



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

Molde as an unexploited territory for adventure
tourism - The case of Molde Adventure Center in
creating a better image for the town

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Abstract

Norway has been experiencing a tourist boom in the last decade and the number of tourists visiting the country is expected to grow. Due to its unique and various natural landscapes, Norway is one of the best destinations for adventure tourism. This thesis aims to investigate the characteristics of adventure tourism, the different theories related to the concept, and people's motives driving engagement in adventure tourism. Further, it touches upon the concept of destination marketing and its importance in creating an attractive image for a given destination. The region of Molde and Molde Adventure Center (MAC) are being applied as a case study and the data collected are related to tourists' impressions about the town and the outdoor adventure activities they carried out in Molde through MAC. Data were collected from MAC clients – regarding the concepts of adventure tourism – and a regional tourist office representative – on the concept of destination marketing. Findings showed that the region of Molde has the prerequisite in becoming an attractive destination for adventure tourism, however its resources must be exploited in a more efficient way.

Keywords: adventure, adventure tourism, experience, motives, Molde Adventure Center, Molde, tourist, destination marketing.

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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Norway has been experiencing a tourist boom in the last 10 years. Since 2009, the number of visitors at destinations like the Trolltunga or Preikestolen hikes have increased from a 1.000 to 100.000 and from 60.000 to 300.000 respectively (Orange 2016). Villages in UNESCO listed fjords like Geiranger or Flåm are visited by hundred thousand of cruise ship passengers every summer (The Telegraph 2016) and in 2016 the Tromsø region attracted 32% more tourists from abroad than in 2015 (NTB/The Local 2016). When we consider outdoor activities, like hiking, mountain biking, sea kayaking, surfing, paragliding, or skiing, the county of Møre og Romsdal is one of the most exciting regions in Norway. Molde is the administrative center of this county and it is located on the west coast of Norway on the Romsdal Peninsula. The city is fairly small and according to the Norwegian Statistics Central Bureau (SSB¹), in the third quarter of 2017, it counted 26 826 inhabitants (SSB 2017). The town is known for the annually held jazz festival since 1961, its local football team Molde FK, and its famous Molde panorama – an amazing view at 222 mountain peaks –, and it is called the “City of the Roses” due to the many roses blooming in the springtime (Engås 2000 and Visit Nordvest 2018). The city and its surroundings also offer a large variety of outdoor activities, like the ones mentioned above, which could make Molde an exciting destination for *adventure tourism*. However, the biggest shortcoming of the city is that tourists have very little or no knowledge about the countless outdoor possibilities they could do in Molde and its surroundings.

The theoretical background of the thesis will be adventure tourism and the identification and investigation of motives driving engagement in adventure activities. These are key issues to find out for stakeholders of the tourism sector to please the needs of tourists and to make them satisfied with their stay. This would further contribute to a better image creation of the destination that could lead to attracting more tourists in the future.

The thesis will introduce one specific stakeholder in the tourism sector in Molde, a newly established company that provides outdoor adventure activities for tourists. This company is Molde Adventure Center (hereinafter referred to as MAC), and the author of this thesis played an important role in building up, establishing and running the first season of MAC, as he carried out his internship there. MAC was the first ever business in Molde that would organize outdoor tours and activities commercially. The town has a rather unknown image among tourists, hence

¹ SSB – Statistisk Sentralbyrå

it is important for such new companies to find out what tourists know about the town, what their expectations and motivations are to engage in adventure activities, and what their general perception about Molde is.

The relevance of this topic is conspicuous. Norway is experiencing a large influx of tourists and managerial practices related to adventure tourism and the means to provide high quality services in outdoor activities are desirable. Molde and its surroundings have a huge potential in becoming one of the best regions for outdoor activities, but this potential is unexploited at the moment.

This thesis will provide a study on how Molde could become a more interesting destination for adventure activities, by identifying tourism patterns and tourists' expectations and impression about the town. Since the characteristics of adventure tourism are going to be analyzed, the following research question is formed:

What is adventure tourism and how could Molde become an attractive destination for adventure activities?

The research question can be divided into two sub-questions that will indicate more specifically the research goal of this study:

What are the tourists' motives driving engagement in adventure activities?

What is the role of a tour provider like MAC and the RTO (Regional Tourism Organization) in promoting Molde as a destination?

To analyze and answer these questions, the first chapter of the thesis will provide the theoretical background related to this study. The contemporary issues of tourism will be presented after which the characteristics of adventure tourism and the most important features of destination marketing will be scrutinized. The second chapter will explain the case of Molde and Molde Adventure Center that will provide the basis for the methodology and data analysis. The third and fourth chapter will provide an explanation of the methodology applied in this study and the findings of the research. In the fifth chapter the discussion and analysis of the obtained results will take place. Finally, in the conclusions part, the main findings of the thesis will be presented that could provide guidelines in creating a better image for Molde.

CHAPTER I – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter will introduce the theoretical perspectives that are related to the main topic of this thesis, that is *adventure tourism*. To begin the chapter with, the characteristics of the tourism sector will be presented to underline the importance of this industry. After that, a specific sub-set of tourism that has become more prominent in the last decades will be introduced, namely *sport tourism*. The concept of sport tourism will provide the starting point for adventure tourism, whose concept and related terms and issues will be presented and scrutinized. Finally, the terms of destination marketing related to adventure tourism will be presented.

1. The characteristics of the tourism sector

Tourism is an economic activity of immense global significance. (Pender 2005). According to the United Nation's specialized agency, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the tourism industry is now the largest industry in the world (Kotler et al. 2017). There are debates among scholars over the definition of tourism and how it should be measured. This discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis and for its purpose the definition by the UNWTO is applied, which states that tourism is "*a trip to a main destination outside usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure, or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited*" (UNWTO 2008, p.10). The tourism industry has showed an unprecedented growth in the last decades. Based on the statistics of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2015 the tourism industry comprised 10% of the global GDP and has contributed to the global employment by 9,1% amounting to one in every 11 jobs (UNWTO 2016). Further, in 2006 there were around 850 million international tourist arrivals recorded worldwide (Freitag and Pyka 2008), which has increased rapidly until 2015 totaling to 1186 million international tourist arrivals (UNWTO 2016). It is further predicted by the UNWTO (2016) that this number will reach 1,8 billion by 2030.

The importance of tourism is indisputable and specific destinations strive to attract as many tourists as possible. It is not a coincidence either that the Norwegian government has picked tourism as one of the five industries that should receive special consideration with regard to Norwegian economy (Alsos and Andreassen 2015).

One of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the tourism industry is *sport tourism* (Gibson 1998:a), which is going to be presented in the next section.

2. Sport tourism

Although sport tourism is a relatively new concept that has been adopted by scholars in the 1990's, it is not a recent phenomenon (Gibson 1998:b and Neirotti 2003). The first documented examples of sport tourism date as far back as the Ancient Olympic Games in Greece starting from 776 BC (Weed and Bull 2009). Already in that time, people engaged in long travels to participate or watch sport, and the practice of stimulating tourism through sport activities has become prominent in the last decades (Neirotti 2003). The commercialization of sport tourism was already present in the last century, but its real influence on the economy has appeared in recent times, as a result of global developments (Weed and Bull 2009).

2.1. Defining sport tourism

The definition of sport tourism is clearly problematic, as it is composed of two terms whose definition still raises questions among scholars and there is much debate about what each of these terms encompasses (Weed and Bull 2009). This indicates that there is no universally agreed definition on sport tourism either. Based on research by Murphy (1985), Leiper (1981), and Smith and Collins (1988), Hinch and Higham (2001) explain three dimensions related to tourism; *spatial dimension*, which involves the travel of “non-residents”, *temporal dimension*, which refers to the temporary stay away from home, and *purpose dimension*, which explains the purpose of the travel. While analyzing the domain of sport, Hinch and Higham (2001) identify the importance of rules that relate to time and space in the context of sport. After analyzing the two concepts separately, the authors stated that “*sport is an important activity within tourism and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport*” (Hinch and Higham 2001 p. 48). Based this statement, Gammon and Robinson (1997) established a distinction between *sport tourists* and *tourism sport* (Hinch and Higham 2001 and Weed and Bull 2009). In the former one the dominant domain is *sport* – hence making tourism a fundamental characteristic of sport –, while in the latter, the dominant domain is *tourism* –, making sport a secondary activity while traveling –.

In her paper, Gibson (1998:b) reflects upon what contemporary research found on sport tourism. She identifies complications with regard to the definition of tourism that relate to spatial (how far), and temporal (how long) dimensions, and the purpose of the trip. To answer the issues related to space and time she quotes Nogawa et al. (1996, quoted in Gibson 1998:b, p. 48), who suggest that a “*a sport tourist is a temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours in the event area*”. However, as for the “purpose of the trip”, she argues that there is still no agreement between scholars on whether tourism only refers to leisure-based travel, or business

travelers and professional athletes should also be considered as tourists. Throughout her research, Gibson (1998:b) identified three distinctive behavioral intentions associated with sport tourism: *actively participating* (Active Sport Tourism), *spectating* (Event Sport Tourism) and *visiting and perhaps, paying homage* (Nostalgia Sport Tourism). Thus, Gibson (1998:b, p. 49) suggests the following definition of sport tourism: “*leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities*”. This is just one out of many definitions that scholars suggested on sport tourism. Other scholars, like Standeven and De Knop (1999, quoted in Bull and Weed 2009, p. 61), include commercial travelers in their definition, stating that sport tourism is “*all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and work locality*”. Gibson’s definition excludes travelers with business/commercial reasons, which the UNWTO includes in their definition of tourism (see page 10). On the other hand, her definition provides a wider scope of understanding of sport tourism, as it includes three distinguished areas of the phenomenon (active sport tourism, event sport tourism, and nostalgia sport tourism). These areas relate to the five core products of sport tourism identified by Kurtzman and Zauhar (1997), which are: *sport tourism attractions, sport tourism resorts, sport tourism cruises, sport tourism tours* and *sport tourism events* (Gibson 1998:b). These products are also related to adventure tourism that is the main topic of this thesis. Scholars, like Gibson (1998:b), Weed and Bull (2009), Hinch and Higham (2001), or Hudson (2003) have used these products identified by Kurtzman and Zauhar in their research. Since this thesis considers adventure tourists whose purpose is to engage in leisure activities while they travel, the definition of Gibson on sport tourism will be applied throughout this paper.

2.2. Sport tourism related domains

Based on Hall’s (1992) findings, Hinch and Higham (2001) proposed a model that describes the related domains of sport tourism.

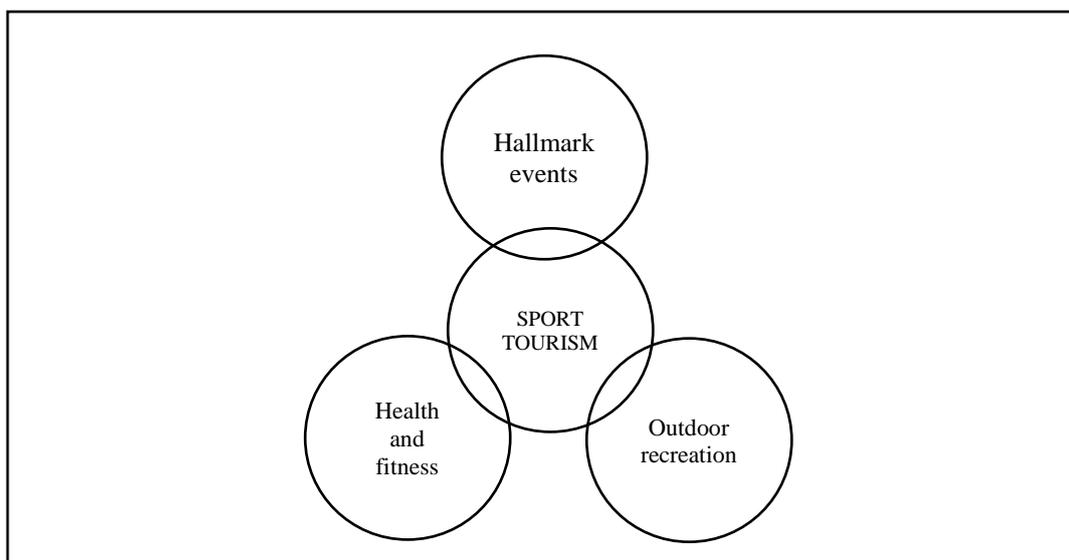


Figure 1. Sport tourism related domains. Source: own elaboration, based on Hinch and Higham 2001, p. 50.

Figure 1 represents the three domains associated with sport tourism. These are *hallmark events*, *health and fitness*, and *outdoor recreation*.

Hallmark events relate to specific events and are described as “*those that possess such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality, or publicity, that the event provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination images become inextricably linked. Hallmark events are, by definition, permanent ‘institutions’ in their communities or societies*” (Getz and Page 2016, p. 57). This definition clearly states the significance of hallmark events in attracting tourists.

Health and fitness are also an important part of sport tourism. Concerns related to health, fitness and well-being have been identified as reasons for growth in the tourism sector (Gibson 1998:b). Wanting to be physically fit and healthy, people often include sport and recreation in their holidays.

Outdoor recreation is the third related area that is inextricably linked to sport tourism. Outdoor recreation occurs in natural settings and such sports can be related to it as: kayaking, biking, skiing, or hiking. Another type of recreation that originates from outdoor recreation is *adventure recreation* with the main difference being, the “*deliberate seeking of risk and danger*” (Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989, p. 209) in case of adventure recreation. The concept of adventure tourism is strictly related to these recreational activities, as adventure recreation is considered to be an integral part of adventure tourism (Weber 2001), and at the same time, adventure tourism is one of the most dynamic components of outdoor recreation (Hinch and Higham 2001).

3. Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism is often cited as one of the fastest growing tourism sectors (Taylor et al. 2013) and it has emerged as a sub-set of sport tourism (Beedie 2008). Further, it brings together travel, sport, and outdoor recreation (Beedie 2003). As we have seen previously the term *sport tourism* relates to leisure activities that happens outside of the consumer's home communities. Swarbrooke et al. (2003) identify three characteristics of leisure:

- It provides opportunities for satisfaction and enjoyment that come from intrinsic motivations;
- It takes place outside of everyday obligations such as work or employment;
- It is freely chosen by the participant.

Swarbrooke et al. (2003) use the terms *leisure* and *recreation* interchangeably and cite Pigram and Jenkin (1996, p. 6) who gathered the ideas of many authors saying: "*Leisure has now become viewed as a process and recreation an experience which is goal oriented, with participation expected to yield satisfactions, and therefore physical and emotional rewards*" (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, p. 6). Scholars distinguish between *serious* and *casual leisure*.

3.1. Serious and casual leisure

The continuum between serious and casual leisure provides a tool to identify in what kind of leisure activities adventure tourists are engaged. Both terms were thoroughly investigated by Stebbins (1997) who provided the following definitions: "*Serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge*". (Stebbins 1992, p. 3) and casual leisure as "*immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it*" (Stebbins 1997, p. 18).

The key difference between these two terms is that serious leisure requires a certain set of skills while casual leisure does not. This difference was identified as a *frontier* by Beedie (2008), referring to serious leisure tourists as more likely to undertake individual adventures, and to casual leisure tourists who are more likely to participate in organized tours. A key argument for serious leisure is that it provides the participant with a sense of social identity that is more highly valued (Green and Jones 2005). Casual leisure tourists – often referred to as "aspirants" – through practicing and gaining skills can become "practitioners" that would bring them closer to the "seriousness" (more serious adventure) end of the continuum. Scholars like,

Getz and McConnell (2011) and Swarbrooke et al. (2003) developed “event travel careers” and “tourism career” models to demonstrate this process. However, this “seriousness” of adventure is highly subjective and varies from person to person (Beedie 2008 and Cater 2013), hence we must understand the meaning of *adventure*.

3.2. Core characteristics of adventure

In his book, Buckley (2010) discusses the concept of *adventure* by providing several definitions from different dictionaries. He does not state one clear definition but identifies the common elements that are included in the definitions, which are “*elements of excitement, uncertainty, and risk and danger*” (Buckley 2010, p. 8). To experience these elements, people have to be involved with practical engagement.

In addition to the above characteristics of adventure, Swarbrooke et al. (2003) identify several more that are: *challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, escapism, exploration, focus, and emotions*. The authors further highlight that in order for an adventure to happen the core elements of it should be present, when an individual is participating in an activity. A person deciding to engage in an adventure must have certain expectations and should be clear of his or her own skills to overcome the challenges of the adventure. If that happens, a person can become completely immersed in an activity and he or she is able to tackle challenges, as they are within the range of capabilities of that person (Mykletun and Mazza 2016). This is what Csíkszentmihályi calls the *flow*. On the other hand, if the nature of the activity exceeds the skills of the participant then – as Mortlock described it – *misadventure* can happen that can end in disaster or tragedy (Swarbrooke et al. 2003 and Beedie 2008).

Based on these characteristics it is now understandable that adventure is not determined by a specific activity, but it is defined by the *state of mind* of the participant. It is a voluntary act, where participants want to experience something new, exciting, and challenging and they enter an adventure hoping to discover something new and gain valuable experiences (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). It is therefore the challenge for any tour operator to provide something exciting and challenging with the perception of risk-taking, while at the same time operate within the boundaries of safety.

3.3. The safety-risk paradox in adventure tourism

The tourism industry aims to reduce risk perceptions among tourists to increase sales (Dickson and Dolnicar 2004). However, adventure tourism (a sub-sector of tourism industry), seems to work the opposite way, as risk and danger and uncertainty of outcome have been

identified as core components of adventure that tourists are actively searching for (Dickson and Dolnicar 2004). It creates a certain paradox for tour operators who should deliver two contradictory perceptions: *risk* and *safety* (Fletcher 2010). In his paper, Fletcher (2010), suggests three ways for overcoming this paradox. First, he mentions the study of Hoyfield et al. (1997; 1999; 2005), who suggest that adventure tourism succeeds by creating the illusion of risk, while hiding “real” security from tourists. The second way is described by Palmer (2006), who argues the opposite, stating that tour operators hide the “real” risk and clients are led to falsely believe that their adventure is without any risk (Fletcher 2010).

For the third way to overcome the safety-risk paradox, Fletcher (2010) presents his own theory in which he says adventure tourism involves public secrecy, that is explained as something generally known but cannot generally be articulated (see Taussig 1992, in Fletcher 2010, p. 11). Fletcher (2010) argues that through public secrecy it is possible to offer risk and safety simultaneously, as tour providers and customers do not acknowledge the apparent contradictory impressions related to the concept of adventure.

3.4. Adventure in a tourism context

As identified by Swarbrooke et al. (2003), adventure is associated with the following activities: *physical activity*, *contact with nature*, *contact with cultures*, and *journeys*. These activities yield niche forms of tourism, like *activity tourism*, *nature-based tourism*, *discovery and cultural tourism*, and *expedition tourism*. See Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between activities and niche form of tourism

Activities associated with adventure		Existing niche forms of tourism
Physical activity	→	Activity tourism
Contact with nature	→	Nature-based tourism
Contact with cultures	→	Discovery and cultural tourism
Journey	→	Expedition tourism

Source: own elaboration, based on Swarbrooke et al. 2003, p. 17.

Activity tourism relates to physical activities that usually happen outdoors. The outdoors – natural world –, provide people with stimuli related to excitement, challenge, novelty, discovery and many more. Hence, we can identify features of adventure tourism. Similarly, *nature-based tourism* can provide experience in the great wilderness, with amazing natural sights and landscapes. The third – *discover and cultural tourism* – relates to contact with often

unique, unusual, and exotic settings. Finally, *expedition tourism* is about dealing in difficult and challenging terrain that could be a substantial source for adventure.

All these niche forms have overlapping features with adventure tourism; therefore, one can state that these niche forms of tourism are sub-sectors of adventure tourism.

Further, Buckley (2010) identifies four key components of adventure activities in the context of tourism. *Independent travel*, which involves at least one commercial transport and accommodation, that makes the adventure qualified as *tourism*. *Fully packaged commercial adventure tours* in which the traveler participates. *Fixed-site adventure activities*, which is available to everyone, but attracts a lot of tourists. And *ancillary businesses* that are linked to adventure tourism, mainly by providing tours and equipment.

3.5. Typologies of adventure tourism

Swarbrooke et al. (2003), define three typologies of adventure tourism. These are “adventure and independence”, “soft and hard adventures”, and “destination- and activity-driven adventure tourism”.

3.5.1. Adventure and independence

This typology was introduced by Addison (1999), who identified two axes to demonstrate the relationship between adventure (challenge) and independence (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). He recognized four types of activities:

Leisure refers to people who have low level of independence and who tackle challenges, where special skills are not needed. For example, a person participating in a commercialized activity where the level of difficulty is easy, and the role of the tour operator is dominant.

Recreation refers to people who have higher level of independence, but the activity is not especially dangerous. An example can be a person that goes on a hike.

Adventure competition describes people who have low level of independence but who like to engage in more challenging and demanding tasks, like adventure racing for example.

High adventure activities are those that require high level of independence and high-level skills to tackle challenging tasks. This concept is similar to the idea of *serious leisure* (see p. 14), and it refers to individual expeditioners or mountaineers.

