

Active holiday-making with a disability

Experiences of a medically-supported sailing holiday



Bachelor Thesis

BSc Tourism

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"It is just really cool that everyone is participating."

- Britt

Authorship Statement

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Authorship statement

I hereby declare that this thesis is wholly the work of Nienke Sluimer. Any other contributors have either been referenced in the prescribed manner or are listed in the acknowledgements together with the nature and the scope of their contribution.

Where I have consulted the published work of others this is always clearly attributed. Where I have quoted from the work of others the source is always given. A list of the references used, is included. An appropriate referencing style is used throughout. With the exception of such quotations this thesis is entirely my own work. I have read and understand the penalties associated with plagiarism as stated in the Student Charter.

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Abstract

Holiday-making with a physical disability has received increasing attention in recent years, however academic knowledge on the topic is limited. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of active holiday-making with a disability, and its connection to the tourist's daily life. Medically-supported tourism and active sport tourism were connected by studying the experiences of physically disabled tourists on an active sailing trip offered by tour operator SailWise. Qualitative methods were used to identify the multi-phased tourism experience. The research discovered high levels of appreciation for the holiday's distinctive features, such as involvement in decision-making, active sailing, a sociable atmosphere and care provision based on maximum independence. These characteristics suggest that the holiday offers a unique experience to disabled travellers, with a strong volunteer role that allows for sailing participation. The findings propose implications for volunteer tourism and hints towards empowerment, and suggests the potential of active types of tourism for the disabled traveller. Nevertheless, it was found that the holiday has limited meaning except for a break from ordinary living. Recommendations involve a deeper understanding of the positioning of the holiday in the guest's daily life, in order to maximise the added value of the trip.

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1. Introduction

"She thought it was not possible, and certainly not safe." This is how Britt, a 28 year old women, describes the reaction of her mother when telling her she was joining a one week sailing trip. Quite an overreacted response maybe, though what these two lines do not mention, is that Britt is unable to move without the use of a wheelchair. An active young adult, she is eager to see the world, and is used to such reactions to her leisure activities. It seems to be a recurring assumption in our Western society, that participation in sports and tourism for people with a disability should be ignored or does not exist as it needs a combination of physical, mental, and social capability which they have problem in controlling (Hua et al., 2013). Having a disability obviously has constraints for holiday-making, however people with a disability have the same needs and desires for tourism as non-disabled people and are users of travel services for many of the same reasons as able-bodied consumers (Ray & Ryder, 2003, Yau et al., 2004). Many disabled travellers are eligible to, and do want to experience sport tourism activities. Luckily, with awareness, technological progress and the help of volunteers, more sport event activities and tourism arrangements are becoming available for persons with disabilities (Hua et al., 2013). However, because of the only relatively recent interest of the tourism market in providing holidays for individuals with a disability, academic research on the topic is limited. This is unfortunate, because a deeper knowledge of the experiences of the disabled traveller is of high value for the development of quality tourism opportunities for this neglected segment.

In order to add to this knowledge of the disabled tourist experiences, I have been gathering data during a sailing trip in the northern part of The Netherlands, joined by eight individuals with a physical disability. Tour operator SailWise allowed me to do qualitative fieldwork during one week of sailing, participating in all the activities the holiday had to offer. The following section will provide an introduction and contextualisation of this organisation, after which I will provide an understanding of the problem statement leading to the thesis objective.

1.1 Background

In The Netherlands, tourism for people with a disability is organised in the Dutch branch organisation for adjusted holidays, the NBAV (Nederlandse Brancheorganisatie Aangepaste Vakanties). This association states that all people with a disability deserve pleasant holiday-making, and assure this by assigning quality labels to affiliated organisations. One of these organisations is SailWise, a one-of-a-kind company that provides water sports holidays to people with diverse disabilities (SailWise, 2015). SailWise is an idealistic organisation that articulates how the right adjustments can make it possible for everybody to participate in water sports. For already 40 years, the organisation offers water sports opportunities for people with a sensory, intellectual, and physical disability. Their objective is to offer people with a disability the availability to explore and increase their abilities, by participating in active water sports in a relaxed and safe environment. These holidays operate from three different locations or platforms: the catamaran Beatrix, the water sports island Robinson Crusoe, and the ketch Lutgerdina. Reservations can be made for groups as well as individuals, organised per type of disability and ranging from two to seven days. It is emphasised that a holiday with SailWise is characterised by active participation, a high level of sociability, and a relaxed atmosphere. The organisation claims to provide their guests a pleasurable feeling of freedom.

SailWise is financially very dependent on donations and operates with the help of a large group of volunteers that give assistance on the trips. Several volunteers join the holidays, helping with household tasks as well as supporting the guests with care. Some volunteers have a background in nursing, but many of them are just interested in helping and giving the guests a pleasant week. At the start of the season, new potential volunteers are invited for an introduction day during which they are provided with information and learn some skills and particularities useful for their participation in one or several holidays. This day has the function for the volunteer to get acquaintance with the organisation, as well as for the organisation to get to know potential volunteers. After the day, both parties have the opportunity to withdraw, when their ideas of the volunteering do not match. The organisation has a long list of passionate volunteers that contribute to SailWise's holidays for already many years.

1.2 Problem statement

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011), there are around one billion persons living with a disability in the world, equating to roughly 15% of the world population having a physical, mental or sensory disability. In addition Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen (2011) point out, that as lifespans in industrialised countries raise, the disabled population is likely to grow substantially in the future, due to aging. There are several good reasons why the tourism sector should give more attention to this growing group of potential tourists with a disability. In the UK for example several studies showed that significant numbers of travellers, are in need of adjusted holiday-making (Dwyer & Darcy, 2010). In Western societies, the disabled community is large and growing and often has more money to spend than is thought (Burnett & Baker, 2001; Ray & Ryder 2003).

The disabled traveller has been part of the tourism industry agenda only recently, and accordingly studies are rare in relation to tourism industry and individuals with disabilities, especially in sport tourism (Darcy, 1998; Burnett & baker, 2001; Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011). It is noted that there is a call for research that explores the vast collection of experiences of the disabled traveller, reaching beyond issues of accessibility and barriers to participation. Quality holiday experiences are valuable for holidaymakers and tourism organisations (Ryan, 2010). All the more, since there are signs (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011; Burnett & Baker, 2001) that holidays have the potential to be of significant influence to the daily life of the disabled traveller.

SailWise is such an organisation, and it hopes to benefit from a more solid, academic foundation of the pleasures and benefits that their holidays bring to the guests. SailWise wishes to better understand the added value of participating in water sport activities for their guests, therefore a research project with Wageningen University's Science Shop has been set up. The Science Shop is planning to execute a 1,5 year research project that will examine the experiences of the tourists to trace the added value for the participants. Hence, this thesis report is part of the explorative phase of the project and is treated as a case study. Based on the data that I have gathered, I hope to give useful recommendations for the project's research design as well as provide suggestions for the academic knowledge of tourism experiences of people with a disability. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to trace the experiences of tourists with a physical disability on a medically-supported sailing holiday, during the different phases that encompass the full holiday experience. To understand how the total experience is constructed and consumed, I will focus on two of the most

important distinctive characteristics of SailWises holidays, being active participation in sailing activities and daily tasks, and the additional value of the volunteers and the nature of their interaction with the guests. I hope that my findings and recommendations provide useful insights that will lead to an increased quality of the holiday experience for the disabled traveller.

1.3 Research questions

In order to address the problem statement, I have formulated the following principle research question: *'How do tourists with a physical disability experience an active, medically-supported sailing holiday?'* Accordingly, I designed three sub-research questions which will help me to answer the main research question. The second question is rather broad to tackle as a whole, which is why two extra questions are added to provide focus to the on-site experience.

1. First I want to understand the experiences tourists with a disability have during the pre-trip (anticipation and travel-to phases):

What experiences do the tourists have during the pre-trip phase?

2. Secondly, I would like to gain acquaintance with the experiences that the tourists come across during the on-site activity on a sailing ship, and trace the interconnectedness between the pre-trip experiences and the experiences during the actual holiday, focussing on SailWises distinctive features:

What experiences do the tourists come across during the actual holiday and how do these compare to pre-trip experiences?

- * *To what extent is interaction between the volunteers and the tourists contributing to the holiday experience of the tourists?*
- * *To what extent is active participation contributing to the holiday experience of the tourists?*

3. Finally, I want to put the pre-trip experiences and the on-site experiences in a broader context, and understand how the holiday is situated in the tourist's daily life:

How do the experiences gained from the holiday contribute to the tourists' sense of holiday-making and living with a disability?

1.4 Thesis structure

The following section involves the review of academic literature on the topic, as well as a framing of the applied theories for the research design. The review will cover the three main themes that make up the experience of a medically-supported sailing trip. The chapter that follows explains the methodology, outlining the research approach, methods used and limitations of the research. Chapter 4 collects the results that come from the data, after which Chapter 5 involves the discussion that puts the findings in the perspective of the existing literature and theories on the topic. This is followed by the conclusion chapter, in which I will provide an answer to the research questions. The final chapter outlines the recommendations I have drawn from the research.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

This section serves as a starting point that explores the research topic and provides the foundation on which I will draw my points of attention. The literature review will cover three areas of interest for the topic, being physically disabled tourism, active sport tourism, and the tourism experience. Important characteristics of these areas are discussed, describing occurring issues and established theories. The section finishes with the presentation of the applied conceptual framework.

2.1 Physically disabled tourism

To study tourists with a disability, it is important to understand what disability actually means and about what kind of disability we are talking. Disability is an inherently multifaceted topic, as it is involved with both medical fixations as well as social complexities (Oliver, 1996). The following section tries to understand medically-supported tourism for people with a disability, by limiting down the area of interest and outlining the most significant findings on this topic.

Background of disability studies

Since the 1960s, debates have been going on that make an attempt to establish a conceptual model that describes the different terminologies that evolve around concepts of impairments, disability, and healthy bodies (Oliver, 1996). Two alternative schemes are at stake nowadays, which are expressed by earlier reports of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Disabled People's International (DPI). Though both parties acknowledge that the notion of impairment is predominantly one of the body, and that disability has a deeper meaning, the main issue is on causality. The two schemes contradict in explaining negative social experiences and the inferior conditions under which people with a disability live. According to the WHO schema, chronic illness is causally related to the disadvantages disabled people experience (Wood, 1980). For those committed to the DPI scheme though, there is no such causal link; disability is exclusively social (DPI, 1982).

These contradictory perspectives are expressed in the two models of disability that currently rule the academic and professional debate on disability, being the social model and the medical model (Howe, 2008). The social model can be argued to be 'the voice of the disabled' and implies the view that disability is socially constructed and that it is society that disables people with impairments. It is seen as an emancipatory perspective, though the social model is criticised as disabled people found that the model does not connect to the actual experience of having a disability. Also, some thoughts are given to its assumed denial of 'the pain of impairment', both physical and psychological (Oliver, 1996). The main focus of the medical model is upon normalisation and adaption of disabled persons to society. The framework underpinning the medical model predisposes practitioners to think of a condition within an abnormal body, which needs suitable treatment. Accordingly, the medical model is criticised for its emphasis on treating and curing disability and neglecting the role of society in creating disability (Darcy, 1998). According to Fitzgerald (2005), this model has been highly influential in establishing leisure as a tool for developing normal, healthy bodies. The same author reminds us that although the social model might give voice to disabled people, we should bear in mind that

disability is not static. Instead, disability is dynamic as disabled people build competencies and constantly reconstruct their connections with their environment and other people. In addition, a term frequently involved in discussions on the issues of disability is empowerment. Empowerment represents an individual having the power to exert choice and therefore being able to maximise control in life. An often heard statement is that the only way to empower disabled people is give up the ideology of caring which is a form of domination and an expression of prejudice (Morris, 1997).

Physical disability

The background of disability studies draws a complex, highly contested image of disability as it is perceived from different facets in society. For the sake of this research, I will make use of the reconstructed expression of disability by the WHO as it appears in their instruction handbook International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10):

** "Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)." (WHO, 2011, pp 10)*

Obviously, this is a very broad term that tends to cover all forms that can exist within the disability realm. However, the disabled community is all but a heterogeneous one and there exist many levels of seemingly similar sorts of disabilities. Accordingly, we must be very aware of over-simplification when it comes to defining people with a disability (Figueiredo, 2012). Segmentation within disability conceptualisation is often done according to the WHO (2011) main types of disability: intellectual, motor or physical, hearing and visual. For this research, I will merely focus on the second type: physical disabilities. According to the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Dutch Institute for Social and Cultural Research), the term physical disability is at stake when a person has considerable difficulty with performing daily activities, mobility, housekeeping duties or lengthy sitting and standing. Additionally, classification of the physical disability can be done according to the, rather trivial, allocation of levels of severity. A person can be considered severely disabled when they are unable to individually perform daily activities, such as grocery shopping and taking a shower. When the person is able to do these activities by him- or herself, though with a lot of effort, he or she can be considered moderately disabled. In The Netherlands, there are 1.4 million independently living persons that consider themselves as moderately or severely physically disabled. More than half of these people has reached the age of 65 or is older, and women more prone to physical disability compared to men (de Klerk et al., 2012). According to De Klerk (2007), there are around 225.000 to 250.000 persons making use of a wheelchair in The Netherlands, of which 150.000 are permanently wheelchair-bound.

Tourism and physical disability

Though there is an increasing recognition of the physically disabled as an important niche market for the tourism industry, the disabled traveller forms a segment that is repeatedly neglected (Ray & Ryder, 2003). This position is reflected in academic research on this topic: people with a disability are not much discussed in tourism literature (Darcy, 1998; Freeman & Selmi, 2009; Ozturk et al., 2008;

Ray & Ryder, 2003). Much of the studies that have been done are constituted around issues of barriers, constraints, and accessibility as originally proposed by Smith (1987). Smith states that the tourism industry for the disabled is fraught with three types of barriers, which are intrinsic (physical), interactive, and environmental (sociological). This resembles the constraints model proposed by Crawford and Godbey (1987) that also identified three sorts of constraints. Here, intrapersonal constraints are the non-stable psychological states of the individuals that affect participation and preference such as depression and concern. Interpersonal constraints imply the absence of others that prevent participation; particularly tourists who are disabled may have a greater need for a person to assist them in their daily activities. The third constraint is structural and includes elements that intervene between the individual's preference and participation such as time, money, information, and accessibility.

These findings correspond to later research on disability and tourism, that has its focus on the physical or structural issues, in particular accessibility and to some extent finance (Burnett & Baker, 2001; Daniels et al, 2005; Israeli, 2002; McKercher et al, 2003). For example, Shaw and Coles' (2004) studies show that access and costs are two significant factors that make the holiday experience stressful for many individuals with disabilities. Access involves a range of physical barriers both in public and private spaces. The underlying assumption of many of these studies is that there is a strong relationship between such barriers and tourism participation for disabled people; suggesting that if barriers would decrease, participation levels would increase. Accordingly, in the past decade progress has been made in removing barriers, so that today the transport, accommodation, and attractions sectors are more accessible for the physically disabled. However, Yau et al. (2004) justly state, that the elimination of physical barriers to access may only address part of the issue. Also Darcy discovered that most barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities are socially constructed (1998). It is suggested that literature misses out on examining issues that go beyond accessibility. Moreover, only a small amount of research covers the benefits and pull-factors that people with a disability find in participating in tourism. Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen (2011) argue that, depending not only on the nature of an individual's disability, but particularly on the individual's former travel experiences and involvement in leisure activities, one would expect that disabled tourists' experience not only obstacles and barriers, but also the importance and benefits of leisure and tourism. Likewise, several scholars (e.g. Daniels et al.,2005; McKercher et al., 2003, Shaw & Coles, 2004) emphasise the need for research that explores the experiences of the disabled traveller, reaching beyond issues of constraint and accessibility.

