THE (CUSTOMER) JOURNEY OF AN OEROL VISITOR

From expectation to experience

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PRE-FACE

This master thesis is the last element of my master Cultural Geography, specialisation Tourism, Geography and Planning. Although the process took longer than the initial period and had its ups and downs. I am glad that I got the chance to be part of this.

I would like to thank everyone that contributed to this research. First, I would like to thank Mr. Hartman, my supervisor, for all his help and patience the past months. Especially for his motivational words and constant feedback. He continued to renew my energy to keep working on my thesis.

Next, I would like to thank the interviewees for their time and answers, which provided the data needed for this research. Lastly, thanks to all others who read this thesis on forehand and provided me with their feedback, in special to Lauren Custers for all her time and feedback.

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ABSTRACT

Oerol is a peculiar arts and culture festival on the island of Terschelling in the north of the Netherlands. The Netherlands has lots of different festivals, but Oerol cannot be compared with one of them. This is due to the theatrical nature of the festival, with performances all over the island even in odd places. Every place, such as a shed, the dunes or the beach can be used as a stage. As the festival lasts for ten days and with a visitor count of more than 55.000 visitors a year, it can be considered as a major festival in the Netherlands. This research tries to explain what people attract to the festival, why they would return every year and why they lost their heart to the festival.

A customer journey, an instrument which elaborates the whole 'journey' of a person, from the first idea to coming home after the festival, can be used to research the motivations, expectations and experiences. This research starts with a literature review on these three topics, followed by a qualitative data collection of seven interviews.

The literature pointed out that motivations of visitors can be divided into three categories: personal-, social- and physical context. Therefore, the interview questions were based on these three categories. The case study is based on seven interviews with Oerol visitors, in different ages, gender and differs in how many years they have visited Oerol.

The personal context had as one of the major outcomes; the motivations are mostly based on the experiences of earlier years, as most of the visitors are returning visitors. According to Yoo et al. (2013), most motivations are also based on earlier visits. New visitors are mostly attracted via other visitors. They hear from others about Oerol and want to visit the festival themselves. Most heard quote of returning visitors (in attracting new ones), is that they can feel if they are in another world, the 'escape-seeking' dichotomy (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Interesting to notice is that almost all interviewees mentioned that they go to Oerol without any expectations as 'They want to find presents.'. They want to feel free and forget about their daily routine to be 'in another world'. Oerol feels like a holiday for them.

The social context is mostly based on the effect of friends on their experiences. Those friends can influence the motivations on why they visit Oerol or if they visit the festival again and for how many days they visit the festival. The group with whom they visit the festival is of influence on the complete experience. With those friends, they also experience some other activities. The group with whom they visit is also a motivation to go (Bitner, 1992). Some of the interviewees have a symbolic tradition during Oerol, apart from the official Oerol program. The people around the interviewees (not only their friends but all people on the island) can be seen as an important influence on the experience.

The Physical context forms a basis to go to a festival, every interviewee talks about the natural environment of the island, Andersen et al. (2019) stated that visitors have expectations from scenery, nature and the weather. Returning visitors have built up an attachment to the island and Oerol. Based on their earlier visits, they identify themselves with Oerol and the island (Tuan 1979; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández et al., 2007). The natural décor of Oerol is one of the unique selling points of Oerol. There are no theatre seats, everything is in connection with the nature and performances really use the natural environment. Also, the weather is of influence as most activities are outside. One of the interviewees stated that the rain is part of the fraternization feeling, but bad weather will not keep them from going to Oerol.

In the end, the study shows that the experience starts before the visitors arrive on Terschelling and that the experience is intermingled with the motivations and expectations. Not all touchpoints in the preparation to go to Oerol are positive, still, the interviewees keep going. Creating a better information platform and a better ticketing system will create a better experience for visitors.

The study contributes mainly to the motivations, expectations and experiences of festival visitors in the niche branch of theatre and arts festival. Future research could elaborate more on different stakeholders (e.g. inhabitants from Terschelling), on the non-existing expectations from visitors and understanding the elements which are important to create a positive experience at festivals.

Keywords: customer journey, experience mapping, Oerol, motivations, expectations, experiences.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 2019, AdresData expected that 1115 festivals have been held in the Netherlands (EMcultuur, 2019), which leads to an average of 2 festivals each day. The festivals are diverse in sort; from music festivals to food truck festivals, and theatre. One of those festivals is Oerol. Oerol is an exclusive festival on the island of Terschelling, which is an island in a UNESCO world heritage area, in the north of the Netherlands (Waddensea secretariat, 2019). The Waddensea area is unique as it is the biggest wetland in the world.

In the middle of this UNESCO world heritage area, a festival is held and it attracts lots of visitors. An interesting question is: how can a festival be created and organised in such a special area, how can visitors be attracted, as they need to travel by boat to an island and how can the festival exist? People often experience a threshold to go to certain festivals as it requires more effort than mainstream festivals. For example, they need to book festival tickets, book a ferry and book an accommodation.

Oerol is created by Joop Mulder in 1982 and started as a theatre festival on the island of Terschelling. It has been Mulder's dream to organise a festival along the coast of the north of the Netherlands and in particular on the island of Terschelling. To create proudness and a bond with the region, the so-called sense of place. Today Oerol is one of the biggest theatre festivals in Europe with around 55.000 visitors a year. The festival takes place in June and lasts 10 days. The only way to reach the island is by boat from Harlingen (Friesland) which takes about two hours. A festival ticket gives access to some of the performances and the festival terrain. However, for other performances, additional tickets need to be purchased. In 2018, Mulder broadened the focus of the festival to the mainland of Friesland in collaboration with local entrepreneurs. This new form of the festival focussed more on nature, culture and landscape formats. In addition, the focus of the performances broadened to the (street)theatre, music and fine arts instead of only (street)theatre. The performances are all over the island of Terschelling; on the beach, dunes, dykes or in sheds (Oerol, 2018). As the focus of the Oerol festival differs from mainstream festivals, one could argue that Oerol visitors possess other motivations and expectations than laying in the sun and listing to music (Pesulima, 2016). Oerol differentiates itself from other festivals with its focus on theatre and arts instead of focussing only on music performances (e.g. Lowlands and Pinkpop). The motivations and drivers behind a festival visit of visitors of Lowlands and Pinkpop are relaxing and listening to music. These motivations and drivers are different from those of visitors of Oerol as they want to experience theatre and arts. Oerol visitors are interested in cultural theatre performances. Attracting visitors with interests that are in line with what the Oerol festival has to offer, is part of the customer journey. This customer journey of the Oerol festival visitors is the main focus of this study. A customer journey shows the journey of a customer from A to Z (Kalbach, 2016). Important to note is that the customer journey of an Oerol visitor starts before the festival takes place. For example, this could be at home thinking about Oerol and how to travel there, or in a pub talking to other friends who want to visit the festival. The customer journey describes a wide and complete spectrum of the Oerol experience, as it starts before and ends after the actual festival itself.

The existing literature on customer journey is not based on festivals and attracting people to festivals or similar events. Most customer journey studies are focussed on commercial companies such as restaurants (Kalbach, 2016), or public transport (Bitner, 1992). Less research is done on alternative festivals. There are some studies about music festivals and sense of place (Tuan, 1979), but none about theatre festivals and sense of place. In order to research a theatre and arts festival, a combination of existing customer journey studies, sense of place and the motivations and experiences of visitors at a festival is used.

The focus of the current study will be on motivations, expectations in relation to the experiences that are measurable after a visit to Oerol. To measure these three pillars (motivations, expectations and experiences) experience mapping will be used. This experience mapping shows; the expectations which can be compared to the visitors' experiences which allow the customer journey to be made measurable. To gather the data required for the mapping, qualitative research (e.g. interviews) with several festival visitors will be conducted.

As Sense of Place is one of the most important themes of a festival, it is also an important subject in the research of culture. Researchers are analysing the feeling people can have with certain places. As Sense of Place is a quite broad concept, the definition of Anssi Paasi (1996) will be used in this study:

'The personal relations with specific localities.'

Paasi researched how people feel attracted to a place. This can be a place as a city or region, but also on a smaller scale such as the house they were born in or the street where they grew up. Moreover, it can be a landmark such as a church tower, which can be seen when arriving in a city. In 2000, Gieryn demonstrated that place has 'elastic boundaries' and it does not necessarily refer to a specific scale but depends on experiences and emotions. Gieryn (2000) gives the following example:

'A place could be your favourite armchair, a room, building, neighbourhood, district, village, city, county, metropolitan area, region, state, province, nation, continent, planet - or a forest glade, the seaside, a mountaintop'. (p.464)

By organising the festival, Joop Mulder tries to create a Sense of Place along the Waddensea coast. This sense of place is an important topic in psychology and geography as the concept explains a feel of home. The definition of sense of place of Oerol states:

One could argue that Oerol was one of the first pillars to create a culture and arts coastline. In 2018 the focus was on several projects along the coast, all to make the coast more attractive, to show how the Netherlands were created and how beautiful the area is (Oerol, 2019).

The goal of this research is to measure the feeling of Oerol visitors and why they go to Oerol. With measuring those feelings, the customer journey of an Oerol visitor is explained to provide more information on what kind of people go to Oerol and what makes the festival special. To create an in-depth analysis of the feelings of the festival visitors and to measure a possible overlap of their motivations and experiences, this research is divided into several parts. With the research, a new insight is shown in the motivations of Oerol visitors and the attractiveness of (theatre and arts) festivals. Marking the research interesting for festival organisations and tourism organisations. The research question central to this research is as follows:

'What is the customer journey of Oerol visitors and how can it be improved to enhance visitors' experiences?'

To answer this question, research needs to be done on (1) customer journey, (2) motivations, (3) expectations, (4) experience and (5) experience mapping. These five topics create a base for this research's sub-questions:
1. What is the motivation of visitors to go to Oerol?
2. What kind of expectations of Oerol do visitors have?
3. To what extent do the experiences meet the visitors' expectations?
4. To what extent can Oerol improve to enhance the experience of visitors, based on a customer journey analysis?

The results of this study give the organizers of the festival more in-depth information about the customer journey which can then be optimized. The research will contribute to the literature by providing new insights on what festival visitors enjoy and what their preferred experiences are. In addition, it provides new views on the decision-making process when potential visitors decide to go to Oerol. By interviewing visitors who have visited last year's edition and by analysing their customer journey, an insight into the experience of visitors can be given.

The research will start with a literature review in chapter 2. This review, which consists of desk research on several themes, provides a basis for the rest of the research. Chapter 3, the methodology includes the methodology that was used to provide the data necessary to answer the research question. In chapter 4 the results of the case study are explained. The results are discussed in the conclusion (chapter 5) and the discussion (chapter 6). These results lead to an answer on the research question central to this study which is also provided in the discussion. Lastly, chapter 7 consists of recommendations on the optimisation of the customer journey of Oerol visitors.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To measure the motivations and experiences of festival visitors, many options come to mind: why would people visit the festival and why would they return next year? This chapter contains desk research of the relevant literature, with a focus on why people visit a festival. The literature review is searched via the University of Groningen library, Google Scholar and Smartcat. Some of the keywords used are motivations, expectations, experience, customer journey, experience mapping, festivalisation and Oerol. Making use of these acknowledged sources and by researching the resources of the articles used in the study (snowballing effect) a certain level of validity is created (Van der Ploeg, 2011). After measuring the motivations and expectations, the experience and the connection between the experience and the motivations can be researched. The desk research attempts to form a solid basis to answer the sub-questions via a case study.

2.1 FESTIVAL

To clarify the motivations and reasons to visit a festival, a broad introduction on festivals needs to be given. As stated before, there are countless festivals in the Netherlands with a different focus, though Noordman et al. (2005) made a global definition of a festival:

> *"A festival is an annual, or at least periodic event, which is characterized by bringing together performances, multiple presentations are programmed directly after the other, or even simultaneously."*

(translated from Dutch to English by author)

A festival can have different characteristics of presentations, audits or performances which are programmed after each other or at the same time (Noordman et al., 2005). Thus, different performances in lots of different categories. Festivals differ from events. Noordman et al. (2005) call festivals a subcategory of events which can be compared to fairs or ceremonies. In the past, those ceremonies were used to escape from reality (Noordman et al., 2005). Festivals, as a subcategory of events, can be categorized into festivals free of entrance or performance fee where visitors can freely watch the performances, and festivals where the purchase of a ticket is required. Moreover, festivals can last for one or multiple days.

The growth in the number of music festivals since the 1990s has been astonishing (Frey, 1994; Gibson 2007). The ongoing increase in the number of cultural festivals organized globally is mainly due to the promoting and celebrating of values, identities, ideologies and continuity that festivals allow for (Zhang et al, 2019). Popular music festivals such as Tomorrowland, which was visited by more than 400.000 people from more than 200 different countries in 2018 (Devin, 2018), integrate new IT developments to enhance operations and the experience of the visitors of the festival. Furthermore, Flinn and Frew (2014) investigated changes made to the Glastonbury Festival during the last few years. This research shows that the Glastonbury Festival focusses on the enhancement of the visitors' experience by adding, among other things, social media into the experience (Robertson et al., 2015). This 'experience turn' shows an evolution in festivals, visitors want an extraordinary experience instead of just listening to music. With this, the visitors get a feeling of attending a cultural experience or being in another world (Zhang et al, 2019). Still, almost all festivals have one or a few big headliners which still are the main reason to visit. Only the last few years some festivals as Down the rabbit hole in Ewijk, the Netherlands are slightly changing their focus.

2.2 MOTIVATIONS

Motivations differ for everyone which makes it a difficult topic to research. However, Bourdieu (1984) connected culture to the behaviour of people to develop a theory that states that a person's position in society can be connected to cultural preferences.

With this Bourdieu tries to link these different motivations to several overlapping fields, such as politics, science, and art. For this research, the art people can be interesting, as the focus is on festivals. Adapting this to the research of Yoo et al. (2013), they do something similar, but more focused on festivals. They researched that there are three distinctive objectives to visiting festivals: (1) the theme of the festival (what does the organisation want to achieve), (2) socio-demographic factors and (3) individual attendee's needs and wants.

First, the theme of festivals is of influence. People can visit the more mainstream big music festivals with world-famous headliners or smaller local festivals. Next to music festivals, there are lots of other festivals, for example, foodtruck festival or theatre festivals. They all differ in what kind of people they attract and what kind of experience they present. The second objective from Yoo et al. (2013), the socio-demographic factors, applies to a different type of festivals. Theatre festivals attract mostly people with an interest in theatre, who like to act or who are interested in culture and arts. The last and third objective can be linked back to the research of Bourdieu (1984). When the festival fits in one of the fields Bourdieu researched, the visitor is likely to go. Still, those fields have specific norms and values to which the persons within that field must adhere (Bourdieu, 1984). Both types of research state that the influence of people and their personal needs are important.

This theory is applicable for attending festivals as some visitors want to see their idol on a big stage singing songs with 60.000 other visitors (e.g. Pinkpop or Lowlands visitors), whilst others search for a rather small-scale experience (e.g. Down The Rabbit Hole or the International Blues Festival in the little village of Grolloo, the Netherlands). One reason for this could be that they like other artists or don't want to go to mainstream, big festivals with thousands of others. The actual reason for attending a festival usually depends on what the visitor likes and expect to experience or see (Kalbach, 2016). These and other reasons lead to different motivations of festival visitors.

The biggest group of festival visitors are people who attend the festival because they relate to the festival, the artists, or want to get a feeling of ambience which the festival grants them. The feeling that festivals give can be explained by the 'escape-seeking' dichotomy. This results in a feeling of forgetting where one is and experiencing the current situation (e.g. the festival) as much as possible (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Derksen and Driesen (2006), researched that most visitors come for 'sfeer'. The Dutch word 'sfeer' can be best translated as 'Ambience'. In addition, 'sfeer' can be connected to cosiness or a feeling of freedom. A study by Knaapen (2005) points out that 'sfeer' is more important than the program and artists. People are searching for the 'festival feeling' (Knaapen, 2005). Jonker (2009) states something different, in her research on festivals she notes that visitors are on an adventure. With a certain headliner, visitors are willing to come to festivals such as Pinkpop or Lowlands, but at the same time, even on Pinkpop or Lowlands, they want to discover new artists (Jonker, 2009). Yoo et al. (2013) researched that visitors can have several reasons why they visit a festival. However, in their research, more than half of the respondents gave 'family or social interaction' as one of the major motivations to go (Yoo et al., 2013).

It is thus hard and maybe even impossible to state that one particular motivation is the reason to go to a festival.

Push and Pull factors

For returning visitors, motivations are not only based on the objectives as written above. They will also motivate their return with their previous experiences. Yoo et al. (2013) made an interesting scheme (Figure 1), which was based on Health & Food festivals in their study but which can also be used for other festivals. The push and pull factors came out of supply chain management and conceptualize:

- Push-factors: the motivational needs that arise due to a disequilibrium, in tourism this would mean: an escape from the daily life, in search for social and cultural factors.
- Pull-factors: the physical attraction of things, in tourism ways this could be: wilderness, nature, local cuisine or core attractions (Mason & Paggiaro, 2009).

Applying this to a festival, the motivations to go can also be divided into push- and pull factors. For example, push factors can be friends that are going to the festival, wanting to experience something cultural, wanting to be blown away by a new experience, getting a holiday feeling or forgetting the daily routine. Pull factors are based on the environment. Visitors who get attracted because the festival is held in a beautiful area, or makes use of the nature.

Figure 1: Motivation and outcomes for health food festivals

Source: Yoo et al. (2013).