3.5.2. *Soft and hard adventure*

This typology has gained the interest of many scholars, (like Lötter et al. 2013; Patterson and Pan 2007; Page et al. 2005; Neirotti 2003) when they strive to identify tourists' motives for engaging in adventures. This typology can resemble the casual-serious leisure continuum.

Soft adventure is defined as “*activities with a perceived risk but low levels of real risk, requiring minimal commitment and beginning skills; most of these activities are led by experienced guides*” (Hill 1995, p. 63) Basically – just like casual leisure – soft adventures do not require previous experience. Soft adventures include activities, like; hiking, cycling, animal watching, or kayaking (Swarbrooke et al. 2003).

Hard adventure on the other hand “*refers to activities with high levels of risk requiring intense commitment and advanced skills*” (Hill 1995, p. 63). Activities like skydiving, scuba diving, or abseiling can be considered as hard adventures (Lötter et al. 2013). These types of activities would resemble serious leisure.

3.5.3. *Destination- and activity-driven adventure tourism*

This typology determines what the main goal of the travel is. In case of destination-driven adventure tourism, the destination is the most important for the traveler. The traveler is interested in specific landscapes, historical monuments, or other attractions that he or she wants to visit. In this case the location can be in a special remote place with remarkable features.

In activity-driven adventure tourism it is the activity that attracts the traveler rather than the destination. In this case the characteristics of the destination are not important, and the traveler wants to try out a specific activity that he or she travelled for. (Swarbrooke et al. 2003)

This division is based on tourists' drives and motives, as there are certain motives that influence travelers' decisions on where to take a trip. These motives and drives will be analyzed thoroughly later in the paper.

3.6. *Adventure recreation and adventure tourism*

As it was stated earlier, adventure recreation is an integral part of adventure tourism (see page 13) and it is defined as: *a variety of self-initiated activities utilizing an interaction with the natural environment that contains elements of real or apparent danger in which the outcome, while uncertain, can be influenced by participant and circumstance*” (Ewert 1989: p. 6). As the definition implies, danger and uncertain outcome are important features of outdoor recreation, just as well as the skills and competence the participant develops to overcome those challenging situations. Danger and uncertain outcome have been identified as important

characteristics of adventure, hence we can assume that just like adventure recreationists, adventure tourists will also prefer uncertain situations, where their skills can be tested. As Williams and Soutar (2005) identify based on Ewert's (1987) findings, the difference between adventure recreation and adventure tourism is that the former one is managed by the individual with little commercial influence.

3.7. Defining adventure tourism

The definition of *adventure tourism* is just as complicated as the definition of tourism or sport tourism. However, based on the review provided above we can highlight some key characteristics of adventure tourism that will help us understand it better.

First, adventure has a subjective nature and is unique to each person (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). This means that what might be perceived as an adventure for one person, might not be for another. Nevertheless, people need to be involved with practical engagement in order to experience adventure. Second, people have certain expectations that they want to fulfill throughout an adventure. They expect certain challenges, something new and exciting that will contribute to the development of their skills and satisfaction. Third, adventure tourism is a business enterprise that includes guidance and specialized equipment. This is what distinguishes adventure tourism from adventure recreation. Adventure tourism is organized beforehand and includes commercialized activity (Beedie 2003; Vujanović et al. 2013). And fourth, adventure tourism relates to nature and outdoor based activities.

Having considered the characteristics of adventure and tourism, out of the many definitions provided by scholars, the definition of Buckley (2007) is found to be the best to define adventure tourism: "*adventure tourism means guided commercial tours, where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized equipment and is exciting for the tour clients*" (Buckley 2007, p. 1428).

The biggest challenge for a commercial tour operator is to identify the motives and drives of potential clients that make them engage in adventure activities. Every adventure tourist has certain expectations and needs, which they strive to fulfill through adventure activities. The tour operator has to understand these needs and expectations to deliver exciting and challenging activities to its clientele to make them satisfied and induce a feeling of well-being. Client satisfaction is crucial, as it will contribute to a better client relationship that can possibly enhance re-visiting intention or the word of mouth effect (Sato et al. 2016; Williams and Soutar 2009).

4. The motives driving engagement in adventure tourism

In general, we can say that tourists are motivated to go traveling and to undertake adventure activities to see and experience something new, to get away from everyday habits, to socialize with people, or to learn something new. The sources of motivation and how tourists value the experience varies greatly (Prebensen 2015) and it depends on geographical (where tourists come from), demographic (age, gender, race) and psychographic (lifestyle and personality) characteristics (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). The aim of this section is to identify adventure tourists, to analyze contemporary theories related to motivation in adventure tourism, and to identify the personal stimuli and driving forces of tourists that make them participate in adventure activities.

4.1. Who is an adventure tourist – the typology of adventure tourists

Simply put, an adventure tourist is a “*tourist taking part in an adventure activity, i.e. one whose principal purpose is excitement*” (Buckley 2010, p. 19) and according to Williams and Soutar (2005, p. 252), “*they are attracted to areas that offer scenic beauty, unique natural formations and opportunities to experience activities in remote wilderness environments*”. As this section will scrutinize, adventure tourists have a myriad of motivations to engage in adventure activities. Perhaps the most important characteristics to identify for the supply side of the adventure tourism sector are the psychographic characteristics of travelers. Personal characteristics and lifestyle are key determinants whether a traveler will participate in adventure activities (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). Further, personality will determine, whether people will travel alone or in groups and lifestyle will indicate the types of activities they might be interested in (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). While identifying adventure tourists, additional characteristics like geographical and demographic characteristics are to be considered. This would shed light on the places of origin of tourists, their gender, age and racial backgrounds, which are all relevant characteristics in determining an adventure tourist. In her study, Sung (2004) classified adventure travelers into six subgroups.

General enthusiasts refer to enthusiastic fans of adventure travel in general. This group is the most likely to take adventure trips and they seek experiential and participatory nature of adventure travel.

Budget youngsters represent young people between 19-34 years of age. They are rather price sensitive and try to arrange the trips themselves. However, they are also willing to engage in commercial trips to gain experience and expertise.

Soft moderates are travelers who like to purchase all-inclusive packages and are most likely to participate in soft activities such as hiking, nature trips, or camping.

Upper high naturalists are attracted by the great outdoors for soft or rugged nature types of activities. Their main preference is to seek novelty and exotic places.

Family vacationers as the name implies, refer to traveling families. They do not exhibit any specific preference for adventure activities, but they are likely to engage in some activities.

Active soloists show extreme interest in seeking adventure activities. This group is likely to engage in challenging activities and they prefer risk-equipped activities (Sung 2004).

4.2. Risk theory in adventure tourism

People experience risk, when they expose themselves to danger (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). Scholars seem to universally agree upon that risk is an integral part of adventure and tourists deliberately seek it (Neirotti 2003; Ewert and Hollenhort 1989; Cater 2013; Ewert 1989). Further, the element of danger and risk has been also identified by Buckley (2010) and Swarbrooke et al. (2003) as a core component of adventure. In fact, danger and risk are closely related to uncertainty of outcome (another core element of adventure). These two elements are interrelated to each other, as uncertainty creates a sense of risk, while risk can also support uncertainty. Risk could relate to physical damage (injury, pain, or even death) or to psychological state (through embarrassment, humiliation, or loss of confidence) (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). Just like in case of adventure, risk is being perceived differently by tourists, and throughout practicing and acquiring skills they can gain the ability to tolerate risk to a certain level. Developing higher tolerance to risk could enable one to participate in adventures with more challenging and risky conditions that would move the participant toward the serious leisure on the casual leisure-serious leisure continuum (see page 14). This idea closely relates to Ewert's and Hollenhort's (1989) findings, who concluded in their study that participants will exhibit higher propensity for risk-taking as their experience level increases, and that risk plays a central role for satisfaction.

Other scholars have also investigated the relationship between risk-taking and satisfaction, more specifically subjective well-being (SWB) (Holm et al. 2017). SWB is a particular outcome for participants undertaking adventure activities which is related to satisfaction, happiness, and fulfilling needs and goals. In their study, Holm et al. (2017) investigate the relationship between SWB and the motivation for risk-taking behavior within *risk-tourism* which is a sub-niche of adventure tourism. Risk-tourism refers to specific activities that may involve the potential for physical injury or even death and require

participants to develop skills and competencies with which they can overcome risks (Holm et al. 2017). Based on their own and Han and Paterson (2007) research, the authors conclude that tourists tend to exhibit risk-taking behavior as it “*may fulfill an existing void, or reduce stress, in their life and therefore gives them happiness, positively contributing to their SWB*” (Holm et al. 2017, p. 12). In this case, risk-taking affects positively their well-being. However, the authors also identify the negative effects on well-being if the risk activity ends in an undesirable way. Whether the risk activity will have a positive or negative effect on the well-being depends on the participant’s skill level. In this regard, we can distinguish between what Swarbrooke et al. (2003) call *positive risk* and *negative risk*. The former one refers to risk over which one has control, hence it is perceived as a positive challenge, while the latter one to risks that one cannot control and is perceived as dangerous.

Through exhibiting risk-taking behavior people seek to satisfy higher level needs such as self-actualization (Weber 2001). Based on Holm’s et al. (2017) work, several scholars associate this seeking for higher level of needs with Maslow’s notion of “peak experience”. According to scholars these peak experiences are mentally, emotionally, and physically engaging that require best sets of skills and competence (Holm et al. 2017). One can possibly acquire these sets of skills while encountering risky adventures and constantly improving his or her skills and competencies.

It seems widely accepted among scholars who investigated the relationship between risk and adventure tourism that risk constitutes an important component of adventure that contributes to the adventure experience. Sensation seeking is another component that is intertwined with the element of risk (Holm et al 2017 and Swarbrooke et al. 2003).

4.2.1. Sensation seeking

The concept of sensation seeking was developed by Marvin Zuckerman (1979, quoted in Arnett 1994, p. 289), who defines sensation seeking as “*the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences*”. Throughout his research, Zuckerman developed the Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS), a psychological model, that tests people’s risk-taking behaviors in different situations (Swarbrooke et al. 2003 and Arnett 1994). The scale measures the overall sensation-seeking and four sub-components: *thrill and adventure seeking*, *experience seeking*, *disinhibition*, and *boredom susceptibility* (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). Lepp and Gibson (2008) associate sensation seeking with the need for novelty which is inextricably linked to tourism behavior, as people want to experience something *new* and *exciting* that is not related to their

everyday lives, when they go traveling. When adventure travelers participate in exciting and adventurous events they can achieve a “feel good” state (Swarbrooke et al. 2003), which will lead to complete enjoyment of the activity and a positive adrenaline rush. This state is similar to the state of flow, described by Csíkszentmihályi (see page 15). In these situations, a person overcomes challenging and possibly risky exercises and can entirely immerse in the activity and enjoy the moment to the fullest. The aesthetics of risk can be a facilitator to experience flow, as it contributes to the pursuit of ecstatic and transcendent experience (Stranger 1999). The adventure has to be meaningful for the participant and an aesthetic which encompasses the appreciation of the sublime in nature and the value of nature can contribute to thrill-seeking and the creation of meaningful experiences that can stimulate the sublime experience of flow (Stranger 1999).

Risky and challenging circumstances are important stimuli that will support the participant to achieve sensation seeking and ultimate satisfaction. This puts the tour operators into a rather difficult situation. They need to provide activities with a perception of risk-taking and which support the idea of sensation seeking, while at the same time providing safe conditions that minimize risk, as for tour operators the most important is to provide safety to their clients (Williams and Soutar 2005) (see section 3.3).

4.2.2. The tour operators' approach to risk

The aim of tour operators is to make sure that their clients feel they can safely and successfully engage in a high-risk activity (Buckley 2010). They have to achieve it by providing exciting and challenging activities and experiences, that would positively influence customers' satisfaction, but at the same time manage everything carefully to minimize risk as much as possible. However, the feeling of risk-taking should never be entirely eliminated, as risk consists an integral part of the adventure (Cloutier 2003). The outdoors, the professional guides, and proper organization should make sure that a given tour is under full control while providing a perception of risk taking to the participant. A critical issue in risk management is that the guides have good judgment in every possible scenario while on a trip (Williams and Soutar 2005). It is crucial for a business to maintain its integrity regarding safety, as incidents involving injury or other more serious consequences could harm its image (Cloutier 2003). Tour operators have to deliver exciting and challenging packages that will meet customers' expectations and contribute to their satisfaction.

Risk and sensation seeking have been identified as key issues for meeting customers' expectations and for delivering satisfaction. However, there are other emerging theories and ideas that somewhat question the importance of risk in adventure activities. These are the *Insight theory* and *Authenticity*.

4.3. *Insight theory in adventure tourism*

In his paper "Pursuing Risk or Insight Marketing Adventures", Walle (1997) criticizes contemporary scholars for putting too much emphasis on risk as an inevitable element for those involved in adventure activities and neglecting other important behavioral and motivational elements. Further, he highlights some inconsistencies related to the risk-theory. He argues that linking risk-taking adventures with Maslow's notion of peak adventures (see page 22) is contradictory to the idea of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Young (1985, quoted in Walle 1997, p. 267) argues that "*the adventurer accepts risks and challenges in order to experience rewards associated with self-actualization and peak experiences*". Walle (1997) argues that this is against the idea of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as the hierarchy does not accept danger in order to achieve high level goals. Advancing to another level is only possible by accomplishing the previous, hence the risk theory suggests that people would abandon "safety" (a low-level need) and undertake danger and risk to achieve higher levels (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Source: own elaboration, based on Walle 1997, p. 268.

Walle (1997) highlights it as a limitation to the risk theory and proposes an alternative, the "insight model". In this model, risk is not viewed as an inherent goal of adventure, although it might emerge as a side effect. In this model, self-actualization would be achieved through gaining insight in adventure activities. This way the model stays consistent with Maslow's

hierarchy and it also preserves the notion that individuals use adventure to achieve self-actualization and peak performance (Walle 1997). This theory is relevant to adventure activities and seeks to identify insight, self-esteem, and personal development as motives to engage in adventure activities, rather than risk-taking behavior.

4.4. Seeking authenticity

Authenticity as a core component of adventure tourism was first discussed by Duffy and Overholt (2013), however the concept of authenticity to study travel motivations was already introduced in the 1970's by MacCannell (Wang 1999). Duffy and Overholt (2013) follow upon Walle's (1997) suggestion on moving away from risk theory and claim that authenticity could be applied to reconsider the meaning of adventure tourism. They suggest that both adventure and tourism experiences reflect the idea of *escaping from modernity* and this is the mechanism that provides the traveler the *novel*, the *unknown*, the *authentic*. In fact, escapism is identified as a major component of adventure (Duffy and Overholt 2013).

In her paper "Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experiences", Wang (1999) presented the idea of *existential authenticity* as an alternative source of authentic experiences. Existential authenticity refers to "*a potential existential state of Being that is to be activated by tourist activities*" (Wang 1999, p. 352). Through existential authenticity one can experience one's real self, including emotional experiences that are felt to be authentic, like passion, thrill, love excitement, or boredom (Duffy and Overholt 2013). Nature-based tourism is one of the best ways of experiencing one's real self (Wang 1999). Untouched and pure nature is considered to be authentic and places that can provide real authentic experiences, however commodified tourist packages might influence this authenticity, as they could harm the "realness" – hence the authenticity – of such environments. However, based on the discussions of Arnould and Price (1993) and Price and Otnes (1999), Duffy and Overholt (2013) highlight that commercial tour operators intentionally construct adventure experiences in a way that it feels authentic, but the activity is actually ritualized and performed by those in charge of the experience. This way, the commodified adventure tourism can still provide authentic experiences. In addition, these pre-organized and insulated activities have the potential to create genuine and authentic feelings such as fear (Duffy and Overholt 2013). According to this theory, the essential point is to provide experiences that are authentic, through which one can find existential authenticity. Even without the presence of risk, if packages and activities are managed in a way that they induce positive feelings and emotions, the adventure is going to be genuine and authentic.

Hence this theory suggests that people seek authenticity in adventure tourism for which risk may not be required.

4.5. *The characteristics and motivational decisions of adventure tourists*

Previous research on motivational decisions by scholars mainly concentrate on adventure recreationists. However, as adventure recreation and adventure tourism are to some extent related to each other, the characteristics and motivational decisions of their participants will be somewhat similar (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016). Perhaps the most important difference between the two concepts is that tourists demand extrinsic values and are willing to pay commercial operators, while recreationists seek intrinsic values and prefer to be independent (McKercher 1996). The element of independence is crucial that make up a significant difference between recreation and tourism. Another key difference is that recreationists are more likely to participate in adventure activities within their home environment (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016).

The first studies on adventure tourists' motives identified *thrill-seeking* as a motive driving outdoor adventure activity participation (see authors in Pomfret and Bramwell 2016, p. 1451). Thrill seeking, combined together with the state of flow constitute *rush* which is “*a particular kind of excitement associated with the physical performance of a specific adventure activity, at the limits of individual capability, under highly favorable circumstances, by a person who is already skilled and trained in the activity concerned*” (Buckley 2012, p. 963). According to Buckley (2012), rush can be considered as a particular form of peak experience that brings one closer to self-actualization, that gives ultimate satisfaction and self-esteem. Hence, it is a rare phenomenon that is only available to participants who have acquired particular skills. Ultimately, people seek rush instead of risk, but the two concepts are intertwined, as circumstances that produce rush also generate risk. However, clients want to experience rush, not the risk and they strive to maximize rush and minimize risks (Buckley 2012). Peak experience is a broad concept which can also be associated with spiritual or creative activities (like art or music), which activities can also cause the sense of peak experience (Buckley 2012 and Lipscombe 1999).

In addition to rush, as in important motivation, Buckley (2012) summarized the previous research on motives driving the engagement in adventure activities. These motives can be divided into three main groups and their sources are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sources of motivation for adventure tourism

Internally generated motives	
<u>Source:</u>	<u>Manifestation:</u>
Thrill	Adrenalin and excitement
Fear	Overcoming fear
Control	Maintain physical and mental control
Skills	Using expertise to perform very difficult tasks
Achieve	Overcoming challenges to reach difficult goals
Fitness	Activity as a way to keep physically fit
Risk*	Danger as a direct motivation
Internal/External place in nature	
<u>Source:</u>	<u>Manifestation:</u>
Nature	Appreciation of beauty and natural phenomena
Art	Perception of activity as artistic
Spirit	Activity as spiritual experience
Externally generated motives	
<u>Source:</u>	<u>Manifestation:</u>
Friends	Enjoyment in sharing the activity with others
Image	Enhancing how one is perceived by others
Escape	A change from routine of home or work
Compete*	Competition against others

Source: own elaboration, based on Buckley, 2012, p. 962.

With asterisk, those sources are marked, which were excluded by some scholars as relevant and true motives of adventure tourists (Buckley 2012). The other motivational forces are discussed by many scholars and they are all relevant sources while analyzing adventure tourism motives. The division of motives into internally and externally generated motives is closely related to *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivations.

4.5.1. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

Deci (1975) was the first theorist to acknowledge the distinction between intrinsic (internal drives) and extrinsic (external or environmental drives) motives (Patterson and Pan 2007). Intrinsic value is defined as “*the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capabilities, to explore and to learn*” (Ryan and Deci 2000:a, p. 70). Basically, it means to do something for one’s inherent (personal) satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence (Ryan and Deci 2000:b). Tasks have to be interesting and create satisfaction when completed, if one exhibits intrinsic motivation. In these cases, the person is not motivated by some external reward, but by the activity itself. Through the

participation in powerful and intrinsically motivating activities, one can perceive positive experiences that can contribute in achieving peak experiences and self-actualization (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016). If self-actualization is achieved, one can experience flow, when one is so involved in the activity that nothing else seems to matter. Consequently, this can lead to playfulness when participants exhibit para-telic state that resembles adventurous spirit and makes the participants trust their skills and abilities (Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004 and Mykletun and Mazza 2016). As Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2004, p. 858) explain “*play is an innate feature of human existence and goes far beyond the games of children or distractive, mindless activities*”. The para-telic state refers to a playful motivational frame, in which the individual feels highly aroused, where one’s skills and competence match the situational risk. On the other hand, the telic state is dominated by emotions like stress and anxiety, where danger and risk levels are beyond competence and skill, and it will influence negatively the experience (Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004). The authors identified a relation between play and risk, as adventurers are naturally looking for challenges to test their abilities and achieve high arousal, which makes the state of play an intrinsically motivated behavior (see Barnett 2000, in Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004, p. 859).

The term *extrinsic motivation* “*refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome*” (Ryan and Deci 2000:a, p. 71). Hence, the motivation does not come from the inside, but there are some external stimuli that will prompt the action. These external stimuli are other-directed and evolve from external or environmental factors (Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989). Extrinsic motivation is usually present in case of unexperienced adventure travelers, who do not have significant skills, and are mainly motivated by external factors, rather than by inner needs to participate in adventures (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016). Extrinsic motivation for adventure tourism can be: wild and rugged destination environments, escape from everyday habits, better health and fitness, or improvement of social status (Patterson and Pan 2007; Swarbrooke et al. 2003; Ryan and Deci 2000:b).

