

Yield-Relevant Tourist Decision Making

**Project Title: Enhancing the Spatial
Dimensions of Tourism Yield**

**Funding Agency: Foundation for Research
Science and Technology**

Kevin Moore
Clive Smallman
Jude Wilson
David Simmons

Report No. 11



**Lincoln
University**
Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki

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Technical Background Report

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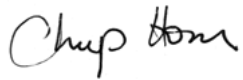
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Executive Summary

Programme and Objective 2

1. This is the milestone report for Objective 2 of the FoRST-funded “Enhancing Spatial Yield in Tourism” programme.
2. The main objective for Objective 2 was to “[d]evelop [an] in-depth understanding of international tourist decision making processes, with emphases on understanding itinerary, activity and expenditure choices”.

Methods

3. Methods included qualitative, on-site interview techniques combined with literature searches, on-site observations, stakeholder advice and were progressively refined as the study proceeded.
4. The authors selected five study sites in the Canterbury region based on the role each site might typically occupy in tourist itineraries. These were: Christchurch (gateway); Kaikoura (through route – stopping point); Hanmer Springs (terminal destination – close to through route); Akaroa (terminal destination); and Tekapo (through route).
5. Two survey instruments were developed (see Appendices 1 and 2) to probe a variety of aspects of yield-relevant tourist decision making.
6. Questioning covered basic demographics, travel characteristics (e.g., transport used, length of stay, etc.), specific decisions (e.g., over accommodation, activities, itineraries), decision making style, travel experience and interests while in New Zealand.
7. A total of 140 interviews were conducted with tourists, lasting from ten minutes to over an hour and involving 182 tourists in total (Thirty-nine interviews involved more than one tourist).
8. Data were analysed by manually coding and recoding and using of NVivo qualitative software to identify emergent themes associated with general characteristics and dimensions of tourist decision making.

Results

9. Analysis revealed ‘Type of Trip’ as a primary determinant of travel behaviour and decision making approach. Type of Trip categories were identified as:
 - a. Sightseeing – “seeing/doing” New Zealand. Included 47 travel groups solely sightseeing and 93 groups that combined it with one of the other categories.
 - b. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) – involving some interaction with New Zealand resident friends or relatives. Some 57 travel groups incorporated a VFR component in their travel. Of these, 21 groups were classified as ‘strong VFR’ (spent over half of their stay with New Zealand residents), 9 groups as ‘moderate VFR’ (less than half the time with New Zealand residents but formed part of the motivation to visit New Zealand) and 27 groups as ‘weak VFR’ (visited people while in New Zealand but spent relatively little time with them and it was not a major motive for visiting New Zealand).

- c. Holiday/Family – involving a holiday-relaxation motive for the visitor as indicated by the expressed importance of spending time with their family during the trip (i.e., family members who arrived together in New Zealand rather than family members resident in New Zealand). Altogether, 28 travel groups were identified in this category.
 - d. Working Holiday – involving year long working holidays. A total of 14 travel groups (mostly sole travellers) adopted a working holiday trip for their visit to New Zealand. Some worked as they travelled around New Zealand; others had a primary site of work and did trips during their stay to different places in New Zealand from their work ‘hub’.
 - e. Round the World (RTW) – visiting New Zealand as part of a much longer trip around the world or as part of a long stay (usually a working holiday) in Australia. This category covered 13 travel groups who were mostly from Europe or the United Kingdom.
 - f. Other – this category involved a variety of specific motives and purposes (e.g., weddings, courses, volunteering, etc.). A total of 11 travel groups were in this category.
10. Type of Trip was ‘locked in’ prior to arrival in New Zealand and, framed a wide range of travel characteristics (e.g., transport, length of stay, accommodation, etc.) and decision making processes (e.g., when, where and with whom decisions related to travel in New Zealand were made). Type of Trip, therefore, represents a primary ‘driver’ of yield-relevant decision making.
 11. Itinerary and accommodation decisions were by far the most likely travel related decisions to have been made prior to arriving in New Zealand. This was true of all tourists, but did vary depending on Type of Trip as well as on some more specific variables (e.g., presence of children, transport type).
 12. Activity and daily purchase decisions were particularly likely to be left ‘open’ until arrival at specific destinations and sites within New Zealand.
 13. Visitors determined these ‘open’ decisions through a combination of encountered on-site information (e.g., signs, brochures, maps, etc.) and, most importantly, through active seeking by tourists of social sources of advice (e.g., over activities, accommodation, restaurants, etc.) and reassurance/reinforcement of contemplated decisions.
 14. The social composition or context of these ‘open’ decisions introduced considerable ‘serendipity’ and apparent unpredictability into tourists’ behaviours.
 15. Decisions were carried out within a widely held perception amongst tourists of the ‘ease of travel’ in New Zealand. That is, the tourist infrastructure, combined with the helpfulness of New Zealanders (both in the industry and more generally), established a strong perception that travel in New Zealand would not involve major logistical difficulties or risks to the quality of the experience.
 16. A model was developed to capture these aspects and dimensions of yield-relevant tourist decision making in New Zealand. Represented graphically, one axis concerns the (in)flexibility of particular decision processes; a second axis describes the likelihood with which decisions are made either off-site or on-site (this applies both to the national scale – decisions made offshore – and to the local scale – decisions made prior to arrival at particular within New Zealand destinations); a third axis concerns the social composition or context of a decision (from the sole individual, through members of the travel group, friends and relatives resident in New Zealand, other tourists, etc.).

17. In this representation, Stage of Trip is a ‘fourth’ dimension that highlights the way the decision making process changes as the trip progresses in distinct stages.

Recommendations for Stakeholders and Next Steps

18. Stakeholder recommendations include:
 - a. Given the importance of social ‘others’ on tourists’ decisions, business operators, marketers and planners at all levels should focus marketing efforts on marketing through social networks. Opportunities for such marketing suggested by the current study include:
 - i. Web 2.0 technology such as social networking sites, travel blogs and travel recommendation sites;
 - ii. New migrant groups within the local community;
 - iii. Local residents (e.g., being well-known and regarded within the broader local and business communities);
 - iv. Residents and business organisations from regions that supply the destination with domestic tourists and services (for ‘flow-on’ recommendations).

Such opportunities allow messages to be embedded within naturally occurring networks that have been shown in this research to filter through into tourist decision making. At the extreme (e.g., where a New Zealand resident takes over the planning for a tourist’s trip) access to those networks can dramatically influence tourist decisions and behaviours. Stakeholders (e.g., tourism businesses) may not have control over the content of these networks but participation in them either directly or indirectly through ensuring consistently high product quality and customer satisfaction will be increasingly essential.

- b. Overall itineraries and ‘Type of Trip’ variables have different implications for spatially distinct sites or destinations and this needs to be taken into consideration in planning, policy and marketing strategies. Thus tourism planners, policy makers, Regional Tourism Organisations and government departments such as the Department of Conservation could use ‘Stage of Trip’ both to predict and influence site-specific visitation by the various ‘Type of Trip’ tourists. Likely patterns of visitor growth at particular natural protected areas, for example, could factor in ‘stage of trip’ calculations into projections.
 - c. As noted, one of the most prominent findings was the openness of much of the tourists’ time, especially once at a particular site or destination. The one day interviews, in particular, highlighted much uncommitted time in a ‘typical’ tourist day. When combined with tourists’ openness to quality signage and information on-site, this suggests that a coordinated approach to organising such ‘formal’ information sources would help tourists engage more with local opportunities.
19. The developed model is an interim summary of the fundamental features of yield-relevant tourist decision making that has emerged from Objective 2. While these features form the basis of immediate recommendations (paragraph 18, above), further refinement and validation of this model is required as work on Objective 3 proceeds. This will be achieved through stakeholder feedback, tourist focus groups (aimed at having tourists reflect on how the model may or may not capture their experiences of making decisions within New Zealand), case studies (as already planned as part of the

overall programme) and the progressive development of a simulation of tourist decision making through agent-based modelling techniques.

20. Suggestions for future research include: applying the model to other regions in New Zealand (e.g., especially in crucial North Island locations); investigating tour operator itinerary, accommodation and activity decisions to determine how these are devised; investigating Asian tourist decision making to identify any cultural differences in decision making processes that may affect refinement of the model developed here; development of quantitative approaches (e.g., surveys) based upon insights from the decision making data and modelling in this study; investigation of the detailed role that new technologies may play in tourist decision making (e.g., social networking sites, GPS systems, etc.).
21. Finally, detailed consideration is given of how the findings reported here can be used as a platform to begin the development of an agent-based simulation of yield-relevant tourist decision making. That development is the primary focus of Objective 3 of the overall programme.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Programme Goals

This report presents findings from Objective 2 of the FRST funded research programme ‘Enhancing the Spatial Dimensions of Tourism Yield’ (LINX0703). The overall aim of the programme is to examine tourism yield from a demand side perspective on the hypothesis that it is possible to identify which tourists (and their itineraries) generate different yield outcomes. A further aim is for this knowledge to enable product, policy and marketing interventions with the potential to grow yield per visitor.

The concept of ‘yield’ has been discussed in detail in the first programme report based on Objective 1 of the overall programme (see Becken et al., 2008). In brief, in the present report ‘yield’ refers both to financial and economic measures of yield and to measures of sustainable yield. ‘Sustainable yield’ refers to measures of environmental returns from tourism (e.g., CO₂ emissions; energy use) and social returns (e.g., the degree of regional dispersal of tourists in New Zealand). All three of these aspects of yield are examined in terms of their spatial expression. That is, each measure of yield is in part determined by where (and when), within New Zealand, these components of yield arise. Put simply, the different itineraries tourists exhibit in New Zealand are associated with different yield outcomes.

These research objectives are:

- OBJECTIVE 1. Derive yield based international visitor and itinerary prototypes;
- OBJECTIVE 2. Develop in-depth understanding of international tourist decision making processes, with emphases on understanding itinerary, activity and expenditure choices;
- OBJECTIVE 3. Develop an ‘agent-based’ simulation of international tourist decision making.

The work reported here on the findings from Objective 2 is therefore part of a systematic examination of the demand side of tourism that will lead to the development of an ‘agent-based’ simulation of yield-relevant, tourist behaviours. Objective 2 relies upon the prototypes extracted from the IVS and other data to frame primary data collection of international tourists’ actual, yield-relevant decision making processes within New Zealand. Findings from Objective 2 that involve the identification of the drivers of decision making will then feed into the simulation modelling in Objective 3.

The outputs, or findings, from Objective 2 that form the basis of this report are of two kinds:

- Readily applicable insights into tourist decision making that could inform stakeholder activities (e.g., marketing, planning, business strategy, product development and design) to ensure rapid dissemination of useful programme findings to stakeholders;
- Initial identification of tourist ‘agents’ in terms of characteristics (attributes), decision rule sets and associated ‘cues’ in the travel environment for ongoing refinement, testing

and implementation in Objective 3 (development of simulations of yield-relevant tourist behaviours through agent-based computer modelling).

The primary focus in this report is on the first of these two outputs. The second output is preliminary and will be refined as work on Objective 3 progresses. As will be explained, the programme goals depend upon continuous refinement of the modelling arising out of the primary fieldwork that forms the substance of Objective 2. That means that an iterative process between the data from the field and the ongoing computer modelling is central to the success of the overall programme.

This report, in summary, focuses on insights about the tourist decision making process that can inform stakeholder activity while at the same time reporting progress on the overall programme goals.

1.2 Overview of Objective 2 Report

The following seven chapters of this report are organised in the following way:

- *Chapter 2: Previous Research on General Decision making*
 - This chapter briefly overviews relevant literature on decision making in general and links it to tourist decision making. The approach taken in Objective 2 towards understanding tourist decision making is positioned within this literature.
- *Chapter 3: Methods*
 - Details are provided in this chapter on the general methodological approach adopted in Objective 2 and the processes of method selection, implementation in the field and analytic procedures.
- *Chapter 4: General Findings and Analysis*
 - This chapter reports the detailed findings arising from the data on tourist attributes, travel style and decision making.
- *Chapter 5: Tourist Decision making General Model*
 - *In this chapter an overall model of tourist decision making that emerged from the detailed analysis is presented along with a discussion of further steps to validate the model.*
- *Chapter 6: Insights, Limitations and Recommendations*
 - This chapter reports the central insights into tourist decision making that may be of use for stakeholders, highlights limitations with the current findings and provides recommendations for stakeholders and for future research.
- *Chapter 7: Initial Agent-Based Model Development*
 - In this chapter, an approach to initial development of an agent-based model of tourist decision making is presented. This model builds on the findings from Objective 2 and provides a link to work on Objective 3.
- *Chapter 8: Conclusions and Next Steps*
 - Overall conclusions are re-emphasised in this chapter and the next steps in the progress of the programme goals are described.

Chapter 2

Previous Research on Decision Making

2.1 Tourist Decision Making

Much of the previous work on tourist decision making has adopted a model of tourists as rational decision-makers engaged in a motivationally-driven process of searching for an efficient means of satisfying desires and needs in relation to travel (e.g., Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and King, 2001). This process, often based on work in consumer behaviour (e.g., Pizam and Mansfeld, 1999), is assumed to involve a directed search for information about options that are available (and accessible) in order to satisfy a desire to travel or go on holiday (e.g., Mansfeld, 1992; Fodness & Murray, 1997; 1999). These options are evaluated in the light of resources, preferences, etc. and a final choice is made. Typically applied to destination choice, this approach to modelling tourist decision making has sometimes incorporated general decision models such as choice set theory (e.g., Crompton, 1992; Crompton & Ankomah, 1993) on the assumption that destination choice represents a high-involvement decision and a significant amount of deliberate search behaviour.

As will be highlighted in the following chapter (Section 3.2), there has been general criticism of this approach to decision making. In tourism, while such an approach provides useful insights into destination choice, for example, it may be less suited to the often relatively unplanned, hedonic, opportunistic and impulsive decision making that sometimes characterises tourists' behaviours on-site at a destination (e.g., Decrop, 1999). More generally, some have argued that rational models of motivation and decision making systematically underestimate the importance of affective (i.e., emotional) processes in tourists' behaviour (e.g., Gnoth, 1997; Goossens, 2000; Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy, 1990). Recent findings have indicated that there may be a 'hierarchy' of tourists' decisions during a trip, ranging from relatively planned (and early) decisions, through 'looser' sets of decisions to almost entirely unplanned decisions (Becken & Wilson, 2006).

These developments in research on tourist decision making reflect shifts in general approaches to decision making, as the following section outlines.

2.2 General Decision Making

There are at least six different paradigms in general decision making theory.

The classical concept of prescriptive, analytical everyday decision making (Edwards, 1954; Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944) claims that people collect and analyse information, eventually selecting an optimal solution from a range of alternatives (the 'choice set'). They do so by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each possible outcome and then choose the one most appropriate to achieve their desired objective. This decision is regarded as optimal, based on subjective expected utility. In its original formulation this theory does not allow for the deterministic limits of assumed 'pure' rationality. Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and, later, regret theory (Loomes & Sugden, 1982: 73-107) tackle these limits in accommodating the notions of risk or uncertainty in decisions. However, these still fail to address the 'mediating processes that lead to a decision' (Decrop, 2006: 2); for example in tourist choice, trip chaining and so-called demographic or retail

gravitation (Stewart, 1948; Reilly, 1931) arguably undercut the overly logical processes implied in prospect and regret theories. Choice set theory remains popular in tourism destination choice research (Jafari, 2003: 145-146). It is exemplified in the work of Wahab, Crampon & Rothfiel (1976) in which the tourist as Homo Economicus tries to maximise the utility of their actions prior to purchase, through minimizing risk with extensive problem solving and advanced planning. Um and Crompton (1990) and Crompton (1992) also exemplify this approach.

Simon (1955) recognised that decision making is bounded by limits on time, cognition and information. Bounded rationality (March & Simon, 1958) offers a more realistic view in claiming that, on the basis of their bounds, individuals make decisions that are 'good enough' rather than optimal. Hence satisficing replaces optimisation (Simon, 1957). Related to this approach, incrementalism assumes similar constraints on decision makers' rationality, but accommodates most humans' natural conservatism, in claiming that decisions are made only where an alternative is definitively better than the status quo. Choice amongst such alternatives is characterised as 'muddling through' (Lindblom, 1959), with, for some authorities, a particular emphasis on conflict, choice and commitment (Janis & Mann, 1977). In tourism research this approach is typified by the work of Schmoll (1977) with the rationality of tourists bounded by constraints including travel stimuli, psycho-social determinants and the 'given' environment. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) and Mathieson and Wall (1982), too, offer empirical work supporting the notion of bounded rationality applying in tourism decision making.

However, even this approach does not deal with the processes mediating the decision. Contingent or adaptive decision making (Payne, 1982; Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993) allows for natural dynamics in solving problems, finding that individuals use a variety of problem solving strategies, depending upon personal traits or characteristics, and problem and social contexts. Their fundamental choice is based on economic or cognitive biases (Decrop, 2006: 4). A variant, the political decision making paradigm (Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981), accommodates polity in decision making, in that it recognises that most decisions are made in the context of groups. Moutinho's (1987) work accommodates the important roles of social influences in tourism decisions, as well as acknowledging their inherent complexity and the need for adaptation.

The arrival of postmodernism brought a fifth and more pragmatic view of decision making that is less cognitively bound (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) than the earlier paradigms. This approach proposes that there is no singular 'reality', that causality is often complex and not clear, and that intentions are poor behavioural signs; in short everything is context-dependent and socially and discursively constructed (e.g. the garbage can model - Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). The pragmatic view of tourists' decision making is implicitly reflected in the work of Woodside and MacDonald (1994) and particularly in Woodside, MacDonald & Burford (2004), in that they embrace a socially constructed view of tourist decision making.

The sixth decision making paradigm, naturalistic decision making (Klein, 1998; Lipshitz, Klein, & Carroll, 2006) is used in the study of real world decision makers, particularly in high risk work environments. The approach deconstructs decision making through detailed analyses of discourse, narrative and social action by decision makers (Gore, Banks, Millward, & Kyriakidou, 2006), with a strong focus on context. This implicit acceptance of the role of the discursive mind (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Harré & Gillett, 1994; Moore, 2002) in

decision making represents a marked departure from more conventional decision making research. Woodside et al. (2004) and Decrop (2006) implicitly follow this approach in their naturalistic accounts of tourism decision making.

With the exception of the sixth, each of the decision making paradigms is an antecedent of subsequent work in decision making in tourism (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Conventionally, the focus of this type of research is on tourist destination choice, generally informed by ‘grand models’ of consumer behaviour (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). The major variables in these models relate to socio-psychological processes, personal variables and environmental variables (Decrop, 2006: 7-14).

Valuable though the first five paradigms have been in telling us what factors matter prior to decision making, we believe that it is not possible to fully understand decision making by studying final decisions (Svenson, 1979); it is unquestionably a process wherein decision-makers’ heuristics and problem representations (cues) interact in the creation of choice (Svenson, 1996), in a dynamically changing context. Hence, in Objective 2 our focus was to find out more about the decision making processes themselves.

Chapter 3 Methods

3.1 General Method

As was emphasised in the brief literature review (see Chapter 3), much research on tourist decision making has been informed by paradigms that have adopted a quantitative approach to the analysis of tourists' decisions. The focus has been on identifying variables predictive of tourist choices and, in particular, overall destination decisions. By contrast, in its attempt to identify the *underlying* 'drivers' of the process of tourist on-site decision making, this study distinguishes itself from much of that work both in intent and in methods employed.

A 'grounded' approach was adopted, based principally on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tourists and interviewers' note taking and reflections on-site. Such methods are well placed to probe the decision making process and, therefore, to identify underlying 'drivers' of that process. The approach is 'grounded' in the sense that it relies heavily on insights gained from direct observation and 'interrogation' of tourists' decision making processes as they occur *in vivo* (i.e., on-site in 'real time'). It is also grounded in that it allows the methods and focus to respond to emergent themes as they become available. That is, when such a theme begins to emerge it can redirect the interview process (or alter the focus of subsequent interviews) or even suggest additional methods to probe the insight further.

While the approach adopted in Objective 2 has been to employ a theory-aware, qualitative methodology rather than a quantitative, statistically driven one, there remains a need to feed back into established research and data on New Zealand tourists (e.g., IVS statistics). It is integral to the programme goals that the findings from this grounded fieldwork must reconnect with what is already known about tourist behaviours in New Zealand. This is partly to help validate the model but, more importantly, it is also to ensure that the findings from Objective 2 can be imported into current stakeholder activity and concerns (e.g., marketing, policy, planning, business operations). Nevertheless, the reason qualitative methods were chosen for data collection is that we consider them to be a direct means of achieving the following core aims of Objective 2:

- Identification of underlying decision making processes that generate observed, yield-relevant tourist behaviours;
- Isolating appropriate agent characteristics, cue sensitivity and 'decision rules' for the 'agent-based' modelling (to be used for the computer simulations in Objective 3);
- To establish 'new science' in relation to the understanding of tourist decision making.

Considerable time and effort during 2008 was put into choosing, developing, refining and, ultimately, simplifying the methods used for data collection. This process is detailed below.

3.2 Survey Instrument Design and Piloting

Initially, we had planned to conduct a series of short (five to ten minute) semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of tourists at a range of different research sites around Canterbury. The data and insights collected from these interviews were to be used to inform longer interviews designed to explore tourists' decision making behaviours in more detail. The short interview schedule was designed and piloted in central Christchurch by two of the

lead researchers in December 2008. These interviews took longer than initially envisioned (some lasted up to 20 minutes) and a considerable amount of data was collected within this time frame. Because of this, and for practical reasons (i.e., tourists appeared comfortable with this length of engagement), it was decided to focus only on these medium length interviews.

