

**Authenticity perceptions of nature-based attractions,
such as Preikestolen, Norway,
by people with different backgrounds**

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Acknowledgments

I had never been hiking before I moved to Norway, since landscapes in my region are rather flat. But right after I first time visited iconic Preikestolen, I became interesting in hiking. I bought a professional gear and joined a local hiking association. Together we made a lot of hard and long hikes, such as Kjerag, Trolltunga, 7 mountains hike in Bergen, experiencing soaring legs, tears and extreme fatigue. This was my way of becoming experienced tourist. These two years I have been, probably, at more mountains than local citizens for their entire lives.

My first time at Preikestolen was emotionally exciting, but physically I was absolutely unprepared - no proper shoes or clothes, the hike seemed for me as an enjoyable walking. After visiting Preikestolen more than five times, being already experienced, observing all the path's developments, I remembered my first impression and realized that me now have absolutely different needs than me before. I started noticing a crowd and irritation of standing in the queues that resulted me taking a remote forgotten path and climbing rocks. My expectations were at least to hike over landscape and experience wild nature of the mountain. So this is how the gap between authenticity perceptions for tourists with different backgrounds has become my interest.

I would like to thank my friend Kaia Rønneberg from Jørpeland, that gave me an accommodation for one week and was driving me every morning to Preikestolen. Likewise, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to University of Stavanger. The entire studying process not just improved my language and personal skills, but has changed all my life.

Abstract

This explorative case study is about Preikestolen, one of the most iconic attraction in Norway. Recently, it has an increasing number in visitation and provides relatively easy hiking, due its' route developments, engaging "mass" or individual tourists with different levels of experience. Nature-based tourism satisfies the needs of contemporary tourists, providing a variety of visual and physical experiences, such as recreation, sightseeing, wilderness, relaxation, personal interactions, etc., being main motives for tourists. The paper measures existential authenticity of activity-based attractions, playing a crucial role in overall satisfaction and latter behavioural attitudes. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between tourist backgrounds, in this case, prior tourist nature-based experience, and perceptions of the Preikestolen experience authenticity.

This paper represents the data of 74 tourists' experiences, on-site data sources include in-person interviews and on-site observations. The results agree with previous works in the literature, arguing for "the difference of perceptions between experienced/inexperienced" visitors. The paper revealed a negative relationship between prior experience and authenticity, meaning that the more experienced tourists are, the less authentic Preikestolen experience is for them. Inexperienced tourists responded more positively to the authenticity, unlike experienced, but, also, accompanied with a frustration caused by the low service of the attraction. This paper provides practical managerial implications based on study results and discussions about a controversy between the need for commoditization of Preikestolen and preservation of authenticity, attracting the visitors.

KEYWORDS: Existential Authenticity, Nature-Based Tourism, Tourist Experience, Motivation, Authenticity Perceptions

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
Introduction	7
Literature review	13
<i>Nature-based attractions provide various experiences</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Prior travel experience</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Existential authenticity as an experience-oriented concept</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Underlying theory of personal perceptions</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Tourist motivation and expectations towards nature based attractions</i>	<i>22</i>
Research Model	23
Research Methodology	26
Data Collection	27
Measurements	29
<i>Interviews</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Observation</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Sampling procedure</i>	<i>35</i>
Data analysis	36
<i>Interviews</i>	<i>36</i>
Results and Analysis	37
<i>The Obtained Sample</i>	<i>37</i>
Prior travel experience	39
Authenticity perceptions	41
<i>Intra-Personal perceptions</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Main motivation</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Visual Experience</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Physical Experience</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Self-Making</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Inter-Personal Perceptions</i>	<i>53</i>
Observation (On-site)	54
Post-event Evaluation	58
Overall Satisfaction	60
Discussion	62
<i>The tourist</i>	<i>62</i>
Authenticity perceptions	63

	6
<i>Bodily Feelings: Visual Experience</i>	63
<i>Physical Experience</i>	66
<i>Self-Making</i>	68
<i>Inter-Personal Perceptions: touristic communitas</i>	70
<i>Post-event Evaluation</i>	72
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	73
Conclusion	74
Managerial Implications	75
Limitations and Further Research	77
References	78
List of Tables	90
List of Figures	91
Appendix	92

Introduction

Authenticity has a great affect on a tourism industry and brings rapidly changing tourists' demands pushing to discover, develop or even create that authentic experience (McCannell, 1976, p.101). "Modern society is inauthentic and alienating, driving people to travel in search of the authentic since authenticity is somewhere else but at home" (Kim and Jamal, 2007). There is an increased demand among tourists for unique places and feelings, something unexperienced before (Scott, Laws & Boksberger, 2009). Tourism literature has identified a growing interest and choice as a contemporary way of alienation from everyday life. As a result, nature based tourism has become an increasingly popular attraction (Uriely, 1997).

