

MASTER'S THESIS  
CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

# TOURIST IN HOME COUNTRY



*Proximity Tourism in Times of Covid-19*

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*Tourist in Home Country. Proximity Tourism in Times of Covid-19*

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## Abstract

Touristic otherness is often associated with traveling geographical distances, far away from one's usual environment. Researchers have been warning for the ever-continuing growth of the tourism sector, as it has some negative consequences, of which one is its negative impact on the climate. Proximity tourism has become an increasingly relevant subject in academic literature, as it may provide a solution to the problematic consequences of the tourism sector. Staying local is one of the ways tourists can minimize their impact on the environment. The Covid-19 crisis has shed new light on this subject: distance has become a disadvantage and proximity a new commodity. This thesis aims to explore to what extent tourists are fulfilled in their longing for otherness at a proximate destination. A survey (N=170) was administered to proximity tourists at three holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands. Next to this, short in-situ interviews were conducted. From the results, it became clear that Covid-19 had a large impact on tourists' motives behind traveling to a proximate destination. Tourists generally preferred a balance between 'other' and familiar characteristics in their holiday. Furthermore, it seems to be possible to experience otherness at a proximate destination. However, the Dutch holiday parks generally did not seem to provide the experiences of otherness that tourists preferred, as some 'other' elements are easier to find than others. The results of this thesis may provide input for further innovative tourism development, aimed at raising awareness and appreciation of familiar, near-home environments.

*Keywords: proximity tourism, otherness, Covid-19, tourist experience, tourist satisfaction, sustainable tourism.*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

What is it that people seek in their holiday? This can be a pragmatic question, with answers such as ‘sunny weather’ or ‘a swimming pool’. However, this matter can also be understood in a deeper sense: is it to escape their daily lives? To have the feeling of a fresh start afterward? According to Lengkeek and Elands (2001; 2012) it may come down to a longing for the other, and tourism can be seen as an expression and metaphor for this desire for the other. The ‘other’ can be explained as a new situation, to a certain extent different from the daily reality of one’s life. The way people actually long for otherness and eventually experience it on their holiday differs per individual.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, many sectors came to a halt, like a fast-speed train coming to a squeaky and creaky stop. One of these is the tourism sector. Recently, academics have been warning for the ever-continuing growth of this sector, as it has some negative consequences, of which one is its negative impact on the climate (Seyfi et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Nagaj & Žuromskaitė, 2021; Höckert et al., 2019). As Hollenhorst et al. (2014) state, tourism is by definition displacement away from home (UNWTO, 2014). Therefore, tourism is almost completely dependent on fossil fuel energy sources, which produce carbon emissions (Prideaux et al., 2020). Now that this halt is suddenly here, it gives space to reflect on the future of the tourism sector, and how it can become more sustainable (Lew et al., 2020; Nagaj & Žuromskaitė, 2021; Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Brouder et al., 2020; Prideaux et al., 2020; Cheer, 2020). According to Hollenhorst et al. (2014), tourism is only problematic if we believe that exciting otherness can only be found in far-away destinations. Next to the impact the tourism sector has on the earth’s climate, mass tourism also causes issues among the local population of popular tourism destinations (Chong, 2019). Furthermore, Hollenhorst et al. (2014) argue that tourism to places that are far away may disrupt local place attachment by privileging one’s own time and energy spent on an exotic place, at the expense of local ‘others’. Tourism pushes people to create false expectations of what defines ‘a good location’ by fetishizing other places.

Staying local is one of the ways tourists can ensure to minimize their impact on the environment (Hollenhorst et al., 2014; CBS, 2020). Now that staying local has become the mainstream way to go on a holiday due to Covid-19, this time brings the opportunity to explore tourists’ experiences while staying local: does it fulfill their longing for otherness? If so, in what ways does it fulfill their longing for otherness? This thesis aims to explore these questions and to give more insight into the experiences of these tourists. Knowing more about proximity tourists’ experiences can contribute to the discourse around the future of tourism and how tourism can become more sustainable. If it is possible to experience otherness in one’s home country, this can be a reason to stay closer to home, and thus have a smaller impact on the environment.

## 1.2 Research Gap

An extensive amount of literature can be found on the tourist experience and the concept of otherness. One of the most influential concepts in tourism literature is the tourist gaze by Urry (1990). With this concept, Urry (1992) acknowledges that being a tourist is not passive, but something one consciously chooses to be. Oftentimes, the tourist gaze is seen as a state tourists experience whenever they are in a distant location, far away from their usual environment (Diaz-Soria, 2016; Urry & Larsen, 2011). However, this viewpoint is increasingly debated, as some scholars state that it is possible to adopt a tourist gaze in a known, familiar location (Hollenhorst et al., 2014; Diaz-Soria, 2016; Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). As this is a relatively new discussion in tourist literature, more research into the experiences of tourists in a proximity destination is needed. Even though most individuals spend holidays in their home countries, there is a bias in tourism research toward international tourism and a lack of insight into and knowledge of the micro-dynamics of domestic tourism (Jeuring, 2017). Therefore, this thesis aims to gather more insight into this topic.

Furthermore, there is a gap of knowledge in the implementation of the concept of otherness, especially in the discourse of proximity tourism. Even though several scholars have attempted to grasp the concept by theorizing about it, it has rarely been operationalized into something that can be empirically researched through quantitative or qualitative research. Only one article has been found that aimed to operationalize the concept of otherness, namely the one by Lengkeek & Elands (2012). Lengkeek & Elands (2012) created a survey to categorize tourists into several modes of experiencing otherness. While some modes are mainly based on familiarity and comfort, others are based on adventure and exciting newness. Contributing to the closing of the knowledge gap between the theory and the implementation of the concept of otherness is therefore one of the aims of this thesis.

## 1.3 Objective

This research aims to explore to what extent tourists long for otherness in their holiday and in what way proximity tourism can fulfill tourists with experiences of the other. Three case studies have been used to examine the experiences of and preferences for otherness of proximity tourists. Surveys have been distributed among different holiday parks located in the north of the Netherlands: Roompot Landgoed Het Grote Zand (Hooghalen, Drenthe), Landal Orveltermarke (Orvelte, Drenthe), and Landal Esonstad (Oostmahorn, Groningen). The research question of this thesis is:

**To what extent do proximity tourists long for otherness in their holiday and in what way can proximity tourism fulfill tourists with experiences of otherness?**

The main question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What are proximity tourists' motives to stay in their home country for holiday and has Covid-19 influenced these?
2. What is otherness and how to operationalize the concept into something that is measurable?
3. Is there a relationship between certain demographic characteristics and preferences for otherness?
4. Does fulfillment with the degree of otherness experienced necessarily lead to a more positive view towards a holiday park and one's home country?

## 1.4 Outline

In the following chapter, an overview of relevant academic literature will be presented. The chapter opens with an introduction to the definitions of tourism and the tourist. Next, the concept of proximity tourism will be explained, as well as the proximity tourist's experiences. Furthermore, the chapter will delve into the concepts of the tourist gaze and otherness, to gain a deeper understanding of the tourist experience in a usual environment. Several typologies of the tourist experience of otherness will be introduced. Among these, are the terms psychocentrics, allocentrics, and midcentrics, which will have a central role later on in the methodology section. Lastly, the concept of otherness will be operationalized into several characteristic elements, finalized by a conceptual model and hypotheses. The third chapter will be concerned with the methodological decisions based upon the theory discussed. These include the reasoning behind the choice for mixed-methods research with a focus on quantitative methods, a questionnaire, case study research, and ethical considerations. In this part, an explanation of the case studies (three holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands) will be included as well. Chapter four presents the results of the questionnaire undertaken. The thesis will be finalized with chapters five and six, which present the discussion and conclusion of the research, ending with some limitations and final reflections.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will begin with an introduction to the definitions of tourism and the tourist. Next, the concept of proximity tourism will be explained, as well as the proximity tourist's experiences. Furthermore, the chapter will delve into the concepts of the tourist gaze and otherness, to gain a deeper understanding of the tourist experience in a usual environment. Thereafter, the concept of otherness will be operationalized in order to use it for data collection, ending with a conceptual model.

### 2.1 Defining Tourism and the Tourist

A diversity of definitions of tourism can be found in the academic discourse. In these definitions, four elements are recurring: displacement, no coercion, no relationship with work and periodicity, and the need to return to the place of residence afterward (Wendt, 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) provides the following definition of tourism: '[...] a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes [...]' (UNWTO, 2008). Furthermore, UNWTO defines the concept tourist as 'a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his or her usual environment [...]' (UNWTO, 2008, p.10). Thus, leaving the usual, ordinary environment seems to be an essential or even necessary element to experience otherness as a tourist. This often implies that one has to travel a certain distance to be called a tourist.

Recently there has been a debate amongst academics on this definition of the tourist (Hoogendoorn & Hammett, 2020). More and more people are exploring their home countries as tourist destinations, and people increasingly seem to observe their everyday surroundings through a touristic gaze (Lengkeek & Elands, 2012). The Covid-19 crisis has increased this number even more: since lockdowns often did not even provide the chance for tourists to go abroad, people were left with no other choice than to go on a holiday in their home country. Thus, traveling a distance to get out of one's usual environment does not seem to be a requirement to be called a tourist (Jearing & Haartsen, 2016; Diaz-Soria, 2016). However, this depends on the scale of what is considered the usual environment, which will be explained in more detail in the next paragraph. Furthermore, according to Hollenhorst et al. (2014), the romanticization of far-away, other places gives tourists unrealistic expectations of what defines a real destination for tourists.

Given the negative externalities associated with touristic travel across long distances, it is appropriate to consider how familiar, everyday surroundings could be revalued (Jearing & Haartsen, 2016). This leads to the question: is it only possible to be a tourist in other places (i.e. outside one's usual environment), or is it possible to experience being a tourist close to home?

## 2.2 Proximity Tourism

### 2.2.1 Defining Proximity Tourism

Tourism relatively nearby home is often called proximity tourism in literature (Salmela et al., 2021). 'Proximity' is a concept with no universally accepted definition among academics in the tourism discourse. It is closely linked to terms such as 'familiarity' and 'staying in one's usual environment' (Govers et al., 2008). The usual environment can be defined as 'the geographical area, though not necessarily a contiguous one, within which an individual conducts his or her regular life routines' (Jeuring, 2017, p. 16). Proximity tourism is a type of tourism that emphasizes local destinations, short travel distances, and low-carbon forms of transportation (Salmela et al., 2021). According to Jeuring (2017), proximity tourism refers to consumption practices that blur the lines between home and away (Bourdeau, 2012) by creating a paradoxical feeling of touristic otherness in locations that are experienced as familiar. Thus, it is based on the notion of viewing familiar places in new ways (Salmela et al., 2021), or positioning touristic otherness as relatively close to (or even within) the usual environment (Jeuring, 2017). Therefore, the notion of proximity questions traditional tourist definitions. The concept can be subdivided into two dimensions: physical proximity and psychological (or 'social') proximity (Diaz-Soria, 2016). Physical proximity is quantitative, and therefore measurable, for example in kilometers. Psychological proximity, on the other hand, is based on individuals' experiences and perceptions (Larsen & Guiver, 2013). This type of proximity is more difficult to measure. It eventually comes down to the degree of familiarity someone experiences in a place (Diaz-Soria, 2016). Whenever someone feels familiar with a location, even though it is physically not proximate to their home at all, psychological proximity is at play. This way, a physically distant location may still feel proximate: a tourist may have stayed here several times before, or the place may even remind them of places they visited often.

### 2.2.2 The Proximity Tourist's Experience

Several studies have been conducted on the experiences of local tourists at a proximate destination. Diaz-Soria (2016) has conducted a case study research on local participants' experiences of Barcelona's walking tours. She found out that 'traditional' tourists and proximity tourists both share curiosity as a motivation to participate, even though they do not have the same points of reference. However, even though the proximity tourists viewed the location as their usual environment or hometown, they were still able to adopt a tourist's gaze. Therefore, the article concluded that otherness can be perceived as much in geographically distant environments as in closer ones (Diaz-Soria, 2016). A similar research has been conducted by Jeuring and Haartsen (2016). They explored the attitudes of residents of the Dutch province of Friesland toward their home province as a tourism destination. They specifically researched perceptions of proximity and distance in relation to preferred holiday destinations with the use of both a survey as well as interviews. Next to this, they analyzed participants' motivations for engaging in proximity tourism. Their results show that respondents with lower sociodemographic status and a higher age typically indicated a preference for a proximate holiday destination. On the other hand, people with higher education levels, higher household incomes, and a younger age typically indicated a preference for distant destinations. Generally, they also had a less positive perception of their home province as a tourist destination. They associated their hometown mainly with bad weather and boring familiarity, whereas they associated distant destinations with environmental or cultural otherness, and escaping everyday life. Furthermore, a mixed preference group appreciated both proximate as well as distant destinations (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Even though some tourists showed a preference for otherness, a large group of tourists found familiarity just as important: mundane activities and 'doing nothing' on a holiday are important elements for many tourists (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Interestingly, Hibbert et al. (2013) identified an attitude-behavior gap among tourists: despite having a positive attitude toward their home environment, going on a holiday was often associated with traveling a physical distance. Therefore, many scholars propose to present familiar places from a new angle. This could encourage more tourists to vacation near home, as well as to develop regional awareness and pride (Hibbert et al., 2013; Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016).