The primary focus of the interviews was on tourists' decision making in New Zealand and participants were talked through their decision making process for different types of travel decisions – the destination they were at, their overnight accommodation, an activity they had participated in and a daily purchase (of food, souvenirs, and so on) (refer to Appendix 1). Participants were also questioned about how decisions were made within their travel party (including when, and by whom, decisions were made). A range of demographic and trip data were also collected from interviewees including gender, age, nationality, country of residence, travel group details, length of stay in New Zealand, day number of trip when the interview occurred, number of previous visits to New Zealand, general itinerary and main type of transport used during stay. Tourists were also asked if they had made any changes to their planned itinerary while in New Zealand. A final set of questions asked participants if they had a budget for their trip in New Zealand, if they kept a record of their spending, their general interest in New Zealand and how they normally preferred to experience tourist activities (for example, passive or active participation, independently or with a commercial company, and so on). Participants were also asked how experienced they perceived themselves to be as tourists, and how many international trips they had taken in the previous ten years.

During the initial phase of interviewing, it sometimes proved difficult to keep participants focused on specific decisions or events rather than a narrative about their whole trip (or even previous trips). In an effort to counteract this, a new interview schedule was developed and used by one of the interviewers at the final research site in Tekapo (refer to Appendix 2). In these interviews (15 altogether) the same general demographic and trip data as in the standard interviews were collected, but the decision making questions focused only on what the tourists had done the previous day (Sometimes this included discussion of events on the day of the interview prior to the interview.). These interviews were shorter than the others, with most lasting around 10 minutes.

3.3 Ethics Process

As an integral part of the research design process, the fieldwork procedures, methods and support processes (e.g., training of interviewers) were developed to incorporate standard ethical requirements. A comprehensive application was made to the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee outlining the proposed methods, confidentiality provisions, data security strategies, interviewee selection and recruitment techniques and consent and information practices. On that basis, approval for the project was gained from the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee (Application No.: 2008-47).

3.4 Fieldwork Organisation and Implementation

All three lead researchers were involved in the design of the interview schedule and it was piloted by two of the lead researchers. Two Lincoln University postgraduate students with interviewing experience were employed to help with the research fieldwork and another to

help with interview transcription. One of the student interviewers spoke both Mandarin and Cantonese. A research timetable was devised to cover the busy tourist season and to fit with the availability of interviewers.

3.4.1 Interviewer training

A training day was held at the University in December to familiarise the students employed to help with the research (this included the two interviewers and the student transcriber) with overall aims of the research project and with the details of the interview research.

The first interviews (which also doubled as training interviews for the student interviewers) were conducted in Christchurch in late December 2008. To ensure consistency between interviewers, the Christchurch interviews were conducted by two interviewers (one lead researcher and one student fieldworker each time), taking turns to lead questioning. Also, after each interview, the two interviewers discussed any problems encountered with questioning and the interview schedules were altered slightly (mostly with respect to the order of the questions) before the subsequent research trips. This process both aided in the refinement of the data collection (to focus on important or emerging themes) and in ensuring that all interviewers were maintaining a consistent approach to questioning and to the emphases in the interviews. With the evolving ‘grounded’ approach adopted in this study, such consistency between interviewers, between sites and over time is essential for the rigour of data collection and later analysis.

3.4.2 Dates, Scope, On-site Sampling and Interviewee Selection

The research was undertaken in the Canterbury region. Adopting a regional focus allowed the selection of a range of types of sites and provided insight into the sequencing and connections within at least a portion of tourists’ itineraries in New Zealand. Five research locations were selected to represent different destination types: gateway (Christchurch), terminal (Akaroa and, to a lesser extent, Hanmer Springs) and through-route (Kaikoura and Tekapo). A ‘gateway’ is an entry point into New Zealand; a ‘terminal’ site is a location that is at the end-point of a diversion from a main through-route; a ‘through-route’ is a site that is located on a significant travel corridor. This range of destinations was chosen to include people at various points in a trip and engaged with different types of destinations and it was expected that the tourists encountered at each place might be interested in different types of activities, have different purposes of visit, and so on. The following paragraphs describe each site and provide details on sampling locations. A detailed description of the tourists encountered at each research site is given at the beginning of the Results chapter.

Christchurch

A gateway city location, Christchurch is an important arrival point for international flights (primarily from Australia) and for tourists flying from the North Island. As a tourist destination, the city has a number of both private and public sector ‘low key’ attractions focused on the central city area – the Christchurch Museum, Arts Centre and shops, Art Gallery, Botanical Gardens, and so on. Other attractions located further away from the centre include the Gondola and the Antarctic Centre. It was expected that tourists would be more likely to stay overnight in Christchurch (than just pass through or visit on a day trip from elsewhere). All eight tourists interviewed in Christchurch were staying at least one night. Also, gateway locations often attract tourists at either the beginning or end of their trips and five of the eight participants interviewed in Christchurch were at the beginning of their New

Zealand trip, two were at the end of their stay. The other, a tourist on a working holiday, was visiting Christchurch in the middle portion of a year long stay.

Kaikoura

Kaikoura's geographic location makes it a good stopping point on SH1 between Picton (the North Island ferry terminal is 157 kms away) and Christchurch (183 kms away). The triangle route that combines Christchurch, Hanmer Springs and Kaikoura is also popular with tourists. A number of tourists encountered arrived/left Kaikoura via Hanmer Springs rather than travelling down SH1. Kaikoura has a signature attraction in whale watching (by both boat and air), as well as a number of other wildlife attractions (dolphin and seal swimming, seal colony, kayaking, fishing, walks, and so on). It was expected that Kaikoura would attract stopover visitors, as well as some travelling through and some on day trips from Christchurch: of the 35 people interviewed, 31 were staying at last one night, three were on day trips and only one was passing through.

Hanmer Springs

Although, technically, Hanmer Springs is a terminal destination, it is also only a short distance off a through-route (Lewis Pass to the West Coast or Nelson area). Hanmer Springs is also on a useful triangle route for short multi-day trips from Christchurch (combined with Kaikoura). From Hanmer Springs it is 135 kms to Christchurch, 141 kms to Kaikoura, 217 kms to Greymouth, 198 kms to Westport and 286 kms to Nelson. Hanmer Springs is promoted as a relaxing destination and best known for the hot springs, although many standard tourist activities are also available – bungy jumping, jet boating, white water rafting (low grade river), quad bikes, horse trekking, mountain biking, and so on. Of the 37 people interviewed in Hanmer Springs, 28 were staying at least one night, four were on day trips and five were passing through (without staying a night).

Akaroa

Akaroa is a terminal destination which attracts many day trippers from Christchurch (84 kms away). Scenic and nature attractions are prominent (particularly swimming with, and viewing, dolphins) and the town has some cultural appeal being sold as New Zealand's only French settlement. A number of short walks are available in the surrounding area and the town is the access point for the multi-day Banks Peninsula Track. The drive from Christchurch to Akaroa is very scenic. Altogether, of the 33 tourists interviewed in Akaroa, 16 were staying at least one night, 16 were on day trips and one was passing through (en route from Christchurch to Aoraki/Mt Cook).

Tekapo

Tekapo is located on the main highway through-route between Christchurch and Queenstown and is often recommended to tourists as a good driving route to take when going south (instead of following the coast). From Tekapo it is 226 kms to Christchurch, 258 to Queenstown and 303 kms to Dunedin. As an overnight stopping point, Tekapo competes with Twizel (which some guidebooks do not rate very highly) and Aoraki/Mt Cook (which has limited accommodation). Fairlie and Omarama are also overnight options in the nearby area. Tekapo is primarily known for its scenic views (particularly the Lake and distant alps/church view) but the surrounding area offers a range of other attractions such as the Mt John Observatory, scenic flights, short walks and good fishing opportunities. There is a recently opened hot spring and spa complex. Altogether, of the 27 tourists interviewed in Tekapo, 19 were staying at least one night, six were passing through and two were undecided (at the time of the interview).

Two locations were selected (usually one at a specific tourist attraction and one in a more generic tourist area) at each research site. Interviewers were able to quickly determine the best places within these sites for approaching tourists and conducting interviews (usually where seating was available), including the best place to position the three interviewers. The interview dates and sites were:

- Christchurch (Cathedral Square outside the i-site and on the Worcester Street Bridge): late December
- Kaikoura (the seal colony and the town beachfront/i-site): 4-6 January
- Hanmer Springs (Thrillseekers Canyon and the public area in front of the hot pools/i-site): 11-13 January
- Akaroa (along the waterfront between the pier and the i-site): 18-20 January
- Tekapo (the Church/statue on the lake and the open ground between the lake and township): 11-13 February

The only research site that was on private property was the ‘Thrillseekers Canyon’ at Hanmer Springs. The owners were contacted by telephone, and then by email to arrange permission for researchers to be positioned there for the dates of the research. After explaining the project to the owners, this permission was granted.

A three day research trip was made to each of the research locations outside Christchurch during January and February 2009. The exact timing of each research trip depended on the availability of all three main interviewers (one lead researcher who was present for all the fieldwork and the two student interviewers). The aim for each interviewer to interview 12 tourists per research trip was achieved. These interviews were supplemented by extra interviews at three of the four research sites (where one of the other lead researchers also interviewed for a day). At the final research site (Tekapo), only two interviewers were present as one was forced to withdraw because of illness.

The weather was particularly good for the first two research trips, so interviews could be conducted comfortably outside (although there were some issues with the audibility of the interview recordings as a result of background noise from other people, birds, traffic, wind, and so on). In Akaroa, thunderstorms made interviewing more difficult, so a number of interviews were conducted at cafés. The interviewers encountered several days of bad weather in Tekapo and although this disrupted the planned interview schedule (there were no indoor alternatives available) the interview quota was still achieved.

At the selected sites, potential participants were approached on a non-random, ‘first past the interviewer’ basis and, in each case, a filter question was asked to ensure that the person approached was an international tourist. Attempts were made to target particular tourist markets in line with recommendations arising from Objective 1. As the results will indicate, this was only partially successful. Given the qualitative nature of the study methods, a representative sample was not sought, although sufficient sampling was aimed at to gain a ‘saturated’ data set in relation to decision making by tourists at these sites. That is, sufficient sampling is achieved once no new insights or significant differences arise from further interviewing.

The research was explained (the purpose of the research, the content and length of the interviews, the research institution involved) and they were asked if they were prepared to participate. Name badges and caps were worn by interviewers to clearly identify that they

were from Lincoln University. All tourists were advised that participation was voluntary and that they were able to withdraw their participation at any time. Before interviews began, participants were shown a more detailed information sheet and asked to sign a consent form (which also gave permission for interviews to be recorded). The interviews took between five minutes and one hour, most were around 20-25 minutes; several were cut short when tourists had to leave (to catch transport, activities, meet other people, and so on). As noted above, the amended interview schedule used by one of the researchers at Tekapo resulted in shorter interviews.

3.4.3 Treatment of Interview Data

The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. To provide some immediate feedback on the quality and usefulness of the data being collected, transcription began after the first research trip. Initially, transcription was undertaken by a postgraduate student with transcription experience (who had attended the project briefing sessions, but who was not involved in the interviews). Later transcription was completed by all those who had been involved in the interviewing.

Key data were recorded on the interview schedules (and later entered into an Excel spreadsheet). On completing each interview, interviewers wrote brief notes on any decision making themes or issues that had featured during that interview. New or interesting findings and problems etc were discussed at the end of each day and the outcomes of these discussions were then incorporated into future interviews, into the way data was recorded on the fieldwork spreadsheet (see 4.4.4) or noted as a focus for later analysis.

3.4.4 Interview Data Analysis

Analysis of interview data was performed both manually and electronically. Using the spreadsheet data and the interview transcripts, the manual analysis identified tourist and trip characteristics that appeared to relate to decision making. From this, a number of recoded variables were generated. Using the NVivo software package (ver.8.0) electronic coding focused initially on decision making styles, topics and themes. Data were then analysed using the recoded variables from the manual analysis.

NVivo provides a powerful, electronic version of standard qualitative coding techniques and thematic analysis and data exploration. At a basic level, sections of interview transcripts can be 'coded' under multiple 'nodes' (e.g., gender, age, accommodation decision, etc.). This initial coding is often called 'descriptive' coding as it organises the data (transcripts) into sections that match the basic categories of data collected in the survey. At a deeper level, coding can identify emerging themes that interviewees mention (e.g., how concerns over 'busy' periods might affect accommodation or activity decisions). This is often called 'thematic coding'. Such electronic coding enhances the ability to explore emergent themes (e.g., for their presence or sub-components), generate node hierarchies (to understand relationships between coded 'nodes') and to make rapid 'queries' of the data (e.g., to see whether a suspected relationship is present in the data).

Chapter 4

General Findings and Analysis

This section provides a detailed discussion of the primary data collection and its analysis. It covers all of the findings from both sets of interviews (i.e., from administration of both questionnaires – see Appendices 1 and 2). It also covers findings that arose from recoding of responses to explore relationships between different aspects of tourists' decision making processes.

Section 4.1 presents a basic analysis of the tourists in the sample, characteristics of their visits to New Zealand, itineraries and main transport types.

Section 4.2 outlines the 'Type of Trip' of tourists in the sample. This was a principal, emergent category, which related directly to features of tourists' travel and decision making. Section 4.3 presents the analysis of the travel group within which interviewees were travelling at the time of being interviewed. It details, in particular, the role of repeat visitors and New Zealand residents in the group, as well as previous travel experience of interviewees and broad group demographics that influenced decision making.

Section 4.4 presents analyses of the sequencing of decisions especially with regard to the stage of a trip and the use of information sources.

Section 4.5 focuses on particular decisions regarding overall interests, general spending behaviours, accommodation and activities.

In Section 4.6 the focus shifts to differences found between our research sites in terms of both general travel characteristics (itineraries, transport, Type of Trip, etc.) and the travel group. It also considers in detail similar findings from the 'one day of decision making' interviews.

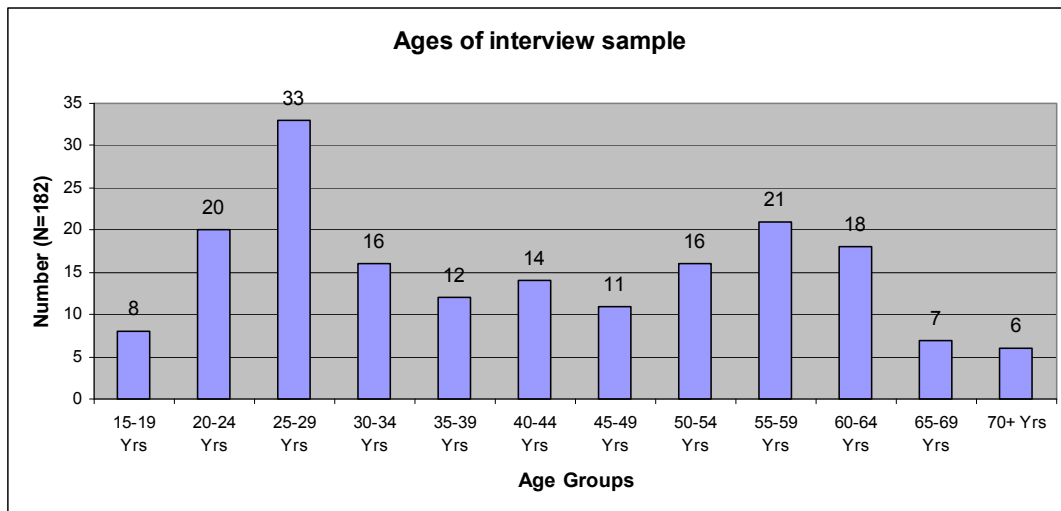
Finally, Section 4.7 provides an interim summary of the findings from the questionnaires.

4.1 Sample Characteristics

4.1.1 General Sample Description and Age of Interviewees

Altogether, 140 interviews were conducted at the five research locations. The majority of interviews (101) involved only one person, the remainder (39) involved either two or three tourists: altogether, 182 tourists were involved in the interviews. The majority of the research findings are described and analysed in respect of the 140 travel groups represented by these 182 tourists. For purposes of sample clarity, the gender and ages of the interview sample are reported below for the 182 tourists; whereas nationality/country of residence is reported for the 140 travel groups (there were no mixed nationality groups in the sample apart from one group of working holidaymakers travelling together. These had met only the previous day and so their travel group was recorded only for the single person interviewed). In respect of gender, the interview sample was made up of 107 females and 75 males; their ages are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Ages of tourists interviewed



4.1.2 Country of Residence

Both nationality and country of residence was recorded for each travel group (Table 1). These differed in 14 cases. For the purposes of analysis, country of residence was used, as it is the strongest determinant of likelihood of repeat visitation (either previously or in respect of future intention to visit) and length of stay. This also matches the visitor data collected by the IVS, which asks ‘Which country did you last live in for 12 months or more?’

Table 1
Research Sample by Nationality and Country of Residence

Country	By Nationality	By Country of Residence
UK	48	43
Australia	24	31
Germany	18	18
United States	10	11
Japan	3	3
China	3	1
Canada	1	2
Czech Republic	2	2
Denmark	2	1
Finland	1	1
France	6	5
Hungary	1	-
India	3	3
Ireland	2	2
Korea	1	1
Netherlands	8	7
Serbia/New Zealand	1	-
Singapore	-	3
South Africa	1	-
Spain	1	1
Switzerland	3	3
Taiwan	1	1
Zambia	-	1
Total	140	140

The preliminary research (see Objective 1 Report: *Tourist Itineraries and Yield*, Becken et al., 2008) identified six key tourist markets based on nationality; Table 2, below, shows the number of people in the sample in each of these, with the rest collapsed by regional geographical areas. Although the sample was not designed to be representative of all tourists to New Zealand, Asian visitors (both Japanese and Chinese) were underrepresented for a number of reasons. According to the 2009 *Tourism Sector Profiles*, for example, Chinese visitors were less likely to visit Canterbury (fewer than 10 % Chinese visitors visit areas outside Auckland, Rotorua and Waikato) (Ministry of Tourism, 2009). The employment of an interview method (which is more time consuming than surveys) made it difficult to intercept and interview Asian tourists, who were more likely to travel on organised tours in New Zealand (according to the *Tourism Sector Profiles*, 89% of the Chinese holiday market and 65 % of the Japanese holiday market travel on group or packaged tours). Some effort was made to counteract expected language difficulties associated with interviewing Asian tourists by employing one interviewer who was a native Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese) speaker. Also, a Chinese version of the interview sheet was prepared in the eventuality of intercepting Chinese tourists. One interview was conducted wholly, and another partially, in Mandarin. Altogether, three of those interviewed were Chinese by nationality; however, two of these tourists were resident in Singapore. ‘Other Europeans’ were overrepresented in the sample.

Table 2
Research Sample by Country of Residence
(collapsed categories)

Country of residence	Number in research sample
UK	43
Australia	31
Germany	18
United States	11
Japan	3
China	1
Other Europe	22
Other North America	2
Other Asia	8
Other	1
Total	140

4.1.3 Repeat Visits

Of the 182 people involved in the interviews, 126 were visiting New Zealand for the first time and 56 had been between one and eight times before. The majority of repeat visitors interviewed were from Australia and the UK with 21 tourists from each having been to New Zealand before. The remainder of repeat visitors were from the United States (4), Germany (3), Netherlands (2), Switzerland (2), Denmark (1), Japan (1) and Korea (1). Generally, tourists from Australia had visited the most times previously, although one German tourist was on their 7th visit and one Japanese tourist was on their 4th visit.

4.1.4 Travel Party – Tourists Only

The travel party includes only those people with whom interview participants arrived in New Zealand (i.e. it does not include New Zealand residents with whom they may subsequently travel with in New Zealand). Altogether, 37 of the 140 travel parties were tourists who arrived (and travelled) in New Zealand alone (although they may have subsequently travelled

on a packaged tour); 60 travelled to New Zealand with one other person and 30 were travelling with three or more others. The other 13 tourists travelled in some combination of these forms of travel party during their trip. They may, for example, have arrived alone but subsequently travelled with people they knew from their country of origin, who were in New Zealand for a different length of time.

The remainder of the report is based on coding associated with the 140 travel groups (which differ from the travel parties described above in that they may also include New Zealand residents). (Note: In some cases ‘travel group’ describes only one tourist.)

4.1.5 Length of Stay

The length of stay in New Zealand ranged from six days to one year. The mode was 21 days (13 travel groups) although this was evenly distributed with similar numbers staying for 14 days (11 travel groups), 30 days (12 travel groups) and 42 days (10 travel groups). For analysis purposes, ‘length of stay’ was recoded according to the following four measures:

- **Short** – up to, and including, two weeks (34 travel groups)
- **Medium** – between two weeks and one month (53 travel groups)
- **Extended** – over one month, but less than three months (35 travel groups)
- **Long** – over three months (18 travel groups)

The extended stay visitors were more likely to travel using either rental vehicles, private transport or a combination of private and some other form of transport. Long stay visitors were also more likely to travel using private transport or a combination of private and other transport (Table 3). The tourists staying the shortest time (short or medium stays) were more likely to travel by rental vehicle. Half of those travelling by tour were staying for a medium length of time – associated with the longer length tours operated by the modular ‘hop-on hop-off’ providers. There were some differences in length of stay by destination with more short stay visitors encountered in Hanmer Springs and more medium stay visitors encountered in Kaikoura, Hanmer Springs and Akaroa. In Tekapo, there were slightly more medium and extended stay than short stay visitors and no long stay ones (Table 3). Table 3 also shows the differences in length of stay by itinerary type (discussed in Section 4.1.7 below). (Length of stay by travel group is shown in Table 6 and is discussed in Section 4.3.2).

