BACKPACKERS' EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTIONS

A CASE STUDY OF NORTHLAND, NEW ZEALAND

BY
Sarah J Toxward

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the masters degree In Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management Lincoln University

Lincoln University
Canterbury, New Zealand

Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of M.P.R.& T.Mgt.

BACKPACKERS' EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTIONS .
A CASE STUDY OF NORTHLAND, NEW ZEALAND

By Sarah J Toxward

The increase of the backpacker market to New Zealand has initiated a number of changes within New Zealand's wider tourism industry. Those catering for this distinct style of travel are becoming increasingly aware of the differing needs and wants of these predominantly independent travellers.

Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques this research explores the level of expectation and satisfaction perceived by backpackers towards three service sectors in Northland :- accommodation, transport and other tourism activities. This study also attempts to assess the level of service quality in Northland within these three sectors.

The results of the research indicate backpackers' level of expectations with accommodation, transport and other tourism activities are met and often exceeded. This subsequently resulted in high levels of satisfaction, which is often associated with overall trip satisfaction. Backpackers are predominantly young, well educated and in general travel for an extended period of time.
This study contends that by understanding backpackers' distinct expectations, and providing consistently high quality services, backpackers will continue to enjoy their experiences in New Zealand. These have important implications for New Zealand's future backpacker tourism industry.

Keywords: *Backpackers, service quality, expectations, satisfactions, Northland, accommodation, transport, activities.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This year of research has been a challenging and rewarding experience. Like most research, I can not take full credit for all my work and would like to acknowledge a number of people. Firstly my supervisors, David Simmons and Jay Kandampully for their continued enthusiasm and constructive criticism throughout the year. Their guidance and endless encouragement greatly shaped my work and taught me a number of value lessons along the way. Other people in the department also gave up their time to discuss various aspects of the research. These include Gary Steel, Kay Booth and Stephen Espiner.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of Destination Northland (Tammy and Nineke) who organised and encouraged hostel operators within Northland to support my research. I appreciated the assistance from hostel operators I meet far and wide who made this research possible. The amazing hospitality and insight into the backpacker market by the hostel operators enabled me to understand how a region accommodates the backpacker traveller.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank my family and friends. The theft of all my work in May was a major setback, but one that I thankfully overcame with a little help from some encouraging people. Thank you to my family for their support and encouragement over these past hard years. To my friends, both within the university and outside, thank you for reminding me there is more to life than academia. Special thanks to Kate, Cushla, Sue, Patrick, Jamie, Sandra, Rochelle and Graham for all the great times, encouragement and support during my time in Christchurch.

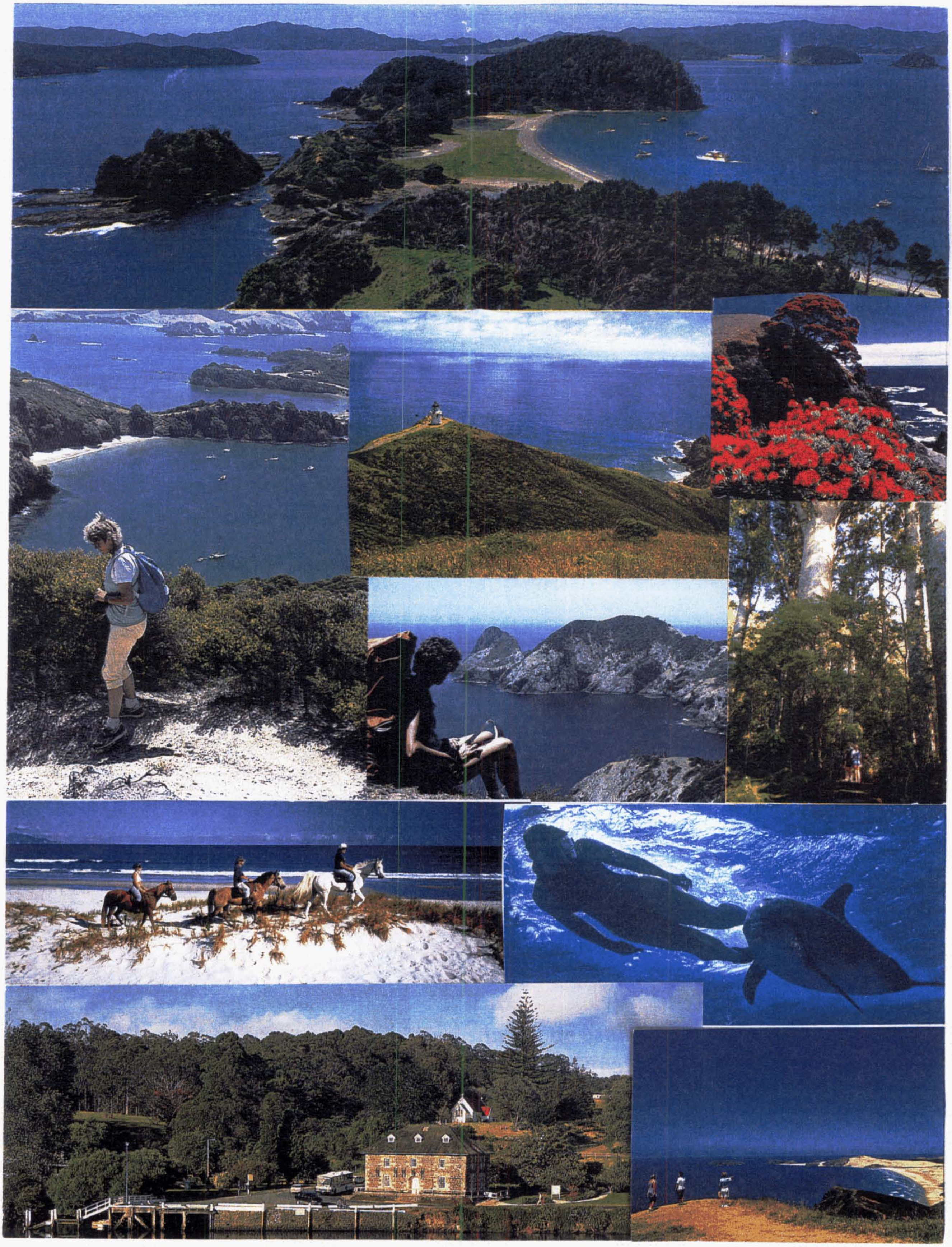
Lastly, but not necessarily the least important, I would like to thank all the backpackers out there, where ever you may be, for your cooperation in this study. Without you this research would have not existed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Frontispiece



NORTHLAND - A BACKPACKERS' PARADISE

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Tourism is important to New Zealand's economy. It generates employment and creates the need for associated services such as international airports, transport services and accommodation. The benefit of tourism to New Zealand's economy is increasingly evident to the extent that it is claimed to be today's leading foreign exchange earner (New Zealand Yearbook, 1998). The promotion and marketing of tourism by government and tourism agencies (Regional Tourism Organisations, (RTO) has added to the popularity and growth of New Zealand as a tourist destination. Coupled with this growth, there has been a change in the style of travel visitors are undertaking. Travelling on package tours such as Contiki in mass numbers was once the common style of travel in New Zealand.

In 1992/93, 270,000 visitors came as package travellers compared with 186,000 Free Independent Travellers (FIT's). This market still exists, but it is the free independent traveller who is now capturing the attention of those in the tourism industry. Free Independent Travellers (FIT) pre-book very little of the trip before arriving at a destination and are less likely to participate in organised, structured activities.
The availability and flexibility of time, together with the willingness to experience New Zealand's environment and culture, has led this market to require different products and services. Since the 1980's when FIT's initially emerged, various tourism businesses and tourism operators have adapted their travel products.

1.1 Why study backpackers

Backpackers have been largely ignored by tourism organisations in favour of tourists with high spending power. However backpackers often spend the same amount of money as mainstream visitors but do this over a longer period distributing money into areas off the main tourist route (NZTB, 1996). It is the backpacker who is often the pioneer visitor to a destination and in so doing initiates the tourism development process. This enables communities outside the major tourist nodes to become tourism destinations. The backpacker market is increasingly targeted by those in the industry because if satisfied with their experience they are likely to return to New Zealand as a different style of traveller (eg with a family).

1.2 Previous research on backpackers

Throughout the world, research has been conducted on the backpacker market to examine how this style of travel is distinctive from other tourism. Originally, studies examined youth travellers and how their travels were similar to the grand tours of the nineteenth century (Riley, 1988). Contemporary definitions of backpackers have now been established with the focus shifting to the distinct characteristics of this modern style of travel such as age and length of stay in a destination.

In Australia there has been considerable research conducted on the backpacker market (Pearce, 1990, Loker, 1993:1995, Ross, 1993:1995). These studies have focussed on how backpackers separate themselves from other travellers, their distinct form of 'road culture', and what motivates them to travel. Only recently have studies attempted to understand the differing needs and desires of the backpacker (Murphy-Pearce,1995, Ross, 1997). The economic contribution of the backpacker market to Australia has been formally recognised by the Australian government with the establishment of the 'National Tourism Backpacker strategy' (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1995).

Due to New Zealand's proximity and close ties with Australia, much of the research conducted in Australia is beneficial to New Zealand's tourism industry.

The studies that have been conducted on independent travellers and backpackers in New Zealand are fairly limited in scope. Parr (1989) studied Free Independent Travellers (FITs) providing a basic description of this group of travellers, and attempted to explain what motivates them to travel. Wares' (1992) study on winter backpackers took a similar approach, but specifically focused on backpackers to New Zealand during the winter months. Doorne's (1994) study was the first to specifically study the backpacker market to New Zealand. His study examined expenditure patterns and the integration of backpacker tourism into the wider tourism context. The New Zealand Tourism Board's 1992/93 International Visitor Survey (IVS), included a profile on the backpacker and provided those in the industry with a greater understanding of the market by providing some basic demographic characteristics. It is these previous studies that form the basis of this thesis and are reviewed later in the literature review and discussion section.

The provision of high quality service is increasingly recognised as a critical factor in the success of the tourism industry (Fick and Ritchie,1991). To date no research in New Zealand has ascertained whether current services and its quality match backpacker's expectations, and whether they are satisfied with what is offered. These questions form the focus of this study.

1.3 Research Area

This research study was conducted in the Northland region of New Zealand. Northland stretches from north of Auckland (Warkworth) through to Cape Reinga at the top of the island, encompassing both east and west coasts of the North Island. The proximity of the region to Auckland City and its favourable climate makes Northland a popular summer destination for both international and domestic visitors. Northland has the highest regional proportion of backpacker hostels in New Zealand (Garnham, 1993) and is included on several backpacker bus routes.
In spite of Northlands popularity no research has been conducted in the area on the backpacker market. This gap was highlighted as a concern in Northland's tourism strategy produced by the Regional Tourism Organisation, Destination Northland in 1996.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

Previous studies on backpackers have focussed on descriptive and behavioural examinations. This study does examine some descriptive characteristics but predominantly focuses on researching Northlands backpacker accommodation, transport, activities and other service sectors to explore expectations and level of satisfactions.

The aims and objectives of this study are as follows:

- Produce a demographic profile of backpackers to Northland, including age, gender, education, occupation, nationality and expenditure.

- Examine the travel patterns of backpackers within the Northland region, and pre- and post- travel patterns.

- Examine prior expectations and levels of satisfactions arising from backpacker's use of accommodation, transport and activity services in Northland.

- Assess the quality of current services based on the prior expectations and level of perceived satisfaction of backpackers, and report any suggested improvements.

- Explore the implications and recommendations of this study by suggesting areas of future research.

1.5 Summary and Outline of thesis

Tourism in New Zealand has become the leading foreign earner, and is fiercely marketed and promoted by the New Zealand Tourism Board. The increase of tourists in New Zealand has produced a range of travel styles and various market groups with corresponding business activity in all sectors of the New Zealand tourism industry. It is the specific needs of backpackers which are explored in this research. Together with previous studies, this research provides an overall picture of this market group and the way in which they are distinct from other forms of travel.

The format of the thesis is as follows:

- Introduction

- The tourism industry, the tourist, history of the backpacker, and a profile of the backpacker are reviewed with respect to contemporary theory, research and data. Backpacking in New Zealand and its growth is profiled.

- The three selected service sectors catering for the backpacker market (accommodation, transport, and tourist activity) are analysed within a New Zealand context. The concepts of service quality, satisfactions and expectations pertaining to backpackers are also examined.

- Research methods are outlined, with reference to both the quantitative and qualitative research techniques employed. Limitations and weaknesses of the methods are discussed.

- The basic demographic features of the sample of backpackers interviewed for this research are profiled.

- The data are divided into and explained in a number of subsections according to accommodation, transport, activities, expenditure, travel patterns, expectations and satisfactions. A discussion using previous studies and other international statistics is provided where applicable.

- Conclusions on the implications of backpacker tourism in Northland and New Zealand are drawn from the research.

- Recommendations and future areas of research are suggested. Implications for managers in Northland hostels are also provided.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Growth of the Tourism Industry

Tourism is currently the world's largest industry earning over US $422 billion in receipts in 1996 (World Tourism Organisation, 1997). It is an industry which is responsive to change both in individuals and the international community. International tourism became a modern mass phenomenon after the second World War when it came to "embrace practically all social classes in industrialised western societies" (Cohen, 1984:376). Major contributing factors to this growth include a rise in standards of living, longer paid holidays and rapid improvement in transport networks.

Changes in technology, economics and social values have also brought about changing travel patterns (Parr,1989). Not only have the number of travellers increased but also there are the changes in holiday style, forms of transport, accommodation and activities. The destinations and types of travel which were once exclusively for the higher social classes have now become "assimilated under the umbrella of mass tourism" (Sharpely, 1994: 67).

This chapter examines the theoretical issues pertinent to this research to establish a contextual reference for the data. The chapter is broken down into three sub sections; the growth of the tourism industry and the backpacker market, Tourism in Northland and service quality, satisfactions and expectations.

2.2 The Growth of New Zealand's Tourism industry

Tourism in New Zealand accounts for 15 percent of export earnings and one in eight jobs (International Tourism report, 1995). The number of visitor arrivals indicates a long-term pattern of consistent growth in the industry, with the number increasing from 1,213 318 in 1994 to 1,551 341 in 1997 (NZTB, 1998).

The New Zealand Tourism Board estimates that in 1996 the tourism industry consisted up of approximately 16,500 businesses that directly employed around 90,000 people (New Zealand Yearbook, 1998).

New Zealand's attractive natural and cultural environment, draw many international visitors who travel in various forms. Over time businesses and tourism operators within the tourism industry have adjusted to cater for both mass package tourists and those who prefer to travel independently.

2.3 Who is a tourist ?

In order to understand, explain and predict tourist behaviour, it is necessary to define a tourist and to identify different types of tourists. The increase in international tourism made it necessary to operationalise the term 'tourist' for statistical purposes, enabling tourism statistics to be collected on a comparative basis for further analysis.

Although the term 'tourist' is widely used and accepted throughout the world as someone who travels, there are difficulties in defining precisely who or what is a tourist. Firstly, a tourist can be categorised into 'domestic' and 'international'. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defines *domestic tourists* as "internal visitors who stay at least one night in private accommodation in the place visited" (Harris and Howard,1996: 63). A limitation in this is that popular forms of accommodation are excluded from the term private accommodation, such as camping grounds. The term 'domestic tourist' is further defined as "any person residing in a country who travels to a place within the country outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months" (Harris and Howard, 1996:63). The term domestic visitor is often used interchangeably with the term domestic tourist.

The most widely accepted definition of an *international tourist* proposed by the WTO in 1968 states "international tourists are temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under **a)** leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, sport) **b)** business" (Cohen, 1984:374). The term 'traveller' is often associated with the term tourist, although recently they have acquired different connotations. A *'traveller'* is applied to someone 'travelling for an extended period of time, which connotes a spirit of freedom and individuality'(Sharpely,1994:68). According to the WTO a *'traveller'* is an "individual who travels to and.stays in places outside their home environment for a limited period of time; either for leisure, business or other purposes"(Harris and Howard, 1996:162). Together with several elements found in other definitions, Cohen uses both 'traveller' and 'tourist' to define a tourist; "A tourist is a voluntary, temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non- recurrent round trip" (Cohen, 1984:380).

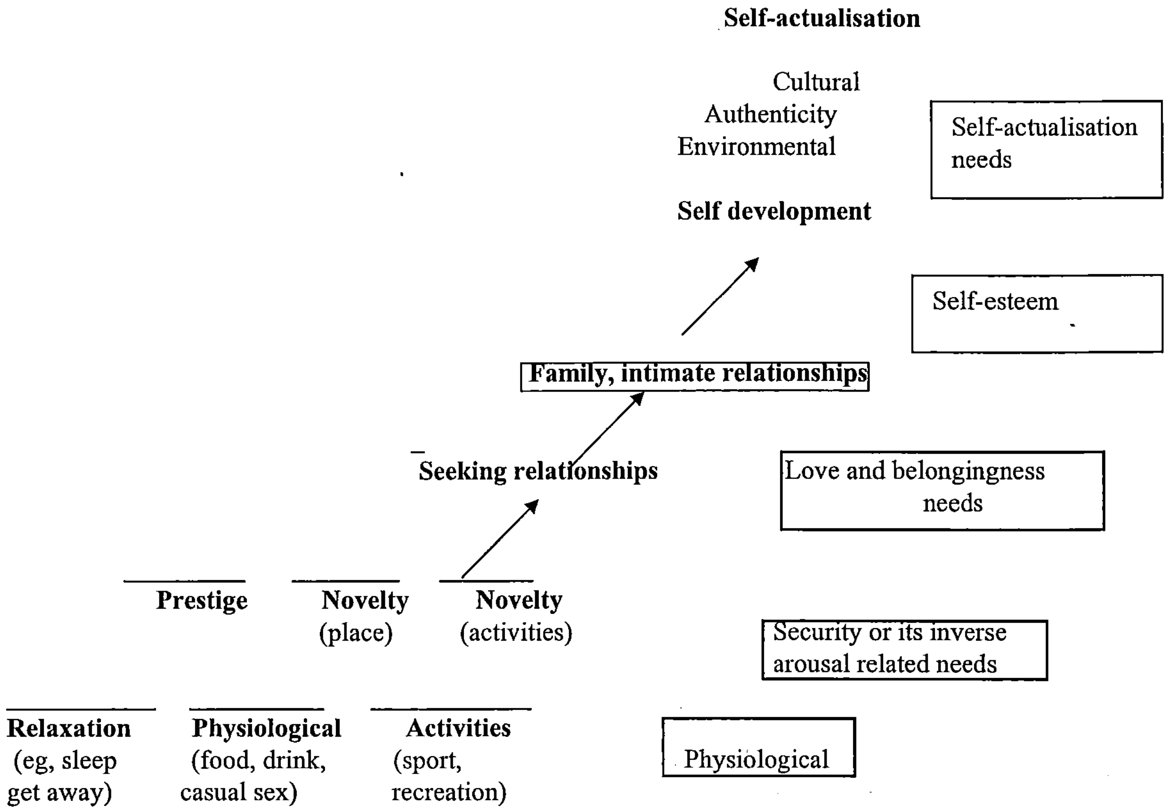
The needs and desires of tourists will naturally influence their attitudes and behaviours while on vacation (Fisher and Price,1991). In an attempt to address these considerations, Pearce (1988) developed a Travel Career Ladder (TCL) which is based on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs (Fig.1). Maslow suggested that human needs as motivators form a five level hierarchy. Maslow argued if none of the needs of the hierarchy was satisfied, then physiological needs would dominate behaviour. If these were satisfied, the individual would be motivated by the next level which include security, love and belongingness, self-esteem needs and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1943). Pearce's TCL can be applied to this research as it is assumed that a certain 'career level' a backpacker has achieved will determine their prior expectations and level of satisfaction. For example a backpacker, who is motivated to travel to satisfy self esteem needs, will have different expectations than the backpacker who is motivated to travel to satisfy physiological needs (eg casual sex).

According to Pearce (1988), the term ‘career’ has a number of implications that make it useful as a theoretical framework for discussing travel and leisure. He suggests that a person progresses through a series of ‘motivation based’ stages and that each of these stages involves experiences that will have different influences on their concept of travel. However Pearce also points out that “it is not necessary for all individuals to start a career in the same position or to move through it at the same rate”(Pearce, 1988:28).
Based on this view, travel careers may be seen as a laddered system involving the possibilities of change, and /or.promotion, both across and within levels.
For example backpacking might be considered a socially accepted form of ‘escape’ from careers or relationships for many young people. “The tasks of travelling, moving on and deciding what to do, and when to do, it give a purpose and structure to ones’ time which forestall more basic decisions about life’s choices” (Pearce, 1990:5).