Social interaction can be used to link the push factors of figure 1 to festivals; visitors are going to the festival with friends and meet new friends. Moreover, 'close to nature' is by Yoo et al. (2013) seen as a push factor, but can also be a pull factor as it is something physical and part of the natural environment. Most festivals are held outside the city centre and in a natural environment. For example, Oerol is held all across the island of Terschelling and Lowlands is held in nature of Flevoland on a terrain which is specially made for big events. The Dutch festival of Defqon takes place at the same location as Lowlands which happens to be next to the theme park Walibi Holland (Walibi Holland, 2020). From a geographical perspective, this is very smart. The festival organisation can use the nearby roads and logistical opportunities of the theme park. Additionally, it provides free marketing for the theme park as every visitor of the festival sees some of the rides. Both festivals can share the costs to maintain the terrain.
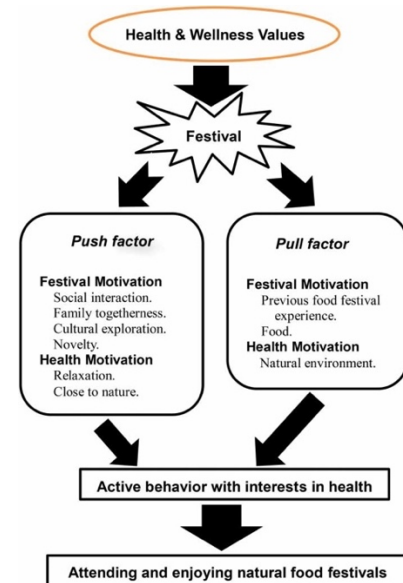
2.3 EXPECTATIONS

After deciding to visit a festival and thus transcending the barriers to go, the so-called 'anticipation' can start. Visitors can start to think about what they want to see and hope to experience at the festival. These expectations can differ for each individual. It is plausible that a visitor's expectation is high when their favourite artist performs at the festival. It was Charles Dickens (1861) who came up with a quote of expectations a long time ago:

> *"As I had grown accustomed to my expectations, I had insensibly begun to notice their effect upon myself and those around me. Their influence on my own character, I disguised from my recognition as much as possible, but I knew very well that it was not all good. I lived in a state of chronic uneasiness... "*

With this, Dickens states that people's expectations are highly influenceable. When the expectations are high, it will be harder to fulfil or exceed them and thus it will be harder to have a positive experience. At the same time, the point at which the previously established expectations are met differs for each person (Tan, 1996 & 2008). The expectations are mostly formed before the festival, for example, whilst researching the festival. This is called *extratextual information* (Genette, 1987). This information can be found on the festival website, on the artist website or in journals and can be part of the marketing campaign of the festival. However, more factors influence expectations.

For example, the visual experiences, which consist of beautiful stages, lights, decors, and the clothes of the artists can influence the expectations (Andersen et al., 2019).

However, Andersen does not state that expectations can be based on experiences from last year, as what is researched by Yoo et al. (2013).

2.4 EXPERIENCE

Experience can be defined as follows; quoted from Romano (1998):

"Experience, in its fundamental sense, is that which, by putting us in play ourselves, modifies us profoundly in a way that after having crossed, endured, traversed it, we will never be the same again: undergo (…) loving, travelling, (…) are "experiences" in the first philosophical sense, surely simple, but nevertheless trivial."

An experience thus does not occur directly. It takes some time to gather a good (or bad) experience and it is a process of several moments which occur during the festival.

Figure 2: the four realms of experience

The experience needs time to grow and is depending on multiple facades. It can also be possible that the first day disappoints whereas the second day exceeds the expectations. Kalbach (2016) notes that experiences are (1) holistic; it is all-encompassing, with actions, thoughts and feelings over time (festival visitors form an experience over the whole weekend with different things that are influential, like performance, accommodation, weather) (2) Personal; it is a subjective perception of the individual, not objective property (which type of performance does the visitor wants to see)? and (3) Situational; the moment you can feel distracted to something, but this can change any minute. (that the preferred kind of performance is a disappointment).
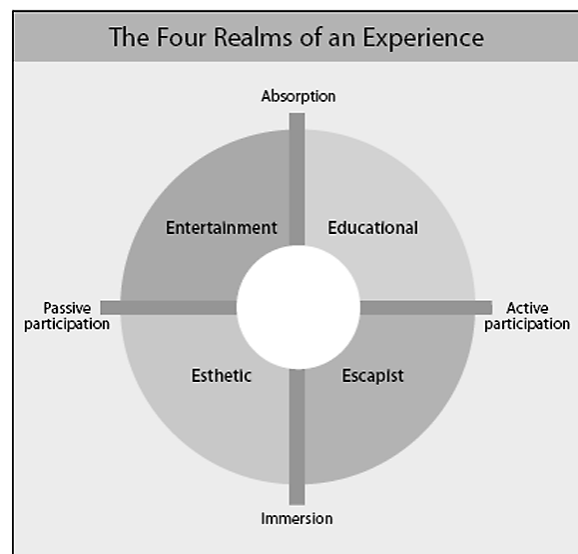
Source: Pine and Gilmore (1998)

Roth and Jornet (2014) state in their study that experience is related to learning and education. Experience is not only something to gain, it is a process of multiple actors, such as other people, but weather and scenery can also be what makes the experience great. A festival is highly dependent on the experience of the visitors. More specifically, the whole festival is about the experience visitors can get due to the attractive stages, surroundings and the nature on the island of Terschelling.

Measuring motivations, expectations, and experiences is complicated. All three are feelings a person experiences and are therefore often intangible.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) established the four realms of experience. They researched that people can have active and passive participation (Figure 2). When being active, people can absorb what they experience which allows them to learn something from it (educational) or it can be immersion, they can get lost in what they experience and feel free. Passive means that people are being entertained or feel the beauty of something, this can be seen as moments in the experience of a festival visitor. During a performance, or going from one performance to the other and experience, for example, the crowdedness of the terrain or the natural surroundings. The active participation is less tangible and again, as Tan (1996; 2008) researched differs for everyone. Applying this to the research of Bourdieu (1984) he also notes that visitors have different cultural preferences, the feeling of 'escape' needs time to grow and grows different for everyone.

Moreover, the festival visitors feel a connection with the environment and other people, which is part of their total experience in which they can escape reality.

Creating an emotional connection between the festival visitors and the festival itself, and creating repetitional behaviour from the visitors by visiting the festival again (Pine and Gilmore 1998 and Metters et al. 2006).

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), visitors can be divided into several groups. However, festival visitors can often be divided into one of the realms of Pine and Gilmore (1998) as most visitors do not go to a festival because they want to learn something. Most visitors go because they want to escape from reality, as Yoo et al. (2013) researched, or for entertainment.

The emotional connection is a part of the active participation with other people and can be applied to not only escapist and educational but also to entertain. Visitors are going to a festival with their friends, those friends are part of the experience and the experience would be lonelier (and less entertaining) for most people if they would go alone. The friends are thus part of their entertainment.

The realms are interconnected with each other and a festival experience is passive (watching performances) and active (the total feeling or experience of the time they are at the festival).
A festival cannot be placed in one of the four realms alone. And if it could be applied to one of them, another visitor could feel more attracted to one of the other realms.

Linking experience to the existing literature, when people feel a sense of belonging to a festival and identify themselves with the festival they tend to behave beneficially for other people at the festival or the environment. This is also called "environmentally responsible behaviours" (Alonso-Vazquez et al., 2019).
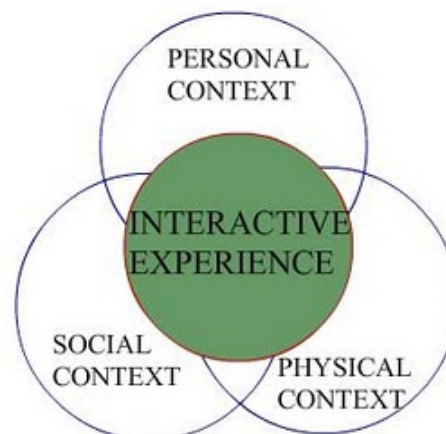
2.5 INTERACTIVE

These three pillars of personal-, social- & physical context are fully focused on the individual, who is visiting the festival. The pillars are about the experience of a single person, which, as stated before, can differ for everyone. Moreover, it is plausible that people influence each other's experiences. One could argue that an altercation with a friend can influence their personal experience of a place. Falk and Dierking (2012) researched the interactive experience model which consists of three elements: (1) personal context, (2) social context and (3) physical context. Those three overlaps each other and create an interactive experience. Falk and Dierking (1992) state that experience is connected to different feelings and influences of other people. They proved this by describing a museum experience:

"a group find part of an exhibition that you know particularly well. And then begin talking about it to the people in your group. Speak with conviction and enthusiasm. Then look and see how many other people around the museum start paying attention. More than likely people will respond to you, either through verbal or non-verbal actions." (Falk and Dierking (2012).

Figure 3: the interactive experience model

Source: Falk and Dierking (2012).

1) The personal context can be divided into several experiences and knowledge and is unique for every individual visitor. This personal context includes interests, motivations and concerns. Those characteristics help to explain what an individual enjoys and wants during a festival (Falk and Dierking, 1992).

2) The social context is more about the influences of others. Most people want to visit a festival with a group of friends. Furthermore, crowded places or misbehaving visitors can influence the social context. Even the interaction with staff or other people can be of influence (Falk and Dierking, 1992).

3) The physical context is about place; the architecture, the feeling, pricing, weather and artefacts. Even the smell can be of influence (Falk and Dierking, 1992).

The social context of Falk and Dierking (2012) can be linked to social capital. Social capital indicates:

'The ability of individuals, groups, organisations, or institutions to engage in networks, cooperate and employ social relation for common purpose and benefit'. (Marsden, 2010, p. 228)

Social capital means that high social cohesion helps in creating a collective action in a group. Meaning that at a festival, people could form a group and influence the feeling of other people (Marsden, 2010). This interaction will not only change the social context, but also the personal context. As they will maybe miss their favourite performance. Or in physical context that they do not like to go to the beach, but all friends go, so the person goes with them.

This interaction is also researched by Bitner (1992). Based on the physical context, she takes the physical environment as a basic and the social context can be influenced by this. Bitner (1992) made a conceptual framework of the servicescape (Figure 4), a design tool to better understand social problems. People get influenced in several steps, starting with the environmental part (Figure 4); conditions as noise and temperature influence the experience of people when they endure the exposure to burning sunlight or get a cold during long rain showers. This can influence their experience. Also, other influences as the responding's of employees to let people feel comfortable, acceptable waiting times and creating an accessible terrain for people with disabilities can influence the festival experience. The model of Bitner can be used to measure those physical influences.

Figure 4: servicescapes by Bitner (1992)
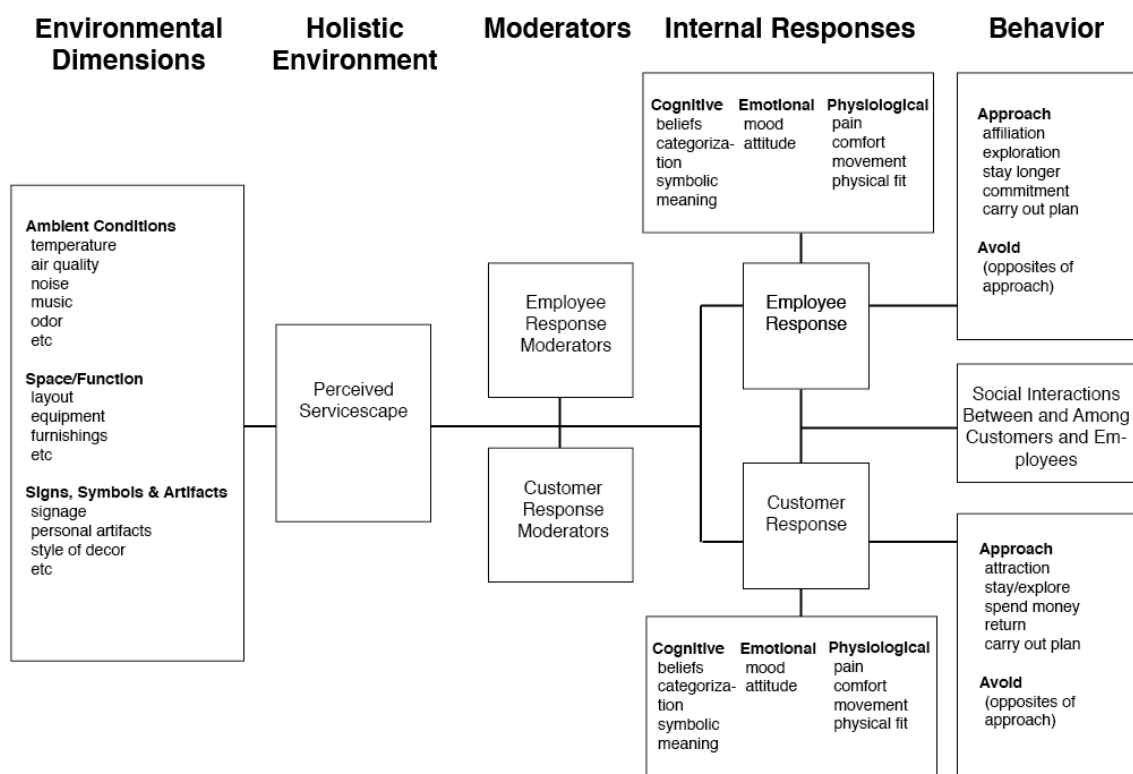
Source: Bitner (1992)

As shown in figure 4, the physical part of attractiveness is divided into several basics and different moderators influence the experience.

Bitner (1992) researched that ambient conditions, space/function, signs, symbols and artefacts from the environmental dimension (physical context in experience). Different things can then influence the experience, like the comfort of the stage, the mood of an employee or another visitor. Those other people influence not only the social context of the experience but also can be influenceable on the physical context.

On the other hand, it can differ in what visitors want and need. Meaning when visitor one thinks that the chair is decent and provides a good stand for the performance, other visitors can think that it is too simplistic and they want the plush of a theatre chair. The responses of other people as Bitner (1992) states can thus be of influence but all starts with what people expect first.

The model above is a useful diagram to see how basic environmental dimensions can get influenced. As there are a lot of influences this also the disadvantage of the model. There are so many responses possible, that is not possible that they will not influence each other. For example, the employee response can be caused by something the customer does. Or the visitor of a festival does something what is not allowed, get caught by an employee, this will influence both, according to the model this should not be possible.

2.6 SENSE OF PLACE

The creation of sense of place is a general concept. It describes the relationships between people and spatial settings (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Sense of Place is seen as the overarching concept of feeling at home. Tuan (1979) calls it the personal feeling of a person or group to the spatial. Sense of place combines different concepts to better understand how people experience and feel about places (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández et al., 2007). It can be divided into place attachment, place identity & place dependency. Place attachment is a known concept in people and place. It is an effective link between people and their environment (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). When people feel attracted to a place it can create a bond with the place, people can feel relaxed and create an identity with the place. Interesting question is what will happen when the festival will move. As people get connected to the festival and place, what will happen when one of the two will change.

The feeling of home links back to the social- and personal context of the earlier researched researches of Bourdieu (1984); Yoo et al. (2013) and Falk and Dierking (2012). As these researched the personal interests of people and what their motivations are to go to a festival. For returning visitors, a motivation to go to a festival can be that they like the festival and the place where it is held and so got connected. Scannel & Clifford (2010) researched that these feelings over the years grow not only in social and personal context but also to the physical context. With that the interactive experience of Falk and Dierking (2012) is complete. Visitors of a festival can feel attached to the festival terrain or the nature, the recognizability of the stage or a landmark (like a church tower, or lighthouse) near the festival terrain. The group with whom they are going can strengthen this feeling of place attachment (Tuan, 1977, in Trentelman, 2009; Low, 1992, in Kil et al. 2014). The group can have a certain ritual or symbolic activity what connects them not only together, but also to the place.

Place identity is the definition of the cognitive bond between people and place. It is how identities are created in spatial settings. Meaning that visitors can adjust perceptions of themselves to the physical context. For returning visitors to a festival, this can be applicable. Visitors can get attached to a feeling of the festival and what they have experienced there on the festival terrain in the past. The third concept of place dependency is the more functional concept. To show the attractiveness of a visitor and a place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). It is a process of personal needs of a place and if alternative places could be outweighed (Hammit et al. 2006).

For festivals visitors, sense of place can be a motivation to go. Visitors can have a certain bond with the festival or the place where the festival is held. For example, a visitor can feel at home when he or she enters the festival terrain, reminding them of how much pleasure he or she had in the past. But sense of place needs to grow over the years, for visitors who visit the festival for the first time, or the location of the festival for the first time, this attachment will differ from visitors who are going for several years.

Interesting in the research for a festival visitor is if the visitor feels attracted to the festival and has a certain attachment with the festival, what will then happen when the festival would be held somewhere else. The place attachment concept is mostly based on the place itself, it is hard to state that this applies to a festival, as visitors are attracted to the festival and not to the terrain in the first place. Place identity and place dependency are more in line, as the sense of place of a festival visitor is inseparably connected to the festival and the performance held at this specific location. When the festival would move, it is plausible that the experience of visitors will change drastically. Interesting for the case study can be if festivals can be compared to each other and what would happen when a festival moves to another location.

Adapting the theory from sense of place to the theory of Bitner (1992), Bitner states that there are several conditions which influence the experience of people, the basics as what visitors' experience notice and experience their selves, for example, it's raining or the style of the décor is beautiful. Those experience can build upon a creating of place attachment. Visitors feel attracted to the location of the performance, or the festival in general. This place attachment can then result in a change in behaviour (last column of figure 4, Bitner (1992)) as they can decide to stay longer, to return next year or to explore more of the surroundings.

This can then again be linked to the theory of (Alonso-Vazquez et al., 2019). Who researched that when people like the environment, they are more willing to conserve it and to change their behaviour.

2.7 CUSTOMER JOURNEY

As mentioned previously, a customer journey describes the route, or 'journey', and all points of contact between a customer and a product, service or brand. This journey can be many things, such as a trip to visit a place, visiting a website or even a study like the current. The customer journey does not need to be tangible. The customer journey can be created by following a customer throughout a service delivery process (Holmlid & Evenson, 2008). The journey has touchpoints in chronological order and emotions are often a part of the journey (Halvorsrud et al., 2016). These touchpoints are '*any interaction that might alter the way that your customer feels*' (Patterson, 2019).

Meaning that a touchpoint can be a change or something to remember during journey of a customer (Interaction Design Foundation (2019).