Table 3
Transport Type, Research Destination and Itinerary
Type by Length of Stay
(recorded)

	Short	Medium	Extended	Long	Total
Transport type					
Rental	23	24	12	-	59
Private	1	8	8	8	25
Public	5	6	3	3	17
Tour	2	5	2	1	10
Combination	3	10	10	6	29
Total	34	53	35	18	140
Research destination					
Christchurch	2	4	-	2	8
Kaikoura	6	12	11	6	35
Hanmer Springs	14	13	6	4	37
Akaroa	5	14	8	6	33
Tekapo	7	10	10	-	27
Total	34	53	35	18	140
Itinerary type*					
Full loop	9	31	28	16	84
Island loop	16	13	3	-	32
Triangle	4	1	-	-	5
Stationary	2	2	1	-	5
Combination	3	6	3	2	14
Total	34	53	35	18	140

* See Section 4.1.6 for definitions

By way of comparison, in 2008, the median stay for holiday and VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) visitors from the six main markets was: UK (20.1 days for holiday travellers and 20.8 days for VFR visitors); Australia (9.9 days for holiday travellers and 9.1 days for VFR visitors); Germany (22.8 days for holiday visitors and 24.0 days for VFR visitors); United States (8.4 days for holiday visitors and 14.0 days for VFR visitors); Japan (6.3 days for holiday travellers and 8.8 days for VFR visitors); and China (3.2 days for holiday travellers and 29.6 days for VFR visitors) (Ministry of Tourism, 2009).

4.1.6 Itinerary Type

While there are no clear prototypes for typical tourist itineraries in New Zealand, preliminary investigation showed that they may be classified according to four broad categories (for fuller discussion of this see, Objective 1 Report: *Tourist Itineraries and Yield*):

- **Stationary** (i.e. tourists arriving at their gateway destination and staying there)
- **Triangle** (i.e. tourists visiting more than one destination, but no more than three e.g. Auckland – Rotorua – Hamilton – Auckland)
- **Island loop** (i.e. tourists who visit several destinations but stay only on either the North or the South Island)
- **Full loop** (i.e. tourists visiting both islands of New Zealand and visiting more than three destinations)

Table 4 shows the sample classified according to these categories (and length of stay) and by survey site. While those doing single-island and full loops were relatively easy to categorise, it proved more difficult to categorically identify tourists who fitted the other groups. Categorisation was further complicated by those tourists who did a mixture of itinerary types – for example, they may have combined a stationary visit in one island with an island loop in the other, or they may have been primarily stationary during their New Zealand visit, but undertook several triangle or small loop trips at some point during their stay. For this reason, another category – “combination” – was added for the analysis.

Table 4
Itinerary Type and Length of Stay (number of days)
by Research Site

Itinerary type (Length of stay)	Christchurch	Kaikoura	Hanmer Springs	Akaroa	Tekapo	Total
Full loop (10 days – 1 year)	4	23	15	22	20	84
Island loop (6 – 49 days)	4	6	11	5	6	32
Triangle (7 – 20 days)	-	-	2	3	-	5
Stationary (6 – 90 days)	-	1	2	2	-	5
Combination (8 – 120 days)	-	5	7	1	1	14
Total	8	35	37	33	27	140

The most common itinerary was a full loop, undertaken by 84 (60 percent) of the travel groups interviewed. As noted above, full loop tourists were classified as those covering all of New Zealand – that is, both North Island and South Island destinations. Full loop tourists could be further categorised as those who were doing a conventional tour of New Zealand (moving in a logical pattern to cover most tourist destinations) and those who were more erratic in their travel behaviour, but who would eventually cover most of the same destinations as those visited on a normal touring route. This latter group were generally staying for longer and included most working holiday makers and some VFR tourists (see Section 5.2, below). Full loop tourists’ length of stay in New Zealand varied from a short 10 days to a relatively long full year. More full loop tourists were interviewed in Kaikoura, Akaroa and Tekapo than in Hanmer Springs (Table 4).

A further 32 travel groups (23 percent) were doing an island loop (in this case, only the South Island, although some also spent a minimal amount of time in Auckland or Wellington at the beginning or end of their stay), with stays that varied from six to 49 days. The number of destinations visited by island loop tourists varied considerably with some doing only short loops and others touring the entire South Island. Within the interview sample, Hanmer Springs was more popular with those doing an island loop. Island loop tourists were often first time visitors with limited time available or were tourists who had been advised by friends or relatives to travel in the South Island only.

Triangle route and stationary were the least common itinerary types encountered, with only five travel parties doing each of these (together, seven percent of all travel groups). Those tourists who could be clearly identified as following triangle itineraries had the shortest stays in New Zealand (7-20 days), and were interviewed in Hanmer Springs (two travel groups)

and Akaroa (three travel groups). The North Island, where travel routes including Auckland and Rotorua are popular, may have generated more triangle itineraries.

Stationary tourists were those who were based at one location whilst in New Zealand and made day trips (and the occasional overnight) from there. While originally conceptualised as tourists staying in gateway destinations (such as Auckland or Christchurch), most of the stationary tourists interviewed were based in smaller destinations (for example, Renwick, Rangiora and Kaiapoi). Stationary tourists stayed for between six and 90 days and were encountered in Kaikoura, Akaroa and Hanmer Springs.

The remaining 14 travel groups (ten percent) followed some combination of these itineraries (as described above) with the majority encountered in Kaikoura (five travel groups), and in Hanmer Springs (seven travel groups). Their stays in New Zealand ranged from eight to 120 days.

4.1.7 Main Transport Used

The IVS collects data on all forms of transport used by tourists whilst in New Zealand. For the purposes of this research it was more useful to code each travel group according to their *main* form of transport. The main forms of transport used while in New Zealand by the 140 travel groups were rental vehicles (59 travel groups), followed by private vehicles (25 travel groups), public transport (17 travel groups) and tours (10 travel groups). The remaining 29 travel groups used some combination of these transport types. Combination was the code used when tourists either gave multiple answers or when our analysis of interview transcripts suggested that several transport types had been used (in roughly equal proportions). The type of transport used was linked to the tourists' itinerary (Table 5).

Table 5
Main Transport Used by Itinerary Type

	Full loop	Island loop	Stationary	Triangle	Combination	Total
Rental	35	20	1	1	2	59
Private	14	4	3	-	4	25
Public	10	4	-	1	2	17
Tour	8	2	-	-	-	10
Combination	17	2	1	3	6	29
Total	84	32	5	5	14	140

Of those travelling by rental vehicle, 42 were travelling by car, 16 by campervan and one on a rented motorbike. The majority of the 59 travel groups using rental vehicles stayed in New Zealand for one month or less and most were following either full loop (59 percent) or island loop (34 percent) itineraries. Of the six main markets, rental transport was most popular with Australians (used by 23 of the 31 Australian travel groups). Of all the travel groups interviewed, rental vehicles were used by fewer than one third of visitors from the UK (13 out of 43 travel groups) and the United States (three out of 11 travel groups), by one third of German visitors (six out of 18 travel groups) and by more than a third of visitors from other countries in Europe (nine out of 22 travel groups). By contrast, half of all Asian visitors interviewed used rental transport.

Cars were also the most popular of the private vehicles used for transport (used by 22 out of 25 travel groups). These were purchased by the tourists in New Zealand, borrowed from New Zealand residents, or used by tourists who were travelling in the company of New Zealand residents. There was also one travel group travelling in a borrowed private campervan, one

tourist travelling by bicycle and one hitchhiker. Over half (14 travel groups) of those travelling by private vehicle were doing full loop itineraries and most were staying for longer than two weeks. Travel by private vehicle was popular with tourists from Europe, with almost one third of the German visitors interviewed travelling by private vehicle (five out of 18 travel groups) along with six of the 22 tourists from other European countries. Of the UK visitors interviewed, only eight of 43 travel groups were travelling *only* by private vehicles, but more than one third (15 of the 43 travel groups) were travelling by a combination of private and rental vehicles. Only two Australian visitors were travelling by private vehicles.

The majority of tourists travelling by public transport used bus or shuttle services (15 out of 17 travel groups) with one sharing public bus with train travel and one tourist mostly flying. A number of other tourists travelled by train whilst in New Zealand, but the train journey was considered an ‘activity’ (rather than a transport mode). As would be expected, those flying on domestic routes stayed the shortest length of time in New Zealand. Over half (10 travel groups) of the tourists travelling on public transport were following full loop itineraries, with most staying one month or less. Public transport was used by travel groups from all countries of residence with the exception of Australia, China and ‘other’.

The ten tourists/travel groups who travelled on tours did so on a variety of tour types, from the modular ‘hop-on hop-off’ Kiwi Experience and Magic Buses, to tours that were fully inclusive and organised. These latter tours included some specific activity tours such as, for example, ‘Hiking New Zealand’. A number of the ‘tour’ tourists were interviewed when they were taking side trips from their tours (for example, if the tour route or timing of a hop-on hop-off service did not suit them or if they were on a day excursion). Eight of these tourists were touring all of New Zealand (full loop) while two were undertaking only a South Island loop. Half the tour group tourists stayed between two weeks and one month (medium stay), one was a short stay tourist (less than two weeks), two others stayed for extended time (between one and three months) and one was a long staying tourist. Over half of the tourists travelling on tours were from the UK (three travel groups) and Australia (three travel groups), with the remainder (one each) from Germany, Other Europe, the United States and Other Asia.

Combination transport described the 29 travel groups who used a mixture of transport whilst in New Zealand. The most common combinations were of private and rental vehicles, and private vehicles and public transport but there were also combinations of tour and rental, rental and train, flying and rental, and so on. One cyclist combined cycling with other forms of transport. Just over two thirds (20 travel groups) of these combination transport users stayed in New Zealand for between two weeks and three months and over half (17 travel groups) were following full loop itineraries. Over half of the combination transport users were from the UK (15 of the 29 travel groups), followed by seven from Germany and other European countries, four from the United States and other North American countries, and three travel groups from Australia.

4.2 Type of Trip

Although participants were not specifically asked about their motives for visiting New Zealand, coding the interview data for itinerary categories suggested that the tourists interviewed represented a range of *trip types*. These trip types, in turn, impacted on tourists’ style of travel, itineraries, transport and accommodation choices and ultimately their decision making. Most fell within the IVS ‘purpose of visit’ classification as either ‘holiday/vacation’ or ‘visiting friends or relatives’ (VFR); the only exceptions were a tourist who was working

for one week of his stay in New Zealand, and two tourists who were undertaking courses whilst in New Zealand. The IVS, however, asks those surveyed to record only their main reason for travelling in New Zealand, whereas the interview data suggested that tourists often have multiple motives.

Importantly, ‘Type of Trip’ – as described in the following – emerged as a principal category in understanding yield-relevant tourist decision making. Once a tourist is categorised in this way, important features of their decision making processes can be understood and explained. Type of Trip can be best thought of as the overall pattern of international tourists’ behaviour in New Zealand. In much the same way that the behaviour of sportspeople can be explained fundamentally in terms of the kind of sport they are playing (e.g., netball, soccer, basketball) and the basic rules of that sport, so too the Type of Trip that a tourist engages in can summarise the ‘point’ of their overall behaviour. To this extent, Type of Trip is related to a tourist’s motive but it goes beyond the notion of a motive (or ‘purpose of travel’) because it is based on patterns of behaviour and the ‘rules’ implicit in that pattern (as with a sport or game).

All travel groups were coded as ‘sightseeing’ and were then coded according to the other categories of trip type if they expressed any one (or more) of the other motives/purposes for their New Zealand visit. The trip types identified were: sightseeing, visiting friends and family (VFR), holiday/family, working holiday and ‘round-the-world’ (RTW). It was possible for more than one of these categories of trip type to apply to each travel group. Type of Trip impacted on a number of other characteristics of travel including the length of stay, type of transport used and itinerary taken.

4.2.1 *Sightseeing*

The most common motive related to Type of Trip for visiting New Zealand was sightseeing (referred to by a number of participants as “seeing/doing” the country). For some participants, sightseeing in New Zealand was the *only* motive for their trip (47 of the 140 travel groups) while for other participants other motives applied alongside sightseeing (93 of the of the travel groups). Of the 93 travel groups with multiple motives and Types of Trip - 16 had only a limited interest in sightseeing. These tourists, for example, only travelled around New Zealand for part of their stay and their other motives were much stronger: 13 were strong VFR visitors (see below); three were holiday visitors and only one was a first time visitor. The quintessential sightseeing tourist was the visitor who stayed for around three weeks, rented a campervan and followed a full loop itinerary.

4.2.2 *Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)*

Altogether, 57 of the 140 travel groups (41 percent) had some VFR component to their New Zealand visit. This was a higher percentage than reported in the IVS where 30 percent of international visitors to New Zealand in the year to March 2009 indicated that VFR was the main purpose of their visit. One explanation for this difference could be an under-representation in the study of tourists from some markets (principally Asian markets). It is worth noting, however, that some VFR Types of Trip were undertaken by tourists from Asian markets.

These 57 VFR travel groups were encountered in Kaikoura (20 travel groups), Hanmer (17 travel groups), Akaroa (12 travel groups), Tekapo (six travel groups) and Christchurch (two travel groups).

The largest group of VFR tourists were from the UK (24 travel groups), followed by Australia (11 travel groups), Europe (ten travel groups), North America (eight travel groups), Asia (three travel groups) and Zambia (one travel group). The majority of repeat visitors from the UK were VFR.

VFR tourists demonstrated much ‘messier’ itineraries (with the most combination ones) than for other categories and, as might be expected, were also more likely to be stationary (four out of the five travel groups classified as having stationary itineraries were VFR). Those following triangle itineraries were also more likely to be VFR tourists (or holiday/family tourists).

VFR visitors were more likely to be travelling in private vehicles or using some combination of transport types whilst in New Zealand. The most common combination was to use both rental and private vehicles (for example, hiring a car for part of their stay). Private vehicle use included travelling with locals, borrowing vehicles and, in the case of longer staying and regular VFR visitors, purchasing their own vehicle for use in New Zealand.

VFR tourists included a high number of repeat visitors who often had high expectations of returning in the future. Although for many of these tourists VFR was the main motivating factor for their visit, the high number of repeat visits made means that eventually they “see/do” all of New Zealand. On repeat visits they also often returned to places they had visited previously, over time developing independent (to their VFR hosts) connections to those places. Interview data suggested that VFR visitors could be differentiated according to the strength (strong, moderate, or weak) of the VFR component of their trip.

Strong VFR

A strong VFR motive was indicated by tourists who spent most (over half) of their time in New Zealand either staying with, or in the company of, New Zealand residents. It was common for strong VFR tourists to travel around New Zealand with the people they were visiting. Also, as noted above, the travel groups that spent limited time sightseeing were more likely to have strong VFR motives.

Altogether, there were 21 travel groups in this category with over half of them being from the UK (12 travel groups), the remainder of strong VFR travel groups were slightly more likely to be from Australia (three travel groups), Europe (three travel groups) and Asia (two travel groups), than from North America (one travel group). These connections are indicative of migration to New Zealand of people from these countries in recent years and the majority of the New Zealand residents these strong VFR tourists were visiting appeared to be relatively recent immigrants to New Zealand themselves.

Of all the VFR tourists, those with strong VFR components were much less likely to follow full loop itineraries and much more likely to follow a combination itinerary. Nine of the 14 travel groups following combination itineraries, for example, were strong VFR visitors. Four out of the five travel groups whose New Zealand itineraries were classified as stationary, were strong VFR visitors.

Strong VFR tourists were less likely than moderate or weak VFR tourists to use rental and public transport. Of the 21 strong VFR travel groups, eight used only private transport and nine groups used a combination of transport types (usually private and rental). More than half of the strong VFR travel groups were medium stay visitors.

Moderate VFR

Tourists classified as having moderate VFR motives (nine travel groups) were those who spent less than half their time in New Zealand with the people they knew, but for whom having acquaintances in New Zealand provided at least part of their motive for visiting New Zealand. They may, for example, have planned their trip around a VFR component (although they subsequently spent a lot of their time travelling independently) or they split their time equally between VFR and other activities.

Almost half of the moderate VFR tourists were from Australia (four travel groups); the others were from the UK (two travel groups), North America (two travel groups) and Europe (one travel group).

The majority of the moderate VFR tourists did a full loop itinerary (seven travel groups) and they used all transport types, with the exception of a tour. Almost half of these moderate VFR travel groups were short stay visitors.

Weak VFR

Overall, weak VFR describes those for whom the VFR connection was not their reason for coming to New Zealand, but they did have someone to visit. Twenty seven travel groups were classified as having a weak VFR motive. While these tourists visited people in New Zealand they spent limited time with them. While the people visited could be either friends or relatives for this group, there was a tendency for North American tourists in this category to be visiting friends rather than relatives. These tourists were often based in smaller destinations away from the more popular tourist routes (for example, Dargaville, Palmerston North, Kurow). Working holidaymakers sometimes selected the areas they looked for work because of a weak VFR connection in that place.

Most of the weak VFR tourists encountered were from the UK (ten travel groups), followed by Europe (six groups), North America (five groups) and Australia (four groups). The final two were from China and Zambia.

Weak VFR tourists were the most likely of all VFR visitors to do a full loop itinerary and to use rental vehicles.

Seven of the 27 weak VFR travel groups travelled by rental vehicles, another seven travelled in private vehicles and nine travel groups used a combination of transport types.

Altogether, of the 27 weak VFR travel groups 11 were extended stay, eight were medium stay, five were long stay and three were short stay visitors.

4.2.3 Holiday/family

In addition to sightseeing, 28 of the 140 travel groups also included some elements of a relaxing holiday or family holiday in their New Zealand visit. Holiday travel was represented by those groups who indicated in interviews that they had a holiday or relaxation motive for their New Zealand trip.

Family groups were those for whom spending time together as a family came out strongly in interviews.

These tourists generally did not travel as extensively, or stay for as long as sightseeing tourists. Holiday and family visits, for example, were characterised by shorter stays (15

stayed for two weeks or fewer, ten for between two weeks and one month) and involved less travel distance (for example, fewer full loops and more triangle, stationary and combination itineraries).

Altogether, over half of all holiday/family groups were from Australia (16 travel groups) with the remainder from the UK (four travel groups), North America (four travel groups), Europe (three travel groups) and Asia (one travel group).

In terms of transport, holiday/family visitors were more likely to use rental transport and combinations of transport types.

The majority of the holiday/family visitors were encountered in Hanmer (13 travel groups), followed by Kaikoura (nine travel groups), Akaroa (five travel groups) and Christchurch (one travel group). There were no holiday/family groups encountered in Tekapo but this may have been because the fieldwork was undertaken there after the school holiday period and most family groups (with school age children or younger) were from Australia.

Half of the holiday/family tourists also had a VFR motive. Also, family groups may also have been those in which the children present were adult and for whom part of their holiday motive appeared to be spending time together in the family group. Although family holiday was indicated by the presence of children, not all travel groups including children were coded as being on family holidays – those who were not were generally VFR tourists.

4.2.4 Working holiday

Altogether, 14 of the tourists/travel groups were in New Zealand on working holidays and were staying for one year. Eleven of the 14 had arrived in New Zealand alone.

The majority were from Europe (eight tourists), followed by North America (four tourists), the UK (one tourist) and Asia (one tourist).

While all of these tourists eventually completed a full loop there were two main ways in which this was undertaken. Some worked as they travelled (i.e. taking jobs for a short time before moving onto the next location) whilst others remained in one place to work, and travelled on shorter trips from that base.

Travel by private vehicle was popular and most of the working holidaymakers interviewed had purchased their own vehicle in New Zealand. Six working holiday makers used only private vehicles while a further five used private vehicles in combination with other transport types. This included, for example, working holidaymakers who did a tour, then other trips with private vehicles or public transport. One of the working holidaymakers had only travelled as part of a tour at the time of their interview.

Although working holidaymakers often met up with (and travelled with) friends while in New Zealand, these were usually friends from their country of origin who were also visiting New Zealand (rather than New Zealand residents). Four of the working holidaymakers interviewed had weak VFR connections.

Most of the working holiday makers were interviewed in Akaroa (six tourists) and Kaikoura (five tourists), followed by two in Hanmer Springs and one in Christchurch. No working holiday makers were interviewed in Tekapo.

4.2.5 Round the World (RTW)

Thirteen tourists were on round the world trips, or were visiting New Zealand as part of a long stay (usually working holiday) in Australia. Six of these RTW tourists arrived in New Zealand alone, while the other seven arrived with one other person. Once in New Zealand, however, they would join with other travellers to share transport costs. Sometimes these other travellers were people they had met in other countries, sometimes they only met them for the first time whilst travelling in New Zealand.

The majority of RTW tourists were from Europe (seven tourists/travel groups), followed by the UK (five tourists/travel groups) and Asia (one tourist). All of the RTW tourists were focused on sightseeing in New Zealand with eight doing full loops, four following island loops and one following a combination itinerary; three also had weak VFR connections.

The different transport options were about equal in popularity with three using rental vehicles, three using public transport, three using a combination of transport types and two taking tours.

Six of the RTW tourists stayed in New Zealand for between one and three months, five stayed between two weeks and one month, and two stayed less than two weeks.

Most of the RTW tourists were interviewed in Hanmer Springs (five tourists) and Tekapo (four tourists), followed by Akaroa (three tourists) and Kaikoura (one tourist). None were interviewed in Christchurch.

RTW tourists did the least amount of advance planning for their travel in New Zealand, often only looking at a guidebook on the flight into the country.

