Time for me and time for us:
An interpretative phenomenological analysis of accompanying spouses' participation in conference travel

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy in Tourism and Hospitality Department

at

The University of Waikato

by

Hyekyung Yoo

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2014

This thesis is dedicated to my family - father, sisters, brothers-in-law and nieces, for their consistent encouragement, support, love and trust, and especially to the memory of my beloved mother:

Youngja Shin

(1941-2012),

who would have been greatly delighted and proud of my achievement.

Abstract

The presence of spouses, i.e., those who accompany their spouses to a conference, is a common phenomenon within the conference travel sector. It has been evident in trade journals that accompanying spouses yield social and economic benefits as a potential market for the conference industry. Moreover, accompanying spouses' participation in conference travel, which has been alluded to in trade journals, appears to be understood as the opportunity to travel with their spouses. However, the accompanying spouses' phenomenon has been less noticed and under-appreciated in academic research, specifically in tourism studies. To present new knowledge about the phenomenon, the research for this thesis investigates the conference travel experience for accompanying spouses by providing information on how accompanying spouses make sense of their conference travel experience, and the meanings that they ascribe to their experience. Therefore, later research can build on its findings to improve knowledge, experience and practice in this area.

Given the originality of the research topic, the thesis adopts a phenomenological approach, primarily grounded in the accompanying spouses' voices of their subjective experience, rather than testing certain hypotheses. At the same time, the thesis is interpretative in which the researcher seeks to make sense of what the participants try to make sense of their experiences, using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Within this approach, it can be possible to gain new insight into the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. The nature of this thesis, thus, is qualitative, inductive and draws on multidisciplinary knowledge. The data were collected from multiple in-depth interviews with fifteen accompanying spouses. The initial interviews present the nature of accompanying spouses' experiences from their perspectives. Concurrently, separate interviews with the fifteen conference attendees who have previously brought their spouses along to conferences were conducted to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Based on the IPA approach, therefore, the thesis research revealed that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon reflected a mix of subjective experiences within the context of time for the self, with their spouse, and with the conference society. Three key emergent themes were evident in the accompanying spouses' accounts: 'the experience of providing individual autonomy', 'the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship' and 'the experience of social inclusion and exclusion'. Firstly, the majority of accompanying spouses described 'the experience of providing individual autonomy' based on a sense of freedom, serendipitous moments and the issues of social engagement. The participants also reflected on the relational aspect of conference travel which emerged from 'the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship' through a genuine sense of connectedness, the experience of caregiver and a sense of strengthened spousal bond. Thirdly, when involved in the social activities of the conference, accompanying spouses were found to negotiate their professional identity on the basis of common 'experiences of social inclusion and exclusion'.

These findings contribute to developments in tourism studies knowledge in such areas as the tourist experience, family travel, conference travel and couples' travel leisure. The thesis highlights the need for further critical thought on the nature of travel and relationships. Specifically, in this thesis, the experiences of serendipity, intimacy and exclusion in the accompanied conference travel experience raise the need for further examination of the embodied and lived experiences of couples travelling together and its associated meaning.

Acknowledgements

Looking back on the past years of my PhD journey, I can see how much I have changed and grown, both as a researcher and a person. Throughout the process of solving the difficult problems and challenges I faced, I feel my inner strength and confidence were reinforced, and my wisdom and intelligence enhanced. At the same time, I also enjoyed the experience of working with many fantastic people without whom this thesis would not have been possible. I am truly grateful for the guidance and moral and intellectual support they provided. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to them.

To the participants: I was deeply impressed with your willingness to open up about your private experiences. It was very kind of all of you to provide so much detail and supplementary information so I could get a better understanding of you and your experience. And I was grateful for the assistance I received to help me recruit other participants. I could not have completed my thesis without your open and honest accounts.

To my supervisors: I believe I am very lucky to have such wonderful supervisors like you, Professor Alison McIntosh, Associate Professor Anne Zahra and Dr. Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten. I really enjoyed working with you, even though you certainly challenged me at times along the way. These were valuable opportunities to develop my critical thinking skills and build self-confidence. This was such a great experience for me to get to know what the 'P' of 'PhD' was all about. Alison, I truly appreciated your guidance, which helped me keep going on so many occasions when I was tossed on an ocean of doubts. Without your patience, consideration and encouragement, I would not have reached the conclusion that I wanted.

To Heather Morrell: I would like to commend you for all your support throughout the thesis process in finding references, sorting out referencing and helping with EndNote. You were a great companion.

To my dear friends and acquaintances around the world: Thanks a lot my supportive friends for providing me a bouncing board wherever you were. You were always there for me, both in the stressful and happy moments. Friends from the Orchard Park and my group of fellow Korean PhDs at The University of Waikato, I will be glad to lend a hand if you want to ease the tension with a giggle, as you did for me. My particular thanks go to Ashley Hopper who was present at a very important moment of my PhD life.

Last, but definitely not least! To the Buddha, Seoil Sunim and Ven Tenzin: I offer a thousand thank yous for your help towards my spiritual growth. In following your teaching, I was better able to deal with sufferings, difficulties and frustration arising from feelings of doubt and uncertainty throughout the research process. Your perspectives on life were very helpful in my selection of research paradigm, and the wisdom and loving compassion you demonstrated helped me to keep my focus in the face of so many distractions.

Finally, it is my wish that this thesis will be of benefit to others in their quest for knowledge.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figure

Chapter One   Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand the phenomenon of spouses accompanying attendees to conferences through the perspective of spouses. This type of travel experience remains a neglected area in tourism studies. Prior to starting the thesis, I did not have any experience of being involved in conference travel as part of a couple. My interest in this topic came from reviewing the literature, engaging with critical approaches to tourism research and conversations with my supervisors who had had their own experiences of travelling with spouses to academic conferences. In the process of producing this thesis, I have now attended conferences, albeit without an accompanying spouse.

In tourism studies, professional trips to conferences referred to as "the voluntaristic nature of meeting-based tourism" (Hiller, 1995, p. 376) are primarily treated as a work-related activity as opposed to a tourist activity (Holley, Jain, & Lyons, 2008; Holloway, 2009). Indeed, people leave their home as individuals or in groups to get together with others who share a common purpose at the destination and become part of a social group (Hiller, 1995; Høyer & Naess, 2001) by seeking self-development (Dann, 1997) and the rise of social networking (Lassen, 2004; Oppermann, 1997a). However, my encounters with the literature convinced me of the ability of conference travel to fulfil a secondary role as a leisure/pleasure vacation. Although conference travel is generally linked to work, the review of the literature indicated the possibility for conference attendees to take their spouses to engage in more leisurely activities.

Meanwhile, the growing recognition and evidence of the increase of spouses' and family members' participation in conference travel has also been evident in trade publication research. Considering the professional and work-related nature of conference travel, I was intrigued as to how and why spouses or families travelling with attendees were engaged, as they had no commitment to attend a conference. As accompanying spouses were marginalised in research concerning the tourism experience, I wanted to look at what lies beneath their experiences and the reason for travelling to conferences together, so as to explore what the

phenomenon is about rather than define the nature of the phenomenon. This led me to the current topic, focusing on what the experience of conference travel means for them. How, then, is this meaning to the travel understood within the field of tourism studies? Therefore, this thesis aims to move towards an original understanding of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in tourism studies.

The thesis does so by first providing an overview of conference travel, in terms of its characteristics, the main research area and the link to the accompanying spouses' phenomenon to identify the research gap.

1.1 Conferences and the presence of accompanying spouses

A conference, as a regular formalised short-term event of an association, company or organisation, brings people together for one or more days to discuss a range of topics of interest and to share information (Davidson, 1993b; Lawson, 1980). A number of classification criteria are used for conferences, such as the level (e.g. regional, national, or international), the duration (e.g. single or multi-day), the kind of organiser (e.g. corporate, association, government, or private), the kind of people who attend (e.g. local residents, out-of-towners, or visitors from abroad), and the main purpose (e.g. educating, informing, or networking) (see, Abbey & Link, 1994; Davidson & Cope, 2003; Kim, Chon, & Chung, 2003; Law, 1992; Lawson, 1980). Given that the conference market is quite heterogeneous, authors such as Astroff and Abbey (2002), Rogers (2008) and McCabe et al. (2000) and Jago and Deery (2006) divide the market into three main categories in line with the particular kind of organiser, namely, corporate, association, government and non-profit. Of these three sub-segments, conferences by corporates and associations represent the most significant proportion of the conference sector (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

Association conferences are hosted by an organised and structured group of persons having a common interest or purpose - such as politics, recreation or socialising (McCabe et al., 2000) - or common type of profession, i.e. trade,

2

scientific, educational, and technical (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). The purposes for such conferences are concerned with networking, educating members, sharing information, planning the activities of the association, and considering proposals or electing leaders (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Var, Cesario, & Mauser, 1985). On the other hand, conferences hosted by companies for internal and external communication efforts fall into the category of the corporate conference (Falk & Pizam, 1991). The most common purposes for this type of conference are management or board discussions, staff training to upgrade knowledge and skills, regional/national sales reports, and new product introductions.

A number of features distinguish association from corporate conferences (see, Table 1, page 4), including a number of attendees, duration, venue preferences, rotations, budgets, and the characteristics of attendees (Hoyle, Dorf, & Jones, 1995; McCabe et al., 2000; Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Rogers, 2008). Firstly, the site or destination for corporate conferences is commonly determined by the location of businesses and headquarters (Weber, 2001). While associations, either national or international, are more likely to operate rotational patterns, or cycles, in the staging of their events (Rogers, 2008). Weber (2001) claims that association conferences have a higher degree of flexibility with respect to the choice of a destination than corporate conferences. Identifying key destination criteria thus is critical to associations choosing an appropriate place to hold their conferences (Go & Govers, 1999; Kang, Suh, & Jo, 2005).

Table 1 Comparison between association and corporate conferences

	Association conferences	Corporate conferences
Attendees' number	Hundreds or even thousands	Usually under 100 and often a few dozen
Decision-making group and process	The decision process can be long and complex, often involving a committee	The decision process is shorter and simpler and it is often made by one person
Budget considerations	Spending per attendee per day can be moderate, as attendees are usually paying out of their own pockets	Spending per attendee per day can be higher, as attendees' companies are usually paying
Duration	May last for several days, or even a week in the case of large international association conferences	Generally shorter, often lasting for only one day
Venue preferences	Mainly large, purpose-built conference centres	Mainly the seminar rooms of hotels
Presence of accompanying spouses	Attendees' partners are usually welcome to attend, so a parallel partners' programme of events is often planned	Attendees' partners are rarely encouraged to attend

Source: Adapted from Holloway and Humphreys (2012, p. 302). Reprinted with permission.

Oppermann and Chon (1997) hold that the characteristics of attendees implying 'freedom of choice' are the most obvious way to differentiate between the two types of conference. Montgomery and Strick (1995) and Oppermann (1996a) similarly considered budget considerations, particularly pertaining to who pays the expenses for conference attendance as relevant. In general, people participating in association conferences cover their expenses themselves, whereas the company provides the cost to attend corporate conferences for its employees. Indeed, the attendance of association members at a conference is recognised as voluntary, while participation in a corporate conference for all selected participants is usually compulsory (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rogers, 2008).

Given the voluntary attendance, associations generally make an effort to attract more members to participate in their conferences (McCabe et al., 2000; Oppermann & Chon, 1997).

Additionally, the presence of accompanying spouses may perhaps also serve as a feature contributing to a boundary between association and corporate conferences. In corporate conferences, accompanying spouses' participation is somewhat limited depending on whether or not the conferences have an incentive element, such as the company covering all costs (Crouch & Weber, 2002). Meanwhile, accompanying spouses' participation in association conferences is often considerably greater than in corporate ones (Rogers, 2008). Considering the flexibility of travel based on levels of personal motivation and leisure time, association conferences can facilitate accompanying spouses' attendance, whereas not all associations appear to facilitate the participation of accompanying spouses (Ligos, 2000). Rodgers (1988) pointed out that the attendance of spouses at an association conference varies according to the timing of the conference, the nature of members' professions, and the purpose of the conference. For example, the annual conference of associations (Hoyle et al., 1995) or an association conference with an educational character (Rodgers, 1988) can entice more accompanying spouses to attend. These features of association conferences in turn may be echoed in the area of accompanying spouses. Therefore, this thesis is set within the context of association conferences.

Due to the rapid growth of the conference industry, the wealth of previous research into the conference sector is primarily concerned with the development of the industry as a main sector in the nation's tourism industry (Bradley, Hall, & Harrison, 2002; Judd, 1995; Kay, 2005; Law, 1992; Lawson, 1980; Morla & Ladkin, 2006; Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Yoo & Weber, 2005) and its economic contribution to a destination (Braun & Rungeling, 1992; Grado, Strauss, & Lord, 1998; Kim et al., 2003; Lee & Back, 2005; Morgan & Condliffe, 2006). Destination marketing for the development and maintenance of its competitiveness is also a frequent research area (see, for instance, Gartrell, 1991; Go & Zhang, 1997; Qu, Li, & Chu, 2000; Weber & Ladkin, 2003).

As the significance of the conference industry has been enhanced, the greatest attention has been directed to issues relating to the main actors in the conference market, namely the organising association and conference planner, the host location, and the potential attendees. These actors are interrelated in many ways to increase the attendance level. In particular, associations and host destinations have a common purpose to maximise the number of attendees (Var et al., 1985). Associations attempt to attract membership and increase the level of attendance by providing an appropriate programme, choosing an attractive destination, designing spousal/social programmes, and promoting the conference (McCabe et al., 2000; Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Destinations also make efforts to promote themselves to associations and meeting planners. Once the decision has been made to hold a conference at a particular destination, the host destination turns its promotion to the association's membership to improve attendance (Seekings, 1997; Var et al., 1985). A review of studies on the relationship between a destination and attendees' participation has found that the characteristics of a destination chosen for a conference significantly influences the attendance level, which in turn determines the success or failure of the conference (see, for example, Lee & Back, 2007; Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Zelinsky, 1994).

From this perspective, and the competitive nature of the conference market, a good number of studies heavily focus on the discussion of the conference site selection in order to identify the meeting planners' perceptions of the host destination (Baloglu & Love, 2001, 2005; Oppermann, 1996a, 1996b) and preferences of meeting planners' destination attributes (Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Choi & Boger, 2002; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Nelson & Rys, 2000; Oppermann, 1996b). Some of these studies are associated with understanding the process for decisions made by the organising association and conference planners when choosing a host destination (Chen, 2006; Clark & McCleary, 1995; Comas & Moscardo, 2005).

Researchers have also previously taken an interest in attendees who may have the choice of a wide range of association conferences relating to their wants and needs. This is because attendees' attendance is closely related to an association's annual revenue and the clear economic benefits to host destinations. A review of

these previous studies reveals that there are two major topics: one is of attendees' motivation, inhibitors, and facilitators in attending conferences, and the other is of the participation decision-making process. One of the concerns addressed in the first theme is the categorising of attendees based on their motivation to participate in a conference, for example, networking, education, leadership, and destination/recreation/social (see, Grant & Weaver, 1996). Achieving a better knowledge of the motivations, inhibitors and facilitators is another issue that can enrich the overall satisfaction, and intention to return of the attendees (Lee & Back, 2007; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Rittichainuwat, Beck, & Lalopa, 2001; Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007).

A key issue of the second theme of the participation decision-making process is to identify factors influencing attendees' decisions as to whether to participate or not (Grant & Weaver, 1996; Oppermann, 1998; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Zhang, Leung, & Qu, 2007). Oppermann and Chon (1997) presented a model of the participation decision-making process, comprising four factors, namely, personal/business, association/conference, location, and intervening opportunities. Later, Zhang, Leung, and Qu (2007) empirically modified and improved this model regrouping the factors into four dimensions: personal/business, association/conference, location (attractiveness and accessibility of convention destinations), and total cost (monetary cost and time cost). More recently, some researchers have widened the area of investigation by applying relevant theory, namely intention-based human behaviour theories, such as the theory of reasoned action and of planned behaviour, to the proposed meeting participation model (see, Lee & Back, 2007, 2008). These studies have drawn together the influence of subjective norm, destination image and past experience for a more detailed understanding of the process of conference attendees' participation behaviour.

A holiday dimension that occurs within the conference's structures has also received attention by scholars. Rutherford and Kreck (1994), for instance, reveal that conference attendees tend to add recreational activities to their primary travel purpose and are willing to spend extra time on leisure tourism either before, during or after the conference. Attendees can take advantage of their participation

7

for a holiday (Grant & Weaver, 1996; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994). Ngamson and Beck (2000) suggest that meeting planners should consider the attractiveness of the overseas travel experience along with professional development and social activities when designing a conference programme, being chiefly motivated by the additional economic value to host destinations (Davidson, 2003; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994; Therkelsen, 2003). As the destination can become an add-on to the essential purpose of a conference, attendees may have the dual purpose of attending a conference, namely the original professional goal and enjoying extra holiday time (Abbey & Link, 1994; Hiller, 1995; Holley et al., 2008).

Given that conference attendees seek to engage in tourism and recreational activities at destinations, conferences for some of them serve as an opportunity to take a holiday with their spouse (Davidson, 2003; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994). The accompanying spouses' phenomenon seems to occur in response to attendees' desire for maintaining a balance between work and life (Gustafson, 2006; Westman, Chen, & Etzion, 2009) as they take a family member to a conference, although this lacks scholarly confirmation. Despite the previous academic research on the conference industry discussed above, the understanding of the nature of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in the academic literature has been, up until recently, relatively limited.

Research gap

The accompanying spouses' phenomenon has come into the spotlight of academic researchers (see, Braun, 1992; Davidson, 2003; Rogers, 2008; Rogerson, 2005) and many conference industry practitioners (see, Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 1993; Brooks, 2003; Crocker, 1999; Sherman, 2007). Scholarly awareness of the phenomenon as an area of importance is concerned with the management of programmes for accompanying spouses (for example, Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997), or the generation of additional financial contribution to a conference organiser and destination (see, Braun, 1992; Rogerson, 2005). Davidson (2003), for example, notes that host destinations can benefit from extra spending in shops, more visits to attractions, extra employment,

and an increase in reputation as a tourist destination as a result of the presence of accompanying spouses.

Much of information about the phenomenon is available from wide coverage based on industry surveys and practitioners' interviews in industry publications relating to conference travel. Such coverage normally focuses on ways of increasing the level of attendance to generate economic benefits (see, Alonzo, 1993; Alonzo, 2009; Carey, 2008), through the issues such as the influence of the destination image on the level of accompanying spouses' attendance and the impact of accompanying spouses on the destination and association.

However, the existing research approach to the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, indeed, is more concerned with the economic and business realms. This may be in part because the attendance of spouses in conference-related activities is perceived as being different and socially excluded in the conference society. In addition to the focus on the economic benefits of spouses attending conferences, it is also hard to find reliable data to measure and understand this phenomenon. There still remains little conceptual and empirical evidence to elaborate the phenomenon. Indeed, despite its potential significance, scholarly attention and research on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon has been, up until recently, noticeably absent from the tourism literature.

On the other hand, as discussed in the section 1.1, the accompanying spouses' phenomenon seems to occur in response to attendees' desire for maintaining a balance between work and life by taking their spouse to a conference, although this lacks academic confirmation. In the same vein, arguably, conference industry practitioners (see, Alonzo, 1993; Ligos, 2000) appear to recognise the holiday dimension of a conference as a motivator for accompanying spouses, possibly with a focus on spending quality time as a couple. It can be assumed that the presence of accompanying spouses draws together personal travel motivations and the nature of individual relationships.

Arguably, the key catalysts for tourism demand have been widely described as a search for novel, exotic and meaningful life experiences in contrast to everyday life (McCabe, 2002). In this sense, for accompanying spouses, conferences may be the opportunity for them to escape from home and experience new places (Franklin, 2003; Iso-Ahola, 1982). At the same time, they are a travelling companion of their spouse on conference travel. It potentially highlights that their presence is shaped within the frame of a particular relationship. Thus, it can be argued that the relational aspect, such as the issues of social relations and sociability in co-travelling with others (Larsen, Urry, & Axhausen, 2007), is inherently embedded in this form of travel.

A number of researchers have paid attention to tourism as a backdrop of (re)establishing intimate interpersonal relationships (see, for example, Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, & Urry, 2004; Davidson, 1996; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). As Williams and Kaltenborn (1999) indicate, "Much of modern tourism is rather ordinary and involves complex patterns of social and spatial interaction that cannot be neatly reduced to a shallow detached relation" (p. 214). Indeed, there is growing recognition that travel is a facilitator encouraging the social and emotional connections between people travelling together (see, for example, Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Larsen, 2008; Larsen et al., 2007; Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Urry, 2003). This recognition raises a call for the need to examine the link between tourism and the issue of interaction with co-travelling significant others to illuminate how the role of travel plays out for individuals and in their personal relationships. Thus, this thesis adopts a position that the significance of sociality and social relations to everyday life coupled with travel motivations, leads spouses to want to travel to conferences with attendees.

1.2 Research aims and questions

Consequently, the overall aim of the present thesis research is to address this knowledge gap in the tourism literature by seeking to provide preliminary in-

depth exploratory insights into the way of the phenomenon of spouses accompanying attendees to conferences rather than defining it. Considering the under-researched phenomenon in tourism studies, the thesis research seeks to draw upon the accompanying spouses' own perspective on the experience of conference travel. The research also investigates the meanings that accompanying spouses ascribe to their experiences. To fulfil the thesis's aim, a phenomenological approach, more specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), is deemed to be appropriate to arrive at thick description of accompanying spouses' experience of conference travel from the perspective of accompanying spouses. Therefore, the thesis is driven by the following phenomenological research questions:

- How is conference travel experienced by accompanying spouses?
- How do accompanying spouses understand their experience of conference travel?

In its use of IPA which is a relatively under-developed approach in tourism studies, this thesis intends to provide experience of the method by addressing its significance as a methodological tool. In particular, IPA is appropriate for research into limited theorising to seek the lived experience of a given person and its significance of that person (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). In addition, the research intends to investigate the link between the travel experience and the couple relationship in the conference travel context. However, there has been very limited previous research into the issue of couple time. The accompanying spouses' phenomenon, guided by broader reflection on other disciplines, can also provide a sufficiently in-depth understanding. Hence, the thesis also aims to explore:

- How is interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) employed to deepen the understanding of the tourist experience?
- In what way is the accompanying spouses' phenomenon theorised through a multidisciplinary approach?

1.3 The rationale of the thesis

The present thesis is unique because to date there has been little attention paid to this topic. In contrast, there has been a good deal of interest in the economic benefits of derived from the accompanying spouses' participation in conference travel, and the effects of the tourism experience on the couple relationship in tourism studies.

Firstly, in view of the originality of the research topic, this thesis research positions itself as contributing to the development of the existing knowledge on the tourist experience through understanding the experiences of conference travel for accompanying spouses. As such, this thesis may lead to the re-conceptualisation of the concept of conference tourism as incorporating accompanying spouses' voices that may reveal the important lens of relational experience often missing from much tourism scholarship. Therefore, later research can build on its exploratory findings to improve knowledge, experience and practice for a voice that remains otherwise unheard. The new knowledge and insights acquired through an analysis of the accompanying spouses' experiences has the potential to contribute to the implementation for developers, entrepreneurs, and planners in creating enjoyable travel experiences, more successful products, and for researchers in more accurately measuring, analysing and modelling industry performance and the extent of this travel phenomenon.

In this way, the present thesis advocates that tourism can play a role in providing the social, cultural and, specifically, personal benefits in addition to economic value (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). The main research area in conference tourism, as analysed in section 1.1, highlights that the role of conference tourism remains a driving force to generate economic benefits to the society. This has resulted in a number of studies focusing on the economic impact of conference tourism on its host destination which the tourism industry in turn can reap the additional benefits for itself from conference attendees (see, for example, Abbey & Link, 1994; Davidson, 2003; Kim et al., 2003; Rogers, 2008; Schlentrich, 2008). The presence of accompanying spouses is assumed to be

evolved from the change of a social force in conference travel, like blurring the line between work and leisure, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. Cohen and Cohen (2012) maintain that broad social trends and particular historical events have influenced the nature of tourism leading to the change in the motives and styles of travel, the structure of the tourist industry and the relationship between tourism and everyday life. In a way, understanding accompanying spouses' travel experiences will serve to shed light on the other benefits of conference travel that may lead to transform the notion of conference tourism into a social and personal trend (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

In the tourism literature, which will be reviewed in Chapter Two, there is a dearth of research examining the link between the experience of couple time and tourism. This research hence is important in providing an understanding of the experience of travelling companions in the context of conference travel. Indeed, this lack of knowledge of the phenomenon in tourism studies led me to employ a multidisciplinary approach to develop better understandings of the phenomenon (Larsen & Mossberg, 2007; Schänzel, Yeoman, & Backer, 2012), including reference to leisure studies, family studies and other disciplines concerning personal relationships issues. It seeks to contribute a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and thereby bridge these divergent studies through the development of knowledge (Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2009).

Given that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon has been largely under explored in tourism studies, the extent of accompanying spouses' subjective experiences seems impossible to presuppose or predefine due to little information on accompanying spouses. To explore the experience of accompanying spouses from their own perspectives, it is crucial to gather a rich, in depth, first person account of their experiences (Willig, 2008). In this sense, the thesis aims to produce knowledge grounded in the voices (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007) of accompanying spouses by using a qualitative and inductive approach. In this sense, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), therefore, is adopted in this thesis to focus on the individual's personal accounts and the meanings of conference travel for accompanying spouses.

As the details will be discussed in Chapter Three, IPA as a version of the phenomenological method is known as the phenomenological and hermeneutical study on the lived experience, namely "an experience of major significance to the person, who will then engage in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking and feeling as they work through what it means" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 3). In contrast to other phenomenological approaches, such as descriptive and interpretive phenomenology which attempts "to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience" (Van Manen, 1997, p. 41), IPA explores in-depth how individuals make sense of the lived experience of a situation and is particularly concerned with a process of intersubjective meaning-making as "researchers do not access experience directly from these accounts" (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103). Indeed, IPA focuses on the individuals' meanings produced by their subjective accounts, and this is combined with the researcher's interpretation of it, rather than producing an objective record of an experience (Dickson, O'Brien, Ward, Allan, & O'Carroll, 2010). In this way, IPA is committed to an idiographic approach which focuses on the uniqueness of each individual rather than the general (Smith et al., 2009).

While there is a dearth of research employing IPA in tourism studies, the method has been used in previous studies which have sought to understand issues on the meanings of the subjective experience in the field of psychology relating to social issues (Connop & Petrak, 2004; Smith, 1999a) and health (Dickson et al., 2010; Reynolds, Vivat, & Prior, 2011); and of management (for example, Cope, 2011; Slater & Koo, 2010). As this thesis seeks to elucidate the 'subjective lived experience' of conference travel for accompanying spouses, an application of IPA, valuing the insider's perspective, therefore can facilitate the search for authentic voices.

Lastly, the research explores the experience of conference attendees who have brought their spouse along to conferences. Andersen and Chen (2002) maintain that the self-significant other relationship provides "the contexts in which much of self-knowledge is derived and thus serve as guideposts for self-definition and self-evaluation in memory" (p. 638). Pocock, Cockburn-Wootten and McIntosh (2013) argue that the voices of significant others can unveil "the 'multiple identities' of

the tourist self through a relational understanding of identity formation" (p. 243).
A significant other is described as "any individual who is or has been deeply
influential in one's life and in whom one is or once was emotionally invested"
(Andersen & Chen, 2002, p. 619). Here, it can be argued that conference attendees
as a significant other have an influence on the accompanying spouses' experience.
As such, it will enable a deeper understanding of the accompanying spouses'
phenomenon through also construing attendees' perspectives on the phenomenon.

The next section provides definitions of an 'accompanying spouse', 'conference
attendee' and 'conference' used throughout this thesis.

1.4 Terms used in the research

The term accompanying spouse

There has been a long history of changes in the term applied to individuals
accompanying conference attendees to conferences (Boudreaux, Tomlinson, &
Amoss, 1984; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997; Shone, 1998). Arguably, the
phenomenon can be better understood by analysing the changes in the term. The
terms have progressed from 'wives' or 'ladies' through to 'spouses', 'partners', or
'guests' to 'accompanying persons' (Boudreaux et al., 1984; Rogers, 2008;
Seekings, 1997). Formerly, most of the attendees were noticeably male, some of
whom occasionally took their wives to conferences (Seekings, 1997). However, as
more female attendees participated in conferences, a need arose to avoid
accusations of gender discrimination (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Seekings,
1997). In other words, one can say that the shift in terms appears to follow
changing trends in the 'spouse' profile of conference attendees according to
changed social and work circumstances more widely.

Astroff and Abbey (2002) and Seekings (1997) maintain that the change reflects
the evolution of social mores and principles in society, and is thus not just an
abstraction in the minds of interested parties only. Presumably, in the conference

industry, a more generic term, instead of particular designations such as a 'spouse' and 'partner' had to be found to satisfy the characteristics of all people who are, and have been, a companion in travel. That gave rise to the creation of the label 'accompanying person' by common agreement in the industry and in the conference society which embraces a range of types of personal relationships with conference attendees in the conference setting, including a spouse/partner, children, and family members, though the terms 'spouse', 'partner' or 'guest' are still used synonymously (Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997).

A review of published literature suggests that the term 'accompanying person' seems to provide an umbrella term for anyone who accompanies conference attendees on conference travel, and to disguise the types of relationships between accompanying persons and conference attendees. However, most likely, there are various forms of travel experiences and behaviours classified based on the particular type of personal relationships with attendees. It may result in much difficulty in understanding these under the single term 'accompanying person'. Hence, there is a need for a particular designation such as 'spouse' or 'family' etc. to identify people who are and have been a companion in conference travel in the thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, the present research deals with the experience of accompanying spouses who are in an on-going romantic relationship, regardless of marital status. On-going romantic relationships are recognised as fundamental in our society associated with various maintenance behaviours (Stafford & Canary, 1991). In relation to spouses, we can assume that there are links between tourism and relationship maintenance behaviours. Therefore, the term 'accompanying spouse' embracing a husband/wife/partner is used throughout the thesis research.

The term conference attendee

Since the focal point of this thesis research is on the experience of conference attendees' spouses, it is necessary to define the characteristics of a conference attendee. Apart from accompanying spouses who may simply participate in conference travel without work-related purposes, the fundamental purpose of attendees' travel is work-related, such travel with the primary purpose linked to

their employment or business interests. Individuals who are willing to join conferences are either a member or non-member of conference association. In practice, the terms 'attendee', 'delegate', 'participant' are synonymously utilised. However, the term 'attendee' seems to be widely used in association conferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). As this thesis research is located within the context of the association conference, the term 'conference attendee' is adopted to refer to a person who is accompanied by a spouse when travelling to a conference.

An understanding of accompanying spouses' experiences may be influenced by the consciousness of their spouse in a travel context; although a couple may travel together, their experiences might be different. In this way, it would be beneficial to the research if it can elucidate the experiences of travelling with a spouse for conference attendees, as they are deemed to play an influential role in accompanying spouses' travel opportunities. Focusing on the relational aspects of the long-term traveller, Pocock et al. (2013) describe the role of significant others' voices, including friends and family members, in affecting the returned travellers' experiences. They attempt to show how these significant others play a role in deepening their understanding of the topic investigated. In this sense, the inclusion of conference attendees' voices in the thesis may, in the same way, helps to facilitate a deeper understanding of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon.

The term conference

Clarifying the meaning of the term 'conference' is important for the thesis in order to avoid confusion towards other terms, particularly 'congress' and 'convention'. In general, various kinds of meetings such as conventions, conferences, and congresses have something in common which is a regular formalised short-term event of an association or an organisation. They also bring people together for one or more days, usually to discuss a range of topics of interest and share information to them all (Davidson, 1993b; Lawson, 1980). Kerr and King (1988) elaborate on what those mean that "extended over a period of one or more days, usually draw people from a large geographical area and often have within them an annual meeting" (p. 129). Many researchers (for example,

Ladkin, 2002; Lawson, 1980; Rogers, 2008; Zelinsky, 1994) have attempted to define the terms 'congress', 'convention' and 'conference' separately.

There is a wide and varied range of definitions of these terms by several writers based on specific meanings that differ from type, membership, size, and frequency. In general, the term congress is described as the traditional form of full-membership meeting and "the regular coming together of large groups of individuals generally to discuss a particular subject" (Rogers, 2008, p. 20). A congress has several concurrent sessions which are mostly concerned with information giving and often last several days (Lawson, 1980). The length of time between congresses is usually established in advance of the implementation stage, and can be either plural-annual (Rogers, 2008). Most international or world congresses are of the former type while national congresses are more frequently held annually.

In addition, the term convention is widely used in North America and the Pacific region to describe major or total-membership meetings (Lawson, 1980). Convention is normally characterised as an event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, exchange ideas, views, and information of common interest to the group (Ladkin, 2002), participate in meeting/discussions, socialise, or attend other organised events. There is also a secondary exhibition component (Rogers, 2008). Convention tends to be perceived as an assembly, often periodical, of members or delegates, of a political, social, professional or religious group, so that includes a gathering of greater importance, size, and formality- perhaps to formulate policy and select candidates for office (Seekings, 1997).

According to Seekings (1997), a conference refers to almost every type of meeting with specific objectives and often lasts for several days not generally limited in time. It may attract hundreds or even thousands of delegates, mainly designed for discussion fact finding, problem solving and consultation planning or obtaining facts and information (Lawson, 1980). Indeed, a conference is used by any organisation to meet and exchange views, convey messages, open a debate or give publicity to some area of opinion on a specific issue (Rogers, 2008).

Conferences are generally held on a smaller scale than congresses, but tend to involve various social programmes, exhibitions and displays.

As stated above, the distinction between terms appears to be problematic, because they are very similar to one another. The terms tend to be used interchangeably and indiscriminately, depending on the country (Falk & Pizam, 1991; Law, 1992; Lawson, 1980; Oppermann, 1996b). For example, generally speaking, the term 'convention' is preferred in North America and the Pacific-Asia Region, 'conference' is preferred in the UK, and 'congress' is preferred in Europe (Ladkin, 2002; Lawson, 1980; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997). However, for this thesis, the term or definition is important as it has implications for data collection. Thus, the term 'conference' is employed as appropriate for the participants involved in this thesis to apply to all meetings held whether they could be named a congress, a conference, or a convention. But specifically, it is the term used to define a formal gathering of persons focused on business or professional purposes and/or socialising.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis, aiming at providing insights into the accompanying spouses' experience of conference travel from their own perspective, consists of six chapters. As stated above, this introductory chapter presents the background to the present research, its purpose and questions, the rationale for undertaking the thesis, and the terms used throughout the thesis research namely 'accompanying spouse', 'conference attendee' and 'conference'. Thereafter, relevant details pertaining to the research structure is provided highlighting the purpose of each chapter.

Chapter 2, 'Literature Review', deals with a review of the literature relevant for understanding accompanying spouses' experiences of conference travel. After a discussion on the broader issues of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in business travel, in particular conference travel, the chapter illuminates the major

knowledge gaps in the previous literature to support the thesis aim. It incorporates a review of multidisciplinary literature to help explain the experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses, including leisure studies, family-related tourism and romantic relationship studies, seeking to broaden and deepen the understanding of the phenomenon by providing first insights and new perspectives. The chapter then offers a review of the tourist experience literature, which provides the conceptual basis for an understanding of the meaning of the travel experience as considered in the context of the accompanying spouse.

Chapter 3, 'Research Methodology', focuses on the philosophical approach (i.e. interpretivism) and the methodological approach (i.e., interpretative phenomenological analysis) underpinning the thesis research. The starting point for the chapter is to present knowledge claims of the thesis research by revisiting gaps in the research. It then justifies the philosophical basis for the thesis including its key assumptions, characteristics and applications, employed in this thesis and develops the theoretical framework that informs the research. This section is followed by an explanation of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach in detail as to how it guides the research question. The second part of the chapter describes the research design, i.e. a qualitative and inductive approach based on interpretive phenomenological analysis, and research methods for collecting data (a semi-structured in-depth interview) and analysis processes. Sampling strategy is also discussed as it relates to the interpretive study.

Chapter 4, 'Research Findings', presents the three key experiential/experience themes which emerged from the data: the experience of providing individual autonomy, the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship and the experience of social inclusion and exclusion. The chapter also presents an introduction to the accompanying spouses participating in the research and contextualisation of their conference travel. This will help the reader develop a more detailed understanding of the unique experiences of each participant and give authenticity to their voice.

Chapter 5, 'Discussion of Key Experiential Themes', develops a wider discussion of the significance and implications of the research findings supported by extant literature. There are three core issues to discuss, that is, relational intimacy, alternative way to enjoy a holiday and the influence of interpersonal relationship on identity.

Chapter 6, 'Conclusion', provides a summary of the key findings and main issues. It also highlights the suggested contributions of the research findings to wider scholarly knowledge as well as theoretical and further implications. The chapter concludes by offering potential recommendations for future study and presenting final reflexive remarks.

Chapter Two   Literature Review

This chapter provides the key theoretical background for this thesis research that seeks to investigate the accompanying spouses' phenomenon within the conference context. As stated in Chapter One, accompanying spouses in this research are those who accompany attendees on conference travel. The accompanying spouses' phenomenon appears to be unique to business tourism, yet it has been relatively under-explored in tourism studies. Attention to the fact that accompanying spouses are treated as a travelling companion on conference travel, it needs to assume that their subjective experiences will be multiple and complex, revolving around two contexts: being alone and being with a spouse (i.e. an attendee). Particular to the context of this research, the thesis takes a multidisciplinary approach that recognises and incorporates different perspectives and empirical findings derived in other disciplines, including leisure studies, family studies and other areas regarding the personal relationship issues. In embracing multidisciplinary knowledge, a better understanding of accompanying spouses' experiences at conferences may be explicated.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the wide body of knowledge in business travel and, in particular, conference travel. This review aims to address the issue of how the accompanying spouses' phenomenon occurs through the changing patterns and notion of business travel. Despite a dominance of marketing and the economic importance of such travel and a shift in patterns of mobility and working practices, it draws attention to the influence of the blurred dichotomy between work and leisure/tourism on the patterns of business travel that may lead to the presence of accompanying spouses. At the same time, the chapter also deals with a multidisciplinary literature on a wide range of issues that may be relevant to the understanding of accompanying spouses' experiences, covering the value and role of holiday experience for families and couple relationships. It seeks to link the literature on business tourism, specifically conference tourism, and the tourist experience to various knowledge of a broader disciplinary arena, for instance, the importance of social connectedness in travel, the role of intimacy in relationship stability and maintenance. In considering the accompanying spouses'

phenomenon from such literature, the knowledge gaps in the present research become vividly evident such that the phenomenon remains fairly elusive and unidentifiable in the tourism literature. It then follows a review of the wider literature on the tourist experience, focusing on the shift from the approach of quantitative evaluations based on recent academic trends, towards qualitative research and other creative methods designed to reveal authentic subjective voice. Finally, an appropriate phenomenological framework for this thesis is proposed to acknowledge an understanding of accompanying spouses' experiences.

2.1 An overview of business travel

Business travel, largely defined as a "form of work for business persons" (Kellerman, 2010, p. 165) or "travelling on behalf of one's employer for work purposes" (Holley et al., 2008, p. 28) is becoming an integral part of global trade that comes as a consequence of globalisation. In the field of business studies, the significant role of business travel in multinational business operations has been addressed in terms of the development of global leadership competencies to achieve expatriate assignments (for example, Oddou, Mendenhall, & Ritchie, 2000) and the effective management of expatriate employees (see, Boyacigiller, 1990; Harzing, 2001).

Specifically, a number of studies (see, Espino, Sundstrom, Frick, Jacobs, & Peters, 2002; Gustafson, 2006; Roehling & Bultman, 2002; Westman et al., 2009) draw attention to the influence of work-related travel on family and the marital relationship claiming that business travel is more likely to be a source of conflict between work and family interfering with family life and family commitments. Increasing attention by researchers has also been paid to the issues of spouses who accompany expatriates addressing a clear correlation between the presence of accompanying spouses and the success of expatriate assignments (Black & Stephens, 1989; Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, & Bross, 1998; Mäkelä, Känsälä, & Suutari, 2011; Mohr & Klein, 2004; Punnett, 1997).

The literature relating to accompanying spouses on expatriate assignments will be further discussed in the section 2.3 with respect to the issues of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conferences.

In the field of tourism studies, there is a prevalent recognition that business travel is a non-leisure (holiday) form of tourism which shares the same infrastructure of a destination with leisure travel. Business travel is claimed to have been growing faster than any other type of travel in the tourism industry since the 1980s, as more often it takes place in off-peak seasons (Wootton & Stevens, 1995). Of particular interest to leisure tourism scholars, business travel is believed to stimulate demand in the short-break leisure market that business travellers may involve themselves in after work (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001; Wootton & Stevens, 1995). It normally entails higher tourist spending and is more concerned with status than leisure travel (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012). Indeed, business travellers are considered as an important contributor to generating income for the travel and tourism industry (Wootton & Stevens, 1995).

Further, Haven-Tang, Jones, and Webb (2007) believe that business travellers can promote tourist destinations through improved destination image and word-of-mouth recommendations. They identify a number of critical factors for the development of business tourism destinations: leadership, networking, branding, skills, ambassadors, infrastructure, and bidding. Indeed, many previous studies in tourism have attempted to determine the economic impacts of business travel (for example, Davidson, 1993a; Morgan & Condliffe, 2006; Tani, 2006), modelling business travel demand (Kulendran & Wilson, 2000; Kulendran & Witt, 2003), and its management (Lawson, 1982; Owen, 1992).

Business travel is primarily recognised as travel for any work-related purpose which expands a company's commercial life or a person's professional activities, education and rewards (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Kulendran & Wilson, 2000). There are two broad categories in the field of business travel, namely individual business travel and organised group arrangements which include travel to meetings and exhibition and corporate hospitality (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Lawson, 1982). In individual business travel, a person travels for work purposes,

such as to make presentations, be involved in consultations, or undertake market-based investigations as required by his/her employer or clients (Davidson & Cope, 2003). In this light, individual business travel is characterised as non-discretionary, a regular and mandatory part of employment, and often involves people travelling alone.

In contrast, organised group travel may be composed of discretionary trips less focused on employment and with people travelling individually or in a group (Bradley et al., 2002). In other words, many people participate in various gatherings, events, exhibitions, trade shows and/or corporate hospitality for both business and personal purposes in any one journey (Coltman, 1989; Holloway & Humphreys, 2012). Given that many people are gathered in a destination for a few days to fulfil commercial or professional purposes, this type of journey defines the largest percentage of the business travel market (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Rogers, 2008).

Arguably, the term MICE as the acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences or Conventions, and Exhibitions is widely used in representations of organised group business travel (McCabe et al., 2000). The MICE industry has rapidly grown in the world's travel and tourism industry more than any other travel sector, and has received special attention by both tourism researchers (for instance, Dwyer & Mistilis, 1997; Ladkin, 2002; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999; Oppermann, 1997b; Schlentrich, 2008) and professional associations/bodies, such as 'Successful Meetings', 'Meetings & Conventions', and 'Conference and Incentive travel'. These studies largely focus on the capacity of the MICE sector for creating social and economic benefits that are more attractive than other tourism sectors to destinations. Specifically, Dwyer and Forsyth (1997) identify a number of benefits generated by the industry in terms of valuable contributions to employment, income and status for a host destination: increased foreign exchange earnings, generation of investment in tourism/recreation infrastructure stimulation of business activity within and between nations, and valuable international exposure.

The blurring of work and leisure in business travel

In recent years, business travel has increasingly become viewed as presenting an opportunity for leisure when business travellers include touristic elements in such travel, as they may involve themselves in time for leisure activities during networking, after work and physical travel time (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Holley et al., 2008; Kellerman, 2010). This may lie in the individualistic nature of business travel and the travellers who have commitment to leisure while work is still held to be central (Boon, 2006). Kellerman (2010) advocates the view of business and leisure as interrelated activities by comparing business and leisure tourists based on activities and offered services and facilities available at an international destination:

> This blurring of boundaries between business and pleasure tourisms is similar to the emerging blurring of distinctions between daily home and work activities, so that mobility at large, domestically and internationally, routine and non-routine alike, evolves as a rather continuous and permanent state of life involving in a rather integrated way both business and leisure. Obviously this integration implies also contradiction and conflict between business and pleasure, but these aspects deserve separate treatments (p. 173).

Holloway and Humphreys (2012) also indicate two distinctive motivations for business travel: employer motivation for which travellers need to complete a task within a given time frame, and personal motivation leading to combining leisure activities with business trips and/or travelling with a non-business companion, i.e. a spouse or partner. With regard to time, Holley et al. (2008) and Kellerman (2010) also identify the existence of leisure time that business travellers get to spend for themselves other than that owned by the employer.

In particular, MICE travel in business tourism seems a hybrid of work and pleasure as a number of MICE travellers appear to seek touristic opportunities while focusing on business purposes (Mill & Morrison, 1985; Robinson, 1976; Seekings, 1997). Lawson (1982) notes that MICE travellers are mainly intent on work-oriented activities, but extended tours or leisure interests may also be part of a wider itinerary for them. One might argue that the short duration of MICE travels encourages attendees to gain a dual experience of work and leisure. From

the perspectives, it can be understood that the dualistic division between work and leisure on business travel is challenged by business travellers who attempt to link their career experience to the wider individual's life experience (Boon, 2006).

In general, leisure/tourism is widely known as a residual by-product of work and other obligations, so that it is perceived as opposite to productive work (Beatty & Torbert, 2003; Mansvelt, 2009; Mill, 2008). Work is often determined by a main goal or other people's plans, whereas leisure/tourism is much more unrestricted and encompasses various activities such as sightseeing, relaxing, shopping, and visiting friends and family (Brown & Chalmers, 2003). Indeed, leisure is commonly understood as the time spent on particular activities that individuals can freely choose to join in (Primeau, 1996). However, a number of authors (for instance, Beatty & Torbert, 2003; Cheek, 1971; Morgan & Pritchard, 1999; Primeau, 1996) argue that such concept of leisure is socially and culturally imposed. As Morgan and Pritchard (1999) state:

> The 'meaning' of leisure is historically and culturally specific, conveying different meanings to different peoples at different times. It can only be understood in the context of its relation to a specific historical and cultural situation. This means that any analyses of leisure that are framed by concepts such as choice, flexibility, spontaneity, and self-determination. (p. 14)

Leisure, thus, can be conceptualised based on the context of individuals' lives or the social realm (Morgan & Pritchard, 1999).

Further, these researchers criticise the notion that leisure and work are two opposing areas of human activity. Cheek (1971) challenges the notion of duality by recognising leisure as a social entity, and suggests the concept of 'not-work' instead of leisure, referring to "behaviour generally participated in by social groups" (p. 251). Primeau (1996) and Beatty and Torbert (2003) also maintain that within daily life, leisure and work are inseparable from each other and can be experienced at the same time. More specifically, Primeau (1996) suggests that a balance of work and leisure within daily life can be achieved through understanding the affective experience of both "work and leisure occupations may not always be experienced as separate and dichotomous phenomena within daily

life" (p. 575). As a result, it can potentially identify a tourism-work nexus on business travel under the condition of the positive interdependencies between leisure and work not as separate.

Within the tourism literature, as work and leisure are considered to be integrated, a growing number of studies have addressed a typology of travellers who combine work with leisure dimension (see, Bianchi, 2000; Pizam, Uriely, & Reichel, 2000; Uriely, 2001; Uriely & Reichel, 2000; Williams & Hall, 2000). Indeed, many researchers have incorporated the blurring notion between work and leisure into an identification of combined activity of work-related with tourist-oriented activities (for example, Pape, 1964; Pizam et al., 2000; Uriely, 2001). Pape (1964) first explains the interaction between work and tourism by using the term 'touristry'; that is, travellers who combine occupational situations with touristic components. The underlying meaning of 'touristry' is twofold: one includes professional employees, for example nurses and IT specialists, who tend to work while travelling to a different place; and the other entails individuals participating in particular work principally for touristic resources, rather than as the pursuit of money or a work-related career (Pape, 1964; Pizam et al., 2000). Cohen (1974) also observes the phenomenon of combining business or work purposes with touristic components and defined several work-oriented travellers, such as conventioneers, business travellers, tourist employees, and official sightseers, as 'partial' tourists.

Further, Uriely and Reichel (2000) introduce the term 'working tourist' regarding all types of travellers who engage in situations that combine work with tourist-oriented activities, for example air attendants, tourist guides, long-term budget working tourists, and working holidays. The scope and the variety of this phenomenon has been revealed by Uriely (2001) grouping a typology of this kind of traveller; travelling professional workers, migrant tourism workers, non-institutionalised working tourists, working-holiday tourists. Indeed, attendees at a conference can be recognised as a 'travelling worker', what Uriely (2001) describes as, "professionals who travel while working are comprised of business people and employees of various occupations, such as members of academic and diplomatic staff, air attendants, tourist guides, mercenaries and professional

athletes" (p. 2). In this sense of definition, conference attendees can been seen as a travelling worker, concerning that they seek to incorporate participation in touristic activities during the conference as part of the overall travel experience (Abbey & Link, 1994; Holley et al., 2008; Rodgers, 1988; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994). More recently, scholarly attention has been paid to the characteristics of individuals who set them on the path to a leisure-oriented job, such as the mobile tourism and hospitality employees, referring to as 'migrant tourist-workers' (for example, Bianchi, 2000; Boon, 2006; Duncan, Scott, & Baum, 2013; Williams & Hall, 2000). Despite the growing attention to the leisure orientation within working lives, the limitation is that an insight into the touristic behaviour and experience of employees still remains lacking.

