dell, 2006). Tourists consider tourist destinations as holistic entities and geographical locations where they can find a bundle of offerings required to satisfy their unmet needs (Eisenstein & Koch, 2015). In reality, a tourist destination does not exist in a vacuum but is an amalgam of different stakeholders and constitutes a complex destination ecosystem.

The situational settings and available natural resources are mostly set conditions and are only to some degree controllable. Consequently, the long-term success of any destination relies on social constructions and the cooperation of stakeholders within the destination (Connelly, 2007; Cooper, Scott, & Baggio, 2009). The individual public and private stakeholders within the destination form a strategic network of co-producing actors (Fischer, 2009; Saretzki, 2007). These actors independently contribute to the value creation of the destination's offering, become co-creators of the overall experience and are indispensable for the destination's competitiveness. Boes, Buhalis, and Inversini (2016) discussed tourism destinations as complex ecosystems and further argued that "tourism destination stakeholders are resource-integrating actors interconnected through the organisational premises of the tourism destination and the mutual and voluntary service-for-service exchange" (p. 110). As tourists perceive the destination as a closed entity, yet the experience is created by a multiplicity of tourism stakeholders in a network equalling a virtual enterprise, a paradox arises that challenges an unambiguous definition that is applicable to both tourists and destination stakeholders.

From a process perspective the tourist destination equals a service chain (Fischer, 2009). Independent stakeholder (e.g., accommodation establishments, transportation providers, restaurants) within the destination provide individual trip elements that each contribute to the overall tourism experience (Eisenstein, 2014). Subsequently, cooperativeness in creating, promoting and eventually delivering the tourism product is inevitable for the overall performance and competitiveness of the destination. The necessary cooperativeness can be challenging and a balancing act as tourism organisations may cooperate on an interregional level but are competitors on intraregional levels (Seeler & Böhling, 2016). The resulting tension between cooperation and competition, also termed co-opetition (Eisenstein & Koch, 2015), requires strategic and holistic management to remain competitive. Many destinations have initiated a DMO to provide leadership, assist in defining a tourist destination's overall aims and promote the development and implementation of tourism strategies.

2.2.2.1 Destination marketing organisation

A DMO holds the central function similar to an orchestra conductor within the complex destination networks and is the key liaison between the individual stakeholders. It is the DMO's role to foster collaboration, integrate major stakeholders in strategic processes, deliver a seamless tourism experience and through adaptation to the changing marketplace ensure that the destination life cycle does not decline and enter into the stage of saturation (Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010; De Carlo, Cugini, & Zerbini, 2008; Lewis-Cameron & Roberts, 2010). A DMO serves as a coordinating body and plays a supportive role in balancing the often contrasting and different interests of stakeholders. Through encouragement of effective exploitation of synergies, a DMO holds the responsibility of forming an integral destination that reflects all stakeholders appropriately (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Subsequently, a DMO plays a critical role in ensuring that stakeholders' expectations are satisfied.

DMOs were mostly hierarchically structured in the past (Bieger & Beritelli, 2013). This meant that tasks were assigned to different destination levels and carried out independently by various industry stakeholders. With the growing number of destinations opening their doors for tourism, competition is growing as well. The increasingly interconnected environment of DMOs is associated with growing task complexity and transaction costs. As a response, an integrated and more coordinated approach gained in importance and strategic networks within and across destinations have been initiated (De Kluyver & Pearce, 2012). Dyadic relationships, cooperativeness and communication within these strategic networks are increasingly understood as drivers of success and a relational view of a cooperative strategy and a source of competitive advantages across the network has been adopted (Fischer, 2009).

Instead of hierarchical structures and top-down approaches commonly adopted in the past, today a DMO's organisational structure is mostly either community-oriented or corporate-oriented (Eisenstein, 2014). When adopting a community-oriented model, individual services are co-produced by small to medium-sized companies and stakeholders that aim for individual profit maximisation. As destination networks within community-oriented models are decentralised and structured heterogeneously, coordinating and controlling needs are more pronounced. It is the DMO's role and responsibility to act as destination policy authority and coordinating body to promote the destination holistically and facilitate the delivery of a seamless tourist experience while operating as a not for profit organisation (Seeler & Böhling, 2016). Within a corporate-oriented model, the destination is centrally organised and controlled by the DMO as a coordinating body, all services are bundled and an overall profit maximisation is prioritised over the individual identity of a stakeholder. The corporate-oriented approach proved to be beneficial when the destination properties and services are themed, such as ski resorts or amusement parks (Eisenstein, 2014).

Fyall, Fletcher, and Spyriadis (2010) argued that there is no blueprint DMO structure as each tourist destination operates in an idiosyncratic environment consisting of different stakeholders. However, several central duties, functions and responsibilities have generally been assigned to a DMO. Closely related to the overall coordination duties of a DMO, Bieger and Beritelli (2013) identified four central functions: (1) planning function (e.g., developing destination strategy, analysing competitive situation); (2) product function (e.g., creating new products and services, ensuring quality); (3) marketing function (e.g., image advertising and branding, promotion and acquisition); and (4) lobby/advocacy function (e.g., coordinating and representing stakeholder interests, advancing tourism consciousness and sensitising the population within the destination). As DMOs aim to make optimal use of resources within the destination network, they need to obtain legitimacy from the various stakeholders and have full authority to act on behalf of them. Because of this, the responsibility of a DMO goes beyond the satisfaction of the industry stakeholder and visitors but also incorporates the enhancement of the residents' social and economic well-being and quality of life (Bornhorst et al., 2010). In addition to the management and coordinating function of the destination, a DMO needs to ensure that the organisation itself is well managed. Thus, any DMO is confronted with dual responsibilities that add to the task complexity.

While a destination is geographically fixed and comparatively inflexible, tourists are mobile world consumers and are able to reach almost every place on the globe. At the same time, a tourist destination possesses an influential realm facilitated by the destination image and marketing (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). The supply-side can only be influential when suppliers within the complex tourism network understand the tourists' constantly changing expectations and needs. Dwyer, Cvelbar, Edwards, and Mihalic (2012) referred to the risk of a strategic drift and competitive disadvantage when changes in the demand are not monitored and new strategy implementation in response to shifting demands is delayed. Although not a new phenomenon, the ever increasing competitive environment has propelled changes, and destination marketers need solid strategies to attract tourists in the long-term and remain competitive.

2.2.2.2 Strategic destination management

Market conditions are shifting and competition is increasing with the growing number of destinations opening their doors for tourism. The increasing competition is accompanied by higher degrees of complexity, political instability and a constantly changing tourism environment. As it is the DMO's primary goal to enhance the competitiveness of the destination in the long-term and gain a sustainable competitive advantage, destination marketing strategies are formulated and implemented (Pike, 2004; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Although DMOs remain the critical connectors between the players within the destination network and are responsible for the strategic planning and decision-making of the destination, they neither own nor produce the destination's tourism product (Sheehan, Vargas-Sánchez, Presenza, & Abbate, 2016). The emerging complexity and interrelatedness of independent stakeholders contribute to the uniqueness that can lead to a competitive advantage. At the same time, one major challenge is associated with the fragmented structure consisting of a multitude of mostly small or medium-sized operators within the destination network. Reconciling the goals of service providers within the network is further impeded as individual and organisational goals are not always fully defined and occasionally go beyond tourism management and development (Crouch, 2011).

The formulation and implementation of a destination marketing strategy requires the DMO to constantly monitor the internal and external environment to understand shifts in the market and changes in the demand. To reduce the risk of marketing failure in the intensified competitive environment and to ensure that needs of the demand are met, marketing and market research gain significance (Eisenstein, 2017). DMOs understand that strategic decisions rely on knowledge generated through meaningful and reliable data resulting in academic as well as applied research flourishing. However, as societal changes are mostly driven by technological innovations and developments, there are new dynamics and changes that shape today's tourism landscape.

2.2.3 Dynamics and changes in the tourism landscape

With the increasing pace of technological innovation, improving global mobility and interconnectedness economies and societies undergo change with a higher speed. At the same time, global economies are facing an ageing society and a growing middle class which further challenge the societal status quo and require industries to rethink products and services. Another aspect of societal changes that is heavily debated is the growth in global temporary or long-term migration leading to increasingly multicultural societies and living environments. Despite economic and political turmoil in recent years, the tourism industry proved to be one of the most resilient and stable industries around the world with constantly growing volumes of tourists and destinations (UNWTO, 2018). The growth in international travel and global mobility has contributed to changes on the demand-side that challenge the supply-side to provide experiences that fulfil and exceed today's tourists' needs and desires (Condevaux, Djament-Tran, & Gravari-Barbas, 2016). Consequently, tourist destinations constantly need to transform themselves to meet these new requirements and needs.

The increasingly connected, engaged and informed tourists aim for co-creation and interaction which evoke changes in different stages of the travel journey. In this regard, several scholars referred to the service-dominant logic (S-D logic) as a concept that allows customers to actively participate in the creation of experiences and thus become co-creators and innovators (Blazquez-Resino, Molina, & Esteban-Talaya, 2015; Evans, 2016; Shaw, Bailey, & Williams, 2011). Although co-creation is not a new concept, the technological advancements and increasingly technology savvy consumers accelerate the process of change and challenge the definition of co-creation. One of the most evident outcomes of the increasingly desired co-creation, collaborative consumption and engagement, is the disruptive growth of the sharing economy, seen clearly in the rise of peer-to-peer accommodation such as Airbnb (Guttentag & Smith, 2017; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016). However, the growing demand in general and the new forms of tourism consumption challenge aspects of a destination's carrying capacity and increasingly raise the questions: How much is too much? With the aim to provide solutions to this question in the future and following S-D logics in marketing, scholars addressed the overall required changes in strategic destination marketing towards more knowledge-based and smart destinations:

> The successful DMO of the future will be an intelligent agent of the destination that is able to identify, engage and learn from disparate stakeholders both within and outside the destination. It must acquire, filter, analyze and prioritize data and information from various sources to create knowledge that can be used to fulfill its role in destination management. (Sheehan et al., 2016, p. 549)

The authors further argued that DMOs evolve from marketing to management centred organisations and become intelligent agents that work towards the establishment of smart tourism destinations in which the respective DMO represents the destination's knowledge gatekeeper. This need for smarter destinations and management approaches was further related to the increasingly hybrid travel behaviour of today's tourists. Hybridity occurs not only in the form of changed travel motives and behaviour from one trip to another, changes also occur during the trip. Csikszentmihalyi and Coffey (2017) recently proposed the travel motivation matrix consisting of two orthogonal dimensions to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Y-axis) and hedonic and eudaemonic travel experiences as major outcomes/goals of a trip (X-axis). Although Csikszentmihalyi and Coffey (2017) concluded that one of the motives and goals is more salient, they made clear that travel motives are fluid and can evolve both over time between trips and during a trip:

> […] it is perfectly possible for extrinsic and intrinsic motives to be involved in the same tourist excursion, either sequentially or at the same time; […]. Again, it is perfectly possible for a person to start a trip with a purely hedonic purpose and after a whole start wondering about the local architecture, about the way people work […] perhaps even to the point of learning a bit about the history and the language of the place. (Csikszentmihalyi & Coffey, 2017, p. 125)

Closely related to the tourists' increasingly hybrid travel behaviour, scholars discussed post-tourism and the hybridisation of tourist destinations and referred to the emergence of new tourism destinations and at the same time, the end of tourism in other destinations (Condevaux et al., 2016; McCabe, 2015). The emergence of new tourist destinations and exchangeability of destinations are further challenged by the advancements in technology and aspects related to virtual reality, second life and secondary experiences (Penfold, 2009). A brief overview of dynamics and changes that are increasingly discussed in tourism research is provided in Table 2.2. Despite the changes in tourism demand that create challenges for the supply-side of tourism, there is a common agreement that the concept of experience is central in today's dynamic tourism network.

Table 2.2: Overview of dynamics and changes in the tourism landscape

Overall topic	Subtopic	Authors (selected examples)
Travel behaviour	▪ Co-creation, engagement & interaction ▪ Hybridity ▪ Personalised experiences ▪ Learning & education ▪ Slow tourism	Boztug et al. (2015); Campos, Mendes, do Valle, and Scott (2016); Condevaux et al. (2016); Coşkun and Yilmaz (2016); Oh, Assaf, and Baloglu (2016); Pera (2017)
Travel motivation	▪ Hedonism and eudaemonia ▪ Meaningfulness/Meaning-making ▪ Transformation	Csikszentmihalyi and Coffey (2017); Packer and Gill (2017)
Technology savvy	▪ Mobile technologies ▪ Augmented realities (AR)/virtual realities (VR) ▪ Digital memories/narratives ▪ User-generated content (UGC)/online social networks (OSN)	Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, and Nusair (2016); Y. C. Huang, Backman, Backman, and Chang (2016); Sedera, Lokuge, Atapattu, and Gretzel (2017); Yilmaz and Olgaç (2016)
Carrying capacity	▪ Gentrification ▪ Overtourism ▪ Antitourism ▪ New urban tourism	Bellini and Pasquinelli (2017); Gravari-Barbas and Guinand (2017); Higgins-Desbiolles (2018)
Sharing economy	▪ Shared/peer-to-peer accommodation ▪ Shared rides/transportation ▪ Meal sharing/Eat with	Guttentag and Smith (2017); Stors and Kagermaier (2017); Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2018)
Smart tourism	▪ Smart destinations/cities ▪ Knowledge-based destinations ▪ S-D logic	Blazquez-Resino et al. (2015); Boes et al. (2016); Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, and Koo (2015); Sheehan et al. (2016)

2.3 The concept of experience in tourism

The term *experience* is widely used in academic, professional and everyday language and the concept of experience creation and consumption attracted researchers and practitioners from different disciplines and fields. The creation of positive memorable experiences has become a key driver to sustain a competitive advantage in today's economic environment (Jensen et al., 2015; Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Subsequently, experience creation gained centre stage in the delivery of a destination's tourism products and services. This is also mirrored in the plethora of studies on this topic and the increase in academic publications that emerged from different research disciplines and traditions. Academic research in the past was mostly driven by the industry and was based on the growing demand for reliable data supporting the creation of experiences. Research followed Pine and Gilmore's (1999) concept of the *experience economy,* adopted a marketing/managerial approach to the topic and considered experiences as objects of consumption and commercial exchange.

More recently, tourism research shifted away from the dominance of managerial approaches, acknowledged the importance of the subject as consumers of experiences and realigned research strategies towards more social science perspectives. While destination marketers and tourism providers endeavour to create, promote and sell *once in a lifetime experiences* and address the increasingly mature and *experienced tourists,* academic research failed to provide answers to conceptual questions related to the creation and consumption of experiences in the tourism context. This is supported by the following quote:

> Unfortunately, there have been limited attempts of bridging the gap and of obtaining better integrations between different schools of thoughts on travel motivation and experiences in tourism research, first of all between the primarily individualistic psychological orientation and the wider sociological social orientation. (Jensen et al., 2015, p. 10)

The lack of a unifying conceptualisation has been assigned to the difficulties in clearly demarcating the term experience due to semantic differences and linguistic ambiguities.

2.3.1 Defining the term experience

A review of the lexical meaning of the term *experience* in the English language demonstrates that the term has not only differently semantic meanings; the usage of the term is further challenged by its dual syntactic use as a verb and noun. An overview of the semantic meanings and functional classification (syntactic) is provided in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: The term *experience* in selected online dictionaries

Def.	Source	Semantics	Syntactic
1	Cambridge Dictionary	(1) (The process of getting) Knowledge or skill from doing, seeing, or feeling things.	noun
		(2) Something that happens to you that affects how you feel.	noun
		(3) If you experience something, it happens to you, or you feel it.	verb
2	Merriam-Webster.com	(1) a. Direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge. b. The fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation.	noun
		(2) a. Practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in a particular activity. b. The length of such participation.	noun
		(3) a. The conscious events that make up an individual life. b. The events that make up the conscious past of a community or nation or humankind generally.	noun
		(4) Something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through.	noun
		(5) The act or process of directly perceiving events or reality.	noun
3	Oxford Dictionaries	(1) a. Practical contact with and observation of facts or events. b. The knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something especially that gained in a particular profession.	noun
		(2) An event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone.	noun
		(3) a. Encounter or undergo. b. Feel (an emotion or sensation).	verb
4	The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language	(1) The apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind.	noun
		(2) a. Active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill. b. The knowledge or skill so derived.	noun
		(3) a. An event or a series of events participated in or lived through. b. The totality of such events in the past of an individual or group.	noun
		(4) To participate in personally; undergo.	verb

The review shows that experiences are defined as either countable and tangible events and facts or as uncountable, intangible and often unconscious processes. Furthermore, the interconnection and mutual dependencies of the countable and uncountable elements of the term experience are highlighted. While referring to the active participation in events, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Experience [Def. 4]), addresses the accumulation of knowledge and skills derived from the participation. Therefore, the dictionary's definition validates the link between the immediate lived experience (countable) and the uncountable element of experience as a form of knowledge accumulation based on subjective reflection and evaluation of the lived experience.

Reviewing the lexical meaning of the term experience in the German language reveals a clearer distinction between the countable and uncountable elements of experience as two different terms exist, namely *Erlebnis* (mostly countable) and *Erfahrung* (mostly uncountable). To overcome semantic ambiguities and challenges related to linguistic subtleties associated with the term in the English language scholars frequently apply the German terms *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* in academic publications. When applying the German terms, boundaries are clearly drawn, misunderstandings eliminated and satisfactory discrimination is achieved.

2.3.2 The role of experience in past tourism research

The interconnectedness of the two meanings of the term and the relationship between tourism providers and marketers as the originators of the objective experience production (countable) and tourists as subjects of experience consumptions and accumulation (uncountable) was also addressed by several researchers (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Volo, 2009). While referring to the individual's travel career and identity construction Smed (2012) explained the mutual dependencies between *Erlebnis* (notion A) and *Erfahrung* (notion B) and provided the following explanation:

> Both notions are instrumental in shaping the travel career, in that notion A represents touristic action and notion B the internalisation of action, with reciprocal evaluations of the action eventually forming a basis for future action. This means that notion A is a prerequisite for accumulating tourist experiences of any sort, whilst notion B is an inevitable effect of engaging in notion A experiences and will inevitably influence notion A experiences in the future. (p. 135)

The author's usage of the German terms to clearly differentiate the two elements of experience, and emphasis on the inseparability and continuous back-and-forth between the two elements of experience has also been discussed by other scholars providing similar definitions. S. Larsen (2007), for example, provided the following explanation:

> One could probably say that Erlebnis is something people have in a "here and now" fashion, whereas Erfahrung is something the individual undertakes, goes through or accumulates. (p. 9)

Existing literature clearly demonstrates that the differences between the two meanings of experience are understood and different key words are frequently used. When discussing experience as *Erlebnis*, scholars refer to immediate lived experiences that are mostly countable and use key words such as on-site experience consumption, during the trip experience or partaking experiences. By contrast, when discussing *Erfahrung* scholars refer to the process view of experience that occurs after the trip and reflects the reminiscing experience and recollection of experiences through memory work. Instead of undergoing an event and the direct encounter expressed when describing an *Erlebnis*, *Erfahrung* relates to the evaluation, reconstruction and subjective reflection of events and is thus not countable. *Erfahrung* is a continuous reflective and interactive process that encourages the individual to challenge the self and contributes to personal change. In this regard Boswijk, Thijssen, and Peelen (2007) summarised that "[a] person is the sum of his [her] meaningful experiences" (p. 24).

Several attempts were undertaken to provide an intelligible definition of the term *experience* in the context of tourism (Boswijk, 2013; O'Dell, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Selstad, 2007), yet no generally accepted and unifying conceptualisation has been derived. Despite the lack of a commonly accepted definition, scholars shared the assumptions that experiences are multilayered, consist of intangible and tangible assets, are subjectively perceived and lived through and thus highly personal phenomena. From this social science perspective the role of the individual in the process of experience accumulation is highlighted and experiences are not understood as moment in time snapshots but as complex individual processes. Experiences are accumulated over time and are constantly changing and developing. Bearing in mind the interconnectedness between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, there are several stakeholders involved in the process of experience accumulation which possess long-term value for the individual. These interrelationships between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* as well as the role of the demand-side and the supply-side of tourism in the process of experiencing are culminated in the proposed conceptual framework (Figure 2.2).

As described by Smed (2012), the accumulated tourist experience has an impact on expectations towards the single tourist experience which underpins the need to understand the process of experience accumulation more comprehensively. However, past tourism research adopted a marketing/management perspective and addressed the creation of experiences following Pine and Gilmore's (1999, 2011) *experience economy*. When adopting a marketing/management approach, tourism experiences equate to consumer experiences as a business offering in the context of tourism. Driven by the industry and from a marketer's perspective, tourism experiences were mostly studied as a source of economic success and driver of competitive advantage (Björk, 2014). The dominance of studies treating experience as an *Erlebnis* instead of an *Erfahrung* was also addressed by Ek, Larsen, Hornskov, and Mansfeldt (2008) who stated that "studies of 'the experience economy' have privileged the supply-side over the demand-side, performance of the industry over consumers and tourists" (p. 123).

In addition to the lack of social science perspectives and the predominance of managerial approaches as well as general linguistic ambiguities, a comprehensive and unambiguous understanding of the term and its two meanings is further challenged by the inconsistent use of the terms *tourism experience, touristic experience* and *tourist experience.* Tourism experience and touristic experience relate to the supply-side dimension of tourism (macro perspective) and reflect the objective creation of experiences from a managerial perspective. Tourist experience, by contrast, focus on the consumption of experiences and thus relate to the subjective meaning of experience strongly associated with tourists themselves (micro perspective). When using these terms interchangeably, the managerial/objective and humanistic/subjective meanings become blurred. The mutual dependencies between subjective and objective elements of experience and thus partaking and reminiscing was addressed in the previous sections. Several scholars discussed the close relationship between the supply-side (marketing/managerial) and demand-side (sociological/psychological) of tourism in the creation and consumption of experiences (Aho, 2001; Jensen et al., 2015). An overall comprehension of the concept of experience in tourism requires a balanced examination of the topic and the incorporation of both perspectives. Subsequently, the creation of experience from a supply-side perspective and consumption of experience from a demand-side perspective need to be considered.

2.3.3 Creating and providing experiences in tourism

In the constantly changing and dynamic tourism landscape, tourism operators and destinations marketers are facing increasingly fragmented markets in which tourists' attitudes and behaviour towards travelling are shifting rapidly. Creating and providing positive memorable experiences has become a key driver of success to remain competitive and perpetuate market share in the competitive environment (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). H. Kim and Chen (2018) defined a memorable experience as a "[…] special subjective event in one's life that is stored in a long-term memory as a part of autobiographical memory" (p. 1). Due to its subjective nature, there is no blueprint which factors contribute to a desirable and memorable experience and factors can vary from one tourism product, service or event to another (Kruger & Saayman, 2016). J.-H. Kim (2014) proposed a measurement model to identify the destination attributes of memorable tourism experiences. The author identified destination attributes on 10 dimensions that are relevant for the destination's competitiveness and emphasised the importance of a destination's expertise to provide and deliver memorable tourism experiences. Overall, the creation of memorable experiences has been defined essential for the long-term success across economic sectors and the *experience economy* was identified as "the fourth economic offering" (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 3).

2.3.3.1 The experience economy in the tourism context

The tourism suppliers within a tourism destination become the facilitators and stagers of these memorable experiences. Following Pine and Gilmore's (2011) four realms of experience, tourism suppliers and destination marketers create and design experiences that are required to take the degrees of customer involvement (active or passive participation) and the degree of connection and relationship with the environment (absorb or immerse) into consideration. Thereby, the scholars made clear that consumers and producers are equally important in the creation of experiences. Across the two dimensions, the influential scholars identified four experiential domains as broader categories of an experience: entertainment, education, esthetic and escapism. As the creation of experience was at the forefront, the identification of the four realms of experience was rooted in a marketing/managerial perspective. Antecedents in the form of accumulated experiences and consequences of the consumption of the experience were subordinate. However, the differentiation between *partaking and reminiscing experiences* was recognised and the scholars assumed that the experience itself is mostly a means to an end, yet with the potential leading to personal transformation in the long-term. Subsequently, experiences are only memorable if they have the ability to guide the desired transformation.

Although the concept of experience has a long history in tourism and academic literature on the subject dates back to the 1970s, the tourism industry was initially not acknowledged in the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999). However, several scholars adopted the concept of the *experience economy* in the tourism context and provided explanations, measurement tools and models that established a relationship between the tourism industry and the *experience economy* (Chang, 2018; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). The focus of most studies was to understand the underlying drivers to create and provide positive memorable experiences.

2.3.3.2 Understanding the creation of memorable experiences

Memorable experiences are, in most studies, explored from a marketing/managerial perspective and equated with consumer experiences (Selstad, 2007). From a social science perspective, tourist experiences are understood as opposite to daily life and regarded as peak experiences, putting tourists themselves and their views at the forefront. Quan and Wang (2004) pointed to the existing academic chasm which is reflected in the dominance of studies examining the touristic experience (peak experience) from a marketing/managerial perspective and the neglecting of a broader perspective that incorporates a social science approach and goes beyond the creation of touristic experience. These scholars argued that the supporting consumer experiences and the relationship to daily routine experiences as a form of contrast, intensification or extension need to be understood as an essential and decisive part of the tourist experience. By reconceptualising the tourist experience, Quan and Wang (2004) emphasised that the study of experience in the context of tourism needs to go beyond the actual on-site, measurable and countable experience created by the tourism industry.

In their discussion on the creation and management of memorable experiences Tung and Ritchie (2011) advised that memorable experiences go beyond on-site experiencing. They also pointed to the importance of the element of time when creating memorable experiences. Tung and Ritchie (2011) suggested affect, expectations, consequentiality and recollection as dimensions of memorable experiences and explained that these experiences encompass all trip elements (pre-trip expectations, on-site perceptions, post-trip memories). In addition to the temporal dynamic nature of experiencing, Ek et al. (2008) acknowledged the metaphysical dimension of space in their developed conceptual model termed *experience design-wheel*. Going beyond the understanding of experience as a form of entertainment or exploration, they included the question of design in their model and thereby equally acknowledged the demand-side and supply-side of tourism in the creation of experience (Figure 2.1).

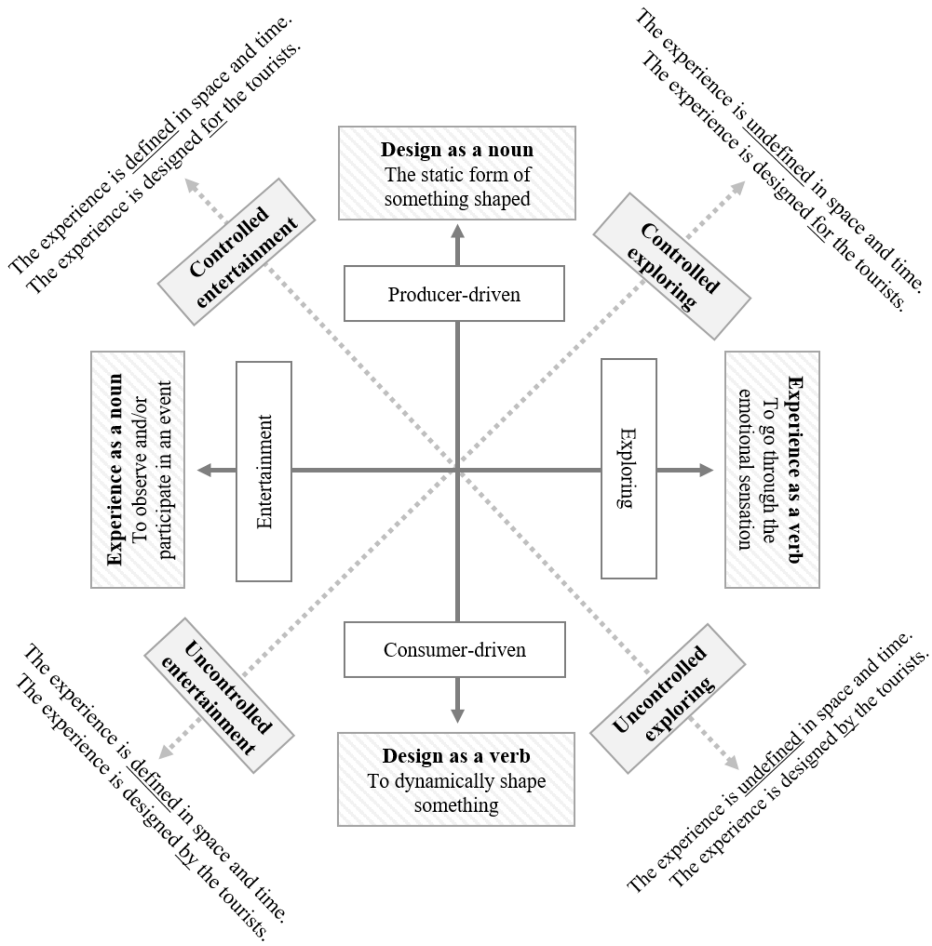


Figure 2.1: The experience design-wheel (Ek et al., 2008, p. 135).

Ek and colleagues (2008) made clear that places of tourism experience creation and consumption are relational in terms of space and time and are partly co-created by the consumers themselves. The authors further proposed that experiences that are lived through during the trip and at the tourist destination are most influential. Subsequently, the tourist destination gains centre stage in the creation and delivery of tourism experiences.

2.3.3.3 The tourist destination as experiencescape

In the digitised and increasingly dynamic daily life environment, consumers are constantly seeking spaces outside their everyday routines to consume experiences that support satisfying unmet needs. Volo (2009) suggested that individuals can accumulate experiences in any setting inside or outside the usual living environment, yet real tourism experiences can only be consumed in the non-usual environment outside the contracted time (e.g., work, house and family duties). Thus, real tourist experiences are space-bound as they encompass a "process of displacement […] into another place and a special time" (Ryan, 2002a, p. 206). The non-usual environments and spaces for the consumption of tourism experiences were coined as *experiencescapes* (Mossberg, 2007). A tourist destination of any scale and character can portray an *experiencescape* and thereby transforms into an experience in itself. Tourism suppliers within the destination network that represent the *experiencescape* have the potential to create and deliver tourism offerings and services that cannot be found in the everyday environment and thus satisfy the individual's unmet needs (Eisenstein, 2014).

It was previously mentioned that an experience takes place in the different stages of the travel journey and constitutes a cyclical model encompassing pre-trip anticipations and expectations, perceptions during the trip in form of on-site travel behaviour and activities, and post-trip recollections and memories. As the tourism destination's influential power mostly relies on the experience accumulated while at the destination, *experiencescapes* were mostly defined in geographical terms equating the tourism destination's physical space and the competitiveness was closely related to the delivery of those on-site experiences. However, this narrowed view limits the destination's long-term competitiveness as the interconnection between the different stages of experiencing is not adequately acknowledged. In addition, past academic and applied research frequently concentrated on the producer-driven creation and design of experience, yet the changes in consumer demand towards co-produced experiences call for more integrative experience creation to eliminate the object-subject gap. Several scholars critically remarked that it must be the tourist destination's aim to go beyond purely producer-driven experiences and instead acknowledge the subjectivity in experience consumption (Campos, Mendes, do Valle, & Scott, 2018; Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2014). It was further proposed that more flexibility and integration of dynamic experience networks are required to enhance the probability of creating and delivering experiences that provoke an emotional reaction leading to memorability (Ek et al., 2008; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Tourism providers within the destination network understand that the destination's overall success relies on the creation of experiences that remain memorable and in the consumers' minds. However, creating the stage and building the *experiencescape* for consumers is insufficient as the physical body of a tourist is needed to translate the experience into practice. Kruger and Saayman (2017) provided a similar conclusion stating that, "organizers cannot give the tourist an experience; they can only ensure that their destination, product, or event is conducive to a tourist experience" (p. 606). Experiencing in tourism is situational and influenced by the environment, processual in terms of space and time and the process itself impacted by the individual's prior knowledge and state of being. Ek et al. (2008) used the example of a marathon runner to describe experience in space and time:

> Experiences are not created in space; experiences are space, constantly reproduced and designed through performances and the bodily practices by the runner, the other runners, the material surroundings, spectators and other people that participate in some way in the event. (pp. 131–132)

The quote indicates that the spaces of experience consumption are relational and are shaped within the individual's mind while being influenced by the environment. This highlights the destination's potential to influence the consumption of experiences when delivering positive memorable experiences but at the same time clearly demonstrates that tourism suppliers within the destination network that shape the environment can only provide the inputs. It is the tourist who translates these inputs into the immediate and lived experiences which become available in the long-term memory of experiences when being recollected. In this regard, it is also important to note that long-term memorability of experiences is not limited to positive emotions but also encompasses negative experiences. However, the role of negative experiences and emotions has largely been neglected in tourism research that largely investigated experiences from a managerial perspective where the creation of positive memorable experiences was emphasised (Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken, 2017). To understand the tourist experience and tourists themselves, including expectations, perceptions and memories more comprehensively, a critical turn towards a more subjective and social science approach that examines experience from the angle of tourists is required.

2.3.4 Consuming experiences in tourism

With the change in perspective from a managerial/objective to a social science and more subjective approach, contemporary tourism research adopted a more consumer-centric perspective of experience. Bosangit et al. (2015) concluded that this changed view "acknowledges that consumers not only play an active, co-creative role in generating the experience, but are self-directed, self-expressive and firmly in the driving seat, with organisations playing a facilitating role” (p. 2). With the increasing sophistication of tourists and the associated changes in the tourism demand, tourists developed from passive consumers and spectators to active performers, co-creators and co-producers. Thus, tourists are promoted from receivers to *experiencers* (Mossberg, 2007; Uriely, 2005) and there is an increasing desire for multisensory experiences that are co-created by tourists themselves.

The shift from marketing/managerial perspectives to more subjective approaches constitutes a modification from a functional to a phenomenological point of view. From this phenomenological perspective tourist experiences are understood as deeply rooted psychological phenomena. As they are shaped by the subjects themselves, tourist experiences epitomise a form of self-expressive consumption that is beneficial for the individuals’ constructions of meaning and self-development (Bosangit et al., 2015; Moscardo, 2017). Chen, Prebensen, and Uysal (2014) defined tourist experiences as “an amalgam of cognitive and affective marks, caused by the bricolage of encounters occurring before, during and after the trip, reflecting in a passive or active state of mind” (p. 14). While referring to the individual and inner processes, the subjectivity, the conscious and subconscious filters, and the interconnected, sequential phases of experience consumption the authors addressed some of the central features of tourist experiences.

Tourists become active in the production of the experience and are understood as prosumers (simultaneously producers and consumers) who provide the mental place and physical body for the tourist experiences to be performed. Goytia Prat and de la Rica Aspiunza (2012) discussed this duality of producing and consuming an experience as a sequenced encoding allowing the tourist to obtain full access to the experience. These inner processes encourage the individual’s accumulation of experiences over time which eventually reinforces the transformation of the self and contributes to shape and to develop personal identity (Bosangit et al., 2015; Noy, 2004). One the one hand, it can be concluded that tourism suppliers in general and tourist destinations in particular provide the physical spaces and input to encourage and stimulate experience consumption and contribute to experience accumulation. On the other hand, experiencing is a mental process within the individual and is only to a limited extent controllable by tourism providers and destination marketers (D. E. Andersson & Andersson, 2013; Mossberg, 2007).

Although the dynamic interactions and relationship between the supply-side and demand-side of tourism have been acknowledged and studies from different perspectives were implemented, there is no consensus about the drivers behind experience accumulation. It remains unclear which elements of an experience are meaning-making and influential in the process of experience accumulation. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive the accumulation of experience is further impeded by the different spaces of experiencing as noted by Quan and Wang (2004). Several scholars addressed the *touristification* of the everyday life closely related to changes in the urban living environment and gentrification processes (Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017; Novy, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011). At the same time a *de-exoticing* of travelling was proposed, which further highlights the blurring of the non-usual and usual environments (Haldrup & Larsen, 2010; J. Larsen, 2008). These movements and changes also lead to a blurring of peak and supporting tourist experiences and the daily life experiences (Filep & Greenacre, 2007). This blurring challenges the identification of determinants that contribute to experience accumulation as enablers of tourist transformation that can be within or outside the physical spaces of tourism consumption.

2.3.4.1 Drivers of tourist experiences

With the aim to conceptualise tourist experiences, the drivers of tourist experiences have been examined in the past. Aho (2001) modelled the process of tourist experiences and proposed four essential typologies of the touristic experience: getting emotionally effected, getting informed, getting practiced, and getting transformed. In the model he acknowledged the interaction and sequence of different elements within the process of experiencing and emphasised the element of time (expectations, perceptions, reflection). He also referred to the process of accumulation which is shaped by the individual's personal memories and influenced by sources in the wider environment. Although Aho (2001) focussed on the stages of experiencing in relation to a trip, he provided insights into the scope of experiencing. By distinguishing between on the spot experiences (*Erlebnis*) and the process view of experience (*Erfahrung*), he drew attention to the different meanings of experiencing and demonstrated the interconnectedness between the two meanings of the term experience.

The different elements of an experience identified by Quan and Wang (2004) reflect on the spot experiences in different environments that can be either the usual, mundane everyday environment or the unusual, non-daily, unique environment. Through the established link between the daily life routine and the peak touristic experience the authors addressed the time element in experience consumption. When entering the *experiencescape* as an unique environment, tourists undergo the peak and supporting tourist experiences which are an extension and intensification of the daily life experiences (Prebensen et al., 2014). The tourist is enabled to truly experience and recall experiences in the long-term when the different elements of the experiences form an organic whole.

Personal resources, including mental and emotional memories, interactive drivers and external stimuli from the physical environment are equally influential in the process of experiencing in the moment and recollecting memories in the long-term (D. E. Andersson & Andersson, 2013; Chen et al., 2014). This emphasises the relationship between *partaking experiences* that are normally consumed during the trip and *reminiscing experiences*, which correspond to post-trip recollections and reconstructions. While *partaking experiences* are normally of shorter duration and encoded while being at the destination (on-site), *reminiscing experiences* are encoded over a longer period of time outside of the actual *experiencescape* where the experience was initially lived through. This reinforces the necessary understanding of experiencing as a form of self-expressive consumption deeply rooted in an individual's mind. Experiencing goes beyond the immediate experience which appears to be relatively similar for every individual partaking in the experience. Instead, experiencing encompasses a cognitive and mental process that is subjective to the individual's memory.

2.3.4.2 Reminiscing experiences and personal memories

Bearing in mind the sequential nature of experiencing and the realisation that prior experiences are interconnected with expectations towards future travel behaviour, it is vital to examine the mental memory processes of experiencing. The recollection and reminiscence of experiences corresponds to the accumulation process of experiences which is highly individual and draws on sensitive information stored in the subject's memory. Thus, personal long-term memories need to be addressed. However, to date the relevance of memory research in the context of tourism is undervalued and research is comparatively limited (H. Kim & Chen, 2018; P. L. Pearce & Packer, 2013).

Personal memories are complex filtering mechanisms encompassing implicit (unconscious) and explicit (conscious) memories. While implicit memories are difficult to access, consciously recollected and memorised facts and events are to some degree declarative and thus accessible. Explicit memories are either semantic and are comprised of general knowledge and facts or episodic memories. Episodic memories refer to past personal experiences that were impressionable enough to enter the individual's long-term memory (S. Larsen, 2007). Several scholars pointed to the importance of episodic memories in the travel decision-making process of individuals and discussed autobiographical elements of the episodic memories as predictors for future travel behaviour (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Diener, 2003).

It must be the tourism suppliers and destination marketers primary goal to create and deliver experiences that are memorable and ensure that the *experiencescape* is recallable over time (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Although practitioners and researchers recognise the importance of the topic, gaining full access to an individual's memory remains challenging and an exhaustive comprehension is believed impossible. Several scholars argued that subjective memories are only accessible by the individuals themselves, however the complexity of conscious and subconscious filters limit the access (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Memory processes require unconditional attention from the individuals themselves who engage in mental time travel which involves the cognitive readiness to be fully retrieved. It is argued that not even the individuals themselves are fully aware of their remembered and filtered experiences and the control, recollection and reconstruction of memories is limited (T. Andersson, 2007).

Wright (2010) argued that narratives enable individuals to organise personal lived experiences and transform them into meaningful memories, and Noy (2004) claimed that narratives are the closest approximation to access and recollect the lived experiences. However, the trustworthiness and accuracy of recollected memories through narratives are challenged. As reported, memories are a reflection of prior (travel) experiences and are reconstructions that do not necessarily reflect actual experiences. It remains questionable whether and to what degree the reported stories are deliberately or unknowingly altered and distorted (P. L. Pearce & Packer, 2013). Despite the limited access to fully comprehend complex and highly subjective explicit memories, there is consensus that prior experiences and thus memories guide the process of experience accumulation and contribute to transformation of the self.

2.3.4.3 Experiences as a guide for transformation

Cognitive aspects of experiencing enable individuals to acquire knowledge and be educated while travelling. The relationship between travelling and learning has attracted several researchers in the past (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, & Benckendorff, 2012; Lück, 2003; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). From a marketing/ managerial perspective, education was identified as one of the four realms of experience creation (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Going beyond the immediate *partaking experiences* several authors proposed that tourism for leisure possesses the potential for cathartic experiences (Y. Li, 2000; Ryan, 1997). Jantzen (2013) also stated that experiencing is not limited to bodily phenomena but may also encompass mental sensations. It was argued that travelling is not merely being in a place, it comprises developmental qualities that encourage tourists to challenge their status quo. Individuals experiment with identities when travelling and transformational moments can evoke personal transformation that contribute to self-identity (Jantzen, 2013; Selstad, 2007). Consequently, tourism experiences can become personal milestones that are remembered in the long-term and become important in the individual's life.

Individuals aim to extend or escape their daily life routines when travelling and are consciously or subconsciously seeking these transformational moments. S. Cohen (2010) proposed travelling as a romanticised exercise of self-directed idealism and Ryan (1997) discussed escapism through traveling as chasing of dreams and hopes:

> The experience of holidays is thus so important in many ways. They may be periods of escape for people, and catalysts for change for both individuals and communities. Yet the process is partly based upon dreams and hopes about places and what they mean. (p. 4)

Thus, experiencing goes beyond the actual lived experience which indicates the interconnectedness between *partaking* and *reminiscing experiences* in the context of experience consumption in tourism. Travelling is not necessarily life changing, yet tourism experiences have the potential to evoke personal development, growth and self-realisation (Jantzen, 2013). H. Kim and Chen (2018) confirmed the significant influence of memorable travel experiences on self-identity and self-congruity. These encouraged transformations of the self through travelling is reflected in changes in the everyday life as well (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). Scholars examined the close relationship to others in the transformation of the self, investigated how tourists perceive their personal changes and studied whether changes are proactively pursued or occur unknowingly (Desforges, 2000; Jensen et al., 2015; Y. Li, 2000; Noy, 2004).

While it remains the tourism supplier's aim to exploit the potential to create positive memorable experiences that contribute to personal change and development of self-identity, the dependence on tourists themselves becomes evident. This mutual dependency underpins the interconnectedness between *partaking and reminiscing experiences* and the relationship between the supply-side and demand-side of tourism. The dependency is relevant and aggravating for the suppliers of experiences as tourists' desire to become an active part in the realisation of the experience and are increasingly aware of their own potential contributions. In addition, a shortened life cycle of extraordinary experiences was addressed and a demand-supply paradox recognised. As tourists continuously ask for new and unique experiences, tourism suppliers and destination marketers are driven to provide these desired extraordinary and memorable experiences (LaSalle & Britton, 2003). However, as the process of identity construction is everlasting and at the same time statistics prove that tourism demand continues to grow, travelling evokes dialectical tensions. Ryan (1997) provided a critical view on this paradox and explained the dialectical tension by referring to Willy Russel's heroine Shirley Valentine and the similarly named award-winning screenplay from the 1990s:

> But there are significant paradoxes inherent in tourism. […] tourism represents for some an escape from the realities of a current environment - a chase of dreams - but what 'Shirley Valentines' do is to substitute one experience for another. That which was once exciting and different becomes the new daily sameness. The success of 'Shirley Valentine' lies in the catharsis of personal change. For others perhaps the approaching end of the fortnight in the sun brings with it a relief that the familiar begins to beckon, for the dream has faded. (p. 24)

Ryan (1997) took up an issue that was thoroughly discussed by the Hungarian psychologist Csikszentmihalyi when identifying and coining the psychological concept of flow and optimal experiences. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) postulated that the engagement in optimal experiences is the primary goal of individuals as it encourages transformation that lead to happiness, satisfaction and enjoyment of life. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) addressed the challenge of change and the consequences upon optimal flow as demonstrated in the following quote:

> To remain in flow, one must increase the complexity of the activity by developing new skills and taking on new challenges. […]. This inner dynamic of the optimal experience is what drives the self to higher and higher levels of complexity. […]. Flow forces people to stretch themselves, to always take on another challenge, to improve on their abilities. (p. 30)

Scholars referred to the concept of flow in the discussion of meaningful and positive experiences. The achievement of optimal experiencing and remaining in flow requires the full and voluntary attention of the participants (Ryan, 2002b). Experiences can only be intrinsically rewarding and considered optimal when individuals are psychologically committed and a sense of personal control is achieved (Csikszentmihalyi & Coffey, 2017).

In order to provide, create and offer positive experiences that contribute to this desired flow, tourism suppliers and destination marketers strive to understand the particular level of experience and the individual's status quo within the chain of optimal experiencing. As discussed in the following sections, several measurement models were suggested to gain a more holistic understanding of the relationship between prior experiences and travel behaviour and motivation related to optimal experiencing.

2.3.4.4 Measuring prior experiences

Fully accessing the subjective memories remained a challenge that impeded the measurements of prior experiences. Consequently, scholars developed models based on countable and unambiguously remembered facts that are stored in the individual's autobiographical memories. The relationship between prior experiences, travel behaviour, motivation, decision-making and destination choice attracted several scholars who proposed models and theories that aimed at explaining the predictability of several travel-related aspects based on prior experiences (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Mazursky, 1989; P. L. Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005; Ryan, 1998).

By integrating prior experience in the already existing expectations-disconfirmation paradigm, Mazursky (1989) extended the model and drew attention to the importance of accumulated experience and knowledge on the decision-making process which was previously neglected. Although the author acknowledged the critical role of accumulated experience and knowledge, he did not provide an explanation of what accumulated actually means. One of the most cited and applied models aiming to predict travel behaviour and motivation based on prior experience is Pearce and colleagues travel career ladder (TCL), later refined as travel career pattern (TCP). Based on the variables age, quantity of domestic travel experiences (number of trips) and international travel experiences (number of trips) P. L. Pearce and Lee (2005) identified two groups distinguished by a low versus a high experience level and tested the motivation factors by these travel-experience-level groups. They provided the following summary of their findings:

> Within the identified 14 travel motivational factors, people with high-travel-experience levels gave more emphasis to motivations regarding self-development through host-site involvement and nature seeking. Low-travel-experience-level people stressed more on other motivation factors such as stimulation, personal development, self-actualization, security, nostalgia, romance, and recognition. (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005, p. 235)

In critically assessing the TCP, several scholars (see Table 2.4 for an overview) grounded their theories and measurement models on this influential model and provided altered or extended approaches. An overview of some of the most cited models that aimed to predict travel behaviour, motivation and decision-making based on prior experiences is provided in Table 2.4. Although different aims were defined and conceptual frameworks used, the methodological approaches and measurements were quite similar. Most models were based on results from surveys collected from a particular group of travellers prior to a particular trip to a destination, while at the destination or after having travelled to a particular destination or overseas in general.

Table 2.4: Overview of empirical research using prior travel experience to explain travel behaviour and motivation

Author	Aim	Methodology	Measurement criteria
Pearce and Lee (2005)	▪ Relate travel motivation patterns to travel experience ▪ Predict travel motivation based on levels of prior experience	▪ Interviews with 12 Australian subjects ▪ Self-administered survey, 1,012 respondents, collected in North Queensland, Western cultural background	▪ Age ▪ Domestic travel experience (number of trips) ▪ International travel experience (number of trips)
Ryan (1998)	▪ Examine the state of the art of the travel career ladder	▪ Survey, 997 respondents, UK holidaymaker	▪ Number of times a similar type of holiday has been taken ▪ Number of past visits to the destination
Filep and Greenacre (2007)	▪ Establish travel motives prior to a Spanish study-abroad experience ▪ Ascertain any differences in the motivation of the study group (qualitative interviews) with other youth travellers	▪ Qualitative essays with Australian university students, 10 female and 10 male students (18-35 years) ▪ Questionnaire with 200 male and female backpackers, Sydney youth hostels (18-35 years)	▪ Number of international trips undertaken ▪ Number of international destinations visited ▪ Total days of international travel ▪ Age
Y. J. E. Kim, Pearce, Morrison, and O'Leary (1996)	▪ Revealing the travel motivation of current and future Korean tourists towards overseas trips ▪ Determine whether tourists ascend the travel career ladder when they become older and more experienced ▪ Examining the influence of motivation on destination choice	▪ Survey, 1,200 respondents, Koreans (at least 18 years with at least one overnight trip in past years)	▪ Number of overseas trips ▪ Age

Author	Aim	Methodology	Measurement criteria
Lehto, Kim, and Morrison (2006)	▪ Exploring whether prior experience with a destination influences tourists' online information behaviour	▪ Survey, 2,470 North Americans (U.S. & Canada), CATI	▪ Pre-visitation particular destination
Lehto et al. (2004)	▪ Exploring the impacts of prior involvement (experiences expressed in numbers of trips) on repeat visitation, risk reduction, information search, expenditure patterns, activity involvement	▪ In-*Flight Survey of International Air Travellers* (U.S. tourism industry), 2,284 UK holiday travellers in the U.S., independent traveller	▪ Number of trips made to the U.S.
Gursoy and McCleary (2004)	▪ Exploring the impacts of prior product knowledge (degree of expertise and familiarity) on information search behaviour	▪ Survey, 482 residents State of Virginia (U.S.)	▪ Degree of familiarity (with a product category) measured on 7-point Likert-type scale ▪ Degree of expertise (with specific product-related experience) measured on 7-point Likert-type scale
Kerstetter and Cho (2004)	▪ Examining the relationship between prior knowledge, source reliability and information search behaviour ▪ Determining whether prior knowledge is multidimensional, influence on information search behaviour and effects on source credibility	▪ Self-administered mail questionnaires, 436 individuals who booked one of three resorts in Florida (U.S.)	▪ Degree of familiarity (with a product category) measured on 7-point Likert-type scale ▪ Degree of expertise (with specific product-related experience) measured on 7-point Likert-type scale ▪ Pre-visitation particular destination (resort)

Note. This overview is not all-encompassing but limited to selected examples that are frequently used in academic literature.

Several scholars referred to the term *prior knowledge* and used it as a synonym for prior experience measured by consumption experience (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004). By using the term *knowledge* in discussing prior experience, researchers referred to *reminiscing experience* (*Erfahrung*). However, the usage of unidimensional measures based on prior consumption to indicate levels of product knowledge was criticised as the complexity of knowledge generation through different sources was neglected in these approaches (Gursoy, 2003). In a conceptual paper, Sharifpour and Walters (2014) proposed that tourists' prior knowledge is a multidimensional construct consisting of subjective knowledge, objective knowledge and past travel experiences, and discussed other dimensions as possible influencing factors (e.g. personality traits, sociodemographic factors, situational factors) on risk perception and decision-making. The influence of personality traits on prior knowledge was also statistically tested by L. Huang, Gursoy, and Xu (2014) who proposed extraversion and neuroticism as antecedents of perceived risk and travel decision-making. Despite the shared understanding that prior knowledge is multidimensional most studies to date rely on simplified and unidimensional measures.

Existing studies show that tourism academics acknowledge the critical importance of prior knowledge and experience when aiming to understand travel behaviour, motivation and decision-making. Over the past three decades, several models were suggested and different definitions and measurements were proposed and adopted to explore impacts on several aspects of travelling. Despite different approaches and outcomes the models and theories share the following three points: (1) prior experiences are presumed to be influential in travel decision-making, behaviour and motivation, (2) prior experiences are treated as antecedents, and (3) measures to distinguish tourists with high levels of experience and low levels of experiences were mostly unidimensional and relied on predefined, countable variables.

2.4 Conceptual framework of experience in the tourism context

The comprehensive and critical review of the literature demonstrates the multifacetedness and interconnectedness of the concepts being studied. The interlinked topics that present the body of knowledge consulted for this study are summarised in the following conceptual framework of experience in the tourism context (Figure 2.2).

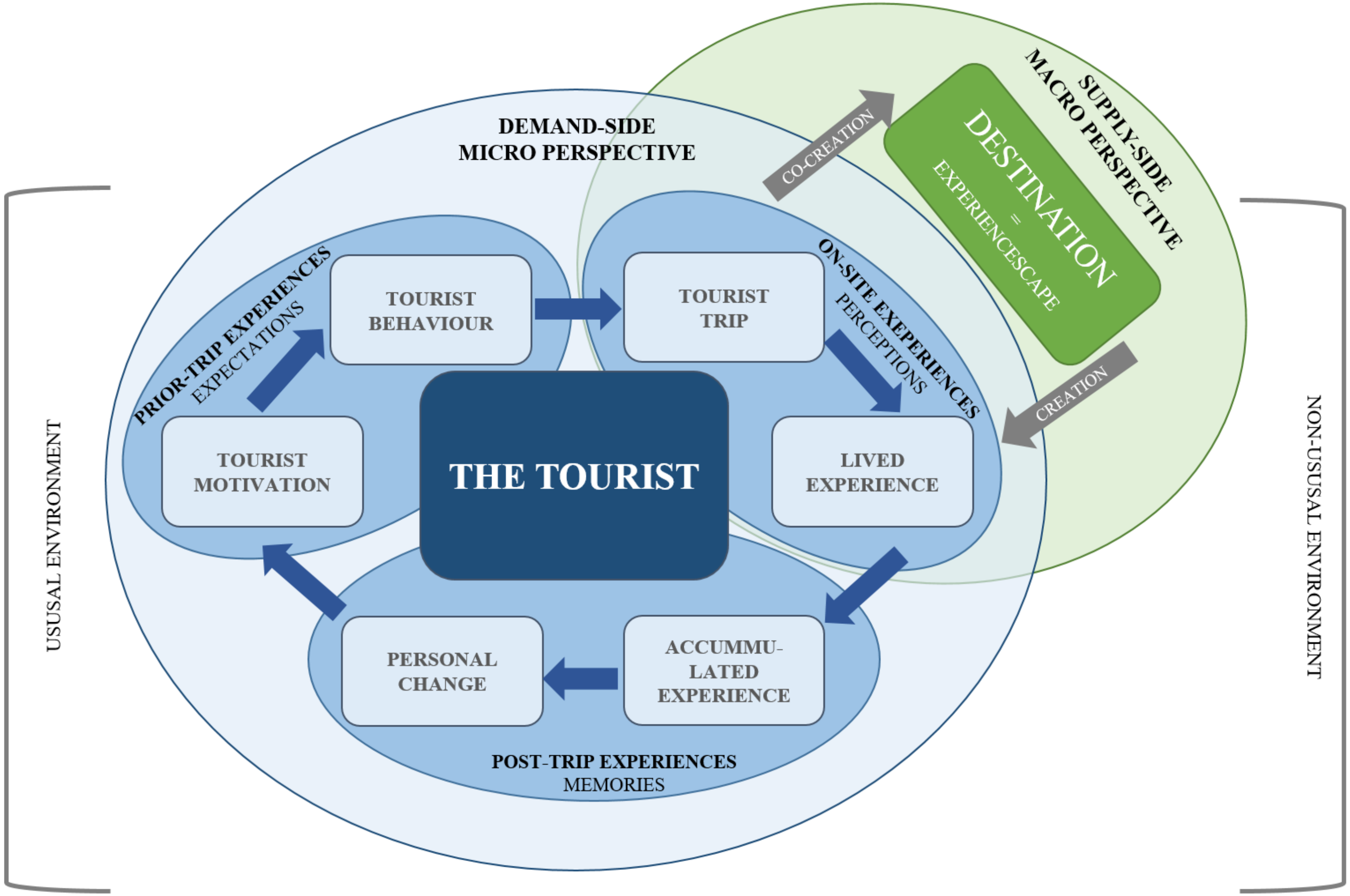


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework of experience in the tourism context

The centrality of experience creation and consumption in tourism became evident and the review demonstrated that the concept of experience has been investigated from different perspectives. A close relationship between *partaking experience* as a form of immediate consumption (*Erlebnis*) and *reminiscing experience* as a recollection of experiences over a lifetime (*Erfahrung*) was proposed. However, emphasis was given to a managerial approach that explored the creation of positive memorable experiences and thus *partaking experiences*. Studies concentrated on a specific point in time, aimed to investigate the impacts of tourism in general and experience creation in particular on the destination, the suppliers within the complex destination network and the hosts.

With the quest for a more humanistic perspective and the recognition that tourists are central and essential in the production and realisation of the tourism experience, the importance of demand-side oriented research, particularly from a psychological and/or sociological perspective, increased but remains unsatisfactory in full detail. Although scholars agreed that tourism contributes to personal change and transformation, the actual impact of tourism experiences on tourists themselves remains undervalued in research to date. At the same time, prior experiences were identified as central antecedent in understanding travel behaviour, motivation and decision-making in tourism. Subsequently, models were implemented to predict travel decision-making, behaviour and motivation based on the individual's prior experience and knowledge. Scholars defined several variables to measure prior travel experiences and distinguished experienced tourists from less experienced tourists. However, most measurements were based on a few predefined, unidimensional and mostly countable variables and what accumulated actually means remains open. In addition, by surveying tourists (demand-side) in different stages of the travel journey (prior to the trip, during the trip, post-trip) and referring to a particular trip or destination, past research failed to incorporate the perspective of destination marketers or other tourism operators to shed light onto the supply-side perspective regarding the accumulation process of experience.

Lastly, the comprehensive and critical review revealed that past research distinguished usual and non-usual environments in discussing the consumption of experiences. Scholars proposed that real experiences can only be consumed in the non-usual environment and thus when being at the destination. However, past research neglected that pre-trip experiences and expectations in the form of tourist motivation and travel behaviour, as well as post-trip recollections and memories that are lived through in the usual, home environment. Thus, the overall experience is not only temporally staged but also lived through in different environments. Most tourism studies that investigated the relationship between prior experiences and travel behaviour were conducted with tourists while being at the destination or in transit and thus in the non-usual environment (Table 2.4). However, when aiming to understand stages of the travel experience that are lived through and accumulated in the individual's usual environment, the research benefits from changing the environment for data collection as well. Past research failed to conduct studies that aimed for a more general understanding detached from a particular tourist destination and trip experience in the individual's normal living environment.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive and critical review of the literature related to the concept of experience in the tourism context. The concept-centric review demonstrated the centrality of prior travel experience in explaining and predicting travel behaviour, travel motivation and destination choice. However, the review also reveals substantial gaps in understanding what prior experience, the accumulation of experience and being an experienced tourist means. Without a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the process of experience accumulation the presumed relationship between accumulated experiences and travel behaviour lacks evidence. This study sought to minimise this research gap by empirically examining the drivers behind experience accumulation and eventually identifying an *experienced tourist*. By giving voices to destination marketers as representatives of the supply-side of tourism and tourists as representatives of the demand-side of tourism, this study expands not only existing conceptual knowledge but methodologically contributes to tourism academia. The methodological approach to the research questions is introduced in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The concept of truth is an elusive one.
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 14)

3.1 Introduction

Every research is underpinned by the researcher's basic set of beliefs and worldviews defined as paradigm (Kuhn, 1970). Paradigm choice and definition of the research design are bound to the questions of ontology (being), epistemology (knowing), axiology (values) and methodology (doing) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Killion & Fisher, 2018). The paradigm choice for this research project is presented in section 3.2 and the ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings are introduced separately. An overview of the philosophical perspective of this study is provided in Figure 3.2. The research was conducted in two case studies, Germany and New Zealand and the case-based approach is introduced in section 3.3.

3.2 Post-positivist paradigm

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described paradigms as "a distillation of what we think about the world (but cannot prove)" (p. 15) and later amended their definition claiming that paradigms "serve as touchstones in guiding our activities" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 80). Major distinctions are drawn between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Punch (2014) summarised qualitative research methods as "a complex, changing and contested field – a site of multiple methodologies and research practices. 'Qualitative research' therefore is not a single entity, but an umbrella term that encompasses enormous variety" (p. 117). Interpretivists and constructivists in naturalistic inquiry are categorised as relativists as they assume that multiple realities exist. Epistemological knowledge can only be generated subjectively through direct interaction and investigation. Subsequently, qualitative research is subjective, multidimensional and pluralistic.

Researchers in quantitative inquiry are detached from the researched, value free and replaceable. The relationship between the researcher (object) and the researched (subject) is dualistic and independent (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Thus, quantitative research is paradigmatically considered as unidimensional, objective and positivistic. Positivists believe that there is one ultimate truth which exists independent of the research and pursue a (naïve) realist ontology. Interconnectedness between the objective and subjective philosophical perspectives were heavily debated in paradigm wars. Purists denied any form of interconnectedness and initiated the incompatibility thesis arguing that any form of linkages between quantitative and qualitative research is antagonistic (Bergman, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Post-positivist, by contrast, adopt a dialectic perspective and consider the integration of different viewpoints as beneficial and fruitful to answer complex questions that require one to go beyond an either confirmative or interpretive approach from a purist perspective.

Several scholars identified post-positivism as an offspring of positivism that emerged as a critique, progress and response to the limitations of positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) remarked that post-positivism is not a replacement of positivism, but an extension. Subsequently, the influential scholars summarised the philosophical positioning as a "standing on the shoulder of the giants" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 29). A close connection and similarities of the two paradigms were proposed and post-positivism declared as a spin-off and reaction to positivism (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A similar interpretation was provided by Giddings and Grant (2007) who concluded that post-positivism was not a counter paradigm, but instead a marginal deviation from a purist's interpretation of positivism, yet still located within a positivist's paradigm.

However, the key premises and beliefs of post-positivists in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology unfold as a clear distinction to a pure positivistic approach. Although attempting to be as neutral as possible, post-positivists move from a narrow purist perspective towards naturalistic worldviews. Subsequently, post-positivist paradigms consider qualitative and quantitative approaches as equally valid and allow the research to be more all-encompassing and flexible in terms of methodology and method choices. The complexity of the research objectives and aims in this study required a more inclusive approach and therefore a post-positivism paradigm was adopted.

3.2.1 Critical realist ontology

The metaphysics and philosophical underpinnings of the nature of being and the constitution of reality are revealed through ontology. The researcher's ontological assumption can best be determined by asking "What is the nature of reality?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 83). Broadly speaking, realism and relativism are distinguished as the two dominant worldviews. In between those strongly contrasting worldviews are perceptions of reality that are informed by both perspectives.

Relativists in a naturalistic inquiry proceed on the assumption that realities are multiple, subjective, ungoverned by natural laws, contextual to knowledge and relative to time and space (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002). The different realities are individually and socially constructed, intangible and constantly changing. As constructions of reality are deeply rooted in the person creating them, they only exist inside the individual's consciousness. Fay (1996) challenged pure relativism by arguing that it results in separatism which in turn implies that reality remains dubious as individuals are trapped in "isolated groups […] inside separate spheres" (pp. 81-82). Nearing realists' assumptions, post-positivists believe that there is an ultimate truth *out there* that exists prior to consciousness. In contrast to positivists' assumptions of a single, solid, perfectly approachable truth, post-positivists hold that objective reality can never be fully known and can only be probabilistically apprehended (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Due to the complexities and dynamics of social phenomena as well as a researcher's subjective definition of truth and inability to uncover an objective reality, knowledge remains propositional and content dependent (Crotty, 1998). This means that theory is fallible, revisable and objectively true until proven false. Although post-positivists assume the existence of a single objective truth, the dynamic nature and elusiveness of reality challenges the depiction of the ultimate truth associated with positivists' paradigms. Rooted in a post-positivist paradigm, critical realists question the immediate access to this ultimate reality in the real world (Easton, 2010; Maxwell, 2012). They assume that reality can only be imperfectly approximated and as this single reality exists independently of the researcher's awareness, there are multiple perceptions of it.

Coined by Bhaskar (1975), critical realism is interpreted as a middle way that bridges the previously separated worldviews by combining transcendental realism and critical naturalism. Critical realists address the flaws associated with natural and social science regimes, while neither rejecting statistical modelling nor interpretivism. Researchers that adopt a critical realist ontology are interested in finding deeper levels and sources of explanations and understanding of reality through the discovery of causal mechanisms. Critical realists assume that the world out there is performative and people "behave as if it was true, as if the world was real" (Easton, 2010, p. 119).

This study aimed to gain deeper understanding of the underlying constructs of being an experienced tourist. Adopting a critical realist ontology encouraged the researcher to investigate the subjective and steadily changing truth of the complex and often unconscious processes of experience accumulation. Thereby the researcher understands that the research outcome is a moment in time perspective and reality remains propositional due to the continuous accumulation of experience and the changing degree of being experienced. Knowledge is produced by humans and occurs in transitive dimensions that are relative to space and time. The nature of knowledge and the epistemological standpoint are addressed in the next section.

3.2.2 Modified dualist epistemology

While occasionally merged together and mixed up in the literature, epistemology is subordinate to ontology (Pernecky, 2007). Epistemology deals with the question of the nature of knowledge, the relationship between the inquirer and what can be known through a priori and posteriori means and the meaning of this knowledge (Creswell, 2013). Epistemological standpoints are strongly related to the researcher's ontological positioning and range on a continuum between objectivity and subjectivity.

Although objectivity is valued within post-positivist research, a positivist's assumption of total neutrality is negated. In a post-positivist paradigm and critical realist ontology the absolute distance between the researcher and the research subjects is contemplated as impossible. Instead, the tentativeness of prior knowledge is recognised, the role of the inquirer acknowledged, the socially constructed stratified nature of reality accepted and total independence rejected (Bhaskar, 1975). It is further argued that the world is not constructed but construed until reality is fully exposed (Easton, 2010). As the researcher's perceptions are not entirely detached from the inquiry, a complex dialectical relationship between knowledge as a transitive dimension and objects as intransitive dimensions is established (Peters, Pressey, Vanharanta, & Johnston, 2013). Interaction with research subjects is minimised to safeguard objectivity and to limit the possible influence of preexisting knowledge, underlying values and critiques.

From an objectivist perspective, meaning is inherited within the researched subject. However, as objective reality is emergent and can only be imperfectly apprehended through subjective interpretations, findings are probable truth and subject to falsification and revision (Crotty, 1998; Racher & Robinson, 2003). Critical realists believe in the causal power of relationships, regard objectivity as an ideal and hold the axiological assumption of value-laden and theory-laden inquiry (Peters et al., 2013; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Axiology refers to the roles of value and moral position that underpins the research. Although critical realists acknowledge that there are different worldviews and cultural upbringings that lead to value-laden research, possible biases or errors are sought to be minimised by being as objective as possible.

Generally, critical realists approach and aim for objectivity. At the same time, subjective thinking and inductive reasoning are encouraged, and the influence of social constructions acknowledged in reality as an approximation (Giddings & Grant, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Consequently, the two epistemologies are not regarded incommensurable from a critical realist's perspective. The major difference between critical realists and social constructionists concerns the question of approaching reality. While critical realists accept the possibility of knowing a single ultimate reality, this assumption is rejected by social constructionists. Through modification of absolute objectivism, critical realists are epistemologically identified as modified dualists/objectivists.

3.2.3 Mixed methods methodology

The process and overall strategy of research are defined as methodology and considered a "thinking tool" (Giddings & Grant, 2007, p. 56) of inquiry that establishes appropriate links between a research problem and particular research methods. In a process-oriented research approach, the methodological choice is dependent on the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of the researcher. Generally, naturalistic paradigms are methodologically inductive approaches (interpreting meanings), whereas the theoretical drive in quantitative research methods is hypothetical-deductive (confirm and discover cause) (Morse, 2003; Patton, 2002).

Post-positivism has mostly been associated with positivism and research methods were predominantly quantitative and deductive. Even though positivists' assumptions of realism, objectivity and value freedom are not entirely rejected, post-positivists appraise nominalism, subjectivism and value-ladenness. From a post-positivist perspective, there is no perfect scientific method. By contrast, the adoption of different sources and research tools and the acceptance of critical multiplism enables one to apprehend reality and reduce the likelihood of distorted, subjectivised interpretations (Crotty, 1998). A critical realist ontology and modified dualist epistemology allow post-positivist researchers to expand the data collection instruments, utilise inductive and deductive tools, and apply qualitative and quantitative research methods. Subsequently, mixed methods research is legitimised and was adopted in this study.

Mixed methods research is viewed as the "third methodological movement" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, p. 5) or "third research paradigm" (R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15) that was developed to philosophically move away from monomethod research approaches. Although there is no generally accepted definition of mixed methods as a methodology, contributors brought forward that deeper and richer understanding can be achieved when applying mixed methods either through the combination of different theoretical perspectives, multiple methods and worldviews or both (Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). R. B. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) provided the following definition of mixed methods research:

> Mixed methods research also is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions […]. It is an expansive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research. It is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection […]. (p. 17)

Several scholars put into question whether a mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods is methodologically reasonable as research methods are rooted in different paradigms and were considered incommensurable (Bergman, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). As a purist Guba (1987) provided a critical perspective and precluded any form of mixing arguing that believing in mixed methods generates the illusion that the world is a flat one. The debate around mixing methods created paradigm wars between qualitative and quantitative scholars that resulted in the incompatibility theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Proponents challenged the purists' criticisms of incompatibility arguing that there is no one single best paradigm. Instead, increasingly complex and diverse phenomena of modern society require investigation through different perspectives in a dialectical stance as all views are partially valuable (Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Iaquinto, 2018).

When adopting a mixed methods approach, the strengths of each method are capitalised on and weaknesses of a single approach study are compensated. A more complete and comprehensive picture can be provided and more complex research questions addressed that cannot be answered by a single method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Punch, 2014). In this regard, R. B. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) challenged the purists' advocated sanctity of predefined linkages and argued that these are neither necessary nor beneficial for advances in research. The authors further explained that methodological pluralism is the only way to conduct *good science* as it supports advancements of the increasingly interdisciplinary and multifaceted scientific landscape.

Due to the complexity and interdisciplinarity of the tourism phenomena and the role of individuals within tourism research, mixed methods grew in significance as a research methodology in tourism (Killion & Fisher, 2018; McIntosh, 1998). This research project examined the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective and encompassed research questions that required both qualitative and quantitative inquiry. A mixed methods methodology proved to be the best fit for this research project. Several scholars developed types of mixed methods design (Creswell, Plano Clark, & Garrett, 2008; Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). To date, there exists no single set of typologies that clearly determines the level of interaction and procedure in mixed methods. Despite the indecision in identifying a single best typology of mixed methods designs, scholars commonly agree that particular analytical decisions must be made prior to data collection.

In mixed methods research, a strand is a coherent research element that comprises the fundamental processes of any research, namely the purpose/question, data collection, data analysis and inferences. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) identified four key decisions that need to be considered when implementing a mixed methods research design: "(1) the level of interaction between the strands, (2) the relative priority of the strands, (3) the timing of the strands, and (4) the procedures for mixing the strands" (p. 64). In this research project, the interaction between the two research phases was dependent, the timing sequential and the purpose developmental and complementary. As common in exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the qualitative phase was implemented first, followed by a quantitative research strand (Denscombe, 2017). The findings from the qualitative interviews were utilised for the development of the online questionnaire implemented in the second research phase. This level of interaction between research strands and procedure demonstrates the dependent and developmental nature of the mixed methods approach. The individual data collection instruments and research strands, namely the semi-structured expert interviews and online population survey, are thoroughly introduced in Chapter 4.

Although relative priority in the development of the integrated model as the major outcome of this study was given to the second quantitative research phase, the qualitative first phase goes beyond a purely informative and supportive phase. In this regard, Denscombe (2017) summarised that "[t]he key to good mixed methods research is to link these components in a way that is beneficial for the research and what it is trying to achieve" (p. 166). This study aimed to shed light on a complex research problem requiring rich and thick data to fulfil the research's overall aims. The link between the two research phases was extended beyond a solely supportive role of the qualitative findings. In addition to the centrality of the first research phase in developing the online questionnaire implemented in the second research phase, results from the qualitative first research phase complemented and corroborated the quantitative data analysis. Conclusively, the purpose of the link was both developmental and complementary. A visual summary of the exploratory sequential mixed methods research design is provided in Figure 3.1.