Loker’s (1996) motivation based segmentation study used Pearce’s model (1988) to measure and evaluate the travel career levels of backpackers by investigating their motives to travel. Loker expected that a tourist would ascend the ladder as they travel more. She also recognised that the same tourist may vary in their travel career level depending on the travel situation and social reference group. Loker divided backpackers into categories based on motive statements; they included self-developers, social/excitement seekers, achievers and escapers/relaxers. Based on their motivation to travel each group of backpackers were at varying stages of their ‘travel career’.

Figure 1 shows Pearce's suggested steps in tourists' travel careers. The steps are organised as part of an ascending stage of Maslow's levels of motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of needs are in boxes on the right hand side).

Figure 1: Pearce's Travel Career Ladder



(Source: Pearce, 1988:29)

2.4 The history and origin of backpacker travel

There are a number of independent themes that contribute to an understanding of the history of the backpacker phenomenon. Although people have always travelled, the origins of backpacker travel lies within the broader history of tourism. This includes the Grand Tours of the 17th and 18th century in Europe, hiking, the youth hostel movement and non-institutionalised tourism.

2.4.1 The Grand tours

The travel behaviour of the affluent, well educated youth of late Victorian period was to "set out on adventure trips to experience the hidden, strange and exotic life of far away countries and unknown people" (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995:820). These enthusiastic adventurers often voluntarily submitted themselves to hardships and adopted the way of life of their hosts. This was looked upon as an "educational finishing school"(Riley, 1988:319) which was likely to increase one's worldliness and social awareness. Alderson (1971, cited in Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995) noted that places visited in the Victorian period are parallel to the 'New' grand tour in the 1960s in which tourist visit the same places and routes throughout Europe (eg Rome and Greece).

2.4.2 Youth Hostel movement

The youth movement appeared, arguably as reaction to the harsh conditions of urban life in cities of nineteenth century Europe. "Young adults began to spend time discovering unspoilt countryside"(Riley,1988:314). To cater for this 'wandering youth' hostels such as YMCA and YWCA were developed offering a range of cultural activities and accommodation. The first Youth Hostel Association (YHA) hostel was established in Germany in 1910. Today the YHA is the world's largest accommodation chain with 36 million overnight visits annually (McCulloch, 1992).

2.4.3 Hiking

Hiking is considered to be another historical contributing factor to contemporary backpacker travel. At the turn of this century young people especially Germans, were taking regular trips into the country side. Such trips become fewer after World War I, with ongoing urbanisation and the importance of craft associations and guilds who acted as a significant organising network, decreased.

After the war the Great Depression effectively changed travel for an entire decade, as higher unemployment and fewer jobs meant, "life on the road was more about survival than enjoyment" (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995:819).

Riley (1988:817) argues it is "necessary to retain the tradition of seeking employment while travelling to understand contemporary backpackers". Travelling to find work is often a motivation of present day backpackers (Loker, 1993:Ross, 1995).

2.4.4 Non-institutionalised tourism

The late 1950's saw the emergence of drifter travellers where "escapism was seen as hedonistic and anarchartisc"(Loker and Pearce, 1995:823). This was the period where backpackers were stereotypically seen as hippies and drifters who attempted to escape from responsibility and reality. These drifters whose "free and independent travel patterns articulated a rejection of package tourism"(Doorne, 1993:30), represented the transformation of a tradition practised for centuries, known as 'the rite of passage' in which people experience life through travel.

Backpackers have also been linked to Cohen's (1972) typology of tourists which denotes different degrees of novelty and familiarity sought in the tourism setting. The 'explorer' arranges their trip themselves in an attempt to get off the beaten track as much as possible, although they look for comfortable accommodation and reliable transport. 'Drifters' venture the furthest from the beaten track and shun tourism establishments (Cohen,1972:530). The modern backpacker is a combination of both the explorer and drifter styles of travelling.
The modern backpacker strives for authenticity and places emphasis on the quality of the experience. Although some backpackers avoid following tourist brochures, which they perceive as inauthentic, they often follow the suggestions and experiences of other like-minded travellers on the bus or in hostels.

In the early 1980's there was a re-emergence of 'youth tourism' where their experiences were presumed to be more authentic than mass tourism. Loker and Pearce, (1995:829), argued that youth travellers "penetrated more deeply into society to avoid staged settings". Today this is referred to as "Overseas Experience" (OE), where young adults seek to exert their independence through travel. Although Western countries view this form of travel as a transition into adulthood

(A rite of passage), for those in the less developed societies, the majority of young have to join the work force in order to survive.

In conjunction with the growth of this form of tourism, was the related increase in infrastructure to cater for it. This consequently popularised and reinforced the backpacker movement. Eric Foley, a backpacker hostel operator in Christchurch, observed that the emergence and popularity of backpacker hostels in New Zealand did not emerge as early as it did in Europe and Asia. "It wasn't until the early 1970's when some of the first accommodation hostels were developed"(pers. comm., 18 August, 1997). Formerly camping grounds and small hotels operated, which initiated the trend towards greater communal accommodation. Twelve years ago there were approximately 42 hostels operating within New Zealand, this has now swelled to over 250 (BBH guide, 1998)[1].

Whether backpacking can be defined as an alternative form of tourism is debatable given the widespread existence of accommodation, transport and infrastructure in New Zealand, which caters for this market. Contemporary backpacking is more structured than the drifter tourism of previous decades, indicating that "a parallel travel system to mass tourism is developing"(Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995:841).

It is the approach to, and varying preferences for travel, which sets backpacker tourism apart from traditional mainstream tourism.

2.5 Who is a backpacker?

Due to the world-wide change in the type and style of travel by visitors, there is an increasing interest in the backpacker segment of travel. To understand the behaviour and motivation for this style of travel it is necessary to identify who is a backpacker and how this style of travel is defined.

---

[1] The Budget Backpacker Hostel guide (BBH) is a guide in which hostels are rated by backpackers. Although a large proportion of hostels are included in this guide, there are some that are excluded.

The term 'backpacker' is not one that is necessarily common or recognised internationally. Due to the variations in definition backpackers and are often referred to as 'independent travellers' or 'budget travellers'. Backpackers are generally classified by tourism promoters in Australasia as "predominantly young budget tourists who utilise backpacker accommodation" (Loker, 1993:3). Another broader definition often used in Australian research is "any traveller who spends at least one night in a backpacker hostel"(Haigh,1995:4). These definitions have inherent problems as they may exclude backpackers who chose not to stay in hostel accommodation opting to stay in alternative budget accommodation.

Cohen's (1972) work on the roles of tourists indicated the 'backpacker fraternity consists of students, old country visitors and those who obtain casual work to pay for extensions to their travels' (Cohen 1972). Using the WTO classification of tourists by purpose of travel, backpackers are in the group designated 'holiday makers' (Garnham, 1993:541).

The term backpacker is also representative of traveller styles where 'the emphasis is on movement and mobility'(Doorne, 1994:30). The backpack is commonly associated with the backpacker traveller as a chosen piece of luggage which enables this freedom of movement.

2.5.1 Pearce's definition of a backpacker

Pearce (1990) defines a backpacker in the five following ways.

1) A preference for budget accommodation:

The most distinct feature of backpackers is that they want to spend as little as they can on accommodation to preserve the bulk of their budget for other activities. While the majority of backpackers stay in hostel accommodation during some time of their holiday, a broad range of other budget accommodation is also used (camping grounds, family and friends).

The economic contribution of backpackers has been widely criticised because of their limited spending. Although their daily expenditure is lower than other visitors, they stay significantly longer in a destination (NZTB, 1993). The distribution of money is injected directly into the domestic economy via their desire to visit 'out of the way regions'. This is in contrast to mass tourists who are more likely to stay in foreign owned hotels and induce a lower multiplier effect into the economy. This is often compensated for by their higher daily expenditure.

2) An emphasis on meeting other travellers:

Backpacker studies reveal that the social aspect of backpacking is expressed as a primary motive to travel (Murphy, 1995, Haigh, 1995). Meeting other travellers is important not only because of social considerations, but also (owing to the nature of the market) because fellow travellers are a primary source of information on things to do, places to visit, where to stay and bargains to be had.

The backpackers desire for social contact extends beyond just meeting other travellers. It also encompasses meeting the local population and understanding their lifestyle and cultural differences. As Riley (1988:317) suggested it is the 'gaining of this understanding and insight which sets these travellers apart from other tourists'.

3) An independently organised and flexible travel schedule:

As stated by Jarvis (1995:1) "backpackers are the ultimate free independent travellers". They pre-purchase very little of their trip, apart from the transport to and from their main destination before departure. Backpackers longer stay means that their itineraries can be flexible, as they wait to hear of the 'must do' activities from other travellers. The flexibility also allows them to take advantage of off- peak fares.

4) Longer rather than shorter holidays:

One of the key differences between backpackers and other tourists is the length of stay in the country. A backpacker may remain in the country for three to six months, often a year. The average length of stay for backpackers to New Zealand in 1992/93 was 41 days (NZTB,1993). This is compared with the average visitor to New Zealand who stayed 19 days (NZTB,1992/93). Due to their longer stay, backpackers can afford the time to visit out of the way places, spending their money on locally produced goods and services. The length of stay enables backpackers to incorporate a wider range of experiences in more diverse geographical locations than a visitor on a short trip.

5) An emphasis on informal and participatory holidays:

A study by Loker (1993) suggests that backpackers have a high participation rate in adventure activities. While they appear to travel cheaply backpackers are willing to pay to undertake adventure activities and specialised tours. Backpackers are also three times more likely to engage in more activities than other visitors (NZTB,1996). This 'new' age of tourism is more qualitative in the sense of 'gaining an experience' rather than collecting destinations. Therefore, the new challenge for tour operators is to develop their resources into products which interest backpackers and satisfy their expectations. "Been there seen that, needs to be allied to new products offering 'shared this experience with...." (Pryer,1997:230).

The strength of Pearce's analysis lies in its emphasis on the motivations and behaviour of backpackers. Predominantly qualitative studies suggest that factors such as itinerary flexibility, access to budget accommodation and social interaction with fellow travellers are central to the backpacking experience (Pearce, 1990, Ross, 1993, Loker, 1995). It follows that these factors should ideally be incorporated into any attempt to construct a comprehensive definition of a backpacker.

There is no reference in Pearce's definition of a backpacker to age, duration of stay nationality or money spent. Pearce believes "that backpacking is an approach to travel and holiday taking" (Pearce, 1990 cited in Loker, 1993), and is not necessarily restricted by any of these demographic or economic factors.

There is no simple demographic or economic criterion that corresponds with a social definition of backpackers. For example, the use of budget accommodation as a defining feature is flawed in that not all users of cheap accommodation are necessary backpackers. Pearce (1990:2) concludes that "it would be undesirable to discard the term [backpacker] because our [Australia] current tourism statistics measures are clumsy when it comes to handling this market".

5.2.2 Additional defining features of backpackers

Although it is widely accepted that Pearce's five criteria define a large proportion of backpackers, other defining factors are also important to ensure some backpackers are not excluded.

Age and duration of stay have been identified as possible determining factors when defining the backpacker market (Loker, 1993). A number of studies have identified backpackers as predominantly young (Loker-Murphy and Pearce,1995, Jarvis,1995, Haigh, 1995). However Riley (1988) states that "although backpacking is the domain of the young, by nature its an inclusive travel style and anyone who cares to take it up is usually made welcome by the industry and is able to share its rewards".

Jarvis (1995) study showed that the age of a backpacker varies with 32% of Canadians and Americans likely to be over 40, and 91% of Japanese and 86% of Scandinavians under 30. Variations in the age of backpackers is due to the way different societies tolerate the concept of extended leave, travel from jobs and education and different economic conditions such as the flexibility of the labour force. Therefore the use of age and length of stay as defining features, raises two issues to consider. Firstly, where does one place the cut-off point of age, should the age limit be at 29 years, 34 or 39? What about the lower limit for duration of stays, should it be two, four or six weeks? Hence there is a certain amount of subjectivity in these decisions.

Secondly, there is a consideration of a philosophical kind. Should a group of visitors who might consider themselves to be backpackers be excluded because they are over a certain age limit or stay for a shorter time period? This answer obviously depends on the purpose of the definition and its objectives.

Due to the lack of knowledge and attention to backpackers differing needs, there may be a tendency for the tourism industry to view backpackers as different from mainstream tourists, but not different from each other. Loker (1995:19) suggested that to assume backpackers are one homogenous group of travellers could be "dangerous as it will surely result in at least some of these visitors being dissatisfied or not well catered for". Like other styles of travel there are different 'types' of backpackers that often emerge. Hartmann (1991 cited in Loker-Murphy and Pearce,1995) categorised youth travellers into seven categories according to their varying motives and experience.
Table one describes the seven types of youth travellers.

Table 1. Seven types of youth travellers

Moratorium Travellers	Take the opportunity to travel extensively before entering family and career . Have the sufficient resources to choose a comfortable way of travelling.
Ascetic Travellers	Abstain from worldly comforts and pleasure on lonely and unplanned journeys, spending as little as possible while testing own limits of endurance.
Adventurers Travellers	Test limits but often with a high input of financial resources and lengthy planning. Look for new and unconquered areas with a large group to view performance.
Goal directed Travellers	Interested in carefully planned and prepared education travel there must be a cultural or material profit.
Party Travellers	See trip as a large party and an opportunity to meet new people, doing things they would not dare do at home.
Alternative Travellers	Look for new experience by avoiding mainstream, problems arise if too many are following same alternative lifestyle, drugs can create problems for country visited.
Peter Pan Travellers	Are in late 30s+ and in search of their second youth by abandoning normal life and joining young people.

Source:(Hartmann,1991 cited in Loker-Murphy and Pearce,1995:829)

2.5.2 Towards a working definition

There is no single definition of backpackers. Ideally there should be a consensus on a general purpose definition that can shape analysis and discussion. This needs to be simple to understand and apply, but broad enough to encompass those groups of visitors most identified as backpackers. Pearce's (1990) definition using the five criteria allows backpackers to be defined from 'other travellers' but excludes age and duration of stay as other defining characteristics. According to the New Zealand Tourism Board backpackers are visitors "who stay at least one night in hostel accommodation, stay at least two weeks in New Zealand and visit New Zealand primarily on holiday or to visit friends and relatives"(NZTB, 1993:82).
For the purpose of this research, the NZTB's definition is applied to allow comparative studies to be made against other international visitors.

2.6 Backpacking in New Zealand

New Zealand's tourism industry is a complex combination of many different travel segments, with accommodation ranging from five star resorts through to farm stays. One of the most complex and least understood segments is that of the backpacker market. This is partly because backpacker tourism does not conform to both the public and industry standard image of tourism. That is, how could someone consider travelling for a year or more. It is this basic lack of understanding of the wants and needs of the backpacker market that is delaying New Zealand's tourism industry from taking full advantage of this expanding independent market.
This may be attributed to the difficulty in extracting backpacker numbers from arrival statistics in order to estimate accurately the size and importance of this market.

In recent years backpacking has become an increasingly developed sector of New Zealand's tourism industry. In the 1992/93 period there were 73,000 backpackers to New Zealand (7.2% of international tourist market), with this growing to 75,644 in the 1995/1996 period (NZTB, 1996). This shows an increase of four percent on the 1992/1993 survey.

The average length of stay has decreased over the three year period with 46 days per backpacker spent in New Zealand over 1992/1993(NZTB, 1993) This is compared with only 26.5 days spent in New Zealand per backpacker in 1995/1996 (NZTB, 1996). Although this indicates a decrease of 42 percent in the number of backpacker nights, the total export revenue from the backpacker market increased over the 1995/1996 period to $2.27 billion from a previous $1.98 billion in 1992/1993 (TNT magazine,1996).

Although backpackers spent less time in New Zealand, they spent more money per day in 1995/1996 than the last research period (1992/1993). The average amount per day grew from $58 in 1992/1993 to $113 in 1995/1996. Although this is less per day than the average visitor to New Zealand who spent $111 in 1992/93, their length of stay is longer. A possible reason for the rise in amount of money spent and the drop in the length of stay is that many backpackers work in Australia and have to leave the country to satisfy Australian visa requirements. New Zealand is considered by backpackers as a holiday destination before they return to work in Australia.

2.6.1 The Growth of Backpacking in New Zealand.

In New Zealand during 1992 and 1993, journalistic writers (Weston, 1993, Adams, 1992) focused their attention on what they described as the 'backpacker boom'. These articles brought the 'backpacker' to the attention of the general public by indicating they were the latest wave of international travellers to New Zealand. Additional research on backpackers in New Zealand by Parr (1989), Ware (1992) and Doorne (1994) focused on who they were, where they were from and what they spent their money on while in New Zealand. These latter studies recognised that backpackers are motivated to travel by different reasons than other types of travellers.

It is these differing motivations to travel that provide the backpacker with a distinctive set of needs and wants. Preliminary studies on backpackers have provided an insight into how they separate themselves from other types of travellers, how they create their distinct form of road culture and why they travel (Riley, 1988, Pearce, 1990, Ross, 1994 and Murphy,1995). The literature however, is limited regarding the service quality preferences and expectations held by the backpacker traveller. The provision of high quality service is recognised increasingly as a critical factor in the success of businesses and operators in the tourism industry. Fick and Ritchie (1991:2) define service quality. as perceived by customers to be "the result of a comparison of expectations of a service they will receive and the perception of the performance of the business providing that service". Expectations that have been met or exceeded are likely to result in high levels of service satisfaction with visitors travel experience.

Service quality ideals and expectations are relatively neglected areas in regard to the backpacker traveller segment of the market. Ross (1993) examined expectations and evaluations of backpackers to the wet tropic's world heritage area in Australia and examined the associated implications of these findings for destinations. Ross' major finding suggested that those with lower levels of education and male travellers were more likely to enjoy their overall experience more than they had expected.

The backpacker places a large emphasis on the quality of the experience they receive, including the importance placed on meeting other people. This experience is facilitated by the provision of hostel accommodation, transport services and the participation in activities. It is of paramount importance that the quality of these services is maintained to ensure backpacker satisfaction. Murphy (1997:3) stated that backpackers are influenced to travel by "particularly strong pre- expectations and the desire to see or experience a particular travel product". In light of these needs the goal of the industry is to provide consistently high quality experiences.

2.7 The Backpacker Accommodation Council (BAC) of New Zealand

Until recently no organisation directly focused on the growth and diversification of the backpacker market. The increase in the backpacker market to New Zealand prompted the establishment in 1995, of an organisation under the New Zealand Tourism Industry Association (NZTIA):- The Backpacker Accommodation Council (BAC). The objective of this member-based organisation is to provide "a united backpacker voice within the greater tourism industry to deal with and speak on behalf of, and for, backpacker accommodation establishments"(BAC, 1995:1). Unlike traditional accommodation such as hotel and motels, backpacker accommodation previously did not have a representative body to help coordinate their interests. The formation of the Council has improved communication and recognition of backpackers within the greater tourism environment. Previously this knowledge was virtually non existent.

The gradual growth of the backpacker market to New Zealand has subsequently led to an increased interest in the backpacker by the tourism industry. This has meant more resources and time are being spent to increase the understanding and awareness of this predominantly independent style of travel.

2.8 Tourism in Northland

The Northland region is located at the northern tip of New Zealand's North Island and stretches from Warkworth (North of Auckland) to Cape Reinga.
The region is typically a summer destination and attracts both international and domestic visitors. It is a region rich in both natural beauty and cultural history. The New Zealand Tourism Board's 1995/96 International visitor survey (IVS) showed that more than 15.8 percent of total visitors to New Zealand visited the Northland region (NZTB, 1996). Garnham (1993) noted that Northland had the greatest proportion of backpacker hostels in New Zealand (12.4%) and that the flow of backpackers was projected to increase.

As a tourist destination the number of backpackers visiting the region is disproportionate to the range of services and infrastructure available to cater for the backpacker market.

Visitor numbers to the region are at a similar level to that recorded ten years ago, with tourism remaining important to Northland. "Tourism is estimated to generate around 300 million dollars to the regional economy and support around 6000 full time jobs' (NZTB,1996). Visitor numbers to Northland in 1996 were 176,000 with 1,063,000 nights spent. Paihia is an important tourist centre with 97,000 visitors and 260,000 nights in 1996 (NZTB, 1996). Although no domestic visitor statistics are available it was estimated in 1993 that 18,000 backpackers visited the Bay of Islands (estimates based on Destination Northland figures, 1993). It is the Bay of Islands region which is the tourism Mecca of Northland where a large range of activities and events are centred. Paihia's capacity to accommodate backpackers has more than doubled over the last two years rising from four to nine businesses catering specifically for the backpacker market, with approximately 400 beds.

Like many areas throughout New Zealand, little attention has focused on the needs and wants of this growing independent market to Northland. The proliferation of budget hostels and backpacker transport services has indicated that individual operators are aware of the market. This does not necessarily indicate any understanding of this style of travel, but suggests it is a reaction to the growth in visitor numbers.