### 2.3 The Tourist Gaze

The questions stated in the first paragraph can be partially answered by acknowledging that the experience of being a tourist is not necessarily created by one's destination environment. Being a tourist is not a passive attitude that just happens when someone is in the 'right' destination, on the contrary: it can be seen as a conscious decision, as glasses through which someone views the world (Diaz-Soria, 2016). Therefore, the tourist experience is not necessarily created in the surroundings but takes place through the imagination of an individual (Hoogendoorn & Hammett, 2020). Tourists intentionally construct a distance between themselves and their destination, allowing them to enjoy the experience as something unique and exceptional (Diaz-Soria, 2016; Karlsdóttir, 2013). This is also known as the 'tourist gaze'. The term 'tourist gaze' was coined by John Urry (1990) and has become one of the most influential terms in tourism studies since then. The tourist gaze can be defined as 'the way tourists view places and people they visit in an attempt to capture the visual aspect of this experience' (Urry, 1992, p. 174). Gazing is a socially constructed practice, as the way people look at the world is shaped by their social class, gender, age, nationality, and education (Urry, 2002). Tourism marketing, which uses socio-spatial identities like nations and regions to distinguish between home and abroad, may have a strong impact on tourists' experiences and behaviors (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Lengkeek and Elands (2001) argue that tourist experiences are built around time, space, tension of consciousness, society, and the self. Therefore, there is no single tourist gaze: it differs per person, group, society, or historical period: everyone looks at the world through their own filter of certain beliefs, skills, expectations, and desires framed by nationality, gender, social class, age, and education (Urry & Larsen, 2011). With the concept 'tourist gaze', Urry directly referenced Foucault's notion of the 'medical gaze', which is characterized by the tendency to control things and people through gazing at them (Foucault, 2003). The person or place that is being gazed at, is put in a narrative that fits the romanticized image of the tourist (Korstanje et al., 2021). Thus, the gaze is constructed through signs. For instance, when tourists see a couple holding hands in Paris, they put this image in the frame they created around Paris as a 'timeless romantic city' (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

## 2.4 Otherness

The term 'otherness' originates from the concept of 'othering', which was originally introduced by Simone de Beauvoir (1982). 'Othering' can be defined as the construction of the self (or in-group) and the other (or out-group) in mutual and unequal opposition through identifying what desirable characteristics the other lacks or has in contrast to the self. Therefore, an individual or group that is othering often looks at the self as superior in relation to the other or vice versa (Brons, 2015). In the case of tourism, tourists frequently seem to look at 'other' places as superior to their home places. Diaz-Soria (2016) has researched otherness in the context of proximity tourist experiences and defines it as follows: '[...] the process through which individuals distance themselves from a close and familiar place in order to approach it differently' (Diaz-Soria, 2016, p.113). According to Lengkeek and Elands (2012), tourism can be seen as an expression and metaphor of a longing for otherness. However, while some tourists prefer to be entirely detached from their everyday routines, other tourists may feel the opposite and want to stay in a location that is as familiar as possible. According to Kastenholtz (2010), tourists usually seem to long for a balance between exciting otherness and 'boring' familiarity. As the concept of 'otherness' is rather abstract and can be interpreted in several ways, it needs to be deconstructed into concrete elements and characteristics. Therefore, a number of typologies of tourists' experiences and longings will be introduced in the following paragraphs. These typologies will be used to operationalize the concept of 'otherness' in this research.

### 2.4.1 Psychocentrics, Allocentrics & Midecentrics

Plog (1974) identifies three types of tourists that seek different degrees of familiarity versus otherness: psychocentrics, allocentrics, and midcentrics. Psychocentrism can be defined as having a preference for familiarity, thus showing a longing for psychological proximity. The psychocentric tourist is characterized by territory boundedness as well as anxiety towards the unknown and a preference for comfort and routines. According to Plog (1974), this would be a non-adventurous person that feels powerless when taken out of his or her familiar situation. On the other extreme, allocentrism can be defined as having a preference for otherness, which may be conceived as the antonym for psychological proximity, i.e. psychological distance. These tourists can be described as venturesome and curious, preferring to visit destinations for a longer time, and not having a preference for comfort. Experiencing novelty, uniqueness, and otherness is one of the main priorities in their trip. The midcentric tourist, then, is located in the middle of the two. Midcentrism can be characterized by a somewhat equal number of elements from both the psychocentric as well as the allocentric side of the spectrum (Plog, 1974).

Litvin (2006) has researched the effectiveness of Plog's model, by operationalizing it into several survey questions. The results indicate that the model might be effective in understanding where tourists would ideally like to travel to. However, it cannot suggest where travelers would actually go, because it leaves out situations that might form a block between one's ideal world and one's real world, such as a lack of money or bad health. Litvin used statements such as 'I will consider going to a new vacation spot even if I have not heard of it before', or 'In general, I am among the last of my friends to visit a new vacation spot' to group participants into Plog's personality spectrum. Weaver (2012) also made use of Plog's (1974) model to identify characteristics of visitors of the Francis Beidler Forest in South Carolina. He developed the following 10 items in order to capture typical allocentric attitudes among visitors:

1. Physical challenge (I am willing to inconvenience myself physically to see something that interests me when I travel),
2. Off-the-beaten-track destinations (I often travel to out-of-the-way places to observe rare or unusual attractions),
3. Spontaneity (When I travel, I tend to be open to unplanned or spontaneous experiences),
4. Physical activity (I like to be physically active when I travel),
5. Curiosity (It is important to me to learn as much as possible about the places I visit),
6. Self-reliance during travel (I don't expect a lot of services when I travel),
7. Pre-travel self-reliance (I prefer to make all of my travel arrangements myself),
8. Novelty (I prefer to visit places that I have never visited before),
9. Mental stimulation (Mental stimulation is an important reason why I travel), and
10. Relatively high-risk tolerance (I like to experience an element of risk when I travel).

### 2.4.2 Five Modalities of the Tourist's Experience

Based on the tourist typology theory of Cohen (1979), Lengkeek and Elands (2012) divide tourist experiences into five modalities: 1) amusement, 2) change, 3) interest, 4) rapture, and 5) dedication. Tourists may experience several of the modes at once, and may even identify themselves with all of them. Although it has to be acknowledged that tourists' experiences cannot entirely be labeled or grouped as they are transient and personal -a model is by definition a simplification-, using a typology of different modes might help to get a grip on them. On the next page, a table can be found that shows the different key characteristics per mode of experience, as created by Lengkeek and Elands (2012). It also shows their operationalizations of modalities into statements, as used in their survey. The modalities can be read as different kinds of otherness: a short trip in a familiar environment might still be experienced as 'other', even though it is more physically and/or psychologically proximate than a long trip to a distant destination.

In the case of mode 1, a tourist mainly longs for familiarity and amusement, showing similarities with psychocentrism. Mode 2 is about leaving the usual, daily activities; where exactly matters less. Mode 3 is mainly about experiencing new places and their stories. Mode 4 goes a step further by really crossing borders, stepping out of comfort zones, and creating a new awareness. Lastly, in mode 5, tourists do not want to be just ‘tourists’ anymore: they want to immerse themselves completely in the location, looking for authenticity to the extent that the place is not even ‘other’ anymore, but becomes their new usual environment.

**Table 1.** *Lengkeek and Elands’ (2012) five modalities of the tourist’s experience.*

Mode	1. Amusement	2. Change	3. Interest	4. Rapture	5. Dedication
<b>Subjective distance</b>	Close by	Going away from	Going to	Far away	Different world
<b>Tension of consciousness</b>	Fun, ease <i>‘Holiday for me is mainly having a lot of fun.’</i>	Away from stress or boredom <i>‘Because of the pressure of my daily activities, I have to go out once in a while.’</i>	Imagination <i>‘When I am on holiday, I really must hear the stories and things important to know about the area.’</i>	Shock, new awareness <i>‘I like active holidays doing strenuous things like long treks and cycle tours.’</i>	Immerse <i>‘I am not satisfied with just seeing local cultures and their habits. I would rather be a part of it.’</i>
<b>Finite self</b>	Light spirited, sense of continuity <i>‘I like to eat Dutch food on holiday.’</i>	Different mindset <i>‘I need a holiday to recharge my batteries.’</i>	New information <i>‘When I am on holiday, I first go to the local tourist office for specific information about the area.’</i>	New identity <i>‘On holiday I can become acquainted with myself.’</i>	Appropriation <i>‘I rather go to the same area because I feel bonded to it.’</i>
<b>Sociality</b>	Familiar social groups, own language <i>‘I like to go to places that attract many tourists and are nice and busy.’</i>	Not to be reminded of social claims <i>‘I go on a holiday to get out of the daily grind.’</i>	Stories <i>‘On holiday I really feel like visiting a church, a castle or a historic city center.’</i>	Open to the unknown <i>‘When I am on holiday I like to be alone in the great outdoors for hours on end.’</i>	Authentic otherness <i>‘Once an area starts getting touristy, I don’t go back.’</i>
<b>Time</b>	Short break <i>‘I like to go on holiday, but I also like to go home again.’</i>	Another sense of time <i>‘I go on a holiday for a good rest and relaxation.’</i>	Ever, future, using your time <i>‘On holiday I want to see new and various things all the time.’</i>	Unanticipated <i>‘On holidays I like it most when, beforehand, I have no idea where I will go.’</i>	Permanent <i>‘If I could, I would live in my holiday location.’</i>
<b>Space</b>	Familiar symbolic and physical environment <i>‘I like it when the people in my holiday area also speak a little Dutch.’</i>	Elsewhere, where exactly matters less <i>‘I don’t care where I go on a holiday. I just have to get away.’</i>	Vistas, gaze <i>‘I almost always buy or borrow a map or a travel guide of my holiday area.’</i>	Crossing borders, really different places <i>‘For me, it is a challenge to live in the most primitive circumstances.’</i>	Backstage world <i>‘The area where I always go on holiday I really consider as my place.’</i>

## 2.5 Influence of Expectations on Holiday Experience

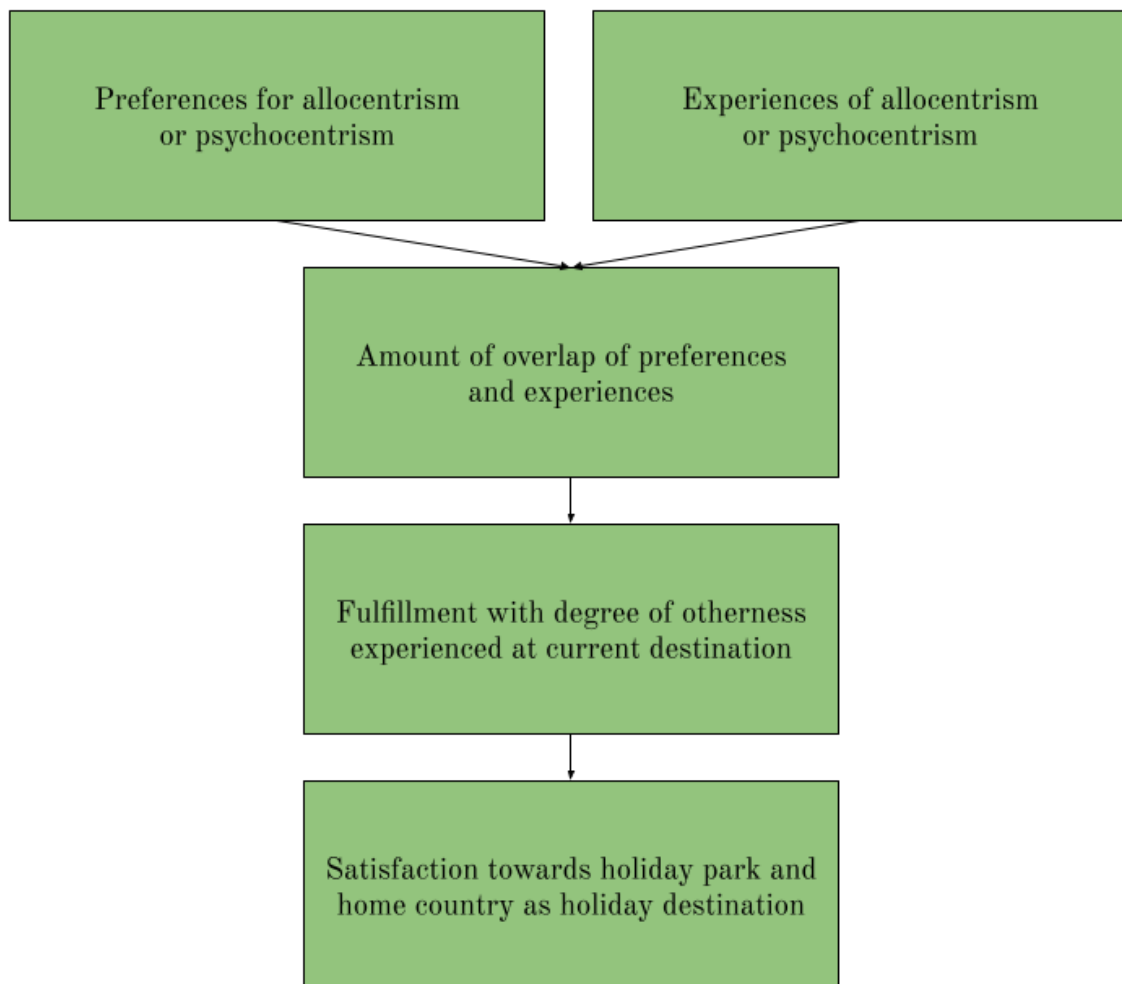
Holiday longings and experiences do not only differ between tourists, but also within an individual tourist (Couto et al., 2020). These longings and experiences depend on a tourist's situation, personal changes, time, and place. Certain aspects may have an influence on the extent of longing for, experience of, and fulfillment with otherness in a holiday (Couto et al., 2020). In a 'special' year with Covid-19 measurements and lockdowns, tourists may adjust their expectations of what their holiday should be like. Several researchers have found a relationship between expectations, experiences and satisfaction of tourists. Tourists' expectations are often formed based on the image that they have from the holiday destination before the visit. These expectations have a direct influence on the perceived value and satisfaction (Sadeh et al., 2012). Kung (2018) explored the influence of tourists' expectations on their experiences and eventually their feelings of satisfaction towards a holiday destination. She found out that there is a significant relationship between expectations and satisfaction: when people have lower expectations, the chance of satisfaction is often higher. Aksu et al. (2010) found a significant relationship between expectations and satisfaction as well. They studied tourists coming to the Antalya region (Turkey). However, they concluded that these expectations and satisfactions differ per an aspect of a holiday. Moreover, Couto et al. (2020) investigated whether the Covid-19 crisis influenced tourism expectations at the Azores Islands. A majority of their respondents had changed their holiday plans or had to reschedule their trip. Most of the respondents preferred to stay close to their home during the Covid-19 crisis, or to not even make a holiday reservation. Thus, the pandemic had significantly changed residents' attitudes in choosing the form and time of a holiday. Furthermore, Covid-19 may lower tourists' expectations (Ivanova et al., 2020). These low expectations may in turn affect the satisfaction of tourists positively. Tourists may be glad to even have the possibility to go on a holiday, and may not have as high standards as they would have had in a 'normal' year without Covid-19 (Kourgiantakis et al., 2020; Ivanova et al., 2020; Altuntas & Gok, 2021). Thus, tourists' expectations might also influence the results of this research.



## 2.6 Conceptual Model

To finalize the theoretical framework of this research, a model has been created (figure 1). The model is primarily based on the models of both Plog (1974) and Lengkeek and Elands (2012). It starts with preferences and experiences of allocentrism and psychocentrism, which will be surveyed with the use of ten statements that will be discussed in the methodology chapter. The overlap between both might indicate a higher fulfillment with the degree of otherness experienced at the current proximity destination. This, in turn, might influence the satisfaction towards the holiday park, as well as one's home country as a holiday destination.

**Figure 1.** *Conceptual model of the research.*



## 2.7 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of results prior to data obtainment are as follows:

1. It is expected that Covid-19 has played the largest role (compared to other motives) in the choice of holiday destination for all types of tourists.
2. Overall, it is expected that the largest group of tourists will not indicate a clear preference for either allocentrism or psychocentrism. Instead, it is expected that they will mainly long for a balance between otherness and familiarity in their holiday (based on previous similar studies: Kastenholz, 2010; Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Tourists indicating a clear preference for psychocentrism or allocentrism are expected to be smaller groups. Of these, the psychocentric group is expected to be larger than the allocentric group.
3. The group of allocentrics is expected to find it most difficult to get their preferences fulfilled at their current proximity destination, whereas the group of psychocentrics is expected to be most fulfilled. This plays a role in the satisfaction towards their home country.