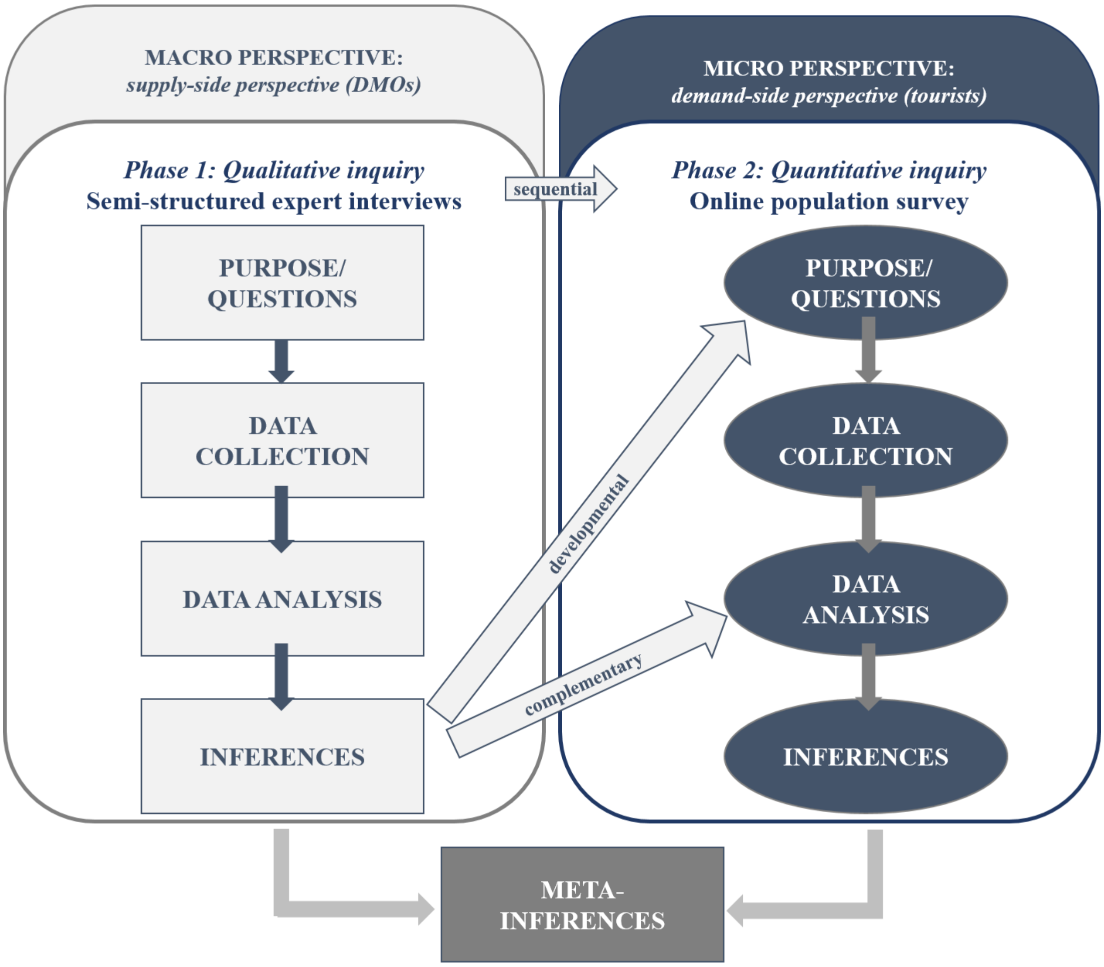


Figure 3.1: Exploratory sequential mixed methods research design of this study

This twofold purpose and relatively equal status of both research phases is supported by the macro-micro perspective of this study which called for a more balanced approach. Giving both research phases equal status requires the researcher to accept commensurability and was identified as the purest and strongest form of mixed methods research (R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

Following the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, interaction between the two phases was initiated in different stages of the research. The inferences from the first research phase were the basis for the development of the online questionnaire implemented in the second research phase. Hence, interaction between the two strands was decisive for the overall research design. In discussing the benefits of a mixed methods approach, Denscombe (2017) remarked that a sequential process regarding the data collection techniques results in “moving the analysis forward” (p. 163). The exploratory sequential design required the data analysis to be independent. Therefore, no combining of the qualitative and quantitative findings took place at this stage of the research and the findings are presented separately. In the discussion and interpretation of the findings, however, both research phases were equally acknowledged and meta-inferences were derived based on an integration of results from both strands. Research Aim 2 was the development of a model that synthesises the dimensions of an experienced tourist. Although the model is directly linked to findings from the quantitative research, the developmental, sequential design means that the quantitative findings were influenced by and dependent on the qualitative results.

3.2.4 Overview of the philosophical perspective of this study

The dependence of the methodological choice on the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the researcher were addressed in the previous sections. A summary of the philosophical perspective and strategies of inquiry adopted in this study is provided in Figure 3.2. This figure indicates the process-oriented nature of the research approach and the required narrowing down from the paradigm choice as the most fundamental decision to indicate the researcher’s worldview and belief set to the applied research methods that represent the tools and techniques to collect and analyse data required to provide answers to the defined research questions. The figure demonstrates the relationship between the philosophical perspective and the strategies of inquiry encompassing the methodological approach discussed in this chapter and the data collection methods that are more thoroughly introduced in Chapter 4.

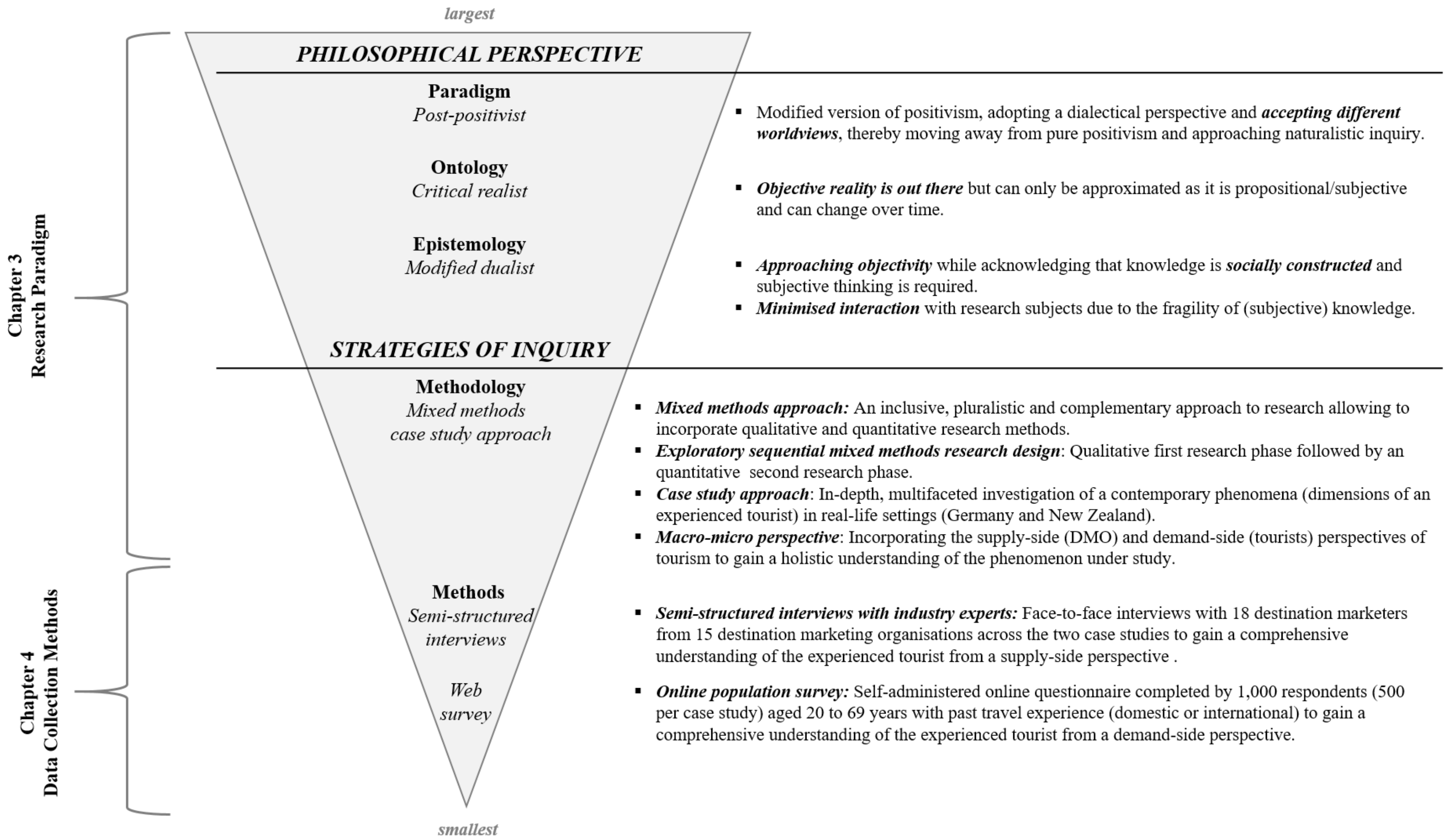


Figure 3.2: Philosophical perspective, research paradigm and strategies of inquiry for this study on the experienced tourist

Closely related to the research's overall aim of a broader perspective and cross-national approach, the strategies of inquiry of this study went beyond an exploratory sequential mixed methods design and incorporated a case study approach. A single case study would have limited the analytical generalisability of research findings and would have reduced the transferability of the model to broader settings. To encourage linkages and comparisons while gaining deep and rich understandings of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro and international perspective, two cases were considered.

3.3 A case-based approach

Case studies address contemporary phenomena in real life settings where the linkages between complex phenomena themselves and the context in which they occur are not clearly defined (Yin, 2014). They are most suitable when asking *how* and *why* questions following inductive logics. Case studies are widely applied when a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena is favoured over confirmatory, simple explanations. Denscombe (2017) emphasised that a case needs to be a "self-contained entity" with "distinctive boundaries" (p. 56) as no isolated examination of the case would otherwise be feasible. These self-contained entities are natural settings embedded in social and historical context that exist prior to any research. They can be of any scale and size and comprise demographic and geographic dimensions, such as communities, countries, events, organisations, policies, and processes (Denscombe, 2017).

Although case study approaches are linked to qualitative research methods, researchers adopting a case study approach are invited to source information from a combination of qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. The use of mixed methods in case study approaches enables one to derive data of different nature and thus endorses the overall aim of a deeper understanding (Denscombe, 2017; Yin, 2014). Considering multiple cases instead of a single case further supports the robustness of the findings and results in analytic benefits (Yin, 2014). In addition, multiple cases facilitate comparisons and the disclosure of differences and similarities. To gain a holistic view of the overall phenomena, support generalisation and transferability of research findings and overcome issues of vulnerability of single case studies, two nations were examined. The feasibility of generalising findings from case studies is debated in the literature with the consensus being that case studies contribute to theory development and analytical generalisation rather than statistical generalisation. This was summarised as follows:

> […] case studies tend to be seen as a starting point for research, serving as a descriptive or exploratory foundation that helps with the development of theory, and it is in this analytic respect that the findings from case studies can be generalized. (Denscombe, 2017, p. 64)

It is further argued that researchers that adopt a case-based approach accept that generalisation to broader settings and the wider population is limited. Instead, they seek to understand particular selected cases holistically and promote transferability of the results in other, similar settings (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995).

Case selection is decisive in any case-based research approach. As the research followed a mixed methods approach and incorporated a qualitative first research strand and a quantitative second research strand, data were collected from two groups of individuals, industry representatives and tourists. Individuals within these two groups were the objects of data collection and built the units of analysis. The mixed methods case-based approach resulted in rich nation-specific and unit-specific findings that reinforced the discovery-led purpose of this research project. It also enabled comparisons on different levels, which in turn supported the derivation of meta-inferences and development of the integrated model.

3.3.1 Choice of case studies

In tourism research, case studies are mostly defined by geographical boundaries that can be drawn within and across countries (Mason, 2014; Veal, 2011). Nations that act as both a generator of tourism departures and a host country for tourism arrivals represent the type of case in this study. Based on several selection criteria that depicted similarities and differences, New Zealand and Germany were deliberately chosen.

With continuous growth in domestic and international tourist arrivals in the past years (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a; Stats NZ, 2018a), the tourism industry plays a vital role in Germany's and New Zealand's economies. Germany has a long tourism tradition and is generating, as well as hosting, growing numbers of tourists every year. New Zealand welcomed its first international tourists in the mid-19th century and looks back on more than 100 years of tourism (Seeler, 2017). Due to the geographic isolation in the South Pacific and relatively small population size, New Zealand neither generates nor hosts as many tourists as Germany, but showed greater growth rates in the past years. In 2016, Germany reported 172 million guest arrivals that generated 447 million guest nights. Compared with 2015 this corresponds to a positive change of 2.9% in the case of arrivals and 2.5% related to overnight stays (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a). In the same period, New Zealand welcomed 19.4 million guests that spent in total 38.5 million guest nights in the country. This represents a positive change of 7.9% in terms of guest arrivals and 6.2% regarding guest nights compared with the previous year (Stats NZ, 2018a). While the majority of guest nights in Germany was generated by domestic visitors and only every fifth night was spent by an international tourist (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a), the distribution between domestic (57.3%) and international (42.7%) guest nights in New Zealand was more balanced (Stats NZ, 2018a).

The total contribution of travel and tourism to Germany's total gross domestic product (GDP) was relatively stable over the past years. In 2016, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP reached United States dollar (USD) 376.7 billion and Germany was ranked third worldwide (WTTC, 2017b). Although the relative contribution to the national's GDP was comparatively low (10.8%), the tourism sector's importance becomes evident when looking at the generation of jobs. With more than 6 million jobs, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment reached 14.0% in 2016 (WTTC, 2017b). Compared to Germany, New Zealand's national economy is smaller. Nevertheless, the role of the tourism industry for New Zealand's economic and social wellbeing is of utmost importance. With a relative contribution of 17.5% to the national's GDP (WTTC, 2017c) the tourism industry has become one of New Zealand's key industries and largest export earners save for the dairy industry. Almost every fourth job was directly or indirectly supported by the industry, adding up to a total contribution of 583,500 jobs in the sector (WTTC, 2017c).

With the aim to investigate the dimensions of an experienced tourist, it was a condition that individuals within the selected case studies be likely to have prior travel experiences. The Germans have an extensive history of travel and have long been considered the world champions of travelling. On an international scale, Germany is one of the most stable and important source markets in terms of both international tourism expenditures and international departures (UNWTO, 2017). Despite the fact that German tourists are of great significance for international travel, were identified as well travelled and increasingly experienced (Sonntag, 2006), a comprehensive understanding of an experienced German tourist is missing. Several travel journalists provided insights in their observations of German travellers and commonly agreed that Germans exhibit pioneering travel behaviour as summarised by the travel writer Nigel Richardson:

> Whenever you think you've reached somewhere few people have been, and are feeling smug about it, a campervan will appear and eight Germans will spill out, looking as if they've been to a million such places. (Telegraph Travel, 2017, February 28)

Against this background, the importance of German tourists for international tourism goes beyond the actual measurable contribution. The pioneering role of German tourists is decisive for future tourism growth and development. Subsequently, a more holistic understanding of the German experienced tourist is not limited to managerial contributions, but is also of significant theoretical significance for tourism research.

Based on the relatively small population size of New Zealand compared to Germany, the international travel frequency of New Zealanders is smaller. However, the growth rates of outbound travel by New Zealanders steadily increased in the past years (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). New Zealand's growth as an international tourist destination and its destination properties were addressed extensively in past research, yet, little is known about New Zealand tourists themselves. The geographic isolation in the South Pacific requires New Zealand international tourists to travel long distance. Although Oceania, and Australia in particular, remained the most visited international tourist region for New Zealand holiday makers, more than a third of all New Zealand residents that travelled internationally were involved in long distance travel going beyond Oceania in 2016 (Statistics New Zealand, 2017).

With the fastest growing population among OECD countries (Fyers & Flahive, 2017, October 10), a growing net migration (Stats NZ, 2017a) and multicultural population, international departures from New Zealanders are expected to grow. This is supported by Poot (2015) who summarised that "[g]rowing international migration triggers cross-border travel and vice versa" and further emphasised the equally high growth of outbound and inbound visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travel generated by migrants. The revaluation of the New Zealand dollar (NZD) and the related improving economic wealth and purchasing power were also reported to be significant for the growth of outbound travel (Tourism Industry Association New Zealand & Lincoln University, 2015). The involvement in long distance travel and exposure to different countries were linked to higher levels of prior experience. Based on these criteria, selecting New Zealand as a case study for the investigation of an experienced tourist was deemed contributory for the research aim.

Going beyond facts that are directly related to travelling, several sociodemographic and macroeconomic aspects were taken into consideration and were decisive in the choice of case studies for this research project. The case selection supports a global perspective as Germany and New Zealand are located on different continents and reflect the Northern (Germany) and Southern (New Zealand) hemispheres. Although critically debated across disciplines, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are still frequently used to discuss cultural differences or similarities between nations. Similarities between the two case studies were found regarding Hofstede's cultural dimensions *masculinity* and *individualism*, yet major differences appeared relating to *long-term orientation* and *indulgence* (Hofstede, n.d.). Past research suggests age as an influential factor in measuring prior experience and a link between higher age groups and quantity of travel was established (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). Both countries are facing an ageing population (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA/PD), 2015), which was regarded beneficial to investigate the dimensions of an experienced tourist.

The differences in geographical location and cultural background are accompanied by different national languages. The linguistic ambiguities in defining the term *experience* and the utilisation of the German terms *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* in the English context were comprehensively described in Chapter 2. Conducting the study in a German and English speaking country enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomenon in two linguistic areas that revealed differences regarding the lexical meaning. The semantic ambiguities were not regarded as a limitation but opportunity to expand on existing knowledge through the acknowledgement of different linguistic perspectives. This was beneficial to satisfy the research aims and maximise the theoretical contribution of this research project. An overview of measurable selection criteria that were taken into consideration for the case study choice is provided in Appendix B

In addition to preselection considerations related to the relevance of the particular case topic, practical considerations supported the final case selection. Germany is the researcher's home country. With her work experience in a Germany based tourism research institute, the researcher possessed extensive knowledge of the German tourism landscape in terms of both supply-side industry stakeholders and demand-side tourists. For her PhD the researcher relocated to Auckland, New Zealand which was beneficial for the data collection. All semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face between the researcher and the participants in their respective national languages. This was feasible as German is the researcher's mother tongue and English her second language. In addition, being in New Zealand allowed the interviews with New Zealand experts to be conducted at their respective premises. For the German interviews, the researcher travelled to her home country and conducted the interviews face-to-face and on-site in the participants' offices. Lastly, intrinsic motivation and interest supported the case selection. Having a German background, the researcher herself has observed and personally experienced the travel behaviour of Germans and has developed a great interest in understanding German tourists more holistically. Choosing New Zealand as a second case study further enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into the tourism landscape in her new country of residence.

The similarities between the two case studies regarding sociodemographic and cultural aspects, such as the aging population and an individualistic society, as well as the absolute and relative importance of tourism in and from the two countries was regarded advantageous in order to minimise possible measurement non-equivalence in cross-national studies. Differences between the two case studies, in particular the linguistic ambiguities related to the term *being experienced/erfahren sein*, were assumed fruitful for a cross-national comparison and in-depth analysis. The cross-national comparison contributed to the development of an integrated and transferable model that displays the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective.

3.3.2 Cross-national comparison

Comparisons are identified as a possible purpose of discovery-led approaches using multiple cases (Denscombe, 2017). The terms multiple case study and comparative case study have been used interchangeably in the past (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The implementation of the mixed methods research design in two countries enabled a comparison between the two case study nations. Comparative research allows the research to highlight particularities and identify, understand as well as explain differences and similarities among and between a priori known societies, cultures and nations (Hantrais, 2007). A greater awareness and deeper understanding is provided through cross-national inquiry and generalisation of research findings is made possible regarding the cases under scrutiny. De Vaus (2008) summarised this as follows:

> […] the contribution of comparative cross-national research is to identify the extent to which social phenomena are shaped by universal system factors and the extent to which they are shaped by unique factors intrinsic to the specific time, place and culture in which they occur. (p. 251)

Despite its historical significance, the feasibility and usefulness of comparison in social sciences were interpreted differently (Azarian, 2011; Mills, van de Bunt, & de Bruijn, 2006). In early research on comparative political research, Sartori (1991) promoted comparative methods stating that "he who knows only one country knows none" (p. 245). The importance of comparative research was further highlighted by other researchers who noted that comparative research is "incontestable" (Jowell, 1998, p. 168) and "inescapable" (Mills et al., 2006, p. 619) for social scientists. Accordingly, social science researchers have a long pedigree in historical and spatial cross-national comparative research.

Two approaches to comparative research are distinguished, namely the case-based and the variable (or survey) based approach (Ragin, 2000). A case-based approach is frequently performed in mixed methods research when qualitative and quantitative tools are combined and was applied in this research project. Case-based approaches, also referred to as *small-n* comparisons, focus on profound understanding, generalities and greater contextual detail of the specific phenomenon under study. Comparing the results from Germany and New Zealand resulted in an understanding of the universal and particular drivers behind the process of experience accumulation. Through the comparison of key findings in the discussion and interpretation chapter, the validity and rigour of this study was increased, and the generalisability and transferability of findings substantiated.

3.4 Chapter summary

Answering the research questions of this study required a wider worldview than a purist's standpoint would have allowed. Subsequently, a post-positivist paradigm rooted in a critical realist ontology and modified dualist/objectivist epistemology was implemented. Post-positivist paradigms allow one to equally pursue description, explanation and prediction, utilise inductive and deductive tools, facilitate macro-micro approaches, and support mixed methods methodologies. A case-based mixed methods methodology was adopted and both research phases implemented in two countries, Germany and New Zealand. In addition to questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology, the choice of methods impacts the research process as a fourth dimension. The data collection methods applied in this study are coherently discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 1	Introduction	SET THE STAGE
Chapter 2	Literature Review	
Chapter 3	Research Paradigm	
Chapter 4	**Data Collection Methods**	
Chapter 5	Qualitative Findings	LET THE DATA SPEAK
Chapter 6	Quantitative Findings	
Chapter 7	Discussion and Interpretation	GIVE IT MEANING
Chapter 8	Conclusion	

CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In essence, life is the experimenter, the life experience is the treatment, and the researcher only the observer.
(Black, 1999, p. 111)

4.1 Introduction

Whereas a methodology is defined as “an approach to the process of the research, encompassing a body of methods” (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 59), methods are the techniques and tools utilised to collect and analyse the data. The research design and methodology applied in this study was introduced in Chapter 3 and it was mentioned that two different instruments were implemented for data collection. To contribute to closing existing knowledge gaps identified in the literature and shed light on the underlying constructs of being an experienced tourist, an explorative approach was established. Due to the complexity of the social phenomenon under study and the involvement of different stakeholders in the process of experience accumulation, it was considered most valuable to include different parties that are directly involved and contribute to the individual’s attainment of higher travel experience levels.

The process of experience accumulation (*Erfahrung*) is highly subjective and is an individual journey. Individuals consume experiences (*Erlebnisse*) throughout their lives, yet only those that are memorable (positive or negative) become influential in the processes of experience accumulation and contribute to higher perceived experience levels. The tourism industry is one of the many facilitators and drivers behind the processes of experience accumulation. In order to remain in the individuals’ long-term memories, it must be the tourism industry’s aim to provide the desirable and memorable experiences that increasingly experienced tourists are looking for. A satisfactory outcome for both parties is only realisable when the supply-side interpretations and perspectives of experienced tourists and its implications for travel behaviour and choices conform to the demand-side realities.

In the first research phase, qualitative semi-structured interviews were implemented and destination marketers were interviewed to gain insights from the supply-side. After completion of the first qualitative research phase, the second quantitative research phase was established. The general travelling population was queried online to derive a demand-side perspective of the dimensions of an experienced tourist. Both research phases were implemented in the two case study countries of Germany and New

Zealand. The sequential, developmental strategy of enquiry enabled a close relationship between the research phases which is thoroughly addressed in the following sections of this chapter. This convergence of both research instruments encouraged a wider integration and interpretation of the findings, provided a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon being studied, established a supply-demand side perspective and therewith acknowledged both the macro and micro environments of tourism in the examples of Germany and New Zealand. The overall data collection procedures are visualised in Figure 4.1.

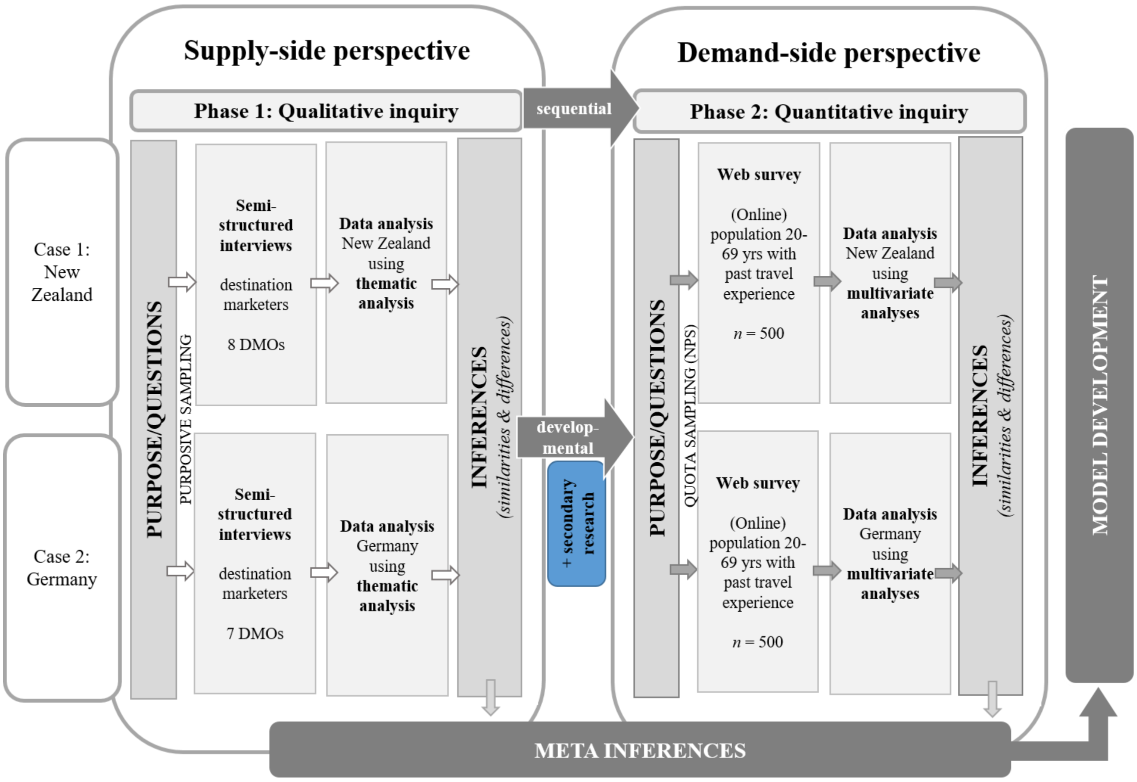


Figure 4.1: Research methods for this study on the experienced tourist

The next sections provide an overview of the implemented data collection instruments. Based on the developmental sequence of data collection, the qualitative inquiry and the methods used to examine the supply-side perspectives are introduced first (section 4.2). The tools and techniques applied to collect quantitative data from the German and New Zealand populations are described in section 4.3. The research ethics (section 4.4) and methodological limitations (section 4.5) are presented before reporting the findings of this research project.

4.2 Phase 1: Qualitative inquiry – the supply-side perspective

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with industry experts from DMOs in Germany and New Zealand to examine the supply-side's understanding of an experienced tourist. Gained insights contributed to the first objective of Research Aim 1. The contribution of the qualitative research phase to Research Aim 1 is highlighted in green in Figure 4.2.

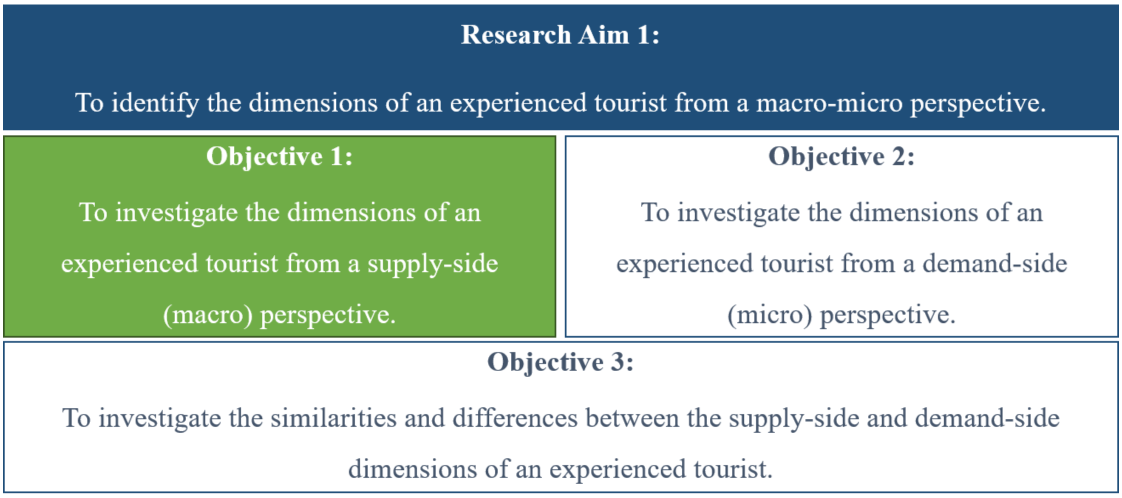


Figure 4.2: The contribution of the qualitative inquiry to Research Aim 1

Following the exploratory sequential mixed methods research approach, the qualitative research phase occupied a dual role. On the one hand, the findings supported and informed the questionnaire design for the online survey conducted in the second research phase. On the other hand, the findings complemented and corroborated the overall inferences from this research project. In the following sections, the implementation of semi-structured expert interviews and the applied qualitative data analysis techniques are introduced and the data validation methods explained

4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are implemented when the research seeks to understand the individuals shared experiences, the meanings subjectively derived and the knowledge gained (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Semi-structured interviews allow more flexibility and depth compared to questionnaire-based interviews as probe and supplementary questions can be asked to encourage participants to provide more in-depth information (Veal, 2011). An interview guide with predefined questions in a logical sequence is central to the success of semi-structured interviews. Although the key topics remain unchanged, the interviewer has the freedom to change the order of questions or ask follow-up questions when required. This challenges consistency across interviews as flow and emphasis of the interviews might vary. At the same time, it allows flexibility, improves the participants survey experience, establishes a positive partnership between the researcher and the participant and enables in-depth findings (Denscombe, 2017;

Patton, 2002). Questions in semi-structured interviews are generally designed to be open-ended in order to encourage the participants to elaborate on specific topics, share in-depth knowledge and support the researcher to examine subjective meaning ascribed to a topic. A sequential three-step approach was adopted to implement the semi-structured interviews, comprising the development of an interview guide, the sampling strategy and gaining access and the interview completion and processing of data.

4.2.1.1 Interview guide development

The development of the interview structure is the first step when performing semi-structured interviews. A checklist with issues to be addressed and an interview guide are recommended (support) tools for semi-structured interviews (Veal, 2011). The type of interview questions and the sequence are of critical importance in the design of the interview guide. For this study, an interview guide with five sections comprising one or two predefined, individually adjusted questions was used (Appendix C).

Generic questions about the organisation and the interview partner’s responsibility were asked at the beginning of each interview. Such introductory questions are easy to answer, provide an overall background, act as icebreakers and establish rapport early in the process. Interview partners were then asked to introduce the tourist destination they are representing, the touristic products and services they are offering, the guests they are targeting and the overall marketing strategy. Company-specific background research (e.g., strategic papers, websites) was conducted prior to each interview. This allowed the researcher to ask questions more purposeful and suitable to the particular organisation. The introductory questions were specific to each organisation in order to establish an overview of the respective DMO and tourist destination. Questions in the second section addressed today’s tourists and turned the lens to the demand-side of tourism. Emphasis was given to leisure tourists and a supply-side perspective of the current demand and observed changes on the demand-side were explored.

To gain insights into the industry experts’ understandings of an experienced tourist, the interview guide included questions that addressed the distinguishing factors of experienced tourists compared to less experienced tourists, the factors that contribute to experience accumulation and the resulting changes in travel behaviour. As the interviews progressed, the questions became more probabilistic and directed towards future perceptions of the demand-side, anticipated changes and expected challenges. Questions in this last section were more flexible and were partly constructed as follow-up questions referring to previous answers. Addressing challenges the industry in general and the organisation in particular are facing, enabled the interview to put the focus on the supply-side. These exit questions encouraged the participants to end the interview with a discussion of a topic that is highly relevant to them. Exit questions are as elementary as introductory questions as they further strengthen the positive partnership between the researcher and the participant as they give the interview partner a positive feeling when completing the interview (Creswell, 2013). The interview guide resulted in higher degrees of standardisation and consistency and reduced the risk of potential interviewer effects. Several changes in terms of organisational context, wording and question sequence were implemented to increase the interview experience and demonstrate acknowledgement of organisation-specific circumstances.

4.2.1.2 Sampling strategy and gaining access

As is common for qualitative research in the social sciences in general and tourism studies in particular, a purposive sampling strategy was implemented (Punch, 2014). Purposive sampling is suggested to be most suitable when the research is exploratory in nature as participants can be selected with a specific purpose in mind (Denscombe, 2017; Punch, 2014). In a qualitative inquiry, information richness and depth of the participants knowledge to generate meaningful and valid insights are valued over sample size and breadth of inquiry. A major advantage of purposive sampling in qualitative inquiry is the accuracy of participant fit that is established through the implementation of specific criteria and variables related to the research problem under study when selecting participants. The researcher can deliberately select participants based on the core experiences and knowledge required to provide meaningful and rich information (Creswell, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Two developmental steps were required prior to interview commencement:

Step 1: Sampling strategy and participant selection criteria.
Step 2: Accessing participants and organising time.

Step 1: Sampling strategy and participant selection criteria

The overall aim of the sampling strategy and participant selection was to recruit a representation of industry experts with different destination and organisational responsibilities, yet preferably similar professional experiences and knowledge. The sample frame and total population comprised all official DMOs within the two case studies. In addition to the national tourism organisations and marketing alliances, there are several regional tourism organisations in New Zealand. For the participant selection, only DMOs that were members of Regional Tourism Organisations New Zealand (RTONZ) were taken into consideration (Figure 4.3). A list of all DMOs initially considered for the selection of research participants can be found in Appendix D.

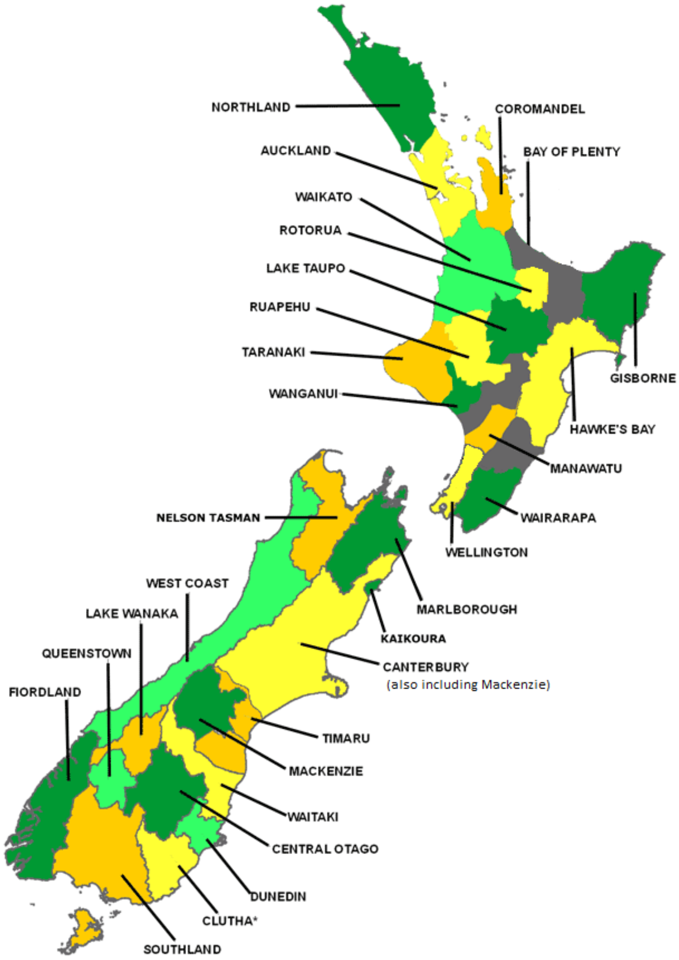


Figure 4.3: Tourist regions in New Zealand (RTONZ, 2016)

Due to the size of the country and the compact structure, the German DMO landscape is comparatively larger. In addition to the national tourism organisation and the 16 DMOs representing the German federal states, there are numerous organisations at regional and municipal levels. The area of responsibility of the DMOs at regional and municipal levels does not always reflect the official tourist regions. In addition, several tourist destinations are governed by different organisations resulting in overlapping responsibilities and added complexity of the destination landscape. An overview of the federal states and the official tourist regions in Germany is provided in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Federal states and tourist regions in Germany (Eisenstein, Schmudde, Reif, & Eilzer, 2017, p. 157)

To facilitate participant selection, it was necessary to narrow down the overall sample frame for Germany. Consequently, the sample frame was reduced to DMOs that are members or cooperation partners of federal state organisations and representing one specific region; marketing alliances made up of different regions were not considered. Second, only regions with at least two million overnight stays in 2015 were included in the overall sample frame. This enabled the sample frame to be narrowed down to 70 German DMOs that were taken into consideration in the selection process of interview participants.

Miles et al. (2014) emphasised that participants and cases in qualitative research are not necessarily individuals, but can also be organisations or groups. The case selection criteria for this research project were related to the destinations as well as DMOs and these were treated as cases for participant selection. After selection of the DMOs, the possible interview participants from the respective organisations were carefully chosen. Several criteria were defined to select the DMOs with the best fit for this research project and eventually interview partners identified. The purposive sampling strategy applied six stages for case selection. The first five steps supported the selection of potential DMOs, the last step (step 6) facilitated the identification of interview partners. The six-stage selection process including the criteria for case selection is visualised in Figure 4.5.

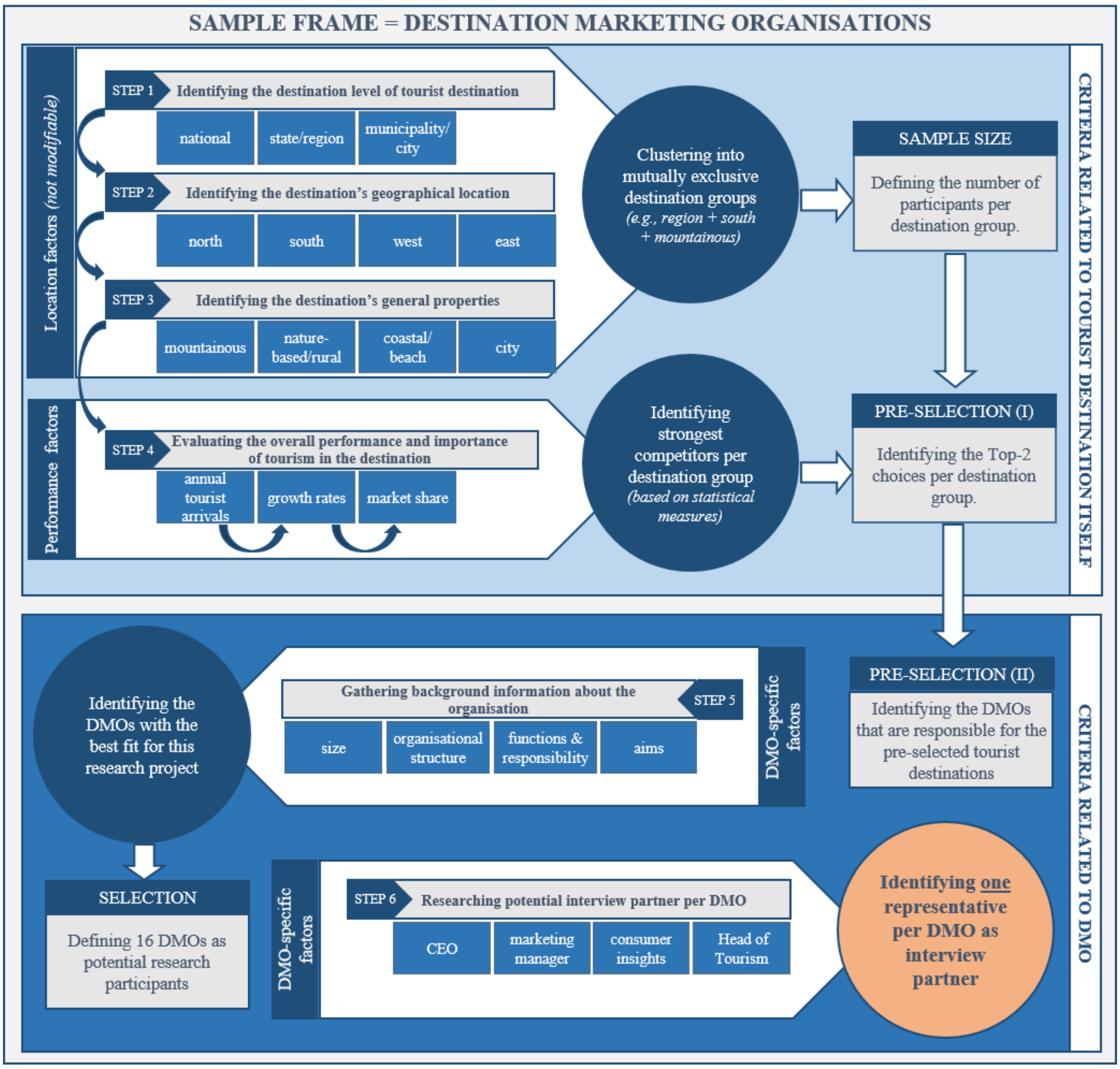


Figure 4.5: Six-stage participant selection process for the expert interviews

To reflect the overall destination landscape in the respective case studies, the purposive sampling strategy supported the researcher to identify organisations from different levels and with varying destination properties. Based on the first five steps comprising criteria based on location factors, performance-related factors and factors related to the organisations, 16 DMOs were identified across both case studies. The last step ensured that the overall aim to conduct interviews with organisation representatives who have relatively high positions within the organisation was realised. This form of interview was defined as interviewing up or elite interviewing (Harvey, 2011; Mikecz, 2012). Darbi and Hall (2014) discussed the power relationships between the researcher and interviewee and addressed the perceived knowledgeability and positionality in elite interviews.

It is assumed that representatives of higher positions have broader industry knowledge (economic, political and social), have higher impact on the strategic decision-making processes, are able to provide more sensitive information and are generally good communicators (Darbi & Hall, 2014). These factors were considered beneficial to enhance the overall quality of data collection and to establish an information rich data set. At the same time, several barriers and challenges were associated with elite interviewing, such as the power imbalance or the development of rapport and trust (Darbi & Hall, 2014). Elites were also predisposed to seek control and to dominate interviews and their experiences with any kind of interviewing is assumed to encourage their ability "to converse easily 'just talk' and get into monologues instead of answering the hard questions" (Mikecz, 2011, p. 484). Several strategies were employed to overcome barriers and encourage a mutually satisfactory interview experience.

Step 2: Accessing participants and organising time

As participants were public persons, the contact details were accessible online and all interview partners were recruited directly and personally through email invitations (Appendix E). Highly standardised and at the same time personally addressed information sheets with relevant information about the project and the interview process were attached to the initial email invitations (Appendix F). These information sheets contained general background information, information about the aim of the research, addressed the participants' rights, explained the anonymity of the research and the confidentiality of all information provided. They also stated the possible outcomes for the participants and respective organisation and were designed with transparency to establish rapport and develop trust (Harvey, 2011).

All invitees answered within a few days, expressed willingness to participate in the research and showed general interest in the research topic. Only one of the sixteen destination marketers declined the invitation due to time constraints. Once participation in the research was confirmed, a second email with proposed dates was sent. In contrast to the frequently discussed difficulty to gain access to elites and conduct interviews in their protected offices (Harvey, 2011; Mikecz, 2012), and despite the request to block out one hour of their time for the interview, finding timeslots was surprisingly effortless as participants were extremely cooperative. The prompt responses, consent to take part in the research project to share their ideas and readiness to arrange a meeting time demonstrated the enthusiasm of the participants' topic salience. One week prior to the interview, a reminder email was sent to ensure that the interview partners were still available, the interview dates suited their timetables and there were no remaining questions. Preparation of the participants was not required, but participants were provided indicative interview questions to familiarise themselves with the topic if desired.

4.2.1.3 Interview completion and processing of data

All semi-structured interviews were scheduled between May and August 2016 and completed face-to-face in the participants' offices. Prior to each interview, participants were informed about the research project and ethical consideration and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix G). Participants were also informed that the researcher will enable access of the research findings after thesis completion. The literature supports benefits such as information sharing when interviewing experts as it encourages reciprocity and a positive partnership between the interviewer and the interviewee (Maxwell, 2012; Shenton & Hayter, 2004). All participants consented to have their interviews digitally recorded and acknowledged that they have the possibility to withdraw at any time during data collection.

Close to the interview date, the researcher conducted additional and up-to-date background research of the interviewees, the organisation and the industry's overall situation and recent developments. Knowledgeability and familiarity of the researcher is suggested beneficial as up-to-date and relevant knowledge reduces the insider verses outsider relationship between interviewer and interviewee and establishes higher levels of rapport and reciprocity (Darbi & Hall, 2014; Harvey, 2011). The researcher also introduced herself and shared information regarding her previous work and research experiences to establish a basis of trust, demonstrate professional suitability, minimise possible barriers between the researcher and the participant and at the same time raise the researcher's self-confidence (Mikecz, 2012; Shenton & Hayter, 2004). These first minutes of the interview process helped to gauge the atmosphere of the interview and set the behaviour in terms of aspects such as language and interview proceedings. The indicative questions proved to be helpful to establish a positive relationship from the beginning of the interview. The interview partners were able to briefly prepare for the interview question and open up more quickly resulting in an interview process that was fluent and focussed. Due to different conversation styles and response lengths, the interview completion time varied between 35 and 70 minutes and was on average 50 minutes.

After interview completion, the audio recordings were fully transcribed in a standardised manner by the researcher herself. Collecting data in person and transcribing the interviews through repeated careful listening enabled the researcher to closely observe the data, encourage familiarity and connect with the information provided prior to data analysis (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). All transcripts were verified against the voice recordings to ensure accuracy, consistency and integrity. Transcribing is proposed to be not a means to an end, but a research activity and initial analysis in itself as the researcher's engagement with the data encourages familiarity (Braun & Clarke, 2006; McLellan et al., 2003). A denaturalised approach to transcription was applied (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). This enabled verbatim depiction while particular elements to speech and speech patterns, such as pauses, emphases in intonation, interjections, emotional expressions and background noises, were removed. Dialects were partly indicated in phonetic spellings (e.g., *gonna* for *going to*, *yeah* for *yes*), false starts (beginning a sentence without finishing) were removed unless the sentence was resumed later. Miles and Huberman (1984) explained that the process of transcribing is the first step of data reduction as the selected strategy determines which information is selected and included in the written transcripts. The German interviews were used in their original form and only the portions that were directly quoted in the finding or discussion chapters were translated into English.

Lastly, an email with the transcribed interview was sent to each participant, thanking them individually for their time and insights and asking them to proofread and confirm the interview. This process ensured transcript accuracy and further deepened trust with the participant (Maxwell, 2012). Several minor changes in terms of wording were made by the participants and sensitive information was rephrased. By and large, interviews were approved as recorded and possible bias with regards to data manipulation eliminated.

4.2.2 Qualitative data analysis methods

Qualitative data analysis (QDA) implies a dynamic process of inductive reasoning, meaning ideas and conclusions are drawn from the collected data. Regardless of the data analysis approach, Morse (1994) proposed comprehension, synthesis, theorising and reconceptualising as basic principles in qualitative data analysis. These basic principles were applied and Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis used for data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) introduced thematic analysis as an independent research tool with theoretical freedom and high degrees of flexibility. The core principles of thematic analysis are the organisation and description of raw material in a way that allows detailed comprehension of the collected data. The authors further emphasised pre-analytical considerations and choices (Table 4.1) that are likely to occur in specific combinations, but are feasible in any form (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 4.1: Pre-analytical considerations of thematic analysis

Considerations	
Aspects to define themes	• Prevalence of space within data item/across data sets (quantity)
	• Keyness of themes
Determining the type of analysis	• Rich thematic description/reflection of the entire data set
	• Detailed account of one particular aspect
Approaches to identify themes	• Inductive approach – data-driven
	• Theoretical approach – theory-driven
Levels of themes to be identified	• Semantic – progression from description
	• Latent – beyond the semantic content, identification and examination of underlying ideas

Note. Based on Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 81-85)

This study followed an inductive approach, was data-driven and allowed for rich thematic description of the data set. However, it was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of the research and took particular aspects related to the core questions into more detailed account.

Thematic analysis is not a linear process, it encourages the researcher to move backwards and forwards during analysis. This also means that data analysis recommences throughout the entire research process and is continued when writing. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified six phases to perform thematic analysis. An adjusted four-phased and sequenced approach was adopted in this research project (Figure 4.6).

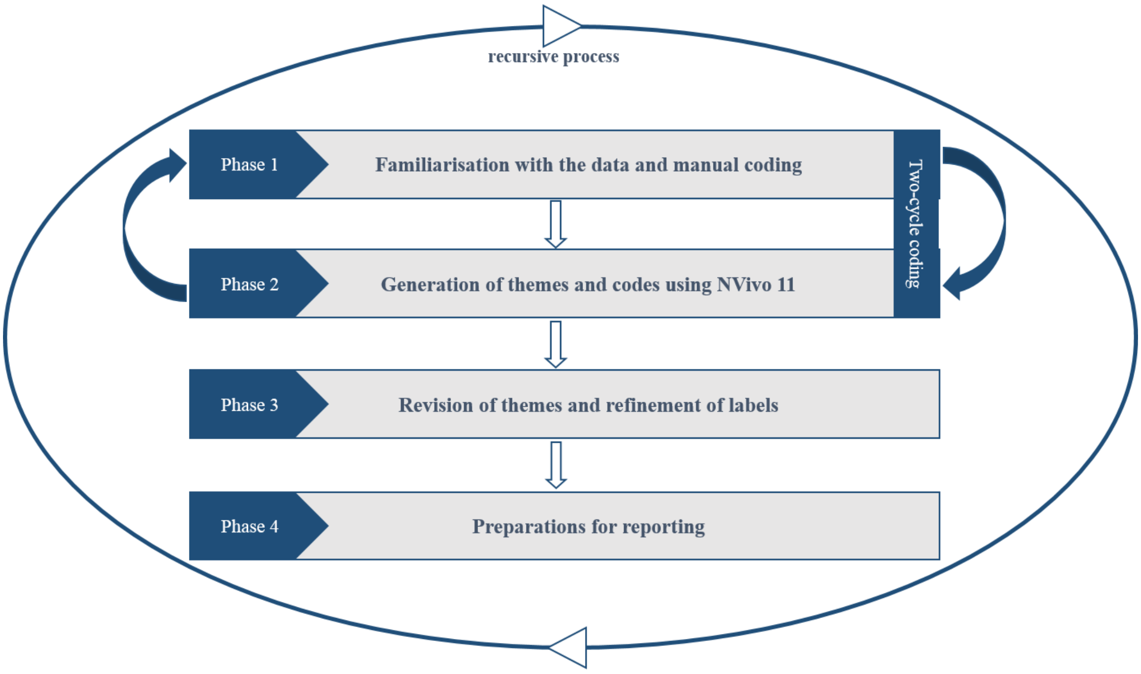


Figure 4.6: Four-phased and sequenced coding approach for the QDA in this study

The implementation of the four individual phases and the recursive process of coding applied in this study is thoroughly presented in the following sections.

4.2.2.1 Familiarisation with the data and manual coding

The process of interview transcription as part of the initial analysis was described earlier in this chapter. After confirmation of transcript acceptance from interview partners and editing when necessary, the researcher immersed herself in the data through actively reading and rereading the transcripts. While familiarising herself with the data, the researcher also engaged in note-taking and created a summary of keywords closely related to the research aims and questions per interview. Note-taking of key ideas and analytic memos support the creation of initial codes and documentation of latent themes (Bazeley, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were carefully examined for differences and similarities of meanings and descriptions.

In this first stage of QDA, data were manually coded using paper-and-pencil tools, primarily highlighters and posit-it notes. Coding in qualitative research refers to the fracturing and grouping of collected data and is a significant component in QDA (Harding & Whitehead, 2013). Bazeley (2013) emphasised that coding does not exist in a vacuum and it "is not a mechanistic, data reduction process, but rather one designed to stimulate and facilitate analysis" (p. 125) and Miles et al. (2014) concluded that "coding ***is*** analysis" (p. 72). It was further postulated that coding is a cyclical, dynamic and recursive process that requires and stimulates the researcher to reread, reconceptualise and revise throughout the entire data analysis process (Bazeley, 2013; Miles et al., 2014).

The overall research was explanatory and research questions were epistemological in nature. Thus, a holistic understanding of the experts' perceptions of the phenomenon was of interest and initial codes were predominantly descriptive and versus codes (experienced tourist versus less experienced tourist). These descriptive codes enabled the researcher to establish the inductive approach to pattern coding and theming. An example of initial coding is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Thematic analysis: Example initial coding applied in this study

Data extract	Coded for
Basically coming down, and half the fun is doing it themselves. Half the fun is actually getting around and discovering and that is part of the experience that they want, because they see that as a challenge to travel to New Zealand and German backpackers are the same. How far from our home can we go which is still safe? Which we can speak English? Which we can get a working visa to? Which has been known as a safe place, which is not full of crime? Where will my parents be OK with me travelling to?	• Independent traveller • Wants to test limits without high risks • Appreciates safety and familiarity although wants to explore the unknown • Impressions on others

Once the transcripts were manually coded, the documents were imported to the qualitative data software NVivo11 and the second cycle of coding was initiated.

4.2.2.2 Generation of themes and codes using NVivo11

The data analysis was brought to a broader level in the second coding cycle. Potential themes were defined, codes constructed as metacodes and assigned to overarching themes. Themes in this research project were not defined a priori, they inductively emerged from the data. The researcher initially referred to codes derived in the first cycle, yet an ongoing and iterative process of coding took place. In the literature, this coding step is described as major heuristic in QDA and "a method of discovery" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73). Coding was also identified as "a heuristic […] exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9). The process of taxonomically organising and categorising codes enables synthesis and consolidation of meaning which then results in themes.

Saldaña (2016) suggested the code-to-theory model in qualitative inquiry that summarises the process from data to codes (and subcodes), to categories (and subcategories), and finally to themes and theory/concepts when the research is exploratory in nature and theory generation is the aim. An adapted version from the original model was used for this research project. Rather than theory generation, the final step in the coding process was the derivation of the experts shared dimensions and assumptions of an experienced tourist.

The computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo11 was used for this second phase of coding, categorising and generating themes. In the 1980s, researchers undertook the development of CAQDAS in order to assist data management and encourage rigour in qualitative data analysis. It was assumed that closeness and distance to the data are equally required for the analysis to be rigorous and software tools were developed to assist the researcher in achieving this (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). The two cyclical coding approach performed in this research project corresponded to this duality of closeness and distance. Several benefits are ascribed to CAQDAS, such as the facilitation of an organised, hierarchical structure and management of the data, the establishment of a coding system comprising parent and child codes and the facilitated identification of relationships and mind mapping through collation of codes into themes (Harding & Whitehead, 2013). It was further emphasised that researchers using CAQDAS need to understand that the software does not automatically run the analysis, but assists in effectively and efficiently analysing the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

The recursive process of coding contributed to a continuous revision, rearrangement and reclassification of initial codes, and the transcripts were reread several times. At this stage, analysis was conducted on three levels: within case (participant-specific), within case study (country-specific), across case studies (comparison). This step enabled the identification of similarities and differences within and across case studies and unfolding of the dominant codes, categories and eventually themes. The development of pattern codes is advised at this stage of analysis as explanatory codes support the establishment of emergent themes (Miles et al., 2014). According to (Saldaña, 2016)“[a] pattern is repetitive, regular, or consistent occurrences of action/data that appear more than twice” (p. 5). An example of pattern codes developed in this phase of the data analysis is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Thematic analysis: Example pattern coding applied in this study

Data extract	Coded for
In that regard, I would anticipate that we have a high degree of repeat visitors to New Zealand or travellers that have been exposed to more cultures and customs and various countries around the world. [...] the people who come to New Zealand are much more likely they have travelled to other short or long-haul destinations more frequently before and when they come to New Zealand it is unlikely it is their first time that they have travelled internationally.	• Quantity past travel • Destinations visited

Once pattern codes were implemented the third stage of the four-phased coding approach was initiated, themes revised and labels refined.

4.2.2.3 Revision of themes and refinement of labels

In this third stage of coding, emerged themes were reviewed to ensure the overall fit of the themes in relation to the data. Several scenarios for this last revision are discussed in the literature: candidate themes might not be sustainable and verifiable due to an unsatisfactory amount of data supporting the theme; themes are combinable as they cover similar content; themes might need to be separated into individual themes when information is rich and other themes might be too broad and analytically less useful (Bazeley, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles et al., 2014). The necessity for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity was also highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006): “Data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes” (p 91). Internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity was achieved through two steps: First, the researcher ensured that the coded data reflected the categories and themes coherently. Second, it was evaluated whether the developed and revised themes were consistent and valid with regards to the overall data set, research aims and objectives. The two-step process was continued until logical relationships between categories emerged, meaning was saturated and a limited, yet significant number of hierarchically organised categories was inferred.

Proper labelling of themes was another central task in this stage of analysis. Bazeley (2013) emphasised the critical importance of labelling for the research outcome and discussed the difficult balance between labels that are too narrow or specific and labels that are too broad or generic. Bearing in mind the overall aim of the research, the nature of the data retrieved through interviews and the thematic output anticipated, the working themes were replaced by clear and self-explanatory labels. The process of mind mapping helped to achieve a satisfactory thematic map as explanatory schema that visually demonstrated the relationships of relevant key themes (Figure 4.7).

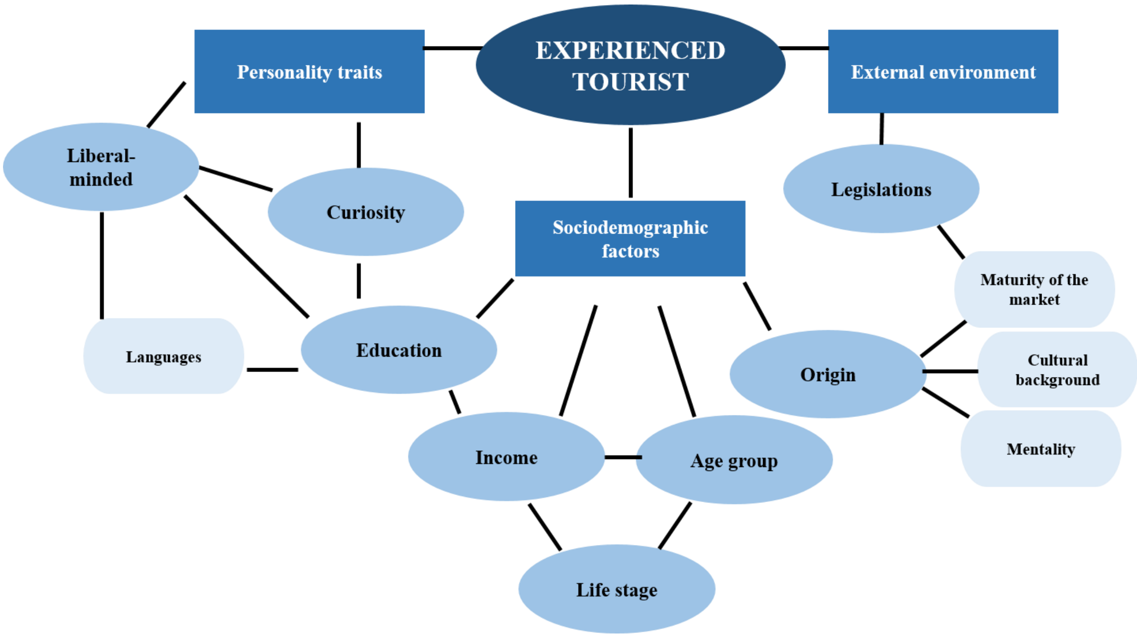


Figure 4.7: Thematic analysis: Example of a thematic map on the experienced tourist

Figure 4.7 is an example of a thematic map developed in this analytical step. It comprises selected interlinked categories and codes that determine an experienced tourist and provides an overview of the findings.

4.2.2.4 Preparations for reporting

Several adjustments were necessary before reporting, interpreting and discussing the key findings derived from QDA. New Zealand's and Germany's destination landscape is comparatively well-structured, reasonable in size and transparent. Subsequently there was a higher likelihood that personal or contextual identifiers breach the participant's confidentiality. To ascertain each participant's privacy and ensure confidentiality, any personal identifiers were eliminated and replaced by placeholders (e.g., destination name replaced by *Destination XY*). In addition, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant (e.g., NZ1, GER7). In the case of two interview participants representing one organisation, only one institutionalised pseudonym was used. The participants were interviewed together and asked to share their ideas as representative of a specific DMO. As they were considered the acting body of the DMO, it was assumed that interview partners discussed issues from the same perspective (as representative of the DMO), underpinned each other's statements and therewith endorsed the establishment of institutionalised pseudonyms.

Based on the case study approach, the codes were used in the original language and extracted categories and themes were bilingually labelled. In order to report direct quotes and provide examples capturing the particular theme, relevant data extracts from the German data set were translated into English. Translation took place throughout the analysis and was performed whenever a German direct quote was embedded in the findings or discussion chapters.

4.2.3 Checking the validity of the qualitative data

Issues around a lack of generalisability, replicability and objectivity were raised regarding qualitative research and criticism emerged whether internal and external validity and reliability can be achieved (Bryman, 2016). However, achieving reliability through replication or repeatability in qualitative research is believed irrelevant and misleading as data are contextual (Stenbacka, 2001). The literature suggests that qualitative inquiry requires other criteria to judge the quality of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of dependability and consistency as an alternative to the traditional quantitative view of reliability and emphasised the essentiality of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness was achieved through the establishment of protocols and several procedures, including audio recording, memo writing and the systematic and recursive coding process described in the previous sections.

It is further suggested that credibility and precision criteria are encouraged to judge the correctness of qualitative results (Golafshani, 2003). In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument and credibility is closely related to the researcher(s) and participant(s) themselves (Patton, 2002). As qualitative research is interested in the participants' perspectives, credibility can only be achieved when incorporating the research participants in the evaluation process. Interview partners in this study were provided with the interview transcripts after interview completion and participants were asked to approve or edit the verbatim versions when necessary.

Issues of validity and reliability apply to all stages of data collection, processing and analysis. As a code is always a "researcher-generated construct" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4) and is processed through the "researcher's analytical lens" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 7), coding in thematic analysis remains a subjective procedure. Bazeley (2013) argued that issues of reliability cannot be solved having multiple coders as no two people will come up with exactly the same codes and categories. Instead, the consistency in the ongoing process of reviewing, refining and recoding needs to be explicitly made clear. Consistency and transparency of the iterative process of coding was explained in detail throughout the previous sections. Keeping an unambiguous and comprehensive record of all data and making the coding process and coding decisions as clear and transparent as possible increases the validity of the argument and conclusion derived. Overall, the detailed explanation of case selection, sampling strategy and data collection methods and analysis techniques established a transparent foundation to validate the data quality, trustworthiness, credibility and confirmability.

4.3 Phase 2: Quantitative inquiry – the demand-side perspective

Once data from the qualitative interviews were coded and analysed, the quantitative inquiry was initiated and a web survey introduced. The web survey was designed to investigate the factors that influence the accumulation processes of experience from the perspective of tourists. The derived findings directly contributed to the second objective of Research Aim 1 and supported to fulfil the third objective of Research Aim 1. After data collection, several univariate and multivariate analytical steps were implemented to satisfy the overall aim of this research project and encourage the model development defined in Research Aim 2. The contributions of the quantitative research phase to Research Aim 1 and Research Aim 2 are highlighted in green in Figure 4.8.

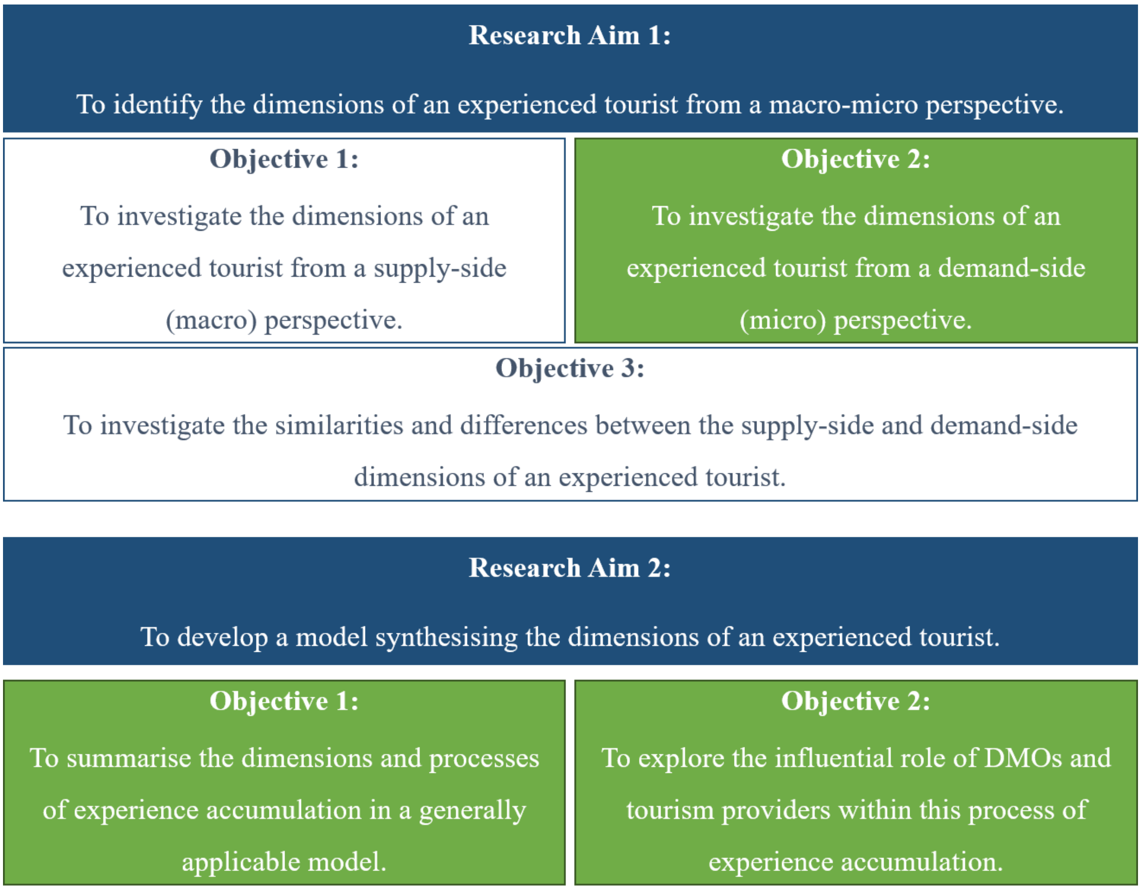


Figure 4.8: The contribution of the quantitative inquiry to Research Aim 1 and 2

The data collection strategies, data processing and pre-analytical requirements, quantitative data analysis methods implemented in this second research phase and the tests for validity and reliability of the quantitative data are thoroughly introduced in the following sections.

4.3.1 *Conducting a web survey for data collection*

Collecting empirical data through questionnaires allows the researcher to gather structured or systematic information with a high degree of standardisation from larger sample populations in a short period of time (de Vaus, 2014; Nardi, 2013). The aim of structured questionnaires is to collect a wide range of numerical data, or data that can be expressed numerically, to facilitate statistical methods and techniques for analysis. One major advantage of the quantification of complex information is the high degree of transparency and possibilities to reanalyse and replicate ensuring validity and reliability of data collected (Nardi, 2013; Veal, 2011). With the increase in internet penetration and usage, and the growing number of mobile phone only households, data collection methods such as computer-assisted telephone interviewing and random digit dialling sampling strategies were no longer sufficient. The technological innovations also resulted in difficulties related to aspects such as coverage bias and alternative research tools and sampling strategies were needed. As a result, the popularity of computer-assisted web interviewing as a special form of computer-assisted self-interviewing increased significantly and gradually replaced traditional survey data collection methods making computer-assisted self-interviewing a dominant research tool (Bethlehem, 2009; Brick, 2011; Brüggen & Dholakia, 2010).

Web surveys are considered more time efficient for both, the researcher and the respondents. Through improved routing and implemented survey logics, respondents can be guided to the questions that are relevant for them. This leads to more efficient survey time, an improved overall survey experience, and eventually enriched data quality. Standardisation limits the researcher's influence on the respondents' responses understandings and responses and positively impacts the reliability of quantitative findings (Nardi, 2013). The elimination of possible interviewer bias, skip errors and other response biases further positively influences the overall data quality (Bethlehem, 2009; Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Fang, Prybutok, & Wen, 2016). Lastly, web survey participation is self-administered and therefore flexible in terms of time and place as respondents can enter data at a time and place most suitable for them (Keusch, 2015).

Despite the advantages associated with web surveys, some limitations remain. Web surveys suffer from undercoverage issues associated with non-internet users, high nonresponse rates when using probability sampling, and the inability to recruit through random digit dialling sampling methods (Baker et al., 2013; Bethlehem, 2009). As a response, web access panels, specifically opt-in panels, have become more prominent (Baker et al., 2013; Callegaro et al., 2014). Web access panels are not to be confused with panel surveys that aim to measure variables with identical respondents over time. Instead, web access panels are to be understood as “a sample database of potential respondents who declare that they will cooperate for future data collection if selected” (International Organization for Standardization, 2012, p. 1). The increased use of web access panels is closely related to the cost-effectiveness, ease of access to large and diverse samples, reduced time needed to obtain data, and the high degree of standardisation that allows replication and comparison (Hays, Liu, & Kapteyn, 2015). The efficiency of web access panel surveys was confirmed by several studies that found higher response rates and fewer uncompleted questionnaires (break-offs) in web access panel surveys compared with web surveys that recruited respondents for one survey only (Manfreda, Bosnjak, Berzelak, Haas, & Vehovar, 2008; O’Neil, Penrod, & Bornstein, 2003).

Web access panels vary in terms of sampling and recruitment strategy, the size and overall aim of the panel, and the panel composition (Callegaro et al., 2014). Panellists are sourced from online and offline channels and recruited by means of probability-based or nonprobability convenience designs. Probability-based samples are considered more reliable in terms of representativeness as they have a known denominator. However, their recruitment participation rates are often relatively low. Consequently, noncoverage and nonresponse are higher and the costs associated to increase internal validity no longer feasible (Baker et al., 2013; Brick, 2011; Hays et al., 2015). With the increasing costs for achieving higher response rates and the simultaneous development of voluntary, opt-in panels, the importance of nonprobability samples in survey research has grown and is understood as an essential feature for the future of survey sampling.

Many panel vendors apply a double opt-in recruitment process to ensure the voluntariness of participation. The process requires the potential panel member to indicate general interest first before an email with a unique link to confirm participation and provide additional information for profiling is sent (Callegaro et al., 2014). Profiling information comprise demographic and/or social indicators and in some cases behavioural and attitudinal information. Once panel membership is complete, email invitations are sent to participate in surveys and members incentivised with various prepaid or post-paid rewards. When conducting web panel surveys, the recruited panellists represent the sample frame. Full access to panellists’ information remains often limited for reasons of panel members' privacy and anonymity, and panel organisation's confidentiality. Therefore, quota sampling is the most common sampling strategy within web access panel sampling. For the survey in this study, a web panel was used to access the respondents and a nonprobability quota sampling strategy employed for the recruitment.

Fan and Yan (2010) identified four basic steps for web survey data collection with the surveyor as sender and the surveyee as receiver of the information. Whilst taking into account the role of the panel provider as the intermediate juncture for the web survey delivery, Fan and Yan's (2010) proposed model was adopted and refined for the research purposes of this study (Figure 4.9).