2.8.1 Current Management of Tourism in Northland

Tourism in Northland is currently promoted and coordinated by the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO), Destination Northland, which is funded by local government.

The main functions of the RTO include:

1) The regional promotion of Northland in selected domestic and international markets.

2) The coordination of key visitor information offices in Northland and Auckland.

3) An industry development, advocacy and coordination role.

(NZTB,1996)

In 1996 a draft strategy for sustainable growth and development (NZTB,1996) was released which produced over 80 recommendations for tourism in the region.
The recommendations provided Northland's tourism industry with some indication of how it is doing and what it needs to do, to compete successfully with tourist destinations throughout New Zealand.
The draft tourism strategy citied four factors as critical to the success of future tourism in the Northland region (NZTB, 1996).
These include:

1. The need for profitability,

2. Visitor satisfaction,

3. Protection of Northlands resources,

4. Gaining of community support.

In addition to providing recommendations the strategy also highlighted the weaknesses in the region. 'The range of accommodation styles is relatively limited, transport services are poor and little priority has been placed on the effective distribution of visitor information' (NZTB, 1996:24). The strategy also acknowledged that different parts of Northland suit different market groups and that some areas should remain relatively undeveloped, offering a less intense visitor experience.

Destination Northland also focused on the future of tourism by producing a vision statement for the year 2005. In this it was noted that visitor expectations could be satisfied through the provision of a wider range of higher quality products, a better distribution of visitor information and through the improvement of the standards of service delivery.

2.9 New Zealand's Tourism Industry related service sectors.

New Zealand's Tourism industry consists of a network of independent but interrelated services with a range of service industries. As recognised by Collier (1997) poor performance of one sector may reflect badly on the tourist satisfaction and subsequently on all providers. It is widely recognised by those in the tourism industry that there are a number of sectors that combine to serve the needs and wants of visitors to New Zealand.

Otto and Ritchie (1996:167) state that "Tourism is essentially a service industry, an amalgam of service industries'. Leiper (1987) identified the main components of the tourist industry as transportation, accommodation, food and related services.

The backpacking industry in New Zealand can be identified as existing within three industry sectors: the accommodation sector, transport sector and activity sector. Each of these will be examined in the following section.

2.9.1 The Accommodation sector

The accommodation sector in New Zealand is very diverse ranging from traditional five star hotels and motels to those that offer more distinct styles of accommodation including bed and breakfasts, farmstays and backpacker accommodation. Backpacker hostels are a type of accommodation available to visitors to New Zealand.

Backpacker accommodation is commonly defined as "properties offering at low cost, a range of sleeping arrangements including dorms, with communal and self catering facilities and an emphasis on guest interaction" (Jarvis, 1995:3).

Hostels have grown faster than any other part of the tourism accommodation infrastructure in the last decade and have the longest relationship exclusively with the backpacker. The number of hostels has grown from 239 in 1996 to 245 in 1997 (New Zealand Yearbook, 1998). During the 1995/96 period 9 percent (110,071) of the total international visitors to New Zealand, stayed at least one night in backpacker accommodation (NZTB, 1996). Hostel accommodation ranges from modern buildings and purpose built structures to renovated houses and hotels. Operators targeting this market have found a highly selective, but a potentially lucrative market for the hostel that has the 'right product in the right place'. Although backpackers often spend as little money as they can on accommodation, they do require clean and safe facilities. The quality of New Zealand's tourism products needs to be matched by consistently high levels of service, to ensure visitors expectations will be met. The key to overall satisfaction is ensuring that the backpackers perceive themselves as being part of an authentic experience, not one that is contrived for the benefit of tourists.

Due to the importance placed on social interaction by backpackers and the use of word of mouth promotion, it is necessary to analyse the social encounters in which backpackers find themselves in (hostels, bus excursions). This has implications for the quality of the backpackers' experience by assessing what extent expectations and the quality of services affects backpackers' level of satisfaction.

Hostel accommodation is the most common setting in which social situations involving backpackers occur. Therefore it is important for hostel operators to recognise the important role they play in stimulating and encouraging the word of mouth promotion among backpacker travellers.

2.9.2 The Transport sector

"Tourism is essentially a mobile phenomenon in which transport plays a crucial role in determining the nature of tourist activity" (Forer and Simmons, 1998:10). However the independent style of the backpacker traveller allows them to travel informally around the country, which means the dependency on transport becomes more complex and subtle. The forms of transport utilised in New Zealand by visitors are diverse which is largely due to the geographic nature of New Zealand. In 1996, 17 percent of all international visitors used private cars as a main form of transport, 16 percent rental vehicles, organised coach or domestic flight (New Zealand Yearbook, 1998). Transport networks have seen a shift in market focus over the years, from packaged coach tours to a more flexible itinerary as visitor's holiday styles have changed.

The types of transport utilised while in New Zealand can often reflect the style of holiday visitors are taking. Those on holiday commonly take organised coach tours (21%) while those visiting family and friends make greater use of private cars (53%) (New Zealand Yearbook, 1998).

There are several transport options available and utilised by the backpacker market to New Zealand. The rise in the number of backpackers prompted the emergence of backpacking bus networks with flexible itineraries to catch the attention of the independent traveller (eg Kiwi experience, Magic bus). This emerged through appropriate product marketing and packaging of tourism products to cater for those who wanted to experience New Zealand in a semi-independent way. Backpacking buses are unconventional tours which provide a new twist to the youth touring market. Youthful 'roughing it' tours such as Moa Trek and Southern Cross which were modelled on European tours, sprung up to service youth travellers.
These budget tours evolved through the 1980's into a more upmarket, sophisticated style of holiday, epitomised by the market leader Contiki. Contiki are still running structured youth coach tours, but the mainstay of their business (young Australians) have moved onto new destinations (TNT magazine, 1996).

Although several other bus companies compete for backpacker business in parts of New Zealand, Kiwi Experience seized the majority of the market through frequency of service, national (and Australian) coverage and cost-effective marketing.
Due to the popularity and convenience of backpackers using private cars, numerous car companies offer to sell cars with a guarantee to buy them back at the end of their travel. Backpacker campervans are also available to backpackers in New Zealand and Australia at a considerable lower rate than conventional campervans (eg $65 per day, Backpacker Campervans Ltd).

The bus networks play a key role in the development process of the backpacker industry. Doorne (1994) describes the impact of transport networks as taking 'backpacking from its traditional exploratory role in the evolution process to more mainstream tourist activity'. He also emphasised that transport 'played a pivotal role in shaping the tourism industry relating to backpacking in New Zealand, by providing the link between the tourist, the place and the product'(Doorne, 1994:161).

2.9.3 The Activity sector

New Zealand's unspoiled natural environment and spectacular scenery attracts both international and domestic visitors. Although activities such as walking and fishing have had a long tradition in New Zealand, many international visitors have been given the opportunity to try out new adventure activities such as bungee jumping, white water rafting and jet boating. It is 'adventure tourism' and its associated products that form the basis of backpacker activities within New Zealand. The adventure tourism industry has rapidly grown and become competitive over the last seven years and is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry. The 1.5 million visitors to New Zealand in 1994 took part in five million adventure activities - around three activities per person. (Cloke and Perkins, 1998:196).
As the popularity of adventure activities grew there became opportunities for further investment and were later commodified as packaged 'backpacker tours'. In effect this created a package product similar to those sold to the organised mass tourist.

Generally backpackers participate in three times more activities than the average visitor to New Zealand (NZTB, 1993). The activity component of a backpacker's visit is usually where the most money is spent. Backpackers are willing to spend as little as they can on accommodation in order to participate in as many activities as they can. Doorne's (1994) study suggested that adventure experience activities are not items to be budgeted on but are selectively consumed. "The desire for the best experience possible to some extent overrides budgetary limitations" (Doorne, 1994:157).

As backpackers are often pioneers to a destination their role in tourism development is to explore and 'get off the beaten track'. In doing so backpackers initiate activity in remote areas through increasing demand. It is the small communities who directly receive the associated economic and social benefits. The establishment of accommodation facilities follows the increase in visitor flow and transport networks which continue to encourage the flow of visitor arrivals. "Backpackers travelling with transport networks, increasingly form the major demand of adventure tourism operators in an increasingly dependent relationship" (Doorne, 1994:160).

2.10 Service quality, expectations and satisfactions

The prior expectations and level of satisfaction of backpackers is essential in an attempt to further the understanding of the importance of customer satisfaction in the tourism industry. In this section the concepts of service quality, expectations and satisfactions will be introduced and their applicability to the backpacker tourism segment will be discussed. To help understand the distinctive needs of the backpacker market it is important to be aware of prior expectations, tolerance levels of service quality and its relevance to overall trip satisfaction. In order to do this one needs to examine perceived service quality, prior visitor expectations and satisfactions within the realms of the tourism industry.

2.10.1 Service quality

"Tourists today are highly sensitive to the quality of services they receive and are often unwilling to compromise" (Kandampully, 1995:169). The tourism industry in New Zealand is at a level where competition between destinations and even within countries is strong. Tourists are demanding more information about the travel and tourism products and services they should expect at a destination.
Kandampully (1995:169) also suggests that a highly competitive tourism market together with the progressive nature of tourists expectations warrants a "pro-active management strategy if organisations are to continue to attract and exceed the expectations of both home and international tourists".

Service is typically regarded as "the result of the interaction between the customer and the service systems which involves contact staff, equipment and facilities" (Baker and Fesenmaier,1997:17). When discussing service quality three unique characteristics of services must be acknowledged: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability. These unique features of services influence the quality service of every service organisation (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml,1991).

Firstly, most services are intangible in that they are performances, rather than objects which cannot be counted or measured in advance of sale to assure quality. Services are therefore considered to be an experience rather than a possession. Secondly, services are heterogenous, with performance varying from producer to producer, day to day. Finally, production and consumption of many services (unlike goods) is inseparable. Services are firstly sold, then produced and consumed simultaneously, indicating 'services cannot be withheld for quality inspection after its production'(Kandampully, 1995:174).

According to Zeithaml (1981) services offer only a limited number of clues for customers to make a purchase decision. However customers have many sources of information that lead to expectations about up-coming service encounters with a particular company. These sources include prior exposure to services, word of mouth (which is especially prevalent in backpackers) expert opinion, publicity and advertising.

The provision of service quality is concerned with the aim of satisfying customers. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) define service quality in terms of customer satisfaction. They conceptualised service quality as the gap between expected service and perceived service, that is what you want and what you get.
The service quality approach has been to "measure the gap between expectations and perception of the service by the customer as an indication of service quality" (Chadee and Mattsson, 1995:97). According to Parasuraman *et al* (1985), service quality, as perceived by consumers, is the 'result of a comparison of expectations of a service they will receive and perceptions of the performance of the firms providing that service'. This definition was used to develop an instrument known as SERQUAL, which purports to measure the customers' perception of service quality. The developers of SERVQUAL defined service quality as " a form of attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfactions and results from a direct comparison of expectations with perception of performances" (Parasuraman *et al,* 1988:15). The SERVQUAL instrument has become the most frequently mentioned and hence most critiqued measurment of service quality within the literature. Fick and Ritchie (1991:2) argue that "perceived quality is then interpreted from the degree and direction of the differences between perceptions and expectations"

Although service quality research has advanced over the last decade a review of the literature reveals only a few attempts have been made to assess service quality in the tourism industry (Baker and Fesenmaier, 1997). Little has been done in terms of measuring tourist experiences and how different quality factors impact on the overall satisfaction of the tourists' experience.

It is acknowledged that if the service quality is as good as expected the consumer will be satisfied, if service quality is less than expected the consumer will be dissatisfied. As acknowledged by Kandampully (1993:173) "central to the dilemma of what constitutes service quality, is the apparent lack of understanding of quality itself by the service provider".

Although numerous studies have focused on the concept of service quality, there are no clear definitions. The definition of quality appears to vary depending on the individual context and from one service performer to another.

2.10.2 Satisfactions

A number of researchers (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman,1996) maintain that customer satisfaction is distinct from service quality. Zeithaml *et al* (1996:33) suggests that "Satisfaction is the result from the comparison between *predicted* service and perceived service, whereas service quality tends to refer to the comparison between *desired* service and perceived service".

Pizam, Neumann and Reichel (1978:315) state that "tourism satisfaction is the result of the interaction between a tourists experience at the destination area and the expectations they had about that destination". Therefore when the tourism experience can be compared with expectations and results in feelings of gratitude, the tourist is satisfied to some degree. Conversely when the tourists' actual experience is compared with expectations and results in feelings of displeasure, the tourist is dissatisfied. However, this formulation fails to recognise what components of the tourists' experience may result in dissatisfaction. The integrated nature of tourism products may produce a 'halo effect' where satisfaction or dissatisfaction in one area may lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the total tourism product and experience.

Danaher and Arweilers'(1993) study on customer satisfaction in New Zealand's tourism industry showed the value of categorising a holiday into several primary components and rating the customer satisfaction of each of them. The satisfaction ratings of individual tourists can be used to determine the relative importance of any component and its influence on overall satisfaction with their (New Zealand) experience. This study revealed that the level of satisfaction with activities largely determined the high level of overall satisfaction with New Zealand.

A study by Backpacker Hostels NZ in 1996 noted the unfortunate trend that there is a distinct growth in the level of visitors' dissatisfaction with some aspects of New Zealand's current services. The recent emphasis placed on quality and service through Kiwihost, Qualmark and the NZTB Tourism Awards would indicate visitor satisfaction should be improving. Nevertheless, perhaps the push to increase visitor numbers and produce more revenue from tourism, is damaging the overall experience.

2.10.3 Expectations

The expectations of a backpacker prior to their arrival in a destination has received little research attention. An organisations management often acknowledges that a thorough understanding of consumer expectations is a prerequisite for delivering superior service (Baker and Fesenmaier,1997). However there is no framework to link different types of expectations, or how their interaction influences perceptions of service performance.

Green and Boshoff (1996) stated that the literature on consumer satisfaction and service quality sees consumer expectations serving as standards with which subsequent expectations are compared, resulting in an evaluation of satisfaction. Knowledge of expectations is critical to the identification of satisfactions.
A clearer understanding of prior expectations backpackers bring to a destination and the evaluations with which they leave, will enable those involved in marketing and management to cater for their distinct needs.

The quality of services, and satisfaction of a traveller, influences positive (and negative) word of mouth, a source of information often relied on by many backpackers. If industry leaders want backpackers to leave a destination with a willingness to recommend the service at the destination, more attention is required on backpackers' expectations prior to arrival. Levels of expectations higher than perceptions of performance suggest lower levels of satisfaction, whereas expectations, which have often been met or exceeded, will result in higher satisfaction levels.

Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml (1993) stressed the importance of understanding visitors' expectations, as these are 'the predictions visitors make in advance of the actual consumption and serve as a standard against which visitors measure a firms' performance'. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991) also argue that understanding visitors' expectations is important to an organisations' ability to deliver quality services. Dissatisfied visitors may search for an alternative tourism experience affecting the popularity of a destination.

It is not only imperative that tourism managers and planners are aware of tourists' expectations, but also service providers need to understand tourist expectations are important in the delivery of high quality service. Organisations need to align themselves with the expectations of their visitors to help improve the efficiency of service delivery. Efficiency can be achieved through face to face interaction with visitors, consumer surveys and other forms of visitor expectations research to determine what visitors want to gain from their experience. Traditionally the use of visitor profiles has been the favoured tool for many tourism operators wanting to know more about their guests. "Visitors' reactions are important for they primarily reflect satisfaction and emotional reactions to a specific tourism venue" (Ross, 1993:478).

2.10.4 Section summary

Expectations and satisfactions are key concepts in which to understand the individual processes that shape the perception of service quality and overall trip satisfaction. The understanding of a visitor's expectations will aid the delivery of quality services which consequently will result in greater customer satisfaction. It is continued customer satisfaction, and the maintenance of high quality service that will ensure visitors to New Zealand continue to enjoy their experience.

2.11 Summary of the literature review

This chapter has reviewed material, which relate to the tourism industry. Subject areas include an examination of the growth of tourism internationally and in New Zealand, definitions of the term's tourists and backpacker, the growth of the backpacker market, three service sectors involved in backpacker tourism and service quality, expectations and satisfactions. In this summary section, the relevance of the literature review will be examined.

- **Growth of the tourism industry- Backpacker market**

The tourism industry is expanding both globally and in New Zealand. The existence of the backpacker market is an indication of the changing style of modern travel. The literature suggests that an independent style of travel known as backpacking has different expectations to other styles of travelling.

- **Definition of backpackers**

Throughout the literature it is obvious that numerous definitions of backpackers exist. Pearce's (1990) definition using the five criteria is the most widely recognised in literature, but the NZTB's definition was applied in this research. The definition currently used by the NZTB defines a backpacker as staying at least one night in backpacker accommodation (NZTB, 1996). This is very broad and may include visitors, which may not be in New Zealand for travelling purposes eg business, school groups. Age and duration of stay are other defining characteristics of a backpacker.

- **Service sectors involved in backpacker tourism**

Three service sectors, accommodation, transport, activities, combine together to form the basic sectors of the backpacker tourism industry. Although these sectors are not exclusive to backpacker tourism, each sector has developed to specifically cater for the needs of this independent style of travel.

- **Service quality, expectations and satisfactions**

Although backpackers are cost conscious, they still expect certain standards of service. The level of prior expectations a backpacker has before arriving at a destination ultimately affects their perception of overall satisfaction. Maintaining consistently high quality services helps to ensure a quality experience.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Outline

The previous chapter examined the theoretical background to this research and presented a critical examination of earlier studies on the backpacker market. The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed explanation of the specific research methods and tools used in this study. Initially the theoretical implications of research methods are discussed, followed by a specific explanation of the research tools used. Limitations and their effect on the research are included. Potential sources of bias are highlighted, followed by a brief discussion on how the data were analysed.
To conclude the summary outlines the key points of the chapter.

3.2 Theoretical underpinning's of the research methods

"Research methods help us to understand the world. They are an essential set of skills, insights and tools needed to answer intelligently any but the simplest questions" (Singleton, Straits and Straits, 1993). To undertake research requires an examination of the research techniques and tools that allows a study to be undertaken. Research methods of any type are a way in which researchers attempt to learn more about a situation, issue or particular topic. Research methods are selected based on the nature of the material to be studied. In this study the researcher is neither proving nor disproving a theory but probing to gain a better understanding of the backpacker phenomenon.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. These are discussed in-depth in the following section.

3.3 Specific explanation of research tools

Walle (1997:524) suggests that in the hospitality industry the 'one of the purposes of qualitative research is to provide information for developing further quantitative research". In this study qualitative research was used in conjunction with quantitative research to add depth to already developed themes. The most significant technique used in terms of contribution to the results was the questionnaire.

3.3 Quantitative techniques

The use of quantitative research techniques in social science and tourism research has been widely studied (Babbie, 1989, Singleton, Straits and Straits, 1993,Walle, 1997). The purpose of quantitative research is to "gather information on a sample population" (Walle,1997:326). A questionnaire was used to assess the expectations, satisfactions and perceived quality of services offered to backpackers in Northland. The format and many of the questions asked of respondents maintained the underlying structure of previous backpacker surveys (Parr, 1989, Doorne, 1994) for comparative purposes. This section outlines the questionnaire format, design, the implementation process and its limitations, and the method of data analysis.

3.3.1 Questionnaire design

"One purpose of surveys is to identify the presence of certain characteristics among groups" (Singleton *et al*, 1993:11) The basic idea of a survey is to measure variables by asking questions and examining the relationships among the measures.
The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed to be administered by the researcher and used a combination of closed and opened-ended questions. The aim of the survey was to determine certain characteristics of backpackers and to enable some conclusions to be made on their expectations and perception of the quality of the services offered to them.

3.3.2 Pre-test

"A pre-test consists of trying out the survey instrument on a small number of people having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents" (Singleton *et al*, 1993:270). Before the survey was finalised, it was pre-tested on a small group of backpackers to a Christchurch hostel. Analysis of comments by the group led to the alteration of some questions and the removal of others. A difficulty with the coding of the open-ended questions led to a reduction in their number.

3.3.3 Questionnaire format

The survey was divided into six general categories; transport, accommodation, expenditure, expectations, satisfactions and activities, travel patterns and a demographic profile.

The first series of questions focussed on transportation decisions, sources of information used and preferred modes of transport. The second section determined the types of accommodation used, the reasons for choosing specific accommodation and the importance of specific variables when choosing a hostel. A five point Likert scale was used with respondents asked to rank hostel facilities in order of importance. The third section determined expenditure patterns and the amount of money spent in Northland and New Zealand. This section was included to compare results with Doorne's (1994) backpacker expenditure study. The following section dealt with backpackers' expectations and satisfaction's with the accommodation, transport and activity sectors. The next section determined the activities participated in, suggestions for improvements and sources of information used. The following section examined backpacker's general travel experience, where they had travelled, intended to travel and whether or not they would return to Northland. This section also gathered information on the geographic flow of backpackers and the direction of travel undertaken while in Northland. The final series of questions focussed on social demographic information such as age, sex, nationality occupation, education and duration of stay.