At the same time it becomes very challenging for the industry to satisfy needs of all types of tourists. Differences in personal backgrounds that distinct people from each other have always been an interest for many studies. People have an image of how the world operates and what exists in it based on the descriptions and meanings that they keep in mind so that they form a certain vision for everything (Johnson-Laird, 2010). Humans make implicit connections between their memories, mindset and experiences. Personal experience differences should be taken into account when the quality of services is providing. Travellers that have different behaviours based on their skills, experience diversity have different expectations, motivations and needs (Fluker and Turner, 2000).

Preikestolen, one of the most iconic nature attraction in Norway, a symbol of Rogaland region attracts visitors from all over the world and has experienced an exponential increase in visitation

within last five years from 90.000 visitors in 2005 to 250.000 in 2015 (Wikipedia.no, 2017). The viewpoint plateau at Preikestolen is known as a “Pulpit Rock” and reached by a four-hours hiking journey of an eight kilometres distance. Reaching the viewpoint plateau is not a mere risk adventure, but a hike is 3,8 kilometers through different terrains and climbing rocks and stone steps on the way. Those who make it to the viewpoint, stand on the wide platform gloriously overlooking Lysefjord located 604 meters below. With an increasing usage of social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and etc, the taken photographs with a view soon shared by tourists as a part of their experience. Preikestolen has developed a strong virtual presence by increasing numbers of photographs shared by visitors, that caused the popularity of Preikestolen as a nature-based attraction.

This paper has been inspired by the examination of how tourist experience influences the perceptions towards a certain destinations and the essence of the subjectivity of judgements. In examining the latter, this study has particularly focused on exploring the, first of all, motives according to tourist backgrounds and, secondly, authenticity perceptions of the current experience. Due to the subjectivity of personal perceptions and importance of providing authentic experience as a main demand of the contemporary tourists, this paper has analyzed Preikestolen hiking experience: the activity of visual experience - sightseeing, accompanying with physical. The study has focused on the background differences such as prior travel experience of tourists, attending journey to Preikestolen and how their perceptions of a truly authentic experience affect a post-event satisfaction.

Norwegian government has made a commoditization of nature-based attractions as one of the main focuses for increasing a tourism level in the country and started to develop Preikestolen site with different facilities (accommodations, parkings, cafeterias, path developments, rescue service and etc.). Within last several years it has changed from an almost untouched area to a highly developed attraction with a variety of services. But there is an assumption that multiple tourists have different expectations and visions of their “ideal” trip, so there should be different approaches of how tourist operators present Preikestolen hiking experience to different types of tourists and how their backgrounds reflect their demands. Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989) suggest that pleasure and satisfaction are based on the perceptions, according to their competence (experience), and that the challenge for managers is to accurately estimate the level of competence of the customers and to “match them with appropriate recreation opportunities” (p.137).

In line with the contemporary tourism experience theories (Eckblad’s Scheme Theory, “flow”-experience), this paper has empirically explored the tourist experience from a *dynamic* perspective by analyzing their opinions and related aspects, such as motivation, bodily feelings, interactional aspect and overall satisfaction. Performance in this study mainly refers to the emotional and cognitive aspects of the tourist experience. In the activity-based approach, the interaction between “individual perceptions” and “reality” (authenticity) of the experience as suggested by Wang (2002) have been explored. Other thing that I would like to find out if there is any frustration or disappointment that affect tourists latter inquiry and what are the main

weaknesses of the experience that can be considered in the future for providing a better service quality, sustaining positive experience.

It is important to understand what types of tourists want to visit nature tourism sites in defining a target market, and to reveal strategies that meet tourist satisfaction. This requires the understanding of tourist motivations for visiting particular sites. As was mentioned before, tourist motivation, that derives from previous travel experience, does not influence their perceptions of attractions directly, but shaped accordingly to personal visions and needs. In other words, a manager should be able to differentiate motivations of nature tourists, and then give an access those features, accordingly to the reconcilability of the tourists needs and the desirable outcome offered by the operator. In studying authenticity of the experience, this research has applied an activity-based approach, by exploring visual activities of sightseeing and physical of hiking as parts of bodily feelings; and treating authenticity as emerged in “real” time. The objective of this study has been to empirically explore the tourist subjective experience at iconic tourist attraction Preikestolen.