Figure 5: Customer journey example
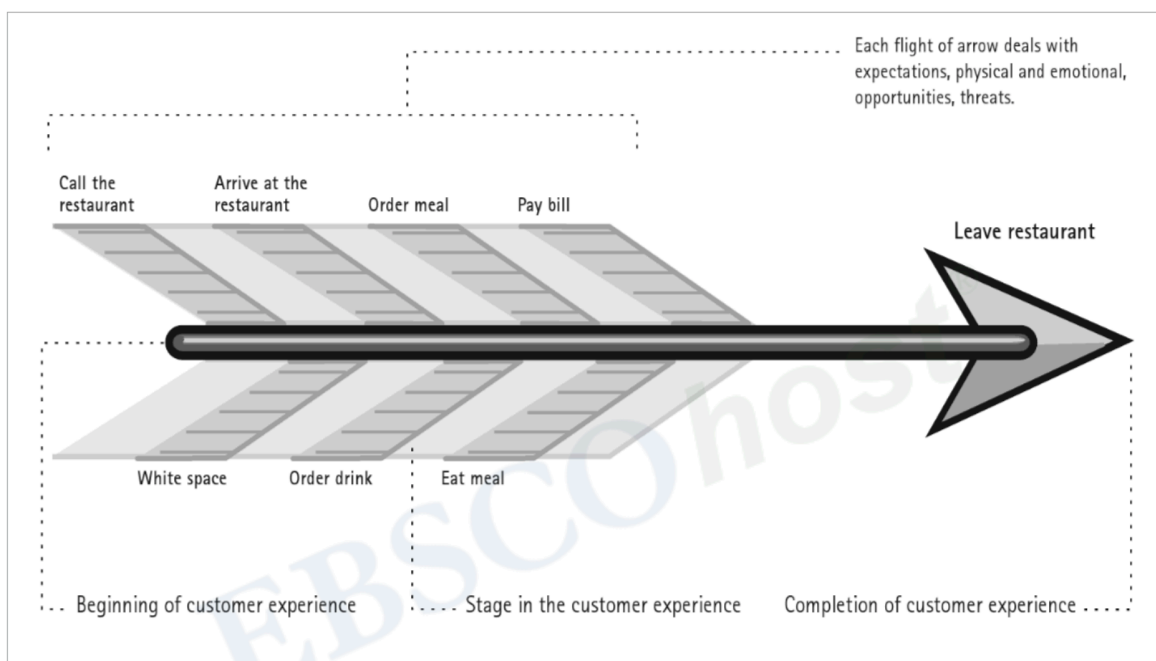
Source: Kalbach (2016)

In this research about the customer journey of an Oerol visitor, a tangible example was chosen to explain the customer journey (Figure 5): a restaurant visit. Most people think that experience starts with for example entering a restaurant and ending it with leaving the restaurant and going home. But the experience starts much earlier. It can begin with the moment at which a person thinks that he or she wants to go to a restaurant and it can end with remembering the delicious food they ate (Kalbach, 2016). The touchpoints in this restaurant visit could be: entering the restaurant (is it beautiful, is it crowded?) eating the meal (does it taste good?), paying the bill (was it expensive?) The restaurant can also be part of the sense of place of people. They can identify themselves with the restaurant because the kitchen is based on the same region as what they like, or where they come from (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001).

The customer journey could be divided into the three parts of motivations, expectations and experiences. The customer journey starts with motivations why people want to visit a place or festival. Then motivations go over in expectations, expecting that they can still make a reservation, or book tickets and for example that the costs are acceptable. They can also have expectations that the location is still the same, or hoping that a certain spot at the festival terrain is still part of the experience, as they feel connected with it.
The experience is the last part of the customer journey, visitors enjoy their time at the festival or in the restaurant, have a nice time with the group with whom they are visiting and in the end, they can share the memories back home. Three phases will likely overlap as they already experience the surroundings, although the expected performance did not start yet or the expected meal is not ready yet.

The customer journey tells the journey of a visitor and provides some insights into their experiences. This could be helpful to gain insights into the experience of their visitors or customers. It could also be helpful for marketing purposes, as the owner can make use of the information which was provided (Archer, 2019). Nowadays companies interact with their customers in different ways. They are forced to be more social and enter the customers' personal space (Katherine, et al. 2016). This is a result of the changes in attracting people to their business, as nowadays the competition is tougher and people can do more online research about the best restaurants.

Zuiderduin (2016) made some basic rules of a customer journey analysis, not all of these rules are applicable to this research. Zuiderduin researched that a good analysis starts with (1) 'know what is being researched'. To know that the journey which is researched is about the customer experience and the process of the organisation.
For example: is the research focused on how a visitor the festival experiences, or how they search for tickets? In addition to knowing what is researched, it is important to have clear who is the target group (2). Next, (4) researching the emotions of people because that is what they will remember (Zuiderduin, 2016). At the end (6) prioritise the key touchpoints of the research from the rest.
Applying the research of Zuiderduin (2016) to a festival this would mean: (1) the customer journey is about the motivations, expectations and experiences of a festival visitor (2), not about the festival organisation. It is about their whole experience (4), why they go and what they expect during their visit. And key touchpoints (6) in the research are motivations, expectations and experiences.
Nowadays, research is changing from 'what a company plans for a visitor (e.g. the service blueprint), to fully focus on a visitor's point of view (e.g. the customer journey) (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010). The difference between those two can be called 'an influential gap'. Where companies thus have a (little) inconsistency in their blueprint or visitor's experience something different than expected (Parasuraman et al., 1985).
The customer journey creates a useful and logic path from motivation to experience, which makes it a useful instrument to measure the concepts. Experience mapping allows for the tracking and the visualization of the customer journey. This makes the motivations, expectations, and experiences measurable.

To measure and make the customer journey of a festival visitor more tangible, experience mapping can be used. The definition of experience mapping according to Beth (2014) is:

"An experience map is a visualization of an entire end-to-end experience that a "generic" person goes through in order to accomplish a goal. This experience is agnostic of a specific business or product. It's used for understanding a general human behaviour (as opposed to a customer journey map, which is more specific and focused on related to a specific business."

Beth uses this definition in a different field of research, however, the definition stays the same. Experience mapping gives in-depth information about the thoughts and feelings of a customer, whereas the customer journey is an illustration of the journey (Ridson, 2012). The experience map can help in understanding the visitor and the touchpoints that are created during the process (Ridson, 2012). Therefore, it is a useful tool to understand the customer journey and in making the customer journey a trustworthy research tool (Walker, 2019).

An experience map is based on several steps. It is a process which focuses on a holistic view of the experience of people (Rajani, 2018). The first step is to discover the bigger picture, in the case of a festival, this consists of investigating the motivations, expectations and experiences. Furthermore, it takes a closer look at the existing data (Rajani, 2018). See Figure 6, on page 14 for an example of an experience map. The second step in experience mapping consists of building blocks (Rajani, 2018). These blocks focus on what people do, think and feel. Or in this research what motivates them, when do they buy tickets and book their accommodation, what do they think, what do they expect and what do they feel and thus experience. The third step is to plot the experience (Rajani, 2018). More specifically, it is forming a customer journey map, which can be used as a basis. The fourth and last step is creating the complete map (as shown in Figure 6), important to note is that separating the key touchpoints from the 'nice-to-have' details is necessary (Rajani, 2018).

For a festival organizer, an experience map can be a useful tool to research not only the experiences during the festival, but it can also help in what visitors expect and motivate them to go. For example, on how they want to buy tickets, as for some festival tickets can be sold out in a few minutes and how this system can be improved. It can also help them to better research their visitors as the festival is a crowded place and people are only there for a short period of time.

Figure 6: Experience mapping of a holiday by train
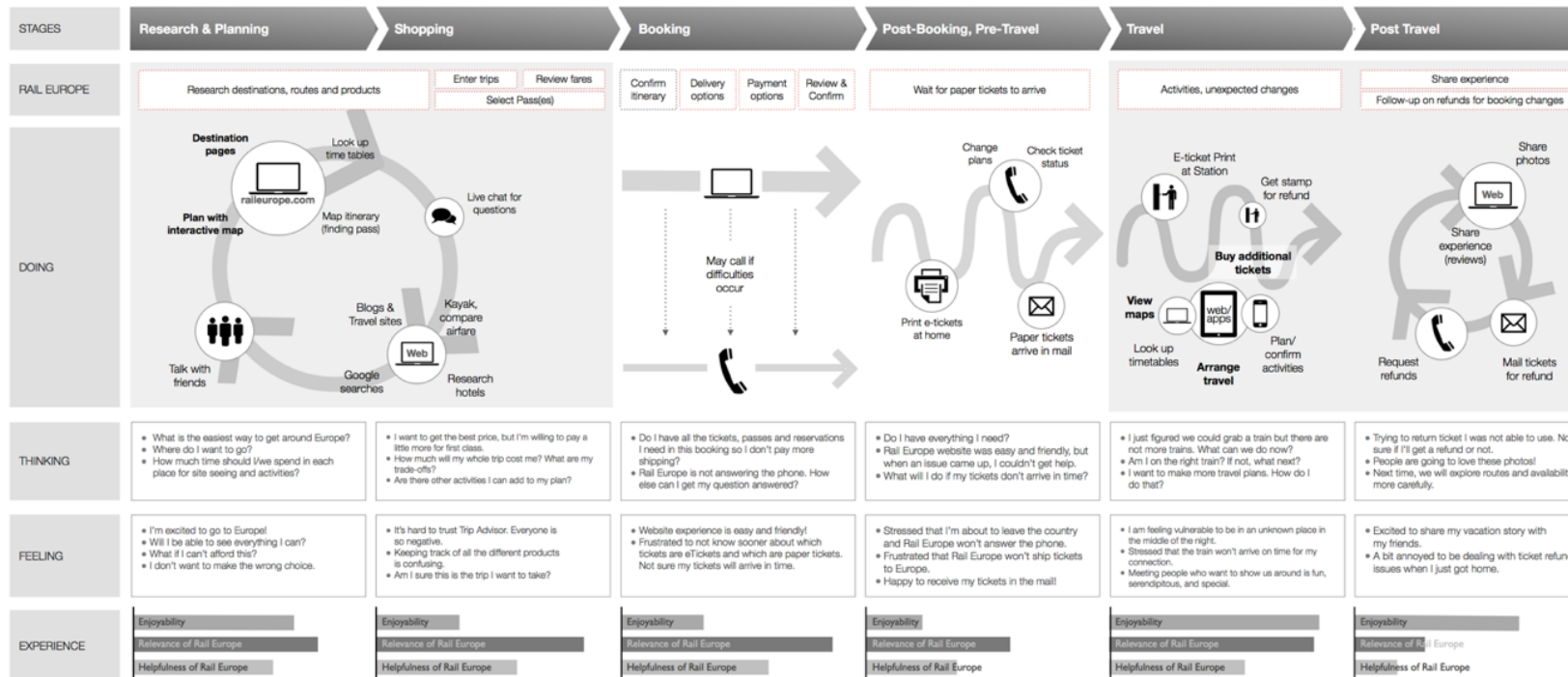
Source: Ridson (2012)

Figure 6 shows the experience map of a person who goes on holiday by train in Europe. The experience map starts with research and planning, in this stage the person enjoys the moment that he or she is going on holiday and asks question as; 'what will it costs?' and 'where are we going to?' Those questions can be seen as the motivations of the traveler and partly overlap with the expectations, as the traveler expects that the tickets will be cheaper as for example plane tickets. The next phases are shopping and booking; the traveler searches for the ticket he or she wants and the first experiences can be shown. For example, in the booking phase; the person notes that the website is easy to use. Next is the travel and post travel phase; the experience part. The traveler is on holiday and experience positive things (meeting new people and see new places) and negative things (not enough trains and refunds system turns out to be hard).

The experience map shows that refund system is insufficient and hard to use, in contrast to the booking system which turned out to be simple to use. Also, the information is insufficient, it turns out to be hard which trains they can take and when they leave. For Rail Europe, they can get effort out of this experience map, starting with a better refunding system and provision of information.

To adapt the experience map to the motivations, expectations and experiences, the motivations are mostly in the research & planning part till the post-booking and pre-travel. Here the expectations (intermingled with more motivations can be found. As the traveler asks for example; 'do I have everything?'. Also, the first experiences come out of here, as the traveler states that the website or Rail Europe is easy to use. Showing that the motivations, expectations and experiences cross the different stages of the customer journey and experience map and each other.

2.9 SYNTHESIS

During the desk research, different elements need to be researched to measure the customer journey of an Oerol visitor. Those elements measure the trip from start to end and create logic codes for the interviews. The next diagram shows how the research is divided into three main elements:

	Personal context *(Falk and Dierking, 2012)*	Social context *(Falk and Dierking, 2012)*	Physical context *(Falk and Dierking, 2012) & (Bitner, 1992)*
Motivations (before the festival) *(Bourdieu, 1984)*	• Interests • Motivations • Concerns	• Influences from others • Group	• Ambient conditions • Space / Function • Signs, Symbols & Artifacts
Expectations (Before & during the festival) *(Andersen et al., 2019)*	• Motivations • Concerns	• Group • Motivations • Concerns • Interests	• Place • Architecture
Experiences (Before, during & after the festival) *(Romano, 1998)*	• Interests	• Influences from others • Group • Interaction with staff • Interaction with friends • Interaction with others	• Place • Architecture • Ambient conditions • Space / Function • Signs, Symbols & Artifacts

As Falk and Dierking (2012) demonstrated, an experience can be divided into three components. Personal, social & physical context. These three components can be divided into smaller subjects, based on a person's interests, concerns or motivations. Also, other people (e.g. their friends or other visitors) can be of influence. Moreover, the physical context about place, weather and other conditions matter. Those subjects can again be divided into three steps; 'pre-festival, 'during the festival and 'After the festival. One of the issues here is that the phases and touchpoints cannot be strictly divided into the boxes as described above. People can change their expectations during the festival (experience phase) if something happens, or for example due to bad weather conditions.

The following scheme gives a clear overview of this change in opinion or expectation. The touchpoints are divided into sections as described above. However, arrows show that changes can occur during the whole customer journey of the visitor. It could even be that motivations change, for example when more information about the program of the festival becomes available. The three phases overlap each other. Expectations are part of the motivations to go and in the same time, experiences of last year can be a motivation to go again. To differentiate them in this scheme, the different phases are colour coordinated since they overlap. The touchpoints are used as a coding scheme for the interviews.

Figure 7: Flowchart customer journey

Source: the author

16
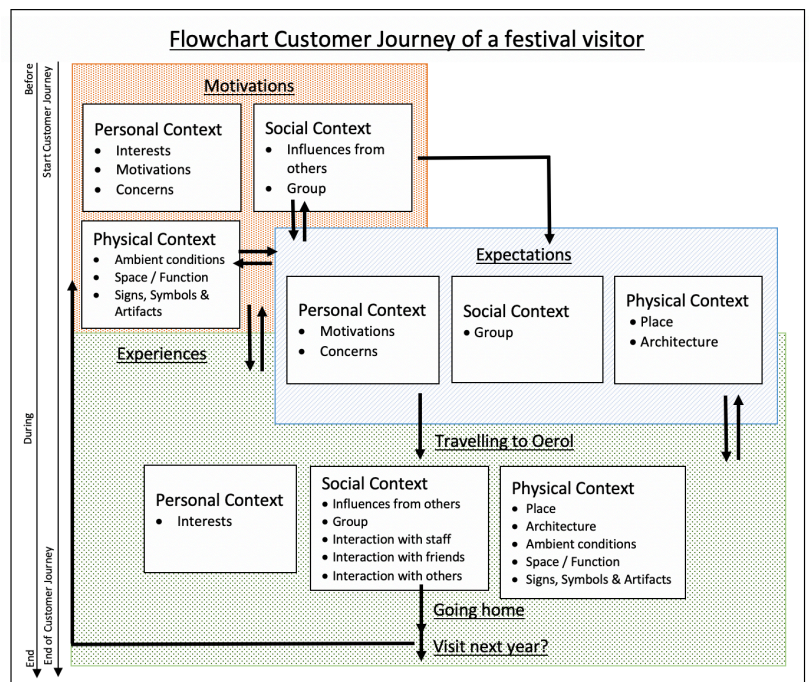
3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains an overview of the research design, the data collection and the data analysis in order to review and advance the customer journey of Oerol visitors.

3.1 CASE STUDY

Festivals are often based on experiences of visitors. Researching such a specific topic needs more than just a literature study (Saunders, 2011). Oerol is a festival full of theatre and arts, which makes it unique compared to most other music festivals. What makes Oerol an extraordinary festival is the experience. It can be stated that Oerol has loyal fans. This loyalty is created by the unique experience, which visitors want to experience again in the future (Van Olderen, 2012). They want to experience this feeling for multiple years. This research is done to find out how Oerol fans became so loyal and why this festival in niche branch, on a place which hard to reach could grow so big. As the festival is also quite expensive (in transport costs, accommodation and festival tickets) it is not a festival for everyone. Visitors need affinity with theatre and arts, but also need to be willing to invest in their trip to Oerol. As there is only a little knowledge about festival research and in special theatre festivals, the research can be seen as exploratory research. The literature review of this research presents a first insight on why people go to a festival.

As the research is based mostly on socio-cultural aspects and is driven by personal motivations, qualitative research is most appropriate in this study. To do this, semi-structured, in-depth interviews are conducted. Quantitative research would only partly fit in this research, as a complete experience map also consist quantitative research, but due to a lack of time and because quantitative data generalise personal insights, the research is done with qualitative data (Punch, 2014). With doing this qualitative case study different stakeholders are interviewed and these provided different insights in motivations, expectations and experiences of why they visit Oerol.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

As visitors can have different reasons to visit Oerol, qualitative research (e.g. interviews) was used to get more in-depth knowledge about the underlying reasoning. To research more on the in-depth feeling of people. Qualitative research gives also the opportunity to be active in the research, to discuss topics and to analyse them more in detail.

The interviews form the case study of the research (Punch, 2014). In this study, seven interviews were conducted (Scholl & Olivier, 2014). Scholl and Olivier (2014) researched that research with eight or more interviews did not lead to new information and only provides a repetition of previously heard answers. As the number of interviewees is limited, still the comparable answers of the interviewees indicate the same result. Therefore, the conclusion still gives a direction of why people visit Oerol. The interviews are semi-structured (see appendix A), this means that some questions were created before the interview and some questions were generated during the interview. This set up gave both the interviewer and the interviewee the option to go more in-depth on certain topics (Hay, 2016). In addition, it allowed the interviewer to ask multiple questions on the motivations and expectations (Clifford et al., 2016; Punch, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013). A semi-structured interview allows respondents the opportunity to extensively talk about their experience. This gives respondents a certain level of freedom in their answers. The questions are open-ended and thus allow for probing questions (Baarda et al., 2012; Punch, 2014). The structure of the interviews can be seen as a customer journey. The sequence in the interview is based on the findings of 2.9, starting with an introduction, followed by a question about the motivations, expectations and experiences.