## 3. Methodology

This chapter will provide an outline of the methodology of the research. The findings of the previous chapter will function as a foundation on which the empirical research is built. First, the choice for case study research and the study areas will be explained, after which the chosen research design and questionnaire guide will be justified. Next, the method of data collection will be presented, ending with a description of the process of data analysis.

### 3.1 Case Study Research

Case study research is the selected methodology for this research, as it provides the chance to gain a comprehensive understanding of proximity tourists' experiences of otherness. A limited number of cases have been examined in order to comprehend a broader group of similar units (Baxter, 2016). In the case of this research, three holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands have been studied. The results of this research may be transferable or generalizable to a larger population (Krusenvik, 2016). As it is not always possible to generalize data, case study research is sometimes unable to provide insights into causality and general conditions (Lindvall, 2007). The most important factor in this is the validity of the sample. The validity of the results will be explained in the results and discussion sections. Nevertheless, the research may provide the chance to gain a comprehensive understanding of one scenario, namely the experiences of proximity tourists at three holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands. For the purposes of this research, a deductive approach has been used in order to test an already existing theory which has been introduced in the previous chapter. This way, current explanatory notions can be confirmed or falsified.

#### 3.1.1 Study Areas

The following three holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands have been chosen as study areas: Roompot Landgoed Het Grote Zand (Hooghalen, Drenthe), Landal Orveltermarke (Orvelte, Drenthe), and Landal Esonstad (Oostmahorn, Groningen). The holiday parks have been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, both Landal Greenparks and Roompot are big chains of holiday parks, with parks all over the Netherlands (and Europe). Landal owns approximately 90 holiday parks, and Roompot owns around 200 holiday parks (there are signs that they want to merge into one firm). Their parks all conform to the same concept and have many similarities, which will be highlighted on the next page. Landal and Roompot have a clear concept behind the setting of their parks in their marketing: instead of mainly focusing on the park itself, the emphasis is placed on the surroundings of the parks.

Oftentimes, the parks are located close to nature areas, which is also visible in their marketing, usually involving pictures of people walking in the woods, dunes, or hills (Roompot, 2021; Landal GreenParks, 2021). This contrasts with other big chains of holiday parks in the Netherlands, such as Center Parcs and Belvilla, whose main focus lies on the park and houses itself and less on the surroundings. This research not only aims to explore proximity tourists' experiences of their holiday park, but also the holiday destination as a whole, including the surroundings. Therefore, Roompot and Landal holiday parks seemed suitable case study areas for this research. The similarities between the holiday parks of Landal and Roompot may result in larger generalizability to the whole chain of holiday parks. Other factors that played a role in the selection of study areas were availability and proximity. In the search for suitable parks, the researcher mainly focused on holiday parks in the north of The Netherlands, as this would be less time-consuming and expensive than locations further away. The resorts are all close to each other in more or less the same region, which might help to make it possible to draw conclusions about the results. Lastly, the availability of the parks played a role. Some parks preferred not to participate in research. Landal Esonstad, Roompot Landgoed Het Grote Zand, and Landal Orveltermarke all gave permission to do academic research on their terrain, so they ended up being the selected case study areas for this research.

**Figure 2.** *Geographical locations of the three holiday parks (ArcGis, adopted by the author, 2021).*



Roompot Landgoed Het Grote Zand is the largest park of the three, and is located in Hooghalen, Drenthe. It is surrounded by a natural environment, which is an important factor in their marketing (see appendix 4): 'Drenthe is the only place in our country where you can still enjoy an almost untouched natural environment. Landgoed Het Grote Zand borders the vast unspoiled forests and heaths of forestry Hooghalen. Deer, hares, squirrels, and rabbits can still be seen here every day' (from website Het Grote Zand, 2021). They market their holiday park as a relaxing destination for both younger and older people. An emphasis is placed on children in their marketing pictures. The park has relatively few facilities compared to the other parks, but offers for example a restaurant, a playground, and a swimming pool. For all amenities and facilities on a map, see appendix 1. The park has only detached holiday houses that are surrounded by trees and lawns. People can choose between basic, sauna, and wellness (sauna+whirlpool) chalets and bungalows. These are for 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12 persons. The bungalows are approximately between 400 and 1200 euros for 3 nights during the summer months, depending on the type of accommodation, time of booking, and the number of persons.

Landal Esonstad has a different set-up than Het Grote Zand. The park is a recreated old village, with many canals, located close to the sea. Next to the marketing of these recreated 'old' houses, the website shows pictures of natural areas, meadows, and water (see appendix 4). The marketing of this park emphasizes facilities for children, as well as walking and cycling possibilities for adults. Just like Het Grote Zand, this park has many facilities, such as a swimming pool and a restaurant. Different from the other parks, this park is close to a golf park and provides the possibility to do water sports (see map in appendix 2 for more facilities). The park has detached houses and terraced houses, as well as a small camping site which is located outside of the village. There are holiday houses for 1-4, 5-8, 9-13, 14-19, and 20+ persons. Guests can choose between basic, comfort, luxurious and extra luxurious bungalows. The latter accommodations provide some extras for the guests, such as box spring beds, flatscreen-tv, terrace or balcony, made beds before arrival, second tv, private sauna (luxurious), fully equipped kitchen, lockers, fully equipped bathroom (extra luxurious). The houses are approximately between 700 and 1600 euros for 3 nights during summer months, depending on the type of accommodation, time of booking, and the number of persons.

The set-up of Landal Orveltermarke is similar to that of Het Grote Zand. Detached holiday houses are surrounded by trees and meadows. In their marketing, emphasis is put on children's activities, food, sports, walking, and cycling. The natural surroundings also play a big role in the marketing of the park (see appendix 4). Next to these, some typical cultural elements of the province of Drenthe are marketed, such as old villages (Orvelte) and megalithic monuments ('hunebedden'). Just like the other parks, Orveltermarke has a lot of facilities, such as a swimming pool and a restaurant (see map in appendix 3). People can choose between accommodations for 1-4, 5-8, 9-13, 14-19, and 20+ persons. Just like in Esonstad, it is possible to choose between basic, luxurious, extra luxurious, and comfort accommodations.

The houses are approximately between 500 and 1000 euros for 3 nights during summer months, depending on type of accommodation, time of booking, and the number of persons. This is generally lower than the accommodations in Esonstad and similar to the accommodations at Het Grote Zand.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design could be described as an embedded design, in which a quantitative data analysis is the main research method, supplemented with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews (Doyle et al., 2009). Moreover, an exploratory research design was chosen as it aims at expanding on a problem that requires more in-depth research to fully understand the subject (Stebbins, 2001). Although exploratory research does not give a conclusive answer to hypotheses, it helps in better understanding the problem at hand. This way, it has the potential to generate a significant contribution to the existing discourse. A mixed-methods approach has been selected in order to explore proximity tourists' experiences of otherness from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. As said, the research is largely quantitative in nature, with a questionnaire as the main method. This has been chosen, as quantitative research, and specifically a questionnaire, provides the possibility to gather a larger group of respondents and therefore more data. This data may prove to be transferable or even generalizable to a larger population. Similar studies have used a questionnaire as well in order to investigate proximity tourists' experiences (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016; Diaz-Soria; 2016), and specifically their experiences of otherness (Lengkeek & Elands, 2012; Weaver, 2012). Next to this, it has been decided to conduct some brief interviews with a few participants who filled out the questionnaire. These interviews, together with the open questions in the questionnaire, give the chance to collect more in-depth, qualitative information from the participants. Tourists' experiences differ per individual as they are highly subjective. Therefore, qualitative research is necessary in order to explore the more subjective experiences in a deeper manner.

### 3.2.1 Justification of the Questionnaire Guide

A questionnaire was created based on the theoretical framework and conceptual model discussed in chapter two (Lengkeek & Elands, 2012; Plog, 1974; Weaver, 2012). The questionnaire starts with questions regarding demographic information, including the respondents' age, gender, country of origin, four numbers of postal code (to measure physical proximity), level of education, and frequency of visits to the current location to understand to what extent the holiday park is a 'usual environment' for the participants. Next, questions regarding usual travel behavior are asked, including their most frequently visited holiday destination in the last five years, and whether they have ever been to a similar holiday park, and are therefore familiar with it (to investigate psychological proximity). Furthermore, the questionnaire includes a section about tourists' motives to stay in their home country for holiday. Moreover, respondents were asked about their usual travel preferences, as well as their travel experiences at the current holiday park. For this section, a list of statements characterizing both psychocentric and allocentric preferences was created (see table 2), built upon the models of both Plog (1974) and Lengkeek and Elands (2012). When compared to the other models this list is relatively short, due to the fact that this is a research project with a limited scope and timeframe. By using the same statements for both categories (preferences and experiences), it is possible to see whether an overlap is present between both. For example, a participant indicating a preference for a holiday destination that feels completely different from home might indicate that he or she does not experience this at the current destination. This might have an influence on their fulfillment of (one or more of) their allocentric preferences. Whether this actually has an influence on the level of satisfaction might be interpreted through the final grade participants assign to the holiday park, as well as their viewpoint towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination. The full questionnaire that has been distributed at all research locations can be found in appendix 8.

**Table 2.** *Chosen items to operationalize and measure preferences and experiences of otherness.*

<b>Psychocentric (preferring familiarity)</b>	<b>Allocentric (preferring otherness)</b>
Wanting to know beforehand what to expect at a holiday destination.	Wanting to have unexpected experiences at one's holiday destination.
Being able to express oneself in one's own/a known language.	Wanting to learn new things about a holiday destination.
Wanting a holiday destination to feel like home.	Wanting the holiday destination to feel completely different from home.
Wanting to experience amusement and pleasure at the holiday park itself.	Wanting to explore new cultures and nature at one's holiday destination.
Wanting to experience comfort and ease at one's holiday destination.	Wanting to experience exciting adventures at the holiday destination.

### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire was conducted at the previously mentioned holiday parks in the summer of 2021, yielding a sample size of 170 valid responses. Both digital and paper questionnaires were conducted for this research, of which the digital version was created in Qualtrics. The digital questionnaire was available for participants through a QR-code on flyers that were distributed at the study areas (see appendix 5). However, most participants made use of the paper version of the questionnaire. The data has been collected on 4 weekdays from 10:00 until 16:00 in July and August. In order to achieve a sample that is as representational as possible, it was of great importance to choose a research location that provides the chance of encountering as many holiday park guests as possible. Therefore, non-randomized, convenience sampling was selected to improve the chances of including all demographics in the data collection. At all holiday parks, the chosen research location was next to the main street close to the reception, the entrance, the parking area, the garbage bins, a swimming pool, a grocery shop, and a playground. In other words, the main route for all guests (plans showing the research locations per holiday park can be found in appendices 1,2, and 3). Therefore, a large and relatively diverse group of guests was expected to be found at these locations. Even though the locations seemed to be the most appropriate, they could still lead to some biases. For example, tourists that mainly stay at their holiday house would have a limited chance to come across this location. Furthermore, as the locations were always close to swimming pools and playgrounds, parents with children were encountered, which might also result in a slight bias in the results. In the next chapter, information will be provided about the ages of the participants. Moreover, as the research took place in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher was standing outdoors at a place where respondents could keep the recommended 1.5 meters distance at all times. Hand sanitizers were available and all used objects (e.g. pens, table) were thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use. This way, a safe environment for both the researcher and the participants could be ensured.

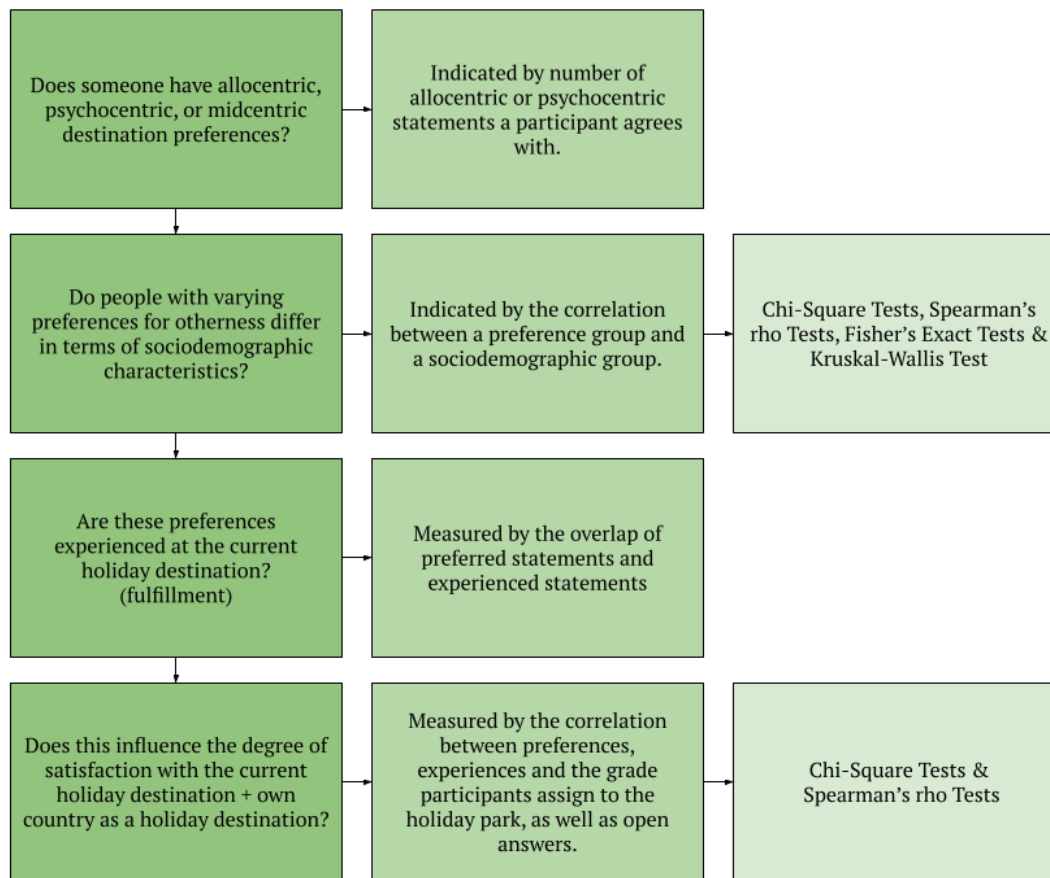
### **3.4 Method of Data Analysis**

In order to operationalize the main question and subquestions of this research, a model has been created to show the different steps for the analysis of the data (figure 3). The data analysis has been carried out using SPSS. The answers to the paper questionnaires were manually put into the program, while the answers to the online questionnaire were directly transferred to it. Several analyses were conducted in order to explore proximity tourists' experiences of otherness. First of all, the sample was analyzed through descriptive statistics, to find out whether it is representative for the Dutch population, and more specifically (Dutch) proximity tourists (that usually go to a similar holiday park). Frequency tables were created in order to get an image of the respondents' demographic characteristics. This is important, as it makes it possible to compare the sample to populations that frequently stay on these resorts or even larger populations. If this is the case, the