Medically-supported tourism

In the general tourism industry, travel personnel and tourism managers are often poorly prepared to assist travellers with disabilities (Daniels et al., 2005). Most tourists with a physical disability however are regularly in need for a certain amount of support in care activities, or even in performing daily tasks. Tourism industry staff plays an important role in reducing potential access issues or in mitigating unforeseen difficulties, and training in disability awareness can minimize the barriers encountered by persons with disabilities (Vignuda, 2001). The disabled tourist is in general quite sceptical of tourism industry employees who do not understand their real needs, particularly of travel agents who are the primary source for people with disabilities (McKercher et al., 2003). For

the sport tourism sector, it is suggested that tourism providers should initiate user friendly strategies in managing the transportation, facilities, and environments for physically-disabled tourists. In addition, professionally trained sports service staffs and volunteers can be of great help to the physically-disabled tourists (Hua et al., 2013). Though, for many people with a disability the dependency on others may severely restrict travel if an individual has “maladaptive social relationships with care-givers and service providers” (Smith, 1987, p. 381). In this case, the relationship the person has to the caretaker can be regarded as an interpersonal constraint that occurs during interactions and a possible reason for non-participation.

Volunteer tourism

As is stated by Hua et al. (2013), besides sports service staff, volunteers can be highly valuable for holiday-making with a physical disability. This can be argued a specific kind of volunteer tourism where volunteers work during their own, as well as someone else's holiday. Volunteer tourists provide unpaid work on behalf of others, and operate according to the idea that tourism ventures can and should bring benefits to locals or others associated (Sin, 2009). Definitions of volunteer tourism are diverse, but many would agree that it involves discretionary time and takes place outside of the regular sphere of the participant's daily life (McGehee & Santos, 2005). This type of tourism has seen a significant growth in recent years, but is also a major topic of debate concerning its impacts (Guttentag, 2009). Also, the discussion concerning the motivations for volunteer tourists is dominated by the self-interest versus altruism issue, relating to notions of deep volunteers and shallow volunteers (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). One of the pioneers of academic work on volunteer tourism, Wearing (2001), suggests that volunteer tourism has positive influences on its participants and functions as a form of alternative tourism. Medical care and general assistance are one of the many types of projects volunteer tourists can participate in, often focused on very short-term assistance in a foreign country.

2.2 Active sport tourism

The last decade of the twentieth century shows a growing demand for tourism related to sport and physical activity (Gibson, 2003). Early literature shows that sports tourism as a tourism segment, can be characterized by two behaviours: travel to take part and travel to watch sport (Hall, 1992). Gibson extended on this view, by categorising sport tourism into three areas, which are active sport tourism where participants travel to take part in sport, event sport tourism where participants travel to watch sport, and nostalgia sport tourism where participants visit sports related attractions (Gibson, 2003). According to Gibson (2003), active sports tourism is described as travel to participate in active sports activities. To be more specific, the primary aim of active sport tourism is travelling to be physically active (Gibson 1998). Active sport tourism includes all sorts of backcountry hiking, trekking, biking, canoeing, sailing, horse-riding, skiing and other outdoor physical activities associated with the benefits resulting from contact with the natural environment (Tomik, 2013). Academic publications on active sport tourism are fairly scarce, though quite noteworthy are theoretical considerations of H. Gibson (Gibson, 1998, 2003, 2005).

Sailing tourism

Sailing has become a very popular leisure activity, pursued on almost every stretch of water in the developed world, from small basins to the open ocean. One of the most important characteristics of sailing, is being on the water. Tourism on water has been a fast growing tourism sub-sector in the past few decades (Kester, 2003). Water can be considered one of the most popular natural sceneries for rest and recreation. Prideaux and Cooper (2009) claim that even short periods near water have a beneficial soothing affect on most people. Water is a major tourism resource providing impressive settings, recreational opportunities, waterfront landscapes, a means of transport and an essential source of human consumption (Prideaux & Cooper, 2009). Sailing shares some important characteristics with cruise tourism. The view from a ship is by many considered to be stunning, and providing an overview of places that one cannot experience from the mainland. Also, sailing around allows to enter the shore regularly and discover unfamiliar destinations, it provides an mobility different from other sorts of travel. In addition, cruise- and sailing tourist mention the pleasurable interactions with fellow guests (Erfurt-Cooper, 2009). Sailing is done in craft of all sizes, from small single-handed dinghies and sailboards and trips range from short courses close to the shore, to sailing across oceans and around the world. Accordingly, the sport embraces all levels of sailors, from sporadic recreational sports people to elite international competitors. At each level sailing is technically complex: hull and sail design, wind and sea condition, tactics and teamwork, and the physical characteristics all interact with their skill to influence performance. It is a highly interactive sports which demands a lot of communication between crewmembers, accordingly social interaction is an important part of the sailing experience (Spurway et al., 2007).

Active sport tourism and physical disability

There is an increasing recognition concerning the beneficial relationship between physical activity and holiday-making (Gibson, 2003). Normally, active sport tourism involves outdoor physical activity of long duration and low intensity. Contact with nature, an inherent component of active sport tourism, fortify the tourist's body through sunlight, atmospheric pressure, air humidity variations and temperature changes. A tourist's mind also benefits from direct contact with nature qualities, such as aesthetics and landscapes, flora and fauna. Several scholars have found that outdoor physical activities allow people to experience the advantages of biological stimuli (for example those provided by air and water); the consequential mental stimulation reinforces the effects of the physical effort undertaken (Tomik, 2013). Understandably, the benefits of sports involvement are the same for both disabled persons and able-bodied persons. However additionally, active involvement in sports motivates persons with disabilities to regain their personality and to deal with the stigma of a disabled body (Martin, Adams-Mushett, & Smith, 1995). According to Yau et al., (2004) holidays make the disabled tourist learn personal capacities and evaluate on managing oneself, considering tourism as representing a metaphor of recovery. Several authors have added other psychological benefits of sport activities to individuals with disabilities, such as social mobility (French & Hainsworth, 2001), integrate people with disabilities into family and community activities, improve quality of life, self-confidence, and social acceptance (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011; Pagán, 2015). These findings correspond to studies on the values of leisure participation in general for people with disabilities. Leisure is playing an important role in increasing self-esteem, confidence and

psychological well-being, enhancing physical health and fitness, reducing the risk of illness and very much contributing to positive social interaction and relationships (Aitchison, 2003). Also, research has noted that the group in guided sport tourism can be one of the most important attractions (Schmidt, 1979). This resembles Auld and Case's (1997) finding that social interaction is among the most frequently reported reasons for participation in leisure activities in general.

This list of benefits does not automatically erase the constraints of joining an active holiday for people with a disability. It is clearly easier for a wheelchair-user to visit a museum than to climb a mountain: people with physical disabilities could have difficulty moving, and may be particularly prone to fatigue while performing an intensive activity (Daniels et al., 2005). Accordingly, the barriers for participation are even higher compared to the common barriers to tourism that people with a disability experience. However, some segments of the active tourism market brought effective innovations that allow people with a disability to join activities with the help of some adjustments to the materials and gear used. This has been a reason for people with a disability increasingly participating in active sports like skin-diving and white-water rafting (Fost, 1998). In Ray and Ryder's study (2003), disabled respondents even rated 'being physically active' as more important while being on holiday than able-bodied tourists. It provides them with a sense of capability that is hard to find in their normal day-to-day activities. Also Darcy (1998) found out that persons with disabilities have stronger goals and insights especially with outdoor sports and leisure activities.

2.3 Tourism experience

The tourism experience is shaped by many things, such as motive, past experience, knowledge of place, persons with whom the place is shared, patterns of change at the place, the images induced about the place and activities, and personal characteristics (Ryan, 2010). According to Cutler and Carmichael (2010), the tourist experience is a complex psychological process, being a discrete experience subject to anticipation, recollection and reflection. This means that the attempt of providing a clear definition of the concept will encompass a complex variety of aspects.

Tourism experience theories

Much academic research has been done on the experiences of tourists, associated with different types of holidays, tourists and the roles that tourists adopt during their travels. Accordingly, there are many ways to conceptualise the tourism experience, which are to a large extent dependent on the geographical context of the researcher. This is emphasised in the text of Ryan (2010), where he reviews existing conceptualisations of the tourist experience. According to his list of literature that examines the nature of the tourism experience, I will clarify several important and foundational tourism experience theories.

The destination can be a significant shaper of the tourist experience. Destinations may be seen as packages of opportunity to fulfil perceived wants. Accordingly, destinations are not simply physical spaces but are also places of constructed meaning (Beerli & Martin, 2004). This resembles Stamboulis' and Skyannis' (2003) definition of the tourism experience, as their focus is on the interaction between tourists and destinations, with destinations being the site of experience and

tourists being the actors of experience. Tourists tend to adopt certain roles, that are to some extent motivated by a sense of role play. The concept of roles is argued to underlie many of the market-oriented segmentation exercises found in the tourism academic literature, and the application of roles may also in a way influence the experience of the tourists (Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). Tourism roles and types are described more often, of which Cohen (1979) and Pearce (1982) are amongst the most foundational ones. Cohen's typology is based on the meanings tourists ascribe to their travels, associating this with issues of authenticity. Much of our knowledge of the roles that tourists can play is reflected in research by Edensor (2001), in which the author states that tourism is not only increasingly staged, it is also very much (re)produced by the performance of the tourists themselves who form perceptions of symbolic places. In this case, his descriptions of improvisational performances are interesting, as they characterise tourism as a facilitator of experiences that challenge habitual behaviour, allowing to try on unfamiliar roles. This is reflected in that statement saying that there is pleasure in the challenge of mental and physical disruption, as it pushes particular experiences.

Challenging behaviour also is the main topic in tourism experience theories of flow and arousal, and their relation to performance. These theories imply that flow (and satisfactory experiences) exist when the participant's abilities are equal to the level of challenge that exists within a given situation. So if the task is too challenging, the individual suffers frustration and possible anger, though if the reverse occurs, then the situation is potentially boring (Ryan, 2010). More specific to the topic of active tourism, to understand the experience of a person participating in sports it is important to be aware of their level of involvement or specialization in the particular sport (Gibson, 2003). Related to these theories is the concept of risk, and levels of competency and skill that may trigger participation and has its influence on the satisfaction of experiences. Tourism is an excellent provider of satisfactory experiences, that arise not only by meeting needs but also very much by meeting wants and fantasies that occur through activities and the interaction with others. This relates to theories of authenticity proposed by Wang (1999), meaning that even though tourism places might be structured according to the destination as a stage and thus missing authenticity (MacCannell, 1973), tourists can still genuinely enjoy social interaction, have fun, reinforce social bonds or perhaps have a moment of catharsis. This corresponds to a more specific study by Page et al. (2001), stating that there are two important motivational forces in sport participation for persons with disabilities, namely demonstrating competence and skills to others and the interaction with others. Also vital to mention, is the theory of the tourist gaze which implies that the tourism experience is also to a large extent influenced by the so called gaze. This theory has been developed by Urry (2002), and describes how a tourist arrives at a destination with particular assumptions about what one will see and experience, influenced by media, predetermined images and ideas and past experience. Expectations can guide choices and understanding of place influencing the level of satisfaction of the experience.

This list is anything but exhaustive, though emphasises that 'any attempt to present definitive explanations of the tourist experience are fraught with difficulties' (Ryan, 2010, p.41). The theories reflected on, are useful for the conceptualisation of the tourism experience, and the perspective of each of them is helpful for a understandable background knowledge of the broader framework I am working in. However, despite of the academic recognition of these theories, I do not want to pin myself down to any or some of the evaluated theories on the tourism experience. The theories might be reflected on in the discussion section, but because of the explorative nature of this thesis

research, sticking to a certain theory beforehand would be too much of an influence to the proceedings. I will keep the insights of these approaches in the back of my mind but rather take a more explorative approach examining the tourist experience beyond existing theories.

Framing the tourism experience

To avoid the research to become too loosely conceptualised, I would like to draw on the conceptual model of the tourism experience proposed by Cutler and Carmichael (2010). Their framework combines the insights from various authors and approaches the tourism experience using three dimensions. Rather than approaching these dimensions as three opposing entities, the dimensions are incorporated in the model forming an integrated whole. An important dimension of the tourism experience is derived from leisure studies, stating that the leisure experience is composed of multiple phases. A model presenting the multi-phased approach of such experiences was developed by Clawson and Knetch (1966) and later applied to the tourism experience (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

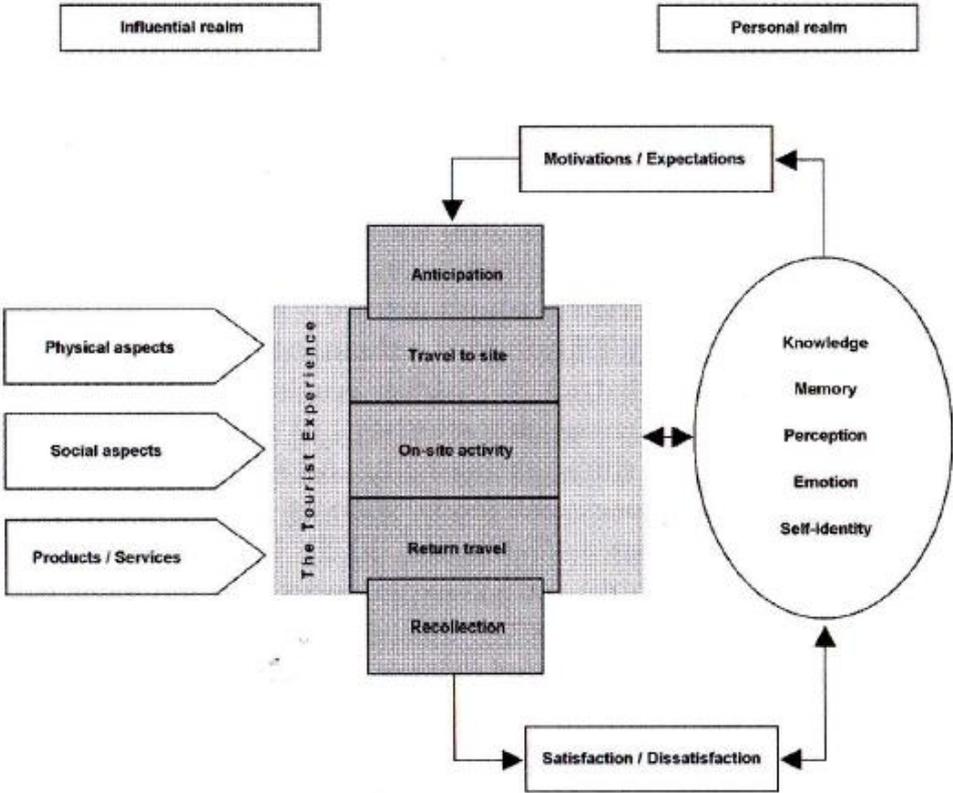


Figure 1 The tourism experience conceptual model of influences and outcomes by Cutler & Carmichael, 2010

The model involves five distinct and interacting phases of the tourism experience, which are anticipation, travel to the site, the on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. The model tends to focus on outside forces of the tourism experience, separating phases based on time and location. The anticipatory phase and recollection phase demonstrate how the tourist experience is planned before a trip takes place, and remembered long after the trip has finished. Additionally, during travel to a site, the tourist could still be developing expectations of the trip just as return travel could be important for reflection on the trip. The additional dimensions that are identified by Cutler and

Carmichael are the influences of the experience and the personal outcomes of the experience: the tourism experience is framed by evaluating the influential factors involved in shaping the criteria of the experience.