In addition to an illumination on the concept and characteristics of individuals who are engaged in a leisure-oriented activity on business travel, a number of researchers (for example, Davidson & Cope, 2003; Rogers, 2008; Withiam, 1997), and press reports concerned with the travel industry (see, Anonymous, 2008; Parnes, 2004), have suggested two main ways of linking work and leisure: first, business travellers seek leisure time to enhance productivity and social network, or enjoy themselves; and second they see the business trip as a potential source of a holiday opportunity with an accompanying spouse, family members, or friend.

This trend has manifested itself in market research. In the USA, for example, the findings of the survey of more than 1,100 business travellers conducted by Expedia corporate travel (Anonymous, 2008) disclosed that 55 percent of respondents took advantage of time after work obligations like using the facilities of hotels (i.e., on-site gyms) or relaxing during travel. Also, 59 percent of respondents took their spouse on business trips to spend free time together. Such patterns of seeking out opportunities for leisure activities on business travel is confirmed by the empirical findings of some studies in the field of mobility (for example, Lassen, 2006, 2009). Indeed, it appears that many business travellers are opting for integration between work and leisure. The change in the motives and styles of business travel influenced by the blurring of work and leisure, in turn, can serve as a facilitator of a stream of accompanying spouses. In particular, as

already discussed in Chapter One, accompanying spouses are deemed to constitute an emergent segment of the conference industry, though they are not an attendee. However, they have not yet been the focus of tourism studies.

The presence of accompanying spouses in business travel, in particular MICE travel, has become evident. More notably than in other subdivisions within the MICE sector, the presence of spouses or family members of attendees remains more common in the incentive travel and conference sector. However, conferences invariably appear to attract holidaying individuals who accompany attendees, although accompanying spouses are usually totally self-funded, unlike in incentive travel (Alonzo, 1993). The reported steady growth of accompanying spouses to conferences, as opposed to a family member's participation in incentive travel, has made accompanying spouses a potential identifiable market (Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 1993; Brooks, 2003; Crocker, 1999; Jensen, 1996; Sherman, 2007) and has thus fostered scholarly awareness (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Davidson, 2003; Seekings, 1997). Such studies will be discussed in section 2.2 below in relation to the issues of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conference travel.

For the present thesis research, therefore, the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in the conference sector, within the wider context of the MICE sector, is deemed appropriate for investigation. In this context, it necessitates identifying how the phenomenon is seen within the structure of conference travel, and addressing knowledge about the phenomenon that has been acquired in the field of tourism. In the following section, the main topics with respect to what is known and has been published about the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conference travel to date are examined. It also draws on a review of the wider range of literature to facilitate an insight into the phenomenon, that is leisure travel in the context of family holidays and the couple relationships literature. Such discussion can lead to the clarification of the knowledge gaps in the body of knowledge regarding accompanied travel. Prior to this, it briefly explores studies on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in other types of travel within the categorisation of business travel, namely, expatriate placements and incentive travel.

2.2 Towards the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conference travel

As discussed above, there is acknowledgement that accompanying spouses appear to be involved in the rise of spouses' participation, namely the change of a social force in business travel which blurs the distinction between work and leisure, and a desire to keep family commitments while on business travel. Indeed, shifting towards the comparative balance of work and leisure appears to contribute to the healthy growth of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon within the business travel context, specifically in the context of the international career (i.e., an expatriate staff), incentive travel and conference travel. As the thesis research is exploratory in nature, before continuing further discussion on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conference travel, this section begins with reviewing the accompanying spouses' phenomenon within the wider context of business travel.

Accompanying spouses on business travel

The growth in international business has led to research focusing on an improvement of the expatriates' performance for the success of international assignments. Expatriates are employees whose work involves foreign subsidiary management, management of globally-dispersed work processes and new market development (Brown, 2008; Caligiuri et al., 1998). Issues associated with expatriate success require an understanding of the role of accompanying spouses. Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley and Luk (2001), for example, by providing insight into the influence of the expatriate family or spouse that is closely related to expatriates' personal and psychological adjustment and their assignment success. Indeed, a number of studies on accompanying expatriate spouses within business studies (Lauring & Selmer, 2010; Punnett, 1997), human resource management (Brown, 2008; Mohr & Klein, 2004) and management (Black & Stephens, 1989; Mäkelä et al., 2011) primarily cite issues on the adjustment of expatriate spouses living in the host country as the important factor in successful expatriation. As such, the effect of spousal adjustment involving life-changes is identified as one of the key determinants for the success of overseas assignments. Punnett (1997)

also advocates the inclusion of the spouse in the expatriation process. Mohr and Klein (2004) explore American spouses living in Germany and identify a three dimensional concept of spousal adjustment, that is, general living adjustment, interaction adjustment and role adjustment. They propose role adjustment, including change of role, new responsibilities and new tasks, as crucial aspects to resettlement, especially to female spouses who previously had their own career; their personal role is substantially transformed during an overseas assignment.

Recently, a closer look at spouses in terms of how their feelings influence the ease of spousal adjustment and their roles in supporting a partner's career has been noted. Brown (2008) confirms the three dominant stressors of reduced self, local pressure and isolation that spouses get easily stressed out during the overseas assignment. The study of Lauring and Selmer (2010) pays attention to the positive influence of expatiate spouses' supportive role on their partner's career. They find that spouses contribute to their spouses' (i.e., an expatriate) immediate career and repatriation opportunities by creating alliances and establishing social networks with influential others. Mäkelä et al. (2011) show that the spouses' supportive role on both an emotional and a practical level is significantly considered on international assignments more so than the domestic context. However, it should be highlighted here that the presence of spouses accompanying expatriates working overseas has been considerably investigated to achieve the successful outcome of expatriates' international assignments. The experiences for spouses accompanying expatriates themselves still remain outside of the focus of much previous research, including tourism scholarship.

Another area that acknowledgement of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is emerging from is MICE travel, particularly incentive travel and conferences. Most previous literature on the presence of accompanying spouses in these sectors is located in tourism studies and trade publications. First of all, incentive travel is purposely designed to provide a luxury travel experience to employees who successfully meet challenging objectives, improve their productivity, sales volume or attain other management goals (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Ricci & Holland, 1992; Witt, Gammon, & White, 1992). Employees on incentive travel can achieve exotic and memorable experiences that they could not afford from their own

efforts (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Ricci & Holland, 1992). Unlike leisure travel, the motive underlying incentive travel strongly reflects a reward for attendees, as travel is used by companies as an effective management tool to encourage employees (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1997). Incentive travel, in turn, encapsulates limited access based on high achievement, external planning and control, enjoyment of travel at the company's expense and a unique experience (Mill & Morrison, 1985; Ricci & Holland, 1992).

The literature which has mentioned the accompanying spouses highlights that family members, namely spouses and children, of an employee are often involved in incentive travel through an offer of free travel by a company (Shinew & Backman, 1995). According to Ricci and Holland (1992) and Shinew and Backman (1995), their participation seems to be considered compensation for their tolerance, sacrifice and support during the long hours worked by the employee. Indeed, the family members appear to be the underlying motivation for incentive travel. As such, to attract family incentive users, a number of industry reports relating to accompanying spouses and children in incentive travel (see, for example, LaForge, 1990; Mthombeni, 2011) have chiefly paid attention to the creation and management of programmes and activities for accompanying spouses and children. However, there is still a dearth of conceptual and empirical research related to the accompanying spouses and children that facilitates practitioners improving strategies for the development of services and products. There is thus an urgent need for a comprehensive research agenda to focus on the wider understanding of accompanying spouses in the incentive travel sector.

Accompanying spouses on conference travel

On the other hand, the presence of the group known as 'accompanying spouses' has been widely accepted as a common feature of conferences (Abbey & Link, 1994; Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Rodgers, 1988; Wiswell, 1986). The generic term 'accompanying spouse' at conferences, as already determined in Chapter One, refers to an individual, such as a wife, husband or partner, who travels and is in an on-going romantic relationship with the conference attendee. Accompanying spouses, especially in today's association conferences, are described as those who:

> Do not normally attend the business sessions of the conference but they will be fully involved in the social events which form part of the conference programme. Partner programmes are designed to entertain partners while the conference is in progress. (Rogers, 2008, p. 44)

From this description, it can be assumed that in principle, accompanying spouses stay outside of the primary conference activities and seek their own experiences (Smith & Godbey, 1991). Nevertheless, to some extent, accompanying spouses can be affiliated with conferences by partaking in secondary conference activities or tourism related activities like dinners, coffee breaks, hotel stays and social activities (Therkelsen, 2003). This is because a conference may frequently incorporate a short break and social events in its programme, and both attendees and their accompanying spouse may become involved in such events (Davidson, 2003; Therkelsen, 2003). If accompanying spouses join in social and/or touristic activities together, then they will become part of the conference context.

In Chapter One, it has been addressed that the holiday dimension which is identifiable within the context of a conference facilitates the increased presence of accompanying spouses. There is evidence of a certain amount of leisure time that attendees spend while on a conference (for example, Abbey & Link, 1994; Holley et al., 2008; Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994; Wiswell, 1986). These researchers indicate that attendees tend to combine work time with the opportunity for an easy and inexpensive holiday for either themselves alone or with a spouse or family due to shortages of discretionary time and financial savings. This shows a trend of integrating work with leisure rather than these fields remaining distinct from each other (Lassen, 2006).

In addition, some writers (for example, Alonzo, 1993; Rodgers, 1988) point out that the presence of accompanying spouses can contribute to improving the quality of a conference experience for attendees, as they stay a bit longer with their spouse and families. Indeed, while a conference is closely concerned with professional gatherings for networking, negotiation or discussion (Høyer & Naess, 2001), the potential for being 'accompanied' by someone significant has come to assume another important aspect of conference travel. This suggests that conference tourism can be argued to contribute to providing personal and social

benefits with respect to fulfilling holiday purposes and socialising with co-travelling significant others, along with its economic values (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Larsen, 2008).

However, given that conference tourism has been largely recognised as an 'industry', the presence of accompanying spouses is merely noticed as a potential area of importance in a few academic books or journal articles mostly relating to the management of programmes for accompanying spouses (see, Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997), or a dimension of the economic impact of the conference industry and destination (see, Davidson, 2003; Oppermann, 1996b; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994). Instead, anecdotal information available from wide coverage based on industry surveys and practitioners' interviews in industry trade publications suggests the market potential of accompanying spouses in the conference travel (Alonzo, 1993; Carey, 2008; Ligos, 2000; Rodgers, 1988; Sherman, 2007; Wiswell, 1986). Such anecdotal information normally focuses on issues, for example, the influence of the destination image on the level of accompanying spouses' attendance, the impact of accompanying spouses on the destination and the association, and the ways of increasing accompanying spouses' attendance. In turn, accompanying spouses are coming into the spotlight in the conference and tourism industry notably with regard to their economic contribution.

While the attention to the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is economically driven, little is known of the characteristics of accompanying spouses on conference travel, including the travel experience, their actual behaviours, the travel patterns and the meanings of travel for them. Instead, information on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conferences mostly relies on anecdotal evidence from the small amount of literature together with surveys and reviews from trade publications. This information raises a key implication that conference travel for accompanying spouses is shaped and captured by the intertwining of a need for family and/or couple time with holiday motivations. Thus, conference travel for accompanying spouses is understood as a family affair or couple affair. In the next section, a range of issues and empirical findings are addressed associated with the concepts of 'family' and 'couple' that may be a useful catalyst

to understand the accompanying spouses' experience of conference travel. This discussion is based on a multidisciplinary approach bringing together various disciplines of leisure studies, family studies and other studies concerning the personal relationships issues, while it also reviews the relevant literature on the concepts within tourism studies. To begin with, an outline of one accompanied aspect of conference travel, the 'family affair' - elucidating the family aspect in the travel, is discussed.

A family affair

A review of such information highlights that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is viewed as a 'family affair' (Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 1993; Carey, 2008; Ligos, 2000; Rodgers, 1988; Sherman, 2007). Alonzo (1993), for example, cites an interview of a conference practitioner, saying that "people need to save dollars, and they're looking for added value when they make the decision to attend a convention or conference. A lot of people have to work harder and longer hours, and it's getting tougher to take vacations. That's where a convention can offer a great opportunity" (p. 67). Indeed, conferences may serve as an opportunity for attendees to juggle work with their family commitments by means of an easy and inexpensive family vacation as they tend to squeeze into holiday time before or after conferences and adjust the schedule of their sessions on conferences (Alonzo, 1993; Rodgers, 1988; Wiswell, 1986). These writers treat conference travel as a family holiday option and mainly focus on the speculative positive outcome for associations and attendees from the accompanying spouses' involvement as a family unit.

There is also a growing recognition that the touristic value of a conference's host destination can be a facilitator for building a family holiday around the conference (Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 2009). It has frequently been revealed that the attendance level of accompanying spouses becomes higher if a conference is held in such resort and/or family-oriented site as the US city Orlando with its Walt Disney World, EPCOT Centre, and Sea World (Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 1993; Rodgers, 1988). Sheffield, Guthrie, and Penland (1993) also found that attention to the quality and variety of recreation programmes for spouses noticeably enhances the

level of their participation. In turn, the association and the host destination have found the family aspect profitable.

More specifically, the influence of accompanying spouses seems to be apparent on both the association's success and attendees' career development. Associations have acknowledged that accompanying spouses have an influence on conference attendees' decision-making process when those attendees face a wide range of conferences to choose from (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Sherman, 2007). In other words, attendees are more likely to choose one conference over another based on their spouses' preference (Alonzo, 1993; Crocker, 1999). However, this is rarely discussed in the literature on general travel decision making.

In case of the impact on attendees' career development, accompanying spouses appear to help their spouse (i.e. an attendee) to stay productive during the conference. For example, Ligos (2000) writes that conference attendees who take family members with them are more productive during the work session than those left their families at home. Carey (2008) agrees that accompanying spouses can provide moral support for attendees because the attendees tend to give more focus to a conference if their spouses are present. Hence, some associations that emphasise family values normally encourage their attending members to take their families along (LaForge, 1990; Rodgers, 1988). This thesis argues that rigorous methods are required to support such information that is mostly opinion based. It also raises an important issue in relation to the impact of conference travel experience on the family, where much research remains anecdotal that comes from the media and industry surveys and practitioners' interviews.

In the wider tourism literature, a family holiday is defined as a "purposive time spent together as a family group (which may include extended family) doing activities different from normal routines that are fun but that may involve compromise and conflict at times" (Schänzel et al., 2012, p. 3). Many previous empirical studies have paid attention to the roles of husbands and wives (see, Jang, Lee, Lee, & Hong, 2007; Kang, Hsu, & Wolfe, 2003; Kozak, 2010; Myers & Moncrief, 1978; Smith, 1979) and children (Blichfeldt, Pedersen, Johansen, &

Hansen, 2011; Jang et al., 2007; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001) in making family holiday decisions. These studies have usually emphasised the decision-making patterns, the role of family members in the decision-making process and spouses' perceptions of relative influence and dominance in the process. Kang et al. (2003) segments family vacationers based on their decision-making patterns and identified each segment with distinctive travel behaviours and demographic characteristics. Kozak (2010) provides that a theoretical basis for exploring joint husband-wife decision making and the role of different decision strategies, that is, compromise, persuasion, and coercion for multiple product categories.

Recently, knowledge of the family holiday has revealed that family holiday experiences strengthen family relationships, highlighting family holidays as a "time to reconnect as a family" (Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001, p. 19). A growing number of studies on family holidays have discussed the value of the family travel experience (Brown, 2005; Chesworth, 2003; Gram, 2005; Lehto, Choi, Lin, & MacDermid, 2009). Gram (2005), for instance, seeks to identify the nature of 'good moments' that constitute good family holiday experience from the parents and children's point of view. His findings show that an essential aspect of 'good moments' is an ambience of family togetherness, though parents and children also seek their own experiences. Brown (2005) also emphasises that the shared experiences of a joint activity, i.e. volunteering, lead family members toward intimate interaction and tighter bonding, and ultimately enhance family relationships. Lehto et al. (2009) conclude that family holidays positively contribute to family bonding and solidarity through memorable experiences, increased opportunities for interaction among family members and communication due to a changed environment. As such, it is increasingly recognised that a family holiday leads to the shared experience among family members and is valuable for developing the quality of family relationships.

Further, there is an indication that people often have an opportunity to travel with family, relatives, friends and significant others under a change in social circumstances, and to attend obligatory social events such as weddings, rituals, family reunions, and funerals (Jang et al., 2007). The family travel market seems to be diversified based on the changes in the notion of the family (Brey & Lehto,

2008; Chesworth, 2003; Gardyn, 2001; Nayyar, 2001) and a need for the social network (Larsen, 2008; Larsen et al., 2007; White & White, 2007). In recent years, family holiday travel occurs in many different forms such as among extended family members as grandparent/grandchild, at a multigenerational level, and among aunts and/or uncles/ nieces and/or nephews (Gardyn, 2001; Nayyar, 2001). Brey and Lehto (2008) highlight that this change in the type of family travel brings about changes for the supply-side of family-oriented destination resorts. Even though there are a range of types of family travel, the purpose of travel is still to develop the relationship between travel parties.

Additionally, a recent study by Kluin and Lehto (2012) observes an emerging trend in family reunion travel. This is a gathering of multiple family units composed of at least three generations on a recurring basis for the purpose of getting together. The study identifies four main motivations for family reunion travel: family history and togetherness, immediate family cohesion, family communication, and family adaptability; it implies that travel may act as a way of experiencing love and bonding through the development of family connection (Kluin & Lehto, 2012).

Another trend in travel with significant others is that travel takes place due to the demand of sociability, social obligations, or social connections (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999). Larsen et al.(2007) point out the role of tourism in (re)producing social relations or networks and in (re)connecting with relations to fulfil business, migration, family life and friendship obligations or desires:

> Co-present interaction is fundamental to social interaction within institutions, families, and friendships, for producing trust, sustaining intimacy, and pleasurable gatherings. So far, virtual communications are often about coordinating physical travel and enabling talk in-between visits and meetings rather than substituting for corporeal travel. (p. 247)

Regardless of the type of travel, it seems that the key role of travel with significant others is the desire to strengthen relationships and achieve intimacy through shared experiences, although this requires further empirical confirmation. As MacCannell (1973) stated:

In our society, intimacy and closeness are accorded much importance: they are seen as the core of social solidarity, and they are also thought by some to be morally superior to rationality and distance in social relationships. (pp. 591-592)

Despite the changing and diversifying family holiday market, an analysis of the literature on the experiences of family holidays reveals family holidays as a source of fostering family relationships (for example, Brown, 2005; Gram, 2005; Kluin & Lehto, 2012; Smith & Hughes, 1999). However, the investigations on this subject have focused on the holiday experience as a family unit and its impact on family functioning. In tourism studies, there is still a dearth of understanding about the holiday experience of couples either married or engaged. In this sense, the benefits gained from the conference travel experience by accompanying spouses within the family holiday context remains insufficiently explored.

The next section discusses another accompanied aspect of conference travel, the 'couple affair', through addressing some of the links between conference travel and the couple relationship. It also examines useful empirical findings and theoretical knowledge relating to the relational aspect which is located within leisure studies, family studies, socio psychology and psychology. In keeping with a multidisciplinary approach to the topic, here the term 'romantic relationship' is synonymously used with the terms 'close relationship' and 'marital relationship'.

A couple affair

Focusing on the couple's perspective of conference travel, some conference practitioners, such as Wiswell (1986), Alonzo (1993), and Ligos (2000) highlight that the presence of accompanying spouses tends to reflect a desire for 'couple time' which presents a clear trend towards mixing business with family commitments. Rodgers (1988) advocates this aspect with an apt quotation from a conference practitioner's interview; he describes it as a "very special couples-type of affair" (p. 68). It can allude to effort to maintain a satisfying romantic relationship due to little time to spend with a spouse and limited budgets for the travelling couple. However, there remains a paucity of research into the nature of

couples' holiday experiences and the meaning ascribed to their experiences for those who are in an on-going romantic relationship.

In the field of tourism studies, it has been suggested that the tourist experience can serve as a way of (re)establishing intimate interpersonal relationships (see, Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Ryan, 2002). Trauer and Ryan (2005) highlight that the quality of the holiday experience is significantly influenced by travelling companions during the travel. An Indian travel operator currently, for example, provides a holiday product which introduces the concept of 'divorce tourism' to couples in a troubled marriage (Khanna, 2009). The CEO of the company ensures that such couples capitalize on the shared experiences from travel to strengthen their relationship:

> Things can end on a sweet note with a better understanding of each other's nature and better communication, which helps in reducing negativity and hard feelings between the two partners. In cases where the outcome is not positive, sweet memories of the vacation can always be cherished. (Khanna, 2009, para. 6)

It can be said that travel experiences as a couple are worthy of attention in terms of their impact on the relationship rather than just the family unit. Indeed, there is an emerging understanding that travel may be a potential source of increased individual happiness or satisfaction (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). A positive travel experience, it can be assumed, strengthens individuals and relationships. However, there are few existing empirical and conceptual studies on the link between relationships and the nature of travel to support such an issue in the tourism literature. In this sense, the use of theories developed in the literature on romantic relationships might be helpful to achieve the research aim of exploring accompanying spouses' experiences.

Indeed, a great deal of research has been devoted to the issues of romantic relationships across various fields, including psychology, social psychology, leisure studies, and family studies. The main concerns of these studies have been on how to eliminate problems relating to divorce, distress, violence, conflict, and betrayals (Meunier & Baker, 2012). However, recent research demonstrates a

41

change in focus towards an increasing positive attitude that develops the quality of a relationship and supports its long-term sustainable growth, which in turn serves as an important source of life satisfaction and wellbeing (Roffey, 2012).

The basis of romantic relationships primarily consists of the desire to stay together forever, or at least for a long time, a depth of intimacy, and emotional interdependence (Kirchler, Rodler, Hölzl, & Meier, 2001). Such components of relationships indicate relational stability (Canary & Stafford, 1994). Here, the concept of 'intimacy' entails five main components: commitment, affective intimacy, cognitive intimacy, physical intimacy, and mutuality; what Moss and Schwebel (1993) describe as:

> Intimacy in enduring romantic relationships is determined by the level of commitment and positive affective, cognitive, and physical closeness one experiences with a partner in a reciprocal (although not necessarily symmetrical) relationship. (p. 33)

The meaning of 'emotional interdependence' encapsulates that persons in a romantic relationship are easily affected by the behaviour of each other (Kirchler et al., 2001). For example, Baumeister and Bratslavsky (1999) take the view that mutual understanding is ascribed to emotional interdependence:

> When someone knows you extremely well, your vulnerability to that person is high, because that person's evaluation is based on extensive, privileged knowledge. Criticism, praise, or rejection from someone who knows little about you can be dismissed as unfounded or fragmentary, but someone who has a thorough knowledge of you is in a position to make a definitive, impactful judgement. (p. 51)

In the field of psychology, a relationship has been discussed as a process of development of satisfaction based on intimacy (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999; Rusbult, 1983). Sharlin, Kaslow and Hammerschmidt (2000) refer to satisfaction from such a process as "a sense of well-being, contentment, and overall good feeling" (p. 15). There is a common understanding that maintenance efforts to maintain a certain degree of intimacy are required for the longevity of stability in romantic relationships (Gottman, 1999). This is because members of a couple in a romantic relationship may have to contend with stressful events and enduring

vulnerabilities, whether they encounter them or bring them to the relationship, and then accumulated experiences though adaptive processes may affect the relationship quality and, in turn, stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Researchers, especially in family studies and personal relationship studies, have examined relationship maintenance strategies and focused on an identification of the critical facilitators that individuals in the romantic relationships may use to strengthen their romantic ties (Malinen, Rönkä, & Sevón, 2010; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Much of the previous work has explored several facilitators, for example positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks (Stafford & Canary, 1991); joint activities and humour (Canary, Stafford, Hause, & Wallace, 1993); time spent together (Gager & Sanchez, 2003; Hill, 1988; Orthner, 1975; Voorpostel, van der Lippe, & Gershuny, 2009); sharing positive events (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004), caregiving (Boeije & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2003). Communication, problem solving, and sexual relationships are also considered key intrinsic factors for relationship maintenance (Cohen, Geron, & Farchi, 2009; Sharlin et al., 2000). As such, maintenance strategies towards personal relationships are considered as actions or activities taken to keep a relationship at a satisfactory level (Canary & Stafford, 1994).

Some of the researchers have maintained that shared time is a significant facilitator of maintaining the quality of romantic relationships. Specifically, Malinen et al. (2010) reveal that in the daily life of couples with young children, spousal presence is the most important factor to maintain positivity in the relationship, along with sharing tasks and everyday lives through conversation. Further, Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna and Heyman (2000) show that couples sharing novel activities demonstrate higher levels of positive change and relationship quality than those who only share everyday activities. The findings of a study by Tsapelas, Aron and Orbuch (2009) confirms that shared experiences of exciting activities facilitate closeness and ultimately promotes stability in relationships over the long term. The study acknowledges that simple boredom or lack of excitement can affect the quality of the relationship. These findings may lead to a search for the influence of travel and tourism as an extraordinary activity on how the quality of the romantic relationship is experienced and expressed in

behaviour during the travel. According to Baumeister and Bratslavsky (1999), shared experiences that imply mutual understanding or new information about each other and the direct communication of positive feelings and affection towards each other can contribute to the development of intimacy, a key variable in the stability of the relationship. Yet, this still needs to be explored.

The role of a couple's shared leisure time, among other activities, in the maintenance of the quality of romantic relationships has been plentifully demonstrated by family studies scholars (for example, Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008; Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George, 2002; Hill, 1988; Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006; Orthner, 1975; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). The main findings of such literature show that pleasurable time experienced through the interaction between members of a couple in joint leisure activities is integral to relationship satisfaction. Orthner (1975) demonstrates that couples who spend leisure time together in joint activities find more satisfaction in the relationship than those whose leisure activities take place in either group settings or individually.

Later studies show that the quality of interaction between the members of a couple has more influence on relationship satisfaction than the amount of time spent in joint leisure activities or the type of leisure involvement (Flora & Segrin, 1998; Johnson et al., 2006). Furthermore, Crawford et al. (2002) demonstrate that the positivity of the link between a couple's involvement in shared leisure activities and relationship satisfaction is conditioned by the couple's preference of activities. Their findings also imply that meaningful interaction between the members of a couple can enhance relationship satisfaction. This reflects on the continuing search for intimacy through the development of the relationship as members of a couple draw closer together in joint leisure time (Gager & Sanchez, 2003; Hill, 1988; Voorpostel, van der Lippe, & Gershuny, 2010).

The positive impact on relationship satisfaction of a couple's participation in joint activities has been also addressed in the leisure literature (Berg, Trost, Schneider, & Allison, 2001; Holman & Epperson, 1984; Madrigal, Havitz, & Howard, 1992; Orthner & Mancini, 1990, 1991; Shaw, 1992). A recent study by Voorpostel et al. (2010) argues that the clear trend towards an increase in a couple's joint leisure

time, particularly relating to activities of a social nature such as visiting and receiving friends and going out to parties, reflects the increasing importance of personal satisfaction and a couple's own form of togetherness in maintaining relationship satisfaction. Voorpostel et al. (2010, p. 260) suggest, "If couples spend an increasing amount of their leisure time in each other's company, this may mean that partnerships have become more intimate and are based more on shared experiences than in the past, for example, enjoying leisure activities together." It seems that the development of intimacy is implicitly acknowledged in the accumulation of shared experiences, which in turn leads to individuals' happiness and sense of well-being as a result of relationship satisfaction (Meunier & Baker, 2012).

The benefits of leisure, specifically family holidays, for family interaction, satisfaction, and cohesion, have also been favourably acknowledged in the leisure literature (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Madrigal et al., 1992; Orthner & Mancini, 1990, 1991; Shaw, 1992). Madrigal et al (1992) for example, provide insights into the underlying dimensions of pleasure and importance in a married couple's involvement in family holidays; couples who perceive greater equality and companionship in their relationship may view family holidays as being more pleasurable and important than couples with more specialised marital roles. Davidson (1996) demonstrates that family holiday experiences can facilitate the development and maintenance of relationships that are important and valuable to women with young children by providing time and activities not available in the normal routine, although she has also written of how women continue the 'gendered' work on family holidays.

This section has focused on the relational aspect of the tourist experience. As a consequence of a review of the tourism literature, it highlights the potential influence of travel, in particular conference travel in improving a personal relationship between travelling companions, although there is still a lack of empirical attention to the topic. An analysis of the diverse relationship-oriented literature reveals that members of a couple in a romantic relationship inevitably seek to maintain their relationship's stability and/or quality through developing intimacy, performing certain relational maintenance behaviours and sharing

45

leisure time. Such various discussions and findings are likely important to understanding the accompanying spouses' experience.

The knowledge gaps

Currently, as already discussed above, the accompanying spouses' phenomenon remains an area with piecemeal information from few empirical studies by the industry or interviews with industry officials to glean information about how to increase the level of attendance at conferences. To date, the majority of trade articles on the phenomenon have focused on the ways spousal programmes increase the number of accompanying spouses (Adams, 1994; Alonzo, 1993; Brooks, 2003; Crocker, 1999; Jensen, 1996); the promotion of holiday aspects of destinations (Kerstetter, Bricker, & Gitelson, 1996; Sherman, 2007); and guiding conference practitioners to manage and operate special programmes and activities in conferences (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Hoyle et al., 1995; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997). There are, so far, no empirical studies or profound understandings of accompanying spouses from their own points of view that could assist developers, entrepreneurs, and planners in creating more successful products and help researchers in more accurately measuring, analysing, and exploring this type of travel experience. This leaves an important knowledge gap in the broader and deeper understanding of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. A gap includes defining who these accompanying spouses are, what their needs, preferences, motivations and behaviour are, or what they expect to achieve from their travel experience. Their voice remains silent.

On the other hand, the review of previous trade articles has also revealed that conference travel is viewed as a source of a family affair and a couple affair. However, there is scant attention to the characteristics of such accompanied aspect of conference travel in tourism studies. The review of various disciplines regarding the concepts of family and couple has disclosed the potential role of travel in strengthening family bonds and maintaining a romantic relationship. This, thus, gives rise to another key knowledge gap without embracing insights from other disciplines. Research into the accompanying spouses' experience within the field of tourism study can be limited in the development of wider and

deeper understanding of what conference travel for accompanying spouses entails or in what ways the travel experience has an influence on their relationship. There is a need for a more integrated approach.

As the present research focuses on the experiences of accompanying conference spouses who are in a romantic relationship with attendees, the thesis therefore intends to fill the knowledge gap in the literature by exploring their subjective experience and its associated meaning for the individuals from their own perspectives. The research is manifestly grounded in the data collected that is more concerned with the detailed examination of experiences as reported by accompanying spouses themselves. The thesis will also contribute to the conference and tourism industry by providing fundamental knowledge: particularly incorporating the conceptualisation of accompanying spouses' experience and offering a potential theoretical link between the travel experience as a couple and their relationship. Greater knowledge about the tourist experience needs to be examined to understand accompanying spouses' experiences and how these may be examined. Therefore, the discussion now moves to a review of the tourist experience literature.

2.3 The concept of the tourist experience

Travel has usually been considered as an ideal way to escape from everyday life to pursue a search for new experiences, pleasures and cultures (Lofgren, 1999). In this sense, the tourist experience has been primarily conceptualised as 'distinctiveness from everyday life' (Uriely, 2005). This definition reflects a broad range of understandings about the nature and meaning of the tourist experience and research addressing the concept of the tourist experience. Numerous studies have been carried out to investigate the tourist experience in a broad range of disciplines, for instance, geographies (see, Hall, 2005; Ryley & Zanni, 2013; Williams & Hall, 2000), sociology (see, Cohen, 1979a; Dann & Cohen, 1991; Wearing & Wearing, 1996), mobility (see, Frohlick, 2013; Gretzel & Jamal, 2009) and psychology (see, Larsen, 2007; Pearce & Stringer, 1991; Tung & Ritchie,

47

2011). This has led to different ways of defining the tourist experience. This section outlines and discusses some of the keys to understanding the tourist experience in general from the review of literature.

A critical review of the literature reveals that study of the tourist experience emerged in the 1960s when that experience was understood as a modern phenomenon resulting from the democratisation of travel for leisure purposes (Goytia Prat & de la Rica Aspiunza, 2012). Perspectives that may lay the roots of the study of what the tourist experience is, for example, are a contrived act of consumption (Boorstin, 1963), a quest for authenticity (MacCannell, 1999), and arranged modes of motivations and a multifaceted leisure activity (Cohen, 1979b). Boorstin (1963) concluded that travel is among the consumption activities of people as the mass of tourists appear to enjoy it as experience of 'pseudo-events' due to it being convenient, comfortable, risk-free, and trouble-free rather than being the authentic product of foreign culture. Sternberg (1997) took a similar view; that tourists are likely to visit a particular site or attraction as part of a set of pre-packaged events.

In contrast to Boorstin's approach, MacCannell (1973) defines the tourist experience as a meaningful modern ritual that follows the quest for 'authentic' experiences by responding to some of the social functions in foreign mundane lives. This is because tourists instinctively pursue authenticity of experience, even though they may not be sure whether or not their experience is, in fact, authentic. A further argument supporting MacCannell's view is that how tourists' needs or preference for authenticity is met is essential in judging their satisfaction with holiday experiences (Pearce & Moscardo, 1986). Goytia Prat and de la Rica Aspiunza (2012) criticise both perspectives pointing out that they share a modernist form of analysis that views societies and social facts, such as tourism, as totalities. In such a view, the tourist experience can be seen as a contrived, prefabricated and homogeneous phenomenon.

On the other hand, Cohen (1979b) argued for both standpoints when, emphasising the phenomenology of tourists' experiences, he holds that the exact meaning of 'experience' for tourists may differ from person to person. He then attempted to

identify the tourist experience in terms of the motivations and their characteristics derived from a person's worldview (Cohen, 1979b). Thus, he developed a typology of tourist experiences that span between the quest for mere pleasure at one end and the search for meanings at the other. In this continuum he identifies the recreational mode, the diversionary mode, the experiential mode, the experimental mode, and the existential mode. This challenges a homogeneous understanding of the tourist experience, providing an understanding of the experience as pluralistic. Subsequently, the tourist experience has been increasingly acknowledged for its variety of motivations, activities, and behavioural patterns (see, Kinnaird, Kothari, & Hall, 1994; Prebensen, Larsen, & Abelsen, 2003; Richards, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2010; Wilson & Little, 2008).

Moving on from the seminal work of Cohen's typologies, it has more recently been argued that every tourist, with an individual social, cultural and interpersonal background is different from others, and is an active player in creating and producing of the travel experience (Dann & Cohen, 1991; Li, 2000; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Quinlan-Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Given the shift in theoretical concerns and the style of conceptualising, some perspectives examine the tourist experience through the 'gaze' (Urry, 1990) and interactions with places and people (Wearing & Wearing, 1996), leading to the conclusion that the meaning of the experience is subjectively constructed rather than imposed.

Urry (1990), for instance, focuses on the process by which the tourist gaze on difference is "constructed and reinforced" (p. 1) and challenges the typical coherent tourist experience with the concept of an external aspect of the tourist's gaze based on the character of consumption "to see *named* scenes through a *frame* such as the hotel window, the car windscreen or the window of the coach" (italics in original) (p. 100). This implies that there is no single gaze, as tourists are from different social and cultural backgrounds and have different levels of prior information, and also their experience is constructed through relations of discursive power and the media. Tourists' gazes at a single site are possibly diverse depending on the tourists' differing character (McGregor, 2000; Urry, 1990). Moreover, the constructed gazes are reinforced by a particular type of interest and participation under the influence of visual, written, or spoken

instructions, such as guidebooks (McGregor, 2000; Urry, 1990). McGregor (2000) also mentions the role of anticipation, apart from the construction of experience through gazing on difference. This falls in with Dann's (1996) perspective that the language of tourism, including the visual and textual content of brochures, is important in aiding a conceptualisation of a place and the appropriate behaviour for that place.

When considering the tourist experience through gazing, it is possible to suggest that most tourists still search for difference or authenticity which is recognised as a key facilitator of demand for tourism (McCabe, 2002). The search for authenticity has inspired the production of unique and exotic tourism products and services resulting from cultural differentiation (Cohen, 1988). McIntosh (2004), for example, notes that the character of tourist consumption is inherent in the desire to gaze on difference. This is because the tourist moves around a destination to gaze upon difference in terms of the romantic or the collective, the historical or the modern, what is authentic or inauthentic (Urry, 1990). In this sense, the authenticity of experience has gained favour as a theme for researchers' investigations (for example, Hughes, 1995; Lau, 2010; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Taylor, 2001). This approach remains in the realm of universal experience, as a tourist does not interact with a destination – the destination is merely an object of the tourist gaze (Tucker, 1997). Wearing and Wearing (1996) argue that tourist destinations are seen as part of an activity in which a specific place is defined as the object that will yield a specific experience under the tourist gaze. The tourist self may still be in an inactive position in the constructing of the tourist experience.

Tourism theories that only emphasise the gaze can themselves set the tourist experience in frames, and thereby gloss over what actually takes place in touristic processes and tourists' interactions with visited environments (Tucker, 1997). Beyond gazing, Wearing and Wearing (1996) present a different way of theorising about the tourist experience, putting emphasis on social interaction as an important component of the experience, "the interaction of the tourist with the representatives of the host community in the form of the receptionist, the bell boy, the waiter/waitress, the hotel manager/ess and the taxi driver is real and will

colour the tourist's subjective construction of the host culture and the values of that culture" (p. 235). In their framework, the tourists or 'chorasters' construct meanings to their experience through interacting with the place and people from different cultural backgrounds in the place (Wearing & Wearing, 1996).

Inherent in this view, authenticity appears to be irrelevant in the tourist experience when that experience is considered in terms of opportunities for self-awareness and self-enhancement (Wearing, 2002). Instead, the concept of serendipity as a spontaneous occurrence of self-discovery comes to the fore as an influential feature in shaping the tourist experience. What Cary (2004) explains:

> Something that is discovered and represented in a serendipitous moment (because it is not self-staged) is automatically thought to be authentic…This quest to glimpse "the real" culminates in the (re)presentation of tourist moment… By "going beyond" and uncovering "something hidden", the tourist moment reveals how the experience is made one's own, or rendered "authentic." (pp. 66-67)

As such, it would suggest that there are a wide range of aspects that help individuals shape their experience and produce the meanings ascribed to their experiences, such as the tourist's own cultural and social background, the purpose of travel, travelling companions, preconceived and observed values of the host culture and marketing images of the destination.

Subjective experiences through the processes of interaction, negotiation, cooperation, and contestation may help tourists forge their identity and/or add further breadth to their sense of 'self'. In this sense, tourism comes to be viewed as a process of expanded social interaction whereby self-identity can be enlarged through interaction with differing places, peoples, cultures, and societies (Wearing, Stevenson, & Young, 2010). A number of the existing researches (see, Desforges, 2000; Galani-Moutafi, 2000; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005) have demonstrated the link between self-identity and tourism. These works largely advocate that self-identity is subjectively formed through the consumption of tourist places, leisure activity and/or material objects (i.e., souvenirs) as an experience of difference or the other. For example, Hughes (1997) and Desforges (2000) argue that a confirmation of self-identity through

holiday consumption can reflect her/his desires and an important and meaningful part of their lives. Further, Palmer (2005) highlights the role of the intangible characteristics of tourism, such as imagination, memory, and emotion in processing the development of identity. The main point presented in these studies is that self-identity is constructed within a wider social interaction through self-discovery and discourses of power and control enabled through the subjective tourism experience.

Likewise, a wide range of concepts of the tourist experience has evolved. Uriely (2005) provides four major trends in conceptual developments in the study of the tourist experience: from differentiation to re-differentiation of everyday life and tourism; from generalising to pluralising portrayals of the experience; from a focus on toured objects to the role of subjectivity in the constitution of experiences; and from contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretations. These shifts reflect that all external stimuli (for example, tourist attractions of various kinds, places visited), as influenced by communication, marketing and the influence of other people, and responses by the tourists themselves (for example, memories and preferences) would be aspects of the tourist experience (Larsen & Mossberg, 2007).

As these theories may provide different approaches of conceptualising the tourist experience, they commonly imply one thing: that tourists seek pleasurable subjective experiences different from everyday life (Urry, 1990). Travel is recognised as a constant search for novelty within a specific time - such as a long weekend - an unforgettable event, a week of family fun, or an exciting adventure (Cohen, 1974; Lofgren, 1999). This brings the concept of novelty or escape to the centre in categorising types of tourists and in understanding their touristic experiences (Cohen, 1974; Quan & Wang, 2004; Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002; Wearing et al., 2010). For example, Cohen (2004) presents a typology of four tourist roles that are divisions of a continuum from familiarity to novelty: the organised mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer, and the drifter.

A review of the published literature reveals that the tourist experience is conceptualised as incorporating novelty, escape, and/or an activity driven by motivations for authenticity and travel (Uriely et al., 2002). Moreover, prevailing among these researchers is the view that tourists experience similar activities and settings in different ways, i.e. subjectively and according to their own personal agenda (see, McIntosh, 1999). In this view, tourists spend time in a personalised way as well as enjoying unforgettable events. The experience is fundamentally understood as the created output of a production process that uses facilities and services (Goytia Prat & de la Rica Aspiunza, 2012). The tourist experience thus has largely been studied to understand motivations to travel, values for travel, and tourist behaviours and preferences (Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2010; Maher, Steel, & McIntosh, 2003; Poria, Biran, & Reichel, 2009), the development of tourist system including attractions, products and places (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Connell & Meyer, 2004; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Weaver, Weber, & McCleary, 2007), or tourist behavioural patterns (Chen & Chen, 2010; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Mazursky, 1989; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Such researches are predominantly concerned with the creation of empirical knowledge and the semi-structured or statistical measurement of the economic benefits for tourist destinations other than personal meaning (Riley & Love, 2000; Wearing et al., 2010).

Indeed, historically, many previous studies quantify the tourist experience as an object, even down to cognitive aspects in behavioural patterns, so that the experience can be standardised and made manageable through the generation of formalised, comprehensive, and measurable data (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; McIntosh, 1999; Riley & Love, 2000). From this historical perspective, the tourist is construed as a consumer located in the centre of the tourism system, so the tourist role, as a patron of standardised and homogenous products and services, is relatively passive (Uriely et al., 2002). In other words, the concept of the tourist experience is based on a mass consumption model and in the context of consumerism (Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryan, 2000), hedonism (Lofgren, 1999) or a commodified pre-determined mass experience (Wearing & Wearing, 1996). Tourists are portrayed either as homogenised into a general type or pluralised so as to capture the multiplicity of the experience (Uriely, 2005).

Historical conceptualisations of the tourist experience have been dominated by a structure-functional or scientific paradigm in conjunction with a positivist ontological discourse. Goodson and Phillimore (2004) point out that the adoption of a positivistic approach within the research context can facilitate the researcher in providing the foundation for a particular view on the production of knowledge which forbids researchers from involving subjectivity and a disconnection from everyday life. This is because the positivist paradigm means that the objective truth as reality is discovered and described (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As a result, the nature and meaning of the tourist experience tends to be based on the grounds of universality and the absolute truths of products and services to the exclusion of the tourists' actual experience of such things (Uriely, 2005). Noy (2008) argues that researchers have left details of tourists' experiences out of account and did not allocate sufficient grounds for these experiences before theorising and conceptually categorising them.

On the other hand, as tourism has become increasingly recognised as an important social and cultural phenomenon, there has been a shift from the consumption-based approach to a tourist's subjective-centred approach in tourism studies (for example, Cary, 2004; Schänzel & McIntosh, 2000; Urry, 1990; Wearing & Wearing, 2001; Willson, McIntosh, & Zahra, 2013). This reflects the difficulties in standardising tourists' experiences into an economic, marketing or management tool, because tourists get involved in tourist industry services and products rather than solely representing them (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007; Wearing & Wearing, 2001). Wearing et al. (2010) argue that theorising about the tourist experience as a set of activities within a specific time and space limits the flexibility and complexity of the experience. Jennings and Nickerson (2006) also hold that tourists' interpretations of their experiences and the meanings ascribed must be considered in analysing the tourist experience.

Putting tourists themselves at the centre of an analysis tends to considerably facilitate a better understanding of their experience by providing insightful information. As McIntosh and Prentice (1999) affirm in their study of tourist experiences at three tourist attractions:

> The processes identified from tourists' reported experiences of an attraction may thus be seen as potentially representing greater importance than the identification of cognitive outcomes of a visit or attention to the reception of historical accuracy. For instance, an understanding of the experiential thought processes and reactions of tourists to their surrounding environment arguably provides a greater insight into the nature of what is actually being derived from visiting, than a concern for whether factual knowledge has been attained. (p. 609)

This leads recent researchers in the study of tourists' experiences to add to the body of knowledge through identifying the subjective characteristics of tourists. Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003) investigate tourists' subjective perceptions and behaviour at heritage destinations. The profiles and categorisation of wine and golf tourists are conducted through an analysis of individuals' experiences on wine and golf tourism by Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) and Tassiopoulos and Haydam (2008) respectively. In the study of Connell and Meyer (2009), an evaluation of tourists' onsite experiences while on a film-shooting location contributes to an understanding of the nature of screen tourism, the likelihood of repeat visits and the implications for destination management and development. Similar investigations are found in the research of wellness tourism. An exploration of three types of wellness tourists' experiences helps Voigt, Brown and Howat (2011) represent the potential differences between wellness tourist groups and the benefits sought. Further, Kelly (2012) suggests that the unique features of retreatants' experiences as a specific subgroup within the wellness sector help to build a richer understanding of wellness tourism.

Further, some researchers challenge the nature of the tourist experience as an escape from home to consume an exotic set of specialised products (Larsen, 2008). White and White (2007) acknowledge that the concept of escape as a motivation to travel has given rise to a blurred distinction between home and away by revealing how tourists maintain a sense of reciprocal connection with families and friends driving travel. As mentioned previously, attention thus has been given to the issues of sociality with significant others (Larsen et al., 2007; McCabe, 2002; Quan & Wang, 2004; White & White, 2007) and meaningful holiday talk in everyday lives (McCabe & Stokoe, 2010). This perhaps reflects the pluralised nature of the tourist experience as tourists are linked with an individual quest for

value, whether or not they are concerned with a way of seeking an extraordinary experience away from everyday life (Goytia Prat & de la Rica Aspiunza, 2012; Uriely, 2005). It is also suggested that tourists are closely involved in the process of creating experiences that may connect with transformational occurrences that, though not necessarily new, exciting or exotic, nevertheless involve human network and development (Larsen, 2008). In turn, it would give a subjective view as to the individuals' own experience as well as the meaning of the travel for them.

Indeed, the move towards a person-centred research in which tourists subjectively negotiate the meanings of their experience allows a variety of developments to emerge in conceptualising the tourist experience. Thus, tourists have become identified as an active creator of the experience and the nature of the tourist experiences are perceived as relative interpretations (Uriely, 2005; Wearing & Wearing, 2001). These changes closely mirror a change in methodological style when conceptualising the tourist experience wherein scholars have employed phenomenology, feminism, critical theory and social constructionism (Selstad, 2007; Uriely, 2005; Wearing et al., 2010), while a positivist tradition is still dominant in the research (Riley & Love, 2000). Furthermore, Larsen and Mossberg (2007) and Schänzel, et al. (2012) advocate the inclusion of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives into the discussion of tourists' subjective experiences to proffer a more holistic perspective to the breadth and depth body of knowledge of the tourist experience.

Greater attention has also been given to the need to take a tourist-centred focus informed by reflexive and critical approaches (see, Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2012; Ateljevic et al., 2007). This changing perspective accompanies a wider range of innovative and creative methods for the study of the tourist experience, for example, an interpretive, auto-ethnographic approach (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Noy, 2008), video diaries (Pocock, Zahra, & McIntosh, 2009), memory-work (Small, 1999, 2008) and arts-based participatory approaches (Rydzik, Pritchard, Morgan, & Sedgley, 2013). Arguably, these methods can serve as a facilitator of communicating an insider's perspective of the tourist experience and reconstructing it in vivid and lively ways allowing greater

involvement of the researcher in knowledge production (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011). As such, a critical turn contributes to moving away from historical positivist traditions with the scientific method and toward alternative methods of theory building focused on the individuals' subjective experience and meaning.

2.4 Understanding the tourist experience of accompanying spouses

Building on recent perspectives to understand the subjective tourist experience, the purpose of the present thesis research is to explore the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conference travel. A discussion in Chapter One disclosed that accompanying spouses primarily participate in conference travel due to a desire for experiencing the exotic destination not for professional profit, unlike attendees. As discussed in section 2.2, there is anecdotal evidence and reports on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in conferences, largely relating to its economic benefits to the conference association and host destination.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that conference travel is viewed as a family affair, specifically a couple's time. Presumably, concerning this aspect of the travel, the accompanying spouses' experience is inherently the relationship in nature. As such, the accompanying spouses' experience potentially is shaped in two ways: being alone and being with a spouse in a romantic relationship. In other words, accompanying spouses have some time alone and with a spouse during the period of the conference. However, there is very little understanding of what the main contents of their experiences are, what it is like for them to experience conference travel, how they make sense of their experiences, and whether there is any influence in shaping the experience such as the nature of the relationship. Indeed, there exists the ambiguity of the portrayal of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon.

This brings the accompanying spouses into the centre of a study that attempts to explore and gain a better informed and more in-depth understanding of their lived experience rather than verifying and generalising the experience into a displayed object (Uriely, 2005). In turn, the approach to such experience in this research should avoid merely collecting knowledge for scientific significance or validation within established parameters and boundaries taking a positivist or post-positivist approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Rather it has to make accompanying spouses' voices heard over the situated voice in tourism studies.