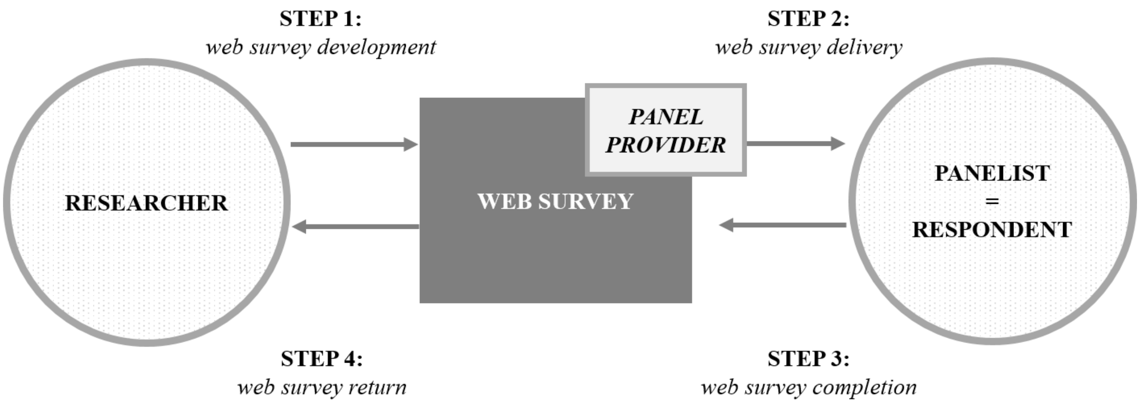


Figure 4.9: Web survey process for the quantitative inquiry of this study (adapted from Fan & Yan, 2010, p. 133)

The four stages of the web panel survey process, namely web survey development, web survey delivery, web survey completion and web survey return, are introduced in the following sections.

4.3.1.1 Web survey development

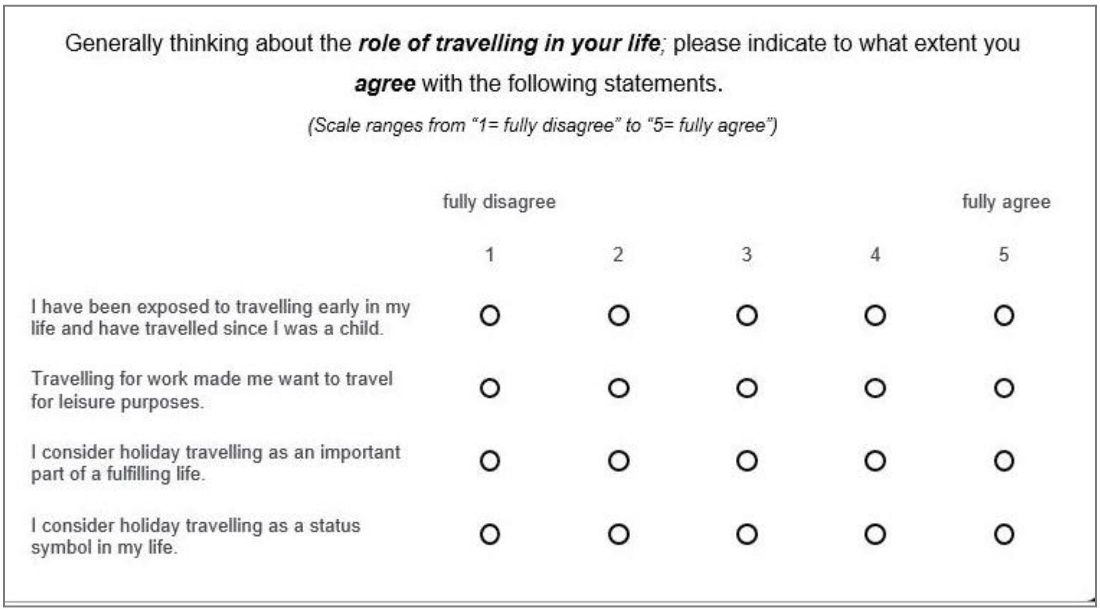
The reliability and validity of research findings depend to a large degree on the design of the questionnaire itself, making questionnaire design one of the most important and critical steps when survey research methods are applied (Nardi, 2013; Peterson, 2000). Developing and programming questionnaires online is also accompanied by more design and formatting opportunities and enhanced data validation. Branching techniques, answer related routing, and skip logics improve the respondent's experience and encourage data quality as tailored questionnaires can be implemented for specific groups of respondents (Alreck & Settle, 2004; Bethlehem, 2009; Fan & Yan, 2010).

The self-administered questionnaire in this study was designed using the research software Qualtrics. The software allowed for branching and filtering, user-friendly survey management and data return. Based on the findings from the first research phase, questions were arranged in eight thematic blocks (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Question blocks of this study's self-administered online questionnaire

Block	Theme	Questions	Respondents
1	Demographic information (*not trip-specific)*	8 (GER), 9 (NZ)	All respondents
2	Past holiday travel (quantity) *(not trip-specific)*	2-3	All respondents
3	Self-assessment experienced *(not trip-specific)*	1	All respondents
4	Desired social identity (personality) and travel behaviour *(not trip-specific)*	5	All respondents
5	Past international holiday travel *(not trip-specific)*	2-3	At least one international holiday trip in the past
6	Most recent international main holiday trip *(trip-specific)*	6	At least one international holiday trip last five years
7	Most recent independent trip *(trip-specific)*	3	Last international main holiday was independent
8	Future travel plans *(not trip-specific)*	2-4	All respondents

Across blocks, response formats for question types were kept similar (e.g., agreement scales, frequency scales), which ensured the measurement to be consistent (Furr, 2011). When items aimed at the same construct and required identical response options, matrix formatting for grouped items was introduced (Figure 4.10). Within topical series, the response formats changed. Research has shown that question batteries with the same formats and similar content are less reliable than questions relating to the same topic with different formats (Alwin, Beattie, & Baumgartner, 2015). Question batteries can result in respondent fatigue and straight-line responding, which directly impacts the results and data quality (Lavrakas, 2008). Subsequently, question batteries were minimised and instead a variety of question formats was used.


Generally thinking about the ***role of travelling in your life***; please indicate to what extent you ***agree*** with the following statements.

(Scale ranges from "1= fully disagree" to "5= fully agree")

	fully disagree				fully agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I have been exposed to travelling early in my life and have travelled since I was a child.	O	O	O	O	O
Travelling for work made me want to travel for leisure purposes.	O	O	O	O	O
I consider holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life.	O	O	O	O	O
I consider holiday travelling as a status symbol in my life.	O	O	O	O	O

Figure 4.10: Online questionnaire: Example of matrix formatting for scaled questions

In a comprehensive literature review on the factors influencing the participation behaviour in web surveys, Keusch (2015) proved that there are no differences between paging and scrolling formats. Paging means that individual questions or a small group of questions is displayed on subsequent screens and clicking the 'next' button is required to submit the answers. Scrolling refers to the display of questions on one page and the requirement to scroll up and down to answer questions. A paging format was applied in this research project as it facilitated improved skip logics and different routing and thus ensured a quality experience for respondents (Nardi, 2013). Before the actual implementation of the web survey, three developmental steps were required:

Step 1: Defining question types and scales.
Step 2: Constructing and designing the questions.
Step 3: Testing the questionnaire.

Step 1: Defining the question types and scales

The questionnaire contained categorical (dichotomous, multiple response, rating scale) and interval-scaled (Likert-type scales) response alternatives and provided single answer and multiple response options. Questions were predominantly factual, aiming for particulars and past behaviour. Only questions in Block 8 referred to future travel behaviour, were nonfactual and prospective in nature. Answer choices were designed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive to ensure validity and reliability of questions. The majority of the questions within the questionnaire were closed-ended. Closed-ended questions are advantageous for both the respondents and the researcher. Respondents prefer closed-ended questions over open-ended questions for their ease to answer, and researcher benefit from closed-ended questions as coding and statistical analysis are facilitated and comparisons are enabled (Revilla, 2015).

Despite identified advantages of closed-ended questions, response effects such as the ballot or position effect cannot be fully diminished (Peterson, 2000). A forced choice format was introduced for the majority of questions to encourage respondents to decide for one response option and therewith avoid measurement and nonresponse errors. In a study on scale labelling in web surveys, Revilla (2015) confirmed that forced choice formats are preferable over 'check all that apply' and unforced formats as the former provides more significant response selection. In addition, the sampling strategy and the utilisation of web access panels allowed forced choice formats as recruitment continued until the required number of respondents with valid and complete answers was realised.

Formulation of questions and scales becomes critically important when using closed-ended questions as the reliability and validity of the questionnaire strongly depend on wording. The absolute and relative understanding of the questions must be ensured and questions must be clearly, precisely and unambiguously expressed (Bethlehem, 2009; Nardi, 2013; Peterson, 2000). The KISS principle "*keep it simple, stupid*" (Alwin & Beattie, 2016, p. 123) was implemented in this research phase of the study. Questions and response options were kept as brief as possible and technical language was avoided. In bilingual surveys, question wording is an even more critical factor as measurement equivalence must be ensured on different levels. Several scholars attempted to define different forms of equivalence, yet without consensus (Hui & Triandis, 1985; van de Vijver & Leung, 1997; Warwick & Osherson, 1973). Measurement equivalence in this research project was multi-layered and related to linguistic, conceptual (structural/functional) and operational equivalence, as well as measurement of item and scalar equivalence.

Linguistic equivalence refers to effects in translation, such as grammatical syntactical equivalence, idiomatic equivalence and vocabulary equivalence. Conceptual equivalence indicates whether a construct has the same meaning in two or more cultures and languages (van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). The equivalence in construct operationalisation supposes that transitioning from theory to measurement is identical across cultures and operational equivalence can be achieved with the instrument

(Dimanche, 1994). A successive translation from the English to German was undertaken and application methods (literal translation) were employed in this research project. Adaptation was necessary for some questions and items to ensure that the constructs were adequately addressed and covered.

The development and implementation of proper scales is an equally important element when designing valid and reliable questionnaires. Scales facilitate not only the measurement of variables, they are also an important information tool and guideline for the respondents (Revilla, 2015). Scales are implemented when the respondent's agreement with statements, frequency of behaviours or events, importance of values or beliefs, likelihood of behaviour or events, or quality of a service or object is aimed to be measured (Furr, 2011). However, in cross-national surveys, item equivalence, which presupposes conceptual and operational equivalence, and scalar equivalence need to be considered when constructing reliable scales (Hui & Triandis, 1985). Scalar equivalence is considered the highest level of equivalence and the most difficult to achieve (van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). When employing standardised instruments, such as Likert-type scales, difficulties in scalar equivalence are minimised. Likert-type scales are slight alterations to the initially introduced Likert scales by Rensis Likert (Likert, 1932). Based on the original Likert scale, balanced 5-point scales were implemented. Scales ranged from 1 (*fully disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*) for the measurement of agreement and from 1 (*not like me at all*) to 5 (*very much like me*) in terms of questions related to the desired social identity of respondents.

The number of response options (odd or even), formatting and response option directions, the inclusions of midpoint or *don't know* options, and the anchoring and labelling of scale categories are some of the most discussed topics in survey methods research (Cabooter, Weijters, Geuens, & Vermeir, 2016; Chan, 1991; Preston & Colman, 2000; Toepoel & Van Soest, 2009; Weijters, Cabooter, & Schillewaert, 2010). An odd number of response options and the provision of midpoints proved effective when introducing agreement scales and was selected for this research project. Several scholars argued that there is a tendency to choose midpoints or *don't know* options when respondents are less motivated or lack thinking (Nadler, Weston, & Voyles, 2015; Weijters et al., 2010). Other scholars supported midpoints as they allow neutral responses that are in some cases reasonable and logical (Nowlis, Kahn, & Dhar, 2002).

Although fully labelled scales are largely supported, the clarification and differentiation of scale categories is problematic and it is not clear whether the response options are interpreted similarly by all respondents (Furr, 2011). Using verbal labels is even more difficult in cross-cultural and bilingual research as translations challenge linguistic equivalence and are potential sources for bias. Adding numerical values facilitates the usage of scales for the respondents as distances between the categories are equally provided. Positive numerical values (1 to 5) were attributed to each category and end labels provided verbally in the online questionnaire of this research project. Frequency scales constituted an exception in the questionnaire. These scales were verbally labelled (never, rarely, sometimes, almost every day, daily) to ensure consistent interpretation of scale categories. When providing numerical values only on frequency scales, there is a risk that respondents consider the numerical values as quantity of the behaviour instead of the degree of endorsement.

Chan (1991) investigated the primacy effects of scale points and concluded that positive scale points on the left led do higher primacy effects and biased responses. All rating scales were presented and programmed horizontally and scale categories organised left to right (negative to positive). Whether Likert-type scales are treated as ordinal or interval scales is also intensely discussed in academia. The agreement scales in this study were considered a modified version of Likert-type scales provided that only the extremes were labelled and numerical values added for scale points (1 to 5). This allowed the same distance between response levels and thus fulfilment of interval scale requirements (Alreck & Settle, 2004; Fowler, 2014).

Step 2: Constructing and designing the questions

Following the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, the key findings of the first research phase were used to design the questionnaire and formulate questions. The utilisation of key findings from the first research phase to inform the second research phase underpins the interaction between the two research phases. It also highlights the sequential and developmental approach and the dependencies between the research phases. In addition to findings from the qualitative interviews, secondary sources were consulted for scale design and questionnaire construction.

For the avoidance of respondent fatigue, it is recommended to start with easy and interesting questions and ask more sensitive and difficult questions at the end (Lavrakas, 2008). Generally, asking for gender and age is considered sensitive, however, the demographic information were required at the beginning of the survey for reasons of sampling and quota management. The place of residence (region) was also prompted at the beginning for quota control; the remaining demographic questions were raised at the end. Demographic questions were the only questions that required country-specific adaptations in order to safeguard construct equivalence (e.g., household income, place of residence). One of the major differences between the two case studies was the ethnic composition of the countries' populations and the role of multiculturalism in New Zealand. Against this backdrop, the New Zealand questionnaire included a question that examined the ethnicity the respondent largely identified with. A screening question was placed after the quota check. The screening question was necessary to test the inclusion criterion of having travelled in the past either internationally or domestically. It is important to mention that emphasis was given to holiday travellers and the dichotomous (yes/no) screening questions was phrased as followed: *Have you spent at least one overnight holiday trip within New Zealand/Germany or abroad in the past?*

The second question block consisted of relatively easy to answer questions concerning the quantity of past domestic and international holiday trips. Destination marketers interviewed in the first research phase confirmed the importance of the quantity of trips when distinguishing experienced from less experienced tourists. Asking questions that refer to events and behaviour in the past has been associated with possible recall and memory errors (Bethlehem, 2009; Bradburn et al., 2004; Nardi, 2013; Peterson, 2000). It was found that errors can be minimised when the topic is of personal significance and interest, however, details about events in the distant past are less likely to be fully recalled. To eliminate recall and memory errors, respondents were asked to state the quantity of trips within the past five years only. Instead of an open answer to precisely respond with the quantity of domestic and international holiday trips, response options were provided and clustered in groups of five. The questions were required as they were the basis for later branching.

On a scale from 1 (*not experienced at all*) to 10 (*extremely experienced*) respondents were asked to indicate whether they consider themselves an experienced or less experienced tourist (Figure 4.11).

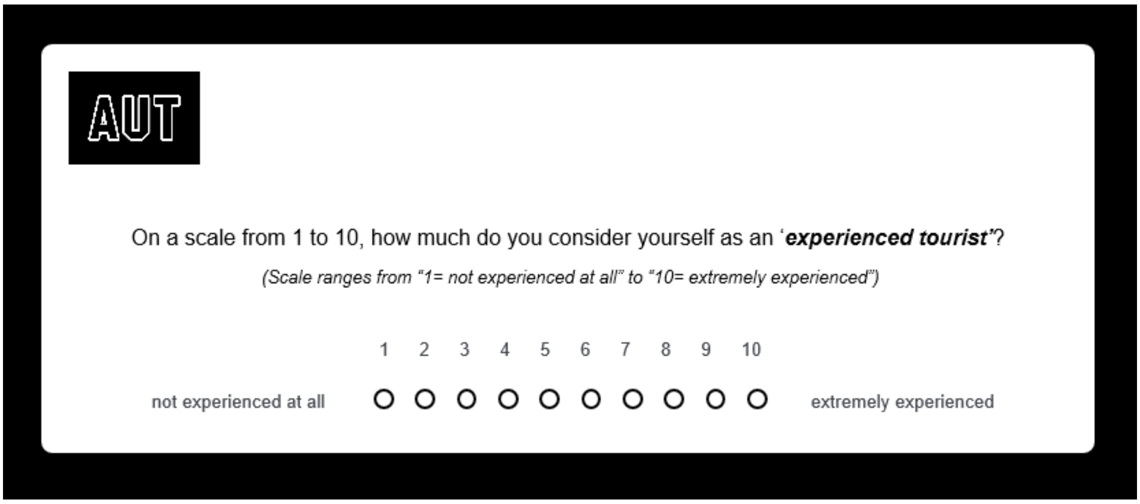


Figure 4.11: Online questionnaire: Agreement scale self-assessed experience level

Nonfactual knowledge was required to provide an answer, making the question more difficult. The question was purposefully raised early in the questionnaire to eliminate possible response bias after having answered other travel-related questions. Findings from this question were of critical importance for the later data analysis as the variable became the dependent variable (DV) in the multiple linear regression analysis introduced later in this chapter. The question was forced to avoid possible nonresponse errors and related limitations in the overall data analysis strategy.

Findings of the first research phase demonstrated that personality traits, or rather (desired) social identity elements, were also suggested to be important drivers to distinguish experienced from less experienced tourists. As the major outcome of the qualitative interviews, thirteen elements were surveyed. Secondary sources on personality scales informed the design of the question items, particularly literature on Myers Briggs personality and the Big Five personality traits (Bradburn et al., 2004; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003; Jani, 2014a). It has to be noted that it was not the aim of the study to test personality traits but to generally understand the respondents' social identity. This encompasses, but is not limited to, personality traits. In the survey, the term personality was used to avoid misunderstandings regarding the term social identity. The question was phrased as follows: "Thinking about your personality, how would you describe yourself (not travel-related but general personality)?"

The direction of statements and the direction of response categories is of critical importance to avoid response errors. Mixing the direction of statements from more negative connoted (fully disagree) to positive connoted (fully agree) statements was assumed to positively influence the overall data quality and reduce response bias (Furr, 2011; Nardi, 2013). The direction of items for this question relating to social identity elements was mixed and a Likert-type 5-point agreement scale designed ranging from 1(*not like me at all*) to 5 (*very much like me*).

Past research predominantly examined the influence of prior experiences in relation to one specific trip and the individual's behaviour before or during that trip. This study went beyond single trips and trip-specific behaviour and incorporated questions that addressed travel-related facts more generally. Respondents were asked questions related to the overall role of travelling in their life, general reasons/motives, major decision-making criteria and sources of inspiration for holiday trips.

Respondents that had travelled internationally for holiday purposes in the past were routed to Block 6, which covered general questions related to past international holiday trips. The finding of the expert interviews indicated that the destinations visited are predicative for the experience levels of individuals. This is confirmed by past research investigating the relationship between experience levels and travel behaviour and attempting to measure prior experiences (Filep & Greenacre, 2007; P. L. Pearce & Kang, 2009). Thus, respondents were asked to select continents/regions they had visited in the past. A concept that is gaining more attention in consumer and travel behaviour is the appeal of all senses (Agapito, Pinto, & Mendes, 2017). Several experts in the semi-structured interviews assumed that the experienced tourists' sensory memories are more distinct compared to less experienced tourists. To shed light on this assumption, the degree of agreement in terms of sensory memory was queried.

The respondents' most recent international main holiday trips were addressed in question Block 7. Branching and skip logics allowed these questions to be displayed only to respondents that had travelled internationally for holiday purposes within the past five years. The exclusion of respondents that had not travelled internationally for holiday purposes within the past five years was made to eliminate possible memory errors. Respondents were asked questions about the timeframe, the type of travel, the country/countries visited, the travel duration, and loyalty to the destination visited. All questions were forced as they were essential for response piping and filtering within the question block and later routing. Due to the industry experts' overall agreement that experienced tourists are more likely to be independent or semi-independent travellers, several questions were aimed towards the independent traveller only. Respondents that travelled internationally and independently within the past five years were asked questions concerning their information search and booking behaviour prior to the trip as well as trip activities and online behaviour during their past trip. The last question block looked at future travel intentions and plans and was more forward-looking. The fully programmed online questionnaire is attached in Appendix H.

The textual documentation of complex skip patterns introduced in web surveys caused comprehension issues in the past and it was recommended to display the questionnaire architecture and underlying routing structure in form of flowcharts (Bethlehem, 2009). A flowchart facilitates the visualisation of complex logics applied in questionnaires when conditional branching and routing is enabled to guide respondents. The online questionnaire in this study comprised several filters that allowed skip logics, branching and routing in order to enable the best survey experiences possible to the respondent. The skip logics and routing for the online questionnaire implemented in this research project are visualised in a simplified version in Figure 4.12. Depending on the skip logics, the number of displayed questions per respondent ranged from 19 to 35.

Step 3: Testing the questionnaire

The questionnaire was tested in three phases prior to the actual fieldwork. Emphasis was given to aspects such as scale reliability, content validity, construct validity and overall comprehensiveness. In late October 2016, the English questionnaire was sent to other academics known by the researcher (native and nonnative English speakers). After the adjustments based on the feedback, the survey was translated into German and a second pretest was implemented. The edited English version was sent to bilingual speakers and the translated questionnaire was sent to German native speakers. Academics and non-academics of the researcher's private network were invited to participate in the pretest. The pretests ensured accuracy of instructions, appropriateness and validity of the questions and contributed to the questionnaire's fine tuning (Mason, 2014; Nardi, 2013). Lastly, the web access panel provider implemented a soft launch prior to the full launch of the survey and the questionnaire was sent to 50 respondents in each case study. In his study on web survey participation, Keusch (2015) found that differences in the advertised and actual completion time negatively impacted the response behaviour. Thus, the soft launch was important to ensure that the announced questionnaire length and the actual length for survey completion were identical. After a satisfactory soft launch, the survey was fully launched in Germany and New Zealand.

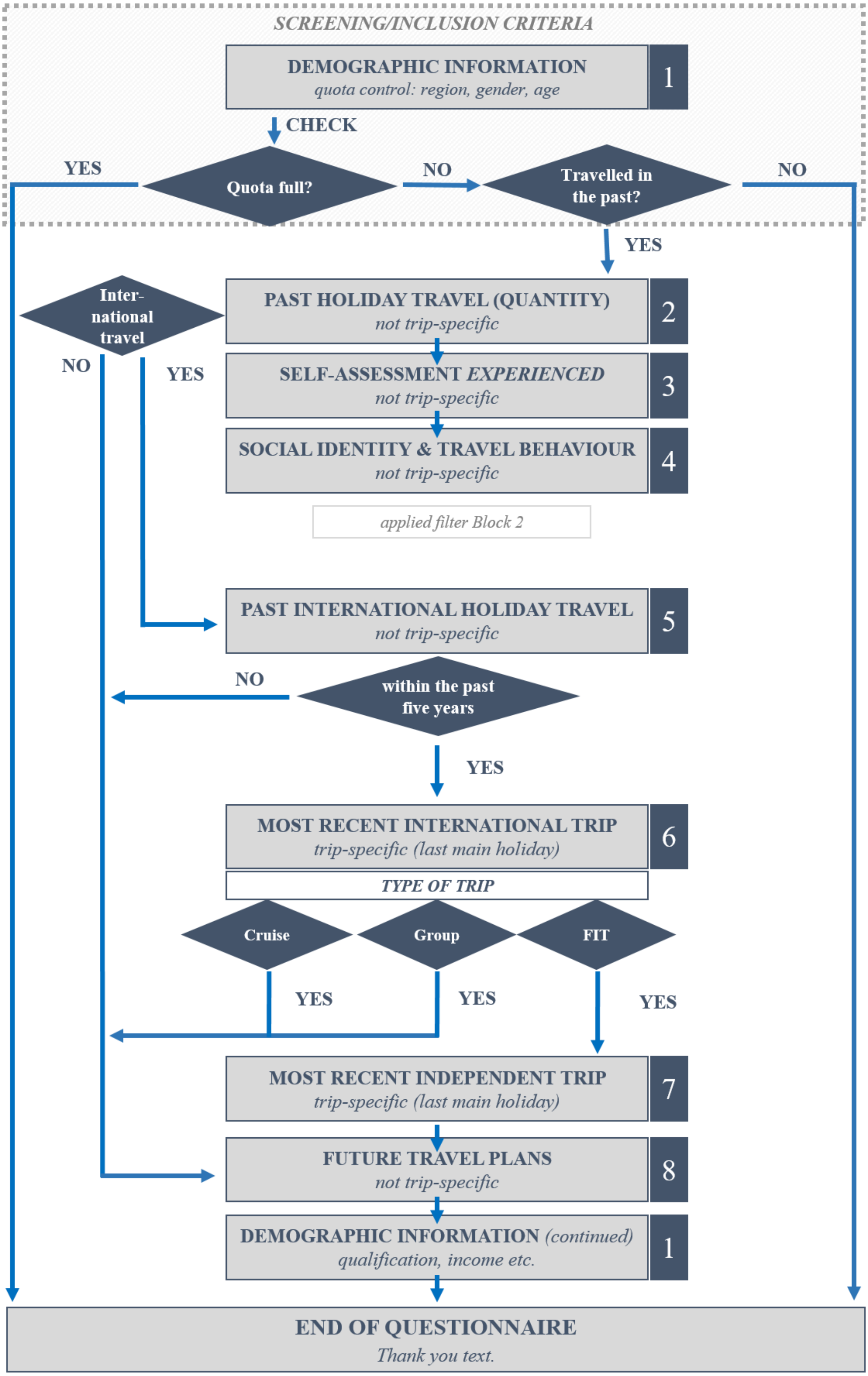


Figure 4.12: Online questionnaire: Survey logics and flow chart

4.3.1.2 Web survey delivery

Respondents were accessed through an established web access panel. However, before recruiting the possible respondents through the panel provider's distribution channels and delivering the survey to respondents, several preparatory steps were required:

Step 1: Defining the target population and identifying the sample size.
Step 2: Defining the sampling strategy.
Step 3: Accessing respondents through web access panels.

Step 1: Defining the target population and identifying the sample size

The definition of the target population is an important step in the development of the survey design. According to Bethlehem (2009) "[t]he target population U is a finite set U= [1,2,...N] of N elements" (p. 16) whereby N represents the size of the population. In order to determine a target population, inclusion and potential exclusion criteria need to be identified. Age constituted an inclusion criterion and the target population was limited to the population aged 20 to 69 years. Addressing respondents younger than 20 years was ruled out due to methodological reasons, but also for reasons of the overall research aim. Although people at the age of 19 or younger have travelled more extensively than people of the same age decades ago (eDreams ODIGEO, 2017) and children play an important role in travel decision-making, the actual travel plans of minors are strongly influenced by others, such as family, school, and recreational facilities (Kozak & Karadag, 2012; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2014). As there is a decrease of web accessibility and internet usage in older age groups (Initiative D21 & TNS Infratest, 2017; Statistics New Zealand, 2012), reaching and eventually recruiting older age groups through web panel surveys is limited and results in higher recruitment costs and time (Table 4.5). Thus, the upper limit was defined as 69 years. The defined target population represented 63% of New Zealand's and 66% of the German total population.

Table 4.5: Internet usage by age cohorts

Age group	New Zealand (2012)	Germany (2015)
Under 20 years[a]	93%	98%
20-29 years	93%	98%
30-39 years	92%	97%
40-49 years	88%	91%
50-59 years	82%	82%
60-69 years	70%	65%
Over 69	40%	30%

Source: Initiative D21 & TNS Infratest, 2015; Statistics New Zealand, 2012 (most recent published data)
[a]GER: 14 to 19 years

Sample size is dependent on the desired degree of accuracy of the sample and the degree of generalisation from the findings. The sampling error and confidence interval are the two statistical tests that help to define the required sample size (de Vaus, 2014). The confidence interval expresses the margin of error and represents the range of values. The margin of error occurs as only a sample and not the entire population can be queried. Errors are not to be understood as mistakes, but reflect the level of accuracy in the data (Black, 1999; Fink, 2002). The confidence level refers to the certainty that a specific outcome is true and the levels correspond to the percentages of the area of a normal distribution curve. As usual in social science research, a 95% level of confidence was applied with a margin of error (e) of $\pm$5% and an expected standard deviation (SD) of $\pm$0.5 (Alreck & Settle, 2004; Williams, 2003).

Based on Blair and Blair (2015), the minimum required sample size was calculated as followed: $N = [Z^2 \ x \ SD \ x \ (1\text{-}SD)]/e^2$. The z-value ($Z$) represents the standard normal distribution of a confidence level and equals $\pm$1.96 for a confidence level of 95% (Blair & Blair, 2015). Accordingly, the minimum required sample size for this research project was computed to be 385. Statistics have shown that beyond a specific point, slight improvements of accuracy associated with an increased sample size cannot be justified by the investment related to increasing the sample (de Vaus, 2014; Williams, 2003). Respectively, the total size of the population is not needed for the accuracy of the sample and the calculated minimum required sample size is valid for large population sizes (500,000 and more). The sample size per case was increased to 500 respondents (1,000 total sample size) to allow filtering and encourage different multivariate analysis options.

Step 2: Defining the sampling strategy

Although sampling methods are relevant to all methods in social science research, sampling issues are predominantly discussed in survey research (Blair & Blair, 2015). A sample is a defined subgroup of the population under study and is described as “a search for typicality” (Williams, 2003, p. 74). Williams (2003) reflected on the differences between sampling and selecting, emphasising that these are not to be seen “as a dichotomy, but more of a continuum from statistical dependability to weak generalization” (p. 74). When conducting social science surveys, the desired research outcome is to encourage a sample that is as representative of the defined population as possible and enables accurate and reliable inferences for the respective target population (Baker et al., 2013). This is achievable through either probability or nonprobability samples (Williams, 2003). In probability sampling each member of the defined total population has an equal chance to be selected for the survey, which makes this sampling method preferable to obtain the best representative sample. In practice, this method is not always possible, particularly in regard to the development of comprehensive sample frames when a large population is targeted (Gittelman, Thomas, Lavrakas, & Lange, 2015). The main advantage of nonprobability sampling is that no sampling frame is required and the technique is much faster and more convenient to implement (Kemper, Stringfield, & Teddlie, 2003).

The discussion on the sampling strategy for this research phase of the study refers to sampling within the web access panel. A nonprobability quota sampling strategy was adopted to recruit respondents for the second research phase. Quota sampling proved to be useful when a probability sample cannot be obtained, but the aim is to create the most representative sample with the resources available (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Buckingham & Saunders, 2004; Gittelman, Thomas, et al., 2015). The same applies to sampling methods within a panel. Due to the extensive knowledge of panel members across the defined profiling variables, the major criticism on quota sampling being less representative diminishes and overall study quota and individual quota cells are facilitated (Alreck & Settle, 2004).

Quotas were defined based on three interlocked demographic criteria: age, gender, and regional distribution. Past research proved that an increase in demographic selection quotas (e.g., ethnicity, education) does not eliminate bias or improve accuracy. Hence the costs associated with increased selection quotas cannot be justified by a potential improved accuracy or reliability (Gittelman, Thomas, et al., 2015). In addition, the more complex the interlocked and interdependent quotas are, the more respondents do not qualify and are rejected (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Quotas in web access panels are normally not enforced during sample draw, instead they are introduced during questionnaire completion in the form of screening questions prior to the actual questionnaire (Callegaro et al., 2014). Through the proportionate distribution of the demographic subgroups and the implementation and sample selection balancing techniques, a representative sample of the total population according to the demographic quota parameters can be approximated (Fink, 2002; Nardi, 2013; Williams, 2003). Gittelman, Thomas, et al. (2015) explained that sample-selection balancing "involves selecting sample members by using quota that regulate the proportions of sample in various demographics groups" (p. 369). When interlocking quotas based on multiple criteria, individual subgroups are likely to be too small for adequate representation within the sample and disproportionate samples are favoured.

A disproportionate sampling method was implemented in this research phase of the study and weighting adjustment applied after data collection to correct overrepresented and underrepresented subgroups. A reliable gauge of the population statistics was required for the construction of the quota sample resulting in the use of the New Zealand and German population censuses. The country-specific interlocked quotas were developed based on the proportions of the demographic subgroups in the total population. The 2013 New Zealand census provided information on age cohorts in five year intervals, sex and regions including 16 regional councils (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). The 2011 German census delivered information on age, sex and municipalities and comprised more detailed information on the demographic composition (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016). For reasons of comparability and feasibility, the German census data for the criteria age and regional distribution were also grouped and instead of municipality level, the federal state level used. When designing the quota cells based on a proportional quota, the New Zealand and German population would have represented 120 strata (16 regional councils/federal states x 2 genders x 5 age cohorts). Bearing in mind that the total sample size per country was 500, the individual quota cells would have been too small. Consequently, regions were merged into standardised groups. An overview of the auxiliary variables used for the definition of the interlocked quota is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Proportions of auxiliary variables used for quota development

Auxiliary variables	Categories	Germany[a]	New Zealand[b]
Gender	Female	51%	52%
	Male	49%	48%
Age group	20-29	18%	21%
	30-39	18%	20%
	40-49	25%	23%
	50-59	22%	21%
	60-69	17%	16%
Region	North Germany	16%	
	West Germany	35%	--
	South Germany	28%	
	East Germany	20%	
	Auckland (AKL)		34%
	Wellington (WEL)		11%
	Rest of North Island	--	31%
	Canterbury (CAN)		13%
	Rest of South Island		11%

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2015; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016a

[a]*Regional composition Germany: North: Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein; West: Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland; South: Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria; East: Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia.*

[b]*Regional composition New Zealand: Auckland: Auckland region; Wellington: Wellington region; Rest of North Island: Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu-Wanganui; Canterbury: Canterbury; Rest of South Island: Tasman, Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast, Otago, Southland.*

Due to partly difficult to reach quota cells, a disproportionate sample based on 10% oversampling was implemented and 550 respondents per case study targeted. Summaries of the proportionate (targeted) and disproportionate (programmed) quotas applied for data collection are presented in Table 4.7 (Germany) and Table 4.8 (New Zealand).

Table 4.7: Overview quota plan for Germany (summary by region)

	GER		North		West		South		East	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Proportionate	500	100	80	16	176	35	142	28	102	20
Disproportionate (+10%)	550	100	110	20	180	33	140	25	120	22

Table 4.8: Overview quota plan for New Zealand (summary by region)

	NZ		AKL		WEL		Rest of North		CAN		Rest of South	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Proportionate	500	100	170	34	57	11	153	31	65	13	55	11
Disproportionate (+10%)	550	100	145	29	95	19	130	26	95	19	85	17

The regional quotas were then distributed by age group and gender according to their proportionate share in the total population and an interlocked quota of the three auxiliary variables was introduced. Based on the interlocked quota, the German population was divided in 40 quota cells and the New Zealand population in 50 quota cells. The web survey design allowed integrated questions to test the quota at the beginning of the survey and quota sizes were programmed. In the case of sufficient respondents within a particular quota cell (quota full), the respondent was redirected to the end of the survey and was thanked for their willingness to participate in the research. The overall sample can be described as inbound-balanced weighted sample.

Step 3: Accessing respondents through web access panels

For methodological reasons, such as the ease of access and time, respondents were invited through a web access panel. The key distinguishing factor between online data collection and online panel data collection lies in data sourcing (J. S. Johnson, 2016). When sourcing data through online panels, an existing panel of ready-to-survey respondents is used for the recruitment of respondents. Thus, the challenges of recruitment rates and response rates were not the responsibility of the researcher herself. However, it was her task to identify the most suitable, rigorous, transparent and trustworthy panel vendor for this study. Several international quality standards are in place that establish and define requirements to ensure consistency and transparency when conducting international market research. The International Organization for Standardization (2009), for instance, established a standard specific for access panels in market, opinion and social research and the not-for-profit market research organisation ESOMAR developed international codes and guidelines for market research and data analytics (ESOMAR, 2017). Only panel vendors with respective certifications and transparency in terms of compliance of guidelines were taken into consideration.

The Germany based panel vendor *respondi AG* was employed for the recruitment of German respondents. The vendor respondi AG has own panels in Germany and nine other European countries, cooperating with several international providers for cross-continental research (respondi AG, 2016). For the New Zealand survey, *Lightspeed GMI* was subcontracted. Both panel vendors utilise a double opt-in recruitment process and ensure panel quality through several checks. The German panel contains 100,000 panel members (respondi AG, 2016) and the New Zealand panel comprises 20,000 panel members (Lightspeed GMI, 2015). Both providers use numerous panel attributes as profiling data ranging from sociodemographic information to specific topics such as finance, travel, health, and automotive and thus enable to reach different target groups.

Although the panel vendor offered full service, the *sample only* option was used for this study. This meant that programming and provision of the survey, quota management and control, and data processing was the researcher's responsibility. The panel provider was responsible for the invitation process and incentives of respondents. The overall costs relied on the defined target group, overall sample size, defined quota, the expected incidence rate, and the average completion time. Thus, it was the researcher's task to ensure that the contracted measures were in place. Several programming steps were required to redirect respondents to the appropriate exit links. This enabled the ability to differentiate whether respondents had completed the survey and were incentivised, were screened out as they did not fulfil the selection criteria, or whether the quota was met. All communication took place between the researcher herself and the vendor respondi AG who forwarded information to Lightspeed GMI.

4.3.1.3 Web survey completion and survey return

On Monday January 23, 2017, a first wave of panel members were invited to participate in the survey. A standardised email with an individualised survey link was sent to the panellist containing information that a new survey was online for six days. As the quota control and survey management was the researcher's responsibility, the researcher sent daily updates relating to response rates and quota realisation to the provider. This enabled the provider to readjust the distribution list, sent additional email invitations to cohorts of panel members that fulfilled the requirements for unmet quotas and at the same time ceasing invites to panel members of quota groups that were already met.

As the web panel survey was self-administered, respondents had the flexibility to decide when to complete the survey. Respondents were also able to return at their convenience via the same survey link at any time until survey completion. Following the standardised procedures of the panel provider, panellist that had not reacted to the initial email invitation were reminded to participate in the survey after two and then four days. Despite the panellists general knowledge and familiarity with web access surveys, their agreement to participate in the panel and awareness of aspects such as confidentiality and trustworthiness, respondents were comprehensively informed about the research on the first page of the survey link. Respondents were provided information about the researcher and the research's aims, the confidentiality and voluntariness, the expected completion time and were given supportive technical advice. On this information sheet, respondents were also informed that by starting the survey they are indicating their consent to participate in the research (Appendix I). The web survey design allowed a link to a PDF document in the survey containing contact information in the case of any concerns or questions (Appendix J). The completion time relied on the branching and actual number of displayed questions to answer and was, on average, 10 minutes. By completing the survey, the data were automatically recorded online and available for data export.

Fulfilment of the New Zealand quota was achieved after five days and the survey link was closed on Friday January 28, 2017. In the case of the German survey, all quota cells were fulfilled by Sunday January 29, 2017 and the survey link was disabled on Monday January 30, 2017. Despite the guarantee of at least 500 valid cases per country (plus 10% over sampling) and generally less concern about response rates, an extension of the field work in the case of low response rates would have resulted in additional costs owing to poor planning and estimated incidence rates. Due to respective incentivising, the survey length is generally a minor concern in web panel data collection (Anderson, Sharp, & Reynolds, 2010), topic salience, in comparison, strongly correlates with survey participation and response propensity (Keusch, 2013). The quick fulfilment of quotas and high number of respondents that were unable to participate due to the early fulfilment of quota cells demonstrate the interest in the topic.

In the German survey, 518 valid and complete responses were collected. In addition, 45 responses were screened out during survey completion as the respondents did not meet the survey requirements of at least one holiday trip in the past (domestic or international), 389 responses were screened out as the specific quota was full, and 12 respondents did not complete the web survey (partial results). In the case of New Zealand, 515 valid and complete surveys were recorded. There were 22 respondents that were screened out as they had no past travel experiences, nine respondents were screened out due to age, in 596 cases the quota was already full and 15 respondents only partially answered the questionnaire. After data screening, quality checks and data set cleaning, 500 valid respondents remained in each data set. Table 4.9 and Table 4.10 show the sample sizes including and excluding screen outs.

Table 4.9: Sample size Germany (summary by region)

	Germany		**North**		**West**		**South**		**East**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Actual sample size *(incl. screen outs)*	545	100	111	20	177	31	139	26	118	22
Actual sample size *(excl. screen outs)*	500	100	100	20	157	32	132	26	111	22

Table 4.10: Sample size New Zealand (summary by region)

	NZ		**AKL**		**WEL**		**Rest of North**		**CAN**		**Rest of South**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Actual sample size (incl. screen outs)	522	100	141	27	87	17	126	24	89	17	79	15
Actual sample size (excl. screen outs)	500	100	135	27	83	17	122	24	85	17	75	15

As a disproportionate quota sampling strategy was introduced during data collection, the actual sample was slightly different to the targeted proportionate sample. A balancing weight was assigned with the aim to correct the oversampled and undersampled subgroups to its proportionate distribution. In the following section, several pre-analytical requirements, including the development and introduction of design weights are introduced.

4.3.2 Data processing and pre-analytical requirements

Using the Qualtrics software to program the questionnaire and collect data online enabled an automatic generation of the data sets. The software allows the researcher to either evaluate questions directly online or export the entire data set in different formats (CSV, TSV, XML, SPSS). The statistical software IBM SPSS 23 (SPSS = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used for the statistical analyses in this research project. The automated export of the data proved to be extremely time efficient as no manual data entry was required. However, before data analyses, the data sets needed to be processed, structured and cleaned. Due to the case study approach and generation of two independent data sets, data processing and structuring was comparable. An identical data set structure and wording was pursued to encourage ease of analysis (e.g., use of one syntax for both data sets) and support comparison. The following actions were undertaken:

- Deletion of additional, redundant variables that were automatically created (e.g., progress, distribution channel);
- Unification of spelling for open responses (e.g. USA= US/United States of America/United States);
- Translation of German data set into English (based on English data set);
- Creation of additional variables (e.g., Respondent ID, Response type (complete, screen-out, quota full, partial);
- Merging and computing of variables (when required);
- Checking variable catalogue and variable codes, apply data transformation and add standardised value labels for categorical data, dummy coding for multiple response items; and
- Reverse coding for items negatively phrased (question on social identity).

After data processing and structuring, data cleaning and mining was necessary. The process of data cleaning and mining refers to the disclosure and elimination of errors by following several tests and procedures. The literature often refers to the principle *garbage in, garbage out* to emphasise the importance of data cleaning for the overall quality and validity of the research (Osborne, 2013). Hurley (2014) argued that using data without cleaning and checking them frequently results in obstacles occurring during data analysis. Quality checks were undertaken in relation to response errors, systematic bias and shirking behaviour such as response time (speeding), extreme response style, central tendency, acquiescence bias, leniency bias, inconsistency error (Bethlehem, 2009; Fang et al., 2016; Yüksel, 2017). Cases with high degrees of response errors were deleted to ensure quality and reliability of the data. This was relevant as multivariate analyses are required to comply with several conditions. In addition to the preparation of the data set in terms of structure and validity, post-stratifying weights were designed and implemented.

4.3.2.1 Checking and dealing with requirements for multivariate analyses

Multivariate analyses encompasses all statistical methods and techniques that are interested in understanding complex relationships among variables and are analysing multiple variables at the same time. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014) described the usefulness strength and power of multivariate analysis as a "[…] seemingly magical ability of sorting through a myriad number of possible alternatives and finding those with statistical significance" (p. 20). In addition to the general data accuracy inspections and cleaning processes, several assumptions are to be checked prior to conducting any multivariate analysis (J. Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Hair et al., 2014). Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) emphasised the importance of order when examining the data set and testing requirements as screening steps and adjustments can influence later steps of the validity check. Six steps were undertaken and are discussed in the following sections:

Step 1: Graphical inspection of univariate descriptive statistics.
Step 2: Identification of missing values.
Step 3: Examination of linearity and homoscedasticity
Step 4: Identification of univariate outliers and examination of normal distribution.
Step 5: Identification of multivariate outliers.
Step 6: Checking multicollinearity and singularity.

It is important to note that all multivariate analyses were conducted on a filtered data and only respondents that met the requirement of a FIT were considered.

Step 1: Graphical inspection of univariate descriptive statistics

Univariate descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviation are helpful to examine the accuracy of a data set and assist identifying anomalies, such as univariate outliers, in an early stage. Some scholars point to the importance and usefulness of graphical examination and data visualisation to identify any possible violation of the assumptions (J. Cohen et al., 2003). Univariate displays in the form of histograms were applied to understand the basic characteristics and relationships of the underlying data. They provided graphical representations of the frequency of the data and gave indications for a normal distribution. Histograms did not indicate any obvious deviations from normality or extremes (univariate outliers). Those variables that showed a slightly skewed curve were given special attention in Step 4 when further statistical tests were undertaken to investigate normality.

Step 2: Identification of missing values

The approach to missing data and the necessary distinction between data missing at random without pattern and data missing not at random but instead follow a specific pattern are thoroughly discussed in the literature. The mechanisms behind missing data are described as missing completely at random, missing at random, and missing not at random (Hair et al., 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The amount of missing data is to some extent neglectable, yet the type of missing data is central to the understanding of the overall quality and reliability of the data.

The majority of questions in this survey were required; which reduced the likeability of illegitimately and unignorably, not at random missing values. Missing data were expected for some questions due to the survey design and applied skip logics. As these missing data were inherent in the survey design, they were ignorable and as the sample size was sufficient, analysis was enabled (Hair et al., 2014). Despite the expected missing data, the inspection of missingness indicated that only very few values were missing with no systematic pattern and very low effect on the sample size and overall data quality. All system missing data were replaced with a dummy variable *99* and were specified as missing. Listwise deletion was adopted in both data sets and cases with any missing data were deleted completely. Listwise deletion is accepted as a reasonable approach when assumptions of missing data completely at random are satisfied and the sample size remains large enough (Hair et al., 2014). After application of the defined filter for multivariate analyses, no cases were removed through listwise deletion in the New Zealand data set and only three cases were deleted in the German data set.

Step 3: Examination of linearity and homoscedasticity

Linearity refers to the assumption that there is a straight line (linear) relationship between any two variables in the data set and this can be tested by examination of scatterplots (Hair et al., 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Theoretically, multiple regression analysis requires scatterplots of standardised residuals and correlations between the DV and each independent variables (IV). However, in data sets with a large number of IVs it is less beneficial and practical to examine any possible combination. Instead, Ullman (2014) suggested to inspect bivariate scatterplots of randomly selected variables. Homoscedasticity relates to the assumption that the variance of data points along the regression line is roughly the same across the range of IVs (Hair et al., 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The graphical inspections of homoscedasticity and linearity provided evidence for the normal distribution as no nonlinear relationships or heteroscedasticity were detected.

Step 4: Identification of univariate outliers and examination of normal distribution

Larger sample sizes with more than 200 cases are less vulnerable to deviations from normality, yet it is recommended to test univariate normality for any metric variable to ensure multivariate normality (Field, 2009). The assumption of normality is described by skewness and kurtosis. Skewness refers to the symmetry of the distribution and kurtosis reflects the peakedness or flatness of a distribution. A normal distribution has a skewness of 0, but is in the real world less likely. Values of skewness that exceed 2 (negative and positive), and values of kurtosis that exceed 7 are critical (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2014). The tests of skewness and kurtosis showed overall satisfying values, only two scales items in the German data set had skewness of >2. These deviations from normality were eliminated through transformation using factor scores. The survey design and closed-ended questions reduced the likelihood of extreme score. Nevertheless, the data sets were inspected for univariate outliers applying z-scores (standard scores). As a rule of thumb, Hair et al. (2014) identified absolute standard scores larger than 4 as potential univariate outlier in large sample sizes. No univariate extreme scores were noticed in the data sets.

Step 5: Identification of multivariate outliers

Multivariate outliers refer to one person’s score being outlandish across multiple variables in the data set (Hair et al., 2014). As discussed earlier, visual inspection of the overall data quality was undertaken in the initial screening to identify cases with response error or systematic bias. In addition, the Mahalanobis D2 measure was used to detect multivariate outliers. Mahalanobis D2 assesses any possible observation across the respective set of variables within a data set and allows to detect multivariate outliers. No multivariate outliers were present in the data sets.

Step 6: Checking multicollinearity and singularity

For multiple linear regression analysis, assumptions of multicollinearity and singularity need to be tested. Both assumptions are logically and statistically critical in multiple regression analysis as they detect either too high correlations between variables or the redundancy of single variables (Field, 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For the identification of multicollinearity or singularity, a correlation matrix with all IVs was conducted in order to inspect Pearson correlation and variance inflation factors (VIF). As discussed by Hair et al. (2014) small tolerance levels and large VIF would indicate high collinearity. Tolerance levels smaller than .50 mean that half of the variance of an IV is accounted for by another IV in the equation. The findings reveal low collinearity as the tolerance for each IV was higher than .70 and each VIF was smaller than 2.0.

4.3.2.2 Defining and implementing design weights

Post-stratifying weights confirm that a population proportionate sample is enabled and none of the strata in the data set are under or over represented. Callegaro et al. (2014) summarised the goals of post-stratifying weights as follows:

> They are intended to reduce bias and improve the accuracy of survey estimates by using auxiliary information to make post-survey adjustments. Auxiliary information is defined as a set of variables that have been measured in the survey and for which information on their population distribution (or complete sample distribution) is available. (p. 13)

Different weighting techniques and methods are discussed in the literature in regard to correction of recruitment bias and related nonresponse bias. The overall aim of any weighting technique is to control the composition of the sample (Bethlehem & Callegaro, 2014). Post-stratification was implemented as weighting adjustment technique in this study and was applied after completion of data collection. This technique required categorical auxiliary variables that can be crossed to divide the sample into internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous strata. When applying post-stratified weights, each survey respondent is assigned a corrective weight in the form of a multiplier to reconstruct the proportionate distribution and adjust data for representativeness (Bethlehem & Callegaro, 2014; Gittelman, Thomas, et al., 2015). All respondents that belonged to one specific strata were assigned the same balancing weight. The particular weight corresponded to the proportion of the strata in the overall target population.

Minimal quotas were imposed in this research project. The quotas controlled three predefined key variables, namely age, gender and region, while other variables remained uncontrolled. External standards from representative offline surveys, here census data were used to weight the sample and post-stratifying weights were employed in the data sets. The following formula was computed to define the post-stratification weight of each stratum: $w^k = [(N_x/N)/(n_x/n)]$. In the formula, *N* represents the population size, *n* the number of respondents, *x* the strata and w^k the weight for the element K in stratum x. Generally, a weight larger than 1 is assigned to individuals of subgroups that are underrepresented in the sample, whereas overrepresented groups are adjusted using a computed weight smaller than 1 (Thomaidou, Valavanioti, & Vassileiadis, 2013). The closer the post-stratification weight is to the value 1, the closer the sample to the actual population strata. Based on the implemented quota plan, there were 40 individual design weights computed for the German data set, ranging from $w^k = 0.7026089$ to $w^k = 1.742713$. In the case of the New Zealand data set, post-stratifying weights ranged from $w^k = 0.5078617$ to $w^k = 1.3796758$. The respective strata weights were assigned to the respondents' IDs within each strata and a variable added to the respective SPSS data files for later case weighting.

4.3.3 Quantitative data analysis methods

Several univariate and multivariate analyses were introduced for quantitative data analyses. Syntaxes were designed and implemented as they enabled the use of the same command in both data sets with only slight adjustments and the command could be easily replicated when necessary. Before any data analysis was undertaken, it was necessary to enable the specific case weighting. Several analyses also required the application of filters to allow the consideration of cases that are relevant to the respective statistical analysis (e.g., only respondents that have travelled internationally, only respondents that fit the requirement of a FIT).

In a first step, univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics were computed and central tendencies, frequencies, cross-tabulations and Pearson's Chi-square tests applied. These analyses provided an overall understanding of the data sets, helped the researcher to familiarise herself with the data and provided a final assurance of accuracy of the data files as well as the satisfaction of assumptions for multivariate analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Frequencies and percentages were rounded to on one place behind the decimal point, mean scores reported using two decimal places and all other statistics (e.g., standard deviation, *p*-values, standardised beta-coefficients) expressed and rounded to three decimal places. Slight percentage deviations from the total are due to rounding and affected by the activated weighting factor.

Multivariate analyses were central to this research. As summarised by Spicer (2005) "[t]he fundamental aim of any multivariate analysis is to detect coherent patterns in complex data" (p. 181). Each data set comprised more than 150 variables. For reasons of practicability without risking the loss of information, data reduction techniques were applied and several variables summarised. Ordinal-scaled categorical data including multiple response categorical variables were merged and reduced based on Pearson's Chi-square correlations and cross-tabulations. For interval-scaled items, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), more precisely, principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted, data reduction and summarisation was realised and factor scores derived. Regression factor scores were implemented in the data sets and multiple linear regression analysis was conducted independently in both data sets to test the strength of relationships between IVs and the self-assessed experience level as DV.

It is important to note that only respondents that fit the requirement of FIT were considered for multivariate analyses. Bearing in mind the mixed methods research approach, mixing took place in all research phases and inferences derived from the qualitative findings informed not only the questionnaire design as such, but also influenced statistical analyses. With the dominant outcome and assumption of industry experts that experienced tourists have travelled internationally and are FITs, the core statistical analyses were conducted based on a filtered data set that only included FITs.

4.3.3.1 Establishing factor analysis scores

The overall objective of factor analysis is to investigate the structure of interrelationships among metric variables and diminish collinearity by reducing highly correlated variables into factors (latent variables) (Hair et al., 2014). Factor analysis is an interdependence technique that can be applied for exploratory or confirmatory purposes (Spicer, 2005). In this research, EFA was carried out for variable reduction (R-type factor analysis) and the derivation of regression factor scores. PCA was applied as method of factor extraction and varimax rotation used (Hair et al., 2014; Ho, 2006). Several scholars challenge classifying PCA as a true method of factor analysis as it disregards underlying structure of latent variables and uses simplified mathematical processes (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). As data reduction and replacement of a large amount of variables with a smaller set of factors were the primary objective in this analytical research step, the aggregation of correlated variables into uncorrelated factors (components) was sufficient. In addition to the generally required satisfaction of assumptions for multivariate analyses discussed previously, PCA requires factorability of the correlation matrix R (Spicer, 2005). Several bivariate correlations must exceed .30 to successfully conduct PCA. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is to be inspected for a minimum value of .50 to be acceptable for PCA to be employed (Hair et al., 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

There were eight scaled question comprising 47 variables in the questionnaire. All variables were initially included in the PCA. Communalities of at least .50 are required for variables to be factorable (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Variables that showed communalities lower than .50 were excluded from the PCA. Several variables showed cross-loadings, meaning that they strongly correlated with more than one factor. As this indicates complexity and causes ambiguity in interpretation, pure markers were aimed for and cross-loaded variables were also excluded. The cases per variable ratio was 10:1 in the German data set and 13:1 in the New Zealand data set, therefore satisfying the minimal requirement of 5:1 (Hair et al., 2014). Simple correlations and anti-image correlations were inspected for factorability and KMO statistics and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Anti-image correlations were diagonal greater than .50, KMO measures were satisfactory in both data sets (Germany KMO: .801; New Zealand KMO: .816) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$). Only factors with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 were retained and scree tests conducted (Appendix K). For the German data set, nine factors with pure markers and factor scores of at least .50 were extracted. In the case of the New Zealand data set eight uncorrelated factors remained. Defining .50 as minimum factor loading for variables to be interpreted corresponds to at least 20% of overlapping variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The extracted factors in the German data set represented 64.2% and the variance in the New Zealand data set corresponded to 64.3%.

A general accepted rule of thumb is a minimum of three items per factor, however, it is argued that two items per factor are acceptable when the variables are highly correlated with each other, but uncorrelated with other variables (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). In the case of New Zealand, one factor was composed of only two items. As these two variables were strongly correlated (> .80) and Cronbach's alpha coefficients evidenced high scale reliability, the factor was retained. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to test internal consistency and reliability for all scale items. Generally, a level of $\alpha > .70$ is defined as the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha coefficient. However, Hair et al. (2014) argued that a limit of $\alpha > .60$ is acceptable when the research is explanatory in nature. Thus, a minimum level of $\alpha > .60$ was applied in this study. In a last step, the extracted factors were labelled.

In this research, EFA was computed with the major aim to reduce the large number of IVs and deploy the information derived for later multiple linear regression analyses in both data sets. To facilitate the use of the information, individual factor scores needed to be created. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) defined factor scores as "estimates of the scores that subjects would have received on each of the factors had they been measured directly" (p. 655). Different computation methods for factor score derivation are proposed, mainly distinguishing unrefined and refined methods (DiStefano, Zhu, & Mîndrilă, 2009). In this research project, regression factor scores were computed for the cases relevant to the factor and the derived factor scores treated as IVs in the subsequent multiple linear regression analysis. As the factor scores constituted new data for follow-up analyses, the general assumptions for multivariate analyses were tested again with a positive outcome.

4.3.3.2 Conducting multiple linear regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis has two broader aims that are not mutually exclusive, but complementary: First, to uncover the best combinations and relationships between several IVs in order to predict one continuous outcome, the DV; Second, to encourage casual analysis without aiming to establish causal relationships (Allison, 1999; Kleinbaum, Kupper, Nizam, & Muller, 2007). In addition to the general satisfaction of assumptions to conduct multivariate analyses, conducting multiple linear regression analysis requires specific scale propositions. The DV must be continuous (metric) and the IVs can be continuous (metric) or categorical (nonmetric). All discrete, nonmetric variables were converted into dummy variables representing a set of dichotomous variables that were coded as 0 (*not selected*) and 1 (*selected*). All observations of the predicted variable were required to be statistically independent, which was tested by Durbin-Watson statistics and no evidence for dependencies among variables was detected (Ho, 2006; Kleinbaum et al., 2007).

Despite the identification of IVs that predict the DV, it was tested whether and to what degree any predictor variable described, affected and influenced the outcome variable. The linear equation for multiple regression is expressed as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots.. + \beta_k X_k + E$. In this linear equation, Y is the raw score of the DV and the observable random variable. The letter X is the measureable raw score of the respective IV. E is the residual error that reflects the observed response Y and the true average response. E is also described as the standard error of estimate to measure the error of prediction. β_0 represents the intercept (point on vertical axis) and $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_k$ denote the regression coefficient of X or slope parameter that needs to be estimated (Kleinbaum et al., 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

There are different approaches to apply multiple linear regression analysis. Standard multiple linear regression and sequential (hierarchical) multiple regression rely on any form of preexisting theoretical or conceptual knowledge to decide which predictor variables to entry and when, statistical (stepwise) regression, by contrast, allows exploratory model building (Spicer, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Utilisation of an algorithm is necessary to identify the most important IVs and identify the *best* equation. Three different forms of statistical regression are established: backward elimination, forward elimination and stepwise regression (Hair et al., 2014; Ho, 2006).

Backward elimination was identified as the preferred procedure to specify the best equation with the least number of IVs that predict the DV and describe a percentage of variance. Generally, backward elimination is considered the most favourable of the three statistical regression techniques, especially with a sample from a well-defined population. It eliminates the risk that a regressor that is added in an earlier step might become redundant in the process or a regressor that was eliminated might have been significant in combination with other predictors that were included later (Hair et al., 2014). However, to ensure that the regression procedure with the smallest bias and best possible regression equation is utilised, all possible stepwise-type procedures that involve the evaluation of a small subset of regression models by adding, deleting or simultaneously adding and deleting variables were conducted and results of the variable elimination options compared. Results from the three regression procedures led to very similar regression equations, yet with the highest R^2 in the case of backward elimination. In addition, validation techniques and cross-validation checks with 80-20 data sets were applied. Bearing in mind that the aim of this study was model building rather than model testing and against the background of the overall complexity of the research methods, only the results from backward elimination are reported and discussed.

A first step in backward elimination is the identification of the maximum model, which corresponds to the largest model encompassing all possible predictor variables (Kleinbaum et al., 2007). A large maximum model reduces a Type II (false negative) error in the regression analysis as bias in the estimated regression coefficient is reduced. However, overfitting the model can induce high collinearity and interfere with Type I (false positive) error to include predictors that show zero population regression coefficient. In other words, a model that contains all IVs delivers the maximum regression coefficient R^2, but the significance of IVs in describing the DV is neglected (Kleinbaum et al., 2007). There is no general accepted rule for the maximum number of IVs to be included. The focus in achieving highly stable regression coefficients lies on reducing collinearity and minimising the residual mean square to maximise the multiple correlation value. In addition, the sample size and statistic power are to be investigated in relation to the maximum number of IVs remaining in the equation. The smaller the anticipated effect size, the more cases are required per IV in the equation. Between 15 and 20 observations per IV are desirable to enable generalisability of findings (Hair et al., 2014).

After bivariate and multivariate data reduction, 50 variables met the requirement to be entered in the multiple linear regression. Based on the individual *p*-value, the IV that least significantly contributed to R^2 was eliminated one at a time. This sequential search process was repeated until the best fit model equation was achieved and no further IV could be eliminated through backward regression. Overall, 19 IVs remained in the German equation predicting an experienced tourist. This indicates a ratio of 17 cases per variable. In the case of New Zealand, 20 variables were identified as predictor variables for the DV, equally corresponding to a satisfying ratio of 17:1. The last step of backward regression was the validation of the regression variate. This check included the examination of linearity, homoscedasticity, independence of residuals and normality (Hair et al., 2014). The analysis of standardised residuals showed linear pattern and indicated homoscedasticity in the respective set of predictor variables. Normal P-P plots of regression for standardised residuals were computed to test for normality of the error term (Figure 4.13).

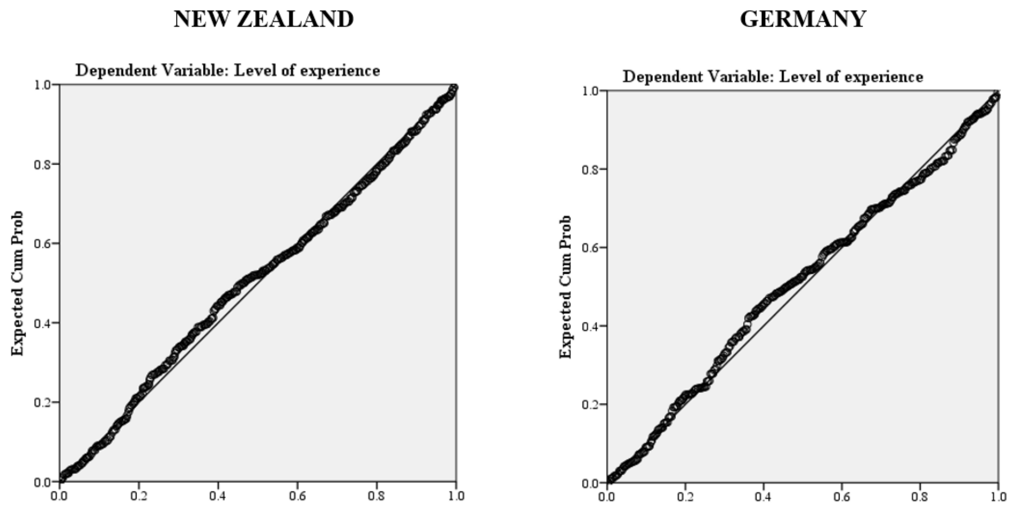


Figure 4.13: Normal P-P plots of regression for standardised residuals

Figure 4.13 illustrates that there are no systematic or substantial departures from the diagonal straight line. This indicates that the regression variates in both data sets meet the assumed normality.

4.3.4 Checking the validity and reliability of the quantitative data

In quantitative paradigms, reliability is defined as "the accuracy and precision of the measurement and the absence of differences if the research were repeated" (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 52). High levels of accuracy of the survey methods and techniques are required to establish consistency of the research. Reliability refers to the replicability of the research with the aim that the research can be repeated at any time with similar results. Conclusively, reliable results imply a low degree of random error (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Several statistical tests were introduced throughout the research to assess internal consistency and reliability (e.g., Item to total correlations, Cronbach's alpha), these were discussed in the previous sections.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed the dependability of validity and reliability and summarised that "a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability]" (p. 316). Although the concept of internal validity is not universally described, quantitative researchers broadly describe internal validity as the "extent to which a test measures what the researcher wants it to measure and the results reflect the phenomena under study" (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 53). Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed in this research project. The former tests the correlation between two measures of the same concept and aims for high correlations, the latter examines the distinctiveness of one construct compared to another similar concept and thus pursues poorly correlated variables (Hair et al., 2014). Correlation matrices also supported the tests of validity and homogeneity in this research phase of the mixed methods study.

One of the major aims of quantitative research is to achieve external validity, which is mainly concerned with the generalisability of research findings from the respective sample to a population to encourage wider claims (Creswell et al., 2008). The generalisability of findings is dependent on the sampling strategy and is related to the sampling error and defined confidence intervals (de Vaus, 2014). Tests of statistical significance were undertaken to ensure that derived results did not happen by chance, but instead are statistically sound and thus generalisable to the population. Bearing in mind that sampling was based on a 95% confidence level and a $\pm$5% margin of error and in addition an interlocked quota was employed, generalisability to the respective target population is enhanced.

The role of questionnaire design, question phrasing and scale development for quantitative research to be reliable and valid was discussed in section 4.3.1.1. The three pretest phases applied prior to the full launch of the survey further contributed to construct and content validity of this research.

4.4 Research ethics

The term ethics is summarised as "the moral values or principles that form the basis of a code of conduct" (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 30). There are several ethical guidelines to be considered when doing research. These include, but are not limited to, anonymity, confidentiality, informed or voluntary consent, reciprocity, and voluntariness of participation. Conducting ethically sound qualitative research requires "explicit agreements about shared expectations" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 56). For any research that involves human beings, it is a condition of the Auckland University of Technology to receive approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). The researcher of this study submitted a detailed application for this first research phase to AUTEC and the approval was granted on April 5, 2016, AUTEC reference number 16/86 (Appendix L).

In addition to technical and practical considerations, ethical requirements need to be met when conducting quantitative surveys. De Vaus (2014), discussed five ethical responsibilities to conduct surveys: "1 voluntary participation, 2 informed consent, 3 no harm, 4 anonymity and confidentiality, and 5 privacy" (p. 56). All aspects were addressed in the ethics application for the second research phase of this study and were previously addressed. AUTEC confirmed the research on December 9, 2016 (Reference number 16/406) (Appendix M).

4.5 Methodological limitations

All research has limitations that are to some degree caused by the contextual nature of a study and the study settings rendering the majority of studies culture-specific (Dimanche, 1994), but also by the unavoidable subjective nature of any research. Patton (2002) argued that "[t]he ideals of absolute objectivity and value-free science are impossible to attain in practice" (p. 50) as human beings design the questions asked and the questions are thus influenced by the researcher's subjectivity. This section describes several methodological limitations that somehow restricted the data collection procedures.

This research project encompassed two case studies from two different cultural and linguistic settings and expanded the overall research frame to cross-cultural settings. However, the results are limited to the two case study countries, namely Germany and New Zealand and occupy Western perspectives. Although the researcher's bilingual background and familiarity with both countries upgraded her as an insider and thus limited potential cultural misunderstandings, several linguistic challenges, particularly in regard to standardisation of the research instruments, remained. Strategies to achieve linguistic equivalence throughout the research were discussed in the previous sections. However, unambiguous equivalence and heterogeneity can never be fully achieved.

The purposive sampling strategy in the first qualitative phase of this study aimed at managers from DMOs of different levels, however, did not incorporate any other tourism providers that are critical in the creation of experiences (in particular providers of tourism attractions). In regard to possible qualitative interview bias, Miles et al. (2014) refer to the elite bias, which tends to give articulate and well-informed interview partners more weight in the data analysis. Bearing in mind the relatively high status and knowledgeability of all the respondents, elite bias was limited. This becomes evident in Chapter 5 as quotes of all participants appear equally.

Another methodological limitation concerning the second quantitative research phase is related to the data collection tool and related coverage bias. Despite the advantages of web surveys listed in section 4.3.1, they exclude people without internet access and thus reduce the generalisability of research findings to the overall population. In order to minimise the coverage bias, the target population was limited to the online active population aged 20 to 69 years. Closely related to the limitations regarding the factor of age is the assumption that members of web access panels are generally more active on the internet and are thus a particular target group in itself (Callegaro et al., 2014).

Several potential biases were discussed in the literature in relation to self-reported data in general and self-rated scales in particular. Aspects such as the honesty of the respondents or the differences in understanding and interpreting questions and scales were addressed and it was assumed that a truly objective rating is difficult if not impossible to achieve (Gittelman, Lange, et al., 2015; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004). Furthermore, the self-completion of questionnaires online has been critiqued for their inability to encourage communication between the researcher and the respondents in the case of any uncertainty and possible data entry errors (Williams, 2003). Despite these general limitations associated with self-administered questionnaires, self-rating scales and response bias, the applied quality checks prior to data analyses and tests for validity and reliability verified that limitations related to measurement and construct equivalence were kept at minimum.

Lastly, the geographical locations of the two case studies resulted in limitations with regards to the timing of data collection. The quantitative online survey took place in late January 2017. Although it did not fall into the Christmas holiday period, the findings are likely to be influenced by the respondents' Christmas holiday trips, which might follow particular routines. While New Zealanders undertake their summer holidays during the Christmas holiday period and predominantly visit Australia for holiday or VFR purposes, many Germans travel to the neighbouring alpine countries (e.g., Austria, Switzerland, Italy) for skiing. Bearing in mind that two question blocks referred to the most recent international main holiday, there is a likelihood that these destinations are overrepresented. However, as these travel destinations are generally among the preferred holiday destinations among New Zealanders (Statistics New Zealand, 2017) and Germans (FUR Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen e.V., 2017), the impact of the timing on the study results was assumed limited.

SET THE STAGE

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LET THE DATA SPEAK

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Chapter 6	Quantitative Findings

GIVE IT MEANING

Chapter 7	Discussion and Interpretation
Chapter 8	Conclusion

CHAPTER 5 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

In doing tourism we do not represent the world and its inhabitants, rather we participate in it from a particular entrance through our bodies.
(Pons, 2003, p. 58).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the first research phase of this two-phased mixed methods approach study. With the aim to explore the supply-side perspective of an experienced tourist, data were collected using semi-structured interviews with German and New Zealand industry experts from 15 DMOs. Overall, the data revealed more commonalities than disparities between and across the two case studies. Thus, findings are reported without particular distinction between Germany and New Zealand and a general shared understanding of an experienced tourist from a supply-side perspective is derived. In the few instances of distinctive differences between case studies or interview participants, these views are clearly highlighted. The findings from the interviews with industry leaders are supported by relevant quotes from all research participants and are structured in line with the format of the interview guide (Appendix C).

At the beginning of each interview participants provided background information about the DMO, the tourist destination they are representing and their role(s) within the DMO. Summarised findings related to the organisational structures, destination features, and participants' roles are presented in section 5.2. Direct quotes and extracts are kept to a minimum to ensure internal confidentiality and reduce the risk of deductive disclosure and possible identification of any participant's or organisation's identity within this research project (Kaiser, 2009). Hereafter, the industry representatives' perceptions of today's tourists and the perceived changes in the tourism demand are explored (section 5.3). This general overview of today's tourists is followed by the supply-side's understanding of an experienced tourist in section 5.4 and the expected influences of past experiences and higher experience levels on travel behaviour presented in section 5.5. Bearing in mind that talking about the future of tourism is a hypothetical approach and relative in nature as circumstances can change rapidly, the industry experts shared ideas concerning future challenges are introduced in section 5.6, followed by a conclusion on the supply-side perspective of an experienced tourist (section 5.7).

5.2 Introducing the interview partners

Based on the purposive sampling strategy, DMOs that represent tourist destinations with diverse product portfolios on different destination levels were selected for data collection. This purposive selection process is mirrored in the findings as destinations varied from seasonal beach destinations, to year round city destinations, to destinations with mountainous terrains and a different seasonal focus, to transregional destinations. All participants had management roles within their particular organisations ranging from positions such as Head of Marketing, Head of Consumer Insights and Head of Visitor Services to General Manager and CEO. The majority of interviews were conducted individually between the researcher herself and the invited expert. In three cases, two people represented the organisations and 18 leaders from 15 DMOs were interviewed.