There are two types of interviews conducted. The first type of interviews is split into two parts; a pre-Oerol and post-Oerol. The pre-Oerol interview is conducted before the visitor goes to Oerol and is primarily based on the motivations and expectations of the interviewee, whiles the post-Oerol interview is conducted after he or she has visited the festival and is primarily focussed on the experience and the relationship between the experience and motivations (Baarda et al., 2009).

With this type of longitudinal research, the same person is interviewed at different moments in time (Caruana et al., 2015). By interviewing the respondents at different moments in time, personal and methodological biases are limited (Decrop, 1999). The interviewees were asked if they would like to receive a copy of the interview. This allows them to review their answers. This maintains objectivity in the research, the answers of the interviewee are validated as true by the interviewees. (Decrop, 1999). The questions asked during the interviews are based on the findings of the literature review and follow a logical order from the start of the customer journey to the end of the customer journey.

All respondents visited Oerol and whilst some of them went for the first time, others visited Oerol before. The respondents were a part of the personal network of the researcher or a part of the network of other respondents. Punch (2014) calls this a 'snowballing-sample', as some respondents were found via other respondents. Some respondents posted a message on their social media, to help finding respondents. This created that other respondents were acquaintances of each other, but did not go to Oerol together.

With one of the respondents, both interviews (pre- and post-Oerol) were conducted, whilst all other interviews were conducted after Oerol. The interviews took place between June and December 2019 (See table 1).

The first respondent is Mrs. Houtsma who participated in the pre-Oerol interview and the post-Oerol interview. She is 58 years old, lives in Nijmegen and has been going to Oerol for almost a decade. She visits the festival with the same group of theatre friends every year. Due to the distance, this first part of the interview is done via telephone and the second part was done in Nijmegen. The second respondent is Mrs. Van den Ham, she is 26 years old and went out of personal interest to Oerol in 2018. She was not familiar with the festival but became interested when she started working for a theatre class. She has already decided that she wants to visit Oerol again in 2020. Mr. Boelen is 21 years old and is the third respondent. He has been visiting Oerol since 2015 after he heard lots of stories about the festival. In 2019 he decided to volunteer at the festival. The fourth respondent was Mr. Waal, who requested to conduct the interview by telephone instead of in person. The interview was a bit shorter, as the interviewee went to Oerol several years ago. He had slightly different reasons to go to Oerol, as he was young and his parents had something to celebrate and wanted to go to Oerol. However, as he could give some other insights in the motivations and experiences, he is still an interesting interviewee. Mrs. Hofkamp is the fifth interviewee. Ten years ago, she went to Oerol for the first time. Since then she has only missed two editions of the festival. As a volunteer, she can give insights on how volunteers enjoy the festival and why is she wants to go back every year. The sixth respondent, Mrs Munster, is a young professional who went to the festival for the first time. She has been visiting Oerol for multiple years, which makes her an interesting interviewee. The seventh and last respondent, Mr. Vreeken, went to Oerol for the first time this year. He did not go there by ferry, but with his sailing vessel. He preferred to do the interviewee via e-mail. Even though this is not ideal, his answer added valuable information to the research. Due to the e-mail, there were not many options to go in-depth, although as the same questions were asked during the other interviews, the answers could be compared with all the others.

Table 1 gives an overview of the characteristics of the respondents in the interviews. All names are anonymised due to ethical reasons, the table provides the pseudonym of the name of the interviewee. Moreover, the age, gender and the date of the interview can be found in the table below. The last column shows the type of interview.

Respondent	Age	Gender	Date of the interview	Interview type
1 Mrs. Houtsma	58	Female	16-06-2019 & 15-12-2019	Pre- & Post Oerol
2 Mrs. Van den Ham	26	Female	02-12-2019	Post -Oerol
3 Mr. Boelen	21	Male	03-12-2019	Post -Oerol
4 Mr. Waal	28	Male	05-12-2019	Post -Oerol
5 Mrs. Hofkamp	30	Female	05-12-2019	Post -Oerol
6 Mrs. Munster	28	Female	05-12-2019	Post -Oerol
7 Mr. Vreeken	32	Male	Per mail	Post -Oerol

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents

The results are divided into several subcategories: (1) why would people visit Oerol and can it be compared with any other festival? (Pre-phase, before they go), (2) What are the motives and expectations of Oerol visitors; (Pre-phase, before they go), (3) Do the motivations and expectations match their experiences ((Post)-phase, during and after the festival) and (4) what do they need to return next year (Post-phase, after their visit)? Those four questions were also the main categories in the interviews (see interview guides in Appendix A).

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

To easily compare the results of the interviews with the literature review and the theoretical framework, the interviews were first transcribed in verbatim style (Barendsen, 2017) and afterwards coded. The codes were made before the first interview, as described in the methodology, and turned out to be quite accurate. However, those codes were only till a certain level selective, focused coding (Cope, 2016). Several codes (e.g. for the costs of the festival) were added during the coding of the transcripts due to comparable answers. These additional codes can be found in Appendix A, table 2. By using a pre- and post-codebook is tried to be as open-minded as possible in coding, but keeping in mind that the literature review and experience shaped a kind of background. A more detailed overview of the codes, the codebook of the three different interviews that were used can be found in Appendix A.

By adding the codes, the data was structured and the answers were divided into sections. Those sections are connected to the findings of the literature review in paragraph 2.9 and figure 7. The codes create a link to the literature review. The pre-codebook is created in a similar format as the structure of the whole thesis (motivations, expectations and experiences). As the literature review has several researches in 'motivations', the answers of the interviews can be linked to these motivations. For example, the code 'MPI' (Pre-Oerol, Motivations, Personal, Interests) is an indicator that the interviewee answers something about the personal motivations to go to Oerol, this could then be linked to the theory of for example Derksen & Driesen (2006) or Bourdieu (1984). By doing this a link between the literature review and the case study is created, to provide conclusions.

The codebook works with abbreviations. These are made with the first letters of the words that describe the question or interview. For example, to make a distinction between the different interview guides, the post-Oerol codes (from of the Post-Oerol interview) starts with a 'P'. The Oerol interview guide starts with 'O'. The other codes are formed with the subject of the question as a basis. For example, 'M' for Motivation. Another example is "PEPM" for Personal Motivations in the Post-Oerol interview.

3.4 QUALITY OF DATA

The goal of the interviews and case-study is to confirm the findings of the literature review, by conducting semi-structured interviews. Before the first interview, a test and introduction interview is done with a friend of the researcher who has visited Oerol for several years. This was a good test to check if the interview guide was complete and if the interviewee provided answers which could be applied to the literature review. The interview guide is also checked with the supervisor.

Before the interview started, the respondents were asked whether or not they allowed the researcher to record the interview. With recording the interview, it is possible to re-listen to the information to include all details and focus fully on the answers of the interviewee. After the interview, the recordings are used to make a transcript in verbatim style via otranscribe.com (Barendsen, 2017). With transcribing in Verbatim style, all 'uh', short silences and other non-verbal terms are included in the transcript to make the transcripts as complete as possible. All respondents got the opportunity to receive a copy of the transcript of their interviews. The interviewee also had the opportunity to apply changes to the transcript, creating an extra layer in trustworthiness (Dunn, 2016).

The location of the interviews is chosen in collaboration with the interviewees, to gain some trust of the interviewees. There is tried to choose locations with least noise as possible, to create the clearest recordings. Some interviews are done at home of the interviewee, some in a pub and via phone. The different locations were mostly requested by the interviewee.

After the interviews were transcribed they were coded by using Atlas.ti. With this program answers can be classified and linked to the theory and any quotes can be found. To obtain results from the codes of the interview, the coding is compared to the coding which was done before the interviews. This results in a pre- & after-code book. These codebooks can be compared and used as the starting point for the result and the conclusion (Barendsen, 2017).

To create diversity in the group of respondents that participated in this study, the ages range between twenty-one and fifty-eight. These ages reflect the average ages of Oerol visitors and can therefore be seen as a reliable age range. As mentioned before, eight or more interviews do not provide new insights or more useful data (Scholl & Olivier, 2014). The researcher tried to enhance the reliability of the data even further by using the same set of questions in each of the interviews. In case the interviews should be conducted again, the results should be the same or at least comparable with only a same differentiation. This was shown by the practice interview.

It is believed that information conducted out of the interviews is enough to compare the findings of the literature review and with that answers to the aim of this research; on why Oerol attracts so many visitors and is still growing, while the festival is in a niche branch and on a difficult to reach location. Assuming that the respondents spoke the truth and otherwise that this would be discovered out of the different interviews (Dunn, 2016). As the interviewee's answers were comparable to each other, the repeatability of answers Is shown, therefore the answers can be seen as truth (Baarda et al., 2005).

Also, the research is done in a consistent order. The literature review, the order of interview questions, the result section and conclusion have the same intent (motivations, expectations and experiences), this repeatability creates consistency (Baarda et al., 2005).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Via an informed consent form, the respondents were asked if they agree with the recording of the interview, if it is allowed to refer to their real name and if they want to receive a copy of the interview. The form (Appendix B) is signed by the interviewer and respondent. The form also makes clear that respondents are free to refuse to answer any question, that they can stop the interview whenever they want and that the interviewer will share the transcript or recording only with the supervisor of the study (Clifford et al., 2016; Punch, 2014). The informed consent had to be read and signed by each respondent as ethics are an important part of the procedure of academic qualitative research (Punch, 2014).

To create one unity, all names have been randomized by the researcher. This is done by using a random generator on the internet. However, the age and gender of the respondents are original data. During the interview, the researcher tried to make the respondents feel free to talk and feel at ease to get the most accurate results (Clifford et al., 2016).

4 RESULTS

The interviews show that visitors can have different reasons for visiting Oerol. In this chapter, the customer journey of several Oerol visitors is researched by conducting interviews and linking the outcome to the theory. The interview results answer the first three sub-questions; (1) What is people's motivation to go to Oerol? (2) What kind of expectations of Oerol do visitors have? And (3) To what extent do the experiences meet the visitors' expectations? This can be found in the first five paragraphs of this chapter. The answer to the fourth sub-question: 'to what extent can Oerol improve to enhance the experience of visitors, based on a customer journey analysis?' can be found in paragraph 4.5 and 4.6.

The result section links back to the theory of 2.9 and in particular to figure 8. Figure 8 forms a summary of the theory and the codes used to analyse the interviews were based on this figure. In the end, an experience map of an Oerol visitor can be made in 4.5. The bullet points of figure 8 are bold in the text of chapter 4. The paragraphs of chapter 4 are divided in a

Figure 8: Flowchart customer journey
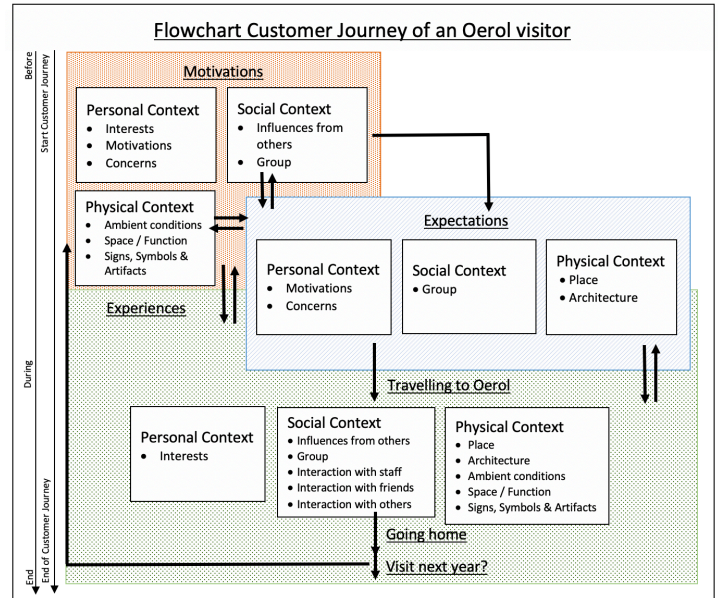
Source: the author

similar way as the flowchart of figure 8. 4.1. The motivations are sub-divided into the personal-, social- and physical context. The same structure is applied to 4.2 and 4.3

4.1 MOTIVATIONS

The motivations of Oerol visitors are based on for example the theory of Bourdieu (1984) and Yoo et al. (2013). This paragraph shows multiple reasons why the interviewees go to Oerol and what Oerol makes attractive for them.

4.1.1 Personal context

The interviews started with questions about why people go to Oerol in the first place. These questions were asked to get to know the interviewee better and to understand what their interests are. One of the first questions was: "why do you go to Oerol?" Almost all interviewees gave a similar answer to the question.

"It [Oerol] is so much more than just the festival. Other festivals like Lowlands, the only thing I do is trying to see as much performances as possible. At Oerol I have more space, it takes longer and you can do so much more. It is a combination of visiting the event and walking and swimming or something like that."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

And

"Well first, I love the sea and the Waddenislands. I also like festivals, that is a nice combination. (…) And because I think the ambiance; the island; the weather, it all so accessible. You can do several things; listening to music, theatre stuff, you could argue Oerol is a bit of everything."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Munster)

These quotes can be linked to **motivations** of why people go to Oerol and in particular to personal and personal interests and motivations. Interviewees see Oerol more as a festival or a short holiday where they can identify their selves with. Both interviewees have been to Oerol before and the main reason for them to go again is because they do not want to miss the festival. These quotes also show the emotional attachment of visitors to the festival. For some interviewees being at Oerol feels as if they are on holiday or even in another world as Mrs. Hofkamp said:

"... I feel if I am away from the rest of the world..."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

The interviewees lost their hearts to Oerol and are afraid to miss something. These are the main drivers for them to visit Oerol every year. At Oerol, they can be in another world and forget their daily routine (Mrs. Houtsma & Mrs. Van Munster).

Linking this to the theory of Falk and Dierking (2012) and Bitner (1992) which states that the physical element is an important factor of going to a place, the island of Terschelling and the weather are important to the interviewees. Those physical elements are also part of the personal motivations why the interviewees visit Oerol. As the island is classified as beautiful by many interviewees (and according to the numbers of the VVV Terschelling, lots of tourists visit the island (VVV Terschelling, 2020). This symbolic feeling of the physical can be seen as sense of place and thus a personal interest, especially place attachment can be linked to this, the interviewees feel a certain bond with the place and associate the beach or other parts of the island with Oerol and their feeling of luck.

Another personal motivation can be what Mrs. Van den Ham said:

"I went to Oerol because it seemed really cool to me, I just did not know it until 3 years ago."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Van den Ham)

Mrs. Van den Ham went to Oerol because she wanted to experience what everyone had told her and because she thought it would fit with her personal interests in theatre and literature.

In the personal context; **interest** and **motivations** are covered from the flowchart, whilst the **concerns** are not. That concerns are not covered is not strange, as the interviews focus on why people go to Oerol and less on why the will not go (anymore). That would have been different research. The motivations on why Mrs. Van den Ham wanted to go to Oerol for the first time are quite broad. In the realms of Pine and Gilmore (1998), she wanted to be entertained, but also have a certain education as she wanted to see the performances. This is part of absorbing the festival.

4.1.2 Social context
Most visitors go to Oerol because someone told them about the festival or because they have a personal interest in theatre and culture. However, almost every interviewee mentioned that the reason for their first visit to Oerol was because someone else told them they would enjoy the festival (**influences from others**). For example, Mrs van den Ham:

"I did not actually know Oerol myself until that one of the people with whom we organized 'these are the writers' [a theatre group she works for] and he was very much into Oerol. "

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Van den Ham)

Mr. Vreeken heard about Oerol from friends. He already knew it exists as he visits the island of Terschelling quite often. Even though he had no intention to visit the festival, his friends persuaded him to go:

"Because a friend said it is fun. And it is on the island of Terschelling."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Vreeken)

These quotes and other information from the interviews show that other people (**group**) are an important factor in the motivations of people to visit Oerol. It can be seen as a first important touchpoint. Meaning that the group with whom they are going is not the main first touchpoint between Oerol and the interviewee, but can be seen as a motivator to go and to return the next year. This makes the influence of others an important factor important, even before the festival has started. In the research of Yoo et al. (2013), they found out that other people and the interaction between people are of major influence on behaviour and motivations. With the quotes of Mrs. Van den Ham and Mr. Vreeken, this can be confirmed. In combination with the unique place of Oerol, the island of Terschelling is another factor why people visit the festival, which will be explained in paragraph 4.1.3.

Six of the seven interviewees are returning visitors of Oerol. Some of them visited the festival eight times in ten years. Mrs. Houtsma even visited almost all Oerol editions in the last fifteen years. As the returning visitors in general are important to Oerol, they can admit to "Friends of Oerol". This membership gives them some advantages, for example, purchasing tickets in pré-sale.

In social context, influences from others and a group are demonstrated via the case study. The interviewees answered that the group and influences from others can be a motivation to go and can even be seen as what has driven the interviewees to visit Oerol for the first time.