In line with the purpose of the present research, the research focuses on subjectively experiencing conference travel, i.e. lived experience, rather than solely on the experience in relation to their primary motivation and participation in activities during the travel. Van Manen (1997) refers to lived experience as, "of something past that can never be grasped in its full richness and depth since lived experience implicates the totality of life. The interpretive examination of lived experience has this methical feature of relating the particular to the universal, part to whole, episode to totality" (p. 36). It requires the emphasis on an understanding of both the particularities and commonalities of the accompanying spouses' lived experience where distinct characteristics of individual conference travel is described individually without uncovering a collective construction of experiences (Smith et al., 2009; Trentelman, 2009).

It makes use, therefore, of phenomenology as the most appropriate way to elucidate the lived experience of accompanying spouses. In tourism studies, phenomenological perspectives are embedded in a desire to understand the nature of lived experience from the perspective of the experiencing individual (for example, Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; Li, 2000) (refer to section 3.3 Phenomenology in the Chapter Three for further discussion). More specifically, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach is employed to investigate accompanying spouses' experiences derived from their own account and the researcher's interpretation of their account (Smith, 2011).

This research holds that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is a multi-faceted social phenomenon that stretches beyond tourism studies and requires a generic focus and a multidisciplinary approach (Larsen & Mossberg, 2007). The research, therefore, attempts to examine a breadth of literature from leisure, interpersonal communication, and couple relationship-oriented studies with links to the travel and tourism context. By doing that, the thesis can contribute to a more holistic understanding of individuals' experiences from an insider's perspective in the tourism context, and give rise to the implications of the role of travel within the context of conference.

The next chapter on Research Methodology explores and describes the details of the methodological approach and the research design used to achieve the aim of this thesis.

Chapter Three Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate how research into the accompanying spouses' phenomenon was undertaken by discussing the underpinning philosophical and methodological approaches and explaining the procedure of data collection and analysis based on those approaches. Through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the research generated an understanding of how spouses accompanying conference attendees make sense of their experiences within the context of their lives. First of all, the chapter revisits the thesis question by presenting the knowledge claims and ways of approaching the inquiry. It then justifies the interpretivist approach acknowledging the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research. The reason for the rejection of alternative paradigmatic approaches to the research is also explained. Subsequently, the chapter discusses IPA as the theoretical approach that informed the research design. It continues with a description of the ways in which data were collected, analysed and presented. Finally, the criteria for assessing the quality and credibility of this thesis research, presentation of the research findings and limitation follow.

3.1 Knowledge claims

This thesis raises the overarching phenomenological questions, 'how is conference travel experienced by accompanying spouses?' and 'how do accompanying spouses understand their experience of conference travel?' The literature reviewed in Chapter Two revealed that very few studies on the phenomenon of spouses accompanying attendees to conferences are reported in the literature of tourism and, more specifically, business tourism. In fact, until recently, accompanying spouses' experiences of conference travel and relevant issues have rarely been documented. Thus, at this relatively nascent stage of the research in tourism studies, the extent of accompanying spouses' experiences seems difficult to presuppose or predefine. Instead, it calls for an investigation of the first-person perspective that is derived from the person undergoing the experience (Ashworth, 2008). Knowledge, therefore, will be acquired and

analysed through data collected from the accompanying spouses' own accounts of the conference travel experience. Indeed, it is argued in the thesis that the methods employed to interpret data are ideally suited to grasp accompanying spouses' understanding of their lived experiences (Hein & Austin, 2001), which is a reflective appropriation of something meaningful (Van Manen, 1997). The thesis could provide in-depth understanding and practical knowledge about the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, and indicate openings for further investigations.

The inductive, qualitative approach to making meaning of the research question reflects this notion. The value of an inductive approach in analysing qualitative data lies in its strength to allow the researcher to accommodate and theorise concepts and themes, or even a model, from interpretations of the raw data (Riley & Love, 2000; Thomas, 2006). For example, employing an inductive, ethnographic approach, Conran (2011) contributed to development theory on humanitarianism, embodied encounters and emotions in tourism by finding that emotional attachments generated in intimate encounters in the volunteer tourism experience can play a role in developing structural inequality. In this thesis, with an inductive, qualitative approach, it will be possible to "establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238).

More specifically, this thesis is concerned with accompanying spouses' individual and subjective experiences of conference travel; what it is like to travel to international conferences as a spouse, how such experiences are understood, and/or what meaningful experiences are associated with conference travel. For the research, it was felt important to employ an open approach that could account for the meaning of such experiences, particularly an approach in which the researcher could mediate between various accompanying spouses' experiences and interpretations as given in their own accounts. Indeed, the research into the human-social oriented feature of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon would demand alternative approaches that critically scrutinise objectivity, generalisability, and measurable knowledge (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001). So, attention was focused on interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a

methodological underpinning for the present research. IPA is concerned with the researcher's attempts to understand how participants make sense of what happens and the meanings they ascribed to their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, the research question was motivated by first-person stories, with particular attention to accompanying spouses' subjective interpretations of their lived experiences. The question also enabled the researcher to explore and interpret such experiences through the reflections of the participants. The thesis, therefore, assumes that an interpretivist paradigm is most appropriate to consider the research question and objective.

Before discussing the relevance of the IPA approach to the research in more detail, the next section discusses the philosophical underpinnings of interpretivism and how it frames the practice of research by identifying underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions. It also highlights why interpretivism has more appeal to the researcher than other alternatives, such as positivism and social constructionism.

3.2 The interpretivist paradigm

Every researcher is required to make explicit philosophical assumptions, i.e. the research paradigm, to underpin the research process. The research paradigm is known as a "basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Each paradigm of inquiry consists of certain ontological assumptions about the nature of reality, and epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge or the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched (Sarantakos, 2005). By choosing a particular paradigm, the researcher offers a way of knowing and understanding the research object or question (Howell, 2013).

As an interpretivist research, this thesis research seems to provide original insight into the accompanying spouses' phenomenon by eliciting a better understanding of the lived experience and what it means for spouses accompanying conference attendees. Interpretivism emerged from the rejection of the positivists' quest, when investigating inquiries in social science, for universal and representative knowledge or truth existing in an external world (Rouse, 1991). The positivist's stance in human and social sciences is concerned with the absolute social laws that can be discovered (ontological assumptions) and objectivity sought through empirical generalisations and prediction (epistemological assumptions) (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2001). Methodologically, verifiable and measurable data can be collected through a series of scientific procedures, or, as Schwandt (2001) puts it, "the interrelationships between dynamics of theory development, the acceptance and rejection of theories, the choice of which experiments to perform to test a theory, and so on" (p. 35). The nature of established knowledge would probably be adhered to in the absolute laws, so that the quality of knowledge can be explained, controlled and predicted (Howell, 2013). In such an approach, the role of the researcher would be "one of a specialist conduit giving access to facts" (Tribe, 2001, p. 443).

Positivist researchers would argue the accompanying spouses' phenomenon could be observed objectively to discover its essential features. However, this approach neglects the role of the researcher's values, beliefs and perspectives in shaping the thesis research. This stance would situate the thesis and knowledge gained as objective, inanimate and based on absolute truth and established foundations. Knowledge, indeed, could be presented through an explanation of the common structure and regularities underlying the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). However, positivism could not address the issue of validity around the data and it is also critically limited in being able to elicit the intrinsic subjective understandings from accompanying spouses' experiences that the present thesis aims to grasp (Botterill, 2001; McIntosh, 1999).

Multiple realities (ontological assumptions)

In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm is concerned with the understanding of subjective meanings of human experiences, action and behaviour (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Interpretivists emphasise interpretation of human action, saying that "the meaningfulness of action has been variously situated in actors' intentions, rules constitutive of their behaviour, background practices that provide the context within which action is intelligible, and so forth" (Rouse, 1991, p. 42). It suggests that social reality is not simply 'out there' awaiting discovery or explanation, but is understood through interpretations by individuals directly involved in a situation or phenomenon (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Schwandt, 2003). Ontologically (i.e., the nature of reality), interpretivists negate any 'real' structures, which can be described as a fixed and consistent thing to the external reality (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Instead, they focus on understanding the meaning of human action (Schwandt, 2001). According to Burrell and Morgan (1979):

> Their theories are constructed from the standpoint of the individual actor as opposed to the observer of action; they view social reality as an emergent process as an extension of human consciousness and subjective experience. Insofar as a wider social environment is accorded ontological status, it is regarded as the creation and extension of the subjective experience of the individual involved. (p. 253)

Indeed, the social reality sought by interpretivists reflects the perspectives of people who interpret and understand their world rather than people who perceive their world as an objective reality confirmed through a set of empirical tools (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). From this perspective, all kinds of different views are each given equal value, because reality cannot be judged right or wrong, true or less so. Reality, rather, is considered more or less informed, contextual and based on the evidence of the best understanding achieved so far (Laverty, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, within interpretivism, multiple realities are considered appropriate.

The diversity of interpretations (epistemological assumptions)

Interpretivists believe that knowledge comes from studying subjective meaning and understanding how subjects make sense of their world as they experience it (Crotty, 1998). Indeed, the epistemological (i.e. the nature of knowledge of reality) position of interpretivists revolves around the assumption that "the social world can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5). In other words, the interpretivist's epistemological position is concerned with a wide diversity of potential explanations of a phenomenon from the different understandings and interpretations of people engaged in the same situation (Patton, 2002). It should then be apparent that from this point of view knowledge is "transitory and flexible" (Howell, 2013, p. 16). Researchers located within the interpretivist paradigm give research participants close attention in order to capture an 'insider's' perspective and unearth meanings created from an actor's interpretation or understanding of their own behaviour or experience (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

In this paradigm, just as the researched (known) are privileged in voicing their own stories, the role of the researcher (knower) is significant in undertaking the research. Rather than remaining as neutral observers, as for example in the positivist paradigm, standing "behind a thick wall of one-way glass" (Guba, 1990, p. 19), researchers must be involved in an interaction with the researched, so that they can gain a better understanding and interpretation of the participants' perspectives. Smith, Harré and Langenhove (1995) indicate that the researcher can only make the participants' story available through interpretative engagement. However, Creswell (2007) also argues that interpretivist researchers need to be mindful of the powerful position they occupy throughout the process of research, namely collecting, interpreting and presenting the meanings participants have about the world. This requires the researchers to focus on participants' lived experiences by acknowledging individual differences.

Interpretivism is frequently combined with social constructionism as both paradigms reflect the subjective nature of knowledge (Creswell, 2007). Instead, the social constructionist paradigm was previously considered for the present thesis. The next section highlights the philosophical assumptions of social constructionism and describes why this paradigm was eventually discarded as less appropriate.

Social constructionism

Previously, I tried a social constructionist approach with this research, aiming to explore the elements constructing the nature of the accompanying spouses' subjective experience and its formation. It appeared that social, historical, and cultural factors and implicit power relations could significantly influence an accompanying spouses' experience during conference travel. Thus, I expected to obtain multiple conclusions through deliberations around the experiences and belief systems of its participants.

Ontologically, social constructionism also challenges positivists' thinking of a 'one fixed reality' discovered by considering empirical data obtained by testing hypotheses about the world. Instead, social constructionists insist on the idea of multiple realities derived from perspectives adopted by people or social interactions among people (Crotty, 1998). As Schwandt (2003) says:

> Human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. Furthermore, there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. (p. 305)

Indeed, the understanding of a phenomenon is based on the subjective views of an accompanying spouses' experience seemed directly involved with, that is, their spouse, their social interactions with others, and their personal histories. A concept, principle, or phenomenon is established by a way of thinking about the world through causes, which are then controlled and developed under certain conditions (Gibbs, 1966). In particular, Hacking (1999) asserts that once a concept

is embodied in a certain kind of person, a group of such persons (for instance, accompanying spouses) becomes not merely a collection of people, but a group with a self-consciousness (for example, a group with the consciousness of being an accompanying spouse). That which is constructed, therefore, is not simply a concept about people, but also includes the experiences of being a particular group of people (i.e., a group of accompanying spouses among others in conferences).

Gergen (1994) argues that the focus for social constructionists are the ways people in their embodied and relationally responsive dialogue create meaning or practical theories. From an epistemological perspective, researchers adopting a social constructionist approach take into account participants' views in order to explain how the participants perceive the research phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Relationships between the researcher and participants are accentuated because meaning is found through examining and understanding interactive processes between people (Burr, 2003). During the interactive process of forming meaning, participants can share their perception of a certain phenomenon with the researcher. The researcher capable of grasping the research participants' understanding of the phenomenon, then constructs and reconstructs their meanings (Gergen, 2003).

Specifically, for the research, it was initially assumed that the concept of 'accompanying spouse' was a social construct, and a subject's experience could be better understood within its social context. People were thought to construct and reconstruct their experiences as an accompanying spouse in their own various ways or through interplay with other people during conference travel. The research expected to seek out a variety of views and identify diverse realities, while collecting information since members of a particular society (in this case, attendees, conference organisers and planners) share meanings and knowledge (Ashworth, 2008; Burr, 2003).

The research also required delving into how conditions influenced the accompanying spouses' presence and interacted with other conditions to create the experience of an accompanying spouse. Probably the variety of conditions provided different people with different experiences, although the conditions all

shared the basic building blocks of experience. The research, therefore, could lead to an understanding of what lies behind the existence and continuity of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, and what conditions influenced the conceptualisation of an 'accompanying spouse'. The research could have focused on whether any factors, conditions or implicit power relations had influence, and if there were any shared meanings among accompanying spouses' experiences. Therefore, the research could contribute to the development of theoretical knowledge or even develop new concepts based on an understanding of accompanying spouses' experiences.

However, during fieldwork, I picked up salient drawbacks to research situated within the social constructionist approach. At conference venues, I interviewed accompanying spouses to capture their experience of conference travel. I also interviewed conference attendees, conference organisers, and the manager at the conference's marketing department in a national tourism organisation to investigate the influence of socially based relationships on the concept of an 'accompanying spouse'. During the interviews, I found, unfortunately, the lack of recognition in the concept of an 'accompanying spouse' among all participants.

In addition, the experiences of accompanying spouses shared with me were personally important and meaningful within the context of their life world, so that I was not convinced that they could be construed in the context of an accompanying spouse influenced by other agents. Rather, they described an individual experience mostly away from the context of the conference. This suggested that the research priority should be given to an understanding of the phenomenon focused on the personal meaning rather than patterns of social construction. The social constructionist approach focused on was not able to frame the research with enough experiential and subjective dimensions of an 'accompanying spouses' lived experience'.

Alternatively, constructivism could have been appropriate as it pays attention to the development of subjective meanings of individuals' lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). However, this approach seeks to develop patterns of meaning as a result of an investigation of the individual lived experience within the process of

interaction among other individuals (Burr, 2003; Creswell, 2007). Instead, I thought it would be better to allow accompanying spouses to construct and interpret their own 'subjective experience' and, therefore, the interpretivist paradigm, where value is placed on considering various perspectives (Patton, 2002) was substituted, for the social constructionist and constructivist approaches that had informed some of the researcher's interpretation within the discussion of themes.

Ultimately, the present research addresses the phenomenological inquiry through an interpretivist paradigm, that is, it explores the understanding and meanings of the lived experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses as presented in their own words. In the next section, it further outlines and discusses the philosophical assumptions that underpin this thesis research as it aligns itself with the interpretivist paradigm.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the thesis

In considering the ontological assumption for this thesis, I cannot resist the view that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon exists as an external reality (i.e., the realist ontological assumption). However, acknowledging that terms 'wives' and 'ladies' have progressed to 'spouses', 'partners', or 'guests' and then to 'accompanying persons' (Boudreaux et al., 1984; Davidson & Cope, 2003; Rogers, 2008; Seekings, 1997), leads to scepticism about the 'objective' reality of the phenomenon. The shift in terms indicates changing trends in the 'spouse' profile of conference attendees according to social and work circumstances. Formerly, most of the attendees were noticeably male, some of whom occasionally took their wives to conference (Seekings, 1997). Yet, as more female attendees tended to travel to participate in conferences (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012; Shone, 1998), a need arose to avoid accusations of gender discrimination (Seekings, 1997). Indeed, it seems that the notion of an external objective reality referring to the progression of the terms is inconsistent with a description of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon.

Instead, Mohanty (1970) and Hammond, Howarth, and Keat (1991) argue that in phenomenology, the 'reality' underlying a certain phenomenon is often perceived in the forms of things 'experienced' and 'revealed' through the interpretations of the conscious subject, neither being perceived in a purely 'objective' way nor constructed by consciousness. It can only be said that essential features of the phenomenon may be echoed in various individuals, particularly those having similar experiences (Lopez & Willis, 2004). In other words, there is no such thing as a 'standardised experience' of conference travel to facilitate true and undistorted representations (Willig, 2008). Rather, the understandings of the phenomenon are changeable and conditioned across different situations and will lead to different consequences (Howell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Arguably, this notion can be explained by the possibility of multiple realities (i.e., the relativist ontological assumption).

In keeping with this, in-between the realism and relativism positions - what Willig (2008) refers to as the "phenomenological" (p. 13) - therefore, the ontological position of this thesis holds that the accompanying-spouses' phenomenon (i.e., its reality) is the collection of what is consciously experienced and understood by different accompanying spouses each in their particular context. The focus needs to be given to the different perspectives of each accompanying spouse about her/his own stories and feelings, these experiences all together constituting the accompanying-spouses' phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). With this in mind, this thesis assumes that spouses participating in conference travel may see their travel through radically different experiences and meanings (Willis, 2001). The knowledge being sought here, therefore, will be principally based on accompanying spouses' insightful subjective accounts of the lived experience of conference travel and the meanings underlying such experiences as reported by them in their own words, as consistent with the recent studies of experience discussed in Chapter Two (see, for example, Ateljevic et al., 2012; Willson et al., 2013).

Further, there are two epistemological ways of understanding the phenomenon under investigation: the description of things as experienced, and of the actual 'experiencer' (Hammond et al., 1991; Mohanty, 1970; Willis, 2001). Mohanty

(1970) explicates that the former is concerned with the creation of the concept that emerges from the insider's experience, while the latter focuses on uncovering the detached, witnessing person who experiences. I wished to investigate the lived experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses as neither the experiences themselves nor the differences between people's understanding of them had been investigated before (Willig, 2008). That is, I wished to explore "the thing being experienced but still as experienced by *me*" (italics in original) (Willis, 2001, p. 6). Epistemologically, I endeavoured to integrate the two elements in order to grasp the lived experiences of conference travel for accompanying spouses, focusing on what was valuable and meaningful (Van Manen, 1997). Thus, knowledge gained in this research will be articulated according to the accompanying spouses' interpretations of their subjective experience and the understandings of the individuals having the experience.

The knowledge also engages the researcher's interpretation of the meanings reported by accompanying spouses. It is widely recognised that to understand participants' experience interpretation is an integral part of the research process (Howell, 2013). Thus, the researcher's role in interpreting and mediating the meanings of the accompanying spouses' lived experience is accepted and even encouraged (Van Manen, 1997). When thinking of the nature of knowledge in this thesis, therefore, the researcher's interpretation can function as a contributing voice to making sense of the accompanying spouses' interpretations (Hein & Austin, 2001) as the individuals tell their stories within their particular context (Smith, 2007).

The knowledge sought in this thesis also involves a 'shared' or 'intersubjective' meaning. This is because the lived experience is essentially heterogeneous: i.e. each subjective experience is relative to the others (Flores-Gonzales, 2008). It should be noted here that the intersubjective meaning is not solely a summary of shared meanings or an objective take on all the subjects' interpretations, but involves openness to others and the process of understanding of self and others (Flores-Gonzales, 2008; Toren, 2009). Toren (2009) explains how the intersubjective meaning is produced:

> Continually, over time, I constitute myself as the conscious subject of my own existence, as a function of my understanding of who I am in relation to others. They do likewise. I cannot be you, so I can have no direct access to what you mean by what you say or write; rather, I understand what you say or write in terms of my current ideas about who and what you are and of the relation between us. At any given point, I speak to my present ideas of who you are and of our relationship, and you answer back to your present ideas of who I am and of our relationship. That is intersubjectivity. It provides for the fact that we can be radically wrong about one another, or wonderfully empathic and understanding, or prejudiced, or downright stupid. (p. 136)

Likewise, in the accompanying spouses' accounts there is the possibility of a shared meaning in that conference travel may be similarly experienced and understood among them. This could also have occurred between me and the accompanying spouses as I attempted to discover a shared meaning through reflection and intuition (Hein & Austin, 2001). The shared meanings can serve as a basis to bridge the divide between the people involved in the research and the interpretation of their experience (Smith, 2007). In addition, an accompanying spouses' experience seems directly involved with that of their spouse, as they travel together. This highlights the fact that to some extent, the meaning of accompanying spouses' subjective experiences is shaped in relation to their spouses, i.e. conference attendees (Cunliffe, 2011). This resulted in me seeking the experience of conference attendees who have been accompanied by their spouse to gain insights about the accompanying spouses' live experience, which will be discussed in detail in section 3.4.

In summary, the thesis suggests that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon consists of the various meanings conveyed in the accompanying spouses' lived experiences (ontology). And knowledge of the phenomenon will be sought based on the accompanying spouses' interpretation of their subjective experience, the researcher's interpretation of the meaning given by accompanying spouses, and the intersubjective meaning (epistemology). On the basis of the underlying philosophical assumptions and the need to access detailed, rich individual accounts, methodologically this research needed to facilitate reflection by accompanying spouses on their own experiences of conference travel. It was also necessary to discover individual differences in experiences of travel and the life world among spouses travelling with conference attendees. Therefore, interpretive

phenomenological analysis (IPA) with its aim to "make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3) is used to guide the research. The next section discusses the IPA's position further with respect to its key theoretical underpinnings and how it is linked to the present thesis.

3.3 Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was developed by Jonathan Smith in the mid-1990s and has developed into a qualitative methodology in psychology, aiming to examine how individuals make sense of a major experience in their lives (Smith, 2011). For the last one or two decades, IPA has widely been used in an extensive range of psychological inquiries, such as in social psychology with the relationship between risk and pleasure (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004), identity change in transition to motherhood (Smith, 1999b), and the role of affective responses in transport mode choices (Mann & Abraham, 2006); in clinical psychology with the shared experience of foster placement breakdown (Rostill-Brookes, Larkin, Toms, & Churchman, 2011), and the influence of divorce on the sibling relationship (Abbey & Dallos, 2004); in health psychology with the experience of men living with osteoarthritis (Turner, Barlow, & Ilbery, 2002); and in criminological psychology with the experience of gypsy-travellers in prison and transitioning back into the community (Meek, 2007).

IPA has also become increasingly employed in other disciplines, including management, to examine the lived experience of professional female self-initiated expatriates (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2008), individuals' experiences of the Tate Modern and the Southbank Centre (SBC) and the meaning these places hold (Slater & Koo, 2010); and in sociology for the leader approach to rural development (Convery, Soane, Dutson, & Shaw, 2010). These studies of experience in particular contexts mostly emphasise participants as experts of their own experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Indeed, to examine how people make sense of their life experiences, IPA maintains a focus on the 'personal' being

studied and a particular context where the experience or phenomenon occurs (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006).

Theoretically IPA as a version of the phenomenological method has phenomenological origins focused on the provision of detailed description of the analytic process and idiographic approach (see, Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Willig, 2008). The following sections introduce and justify the philosophical consideration of phenomenology and ideography to underpin IPA.

Phenomenology

Historical background of phenomenology

Philosophical insights into phenomenology were developed by a range of philosophers at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries against reductionist and objectivist approaches to studying human phenomena (Becker, 1992). Within the interpretive paradigm, phenomenology challenges perceived limitations of scientific philosophies of social phenomena grounded in an independent reality (Becker, 1992; Dowling, 2007). Phenomenology is commonly accepted as a philosophical approach that investigates a particular phenomenon, namely 'the thing itself', from the viewpoints of the experiencing persons (Becker, 1992; Bruyn, 1966; Willig, 2008). Indeed, the primary concern of phenomenologists is identification of the important aspects of the phenomenon, and this makes it appropriate for the research of subjective experiences of conference travel.

Since Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who is recognised as a founder of phenomenology, different schools such as transcendental phenomenology, existential phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology have evolved based on various stances of phenomenological ontology and epistemology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Laverty, 2003). Each has retained key aspects of phenomenology, but proposes different terms and methods to explore people's experiences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Dowling, 2007). The

following sections explores the shared features of phenomenology as a philosophy by primarily characterising it in terms of the essential structures versus individual experience and descriptive versus interpretation. A methodological consideration of IPA within Phenomenology follows.

The essential structures versus individual experience

In the exploration of lived human experience, there are two views about the purpose of investigation. Husserl believed in the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world, so he investigated phenomena as they appeared through human consciousness (Moran, 2000). For Husserl, the nature of the human being is as pure subject, a passive witness of the world and others (Mohanty, 1970). Husserl accepted Brentano's idea of 'intentionality', that is, "the very act of thinking is an act that affirms the union that exists between the thinking subject and the object of thinking" (Willis, 2001, p. 3). He presented intentionality as the fundamental principle of phenomenology, so that all conscious experiences are characterised by objects. Indeed, the actual experienced action is intentional awareness in that the mind or thinking always directs focus and attention to something (Moustakas, 1994).

With the concept of 'intentionality', Husserl intended to abstract and describe from individuals' experiences the 'essential structures' or 'essences' of the experienced phenomenon (Bruyn, 1966; Willig, 2008). Essence for Husserl refers to "the *whatness* of things, as opposed to their *thatness* (i.e. their existence)" (italics in original) (Van Manen, 1997, p. 177). Indeed, Husserl believed that the use of descriptive essences would lead to a fundamental understanding of what makes a thing, regardless of induction or generalisation (Moustakas, 1994). Laverty (2003) highlights that essences, or the essential structures of the phenomenon studied, identify the phenomenon as unique from others, represent the true nature of the phenomenon and presents common features to all persons who experience it. Indeed, Husserlian phenomenologists draw attention to the content of conscious experience by examining experience itself and describing its essential features, so more in a positivist sense. Consequently, they come to the creation of, what Mohanty (1970) refers to as, "the subjective constitution of the

objective essences" (p. 96).

On the other hand, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) claimed to process essential insight into Husserlian phenomenology, stressing the nature of manifestation as movement towards enlightening details within experience (Moran, 2000). Heidegger brought the ontological question of the existence of self into phenomenology philosophy. He argued that the object cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object (Crotty, 1998; Smith & Osborn, 2008), and then established 'Dasein' meaning "being there" or "the there of being" (Becker, 1992, p. 13). By identifying an individual as a being who is in the world as much as with others, the way the individual exists, acts, or is involved in the world (i.e. relatedness-to-the-world) must be understood in relation to the diverse cultural, social and historical contexts in which experience is located (Becker, 1992; Van Manen, 1997). Dasein implies a focus on the phenomenological concept of 'intersubjectivity' or selves-in-relation-to-others, construing a phenomenon in terms of shared understandings between people based on interrelated experiences and in situ meanings (Cunliffe, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, Heideggerian phenomenologists put emphasis on knowing with its unique identification with meanings and perceptions both of others and objects, as against pure understanding which provides a unique reference to generality (Mohanty, 1970).

Description versus interpretation

In the diversity of the exploration of lived human experience, another difference between phenomenological approaches appears in the methods used to interpret the meaning of a phenomenon under investigation. The difference is concerned with how the knower, namely the researcher, is positioned in the research process, because the experience of something tends to be understood through the knower's mixture of sensory experiences, emotional responses, memories, prejudices and the like (Willis, 2001). In search of the central structures of subjective experience, Husserl proposed an epistemological technique known as 'phenomenological reduction'. A first procedure of phenomenological reduction is 'bracketing' or 'epoche' (Bruyn, 1966; Moran, 2000), referring to "the act of suspending one's

various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world" (Van Manen, 1997, p. 175). It requires excluding all forms of logical implications, or mediate knowledge of any kind, considering that they may be a barrier to true understanding by masking pre-reflexive experience (Moran, 2000). This transcendent attitude suggested by Husserl aimed to present the essential structures of the phenomenon in as unprejudiced a way as possible through intuitive seeing (Dowling, 2007; Laverty, 2003; Willis, 2001).

Husserl endeavoured to illustrate the purely essential character of conscious experience through careful description (Laverty, 2003). He advocated that phenomenological knowledge must be 'presuppositionlessness', referring to it as "the claim to have discarded philosophical theorising in favour of careful description of phenomena themselves, to be attentive only to what is *given* in intuition" (original italics) (Moran, 2000, p. 9). This aims at establishing the nature of experience in situ by avoiding any distortion or misleading description through knowledge (Hammond et al., 1991). By refraining from preconceptions, Husserlian phenomenologists advocate that an experience can be described directly and in the exact manner in which it is given (Moran, 2000). However Husserl found an absolute presuppositionlessness was not possible when presenting data for phenomenological description (Moran, 2000).

On the contrary, Heidegger believed that all human knowledge is interpretative, saying "the most primitive 'seeing' is 'interpretative'… the phenomenological method of description is really interpretative" (Mohanty, 1970, p. 93). In order to grasp the appearance of the phenomena itself and its real being, Heidegger claims that phenomenology cannot simply be reduced to description dependent on intuition, since things do not always show themselves as they are (Moran, 2000). Instead, he employed hermeneutics to elaborate phenomenology (Smith & Osborn, 2008). As Moran (2000) explains:

> Phenomenology is seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity's mode of appearing. In that case the proper model for seeking meaning is the interpretation of a text and for this reason Heidegger links phenomenology with hermeneutics. How things appear or are covered up must be explicitly studied. The things themselves always present themselves in a manner which is at the same time self-concealing. (p. 229)

Indeed, Heidegger maintains that nothing can be encountered without reference to a person's background. That always predates and informs our understanding of a phenomenon which itself also becomes part of our historicity, i.e. subjectively experienced time and place (Cunliffe, 2011; Laverty, 2003). Their background enables researchers to describe what comes into participants' mind about their memorable experiences, with a reinterpretation as new meaning, or renewed meaning, as against presuppositionless description (Crotty, 1998). Pre-understanding therefore is not something a person can step outside of or put aside, as it is already with us in the world (Schwandt, 2003). This all leads to a re-evaluation of the role of bracketing as a cyclical process and as something which can only partially guide research inquiry into meaningful understanding (Smith et al., 2009).

Hans-George Gadamer as a follower of Heidegger's hermeneutics takes the view that human beings always approach a topic with a certain initial understanding or misunderstanding. The knower's greater understanding occurs in a dialogue between this set of initial beliefs (something old) and the topic under consideration (something new) (Moran, 2000). For Gadamer, common understandings emerge in a dialogue 'between' people and their tradition and go beyond the intentions of the speakers (Moran, 2000). In Gadamer's philosophy the central act by which humans engage with the world is the act of understanding that shared meaning has been achieved (Gadamer, 1988).

This circular structure of understanding occurs within the framework of a relationship between a part and the whole (Gadamer, 1988). The part / whole consideration can apply multifariously, for example as follows (Smith et al., 2009):

The part	The whole
The single word	The sentence in which the word is embedded
The single extract	The complete text
Interview	The research project
The single episode	The complete life

The hermeneutic circle is an iterative style of analysis which moves repeatedly from the parts of experience to the whole and back again and again to increase the depth of engagement with and the understanding of texts (Laverty, 2003). Smith (2007), considering how the hermeneutic circle facilitates understanding in the research process, emphasises the significance of engagement with the participants over the researcher's presuppositions: "the fore structure is always there but it in fact is in danger of presenting an obstacle to interpretation. Therefore, priority should be given to the new object rather than to ones preconceptions" (p. 6).

The development of IPA within the phenomenological traditions

In its concern with the lived human experience, IPA is committed to a phenomenological tradition (Larkin et al., 2006). Specifically, IPA is based on the Husserlian tradition focusing on the significance of a lived experience to the experiencer and attempts to gain a rich, detailed account of experience, thoughts and feelings through the meanings assigned by the experiencer (Smith et al., 2009). So, rather than producing an objective statement of the thing experienced, IPA is more concerned with the meaning assigned by the experiencer as she/he attempts to understand the experience (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This leads the researcher to building up a detailed picture of the subjective-felt experience (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005) and so for IPA it is important to capture an insider's view as closely as possible. From this, the way IPA understands the lived experience is consistent with the core emphases of the phenomenological approach, and a number of particular features drawn emphases from the different traditions (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA, however, recognises that there may be difficulties in gaining a genuine, insightful insider's perspective because participants' experiences are not transparently or completely obtainable (Larkin et al., 2006; Willig, 2008), as

Husserl's pursuit of the essence of experience is too abstract when reaching actual experiences. The other core idea of IPA is that lived human experience can be understood through an examination of the meanings people give it (Smith et al., 2009). This has resulted in the adoption of the more contextualised, existential Heideggerian approaches (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009), and draws on the 'dynamic' process in which the researcher interprets what is conveyed so as to develop an understanding of the subjective experience and what it means to the experiencer (Smith, 2004). In this process, the researcher's own conceptions and pre-understandings may play a part in answering a research question (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008). The researcher is thus able to think about 'what it means' for participants to have made claims, as well as gain an understanding of the feelings and thoughts of individuals in particular situations (Larkin et al., 2006). Therefore, IPA is also intellectually connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

As much as understanding what it is like from the participants' perspective, IPA is also concerned with the detailed interpretative engagement of the researcher on participants' understanding (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher tries to "get as 'close' to the participant's view as is possible' and to 'provide a critical and conceptual commentary upon the participants' personal 'sense-making' activities" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 104), a process Smith (2004) refers to as a "double hermeneutic" (p. 40). As the double hermeneutic is recognised as a distinct form of analysis in IPA research, the hermeneutic circle, "the meaning of the whole can only be grasped on the basis of the parts, while understanding the meaning of the parts presupposes a grasp of the meaning of the whole" (Connolly & Keutner, 1988, p. 2) is accepted to facilitate the dynamic process of interpretation.

Thus, with the double hermeneutic, IPA emphasises two aspects of interpretative positions. One, a hermeneutics of empathy, is concerned with the researcher's endeavour to empathise with the participant trying to grasp the thing itself (Smith et al., 2009). The other is a hermeneutics of suspicion that entails the researcher's sense-making from a different perspective of the participants' meaning-making (Smith et al., 2009). In this sense, IPA allows the researcher to gain greater understanding of an experience while upholding the context of everyday lived

experience where meaning resides without a conceptual framework (Reid et al., 2005). Indeed, the researcher is required to position her/himself within both aspects when interpreting in order to provide a holistic understanding of the person (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA uses an interrogative approach through multiple levels of interpretation (Smith, 2004).

Idiography

In addition, IPA is keen to study 'individual' persons experiencing particular situations or events in their lives 'idiographically', i.e. with respect to "the commitment to the single case in its own right, or to a process which moves from the examination of the single case to more general claims" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29), as opposed to a nomothetic approach. In other words, IPA focuses on the detailed examination of the particular case, "what the experience for *this* person is like, what sense *this* particular person is making of what is happening to them" (italics in original) (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). This leads to a participant's individual view or explanation about the entity or occurrence under consideration rather than an effort to make objective declarations about it. Thus, in this thesis research, I can capture deeper information about the accompanying spouses' experiences concerning with the close investigation of each individual case to understand how they make sense of their subjective experience (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008), although this depends on the fluency with which an individual can articulate the meaning of their experiences.

Brocki and Wearden (2006) argue that IPA contributes to a more informative understanding through a deep individualised analysis focused on insights into people's experience and the detailed reasons behind their thoughts, beliefs and behaviours. By means of that, IPA is able to demonstrate a detailed analytical treatment of each case followed by a search for patterns in the shared experiences across the cases (Smith, 2004). IPA is thus distinctly concerned with the balance of commonalities and particularities across individual cases by presenting shared themes as well as the uniqueness of individual experience on those themes (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004; Smith, 2011).

In summary, IPA can be seen as a systematic, holistic approach within the intellectual current of phenomenology, influenced by the descriptive and interpretative study of a lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). IPA also resists objectivity, rather giving weight to in-depth, formulated idiographic analyses of particular cases of lived experience (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Furthermore, to make sense of participants' subjective experiences, IPA requires close interaction between the researcher and text, so that the kind of knowledge that emerges is committed to accounts of insiders' perspectives interpreted by the researcher (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011).

With these features, IPA is deemed an appropriate approach to gaining an understanding of how conference travel is experienced by accompanying spouses. Methodology informs the whole process of the research by providing appropriate methods for collecting and analysing data, and is a significant influence on "what knowledge is considered to be and the consequent outcomes of the investigation" (Howell, 2013, p. 1). In the next section, IPA's relevance in guiding this research to its objective and the kind of knowledge it seeks is explained. It also provides fresh avenues for this research in exploring an insider's perspective of how accompanying spouses describe and make sense of their lived experiences.

3.4 Methodological coherence with IPA in the thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to explore the subjective lived experience of spouses accompanying conference attendees to conference and the meanings of that travel to the individuals, from their perspectives. To meet the research aim, it was felt important to give voice to the research participants and to acknowledge the researcher's understanding of participants' voices. The knowledge sought here concerns participants' reflection on their experience and the researcher understanding participants' accounts through the inductive process of interpretation of the meaning of their perspective. This means that the research is designed to capture the subjective 'feel' of particular experiences as well as to identify recurring patterns of experience among a group of people. The

phenomenological focus of this thesis therefore requires a distinctive approach, namely interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) rather than giving privilege to any one particular phenomenological philosophy.

Firstly, IPA enables me to explore accompanying spouses' subjective experience focusing on pre-reflexive features and the meanings of such experience (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). In fact, phenomenology has increasingly been a preferred approach in studies of the tourist experience (see, for example, Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; Li, 2000; Pernecky, 2006; Santos & Yan, 2010; Szarycz, 2008; Uriely, 2005; Ziakas & Boukas, 2013). This is because phenomenology focuses on the nature and meaning of a specific phenomenon as it is experienced. Thus, it helps the researcher provide new informative sources and knowledge in the tourism literature by describing a deeper understanding of lived experience from the insider's perspective. While the importance of the individuals' accounts in understanding the nature of the phenomenon is still emphasised, the focus of these studies is on the discovery of the phenomenon's underlying structure as experienced by research participants. The understanding of how participants consider what is happening to them appears to be still missing from published research. This may result in the objectification of knowledge if it is pursued with positivistic assumptions (Szarycz, 2009), that is, "interpreting embodied subjects becomes interpreted categorised objects" (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 652). As this thesis is positioned within the interpretivist paradigm, however, it requires concerning the meanings of accompanying spouses' subjective experience of conference travel rather than the objective nature of conference travel experienced by them (Willig, 2008).

This thesis intends to go beyond the description of the underlying structure of the lived experience of the participants to explaining the meaning of the conference travel experience for accompanying spouses within the context of the individual's life world (Smith et al., 2009). IPA can facilitate a depth and richness of the description and understanding of the lived experience of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). It allows participants to provide personal meaning to their experiences (Smith, 2004). This meaning is used in the present research to reveal the subjective and unique experiences of accompanying spouses rather than just an

objective documentation of that experience. IPA helps me to produce knowledge that reflects the set of specific meanings both shared by all the participating accompanying spouses (i.e. commonalities) and subjectively and distinctively embodied in that experience (i.e. particularities) (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 2011). Therefore, the research consistent with an IPA approach may provide a unique contribution to 'subjectivised experience' by making visible an insider's perspective on, for instance, how and why spouses accompany attendees to conferences, a perspective not previously obtained in tourism studies.

Secondly, IPA allows me as the researcher to provide my interpretation of the meaning of the phenomenon (Smith, 2004). Acknowledging that access to the participant's accounts is partial and inevitably complex, IPA considers the researcher's understanding of the participants' thoughts as necessary (Willig, 2008). Many studies employing IPA address the influence of the researcher's own beliefs and experiences; see the existing literature (for example, Connop & Petrak, 2004; Quinn, Clare, Pearce, & van Dijkhuizen, 2008; Turner et al., 2002). In particular, Reynolds et al. (2011), exploring the meanings of visual art-making for older women living with arthritis, recognise the role of the researcher as central to the inductive processes of making meaning, because in their study, "the researchers bring their own academic and professional perspective to make sense of participants' accounts during IPA, so we accept that researchers with different academic backgrounds might construct somewhat different overarching themes" (p. 330).

However, it was difficult for me to draw any interpretation of the participants' narratives from preconceived notions or theoretical constructs as theories about accompanying spouses' lived experience are under-developed in the tourism literature. Reid et al. (2005) advocate for IPA as a suitable approach for new research lacking a theoretical pretext or pre-existing theoretical viewpoint, as it is idiographic, inductive and iterative. For instance, in the study of identity development of women during the transition to motherhood, Smith (1999b) proposes a theoretical model of the relational self that evolved from an analysis of the accounts of participants' experiences. In addition, Dickson et al. (2010) contribute to knowledge about extant caregiver literature by raising a number of

issues around being the spousal caregiver of an acute SCI patient. Their study covers ground from the caregiver's own perspective that previous quantitative researches overlooked. They maintain that an IPA approach addressing a hermeneutic of empathy with a phenomenological, idiographic focus facilitates a detailed, nuanced understanding between the participant's narratives and the researcher (Dickson et al., 2010).

Therefore, a priority of the present research was to consider all accompanying spouses' account from an IPA orientation (Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). This helped me pinpoint central issues articulated by the participants during the research process while also allowing for the emergence of theoretical arguments (Smith, 1999a). Indeed, with hermeneutic empathy during the questioning of the participants, I was able to gain a rich understanding of their experiences. A detailed discussion on these processes is presented in Section 3.7 Data Collection and 3.8 Data Analysis. My understanding of participants' understanding of their experience was obtained, therefore, through a hermeneutic circle between my ideas, experiences and beliefs (the whole) and my encounter with each participant in the research (the part) (Smith et al., 2009). This well led to an understanding of the dynamic between the theory of the tourist experience (the whole) and the accompanying spouses' lived experience (the part) (Gadamer, 1988).

Conference attendees' voices are also heard in this thesis. Due to the paucity of research into the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, it was felt important to acquire supplementary accounts of conference attendees, i.e. those who participated in a conference and travelled there with their spouses. The main reason for including these individuals was the anticipation that each would have had a meaningful impact on the accompanying spouses' experiences (Pocock et al., 2013). Although attendees did not necessarily spend all the time during the conference with their spouse, they were still likely to have influenced that spouses' experience and the reason for the spouse accompanying them, the feelings of being together away from home and their engagement with the conference society. It, therefore, seemed appropriate to consider the perspective of conference attendees as well. The appropriateness of the relevance of other's voices is evident in the study by Pocock (2011). In her thesis, she explored the

influence of significant others on returned travellers' experiences and incorporated their voices to strengthen her understanding of travellers' experiences of home and their return to it. In a similar sense, my interpretations of conference attendees' understanding can function as a source of deepening the accompanying spouses' experience. Such an approach contributes to a holistic understanding of the accompanying spouses' experiences, specifically when the researcher sharpens the focus onto time shared by spouses thus linking their thoughts and experiences. IPA, with its phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic focus, is, therefore, deemed the most appropriate approach for this thesis. Its strong inductive emphasis also facilitates the development of unanticipated but significant constructs by the participant, the research not being solely determined on the basis of guided theory, however closely it engages with the data (Smith, 2004). This thesis can hence facilitate a deeper understanding of what conference travel means to an accompanying spouse from that spouses' own perspective and expressed in his/her own terms.

3.5 The researcher's positioning and reflexivity

As the thesis is consistent with an IPA approach, the insider's (the participants, phenomenological) perspective is significant for an understanding of the participants' points of view of their experience, while an outsider's (the researcher, interpretative) perspective provides an interpretative account of the meaning articulated by the participants. Therefore, I, the researcher, needed to maintain a balance between these two perspectives as I developed an interpretation based on the participants' interpretation of their experience (Reid et al., 2005).

Under an IPA approach, I was an integral part of the whole research process, and needed to stay aware of the procedure. The influence of my subjectivity on shaping the research inquiry - including the choice of the research topic, the philosophical underpinnings and the research design - was undeniable (Dupuis, 1999; Peshkin, 1988). However, I have mostly reflected a third person point of

view because prior to this research I had no personal experience of accompanying someone on conference travel. My indirect understanding of the experience came through my interactions with accompanying spouses and observations of their behaviour at conference social events. I found, though, that my lack of any experience of accompanying significant others facilitated an awareness of new themes.

I was restricted in my insight and understanding of how the participants may have felt by not being able to reflect on my own similar experiences (Abbey & Dallos, 2004). Such reflexivity is considered significant in making the quality of knowledge rigorous and transparent (Dupuis, 1999; Yardley, 2000). However, in spite of this limitation, I often recognised similarities between my experience of engaging with accompanying spouses and their stories. That helped me stay close to my participants' experiences reflexively. Specifically, at times it made the analysis easier as close attention was required for me to keep focused on the participant's narratives and I could frequently ask for points of clarification.

Riley and Love (2000) explain that a text that is researcher- reflexive in narrative represents the voices of those who share the experience and no one voice is actually privileged. I had to remember that making 'reflexive notes' helped a researcher develop a reflexive attitude and so immediately made summary notes after each interview. Throughout the research, these notes were kept separate from the data being collected and were stored for later analysis in referencing and categorising data and making it readily available for subsequent reinterpretation (Soy, 1997). I also kept reflexive notes on changes or additions to my understanding of accompanying spouses' experience.

In the reflexive notes, I recorded interview settings, probing questions that arose from the interview, and documentation of the work in progress. I also reflected on my own role, my feelings during the interview and how interactions with participants might be affected by my particular communication style and values. These notes enabled me to identify the participant's account within the context of their life world rather than simply relying on a contextual verbal recording (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). The notes also assisted in determining whether or not

according to what was being observed, the inquiry needed to be redefined. Therefore, knowledge produced in the research also includes, as a necessary precondition for making sense of another person's experience, the reflexivity of the researcher (Cunliffe, 2011; Larkin et al., 2006).

Having clarified the philosophical foundations of the research question, the thesis then provides an outline of the research design. The following sections present the sampling strategy and size, the procedures of data collection and analysis, the quality of the research and a presentation of the findings.

3.6 Recruiting a sample and participants

Sampling refers to the process of "selecting respondents for research" (Fontana & Prokos, 2007, p. 120). In seeking eligible participants, the researcher needs to ensure that potential participants can easily provide knowledge, experience, or information on the phenomenon being sought. Their accounts of their experiences must necessarily help the researcher develop an understanding of the research inquiry (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008; Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). It is also necessary to ensure that the data gathered is of direct relevance to the research aim (Appleton, 1995). Moreover, consistent with IPA's orientation, the researcher in the present research purposely attempted to look for a homogeneous sample in order to obtain original insight into a particular experience, namely conference travel (Smith et al., 2009).

The homogeneity sought in the research sample was broadly in respect to the research topic. During the literature review, it was discovered that accompanying spouses would not be easily accessible because of the lack of any authorised demographic profile to target them. The potential population was vulnerable, its size difficult to determine and so access to sufficient numbers of qualified participants was not possible. Thus, for the present research, it became necessary to extend the definition of the relevant sample so as not to include any specific frame, such as geographical region, ethnicity, age or travel frequency. The

research, more specifically, did not address the issue of gender because there was no evidence of gender differences in experiences of conference travel. Therefore, the research had to be more selective when considering factors for a homogeneous sampling and which factor would be more important than others (Smith et al., 2009). The homogeneity also needed to align with the purpose of the research of understanding the subjective experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses, so that the research could provide a passible avenue for future explorations based on its findings.

Having experienced how hard it was to find eligible participants, I focused on individuals who were homogeneous in terms of whether they 'had lived in a stable partnership' and had 'ever accompanied their spouse on travel to a conference'. As a result, the following criteria were used to recruit a relevant sample for the current research:

- People who had an experience of overseas conference travel with their spouse regardless of the characteristics of the conference at least once.
- People who were a spouse or partner of conference attendees regardless of gender, age, and nationality.

Here, in line with IPA's orientation, the intent was to gain individuals' perspectives on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, rather than make them representative of an accompanying spouses' population (Smith et al., 2009). The intent also encompassed the inductive logic, "from the ground up, rather handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). The topic is that this thesis research will yield substantive and specific findings for subsequent studies looking at larger populations or different spouse job areas, such as between the public and private sectors, and travel for incentives and exhibitions or different accompanying persons for example friends, family and relatives (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

In terms of the sampling of conference attendees, a person in a relationship and travelling with their spouse to any type of conference was eligible to participate in the research. In practice, a number of primary participants took part in the research through the support of their partners.

The recruitment of eligible primary participants for the research was challenging, due to the lack of direct social access to potential participants. Initially, I attempted to recruit participants at a conference site during the conference period. I thought that potential accompanying spouses would be easily identified and accessed at a conference site considering unknown population parameters, so it could facilitate the sample process. At this time, a combination of two sampling techniques, a purposive and a convenience sampling (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006), was used to identify potential participants. Patton (2002) notes that the use of more than one technique improves the chances of finding a quality sample, and in line with that, sampling in the current research aimed to eliminate the uncertainty of the level of spouses' attendance at a conference and improve the opportunity of finding a quality sample (Jennings, 2010).

Although without meeting the conference organisers I was allowed to contact potential participants through my own efforts at a conference venue, I encountered a fundamental difficulty in identifying accompanying spouses. Almost half of the accompanying spouses who I contacted refused to participate in the research due to their schedule and their spouses' position. Eventually, four participants were found at the third conference in four months. However, there still remained difficulties in building rapport with them given the tight schedule of a conference and this resulted in poor and superficial data. Participants' stories tended to focus on immediate experiences rather than be reflective on the meaning of something particular in their travel. As a result, I decided to recruit participants based on their availability outside of a conference venue.