The influence on the tourism experience is composed of interwoven aspects, which is derived from research by Nickerson (2006). These two dimensions are translated in the model through the two elements influential realm and personal realm. The influential realm represents three categories of influence which are outside the individual. These are (1) the physical aspects, involving spatial and place-based elements of the destination; (2) social aspects, which encompass the social influences; and finally (3) the influence of products and services, such as service quality and leisure activities available.

The personal realm encompasses all the elements of a tourist experience within the individual, being motivation and expectation, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, knowledge, memory, perception, emotion and self-identity. Motivation and expectation are regarded as significant for the overall evaluation of a holiday and very much contributing to the choices made and experiences sought. Motivations are the reasons why tourists travel, and can be defined by push and pull factors and further identifications as indicated by Crompton (1979). Expectations are defined as anticipated traits, formed beliefs and predictions about future events and very much colour whether or not experiences are satisfying. Therefore, the satisfaction/dissatisfaction element is very much determined by the interplay between expectation and experience, ideally resulting in flow and pleasure. Knowledge is a cognitive aspect of the tourism experience which involves learning and skill development. Memories can be defined as mechanisms linking the experience to the emotional and perceptual outcomes of a tourist event, being an outcome as well as an influential factor. Perception allows an evaluation of tourist experiences, by attributing meaning to an environment, event or object. The tourist carries pre-set ideas, values and knowledge and reflects this on the experience, making the perceptual process very much socially constructed. Emotional responses on tourist events influence the evaluation of experiences, having very much to do with the perception and memory elements. Finally, self-identity is understood as the effect of the tourist experience on our everyday life through changes in self-identity and self-perception.

2.4 Conceptual model

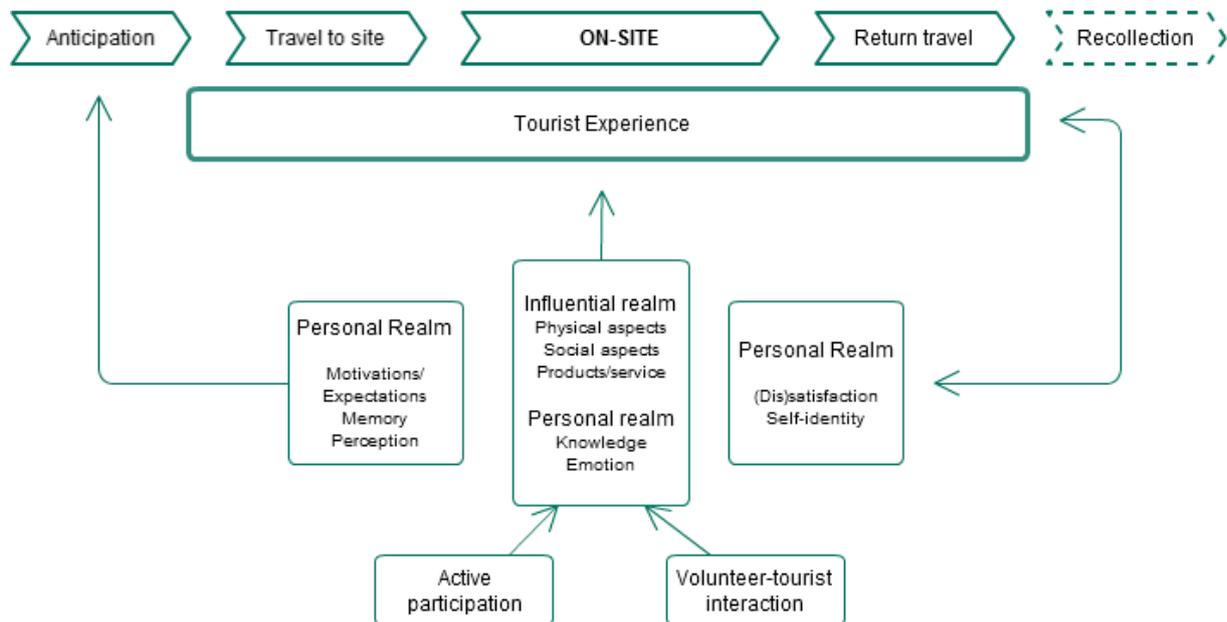


Figure 2 Conceptual model

The literature review shows the interrelatedness of several concepts that attempt to clarify a section of the experiences of disabled tourists on an active holiday. The three main themes of the research; physically disabled tourism, active sports tourism and the tourism experience, have their individual range of applications and theories. I combine these three areas of study and trace how elements of disability studies and active tourism studies appear in the experience of a medically-supported sailing holiday for people with a physical disability. The research is designed according to the dimensions of the tourism experience model by Cutler and Carmichael (2010). The structure of the multi-phased tourism experience is used and the data is gathered through examination of the two dimensions of the tourism experience, being the influential realm and the personal realm. However, I have made some adjustments to the original model by Cutler and Carmichael, in order to make it more suitable for this study. The elements of the personal realm are split up, as they were found to have a better fit when applied directly to a specific phase. In addition, it seemed useful to include the active tourism element and medically-supported tourism element more extensively by incorporating two of their most important features, being 'active participation' and 'volunteer-tourist interaction'. With active participation is meant the involvement of the guests in physical activities, in particular the sailing. The volunteer-tourist interaction incorporates the contact between guests and volunteers concerning care as well as social connectivity. The recollection phase is boxed with a dotted line, for its limited discussion in this report.

3. Methodology

This section aims to provide an understanding of the applied methods and limitations of this research, and moreover identifies the approach that I have been using. The fieldwork involved me joining the trip of 23-29 May, during which I had several tasks on the boat that supported the volunteers in their care-taking activities. This trip was joined by eight guests, of which seven mainly move with the help of a wheelchair. In addition, there were seven volunteers joining the holiday and three crew member responsible for the course of sailing. The opportunity to participate on this trip allowed me to get in close contact with a group of people that is usually rather hard to reach, this setting was thus very beneficial from an accessibility point of view. My role with the volunteers also minimised my intrusion into the scene, as I joined all of the activities and helped with the daily tasks such as grocery shopping and doing small tasks for the guests. More on this can be found in the following sub-section, in which the applied approaches are explained.

3.1 Research approach

The research is exploratory in nature, as it aims to uncover new insights on the topic. A sailing trip with SailWise is taken as a case study. A case study is an adequate method to perform exploratory research, as it allows for a deep knowledge on the phenomenon and the ability to cover the contextual background. Moreover, as found by Jennings et al. (2009), the tourism experience is greatly subjective and can only be interpreted properly by reviewing the individuals involved and the specific settings where the experience takes place. Same goes for the benefits of using qualitative methods to understand the tourist experience (Ryan, 2010). The applied methods and nature of the study do have some consequences that I deal with in the research approach.

Social constructionism

For this study, it needs to be emphasised that the experience of a single trip is influenced by earlier experiences and broader situations in the life of the tourist. According to Edensor (2001), tourist experiences abound with their own habitual endorsements, and tourism is never entirely separate from the habits of everyday life, since they are embodied in the tourist. To be more specific, Murray and Sproats (1990) note that feelings of incompetence in leisure activity may, over time, lead to feelings of generalized helplessness resulting in reduced future participation. It has also been suggested that the first tourism experience is a major hurdle determining whether an individual with a disability will continue to travel or not. Positive experiences in the past thus trigger positive future experiences, however we must also be aware that each layer of past experience yield processes of learning and, however much one may seek to replicate a past action or experience, past experiences shape future expectations and wants, and in consequence tourists may wish for either nostalgia or novelty (Ryan, 2010). Meaningful expectations are thus very much influencing future experiences. According to these theories of intimacy, destinations are multiple products that are ready to be experienced in different ways.

The methods used and topic of interest of this research inherently ask for a perspective that takes into account the socially situated position of both the researcher and the subject of research. Accordingly, the nature of this research requests an approach that evaluates the context of the phenomenon in every phase and element of the study. Therefore, this research follows the social constructivist approach. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (McMahon, 1997). We actively construct knowledge in our attempts to make sense of the world, and according to the social constructivist approach there is no existence of an objective reality. Social constructionism is concerned with the creation and institutionalization of reality in social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to this approach, I would like to adopt the point of view suggested by Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen (2011), meaning that this thesis draws upon an perspective that acknowledges disability as socially constructed, but additionally sees disability as something that is dynamic and subject to change as the person and his or her personal experiences change over time.

Ethnographic representation

The applied methods, participant observation in specific, are ethnographic methods that essentially deal with the representation of the research subjects. The analytical processes through which fieldnote segments are selected, linked to one another, reworked into consistent themes and integrated to produce a clear rhetorical style, are very much representational. Similarly, representation is at stake when creating fieldnotes in the first place. Presenting social reality is always to some extent influenced by the subjective perspective of the ethnographer (Denzin, 2000). As a researcher, I acknowledge that I determine whose point of view to present, what is significant about a person or an event, and what is supplementary and what can be left out. Also, the researchers point of view and conceptual priorities are not basically pre-given, they are influenced and shaped by the relationships with the people that he is trying to understand. These notions do not mean that research designed like this is meaningless, the opposing is true. Reflexivity, when applied to the understanding of members' worlds, helps us to see those worlds as shaped not by variables or structures that stand above or stand apart from people but rather as meaning systems negotiated and constructed in and through relationships (Emerson et al., 2011). Vital for an understanding of how these relationships shape, is a fine reflexivity and account of the chosen methods, therefore I describe in the following sections exactly how I have produced, processed and assembled fieldnotes into texts.

These applied methods are inherently related to epistemological issues. Considering the epistemological stance in the research, it is accepted that a completely objective perspective on the research is impossible. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1994), the epistemology of participant observation is founded in the principle of interaction and the reciprocity of perspectives between social actors. Knowledge construction happens through the interrelation of researcher and research subject (Adler & Clark, 2011). I took the role as a participant-observer, and engaged the activities together with the participants. However, when actually doing observations and writing down notes I distanced myself from the situation and was aware of the role I had as a researcher. More practical issues can be found in the participant observation sub-section.

3.2 Methods

I consider the fieldwork the frame of my data collection, as it involves a defined period of time and place. Within this fieldwork frame, I made use of several data collection methods. Semi-structured interviewing and participant observation are considered to be the main and official methods of research. However, as the fieldwork involves being among the subjects of interest for a week long, also informal talks and spontaneous conversations were part of the data collection and incorporated in the participatory method.

Interviews

For every guest respondent, two semi-structured interviews were held (see Appendix I). Interviews took place on-site, one at the beginning of the holiday and one at the end of the holiday. Out of practicality, the first type of interviews took place on the first evening and morning of the trip, and the final interviews at the last two days of the trip. The questions were formulated in a parsimonious fashion taking into account the guests that have difficulty with understanding and speaking. Interviews were guided and structured according to the multi-phased holiday experience, covering the anticipation, travel-to experience and part of the on-site experience in the first interview, and covering the main part of the on-site experience, return travel and recollection experience in the final interview. This structure was helpful for the researcher as well as the respondent. It must be noted that because of the time constraints of this thesis project, I was not able to study the recollection phase in retrospect but tried to understand as much as possible of this phase through the final interviews. In the first interview, additional questions were asked about the background of the tourist and their physical disability, this was to understand how the holiday fits in the life of the tourist. Moreover, the choice for a sailing holiday reflects the interest in active holiday making, so to reduce bias such insights are very helpful. In addition, one interview was held with the volunteers, primarily to address the third sub-research question addressing the social interaction. This interview mainly covered the on-site phase experiences, but also asked for the background of the volunteer. A consent form (see Appendix II) was filled in at the start of participation. This guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents, which is why pseudonyms are used in the report. Interviews were audio recorded using a smartphone, and additionally I used pen and paper to note down emergent thoughts and key points.

At the start of the trip, I have asked all of the eight guests whether they wanted to be an active participant in the research. Using the critical theory of saturation by O'Reilly and Parker (2012), I decided after the sixth start interview that the gained information was sufficient for an analysis that would cover the broadest range of perspectives. It appeared to be interesting to spend the rest of my time, besides doing the final interviews and volunteer interviews, by deepening and validating the data through participant observation. For the interviews again, I recognised the constructionist nature of the research, knowing that the act of asking a question is not a neutral act (Ryan, 2010). Accordingly, I acknowledge that researchers' theoretical assumptions about qualitative interviews have implications for how interview methods are structured, and thus I have used the theoretical perspectives on qualitative interviewing by Roulston (2010) to assure the quality of this method. Accordingly, I aimed at minimising my influence to the interview, as well as the effects of contextual influences. I took a neutral position in the interview, and tried to deepen the talking by asking value-

free follow up questions. This was difficult for some participants, since they were not so talkative or had a disability that hampered their ability to speak. These interviews appeared to be shorter than others. The interviews took place on moments of rest, when there was time between activities and all passengers on the boat were free to go. In this way, I was minimising the disturbance of holiday-making of the guests. I experienced this to be challenging sometimes, when I felt to be intruding their activity. The place of interviewing varied considering the level of noise and social distraction, but it proceeded always in either the common dining area or outside on deck assuring minimisation of distraction.

Participant observation

Participant observation was the primary tool to deepen the data on the experiences of the tourists during the on-site activity phase, and additionally worked as a validation tool for the information gained in the interviews. Participant observation, often referred to as ethnography, is 'performed by observers who take part in the activities of the people they are studying' (Adler & Clark, 2011, p292). This nature of participant observation makes that the method is affected by a complex network of personal characteristics of the researcher, theoretical perspectives and research contexts (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). This is not a limitation though, at least not if we do make an attempt to describe these contexts. All social actors, including ethnographic note-takers, keenly strive to make informed decisions based upon their background knowledge. In my practices and the fieldnotes I recorded, I considered the notions of reflexive ethnography as described by Wolfinger (2002), and applied comprehensive note-taking following temporal structure. I portrayed the course of the fieldtrip, writing down our activities in general, and regularly describing situations in more detail. This allowed to convey a more comprehensive depiction of the research location, allocating valuable insight into the background knowledge that guides subsequent note-taking. Beforehand, a list was created with notable aspects of the holiday experience and situations to be careful of, to create a comprehensive framework and provide structure in a method that is rather unstructured by nature. This list was based on the theories of the tourism experience and disability and active tourism studies as apparent in the literature (see Appendix III). Regarding note-taking, I made shorthand notes when they allowed me to not interrupt the natural flow of the situation. However, when participating in a conversation, having dinner or helping with some small care activities it seemed more appropriate to make notes afterwards. This was based on the goal to record observations as precisely as possible, as soon as possible, before the inevitably distorting effects of time increased unnecessarily. Every evening and early in the morning, I took time to transcribe and elaborate the fieldnotes when unrecorded impressions were still fresh in my memory.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, after which I did a content analysis of both the interview data and the fieldnotes originating from participant observation. Analysis of the fieldnotes and interview results proceeded employing thematic networks. Thematic networking implies a method for conducting thematic analyses of textual data, employing established techniques in qualitative analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). I worked according to the steps proposed by Attride-Stirling,

involving the stages; the reduction or breakdown of the text, the exploration of the text, and the integration of the exploration. Accordingly, the method draws on core features that are common to many approaches in qualitative analysis, such as data reduction and coding practice (Adler & Clark, 2011). Codes were attached to chunks of varying-sized words, phrases, sentences or entire paragraphs. The codes I used were subtracted from the elements of the conceptual framework, but also emerged during the practice itself, because of the interpretive nature of this practice. This is similar to how Dey (1993) describes the establishments of codes, stating that when we devise a category, we make decisions about how to organize the data in ways which are valuable for the analysis: we have to take into account how the category will fit into the wider analytic context.