Tourism scholars have been invited to incorporate notions of individual aspects, such as prior travel experience and perceptions, applying on existential authenticity within a trip. It is argued that activity-based approach to authentic experience provides a contemporary gaze onto post-modern tourists and their demands (Kim and Jamal, 2007). Based on contemporary literature and the context of this research, the following main research objectives have been stated:

- * Exploring the authentic travel experience, gained at the site of Preikestolen, by means of:
- * Exploring the visual experience of sightseeing
- * Exploring the physical experience of hiking
- * Exploring unique emotions based on their perceptions (Self-making)
- * Providing an opinion regarding subjectivity of a personal vision onto general viewpoints regarding the site Preikestolen
- * Providing an overall insight into the tourist perceptions regarding Preikestolen site

In line with the stated objectives, the following research questions have been defined:

RQ1: What kind of tourists mostly visit Preikestolen?

RQ2: What motives drive them according to their backgrounds?

RQ3: How does a prior experience influence tourists' perceptions of Preikestolen?

RQ4: How different tourists' perceive the authenticity of Preikestolen hiking experience?

In building on Mehmetoglu, McKercher and Wong, Fakeye and Crompton, this study has implemented the term "prior experience" to cover a variety of subjective meanings and perceptions including motivations and expectations, resulting in feelings, moods and emotions of individuals (Mehmetoglu, 2007; McKercher and Wong, 2004; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). The existential authenticity concept is applicable to analyzing tourists perceptions, based on two parts - Intra-Personal and Inter-Personal, as stated by Wang (1999).

At Preikestolen, tourists have been empirically and on-site (in natural settings) observed and interviewed in-person during the beginning of season in May 2017. Established intrinsic tourism

theories, such as Ecklbar's scheme and "flow-experience", have functioned as a basis for understanding subjective experiences via using semi-qualitative exploration of observable phenomena at the site. A better understanding of what is central for different types of tourists regarding their level of expertise and skills will provide spheres where the service can be improved, meeting their expectations. Indeed, this approach focuses on the task to consider the level of dissonance between the previous expectation and the outcome of tourism experiences. The disconfirmation of expectations is the most immediate influence on satisfaction (Oliver 1993).

This research has based only on qualitative methods, and aimed to contribute to the overall understanding of a particular experience (Preikestolen) and relevant to current tourism research. It is also can be useful for practical implications and further studies. *Managerial implications* refer to the usage of a relevant information as derived from various researches within the tourism sector in developing better strategies and practical decisions (Jaworski, 2011). The key dilemma of tourism Norwegian management here is how postmodernism can effectively contribute to the understanding of authenticity concept as a main tourist motivation and how these findings can be used in order to increase the visitation. According to Jensen & Lindberg, 2001, the postmodern tourists do not judge authenticity from an intellectual angle anymore and namely are "affective-driven, emotional experience-seeking hedonists", demanding a reconceptualization of traditionally assumed motives and criteria in the quest for authenticity.

Literature review

Nature-based attractions provide various experiences

According to Lovelock (2004), any place or object naturally can become an attraction if under the “gaze” of tourists, which is, also, creates a marketplace for visual and physical experience by visiting destinations and exploring unique areas, including nature-based attractions (Jensen, 2014). Some attractions are landscape features and can be created by the tourists themselves with the aim of reaching the “peak” experience or high level of sensitivity from physical challenge (Bell and Lyall, 2002). Landscape attractions bring unique combination of feelings and features and differ from cultural or other types of tourism (Bell, 2012). From the tourists’ experience perspective, landscapes (adventure tourism) provides two types of perceptions - something beautiful and picturesque - visual experience, and accelerating the sublime, indeed physical experience (Greer, Donnelly & Rickly, 2008; Jacobsen & Tømmervik, 2016). The feeling of “beauty” is characterized harmonious, content, restorative and aesthetically satisfying (Lothian, 1999; Schönle, 2000). The sublime is characterized by some extent of risk, wild, uncontrollable, feeling of self-overcoming and achieving certain personal tasks (Schönle, 2000; Bell, et al., 2002). The sublime is something attractive and positively influencing tourists, that idolizing nature as a source of special experience (Belk & Costa, 1998; Bell, et al., 2002).