In summary, a combination of non-random techniques, i.e. purposeful and snowballing sampling, was used to recruit participants who met the research criteria. Patton (2002) says that such a sampling technique is invaluable when looking for in-depth understanding and insights. This sampling strategy also fits

an IPA orientation as it helps the researcher to select potential participants that will provide a detailed description about the phenomenon being investigated (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The research participants were mostly sought through my personal contacts, acquaintances, and social networks. Snowball sampling also allowed me to contact, through a referral by current participants, other potential candidates with conference travel experience possibly interested in participating in the research (Bernard, 2013). In this procedure, I asked participants if they knew someone else who met the criteria of the research. Snowball sampling thus resulted in the discovery of hidden populations (Sarantakos, 2005).

In total, fifteen accompanying spouses (primary participants) and fifteen conference attendees (secondary participants) were recruited for the research. Initially, ten conference attendees agreed to join in the research. The conference attendees were not always the partners of accompanying spouses taking part in the research. This is because the interviews with conference attendees set out provide supplementary information which was helpful for me when analysing accompanying spouses' understanding of their experience. During the sample process or after interviewing, they were encouraged to pass on an information sheet clearly describing the research purpose to their spouses. Through this, the spouses of seven conference attendees joined the research project while the remainder refused to take part for personal reasons. Six accompanying spouses were recruited through my social networks, and of those, the partners of four were willing to take part in the research as conference attendees.

Further attempts to select the remaining two accompanying spouses and single conference attendee were made through contacting various kinds of the gatekeepers due to the challenges associated with recruiting the primary participant. I conducted targeted advertising through gatekeepers of public and private organisations. Those organisations included, for example, the Waikato University Postgraduate Student Associate, Waikato District Health Board, the Hamilton City Council, and ethnic communities. I asked the organisations to run the research invitation through their networks. The invitation displayed the nature of the research, an introduction to the thesis and its importance, and the researcher's contact details for those who would reply positively to the invitation.

One accompanying spouse and one conference attendee who were eligible to the research criteria volunteered and the conference attendee helped me recruit his wife for the research.

Same size

As the purpose of the research was to seek a detailed personal account of the experience in an IPA orientation, I could have purposely used a small sample that would grasp a sufficient account of accompanying spouses' personal experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The larger sample of fifteen accompanying spouses and fifteen conference attendees were interviewed for the thesis research. This could have led to the loss of some idiographic detail if the researcher found difficulty in giving sufficient voice to every participant (Smith, 2004), and in understanding the deeper personal meaning of the phenomenon (Jennings, 2010).

However, sample size inevitably varies according to the type of the research based on the quality of the data collected, the richness of individual cases, and the level of analysis and reporting (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Patton, 2002; Smith, 2004). In other words, the size of the sample may increase or decrease in a possible continuation of the study depending on whether the research reaches saturation point (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Patton, 2002). IPA maintains an idiographic rather than nomothetic focus in order to gain a detailed understanding of the lived experience of the people being studied and does not create a definitive theory or make general claims across a population (Smith et al., 2009). Reid et al. (2005) recommend a sample size of between three and six research participants for a project using IPA would be reasonable. This allows sufficient in-depth engagement with each individual case (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). However, in reviewing IPA studies, Brocki and Wearden (2006) found that sample sizes varied according to circumstance so there is no 'saturation' in such studies.

Beyond any advantage of a small sample size, I wanted to see if the opportunity for new themes emerged from a broader recruitment. Therefore interviewing was stopped when I found that new participants repeated narratives rather than added

new information to previously heard stories about conference travel. This was in accordance with Turner et al. (2002) who interviewed no more than twelve participants in their study because they felt that when no new themes arose they had reached data saturation point.

Accompanying spouses

Of the fifteen who had accompanied their spouses to conference travel, thirteen were female and two male. I intended to recruitt more male participants to see if there was any gender difference in experiences of conference travel, but interesting in itself, it was rare to find female conference attendees who had travelled with a spouse. At the time of the interviews, accompanying spouses' ages ranged from 29 to 68 years, with the median age being 47.7 years. Seven accompanying spouses had grown-up children, six were living with young children, and two had no children. Grown-up children appear to facilitate a greater participation of accompanying spouses in travel, those at the 'empty-nest' stage easily make the decision to travel with their spouse.

Considering participant's social background, three women perceived themselves to be housewives at the time of the interviews, and one was getting ready for a PhD study. The remainder worked on a full or part-time basis. It seems that personal availability due to conditions of employment at the time of travel may be considered a dominant factor in the decision whether to travel or not. As can be seen in Table 2 (page 94), the participants came from a wide variety of ethnic groups and included New Zealanders and people of British, Vietnamese, Australian, Korean, Japanese, Iranian, and Malaysian descent. This was not deliberate, but at the time of the interviews, fourteen participants lived in Hamilton and Auckland in New Zealand; one, possible result of purposive sampling, resided in the Republic of Korea. This pattern of participants' location distribution might have been influenced by the sample process and convenient access to in-person interviews. However, social-cultural differences showed that fourteen were married, and one was in a cohabiting relationship.

Table 2 Ethnic characteristics of participants: Accompanying spouses

Ethnicity[1]	New Zealander	British	Vietnamese	Australian	Korean	Japanese	Iranian	Malaysian
Number of participants	6	1	1	1	2	1	1	2

It is worth noting that while a person may not consider him/herself a 'spouse', the researcher used this term as a convenient shorthand, as defined for the context of this thesis in Chapter One. Four had experienced overseas conference travel with a spouse once, the remainder more than twice.

Table 3 (page 95) provides a demographic summary of the fifteen accompanying spouses interviewed. This information was deemed important for in section 4.1 in Chapter Four as an introduction to the demographics and backgrounds of the participants. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the primary participants.

---

[1] Ethnicity is used in this thesis to denote participant's self-defined allegiance to a particular home country background or culture.

Table 3 Demographic characteristics of accompanying spouses

Name	Age	Gender	Citizenship	Occupation	Main reason for travel	Conference type	Source of travel funds
Nelly	62	Female	New Zealand	Educational researcher	Leisure/ vacation	Academic	Private
Glenda	56	Female	New Zealand	Medical librarian	Leisure/ vacation	Academic	Private
Bridget	36	Female	Vietnam	English teacher	Leisure/ vacation & Family time	Academic	Private
Fiona	68	Female	Australia/ New Zealand	Practice nurse	Leisure/ vacation	Industry	Private
Brenda	49	Female	New Zealand	House wife	Leisure/ vacation & Family time (with husband)	Industry	Private
Sherine	59	Female	Japan	Teacher (ESOL) & translator	Leisure/ vacation	Academic	Private
Jessica	29	Female	New Zealand	Environmental specialist-Air	Leisure/ vacation	Academic	Private
Russell	65	Male	New Zealand	Charted accountant	Leisure/ vacation	Association	Private
Chloe	39	Female	New Zealand	Nurse coordinator	Leisure/ vacation	Industry	Organisation
Bella	50	Female	Korea	House wife	Family time (with husband)	Industry	Private
Kathy	51	Female	Australia	HR/Training	Leisure/vacation	Academic/industry	Private
Emma	29	Female	Iran	Former student	Studying	Academic	Private
Sylvia	34	Female	New Zealand	Housewife	Leisure/vacation	Industry	Private
Renee	52	Female	New Zealand	Teacher	Leisure/vacation	Academic	Private
Thomas	37	Male	New Zealand	Project manager	Leisure/vacation	N/A	N/A

Conference attendees

Of the fifteen conference attendees that took part in the research, twelve were male and three female. Their ages ranged between 28 and 66 years, with the median age being 45.9 years. The occupations of most participants were academic, such as a professor, lecturer, research fellow and PhD student. The remainder were involved in the medical profession or other industries (see, Table 4). Due to the nature of their occupations, they often have opportunities to travel to conferences as a part of their job whether or not accompanied by a spouse. The nature of the occupation of conference attendees is also a significant contextual factor in how accompanying spouses' travel opportunities arise.

Table 4 The occupations of participants: Conference attendees

Occupation	Academic	Medical	IT	Business
Number of participants	11	2	1	1

Remarkably, apart from two participants, all participants had been on a conference trip paid for by their work organisation and/or employer. In such cases, it may be cost effective for attendees to travel with their spouses; that the couple only pays for one traveller could make the trip appealing. In fact, seven attendees had experienced overseas conference travel with their spouse once, the remainder more than twice.

Table 5 (page 97) shows a summary of the demographic information of conference attendees in this research. This information may demonstrate that conference attendees act as facilitators for accompanying spouses' involvement in conference travel. Pseudonyms have again been used to protect the privacy of all secondary participants.

Table 5 Demographic characteristics of conference attendees

Name	Occupation	Age	Gender	Main reason for travel	Conference type	Source of travel funds
Ellie	University professor	41	Female	Keynote presentation	Academic	Organisation
Billy	Retired professor	66	Male	Leisure/ vacation	Academic	Organisation
Ashely	University senior lecturer	58	Male	Networking/achieving publication outputs	Academic	Organisation
Daniel	University lecturer	37	Male	Academic research	Academic	Private
Jimmy	Medical doctor	39	Male	Networking	Academic	Organisation/Private
Colin	Research fellow	31	Male	Presenting a paper	Academic	Organisation
Paul	University lecturer	65	Male	N/A	Academic	Organisation/Private
Andrew	PhD student	28	Male	Presenting paper	Academic	Organisation
Grace	Senior tutor	62	Female	Networking/ presenting a paper	Academic	Organisation
Brian	IT support	50	Male	Leisure/ vacation	Individual business travel	Private
Jay	PhD student/tutor	27	Male	Networking	Academic	Organisation
David	Director	35	Male	Leisure/ vacation & business	Industry	Organisation
Jack	Medicine anaesthesiatist	56	Male	Continuing medical education	Academic	Organisation/Private
Anthony	University academic	57	Male	Family affair	Academic/industry	Organisation
Laura	N/A	37	Female	Networking/learning	Academic	Organisation

3.7 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were deemed best for this research because of their flexibility in operation, the unique nature of the research topic and the unpredictability of the population. As a mode of data collection interviewing with its conversational dialogue style encourages participants to share their personal experiences with the researcher (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). Thus, the researcher could capture in-depth stories, feelings and thoughts from the participants' own words. Interviews needed to be flexibly structured to allow the research participants to tell their stories and what made the stories meaningful. However, the participants were guided by a common set of the key questions to ensure comparability with the other interviews. The semi-structured interview is, also, frequently favoured in IPA studies, specifically those aimed at seeking each participant's perspective on a common experience (see, for example, Larkin & Griffiths, 2004; Mahrer-Imhof, Hoffmann, & Froelicher, 2007; Mulveen & Hepworth, 2006; Quinn et al., 2008; Reynolds et al., 2011).

In general, a face-to face conversational format was used, as this facilitated an easy opening up and free talking by participants and the researcher eliciting more detailed accounts (Reynolds et al., 2011; Rostill-Brookes et al., 2011). Where such a format was restricted by distance, money and time, email interviews were also used. Email interviews are especially valuable when questioning a population hard to reach due to geographical distance, socio-cultural boundaries or physical conditions (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004) or when the research topic may be too personal or sensitive to discuss face-to-face, like, for example, the experience of a menopausal transition (Pearce, Thøgersen-Ntoumani, & Duda, 2013).

In this thesis, data was gathered through two stages of face-to-face interviews (initial and second phase) with accompanying spouses and face-to-face and email interviews with conference attendees. Indeed, I was able to obtain sufficient information from face-to-face and email interviews. However, reflecting on my experience, face-to-face interviews were more effective than email interviews because I, as an interviewer, was able to build on the participants' responses

freely by asking probing questions. Face-to-face interviews mainly took place at participants' homes, which helped me to accustom myself with participants' surroundings and better understand each participant's way of life. All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the research participants then downloaded to PC and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

As the thesis involved data collection from human participants, the researcher needed to gain prior ethical approval for the research project and all relevant materials - including an information sheet, consent form and interview questions - from the Waikato Management School Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. Under the research ethics guidelines of University of Waikato, all participants were given an 'information sheet', before interviews started. This was necessary as it helped ensure their participation with the researcher. They were made aware that the names and other identifying information of all participants would be changed to maintain confidentiality. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the research, but if agreeing to participate, they had to sign on a 'consent form'. In the case of email interviews, once participants agreed to be questioned, they were sent an information sheet and a consent form with a list of the main interview questions via e-mail. In actuality no special concern about confidentiality arose at any time during the research process.

Initial interview

The initial interview was designed to capture a rich and detailed account of participants' experiences of conference travel and what conference travel meant to them. Participants were considered 'experiential experts' on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in this thesis, and given the maximum opportunity to tell their stories in their own way (Smith & Osborn, 2008). My role as a researcher was to help them to talk about their thoughts, understandings and feelings which I then interpreted avoiding academic jargon, patronising respondents, showing disbelief or judging the accounts (Sarantakos, 2005).

Fifteen initial interviews with accompanying spouses were conducted over a twenty-month period from December 2011 to November 2012. Via e-mails or phone calls, I confirmed that each participant was willing to participate in the research process, and then arranged a time, date, and place for an interview. The interview setting was decided at each participant's convenience so that both the participant and I felt comfortable. This included such venues as the participant's house, the participant spouses' office, the researcher's office, a café, or a meeting room in the library at the University of Waikato. The interviews were also conducted at the time and date most convenient for the participants. Initial interviews normally lasted between 40 and 70 minutes.

To elicit detailed, insightful accounts from participants, it was important to get participants as actively involved in the interview process as possible. Before each interview, I had a brief, informal chat with the participant to encourage engagement in the interview. I felt that the richness of the stories would be tapped when the participants felt comfortable and opened up. I did not have any pre-set questions at this stage but rather talked off topic, for example introducing myself and my interest in their experiences and chatting about something in the participant's house or the way they spent their free time. On occasion, this informal conversation occurred after the interview was finished. This helped build a positive rapport between us and increased their trust in me. Then, in accordance with the research ethics guidelines of the University of Waikato, the participant was given an information sheet (see Appendix A, page 238) reminding them of the aim of the research and the interview process. They were also given the consent form (see Appendix B, page 239) which allowed withdrawal at any stage of the research until voice recording and data analysis commenced. All participants agreed to the interviews being digitally recorded, and none chose to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

After the preliminary formalities of introducing the research, the interview began with questions about their demographic background and general holiday patterns. I felt it was essential to gather background information about the research participants as research around the topic and participant profiles were under-developed. I also thought such information could be useful in the later study of the

accompanying spouses' experience. Questions about demographic background covered general information, such as 'Please, tell me a little about yourself', while those about general holiday patterns covered participants' holiday experiences and opinions, for example 'How often do you go travelling?' and 'What does travelling mean to you?' These questions specifically helped the participants to distinguish between conference travel experience and other types of holiday experience.

An interview schedule was structured to guide the interview. The interview schedule generated specific questions to explore how experiences of conference travel were understood by accompanying spouses within the context of their lives, and maintained IPA characteristics (see, for example, Dickson et al., 2010; Quinn et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2009). With this schedule, I wished to encourage accompanying spouses to tell their stories in their own words, highlighting how they felt the experience of conference travel had impacted on their lives, their experiences and feelings when spending time alone and with their spouses, and when engaging in conference activities. The schedule mainly consisted of a set of open-ended, descriptive and narrative questions and was reviewed and confirmed by a chief supervisor before the interviewing began. Appleton (1995) indicates that by using open-ended questions the researcher can encourage participants to deepen their experiences and discuss different perspectives brought by other participants.

The following questions represent the basis of interviewing:

- What was it like for you to travel to the conference?
- What made you decide to join this travel?
- How did you spend time alone while your spouse worked?
- How did you spend time with your spouse during the time of conference?
- Will you please tell me about the feelings that stood out for you during the travel?
- What does travel to conference(s) mean to you?

Possible prompts and probing questions were also prepared in the schedule. The aim of these was to help me follow up information, specifically if participants did not respond to questions in detail or follow particular leads, for example:

- Please tell me a little more about that.
- What do you mean by that?
- From my understanding………., is that right?
- Can you please give me further examples of that/those?
- Why is that important to you?

Such questions in turn were helpful in increasing the depth and richness of participants' accounts, and are favoured in qualitative studies to attain more detailed narratives about participants' experiences. During the interview, I also took opportunities to probe the participants further with questions other than those above to find out more about interesting or important issues they revealed. Thus, the process of reflecting and probing helped shape the flow of accompanying spouses' stories and interpretations (Dickson et al., 2010). Also, the interview schedule was consistent with an inductive approach and was sufficiently flexible to allow participants to raise new topics. I, therefore, did not follow a mechanical sequential questioning when needing to following up on responses given by the participants during the interview (Kvale, 1996). The actual order of the questions differed from interview to interview. IPA supports an unrestricted conversation or connectedness between the researcher and participants, which makes possible unexpected responses and novel viewpoints on the research question (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 1999b).

As may be seen, a dynamic process captured the rich and insightful descriptions of the participants during the interview. This process required from me an intense attentiveness to and engagement with the participant (Smith, 2007). I endeavoured to either bracket or at least acknowledge my preconceptions as, with empathy for their situation during the interview, I reflected on their perspectives; what Willis (2001) refers to as "intuitive grasp" (p. 5).

Alongside this empathic reflection, I intended to understand how my own beliefs, assumptions and ideas relating to extant literature illuminated by what the participants told me (Smith et al., 2009). This enabled me to follow up unique and important issues of individual participants as they arose during the interviews (Smith, 2004). As I reflexively probed participants further on such issues, I clarified what was behind their response and got to know more about them. This also helped me to find connections between different aspects of a person's account within the context of their life world (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009). Indeed, the hermeneutic circle of understanding between the researcher (the whole) and participant (the part) was established as the researcher kept moving back and forth from the point where the researcher started (Smith, 2007). This process played out on an individual basis, consistent with an IPA emphasis on an idiographic approach and I focused on each individual and story as a unit of analysis (Smith et al., 2009). It made a positive contribution to finding the depth and richness of the participants' accounts.

At the same time, it allowed unanticipated themes to surface during interviews and I probed participants further on such themes, as 'companionship', 'togetherness', 'social inclusion and exclusion' and 'blending of roles'. These themes were concerned with relationship with participants' spouses and other people within the conference society, themes I would never have thought of until the interview. In fact, no specific question investigated the 'relational aspect' of travel experience in the original interview schedule. The participants brought the theme into the research by talking implicitly and explicitly about their reasons for travel and their feelings while spending time with spouses and others in the conference society. The impact of relational experience and accompanying emotions on the conference travel experience was acknowledged and validated. In turn, that allowed me to consider relevant theoretical perspectives on such issues. To elaborate on such themes, the participants were asked be part of second stage interviews. Five out of fifteen participants agreed.

Establishing a rapport

Trust between me and the participant was essential for this research, as personal issues could have arisen during a participant's experiences of conference travel. In general, researchers are advised to create good rapport with participants when collecting verbal data and to minimise their impact on participants' accounts (Smith et al., 2009). Building rapport is, what Minichiello et al. (2008) refer to as, getting "a positive easy-going relationship with the informant" (p. 328) to draw out their unique stories (Fontana & Prokos, 2007; Minichiello et al., 2008; Sarantakos, 2005). Having built a positive rapport, the researcher is able to understand the situation more easily from the participant's viewpoint and create a trust that makes the respondent confident in their answers (Minichiello et al., 2008; Sarantakos, 2005). This could be achieved in the interview through interactions such as me nodding my head and making eye contact during the interview, as this made the participants feel validated and that they were contributing something of interest. Further, rapport was also possible in a second interview when a 'sharedness of meanings' (Fontana & Prokos, 2007) was created, especially as sensitive areas in a couple's relationship arose during interviews. Thus, trust between researcher and participants is especially relevant and establishing rapport with participants was seen as an important step in the collection of data.

Interviews with the conference attendees

As the interviews with accompanying spouses progressed, fifteen interviews with conference attendees were carried out over a thirteen-month period from November 2011 to November 2012. These interviews set out to provide supplementary information about conference attendees' experience of conference travel with their spouses. Such information was helpful when analysing accompanying spouses' understanding of their experience. Acknowledging that conference attendees' perspectives were different from those of accompanying spouses, I decided to interview them separately. Also, there was a limitation on couple interviews because eight couples were involved in the research.

The data collection procedure was the same as for initial interviews with accompanying spouses. Before starting an interview, the participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix C, page 240) and were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix D, page 241). The interview schedule was constructed in the same way as that for the initial interview with accompanying spouses and included a series of open-ended, descriptive and narrative questions with possible probing sub-questions. Here, conference attendees were asked to describe their experience, feelings and thoughts on conference travel with their spouses and their understanding of the experience. The following questions show the basis of interviewing:

- What was it like for you to take your spouse to a conference(s)?
- What do you think it was like for your spouse to be accompanied to a conference(s)?
- Under what circumstances do you take your spouse to a conference(s)?
- What does travel to conference(s) mean to you?

As no one had previously analysed the perspective of these individuals, it was important to collect their background information and general holiday patterns. In addition, to make explicit the reason for travelling together, questions about general patterns of conference travel were included, like 'How often have you attended an international conference?', 'Have you ever combined your conference attendance with a holiday for yourself?', 'What is the main reason to attend a conference for you?'. The interview schedule remained flexible enough for important topics to as they emerged.

Twelve out of fifteen face-to-face interviews with conference attendees were conducted following the interview schedule. Interviews were normally held in the participant's office at work, though two took place in the participant's house and one in a café. Compared to the initial interviews with accompanying spouses, interviews with the attendees tended to be shorter - lasting 30 minutes on average - because they were normally carried out during interviewees' work time. Before or during the interview, I purposely engaged in friendly conversation to establish

a good rapport with the interviewees.

Three email interviews were undertaken because of geographical location and personal reasons. Through purposive sampling, two participants who lived outside New Zealand were recruited for the research as was one who lived in New Zealand but who was not available for a face-to-face interview. I offered all the choice of either email (asynchronous method) or communication through real-time-chat-software like Skype or MSN Messenger (synchronous method) (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004; Fontana & Prokos, 2007). All preferred email. Indeed, I could save time and financial resources by eliminating the need to travel or transcribe tapes and set up mutually convenient interview times (Fontana & Prokos, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

I emailed the interview schedule and consent form to the participants and received replies at their convenience. While email interviews cannot approach a real-time conversation, they still allowed participants to see and potentially reflect upon the dialogue as a visual written 'record' (Pearce et al., 2013). However, responses were much more concise when compared to face-to-face interviews. It was also impossible to capture the participants' reactions to questions via body language, voice and facial expression, so personal insights and the relevance of the subject to the email interviewees was lacking. Email also reduced the opportunity to raise possible new topics through probing questions. Although therefore possibly disadvantageous compared to a face-to-face interview, email has the benefit of an increased level of anonymity between participant and researcher (Pearce et al., 2013). Most of all, the email interviews helped the researcher to elicit a background understanding of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon and contributed similar themes to the other data collected.

As in the interviews with accompanying spouses, the topic of the 'relational aspect' of travel experience arose in conference attendees' accounts, although no particular questions addressed this topic in the interview schedule. By considering the attendees' perspectives, I was able to refine and develop the understanding gained from the perspectives of accompanying spouses. The relational issue emerging from both groups of participants led me to include a relationship

dimension in the research investigation and, as it was pervasive in the attendees' accounts, I added probing questions about relational issues to the interviews with them.

The second phase interview with accompanying spouses

After reading the interview transcripts, I obtained a general sense of the data as a whole and encountered a range of issues the meaning of time during travel; the interplay between the reasons for travel, the spousal relationship and the importance of couple time away from home raised by accompanying spouses' interviews and confirmed by conference attendees' interviews. However, given that no particular theoretical framework was employed in this thesis, an increased rigour and trustworthiness of the researcher's understandings and interpretations was necessary. Therefore, second-phase interviews with accompanying spouses were designed to improve the accuracy of my understandings. Indeed, I attempted to get the participants to reaffirm their understandings and meanings rather than cover a range of new topics. The second-phase interviews also gave participants the opportunity to expand on comments made during the initial interviews.

I contacted all accompanying spouses again by email and a phone call to invite them to take part in a second interview. Even though I informed them about the second-phase interview during the initial interview stage, the majority of the participants were not willing to participate again. This was likely due to the summer holiday timing of the second-phase interviews during December and January. Five out of the fifteen made themselves available for the second-phase interview, which lasted for 30 minutes on average. During the interviews, rapport was quickly re-established and I was able to digitally record and later transcribe the interviews verbatim for analysis. They were more structured but still took an open and conversational style (Minichiello et al., 2008; Patton, 2002). No interviews were prepared; instead I formulated several questions relevant to each individual to confirm my understanding. In general, these interviews progressed in a more relaxed atmosphere than the previous interviews.

Typically, the interview began with cross-checking my understandings of individual experiences. I discussed specific examples that I noted down during the initial interview. When participants had difficulty remembering details of their experience or their descriptions differed from their spouses', I told them what their spouse had said to prompt them. However, I did not report everything their partner had said as care had to be taken to avoid influencing the participant's experience with that of their spouse. Pocock, Cockburn-Wootten and McIntosh (2013) argue that the researcher needs to be aware of potential tensions caused by him/herself, participants and their significant others during the interview. Some of what was reported - for example frequency of travel, destinations visited and touristic behaviour - was assumed to be factual.

The conversation between me and the participants also facilitated the development of an intersubjective understanding of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2007). I sought a shared understanding and an awareness of similarities and differences between my own views and those of others during my dialogue with the participant. I also entered a process of mediation between the interviewee and the other participants (Appleton, 1995; Minichiello et al., 2008). Ellis and Bochner (1992) argue that understanding is not embedded in the experience as much as it is achieved through an on-going and continuous reliving of the experience. As such, when I presented key issues from the initial interview transcripts, participants engaged with the life-worlds of other participants, asking the details of their experiences, such as '*what happened to them?*' This attention to others' experiences of conference travel facilitated a shared or common understanding (Toren, 2009). It also allowed participants to recognise their views without the pressure of having to achieve anything but accept each other's differences (Muth, 2009). And among other possibilities it opened the opportunity for participants to see others reflected in themselves or themselves in others. Therefore, this interview contributed to participants' final reflections on the meanings ascribed to their experience. It also allowed me to clarify any of my own misunderstandings of the participants' accounts before the interpretation phase.

3.8 Data analysis

The thesis, the analysis was not solely concerned with extracting the essential features of accompanying spouses' experience from research data, it also considered the participants' attempts to make sense of their experience (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Eatough & Smith, 2008). With the use of IPA, the emphasis was directly on understanding the sense participants tried to make of their experience. In alignment with the IPA guidelines presented by Smith et al. (2009, pp. 82-103), my analysis developed from the descriptive to the interpretative through a series of stages. Given that the data from the participants and conference attendees represented two different phenomenological perspectives on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, they were treated as two different data sets and were analysed separately. All the verbatim transcripts were dealt with coherently, one at a time, thoroughly and equally. I began with the first interviews, following the IPA's guidelines, as outlined below.

Repetitive reading and initial noting

Firstly, I repeatedly read each transcript several times without any interpretations or judgements to familiarise myself with the data and find a general sense of the participant's account as a whole. It was worthwhile listening to the audio-recording of interviews as well as reading the transcripts. This helped me form a more complete analysis as it reminded me of the sequence of the interviews and nuances of expressions.

Thereafter the original transcript was placed into a table format with two columns on the right-hand side and what I perceived as important words, parts of sentences or whole sentences underlined. Any significant comments and preliminary interpretations were noted in the first column. The intent was to encapsulate idiographic and descriptive comments of what concerned the participant, how it did so, and the explicit meanings for the participant (Smith et al., 2009). While moving through the transcript, I also kept looking for strongly apparent common themes and attempted to check what they meant for the participant. This enabled

me to generate a comprehensive set of comments along with my preliminary interpretations, which included similarities and differences, echoes, amplifications and contractions in the participant's narrative (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The comments on the first transcript were used as a basis for the analysis of subsequent transcripts, thus the analysis was cumulative.

Developing emergent themes

At this stage, I mostly reviewed initial comments rather than transcripts to capture any emerging themes. Smith and Osborn (2008) advise that researchers unearth the 'essential quality' of what was found when transforming the initial comments into concise phrases. I attempted to identify emergent themes involved in the hermeneutic circle, what Smith et al. (2009) refer to in the paragraph:

> …analysing exploratory comments to identify emergent themes involves a focus, at the local level, on discrete chunks of transcript. However, it also involves a recall of what was learned through the whole process of initial noting…the original whole of the interview becomes a set of parts as you conduct your analysis, but these then come together in another new whole at the end of the analysis in the write-up. (p. 91)

Accordingly, I repeatedly came back to the whole transcript to interpret pieces as part of the whole. I created concise themes underpinned by a cluster of initial comments, considering their theoretical connections and patterns in relation to the whole interview. I listed the emergent themes in the second column of my analysis table. The emergent themes were normally described using the participants' language in order to ensure the inductive nature of analysis. This process of analysis involved a close interaction between the researcher and the text which entailed attempting to understand what the participant said, but also drawing on the researcher's own interpretative resources (Smith et al., 2009). The emphasis of this stage was on the interpretative demands of IPA.

Table 6 (page 111) resents an example of how I processed the data analysis containing exploratory comments and the emergent themes. I coloured passages in the original transcript that I thought important. The exploratory comments' column contains descriptive comments (roman), linguistic comments (italic), and

conceptual comments (underlined). It also shows the process of my immersion into the data throughout the process of IPA analysis.

Table 6 An example of developing emergent themes

Original transcript	Exploratory comments	Emergent themes
I: So, travelling to conferences, to you, seems to bring a lot of opportunity?		
R: Yeah. *It's just an opportunity to travel for me*. It certainly … it has nothing to do with learning anything about what the conference is about. Although I will sometimes look at his programme and we talk about was it a good meeting and he'll say 'Ah, you know, so and so gave a really good talk on this or that'. So, we do discuss sort of what's happened at the meeting or, he'll say 'Ah, no, that was a pretty wasted morning', yeah [laughs].	Opportunity to travel - The main purpose for Chloe to accompany.	Giving support Developing shared interest
I: Ok. What does travel to his conferences with your partner mean to you?		
R: It's quite important because we both work a lot and we don't tend to get away, um, by ourselves. So, *it's just a nice opportunity to spend some time with [name] really, because it's probably the only time we ever do go away*. We've just had a holiday, but that's unusual.	**PROMPT-MEANING OF CONFERENCE TRAVEL** *It's just a nice opportunity to spend some time with*.	Uniqueness of the conference travel experience
I: And why is that important to you?		
R: Um … *I think it's important to any relationship, friendship, or other, to be able to spend some time together that's away from the usual humdrum of work and housework, and study and kids, and all the rest of it. So, it's a good opportunity to do that*.	**PROMPT-RELATIONSHP** Having time together is important to maintain and/or enhance the quality of relationship.	The importance of time spent together on the satisfaction in relationship (CL 8, 159-178)

Connecting themes across emergent themes

Each emergent theme within the transcript was noted on a 'Post-it' note in the order it came up. I attached these notes to a larger piece of paper. This enabled me to explore how emergent themes related to each other. I moved the themes around according to conceptual similarities in representations or understandings (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009). Some of the emergent themes were clustered together, when their connection made sense. Such clusters were given descriptive labels to easily form sub-themes. A table listed clusters, their names and sub-themes with identifiers, such as 'prompt' in Table 6 (p. 10), indicating where the themes could be found in the original transcript. Clusters and themes were checked with the primary transcript to clarify if the connections could also be made from what the participant actually said (Smith et al., 2009). During this process themes were discarded if they did not fit into the emerging structure or were not evidentially rich in relation to the research question.

At this stage, I could have used a software program such as Nvivo or AtlasTi which would have helped me to code themes as it looked for convergences and divergences across all cases (Bernard, 2013). However, I wondered about the use of a software program in an analytical process dependent on phenomenology and the iterative hermeneutic circle. Learning the program would have required much time investment, which I was reluctant to make if it would not enhance my analysis. Boland (2011) used NVivo 8 software on data during his IPA study of coping with multiple sclerosis. He reported that, although a useful tool to help organise the data and collect themes, such software could not be a substitute for his engagement with the data in a continued process of interpretation and reflexivity. Thus, I chose not to use any such program with my study. I found that the traditional method I used yielded considerable detail, specifically during the circular interpretative back and forth between parts of the text and the whole.

Looking for patterns across cases

Once I finished analysing the first interview transcripts, I set to work analysing the subsequent transcripts using the same process. In each analysis, I focused on the transcript's individuality without fitting it into any prescribed or particular formula; thus I maintained the detailed and nuanced individual experience which is demanded by IPA (Smith, 1999a). I had fifteen interview transcripts, so my emphasis was to identify the key emergent themes for the whole group. Once two transcripts had been analysed, I began to cluster the most prominent emerging sub-themes into broad subordinate themes. This involved comparing and understanding the convergences and divergences of emergent themes in the two transcripts. I found that some 'second' transcripts produced more themes than others, depending on the richness of the interview. Smith (2004) describes this process as cyclical in the sense that new emerging themes should be tested against earlier transcripts. Newly emergent themes thus enlightened, modified, or became sub-themes to previously elicited themes (Smith et al., 2009).

Recurrence of themes across cases was measured to decide which themes' foci were important. Themes were not selected purely on the basis of their prevalence within the data but also on other factors, including the richness of the passages that highlighted a theme and how the theme helped to illuminate other novel or surprising aspects of the account (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Shared themes containing lower level themes were categorised in the form of consistent and meaningful statements implying the core meanings and essences of the participants' experiences grounded in their own words (Smith & Osborn, 2008). However, I still concentrated on particular individual examples, which helped develop new themes.

This process of inductive movement, shifting from the particular to the general and revising, led to the emergence of three key themes. Table 7 (page 114) presents an initial version of a master list of themes. I modified themes a number of times as a result of the development of my understanding during the analysis of data. The final version is presented in the findings chapter.

Table 7 Initial version of a master list of themes

Key themes	Sub-themes
Relationship	The nature of the relationship
	Shared experience or memories
	Giving support/show of devotion
	Intimacy/togetherness
Own time	Self-sufficiency/ ability to be on one's own
	Social relations
	-The importance of VFR
	-Building relationship
	Changing roles
	-Social inclusion vs. social exclusion
	-The dilemma in status
	- The chance to know spouses' work
Uniqueness of the conference travel experience	The sense of luxury
	Serendipity
	The availability of own time
	Ethics

3.9 The quality of the research

In keeping with IPA tradition, the knowledge produced in this thesis comes more from subjectivity in the interpretation of the data than a check on the objectivity of such interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, the key to evaluating the quality of the research is not the generalizability of the findings, but rather whether knowledge is established by the shared understanding and negotiation of meaning between the researcher and participants (Yardley, 2000). In particular, for this thesis it is appropriate to create an extensive grounding in the participants' and researcher's interpretations, since the thesis does not depend on a theoretical framework. Therefore, the research is sensitive to the interpretation created by the participants and takes the accounts of participants at face value.

In IPA research, peer review is an acceptable form of cross-validation and is considered a desirable way of checking and improving the validity and audit of work (Smith et al., 2009). Reid et al. (2005) acknowledge that analysis conducted by more than one researcher is another form of 'triangulation', and in IPA researches it can take different forms during the data analysis. Usually a second researcher reviews and discusses the first's analysis (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004; Rostill-Brookes et al., 2011), but another form is peer coding in which co-

researchers conduct independent analysis and produce a final agreed classification through discussion (Abbey & Dallos, 2004; Dancyger, Smith, Jacobs, Wallace, & Michie, 2010). The involvement of multiple researchers in the analysis of the data may be an explicit requirement for increasing the trustworthiness of the data and the breadth of the interpretative process, specifically when only one researcher conducts the research (Yardley, 2000). In case of Boland's (2011) thesis, the trustworthiness of the research findings was enriched through an independent audit by one supervisor and the joint coding of selected sections of the interview transcripts by another. A comparative coding by supervisors for selected rich narratives also helped Watts ("A Family Affair," 2006) ensure his emerging themes showed a level of transparency and coherence.

Once I completed the analysis of all participants' transcripts and had an early version of the master list of themes, my chief supervisor verified my data analysis. My supervisor who had taken her partner to academic conferences read through the transcripts and analysed them independently from me. Smith et al. (2009) argue that peers can only verify the quality of a study in terms of coherence and credibility, not in terms of the researcher's subjective interpretation. Also peers do not have to represent the 'truth' or necessarily to reach a consensus. When my supervisor completed her work, we discussed our interpretations. We found nearly the same interpretations in terms of representing commonalities across the participants' accounts and accommodating the variations within the data set. In other words, a shared meaning between me and my supervisor was created and offered the basis for articulating and interpreting the accompanying spouses' experience (Hein & Austin, 2001). Thus, the common emerging themes from the data were set.

This verification gave me confidence in a clear plan of how and what to highlight as key themes. During this process, the early version of the master list of themes (Table 7, page 114) was articulated and revised. The final version of the list of themes is presented in Chapter Four Findings. The credibility of the analytic process and the results of this research have been strengthened by the documentation of the stages of analysis and the discussion between me and my supervisor about the interpretation of the data (Smith, 2004; Yardley, 2000).

Yardley (2000) demonstrates that the coherence of research is informed by the well-elucidated perspective of participants, especially where the research offers no predictions or preconceptions. Here, the research adopted an inductive approach to data analysis to explore each accompanying spouses' perspective of conference travel experience. It aligns with hermeneutic philosophy and an idiographic approach of IPA as accompanying spouses have a privilege of interpreting their own experiences. It required a participant's account in concrete and explicit detail. Participants verifying their own experience was considered a form of member validation in what Bygstad and Munkvold (2007) refer to as, "the common-sense wisdom of asking the source of information to verify that it is exact and complete" (p. 243b). An interpretive case study by Bygstad and Munkvold (2007) empirically showed that member validation plays a significant role in the constructing of a case and increasing its validity. During the interviews, I also tried to achieve stability within my interpretation of what participants said through the clarification process with each participant. I constantly checked the accuracy of my understanding with questions such as, 'My understanding is that you don't seem to care about your status at the conference, is that right?' Furthermore, I conducted the second phase interview with accompanying spouses to check my understanding of each participant's description within the context of her/his life world. This process of member validation helped to ensure the trustworthiness of the data (Abbey & Dallos, 2004).

Finally, the transferability of data also improved the present research's quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this thesis, I tried to present 'thick' descriptions illustrating the axiomatic representation, various experience and contextual situatedness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McCormick, 1996). As such, this description aims to share with the reader about what I and participants think, thus, allowing the reader to bring her/his own tacit knowledge to an understanding of the participants' experience (McCormick, 1996). Smith et al (2009) also explain that through connecting the findings to the extant tourism literature, the researcher can shed light on the existing research for the reader. Readers can, in turn, continue this process of theoretical transferability as they examine the research from the perspective of their own experiential knowledge base, and begin to think of the implications for their own work (Smith et al., 2009).

3.10 Presentation of the research findings

This thesis research has sought subjective, richly detailed and context-dependent data to establish a subjective-felt experience (Smith et al., 2009). The most important point is that the deeply interpreted and elucidated meanings of the data should help an audience access the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. Openness and transparency in writing the statements builds trust with the reader (Dusek, 2006) and my choices for the presentation of the thesis attempt to accomplish that purpose. In aligning the thesis with an IPA orientation, I was required to provide a narrative around the key themes in order to "account for what is shared in the data, whilst also identifying what is distinct" (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004, p. 219). I elaborated the unique features of each of the key themes shared by the participants involved in the research and identified through the analysis. These themes are illustrated with the use of relevant exemplar quotes from the accompanying spouses' interviews in Chapter Four. The narrative would build trust between the researcher and the reader, as such it allows the reader "to access the pertinence of the interpretations, but also to retain the voice of the participant's personal experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 155). An interpretative comment is subsequently followed by a quotation to confirm the participant's interpretation. This is because the researcher's comment makes participants' quotations particular to the expanding theme (Smith, 2011).

More importantly, I have attempted to describe the uniqueness of the individual experience (i.e., particularities) in the accounts, combined with the common features. IPA strongly suggests this as a researcher demonstrates how participants manifest the same theme in particular and different ways (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004; Smith, 2011). Prior to the presentation of each key theme, I report one participant's story that shows both the differences and uniqueness of the experience compared to other cases within the theme. This story attempts to help the reader grasp particular aspects of the common patterns of the accompanying spouses' travel experience (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009) and the underlying meanings of that experience within the context of the spouses' particular life experiences. By focusing on the distinctive voice, the thesis can align with IPA

that represents a set of common processes (e.g. moving from the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative) and principles (e.g. a commitment to an understanding of the participant's point of view, and a psychological focus on personal meaning-making in particular contexts) which are applied flexibly (Reid et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2009).

The accounts of the conference attendees support those of accompanying spouses, particularly in regard to 'relational aspects' and 'social inclusion/exclusion', as will now be revealed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four   Research Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the findings that emerged from the IPA analysis of the data to answer the thesis aim. The researcher's analytic attention to accompanying spouses' understanding of their conference travel experiences revealed that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon was multifaceted, but they were not mutually exclusive, evolving through three different contexts: being alone, being with a spouse and being involved in the conference society. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the understanding of three key themes, namely 'the experience of providing individual autonomy', 'the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship' and 'the experience of social inclusion and exclusion'. These themes represent aspects of the accompanying spouses' experiences that were important in their reflections of what the experience meant to them. Thus, rather than conceptualising the phenomenon specifically, this chapter seeks to elucidate what the conference travel experience meant for accompanying spouses. While the chapter is mainly written from the voice of the accompanying spouses, the conference attendees' perspective is also given when necessary to substantiate the themes, as justified in Chapter Three.

Firstly, the chapter introduces the accompanying spouses to the reader by providing the context of individuals' life for the reasons elucidated in Chapter Three. It will help the reader to understand each participant's personal information that influenced their engagement in conference travel and gives background to their personal voice. The chapter then provides the context for this investigation into the understanding of the accompanying spouses' experience of conference travel and the personal meaning that they gained from their experiences. The chapter continues to offer an overview of the key themes that emerged from the data. The main features of each of the three key themes are described and analysed in turn. In particular, as in the case of the IPA analysis, each theme provides the description of a single case. The reasoning behind this was described in section 3.10 in Chapter Three. Finally, the summary of this chapter follows.

4.1 Getting to know the research participants

Prior to presenting the findings of the research, it is important to introduce the reader to the accompanying spouses involved in the research, whereby the reader can get an idea of how individuals have subjectively experienced conference travel in the context of their particular life. This is an important aspect of IPA with emphasis on an idiographic approach, which focuses on grasping the meaning of something for a given person (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, the reader will be better positioned to check the interpretations of what was found from the data. The following Table 8 shows a summary of the fifteen accompanying spouses' profiles.

Table 8 Summary of accompanying spouses' details

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Length of the relationship (years)	Occupation
Nelly	62	Female	13	Educational researcher
Glenda	56	Female	38	Medical librarian
Bridget	36	Female	12	English teacher
Fiona	68	Female	44	Practice nurse
Brenda	49	Female	23	House wife
Sherine	59	Female	30	Teacher (ESOL)
Jessica	29	Female	7	Environmental specialist
Russell	65	Male	40	Charted accountant
Chloe	39	Female	n/a	Nurse coordinator
Bella	50	Female	n/a	House wife
Kathy	51	Female	31	HR/Training
Emma	29	Female	3	Former student
Sylvia	34	Female	11	House wife
Renee	52	Female	25	Teacher
Thomas	37	Male	5	Project manager

The following provides a brief description of the fifteen research participants in the context of the meaning for travelling to conference.

Nelly is 62 years old, female, a full-time worker. 13 years of marriage with 5 grown-up children. She likes travelling since she was young, to experience other cultures, foods and places. It has become a way of life for her. She has a long list of places to be ticked off. Her husband is a retired professor who frequently travelled for study leave and conferences over his entire career. Both of them like to travel, so conferences were a good vehicle for this to happen. She accompanied her husband on almost every occasion and took extra time for a holiday with him before or after the event. However, whether or not she joined her husband depended on if he could make time for a holiday out of the conference.

Glenda is 56 years old, female, a part-time worker. 38 years of marriage with grown-up children. She likes travelling specifically to be relaxed and free of the stress of normal life. Her husband is a university senior lecturer who attends at least one international and one local conference every year. Glenda has accompanied him on his travel at least 5 or 6 times. The main reason was to be company for her husband and for them to spend time together. As her husband frequently attends conferences in European countries due to his academic requirements and work expectations, she has another purpose in her company, namely learning more about her country of birth which she left when she was young. It also gave her a chance to reconnect with relatives.

Bridget is 36 years old, female, a former teacher. 12 years of marriage with 2 young children. She likes to travel as it helps her broaden and relax her mind. Her husband is studying for a PhD degree, so she and the children came to stay with him together during his study. As she has young children, she mainly seeks travel value for the children. She believes that family time on holiday reflects a strong family cohesion. At the same time, she still looks for her own time. Travel is usually limited due to financial implications. Normally, her vacations have been to places in her local vicinity with family. Accompanying her husband on conference travel was a good chance to gather all family members together and travel further than she used to do.

Fiona is 68 years old, female, a full time worker. 44 years of marriage with grown-up children. For Fiona, travelling together is an important aspect of spousal relations and she feels that travel gives the couple some of their happiest times. Her husband is a retired chartered accountant who often attended association conferences. She has had 4 overseas conference travel experiences. The main motivation was a shared experience with her husband. She preferred to join the programme for spouses during her time at the conferences. This is because this programme was organised by locals, so she believed that it made an efficient way to understand local knowledge within a specific time.

Brenda is 49 years old, female, a housewife. 23 years of marriage with no children. She is not really into travelling, but if her husband wants to travel together she has learned to enjoy it. Brenda's husband is self-employed in the computer industry, so travel is a part of his work. Her first experience of her husband's conference travel was a catalyst that led to her accompanying him on his travels abroad for education and business. Her company plays an important role in providing emotional stability for her husband during the travel. Travelling together has become habitual, so Brenda does not care about the destination he chooses or financial concerns. As she has accumulated experience, she has positively changed her attitude towards the travel. It has become a unique opportunity for her to change and develop her understanding of the world and herself.

Sherine is 59 years old, female, a part-time worker**.** 30 years of marriage with 2 grown-up children. Her husband is a senior university lecturer and regularly attends conferences, at least once a year. As her husband likes to use the travel as a frame for a holiday, accompanying her husband is a proper chance for a holiday overseas. Visiting new places is crucial for Sherine when deciding on her participation. The motivation behind conference travel for Sherine is to fulfil academic achievements, as she shares education and academic interests with him and is also an academic. She is keen to get more involved with conferences through social events and sneak into conference sessions of interest to her. She believes that visiting places as an accompanying person is more ethical than visiting these places as a holidaymaker, referring to it as knowing the local

situation from local attendees and making friends. Therefore, conference travel means that she can have a worthwhile holiday with her husband.

Jessica is 29 years old, female, on maternity leave. 7 years of marriage expecting the first baby. Jessica prefers relaxing holidays with some exploring, although she has not travelled overseas much. Her husband is a PhD student and has some chances to attend conferences. The reasons for accompanying him were that she did not want to be away from him, but she also understood from her own experience that travelling for work was not always fun. For her, this type of travel was a good way to justify going overseas without feeling guilty about spending money. On the most recent occasion, it facilitated her and her husband spending time as a couple before Jessica gave birth. She has come to view it as a good way for them to see the world, and intends to make it work in the future.

Russell is 65 years old, male, a freelance chartered accountant. 40 years of marriage with 3 grown-up children. He likes tramping trips as he gets more involved when he sees things. His wife is a senior tutor at the University who attends at least one conference each year. The couple enjoy overseas travel but are usually constrained by finances due to family priorities. He has accompanied her to one overseas conference and a number of domestic conferences. It was a good chance to see other places he had not seen before at a reduced cost, as his wife had got funding to travel. Especially, for Russell the conference travel experience is beneficial that he can gain a better understanding of what his wife does.

Chloe is 39 years old, female, a full-time worker studying part-time at university and mother of 4 children. Her partner is a physician who goes to medical conferences very often. She goes to his conferences twice a year. Accompanying her partner is a good opportunity for her to see new places, stay in nice hotels that she would not normally be able to afford, and is cost effective. Personally, Chloe gets both a break from the daily routine and an opportunity to study. Of particular significance, she places much emphasis on conference travel identifying it as an integral part of maintaining the quality of the relationship. This is because combining his conference travel with holidays is almost the only way they can spend quality time together due to their busy lifestyles.

Bella is 50 year old, female, a housewife. 26 years of marriage with 2 grown-up children. Her husband is the CEO of a foreign company in Korea, often travelling abroad as part of his job. She has the experience of living overseas due to her husband's employment. She and the family often travelled around the cities where they stayed. Since Bella has been relieved of parenting responsibilities, she has started accompanying her husband on his travel. It has proved to be a good opportunity to reconnect with her husband. A crucial factor in deciding whether or not to accompany her husband is the availability of his free time during travel. Travelling together has resulted in an enhancement of the couple's relationship through increased romantic feelings between them.

Kathy is 51year old, female, a part-time worker. 31 years of marriage with 2 grown-up children. She has lived in a number of different countries due to her education, career, and marriage. She is quite comfortable with other cultures and new environments. Connecting with people is one of her foremost objectives in her travel experiences. Her husband is an associate professor at the university who attends 2 or 3 conferences every year and she has quite often accompanied him. Her husband's conference travel opens a number of opportunities to see new places, join family reunions, trace her family's genealogy and learn about different cultures and histories. But on other occasions she also travels for the sake of a holiday.