4.2.6 Other reasons

In addition to motives associated with general sightseeing, VFR, holiday/family visitors, working holidays and visiting New Zealand as part of a RTW trip, 11 tourists had a specific reason for visiting New Zealand. These were to:

- attend a wedding (four travel groups);
- complete a language course (one tourist) and a climbing course (one tourist);
- work (one tourist);
- spend time at a house owned in New Zealand (one tourist);
- take part in a volunteer programme (one travel group);
- attend a conference (one tourist) and to walk the Milford Track (one travel group).

The tourist taking the language course and the tourists participating in the volunteer programme were all working holiday makers. The language course student, the conference attendee and the four wedding visitors also had VFR connections. Two of the wedding visitors had weak and two had strong VFR connections. The conference attendee and two of the wedding visitors were amongst the 16 travel groups who had limited interest in sightseeing.

4.3 The Travel Group

4.3.1 *The Emergence of Travel Styles*

The identification of these trip types and the systematic coding of travel groups according to the variables discussed thus far highlighted a number of important variations in the travel styles of the 140 travel groups in the research sample. The addition of a ‘combination’ category to both itinerary and transport variables was useful in understanding the differences between each of the trip types described above. In particular, the finding that VFR tourists (and to a lesser extent family/holiday visitors and working holiday makers) were the most likely to follow combination itineraries and use a combination of transport types indicated that the presence of a VFR component is an important determinant of travel style.

Recoding the interview data for each of the travel groups into itinerary and Type of Trip highlighted several other variables that could be used to describe the type of travel style practiced by each travel group. Trip characteristics or travel style, for example, could also be described by the length of stay and transport used; the choice of these (in addition to age, nationality, Type of Trip) was linked to the characteristics of the travel groups and, in particular, whether tourists were first time or repeat visitors and who they were travelling with in New Zealand, as well as their travel experience in general. There were also a number of specific group characteristics that impacted on travel style and decision making.

4.3.2 *The Travel Group in New Zealand*

‘Travel group’ refers to the composition of the group with whom an interviewee was travelling at the moment of the interview. The ‘travel party’ variable, by contrast, described the number of people with whom each of the 182 tourists (representing 140 travel groups) interviewed had travelled to New Zealand. Those interviewed were also asked if they had been to New Zealand before. Neither question took account of there being someone else in the travel group who had been to New Zealand before (i.e., someone not interviewed, but who was a repeat visitor) or of the travel group (once in New Zealand) including people who lived in New Zealand. The 140 travel groups were assigned a travel group coding based on the presence of either repeat visitors or New Zealand residents in that travel group: all new visitors (77¹ travel groups); someone (or everyone) in the group a repeat visitor (38 travel groups); a New Zealander in the travel party for the entire trip (14 travel groups); and combination of these (e.g. they might travel with a repeat visitor or with a New Zealander for part of their New Zealand trip) (11 travel groups).

The itineraries, transport used and length of stay for the 140 travel groups, according to whether there were repeat visitors or New Zealand residents present, are shown in Table 6.

¹ Earlier we reported that 126 of the 182 tourists interviewed were new visitors – this discrepancy in the number of new visitors is because many of those tourists were travelling with other tourists who were not new visitors (but were not interviewed).

Table 6
Itinerary Type, Main Transport Used and Length of Stay by
Travel Group in New Zealand

	All new visitors	At least one repeat visitor	New Zealander in travel group	Combination	Total
Itinerary					
Full loop	58	18	2	6	84
Island loop	15	12	4	1	32
Triangle	1	2	1	1	5
Stationary	-	2	3	-	5
Combination	3	4	4	3	11
Total	77	38	14	11	140
Transport					
Rental	31	26	1	1	59
Private	13	4	7	1	25
Public	13	3	1	-	17
Tour	9	1	-	-	10
Combination	11	4	5	9	29
Total	77	38	14	11	140
Length of Stay					
Short	16	13	3	2	34
Medium	26	15	9	3	53
Extended	21	8	1	5	35
Long	14	2	1	1	18
Total	77	38	14	11	140

All New Visitor groups

Altogether, 95 percent of new visitors groups followed full loop (58 travel groups) or single loop itineraries (15 travel groups). New visitors represented almost 70 percent of all the travel groups following full loop itineraries and just under half of the travel groups following single loop itineraries.

Rental transport was used by 40 percent of new visitors, with the remaining 60 percent spread evenly across all other transport types. New visitors were the tourists most likely to travel on a tour and to use public transport.

New visitors were also the most evenly distributed tourists according to their length of stay, and represented the majority of long stay visitors, over half the extended stay visitors, and just under half of medium and short stay visitors (Table 6).

Groups containing at least one repeat visitor

Almost three quarters of the 38 travel groups that included at least one repeat visitor stayed either a short or medium length of time in New Zealand; they made up almost 40 percent of short stay visitors and 28 percent of medium stay visitors.

Almost 70 percent of these repeat visitor groups used rental transport. Altogether, 79 percent of these visitors followed full loop (18 travel groups) and single loop (12 travel groups) itineraries (Table 6).

Groups travelling with a New Zealander

Those tourists who travelled with a New Zealander for their entire trip in New Zealand followed a mix of itinerary types with single loop (4 travel groups) and combination itineraries (4 travel groups) the most popular.

These tourists represented over a third of all tourists who followed combination itineraries and more than half of those who were stationary.

Altogether, 86 percent of the travel groups that included a New Zealander travelled by either private or combination transport. They were more likely to stay for a medium length of time (Table 6).

Combination of groups

The 11 tourists who travelled in a combination of different travel groups whilst in New Zealand were also more likely to use a combination of transport types, to follow either a full loop or a combination itinerary and to stay for an extended length of time (Table 6).

Decision making in mixed groups

Overall, the interview data suggested tourists defer decisions and trip organisation to either repeat visitors or to New Zealand residents if they were present in the travel group. The father of an Australian family group, for example, commented that *“I’ve tended to make most of the decisions because I’ve been here before”*.

Repeat visitors also often acted like tour guides, as in the case of another Australian tourist who was travelling with his extended family: *“I have been there before [Arthurs Pass, the glaciers, Milford Sound, Rotorua], but my kids and mother haven’t so I thought it would be great to take them there”*.

Having some previous experience of travel in New Zealand made repeat visitors more comfortable with regard to the amount of advance booking and organisation required. Being a repeat visitor also changed travel plans and priorities as in the case of a Dutch couple, touring New Zealand by campervan for a second time: *“Last year we made a tour along the coast, so this year we have said we are crossing the inland”*.

Strong VFR tourists (who were more likely to travel with their New Zealand hosts) were usually happy to leave all their New Zealand travel planning and organisation to the people they were visiting, and to have very little input into even the selection of itineraries.

A number of tourists commented that, as a result of the experience gained on their current trip, they would change their travel behaviour if they made any subsequent trips to New Zealand. Some tourists, for example, commented that they would be more confident to leave bookings to chance (i.e., not pre-booking as much before arriving in New Zealand). A number of tourists travelling by campervan specifically mentioned that they would be more likely to free camp (now that they were more familiar with New Zealand and with the free camping opportunities) if they were to make a repeat visit to New Zealand. Even, however, for those tourists who were travelling in New Zealand as part of an ‘all new visitors’ travel group their own previous travel experience (in other countries) – which in most cases was extensive – meant that travel in New Zealand was not experienced as overly challenging.

4.3.3 *Previous travel experience*

In the interviews, tourists were asked how experienced they were as tourists and how many international trips they had made in the previous ten years.

Altogether, 123 tourists answered the experience question (the short interview tourists in Tekapo were not asked this and the question was missed in some interviews which were cut short). Also, as only one answer was recorded for each travel group, they may not have represented the experience of the entire travel group.

Overall, however, most of the tourists interviewed were experienced travellers: of the 123 recorded responses 60 tourists (49 percent) thought they were relatively experienced, 36 (29 percent) were very experienced tourists, while 19 (15 percent) were about average in their travel experience. Seven tourists considered themselves to be relatively inexperienced, only one was very inexperienced.

The visitors who considered themselves ‘very experienced’ tourists had taken between four and 50 international trips in the previous ten years – most had taken between 20 and 30 trips. The ‘relatively experienced’ tourists had taken between two and 30 trips (with a mode of ten trips). The tourists with ‘about average’ experience had taken between two and twenty trips. Three of the tourists who considered themselves to be either relatively or very inexperienced tourists were on their first international trip, the other five had taken between one and 18 previous overseas trips in the last ten years.

The anomaly of these less experienced tourists having taken so many international trips may be partly explained by their limited experience of this particular type of holiday. There were also a number of ‘very experienced’ tourists interviewed, for example, who commented that their experience was for different types of holidays to what they were taking in New Zealand. This was especially the case with UK and European visitors who were used to package/resort holidays rather than touring ones.

Travel experience did not appear to be very strongly correlated with tourists’ style of travel. The ten tourists who travelled in New Zealand on tours, for example, had a range of travel experience: only one was ‘very inexperienced’, three were ‘very experienced’ and five were ‘relatively experienced’ (one ‘tour’ tourist did not answer the experience question).

European and UK tourists had taken the most international trips in all these experience categories although for these tourists their geographic proximity to many other countries (and the ease with which they could travel to these countries) made it difficult to calculate an exact number of international trips.

Generally, tourists from the United States and Australia had taken the fewest trips in the previous ten years.

The three tourists on their first overseas trips were from Taiwan, UK and Australia.

Overall, the number of international trips reported by the interview sample supports the travel propensity figures reported in the Ministry of Tourism’s *Sector Profiles*: the propensity for outbound travel of UK residents, for example, is 112 trips per hundred people; 86 trips per hundred people in Germany; 28 per hundred in Australia; 13 per hundred in the United States and Japan; and three trips per hundred people in China (Ministry of Tourism, 2009).

4.3.4 Group composition

In addition to input from repeat visitors or New Zealand residents in travel groups, there was some evidence in the interview data that the composition of the travel group made a difference to the ways decisions and selections were made.

A new variable was added to subsequent data analyses that incorporated a disparate range of characteristics: if children were present; if there was an older person in the travel group; if the group was multigenerational; if the tourists were single females; or if they were vegetarians. This travel party coding included all the people in the current travel party (and so may have also included New Zealand residents). It was also possible for travel groups to fit multiple categories.

Altogether, 18 travel groups included children (aged from infants to teenagers). Thirteen of these were from Australia, three from the UK and two from Europe. Eleven of these 18 travel groups also had a VFR connection in New Zealand.

Almost half of the visitors travelling with children were following full loop itineraries (eight travel groups) and five were following combination itineraries (four of these also had strong VFR motives). There were also four following island loops and one a triangle itinerary.

Twelve of the 18 travel groups were travelling by rental vehicle, three by private vehicle and three used a combination of transport types.

If children were present, there were differences in the ways bookings were made, the accommodation types used, which activities were of interest and suitable (for example, some adventure activities have age and size restrictions), the amount of distance travelled, and so on.

There were some differences associated with the ages of the children. With younger children, the provision of safe play areas (both in terms of the play equipment and safety from passing traffic) and play facilities were important considerations in the selection of accommodation. The provision of toys and a play area for young children on cruise boats or in tourist company offices were appreciated, particularly if tourists were travelling with children of different ages (some of whom may not taken part in a particular activity).

For those travelling with very young children, commercial activities that took a long time also had less appeal. Keeping the children happy was given preference and activities were often chosen that had appeal to children rather than the adults in the travel group. One Australian father, for example, commented that he and his wife wanted to visit a winery at some stage of their trip, but that “*what we try to do is put in something each day that the kids can do, that is special for them*”.

For the adults in travel groups that included children (particularly those on family holidays or VFR trips) spending time with the travel group was the most important motive of their trip. While older children were easier to entertain they often still had limited tolerance for activities that took a long time.

Families travelling with several children (or with children who were old enough to be charged adult prices for activities) were very price conscious. One Australian family of five, for example, had spent over \$1500 in one day alone on commercial activities in Queenstown.

There was less impact on the travel dynamic in the case of groups that included adult children, but identifying these travel groups supported the coding of Type of Trip as either family or VFR (six out of nine groups that included adult children were also either VFR or family holiday visitors).

The travel groups with adult children were from Australia (four travel groups) the UK (four travel groups) and the United States (one travel group). With an overriding motive to spend time together, many travel groups that included adult children had correspondingly less interest in participating in commercial tourist activities, or even in sightseeing.

Altogether, 31 of 182 tourists who participated in the interviews were aged 60 or over, and many other travel groups (from whom only younger members were interviewed) also included older travellers.

In 12 interviews, however, the advanced age of members of the travel group was mentioned as a factor that impacted in some way on their trip. In these cases their age (or physical abilities) made some difference to their travel style and to what they were interested in or able to do. One travel group from Australia, for example, had decided to travel by campervan because they had their 78 year old mother with them. She had recently had open heart surgery and the campervan enabled them to pull over to the side of the road whenever they needed to and while the mother rested the others were able to go for a walk.

Age also impacted on the amount of advance booking tourists did, with one UK tourist admitting that *“it’s not like when I was younger and I would just find somewhere to stay when I arrived in a place. Now I would book it in advance”*. Nine out of these 12 travel groups were VFR visitors.

A further six travel groups were coded as ‘multigenerational’. These groups included both children and older people (and, once again, age was specifically mentioned) or were groups who mentioned their range of ages, with the inference that this had to be allowed for in their travel style and preferences. As one UK tourist, travelling with his teenage son and several younger children (from their VFR hosts), commented in response to a question on the planning he had done for a day trip to Hanmer: *“You can’t be spontaneous with three young boys – you have to plan and get food and organise the day. You can’t just go. I like to go off and do quad biking but all the lads are under 16, so there is no way I am taking them, because I am not bringing them back in bits”*.

The only gender dimension of significance was for ‘single female’, mentioned specifically in respect of their decision making by five of the tourists interviewed (there were more single females interviewed than this) . Some references were made in respect of security (for example, pre-booking accommodation if arriving late, staying in accommodation in what were termed “nice” areas, and so on) but it was more often referred to in relation to wanting company (and so opting for group or organised activities or hostel accommodation where meeting other tourists was common).

Four of the five single females were following full loop itineraries; the other was following a combination itinerary. Three were travelling on tours, one by public transport and the other, who was also a working holiday maker, was using a combination of transport types. One of these tourists directly attributed their decision to take a tour to their single female status.

A final personal characteristic mentioned frequently in interviews was that tourists were vegetarian. Being a vegetarian made a difference to accommodation choices (wanting facilities to cook for themselves) and to eating out choices.

4.4 Sequencing of Decisions

A key finding from interviews was that a considerable amount of travel planning and decision making took place before tourists arrived in New Zealand. While travel group decisions took account of the ages of the people in the travel group, it was also of interest who had input into trip planning (and when this input occurred), and who made the travel decisions within each group. As noted above, the overall travel experience of the tourists also had an impact on their decision making and the timing of decisions.

Itineraries, transport type and accommodation, for example, were commonly decided prior to arriving in New Zealand and there was little scope for changing these once in the country. As might be expected, those staying shorter lengths of time were more likely to have decided all of these details in advance. By contrast, tourists decided on their activities more spontaneously and usually not until they had arrived in a particular destination. The exception to this was if there was a particular activity (for example, Whale Watch) they wanted to do or were coming to New Zealand for (for example, to walk the Milford Track).

Working holiday-makers had decided the least in advance of their arrival in New Zealand (although in some cases they may have made some work arrangements).

VFR and RTW tourists also planned little in advance although they may have arranged car/campervan hire in advance (especially if they knew they were arriving in the busy season, or if they were VFR tourists who planned to travel extensively while they were in New Zealand).

Others sometimes made accommodation bookings in advance if they wanted a special place to stay in a particular destination (for example, on the lake at Queenstown) or if it was a special occasion like Christmas, New Year or a personal event such as a birthday.

Several new variables were developed to take account of the timing of decision making: stage of trip; travel advice (where help and advice came from); information sources consulted outside New Zealand; and, information sources used within New Zealand. (Note: Given that these variables were not targeted by specific questions in the questionnaires, coding was based on interview data expressed throughout an interview rather on the responses given to specific questions).

4.4.1 Stage of trip

In interviews, tourists were asked how long they were staying in New Zealand, and what day of that stay they were currently at. As noted earlier, their length of stay (given in number of days) was recoded as either a short, medium, extended or long stay. In addition, the day of the trip they had reached was recoded according to whether they were in the first, middle or final third of their trip.

Altogether, of the 140 travel groups interviewed 38 (27 percent) were in the first third, 60 (43 percent) were in the middle third and 42 (30 percent) were in the final third of their New Zealand trips.

More middle third tourists (than first and final third) were encountered in both Hanmer Springs and Akaroa, than in the other research sites. In Christchurch, only one travel group was in the middle third of their trip – to be expected given that Christchurch is a gateway destination (five of the travel groups interviewed in Christchurch were in the first third of their trips, the other two in the final third).

Although there were variations associated with tourists' overall length of stay, it emerged that, overall, tourists had more planned in the first third of their trip, were more relaxed in the middle section and demonstrated changed priorities and behaviours in the final third.

Even for those who did not pre-book, it usually only took them a few days to “figure out” New Zealand, especially as most described themselves as experienced tourists (with the exception of some Australians) by the time they travelled to New Zealand.

Many tourists are, however, “locked in” as they have all their accommodation booked (and therefore their itinerary planned) before they arrive in New Zealand. As their trip reaches the final third, for some there are desired activities still to be included while others have had enough of sightseeing and are more interested in having their remaining days as a holiday and for relaxing.

At the end of a trip there is often time set aside for shopping and accommodation may be upgraded to enhance the final phase of the trip experience.

4.4.2 Information sources

Tourists were influenced by information from a range of sources before they arrived in New Zealand with a considerable amount of advice and planning input from people outside both the travel group itself and the travel industry.

The interview data suggested that a considerable amount of travel advice and assistance comes from non-industry sources. This may be given before tourists arrive in New Zealand or (in the case of VFR tourists) be ongoing during their stay.

A key feature of VFR tourists was the amount of travel help their hosts in New Zealand provided. Help and advice from non-industry (human) sources was coded for those tourists who mentioned this in their interviews (i.e., it may have applied to more tourists as the question was not specifically asked): advice home; advice New Zealand; planning New Zealand; and, travel New Zealand. It was possible for several categories to apply in respect of one travel group.

In support of this general finding, it is worth noting that our interviewees were often asked for advice from those they interviewed. Given their obvious status as ‘locals’ and, perhaps, a perception that they may have had some ‘expert knowledge’ it is no surprise that tourists often tended to use them as decision making resources in this way. Once again, this was as likely to be for reassurance over a considered decision alternative (e.g., concerning a local activity) as an open request for advice (e.g., ‘What do *you* think I should do while I’m here?’). (See Section 5 for further discussion).

Altogether, 55 tourists had received some New Zealand travel advice from people they knew in their countries of origin (who had been to New Zealand). Usually, this advice was focused on places people ‘should visit’ while in New Zealand, and less often on activities they should

do, or on how they should travel (for example, by campervan or by a particular tour company).

In some cases the advice was generic and appeared to have been just a recommendation to go to New Zealand. Three of the above tourists specified that the advice came from New Zealanders they knew (in their country of origin); two others took advice from travel agents in their country of origin, as well as from other people. For some RTW tourists this advice came from other travellers they met on the road (prior to arriving in New Zealand).

The other three categories (which all applied to VFR tourists) were those who took advice from VFR hosts (16 travel groups), those who had planning help from VFR hosts (5 travel groups) and those who travelled in New Zealand with their VFR hosts (13 travel groups).

Advice was given by VFR hosts on activities, itineraries and accommodation. Planning help included advice, but was more proactive on the part of the VFR hosts, as they took an active role in route planning and made accommodation and activity bookings for the tourists. In the cases where the VFR hosts were travelling with the tourists, the hosts tended to be left to make most (or all) of the travel arrangements.

In addition to the advice from friends and family who had travelled to New Zealand before (and who often had kept brochures from their New Zealand trips that they showed to intending tourists), tourists mentioned consulting travel agents, the internet, guide books and other travel books, seeing New Zealand films (*Lord of the Rings*, *The Piano*, *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*), television programmes and magazine articles.

Several people said they did research in advance of their trip, but did not specify the type or source of information consulted. Apart from several generic comments made in interviews about New Zealand being known about in the tourist's home country – as a popular tourism destination –there was no spontaneous mention in interviews about tourists having been influenced (or informed) by marketing campaigns.

The most popular source of information (after personal recommendations and advice) was the internet, mentioned by 54 of the tourists interviewed.

The internet was used in several ways: as a source of information (including looking at reviews posted by other travellers); to plan itineraries; and to make bookings (particularly for accommodation and rental transport). (More people than recorded here may have used these information sources as 'information sources used?' was not a specific question asked in the interviews, instead, tourists were asked to describe the process they went through to reach particular decisions).

In some cases tourists undertook internet research (in advance of arriving in New Zealand) on activities available in particular destinations and subsequently arrived in New Zealand with a comprehensive mental list of the things they would like to do whilst in the country. In the case of family holiday tourists, the internet was sometimes used to contact activity providers to find out more about suitability for (or restrictions associated with) children.

Internet use in New Zealand was specifically mentioned in 25 interviews and the internet was again used for multiple purposes. The most common use was as a source of information (reported by 16 travel groups), followed by banking (eight travel groups), as a means of contact (two travel groups). As noted above, more tourists may have used the internet than recorded here as it was not a specific question asked. Seven tourists also mentioned looking

(during their New Zealand trip) at the reviews posted on the internet by other travellers on the internet. These included travellers' feedback/reviews and travel blogs. Sometimes specific sites were mentioned (for example, Trip Advisor, wotif.com or accommodation providers such as YHA, Top 10, and so on).