I had a limited period available for analysing the data, and found that this method allowed for a efficient and thorough analysis. Moreover, this sort of analysis was appropriate for the current study, as it can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches and provide rich and insightful understandings of the qualitative data that describes the experiences of the guests. It is valuable to note, that all transcribed interviews and fieldnotes were originally in Dutch. Quotations in this report have been translated in English most literally as possible.

3.3 Limitations

To put the results of this research into perspective, a discussion of the limitations has to be taken into consideration. These limitations are inherently caused by methodological design and personal involvement in the research. The limitations are listed in a random order.

The first limitation I would like to discuss is one essentially caused by the nature of a case study. Choosing for a case study, means that the results cannot be generalised beyond the set boundaries of the sailing trip. The limits to generalisation are also set by the small sample size, which constraints making claims about general attitudes of physically-disabled tourists on a sailing trip. However, generalising the data has never been part of the research goal. On the contrary, it aims to provide more in-depth knowledge that can add to the development of further research and more applied knowledge in the future.

Secondly, the choice for this holiday as a case study was mainly based on convenience from the side of the organisation as well as the researcher. This was the only trip that had a vacancy on a short term, and allowed to fit in my time schedule. A more thorough consideration of sailing trips to choose from, would have allowed to look into the passengers on the boat and choose a sample that represented SailWises guests and tourists with a disability more adequate.

The third limitation is very much defined by the scope of the research that did not allow me to study the experience of the holiday in retrospective. I could draw assumptions from the guests' expectations of recollection after the holiday, which is also interesting from a tourist-perspective kind of view. But this method is not adequate for drawing definite conclusions about the recollection phase. To a significantly lesser extent, this was also the case for studying the motivations and expectations: those would have been more interesting when studied during the actual anticipation phase and not only in retrospect. I did not have the time and resources to devote to such a research design.

The final limitation is rather crucial for the research, and has to deal with the involvement of the researcher in the data gathering. First, the use of semi-structured interviews has the risk of bringing an interviewer effect to the situation, meaning that some aspect of the interview situation has an influence on the behaviour and response of the participant (Adler & Clark, 2011, p.233). How questions are asked gives associations for the respondent, that may influence his or her answers. The interview effect can never be completely ruled out, but considerable effort was made to make interview situations as consistent as possible. A limitation that should be given some considerable thought as well, is that of bias caused by the researcher's subjective interpretation of situations. My participation in the situation I was observing could have structured my note-taking, though I intended to be as objective as possible. Finally, a note about the informed consent must be made. At the start of the holiday, I introduced myself as a researcher, declaring that I would be joining their activities and that they should not take notice of my data gathering practices. The research was explained, but I did not go very much into detail on the specific situations I was looking for. I tried to take notes when I was not closely accompanied by others, but being on a boat does not allow to isolate completely. However, I did not have the feeling the guests adjusted their behaviour because of me. They approached me like a normal passenger: they involved me in their conversations and asked me for help just like they did with the other volunteers.

4. Results

In the following section, I will present my findings according to the themes that emerged out of the analysis of my fieldwork data. The findings are supported by segments from the data, after which the themes are immediately reflected on, fitting it in the perspectives of the literature review and conceptual model. The findings are organised according to the multiple phases of the tourism experience, as this provided a clear structure for analysis and is adding to the readability of this section. I will start by elaborating on the background of the guests, to understand their disability, daily life and their perception on the holiday.

4.1 Disability and daily life

This section is meant to provide an understanding of the background of the guests on the trip and the positioning of the participants in the research. It very much shows the diversity of the guests on this holiday, though at the same time revealing their bonding characteristics. The age of the guests on this trip ranged from 28 to 62 years old. The trip was joined by three female and five male guests, living all across The Netherlands and even coming from Belgium. For these people, their disability is significant in their daily life and shapes how they interact with their environment and perceive holiday-making.

4.1.1 Perception: active, but sometimes restricted living

The perception that the tourists brings with him or her, is highly influential to the evaluation of the tourism experience. Therefore, this section provides an understanding of the tourists background that constructs the meaning that is given to the holiday. The guests' perception is characterised by appreciation of active life and issues of (im)mobility.

Guests have different sorts of impairments and home situations

The guests on the trip all have a physical disability, which is an obvious finding as this holiday was specifically meant for people dealing with such an impairment. All of them make use of a wheelchair, though are dependent on this tool in varying intensities. Also very dissimilar is the nature of their impairment as well as their varying home situations. Of the total eight guests, half has been disabled since they were born, and the other half got disabled on a later age. Of the four guests that have been disabled for their whole life, three were born with a split spine, or spina bifida using the Latin medical term. This impairment has developed in a different ways for these three. Edwin, disabled because of a split spine, has been in a wheelchair as long as he can remember. This resulted in a very strong development of the muscles in his arms, through which he now is able to walk short distances with crutches. Same goes for Frank and Harriet - disabled caused by a split spine and respectively a paralysis affecting one side of the body caused by a stroke - who are able to walk short distances with crutches. They mainly use a wheelchair on boat, because of the unpredictable movements on deck. The others are to a larger extent dependent on their wheelchair.

** "I have walked until I was twelve, from then on I used my wheelchair only for longer distances such as grocery shopping or visiting a themepark. From my seventeenth, I gradually chose for the wheelchair. And the lesser you walk, the weaker your muscles will be and the more you will use your wheelchair." - Andrea*

** "I have paraplegia, cervical. This means that I am partially incapable of using my hands. I do am able to have some grip, but it is limited. And I am unable to use my legs, paralysed from the chest actually. That means I am bound to my wheelchair." - Giel*

Not only is diversity reflected in the disabilities the guests cope with, also their living situations are quite varied. Of the interviewed guests, one lives together with his parents and two live independently in a house that has been adjusted to their disability. The other three live in a so-called 'Fokuswoning'. These are homes that allow for a rather autonomous living with 24/7 care only when needed.

** "I live on my own, but with constant assist when I need it. When I am in need of help, I push the button and someone will come. These people do not live there, but at almost any moment of the day three or four people are present to assist the eighteen residents." - Andrea, living in a Fokushome*

** "I still live with my parents, but most things I do by myself." - Frank*

** "I live independent in an adapted house, married." - Edwin*

These characteristics mark the diversity of the guests on this trip. It is apparent that the guests' individual abilities range across different levels, which is very much influenced by the person's type of impairment. Accordingly, despite the fact that these people all deal with a physical disability, the descriptions indicate the different living situations among people that are often indicated as one homogeneous group.

Guests have an active life

Active hobbies and various daily affairs mark the daily life of any of the participants. Though not all of the guests currently have a paid job, they are anything but passive. Being active is reflected in normal day-to-day activities such as grocery shopping and social activities, but also appears in hobbies like cycling and swimming, or even deep-sea diving.

** "I work 20 hours a week as administrative worker at the municipal office, social assistance. I spend the rest of my time doing domestic work, visiting friends or shopping, actually just what everyone does. (...) I like to read and design greeting cards, and swim when I have the possibility." - Andrea*

** "I work as medical secretary in a hospital, 30 hours a week. Apart from that I have a lot of friends and family who I spend a lot of time with. And I have an assistance dog with whom I do a lot of activities. (...) I have quite a busy agenda, like to go out and visit bars, I have many social contacts." - Britt*

** I swim two times a week and I like to go cycling everyday when possible. Since recently, I have a new hobby, which is participating in races with radio controlled cars." - Giel*

The guests participate in diverse activities and like to describe their lives as similar to that of people without a disability. Indeed, their hobbies and activities do not differ from those of a non-disabled person. Social connectivity varies between the guests, some describe meeting friends as a regular activity and some indicate that they very much enjoy being on their own every now and then. This is of course dependent on personal interests, just as for example the preference of drawing and painting which is distinctive for guest D. The guests find joy in their hobbies and appreciate when they can independently participate in activities and sports, just like they value their ability to get from one place to another on their own. The following theme will indicate more on this feeling of mobility.

Guests are fairly mobile

The previous section already indicates the active life of the participants, suggesting that the guests are familiar with activities that involve travelling from one place to another. Some statements indicating levels of mobility:

** "Because of the tools I use, I do not have the feeling I am immobile. Manual wheelchair, motorised wheelchair, a car: what is more to expect? I can go anywhere I want." - Andrea*

** "I drive my own car, so I am as mobile as possible." - Frank*

* *"I can get everywhere, lovely. Just always hold on. I drive my own car: wheelchair elevator, wheelchair in the car, and go! Lovely. I can drive for an hour, not longer." - Harriet*

* *"I enjoy a lot of freedom with my wheelchair and car, through which I do not have the feeling to be very much disabled. (...) I do feel immobile in my hometown sometimes. This is a medieval city, there are not many places and shops that are accessible for wheelchairs." - Britt*

Accordingly, most of the participants experience quite a high level of freedom and do not really feel limited in their mobility to go from one place to another. For Britt, only limitations in visiting certain shops and restaurants sometimes cause frustrations, but she has learned to deal with this and come up with alternative places that do allow her to enter. All guests make to a high extend use of (electronic) tools that function as a sort of extension of their physical abilities, allowing them to individually go to places they would not have visited without. Most of the participants use a manual wheelchair as well as a motorised wheelchair in daily life, and five of the six participants have a car which they drive themselves. The use of these tools allows for a daily life that is rather dynamic.

Struggle with issues of dependency

Disability indicates the limitation of moving with an impairment. This limitation implies that there will always be things that people with a disability are not able to do individually or with the help of tools. For example Andrea, who indicated in one of the above fragments her interest in swimming, reveals in a later sentence that she is not able to swim independently, as she needs help with dressing and getting into the water. Dependency on others does not directly cause struggle, only when it coincides with frustration. Giel has more issues with such limitations than the other guests, and links these struggles to the regular dependency on non-disabled people in moving or doing normal tasks. He experiences this very much in daily life, struggling with the help he needs to dress, go to the toilet and shower. Also, he considers himself as not being very mobile, because of his rather high level of dependency on others when travelling from one place to another.

* *"Well, if you want to go somewhere you are dependent on others to get there. That is how limited you are. This can be quite hard sometimes." - Edwin*

Likewise, Andrea indicates:

* *"A hate versus love relationship with my wheelchair."*

Dependency on others is something all of the participants regularly deal with. They just cannot do everything independently, which is one of the main reasons why most of them need regular help in care or household activities. This occasionally causes frustration and conflicting feelings. They acknowledge that society is often not taking into consideration the people that do not fit in the image of a healthy individual.

4.2 Anticipation and travel-to

During the anticipation phase, the guests consider their holiday options and make decisions according to their personal interests and motivations. Accordingly, they develop expectations about the trip that they will join. According to SailWise (2015), one of the main reasons for people to join their holidays, is because it allows them to participate in energetic activities. This coincides with the findings of this study: the participants joined the trip to be active. Also, they feel like the trip needs to be relaxed and without strict rules or time schedules that would withhold them from having the actual 'holiday-feeling'.

4.2.1 Motivation: holiday offers the guests' needs and desires

The tourist motivations for participation are an important indicator for their wishes and desires, and shows what they would like to see in the holiday. The motivation for a holiday is defined by different factors and shapes the decisions that are made. In this case, the tourists would like to experience a relaxing week of active sailing, with the care they need.

Guests deliberately choose for a relaxed sailing holiday with active participation

Not only in their daily life, but also during their holidays, the guests like to be active and make the best of every day. Therefore, the guests indicate this as one of the main reasons for their participation on this trip: it allows them to be engaged with sailing. Also other activities during the trip are found as reasons for participation, such as involvement with cooking and the availability to go ashore in the harbours the boat visits. Additionally, a relaxing week is very important for the participants as the holiday is seen as a small breakaway from their ordinary life during which they do not want to worry about daily pursuits.

** "You are able to do things together. And if you want to be active it is fine, but if you don't feel like participating it is also fine." - Giel*

** "Just comfortable, being away on holiday. I will be exhausted when arriving home, but that doesn't matter. I used to play polo when I was younger, I love being on the water." - Harriet*

** "I like to explore this area, and the travelling around. (...) I just enjoy to help raising the sails and the jib, and I like to be active. Though sometimes I also find pleasure in doing nothing and read a book somewhere in the common area." - Frank*

These excerpts show that apart from being active, also being able to relax is a major reason to choose for this holiday. It seems that the guests are attracted to the balance between being active and having the availability to relax from time to time. This is something the holiday can offer, even more because SailWise is emphasising that you can create this balance yourself. The participants have read into the particularities of the trip, and know through the brochure and website that these factors are highly valued on Sailwises holidays. Furthermore, three of the guests mention the

environment as a trigger for participating on this trip. Accordingly push-factors as well as pull-factors define the motivations for choosing this holiday.

Recognition of the needed adjustments for active holiday-making

The guests acknowledge that because of their disabilities, they are restricted in their choices for holiday-making. They indicate that there is still a whole range of vacation options for them in The Netherlands and abroad, though not all fulfil their requirements. Their desire for active vacationing has some consequences, meaning that tools must be available and adjustments to accommodations are required. The guests recognise this, knowing that the only organisation that offers multiple-day sailing trips for people with a disability is SailWise. Accordingly, a significant reason for choosing this holiday is because of its adaptations and care facilities.

** "Normally I like to go on a holiday together with my wife, without any guidance or care. But for these kind of trips you just need some support and then it is a pleasure that it is available."*

- Edwin

** Holiday-making with a disability can be quite hard. (...) And well, if this boat offers the possibility to rotate the winch and contribute to the holiday, that is pretty nice." - Giel*

Andrea adds the comparison to an organisation also involved with water cruising holidays for people with a disability. She acknowledges the need for care, but don't want the feeling to be nursed. Her growing discomfort with these holidays was a motivation to choose for SailWise:

** "Some other organisation made me feel like I could not do anything independently, it felt oppressive. I thought these holidays would suit me more." - Andrea*

Both Giel and Edwin, and Britt as well, regularly go on holiday without any particular care. These are holidays with family and friends, that bring no difficulty for wheelchair users. These three guests do not need particular care, only some help that their company can provide. They do acknowledge that for active sailing trips, care and more particular adaptations are inevitable and they appreciate the help that they can get. The other participants are, to different extents, used to having care available and their holidays are rarely without medical support. Concluding, the motivations for people to join the holiday are mainly based upon the opportunity to be active, the provision of care, and the availability of relaxation and casual holiday-making.

4.2.2 Expectation: in anticipation of a pleasurable week

The expectations that are formed during the anticipation phase are of major importance for the actual holiday experience, as on-site experiences are evaluated according to pre-set ideas of the holiday. Expectations are formed about different elements of the holiday that are important from the perspective of the guest. These expectations are shaped by different sources of information, being written or verbally through stories. In addition, previous experiences of holidays, being with SailWise or not, are also very much of influence to expectations. Guests aim to not have too high expectations, anticipating a relaxing holiday without disappointment or struggle.

Expectations of the group, care and activities

The participants have been developing expectations during the anticipation phase, and it was found that these primarily involve expectations of the interaction with others, the activities and general holiday affairs and the provided care and communication with the volunteers. On group relations, expectations expressed feelings of hope for nice contacts and interaction as a cooperating group. The guests acknowledge that every group is different, and that people can act differently when they are among people they don't know. Therefore, also feelings of uncertainty are expressed and the guests have an attitude of just seeing what happens.