Emma is 29 year old, female, 3 and half years of marriage with no children. She likes travelling with her husband for refreshment. Her husband is a PhD student. She is also a student, and they came to New Zealand together from their native country to study. She has experienced conference travel on only one occasion, her decision to accompany him largely motivated by the fact that at the time of the conference she had few close friends or acquaintances to rely on while her husband was away. It was a very good break time for her, and also beneficial to her relationship to be with her husband away from their commitments. Having had such a positive experience of conference travel, she is keen to do more of it. In particular, she hopes to travel to a conference hosted by the country in which her friends/family lives. The only concern is whether it will be financially viable.

Sylvia is 34 year old, female, a housewife. 11 years of marriage with 2 young children. She likes to travel to learn about and experience new cultures and enjoy different foods. Her husband is a director in charge of an importing department. He does not really like to travel, but does so for her sake. As the couple have young kids, they normally travel as a family, which means she is a full-time caregiver while on holiday. For her, travelling to conference without the kids was a good alternative to the family holiday. This provides Sylvia the opportunity to focus on herself and her husband, free of the duties of caregiving.

Renee is 52 years old, female, a home school teacher. 25 years of marriage with 2 grown-up children. Her husband works in medical anaesthesia, and as a requirement of his position has to attend conferences every 2 or 3 years for ongoing medical education. For the couple, travel is the main joint activity for leisure, particularly travel for cultural activities, such as opera or chamber and orchestral concerts. Renee has accompanied her husband to 3 local and 5 international conferences. Being a travelling companion was an opportunity to travel cheaply when she had a young family. For her, travelling with her husband to his conferences is a gateway to the global society, as she finds opportunities to learn from a great diversity of cultural perspectives.

Thomas is 37 years old, male, a full-time worker. 5 years of marriage with 2 young children. He enjoys spending time with his family. His wife is a lecturer. He sees the principal benefits of travel as being time to enjoy with his wife, and relieving tensions in their relationship. He has travelled to 3 overseas conferences accompanying his wife. These travels were his first overseas travel for pleasure, although he has some overseas working experience. Indeed, conference travel helped him to catch up with his old friends all over the world.

Each individual above presents a different perspective of conference travel in everyday life. At the same time, similar patterns of experience are also found throughout all of the participants' cases. The research aims to explore the unique and meaningful aspects of the accompanying spouses' experience rather than to generalise. This leads to a need for providing background contextual information that helps the reader understand the findings arising from participants'

descriptions of their experience. The following section focuses on a broad picture of the notion of conference travel for accompanying spouses, decision making factors of their participation in conference travel and in what ways their experiences occurred. The contextual information draws on the data from interviews with all the research participants.

4.2 Contextualisation of conference travel

This thesis involves research with spouses who have travelled with attendees to conferences. The conference travel serves as the research context of this thesis in which participants' subjective experiences can be studied. Conference travel, as already stated in previous chapters, is broadly defined as a work-related activity. In some respects, conference travel is considered part of the tourism realm because a holiday is often combined with either before, during or after the conference. In this context, accompanying spouses as travelling companions might be better able to afford an overseas holiday with their spouses, i.e., conference attendees. In reality, all accompanying spouses participating in this thesis research perceived trips to conferences as a holiday activity that offered a welcome and unique opportunity for being away from normal life, and an opportunity to do something different together with their spouses:

> I love to travel. I would travel with anyone. If you said would you come to a conference in Korea tomorrow and carry my bags, I would say 'sure thing'… It's sort of a reason for being and conferences are a good vehicle for this to happen. Had he gone to more, I would have gone to more. (Nelly)

> If it was just to the conference, I'm not going to accompany him to the conference. I know it can be quite boring. But, I like travelling; I make the most of it. I get out maps and find out what's available in the city… I love travel. Travel is part of my life. So, it's a good opportunity. (Glenda)

> That's an opportunity to go overseas. What we try to do is to decide which conference we'll go, and then arrange everything, especially I check if I can apply for a leave. Conference travel gives a focus for a holiday. (Renee)

In this sense, the participants mostly presented themselves as tourists. Some participants reported that the travel had become a regular pattern, supplying an opportunity for an overseas holiday together on a number of occasions.

There was no common history of initiation into conference travel shared by all participants. Instead, four contextual factors that provided a frame for making the decision to travel were found from the participants' accounts: the nature of the spouses' job, the availability of individuals, financial implications, and the destination. These factors were noticed to influence both the motivation for the trip and the travel experience itself. Firstly, the nature of the spouses' job was found to lay the foundation for understanding how participants' travel opportunities occur. The distance to be travelled and feelings of loneliness or isolation when a spouse needs to travel alone, in particular, appear to trigger accompanying spouses' involvement in conference travel. The impact of the nature of the spouses' job as a driving force behind the travel is embedded in two other contextual factors: 'destination' and 'financial implications'.

The destination reportedly played a pivotal role in the decision-making process. This is because any given destination presents a distinct variety of cultural experiences and other opportunities. Most accompanying spouses in the research reported that they were more likely to engage with the travel if the conference was held in a destination they wanted to visit; if they could find things to do on their own; and if there were people like family, relatives, friends and acquaintances who they would probably reconnect with:

> I know I've got that time to spend, so I try and fill that time in. So I'm not lonely or bored… I do a lot of reading, a lot of walking, I like visiting art galleries and museums. The last time we went we were not far from my relatives, so I visited some elderly relatives, which was good. (Glenda)

> I like visiting new places. It depends on the place, if I'm not interested I don't want to go… If it's a nice place to visit I'd enjoy walking around and trying new food…It's always good to meet old friends and acquaintances. (Sherine)

Some places we have family, so it's both: I get to see the countries and I visit family as well. Like when we went to UK, it was actually a good opportunity because I hadn't seen my sister for almost 20 years. So, when he was going to the UK, I said 'oh, I'll go to the UK. I can meet her'. (Kathy)

This highlights that, although the experience of time spent alone clearly differed one from the other, for the participants, conference travel was viewed as an opportunity to take up various valuable leisure pursuits all at once. It can be suggested that the pursuit of personal interests becomes a part of the motivation to participate in conference travel. Indeed, the destination provided a context for what the participants experienced and how they made sense of it during their own time. However, perceived vast geographical distances could lead to restrictions on their engagement in the travel in relation to financial, time and availability concerns: '[name] is going to Spain and then on to Canada and he's been to Budapest, but they are often too far away… and the flights are too expensive. I wouldn't want to spend that much on a flight for four days, you would go on a holiday' (Chloe).

In terms of financial implications, most participants found that conference travel was a net benefit for them if their spouse had funding to go to a conference: "Conferences, part of that paid full by the firm. You add on you own and pay for whatever you add on" (Fiona); "The University paid expenses for my husband. We paid my airfare and something else on my own" (Emma); "It was a good chance to have a look at another place, and she was getting a free trip. The conference was paying for the airfares" (Russell). Indeed, for most participants, conference travel appeared to be a relatively cheap holiday and offer good value for money compared to their normal holidays. This was deemed to be one element that permitted accompanying spouses to continue conference travel in a sustainable way. A further contextual factor is an opportunity within a life stage to be able to travel with respect to the availability of individuals at the time of the conference and the absence of dependent children. Across the interviews, personal availability based on conditions of employment was considered a dominant factor in the decision whether to travel or not:

We have talked about me joining him at some conferences; I think there's one in San Francisco next year or the year after. I can if we can afford to combine that with a holiday and we can tee up our annual leave. That's always hard as well, as I need to try and get annual leave at the same time. (Chloe)

Of course, it depends on how may holidays I have from my work and I can get the time off. (Kathy)

Having grown-up children, most participants freely accompanied their spouses on conference travel. One participant (Bella) described that it was difficult for her to travel with a husband to his conferences due to her childrearing obligations: "We like to travel together, but we couldn't afford to do it due to child-rearing. But, as my children are grown up, we can make it." It becomes apparent that those at the 'empty-nest' stage most readily made the decision to travel with their spouse.

While all participants reflected their own desire to travel to conference for holidays, an issue that emerged inductively was that conference travel presented an alternative opportunity for them to spend quality time with their spouse. Accompanying spouses tended to use the travel as a means of sharing affection and mutual respect:

It's probably he doesn't want to feel that he's leaving me behind at home while he's going to… he's visiting interesting places. So, if we can afford it, he always encourages me to accompany him; probably that's one reason. (Sherine)

I did it just so to keep him company because I know what it's like going to conferences by yourself, it's quite tedious… You are with those people all day, it's usually quite academic or quite scientific and often you are quite isolated, you don't know anybody else there; the meeting has people from all over the world, and he would prefer to spend time with somebody that he knows, and not go to the extra-curricular functions that everybody goes to. He would rather go and do something with me than do more networking or make polite conversation with people that you don't know. (Chloe)

He's always happy for me to come; it's nice to go together. It's pretty boring on a plane for a long time alone. Much more fun doing together, sitting in a restaurant on your own is not much fun. So we like to go together. (Glenda)

These excerpts describe how their participation in the travel was concerned with their commitment to the relationship and reflect an inherent sense of emotional intimacy in a relationship that they sought to maintain and develop through the travel. It seems that the accompanying spouses' experience was also shaped by the time they spent together with their spouse during the period of the conference. Therefore, the time that the participants spent with their spouses can provide a context for what the participants experienced and how they made sense of it during the time spent together.

Further, another inductive finding also involved that conference travel provided participants an opportunity to socialise with people in the conference society through joining social activities, such as dinners, coffee breaks and welcoming ceremonies. The experience of social activities during the period of the conference as a spouse tended to bring participants a distinctive experience. Some participants reported certain feelings and emotions derived from the involvement in the situation. In this sense, the experience of interactions with people at conferences can constitute the conference travel experience relating to what the participants experienced and how they made sense of their experiences.

In short, the experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses participating in the research was located in the three main key contexts: time for being alone, time spent with a spouse together, and circumstance for the involvement in social activities. Therefore, it was inferred that accompanying spouses experienced conference travel in three ways:

- It entails the individual time that accompanying spouses spend on their own,
- It encourages a relationship-focus through sharing time together, and
- It adjusts and challenges their social and professional identity

The next section presents each of the three main recurrent themes which relate directly to the above three contexts. It explores the subjective experience and the meanings that participants ascribed to their experience in more depth before moving on to the wider discussion and significance of these three themes in Chapter Five.

4.3 "You can do what you want to do" – The experience of providing individual autonomy

For the majority of participants, conference travel was a 'unique and meaningful experience' as it gave individuals autonomy in pursuing their own interests during the travel. This theme, **the experience of providing individual autonomy**, addresses the meaning of the time for accompanying spouses spent alone during the period of the conference.

In the story given below, Nelly provided the way she dealt with her own time within the context of her life and how she benefited from the experience.

Nelly's story

> Our holiday is usually around a conference or a sabbatical leave trip. The time we did this we both took annual leave before the conference. If the conference happens in teaching time, or for whatever reason we have no extra time, then we can't do that. So it's clear we have to have the time to do that. When we can do it on our own, we do it on our own. Actually, my chief motivation for life is to travel. It's just a matter of time now, as to how many places we can see before we run out of money or health. It's sort of a reason for being and conferences are a good vehicle for this to happen.

> I didn't attend the conference, I wasn't an attendee. I wasn't obliged to sit through the talks or anything. I would say that most husbands or wives do not go to the conference, or understand what is going to happen, or even interested in what is going to happen, or have background knowledge in what is happening. So it becomes less and less relevant to them. They would find it boring or lonely and if they are used to being with their spouse all the time like that, then they wouldn't be able to go off on their own and do something because they would feel less confident, especially in another culture. But I speak a few languages myself, so I can get out there and do it. And I'm used to being on my own.

> I can quite happily spend time by myself. There's a lot of sightseeing to be done. I have interests of my own and particularly when I went on my husband's sabbaticals where I've stayed at a place for months at a time. I have another life and it is to be a water colour painter. I paint which takes a lot of time but which I can't do during normal working life. It's quite absorbing really. Whenever, he would go off to work every day and I would sit at home and paint or go out in to the community and paint. He would come back late afternoon and we would go off and do things together, so that's the pattern.

> When I come home, I have an exhibition and see how many paintings I can sell and that's what I did at the very beginning. The first time we went on a sabbatical was six months overseas; we had time in Switzerland, Wales and north-west Spain, and from that time, I painted an awful lot, came home, had an exhibition and sold most pieces. So I thought I would do that each time I went away. At the conference in Niue, we were in a hotel because there were no apartments, but I could paint on the deck, at the swimming pool, or wherever, at the seaside. However, now it's different because he is retired and I'm the one going to conferences, so it doesn't happen anymore.

Across the interviews, *own time* on conference travel was seen as the best way of following the participants' valued interests especially in the context of removal from 'home' and everyday life, as in Nelly's example of painting.

In tourism studies, own time within the context of family holiday is described as "freedom from those family commitments to pursue own interests alone or with peers" (Schänzel, 2012, p. 72) rather than merely 'time alone'. By contrast, here, own time was viewed as the time allotted for accompanying spouses that they had to manage rather than time sought for. Almost all participants' accounts related their ability to pass long periods on their own:

> Have something to do, or go somewhere where… I have attended conferences where I've known people; I've had friends in Australia and I've met up with them during the day while he's at conference, and then we've done things, you know, on his half days if it's not a full meeting or at night. Otherwise, it could be fairly tedious actually… The meeting can start at 8am and they might have a quick break for lunch or something, but then they'll go until 6pm or 7pm that night, or even they'll have evening meetings. So, you just have to make sure what the agenda is and be pretty self-sufficient to fill in your own time. (Chloe)

> Some people really like being on their own, it doesn't worry them at all. But it is easy to sit inside the hotel room, you have to step outside the door and do something to make it interesting. (Glenda)

> It's all up to you to find your own things to do. (Renee)

These excerpts clearly evince the characteristics of own time on conference travel that is a result of temporary separation of the couple during the main sessions of the conference from which accompanying spouses are excluded. In particular,

Chloe explained that this time was still there with a caution of 'it could be fairly tedious' if activities were not planned, whilst she could meet up with her spouse in the breaks or go out in the evening. For participants, being 'self-sufficient' was important regarding own time as an integral aspect of conference travel. As such, it appeared that planning ahead was a necessary prerequisite of managing their own time, specifically with the aim of being independent during the time of the conference rather than desiring to have time out from the couple time.

A wide range of activities had been proposed in different ways among participants, such as exploration of a place, visiting family, relatives and friends, participating in spousal programmes organised by the conference and doing things that was not easy to do in the their daily lives. Collectively, these activities were described as being experienced as a 'sense of freedom', 'serendipitous moments' and 'the issues of social engagement'.

A sense of freedom

There were many cases in participants' accounts describing their own time as an opportunity for them to focus on the self by purely responding to their own wants and needs. In particular, Brenda found this state of being temporarily separated from her husband valuable for pursuing her own interests:

> When my husband does his work, I often…, I have a set number of activities. I go to a museum first and next it's on to an art gallery. Wherever I go, on the first day I visit a museum, an art gallery, and the famous places in a destination where my husband doesn't like to go, but I don't mind visiting [laughs]. When I'm with my husband, I tend to go along with his opinion, so I don't go to those places. So when I have my own time, I must go to those places.

Later, she dwelt on her feeling during that time:

> I don't have fears about doing those things on my own. Not at all. It's just freedom; I'm feeling liberated because I don't have to do housework. As a housewife, I have to prepare a meal for the family three times a day. If I had a baby, the situation would be worse. So whenever I'm on this travel, I feel free and easy.

Brenda's extracts describe aspects of own time which pertain to independence and autonomy. It is apparent that Brenda's comfort with her own independence and autonomy enabled her to follow her own interests during her time for self. For Brenda, own time was synonymous with her strongly-felt sense of freedom from her commitments and responsibilities within coupled life. Another participant, Russell, also clearly outlined a sense of freedom from the constraints of structured time arising from this autonomy:

> Probably when you're by yourself you're a bit more independent, because you can do what you want to do… When I was with her, I was a bit more organised probably, whereas with me, I'll just go here and just go there, catch the tram here. When I was by myself, and [name] was in the conference, I'd just catch a tram to the coast or whatever and... I could just wander around and have a look around, and do what I wanted to. I don't have to go to so many dress shops [laughs].

For Russell, spending time alone apparently legitimised his liberty to do 'what he wanted to do'. He did not need to lay out a schedule of where to go, what to eat etc. This relaxed attitude to structuring own time embodied a sense of freedom to him. The above examples of Brenda and Russell outline a conception of own time within the conference travel context as an individual free time accompanied by a personal sense of autonomy, individuality, independence and even emancipation, which will be discussed within the wider perspectives of the research in Chapter Five.

This individual free time appeared to result in accompanying spouses creating and legitimising an alternative space for themselves within the conference travel context, which Stevens, Maclaran and Catterall (2007) refer to as "me-time" (p. 237). For some participants, having some time alone was a valuable opportunity to refresh themselves. As Jessica reflected:

> I quite like spending time alone; so, you know, you can do things at your own pace. There were some days where I would just sit and read a book, or read a book on the beach, or… I find it quite recharging spending time by myself.

135

Jessica's excerpt reveals that there was certainly a willingness to take part in such 'me-time', just for the self. More specifically, the importance of the quest for 'me-time' emerged from some participants' accounts, particularly as a means of legitimising the desire to focus on the participants' wants and needs. The following conversation with Chloe shows the value of own time to her in enabling her to pursue her own personal objectives free of the everyday commitments of home:

> I: How did you spend your time?
> C: Normally, when I go with [name] to a conference, while he's attending the meeting, it's always been during my academic year, so I take my law books with me… Studying, reading, watching lectures on line and catching up, writing assignments. I'll do three hours of study in the morning and then I'll meet up with him for lunch, and then I'll go and maybe do something, depending on where we are.
> I: And then how did you feel during what you did?
> C: It was fine. Because I'm normally really busy and I'm working and I've got the kids and I'm studying. So for me, it's just an opportunity to get some study done during the day, and something to look forward to in the evening.

Indeed, own time for Chloe could be said to facilitate her focus on study, as evinced by her elaboration of the various commitments that compete for her time in her home life. Glenda used some of her own time to reconnect with relatives and some other family members, and to the past:

> When he was at the conference, I caught a flight over the UK and spent some time with my relatives and then flew back again…my aunt and uncle are getting old and won't be around for much longer so any opportunity I can, I like to catch up with them. I know them very well; they used to live in New Zealand.

> The most recent one we went to the UK, we were in Portsmouth and I was born in Southampton and that wasn't far away so it was really nice to go there, and although I was born nearby, I didn't live there for long, I was two when I left, so that was really good. My father used to be at sea, he was a ship person, and I bought a ticket to go to the historic dockyard and spent a day there and that was really interesting. I went to the shops and did some shopping. I rang a cousin up and they picked me up and took me out to dinner to their house, and I don't know them very well so that was lovely to meet some of the family. Another day a relative picked me up from Southampton and took me to visit some other people so I did a real variety.

For Glenda, reconnecting with relatives and to the past was important to her desire to better understand her family history, and contributed to a greater sense of belonging. The development of identity and a sense of belonging are also considered as important aspects of genealogical tourism experience from the point of view of obtaining an understanding of past events and people (see, Santos & Yan, 2010). It could be said the own time component of conference travel provided Glenda a useful means by which she could further her personal objectives. From this perspective, accompanying spouses could be seen to derive meaning from own time during conference travel for the opportunity it presents to undertake activities that are difficult or unavailable in their actual lives. This proposition may have functional value in managing own time, but also contributes to the intrinsic satisfaction participants may derive from individual free time.

Whilst most of the participants expressed that they valued own time for facilitating a focus on the self, one participant (Chloe) perceived that temporary separation from each other had a beneficial effect on the maintenance of the relationship with a spouse:

> It is quite different to travelling on holiday, mainly because you don't spend all your time together. It's a good thing because you spend shorter amounts of time together, so it's nicer. You don't tend to squabble or…because your time together is short, you know what you want to do and don't have differing agendas or anything like that. On the other hand, it's work, so he can be quite tired at the end of it. And often I wouldn't have eaten much during the day and he'll have been eating conference food all day, so I'll be starving and want to go out for dinner and it's the last thing he wants to do. That sort of thing. Yeah, it's quite different from going on holiday I think.

Chloe's account emphasises that each member of a couple might do one's own thing during the conference, which is something quite the opposite of normal holidays. She experienced own time as helpful for reducing tension in the relationship that may arise during travel. It could be inferred that emphasising the own space component of conference travel would serve as a way of improving the quality of individual life, in turn positively impacting the quality of the relationship (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). This idea might be of value in interpreting the accompanying spouses' experiences of conference travel, particularly as it related to time spent together as a couple for accompanying spouses, which will

be discussed in Section 4.4.

Serendipitous moments

With a sense of freedom which underpinned many participants' emotional experience of own time, some participants described meaningful encounters in the form of unanticipated discovery, as a part of their travel experience. Indeed, spending time alone offered them opportunities for unexpected discoveries, namely serendipitous moments that may generate value of their own time accord. Serendipity, in general, refers to "the art of making an 'unsought finding'" (Andel, 1994, p. 643). Cary (2004) recognises a serendipitous moment as the tourist moment simultaneously producing and erasing "the tourist-as-subject, for at the very instant one is aware of and represents oneself as "tourist", one goes beyond "being a tourist"" (p. 63). In this research, the term serendipity is employed in the sense of its role in producing a pleasant experience as a result of encountering unexpected discoveries, concerning an increased self-confidence, a feeling of luxury and the acquisition of new information, while being alone as described by the accompanying spouses. First of all, some participants described the role of serendipity in discovery giving rise to a relaxed sense of enjoyment. Bella, for example, reflected on her serendipitous moments:

> I: What do you normally do on your own time? How do you feel about that?
> B: While he did his work, I was hanging out in the shopping mall. It's great. I did some shopping and looked at the shops in the shopping mall. Sometimes, I sit in the café for a cup of coffee and watch local people there, more like gazing at people who are having conversations with each other. Then, I find there is nothing different from the way I do with my friends. I also like to stop in a bookstore and a traditional fish market to browse. Particularly, I prefer seeing the recipe for the food the local people eat as listed in the cookbook. Through this, I can discover their food culture and noticed similarities and differences in my food. I really enjoy it. I feel confident to try something by myself.

Bella's extract shows that in a serendipitous moment, she recognised herself as a tourist and felt a sense of belonging with people there, saying 'I can discover' and 'I find there is nothing different'. Cary (2004) points out that a spontaneous experience of self-discovery and communal belonging is generated and

represented in a serendipitous moment. Further, for her, discovery of new, unexpected information and accompanying emotions potentially reduced her vulnerability to an array of feelings, such as loneliness, isolation and unease that might arise while she was alone. This is mirrored in Kathy's account:

> I: How do you feel when you are on your own?
> K: I don't have any problem going out and doing things by myself. It's a new place or everything is nice. I like to go to the supermarket, because you get to see the food. You can see what sort of different food. And, you walk around the city. You see the buildings, the architecture, you know, different place.

Kathy's descriptions also hinted at a relaxed sense of enjoyment through experiencing serendipitous moments from which she gained a sense of independence and self-confidence, by way of reduced fear of spending time alone. Serendipitous moments, indeed, can be considered as valuable in growing self-confidence and contribute to participants' enjoyment of own time; with the accompanying increased independence and self-confidence likely to engender greater enjoyment as against being constrained (Wilson & Little, 2008).

For some participants, a feeling of luxury and the acquisition of new information via serendipitous moments played a role in making conference travel unique and special. The opportunity to stay in luxury accommodation that might normally be outside of participants' budgets was also seen as a unique and pleasurable element of the conference travel experience encouraging serendipitous moments:

> It was a very nice trip, luxury trip, because we had a very good hotel in Sydney. It was a very luxurious and beautiful hotel. (Emma)

> Staying in lovely resorts that I wouldn't be able to afford; on holiday we wouldn't necessarily stay in really nice hotels. Conferences are often in really nice venues and it doesn't cost any extra I suppose to have your partner stay at the venue, unless you take children and then you pay the extra. So it's nice, it's a bit of luxury. (Chloe)

The above excerpts describe that a feeling of luxury that is serendipitously experienced could be connected to pleasant memories. Both of them spoke of memorable travel experiences infused with a sense of luxury.

The link between a sense of serendipity and the travel experience could also be seen in Bella's account:

> In Nagoya, he was very busy with this work, so that we didn't have much time to spend together. So I spent time alone to use the sauna and a swimming pool at the hotel. At that time we stayed at a 5 star hotel. I enjoyed an excellent service during my time at the hotel.

Clearly, for Bella, the serendipitous moment occurred when she received very good service as a group of conference members. This moment could offset a lack of preparation for her own time and represent a luxurious experience. Indeed, a luxury experience was serendipitously encountered and was able to draw having satisfied and unique experience of own time, on a larger perspective, during conference travel.

In addition to the value of a sense of luxury, some participants reflected exclusive experiences that were often as serendipitous as deliberate. For some, like Fiona and Renee, joining a social programme organised for spouses was motivated by a desire to discover of new information that they may not get as a tourist or could not afford on normal holidays:

> The locals who organised knew the best things to take you to. So we were very lucky from that point of view. Because if you were travelling on your own, you would not necessary know to do those things…I mostly chose to go with the trips because they'd been organized and planned by someone. In some places, especially in India, we would experience things we wouldn't have if we'd just planned our own trip. (Fiona)

> It has been excellent. Programmes organised all through the day for spouses and some of them were related to meet others' wants… So the first day, I think, we went to dinner where we had a traditional Canadian meal in which they tried to incorporate things from Indian culture as well as Quebec culture. That was very interesting. And we actually met some Native American Indians there; I had a group to talk to, which was very interesting. The next night, there was a huge ice figure-skating display just for the conference. So ice skating we went to, and a baseball match, and they also arranged for us to go to the opera or to hear the symphony orchestra. Both were nice. Yes, it was the just most incredible conference I have ever been to. (Renee)

For Fiona and Renee, joining a programme was an enjoyable and beneficial way of spending their time, as they deliberately sought out serendipitous moments which engendered pleasurable and meaningful experiences. Renee, for example, reflected her engagement with the serendipitous moment that she found something unexpected, or other discoveries, describing these occasions as 'very interesting' and 'most incredible'. At the same time, Fiona and Renee also described a sense of exclusivity by reference to their participation in experiences 'we wouldn't have if we'd just planned our own trip' and 'just for the conference' respectively. In turn, these discoveries as one aspect of serendipity influenced the value of the travel experience. It suggests that accidental and serendipitous encounters can also be facilitated or induced within the planned but sporadic moments, namely joining a tour programme in the context of conference travel. In computer science and studies concerning information-seeking behaviour (see, André, Schraefel, Teevan, & Dumais, 2009; Foster & Ford, 2003), the role of serendipity in discovery, innovation and creativity is deliberately developed to be valuable chance occurrences. As a result, the unexpected finding through the feeling of luxury and the discovery of new information potentially proves to be of unexpected value to the whole experience of travel within the context of the conference. This will be further discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

The issue of social engagement

As noted above, most accompanying spouses who took part in this research experienced the need for being independent and being self-sufficient to fill in own time. On the other hand, participants also expressed recurrent feelings of being constrained and limited when in public areas without a spouse accompaniment. The development of self-confidence was closely linked to a guarantee of enjoyment in being independent against being constrained:

> I think these days I feel more confident to try something different by myself. Before I tended…sometimes I just stayed at the hotel and read books or wrote letters, and things like that, just walked around the hotel. But I think these days I try to do something new by myself, but it very much depends on the country we are in. (Sherine)

I've some confidence now, initially I would try to be fully involved with programmes. But as I got more experience, I didn't feel that pressure so much. In fact, we arranged things so that he could go to a conference and I might not even register as an accompanying spouse because now I have the confidence to find out what things to do. Although he's busy at the conference, I'm quite happy about doing things on my own. (Renee)

The experience of Sherine and Renee typified what the majority of participants reported with regard to negotiating and alleviating the feelings of fear and anxiety with a growing a sense of self-confidence. Accumulated experience of being alone seemed to facilitate diminishing self-limitation. It possibly resulted in a positive experience. However, some participants still reported feelings of fear, loneliness and anxiety that might restrict their activities at a given destination:

I'm not very good at doing things on my own, but it's good for me, I have to… I know I've got that time to spend so I try to fill the time in. so I'm not lonely or bored. But it's quite different for me to be on my own. I quite enjoy it for a while, but I wouldn't like it all the time. At first, I felt lonely on my own. (Glenda)

I'm not that brave I suppose to be going off on my own. (Fiona)

I was quite happy just to wander around and explore by myself, but it was scary getting on the bus and going. (Jessica)

These less confident people spoke of the constraints on enjoying own time as restricting their involvement in leisure activities. In particular, Thomas, who stayed separate from his wife during the conference, recalled a sense of discomfort and isolation:

She attended the conference and left me to go on my own holiday for about 4 or 5 days in Croatia. It was quite a different experience travelling to those places on your own because everyone else was in couples on sort of romantic islands… It was OK. But, I had a companion, my wife, probably we would've done a lot more. I would do the tours or hire some motorbikes and go around the island things like that. It was a little bit quieter. You don't enjoy things as much because your partner's not there. Therefore, I didn't think I should go and spend time doing all these things on my own. So, I wasn't so. I wasn't going to enjoy this much.

Thomas's extract describes a sense of discomfort at being alone was increased by the feeling of isolation from the romantic atmosphere of a place. For Thomas, feelings of isolation and loneliness were closely related to his wife's absence. Such feelings may have alleviated if he engaged with leisure activities with his wife. This is evident in the following extract:

> I decided to go and have dinner on my own. And so went to a restaurant in a very busy, very popular island and because I was on my own they rejected me. They said I couldn't have dinner in their restaurant because I was using a table for two and that made me feel small [laughs]. Yeah, so I went and had a takeaway down by the water and went back to my bedroom [laughs].

Thomas's excerpt shows that his situation of being alone increased his feeling of social isolation, but also altered his decision; it had power to restrict his willingness to join holiday activities saying 'feel small'. This experience brought with it a sense of dissatisfaction and frustration. For him, being with his wife facilitated a greater degree of social engagement. In this regard, it can be said that for less confident people, being alone was less related to individual freedom, and more related to a sense of emptiness, as could clearly be seen in Thomas's case.

Summary

In summary, this section explored the subjective emotional experiences of accompanying spouses within the context of time without their spouses (see, Table 9 for a summary of the theme, page 143). It revealed that own time served to enable participants to focus on the self through the pursuit of their own interests and wants. The possibility of serendipitous encounters, such as a sense of luxury and new discoveries, made own time fulfilling for participants. In addition, there were the issues of social engagement concerning a sense of self-confidence. As such, the experience of own time provided creative and meaningful experiences in their lives that they may not have had in other types of travel, such as family holidays.

It is argued that in the greater perspective, the experience of own time for accompanying spouses could be seen to reside within the context of the alternative travel experience. As such, it potentially needs to consider the personal dimension of alternative tourism. However, there has been scant attention to the phenomenon in the tourism literature, so this will be further discussed in Chapter Five in the wider implications of the research findings.

Table 9 Summary of the theme of the experience of providing individual autonomy

Theme	Sub-theme	Key words
The experience of providing individual autonomy	A sense of freedom	Independence/emancipation
		Me-time
	Serendipitous moments	Increased self-confidence
		A feeling of luxury
		The discovery of new information
	The issues of social engagement	Less confidence
		Feelings of anxiety, fear and loneliness

4.4 "We can focus on each other instead of other activities at home" – The experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship

While the participants derived from own time a sense of freedom, moments of serendipity and the issues of social engagement, conference travel was also experienced as a 'positive influence on the relationship'. This inductively acquired 'relational aspect' of the conference travel experience was critical to understanding the meaning of couple time as it was the recurring element in all participants' accounts in this research. The theme of **the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship**, thus, demonstrates how the participants made sense of their experience of the time spent with their spouse during the period of the conference.

The following story is from Bella whose purpose of travel to conferences was more relationship-focused. It can be seen that the nature of the relationship was the underlying reason for being a willing travel companion, as stated in section 4.2. Her experience also described what she considered to be important for her relationship through travelling with her husband and how she benefited from the experience.

Bella's story

> I would say this type of travel is my favourite. I feel really close to my husband during all this time. I am really keen to enjoy something new to us. He always encourages me to travel with him. I should say, my husband is a family man who is devoted to the family. So, probably he does not want to feel that he is leaving me behind at home. Especially, if he goes to places where I have not been to, he seems to be feeling sorry to me for enjoying it alone. When he comes back he keeps saying me 'let's go together next time and I can try something special there'. Actually, this is the pattern that I accompany him. A few years back, he put me up to go with him to Nagoya because of a bowl of eel and rice. Since he tried a bowl of eel and rice which is famous in Nagoya alone, he thought about me and wished to take me there to have a bowl of eel and rice together. I also went to Japan with him to try the famous Japanese skewer. Having said that, I could not travel on every occasion, I have more opportunities to do this now my children have grown up.

I suppose it is also nice for him to be with family. Anyway, after he gets his work finished, he has to spend some time doing things on his own. But as I keep him company, it is different. He is not completely on his own. By the end of the day he is completely washed out. So, if he could do something together with me and have a lot of fun, it was good for him. It is much better than if he comes back to the hotel room by himself or does things alone during the day that were boring and isolated. It probably is like having a holiday we spend together with a bit of work in it. I can feel he is comfortable and relaxed when I am with him on his travel.

Of course, we like going on family travel. But this travel is quite different from family travel. For family travel, we make a plan in advance. And we can explore and learn many things during the trip. You know, travelling with children I have to look after them. So there is less availability for us. But, unlike family travel, most of the times I have accompanied my husband, he has gone to work and we do things together when he comes back late afternoon. I can't spend enough time with him, because he has to remain faithful to his work. Yes, it is like what happens in our everyday life. But, he seems to consider me better than he does at home. There is more attention and a commitment to each other here. Before he leaves for work, he tells me 'it will take a long time to finish. I'm sorry you'll be tired and bored of waiting for me.' Then I said 'don't worry about me. I'll be fine'. Well, I just love it that is joyful and heart-warming. It was something new, something different that he does not do at home which naturally trigger romantic feelings.

I found these romantic feelings for him that were reduced in the daily life while we were on travel. When my husband came back from work, we had dinner together at a famous restaurant in the area. Then, we did a few things on the way back to the hotel. We just walked along the road, visited a traditional market and had a look at some tourist attractions. I really felt like being on a date with him. I was fully aware of my affection before we got married. Of course, I hang around with him at home, but for me it is just a common thing for a husband and wife. But, whenever I spent time with him on his travel, I really was over the moon. I felt as if we were newlyweds and on a honeymoon. I even felt as if I was sneaking out with someone not my husband [laughs]. I feel very happy and refreshed at that time. I can feel we are getting closer through all this time.

I would like to go on this travel as opportunity offers. It would be great if I can visit the places where I have never been to. But, I don't mind going to any places. I would say travel plays an important role in our relationship. Our relationship has blossomed from what it was after travelling all this way. Yes, I can feel it. We have lived together over 20 years. So, I think we need something that helps us to maintain the quality of our relationship. I am sure travel helps us to keep our relationship through the shared experience between us that would be different from what we have in our daily lives.

Bella's story clearly demonstrated that having *couple time* on travel functioned to (re)connect her and her husband through the romantic feelings it engendered, and thus encouraged the development of a strong feeling of emotional intimacy. Along with Bella's case, the majority of participants reflected on a number of positive emotional benefits as a consequence of the experience of the time spent as a couple.

In tourism studies, there is evidence that the experience of family holidays plays a role in increasing family togetherness, bonding and solidarity within the family unit (see, Gram, 2005; Lehto et al., 2009; Schänzel et al., 2012), as already discussed in Chapter Two. There still remains a dearth of evidence concerning the contribution of holiday experience to couple relationships. Therefore, this theme examines participants' descriptions of how time which was more relationship-focused was experienced, and how such experiences were understood in their relationships. Throughout the interviews with accompanying spouses, it was revealed that the time for the couple was commonly characterised by 'a sense of connectedness', 'the experience of the caregiver role' and 'a facilitator of strengthening spousal bond'.

A sense of connectedness

Among the participants, a sense of 'connectedness in a relationship' was recurring within this key theme as an aspect of the experience of the time for the couple. All participants shared the value of conference travel in facilitating and remaining in constant and direct contact with their spouse. In fact, the experience of being connected with a spouse found an echo throughout the participants' accounts with respect to relief from personal obligations and a commitment to each other. Firstly, relief from personal obligations, namely without disturbances from personal commitments or child care, was especially captured by participants involved in a child's upbringing. The following conversation with Chloe illustrates this:

I: What does travelling to his conferences mean to you?
C: It's quite important because we both work a lot and we don't tend to get away by ourselves. So, it's just a nice opportunity to spend some time with [name] really, because it's probably the only time we ever do go away. We've just had a holiday, but that's unusual.
I: Why is that important to you?
C: I think, it's important to any relationship, friendship, or other, to be able to spend some time together that's away from the usual hum drum of work and housework, and study and kids, and all the rest of it. So, it's a good opportunity to do that.

Chloe's excerpt highlights that a sense of connectedness was relevant to the development of the quality of the relationship. Chloe herself acknowledged travelling together as a way of enhancing her sense of connectedness to her partner both physically and emotionally. She found it valuable to engage with conference travel, which provided her with time to spend together with her partner. Indeed, for her, conference travel acted to extend the time frame in which she could be together with her partner.

Sylvia also found that the experience of conference travel could serve as a means of reconnecting with her husband:

That's very important to me, because I like to spend time with him, then we can both together see things. That's completely different if you go with family, like two kids, because they are young so they'll make troubles [laughs]. I have to spend time to look after them. Sometimes we make arguments because of kids… If we, just me and him, travel together, not much things are to worry about that kid of stuffs. When I've been to the Gold Cost for conference with my husband, we just need to worry about, how're my kids back in Auckland, do they sleep well sort of questions.

In Sylvia's case, having a time as a couple on conference travel helped to focus more on one another with a lot less potential for argument in relation to the childcare on family travel. Unlike family travel that women still play a role of mother in maintaining the same domestic responsibilities on holidays (see, Davidson, 1996; Mottiar & Quinn, 2012), accompanying her husband authorised her to travel without her children. For Sylvia, travelling without accompanying children brought with it a feeling of being relatively relaxed and peaceful in comparison to family travel where there might be feelings of tension and stress between the two of them. Indeed, it enabled them to focus on the relationship and

each other more than when they had to care for children.

On the other hand, it was evident that the nature of the relationship and a commitment to each other had an influence on the rise of the sense of emotional connectedness. Analysis of the interviews showed that benefits to the relationship were acknowledged by accompanying spouses participating in the research as a sense of togetherness, affection and companionship. All reported that their willingness to be a travelling companion stemmed from their good relationship with their spouse. For example:

> I think he just likes me to be there. I think he probably gets lonely if I'm not there. I think he's more comfortable having a partner with him rather than not having someone with him. (Fiona)

> I think it's nice for my husband too, when I go; it's company. If you are going to England, it's a very long flight, too long a fight. It's quite nice to get away from home and do something together. He's always happy for me to come. (Glenda)

> I think [name] enjoys or likes to take me. Because what happens when you are going from here, it's a long journey. 10 hours to go to Singapore. He's not alone. So, it's a companionship. (Kathy)

These extracts describe participants' company as a way of expressing their understanding and concern for their spouses' professional life. This fostered a sense of connectedness to each other. In turn, for them, the involvement in conference travel supplied a purposeful and meaningful way that they could engage with each other.

The feeling of connectedness derived from affection, togetherness and companionship was also evidenced in the accounts of all interviewed conference attendees. Conference attendees said that the nature of their relationship facilitated their spouses' involvement in travel and enabled the couple to spend time as a couple. As an example, Geoffrey explained:

I do go to conferences on my own sometimes because I go so far and because I tend not to go with anyone else from here. Most people go to conferences with colleagues but I don't usually, because my colleagues aren't really researching in the same area that I am… … I'm not big on networking but I still have to go and present my stuff, so it just means you've got someone else to travel with, it's not completely alone. I don't care about being alone, but it is better not to be sometimes … International conferences can be quite solitary events. It depends on your personality a little bit and how much you can force yourself to network… I think that's why people will either go with colleagues as a group because they tend to keep together as a group, or a couple might go and the partner might be staying nearby. So at least you are not completely on your own at these things.

Geoffrey's account clearly shows that he felt a sense of companionship as a result of his wife travelling with him. He also alluded to a sense of understanding and concern from his wife with regard to his professional life. It seems that for Geoffrey's couple companionship potentially plays a role in heightening a sense of connectedness. In short, the nature of the relationship can be understood as an integral part of accompanying spouses' involvement in a conference, which in turn, often serves to strengthen the feeling of being connected with each other in the relationship. From a wider perspective, it can contribute to an increase in the level of emotional intimacy between couples, and in turn plays a role in maintaining the relationship (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999), which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Further, the participants, specifically those who maintained stability in the relationship, were found to report their emotional commitment to their spouse. Commitment, here, refers to the "tendency to maintain a relationship and to feel psychologically 'attached' to it" (Rusbult, 1983, p. 102). Some participants expressed that an emotional commitment to their spouse transformed into their engagement with conference travel. For example, when asked as to why participants liked to accompany their spouse, Jessica reflected, "When he went to Melbourne the last time, so he went a few days before me and he said to me he finally understood why his dad and I used to dread going away; that going away by yourself is not so much fun. So I think he did enjoy having me there at the end of the day. It's not always nice coming back to your hotel room by yourself." Similarly, Renee said, "He doesn't enjoy quite so much going without me". It seems that participants' engagement with travel can be potentially understood as

the notion of a relational commitment demonstrating their desire to remain involved in their relationship.

In particular, Brenda, who personally did not like conference travel, provided an insight into how the context of a relational commitment led her to adopt the role of travelling companion:

> Actually, I don't…rather I want to stay at home. But I always have travelled with him because he wants me to. He frequently travels for a long period as a part of his work. Probably he wants to feel comfortable overseas like staying at home. This is why he encourages me to accompany him. But when overseas, everything is different from my daily life here. I have to adjust to a different culture and language, and develop new routines. I don't like doing such things. So, if he doesn't want, I'm happy not to go [laughs]… but, the thing is he wants my company. And as I accumulated experience, I realise I've been changed. I also enjoy travelling and doing such things.

Apparently, for Brenda, participating in conference travel represented more of an obligation concerning her commitment to the relationship. She described that her involvement in travel became mandatory in her relationship with her husband. However, she also talked about her willingness to travel with her husband not only for the purpose of making him feel comfortable, but also for her own enjoyment. In this respect, there appears to be an increased level of commitment to the husband through developing a sense of satisfaction with being together away from home.

From this perspective, to continue travelling to conferences together would be conducive to remaining faithful to the spouse and might, in turn, foster a sense of commitment. It can perhaps be suggested that the feeling of a relational commitment can act as a catalyst for reinforcing a sense of connectedness. It can also think of this in connection with a way of enhancing an emotional feeling of closeness (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). From a wider perspective, therefore, the sense of connectedness in the romantic relationship could be situated within the wider context of the maintenance of the relationship. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

The experience of caregiver

The majority of participants frequently reported that the sense of connectedness also gave rise to the feelings of care, sympathy and consideration. At the time of the travel, these feelings were relevant in terms of the form of support or care that accompanying spouses provided for their spouse and experienced. In essence, conference travel tends to revolve around business or professional affairs, and necessitates participants' spouses' attendance at a conference. Their spouses' circumstances resulted in participants accepting a caregiver role to lessen stress or tension in some situations and increase relaxation or concentration on his/her task with certain supportive feelings. In tourism studies, the experience of caregiver has been addressed related to the impact of caregiving on the leisure travel behaviours of family caregivers, extensively women (for example, Bedim & Guinan, 1996; Gladwell & Bedini, 2004). Here, caregiving in the relationship was experienced as a form of emotional support that influenced the ways accompanying spouses felt towards their husband. Caregiver support was provided in various ways focused on moral support, intellectual support and a sense of tension.

Throughout the interviews, moral support and intellectual support appeared to be common features of the caregiver role that participants experienced. In particular, one participant (Brenda) reported that her husband was keen to find "a home away from home" when they spent time together during the travel. Of any particular example, Sherine gave a detailed explanation of how this support was provided for her husband during the time of the conference:

> I: Do you think you can support your husband during the conference?
> S: Oh very much so. I think I have a role in his welfare during the conference.
> I: Is there any impact of the travel on the togetherness of you as a couple?
> S: It's very much positive. I can support him and I can be his bouncing board, you know, sort of throwing ideas, etc… or he can sort of… how can I say? … Pour out his frustrations to me as well. In that sense, I play a fairly large role in his welfare. But at the same time it's just sort of consolidating our way of life I think… emotional bouncing board which is important, I think. I mean inevitably the conference can be very tense with tiredness or frustration. This kind of thing can be relieved, even for a short period of time,

if you can talk to someone who doesn't calculate your reaction. I mean basically from husband side to wife. That's helpful, I think.

Sherine highlighted the caring nature of her caregiver role for her husband; her presence stood for a constant source of ongoing care. Specifically, she described it as moral support and playing a role as 'welfare', a 'bouncing board' and letting him 'pour out his frustrations' and intellectual support as he could be 'throwing ideas' at her. However, she did not take this role as her duty of care responsibility. Rather, she felt that this role was associated with a sense of belonging in a relationship; as a means of the 'consolidation of our way of life'. From this perspective, it is possible that Sherine's caregiver role can be understood as a way of maintaining the long-term relationship with her husband having a sense of shared understanding and knowledge with a husband. This notion was clearly reflected in the narratives of Paul, Sherine's husband:

> I: What do you think it was like for your wife to accompany you to conferences?
> P: I like my work and the rest of my life to be integrated, so if I meet interesting people at a conference, it's nice to think that my wife thinks they're interesting. If I think that person is rather boring or very unpleasant, it's nice to know my wife's opinion because she may have a very different opinion to me. Basically, the idea is I don't want to compartmentalise my life, so most of the friends I have around the world come from my work, and many of them are known to my wife.
> I: Do you think you get support from your wife as you have brought your wife to conferences?
> P: Oh yes; I mean support, moral support, companionship as I've said, intellectual support, yes.

Certainly, Paul reported that Sherine's caregiver role providing moral and intellectual support was critical to the way the two of them shared their life together. There was a tendency for her caregiver role to be associated with accumulating and sharing information. He described sharing information with Sherine as important to their remaining in close contact with each other and as a method to integrate work and life. It was also evident that Sherine's caregiver role was a key tool for the continuity of their relationship. In this sense, the caregiver role of accompanying spouses can be understood as an example of relationship maintenance behaviour which will be further discussed in Chapter Five (see, Canary et al., 1993; Malinen et al., 2010; Stafford & Canary, 1991).

Almost all accompanying spouses interviewed spoke of somewhat different experiences of giving such support depending on the context of their lives. As examples of this caregiver role:

> I think it's definitely nicer to go to meetings with somebody that you know and are comfortable with, and it means you get a break, because if you are there on your own, you are either at the meeting, which can be really long, and you either stay for the functions or you go home and sit in a hotel room. I mean, you can go and explore the city on your own but it's quite lonely and you don't… you know, you are in a big city that you don't know usually, in a country that you are not familiar with, so you tend to just sit in your hotel room, and the hotel room could be anywhere in the world, they're just the same. (Chloe)

> [Name] is a lot more social than I am, so I don't want to intrude on his needing to socialise with people at the conference because networking is kind of an important part of it, so I don't want to stop him from…But the end of the day, I still want to go out for dinner or something [laugh]. So, when I do go, I don't want to impose on stopping the reason he's there either. (Jessica)

From these extracts of Chloe and Jessica, it was apparent that they had empathy for their spouses who had their own agendas at the conferences. Specifically, Chloe tried to comfort her spouse against anticipated distress that might arise from his participation in the conference. Jessica was also wary of disrupting her husband's networking that he deemed as important. There was the appearance of a link between this caregiver role and the maintenance of the relationship, because participants involved in this role frequently expressed genuine concern and a genuine willingness to help. This view was similarly highlighted in the accounts of the conference attendees participating in the research.

In fact, for conference attendees, their spouse was seen as a guarantee of support to them: "The presence of [name] on my travel doesn't cause any disruptions to my work. Rather, her company makes me more comfortable that I can spend time with her together after I finish work" (Brian); "It was just nice to have her around. I've had just as much support from her at the ones in Wellington as the ones where she's been there. I think, feeling like I'd rather just be back at the motel doing something with her, shopping with her again has been more significant than any sort of emotional support from having her around" (Andrew). This is partly

154

because conference attendees recognised conference travel as a solitary activity. Indeed, for them travelling with someone, specifically somebody close to them, brought with it feelings of relaxation and warmth.

Grace presented a deeper understanding of the accompanying spouses' caregiver role from the perspective of a conference attendee:

> When I was the chair of a national organisation for four years and I had to do the AGM, having my husband there the night before was just fantastic, you know; he gave me positive support and moral support. Particularly if you are presenting a paper or you have to chair a session and you are feeling really nervous. It's having that feeling of support there. I think that's probably a very important aspect of taking your partner to a conference is that you do get that moral support; that physical presence; just somebody there who you know actually cares. Because some of these conferences can be so big, so daunting, that you are kind of left on your own, and although you are a professional person, it's sometimes just very nice to have somebody that you can talk to, who will understand, how you are feeling and give you a good cuddle or something when you need it. I mean that's kind of quite nice and also can share your successes and perhaps commiserate with your failures when it didn't go quite as well as you think. They could say, 'well, look, no, don't worry so much, it wasn't that bad'…

Grace's extract is indicative of the way in which the accompanying spouses' caregiver role was understood by attendees and influenced the couple's relationship. Grace talked about the feeling of being cared for that her husband's attention provided. This sense led her to a sense of belonging in a relationship which she could share feelings and experience with her spouse without judgement or criticism of people, in line with Sherine's extract in pages 149-150. Indeed, her husband's caregiver role may function as a positive re-appraisal of Grace's situation to help her better cope with it. From this perspective, it is possible that conference attendees are also conscious of the caregiver role of their accompanying spouses and of enhancing emotional closeness.