results could be more generalizable. However, this is only possible when the sample is valid. Most of the results could be analyzed using descriptive statistics. This way, percentages of tourists' motives to travel to a proximity destination, their psychocentric and allocentric preferences and experiences, and their overlap between these preferences and experiences could be measured. Next to this, respondents' viewpoints towards the holiday parks as well as The Netherlands as a holiday destination were analyzed. The questions about tourists' usual behavior (questions 6 until 9) were analyzed through descriptive statistics as well. Then, tourists' motives behind traveling towards a proximity destination this year were analyzed (questions 10 until 12), resulting in percentages per chosen answer for the total sample as well as every individual holiday park. Question 13 and 14 were analyzed in several ways. First of all, the percentages for every answer for the total sample and per holiday park were calculated. Per answer, it was calculated whether there was a difference per park or per demographic characteristic. Using Chi-Square, Fisher's Exact, and Spearman's rho tests, it was analyzed whether there was a significant correlation between a demographic characteristic and an answer (De Vocht, 2019). Then, the overlap between the answers for question 13 and question 14 was calculated. Again, it was calculated using Chi-Square and Spearman's rho tests whether there was a significant relationship between the amount of overlap and certain characteristics (such as age, level of education, and usual travel behavior. Lastly, the correlation between answers of questions 13 and 14 and questions 15 until 17 (see appendix 8) was calculated using Spearman's rho and Kruskal Wallis tests (see appendix 9 for a table showing survey questions, level of measurement, and suitable tests) (De Vocht, 2019). The qualitative data of this research includes both the open answers to the questionnaire as well as some short interviews with participants at the holiday parks. As there is just a small number of open answers, they could be analyzed by manually making a list of the characteristic statements or words that were used by the participants to describe their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors. The short interviews were not recorded, but the most relevant and characterizing statements and words were written down by the researcher. Not recording the interviews could lead to misinterpretation and overlooking of information. However, respondents' relatively concise answers, as well as the researcher writing down the answers, minimized the chance of misinterpretation. The interviews function as additional information and are not the main type of research for this thesis. Together with the open answers, they were used to enrich the results of the quantitative data with more in-depth information.

**Figure 3.** Model showing key questions (left) and how to measure them (right).



### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

Within all research, it is important to be aware of ethical responsibilities (Clifford et al., 2016). First of all, it is important to obtain informed consent. This has been done by informing participants on the topic beforehand, ensuring anonymity and safety through the handling of data, and providing the contact information of the researcher (Punch, 2014). Respondents were given the possibility to make a well-considered decision on whether they wanted to participate in the research (Hay, 2016), and it was explained that they have the right to engage in the research without compromise or care. Next to this, respondents were given the right to not give an answer to certain questions. Therefore, there was an option to skip a question, in both paper and digital questionnaires (Hammer, 2017). Next to informed consent, ensuring anonymity is an important ethical consideration. Personal identification markers are asked in the survey, such as age, gender, nationality, four numbers of postal code, as well as some open answers revealing personal characteristics. Therefore, it has been made sure that an individual participant cannot be traced back through his data (Punch, 2014).

Important identity markers such as names and e-mail addresses are left out of the research, this way limiting the chances of information leak. Moreover, digital data will be collected using Qualtrics, which is a computer program connected to the University of Groningen system. The University of Groningen has an agreement with Qualtrics that it will not view, share or move the data (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2020). Although digital surveys may seem anonymous, oftentimes individual internet protocol (IP) addresses may be traced (Baker, 2012). Therefore, it was chosen to exclude this information (which is a possibility in Qualtrics) in order to ensure a higher level of anonymity. Lastly, the data has been analyzed using SPSS, which is locked behind a computer password, ensuring that the data of participants stays protected at all times.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Respondents

In the summer of 2021, a total of 172 responses were recorded through paper and online questionnaires. 164 of the respondents were living in The Netherlands for their entire lives. Two of the respondents were living in The Netherlands for less than ten years, therefore they were excluded from the results, as this thesis only focuses on people who feel relatively familiar with The Netherlands. The remaining six respondents were living in The Netherlands for more than ten years. As this is a relatively long time, it was chosen to include them as they probably have had enough time to get familiarized with The Netherlands in a way that it is now their 'usual environment'. Thus, a total of 170 valid responses were recorded. 54.4% of the respondents were female, which is slightly higher than the population of The Netherlands, of which 50.3% are female (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). Most of the respondents are from Het Grote Zand (41.1%), whereas 27.1% are from Esonstad, and 31.8% from Orveltermarke. This has to do with the fact that the researcher stayed at this park on two different days, compared to one day at the other parks. The respondents were also asked for the four numbers of their zip code, as this could indicate whether the park is situated in a relatively familiar or unknown (or 'other') environment to them. The holiday parks are all located in zip code area 9000-9999. Furthermore, zip code areas 7000 until 8999 are subdivided into one category, as they both border on 9000-9999. The other zip code areas are subdivided into two groups: 1000-3999 and 4000-6999. To participants living in the latter areas, the holiday parks probably have the lowest physical proximity, although this depends on their exact location. Interestingly, many respondents seem to come from cities (see figure 4). For these respondents, the holiday parks might already feel 'other' (or physically proximate) because of their remote locations and natural surroundings. The table on the next page presents the percentages of participants coming from the four zip code groups. It is notable that more than half of the participants are from groups 1000-3999. This zip code area is located at and around the Randstad (see appendix 6 for a map of all zip codes and appendix 7 for a more detailed table of zip codes).

**Figure 4.** Map locating all respondents (red dots) and holiday parks (green pins), created by the author on ArcGis (2021).



**Table 3.** *Characteristics of the sample.*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Total percentage (N=170)</i>	<i>Het Grote Zand (N=70)</i>	<i>Esonstad (N=46)</i>	<i>Orveltermarke (N=54)</i>
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	45.6	47.1	50.0	40.7
Female	54.4	52.9	50.0	59.3
<i>Age group</i>				
25 and younger	8.9	13.0	8.7	3.8
26-35	15.5	17.4	8.7	18.9
36-45	27.4	13.0	32.6	41.5
46-55	24.4	17.4	37.0	22.6
56-65	11.9	11.6	10.9	13.2
66+	11.9	27.5	2.2	0.0
<i>Highest education</i>				
Basisonderwijs	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.0
Vmbo, mbo1	12.9	15.7	10.9	11.1
Havo, vwo, mbo	35.3	35.7	37.0	33.3
Hbo, WO	51.2	47.1	52.2	55.6
<i>Zipcode group</i>				
1000-3999	55.8	58.9	42.3	63.4
4000-6999	12.1	8.8	11.1	17.3
7000-8999	13.3	14.7	13.3	11.5
9000-9999	18.8	17.6	33.3	7.7
<i>Destination most visited in last 5 years</i>				
Own province	3.6	7.1	2.2	0.0
The Netherlands	46.2	44.3	35.6	57.4
Within Europe	40.2	40.0	53.3	29.6
Outside Europe	10.1	8.6	8.9	13.0

## 4.2 Validity of Sample

The target population of this research is proximity (Dutch) tourists who resided at a holiday park in the north of The Netherlands. In order to understand to what extent the respondents are representative of Dutch proximity tourists, the sample has been compared to some demographic characteristics of tourists going to holiday park chain Landal. Landal provided the chance to give an insight into some demographic characteristics of tourists coming to all of their Dutch parks in 2019, 2020, and 2021. These can be found in the table below and can be compared to table 3. The percentages are not only for the summer holidays but for the complete year. When comparing the numbers to the sample of this thesis, it becomes clear that the proportions for males/females are slightly different. Furthermore, in both tables, the age group 35-44 is the largest, followed by the age group 45-54. In the table of Landal, the average age seems to be slightly higher than the average age of my sample. Moreover, the youngest age group (<25) is lower than the sample of this thesis. Landal could not provide the data of tourists' education level and zip codes, understandably, due to the private and sensitive nature of this information.

**Table 4.** *Average characteristics of tourists residing at Dutch Landal holiday parks.*

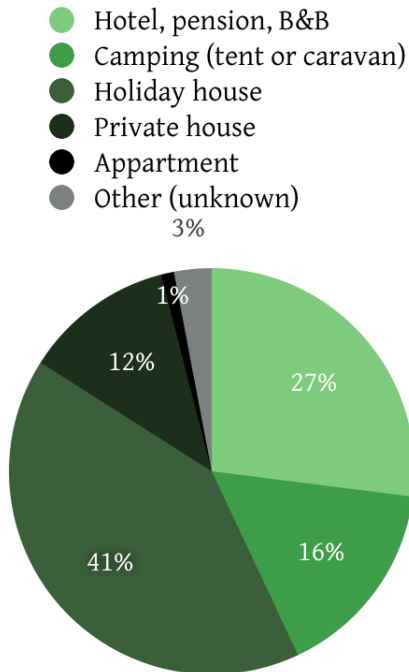
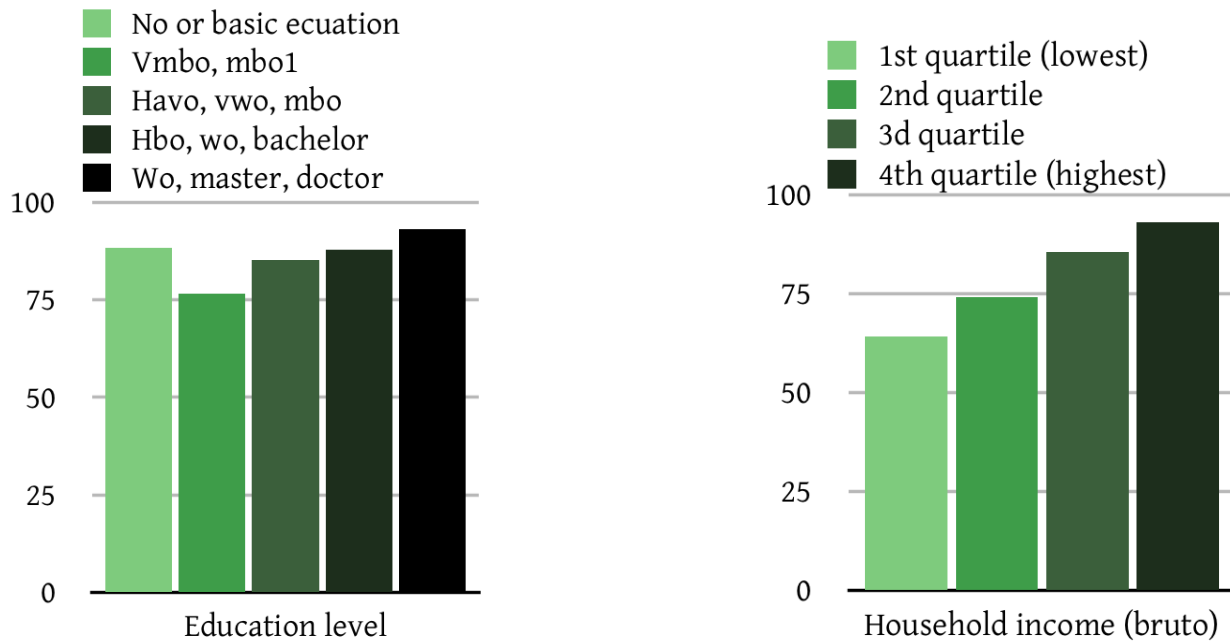
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b><i>Sex</i></b>			
Male	53.7	52.4	50.6
Female	46.3	47.6	49.4
<b><i>Age groups</i></b>			
< 25	1.6	2.4	2.5
25-34	15.8	16.2	14.9
35-44	30.5	28.9	28.2
45-54	19.4	20.8	20.6
55-64	16.0	17.2	17.5
65-74	13.0	11.6	12.9
75+	3.7	2.8	3.4

To provide an even better insight into the validity of the sample, respondents of similar studies and information about the demographics of proximity tourists have been studied. However, due to the limited data available on proximity tourists, difficulties arose in monitoring to what extent the sample could be representative for the population. First of all, participants' demographic characteristics in similar articles were studied (Kastenholz, 2010; Diaz-Soria, 2016; Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). In their research, the distribution of gender was approximately balanced, with a slightly higher percentage of women. In research done by Kastenholz (2010), respondents tended to belong to slightly younger age ranges, with nearly half of the sample between 15 and 34 years. This is in contrast to the participants of this research, which are mainly people aged 30+, which probably has to do with the relatively higher price of holiday houses, as well as the location: no nightlife, no cultural activities, and mainly nature surrounding the park. Next to this, the parks might be most attractive for families with young children, as the emphasis is placed on this group in the marketing of these parks.

Furthermore, according to the tourism report of Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, 2020), Dutch inhabitants generally prefer going on a holiday in foreign countries. In 2019, around 11.1 million inhabitants indicated to prefer this. Around 3.1 million inhabitants only went on a holiday in The Netherlands. Dutch inhabitants differ in the extent to which they participate in holidays. With more than 95%, the participation of young people up to the age of 15 in 2019 was significantly above the average participation of 84% of the Dutch population as a whole. Whereas in the group of 75 years and older, this was only 68%. In the case of this research, most respondents are on the older side, which - as explained above - might have to do with the relatively high price, as well as the few facilities that are generally more popular for younger age groups. As visible in the graph below, most Dutch tourists in The Netherlands stayed in holiday houses. Thus, the study areas of this research (parks with holiday houses) are the most popular holiday destination in The Netherlands, but still just a small part of the whole domestic tourism sector (for more characteristics on Dutch tourists see figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Characteristics and most frequently chosen accommodations of Dutch tourists in The Netherlands (CBS, 2020).



### 4.3 Motives behind Traveling to a Proximity Destination

A majority of the respondents had never been to their current holiday park (67.5%), whereas a few had visited it one or two times before (17.7%), and some even three times or more (14.8%). Most of the respondents had visited a similar holiday park before (91.1%). This could influence their experience of 'otherness' (physical proximity) at the current holiday park, as the park might feel relatively familiar due to similar previous experiences. For 71.6% of the respondents, this was their only summer holiday this year. Of the other 28.4%, most went to other destinations in The Netherlands, and a few went to locations outside of The Netherlands (Italy, Greece, Madeira, Germany, France, and Austria). Whether the latter might indicate a longing for otherness to be found in foreign countries, might be fuel for further research.