* *"I hope we will have a nice and sociable week together, and that we can do the tasks on board as a group. I think that this is certainly possible." - Andrea*

* *"I am hoping to get a good relationship with these people, we'll see." - Britt*

* *"I don't have expectations of the group. Every group is different, and I am not the one who takes the lead. I just go with the flow and see what happens. I hope it will be fun, but I am not going to do my best more intensively." - Giel*

Edwin thinks that he will have a more intensive contact with the volunteers compared to the guests. He believes that this is caused by the state of his disability, meaning that he normally feels more connected to non-disabled people than to people with a disability. The expectations of the (medical) care and interaction with the volunteers are based on the wish to be independent and use help only when needed to. The participants emphasise that they will do most things by themselves, but appreciate that they can ask for support whenever they want to. Also, they expect the volunteers to be friendly in their care as well as informal contact. Their expectations are not very demanding, there is mainly hope for independence and some needed care, but most of the guests mention that they will just see how this will develop. At this point, I already noticed that they are assertive enough to ask for help anytime.

* *"I expect that we will get a little help with the things we can't do, that we get the care when we ask for it, and that we can indicate this ourselves." - Giel*

* *"That they help us when needed, that they treat us nicely. That we can do the things we are able to do, and that they can help us when we ask." - Andrea*

* *"Well, that has always been good. And I can do a lot myself, so most things I will do independently." - Frank*

* *"Just a pleasurable interaction. Support when necessary, but for me there is actually no need for care." - Edwin*

As was found in the previous section, the activities are a major motivational factor to participate in the holiday. Therefore, expectations are developed that wish for involvement in exiting activities and a week marked by its diversity. The guests will like to help with sailing activities, and supporting with other things such as stipulating the route and preparing the food. In addition, they expect to be free in their participation. They hope to be involved when they wish, but that they also have the possibility to say no sometimes.

- * *"Well, actively participating in raising the sails, help to get the job to the other side. As much as possible. Just pleasantly sailing." - Edwin*
- * *"A little bit of everything, participation is possible but not obligatory. And I will be tired." - Harriet*
- * *"I just expect to be a bit involved, sometimes more intensive and sometimes less intensive. And sometimes you just don't feel like helping, that is also fine." - Giel*
- * *"Well, holding things and helping, I would like that because I have never done anything like that before. And I hope we will visit places and go to shore. (...) I am looking forward to drive around for a bit." - Britt*

These findings can be summarised as expectations that articulate careful hopes on what the holiday will look like. They evolve around the elements of care, group interaction and participating in activities. The guests above all expect a pleasurable week on the sea, in which they can decide on most of the things themselves. However, they also understand that much aspects of the holiday are dependent on factors that you can't predict in advance. This has the effect that their expectations are intentionally as well as unintentionally a bit vague. More on this can be found in the section 'go with the flow'.

[Expectations based on prior experience or stories: influence of the memory element](#)

Holiday expectations are produced through the influence of various sources that give information on the trip. Important sources of information are websites and brochures. Most participants have their information from these channels, and accordingly also rely on these channels when they shape their expectations. Another important source that refines expectations for future holidays, are experiences of previous holidays. This is related to the tourism experience element 'memory'. Previous experiences shape future experiences because of the memories that are in the head of the tourist. We have a selective memory, meaning we sometimes mainly remember the good or bad things of a holiday. These memories are accordingly compared to new on-site experiences, shaping the overall evaluation of new holidays (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Five out of the six participants had been on a holiday with SailWise before, of which four went on one or more holidays with the same boat.

- * *"I have been on the Robinson Crusoe two times before, a pleasing experience. The only drawback to this kind of holidays, or at least that was how it was at the island, is that you are forced to participate in these little tasks like doing the dishes, setting the table. I noticed that I was the most vital one, meaning that I was the one constantly doing these tasks. I think the Lutgerdina and Robinson Crusoe are different, different ways of being active." - Edwin*
- * *"I see these holidays as a healthy addiction: when you have done this once, you just don't want it differently." - Andrea*
- * *"The previous years have been nice, so that is what I am hoping for." - Frank*

Britt is the only participant who did not go on one of SailWise's trips before. Her expectations are shaped by her previous experiences with a different organisation, operating from Belgium. In this organisation, there is no difference between volunteers and guests. All participants come as a tourist on a trip, but not all of them have a disability. She enjoys this setting, so this shapes her expectation of this holiday, where there is a small distinction between volunteers and guests. The other five participants are satisfied by their previous experiences of holidays with SailWise. Therefore, they choose to join this trip and hope for a week that is just as pleasurable as the ones before. Accordingly, expectations of this particular holiday are also for a large extent influenced by these previous experiences. Nevertheless, the participants aimed to get rid of their previous experiences and start the holiday from a blank point of view. I elaborate on this in the following section.

Guests limit their expectations

As became apparent from the fragments above, the guests have some pre-conceived ideas about how the holiday will look like. However, they also formulate their expectations rather vague and express hopes carefully. Two reasons for this can be identified. First, some guests acknowledge that expectations are of influence to the experiences during the actual holiday, so to avoid disappointment they try to limit their expectations. Secondly, others are just unaware of how the holiday will look like, so they are precarious in predicting the course of action.

** Harriet, about the expectation of the group: "You have to wait and see what happens."*

** "I am looking forward to see many things, but I will very much go with the flow. That is what I usually do on holidays, just be easy and not expect too much." - Britt*

** "Well, I try to start every holiday from a blank page. Though you make every trip with the same boat, every holiday is different. You know the boat, you have a feeling about how things go, but the group and the weather are always different. I just go with the flow and see how things go, you can't really have expectations." - Andrea*

Limiting expectations is expressed in the urge of the participants to just go with the flow. It reflects the wish to not be disappointed and a longing for natural interactions. I think, however, and so does literature say (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010), that it is impossible to not have preconceived ideas about future holidays. Unconscious hopes will always be at stake in the interplay between expectations and actual experiences. Accordingly, I do not want to conclude that the participants' experiences are expectation-free, though the wish of guests to avoid these preconceived ideas indicates their pleasure for spontaneity and care-free holiday-making.

Anticipating on a relaxed holiday, starting with the travel-to

Care-free holiday-making is already expressed at the very beginning of the holiday. Guests expect their holiday to be relaxed, and would like to begin it that way. The guests feel strongly about relaxation, and their holiday starts from the moment they are leaving home. Though most of the

guests have the ability to drive themselves, or use public transport independently, they prefer someone else driving them to the place of departure.

** "I had preferred using public transport, because my mom and dad can't use their car for a week now. However, this is most practical. (...) Public transport was quite hard, it is an eight hour trip, with four transfers. That causes a lot of fuss." - Britt*

** "Family brought me, which was fine because now we had the time on our own." - Giel*

** "I went here with Valys. Normally I go with my car to Enkhuizen, but I don't know Harlingen. Then I would have felt nervous, and I don't want that." - Harriet*

** "I considered to drive myself, I have my own car. But I did not bother arranging that, because then a volunteer would have had to pick me up at some parking lot. It was getting too complicated, so my brother brought me." - Edwin*

Of the total eight guests on the trip, only one drove independently to the place of departure. Accordingly, most guests prefer being brought to the destination by car, over getting there themselves. This would be too much of a hustle, something they want to avoid at the start of their holidays. Especially for the guests that came from far, they holiday started from the moment they left home: pictures were taken and stops were made along the way. These findings coincide with the motivation to go on a relaxing holiday and the desire to just go with the flow. Starting the holiday comfortably seems to be valued over the desire to be independent.

4.3 On-site activity

During the on-site activity phase, the most important holiday experiences are built. Accordingly, this is the most extensive section, filled with the most significant experience elements of the holiday. The elements that are of high influence are the social aspects, the physical aspects and the products and service. Additionally, I have added a section with the less evident experience elements, which are knowledge and emotions.

4.3.1 Social aspects: laidback attitude and friendliness are key

The literature on both active tourism and medically-supported tourism indicates the importance of social interactions and feelings of belonging for the tourism experience. Also in this study, the interaction between different guests and the volunteers was seen as a positive element adding to the overall experience of the holiday. Adding to the feeling of group interaction, was the casual atmosphere that was remarkable for the whole week. This manifested a pleasurable informal feeling that gave room for spontaneous actions and humour.

High level of involvement of everyone in the group

On the first day, the volunteers and crew members came together three hours before the guests would arrive, to get to know each other, go through the guests, and prepare the boat for departure. One of the things that got emphasised during that meeting, was how important it is to realise that we are on a holiday with a group and that we will always involve all participants on the boat. This was for a large part demonstrated with the involvement of the guests in deciding on the route. Already right after arrival of all the guests, we talked about everyone's preferences regarding the route and places to visit. On a map of the northern part of The Netherlands, the captain showed us the places and routes we could possibly go, taking into account the wind and tides. There was kept score of everyone's preferences, and we picked the route that most of us would like to take. Similar events occurred during the week, when we had to adjust the route because of the weather. The guests appreciated to have a say in this process, it felt significant to articulate your view.

** "I suggested to visit the island of Schiermonnikoog, but that appeared not to be possible because of the neap tide. Though I would have liked to go there, I think it is a good decision of the captain that we did not pull it through." - Frank*

** "So the thing is that you have a certain goal, but for some reason you can't get there. And then the captain is saying like, 'guys think please, where can we go'. Yes, I appreciate it very much that we can contribute to that." - Andrea*

The crew members do their best to make everyone involved in the sailing, and the volunteers try to involve the guests in the other activities on board, such as cooking and preparing coffee and tea. The crew members do this excellent, not only randomly asking who wants to help, but also calling the guests by name and asking directly for their assistance. The volunteers think that it is sometimes hard to ask the guests for help, since they felt to take easily control of things themselves instead of asking others. However, they acknowledge that the guests deliberately choose for an active holiday, so volunteer Anna mentions their aims to stimulate guests in the daily tasks:

** "Same goes for doing the dishes, if you do it together it is done in no time. Sometimes you have to push this involvement, and sometimes it will go naturally and are they keen to assist." - Volunteer Anna*

An example of involvement in such a daily task from my notes:

** "A few moments later, one of the volunteers comes to ask Giel if he would like to help cutting vegetables. He wants to. I join them downstairs, where he is cutting cucumbers with the help of very handy desks that can pin the vegetable so that it won't move."*

These observations were not just singular, such aims were made the whole week long and the guests indicated their appreciation for the effort that was taken to constantly involve them.

** "I think that the captain and the two crew members did their very best to involve everyone, you can see that constantly. They are very motivated to make everyone useful, I like that very much." - Britt*

** "They asked me to go into the yankee net, which was a special experience." - Edwin*

** "I was asked to go into the yankee net, but I let that one pass. That would take too much energy. I did it before on a holiday, I had never expected to do something like that. (...) Then I was supported by the jokes and the promises the crew made, persuading me to do something I thought I couldn't."*

- Andrea

The crew as well as the volunteers do their best to involve the guests in simple as well as more challenging tasks and activities. Decisions are made together with the group, and the crew and volunteers are open for suggestions. Efforts are made to provide the sort of holiday the guests are looking for, offering the opportunity to get most out of the week and the activities. The guests like this involvement very much, and appreciate the opportunities they get offered. Making decisions as a group is valuable for them, because you are on holiday together. The guests don't have a feeling to be neglected, there is taken care of their abilities as much as possible. Involvement stays voluntarily though, more on that can be found in a later section.

Friendly interaction

It struck me that in this group of nineteen persons, no small groups were formed. All activities are done together as one, and everyone talks to different people. This was also noticed by Britt, who mentioned several times how friendly everyone is and how easy-going the atmosphere is compared to the holidays she was used to. One element that was of great meaning to the sociable atmosphere, is humour and joking. Giel and Dirk were constantly laughing together: Dirk has a lot of self-mockery, and Giel makes the most funny and inventive combinations of words and sentences. During dinner, people are often laughing and telling amusing stories. Also when people are involved in activities or invited to help, this is frequently done with a joke from the side of the volunteers or the crew members. Most of the guests are open to jokes about their handicaps, which they often enjoy themselves at most. This adds to the sociable feeling of interaction, and influences the casual atmosphere. Additionally, it reflects the level of acceptance the guests have with their disability, since they are okay with making jokes about it. The enjoyable interaction was noticed by the guests as well as by the volunteers. Communicating with new people can be exiting for some people, but the casual environment effected a positive mindset that intensified the sociable atmosphere during the week for all passengers.

** "Well yeah, you have to get used to each other. For the first two days, you have to settle. Afterwards it is fine, but it does not always come easily. You first have to know what the others' abilities and barriers are." - Giel*

** "You have a different relationship with every passenger. (...) But with this group it is nice to be on holiday for a week." - Andrea*

One thing that struck Edwin as well as Britt, was a higher level of interaction with the volunteers than with the guests. For Edwin, this responded to his expectation, because also in daily life he finds it hard connect to other people with a disability. Britt's feeling was that this was affected by the large age difference and variety in interests and daily life. She felt more connected to the volunteers, but this was not negatively affecting her feelings of pleasure and friendliness.

** "With some guests it was harder to get in contact." - Edwin*

* *"You would say that conflicts would arise after a few days, but I did not notice anything like that. Everyone is so friendly, communication goes very well." - Britt*

The guests had a different experience of their contacts during the week, though all noticed and appreciated the friendly interaction between everyone. This added very much to their positive feeling of the holiday, and created an open and spontaneous atmosphere. However, this feeling only had a temporary meaning because none of them believed to stay in contact with any of the guests or volunteers. Some indicated they would consider visiting the reunion if this was organised, though no one felt the need for such an event. Accordingly, friendly group interaction was a major holiday satisfier and influence to the holiday experience, the social connectivity generated feelings of group belonging. Though, this was only for the course of the on-site activity phase.

High appreciation of laidback attitude

Casual atmosphere and relaxation are some of the key factors for this holiday. According to volunteer Anna, you can make decisions, but you will have to take into account that these can change within a few hours. All days were planned differently, generally because we had to take into account the tides and sluices for the time of departure and arrival. Therefore, some of the mornings we got up earlier and made a buffet so that everyone could eat breakfast whenever and wherever he or she wants. Also one morning, we had to leave late, at 12.00 in the morning. Breakfast was served around 10.30, and people could sleep long which was highly appreciated. Even when we decided to have breakfast early, it was possible to sleep longer if you would have preferred that. Dirk did this for example pretty often, which was no problem unless it was mentioned to the volunteers that would wake him up. Same for bedtime. When you were tired, you got to bed and when you felt like having a drink or playing a game this was also possible. During the day we agreed on the time for dinner, depending on aspects like time of arrival and the plans for the evening. We went several times for a walk with the people who liked to, to get an ice cream, walk along the village or city, or watch the sunset. Guests liked this diversity of activities and places we went on land.

* *"I liked to be on the islands, the viewpoint on the island of Terschelling was incredibly beautiful. But also walking through the village on the island of Ameland was very enjoyable." - Edwin*

Not only the time schedule was unplanned, also the consumption of food went natural and unstructured. At the start of the holiday, the captain made clear that we can have almost all the food we want to, everyone is free to make suggestions for dinner or buy the ingredients for a tasty cake or desert. This meant that we ate loads of food during the week, at very different moments that just suited the planning for that day. Some days, when breakfast was late, we had a late lunch with simple sandwiches, but we once we also had very tasty pancakes for lunch. When some of the guests were not feeling like a hot lunch on the final day, some volunteers prepared sandwiches for them which was highly appreciated. Guests clearly pleased the relaxed atmosphere.

* *"I loved that, very positive. Nothing is obligatory and everything is possible." - Andrea*

* *"That was great, you are allowed to do everything at your own pace. (...) I liked not knowing where we would go." - Britt*

** "That was wonderful. Flexibility and just see what the day has to offer." - Edwin*

A relaxed attitude is also required sometimes. In the mornings, it is rush hour in the bathrooms, as there are no separate toilets and we have to share two adapted bathrooms and one normal bathroom among all passengers. This is no problem, but as a passenger you can't expect to take a long shower at that time. Giel sometimes had a bit of a struggle with the casual atmosphere, he values to know how things go and having control of the situation. To reduce his feelings of insecurity and being dependent on the situation, a list was made for him that covered the names of the volunteers that would assist on what day.