Thirteen interview partners were male and five participants were female. The overrepresentation of male interview partners is attributable to the dominance of males in management and executive positions in tourism (Costa et al., 2017). No gender distinction in reporting or interpreting the findings was made in this study. An overview of the organisations and interview partners is provided in Table 5.1. Information in this table is limited to the participants' references and do not consider any additional material that is publicly available (e.g., strategic paper). Due to reasons of internal confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the list does not contain the pseudonyms that are used in later chapters of this thesis.

Interview partners represented companies with varying structures and different sizes, yet similar responsibilities. The organisations major functions and responsibilities were to promote the respective destination nationally and internationally. Several participants elaborated on the destination's branding propositions, product portfolio and new product developments, such as off season travel and (local) events. Some organisations comprised visitor services and had direct contact with customers through visitor centres, call centres and/or online services. With the exception of promoting the destination for leisure travel, several industry representatives mentioned business travel, congresses and conventions as part of their responsibilities.

Table 5.1: Background of organisations and interview partners

Case study	Position(s) interviewees*	Organisational functions and responsibilities	Size**	Funding and government structure	Direct customer contact (DMO)
GER	Head of Visitor Services (F)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*) Corporate affairs Visitor services PR/media relations	Large	Public-private partnership with shareholder structure	Yes
GER	Head of Consumer Insights (M)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*) Corporate affairs PR/media relations	Large	Government funded (100%)	No
GER	Head of Consumer Insights (M)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*) Tour operator (direct sales) PR/media relations	Medium	Public-private with shareholder structure	Yes
GER	CEO (F) Head of Consumer Insights (M)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*) Corporate affairs/advocacy group	Medium	Membership organisation (shareholder) with elected government board and additional government funds	No
GER	CEO (M)	Destination Marketing Corporate affairs/advocacy group	Small	Membership organisation	No
GER	CEO (M)	Destination Marketing Corporate affairs	Medium	Membership organisation (shareholder)	No
GER	Head of Consumer Insights (M)	Destination marketing Visitor service *(direct sales through cooperation)*	Medium	Membership organisation	Yes
NZ	Head of Tourism (M)	Destination marketing	Large	--	Yes

Case study	Position(s) interviewees*	Organisational functions and responsibilities	Size**	Funding and government structure	Direct customer contact (DMO)
		(national/international; business/leisure) Visitor services Cross-sectional economic development			
NZ	Head of Marketing (F)	Destination marketing *(business/leisure)* Visitor services PR/media relations	Medium	Majorly council and local government	Yes
NZ	CEO (M)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*)	Small	Tourism promotion levy commercial rate payers, governed by board of elected representatives	No
NZ	General Manager (M)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*)	Small	Funded, owned and governed by cooperating tourism operators	No
NZ	General Manager Regional Promotion (M)	Destination marketing Cross-sectional economic development and promotion	Small	--	No
NZ	Chief Advisor (M) Communication Manager (F)	Association of special interest providers Corporate affairs/advocacy group	Small	Membership organisation with additional government funds	Yes
NZ	CEO (M) Head of Visitor Service (M)	Business development Investments in attractions Destination marketing Visitor services	Medium	Public-private partnership, council controlled with independent board	Yes
NZ	Consumer Insights Analyst (F)	Destination marketing *(national/international; business/leisure*) Corporate affairs PR/media relations	Large	Government funded (tax payer) (100%)	No

* M =Male, F=Female // ** small ≤ 19, medium 20-99, large ≥ =100.

German destination marketers emphasised the economic significance of business travel in some regions and accentuated the advantages of the many industrial sites and headquarters of globally acting companies in Germany. Industry experts explained that these operating sites are mainly responsible for traditional business trips (e.g., visiting customers/suppliers/headquarters, meeting at other companies' locations) that are otherwise less amenable to influence by DMOs. New Zealand experts assessed business travel within the country as currently less important, yet several participants pointed to new initiatives and infrastructural developments to create more demand for business travel. Corporate affairs and representation of interests in governmental and stakeholders' groups were also stated as major components of the particular DMO's work and several interview partners expanded on the organisation's funding and governmental structure

5.3 Identifying today's tourists

To enable a comprehensive picture and overview of the demand-side of tourism from a supply-side perspective, industry experts reported on the observed changes with particular reference to leisure visitors. Participants reviewed changes in the visitor mix and strongly emphasised the necessary distinction between guests from traditional travel markets and guests from new emerging travel markets. General changes in the travel behaviour were expressed and experts commented on changes in relation to information and booking behaviour, online engagement, travel motives and trip activities.

5.3.1 The increasingly multicultural visitor mix

Industry experts discussed the changing and increasingly multicultural visitor mix and referred to the distribution between domestic and international guests. In relative terms, the domestic market was still dominant in most destinations; however, recent growth rates were mostly attributable to the increase in international tourist arrivals. The majority of German experts indicated that their future focus lies primarily on expanding arrival numbers from international guests and it was suggested that marketing budgets need to be newly allocated and shifted.

GER2: Our aim is 25 percent international guests. We haven't reached that yet. In terms of our destination marketing, our major source market still remains the domestic market.

Although New Zealand representatives appraised the growth in international arrivals, they highlighted the recent re-engagement with the domestic market. This re-engagement was linked to the high seasonality that many New Zealand destinations are facing and the need to encourage more tourists to travel during the shoulder seasons. Experts also elaborated on the increasingly multicultural domestic market and the opportunities arising from it. Temporary and permanent migrants explore their new home country by themselves and in addition, create reasons for friends and family to visit them which further encourages growth in the VFR segment. This growth was found to be solidly linked to students and the strong connection between the tourism and education sector in New Zealand was highlighted as follows:

NZ4: [...] potentially a significant fact for the future visitor experience, and what it looks like in New Zealand, is the role of international education, particularly for non-English speaking countries. I don't know what it means yet, but it is pretty obvious that we have to be aware of international education, because it is a significant driver and form and lead indicator or lead driver of international markets. They are the best ambassadors.

New Zealand is a long haul destination for most international visitors (with the exclusion of Australian and Pacific Island visitors) and many visitors stay for an extended period of time for holiday or VFR purposes. German experts described different travel forms and durations depending on the source market as well as proximity to Germany and affirmed the centrality of business travel in some regions.

GER1: [...] for Europeans we are a short trip destination. [...]. For visitors from overseas, business trips are quite dominant, in some parts 30 to 40 per cent, less VFR and if holiday, than as part of a Europe trip.

Additionally, it was mentioned that the diversity of countries of origin and the cultural diversity of visitor markets had changed within the past years. Connectivity (predominantly by air) and legislative changes in some countries were outlined as dominant drivers behind the increased number of international guests. Due to the geographic isolation, issues of connectivity were particularly raised by New Zealand experts. A link to the extension of flight networks was established and it was unambiguously asserted that the improved connectivity had affected the visitor mix and the tourism industry's overall success.

NZ8: Firstly, the visitor flows into New Zealand are determined by the air capacity. [...]. Without the air capacity, we are more limited with what we can achieve. That is sort of the macro trend.

Interviewees ascertained different developments between more established travel markets and new source markets. They emphasised that the travel behaviour in traditional source markets remained fairly stable within the past years, while changes in the travel behaviour of tourists from emerging source markets were detectable. Participants exemplified these changes by referring to China and the other BRIC nations[1], the Gulf States and Latin American countries.

GER7: Other than that, all other countries, the emerging markets, the 'newer markets', such as Saudi Arabia, Iran or the Gulf States, Israel, the BRIC countries, they change their travel behaviour radically, more or less within a decade. [...] in countries such as France, Germany or Switzerland it remains pretty much unchanged and constant – in general, despite new paths and increased past travel experience – people who move internationally, think globally and so forth – that is surprising.

Despite the accelerated changes in travel behaviour, experts concluded that visitors from new emerging source markets were undergoing similar steps in terms of travel biography, just at a faster pace and an accelerated learning curve.

GER1: Well, there are two waves of Chinese travellers. First, they discovered new countries as part of a group and with a tour operator. Then they said 'Okay I know how Europe works and can do it on my own, more independently'.

Group travel was observed to be the preferred travel form by tourists from emerging markets. However, New Zealand experts had recently noticed more individual travellers from these emerging and maturing countries. German experts declared that changes from group to individual travel were just rudimentarily visible.

GER4: Indeed, the second wave is directing towards individual travel, observable, however, are groups.

NZ6: [...] but I think one of the things that has changed a lot though in particular, the Chinese one is maybe the most visible that we are starting to see here, is the shift from group to semi-FIT, or a certain element of that.

The development and changes from the Chinese markets were dominant in the discussions that evolved around the new visitor mix. New Zealand experts pointed to the importance of other Asian markets such as Indonesia and South Korea and identified a recent growth in arrivals from Latin America (borne by improved air links). German participants also acknowledged Asian markets, yet emphasis was given to the fast growing Middle Eastern source markets, particularly Saudi Arabia and Israel. In addition to changes in the source markets and the market mix, behavioural changes of today's tourists were also considered.

[1] BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China

5.3.2 *The increasingly hybrid tourists in the digitalised world*

Interview participants unanimously agreed that tourists are travelling more often yet in shorter timeframes and are becoming increasingly hybrid tourists. This means that the tourists' motives change and there are no clear patterns behind decision-making and travel behaviour.

GER5: [...] we know there is the hybrid travel behaviour, which means domestic, international, different travel forms, they alternate.

The findings revealed that today's tourists engage in traditional tourist activities, as they want to see the must-see places and a destination's point of interest (POI). At the same time, several industry experts described that selling these attractions had changed. It was thought that reaching out to potential guests became more complex as competition and communication channels had increased. One participant commented:

GER2: The classic POIs [...] remain the main driver to visit a destination. Selling these POIs, however, is now more differentiated and needs to be more original.

Another major feature of today's tourists was observed to be the appreciation of authentic experiences. Tourists are generally believed to seek places off the popular travel routes and want to be closer to the population that resides in the destination. Commenting on off the beaten track and authentic experiences, several participants explained that this does not necessarily mean special and unique, but can also refer to mundane, regular and normal life experiences.

NZ2: [...] visitors are looking for the more authentic experiences. Authentic is how we live today. Getting an insight into how we live today. [...]. Being able to sit down with the locals, and see what is going on in their world, get an idea. So that is what is coming through, there is a greater demand for these authentic experiences. It doesn't have to be engineered or manufactured it can be just 'real'.

Experts described these experiences as *back to the roots* and *real experiences* and pointed to the importance of sensory experiences. Industry representatives assumed that tourists are increasingly engaging in activities that stimulate all their senses, they, "want to feel it, want to smell it, and want to touch it" (NZ6). This view was echoed by another participant who came to a similar conclusion, "just breathing the air and hearing the birds and seeing the water at your feet and all that stuff" (NZ4). Industry experts proposed that today's tourists have developed from passive spectators to active participants who want to be fully immersed in the destination and the experience.

NZ3: *And I think the other big shift is away from having seen something to having experienced something. The days of taking a photo of symbols and showing photos to all of your friends once you get back home and ticking the box that you have been there is no longer enough.*

Another observed aspect was the autonomy of tourists. One expert reported that tourists, "are much more aware of what is on offer, what is possible, what they can do, what they can see and do. So, self-selection is what is happening" (NZ7). It was further stated that today's hybrid tourist's multi-optional behaviour and themed travel choices, challenge the role of the tourist destination. This is exemplified in the following quote:

GER2: *When I research for my next trip and search information to facilitate decision-making, it is rarely the case that I know 'I want to do a [themed] trip, it can only be [destination]'. Most of the times I have different options kept in sight.*

In relation to booking behaviour, experts agreed that tourists are booking most trip elements short term, are gradually using online channels and make decisions more spontaneously. One participant summarised that, "[t]he cut-off days are significantly shorter" (GER2). In terms of the lead time, experts differentiated between shorter and longer holidays and holidays to places in close proximity and destinations further away. One interviewee concluded that, "trips in proximity are planned and booked with shortened lead time compared to the past" (GER4). Experts also emphasised the growing affinity for the internet and stated that the changing media behaviour was reflected in the tourists' information and online booking behaviour.

GER5: *We do also see that the internet is highly important when it comes to booking – at the same time, it is not the only source that needs to be acknowledged [...]. And we noticed that the topic information and inspiration and the question, "how I prepare for a trip" as a second question in the digital controlled travel decision-making, is growing in importance.*

One German participant shared interesting insights from a study conducted by Google and the German tour operator TUI on the time spent on inspiration and decision-making. The summarised results of the survey are shown in the following quote:

GER5: *This [the inspiration phase] is not carried out in one piece, but comprises a period of around nine hours in total. Principally, a full working day that the traveller spends in front of his device - mobile, tablet - to get informed and inspired before booking or making a final purchasing decision.*

Findings indicated that changes in online behaviour were observable throughout the travel journey as tourists continuously search for additional information. Experts also referred to the remaining importance of word-of-mouth (WOM), yet simultaneously growing significance of Web 2.0, user-generated content (UGC) and online social networks (OSN) in relation to booking and information behaviour prior to the trip and media behaviour during the trip.

NZ8: *Fifty percent of the people who see somebody's post will be encouraged to visit the location. [...]. It is just word-of-mouth on stereo. It is just a slightly different channel to tell the story.*

The experts explained that new possibilities established through UGC and OSN enable digital memories for tourist themselves and act as sources of inspiration for other travellers. This further accelerates the process of the individual's experience accumulation.

5.4 Outlining the dimensions of an experienced tourist

Experts identified various factors that are influential in the individual's process of experience accumulation and are meant to distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist. Based on Saldaña's (2016) codes-to-theory model, findings related to the dimensions of an experienced tourist were coded and categorised. Two overall themes emerged and were summarised as personal identifiers and external facilitators.

5.4.1 The profile of an experienced tourist: Personal identifiers

Experts identified several sociodemographic factors as being relevant for the process of experience accumulation. In addition, research participants listed elements of the (desired) social identity that were associated with an experienced tourist. Aspects related to life stage and daily life routines were also mentioned and categorised as influential dimensions. Lastly, the personal travel biographies were observed to clearly impact the accumulation of travel experiences. These four categories were identified as being subjective and unique to the individual. Thus, the first overall theme was labelled *personal identifiers* that frame the profile of an experienced tourist.

5.4.1.1 Sociodemographic factors

There was unanimous agreement that travel experience is likely to grow over a lifetime and with age. However, several interviewees accentuated the generation change and addressed the accelerated accumulation of travel experiences of younger generations. It was noted that younger generations, particularly the Generation Y, accumulate travel experiences earlier in their lives. Experts emphasised that the younger generations' parents possess a specific level of prior travel experience and are in a different stage of being experienced tourists. As a result, children of experienced tourists are introduced to other stages of the travel lifecycle. One participant proposed that, "the accumulation process of the generation of your parents differs from people who are 20 years old" (GER2). Findings from the semi-structured interviews suggest differences in the travel consumptions and media behaviour of the younger generation when travelling. This was claimed to be an important factor in regard to the accumulation of experiences from early childhood as highlighted in the following quote:

GER5: [...] for the younger generation, the Generation Y, a hotel is no longer satisfactory [...]. Well, I can imagine that the Generation Y values free independent travel much more. They might have grown up differently, have consumed much more conventionalised goods early in their life. Everyone has an iPhone, everyone has the same experiences. Maybe they have stayed in hotels since their childhood and that is the reason why they are looking for more authentic places.

In addition to the demographic factor of age and the associated changes across generations, the country of origin and the resulting cultural imprint were recurrent codes in the distinction of an experienced tourist. One interviewee postulated that, "it depends on the market where they are coming from. It depends on how sophisticated they are as a traveller" (NZ1). Overall, people from Western, more developed countries and mature travel markets (particularly Europe) were associated with higher levels of prior travel experiences and classified as experienced tourists. Several New Zealand experts exemplified the typical behaviour of an experienced tourist using the German tourist as shown in the example below:

NZ1: The Germans really want to get engaged with us as a country and us as people. They want to get a really good experience of who we are.

Although it was commonly agreed that experienced tourists are predominantly from the Western, developed markets, it was advocated that new emerging travel markets are catching up quickly. The development of the Chinese market was highlighted and it was hypothesised that the improved accessibility, travel freedom and emerging middle class support the accumulation of travel experiences and thus a growing segment of experienced tourists within China.

The disposable income of experienced tourists was also mentioned and experts maintained that the individual's economic wealth is important as it encourages experience accumulation. Experienced tourists were observed to be more affluent and hold a specific economic status. Educational background, language and communication skills were assessed to be an influencing factor and were expressed as critical links to distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist.

NZ3: [...] education and the standard of their education obviously has an influence. Their language capability, their ability to communicate in the market they are going to.

One German expert linked this change in language and communication skills to the change in education system as well as generation change:

GER5: The generation previous to our generation had travelled already. They chose packaged group holidays as they were unable to speak the language and communicate – they were even afraid to travel on their own in Europe. Nowadays we have English [...].

Another industry representative critically questioned the over emphasis of formal education and addressed the broader concept of life experience:

GER4: It is certainly easier when people have a higher education level, especially in terms of language. Ultimately, everyone has the freedom to travel around the world. That is not necessarily related to academic education, but more life experiences, which play an important role – lifelong learning.

Although the expert did not neglect the importance of higher educational standards in order to accumulate experiences, the centrality of formal education was questioned and a link to particular elements of the social identity was established.

5.4.1.2 Social identity

Elements of a tourist's (desired) social identity and particular personality traits were recurring factors mentioned by the interviewees. There was a common understanding amongst industry experts that particular traits were more likely to be found in an experienced tourist. These elements of a person's social identity were interpreted to be somewhat accountable for the higher levels of past travel experience. The participants' perceptions were that tourists with higher levels of prior experiences are more curious and want to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

NZ3: [...] breadth of knowledge and cross-cultural understanding or interest levels and investigating new things or doing something different.

Experts further explained that experienced tourists have higher awareness for the ordinary tourist services. They are looking for extraordinary moments, deeper insights, and direct interactions that enrich them mentally.

GER5: *In relation to interaction, they know that the service staff is trained, they say 'Welcome' to everyone. There [related to private accommodation] I have the possibility to see behind the curtain of the tourism industry and am much closer to the people living in the place.*

NZ3: *They want to understand, they want to learn, they want to be educated, and feel enriched on a mental level not only a superficial level of telling their friends they have been here.*

An increased risk-taking propensity was also identified among experienced tourists. One German expert used an example of tourists visiting industrial sites and claimed that in the past people would have avoided coming close to any industrial sites for fear of possible risk. The more curious and risk-taking experienced tourists, however, want to go inside to fully immerse in the experience and become a part of it. A similar example was provided by a New Zealand participant who explained that today's experienced tourists want to test their limits without dispensing of their personal safety:

NZ1: *How far from our home can we go which is still safe? [...] Which has been known as a safe place, which is not full of crime? Where will my parents be OK with me travelling to?*

Another interviewee explained that the more experienced and curious tourists are not only aiming to understand foreign cultures and religions for the sake of general knowledge, but also to bring broader political and societal issues into context. This assumption was linked to the generally emerging safety culture of tourists. Experienced tourists increased cross-cultural understanding was also hypothesised as being accompanied by open-mindedness and higher confidence levels. For example, one research participant claimed, "I guess open-mindedness or confidence to do things or go somewhere you have never been is probable" (NZ3). Regarding the broadened cross-cultural knowledge, it was further assumed that the experienced tourists' value systems differ from less experienced tourists. Experts provided links between different generations, higher experience levels and social responsibility as exemplified in the following quote:

GER5: *The best ager, who cruises twice a year with the AIDA or another cruise ship, is maybe not as accessible for specific values. Due to the liability towards their children, it is maybe rather the young family that values regionalism and organic produce and is actually worrying about sustainability and is maybe thinking 'No we shouldn't pollute our oceans more than we have already'. For them it is more important to value and maintain the authentic, the closeness to nature, the sustainable, and the responsible.*

The quote indicates that social responsibility, sustainability and closeness to nature were considered deep-rooted and highly valued in the younger generations' value systems. At the same time the expert claimed that the older generation might travel more frequently and might investigate other forms of travel, but their travel behaviour is not necessary sustainable. These interpretations were closely linked to life stages and daily life routines across generations that were identified as being influential in the process of experience accumulation.

5.4.1.3 Life stage and daily life routines

It was implied that different life stages, the living environments and daily life routines strongly influence the process of experience accumulation.

GER5: Regarding past travel experience, it is not only what you have experienced when travelling, but also how your living environment and life standards have changed.

Experts provided links to sociodemographic factors such as income or family status on this subject. For instance, experts described the changes of travel mode and style with and without children in the household and used several personal examples to explain these changes:

GER4: Yes, family status is definitely extremely important. I see that in myself. Back in the days, I travelled with backpack, thumps up, Interrail [European train system] or something similar. Then we started building our family, first travelled within Germany, now the children are mobile so we could do cycle trips. That is what you can do with children in different age groups. At some stage, you can travel overseas again and I think once the children are out of our house and I am not working any more, I will take the bus and travel through Europe, visit cities, be independent again.

Industry experts suggested that values of consumerism and behavioural factors that are part of the tourists' daily lives and outside of the actual travel experiences are influential on the process of experience accumulation. Participants explained that tourists expect at least the standards they are used to in their everyday environment when travelling.

GER7: When I afford a holiday, it should be nice. Those people, who do not have the income to travel, normally stay at home. Rather than saying I travel to [destination] and book a cheap holiday home that is not up to my expected standard.

One German expert further elaborated on the influence of the daily life standards and routines on travel expectations and used the example of today's coffee culture:

GER5: Coffee is a good example: Everyone has a Nespresso or WMF coffee machine at home. Then you arrive at a hotel and the only thing you get is a filtered coffee that was brewed at 6am. Expectations are growing not necessarily because the guest has experienced better service in a different hotel, but because the tourist is used to it in the daily life.

Experts claimed that people are generally more exposed to different cultures and nationalities in their everyday life environment, which means that they engage in foreign experiences while being closer to home. This exposure to different cultures and a multicultural environment was proposed to influence the individual's process of experience accumulation and was mainly recognisable among the younger generations.

NZ1: Particularly younger people, as they become interested in knowing the world and I think that will happen too, partially because of our multicultural world now where you have got all sorts of different cultures all in a melting pot. No matter which country you live in, you are exposed to different cultures, different races, different religions, different beliefs, different value systems. So younger people become much more exposed to that earlier [...]. The more you are exposed to that when you are younger, the more it opens your eyes to the possibilities.

This assumption also implied the blurring of the daily life environment with the tourism environment that further affects the process of experience accumulation. Closely related to the everyday life, the experts referred to the increasingly media saturated environment and high levels of everyday and work stress from which individuals try to escape. Experts discussed the slower pace of travelling and alternative worlds that are sought through travelling. Overall, interviewees expressed that life stage and the daily life environment are highly influential in the individual's process of experience accumulation as individual trips are selected and adjusted accordingly.

5.4.1.4 Travel biography

International travel experiences in the past were identified as major factors to distinguish an experienced from a less experienced tourist. It was also proposed that the global growth of international travel and the fact that people travel more often influences the individual's experience accumulation and there are generally more people now with higher levels of past travel experience.

GER5: [...] every experience, every behaviour influences the experience level and as people travel several times a year, it can be concluded that this must happen. To the expense that people travel more, they have more travel experience quantitatively.

Experts shared that their international visitors were generally more experienced tourists who will have travelled to other countries and continents before visiting Germany or New Zealand. Participants discussed the importance of past travel, yet made it clear that quantity of trips is not the only dominant factor that classifies an experienced tourist. They draw a clear line between people who had travelled several times to the same destination adopting similar travel patterns and those travellers, who had encountered foreign cultures and customs and were required to prepare differently for their past trips. This is demonstrated in the following two quotes:

GER2: [...] the horizon of experience [GER: Erfahrungshorizont] does not grow with the number of trips when the travel pattern remains unchanged.

NZ8: [...] they have been exposed to more cultures and customs and various countries around the world.

There was an overall agreement that an experienced tourist will have visited the must-see destinations and sites already and have started to discover other parts of the world that are either more off the beaten track or of secondary order.

GER1: First, you visit attractions such as Paris and Neuschwanstein Castle. Once you have seen that you will say 'Okay, I know these places already, now I want to explore more rural areas that are off the beaten track.'

Several industry experts linked the discovery of foreign countries with more sensory experiences that are predominantly encountered when travelling further from the home country. One German expert, who considered him/herself an experienced tourist, shared a personal experience of travelling to North Korea. The expert remembered the smell of the country and it reminded him/her of the former similarly communist German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union. Thus, the previously addressed search for sensory experiences and sensory memory was proposed to be predominantly found among experienced tourists.

5.4.2 The environment of an experienced tourist: External facilitators

In addition to subjective personal identifiers, several external factors facilitate and encourage the process of experience accumulation. As these factors are out of the control of the individuals, they are more widely applicable. Experts named the technological advances and particularly OSN and UGC as influencing factors in the process of experience accumulation. Closely related to these new forms of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) experiences, experts identified the individuals’ personal reference groups as being important in travel decision-making and ultimately experience accumulation. Lastly, several external factors refer to the broader political, societal and economic environments, which were also observed to be influential in the process of experience accumulation and the emergence of experienced tourists. These external factors are neither controllable by the tourists nor by the tourism industry. However, industry experts referred to their role within the individuals' processes of experience accumulation and emphasised the importance of industry-induced influences in these processes.

5.4.2.1 Technological advances and online media

Industry representatives asserted that the range and depth of information has grown immensely over the past decade and today's experienced tourists have more opportunities to inform themselves, feel better prepared and more secure.

NZ5: *I think it is the availability of information, the instant availability and it gives [...] them the confidence that they will be ok.*

Experts suggested that the accessibility and availability of information result in more openness towards the visitation of new tourist destinations and interest in new discoveries. This in turn accelerates the process of experience accumulation. These new developments were linked to the technological advances and the role of digital media in the individual's travel choices.

GER7: *[...] obviously, digital media occupy the most important and dominant role in the individual's information search and holiday booking.*

The participants picked up a general discussion around the effectiveness and the need for traditional marketing channels and questioned whether new media channels replace traditional channels. Interviewees postulated that a distinction between experienced and less experienced tourists is required when investigating the distribution channels used for holiday trip planning and booking.

NZ7: *Some people treat it [new media] as gospel, as the absolute truth and other people are very cynical about it. So, it depends on the psychographics of that person and again their own experiences.*

It was claimed that experienced tourists desire breadth and depth of information and individually appealing content without being overwhelmed. There was unanimous agreement that new technologies influence the individuals' travel choices and experience accumulation processes, yet, the ability to instantaneously share information was seen as good and bad at the same time, "it becomes easier, in some ways it becomes harder" (NZ3). The effectiveness and advantageousness in regard to experience accumulation was partly scrutinized. It was assumed that advancements in new technologies, emergence of new media channels and increased use of social media are accompanied by higher degrees of transparency. This encourages experienced tourists to compare offers and services online throughout the entire travel journey. The growing amount of available information, both online and offline, is believed to contribute to an increased level of knowledge and experience even without travelling to a specific place. Participants observed that individuals are no longer capable of differentiating between primary/analogous experiences and secondary/virtual experiences.

GER5: In terms of past travel experience it has to be distinguished between what was built up through actual, lived through travel behaviour and what has been added virtually through the media behaviour.

NZ7: So that whole social media world means that they probably have secondary experiences through other peoples' interactions.

Several interviewees, who further elaborated on the new emerging influencer landscape, stated the influence of secondary experiences on the process of experience accumulation. One participant concluded that, "[t]he changes that social media has made is obviously significant. Anyone in our roles, everybody is playing some role in social media now" (NZ5).

It was further proposed that experienced tourists are not only influenced, but also act as influencers for other people's experience accumulation. Industry representatives provided a link between technological advancements, the increasing significance of UGC and the individuals' reference groups and its interplay in the process of experience accumulation.

5.4.2.2 Personal reference groups

Personal reference groups, specifically family and close friends, were identified as major influencers behind the experienced tourists' destination choices and travel behaviour. Experts described that personal reference groups and WOM remained the most powerful tool in the decision-making processes and referred to the high reliability associated with recommendations from friends and family members.

GER4: It is not only the personal past experience, it is also the experience of others that plays a critical role.

NZ8: *A lot of those thoughts are seeded by their friends' social media activity and sharing of their own holiday experiences. Word-of-mouth has been the best form of advertising since day one and it hasn't changed.*

The experts' quotes highlight the close link between personal reference groups and social media. This relationship and positive influence were also addressed by one German expert who described these new forms of eWOM as influential for the individual's experience accumulation and beneficial for the destination:

GER3: *You wouldn't blame the destination when something is not as great as your friends told you. I think it is the exact opposite. As people have a direct access through their friends' recommendations, there is a higher likelihood of satisfaction and success. The risk of falling is secured. I won't go to the major square that does not really match with my personal interest, I will go to places that my friends have recommended and will have a different approach to the experience. Therefore, I do believe that these new forms of marketing not only positively influence the success, but also the satisfaction of visitors.*

Experts also addressed the usage of social media from friends and family. These new forms of information sharing accelerated the pace of reliable information exchange, changed the way of communication and impacted tourists' movements and experience accumulation. Several interview partners went beyond the close connection between the personal reference group and travel choices and hypothesised the importance of general consumer trends and the broader environment in the process of experience accumulation.

5.4.2.3 Broader environmental factors

Consumer mega trends and societal changes were stated as influencing factors in the individual's process of experience accumulation. It was assumed that, "past travel experience mixes with societal mega trends" (GER5). Experts used examples from emerging markets to explain the interplay between increased consumerism and travel experience. This is highlighted in the following quote:

NZ5: *Travel was no different to wanting a big screen TV and all the comforts of life. Once you get to that point that is just the next natural step.*

Consumerism was also linked to the culture and mentality of the tourists' home countries, which were already addressed as an influential sociodemographic factor. Referring to different cultures and mentalities and using an example from Saudi Arabia, one German expert questioned the German term *Reiseerfahrung*:

GER7: *These are clearly different societal levels and these guests have very different travel motives and are differently conditioned in terms of their past travel* *experience. Therefore, the question comes up, what does this 'Reiseerfahrung' actually mean? When they fly to Paris or New York for a weekend and the women go shopping [...]. 'Is that actually 'Reiseerfahrung'?' Clearly it is kind of 'Reiseerfahrung' but they really want to go shopping, everything else is irrelevant.*

The country of origin was discussed in relation to the maturity of the market, which was linked to the individuals within the market and their respective prior travel experiences.

NZ3: And every market is at a different stage and even every segment of each markets is at a different stage, in terms of market maturity, in term of how far down they are along that pendulum.

Participants explained that the maturity of the market and the possibility for individuals to gather experiences is strongly dependent on connectivity, especially by air, allowing for increased mobility and is triggered by the increase in low cost carriers. Air connectivity not only impacts the destination's competiveness and success as increased connectivity means expansion of source markets, it also positively influences the demand-side as tourists have more choices to accumulate experiences. This is highlighted by a participant stating that, "[t]he world is shrinking, everywhere is more accessible" (NZ1).

Another factor that was mentioned to facilitate or hamper the individuals' ability to accumulate travel experiences is the freedom to travel internationally and the associated legislative situation in a particular market. Experts referred to the Chinese market and explained how the legislative changes have influenced the international travel landscape in general, and also the individuals' travel progressions and accumulation processes of experiences. This is highlighted in the following quotes:

GER4: So, if you look at the Chinese market, it develops extremely fast. However, you have to ask yourself, "Who are the Chinese that are travelling?" Only five percent of the population owns a passport. They are eligible to travel. It is not the higher middle class, it is people who really have the money and can afford an international trip [...].

NZ2: [...] so kind of new travellers, new money, just only started travelling the last 10 to 15 years.

The participants outlined the recent changes in international travel regulations, the economic wealth in several emerging countries and the new middle class that is now increasingly travelling. Lastly, interviewees addressed the current political situation as a critical influencing factor on tourist behaviour and experience accumulation. The findings demonstrate that experts observed the topic differently:

GER4: *The statistics generally show that people are a little bit more cautious and holding back. I wouldn't derive monocausal links. The Baltic Sea is going through the roof this summer. Turkey and Egypt, by contrast, are on the downwards track [...]. Aspects of security are definitely of importance here. But there are also very nice statistics from the World Tourism Organization demonstrating that the effect of terrorism on visitation is relatively short lived. After around half a year, it is forgotten. The tourist's memory is relatively short.*

GER5: *The requests, 'How safe is [destination]?' are increasing. This sensibility especially increases among international guests.*

NZ2: *I think one major thing will be safety and security. I think New Zealand has a good reputation, especially what we have seen in the past few years, with Paris, Belgium, London, New York […].*

These examples show the different approaches and observations related to the topic, emphasise the dependency on location and the organisations' responses and handling of the situation.

5.4.2.4 Industry-induced factors

In addition to the technological, political, economic and sociological factors that influence the individual's experience accumulation, experts advocated the facilitation role of the tourism industry itself. The majority of participants assumed that their guests were more experienced compared to the past and attracting these 'new' tourists and meeting their expectations has become a major aim. The experts elaborated on the changes in the experienced tourists' behaviour and how DMOs need to redefine their roles and tasks to meet the experienced tourists' needs:

NZ2: *[...] people want their connections. And we are advocating that our members give them that. We want them to give them a richer experience and that even goes down to making them feel welcome.*

Experts argued that (international) tourists have different experience levels and accumulate experiences differently. It is the industry's responsibility to fulfil the different demands and appeal to different target groups through promotion and product variation to suit the markets. Several industry experts outlined the endeavours of destination branding and the effects of well-established destination brands on tourist movements as highlighted in the subsequent quote:

NZ8: *Through ongoing work we have also raised awareness of [destination]. [...] Broadly speaking, six years ago most people weren't aware of [destination] and those that were, were not aware what we had to offer. [...] Our brand is all about deepening that story and also having a stronger content hierarchy to draw people through to give them the information they want and I guess, give people one more thing that may surprise them.*

Several participants assumed that image advertising is generally a facilitator of experience accumulation, but loses effectiveness when individuals have higher levels of prior experience and travel knowledge. This is exemplified in the following quote:

GER1: You no longer need to make image advertising. That time is over. [...] you should deliver detailed information. When does the museum xy open and how much is the entry fee? These are things of interest now.

Thus, promoting the destination and products to experienced tourists requires an alignment in marketing strategies. The importance of social media was mentioned and it was summarised that destination branding becomes storytelling. As outlined in the subsequent quotes, experts emphasised the required establishment of relationships and consideration of different voices.

NZ4: Social media is critically important for any destination or any marketer [...]. It is a critical environment and our voice in that, our sort of curative voice, is actually only a small part of it. We know we are only a tiny part of that voice, social media voice and that is fine, that is good.

NZ8: [...] to paint a very clear picture of what our destination has to offer in terms of being friends with our visitors. [...]. If you start to target on interests and values, you start to get to the heart of who somebody is as an individual. So, you know if we can articulate our story the best we can and that connects with people based on values and interests, that is job done.

Participants discussed the link between advancements of technologies, the growing importance of OSN and UGC, the role of reference groups and the new emerging social media influencers that are not to be neglected in the organisation's marketing portfolio.

GER2: I want to stimulate my visitors and want to provide possibilities that they are inspired or guided by me. I want to encourage them to share what they have experienced […].

Findings showed that industry experts from both countries acknowledged the facilitating and important role of social media influencers. However, the achievements and endeavours to incorporate new digital communication strategies in overall marketing strategies differed. New Zealand experts illustrated their social media strategies to ensure the organisation's role in the tourist's decision-making process and travel experience accumulation:

NZ2: So, we do host VIP groups from time to time and part of the reason for that is that they have quite a wide reach on social media [...]. So, they are producers, directors [...]. That are people that have money so their contacts mainly gonna be the same things. That is matching with our all overarching view, more value over volume. You can have an actor, who has got a million followers on Twitter, *but how many of those are actually that high value potential tourists? And then you have a director or producer, who has maybe a 100,000, but more potential of those who earns a high income and can afford to come to New Zealand and can have this high cost, high value experiences here.*

As illustrated in the quote below, findings from the German interviews revealed a more hesitant strategy and approach towards social media strategies and influencer marketing:

GER2: I do believe with influencer marketing itself [...], if we do allow the assumption that it gains in importance, it ought to correlate with the value loss of traditional marketing that destination marketers are mostly involved in now. If we then look at it and say, 'The claims are interchangeable', [...], 'The marketing activities are interchangeable' […] basically everything is interchangeable and if we, by contrast, say influencer marketing, personal experiences and insiders are gaining in importance, then the critical situation organisations are facing already, is exacerbated.

Despite challenges DMOs are facing regarding the increasingly experienced tourists (more details section 5.6) and the digitalised environment they are operating in, experts maintained their key roles in creating memorable experiences and facilitating the process of experience accumulation.

5.4.3 Summarising the dimensions of an experienced tourist

To summarise the findings related to the dimensions of an experienced tourist, an adapted version of Saldaña’s (2016) code-to-theory model was developed and is displayed in Figure 5.1. It is important to note, that for reasons of complexity, identified interlinkages between codes, categories and themes are not displayed. In addition to the factors that were assumed to determine an experienced tourist and distinguish an experienced from a less experienced tourist, experts explained how a higher experience level is mirrored in the travel behaviour.

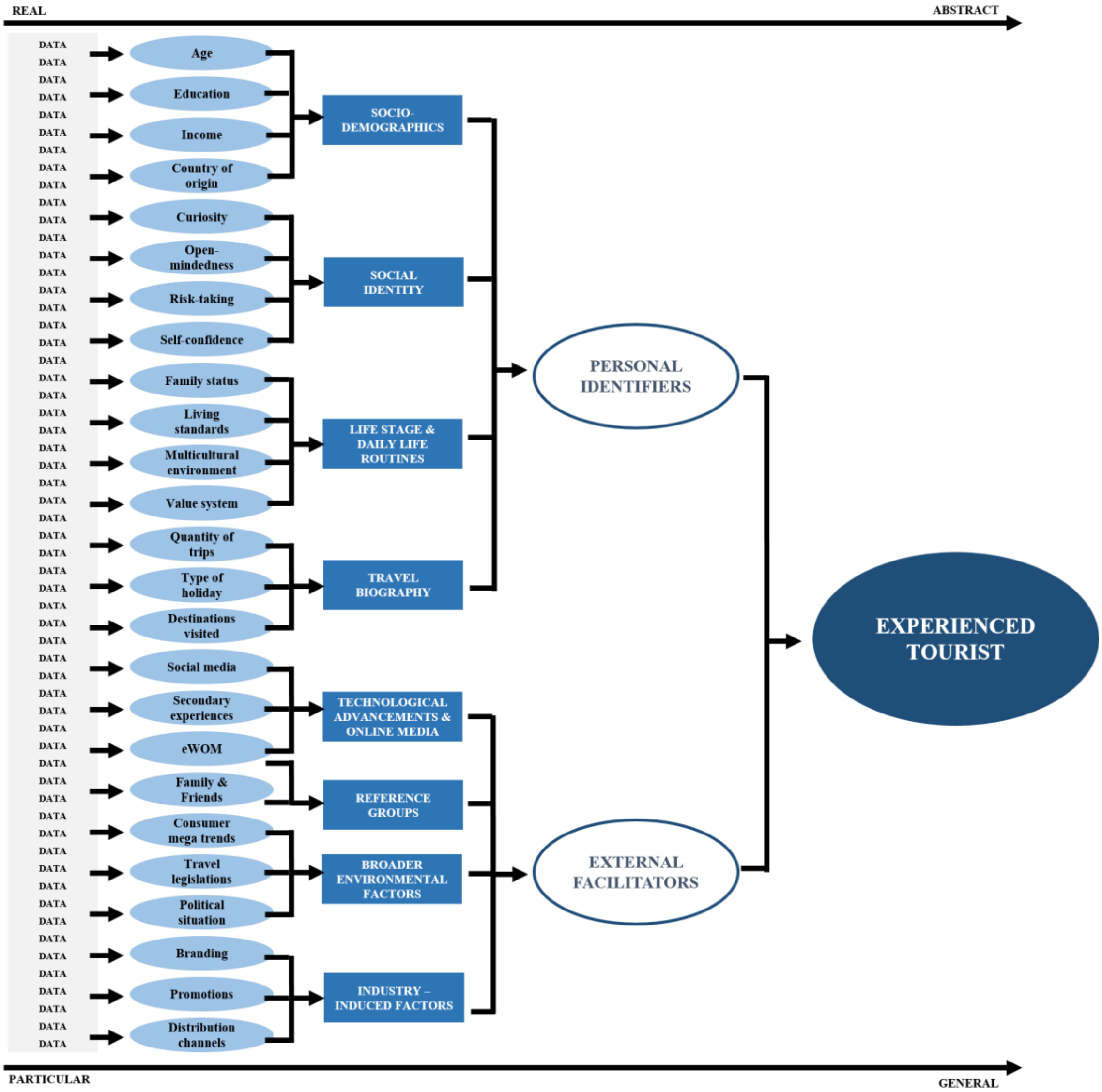

Figure 5.1: Supply-side dimensions of an experienced tourist: An adaptation of Saldaña's (2016) codes-to-theory model

5.5 Unfolding the travel behaviour of an experienced tourist

Throughout the interviews, industry experts compared the travel behaviour of experienced and less experienced tourists and identified several behavioural changes that they related back to the different levels of prior travel experience. Five broader categories emerged as major differentiators regarding the travel behaviour of experienced and less experienced tourists and are presented in the following sections. The participants strongly emphasised that changes in travel behaviour need to be seen in cultural settings as specific patterns of behaviour are not generalisable or transferable.

5.5.1 From group travel to independent travel

Industry experts observed changes in the way of travelling and a shift from packaged/group travel to more independent travel. Experts hypothesised that this shift is attributable to the higher number of experienced tourists. The degree of independence became central in the distinction between experienced and less experienced tourists.

GER5: [...] with the increase of past travel experience, there is a tendency to travel more individually, detached from ready-made, packaged trips.

NZ5: [...] as tourism matures as a whole, you do find that people become far more independent.

However, it was also mentioned that the relationship between travel biography, level of experiences and form of travel is not necessarily linear and unidirectional. Several participants reasoned that the tourists' decisions to travel independently or as part of a group are partly determined by other factors, such as pre-visitation, familiarity or safety of the destination visited. An experienced tourist does not necessarily shy away from packaged group tours when a destination is new. This is expressed in the following quotes:

GER1: Even if I have past travel experience, I feel more comfortable, have a certain sense of safety and security [when travelling in a group] [...]. When I recognise 'Ah, it is safe and I can communicate', I can say, 'Okay, next time I plan and do it on my own'.

NZ3: So new markets, new destinations, places that people don't know about. If I was going to Kazakhstan, I would go through a travel agent, because I don't know anything about it, and I won't trust my knowledge or anything else.

The findings indicate that the experienced tourists' open-mindedness and higher confidence levels are reflected in a more spontaneous travel behaviour and the faith to try out different things. Interviewees argued that experienced tourists engage in a wider range of activities that are predominantly off the beaten track, off the first time visitor experiences list, and more individualistic and interactive.

NZ7: [...] as the world becomes a bigger place and more people have got more experience, they have travelled, then, people will seek out places that not many other people go to.

It was also specified that there is a stronger desire for new discoveries instead of re-visiting places. As today's experienced tourists had visited the major sites, they are gradually seeking places that are not necessarily purely touristic, but deliver any kind of original story associated with the place. This was especially believed as beneficial for tourist destinations that have no clear POI and are not necessarily among the must-see destinations globally, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris. A New Zealand expert also concluded that New Zealand has been positively impacted by the increasing number of experienced tourists and their changes in travel mode and destination choice.

NZ4: *[...] in New Zealand, we are a tiny, tiny destination in the world and we are an island nation at the bottom of the world. [...] international visitors, they think it is a bit exotic, down at the bottom in the South Pacific, looks like a beautiful place. [...] We have that proposition as well and that is what is gonna appeal to more experienced travellers, who have done all of the obvious stuff first.*

Different examples were provided with the overall agreement that experienced tourists are seeking *other*, more off the beaten track destinations. Furthermore, participants discussed the interplay between past experiences and destination choice with respect to the changed expectations.

5.5.2 Increased knowledge, comparability and expectations

Based on increased knowledge gained through previous consumption, today's experienced tourists were assumed to have more opportunities to compare, which ultimately affects the tourists' expectations. Expectations, in turn, were believed to be reflected in the tourists' travel choices, consumption of services, evaluations and recommendations. Industry experts asserted that today's experienced tourists have higher expectations and quality standards compared to less experienced tourists. The changes in expectations were traced back to the experienced tourist's knowledgeability, both theoretical knowledge and their own experiences. Findings revealed that the participants admitted the industry's contributory negligence in terms of the tourists' high expectations and provided several examples.

NZ2: *Especially for our cultural performances. [...] the expectation was higher, because people were expecting to find Māori wearing grass skirts, they were expecting finding Māori living in grass huts, expecting to find all these things that have been shown in all the marketing promotions. Our natural scenery pretty much looks after what is shown offshore. But it is coming to that same issue. Our current marketing shows that you can walk the Abel Tasman Track and you will not find a single person there. Anyone who has gone and done that, knows, that is not the case and you gonna meet a bunch of people that same day. So, there is a potential issue for our expectations to not actually meet the reality of a lot of our visitors.*

The interviewee further challenged the insufficient transfer of information and knowledge and exemplified this as follows:

NZ2: *I had a French photographer come to New Zealand and I did an itinerary for him because he wanted to see and do certain things. And he came to New*

Zealand and he was like, "So where do all the Māori live?" He had in his mind that they are all living in reservations like they do in America.

Alongside theoretical knowledge that changes the tourists' perceptions and expectations, tourists have progressively accumulated knowledge through past travel experiences. It was suggested that changes in travel biography and the resulting ability to compare with own experiences and acquired knowledge leads to higher expectations towards services and offers.

GER6: One compares with things that one has experienced in the past and sets the destinations into relation.

NZ3: And their knowledge about other destinations and other countries is strong, so their expectations and demands are as well.

One German participant expressed that today's experienced tourists possess a set of different past travel experiences, which are often incomparable, yet influence the expectations. Overall, the German experts assessed these changes in expectations and increasingly high demands more critically compared to the New Zealand experts and claimed that the experienced tourists' expectations are unrealistically high and often unjustified. Moreover, the changes in expectations were associated with changes in the desired outcomes of today's experienced tourists.

5.5.3 Desire for co-creation, emotional response and self-fulfilment

Experts shared the assumption that experienced tourists prefer to be active participants rather than passive spectators when travelling. Tourists want to *get a real feel* for the place to achieve their desired outcome of being emotionally touched and enriched and become part of the experience.

NZ1: It is getting more real again; I think it is less about doing the big sites. I think it is more about getting underneath the skin of a place and getting to know the people.

NZ2: [...] to welcome and treat people as they are part of our family and that is basically what it comes down to, we are making them feel that they are not just here, but they are a part of our family.

This emotional enrichment was showcased by one participant who used a personal example of a trip to Vietnam and a visit to the Cu Chi (war) tunnels to describe the *real* feel of a place:

NZ6: [...] going up the tunnels, walk through the forest. That is just unbelievable. You can't read that, you can't just say, 'The walk through the forest will turn you on.

Let's go through the tunnels", that is what you can put into a few words, that is the message that you get, it doesn't really matter what they are saying, but the actual experience of being picked up from the hotel, getting there, the tour, the guide, and all that you can't explain that, you can't explain that on your form.

Several industry representatives referred to the sensory involvement and enrichment that experienced tourists are aiming for and their willingness to visit more surreal places to receive these.

GER1: I always say, 'Sure you can sit at home and read the Weltspiegel [German newspaper], but that is very different to being in the middle of it'. The heat, the smells. India or something similar - I think there is no getting around. [...]. And that is exactly what so many are looking for, the immersion.

NZ1: It very much takes all levels of us as human beings - the soul and the heart and the head, in terms of the travel experience in totality.

This was linked to the experienced tourists' travel biographies and observations that they have seen the obvious sights and now seek something different with enrichment on other levels.

GER2: [...] when I have a different value orientation and I say that there are other things now that are more important when travelling because I have seen quite a bit of the world already, and the Eiffel tower is not paramount, at the end of the day I want to experience the atmosphere in Paris. I think that has always been the tourist's desire [...] but as I no longer need this 'show-and-tell' to differentiate [...] When they post a picture on Instagram 'Look, I am at the Eiffel tower' that is not too exciting. However, if you say I am in a super unique location, eat something typical for the region, and say Look at this - super exciting here' that is surely more successful

The increased desire to become an equivalent part in the creation and realisation of their individual and tailor-made trips was addressed by several experts in the semi-structured interviews. German experts further elaborated on the principles of co-creation and the increasing desire to be engaged and participative [GER: Verbraucheremanzipation].

GER5: This means that the travel behaviour becomes completely individualised and changes from traditional packaged holiday as well as the traditional structures of service providers in tourism.

Experts asserted that trip elements are aimed to be meaningful for the moment in time experience, but more importantly need to be meaningful and memorable long-term as tourists are looking for challenges to encourage transformation of self and test their boundaries. It was postulated that travelling is considered as essential for a fulfilling life and personal growth. Experienced tourists are willing to invest in preparation and gather more information prior to the trip to ensure that transformation is enabled and encouraged.

NZ6: We tend to find that people are a bit more and better informed nowadays [...], but it is more like I am interested in these three or four things, what is the difference and what is the best for me to do […].

Tourists seem to deliberately gather information and then evaluate the options regarding their desired outcomes. The experts also linked the information search to the oversaturated availability of information in the digital age and the desired personal interaction and interactive experience.

5.5.4 Interpersonal relations and social responsibility

A common view was that experienced tourists are requesting and valuing the individual, face-to-face conversations during the trip. Thus, interactive experiences and interpersonal relations gain centre stage in the overall trip experience. It was further advocated that experienced tourists are aware of the variety of information online, will have informed themselves prior to the trip, but are looking for reassurance and appreciate the personal touch only achievable through direct interaction.

GER3: Interestingly, despite being in the internet and social media age, they still like to come to us; they want to have a personal point of contact. They are looking for personal conversation.

NZ6: It is interesting they [experienced tourists] are still the future of visitor centres, I generally believe, they gonna be a definite requirement of the FIT visitor and I don't think that will ever change. [...] it is part of the visitor centric [...] the role that the I-sites [visitor centres in NZ] really do play, even a more important role potentially as a result of the digital effect, [...] and it is the fact that you can actually walk in and talk to someone, who is actually an expert.

Through interaction and communication, tourists are proposed to become more conscious about the places they are visiting. This encourages responsible behaviour towards the host and the destination in general.

NZ1: So I think travel in tourism has changed from being 'You must go here, because these are part of the seven great sights of the world to see, so you must go to the Niagara Falls'. It is more about people are wanting to connect more with local people and understand local culture.

Participants further explained that knowledge, awareness of a place and consciousness of what is going on at a place in relation to aspects such as human rights, social responsibility, and environmental protection influences travel choices. One research participant summarised this as, “feeling good about where you have been” (NZ1) and provided further elaborations:

NZ1: *[…] there is an emerging trend for eco-tourism, for example, where people can help. And it might be that they go to a struggling nation and they can actually do some goodwill over there and they feel good. And so, the experience that they get out of doing that is not only have they gone to a place that they would not normally have gone to, that they have helped, and therefore they feel good for the experience as well.*

Several German interviewees critically addressed this feeling good about the trip and consideration of sustainability and responsibility. Aspects of responsible travel became what was normal and were believed to mostly relate to social desirability while actual responsible behaviour was limited observed in the destination.

GER4: *Specific services in terms of comfort and facilitation of travel is nowadays taken for granted. This also applies to aspects around environmental issues, waste separation and so forth.*

Closely related to the desired active participation and immersion, a higher demand to stay in private, more interactive accommodation types and listed facilities such as Airbnb, bed and breakfast style accommodation, and farm stays was acknowledged.

NZ6: *We have noticed that B&Bs are growing, because traditionally they were never coming to us. People are coming and talk to us, emailing to us because they want to stay in B&Bs and of course then the holiday homes, where we don’t even have an impact on and Airbnb, which is private homes, but that is what they are doing now [...].*

One of the experts summarised that this changed behaviour in accommodation choice is not generalisable, but is dependent on the country of origin and can be explained by the overall higher experience levels of Western/European markets.

NZ6: *I think it is gonna be interesting because it is a little bit market specific as well. Specific markets, especially European markets are a little bit more comfortable with Airbnb and that approach.*

On the one hand, experienced tourists are postulated to be more price conscious. On the other hand, they value the authentic, less commercialised and one-on-one experience over quality of a five star hotel. They are willing to travel further and spend more for the realness of an experience. A link between prior travel experience, higher experience level and travel knowledge, accommodation choices and spending behaviour was established.

GER5: *People want to be in contact with the destination. Moreover, people have the feeling, or the knowledge that they pay for services in a hotel or for other tourism providers that are pulling them away from the actual destination and they want to immerse more in it. [...] I want to pay to get to know the region. I prefer sitting on an improvised table, have less for breakfast, but I have breakfast in a manner people have breakfast there.*

Experienced tourists have not only the ambition to interact with the local community during the trip, this interactive behaviour was also observed in the information and booking behaviour prior to the trip and information sharing behaviour during and after the trip.

5.5.5 Consciously juggling between being online and offline

Industry representatives estimated changes in the experienced tourists' information and booking behaviour throughout the travel journey. Apart from the face-to-face interaction, it was assumed that experienced tourists seek interaction through social media channels and want to share their experiences directly with their friends and family.

NZ2: *Part of the enjoying the experience is the ability to brag to others back home – 'this is a premier event, I have been there, you haven't'.*

The high online affinity of experienced tourists and ability to use technology was also demonstrated in travel behaviour during and prior to the trip. The preference of online channels in travel booking was associated with the self-selection and individualisation of travel choices.

GER5: *And this topic tailor-made or individual, that is obviously the result of past travel experiences as people feel safe and confident that they can plan and book their journeys online in the same way the travel agent would.*

Closely related to the desire for co-creation when travelling, experienced tourists are increasingly becoming co-creators and prosumers of their travel planning as they have the ability to organise and navigate online independently. The German expert further provided the following insight:

GER5: *This past travel experience and individualisation is supported by the ability to use smartphones for navigation. [...]. We are aware that our smartphones are our tour guides wherever and whenever we travel. Insofar, past travel experience is the one thing, but also the competency to use these new technologies. [...] People know that their smartphones will always provide some ideas and advices […].*

This was linked to the self-confidence of experienced tourists and higher levels of spontaneity when planning a trip or booking trip elements online. Despite the generally high online affinity, a higher demand for *offline holidays* among experienced tourists was outlined. These offline endeavours were explained by the desire for interpersonal and personal connections and simultaneously disconnection and escape from the busy and media saturated everyday life.

GER7: Looking at our DNA, our genetics, we are not made for the digital world. It has to remain a support tool. As soon as it becomes central to our everyday life, we will have problems, mentally and physically. We see this already. There will be a need for retreats where people can be human again, human in all its genetic makeup. This will be even more important, the further the digitalisation proceeds.

NZ1: [...] people become more bombarded with communication, [...]. There is a lot of stress that goes on. [...]. This juggling act has always existed, but the expectation is, that we can fit more into a day and so we do and therefore the counter trend to that is, opt out of the rat race for a while and become closer to nature, get back to some of the basic things in life that make people feel happy and well – like fresh air and sunshine and a lack of emails and cell phones.

A link to the developing slow movement and mindfulness trend was established and its relationship to the behaviour of experienced tourists described. When it came to online and social media context, the experts emphasised the necessary distinction between source markets and acknowledgement of cultural differences.

5.5.6 Influenced by cultural and societal factors

In addition to the general behavioural changes observed among experienced tourists, a recurrent issue was the importance of acknowledging cultural and societal differences when discussing the influence of past experience levels on travel behaviour.

GER7: Differences in terms of country of origin, which is a result of different mentalities, different cultural and sociological characters and clearly mentalities, that are socially conditioned, the heritage of this society.

Industry representatives distinguished the travel behaviour of experienced tourists from Western/Europeanised, Asian and Middle Eastern countries. The purpose of travelling and the role of travelling as a status symbol were identified as critical differentiators. While experienced tourists from established markets are desiring enrichment on a mental level, travelling fulfils a more status orientated function in the new emerging markets where the tourists follow the bucket list approach. This was partly associated with the overall maturity of the market and the travel history of the society, but also with cultural differences found across nations. This is exemplified by the following quotes:

GER7: *[...] we have young travel markets and there is no one who would walk or cycle, they have just developed from that. Especially these emerging markets, they don't walk or take the bicycle, they can't believe that we are doing that in our leisure time - that is like in the Stone Age. At the end of the day, it is always the question in which developmental stage they are [...].*

NZ5: *For the Chinese market often the travel is about creating that sense of achievement. [...]. And they take a lot of photos to send to their friends and family and say, look this is what I have done.*

Aspects such as days of holiday and travel freedom were also addressed by experts in regard to people's ability to accumulate experiences. It was assumed that, "[s]ome people from some markets will always be constrained by time and might not be as experienced and only want what we call whistle stop tour, just go to the main destinations" (NZ7). Findings indicate that the economic well-being of a nation and its population is just one explanatory factor when discussing cultural differences related to past experiences and expected travel behaviour.

GER3: *Interestingly, there are still many people, amongst them many U.S. citizens that are anxious and worried and ask, 'Is it safe?' or they ask about 'No-go areas'. They seriously ask, 'How does the train work?' […]. That is hard to believe, they are from the States and normally you need to take them by the hand.*

NZ6: *[...] the market mix element will have some general impact on the experience. [...] some trends around some of the Indian buyers, they are having the experience that there are so many Indians around, which was a detrimental factor for them. Whereas part of the Chinese market like the fact that they do see many other Chinese around and they feel more comfortable, but the other part of the market, which is the higher value end of the market, doesn't like to have too many Chinese [...].*

These quotes illustrate that changes in behaviour are attributable to the country of origin, yet, a further distinction of the place of residence and economic wealth of the specific individual is required to be factored in including the degree of past experience. Bearing this in mind, several challenges associated with the changes in demand were stated by the experts and are presented in the following section.

5.6 Identifying challenges for the tourism industry and DMOs

After having identified the dimensions of an experienced tourist and the influences of higher experience levels on travel behaviour, it was investigated what impact these changes on the demand-side have on tourist destinations and tourism providers.

Looking beyond current behavioural changes, experts elaborated on challenges related to tomorrow's tourists and referred to other broader environmental, political and economic challenges. Findings showed that these challenges can be either external to the tourism industry and less controllable, or internal and organisation-specific. The interplay between these internal/controllable and external/less controllable factors was noted and the relevance to address these challenges appropriately and in a timely way to remain competitive was emphasised. Identified challenges were predominantly driven by the demand-side, yet the supply-side, specifically promotional activities from DMOs, need to be held responsible for several internal challenges as well.

Keeping the balance between supply and demand was identified as one of the major tasks and aims for any DMO. Experts noted that this requires the acknowledgement of both internal challenges and the external environment. Interview partners used several examples to demonstrate the interplay between internal and external, as well as demand-side and supply-side driven challenges. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 5.2. Emphasis was given to examples that directly or indirectly relate to the previously discussed dimensions of an experienced tourist and the associated changes in demand. The summary clearly indicates that DMOs face a complexity of challenges ranging from mostly internal aspects such as promotion and product development to external issues related to seasonality and infrastructure.

Table 5.2: Challenges for the tourism industry identified by interview participants

Related to	Challenge	Selected key quotes
International guests	Making the international guest feel welcome	GER4: [...] when there are several flags blowing in the wind in front of the hotel and one of them is the Chinese flag, that is sufficient to let them feel welcome. NZ1: Because a big part of [DMO's] effort is all around "Welcome our visitors as whanau" (and leaving them with a little bit of New Zealand in their hearts). We can't do that if we can't touch people individually. If we can't give them that personal experience, then we are not giving them our true New Zealand, we are not giving them a sense of who we are.
Product development	Staying authentic	GER2: The biggest challenges for the destination? Well, for the really successful destinations (London, Rome, Amsterdam) there is a shift in perspective, there is it the challenges to remain an interesting and attractive destination, remain authentic and true to themselves and not becoming a facade or shop window. That is a master stroke. NZ2: When does it stop becoming a Māori experience, a New Zealand experience - because you are giving them everything in Mandarin, so sort of what is the line that you got to, to make them feel welcome and to where you actually overstep what you are originally offering? I think that is something New Zealand as a whole has to struggle with in the coming years. [...]. Like what is the limit with what you can actually offer for non-English speaking speakers?
	Keeping a promise	NZ4: [...] of course the promise you make as a marketer, you want to make sure is being fulfilled and the experience. It is a very big balancing act. NZ5: There are lots of places and during peak season, you just can't go. And what does that mean in terms of the satisfaction of the people that do go?
	Involving the community	NZ8: [...] that is our challenge to keep the integrity of our community. Because if we lose those underlying values, we commoditize what we have to offer.
	Considering new technologies and possibilities	GER6: That is not a virtual pair of glasses [Google Glasses], that is a form of information pair of glasses […] it enables these augmented stories and people can receive information while looking at the real landscape. NZ3: Where things have disappeared, where stories, real stories by real people can be told with a leveraged support, from augmented reality or something else. [...] adding value and adding

Related to	Challenge	Selected key quotes
		educational component.
Cooperativeness	Delivering seamless services	GER6: [...] we constantly need to improve ourselves and we need to train our service provider both in terms of quality standards, but also in terms of online media presence. The latter is the bigger challenge. GER7: Indeed, the success of a destination is dependent on the ability to cooperate. At the moment we are seeing the tendency, and that is the normal development in life cycles, that we are falling back to egoism and nationalism. We are seeing that also on an international scale. That means that solidarity, cooperativeness and the ability to cooperate decrease again.
Marketing and promotion	Supplying digitalised information search and booking possibilities	GER1: The digital age opens many new doors. However, we need to take into account which of the channels my company is able to operate. I don't even need to start using specific channels if I don’t have a conception or the capacity. NZ7: [...] the challenge is, for a small organisation like ours, the resources to do that with and the expertise. Having social media experts within the organisation, having people experienced in web marketing, that kind of thing.
	Monitoring and evaluating new technologies	GER6: I don't think that virtual experiences can replace the real experiences. However, these virtual experiences are becoming more and more realistic. That means they can play a critical role in the individual's travel preparation and decision-making. NZ5: It can influence your decision-making process definitely. I mean a lot of tourism operators are investing in 3D simulation stuff for trade shows. But it is more about giving an impression of the product, it is not replacing the product.
Staffing	Finding, retaining and developing skilled staff	GER4: At the end of the day, I need trained and qualified staff that can handle it [technology] and fulfil the demand. [...] Nowadays I can't have a poor website any longer. NZ7: [...] that’s the quality of services that is provided, availability of suitably skilled and trained staff is an issue, particularly in a remote region [...]. NZ5: How do you sustain a business that is so overwhelmed for five or six months of the year and then dead for some months and then okay for others? That comes with so many levels of problems. Staffing problems, you name it.

Related to	Challenge	Selected key quotes
Seasonality and regional dispersal	Being attractive all year round	NZ8: [...] it is also about encouraging people to spread out and to see New Zealand at different times of the year.
	Guiding guests into the regions	GER2: Being attractive all year round for specific target groups [...]. And clearly, to some degree new regions/districts. But the guest is already of that age, he/she knows the cool districts/regions [...]. Sure, if I send more people there, the question would be 'Where do the cool people go to?'.
Infrastructure	Ensuring services and technological development	GER3: In Germany, we are definitely behind regarding Wi-Fi. [...]. Another thing that surprises me is the credit card behaviour of Germans [...]. That facilitates travelling a lot and Germans are very suspicious, many businesses don't want that - still. GER6: This clearly means for us that we have to constantly work on and improve our quality standards. That is a process that is never to be completed. [...]. That has been similar 30 years back, although everything was a little bit slower. [...] it was expected that the holiday home has a TV, or a tape recorder, then CD player, than telephone and now Wi-Fi is expected.
	Improving hard infrastructure	NZ4: We need good roading and investment in roading, [...], we need good parking, we need a bypass to let traffic can pass the town rather than going right through it, which is currently happening. But equally we do need better public transport. NZ3: But at the moment the biggest issue and challenge is a shortage of infrastructure around accommodation and other parts of the infrastructure.
	Securing environmental and economically acceptable investments	NZ4: And the real gap as a smaller community, [...] is funding. Every small destination, especially those like ours with high visitor numbers and low resident population, struggles with that. And that is where the infrastructure problems come from.

5.7 Conclusions on the supply-side perspective

This chapter presented the findings synthesised from the semi-structured interviews with key industry stakeholders conducted in the first phase of this research project. Following the exploratory sequential mixed methods research approach, the inferences from the first research phase supported the development of the research instrument for the second research phase and directly contributed to the survey design and questionnaire development. The purpose of this first qualitative research phase, however, was beyond being purely supportive and informative. The qualitative findings corroborated and complemented the analysis and discussion of the quantitative findings and were central to the model development to accomplish Research Aim 2.

The supply-side perspective of an experienced tourist was presented in this chapter. Findings were based on interviews conducted in two case studies, Germany and New Zealand, and with organisation representatives of different destination levels. Overall, a common understanding and general agreement on the key determinants and dimensions of an experienced tourist was found. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis and adopting Saldaña's (2016) general codes-to-theory model, two overall themes emerged from the interviews. These themes were labelled *personal identifiers* and *external facilitators* and were suggested to be equally important to predict the dimensions of an experienced tourist. Both themes comprised four independent, yet somewhat interlinked, categories that were partly related to travel, partly detached from travel, and consisted of several codes.

In addition to the identification of the dimensions of an experienced tourist, several behavioural changes were observed among experienced tourists and impacts of higher experience levels on the travel behaviour discussed. Throughout the interviews, the factors *having travelled internationally in the past* and *having travelled independently in the past (identifying as FIT)* were the two most recurring factors mentioned to identify an experienced tourist. The centrality of these two factors informed the questionnaire development and was of upmost significance in the analysis of the quantitative results. The quantitative findings from the second research phase are introduced in the following chapter.

SET THE STAGE

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Paradigm
Chapter 4	Data Collection Methods

LET THE DATA SPEAK

Chapter 5	Qualitative Findings
Chapter 6	**Quantitative Findings**

GIVE IT MEANING

Chapter 7	Discussion and Interpretation
Chapter 8	Conclusion

CHAPTER 6 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Rather than just being tourists on holiday, we are seeking, searching, discovering. There is a primal urge to keep moving, looking over the next hill for new lands, peoples and adventures. Part of the myth is that we expect the experience will transform us. We will return as a better, wiser, more interesting person.
(Laing & Frost, 2014, p. 4)

6.1 Introduction

The key findings of the second research phase are introduced in this chapter and the demand-side perspective of an experienced tourist is explored. After investigating the supply-side dimensions of an experienced tourist in the first research phase, the derived key findings informed the development of the online questionnaire. Through a population representative web survey, the researcher was interested in gaining an understanding of the demand-side perspective of an experienced tourist. Data from 1,000 respondents across the two case studies, namely Germany and New Zealand, were collected. For methodological and analytical reasons, the statistical analyses were computed independently and the findings for Germany (section 6.2) and New Zealand (section 6.3) are presented separately. For each case study 500 valid cases were used and univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistics were implemented.

Findings from univariate descriptive statistics are explored and central tendencies and frequencies (expressed in percentage of valid cases) are introduced to establish an overall understanding of the respondents. For scaled items, either the top-value or the mean score (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) are reported. Hereafter the results from the respective factor analysis using principal component analysis (PCA) are presented. The identification of variables that best explain and predict the experience level of German and New Zealand tourists was central to this research project. In addition to the statistical predictability, the strength of contribution of each identified predictor variable was investigated using multiple linear regression analysis and applying stepwise backward elimination. The regression equations that best predict the German and New Zealand experienced tourists are introduced in this chapter. The centrality of having international travel experience and travelling independently was outlined in the previous chapter and all multivariate analyses in this second research phase were performed using a filtered data set. Only valid cases that met the requirements of being an *international, independent traveller* were included in the computation to extract factor scores and identify the predictors of being experienced.

6.2 The German experienced tourist

Results from the German survey are presented in the following sections and the German experienced tourist is explored. Key findings from the three core statistics, namely descriptive statistics, PCA, and multiple linear regression analysis, are introduced and supported by tables and figures.

6.2.1 Describing the German respondents

Descriptive statistics were conducted to achieve a general overview of the survey respondents in the German data set. These univariate analyses were computed using all valid cases. Due to filters and survey logics applied in the survey and a few missing values in some questions, the amount of valid cases varied across question blocks and ranged between 239 and 500 valid cases.

6.2.1.1 The respondents' profiles

Based on the interlocked quota, the demographic composition in terms of age, gender and place of residence (Table 6.1) corresponds to the actual proportions of the German population (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016).

Table 6.1: Sociodemographic profile of German respondents (quota control)

Age group		Gender	Place of residence			
			South	North	East	West
20-29 years	18.3	F	14.3	7.7	9.9	17.6
		M	14.3	7.7	11.0	17.6
30-39 years	17.9	F	14.6	7.9	9.0	18.0
		M	14.6	7.9	10.1	18.0
40-49 years	25.2	F	14.4	8.0	9.6	17.6
		M	14.4	8.0	9.6	18.4
50-59 years	21.9	F	13.8	7.3	11.0	18.3
		M	13.8	7.3	11.0	17.4
60-69 years	16.7	F	14.3	8.3	10.7	17.9
		M	13.1	8.3	10.7	16.7
Total (n = 500)	100.0	F	14.3	7.8	10.0	17.9
		M	14.1	7.8	10.4	17.7

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases, based on all valid cases. Represents the interlocked quota applied to sample German respondents according to the respective population proportions

Comparison with information from official statistics (e.g., census data) proved that the percentage distribution of other sociodemographic variables were also similar to the population's proportions (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016, 2017b). The respondents' demographic information in relation to qualification, net household income, number of children younger than 18 years old living in the household, household size and employment status are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Additional sociodemographic information of German respondents

Criteria	**Items**	**%**
Highest school qualification[a]	Lower secondary education	12.4
n = 500	Middle secondary education	33.3
	German Abitur	26.1
	University degree	27.5
	No formal qualification	0.7
Total net household income (annually)[b]	Less than NZD 26,500	22.4
n = 439	NZD 26,500 – NZ D52,799	42.4
	NZD 52,800 – NZD 79,199	24.5
	NZD 79,200 – NZD 105,599	7.5
	NZD 105,600 or more	3.3
Children younger than 18 years living in the household	None	79.0
n = 498	1	10.3
	2	8.1
	3 or more	2.6
Household size	1	26.9
n = 499	2	43.1
	3	15.4
	4	10.7
	5 or more	4.0
Employment status	Full-time employed	47.0
n = 499	Part-time employed	13.6
	Self-employed	8.0
	Homemaker	4.4
	Student	9.3
	Retired	14.3
	Currently not employed	3.3

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases, based on all valid cases. Possible missing value as questions were not forced.

[a]Lower secondary education (GER: Hauptschulabschluss) is a school leaving certificate awarded after nine years of schooling and equals the lowest level in the German secondary school system; Middle secondary education (GER: Realschulabschluss) is a school leaving certificate awarded after 10 years of schooling; the German Abitur is the highest level in the secondary school system. Depending on the Federal State, students leave with an Abitur after 12 or 13 years of schooling and are provided the qualification to attend any German university.

[b]Item *prefer not to answer* coded as missing. In the survey, items were prompted in the national currency (Euro) and were expressed in the standard format used, namely monthly net household income. The monthly income was converted into NZD using the XE currency converter (http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/) as of January 30, 2017 and an annual income was projected for comparability with the New Zealand data.

In addition to the demographic information examined to describe the respondents' general profiles, several elements of the social identity were tested. On a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not like me at all*) to 5 (*very much like me*) thirteen elements were examined. The element *curious/inquisitive* obtained the highest agreement among the German population (M = 4.20, SD = 0.760) followed by *adaptable/open-minded* (M = 4.01, SD = 0.799). The lowest scores were recorded for *adventurous/risk-taking* (M = 3.18, SD = 1.093) and *trendsetting/innovative* (M = 2.82, SD = 0.964). A summary of the results is visualised in Figure 6.1 and all univariate findings related to the respondents' desired social identity are presented in Appendix N.