3.4 Qualitative interviews

"The goal with in-depth interviews is to develop extensive information from a few people" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:28). Although the majority of this study was conducted using quantitative methods the use of in-depth interviews allowed for a greater understanding of the backpackers expectations and perception of quality. It was believed that qualitative research can also direct the methodological decisions that are made for quantitative studies. Between January 4th to January 26th (1998), ten in depth interviews were conducted. Every 20th person who filled in the survey was subsequently asked for an in depth interview. The response rate for this was 100 percent. During the study period, the qualitative data supplemented informal contacts and discussions with hostel operators involved in the research.

The structure of the qualitative interviews was informal. Questions were based on the answers respondents had chosen in the questionnaire. This was used to gain a greater understanding of respondents reasoning. Interviews were between 20- 45 minutes long and were conducted by the researcher.

3.5 Implementation of research techniques

Both quantitative and qualitative research techniques utilised in this research required a different implementation process. The design of the survey enabled it to be administered by the researcher. The survey was administered to backpackers who were staying in the selected backpacker hostels[2] during the time of data collection (Both international and domestic backpackers were included). Over a period of three weeks (4th - 26th January,1998) 219 surveys and ten interviews were completed. The surveys were predominantly conducted during the early evening (5- 9.30 PM) due to the absence of backpackers during the daytime.

[2] The hostels were selected by Destination Northland in attempt to include a wide range of hostel types. Hostel operators were contacted and permission to stay in the provided accommodation was confirmed prior to arrival (Appendix 3).

3.5.1 Limitations of the implementation process

During the process of data collection there are always factors that may limit the study. Firstly, the study was conducted during the summer season where the weather plays an important role in determining where and how backpackers spend their time. This meant, the available time spent with backpackers was limited which often resulted in a bottle neck of backpackers during busy times eg dinner time. The researcher only conducted the survey, hence the number of backpackers surveyed each night was limited. This may have affected the sample by excluding those who went out in the evenings. To resolve this issue, surveys were also conducted during the day, even though the amount of backpackers present was low.

A second limitation was using hostels as the only place to interview backpackers. This meant other forms of accommodation used by backpackers were not represented. The favourable weather conditions meant a greater number of backpackers spent time in camping grounds and Department of Conservation huts. A further limitation was in the design of the questionnaire. The use of the 'tick the box' responses limited the respondent to answer pre- determined outcomes which they may have not previously considered. The use of the informal interviews enabled the respondents to elaborate on any pre-determined questions.

3.5 Response rate

The response rate of the survey was 98 percent. The use of the face to face interviewing technique, which allowed a high level of personal interaction, encouraged respondents to participate. This high response rate was achieved by the use of a relatively short questionnaire together with the genuine interest expressed by the majority of backpackers. After the respondents were approached, verbal consent was required for their participation in the survey. A number of people expressed their concern regarding their limited knowledge of the English language. To overcome this barrier and to avoid bias, more time was spent surveying those with English as a second language.

3.6 Analysis of data

“Data analysis techniques depend on whether the surveys purpose is descriptive, explanatory or a combination of the two” (Singleton *et al*, 1993:3).
Following data collection, the results were entered into the computer and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) . Cross-tabs and chi-square tests were calculated to determine whether the results gathered were significantly different from chance. Qualitative interviews were transcribed verbatim and subsequently analysed into common categories. A number of responses to the open ended questions were transcribed verbatim and entered into the computer. All transcribed material was then classified under common categories for further reference.

3.7 Bias

Although there are sources of potential bias in this research, every attempt was made to reduce their effect. Respondents were approached on a systematic basis. Where a group of backpackers sat together, to avoid bias by dominant members of the group, the person with the birthday closest to the date was interviewed.

3.9 Chapter summary

The importance of the methodology is very important. It is an integral part of the research process as it allows the structure of a study to be examined. This chapter focused on the research techniques involved in this study, the questionnaire, its design, implementation and the way it was analysed. In addition there was a discussion on the limitations and possible source of bias.

The available descriptive data combined with the qualitative information is considered to be sufficient to provide a basic understanding of Northland's backpacker market.

Chapter Four

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter Outline

This chapter outlines and discusses the results of the research on the backpacker market to Northland. Data were entered into a computer and analysed using SPSS (Statistical package for Social Sciences). The data were of the nominal order with the statistics descriptive. Where applicable explanation and discussion of the results is provided using comparisons with general international visitor populations, other backpacker studies and qualitative information gathered during the study period.

The chapter is divided into a number of different sections and is presented in the following format; profile of respondents, travel patterns, expenditure patterns, accommodation, transport, activities, expectations, satisfactions, repeat visitation and the quality of services.

4.1 Profile of respondents

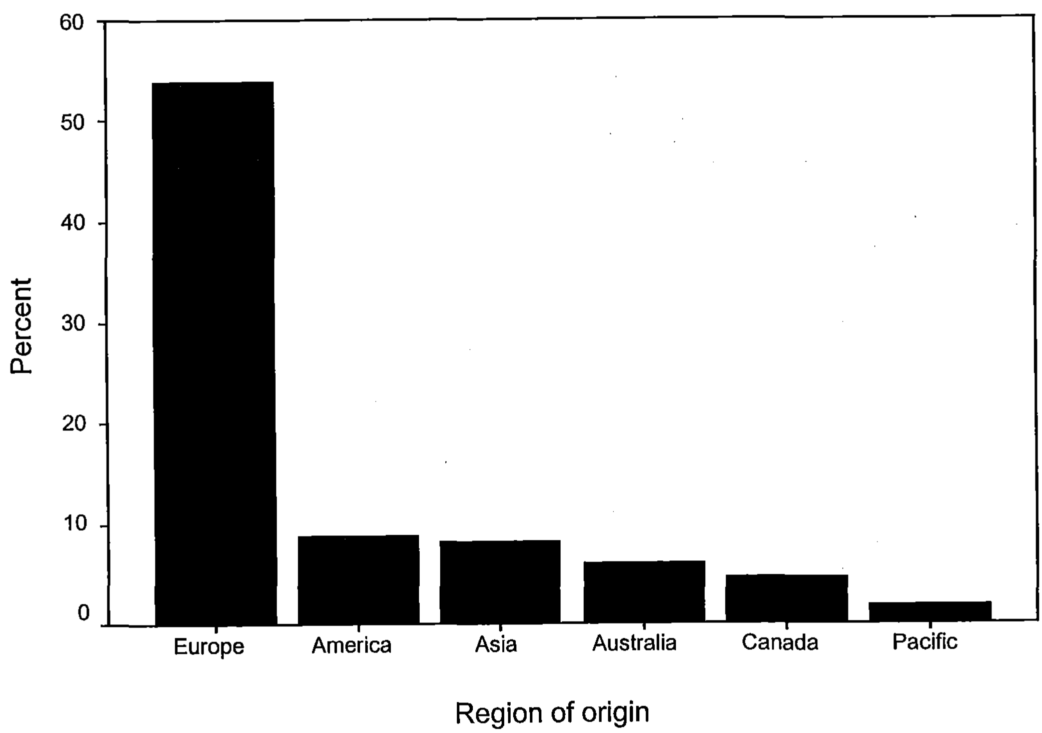
The sample of respondents included both domestic (16%) and international backpackers (84%) with 56.7 percent female and 44.3 percent male (Table 2). Ninety two percent of backpackers travelled independently (not on a package tour). This is in support of the third criterion in Pearce's (1990) definition of backpacking (an independently organised and flexible travel schedule). Average age of the respondents was 29.3 years, with 45 percent aged between 25-34 years of age. This is lower than the 1992/93 IVS where 55 percent of backpackers were aged between 25-34. The age of backpackers ranged from 16-78 years.

Table 2: Age and gender of backpackers to Northland.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	122	55.7
Male	97	44.3
Age		
15-24	85	38.8
25-34	99	45.2
35-49	21	9.6
50-74	13	5.9
75+	1	0.5

Backpackers originated from 19 different countries. England was the country where the largest majority of backpackers originated. The countries were divided into six different regions[1] which are illustrated on figure 2.

Figure 2: The distribution of backpackers according to country of origin



4.2 Education and Occupation

Sixty one percent of backpackers stated that they had attended university, with twenty percent said they attended university at the time of the sample. This may suggest that students are taking advantage of their holidays with a trip overseas. The most common occupation categories were professional (19.6%), clerical/service (13.7%), trades (11.9%), health (12.3%) and those who were self employed (9.1%). The previous statement indicates that backpackers are generally young, well-educated males and females who are well qualified to enter or rejoin the work force on completion of their travel. These results are similar to Loker's 1993 study where high proportions of the backpackers sampled were well educated. Loker drew this conclusion from her 1993 study that showed 69 percent of backpackers had attended university.

4.3 Travel patterns and characteristics

The following section deals with the length of stay in Northland and New Zealand and pre- and post travel.

4.3.1 Length of stay

As expected the majority of respondents in this survey travelled for an extended period of time. The 1992/93 IVS indicated backpackers stay in New Zealand for an average of 41 days. Figure 3 shows 29.3 percent of backpackers to Northland estimated that they would spend 31-90 days in New Zealand and 23.7 percent would stay for 15-30 days.

Figure 3: The time spent in New Zealand by backpackers to Northland

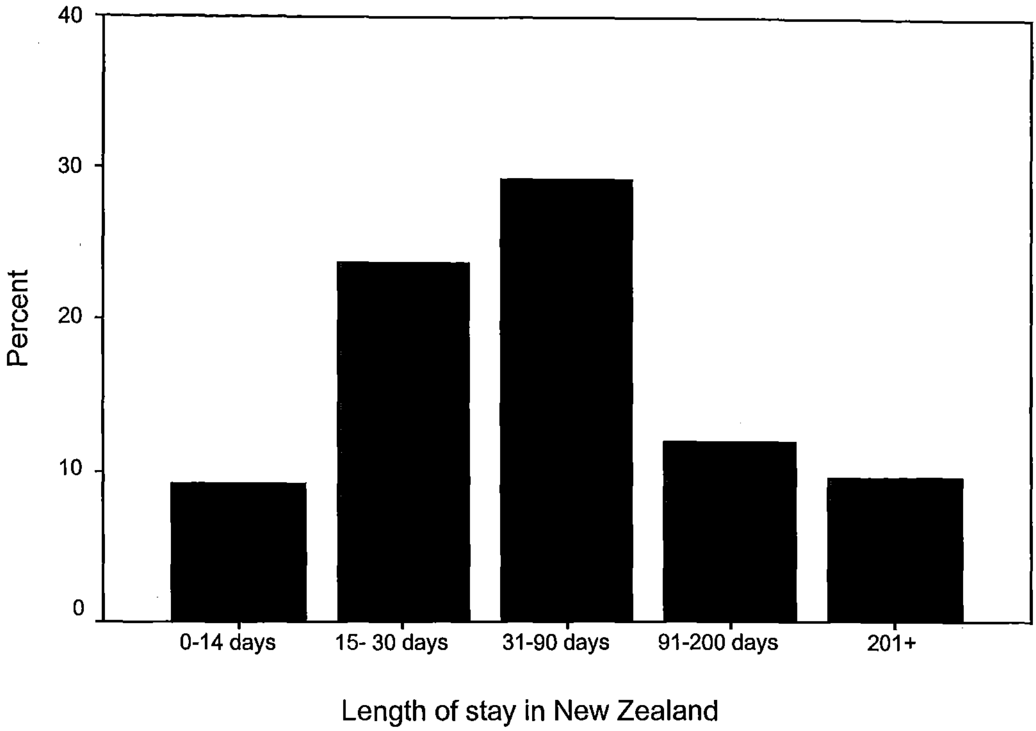
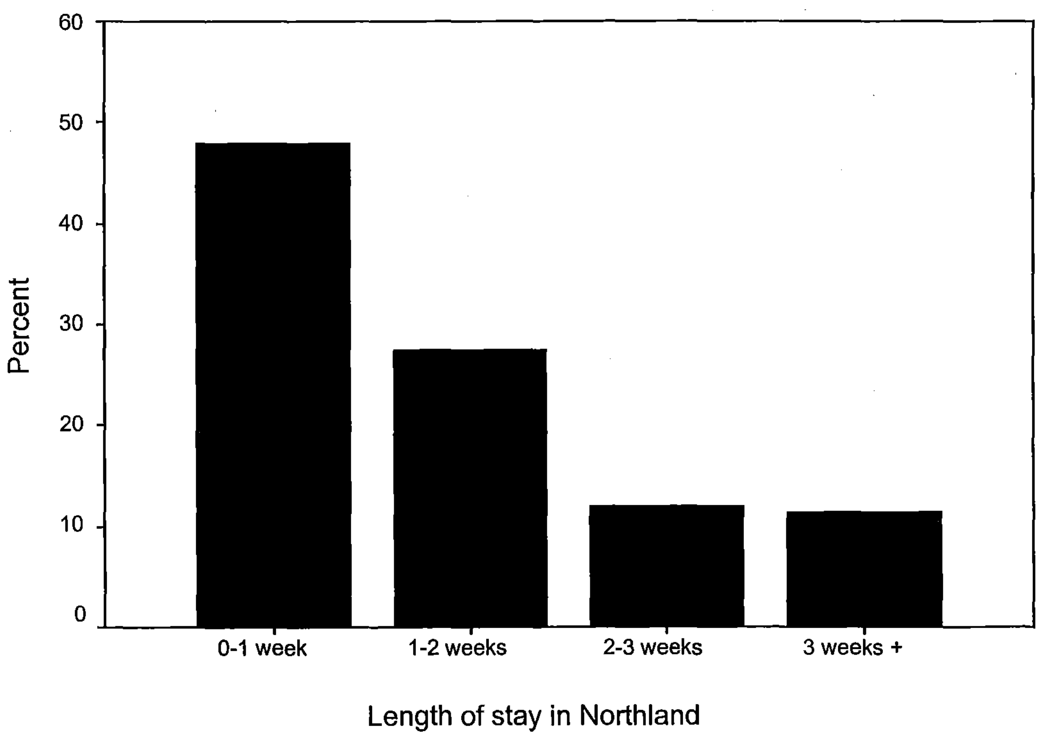


Figure 4 shows 47.9 percent of backpackers spent one week in Northland, while 11.4 percent stayed for over three weeks. This result indicates the majority of backpackers to Northland are short stay visitors, staying up to a week.

Figure 4: The time spent in Northland by backpackers



4.3.2 Pre and Post travel to New Zealand

Before arriving in New Zealand 29.7 percent of backpackers visited Australia, and 13.2 percent visited Europe. For 14.6 percent of backpackers, New Zealand was the first destination of their journey (Fig.5).

Figure 5: The region backpackers visit before arriving in New Zealand

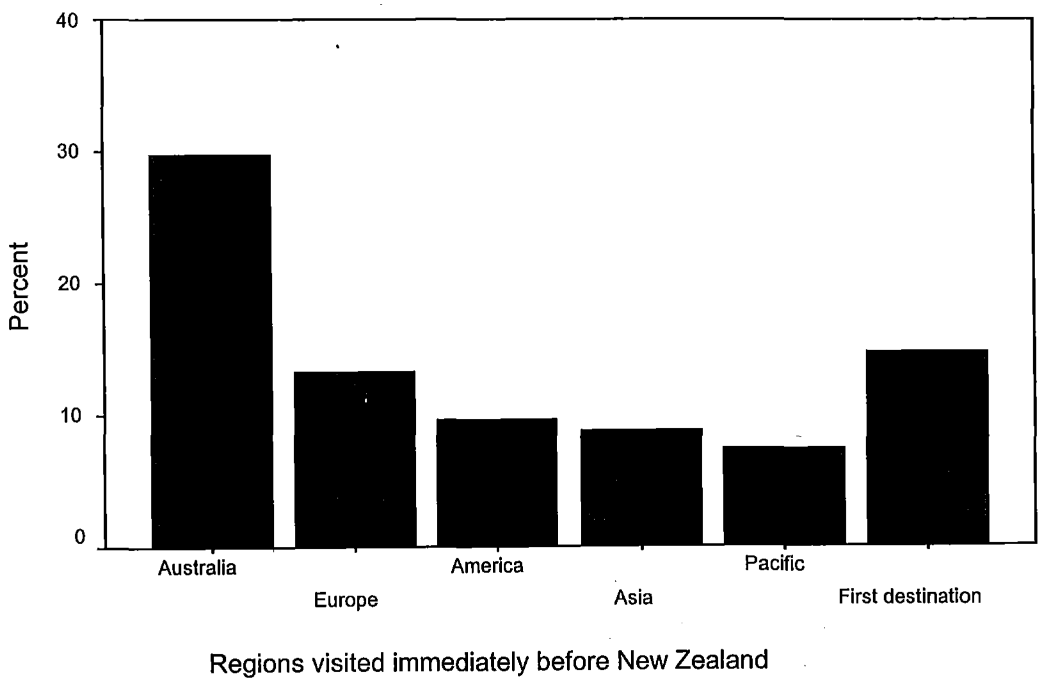
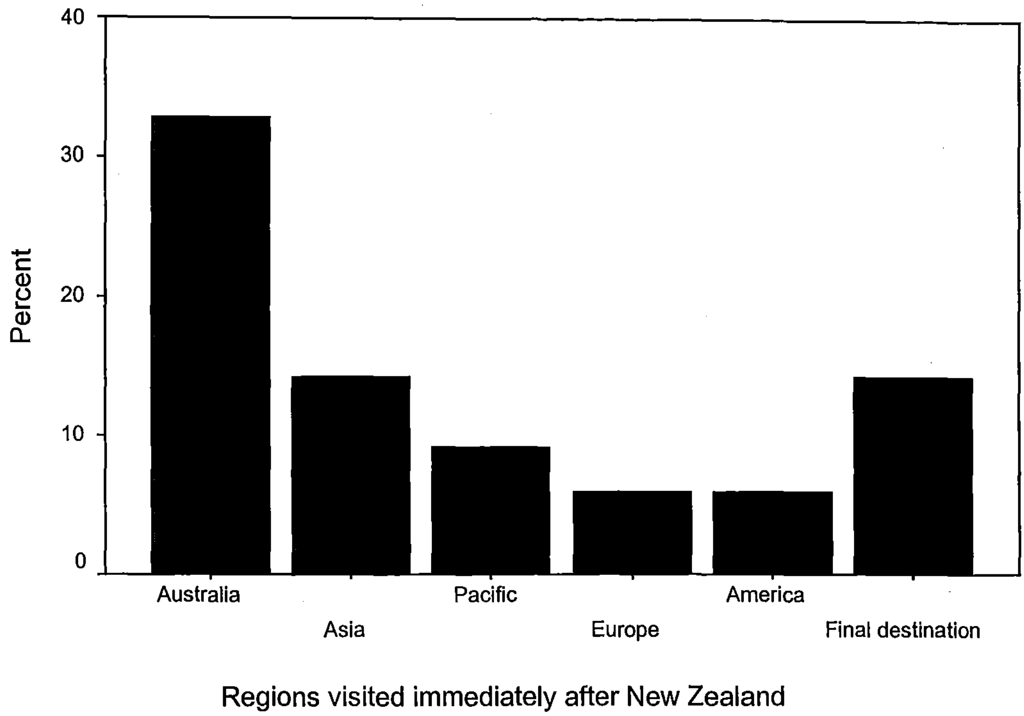


Figure 6 shows that 32.9 percent of backpackers planned to travel to Australia after New Zealand, followed by 14.2 percent to Asia. New Zealand was the final destination for 14.2 percent of backpackers.