4.1.3 Physical context

The locations of the performances are an important motivation of why people go to Oerol, as all interviewees in the research answered that the island of Terschelling (or the Waddenislands in general) is a motivation to go to Oerol. The reason for this is that the island of Terschelling allows visitors to watch performances in the woods, on a beach, in dunes and other alternative spots. Creating a different experience then what a theatre could bring. As those locations are in- and outside, the weather is another important factor. However, none of the interviewees hesitated to go to Oerol when the weather forecasts were bad (**Ambient conditions**). Bitner (1992) researched that those ambient conditions are the basics of the physical attractiveness of a festival. In the basics, bad weather could be a motivation to skip the next edition of Oerol. Despite that, these feelings change later on and visitors will return to Oerol anyway (Figure 4; internal response column). The feelings will probably change when they are already at Oerol or made plans which are (almost) complete. Meaning that is in unlikely that they will sell their tickets and going to miss the festival edition. Also, Mrs. Van den Ham stated:

"While we were there I realised that when it would rain, (…) than you got a totally complete experience. Because you need to go from place to place, which is very nice, but it is all outside."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Van den Ham)

According to Mrs. Houtsma it even adds to some of the performances:

"… sometimes you are on the beach, or some other spot outside, sitting there with your raincoat and close to each other, to keep yourself warm. That is something which can be seen as nice and gives the 'wow'-effect. That's different from some plush seat in the theatre."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Houtsma)

The island is thus one of the important factors of Oerol and something that makes Oerol unique, which can be stated by the quote of Mr. Boelen:

"I think when Oerol would not be held on an island, the complete experience would be different. You would have more the feeling that you are locked on a festival terrain, now it feels open. Now you have freedom. (…) And the island is so beautiful."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

The aesthetics (Pine and Gilmore (1998) are a motivation to go to Oerol. In the research of Yoo et al. (2013), this is a pull factor. The locations of some performances are so special that it is not possible to compare them with any theatre décor. As the décor consists out of the dunes, or the beach for example, the aesthetics are very unique. By making use of this the performance is inseparable connected to the island. The same décor cannot be created in any theatre. Mrs. Van den Ham described that one of the performances became her favourite performance due to the location in the woods. The location was so important for the performance that it is not possible to see this somewhere else and experience the same feeling. Even when the same performance would be shown in a theatre, it would be of a completely other level:

"I think it makes it so unique to me and I think that the makers who do something there, certainly the makers who use locations to shape a performance, cannot do that anywhere else. We also had a performance in the middle of the forest, it was also dark. (…) I was a bit scared. (…) (Performances red.) in a meadow, in a farm, in a barn, I do not think you can see that in many other places."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Van den Ham)

The quote above is partly the answer to what makes Oerol unique for Mrs. Van den Ham and why she visits Oerol. The island of Terschelling (**Space / function**) is something which was mentioned by every interviewee during the interviews. Not all of them mention it as their main motivation to go to Oerol. However, the island is of influence for all of them and the experience they had.
Furthermore, they stated that the island is a pull factor to go. Yoo et al. (2013) researched this in their study about festival motivation; the environment is a 'pull-factor'. In their research, they state that the physical attractiveness of nature and landscape plays a role in the motivations to go to Oerol.

The results of the physical context show that the island of Terschelling is important in **Space / Function**, as Terschelling has several artefacts which are a part of a festival terrain (**signs, symbols and artefacts**). The ambient conditions are less important. For example, the bad weather forecast is mentioned in the interview, but this did not withhold visitors from going to Oerol. The already purchased tickets can also be a reason to ignore the weather forecasts and still visit Oerol, as Mrs. Munster stated:

"Of course, the weather is very important! But when you already got tickets, the motivations to go when it rains, are rather high [because she got tickets already]."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Munster)

4.1.4 Other motivations
Another motivation to go to Oerol is that Oerol cannot be compared to any other festival. In other words, there is no alternative way to get the same experience. The respondents describe the festival as unique and one of a kind. When they were asked if Oerol could be compared with any other festival they know. Some answered that it could be compared with 'de Parade (a theatre festival among inner cities in Rotterdam, Den Haag, Utrecht and Amsterdam in the Netherlands (deparade.nl, 2019). Others answered that it could be compared with the Noorderzon festival in Groningen, which is a performing arts festival (Noorderzon, 2019) (Mrs. Munster & Mr. Boelen). However, all of the interviewees said that it only partly overlaps. This shows that Oerol is a unique festival.

The motivations show important first steps in the customer journey of an Oerol visitor. Not only is the physical attractiveness of the island of Terschelling important, but also the influence of others is important. It turned out that new visitors go to Oerol because they have heard about it from others and they are so enthusiastic it persuades them to go.

Touchpoints in the motivations to go are thus; being at Oerol, the influence of others and the island of Terschelling. Regarding the motivations of visitors, the personal context and physical context are the most important, according to the answers of the interviewees (Romano, 1998, Bourdieu, 1984; Falk and Dierking, 2012). The motivations of people are mostly in the first part of the customer journey.

4.2 EXPECTATIONS

Motivations and expectations cannot be seen as separate elements. The motivations of (returning) visitors are mostly based on their expectations and experiences from earlier years. In all interviews the motivations and expectations intermingle with each other, creating a bit of a blur in the answers. This was expected due to the theory of motivations and expectations. This overlap is also clear in figure 8. Also, expectations are difficult to capture in touchpoints, they overlap, they differ and for the interviewees they were hard to answer.

4.2.1 Personal context

As found in paragraph 2.3, Dickens (1861) researched that the personal expectations are highly influenceable. That is also found in the interviews as all the interviewees gave different answers to what they expect (**motivations**) when they go to Oerol. Mrs. Hofkamp said:

"For me personally, it is the combination of everything, I am distracted from the rest of the world. (…) I am in my Oerol Bubble."
And
"(…) I cannot miss the cultural influences I get there."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

These quotes can be linked to the escape feeling of Pine and Gilmore (1998), visitors can forget about their daily life for a while. Furthermore, they create an identity with it. As they state they are in their Oerol bubble, they consider the festival as part of them. They have a sense of place there and they feel that this is who they are. It was Mrs. Hofkamp who said:

"When I need to describe Oerol to people who do not know the festival; I always say 'the 10 happiest days of the year, because I can feel free and happy (…)."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

and

"…That also lifts me out of the ordinary world for a moment…"

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Houtsma)

These thoughts about being out of their ordinary world can be seen as a push-factor (Yoo et al., 2013) and as escapist in the research of Pine and Gilmore (1998). They 'escape' from reality on Oerol, according to the quotes above, Oerol can make them happy. They can find their equilibrium in their social and cultural needs. With these quotes, they answered that some of the performances touched them and tempts them to think about a next visit. For example, in 2019 Mrs. Houtsma saw a performance by three women who played Othello (the tragedy from Shakespeare). The area where this performance was held was a sports field with an improvised platform (see figure 9).

She mentioned that even after fifteen years of Oerol she was flustered and it felt as if the spectators were in the middle of the battlefield. In this case, the absence of a theatre or stage was not of any influence. But still, the performance blew her away. The décor on Oerol is mostly connected with the nature at Terschelling, as this is for the rest of the year a nature area, there are no permanent stages. At Oerol this is considered as normal, wherein most theatres this would not be possible.

Source: picture is made by interviewee Mrs. Houtsma

The absence of stages and theatre services fits in what most people expect from Oerol. As everything is very accessible and open-minded. Several interviewees have no real expectations at all, before going to Oerol. This can be a disadvantage (**concern**), because can people have no expectations? Or is having no expectation at all, already an expectation? Because they want to discover the festival and they would be disappointed if they did not find enough new experiences?. Several interviewees stated that they go to the festival without any expectation to be as open-minded as possible. They all want to go in blanc and let the experience of that edition come to them. After asking them if they do not expect something, their answer was:

"To be open, or appreciate more what is coming my way. So, if I already had an expectation, then it would be: try to have less and less expectation and to be guided more and more by what comes on my way."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

Mr. Boelen said something equal:

"I expect actually nothing and [at the same time] everything... Because I do not need to do anything obligated, I may know what I am doing."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

Visitors have thus different expectations. On one hand, they have no expectations at all. On the other hand, having no expectations actually creates some expectations as they want to experience surprises. Having those expectations can be seen as a concern as it is not clear if the expectations can be met. Mrs. Van den Ham expects that she sees performances from a higher cultural level. Mrs. Houtsma says that visitors need to have at least some experience in theatre since the performances have a certain level of abstraction. Mrs. Houtsma states in her interview that Oerol can be seen as educational and that something can be learned from the performances. Oerol is on the absorption side of the realms of Pine and Gilmore (1998), as education and entertainment are two important factors in the expectations of Oerol visitors. They want to see new performances (they want to be entertained), but as Mrs. Houtsma said, they also want to feel a certain cultural feeling, they want to learn and discover (educational).

4.2.2 Social context

Interesting to notice was that the group (**group**) with whom they are going to Oerol is of influence on the motivations to go to Oerol and is of influence on their experience, but when asked if the interviewees expect something from the group they answered no. Only Mrs. Munster said that when the group would change, she is not sure if she wants to go again as her experience was mainly influenced by the group.

According to the flowchart of figure 9, the group is the main pillar of the social context. In the case study, it is found that only Mrs. Munster was influenced by this. The other interviewees have motivations to go with a group but do not expect anything from them. At the same time, they expect that the group behaves as they did in the past. Otherwise, the interviewees would have said that they expect something different (in behaviour) of their friends. As Dickens (1861) researched that people are very influenceable by their friends, the interviewees would have mentioned that they expect different behaviour.

4.2.3 Physical context

Another important motivation for most interviewees is the attractiveness of the island of Terschelling and for some the Wadden islands in general. It was Mr. Boelen who said:

"The feeling of an island is 'next level'."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

The physical attractiveness of the unique location (**place** & **architecture**) where Oerol is held is not only important to visit great performances in an alternative setting, the island itself and the boat to the island are also of importance influence on the physical attractiveness. The role of space can be linked to every person in the research, the aesthetic value of Terschelling is a major influence (Falk and Dierking, 2012; Bitner, 1992). For example, when the visitors are on the boat to Terschelling and they see the lighthouse again, the lighthouse will likely remind them on earlier experiences, as the lighthouse is an important Landmark of the island. Which can then be linked again to sense of place and place attachment.

The literature review showed that place & architecture are of influence on the expectations of the visitors of Oerol. In the case study, it turned out that the interviewees have expectations of the scenery surrounding the performances, and that the experience the scenery brings is something which is not possible in a theatre. For example, Mrs Van den Ham, who watched a performance in the dunes, but due to the strong winds, there was a sort of a sandstorm. This sandstorm made them go away, which was a disadvantage of the décor, but of major influence:

"We went to a performance in the dunes, but there was too much wind. We were in a sort of sandstorm and that was a disappointment."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Van den Ham)

4.2.4 Other expectations

It was Mr. Vreeken who said that he wants to enjoy:

"an open casual environment."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Vreeken)

This quote of Mr. Vreeken and some of the earlier quotes show that the interviewees expect nothing when they go to Oerol, but at the same time they want to be blown away.

As most interviewees want to be surrounded by something new to experience the culture and in their way, they all feel attracted to the island of Terschelling or the Wadden islands in general. Making it hard to link the expectations to tangible touchpoints. But touchpoints for the experience mapping are: experiencing something new and the island of Terschelling.

4.3 EXPERIENCES

The experiences in this result section are based on the second half of the interviews with Oerol visitors. To find out if the expected experiences match and how influenceable they are through other people. Also, what kind of influence different aspects (social and physical) have on the experience of visitors. The experience part of the interviews started with the personal context. Questions such as "what is your best Oerol experience?" and "what is the nicest thing you have seen?" were asked

4.3.1 Personal context

The questions which were asked attained some very detailed answers about performances, such as the quote about Othello from Mrs. Houtsma (p.20).

All interviewees mentioned that the performances they attended, cannot be seen anywhere else. They also note that the total experience is what makes Oerol special. It is not only the artist(s); it is also the barn, sporting field, dune or beach or any other place which is of great influence on their experience.

Additionally, the people around them are of influence. This makes the personal motivation and with that the measuring of personal experiences of why people are visiting Oerol hard to understand and intangible. It is almost impossible to choose one personal reason why they go since the only thing they have in common is that they all want to experience something new and they want to have a cultural experience.

The interviewees who have been returning to the festival for several years are also searching for things that make Oerol special. The performances they do not know about on forehand (**interests**), can be a personal reason to go said Mrs. Houtsma, as those performances are the unexpected, she experiences something special, for example:

> *"The performance was so fascinating! (…) that is what I like most I think, the unexpected present, the surprises you get."*

> (translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Houtsma)

Expectations matching experiences

The answers of the interviewees show that they experienced memorable performances and that they attended performances which were 'mind-blowing' as one of the interviewees said. All except for one interviewee said that they want to visit Oerol again next year, meaning that their experience must have been at least positive. However, it is hard to make the match between expectation and experience tangible. As interviewees said, they have almost no expectations beforehand and that the expectations they have differ for everyone.

4.3.2 Social context

The second part of the interview consisted of questions about the people on the island. All interviewees call the people on the island of great importance in their experience. The people on the island can be sub-divided into four categories: 'Eilanders' (people who live on the island), visitors, the group of friends with whom they visit Oerol and the Oerol staff. The 'Eilanders' are very helpful, despite the large numbers of tourists on 'their' island. They are very helpful in creating a positive experience for the Oerol visitors. As Mrs. Houtsma told a story about a friend in a wheelchair who got a beach buggy even on Sunday night, from a Terschelling inhabitant. It is important to mention that they earn money from Oerol visitors, for example by renting out bikes. However, they are still very helpful according to several interviewees. The other visitors (**influence of others**) are described as loyal. People try to help each other to give everyone a chance to watch a performance and they do not complain about each other, this is again an internal response from the model of Bitner (1992), as Bitner describes 'the customer response' in mood and attitude which changes the 'basic' experiences.

A quote from Mrs. Munster:

"it [Oerol] attracts a certain kind of visitors, they respect nature and many more. If you would compare it with a festival as Defqon or something similar, the public is wilder and the ambience is more aggressive there. I have never seen or experienced that at Oerol. For me, that is also something that I like about the festival".

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Munster)

The main driver and main reason for the great experience of all interviewees may be the group (**group**) of friends they are visiting the festival with. Each interviewee had a different kind of group of friends that accompanied them during their visit. According to Mrs. Hofkamp it can make or break friends:

"When I went for the first time, I went with someone I did not know that good. I knew her from an online platform and saw her only once. (…) Now she is one of my best friends.

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

Mrs. Hofkamp visited Oerol with one of her best friends who did not like the festival that much. According to Mrs. Hofkamp, it broke their friendship. Mrs. Houtsma explained that her most important memory was that she and her friends went to the beach (**influence of friends** & **influence with others**). They were able to bring their friend, who is in a wheelchair, thanks to special facilities at the festival. The group can thus be seen as the most important social context of the visit of an Oerol visitor.

Mr. Boelen and Mrs. Hofkamp were volunteers at Oerol because it is cheaper to visit Oerol as a volunteer and because the experience is different as they serve the festival in a team. They feel like they are a group with all other volunteers. They call the staff very friendly and cosy (**influence of staff**).

Not only the interaction with the people who live on the island (as the example from Mrs. Houtsma on page 29) who are very friendly and helpful, but mainly the other Oerol visitors. As they mentioned the other visitors as friendly and compliant. For example, they make room for each other. As Mrs. Munster said:

"[Oerol] just attracts a certain audience (…) I think that the audience Oerol attracts also makes the experience."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Munster)

The interaction (Yoo et al., 2013) with other people can thus be seen as very important. Every interviewee talks about the interaction with others. From friends of their group with whom they visit the festival to the other people on the island. The interaction contributes to the 'sfeer' (Derksen and Driesen, 2006), as people are open and friendly to each other and with that change the experience of others in a positive way.

Expectations matching experiences
The other people (visitors and inhabitants) on the island of Terschelling can be seen as of major influence on everyone. All interviewees talk about the influence of other people. Not only from their own group of friends but also the other people on the island. The group can make or break their time on Terschelling.

4.3.3 Physical context
The quote of Mrs. Houtsma about her beach ritual shows that the weather (**ambient conditions**) and place are important factors, the weather is of influence for all interviewees. The weather influences the experience of the performances in a specific way.

But, the weather is not of influence on the total experience, if the visitor goes to Oerol or not. As the festival is held on Terschelling in June, the weather can be changeable and unpredictable.

When it starts raining and visitors are watching a performance outside, the experience will change drastically. The rain influences the state of mind of visitors. But, as Mrs. Hofkamp notes, the weather can change quickly which means that it is not likely that it rains during the entire Oerol visit. Mrs. Houtsma notes that the warm feeling they can have after the drizzling weather can be very nice and is something which is a part of the festival experience (**ambient conditions**).

Apart from the experience during the performances, the weather on the island of Terschelling is something that is mentioned multiple times during the interviews. All interviewees answered that the weather influences their experience, but none the interviewees would cancel their trip to Oerol, because of the weather.

As some of the interviewees have their own rituals & symbolism (as swimming in the lake what Mrs. Hofkamp does & lying in the dunes what Mrs. Houtsma does after she has arrived) others, as Mr. Boelen searches for what the island has to offer in addition to the festival (**place, architecture, signs, symbols & artefacts):**

"There was a party in the dunes, a sort of rave, or something where lots of people went to (…), that is not part of the festival but it was definitely part of experience."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

Another argument that was often mentioned was everything around the festival. For example, the people on the island, the option to go to the beach or to go to one of the other parties which are organised by others during the festival. Mrs. Houtsma said in the Post-Oerol interview that the first thing she does after arriving at their cottage is (**place, signs, symbols & artefacts & space / function**):

"One of the highlights I have every year is after arriving I go to the beach and lay down in the sun for a moment. Yes, I think that is a big holiday feeling."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Houtsma)

Expectations matching experiences
That the island of Terschelling is an important factor for Oerol visitors is clear. The interviewees do not have any clear expectations in physical attractiveness but they mentioned that the physical environment is inseparably connected to traditions they have or expectations from several performances which use the environment of Terschelling.

4.3.4 Other experiences
Mr. Waal went to Oerol for the first time with his family, they wanted to experience Oerol and have a holiday on one of the Wadden islands:

"We went with our family to Terschelling for a week and during our holiday we also went to Oerol. "

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Waal)

The island of Terschelling is not only important during Oerol, but also as a holiday destination in general. As Terschelling is visited by tourists all year round (VVV Terschelling, 2020), the island is not only an Oerol stage. Oerol visitors can also enjoy what the island has to offer around Oerol. This holiday feeling can be seen as a pull-factor of Terschelling and be linked to the interaction (Yoo et al., 2013). The physical attractiveness of the island of Terschelling (apart from the festival) is of influence.

The island plays an attractive role in attracting visitors to Oerol. Meaning, that the environment of the island is interconnected with the festival and the experience of the visitors.