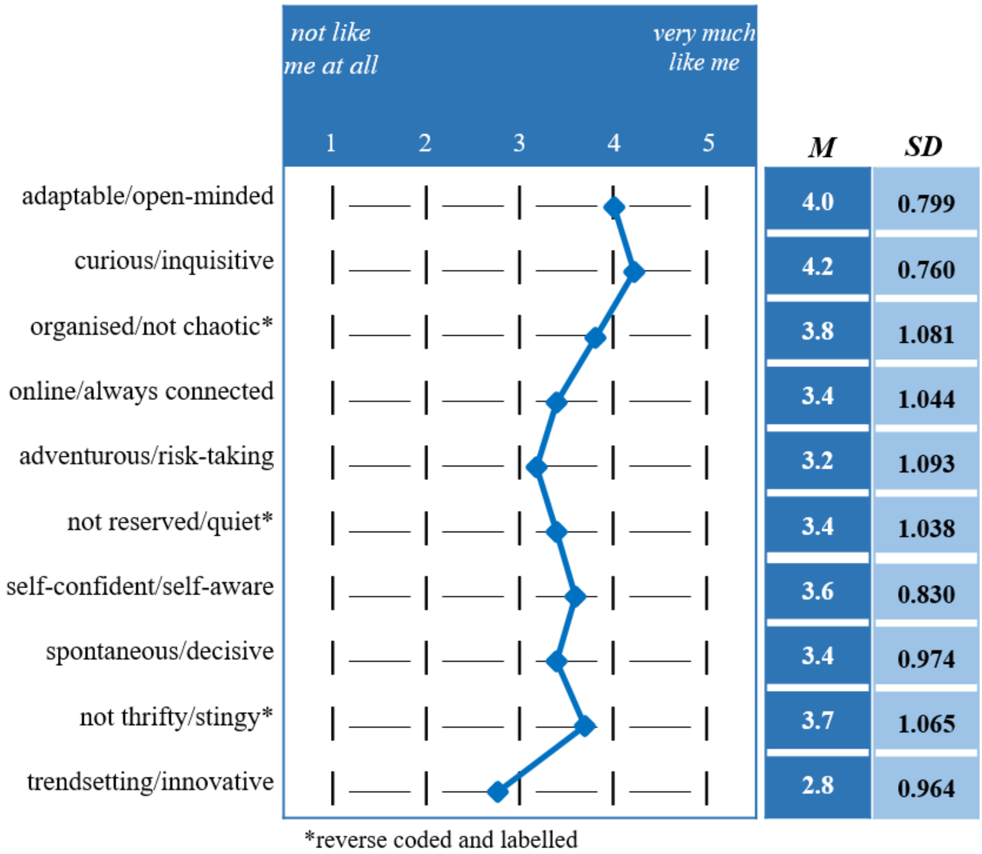

Figure 6.1: Desired social identity elements of German respondents (n = 500)

In addition to the respondents' general profiles, the investigation of the respondents' travel preferences and travel behaviour resulted in a comprehensive database that encouraged the inspection of the respondents' profiles as tourists.

6.2.1.2 The tourists' profiles

The self-assessed travel experience level of individuals was central to this research project. The respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 (*not experienced at all*) to 10 (*extremely experienced*) how much they consider themselves as an experienced tourist. On average, German respondents ranked themselves above the middle-point (M = 6.18, SD = 2.103) with almost one quarter of respondents indicating an experience level of 8. Only 1.8% stated that they were *not experienced at all* and 2.5% specified to be *extremely experienced* (Figure 6.2).

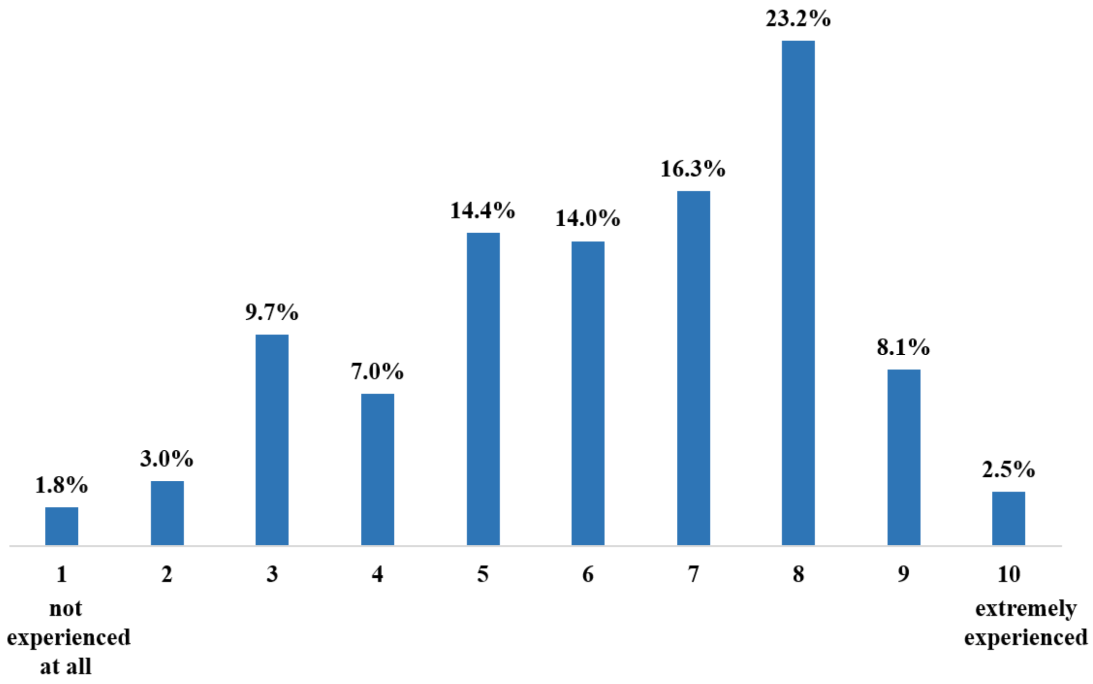

Figure 6.2: Self-assessed experience level of German respondents (n = 500)

The quantity of domestic and international holiday trips within the past five years was estimated to investigate the general travel frequency of respondents. The majority of Germans undertook at least one domestic overnight holiday trip within that period. Less than 10% maintained that they had never travelled internationally. The majority of Germans with international holiday trip experiences had undertaken one to five international holiday trips in the past five years (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Past holiday trips of German respondents

Criteria	Items	%
Domestic holiday trips within the past five years[a]	0	4.9
n = 500	1-5	53.4
	6-10	23.0
	11-15	11.1
	16-20	4.7
	21-25	1.4
	26-30	0.4
	more than 30	1.1
International holiday trips general (no time restriction)	Yes	91.8
n = 500	No	8.2
International holiday trips within past five years[a,b]	0	6.6
n = 459	1-5	58.7
	6-10	22.9
	11-15	7.6
	16-20	1.1
	21-25	0.8
	26-30	1.0
	more than 30	1.3

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases, based on all valid cases.
[a]To avoid recall bias, respondents provided an estimate of trips undertaken and not the actual count.
[b]Question was only displayed to respondents with at least one international holiday trip in the past (no time restriction).

To further investigate the tourists' profiles, survey respondents rated their level of agreement regarding several aspects related to the general role of travelling in their lives. On a scale from 1 (*fully disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*), holiday travelling was rated as an *important part of a fulfilling life* by two thirds of German respondents (M = 3.85, SD = 1.102) and almost half of respondents agreed or fully agreed that they had *travelled since their childhood* (M = 3.16, SD = 1.398). In addition, one third of respondents agreed or fully agreed that travelling was a *status symbol in their lives* (M = 2.83, SD = 1.278). The agreement with the statement *travelling for work made me want to travel for leisure purposes* was notably lower (M = 1.85, SD = 1.170).

Without reference to a specific trip or destination, respondents identified their major reasons and motives to travel for holiday purposes. Amongst the reasons queried, *escaping everyday life* (61.4%), *visiting a new tourist destination* (52.6%) and *exploring different landscape/scenery* (51.1%) were the three major reasons for Germans to travel for holiday purposes. *Go shopping* (8.9%) and *step out of my comfort zone* (8.2%) achieved the lowest scores. Respondents also reflected on the decision-making processes and sources of inspiration for holiday travel. The *tourist destination itself* was the criterion with highest priority in the decision-making process for more than one third of Germans (38.0%). In a multiple response question concerning the sources of inspiration for holiday travel, most German respondents selected *family and friends* (59.9%), followed by *online travel platforms* (39.0%) and *TV and movies* (26.8%).

Survey respondents with past international travel experiences were asked several additional questions. Findings reveal that almost all German respondents (99.6%) had travelled within Europe (outside of Germany) and roughly 1 out of 3 Germans mentioned that they had been to North America (34.4%), Asia (31.2%) and/or Africa (31.3%) for holiday purposes. On average, German respondents had visited 2.5 continents/regions. Respondents with past European travel were further asked to indicate the countries they had visited. For the statistical analysis, the European countries were geographically clustered as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: European country groups

Groups	**Countries**
Alpine countries	Germany[a], Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein
Balkan countries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia
Baltic states	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
Benelux	Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands
Caucasus	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
Mediterranean	Andorra, Cyprus, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, San Marino, France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Greece
Nordic countries	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden
Slavic countries	Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine
UK and Ireland	Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland

Note. Country grouping by geographical clustering.
[a]Germany excluded in the German survey (emphasis on international holiday trips)

Nearly 9 out of 10 Germans had visited at least one of the Mediterranean countries (86.7%), more than half of Germans stated that they had been to any of the neighbouring Alpine countries (58.0%) and almost 4 out of 10 Germans had been to any of the Benelux countries (38.2%) for holiday purposes. On a 5-point Likert-type scale, respondents rated their ability to recall different sensory experiences from past international holiday travel. Findings reveal that the *visuals of a place* (*e.g., landscape, architecture*) (M = 4.30, SD = 0.917) and the *feel of a place* (*e.g., humidity, soft sand*)

(M = 4.19, SD = 0.874) were the sensory experiences remembered the best. With an average of 3.32 (SD = 1.187) the *sound of the place* (*e.g., sound of birds, traffic*) received the lowest average agreement rating among the five human senses.

To minimise possible recall biases, only respondents who had travelled internationally within the past five years were asked several trip-specific questions. The descriptive statistics show that the last international holiday trip for most Germans was in *2016* (66.4%) and 41.7% travelled between *8 and 14 days*. Almost every fifth German claimed that they were first-time visitors (19.6%) in the visited holiday destination. A summary of all findings related to the general travel behaviour, general international past travel and most recent international holiday trip is provided in Appendix O.

The travel behaviour of independent tourists was of foremost interest in this research phase and several questions were directed towards this subgroup. Respondents were requested to classify the type of holiday of their most recent international holiday trip to facilitate later filtering options and direct questions only towards FITs (Figure 6.3).

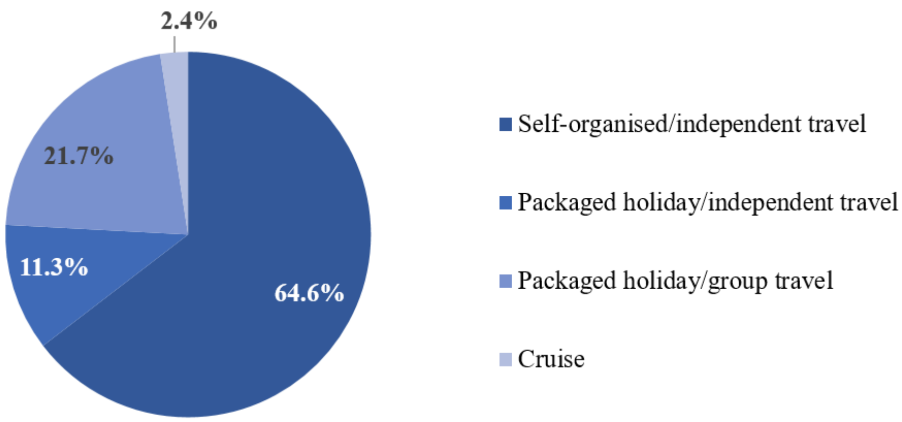

Figure 6.3: Type of holiday most recent international holiday trip (GER) (n = 428)

The findings show that 75.9% of German respondents can be classified as FITs as 64.6% specified that their last holiday trip was a self-organised/independent holiday trip, while another 11.3% specified that they had booked a packaged holiday and travelled independently. When filtering the data set based on the selection of one of these two items, the reduced sample size (n = 325) was sufficient for further analyses of the independent tourists' behaviour and activities and later multivariate analyses.

6.2.1.3 The independent tourists' behaviour and activities

Survey respondents that met the requirement of a FIT were asked several questions related to their most recent international holiday trip. On a 5-point Likert-type scale, respondents indicated their level of agreement with several statements related to their booking and information behaviour prior to the trip. Although more than one third (37.0%) fully agreed that they had *booked most elements online* (M = 3.25, SD = 1.654), 27.2% of respondents fully disagreed with the statement. There was a high level of disagreement (43.3%) with spontaneous booking behaviour (M = 2.36, SD = 1.464), however, the majority (fully) agreed that they *felt prepared and informed* before starting the trip (M = 3.97, SD = 1.028). Among the nine travel-related activities queried, *checked out places that the local community frequents* achieved the highest average agreement (M = 4.14, SD = 1.057), followed by *was very active and explored as much as possible* (M = 3.77, SD = 1.075). Lastly, respondents reflected on the frequency using online media during their last international holiday trip and a distinction was made between *daily, almost every day, sometimes, almost never and never* (Figure 6.4).

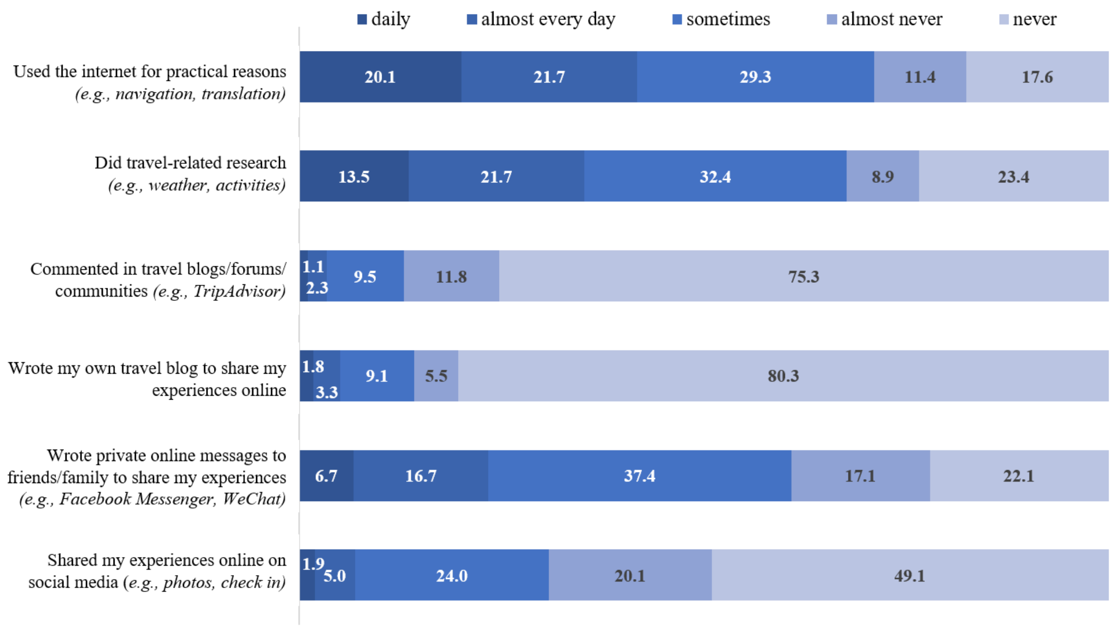

Figure 6.4: FITs' online behaviour during the last international holiday trip (GER) (n = 325)

Figure 6.4 reveals differences between the frequencies of online services used. While 41.8% of survey respondents had used the internet daily or almost daily for practical reasons, the proportion of respondents that regularly participated in Web 2.0 activities was much smaller. Only 6.9% of German FITs frequently shared their experiences online, 3.4% commented daily or almost daily in travel blogs and 5.1% wrote their own travel blog on a regular basis. A summary of the findings related to the independent tourists' travel behaviour and activities is provided in Appendix P.

6.2.1.4 The tourists' future desires and plans

Several questions addressed future travel intentions and behaviour. These questions were not trip-specific but hypothetical and of broader scale. Respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement with ten statements related to future travel intentions and behaviour. Almost two thirds of respondents agreed or fully agreed that they want to *travel more often* in the future (M = 3.88, SD = 1.042). Most survey respondents agreed that they expect to *experience modern and up-to-date services when travelling* (M = 3.65, SD = 1.186) and desire to *experience places like the locals do* (M = 3.51, SD = 1.097). Half of the respondents (47.7%) had planned their next international holiday trip already, almost 9 out of 10 respondents (89.0%) had scheduled it within the next 12 months and the majority (72.4%) selected a destination within Europe for their next international holiday. An overview of the results related to the respondents' future travel plans and intentions is provided in Appendix Q.

6.2.2 Reducing the possible predictors of being an experienced tourist

As described in section 4.3.3 a reduced data set was used for multivariate analyses. In the German data set, 325 respondents were classified as FIT. After listwise deletion of missing values, 322 valid cases remained in the data set. The questionnaire contained six scaled questions, comprising 47 items that were identified as potential predictor variables for the outcome variable *experience level*. Nine independent and uncorrelated factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 and factor loadings of at least .50 were derived.

Scale reliability was tested applying Cronbach's alpha. As all alpha-coefficients were greater than .60, satisfactory scale reliability was detected. The nine extracted factors, factorised items, factor loadings and related Cronbach's alpha coefficients are presented in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Reduction of predictor variables using PCA (GER)

Factor	**Items**	**Factor loading**	**α**
Web 2.0 engagement	Wrote own travel blog	.878	.825
	Commented in travel blogs	.858	
	Shared experiences online	.744	
	Wants to share experience and be an inspiration (future)	.602	
Multisensory memory	Sound of a place (aural memory)	.836	.810
	Smell of a place (olfactory memory)	.812	
	Feel of a place (tactile memory)	.744	
	Taste of a place (gustatory memory)	.681	
Novelty seeking and exploring	Want to go to places none of my family/friends have been before (future)	.733	.748
	Wants to go to places not many people have been before (future)	.727	
	Wants to experiences places like the locals do (future)	.715	
	Wants to travel more often (future)	.589	
Convenience and enjoyment	Experiences high levels of comfort and quality (future)	.773	.661
	Experience modern and up-to-date services when travelling (future)	.649	
	I am online/always connected	.522	
Exploratory social identity	I am spontaneous/decisive	.789	.681
	I am self-confident/self-aware	.757	
	I am adventurous/risk-taking	.645	
	I am trendsetting/innovative	.507	
Internet as practical support tool	Did travel-related research	.813	.698
	Used the internet for practical reasons	.792	
	Wrote private online messages	.532	
Self-seeking and self-development	Travelled off the beaten track	.754	.652
	Felt being an active part of the experience/the place/the community	.703	
	Spent more time in the same place to get a real feeling	.678	
Standard travel activities	Visited must-see places and famous sites	.855	.704
	Wants to see as many famous sites as possible (future)	.592	
	Asked locals for first-hand information	.585	
	Was active and explored	.513	
Travel as part of life	Travelled since childhood	.755	.643
	Holiday travel as status symbol in life	.640	
	Holiday travel as an important part of a fulfilling life	.629	

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). PCA with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation, factor loadings > .50, factor loadings < .50 were suppressed, only pure marker, no cross-loadings, n = 322.

The first factor explained 19.3% of the variance, comprised items associated with online media behaviour and was labelled *Web 2.0 engagement*. A second factor related to online media was identified and the factorised items were summarised as *internet as practical support tool* (4.6%). Several items referred to travel behaviour and activities undertaken during the trip or aimed to be undertaken in the future. Four factors related to travel behaviour were derived and labelled *self-seeking and self-development* (4.0%), *novelty seeking and exploring* (7.1%), *convenience and enjoyment* (6.0%) and *standard travel activities* (3.9%). The factor *exploratory social identity* (5.8%) measures the consensus with specific desired social identity elements. Items related to the role of travelling showed positive factorability and the extracted factor was labelled *travel as part of life* (3.6%). Additionally, recallable sensory experience items showed high loadings, were factorised and named *multisensory memory* (10.0%).

The nine factors were pure markers and accounted for 64.2% of the variance. Based on the extracted factors using PCA, factor regression scores were computed for all subjects and saved as new variables in the data set. These variables were then used as possible predictors of the outcome variable *experience level* in the subsequent multiple linear regression analysis.

6.2.3 Identifying the predictors of being an experienced tourist

With the aim to identify the factors that significantly contribute to the self-assessed experience level of German tourists, multiple linear regression analysis was computed. The analysis was also performed using the reduced data set that comprised respondents who met the requirement of being a FIT (n = 322). The self-assessed experience level (Figure 6.2) was treated as DV and backward elimination was applied to identify the variables that best predict the DV. More than 50 possible IVs were entered in the equation and removed until a significant regression was found. Multiple regression proposes a rate of change in the DV with respect to the estimated change in the IV under the condition that the other IVs in the regression equation are fixed. For the German data set, 18 IVs were identified as being influential in the prediction of the self-assessed experience level. These predictor variables explained 47.7% of the variance (F(18, 300) = 15.199, p = .000, R^2_{adj}: .445).

In addition to the identification of variables that have a statistical impact on the outcome variable, the degree and direction of contribution (positive or negative) were investigated. Results from multiple linear regression analysis show that all but one IV significantly ($p < .050$) contributed to predict the outcome variable. The only predictor variable with a non-significant *p*-value was the variable *medium level of income* ($p = .096$). Conclusively, statistical interpretation for this variable is limited. The findings reveal that *travel as part of life* ($X_{1.GER}$; $\beta = .354$, $p = .000$), *Web 2.0 engagement* ($X_{2.GER}$; $\beta = .216$, $p = .000$) and *visited more than one continent/region in the past* ($X_{3.GER}$; $\beta = .190$, $p = .000$) most significantly predicted the experience level. The predictors *immersion and learning as travel motives* ($X_{14.GER}$; $\beta = -.090$, $p = .049$) and *young adults* ($X_{15.GER}$; $\beta = -154$, $p = .001$) were statistically significant, yet indicated negative beta coefficients. This means that for each one unit increase of the IV, the DV decreases on average by the respective beta value.

A summary of the predictor variables that remained in the regression equation to predict the self-assessed experience level of Germans is provided in Table 6.6. In addition to the standardised beta coefficients, *t*-statistics and *p*-values, the table reports collinearity statistics. The IVs that best explain the DV range from sociodemographic factors and desired social identity elements to general travel-related aspects and behavioural factors linked to different stages of the travel journey (inspiration, decision-making, booking, trip activities, and future intentions).

Table 6.6: Predictors of the self-assessed experience level of German tourists

IV		β	*t*	*p*	collinearity tolerance	collinearity VIF
	(Constant)		4.197	.000		
$X_{1.GER}$	Travel as part of life[a]	.354	8.031	.000	.899	1.113
$X_{2.GER}$	Web 2.0 engagement[a]	.216	4.724	.000	.834	1.199
$X_{a.GER}$	Visited more than one continent/region in the past[b]	.190	4.125	.000	.818	1.222
$X_{b.GER}$	Visited must-see destinations in the past[b,d]	.170	3.875	.000	.909	1.100
$X_{3.GER}$	Informed and booked most trip elements online	.147	3.407	.001	.934	1.071
$X_{4.GER}$	Undertook at least five holiday trips within the past five years[b,c]	.132	2.874	.004	.828	1.208
$X_{5.GER}$	Self-seeking and self-development[a]	.131	3.064	.002	.956	1.046
$X_{6.GER}$	Tourist destination itself as major decision criterion	.131	2.782	.006	.786	1.273
$X_{7.GER}$	Adaptable/open-minded social identity	.131	2.646	.009	.715	1.398
$X_{8.GER}$	Holiday type (e.g., hiking trip, city trip) as major decision criterion	.125	2.632	.009	.770	1.298
$X_{9.GER}$	Novelty-seeking and exploring[a]	.109	2.351	.019	.812	1.231
$X_{10.GER}$	Standard travel experiences[a]	.098	2.303	.022	.972	1.029
$X_{11.GER}$	No children under 18 years living in the household	.094	2.124	.034	.897	1.114
$X_{12.GER}$	Internet as practical support tool[a]	.091	2.002	.046	.840	1.191
$X_{13.GER}$	Family and daily life as inspiration[b]	.090	2.064	.040	.909	1.100
n.s.	Medium level of income (26,500-79,199 NZD/annually)[b,e]	.072	1.672	.096	.946	1.057
$X_{14.GER}$	Immersion and learning as travel motives[b]	-.090	-1.980	.049	.848	1.179
$X_{15.GER}$	Young adults (20-39 years)[b]	-.154	-3.425	.001	.861	1.162

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Dependent variable: Self-assessed experience level. Stepwise regression with backward elimination, confidence levels 95%, β = standardised beta coefficients, n = 322.
[a]Variable was entered as factor score derived from PCA (section 6.2.2).
[b]Variable was transformed/merged for multivariate analysis.
[c]International and domestic holiday trips within past five years.
[d]Visited at least one of the following must-see destinations in the past (independent of time): France, Spain, Italy, UK, North America.
[e]Variable not significant (p < .050) and not used for further analysis and discussion of results.

6.3 The New Zealand experienced tourist

Following the same analytical procedure and structure applied for the analysis of the German data, the univariate and multivariate results from New Zealand respondents are reported in the following sections. Several figures and tables are used to summarise the findings and detailed overviews are given in the respective appendices.

6.3.1 Describing the New Zealand respondents

Findings from descriptive statistics are based on the weighted data of all valid cases. Due to survey logics, the considered number of respondents varied between 215 and 500 valid cases.

6.3.1.1 The respondents' profiles

The sociodemographic variables age, gender and place of residence were applied as quota criteria and a balancing weight according to the official population statistics was introduced after data collection. Conclusively, the demographic composition of these three variables reflects the proportionate distribution of the New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). The sociodemographic profile of New Zealand respondents is reported in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Sociodemographic profile of New Zealand respondents (quota control)

Age group		**Gender**	**Place of residence[a]**				
			AKL	**WEL**	**North**	**CAN**	**South**
20-29 years	20.6	F	19.4	5.8	14.6	5.8	4.9
		M	18.4	5.8	13.6	6.8	4.9
30-39 years	19.6	F	19.4	6.1	15.3	6.1	5.1
		M	17.3	6.1	13.3	6.1	5.1
40-49 years	22.8	F	18.4	6.0	15.8	7.0	5.3
		M	16.7	5.3	14.0	6.1	5.3
50-59 years	21.0	F	16.2	5.7	17.1	6.7	5.7
		M	15.2	4.8	16.2	6.7	5.7
60-69 years	16.1	F	15.0	5.0	17.5	7.5	6.3
		M	13.8	5.0	17.5	6.3	6.3
Total (n = 500)	100.0	F	17.8	5.8	16.0	6.6	5.4
		M	16.4	5.4	14.8	6.4	5.4

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases, based on all valid cases. Represents the interlocked quota applied to sample New Zealand respondents according to the respective population proportions.

Findings related to sociodemographic information that go beyond age, gender and region also reflect closeness to the official statistics (Statistics New Zealand, 2014, 2015). In addition to the qualification, net household income, children under 18 years in household, household size and employment status, New Zealanders were asked to state the ethnicity they most identify with (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Additional sociodemographic information of New Zealand respondents

Criteria	**Items**	**%**
Highest school qualification	Secondary education	28.5
n = 498	Vocational qualification	22.3
	Undergraduate degree	24.7
	Postgraduate degree	21.5
	No formal qualification	3.0
Total net household income (annually)[a]	less than NZD 30,000	17.9
n = 417	NZD 30,000-NZD 70,000	36.2
	NZD 70,001-NZD 100,000	23.3
	NZD 100,001-NZD 130,000	13.5
	NZD 130,001 or more	9.2
Children younger than 18 years living in the household	None	69.6
n = 492	1	14.8
	2	11.3
	3 or more	4.4
Household size	1	15.4
n = 494	2	32.4
	3	20.9
	4	18.1
	5 or more	13.3
Employment status	Full-time employed	40.3
n = 498	Part-time employed	18.3
	Self-employed	10.0
	Homemaker	6.9
	Student	4.8
	Retired	9.2
	Currently not employed	10.4
Ethnicity	European/Pākehā	72.3
n = 498	Māori	5.8
	Pasifika	1.5
	Asian	10.8
	Middle Eastern	1.1
	Latin American	1.2
	African	1.1
	Other ethnicity	6.2

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases. Based on all valid cases, possible missing value as questions were not forced.
[a]Item *prefer not to answer* coded as missing.

To gain a holistic understanding of the respondents' profiles, several elements of the (desired) social identity were tested. New Zealand respondents were asked to describe themselves regarding 13 elements on a scale from 1 (*not like me at all*) to 5 (*very much like me*) (Figure 6.5).

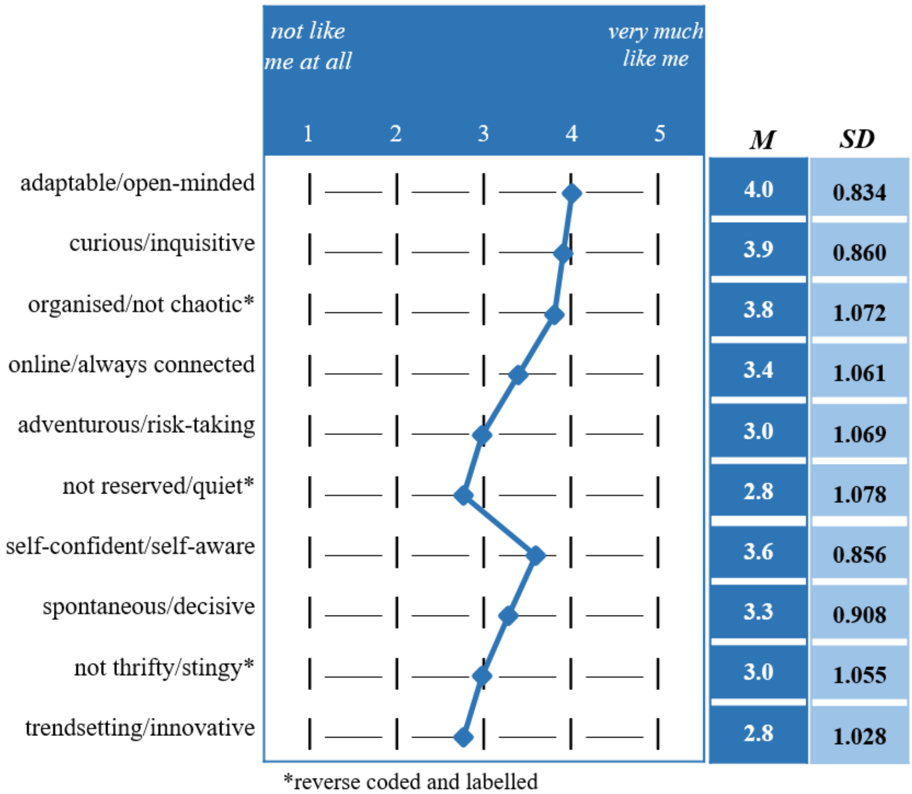

Figure 6.5: Desired social identity elements of New Zealand respondents (n = 500)

Based on the 5-point Likert-type self-rating scale, the element *adaptable/open-minded* (M = 4.02, SD = 0.834) and *curious/inquisitive* (M = 3.89, SD = 0.860) received the highest average agreement rating among New Zealanders. By contrast, the agreement ratings for *trendsetting/innovative* (M = 2.76, SD = 1.028) and *not reserved/quiet* (M = 2.81, SD = 1.078) received the lowest agreement ratings among the thirteen elements queried. All findings are provided in Appendix N.

6.3.1.2 The tourists‘ profiles

Several questions were raised to derive a touristic profile of New Zealand respondents. On a 10-point scale, New Zealanders scored an average of 6 (M = 5.77, SD = 2.438) regarding their self-assessed experience level as a tourist. However, there was a greater proportion of New Zealanders indicating that they were *not experienced at all* (7.1%) compared to respondents whose self-assessment was *extremely experienced* (4.5%; Figure 6.6).

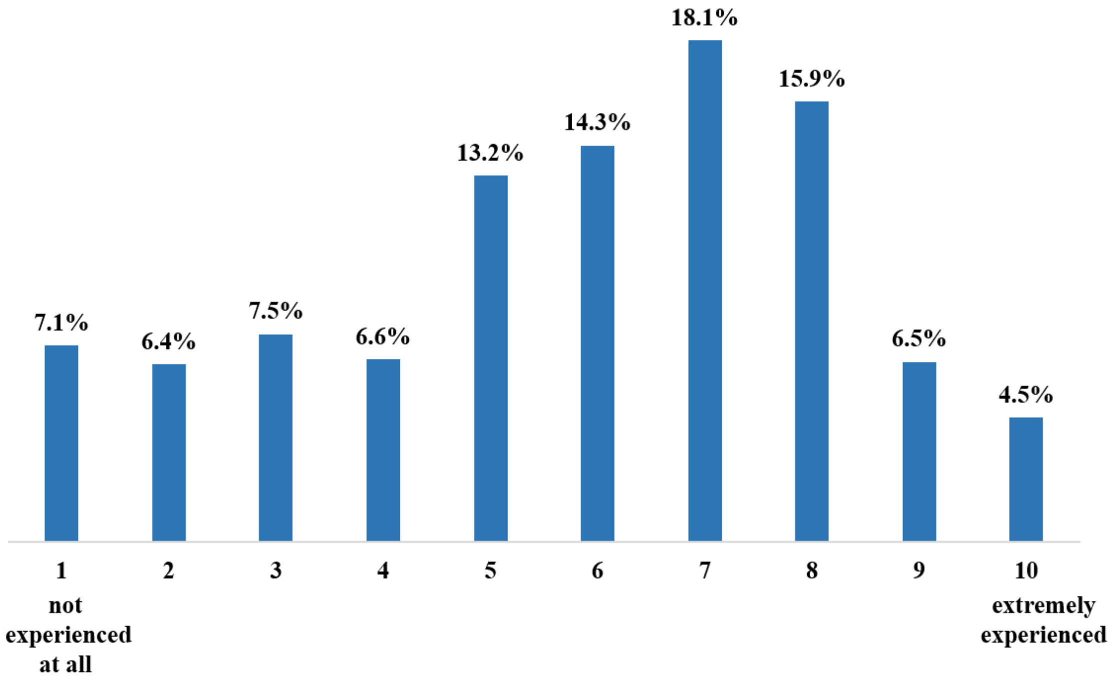

Figure 6.6: Self-assessed experience level of New Zealand respondents (n = 500)

Findings demonstrate a high travel frequency of New Zealanders. Only 3.2% of survey respondents had not travelled domestically for holiday purposes within the past five years and 10.6% had never travelled internationally. Among the New Zealanders having travelled internationally for holiday purposes in the past, the majority (64.5%) had undertaken one to five international trips within the past five years (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9: Past holiday trips of New Zealand respondents

Criteria	Items	%
Domestic holiday trips within the past five years [a]	0	3.2
n = 500	1-5	42.7
	6-10	24.1
	11-15	15.5
	16-20	5.3
	21-25	3.4
	26-30	0.9
	more than 30	5.0
International holiday trips general (no time restriction)	Yes	89.4
n = 500	No	10.6
International holiday trips within the past five years[a,b]	0	16.3
n = 447	1-5	64.5
	6-10	13.3
	11-15	3.2
	16-20	1.1
	21-25	0.9
	26-30	0.3
	more than 30	0.4

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Expressed in % of the cases, based on all valid cases.
[a]To avoid recall bias, respondents provided an estimate of trips undertaken and not the actual count.
[b]Question was only displayed to respondents with at least one international holiday trip in the past (no-time restriction).

On a 5-point Likert-type scale, more than two thirds of respondents agreed or fully agreed that holiday travelling was an *important part of a fulfilling life* (M = 3.85, SD = 1.060). Approximately 45% of survey respondents agreed or fully agreed that they had been exposed to travelling early in their lives and had *travelled since their childhood* (M = 3.08, SD = 1.449). The proportions of New Zealanders who agreed or fully agreed that *travelling for business was a motivation for leisure trips* (M = 2.41, SD = 1.330) or *holiday travelling was considered as a status symbol* (M = 2.61, SD = 1.259) were considerably smaller. In a multiple response question, respondents shared general reasons that are relevant to them when travelling for holiday purposes. Although *spending time with family/friends* was selected by 61.0% and was the most often selected reason to travel, *meeting people and build new relationships* (13.2%) was the least important travel motive. Half of the respondents chose *visiting a new tourist destination (54.1%)* and/or *exploring different landscape/scenery (51.0%)*. For almost one third of respondents (30.3%), the *price* was the major decision-making criterion. Another 29.1% stated that the *tourist destination itself* was decisive for holiday travelling. New Zealanders indicated *family and friends* (68.7%) as most important source of inspiration, followed by *online travel platforms* (29.1%) and *own social media contacts* (28.8%).

Findings disclose that survey respondents had visited on average three continents/ regions. Almost 9 out of 10 respondents (88.8%) had travelled to Australia/Oceania (excl. New Zealand) and more than half had travelled to Asia (56.6%) and/or Europe (56.0%). Within Europe, the UK and Ireland (75.1%) and the Mediterranean (73.7%) were the country groups (Table 6.4) most visited. The *visuals of a place* (*e.g., landscape, architecture*) (M = 4.27, SD = 0.835) and *the feel of a place* (*e.g., humidity, soft sand*) (M = 3.95, SD = 0.986) were the best recallable sensory experiences.

Survey respondents that had travelled internationally within the past five years shared information related to their most recent international holiday trip. The majority (62.1%) visited one country, 12.0% travelled to four or more destinations and more than three-quarters of New Zealanders (77.9%) had undertaken an independent holiday trip organised by themselves (Figure 6.7).

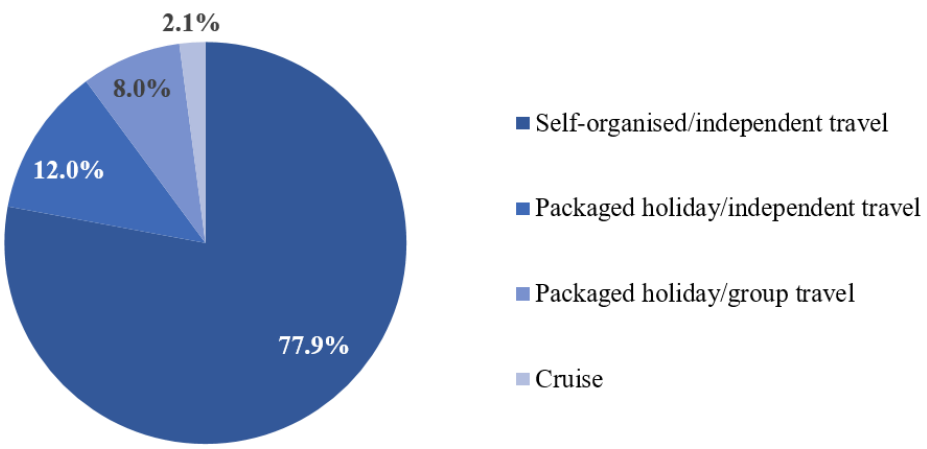

Figure 6.7: Type of holiday most recent international trip (NZ) (n = 374)

As 89.9% of respondents met the requirement of a FIT, 337 survey respondents remained in the data set for more in-depth questions related to this subgroup. A summary of all findings related to the general travel behaviour, general international past travel experiences and most recent international holiday trip is presented in Appendix O.

6.3.1.3 The independent tourists' behaviour and activities

Most independent tourists confirmed that they had *planned the holiday trip by themselves* (M = 3.96, SD = 1.260) and the majority had *booked most trip elements* *online* (M = 3.77, SD = 1.337). Although one third of New Zealand FITs (33.7%) fully disagreed that they had *booked most trip elements relatively spontaneously (less than four weeks prior to the trip)*, there was high agreement that decisions were made spontaneously once they had arrived at the destination (M = 3.29, SD = 1.182). The activity *checked out places that the local community frequents* achieved the highest average agreement (M = 3.72, SD = 1.090), followed by the activity *visited must-see places and famous sites* (M = 3.62, SD = 1.154). New Zealanders showed strong affinity for using online services during their holidays as visualised in Figure 6.8.

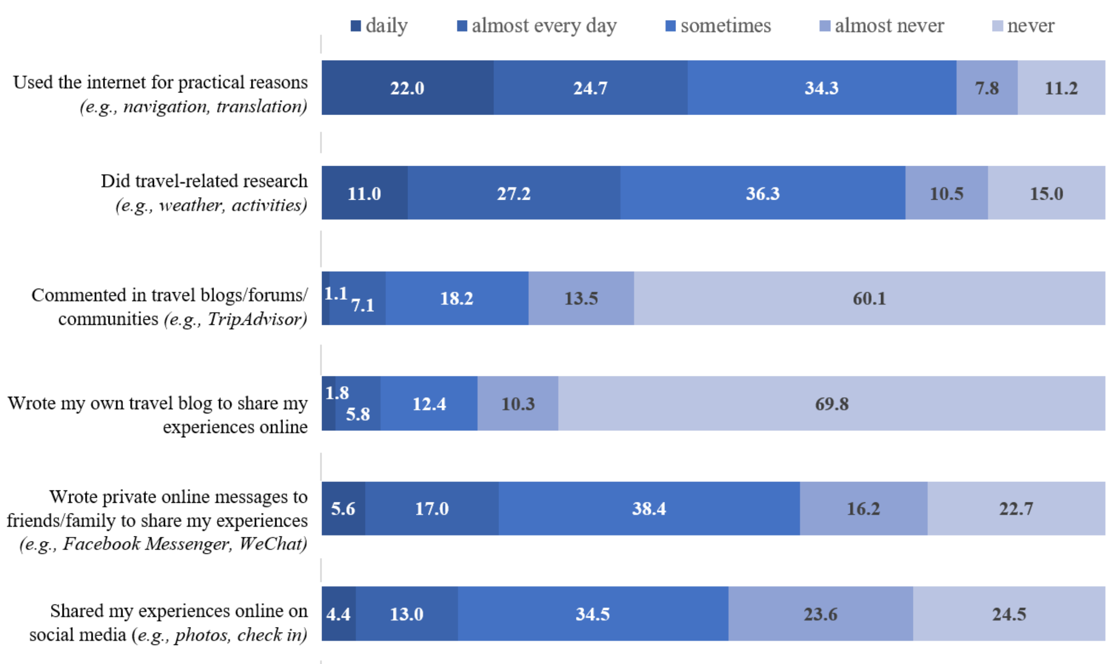

Figure 6.8: FITs' online behaviour during the last international holiday trip (NZ) (n = 337)

Almost half of the respondents had *used the internet for practical reasons* daily or almost daily (M = 3.39, SD = 1.228) and there was a high frequency for the practise of *travel-related research* (M = 3.09, SD = 1.189). In contrast to the high frequency of using the internet as a practical support tool, a smaller percentage of New Zealanders *shared their experiences online* on social media channels (M = 2.49, SD = 1.126) or *wrote their own travel blogs* (M = 1.59, SD = 1.025) on a regular basis. The findings related to the independent traveller's travel behaviour are summarised in Appendix P.

6.3.1.4 The tourists' future desires and plans

Lastly, potential future travel intentions and plans were examined. Most New Zealanders agreed that they want to *travel more often* (M = 4.03, SD = 1.002) and there was strong agreement with the statement *I want to explore more of my home country and culture* (M = 3.84, SD = 1.068). *Experiencing places virtually (online) instead of going there* was only imaginable by 11.0% of New Zealanders (M = 1.90, SD = 1.160). Almost half of the respondents (43.1%) affirmed that they had already planned their next international holiday trip and almost three quarters of New Zealanders (72.0%) mentioned that they would travel within the next 12 months. Most New Zealanders (44.1%) planned to travel within Australia/Oceania (excl. New Zealand) and 3 out of 10 New Zealanders intend to visit Europe (27.1%) and/or Asia (27.1%). A summary of findings related to the tourists' future desires and plans is provided in Appendix Q.

6.3.2 Reducing the possible predictors of being an experienced tourist

Identical to the German data evaluation, PCA was computed to reduce the scaled IVs in the New Zealand data set. After listwise deletion of missing values, 335 valid cases remained and were used for variable reduction. The 47 scaled items were reduced to eight factorised scores and scale reliability was confirmed applying Cronbach's alpha coefficients (>.60).

Four items that measured the agreement of recallable sensory experiences were reduced to a factor and labelled *multisensory memory*. This factor was accountable for 21.3% of the variance. Several touristic activities showed positive loadings on the second factor. As these factorised activities were rather diverse than specific, the factor was summarised as *hybrid travel behaviour* (10.0%). Two other extracted factors were associated with travel behaviour and activities and were named *collecting destinations and attractions* (4.6%) and *convenience and enjoyment* (4.4%). Regarding online and media behaviour, three unrelated and unique factors were reduced: *pioneering online engagement* (8.0%), *online interaction* (5.4%) and *internet for information searching* (4.0%). The three factors that were related to online behaviour indicate different degrees of online engagement and interaction. In contrast to the first online factor – *pioneering online engagement* – that comprised items that yielded towards advanced online engagement and communication and were beyond the regular and mostly personal online activities, the factor *online interaction* referred to sharing with a closer circle of acquaintances. The last online factor, *internet for information search,* was purely for individual benefit. In addition, PCA showed positive factorability of items related to the individual's desired social identity. These factorised items were labelled *exploratory social identity* (6.6%). The results of PCA are summarised in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Reduction of predictor variables using PCA (NZ)

Factor	**Items**	**Factor loading**	**α**
Multisensory memory	Sound of a place (aural memory)	.817	.802
	Smell of a place (olfactory memory)	.815	
	Feel of a place (tactile memory)	.717	
	Taste of a place (gustatory memory)	.711	
Hybrid travel behaviour	Was very active and explored as much as possible	.723	.746
	Visited must-see places and famous sites	.680 .	
	Travelled off the beaten track	644	
	Felt being an active part of the experience/the place/the community	.627	
	Checked out places that the local community frequents	.596	
Pioneering online engagement	Wrote own travel blog	.764	.754
	Commented in travel blogs	.733	
	Wants to experiences places virtually (online) instead of going there (future)	.728	
Exploratory social identity	I am spontaneous/decisive	.764	.695
	I am adventurous/risk-taking	.665	
	I am trendsetting/innovative	.626	
	I am self-confident/self-aware	.591	
	I am adaptable/open-minded	.559	
Online interaction	Shared experiences online	.826	.818
	Wrote private online messages	.789	
	Share my experiences online and be an inspiration for other travellers (future)	.625	
Collecting destinations and attractions	Go to places none of my family/friends have been before (future)	.708	.673
	Wants to see as many famous sites as possible (future)	.675	
	Go to places not many people have been before (future)	.666	
Convenience and enjoyment	Experiences high levels of comfort and quality (future)	.695	.615
	Experience modern and up-to-date services when travelling (future)	.641	
	I am online/always connected	.556	
Internet for information search	Did travel-related research	.827	.706
	Used internet for practical reasons	.817	

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). PCA with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation, factor loadings > .50, factor loadings < .50 were suppressed, only pure marker and no cross-loadings, n = 335.

As cross-loadings and loadings under .50 were suppressed, the eight extracted factors correspond to pure markers that explain 64.3% of the variance. Factor regression scores were computed and integrated as possible predictor variables in the subsequent multiple linear regression analysis.

6.3.3 Identifying the predictors of being an experienced tourist

In a last statistical step, multiple linear regression analysis was computed to identify the predictor variables of being an experienced tourist. All possible predictor variables were entered in the equation and 51 models were initially identified. The process of backward elimination was repeated until the best model fit was found and only IVs that contributed to the DV remained in the equation. Nineteen variables remained in the equation predicting the self-assessed experience level. These variables explained 45.8% of the variance (F(19, 308) = 13.721, p = .000, R^2_{adj} .425). In the case of five predictors, no statistical significant linear dependence was detected (p > .050). As the interpretation of these variables' contributions is statistically limited, they were labelled *n.s.* (not significant) and they were not considered in the discussion of the findings. The standardised beta coefficients provide estimates of the strength of effect of each of the IV on the DV and allow a relative comparison of the importance of the predictors. Statistically, *travel as an important part of a fulfilling life* ($X_{1.NZ}$) most strongly and positively affected the DV (β = .259, p = .000), followed by the variable *visited more than one continent in the past* ($X_{2.NZ}$; β = .181, p = .000).

The findings further demonstrate that several of the IVs negatively affected the DV. The IVs $X_{8.NZ}$ to $X_{12.NZ}$ showed p-values smaller than .05 and were statistically significant yet, every one unit change in any one of the predictor variables contributes to a decline in the self-assessed experience level. Subsequently, the outcome variable *experience level* is best explained by a diverse set of variables ranging from sociodemographic factors and desired social identity, to past as well as future travel behaviour. The variables predicting experienced New Zealand tourists and the statistical contribution of each predictor are shown in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11: Predictors of the self-assessed experience level of New Zealand tourists

					collinearity	
IV		**β**	***t***	***p***	**tolerance**	**VIF**
	(Constant)		2.103	.036		
$X_{1.NZ}$	Holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life	.259	5.341	.000	.748	1.337
$X_{a.NZ}$	Visited more than one continent in the past[a]	.181	3.612	.000	.701	1.428
$X_{2.NZ}$	Is not reserved/quiet[b]	.169	3.768	.000	.870	1.15
$X_{b.NZ}$	Visited must-see destinations in the past[c,d]	.155	2.986	.003	.654	1.528
$X_{3.NZ}$	Exploratory social identity[e]	.150	3.243	.001	.819	1.222
$X_{4.NZ}$	Pioneering online engagement[e]	.117	2.486	.013	.798	1.254
$X_{5.NZ}$	Industry-induced sources as inspiration for holiday travelling[d]	.116	2.575	.011	.873	1.145
$X_{6.NZ}$	Has at least undergraduate degree[d]	.111	2.417	.016	.840	1.190
n.s.	Wants to experience places like the locals do[f]	.100	1.922	.056	.653	1.531
$X_{7.NZ}$	Multisensory memory[e]	.096	2.018	.045	.777	1.286
n.s.	Spent more time in one place (get the real feel)[f]	.088	1.951	.052	.873	1.146
n.s.	Tourist destination itself as decision criterion[f]	.080	1.798	.073	.880	1.137
n.s.	Is not disorganised/chaotic[b]	.079	1.764	.079	.876	1.142
n.s.	Undertook at least five trips within the past five years[a,d]	.078	1.750	.081	.874	1.144
$X_{8.NZ}$	Is not thrifty/stingy[b]	-.098	-2.252	.025	.922	1.084
$X_{9.NZ}$	Planned holiday trip on own	-.100	-2.230	.026	.873	1.145
$X_{10.NZ}$	Web 2.0 as sources of inspiration for holiday travelling[d]	-.107	-2.382	.018	.871	1.148
$X_{11.NZ}$	Wants to explore more of own home country and culture	-.161	-3.337	.001	.758	1.319
$X_{12.NZ}$	Low income group (less than 30,000 NZD/annually)[d]	-.163	-3.721	.000	.916	1.091

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Dependent variable: Self-assessed experience level. Stepwise regression with backward elimination, confidence levels 95%, β = standardised beta coefficients, n = 335.
[a]International and domestic holiday trips within past five years.
[b]Item was worded opposite in the survey, reverse coding for multivariate analysis.
[c]Visited at least one of the following must-see destinations in the past (independent on time): France, Spain, Italy, UK, Germany, North America.
[d]Variables were transformed/merged for multivariate analysis.
[e]Variable was entered as factor score derived from PCA (section 6.3.2).
[f]Variable not significant (p < .050) and not used for further analysis and discussion of results.

6.4 Conclusions on the demand-side perspective

Findings derived from data collected through the web survey in Germany and New Zealand were reported in this chapter and the dimensions of German and New Zealand experienced tourists were explored. The major aim of this research project was to identify the factors that predict the self-assessed experience level of tourists. Conclusively, the independently conducted multiple linear regression analyses in both case studies were the core analytical contributor to the satisfaction of the research aims. Prior to the implementation of the multiple linear regression analysis, the comprehensive data sets were descriptively examined and variables reduced using PCA.

The findings from this research phase suggest differences between the two case studies regarding the predictability of the self-assessed experience level and different dimensions of a German and New Zealand experienced tourist were demonstrated. Despite the differences between case studies, the overall findings from the quantitative analyses show that an individual's self-assessed experience level is best explained by a complex set of different predictors. These predictors range from factors that are independent from travel and related to an individual's general profile, to predictors that are directly related to travel. The findings reveal that these indicators are directly associated with the stages of an individual's travel journey. Predictors range from pre-trip behaviour in the form of inspiration and decision-making, to travel activities undertaken during a holiday, to future intentions. Key results from both research phases and both case studies are coherently discussed and linked to existing literature in the subsequent chapter and the proposed model synthesising the key findings is introduced.

Set the Stage

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Paradigm
Chapter 4	Data Collection Methods

Let the Data Speak

Chapter 5	Qualitative Findings
Chapter 6	Quantitative Findings

Give it Meaning

Chapter 7	**Discussion and Interpretation**

Chapter 8	Conclusion

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of the subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them.
(Dewey, 1997, p. 35)

7.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this study was to identify the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective and develop an integrated model that synthesises the factors that significantly contribute to the individual's process of experience accumulation. To fulfil the research aims, this research project goes beyond the understanding of an experienced tourist from an insider perspective (the tourists themselves) only. Instead, the study also incorporates the voice of the industry, providing an outsider perspective. Combining both an insider and outsider perspective contributes to a more holistic view and enables the ability to test whether the experts' perceptions (outsider perspective) and tourists' realities (insider perspective) match.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative findings reported in the previous chapters, a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the key results is presented in the following sections. Section 7.2 addresses the results from the semi-structured interviews conducted with destination marketers in Germany and New Zealand. The findings reflect today's experienced tourists from an outsider perspective and portray the experts' perceived and presumed ideas and meanings. The nature of the data does not allow for unambiguous generalisability, yet the similarities found between and across case studies encourage transferability and applicability of the findings. Grounded in past literature, an interpretive analysis of the emergent themes is presented. This first discussion section mainly contributes to Objective 1 of Research Aim 1 (Figure 1.2).

In section 7.3, findings from the quantitative online survey are introduced, the realities of today's tourists revisited, and the New Zealand and German experienced tourists described. With the aim to identify factors that positively or negatively contribute to higher experience levels of tourists, the relationships between predictor variables and the outcome variable *experience level* were investigated. The results derived from the multiple regression analyses were given centre stage in the discussion and model development. As major differences were found between the two case studies, the German and New Zealand results are discussed separately and country-specific models as well as an integrated model of all results are introduced. Section 7.3 reflects on the demand-side perspective of an experienced tourist, addresses Objective 2 of Research Aim 1 and majorly contributes to Objectives 1 and 2 of Research Aim 2 (Figure 1.2).

Mixed methods research allows the integration of multiple research phases and the ability to derive meta-inferences. In this study, the perceptions of the supply-side and realities of the demand-side correspond to the meta-inferences. The discussion and interpretation of the supply-side's perceptions and demand-side's realities provide answers related to research gaps associated with Objective 3 of Research Aim 1. The convergences and divergences of the findings from both research phases and case studies are introduced in the closing section of this chapter (section 7.4).

7.2 Perceptions of an experienced tourist: Destination marketers' perspectives

Tourist destinations play a pivotal role in delivering tourism products and services. They provide the space for tourists to experience their holidays, they represent the heart of tourism consumption and the *experiencescapes* for visitors (Mossberg, 2007). Within tourist destinations, DMOs occupy a leading role and are held responsible for the sustainable development and planning of a destination as well as promotion to potential customers (Lewis-Cameron & Roberts, 2010). Market research is a key task for DMOs and both tourists and potential tourists are researched comprehensively. Based on the insights gained and with the overall aim to cater for the growing demand for memorable and extraordinary experiences when travelling, product developments are put forward and advertised (Birenboim, 2016). With their central role being the creation and delivery of the tourism product, industry experts from DMOs embody the supply-side of tourism in this study.

Generally, differences between the two case studies in relation to the geographic location, sociopolitical environment and global economic importance, as well as their roles in international tourism were found and determined in the data collection. Despite these differences, similarities of qualitative findings across and within the two case studies were revealed. In the following sections, emphasis is given to findings in relation to the dimensions of an experienced tourist and the expected relationships between higher experience levels and travel behaviour. It has to be noted that the discussion is purely based on the experts' understandings of experienced tourists and their travel behaviour. The discussion refers to the questions "How would you define an experienced tourist?", "What are the factors contributing to higher self-assessed experience levels of tourists?" and "How does the increased level of past experience changes travel behaviour?" Some of the behavioural trends discussed may also be applicable for tourists in general, are independent of the tourist's experience level and are not necessarily exclusive to experienced tourists. However, as experts directly linked these behavioural trends to an experienced tourist, no differentiation between trends influencing all tourist and experienced tourists are made in the discussion. Rather the changes in behaviour are interpreted as being related to experienced tourists only as this reflects the perspective and perceptions of tourism experts interviewed in this research phase. In order to comprehend an experienced tourist holistically, the general tourist profiles and the changes on the demand-side need to be understood first.

Re-engagement with the domestic market and expansion of international markets

Destination marketers from New Zealand and Germany reflected on the changes in the visitor mix, highlighted the importance of the growing international market and pointed to the diversity of the visitors' countries of origin. The growth of the numbers of incoming tourists compared to domestic guests is affirmed by the incline in absolute numbers and is even more pronounced in regard to the growth rates of international arrivals compared to domestic arrivals in most touristic regions (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a; Stats NZ, 2017b). Despite the positive growth rates in both countries, New Zealand's and Germany's guest structures are dissimilar. This is also reflected in marketing strategies and investments. In 2016, the distribution between domestic (57.3%) and international (42.7%) guests was fairly balanced in New Zealand. In comparison, 81.9% of all guest nights in Germany were undertaken by domestic tourists (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a; Stats NZ, 2018a). While New Zealand experts stated a desired re-engagement with the domestic market and identified domestic tourists as the backbone of New Zealand's tourism industry (Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2014), German destination marketers described their endeavours to attract more international tourists in the future.

Findings also reveal differences regarding aspects such as the visitors' countries of origin, travel motives and the length of stay. Based on the qualitative findings, these differences are mostly attributable to the geographic location and the general characteristics of the countries as tourist destinations. Apart from the differences found between and across case studies, experts expressed that they notice sustained and dynamic changes in the visitor mix. Accepting these changes and adjusting products and promotions were expected to encourage a better alignment of marketing strategies and strengthen their competitive advantage.

Emerging travel trends and mature tourists

In addition to the perceived changes and the increasingly multicultural visitor mix, destination marketers pointed to several general changes in today's tourists' behaviour. These discussed changes are reflected in recent tourism research and refer to, amongst others, the hybridity of the demand (Boztug et al., 2015), the co-creation and the emergence of prosumers (Campos et al., 2016; Coşkun & Yilmaz, 2016), and the utilisation of technology and online media in the booking and information processes (Yilmaz & Olgaç, 2016). However, in this study a link between these recognised trends and the tourists' increased sophistication and higher experience levels was established. This aspect had not yet been sufficiently addressed in the literature. New Zealand and German experts identified tourists in their particular destination as generally experienced guests. Bearing in mind the previously mentioned differences in the guest structure, the assumptions of this study regarding different accumulation sets to define an experienced tourist is affirmed. At the same time, it challenges existing theories and models that made predefined measurable factors accountable for the process of experience accumulation.

7.2.1 Expanding the limited dimensions to determine an experienced tourist

This study proposes that an individual's level of past experience is an accumulation of several independent factors and further suggests that there are different accumulation sets that determine a particular level of being experienced. Destination marketers commonly agreed that the classification of a tourist as experienced relies on a set of factors that independently, and to varying degrees, influence the individual's self-assessed experience level. Hence, there was a shared understanding that the individual's experience level is a result of different influencing factors and individuals possess distinctive accumulation sets that classify them to be a more or less experienced tourist. The influencing factors are partly static, partly dynamic, to some degree interlinked, yet, predicted to be independent.

In previous research on the measurement of prior experiences, scholars predominantly concentrated on a few quantifiable criteria and based their studies on the TCP. These predefined measures included the quantity of trips in general (domestically or internationally) or to a specific destination (Filep & Greenacre, 2007; Y. J. E. Kim et al., 1996; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005; Ryan, 1998), the quantity and timeframe of prior experiences in specific settings (P. L. Pearce & Kang, 2009), the number of times a similar type of holiday was undertaken (Ryan, 1998), the number of countries visited (Filep & Greenacre, 2007; P. L. Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983), the time spent for travelling (Filep & Greenacre, 2007), and the age of the tourist (Y. J. E. Kim et al., 1996; P. L. Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). As more comprehensively discussed in Chapter 2 (Table 2.4), most studies aimed to understand the impacts of these prior experiences on a single trip in regard to aspects such as destination loyalty, repeat visitation, interest and motivation, involvement in particular tourist settings or satisfaction with the destination (Y. J. E. Kim et al., 1996; Lehto et al., 2004; P. L. Pearce & Kang, 2009; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005; Ryan, 1998; Wirtz et al., 2003). In summary, prior experience levels were identified based on a simplified measurement, treated as antecedents and used to explain particular travel behaviour and destination choices.

This study proposes that quantifiable factors such as the number of trips in general or to a particular destination are dissatisfactory to distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist. Destination marketers highlighted the importance of other factors that go beyond the previously defined quantifiable factors to determine the process of experience accumulation and expected a complex structure of influencing factors. In addition, the experience level was regarded as an outcome variable and in contrast to existing research, the antecedents and drivers behind experience accumulation were investigated as well. Destination marketers identified several influencing factors that are either unrelated to travel or directly related to travel and can be internal/individualistic or external/collectivistic in nature.

The role of age

The sociodemographic factor of age was assumed to have an impact on the accumulation process of experience and age was further related to the quantity of trips. In line with previous research that suggested a strong correlation between age, quantity of trips (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005) and the overall maturity as a tourist (Decrop, 2006), several interview partners shared that a higher age inevitably results in more opportunities to accumulate experiences and subsequently to become an experienced tourist. Filep and Greenacre (2007) contradicted this assumption and argued that older people might have had more opportunities to accrue travel experiences but might not have made good use of them. Based on findings from a survey on travel motivation, these authors found that there were no significant differences between age groups and concluded that age was an inadequate indicator to measure travel experiences.

Several experts in this research project emphasised that today's younger generations accumulate travel experiences much earlier in their lives and it was questioned whether age still is a predictor for a higher quantity of trips. It was also noted that the younger generations' parents might be in a different stage of their travel life cycles and children are introduced to more mature forms of travel compared with previous generations. These suppositions are underscored by several recent commercial and scientific studies. Kožić, Mikulić, and Krešić (2016), for example, found that the previously dominant sociodemographic factor of age had a deminishing influence on the travel propensity of Europeans and the report *Travel Through The Generations* (eDreams ODIGEO, 2017) showed a high travel propensity of today's young generation.

Overseas study, working or travelling has become almost normal in young peoples' lives and is believed to be a foundational part in self-development and self-construction (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Conradson & Latham, 2005). These temporary migrations of the younger generation support the experts' proposition that there is no longer a direct link between age and the individuals' travel propensities. The findings also underpin the rationale of this study as it provides evidence that the widely adopted measurement of prior travel experience to explain travel behaviour and motivation is limited and not timely. Although P. L. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) emphasised in early research that the individual's travel career is not directly linked to age but related to the individual's ability and knowledge regarding the task or activity, the two quantifiable factors of age and quantity of trips were predominantly applied as distinguishing factors to measure prior travel experience.

The role of affluence and education

Educational background and disposable income are identified as additional influential sociodemographic factors to accrue travel experiences. In past tourism literature these factors were acknowledged as determinants of travel frequency, travel decision-making and travel expenditures (Alegre & Pou, 2004; Kožić, Mikulić, & Krešić, 2016). However, studies on the measurement of prior travel experience and experience levels overlooked these sociodemographic factors. The link between affluence and experience levels was mostly discussed by New Zealand experts. As New Zealand destination marketers also assumed that their visitors have higher levels of experiences, this study concludes that New Zealand's international and experienced tourists are generally more affluent.

A higher required affluence can be linked to New Zealand's geographic isolation in the South Pacific that is associated with relatively high transportation costs that come with an overseas trip to the country. In addition, the revaluation of the New Zealand dollar has recently affected the cost of living in New Zealand. Auckland and Wellington are now among the 20 most expensive cites to live and are except for São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro the two cities with the biggest change in the ranking of the most expensive cities (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2017). With the change in living costs, the costs for accommodation and other travel expenses have also grown considerably. The comparatively high average of trip expenditures by international guests in New Zealand, which equalled NZD 3,170 per person for the year ending June 2017 (Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment (MBIE), 2017), support the prediction that the New Zealand visitor is required to be more affluent.

The role of social identity

A close relationship between the propensity of travel hybridity and the corresponding process of experience accumulation and specific elements of the social identity was suggested. The effects of personality on travel behaviour and the identification of travel personalities, tourist roles and vacation lifestyles have a long tradition in tourism research (H. Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Gretzel, Mitsche, Hwang, & Fesenmaier, 2004; Jani, 2014a; Schneider & Vogt, 2012). Despite its identified central role in travel motivation, decision-making and behaviour as well as undeniable impact on the process of experience accumulation, existing studies did not acknowledge elements of the social identity when measuring prior travel experience and grouping tourists into different experience levels.

Industry experts referred to adventurousness, curiosity, decisiveness, innovativeness, open-mindedness and self-confidence as predictors to accrue travel experiences and become an experienced tourist. These traits correspond to three of the Big Five personality traits, namely *openness to experience*, *extraversion* and *agreeableness*. These personality dimensions are decisive for particular travel personalities and were linked to travel curiosity (Jani, 2014b). Furthermore, Dickman (2003) concluded that a low self-confidence negatively impacted the frequency of travel. Thus, the experts' expectations of personality traits and social identity elements to be major indicators to distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist are sustained. Experts also noted that experienced tourists are more risk-taking and venturesome which was also found by Lepp and Gibson (2003). Based on the findings and grounded in past literature, this research project suggests particular social identity elements are imperative to identify experienced tourists and attract them appropriately.

The role of the daily life environment

Closely related to the sociodemographic factors of age, education and disposable income, the life stage and daily life environment were stated to determine travel behaviour, propensity and experience accumulation. Experts referred to the number of children living in the household, the family status and the general life stage and emphasised the role of the everyday life routines and hobbies in the process of experience accumulation. Early and seminal tourism research viewed tourism consumption in contrast to everyday life (E. Cohen, 1979; MacCannell, 1976) and considered it as a deviation from daily life routines and engagement in non-ordinary experiences (A. H. Hansen & Mossberg, 2013). However, the touristification of everyday life is increasingly discussed in tourism literature and is taking on a different viewpoint. As travel has become an integral part of the everyday life, it is argued that the distinction between holidays and everyday life is increasingly fuzzy and inseparable (Carr, 2002; Condevaux et al., 2016; Pons, 2003; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Several scholars discussed the mutual influence between tourist experiences and leisure behaviour (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Haldrup & Larsen, 2010) and it was proposed that tourists try to maintain their travel experiences in their daily life environment, for example going to authentic restaurants of foreign cuisine experienced during a previous holiday. At the same time, everydayness influences and informs travel decisions as tourists aim to extend and deepen their leisure behaviour when travelling, for example by engaging in sports. In his article on de-exoticizing tourist travel, J. Larsen (2008) concluded that "one significant aspect of everyday life is routine and that this is part of the traveller's baggage" and further stated that "leisure travel is no longer merely an escape from everyday life but also a way of performing it" (p. 22). In their analysis on meaningful holiday experiences Packer and Gill (2017) found that holidays also contribute to an extension of the engagement in hobbies as some leisure activities (e.g., surfing, skiing) can usually only be accessed by travel.

The increasingly multicultural living environment acts as source of inspiration for travel decision-making and becomes influential in the process of experience accumulation. This is supported by Pons's (2003) notion that the everyday ordinary practices shape tourists, while the spaces around them are reciprocally shaped by human practices. The author further emphasised the complexities and dynamics of these changing environments as he stated that "the human practices through which we dwell the world are relational, integrated in several networks and always in the making" (Pons, 2003, p. 59). The scholar's conclusion of continuous dwelling in different and geographically unrelated networks supports the theory that the everyday life environment, as one of the geographic entities and networks tourists are operating in, impacts travel decision-making. Driven by the experienced tourists' open-minded and adventurous nature, they are inspired by their living environments and want to learn more about the human practices encountered through the surrounding multiculturalism. The concept of the touristification of the everyday life progresses into a next step of immersion in the unknown, yet previously experienced at home.

The role of reward

Travelling is not limited to a temporary escape and distraction; it is a vital part of an experienced tourist's life. This central importance of travelling in the experienced tourist's life accelerates the process of experience accumulation. Engaging in travelling assists them to achieve the desired outcome of a balanced lifestyle. Thus, travelling is not necessarily considered a short-term recharge from the everyday turmoil but a long-term stimulation and investment in a fulfilling life. Experts concluded that with an increased level of travel experiences, tourists no longer necessarily consider travelling as a means to an end to *collect* countries and follow the bucket list approach. Travel is not always an outward status symbol and form of conspicuous consumption. Instead, it is also an intrinsic reward and part of the individual's personal journey towards the individual's self-defined inner wealth. Similarly, recent consumer research ascertained that there is a higher probability to spend disposable income on travel experiences compared to material objects (Skift, 2017, January 12).

The role of new discovery

There was a strong agreement that experienced tourists have travelled frequently and the frequency of travel was identified as a key determinant to identify an experienced tourist. This is supported by past measurement models that utilised the quantity of past international and domestic holiday trips as one of the key determinants of prior experiences (P. L. Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). However, industry experts made clear that being classified as an experienced tourist goes beyond the quantity of past trips. It was highlighted that an experienced tourist had travelled widely and had been exposed to different cultures and customs around the world. It was further proposed that experienced tourists are seeking new, exotic and off the beaten track destinations outside of the traditional tourist bubbles to widen their travel horizon. They want to be exposed to different cultures and visit places not many tourists have been before.

Statistics show continuous growth of international arrivals and guest nights, specifically from new emerging source markets and to new emerging travel destinations (UNWTO, 2017). The growth of new emerging travel destinations in Asia, the Pacific and South America is interpreted differently. The dense population in these travel regions, the improved travel freedom and growing economic wealth combined with the fact that most international travel is intraregional explain part of the growth (UNWTO, 2017). The continuous expansion of air connectivity and the steady improvement of global mobility is another decisive factor of the growth from and to these emerging markets as it enables tourists to accrue experiences more promptly and widely.

Another potential reason for the growth in these new tourist regions is the emergence of experienced tourists as a growing target group. With their adventurous nature, there is a high likelihood that experienced tourists embody the early visitors in new tourist destinations. This research project postulates beneficial effects for both the destination and the tourist. While the arrivals of experienced tourists support emerging destinations and their continued growth, experienced tourists satisfy their needs and fulfil their desires. Through the accumulation of new experiences, tourists further grow and are shaped as experienced tourists. Subsequently, it can be argued that experienced tourists depend on the emergence of new tourist destinations to allow further experience accumulation and growth.

The role of sensory memory

The past visitation of more exotic destinations is linked to an enlarged and more diversified sensory input experienced when travelling. The sensory stimulation of the five human senses gained an important role in contemporary tourism marketing management and tourist destinations were described as *sensescapes* (Agapito et al., 2017). Researchers accentuated the tourism industry's responsibility to encourage sensory experiences in order to become a dominant element in tourists' long-term memories (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2014; Dias, Correia, & Cascais, 2017; Pawaskar & Goel, 2014). Without reference to specific marketing endeavours, destination marketers emphasised the visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory and tactile encounters of tourists in unfamiliar environments. These sensory inputs are unconsciously perceived, yet retrospectively transfer into consciousness and become highly memorable.

Stepping out of the plane in an exotic destination for the first time, breathing the air and feeling the temperature, exponentially contributes to a different experience level and future desires. Thus, sensory memories were proposed to be decisive in the individual's process of experience accumulation and a factor in determining an experienced tourist. Due to the predicted importance of sensory memory in experience accumulation, a need for more multisensory experiences was suggested and the centrality of visuals in experience accumulation challenged. This is confirmed by more recent research raising awareness to the existing gaps in regard to the role of multisensory stimuli and impressions (Campos et al., 2016).