Figure 6: The world region backpackers visit after New Zealand



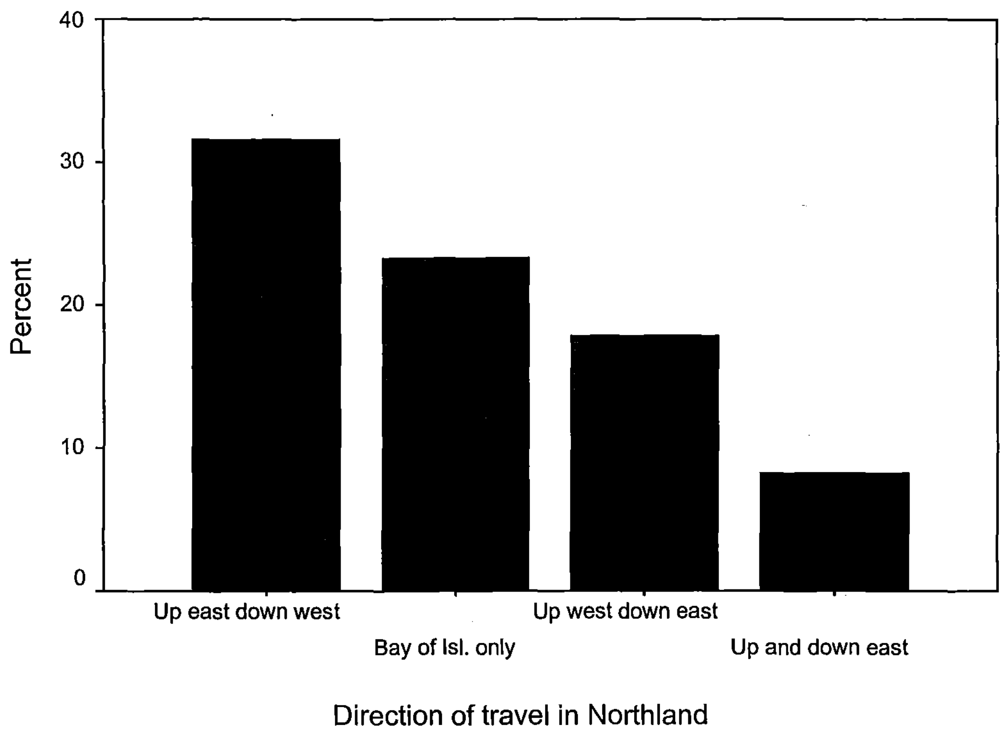
It is useful to know from what countries backpackers are entering New Zealand as opportunities exist to provide information at these points that can influence travel decisions once in New Zealand. It is obvious from figures 5 and 6 that Australia (before and after New Zealand), is an important backpacker visitor destination. Particular attention could focus on targeting the backpacker market while they are in Australia. Studies by Loker (1993) show that Cairns and Sydney are noted as favourite destinations by backpackers to Australia. The provision of information in hostels and information centres on New Zealand may help aid backpackers' decisions to travel onto New Zealand.

4.4 Travel routes in Northland

Backpackers plotted their completed and planned travel routes on a map of Northland, which is graphed below (Fig. 7). The following results are based on the researchers' interpretation of the marked travel routes.

It is important to note that actual future travel routes by backpackers may have deviated from the intended ones on the map. The findings therefore should be taken as a basic guideline, although they should reflect accurately the popularity of certain routes.

Figure 7: The travel routes taken by backpackers to Northland



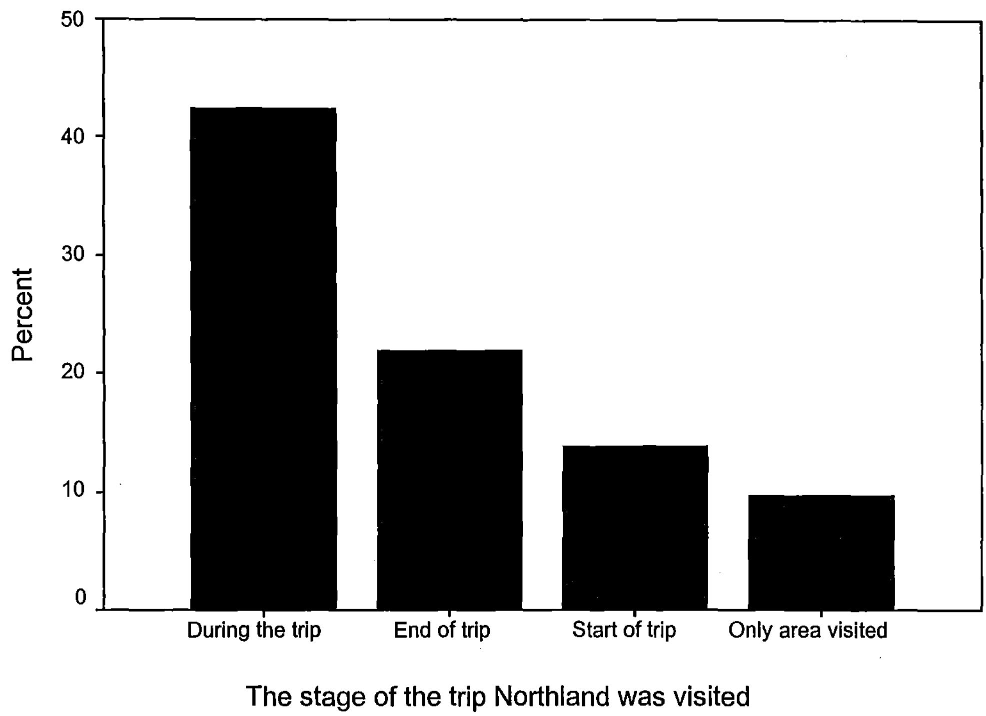
Thirty two percent of backpackers travelled up the east coast and down through the west of Northland, with 23.3 percent visiting the Bay of Islands area only (includes Paihia, Keri Keri and Russell)(Fig. 8). The least frequently travelled section was up and down the East Coast (8.2%).

It is estimated from the planned travel routes that the majority of backpackers enter New Zealand via Auckland (82%) and leave via Christchurch (61%).

Figure 8 shows 42.5 percent of backpackers visit Northland during their trip, with 22 percent at the end and 13.7 percent who began their trip in Northland.

It is noted that 9.6 percent of backpackers **only** visited the Northland region while in New Zealand.

Figure 8 : Visitation patterns of backpackers to the Northland region.

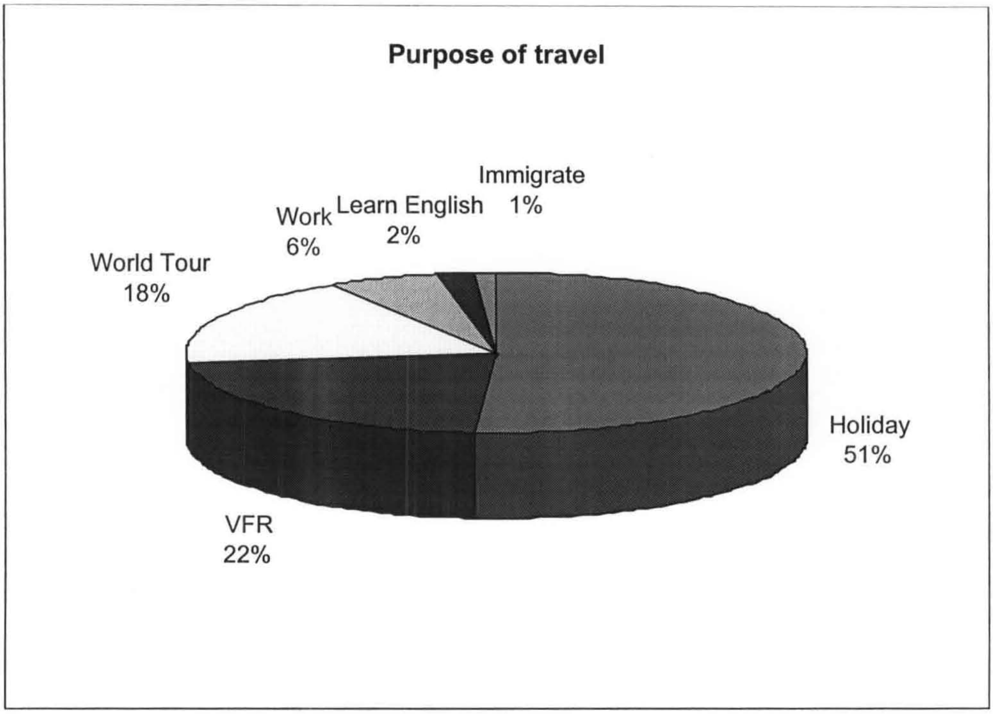


4.5 Purpose of visit to New Zealand

Backpackers were asked to indicate the main reason for travelling to New Zealand. Figure 9 shows that 51 percent came for a holiday, 22 percent to visit family and friends and 18 percent as part of a world tour. Other reasons to travel included to work, learn English and to immigrate. These results are similar to Parrs' (1989) results, which indicated 61.4 percent came for sightseeing and a holiday and 10.5 percent as part of world tour.

Many backpackers from the Northern Hemisphere holidaying in New Zealand over the summer were taking the advantage of the opposite seasons, avoiding some of the northern winter. A large proportion of backpackers work in Australia and take the opportunity to come to New Zealand on holiday.

Figure 9: Purpose of travel to New Zealand



4.6 Expenditure patterns

The expenditure of a backpacker was divided into specific categories based on the amount spent 'yesterday' (Fig. 10). Table 3 shows the highest average amount of money spent by backpackers was $19.29 on transport.

It is generally accepted that backpackers are cost conscious in terms of accommodation but are willing to pay for activities often unique to a destination.

Table **3** indicates the maximum amount spent on activities was 400 dollars. While tour expenditure may seem to be contradictory to the definition of a backpacker, it must be emphasised that many of Northlands' natural attractions (Eg dolphin watching) are only accessible to visitors through some form of paid package tour.

Table **3** below shows the break down of how much a backpacker spends per day, showing both the average and maximum amount spent on their trip. The results were collected from 'yesterdays' expenditure.

Table 3: Backpacker expenditure

	Average ($)	**Maximum ($) spent on any item**
Transport	19.20	500.00
Accommodation	18.60	88.00
Tours/sightseeing	18.60	400.00
Food	16.10	80.00
Alcohol	5.00	50.00
Other goods (souvenirs, stamps)	3.30	130.00
Equipment	.80	40.00
TOTAL	**81.60**	**1288.00**

Backpackers estimated the amount they intended to spend while in the Northland region and the average amount per day while in New Zealand. The average amount spent per day in New Zealand was $48.80. This is lower than the 1992/93 IVS where the average expenditure was $65 per day. This result is higher than Doorne's (1994) $40.53 per day. This may be a result of many factors including changing tastes, more selection of activities and changes in the value of the New Zealand dollar over the year long study period. The minimum expenditure per day was $15 and the maximum per day was $150.

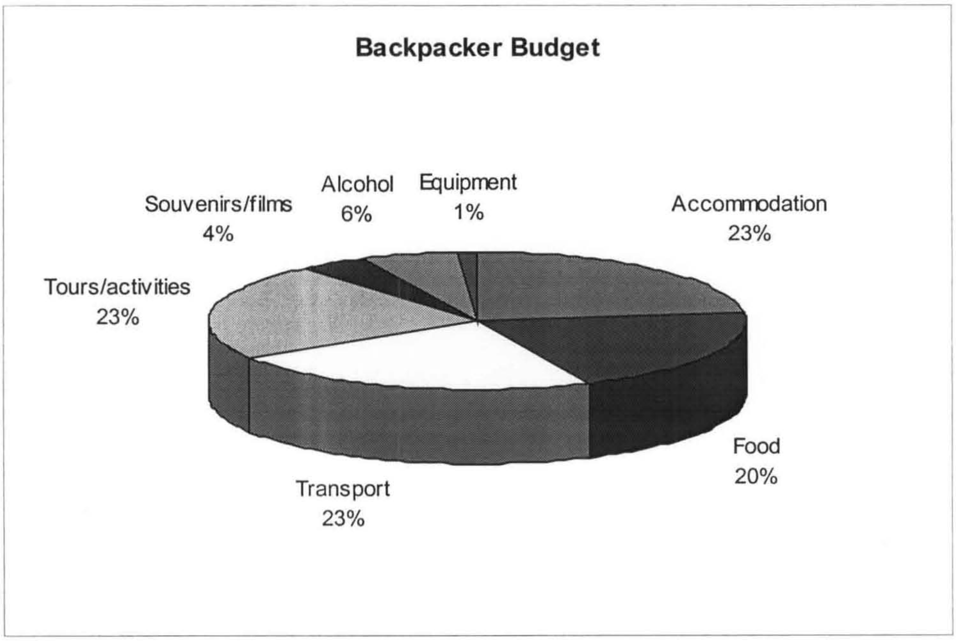
During their time spent in Northland, backpackers indicated they would spend an average of $634.56. The minimum amount spent in total was $80.00 and the maximum amount $4000.00.

In economic terms backpackers have often been over looked in favour of more easily identified 'big spending' resort stayers who are considered by tourism promoters in the industry to contribute more money into the economy.[2] The wide distribution of accommodation and variety of transport modes utilised by backpackers, enables them to travel to more remote parts of New Zealand.

Backpacker spending distributes the economic benefits more widely, which often contributes to the local economies of many small communities usually not benefited by tourism. This was evident in the Hokianga area where places such as Kohukohu, Omapere and Opononi had a number of hostels and local activities attracting the 'off beat' traveller.

Backpackers often purchase and consume locally made goods and produce. Food and alcohol for example contributed to 26 percent of a backpacker's daily expenditure. This indicates the food and beverage sector gains a significant proportion of the market yet may be unaware that they benefit directly from backpackers.

Figure 10: Breakdown of a backpacker's daily budget.



*Equipment includes items such as gas cookers, sleeping bags, footwear and tents.

[2] Doorne (1994) acknowledged that there is no comparative information on expenditure patterns for the general tourist population to New Zealand.

4.7 Accommodation

The main emphasis on the accommodation in this study was to establish what forms of accommodation were used, and what qualities backpackers look for when deciding on a hostel. The reasons for choosing a particular hostel and any improvements that could be made to enhance the quality of the accommodation is also discussed.

4.7.1 Accommodation use patterns

Nineteen different hostels were visited over the three-week period (Appendix 3). The size of the accommodation varied between hostels, ranging from five beds to 60 beds. Hostels in Northland ranged from $12 to $20 per night and included dorms, single, twin and double rooms. Hostels are located from Paihia through to small communities such as Mitimiti. The distribution of backpacker hostels throughout Northland was particularly impressive to one backpacker who stated:

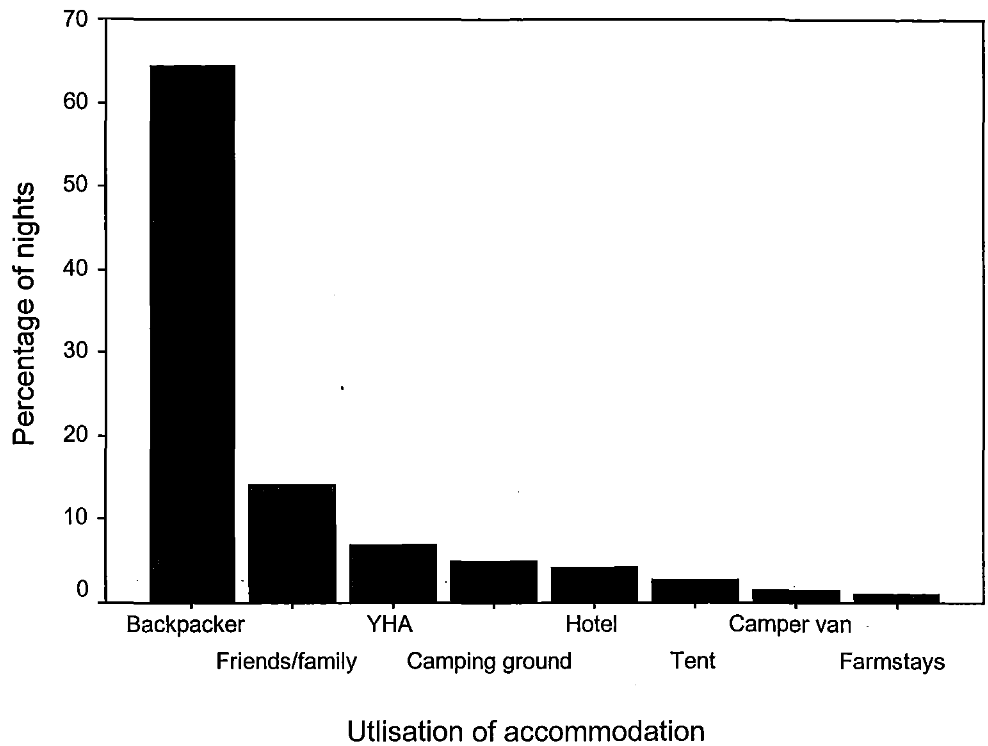
"That's one thing I knew before coming to Northland, there are a lot more hostels, like the density of them is higher than in rest of New Zealand, it's like every village has a hostel" (Dirk, 39, German).

Eight different forms of accommodation were utilised by backpackers to Northland. Figure 11 shows the most frequent types of accommodation utilised were private backpacker hostels (64.4%) and friends and family (14.2%). Following this were YHA's (6.8%), camping (5%) and hotels (4.1%). Others included DoC huts, farm stays and WWOOFING[3] .

It is important to note that tent camping, campervans and farmstays are common options and are likely to be under represented in this study because interviewing only took place in hostels. However the NZTB's broad definition of a backpacker, refers to hostel accommodation as the only form of accommodation utilised by backpackers.

[3] (WWOOF) Willing Workers On Organic Farms- People work on organic farms in exchange for meals, accommodation and experience in organic farming methods. This accommodation is available to members only.

Figure 11: The types of accommodation used by backpackers in Northland



Fifty seven percent of backpackers indicated that price was the major determinant when choosing what form of accommodation to use (Fig 12). Location of the accommodation (16.4%), cleanliness of hostel (8.2%) and the reputation of the accommodation (7.3%) were also important. Others included the available facilities, meeting people, size and availability of work in the area. These results deviate slightly from Doorne's (1994) study which stated that location, cleanliness and atmosphere are important considerations when deciding what accommodation to use. Doorne also indicated that length of stay in a hostel was dependant on four factors: a) whether the travellers is passing through for the first time, b) the weather, c) management style of hostel and d) relationship of hostel with transport company catering to backpacker market (Doorne, 1995:532).

Figure 12: Reasons why backpackers chose certain forms of accommodation

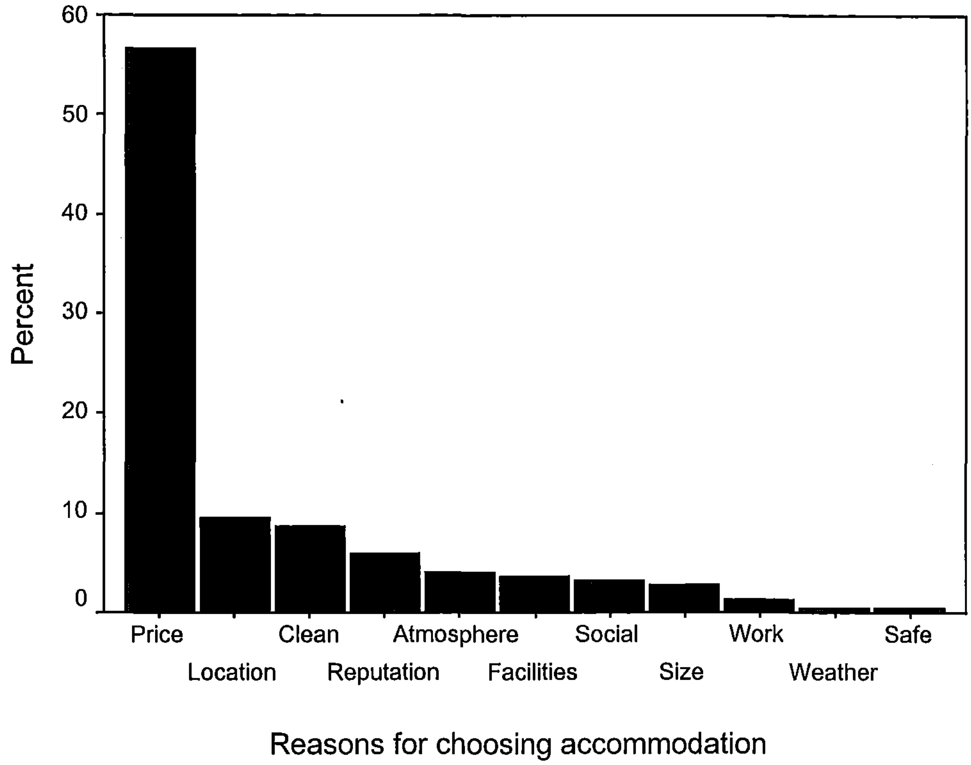


Table 4 shows six variables and how important each is to backpackers when choosing a specific hostel. Forty three percent of backpackers noted the 'atmosphere' of the hostel was the most important variable, closely followed by the cleanliness of a hostel (42%).

Table 4: The importance of certain variables when backpackers choose a hostel

	Level of Importance %				
	Very Important	Important	Not Essential	Unimportant	Irrelevant
VARIABLE					
Atmosphere	43	40	15	1	1
Cleanliness	42	45	10	2	1
Friendliness	39	40	19	1	1
Price	37	48	14	1	0
Location	34	52	11	2	1
Other facilities	29	24	22	10	15

Eleven percent thought the location of the hostel was 'not essential' while 15 percent thought the provision of other facilities was 'irrelevant'. This last result is particularly interesting in Northland as a large proportion of the hostels are in remote areas and the limited transport services available often means private transport is necessary. Many hostel operators realise the difficulty of transportation for backpackers and provide free pick and drop off service.