The personal-, social- and physical context can be combined in a quote from Mr. Vreeken:

"We were in a shed listening to the performance of Marten Winters. It rained. He actually planned a whole show outside, but that was not possible anymore. Now we were actually waiting together until it would stop raining, but he managed to fascinate us with his stories. And the audience became one group."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Vreeken)

This last quote of Mr. Vreeken shows once more that the experience is influenceable by different factors and that Oerol is a combination of the entertainment realm of Pine and Gilmore (1998), as the visitors are entertained by Marten Winters, he used the ambient conditions to entertain the visitor longer and creates with this interaction (Yoo et al., 2013). This interaction created a performance to remember for Mr. Vreeken. Mostly due to a physical experience (rain), which got influenced by internal responses (Bitner, 1992) of the employee, to provide a longer a broader performance. According to the interviews, is these unexpected surprises, what makes Oerol unique. The touchpoints in experience are the island of Terschelling, Weather, performances, rituals and social interactions.

4.4 CONCERNS

One of the most often mentioned disadvantages of the Oerol festival is the price of the festival. With buying ferry tickets, transport costs to Harlingen, accommodation costs and the festival ticket (which does not include most performances and only grants access to the festival terrain) (Oerol, 2019). Oerol is an expensive festival and it made Mr. Boelen and Mrs. Houtsma doubt whether they want to go to Oerol next year. Mr. Boelen said:

"I do not have a lot of money at the moment for all those festivals, but I certainly want to go, it feels like a vacation you know, but you can also go to the sun for that money."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mr. Boelen)

Another disadvantage is the booking system. Tickets for the popular performance are sold out extremely quickly and it could be difficult to get those tickets. Also, Mrs. Houtsma and Mr. Boelen complain about the online system Oerol uses, they call it difficult and inconvenient. This online system is one of the first big steps in the customer journey and with that an important part of the beginning of their (yearly) customer journey.

One of the last questions asked is: 'do you want to visit Oerol again?' Two quotes make the answer to this question quite clear:

"… and I thought it was really great and I really lost my heart to Oerol."

(translated from Dutch to English from the interview with Mrs. Hofkamp)

Mr. Boelen said something equal:

"actually [I] fell in love with the festival (…)."

Only Mr. Waal answered this question with 'no':

"No, that is not in my plans, but I certainly do not dislike the festival."

But, Mr Waal answered that Oerol is a typical kind of festival, with visitors who are interested in rather unique performances instead of the more music-based festivals. Which has his preference. All of the other interviewees are already making plans for their next visit. However, the costs are a reason to doubt, as Mrs. Houtsma said:

"Well, I also doubted sometimes. Mostly because it is also quite expensive, for that you can go to let's say Valencia for a weekend. (…) But I think u could not miss it, the idea that I see things there and experience, that cannot be found somewhere else. So, yes I am going again."

The price of the festival is a touchpoint and as the festival is quite expensive it is mentioned as a reason to not go again. Another touchpoint is a visitor who fears that they will miss something, except for Mr. Waal they all want to have the Oerol experience again.

4.5 CUSTOMER JOURNEY

The customer journey of an Oerol visitor creates a timeline in the process of an Oerol visitor. At the end of this research, a customer journey is created for Oerol visitors, based on the literate review and the results of the case study. This map is based on the example of Kalbach (2016) but made by the author of this study. It is a representation of what the journey of an Oerol visitor can look like. The journey has the same structure as figure 5 and all arrows match with the touchpoints of figure 8 (paragraph 2.9) and the case study of Chapter 4. The customer journey forms a basis for the experience map in paragraph 4.6. Every vertical line in figure 10 can be seen as a touchpoint. First, a standard customer journey of an Oerol visitor is created. Next, on page 35 the customer journey of Mrs. Houtsma and her visit to the 2019 edition of Oerol was created.

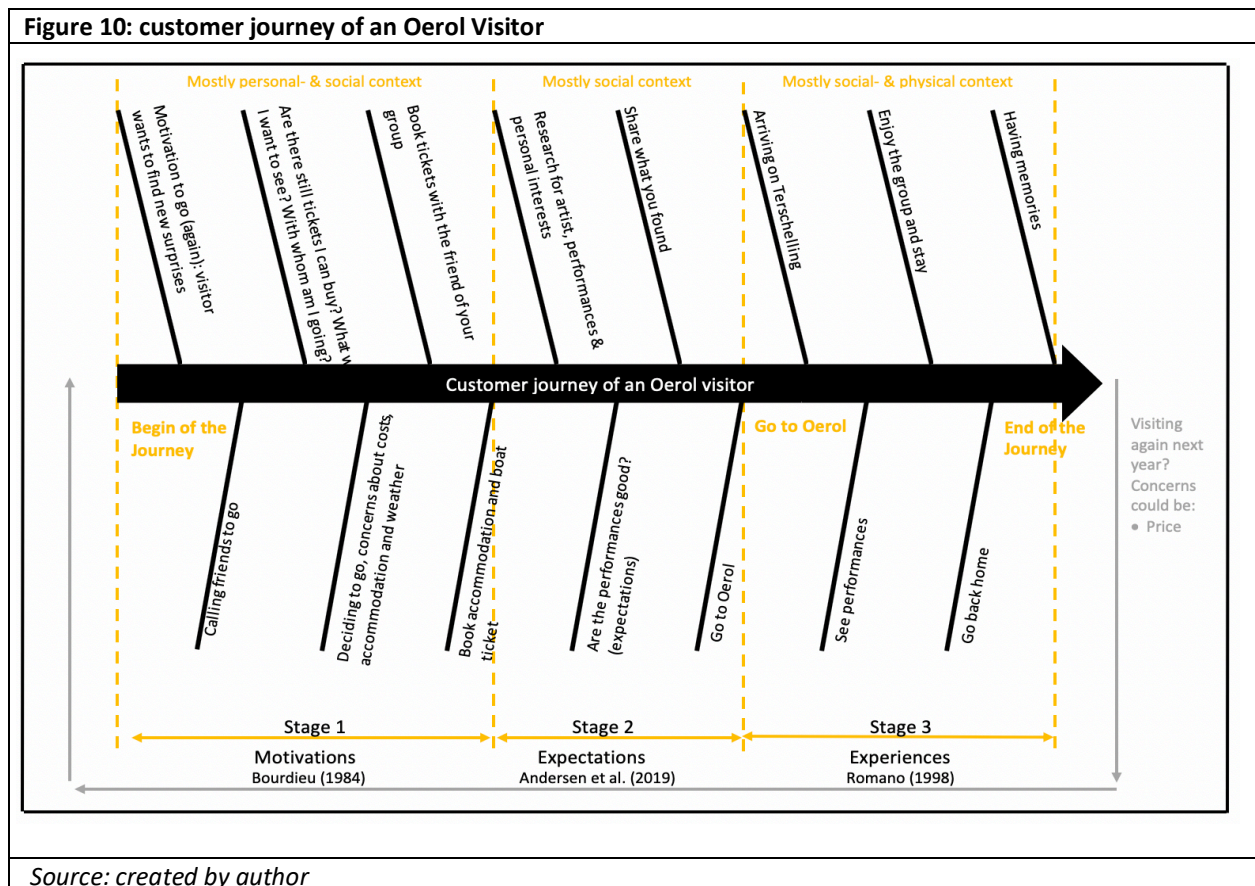**Figure 10: customer journey of an Oerol Visitor**

Source: created by author

Figure 10 shows a customer journey of an Oerol visitor, the figure is quite broad, mostly because every visitor has his or her customer journey with their steps and touchpoints. What a major hick-up is for one person, does not need to be a hick up for another.

Also, the starting point of the customer journey will differ for everyone. For example, a new visitor is likely to search for other things (for example; how does the ticket system work, what do I need to buy and how do I travel to Oerol) than a returning visitor.

For the Oerol visitors, it starts in stage 1 with thinking if and how the visitor will go, based on several motivations (like experiences of last year, money, accommodation options and friends) they will decide to go and starts searching for performances, tickets, accommodation, and boat tickets. With this, the anticipation pleasure starts, the phase in which they research what they are going to see and expectations will grow. This is stage 2 in the customer journey and is partly intermingled with stage 1. Then, as the boat almost arrives at Terschelling (stage 3 has started earlier, again intermingled with stage 2, when they left their homes), the memories are coming back and they will enjoy their stay at Oerol, see performances and create new memories, the customer journey ends at home, showing pictures to friends.

Some of in chapter 4 defined touchpoints were added to figure 11 as these could apply to the customer journey of Mrs. Houtsma's trip to Oerol. The customer journey of Mrs. Houtsma is based on the two interviews and applies to her Oerol trip in 2019. The customer journey in other years will differ from this one. Although she states that she and her friends have some traditions and rituals when they are at Oerol. The customer journey should thus not change that much. The blue touchpoints are not likely to change. In figure 11 it looks as if the motivations, expectations and experiences follow after each other, but as described earlier, the stages overlap.

Figure 11: customer journey of Mrs. Houtsma
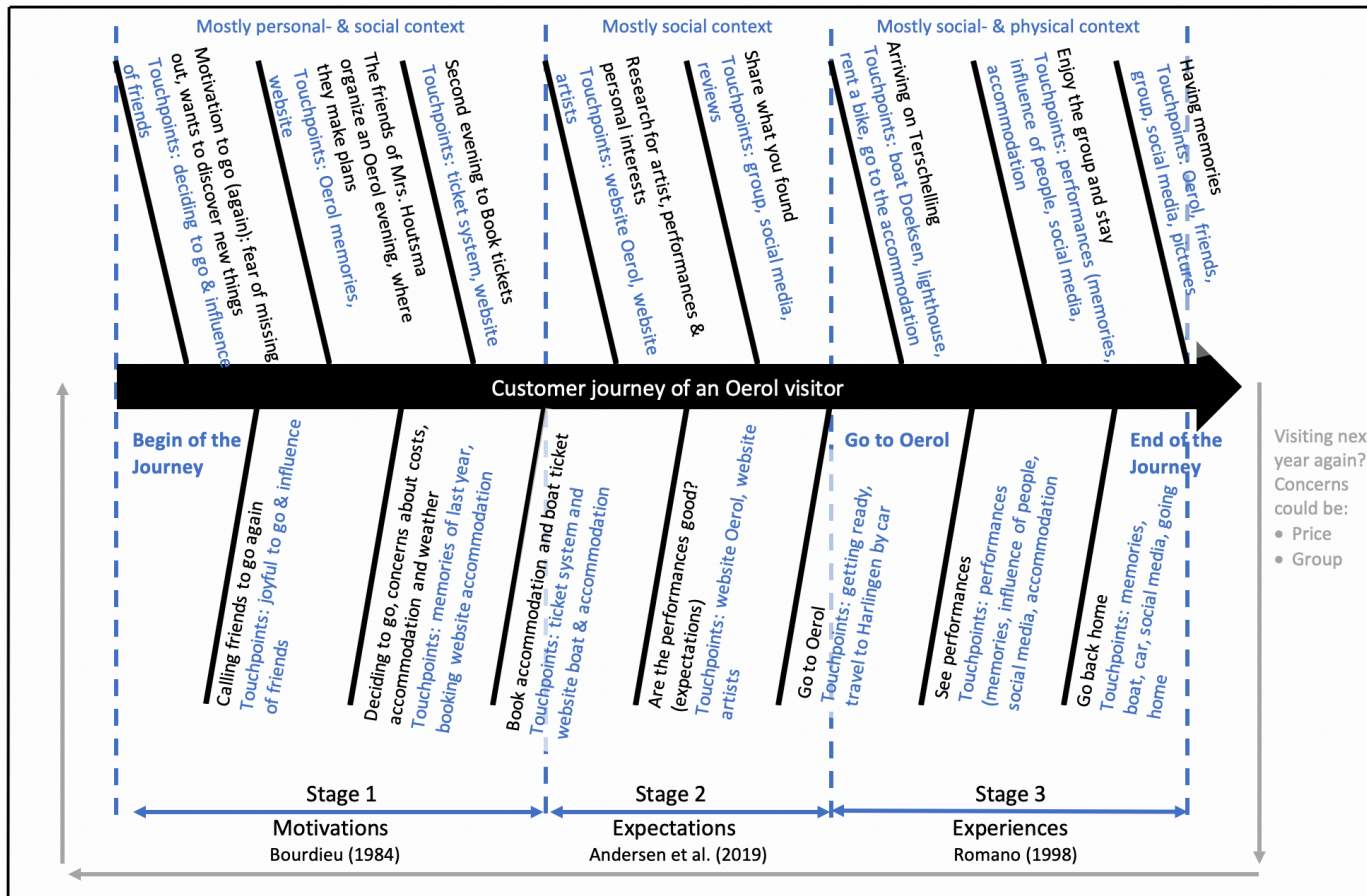
Source: created by author

The customer journey of Mrs. Houtsma starts rather similar to the general one of figure 11. With making plans, asking friends to go again. She told that they organize a ticket-book party when the pre-sale opens (As they are all friends of Oerol, they can buy tickets in pre-sale). Stage 1 has thus already started at the first point of 'I want to go to Oerol again' and asking the group of friends to go again. The difficult ticket system could be seen as a first disappointment in the experience of the 2019 Oerol experience. An expectation was that she hoped the system would have been improved. After the tickets are booked, also for her the 'fun' starts and they are going to book an accommodation and ferry tickets and do research online in what they are going to do and see. Then, when the lighthouse shows up at the ferry, for her personally the experience starts, but in theory, it did much earlier, as the ticket system failed again (and intermingles with stage 1 and 2). After arriving she starts with her traditional ritual of lying down in the dunes and enjoy the island.

During Oerol the other people, the island, the weather and the performances all influence her customer journey and her total experience. For example, there was a bit of rain last year. They were on the beach and there was only one tent, way too small for all people, but the other visitors made space and tried to keep as much as possible people dry. As this was a quite popular performance, all the bikes (the most important transportation option) were a complete mess. But everyone helped each other in searching for the right bike and leaving the storage.

Another important experience was the earlier mentioned play of Othello on page 27. It blew her away, as the performance was marvellous, but surroundings or décor were not. Still, it was for her a touchpoint in the total experience of Oerol 2019. After her trip has finished, the customer journey ends, back home, during an evening with her friends in which they share pictures.

4.6 Experience map

The experience map is the more detailed and more extensive version of the customer journey, as discussed in 2.8. The experience map created for an Oerol visitor is based on the model of Ridson (2012) and the basic customer journey of paragraph 4.6. The same touchpoints and structure as in the rest of the research are used as a basis.

Figure 12: Experience map of an Oerol Visitor

Source: created by author

36
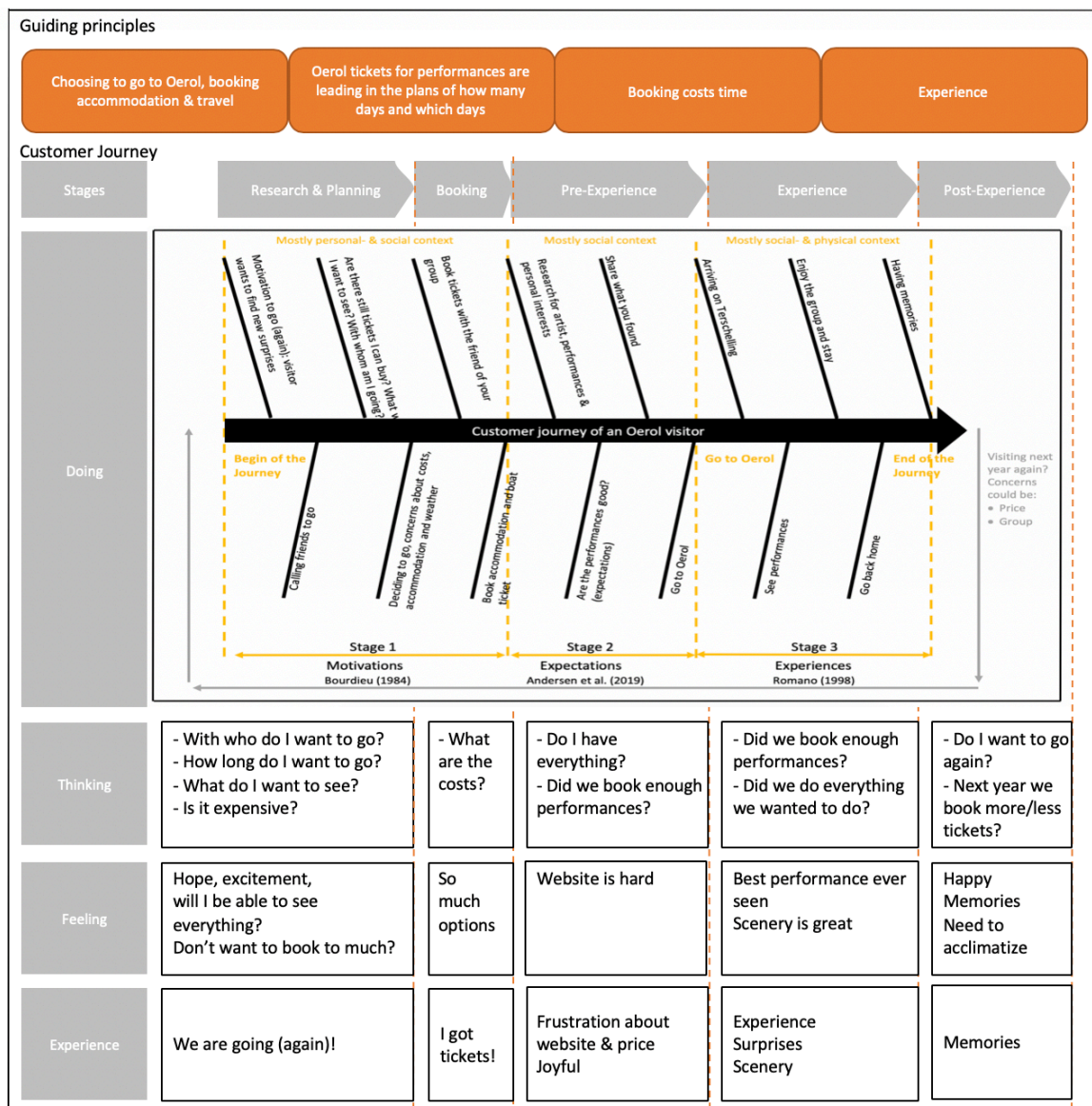
The experience map starts the different stages, of what Oerol visitors do on certain moments. As the last three rows indicate individual thoughts and needs of Oerol visitors, these 'thinking', 'feeling' and 'experiences' can differ per individual visitors. The mentioned thoughts and feelings of figure 12 are all based on the interviews. As indicated in 4.5, the customer journeys of Oerol visitors differ per year, also this experience map could be different next year. Also, the questions and experiences differ for visitors, where one visitor asks what they want to see, the other can wait with booking tickets after he or she arrived.