Visual experiences are essential in current tourism and sight impressions have been a significant topic in tourism research” (Steenjacobson, 2001, p.100). Contemporary tourism industry provides an opportunity of interacting with nature and visually and physically experiencing it (Higgins, 1996; Wilson, 1992). Many research has been done with a domination of “visualism”, calling this aspect as a central in tourism (Crawshaw & Urry, 1997; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). Though, landscapes provide a visual experience and tourists strongly associate themselves with visual impressions (Jacobsen, 2004), however, it is only part of tourists nature experience and other multitude activities are also important (Urry and Larsen, 2011). New visual opportunities derive from extending the tourists’ gaze with upcoming modern technology (GoPro, flying cameras, etc.), pushing people not just viewing landscapes but reasoning photography trips as a type of tourism (Crouch, Jackson & Thompson, 2005). Landscapes are not only places gazed upon but offers various activities as part of the tourists’ experience, for instance, photography and image making (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Tourist, of course, can experience landscapes through screens and scenery, but a contemporary tourists’ role is to turn tourism towards active physical, intellectual and cognitive participation (Ek et al., 2008). Nowadays, tourists are more than just “eyes”, they are becoming an important aspect in incorporating of the visual tourists’ experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Edensor, 2006).

In addition, when it comes to creating an authentic tourists experience, in order to be in touch with this beauty, the physical presence is needed and only then landscapes can be really experienced (Urry, 2002). Social science focuses on an increasingly growing tourists’ role as

individual active player. Though, before mental and physical were separated, now researchers discussing of the phenomena in an active perspective, where tourists' performance is based on visual and body interaction. This particularly applies to experiencing "soft" or "hard" landscapes' and adventure activities (Crouch, 2002).

Prior travel experience

Reid and Reid (1993) state that each individual possess a certain destination knowledge, built on prior visitation experience, influences perceptions of a place. They claimed that first-time visitors shaped their perceptions relying on external sources, such as tour operator information about an attraction, social media, Internet, friends and relatives; experienced tourists set their expectations before visitation based on their expertise and skills. Main conclusion was that to meet an authentic experience tour operator should take into account the gap between these two types of tourists and provide the ability of a destination to deliver an appropriate experience via better external communication between promised benefits and visitors' expectations.

However, stimulating first time visitation can result in decreasing of a number repeat tourists (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Reid and Reid, 1993). There is a big discrepancy between these two types of tourists, differing in perceptions, motivations and desirable activities (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Lau and McKercher, 2004). Generally, tourists with no or little prior experience are keen to explore a destination only widely, in a shallow way, while skilled visitors, on the other hand, tend to prefer more detailed and emerged activities. As with experienced and inexperienced visitors, studies of destinations tourists also identify significant differences in

visitor profiles and behavior. Mill and Morrison (1985) stated that for inexperienced tourists a mass or main destination is attractive enough to be the primary motive for visiting and able to satisfy the tourist in a shallow manner. Many tour operator avoid the experienced tourists as a demanding group and pay little attention to them. Indeed, to identify the reason why people choose different destinations, including their perceptions, independent behavioural patterns between different tourists is a key task for the industry (Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier, 1993)

Existential authenticity as an experience-oriented concept

Through developing a concept of authenticity many researchers revealed that existential authenticity and object-based authenticity are different concepts and can not be explored at the same time (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Wang, 2002). These dispersing views also represent the disproportion of different scientific positions, tending to conceptualize authenticity. Several studies demonstrate that perceptions of object-based authenticity and existential authenticity depend on a type of experience (Cohen, 1988; Pomfret, 2004; Weber, 2001), for instance, in activities such as camping, picnicking, campfires, climbing, hiking, experiencing wilderness, conventional and contemporary adventure tourism activities, where tourists do not literally concern themselves about the *authenticity* of toured objects at all, but rather in search of *Self-authenticity* with the support of activities or toured objects (Reisinger and Steiner, 2005). Being more specific, Wang (2000) criticizes postmodern and objective perspectives, because of their inability to encompass all the constructives and motives that authenticity phenomenon contains. Wang introduces “*existential authenticity*” perspective that clarifies the phenomenon

even more thoroughly and extends the understanding force of the concept. Main point is that existential authenticity is subjective or intersubjective, existing separately from object-related authenticity, meaning that tourists can achieve a real *existential state of Being* activated by certain activities even with inauthentic labeled object (Wang, 2000, p.359).