Another way to refer to intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is the push (socio-psychological) and pull (cultural) factors (Swarbrooke et al. 2003 and Kotler et al. 2017). The division of tourist’ motives into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is useful to better understand adventure tourists’ motivations. One of the best theoretical frameworks to apply this theory is the travel career ladder of Pearce (1988) (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). This model is an adaptation of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (see Figure 2), as it explains how (adventure) tourists reach “fulfillment” through realizing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Figure 3 depicts the travel career ladder.

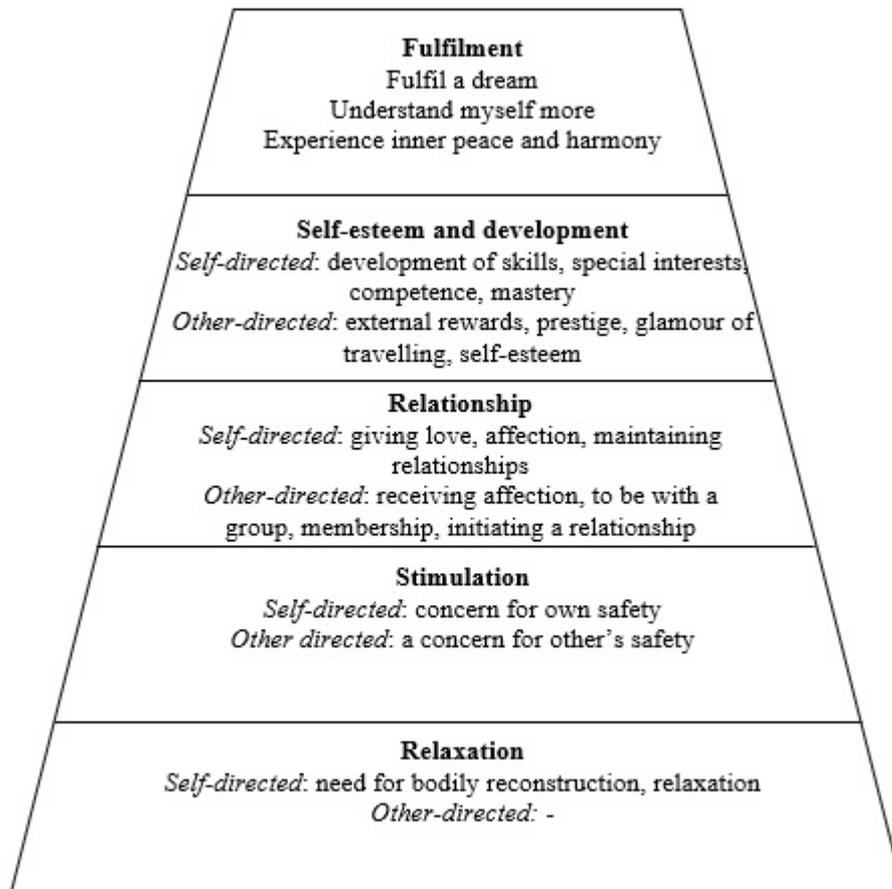


Figure 3. The Travel Career Ladder. Source: own elaboration, based on Swarbrooke et al. 2003 p. 68.

The levels of the travel career ladder resemble the levels of Maslow's pyramid. In Maslow's model the first level concerns biological and psychological needs, that in the tourism context can be described with the need for relaxation and escaping from reality. The second level – safety and security needs –, is present in tourism behavior as the need for own safety (intrinsic motivation) and need for other's safety (extrinsic motivation) while participating in an adventure activity. The third level of Maslow's hierarchy is love and belonging needs, which would be seeking social relationships (intrinsic motivation) and meeting new cultures (extrinsic motivation) in case of an (adventure) traveler. The fourth level in Maslow's pyramid is the self-esteem needs, which is clearly visible in case of adventure tourists. They have the intrinsic motivation to become better, to gain new skills and knowledge, and to overcome challenging situations. While the extrinsic motivation is to demonstrate their capabilities and prove that they are able to overcome challenging situations. Finally, the top level of the hierarchy – self-actualization – is fulfilment in case of (adventure) tourists, which means, that they gained significant skills, achieved certain goals, and can enter the playful (para-telic) and flow state, while experiencing the feeling of rush.

4.6. *Spiritual well-being*

Spirituality, nature, and art have been identified as motives driving engagement in adventure activities (see Table 2). There is an identified link between spiritual well-being and nature (wilderness), as spiritual benefits are often mentioned as a reason for valuing wilderness (Heintzman 2003). Elkins et al. (1998, quoted in Heintzman 2003 p. 27), defined spirituality as “*a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be Ultimate*”. Such identifiable values could be; health, solitude, self-learning, physical, emotional, social, or nature inspired spiritual experiences (Heintzman 2002; Heintzman 2003; Brymer and Gray 2009). The connection between spiritual well-being and the natural environment was also identified by Varley (2006 p. 188), who argued that outdoor adventure creates a romantic connection with nature that offers “*the potential for spiritual renewal via de-alienating, creative experiences and a feeling of a return to the (imagined) core qualities of pre-modern lifestyles (also romanticized)*”. Hence, we can clearly see the interrelation between spiritual well-being and the natural environment. Further, the engagement in extreme sports is a transformational experience for some participants who can experience spiritual, physical, and emotional benefits (Brymer and Gray 2009).

4.7. *Experiences, values, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in adventure tourism*

The previous sections have been analyzing the motives of adventure tourists, while this section is going to concentrate on what tourists *expect* from adventure activities, by examining the relationship between value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Behavioral patterns try to answer the questions, like; What motivates people? What are their expectations from adventure activities? What gives them satisfaction? What makes them to come back for more? (Williams and Soutar 2009). Three dimensions of customer values are identified, which are: *value for money, emotional value, and novelty value* (Williams and Soutar 2009). From a service perspective, these customer values are crucial, as they are going to have a huge influence on customers’ satisfaction, revisiting intentions, or on the word of mouth effect, that are directly related to the consumption experience. It means that tour operators do not only have to deliver good service, but also unique experiences that suggests the rise of a new emerging economy (following agrarian, industrial, and service economy), that is the *experience economy* (Pine and Gilmore 1998).

4.7.1. *The experience economy*

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), experience economy has become the fourth emerging economy following agrarian, industrial, and service economies. It is “*because consumers unquestionably desire experiences, and more and more businesses are responding by explicitly designing and promoting them*” (Pine and Gilmore 1998, p. 97). One of the most profound trends in the world of events has been the growing interest of corporate businesses to use the concept of experience for brand building and marketing purposes (Getz and Page 2016). Businesses nowadays have to facilitate positive experiences concerning their products and services, that create customer satisfaction and increase the chance of repurchasing the company’s products. In case of a tour operator it would be the intention for re-visiting or the positive image creation for the company through word of mouth. In order for that to happen to tour operators evoke *memorable tourism experiences*.

4.7.2. *Memorable tourism experiences (MTE’s)*

The experience of leisure and tourism can be described as “*the subjective mental state felt by participants*” (Otto and Ritchie 1996, p. 166). For an experience to be durable and long lasting, it has to include some extra and added value that makes it *memorable* and *meaningful*. Through offering interesting and challenging activities in spectacular natural environment these MTE’s can be evoked. “*MTE’s are those experiences that are selectively constricted from tourist experiences and can be remembered and recalled after a trip*” (Zhang et al. 2017, p. 2). In their study Kim et al. (2012) developed a measurement scale specifically for MTE’s and identified seven dimensions that characterize MTE’s. These dimensions are: *hedonism* (pleasurable feelings), *refreshment* (state of being refreshed), *local culture* (good impression about local people), *meaningfulness* (great value or significance), *knowledge* (the gain of new skills and knowledge), *involvement* (being involved in the experience), and *novelty* (psychological feeling of newness) (Kim et al. 2012). These seven experience dimensions are considered to be the ones that individuals recall most frequently (Zhang et al. 2017).

4.7.3. *The multidimensional perspective of customer value*

The multidimensional perspective of customer value includes both utilitarian and socio-psychological perspectives (Williams and Soutar 2009). It is useful to consider this multidimensional view regarding adventures services because it underlines the importance of interaction between the producer (tour operator) and customer (adventure tourist) and the

heterogeneous character of adventure products (meaning adventure is a subjective manner). Based on Sheth et al. (1992) and Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Williams and Soutar (2009) identify four value dimensions that are important to analyze in the adventure tourism context. These are *functional value*, *social value*, *epistemic value*, and *emotional value*.

Sheth et al. (1991, quoted in Williams and Soutar 2009 p. 416-417), defined *functional value* as the “*perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s capacity for functional, utilitarian or physical performance*”. Functional value is the primary driver of consumer choice and its common attributes include quality, reliability and price (Williams and Soutar, 2009). In adventure tourism functional value refers to the quality of equipment, safety measures, and risk minimization.

Emotional value is a social-psychological dimension and it is experienced when the product or service is able to arouse feelings or affective states (Williams and Soutar 2009). Emotional value is likely to be a key element in adventure tourism, as they refer to such feelings as excitement, fear, rush, para-telic state, or the state of flow.

Sheth et al. (1991, quoted in Williams and Soutar 2009 p. 417), defined *social value* as the “*perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s association with one or more specific social groups*”. In the context of adventure tourism, it refers to social contact between participants, or with the guides, and the individual prestige and recognition that is achieved through participating in adventure activities (Williams and Soutar 2009).

Epistemic value refers to the novelty value, which is created when the product or service satisfies a desire for knowledge (Williams and Soutar 2009). It is an important value, as novelty and the desire to learn something new have been identified as motives driving the engagement in adventure activities in case of Walle’s insight theory (see section 4.3).

4.7.4. Customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions

Satisfaction is related to individuals’ motivations as the latter one reflects the inner needs and push them to seek out experiences that will bring the former (Swarbrooke et al. 2003). It is in the best interest of tour operators to create positive values and to tailor their products and services according to the needs and expectations of their customers, as satisfaction is positively influenced by value and positive experiences. Based on previous research Otto and Ritchie (1996) identified that in case of services, the subjective, affective, and experiential factors make up a substantial amount of customers’ satisfaction. Hence, by providing the appropriate level of challenge will increase the possibility of satisfaction for customers, as they would be able to enjoy and learn from the activity (Williams and Soutar 2005). Tour operators must distinguish

between participants with previous experience and with no experience, as the threshold where they begin to feel satisfied is essentially different.

The overall satisfaction of a customer will have an effect on behavioral intentions. Several studies identified the relationship between customers' satisfaction and post-purchase consequences, like loyalty, word of mouth, or re-visiting intentions (Sato et al. 2016 and Williams and Soutar 2009). Positive satisfaction will induce favorable intentions from the tour operators' perspective, while negative feedback and image deterioration can happen if they fail to satisfy their clients. Therefore, it is crucial for any tour operator to create relevant value and experiences that will influence positively customer satisfaction which would consequently lead to favorable post-purchase behavioral intentions.

4.8. Previous findings on tourist motives

To summarize this section on adventure tourism, a literature matrix is presented that illustrates the key motives found from 12 studies that specifically examine adventure tourist's motives. These motives greatly overlap with the ones identified in this section and will create the base for the data collection section. The studies were identified via literature searching engines using such key words, like: "motivation", "adventure", "adventure tourism", or "adventure tourist motivation". The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Tourist motives driving engagement in adventures identified in the literature

Author (Year)	Research – Adventure activity/Type of tourist	Findings regarding motives – Motives driving the engagement in adventure activities
Breejen (2007)	Motives for hiking/Long distance walking: the case of West Highland Way in Scotland	relax mentally; get away; challenge one's self; feel close to nature; feeling of control; self-accomplishment.
Brymer and Schweitzer (2013)	Motives for participating in extreme sports	explore fundamental human values; risk; feel of adrenaline; feeling of freedom; redeem self-responsibility.
Albayrak and Caber (2017)	Motives for white-water rafting	explore new ideas; learn something new; expand knowledge; gain respect; be active; challenge abilities; develop physical fitness; socializing; relieve stress and tension.
Holden (1999)	Motivation of ski tourists	have a good time with friends; make new friends; self-esteem and development; challenge and develop abilities; closeness to nature, impress others.
Kruczek et al. (2018)	Adventure activities in the Antarctic Region (Marathon, South Pole Ski Expedition, Antarctic Crossing, Deep Field Flights, Last 1-2 Degree Expedition)	escape from everyday life; opportunity to tackle extremely harsh conditions; risk; fear; euphoria; remoteness; nature.
Lăzuran (Giurău) and Ungureanu (2014)	Motives to participate in activities in Bihor County Romania (canyoning, river rafting, rock climbing)	adventure has a subjective meaning; risk; thrill; excitement; hunt for adrenalin.
Lindberg and Eide (2015)	Motivations to visit the Arctic	the romantic images of Svalbard; wilderness of the Arctic; to be able to cope with harsh conditions.

Mutanga et al. (2017)	Motives for wild life tourism in Zimbabwe	<p>Push motives: recreation and knowledge seeking; appreciating wildlife; feeling close to nature.</p> <p>Pull motives: wilderness; beautiful landscapes; culture and tradition; peaceful environment; variety of recreational activities.</p>
Mykletun and Mazza (2016)	Motives for participants in an adventure expedition race	unique experiences; coping with nature in extreme conditions; develop skills and personal development; creating friendship.
Patterson and Pan (2007)	The main motivations of 'baby boomers' / 'seniors' that refer to people with the age of 50 and older.	<p>Intrinsic motives: escapism and relief from boredom; experiencing nature and the sense of adventure; joy and being physically challenged; meeting new people; to relieve their youth.</p> <p>Extrinsic motives: perceived health status; financial ability to travel.</p>
Pomfret and Bramwell (2016)	Motives of mountaineer tourists	master of skills; challenge and risk; catharsis; need to improve self-esteem; locus of control; recognition.
Sato et al. (2016)	Motivations and destination loyalty; decision (DMs) and non-decision makers (Non-DMs)	<p>Push motives: social interactions; escape; family; excitement.</p> <p>Pull motives: natural resources; culture; satisfaction.</p> <p>Extra findings: DMs are more goal oriented than Non-DMs, Non-DMs have lower expectations; Non-DMs are encouraged to travel by family related desire.</p>

Source: own elaboration, based on literature review.

So far, we have seen how huge of an impact, tour operators have on creating MTE's and value for customers that would induce satisfaction. However, in order for any tour operator to be able to offer exciting activities – in addition to favorable natural characteristics of a destination –, the local organizations responsible for tourism have to provide the right circumstances to conduct activities and create an attractive image of the given destination that would draw tourists. It is when *destination marketing* comes into play.

5. Destination marketing

Destination marketing is acknowledged as a pillar of the future growth and sustainability of tourism destinations (Pike and Page 2014). Practitioners of this field have a more complicated task than the practitioners responsible for marketing of casual products, as a destination is a bundle of highly diverse products, such as; geographic size, attractions, accommodation, or entertainment (Kotler et al. 2017). In addition, unlike business marketing, in which target markets define product strategy, the initial destination marketing effort starts with identifying attractions and resources at hand and then finding the right target group(s) that can be attracted by these attractions and resources (Kotler et al. 2017). According to Kotler et al. (2017), a destination is a place with actual or perceived boundaries, that can be physical, political, or market-created. and it is a place “*the consumer travels to temporarily, from the region they reside in, creating a tourism flow (demand) in both time and space*” (Pike and Page 2014, p. 204). A destination can be defined as a “*geographical space in which a cluster of tourism resources exists*” (Wang 2011, p. 2). A tourism cluster refers to the accumulation of touristic attractions, resources, equipment, service providers and other supportive sectors and administrative organizations, whose integrated and coordinated activities provide the experience that the customer is expecting from the destination (Wang 2011). As we can see, it is not only the service providers – e.g. tour operators –, but also natural characteristics and other important organizations that contribute to the overall image of a destination. Such important organizations are the *Destination Marketing Organizations* (DMOs).

5.1. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

Briefly speaking, the role of DMOs is to lead destination marketing (Pike and Page 2014), thus a DMO can be defined as “*the organization responsible for the marketing of an identifiable destination*” (Wang 2011, p. 6). Wang (2011) identifies four levels of DMO’s.

The *National Tourism Office* (NTO) is managed by the central state administration and is responsible for tourism development at the national level.

The *State Tourism Office* (STO) is the organization that is responsible for marketing a state, province, or territory as a tourist destination.

The *Regional Tourism Organization* (RTO) is responsible for the marketing of a specific region. A region refers to a concentrated area like cities, towns, villages, coastal resort areas, islands and rural areas.

The *Local Tourism Office* (LTO) can represent both, the local tourism administration and the local tourism association. (Wang 2011).

Owing to the rapid growth of the tourism sector, DMOs have to compete with each other on global, national and regional level. Adventure tourists also have changing needs, desires, and attitudes and they seek to attain unique experiences with often personalized services (Teodorescu et al. 2012). It follows that DMOs have an important role in organizing and facilitating tourism marketing and development in the given area (Wang 2011). They do it by designing and implementing marketing communication strategies that match destination resources – the area is in possession of –, with market opportunities – what tourists seek – (Pike and Page 2014). When we consider the competition between DMOs we can distinguish between *comparative advantages* and *competitive advantages*.

5.2. *Comparative advantages*

The starting point of a DMO in developing a marketing communication strategy is to identify those destination resources that represent potential sources for comparative advantages (Pike and Page 2014). Comparative advantage concerns “*a destination’s factor endowments, both naturally occurring as well as created*” (Crouch and Ritchie 1999, p. 142). In other words, it constitutes all the resources that are available to a certain destination. The five categories of resources for comparative advantage are; *human resources, physical resources, knowledge resources, capital resources, and infrastructure* (Porter 1990). The resources that make up the destination’s factor endowments change over time – e.g. naturally occurring resources that can be renewable or non-renewable –, hence proper management strategies are required from DMOs and other stakeholders related to tourism to maintain comparative advantages in the long distance. Right strategies include the proper education and training of human resources, the protection and sustainable usage of physical (natural) resources, the expansion of the knowledge resources, the investment and increase of capital resources, and the construction and development of infrastructure (Crouch and Ritchie 1999, p. 142).

5.3. *Competitive advantages*

Once a destination has identified its relevant resources that can constitute the comparative advantage, it must utilize that advantage. Competitive advantage relates to “*a destination’s ability to use these resources effectively over the long term*” (Crouch and Ritchie 1999, p. 143). It relates to management, marketing and organizational skills. It means that in case of a destination that exhibits an abundance of resources that represent comparative advantages, might not be fully exploited if the destination lacks the “know-how” and skills to utilize them properly. It follows that, a destination lacking resources, but utilizing effectively

the little it has, could lead to a competitive edge. Hence, DMOs at all levels have to demonstrate “know-how” and human capital (competitive advantage) to exploit their comparative advantage(s) to the fullest that would create an attractive image for the destination.

5.4. The destination development process

The most widely used framework to analyze the development process of a destination is the *Tourism Area Life Cycle* (TALC) model introduced by Butler (1980). The model is still being applied in tourism development case studies, both as a benchmark device or framework to plan and manage resources, hence to improve the attractiveness of a destination (Butler 1980; Lundgren 2005). The original concept of the model is to treat destinations as “products” that resemble the traditional “s-shaped” product life cycle model (Butler 1980; Butler 2011). Figure 4 depicts the TALC model.

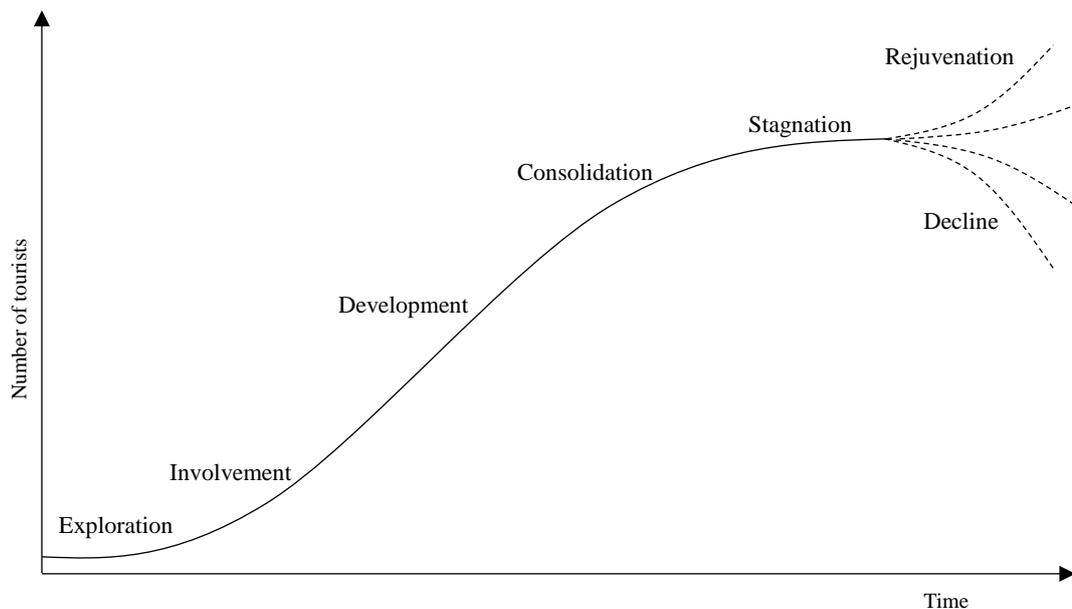


Figure 4. The Tourism Area Life Cycle. Source: own elaboration based on Butler 1990, p. 7.