The provision of 'other facilities' is often regarded as important by hostel operators to promote and encourage travellers to their hostel. Table 4 indicates this is not necessarily important to travellers, with 29 percent stating it was 'very important'. This is expressed by a backpacker who stated:

"Independent travellers don't expect that much so anything extra is a perk, not a necessity" (Claire, 24 Ireland).

4.7.2 Suggested improvements to hostels

Backpackers were invited to express any concerns or suggestions they felt could improve the quality of the services offered to them. Sixty four percent answered this question, with 11 percent confirming that they were 'satisfied' with what they received, and 25 percent who 'did not know'.
Comments ranged from practical ideas and suggestions to those who took the opportunity to be humorous. The most common of these suggestions was that hostels should be cleaner (16.7 %).
This result is reflected in a comment made by a backpacker;

"A clean place is important, but then you are not going to know until you get there. So that determines how long you stay there" (Siobbhan, 28, England).

Suggestions included:

- On arrival provide a guided tour of the hostel and facilities and introduction of hosts
- Less people in a room, limit to 4 people per dorm
- Maintain cleanliness, provide clean tea towels, hand soap
- The provision and access to other facilities where available eg fishing rods, bikes, kayaks
- Provide access to the use of a pay phone

.........to those which were not so practical

- Bigger pillows
- Anti snoring devices
- Outlet for hair curlers
- A bar in all hostels!!

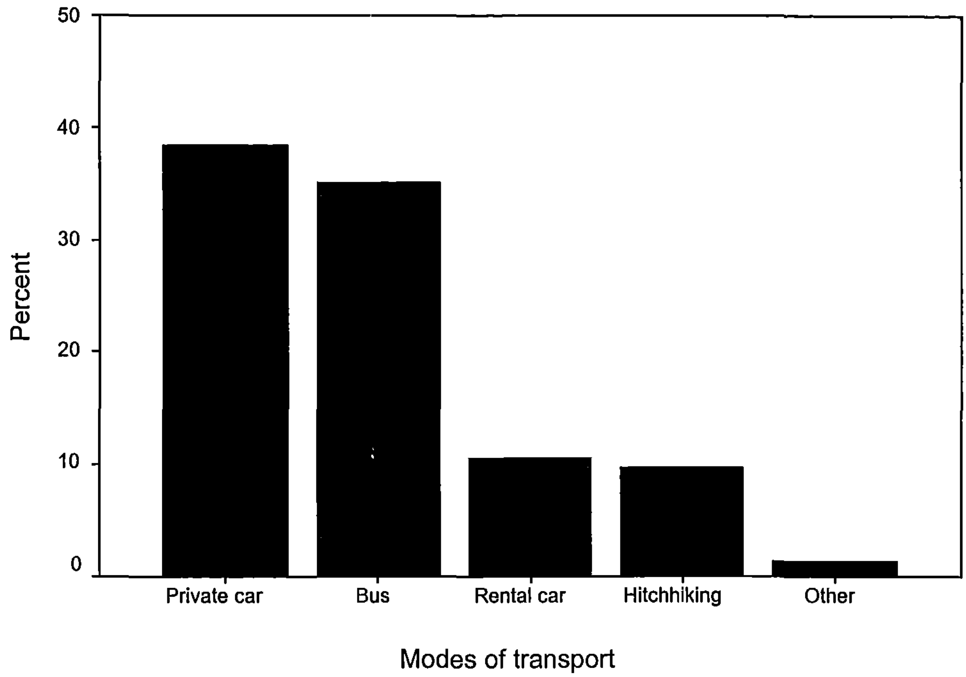
4.8 Transport

The main emphasis on the transport sector in this study was the types of transport used by backpackers, factors which influence their decision to use certain transportation modes, and what information was used to make these decisions.

4.8.1 Transportation modes

A range of transportation modes were utilised by backpackers to Northland. Figure 13 shows 38.4 percent of backpackers use private cars. This is slightly greater than the 34 percent of international visitors to New Zealand who use private cars (NZTB, 1993). Bus (35.2%) and rental cars (10.5%) were the next most popular means of travel. The bus services used by backpackers in this study include Northliner, Intercity and Kiwi Experience. Other forms of transport include walking, flying sailing and cycling (motor and bicycle).

Figure 13: The modes of transport used by backpackers to Northland



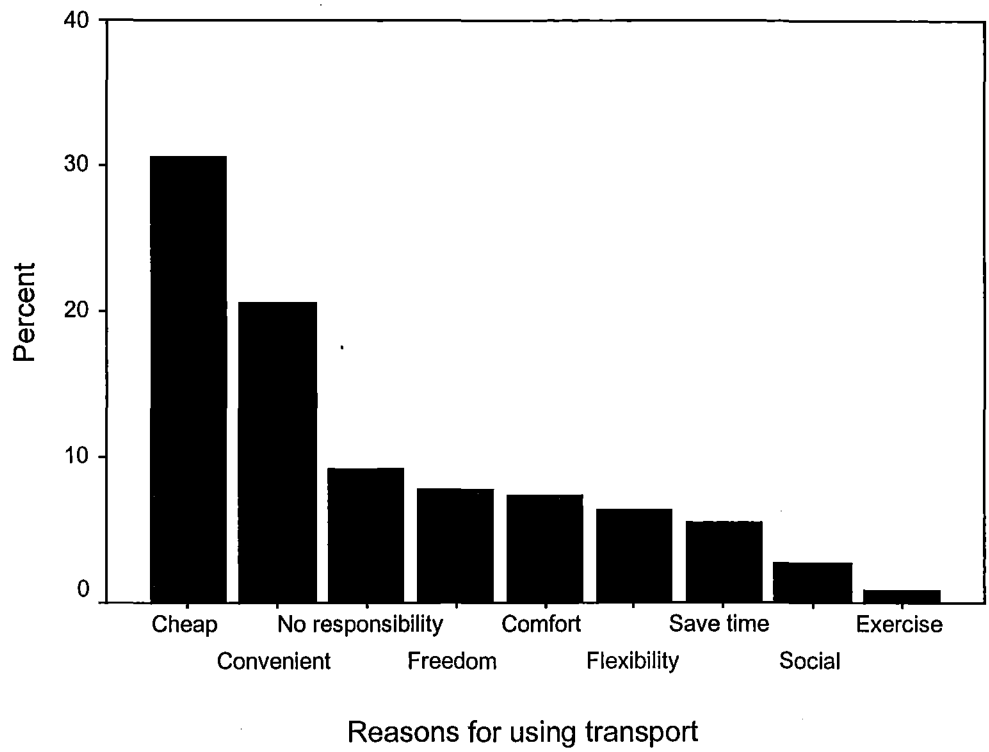
4.8.2 Factors influencing the utilisation of particular transport modes

Backpackers listed the factors that influence their decision to choose a form of transport and ranked them in order of preference. Figure 14 indicates 30.6 percent of backpackers use a particular form of transport because it is 'cheap', 20.5 percent for its 'convenience' and 9.1 percent because of the 'lack of responsibility'. Other influencing factors include freedom, flexibility, comfort, meeting people and exercise.

Hitch hiking is one particular form of transport utilised by backpacker's which is traditionally associated with this market. A comment by the backpacker below suggests why it is often chosen as a preferred form of transport.

"Hitch hiking is very suitable for freedom of movement so if you want to leave from one place you just get up and hitch hike" (Virginnie,26,Vanuatu).

Figure 14: The reasons why backpackers chose certain modes of transport



4.8.3 Information sources used for transport decisions

Different information sources were used by backpackers in Northland to help inform them on what transport options were available. The most widely accepted source of information was the use of guide books (27.4%), with "The Lonely Planet" the most popular. The popularity of the Lonely Planet is not recent. Ware's (1992) study revealed 56 percent of backpackers relied on the Lonely Planet as a source of information. For this sample word of mouth promotion from other travellers (26%), family and friends (16%) and brochures (12.8%) were useful.

The use of word of mouth (WOM) recommendations is reflected by a backpacker who stated:

"..... that is what I have learned from other travellers. That's the other source of information I use, recommendations from other travellers" (Dirk, 39, German).

Other sources include information centres (6.4%), own knowledge (4.6%), travel agents (2.7%) and the Internet (2.1%). The use of information centres was widely acknowledged by many backpackers who were impressed by the level of service and information available on a number of different things.

"Information centres in Northland have just been fantastic in their willingness to let you know about off the track places that you can get to, with and without transport"(Siobbhan, 28 England).

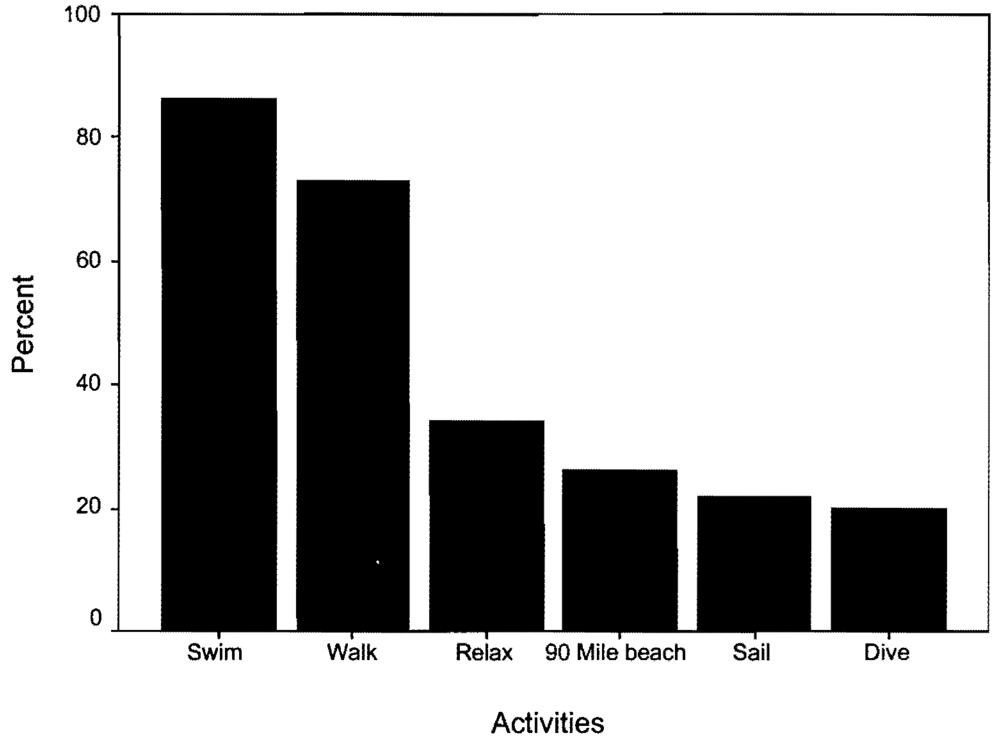
This result was interesting because the 1996 draft tourism strategy (NZTB, 1996) indicated that the distribution of information through visitors' centres was poor. This could indicate that backpackers are more likely to use information centres as a primary source of information, whereas other visitors may use them as secondary sources of information.

4.9 Activities

The main emphasis on the activity sector of the study was the type of activities backpackers participated in, suggested improvements to activities and sources of information used.

The majority of activities participated in by backpackers were water based, due to the location and proximity of Northlands hostels to the coastline. Figure 15 shows the top six participated activities by backpackers to Northland. Swimming (82.3%), walking (71.2%) and relaxing (32.1%) were the top three activities. Others include visiting the Treaty house (Waitangi), Kauri forests and Cape Reinga, sailing, tramping, shopping, drinking and fishing.

Figure 15: The top six activities participated by backpackers in Northland



From figure 15 the top three activities are 'free' activities in that money is not directly required to participate in them. An explanation for this is a number of backpackers indicated that they had spent all their money on activities in destination such as Queenstown and Rotorua and had come to Northland with little money. However, diving was an activity that backpackers came to Northland specifically to do. This has important marketing implications for promoters of Northland who need to ensure backpackers are aware of the range of activity options available before they start travelling. This will ensure money is spent in the area.

Backpackers were invited to suggest improvements that could be made to the activities offered. Thirty five percent of backpackers responded to this question with suggestions including cheaper activity prices (14%), more specific information on activities (8.1%) and free pick up and drop off from sites (6.3%). Others included more road signs, that brochures are misleading, and better weather!

One backpacker clearly stated their obvious disappointment with a misleading brochure:

" I think the brochures should clearly state when you will and won't see dolphins. The brochures indicate you definitely will- I didn't" (Barbara; 25, Holland).

4.9.1 Sources of information

To gather information on things to do while in Northland backpackers use formal and informal information sources. Travel magazines and guidebooks (34.2%) were the most common. Following this was other travellers (25.1%), family and friends(18.7%) and information centres (13.2%).
At many hostels, tips by other travellers on handy hints and things to do were recorded, this with the recommendation of the hostel operator are considered useful sources of information. Other forms include the Internet, Kiwi experience bus drivers and diving magazines.

4.10 Expectations

This section focused on backpackers' expectations using a five point Likert scale to determine the perceived level of prior expectations towards accommodation, transport and tourist activities.

Figure 16 (page 67) shows that generally backpackers' prior expectations of accommodation, transport and activities were predominantly 'as expected' or 'better than expected'. The prior expectations of backpackers was similar for both accommodation and activities, with 14.6 percent of backpackers indicating that their level of prior expectations were exceeded. Backpackers' expectations of transport were lower with 8 percent indicating that their transport expectations had been exceeded.

A backpacker commented on their lack of prior expectations of backpacking in Northland:

" I didn't expect anything, I didn't know that backpackers [hostels] did exist, this facility of travelling, like the bus tours the cheap accommodation and everything, the backpacker newspapers. I didn't know they existed" (Virginnie, 26 Vanuatu).

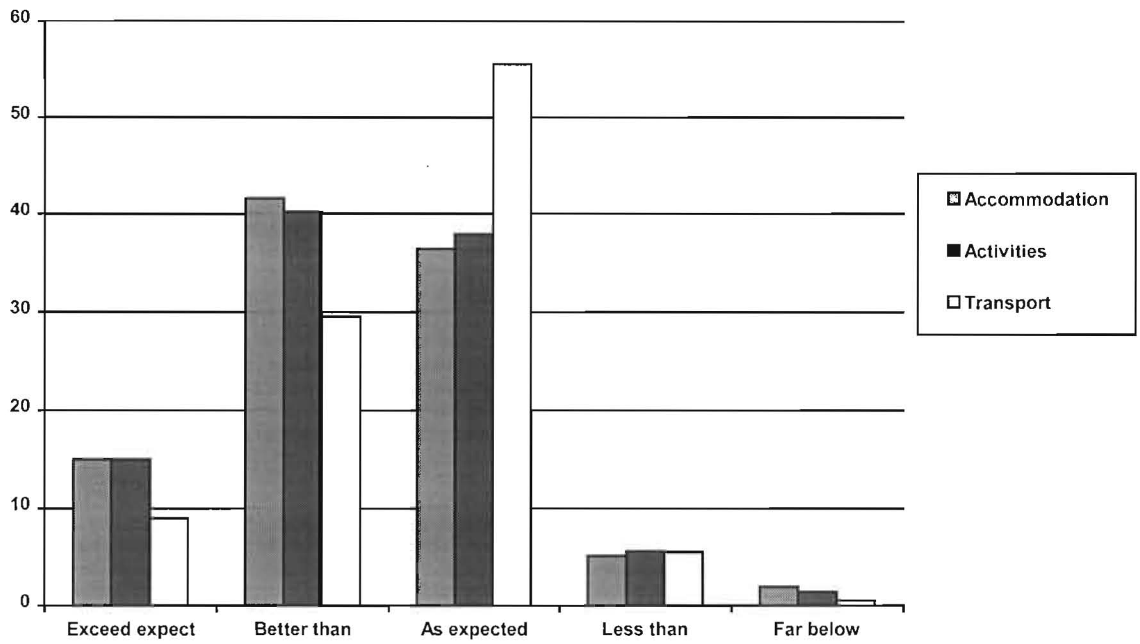
This suggests using prior expectations as a measure of satisfaction and service quality, may be difficult. Measurements need to take into account attitudes and behaviour of visitors. If nothing is known about an area, gathering prior expectations is difficult.

"I didn't expect when I first visited New Zealand such a backpacker institution, it makes everything very easy for the traveller, maybe too much sometimes" (Theo, 32, German).

Less than two percent of backpackers surveyed indicated that prior expectations of accommodation, transport and activities were 'far below expectations'. This is an encouraging result with the greatest proportion of backpackers indicating prior expectations were 'as they expected'.

" I just didn't expect there would be so many different places. I think its incredible how much the hostelling thing has obviously struck the people in Northland, they are actually willing and prepared to run a business, especially in the far out places, that you really have to make an effort to get to"(Siobbhan, 28, England).

Figure 16: The level of expectations towards accommodation, transport services and activities



Backpackers indicated whether travel and accommodation in Northland was more expensive or cheaper than they expected, compared with the other areas in New Zealand they had visited. Forty seven percent of backpackers stated travel was 'cheaper' than expecetd, 35.1 percent 'more expensive' and 17.7 percent 'as expected'. Accommodation expectations were similar with 46.2 percent indicating that accommodation was 'cheaper' than in other areas, 27.9 percent 'more expensive' and 25.9 percent as expected'.

A number of backpackers interviewed commented on how affordable hostels were in New Zealand. This backpacker was obviously impressed with accommodation he received:

"I don't think that it would be appropriate to expect much more for only 16 dollars a night" (Theo, 32, German).

Expectation levels of domestic backpackers towards accommodation were slightly higher than international backpackers. Fifty four percent of domestic visitors stated accommodation was 'better than expected' compared with 48 percent of international visitors. However interviews and informal discussions indicated that domestic backpackers expected to be provided with modern facilities such as microwaves and televisions and were disappointed when told they were not available or would cost extra.

4.11 Satisfactions

This section focuses on the satisfactions of backpackers' using a five point likert scale to determine the level of satisfaction backpackers had towards accommodation, transport services, activities and other services including banks, supermarkets and post shops.

Figure 17 (page 70) indicates that generally backpackers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied with accommodation, activities, transport and other services.
A backpacker reflected this result when he stated:

"The choice of activities is especially good. I mean there are so many things to do, there is tramping if you want it, there's also different companies to choose from" (Theo, 32, German).

A number of backpackers expressed concerns over the poor level of transport services received particularly in organised coach tours which had limited destination stops. Backpackers expressed their concern about the transport services and limited travel routes taken by some bus companies.

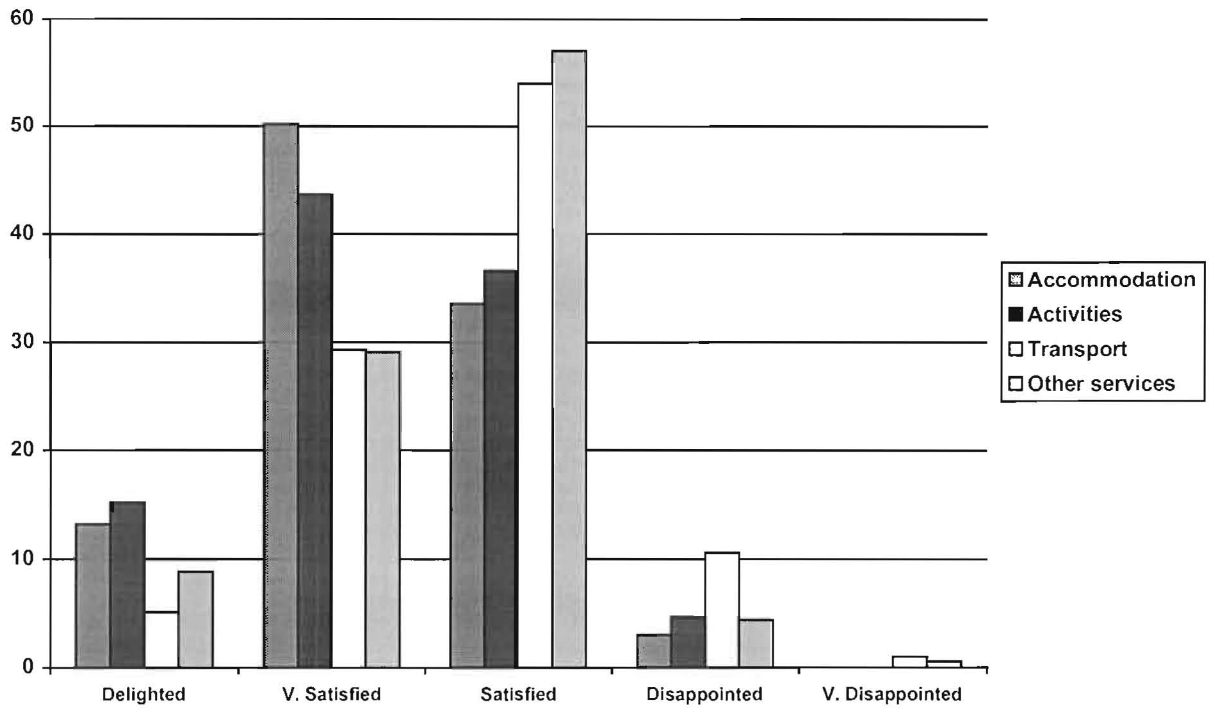
"The problem with the bus service is that it goes only one way so you miss certain places" (Claire, 24, Ireland).