Wang (2000) defined two main existential authenticity dimensions: *intra-* and *inter- personal* authenticity. *Intra-personal* authenticity treats body as an instrument or feelings sensor such as pleasure, relaxation, physical achievement, control. Physical relaxation, rehabilitation, involvement into activities and entertainments, sensual experience that brings pleasures, and so on are all touristic contents (Cohen 1979b, 1985; Mergen 1986). In sense of existential authenticity body is perceived, on the one hand, as a storage for sensors forming personal identity, such as “physical condition, health, naturalness, youth, vigour, vitality, fitness, movement, beauty, energy, leisure class, taste, distinction, romance, etc.” (Wang, 2000, p.361). On the other hand, the body is the source of temporary feelings and sensual pleasure experience at the certain moment or for a short period of time that tourist industry provides. Therefore, there is a great tourists concern over bodily and sensual experience - source of the authentic self, indeed personal authenticity.

There is no better example for a bodily concern than a sea resort, e.g. Mallorca (Jacobsen, Skogheimb and Graham, 2015). On the one hand, tourists experience relaxation that is not limited by a self-control or a social rules, and, on the other hand, body switches from an ordinary daily life routine and opens up to a new alternative state: “recreation, diversion, entertainment,

spontaneity, playfulness, or in short, authenticity in the existential sense” (Wang, 2000, p.363). Thus, nowadays, bodily experience is a great focus of a tourism industry, aiming to intensify certain bodily demands such as sensual pleasures, feelings and physical impulses (adventure tourism, sex tours, food trips, sightseeing, physical activities, etc.) (Wang, 2000; Selännemi, 2001; Bell, Claudia & Lyall, 2002). However, this part of a body experience lasts for a short period of time, mostly being a motivation for holidaymakers to move away from inauthentic everyday life (Jacobsen, et al., 2015) and also can be realized as a “peak experiences” with dynamic or static activities, depending on a personal identity (Bell, et al., 2002).

Also, another important part of intra-personal authentic experience is *Self-Making or Self-identity*. This is an implicit personal motivation, pushing tourists to choose certain destinations, such as cultural (sightseeing, museum-linked trips, etc.) or adventure trips (exploring nature landscapes, extreme sport, etc.). Main feature of self-making is inability to achieve self-realization in everyday life activities, such as work and social roles, containing monotonous routine (Vester 1987, Wang, 2002).

In addition, tourists also quest for first part of *Inter-personal authenticity - Family Ties*, in other words, in modernity people seek for a “social authenticity” (Fornas, 1995) or “natural sociality” (Maffesoli, 1996, p.80). Toured objects or trips are only the part of tourists’ self-making process, reasoning that tourists are called together, and then, an authentic inter-personal relationship between them occur during their experience (Maffesoli, 1996). Tourism or a holiday is itself an opportunity for families or other groups (friends, colleagues, etc.). In recreational tourism

individual is pleased not only by seeing or feeling, sensors of *Intra-Personal authenticity*, but also experiencing emotional authenticity, such as feeling of a real intimacy between family members (Wang, 2002, p.366).

Underlying theories of personal perceptions

Psychologists tend to explain “perception” as a mental process where emotions are selectively organized and interpreted. Perception is about interpreting our senses about what surrounds us (Myers, 2003; Passer & Smith, 2004). Matlin (2004) characterizes perception as the use of “...previous knowledge to gather and interpret the stimuli registered by the senses” (p.33). The concept of perception was defined as a process of how we select and assimilate the information, coming from the outside world, gathered by our senses (eyes, ears, bodies, minds) in order to interpret it (Greenberg and Baron, 1997). In the case of a hiking experience, a person may observe the view, listens the nature sounds, and feels the excitement of physical belonging to nature. The person then gathers the information and shapes a perception of the experience. Cohen (1988) proposed in his study that perceptions and degree of authenticity depend on the tourist’s background, indeed constructed by a personal social experience (p.374). Different criteria were indicated that form authenticity perceptions, for example, originality, cultural and historic integrity, prior experience, genuineness, and etc., also vary for different tourists and dependent on an life experience and travel frequency (Littrell, Anderson, and Brown, 1993). Other words, people, possessing rich social and travel experience, search for the lack of McCannell’s (1999) concept of staged authenticity.