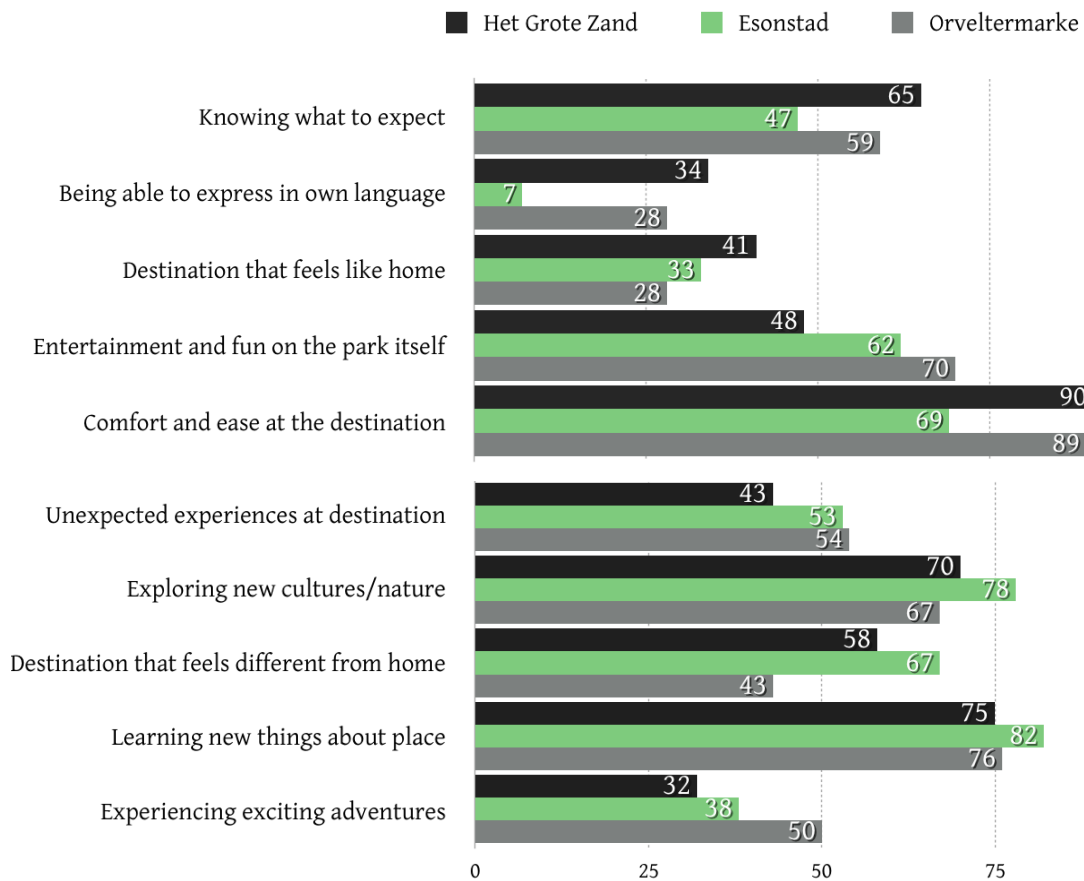
Respondents could indicate what had influenced their choice for a summer holiday destination this year (see survey questions 11 and 12 in appendix 8). For 76.3% of all respondents, Covid-19 played a role in their choice for a summer holiday destination this year. This was also reflected in the small interviews held with some of the participants. For example, someone indicated to normally go to the United States of America on summer holiday, but due to Covid-19 he had decided to stay in The Netherlands. He explained that going on a holiday in The Netherlands was more fun than he had expected beforehand, as it still gave him the opportunity to be away from home in a new environment. Another influential factor that attracted visitors were the surroundings: 46.5% of the respondents indicated that this had influenced their choice. In the small interviews, people indicated that they loved the meadows at Orvelte, the woods at Hooghalen, and the little houses and canals at Esonstad. The holiday parks themselves seemed to be of less influence than the surroundings, as only 31.2% chose this option. This is in line with the marketing of the parks, which focuses mainly on the surroundings instead of the park itself. Another option that seemed to be of less influence was the proximity of the location, as merely 12.4% chose this option. The open answers of respondents indicated sometimes purely practical reasons for choosing this park, such as availability (some indicated that many holiday parks were already full, whereas others had initially booked a place in a foreign country which was canceled due to Covid-19), child-friendliness, swimming pools, or the possibility to bring dogs.

#### 4.4 Preferences for Psychocentrism and Allocentrism

To understand respondents' preferences for otherness (allocentrism) or familiarity (psychocentrism) in their holiday destinations, several questions were asked on this topic. Firstly, respondents were asked to rank four holiday destinations according to their preferences: their own province, The Netherlands, within Europe, and outside Europe. Here, 1 indicated the highest preference, and 4 the lowest (to avoid misinterpretations this was clearly stated). Most of the respondents showed a large preference for holiday destinations within Europe: 87.6% of the respondents put this option in the first two places. The respondents were less unanimous about their preferences for The Netherlands and outside Europe, as the percentages were quite evenly spread across numbers 1 until 4. Most respondents seemed to not prefer to go on a holiday in their own province: 90.5% of the respondents put this option in the last two places. This might have to do with the fact that people generally seem to not associate their home place with a holiday destination, which is in line with the results of similar studies (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016; Diaz-Soria, 2016). Hometowns are often mainly associated with bad weather and boring familiarity, whereas distant destinations are associated with environmental or cultural 'otherness' (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). This might also be the reason why many respondents came from the furthest away zip code areas, and mainly from the Randstad, however, further research is needed in order to investigate this. Moreover, a Fisher's Exact Test showed that there is no sufficient evidence to say that there is a significant association between the demographic characteristics of age and level of education and preference for holiday destination.

Respondents could indicate for ten statements (five typically allocentric and five typically psychocentric) whether they prefer them in their holiday or not, as explained in the methodology section. In this research, someone is regarded as having a preference for one of the two when more than half (3 or more out of 5) are indicated as being important. Respondents generally showed a slightly larger preference for allocentric statements (63.7%) than psychocentric statements (54.7%). A smaller group had an even amount of allocentric and psychocentric preferences (20.0%). The graphs below show respondents' preferences for the ten statements per holiday park. Here, it is visible that the holiday park with the highest allocentric preferences was Esonstad (78.3% had crossed more than half of the statements). In Het Grote Zand and Orveltermarke around 57% of the respondents crossed more than half. This high percentage for Esonstad is mainly caused by respondents' answers to the first two statements: exploring new cultures or natures (78% indicated that this was important to them), and learning new things about the place (82% indicated that this was important to them). These two statements were also deemed most important in the other holiday parks, although the percentages were a little lower.

**Figure 6.** Respondents' preferences for psychocentric (upper) or allocentric (lower) statements.



For all holiday parks the psychocentric statements with the highest percentages were 'entertainment and fun on the holiday park itself' and 'experiencing comfort and ease at the holiday destination'. One psychocentric statement clearly was not deemed to be as important: 'being able to express myself in my own language'. In Esonstad this number was particularly low, with just 7% of all respondents choosing this statement. For all zip code areas, the percentages of allocentrics and psychocentrics were quite similar, with the lowest allocentric preferences for area 7000-8999 (54.5%) and the highest allocentric preferences for area 9000-9999 (71.0%). Thus, the respondents that lived closest to the holiday parks seemed to have slightly higher allocentric preferences. However, a Chi-Square Test showed no evidence of a significant relationship between zip codes and high allocentric preferences (with 3 or more statements crossed). Even after a robustness check, no significant relationship could be found. Furthermore, respondents could indicate which holiday destination they went to most often in the last 5 years, choosing from their own province, The Netherlands, within Europe, and outside Europe (see table 3). A Kruskal-Wallis Test showed a significance of 0.054 in the relationship between destination most visited and amount of allocentric preferences. This number is slightly too high to confirm a significant relationship between both.

Twelve respondents had crossed none of the allocentric preference statements. They were all 30 years or older and most of them lived in the two nearest zip code areas (60.0%). These respondents all never mentioned the surroundings, but were focused on the park itself in their open answers. Typical words mentioned in their open answers confirmed their preferences: comfort, ease, Covid-19, quietness, facilities, staff. 24 respondents had crossed all of the allocentric preference statements. These respondents were relatively younger, often coming from further away zip code areas (83.3% from the two furthest away zip code areas). These respondents almost never mentioned the park itself in their open answers. Instead, they focused on the surroundings. Typical words mentioned in their open answers were: exploring, nature, surroundings, experience, diversity, new place(s).

It was possible for respondents to cross both psychocentric and allocentric statements that were seemingly contrasting to each other. For example, the statements 'a destination that feels like home' and 'a destination that feels completely different from home'. 35.1% of all respondents crossed both statements. The same applies to the statements 'knowing what to expect at my holiday destination' and 'having unexpected experiences at my holiday destination', where 20.4% crossed both. This possibly reflects a longing for a balance between familiarity and otherness. Open answers give some more clarity on what is preferred to be familiar and what is preferred to be other: some respondents indicated wanting clean sanitary and holiday houses that feel like home, while looking for otherness in the natural surroundings of the park. Another influential factor was that many respondents were parents. Because of their children, they now had different preferences than they would have had without children: while they always longed for otherness and far away places, they now preferred the comfort and ease of a place nearby with many facilities for the children.

Furthermore, some elderly people indicated in their open answers or in short interviews that they had a higher preference for otherness when they were younger, but now since they were older and less vital they preferred a comfortable place close to home and health facilities. According to them, Covid-19 made this preference for comfort and familiarity even higher. However, a Spearman's rho test could not identify evidence of a significant relationship between age and preference for allocentrism. Thus, open answers and interviews with respondents regarding the influence of their age cannot be grounded on significant evidence.

## 4.5 Experiences of Psychocentrism and Allocentrism

Respondents could also indicate whether they actually experience the psychocentric and allocentric statements at their current holiday park. These answers could eventually indicate whether their preferences are fulfilled by the holiday destination. The results for all holiday parks show that respondents generally experience more of the psychocentric than the allocentric statements. Just 7.1% of all respondents indicated that they experienced 4 or 5 of the allocentric statements, whereas 33.5% of all respondents indicated this for 4 or 5 psychocentric statements. These percentages were similar for all individual parks (for results per park, see appendices 10 and 11). Thus, the holiday parks might be more suitable for having psychocentric experiences than allocentric experiences.

### 4.5.1 Psychocentrism

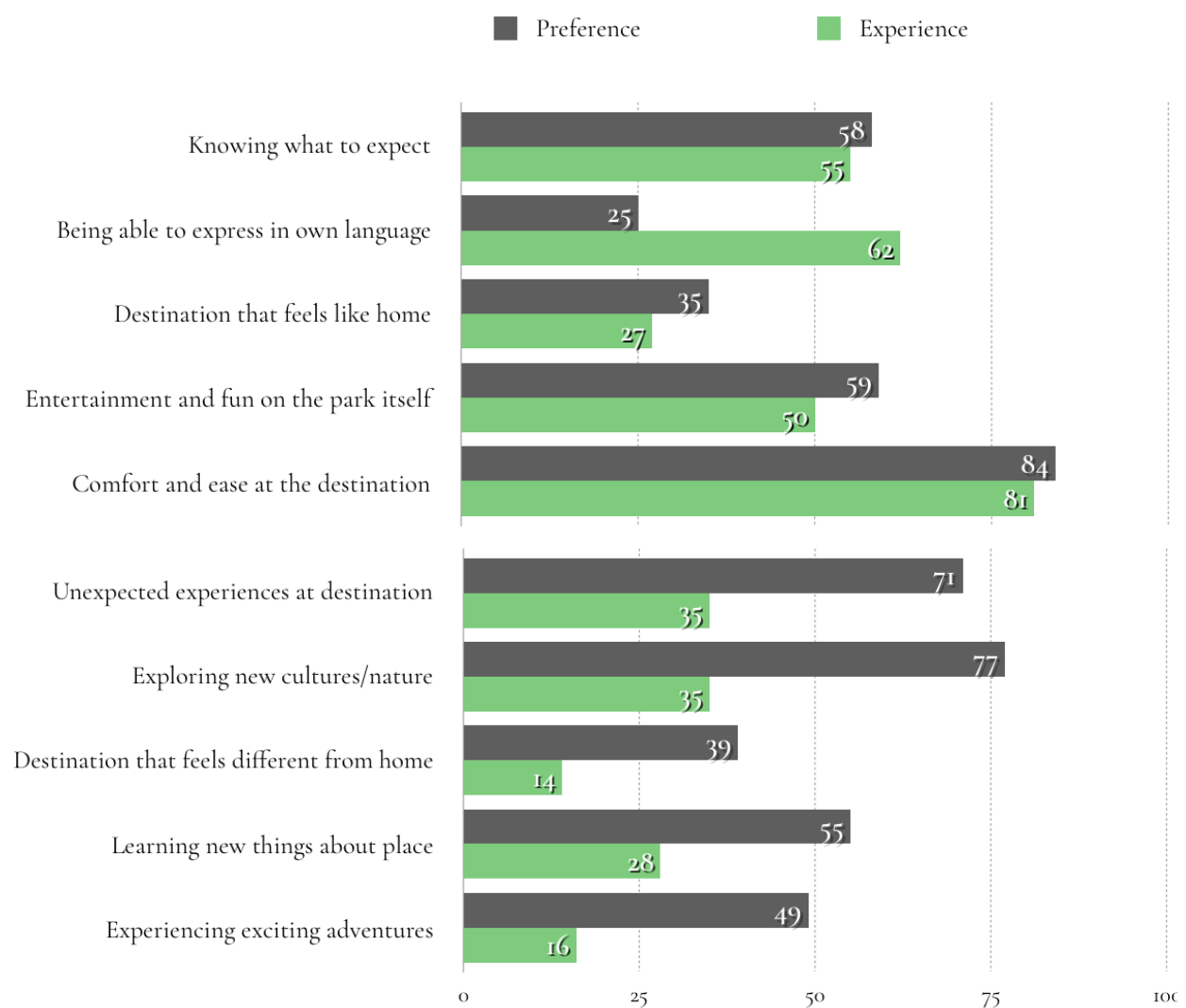
In the graph on the next page, the psychocentric preferences and experiences of all respondents are shown. The preferences and experiences seem to be similar, except for 'being able to express in own language', which was rather predictable, as all respondents could speak Dutch (the percentage of experience should therefore probably be higher). The results of all individual holiday parks are generally in line with the percentages below, except for a few statements (see appendices 10 and 11). It is remarkable that visitors of Het Grote Zand experience less entertainment and fun on the park (just 35.7%) than the other parks (around 60%). When looking at the maps of facilities (appendix 1,2 and 3) of all parks, Het Grote Zand indeed offers less facilities than the other parks. A Chi-Square Test showed enough evidence for a significant relationship between both, as is visible in appendix 12. Visitors of Het Grote Zand also indicated a lower preference for entertainment and fun in the park than visitors of other parks. Furthermore, visitors of Orveltermarke indicated a higher experience of 'knowing what to expect at the holiday destination' (74.1%) than the other parks (around 50%). A Chi-Square Test proved that a significant relationship is present between holiday park and the experience of knowing what to expect (see appendix 12).