"It would be nice to have more services to get to certain points you normally can't get to. On the other hand if there's too much its going to be too touristy, then the quality of the travelling decreases... if there are too many tourists I won't like it any more" (Dirk, 39, German).

No backpackers surveyed were 'very disappointed' with accommodation or activities. Less than two percent of all backpackers surveyed were 'very disappointed' with transport and other services.
The quality of 'other services' and their relevance to some backpackers was indicated through the opinion of a backpacker below that stated:

"At times I have been disappointed with the banking and other services, but after wards if I think about it I am not disappointed. If I want banks everywhere that means that the whole country is covered with towns and that's not what I am looking for.... just surprised, but positively surprised" (Virginnie, 26, Vanuatu).

Figure 17: The level of satisfaction towards accommodation, transport, activities and other services



4.12 Repeat Visits of backpackers to Northland

Sixty four percent of respondents said that they would return to Northland, indicating a generally high level of satisfaction with their overall trip to Northland (Table 5). Thirty seven percent of backpackers stated 'other countries to visit' was the most common reason for not returning to Northland. An additional indication of satisfaction is that 97 percent of backpackers would recommend a friend to travel to Northland.

Table 5: Return of backpackers to Northland

	Frequency	Percent
Return to Northland		
Yes	140	64
No	70	32
Don't know	9	4
Reasons for not returning		
Other countries to visit	26	37
Other parts of NZ to visit	15	21
Once in a lifetime trip	13	19
Too far away	9	13
Disappointed	7	10
Recommend Northland?		
Yes	213	97
No	4	2
Don't know	2	1

4.13 Quality of services

Backpackers were asked to indicate the **main** services and facilities they expected New Zealand hostels to provide when in New Zealand. Fifty six percent of backpackers expected a bed, shower, kitchen and laundry. Other expected services were the provision of clean facilities (13.6%), visitor information and reception area (12.6%). Other services that backpackers categorised as being main services included provision of linen, pay phone, free pickup and drop off, lockers and a tour of the hostel.

One backpacker stated how important it was to be given a tour of a hostel when they arrived:

" I like it when they tell you about the place where you are staying, like when they show you around and tell you where you can find everything"(Barbara, 25, Holland).

Comments by backpackers reflect the general attitude towards the quality of services within a hostel.

"The quality of services comes from the personal aspect of those running the backpackers. It is hard to alter and varies from place to place" (Dirk, 39, German).

And

" More personal service is all that's needed so you know you're in a backpackers and not a motel" (Claire,24, Ireland).

These excerpts from interviews reinforce Doorne's (1995) statement that suggests the management style of the hostel is important consideration to backpackers on their length of stay in a particular hostel.

Backpackers were asked to indicate their prior expectations of the quality of the services in New Zealand compared to other countries in which they had backpacked. Twenty eight percent of backpackers stated the services they had experienced in New Zealand were 'as expected' with 16.1 percent stating that their New Zealand experience's had 'exceeded their expectations'. For 12.9 percent of backpackers it was their first time backpacking and 4.8 percent of backpackers had 'no expectations' of New Zealand services.

Typical examples of backpacker's satisfaction with the quality of services in New Zealand are described below:

" *What we have seen here in New Zealand is great, other countries can not compare to New Zealand's backpackers"(Barbara, 25, Holland).*

Other examples include:

" I did not realise that backpacking in New Zealand is so easy, everything is set up for the backpacker traveller"(Scott, 21, America).

" New Zealand hostels are more friendly, helpful and provide more than other hostels worldwide that I have experienced"(Dirk, 39, German).

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter Outline

An examination of backpackers' expectations and satisfactions has aimed to identify the perceived quality of services offered to this market in the Northland region. Analysis of the backpacker tourism industry in Northland reveals the quality of services currently offered to backpackers. This chapter discusses the implications of these findings providing recommendations, areas for future research and managerial implications.

5.1 New Zealand's Backpacking industry

The increasing presence of backpackers in New Zealand has initiated a number of changes within areas of the tourism industry. The increase in the backpacker market has prompted the establishment of accommodation and transport networks specifically designed for the independent, cost conscious backpacker.
The backpacker industry is identified as operating and existing across three industry sectors, the accommodation sector, transport sector and the activity sector.

5.2 Summary of findings

This study examined a number of issues regarding backpacker travel in Northland. The summary of the major findings is divided into five different sections: demographic profile, travel patterns, accommodation, transport and activity sector, expectations and satisfactions, and quality of services.

5.2.1 Demographic profile

Consistent with previous literature (Ware, 1992, Doorne, 1994) and results from Loker's study (1993), backpackers are generally young and well educated. Backpackers in this study are either students (20%) or the majority are from technical or professional occupations (20%). The results reveal that the majority of backpackers to Northland are international visitors, with the majority originating from England, and wider Europe.

5.2.2 Travel patterns

Australia is the destination where the highest proportion of backpackers travel from before (30%) and after New Zealand (33%), generally arriving in Auckland and departing from Christchurch. Results from travel pattern analysis indicate the majority of backpackers to Northland visit the region as part of their travel in New Zealand. The most common path of travel is up the east coast and back down the west coast of Northland. Visiting the Bay of Islands region only was also a common pattern.

5.2.3 Accommodation, transport and activity sectors

This survey concluded backpackers' hostels were the preferred form of accommodation utilised by backpackers to Northland. The atmosphere of a hostel was the most important factor when choosing a specific hostel with the provision of other facilities the least important. Price was the most important factor when choosing backpacker hostels as an accommodation preference. Private cars were the most common form of transport utilised by backpackers followed by bus services. Reasons for using specific transport modes included the price, convenience and freedom.

Backpackers to Northland participate in a variety of activities. Diving is an activity in which backpackers specifically visit the Northland region to participate in. Large proportions of these are water-based activities and are relatively inexpensive (eg swimming, fishing).

5.2.4 Expectations and Satisfactions

The prior expectations of backpackers to the three service sectors were met and at times exceeded. The majority of backpackers were highly satisfied with the three service sectors of the backpacker tourism industry. While this result is encouraging, backpackers did not perceive all sectors to be of equal standard. Accommodation had the greatest level of satisfaction, with a small proportion of backpackers disappointed with transport services. The cost of accommodation and travel compared with other destinations visited, was less than expected or as expected.

The prior expectation of other services (supermarket, bank, and post) was generally lower compared to the other three services. Compared with other countries, backpacker's perceived that New Zealand services had exceeded their expectations.

5.2.5 Quality of services

Backpackers to Northland were satisfied with the quality of services they received, which according to Danaher and Arweiler's study (1996) can have a high influence on overall trip satisfaction. Numerous suggestions for improving the quality of hostels were stated, with the largest single group suggesting that hostels should be cleaner.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has assumed that the expectations and satisfactions a backpacker has can largely determine the satisfaction of their overall tourism experience in New Zealand. A critical point arises in meeting the expectations of backpackers in order to satisfy their needs while simultaneously providing consistent levels of service quality. The recommendations in this section are based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected, as well as the researchers' interaction with a variety of key people in the industry.

- Domestic travel surveys have not been recorded in the past ten years, hence it was difficult to calculate domestic visitor travel information for the Northland region. Therefore statistics on the domestic market to Northland need to be collected to enable an approximation of the visitor numbers coming in and out of the region. This information will help indicate what regions in New Zealand visitors are coming from, and therefore where to disseminate provincial marketing information.

- The development of a clearer definition of what constitutes a backpacker, coupled with yearly data collection of arrivals by the New Zealand Tourism Board, will give those in the market an indication of the trends in this segment of travellers. Statistics collected annually would ensure the industry is aware of the changing patterns of demand. Regions throughout New Zealand would benefit by being able to plan for actual and predicted visitor flows and budget accordingly. The definition will need to be more specific and include a definition of what type of accommodation is classified as 'budget accommodation'. The definition would also need to indicate how a backpacker is defined by their purpose to New Zealand. This would eliminate domestic visitors who are travelling for business purposes and stay in hostel accommodation. In 1998 the New Zealand Tourism Board established Tourism Marketing Networks (TMNs). Tourism Marketing Networks are groups of individual businesses who join forces to market new or existing activities, experiences or attractions which appeal to a specific segment in the market (NZTB, 1999). A network was established in 1998 to cater for the backpacker market with representatives from the transport sector, tourism operators, backpacker hostel operators and a representative from the New Zealand Tourism Board.

- Backpackers were satisfied with the standard of accommodation received in Northland based on their prior expectations. Unlike the motel and hostel industry, backpacker accommodation has no nationally recognised standards of quality. Although accommodation guides (BBH, YHA, and VIP) are published, their purpose is to inform backpackers what accommodation is available and how other backpackers have subjectively rated them. Presently the Backpacker Accommodation Council (BAC) is working on developing a scheme, similar to Australia's Backpacker Accommodation Classification scheme. It is recommended that this scheme be implemented to assure backpackers that certain standards have been met by a particular property. This would enable all operators to protect the industry's image by applying stringent standards of quality.

5.4 Future research opportunities

It is possible to identify several broad opportunities for future research emerging from the present work.

- Unlike Australia, New Zealand does not have a nationally recognised backpacker tourism policy, such as Australia's National Backpacker tourism strategy (1996). The aim of the strategy was to 'establish Australia as the preferred destination for independent budget travellers by offering distinct, world class experiences provided by a competitive and viable industry' (Commonwealth Department of Australia, 1996:4). Initially a feasibility study would need to be conducted to determine whether backpacker tourism in New Zealand warrants a separate tourism policy. Would the policy be economically viable and how would the separation of travel markets under different policies benefit backpacker tourism in New Zealand, are questions that need to be addressed. Funding would be the major obstacle to this along with the challenge of unifying all the various sectors of the industry together to ascertain what is best for the market. However a similar strategy in New Zealand would enable backpacker development to be coordinated and structured within a nationally recognised and funded policy.

This would ensure high levels of service are consistent with other aspects of tourism in New Zealand.

- Research needs to be conducted on hostel operators throughout New Zealand to gauge response to the establishment of nationally recognised standards of quality, similar to those found in motels and hotels (Qualmark). The standards would help to encourage all hostels to adhere to a set of guidelines, where quality is rated on their level of service by the use of the 'star' rating scheme.
  To avoid any inconsistencies between different regions in New Zealand, the standards could be integrated into a national tourism plan. A similar scheme has been initiated in Australia and has proven to be successful in promoting a high quality of service. The scheme provides an independent assessment of accommodation properties to assure backpackers standards have been met.

5.5 Managerial implications

This research also highlighted a number of recommendations and implications applicable to the owners and managers of backpacker hostels. It must be noted that these recommendations are of the opinion of the researcher, based on the results of the survey, meeting with operators and comments made by backpackers.

- Various styles of rooms are currently available in most backpacker hostels. Although the majority of backpackers are satisfied with a dorm bed, a growing proportion prefers single or double rooms. To ensure people are initially satisfied with sleeping arrangements, guests could be asked if they have a room preference on arrival. Informal discussion and observation showed older travellers (40+) and some females travelling alone prefer single sex dorms or rooms. The allocation of rooms according to preference would eliminate the conflict between those who request solitude and others who do not want to be restricted by a curfew. This obviously needs to be consistent with hostel management and would vary according to on and off peak periods.

- The results concluded that backpackers perceived level of satisfaction with accommodation, transport and activities was high, with backpackers' expectations generally being met and at most times exceeded. Yet there are some particular aspects, which could be improved in some areas, such as the provision of other services (eg banks and food markets). It is recommended for those hostels which are more than 20 minutes away from food outlets, to provide a shop system for basic food items. Alternatively hostel operators need to clearly indicate (brochure advertising, BBH book) that their hostel is a certain distance from town allowing backpackers to arrive prepared.

- The high level of importance backpackers place on a clean hostel environment is a major determinant in choosing which hostel in which to stay and the duration of stay. Hostel owners and operators need to ensure that the standard of cleanliness is maintained throughout the hostel and its facilities. This can be achieved on a small level (providing clean tea towels, hand soap) and on a larger scale (daily cleaning of bathrooms and kitchen). Backpacker's importance and reliance on word of mouth recommendations, means reports of bad experiences spread quickly.

- Operating backpacker hostels is not necessarily an easy business. Positive feedback can be rewarding and useful. The use of a postage paid survey, given to backpackers as they leave the hostel is a way of gaining information on the assessment of the accommodation offered. Customer satisfaction surveys are currently practised by Nomads International backpacker hostels in Australia, with proven success.

5.6 Final word

The prior expectations and satisfaction levels of a backpacker have important implications for those catering for this independent style of travel.
This thesis is propositioned on the service quality model whereby to ensure backpackers continue to enjoy their visit to New Zealand it is important to assess prior expectations to gauge customer satisfaction.
With this focus, the present study has examined the backpacker market to Northland. Focusing on backpackers characteristics, travel patterns, three services sectors (accommodation, transport, activity) expectations, satisfactions and quality of services, this case study has addressed the issue of customer satisfaction and the perceived service quality ideals of the backpacker market to Northland

It is hoped that this study will stimulate further research into service quality of this growing phenomenon of backpacker tourism in New Zealand. Greater understanding of this sector of New Zealands' tourism industry will benefit backpackers, hostel and transport operators and other key people within the industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ackroyd, S. and Hughes, J. (1981). *Data collection in Context,* London: Longman.

Adams, C. (1992). Backing the New Tourist. *New Zealand Business, July, 1992 37-42.*

Adams, G.R., and Schvaneveldt, J.D. (1985). *Understanding research methods*, New York, U.S.A: Longman Inc.

Babbie, E. (1995). *The Practice of Social Research: Seventh edition.*, USA: Wadsworth publishing company.

Backpacker Accommodation Council. (1995) Mission statement of the Backpacker Accommodation Council (BAC), Auckland, New Zealand Tourism Industry Association.

Baker, D. and Fesenmaier, D. (1997). Effects of service climate on managers and employers rating of visitor service quality expectations. *Journal of Travel Research, 15-22.*

Barnes, P. (1992). Packing them in. *Listener and TV Times, June 22, 1992, p 32.*

Berry, L.L, Zeithaml, V and Parasuraman, A. (1990). Five imperatives for improving service quality. *Sloan Management Review, 30 (1),29-38.*

Boulding, W., Kalra, A., Staelin, R. and Zeithaml, V.A. (1993). A dynamic process model of service quality: From expectations to behavioural intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research, 30,7-27.*

Bryman, A. and Cramer, D. (1997). *Quantitative data analysis with SPSS for windows: A guide for Social Sciences*, London: Routledge.

Buchanan, I. and Rossetto, A.(1997). With my swag upon my shoulder. A comprehensive study of international backpackers to Australia. *Bureau of Tourism Research, Australia.* Occasional paper No. 24.

Budget Backpacker Hostels (1998) *The 1998 Budget Backpacker accommodation guide*, Christchurch, Budget Backpacker Hostels Ltd.

Butler, R. (1980).The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution. Implications for managers of resources. *Canadian Geographer, 24:5-12.*

Calkin. A. and Simpson, D. (1998). Establishing the Backpacker industry council of Australia, Business plan 1998-2001, Sydney, Australia: Calkin Associates.

Chadee, D. and Mattsson, J. (1995). Measuring customer satisfaction in tourist service encounters. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 4 (4),97-107.*

Chittenden, B. (1994). Expectations and perceptions of service quality in Banking, Real estate, appliance repair and general medical practice. Occasional paper series, Nelson Polytechnic.

Cloke, P. and Perkins, H.C. (1998).'Cracking the canyon with the awesome foursome': Representations of adventure tourism in New Zealand. *Environment and Planning D :Society and Space, 16(2),187-252.*

Coakes, S. and Steed, L. (1997). *SPSS Analysis without anguish*, Singapore: John Wiley and Sons.

Cohen, E .(1973). Nomads from affluence. Notes on the phenomenon of drifter tourism. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology. 14(1/2),89-103.*

Cohen, E.(1974).Who is a tourist?: A conceptual clarification. *Sociology Review. 22 (4), 527-555.*

Cohen, E. (1975). Towards a sociology of international tourism. *Social Research, 39,164-182.*

Cohen, E.(1984). The Sociology of Tourism: Approaches, Issues and Findings. *Annual Review of Sociology,10,373-392.*

Collier, A. (1997). *Principles of Tourism. A New Zealand Perspective*, Auckland, New Zealand: Pitman Publishing.

Commonwealth Department of Tourism. (1996). *National Backpacker Tourism Strategy*, Canberra: Australian Government publishing services.

Danaher, P.and Arweiler, N. (1996). Customer Satisfaction in the Tourist industry: A case study of visitors to New Zealand. *Journal of Travel Research, 89-93.*

Department of Statistics. (1998). *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, Wellington: Department of Statistics.

Doorne, S.M. (1994). *Symbiosis, Integration and the backpacker tourist industry* Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Doorne, S.M. (1995). Expenditure patterns of backpackers: Examples of businesses dependent on backpacker income from two case studies. *New Zealand Geographical Society Conference.*

Economist Intelligence Unit. (1995). *International Tourism Report.* Great Britain: Economist Intelligent Unit.

Fick,G. and Ritchie, B.(1991). Measuring service quality in the travel and tourism industry. J*ournal of Travel Research, 2,2-9.*

Fisher, R. and Price, L. (1991). International Pleasure Travel Motivation and Post Vacation Cultural Attitude change. *Journal of Leisure Research.* 23 (3),193-208.

Forer, P.C and Pearce, D.G.(1984). Spatial Patterns of package tourism in New Zealand. *New Zealand Geographer,34-42.*

Forer, P. and Simmons, D (1998) Analysing and Mapping Tourist flows. *Transportation,28(1) 10-13.*

Freeman, S. (1996). *Creating the Competitive edge: The New Zealand Tourism conference.* Wellington: New Zealand Tourism Industry Association.

Garnham, B. (1993). A backpacking geography of New Zealand. *New Zealand Geographical Society Conference 1993. 538-545.*

Gilbert, J. (1997). *Ecotourism means business.* Wellington, New Zealand: GP Publications.

Gnoth, J. (1997). Tourism motivations and expectations formation. *Annals of Tourism Research, 24,(2),283-301.*

Gray, P. (1981). Wanderlust Tourism: Problems of Infrastructure. *Annals of Tourism Research, 3(2),285-289.*

Green, S. and Boshoff, C. (1996). *An empirical assessment of the relationship between service quality, satisfaction and value:* A Tourism study. Department of Marketing, University of Otago, Working paper series number five.

Haigh, R. (1995). *Backpackers in Australia.* The Bureau of Tourism research, Australia. Occasional paper No. 20.

Harris, R. and Howard, J. (1996). *Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Terms.* Melbourne, Australia: Hospitality Press.

Jarvis, J. (1995). *The Billion dollar backpackers: The Ultimate fully independent tourist.* Monash University: National Centre for Australian Studies.

Jeffcoat, M., Jeffcoat S, and Ryan, C. (1998). Visitor and host perception of tourism in Niue. *Pacific Tourism Review, 1,189-199.*

Jones, P.W. (1997). Service Quality within the public domain, Thesis, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Kandampully, J. (1993). Service Quality and the dilemma of Service Quality standards, The design and delivery of Effective Service Operations, in (Eds) R. Johnston and N.D.C Slack, University of Warwick, UK: Warwick Business School.

Kandampully, J.(1995). Tourism in the South West: Present possibilities and future projections. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics, 6,169-181.*

Leiper, N.(1987). The Framework of Tourism: Towards a Definition of Tourism and the Tourist Industry. *Annals of Tourism Research, 6(4),390-407.*

Leiper, N. (1990). Tourism Systems: An interdisciplinary Perspective. Palmerston North, Department of Management Systems, Business Studies faculty, Massey University

Lofland, H. and Lofland, J. (1984). *Analysing social settings.* California: Wadsworth publishing.

Loker, L. (1993). *The Backpacker phenomenon II: More answers to further questions.* James Cook University, Australia: Department of Tourism.