The TALC model represents a series of stages reflecting the development of a tourist destination. The first stage *exploration* is characterized by a small number of tourists visiting the destination, using existing facilities and having no, or little influence on the local society. The second stage, *involvement* would resemble the emergence of certain tourism related products and the engagement of some of the local residents. The third stage, *development* represents a well-defined tourist market area, with the constant growth of tourist services and facilities, the increasing number of tourists, the local and foreign investments, and the physical

changes of the destination. In the fourth stage, *consolidation*, the area is identified as a tourist center and the local economy would be dependent on tourism and tourist numbers are likely to have reached their maximum growth rates. The fifth stage, *stagnation* will be characterized by achieving or even exceeding peak numbers of visitors and occurring environmental, social and economic problems. The image of the destination is still well-established, but it will be out of fashion. A typical stage after stagnation is *decline*, which happens when the destination will not be able to compete with new attractions and fails to attract new tourists. The destination as a tourism market will face a decrease in the number of tourists and it will only receive occasional visitors. A lot more promising alternative is the stage of *rejuvenation*. This stage may occur, although it will never be reached unless the attractions on which tourism is based are completely changed (Butler 1980; and Butler 2011).

All these stages require effective management skills from DMOs to facilitate the process of tourism development of a destination and to provide opportunities for other relevant stakeholders in the tourism sector, like: hotels, restaurants, or tour operators. It can be argued that the creation of the most beneficial economic value is reliant upon the best usage of available resources (Haywood 2005).

In developing a destination, the DMOs have also other very important responsibilities, like creating a destination image and the promotion of the destination.

5.5. Destination image development

Destination image (brand image) has become one of the most important concepts in tourism destination marketing (Shani and Wang 2011). It basically describes the first thing that comes into people's minds when they think of a destination. Destination branding is used to create attractive images and is defined as “*creating differentiated destination image that influences travelers' decision to visit a destination and conveys the promise of memorable experience that is uniquely associated with the destination*” (Kotler et al. 2017, p. 537).

A destination tourism slogan is an important tool to promote and develop destination images (Galí et al. 2017). A *brand slogan* is one out of three elements of a brand, with the other two being the *brand name* and the *brand logo*. A brand slogan is particularly important and composes the most dynamic element of a brand, as – unlike the two other elements – it is much easier to change for rebranding purposes (Galí et al. 2017 and Kotler et al. 2017). Typical brand slogans in case of destinations are: “Incredible India”, “What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas” or “I Love NY”. The creation of an attractive slogan is a challenging and difficult task for the DMOs, however, based on previous studies the following features were identified of a

good sounding slogan: *slogans comprising few words, endowed with meaning, oriented to the supply-side and with a specific geographic reference* (See various scholars in Galí et al. 2017, p. 250).

5.6. Promotion of a destination

With the age of the World Wide Web, the promotional opportunities have significantly changed in the last decades. Colorful brochures and guidebooks still exist, but their importance diminished considerably compared with the end of the 20th century. Since 2000, technology has revolutionized the information distribution and the usage of communication channels in the tourism sector (Li et al. 2017). Already in 2007, the web-based content was the most prominent information source to travelers and since then the development of e-marketing has gained the interest of many scholars (see various scholars in Li et al. 2017, p. 96). Nowadays DMOs need to have an attractive and appealing website with relevant content and useful information regarding attractions, accommodation, or activities. The traveler of the 21st century also exhibits non-traditional way of booking of accommodation, trips, and other services (Li et al. 2017), hence the application of booking systems on DMO webpages is desired. The word of mouth effect is also a lot more powerful via the Internet. People post and share pictures and opinions on social media and online travel sites (TripAdvisor), hence the power of eWOM or Electronic Word of Mouth in relation to creating an image (positive or negative) for a destination is indisputable. Of course, DMOs have no control over what people post and write about on the Internet, but if visitors of a destination are *satisfied* with the services of the DMO and related attractions and services, their positive feedback and eWOM could have a significant effect on promoting the destination.

This section showed how complex of an issue destination marketing is and how many challenging tasks DMOs must face. The TALC model proposed by Butler (1980) could provide a useful framework for tourism managers to estimate the position of a destination, while the rapid improvements in the communication technology brings in new possibilities in developing and promoting the destination image. To end this section with another literature matrix is presented which sums up specific managerial implications on destination marketing strategies identified in seven studies. The studies were identified using literature search engines using keywords like: “destination marketing strategies” destination management”, “destination brand management” or “destination improvement”. The findings are presented in Table 4 that will provide background information for the latter sections of the thesis.

Table 4. Managerial implications on destination marketing identified in the literature

Author (Year)	Research – Case of destination marketing	Findings regarding managerial implications on destination marketing
Curtin (2013)	Wildlife tourism, destination management and product development: the case of Scotland.	different segments of tourists have different needs; importance to improve infrastructure; importance for collaboration of stakeholders; tourist motives have a direct effect on management implications; need to nurture strategic relationships between DMOs and private sector operators. need of being innovative.
Maravić et al. (2015)	The analysis of Slovenian sport tourism destinations and how they can compete with other destinations abroad.	importance of destination competitiveness analysis, mainly to list weakness that need to be annulled; importance of defining sport tourism products; cooperation between tourism stakeholders.
Mykletun (2015)	The case of Voss and Ekstremsportveko: a destination for robust experiences.	initiative and entrepreneurship in establishing something exclusive; local extreme sport clubs also provide commercial activities; a main and successful event (Ekstremsportveko) serves as a catalyst for further development; importance of local DMO and its promotion of services; identifies the importance of: <i>economic-, natural-, human-, physical-, social-, cultural-, and administrative capitals.</i>
Teodorescu et al. (2012)	Establishing a starting point for the Argeş County destination marketing audit, as a sport tourism destination.	identify comparative and competitive advantages; identify awareness degree of tourists wanting to participate in activities; benchmarking; offering a proper product mix.

Tolkach et al. (2016)	The case of Australia's National Landscapes Program: issues of collaborative destination management	importance of putting forward a strategic direction plan; identifying common needs that supersede individual interests; setting objectives that serves the interests of tourism stakeholders; measuring success; necessity for sustainability; collaboration of tourism stakeholders.
Vujadinović et al. (2013)	Mountain-based adventure tourism: the case of Serbia and the types of activities it can offer.	firmer functional link between Sector for Tourism of the Ministry of Economy and the DMOs; support should be received by clubs and NGOs providing activities; more and better accommodation facilities; better cooperation between private and public sector.
Borrero (2012)	The case of adventure tourism in Suesca, Cundinamarca in Colombia	identify comparative and competitive advantages; benchmarking as a tool to identify performance gaps compared to other destinations; importance of development plans.

Source: own elaboration, based on literature review.

6. Summary of the chapter

This chapter has focused on concepts related to tourism (sport and adventure tourism) and destination marketing. It was demonstrated that tourism is the largest industry in the world and adventure tourism represents a rapidly growing sub-category of tourism.

The main focus of this chapter has been the *adventure tourism* and related theories and terms. It has been found that adventure is a subjective concept, but it possesses certain key elements like: *excitement, uncertainty, risk and danger, challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, escapism, exploration, focus, and emotion*. Based on their skill and participation levels (serious and casual leisure, or soft and hard adventures), adventure tourists seek these elements of adventure while engaging in adventure activities. Four approaches related to elements that are sought by adventure tourists have been explained. The *risk-taking* and *sensation-seeking* approach argues for risk as being a key element in adventure tourism, an approach that has received critics from contemporary researchers. The *insight theory* argues against risk and identifies insight, self-esteem, and personal development as key elements in achieving self-actualization. Lastly, the *seeking authenticity* approach argues for escaping from modernity and seeking the novel, the unknown, the authentic. Based on these different approaches *internal (intrinsic)*, and *external (extrinsic)* motivational forces have been identified in adventure tourism. Some of the most important motives driving tourists to engage in adventure activities are: *thrill-seeking, escaping from everyday life, enjoying nature, improving skills, self-esteem, social status, fun, excitement, and rush*.

The secondary focus of this chapter has been *destination marketing*. DMOs have been identified as vital organizations in creating an attractive image for a destination. The importance of possessing comparative and competitive advantages has been identified. Comparative advantage refers to resources (human, physical/natural, knowledge, capital, and infrastructure) that a destination has an advantage over another one, while competitive advantage refers to the ability to exploit the comparative advantage. Further, the stages of the TALC model have been explained along with the importance of image creation and promotion of a given destination.

It can be concluded that a success of a local tour operator does not only depend on its own skills and resources, but it is also highly dependent upon the abilities of DMOs in promoting the destination and attracting the right customer group(s) to the region.

CHAPTER II – THE CASE OF MOLDE ADVENTURE CENTER

This master thesis will apply Molde Adventure Center (hereinafter referred to as MAC) as a case study and it employs both primary and secondary data. A case study is “*an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*” (Yin, 1993). The aim of this chapter is to provide background information about Molde and to introduce the case of MAC, that will provide the base for the methodology and the data analysis for the subsequent sections of the thesis.

1. Molde

As stated earlier in the Introduction, Molde is the administrative center of the county Møre og Romsdal and it is located on the west coast of Norway on the Romsdal Peninsula, with nearly 27 000 inhabitants. According to visitnordvest.no Molde is most commonly associated with “Jazz, Roses and Panorama”. The first one refers to the annually held Jazz festival since 1961, the second to Molde’s nickname (city of the roses) and the third, to the unique view from the mountains of Molde over the 222 mountain peaks of the Romsdalen Alps. The city and its surroundings also offer a large variety of outdoor activities (hiking, biking, kayaking, skiing) and it lies in between two famous outdoor attractions: The Atlantic Ocean Road and Trollstigen (Trolls’ Path). Despite its great location and many opportunities, Molde is relatively unknown among travelers, which will be explained and underlined in the following sections. MAC was established with the aim to provide exciting outdoor experiences to visitors that could further contribute to the improvement of the image of Molde, as an outdoor destination.

2. Molde Adventure Center (MAC)

MAC was established in Spring 2017 by Didrick Ose, the owner of DID Adventure. DID Adventure is an experienced adventure company, providing high quality customized trips for companies and large groups. The idea of MAC was to provide outdoor activities in Molde and its surroundings for tourists in the summer seasons. MAC was the first ever company in Molde to provide organized outdoor activities commercially. In its first operational season, MAC was open every day from 9AM till 5PM between the 15th of June and 16th of August. The office of MAC was at the main square of Molde and due to the absence of an official tourist office in the town, the office quickly became the “unofficial” tourist information point of Molde.

The main goal of MAC was to make Molde a more attractive city for both locals and tourists, by offering different kinds of activities. In the first season MAC received more than 300 clients and it was confirmed that there is a demand for organized outdoor activities, especially by tourists visiting the town. In the future seasons, MAC wants to extend its offer to gain more customers and to have a wider range of products.

2.1. How MAC developed

The idea of launching MAC was created by Didrick Ose, the owner and manager of DID Adventure. Two sport management master students from Molde University College could gain a closer look on how a new start-up is built up and what the challenges and difficulties are with starting a new venture. Their involvement was carried out in a form of an internship, which was an obligatory part of their master programme in sport management. All the expenses connected to the development of the project was covered by Didrick Ose, while the two students were responsible for preparing the venture for the summer seasons and running the business in the summer. The main responsibilities included the tasks described below.

2.1.1. Website development

First and foremost, MAC needed an online platform where potential customers could easily find out more about the possibilities in Molde and could book the tours and activities they were interested in. For this purpose, Trekksoft online booking software for tours was used. Trekksoft is an online tool providing the management of business operations – related to organized tours and activities – on a single platform. Trekksoft also provides the possibility of building up a website via their own website building kit. This tool was used to create and build up a website on the domain, moldeadventurecenter.no. The pictures, logos and sketches found on the website were created by Grafia, a local design company in Molde. Everything else, regarding setting up the structure, managing the booking system and administering the domain was carried out by the interns.

2.1.2. Informing relevant stakeholders of the tourism segment

Just before the summer season started, it was vital to inform relevant stakeholders of the tourism segment in Molde. Several meetings were set up with the regional tourist office (RTO) to inform them about the products of MAC and to make those products visible on the RTO's website: visitnordvest.no. Other important meetings were arranged with the local port authorities who were in charge of the schedule of cruise ships visiting Molde. Thanks to them,

MAC was marked on the maps that were distributed to passengers disembarking the ship, making it easier for tourist to find the office. Finally, prior to official opening all the hotel managers of Molde were informed about products and activities offered by MAC, so that the hotel staff could also inform their guests looking for outdoor activities in Molde.

2.1.3. Marketing activities

Creating awareness about MAC was the biggest challenge in 2017. The company was brand new it had no history, so the most important task was to let people know about the existence of MAC. Posters were hung out in the town and fliers were distributed to inform the locals about the new attractions. Also, two articles were written about MAC in the local newspaper, “Romsdals Budstikke” to create awareness among local people. The posters and fliers were also distributed in the hotels and campsites of Molde to inform tourists staying overnight in Molde.

The presence of MAC on online surfaces was also crucial. MAC profiles were created on such social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. These tools were also used to reach out to people, inform them about the available products and to spread the word about MAC. A profile on TripAdvisor has also been created on which the tourists could express their opinions about the services of MAC.

2.1.4. Customer service and guiding

The office of MAC was open every day between 15th of June and 16th of August. The interns were responsible for equipment maintenance, information distribution, replying to customers’ inquiries and guiding. Due to the absence of an official tourist office in Molde, the office of MAC also took the role of a tourist information by informing people about the region of Møre og Romsdal, about traveling possibilities, and providing suggestions on where to go and what to visit.

However, the main objective was to sell the activities provided by MAC, which are described in the following section.

2.2. The activities offered by MAC in summer 2017

The main product of MAC in summer 2017 was electric bicycle and regular mountain bicycle trips. The recreational area (Moldemarka) just outside Molde provides the perfect terrain for biking, enjoying nature and the spectacular views over the “Romsdalsfjorden” and the famous Molde panorama with 222 mountain peaks. MAC had 10 high quality Scott

mountain electric bikes and 15 high quality Trek regular mountain bikes. The main focus was on electric bike trips, as the terrain of Moldemarka is quite hilly and steep at some points, therefore the help from the electric motor was very useful while climbing peaks of over 600 meters. However, some clients preferred the muscle-powered mountain bikes to undertake the challenge of experiencing the trails of Moldemarka.

Another product was two guided city walks in Molde to Romsdalsmuseet (Romsdals museum) and Aker football stadium. The Romsdals museum is a regional museum of culture and heritage of the region Møre og Romsdal. The museum also has a production unit, where the famous wedding dresses, “Bunad” are manufactured (Romsdalsmuseet 2018) MAC organized a guided trip in the museum, which included a guided walk in the city, entry ticket and guidance in the museum and a coffee and waffle break in the museum’s cafe. The Aker Stadium is the home of Molde Football Club, that is one of the best teams in the Norwegian Football League. The spectacular stadium opened in 1998 and was nominated for the FIABC’s Prix d’Excellence in 1999 and was a gift to the city from the local businessmen Kjell Inge Røkke and Bjørn Rune Gjeldsten (Molde FK 2018). MAC gained the exclusive rights from the management of the football club to provide a guided tour of the stadium. The guided trip included a short walk in the city center and entry to the stadium to such places as the players’ lounge, mixed zones, VIP sections, or media and security sections. The guided tour ended at Skybar of the Scandic Seilet Hotel, where the tourists could enjoy a spectacular view at the city, the fjord and the Molde panorama.

MAC also offered guided hiking trips to the popular limestone caves of Trollkirka (Troll Church). Trollkirka is located around 30 kilometers outside Molde and after a hike of approximately 90 minutes, one can enter three separate limestone caves with spectacular waterfalls, and dark and curvy ways inside the caves. This hiking trip was only available on request and it was mainly organized for the Viking Cruises, whose every vessel coming to Molde in 2017 requested a trip for their passengers. A maximum of 30 participants could join the hike and each time MAC provided two guides, flashlights and helmets, which were necessary to enter the caves in a safe way.

The final product that was offered in 2017 was guided kayak trips and kayak rental. Due to the difficulty of storing sea kayaks in the centrum of Molde, kayaks were only available on request. MAC was also cooperating with the local kayak club in Molde, that organized basic kayak courses for MAC clients.

2.3. The future of MAC

MAC is currently developing its products for summer 2018. The main attraction will still remain with the electric bike and regular mountain bike trips, but several other products are to be added which were only available on request or were not available at all.

Guided kayak trips and kayak rental now will be available daily, as MAC received several requests from cruise agents for carrying out guided kayak trips. The difficulty of storing the equipment has been also solved, as MAC will have its equipment stored by Molde Fjordstuer Hotel, which has great access to the fjord that makes entering the sea a lot easier.

MAC will also include more hiking trips for which it will be also able to organize transport on request. Such hikes as Jendemsfjellet, Sjurvarden or Romsdalseggen are all well known among locals, which have the potential of attracting foreign tourists as well.

Another product that will be available in 2018 is an on-request fishing trip in Molde and Bud and the rental of fishing equipment. MAC received several inquiries from tourists visiting the town for fishing possibilities and fishing equipment, hence the inclusion of this product for the 2018 season.

Finally, MAC intends to organize rappel on Scandic Seilet Hotel that would be an exciting activity for people who like climbing and are not afraid of heights.

3. Summary of the chapter

This chapter introduced MAC, which is applied as a case study in this thesis. Its brief history, activities provided in 2017 and future plans have been presented. After the first season it was confirmed that Molde is in need of a company that arranges organized outdoor activities, as people visiting the town are looking for different opportunities and adventures. Molde and its surroundings provide the perfect environment for carrying out cycling, hiking or kayaking activities. As the title of this thesis articulates, this opportunity is currently unexploited and Molde does not capitalize on its comparative advantages. Companies providing adventure activities could be an essential part in utilizing these comparative advantages that could contribute to a better image of Molde as an outdoor destination.

The further chapters of the thesis will explain the methodology used in obtaining data and present the findings and analysis that are connected to the first operational season of MAC in 2017.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

The methods used in this research for collecting data is strictly connected to MAC, its activities and its first-year clients. To gather the data, both primary and secondary data were employed. Primary data refer to *new data specifically collected in the current research project – the researcher is the primary user of such data*” (Veal and Darcy 2014, p. 204). Since the author of this thesis took part in the creation and running of MAC, relevant primary data could be collected that will be presented in the next chapter. Secondary data on the other hand, refer to data that *“already exist and were collected for some other (primary) purpose but can be used a second time in the current project – the researcher is the secondary user”* (Veal and Darcy 2014, p. 204). In case of this research, secondary data refers to data connected to tourism in Molde that were obtained from various sources.

1. Primary data collection

Data were collected throughout the project – while providing activities to people – and after the project. The method for data collection during the project was through *observation* while a *questionnaire* was constructed and sent out to gather further data after the first season was over. In addition, four of the participants were willing to give a more detailed insight on their journey to Norway and Molde, hence extra *interviews* were scheduled with them. Finally, a meeting was set up with the representative of the RTO of Nordvest (region of Møre og Romsdal), to get more information on what Molde – as a city – is planning to do to boost its reputation as an outdoor destination.

1.1. Observation

Observation involves paying attention to various details. According to Veal and Darcy (2013) there are number of types of situations, where observation is applicable for data collection. In case of observing MAC clients, the observation of *visitor profiles* was applied (Veal and Darcy 2013). This method includes site surveys that are *“typical means for researching demographic and group composition data which combine to provide a visitor or user profile”* (Veal and Darcy 2013, p. 230).

Observations of people visiting the office of MAC were carried out every day when the office was open. Visitors’ profile such as gender, nationality, estimated age, and purpose of visit were determined and noted. The purpose of these observations was to identify the

demographic profiles of MAC clients and their main purpose of visiting Molde and MAC. This was important to understand what kind of customers MAC could expect in the future and to identify the products, MAC should consider implementing in the upcoming seasons. In addition to demographic characteristics, also the attitude toward outdoor activities was observed. There were major differences observed between decision makers and non-decision makers that will be explained in the next chapter.

1.2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be defined as “a written/printed or computer-based schedule of questions and a pro forma for recording answers to the questions” (Veal and Darcy 2013, p. 278). Questionnaire surveys are being applied when a specific range of information is required by the researcher. This research method is based on a representative sample of a defined population, from whom the researcher collects responses through questionnaires. The questions usually have a limited number of possible answers, but some questions may be open-ended questions (Veal and Darcy 2013).

The questionnaire used in this research was an electronic survey, that was conducted via the Internet. The advantages of this method are its low cost and the speed of the process and the ease of answering by respondents. While the disadvantage of e-mail surveys is the low response rates, as respondents might not be willing to fill out such questionnaires.

To find out more about MAC’s clients attitude toward outdoor activities and motives driving participation in such activities, a questionnaire was constructed, mainly concentrating on the theoretical aspects of adventure tourism presented in the first chapter (see the questionnaire in the appendices, in Appendix A). The aim with this questionnaire was to establish a more in-depth profile of customers that would serve in better understanding the theoretical concepts of this thesis.