### 4.5.2 Allocentrism

Next to the psychocentric statements, respondents also indicated their experiences of the allocentric statements (see graph below). Here, it becomes immediately visible that respondents generally seem to experience less of the allocentric statements. When looking at the results of each individual holiday park, it is noticeable that the results of Het Grote Zand and Esonstad are very similar (often just 1 or 2 percentages difference), while the results of Orveltermarke are different. A Spearman's rho test could not identify a significant relationship between the amount of all allocentric experiences and holiday parks. Furthermore, the statements 'exploring new cultures or natures' and 'learning new things about the place' are both around 38% for the Het Grote Zand and Esonstad, while just around 28% for Orveltermarke. The statement 'a holiday destination that feels different from home' is around 32% for the first two holiday parks, and just 18.5% for Orveltermarke.

The statement 'having unexpected experiences at the destination' is also higher for the first two parks (around 19%) than for Orveltermarke (9.3%). Thus, it could be concluded that Orveltermarke seems to be less suitable for allocentric experiences. Except for one of the statements: experiencing exciting adventures (18.5% for Orveltermarke and around 10% for the other parks). However, a Spearman's rho test could not provide evidence for a significant relationship between age and number of allocentric experiences.

**Figure 7.** Respondents' preferences & experiences for psychocentrism (upper) and allocentrism (lower).



## 4.6 Overlap between Preferences and Experiences

Whenever respondents indicated that they both prefer and experience a statement at their current holiday park, an overlap is present: their preference for this statement might be fulfilled by the holiday park. As already became clear in the previous paragraph, the allocentric experiences are all lower than what the participants would prefer. As the main question of this research especially focuses on experiences of allocentrism, this chapter will go more in-depth into these statements. 16.5% of all respondents had an overlap between preferences and experiences of 3 or more (out of 5), meaning they crossed the same allocentric statements for both preference and experience. 47.1% had an overlap of 3 or less (out of 5) allocentric statements. For all parks these percentages were similar. Thus, relatively few people had an overlap and were thus not completely fulfilled in their allocentric preferences at the current holiday park.

Participants indicated a preference for 'exploring new cultures or natures' and 'learning new things about the place' while the percentages for experience are a lot lower (34.7% for both). Of all respondents indicating a preference for exploring new cultures or natures (N=119), 47.9% indicated that they experienced this at the current park. This comes back in some of the open answers of these respondents, such as: '[...] foreign countries often bring something new, which I miss here', 'I prefer more cultural and historical differences', or 'I miss the sun and new cultures'. Nevertheless, most answers are more positive, often bringing up experiences of the quiet environment and the beautiful nature. Of all respondents indicating a preference for learning new things about the place (N=130), 43.1% experienced this. 'Because I already know the environment, there are not a lot of new things to explore', someone explained. Furthermore, of the respondents indicating a preference for experiencing exciting adventures (N=66), only 25.8% were actually experiencing this. Of these respondents, some indicated missing (skiing in) the mountains and (swimming in) the sea. For the statement 'This place feels completely different than home', of the respondents indicating 'yes' (N=93), 44.1% indicated experiencing this. One answer seemed to summarize the feelings of the respondents who did not experience it: 'I would rather go outside of The Netherlands. Here I am again at Albert Heijn for my groceries...'. Nevertheless, again most open answers were more on the positive side. Lastly, of the respondents indicating a preference for unexpected experiences (N=82), 28% experienced this. Thus, it can be concluded that the overlap between allocentric preferences and allocentric experiences was generally on the low side. However, it is the question whether this actually influences respondents' viewpoint towards the holiday park, as well as their viewpoint towards their home country as a holiday destination.



### 4.6.1 Viewpoint towards the Holiday Parks

In the table below, the grades that respondents assigned to the parks are shown. A Spearman's rho test could identify a significant positive relationship between respondents' amount of allocentric overlap and their assigned grade (see appendix 13). Thus, respondents who had a higher amount of overlap generally seemed to assign a higher grade to the park. In their open answers and interviews, respondents who stayed at Het Grote Zand indicated they enjoyed the calm and serene environment. They also mentioned that there is not a lot to do in the surroundings. Some indicated that the park itself is a bit simple, not very special, and with not many activities, which is in line with respondents' answers to the statement 'I experience entertainment and fun on the park itself'. The relatively few facilities (compared to the other parks) may have had an influence on these answers. Next to this, Esonstad and Orveltermarke might provide more interesting surroundings for the visitors: Orveltermarke is close to village Orvelte which attracts many visitors, and Esonstad is close to Lauwersmeer, which is also an attractive tourist spot. Het Grote Zand generally has less attractive touristic surroundings. Also noticeable was that respondents indicated that the houses in Het Grote Zand were not clean. Respondents staying at Esonstad mainly mentioned that the park was well-maintained, clean, and overall well-organized. The surroundings were less mentioned in comparison to Het Grote Zand. This might be because Esonstad is a recreated old village, so the focus is more on the park itself than on the surroundings, even though it is situated in a natural environment called Lauwersmeer. Remarkably, respondents never mentioned Lauwersmeer in their open answers. Furthermore, respondents at Orveltermarke indicated that they were positive about the park, especially activities for (small) children were mentioned. However, some respondents mentioned that there were few activities on the park itself, that the houses were not clean, with some utilities missing in the houses. One respondent mentioned that the restaurant was unprofessional. Opinions on the surroundings were not unanimous: some people were positive about the surroundings, while others mentioned that there was not much to do or experience.

**Table 5.** *Final grades assigned to the holiday parks.*

	<i>Average grade</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Minimum grade</i>	<i>Maximum grade</i>
<i>Het Grote Zand (N=70)</i>	7.8	0.85	6.0	10.0
<i>Esonstad (N=46)</i>	7.9	0.94	4.0	10.0
<i>Orveltermarke (N=54)</i>	7.7	0.82	6.0	9.0

#### 4.6.2 Viewpoint towards Home Country as a Holiday Destination

Respondents could also indicate whether the current holiday destination influenced their viewpoint towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination, choosing between 'more positive than before', 'more negative than before' and 'the same as before', with an option to indicate why. Of all participants that filled out this question (N=167), 37.7% were more positive, 4.8% more negative, and 57.5% the same as before. 27 respondents had an overlap between preferences and experiences of 3 allocentric statements or more. Of these, 48.1% indicated having a more positive viewpoint towards their home country, and for the other 51.9% their viewpoint remained the same. For a few respondents, it was their first time going on a holiday in The Netherlands, which had positively surprised them. Respondents who indicated having a more positive viewpoint, had answers like: 'The Netherlands has beautiful nature that we would like to explore more', 'I discovered how beautiful The Netherlands is', and 'we have a beautiful country, with so much diversity'. The respondents with the same viewpoint as before indicated that they already knew that The Netherlands was beautiful. Some explained that they went on a holiday to The Netherlands before, but mostly outside of the summer season. Furthermore, 80 respondents had an overlap between preferences and experiences of less than 3 allocentric statements. Of these, 40.0% were more positive, 53.8% had the same viewpoint, and 6.3% were more negative towards The Netherlands. A Spearman's rho test identified evidence for a significant positive relationship between the amount of allocentric overlap and viewpoint towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination (see appendix 13). Thus, respondents with more overlap between their preferences and experiences seemed to have a slightly more positive viewpoint towards their home country. The respondents with a more negative viewpoint mostly mentioned the weather, which was too cold in The Netherlands in their opinion.

**Table 6.** *A selection of open answers received from the respondents, indicating their viewpoints towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination during/after their current stay (translated from Dutch).*

More positive	Neutral/same as before	More negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I like the quietness and nature here.'</li> <li>● 'We discovered unknown places here.'</li> <li>● 'Here, I feel at home.'</li> <li>● 'The nature here is more beautiful than expected.'</li> <li>● 'I discover the beauty of The Netherlands.'</li> <li>● 'Because of Covid-19 going abroad is less attractive.'</li> <li>● 'No stress at Schiphol airport.'</li> <li>● 'The Netherlands is a safe country with a lot of possibilities.'</li> <li>● 'The Netherlands is beautiful as well. You experience this now because you have more time to explore your home country. Before Covid-19, you would explore a lot less in The Netherlands, as most of the holidays took place abroad.'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 'I like The Netherlands, but I prefer going abroad.'</li> <li>● 'I already had positive experiences in The Netherlands.'</li> <li>● 'I already knew what to expect in The Netherlands.'</li> <li>● 'There is still so much to discover in The Netherlands.'</li> <li>● 'Normally, we would go to these parks outside of the summer season. But this is fine too.'</li> <li>● 'With young children it is easier to stay at such a holiday park in The Netherlands.'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 'It is too cold!'</li> <li>● 'I prefer exploring more cultural or historical differences.'</li> <li>● 'There is more space at foreign holiday parks.'</li> <li>● 'The weather is a bit worse than expected.'</li> <li>● 'I miss the sun and new cultures.'</li> </ul>

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

### 5.1 Conclusions

This exploratory research has provided preliminary understandings of an ongoing research on the experiences of otherness in relation to proximity tourism. Otherness is a complex and heterogeneous concept, as the experience of otherness is highly subjective, and thus differs per tourist (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Hoogendoorn & Hammett, 2020). Because of this complex nature, it is difficult to operationalize the concept of otherness into something that can be empirically researched. Nevertheless, it has been attempted within this thesis. Yet, it has to be mentioned that this research can only function as one puzzle piece, and needs further research to gather more comprehensive conclusions regarding the experiences of otherness of proximity tourists. The next chapter will delve further into the limitations and future research recommendations. This chapter provides the conclusions of this research, following the hypotheses that have been stated in chapter two.

First of all, Covid-19 was expected to play the largest role (compared to other motives) in the choice for a holiday destination of proximity tourists. From the results, this indeed seems to be the case. Tourists indicated that they normally would go to foreign countries during the summer holiday. The choice to stay in their home country this summer was based on various motives: while some indicated that they felt safer in their home country and therefore preferred to stay in The Netherlands, others indicated that initial holiday plans in foreign countries were canceled due to lockdowns. Tourists chose these specific Dutch holiday parks mainly because of their surroundings. The way that the parks market themselves as comfortable and serene places surrounded by nature indeed seemed to attract these tourists. As became clear from the qualitative data gathered, the relatively remote location of the parks was even more attractive in times of Covid-19, as it may give the feeling of being far away from the crowds, and therefore possibly being further away from Covid-19. However, as these results are only based on qualitative data, they cannot be generalized. Thus, in future research they could be tested with a survey at other parks.

Furthermore, it was expected that the largest group of tourists would not indicate a clear preference for either allocentrism (otherness) or psychocentrism (familiarity). From the results, it became clear that tourists generally do not prefer going on a holiday in their own province, which is in line with similar studies (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016; CBS, 2020). Thus, too much physical proximity was not desired. This might have to do with the fact that people generally seem to not associate their home place with a holiday destination (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016; Diaz-Soria, 2016). However, far-away places outside of Europe are generally not preferred either. A balance between physical proximity and physical distance seemed to be preferred by most of the tourists, which is similar to the results

of Kastenholz (2010). Furthermore, allocentric elements in a holiday seemed to be preferred slightly more than psychocentric elements, although the difference was minimal. Most tourists indicated at least a small longing for otherness, and more than half of the tourists expressed a clear preference for otherness, indicating a preference for more than half of the allocentric statements. Elements that were mostly preferred were exploring new cultures and nature and learning new things about a place. Furthermore, even though some tourists showed a preference for otherness, a large group of tourists found familiarity just as important: mundane activities and 'doing nothing' on a holiday are important elements for many tourists, which suits results of similar studies (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). A relatively small group did not prefer any of the allocentric elements and focused mainly on the comfort and familiarity of the parks in their open answers.

Moreover, tourists' longing or preference for otherness (or familiarity) does not necessarily have to be in line with their choices for a holiday destination. Other factors may have played a larger role in their choices. For example, tourists with children indicated that more practical factors such as comfort, ease, and facilities for children played a larger role than their own deeper longings for otherness. The latter became less significant for them. Elderly people indicated that they longed for otherness when they were younger, but nowadays comfort, ease, and familiarity became more important to them. Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between age preference. Money also plays a role in the choice for a holiday destination: travel still is a luxury for some people, and limited financial resources might translate into limitations in mobility (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Moreover, Covid-19 may have lowered tourists' expectations (Ivanova et al., 2020). These low expectations may in turn have affected the satisfaction of tourists in a positive way. Most of the respondents seemed to have set aside their usual expectations. They may have been glad to even have the possibility to go on a holiday, and probably did not have as high standards as they would have in a 'normal' year without Covid-19 (Kourgiantakis et al., 2020; Ivanova et al., 2020; Altuntas & Gok, 2021). Tourists proved to be adaptive to situations, adjusting their desires to the current possibilities in times of Covid-19. While some normally went to far-away places, they now saw the beauty of their home country.

The results of this research show that it is certainly possible to experience otherness in a proximity destination. This is in line with similar studies, such as Diaz-Soria (2016). However, the Dutch holiday parks generally seemed to not give the tourists the experiences of otherness they preferred. Especially the allocentric statements 'experiencing exciting adventures', 'a destination that feels different from home', and 'having unexpected experiences' were hardly experienced by the tourists. Tourists indicated missing certain holiday elements that they can only experience in foreign countries, such as sunny weather, exploring new cultures, and historical differences.

The results of this research also showed a slight significance in the relationship between respondents' overlap of preferences and experiences and the viewpoints towards their home country. Even though the holiday parks seemed to not entirely fulfill tourists' longing for otherness,

just 4.8% of the respondents had a more negative viewpoint towards their home country. More than a third of the tourists even had a more positive viewpoint towards their home country because of their current visit. Whether this positive viewpoint towards their home country will actually influence their travel behavior in the following years might be explored in further research.

To conclude, the results are mostly in line with the hypotheses. First of all, Covid-19 indeed seemed to play the largest role for tourists to choose a destination within their home country this year. Secondly, respondents indicated a slightly higher preference for allocentrism than psychocentrism. A small group showed a high preference for allocentrism (and crossed all of the allocentric statements). Furthermore, allocentric elements were less experienced by tourists than psychocentric elements. Especially unexpected experiences and exciting adventures were not as often experienced as preferred by the tourists. However, there were some differences between experiences between holiday parks, so these experiences probably depend on the holiday destination: a different case study may have provided different results. The methodology and results of this research can therefore be used in future similar studies, to explore the effect of the research area on results. It can be concluded that it is possible for tourists to experience otherness in their home country, although some elements are easier to find than others. Fulfillment of otherness seemed to have an effect on the satisfaction of tourists. However, whether this otherness was really a crucial factor for their level of satisfaction is sometimes not as clear, and would need further research.