The main explanation theory of the subjectivity of perceptions is the Eckblad's Scheme Theory (1980). According to this theory, emotional experience is the result of a process of assimilating the world into a structure of cognitive "maps" or schemas (Vittersø, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland, 2000, p.435). In the main sense, a cognitive schema explores the relationships between the existing surroundings and the mechanisms of perception and further behaviour, and relates to mentality, language, and culture. The experienced (visually, physically or mentally) reality is adopted into personal schemas to the extent that the any further behaviour is bounded by these perceptions. "While awake, the person is engaged in a continuing action/perception cycle. At any time a particular assemblage of certain schemas constitutes the individual's representation of current situations and goals" (Arbib and Hesse, 1986, p.13).

Whenever one's world perception corresponds to shaped schemas, the process of acceptance operates without assimilation resistance (AR). "Assimilation resistance (AR) increases as the differences between an actual situation and one's cognitive schemas of it expand, and according to the scheme theory, the quality of an affective experience is partly determined by the amount of AR produced in the situation" (Vitterse, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland, 2000, p.436). This AR subjective index causes boredom if it is low and increases relaxation and satisfaction from the experience when it becomes larger (the curvilinear relation between assimilation resistance and affect is presented in Figure 1).

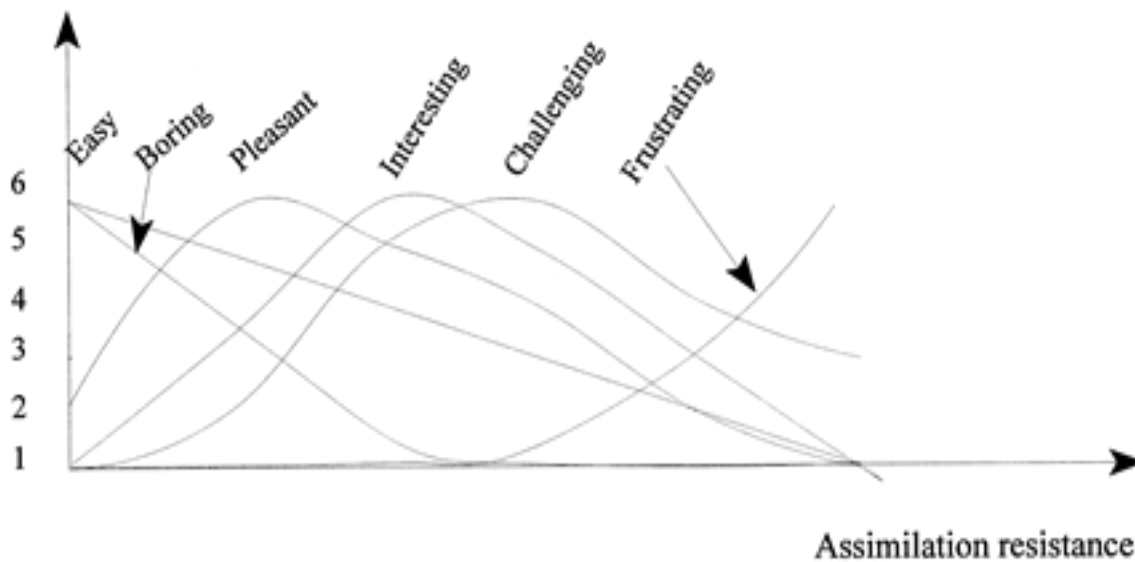


Figure 1. Affective Responses as a Function of Assimilation Resistance (*Vitterse, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland, 2000, p.435*).

Existential authenticity concept looks at the authenticity not just “true or false” in McCannell sense, but rather activity-based approach reasoning personal achievements and gains authentic experience, despite perhaps inauthenticity of objects. This concept discloses personal characteristics, that form authenticity perceptions and contributes to its’ explanation. Allport (1961) claimed that people state is important - conscious motivation has value. According to his concepts of personality, the small number of central dispositions that characterize personality, and hence perception and response to an individual’s personality, implies that a *close relationship exists between attitudes, motivations and traits* (Ryan, 1991, p.27).