The role of unpredictability and freedom

Experts explained that the higher frequencies of holiday trips across ages and the growth of visits to emerging (and what is considered exotic) destinations is also accompanied by increasingly hybrid travel motivations and behaviour. This hybridity assists the individual tourists to accrue a variety of travel experiences more quickly and widely. This was particularly associated with experienced tourists who consciously alter their travel behaviour for the best possible outcomes.

This topic also garnered interest from tourism researchers in the past. Boztug et al. (2015) concluded that "travel motivation hybridity is the norm, not the exception" (p. 199), Gretzel, Fesenmaier, and O'Leary (2010) discussed hybridity as unpredictable and contradictory while Yeoman (2012) endorsed a fluid identity of today's hybrid tourists.

The realisation of the desired hybridity is boosted by the industry's developing degree of professionalism, making tourism providers, industry stakeholders, and DMOs decisive players in the individual's process of experience accumulation. The hybrid and fluent nature goes beyond decision-making for one particular trip as the contextual influences change not only from one trip to another, but also over the tourist's life time (Decrop, 2006). This supports the proposed importance of hybrid travel behaviour in the process of experience accumulation.

The role of politics

Industry experts further acknowledged that these forms of hybrid travel behaviour and the associated accrual of travel experiences strongly depend on broader, political circumstances. In this context, the role of the country of origin in regard to the geographic location, its accessibility and political system were described as influential factors in the process of experience accumulation. Destination marketers referred to visa politics and the strength of passports, a country of origin's statutory annual leave, as well as questions of connectivity. Although these factors were identified as decisive in order for individuals to have the opportunity to accumulate experiences and mature as a tourist, they are external to the tourist as well as the tourism industry and thus less controllable and amenable to influence. Interview partners proposed that today's experienced tourists are more likely from Western and developed countries. This assumption was based on the economic wealth and stable economic environment in most developed countries.

Several interview partners exemplified the link between visa policies, travel propensity and experience accumulation using the example of China. With the liberalisation of visa politics for leisure travel and the growing number of destinations approved by the Chinese government, international tourist arrivals from mainland China grew significantly in the last decade (Dai, Jiang, Yang, & Ma, 2017). At the same time, destination marketers interviewed in this study acknowledged a shift from group to FIT travel among Chinese tourists. Independent travel behaviour was strongly associated with experienced tourists and the close relationship between the country of origin, the freedom to travel and the level of experience established.

The role of digital media

Regarding the sources of inspiration and information search prior to the trip, destination marketers referred to the digitalisation of everyday life and the increased application of UGC in travel decision-making. Strongly related to technological advancements, tourists in today's digital society are frequently receiving travel inspiration, both consciously and subconsciously. It was suggested that experienced tourists engage differently and more strategically with digital media. Industry experts stated that the experienced tourists' travel journeys are strongly influenced by information sourced through digital media. As information is spread more rapidly and widely, experiences are accumulated with an increased pace and scope.

This is supported by past literature arguing that marketing is no longer a unidirectional push of information similar to broadcasting, instead it is a multidirectional communication between different players and influencers including the tourists themselves (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Yeoman, 2012). Mobile technologies and the growth of Web 2.0 steadily democratised tourists from being a passive consumer to become an active creator in delivering messages. This study proposes that the fast growth of digital media and the availability of information affects the process of travel experience accumulation and is a major cause for the overall higher experience levels.

The role of narratives and secondary experiences

Experts also discussed the relevance of other peoples' travel narratives and concluded that these narratives further contribute to accrue experiences without actually travelling to a place. The individual's level of experience is a mixture of personally lived experiences and secondary experiences asynchronously experienced and lived through other's (mostly digital) narratives. In early research on epistemologies, metaphysics and questions of realities, the concept of primary and secondary qualities of experiences was introduced. A distinction between having an experience (active) and knowing an experience (passive) was proposed (Campbell, 1995). The role of subjective and objective knowledge and internal and external sources attracted several researchers in the field of holiday decision-making, yet with inconclusive and somewhat insufficient results (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004; Sharifpour & Walters, 2014). Additionally, the concept of active and passive experiencing as a primary and secondary learning process as applied in educational research received relatively little attention in consumer behaviour and tourism research.

Bearing in mind the growing importance of social influence in consumer decision-making through digital narratives, storytelling and visual content sharing (Pera, 2017; Sedera et al., 2017; Tanford & Montgomery, 2015), there is a higher likelihood for tourists to consume and accrue secondary experiences. In relation to digital developments topics such as the motivations of bloggers and digital travel writers (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Volo, 2010), the growth of (mobile) augmented realities (AR) and virtual realties (VR) in tourism (Y. C. Huang et al., 2016; Kounavis, Kasimati, & Zamani, 2012) or the role of Second Life and virtual worlds (Penfold, 2009; Wyld, 2010) received notice from scholars in the past. It was also postulated that AR and VR could improve tourist's knowledge, influence travel intentions and supplement the travel experience. Kounavis et al. (2012) argued that "mobile AR applications allow users to explore the world adding new layers to their reality" (p. 3).

Experts in this research project similarly agreed that AR applications could be a supportive and an educational tool in future tourism promotion and tourism product delivery. Several interview partners noted that experienced tourists are generally more willing to try out these new forms of experiencing due to their trendsetting behaviour and their processes of experience accumulation are likely to be influenced by these new technologies. Other experts challenged the impacts of secondary experiences, specifically those only digitally and virtually lived, on the tourists' memories and accumulation processes of experiences. It was further scrutinised how possible secondary experiences through digital narratives affect the real experience of others that have actually undertaken the activity. Generally, destination marketers ruled out that real experiences will be replaced by secondary experiences of any form (e.g., digital narratives, virtual worlds). Past literature noted that the actual effects of secondary experiences on the receivers are undervalued (Y. C. Huang et al., 2016) and that there is little known regarding whether, if and to what degree virtually lived experiences impact on the process of experience accumulation.

Considering that in today's digital society everyone can be a social media influencer, this legitimate question needs to be understood in a broader context. The social influence is not limited to paid media in the form of AR or VR, professional (or semi-professional) bloggers or commercialised virtual worlds and Second Life. Social influence also includes the individuals' close reference groups, particularly friends and family. In knowing that there is an important significance in a small circle of acquaintances as channels of trust in the decision-making process, the ever-increasing role of the social media influencer as a source of inspiration and at the same time origin of accrued secondary experiences becomes evident.

The role of comparison and expectations

It was suggested that experienced tourists compare elements of their holidays not only with secondary experienced impressions, but also with other elements of their daily lives. A strong impact from the everyday life and general consumer trends on the travel decision-making processes and the accrual of experiences was proposed. The established link between everyday life and travel decision-making encourages comparability between everyday life standards and travel experiences and further affects expectations, trip satisfaction and recommendations. Similarly, Boorstin (1992) argued that "there is no better illustration to our newly exaggerated expectations than our changed attitude towards travel" (p. 78). The World Travel & Tourism Council's report on global economic impacts and issues 2017 lends evidence to this proposition. Adam Weissenberg (Global Leader for Travel, Hospitality and Leisure, Deloitte) explained that due to everyday exposure to general consumer brands such as Amazon or Starbucks, tourists are more influenced by everyday brands compared with tourism brands and expectations are assimilated (WTTC, 2017). Several experts in the semi-structured interviews linked travel and everyday life habits to consumer mega trends, such as the establishing coffee culture and changed coffee consumption habits that was notably found among millennials (Morris, 2013).

The increased comparability and the inseparability of everyday life standards, expectations and travel requirements gain prominence in product planning, service delivery and strategic destination management. Firstly, it underscores the need of an interdisciplinary approach to understand today's tourists' processes of experience accumulation and their travel behaviour. Secondly, it demonstrates that the dynamic changes on the demand-side create gaps in the tourism supply that need to be addressed and eliminated to remain competitive and successful in the long run.

The role of the tourism industry's engagement

Despite the undeniably growing role of secondary experiences, the individuals' travel biographies and primary travel experiences maintain the central role in the process of experience accumulation. This places the tourism industry centre stage in the process of experience accumulation. Only when tourism providers encourage the creation and delivery of tourism experiences can a tourist consume and accumulate experiences. The industry experts referred to the necessary cooperation of industry players within the destination network to ensure a seamless experience. They also realised that the industry's endeavours positively or negatively influence the tourists' process of experience accumulation.

This understanding is supported by the literature claiming that the growing competition challenges tourism providers to continuously develop new products that cater for the increasingly demanding tourists and create extraordinary and memorable experiences (Birenboim, 2016). Thus, the professionalism and innovativeness of the tourism industry itself is of critical importance for tourists to enable them to accumulate experiences that contribute to the maturity as a tourist and become an experienced tourist. However, as addressed in previous sections today's experienced tourists become increasingly autonomous, independent and co-create their travel experiences. They seek experiences off the beaten track and desire real and unstaged experiences, immersion and authentic interactions. These mostly happen outside of the actual tourism bubble and the tourism commercialised transactions and can neither be created nor promoted by the tourism industry itself. Bearing in mind that industry experts on the one hand stated theses new trends and developments recognised in the tourism demand, and at the same time strongly underpinned their indispensable role in creating and providing memorable experiences, it needs to be critically questioned whether the destination marketers overplayed their roles and responsibilities. Whether or not industry-induced factors are decisive for the process of experience accumulation required further testing in the second research phase

The multidimensional influence to become an experienced tourist

In summary, the discussion and interpretation of research findings from the qualitative expert interviews disclose eight crosscutting dimensions of an experienced tourist that are, to some extent, interlinked. These dimensions are reflected as categories in the coding model and were classified into two broader themes. Expressed by several personal identifiers, the profile of experienced tourists leads to a meaningful classification. The personal identifiers comprise aspects related to the individuals' sociodemographic characteristics, (desired) social identity, everyday life environment, and travel biographies. In addition, factors of the external environment act as external facilitators that enable and accelerate the process of experience accumulation. These encompass technological advancements and notably the development of digital media, the tourists' personal reference groups, the broader environment, and the tourism industries' involvement. A specific combination of factors that are partly possessed and inherited by the individual and further facilitated and enabled by the wider environment are accountable for the individual's level of experience. Figure 7.1 provides a summarised and simplified overview of the dimensions of an experienced tourist from the supply-side perspective.

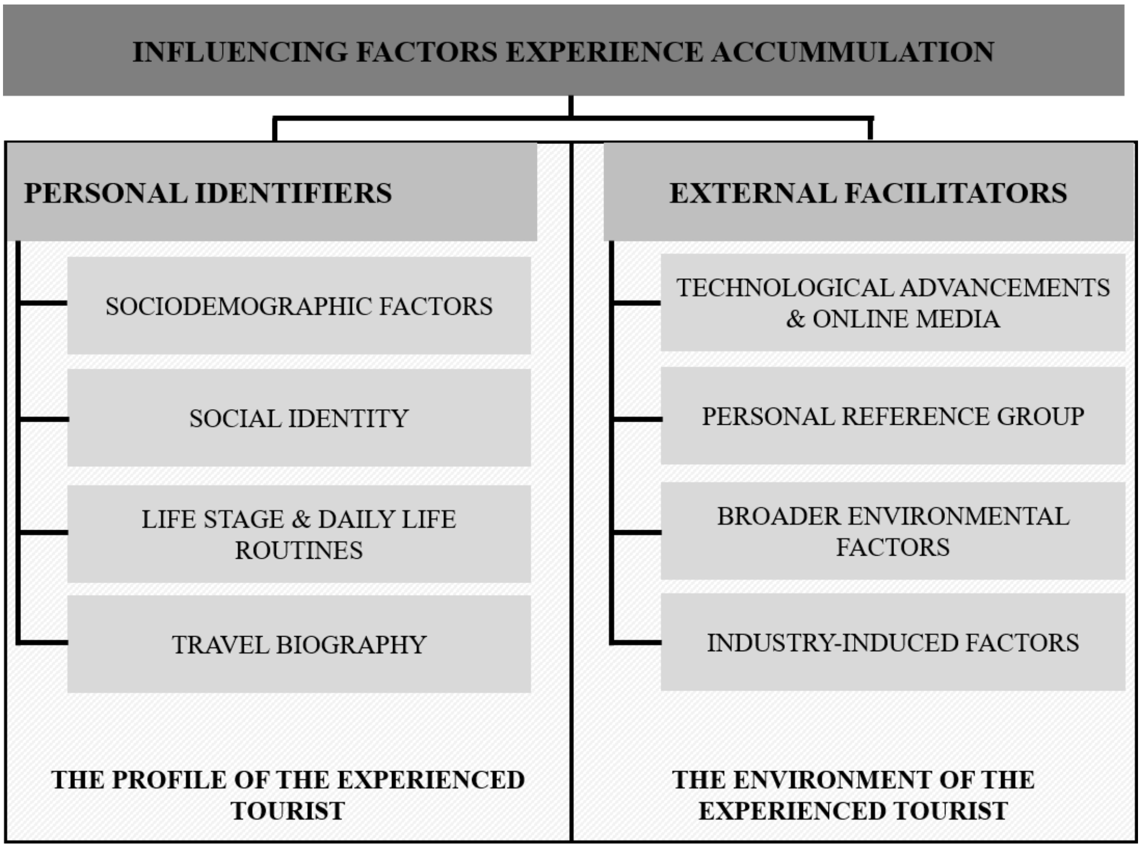

Figure 7.1: A summary of the supply-side dimensions of an experienced tourist

The findings clearly reveal that the dimensions of an experienced tourist are multifaceted and shaped by several partly interlinked, yet independent indicators. The research's assumption that the individuals past experience is an accumulation of several independent factors is supported by industry experts. As the country of origin, the cultural identity and the maturity of the market in regard to travelling were emphasised, it was proposed that there are different accumulation sets and different levels of experiences. Despite the different accumulation sets, there was consensus about particular behaviour patterns among experienced tourists.

7.2.2 *Establishing relationships between being experienced and travel behaviour*

Destination marketers expected changes in travel behaviour patterns, intentions to travel and desired outcomes when experience levels are higher and supported the researcher's assumption that being experienced impacts travel decision-making. Although industry experts established several links between higher experience levels and particular travel behaviour, one assumption dominated the qualitative findings. Closely related to the adventurous nature of experienced tourists, destination marketers commonly agreed that experienced tourists travel more independently, they are more individualistic and largely detached from packaged holidays.

The experienced tourist's quest for knowledge enhancement

The experts' explanations of the experienced tourists' travel behaviour delineate parallels to *drifter* and *explorer* travel typologies theoretically identified and classified as non-institutionalised and independent travellers (E. Cohen, 1972). Another comparison that affirms the experienced tourists' independent travel behaviour can be drawn to Plog's allocentric travel personality (Plog, 1974), later reformulated as venturer. Similar to the identified personality of an experienced tourist, Plog (2001) referred to venturesomeness, curiosity, living in the moment, self-independence and spontaneity when introducing the venturer. Although the influential scholar linked the travel behaviour and destination choice of U.S. Americans to psychographic factors only, the venturer was identified as an independent traveller. The desire for independent travelling among experienced tourists is further supported by Decrop's (2006) proposed *adaptable vacationer*. Similar to the identified profile of an experienced tourist, travelling is part of a fulfilling life for the adaptable vacationer, who is generally more open to new discoveries, plans more spontaneously and is less risk-adverse.

While Plog's venturers aim to visit "unusual, underdeveloped destinations" (Plog, 2001, p. 17) and categorically distance themselves from a "regimented escorted tour" (Plog, 2001, p. 18) and Cohen's (1972) drifter and explorer were categorised as non-institutionalised travellers, destination representatives in this study were inconclusive about this simplified categorisation in regard to an experienced tourist. Despite the general venturesome nature of experienced tourists, the high travel frequency, the tendency to travel independently and visit more exotic destinations, experts ascertained varying travel behaviour among experienced tourists in relation to the travel destination.

It was assumed that the psychographics and prior experiences do not linearly translate into independent travel. Instead, it was proposed that the type of the destination influences the form of travel. It was supported that experienced tourists foremost travel independently and their personalities equal Plog's venturers, Cohen's explorers and drifters and Decrop's adaptable vacationers. Although they identify themselves as FIT, it was not categorically ruled out that experienced tourists travel as part of a small group when the destination is unknown.

Destination marketers addressed the new awareness among experienced tourists towards a rediscovery of organised group travel. It was summarised that experienced tourists generally appreciate independence when travelling and their travel biographies are shaped by independent travelling, yet, they value organised group travel when it is beneficial for their desired personal development and growth. This is supported by the previously discussed hybridity of consumers, which challenges the ability to categorise tourists into internally homogenous and static typologies (Boztug et al., 2015). Although Decrop (2006) referred to hybrid behaviour when introducing the adaptable vacationer, he concluded that this type of traveller refuses any organised group tours. Bearing in mind that most tourist typologies are more than 10 years old and taking into account the dynamics in tourism demand as well as the increased maturity of tourists, a more current understanding of an experienced tourist is required.

Experienced tourists carefully select the travel group and tour and their travel choices are in line with their desired outcomes. Findings indicate that less experienced tourists choose packaged group travel for reasons such as security, budget, having little knowledge, and disinterest to organise a trip by themselves. Experienced tourists, by contrast, wish for greater knowledge transfer through organised group travel, prefer smaller group sizes with like-minded travellers and are willing to spend more money and time. The experts suggested a desire for learning and education and a demand for more intensive, guided study trips (GER: Studienreisen) among experienced tourists.

The overall trend of a rising demand for *Studienreisen* in Germany is explained by the growing middle-class, higher educational standards and generally ageing population, which is identified as major target group for *Studienreisen* (Lohmann & Mundt, 2002; Mandel, 2011). However, *Studienreisen* are no longer limited to the educated middle-class intellectuals as a market segment that undertakes such trips. Today, the tours go beyond purely cultural elements and incorporate components that fulfil the demand of niche tourists and new market segments (Lohmann & Mundt, 2002; Mandel, 2011). These new market segments correspond to the emerging experienced tourists. Conclusively, findings suggest that explaining this trend is not necessarily limited to a particular profile based on sociodemographic factors. Instead, the increasingly experienced (German) tourists and their desire for deeper understanding, learning and knowledge enhancement through travelling irrespective of their age and educational background can explain the trend for Studienreisen.

Furthermore, Weiler and Black (2015) introduced today's tour guides as experience brokers that provide physical access, facilitate encounters through interaction, encourage understanding through intellectual discourse and support empathy through emotional understanding. These brokering functions of a tour guide support the desired social interaction between the host communities and the tourists, help to overcome issues of language barriers and encourage cultural understanding (Mackenzie & Kerr, 2017). Subsequently, these new forms of tour guiding are beneficial for both the host communities and the tourists.

Previous studies on ethnological tourism revealed an increasing demand for intimate and authentic experiences that go beyond commodified and staged experiences. Existing language barriers, power relations and sociocultural differences impeded the desired outcome of closeness and interaction (Conradson & Latham, 2005). Through guided group tours in the form of *Studienreisen* and local guides, these barriers are eliminated and the experienced tourists' demand fulfilled. The growing trend for *Studienreisen* and the general interest in knowledge transfer and historical awareness when travelling resembles a return to travelling in its original forms, such as the Grand Tour of Europe, when cultural education was the main motive (Mandel, 2011). This study hypothesises that it is generally more difficult to influence travel plans of experienced tourists and offer packaged holidays to them as they identify themselves as FIT, are well prepared and prefer to organise and plan trips by themselves. However, particular niche products are appealing to them as they assist fulfilling their desires for deeper understanding, immersion and enrichment.

One expert further summarised that learning about other cultures, norms and rituals inspires tourists to reflect on their own culture. It was suggested that these reflections are significant in today's volatile global political environment where dual and partly conflicting developments between rising nationalism and at the same time growing altruism and humanism, is recognisable. In this regard, Harrison (2003) identified understanding home and making sense of the world as one of the underlying reasons why people travel. In addition, Mandel (2011) proposed that engagement with foreign cultures encourages a comparison with the home culture, enabling a more nuanced reflection, and appreciation of the home country. The author further suggested that tourism has the potential to become a major supporter in the formation of intercultural competence. Interest in intercultural communication and understanding is associated with the experienced tourists' social identity and general travel motives, which further underlines the proposal of a direct link between higher experience levels and the desired deeper understanding, learning and knowledge enhancement.

The experienced tourist's quest for immersion

Experienced tourists were less associated with destination loyalists. Their hybrid nature is believed to translate into variety seeking and an interest in the new and the unknown. Decrop (2006) noted that the distinction between loyalists and variety seekers is reflected in the vacationers' careers as their desires for novelty, new discovery and deep understanding of the unknown shape their travel biographies and experience accumulation. Despite the identified gaps in measuring prior experiences and distinguishing tourists with higher experience levels, several studies are supportive of the expected changes in travel motivation and patterns among experienced tourists (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005).

Industry representatives identified a growing desire for new discoveries, learning, immersion, involvement, interaction, and sensory experiences among experienced tourists. This growing desire for authentic experiences and full immersion in real living environments is predominantly reasoned by the interest in the unknown and variety seeking. The findings of this research project maintain another possible explanation that links back to the previously discussed multiculturalism of the everyday living environment. Destination marketers implied that multicultural living spaces act as push factors towards a destination. The concept of push and pull factors behind travel motivation is widely adopted and has attracted researchers for more than 40 years (Crompton, 1979).

In Crompton's (1979) widely applied push and pull model, the escape from the perceived mundane everyday life and daily routines was a dominant push motive for holiday decision-making. Findings from this study indicate that this escape from the everyday life and living environment has changed. It is not necessarily a going away from the everyday life and leaving the living environment, but a moving towards the real experience of the daily experienced multicultural environment. Experienced tourists predominantly pursue these encounters. The findings lead to the conclusion that the globalised society and living environment add new layers to the push and pull model, provides opportunities and challenges for strategic destination management and requires more research in the future.

The experienced tourist's quest for simplicity

It is also proposed that experienced tourists appreciate simplicity, stay longer in one place to get a real feel for the destination and build stronger connections. Recent research showed that there is a growing demand for slow travel, which developed as an offshoot from the slow food movement and a response to the fast pace of modernity and postmodernity. Slow travel is associated with the travel behaviour of slowing down the itinerary to allow the desired immersion, sense of the local through an open mindset and experience of the self through simplicity (Howard, 2012; P. L. Pearce, 2011). It was further identified as a preferred form of travel as it resembles more ethical, responsible and sustainable forms of travelling (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Moore, 2012). Several similarities are detected between slow travel and the behaviour of experienced tourists. These similarities lead to the conclusion that there is a potential link between slow travellers and experienced tourists. Understanding the dimensions of an experienced tourist can contribute to better understand the motivation behind slow travel and further strengthen the growth of this more sustainable form of travelling.

The experienced tourist's quest for self-fulfilment

Closely related to higher experience levels, resulting knowledgeability and ability to compare, experts suggested that experienced tourists have higher expectations towards holiday trip experiences. This is underpinned by past literature discussing the impacts of prior experiences on expectations, decision-making, satisfaction, and destination loyalty (Decrop, 2006). Industry experts further linked the experienced tourists' expectations to their overall hybridity in consumption and emphasised on the partly unsubstantiated comparison with very different products. Experiences are neither sedated, nor differentiated but are transferred across sectors and products are compared on any comparative basis (e.g., city hotel vs. bed and breakfast in the countryside).

At the same time, the proposed higher expectations can be challenged by the belief that experienced tourists are more realistic about the places they visit. Their interests for a deeper understanding of the place and the people call for an immersive and more genuine experience. This in turn might set the expectations in relation to the place. Experts provided links between changes in expectations among experienced tourists and their desired outcomes. These were summarised as co-creation, emotional response and self-fulfilment. For experienced tourists, travelling is not about flaunting and public perception, but very much about enriching and transformative experiences that satisfy on a deeper and more personal level.

The developmental and transformative qualities of tourism experiences were addressed in the literature determining that tourism enables individuals to experiment with their identities (Noy, 2004; Selstad, 2007). Conclusively, tourism contributes to personal change, development, growth and self-realisation (Boswijk, 2013; Y. Li, 2000). Whether tourists regard their touristic experiences as a confirmation and accelerator of self-image (Jensen et al., 2015), as a “marker of difference” (Desforges, 2000, p. 930) or “catalyst for change” (Ryan, 1997, p. 4), where life transitions are proactively pursued to depart everyday routine, and become the person the individual is desiring, or whether the (positive) personal changes occurred unintentionally when change was not directly sought (Noy, 2004), remains contradictory in tourism research.

This study proposes that experienced tourists purposefully seek personalised experiences that evoke an emotional response and deep enrichment. Although pursuing self-fulfilment, personal growth and putting the self to the forefront, an experienced tourist is not self-centred. Instead, the experienced tourist desires to be challenged when travelling and requires a stage to enable the personal development and self-discovery. They upgrade themselves from a passive spectator, whose major aim is to unwind and relax in a perfectly provided touristic environment, to an active and equivalent part in the realisation of the experience. For experienced tourists, the desired personal enrichment and growth is best found in different and new places that help to define boundaries and test limits on different stages. It is less about places that are staged and sold as tourist areas, but are instead real locations, actual living environments and authentic. Although travelling remains about the self, the desired outcomes and reasons behind travelling change as interaction and interpersonal relationships gain centre stage. A similar conclusion was drawn in the Skift 2017 Megatrend report, which stated that "[h]umanity returns to travel, in an age of digital overload" (Skift, 2017, January 12). The digitally connected and early adopting *supertravelers* endeavour to experience human-centric and emphatic social experiences when travelling.

The experienced tourist's quest for new paths

The desires for new discoveries and interaction not only shape experienced tourists in their maturation process, they also bring opportunities and challenges for destinations and tourism providers. The experienced tourists' movements away from popular tourist sites and destinations towards less traditional tourism destinations, peripheral neighbourhoods and off the beaten track destinations benefit destinations that lack world-renowned iconic landmarks to put themselves on the tourist map. This also positively contributes to the essential gentrification and tourist dispersion in some of the world's tourist hotspots, such as Venice or Barcelona, where overcrowding and anti-tourist attitudes among residents have become major issues and concerns for the sustainable development of the destinations. The recent political developments, the revival of political isolationism and increasing number of terrorist attacks in major tourist places resulted in an emergence of anti-tourism activists protesting against massified tourism and overcrowding, which has been identified as *overtourism* (Buck, 2017, August 20; McLaughlin, 2017, August 10; Skift, 2017, January 12). These new forms of *overtourism* further exacerbate the required tourist dispersion to spread tourists within and across destinations and avoid the problems of too many people at one destination.

This study proposes that a better understanding of experienced tourists and targeted marketing strategies are essential for the sustainable development of a destination. Findings from the qualitative interviews support the idea that the experienced tourists' travel behaviour positively contributes to the reduction of pressure produced by mass tourism. The results further show an accelerated process of experience accumulation of tourists from less mature, yet fast growing markets (e.g., China, UAE). This accelerated process is primarily noticeable through the increasing travel propensity and volume of international arrivals. In addition, the shift away from large organised trips to more individual travel among these new emerging markets is another indicator of the maturation as a tourist. It is proposed that a better understanding of these two groups will contribute to addressing their demands and desires more effectively. This in turn enables the industry to positively impact the tourists travel careers and encourages tourist dispersion.

The recently emerging and growing anti-tourist attitudes and provocations bring new challenges for the holistic management of destinations and in addition, create negative impacts on the desired interaction and social relationships between the destination and the tourist. Although experienced tourists are generally expected to avoid touristic hotspots that are more prone to be affected by anti-tourism activists, their hybrid nature and high travel frequency stimulate an interchange of touristic and less touristic places. Experienced tourists, who were previously categorised as explorers and elite travellers, pave the way for new markets and inspire less experienced tourists to visit particular destinations or sights (Laing & Frost, 2014). Subsequently, when an experienced tourist is dissatisfied with a destination or particular tourism provider and actively turns away from it, this negative experience may spread to other potential tourists.

The experienced tourist's quest for transparency

Through discouraging recommendations, the decision-making of others, particularly less experienced tourists, is influenced. Underpinned by existing literature, findings suggest that recommendations from family and friends via WOM remain the most important source for information and inspiration (The Nielsen Company, 2015). In the digital age and with the growth of social media platforms, the magnitude of communication is broadening. Qualman (2013) argued that the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and the increasing use of OSN and UGC goes beyond a shift from traditional WOM to eWOM. The author postulated that eWOM further develops to *world of mouth*. Qualman (2013) proposed that world of mouth is an advancement of traditional WOM and summarised the following advantages "(1) it disseminates the information quickly and globally, (2) its digital aspect allows the original integrity of the message to remain intact and (3) it is traceable to an original source" (p. 54). In summary, recommendations are spreading much quicker through OSN and the scope of readers is extended. This contributes to an increased influential power of individuals through any channels of eWOM. At the same time, it limits the organisation's information control which can be both, advantageous or disadvantageous (Gillin, 2007).

This study proposes that the influence of social media is not only a major driver behind experience accumulation, it is also mainstay for the experienced tourists' travel behaviour and online engagement throughout all stages of their holiday trips. Firstly, the growth of digital information facilitates access and information acquisition, advocates transparency and comparability of offers, qualifies experienced tourists to co-create their personalised journey and encourages spontaneity in decision-making. This allows them to accumulate the individualised experiences that contribute to further grow as a tourist and provides opportunities to develop and transform. This increased accessibility of information, comparability and transparency also triggers the already discussed expectation levels as it is more than ever the industry's responsibility to deliver the services and quality advertised and promised. Experienced tourists have the knowledge and assurance to use specific services and are able to distinguish between trustworthy and less trustworthy information. Their high evaluation benchmarks deepen the discussion around the degree of required transparency and lead to the conclusion that experienced tourists add more pressure on destination marketing strategies.

Secondly, the interactive nature of experienced tourists is believed to translate into a higher likelihood to share experiences and become an inspiration for other travellers. Through social media platforms, experienced tourists are empowered to go beyond their close circle of family and friends and communicate their messages more widely. The processes of experience accumulation are not only shaped and influenced by the media, experienced tourists themselves become social influencers. The digital age is also associated with a faster pace of information spread and the challenge to keep storytelling stimulating and exciting. Travel experiences in the pre-internet era were judged and measured by the quality of memories delivered analogue and face-to-face. In today's dynamic and digital environment, the goodness of a trip is defined by online posts, the numbers of likes and comments.

Thirdly, the experienced tourist's affinity for online services and understanding how to utilise and participate efficiently contributes to the vacillation between being online and offline. Despite their enjoyment of being part of the online community, experts proposed that experienced tourists appreciate offline time and are not discouraged to travel to places with no internet availability. Being offline during holidays was recently claimed to be the new luxury (Süddeutsche Zeitung GmbH, 2017, April 04) and futurists' theories of digital revision, digital backlashes and longing to be offline were confirmed (Horx, 2013). While the previously growing trend of an online society is declining and an adverse trend towards offline experience is ascertainable, several tourism providers recognise the trend and began pioneering projects such as digital detox camps (Digital Detox LLC, 2014; The Digital Detox, 2017) or specific websites listing accommodation without electricity (Hüttenland, n.d.) to help tourists find their desired *unplugged* holidays.

Lastly, the digitisation and the emergence of user-generated and co-created content functions as online storage of the individuals' lived experiences and advance personal archives of past experiences through digital memories. Past research found that social media is not limited to the presentation of the self in the present and burying in the past, it also enables digital timelines to recollect and reminisce about past events. Zhao et al. (2013) concluded that "social media data are used more for asynchronous exhibitions than synchronous performances" (p. 2) and emphasised the role of digital possession and the self as an important audience and receiver of this shared information that correspond to digital traces for recollection and reflection.

The experienced tourist's quest for normality

Another factor closely related to the desired interaction was an expected higher demand for private, shared and non-commercial accommodation such as Airbnb. Oskam and Boswijk (2016) summarised that the critical future tourists are experienced tourists that are more likely to seek the local contact and choose Airbnb as an accommodation option. Additionally, Gravari-Barbas and Guinand (2017) emphasised the crucial importance of *locality* as they suggested that today's global tourists aim to transpose their roles of being tourists and want to become locals for the time being in the place. The ITB World Travel Trends Report also stated that there was a higher proportion of sharing accommodation bookings in mature tourist markets (e.g., the USA, Germany or France) while bookings in less mature source markets (e.g., China or Poland) were restricted (Messe Berlin GmbH, 2016). This further strengthens the assumption that experienced tourists from mature source markets are more likely to stay in shared accommodation options when travelling.

A further link between experienced tourists and users of sharing offers can be drawn when looking at Stors and Kagermaier's (2017) publication on the sharing economy in metropolitan areas. The authors discussed the changed value system of post-materialists and explorer tourists towards more authentic tourist experiences and interest for sharing offers and more sustainable travel forms. Their interpretation of guests participating in sharing offers resembles the identified behaviour patterns of experienced tourists. The authors further stated that the main target groups are younger tourists that are more venturesome and open-minded compared with non-users (Stors & Kagermaier, 2017). This is in line with the experienced tourists' (desired) social identity and further strengthens this research's proposition that age is no longer a meaningful determinant for higher experience levels as a tourist.

The growth of private shared accommodation has already triggered heated and intense debates in several popular tourist cities (e.g., Berlin, Amsterdam, Vancouver) as the house sharing platform Airbnb occasionally interferes with legal requirements, adds pressure on rental prices in places where the housing market is already stretched, fuels gentrification and contributes to excessive numbers of visitors in some neighbourhoods stretching the destinations' carrying capacities (Bula, 2017, September 11; Fraňková, 2017, August 25). Mermet (2017) exemplified these partly disruptive effects and summarised these symptoms as the *Airbnb syndrome*. Thus, Airbnb not only constitutes a new competitor and disruptor for the traditional tourism and hospitality industry, it also adds pressure on the political environment of destinations and further exacerbates the emerging dissatisfaction of residents in tourism hotspots towards tourism growth.

The increasingly experienced tourists and their interests and engagements with private and shared accommodation styles, however, trigger the need to find solutions to satisfy this growing demand. While Airbnb is beneficial for less touristic regions and cities and contributes to tourist dispersion by pushing the visitor in less popular neighbourhoods, the damage and disruption is most evident in major tourism cities and among residents in trendy neighbourhoods (Oskam & Boswijk, 2016). Against the background of the adventurous nature of experienced tourists, their search for off the beaten track destinations and desire to get in touch with the *unknown*, Airbnb constitutes another opportunity to promote regional dispersal. This, however, requires engagement from the tourism industry itself and a turn away from the negativism associated with new forms of shared accommodation (Destinet.de, 2018, February 7). Instead, it was concluded that DMOs and tourism providers can learn from Airbnb as the platform gets to the heart of today's tourists' needs and constitutes successful proof of the concept that matches the experienced tourists' requirements.

7.2.3 Reflecting on the experts' perceptions of an experienced tourist

The 18 industry representatives from 15 DMOs in Germany and New Zealand presented a consistent picture of an experienced tourist, identified the drivers behind experience accumulation and described the observed changes in travel behaviour among experienced tourists. The findings substantiate that the previously limited and quantifiable factors to measure the level of past experiences and classify an experienced tourist are no longer sufficient. Instead, the research's assumption of a set of multiple factors in the process of experience accumulation is confirmed by industry representatives. The proposed independency of the identified influencing factors was postulated, but was not tested in this research phase and is addressed in the discussion of the quantitative findings.

Destination marketers agreed that the individual's accumulated experience level has an influence on travel behaviour and destination choice. Several of these identified behaviours, desires and needs of experienced tourists comply with current travel trends and prospective travel behaviour that is considered more ethically, sustainably and socially responsible. In past research, higher experience levels were assumed closely interwoven and inseparable of higher age. The findings of this research project depart from the hypothesised interdependency between higher age and higher experience level. Although destination marketers acknowledged the possible influence of age on the process of experience accumulation and confirmed that there is a higher likelihood of more trips purely based on quantity, the described travel behaviour of an experienced tourist corresponds with the consumption patterns of millennials and younger age groups. Experienced tourists seek immersion, want to engage with local culture and communities and desire multisensory experiences. These motivations, needs and travel behaviour were previously associated with Generation Y travellers (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010; Pendergast, 2010).

Findings discussed in this section relate to the experts' shared perceptions of an experienced tourist. These interpretations are based on observations from industry representatives and the discussion reflects an outsider perspective of an experienced tourist. At this stage of the research, little is known whether the identified drivers and behaviour patterns are general travel trends or are related to an experienced tourist more particularly. To enable a more comprehensive understanding and contribute to fill existing knowledge gaps, a second research phase was initiated. Based on the findings from the qualitative interviews, the tourists' realities were investigated from an insider perspective and the German and New Zealand tourists were surveyed.

7.3 Realities of an experienced tourist: Tourists' perspectives

There would not be a tourism experience without the industry offerings. As the tourist destination provides the physical space for experience consumption, it gains centre stage in the creation and delivery of the tourism product. However, for a tourism experience to be created and realised, the physical body and mind of a tourist are required. This reflects the interconnectedness between the destination and the tourist and unfolds the benefits of establishing a macro-micro perspective in order to understand the underlying construct of an experienced tourist more holistically. In the following sections, the results from the web survey are discussed and interpreted. Understanding the general travel profiles of Germans and New Zealanders sheds light on the tourist realities and enables the desired comparison between the outsiders' (DMOs) perceptions and the insiders' (tourists) realities. The quantitative findings lead to the conclusion of a similar sociodemographic and psychographic profile of German and New Zealand tourists, yet with somewhat dissimilar travel biographies and travel behaviour. Before discussing the results from the multiple linear regression analyses and introducing the developed model of an experienced tourist, the sample size composition is briefly introduced and supported by existing literature.

Sociodemographic characteristics in support of being experienced

The sampling strategy generated population representative results of the German and New Zealand populations. Both countries are experiencing changes in the populations' age compositions and are progressively facing an ageing population (UNDESA/PD, 2015). The age group 40 to 49 years constituted the largest cohort in both case studies. The New Zealand age composition was slightly more balanced compared to Germany, which was heavily skewed towards higher age groups. This is reflected in the World Population Ageing report as Germany had the second most aged population in the world (UNDESA/PD, 2015).

The relationship between the ageing population and the future of tourism was addressed in several studies, and challenges and opportunities of the senior market were likewise identified (Borges Tiago, Couto, Tiago, & Dias Faria, 2016; Huber, 2014; Vigolo, 2017). Bearing in mind the centrality of age in past measurement models of prior experiences and the world’s ageing population, this research’s overall assumption of increasingly experienced tourists is affirmed. The predictability of age on higher experience levels was already criticised in the discussion of the qualitative findings and a more process-oriented perspective is required to understand whether age is indeed an independent factor that statistically contributes to being an experienced tourist.

A higher travel frequency was considered to determine higher experience levels. At the same time higher education, affluence and smaller, childless households were defined to be crucial factors for higher travel propensities. Thus, a link between travel propensities, particular sociodemographic determinants and higher experience levels was established. Findings from the online surveys demonstrate greater proportions of respondents with higher education qualifications, more disposable income and childless households. In previous research, these aspects were directly associated with higher travel propensities and levels of experiences. Consequently, the demographic profiles of respondents in this study are generally supportive of a high number of experienced tourists within the two case study samples. Family structure and occupational status were also interpreted to be important influencing factors in travel decision-making (Decrop, 2006) and it was predicted that smaller family sizes positively impact the travel propensity (Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

A decline to further accumulate travel experience in stages of the life cycle when young children are in the household was noted in the literature and stated in the qualitative interviews of this research. However, recent studies on family tourism indicate a growing travel propensity of families with young children and a growing involvement in long-distance holidays, educational travel, and family gap years (Choat, 2016, January 29; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2014). If and to what extent these sociodemographic variables impact the process of experience accumulation and eventually contribute to the self-assessment of being an experienced tourist requires an analysis of the statistical relationships between the outcome variable *experience level* and variables associated with sociodemographic characteristics. Figure 7.2 provides a summary of the key findings related to the sociodemographic profiles of respondents.

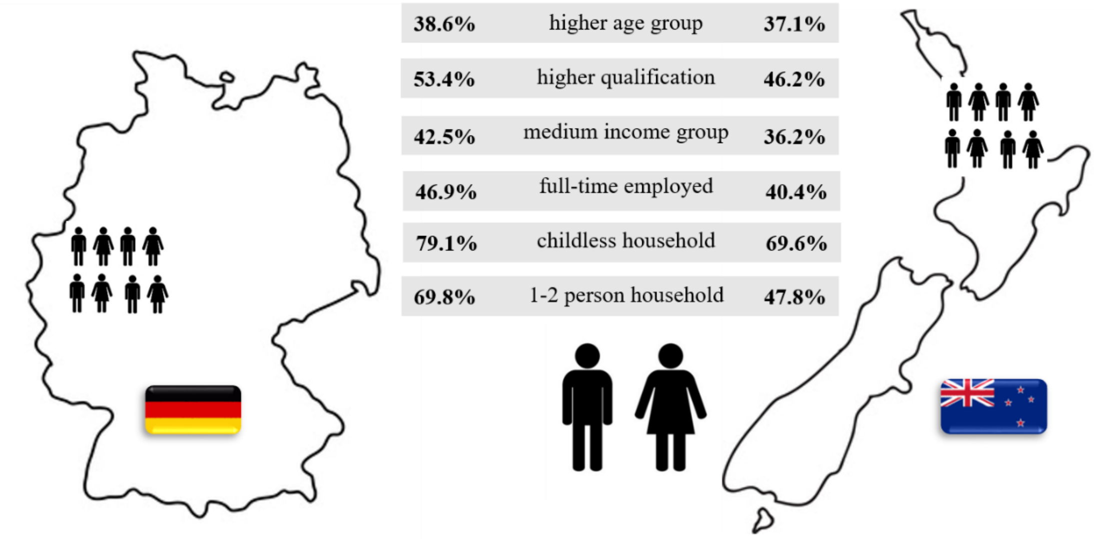

Figure 7.2: Sociodemographic profiles of German and New Zealand tourists

The sociodemographic information demonstrate a fairly similar profile of German and New Zealand tourists and indicate a similarity to the respective official statistics. The proportion of childless households in Germany, for instance, was 79.1% in the survey and was 80.0% in the last micro census (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017b). The micro census further stated that three-quarters of households were single or two-person households (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017b); the proportion of small households was similarly high in this study. The average household size in New Zealand is slightly larger, which was also confirmed by the 2013 New Zealand census (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Deviations from the census data were found in relation to New Zealand's ethnic composition (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Compared to the census data, the survey included more respondents of Asian ethnicity. It is important to note that the most recent available census data are from 2013 and projections on migration show an influx of people of Asian ethnicity, predominantly of Chinese and Indian heritage (Stats NZ, 2017c) which explains the deviation of this research's findings from the official statistics.

Travel biographies in support of being experienced

Global tourism has experienced sustained growth since the 1950s (UNWTO, 2017). Legislative changes in emerging travel markets and improved travel freedom, as well as an increase in international travel from established travel markets have contributed to this positive development. Germany and New Zealand benefited from this growth as both countries accommodated increasing numbers of international visitors (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017c; Stats NZ, 2017b). At the same time, both countries actively participated in international tourism and contributed to international arrivals with a growing number of New Zealanders and Germans travelling outbound (Stats NZ, 2017d; UNWTO, 2017).

In addition to the growing enthusiasm of Germans and New Zealanders for international holiday trips, domestic arrivals increased as well (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017c; Stats NZ, 2017b). The high domestic and international travel propensities of Germans and New Zealanders were confirmed in this study. Despite higher growth rates of outbound trips from Germany and New Zealand as well as international arrivals to both countries, findings from the online survey demonstrate higher absolute numbers of domestic trips within the past five years. This emphasises the importance of the often underestimated domestic travel market. It also encourages the discussion around the often neglected private accommodation sector and VFR sector. Although these accommodation forms are highly frequented by domestic guests, they are overlooked in the official accommodation statistics (Backer, Leisch, & Dolnicar, 2017; Reif, Eisenstein, Krüger, & Gaßner, 2017). The significance of the private (friends and relatives, own holiday homes) and non-commercial accommodation (less than 10 beds) sector in Germany was also reported in the GfK/IMT DestinationMonitor. In 2014, the non-commercial market, which comprises any kind of lodging that does not qualify as commercial accommodation, was estimated to add 49% to the officially registered domestic guest nights in Germany, in some regions the share was even higher (GfK/IMT DestinationMonitor Deutschland, 2015, March 5).

Similarly, results from the last New Zealand domestic travel survey reported a high proportion of tourists that stayed in private dwellings for both domestic short trips and longer domestic holidays (MBIE, 2010). Across the eight domestic market segments identified, at least 38% stayed in owned dwellings (private or rented) for their last short break. In the case of longer domestic holidays, the proportionate share was even higher, ranging between 46% and 71% of domestic guests that stayed in owned dwellings (private or rented) (MBIE, 2010). A link between the frequency of using private accommodation and VFR travel was established and the importance of this sector for domestic travellers highlighted. The changes in the accommodation landscape and the rising significance of non-commercial hospitality are enhanced by the emergence and steady growth of shared and networked hospitality businesses, such as Airbnb (Guttentag, 2015; Guttentag & Smith, 2017).

A generally high volume of outbound travel among Germans and New Zealanders was found, however, there were differences in regard to the timeframe and frequency of international departures. Almost every German with outbound travel experiences travelled internationally within the past five years for holiday purposes. The share of New Zealanders travelling internationally within the same timeframe was slightly smaller and the last international holiday trip was often further in the past. Similarly, official reports stated that a New Zealander takes on average one international holiday trip every 2.5 years (MBIE, 2010). Although Germany remained the top tourist destination for German holidaymakers (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2017), one third of the German population travelled both domestically and internationally in 2016 (Reinhardt, 2017; Zwingenberger, 2017).

The geographic isolation, proximity to other international holiday destinations, affordability, accessibility and connectivity are possible reasons for the lower frequency of international departures among New Zealanders. Bearing in mind the centrality of the quantity of trips in past measurements of travel experience, the slightly lower self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders compared to Germans might be attributable to the lower propensity and quantity of travel.

However, DMO experts assumed in the first phase of this research project that being an experienced tourist goes beyond having accumulated a higher quantity of trips. It also incorporates the exposure to different customs and cultures around the world. Comparing the average number of continents/regions visited, it can be concluded that Germans and New Zealanders are both well-travelled. Even though New Zealanders travelled less often, they have generally been exposed to more foreign destinations. During their last holiday trip, more New Zealanders had visited several destinations (countries), travelled for a longer period of time while not necessarily staying longer in one destination to get a *real feel*. Again, the geographic isolation is a possible explanation for this travel behaviour, which is an indication that external factors are influencing and guiding the process of experience accumulation. Figure 7.3 summarises and compares the key figures associated with the travel profiles of Germans and New Zealanders.

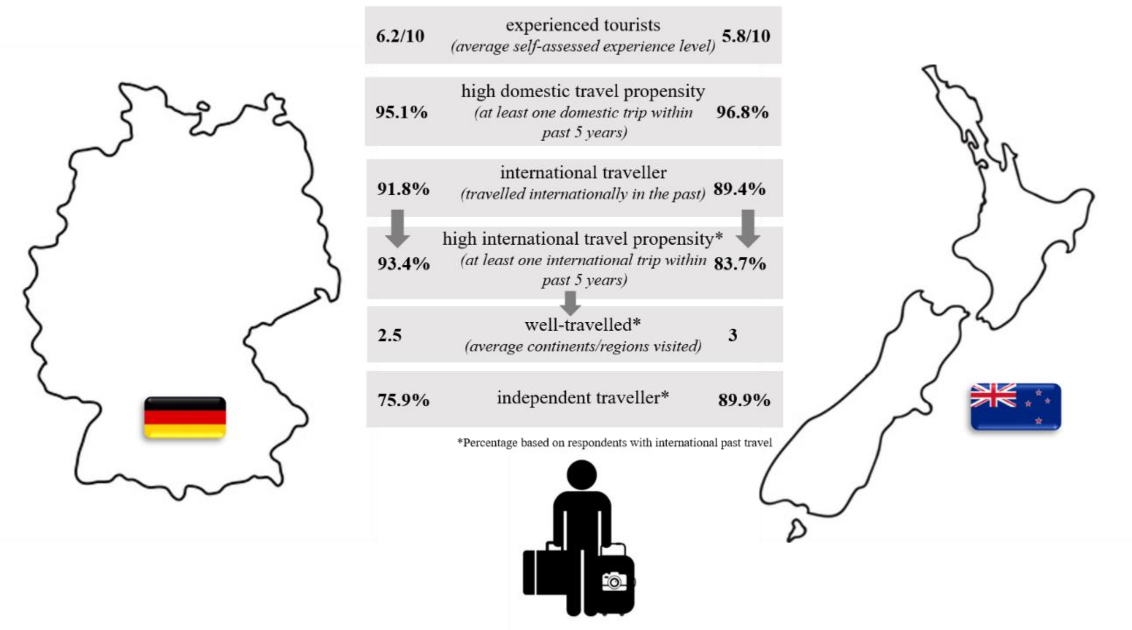

Figure 7.3: Travel profiles of German and New Zealand tourists

A strong link between higher experience levels and independent travel behaviour was drawn in the literature and was discussed in previous sections. Results suggest a high proportion of independent tourists in both case studies and a high self-assessed experience level which confirms the previously posited relationships. Following past research's assumption of a close relationship between prior travel experience and FIT, the somewhat higher self-assessed experience level of Germans compared to New Zealanders would lead to the anticipation of a higher proportion of independent travellers in the German population. By contrast, results from the representative survey demonstrate a higher proportion of New Zealanders stating that their last international holiday trip was an independent holiday trip. These findings further challenge the conceptualisation of being an experienced tourist, imply a complex process to become an experienced tourist and support the research's assumption that there are different sets of experience accumulation.

Travel behaviour in support of being experienced

The individuals' travel biographies and past experiences are proposed to be related to the maturity of the domestic market in general. The maturity of the domestic market is linked to the country's legislative situation, freedom and access to travel and the strongly associated role of travelling in the residents' lives. With the permission to visit 176 countries without a visa, Germany has the most powerful passport in the world, closely followed by New Zealand whose passport allows to visit 172 countries without a visa (Henley & Partners, 2017). The abundant travel freedom is reflected in the respondents' relatively high levels of self-assessed travel experience, the centrality of travelling in the respondents' lives and the high agreement ratings of having travelled since early childhood. Despite the similarly important role of travelling in the lives of Germans and New Zealanders and the high travel propensity, travel biographies were dominated by different travel motives and were guided by varying decision-making criteria.

Findings from the online survey show that *escape the everyday life* was the major reason for Germans to travel for holiday purposes. The travel motives *escaping the everyday life* and *change of scenery* have been recognised as major reasons to travel for German leisure tourists (Mundt, 2013). This motivation is also reflected in the growing demand for slow travel amongst the German population (Antz, Eisenstein, & Eilzer, 2011; Leder, 2013) which was previously proposed to be linked to higher experience levels. Furthermore, the *tourist destination itself* was the major decision-making criterion for the majority of German holidaymakers. Destination choice was identified as a central, yet complicated and risky decision made within the early stages of trip planning (Thai & Yuksel, 2017). The recently identified choice overload and exchangeability of tourism products and tourist destinations (J.-Y. Park & Jang, 2013) and at the same time growth of hybrid travel behaviour and interest for themed holidays (Boztug et al., 2015) led to the industry experts' conclusion that the holiday type gains centre stage in the decision-making process. With every fifth German stating that the holiday type was the major decision-making criterion, the quantitative results confirm the industry experts' perceptions.

By contrast, New Zealanders were predominantly driven by *price* and their major motive was *spending time with family/friends*. This indicates a different desire to travel and leads to the conclusion of varying value systems and importance of travelling in the lives of Germans and New Zealanders. The dominance of the motive was also found in a study on New Zealand's domestic market where the segment *Being There* was discovered to be the largest market segment. It was further explained that people within this segment desired to spend time with family and friends and enjoy safe and affordable tourist destinations. The market segments *Rewarding, Making Do, Embracing Life and Creating* were also linked to family friendly products and shared experiences (MBIE, 2010). This confirms the central role of spending time with family and friends for New Zealand holidaymakers.

The report also supports the price sensitivity of New Zealand tourists, as money was the single most important barrier to travel for both domestic and overseas holidays. Price consciousness of New Zealanders also emerged through the desired social identity elements as there was a relatively strong agreement to be *thrifty/stingy*. Watkins (2015) concluded that the increase in living expenses and consumer prices in New Zealand over the past years had contributed to more pronounced price awareness among residents confirming the price consciousness of New Zealanders. Germans, by contrast, showed lower levels of agreement towards being *thrifty/stingy* and *price* was a less important decision-making criterion for holidays.

There were similar tendencies concerning the travel activities undertaken by independent holidaymakers from Germany and New Zealand. However, Germans showed generally higher and more extreme agreement ratings for all rating scales in the questionnaire compared to New Zealanders. In addition to the longer trip duration, New Zealanders had visited several destinations during their last international holiday trip which can account for the lower agreement with activities that required more time, such as *spent more time in one place (to get the real feel)* or *travelled off the beaten track*. Generally, the differences in agreement ratings in terms of the activities undertaken lead to the conclusion that the German independent travellers engaged in more authentic and immersive travel experiences compared to New Zealanders for whom the relaxation and simply spending time with the family was the key and thus more hedonic outcomes were pursued. This notion is supported by the MBIE's (2010) domestic survey in which the segment *Immersing* accounted for only 13% of New Zealand's overall population while the dominant segments stated propositions that are more akin to mundane travel experiences and the visitation of a holiday destination.

Germany and New Zealand have an equally high internet usage in the age groups represented in this survey (A. Gibson, Miller, Smith, Bell, & Crothers, 2013; Initiative D21 & TNS Infratest, 2017). Despite a similarly high internet penetration, online media played a somewhat more dominant role throughout the travel journeys of New Zealanders. Findings suggest a high degree of internet affinity among New Zealanders, who actively engaged and participated in travel online communities. German tourists, by contrast, consumed online media predominantly as a source of additional information alongside traditional media channels and less actively participated in sharing activities. Findings related to the travel behaviour of Germans and New Zealanders are summarised in Figure 7.4.

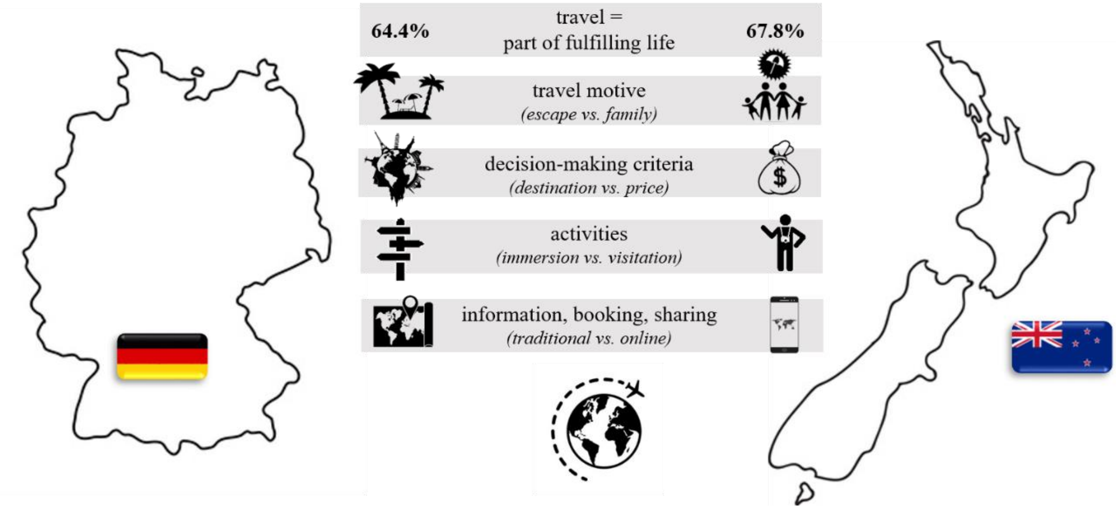

Figure 7.4: Travel behaviour of German and New Zealand (independent) tourists

Similarities in regard to the respondents' sociodemographic, psychographic and general tourist profiles were found in the descriptive analyses. Following past models that measured the levels of prior experience based on quantity of trips and age, the German and New Zealand tourists could be assumed equally experienced. That is also confirmed by the relatively similar self-assessed experience levels of the respondents in this research. More in-depth analyses of the respondents' information channels, travel behaviour, choices and motivations confirm that measuring past experience goes beyond quantifiable factors and identifying an experienced tourist requires a more comprehensive approach.

Results from multivariate analyses further challenged the generalisation of the measurement of prior experiences and supported the assumption of several accumulation sets. Although the same variables were entered in the factor analyses for data reduction, the derived factors varied in terms of factor composition and factor loadings. Applying backward elimination in stepwise multiple regression analyses also revealed differences between the two case studies. These differences between the German and New Zealand data validate varying underlying concepts of being an experienced tourist and further prove the need of a more process-oriented perspective to identify the factors that contribute to experience accumulation and understand the processes to become an experienced tourist. The results by case study also highlight the requirement of a source market specific investigation.

7.3.1 *Discovering the role of the homeland to identify the dimensions of an experienced tourist*

In the first research phase of this study, destination marketers offered several interpretations of the dimensions of an experienced tourist, identified factors that are believed important in the experience accumulation process and discussed the implications on travel behaviour. Due to methodological limitations, the actual influence, relationship and independency of factors were not addressed. Through multivariate analyses, the statistical independencies of factors were tested, the relationship between predictor variables that explain an experienced tourist computed and a process-oriented perspective achieved. Following an exploratory and inductive approach, the potential predictability of numerous variables was examined. Results from backward elimination multiple regression analyses in both case studies affirm the research's assumption of several independent factors that are made accountable for being an experienced tourist. Different predictor variables remained in the regression equations to describe a German and a New Zealand experienced tourist. This lends evidence to the general assumption that different accumulations sets to determine an experienced tourist exist and that different geographic settings can result in different accumulations sets.

The previously discussed descriptive findings already pointed to both differences and similarities between the German and New Zealand tourists and highlighted the role of the country of origin in the investigation of travel behaviour. In the seminal study on travel motivation, P. L. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) summarised that "travel is attributed to a desire to fulfil a status need imposed by one's social environment or as means of role of conformity, in that it is considered desirable to occasionally escape from normal routine" (p. 16). This quote draws attention to the role of the country of origin as the foundation of the social environment and routine to escape from and highlights the significance of the homeland in understanding travel motivation. Since then, the relationship between the country of origin and travel motivation attracted researchers and several case-based studies were conducted (Kozak, 2002; S. H. Park, Lee, & Miller, 2015). There was a general consensus that tourists from different backgrounds experience and interpret tourism products differently and the definition of memorability varies (Kruger & Saayman, 2017; Ooi, 2005). Despite the taken for granted influence of the country of origin on travel motivation, the homeland was not acknowledged in models measuring prior experiences to predict travel behaviour and motivation.

The differences and similarities between Germany and New Zealand were evaluated in the selection of the case studies for this study. Major differences of the two countries are the age distribution, family sizes, geographic location, global economic strength, socioeconomic well-being and the strongly related travel propensity of residents. While the geographic isolation of New Zealand and connectivity were a barrier for people to travel internationally in the past (MBIE, 2010), Germany's centrality in Europe and its proximity to other international tourist destinations stimulated Germans to accumulate travel experience for several decades. Against the background of similar sociodemographic profiles, the geographical differences were assumed to cause variances in the individuals' travel biographies. This was already confirmed in the discussion of descriptive findings and is addressed more comprehensively in the discussion of the multivariate results presented in the sections below.

7.3.1.1 No show-and-tell wanted – predicting a German experienced tourist

Through multiple linear regression analysis and applying backward elimination the predictability of the dependent variable *experience level* (Y_{GER}) was tested in the German data set. Results validate that there are several variables that independently explain a German's self-assessed experience level and contribute to a rate of change in Y_{GER}. A linear dependence between *experience level* (Y_{GER}) and 18 independent variables (X) was found, yet, a statistically significant contribution was verified for 17 predictors and the interpretation and discussion limited to these significant influencers.

The predictors range from broader and more static factors related to the individual's general and travel profile to more dynamic predictors that are associated with travel behaviour and reflect aspects of the different stages of the travel journey. Overall, findings show that the dimensions of an experienced tourist go beyond retrospective factors and incorporate prospective travel behaviour. All 17 significant predictors positively or negatively influence the individual's experience level to varying degrees and are appointed to one of the three overall clusters that are further subdivided into seven thematic blocks. The clusters and thematic blocks of significant predictor variables that were identified in this study and build the basis for the model development as well as discussion below, are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Clusters and thematic blocks of significant predictors

Cluster	Thematic block
General profile	• Socio-demographics (T1a) • Social identity (T1b)
Travel profile	• Past travel (T2a) • Role of travel (T2b)
Travel journey	• Inspiration and decision-making (T3a) • Holiday trip behaviour (T3b) • Future holiday intentions (T3c)

Note. Based on findings from multiple linear regression analyses in both case studies.

On the basis of findings from both case studies, a model that is able to display the different predictor variables in a comprehensive manner was developed and labelled *Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality (CETM).* The results from the German regression analysis are displayed in Figure 7.5 and the CETM model of the German experienced tourist is presented.

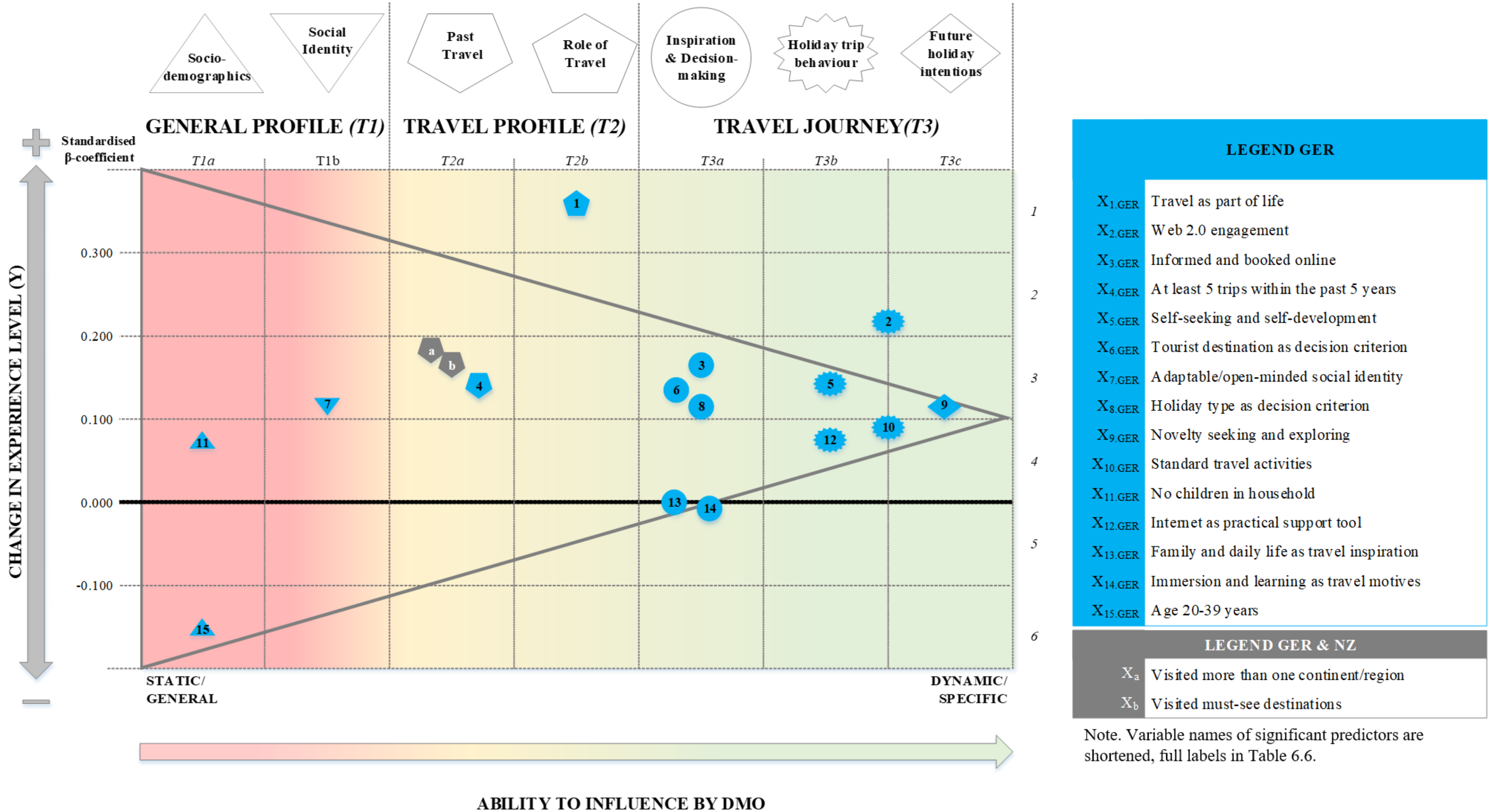

Figure 7.5: Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality (CETM): The case of the German experienced tourist

The location on the Y-axis reflects the standardised beta coefficient and the computed change in the experience level. The higher the predictor variable on the Y-axis, the more positive the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable. For ease and clarity in interpreting and reporting the results, the Y-axis is divided into six rows by steps of 0.1 change in the standardised beta coefficient and labelled numerically (1-6). The X-axis is divided into the three overall clusters and further subdivided into the previously introduced seven thematic blocks. These range from static/general factors on the left to dynamic/specific factors on the right end of the axis. The predictors are numbered by order (largest to smallest standardised β-coefficient) with the exception of two predictors labelled alphabetically as they were valid in both data sets.

Predictors related to the general profile (T1)

In the CETM model, sociodemographic factors (T1a) and social identity (T1b) are summarised as the tourist's general profile. These factors are mostly static and deeply rooted in the individuals, yet independent of travel. In the case of the German data set, three general profiling variables remained in the regression equation predicting the German experienced tourist.

Predictors related to the sociodemographic profile (T1a)

Findings show that the IV *no children under 18 years living in the household* ($X_{11.GER}$) influenced the self-assessed experience level of German tourists. The standardised beta coefficient was positive, yet, relatively small ($\beta = .094$) compared with other predictors (Figure 7.5; T1a:4). This gives $X_{11.GER}$ a subordinate role in the understanding of the drivers that determine the individual's experience level. At the same time, it confirms the anticipated influence of childless households on the process of experience accumulation. The IV $X_{11.GER}$ is located on the left end of the CETM model as the variable is generic, not directly related to travel and there is no potential for the tourism industry to influence the variable. However, in knowing that living in a childless household contributes to higher experience levels, DMOs and other service providers can incorporate this new insight in marketing strategies, particularly when drilling down into market segmentations while aiming to attract experienced tourists.

For the purpose of multiple regression analyses, age was in both data sets clustered into two groups, 20-39 years and 40-69 years and labelled *young adults* and *mature adults*. While the IV *mature adults* was excluded through backward elimination as no statistical change was found and no predictability existed, the IV *young adults* ($X_{15.GER}$)

significantly contributed to the self-assessed experience level. However, $X_{15.GER}$ showed a negative standardised beta coefficient and the self-assessed experience level reduced on average by .154 with every one unit change in the predictor variable $X_{15.GER}$. This negative contribution of $X_{15.GER}$ translated into a reduction of Y_{GER} (Figure 7.5, T1a:6). This outcome complies with past measurement models that established a link between higher age and prior experience level, yet limits the assumption that a higher age directly contributes to a higher experience level. No other sociodemographic factors remained in the regression equation after backward elimination. This underpins that general profiling information is no longer satisfactory to understand the underlying constructs of today's experienced tourists.

Predictors related to social identity (T1b)

Having an *adaptable/open-minded social identity* ($X_{7.GER}$) was the only social identity element that remained in the German regression equation explaining the predictability of being experienced. With every unit change in $X_{7.GER}$, the outcome variable Y_{GER} increased on average by .131 (Figure 7.5; T1b:3). Early studies on travel motivation, tourist roles and behaviour established links to personality factors. Being adaptable and open-minded was found among the more adventurous, independent vacationers, explorers and variety-seekers (Decrop, 2006; Plog, 2001). Supported by past literature, the results confirm the established positive relationship between FIT, being experienced and an adaptable/open-minded social identity. As no other psychographic attributes were detected to predict the self-assessed experience level of respondents, $X_{7.GER}$ is interpreted as the dominant desired social identity element in explaining a German experienced.

Predictors related to the travel profile (T2)

In addition to age as a sociodemographic factor, aspects of travel frequencies were given priority in past measurement models. Several factors that were associated with the individual's travel biography and profile remained in the regression equation explaining the German experienced tourist. These factors were identified as the individual's travel profile consisting of past travel (T2a) and the role of travel (T2b) in the individual's life.

Predictors related to past travel (T2a)

The retrospective IVs *visited more than one continent/region* (X_a) and *visited must-see destinations* (X_b) were the only two predictor variables that remained in the regression equation of both case studies. Both variables emphasised destinations visited in the past and contributed positively to the rate of change in the conditional mean of the outcome variable. With every one unit increase in $X_{a.GER}$ the self-assessed experience level of German respondents grew by .190 units and every one unit change in $X_{b.GER}$ resulted in a positive change of .170 units (Figure 7.5; T2a:3). With the significantly positive contribution of each of the two predictors on the self-assessed experience level, this research project postulates that an experienced tourist has travelled widely and has been exposed to different cultures and nations. This is supported by past research that identified the number of destinations visited and the number of similar destinations visited as determinants for higher experience levels (Filep & Greenacre, 2007; Ryan, 1998). The results emphasise the centrality of traditional tourist destinations (France, Italy, UK, Spain, and North America) in the German experienced tourists' travel biographies and approve the experts' assumption that the visitation of any of these traditional destinations is a must for an experienced tourist.

Alongside the number of destinations visited in the past, the variable *undertook at least five holiday trips within the past five years* ($X_{4.GER}$) stayed in the regression equation and significantly influenced Y_{GER}. In line with past models, the travel frequency positively affected the self-assessed experience level of German tourists. With every one unit change in $X_{4.GER}$, the outcome variable increased on average by .132 units. The positive contribution of $X_{11.GER}$ (*no children living in household*) and $X_{4.GER}$ (*at least five trips within the past five years*) on the self-assessed experience level lends evidence to support previous studies that postulated a link between smaller household sizes, travel frequency and prior travel experience (Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

Predictors related to the role of travel (T2b)

The single best predictor of the individual's self-assessed experience level belongs to the fourth category and substantiates the importance of travel in the individual's life. In the German survey, *travelling as part of life* ($X_{1.GER}$) was factorised and comprised the variables *travelled since childhood, holiday travel as status symbol* and *holiday travel as an important part of a fulfilling life*. While the other predictor variables were fixed, for every one unit change in $X_{1.GER}$, the self-assessed experience level positively changed by .354 units (Figure 7.5; T2b:1). This demonstrates the centrality of travelling in an experienced tourist's life. Travelling goes beyond simply having a break to relax; it is very much about the discovery of self, the fulfilment of one's own dreams and the satisfaction of a meaningful purpose in life. Researchers investigated the effects of leisure travel on life satisfaction (S. Wang, 2017), quality of life (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012), subjective well-being and happiness (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Nawijn & Filep, 2016), and the growing trend of mindfulness and meaningful experiences (Moscardo, 2017; Packer & Gill, 2017).

In the fast pace of modern society and the growing concerns of restless minds, travelling has become a way to slow down, recharge emotional and physical batteries and get in touch with the real self to increase emotional stability, productivity and subsequently self-fulfilment. In this context, travel experiences move from being massified and objective to individualised and subjective. The role of travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life can be linked to FIT behaviour, which was presumed to determine higher experience levels in this research project. The relatively strong statistical relationship between the self-assessed experience level and $X_{1.GER}$ reinforces the relevance of the variable in explaining the drivers behind experience accumulation and predicting an experienced tourist.

Past travel (T2a) and role of travel (T2b) are descriptors related to the respondents' travel profiles. Due to its retrospective, these predictors are not modifiable and are rather static. Therefore, there is little ability for DMOs and other tourism organisations to influence these factors in the process of the individual's experience accumulation. The variable $X_{1.GER}$ is mostly retrospective, yet constitutes dynamic and prospective elements. It comprises the variable *travelled since childhood* which implies that travelling has taken place throughout the individual's life. At the same time, the variable *holiday travel as an important part of a fulfilling life* suggests a continuation of travelling to achieve the desired fulfilment and satisfaction. While existing measurement models concentrated on static and quantifiable prior travel experiences (number of trips), the prospective elements of this central predictor advance this research's proposition of a more dynamic and forward-looking model.