In addition to moral support, intellectual support was particularly reported by such participants as Nelly, Bridget, Sherine, Jessica, Chloe and Kathy who shared the same education or academic interest as their spouse. The following conversation with Bridget shows the way she provided her intellectual support to her husband:

I: How did you spend time with your husband during the conference?
B: When he prepared for his speech in the conference, because I know a little bit about his research, when he had something he was not sure about, he asked me, and I just helped him with some ideas.
I: That's brilliant.
B: When he came back from the conference, he told me the result. And he told me about the conference, what he did in the conference and I just gave him some ideas to encourage him.

Bridget's excerpt illustrates how intellectual support can be understood within a relationship. She appeared to actively take part in the conversation by disclosing her own thoughts about some depth of knowledge or interest (cf., her spouses' education) and sharing his experience with him. For Bridget, this intellectual conversation was meaningful as it provided help to her husband as well as guaranteed her participation in his work life. In fact, this caregiver role appeared to be enjoyable and fulfilling for her and helped her to have a better understanding of her spouse.

Similar examples can be found in Chloe's account: "I will sometimes look at his programme and we talk about whether it was a good meeting and he'll say 'Ah, you know, so and so gave a really good talk on this or that'. So, we do discuss sort of what's happened at the meeting or, he'll say 'Ah, no, that was a pretty wasted morning' [laughs]", and in Jessica's quote: "I'm quite keen to hear about what he's learnt about, or ideas of how that could affect his research. I guess he knows what level to talk to me about it at. It's nice to hear about what he's learnt about and what's going on in that world." In these extracts, it can be seen that they exchanged thoughts and shared ideas, and enjoyed similarities and differences between their opinions. Having said that, giving intellectual support was related not only to the development of mutual knowledge, but also to a better understanding of one another. It seems to create a new openness towards the maintenance of their relationship without its participants even noticing (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999). This idea was clearly revealed in the conversation with Russell:

I: What kind of support?
R: Because I was there I was probably finding out more about what the conference was about and what different things were happening. She had no idea of some of the things that were happening at the conference with me. No the technical details, but yeah, so.
I: What does the travel to the conference with your wife mean to you? What's the meaning of that?
R: Not sure. I just think giving support. She finds out things that I do with my work, and I find out things she does with her work, and it just adds to what you learn from what she does. I think it gives more meaning maybe to what she does. The conference was about that sort of thing.

Russell's extract reflects that the caregiver role is directly associated with an understanding of what their spouse does. Russell illustrated that he helped his wife to understand different aspects of the conference as he monitored the conference atmosphere. At the same time, he found it beneficial to gain information and a better understanding of his wife's work. For him, the caregiver role in conference furthered his understanding of his wife's other life and led him to expressions of affection and intimacy.

On the other hand, whilst many conference attendees who participated in the research regarded their spouses' companion as a guarantee of support during the period of the conference, one participant (Thomas) reported that his companion might be unwanted at times:

She knew that I was coming to back her up, so she wasn't on her own for the whole time… But she wanted to be on her own for that period that she could focus on the conference. Otherwise I probably distracted at least go off for the dinner… I know she would be thinking about things happening in the conference… that's the reason why she wants me to be away from her at times. So she can focus on what she knows and keep feeling or getting in her thinking, thoughts.

Thomas illustrated that the lack of reciprocity during the time of the conference diminished his caregiver role. Although Thomas understood his wife's attitude towards a conference, he appeared to feel loneliness and disconnected from his wife. This is because he was willing to take a caregiver role for his wife. Indeed, for Thomas, the caregiver role appears to be of less significance compared to the rest of the participants.

Notably, the presence of accompanying spouses may not always be perceived as a supportive, pleasurable or desired in some cases, although this was found to be minimal in this research.

This potentially negative aspect of the presence of accompanying spouses emerged from the conference attendees' accounts. For some of the conference attendees in the research, a sense of tension, guilt or worry was revealed in the experience of taking a spouse to conferences. Geoffrey's story was typical:

> There's a danger that you tend to avoid going to some of the functions because you are conscious that that person is alone in the hotel or doing something. It doesn't… you are aware that person is there and you don't want to leave them on their own all the time but you still need to go to conference things, so there's a bit of a tension.

Geoffrey described that a spouse's companionship can possibly act as a barrier to social inclusion, if an attendee fails to keep a balance between the ultimate purpose of the travel and time for leisure. In this sense, a spouse becomes a factor that potentially limits an opportunity for attendees to socialise with other people if it is a part of the purpose for the travel.

Jay, writing of his first experience of taking his wife to his conference revealed the need for developing strategies for coping with the situation. He reflected on a sense of worry:

> I couldn't focus on my topic because I was thinking always 'where is she now' and 'what is she doing'…wherever we go together to different places, if I have to leave her alone I can't enjoy myself. So I'm always worried about her and, yes, I was worried about her. But I couldn't do anything about that; I had to spend time at the conference

And, at the same time a sense of tension arose:

I didn't have enough time to spend especially after each presentation. In the breaks, for example-they were one and a half hour or one hour breaks- I didn't stay there, I went back to the hotel and had time with my wife. But if I could have stayed at the conference venue, I could've established more relationships with other professors, I did with some, I found some professors and just established a relationship. But if I was able to put all my time there, it would've been really good for my job and for my academic background.

Actually, Jay preferred not to take his wife on following occasions. These experiences may indicate that accompanying spouses' presence should not be simplistically understood as a leveraged support. Also it could impose a constraint on a rise in the level of intimacy in the relationship, as the spouse felt tension with the other spouses' attendance.

Despite these tensions, overall, the caregiver role of accompanying spouses was uniquely acquired within the context of conference travel. The role appears to be inseparable and intrinsic to the nature of the individual relationship. For the participants, this role can symbolise the special time and space for both spouses in which increased closeness between each other can be facilitated and a better understanding of their spouse can be gained. There is the view that the accumulated knowledge and understanding of one another is a key element in enduring romantic relationships, and has a strong influence on the level of intimacy, supported by Moss and Schwebel (1993). In this respect, the experience of being caregiver can be understood within the context of relational maintenance behaviour.

A facilitator of strengthening spousal bond

As discussed above, for participants, the experience of couple time on conference travel can be seen as increased emotional closeness through ways of (re)connecting with their spouse where there is more availability of time for each other; and establishing a better understanding of their spouse as they provided support for their spouse with the feelings of care, empathy and a sense of belonging in the relationship. Descriptions of the 'sense of connectedness' and 'experience of the caregiver role' were accompanied by a sense of 'strengthening spousal bond'. Almost all participants frequently reported that they forged a

159

stronger bond of intimacy between each other through sharing quality time during the period of the conference. Here, this sub-theme is more concerned with the link between the role of travel and the relationship.

The majority of participants frequently expressed an increased sense of reciprocity in the relationship as they remained in close contact with their spouse during the travel. This was also closely connected with the development of a sense of connectedness which was examined in section 4.3. Throughout the interviews, it appeared that the behaviour pattern as a couple was much like that at home. The participants reflected that they normally caught up with their spouse in the evening away from the conference schedule. This is because their spouse had things to do at the conference. Similar to the study of Mottiar & Quinn (2012), participants had newly emerged other routines from everyday routines while on holiday. When asked the participants if they found any extraordinary circumstances in such an ordinary situation, the experience of being together for novelty and newness emerged:

> I think when you go away from home, it's always nice to have a break. It's just from everyday things like cooking and the phone ringing…Just take a break and see things that I can't see at home… I think that's sharing more things than every day; because you know each other so well. You talk about all the other things very often. There are the new things to share. I think it's good. We've got a good relationship whether home or away, so it doesn't matter. But, it's always fun to go away with someone you get on with. So we enjoy it. Because you are not so busy, you've got time to talk. (Glenda)

> The location is different; the location is novelty. And the people if we meet new people there, that's the novelty too… Travel can provide different things from ordinary life that the couple share with each other. It's a constant if you go together; it's a constant dialogue… I mean the behaviour pattern might not be that different, but doing it in the new place is definitely different, I think. And sort of if you go to a conference maybe sort of behavioural pattern as a couple might not be different, but expectations are different. Because it's a new place and there's always unknown factors, so I think that's different. If I feel that all, wherever we go what I do is more or less the same I wouldn't go, would I? (Sherine)

> I think it makes it closer, yes. Sometimes we do something outside of normal life, because I guess you behave differently. This is not precious your normal job, your family. It's actually very nice to get outside of our normal environment and do something new together. (Renee)

160

> When we go to travelling, we have more time together, to talk together, to discuss together about something, some strange things, about what we see together. (Bridget)

These extracts encapsulate that being together in a new place makes the couple attach themselves to each other more strongly compared to at home. Clearly, for Glenda, Sherine and Renne, the fact that they were exposed to a new environment together with their spouse provided them increased opportunities for interacting with their spouse. Glenda found it valuable to secure the time for staying more focused on her spouse. For Sherine, this was found to facilitate better communication between each other. As such, participants viewed this routine emerged while on the travel as the opportunity that they could be in close contact, which in turn became part of the positive, memorable experiences of conference travel.

Russell also acknowledged that this increased sense of reciprocity was facilitated by better communication:

> I: But at home, in your daily life, you may understand or you may know what she does?
> R: The trouble is, at home, you get too busy; we end up I'm busy doing this and she's doing that and sometimes communication isn't the greatest…sometimes, because we're too busy. Whereas when you're on holiday and you're away from home, you probably communicate more, maybe.

This extract potentially outlines how holiday facilitates communication between the spouses. Russell emphasised that conversation with his wife on holiday was relatively higher in quality than it was in the everyday life. Specifically, being on conference travel, the type of conversation with his wife was more likely to involve information or a topic relating to his wife's task, the conference atmosphere and individual experiences that they could share with each other. It led him to a better understanding of what she does. Indeed, for him, better communication with his wife appeared to lead to the continuity of spousal interaction, reinforcing a sense of belonging in the relationship, and thus functioning to maintain a bond of intimacy with his wife, a finding noted in previous research (see, Alberts, Yoshimura, Rabby, & Loschiavo, 2005; Layder,

2009).

The sense of reciprocity in the continuity of spousal interaction can be used to assimilate a newly shared experience with one another. Renee presented an insight into this link:

> I guess, like the intimate contact all the time. Actually quite different when you do it with your family, because there is only small chance of having any quality of time together… So, going away together actually gives an opportunity to have closer contact, to have quality time together, and it's something we both actually enjoy. Because I'm so busy, we might not necessarily have the time to make contact about those things that we are both quite interested in, like military history. So when we travel… for example going to Paris, we visited Normandy beach and some other World War I battle-fields. We wouldn't normally get the opportunity to share those experiences and we both actually learned about those historical bases. When we're travelling we get to share the experience and learn and have debates about what we think might have happened. That sort of thing, we wouldn't get on a daily basis.

Renee's excerpt describes that travel allowed the couple to experience different environments and activities as a unit outside of their normal environment and facilitated sharing each other's feelings. It is clear for Renee that being on holiday as a couple facilitated her spending 'intimate' time with her spouse in pursuing special activities that both of them enjoyed to share. The shared experience between her and her husband appeared to be intertwined with a reciprocal interaction, as she said, 'when we're travelling we get to share the experience and learn and have debates about what we think'. Indeed, for Renee such shared experience constituted the quality of time spent with her spouse. This idea is important to understanding the ways in which having a shared experience within the relationship leads to relationship satisfaction (Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998).

More specifically, the majority of participants reported the value of the shared experience with a spouse in reinforcing the spousal bond. For this reason, some participants illustrated that the main concern for the engagement with conference travel was to have a shared experience with their spouse. As Russell said:

162

I was doing something different with her. We've always liked parts of Australia and I like travelling a bit. I would have liked her, for instance, because she's got asthma she couldn't go to Nepal with me. But it would have been really neat if she could have done. So it was quite nice just doing something with her.

Russell described his willingness to join the conference travel to have a shared experience with his wife. For him, having a shared experience appeared to be important in his relationship with his wife. Because each of them has their own social life, a shared experience can be served as a means of the continuity of spousal interaction. His wife, Grace (a conference attendee) explained the meaning of the shared experience in their relationship in more detail:

The opportunity to see new places together, and so that you have that shared experience; it's the sharing of the experience and the memories, and the film, and the pictures you take; all those kinds of things that, I've got an example on my I-Pad of the Rail Trail trip that we did after the conference and things like that... Whereas when it's an experience that you've done by yourself, then you can never quite show others what happened. Like, for example, my husband and daughter went to Nepal; they travelled together and did lots of climbing, and did the Annapurna Triangle and all that kind of thing. I didn't do that, so my experience is through their eyes, so, in a sense although your experiences may be different, having done the same thing together, you still have a sense of being in the same place at the same time. You can share what your feeling was at the time when you talk to somebody about it, but there's more of a sense of immediacy if you'd sat in that place with that person at that time.

Grace's extract demonstrates the importance and beneficial effects of sharing an experience in the relationship with Russell. For Grace, the shared experience drew on a sense of connectedness, togetherness, and immediacy. She described the example of travel to Nepal that she could not join as a sense of disconnection and missing out. Indeed, it can be said that the influence of the shared experience is significant in giving rise to a unique sense of a spousal bond (see, Hill, 1988; Voorpostel et al., 2010).

Further, this may reflect why many participants saved a particular experience while their spouses were at work, so they could enjoy it together when their spouses returned. It can be clearly seen in Renee's account: "Special things I try to save to do with him. Something he particularly wants to do. I will leave or find

out how to do it, but I'll save it to do with my husband." Russell did the same: "I had a look around, found some good places and then actually went back with her and had a look at them." And Jessica returned with her husband to places she'd been alone: "In Brisbane, I only saw him once during the time he was at the conference. Then afterwards we had maybe three nights after his conference, so he came exploring the town with me and I showed him what I had found." It became obvious that the participants tended to pursue a sense of spousal bond through sharing an experience with their spouse.

Summary

This theme has revealed the meaning of the experience of the time spent together as a couple during the period of the conference (see, Table 10 for a summary of the theme). In general, conference travel was understood as a meaningful and beneficial way of maintaining the quality of the relationship. An increased feeling of emotional closeness in the relationship has commonly been reported. This experience of emotional closeness is also evident in the conference attendees' accounts.

Emotional closeness in the relationship reportedly results in a sense of connectedness, a better understanding of the spouse by certain supportive facets and an increased sense of spousal bond. This is in part because travelling to conference may be directly associated with the relationship between spouses in close and emotional contact, and in part because the experience of conference travel can be understood as altering the ordinary routine/dynamic of their relationship. However, this intimate relational aspect of travel is rarely seen in the tourism literature. As such, the experience of couple time can deepen degrees of intimacy and satisfaction with their relationship and couple time can be understood within the context of the maintenance of the relationship which will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 10 Summary of the theme of the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship

Theme	Sub-theme	Key words
The experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship	A sense of connectedness	Relief from personal obligations The nature of the relationship A relational commitment to each other
	The experience of caregiver	Moral support Intellectual support A sense of tension
	A facilitator of strengthening spousal bond	Increased sense of reciprocal interaction The value of a shared experience in the relationship

4.5 "That is always a niggling feeling with me" - The experience of social inclusion and exclusion

A number of participants viewed conference travel as 'an experience of interpersonal relationships' in the conference society. While access to the conference is restricted mainly to members, it also allows accompanying spouses to join the social part of conferences. The theme of **the experience of social inclusion and exclusion** revealed the meaning of such interpersonal relationships with the conference society for accompanying spouses during the period of the conference. In the story given below, Sherine described the way she dealt with her status through her involvement in a conference society. She also reflected how she experienced social connection and her own sense of identity.

Sherine's story

> I could say I am a conference-goer, if I could do. The past three or four years, every time we travelled overseas it was accompanying my husband's conferences. Actually, we do not like being tourists. We do not want to visit countries as those holidaymakers who try to make the most of currency differences. We believe we can find and learn about the country through interacting with local people at conferences more than if we sit in a hotel or sit on the beach. This is why I accompany him. I feel visiting places as an accompanying person is more ethical than visiting places as a holidaymaker. So if he goes to somewhere to attend a conference, then we add some more days to enjoy holiday at the destination. Well, I think I can afford it, probably because my husband does not want to compartmentalise into work and life. You know, he wants me to know who the people he is working with are, and he also wants know who the people I am working with are. But also, I am in favour of attending conferences because my husband and I share the same education, the same interests. We are both interested in languages and language teaching. He says, "It is nice to share ideas with you. I like this intelligent conversation with an intelligent woman."
>
> Yes, I find the conferences interesting. I have never registered at a conference that my husband has been to. I have not attended all of the conference, but have been sneaked in to sessions sometimes. Instead, I have normally attended the social events. This is how I meet and get to know his friends. It is also time for me to often meet people who I know at conferences. You know, as I come to conferences as repeat visits, I come to have an independent relationship; sort of acquaintanceships, perhaps even friendships. Especially, if we stay in a hotel during the period of the conference, then I am very likely to join conference meals with him and the

people at the conference. He wants to spend more time with other participants. Sometimes, I find it a bit much really. He does this sort of almost debriefing session for his students over a meal outside the conference venue. So yeah, it is OK. I do not feel too bad about it. But I can say if I have no interest in my husband's specialised field, I would feel very different about attending the conference, I am sure.

Of course, all this not for me, no. That is very true. In a way, well, I think there are two sides of it. Because what often happens is he meets people in the same area and starts talking about his work. Sometimes, I get bogged down in the detail because there is a tendency for the conversation going too technical and detailed. That's fine. In some ways, it has been really positive. The fact that we are both in the same area means that I can understand what's going on to a certain extent and I can talk to the other participants quite freely and not feel stupid or anything like that. I think the experience has helped me to extend my knowledge and understanding. So that is a positive side of it. But, in other areas, I feel uncomfortable when I was there. I join in the conversation, but I am kind of left out of it professionally. This is the other side that I am a teacher, but I am a part-time teacher, and so now I have not got the status to attend, to participate in the conference as a member. That makes me feel frustrated sometimes. I mean the point is, you know, I could have done that. I could be the full membership; I could have full membership status, but I didn't… kind of thing? It is always tied with me the situation, um, having a family and having children. I couldn't have all… So I had to drop certain aspects of my life and in my case, it was the very professional side of it. So it is good that I can still teach, but probably I lost the opportunities to develop myself into the full membership status. It has been quite difficult for me.

So there are both sides of the coin, so to speak… It is good that I can hold intelligent conversation with other participants, but on the other hand, I haven't got the status of my own. That is always a niggling feeling with me in my case. I feel that I could be here on my own status, not as a wife. Sometimes I feel that, why I'm spending time here, and if I can find some other activities, I will be quite happy to do so.

Sherine vividly described differences in the feelings of being included and excluded socially while interacting with people in the conference society and how her identity was adjusted in each case. For Sherine, her status clearly restricted her activity at conferences and led her from feelings of confidence and belonging to feelings of discomfort and inferiority by expressing 'a niggling feeling'. Like Sherine, a number of participants revealed the ways they adjusted to their status in terms of how they felt through the process of social interaction. Actually, there was no prior intention of an investigation of an identity issue in the present

research design, but many of the other participants brought it to the discussion. This inductively emerged from the analysis in the form of a 'dilemma in status' or an 'identity crisis' to understand the experience of social inclusion and exclusion as it was significant to the participants' narratives in this research.

Social inclusion

A number of participants reported their experience of engagement with social events at the conference, such as dinners, and welcoming receptions:

> I'll go to the dinners, because they have an interesting speaker usually and you meet people around the table. (Nelly)

> I enjoyed especially when they have a dinner or something you can go to and meet different people and talk to them. You can know different cultures. So it's a good experience. (Kathy)

> It's nice to go somewhere different to learn from different people who are sort of presenters at the conference. It's a global way of learning. It's also a good way to network with them. (Renee)

These extracts show the opportunity for improving participation of accompanying spouses in the conference society, specifically social activities. Also they revealed that inclusion in conferences contributed to fulfilling their needs such as broadening their academic knowledge through intelligent contacts with interesting key speakers and socialising with other people. Such inclusion in the conference appeared to make a distinct impact on social connection and a sense of belonging for the participants. From this perspective, for participants the experience of social inclusion can function as a means of constructing themselves as either an insider or outsider in relation to the conference society.

Some participants particularly valued joining the social activities as a member of the conference society. It seems that there was the possibility of building independent relationships through being included in the conference. This is in part because participants gain access to the society through social interaction with other people at the conference, like other accompanying spouses, attendees, and staff. For example, Sherine described:

When we were in Korea last year, we met one of the teachers at the university. I think she and I became friends rather than she and my husband becoming acquaintances in the academic field, if you know what I mean … So, if I visit Korea again, surely I will meet her, and she and I might do something together … That'd be very nice.

Sherine described how she developed a special connection with people at a conference. For her, having an independent relationship from her husband at the conference seemed to make her feel socially included. In addition, for Glenda who perceived herself as an outsider in the conference, the feeling of being socially included appeared to bring a distinctive meaning. The following conversation with her shows how the context of engagement with the social events led her to change her perception of her status in the conference society:

G: Usually at the conferences [name] goes to, the spouses aren't invited, but I did go to one in which they had a conference dinner run by the publishers and they invited the spouses. That was fantastic; it was on Queen Victoria's war ship. It was so exciting, it was wonderful. I really enjoyed that and I enjoyed meeting people, but normally I don't get invited. Not because of [name] but because they just don't have spouses there. So that was good. Also at the same conference the people were really friendly and included me and I went out for dinner with them although it had nothing to do with the conference. It wasn't official but they knew I was there, so they said 'come along with us'.
I: If you attended the same conference again, do you think the same would happen again?
G: Yes, it probably would. It's a smaller conference and everyone knows each other because they go to the same conference every two years and because I've been, if I go again, they will know me so they will include me… the following year, [name]'s already said do you want to come, and that's a factor because I know that they are friendly people and they know me. Normally, I don't really meet anybody at the conference.

Glenda's extract suggests that the feeling of being socially included was derived from a sense of belonging to the community. Glenda spoke of positive feelings which were 'fantastic', 'exciting', 'wonderful', 'friendly' and 'included' that she experienced during the conference dinner. It revealed that she felt she was treated as a part of the conference society rather than being an outsider. Indeed, these feelings appeared to help her in a positive way to develop a shared sense of being connected with people at a conference. As such, for her, this special relationship represented a sense of being an insider by increasing a sense of belonging. From

this perspective, the socialising side of involvement becomes apparent, by which Glenda, like Sherine, sustained the familiar social identity of her everyday life during the event, whilst remaining as an accompanying spouse.

This is mirrored in Renee's description. Renee seemed to maintain her social identity in the conference society through developing her relationships with people involved in her spouses' work life:

> We do less and less doing conference dinners, and more and more of actual networking with people from home so, home means from Hamilton. We didn't meet them before, but we see them at conferences [laughs] and there is only I just look around the corner [laughs], we often go and do conferencing, we're more likely to catch up with them there something socially there than we do in Hamilton. So that sounds a bit crazy, you go to somewhere like Europe, to socialise with people who actually just live around the road or just down the road, just quite strange [laughs]… The thing is, people are who my husband works with, but the context is not about the work. So if we socialise here often says see new staff's functions or farewells and most of their contexts will be work. But if you are on a conference and you meet, say, at a local restaurant, more like to talk about, sort of family, what you're actually doing or what you've done over the year.

Renee drew attention to the feeling of social inclusion in her husband's social relations and networks at home. Through the process of enhancing social contact with her husband's co-workers at conference, she was recognised and included in the context of her husband's work. In this respect, she was able to forge her personal identity rather than being an accompanying spouse, as she said "we're more likely to catch up with them there something socially there than we do".

In short, it can be argued that accompanying spouses' independent relationships at conferences potentially come to symbolise their social identity to be a part of the conference society. Hall (2004) holds that social inclusion extends the possibility of better opportunities for people to share social position, though certain criteria might serve to limit the degree of their sense of inclusion. Therefore, the feeling of being socially included can potentially offer accompanying spouses a means of achieving status while maintaining their own sense of identity along with an appreciation of their own value as a single, unique individual in their own right.

Social exclusion

Almost all participants also described marginalisation from the mainstream conference activities due to limited access to conferences: "There wasn't the firm involvement and I think spouses only went to the dinner. Many of them [conferences] have been like that. You only go along to the dinner" (Renee); "If you are an accompanying member at a conference, you don't get free entry. You have to pay if you want to go to the course and they won't accept you necessarily, unless you are qualified for that" (Nelly); "I think conference is only for people who study or do the research related to or who have the invitation from the conference" (Bridget). Indeed, accompanying spouses are institutionally or voluntarily recognised as a marginalised group within the conference society.

Throughout the interviews with accompanying spouses, it is apparent that they purposely chose to exclude themselves from the mainstream of the conference society. Indeed, all participants reported an independent role at conferences. As Russell says: "I think they had a dinner which I went to, but apart from that, really it was just [name] at the conference doing her thing and I did my thing." Glenda also described that she preferred to be marginalised herself with a full awareness of the business nature of conference:

> G: I feel like a tourist, I think. Yes, because I don't go to the conference.
> I: So, you never go to sessions?
> G: No. it's too academic for me [laugh].
> I: Can you please tell me about the feelings that stood out for you as an accompanying person?
> G: Do I feel left out, you mean?
> I: Yes.
> G: No, it doesn't worry me because I know why I'm going and I haven't been invited or paid to go the conference. It doesn't worry me at all. I'm just grateful for the chance to go away… I'm quite happy not to be included.

In these excerpts, there seems to be no expectation and anticipation of a sense of being socially included in the conference. Glenda illustrated that she accepted her exclusion from the conference as necessarily desirable for herself and her spouse, saying "I'm quite happy not to be included". For her, self-exclusion represented a contextual and active decision. This self-exclusion was subjectively experienced

as a sense of freedom and serendipitous moments by participants in different ways, as was discussed in section 4.3.

Accompanying spouses' marginalisation in the conference society was also noticed in the accounts of conference attendees who are in the mainstream of the society. They perceived that their spouses were on the margins of the conference society:

> Most conferences don't really allow... if they have a social function, it's only for the people who have paid the registration fee to attend the conference and that, so, she doesn't feel comfortable coming to those. Sometimes she can pay a bit more and she can come, but she said really she's isn't particularly interested in coming to my conferences and that's fair enough, I don't really expect her to. (Geoffrey)

> She might come to the conference dinner, might come to the reception, but not in any other sense. She's got little interest in the papers, never listens to any of the papers or anything like that, so she's not in the conference. But conferences usually accommodate accompanying people at the social events, like the dinner. (Billy)

> She has never registered at a conference that I've been to. She has attended the social events. She is introduced as my wife, and at other times, when I give a conference paper, she may sit in the audience and pretend that she doesn't know me, and then she hears what people say about the conference. (Paul)

Indeed, the conference system could potentially be seen to institutionally alienate accompanying spouses, as they have only limited access to social events during the conference such as social dinners.

By contrast, some of the participants in the present research challenged their social identity as an accompanying spouse through their experience of being socially excluded from the conference society. Hall (2004) refers to social exclusion as the incorporation of a "lack of access to cultural as well as material resources and the sense of process" (p. 299). Their involvement in the conference society through interacting with others at social activities resulted in them questioning their identity as an accompanying spouse. For example:

At the Brisbane conference, I knew someone else from Waikato who was there because he is doing his PhD with my husband, so I probably talked to him more than I talked to anyone else. It was nice to be able to put faces to a few names when [name] talked about different people, but I would never have contact with any of them ever again. I only met them for maybe an hour or two, so there are no long-term relationships from any of the people I've met. And the Melbourne one … one of his supervisors was at the conference and we had dinner together one night; so, I guess, of course I'll see him again. But I've not really had a lot of chance to interact with the other people at the conference because I'm not aware that any of them had partners. (Jessica)

I mean you meet acquaintances but you don't tend to have… because a lot of people have got their own agenda and if they have taken friends or partners with them, they will go and do their own thing; they don't tend to… we don't go all hang out together. (Chloe)

These excerpts illustrate that social interaction with other people at a conference can also raise a concern by no means restricted to social identity. This is possibly because the social activities at the conference are still recognised as the major means of facilitating social networking for the conference attendees. For Jessica, it was evident that her social identity as an accompanying person led to difficulties in interacting with the mainstream conference population. She appeared to be alert to her marginalisation, as she mentioned "I've not really had a lot of chance to interact with the other people at the conference because I'm not aware that any of them had partners". Chloe also implied that she felt she had no option in this affair. Indeed, it is possible that having a role of accompanying spouse leads to a difficulty in gaining access to the conference society. As such, interaction with the mainstream people gave rise to heightening the awareness of an identity as an accompanying spouse or non-member.

Further, for some participants, this awareness had been a dilemma as illustrated in Sherine's story in page 166-167. Such dilemmas in status in conferences were noticeably reported by participants who specifically have the same education as their spouses. As Jessica said:

If it was just maybe drinks, socialising, then possibly I would go, but if you put me in a room of academic people, even though I do have a degree, I feel a bit not smart enough to be there [laughs].

The perception of cliquish groupings and the professional image of the conference environment seem to make Jessica feel socially and professionally excluded in a group. For Chloe, the feeling of exclusion tends to 'colour' her entire travel experience:

> I: Where do you feel uncomfortable during the travel?
> C: Often if I go to the dinners, or the lunches; I don't particularly enjoy that. Generally it's OK when there are other partners there, but when there aren't, you feel a bit silly [laughs]. I mean, at least I'm familiar with what they are talking about because I've got a medical background too, but they are all doctors and I'm in nursing and it's quite different. It's OK, but that's probably the part that I dislike the most because I'm quite shy and often sitting at a table with a whole lot of quite intelligent and outspoken people, I tend to just sit there and not say much [laughs]. I don't know anything about inflammatory bowel disease, so I usually can't comment [laughs].

Later,

> I: If someone who hadn't experienced accompanying her or his partner to a conference, if they ask you advice, what would you say?
> C: Don't attend the function dinner [laugh]; that would be my advice; and have something to do, or go somewhere.

This extract outlines that the loss of professional identity is bound up with a certain feeling of awkwardness during the travel. Chloe described that her perception of her own social role at the conference was influenced by intellectual conversations with the other people within the mainstream of the conference society. However, the loss of professional identity in this conversation appears to lead her to feelings of inferiority, discomfort, shyness and isolation, corresponding with that Jessica felt. Clearly, she felt unfulfilled by her identity as an accompanying spouse through the process of social interaction with other people. Indeed, the status issue seemed to diminish participants' sense of having something to contribute and openness to self-expression, even though they did not expect their professional identity to be recognised by other people within the society. As such, the loss of professional identity led participants to feelings of discomfort, inferiority and isolation.

Summary

The theme of the experience of social inclusion and exclusion has highlighted the ways in which feelings of inclusion and exclusion in the conference society can precipitate a change in identity (see, Table 11 for a summary of the theme). In view of the evidence provided above, the identity crisis was induced and conditioned by relations with the mainstream people in the conference society. The development of personal relationships with other people in the conference facilitated the experience of being socially included. Participants' own social identity was sometimes used as a means to develop various relationships resulting in a shared sense of community and belonging to the conference society. As such, social inclusion in the thesis can be perceived as a satisfying experience accompanied by feelings of being secure, embraced and belonging.

At the same time, the experience of social interaction at the social activities also tended to bring about an identity crisis. Indeed, with the loss of their own professional identity participants had to challenge the feeling of isolation and the devaluation of their own professional positions. It was disclosed that a sense of being personally devalued enhanced the feeling of being socially excluded. Arguably, the experience of social exclusion was closely related to the loss of status. Within this research, the experience of social inclusion and exclusion represented difficulties in adjusting to conference status, specifically with regard to professional identity. However, this idea has remained relatively underdeveloped in tourism studies. In this context, the issue of identity potentially needs to be understood within a wider context of interpersonal relationships to understand the social interactional context in which tourism occurs.

Table 11 Summary of the theme of the experience of social inclusion and exclusion

Theme	Sub-theme	Key words
The experience of social inclusion and exclusion	Social inclusion	A sense of belonging Building an independent relationship
	Social exclusion	Self-exclusion/marginalisation Dilemma in status

4.6 Chapter Summary

Using an IPA lens to analyse this data, as justified in Chapter Three, three key emergent themes, 'the experience of providing individual autonomy', 'the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship' and 'the experience of social inclusion and exclusion', were evident in the narratives of the accompanying spouses who participated in this research. In a discussion of each theme, an idiographic story from one participant was presented to show the variations of each theme rather than a definitive or predictable feature of individuals' experiences. The analysis of conference attendees' interviews also upheld and substantiated these themes.

While the themes appeared to be inter-related, each of the themes signified a different emphasis on the aspects of the conference travel experience from the accompanying spouses' perspective. The following Figure 1 shows the three key themes.

The accompanying spouses' experience of conference

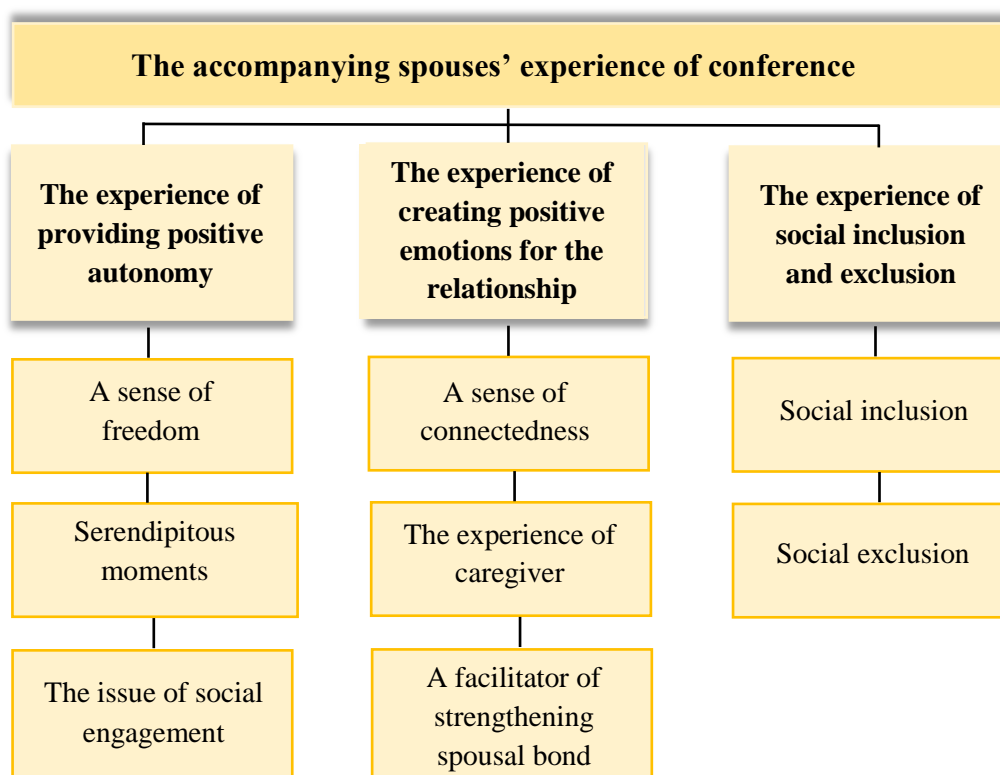| The experience of providing positive autonomy	The experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship	The experience of social inclusion and exclusion
A sense of freedom	A sense of connectedness	Social inclusion
Serendipitous moments	The experience of caregiver	Social exclusion
The issue of social engagement	A facilitator of strengthening spousal bond	

Figure 1 Key themes for the conference travel experience from the accompanying spouses' perspective

The first theme of the experience of providing individual autonomy was related to the time that accompanying spouses spent on their own. Specifically, it focused on how accompanying spouses experienced the time alone, and what made their experience unique and meaningful in the context of their life. The time for accompanying spouses was experienced mainly in three ways: a sense of freedom to do their 'own thing', 'serendipitous moments' and 'the issues of social engagements'. Specifically, this theme was understood with the relationship with a spouse (the second theme) and within the issues of social inclusion and exclusion (the third theme).

The second theme, the experience of creating positive emotions for the relationship, reflected the accompanying spouses' experience of time spent together with their spouse during the period of the conference. This theme represented the most pervasive and distinctive aspect of the conference travel experience for accompanying spouses, as it drew attention to the role of travel in facilitating an increase in a sense of intimacy between the couple. As such, the theme highlighted the relational aspect of the travel experience which is hugely under-studied in the tourism literature.

The third theme- the experience of social inclusion and exclusion- described how the participants subjectively experienced their engagement with the conference society. This theme elaborated the ways in which the participants dealt with their involvement in social interaction with other people in the conference society and how they felt in the meantime. Such experiences were found to entwine with participants' social identity as an accompanying spouse challenging their own professional identity.

These three themes will now be discussed further in Chapter Five and their positioning within current academic debate and contribution to tourism scholarly knowledge.

Chapter Five Discussion of Key Experiential Themes

This thesis has explored the accompanying spouses' subjective lived experiences and the meaning ascribed to their experiences with a view to providing insights into the conference travel experience from their perspectives. An interpretation of the findings presented in Chapter Four has helped to uncover various experiential themes that constitute the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. In particular, a presentation of commonalties of all participants' responses has suggested that conference travel was experienced as the enabler of enhanced greater autonomy or wellbeing in participants' own time during the travel, of promoting positive emotions and feelings in their relationship, and of negotiating a potential change in their identity through interpersonal relationships in a conference society. This has resulted from the synthesis of the researcher's interpretations of the data, followed by a theoretical discussion of the relatedness of the findings to the wider academic literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer further in-depth discussion around the meaning of travel to conferences with a spouse, from the accompanying spouses' perspectives, rather than provide an empirical explanation of it. It is noteworthy that IPA is more concerned with examining the individual's personal accounts rather than producing an objective record of an experience (Dickson et al., 2010). Three experiential facets of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon are identified from the findings presented in Chapter Four that represented particularly meaningful experiences for them, which are 'relational intimacy', 'an alternative way to enjoy a holiday' and 'the effect of interpersonal relationships on identity'. The chapter attempts to place these three aspects of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in a wider context with reference to the extant literature. It begins with the discussion of relational intimacy that was considered as a crucial element of participants' experiences. It then proceeds with discussion of conference travel seen as alternative holiday experience, and the link between interpersonal relationships and identity, respectively.

5.1 Relational intimacy

The present thesis's findings have provided new insights into the meanings of the shared time as a couple during conference travel. For participants, the experience of conference travel was a way of giving more availability to each other, free of the concerns of ordinary home life, regular routines and childcare. The value of spending couple time together in manner was reflected in reported experiences of an increased sense of emotional closeness in their relationships as a result of an enhanced sense of spousal connectedness, the giving of support and a sense of strengthened spousal bond. As identified in Chapter Four, such emotional experiences were regarded as beneficial for creating wellbeing and stability in romantic relationships (Layder, 2009; Meunier & Baker, 2012). Therefore, the thesis has suggested that conference travel can provide an opportunity to maintain the quality of the romantic relationship through heightening 'emotional intimacy' in couples; as demonstrated by Sternberg (1986) who refers to a "feeling of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships" that "give rise, essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship" (p. 119). In the tourism literature, the topic of intimacy has been characterised as a way of developing the quality of the individual travel experience by promoting close relations between tourists and a place and the local community (see, Conran, 2011; Frohlick, 2013; Harrison, 2003; Trauer & Ryan, 2005). However, the thesis has moved beyond this "touristic intimacy" (Harrison, 2003, p. 51) and has introduced the term 'relational intimacy' to address the relational aspect of the tourist experience that enhances the tourist experience through the sharing of experiences and other beneficial outcomes.

The overall findings revealed that participants perceived enhanced wellbeing and stability in their relationships derived from the experience of positive emotions resulting from time spent together during conference travel. Throughout the interviews, participants openly talked about their experiences of togetherness, companionship, consideration, empathy, mutual understanding, reciprocal interactions and a sense of belonging in the relationship. Arguably, these emotions they experienced towards their spouses were conducive to increasing intimacy in

couples, thereby, from their point of view, enhancing their satisfaction with their relationships. This relational aspect of travel has not yet been well studied in the tourism literature, although there are numerous suggestions as to the impact of levels of intimacy between co-travellers on the quality of the holiday experience (see, Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). From the greater perspective of intimacy and romantic relationships, intimacy is found to be a fundamental factor in maintaining positive couple relationships. Many previous studies (for example, Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999; Layder; Meunier & Baker, 2012; Moss & Schwebel, 1993; Takahashi, 2004) have established that the level of intimacy experienced by individuals within romantic relationships has a profound effect on stability in the relationship. This concern with the experience of intimacy in relational satisfaction can help provide couples maintain and increase the level of intimacy with each other through spending time together during conference travel, and in turn enhance the quality of their relationships.

The present findings suggest that the issue of the relational intimacy-travel experience nexus could be identified within the context of the relational maintenance strategy, which is extensively examined in the field of family and personal relationship studies (for example, Gager & Sanchez, 2003; Malinen et al., 2010; Stafford & Canary, 1991; Takahashi, 2004; Voorpostel et al., 2009). The participants' accounts in the thesis showed that participants became involved in conference travel with a view to maintaining the quality of their relationships. Conference travel served as a catalyst for some participants to share affection with each other. Some participants reported responsibilities around their commitment to their spouses. In fact, affection and commitment are identified as salient features of intimacy and considered as an important role in maintaining romantic relationships in the study of relational maintenance (for example, Rusbult, 1983; Stafford & Canary, 1991). For example, participants' actual involvement in conference travel can be understood as efforts toward maintaining their relationships by way of demonstrating their commitment to the relationship. As such, the relational intimacy-travel experience nexus may be understood in light of the proposition that conference travel reflects participants' desire to maintain relational stability.

With respect to the relational maintenance strategy, it would be interesting to further investigate the importance of participants' caregiver role during conference travel to relational maintenance. Participants presented their experience of fulfilling the role of caregiver as a way of incorporating their desire to provide their spouse with certain supportive feelings, such as care, sympathy, empathy and consideration, during the period of the conference. Participants were found to satisfy their caring instincts by the provision of moral and intellectual support, while still indulging their pursuit of leisure. From the accompanying spouses' perspective, the experience of their caregiving was not related to their caregiving responsibilities. Rather it provided an opportunity to develop a new understanding and knowledge of a spouse in terms of his/her social life and enhance a sense of belonging in the relationship.

In contrast, previous research in family studies has revealed the challenges and issues of caregiving toward the maintenance of the relationship and its impact on relationship dynamics (see, for example, Boeije & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2003; Dickson et al., 2010). In leisure and tourism studies (see, Bedim & Guinan, 1996; Gladwell & Bedini, 2004; Strang, 2001), some attention has been given to the role of leisure for caregivers in improving and maintaining their well-being and caring abilities. In this context, the findings of this thesis made a contribution to the previous literature on the maintenance of the relationship and the caregivers' leisure participation. It can be said that, within the context of conference travel, care provision emerged as being of considerable importance in developing and increasing relational intimacy. This is supported by the study of Baumeister and Bratslavsky (1999) which suggests that intimacy is derived from an empathic, sympathetic understanding of each other through shared experiences. Therefore, in the context of conference travel that had a profound effect on a satisfying relationship, caregiving can function as a contributor to improving the sense of wellbeing in couple relationships, while it is also widely considered as an underlying barrier to caregivers' leisure participation (Bedim & Guinan, 1996; Gladwell & Bedini, 2004). There will be a need for further research into this newly-acquired aspect of caregiving relating to relational maintenance behaviours and the relational aspect of the tourist experience.

The thesis draws attention to positive outcomes resulting from the experience of couple time during conference travel, described in the majority of responses in the form of heightened spousal bond and relational solidarity. Participants reported that conference travel as an extraordinary activity could help them rekindle their estranged relationship with their spouse again, and as a result of this, emotional intimacy could be maintained and developed. The thesis findings provided further evidence of a sense of strengthened spousal bond through participants' descriptions of an increased reciprocal interaction with their spouse and shared intimate experiences during the travel. In most of the family tourism literature, there has been much attention devoted to the importance of time spent as a family during holidays in developing family cohesion, bonding and togetherness by sharing experiences with family members and facilitating open communication among them (see, for example, Gram, 2005; Lehto et al., 2009; McCabe, 2009; Schänzel et al., 2012). As an important factor in the quality of a travel experience, the spousal bond is of particular interest in that it may help to sustain a couple's relationship in its progression through various life stages, such as from partners to parents and empty nests (Fingerman & Lang, 2004; Voigt & Laing, 2010).

To support the thesis findings, a broader multidisciplinary perspective is required. As such, the phenomenon can potentially be understood within the context of couple leisure and relationship satisfaction in the field of family studies (for example, Crawford et al., 2002; Hill, 1988; Johnson et al., 2006; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) and leisure studies (for example, Berg et al., 2001; Shaw, 1992; Voorpostel et al., 2010). A theme which emerged frequently from these studies was that pleasurable time experienced through interactions between couples in joint leisure activities, rather than simply the amount of time spent together, was hugely influential on personal satisfaction with the relationship. Specifically, interactions between couples occurring in joint leisure activities of everyday life on a regular basis have been viewed as a catalyst for elevating a level of mutual understanding and a feeling of closeness (Voorpostel et al., 2010; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). There is evidence that experiences of shared participation in novel and stimulating activities rather than everyday activities, for example leisure travel, were more influential in maintaining the quality and stability of romantic relationships (for example, Aron et al., 2000; Tsapelas et al.,

2009). In this sense, conference travel can be seen as a unique form of travel that facilitates strengthened spousal bonds by providing a platform for an increased and varied reciprocal interaction between couples.

In recent years, within the field of tourism studies, the importance of interactions between people has also been taken into account with respect to diversifying and broadening the tourist experience. A number of researchers (see, Hibbert, Dickinson, & Curtin, 2013; Larsen, 2008; Larsen et al., 2007; Ross, 2005; Urry, 2002, 2003; Williams & Hall, 2000) have indicated the increased role of social networks in transforming tourism into a new form, particularly revolving around visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism. These studies brought into the tourist experience literature issues of (re)connecting people at a distance to fulfil various family or social obligations and reinforcing family bonding through tourism. As such, a desire for maintaining interpersonal relationships or interactions embedded in this approach inherently involves social meaning (Williams & Hall, 2000).

An increasing number of studies on the tourist experience and family holidays exhibit the role of interactions with co-travelling significant others, such as family members, spouse, relatives and friends, during the travel, as a positive contributor to fostering social relationships (for example, Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Heimtun, 2011; Mottiar & Quinn, 2012; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). The results of the study by Heimtun (2011), in particular, reveal that bonding with significant others (i.e., friends in her study) that occurs in the holiday context through commitment and reciprocity is conducive to maintaining interpersonal relationships in daily life. Similarly, Tung and Ritchie (2011) found that improving social relationships through interaction with co-travelling significant others during the travel was an important component in making the travel experience memorable, explaining that "We often visit numerous destinations with fellow tourists but the sole notion of companionship does not make that trip especially memorable" (p. 1379). While these studies are carried out on diverse relationships including friends and family, they are specific to personal relationships between co-travelling travellers highlighting the importance of the interaction between them. These results can help to understand the role of reciprocal interactions between couples during conference travel in fostering spousal bond. Therefore, the thesis has suggested

183

that a sense of heightened spousal bond represented a beneficial outcome of shared intimate experiences through the process of continuous reciprocal interaction between spouses during the travel.

In summary, this thesis emphasises the fact that conference travel offers the opportunity for couples to be close together for an extended period of time outside of their normal environment. As reinforced by the wider literature, sharing couple time can deepen degrees of intimacy in couples and satisfaction with their relationships. Relational intimacy in turn was reported to contribute to the development and maintenance of relational satisfaction. In this sense, the thesis has suggested that relational intimacy presents a unique perspective for interpreting the tourist experience, specifically as it concerns couples who travel to conferences together. In light of the positive emotional experience that such couples' travel may offer, it merits further research into the relational aspect of the tourist experience in various ways in the tourism literature, not just in the conference travel context. The notion of couple intimacy presented in the thesis may provide sectors of tourism associated with stages in the family life cycle, such as marriage, honeymoon, pregnancy and childbirth, with a new lens through which the tourism experience can be examined, as previous studies have largely focused on destination marketing and tourism products and services (see, Johnston, 2006; Kim & Agrusa, 2005; Voigt & Laing, 2010).

5.2 Alternative way to enjoy a holiday

The findings presented in Chapter Four have shed light on the meanings of time spent alone during conference travel from the accompanying spouses' perspective. In general, participants perceived that their own time was closely associated with the idea of being self-sufficient in preparation and fulfilment without their spouses' accompaniment. Participants commonly expressed a sense of freedom gained during their own time, from the responsibilities in their lives. Some participants spoke of serendipitous moments that allowed them to achieve spontaneous discoveries without any explicit preparation. The thesis found that

own time helped the majority of participants to experience a period of autonomy of the individual and independence. Although for some who had less self-confidence to go out on their own the experience of own time was seen somewhat negatively, in general experiencing individual freedom was found to be valuable. This is because its characteristics were accepted as being of an alternative or unusual nature that might not be available on other types of holiday travel that they had with their spouse, particularly family holidays. In particular, Gram (2005) found a need of having individual space on family holiday, along with the ideal of family togetherness to constitute better or ideal family holiday experiences.