There were many comments made in the interviews about how easy things were to arrange once in New Zealand and information and advice was sought from a variety of sources. Although tourists were not asked specifically about the information sources they consulted whilst in New Zealand, *i*-sites, brochures, websites and guide books were all mentioned frequently. Recommendations by accommodation providers were also important (sometimes with regard to subsequent accommodation decisions, but more often in regard to which activities or companies tourists should select in that destination).

4.5 The Decisions

The focus in the manual analysis was on identifying characteristics associated with decision making with the ultimate aim of modelling the ways in which different tourists – or agents – make travel decisions (see Chapter 5). The interview data also offered considerable insight into a wide range of factors associated with decision making; while some of these added greater understanding of the differences in types of tourists (and their decision making); others applied across the whole spectrum of tourists. A number of these were environmental cues – i.e. they were things encountered by tourists, which they react to, but which had little to do with what type of tourist or travel group they represented. One example of this was the difference that the weather made to tourists' plans and decisions.

The sequence of decision making discussed in the previous section suggested that the decisions made by travel groups varied according to what those decisions were for (i.e., for itineraries and destination, accommodation, activities or general purchases) and according to the stage of trip and the sources and timing of information collection. Decisions – particularly those relating to activities, but also the choice of destinations visited – were also influenced by tourists' particular interests.

4.5.1 Interests

An attempt was made in interviews to understand in which types of activities the tourists interviewed were most interested. A list of activity categories (three natural and six cultural – see Appendix for full list of activities in each category) was shown to the tourists and one tourist from each travel group was asked to rank these according to their own personal interest.

'Natural' activities were explained to interviewees as referring to a range of degrees of interaction, through activities, with the natural environment. This varied from so-called 'passive' nature experiences (typically viewing natural scenery) to 'soft adventure' (e.g., walking, tramping, etc.) and 'exciting experiences' (e.g., jet-boating, white-water rafting, etc.).

By contrast, the broad category of 'cultural' experiences included a wide range of experiences of the social, cultural, economic and built environments (e.g., shopping, visiting museums, Maori attractions and activities, entertainment, eating out, etc.).

Table 7 shows the number of interviewees who gave each experience category a ranking of 1, 2, or 3 (The totals add up to more than 140 as some people gave several activities equal ranking). Some 18 tourists (the 15 short interviews in Tekapo and three others) did not answer this question. The column to the far right of the table shows the number who declared absolutely no interest in that type of activity. Finally, the order of activities presented in Table 7 is simply the order that they appeared on the questionnaire. As will be explained, overall ranking depends upon which aspect of interviewees' ranking is emphasised.

Table 7
Ranked Interest in Different Types of Activity

Type of activity	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Total 1,2,3	No interest
Passive nature	52	28	19	99	4
Soft adventure	56	31	11	98	12
Exciting experiences	19	21	21	61	32
Eating out	6	9	22	37	22
Museums	4	7	23	34	22
Maori attractions	7	6	21	34	13
Shopping	7	9	13	29	26
Entertainment	5	9	15	29	16
Gardens, city sightseeing	4	12	10	26	20

As Table 7 shows, the three natural environment activity categories (shaded) were by far the most popular with passive enjoyment of natural attractions scoring the highest total (99) across all three rankings. Only four tourists indicated that they had no interest in passive nature activities (the lowest 'no interest' score).

Soft adventure activities were the most popular, however, with 56 tourists ranking them first and a further 31 ranking them second. Almost half of the tourists who ranked soft adventures first were encountered in Akaroa.

Exciting experiences were considerably less popular as a first choice (19 tourists), but were ranked in the top three by 60 tourists. Thirty-two tourists, however, had no interest in exciting experiences (the highest 'no interest' score). This is a particularly interesting finding given that exciting natural experiences are often understood as the essence of a New Zealand experience. Clearly, a significant proportion of visitors explicitly exclude this category of activities from their preferences.

Very few tourists awarded cultural activities a first or second ranking, but museums, eating out and Maori attractions were all popular as the third highest interest choice and, of these, eating out had a slightly higher combined ranking (with 37 tourists ranking it either 1, 2 or 3) than did museums and Maori attractions (34 each).

Altogether, around a fifth of the 122 tourists who answered this question had no interest in shopping (26 tourists), eating out (22 tourists), museums (22 tourists) or garden/city sightseeing (20 tourists). Only 13 tourists indicated 'no interest' in Maori attractions as activities.

While the analysis of these data was primarily qualitative, it did indicate some differences in interests, particularly in relation to the Type of Trip categories.

The majority of the RTW tourists (11 out of 13 tourists/travel groups) and all of the working holiday tourists (14 tourists/travel groups), for example, ranked one of the natural environment activities in their top three.

The RTW tourists were more interested in soft adventures (five tourists/travel groups ranked this first) and exciting experiences (four ranked it first) and the working holiday makers in soft adventures (eight ranked it first) and passive nature experiences (while only one tourist ranked this first another four gave these two equal first rankings).

The RTW tourists also recorded correspondingly high levels of 'no interest' in cultural activities with five recording no interest in museums, four no interest in shopping, three no interest in entertainment or eating out, and two with no interest in Maori attractions or gardens/city sightseeing (these may have been the same people).

Working holiday tourists appeared slightly more interested in cultural activities, with fewer tourists (and not all categories) recording 'no interest'. Eating out was the least popular cultural activity with working holiday makers (five tourists/travel groups), followed by shopping and museums (three each) and gardens/city sightseeing and Maori attractions (one each).

In contrast, VFR and holiday/family tourists were more evenly attracted to both natural and cultural activities.

Of the 27 holiday/family tourists, 17 picked one of the cultural activities as their first choice. Eleven family/holiday groups ranked passive adventures as first (and none had no interest in this) and nine ranked soft adventures first.

The highest number of 'no interests' for holiday/family tourists were exciting adventures (nine travel groups), gardens (seven travel groups), and eating out (six travel groups).

Altogether, just over a third (20 out of the 57 VFR travel groups) of the VFR tourists ranked one of the cultural activities first.

The most popular activity categories with VFR tourists were those based on the natural environment with passive experiences ranked first by 24 travel groups, and soft adventures ranked first by 19 travel groups.

The three activity categories recorded by the most VFR tourists as being of 'no interest' were exciting experiences (13 travel groups), Maori attractions (nine travel groups) and shopping (eight travel groups).

As might be expected, those tourists who were only sightseeing in New Zealand all ranked their interest in one of the three natural attractions as either first (16 tourists), second (19 tourists) or third (four tourists) (some selected these as first equal).

Because a large proportion of 'only sightseeing' tourists were encountered in Tekapo (where the 'one day of travel' tourists were interviewed) only 36 of the 47 'only sightseeing' tourists answered this question.

Cultural activities were popular as second or third choices for these tourists, however, with Maori attractions the most popular (13 second or third rankings), followed by museums (11), eating out (nine), entertainment (seven, including one tourist who ranked it equal first with

soft adventures and exciting experiences) and shopping (five). Only one of the ‘only sightseeing’ tourists had no interest in Maori attractions. (For all types of tourists it is possible that Maori attractions may have ranked more highly if the research had been undertaken in the North Island - see, for example, Wilson et al. (2006))

In the case of sightseeing tourists, the numbers who recorded ‘no interest’ in the other cultural activities were evenly distributed: eight tourists had no interest in shopping, seven tourists had no interest in both eating out and museums, six tourists had no interest in gardens and five tourists had no interest in entertainment.

4.5.2 Spending

Interviewees were asked if they had kept a track of their daily spending (answered by 123 tourists) and if they had an overall budget (answered by 118 tourists) for their New Zealand trip. The sample was evenly split between tourists who did (62) and did not (61) keep a track of their daily spending.

However, 18 tourists who kept track were only keeping a rough record and three tourists had begun their trip keeping a record, but were no longer doing so.

Those who kept track did so by way of written records and spreadsheets, or they kept receipts for purchases and ATM withdrawals. Some used on-line banking to keep a track of their spending and some just kept mental records.

The tourists who kept a rough record also kept mental records and ATM or purchase receipts, but tended not to look at them.

Of the 62 tourists who did not keep a daily record, 46 (74 percent) were staying for one month or less, the three tourists who gave up keeping a record were staying for more than one month.

In comparison, fewer than half (46 tourists) of the 118 tourists who answered the overall budget question did not have an overall budget.

Of those who did have an overall budget, however, 49 gave a definite “yes” while 23 had a rough or very rough budget (“*kind of*”, “*rough idea*”, “*frame only*”, “*not really*”). A number of RTW tourists commented that they had to have an overall budget because their New Zealand trip was only one part of a larger trip. One of these tourists admitted to having to cut back spending in New Zealand because they had overspent in Australia, another that they had to be careful in New Zealand in order to have enough money for their next stop.

While tourists in New Zealand for ‘extended’ or ‘long stays’ were more likely to have an overall budget (than not), for daily spending the long stay tourists were more likely (than extended stay ones) to keep track of their spending. Medium stay tourists were the group least likely to keep a track of their daily budgets.

Tourists were also asked if they prioritised what they spent their money on in New Zealand. The wide range of answers given precludes any useful quantification of these responses, but they can be grouped into those which suggested a straightforward priority rating of the core expenses of a trip such as, for example, “*activities over shopping*”, “*activity over food*”, “*accommodation/food and then entertainment/activities*” or “*activities, then accommodation, then food*”.

Spending on activities was usually given preference, with some tourists adding that within their activity selections they also prioritised their spending by, for example, saving money on smaller activities in order to do bigger (more expensive) ones. One tourist specifically mentioned wanting to “*keep a bit for Queenstown stuff*”, another that they were “*saving for the Milford Sound cruise*”.

Some of the tourists on family or holiday trips expressed a preference for better quality accommodation (“*the wife doesn’t like to rough it*”, “*we like reasonable accommodation, but otherwise no priorities*”, “*have accommodation standard*”) and several of the working holiday makers said that they preferred to spend their money on food and accommodation rather than on activities.

There were also some concessions made on transport in favour of accommodation (“*small car, but good hotel*”) but usually transport costs were given preference (“*spend more on hire car for freedom*” and “*distance travelled and activities more important*” “*food priority and then save on accommodation for activities and petrol*”).

Others “*kept accommodation cheaper*” or “*used hostels because they are cheap*”. The RTW tourists demonstrated diverse preferences with several “*saving on food to use for accommodation*”, some “*eating very well – give food priority*” and others giving preference to activities.

This question generated far more comments on accommodation, food, transport and activity spending than on shopping. There were a number of comments made about having no interest in shopping, which is consistent with the interests discussed above.

The only tourists to express a preference for spending on shopping mentioned specific products (jewellery and merino products). Others mentioned buying “*no souvenirs*” “*don’t do souvenirs*” and “*not overboard with expensive souvenirs*”.

4.5.3 Accommodation

As noted earlier, accommodation was often booked before tourists arrived in New Zealand. While the majority of visitors tended to book their initial night’s accommodation in advance (before arriving in New Zealand), new visitors were more likely (than repeat visitors) to have pre-booked more of their subsequent nights’ accommodation.

Those who stayed the shortest number of days in New Zealand were also more likely to book the majority of their accommodation before arriving in New Zealand.

Most accommodation was found and booked on the internet, with limited use of travel agents. Some of those who had used travel agents were not happy with the service they received and commented that they would not use them again, preferring to make their own bookings.

Searching and booking accommodation on the internet could be time consuming – one tourist estimated that they had spent around 35 hours planning their accommodation for a 14-day trip. For many people this was not that much of an issue as they had purchased air tickets well in advance (especially long-haul travellers) and therefore had time to ‘mess about’ with the finer details of their holiday planning.

There was some accommodation loyalty shown towards to particular chains – Top 10, YHA, BBH hostels, motel/hotel chains, and so on – often this appeared to be as much because of

easy booking systems (and occasionally discount schemes) as about particular satisfaction with that product.

Although few tourists admitted to having a daily budget (or a specific amount set aside for their New Zealand trip overall) in respect of their accommodation most tourists had a reasonable idea of what price they were prepared, or able, to pay. This was based on their previous travel experience (both in New Zealand and in other countries).

For new visitors, once they had seen what facilities and standard they could expect for that price in New Zealand, they might either downgrade or upgrade their choices slightly. Once this was established, they tended to take the easiest option and put little effort into making accommodation selections.

Those who had not booked accommodation in advance also took a few days to establish the amount of advance booking needed to find suitable places to stay. In some cases (in the busier times) this was several days, in others, they found they had no problems finding accommodation each night, as long as they arrived before a certain time.

It was common to arrange accommodation several days in advance, once the next itinerary stop was decided on.

Ease of booking was important and free phone numbers, internet booking and *i*-sites were all mentioned as being useful for arranging accommodation while on the road.

The type of accommodation chosen was influenced by what Type of Trip tourists were on, who was in the travel party, travel budget and, to a lesser extent, the stage of their trip.

VFR tourists stayed in the widest range of accommodation types, including private homes and holiday homes.

For most accommodation types, self-catering facilities were important (few people were in New Zealand to enjoy the food although trying the local (sea)food was mentioned more often by tourists interviewed in Kaikoura). Self-catering was especially important for those on tighter budgets, those travelling with children and vegetarians.

For hostel/backpacker accommodation the ratings in the BBH book were widely used. Hostels were selected based on their location, facilities, room options, overall hostel size, and the characteristics of other guests (e.g., if they were mostly young, slightly older, and so on).

Location criteria varied according to destination with, for example, Christchurch hostels selected because they were centrally located, within walking distance of attractions or public transport, or located in safe or quiet areas. In contrast, hostels in Tekapo were selected because they were located with a view of the lake.

4.5.4 Activities

As noted earlier, activity decisions were usually left until tourists arrived in a destination although most people had an idea of what was available prior to getting to that destination.

The general sequence was to get an idea of what was on offer, collect some brochures with details, look through these (or their guidebook) before arriving in a destination (sometimes

after first getting there) and then decide what to do. Sometimes tourists carried brochures for the full length of their trip, not doing that activity until the end.

The final decision about a particular activity was dependent on either the timing of the activity (whether it suited their schedule and also how long it took) or on getting recommendations from other tourists, or from where they were staying as to what an activity was like (or which was the best one to do).

Sometimes (but not often) a decision to do a particular activity was weather dependent. Many tourists were surprised to discover that some activities were weather dependent (such as, for example, the fact that Whale Watch boats did not go out in rough weather).

While there were some well-recognised signature attractions (for example, Whale Watch in Kaikoura, the Hot Springs in Hanmer Springs) it was of more interest to many tourists that destinations offered a range of activities. With many activities people only wanted to do some things once (in New Zealand), so some careful planning went into where that would be.

A number of tourists had done internet research on activities before coming to New Zealand, but this was more to find out details about activities that most suited them if they were restricted in any way. As noted earlier, this was particularly the case with people travelling with children (for example, finding suitable rafting on lower grade rivers), or who were older. One Australian tourist, for example, was travelling with his elderly parents and was tailoring the activities they did to suit them: *“I can’t take them [walking] up the glaciers so will probably talk them into doing a helicopter flight or something like that”*. Another Australian tourist, travelling with his wife and 10-year old daughter, commented that if they were own their own they would do, *“more jet boating and walking but with a 10-year old we tended to overestimate the capacity for that”*.

Visibility of products was important and tourists liked seeing company vehicles around the town (and that they looked to be in good condition). They also liked to see professional looking websites and brochures and high quality advertising.

Word of mouth recommendations (from other tourists, accommodation suppliers, VFR), guidebooks, signs, *i*-site information were also important but personal interest was the overriding determinant of whether they would do a particular activity.

If a destination offered a wide range of activities, it was more appealing to tourists – even if they personally were not interested in many of the things on offer. This seemed to reinforce for them that they were in a good place for tourists (especially if they were “seeing/doing” New Zealand).

For tourists who were primarily sightseeing in New Zealand, driving around New Zealand was an activity in itself. Sightseeing trips, for example, included the route taken (the drive and the scenery along the route was as much part of what tourists were in New Zealand to ‘see’, as were the places they chose to visit or to stay at overnight).

These tourists appeared to be equally interested in the drive between destinations as they were in the commercial activities available there. They often stretched their travel out to take a whole day between selected overnight stops making short stops for walks and low-key sightseeing on the way. This came out especially in the “what you did yesterday” interviews that were done in Tekapo.

There were variations on how discrete destinations were perceived according to the Type of Trip tourists were on.

For visitors with motives other than just sightseeing – particularly VFR or holiday tourists – the specific destinations were more important (especially if visited for a day trip).

There was also evidence of these differences in perception of destinations according to itinerary types. Stationary tourists and those following triangle itineraries also seemed to treat the destinations as more discrete places whereas tourists who toured New Zealand on full loop and island loop trips often described their trips as “seeing/doing” New Zealand.

Many people were visiting New Zealand simply to see the scenery. A number of tourists interviewed in Tekapo, for example, were there because they had a recommendation to drive that way (because of the scenery) and they had no idea what there was to do once they got there.

Similarly, for VFR and family holiday tourists spending time with their travel companions, or the people they were visiting, was perceived as a primary activity and commercial or organised activities were often of secondary interest.

As noted in the method section, 15 interviews in Tekapo addressed only what the tourists had done the previous day. It was of note that despite very bad weather on two of the days these Tekapo interviews addressed, most tourists appeared happy to continue with their plans regardless of the weather.

Overall, there appeared to be little adjustment to itineraries as a result of weather, often because, as noted earlier, tourists were ‘locked in’ to particular itineraries and timings. The weather did occasionally force tourists to miss activities they planned to do (for example, the cancellation of Whale Watch) but for many they were able to re-schedule in a different destination (for example, sky diving at Wanaka rather than at Taupo).

4.6 Destinations and Itineraries

4.6.1 Main Survey Findings

At the New Zealand-wide scale some groups of tourists travel less distance and to different areas than do others. Ministry of Tourism (2009) *Sector Profiles* show some distinct regional variations in visitation according to tourists’ country of origin. This is, in part, linked to tourists’ length of stay in New Zealand with shorter stay tourists having less time to visit destinations that are more remote (from their gateway arrival points).

Our data suggests that one notable exception to this was the VFR tourists who stayed a long time in New Zealand, but who did not travel extensively. Although the interview sample was not intended to be representative, there were some differences in the tourists interviewed in each location according to their itineraries, Types of Trip, the transport they used and their stage of trip (see a summary of these in Table 8). (Note: only 8 tourists were interviewed in Christchurch, compared with 35 in Kaikoura, 37 in Hanmer Springs, 33 in Akaroa and 27 in Tekapo).

Table 8
Research Destinations by Itinerary, Type of Trip, Transport Used
and Stage of Stay

	Christchurch	Kaikoura	Hanmer Springs	Akaroa	Tekapo	Total
Itinerary						
Full loop	4	23	15	22	20	84
Island loop	4	6	11	5	6	32
Triangle	-	-	2	3	-	5
Stationary	-	1	2	2	-	5
Combination	-	5	7	1	1	14
Total	8	35	37	33	27	140
Type of Trip*						
Only sightseeing	3	10	7	10	17	47
VFR	2	20	17	12	6	57
Holiday/family	1	9	13	5	-	28
Working holiday	1	5	2	6	-	14
RTW	-	1	5	3	4	13
Other	1	1	5	4	-	11
Transport						
Rental	3	9	18	11	18	59
Private	1	5	9	6	4	25
Public	2	6	4	3	2	17
Tour	1	4	-	3	2	10
Combination	1	11	6	10	1	29
Total	8	35	37	33	27	140
Stage of Stay						
First	5	10	8	7	8	38
Middle	1	13	18	17	11	60
Final	2	12	11	9	8	42
Total	8	35	37	33	27	140

* Multiple responses possible

As expected, there were differences in the ways each of the research destinations fitted with tourists' itineraries. These differences were based, in part, on the geographic location of each of the research destinations and at what stage of their trip tourists reached that destination. Tourists' 'stage of trip' also impacted on how much they had planned and organised in advance for that particular destination.

Generally, the type of transport used by tourists was associated with their itineraries and the Type of Trip they were on.

Analysis of the sources of travel advice also indicated some differences across destinations with Kaikoura, Hanmer Springs and Akaroa more likely (than Tekapo or Christchurch) to be recommended by someone in the tourists' home countries. Also, tourists were more likely to be taken to Kaikoura and Hanmer Springs by New Zealand residents (Table 9).

Table 9
Travel Group Characteristics by Research Destination
(excluding Christchurch)

Kaikoura	Hanmer Springs	Akaroa	Tekapo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full loop • UK visitors • VFR • Combination transport • Medium & extended stay • All stages of stay • Recommendations from home • Travel with New Zealand hosts • Interest in passive experiences • Most travel groups staying overnight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full & island loop • UK & Australia • VFR & holiday/family • Rental transport • Short & medium stay • Middle & final third of stay • Recommendations from home • Travel with New Zealand hosts • Interest in passive experiences and soft adventure • Some day trip & tourists passing through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full loop • All nationalities • Only sightseeing & VFR • Rental & combination transport • Medium stay • Middle of stay • Recommendations from home • Interest in soft adventure • Many day trippers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full loop • Slightly more UK and ‘other European’ • Only sightseeing • Rental transport • Medium & extended stay • Middle of stay • Some tourists only passing through

4.6.2 ‘One Day of Decision making’ Findings

As noted in Section 3.2, 15 interviews conducted in Tekapo focused on what the tourists had done the previous day. These interviews provided some useful insights into how tourists spent their time over the course of a day and into their decision making and its sequencing. While the ‘one day of decision making’ data supported the findings from the longer interviews, more importantly these interview data provided particularly illustrative examples of the cues and processes involved in specific decisions.

These 15 travel groups were predominantly sightseeing tourists (one was on a RTW trip, only three had VFR connections – two weak, one strong): 11 were following full loop itineraries, two island loops and one a combination itinerary.