Spontaneous actions

Sailing on the Waddensea means being very much dependent on the wind and, in particular, the tides. This meant that we had to change our plans rigorously a few times. On the third day, we got stuck on a sand bank, and the captain decided to turn back to the harbour of Nes, where we came from. Accordingly, we were on the island of Ameland for the second time, which was unplanned but inevitable. Spontaneously the captain suggested to go to a restaurant, to make the day just a little more special. As we all thought this was a nice idea, we left the planned food for the evening for the day after and had a very delicious dinner in the village of Nes.

Spontaneity also has to do with the inventiveness and creativity, which I often came across on the boat. Moving the wheelchairs on a ship is sometime causing difficulty, especially when getting off- and on-board. Because of the tides, the gangway would sometimes be at an unbalanced level compared to the ship, meaning that it is very hard to move a wheelchair without slipping. As a solution to this, ropes were secured to the wheelchairs and held by some volunteers after which the wheelchair was pulled up or dropped down. A quite exiting and enjoyable activity for both guests and volunteers. Sometimes, the rope was even secured to Britt's motorised wheelchair so she could pull someone up herself. This worked also very well with sailing cables, making the work light and making many laugh. The whole holiday, some of the volunteers and crew members were worried about Dirk, because he was constantly dropping to one side of his wheelchair. They were considering different options, until one suggested to use a shelf on one side of this wheelchair. Surprisingly, this worked and Dirk was pleased with the solution. Many things are possible on the boat. During two afternoons, Casper was feeling tired but did not want to go to bed and miss what happens on deck. Therefore, some life-jackets were put on the cabin roof, in order to create a relaxing bed outside where he was quite happy about. I even heard that they sometimes make a swimming pool on deck, improvising with canvas and water.

We stayed in Leeuwarden for the last night, and the following morning I went out to get croissants for breakfast. This was an idea suggested by Carla on the day before, and I offered to get them. When I arrived back on the boat, people thanked me and enjoyed their croissants.

** "You notice people like these things. Now they are involved with activities they will never do at home." - Volunteer Anna*

The guests liked how the trip was organised: not so organised. Spontaneous actions and inventive plans marked the holiday, which was appreciated on the side of the volunteers as well as the guests.

Usually, guests' lives are rather structured and planned to suit their work and make sure assistance for leisure activities is available. It was experienced as pleasantly that the week is free from obligatory structure and filled with unusual actions.

4.3.2 Products and service: care and activities are key

Products and service elements are contributing significantly to the on-site holiday experience. An important feature of the holiday that is being offered to the guests, is the constant availability of care that the guests can request whenever they want. This can be considered a service element where independence is key. In addition, active participation in sailing and other activities is key to the holiday and found to be very much appreciated by the guests as a satisfactory element.

Volunteers provide care and use tools only when needed

The guests can always rely on the help of the volunteers for the whole week long, with some moments where guests need a little more assistance. Some of the guests need help and some medical care when going to bed or getting up in the morning. This goes very informally: none of the guests is linked to a volunteer for the whole week, but the guests ask during the day a volunteer if he or she can assist with these tasks. The guests give them a sign if they would like to go sleeping, and they agree on a time to get up in the morning. Some of the guests do not need any help at all, or just with giving them some clothes that they can't reach. I have for example helped Britt two mornings with providing her clothes and toiletries, so she could do the rest herself.

After two days, the volunteers have a good understanding of the people that are rather independent and of the others that need some extra help sometimes. The volunteers know that they should always avoid to patronise, and they expect that most of the guests take their own initiatives. Volunteer Gina notices that this is very much dependent on the guest:

** "Some arrange it all themselves and ask for help when needed, and others need help but refuse to ask for assistance. Those you can subtly offer your help."*

The care provision is largely dependent on the demand of the guests. When they do not bother to ask, or feel like they can do it independently, the volunteers will interfere as little as possible. This is based on the assumption that the guests know very well how they normally perform these daily tasks, so they are perfectly aware of their abilities and can articulate their preferences properly. Giel sometimes had a little struggle with the lack of structure and the rotating care system, but acknowledges that the volunteers learn fast when you explain your needs. Organising the care provision in such a way, was overall experienced pleasurable by guests as well as volunteers.

Care is minimised, and left to the responsibility of the guests. The volunteers are willing to do as much as possible, but that is just not how the holiday is organised and how the guests would like to see it. The volunteers considered this week as fairly light, since many of the guests were rather mobile and independent. Communication is at the heart of the care provision, because guests have to indicate when they need help and how they would like to be assisted. The volunteers have learned

to estimate when help is needed, and ask for the people's wishes when they don't know how they can help. This informal setting is very much appreciated by the guests.

Assistance based on friendliness and mutual help

You do not need to be an experienced caregiver to be a volunteer on the boat, needed is a friendly attitude in assisting others. In a conversation with two of the volunteers, I was asked if the volunteering would suit me. I expressed my doubts: I am not a good care provider. However, they considered this no problem, because the guests can indicate very well what they need. Vital is that you are sociable and open, and not afraid to give intimate help sometimes. A friendly attitude and willingness to assist guests as well as adding to the group atmosphere, marks being a volunteer on this boat. Guests appreciate this friendly and casual care provision.

** "Everyone is helping each other when possible, from both sides. And it is very much appreciated when you help someone. Very positive." - Britt*

**"Everyone is so attentive." - Edwin*

Likewise, they add themselves to this attitude of assistance as apparent in the following example from my notes, an interaction occurring multiple times:

"Andrea asks me if I would like to drink something, she is getting tea for herself and Casper. A few minutes later, she also gets him some pudding."

The guests appreciate the help that they are receiving, and like to show this to the volunteers. Concerning communication, it very much appeared to me that when volunteers ask if the guests need some help, for example by reaching something or pushing the wheelchair, this is always done in a friendly and light way, or even by making a joke. Through this, the idea of volunteer and caregiver vanishes and an atmosphere is created based on mutual help instead of the manifestation of unequal relationships.

Sailing, cooking, and off-deck activities

The findings have already shown that being active is one of the major motivations for participants to join this trip, and accordingly it also is one of aspects of the holiday that they appreciate most. They like to do things by themselves, and value their independency on the boat. Especially Britt, Edwin and Harriet easily move themselves on deck. Obviously, sailing is the key activity in which the guests like to be involved. Many of them take the opportunity to help sailing when this is needed, according to their abilities. Edwin is one of the guests that was very actively involved with sailing, which is shown in the following segment of my notes:

"A few moments after we got on open water, the sails needed to be raised. The only way to untie the ropes of the sail, is to climb on the cabin roof. I was reaching out for the ropes already, but Edwin was ahead of me. Seemingly without any effort, Edwin got out of his wheelchair and climbed on the roof to untie the ropes he could reach."

Guests expressed their pleasure in sailing through actions. Often initiatives came from the side of the guests, asking if they could give a hand or support with some tasks. During two days of wild sea, some would sit for hours at the front side of the boat handling the jib, letting themselves get completely wet from the seawater. Though also their words express their appreciation.

** "I liked that very much! Physically it was quite heavy, much heavier than I would normally do. But this turned out quite well, I thought it would be even heavier, or that I would have pain or wrenching somewhere. But I don't feel anything like that, I feel just good!" - Britt*

** "Active participation makes this holiday fun! That is why I join." - Harriet*

** "I liked the sailing and cooking, otherwise I wouldn't have joined." - Giel*

The opportunity to sail was high on the guests' lists, though they also liked to help with other tasks such as cooking. Some of the guests took their own initiative to help with these things. Others needed a little push to get involved in a certain task: in their daily life they are not that used to doing these tasks. Essential is to accept that things take a little longer, harmonising with the relaxed and casual rhythm of the holiday.

Free choice to participate actively

Not only the opportunity to participate was appreciated, also the availability to say no to participation was highly valued. The guests acknowledge that some tasks are just too heavy for them, and participation in all activities would take too much energy. From my notes:

"One of the crew members asked who liked to help with sailing, and assigned specific tasks to people who wanted to. Together with Frank I was going to raise the main sail. In the end I finished this together with Arend, one of the volunteers, since it got too heavy for Frank. Simultaneously, Giel got assistance from volunteer Anna, because he indicated that the job got too tough."

In general, these guests were assertive enough to indicate not to join activities when they were tired, or just did not feel like doing something. In a conversation I had with Britt and Andrea they expressed their appreciation for the freedom they had. They agreed on the joy they found in the sailing and cooking, but also valued that you can make the decision to participate yourself. Andrea mentions the importance of taking your moments of rest; to avoid being exhausted and unable to enjoy the rest of the holiday.

** "Get involved with everything in a good way, but also being able to say no at moments you did not feel like it. Very positive." - Andrea*

** "I haven't been off-deck every time we dropped anchor in a harbour, then I just want to read a bit on my own." - Frank*

The guests are free to do what they want. They know they choose for an active holiday, and want to take out as much as possible. However, the holiday is also characterised by a feeling of casualty that allows the guests to relax and take their time to rest. Participants are supported to join the activities,

but they will never be forced to do things they are unable to or not interested in. This feeling of freedom is valued and experienced in a positive way.

4.3.3 Physical aspects: environment is a pleasurable factor

The physical environment of a holiday is a major contributor to the tourism experience. Destinations vary on an extensive list of elements, characterising every place differently. Same goes for the environment of this holiday, which is noticeably extraordinary. Not even has the Waddensea a very particular nature to offer, also being on the water and living on a boat brings its special elements to the holiday experience.

The weather and environment add to the holiday feeling

The weather during a holiday can be very determining for the atmosphere. During the trip, we were lucky to enjoy an almost full week without any rain. We saw quite some sun, and the temperature was fairly good. Cold was experienced sometimes, but because of the sailing suits that were available we did not suffer from it. Guests as well as volunteers liked to relax in the sun every now and then, and several times I heard people say how much they appreciated this. Britt one day noted, that the holiday would have been a lot different when we had experienced a lot of rain. We would have resided much more inside, packed in a rather small area. This could have caused frustration and conflict, and we would have missed the pleasure of sitting outside. Not only the weather, also the natural area added to the guests' holiday feeling. For many, being on the water was directly associated with holidays, for it is a sort of environment that is different from one's natural surroundings.

** "I love being on the water, obviously one of the reasons to choose for this holiday." - Edwin*

** "Being on the water was so nice, I already thought I would like that. I had no experience in cruising like this, but normally a holiday is complete when it has a boat tour. So this definitely felt like holiday haha. - Britt*

However, what Britt also mentioned is that she sometimes felt a bit restricted on the boat. She values her ability to drive everywhere with her motorised wheelchair, this is quite limited when being on a boat with eighteen other persons. This did not affect her level of pleasure, but it made her realise how much she appreciates the freedom of her daily life. The guests made pictures of our surroundings quite intensively, for example of the seals we came across many times. They were in awe of the animals and liked to watch them sunbathing. The boat, weather and nature were for many an attractive factor of the holiday.

Being on the water provides a feeling of freedom and being away

Being on the water felt as a hallmark of holiday-making, but it was also very much providing a feeling of freedom and being away from daily life. Not only because we were in an unfamiliar environment,

but also because the freedom it brings to visit so many places. At the beginning of the trip, guests were a bit overwhelmed by the different opportunities we had for our route. This was an experience it had myself as well, we shared pleasure of having a variety of destinations to choose from. In my notes I articulate repeatedly how I like the amount of places we visit, and that I recognise others feel like this too.

** "You are able to reach a much larger area, like a journey. I like that, brings feelings of freedom."
- Edwin*

** "Yes, I love it. Oh, I am repeating myself haha. Just forget everything, no newspapers, television and telephone. Literally being away and refresh. (...) Being on the water is really being away." - Andrea*

** "What I like about this holiday and the sailing, is that you don't have to think about the stuff at home for a while. Which is nice, you really are away for some days. The holiday has a positive impact on your level of worry." - Giel*

In the above mentioned quotes by Andrea and Giel, they share the function of this holiday as a sort of escape from daily life. Also two others experienced this, that the holiday make you forget your daily struggles as if you are having time to refresh and take a break from your daily rhythm. This feature of the holiday is very much valued, as it cuts the guest loose from their daily life that can be full with restrictions. The water provides the feeling of being in no-man's-land, and also on the island a feeling of isolation from the normal world was experienced. The guests liked this very much.

4.3.4 Knowledge and emotion: less evident experience elements

Not all of the elements of the tourism experience as proposed by Cutler & Carmichael (2010) are obviously represented in the data. The knowledge element was apparent during the trip, but the data shows that it did not really have that much of an influence on the holiday experience. The next element of which I can't heavily reflect on, is emotion. This is for a whole different reason. Obviously, emotions are represented in almost every other aspect of the tourism experience because the positive evaluation of these aspects comes with positive emotions. The emotion element therefore, can be found in any of the mentioned elements, because of their positive or either negative evaluation. I will shortly reflect on two more apparent aspects of emotions that influence the tourism experience more directly.

The holiday is tiring

From the first day onwards, guests as well as volunteers took their time to rest. Most people needed some time to take a nap or relax, because the days were relatively active and not everyone slept well during the night. Additionally, the holiday is providing a lot of new impressions and the interaction with new people often takes effort. Despite of Britt, all guests were having difficulty with finding the balance between fatigue and active participation.

** "I notice that I use more energy on the boat compared to my normal daily life. This certainly has an impact on the following days. (...) I took an extra day off from work." - Frank*

** " I did more than I intended to do. With my disability, that will take some time to recover. (...) The holiday is something you have been looking forward to for a long time, then you want to run the thing for all it is worth." - Edwin*

** "I was planning to take some gas off today, but I am not handling that very well. Tiring, especially the end of the week is exhausting." - Andrea*

During the week, several of the guests indicated that they were passing barriers, and felt that the holiday was asking much energy, physically as well as mentally. Sometimes volunteers felt that they had to interfere, because the activities were simply too intensive for the guests and not all of them were aware of this. The guests anticipated on their tiredness: despite of Britt, all of the guests had taken one or more days off from work or daily activities after their arrival back home.

The holiday brings feelings of joy

Emotions are experienced constantly, and therefore it is impossible to detect all of them individually. The identification of the guests' experiences also involves an evaluation of the feelings that belong to these experiences. Accordingly, I found that experiences very much go hand in hand with positive emotions and that the feeling of pleasure is recurring during the whole trip. Pleasure will be linked with satisfaction in the final section of the results.

** "I have felt very happy and cheerful, unless I had some personal difficulties." - Andrea*

** "Relaxed. You have time to think and breath in the fresh air." - Britt*

These quotes reflect how many of the guests have regularly felt during the week. The research did not allow to study personal emotions and inhibited feelings. Though, the experiences that I came across were filled with feelings of joy and relaxation, and sometimes some struggle. These feelings undermine any of the experiences of the guests and make them evaluate on the experiences in a positive way.

Gaining sailing skills

The tourism experience element that was not so influential for this case, was knowledge. Knowledge and learning do not play a significant role in the tourism experience process. This was related to the fact that sailing skills or other particular experience do not play a role in the holidays with SailWise, because you will do everything together. Two times the crew members organised a small sailing lesson, but they acknowledged that you will forget most of it; it was merely for fun. Some of the guests, with less sailing skills, mention that the few things that you will learn this week, will be gone the next time you go on a sailing trip. Others indicated that they know enough, and just don't need to learn anymore.

** "Your experience does not really play a role, I found that out after my third holiday I think." - Giel*

** "I have been sailing for quite some years now, so I don't have to learn anymore." - Frank*

Accordingly, the need for learning and knowledge development is of minor detail to this holiday. It is not a particular reason to join the trip, and in general the guests do not expect that they will take knowledge with them home.