Predictors related to the travel journey (T3)

Ten of the 17 significant predictors of the self-assessed experience level of German tourists go beyond general profiling variables and comprise behavioural aspects that occur throughout the travel journey. In contrast to predictors represented in T1 and T2, these variables are directly related to travel, more dynamic and more likely to be directly amenable to influence by the tourism industry. Subsequently, descriptors in T3 are of predominant importance for DMOs in order to appeal to experienced tourists and more importantly become part of the memorable experience accumulation process. The cluster is subdivided into three thematic blocks that present a trip's time dimension: inspiration and decision-making (prior to the trip, T3a), holiday trip behaviour (during the drip, T3b) and future travel intentions (future trip, T3c).

The regression analyses in both case studies were preceded by a PCA to reduce the number of variables that entered the initial regression equations. Some of the factorised variables encompassed aspects of past and future travel behaviour and were thus not unambiguously assignable to one of the three time dimensions. Instead, they were located between the two thematic blocks T3b (past) and T3c (future). As these predictors were related to either holiday trip activities or relevant online media engagement, the factors in these thematic blocks are discussed accordingly.

Predictors related to inspiration and decision-making (T3a)

Past research discussed inspiration and planning in the context of travel motivation and decision-making prior to the holiday trip. Regarding travel motivation, emphasis was given to extrinsic (pull) and intrinsic (push) motivations (Crompton, 1979) and a major distinction was made between travelling for hedonic and eudaemonic reasons and benefits sought (Csikszentmihalyi & Coffey, 2017). The relationship between prior knowledge and information search behaviour, the role of internal information (stored memory) and external information (environment), and the impacts of past experiences on information acquisition and holiday decision-making gained the attention of several researchers, who provided somewhat contradictory and inconclusive outcomes (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004; Lehto et al., 2006; S. Park & Kim, 2010; Sharifpour & Walters, 2014). Experienced and novice consumers were distinguished and past consumption identified as a crucial factor in decision-making and the central element of the multidimensional construct of prior knowledge. Nonetheless, prior experiences were identified based on a limited unidimensional measurement tool that was predominantly based on product possession or previous consumption. This study proves that being experienced is multidimensional and is based on an accumulation of several independent factors. The findings also reveal a somewhat reversed effect compared with previous approaches as several aspects of the information search and booking behaviour significantly influences the process of experience accumulation.

Positive relationships between Y_{GER} and the *tourist destination itself as major decision criteria for holiday trips* ($X_{6.GER}$) as well as the *holiday type as major decision criteria for holiday trips* ($X_{8.GER}$) were found (Figure 7.5; T3a:3). For every one unit change in $X_{6.GER}$, the average positive change in the mean of the self-assessed experience level was .131 units and for every one unit change in $X_{6.GER}$, the outcome variable Y_{GER} increased by .125. Whereas past research was principally interested in the impacts of decision-making on destination choice and travel behaviour from an objective and managerial perspective, findings reveal the impact of travel decisions on the individual's experience accumulation. Being experienced is not understood as the antecedent to predict decision-making, but the outcome of particular decisions related to travel. As a result, a more subjective perspective is established. The statistically significant relationships between the two variables and Y_{GER} prove the mutual importance of prior experience (cause) on decision-making (effect) and the decision-making (cause) on the self-assessed experience level (effect).

The variable family and daily life as travel inspiration ($X_{13.GER}$) remained in the regression equation and significantly contributed to the outcome variable. With a standardised beta value of .090, the positive contribution of $X_{13.GER}$ on the self-assessed experience level was positive, yet comparatively weak (Figure 7.5; T3a:4/5). Family and friends continued to be the most dominant source of information and inspiration for holiday decision-making (The Nielsen Company, 2015). Past research further demonstrated that experienced consumers rely less on personal internal information sources compared to destination-specific external sources (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). Despite the comparatively low standardised beta value, the results are not to be underestimated as $X_{13.GER}$ was the only predictor related to travel inspiration that remained in the German regression equation. This demonstrates the relevance of family and daily life as an analogue source of information for travel inspiration. Sax (2016) proposed that despite being surrounded by digital information, there is a growing counter movement towards more analogue and a diminishing importance of digital information in daily life consumption and decision-making. The author emphasised the importance of analogue sources in inspiration and points to the media saturation of today's society. Based on the findings and supported by the literature, this research project proposes that information sources are not necessarily consciously sought through active research, but often unintentionally absorbed in the daily live environment and surroundings.

Immersion and learning as travel motive ($X_{14.GER}$), which was operationalised as a merged variable based on the variables *learn about foreign culture* and/or *open my eyes and broaden my knowledge* and/or *step out of my comfort zone* and/or*, meet new people and build new friendships,* stayed in the regression equation as predictor of being experienced. The standardised beta value was negative and Y_{GER} decreased on average by .009 with every one unit change in $X_{14.GER}$ (Figure 7.5; T3a:5). Established theories and models noted that mature and experienced tourists aim to fulfil higher needs and seek discovery, knowledge enhancement, self-development and fulfilment (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). Although the study at hand does not rule out that an experienced tourist is motivated by and participates in immersive and educational experiences, the motive had a marginally negative impact on the outcome variable. Conclusively, the individual's experience level does not grow with an increase in $X_{14.GER.}$ This finding endorses that a more comprehensive understanding is required to distinguish between the outcome of being experienced and the process to become experienced.

When applying the push and pull model of motivation and holiday trip planning, $X_{6.GER}$ and $X_{8.GER}$ can be categorised as pull factors, while $X_{13.GER}$ and $X_{14.GER}$ are relatively intrinsic and can be considered push factors of holiday trip planning. The findings demonstrate a significantly positive relationship between the pull factors $X_{6.GER}$ and $X_{8.GER}$ and the self-assessed experience level, whereas the push factors $X_{13.GER}$ and $X_{14.GER}$ had a marginal positive or negative influence on the outcome variable. As pull factors are controlled and managed by the supply-side and are to some degree the responsibility of DMOs, these findings confirm the assumption that the tourism industry plays a significant role in the tourist's process of experience accumulation.

Recent academic studies and applied consumer surveys reveal a growing utilisation of online booking platforms in the holiday planning and decision-making processes (Bilgihan et al., 2016). In Germany, 38% of holidays that were booked in advance were booked online in 2016 (FUR Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen e.V., 2017). In an earlier research on information search, Kerstetter and Cho (2004) concluded that the experienced consumers' increased knowledge results in less trust in the internet as external source of information. Consequently, a negative relationship between prior knowledge and the usage of the internet was established. Findings from this research project reveal a significantly positive relationship between online booking and information behaviour in the process of experience accumulation. With every one unit change in the variable *informed and booked most trip elements online* ($X_{3.GER}$), the self-assessed experience level of German respondents grew on average by .147 (Figure 7.5; T3a:3). The somewhat contradictory results are suggested to be a result of the one-dimensionality of prior experiences in past research and the distinction of experienced and novice tourists based on repeat and first-time travel behaviour.

Predictors related to holiday trip activities (T3b & T3c)

A positive relationship between the holiday trip activity *self-seeking and self-development* ($X_{5.GER}$) and the respondents self-assessed experience level was found in the regression analysis. The variable $X_{5.GER}$ was factorised as *travelled off the beaten track, felt being an active part of the experience/the place/the community, and spent more time in the same place to get a real feeling* and referred to holiday activities in the past only (Figure 7.5; T3b:3). With every one unit change in $X_{5.GER,}$ the outcome variable changed on average by .131 units. This result resembles previous studies that investigated the impacts of prior experience on travel behaviour and motivation. P. L. Pearce and Lee (2005) identified self-development as one of four core motivational factors and distinguished personal development from host-site development. The authors further claimed that the former is predominantly aspired by tourists with lower travel experiences, while the host-site involvement develops with travel career progression.

Findings from this research project are supportive for the previously identified desire for self-actualisation and self-development when higher levels of experiences exist. Travel for personal growth and self-development were also addressed in the travel motivation matrix by Csikszentmihalyi and Coffey (2017). The authors defined an eudaemonic tourist as a person that considers travel as a growth opportunity, is interested in learning about the culture and history of the place, engages in immersive encounters and is focused on meaningful experiences. A similar conclusion was provided by Moscardo (2017) who noted that eudaemonic satisfaction is a "longer-lasting affective state associated with deep processing and similar conditions to those reported for mindfulness, and likely to contribute to overall well-being and improved quality of life" (pp. 113-114). These definitions provide evidence to conclude that an experienced tourist is predominantly motivated by eudaemonic reasons to travel. At the same time, the respective level of experiences is shaped by the immersive and engaging travel behaviour, establishing a mutual dependency between experience accumulation and motivation.

Another significant variable related to the individual's holiday trip activity was the factorised variable *standard travel activities* ($X_{10.GER}$). This predictor was operationalised as *visited must-see places and famous sites, wants to see as many famous sites as possible in the future, asked locals for first-hand information* and *was active and explored*. The variable comprised activities that were undertaken in the past and travel behaviour that was aimed for in future travel. Subsequently, the variable relates to both, past related on-site behaviour and future holiday intentions and is positioned between cluster T3b and T3c (Figure 7.5; T3b/c:4). With the positive beta coefficient of .098, the outcome variable slightly increased with every one unit change in $X_{10.GER}$. This result lends evidence to underscore existing studies that examined the changes in travel behaviour and postulated hyper-tourism as a growing trend. Condevaux et al. (2016) affirmed that the increased desire for alternative, off the beaten track and authentic experience does not replace the visitation of famous tourist spots and standard travel activities.

The forward-looking desire for *novelty seeking and exploring* ($X_{9.GER}$) also significantly influenced the self-assessed experience level of German respondents. The predictor was factorised and comprised the following prospective variables: *wants to go to places none of my family/friends have been before, wants to go to places not many people have been before, wants to experiences places like the locals do,* and *wants to travel more often*. With every one unit change in $X_{9.GER}$, the self-assessed experience level of German tourists increased by .109 units (Figure 7.5; T3c:3).

Novelty seeking and exploring are among the most discussed topics in tourism research related to motivation, travel behaviour, roles and typologies (E. Cohen, 1972; Decrop, 2006; Ryan, 2002b). Research showed that prior experiences and knowledge lead to higher demand in novelty seeking and exploring. This research project reveals that prior experiences are not only antecedents of novelty seeking and exploring; the self-assessed experience level of tourists is also influenced by the desire for novelty seeking and exploring. Bearing in mind the prospective nature of this variable, there is relatively high potential for DMOs and other tourism providers to have an impact on the outcome of the variable and thus become decisive in the process of experience accumulation.

Predictors related to online media engagement (T3b & T3c)

The second most useful predictor of the self-assessed experience level of Germans was Web 2.0 engagement ($X_{2.GER}$). The variable was operationalised as *wrote own travel* *blog, commented in travel blogs, shared experiences online,* and *wants to share experience and be an inspiration in the future*. With every one unit change in $X_{2.GER}$, the self-assessed experience level grew on average by .216 units. As the variable comprised past and future aspects of Web 2.0 engagement, it was located between the two thematic blocks in the CETM model (Figure 7.5; T3b/c:2).

Several scholars emphasised the growing importance of OSNs as user-generated knowledge sharing and information platforms that enable tourists to exchange, connect and interact (Bilgihan et al., 2016; Hays et al., 2015). Based on the result of the German multiple regression analysis, this study proposes that experienced tourists engage more actively in the online travel community, become co-creators and active social media influencers. The role of social media influencer in tourism marketing and communication strategies was recently addressed in academic research and scholars implied that the willingness of tourists to share knowledge and actively participate in OSN is of critical importance for a tourism organisation's overall success (Bilgihan et al., 2016; Hays et al., 2015). Although the direct effects of potential secondary experiences through online engagement and learning were not tested, it is concluded that an experienced tourist's overall increased Web 2.0 engagement comprises consuming and sharing throughout the travel journey. This reinforces the important role of Web 2.0.

In addition to the active engagement and co-creation in Web 2.0, experienced tourists increasingly utilise the internet for practical and purely self-serving reasons. This is supported by the significant contribution of $X_{12.GER}$ (*internet as practical support tool*) on the predictability of Y_{GER}. The predictor $X_{12.GER}$ comprised the variables *did travel-related research, used internet for practical reasons,* and *wrote private online messages* which indicate media behaviour in the past. The outcome variable increased on average by .091 with every one unit change in $X_{12.GER}$ (Figure 7.5; T3b:4). Past literature noted that tourists were generally consuming online information by reading discussions, feedback and reviews, but only rarely actively participate by sharing information (Bilgihan et al., 2016). Findings from this study suggest both an active and outwardly directed engagement in the online community ($X_{2.GER}$) and a more self-centred, passive consumption of online information sources ($X_{12.GER}$). With the increased likelihood of active online engagement, it is concluded that experienced tourists are of critical significance for the tourism industry's endeavours to encourage tourists to share information.

Overall, the findings validate that German experienced tourists have the knowledge and ability to take responsibility for their decisions. As travelling becomes a self-directed, conscious act to satisfy needs and achieve a fulfilled life, this section was labelled *no show-and-tell wanted* and stands in many ways, in contrast to the dimensions of a New Zealand experienced tourist introduced in the following section.

7.3.1.2 Catch me if you can – predicting a New Zealand experienced tourist

After backward elimination, 19 variables remained in the regression analysis predicting the New Zealand experienced tourist (Y_{NZ}). In the case of five predictors, the *p*-values were greater than .05 and as no statistical significance was found, these predictors are neglected in the discussion and interpretation. The modular design and general layout of the *Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality (CETM)* was introduced in section 7.3.1.1. Similar to the German findings, statistically significant predictors in the New Zealand data ranged from general profiling variables (T1), to variables related to the travel profile (T2) and the travel journey (T3) and are displayed in the CETM model for New Zealand (Figure 7.6).

Predictors related to the general profile (T1)

Compared to the CETM model of the German experienced tourist, the New Zealand model comprised more significant predictor variables related to the general profile of respondents. Two significant predictors were assigned to the sociodemographic profile (T1a) and three variables related to social identity (T1b).

Predictors related to the sociodemographic profile (T1a)

Findings from the multiple linear regression analysis show that a higher level of education had a positive impact on the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders. Every one unit change in the variable *has at least undergraduate degree* ($X_{6.NZ}$), comprising the variables undergraduate degree and postgraduate degree as the highest formal qualification, contributed averagely to a positive change of .111 in Y_{NZ} (Figure 7.6; T1a:3).

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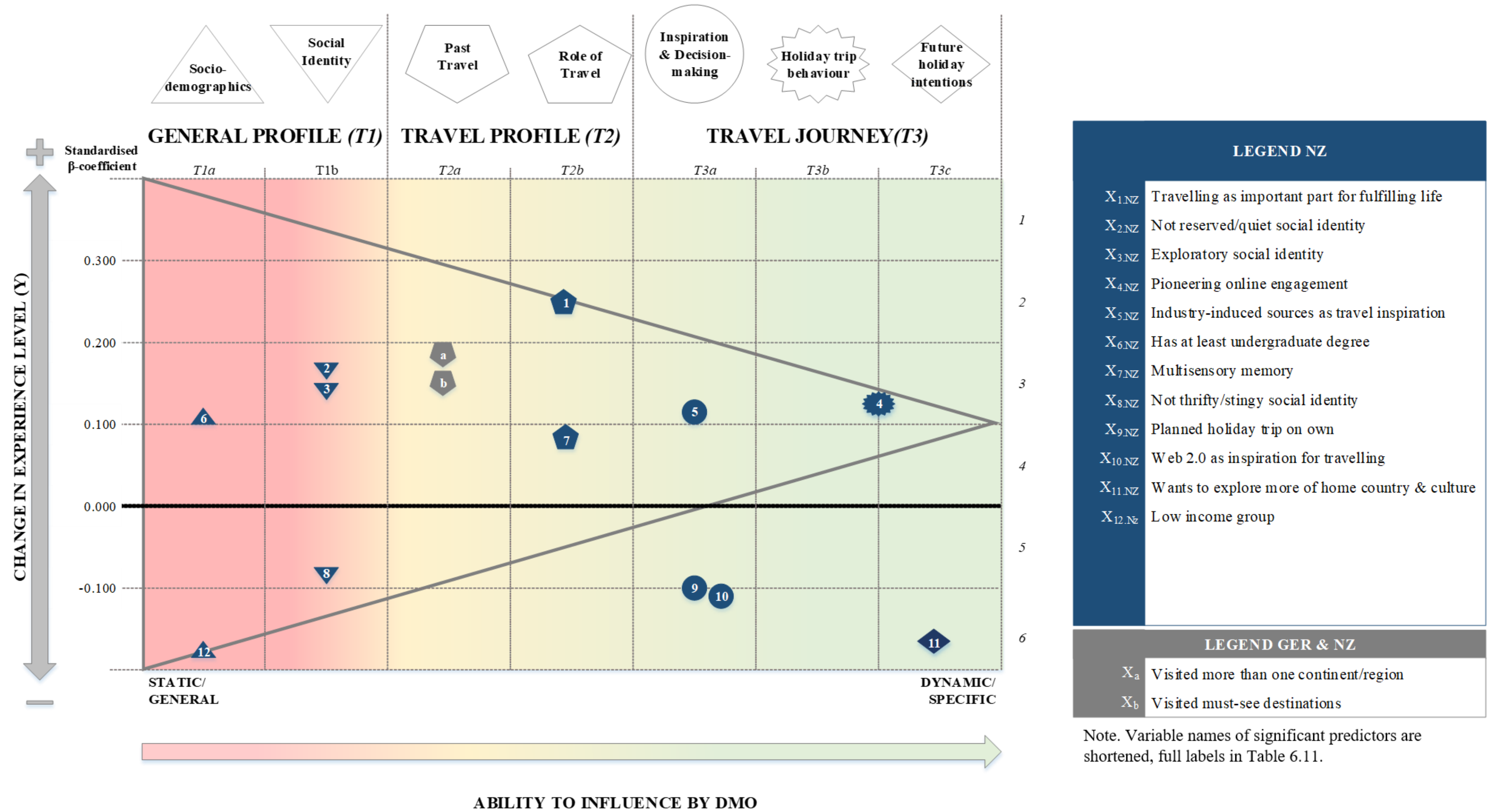


Figure 7.6: Continuum of the Experienced Tourist’s Multidimensionality (CETM): The case of the New Zealand experienced tourist

Several scholars discussed the educational background of tourists in relation to decision-making, destination choice, travel behaviour and the propensity to travel (Alegre & Pou, 2004; Kožić et al., 2016; Laing & Frost, 2014). Whereas past measurements of prior experiences considered travel propensity, no relationships between educational background and prior experience were established. With the positive impact of $X_{6.NZ}$ on the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders, this study provides significant statistical evidence for a relationship between the variables. Subsequently, the results contribute to an expansion of existing measurement models and contribute to the elimination of knowledge gaps.

Closely related to educational background, disposable income and standard of living were discussed as determinants for travel participation and frequency. Based on data from Eurostat, Kožić et al. (2016) found that income was the key determinant for net travel propensity and a positive relationship between higher disposable income and higher travel frequency was established. Although, the regression analysis did not result in any significant contribution of higher income groups on the self-assessed experience level, a negative relationship between the variable *low income groups (less than 30,000 NZD/annually)* ($X_{12.NZ}$), and Y_{NZ} was found. As the self-assessed experience level reduced on average by .163 with every one unit change in $X_{12.NZ}$, the results lead to the conclusion that a reverse effect of a positive contribution of higher income levels on higher experience levels may exist, but is not statistical significant (Figure 7.6; T1a:6).

Predictors related to social identity (T1b)

With a positive standardised beta coefficient of .169 the variable *not reserved/quiet* ($X_{2.NZ}$), significantly contributed to Y_{NZ} and was the second-best predictor describing a New Zealand experienced tourist (Figure 7.6; T1b:3). In addition to $X_{2.NZ}$, the factorised variable *exploratory social identity* ($X_{3.NZ}$) positively contributed to a higher experience level of New Zealand respondents. The factorised variable $X_{3.NZ}$ was operationalised as *spontaneous/decisive, adventurous/risk-taking, trendsetting/innovative, self-confident/self-aware* and *adaptable/open-minded social identity*. With every one unit change in $X_{3.NZ}$, the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders grew on average by .150 (Figure 7.6; T1b:3).

The predictors $X_{2.NZ}$ and $X_{3.NZ}$ show similarities with the personality factors openness and extraversion defined as two of the Big Five personality traits (Gosling et al., 2003). The influence of personality traits on travel decision-making, leisure and travel behaviour attracted several scholars in the past with partly contradictory findings (Jani, 2014a, 2014b; C.-Y. Li & Tsai, 2013; Schneider & Vogt, 2012). In early research on travel typologies and motivation, E. Cohen (1972) and Plog (1974) also referred to particular personality traits in relation to behaviour and travel choices. Being extrovert and open to experiences was linked to Plog's allocentric and Cohen's explorer personalities and relationships to travel curiosity, independent and international travel behaviour were established. Findings from this research project lend evidence to the previously derived suggestions of a relationship between extraversion and openness to experience and higher degrees of prior experiences. This is substantiated as only respondents that fit the requirement of an independent tourist were considered and a positive contribution of $X_{2.NZ}$ and $X_{3.NZ}$ on the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders was found.

In addition to the two desired social identity elements that are closely related to extraversion and openness to experience, the variable *is not thrifty/stingy* ($X_{8.NZ}$) contributed to the predictability of Y_{NZ}. With a standardised beta coefficient of -.098, every one unit change in $X_{8.NZ}$ resulted in a deduction of the self-assessed experience level (Figure 7.6; T1b:5). The price consciousness of New Zealanders and predominance of price in travel decision-making was previously addressed. The negative contribution of $X_{8.NZ}$ on Y_{NZ} somewhat reflects the price consciousness of New Zealand experienced tourists. It is of relevance to note that a negative relationship between the self-assessed experience level and a low income was also found, yet no statistical relationship between the two variables $X_{8.NZ}$ and $X_{12.NZ}$ was detected. Whereas the negative contribution of $X_{12.NZ}$ underscores the general assumption that higher levels of disposable income positively impact travel frequency and travel experiences, the findings demonstrate that having a *not thrifty/stingy social identity* does not positively impact the process of experience accumulation of New Zealand tourists. That leads to the general assumption that being more affluent does not necessarily result in being less stingy, and being thrifty/stingy does not interfere with the accumulation of travel experiences.

Consumer behaviour literature looked at the effects of prior knowledge on price acceptability and price consciousness with partly contradictory findings (Rao & Sieben, 1992). Because of the tourism products' unique features, the purchasing process for holiday trips involves more emotional and financial risk compared with other tangible consumer goods (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). This leads to a more extensive information search. Price consciousness requires an even more extensive information search in order to find the lowest possible offer for a particular product or service (Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, 2016). Moreover, H. Hansen (2013) concluded that "[H]igh knowledge consumers may use their memory-based category information to make inferences about price" (p. 243). This respectively influences the consumers' purchase intentions. Whereas purchases were cut down as a consequence of the global economic downturn and financial crisis in 2008/2009, the tourism industry proved to be extremely stable and resilient with continuous growth since the 1950s (Sharpley, 2015). This also provides evidence to the findings that general price consciousness and stinginess do not automatically limit travel. This study suggests that New Zealand's geographic isolation and high living costs require tourists to be more price conscious in order to enable travelling and experience accumulation. Those individuals that choose to travel and wish to expand their travel careers might be more thrifty/stingy in their daily life to afford travelling. This is somewhat echoed by D. G. Pearce, Reid, and Schott (2009) who concluded that New Zealand independent travellers are more price conscious compared to package travellers.

Predictors related to the travel profile (T2)

Several factors related to the travel profile of New Zealanders positively contributed to the self-assessed experience level. The travel profile is explained through predictors relating to past travel (T2a) and the role of travelling (T2b) in the respondents' lives.

Predictors related to past travel (T2a)

Similar to the German regression results, *visited more than one continent/region* ($X_{a.NZ}$) and *visited must-see destinations* ($X_{b.NZ}$) showed a statistically significant, positive impact on the outcome variable. With a standardised beta coefficient of .181, $X_{a.NZ}$ contributed to a positive change in the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders. Similarly, every one unit change $X_{b.NZ}$ led to an increase of .155 units in Y_{NZ} (Figure 7.6; T2a:3). The variable X_b was operationalised in both case studies through the agreement of having visited at least one of the following tourist destinations: France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain and/or North America. Bearing in mind the geographic location of New Zealand, having visited at least one of these destinations requires long-distance travel. The positive impact of $X_{b.NZ}$ on the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders underpins not only that having visited traditional tourist destinations is a must to become an experienced tourist, it also indicates that experienced tourists are engaging in long-distance travel.

Against the background that $X_{8.NZ}$ negatively impacted the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders and at the same time acknowledging that long-distance travel involves a higher investment, this study postulates that the experienced tourists' general stinginess and price consciousness is of less significance when it comes to travel investments. The number of past trips gained centre stage in prior measurement models and was confirmed to be a statistically significant predictor of the German experienced tourists. In the case of the New Zealand regression results, a positive relationship was found between the variable and Y_{NZ}, yet with a p-value of .081 it cannot be concluded that a significant difference exists and the predictor was not taken into account for further analysis and discussion.

Predictors related to the role of travel (T2b)

Whereas the variable *holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life* was factorised in the German data set, this variable was not factorised in the New Zealand data set. This provided the variables *holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life* as well as *travelling since childhood* and *holiday travel as a status symbol* a more distinct importance as they were entered as stand-alone variables in the initial regression equation applying backward elimination. Of the three variables concerning the role of travel in the individual's life, only *holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life* ($X_{1.NZ}$) remained in the regression equation assessing the predictability of Y_{NZ}. The outcome variable changed on average by .259 with every one unit change in $X_{1.NZ}$. Conclusively, $X_{1.NZ}$ was the single best predictor of the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders (Figure 7.6; T2b:2). The significant contribution of $X_{1.NZ}$ on the self-assessed level of experience further strengthens the assumption that *being thrifty/ stingy* does not necessarily translate into reserved travel behaviour. As travelling is regarded an integral part of happiness and life satisfaction, experienced tourists are not undeterred by travel investments and prefer to live inexpensively in daily life to allow travel experience accumulation.

The important role of sensory stimuli to invoke emotional and memorable experiences deeply embodied in the tourists themselves received notice in academic research and more sensory experiences were suggested as inevitable for the competitiveness of any destination (Agapito, Mendes, & Valle, 2013; Davenport & Beck, 2001; Ooi, 2005).

Recent tourism studies questioned the dominant centring of ocular experiences in tourism consumption, raised the need for more multisensory experiences and consideration of the multiphasic nature of tourist experiences in relation to sensory memories (Agapito et al., 2013; Agapito et al., 2017; Campos et al., 2016).

This study delivers several critical insights in regard to the existing research gaps. The factorability of the sensory memories s*ounds of a place*, *smell of a place*, *feel of a place* and *taste of a place* was concluded from the PCA. The variable *visuals of a place* was not factorable and remained as a stand-alone variable in the initial regression equation. With a statistically significant standardised beta coefficient of .096, the factorised variable *multisensory memory* ($X_{7.NZ}$) contributed positively to the self-assessed experience level of respondents. The findings confirm that sensory experiences are influential in the tourists' long-term memories and mental process of becoming an experienced tourist. The findings also reveal that despite visual stimuli being dominant in the recall of sensory experiences (Appendix O), the variable did not contribute to the predictability of the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders. The findings endorse previous research that challenged the centrality of visual stimuli and suggest the relevance of multisensory experiences in memorability and experience accumulation.

Predictors related to the travel journey (T3)

Predictors related to the travel journey are more dynamic compared to the profiling factors and are more amenable to be influenced by DMOs and other tourism providers. Compared to the dimensions of a German experienced tourist where 10 predictors were assigned in this cluster, only five predictors that are related to the travel journey remained in the New Zealand regression equation. Three predictors were assigned to inspiration and decision-making (T3a) and one predictor related to future holiday intentions (T3c). Although no predictor was directly assignable to holiday trip behaviour in the past (T3b), one predictor comprised past and future behaviour and was arranged between T3b and T3c.

Predictors related to inspiration and decision-making (T3a)

The positive contribution of the variable *industry-induced sources as inspiration for holiday travelling* ($X_{5.NZ}$), operationalised as *advertisement* and *online travel platforms* indicates direct industry involvement and the importance of external pull factors of motivation in the process of experience accumulation. With every one unit change in $X_{5.NZ}$, the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders increased on average by .116 (Figure 7.6; T3a:3). In previous research, Gursoy and McCleary (2004) posited a relationship between prior experiences and internal and external information sources. The authors found that experienced consumers are more likely to use external, more product-specific information sources and are motivated by external pull factors. This study suggests that the experienced tourists' increased product knowledge, awareness and sensitivity encourage them to engage with industry-induced sources in order to gain a desired deeper understanding.

Despite the growing popularity of Web 2.0 in marketing strategies and the assumed impacts of online information source on travel decision-making (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013; Bilgihan et al., 2016; Hays et al., 2015), findings from the multiple linear regression analysis demonstrate that *Web 2.0 as inspiration for travelling* ($X_{10.NZ}$) did not positively contribute to an increase in the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders (Figure 7.6; T3a:6). The variable $X_{10.NZ}$ was operationalised as a merged variable comprising *own social media contacts*, *celebrities on social media* and *general travel blogs as inspiration for holiday trip planning*. With every one unit change in $X_{10.NZ}$, the outcome variable Y_{NZ} decreased on average by .107 units. Whereas $X_{5.NZ}$ as a pull factor behind motivation and inspiration had a positive impact on the self-assessed experience level, $X_{10.NZ}$ as a push factor of motivation showed a reverse effect on the self-assessed experience level.

Scholars questioned whether the general popularity of Web 2.0 channels eventually translates into actual trip planning or whether it is rather an add-on source that lacks trustworthiness and reliability (Ayeh et al., 2013). Findings from descriptive statistics clearly showed that Web 2.0 information sources and respondents' own social media contacts were of relatively high importance as a source of holiday inspiration. This comparatively high importance of Web 2.0 as a general source of inspiration, but at the same time negatively contributing to the self-assessed experience level of respondents, emphasises the need to understand the underlying process of being an experienced tourist. While the findings from the regression analysis do not interfere with the general derived importance of $X_{10.NZ}$ as a source of travel inspiration, the predictor is less relevant in long-term memorability as it does not positively impact the self-assessed experience level.

The variable *planned holiday trip on my own* ($X_{9.NZ}$) had a negative relationship with the outcome variable Y_{NZ} (Figure 7.6; T3a:5/6). This result seems surprising considering that only independent tourists were considered and that they are normally known for independent trip planning and booking as well. However, when putting this result in the overall context of the findings and the case study settings, there are several possible explanations for the negative impact of $X_{9.NZ}$ on the self-assessed experience level of New Zealanders. The discussed price consciousness, the geographic isolation, and the positive impact of industry-induced sources as travel inspiration lend evidence to explain the negative contribution of $X_{9.NZ}$. In order to accumulate travel experiences and become an experienced tourist, New Zealanders rely on external sources in the planning and booking process with the aim to find the best prices possible and satisfy their general price sensitivity. Previous research supports this assumption, as travel agents were the dominant booking channel for international holiday trips by New Zealanders. Ease, convenience, and price were among the reasons for the channel choice and there was a strong involvement of others in the booking process of international holiday trips (D. G. Pearce & Scott, 2011).

In addition, the geographic location, isolation and predominance of long-distance travel require more planning and information gathering which often involves different parties and results in the utilisation of different booking channels. Effects of distance on travel movements in general and regarding price consciousness, information sources, booking and distribution channels gained the attention of several researchers in the past. Individuals from source markets without direct neighbours and further distance were expected to travel less internationally (McKercher, Chan, & Lam, 2008). In addition, a relationship between higher price consciousness and more engagement in advanced travel planning and utilisation of external booking channels was established in previous research (Wu, Law, & Jiang, 2013).

Predictors related to holiday trip activities (T3c)

The forward-looking variable *wants to explore more of my own home country and culture* ($X_{11.NZ}$) remained in the regression equation predicting an experienced New Zealand tourist. With every one unit change in $X_{11.NZ}$, the self-assessed experience level declined on average by .161 (Figure 7.6; T3c:6). Despite the overall high agreement that the home country and culture is aimed to be explored more in the future (M = 3.84), this desire for more domestic travel negatively impacted the level of self-assessed travel experience. In past literature, the visitation of exotic and new destinations was found to be appealing for explorer tourists with higher levels of prior experiences (Decrop, 2006). It is concluded that travelling within one's own country does not allow one to be exposed to new cultures and customs and as there is less broadening of the individual's horizon, therefore the desire for self-development, growth and transformation cannot be satisfied. This finding further challenges previous measurement models that concluded that the quantity of trips (domestic or international) contributes to higher experience levels.

This study, by contrast, proposes that a higher number of trips within the home country does not contribute to higher levels of being experienced. At the same time, the descriptive findings clearly show the importance of domestic trips for the individual's travel biographies. Thus, a re-engagement with the domestic market, as aspired by the New Zealand tourism industry, can be supported. This further leads to a difficult and partly contradictory situation for destination marketers that has not been addressed in the literature to date and requires attention in future research. Findings from this research phase demonstrate that a higher maturity of a tourist destination's residents is not necessarily supportive for national tourism growth. Subsequently, the encouragement of the maturation process of domestic tourists seems disadvantageous for the national tourism industry leaving destination marketers with new challenges with respect to product development and experience creation.

Predictors related to online media engagement (T3b & T3c)

When referring to Web 2.0 as a source for travel inspiration, the tourist is the receiver of information and less actively involved in the sharing process. In contrast to the negative contribution of passively receiving shared information, a positive relationship between the variable *pioneering online engagement* ($X_{4.NZ}$) and Y_{NZ} was found. The predictor variable $X_{4.NZ}$ was operationalised comprising the variables *wrote own travel blog, commented in travel blogs* and *wants to experience places virtually (online) in the future instead of going there in the future* and thus encompassed retrospective and prospective aspects of online engagement. With a positive standardised beta coefficient of .117, an active engagement and involvement in Web 2.0 applications were accountable for the predictability of Y_{NZ} (Figure 7.6; T3b/c:3).

The positive contributions of the $X_{3.NZ}$ and $X_{4.NZ}$ lead to the overall conclusion that a New Zealand experienced tourist is shaped by a pioneering, innovative and exploratory social identity. The negative contribution of $X_{10.NZ}$ (*Web 2.0 as source of inspiration for holiday travelling*) further underpins this pioneering role that a New Zealand experienced tourist aims to occupy. A New Zealand experienced tourist does not want to receive inspiration through other potentially like-minded travellers and follow other people's dreams, but instead want to be an inspiration for others while fulfilling their own travel dreams. At the same time, the positive contribution of $X_{5.NZ}$ (*industry-induced sources as inspiration for holiday travelling*) and negative contribution of $X_{9.NZ}$ (*planned holiday on my own*) demonstrate that they do not reject direct support from industry experts. This further underpins the challenge of attracting and reaching out to a New Zealand experienced tourist. Against this background, this section was labelled *Catch me if you can*.

7.3.2 Reflecting on the tourists' realities of an experienced tourist

In the previous sections, the results from the population representative online survey were coherently discussed. Based on approximately 350 cases per case study, the dimensions of the German and New Zealand experienced tourists were interpreted and the CETM model per case study introduced. Analysing the predictability of the self-assessed experience level of German and New Zealand tourists through stepwise multiple linear regression analyses supports a diverse set of variables contributing to the self-assessment of being experienced.

The results manifest that several independent factors positively or negatively influence the self-assessed experience level of German and New Zealand tourists. These factors range from static/generic and predominantly retrospective to dynamic/specific factors that are more prospective and related to future travel intention. The translation of this continuum into the CETM model facilitates a simplified understanding of the underlying complexity to determine an experienced tourist. The CETM model clearly demonstrates that the identification of an experienced tourist requires going beyond retrospective factors based on purely measurable facts (e.g., age, number of past trips). Despite the relevance of general profiling and mostly retrospective aspects in the process of experience accumulation, several more dynamic and prospective elements of the travel journey require attention to achieve a holistic understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist.

The case study approach resulted in varying, yet similarly multifaceted accumulation sets of an experienced tourist. Consequently, the findings endorse the assumption that different accumulation sets exist and these are closely related to the individual's country of origin. Conclusively, the country of origin is postulated to be a moderator for different accumulation sets. Among approximately 50 possible predictor variables, the variables *visited more than one continent/region* (X_a) and *visited must-see destinations* (X_b) were the only two predictors that proved to be statistically significant in both case studies. The relevance of X_a and X_b in the predictability of an experienced tourist is in line with past research that focused on quantifiable and past travel-related factors to measure travel experience. The statistical significance of being well travelled and having seen the traditional must-see tourist destinations provides evidence to assume that the predictors are set conditions to identify an experienced tourist independent of the moderating country of origin.

Another noteworthy finding is the identification of the single best predictor of an experienced tourist which was in both regression equations very similar. Although operationalised slightly differently, the variables $X_{1.GER}$ and $X_{1.NZ}$ referred to the important role of travelling for a fulfilling life. For experienced tourists, travelling goes beyond purely hedonic reasons, but incorporates eudaemonic intentions to further grow and develop. Consequently, travelling is a vital component of a fulfilling life and with more opportunities to travel and accumulate travel experiences, the tourists does not only become more experienced, but also more satisfied and higher levels of happiness are achieved.

Although two sociodemographic predictors remained in each of the regression equations, these factors related to different profiling information and contributed to varying degrees to the self-assessed experience level of German and New Zealand tourists. Subsequently, no central sociodemographic characteristic was derived as predictor of being an experienced tourist. In addition, the previous dominance of age in past models to measure travel experiences is challenged. The variable $X_{15.GER}$ was the predictor that most negatively contributed to the self-assessed experience level of German tourists. The variable represented the younger age cohort, while no statistical significance was detected for the older age group. In the case of the New Zealand regression equation, there was no statistical relationship between age and the self-assessed experience level statistically detected. This leads to advocate that being experienced is not related to older age and the emergent criticism of age occupying a central role in the measurement of travel experiences is corroborated.

Several variables related to the individual's social identity contributed to the predictability of the New Zealand experienced tourist and similarities were found regarding $X_{7.GER}$ in the German equation and $X_{3.NZ}$ in the case of New Zealand. While

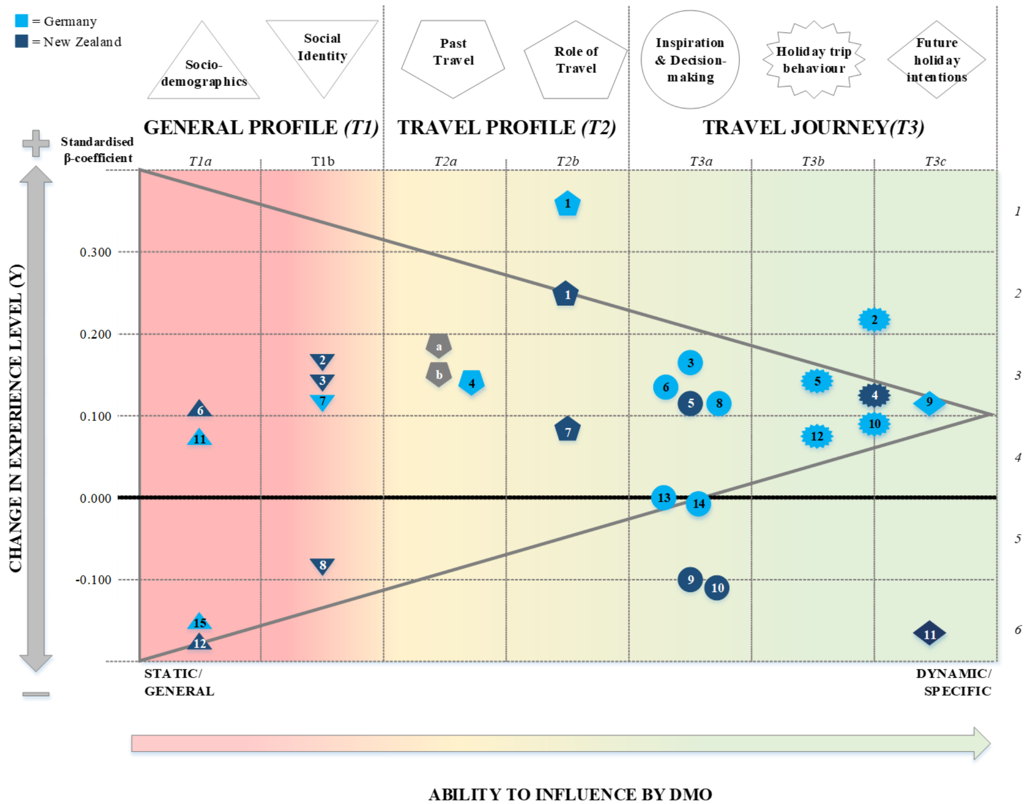
$X_{7.GER}$ corresponds to *adaptable/open-minded social identity* as a stand-alone variable in the German data set, the element was factorised in the New Zealand data and the derived variable $X_{3.NZ}$ summarised as *exploratory social identity*. Both variables positively contributed to a higher self-assessed experience level. This provides evidence to conclude that being adaptable/ open-minded is a central condition for being an experienced tourist.

In regard to the predictors corresponding to the travel journey (T3), differences between the two case studies and the country-specific dimensions of an experienced tourist were more prominent. While several travel activities and factors related to the online media engagement positively influenced the self-assessment of German experienced tourists, the influences of predictors in T3 were limited and partly negative in the case of New Zealand. The CETM model draws attention to differences in terms of the distribution of the significant predictors along the continuum. These differences are visualised in the CETM integrated model (Figure 7.7) and discussed in the following section.

7.3.3 Developing an integrated model of experienced tourists

The development of an integrated model to understand the underlying complexities and dimensions of an experienced tourist was one of the two research aims of this study. Research Aim 2 sought to develop a model that synthesises the dimensions of an experienced tourist based on findings from both research phases and explore the role of DMOs within the process of experience accumulation. The multifaceted drivers that independently contribute to a self-assessed higher experience level and determine a German and New Zealand experienced tourist was provided in the previous sections and a comprehensive understanding achieved.

The continuum enables one to distinguish static/generic from dynamic/specific factors. The further the predictor on the right, the better the ability for DMOs or other tourism providers to influence experienced tourists. The further the predictor is on the left, the more generic, static (e.g., sociodemographic factors), orientated towards the past (e.g., past travel) and less amenable it is to be influenced by tourism providers. When integrating the results from both case studies into one model, the distribution of the significant predictors along the continuum unfolds differences between the German and the New Zealand experienced tourists (Figure 7.7).



LEGEND GER	
$X_{1,GER}$	Travel as part of life
$X_{2,GER}$	Web 2.0 engagement
$X_{3,GER}$	Informed and booked online
$X_{4,GER}$	At least 5 trips within the past 5 years
$X_{5,GER}$	Self-seeking and self-development
$X_{6,GER}$	Tourist destination as decision criterion
$X_{7,GER}$	Adaptable/open-minded social identity
$X_{8,GER}$	Holiday type as decision criterion
$X_{9,GER}$	Novelty seeking and exploring
$X_{10,GER}$	Standard travel activities
$X_{11,GER}$	No children in household
$X_{12,GER}$	Internet as practical support tool
$X_{13,GER}$	Family and daily life as travel inspiration
$X_{14,GER}$	Immersion and learning as travel motives
$X_{15,GER}$	Age 20-39 years

LEGEND NZ	
$X_{1,NZ}$	Travelling as important part for fulfilling life
$X_{2,NZ}$	Not reserved/quiet social identity
$X_{3,NZ}$	Exploratory social identity
$X_{4,NZ}$	Pioneering online engagement
$X_{5,NZ}$	Industry-induced sources as travel inspiration
$X_{6,NZ}$	Has at least undergraduate degree
$X_{7,NZ}$	Multisensory memory
$X_{8,NZ}$	Not thrifty/stingy social identity
$X_{9,NZ}$	Planned holiday trip on own
$X_{10,NZ}$	Web 2.0 as inspiration for travelling
$X_{11,NZ}$	Wants to explore more of home country & culture
$X_{12,NZ}$	Low income group

LEGEND GER & NZ	
X_a	Visited more than one continent/region
X_b	Visited must-see destinations

Note. Variable names of significant predictors are shortened, full labels in Table 6.6 (GER) and Table 6.11 (NZ).

Figure 7.7: Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality (CETM): An integrated model

The integrated CETM model demonstrates that the majority of statistically significant predictors positively contribute to being an experienced German and New Zealand tourist. With every one unit change in any of these positive contributors, the self-assessed experience level increases on average by the respective standardised beta coefficients. Only a few predictors indicate a statistically negative contribution on the self-assessed experience level of respondents.

Predictors of the German experienced tourist (light blue) heavily skew towards the right end of the continuum and are mostly associated with aspects of the travel journey. This implies that there is more potential for the tourism industry to actively engage in the individual's process of experience accumulation and occupy an important role in the self-assessment of being an experienced tourist. Results from the multiple linear regression analysis show that the German experienced tourist is less interested in self-profiling and bragging through travelling but seeks self-fulfilment and has the maturity to understand tourism as a self-serving element of life; the discussion and interpretation of the German experienced tourist was labelled *No show-and-tell wanted*.

In the case of the New Zealand experienced tourist, the predictors are more scattered along the continuum, yet, lean toward the static/generic end of the continuum. This results in generally limited abilities for DMOs and other service providers to influence the self-assessment of being experienced. The comprehensive discussion previously provided demonstrated the pioneering role of the New Zealand experienced tourist in terms of active online engagement and at the same time importance of traditional, booking and information channels. This leads to a challenging role of DMOs to actively engage in New Zealanders' processes of experience accumulation. Accordingly, the discussion and interpretation of the New Zealand experienced tourist was headed as *Catch me if you can*.

7.4 Synthesis of being experienced: Experts' perceptions and tourists' realities

Following the exploratory sequential mixed methods research approach, this study integrated findings from the first research phase into the development of the second research instrument. Hence, a macro-micro perspective was established, the supply-side and demand-side of tourism were equally considered and a comparison was facilitated. This macro-micro approach allowed the study to go beyond mostly objective perceptions from the supply-side and incorporate subjective realities from the demand-side.

Destination marketers from Germany and New Zealand shared a common understanding of an experienced tourist and pointed to numerous potential influencing factors that determine an experienced tourist. The study design enabled the testing of the destination marketers' perceptions of an experienced tourist and facilitated the investigation whether the perceptions of an experienced tourists' match the realities of an experienced tourist. Applying stepwise multiple linear regression analyses as the core statistical tests to examine possible relationships between predictor variables and the self-assessed experience levels of German and New Zealand tourists facilitated the identification of significant predictors. The comprehensive perceptions of an experienced tourist and the extensive amount of possible influencing factors identified by destination marketers interviewed in the first research phase was narrowed down to a smaller set of predictors. In the second quantitative research phase, the drivers that significantly contribute to the self-assessed experience level of Germans and New Zealanders were identified. Bearing in mind that self-assessments are mental constructs, the endeavoured subjective perspective in understanding an experienced tourist was further supported. Due to the centrality of the industry experts' perceptions that an experienced tourist comes from more mature travel markets, travels independently and internationally, several questions in the online survey were directed towards international FITs only. More than two thirds of respondents in each case study met the requirements of a FIT. This confirms the destination marketers' assumptions and further resulted in extensive databases that encouraged the implementation and execution of multivariate analyses.

Industry representatives identified eight dimensions of an experienced tourist (Figure 7.1) which were grouped in two overall themes: personal identifiers and external facilitators. Results from the multiple linear regression analyses in both case studies demonstrate that statistically significant predictors are attributable to all eight suggested dimensions. Although influencing factors associated with the broader environment were not directly tested in the online survey, the case study design allowed the consultation of external sources to determine the possible influence of travel legislation and the political situation in both case study countries. The stable global political situation and power of the German and New Zealand passports (Henley & Partners, 2017) are beneficial for experience accumulation. Hence, a positive contribution of the broader environment was concluded. The country of origin was also strongly emphasised by German and New Zealand destination marketers in the discussion of an experienced tourist. Although experts agreed on several explicit dimensions that distinguish an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist, the moderating role of the country of origin was accentuated. The case study approach allowed the testing of this supposition. As different dimensions of a German and New Zealand experienced tourist were detected, the importance of the country of origin was confirmed.

Industry experts also established relationships between being an experienced tourist, travel behaviour and desired outcomes. A more eudaemonic travel behaviour was suggested among experienced tourists, who were also seen as pioneers regarding aspects such as technological advancements and new travel discoveries. Destination marketers discussed prior experiences primarily as antecedents of travel decision-making and behaviour. Findings from the quantitative survey go beyond the role of particular behaviour as result of prior experience, but prove that several factors related to travel behaviour are significant predictors to achieve higher self-assessed experience levels. Simultaneously, the statistical significance of future relevant behaviour and travel intentions lend evidence that the level of experience is both retrospective and prospective. Holiday trip activities were predominantly found to be statistically relevant and positive contributors in the German equation predicting an experienced tourist.

In the New Zealand analysis, by contrast, only one factor related to online media behaviour showed a positive relationship with higher experience levels. It is important to note that applying multiple linear regression analyses allowed the researcher to test the predictability of the self-assessed experience level of Germans and New Zealanders. At the same time, the analyses do not permit the researcher to rule out that particular travel behaviour is predominantly sought by experienced tourists. The investigation of statistical relationships between higher experience levels and particular travel behaviour requires future attention. The DMOs' perception that particular behaviours shape an experienced tourist was, to some degree, statistically confirmed in the German data set, yet little evidence was provided by the New Zealand results.

This finding not only supports the idea that different accumulation sets of being an experienced tourist exist, but also challenges the existing linguistic subtleties and semantic ambiguities related to the term *experience* in the English language (Seeler et al., in press). Bearing in mind the different dimensions that distinguish a German from a

New Zealand experienced tourist, the question arises whether these variations in significant predictors are purely moderated by the country of origin as suggested by the supply-side, or whether semantic discrepancies are, to some extent, accountable for the differences in the regression equations. Although this question requires future research, unfolding different accumulation sets to determine an experienced tourist and identify the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective clearly contributes to knowledge and points to several conceptual, theoretical but also methodological and managerial contributions that are addressed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 1	Introduction	SET THE STAGE
Chapter 2	Literature Review	
Chapter 3	Research Paradigm	
Chapter 4	Data Collection Methods	
Chapter 5	Qualitative Findings	LET THE DATA SPEAK
Chapter 6	Quantitative Findings	
Chapter 7	Discussion and Interpretation	GIVE IT MEANING
Chapter 8	**Conclusion**	

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought, and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used. (Wendell Holmes, 1918)

8.1 Introduction

The digitisation of society and everyday life contributes to a constantly changing consumer landscape, changing needs and expectations. Today's increasingly mature and global consumers are more aware of their environments and what is on offer. They make use of their knowledge to become co-creators of their personalised purchases. With evolving consumer mind-sets, values and priorities are shifting from *having* to *being*. Ownership is constantly challenged, minimalist lifestyles and altruism embraced while social justice and truth are sought. With the focus on the consumer, the creation of experiences was identified as the fourth economic offering and the e*xperience economy* was initiated. In the progression of economic value Pine and Gilmore (2011) suggested transformation as the next stage. Although these influential authors understood that transformations are subjective and personal, they advocated them as an economic offering. Today's focus has shifted from managerial and objective to more personal and subjective approaches to understand the underlying constructs of these personal transformations.

Tourism experiences are proposed to possess meaning making qualities and tourism has become a catalyst for personal change and growth (Jantzen, 2013; Selstad, 2007). Prior experiences were identified as predictors of decision-making, travel behaviour, motivation and destination choice (Lehto et al., 2004; P. L. Pearce & Kang, 2009; Sharifpour & Walters, 2014). Thus, the level of prior experience functioned as the antecedent and the cause behind decision-making, behaviour and motivation and eventually deeper meanings and personal growth.

The ongoing and vivid discussion of experience creation and experience consumption in the academic literature reveals that the term *experience* has a dual meaning. This is confirmed by a review of the linguistic connotations of the term which possesses semantic ambiguities. Experiencing encompasses an immediate, partaking experience as a snapshot in time as well as reminiscing experiences that last in the long-term and contribute to an individual's knowledge base. This was summarised by Pine and Gilmore (2011) as follows:

> […] goods and services remain outside of the individual, while experiences actually reach inside of the individual to affect him [her] in an inherently personal way, greatly increasing the value of the offering. But no matter how acute an experience, one's memory of it fades over time. Transformations, on the other hand, guide an individual toward realizing some aspiration and then help to sustain that change through time. (p. 277)

Past theories and models show that the stages of experiencing are intertwined and reliant on each other. Although the individual's accumulated experiences were taken into consideration, scholars and practitioners were mainly interested in understanding the impacts of these levels of accumulated experiences on the consumption needs associated with a particular level of experience. The idea was to gain insights that support the creation of touristic offerings that are desired and memorable when lived through. Thus, the main emphasis was to optimise experience creation in order to remain competitive and encourage economic growth instead of personal transformations of consumers and tourists (Quan & Wang, 2004; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Prior studies have missed to identify the drivers behind experience accumulation and lacked the provision of a comprehensive understanding of an experienced tourist.

This study argues that the level of an individual's prior experience can only serve as an antecedent and predictor of travel decision-making, behaviour and motivation when the drivers behind experience accumulation are fully understood and the distinction between less experienced and experienced tourists can be empirically defined. Rather than exploring prior experience as an antecedent of travel behaviour and decision-making, this study understands it as an outcome variable and a complex process closely related to personal transformation. Adopting an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design, this study explored which factors independently and significantly contribute to the self-assessed experience level in tourism. Research findings encouraged the conceptualisation of an experienced tourist, the development of a generally applicable model and lent support to eliminate existing gaps in the literature.

This final chapter of the thesis revisits the research aims and objectives and provides an overview of the key findings to demonstrate how these were addressed (section 8.2). The originality of this study is synthesised and the conceptual, methodological and theoretical contributions, as well as managerial implications for the tourism industry are presented in section 8.4. Overall limitations of this research project are noted (section 8.5) and opportunities for future research outlined (section 8.6). The chapter closes with a personal reflection of the researcher (section 8.7).

8.2 Revisiting the research aims and objectives

The overall aims of this study were to identify the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a macro-micro perspective (Research Aim 1) and to develop an integrated model synthesising the dimensions of an experienced tourist (Research Aim 2). As little was known about the phenomenon studied, inductive thinking led the research project, yet deductive logics were accepted. The critical realist ontology encouraged the researcher to use different research lenses. The implementation of different data collection methods supported the fulfilment of the research aims and objectives. As a broader perspective was sought and a cross-national approach desired, this study was implemented in two case studies: Germany and New Zealand. The realisation and fulfilment of the research aims and objectives through the exploratory sequential mixed methods research design is summarised in the following sections and the key findings detailed.

Research Aim 1; Objective 1: To investigate the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a supply-side (macro) perspective

This first objective of Research Aim 1 was addressed through semi-structured interviews conducted with German and New Zealand experts from 15 DMOs. The tourist destination is the heart of the tourism product and represents the space where the tourism product is consumed and experienced (O'Dell, 2006). DMOs do not necessarily have direct customer contact, but they are equipped with extensive knowledge related to the group of tourists in their destination. Acting as the coordinating body of the often fragmented environment of several independent suppliers within the tourist destination, DMOs are directly involved and responsible for the creation of seamless tourism experiences. In addition, through close collaboration with political institutions and other stakeholders, DMOs are the key actors in strategic planning and development of a destination. This study strived to understand the dimensions of an experienced tourist more holistically and destination marketers were identified as most promising in providing this information.

With the increasing volume of international tourism and growing travel frequency of individual tourists, DMO representatives commonly agreed that today's tourists are more experienced, and they understood that this improved level of prior travel experience is reflected in changing travel behaviour. A unifying vision of the dimensions of an experienced tourist was revealed. Destination marketers envisioned the experienced tourists not only based on the number of past trips but also referred to several other factors that contribute to higher experience levels. Subsequently, being classified as an experienced tourist is the result of a multidimensional accumulation process.

Destination marketers further elaborated on the relationship between experience levels and travel behaviour and decision-making. The experienced tourist's behaviour is more desirable for the sustainable development of a destination as they were perceived to be more aware and tend to travel more ethically and responsibly. A higher level of desired self-fulfilment and knowledge enhancement was proposed when higher experience levels are present. The experienced tourist's travel behaviour was also strongly linked to independent travel typologies. Overall, the supply-side of tourism indicated awareness of the complexity behind experience accumulation and a more comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist was brought forward.

The impact of the factor of age on an individual's process of experience accumulation was interpreted differently. Despite the inconclusiveness of whether higher age is directly related to higher experience levels, the identified behaviour of experienced tourists indicated similarities with travel behaviour of younger generations and millennials in particular (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010; Pendergast, 2010). Whether the previous dominant factor of age proved to be statistically significant as a factor to predict higher experience levels required the implementation of a second research phase.

Research Aim 1; Objective 2: To investigate the dimensions of an experienced tourist from a demand-side (micro) perspective

Across both case studies 1,000 people were queried online and represented the demand-side of tourism in this study. Under the heading *no show-and-tell wanted,* the German experienced tourist was identified based on 17 predictor variables. German experienced tourists are equipped with the knowledge and tools to be highly independent and make decisions for themselves when it comes to travelling. They have reached a stage where travelling is no longer a mystery, and diversity of travel experiences is sought to satisfy the hybridity of needs. At the same time, they want to be surprised, personally enriched, emotionally touched and recognised as a role model without actively sharing their experience with a wider audience.

The New Zealand experienced tourist is shaped by slightly different predictor variables and labelled *catch me if you can*. While German experienced tourists are predominantly defined by factors related to the actual travel journey, New Zealand experienced tourists are more strongly shaped by general profiling variables related to the desired social identity. They trust industry sources to plan and organise their holidays, yet their personality encourages them to have a pioneering travel behaviour regarding online engagement and participation. Although they appear to be less autonomous to make decisions compared to German experienced tourists, the central role of travelling in their lives encourages them to keep exploring, despite their price consciousness, and be one step ahead of other travellers.

This study proposes that being well travelled and having seen different parts of the world is one requirement to identify someone as an experienced tourist. The study also advocates that the maturity of the country of origin with regards to travelling plays a distinctive role in the process of experience accumulation. Despite differences between the two case studies, the distinction of the single best predictor of an experienced German and New Zealand tourist proved to be a noteworthy result of this research project. The variable *travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life* most positively contributed to the self-assessed experience level of Germans and New Zealanders. This salient finding underpins the key role of travelling in the experienced tourists' lives and it was proposed that travelling goes way beyond relaxation needs. For the experienced tourist travelling incorporates self-fulfilment and contributes to happiness. The relationship between happiness, well-being and tourist experiences recently received notice from several researchers (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Saayman, Li, Uysal, & Song, 2018), yet the relationship between accumulated experiences and the experienced tourist has not been previously established.

> *Research Aim 1; Objective 3: To investigate the similarities and differences between the supply-side and demand-side dimensions of an experienced tourist*

Bearing in mind the sequential, developmental nature of the research design, a degree of similarity organically emerged between the two research phases. Evaluating the overlaps between the supply-side perceptions and demand-side realities led to a comprehensive understanding of an experienced tourist and the incorporation of multiple voices. Eight dimensions of an experienced tourist were identified from industry experts. These dimensions encompass personal identifiers that are highly subjective and external facilitators that are broadly applicable. Although differently categorised, all dimensions were to some degree and with a more detailed understanding, reflected in the demand-side perspective of an experienced tourist. This leads to the conclusion that industry practitioners have an overall sound understanding of an experienced tourist despite the missing definition of this notion in academic literature.

Research Aim 2; Objective 1: To summarise the dimensions and processes of experience accumulation in a generally applicable model

A general model was developed and the dimensions of an experienced tourist were visually synthesised. Although different dimensions of a German and a New Zealand experienced tourist were manifested, the significant predictors encompassed the same three clusters and seven thematic blocks ranging on a continuum from static/general to dynamic/specific factors. This salient finding of identical thematic blocks, yet different predictors within each of these blocks, contributed to the overall understanding of a complex, multidimensional and at the same time location dependent classification of an experienced tourist. The applicability of the continuum to develop the model and integrate the country-specific findings supports the generalisability and transferability of the proposed *Continuum of the Experienced Tourist's Multidimensionality* (CETM). The CETM model is the first comprehensive and holistic approach to summarise the process of experience accumulation in a visual form and capture the multidimensionality of experienced tourists.

Research Aim 2; Objective 2: To explore the influential role of DMOs and tourism providers within the process of experience accumulation

The role of DMOs and other tourism providers was explored and incorporated in the model. The model was developed as a continuum encompassing general, personal and partly retrospective factors that are less amenable as well as dynamic factors that are prospective in nature and are directly related to the individual's travel journey. This identification of factors that are directly related to the travel product and are associated with the different stages of a travel experience contributed to the discovery of areas that are to be addressed by DMOs to become an active and memorable part in the individual's process of experience accumulation.

The insights gained from this study and visually synthesised in the CETM model reach beyond the ability to identify areas of potential influence to enter tourists' long-term memories and contributes to transformation and personal growth. Bearing in mind that the travel behaviour of experienced tourists was identified as desirable for the sustainable development of a tourist destination, becoming an active part in the accumulation process becomes vitally important. Encouraging tourists to become experienced supports the cultivation of a demand-side that positively contributes to the sound development of a more sustainable future of tourism.

8.3 Defining the experienced tourist

Following the perceptions of an experienced tourist from the supply-side perspective, statistical evidence was gained revealing that several factors positively and negatively influence the experience level of tourists. In this study, being experienced was not regarded as antecedent or cause to predict decision-making, travel behaviour or motivation; instead, the process of experience gained centre stage and being experienced was investigated as an outcome. Throughout this research project, it was acknowledged that the identification as an experienced tourist remains a subjective and mental process and relies on the individual's self-perception. Against this background and despite existing criticism of self-rated scales, the self-assessed experience level of tourists was investigated. This approach enabled the approximation of the self-identification of being an experienced tourist and the following definition is proposed:

> An experienced tourist is shaped by a multidimensional accumulation set consisting of several general profiling factors and travel profiling factors that are retrospective and prospective in nature. The identification as an experienced tourist is self-perceived, moderated by the tourist's country of origin, remains a form of self-expressive consumption, and indicates future intentions.

8.4 Synthesising the originality of this study

Several gaps were identified in the literature and addressed throughout this thesis. This research project succeeded in expanding empirical knowledge associated with today's increasingly experienced tourist and filled existing research gaps related to the concept of experience in tourism. The findings contribute in several ways to a more comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist and result in an advancement of knowledge in four ways: conceptual, methodological, theoretical and managerial. The specific advancements of knowledge that underpin the originality of this study are synthesised in the following sections.

8.4.1 Conceptual contributions

An enhanced conceptual framework of experience in the context of tourism was proposed in section 2.4. Although the concept of experience gained the attention of several researchers in the past resulting in models and theories being proposed and widely applied, an extensive review of the literature revealed that there were conceptual gaps regarding the holistic understanding of the term experience in the context of tourism. The critical reflection of the literature contributes to a more holistic understanding of the complex concept of experience in the tourism context and conceptually adds to the existing body of knowledge.

> *Conceptual contribution 1: Evaluating the dual meanings of the term experience and acknowledging the interaction between the supply-side and demand-side of experience creation and consumption.*

The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) expands the existing body of knowledge, provides a more comprehensive understanding of the stages of experiencing and reveals linkages between the demand-side and supply-side of tourism. The objective meaning of experience in the form of tourism experience creation and subjective meaning of experience in the form of tourism experience consumption were thoroughly examined and the duality of the term *experience* evaluated. Although past research noted the different connotations of experience and acknowledged the interconnectedness and co-dependence of the objective and subjective meanings (Jantzen, 2013; S. Larsen, 2007), a comprehensive understanding of the dual meanings within the broader tourism context was limited. The conceptual framework depicts the duality of objective and subjective experiencing.

The major contribution of the conceptual framework lies in the classification of lived experience and accumulated experience in the different stages of the travel journey, the distinction between the non-usual and usual environment, and the link between the supply-side and demand-side in the creation and consumption of experience. It clearly depicts that the immediate lived experience is perceived during the trip and is closely related to the *experiencescape* enabled by the tourism industry. The interaction between the different stages of expectations prior to the trip, perceptions during the trip and memories after the trip were addressed in previous research (Kruger & Saayman, 2017;

Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Scholars also referred to elements of space and time emphasising non-usual environments as the physical spaces to engage in tourism experiences (Ek et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2007). Although the practical accumulation of experience happens while travelling, the actual processing and reminiscing of the experience is a post-trip memory work outside of the tourism industry's direct influence and in the individual's usual home environment.

These demarcations of experiencing in different temporal phases of the travel journey, in different physical spaces and incorporation of the demand-side and supply-side of tourism in one conceptual framework enhances the existing body of knowledge. The conceptual framework understands the stages of experiences as an uninterrupted progression for the tourist and provides conceptual links to the emergence of experienced tourists. While most studies discussed the interaction between the stages of experiences with the aim to understand the creation of positive memorable experiences, this research project focusses on the subjective meaning of experiencing, the drivers behind transformation and personal growth and thus identification of the dimensions of an experienced tourist. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study that investigates these dimensions of an experienced tourist.

8.4.2 Methodological contributions

The exploratory sequential mixed methods research design implemented in two case studies led to several methodological contributions.

> *Methodological contribution 1: Incorporating different voices and establishing a supply-demand side perspective through a mixed methods research design.*

This study adopted a macro-micro perspective and incorporated the supply-side of tourism represented by several DMOs as the heart of the tourism product and the demand-side of tourism represented by tourists at the heart of tourism consumption. This approach allowed the research project to gain a broader and more holistic understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist. The study not only combines the supply-side's perceptions and demand-side's realties to one comprehensive study, it also gives a voice to the often neglected DMOs encouraging a multiple voice approach. Despite the DMOs centrality in providing the spaces in which the tourism product is delivered and consumed and its important role in providing seamless experiences through a strong network approach, only few studies to date actively engaged DMOs themselves. This study gave DMOs the voice first and then challenged their perceptions through an online survey with tourists. This approach allowed the research to explore whether and to what degree the DMOs' perceptions and tourists' realities correspond.

The methodological contributions go beyond the derivation of comprehensive information to the integration of different voices. The exploratory sequential mixed methods research design encouraged the integration of different research lenses. Industry experts were given a voice through the implementation of semi-structured interviews whereas tourist voices were recorded via an online survey. Most studies that investigated travel behaviour and motivation in the past, applied single method and single voice approaches. Studies focussed on tourists as one specific stakeholder in a particular geographical setting (e.g., at the destination) and in a specific stage of travel (e.g., during a trip). Models that aimed at predicting travel behaviour or motivation based on prior experiences either applied single methods or followed a mixed methods research approach and integrated different research techniques yet with the same stakeholder group. This research project expanded methodological approaches by incorporating different stakeholders' voices and different research techniques.

Although mixed methods research has grown in importance over the past decades, critical opinions remain, and purist perspectives are still dominant. This study confirms that the integration of different methods and acceptance of different research lenses is applicable, feasible, effective and important in studies that investigate complex phenomena. The implementation of an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design as a more holistic approach to explore current phenomena in tourism and the use of inductive thinking underpinned by deductive logics led to a comprehensive picture of an experienced tourist which was further accentuated by the previously described advancement of a macro-micro approach.

Methodological contribution 2: Expanding the research to two case studies with different linguistic backgrounds.

This study was implemented in two case studies, Germany and New Zealand. Responding to the call for more cross-national tourism research (Jamal & Lee, 2003; Morgan et al., 2010), this study contributes to expanding strategies of inquiry in tourism academia. Although tourism is increasingly international and a global phenomenon, most studies concentrate on a single country approach or explore different case studies within one destination.

Comparative qualitative research is limited due to linguistic challenges and limitations that arise when studies are conducted in two languages. A dominance of Western perspectives and English text was recognised in the social sciences and a decolonisation of research methodologies has been requested (Hamel, 2007; L. T. Smith, 2012). What comes as a surprise is that linguistic non-equivalence was noted as one of the primary reasons against cross-national research, but at the same time a plethora of research is conducted in the English-speaking world or translated into English by non-native English speakers. This study demonstrates that conducting research in more than one country advances research methodologies. Approaching a topic from two different linguistic backgrounds requires the researcher to immerse him/herself deeper in the data and spend more time coding, translating, reporting, reflecting and making sense of the information. It encourages the researcher to unfold similarities and differences between the case studies, identify whether topics only appear in one context, explore whether key words are used identically and suggest aspects that are linked. This in-depth approach enhances the data analysis and contributes theoretically and methodologically.

Conducting research in an English-speaking and a German-speaking country proved to be of methodological interest due to the distinct features of the German language. Although German and English are both Latin based, belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family and share several features, differences remain as the German language is often more complex and precise. German philosophers proved to be important to the development of both analytic and continental traditions in philosophy and are some of the most influential Western philosophers of all time. Several frequently used philosophical terms and concepts were coined by Germans and the German terms were adopted into the English language as translations proved unsatisfactory (e.g., Heidegger’s *Dasein*, Hegel’s *Zeitgeist*). Subsequently, early scholars utilised German expressions in English texts to expand knowledge and provide more depth to the meaning of concepts such as the difference between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. The implementation of this study in Germany and New Zealand methodologically contributes to the existing body of knowledge and research strategies as it is more all-encompassing and linguistically rich.

Methodological contribution 3: Collecting data in the individual's home environment and detached from one particular trip/destination/experiences.

The process of experience accumulation is not a snapshot, but occurs over time, is deeply rooted in the individual's memory and is not space-bound. This research project was concerned with going beyond the on-site immediate experience lived through at a destination and during a trip. Instead of surveying tourists while being in transit or at a destination, individuals with any past travel experiences were accessed in their usual home environments. As indicated in the discussion of the conceptual contributions, the stages of pre-trip and post-trip experiences and thus the often addressed relationship between prior experiences and travel behaviour and motivation, are lived through in the usual environment. Most studies that investigated these relationships, however, were conducted while tourists were at the destination or in transit and thus in their non-usual environment. Several widely adopted theories and models are based on findings derived from a sample within a destination, yet interpreted and applied in a broader context and refer to the general travelling population. This created a methodological incongruity that was addressed in this study.

The sampling strategy in this study supported the overall research aim insofar as it reduced the risk that survey respondents related general questions to a particular destination or trip (e.g., being experienced in regard to a particular destination or experienced in general). This data collection strategy enabled the investigation of broader and more general themes related to travel behaviour and encouraged the generalisability of findings to the overall population instead of current guests within a destination. Reaching tourists in their usual living environment where pre-trip and post-trip experiences are lived through is methodologically more challenging, yet was realised through the utilisation of an established web access panel. Web access panels are deemed more cost and time efficient as they draw on ready-to-survey respondent and have the ability to access larger and more diverse samples in a shorter time.

Methodological contribution 4: Allowing for generalisability of the quantitative findings through a quota sampling strategy.

The quota sampling strategy enhanced the statistical generalisation of findings within each case study. With a margin of error of $\pm$5% it can be assumed that the results of this study are as true as possible of the entire target population and thus projections of representativeness can be made. This was further confirmed by the sociodemographic information provided by respondents that presented high degrees of similarity with existing studies from official statistics.

Using web access panels and adopting a quota sampling strategy as the non-probability sampling solution to create a stratified sample is not new but is undervalued in academic tourism research. Against the background of the increasing hybridity of tourism demand and general complexity of the tourism phenomena, tourism research needs to go beyond single trip and immediate experiences. This study has extended the use of web access panels in academic tourism research to enable a more comprehensive and generalisable understanding of the travelling population within a market and independent of a particular trip experience.

8.4.3 Theoretical contributions

Bearing in mind the sustained growth of international tourism, the positive outlook for future growth and subsequently the growing number of mature tourists, empirical knowledge is needed to understand the dimensions of an experienced tourist more holistically. This study was explorative in nature and aimed at expanding the existing body of knowledge related to the phenomena of being an experienced tourist. The insights gained advance theoretical knowledge that can be significant for future students, researchers and other stakeholders in academia. The research project's originality is underpinned by five distinctive theoretical contributions that add value to the study of travel behaviour and motivation. The case-based approach and adoption of the research design in two countries with linguistic differences present theoretical implications that go beyond the tourism context.