## 5.2 Discussion

As explained in the introduction, the tourism sector is ever-growing and has negative consequences on the climate and populations. Therefore, finding new, more sustainable ways of traveling has become more relevant than ever (Seyfi et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Nagaj & Žuromskaitė, 2021; Höckert et al., 2019). This thesis aimed to contribute to the discourse around local tourism as a more sustainable way of traveling. Investigating the fulfillment of proximity tourists' longing for otherness can be helpful to understand whether local tourism might be a viable option to ensure a more sustainable tourism sector in the future. The results of this thesis showed that it is certainly possible to experience some elements of otherness in a proximity destination, although some elements were experienced more than others. Certain elements are place-based, meaning that their existence depends on their geographical location. For example a warm climate/weather, different nature, and different cultural history. Tourists indicated missing these elements at their proximate holiday destination. Jeuring & Haartsen (2016) explained that distant destinations are often more attractive to tourists because they are associated with warm and stable weather, while proximate locations are associated with bad, unpredictable weather. Apart from these elements that are dependent on a certain geographical location, there are also 'other' elements that can be experienced in one's home country. For example, the natural surroundings of the researched holiday parks attracted many of the respondents and often made them feel like they were away from their home. Moreover, too much focus on otherness could neglect the significance

of familiarity in tourism (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). Familiarity and comfort are often just as important factors for tourists. As explained in the previous paragraph, most tourists seemed to prefer a balance between both familiarity and otherness.

Proximity tourism might function as an alternative option, reflecting behavioral responsibility for the local as well as the global environment (Gren & Huijbens, 2015). Tourism marketing, destination branding, and regional development as a whole may be able to redefine the target audience of tourist attraction and how tourism contributes to people's well-being through proximity tourism. Because traveling further distances is considered affluent, social and normative components of identity are particularly relevant (Hibbert et al., 2013). Nonetheless, a growing number of initiatives show a reassessment of the local and familiar in the context of close-to-home touristic experiences, renegotiating the rhetoric of home and away and dividing the geographical distance from sensed otherness (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016; Diaz-Soria, 2016). This has already been done by several tourism marketing organizations, such as the Dutch Province of Flevoland, who introduced an 'Adventurous Nearby' campaign in 2016 to raise awareness for the touristic values of residents' surroundings (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2016). During the Covid-19 crisis, an increasing number of individuals and organizations has raised awareness for the touristic values of one's home country. Not only tourism marketing organizations, but also so-called 'influencers' seemed to have played a role in this. For example, the book 'Nederland heeft Alles' ('The Netherlands Has Everything') from Nicolette van Dam and Bas Smit (2021) gained attention this year. Also, famous influencers on Instagram and Youtube, such as Lisa Stel (@lisagoesvegan on Instagram), Diana Leeftang (@disfordazzle on Instagram), or Teske de Schepper (@teskedeschepper on Instagram) influenced their followers to go on a holiday in their home country and appreciate their local environment. The researched holiday parks for this research could emphasize location-specific qualities (in their marketing) to evoke a feeling of otherness. This could be done by offering local dishes at their holiday park shops. For example, Orveltermarke and Het Grote Zand could sell biological meat from typical highland cows in Drenthe. This could also generate regional pride among the local inhabitants.

Finally, presenting familiar places from a new angle could enable people to reconstruct their own identities and the identities of the places they live by presenting familiar locales in unexpected ways (Hibbert et al., 2013). Defining proximity tourism as a form of citizenship behavior may inspire individuals to spend vacations close to home, to interact with everyday environments in new ways, and to create regional pride and awareness (Hibbert et al., 2013; Jeuring, 2017). Such knowledge may eventually lead to regional ambassadorship initiatives, such as word-of-mouth behavior (Jeuring & Haartsen; 2016). This thesis aimed to provide input for further innovative tourism development, raising awareness and appreciation of familiar, near-home environments.

## 6. Reflections, Limitations and Future Research

Despite providing fruitful grounds for discussion, this research has various limitations. First of all, more research is needed to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' experiences of otherness in a proximate destination. Despite the care with which this research was designed, most of the results of this research were not significant, and are therefore not yet representative for a larger population of proximity tourists. This was mainly due to the fact that the researcher did not have a background in quantitative methods and had to learn this throughout the process of writing this thesis. Moreover, the survey questions for this research could mainly collect nominal and ordinal data, which limits the possibilities to analyze and statistically test the results. Interval and ratio data could provide more information and possibly more significant results. Nevertheless, the results of this research can inspire future research on a larger scale.

Furthermore, this research had a relatively small sample, which was spread over three different holiday parks. Per holiday park a sample of between 50 and 70 respondents was researched, making this research less generalizable and, thus, less valid. Moreover, even though the holiday parks have been carefully chosen because of their representativity of other (Roompot and Landal) holiday parks in The Netherlands, it is important to highlight that they might not be completely representative. The researched holiday parks all attract similar target audiences, have a similar amount and type of facilities, and are all located in natural surroundings (forest, beach, meadows) in either the provinces of Groningen or Drenthe. However, they also differ, in terms of prices (Esonstad is slightly more expensive than the other parks), type of park (Esonstad is set up as a recreated old village, whereas the other two parks are only separate holiday houses. Het Grote Zand is a bigger park, whereas Esonstad and Orveltermarke are slightly smaller. Furthermore, Esonstad is located near the sea, whereas Het Grote Zand and Orveltermarke are surrounded by mainly woods and meadows. The type and location of the holiday parks have probably influenced the results of this survey. To explore the effect of holiday park location, further research might be conducted in other parts of The Netherlands, to compare results between different locations and different target audiences.

Next to this, it was sometimes unclear whether respondents experienced the holiday destination as their usual environment or not. This research aimed to explore whether tourists could experience a feeling of otherness in a proximate destination. However, because it was not entirely clear to what extent the holiday destination felt familiar to the tourists, the results may have not provided a well-grounded answer to the main question. Proximity and familiarity are relative concepts, so finding an absolute answer may never be possible. Yet, demarcating the sample and study area might help. For example, Jeuring & Haartsen (2016) only studied the experiences and attitudes of inhabitants of the province of Fryslân towards their own province. This way, it is more probable that the location indeed feels familiar to the respondents.



Lastly, the concept of otherness proved to be a complex topic to research. This research made use of models from previous studies in order to get a grip on the concept. This way, the concept was divided into a model of ten statements (allocentric and psychocentric). According to Hawking and Mlodinow (2010, p.51) a model is good 'if it is elegant, contains few arbitrary or adjustable elements, agrees with and explains all existing observations, and finally makes detailed predictions about future observations that can disprove or falsify the model if they are not borne out'. For this thesis, an effort has been made to create such a model. However, the model used in this research might be too simplified to encompass all elements of otherness. It is even questionable whether a model could ever encompass all elements of otherness, as otherness means something different to every individual tourist. Thus, further research is needed on what otherness actually means to tourists, and how to measure it properly. To what extent preferences for a certain amount of otherness are crucial factors in the choice for a holiday destination, and to what extent expectations of tourists might influence the experiences of otherness, might be further researched as well.

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# Images

## Image on front page

Toerist in eigen land. (2020, 26 mei). [Photo].

<https://www.telegraaf.nl/watuzegt/620854087/vier-vakantie-in-eigen-land> (2021).

## Het Grote Zand

Roompot Het Grote Zand. (2021). [Photo]. <https://www.hetgrotezand.nl/>

Roompot Het Grote Zand. (2021). [Map]. <https://www.hetgrotezand.nl/>

## Esonstad

Landal Esonstad. (2021). [Photo].

<https://www.landalcamping.nl/campings/esonstad/op-en-rond-het-park#filter:e30=>

Landal Esonstad. (2021). [Map].

<https://www.landalcamping.nl/campings/esonstad/op-en-rond-het-park#filter:e30=>

## Orveltermarke

Landal Orveltermarke. (2021). [Photo].

<https://www.landal.nl/parken/orveltermarke/omgeving#filter:e30=>

Landal Orveltermarke. (2021). [Map].

<https://www.landal.nl/parken/orveltermarke/omgeving#filter:e30=>

## Map of all zip codes in The Netherlands

Postcodegebieden in Nederland [Illustration]. (2006, 29 april). Postcodes in Nederland (Blacknight) - Wikipedia.

## Map locating all respondents

Created by the author on ArcGis (2021).

# Appendices

**Appendix 1.** Plan of Roompot Landgoed Het Grote Zand (Hooghalen, Drenthe). The hand points at the location where the research took place (Het Grote Zand, 2021, edited by the author).



**Appendix 2.** Plan of Landal Esonstad (Oostmahorn, Groningen). The hand points at the location where the research took place (Esonstad, 2021, edited by the author).



- A** = Receptie - Rezeption - Reception
- B** = Zwembad - Hallenbad - Swimming pool
- C** = Multifunctioneel sportveld - Multifunctionale Sportplatz - Multifunctional sports field
- D** = Stadspoort - Stadttor - Town gate
- E** = Brasserie De Waegh
- F** = Parkwinkel\* - Parkladen\* - Parkshop\*
- G** = Bootverhuur La Barca  
Bootsvermietung - boat hire
- H** = Recreatieruimte De Werf - Freizeitsraum De W  
Entertainment room De Werf
- H1** = Schaakspel - Schachspiel - Chess game
- I** = Wasserette\* - Waschsalon\* - Laundrette\*
- J** = Stadscafé & Pizzeria Uccello
- K** = Speelweide en sportveld - Spielwiese und Sportplatz - Playground and sports field
- K1** = Spijkerdorp "De Vesting"  
Hüttendorf: „Die Festung“  
Build your own hut at "The Fortress"



- L** = Opstapplaats veerboot naar  
Fähre nach / Ferry to Schiermonnikoog
- M** = Pitch & Putt golfbaan - Pitch & Putt Golfplatz  
Pitch & Putt Golf course
- M1** = Pitch & Putt kiosk
- M2** = Pitch & Putt golf - Footgolf
- N** = Strandje - Kleines Strand - Small beach
- O** = Snackbar\* - Imbiss\* - Snack bar\*
- Q** = Brug/sluis - Steg/Schleuse - Bridge/Lock
- R** = Fietspad - Fahrradweg - Bicycle road
- S** = Hellingbaan voor diverse boten - Anlegestelle für  
verschiedenen Schiffe - Ramp for various boats
- T** = Buitenhaven - Außenhafen - Outer harbour
- T1** = Lauwersmeer
- U** = Binnenhaven - Binnenhafen - Inner harbour
- V** = Fietsenstalling - Fahrradständer - Bicycle shed
- W** = Vuilcontainers - Müllcontainer - Garbage containers
- W1** = Vuilwaterstortplaats - Entleerung chemischer Toiletten  
Waste water disposal (for chemical toilets)

- W2** = Innamepunt drinkwater (camper)  
Trinkwasser-Entnahmestelle (Camper)  
Supply for drinking water (camper)
- W3** = Hondentoilet - Hundetoilette - Dogs place
- W4** = Sanitairgebouw - Sanitärgebäude - Sanitary building
- W5** = Basketbalveld - Basketballplatz - Basketball court
- X** = Paviljoen La Barca
- Y** = Speeltoestellen - Spielgeräte - Playing attributes
- Y1** = Airtrampoline - Air-Trampoline - Airtrampoline
- Z** = Jeu-de-boules-baan - Boulebaan - Pétanque
- Z1** = Insectenboom en dierenweethoes pad  
Insekten Baum und Tier Fakten Pfad  
Insect tree and animalfacts path
- Z2** = Verzonken viking speelschip  
Spielschiff "Versankener Wickinger"  
Viking play ship
- Z3** = Pontje - Kleine Fähre - Small ferry
- Z4** = Flerjepbaan - Stabhochspringen - Pole vaulting
- Z5** = Kruidhuis, kanon en stormpaal Oostmahorn

- Z6** = Indoor Speelparadijs met horecapunt  
Indoor-Spielplatz mit Gaststättengewerbe  
Indoor playhouse with food and beverage
-  = AED - Defibrillator
-  = Parkeerplaats - Parkplatz - Parking lot
-  = Plattgrond/infokast - Parkplan/Informationen  
Map/information
-  = Wandelpad - Fußweg - Footpath

\* Gelegen onder de appartementen - Unter den Ferien-  
wohnungen gelegen - Situated under the apartments



**Appendix 3.** Plan of Landal Orveltermarke (Orvelte, Drenthe) The hand points at the location where the research took place (Orveltermarke, 2021, edited by the author).



**A1 = Centrumgebouw met o.a. receptie, snackbar, restaurant met bar en terras**

Zentralgebäude u.a. mit Rezeption, Imbiss, Restaurant mit Bar und Terrasse  
Center building with reception, snackbar, restaurant with bar and terrace

**A2 = Zwembad – Hallenschwimmbad**  
Swimming pool

**A3 = Indoorspeelplaats, amusementshal/poolbiljart**  
Indoorspielplatz, Freizeithalle/Pool-Billard  
Indoor children's playground, recreation room/  
pool billiards

**A4 = Wasserette – Waschsalon – Launderette**

**A5 = Supermarkt – Supermarket**

**B = Speelplaats – Spielplatz – Playground**

**C = Airtrampoline – Air-Trampolin**

**D = Midgetgolf – Minigolf**

**E = Jeu-de-boules-baan – Boulebaan**  
Pétanque court

**F = Multifunctioneel sportveld**

Multifunktions-Sportplatz

Multifunctional sports field

**G = Fietsverhuur – Fahrradverleih**

Rental department for bicycles

**H = 18-holes Pitch&Putt golfbaan**

18-Loch-Kurz-Golfplatz

18-holes Pitch&Putt Golf course

**I = Afvalcontainers – Müllcontainer**  
Garbage container

**J = Spellegieshuus: recreatie ruimte**

Freizeitraum – recreation area

**K = Natuurbad – Naturbad – Natural Swimming Pool**

**L = Ligweide – Leigewiese**

Sunbathing area

**M = Avontureneiland – Abenteuerinsel – Adventure island**

**N = Kano- en waterfietsverhuur – Kanu- und  
Tretbootverleih – Canoe and pedalo rental**

**O = Kiosk (toiletten en omkleedruimte)**

Kiosk (Toiletten und Umkleideraum)

Kiosk (toilets and changing room)

**R = Pingpongtafel – Tischtennisplatte – Ping pong table**

**S = MTB Technical Trail**

**T = Tipi tent – Tipi-Zelt – Teepee tent**

**Vernuoverpad (speel- en ontdekp pad)**

Naturlebnispfad – Nature discovery track

**Deponiebak hondenoepzakjes**

Deponie für Hundebeutel

Waste bin for poop scoop bags

**AED – Defibrillator**

**Centrale parkeerplaats – Zentralparkplatz**

Central parking place

**P2 = Overloopparkerplaats**

Zweiter Zentralparkplatz

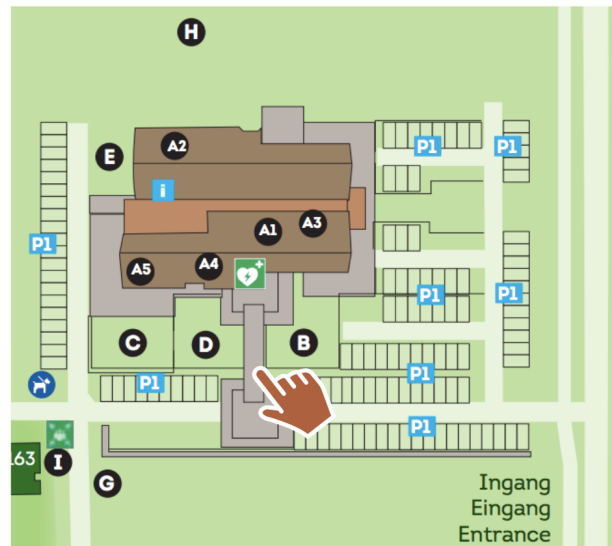
Second central parking place

**I = Plattegrond/infokast – Parkplan/Informationen**

Map/information

**Verzamelplaats – Treffpunkt – Meeting point**

Wandelpad – Fußweg – Footpath



Ingang  
Eingang  
Entrance

**Appendix 4.** *Marketing pictures as shown on the website of Roompot Het Grote Zand (two pictures above, Het Grote Zand, 2021), Landal Esonstad (middle two pictures, Esonstad, 2021), and Landal Orveltermarke (two pictures below, Orveltermarke, 2021).*



**Appendix 5.** *Flyer with QR-code leading to the Qualtrics online survey, which has been distributed at the three holiday parks.*



**U BENT  
UITGENODIGD**

Helpt u mij afstuderen?