4.4 Return travel and recollection

The return travel and recollection phases constitute an overall satisfaction level of the holiday, and have the potential to link the holiday experience to daily life. During the return travel, guests had the idea to experience satisfaction and contentment. They go home with a positive feeling. It is however argued that for the largest part of the guests, the holiday merely brings a temporal positive meaning and that besides the memories the holiday does not significantly add to daily life. Some hints for a contradictory outcome might be detected, but no conclusions can be made.

4.4.1 Satisfaction: contentment

Evaluating different aspects of the holiday, the experience might be characterised by feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Satisfaction obviously has a positive influence on the overall tourism experience, and dissatisfaction affects the experience negatively. At the end of the holiday, the guests expressed feelings of contentment; the holiday had satisfied their needs and desires.

Guests go home satisfied, the holiday is pleasurable

At the end of the trip, just before the guests were picked up, we had some tea and coffee and evaluated the holiday. After expressing his own experience, the captain asked every guest as well as volunteer for their experience of the week. Everyone reacted positively, explaining how they were pleased by the sociable group interaction, relaxed atmosphere and the sailing. In addition, many appreciated the variety of the trip: we were able to visit the different islands, but also sailed the Frisian lakes and canals. During this conversation as well as in the interviews, all guests indicated that they would consider going on another trip with this boat in the future. They were positively satisfied, and would like to have such an experience again in the future. Harriet and Frank have even already booked another holiday for this season. Though Giel and Dirk like to go, they have their doubts because of financial reasons and the physical effort the trip takes.

** "This was a beautiful trip! Positive, just fun. (...) I have booked another trip in June, which is leaving from Enkhuizen." - Frank*

Also, one of my final questions asked for the feeling that the guests would have on their way home. All guests mentioned 'satisfied', and indicated feelings of pleasure as well as fatigue.

** "Tired, satisfied, looking back on a pleasurable holiday. (...) I will definitely come back." - Andrea*

** "The pace was very good, I experienced a good balance. Being more active would have been rather exhaustive, but less activities would have been boring I think." - Britt*

The guests liked the balance between being active and relaxing, especially because they were able to create this balance themselves. They felt exhausted after this week, but in a positive, refreshed way. Contentment characterises their evaluation of the holiday, the week responded to their desires of being active and have a relaxed holiday and answered to their need to have a holiday with some care and adaption to their disability. The volunteers reacted on these positive responses, by expressing feelings of reflexive satisfaction. They felt happy to contribute to an experiences that would not have been possible without their support, and indicated the pleasure they get out of participating in this form of volunteer tourism. Because for them, it also felt like a holiday.

Fulfilling expectations

In essence, satisfaction is generated through the interplay between expectations and actual experiences. Though the guests tried to limit their expectations, underlying pre-set ideas of the holiday have modified how they experienced the on-site activity phase. In general, the holiday responded to the expectations of the guests. Edwin experienced one thing different than expected, being the heaviness of the sailing.

** "I was a bit disappointed by the sailing, most tasks are too heavy to participate actively. Small adaptations would be beneficial, with more pulleys and winches, to make it less heavier so that more people can help." - Edwin*

Edwin compared his experience on the boat to his previous experiences of two holidays on the Robinson Crusoe island. Accordingly, he concluded that sailing here was much heavier than he was used to. Without his previous knowledge and build expectation, he might have not noticed this.

4.4.2 Self-identity: limited significance

The tourism experience can cause changes in self-identity and self-perception, when the holiday experiences are translated to personal insights. This change does not occur necessarily, and is very much dependent on the meaning that the guests give to the holiday beforehand. The data shows that for this case, the experience has limited experience for the guests' personal identities.

The perspective of the guests influences the meaning of the holiday

Tourists bring their own background and perception with them on holiday, as has been stated in earlier sections of this report. The values they bring with them, have their influence on their personal reflections and levels of satisfaction. Holidays in general, are for most guests indicated as something pleasurable, to which they look forward to. These trips are not seen as big, life changing events: several guests go on a sailing trip more times a year, or have multiple independent trips and holidays with other organisations. They do look forward to the holiday, it provides a break in their daily life. However, after this break, they assume to continue their life as they have known it before.

* *"Holidays are always nice, lovely. Not feeling necessarily better, just normal. Something you look forward to." - Harriet*

* *"I want to make a photo album, a good experience allows to enjoy the afterglow for a little while."
- Edwin*

The experience continues in the recollection phase. Most guests collected the pictures of their fellow guests, which they like to show their friends and family afterwards or use to make a photo album. Guests do not have high hopes to stay in contact with others in the group and accordingly do not make the effort to start long-lasting relationships. They concern the holiday to be something to look forward to, without assigning sky-scraping aspirations to their trip beforehand.

The holiday experience does not directly influence one's self-identity

Though all guests indicate their positive feelings and pleasurable as well as satisfying experiences, their believe in influence to their self-identity is not convincing. There is a general expression of positive experiences, but explicit statements of influence on daily life are hard to detect. Apart from some hints to positive feelings, there are no suggestions of links to daily life and identity. One participant did express a positive influence of these holidays in general, because she has experienced such an effect after previous holidays.

* *"The holiday gives me a positive feeling." - Frank*

* *"Well, maybe not this holiday in specific, but my previous holidays with this boat have done so. They have influenced how I afterwards dealt with things at home. (...) I experienced that I was able to do things on the boat, and translated these to my abilities at home. Of course, this does not happen every specific trip, but there were certainly things that gave me a good feeling." - Andrea*

Also, Britt has the feeling that the holiday will give her some stuff to think about. But she is unsure of the actual affect that will provide to her self-perception and daily life.

* *"Well, I don't know. (...) Every now and then you have to push boundaries, that is something I take with me and might think about." - Britt*

According to these findings, definite statements on the tourism experience related to self-identity can't be made. This is partly because the guests claim that there is no influence. In addition, the self-identical process is very much unconsciously fixed. This study is not designed for such an assessment and the scope does not allow for a retrospective evaluation of the effect of the tourism experience on daily life. This is clarified in the limitation section, as well as in the recommendations

5. Discussion and conclusion

The results indicate the pleasure that is experienced by disabled tourists on a medically-supported sailing trip, and confirm the positive influence that active participation in sailing and the friendly care provision have on the overall experience of the holiday. Now, I would like to compare these findings to the existing theories on this topic, in order to outline the relevance of the research. The detection of differences and similarities to corresponding studies will provide a comprehension of the positioning of this research project and the contributions of this study.

5.1 Discussion and synthesis

Comparing phases of the experience: how the experiences were shaped

It is significant to realise how guests' motivations influence the outcome of the research. It is to be expected that the participants like being active during the holiday, as it is one of their major values in life. Taking a random group of people with a disability, would have resulted in outcomes that are more diffused because of more diverse interests. Accordingly, the participants' interests characterize the motivation for choosing the holiday (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010), are therefore very much defining the participants' judgement of the holiday.

Though the participants tried to limit their level of expectation, expectation based on previous experiences were found to be influential for the evaluation of the holiday, corresponding to the applied model of Cutler and Carmichael (2010) as well as theory by Ryan (2010) and Edensor (2001). Experiences of the past shape future experiences, as became also apparent from the data: participants judged situations comparing them to what they were used to. Tourist experiences are never entirely separate from the habits of everyday life. Resulting, the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are very much based on the extent to which expectations are met during the holiday (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Urry, 2002). At the end of the holiday, guests felt that most of their expectations were met, except for small things that some would have liked to see different. These comments did not influence their level of satisfaction: guests indicated to turn back home tired but contented. Moreover, all would consider participating in one of SailWise's holidays again, matching Ryan's notions (2010) of the triggers that positive experience have towards future experience.

According to these findings, it can be concluded that the experiences of the holiday are very much dependent on external forces and that the different phases of the holiday are highly intertwined. The process of shaping experiences is inherently socially constructed, and determined by influences such as previous experience, perspective and expectation.

The contribution of active participation

The findings signify several bonding characteristics to be found in this group. Predominantly, these are their dedication to various leisure activities and their wish to be maximally independent. The guests' remarkably high level of daily activities and participation in sports is not uncommon: it confirms findings by Darcy (1998), who found that persons with disabilities have stronger goals and insights in leisure activities. Being active is likely to give them a feeling of pleasure that is unfamiliar

for a person without a disability. Accordingly, these findings add to the rather unrepresented link between disability tourism and active tourism research. References might be drawn to psychological benefits of sport activities to individuals with disabilities such as self-confidence, and social acceptance as indicated by Page et al. (2001) and Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen (2011) as well as for example enhancing physical health and fitness and reducing the risk of illness (Aitchison, 2003). It is no surprise that one of the main motivations that came apparent from the research, is their wish to actively participate in sailing and other tasks. This matches theories of flow and arousal (Ryan, 2010), that indicate the wish for tourists to have challenging experiences, that provide some risk to performance.

The contribution of volunteer-tourist interaction

The interaction between volunteer and tourist was experienced agreeable and the laid-back organisation of care received high appreciation. Corresponding to literature, the friendly atmosphere contributed to positive social connectivity (Aitchison, 2003; Page et al., 2001). Also, the guests' appreciation of the informal organisation of care is not uncommon in literature, since bad relationships with volunteers as care-givers are found to be an issue that restricts people with a disability from travelling (Smith, 1987). Participants were pleased by the easy-going care provision that focused on maximising their independence. This matches other studies that found that volunteers are usually appreciated for their mitigation of unforeseen difficulties (Vignuda, 2001) and user friendly strategies (Hua et al., 2013). The organisation of the volunteering contributes to a friendly and supportive atmosphere that helps to overcome barriers since solutions are found for non-accessibility. Accordingly, barriers and constraints like they are proposed in literature by for example Godbey (1987), Smith (1987) and Shaw and Coles (2004) are less dominant than expected, allowing for higher levels of pleasure. Consequently, the role of the volunteers and the specific organisation of care is adding to a positive holiday experience.

These findings have interesting implications for existing notions on volunteer tourism, and its perceived benefits and damages for the group that is assisted (Wearing, 2001). Recurring critiques on common volunteer tourism and the care type of tourism in specific, are its potential harm for local communities, its temporal nature and long travel distance (Guttentag, 2009). Such remarks are overcome, since this type of volunteer tourism allows for temporal care and nearby holiday-making. Moreover, it leaves the group that is assisted with individual choice and high independence. The constant communication between guest and volunteer allows for care to be designed only provided when needed, based on notions of empowerment and care provision (Morris, 1997). This was found to be beneficial for both parties, since it is leaving the volunteer with an continual feeling of being on holiday as well, and the guest with an experience of independence and even empowerment that they highly appreciate. These findings add to academic literature on conventional volunteer tourism, given that this specific kind of assistance and care provision is rather uncommon for the ongoing discussion on volunteer tourism in both the academic and the professional field.

The contribution of distinctive holiday characteristics and tourist typology

This sailing holiday distinguishes from other organised holidays for people with a disability, and even has some significant differentiating features that contribute to the experience beyond the disability

context. Besides distinctive forms of active participation and care provision, several holiday characteristics add to the experience of the trip. To start, the holiday is specifically characterised by a casual atmosphere. And indeed, in many of the guests' experiences this theme is present, determining the relaxed rhythm and voluntarily participation of activities. Guests were happy to be involved in different activities, but also very much appreciated the opportunity to say no when they did not feel like participating. Additionally, the involvement of guests as well as volunteers in deciding on which route to take is special: seldom do we see holidays that involve passengers in the decision making process and in selection of routes. Especially guided tourism is typical for being planned, defined by a fixed itinerary which is known beforehand and which involves some degree of planning and direct participation by agents apart from the tourists themselves (Schmidt, 1979). This extraordinary form of involvement has contributed to the pleasant holiday experience, it is an aspect of the holiday that receives a lot of appreciation. Existing literature has not given attention to the benefits of involvement in decision-making while being on holiday. However, links might be drawn to the general longing of individuals with a disability to be autonomous and make independent choices (Howe, 2008). This could clarify the appreciation for these aspects.

SailWise is exceptional in offering sailing holidays for disabled tourists. There are several tour operators that offer cruising holidays in The Netherlands (Red Cross, Zonnebloem), but these do not compare to the active and casual nature of these holidays. Moreover, since the trip follows a route that is inaccessible for larger boats, the holiday also offers a unique combination of sailing and environment. High value was given to the environment and accessibility of diverse destinations along the week. Corresponding to Prideaux and Cooper (2009), being on the water had a beneficial and relaxing influence on the experience. According to Tomik (2013), a tourist's mind benefits from direct contact with nature qualities, such as landscapes, flora and fauna, but also sunlight and temperature changes. The guests agreed to this, varying landscapes and good weather in combination with being active added to their positive evaluation of the holiday.

The findings can add to the understanding of the disabled tourism segment and be applied to serve the group of disabled travellers more adequately. Now we know that participants appreciate this holiday's distinctive characteristics, links can be drawn to existing classifications and tourist types. Adopting the modes of tourism experience proposed by Cohen (1972), the tourism experience of the participants in this study can be classified as recreational as well as experiential. The guests seek for a week of relaxing pleasure, full with recreational activities without the desire to experience serious authenticity. On the other hand, the guests are in search for more a profound experience, and the positive feeling that the holiday gives can be uplifting. The guests are not seeking a different sacred centre, since they adhere to the society they live in. Additionally, they formulate push as well as pull factors, indicating that it is not merely a search for significance somewhere else. It was found that the guests may vary between these two different types, since the holiday can give response to both experience modes. Moreover, it is significant to notice that the participants are not merely interested in active sailing holidays: from time to time, they also enjoy a relaxing sun vacation or city trip where they can receive a different level of care.

This typology implies that the guests can be categorised according to different experience modes, suggesting that the holiday attracts different types of tourists. This corresponds to the participants' diverse motivations, which also are constitute of desires typical for different sorts of holiday-making. These motivations are similar to general travel motivations as formulated by Crompton (1979), that

can be significant for holidays ranging from adventure tourism as well as beach tourism. However, the guests main motivations, being active participation and independent care provision, might indicate a preference for the more dynamic types of holiday-making. Unfortunately, since holiday-making (Hua et al., 2013) and particularly active tourism (Daniels et al., 2005) for people with a disability is still associated with perceived barriers, the understanding of the active holiday-making for this segment is limited. Nevertheless, the results show that an organisation of care based on independence, may lead to such constraints to be defeated and allowing accessible forms of sport and adventure tourism. Since the findings of this study do indicate the interest for such holidays, it is suggested that the disabled tourist would benefit from a deeper understanding of the potential of active types of tourism.

The contribution to daily life: sense of holiday-making and living with a disability

Guests make sense of the holiday through their personal significance of holiday-making and disability in daily life. Guests have their individual struggles, and cope with independence issues on different levels. In general, the guests have accepted their impairment as is evident from the ability to make jokes of their disabilities, allowing for a rather down-to-earth attitude. This attitude is influencing their holiday perception, in a sense that they see holidays as a regular break from daily life without having the expectation of life-changing experiences. Accordingly, the probability of the holiday contributing to their daily life was rather low, dependent on this assigned meaning to the holiday and (Ryan, 2010). This is not exactly in line with some of the benefits found for medically-supported tourism for people with a disability (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011) and active sports for people with a disability (Martin et al., 1995; Yau et al., 2004). These authors state that holidays make the disabled tourist learn personal capacities and evaluate on managing oneself, considering tourism as representing a metaphor of recovery. A possible reason for this limited contribution, is the temporary nature of social interaction. Though a pleasurable group contact was found a positive contribution to the holiday, it is suggested that the feeling of being one group was only short-term. Even since the guests very much enjoyed the sociable atmosphere, most of them did not expect to stay in contact with the others after the holiday. Accordingly, the benefit of social mobility of sports activities for people with a disability as described by French & Hainsworth (2001), is only affective during the course of the on-site activity. However, because of the lack of adequate research design to test the prospective nature of this phase, only suggestions about the recollection phase can be drawn. Despite of some hints towards meaningful kinds of value processes, there can no statements be made about the concrete value of the experience for the sense of holiday-making and living with a disability.