The experience map starts with some guiding principles, those principles are similar to the customer journey and starts with deciding to go to Oerol again, booking accommodation and travel options. Potential Oerol visitors are then working on their motivations to go, for example: with whom do I want to go, which friends do I want to go with and which are friends are also willing to go again? The feeling they then have is: excitement and a bit of confusion on how much they need to book (for example Mr. Boelen who said; do I need to buy all my tickets on forehand?)
The group of friends is of influence on what they decide to go, if they go, how long, when and what they are going to do.
After deciding to go, other questions arise, what does it cost? Are the tickets I want still available and the first experience arrived for Mrs. Houtsma, as the ticket system, according to her, is difficult. The feeling goes more to frustration, but still excited and joyful because they go (again). Also, the other people are very nice and the natural environment as décor is an experience. For example, the quote of Mrs. Van den Ham, who was a bit scared by a performance in the woods. Adapting this to the literature of (Alonso-Vázquez et al., 2019), nature is used as part of the performance and attractiveness of the festival. In the example of Mrs. Van den Ham, the nature scared her out a bit, but she stated that it was memorable, meaning that she also feels attracted to the nature and this nature influenced her experience.

Then, when arrived at Oerol, the feeling changes to surprises, happiness and pleasure. Still, some questions as: have we seen everything? Ending with the post-experience phase, the visitors are back home and creating memories, which they share with their friends they went with and form a basis to go again next year. For example, Mrs. Hofkamp goes to Oerol, to be blown away, just as last year.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine and enhance the customer journey of Oerol visitors. The research question central to this thesis was "*'What is the customer journey of Oerol visitors and how can it be improved to enhance visitors' experiences?'*. To answer the research question several sub-questions needed to be answered first: (1) what is the motivation of visitors to go to Oerol?, (2) What kind of expectations of Oerol do visitors have?, (3) To what extent do the experiences meet the visitors' expectations?, and (4) to what extent can Oerol improve to enhance the experience of visitors, based on a customer journey analysis?

Motivations

Previous literature stated that an "escape-seeking" dichotomy is one of the motivations to go to festivals (Crompton & McKay, 1997). This feeling is confirmed by the results of this study as various participants indicated that they feel like they forget where they are and are only focussed on experiencing the current situation. According to Yoo et al. (2013), the motivation to visit a festival can be explained by previous experiences with the festival. This study confirms this theory by Yoo et al. (2013) as most participants indicated that they had positive previous experiences with Oerol.
Moreover, the results show that the ambience is an important motivator to visit the festival again. This is in line with the research of Derksen and Driesen (2006), who stated that the ambience is one of the main motivations to go to festivals. Jonker (2009) stated in her research that people go to festivals for headliners and to discover new things. Even though Oerol allows visitors to discover new things, they do not provide a headlining performance.

The ambience of a festival is created by the people on the island, from the organisation and residents to the other visitors. Derksen and Driesen (2006) and Crompton and McKay (1997) researched that people create the festival's ambience and generate their own experience.

A Pull factor to go to the festival was given by Yoo et al. (2013); 'the natural environment.' As every interviewee talked about the beautiful island of Terschelling, it is clear that the island is a pull factor in the motivation to go to Oerol. All interviewees stated that it is not possible to move Oerol to another location, or to compare the festival with another, most of them state that this is due to the beautiful location and the uniqueness of an island. This unique feeling also creates a certain place attachment for returning visitors, this feeling gives them a bond with the island and with the festival (Alonso-Vazquez, 2019).

Along with the attractiveness of the extraordinary location, the group of friends or acquaintances with whom the visitor is attending Oerol can be a motivation to go. At the same time, when the composition of the group changes, visitors can decide not to go to Oerol anymore.

To conclude, the "escape-seeking" dichotomy, previous positive experiences with the festival, the superior ambience and the natural environment on the island are all motivations of visitors to go to Oerol.

Expectations

The results of this study contradict the theory of Genette (1987) which states that expectations are mostly formed before the festival. The participants indicated that they have no or at the very least a few expectations before attending to the festival.

The expectations of the group differ for several participants. On one side, most people visit the festival with a group of friends and expect to do their symbolic rituals every year, or that they make their Oerol feeling again, the helpful ambiance in which everyone helps each other and make room for each other. However, on the other side, they do not expect something from their group, as they do not in particular name something. For example, Mrs. Hofkamp went with a friend who she barely knew to Oerol. Nowadays it is one of her best friends.

Andersen et al. (2019) stated that visitors have expectations from the scenery, clothes of artists, the island and the weather. However, the case study did not demonstrate this.

The participants did not mention any expectations in scenery or weather, they did mention that they hope the weather is good. However, it is self-evident that visitors want to have good weather since most of the festival is outdoors. The fact that visitors do not talk about the scenery in their expectation is interesting. They expect that the scenery is part of the Oerol experience, but this is mostly in the attractiveness of the island itself and with that only partly part of the decors of the performances.

To conclude, the visitors of Oerol do not have many expectations for the festival before their visit. However, they do have certain expectations of the group of friends they are visiting the festival with.

Experiences

The experience of people at a festival grows over time and is influenced by several aspects, as the environment (the natural environment of the décors), other people on the terrain (friends, other visitors, staff and local inhabitants) and the performances. But what they often remember, is one thing in particular (e.g. a performance that was astonishing good), and not the total experience of all of the time they were there (Romano, 1998). At Oerol, visitors want to feel free, forget their daily routine, and they want to be in another world for a few days. It is a holistic view as researched by Kalbach (2016) the whole experience of the festival, what is organised by the festival. But also, the parties organised by others, or the moment that visitors can go to the beach, or swim in a lake. Moreover, the results show that Oerol can be seen as a short holiday. It offers almost everything that the participants want to experience during a holiday, like going with friends, beautiful scenery, performances and a feeling of freedom.

The group, as shown in the results, are of major influence on the experience. This social influence of other people is part of the interactive experience described by Falk and Dierking (2012). It is found that every person on the island the visitor has contact with, is of influence on the experience. This can also be the group of friends with whom visitors are going to the festival. Other people, which could be staff, inhabitants or other visitors on the island are of great influence on the experience as well. Furthermore, a nice and calm ambience contributes to the experience.

Bitner (1992) researched that the physical context, the so-called 'environmental dimensions', are a basic principle in the experience. Arising from the physical context, visitors experience can be influenced by for example ambient conditions like the décor of a performance. However, the results of the study do not show any evidence for this.

Every interviewee notes that one of the unique selling points of Oerol is the island of Terschelling. The surroundings on the island, like the beach and nature are what make most performances unique and elevate the experience. Performances which would be very different in a theatre. The island itself can be seen as part of the Sense of Place.

Despite the positive experience, the price for a trip to Oerol is quite high which turned out to be a major downside of the experience for several interviewees. The results even show that the costs of the festival could be an argument to hesitate to go again.

To conclude, the experiences of Oerol visitors do not directly match their expectations. This is due to the fact that the Oerol visitors arrive at the festival without any expectations. The study shows that the experience is mostly based on the pleasant ambience and the social interaction with the staff, other island visitors and residents of the island.

Enhancing the customer journey

To conclude, the answer to the research question remains: '*what is the customer journey of Oerol visitors and how can it be improved to enhance visitors' experiences?*'

This study shows that the customer journey of the Oerol visitors starts before they arrive at the festival. The first points in the customer journey are related to purchasing tickets, booking an accommodation and planning with friends.

After deciding to go to Oerol and booking tickets, the customer journey leads to researching artists and performances. This is usually the last touchpoint before the visitor arrives at the Oerol terrain.

The next touchpoints within the customer journey include arriving at the festival and enjoying the performances before leaving the festival again.

Not all touchpoint within the Oerol customer journey elicits a positive reaction. The participants considered the high prices and unclear booking system as a negative experience. Changing the negative experience into a positive experience could lead to a better customer journey and in the end possibly to a higher number of visitors. The Friends of Oerol program gives returning visitors some advantages, such as an earlier option to buy tickets. The Oerol organisation already created a system in attracting returning visitors. Such benefits could be a decisive change for potential Oerol visitors who have previous negative experience with purchasing tickets for the festival. This and other recommendations to enhance the customer journey will be explained more detailed in chapter 7.

6 DISCUSSION

Oerol visitors are visiting a niche festival. The festival on theatre and arts is held on the island of Terschelling in a UNESCO protected area, which is only reachable by boat. It was expected that visitors would visit the festival because they were mainly looking for theatre performances. The data of this research does not support this expectation. The attractiveness of Oerol turned out to be much more than that. Measuring the customer journey of Oerol visitors turned out to be a useful manner to research the needs and expectations of festival visitors.

Discussion of the results

The confirmation of the "escape-seeking" dichotomy is a sensible result of the case study. Many people often look for situations in which they can escape their daily lives for a few hours, as was also mentioned by the participants in this study. Festivals are a suitable option to experience this "escape" and therefore the results are not surprising. It is also not surprising that a previous positive experience is a motivational factor to visit the festival again. Positive experiences lead to repetition behaviour (Crompton & McKay, 1997). In line with the research of Derksen and Driesen (2006), part of this escape of the world is caused by the ambiance of the festival. As Derksen and Driesen (2006) already stated, that ambiance is an important factor to visit a festival, which is confirmed by the results of this study. The created ambiance comes from multiple sources, from people on the island (e.g. visitors, inhabitants or staff) and is mentioned by every interviewee.

This study is in line with the results of Yoo et al. (2013) who describe the natural environment as a pull-factor for festival visitors. The island of Terschelling has beautiful protected nature areas that are used by the festival. Where other festivals build big stages with themes, Oerol uses the natural environment such as the beach or dunes. At the same time, without those themed stages, Oerol does not have a clear main theme. This implies that Oerol does not optimally make use of the three objectives described by Yoo et al. (2013) in order to motivate the (potential) visitors of Oerol to come to the festival. Which possibly creates a lower motivation to go and could in turn lead to a lower number of visitors.

The results of the study indicate that visitors have no or at the very least low expectations before visiting Oerol. This finding contradicts the research by Genette (1987) who demonstrated that expectations are already formed as people visit a website. One reason for this could be that the visitors want to go as open minded as possible, because many of the artists at the festival are unknown. (there is no major headliner).

The group with whom people are visiting a festival can be seen as one the most important influencers, not only stated by Yoo et al. (2013) and Bitner (1992) where the group can be of influence on the personal-, social- and physical context (Falk and Dierking, 2012). People are influenced by every other person at the festival. Although the interviewees saw mostly the influence of their friends and other visitors. But, for example, the performance which took longer because of the train, was an influence of one person on all the spectators of that performance. It also kept the spectators happy on the rainy day, creating a calm and satisfied public. The other people who rent out stuff, or organise a side program are also of influence on the social context. For some of the visitors, like Mrs. Houtsma the special wheelchair which was provided by a private person was a touchpoint in her Oerol visit of 2019.

The Oerol website and ticketing system is one of the points that stood out during the case study. The website turned out to be difficult to navigate and tickets are too expensive. Which puts a constraint on one of the first experiences that visitors have with Oerol. A better website and cheaper tickets it would be beneficial for a better start of the experience. As building a new website or decreasing prices considerably is not always an option, a guide to use the website more easily or including more benefits into the ticket price (e.g. benefits similar to the Friends of Oerol benefits) could also constrain some of these negative experiences.

New visitors are mostly attracted via the network of returning visitors. With creating more online footage and thus expectations, visitors will be influenced more.

As multiple interviewees stated, the escape feeling and the total experience (Romano, 1998) of being at a festival with friends is what makes Oerol so special. This can be related to the interaction with others as researched by Falk and Dierking (2012).

As returning visitors go to Oerol because they fear that they could not miss it and want to go because of the surroundings and the ambiance, visitors do have a certain sense of place (Tuan, 1979) with the festival. Alonso-Vazquez et al. (2019) researched that the uniqueness of the environment creates a place attachment. The place attachment is one of the major reasons why visitors visit Oerol. They feel connected with the festival, identify themselves with the festival (place identity, (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández et al., 2007).

Oerol does not differentiate itself from other festivals, Flinn and Frew (2014) researched that other festivals focus on the experience of visitors at the festival, the 'experience turn in Festival' as they call it. Visitors want to have a cultural experience as researched by Zhang et al. (2019).

Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the literature in various important ways. Previous literature focussed mainly on motivations and experiences of other social activities, such as restaurant visits (Kalbach, 2016) or music festival (Alonso-Vazquez, 2019). This case study applies the theory of social activities to festivals and whereas other studies on festivals are mainly focussed on mainstream music festivals (e.g. Lowlands or Pinkpop), this study focusses on a more niche festival. This provides new insights into the motivations, expectations and experiences of visitors of niche festivals. The new insights can be used to further deepen the knowledge about festivals in general. Furthermore, this study is based on qualitative data which provides different insights into the answers and reasoning compared to one of the main studies on festivals by Yoo et al. (2013). Lastly, this case study is among the first studies that focus on the customer journey of festival visitors and in particular visitors of niche festivals.

Limitations and future research

As true for any research, this case study has several limitations. The first limitation is the number of interviewees. In the end, seven interviews are conducted and only one of them split into two parts as a pre- and post-interview. Originally, the plan was to conduct several interviews with two parts and to conduct at least nine interviews in total. This would have improved the validity of the research. As with new interviews, new insights could be gathered. At the same time, as Scholl & Olivier (2014) researched, eight or more interviews would not evidently lead to more information. Which means that the number of interviews conducted in this research is sufficient but modest. However, for future research more interviews might help shed light on other topics that could not be included in the current study.

A second limitation occurred during the interviews. The interviewer realised that a question that should shed light on the ambience of the festival by asking the most important memory of the interviewee did not have the expected effect. Therefore, this question was not successful in gathering the wanted data. In future research, it would be better to ask about more about the ambience in relation to the experience.

A third limitation relates to figure 8. The concept of 'concerns' is connected with motivations and expectations, but in the interviewee, answers could not be found. This can mean that one of the interview questions was not sufficient or concerns were not of major importance for the interviewees.

A fourth limitation is that not all answers apply to one touchpoint. Some of them can apply to multiple touchpoints. For example, the 'beautiful island' can be seen as a personal motivation to go but is also a physical attractive force.

Lastly, not all interviewees provide an equal amount of detail in their answers. Of course, all interviewees talk about what they want and are free to answer in every way they want, but this means that not all answers were as useful.

Future research regarding Oerol could focus on interviewing different people who are of importance to the customer journey. For example, residents of the island of Terschelling, people who have visited in the past and do not want to visit the festival again or organizers of other festivals to gain insights in their customer journey. In addition, an extensive amount of extra data (e.g. quantitative) regarding the experiences of Oerol visitors could broaden the knowledge and help to better align the expectations and experiences of the visitors.

An interesting area of future research regarding the literature is the non-existing expectations that were demonstrated by this study. As it is plausible that most people have at least some expectations of a festival due to the artists they know are performing, it is interesting to see that Oerol visitors do not have these expectations. More research on motivations, expectations and experiences is needed to fully grasp the importance of these elements on visiting a festival. Future research could focus on a deeper understanding of the elements that are important in creating a positive experience at festivals.

Or more broadly, on what creates a positive experience in social activities. Additionally, more research needs to be done to create valid and reliable scales that measure motivation, expectation and experience in qualitative research as these scales are not fully clear yet.

The customer journey is not a well-known definition for people. Although it could be useful for further research to let people fill in their customer journey of a festival. Of course, in a certain format, this could be part of the interviews. With filling in their experience map, a more detailed way of expectations and experiences can be researched. This can be done by showing them a customer journey, asking them what they think and feel at a certain point. For example, when the online ticket sale starts, this is a touchpoint in the customer journey, ask specifically what the interviewee thinks and feels at that moment.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research is now formally based on why people visit a festival and why in particular Oerol, meaning that the research is interesting for researchers who are interested in festivals and the behaviour of people at festivals. It is also useful to research for the organisation of the festival and in particular Oerol, as with this research the customer journey of a festival visitor is shown. In addition, for Oerol the research gives insights into what the Oerol visitors expect and experience.

In the first place, this research was started to find out what Oerol visitors motivates and how the rather alternative festival can exist.

In a personal context, a recommendation could be to furthermore research what concerns and (negative) motivations are why people would stop visiting a Festival. At what moment the negative aspects are bigger than the positive and can those negative aspects (as the ticket system for Oerol) be improved.

In a social context, about what so important is about other people. As people go for their own experience, what difference would it make when the group with whom they are going changes. Next to that, how this would influence their experience.

In a physical context, it could be interesting to research more about what the environment does for festival visitors, about how the surroundings contribute to the experience. And what the difference would be when Oerol is held in a theatre.

The research could be more on the theoretical part of Sense of place (Tuan, 1979) and festival attachment. (Alonso-Vazquez, 2019) As with this research is stated that Oerol is not that different from other festivals.

Case study Recommendations

The inhabitants of Oerol are multiple times heard as, very kind and polite. As Oerol uses lots of different facilities of Terschelling, this could be improved by working even more together.

As mentioned before, one important recommendation is the improvement of the ticket(system), as the system is called difficult and some of the performances are sold out too fast. Making this an important disadvantage in the Oerol experience of a visitor.

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Interview Guide
There are three interview guides, one pre-Oerol interview; for the interview which is done before the respondent went to Oerol another is for post-Oerol and the last for a new Oerol visitor, which went for the first time. As the interviews were done in Dutch, the interview guides are also in Dutch. The interview guide is based on Cope (2016). In the interview guide a pre-code scheme can be found, this code scheme forms the basis for the coding schema which will be used in the results.

Code book
The codes are based on the literature review and were made in advance on the interviews. After transcribing all the interviews, the codes are reviewed and the code tree was made. The coding is done in Atlas.ti.
The coding is structured with letters. To make a distinction between the different interview guides, the post-Oerol codes start with a 'P'. The Oerol interview guide, starts with 'O'. The rest of the codes are formed with as basics the subject what the question and or code is about. Such as 'M' of Motivation. Making that the code for personal motivations in the Post-Oerol interview guide is: 'PEPM'.