Tourist motivation and expectations towards nature based attractions

One of the first attempts to define the essence of nature-based attractions made by Laarman and Durst (1987) who claimed that nature tourism contains three specific elements: education, recreation and adventure. Weber (2001), however, suggests that adventure tourism, such as hiking, rafting, climbing, etc., is rather a function of an individual's desire to experience what nature brings, including physical activities, emotional and psychological constituents. Valentine (1992), revealed one of the main constructs of nature-based tourism is a direct enjoyment of some untouched and unique phenomenon of nature. He also claims that the extent of tourists enjoyment depends on their travel experience, and proposes three types of activities, deriving from his definition: experiences that are dependent on nature, increased by it, and experiences for which a natural setting is incidental. In the case of hiking experience, a motivational drive can be the need to escape the everyday life and be closer to the natural environment. A person without enough knowledge, choosing to take a nature based trip, may expect that the experience will be exciting, and tourists with some expertise level will expect some pitfalls in addition to excitement. It can be a misleading if tourists of one attraction are perceived as a single homogeneous group, because tourists visiting drives are different. For example, there are "hard and soft nature" tourists, distinguished by different level of physical engagement (Laarman and Durst, 1987). Typical *hard-core/dedicated* tourist is characterised by searching a gain of personal experience, expecting a deep engagement with nature, more physical activities and, especially, challenges (Lindberg, 1991) . "Soft" or *mainstream/causal* ecotourist, on the other

hand, “typically interacts with nature in a shallow way, seeks comfort, expects services, puts emphasis on interpretation rather than physical challenges” (Reichel, Uriely and Shani, 2008, p.25). According to Weaver (2005), “...soft activities typically involve larger numbers of participants who make relatively short and physically comfortable visits to serviced sites as one component of a multipurpose experience...” (p.446). Moreover, all landscapes, outdoor, extreme sport and other nature-based activities are differently perceived according to their intensity of involvement (Scott & Shafer, 2001). Within this sense it is assumed that the more equipped and specific the nature tourists are, the more skilled and experienced they are, and the more they concerned about service and authenticity of experience issues (Lemelin, Fennel, & Smale, 2008). When considering visitors’ expectations the tourist satisfaction is an important concept, as one of the ultimate purpose of the participation of tourist activity. Satisfaction is the psychological concept through which tourists create the total opinion by combining their previous expectations and emotions with the result of the current experience (Lounsbury & Polik, 1992).

Research Model

In exploring tourist perceptions in the context of Preikestolen hiking, prior nature-based experience has been chosen as a main focus in empirical analysis. This exploratory study compliments to several previous researches (Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Fluker and Turner, 2012; Cho, 2012; Kim and Jamal, 2007) about existential authenticity (for activity-based attractions) and their perceptions. However, none of these studies have explored the relationships between personal experience and authenticity perceptions, only Fluker and Turner (2012) made a

quantitative research of tourists with/without a prior rafting experience, but none of them focused on the landscape experience. All of these studies have a high impact factor, published in peer-reviewed journals, mostly of them have been cited more than 300 times.

The research has been based on (1) pre-research and related theories to explore the tourists perceptions in the context of Preikestolen. Eckblad's Scheme Theory clearly points out an importance to consider a subjectivity of emotions, values and experience. For perceiving the subjective experience as a "real", both cognitive and emotional concepts need to be involved (Gray, 1990, p.269). Clearly, the scheme theoretical approach with the line of existential authenticity defines the present work that based on a prior tourist experience indirectly influences authenticity perceptions via motivations and expectations. This perspective makes possible a more varied understanding of the subjective responses produced when encountering attractions, contributing to understanding of existential authenticity and tourist perceptions towards nature-based tourism according to their previous experience.

The latter has provided a foundation for the analysis of the on-site tourist experience (2) as mainly explored by means of the existential authenticity concept, dividing into several constructs (intra- and inter- personal). The resulting tourists' perceptions as derived from Preikestolen experience have been measured as subjectively expressed by visitors' opinions, impressions, and perceptions. Overall results as arose from tourists perceptions have been analyzed and categorized in either authentic/inauthentic experiences reasoning confirmation/disconfirmation of their expectations (satisfaction/dissatisfaction). The main results have been discussed which

have led to (3) the conclusion and managerial implications. In addition, limitations and future research as part of the research have been presented. For better explaining of the phenomenon tourists expressions, opinions and additional activities, such as photography and video making, has been noticed. Due to the complex structure of individual constructs and their influence on the perceptions, it has been decided that main focus of the paper will be only prior tourist experience in analyzing authenticity perceptions and on-site experience, excluding possible others, such as educational level, age, nationality, cultural backgrounds, etc. and have not been included in the research model. The general research model as presented in Figure 1 has functioned as a basis for this research.