The questionnaire was created through an online survey and feedback software company, “Questback”, composed 25 questions (22 closed questions, 2 short answers, and a question, where participants were asked to state their nationalities) and was sent out via e-mail to 50 separate recipients. The closed questions consisted of single and multiple-choice questions and in some cases “Likert scales” were applied, where respondents could indicate their agreement or disagreement on a 1-5 scale.

The types of data measured through the questionnaire were *nominal data* and *scale data*. Nominal data refer to non-numerical categories such as questions referring to gender, experience level, or the way people found out about MAC. Since the data was analyzed by

computer, these types of information from the questionnaire were coded, that is “*converted into generally numerical codes and organized in a systematic, ‘machinereadable’ manner*” (Veal and Darcy 2013, p. 325). Every question option was given a numerical identification through which the analyzing software could interpret the data. Scale data on the other hand refer to numerical information, like age or Likert scale questions. In these cases, coding was unnecessary, as the answers were already received in numerical format. The retrieved information was analyzed through Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Since MAC had a lot of German speaking customers, the questionnaire was available both in German² and English. The recipients were all MAC clients who participated in an activity organized by MAC in summer 2017. The e-mail addresses were collected during the summer, when people signed up for activities. Due to the optional choice of providing an e-mail address and the fact that some people traveled in pairs or in smaller groups the number of e-mail addresses collected were much lower than the actual number of participants MAC hosted in 2017. Recipients were however encouraged to also forward the questionnaire to their travel companions.

The questionnaire was sent out in March 2018, which was 6-9 month later the guests visited Molde. The reason for this large time lapse is that the topic of this thesis and its research background was only defined in January 2018 and the questionnaire could only be constructed in late February 2018. Due to this large time lapse only five questionnaires were returned after the first send-out, and an additional 11 after sending out three reminders. A total of **16 responses** were received which is equivalent to a **response rate of 32%**. Six Americans, five Germans, two Swiss, and one Dutch, Japanese, and Estonian returned the questionnaire. There was a huge abundance of male respondents, as 13 responses were received by males and only 3 by females. The average age of respondents was 40. The results of this questionnaire will be presented and analyzed in the next chapter.

1.3. Interviews

The purpose of interviews (in-depth interviews) is to get a better understanding of the research phenomenon than through questionnaires (Veal and Darcy 2013). Such interviews are longer than questionnaires and they also provide the opportunity to provide a deeper analysis

² The author of the thesis does not speak German; therefore, a native speaker was asked to translate the questionnaire. All the analysis was carried out in English.

of the research topic. For the purpose of this thesis, five interviews were carried out. Four connected to the theoretical concepts of adventure tourism, as the interviewees were MAC clients. The second interview was carried out with RTO representative in Molde and its subject was related to the concepts of destination marketing strategies.

1.3.1. Interview with Participants

In addition to the 25 questions, the online questionnaire had an extra question in which the respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in a Skype or telephone interview to provide more insight and impressions about their stay in Molde. Four people expressed willingness to participate in such interview which were carried out in the end of March and in the beginning of April. The outline of the checklist for the in-depth interviews is provided in the appendices, in Appendix B.

1.3.2. Interview with RTO representative in Molde

This interview was arranged to find out more about the RTO's efforts and decisions on creating a more positive image for Molde. RTO's play a vital role in managing a city brand and an interview with a local representative was considered to be a good way to gain useful information and data regarding this subject. The interview was scheduled for the 6th of April and it took place in the RTO's office in Molde. The outline of the checklist for the in-depth interviews is provided in the appendices, in Appendix C.

2. Secondary data collection

Secondary data were collected prior to the project and it consisted of data related to tourism in Molde. It was necessary to have an overview on how many tourists and travelers MAC can expect during the first season. For this purpose, numbers and statistics were acquired from "Statistiknett Reiseliv" (a Norwegian online database on tourism in Norway), the local hotels, and the port authorities.

2.1. Online statistics

Statistics regarding tourism in Norway and Molde were collected from the website: <http://www.statistiknett.no/>. The main aim was to identify the number of tourists visiting Molde in the summer months: June-August and to compare the numbers with previous years'

statistics to determine tendency. It was a vital point prior to launching the project to have an understanding over tourism patterns and what the year 2017 could bring.

2.2. Data from hotels

Prior to the launch of MAC, hotels were requested to send information on the number of hotel guests they received in the summer months (June-August) in 2016 and the average number of nights they spent in Molde. This information was important to have an overview over tourists staying in hotels and to understand better tourism patterns in the summer months in Molde. In addition, hotels were asked to send information about their guests' most frequently asked questions about Molde and what they can do in the town.

2.3. Data from port authorities

These data were crucial, as cruise ship passengers compose a great deal of overall tourist numbers visiting Molde in the summer months. It was important to find out, when a given ship was coming to Molde, how long it stayed, how many passengers it carried, and the most common nationalities of its passengers. This information was important to prepare everything prior to a ship's arrival and to know how many tourists could be expected in Molde during that day.

3. Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided an explanation on the methodology that has been used for data collection throughout this thesis. The difference between primary and secondary data and the various methods in collecting these data have been explained and presented.

Primary data collection was applied by the researcher during the first operational season of MAC – through observations and profiling visitors – and after the first season ended – through an online questionnaire and interviews –. These primary data compose the most important aspects of the thesis, as they intend to find an answer on what people expect from Molde and how it could become a better-known destination for adventure activities.

Secondary data collection concentrated on identifying tourism trends in Molde during the summer months, which was important in case of MAC to have an estimate over the number of tourists that Molde could expect.

In the next chapter, both primary and secondary data will be presented and explained to gain a better insight on the theoretical perspectives presented in the first chapter.

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

This chapter is going to present and analyze the data that were gathered throughout this research. As it was explained earlier the research applied both, primary and secondary data. The findings will be presented in accordance with variable types of data explained in Chapter III, starting with the secondary data analysis.

1. Findings from secondary data

Sources for secondary data throughout the research have been: online tourist statistics, statistics from hotels, and statistics from the port authorities. Data connected to Molde have been collected and analyzed.

1.1. Findings from online statistics

The aim with these data was to examine the number of people visiting Molde in the summer months (June-August), as in the first season MAC was operating in these months. The data include the overnight stays in four hotels and one campsite in Molde. Table 5 represents these data from 2010 to 2016.

Table 5. Overnight stays in summer months (June-August) in Molde: 2010-2016

Overnight stays in summer months (June-August) in Molde between 2010-2016							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	49 443	53 682	51 551	50 596	56 198	62 056	63 896
Norwegian	40 311	41 406	41 249	37 752	40 717	46 552	43 309
Foreigners	9 132	12 276	10 302	12 844	15 481	15 504	20 587

Source: own elaboration, based on http://www.statistikknett.no/reiseliv/sommer/utv/utv_region_marked_alle.aspx.

Table 5 shows that the overnight stays in Molde increased significantly in the last seven years (with the year 2012 showing a slight decrease, and 2013 regarding Norwegian overnights). By 2016, there was an approximately 30% of increase of total overnights in June-August, compared to 2010, and more than a 100% increase regarding foreign overnights. According to statistikknett.no, the foreign nationalities came from more than 40 different countries. The most representative groups are: Germans, Swedes, Americans and Dutch.

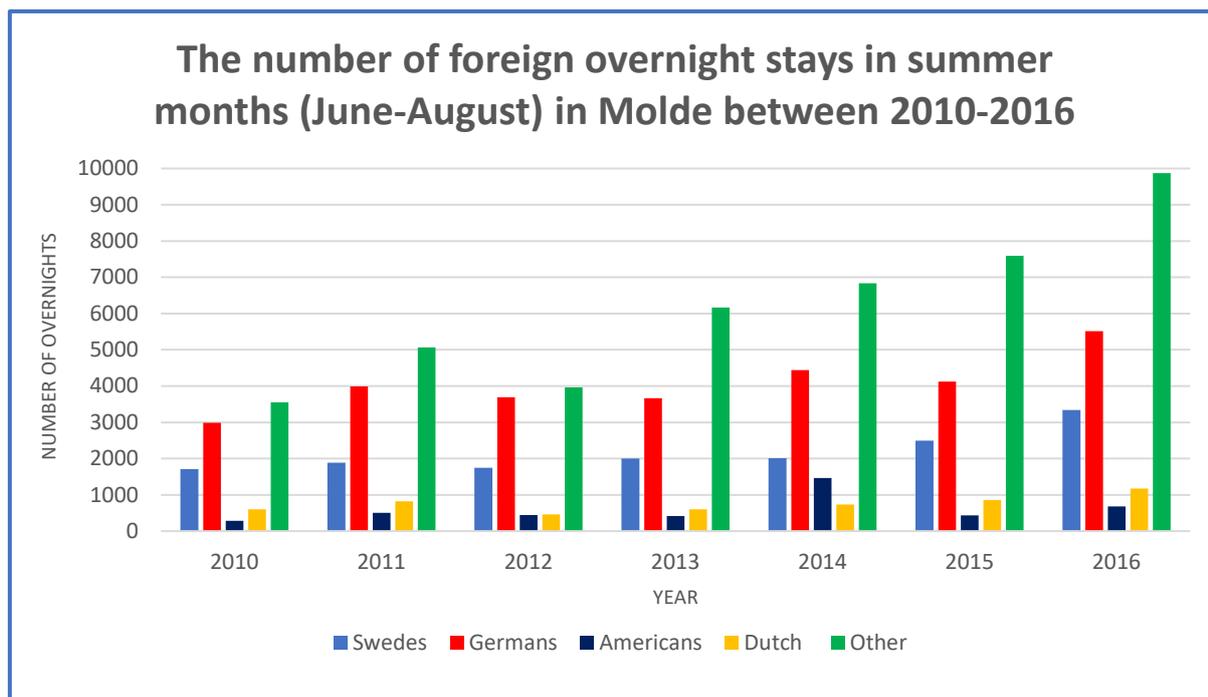


Figure 5. The number of foreign overnight stays in summer in Molde: 2010-2016. Source: own elaboration based on http://www.statistiknett.no/reiseliv/sommer/utv/utv_region_marked_alle.aspx.

Figure 5 depicts the most representative foreign groups of overnight stays in summer months (June-August) in Molde between 2010-2016. As the data show, there is a significant increase in the numbers, demonstrating an increase of interest among foreigners to visit Molde during the summer. These statistics are limited to people who spend at least one night in Molde and do not show tourists traveling on cruise ships, or travelers who choose other overnighting possibilities.

1.2. Findings from data from hotels

One of the sources MAC could expect its customers are the visitors staying in hotels. MAC was closely cooperating with the hotels in Molde before the business was launched, during and after the first season. Table 6 represents the statistics and data received directly from the four hotels operating in Molde after the first operational season and consider the summer season in 2017.

Table 6. Data received from Hotels in Molde

Hotels of Molde				
	<i>Scandic Seilet</i>	<i>Alexandra</i>	<i>Thon</i>	<i>Fjordstuer</i>
Number of total visitors (June-August)	~20 500	~13 500	~8 500	~6 000
Average number of nights spent in Molde	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,6
Most representative nationalities	1. Norway 2. Sweden 3. Germany	1. Norway 2. Germany 3. The Netherlands	1. Norway 2. Sweden 3. Germany	1. Norway 2. Germany 3. Sweden
What they are looking for in Molde	1. Mountains 2. Culture 3. Transit city	1. Culture 2. Outdoor possibilities 3. Transit city	1. Nature 2. Shopping 3. Transit city	1. Hikes 2. Nature 3. Fishing

Source: own elaboration, based on information and data from hotels.

As Table 6 shows, there was around 48 500 visitors who stayed in hotels in summer 2017. Most of the guests were Norwegians, and the most representative foreign nationalities were Germans, Swedes, and Dutch.

The biggest challenge for the tourism industry in Molde is shown in row 2, in which the average number of nights spent in Molde is presented. On average, visitors spend little over one night when they visit Molde, which also supports the argument that some people consider Molde as a “transit city” while they travel in Norway (see row 4 in Table 6). This is a major problem, as people visiting the town are not staying for longer than 1-2 nights, which considerably limits their chances in experiencing the atmosphere and various outdoor possibilities Molde has to offer.

1.3. Findings from data from port authorities

Another essential source of MAC customers are cruise ship passengers. Year after year, the three ports administered by the port authorities in Molde receive more cruise ships. These three ports are in Molde, Åndalsnes and Eresfjord. In 2016 these three ports received 85 cruise ships, in 2017, 91, and in 2018 more than 100 ships are expected to visit the region. These numbers in case of Molde are 37 (2016), 34 (2017) and 54 (2018) respectively (Molde-romsdalhavn 2018). These numbers cover a whole calendar year, but most of the ships are

coming in the summer months. In 2017, 30 cruise ships came to Molde in the period when MAC was open. The list of these cruise ships is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Cruise ships during summer (June-August) in Molde 2017

Date	Cruise ship	Most representative nationalities	No. of passengers
16.06.2017	Thomson Celebration	British	1 214
18.06.2017	Mein Schiff 3	German	2 750
20.06.2017	Viking Sky	American	930
20.06.2017	Costa Magica	Italian, German	3 470
24.06.2017	Silverwind	American	296
26.06.2017	MS Deutschland	German	600
28.06.2017	Viking Star	American	930
28.06.2017	Viking Sea	American	930
29.06.2017	Gann	Norwegian	148
30.06.2017	MSC Preziosa	Italian, German	4 345
03.07.2017	Albatros	Spanish	1 000
03.07.2017	Star Legend	American	208
04.07.2017	Silvercloud	American	300
05.07.2017	AIDA Sol	German	2 194
07.07.2017	Monarch	German	2 766
11.07.2017	Hamburg	German	420
12.07.2017	Viking Sky	American	930
13.07.2017	Star Pride	American	204
15.07.2017	AIDA Sol	German	2 194
18.07.2017	AIDA Bella	German	2 050
20.07.2017	Viking Sea	American	930
25.07.2017	AIDA Sol	German	2 194
26.07.2017	Silverwind	American	296
27.07.2017	Seabourn Quest	American	450
04.08.2017	AIDA Sol	German	2 194
08.08.2017	Star Legend	American	208
14.08.2017	AIDA Sol	German	2 194
15.08.2017	AIDA Bella	German	2 050
16.08.2017	Mein Schiff 6	German	2 500
16.08.2017	Europa	German	408
			41 303

Source: own elaboration, based on "2017 Cruise Molde – Åndalsnes – Eresfjord".

During the first operational season of MAC, around 40 000 cruise ship passengers visited Molde, on 30 different ships. The ships were in Molde for different time periods ranging from 4 to 10 hours. The most representative nationalities were Germans and Americans.

2. Findings from primary data

Sources for primary data throughout this research have been: observation during the project, receiving customer feedback via an online questionnaire, and conducting interviews with three customers and a representative from the RTO.

2.1. Findings from observation

Observation was carried out during the project and such data were gathered as demographic information, origin of customers, purpose of their visit, or the way they found out about MAC. Tables 8 and 9 and Figure 6 summarize these findings.

Table 8. Summary of MAC clients in 2017

Nationality	Number of guests on E-bike	Number of Guests on MTB	Number of guests on Stadium tour	Number of guests on museum tour	Extra (Trollkirka hike and Kayak)
Norwegian	29	4	-	-	1
German	39	3	9	9	3
American	23	-	-	4	130
Dutch	13	7	-	-	-
Swiss	11	3	-	-	-
Spanish	6	-	-	-	1
Italian	5	-	-	2	-
British	3	2	3	-	-
Belgian	3	-	-	-	-
Polish	1	-	-	-	-
Estonian	1	-	-	-	-
Austrian	1	-	-	-	-
Swedish	1	-	-	-	-
French	-	4	-	-	-
Japanese	-	1	-	-	-
TOTAL	136	24	12	15	135

Source: own elaboration, based on observation during first season of MAC.

In total, MAC had 322 customers from 15 different countries in 2017. The most representative nationalities resemble the nationalities identified in statistiksnett's data (except for Swedes). MAC mostly received people from Norway, Germany, United States, and the Netherlands. Concerning gender, 44% (141) were female customers and 56% (181) were males. The most popular products were e-bike tours, the hiking trip on Trollkirka and kayaking. This is the main reason, for including kayaking and various hiking trips in the product offer of MAC in summer 2018.

Another important observation was to identify where the customers were originated. This is shown in Figure 6.

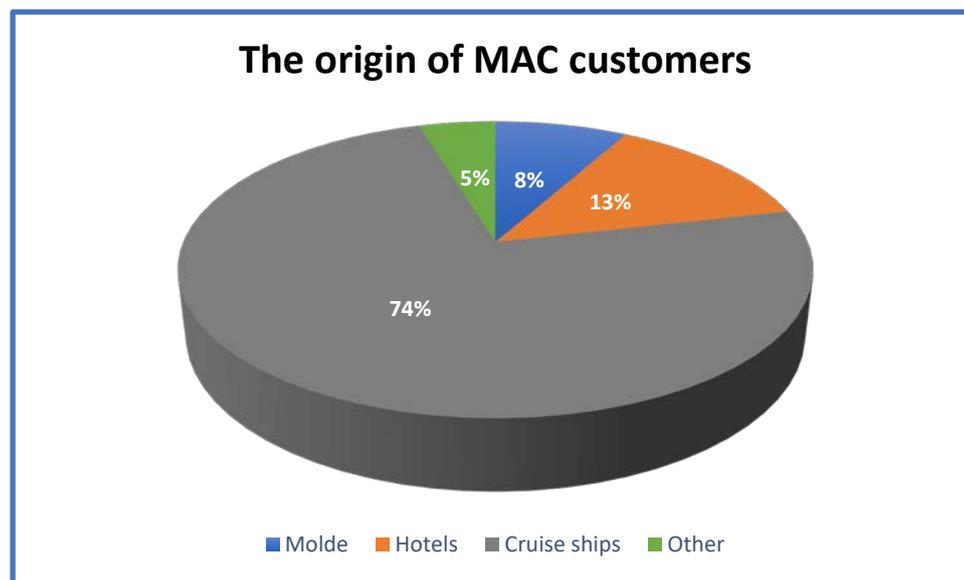


Figure 6. The origin of MAC customers. Source: own elaboration based on observations during the first season of MAC.

As Figure 6 shows, 74% (238 customers) of MAC customers came from various cruise ships and only 13% (43 customers) from hotels. The remaining customers were from Molde by 8% (26 customers) and had other origins by 5% (15 customers). "Other" refer to customers, who traveled in camping cars or stayed overnight at other places than hotels.

Table 9. Purpose of visit and finding out about MAC

The purpose for visiting MAC/Molde	How they found out about MAC
Try out e-bikes just for fun	Facebook
Experience nature	Online search
Long weekend trip to Kristiansund	Fliers from hotels
Check the trails of Moldemarka	Hotel reception
Wanted to learn more about the culture	TripAdvisor
Family trip	Maps distributed on the pier
Try out kayaks	Randomly, walking around in the city
Go for a hike	Looking for the tourist information
Quick transport	
Test an e-bike before buying one	

Source: own elaboration, based on observation during first season of MAC.

Table 9 summarizes the observations regarding the purpose of visiting Molde/MAC and the sources of information where people learnt about MAC. The most common reasons for visiting MAC was to try out the e-bikes and to get information about the outdoor possibilities in Molde. The biggest problem is however that 74% of customers were from cruise ships, who visited the town because Molde was part of the ship itinerary and not necessarily because they wanted to visit the town. It was also an important observation that people had very little or no knowledge about Molde and the outdoor possibilities one can do in the region. The most common way of finding out about MAC were the Internet, maps distributed on the pier and randomly walking around in the city.

2.2. Findings from questionnaire

The questionnaire's sample size is 16 tourists, who visited Molde in summer 2017. More than 50% of the respondents arrived in Molde on cruise ships, meaning that they did not have an overnight stay in Molde. For all, but one visitor³, the visit of Molde in 2017 was the first visit of the town and all the respondents claimed that they knew very little or nothing at all about the city before their arrival. Table 10 summarizes the findings.

³ The person visited Molde on Hurtigruten coastal trip in 2016, where the stop in Molde is only 30 minutes, therefore there was no chance to get the city know any better.

Table 10. Knowledge about Molde

Knowledge before arrival (N=16)	No knowledge at all			Very good knowledge		Mean	
	1	2	3	4	5		
How well did you know Molde before your vacation? (1-5)	11	3	2	-	-	1,44	
Knowledge after the visit (N=16)	1	2	3	4	5	I don't know	Mean ⁴
Countless opportunities for outdoor activities (1-5)	-	1		6	7	2	4,36
Unique natural settings and landscapes (1-5)	-	1	-	7	7	1	4,33
The Atlantic Ocean road (1-5)		3	4	3	3	3	3,46
Molde Jazz (1-5)	-	1	2	1	1	11	3,40
“City of the Roses” (1-5)	1	2	3	0	1	9	2,71

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

As it can be seen from Table 10, even after the visit, most of the respondents did not gain any knowledge regarding the Atlantic Ocean Road, Molde Jazz, or that Molde is the “City of the Roses”. However most of the visitors do associate Molde with plenty of outdoor possibilities and unique natural settings after they had visited the town.