Twelve of the 15 travel groups were travelling by rental transport (six cars, five campervans and a motorbike); the others were travelling by private transport (including one cyclist) and a tour.

The majority of these travel groups were two person travel parties (11 travel groups), first time visitors (ten travel groups), and either extended (six travel groups) or medium (seven travel groups) stay visitors.

Their visits to Tekapo occurred in all stages of their New Zealand trips (four in the first third of their stay, six in the middle third and five in the final third).

Ten out of the 15 travel groups were staying overnight in Tekapo, four were travelling through (i.e., not staying a night in Tekapo). The other travel group had not decided at the time of their interview whether or not they would stay in Tekapo for the night (two of the travel groups travelling through had also not decided where they would stay).

Of the ten travel groups who were staying a night in Tekapo, five had not booked any accommodation prior to arriving in the town; three had booked their Tekapo accommodation prior to arriving in New Zealand, and one had booked it in New Zealand prior to arriving in Tekapo. One of the two travel groups who were travelling through, and who knew where they were staying (in advance of arriving in Tekapo), had booked their accommodation that day whilst on route to their destination, the other was travelling by campervan and planned to camp at the side of the road.

These tourists had arrived in Tekapo from a variety of directions: of the ten travel groups who were staying overnight, four had travelled from Queenstown, three from Dunedin, two from Christchurch and one (the cyclist) from Geraldine. Three of the five travel groups who were passing through, or who were unsure of where they were staying that night, had travelled from places close by (two from Fairlie, one from Omarama). The other two had travelled from Christchurch.

Altogether, three of the four travel groups who were travelling through Tekapo (i.e. not stopping there the night) and the undecided tourists were all travelling by campervan.

Although the majority of the campervan tourists interviewed in the overall sample stayed in commercial campgrounds, the more immediate planning behaviour of this sample of tourists suggests that travel by campervan offers the freedom to leave accommodation bookings to chance and to stay in smaller, less popular destinations.

A combination of factors contributed to the decisions on where to stop for the night (in terms of both location and type of accommodation). One travel group, for example, stopped in Geraldine *en route* to Tekapo and asked at the information centre about accommodation options, eventually deciding on (and booking) a place to stay in Twizel: *“We looked at Tekapo, but we thought it was a bit expensive for the three of us travelling together and because we have got quite a lot of travelling to do tomorrow, it wasn’t really half-way point and we wanted to get a bit further on”*. For repeat visitors travel was easy, because, as one couple from the UK, who made no advance accommodation bookings explained: *“We are used to the Kiwis”* and *“we have done it before [found a place on arrival] and it was no problem, and we didn’t have any this time”*.

Advice from both tourism providers and other tourists was also important and contributed to travel decisions relating to destinations, accommodation and activities that were made whilst in New Zealand, as the following quotations show:

- *“I made a rough time plan so I had to think where I would go. I did not plan to go to Wanaka but the bus driver [on Magic Bus] said that Queenstown was very busy and I heard that Wanaka was one of the best places to sky dive and when I got there I saw that it was also possible to mountain bike”* RTW Dutch tourist travelling by tour bus.
- *“We have been planning this trip for about a year, but having said that we weren’t going to Akaroa but the guy in our motel [in Christchurch] suggested it”* Three full loop tourists from the UK on their first visit to New Zealand.
- *“For accommodation we ask in the visitors centre and for things to do we usually get advice from the places we stay, but we are happy enough to get sidetracked if we see somewhere nice. I mean you are regimented enough when you work without it being the same on holiday”* UK couple on third visit to New Zealand (strong VFR visitors).

The ways in which the questions were asked in the longer interviews precluded picking up information about the amount of time tourists spent travelling between destinations and the amount of time they spent doing ‘nothing’ (in terms of specific tourist activities, having meals out, and so on). The one day interviews suggested that a significant amount of tourists’ time is spent on everyday activities. The RTW tourist described his morning in Tekapo: *“first I check my emails, then I do some laundry and relaxed a little in the hostel, then I threw some papers away for places I had been, then I walked over to here, looking at the lake”*. A Dutch couple travelling by campervan had spent much of the previous day in Rangiora where the husband spent time at the internet café at the local library and shopping for groceries while his wife had her hair coloured.

These interview data also reiterated the ‘having a holiday’ aspect of all these types of travel in New Zealand. One couple, for example, were keen lawn bowlers at home in the UK and while they were in Queenstown went to the local club, introduced themselves and asked if they could have a game. One of the campervan travel groups described their usual day’s timetable: *“We get on the campsite reasonably early – about four-ish – and my husband has had enough of driving – after all it is his holiday as well – otherwise you can just drive all the time. So, we try and get on the campsite about four and then just sort of live the campsite life really”*.

Other tourists talked about *“just walking around to fill in the time”* while they waited several hours to do an activity they had booked. Another couple had *“just wandered down here slowly”* with a number of stops on their day-long drive between Christchurch and Tekapo. Another of the campervan tourists described what they had done the previous day: *“just the drive, and some lunch and chilled out and read some books”*. One Australian couple had driven 25 kilometres out of Queenstown when they decided to backtrack in order for one of them to do a canyon swing. This tourist had heard about the swing from friends who had been to Queenstown, had picked up the brochure whilst in Queenstown, had told his girlfriend about it but had decided not to do it because of the cost. According to his girlfriend, on their way out of Queenstown they *“stopped to look at the bungy place and then he’s like “I should do that”, but it hurts your eyes and then we were driving and I got the video camera out and embarrassed him until he decided to go back and do the canyon swing”*.

Tourists also appeared to be quite indecisive about which activities they were going to do while they were in Tekapo, with most only planning to *“have a look around”*, *“probably have a look at the lakes and have a drive around”*, *“maybe go for a walk”*, or *“have a coffee and have look at the guide book”*. As noted in Section 4.5.4, several days of bad weather were encountered during the Tekapo fieldwork and, when asked if the bad weather had disrupted their planned activities in any way, one couple said: *“we will probably do it anyway [drive to Mt Cook], because we only have two days and you can’t wait for the weather – you have to enjoy it [New Zealand] while you are here”*. The weather had kept one Dutch couple moving more quickly than they might otherwise have done: *“When we got to Oamaru we start complaining about the weather, so we didn’t do anything there except have something to eat. We went straight towards Mt Cook, but the weather was still bad, so we stopped in at Twizel and we didn’t like the accommodation there at all, and it was still quite early, and it was still raining so we came here [to Tekapo]”*.

In the longer interviews when tourists had been asked about choices of restaurants and cafés, most said that they liked to eat in places that local people frequented or in places that had a nice ambience or atmosphere. Many said that they liked to avoid international chains such as Starbucks. In the one day interviews, however, several tourists admitted that they had taken an ‘easy option’ when looking for food, as in the case of the RTW tourist who admitted that,

for dinner the previous evening: “*I just went into town – and I am not ashamed to say it – I went to the McDonalds*”.

These one day interviews gave additional insight into tourists’ decision making, particularly the flexibility of many tourists’ travel plans. Despite a significant number of tourists having decided on a route plan and having their accommodation booked in advance, they were not overly concerned about what else they might do. Most tourists appeared to have a relaxed and flexible approach to what activities they might do to fill in their days and enjoyed taking their time to travel between destinations as much as spending time in the destinations themselves.

4.7 Interim Summary

Although the research approach was qualitative, the number of interviews undertaken (140) generated a significant amount of data that could be considered quantitatively to provide additional insights. As an analytic tool, categorising variables according to their influence on particular travel styles and then recoding according to the themes that appeared in the interview data as a whole, offered new insights into the ways tourist behaviour, travel styles and decision making can be understood in the New Zealand tourism context.

It is also important to note that many of the findings reported in this section emerged through processes of recoding and immersion in the qualitative data. Some of the conclusions do not, therefore, relate directly to questions specifically asked (e.g., no questions were asked about information sources but considerable insight could be gained about the use of various sources). Rather, they have arisen from a systematic and layered interrogation of the interview data. This is a particularly important point as one of the central insights concerned what we have called ‘Type of Trip’, a categorisation that was not directly asked about but which was an emergent amalgam of interviewees’ answers to a number of other questions.

Given the above, the most important findings arising from the data concerning decision making are the following:

- Type of Trip has the strongest and most defining impact on what tourists do and decide (e.g., in relation to itineraries, accommodation and activities) and on how much they plan in advance.
- The Type of Trip here categorised broadly as VFR (which applies to a significant number of tourists) has an especially strong influence on decision making. This is because it typically involves significant input from New Zealand residents outside the initial travel group into decisions and decision making (e.g., itinerary formation, activity selection, accommodation advice and even booking). This finding is particularly useful for stakeholders, such as Regional Tourism Organisations, involved in regional promotion and for the internal marketing of New Zealand as a destination. Of particular importance is that, most often, those hosting tourists are relatively recent migrants to New Zealand (having arrived within the last 10 years).
- The IVS does not capture the nuances of VFR travel much beyond these visitors’ propensities to stay longer than holiday tourists and to visit more remote regions. This analysis suggests that VFR tourists also vary from other tourists across a range of behaviours, including the selection of accommodation, length of stay, itineraries, activities and interests. Also, while Ministry of Tourism data (Angus & Associates, 2009) suggests that VFR visitors who travel in larger travel groups tend to choose commercial accommodation for their ‘overflow’, this research suggests that many VFR visitors stay in

commercial accommodation during those portions of their New Zealand trip when they tour New Zealand (in the same manner as holiday visitors).

- Of note in regard to VFR visitors, in particular, but also in the case of many tourists to New Zealand is the general ambivalence towards participation in organised or commercial tourism activities. The identification of ‘sightseeing’ as a distinct travel type highlights the importance of general sightseeing and of just ‘taking in’ the scenery that is viewed whilst travelling between specific destinations. Linked to this is the holiday or relaxation aspect of travel that underpins many tourists’ decisions and actions whilst travelling. The ease of travel facilitates this focus on ‘unorganised’ experiences.
- The travel group is central to decision making processes – rather than the individual. Composition of the travel group (e.g., particular demographic attributes in so far as they affect decision making, presence of repeat visitors, etc.) therefore has direct effects on on-site decision making.
- The research suggested that there are a number of differences in what tourists in New Zealand do and where they go associated with the nature of different destinations, the geographic location of that destination and the Type of Trip tourists are on. These differences have implications for tourism providers in respect of marketing initiatives and policy and planning.
- The research suggests that, because of their geographic location, different destinations are likely to be encountered at different stages of a tourists’ trip. Findings have emphasised important differences in the ways in which tourists plan and make decisions, and in their interests and travel styles, according to the stage of trip they have reached. This means that the interaction between destination location, on the one hand, and shifts in tourist decision making during a trip, on the other, is likely to have a predictable effect on the way the same kinds of decisions are made in relation to different destinations.
- Collecting data on specific places visited (i.e., on itineraries) masks the fact that these may be folded in to an itinerary in a variety of ways. Visits to a destination may, for example, be split across different types of trips (some day visits, some overnight and some for longer stays as, for example, VFR visitors take stationary holidays with their VFR hosts). Those with a VFR component to their trips tended to have the ‘messiest’ itineraries and were less likely to be touring New Zealand in the conventional sense. Understanding the type of tourists a destination attracts is important in this respect.

Chapter 5

Tourist Decision Making General Model

5.1 Introduction

The rich data reported in the previous section provide substantial insights into the factors and dynamic processes involved in the various yield-relevant decisions tourists make while within New Zealand. The purpose of this chapter is to distil from those data, and the manual analysis, the main dimensions and drivers underlying yield-relevant decision making.

First, this section describes the overall context of tourist decision making as it arose from the data.

Second, we isolate from the data the main drivers and dimensions in the decision making process.

Third, we outline a general model that incorporates these drivers and dimensions, emphasising the decision making process and the general pattern of decision sequencing.

Fourth, we present a process of model validation which will be incorporated into the development of an agent-based model as part of Objective 3 of the overall project.

Having completed this we reflect on the limitations and opportunities presented by this work.

Finally, recommendations based on the findings and modelling are presented. These recommendations provide useful suggestions for tourism stakeholders in meeting their operational objectives (e.g., Ministry of Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Industry Association, Regional Tourism Organisations, Department of Conservation, Iwi entities and tourism operators).

5.2 Decision Context

To understand yield-relevant tourist decision making three scales of interest were considered:

- Processes that generate the overall route/itinerary within New Zealand;
- Processes that generate destination-specific decisions and behaviours (a ‘destination’ refers here to a location within New Zealand);
- Processes that generate ‘between destination’ decision making and behaviours.

The data collected provided the greatest insights into the first two of these scales. Between destination decision making entered into the data collection indirectly via tourists’ accounts of the specific decisions that were probed and, more directly, in the interviews that focused on tourists’ accounts of their previous day’s activity (see Section 4.6.2).

In relation to the first scale, interviews show that a primary context – often ‘locked in’ prior to arrival in New Zealand – is length of stay and, perhaps to lesser or a more conditional extent, available money for the trip and travel party composition (i.e., the composition of the ‘group’ that initially arrives in New Zealand, including sole travellers). Length of stay and

available money, in particular, represent ‘book ends’ for many tourists’ visits to New Zealand. In one sense, of course, they are themselves ‘decisions’ that tourists make. Given that they are most often made – and committed to – prior to arrival they represent, however, a *de facto* context within which on-site decision making must occur.

As noted, length of stay interacts with on-site decision making particularly to the extent that shorter lengths of stay are associated with pre-booking or committed decisions concerning much of the itinerary, transport options and accommodation. Importantly, activity decisions are less constrained, in this way, by length of stay, although a particular activity may ‘anchor’ at least part of the itinerary prior to arrival. (e.g., an ‘iconic’ activity such as Whale Watch or walking the Milford track or a specific event associated with an interest or social obligation).

An important point to make about this context of tourists’ decision making is that the ‘book ends’ reciprocally and strongly interact with one of the central variables that emerged in this study: Type of Trip (see Section 4.2). Most obviously, Type of Trip will in part be determined by available time and money (e.g., a Round The World Type of Trip is impossible unless sufficient time is available). Conversely, an early decision about Type of Trip will affect the length of stay and money available (e.g., a strong VFR Type of Trip may well lead to decisions to incorporate a longer stay).

As reported in the previous section, a second dominant context for tourist decision making that emerged from the interviews was the overall impression tourists had of the comparative ease of travel within New Zealand. This did not just apply to very experienced travellers or to those who had visited New Zealand previously. Even first time visitors commented that they were likely to adopt a less pre-planned approach to organising any future trips to New Zealand based on their current experiences.

This context of perceived relative ease of travel should not be underestimated in modelling tourist decision making behaviour in New Zealand. Not only is it likely to affect the timing of on-site decisions (and, presumably, the overall decision to return to New Zealand), but it also represents a significant influence on changes in decision making approach during the time in New Zealand. That is, as on-site experience accumulates, the tendency – for all tourists – will be towards a more ‘relaxed’ approach to decision making. This represents a major ‘learning’ factor in decision making. In agent-based models (see Chapter 7), agents alter their behaviour through ‘learning’ encounters with their environment.

A third context for on-site decision making that requires highlighting is the role of social inputs and encounters. This is certainly true of the initial travel party composition (those who arrived as a group in New Zealand) as a reasonably long history of previous research has emphasised (e.g., van Raaij and Francken, 1984). The composition of the travel group (e.g., the presence of young children) clearly influenced a variety of on-site decisions (e.g., accommodation, activity).

What this study has added to this portrayal of the role of social factors is two-fold. First, during the trip within New Zealand, the ‘travel group’ for many tourists can change quite significantly. A typical example of this concerns VFR tourists who might spend a considerable portion of their trip staying or even travelling with local residents but also insert a period of ‘independent’ travel without their friends or relations. As emphasised, however, this does not necessarily mean that friends and relatives have no influence over decisions

made for the ‘independent’ portion of a trip (e.g., friends and relatives may advise on itineraries and even book accommodation for these ‘independent’ portions).

Second, tourists in this study showed a strong tendency to seek out personal advice from whomever was immediately available. This included seeking advice from other tourists (often following a similar Type of Trip), local residents, accommodation personnel, front-line staff at *i*-sites, etc.. This advice served two basic functions: To become informed about activities or accommodation (either on-site or at the next or a subsequent destination); to receive reassurance that a contemplated decision (about accommodation, destination or activity) was a ‘good’ one.

In this way, the context of social inputs into decision making also interacts with non-social information sources (e.g., guide books, brochures, websites, etc.). The information in such sources was often tested against the advice of others. A special case of this interaction was a tendency to rely on internet sources based on the opinions of other travellers (i.e., the information source was itself used in such a way as to seek advice and/or reassurance from others).

These contexts suggest a number of significant dimensions along which tourists’ on-site decision making can be positioned. The following section describes and explains these dimensions.

5.3 Decision Dimensions

Based on the analysis and the identified contexts of decision making, three dimensions were isolated that, together, help to explain most of the data on yield-relevant decision making reported above:

- (In)Flexibility;
- Timing/ location;
- Social composition.

The dimension of (in)flexibility represents an amalgam of a number of factors that arose from the interviews: A perceived (and actual) ‘ease’ of travel in New Zealand; decision openness (degree to which a decision is left ‘open’); facilitation openness (receptiveness to advice and information). The following husband and wife couple from the United Kingdom on a two month trip to New Zealand explain how their itinerary had elements of both inflexibility (i.e., elements in place prior to arrival) and flexibility (especially length of stay in particular destinations):

Interviewer: *So did you have a pretty fixed route plan before you got here or not?*

Female: *Yes, I think with it being 2 months, I know it sounds a bit odd but its not very much time 2 months to do the whole, of North and South.*

...

Interviewer: *...did you have a plan for how long you’d stay places?*

Male: *Not really, no, we’ve just sort of made it up as we’ve gone along*

Interviewer: *So you had more of a plan for the actual route, and not so much*

Male: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *So you've made a few changes to your route and you didn't really have one for your time*

At the extreme of flexibility was an Australian woman travelling with her two teenage daughters. Importantly, she had emphasised how it did not matter what they did and where they went this time because they would always have 'next time':

Interviewer: *So, basically, you've done the country, apart from ...*

Female: *Well, there's a few places we haven't been but we figured, hey, next trip because I wanted to go to Bluff, but it's 16 hours from Queenstown, and I thought, no, too far, so we missed Queenstown altogether and thought, right we want to do some spa stuff at Hanmer - we'll go there.*

Interviewer: *Good, good.*

Female: *And next trip we can do what we, what else we wanted to do.*

....

Interviewer: *So these places that you list here, did you have them all in mind before you came?*

Female: *No, we came and thought, we'll go where the wind takes us, you know, didn't plan anything.*

Interviewer: *Good.*

Female: *The best holidays are unplanned.*

The dimension of timing/location primarily describes the tendency to have made a decision prior to arriving (either arriving in New Zealand or at a specific destination, i.e., 'off-site') or while in the country or even at a specific destination (i.e., 'on-site'). It is a function of tourist concerns over likely risks of not booking in advance (e.g., during perceived 'busy' periods such as statutory holidays or for popular activities); the significance of particular needs of group members (e.g., cooking facilities for vegetarians; suitable accommodation for children); Type of Trip (e.g., a short holiday); and, type of decision (e.g., activities). A young German tourist, travelling and working for ten months in New Zealand, explains how she made the decision to bungee jump (an activity available at numerous sites in New Zealand):

Interviewer: *Could you describe to me once again how you came to make that decision?*

Female: *(Laughing) No, well I've just always wanted to do that, a bungee in New Zealand because, I don't know, and then I went to Taupo, famous for something? and I went to Taupo and then I saw the place where you can do the bungee with the Waikato River and I thought 'oh I'll have to go and do that', it looked so beautiful.*

Interviewer: *So you just came across it, did you realise there was a bungee in Taupo?*

Female: *Yeah I know there was a bungee, but I didn't um, expect to do that, I just thought let's go there and maybe look, and then I decide to do that because it was so beautiful, the area.*

Interviewer: *Ok, knew beforehand and decided actually while you were there?*

Female: *Yeah.*

The dimension of social composition describes not only the tendency to involve various members of a travel group in a decision, but also the tendency to include (and seek out) the input of immediate (sometimes on-site) 'others' in the decision. An important factor in that tendency is the extent to which others are perceived to have some valid (usually personal) familiarity with New Zealand (or with a particular destination, transport mode, etc. within

New Zealand). Another couple from the United Kingdom visiting New Zealand for a month demonstrate how decisions made prior to arrival in New Zealand were influenced by some New Zealand based friends' familiarity with New Zealand:

Interviewer: *These places, particularly the one's you've been to, which ones did you particularly want to visit while you were in NZ, say prior to arriving you thought to yourself, definitely...*

Female: *Personally it was ...*

Male: *Well for me it was Napier...*

Female: *Yeah, I liked Bay of Islands, and um, (pause) the Coromandel, and Akaroa.*

Male: *Yeah, here as well.*

Interviewer: *Oh, ok, so you'd heard about Akaroa before you ...*

Male: *Yeah, we'd knew from our friends who are living here at the moment, they've done a big tour of New Zealand.*

A 'fourth dimension' present in the data is 'Stage of Trip'. This dimension incorporates the dynamic changes in decision making that, the data shows, typically arise during a trip within New Zealand. This has been characterised in terms of 'trip thirds' (first, middle, last) but principally represents a psychological shift in decision making style and priorities as a trip unfolds. It appears to be more pronounced at the mid-range of 'length of stay' categories but is also evident in very short and very long lengths of stay categories.