Loker-Murphy, L. and Pearce, P. (1995). Young budget travellers: Backpackers in Australia. *Annals of Tourism Research, 22(4),819-843.*

Loker, L. (1996). Backpackers in Australia: A motivation based segmentation study. *Tourism Research and Education in Australia.*

Luk, S, de Leon, C, Leong, F. and Y Li, E. (1993). Value segmentation of tourist expectations of service quality. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 2(4),23-37.*

McCulloch, J.(1992). The Youth hostels association: Precursors and contemporary achievements. *The Journal of Tourism Studies. 3,(1)22-27.*

Morgan, D. (1998). *The adventure tourism experience on water: Perceptions of risk and competence and the role of the operator.* Thesis, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Moutinho, L. and Witt, S. (1989). *Tourism Marketing and Management handbook.* UK: Prentice Hall.

Mukerji, C.(1978). Bullshitting: Road lore among hitchhikers. *Social problems. 25, 241-252.*

Murphy, L.(1996a). *Backpackers and the decisions they make.* James Cook University, Townsville, Australia: Department of Tourism.

Murphy, L. (1996b). *Understanding the social networks of backpacker travellers: A social situation analysis approach.* Australia: James Cook University.

Murphy, L. and Orlandi, M. (1996). *North American graduates: A potential backpacker market for Australia.* James Cook University of North Queensland, Australia: Department of Tourism.

New Zealand Tourism Board. (1993). *International Visitor Survey.* Wellington: New Zealand Tourism Board.

New Zealand Tourism Board. (1996). *Tourism in Northland: A draft strategy for Sustainable Growth and Development.* Wellington: New Zealand Tourism Board.

New Zealand Tourism Board. (1998). *International visitor arrivals to New Zealand.* Wellington, New Zealand.

New Zealand Tourism Board (1999) *About NZTB : Strategy* [online]. Available: http://www.nztb.co.nz/nztb/strategy.html

Office of National Tourism (1995) *Backpacking* [online]. Available: http://www.dist.gov.au/tourism/publications/talkingtourism/sept95/backpacking.html

Office of National Tourism (1997) *Backpacker Accommodation Ratings Guide* [online]. Available: http://www.dist.gov.au/tourism/publications/backpack/guide/about.html

Oh, H. and Parks, S.C. (1997). Customer satisfactions and service quality. A critical review of the literature and research implications for the hospitality industry. *Hospitality Research Journal, 20,(3)21-26.*

Oppermann, M. (1993). German tourists in New Zealand. *New Zealander Geographer, 49,(1),30-34.*

Ostrowski, P.L, O'Brien, T. and Gordon, G. (1993). Service Quality and Customer loyalty in the commercial Airline industry. *Journal of Travel Research,4,16-24.*

Otto, J. and Ritchie, B. (1996). The service expectations in tourism. *Tourism Management, 17,(3),165-174.*

Ough-Dealy, H. (1996). No beds for backpackers? *Russell Review, 1996-1997 issue, 20-25.*

Parasuraman, A, Zeithaml, V and Berry, L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing, 40,41-50.*

Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. and Zeithaml, V. (1991) Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing, 67(4) 46-61.*

Parasuraman, A, Zeithaml, V. and Berry, L. (1994). Reassessment of expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality. Implication for future research. *Journal of Marketing, 58 (1),111-124.*

Parr,D. (1989). *Free Independent Travellers: The Unknown tourists.* Thesis, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Pearce, P. (1988). *The Ulysses Factor: Evaluating visitors in tourist settings.* New York: Springer-verlag.

Pearce, P.L. (1990). *The Backpacker Phenomenon: Preliminary Answers to Basic Questions.* James Cook University of North Queensland: Department of Tourism.

Pizam, A., Neumann,Y and Reichel, A. (1978). Dimensions of Tourist Satisfaction with a Destination area. *Annals of Tourism Research. 5,314-322.*

Poon, A. (1994). *Tourism, Technology and Competitive strategies.* United Kingdom: CAB International.

Pryer, M. (1997).The traveller as a destination pioneer. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research, 3,225-237.*

Riley, P.(1988). Road culture of International long-term budget travellers. *Annals of Tourism Research.4,(3),313- 327.*

Ross, G. (1992). Destination evaluation and vacation preferences. *Annals of Tourism Research, 477-489.*

Ross, G. (1993). Ideal and actual images of backpacker visitors to Northern Australia. *Journal of Travel Research,54-57.*

Ross, G. (1995) Service Quality ideals and evaluations among Backpackers. Australia, Department of Psychology and Sociology, James Cook University.

Ross, G. (1997). Destination motivations among backpacker visitors to Northern Australia. *Pacific Tourism Review 1,7-15.*

Ryan, C. (1991). *Recreational Tourism. A Social Science perspective.* London: Routledge.

Ryan, C. (1995). *Researching tourist satisfaction: Issues, concepts, problems.* London: Routledge.

Sharp, I. (1994). On the Road: Destination New Zealand. *Pacific Way, 56-58.*

Sharpley, R. (1994). *Tourism, Tourists and Society.* UK: ELM Publications.

Simmons, D. (1988). Integrating formal and informal research methods. In Les Cahiens du Tourisme. Centre des hautes Etudes Tourisitiques Universitie de Droit, Dreconomil en du sciences.

Singleton, R., Straits, B. and Straits, M. (1993). *Approaches to Social Research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Stebbing, L. (1990). *Quality management in the service industry.* New York, U.S.A: Ellis Horwood Limited.

Stuart, D. (1994). Backpackers- The future backbone of the hospitality of the industry? *Hospitality, July, p 21-22.*

Teas, R. K.(1993). Consumer expectations and the measurement of perceived service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 57,18-34.*

Teas, R.K. (1994). Expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality: An assessment of a reassessment. *Journal of Marketing, 58, 132-139.*

TNT magazine (1996). *TNT magazine: The No. 1 Backpacker magazine.* Australia, Australian TNT magazine publications.

Vogt. J.(1976).Wandering: Youth and Travel Behaviour. *Annals of Tourism Research, 4 (1),25-40.*

Walle, A. (1997).Quantitative versus qualitative tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research,24(5),324-336.*

Ware, M. (1992). *"Been there; Done that" A study of winter backpackers in New Zealand.* Dissertation, Cambridge University, England.

Webster, C.(1991). Influences upon consumer expectations of services. *The Journal of Services marketing, (5),5-17.*

Weston, S.(1993). Backpack boom. *New Zealand Listener, 1993.*

World Tourism Organisation. (1994). *Global tourism forecasts to the year 2000 and beyond.* Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organisation.

World Tourism Organisation.(1997). *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, 49th Edition.* Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organisation.

Zeithaml, V. (1981)."How customer evaluation processes differ between goods and services, In *Marketing in Services,* Donnelly, J. and George, W., Chicago, American Marketing.

Zeithaml, V., Berry, L. and Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioural consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 60,31-46.*

APPENDIX ONE

Copy of questionnaire

Kia Ora and welcome to Northland. My name is Sarah Toxward and I am a Masters student at Lincoln University studying parks, recreation and tourism management. I am researching you the backpacker to the Northland region to examine your expectations and the perceived quality of the services that you use while in Northland. These include your use of accommodation, mode of transport and the activities you participate in. I would appreciate it if you could spend twenty minutes of your time going through this questionnaire.

Transport

1. Are you part of a package tour ? **1.** No ☐ **2.** Yes ☐
Which one ______________________

2. What modes of transport have you used or are planning to use in Northland ? Please **rank** them in order of preference (**1** = most preferred)

1______________________
2.______________________
3.______________________

3. Please indicate the **3 main** reasons that influence your decision to use a particular mode of transport

1.______________________
2.______________________
3.______________________

4. Travel in Northland is: more **expensive/cheaper** than I expected ? (Please **delete** one)

5. What sources of **information** do you use for making transportation decisions (please **tick**)

1. Other travellers ☐
2. Travel guide books ☐
3. Friends/Family ☐
4. Brochures ☐
5. Travel agent ☐
6. Information centre ☐
7. Other ______________please specify) ☐

Accommodation

6. Please indicate your **main** reasons for choosing a particular form of accommodation (Rank them in order of importance 1= most important)

1______________________
2.______________________
3. ______________________
4.______________________

7. What **types** of accommodation have you used while travelling in New Zealand (Please **rank** them in order of preference)

1.______________________________
2.______________________________
3.______________________________
4.______________________________

8. Using the scale below please answer the following question: (please **circle** the appropriate number)

When deciding on what **hostel** to choose how important is

	Very important	Important	Not essential	Unimportant	Irrelevant
1. Price	1	2	3	4	5
2. Accessibility/location	1	2	3	4	5
3. Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
4.Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5
5. Good atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
6. Other facilities (please specify)____________	1	2	3	4	5

9. When you arrive at a hostel what are the **main services/facilities** you expect the hostel to provide you with ____

____

10. What other hostels have you stayed in while travelling around Northland ?____________

____

11. Accommodation in Northland is: more **expensive/cheaper** than I expected (please **delete** one)

12. What could hostels do to improve the **quality** of their services to you________________

____

Expenditure

13. How much did you spend yesterday on the following items (NZ$)

Accommodation ______________________
Transport ______________________
Food ______________________
Tours/sightseeing ______________________
Alcohol ______________________
Equipment/Clothing ______________________
Other (please specify) ______________________

14. How much on average do you spend per day while in New Zealand? ______________

15. How much money do you expect to spend while in Northland ? ____________________

Expectations

16. Using the scale below **circle** the number which best describes your experience for the following statements

	Exceeded expectations	Better than expected	As expected	Less than expected	Far below my expectations
Transport I have used in Northland	1	2	3	4	5
Accommodation I have used in Northland	1	2	3	4	5
The variety of activities in Northland	1	2	3	4	5

Satisfactions

17. Using the scale below **please circle** the number which best describes your level of satisfaction with the following services in Northland, compared to other areas visited in NZ.

	Delighted	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Disappointed	Very Disappointed
Transport within Northland region	1	2	3	4	5
The accommodation available within Northland	1	2	3	4	5
The activities offered in Northland region	1	2	3	4	5
Other services (banking, post) offered in Northland	1	2	3	4	5

Comments____

Activities

18. What activities have you **done** while in Northland ? (**please rank** them in order of preference, 1= most preferred)

1. ____________________ 5. ____________________
2. ____________________ 6. ____________________
3. ____________________ 7. ____________________
4. ____________________ 8. ____________________

19. What activities do you **intend** to do while in Northland ?

____

____

____

20. What suggestions could you make in order to improve the activities you have been offered?

____

____

21. How did you hear about these activities ? (please **tick**)

1. Other travellers ☐
2. Family/friends ☐
3. Travel brochures/magazines(what ones)________________ ☐
4. Information centres (where)________________________ ☐
5. Other (please specify)___________________________ ☐

<u>General</u>

22. As a backpacker what **services/facilities** did you expect New Zealand tourism providers to offer from your previous travel experiences in other countries?____________________

____

____

23. What countries have you travelled to before arriving in New Zealand ?______________

____

____

24. What countries do you plan to visit after you leave New Zealand?_________________

____

____

25. What is the **main** reason you travelled to New Zealand (please **tick**)

1. Visit family/friends ☐
2. Part of world tour ☐
3. Holiday/sightseeing ☐
4. Business ☐
5. Work ☐
6. Other (please specify)________________________ ☐

26. Will you return to Northland ?

1. Yes ☐
2. No ☐----> What are your reasons for this__________________

____

____

27. Will you recommend Northland to other travellers ?

1. Yes ☐
2. No ☐ -----> What are your reasons for this __________________

____

____

____

Demographic profile

28. What is your age ? ______________________

29. Are you : 1. Female ☐ 2. Male ☐ (please tick)

30. Do you live in New Zealand ? 1. No ☐ 2. Yes ☐ (please tick)
Where ______________

31. What country do you live in ? ______________________

32. What is your occupation ? ______________________

33. What is your martial status ? ______________________

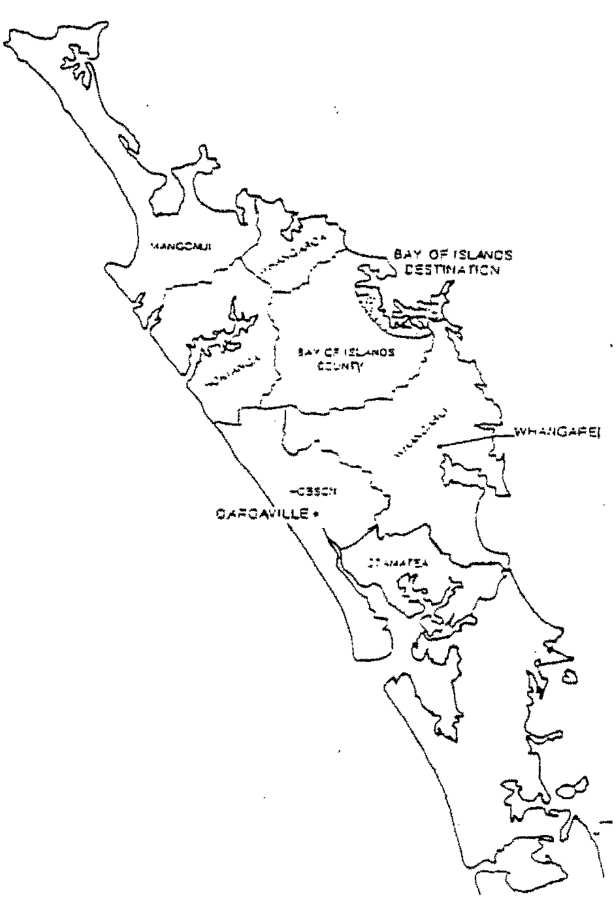
34. What is your highest level of education ? ______________________

35. How long do you expect to stay in Northland (days) ______________________

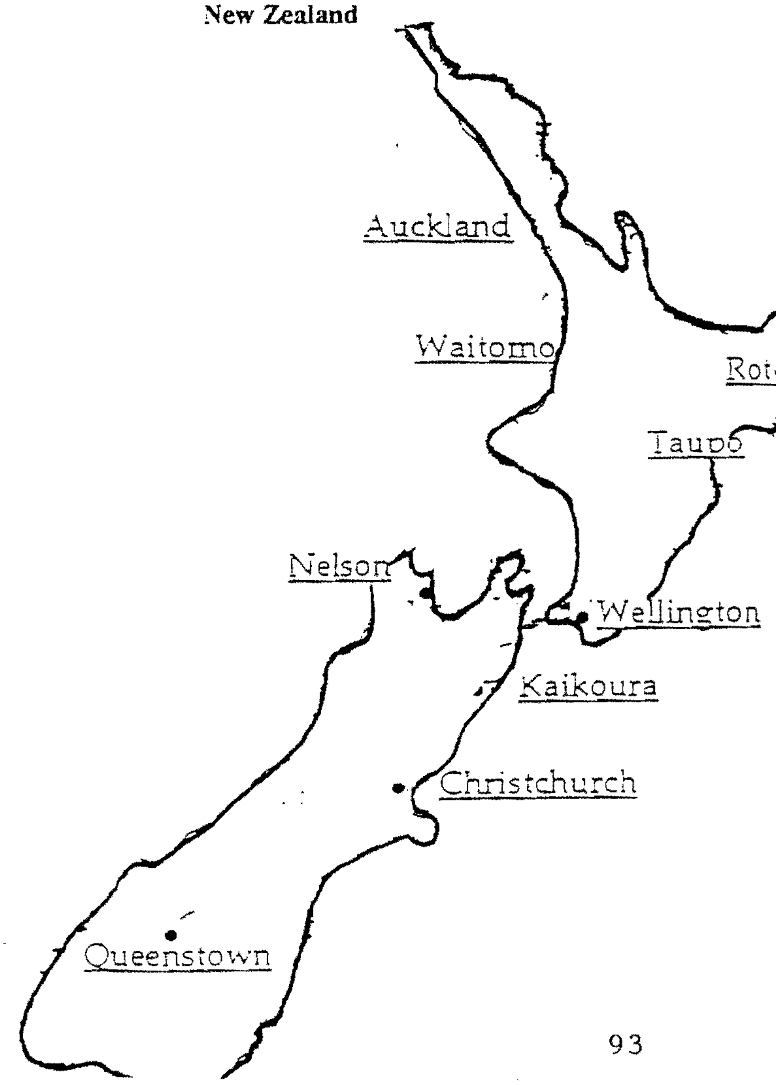
36. How long do you expect to stay in New Zealand (days) ______________________

37. Using arrows on the maps below, please indicate the travel routes you have traveled in Northland **and** New Zealand. Please indicate where you started your travel in New Zealand and where you expect to finish.

THE NORTHLAND REGION



New Zealand



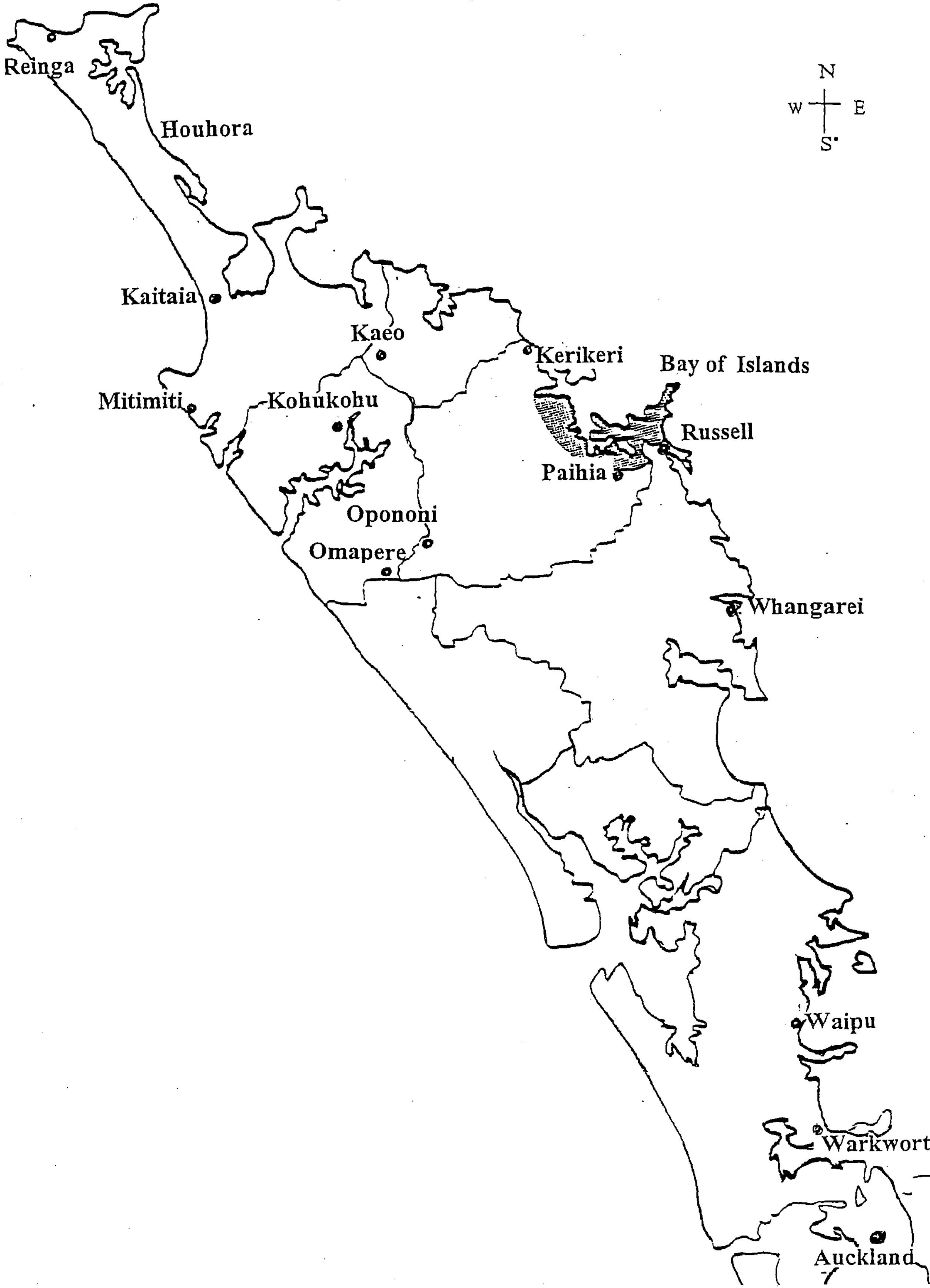
APPENDIX TWO

Breakdown of regions showing the country of origin and the number of backpackers surveyed.

REGION	COUNTRY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Australia		20
Pacific	Samoa	3
	Vanuatu	1
America		15
Canada		25
Europe	England	39
	Holland	17
	Switzerland	18
	Germany	30
	Denmark	4
	Norway	4
	Ireland	3
	Spain	3
	Scotland	13
Asia	Korea	4
	Japan	17
Other	Israel	1
	South Africa	2

APPENDIX THREE

Map of the Northland region indicating the areas where the research was conducted.



Not drawn to scale

Source (Destination Northland, 1998)