The most frequent reasons for choosing Norway as a destination and Molde as a part of their vacation are presented in Table 11. The received answers were first read and then divided (coded) into 5 different categories (1-5 in case of reasons for visiting Norway) and 6 different categories (1-6 in case of reasons for coming to Molde) that made it possible for SPSS to make the analysis. In case of reasons for visiting Norway, the category “Other” included: *not overrun by tourists, friends recommending it, Norwegian lifestyle, and well-organized country*. While in case of reasons for visiting Molde, the category “Other” included: *looking for family roots, work related stay, and good hotel options*.

⁴ Means were calculated without the “I don’t know” option, which makes the values a lot higher, as most responses could not be taken under consideration due to the lack of recalling the given feature. If we exclude “I don’t know”, the mean values are a lot lower

Table 11. The most common reasons for visiting Norway/Molde

Most common reasons for visiting Norway		
	Responses (N=48) ⁵	
	N=48	Percent (%)
Nature/Landscapes	23	47,9
Culture	6	12,5
Sport/Outdoors	6	12,5
Vacation/first time visit	5	10,4
Other	8	16,7
<i>Total</i>	48	100
Most common reasons for visiting Molde		
	Responses (N=39) ⁶	
	N=39	Percent (%)
Part of ship's itinerary	13	33,3
Nature/Landscapes	7	17,9
Sport/Outdoors	6	15,5
Part of travel plan/Transit	4	10,3
Culture	2	5,1
Other	7	17,9
<i>Total</i>	39	100

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

The most common reasons for visiting Norway were the unique natural settings and landscapes, followed by cultural reasons and the willingness to pursue various sport and outdoor activities. In case of visiting Molde, the most common reason was found to be that “it was part of the ship's itinerary” (more than 50% of responses came from cruise ship passengers), but many people wanted to experience nature and carry out outdoor activities. On some occasions the city was considered to be as a “transit city”.

The respondents were also asked to provide feedback on what they expected from Molde as a destination. Four, multiple-choice options were given, therefore people could select more than one answer. The results are shown in Figure 7.

⁵ The reason for N=48 is that respondents could give a maximum of 3 most common reasons for visiting Norway.

⁶ The reason for N=39 is that not all of the respondents gave 3 reasons for visiting Molde.

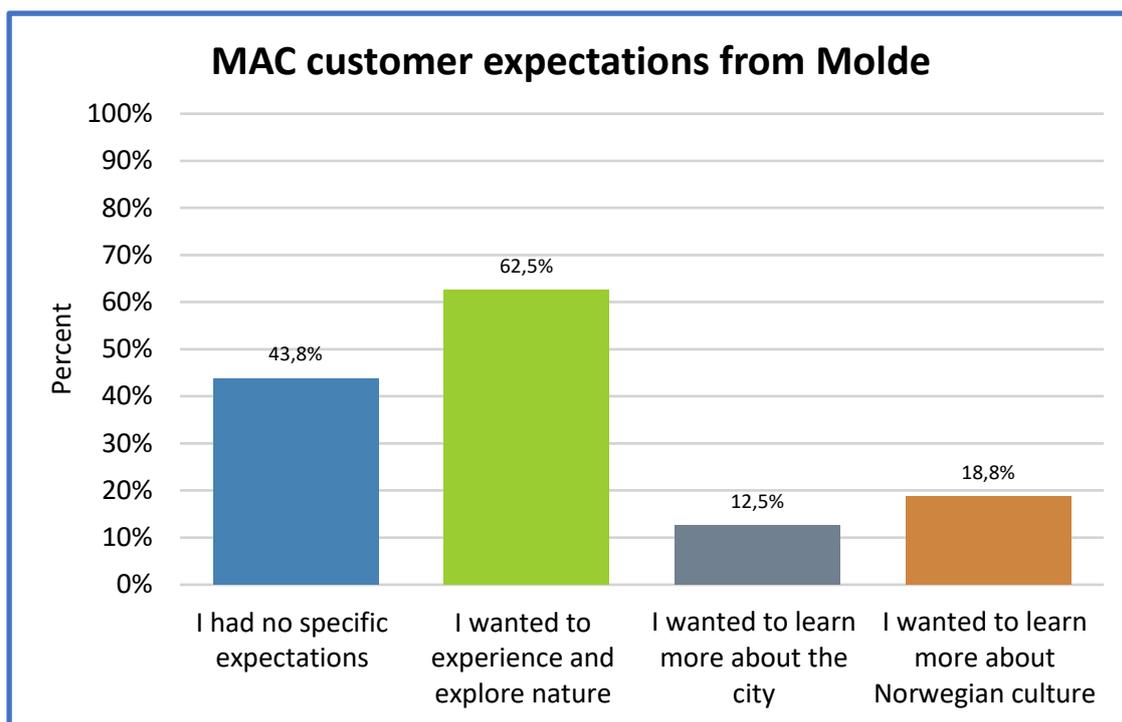


Figure 7. MAC customer expectations from Molde. Source: own elaboration based on SPSS calculations.

As Figure 7 indicates, many respondents signaled that they wanted to experience and explore nature, despite having little or no knowledge at all about Molde. However, as nearly 50% of visitors chose Norway because of the nature and spectacular landscapes (see Table 7) this result is not surprising. On the other hand, more than 40% of respondents had no specific expectations from Molde prior to their visit. As more than 50% of respondents were cruise ship passengers (who do not pick their itinerary) it would be interesting to see whether there is a relationship between the way people arrive in Molde and their expectations from their visit in the town. To investigate this, two hypotheses were made:

H_0 – there is *no* relationship between the way how people arrived in Molde and their expectations from the town.

H_1 – there *is* a relationship between the way how people arrived in Molde and their expectations from the town.

To analyze this relationship the Crosstabs analysis was applied in SPSS, which measures the relationship between two variables. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Crosstabs analysis

Arrival in Molde, N=16	No expectations	Expectations	Total
Cruise ship	7	2	9
Airplane	0	2	2
Car	0	4	4
Bus	0	1	1
<i>Total Sample size (N=16)</i>	7	9	16
$\chi^2 = 9,68$, significant at 5% level			

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

The Crosstabs analysis showed that the relationship between the way people arrive in Molde and their expectations from the city was significant at the 5% level. The chi-square (χ^2) was 9,68 and the probability of this value was 0,022 or 2,2%. Hence, the chi-square value is an unlikely one (it has a likelihood of less than 5%), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the way people arrive in Molde and their expectations from the town. The response “I had no specific expectations” were only indicated by respondents who arrived on cruise ships, while people who arrived by car, bus, or airplane had some specific expectations before their visit.

The questionnaire investigated the specific elements people are looking for when they engage in adventure activities. The left side Table 13 shows the motives that might drive the participation in adventure activities and their corresponding importance to respondents. The right side of the table represents the corresponding values in relation to the services provided by MAC.

Table 13. Expectations from adventure activities

Motives to engage in adventures	The importance of these elements in general, N=16							The elements were met by MAC in a satisfactory way, N=16								
	<i>Not important</i>					<i>Very important</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	MEAN	<i>Disagree</i>					<i>Agree</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	MEAN
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>				<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>			
Experiencing nature	-	-	-	6	10	-	4,63	-	-	2	2	11	1	4,6		
Beauty, Scenery and landscapes	-	-	1	3	12	-	4,69	-	-	1	2	12	1	4,73		
Getting away from everyday habits	-	2	-	6	8	-	4,25	1	-	-	4	9	2	4,23		
Challenge myself	-	3	1	9	3		3,75	-	2	4	1	7	2	3,93		
Self-accomplishment	-	2	3	7	2	2	3,64	1	2	2	2	6	3	3,77		
To have fun!	-	-	1	4	11	-	4,63	-	-	-	4	12	-	4,75		
Try something new I have barely or never done before	-	1	4	4	7	-	4,06	2	2	1	2	8	1	3,8		
To experience risk	1	4	5	5	-	1	2,93	2	3	3	5	1	2	3		
To experience the feel of adrenaline	1	4	5	5	-	1	2,93	2	2	3	6	1	2	3,14		
To be together with friends/family	-	-	2	2	12	-	4,63	1	-	-	4	11	-	4,5		
Playfulness	-	2	3	6	3	2	3,71	1	1	2	5	5	2	3,86		
Excitement	-	1	1	10	3	1	4	-	2	1	7	4	2	3,93		
To gain personal development	1	3	2	5	4	1	3,53	2	1	3	2	5	3	3,54		
To gain insight into a new activity	1	1	2	7	4	1	3,8	2	-	3	4	5	2	3,71		
To keep physical fitness	-	-	3	4	9	-	4,38	1	-	2	4	8	1	4,2		
To learn something new	-	-	5	5	6	-	4,06	1	-	4	6	4	1	3,8		

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

The highest means were recorded for “experiencing nature”, “beauty, scenery and landscapes” and “to have fun!” in both, the general importance of elements and what MAC delivered. It can be stated that most of the respondents associate adventure with nature, natural landscapes, and an activity where they can have fun. Other elements, such as “to be together with friends/family”, “getting away from everyday habits” and “to keep physical fitness” were also considered to be important. However, the elements related to risk and adrenaline were detected to have a much lesser importance to the respondents when they think of adventures.

It is also important to note that almost all respondents have more experience in organized adventure activities, as all but one indicated that they tend to participate in an outdoor/adventure related activity when they are on vacation. Many of them also participated in activities in other Norwegian cities on their vacation in 2017. The most common responses were: Trondheim, Bergen, and Geiranger.

Another relevant aspect to mention is the comparison of the two sets of means shown in Table 13. After carrying out a *Paired Samples T-Test* in SPSS, it was concluded that in case of all elements the difference between the mean of the “general importance of that element” and the mean for that “element met by MAC in a satisfactory way” was insignificant, given the sample responses. This means that MAC could deliver the elements of adventure activities that were sought by clients in general when they engage in such activities.

Also, an additional analysis was performed, in which the set of means for the “importance of these elements in general” were analyzed with regard to the type of tourist the respondents considered themselves to be. Table 14 shows the frequency measures for the types of tourists the respondents considered themselves.

Table 14. Types of tourists

Type of traveler	Frequency	Percent (%)
Package traveler	4	25
Family vacationer	3	18,8
Individual traveler who plans everything ahead	4	25
Spontaneous individual traveler who does not plan much	5	31,3
<i>Total (N=16)</i>	16	100

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to measure the relationship between the types of tourists and the mean scores for the importance of the elements of adventure in general. ANOVA is applicable when more than two means are to be examined. The aim was to identify whether there was a significant difference between the four specific groups in comprehending each motive to engage in an adventure (presented in Table 13). For example, if the average mean value for “playfulness” for a package traveler was significantly different compared to the overall mean value (defined by all four tourist type groups).

For this purpose, all 16 elements identified in Table 13 were considered as *dependent variables* and were tested against the *independent variable*, which was the four different types of tourist groups. In 15 cases, the ANOVA analysis confirmed that there was no significant difference between the mean values scores of the four different types of tourist groups, meaning that all groups considered the elements of adventure equally. Only in case of the element “to learn something new”, the ANOVA showed a significant difference at the 5% level. In this case the level of significance was 3,8%, which indicated a significant difference between the overall mean value and the mean value scores for “family vacationers” and “individual travelers who plan everything ahead”. The analysis implied that family vacationers considered the element “to learn something new” more important than individual travelers, who plan everything ahead. The more detailed analysis of the ANOVA and Post-hoc test can be found in the appendices, in Appendix D.

Finally, the questionnaire considered the importance of a tourist office in a destination and visitors’ impression about Molde and the probability of recommending Molde and MAC to family and friends. The findings are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 15. Importance of a tourist office

	Not important			Very important		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
How important is it for you to get information from a local tourist office while visiting an unknown place, N=16	1	3	3	4	5	3,56

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

As Table 15 shows, the importance of having access to a LTO is fairly relevant for the respondents with a mean score of 3,56.

Table 16. Impression about Molde

Opinion about Molde, N=16	Disagree			Agree		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
My stay in Molde was very valuable	-	-	-	9	7	4,44
I have gained a lot of valuable experiences	-	-	7	5	4	3,81
The services of MAC made my stay more pleasant	-	-	-	4	12	4,75
I am satisfied with my stay in Molde	-	-	-	1	15	4,94
MAC provided extra value	-	-	-	7	9	4,56
Possible word of mouth effect, N=16	Not at all			Very much		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Would you recommend Molde?	-	-	-	9	7	4,44
Would you recommend MAC?	-	-	-	4	12	4,75

Source: own elaboration, based on SPSS calculations.

It can be clearly seen that MAC customers were satisfied with their stay in Molde and they considered the services of MAC very useful, something that made their stay more pleasant in Molde. Further, they would recommend the visit of Molde and the services of MAC to others. Many of them also wrote positive feedbacks on TripAdvisor that will surely help MAC in the upcoming seasons.

2.3. Findings from the interviews

Four MAC customers agreed to participate in an interview, in which they provided more insight to their adventure travel history, their perception of adventure and some other theoretical aspects, and their summer holiday in Norway in 2017. The interviewees will be referred to as “Interviewee A, B, C, and D. In addition to that, another interview was carried out with a RTO representative, who provided more information on Molde’s position as a destination and some future perspectives that could shape the image of the town. The short summary of these interviews can be seen in Table 17.

Table 17. Summary of interviews

Interviewee	Nationality	Language spoken during the interview	Duration of the interview
MAC “Interviewee A”	United States	English	00:48:35
MAC “Interviewee B”	United States	English	00:32:35
MAC “Interviewee C”	Swiss	English	00:43:31
MAC “Interviewee D”	German	English	n/a ⁷
RTO representative	Norwegian	Norwegian	01:17:56

Source: own elaboration, based on interview material.

⁷ No recording was made, only notes were taken

2.3.1. Interview with “Interviewee A”

“Interviewee A” was a male American in his mid-60’s from Minnesota. He arrived in Molde with the Viking cruises and found out about MAC by chance, walking around in the city.

The concept of adventure:

He associated adventure with the following key characteristics: risky, exciting, something that you don’t do at home on a regular basis, and something that is related to nature and outdoors.

Previous adventure travel history:

He started by saying that “*sometimes the actual purpose of the vacation is adventure*”. He referred to two specific climbing/hiking holiday cases, one in the Swiss Alps in Zermatt and one Tanzania with Kilimanjaro. He considered both these adventures as “soft adventures” as you don’t need specific sets of skills to participate in those adventures, you just have to have a certain physical shape. Both adventure tours were multiple day tours with experienced guides. He also participated in canoeing activities in Northern Minnesota at the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. In general, he likes to engage in adventure activities while on holiday, and he says: “*whenever I go somewhere, I try to seek what other people aren’t doing. That’s just my nature*”. For him, adventure activities are activities that are not pursued by many people in the given area, which makes that specific activity unique.

Reflection on theory:

The interviewee agreed a 100% with the characteristics of Risk theory, that adventurers deliberately seek risk and excitement to achieve higher levels of SWB. However, he does not necessarily associate risk with exposure to physical danger, rather than with the risk that the adventurer “won’t make it” which will hurt his/her ego. The interviewee later reflected on the aspect related to ego and self-achievement, saying that:

“Part of adventure tourism is feeding the ego of people. Because when I say, I climbed Kilimanjaro, because so few people have done it, it’s like: ‘Oh my God you climbed Kilimanjaro!’ Yes, I was physically fit enough to hike for seven days. (...) It’s an ego-inducing thing.”

Hence, the interviewee associates adventure activities with self-development and the improvement of social status, which contributes to satisfaction and self-accomplishment.

Your holiday in Norway:

The interviewee first identified Norway with small population, the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer in 1994, and cities like Oslo or Bergen. He also has couple of friends in the US with Norwegian heritage, and he decided to visit Norway when he was climbing on Kilimanjaro. He met a Norwegian person there and after getting to know that person a little better he knew he wanted to visit Norway, as he said under the interview: *“If this is Norway, then I want to go!”*

The most impressive places he recalled to be were the: North Cape – although he said that it highly depends on the weather and they were lucky to have clear sky –, Fjellheisen in Tromsø, the Archbishop’s Palace in Trondheim, and Geiranger.

Your experience in Molde:

Simply put, the interviewee was expecting nothing from Molde. However, he was positively surprised by the possibilities the city and its surroundings provided. He was impressed by the view from the top of Varden and he also appreciated the services of MAC that made it possible to explore the city on an electric mountain bike. He summed it up as:

“With the limited amount of time we had I thought Molde was great and it exceeded my expectations.”

2.3.2. Interview with “Interviewee B”

“Interviewee B” was a male American in his early 50’s from Salt Lake City. He arrived in Molde with his wife by car and he found out about MAC before his arrival via Internet search.

The concept of adventure:

The interviewee associated the word adventure with outdoors, being active, and with the presence of a little bit of adrenaline. In addition to that he expressed his thoughts on the “novelty aspect”, as he said that adventure: *“Usually is something new, that you are either seeing or doing, something you have never done before”*.

Previous adventure travel history:

The interviewee started by saying that he would not describe himself as a “hard core” adventurer. On previous occasions he participated in zip-lining, rappelling, ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) quad bike rides, mountain biking and he did several Via Ferrata climbing routes. He described the types of activities that he engaged himself in as: *“Usually nothing hard core, but fun and new, often out in nature”*. He mostly carried out the activities in the United States, in Virginia (rappel and zipline), in the UK (ATV quad bike), and in Andorra and Northern France (Via Ferrata).

Reflection on theory:

The interviewee started by reflecting on the risk theory by saying *“It is funny, because as a profession I am a risk manager [...] I am only taking controlled risk”*. Then he exemplified with the hike to Kjeragbolten as the riskiest thing he has ever done. He recalled his hike to Kjerag the following way:

“The night before I did not sleep a wink. I have made a mistake of watching some Youtube videos before... I think I would have been better If I had not... And I was not sure if I was going to step out on the bolder, I told myself: ‘Look, go, and then if your gut tells you, you can do it, then do it, and if your gut says don’t do it, then don’t do it’ [...] And I did it [...] That is probably the riskiest thing I have done”

After expressing his thoughts about the Kjerag hike, the interviewer asked if it gave him self-satisfaction and self-accomplishment: *“Ohh, a ton, just even thinking about it, there is smile on my face. It was a blast!”*.

The interviewee indicated that he agrees with the risk theory, although for him personally it is not a motive and he is only willing to take controlled risk. He also mentioned the “novelty aspect” often for which reason he could also identify himself with the insight theory.

Your holiday in Norway:

Norway was a destination for the celebration of the 30th year of anniversary trip for the interviewee and his wife. The main reason for choosing Norway was that *“In particular, Norway is naturally adventurous, so that was what attracted us to Norway”*. Their trip was concentrated around the three popular hikes in Norway: Preikestolen, Kjeragbolten and Trolltunga. The main purpose of the holiday was to have adventures.

Prior to his visit in Norway, the interviewee mostly associated Norway with spectacular nature, and the famous Norwegian winter athletes.

Your experience in Molde:

The interviewees visit to Molde was because of a coincidence. The interviewee likes to run (he has a goal of running a half marathon in all 50 states in US), and there happened to be a half marathon on Sekken, an island just outside Molde during their visit in Norway. Therefore, they decided to fly up to Trondheim and travel by car to Molde and from there to carry on with their trip toward south.

The interviewee had limited time in Molde, but he mentioned that they would have surely tried kayaking if they had more time in Molde and he considered the area of Molde as very exciting for people liking outdoors. Regarding his experience in Molde, he specifically recalled watching the sunset at the Atlantic Ocean Road.

“For me the Atlantic Ocean Road was an architectural novelty [...] and it was cool to watch the sunset at midnight.”

2.3.3. Interview with “Interviewee C”

Interviewee C was a male traveler from Switzerland in his mid-40’s. He arrived in Molde by bus and he found out about MAC prior to his arrival through Internet search.

The concept of adventure

He interpreted the word adventure as something that is related to uncertainty and danger. However, as a participant in adventure activities he considered the following aspects as important; switch off the brain, see something new, social aspects, quiet, and being out in nature.

Previous adventure travel history:

The interviewee started by saying that he is a backpack traveler, and he likes to engage himself in adventure activities on his own, in remote areas without civilization and without any “outside help” As he said: *“Usually I plan to be independent, and I plan my own trip. But in your case, it was not possible to deliver the bikes to Molde. [...] When you plan, you have expectations and it makes the adventure somehow greater.”*

He added that in case a local provider has some interesting things to say about a special environment, he is willing to participate in organized tours. He exemplified with a special excursion in Spain to a sand forest and another excursion of a heli-watch trip in Northern America.

Reflection on theory:

For the interviewee risk is not important in case of adventure activities and he associates risk with something negative that he wants to avoid. He does not consider the aspects of self-development nor the improved self-esteem as important features of adventure activities:

“I would not say it [adventure activities] is about self-development. I don’t want to learn something really. I just want to switch off the brain and let it to be quiet.”

He clearly stated that he agrees with the theory of seeking authenticity that describes the escape from modernity the seeking of the novel, the unknown, the *authentic*. This is what he considered to be important when he engages in adventure activities.

Your holiday in Norway:

The interviewee traveled together with his girlfriend from Sweden to Trondheim and from Trondheim down to Molde. It was their first visit in Scandinavia and their main purpose was to have a bike trip in Norway. However, the transport of their bikes was not possible, and this is how they ended up picking Molde as the destination of their trip.