5.2 To conclude

This study adopted a qualitative method to test the experiences of guests with a physical disability on a medically-supported sailing trip operated by touroperator SailWise. Fieldwork took place during this holiday, treating it as a case study. Because of the limited literature on this topic and my position in the Science Shop project, I took an explorative approach that allowed insight on the holiday experience of the guests.

It was shown that the holiday experience is shaped by external forces, being perception and meaning given to the holiday during the anticipation phase. Accordingly, there is a link between the pre-trip phases and the on-site activity phase, since experiences are shaped by motivations and expectations. The actual experience was characterised by a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. The trip was found to have some exceptional characteristics that together shape a holiday that is uniquely defined. The casual provision of care, that allows physically disabled tourists to join a sailing holiday without having the feeling of losing independence can be argued to be rather special. Guests appreciate participation in activities, the diverse environment and the involvement in decision-making. The guests valued the friendly and spontaneous interaction they had with the volunteers as well as with the other guests. Care provision was experienced as pleasant, and the involvement in activities and decision-making might give some hints to notions of empowerment. These unique features of the holiday experience lead to some implications for the tourism and leisure understanding. The findings could provide a valuable contribution for volunteer tourism literature, since this type of volunteering forms a significant extension of conventional volunteering theories. Additionally, the study expands the limited literature on the significance of active sport tourism for people with a disability. With adequate care provision and a casual atmosphere, active types of tourism have high potential for the disabled traveller.

Guests see the holiday as a break from their daily life and their disability, but it can be argued that there is a missing link between the holiday and daily life of the guest that hinders added value and empowerment in everyday proceedings. This means that actual benefit apart from the holiday pleasure is limited. Since explicit statements on this topic are risky seeing the scope of the study, the final chapter of this report will make suggestions for future research in the Science Shop SailWise project.

6. Recommendations

Apart from general implications of the research valuable for tourism literature, the results indicate several points of attention for the prospective research on the added value of water sports activities for people with a disability. In this final section, I will provide recommendations for the Science Shop to apply in their project with SailWise. These recommendations are based on issues I came across in the research that were influential for the holiday experience. Also, the recommendations aim to tackle elements that seem important to examine, but that I was incapable of incorporating in my study. My final point involves an advice that I want to give to researchers engaging in on-site fieldwork.

- * *Deepen the knowledge on the contribution of the holiday* - As is clear from my results and conclusion, this study leaves a gap at the final phase of the holiday experience. My findings suggest a relative low contribution of the experience to the self-identity of the guests. However, these findings are based on a limited amount of research questions, testing the sense of holiday-making and living with a disability from a perspective that makes it hard to trace future contribution. It would be interesting to test the experiences of this phase with a retrospective approach and by using methods that may be more suitable. It could be useful to apply features of dynamic types of tourism, and compare the perceived benefits of the holiday and its added value to that of adventure tourism or sport tourism holidays. Accordingly, the added value of water sports activities for the daily life of the guests can be studied more intensively.
- * *Study the interest for a reunion* - Related to the limited contribution of the holiday on the tourists' daily life, is the disinterest of guests for a reunion. Some indicate that they would go if it was organised, but no one feels a need for it. Such meetings would however be interesting, since they allow for a connection between the holiday experiences and the guests' daily life and therefore increase the added value of the holiday. More insight into the perspectives of the guests on this would be interesting, testing the critical factors that would increase the value of reunions for the guests.
- * *Study the pre-trip phases more thoroughly* - Also the anticipation and travel-to phases would benefit from a method that studies the experiences in these phases more directly. Such insights will give more information compared to the retrospective approach that I have used. This was sufficient for the scope of my research, and allowed to make conclusions about links between several phases. However, to amplify the knowledge on these links and provide a more enhanced support of the influence of motivations and expectations, I would suggest more thorough assessment of the pre-trip phases. In particular, a deeper knowledge on the attraction to the holiday's distinguishing factors such as active sailing and independent care provision is valuable, since the pre-conceived ideas on these elements very much define the meaning that they are given during the holiday.
- * *Study the supporting nature of the volunteers* - It became apparent from the research, that the volunteers constitute a large part of the positive holiday experience. The supportive and independent nature of the care provision helps the guests to overcome barriers and constraints as they are found in literature. We know that the volunteers contribute to this, but we are

unaware of how they contribute. Principles of volunteer tourism could be helpful to understand the incentives of the volunteering, that can explain the enthusiastic and supportive performance of the volunteers. Accordingly, this could provide implementations for SailWise's recruiting process, providing scientific foundation by applying concepts such as altruism and self-interest. Moreover, a better understanding of the role of the volunteer, might help to explain their significance for potential hesitant guests in conquering barriers.

- * *Study the links between independence, involvement and empowerment* - The research gave some interesting hints that suggest the influence of independent care provision and involvement in decision-making to feelings of empowerment. These characteristics have the potential to provide an added value of the holiday that is significant for empowerment in the guests' daily life, since these are activities in which they are frequently dependent on others. Since the holiday is unique in involving the passenger with decision-making on route and daily proceedings, this is an aspect that should be studied to a larger extent to understand its possible uplifting function.
- * *When engaging in on-site research, be flexible* - One thing I learned from doing fieldwork on board, and studying how others are on holiday, is to be flexible. Especially on the boat, things often go unplanned and every day is different. You are unable to indicate a fixed moment to do the interviews, because one day you are having dinner at that time, and the other day the participants are still engaged with sailing at that same time. You also have to take into account that your research subjects are on a holiday, and that you want to intrude their holiday-making as least as possible with your research practices. My advice is to be alert to detect moments when people are not occupied with daily tasks or pleasurable activities and don't panic when something is not exactly going the way you planned it. You have to get into the casual rhythm of the holiday.

7. Acknowledgements

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Appendix I: Interview guides

Guests Interview Guide 1 (start trip)

Introduction

1. Hoe heet u en wat is uw leeftijd?
2. Hoe en waar woont u?
3. Wat zijn uw dagelijkse bezigheden?
4. Wat is uw ervaring met begeleide vakanties?
5. Wat is uw ervaring met de vakanties van SailWise?
6. Wat is uw ervaring met zeilen? Bij geen/weinig ervaring, denkt u dit te leren?

Disability

7. Kunt en wilt u iets meer vertellen over uw beperking?
8. Hoe uit zich uw beperking in het dagelijks leven?
9. Ervaart u uzelf mobiel beperkt? Zo ja, waarom?
10. Hoe ervaart u reacties uit uw omgeving op uw beperking?
11. Ervaart u moeilijkheden om op vakantie te gaan met een beperking?

Anticipation

12. Hoe hebt u SailWise leren kennen?
13. Waar hebt u uw informatie over de reis en SailWise vandaan?
14. Wat zijn uw redenen om speciaal met deze reis mee te gaan?
15. Wat verwacht u deze reis van de groep?
16. Wat verwacht u deze reis van de begeleiding van de vrijwilligers?
17. Wat verwacht u deze reis van de activiteiten, voornamelijk het zeilen en actief meedoen?

Travel-to

18. Hoe bent u naar de Lutgerdina in Harlingen gereisd?
19. Had u graag op een andere manier willen reizen? Hoe dan?

On-site activity

20. Verwacht u te leren van deze reis?
21. Verwacht u met alle activiteiten mee te kunnen doen?
22. Hoe vind u het ongedwongen aspect van deze vakantie (route, activiteiten en eten)?
23. Zijn er dingen waar u tegenop ziet of juist naar uit kijkt?
24. Heeft u zin in de aankomende week?

Guests Interview Guide 2 (end trip)

On-site activity

1. Heeft u alle activiteiten gedaan die aangeboden werden deze vakantie? Zo niet, waarom?
2. Heeft u dingen gedaan waarvan u niet dacht ze gauw/ooit te zullen doen? Waarom?
3. Heeft u het gevoel gehad aangemoedigd te zijn om zulke dingen te doen?
4. Hoe heeft u de actieve deelname in de vakantie in het algemeen ervaren?
5. Hoe heeft u het ongedwongen aspect van de vakantie ervaren?
6. Zijn er dagelijkse dingen die u anders heeft gedaan dan normaal? Zou u dit vaker willen?
7. Hoe heeft u het zijn op het water ervaren?
8. Ervaart u een verschil tussen een vakantie op een boot en een vakantie op een plek?
9. Hoe heeft u de hulp van de vrijwilligers ervaren?
10. Hoe heeft u het contact met de vrijwilligers ervaren?
11. Hoe heeft u het contact met de andere gasten ervaren?
12. Hoe heeft u de groep in zijn geheel ervaren?
13. Zijn er deze vakantie dingen geweest die u geleerd hebt?
14. Hebben de activiteiten en de vakantie in het algemeen aan uw verwachtingen voldaan?
15. Hoe zou u uw ervaringen van deze vakantie beschrijven? Welke emoties horen bij de reis?
16. Zijn er dingen die u graag anders had gezien, in het algemeen of voor u persoonlijk?

Return travel

17. Hoe zult u terug reizen?
18. Met wat voor gevoel gaat u naar huis?

Recollection

19. Zult u mensen gaan vertellen over deze reis?
20. Zult u contact houden met mensen (gasten en vrijwilligers) die mee gingen op reis?
21. Zou u behoefte hebben aan een reünie?
22. Denkt u vaker met een soortgelijke reis mee te zullen gaan?
23. Denkt u dat deze reis invloed heeft op uzelf en/of uw dagelijks leven?

Volunteers Interview Guide (mid-trip)

Background

1. Hoe heet u?
2. Wat is uw ervaring met begeleide vakanties? En SailWise specifiek?
3. Wat is uw ervaring in vrijwilligerswerk?
4. Heeft u een verpleegkundige of zorgbiedende achtergrond?
5. Wat zijn uw redenen om op deze reis mee te gaan?

On-site activity

6. Hoe ervaart u de zorgtaken voor de gasten?
7. Hoe ervaart u het contact met de gasten?
8. Hoe ervaart u de ongedwongen sfeer?
9. Hoe ervaart u de actieve deelname van zowel gasten als vrijwilligers?
10. Hoe ervaart u de vakantie in het algemeen?

Appendix II: Consent forms

Toestemmingsverklaring

Beste deelnemer van deze reis,

U bent gevraagd om mee te doen aan een onderzoek naar de ervaringen van een begeleide zeilvakantie, en hoe het is om op een actieve vakantie te gaan met een lichamelijke beperking. Dit onderzoek is een afstudeer opdracht en wordt uitgevoerd door mij, Nienke Sluimer, studente toerisme aan de Universiteit van Wageningen. Daarnaast hoop ik met de resultaten advies te geven aan de Wetenschapswinkel van de universiteit, zij zullen een project met SailWise gaan uitvoeren.

Deze week zal ik met u mee gaan op vakantie, en twee keer een kort interview met u houden over uw ervaringen vanaf de voorbereiding tot de terugkeer van de vakantie. De rest van de tijd vier ik de vakantie graag met u mee en maak ik aantekeningen van mijn ervaringen op de boot. Mocht u merken dat uw medewerking aan het onderzoek uw vakantie negatief beïnvloed, laat het mij dan gelijk weten. Als u het leuk vindt kunt u begin juli een digitaal exemplaar ontvangen van het afgeronde onderzoek.

In te vullen door de deelnemer:

Ik verklaar voldoende te zijn geïnformeerd over het onderzoek. Aanvullende vragen die ik had zijn beantwoord. Ik begrijp dat ik tijdens het onderzoek nog altijd vragen mag stellen. Ik begrijp dat de resultaten van het onderzoek gebruikt kunnen worden in het eindverslag van de onderzoeker.

Ik weet dat deelname aan het onderzoek vrijwillig is en dat ik elk moment kan beslissen niet meer mee te doen. Hier zullen geen gevolgen aan zitten. Mocht ik een vraag om welke reden dan ook niet willen beantwoorden dan is dat geen probleem. Ik weet dat ik volledig anoniem meedoe aan dit onderzoek, en dat resultaten alleen vertrouwelijk aan derden bekend gemaakt zullen worden.

Naam en handtekening deelnemer:

Datum:

In te vullen door de uitvoerende onderzoeker:

Ik verklaar dat ik zowel schriftelijk als mondeling toelichting heb gegeven op het genoemde onderzoek. Resterende vragen over het onderzoek zal ik zo goed mogelijk beantwoorden. De deelnemer mag elk moment met het onderzoek stoppen en zal hier geen nadelige gevolgen van ondervinden.

Naam en handtekening onderzoeker:

Datum:

Toestemmingsverklaring

Beste vrijwilliger op deze reis,

U bent gevraagd om mee te doen aan een onderzoek naar de ervaringen van een begeleide zeilvakantie, en hoe het is om op een actieve vakantie te gaan met een lichamelijke beperking. Dit onderzoek is een afstudeer opdracht en wordt uitgevoerd door mij, Nienke Sluimer, studente toerisme aan de Universiteit van Wageningen. Daarnaast hoop ik met de resultaten advies te geven aan de Wetenschapswinkel van de universiteit, zij zullen een project met SailWise gaan uitvoeren.

Deze week zal ik met u mee gaan op vakantie, en in het midden van de week een kort interview met u houden over uw ervaringen als vrijwilliger. De rest van de tijd doe ik graag met de deelnemers mee, ondersteun ik waar nodig en maak ik aantekeningen van mijn ervaringen op de boot. Als u het leuk vindt kunt u begin juli een digitaal exemplaar ontvangen van het afgeronde onderzoek.

In te vullen door de vrijwilliger:

Ik verklaar voldoende te zijn geïnformeerd over het onderzoek. Aanvullende vragen die ik had zijn beantwoord. Ik begrijp dat ik tijdens het onderzoek nog altijd vragen mag stellen. Ik begrijp dat de resultaten van het onderzoek gebruikt kunnen worden in het eindverslag van de onderzoeker.

Ik weet dat deelname aan het onderzoek vrijwillig is en dat ik elk moment kan beslissen niet meer mee te doen. Hier zullen geen gevolgen aan zitten. Mocht ik een vraag om welke reden dan ook niet willen beantwoorden dan is dat geen probleem. Ik weet dat ik volledig anoniem meedoe aan dit onderzoek, en dat resultaten alleen vertrouwelijk aan derden bekend gemaakt zullen worden.

Naam en handtekening deelnemer:

Datum:

In te vullen door de uitvoerende onderzoeker:

Ik verklaar dat ik zowel schriftelijk als mondeling toelichting heb gegeven op het genoemde onderzoek. Resterende vragen over het onderzoek zal ik zo goed mogelijk beantwoorden. De deelnemer mag elk moment met het onderzoek stoppen en zal hier geen nadelige gevolgen van ondervinden.

Naam en handtekening onderzoeker:

Datum:

Appendix III: Participant observation guide

Personal Realm:

- Motivation and expectation
- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction
- Knowledge
- Memory
- Perception
- Emotion
- Self-identity

Influential Realm:

- Physical aspects
- Social aspects
- Influence of products and service

Spots and situations

- Dining area interactions
- Participating with sailing on deck
- Dressing up, washing, going to sleep
- Moments of spontaneous interaction off-deck
- Active participation element
- Volunteer-tourist interaction