Voor mijn masterscriptie Culturele Geografie doe ik onderzoek naar de ervaringen van Nederlandse vakantiegangers die in hun eigen land verblijven dit jaar. Hiervoor heb ik een enquête samengesteld van ongeveer 5 minuten. U zou mij zeer helpen als u deze zou willen invullen.

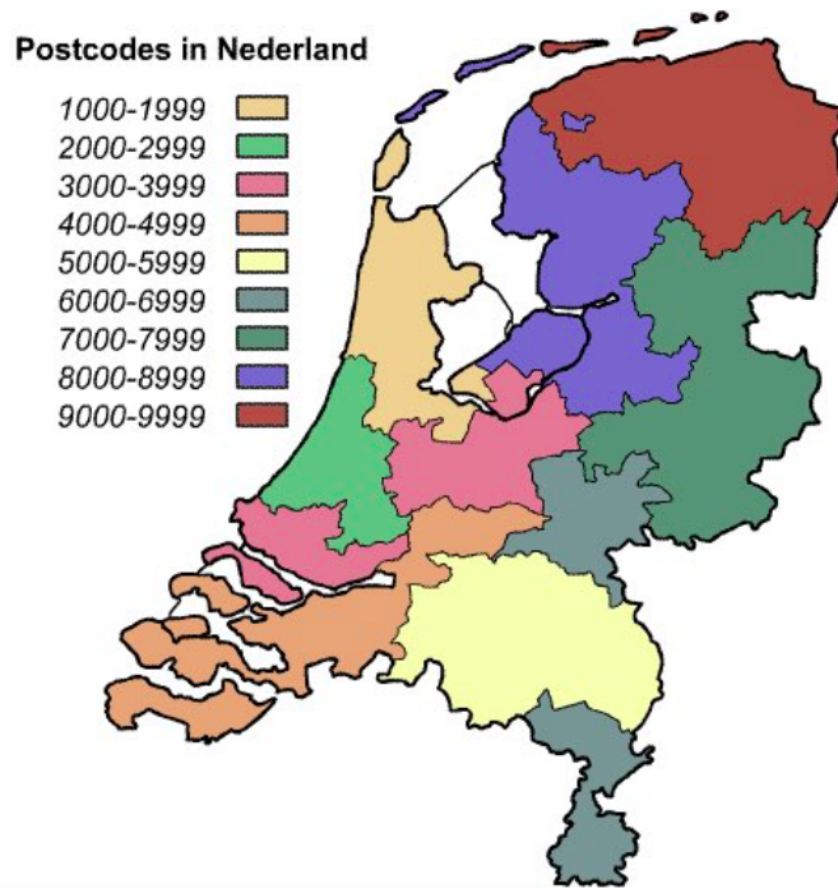
U vindt de enquête onder de link [rug.eu.qualtrics.com/VakantieInNederland](http://rug.eu.qualtrics.com/VakantieInNederland) of door de QR-code te scannen!

Vragen?  
Stuur even een mailtje naar [f.r.pot@student.rug.nl](mailto:f.r.pot@student.rug.nl)!



**university of  
 groningen**

Appendix 6. Map of all zip code areas in The Netherlands (2006).



**Appendix 7.** *More detailed version (with more zip code groups) of percentages of respondents per zip code area.*

<i>Zip code groups</i>	<i>Total (N=170)</i>	<i>Het Grote Zand (N=70)</i>	<i>Esonstad (N=46)</i>	<i>Orveltermarke (N=54)</i>
<i>1000-1999</i>	21.8	32.4	17.8	11.5
<i>2000-2999</i>	18.8	10.3	15.6	32.7
<i>3000-3999</i>	15.2	16.2	8.9	19.2
<i>4000-4999</i>	6.1	2.9	6.7	9.6
<i>5000-5999</i>	3.0	4.4	4.4	0.0
<i>6000-6999</i>	3.0	1.5	0.0	7.7
<i>7000-7999</i>	4.2	2.9	2.2	7.7
<i>8000-8999</i>	9.1	11.8	11.1	3.8
<i>9000-9999</i>	18.8	17.6	33.3	7.7

**Appendix 8.** *The questionnaire (in Dutch) that has been distributed at the research locations.*

Beste vakantieganger,

Mijn naam is Femke, ik ben masterstudente Culturele Geografie aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen en doe voor mijn eindscriptie onderzoek naar de ervaringen van Nederlanders die dit jaar in hun eigen land op vakantie gaan: is dit iets wat u altijd al deed, of gaat u normaal meestal naar het buitenland? En hoe bevalt het hier? De enquête duurt ongeveer 5 minuten om in te vullen. Gegevens worden anoniem verwerkt en er zal betrouwbaar om worden gegaan met de data, die uitsluitend zullen worden gebruikt voor mijn scriptie.

Bedankt dat u de tijd neemt om deze enquête in te vullen. U helpt mij hiermee met mijn afstuderen!

PS: Wanneer er onduidelijkheden zijn, kunt u mij altijd vragen stellen.

1) Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders

2) Wat is uw leeftijd? (open)

3) Hoe lang woont u al in Nederland?

- Mijn hele leven; ik ben hier geboren
- 10 jaar of langer
- 5-9 jaar
- Minder dan 5 jaar

4) Wat zijn de 4 cijfers van uw postcode? (open)

5) Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding?

- Basisonderwijs
- Vmbo, mbo1
- Havo, vwo, mbo
- Hbo, WO

6) Op welke vakantiebestemming bent u de afgelopen 5 jaar het vaakst geweest?

- Eigen provincie (waar woonplaats is)
- Nederland
- Buitenland (binnen Europa)
- Buitenland (buiten Europa)

7) Toon uw voorkeur voor de volgende vakantiebestemmingen door ze te nummeren van 1 t/m 4 (1 = meeste voorkeur; 4 = minste voorkeur).

- Eigen provincie (waar woonplaats is)
- Nederland
- Buitenland (binnen Europa)
- Buitenland (buiten Europa)

8) Hoe vaak bent u al eerder naar dit vakantiepark geweest?

- Nooit; dit is de eerste keer
- 1 keer
- 2 keer
- 3 keer of vaker

9) Bent u al eens eerder naar een soortgelijk vakantiepark in Nederland geweest?

- Ja
- Nee

10) Is dit uw enige vakantie deze zomer?

- Ja
- Nee, mijn andere vakantie gaat naar (open)

11) Heeft Covid-19 een rol gespeeld in de keuze voor uw vakantiebestemming voor deze zomer?

- Ja
- Nee

12) Waarom heeft u voor dit vakantiepark gekozen? (vink alle opties aan die op u van toepassing zijn!)

- In verband met Covid-19 leek het me beter om in eigen land te blijven
- Vakantieparken als deze bevallen me normaalgesproken goed
- Het is lekker dichtbij
- Het vakantiepark trok mij aan
- De omgeving trok mij aan
- Anders, namelijk:

13) Wat vindt u belangrijk in uw eigen vakantie (op zo'n manier dat het meespeelt in uw vakantiekeuze)? Vink aan:

1. Weten wat me te wachten staat op mijn vakantiebestemming.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

2. Nieuwe culturen en/of natuur ontdekken.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

3. Mij kunnen uitdrukken in mijn eigen taal/een taal die ik ken.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

4. Nieuwe dingen leren over een plek.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

5. Een plek die aanvoelt als thuis.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

6. Spannende avonturen beleven.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

7. Vermaak/plezier op het park zelf.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

8. Dat de vakantieplek compleet anders aanvoelt dan thuis.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

9. Comfortabel gemak ervaren.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

10. Onverwachte ervaringen opdoen.

- Belangrijk
- Niet zo belangrijk

14) Vink aan welke van de aspecten u op uw huidige vakantieplek ervaart.

Als u een aspect niet of onvoldoende ervaart, laat het vakje dan leeg.

- Ik weet op deze plek wat me te wachten staat
- Ik kan hier nieuwe culturen en/of natuur ontdekken
- Ik kan mij hier uitdrukken in mijn eigen taal/een taal die ik ken
- Ik leer hier nieuwe dingen over deze plek
- Deze plek voelt aan als thuis
- Ik kan hier spannende avonturen beleven
- Ik ervaar hier genoeg vermaak/plezier op het park zelf
- Deze vakantieplek voelt compleet anders aan dan thuis
- Deze plek biedt mij comfortabel gemak
- Ik kan hier onverwachte ervaringen opdoen



15) Door mijn huidige vakantie kijk ik positiever naar Nederland als vakantiebestemming.

- Ja, ik kijk positiever naar Nederland als vakantiebestemming.
- Nee, ik kijk juist negatiever naar Nederland als vakantiebestemming.
- Ik kijk hetzelfde naar Nederland als vakantiebestemming.
- Anders (vul reden in hieronder)

16) Kunt u aangeven waarom? (open)

17) Welk cijfer op een schaal van 1 t/m 10 zou u uw huidige vakantiebestemming geven? Waarom? (open)

18) Optioneel: als u normaalgesproken vaak naar het buitenland gaat op vakantie, mist u iets hier dat u daar wel vond? Zo ja, wat? (open)

19) Wilt u zelf verder nog iets kwijt? (open)

**Appendix 9.** *Survey questions, level of measurement and suitable tests.*

Survey question	Level of measurement	Suitable test
1. Wat is uw geslacht?	Nominal	Chi square test
2. Wat is uw leeftijd?	Ratio	Spearman's rho / Pearson's r / Kruskal-Wallis / Chi square test
3. Hoe lang woont u in Nederland?	Ordinal	Chi square test
4. Wat zijn de 4 cijfers van uw postcode?	Nominal	Chi square test
5. Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding?	Ordinal	Chi square test
6. Op welke vakantiebestemming bent u afgelopen 5 jaar het vaakst geweest?	Nominal	Chi square test
7. Toon uw voorkeur voor de volgende vakantiebestemmingen...	Ordinal	Chi square test
8. Hoe vaak bent u eerder naar dit vakantiepark geweest?	Ordinal	Chi square test
9. Bent u al eens eerder naar een soortgelijk vakantiepark geweest?	Ordinal	Spearman's rho / Pearson's r / Kruskal-Wallis / Chi square test
10. Is dit uw enige vakantie deze zomer?	Nominal	Chi square test
11. Heeft Covid-19 een rol gespeeld in de keuze voor uw vakantiebestemming dit jaar?	Nominal	Chi square test
12. Waarom heeft u voor dit vakantiepark gekozen?	Nominal	Chi square test
13. Wat vindt u belangrijk in uw eigen vakantie?	Nominal	Chi square test

14. Vink aan welke aspecten u op uw huidige vakantieplek ervaart.	Nominal —> overlap tussen vraag 13 en 14: nieuwe variabele	Chi square test —> Spearman's rho / Kruskal-Wallis
15. Door mijn huidige vakantie kijk ik positiever naar Nederland.	Nominal	Chi square test
16. Kunt u aangeven waarom?	Nominal (open)	-
17. Welk cijfer op een schaal van 1-10 zou u uw huidige vakantiebestemming geven? (waarom?)	Ratio	Spearman's rho / Pearson's r / Kruskal-Wallis / Chi square test
18. Als u normaalgesproken naar het buitenland gaat, mist u iets hier dat u daar wel vond? Zo ja, wat?	Nominal (open)	-
19. Wilt u verder zelf nog iets kwijt?	Nominal (open)	-

**Appendix 10.** Preferences (*P*) for and experiences (*E*) of psychocentric statements (percentage under '*P*' indicates the number of participants that checked the box with 'important to me in my choice for holiday destination', whereas percentage under '*E*' indicates the number of participants that experience the statement at their current holiday destination).

Variable	Total percentage (N=170)		Het Grote Zand (N=70)		Esonstad (N=46)		Orveltermarke (N=54)	
	P	E	P	E	P	E	P	E
Psychocentric								
1. Knowing what to expect at my holiday destination	58.3	55.3	65.2	41.4	46.7	54.3	59.3	74.1
2. Being able to express myself in my own language	25.0	62.4	34.8	57.1	6.7	60.9	27.8	70.4
3. A destination that feels like home	34.5	27.1	40.6	28.6	33.3	26.1	27.8	25.9
4. Entertainment and fun on the holiday park itself	58.9	50.0	47.8	35.7	62.2	54.3	70.4	64.8
5. Experiencing comfort and ease at the holiday destination	83.9	80.6	89.9	75.7	68.9	82.6	88.9	85.2

**Appendix 11.** Preferences (*P*) for and experiences (*E*) of allocentric statements (percentage under ‘*P*’ indicates the number of participants that checked the box with ‘important to me in my choice for holiday destination’, whereas percentage under ‘*E*’ indicates the number of participants that experience the statement at their current holiday destination).

Variable	Total percentage (N=170)		Het Grote Zand (N=70)		Esonstad (N=46)		Orveltermarke (N=54)	
	P	E	P	E	P	E	P	E
Allocentric								
1. Exploring new cultures or natures	70.8	34.7	69.6	38.6	77.8	37.0	66.7	27.8
2. Learning new things about the place	77.4	34.7	75.4	38.6	82.2	37.0	75.9	27.8
3. Experiencing exciting adventures	39.3	13.5	31.9	11.4	37.8	10.9	50.0	18.5
4. A holiday destination that feels completely different from home	55.4	28.2	58.0	34.3	66.7	30.4	42.6	18.5
5. Having unexpected experiences at the destination	49.1	15.9	42.6	20.0	53.3	17.4	53.7	9.3

**Appendix 12.** *Chi-Square Tests showing significant results.*

Rows	Columns	P-value
Park	I experience entertainment and fun on the park	0,005
Park	I know what to expect on this park	0,001

**Appendix 13.** *Spearman's rho Tests showing significant results.*

Rows	Columns	P-value	Correlation coefficient
Amount of allocentric overlap	Viewpoint towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination	0,015	0,187
Amount of allocentric overlap	Assigned grade to holiday park	0,002	0,244
Assigned grade to holiday park	Viewpoint towards The Netherlands as a holiday destination	0,000	0,275