I put Molde on the map, because of good public transportation. And on top you were the only place where you can rent bikes apart from Geiranger, where it is too expensive to stay and the Lofoten where it was too crowded. [...] We said, 'okay, we go to Molde, that is not really a village, somewhere in the green, and it might be the best place'."

In this case, Molde was the main destination of the vacation and the interviewee did his online search about the town before the vacation.

Your experience in Molde:

The interviewee and his girlfriend spent 4 days in Molde. The first two days they hiked up to Varden to see the Molde panorama and did another hike little outside Molde. In the third day, they rented out bikes from MAC and made a whole day trip all the way to the Atlantic Ocean Road. The fourth day included an excursion do Geiranger from where they took a ship back to Trondheim. Overall, the interviewee had a pleasant time in Molde saying that:

It [Molde] was even better than we thought, because then you recommended this Atlantic Road which we had no idea about. I mean we saw picture in the Swiss newspaper from this bridge that goes up in the sky, but we did not know where that picture was taken. It was really better than we thought."

2.3.4. Interview with “Interviewee D”

“Interviewee D” was a German master student who carried out 3-month long internship in Molde. He arrived in Molde by plane and he found out about MAC by colleagues and friends.

The concept of adventure:

The interviewee interpreted the concept of adventure as an activity that is new and unknown that is carried out in nature. He also expressed that he thinks of adventure as a sportive activity, but he also said that *“discovering new places or cities is an adventure to me”*.

Previous adventure travel history:

The interviewee started by saying that he is a destination-driven tourist. He likes to discover and experience new places, different cultures and habits. The interviewee has been traveling in the US, where he engaged in all kinds of water activities in Florida, like: snorkeling, water skiing or fishing on the open ocean. In Europe, he has been doing rock climbing and kayaking in the Swiss and Austrian Alps. He also said that he likes to travel back home *“when I am in Germany, I like to take my motorbike for a ride without a specific destination to experience freedom and to see new places”*.

Reflection on theory:

The interviewee claimed that rush and adrenaline do not have to be involved in an adventure. He agreed more with the insight theory, that claims that people want to achieve peak performance and self-actualization through seeking insight, self-development and self-esteem, where risk might be only present as a side effect.

“I am not chasing an adrenalin rush by doing risky activities on purpose. If the activity is risky, I would mostly do it to prove to myself that I can do the given activity. Adrenaline would be involved, but not the target.”

Hence, he identified risk and adrenaline as possible side effects of an activity, that would give him satisfaction once he managed to achieve the goal of the given activity.

Your holiday in Norway:

The purpose of the visit in Norway was to carry out a three-month long internship. The interviewee knew about the spectacular fjords and mountains of Norway, but his main focus

was not to engage in adventure activities. However, even though he knew what he could expect from Norway, prior to his visit, he was positively surprised with what he experienced in Norway. He specifically mentioned the super windy road of Trollstigen and the mountains near Åndalsnes in Rauma municipality that made a specific impression on him: *“All in all, I am impressed by the Norwegian nature I saw when I was traveling in Norway.”*

Your experience in Molde:

The interviewee was living outside Molde and he admitted that he did not know anything about the town: *“To be honest I did not know anything about Molde and I did not even know, that there is a Molde on this planet.”*

However, he recalls Molde in a pleasant way as *“a very small, but lovely town placed beautifully between the sea and mountain”*. In Molde he mainly engaged in fishing activities, and in a few biking trips, arranged by MAC. He really enjoyed his time in Molde and said:

“I thought I was aware of Norwegians rural beauty, but I was overwhelmed when I arrived in Norway. It was very very nice!”

2.3.5. Summary of the interviews with MAC customers

The four interviews provided a more detailed overview of four different types of travelers. All, but one interviewee had no knowledge about Molde prior to their visit, and in case of Interviewee B the visit of Molde was pure coincidence. The interviewees also had different point of views on the concept of *adventure*, as all three theories explained in this thesis – risk theory, insight theory, and authenticity – were identified by the interviewees. The common feature in all four cases was that every interviewee expressed that they were satisfied with their stay in Molde and they were impressed by the natural landscapes and the outdoor opportunities one can do in Molde.

2.3.6. Interview with RTO representative in Molde

This interview was carried out with an RTO (Nordvest) representative in Molde, who has been working for Visit Nordvest for 15 years. Visit Nordvest is a part of Visit Norway, that is responsible for the destination marketing of 19 municipalities in Møre og Romsdal.

DMOs in Norway:

The National Tourism Office in Norway is administered by Visit Norway, which is run and supported by Innovation Norway. Innovation Norway is a state-owned organization that among other things, financially supports tourism related businesses and startups, while Visit Norway is responsible for marketing activities of tourist attractions on a national level. The RTO representative also specified the close relationship between the two organizations: Innovation Norway has many offices in Europe (e.g. Germany, The Netherlands, UK) and they work together with local tour operators and provide relevant information on tourism trends and on the demands of these markets, which is useful for Visit Norway in setting up marketing strategies to advertise the places of Norway.

The State Tourism Office is represented by Fjord Norway, which is a “district company” (landsdel selskap). The western states (counties) of Norway for instance are administered by the cooperation of four counties: Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn of Fjordane, and Møre og Romsdal.

The Regional Tourism Office represents one specific region in a county. Møre og Romsdal is divided into three regions: *Ålesund and Sunnmøre Alps*, *Nordvest region* and *Geiranger region*.

While the Local Tourism Office represents a specific city. All of the bigger Norwegian cities have a LTO. Unfortunately, the one in Molde was closed 3 years ago.

The comparative and competitive advantages of Molde:

The interviewee started by listing the comparative advantages that include:

- *national tourist roads (nasjonale turistveger)*, mainly related to The Atlantic Ocean Road and Trollstigen.
- *good location and overnight possibilities*: Molde has an airport is easily accessible and it lies in the “*centrum of the attractions of the region, it has both fjord and mountains and people can do unique things*”. In addition to that the city has good hotel facilities.

- *Varden and the “Molde panorama”*. Varden is right next to the city center, and from the top of it, one can enjoy the spectacular panorama with 222 mountain peaks.

However, when it comes to competitive advantage, the interviewee admitted that *“Molde has an unclear profile... We are a little like, what is there in Molde actually?”* She said, it is a huge deficit that the town does not have a well-established profile, that people could associate the town with. To improve that, the “Master Plan Molde 2030” – a multiyear project – has been launched recently. The details of this plan were discussed later in the interview.

The Tourism Life Cycle Model:

The interviewee clearly stated that the tourism trends in Norway are still in the development phase. However, there are huge varieties between summer/winter seasons and regions. For instance, Northern Norway receives most of its tourists in the winter time (mainly due to the northern lights) and less tourists in the summer. The opposite is true in case of Møre og Romsdal. Currently, this region strives to extend the summer season and to attract more tourists also in the winter season. In general, she said that Norway, as a tourist destination is still in the development phase and she further added: *“Based on WTO forecast, we are expecting more and more tourists from China”*.

Promotion of Molde:

Currently, Molde does not have a slogan that would catch peoples’ attention, but the Master Plan Molde 2030 is working on one that could easily be associated with the city. When it comes to a logo, it is not Molde, but the entire Nordvest region (a total of 19 municipalities) that has one.

Molde, as part of Nordvest is being promoted on the website visitnordvest.no. This website embraces the entire region of Nordvest, and Molde, as a destination has its own page under vistinordvest.no. It is not a “city webpage”, but as she said, *“when people ‘google’ Molde, they find the information about the town on vistinordvest.no very easily”*. The website of visitnordvest.no receives over 600.000 users in a year, with around 1.200.000 page visits. Both these numbers represent around 3% of the numbers of visitnorway.com, which are 20 million and 40 million respectively (Visit Norway 2018)

On social media platforms, it is again Visit Nordvest “as a whole” that represents the region and the 19 municipalities (including Molde).

In cooperation with Innovation Norway, Visit Nordvest also organizes promotional activities for foreign cruise agents and tour operators. Last September, they organized a multi-day tour for cruise ship agents. Among other places, they visited Kristiansund, The Atlantic Ocean Road, Molde, and Åndalsnes. This June, they are going to arrange a tour for South Korean tour operator agents. “*These kinds of activities are important to promote our region among cruise agents and tour operators*”, she said.

The interviewee explained the lack of tourist information in Molde with the inadequate financial support. The tourist office was run by municipality for several years, but it was closed due to huge expenses. With the Master Plan Molde 2030, a new perspective for the tourist office might be developed.

Winter Project:

As the interviewee said earlier, Molde and its surroundings struggle to attract tourists in the winter season. This three-year long *Winter Project* aims to promote the region as a winter destination. The leader of the project is a famous Norwegian freestyle skier, Asbjørn Eggebø Næss. The project focuses on four different goals.

- to build a small ski resort in Brandstad.
- to create promotional videos representing the winter season of the region. There is a plan for a promotional video with alpine slalom world cup winner Henrik Kristoferssen.
- to develop ski touring in the region and to organize several multi-day ski tours for foreign guests.
- to further promote the region as a winter destination, through PR activities and being a good host for the region.

The project is a cooperation between Visit Nordvest and Innovation Norway.

Master Plan Molde 2030:

This plan was developed by 2469 Reiselivsutvikling AS that aims to promote the new Molde municipality. The municipalities of Molde, Nesset and Midsund will be merged and create a new and bigger municipality of Molde, and this plan aims to contribute to the development and promotion of this new municipality as an outdoor adventure tourism destination.

The interviewee stated that the biggest challenge of the project was identified to be to extend the average overnight stays in Molde. The main plan is to provide experiences and attractions that create a “reason to go” for tourist. The main focus is on soft adventure activities, like: mountain hiking, biking, fishing, and cultural activities. As the interview said “*we lack organized and bookable activities ... And people ask: what is there in Molde, what can we do there? Where can book a tour?*” Currently, there are several stakeholders that use the same online booking system, Trekksoft. These are for example: MAC, Visit Nordvest, FRAM (bus operator) or Norsk Tindesenter (climbing center) in Åndalsnes. Due to this common booking system, it is possible to sell each other’s products to increase range and sales. The main goal of the Masterplan project is to provide 80 new, full season adventure activities that are easy to book. This could attract more interest, as travelers are looking for “reasons to go”.

The interviewee specified four main tasks that Visit Nordvest will be focusing on during the Masterplan Molde 2030.

- to develop a new attractive profile for Molde.
- to create new cooperation with tour operators that sell winter tours in Norway.
- to promote the region during Norwegian Travel Workshops.
- to represent and promote the region in international workshops.

3. Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the findings from both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary data confirmed that Molde is receiving an increasing number of tourists in the summer months, mainly from Germany Sweden, US, and The Netherlands. It also showed the importance of cruise ship traffic and the growing number of tourists visiting the town on cruise ships. Lastly, the secondary data presented numbers from hotels and depicted the biggest challenge for the whole region, namely the short amount of time visitors spend in Molde.

Primary data sources included observations of MAC clients during the first operational season, analysis of questionnaire returned by MAC clients, and interview analyses. It was found out that Molde has a low reputation, and tourists visiting the town have no, or very little knowledge about the outdoor adventure possibilities that can be carried out in the area. However, it was also identified through the questionnaire and interviews that after their visit, tourists were positively surprised with Molde and the opportunities, the town and its surroundings provide. MAC also received positive feedback from its customers, which is a clear indication, that a company offering outdoor adventure activities is an important element in contributing to the creation of a pleasant time of visitors. The interview with the RTO representative also shed light on the fact that Molde is little known among tourists, and there as an insufficient amount of organized and bookable adventure activities. The Masterplan Molde 2030 intends to address this issue and aims to widen the outdoor offer of the entire region.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Findings revealed that Molde is an unexploited territory for adventure tourism, as people visiting the town have very little or no knowledge at all about the outdoor activities one can do in the area. This is due to several factors that will be discussed in this chapter. Further, the findings showed what tourists traveling to Norway expect from adventure activities, and how those expectations were met by MAC.

Findings from MAC clients showed that people who used MAC services can be considered as regular outdoor recreationists, as all but one respondent answered that they tend to participate in outdoor activities at least once, while on their vacations. On their vacation in Norway in 2017, 75% of respondents took part in outdoor activities in other Norwegian cities, the most common ones being Trondheim, Bergen, and Geiranger. Responses also showed that the most common reasons for people to choose Norway, as a place for their vacation were the natural settings, and the outdoor possibilities provided by the country. This confirms that most people associate Norway with spectacular nature, and the changing landscapes of thrilling fjords and mountains. However, findings also showed that despite its perfect location, people visiting Molde know nothing at all, or only very little about the outdoor activities one can do in the town and its surroundings. As the title of the thesis suggests this is a huge problem for the town, as it does not exploit its comparative advantages and does not have an established image for being a great destination for adventure travelers. Findings confirmed that, but they also showed that Molde has all the prerequisites for becoming a great and popular center for adventure travel in Møre og Romsdal county.

Motives driving engagement in adventure activities

The most important motives for respondents to engage in adventure activities, were the close connection with nature, to experience spectacular landscapes and scenery, to have fun, and to be with family or friends (see Table 9). These aspects were identified by several scholars like; Swarbrooke et al. (2003), Breejen (2007), Holden (1999), or Mutanga et al. (2017), who carried out research in the field of adventure tourism.

Some other – still important motives – with slightly lower mean scores were identified to be: escape, challenge, novelty, excitement, personal development, and self-accomplishment. These motives were identified in publications of scholars, such as; Albayrak and Caber (2017), Mykletun and Mazza (2016), or Buckley (2010). These aspects were also identified during the

interviews with MAC clients. Interviewee A claimed that climbing Kilimanjaro was a great challenge that gave him self-accomplishment, a great amount of personal development, and satisfaction that also contributed to improved social status. In his case, participation in this particular advantage made him happy and satisfied that he was able to tackle the challenge and was able to gain introspection and self-development, just as suggested by Walle's (1997) insight theory. Interviewee B exemplified with his hike on Kjeragbolten. It was the riskiest adventure he has ever done, but after reaching the top and stepping out on the bolder he gained a ton of satisfaction and self-esteem.

Risk and the feel of adrenaline however have been identified as motives with the least importance. This somewhat contradicts the findings of a great deal of scholars like; Ewert (1989), Buckley, (2012), Lăzuran (Giurău) and Ungureanu (2014), Holm et al. (2017), who link risk and adrenaline inextricably to the concept of adventure. In case of MAC customers, the aspects of risk and feel of adrenaline were not crucial motives driving engagement in adventure activities. Interviewee A mentioned risk as an important part of an adventure, however he did not associate risk with physical danger or hazard, rather with the risk of not being able to fulfill the activities that could harm self-esteem. Interviewees C and D did not relate risk and adrenaline to the concept of adventure at all. For them other aspect like socializing, gaining new experiences, novelty and escape were more important, which were also identified as more important aspects in the questionnaire.

It could be also detected from the questionnaire, that the expectations from adventure activities of MAC customers were met by MAC services in a satisfactory way. This can be seen by comparing the two columns showing the mean scores for each factor in Table 10. This confirms that MAC delivered high quality service, something that people were looking for.

Based on the findings, it can be stated that MAC customers pursue soft adventure activities, where closeness to nature, fun, and spending time with others, are considered to be a lot more important motives than risk and the feel of adrenaline.

Typologies of adventure tourism and adventure tourists

The questionnaire and the interviews carried out with MAC customers confirm that MAC customers rather seek soft adventure activities, which are characterized by low risk levels, and with no special sets of skills required (Hill 1995 and Swarbrooke et al. 2003). After the first operational season, MAC customers could be divided into people seeking leisure and recreation. The former one refers to the customers that preferred to have minimum independence and they wanted to be led by a guide, while the latter one to more independent

customers, who just rented the equipment and wanted to explore the area on their own (Swarbrooke et al. 2003) (see section 3.5.1 in Chapter 1).

Interviewee A claimed that in some cases the activity he wants to engage himself in comes first and the destination is secondary (like the case of climbing Kilimanjaro or the Matterhorn), which refers to activity-based tourism. In case of Interviewee B, his visit to Molde was clearly an activity-driven adventure tourism, as it was the specific event on Sekken that made them come to Molde. Had the interviewee found a half marathon event elsewhere in Norway, he would have never visited Molde. Molde was identified as a specific destination only in case of Interviewee C. He claimed that he found Molde to be the best place for carrying out the activities that he wanted to do in Norway. Interviewee D indicated that it is the destination that is primary for him, therefore he is a destination-based tourist (Swarbrooke et al. 2003) (see section 3.5.3 in Chapter I).

When it comes to the typologies of adventure tourists, that used the services of MAC in the first season, the following groups were identified based on the classification of Sung (2004) (see section 4.1); *general enthusiasts*, *budget youngsters*, *soft moderates*, *upper high naturalists*, and *family vacationers*.

General enthusiasts refer to people who visited Norway to experience nature and the great outdoors. Since they like to participate in adventure activities and they found out about MAC, while being in Molde they decided to use its services and explore the city and its surroundings.

Norway is not a friendly place for budget youngsters, but on few occasions, MAC did receive *budget youngsters* as well. There was a group of Dutch and British students and a Japanese student, who decided to rent out bikes to go a tour to the Atlantic Ocean Road or Trollstigen.

The most common group MAC received in 2017 was the *soft moderates*. This is due to the fact, that MAC received nearly 75% of its customers from cruise ships. The soft moderate group does not apply in all cases for cruise ship passengers, but a clear majority of them purchase all-inclusive packages, who are most likely to participate in soft adventure activities.

Interviewee C was identified to be as an *upper high naturalist*, who rather is an independent soft adventurer, for whom the aspects of novelty, escape and the search for exotic places are important.

MAC also received *family vacationers* and on some occasions bicycle trips were taken with children below three years old with a help of an attachable baby wagon onto the bikes. The ANOVA analysis also showed that in case of family vacationers the motive “to learn

something new” (novelty) to participate in adventure activities was significantly of higher importance than for other types of tourists. This makes sense if we think about families traveling with smaller children, since the novelty value in this case is more important that can encourage children to engage in the activity. MAC had a specific case with this example, as a German family wanted to go on a e-bike tour with their 16-year-old son. At first, the son was not very enthusiastic, but since he has never ridden an e-bike before after having experienced this new activity, he came back as a “different person” with a huge smile on his face and very satisfied.

Knowledge about Molde prior to and after visit and other Norwegian destinations

Findings showed that Molde is a very little-known town in Norway. Most people did not have any specific expectations from the town, since they knew nothing about the outdoor possibilities the region has to offer. However, after their visit, all MAC clients were impressed by the nature of Moldemarka, the spectacular view from Varden over the 222 mountain peaks, the great kayaking possibilities in the fjord, and the various hiking options in the town and its surrounding area. This shows, that the region has a great potential in becoming an exciting destination for adventure tourism. However, in order to achieve that, the promotion of the town has to be more effective, so people can learn about it prior to their visit. The interview with the RTO representative showed that the website of visitnordvest.no receives over 1 million-page visits, but it is barely 3% of the entire visitnorway.no page visits. In 2017, the most visited destinations on visitnordvest.no were: Lofoten, Bergen, Tromsø, Svalbard, and Geirangerfjorden (Visit Norway 2018). Ålesund and the Sunnmøre Alps were 10th most visited page in 2017. This shows, that the online pages of two out of three regions of the county of Møre og Romsdal were placed in the top 10 most visited pages in 2017. Unfortunately, Nordvest is the third region that was outside the top 10. This provides room for improvement, when it comes to better promoting the region online.

The Masterplan Molde 2030, also intends to improve the promotion of the city and its surroundings, by providing more all-year long tour operators and by concentrating on the unique outdoor attractions of the region that would attract more tourists that like adventure activities.

Molde and its surroundings as a destination

Molde and its surroundings have a great deal of comparative advantages that ought to be better utilized. As the RTO representative said, Molde is easily accessible, lies in the centrum

of Møre og Romsdal county, national tourist roads are close by, has great outdoor possibilities, and provides good overnighting facilities. Its good location might be the reason for travelers to comprehend Molde as a “transit city” between Ålesund and the Sunnmøre Alps (south), and the Atlantic Ocean Road, Kristiansund and Trondheim (north). Findings showed that the average length of overnight stays in hotels is below 1,5 nights, and that some people think of Molde as a “transit city” (findings from hotels; see Table 2, and from MAC clients; see Table 7). This picture of Molde as just “a place for an extra overnight stay” is a huge drawback for the city that should be altered. Molde could become a great place for daily excursions to such places as the Atlantic Ocean Road, Åndalsnes and Trollstigen, different hiking destinations, or the Geirangerfjord. Some of these excursions are already available for cruise ship passengers, but it should also be accessible for other travelers with some extras, such as biking from Trollstigen or at the Atlantic Ocean Road and the inclusion of several hiking trips. Companies like MAC are ready to offer that, but due to the lack of knowledge of travelers about the region of Nordvest (in comparison to other regions of the county), there is limited demand on such activities at the moment.

Same applies for the winter season. The Sunnmøre Alps are a well-known destination among foreigners for ski touring, but the mountains of Nordvest lack that reputation. The three-year long project with Asbjørn Eggebø Næss aims to change that and make the region of Nordvest a better recognized destination for winter sport lovers.