Type of Question	Type of benefits	Example of question (the questions can change during the interview) *(questions with a bullet point are follow up questions)*	Link to Literature (Probes coding)
Descriptive (primary)– *introduction*	Opening Motivations /Expectations	Gaat u voor het eerst naar Oerol, of bent u al vaker geweest? • Waarom naar Oerol? • Gaat u alleen of met een groep? o Bent u vaker met deze groep geweest? • Is Oerol vergelijkbaar met een ander festival? Wat maakt Oerol (dan) uniek?	Motivations to go (OHO, OVE, MPI, MPM, MPC, MSG, MSI) Optional codes: (EPM, EPC, ESG)
Formal Secondary question - *Motivations*	Identifies the motivation to go	Wat is de voornaamste reden om te gaan? • Hoe is deze reden veranderd door de jaren heen? Wat verwacht u tijdens Oerol van de sfeer?	Motivations to go (OTR) Expectations (EPM, EPC, MSG, ESG) Optional codes: (MPHSA, MPHSP, MPHSS, EPHP, EPHA)
Formal Secondary question – *Motivations & expectation*	Identifies the motivation to go & Based on experience	Wat zou een reden zijn om niet meer te gaan? • Zou een verandering in het gezelschap een reden zijn om niet meer te gaan?	Motivations to go (OTR) Expectations (EPM, EPC, MSG, ESG) Optional codes: (MPHSA, MPHSP, MPHSS, EPHP, EPHA)
Closing	Feeling	Is er nog iets wat we nu niet besproken hebben? Of iets wat u echt nog wilt toevoegen?	

Concept	Description	Code	Link to scholars
Descriptive – introduction – **P**ersonal	Personal details	PD	Cope, (2016)
	Gender Age	PG PA	Cope, (2016) Cope, (2016)
Descriptive – introduction – **O**erol	Waarom naar Oerol Vergelijkbaar	OHO OVE	Flinn and Frew, (2014) Flinn and Frew, (2014)

Analytical Question – **M**otivation	Motivations:
	• Personal
	   o Interests
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	• Social
	   o Influences from others
	   o Group
	• Physical
	   o Ambient conditions
	   o Space / Function
	   o Signs, Symbols & Artefacts
		(M)
		(MP)
		MPI
		MPM
		MPC
		(MS)
		MSI
		MSG
		(MPH)
		MPHSA
		MPHSP
		MPHSS
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			Bourdieu, (1984)
			Yoo et al., (2013), Crompton & McKay, (1997) & Van Olderen, (2012)
			
			Yoo et al., (2013) & Knaapen, (2005)
			
			Knaapen, (2005) & Van Olderen, (2012)

Analytical Question – **E**xpectations	Expectations:
	• Personal
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	• Social
	   o Group
	• Physical
	   o Place
	   o Architecture
		(E)
		(EP)
		EPM
		EPC
		(ES)
		ESG
		(EPH)
		EPHP
		EPHA
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			Dickens, (1861)
			Tan, (1996)
			
			Tan, (1996) & Andersen et al., (2019)
			Tan, (1996) & Andersen et al., (2019)

*Codes between bracelets are not codes, but define letters for codes from the subject. Such as *'(E)' from expectations, '(EP)' from Expectations; personal.*

Type of Question	Type of benefits	Example of question (the questions can change during the interview) *(questions with a bullet point are follow up questions)*	Link to Literature (Probes coding)
Descriptive (primary)– *introduction*	Opening	Hoe is Oerol bevallen? • Hoe was de groep van invloed op uw ervaring? • Was het boven verwachting? Waarom wel of niet?	Experiences (PWO, PEXSG, PBV, PESG) Optional codes: (PMSG, PEXPI, PEXSIO, PEXSG, PEXSIS, PEXSIF, PEXSINTER, PEPHP, PEPHA, PEPHAM, PEPHS, PEPHSI)
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations & experiences*	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Wat is het eerste wat in u op komt na afgelopen keer? Wat is het leukste dat u gezien en/ of gedaan heeft? • Is dat ook de sterkste herinnering?	Experiences (PWO, PWO, PEXSG, PBV) Optional codes: (PMSG, PEXPI, PEXSIO, PEXSG, PEXSIS, PEXSIF, PEXSINTER, PEPHP, PEPHA, PEPHAM, PEPHS, PEPHSI)
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations* & Experiences	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Terugdenkend aan Oerol, wat was dan het leukste moment? • Hoe speelden de mensen om u heen een rol? • Hoe speelde de omgeving een rol? • Hoe beïnvloedde het weer uw bezoek? • Bent u tevreden met de organisatie van het gehele bezoek (festival ervaring, als ook eigen boekingen)?	Experiences (PEXPI, PEXSIO, PEXSG, PEXSIS, PEXSIF, PEXSINTER, PEPHP, PEPHA, PEPHAM, PEPHS, PEPHSI)
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations* & Experiences	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Overtrof Oerol uw verwachtingen? • Meer of minder dan andere jaren? • Waarom verschilt het van andere jaren? (wat was van invloed; gezelschap, optredens, sfeer etc.)	Expectations, Experiences (PMPI, PMPM, PMPC, PMSI, PMSG, PEXPI, PEXSIO, PEXSG, PEXSIS, PEXSIF, PEXSINTER, PEPHP, PEPHA, PEPHAM, PEPHS, PEPHSI)
Descriptive (primary) – *Expectations*	Identifies expectations	Gaan jullie komend jaar nog een keer?	Motivations (PMPI, PMPM, PMPC, PMSI, PSMG, PMPHSA, PMPHSP, PMPHSS) Optional codes: (EPP, EPS, EPH)
Closing	Feeling	Is er nog iets wat we nu niet besproken hebben? Of iets wat u echt nog wilt toevoegen?	

Codebook Post-Oerol

Concept	Description	Code (**P**ost)	Link to scholars
Descriptive – introduction – **O**pening	Hoe is Oerol bevallen? Hoe was de groep van invloed op uw ervaring? Was het boven verwachting?	PWO PEXSG PBV	Flinn and Frew, (2014) & Kalbach, (2016) Kalbach, (2016)

Analytical Question – **M**otivation	Motivations:
	 • Personal
	   o Interests
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	 • Social
	   o Influences from others
	   o Group
	 • Physical
	   o Ambient conditions
	   o Space / Function
	   o Signs, Symbols & Artefacts
		(PM)
		 (PMP)
		 PMPI
		 PMPM
		 PMPC
		 (PMS)
		 PMSI
		 PMSG
		 (PMPH)
		 PMPHSA
		 PMPHSP
		 PMPHSS
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			 Bourdieu, (1984)
			 Yoo et al., (2013), Crompton & McKay, (1997) & Van Olderen, (2012)
			
			 Yoo et al., (2013) & Knaapen, (2005)
			
			 Knaapen, (2005), Bitner, (1992) & Van Olderen, (2012)

Analytical Question – **E**xpectations	Expectations:
	 • Personal
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	 • Social
	   o Group
	 • Physical
	   o Place
	   o Architecture
		(PE)
		 (PEP)
		 PEPM
		 PEPC
		 (PES)
		 PESG
		 (PEPH)
		 PEPHP
		 PEPHA
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			 Dickens, (1861)
			 Tan, (1996)
			
			 Tan, (1996) & Andersen et al., (2019)
			 Tan, (1996), Bitner, (1992) & Andersen et al., (2019)

Analytical Question – **E**xperiences	Experiences:
	 • Personal
	   o Interests
	 • Social
	   o Influences from others
	   o Group
	   o Interaction with staff
	   o Interaction with friends
	   o Interaction with others
	 • Physical
	   o Place
	   o Architecture
	   o Ambient conditions (weer)
	   o Space / Function
	   o Signs, Symbols & Artefacts
		(PEX)
		 (PEXP)
		 PEXPI
		 (PEXS)
		 PEXSIO
		 PEXSG
		 PEXSIS
		 PEXSIF
		 PEXSINTER
		 (PEPH)
		 PEPHP
		 PEPHA
		 PEPHAM
		 PEPHS
		 PEPHSI
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			 Romano, (1998)
			 Kalbach, (2016)
			
			 Kalbach, (2016)
			
			 Kalbach, (2016) & Bitner, (1992)

Codes between bracelets are not codes, but define letters for codes from the subject. Such as *'(E)'*
from expectations, '(EP)' from Expectations; personal.

Type of Question	Type of benefits	Example of question (the questions can change during the interview) *(questions with a bullet point are follow up questions)*	Link to Literature (Probes coding)
Descriptive (primary)– *introduction*	Opening Motivations /Expectations	Gaat u voor het eerst naar Oerol, of bent u al vaker geweest? • Waarom naar Oerol? • Gaat u alleen of met een groep? ○ Bent u vaker met deze groep geweest? • Is Oerol vergelijkbaar met een ander festival? Wat maakt Oerol (dan) uniek?	Introduction (OPD, OPG & OPA) (OGE, OWO, OVE & OU) Optional codes: (OMPI, OMPM, OMPC, OMSI, OMSG, OMPHSA, OMPHSP & OMPHSS, OEPM, OEPC, OESG, OEPHP & OEPHA)
Formal Secondary question - *Motivations*	Identifies the motivation to go	Wat is de voornaamste reden om te gaan? • Hoe is deze reden veranderd door de jaren heen? Wat verwacht u tijdens Oerol van de sfeer?	Motivations & Expectations (OMPI, OMPM, OMPC, OMSI, OMSG, OMPHSA, OMPHSP) Optional codes: (OMPHSS, OEPM, OEPC, OESG, OEPHP & OEPHA)
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations & experiences*	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Hoe is Oerol bevallen? • Hoe was de groep van invloed op uw ervaring? • Was het boven verwachting? Waarom wel of niet?	Expectations & Experiences (OMPHSS, OEPM, OEPC, OESG, OEPHP & OEPHA, OEXPI, OEXSIO, OEXSG, OEXSIS, OEXSIF, OEXSINTER, OEPHP, OEPHA, OEPHAM, OEPHS & OEPHSI) Optional codes: OWO
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations & experiences*	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Wat is het eerste wat in u op komt na afgelopen keer? Wat is het leukste dat u gezien en/ of gedaan heeft? • Is dat ook de sterkste herinnering?	Experiences (OEXPI, OEXSIO, OEXSG, OEXSIS, OEXSIF, OEXSINTER, OEPHP, OEPHA, OEPHAM, OEPHS & OEPHSI)
Formal Secondary question – *Expectations* & Experiences	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Terugdenkend aan Oerol, wat was dan het leukste moment? • Hoe speelden de mensen om u heen een rol? • Hoe speelde de omgeving een rol? • Hoe beïnvloedde het weer uw bezoek? • Bent u tevreden met de organisatie van het gehele bezoek (festival ervaring, als ook eigen boekingen)?	Experiences (OEXPI, OEXSIO, OEXSG, OEXSIS, OEXSIF, OEXSINTER, OEPHP, OEPHA, OEPHAM, OEPHS & OEPHSI)

Formal Secondary question – *Expectations* & Experiences	Identifies expectations & Experiences	Overtrof Oerol uw verwachtingen? • Meer of minder dan andere jaren? • Waarom verschilt het van andere jaren? (wat was van invloed; gezelschap, optredens, sfeer etc.)	Expectations & Experiences (OMPHSS, OEPM, OEPC, OESG, OEPHP & OEPHA, OEXPI, OEXSIO, OEXSG, OEXSIS, OEXSIF, OEXSINTER, OEPHP, OEPHA, OEPHAM, OEPHS & OEPHSI)
Descriptive (primary) – *Expectations*	Identifies expectations	Gaan jullie komend jaar nog een keer?	Motivations (OMPI, OMPM, OMPC, OMSI, OMSG, OMPHSA, OMPHSP & OMPHSS)
Closing	Feeling	Is er nog iets wat we nu niet besproken hebben? Of iets wat u echt nog wilt toevoegen?	

Codebook Oerol visitor

Concept	Description	Code (Oerol)	Link to scholars
Descriptive – introduction – **P**ersonal	Personal details	OPD	Cope, (2016)
	Gender Age	OPG OPA	Cope, (2016) Cope, (2016)
Descriptive – introduction – **O**pening	Gaat u voor het eerst? Waarom naar Oerol? Is Oerol vergelijkbaar met een ander festival? Wat maakt Oerol (dan) uniek? Respondent is student Respondent werkt	OGE OWO OVE OU OPS OPW	Flinn and Frew, (2014) & Kalbach, (2016) Kalbach, (2016) Van Olderen, (2012)

Analytical Question – **M**otivation	Motivations:
	• Personal
	   o Interests
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	• Social
	   o Influences from others
	   o Group
	• Physical
	   o Ambient conditions
	   o Space / Function
	   o Signs, Symbols & Artefacts
		(OM)
		(OMP)
		OMPI
		OMPM
		OMPC
		(OMS)
		OMSI
		OMSG
		(OMPH)
		OMPHSA
		OMPHSP
		OMPHSS
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			Bourdieu, (1984)
			Yoo et al., (2013), Crompton & McKay, (1997) & Van Olderen, (2012)
			
			Yoo et al., (2013) & Knaapen, (2005)
			
			Knaapen, (2005), Bitner, (1992) & Van Olderen, (2012)

Analytical Question – **E**xpectations	Expectations:
	• Personal
	   o Motivations
	   o Concerns
	• Social
	   o Group
	• Physical
	   o Place
	   o Architecture
		(OE)
		(OEP)
		OEPM
		OEPC
		(OES)
		OESG
		(OEPH)
		OEPHP
		OEPHA
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			Dickens, (1861)
			Tan, (1996)
			
			Tan, (1996) & Andersen et al., (2019)
			Tan, (1996), Bitner, (1992) & Andersen et al., (2019)

Analytical Question – **E**xperiences	Experiences:
	• Personal
	   o Interests
	   o Costs
	   o Culture
	• Social
	   o Influences from others
	   o Group
	   o Interaction with staff
	   o Interaction with friends
	   o Interaction with others
	• Physical
	   o Place
	   o Architecture
	   o Ambient conditions (weer)
		(OEX)
		(OEXP)
		OEXPI
		OEXPK
		OEXPC
		(OEXS)
		OEXSIO
		OEXSG
		OEXSIS
		OEXSIF
		OEXSINTER
		(OEPHY)
		OEPHYP
		OEPHYA
		OEPHYAM
			General: Falk and Dierking (1992)
			Romano, (1998)
			Kalbach, (2016)
			
			Kalbach, (2016)
			
			Kalbach, (2016) & Bitner, (1992)

| | o | Space / Function | OEPHYS | |
| | o | Signs, Symbols & Artefacts | OEPHYSI | |

Codes between bracelets are not codes, but define letters for codes from the subject. Such as *'(E)'* from expectations, *'(EP)'* from Expectations; personal.

Additional codes

After the transcripts were made, several interviewees gave a comparable answer to questions. To compare those answers some codes are added to the code scheme. Table 2 shows which codes were added, to make a distinction between the pre- and post-codebook.

Interview Guide	Code	Code is used for:
Pre-Oerol	EPM (Expectations, Personal, Motivation)	To indicate the expectations which were cited by the interviewee
Pre-Oerol	ERK (Expectations, Personal, Costs)	To indicate the costs which were cited by the interviewee
Post Oerol	PEXPK (Post, Experience, Personal, Costs)	To indicate the costs which were cited by the interviewee
Oerol visitor	OPS (Oerol, Personal Details, Student)	To indicate the difference between a student and someone who is working
Oerol visitor	OPW (Oerol, Personal Details, Work)	To indicate the difference between a student and someone who is working
Oerol visitor	OEXPC (Oerol, Experiences, Culture)	To indicate that visitor can go to Oerol to experience cultural education
Oerol visitor	OEXPK (Oerol, Experiences, Costs)	Interviewees named multiple times the costs of the festival as a motivation
Oerol visitor	OGE (Oerol, Going for the time)	This code is not new, but has also been used for how many times the interviewee has visited Oerol

Table 2: Added codes to the coding scheme after the interviews were conducted and transcribed

Groningen
15-06-2019

Beste <mark>\<naam\>,</mark>

Allereerst hartelijk dank dat u de tijd neemt om mij verder te helpen met mijn onderzoek naar verwachtingen en ervaringen van Oerol bezoekers. Als masterstudent Culturele Geografie aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen ben ik bezig met een onderzoek naar de motivatie, verwachtingen en ervaringen. Om dit onderzoek kracht bij te zetten wil ik graag een aantal interviews afnemen. De interviews zijn vertrouwelijk en zullen alleen beschikbaar zijn voor mijn begeleider en mijzelf. Ook zal een pseudoniem gebruikt worden van uw naam, tenzij u expliciet toestemming geeft uw naam (en leeftijd) te mogen gebruiken.
Op <mark>\<datum\></mark> staat ons interview gepland, middels deze informatie tracht ik alvast kort uiteen te zetten wat u kunt verwachten en wil ik nogmaals benadrukken dat ik vertrouwelijk om ga met uw antwoorden en persoonlijke details. Naar verwachting duurt het interview ongeveer 30 minuten.

Tot slot zou ik willen vragen of ik het gesprek mag opnemen, zo kan ik mij tijdens het gesprek volledig focussen op de antwoorden die u geeft en zo ben ik in staat goed te luisteren naar uw antwoorden. Tevens kan ik daarna het gesprek terugluisteren en uitwerken. Hiermee voorkom ik dat er fouten sluipen in het interview. Vanzelfsprekend zal ook de opname, als mede de uitwerking vertrouwelijk worden behandeld. Tevens kunt u tijdens het interview altijd besluiten een vraag niet te beantwoorden of het interview te stoppen wanneer u bijvoorbeeld niet comfortabel bent met de vraag.

Mocht u nog vragen hebben, ben ik daarvoor altijd bereikbaar.

Alvast bedankt.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Jeroen Custers
06-14059120
j.m.i.custers@student.rug.nl
_____
Hierbij geef ik (omcirkel wat van toepassing is):

toestemming dat het interview mag worden opgenomen (alléén voor eigen gebruik)   JA / NEE

In geval van JA:
Mijn naam mag gebruikt worden in het onderzoek   JA / NEE
Of
Een gekozen pseudoniem mag gebruikt worden   JA / NEE

Ik ontvang graag de uitwerkingen van het interview   JA / NEE

Middels ondertekening ga ik akkoord met dit interview en bevestig ik dat ik dit formulier ontvangen heb.
Handtekening deelnemer   Datum

_____   _____