> *Theoretical contribution 1: Understanding prior experience as an outcome of a multidimensional accumulation process.*

The approach to investigate the factors that contribute to the process of experience accumulation moves beyond the dominant understanding of being experienced as an antecedent to predict decision-making, behaviour and motivation. This study argues that levels of experience can only be used to explain and predict a particular outcome when the input variables are clearly understood, and the process of experience accumulation is acknowledged. From this perspective, experience is not to be reduced to a cause or antecedent of behaviour or motivation, instead being experienced is an outcome that relies on several independent factors. The proposed multidimensionality of an experienced tourist gives justice to today's tourist's improved self-awareness, self-determination, diversity and hybridity which requires a broader approach and enhancement of prior models. This research project appears to be the first of its kind that provides a comprehensive assessment of the underlying construct of being experienced.

The knowledge generated from this study confirms that several independent determinants predict the self-assessed experience level of tourists and the findings contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of being classified as an experienced tourist or having a high level of prior experience. A more subjective understanding of the multidimensional accumulation process is achieved through the self-assessed measurement of the respondents' experience levels.

> *Theoretical contribution 2: Identifying overall dimensions of an experienced tourist while acknowledging country-specific subtleties.*

By examining the underlying mechanisms and accumulation processes of prior experiences, this study enables future researchers to make greater sense of the complexity of experiencing and provides richer theoretical nuances. Among the discovered dimensions of an experienced tourist, only two predictors proved to be significant in the two case studies and both factors were related to the individuals' general past. This particular outcome echoes past models and theories that frequently referred to similar countable and past travel-related indicators. However, the findings of this research project departed from previous models based on a few countable factors and refined the understanding of being experienced. Identifying several factors that independently contribute to higher experience levels enhances the existing body of knowledge as prior experiences are no longer understood as unidimensional but instead as multidimensional. A more comprehensive understanding of being experienced as an outcome of a multidimensional accumulation process is generated.

The research also expands the existing theories by demonstrating that accumulation sets can vary in different geographical settings. The case-based approach broadened the perspective, provided the opportunity to compare the findings of the two case studies and enhanced the transferability and generalisability of the research findings. While the overall topics and general dimensions remained the same and a general conceptualisation was derived, different factors were found to be significant predictors of German and New Zealand experienced tourists. Models such as the TCP were tested in different geographical settings to examine whether predictions on travel behaviour and motivation are generalisable and transferable. However, the variables that were used to measure prior experience remained mostly untouched. Findings from this study prove that a general conceptualisation of an experienced tourist exists. At the same time, this research project questions the limited view of the same predictors in different geographical settings and argues that the country of origin assumes a moderating role in understanding the drivers behind experience accumulation. Thus, previous unified measurement models that were globally accepted and applied are challenged. Instead a broader and dynamically changing model is suggested.

> *Theoretical contribution 3: Conceptualising an experienced tourist and synthesising the ideas in a generally applicable model.*

Findings demonstrated similarities regarding the general theorising of the dimensions of an experienced tourist and revealed three overall topics and seven general dimensions of an experienced tourist. The synthesised CETM model proved to be applicable in both case studies. The model was designed broad enough to capture the complexity and multidimensionality of an experienced tourist. Thereby, it encourages the applicability in both case studies and allows the transferability to other geographical settings.

As previously described, identifying as an experienced tourist remains a form of self-expressive consumption and relies on the individual's ability to reflect on experiences lived through and its transformative impact. Transformations cannot be created or provided by the tourism industry, but tourism can act as a co-creator and provide guidance for personal transformation and change. While the proposed conceptual framework indicates the continuous progression of a tourist, the developed CETM model enhances the understanding of transformation about becoming an experienced tourist. The CETM model shows that particular predictors positively or negatively contribute to higher levels of experience and thus entail transformative qualities. While focusing on the emergence of experienced tourists, the CETM model also indicates that the non-compliance with predictors does not contribute to higher experience levels and might limit personal transformation. Although personal growth is sought by many tourists, the comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of an experienced tourist and the identification of drivers behind experience accumulation allow the identification of tourists that do not travel mainly for eudaemonic reasons but prefer hedonic experiences over transformation of the self.

Theoretical contribution 4: Understanding the role of the tourism industry within the subjective processes of experience accumulation.

The general model also enhances the understanding of tourism industry players within the process of experience accumulation. With the growing trend of co-creation and emerging hybrid prosumers, it has become more important than ever to understand the underlying mechanisms of decision-making. Although the creation of positive memorable experiences is central in the delivery of tourism experiences, memorability remains highly subjective and requires the individual's involvement to become an active part of the memory process. Obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to this memorability and subjective processes adds to the extensive body of knowledge existing in the field and enhances previous research that neglected the underlying mechanisms of experience accumulation. The relationship between objective experience creation and subjective experience consumption was addressed in past research and a mutual dependency was proposed. The findings reported in this study shed new light on this interconnectedness. It is the first comprehensive and holistic study that investigates the process of experience accumulation and furthers understanding through the development of a generally applicable model.

The CETM model is proposed as a continuum that comprises, at the left end, the static/general factors that are relatively retrospective or contemporary and less amendable to influence. At the right end of the continuum, factors are directly associated with the travel journey. As factors are dynamic, travel-related and prospective, there is a higher likelihood for DMOs to become an active part in the subjective accumulation process. The proposed model may help to improve predictions on travel behaviour and motivation and subsequently tourism experience design, product planning and promotion. This also leads to the managerial implications introduced below.

Theoretical contribution 5: Furthering the discussion around the semantic understanding of the term experience.

In addition to the theoretical contributions to tourism research, this study furthers the discussion around the semantic understanding of the term experience in the English language. This study has raised important questions about the nature of the term *experience* and the overall difficulties in using the term appropriately in academia as well as everyday language. Several scholars addressed this issue and attempted to eliminate ambiguities associated with the term by referring to the translated terms *Erlebnis* (partaking experience) and *Erfahrung* (reminiscing experience) in the German language (Jantzen, 2013; S. Larsen, 2007).

This study was conducted in New Zealand and Germany. It is not only the first study that explored the self-assessed experience level in general, the contribution is enhanced by the implication of the research in the two case studies with linguistic diversity. Bearing in mind the significance of the German translations in the discussion of the term *experience*, the insights gained further contribute to theoretical knowledge. This study should encourage future students, researchers and practitioners to consider the term experience more sophisticatedly. Although this study did not aim to investigate possible linguistic deviations, the differences in the regression equations to identify the predictors that contribute to higher experience levels lead to the suggestion that language subtleties are potential moderators. This leads to future research opportunities that are addressed in section 8.6.

8.4.4 Managerial implications for the tourism industry

The major aim of this thesis was to provide original conceptual, theoretical and methodological contributions to tourism academia. Insights gained from this study may also be of assistance to tourism providers in general and DMOs in particular. Three managerial contributions are introduced in the following section. These are aimed to be implementable in strategic destination management and deliver support for DMOs and other tourism providers for strategic decision-making regarding market segmentation and product development.

> *Managerial contribution 1: Advancing the perception-reality dilemma through evidence-based research.*

The growing importance of co-creation between the host and the guest in successfully managing a tourist destination requires a more holistic understanding of guests. It also requires reflections from the supply-side to balance perceptions with realities. Industry representatives shared the ideas of a distinctive accumulation set to determine an experienced tourist but there was strong consensus that this outsider perspective results in perceptions only. The macro-micro perspective of this study provides managerial implications as the perception-reality dilemma between the supply-side and demand-side of tourism is reduced. Although market research in tourism has grown significantly in recent years, the managerial nature of research did not encourage the industry's own voice in past research. Instead, most market research studies were implemented with the major aim to find solutions to improve profitability and gain market share.

The supply-side's perceptions and the demand-side's realities of an experienced tourist were contrasted, and similarities and differences were identified. The insights gained from this study may be of assistance for destination marketers to assess their marketing strategies and potentially encourage realignments to meet the demand more efficiently.

> *Managerial contribution 2: Enhancing market segmentation strategies to address the experienced tourist as a promising target group.*

The growing volume of international tourism led to the assumption of increasingly mature and experienced tourists in the future. This requires attention in strategic destination management. The findings of this study will be of interest to destination marketers as they provide evidence-based insights related to travel behaviour of German and New Zealand experienced tourists. In particular German tourists are of great interest for destination marketers around the world as they remain to be one of the largest market segments (UNWTO, 2018). The empirical findings from this study and discussion of the results contribute to this desired in-depth understanding. The identification of factors that contribute to higher experience levels and are memorable assists in furthering market segmentation strategies.

In the semi-structured interviews destination marketers emphasised the difficulty of attracting the increasingly hybrid tourist who aims to become an active part in the process of experiencing. At the same time, creating a loyal customer base was expressed as a major aim of many DMOs. Having loyal customers translates into having tourists that are experienced regarding the particular destination. These loyal tourists are not necessarily experienced tourists by definition as proposed in this study. The hybridity of today's demand evokes changed travel preferences and tourists often participate in different trips and travel forms to satisfy their diverse needs. This is confirmed by the results of the multiple regression analyses of this study and the suggestion of a multidimensional accumulation set of today's experienced tourists. However, this study proposes that being experienced does not exclude being a loyal customer. It is the frequency of trips during a year and the hybrid travel behaviour that encourage tourists to be both loyal to one destination and new to another destination to satisfy the explorer nature.

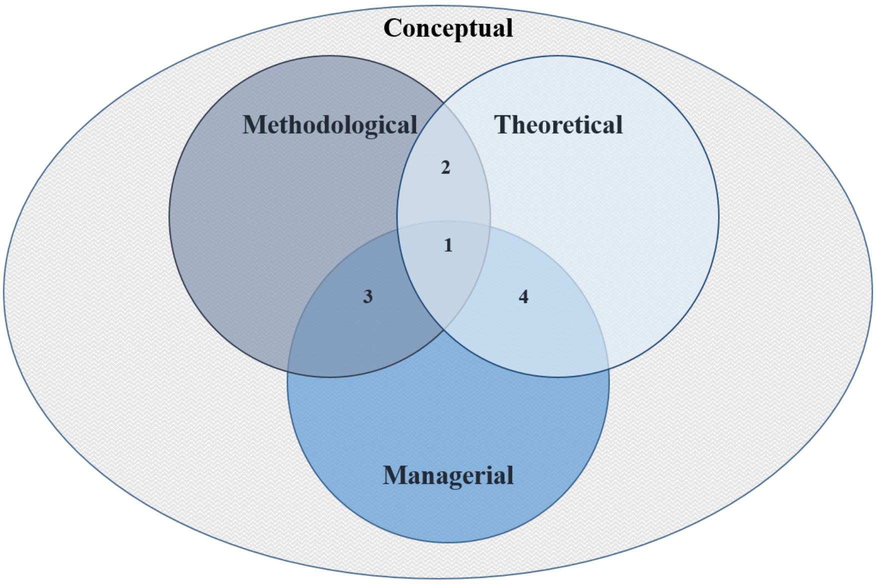
The proposed CETM model provides different opportunities for destination marketers to enhance their marketing strategies and goes beyond market segmentations that are based on static factors only. New approaches to overcome the one-dimensionality in market segmentation strategies were proposed recently and more comprehensive approaches suggested (Dolnicar, 2008; Kotler et al., 2017). This study adds value to existing market segmentation strategies and presents the experienced tourist as a promising target group to support the sustainable development of a destination. The discussion provided an overview of travel behaviour that is more likely to be found among the experienced tourists, such as off the beaten path exploring, immersing and learning. As reflected in the CETM model, the experienced tourist travels more responsibly and should be of interest for any DMO.

Managerial contribution 3: Advocating the role of DMOs and supporting legitimacy of their work.

The pressure to demonstrate legitimacy of a DMO’s work has drastically increased in the past years. The digitisation of information and booking processes, the growing degree of professionalism of tourism operators of any size and at the same time self-determination and independence of today’s tourist have contributed to this increased pressure (Eisenstein, 2014). As a consequence, lobbying became critically important to legitimise work towards stakeholders and politics (Seeler & Böhling, 2016). Previous research argued that the utilisation of external pull factors induced by the tourism industry itself were found to be more likely used by tourists with prior knowledge (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). In support of past research and official tourism statistics, findings from this study evidence the growing number of experienced tourists. This study suggests that the experienced tourists’ travel behaviour is in favour of DMOs. The New Zealand CETM model demonstrates the importance of the industry within the individual’s process of experience accumulation as the variable *industry-induced sources as inspiration for holiday travelling* was found to positively impact on the self-assessed experience level. Understanding the dimensions of an experienced tourist contributes to the management of destinations regarding the creation of memorable and meaningful experiences, further advocates the role of the DMO and adds reasons to legitimatise their work.

8.4.5 The originality of this study

Bearing in mind the plethora of existing studies and increasing number of academic contributions, the originality of a research project is no longer sufficiently described as either conceptual, theoretical/empirical, methodological or managerial. Instead, the originality of a research project is dependent on the correlated contribution derived from these four aspects. The conceptual, methodological, theoretical and managerial contributions of this study were presented in the previous sections. While the conceptual contribution is overarching, there are several direct links between the methodological, theoretical and managerial contributions that add to the originality of this research project. The interplay between the contributions is summarised in Figure 8.1.



Overall	Methodological	Theoretical	Managerial
Originality 1a	Incorporating different voices and establishing a supply-demand side perspective through a mixed methods research design.	Understanding the role of the tourism industry within the subjective processes of experience accumulation.	Advocating the role of DMOs and supports legitimacy of their work.
Originality 1b	Collecting data in the individual's home environment and detached from one particular trip/ destination/experiences.	Conceptualising an experienced tourist and synthesising the ideas in a generally applicable model.	Enhancing market segmentation strategies to address the experienced tourist as promising target group.
Originality 1c	Allowing for generalisability of the quantitative findings through a quota sampling strategy.	Conceptualising an experienced tourist and synthesising the ideas in a generally applicable model.	Enhancing market segmentation strategies to address the experienced tourist as promising target group.
Originality 2a	Expanding the research to two case studies with different linguistic backgrounds.	Identifying overall dimensions of an experienced tourist while acknowledging country-specific subtleties.	--
Originality 2b	Expanding the research to two case studies with different linguistic backgrounds.	Furthering the discussion around the semantic understanding of the term experience.	
Originality 3	Incorporating different voices and establishing a supply-demand side perspective through a mixed-methods research design.	--	Advancing the perception-reality dilemma through evidence-based research.
Originality 4	--	Understanding prior experience as an outcome of a multidimensional accumulation process.	Enhancing market segmentation strategies to address the experienced tourist as promising target group.

Figure 8.1: Originality of the study of an experienced tourist

Despite the contributions identified in the previous sections, every study has limitations that need to be addressed.

8.5 Limitations of this study

Methodological limitations were identified previously and strategies to overcome issues related to aspects such as linguistic equivalence or coverage bias were comprehensively introduced (section 4.5). Several general and overarching limitations remain which are associated with the mixed methods research design, selection of case studies, linguistic non-equivalence, and research participants.

The implementation of a mixed methods research design proved to be beneficial to provide answers to the complex questions of this research project. By giving a voice to destination marketers and tourists in the different research phases, greater stakeholder involvement was achieved and the research aims were addressed from different viewpoints. This led to a more comprehensive approach and rich understanding of the experienced tourist. However, the challenges associated with the implementation of different data collection methods within one research project need to be acknowledged. The feasibility of mixed methods research has been criticised and it was argued that the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative methods in one research study is incommensurable. It was further noted that enhanced expertise is required from social researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Compared with a single method study, the implementation of a mixed methods research design requires more time for the data collection and analysis and it was further argued that many research studies neglect to integrate both research methods sufficiently (Creswell et al., 2008).

While the criticisms from a purist's standpoint remain and questions around compatibility and commensurability are unresolved, this study overcame the major challenges of mixed methods research. Rich datasets were provided through a well-organised and managed research strategy and the implementation of an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design. The comprehensive information gathered through purposefully integrating qualitative and quantitative methods goes beyond the narrow information a single method study would have allowed. The researcher's critical realist perspective towards the nature of reality and modified dualist justification of knowledge resulted in enhanced skills and expertise in research methods.

Conducting the research in Germany and New Zealand advances prior methodological approaches. At the same time, one major limitation of this study is that it is restricted to these two countries and falls short in going beyond westernised perspectives. In the semi-structured interviews destination marketers reflected on tourists in general, talked about domestic and outbound travel behaviour of the home market and discussed international tourists. Thereby, several experts in the first phase of this study compared the new emerging Chinese tourists with tourists from more developed travel source markets such as Germany. The destination marketers expanded their views and clearly demonstrated that the differences between experienced and less experienced tourists are not only to be found within a source market, but also across international markets.

Although the online survey conducted in this study did not incorporate tourists' perspectives from emerging and non-Western markets, the implementation of the study in two linguistically different countries goes beyond the dominance of single country studies. This academic study is one of the first research projects to incorporate Germany as a representative of the Northern Hemisphere and a key player in Europe as well as New Zealand as a representative of the Southern Hemisphere and a key player in the South Pacific. Despite being considered Western countries, the differences related to the geographical location and spoken language resulted in a unique study approach that outweighed the limitation of missing non-Western perspectives.

The implementation of the study in Germany and New Zealand resulted in not only thematically rich information, but also linguistically rich information that encouraged a broader understanding of the experienced tourist. The challenges related to cross-national studies in different linguistic areas were addressed throughout the thesis and strategies to minimise semantic ambiguities and achieve linguistic equivalence were introduced. However, any study that is conducted in more than one country and in different languages faces unavoidable limitations that are the outcome of the differences in semantics and word use. In this study, this limitation is not considered a weakness but instead a major theoretical contribution. It challenges the often simplified translation of key terms and buzz words such as experience and encourages future researchers to critically question and reflect on the language used. This theoretical contribution arose from the methodological advancement as well as the researcher's lens to critically investigate contemporary phenomena. The researcher's bilingualism brought full awareness to the semantic ambiguities between the two languages which did not limit but advanced the outcomes of this study.

Another limitation of this study refers to the definition of the interview partners in the first research phase. DMOs are considered as conductors in the orchestra of tourism suppliers within a destination, but they are only one player and do not represent the supply-side of tourism to its full extent. While they are the coordinating body and are responsible for lobbying the representation of tourism interests, DMOs often do not have direct contact with tourists and are proposed to have little direct influence on the tourists' decision-making processes. However, the limitations are not necessarily seen as weakness but rather a foundation and invitation for future research.

8.6 Opportunities for future research

To further enhance the existing body of knowledge and build on the conceptual, theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions while eliminating the limitations of this study, this research could be expanded to non-Western markets. It is suggested that an identical research design is implemented in a less developed yet dynamically growing market such as China, South Africa or Argentina. Adding an Asian, African or Latin American perspective and administer the survey in neither English nor in German will not only add to the further development and review of the model, it will also test the applicability in different geographical settings and may provide further insights from different linguistic backgrounds.

This research project raised the question of whether the linguistic ambiguities related to the term *experience* in the English language and the potential differences in interpreting the meaning of being experienced (*erfahren sein*) by respondents had an impact on the regression results. To test whether the language and meanings of a term have a moderating effect on the research outcome, future research is needed that goes beyond one discipline. This quest for more interdisciplinary research is not limited to the term *experience* but needs to be extended to other frequently used terms where simple semantic translations are applied that are often limited in different language backgrounds. Considering that tourism promotion and on-site information are dominated by English text yet often address non-English speakers, substantially more interdisciplinary work is needed to address potential linguistic ambiguities. This is further underpinned by the growth of international tourism from emerging markets where the standard of education and the language abilities might be considerably lower. While past research concentrated on the impacts caused by misunderstandings (e.g., when safety instructions are not understood correctly), research is limited in understanding the reasons behind misunderstandings. Future research is required that goes beyond actual translations and explores the meanings and interpretations of a term in different language settings. It is also worth expanding the target population to understand the supply-side perspective and include other tourism providers such as activity operators, transport agencies, and hospitality businesses. Lastly, the research design could be expanded and include in-depth qualitative interviews (e.g. focus groups) with tourists to enhance the subjective understanding of an experienced tourist.

8.7 Closing thoughts and reflections

One day several years ago, I sat with my family at the dinner table reminiscing about past holidays and sharing memorable experiences. We all like to travel. We all had travelled extensively in the past. We all had plans to travel. However, our travel biographies were quite different, and my family was often left surprised when I told them about my future travel plans such as hiking in Nepal or horseback riding in Mongolia, which have little in common with their ideas of a fulfilling holiday. I asked my family members at the table whether they considered themselves as an *experienced tourist* (*erfahrener Tourist*). All of them answered in chorus, "*Of course I am*!" This conversation was the beginning of this research journey. A journey that has clearly become a life changing and transformative experience for me and my family.

I started questioning the meaning of *being experienced*, 'How can we all at this table identify as an experienced tourist bearing in mind that our travel biographies, travel motivation, behaviour, expenditures and so on are so different?' I quickly came to realise that identifying as an experienced tourist is about self-perception and a highly subjective process. Until that moment, the idea of doing a PhD slept inside me. I took this question, which came up in a very normal everyday conversation, and out of my own curiosity as well as self-interest in the topic, started my desk research. I quickly concluded that *experience* is one of the hot topics in tourism research and had been covered widely. My hope that I found a research gap that is worth exploring in the frame of a PhD slowly disappeared. However, a closer examination of the existing body of knowledge made me aware of semantic ambiguities related to the term *experience* and I challenged the notion linguistically. While I was mainly interested in the accumulation of experience over a longer period and expressed as *Erfahrung* in German, academic research mostly concentrated on an *Erlebnis*, which refers to the immediate experience.

This discovery early on in my PhD journey became the focal idea and rationale of my research. At the same time, it became one of the major challenges throughout the journey. Although I recognised that doing a PhD in tourism attracts general interest in others inside and outside academic circles as most people can relate to it and conversation flourished quickly, most English-speaking people immediately started to talk about their last holiday experiences and referred to the snapshot meaning of experience (*Erlebnis*) – not the accumulated experience (*Erfahrung*) I was looking for in my thesis. My continuous efforts to explain that experiencing goes beyond this moment in time lived experience made me not only realise that researching this topic is of significance, it made me also realise that we often accept terms and frequently use them without questioning their actual meanings. I would have probably not come to the same awareness without knowing the German terms and having them in my everyday vocabulary as a native speaker.

There were several occasions throughout the phases of data collection and analysis when I seemed to hit a brick wall, not because of the complexity of the study as such, but because of the idiosyncratic features of language. Several examples in the past have proven that the German language uses complex and rich words that cannot be translated without losing the actual meaning of the term. Issues of linguistic equivalence have been widely discussed in academic literature and I agree that that these are likely to occur when research is conducted in more than one language. However, there is more to it. It also made me question whether the dominance of the English language in science and the huge amount of translated studies meet the requirements of academic integrity.

This brought me back to the question of truth, reminded me of my critical realist view of the world and my inability to fully uncover the truth as it is subject to change. It also made me realise that a PhD is more than working towards a degree. It is about understanding yourself, appreciating your own roots and beliefs, language and being. I purposefully decided to complete my degree in an English-speaking country and was aware of the linguistic difficulties it might bring, such as moments of frustration that I just cannot express what I aim to express, moments of feeling lost in a jungle of words that are not imprinted in my everyday dictionary. However, I learnt something that I was not pursuing: I learnt to value my mother tongue. Not because it is easier for anybody to communicate in his or her native language, but because of the richness of the German language that I had never appreciated before. The PhD is an *Erlebnis* that starts as a snapshot in life, but endures over a lifetime, shapes individuals and becomes an *Erfahrung*.

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GLOSSARY OF GERMAN TERMS USED

Erfahren sein:	To be experienced (accumulated over time)
Erfahrener Tourist:	Experienced tourist
Erfahrung:	Experience as accumulated knowledge (experience recollected over time, reminiscing experience)
Erfahrungshorizont:	Horizon of experience/range of experience (accumulated over time)
Erlebnis:	Experience as an undertaking/adventure (immediate experience through participation, partaking experience)
Reiseerfahrung:	Experience accumulated through travelling
Studienreise:	Organised study tour, travel to a foreign destination with the aim to enhance knowledge (in a particular area)
Verbraucheremanzipation:	Emancipation of consumers, desire for co-creation, participation and engagement in the production and delivery of consumer goods and services

APPENDIX

Appendix A: The experienced tourist: A mind map of the key results

Note. Based on findings from multiple linear regression analyses in both case studies. Visualisation with the assistance of Dipl.-Des. Kirsten Baumert (www.baumert-design.de) and Meike Seeler (www.seeler-werbung.de).

Appendix B: Selection criteria for the choice of case studies in this research project

Category	Criteria	Germany	New Zealand
Guest nights[a]	Guest nights (total)	447 million	38.5 million
	Growth compared with previous year (%)	+ 2.5%	+ 6.2%
	Domestic guest nights (%)	81.9%	57.3%
	International guest nights (%)	18.1%	42.7%
Tourism contribution[b]	Total contribution to national GDP	USD 376.7 billion (3rd)	USD 31.8 billion (32nd)
	Relative contribution to GDP (%)	10.8% (78th)	17.5% (43rd)
	Total contribution to employment	6,086,000 (8th)	583.500 (58th)
	Relative contribution to employment	14.0% (55th)	23.6% (28th)
Tourist departures	International tourist departures (total)[c]	83.7 million (3rd)	2.4 million(51st)
	Growth compared with previous year (%)[c]	0.9%	5.6%
	International tourism expenditures[d]	USD 88.8 billion (3rd)	USD 3.7 billion (46th)
Population	Population size[e]	82.5 million (16th)	4.8 million (120th)
	Net migration rate (per 1,000 population)[f]	1.5	2.2
Macro-environment	GDP[g]	USD 3,479.232 billion	USD 181.713 billion
	GDP per capita[g]	USD 42,176.854	USD 38,277.934
	Gini coefficient[h]	28.9 (low)	34.9 (medium)
	Human development index[i]	0.926 (very high)	0.915 (very high)
Cultural dimensions[j]	Power distance	35	22
	Individualism	67	79
	Masculinity	66	58
	Uncertainty avoidance	65	49
	Long-term orientation	83	33
	Indulgence	75	75

Category	Criteria	Germany	New Zealand
Language	Official language	German	English, Māori

Note: Data has been updated to the most current information when available.
[a]Data for the year ending 2016; Statistisches Bundesamt (2017a), Stats NZ (2018a)
[b]Data for the year ending 2016; in brackets rank world; (WTTC, 2017b; 2017c)
[c]Data for the year ending 2015;in brackets rank world; The World Bank Group (2017a)
[d]Data for the year ending 2015; in brackets rank world; The World Bank Group (2017b)
[e]Population estimates 2017 based on respective census data; Statistisches Bundesamt (2018); Stats NZ (2018b)
[f]Estimates for 2017; (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017)
[g]Data for the year ending 2016; International Monetary Fund (2017a, 2017b)
[h]Data for the year ending 2014; The Gini-coefficient measures the income inequality in a population, an indicator of zero would imply that everyone had the same income. A low Gini-coefficient stands for less inequality within the population, OECD (2018)
[i]Data for the year ending 2015; The Human Development Index is defined as "A composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living." (United Nations Development Programme, 2016)
[j] Hofstede (n.d.)

Appendix C: Interview guide for the semi-structured interviews

Section	Set of questions	Probe questions
Background organisation & interview partner	Please tell me a little but about your role and responsibility within the organisation and the organisation itself!	What is the organisation's role within the broader New Zealand/Germany tourism context? Can you tell me a little bit about cooperations within or across the industry?
Background destination	In your own words, how would you describe Destination XY?	What distinguishes Destination XY from other destinations? What are your branding position and promises?
Today's tourist (general and at destination)	How do you describe the today's tourist in Destination XY?	Who is the typical guest in Destination XY? How does the visitor mix look like? Are you attracting a specific target group? How does the guest in Destination XY differ from guests in other destinations?
	Which changes have you seen in the tourist's behaviour over the past (five) years?	Are these changes specific to Destination XY? In which way is the visitor mix reflected in these changes? What is the industry's/organisation's response to these changes?
Experienced tourists	In your own words, how would you define an *experienced tourist*?	What distinguishes an experienced tourist from a less experienced tourist?
	Which factors influence the individual's accumulation of experiences?	What is the industry's role in this accumulation process?
	How does an increased level of past experience reflect on travel behaviour and destination choice?	What does an increased level of past experience mean for the economically sustainable development of a destination?
Future tourists	How will today's (experienced) tourist differ from tomorrow's (experienced tourist?	What changes in the tourists' behaviour are you anticipating in the future? What changes in the visitor mix are you anticipating in the future?
Challenges	What are the major challenges for the tourism industry in New Zealand/Germany? What are the major challenges for Destination XY and organisation XX?	

Appendix D: Sample frame for the selection of DMOs

Tourist destination Germany	DMO
Deutschland	Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V.
Allgäu	Allgäu GmbH Gesellschaft für Standort und Tourismus
Alpenregion Tegernsee-Schliersee	Alpenregion Tegernsee Schliersee Kommunalunternehmen
Baden-Württemberg	Tourismus-Marketing Baden-Württemberg GmbH
Bayerischer Wald	Tourismusverband Ostbayern e.V.
Bayerisch-Schwaben	Tourismusverband Allgäu/Bayerisch-Schwaben e.V.
Bayern	Bayern Tourismus Marketing GmbH
Bayrisches Golf-und Thermenland	Tourismusverband Ostbayern e.V.
Berchtesgadener Land	Berchtesgadener Land Tourismus GmbH
Berlin	Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH
Bodensee	Internationale Bodensee Tourismus GmbH
Bonn und Rhein-Sieg-Kreis	Stadt Bonn
Brandenburg	TMB Tourismus-Marketing Brandenburg GmbH
Bremen	Bremer Touristik Zentrale
Chiemgau	Chiemgau Tourismus e.V.
Chiemsee-Alpenland	Chiemsee-Alpenland Tourismus GmbH & Co. KG
Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf Tourismus GmbH
Eifel	Eifel Tourismus GmbH
Erzgebirge	Tourismusverband Erzgebirge e.V.
Frankfurt am Main	Tourismus+Congress GmbH Frankfurt am Main
Fränkisches Weinland	Fränkisches Weinland Tourismus GmbH
Grafschaft Bentheim-Emsland-Osnabrücker Land	Grafschaft Bentheim Tourismus e.V.
Hamburg	Hamburg Tourismus GmbH
Hannover	Stadt Hannover
Harz	Harzer Tourismusverband e.V.
Hessen	HA Hessen Agentur GmbH
Köln	KölnTourismus GmbH
Landeshauptstadt München	Landeshauptstadt München, Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft, Tourismus Leitung
Lüneburger Heide	Lüneburger Heide GmbH
Main und Taunus (exkl. Frankfurt)	Taunus Touristik Service e.V.
Mecklenburgische Schweiz und Seenplatte	Tourismusverband Mecklenburgische Seenplatte e. V.
Mecklenburgische Seenplatte	Tourismusverband Mecklenburgische Seenplatte e.V.
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.
Mosel-Saar	Saar-Obermosel-Touristik e.V.
Münsterland	Münsterland Tourismus e.V.
Niederrhein	Niederrhein Tourismus GmbH
Niedersachsen	TourismusMarketing Niedersachsen GmbH
Nordrhein-Westfalen	Tourismus NRW e.V.
Nordsee Schleswig-Holstein	Nordsee-Tourismus-Service GmbH
Nordseeküste Niedersachsen	Die Nordsee GmbH
Nürnberg	Verkehrsverein Nürnberg e.V.
Odenwald-Bergstraße-Neckartal	Odenwald Tourismus GmbH
Ostfriesische Inseln	Ostfriesland Tourismus GmbH
Ostsee Schleswig-Holstein	Ostsee-Holstein-Tourismus e.V.
Pfalz	Pfalzwein e.V.
Rheingau-Taunus	Rheingau Taunus Kultur und Tourismus GmbH
Rheinland-Pfalz	Rheinland-Pfalz Tourismus GmbH
Rheintal	Romantischer Rhein Tourismus GmbH
Rügen/Hiddensee	Tourismuszentrale Rügen GmbH
Ruhrgebiet	Ruhr Tourismus GmbH
Saarland	Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH
Sachsen	Tourismus Marketing Gesellschaft Sachsen mbH
Sachsen-Anhalt	IMG – Investitions- und Marketinggesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH

Tourist destination Germany	DMO
Sächsisches Burgen- und Heideland	Tourismusverband Sächsisches Burgen- und Heideland e.V.
Sauerland	Sauerland Tourismus e.V.
Schleswig-Holstein	Tourismus-Agentur Schleswig-Holstein GmbH
Schwäbische Alb	Schwäbische Alb Tourismusverband e.V.
Schwarzwald	Schwarzwald Tourismus GmbH
Seenland Oder-Spree	Tourismusverband Seenland Oder-Spree e.V.
Stadt Dresden	Dresden Information GmbH
Stadt Leipzig	Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH
Städte Eisenach, Erfurt, Jena, Weimar	Erfurt Tourismus und Marketing GmbH
Stuttgart	Stuttgat-Marketing GmbH
Teutoburger Wald	OstWestfalenLippe GmbH-Fachbereich Teutoburger Wald Tourismus
Thüringen	Thüringer Tourismus GmbH
Thüringer Wald	Tourismusverband Thüringer Wald - Gothaer Land e. V.
Vorpommern	Tourismusverband Vorpommern e. V.
Waldecker Land	Touristik Service Waldeck-Ederbergland GmbH
Weserbergland-Südniedersachsen	Weserbergland Tourismus e.V.
Württembergisches Allgäu-Oberschwaben	Oberschwaben-Tourismus GmbH
Zugspitz-Region	Zugspitz Region GmbH

Note. Original place names in German, in alphabetical order.

Tourist destination New Zealand	DMO
New Zealand	Tourism New Zealand
New Zealand (Māori)	New Zealand Māori Tourism
Auckland	Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development
Bay of Plenty	Tourism Bay of Plenty
Canterbury & Christchurch	Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism
Central Otago	Tourism Central Otago
Clutha	Destination Clutha
Coromandel	Destination Coromandel
Dunedin	Enterprise Dunedin
Fiordland	Destination Fiordland
Gisborne	Tourism Eastland
Hawke's Bay	Hawke's Bay Tourism
Hurunui (Hamner Springs)	Hurunui Tourism
Laka Wanaka	Lake Wanaka Tourism
Lake Taupo	Destination Great Lake Taupo
Manawatu	Central Economic Development Agency
Marlborough	Destination Marlborough
Nelson/Tasman region	Nelson Tasman Tourism
Northland	Northland Inc
Queenstown	Destination Queenstown
Rotorua	Destination Rotorua
Ruapehu	Visit Ruapehu
South Canterbury (Timaru)	Aoraki Development Business & Tourism
Southland	Venture Southland
Taranaki	Venture Taranaki Trust
Waikato	Hamilton & Waikato Regional Tourism
Wairarapa	Destination Wairarapa
Waitaki	Tourism Waitaki
Wellington	Positively Wellington Tourism
West Coast	Tourism West Coast
Whakatāne-Kawerau	Whakatāne i-SITE
Whanganui	Visit Whanganui

Note. In alphabetical order.

Appendix E: Sample email invitation for semi-structured interviews

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Email

Invitation to participate in my doctoral research

Dear [Mrs XY],

My name is Sabrina Seeler and I am a doctoral candidate (PhD) at the Auckland University of Technology. My research focuses on the 'experienced tourist' and aims to investigate the influences of individual past experiences on future travel behaviour and destination choice. The title of the thesis is: **Experience matters – the influence of tourist experiences on travel behaviour and challenges for strategic destination management**. I am writing you today to ***invite you to participate in my doctoral research***.

Why am I addressing you? Destinations worldwide are operating in an increasingly competitive environment. Generating and sustaining a competitive advantage is the key to success and of central importance for the longevity of a destination. Understanding the motivation and behaviour of tourists is one of the most important factors to develop strategies and, in turn, remain competitive. Strongly related to motivation and behaviour is the individual's past experience. Consumers and tourists are believed to be more experienced than ever before. At the same time the past tourist experiences are considered the major drivers for the changes in behaviour and consequently demand.

What is missing so far is an *understanding* of what ***'more experienced'*** actually means and how the individual level of accumulated experiences influences future behaviour and destination choice. This thesis aims to find answers from a supply-side and demand-side perspective.

A **selected group of eight industry experts** has been addressed to participate in the research. There has been a positive response rate so far. As the [Role of interview partner] at [DMO XY] your insights would be more than valuable to my research. These are the key facts at a glance:

- Research conducted as part of my PhD qualification;
- Eight selected interview partners in New Zealand (industry expert, Destination Management Organisations);
- Interviews planned for May/ June 2016 (alternative dates may be discussed);
- Duration of the interviews will be approximately one hour;
- Interviews will be conducted at a place most suitable for you (e.g., your office);
- Interviews will be conducted with me in person.

Why should you participate? The interview aims for mutual benefit. While your information will contribute to my research findings, the overall aim is to develop a model, which displays the accumulation process of past experiences and helps to understand the relationship between past experiences and future behaviour. This new insights may deliver valuable information for your future strategic decisions. Your benefits at a glance:

- Exclusive participation and insights into a practice-oriented research project;
- Model contributing to decision making in destination management;
- Exclusive short summary of research findings.

You can find more details on the research and the desired outcomes in the information sheet attached.

I would be very thankful, if you could give me some of your precious time and participate in my research. I am looking forward to your response until **22. April 2016**.

If you have any questions concerning the research, you are most welcome to contact me directly by mail sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz. If you prefer a phone call, please let me know and we can arrange a date.

Kindest regards,

Sabrina Seeler

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 05. April 2016, AUTEC Reference number *16/86*.

Appendix F: Sample information sheet for semi-structured interviews

Participant Information Sheet

Organisation

Participant's name

Address line 1

Address line 2

New Zealand

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05. April 2016

Project Title

Experience matters – the influence of tourist experiences on travel behaviour and challenges for strategic destination management

An Invitation

Dear [Mrs XY],

My name is Sabrina Seeler and I am a doctoral candidate (PhD) at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Prior to my PhD journey in Auckland, I used to work as a research assistant and project leader at a university-based research institute in Germany (Institute for Management and Tourism (IMT)). During the four years at the IMT, I have worked very closely with destination management organisations of different sizes and of different destination levels within Germany as well as other European countries. My past work not only allowed me to gain valuable insights into the multifacetedness of tasks carried out by the DMOs, but also gave me an understanding of the many challenges DMOs face and need to respond to in a time when competitiveness is the key to success while time and money are scarce.

Looking through the eyes of an independent researcher, I was asking myself: How to define strategies when little is known about the potential customers in terms of their past experiences and related motivation to travel? It has been broadly recognised that past experiences influence the tourist's demand, motivation, and future travel behaviour, as well as destination choice. While suppliers are developing and promoting products suited to the *'experienced tourist'*, one question remains open: *Who is the experienced tourist and how can the 'experienced tourist' be approached?*

This research addresses the lack of knowledge and aims to investigate how to define the *'experienced tourist'* from a supply-side and a demand-side perspective. When you as [function of participant] of [destination name] think of your current guests, how would you define them? Would you say that they are more *'experienced'* compared to the past? What does that exactly mean?

As a researcher I am convinced that strategies are most successful when supply and demand-side perspectives are equally considered and different perspectives valued to define competitive strategies. It is of particular importance to understand the experts' perspectives on specific phenomena and compare their understandings and views with those of the potential guests. Numerous research has been undertaken on topics such as motivation and destination choice and a supply-side *or* demand-side perspective was adopted – only few approaches included both perspectives within one study. This research aims to incorporate your perspective as a destination management organisation, and also the perspective of your (potential) guests.

Representing [destination name] as a tourist destination you are not only challenged by the general changes in demand, but also by the increasing number of international tourists coming to visit [destination name]. Whether international tourists or domestic guests, their past experiences might be differently defined and understood. Only an international comparison can provide all-encompassing insights and reveal differences and similarities. Therefore, the study will not exclusively be conducted in New Zealand, but also in Germany – one of the biggest international source markets worldwide and the fifth biggest international source market for New Zealand.

This research is part of my qualification as Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and follows predominantly academic purposes. The overall aim, however, is to develop a model for strategic destination management, which is not for academic purposes only, but aims to be implementable in practice as well. When revealing which factors influence the experiences of tourists, and understanding how these past experiences influence future behaviour and destination choice, valuable support can be provided for your strategic decisions and formulations.

Interview partners were selected carefully and an exclusive selection of eight experts within New Zealand was made to achieve the best possible outcomes for my research. [Destination name] is of great significance for the New Zealand tourism landscape and your insights as the [function of participant] of [DMO's name] are considered very valuable for this research. Against this background, I would be very grateful if you could spare some time and would be willing to share some of your knowledge and experiences with me.

The interview should not last longer than one hour, will be conducted face-to-face and most preferably be finalised before mid-June 2016. I will provide you some options to set a date and will come to the place most suitable for you (preferably your office). Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time before or during interview completion. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed by myself after interview completion. My first supervisor, Associate Professor Michael Lück, and I will be the only persons, who have access to the interview tapes. A transcript will be provided for your approval once the transcription is completed.

As the [function of participant] of [DMO's name] you carry great responsibility and your knowledge and expertise is very valuable. To keep your personal as well as organisational identity confidential, names will be replaced with pseudonyms and information will be coded. The research aims to derive a definition of '*experienced tourists*' based on the experts' shared opinions. Therefore, common statements will be privileged over individual statements, which further safeguards your confidentiality.

As soon as all interviews are carried out and transcribed interviews approved, major findings of the interviews will be tested in an online survey carried out with (potential) tourists. This approach allows to compare the industry perspective with opinions of potential guests.

In the following sections, I will provide some additional information to give you the best possible overview of my research. In case any questions remain unanswered, my contact details are provided at the bottom of the document and I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research is part of my qualification as Doctor of Philosophy. The thesis is expected to be completed by mid-2018 and findings will be published in the written thesis as well as presented during my oral presentation. The overall aim is to provide an all-encompassing definition of the *'experienced tourist'*, identify different levels of 'experienced tourists' and develop a model that explains the process of experience accumulation to better understand the influencing factors behind tourist behaviour and destination choice.

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

The quality of research findings is heavily dependent on the quality of the interviewees' knowledge and expertise. Potential participants for this research were selected purposefully. Several indicators (such as market growth of destination, destination characteristics and geographical location) were considered to identify the DMOs most appropriate for the research. [DMO's name] was chosen as one of the eight potential partners throughout New Zealand. All interviews will be conducted with either the CEO or the Marketing Manager of the specific organisation. As the [function of participant] of [DMO's name] you were selected as the desired interview partner.

What will happen in this research?

The interview duration will be no longer than one hour and will be face-to-face in a location of your preference. The research aims to identify the core of the experts' definitions of an *'experienced tourist'*. Several questions will be predefined to enable consistencies between the conducted interviews. However, you as the interview partner and expert will be at the forefront of the interview and will be given the opportunity to share your knowledge and expertise at the level of detail you prefer. If you wish to prepare for the interview, I can provide an interview guide with indicative questions in advance.

What are the discomforts and risks?

As a researcher and former consultant for destination management organisations I am well aware of the sensitivity of your expertise and views. The research does not aim to use your knowledge for any projects in applied research, but is set for academic purposes only. No questions on your personal life will be asked, all questions will relate to your professional role within [DMO's name].

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

In case you feel uncomfortable during the interview process, there is something you do not fully understand or are unsure how to answer, you will always be given the possibility to pause the interview, skip the answer or postpone it to be answered in a later stage. If your level of discomfort is too high, you will have the possibility to withdraw from the interview at any time – before and during the interview completion.

What are the benefits?

The research aims for a mutual benefit: Your participation in the research will help me to derive scientific findings, answer my research questions and therewith complete my qualification as Doctor of Philosophy. Although the research follows academic purposes and is not directly attributable to applied sciences, it is highly likely that the developed model will have practicability for destination management organisations. All research participants will be provided an exclusive summary report of the major research findings.

How will my privacy be protected?

After interview completion the information will be transcribed and you will be asked to approve the transcription. Once all transcriptions are approved, data will be coded and all personal identifiers will be eliminated. The coding will allow to appropriately value your statements without allowing any risk of external or internal identification. All forms, transcripts, and data will be securely stored and will not be accessible for anyone but the research supervisor and myself. The AUT university guidelines require a storage of at least six years. After six years all information will be destroyed irrevocably.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs involved for you other than the time you are taking to conduct the interview.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

The research consists of two phases and will be conducted in two countries. As the data collection is planned to be completed by the end of the year, interviews in New Zealand are scheduled to be finalised by mid-June 2016. I am well aware of your limited time, however, would be grateful if you could reply by Friday, **22. April 2016**. In case you are willing to participate, I will get back to you to set a date for the interview in [destination name]. If you are unsure about being able to schedule the interview before 15. June 2016, but are generally interested and willing to participate, please let me know and we can discuss alternatives. In case there are any remaining questions impeding you to decide on your participation, please feel free to contact me (contact details see below).

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Michael Lück; mlueck@aut.ac.nz; (+64) 9-921-9999 ext. 5833

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+64) 9-921-9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference. You are also able to contact the researcher, Sabrina Seeler, directly via email: sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz.

Researcher Contact Details:

Sabrina Seeler, M.A.
PhD candidate and Lecturer Tourism & Events
School of Hospitality and Tourism | Faculty of Culture and Society | AUT University | Private Bag 92006 | Auckland | New Zealand
e-mail: sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz | Phone: +64 9-921-9999 ext. 5833 | Fax: +64 9-921 9962

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Associate Professor Michael Lück
Head of Department (Tourism and Event Management)
Associate Professor of Tourism Studies | School of Hospitality and Tourism | Faculty of Culture and Society | AUT University | Private Bag 92006 | Auckland | New Zealand
e-mail: mlueck@aut.ac.nz | Phone: +64 9-921-9999 ext. 5833 | Fax: +64 9-921 9962

Appendix G: Sample consent form for semi-structured interviews

Consent Form

Project title:	***Experience matters – the influence of tourist experiences on travel behaviour and challenges for strategic destination management***
Project Supervisor:	***Associate Professor Michael Lück***
Researcher:	***Sabrina Seeler***

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 05. April 2016.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interview, that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed, and I will be asked to approve the transcript of the interview after interview completion.
- ○ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to interview completion without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a copy of the major findings (summary report) from the research.

  ○ Yes ○ No

Participant's name: ....

Role within organisation: ....

Name of organisation: ....

Participant's contact details:

Full address of organisation: ....

Telephone number ....

E-mail address: ....

Paticipant's signatutre: .... **Date:** ....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 05. April 2016, AUTEC Reference number 16/86.

Appendix H: Fully programmed online questionnaire

The fully programmed questionnaire is digitally attached to this document (CD).

Appendix I: Sample information sheet for online questionnaire

AUT

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey!

Before you proceed, I would like to give you some general information about this research:
My name is *Sabrina Seeler* and I am conducting this survey as part of my *doctoral qualification* at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

The survey covers questions **concerning *your travel preferences for holiday trips*** and questions relate to ***your past travel experiences and future travel plans***.
In this study, holiday trips are considered as private, non-business trips with at least one overnight stay

As a member of this panel, you were selected to participate in this survey.
All information provided will be kept ***anonymous*** and all answers will ***remain confidential***.
Your participation is ***voluntary.*** If you do not wish to answer a specific question, you have the possibility to ***skip the answer***. You may also ***withdraw from the survey*** at any time ***during participation.*** Once the survey is completed and the data submitted, a withdrawal is no longer possible. By completing the survey, you will receive the ***announced bonus points***.

Depending on your responses, the survey will take between ***8 and 12 minutes***.

Some technical advices:

- If you wish to change your responses, please use the "***previous***" button provided in the survey (do not use the previous button in your browser).
- If you use a **mobile device**, ***horizontal orientation*** **is recommended.**

Once again, your information will be kept anonymous and participation is voluntary.
By **starting the survey**, you are indicating your **consent** to participate in this research.

In case of any questions or concerns, please contact the Research Team.

Start Survey

Appendix J: Sample contact information sheet for research respondents

<u>**CONTACT INFORMATION**</u>

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Michael Lück; mlueck@aut.ac.nz; (+64) 9-921-9999 ext. 5833.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor; ethics@aut.ac.nz; (+64) 9-921-9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please contact the researcher, Sabrina Seeler, directly via email: sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz.

Researcher Contact Details:

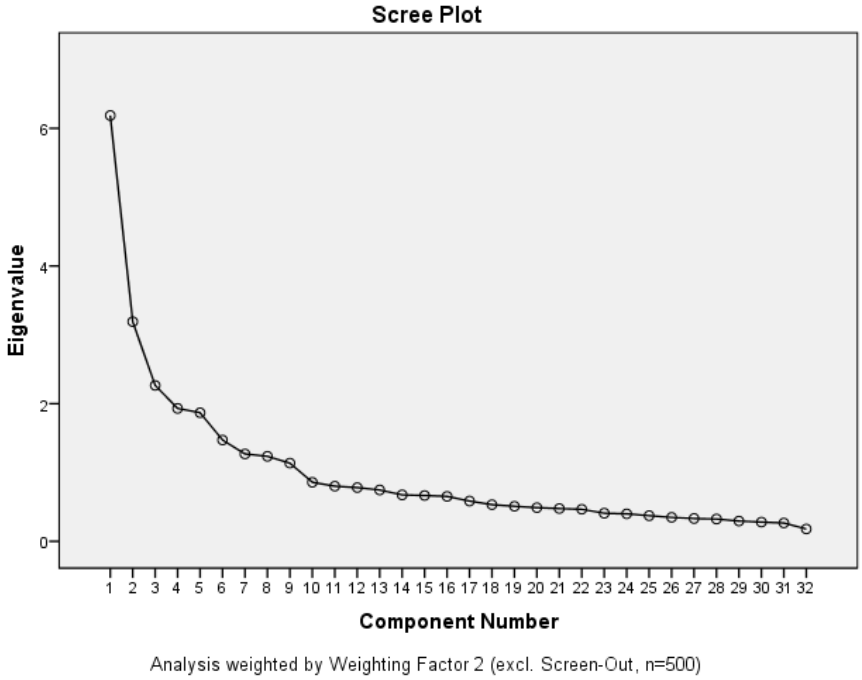
Sabrina Seeler, M.A.
PhD candidate and Lecturer Tourism & Events
School of Hospitality and Tourism | Faculty of Culture and Society | AUT University | Private Bag 92006 | Auckland | New Zealand
e-mail: sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz | Phone: +64 9-921-9999 ext. 5833 | Fax: +64 9-921 9962.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

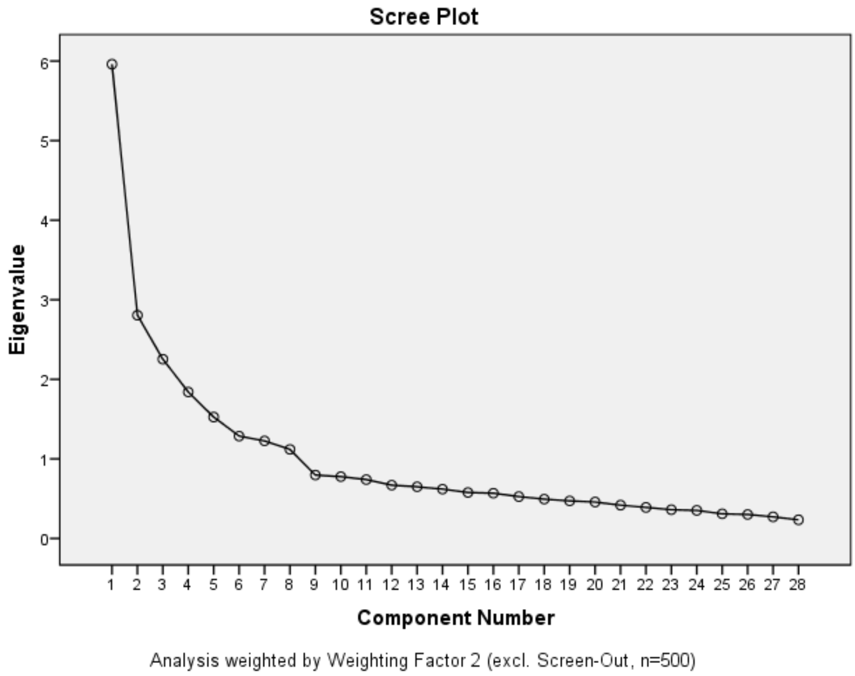
Professor Michael Lück
Head of Department (Tourism and Event Management)
Professor of Tourism Studies | School of Hospitality and Tourism | Faculty of Culture and Society | AUT University | Private Bag 92006 | Auckland | New Zealand
e-mail: mlueck@aut.ac.nz | Phone: +64 9-921-9999 ext. 5833 | Fax: +64 9-921 9962.

Appendix K: Scree plots PCA Germany and New Zealand

Scree plot PCA Germany



Scree plot PCA New Zealand



Appendix L: AUTEC approval research phase I (16/86)

AUTEC Secretariat

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

5 April 2016

Michael Luck
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Michael

Ethics Application: **16/86 Experience matters - the influence of tourist experiences on future travel behaviour and challenges for strategic destination management.**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved for three years until 4 April 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to 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 4 April 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 4 April 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, we ask that you 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.

All the very best with your research,

K O'Connor

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

Cc: Sabrina Seeler sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz; Heike Schanzel

Appendix M: AUTEC approval research phase II (16/460)

AUTEC Secretariat

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

9 December 2016

Michael Luck
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Michael

Re Ethics Application: **16/460 Experience matters - the influence of tourist experiences on future travel behaviour and challenges for strategic destination management**

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

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 9 December 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to 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 9 December 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 9 December 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.

All the very best with your research,

K O'Connor

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

Cc: sabrina.seeler@aut.ac.nz; Heike Schanzel

Appendix N: The respondents' profiles

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
Personality/Desired Social Identity Elements	Adaptable/open-minded	1 = not like me at all	0.7	0.5
	n = 500 (GER)	2	2.4	4.9
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	19.8	16.1
		4	49.2	49.4
		5 = very much like me	27.9	29.2
		M	4.01	4.02
		SD	0.799	0.834
	Curious/inquisitive	1 = not like me at all	0.4	1.3
	n = 500 (GER)	2	2.3	4.3
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	11.5	22.3
		4	48.3	48.3
		5 = very much like me	37.5	23.8
		M	4.20	3.89
		SD	0.760	0.860
	Not disorganised/chaotic[a]	1 = not like me at all	3.8	2.6
	n = 500 (GER)	2	9.2	10.7
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	20.0	21.2
		4	37.5	34.5
		5 = very much like me	29.5	31.0
		M	3.79	3.81
		SD	1.081	1.072
	Online/always connected	1 = not like me at all	5.0	3.7
	n = 500 (GER)	2	13.8	16.9
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	37.3	30.9
		4	29.6	32.4
		5 = very much like me	14.4	16.2
		M	3.35	3.40
		SD	1.044	1.061
	Adventurous/risk-taking	1 = not like me at all	7.1	10.1
	n = 500 (GER)	2	18.6	22.5
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	35.5	35.7
		4	26.6	25.2
		5 = very much like me	12.2	6.5
		M	3.18	2.95
		SD	1.093	1.069
	Not reserved/quiet[a]	1 = not like me at all	3.8	11.1
	n = 500 (GER)	2	14.7	29.8
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	35.2	32.3
		4	30.7	20.6
		5 = very much like me	15.6	6.2
		M	3.40	2.81
		SD	1.038	1.078

Concept	**Criteria**	**Items**	**GER**	**NZ**
	Self-confident/self-aware	1 = not like me at all	0.4	1.6
	n = 500 (GER)	2	7.9	8.4
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	31.9	34.5
		4	46.0	44.6
		5 = very much like me	13.6	11.0
		M	3.64	3.55
		SD	0.830	0.856
	Spontaneous/decisive	1 = not like me at all	2.2	3.1
	n = 500 (GER)	2	15.9	14.0
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	33.1	37.5
		4	36.1	38.4
		5 = very much like me	12.7	7.0
		M	3.41	3.32
		SD	0.974	0.908
	Not thrifty/stingy[a]	1 = not like me at all	1.8	7.7
	n = 500 (GER)	2	12.6	25.7
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	30.9	37.8
		4	27.4	20.1
		5 = very much like me	27.3	8.7
		M	3.66	2.96
		SD	1.065	1.055
	Trendsetting/innovative	1 = not like me at all	9.4	10.4
	n = 500 (GER)	2	24.6	32.2
	n = 500 (NZ)	3	45.0	32.7
		4	16.7	20.4
		5 = very much like me	4.3	4.3
		M	2.82	2.76
		SD	0.964	1.028

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Percentages expressed in % of the cases.
[a]Items were oppositely worded in the online questionnaire, reverse coded and labelled for scale reliability.

Appendix O: The tourists' profiles

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
Role of travelling[a]	Holiday travelling since childhood *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 497 (NZ)	1= fully disagree	16.5	20.1
		2	18.1	18.9
		3	22.2	16.2
		4	19.7	22.9
		5 = fully agree	23.5	22.0
		M	3.16	3.08
		SD	1.398	1.449
	Leisure travel motivation through business trips *n* = 498 (GER) *n* = 499 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	56.5	35.6
		2	18.4	20.3
		3	11.9	19.9
		4	9.7	16.0
		5 = fully agree	3.5	8.2
		M	1.85	2.41
		SD	1.170	1.330
	Holiday travelling as an important part of a fulfilling life *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 499 (NZ)	1= fully disagree	3.5	3.5
		2	8.2	7.5
		3	23.9	21.2
		4	28.9	36.0
		5 = fully agree	35.5	31.8
		M	3.85	3.85
		SD	1.102	1.060
	Holiday travelling as a status symbol in life *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 499 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	21.6	25.7
		2	16.6	20.9
		3	28.5	27.4
		4	23.5	18.3
		5 = fully agree	9.8	7.7
		M	2.83	2.61
		SD	1.278	1.259
General reasons to travel for holiday purposes (not trip-specific)[b]	Reasons to travel for holiday purposes *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 500 (NZ)	Visit tourist destinations I have never been before	52.6	54.1
		Escape everyday life	61.4	44.6
		Try out local food	26.6	28.9
		Open my eyes and broaden my knowledge	40.8	46.1
		Explore different landscape/scenery	51.1	51.0
		Learn about foreign culture	44.2	29.5
		Return to places that are important to me	32.8	29.9
		Meet people and build new friendships	14.1	13.2
		Tick off my bucket list	13.2	14.8
		Step out of my comfort zone	8.2	19.5
		Go shopping	8.9	21.6
		Spend time with family/friends	48.2	34.3
		Relax and do nothing	2.7	3.7

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
		Contribute positively to the sustainable development of the destination		
Decision-making process (not trip-specific)	Major decision-making criterion for holiday trips *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 500 (NZ)	Tourist destination itself	38.0	29.1
		Type of tourist destination	21.4	12.8
		Holiday type	20.1	13.1
		Price	12.7	30.3
		On-site options	2.0	3.2
		Recommendations from friends/family	2.0	4.4
		Others decide for me	0.8	1.3
		Current travel trends	0.2	0.7
		Other reasons	2.7	5.1
	Sources of inspiration[c] *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 500 (NZ)	Family and friends	59.9	68.7
		Advertisement	25.5	27.5
		Online travel platforms	39.0	29.1
		Social media (own contacts)	13.6	28.8
		Social media (pages/celebrities)	4.8	7.0
		Travel blogs	12.3	16.1
		TV/movies	26.8	23.6
		Daily local environment	16.0	13.5
		None of the above	11.5	9.7
International destinations visited in the past (within past five years and/or before)[c]	By continents/regions[d] *n* = 459 (GER) *n* = 445 (NZ)	Europe	99.6	56.0
		North America	34.4	46.1
		South/Central America	20.2	17.3
		Asia	31.2	56.6
		Australia/Oceania	11.9	88.8
		Africa	31.3	16.4
		Middle East	24.0	20.0
	European countries[e] *n* = 457 (GER) *n* = 249 (NZ)	Alpine countries	58.0	50.8
		Balkan countries	21.4	13.8
		Baltic states	3.1	2.9
		Benelux	38.2	40.3
		Caucasus	0.6	0.5
		Mediterranean	86.7	73.7
		Nordic countries	28.3	21.0
		Slavic countries	35.3	18.5
		UK and Ireland	31.2	75.1
Recalling sensory memory[f]	Visuals *(e.g.,landscape, architecture)* *n* = 458 (GER) *n* = 445 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	2.0	1.3
		2	2.9	1.7
		3	10.6	12.4
		4	31.9	38.5
		5 = fully agree	52.5	46.1
		M	4.30	4.27
		SD	0.917	0.835

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
	Taste *(e.g., local/exotic food)* *n* = 456 (GER) *n* = 446 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	3.4	3.3
		2	10.8	8.2
		3	22.7	25.0
		4	31.9	36.7
		5 = fully agree	31.3	26.9
		M	3.77	3.76
		SD	1.106	1.041
	Sound *(e.g., sounds of birds/traffic)* *n* = 457 (GER) *n* = 440 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	5.9	4.9
		2	20.8	16.0
		3	29.8	33.5
		4	22.5	26.8
		5 = fully agree	21.0	18.8
		M	3.32	3.39
		SD	1.187	1.109
	Feel/atmosphere *(e.g., humidity, soft sand)* *n* = 456 (GER) *n* = 445 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	1.4	2.1
		2	2.4	5.8
		3	15.0	21.3
		4	38.1	36.8
		5 = fully agree	43.2	34.0
		M	4.19	3.95
		SD	0.874	0.986
	Smell *(e.g., spices, flowers)* *n* = 457 (GER) *n* = 446 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	5.9	4.6
		2	14.2	18.2
		3	27.5	31.0
		4	28.3	26.0
		5 = fully agree	24.2	20.3
		M	3.51	3.39
		SD	1.171	1.135
Most recent international main holiday trip (within past five years)[g]	Trip period (year) *n* = 428 (GER) *n* = 374 (NZ)	2016	66.4	53.8
		2015	14.2	20.2
		2014	8.6	8.7
		2013	4.0	7.9
		2012	6.9	9.5
	Number of destinations *n* = 428 (GER) *n* = 374 (NZ)	1	73.8	62.1
		2	16.7	17.6
		3	6.1	8.3
		4 or more	3.4	12.0
	Travel duration *n* = 428 (GER) *n* = 373 (NZ)	1-3 days	3.2	4.0
		4-7 days	21.9	17.1
		8-14 days	41.7	25.5
		15-21 days	24.9	24.0
		22-31 days	5.6	18.4
		2-3 months	1.6	7.7
		4-6 months	0.8	1.3
		7-12 months	0.2	1.0
		longer than a year	0.0	1.0

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
	Destination(s) visited[h]	Europe	81.2	10.7
	n = 428 (GER)	North America	4.9	7.7
	n = 373 (NZ)	South/Central America	2.1	1.4
		Asia	3.3	16.4
		Africa	3.1	2.0
		Australia/Oceania	0.5	40.2
		Middle East	1.0	0.7
		More than one continent/region	4.0	20.9
	Pre-visitation[i]	Visited never before	19.6	18.4
	n = 428 (GER)	Visited (all) at least once before	64.8	65.8
	n = 374 (NZ)	Visited at least one destination before	15.8	15.8

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Percentages expressed in % of the cases.
[a]Possible missing values as question was not forced.
[b]Multiple response option; maximum five responses.
[c]Multiple response option; source of inspiration: response option *none of the above* as exclusive answer.
[d]Question only displayed to respondents with at least one international holiday trip in the past (no time restriction), GER questionnaire items *Europe* and *Alpine countries* excl. Germany, NZ questionnaire *Australia and Oceania* excl. New Zealand.
[e]Question only displayed when Europe was selected in previous question (country groups see Table 6.4).
[f]Question only displayed to respondents with at least one international holiday trip in the past (no time restriction), possible missing values as question was not forced.
[g]Questions in this question block only displayed to respondents with at least one international holiday trip within the past five years.
[h]Open response option, linked to number of destinations visited. Coded into continent/regions for comparability. In the case of more than one destination visited, acknowledgment of all destinations.
[i]Linked to number of destinations and destinations visited (based on unclustered data). In the case of more than one country visited differentiation whether all destinations have been visited in the past, have not been visited in the past or combination of the two.

Appendix P: The independent tourists' behaviour and activities

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
Information and booking behaviour (prior to the trip)[a]	Planned holiday trip on own *n* = 324 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	3.1	8.6
		2	3.7	4.3
		3	9.8	17.0
		4	17.5	22.9
		5 = fully agree	65.8	47.3
		M	4.39	3.96
		SD	1.019	1.260
	Booked most trip elements online *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	27.2	10.4
		2	8.2	8.0
		3	13.6	16.9
		4	14.0	23.8
		5 = fully agree	37.0	40.8
		M	3.25	3.77
		SD	1.654	1.337
	Booked most trip elements spontaneously *n* = 323 (GER) *n* = 334 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	43.3	33.7
		2	15.1	18.6
		3	17.9	16.9
		4	9.6	19.3
		5 = fully agree	14.1	11.5
		M	2.36	2.56
		SD	1.464	1.414
	Felt overall prepared and informed *n* = 324 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	3.2	1.0
		2	6.2	1.9
		3	16.0	11.0
		4	39.1	35.0
		5 = fully agree	35.5	51.1
		M	3.97	4.33
		SD	1.028	0.824
Activities undertaken during the most recent international holiday trip	Checked out places that the local community frequents *(e.g., local restaurants)* *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	2.9	5.0
		2	6.2	8.9
		3	13.4	20.5
		4	28.7	40.2
		5 = fully agree	48.7	25.5
		M	4.14	3.72
		SD	1.057	1.090
	Spent more time in the same place to get a real feeling *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	2.4	4.5
		2	8.6	17.0
		3	29.3	37.8
		4	32.2	28.8
		5 = fully agree	27.6	12.0
		M	3.74	3.27
		SD	1.030	1.024

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
	Felt being an active part of the experience/the place/the community *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	1.8	4.9
		2	11.2	12.8
		3	35.9	38.3
		4	29.7	30.0
		5 = fully agree	21.3	13.9
		M	3.57	3.35
		SD	1.005	1.030
	Travelled off the beaten track *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	5.2	16.5
		2	10.2	21.1
		3	30.9	25.7
		4	29.3	24.3
		5= fully agree	24.3	12.4
		M	3.57	2.95
		SD	1.120	1.270
	Was very active and explored as much as possible *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	2.7	6.0
		2	10.5	11.0
		3	24.6	27.2
		4	32.1	31.3
		5 = fully agree	30.2	24.5
		M	3.77	3.57
		SD	1.075	1.149
	Visited must-see places and famous sites *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	6.8	6.7
		2	10.5	10.3
		3	24.1	21.2
		4	32.3	37.5
		5 = fully agree	26.3	24.3
		M	3.61	3.62
		SD	1.178	1.154
	Asked locals for first-hand information *(e.g., local tourist information centre)* *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	14.8	10.7
		2	14.9	14.6
		3	23.9	23.6
		4	23.8	32.0
		5 = fully agree	22.5	19.1
		M	3.24	3.34
		SD	1.352	1.242
	Stayed in private/local/ shared accommodation *(e.g., Airbnb)* *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	44.0	32.8
		2	9.6	8.8
		3	16.0	14.4
		4	10.6	22.8
		5 = fully agree	19.8	21.3
		M	2.53	2.91
		SD	1.593	1.575

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
	Decided spontaneously what to do *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	4.7	9.8
		2	8.9	14.1
		3	23.1	29.8
		4	33.4	30.4
		5 = fully agree	29.9	16.0
		M	3.75	3.29
		SD	1.117	1.182
Online behaviour during the most recent international holiday trip (frequency)	Shared experiences online on social media *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	49.1	24.5
		2 = almost never	20.1	23.6
		3 = sometimes	24.0	34.5
		4 = almost every day	5.0	13.0
		5 = daily	1.9	4.4
		M	1.90	2.49
		SD	1.045	1.126
	Wrote private online messages to friends/family to share my experiences *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	22.1	22.7
		2 = almost never	17.1	16.2
		3 = sometimes	37.4	38.4
		4 = almost every day	16.7	17.0
		5 = daily	6.7	5.6
		M	2.69	2.67
		SD	1.182	1.165
	Wrote own travel blog to share my experiences online *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	80.3	69.8
		2 = almost never	5.5	10.3
		3 = sometimes	9.1	12.4
		4 = almost every day	3.3	5.8
		5 = daily	1.8	1.8
		M	1.41	1.59
		SD	0.919	1.025
	Commented in travel blogs/forums/communities *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	75.3	60.1
		2 = almost never	11.8	13.5
		3 = sometimes	9.5	18.2
		4 = almost every day	2.3	7.1
		5 = daily	1.1	1.1
		M	1.42	1.76
		SD	0.843	1.054
	Did travel-related research *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	23.4	15.0
		2 = almost never	8.9	10.5
		3 = sometimes	32.4	36.3
		4 = almost every day	21.7	27.2
		5 = daily	13.5	11.0
		M	2.93	3.09
		SD	1.335	1.189

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
	Used the internet for practical reasons *n* = 325 (GER) *n* = 337 (NZ)	1 = never	17.6	11.2
		2 = almost never	11.4	7.8
		3 = sometimes	29.3	34.3
		4 = almost every day	21.7	24.7
		5 = daily	20.1	22.0
		M	3.15	3.39
		SD	1.349	1.228

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Percentages expressed in % of the cases. Questions displayed to respondents who met the requirement of an independent tourist (FIT). Questions were related to the most international main holiday trip.
[a]Possible missing values as question was not forced.

Appendix Q: The tourists' future desires and plans

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
Future travel intentions for international holiday trips	Travel plans *n* = 499 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	Yes	47.7	43.1
		No	52.3	56.9
	Travel period[a] *n* = 239 (GER) *n* = 215 (NZ)	Within the next 12 months	89.0	72.0
		Within the next 13 to 24 months	6.5	20.2
		Do not have a fixed timeframe	4.4	7.8
	Holiday travel destination(s)[a,b] *n* = 262 (GER) *n* = 276 (NZ)	Europe	72.4	27.1
		North America	11.0	19.3
		South/Central America	4.7	5.9
		Asia	11.9	27.1
		Africa	5.6	3.2
		Australia/Oceania	1.6	44.1
		Middle East	2.6	1.8
Future travel behaviour (I want to…)	Experience modern and up-to-date services when travelling *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	6.8	4.2
		2	9.4	7.5
		3	24.3	24.2
		4	30.5	33.5
		5 = fully agree	29.0	30.6
		M	3.65	3.79
		SD	1.186	1.088
	Travel more often *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	2.5	1.3
		2	7.0	6.7
		3	25.2	20.6
		4	30.8	30.4
		5 = fully agree	34.6	41.0
		M	3.88	4.03
		SD	1.042	1.002
	Explore more of my home country and culture *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	5.5	3.3
		2	16.1	7.7
		3	32.8	23.7
		4	28.5	32.8
		5 = fully agree	17.0	32.5
		M	3.35	3.84
		SD	1.107	1.068
	Go to places not many people have been before *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	8.5	8.2
		2	21.8	15.8
		3	30.6	31.8
		4	21.2	24.4
		5 = fully agree	17.9	19.8
		M	3.18	3.32
		SD	1.207	1.193
	Experience places like the locals do *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	3.9	2.9
		2	14.8	6.9
		3	29.2	31.4
		4	31.0	35.2

Concept	Criteria	Items	GER	NZ
		5 = fully agree	21.2	23.7
		M	3.51	3.70
		SD	1.079	0.997
	See as many famous sites as possible *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	5.9	4.1
		2	17.3	11.9
		3	32.8	30.2
		4	28.8	30.0
		5 = fully agree	15.1	23.8
		M	3.30	3.58
		SD	1.103	1.098
	Go to place none of my family/friends have been before *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	11.0	11.3
		2	18.5	14.1
		3	34.1	30.3
		4	20.2	26.8
		5 = fully agree	16.1	17.4
		M	3.12	3.25
		SD	1.209	1.224
	Experience high levels of comfort and quality *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	4.8	1.7
		2	11.8	9.9
		3	35.9	36.2
		4	34.0	30.7
		5 = fully agree	13.5	21.5
		M	3.39	3.60
		SD	1.018	0.986
	Share my experiences online and be an inspiration for other travellers *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	39.3	27.2
		2	20.4	24.2
		3	23.6	23.3
		4	11.7	17.1
		5 = fully agree	4.9	8.2
		M	2.22	2.55
		SD	1.221	1.277
	Experience places virtually (online) instead of going there *n* = 500 (GER) *n* = 498 (NZ)	1 = fully disagree	51.2	53.4
		2	17.7	18.9
		3	18.4	16.8
		4	9.7	6.7
		5 = fully agree	3.0	4.3
		M	1.96	1.90
		SD	1.165	1.160

Note. Data weight activated (population weight). Percentages expressed in % of the cases.
[a]Question only displayed when general future travel plans *yes* selected.
[b]Multiple response option.