A fifty-two year old male from the United Kingdom, travelling alone, and in New Zealand for 25 days noted, mid-trip, that he was already likely to have to make a decision not to go to Queenstown. Interestingly, he did not see this as much of a problem as he was going to be able to do all the activities he had planned to do in Queenstown, elsewhere:

Interviewer: *Have you missed anything or do you think there's going to be anything you'll miss?*

Male: *Hopefully not, well I did want to go right down to the south, I did want to do Queenstown, but time won't permit, but from what I've been told, all what I'm doing I'm not missing much, so, (laughing).*

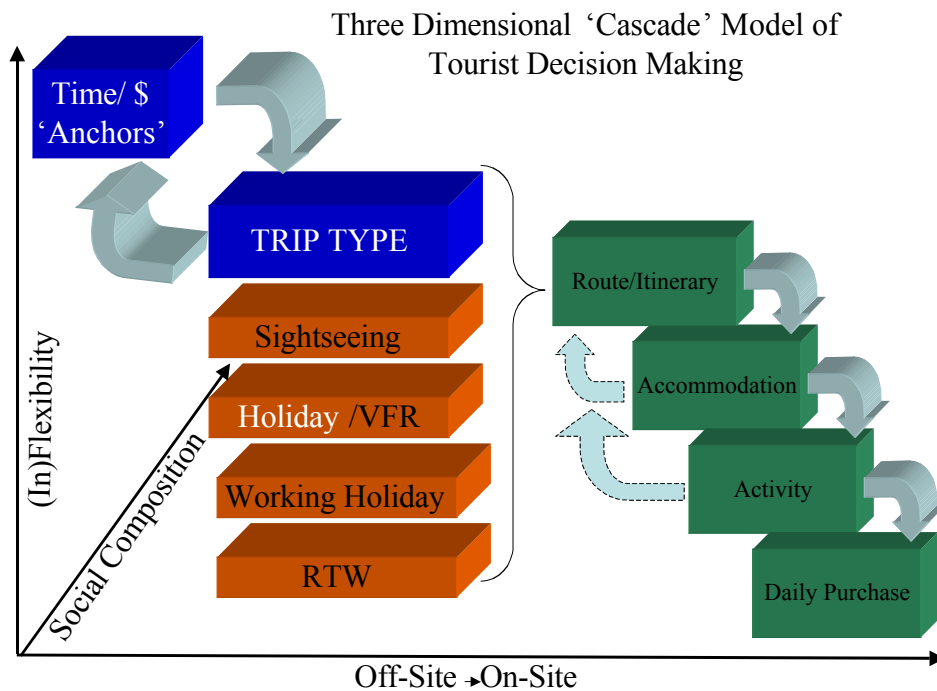
Interviewer: *So, you're managing to do everything that [you] might do there, elsewhere?*

Male: *Yes, yes.*

5.4 Summary Model of Tourist Decision making

Based on the raw data, its recoding and further analysis and isolation of the significant contexts and dimensions of tourist decision making, a summary model of how tourists make yield-relevant decisions in New Zealand can be proposed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
A three dimensional ‘Cascade’ model of tourist decision making



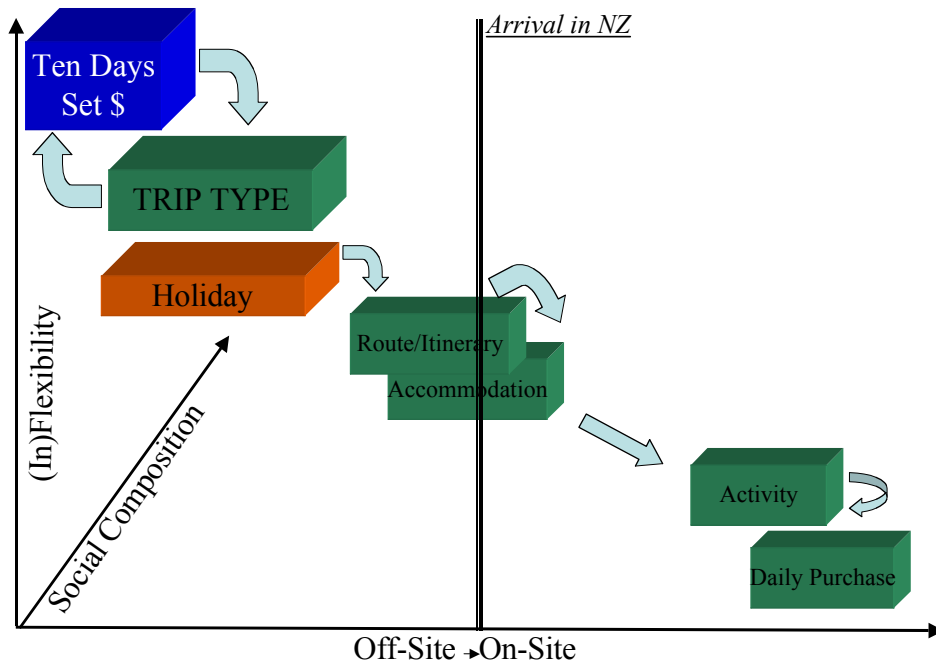
In this model, the decision process and sequencing is understood as a function of the three basic dimensions of (in)flexibility, social composition of the decision and the timing or location of a decision (‘Off-site – On-site’). The blue boxes represent those ‘decisions’ that are locked in early in the decision process and act to constrain or channel the approach to later decisions. In effect, these early ‘decisions’ configure the Type of Trip that will be engaged in on-site by the tourist (or travel group). Time, money and what could be termed the motivation for a particular Type of Trip interact to provide the overall framework for trip decision making.

Each Type of Trip (identified in this study) represents an option that then leads to a particular ‘cascade’ of decision making. These subsequent decisions (itinerary, accommodation, etc.) can then be placed in the three-dimensional space derived from the dimensions identified (degree of flexibility, social composition and timing/location).

The principal ‘driver’ in this model is the Type of Trip adopted. One of the unanswered questions in this study, therefore, is how tourists’ choices of Type of Trip are determined. This omission is because the influences on this choice occur largely outside of New Zealand and so were not the focus of the data collection. Nevertheless, as the detailed presentation of the findings above shows, Type of Trip has relationships, in our sample of interviewees at least, with a range of other tourist attributes (e.g., nationality, itinerary type, transport type, etc.). In this way, Type of Trip can be inferred through triangulation using these other attributes. That is, a proxy for Type of Trip can be derived from particular mixes of tourist attributes that form part of commonly collected statistics on New Zealand tourists.

An example of the way in which this model can be applied is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3
An illustrative example of the ‘Cascade’ model applied to the trip type of ‘holiday’



A ‘holiday’ type of travel is depicted. This represents a relatively ‘constrained’ type of travel in that many of the itinerary and accommodation decisions will have been made prior to arrival in New Zealand (i.e., inflexibility is ‘high’ for these decisions) and they will typically be of shorter duration. They are also resistant to social input (at least within New Zealand itself and on-site in particular destinations in New Zealand) and so are ‘low’ on social composition. Activity and daily purchase decisions, however, are lower on inflexibility (i.e., high on flexibility) and are relatively ‘high’ on social composition (they will incorporate advice, suggestions, reassurance, etc. from people in the travel group and beyond).

Through such an analysis, it would be possible to identify those aspects of the decision making of particular tourist types that might be most easily influenced in relation to the various measures of yield that are the central concern of the overall project (financial, economic, environmental and social). In addition, the dimensions help to suggest the best way in which such influence could be targeted, both in terms of the time/location within a trip (e.g., for marketing of an activity to a particular ‘Type of Trip’) and via the social ‘inputs’ into those decisions.

A final, but highly significant, feature of the proposed model is that it includes the fourth dimension of ‘Stage of Trip’. In Figure 4, the entire process of decision making (i.e., the decision making summary ‘Cascade’ model) is depicted as moving through and evolving during a single trip. That progression has been simplified into three parts, represented as equal ‘thirds’. What this indicates is that during the course of a visit to New Zealand certain decisions (most often those not already ‘locked in’ prior to arrival) become repositioned in relation to the three dimensions. For example, accommodation decisions (within a number of types of travel) may become more flexible during different stages of a trip (e.g., the middle stage) and also become composed by a range of social ‘inputs’. At a different scale, during a

- Further case studies – on-site and targeted data gathering at selected sites to ‘test’ the model as it is refined and translated into an agent-based model (this may also address possible limitations in the model arising from the limited geographic range of sites that were used in this study)

In addition, Objective 3 already incorporates validation processes that will ‘ground’ the model in databases such as the IVS.

Chapter 6

Insights, Limitations and Recommendations

6.1 Insights into Tourist Decision making

Numerous insights into the decision making process of tourists within New Zealand have been presented in this report. Some of the most significant of these include:

1. Many, even most, tourists have a number of decision elements in place prior to arriving in New Zealand.
2. Beyond those ‘locked in’ elements, tourists’ decision making occurs within a context of perceived ease of travel and openness to facilitation.
3. ‘Type of Trip’ provides the most insightful categorisation for highlighting consistent differences in the way that different tourists go about making various decisions.
4. During a trip, tourists’ decision making evolves in broadly predictable phases, here classified in terms of ‘Stage of Trip’ (first, middle and last thirds of a trip).
5. Positioning of destinations – via itinerary choices - within these ‘stages’ will systematically affect how (and when) tourists reach yield-relevant decisions (e.g., over accommodation, activities, general expenditure) with respect to those destinations.
6. As has been frequently found in tourism research, the social context and composition of decisions (e.g., through ‘word of mouth’ recommendations) is a primary influence on decision making.

6.2 Limitations

The in-depth interviewees included limited representation of Asian tourists to New Zealand (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, South Korean, Indian). Feedback from the Advisory Group members suggests that such tourists (especially Japanese tourists) may follow a distinctly different style of decision making from those included in this research. In particular, it is possible that such tourists adopt a decision making style focused on ‘collecting’ destinations within New Zealand.

One issue associated with the research methodology was that it was only focused on Canterbury. The relatively small number of triangle tourists encountered in the research, for example, may have been a product of research focused on a Christchurch gateway; triangle itineraries are likely to be more common in the North Island from an Auckland gateway.

Another issue that arises from the research being performed in the South Island is that the tourists may have been more focused on what they had done in the South Island. In turn, this may mean that their accounts ‘glossed over’ their North Island itineraries (they may have toured more comprehensively than the data suggest). This factor may also have made a difference to their expressed interests (particularly the low level of interest in Maori attractions).

While there were highly suggestive findings related to the role of ‘new’ technologies (especially social networking sites, travel blogs, etc.) the lack of a specific focus on this during the interviews may have underestimated the extent of this rapidly developing influence on decision making.

6.3 Recommendations for Stakeholders

1. Given the importance of social ‘others’ on tourists’ decisions, business operators, marketers and planners at all levels should increase their marketing efforts on marketing through social networks. Opportunities for such marketing suggested by the current study include:
 - Web 2.0 technology such as social networking sites, travel blogs and travel recommendation sites;
 - New migrant groups within the local community;
 - Local residents (e.g., being well-known and regarded within the broader local and business communities);
 - Residents and business organisations from regions that supply the destination with domestic tourists and services.

Such opportunities allow messages to be embedded within naturally occurring networks of social discourse that have been shown in this research to filter through into tourist decision making. At the extreme (e.g., where a New Zealand resident takes over the planning for a tourist’s trip) access to those discourses can dramatically influence tourist decisions and behaviours. Stakeholders (e.g., tourism businesses) may not have control over the content of these networks but participation in them either directly or indirectly through ensuring consistently high product quality and customer satisfaction will be increasingly essential.

2. Tourism planners, policy makers, Regional Tourism Organisations and government departments such as the Department of Conservation could make use of the analysis of decision making into ‘Stage of Trip’ both to predict and influence site-specific visitation by the various ‘Type of Trip’ tourists. Likely patterns of visitor growth at particular natural protected areas, for example, could factor in ‘stage of trip’ calculations into projections. This recommendation is one aspect of a broader insight: Overall itineraries and ‘Type of Trip’ variables have different implications for spatially distinct sites or destinations, and these need to be taken into consideration in planning, policy and marketing strategies.
3. One of the most prominent findings was the openness of much of the tourists’ time, especially once at a particular site or destination. The ‘one day interviews’, in particular, clearly showed the degree of uncommitted time in a ‘typical’ tourist day. When combined with tourists’ openness to quality signage and information on-site, this suggests that a coordinated approach to organising such ‘formal’ information sources in a destination would enable greater engagement from tourists with local opportunities.
4. Interviews of tourists’ ‘one day of decision making’ (Appendix 2) suggests that there is a considerable degree of receptiveness to opportunities that present themselves *between* locations on an itinerary. While overnight stays are often (but not always) decided ahead

of arrival at a location, stops *en route* are often opportunistic or at least left open until the moment that the opportunity is encountered. Publicly provided walkways, lookouts and picnic spots, for example, are likely to be visited in proportion to the ‘signalling’ of these opportunities along a route.

6.4 Future Research Directions

A number of areas for further investigation have become clear from these findings:

- There is a need to examine existing data on tourist flows to determine at which stage of tourists’ itineraries a particular destination is likely to be encountered;
- For a number of methodological and theoretical reasons, it would be useful to replicate this research elsewhere in New Zealand to see if the same findings apply;
- Data collected here should prove useful to guide and inform future quantitative surveys on information sources, timing of decisions, and so on;
- More research into the ways in which the internet is used while a trip is in process would be useful to understand on-site decision making;
- Investigation of the decision making rubrics used by coach tour operators would complement the findings here and, to an extent, ameliorate the limitation of these findings that has arisen from under-representation of Asian tourists.

Chapter 7

Initial Agent-Based Model Development

Whilst the primary purpose of this report is to describe and discuss the findings of our empirical work in Objective 2, building on presentations made to the Advisory Group, this section lays out some of our early thinking on what a formal agent-based model might comprise.

7.1 A Prototype Formal Decision Making Model

As we indicated earlier in this report, a major issue in modelling tourists' decision-making is the lack of processual theory or empirical evidence around how tourists make decisions once they have arrived 'in-destination' (Smallman and Moore, 2009). The findings from this study represent a first step in providing an empirical basis for producing a decision making model of just such on-site decisions.

The purpose of this section is to begin to 'bridge' from this empirical work and analysis to initiate work on the development of an agent-based model of yield-relevant tourist decision making in New Zealand. To provide that 'bridge', the decision making literature introduced in Section 2.2 (above) is first reconsidered.

Theory around destination choice is arguably well-developed, though biased towards cognitivist 'grand theories' of consumer behaviour. Hence, this extant theory suggests decisions are 'well-structured', in that the body of knowledge suggests that most tourists enjoy a well-defined and complete specification of their desired outcomes (e.g. destination, accommodation) and understand the constraints upon achieving those outcomes. In essence, much of tourists' decision-making (and wider consumer behaviour) theory argues that either the human mind has unlimited reasoning power in optimising choices under constraints or exhibits unbounded rationality (with scant regard for time or knowledge constraints of humans or their limited computational capacities; Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999).

Some theory admits to the limits of human (bounded) rationality in adopting (and often adapting) Simon's (1955) notion of satisficing. Herein the limitations of the human mind and the structure of the environment in which it operates are interdependent (Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999). Hence, in poorly defined natural situations, the likelihood of a decision maker finding an 'optimal' decision-making strategy is low. The mind's limitations demand that we "use approximate methods to handle most tasks" (Simon, 1990: 6 cited in Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999: 12). Such methods include recognition processes that mitigate or ameliorate information needs, heuristics that guide or stop necessary search, and concise decision rules that act upon the information at hand. The performance of such methods is partially influenced by the structure of the environment, whereby if the method 'fits' well with the environment, then it should perform well too. The degree of adaptation of a method to an environment determines its ecological rationality (Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999: 13). In arguably reflecting a more realistic picture of human decision-making (particularly in professional settings) than say expected utility or Bayesian probability models, satisficing may still require decision makers to deliberate in depth or at length, particularly around their aspirations (Simon, 1956 cited in Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999: 14).

Hence, classical satisficing is a good fit with most tourists' approach to destination choice which is seldom spontaneous. However, typically, once in-destination, tourists face a very different set of circumstances, to which many interrelated factors pertain, much more so than is the case in destination choice. These contextual factors (or situational cues) are not just exogenous or physical, they may also be social, personal, or spiritual (in either the secular or religious sense). These cues change over time through a range of processes in ways that may not easily be predicted or anticipated. Dynamic contexts change as circumstances change, in effect giving rise to "wild and wicked" problems that tourists must solve (Spector, 2008).

Choice in such circumstances is often spontaneous and always socially-embedded, reflecting humans' disposition to tacit knowledge and emphasizing the role of mind in perception and comprehension, as well as the interwoven nature of consumers' understandings, feelings, and actions (Allen, 2002) – their biography (Strauss, 1993: 97-106). Conceptualised in this manner, choice as practical experience is not the expression of inner states, but is exactly how we think within a context, as a complex of evolved understandings, feelings, and actions; that is, *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1980/1990). For example, tourists will act and respond in-destination (their field of play) in response to a feel for where they are (in body and mind) in relation to their travelling companions, other agents and the "contours" (cues) of their destination (Bourdieu, 1980/1990). That is, they react to discourse, to multiple agents and other cues (contingencies) in acting to develop their trajectory (Strauss, 1993: 53). Hence, to understand choice is to understand the experience of choice, which is an embodied, holistic perceptual comprehension, accompanied by a "perfect-fit" experience (Woodside and Martin, 2008; Martin and Woodside, 2008); the context of choice (choice is an *in-situ* encounter between an embodied consumer and an object of choice); and forces that generate choice (the shaping of the *in-situ* encounter by social and historical factors incorporated in the consumer and embedded in the object of choice) (Allen, 2002). With the exception of the work of Martin and Woodside (2008), Woodside, Caldwell, & Chebat (2007), Woodside, MacDonald, & Burford (2004), Woodside and Martin (2008) and Decrop (2006), little work in tourists' decision-making behaviour, especially in-destination decision-making behaviour, adopts a socially and situationally embedded and, often, discursive perspective (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Harré & Gillett, 1994) such as this; Moore (2002) is a notable exception.

Given the fit of this concept with the nature of in-destination choice, this absence seems to be an oversight. This absence is especially significant since the nature of in-destination tourism decision-making and the lack of theory and empirical evidence around such decision-making poses particular issues for policy makers and business planners in marketing and product planning in-destination. In striving to improve yield from marketing investment and capital assets (whilst improving social yield and minimising environmental impact), or, in the public sector, to establish and implement planning frameworks and policy options, they are limited by both the nature and the accuracy of forecasting that they may undertake.

In addressing this theoretical and practice gap, we draw upon our fieldwork and research that set out with the intention of deepening understanding of leisure travel decisions and tourism behaviours (Woodside et al., 2004) and tourists decision-making styles (Decrop, 2006). We link this to new insights in cue-based or naturalistic decision-making from adaptive behaviour and cognition research (Gigerenzer, 2007; Gigerenzer & Selten, 2002; Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999; Klein, 1998; Lipshitz, Klein & Carroll, 2006; Lipshitz, Klein, Orasanu & Salas, 2001),

which offer decision-making strategies that employ ‘fast and frugal’ heuristics² to choose amongst alternatives that are specified by cues. These heuristics employ a minimum of time, knowledge (information) and computation to make adaptive choices in real environments. These models are well suited to making choices amongst simultaneously available alternatives, where the search for, or amongst, situational cues, features or consequences with reference to the alternatives is, or must be, limited (Gigerenzer & Todd, 1999: 14). We contend that this approach fits extremely well with our conceptualisation of tourists’ ‘in-destination’ decision-making (i.e., frequent choice amongst several or many alternatives in a physical, individual, social and spiritual milieu) and the empirical evidence from this study. Hence, we develop a model of how tourists make fast and frugal heuristic decisions ‘in-destination’.

7.2 Initial ABM Model Development

The assumptions underlying our model are that tourists’ decision-making objectives are implicit, poorly defined and incomplete specifications of outcomes, cues and constraints. Furthermore, decision-making is tacit and considers many interrelated factors with non-linear relationships, some of which are time dependent. This means that the decision-making problem context changes over time unpredictably. All of this makes modelling tourists’ in-destination decision-making challenging, because:

‘... the same person will make different decisions in different ways and will make the same decision in different ways and at different points in time’

Payne & Bettman (1993)

Whilst our theoretical inspiration is wide, the work of Woodside et al. (2004) was particularly influential. The framing of our fieldwork, and ultimately our model, was heavily influenced by Woodside et al.’s (2004) grounded theory of tourist decision-making. Perhaps not surprisingly, the findings from our fieldwork and subsequent analysis, show great similarities with Woodside et al.’s theorising, in that we have found that many tourists’ ‘in-destination’ decisions are pre-framed and pre-planned notably in terms of trip type, budget and time. These anchors feed in to decisions that are made usually prior to arrival (itinerary and accommodation), leaving the main foci of in-destination decision making as activity choice and daily purchases, which are more likely to be influenced by contextual or on-site influences. This ordering of decisions made also indicates the degree of flexibility that most tourists have around these different types of decision. The major external constraint throughout the decision-making process seems to be the social composition of travel groups. A further important factor within decision making is elapsed time within the length-of-trip.

Our findings confirm ideas that we established in exploring the literature – the need to construct a model that reflects a complex process that represents the psycho-social nature of human decision making, situated in a physical and economic world. Such modelling has been undertaken previously by economists and social-psychologists in seeking to model economies (Tesfatsion, 2001), societies (Conte et al, 2001) and behaviour in social groups (Fowler & Smirnov, 2005). Hence, findings from analysis based on our fieldwork are coupled to ideas drawn from artificial intelligence research, notably Gigerenzer (2007) and Gigerenzer &

² Heuristics are those ‘rules of thumb’ that humans discover for themselves as a means of simplifying how they interpret and act upon information they receive. The derivation of the word is from the Greek εὕρηκα - ‘evrika’ – “I have found”, commonly mispronounced as ‘eureka’.