Interviewee A was positively surprised by the town of Molde and especially was impressed by the view at the 222 mountain peaks from the top of Varden. He claimed his visit in Molde to be very interesting and that Molde “*exceeded his expectations*”. Interviewee B visited Molde, only because of the half marathon race on Sekken. He claimed he would have tried more activities in Molde if he had been to Molde longer and he specifically recalled watching the sunset from the Atlantic Ocean Road. Interviewee C was the one, who had some previous knowledge about Molde and visited the town with a specific goal. He associated the region with great hiking opportunities, and he as well, remembered specifically the trip to the Atlantic Ocean Road claiming that it was “*really something better than he thought*”. Interviewee D has been living in Molde for three months. As he said, he thought he was aware of Norwegian rural beauty but he “*was overwhelmed when he arrived in Norway*”.

Hence, findings from questionnaire and interviewees with MAC clients confirmed that Molde and its surroundings possess the prerequisites for becoming a great destination for adventure tourism both in the summer and winter season. However, those prerequisites need to be converted into well-defined “reasons to go” that will make people want to visit the region

of Molde and its surroundings. In other words, the existing comparative advantages – that are unexploited at the moment – must be utilized in a better way, by employing competitive advantages. MAC as the first ever outdoor adventure provider in Molde already helps in better utilizing the comparative advantages by organizing tours and informing visitors about the outdoor possibilities the region has. According to the RTO representative, Masterplan Molde 2030 will help the region exploit its comparative advantages in a much more effective manner.

MAC as an activity provider

Findings from questionnaire and interviews with MAC clients clearly indicated that MAC is a great venture that makes Molde a more interesting place for tourists to visit. The mean scores of respondents for: “the services of MAC made my stay more pleasant”, “MAC provided extra value”, and “would you recommend MAC?” were 4,75, 4,56, and 4,75 respectively, with 5 being the highest score. This shows that tourists who came to Molde and used the services of MAC were very satisfied, as MAC could provide something extra for them that otherwise would not have been possible for them to experience. This is another evidence that a company providing outdoor adventure activities is important in creating a better image for a destination, and an unknown place like Molde needs such a company. Findings from observations and the interviews with MAC clients also showed that it was nature and the spectacular scenery that made a particular impression on people. Through the close connection with nature, remoteness, and the new experience in a form of e-bikes, it can be argued that some MAC clients achieved spiritual well-being, which was identified by such authors as Heintzman (2003), Varley (2006), and Brymer and Gray (2009) (see section 4.6 in Chapter I).

Another evidence for MAC being an important stakeholder for the development of adventure tourism in Molde are the positive comments that clients of MAC posted on TripAdvisor after their tour. TripAdvisor is considered to be as an important source of information for travelers, who rely on tour providers and other tourism related facilities with good opinions. Already in the second half of the first season, MAC received customers, who decided to go on a kayak trip, due to the positive feedback and comments they found on TripAdvisor. These positive comments prove that MAC customers gained *memorable tourism experiences*, and they gladly express their positive thoughts and experiences in relation with Molde and MAC services. It can be also concluded from TripAdvisor comments (and observations), that the four values in the context of adventure tourism identified by Williams and Soutar (2009) were experienced by MAC clients (see section 4.7.3 in Chapter I). Concerning *functional value* all clients were satisfied with the quality of equipment and

services. There was only one slightly critical comment concerning price, but it also acknowledged that based on Norwegian standards, prices were reasonable. *Emotional value* was clearly present in the form of immerse with nature and enjoying the unique landscapes and the activity itself. Through the interaction with clients and with the achievement of physically less fit clients created *social value*. Lastly, for many people, riding an e-bike, visiting remote limestone caves, or kayaking in a fjord was a brand-new activity, where people learnt new things that created *epistemic value*.

It can be stated that MAC created MTEs and customer satisfaction that can create favorable behavioral decisions in relation to positive word of mouth effect about Molde and MAC. Hopefully this word of mouth effect in the form of TripAdvisor comments will be even stronger in the upcoming season and they will attract even more people to Molde who are interested in adventure activities. MAC will also introduce new products for the upcoming season aiming to widen its product range that could gain the interest of more potential customers. The main aim is to pursuit *experience economy*, as customers unquestionably desire experiences, and companies in this business need to provide and design products that create memorable experiences for their participants (Pine and Gilmore, 1998 (see section 4.7.1 in Chapter I).

Future perspectives and the role of the RTO

Findings confirmed that Molde and the region of Nordvest have a great potential in becoming an attractive destination for adventure tourism, however other regions of the county like Ålesund and Sunnmøre alps and the Geirangerfjord currently are more popular destinations. To improve the position of Nordvest, the RTO of Nordvest engage in several interesting projects.

The three-year long winter project signed with Norwegian freestyle skier Asbjørn Eggebø Næss intends to create a more exciting winter destination image for the region, that would also attract people in the winter season.

Arrangements made for foreign tour agents and cruise ship agents are certainly a helpful tool to improve the image of the region. Last year the RTO of Nordvest had tour agents from Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, and France, while this year they are going to have a group of agents from South Korea. The region needs more of such arrangements, as tour agents have the connections and the right assets to advertise Nordvest as an exciting region for adventure tourism.

The RTO of Nordvest also engages in the project of Masterplan Molde 2030. According to the RTO representative, this project will certainly contribute to better exploit the comparative advantages that Molde possesses. One of the key efforts is to have tour providers that can organize adventure activities. This argument is also supported by the first operational season of MAC, which showed that tourists visiting Molde do require outdoor tour providers and they gladly use their services. The biggest problem, however is that tourists know very little about Molde and they do not stay in the town for more than 1-2 nights. The most important goal of this Masterplan Molde 2030 is to extend the average stay of people in the town. This is the key in providing exciting adventure activities that would create the “reason to go” for tourists to the region of Nordvest.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Limitations of this study were encountered during data collection. The sample size of 16 respondents is not a large sample to analyze adventure tourists’ behaviors and motivations, but at the same time it provides reasonable indications. The reason for this relatively small sample size is clearly the large time span between the visit of people in Molde and receiving the questionnaire (6-9 months). A better way would have been to perform the questionnaires right after the clients’ vacation in Molde, but due to the circumstances it was not possible, as explained section 1.2. in Chapter III.

Another limitation of the study was that the interviews with MAC clients were also carried out 6-9 months after the interviewees visited Molde. This large time lapse could have influenced their answers, as they might have not remembered everything as precisely, had the interviews been carried out earlier, only a few weeks after their stay. Due to geographical differences, the interviews were performed via phone, which is not the best way, as the interactions between the interviewer and interviewees are limited in comparison to live “face to face” interviews. Another limitation occurred in case of the interview with the RTO representative. The interview was carried out in Norwegian, but the quotes presented are in English, that are not direct quotes, but quotes translated from Norwegian by the author of this thesis.

Finally, some limitations were encountered due to the case study approach of this research. Since the author of the thesis was involved in the process of launching this new venture and he could receive first hand data and information, the arguments presented could have been biased that could have influenced the results. Further, in case of a case study approach, the findings and results cannot be generalized.

Nevertheless, the thesis provides a good basis for future research. It has gathered and analyzed information on what tourist visiting Molde expect from the town and from adventure activities. The meaning of the word *adventure* understood by different tourist was also identified via interviews, which could also provide a good basis for future research on finding out how different people comprehend and interpret the term *adventure*. Further, the thesis showed with the case of MAC, how a new startup company providing outdoor activities can create an exciting and eventful time for tourists, which generate customer satisfaction, MTEs and possible word of mouth effects. Further research could analyze the upcoming seasons of MAC and the effect it has on customer satisfaction and whether its services will further contribute to the improvement of the image of Molde. In addition, further research could analyze the effects of Masterplan Molde 2030 and its input in shaping the position of the new Molde municipality, as a destination for adventure tourism.

In general, the case of MAC and the new project of Masterplan Molde 2030 provide a good basis for future research that is connected to the analysis on the development of the new Nordvest region, as an exciting destination for adventure tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

“With the limited amount of time we had I thought Molde was great and it exceeded my expectations.” (Interviewee A)

“I thought I was aware of Norwegians rural beauty, but I was overwhelmed when I arrived in Norway. It was very very nice!” (Interviewee D)

This thesis provided an in-depth analysis of the concept of adventure tourism, motives driving engagement in adventure activities, and the important factors of destination marketing. Further, it applied MAC – a newly established company providing outdoor activities in Molde –, as a case study to demonstrate the importance of the presence of such a company in creating a better image for an unexploited destination.

It was clearly identified in this research that Molde has an unknown image and people visiting the town have very little, or no knowledge at all about the town. It is because Molde and its surroundings do not utilize their comparative advantages good enough and tourists visiting the region cannot acquire enough knowledge and information about the town. The absence of an official tourist information further contributes to the lack of knowledge and missing information about the countless outdoor possibilities one can do in the region. All this leads to the fact that the region of Nordvest – the region in which Molde lies – attracts a lot less tourists than the other two regions of the county of Møre og Romsdal: Ålesund and the Sunnmøre Alps and Geiranger.

The thesis applied MAC as a case study to demonstrate, how companies that offer outdoor adventure activities could contribute to the better recognition of a destination. It can be concluded that the services provided by MAC were in line with customers’ expectations towards adventure activities. Based on questionnaire findings, tourists visiting Molde want to experience nature and natural landscapes, have fun, and to be together with friends/family, which were clearly met by Molde and the services of MAC. This implies that the natural surroundings of Molde provide perfect conditions for adventure activities. However, since Molde is an unknown destination, people *do not visit specifically* Molde to engage in adventure activities, they just happen to find out about the possible adventures, once they are in the town. The information about the region should be more easily available for tourists who should be able to learn more about the outdoor possibilities prior to their arrival.

One of the biggest problems identified in this thesis – that has been also confirmed by the RTO representative –, is the short amount of time people spend in Molde (1,4 nights on average according to hotels' statistics). This seriously limits the possibilities for tourists to enjoy the region of Molde and to find out more about the exciting outdoor places. Stakeholders involved in the tourism industry should strive to offer interesting products that will make tourists want to stay in Molde for longer. In other words, they need to establish a *reason to go* and a *reason to stay*. To be able to identify these reasons, both the tour providers and the RTO are required to undertake specific actions that were identified and analyzed in this thesis.

It was evidently determined throughout this research that the services provided by MAC contributed to a more pleasant stay of tourists in Molde. Findings from both, the questionnaire and interviews confirmed that the possibility of enjoying the outdoor activities of Molde via a tour operator made the stay of tourists more valuable. Offering interesting and exciting services that yield MTE's can increase the chance for positive word of mouth effect that could contribute to the improvement of the image of Molde and its surroundings. In case of Molde and MAC this positive word of mouth effect can be seen through positive comments on TripAdvisor that can incline future tourists to include Molde as a destination on their vacation. (MAC has already received more requests as of now, compared with the same time in 2017.)

The RTO's main responsibility is to develop an attractive profile for Molde and the Nordvest region. The promotion is done via visitnordvest.no (under visitnorway.com) and it should be further strengthened, as the online promotion of the other two regions of the county of Møre og Romsdal is more effective, and they also attract more tourists than Nordvest. Through the Masterplan Molde 2030, the RTO and the new Molde municipality should aim at better promoting the entire Nordvest region by creating services, activities, and tour providers that could make the stay of tourists more exciting.

In other words, the region of Nordvest needs to make a better use out of its comparative advantages, hence it needs to work on improving its competitive advantages. It was also underlined by the RTO representative that the region of Molde has a great deal of comparative advantages, but it does not exploit those advantages in an efficient way. This is what the new Molde municipality need to change in the future, should the region of Molde become an exciting and popular destination for adventure tourism.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Questionnaire

1. How did you arrive in Molde?

- Cruise ship
- Airplane
- Car
- Bus
- Other

2. Where did you hear about Molde?

- I did not know about Molde
- Internet
- Friends and relatives
- Media
- Travel agency
- Guide books
- It was part of a travel package

3. How well did you know Molde before your vacation? “1”: I did not know the city at all; “5”: I knew the city and its attractions.

I did not know the city at all			I knew the city and its attractions	
1	2	3	4	5

4. Was your visit in Molde in 2017 your first visit of the town?

- Yes
- No: how many times have you visited the town before?

5. How many nights did you spend in Molde?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5+

6. Please state three reasons for choosing Norway as the destination of your vacation.
7. Please state three reasons for visiting Molde during your vacation Norway.
8. Below are listed some statements which refer to the general image of Molde as a tourist destination. For each statement please indicate to what extent you agree with it (how much you know about it). “1” means you strongly disagree with it; “5” means you strongly agree with it when you think of Molde.

	I Strongly disagree			I strongly agree		I don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	
Countless opportunities for outdoor activities						
Unique natural settings and landscapes						
The spectacularism of The Atlantic Ocean Road						
The annually held Jazz Festival						
The “City of the Roses”						

9. How would you describe yourself as a tourist?
- package traveler
 - Family vacationer
 - Individual traveler who plans everything ahead
 - Spontaneous individual traveler who does not plan much.
10. How would you characterize yourself toward outdoor activities?
- Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Experienced
11. Did you participate in other outdoor related activities in other Norwegian cities while on your vacation in 2017?
- No
 - Yes – please specify which city
12. In general, how many times do you tend to use services by outdoor activity providers while you are on your vacation?
- 0

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5+

13. What were your expectations prior to your arrival in Molde?

- I had no specific expectations
- I wanted to experience and explore nature
- I wanted to learn more about the city
- I wanted to learn more about Norwegian culture

14. How important is it for you to get information from a local tourist office while visiting an unknown place? “1”: not important at all, I do my own research; “5”: very important.

Not important at all					Very important
1	2	3	4	5	

15. How did you find out about Molde Adventure Center?

- Facebook
- Internet search
- From hotels (fliers, receptionists)
- Information on board the ship
- Information received while disembarking the ship
- Randomly, walking around in the city
- A friend/relative recommended
- Other – please specify

16. Below are listed some reasons/motives that you might consider when you decide to participate in adventure activities. Please indicate how important is each of these reasons/motives to you when decide to participate in an outdoor activity **in general**. Rate them on a scale “1”: completely unimportant to “5”: very important.

Motives driving engagement in adventure activities	completely unimportant very important					I don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	
Experiencing nature						
Beauty, Scenery and landscapes						
Getting away from everyday habits						
Challenge myself						
Self-accomplishment						
To have fun!						
Try something new I have barely or never done before						
To experience risk						
To experience the feel of adrenaline						
To be together with friends/family						
Playfulness						
Excitement						
To gain personal development						
To gain insight into a new activity						
To keep physical fitness						
To learn something new						

17. Below are listed the same elements as in question 16. Please indicate on a scale 1 – 5 to what extent do you agree with the statement that these elements were satisfied by Molde Adventure Center. “1”: I completely disagree; “5”: I completely agree.

Molde Adventure Center could satisfy these elements	I strongly disagree					I strongly agree					I don't know	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
Experiencing nature												
Beauty, Scenery and landscapes												
Getting away from everyday habits												
Challenge myself												
Self-accomplishment												
To have fun!												
Try something new I have barely or never done before												
To experience risk												
To experience the feel of adrenaline												
To be together with friends/family												
Playfulness												
Excitement												
To gain personal development												
To gain insight into a new activity												
To keep physical fitness												
To learn something new												

18. How would you consider the offer of activities in Molde in comparison to other Norwegian cities you visited in 2017? “1”. very low; “5”: very high.

Very low					Very high					
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

19. The following statements refer to your general satisfaction/impression concerning your stay in Molde. Please indicate on a scale 1 – 5 to what extent do you agree with the following statements.

	I strongly disagree			I strongly agree			I don't know
	1	2	3	4	5		
My stay in Molde was very valuable to me							
I have gained a lot of new experiences in Molde							
The services of Molde Adventure Center made my stay in Molde more pleasant							
I am satisfied with my stay in Molde							

20. How much extra value did the services of Molde Adventure Center provide to you while you were in Molde? “1”: none at all; “5”: a lot of extra value

None at all					A lot of extra value
1	2	3	4	5	

21. Would you recommend to a friend/family member Molde as a destination? “1”: not at all; “5”: very much.

None at all					Very much
1	2	3	4	5	

22. Would you recommend to a friend/family member Molde Adventure Center as a service provider? “1”: not at all; “5”: very much.

None at all					Very much
1	2	3	4	5	

23. Please name your country of residence.

24. Gender:

- Female
- Male

25. Age

- 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71+

APPENDIX B – Checklist for interviews with MAC clients

The concept of <i>adventure</i>	What is it? What comes into your mind? Characteristics? What do people seek from adventure?
Previous adventure travel history	Where? What kind of Activity? Soft/Hard Destination driven/Activity driven? What type of tourist?
Reflection on theory	Risk theory? Insight theory? Authenticity?
Your holiday in Norway	What did you know? What did you expect? What was the most impressive place?
Your experience in Molde	Expectations? importance of a tourist office? Touristic places? Services provided by MAC in comparison to other cities?

APPENDIX C – Checklist for interview with RTO representative

DMOs in Norway	Is it similar to the international pattern? In the county of Møre og Romsdal? Cooperation with Innovation Norway?
Advantages of Molde	What are the comparative advantages? What are the competitive advantages?
Tourism Area Life Cycle Model	TALC in case of Norway TALC in case of Molde
Promotion of Molde	Logo and slogan? Website? Number of website visitors? Social Media? Activities organized by Visit Nordvest? Tourist information in Molde?
Project with Asbjørn Eggebø Næss	Details of the project? Aim of the project?
Master Plan Molde 2030	The biggest challenges and aim of the plan? What is the role of Visit Nordvest?

APPENDIX D – The ANOVA table and Post hoc test results

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Experiencing nature	Between Groups	,133	3	,044	,147	,929
	Within Groups	3,617	12	,301		
	Total	3,750	15			
Beauty, scenery, and landscapes	Between Groups	1,138	3	,379	1,058	,403
	Within Groups	4,300	12	,358		
	Total	5,438	15			
Getting away from everyday habits	Between Groups	1,583	3	,528	,472	,707
	Within Groups	13,417	12	1,118		
	Total	15,000	15			
Challenge myself	Between Groups	4,200	3	1,400	1,556	,251
	Within Groups	10,800	12	,900		
	Total	15,000	15			
Self-accomplishment	Between Groups	,548	3	,183	,171	,913
	Within Groups	10,667	10	1,067		
	Total	11,214	13			
To have fun!	Between Groups	,283	3	,094	,207	,889
	Within Groups	5,467	12	,456		
	Total	5,750	15			
Try something new, I have barely or never done before	Between Groups	1,971	3	,657	,608	,622
	Within Groups	12,967	12	1,081		
	Total	14,938	15			
To experience risk	Between Groups	1,067	3	,356	,330	,804
	Within Groups	11,867	11	1,079		
	Total	12,933	14			
To experience the feel of adrenaline	Between Groups	1,067	3	,356	,330	,804
	Within Groups	11,867	11	1,079		
	Total	12,933	14			
To be together with friends/family	Between Groups	2,250	3	,750	1,636	,233
	Within Groups	5,500	12	,458		
	Total	7,750	15			
Playfulness	Between Groups	5,190	3	1,730	2,257	,144
	Within Groups	7,667	10	,767		
	Total	12,857	13			
Excitement	Between Groups	2,333	3	,778	1,510	,266
	Within Groups	5,667	11	,515		
	Total	8,000	14			

To gain personal development	Between Groups	5,650	3	1,883	1,146	,374
	Within Groups	18,083	11	1,644		
	Total	23,733	14			
To gain insight into a new activity	Between Groups	4,183	3	1,394	1,079	,398
	Within Groups	14,217	11	1,292		
	Total	18,400	14			
To keep physical fitness	Between Groups	1,133	3	,378	,526	,673
	Within Groups	8,617	12	,718		
	Total	9,750	15			
To learn something new	Between Groups	5,388	3	1,796	3,883	,038
	Within Groups	5,550	12	,463		
	Total	10,938	15			

As the information in the red bracket shows, the mean value for the element “learn something new” was different between the different tourist groups at the significance level of 3,8%.

Post-hoc test – Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: To learn something new

Tukey HSD

(I) How would you describe yourself as a tourist?	(J) How would you describe yourself as a tourist?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound Upper Bound	
package traveler	family vacationer	-1,000	,519	,269	-2,54	,54
	individual traveler	,750	,481	,435	-,68	2,18
	spontaneous traveler	-,200	,456	,971	-1,55	1,15
family vacationer	package traveler	1,000	,519	,269	-,54	2,54
	individual traveler	1,750*	,519	,025	,21	3,29
	spontaneous traveler	,800	,497	,409	-,67	2,27
individual traveler	package traveler	-,750	,481	,435	-2,18	,68
	family vacationer	-1,750*	,519	,025	-3,29	-,21
	spontaneous traveler	-,950	,456	,213	-2,30	,40
spontaneous traveler	package traveler	,200	,456	,971	-1,15	1,55
	family vacationer	-,800	,497	,409	-2,27	,67
	individual traveler	,950	,456	,213	-,40	2,30

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Post-hoc table shows, that in case of *individual travelers* and *family vacationers* (red brackets) the mean score for the importance of the element “to learn something new” was significantly different from the overall mean value defined by all for types of tourist groups. In case of *individual travelers*, the element “to learn something new” was below the overall mean score, while in case of *family vacationers* the same element was above the overall mean score.