More specifically, in previous studies on the relations of the holiday experience and gender, from a feminist perspective, it has become clear that the absence of a sense of individual space imposes inevitable constraints on leisure involvement for women when on holiday, due to their continuous genderdised role (for example, Davidson, 1996; Mottiar & Quinn, 2012). Further, Mottiar and Quinn (2012) found that women involved in the domestic responsibilities as a family routine fulfilled the same role in the context of self-catering holidays. As such, for participants in this research, the experience of own time away from usual routines and roles can serve as an alternative opportunity that they might aspire to but never quite reach in other types of travel. In this sense, there is a need for setting up the term 'alternative' for the thesis to showcase the freedom from family routines that alternative travel of this variety entails.

In tourism studies, the term 'alternative' is widely adopted to describe and explain any alternative form of tourism to commercial mass tourism that is "consistent with natural, social, and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences" (Eadington & Smith, 1992, p. 3). As such, the term alternative is considered as a flexible and generic label embracing a variety of forms of tourism, such as rural, green, volunteer, new and responsible tourism, which aim at social and environmental transformations, in line with a sustainable development agenda, when developing and promoting tourism for long term success (Fennell, 2006; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008; Pearce, 1992). In these particular contexts, the concept of the alternative is

more concerned with their potential as a force for change in existing approaches to tourism by seeking social and ethical values (Bramwell & Lane, 2014; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008).

In contrast, in this thesis, the term alternative occupies a unique position in shedding light on specific facets of conference travel that provide participants with alternative or unusual experiences of the travel, mostly linked to their personal values. As an example, participants perceived that conference travel facilitated creative and meaningful experiences that encouraged them to create and legitimise the time and space specifically for the development of individual interests. It also helped them enhance a sense of self-confidence in doing things on their own. Therefore, in a broader sense, the current thesis has introduced the term 'alternative' to promote particular facets of conference travel, including own time, which give rise to opportunities for participants to experience their holiday in an alternative way at the personal level. As such, their subjective lived experiences become rewarding blend of personal space and conference travel context.

A recent study by Schänzel (2012) examined the relationship between family time and own time on family holiday; individual family members described pleasurable leisure experiences on their own as highlighting the importance of personal own time away from the whole family in increasing the quality of the family holiday experience. Schänzel (2012) suggests a more holistic and critical approach to own time away from the family which in turn facilitates the more collective perspective of the family holiday experience. In Schänzel's study, consideration of the role of own time seems to be limited to development of a better understanding of internal family group dynamics.

By contrast, the present thesis found experiential dimensions of own time within the conference travel context, characterised by individual free time accompanied by a personal sense of autonomy, individuality and independence. In a sense, own time within the context of conference travel provided space and freedom for participants to pursue experiences of their own choosing and indulge their own personal interests. The thesis suggests that in enjoying having personal time out

from couple time, participants were able to focus on themselves, and this may contribute to providing them with valuable experiences and increased individual well-being. This is supported by the findings of Gilbert and Abdullah's study (2004), which indicate that the experience of taking a holiday as a form of leisure activity can positively enhance the holidaymakers' sense of happiness. In addition, as the experience of own time brings benefits to individuals, it can, perhaps, come to be linked with happiness, satisfaction and stability of the relationship with a co-travelling spouse (see, Meunier & Baker, 2012); travel that blends time out with time together is under-researched in literature on the tourist experience.

The thesis findings presented in Chapter Four also highlight the notion of serendipity as an integral part of the tourist experience by which alternative benefits to individuals were created and secured during conference travel. The thesis suggests that conference travel serves as a way to experience incidental or unexpected encounters that participants may not expect or be able to afford on other types of holidays. Some participants reported that they serendipitously experienced new discoveries about the destination. Some mentioned a sense of unanticipated surprise and happiness when encountering the feeling of luxury, particularly relating to accommodation; a feeling of exclusiveness by being treated as a group of conference members through being involved in social events; and the new acquisition of unanticipated information or discoveries about the destination through involvement in spousal programmes. Indeed, serendipitous moments have the potential to increase the overall satisfaction of the travel experience.

In tourism studies, serendipity appears to be synonymous with spontaneity or surprise, and serendipitous experiences are considered as a way in which the tourist experience may be conceptualised (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). In particular, O'Reilly (2006), in describing serendipity as "going with the flow" (p. 1001), indicates its importance as an integral part of backpacker tourism in which backpackers intend to have little or no advanced planning. Ryan (2002) also identifies that serendipity, referring to it as "the knack of the happy surprise" (p. 59), can be a key motivation for travellers purposely seeking unexpected

discoveries. Further, in Tung and Ritchie's recent study (2011), the descriptions of memorable experiences were associated with the positive experience of surprise for an unplanned activity. Indeed, positive effects of serendipitous experiences appear to be a significant factor in the overall quality of the experience. However, there seems to be a lack of definition as to what it means to encounter serendipitous discoveries, and a paucity of data on their wider effects on the whole experience and how they can lead to new experiences (Foster & Ford, 2003).

Abrahams (1986) mentions the value of openness and apparent spontaneity when experiencing things from the most ordinary to the extraordinary as to the outcome of the serendipitous experiences:

> We must expend a good part of our energies secretly preparing for these breakthroughs, for these spontaneous times in which we are overcome by the fulfilment of the expectations we hardly could admit to having-like those "first-time experiences" which, when successful, are so surprising because we hear about them and even talk about them but they seem to sneak up on us anyhow. We are surprised only by the fulfilment of expectations. (p. 64)

Indeed, those serendipitous moments we regard as most authentic tend to be those that make up the value and quality of an experience. In the same vein, Cary (2004) suggests that the understanding of serendipitous moments in tourists' narratives is important in representing the ideal of the experience of being a tourist rather than economic impacts. Cary (2004) also proposes that tourists serendipitously experience themselves as tourists and feel a sense of belonging in the environment of the destination; thereby the exploration of serendipitous experience as the tourist moment facilitates a representation of the tourist subjective experience. Arguably, it needs to take a broader view of serendipity rather than simply having a serendipitous insight in order to understand the tourist experience. In this context, the present thesis findings make a contribution that show the role of serendipitous experiences in revealing subjective meanings ascribed to the experience and in turn distinguishing the conference travel experience from other types of holiday experience.

In summary, the thesis found that personal own time was secured in the context of conference travel and served as a facilitator, enabling accompanying spouses to pursue their own interests and wants apart from normal travel activities. In this sense, own time was understood as an exclusive time in which participants might obtain a personal sense of autonomy, freedom and independence. Additionally, it has suggested that the presence of some time for the self within the holiday environment could generate positive results for the members travelling, i.e. in the research, spouses in the romantic relationship. In addition, serendipitous encounters occurring during the travel experience can be represented as alternative travel experiences that make conference travel unique. For accompanying spouses, the results of unexpected finds, such as a sense of luxury and learning about local cultures, were used to explore the unidentified and hidden aspects of conference travel experiences. Therefore, the thesis suggests that the experience of own time and the analysis of serendipitous moments provide drivers for improving understanding of conference travel as an alternative form of tourism consumption.

5.3 The effect of interpersonal relationships on identity

The thesis findings presented in Chapter Four have revealed the experiences of social inclusion and exclusion through accompanying spouses interacting with people in the conference society. As can be seen in the previous chapters, the structure of conference travel is very conducive to creating opportunities for participants to be involved in social contact with others in the conference society. The thesis found that the experience of being socially included or excluded was based on whether participants felt a sense of 'belonging' to the conference society or not. Some participants reported that the possibility of building independent relationships made them feel like they did belong to the society while keeping their own social identity. On the other hand, some participants described feelings of inferiority, shyness and isolation, and a sense of being marginalised from the society.

Previous research has largely considered the issues of social exclusion involving notions of poverty, inequality and deprivation to reconstruct the destination or increase people's participation in tourism (see, Agarwal & Brunt, 2006; Hazel, 2005; McCabe, 2009). Further, the recent study by Small, Darcy and Packer (2012) suggested that the quality of the tourist experience was associated with tourists' feelings of inclusion or exclusion and the degree to which they were emotionally, socially and physically challenging. They analysed the effect of environmental structures and social attitudes on the quality of the tourist experience for people with vision impairment. The experience of inclusion and exclusion for such people was identified as being a continuum comprising a set of conditions that reflected levels of inclusion and exclusion based on access to information, the experience of wayfinding, knowledge or attitudes of others and travelling with a guide dog (Small et al., 2012). The study suggested the industry should undertake a more sophisticated rethinking of the experiential offerings, while academics could work to further understanding of impairment groups to help the industry to provide quality experiences (Small et al., 2012). Indeed, these studies revealed that some groups of people would potentially be marginalised through tourism.

In the present thesis, a further interpretation of the experience of social inclusion and exclusion has revealed that participants negotiated their 'social identities' through interpersonal relationships with people in the conference society. Some participants reported a sense of belonging to the conference society, while others identified a loss of identity in terms of their own professional identity. Identity in tourism studies is widely acknowledged as a "dynamic process of becoming and involves notions of self-discovery, personal growth and lifestyle choice" (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005, p. 32). In particular, Wearing and Wearing (1992) commented that leisure activities serve as a source for the construction of individual identity that the meanings attached to leisure activities are various and the experience is associated with a satisfying lifestyle. Hughes (1997) also indicated that the consumption of holidays contributes to the construction and validation of identity in case of gay men for whom holidays can provide opportunities to express their sexuality openly; it is noteworthy that the ability to establish and confirm identity usually necessitates relationships with others, in the case of this study with other

gay men while on holiday (Hughes, 1997). Indeed, it can be said that conference travel can serve as a stage for negotiating and acknowledging participants' social identity, as they question their status through interpersonal relationships with others in the conference society during the travel.

The findings of this thesis highlight the role of involvement in interpersonal contact with the mainstream population at the conference in providing opportunities to reflect on their own sense of identity. In this sense, in understanding the creation of a new 'accompanying spouse' identity, it is important to consider the notion of 'relational self' which proposes that self-identity can be changed depending on relationships with others (Andersen & Chen, 2002). Anderson and Chen (2002) argue that the self is essentially interpersonal, so that different relational selves develop across interpersonal contexts based on "if-then terms, whereby ifs are interpersonal situations in which transference is triggered, and thens are the manifestations of the relational self that emerge in these situations" (p. 638). In particular, Smith (1999a), in exploring a women's sense of identity during pregnancy, found that increased interpersonal contact can lead to a changing conception of self as related to others. Later, Smith (1999b) explained further with the notion of relational self that identity does not remain constant, but is subsequently modified and transformed as a result of the social engagements the person encounters throughout their life.

The thesis presented the ways the relational self was manifested through interpersonal contact during conference travel. Participants who addressed a feeling of inclusion appeared to be those who identified as part of the conference society, which in turn became motivation for conference travel. This is supported by the recent study of Hibbert et al. (2013) that showed the impact of interpersonal relationships in shaping identity and tourism mobility based on visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism. Hibbert et al. (2013) found that identity plays a significant part in travel motivations as tourists seek to sustain themselves in relation to significant others. In addition, some participants in this thesis identified an identity crisis or dilemma in status based on the loss of their professional identity as a result of a lack of adequate socio-cultural resources for the validation of participants' own professional identity in the conference. As a

result, participants faced the fact that their social identity was informed by interaction with the mainstream in conference society.

Arguably, accompanying spouses developed a heightened awareness of their identity as a consequence of interpersonal contact at social activities. In the context of conference travel, interpersonal relationships with other people appear to play a significant role in adjusting a professional identity and may even precipitate an identity crisis. In this context, it can be suggested that the relationship between issues of identity and tourism needs to be understood within a wider context of social interactions, where there is a dearth of literature in tourism studies.

5.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the three key experiential concepts of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon were presented and discussed as unique to the thesis research. These are relational intimacy, the unique leisure travel proposition conference travel represents and the effect of interpersonal relationships on identity. Indeed, each supplies a new lens for the conceptualisation of conference travel, and tourism activity in a wider sense. Therefore, the accompanying spouses experience is a unique and alternative type of travel experience, focused on relational elements potentially encompassing re-negotiation of identity.

The next final chapter will conclude this thesis research in discussing the key points that the thesis has found regarding the accompanying spouses' phenomenon.

Chapter Six Conclusion

In this final chapter, I seek to conclude the thesis. In particular, I seek to make sense of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, by drawing together the main findings and their significance as discussed in previous chapters. Throughout the whole process of the thesis research, I attempted to explore the meanings of the conference travel experience of accompanying spouses that emerged from the ways in which conference travel was subjectively experienced by them. This aimed to provide a theoretical platform for further investigation into the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. In adherence to the principles of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, the thesis can provide an original and informative contribution to the accompanying spouses' phenomenon and its significance in the development of quality and continuity of the couple's relationships as well as an opportunity for the alternative travel experience. Indeed, the thesis can offer IPA as an innovative and accessible approach to explore the lived experience of accompanying spouses in capturing rich detail from an insider's perspective and offering an interpretation of this perspective to tourism researchers (Smith et al., 2009).

This chapter begins by reiterating the main findings of the thesis to make sense of what the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is about by highlighting the key meanings of the conference travel experience shared by accompanying spouses. It then proceeds with discussion of the contributions to the existing tourism literature, methodological knowledge and further implications that the thesis makes. Finally, recommendations for further research are suggested before concluding remarks are given based on my reflections on the research process as the researcher.

6.1 What is the accompanying spouses' phenomenon about?

The thesis found that the experience of conference travel for accompanying spouses was complex and multifaceted. Overall, the thesis findings suggest that

the accompanying spouses' phenomenon was based on the alternative quality of conference travel as it compares with other types of holidays. Accompanying spouses could escape from their home environments with their spouse as a couple, and therefore they were able to experience personal and relational benefits compared to other types of holiday, particularly family holidays. Accompanying spouses conference travel was associated with ideals of couple time and individual time, and viewed as a period of travel and an enjoyable part of their relationship and as a period of freedom and independence. Indeed, the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is closely associated with the personal values of conference travel in relation to relational intimacy, the alternative opportunities for the unique leisure travel and interpersonal relationships with others in the conference society.

The most salient aspect of the phenomenon is perhaps the increased level of couple intimacy through the fulfilment of couple time. Subjective experiences of couple time spent during conference travel were characterised by increased intimacy between partners, a high level of reciprocity and closer interaction (Gottman, 1999; Roffey, 2012). Participants in this thesis expressed their perception that the emotional connection with their spouse was strengthened particularly during couple time, when they were close together. Participants found that their communication became more open and they shared in the accumulation of a greater number of unique and novel experiences during conference travel, by contrast with their everyday lives. As such, enhanced emotional intimacy in couples resulted in a strengthened spousal bond. In a sense, couple time, as consciously constructed during the travel, created a great deal of unique pleasure that was reported as comparatively rare during other types of holiday time.

Another key element of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon is concerned with own time, entailing both independence and a personal sense of autonomy. Specifically, participants reported the selection and pursuit of activities in which they participated on their own during own time as being highly enjoyable. They derived a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from these activities, which presented opportunities for freedom and independence that for some accompanying spouses were all too rare at home due to their ordinary

responsibilities. A key argument made here is that the opportunity to have own time, in effect, the possibility of individual autonomy, is an important contributor to an accompanying spouses' sense of wellbeing. Also, own time provided unique and fertile conditions for unexpected discoveries that accompanying spouses encountered. Experiences that were particularly unique and memorable were seen to arise in these serendipitous moments.

The final key theme emerging from the findings was the influence of interpersonal interactions on identity as being one of conference travel's most unique aspects. As mentioned in previous chapters, accompanying spouses had only limited social contact provided by the conference structure. They tended to have little exposure to people in the conference society. However, at any point in time during the travel process, interpersonal contact could arise that would entail negotiation of identity for accompanying spouses. The quality of the accompanying spouses' relationships with people in the conference is clearly significant in negotiating their identity. In particular, the feeling of social inclusion arising during the conference travel extended beyond the period of the travel itself. Inclusion was further maintained through building independent relationships and a sense of belonging to the society influenced accompanying spouses' enjoyment of the travel. In contrast, accompanying spouses also faced a potential identity crisis based on their professional identity during interaction with people in the conference.

In light of the findings reported here, it can be said that the accompanying spouses' phenomenon can be seen as a particular type of holiday proposition, one which is a relationship-centred couple holiday, but includes a significant degree of individual freedom. This thesis also suggests that the benefits of conference travel for accompanying spouses were not confined to the actual duration of the travel itself. Indeed, the lived experience of conference travel has positive impact on promoting the strength and stability of the couple's relationships and personal wellbeing.

These features of the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, inductively acquired from the analysis process, will contribute to extending the existing tourism literature on the tourist experience by providing new perspectives and insights that have developed from various work on intimacy, relationship maintenance behaviour, family studies and leisure studies.

6.2 Contribution of this thesis

Theoretical implications

This exploratory nature of the thesis makes a contribution to understanding what it actually means for accompanying spouses to accompany their spouse to conferences from their own perspective. The thesis has attempted to elucidate accompanying spouses' understanding of conference travel by identifying common features that constitute what has come to be known as the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, rather than extracting patterns or essences that characterise the phenomenon. As a result, the thesis offers meaningful and valuable theoretical contributions to the existing literature on the tourist experience. Specifically, the contributions are concerned with ways of conceptualising the tourist experience by providing new perspectives with respect to the notion of intimacy and serendipity and the characteristics of own time on holidays. There is empirical study on the intimate relational aspect of the travel experience and its significance to the quality of the travel experience as well as the qualities of experiences seen to contribute to personal well-being, something rarely seen in tourism studies.

Firstly, the most significant contribution from the findings of the thesis is that it opens up for discussion the 'relational aspect' of the tourist experience. The relational aspect should be potentially considered in future tourism studies, particularly the link between the tourist experience and the level of intimacy. The thesis has shed light on the notion of intimacy, namely relational intimacy, as a new and valuable perspective. It has been noted that emotional intimacy in couples has been increased through sharing time as a couple during conference

travel. In this sense, it can be argued that intimacy, specifically maintaining or developing the quality of relationships with co-travelling significant others impacts substantially on tourism outcomes. There are numerous researchers who consider the role of significant others in influencing the travel experience (see, Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Heimtun, 2011; Hibbert et al., 2013; Larsen, 2008; Larsen et al., 2007; Mottiar & Quinn, 2012; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Little research, however, has explored how intimacy impacts on the tourist experience in a tourism context, especially where it concerns travel with significant others. In presenting this issue, it can be said that the experience of conference travel presents a useful starting point, as conference travel can function as a unique means of creating a special time and space for the couple in their romantic relationship. This thesis also provides a dynamic picture of the process explaining the quality of the travel experience resulting from an increase in the level of relational intimacy.

Secondly, this thesis addresses unique and alternative aspects of the tourist experience in the context of conference travel that individuals may not encounter in other types of holidays. The thesis has explored the notions of own time and serendipity that give the experience of conference travel an alternative and unique character. Here, as already discussed in Chapter Five, the term 'alternative' symbolises the personal values of the experience that have remained largely hidden in the tourism literature. In particular, the findings have highlighted the role of serendipitous experience in differentiating the conference travel experience from other types of tourism. This is evident from the findings of the thesis, in that participants considered conference travel as an alternative form of tourism as they serendipitously experienced feelings of luxury, exclusiveness and the new acquisition of unanticipated information or discoveries about the destination through involvement in social events in the conference. Further empirical work will be required to confirm and clarify role of the serendipitous experience.

These contributions were made possible by seeking out the authentic voice of participants, as the thesis research allowed them to describe their subjective lived experiences in their own terms. This personalised voice was captured by the use

of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach. The next section describes IPA as an innovative qualitative research method in contributing to an exploration of the tourist experience.

Methodological implications

Methodologically, this thesis also makes a valuable contribution to the realm of the tourist experience in tourism studies by introducing the IPA approach as a valuable and accessible way of elucidating the individuals' lived experience. A review of the literature on accompanying spouses in the context of conference travel addressed a number of methodological issues. In particular, until recently, there has been little academic research and a dearth of statistics to draw on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon in tourism studies. To this end, I have attempted to conduct the inductive and exploratory research with a goal of giving the research participants a voice to capture their subjective lived experiences and the meanings ascribed to their experiences. As such, IPA as the research methodology employed in this thesis research has been very well suited to grasping and describing individuals' subjective experiences of conference travel that were meaningful within their lives (Ashworth, 2008). The premise of IPA is to allow researchers to explore the subjective experiences from the insider's perspective, and help the participant to describe and understand their accounts of the ways in which they make sense of their experience.

The key advantage of the use of IPA in exploring the tourist experience is to focus on the individual case, thereby addressing any issues relating to the richness of individual accounts (for example, Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Shinebourne & Smith, 2009; Smith, 2004). This idiosyncratic substance enabled the researcher to focus on the exploration of participants' self-reflection on their unique experience, understandings, perceptions and views (Reid et al., 2005). In particular, in this thesis, privileged participants' interpretations of their own experiences facilitated a multiplicity of meanings to emerge within the context of participants' experiences of conference travel. Another vital feature is that IPA maintains an explicit process orientation by focusing on the interpretation of meaning (Smith et al., 2009). This type of inductive procedure can help the researcher who does not

explicitly recognise either the theoretical preconceptions to the data involved in the analysis process (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). As engaging in a double hermeneutic, the researcher could make sense of the participants trying to make sense of what is happening to them (Smith, 2011). Indeed, IPA is able to engage with both new areas without a theoretical pretext and existing theoretical frameworks (see, for example, Dickson et al., 2010; Reynolds et al., 2011).

Given the growing value assigned to qualitative methodologies in tourist experience research, the thesis has demonstrated that IPA is particularly apposite to the task of exploring the detailed examination of personal lived experience and the meaning of experience to participants (see, Smith, 2011).

Further implications

Lastly, this thesis has made further implications, as it provides insights into the conference travel experience of accompanying spouses who otherwise remain marginalised in the tourism industry. For entrepreneurs and planners in the conference tourism industry, this thesis' findings describe the meanings ascribed to the conference travel experience for accompanying spouses and recognition of accompanying spouses as tourists. Indeed, the thesis helps conference practitioners to improve inclusive approaches to tourism products and services for them. In particular, they might build strategies for delivering relevant programmes for spouses and/or improve their current products. However, this thesis suggests that practitioners might carefully consider the experience of own time that accompanying spouses spent alone during the period of the conference. Participants revealed that a principal reason for joining a spousal programme was to discover new information and acquire the exclusive experience that they may not get as a tourist or could not afford on normal holidays. This thesis also demonstrates to destination and conference marketers that accompanying spouses are inherently diverse in their characteristics, as is evident from the variety of types of activities chosen during own time. With this information, there may be significant opportunities for conference marketers to reach out to this group of people as consumers, and contextualise the emergent marketing activity which is directed towards the accompanying spouses.

The other issue that the thesis highlights is the lack of industry knowledge on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon. Due to the paucity of reliable research studies to date, there is a growing need to develop new theories and empirical data on this new market segment. The conference tourism industry needs knowledge relating to this emerging market's needs and realise the potential demand of the market which in turn will facilitate further research to capture actual and current information and knowledge about this customer group (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). In this sense, the thesis suggests building partnerships between qualitative and quantitative researchers so as to illuminate the depths of tourism experiences and the business potential which stems from this. There is a growing need to develop new theories and empirical data on this new market segment through qualitative and quantitative studies. A study of accompanying spouses with diverse professional profiles may be required to establish the extent to which education and profession influence their demand and touristic behaviour. This could help to define ways in which product and promotional strategies should be conducted in relation to the accompanying persons market (Therkelsen, 2003). Qualitative studies are also demanded to seek out more in-depth information about motivations and reasons behind choices. An in-depth understanding of their experiences is valuable in order to actively target the accompanying spouses market as potential consumers. As Klemm and Parkinson (2001) emphasise, in categorising tourism market segments, multiple-factors including psychographic dimensions which reflect tourists' personalities, lifestyles and aspirations are being used. These should be useful in overcoming limitations of existing marketing efforts, such as a lack of product availability, facilitating an understanding of accompanying spouses.

6.3 Recommendations for further study

Given the originality of the research topic, there seem to be many potential avenues for further research. The thesis provides the empirical evidence on the accompanying spouses' phenomenon by plugging some of the knowledge gaps in

the tourist experience literature. Firstly, and most importantly, it is evident that the relational aspect of the tourist experience needs to be extended. This thesis has described how intimacy between couples was experienced during the travel and showed the growth of the quality of the couple's relationships as a result of the intimacy they experienced. Since relational intimacy was viewed as one of the foremost benefits with which accompanying spouses were rewarded during conference travel, it could be worthwhile to carry out a similar study which refers to the inclusion of conference attendees' subjective lived experiences. It could potentially help to provide a more holistic view of the relationship between intimacy and the tourist experience. Further studies could continue to move towards investigating how relational intimacy is experienced in other types of relationship, such as with friends and family members, at the time of travel. Specifically, the thesis suggests that conference travel was described as an opportunity within a life stage to be able to travel as a couple, with the absence of dependent children being a particularly unique quality. It could be beneficial to focus on the influence of relational intimacy on tourism associated with stages in the family life cycle, such as marriage, honeymoon, childbirth, retired and empty nesters, and explore the nature of the particular tourism experience. In doing so, tourism studies should broaden its focus to embrace the effect of relational intimacy on the tourist experience that is considered in various types of interpersonal relationship and different stages of life.

Further, this thesis took a multidisciplinary perspective on the terms of various social and psychological disciplines to produce knowledge about the accompanying spouses' phenomenon, appreciating the intent of the statement "The simple principle of attempting to restrict ones writing to one's own discipline may conceivably to some readers seem to be a limitation of scope" (Larsen & Mossberg, 2007, p. 3). Thus, an investigation of accompanying spouses' experiences has served to facilitate blending other disciplines to broaden the field of tourism studies. In particular, the thesis has illustrated a number of particular types of communication couples engaged in during conference travel compared to their patterns of communication in everyday life, for example discussion of spouses' professional experiences and conference topics, conference atmosphere, sharing each other's experiences and the continuity in

communication flowing from the conference context. Couples' communication during the course of the travel led to a sense of reciprocity and the stimulating experiences accompanying the conference travel experience provided fuel for ongoing spousal interactions. In this sense, it might be worthwhile to bring more specificity from the fields of relational maintenance and communication for analysis of the link between interpersonal communication and the tourist experience.

6.4 Final reflexive remarks

As already reported in Chapter Three, throughout the research process I have positioned myself as an outsider, considering that I have no 'first-hand' experience of accompanying someone on his/her conference travel. In general, my personal participation in the long research journey was not fully accomplished. However, during the course of the research, I have articulated my voice as a researcher; IPA is concerned with the researcher's role, "We cannot escape interpretation at any stage, but we can reflect upon our role in producing these interpretations, and we can maintain a commitment to grounding them in our participants' views" (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103). Indeed, I was able to reflect on not only my beliefs and knowledge, but also my experience being involved in interaction with accompanying spouses as a conferences attendee. Throughout the series of activities, but particularly in data collection and analysis, a sense of empathy for participants developed. In the end, I come to realise that I was involved as both insider and outsider, knower and participant, in undertaking this thesis research.

Reflecting on my research process, the hardest part was to build the theoretical framework for my research. As described in Chapter Three, I changed research paradigm from social constructionism to interpretivism in the course of my research, as the experiences of accompanying spouses were personally important and meaningful within the context of their life world. I needed to open up to difference and an interest in personal context rather than social context. At the same time, my readings of other disciplines relating to couple time and

leisure/tourism experience also helped me to move further than beyond the limited methodological area in tourism studies. The process of changing paradigm encouraged me to examine critically which ontological and epistemological stance I took rather than simply accepting a certain paradigm. This led me to reconsider my thoughts about research questions and methodologies available for qualitative research and develop the critical issues. It was also an opportunity for me to grow as a qualitative researcher.

As I reach the end of my thesis research, I can reflect on how far I have come in terms of my own thinking about the role of travel beyond purely economic benefits and encompassing its value to society and individuals. Having completed my research, now I have some understanding about the value of travel in connecting co-travelling companions and enhancing the quality of the personal relationship.

References

Abbey, C., & Dallos, R. (2004). The experience of the impact of divorce on sibling relationships: A qualitative study. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 9*(2), 241-259. doi:10.1177/1359104504041921

Abbey, J. R., & Link, C. K. (1994). The convention and meeting sector: Its operation and research needs. In J. R. B. Ritchie & C. R. Goeldner (Eds.), *Travel, tourism and hospitality research: A handbook for managers and researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 273-284). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Abrahams, R. D. (1986). Ordinary and extraordinary experience. In V. W. Turner & E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 45-72). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Adams, M. (1994, April). Family affair. *Successful Meetings, 43*(5), 62. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Agarwal, S., & Brunt, P. (2006). Social exclusion and English seaside resorts. *Tourism Management, 27*(4), 654-670. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.02.011

Aitchison, C. (2001). Theorizing other discourses of tourism, gender and culture. *Tourist Studies, 1*(2), 133-147. doi:10.1177/146879760100100202

Ajjawi, R., & Higgs, J. (2007). Using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate how experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(4), 612-638.

Al-Saggaf, Y., & Williamson, K. (2004). Online communities in Saudi Arabia: Evaluating the impact on culture through online semi-structured interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 5*(3), Art. 24.

Alberts, J. K., Yoshimura, C. G., Rabby, M., & Loschiavo, R. (2005). Mapping the topography of couples' daily conversation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 22*(3), 299-322. doi:10.1177/0265407505050941

Alonzo, V. (1993, September). Conventional vacations. *Meetings & Conventions, 66-68.*

Alonzo, V. (2009, February). Report reveals mood of the market. *Successful Meetings, 58*(2), 14-15. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Andel, P. V. (1994). Anatomy of the unsought finding. Serendipity: Origin, history, domains, traditions, appearances, patterns and programmability. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 45*(2), 631-648. doi:10.2307/687687

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review, 109*(4), 619-645. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.109.4.619

André, P., Schraefel, M. C., Teevan, J., & Dumais, S. T. (2009). Discovery is never by chance: Designing for (un)serendipity. In *ACM Conference on Creativity And Cognition, 2009* (pp. 305-314). Berkeley Art Museum & UC Berkeley, CA.: ACM. 10.1145/1640233.1640279

Anonymous. (2008, June 16). Expedia corporate travel: U.S. business travelers find ways to manage work-life balance. *Technology News Focus,* 241.

Appleton, J. V. (1995). Analysing qualitative interview data: Addressing issues of validity and reliability. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 22*(5), 993-997. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.1995.tb02653.x

Aron, A., Norman, C. C., Aron, E. N., McKenna, C., & Heyman, R. E. (2000). Couples' shared participation in novel and arousing activities and experienced relationship quality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(2), 273-284. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.2.273

Ashworth, P. (2008). Conceptual foundations of qualitative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 4-25). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Astroff, M. T., & Abbey, J. R. (2002). *Convention sales and services* (6th ed.). Las Vegas, NV: Waterbury.

Ateljevic, I., Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (Eds.). (2012). *The critical turn in tourism studies: Creating an academy of hope*. Milton Park, England: Routledge.

Ateljevic, I., Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (Eds.). (2007). *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier.

Bærenholdt, J. O., Haldrup, M., Larsen, J., & Urry, J. (2004). *Performing tourist places*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Ballantyne, R., Packer, J., & Sutherland, L. A. (2010). Visitors' memories of wildlife tourism: Implications for the design of powerful interpretive experiences. *Tourism Management, 32*(4), 770–779. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2010.06.012

Baloglu, S., & Love, C. (2001). Association meeting planners' perceptions of five major convention cities: results of the pre-test. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 3*(1), 21-30. doi:10.1300/J143v03n01_02

Baumeister, R. F., & Bratslavsky, E. (1999). Passion, intimacy, and time: Passionate love as a function of change in intimacy. *Personality & Social Psychology Review, 3*(1), 49-67. doi:10.1207/s15327957pspr0301_3

Beatty, J. E., & Torbert, W. R. (2003). The false duality of work and leisure. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 12*(3), 239-252. doi:10.1177/1056492603256340

Becker, C. S. (1992). *Living and relating: An introduction to phenomenology*. London, England: SAGE.

Bedim, L. A., & Guinan, D. M. (1996). "If I could just be selfish …": Caregivers' perceptions of their entitlement to leisure. *Leisure Sciences, 18*(3), 227-239. doi:10.1080/01490409609513284

Beeho, A. J., & Prentice, R. C. (1997). Conceptualizing the experiences of heritage tourists : A case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village. *Tourism Management, 18*(2), 75-87. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(96)00103-3

Berg, E. C., Trost, M., Schneider, I. E., & Allison, M. T. (2001). Dyadic exploration of the relationship of leisure satisfaction, leisure time, and gender to relationship satisfaction. *Leisure Sciences, 23*(1), 35-46. doi:10.1080/014904001500502234

Bernard, H. R. (2013). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Bianchi, R. V. (2000). Migrant tourist-workers: Exploring the 'contact zones' of post-industrial tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism, 3*(2), 107-137. doi:10.1080/13683500008667869

Black, J. S., & Stephens, G. K. (1989). The influence of the spouse on American expatriate adjustment and intent to stay in Pacific Rim overseas assignments. *Journal of Management, 15*(4), 529-544. doi:10.1177/014920638901500403

Blichfeldt, B. S., Pedersen, B. M., Johansen, A., & Hansen, L. (2011). Tweens on holidays. In-situ decision-making from children's perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 11*(2), 135-149. doi:10.1080/15022250.2011.588444

Boeije, H. R., & Van Doorne-Huiskes, A. (2003). Fulfilling a sense of duty: How men and women giving care to spouses with multiple sclerosis interpret this role. *Community, Work & Family, 6*(3), 223-244. doi:10.1080/1366880032000143438

Boland, P. (2011). *Coping and multiple sclerosis: Individuals with multiple sclerosis and their significant others* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10523/1758

Boon, B. (2006). When leisure and work are allies: The case of skiers and tourist resort hotels. *Career Development International, 11*(7), 594-608. doi:10.1108/13620430610713463

Boorstin, D. J. (1963). *The image: Or, what happened to the American dream*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Botterill, D. (2001). The epistemology of a set of tourism studies. *Leisure Studies, 20*(3), 199-214. doi:10.1080/02614360127084

Boudreaux, C., Tomlinson, E., & Amoss, L. (1984, August). Yesterday's spouse program becomes tomorrow's partners program. *Successful Meetings, 33*(8)*,* 67-69. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Boyacigiller, N. (1990). The role of expatriates in the management of interdependence, complexity and risk in multinational corporations. *Journal of International Business Studies, 21*(3), 357-381. doi:10.2307/154951

Bradley, A., Hall, T., & Harrison, M. (2002). Selling cities: Promoting new images for meetings tourism. *Cities, 19*(1), 61-70. doi:10.1016/S0264-2751(01)00046-4

Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2014). The "critical turn" and its implications for sustainable tourism research. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 22*(1), 1-8. doi:10.1080/09669582.2013.855223

Braun, B. M. (1992). The economic contribution of conventions: The case of Orlando, Florida. *Journal of Travel Research, 30*(3), 32-37. doi:10.1177/004728759203000305

Braun, B. M., & Rungeling, B. (1992). The relative economic impact of convention and tourist visitors on a regional economy: A case study. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 11*(1), 65-71. doi:10.1016/0278-4319(92)90036-U

Brey, E. T., & Lehto, X. (2008). Changing family dynamics: A force of change for the family-resort industry? *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 27*(2), 241-248. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2006.12.008

Brocki, J. M., & Wearden, A. J. (2006). A critical evaluation of the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in health psychology. *Psychology & Health, 21*(1), 87-108. doi:10.1080/14768320500230185

Brooks, J. (2003, August). Spouse appeal. *Successful Meetings, 52*(9)*,* 38. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Brown, B., & Chalmers, M. (2003). Tourism and mobile technology. In K. Kuutti & E. H. Karsten (Eds.), *The eighth European conference on computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 14-18). Helsinki, Finland: Kluwer Academic Press.

Brown, R. J. (2008). Dominant stressors on expatriate couples during international assignments. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 19*(6), 1018-1034. doi:10.1080/09585190802051303

Brown, S. (2005). Travelling with a purpose: Understanding the motives and benefits of volunteer vacationers. *Current Issues in Tourism, 8*(6), 479 - 496. doi:10.1080/13683500508668232

Bruyn, S. T. (1966). *The human perspective in sociology: The methodology of participant observation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd ed.). London, England: Routledge.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corpporate life*. London, England: Heinemann.

Bygstad, B., & Munkvold, B. E. (2007). The significance of member validation in qualitative analysis: Experiences from a longitudinal case study *HICSS 2007. 40th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2007.* (pp. 243b-252b). Waikoloa, HI: IEEE. doi:10.1109/HICSS.2007.553

Cai, L. A., Bai, B., & Morrison, A. M. (2001). Meetings and conventions as a segment of rural tourism: The case of rural Indiana. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 3*(3), 77-92. doi:10.1300/J143v03n03_06

Caligiuri, P. M., Hyland, M. M., Joshi, A., & Bross, A. S. (1998). Testing a theoretical model for examining the relationship between family adjustment and expatriates' work adjustment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*(4), 598-614. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.83.4.598

Canary, D. J., & Stafford, L. (1994). Maintaining relationships through strategic and rourine interaction In D. J. Canary & L. Stafford (Eds.), *Communication and relational maintenance* (pp. 3-22). San Deigo, CA: Academic Press.

Canary, D. J., Stafford, L., Hause, K. S., & Wallace, L. A. (1993). An inductive analysis of relational maintenance strategies: Comparisons among lovers, relatives, friends, and others. *Communication Research Reports, 10*(1), 3-14. doi:10.1080/08824099309359913

Carey, R. (2008). A family affair. *Successful Meetings, 57*(3)*,* 34, 36-37. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Cary, S. H. (2004). The tourist moment. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(1), 61-77. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2003.03.001

Chacko, H. E., & Fenich, G. G. (2000). Determining the importance of US convention destination attributes. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 6*(3), 211-220. doi:10.1177/135676670000600302

Charters, S., & Ali-Knight, J. (2002). Who is the wine tourist? *Tourism Management, 23*(3), 311-319. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00079-6

Cheek, N. H. (1971). Toward a sociology of not-work. *The Pacific Sociological Review, 14*(3), 245-258. doi:10.2307/1388640

Chen, C.-F. (2006). Applying the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) approach to convention site selection. *Journal of Travel Researach, 45*(2), 167-174. doi:10.1177/0047287506291593

Chen, C.-F., & Chen, F.-S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management, 31*(1), 29-35. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008

Chesworth, N. (2003). The family vacation: A double-edged sword. *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 27*(4), 346-348. doi:10.1046/j.1470-6431.2003.00325.x

Choi, J.-J., & Boger, C. A. J. (2002). State association market: Relationships between association characteristics and site selection criteria. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 4*(1), 55-73. doi:10.1300/J143v04n01_04

Clark, J. D., & McCleary, K. W. (1995). Influencing associations' site-selection process. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 36*(2), 61-68. doi:10.1016/0010-8804(95)93845-L

Claxton, A., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (2008). No fun anymore: Leisure and marital quality across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*(1), 28-43. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00459.x

Cohen, E. (1974). Who is a tourist?: A conceptual clarification. *The Sociological Review, 22*(4), 527-555. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1974.tb00507.x

Cohen, E. (1979a). Rethinking the sociology of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 6*(1), 18-35. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(79)90092-6

Cohen, E. (1979b). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology, 13*(2), 179-201. doi:10.1177/003803857901300203

Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 15*(3), 371-386. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(88)90028-X

Cohen, E. (2004). Toward a sociology of international tourism. In S. Williams (Ed.), *Tourism: Critical concepts in the social sciences* (Vol. 1, pp. 174-187). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cohen, E., & Cohen, S. A. (2012). Current sociological theories and issues in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 39*(4), 2177-2202. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.07.009

Cohen, O., Geron, Y., & Farchi, A. (2009). Marital quality and global well-being among older adult Israeli couples in enduring marriages. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 37*(4), 299-317. doi:10.1080/01926180802405968

Coles, T., Hall, C. M., & Duval, D. T. (2009). Post-disciplinary tourism. In J. Tribe (Ed.), *Philosophical issues in tourism* (pp. 80-100). Bristol, England: Channel View Publications.

Coltman, M. M. (1989). *Introduction to travel and tourism: An international approach*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Comas, M., & Moscardo, G. (2005). Understanding associations and their conference decision-making processes. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, 7*(3/4), 117-138. doi:10.1300/J452v07n03_07

Connell, J., & Meyer, D. (2004). Modelling the visitor experience in the gardens of Great Britain. *Current Issues in Tourism, 7*(3), 183-216. doi:10.1080/13683500408667979

Connell, J., & Meyer, D. (2009). Balamory revisited: An evaluation of the screen tourism destination-tourist nexus. *Tourism Management, 30*(2), 194-207. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2008.06.001

Connolly, J. M., & Keutner, T. (1988). Interpreation, decidability and meaning (J. M. Connolly & T. Keutner, Trans.). In J. M. Connolly & T. Keutner (Eds.), *Hermeneutics versus science? Three german views* (pp. 1-67). Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press.

Connop, V., & Petrak, J. (2004). The impact of sexual assault on heterosexual couples. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy, 19*(1), 29-38. doi:10.1080/14681990410001640817

Conran, M. (2011). They really love me!: Intimacy in volunteer tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(4), 1454-1473. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.03.014

Convery, I., Soane, I., Dutson, T., & Shaw, H. (2010). Mainstreaming leader delivery of the RDR in Cumbria: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Sociologia Ruralis, 50*(4), 370-391. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9523.2010.00519.x

Cope, J. (2011). Entrepreneurial learning from failure: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing, 26*(6), 604-623. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2010.06.002

Crawford, D. W., Houts, R. M., Huston, T. L., & George, L. J. (2002). Compatibility, leisure, and satisfaction in marital relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*(2), 433-449. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2002.00433.x

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Crocker, M. (1999, June). Great expectations: No longer can assumptions be made about what your attendees' guests want, or even who they are.(conference management). *Meetings & Conventions, 34*(7), 56(55).

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, England: SAGE.

Crouch, G. I., & Louviere, J. (2004). The determinants of convention site selection: A logistic choice model from experimental data. *Journal of Travel Researach, 43*(2), 118-130. doi:10.1177/0047287504268233

Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, J. B. (1998). Convention site selection research: A review, conceptual model, and propositional framework. *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management, 1*(1), 49-69. doi:10.1300/J143v01n01_05

Crouch, G. I., & Weber, K. (2002). Marketing of convention tourism. In K. Weber & K. Chon (Eds.), *Convention tourism: International research and industry perspectives* (pp. 57-78). London, England: Haworth Hospital Press.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2011). Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods, 14*(4), 647-673. doi:10.1177/1094428110373658

Dancyger, C., Smith, J. A., Jacobs, C., Wallace, M., & Michie, S. (2010). Comparing family members' motivations and attitudes towards genetic testing for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer: A qualitative analysis. *European Journal of Human Genetics, 18*(12), 1289-1295. doi:10.1038/ejhg.2010.114

Dann, G., M.S., & Cohen, E. (1991). Sociology and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 18*(1), 155-169. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(91)90045-D

Dann, G. M. S. (1996). *The language of tourism: A sociolinguistic perspective*. Wallingford, England: CAB International.

Dann, G. M. S. (1997). Tourism conference goers: A serious typology? *Tourism Management, 18*(5), 251-253. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(97)00013-7

Davidson, P. (1996). The holiday and work experiences of women with young children. *Leisure Studies, 15*(2), 89-103. doi:10.1080/026143696375648

Davidson, R. (1993a). European business tourism: Changes and prospects. *Tourism Management, 14*(3), 167-172. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(93)90017-F

Davidson, R. (1993b). *Tourism* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Longman.

Davidson, R. (2003). Adding pleasure to business: Conventions and tourism. *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management, 5*(1), 29-39. doi:10.1300/J143v05n01_03

Davidson, R., & Cope, B. (2003). *Business travel: Conferences, incentive, travel, exhibitions, corporate hospitality and corporate travel*. Harlow, England Prentice Hall.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Desforges, L. (2000). Traveling the world: Identity and travel biography. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(4), 926-945. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00125-5

Dickson, A., O'Brien, G., Ward, R., Allan, D., & O'Carroll, R. (2010). The impact of assuming the primary caregiver role following traumatic spinal cord injury: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the spouse's experience. *Psychology & Health, 25*(9), 1101-1120. doi:10.1080/08870440903038949

Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen: A review of different phenomenological approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 44*(1), 131-142. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2005.11.026

Duncan, T., Scott, D. G., & Baum, T. (2013). The mobilities of hospitality work: An exploration of issues and debates. *Annals of Tourism Research, 41*(0), 1-19. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.10.004

Dupuis, S. L. (1999). Naked truths: Towards a reflexive methodology in leisure research. *Leisure Sciences, 21*(1), 43-64. doi:10.1080/014904099273282

Dusek, V. (2006). *Philosophy of technology: An introduction*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing.

Dwyer, L., & Forsyth, P. (1997). Impacts and benefits of MICE tourism: A framework for analysis. *Tourism Economics, 3*(1), 21-38.

Dwyer, L., & Mistilis, N. (1997). Challenges to MICE tourism in the Asia-Pacific region. In M. Oppermann (Ed.), *Pacific rim tourism* (pp. 219-229). Wallingford, England: CAB International.

Eadington, W. R., & Smith, V. L. (1992). Introduction: The emergence of alternative forms of tourism. In V. L. Smith & W. R. Eadington (Eds.), *Tourism alternatives: Potentials and problems in the development of tourism* (pp. 1-12). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Eatough, V., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In C. Willig & W. Stainton- Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in Psychology* (pp. 179-194). London, England: SAGE.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (1992). Telling and performing personal stories: The constraints of choice in abortion. In C. Ellis & M. G. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (pp. 79-101). Newbury Park, California: SAGE.

Espino, C., Sundstrom, S., Frick, H., Jacobs, M., & Peters, M. (2002). International business travel: Impact on families and travellers. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 59*(5), 309-322. doi:10.1136/oem.59.5.309

Falk, E. T., & Pizam, A. (1991). The United States' meetings market. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 10*(2), 111-118. doi:10.1016/0278-4319(91)90033-E

A Family Affair. (2006). *Corporate Meetings & Incentives, 25*(6), na.

Fennell, D. A. (2006). *Tourism ethics*. Clevedon, England: Channel View Publications.

Fingerman, K. L., & Lang, F. R. (2004). Coming together: A perspective on relationships across the life span. In F. R. Lang & K. L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 1-23). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Fitzgerald, C., & Howe-Walsh, L. (2008). Self-initiated expatriates: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of professional female expatriates. *International Journal of Burinsess and Management, 3*(10), 156-175. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v3n10p156

Flora, J., & Segrin, C. (1998). Joint leisure time in friend and romantic relationships: The role of activity type, social skills and positivity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*(5), 711-718. doi:10.1177/0265407598155009

Flores-Gonzales, L. M. (2008). Phenomenological views on intersubjectivity: Towards a reinterpretation of consciousness. *Intergation Psychology Behaviour, 42*(2), 187-193. doi:10.1007/s12124-007-9044-5

Fontana, A., & Prokos, A. H. (2007). *The interview: From formal to postmodern*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Foster, A., & Ford, N. (2003). Serendipity and information seeking: An empirical study. *Journal of Documentation, 59*(3), 321-340. doi:10.1108/00220410310472518

Franklin, A. (2003). *Tourism: An introduction*. London, England: SAGE.

Frohlick, S. (2013). *Sexuality, women, and tourism: Cross-border desires through contemporary travel*. New York NY: Routledge.

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*(2), 228-245. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.87.2.228

Gadamer, H.-G. (1988). On the cirle of understanding. In J. M. Connolly & T. Keutner (Eds.), *Hermeneutics versus science? Three German views* (pp. 68-78). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Gager, C. T., & Sanchez, L. (2003). Two as one?: Couples' perceptions of time spent together, marital quality, and the risk of divorce. *Journal of Family Issues, 24*(1), 21-50. doi:10.1177/0192513x02238519

Galani-Moutafi, V. (2000). The self and the other: Traveler, ethnographer, tourist. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(1), 203-224. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00066-3

Gardyn, R. (2001). The new family vacation. *American Demographics, 23*(8), 43.

Gartrell, R. B. (1991). Strategic partnerships for convention planning: The role of convention and visitor bureaus in convention management. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 10*(2), 157-165. doi:10.1016/0278-4319(91)90038-J

Gergen, K. J. (1994). *Realities and relationships: Soundings in social construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gergen, K. J. (2003). Knowledge as socially constructed. In M. Gergen & K. J. Gergen (Eds.), *Social construction: A reader* (pp. 15-17). London, England: SAGE.

Gibbs, J. P. (1966). Conceptions of deviant behavior: The old and the new. *The Pacific Sociological Review, 9*(1), 9-14. doi:10.2307/1388302

Gilbert, D., & Abdullah, J. (2004). Holidaytaking and the sense of well-being. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(1), 103-121. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2003.06.001

Gladwell, N. J., & Bedini, L. A. (2004). In search of lost leisure: The impact of caregiving on leisure travel. *Tourism Management, 25*(6), 685-693. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2003.09.003

Go, F. M., & Govers, R. (1999). The Asian perspective: Which international conference destinations in Asia are the most competitive? *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management, 1*(4), 37-50. doi:10.1300/J143v01n04_04

Go, F. M., & Zhang, W. (1997). Applying importance-performance analysis to Beijing as an international meeting destination. *Journal of Travel Researach, 35*(4), 42-49. doi:10.1177/004728759703500411

Goodson, L., & Phillimore, J. (2004). The inquiry paradigm in qualitative tourism research. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 30-45). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gottman, J. M. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. London, England: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Goytia Prat, A., & de la Rica Aspiunza, A. (2012). Personal experience tourism: A postmodern understanding. In R. Sharpley & P. Stone, R (Eds.), *Contemporary tourist experience: Concepts and consequences* (pp. 11-24). London, England: Routledge.