Selten (2002). We develop a prototype model in which a simplified representation of human behaviour is simulated through the evaluation of psycho-social, environmental, economic and temporal cues are evaluated using well-established human decision-making heuristics (see Figure 5). We have initially identified seven states (S1 to S7) that reflect tourists' choices and the nature of the wide (New Zealand) and local (destinations such as Hanmer Springs) worlds, and 10 processes (P1 to P10) that transform one state into another.

The simulated tourist (S1) is represented as 'vector' of characteristics that are drawn from a combination of our findings in the field, earlier research and (of course) the research objectives of improving various 'yields':

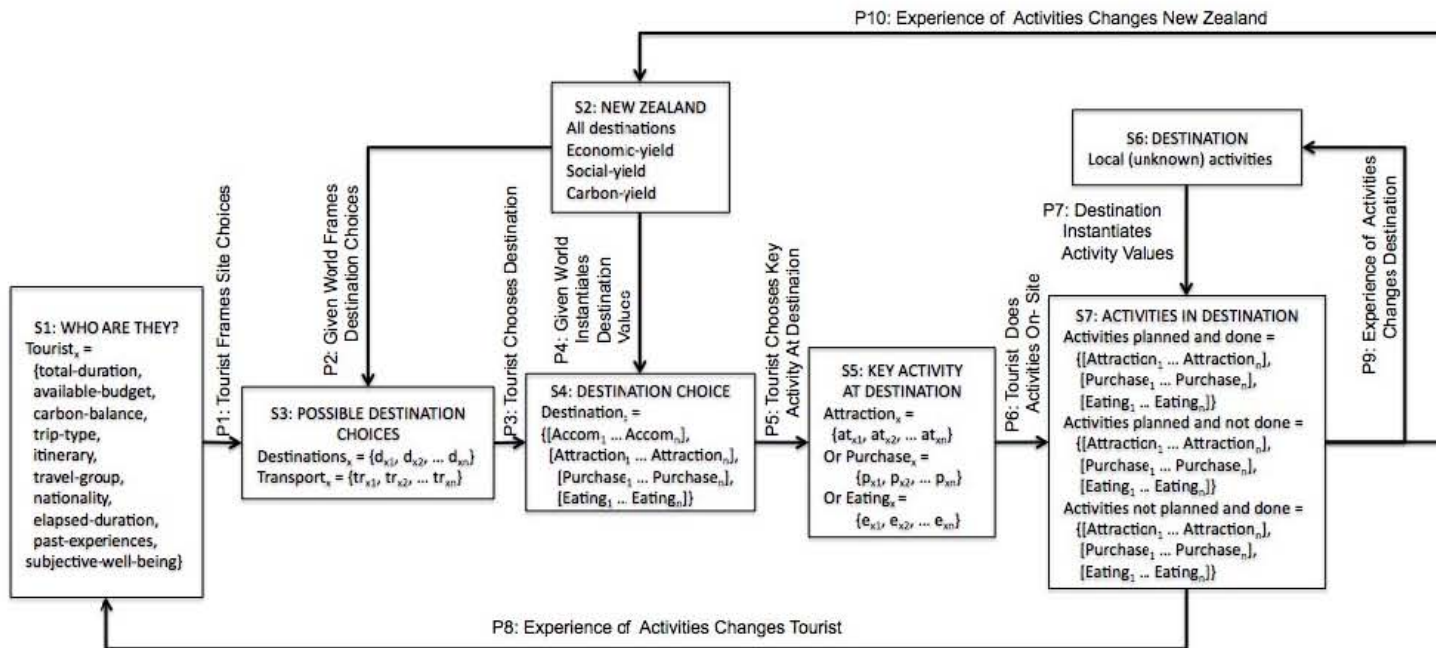
- *total-duration* is the planned duration (stay in New Zealand) in days of the whole trip;
- *elapsed duration* is the number of days the tourist has been in New Zealand;
- *available-budget* is the amount of money a tourist has available to spend at any one time (its may be unlimited, but will usually run down as the vacation progresses);
- *carbon-balance* represents a tourists own 'energy quota' (Fleming, 2007), i.e., as they move around New Zealand they may 'burn' (add to New Zealand's carbon-yield) or 'refuel' (reduce New Zealand's carbon yield)
- *trip-type* is a category defined by fieldwork – sightseeing, holiday, VFR, working-holiday, RTW;
- *itinerary* refers to common itinerary 'shapes' that show up in analysis of the IVS - full loop, island loop, triangle, stationary or combination, coupled to a list of sites, key activities associated with those sites, and a means transport around sites;
- *travel-group* based on our fieldwork - all new visitors, someone (or everyone) in the group a repeat visitor, a New Zealander in the travel party for the entire trip or a combination
- *nationality* as a proxy for culture giving an insight into conventional cultural dimension (Hofstede, 2001) – power distance (a measure of power distribution in groups), individualism, masculinity (a measure of assertiveness or competitiveness), uncertainty avoidance (a measure of risk propensity) and long-term orientation (a measure of thrift and perseverance);
- *past-experiences* record and rate previous activities and sites – tourists may recall and use such experiences in return visits; and
- *subjective-well-being* is a means of subjectively assessing 'happiness' (a primary function of most people's holiday) and which may be measured through a variant of Pavot and Diener's (1993) Satisfaction With Life Scale by making assessments of how close the itinerary is to the ideal (starting itinerary), the conditions of the holiday, satisfaction with the holiday, proximity to meeting key requirements (activities), the degree of change to the original plan.

New Zealand (P2) represents all tourist destinations (e.g., Kaikoura, Hanmer Springs, Whangerei, Waitangi, Invercargill, Stewart Island, Lake Tekapo township, Fox Glacier township) in New Zealand that are visible to international tourists. Destinations comprise accommodation choices, attraction choices (e.g., Whalewatch, Kaikoura), purchase choices (e.g., shopping for gifts anywhere) and eating (e.g., restaurants, self-catering) choices. In addition to destinations, New Zealand has a measure of economic yield (a function of expenditure from tourists available budget, but related to GDP), social yield (a measure of national sustainable human well-being – Costanza et al. (2009) and carbon yield (a function

of tourists' carbon balances). Destinations (S6) may offer attractions, purchases and eating choices that are not visible to international tourists before they arrive on-site.

In a process of framing destination choices (P1) a tourist will combine various characteristics, but chiefly itinerary, to frame their destination choices. This is also based on how the given world (New Zealand) frames destination choices (P2). Hence possible destination choices are identified along with transport choices (S3). From these possible choices, the tourist will pick a destination (S4), which will list available accommodation, attractions, purchases and eating alternatives. The tourist will then choose (P5) a key activity (attraction, purchase or eating opportunity) associated with that destination (S5), i.e., the 'thing that made the difference'. From here the tourist does various activities on-site (P6). There may be activities planned and done, activities planned and not done, and activities not planned and done (S7). The activities in destination will be influenced not just by the tourists' planned and initial choices, but also by destination information (S6) that may change destination values of activities (P7). Tourists' perceptions of experiences may change the tourist (P8), the destination (P9) and New Zealand (P10). The values of the various characteristics that describe states will be derived from the IVS, our fieldwork, other research findings or through manipulation by logical, mathematical or heuristic rules deployed by tourists, the wide world or the local world. 'Given' characteristics (e.g., nationality, total-duration, sites) are 'relatively' easily obtained, but the rules through which they will be manipulated may only be developed through further analysis and experimentation.

Figure 5
A Grounded Model of Tourists' Decision-making



Based on our current understanding, the various processes may be categorised as:

- *Framing* processes (P1, P2) in which an agent (i.e., tourist, New Zealand or destination) identifies or offers a choice set based on values selected from their defining characteristics. For example, a tourist will select only sites that are on their itinerary.
- *Choice* processes (P3, P5, P6) in which an agent (in this case a tourist) chooses from a set of alternatives using a generic search strategy (see Figure 6), which employs heuristics to assess alternatives based on the tourists characteristics. Using accommodation as an example (see table one), each choice option i (*accommodation A-E*) is represented as a vector of cue values $(x_{i1}, x_{i2}, \dots, x_{in})$. These reflect the extent to which each option meets the goal of the decision maker. The choice set may and will vary between choice problems. We continue to work on vector specification from cue research for each element of the tourist experience.
- *Instantiation* processes (P4, P7) fill-in the detail of choices made (e.g., attractions, purchases and eating options on a particular site).
- *Activity* processes (P6) occur where a tourist undertakes (or not) a planned or unplanned activity. These may also be choice processes where local information is added to activities in destination.
- *Change* processes (P8, P9, P10) update the state of the world (New Zealand and destinations) and tourist characteristics based upon their experiences.

Figure 6
Generic Search

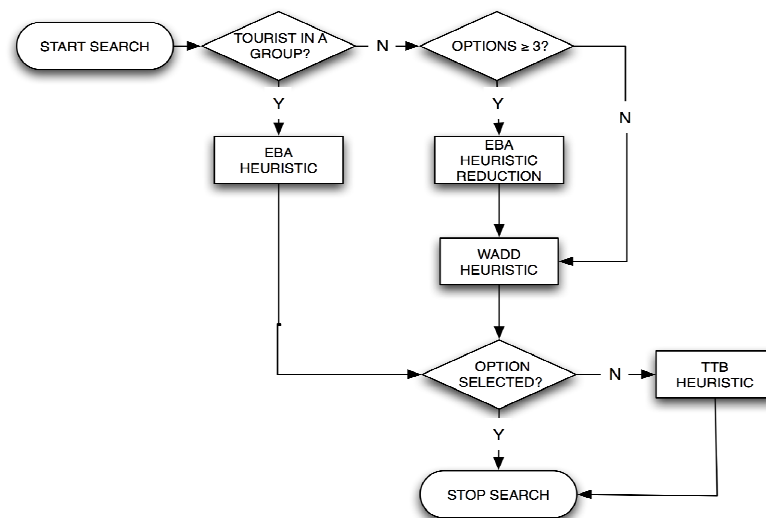


Table 10
Accommodation Options Representation

<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>Availability</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Word-of-Mouth</i>
A	None	High	4*	Good
B	Available	Medium	3*	Good
C	Available	Low	4*	Average
D	None	Low	3*	Good
E	Available	Medium	4*	Average

Further work is required on the specification of the model (e.g., ordering of and interaction between *Destination Choice* and *Key Activity in Destination* processes) processes outlined above.

7.3 Next Steps

Using the Repast software toolkit, in Objective Three we will create a Wide World, that will simulate sites (each within a local world) with range of activities available. We will create tourist agents and allow them to roam in and interact with the world. This will produce change to the world that will be evidenced in changes in yield metrics and in individuals. We may later add other agents (e.g., tourism operators, the local population).

Obviously the model needs refining, with particular attention to be paid to cues and heuristics.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

From the findings presented in this report a number of central conclusions can be drawn about yield-relevant tourist decision making within New Zealand.

1. 'Type of Trip' is the single most important factor that frames a tourist's decisions.
2. Type of Trip is usually 'locked in' prior to arrival in New Zealand, partly as a function of available time and budget considerations.
3. As a consequence, and especially for particular trip types, basic features of tourist itineraries (e.g., full loop vs. Island loop) - and often a considerable component of the associated accommodation - are also 'locked in' prior to arrival.
4. On-site, tourists demonstrate flexibility and 'openness' in relation to undecided elements, especially activities and daily purchases.
5. Social sources of information and reassurance/reinforcement are actively sought by most tourists regarding these undecided elements.
6. These social sources of information include other members of a travel group (especially any repeat visitors), friends and relatives who are New Zealand residents (especially relatively recent 'new' immigrant groups), other local New Zealanders, other tourists, industry personnel (especially in accommodation outlets and *i*-sites) and those commenting on internet social networking sites, blogs, traveller advice sites, etc.
7. The perceived and actual 'ease of travel' within New Zealand reinforces this flexibility.
8. 'Stage of Trip' influences the broad outline of a tourist's approach to decision making: Early in the trip, accommodation and itinerary decisions have often been established off-site; during the middle third of a trip, decision making is especially 'open' and exploratory; in the final phase of a trip decision making responds to the imminent end of the stay, and is often marked by a shift in priorities (e.g., a few days relaxation, 'treating' oneself, ensuring that important pre-trip goals and experiences have been achieved, making decisive trade-offs if necessary).
9. Destinations within New Zealand - by virtue of their geographic location, activity options, etc. - occupy specific roles and positions within different types of trip. Most obviously, they arise at particular stages (e.g., first, middle, last third) of tourists' visits. Their profile of visitors, especially in terms of Type of Trip, will have a major impact on how, and what tourists visiting their location will decide (or will not have already decided).
10. These findings together suggest considerable room for influencing yield-relevant tourist decision making and, further, highlight the crucial points during a trip, types of decisions and means through which such decisions could be influenced.

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Appendix 1
Tourist Decision Making Questionnaire

Interviewer?

--

Date?

___/___/___

Site? Weather?

Hello,

My name is < > and I'm carrying out a study for Lincoln University on how visitors to New Zealand make decisions during their trip. All the information you give will be completely confidential.

Filter Question: Are you visiting New Zealand?

If 'no', then thank the person for their time and explain that the study is only of international visitors to New Zealand.

If 'yes', then provide them with an information sheet, allow time for reading and then ask 'Would you mind spending no more than 10 minutes to answer a few questions?'

If 'YES' then continue with the following questions.

Do you mind if I record this conversation? (If 'yes', use digital recorder. If 'no', take notes.)

1. Gender?

M		F	
---	--	---	--

2. Age?

15-19		20-24		25-29		30-34	
35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54	
55-59		60-64		65-69		70+	

3. Nationality? *[Includes NZers currently resident outside NZ but 'home' for a visit. Use 'Other' in this case. Note any other unusual circumstances in the space below.]*

Australia		Other Asia	
United Kingdom		South/Central America	
United States		Other Europe	
Japan		Pacific	
Germany		Africa	
China		Other?	

4. Are you currently travelling ... ? (Tick as many options as appropriate if more than one applies).

Alone	
As a couple	
As a family with children	
As a family without children	
As a group of friends	
As a group of friends and family	
As a tour group	

5. Length of Stay in NZ?

Day number of trip today?

How many visits to NZ?

	<i>Days</i>
--	-------------

	<i>Trip Day</i>
--	-----------------

	<i>Number of Visits (1=first time to NZ)</i>
--	--

6. Could you please briefly list places on the general route you have taken or think you will take while you are in New Zealand? (e.g., CHCH-QTN-CHCH)

(Enter each destination in sequence – 1,2,3,etc. – and indicate an overnight (or longer) stop with an asterisk.)

1		2		3		4	
5		6		7		8	
9		10		11		12	
13		14		15		16	

7. What type of transport have you used most days (or intend to use most of the time in New Zealand)?

Tour Coach		Rental Car		Campervan	
Private Car		Train		Plane	
Bicycle		Public Bus		Other?	

8. Before arriving in New Zealand what places did you particularly know you wanted to visit? Did you visit/ will you still visit them?

Place 1		Visited? will visit?*	Still will visit?	
Place 2		Visited? will visit?	Still will visit?	
Place 3		Visited? will visit?	Still will visit?	
Place 4		Visited? will visit?	Still will visit?	
Place 5		Visited? will visit?	Still will visit?	
Place 6		Visited? will visit?	Still will visit?	
Others...				

* use 'V' for already visited, 'WV' for still will visit

If there were places that they intended to visit but have not done so (or no longer intend to do so), ask the following of the first instance of this in the above list.

I notice that you didn't visit/no longer think you will visit < >. Why is that?

9. Have you made any changes to your route plans as you have gone along?

None/Hardly any	A few	Some	Many	Completely Changed	Did not have a route plan

10. Before arriving in New Zealand what activities did you particularly know you wanted to do while here? Have you done/will you still do them?

Activity 1		Done? do?*	Still to do?	
Activity 2		Done? do?	Still to do?	
Activity 3		Done? do?	Still to do?	
Activity 4		Done? do?	Still to do?	
Activity 5		Done? do?	Still to do?	
Activity 6		Done? do?	Still to do?	
Others...				

* use 'D' for already done, 'WD' for still will do

If there were activities that they intended to do but have not done so (or no longer intend to do so), ask the following of the first instance of this in the above list.

I notice that you haven't done/no longer think you will do < >. Why is that?

Decision Making in New Zealand

I'd now like to ask you a few questions about how you have gone about making various types of decisions.

11. Could you please briefly describe for me how you decided to come here (Kaikoura, Akaroa, etc.) and how long you have stayed or intend to stay?

Prompts: Where did you find out about < >? When? From whom/what? Planned well before? Spontaneous? Who decided (You? Others in group)?

[Follow-up if needed – ‘And, when did you basically make that decision?]

What were the **THREE** most important influences on that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Prompts:

Recommendation?

Cost?

Familiarity with destination?

Ease of coming here?

Specific attraction?

12. Now, think about your most recent decision on overnight accommodation. Could you please briefly describe for me how you made the decision to stay at that accommodation?

[Prompts: Where did you hear about it? What did you take into consideration? Who made the decision?]

What were the **THREE** most important influences on that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Prompts:

Recommendation?

Quality?

Cost?

Familiarity (with brand)?

Ease of booking?

Available information?

13. Think about a place you have visited or an activity you have taken part in while you have been here or at your previous overnight destination. Could you please briefly describe for me the process you went through in deciding to visit that site or participate in that activity?

[Attraction/Activity = _____]

What were the **THREE** most important influences on that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

<p>Prompts: Recommendation? Cost? Familiarity (with brand)? Ease/convenience? Available information?</p>

14. Now, consider a recent daily purchase you have made, such as eating out, buying a souvenir or present or having a coffee. Could you please briefly describe for me how that decision came to be made? [**Daily purchase** = _____]

What were the **THREE** most important influences on that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

<p>Prompts: Recommendation? Cost? Familiarity (with brand)? Ease/convenience? Available information?</p>

15. Could you please say a little bit about any differences or similarities there might be in how you made these different types of decisions?

[Prompts: How much effort and time did you put into each? For some decisions did you deliberately compare different options or just go for the first option that seemed ok?]

16. If you had to describe to someone the way you generally make decisions what **THREE** words or phrases would you use?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

17. How have you kept/will you keep track of your daily expenditure during your visit to New Zealand?

[Prompts: Do you have a written record? Do you have a daily budget for particular items? (e.g., accommodation, entertainment, food, activities).]

18. Do you prioritise what you spend money on? (i.e., do you try to save as much of your spending for certain things rather than others? E.g., eating out, accommodation, etc.)

19. Did you have a fixed amount of money set aside to spend during your trip to New Zealand?

Follow-up question: How closely do you expect that you will stick to that amount?

20. To finish off, we would like to get an idea of what type of things interest you the most as a tourist in New Zealand. Are you, for example, interested in both the natural and cultural environments of New Zealand? How would you rank the following types of activities in order of interest to you? (1=most like to do). *[It may be simplest to get them to list their 'top three' in rank order, indicate with a 'X' any that they have no interest in and allow them to rank others as equal – i.e., with a '=' sign.]*

	Types of activities	Ranking
Natural environment	Passive experiences – general site seeing, scenic boat trip, aerial flights, helicopter flights, bird watching, lookouts and viewing platforms	
	Soft adventure experiences – kayaking, swimming with dolphins, mountain biking, walking and trekking, swimming	
	Exciting experiences – jet boat, bungee jumping, rafting, sky diving, caving, snow sports, climbing, diving	
Cultural environment	Shopping – tourist shops, local shops, markets, arts and crafts	
	Museums, galleries, heritage areas and theme parks	
	Gardens, general city/town sightseeing, farms	
	Eating out, winery visits	
	Entertainment – festivals (eg wine and food, music), special events, local fairs, sporting events, casinos, performing arts	
	Maori cultural events and sites – marae visits, performances	
Other things?		

21. How do you normally prefer to experience these things?

[**Prompts:** Do you usually prefer passive or active things – eg looking or doing? Under your own steam, or as part of a guided/organised group?]

Why is this?

Prompts:
 The time it involves?
 Cost?
 Lack of knowledge?
 Ease/convenience?
 The equipment needed?
 The only way to get physical access to that activity/place?

22. How would you rate your overall experience as a tourist/traveller?

Very Experienced	Relatively Experienced	About Average Experience	Relatively Inexperienced	Very Inexperienced

23. How many international trips have you taken in the past ten years?

_____ trips.

24. Is there anything else you would like to mention about how you have gone about making travel-related decisions on your visit to New Zealand?

Thank you for taking part in our research. Enjoy the rest of your day!

Appendix 2
'Day of Decisions' Interview Schedule

Interview sheet

Recording time _____

I am carrying out a study for Lincoln University on how visitors to New Zealand make decisions during their trip. All the information you give me will be completely confidential. First I would like to know a little bit about you and your trip.

Gender: M – F

Age: _____

Nationality: _____

Travelling group: _____

Length of stay in New Zealand? _____ days

Day number of trip? _____ day

How many previous visits? _____ (1=first time to New Zealand)

Travel route: full loop – single loop – triangle – single destination

Type of transport used? _____

I am interested in what you did yesterday – can you talk me through your day

- Where were you staying?
 - What time did you get up?
 - What time did you leave your accommodation?
- Where did you go first?
- What did you do there?
- What did you do next?
- Lunch/dinner/activities/time out/stops whilst driving next accommodation etc
- For each action or activity ask:
 - When did you decide to do that (eg how long beforehand)
 - How much time did you spend making your decision
 - What made you pick that activity/café/route/stopping point/etc
 - Did all the people with you do the same things all day