Grado, S. C., Strauss, C. H., & Lord, B. E. (1998). Economic impacts of conferences and conventions. *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management, 1*(1), 19-33. doi:10.1300/J143v01n01_03

Gram, M. (2005). Family holidays: A qualitative analysis of family holiday experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 5*(1), 2 - 22. doi:10.1080/15022250510014255

Grant, Y. N. J., & Weaver, P. A. (1996). The meeting selection process: A demographic profile of attendees clustered by criteria utilized in selecting meetings. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 20*(1), 57-71. doi:10.1177/109634809602000106

Gretzel, U., & Jamal, T. (2009). Conceptualizing the creative tourist class: Technology, mobility, and tourism experiences. *Tourism Analysis, 14*, 471-481. doi:10.3727/108354209X12596287114219

Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17-27). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Gustafson, P. (2006). Work-related travel, gender and family obligations. *Work, Employment & Society, 20*(3), 513-530. doi:10.1177/0950017006066999

Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hall, C. M. (2005). Reconsidering the geography of tourism and contemporary mobility. *Geographical Research, 43*(2), 125-139. doi:10.1111/j.1745-5871.2005.00308.x

Hall, E. (2004). Social geographies of learning disability: Narratives of exclusion and inclusion. *Area, 36*(3), 298-306. doi:10.1111/j.0004-0894.2004.00227.x

Hammond, M., Howarth, J., & Keat, R. (1991). *Understanding phenomenology*. Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell.

Harrison, J. (2003). *Being a tourist: Finding meaning in pleasure travel*. Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.

Harzing, A.-W. (2001). Of bears, bumble-bees, and spiders: The role of expatriates in controlling foreign subsidiaries. *Journal of World Business, 36*(4), 366-379. doi:10.1016/S1090-9516(01)00061-X

Haven-Tang, C., Jones, E., & Webb, C. (2007). Critical success factors for business tourism destinations: Exploiting Cardiff's national capital city status and shaping its business tourism offer. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 22*(3/4), 109-120. doi:10.1300/J073v22n03_09

Hayllar, B., & Griffin, T. (2005). The precinct experience: A phenomenological approach. *Tourism Management, 26*(4), 517-528. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2004.03.011

Hazel, N. (2005). Holidays for children and families in need: An exploration of the research and policy context for social tourism in the UK. *Children & Society, 19*(3), 225-236. doi:10.1002/chi.838

Heimtun, B. (2011). The friend, the loner and the independent traveller: Norwegian midlife single women's social identities when on holiday. *Gender, Place & Culture, 19*(1), 83-101. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2011.617881

Hein, S. F., & Austin, W. J. (2001). Empirical and hermeneutic approaches to phenomenological research in psychology: A comparison. *Psychological Methods, 6*(1), 3-17. doi:doi:10.1037/1082-989X.6.1.3

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *The practice of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Hibbert, J. F., Dickinson, J. E., & Curtin, S. (2013). Understanding the influence of interpersonal relationships on identity and tourism travel. *Anatolia, 24*(1), 30-39. doi:10.1080/13032917.2012.762313

Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2006). More than an "industry": The forgotten power of tourism as a social force. *Tourism Management, 27*(6), 1192-1208. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.05.020

Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2008). Justice tourism and alternative globalisation. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 16*(3), 345-364. doi:10.1080/09669580802154132

Hill, M. S. (1988). Marital stability and spouses' shared time: A multidisciplinary hypothesis. *Journal of Family Issues, 9*(4), 427-451. doi:10.1177/019251388009004001

Hiller, H. H. (1995). Conventions as mega-events: A new model for convention-host city relationships. *Tourism Management, 16*(5), 375-379. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(95)00041-L

Holley, D., Jain, J., & Lyons, G. (2008). Understanding business travel time and its place in the working day. *Time & Society, 17*(1), 27-46. doi:10.1177/0961463x07086308

Holloway, J. C. (2009). *The business of tourism* (8th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Holloway, J. C., & Humphreys, C. (2012). *The business of tourism* (9th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson.

Holman, T. B., & Epperson, A. (1984). Family and leisure: A review of the literature with research recommendations. *Journal of Leisure Research, 16*(4), 277-294.

Hosany, S., & Witham, M. (2010). Dimensions of cruisers' experiences, satisfaction, and intention to recommend. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(3), 351-364. doi:10.1177/0047287509346859

Howell, K. E. (2013). *An introduction to the philosophy of methodology*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Høyer, K. G., & Naess, P. (2001). Conference tourism: A problem for the environment, as well as for research? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 9*(6), 451-470. doi:10.1080/09669580108667414

Hoyle, L. H., Dorf, D. C., & Jones, T. J. (1995). *Managing conventions and group business*. East Lansing, MI: Educational institute of the American Hotel & Motel Association.

Huang, J., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2009). Interaction among fellow cruise passengers: Diverse experiences and impacts. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 26*(5), 547-567. doi:10.1080/10548400903163103

Hughes, G. (1995). Authenticity in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 22*(4), 781-803. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(95)00020-X

Hughes, H. (1997). Holidays and homosexual identity. *Tourism Management, 18*(1), 3-7. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(96)00093-3

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1982). Toward a social psychological theory of tourism motivation: A rejoinder. *Annals of Tourism Research, 9*(2), 256-262. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(82)90049-4

Jago, L., & Deery, M. (2006). Convention delegates- The relationship between satisfaction with the convention and with the host destination: A case study. In B. Prideaux, G. Moscardo & E. Law (Eds.), *Managing tourism and hospitality services: Theory and international applications* (pp. 15-25). Wallingford, England: CAB International.

Jamal, T., & Hollinshead, K. (2001). Tourism and the forbidden zone: The underserved power of qualitative inquiry. *Tourism Management, 22*(1), 63-82. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00020-0

Jang, H., Lee, S., Lee, S.-W., & Hong, S.-k. (2007). Expanding the individual choice-sets model to couples' honeymoon destination selection process. *Tourism Management, 28*(5), 1299-1314. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2006.11.008

Jennings, G. (2010). *Tourism research* (2nd ed.). Milton, Qld, Australia: John Wiley & Sons.

Jennings, G., & Nickerson, N. P. (Eds.). (2006). *Quality tourism experience*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Jensen, M. (1996, February). A new breed. *Successful Meetings, 45*(2), 77-82. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Johnson, H. A., Zabriskie, R. B., & Hill, B. (2006). The contribution of couple leisure involvement, leisure time, and leisure satisfaction to marital satisfaction. *Marriage & Family Review, 40*(1), 69-91. doi:10.1300/J002v40n01_05

Johnston, L. (2006). 'I do down-under': Naturalizing landscapes and love through wedding tourism in New Zealand. *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geography, 5*(2), 191-208.

Judd, D. R. (1995). Promoting tourism in US cities. *Tourism Management, 16*(3), 175-187. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(94)00018-6

Kang, M.-H., Suh, S.-J., & Jo, D. (2005). The competitiveness of international meeting destinations in Asia: Meeting planners' versus buying centers' perceptions. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, 7*(2), 57-85. doi:10.1300/J452v07n02_04

Kang, S. K., Hsu, C. H. C., & Wolfe, K. (2003). Family traveler segmentation by vacation decision-making patterns. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 27*(4), 448-469. doi:10.1177/10963480030274005

Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1995). The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, methods, and research. *Psychological Bulletin, 118*(1), 3-34. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.118.1.3

Kay, A. L. K. (2005). China's convention and exhibition center boom. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism, 7*(1), 5-22. doi:10.1300/J452v07n01_02

Kellerman, A. (2010). Business travel and leisure tourism: Comparative trends in a globalizing world. In J. V. Beaverstock, B. Derudder, J. Faulconbridge & F. Witlox (Eds.), *International business travel in the global economy* (pp. 165-175). Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Kelly, C. (2012). Wellness tourism: Retreat visitor motivations and experiences. *Tourism Recreation Research, 37*(3), 205-213.

Kerr, M. K., & King, H. W. (1988). *Procedures for meetings and organizations* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Carswell.

Kerstetter, D., Bricker, K., & Gitelson, R. (1996). The influence of a spouse or partner in travel decision-making. *Visions in Leisure & Business, 15*(2), 40-44.

Khanna, S. (2009). Troubled marriage? Try divorce tourism: Estranged couples are spent on vacation which gives them a chance to revive their relationship. *DNA: Daily News and Aanlysis*. Retrieved from http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/report-troubled-marriage-try-divorce-tourism-1282978

Kim, S. S., & Agrusa, J. (2005). The positioning of overseas honeymoon destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*(4), 887-904. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.12.004

Kim, S. S., Chon, K., & Chung, K. Y. (2003). Convention industry in South Korea: An economic impact analysis. *Tourism Management, 24*(5), 533-541. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00006-2

Kinnaird, V., Kothari, U., & Hall, D. (1994). Tourism: Gender perspectives. In V. Kinnaird & D. Hall (Eds.), *Tourism: A gender analysis* (pp. 1-34). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Kirchler, E., Rodler, C., Hölzl, E., & Meier, K. (2001). *Conflict and decision-making in close relationships: Love, money and daily routines*. Hove, England: Psychology Press.

Kluin, J. Y., & Lehto, X. Y. (2012). Measuring family reunion travel motivations. *Annals of Tourism Research, 39*(2), 820-841. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.09.008

Kozak, M. (2010). Holiday taking decisions- The role of spouses. *Tourism Management, 31*, 489-494. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.014

Kulendran, N., & Wilson, K. (2000). Modelling business travel. *Tourism Economics, 6*(1), 47-59. doi:10.5367/000000000101297460

Kulendran, N., & Witt, S. F. (2003). Forecasting the demand for international business tourism. *Journal of Travel Research, 41*(3), 265-271. doi:10.1177/0047287502239034

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Ladkin, A. (2002). Research issues and challenges for the convention industry. In K. Weber & K.-S. Chon (Eds.), *Convention tourism: International research and industry perspectives* (pp. 101-118). New York, NY: Haworth Hospitality Press.

LaForge, A. E. (1990, July). Family affair: Shoulc kids go on incentive trips? *Successful Meetings, 39*(8), 108-112, 114, 118, 120, 122-123. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Larkin, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2004). Dangerous sports and recreational drug-use: Rationalizing and contextualizing risk. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 14*(4), 215-232. doi:10.1002/casp.770

Larkin, M., & Thompson, A. R. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis in mental health and psychotheraphy research. In D. Harper & A. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotheraphy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 101-116). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 102-120. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp062oa

Larsen, J. (2008). De-exoticizing tourist travel: Everday life and sociality on the move. *Leisure Sciences, 27*(1), 21-34. doi:10.1080/02614360701198030

Larsen, J., Urry, J., & Axhausen, K. W. (2007). Networks and tourism: Mobile social life. *Annals of Tourism Research, 34*(1), 244-262. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.08.002

Larsen, S. (2007). Aspects of a psychology of the tourist experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 7*(1), 7-18. doi:10.1080/15022250701226014

Larsen, S., & Mossberg, L. (2007). Editorial: The diversity of tourist experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 7*(1), 1-6. doi:10.1080/15022250701225990

Lassen, C. (2004). Rethinking central concepts of work and travel in the 'age of aeromobility' *The alternative mobility futures* (pp. 1-26). Lancaster, England: Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University.

Lassen, C. (2006). Aeromobility and work. *Environment and Planning A, 38*(2), 301-312. doi:10.1068/a37278

Lassen, C. (2009). Networking, knowledge organizations and aeromobility. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography, 91*(3), 229-243. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0467.2009.00317.x

Lau, R. W. K. (2010). Revisiting authenticity: A social realist approach. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(2), 478-498. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2009.11.002

Lauring, J., & Selmer, J. (2010). The supportive expatriate spouse: An ethnographic study of spouse involvement in expatriate careers. *International Business Review, 19*(1), 59-69. doi:10.1016/j.ibusrev.2009.09.006

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3), 1-29.

Law, C. M. (1992). Urban tourism and its contribution to economic regeneration. *Urban Studies, 29*(3/4), 599-618.

Lawson, F. R. (1980). Congresses, conventions, and conferences: Facility supply and demand. *International Journal of Tourism Management, 1*(3), 184-188. doi:10.1016/0143-2516(80)90006-7

Lawson, F. R. (1982). Trends in business tourism management. *Tourism Management, 3*(4), 298-302. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(82)90054-1

Lawthom, R., & Tindall, C. (2011). Phenomenology *Qualitative methods in psychology: A research guide* (2nd ed., pp. 3-21). Maidenhead, England: Open Univeristy Press.

Layder, D. (2009). *Intimacy and power: The dynamics of personal relationships in modern society*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lee, M. J., & Back, K.-J. (2005). A review of economic value drivers in convention and meeting management research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 17*(5), 409-420. doi:10.1108/09596110510604832

Lee, M. J., & Back, K.-J. (2007). Association members' meeting participation behaviors: Development of meeting participation model. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 22*(2), 15-33. doi:10.1300/J073v22n02_02

Lee, M. J., & Back, K.-J. (2008). Association meeting participation: A test of competing models. *Journal of Travel Research, 46*(3), 300-310. doi:10.1177/0047287507308320

Lehto, X. Y., Choi, S., Lin, Y.-C., & MacDermid, S. M. (2009). Vacation and family functioning. *Annals of Tourism Research, 36*(3), 459-479. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2009.04.003

Lehto, X. Y., O'Leary, J. T., & Morrison, A. M. (2004). The effect of prior experience on vacation behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(4), 801-818. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.02.006

Li, Y. (2000). Geographical consciousness and tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(4), 863-883. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00112-7

Ligos, M. (2000, March). The great escape. *Successful Meetings, 49*(3), 33-36, 39. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2003). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed., pp. 253-291). Thousand Oakis, CA: SAGE.

Lofgren, O. (1999). *On holiday: A history of vacationing*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Lopez, K. A., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research, 14*(5), 726-735. doi:10.1177/1049732304263638

MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *The American Journal of Sociology, 79*(3), 589-603.

MacCannell, D. (1999). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Madrigal, R., Havitz, M. E., & Howard, D. R. (1992). Married couples' involvement with family vacations. *Leisure Sciences, 14*(4), 287-301. doi:10.1080/01490409209513175

Maher, P. T., Steel, G., & McIntosh, A. (2003). Examining the experiences of tourists in Antarctica. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 5*, 56-67. doi:10.1002/jtr.418

Mahrer-Imhof, R., Hoffmann, A., & Froelicher, E. S. (2007). Impact of cardiac disease on couples' relationships. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 57*(5), 513-521. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.04141.x

Mäkelä, L., Känsälä, M., & Suutari, V. (2011). The roles of expatriates' spouses among dual career couples. *Cross Cultural Management, 18*(2), 185-197. doi:10.1108/13527601111126012

Malinen, K., Rönkä, A., & Sevón, E. (2010). Good moments in parents' spousal relationships: A daily relational maintenance perspective. *Family Science, 1*(3-4), 230-241. doi:10.1080/19424620.2010.570968

Mann, E., & Abraham, C. (2006). The role of affect in UK commuters' travel mode choices: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *British Journal of Psychology, 97*(2), 155-176. doi:10.1348/000712605x61723

Mannell, R. C., & Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1987). Psychological nature of leisure and tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 14*(3), 314-331. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(87)90105-8

Mansvelt, J. (2009). Leisure. In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of human geography* (pp. 179-186). Oxford, England: Elsevier.

Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (2001). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. London, England: RoutledgeFalmer.

Mazursky, D. (1989). Past experience and future tourism decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research, 16*(3), 333-344. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(89)90048-0

McCabe, S. (2002). The tourist experience and everday life. In G. M. S. Dann (Ed.), *The tourist as a metaphor of the social world* (pp. 61-75). Wallingford, England: CAB International.

McCabe, S. (2009). Who needs a holiday?: Evaluating social tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 36*(4), 667-688. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2009.06.005

McCabe, S., & Stokoe, E. (2010). Have you been away? Holiday talk in everyday interaction. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(4), 1117-1140. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2010.05.001

McCabe, S., & Stokoe, E. H. (2004). Place and identity in tourist's accounts. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(3), 601-622. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.01.005

McCabe, V., Poole, B., Weeks, P., & Leiper, N. (2000). *The business and management of conventions*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Australia.

McCormick, B. P. (1996). N = 1: What can be learned from the single case? *Leisure Sciences, 18*(4), 365-369. doi:10.1080/01490409609513294

McGregor, A. (2000). Dynamic texts and tourist gaze: Death, bones and buffalo. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(1), 27-50. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00034-1

McIntosh, A. J. (1999). Into the tourist's mind: Understanding the value of the heritage experience. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 8*(1), 41-64. doi:10.1300/J073v08n01_03

McIntosh, A. J. (2004). Tourists' appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand. *Tourism Management, 25*(1), 1-15. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00058-X

McIntosh, A. J., & Prentice, R. (1999). Affirming authenticity: Consuming cultural heritage. *Annals of Tourism Research, 26*(3), 589-612. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00010-9

McNamara, K. E., & Prideaux, B. (2010). A typology of solo independent women travellers. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 12*, 253-264. doi:10.1002/jtr.751

Meek, R. (2007). The experiences of a young gypsy-traveller in the transition from custody to community: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Legal & Criminological Psychology, 12*(1), 133-147. doi:10.1348/135532506X107165

Meeks, B. S., Hendrick, S. S., & Hendrick, C. (1998). Communication, love and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*(6), 755-773. doi:10.1177/0265407598156003

Meunier, V., & Baker, W. (2012). Positive couple relationships: The evidence for long-lasting relationship satisfaction and happiness. In S. Roffey (Ed.), *Positive relationships: Evidence based practice across the world* (pp. 73-89). Dordrecht: Springer.

Mill, R. C. (2008). The inter-relationships between leisure, recreation, tourism, and hospitality. In B. Brotherton & R. C. Wood (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of hospitality management* (pp. 90-106). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE

Mill, R. C., & Morrison, A. M. (1985). *The tourism system: An introductory text*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., & Hays, T. (2008). *In-depth interviewing: Principles, techniques, analysis* (3rd ed.). Sydney, NSW: Pearson Education Australia.

Mistilis, N., & Dwyer, L. (1999). Tourism gateways and regional economies: The distributional impacts of MICE. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 1*(6), 441-457. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(199911/12)1:6<441::AID-JTR177>3.0.CO;2-8

Mohanty, J. M. (1970). *Phenomenology and ontology*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.

Mohr, A. T., & Klein, S. (2004). Exploring the adjustment of American expatriate spouses in Germany. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 15*(7), 1189-1206. doi:10.1080/0958519042000238400

Montgomery, R. J., & Strick, S. K. (1995). *Meetings, conventions, and expositions: An introduction to the industry*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London, England: Routledge.

Morgan, A., & Condliffe, S. (2006). Measuring the economic impacts of convention centers and event tourism: A discussion of the key issues. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism, 8*(4), 81-100. doi:10.1300/J452v08n04_06

Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (1998). *Tourism promotion and power: Creating images, creating identities*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (2005). On souvenirs and metonymy: Narratives of memory, metaphor and materiality. *Tourist Studies, 5*(1), 29-53. doi:10.1177/1468797605062714

Morgan, N. J., & Pritchard, A. (1999). *Power and politics at the seaside: The development of Devon's resorts in the twentieth centry*. Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press.

Morla, D. M., & Ladkin, A. (2006). The convention industry in Galicia and Santiago de Compostela: Stakeholder perceptions of its success and potential for growth. *Event Management, 10*(4), 241-251. doi:10.3727/152599507783948639

Moss, B. F., & Schwebel, A. I. (1993). Defining intimacy in romantic relationships. *Family Relations, 42*(1), 31-37. doi:10.2307/584918

Mottiar, Z., & Quinn, D. (2012). Is a self-catering holiday with the family really a holiday for mothers? Examining the balance of household responsibilities while on holiday from a female perspective. *Hospitality & Society, 2*(2), 197-214. doi:10.1386/hosp.2.2.197_1

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Mthombeni, T. (2011, April). Incentive travel programmes motivation and investment. *Accountancy SA,* 27.

Mulveen, R., & Hepworth, J. (2006). An interpretative phenomenological analysis of participation in a pro-anorexia internet site and its relationship with disordered eating. *Journal of Health Psychology, 11*(2), 283-296. doi:10.1177/1359105306061187

Muth, C. (2009). How to teach intersubjectivity. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 23*(2), 201-213. doi:10.1080/02650530902923791

Myers, P. B., & Moncrief, L. W. (1978). Differential leisure travel decision-making between spouses. *Annals of Tourism Research, 5*(1), 157-165. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(78)90009-9

Nayyar, S. (2001). Family affairs. *American Demographics, 23*(8)*,* 5.

Nelson, R., & Rys, S. (2000). Convention site selection criteria relevant to secondary convention destinations. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 2*(2/3), 71-82. doi:10.1300/J143v02n02_07

Ngamsom, B., & Beck, J. (2000). A pilot study of motivations, inhibitors, and facilitators of association members in attending international conferences *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 2*(2/3), 97-111. doi:10.1300/J143v02n02_09

Nickerson, N. P., & Jurowski, C. (2001). The influence of children on vacation travel patterns. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 7*(1), 19-30. doi:10.1177/135676670100700102

Noy, C. (2008). The poetics of tourist experience: An autoethnography of a family trip to Eilat. *Journal of Tourism & Cultural Change, 5*(3), 141-157. doi:10.2167/jtcc085.0

O'Reilly, C. C. (2006). From drifter to gap year tourist: Mainstreaming backpacker Travel. *Annals of Tourism Research, 33*(4), 998-1017. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.04.002

Oddou, G., Mendenhall, M. E., & Ritchie, J. B. (2000). Leveraging travel as a tool for global leadership development. *Human Resource Management, 39*(2-3), 159-172. doi:10.1002/1099-050X(200022/23)39:2/3<159::AID-HRM6>3.0.CO;2-J

Oppermann, M. (1996a). Convention destination images: Analysis of association meeting planners' perceptions. *Tourism Management, 17*(3), 175-182. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(96)00004-0

Oppermann, M. (1996b). Convention cities: Images and changing fortunes. *The Journal of Tourism Studies, 7*(1), 10-19.

Oppermann, M. (1997a). Tourism conferences: Academic titillation, social interactions or job market? *Tourism Management, 18*(5), 255-257. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(97)00014-9

Oppermann, M. (1997b). Perceptions of convention destinations: Large-half versus small-half association meeting planners. *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management, 1*(1), 35-48. doi:10.1300/J143v01n01_04

Oppermann, M. (1998). Association involvement and convention participation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 21*(3), 17-30. doi:10.1177/109634809802100302

Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research, 24*(1), 178-191. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(96)00049-7

Orthner, D. K. (1975). Leisure activity patterns and marital satisfaction over the marital career. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 37*(1), 91-102. doi:10.2307/351033

Orthner, D. K., & Mancini, J. A. (1990). Leisure impacts on family interaction and cohesion. *Journal of Leisure Research, 22*(2), 125-137.

Orthner, D. K., & Mancini, J. A. (1991). Benefits of leisure for family bonding. In B. L. Driver, P. J. Brown & G. L. Peterson (Eds.), *Benefits of leisure* (pp. 289-301). State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

Owen, C. (1992). Changing trends in business tourism. *Tourism Management, 13*(2), 224-226. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(92)90063-D

Palmer, C. (2005). An ethnography of Englishness: Experiencing Identity through Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*(1), 7-27. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.04.006

Pape, R. H. (1964). Touristry: A type of occupational mobility. *Social Problems, 11*(4), 336-344. doi:10.2307/799189

Parnes, F. (2004, 15 June). How not to spend your next, or first, honeymoon. *The New York Times,* p. 10.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). London, England: SAGE.

Pearce, D. G. (1992). Alternative tourism: Concepts, classifications, and questions. In V. L. Smith & W. R. Eadington (Eds.), *Tourism alternatives: Potentials and problems in the development of tourism* (pp. 15-30). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Pearce, G., Thøgersen-Ntoumani, C., & Duda, J. L. (2013). The development of synchronous text-based instant messaging as an online interviewing tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1-16. doi:10.1080/13645579.2013.827819

Pearce, P. L., & Moscardo, G. M. (1986). The concept of authenticity in tourist experiences. *The Journal of Sociology, 22*(1), 121-132. doi:10.1177/144078338602200107

Pearce, P. L., & Stringer, P. F. (1991). Psychology and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 18*(1), 136-154. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(91)90044-C

Pernecky, T. (2006). Co-creating with the universe: A phenomenological study of New Age tourists. *Tourism (Zagreb), 54*(2), 127-143.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In Search of Subjectivity—One's Own. *Educational Researcher, 17*(7), 17-21. doi:10.3102/0013189x017007017

Pizam, A., Uriely, N., & Reichel, A. (2000). The intensity of tourist–host social relationship and its effects on satisfaction and change of attitudes: The case of working tourists in Israel. *Tourism Management, 21*(4), 395-406. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00085-0

Pocock, N. (2011). *Exploring concepts of home for returned long term travellers* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10289/5197

Pocock, N., Cockburn-Wootten, C., & McIntosh, A. (2013). Significant other voices in tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research, 41*, 240-243. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.11.010

Pocock, N., Zahra, A., & McIntosh, A. (2009). Proposing video diaries as an innovative methodology in tourist experience research. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development, 6*(2), 109-119. doi:10.1080/14790530902981480

Poria, Y., Biran, A., & Reichel, A. (2009). Visitors' preferences for interpretation at heritage sites. *Journal of Travel Research, 48*(1), 92-105. doi:10.1177/0047287508328657

Poria, Y., Butler, R., & Airey, D. (2003). The core of heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 30*(1), 238-254. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00064-6

Prebensen, N. K., Larsen, S., & Abelsen, B. (2003). I'm not a typical tourist: German tourists' self-perception, activities, and motivations. *Journal of Travel Research, 41*(May), 416-420. doi:10.1177/0047287503041004011

Primeau, L. A. (1996). Work and leisure: Transcending the dichotomy. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 50*(7), 569-577. doi:10.5014/ajot.50.7.569

Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (2007). De-centring tourism's intellectual universe, or traversing the dialogue between change and tradition. In I. Ateljevic, A. Pritchard & N. Morgan (Eds.), *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies* (pp. 11-28). Oxford, England: Elsevier.

Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Ateljevic, I. (2011). Hopeful tourism: A new transformative perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 941-963. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.004

Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London, England: SAGE

Punnett, B. J. (1997). Towards effective management of expatriate spouses. *Journal of World Business, 32*(3), 243-257. doi:10.1016/S1090-9516(97)90010-9

Qu, H., Li, L., & Chu, G. K. T. (2000). The comparative analysis of Hong Kong as an international conference destination in Southeast Asia. *Tourism Management, 21*(6), 643-648. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00010-8

Quan, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: an illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management, 25*(3), 297-305. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00130-4

Quinlan-Cutler, S., & Carmichael, B. A. (2010). The dimensions of the tourist experience. In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi & J. R. B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives* (pp. 3-26). Bristol, England: Channel View.

Quinn, C., Clare, L., Pearce, A., & van Dijkhuizen, M. (2008). The experience of providing care in the early stages of dementia: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Aging & Mental Health, 12*(6), 769-778. doi:10.1080/13607860802380623

Reid, K., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *Psychologist, 18*(1), 20-23.

Reynolds, F., Vivat, B., & Prior, S. (2011). Visual art-making as a resource for living positively with arthritis: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of older women's accounts. *Journal of Aging Studies, 25*(3), 328-337. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2010.12.001

Ricci, P. R., & Holland, S. M. (1992). Incentive travel : Recreation as a motivational medium. *Tourism Management, 13*(3), 288-296. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(92)90100-L

Richards, V., Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (2010). (Re)Envisioning tourism and visual impairment. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(4), 1097-1116. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2010.04.011

Riley, R. W., & Love, L. L. (2000). The state of qualitative tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(1), 164-187. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00068-7

Rittichainuwat, B. N., Beck, J. A., & Lalopa, J. (2001). Understanding motivations, inhibitors, and facilitators of association members in attending international conferences. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management, 3*(3), 45-62. doi:10.1300/J143v03n03_04

Robinson, H. (1976). *A geography of tourism*. London, England: MacDonald and Evans.

Rodgers, J. (1988, October). Families at meetings: Come one, come all. *Successful Meetings, 37*(11)*, 64-71. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Roehling, P., & Bultman, M. (2002). Does absence make the heart grow fonder? Work-related travel and marital satisfaction. *Sex Roles, 46*(9-10), 279-293. doi:10.1023/A:1020272428817

Roffey, S. (2012). Introduction to positive relationships: Evidence-based practice across the world. In S. Roffey (Ed.), *Positive relationships: Evidence based practice scross the world* (pp. 1-15). Dordrecht: Springer.

Rogers, T. (2008). *Conferences and conventions: A global industry* (2nd ed.). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Rogerson, C. M. (2005). Conference and exhibition tourism in the developing world: The South African experience. *Urban Forum, 16*(2/3), 176-195. doi:10.1007/s12132-005-1004-x

Ross, G. F. (2005). Senior tourists sociability and travel preparation. *Tourism Review, 60*(2), 6-15. doi:10.1108/eb058451

Rostill-Brookes, H., Larkin, M., Toms, A., & Churchman, C. (2011). A shared experience of fragmentation: Making sense of foster placement breakdown. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 16*(1), 103-127. doi:10.1177/1359104509352894

Rouse, J. (1991). Interpretation in natural and human science. In D. R. Hiley, J. F. Bohman & R. Shusterman (Eds.), *The interpretive turn: Philosophy, science, culture* (pp. 42-56). New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

Rusbult, C. E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*(1), 101-117. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.45.1.101

Rutherford, D. G., & Kreck, L. A. (1994). Conventions and tourism: Financial add-on or myth? report of a study in one state. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 3*(1), 49-64. doi:10.1300/J073v03n01_03

Ryan, C. (2000). Tourist experiences, phenomenographic analysis, post-positivism and neural network software. *The International Journal of Tourism Research 2*(2), 119-131. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(200003/04)2:2<119::AID-JTR193>3.0.CO;2-G

Ryan, C. (2002). From motivation to assessment. In C. Ryan (Ed.), *The tourist experience* (Vol. 2nd pp. 58-77). London, England: Continuum.

Rydzik, A., Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Sedgley, D. (2013). The potential of arts-based transformative research. *Annals of Tourism Research, 40*, 283-305. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.09.006

Ryley, T. J., & Zanni, A. M. (2013). An examination of the relationship between social interactions and travel uncertainty. *Journal of Transport Geography, 31*(0), 249-257. doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2013.05.014

Santos, C. A., & Yan, G. (2010). Genealogical tourism: A phenomenological examination. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(1), 56-67. doi:10.1177/0047287509332308

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schänzel, H. (2012). The inclusion of fathers, children and the whole family group in tourism research on families. In H. Schänzel, I. Yeoman & E. Backer (Eds.), *Family tourism: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 67-80). Bristol, England: Channel View.

Schänzel, H., Yeoman, I., & Backer, E. (2012). Introduction: Families in tourism research. In H. Schänzel, I. Yeoman & E. Backer (Eds.), *Family tourism: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 1-14). Bristol, England: Channel View.

Schänzel, H. A., & McIntosh, A. J. (2000). An insight into the personal and emotive context of wildlife viewing at the penguin place, Otago peninsula, New Zealand. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 8*(1), 36-52. doi:10.1080/09669580008667348

Schlentrich, U. A. (2008). The MICE industry: Meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions. In B. Brotherton & R. C. Wood (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of hospitality management* (pp. 400-420). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Schwandt, T. R. (2003). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed., pp. 292-331). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Seekings, D. (1997). *How to organize effective conferences and meetings* (6th ed.). London, England: Kogan Page.

Selstad, L. (2007). The social anthropology of the tourist experience. Exploring the "Middle Role". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality & Tourism, 7*(1), 19-33. doi:10.1080/15022250701256771

Severt, D., Wang, Y., Chen, P.-J., & Breiter, D. (2007). Examining the motivation, perceived performance, and behavioral intentions of convention attendees: Evidence from a regional conference. *Tourism Management, 28*(2), 399-408. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.003

Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., Gilley, K. M., & Luk, D. M. (2001). Struggling for balance amid turbulence on international assignments: Work–family conflict, support and commitment. *Journal of Management, 27*(1), 99-121. doi:10.1177/014920630102700106

Sharlin, S. M., Kaslow, F. W., & Hammerschmidt, H. (2000). *Together through thick and thin: A multinational picture of long-term marriages*. New York, NY: Haworth Clinical Practice.

Sharpley, R., & Stone, P., R. (2012). Introduction: Experiencing tourism, experiencing happiness? In R. Sharpley & P. Stone, R (Eds.), *Contemporary tourist experience: Concepts and consequences* (pp. 1-8). London, England: Routledge.

Shaw, S. M. (1992). Dereifying family leisure: An examination of women's and men's everyday experiences and perceptions of family time. *Leisure Sciences, 14*(4), 271-286. doi:10.1080/01490409209513174

Sheffield, E., Guthrie, R., & Penland, D. (1993). Resort recreation programs for conference groups: Programs and pricing. *Visions in Leisure & Business, 12*(3), 42-54.

Sherman, P. D. (2007, Feburary). Mixing business with pleasure. *Expo Magazine, 19*(2), 46-51.

Shinebourne, P., & Smith, J. A. (2009). Alcohol and the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experience of addiction and its impact on the sense of self and identity. *Addiction Research & Theory, 17*(2), 152-167. doi:10.1080/16066350802245650

Shinew, K. J., & Backman, S. J. (1995). Incentive travel: An attractive option. *Tourism Management, 16*(4), 285-293. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(95)00018-J

Shone, A. (1998). *The business of conferences: A hospitality sector overview for the UK and Ireland*. Oxford, England: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Slater, A., & Koo, H. J. (2010). A new type of "Third Place"? *Journal of Place Management and Development, 3*(2), 99-112. doi:10.1108/17538331011062658

Small, J. (1999). Memory-work: A method for researching women's tourist experiences. *Tourism Management, 20*(1), 25-35. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00091-0

Small, J. (2008). The absence of childhood in tourism studies. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(3), 772-789. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2008.06.002

Small, J., Darcy, S., & Packer, T. (2012). The embodied tourist experiences of people with vision impairment: Management implications beyond the visual gaze. *Tourism Management, 33*(4), 941-950. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2011.09.015

Smith, J. A. (1999a). Identity development during the transition to motherhood: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology, 17*(3), 281-299. doi:10.1080/02646839908404595

Smith, J. A. (1999b). Towards a relational self: Social engagement during pregnancy and psychological preparation for motherhood. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 38*(4), 409-426. doi:10.1348/014466699164248

Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1*(1), 39-54. doi:10.1191/1478088704qp004oa

Smith, J. A. (2007). Hermeneutics, human sciences and health: Linking theory and practice. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 2*(1), 3-11. doi:10.1080/17482620601016120

Smith, J. A. (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis: A reply to the commentaries and further development of criteria. *Health Psychology Review, 5*(1), 55-61. doi:10.1080/17437199.2010.541743

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Smith, J. A., Harré, R., & Van Langenhove, L. (1995). Introduction. In J. A. Smith, R. Harré & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.), *Rethinking methods in psychology* (pp. 1-8). London, England: SAGE.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 53-80). London, England: SAGE.

Smith, S. L. J., & Godbey, G. C. (1991). Leisure, recreation and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 18*(1), 85-100. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(91)90041-9

Smith, V., & Hughes, H. (1999). Disadvantaged families and the meaning of the holiday. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 1*(2), 123-133. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(199903/04)1:2<123::AID-JTR146>3.0.CO;2-R

Smith, V. L. (1979). Women the taste-makers in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 6*(1), 49-60. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(79)90094-X

Soy, S. K. (1997). *The case study as a research method*. University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/l391d1b.htm

Stafford, L., & Canary, D. J. (1991). Maintenance strategies and romantic relationship type, gender and relational characteristics. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 8*(2), 217-242. doi:10.1177/0265407591082004

Sternberg, E. (1997). The iconography of the tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 24*(4), 951-969. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(97)00053-4

Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review, 93*(2), 119-135. doi:doi:10.1037/0033-295X.93.2.119

Stevens, L., Maclaran, P., & Catterall, M. (2007). A space of one's own: Women's magazine consumption within family life. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 6*(4), 236-252. doi:10.1002/cb.219

Strang, V. R. (2001). Family caregiver respite and leisure: A feminist perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, 15*(1), 74-81. doi:10.1046/j.1471-6712.2001.1510074.x

Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2001). *Business travel and tourism.* Boston, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Szarycz, G. S. (2008). CruIsing, freighter-style: A phenomenological exploration of tourIst recollections of a passenger freighter travel experience. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 10*(3), 259-269. doi:10.1002/jtr.658

Szarycz, G. S. (2009). Some issues in tourism research phenomenology: A commentary. *Current Issues in Tourism, 12*(1), 47-58. doi:10.1080/13683500802279949

Takahashi, K. (2004). Close relationships across the life span: Toward a theory of relationship types. In F. R. Lang & K. L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 130-158). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Tani, M. (2006). International business visits. *Agenda, 13*(4), 323-337.

Tassiopoulos, D., & Haydam, N. (2008). Golf tourists in South Africa: A demand-side study of a niche market in sports tourism. *Tourism Management, 29*(5), 870-882. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2007.10.005

Taylor, J. P. (2001). Authenticity and sincerity in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 28*(1), 7-26. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00004-9

Therkelsen, A. (2003). *All work and no play...?: Tourism related demand patterns of conference participants* (Working Paper No. 2). Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University

Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*(2), 237-246. doi:10.1177/1098214005283748

Toren, C. (2009). Intersubjectivity as epistemology. *Social Analysis, 53*(2), 130-146. doi:10.3167/sa.2009.530208

Trauer, B., & Ryan, C. (2005). Destination image, romance and place experience: An application of intimacy theory in tourism. *Tourism Management, 26*(4), 481-491. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2004.02.014

Trentelman, C. K. (2009). Place attachment and community attachment: A primer grounded in the lived experience of a community sociologist. *Society & Natural Resources, 22*(3), 191-210. doi:10.1080/08941920802191712

Tribe, J. (2001). Research paradigms and the tourism curriculum. *Journal of Travel Research, 39*(4), 442-448. doi:10.1177/004728750103900411

Tsapelas, I., Aron, A., & Orbuch, T. (2009). Marital boredom now predicts less satisfaction 9 years later. *Psychological Science, 20*(5), 543-545. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02332.x

Tucker, H. (1997). The ideal village: Interactions through tourism in central Anatolia. In S. Abram, J. Walderen & D. V. L. Macleod (Eds.), *Tourists and tourism: Identifying with people and places* (pp. 107-128). Oxford, England: Berg.

Tung, V. W. S., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2011). Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(4), 1367-1386. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.03.009

Turner, A., Barlow, J., & Ilbery, B. (2002). Play hurt, live hurt: Living with and managing osteoarthritis from the perspective of ex-professional footballers. *Journal of Health Psychology, 7*(3), 285-301. doi:10.1177/1359105302007003222

Uriely, N. (2001). 'Travelling workers' and 'working tourists': Variations across the interaction between work and tourism. *The International Journal of Tourism Research, 3*(1), 1-8. doi:10.1002/1522-1970(200101/02)3:1<1::AID-JTR241>3.0.CO;2-M

Uriely, N. (2005). The tourist experience: Conceptual developments. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*(1), 199-216. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.07.008

Uriely, N., & Reichel, A. (2000). Working tourists and their attitudes to hosts. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(2), 267-283. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00071-7

Uriely, N., Yonay, Y., & Simchai, D. (2002). Backpacking experiences: A type and form Analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research, 29*(2), 520-538. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(01)00075-5

Urry, J. (1990). *The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies.* London, England: SAGE.

Urry, J. (2002). Mobility and proximity. *Sociology, 36*(2), 255-274. doi:10.1177/0038038502036002002

Urry, J. (2003). Social networks, travel and talk. *British Journal of Sociology, 54*(2), 155-175. doi:10.1080/0007131032000080186

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). London, Ontario, Canada: University of Western Ontario.

Var, T., Cesario, F., & Mauser, G. (1985). Convention tourism modelling. *Tourism Management, 6*(3), 194-204. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(85)90036-6

Voigt, C., Brown, G., & Howat, G. (2011). Wellness tourists: In search of transformation. *Tourism Review of AIEST - International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, 66*(1/2), 16-30. doi:10.1108/16605371111127206

Voigt, C., & Laing, J. H. (2010). Journey into parenthood: Commodification of reproduction as a new tourism niche market. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 27*(3), 252-268. doi:10.1080/10548401003744685

Voorpostel, M., van der Lippe, T., & Gershuny, J. (2009). Trends in free time with a partner: A transformation of intimacy? *Social Indicators Research, 93*(1), 165-169. doi:10.1007/s11205-008-9383-8

Voorpostel, M., van der Lippe, T., & Gershuny, J. (2010). Spending time together: Changes over four decades in leisure time spent with a spouse. *Journal of Leisure Research, 42*(2), 243-265.

Wearing, B., & Wearing, S. (1992). Identity and the commodification of leisure. *Leisure Studies, 11*(1), 3-18. doi:10.1080/02614369100390271

Wearing, B., & Wearing, S. (1996). Refocussing the tourist experience: The flaneur and the choraster. *Leisure Studies, 15*(4), 229-243. doi:10.1080/026143696375530

Wearing, S. (2002). Re-centering the self in volunteer tourism. In G. M. S. Dann (Ed.), *The tourist as a metaphor of the social world* (pp. 237-262). New York, NY: CABI.

Wearing, S., Stevenson, D., & Young, T. (2010). *Tourist cultures: Identity, place and the traveller*. London, England: SAGE.

Wearing, S., & Wearing, B. (2001). Conceptualizing the selves of tourism. *Leisure Studies, 20*(2), 143-159. doi:10.1080/02614360110051631

Weaver, P. A., Weber, K., & McCleary, K. W. (2007). Destination evaluation: The role of previous travel experience and trip characteristics. *Journal of Travel Research, 45*(3), 333-344. doi:10.1177/0047287506292702

Weber, K. (2001). Meeting planners' use and evaluation of convention and visitor bureaus. *Tourism Management, 22*(6), 599-606. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00040-1

Weber, K., & Ladkin, A. (2003). The convention industry in Australia and the United Kingdom: Key issues and competitive forces. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*(2), 125-132. doi:10.1177/0047287503257489

Westman, M., Chen, S., & Etzion, D. (2009). Crossover of positive experiences from business travelers to their spouses. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 24*(3), 269-284. doi:10.1108/02683940910939340

White, N. R., & White, P. B. (2007). Home and away: Tourists in a connected world. *Annals of Tourism Research, 34*(1), 88-104. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.07.001

Williams, A. M., & Hall, C. M. (2000). Tourism and migration: New relationships between production and consumption. *Tourism Geographies, 2*(1), 5-27. doi:10.1080/146166800363420

Williams, D. R., & Kaltenborn, B. P. (1999). Leisure places and modernity: The use and meaning of recreational cottages in Noreway and the USA. In D. Crouch (Ed.), *Leisure/tourism geographies: Practices and geographical knowledge* (pp. 214-230). London, England: Routledge.

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method* (2nd ed.). Berkshire, UK: Open university press.

Willis, P. (2001). The "Things Themselves" in phenomenology. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology, 1*(1), 1-14.

Willson, G. B., McIntosh, A. J., & Zahra, A. L. (2013). Tourism and spirituality: A phenomenological analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research, 42*(0), 150-168. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.016

Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2008). The solo female travel experience: Exploring the 'geography of women's fear'. *Current Issues in Tourism, 11*(2), 167-186. doi:10.2167/cit342.0

Wiswell, J. (1986, December). Vacation or an education? *Seccessful Meetings, 35*(12)*,* 45-48. Retrieved from http://www.successmtgs.com

Withiam, G. (1997). Mixing business with pleasure. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 38*(5), 18. doi:10.1016/S0010-8804(97)90020-3

Witt, S. F., Gammon, S., & White, J. (1992). Incentive travel : Overview and case study of Canada as a destination for the UK market. *Tourism Management, 13*(3), 275-287. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(92)90099-S

Wootton, G., & Stevens, T. (1995). Business tourism: A study of the market for hotel-based meetings and its contribution to Wales's tourism. *Tourism Management, 16*(4), 305-313. doi:10.1016/0261-5177(95)00020-O

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology & Health, 15*(2), 215-228. doi:10.1080/08870440008400302

Yoo, J. J.-E., & Chon, K. (2008). Factors affecting convention participation decision-making: Developing a measurement scale. *Journal of Travel Research, 47*(1), 113-122. doi:10.1177/0047287507312421

Yoo, J. J.-E., & Weber, K. (2005). Progress in convention tourism research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 29*(2), 194-222. doi:10.1177/1096348004272177

Zabriskie, R. B., & McCormick, B. P. (2001). The influences of family leisure patterns on perceptions of family functioning. *Family Relations, 50*(3), 281-289. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2001.00281.x

Zelinsky, W. (1994). Conventionland USA: The geography of a latterday phenomenon. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 84*(1), 68-86. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.1994.tb01729.x

Zhang, H. Q., Leung, V., & Qu, H. (2007). A refined model of factors affecting convention participation decision-making. *Tourism Management, 28*(4), 1123-1127. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2006.07.008

Ziakas, V., & Boukas, N. (2013). Extracting meanings of event tourist experiences: A phenomenological exploration of Limassol carnival. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 2*(2), 94-107. doi:10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.02.002

Appendices

Appendix A

Information Sheet for Accompanying Spouses

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

A study of accompanying spouses' experiences in conference travel

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study. This study is being undertaken for my PhD thesis research at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of persons accompanying their spouse/partner (a conference attendee) to an overseas conference in order to gain insight into this relatively common yet poorly understood phenomenon. Specifically, I am interested in what motivated you to travel as an accompanying person to the conference, the meaning of conference travel for you, and how you made sense about the experience.

Participation in this thesis will involve a conversational interview. With your permission, the interview will be recorded using an audio device and should not be more than 45 minutes. No identifying information will appear in the transcriptions. On completion of the study, all files will be destroyed. Please be aware that all responses and data gathered are confidential.

As a participant in this research, you have the right to refuse to answer any particular question at any time; withdraw from the research at any time up until the data analysis stage; ask any further questions about the research that occur to you during or after your participation.

The information collected will be strictly used for research purposes only. I will produce a PhD thesis summarising the results of this research, combining it also with academic literature. If you are interested, I am happy to provide you with a summary of my thesis findings on completion of my study. Please contact me at the address below.

<table>
<tr><td>Researcher's Name and contact information:</td><td>Supervisor's Name and contact information:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hyekyung Yoo
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand
Ph: +64 7 838 4466 ext) 6842
Email: hy82@waikato.ac.nz</td><td>Professor Alison McIntosh
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand
Phone: +64 7 838 4962
Email: mcintosh@mngt.waikato.ac.nz</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix B

Consent Form for Accompanying Spouses

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

A study of accompanying spouses' experiences in conference travel

I have read the **Information Sheet for Accompanying Spouses** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until the data analysis stage, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

I understand that my responses are confidential.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

I am happy for my interviews to be recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:	*Supervisor's Name and contact information:*
Hyekyung Yoo	Professor Alison McIntosh
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management	Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
University of Waikato	Waikato Management School
Private Bag 3105	The University of Waikato
Hamilton, New Zealand	Private Bag 3105
Ph: +64 7 838 4466 ext) 6842	Hamilton, New Zealand
Email: hy82@waikato.ac.nz	Phone: +64 7 838 4962
	Email: mcintosh@mngt.waikato.ac.nz

Appendix C

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

A study of accompanying spouses' experiences in conference travel

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study. This study is being undertaken for my PhD thesis research at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of persons accompanying their spouse/partner (a conference attendee) to an overseas conference in order to gain insight into this relatively common yet poorly understood phenomenon. Specifically, I am interested in what motivated you to travel with your spouse/partner to the conference, the meaning of traveling together for you, and how you made sense about the experience.

Participation in this thesis will involve a conversational interview. With your permission, the interview will be recorded using an audio device and should not be more than 45 minutes. No identifying information will appear in the transcriptions. On completion of the study, all files will be destroyed. Please be aware that all responses and data gathered are confidential.

As a participant in this research, you have the right to refuse to answer any particular question at any time; withdraw from the research at any time up until the data analysis stage; ask any further questions about the research that occur to you during or after your participation.

The information collected will be strictly used for research purposes only. I will produce a PhD thesis summarising the results of this research, combining it also with academic literature. If you are interested, I am happy to provide you with a summary of my thesis findings on completion of my study. Please contact me at the address below.

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Hyekyung Yoo
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand
Ph: +64 7 838 4466 ext) 4662
Email: hy82@waikato.ac.nz

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Professor Alison McIntosh
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand
Phone: +64 7 838 4962
Email: mcintosh@mngt.waikato.ac.nz

Appendix D

Consent Form for Conference Attendees

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

A study of accompanying spouses' experiences in conference travel

I have read the **Information Sheet for Conference Attendees** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until the data analysis stage, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.
I understand that my responses are confidential.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

I am happy for my interviews to be recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:	**Supervisor's Name and contact information:**
Hyekyung Yoo	Professor Alison McIntosh
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management	Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
University of Waikato	Waikato Management School
Private Bag 3105	The University of Waikato
Hamilton, New Zealand	Private Bag 3105
Ph: +64 7 838 4466 ext) 6842	Hamilton, New Zealand
Email: hy82@waikato.ac.nz	Phone: +64 7 838 4962
	Email: mcintosh@mngt.waikato.ac.nz