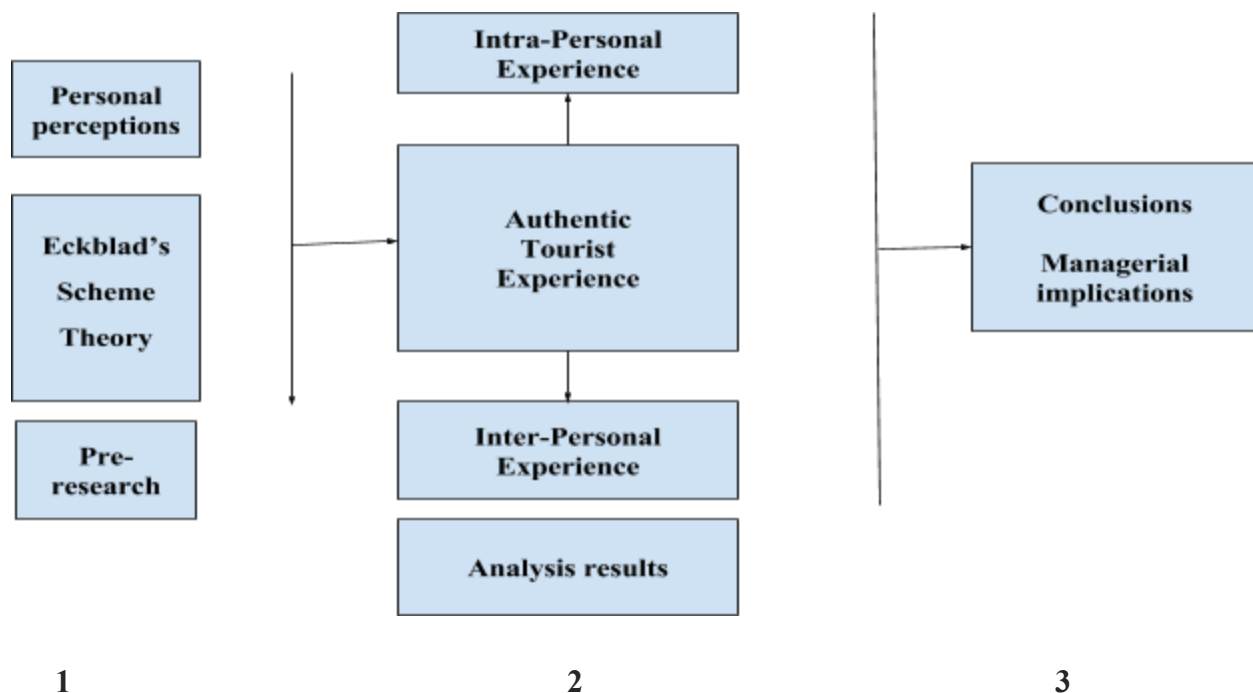


Figure 2. General research model for empirical exploration of the tourist experience based on the literature review

Research Methodology

This study with the aim of developing a better understanding of the tourist perceptions of Preikestolen is based on empirical analysis has implemented an exploratory case study design. *Exploratory* in this study refers to a description of a situation, which provides implicit insights to tourists for tour operators and researchers. Case studies provide hidden details, showing to researchers directions and main patterns to work on them and shape current theories to more complex cases and other situations. A qualitative method is best applied in order to develop an overall better understanding (Neuman, 2011) due to just few studies about personal perceptions according to backgrounds. Data, as derived from qualitative methods, gives a subjective perspective for the researcher and chance to predict a nature of the phenomenon (Morehouse, 1994). This study has aimed to establish a pattern based on the categorization of tourists perceptions related to their experience, motivation and viewpoints. Semi qualitative method was chosen due to the limitation in time and need of a larger sample size.

The present study adopts activity-based approach for analyzing existential authenticity of a nature-based attractions, meaning that evaluation arises in a real time. Modern tourists who are aware of the essence of existentialism — measure with subjective values (individual constructs) that are more important than objective — resulting “authenticity of experience” through their direct experiences at a certain destination. Therefore, existential authenticity depends on the perception level of tourists and other types of authenticity are not considered due to

activity-based approach. Based on the concepts described, the following hypotheses have been developed in an attempt to address the specific aims of this study.

Hypothesis 1: Different prior experience forms significantly different tourists' motivations.

Hypothesis 2: Different motivations will differently influence tourist perceptions towards existential authenticity of Preikestolen.

Hypothesis 3: Tourists perceptions of authenticity will significantly affect tourists satisfaction after visiting Preikestolen.

Data collection

In this study on-site data collection was used for avoiding a loss of real-life expressions and important data. On-site data collection allows better to capture small details of a behaviour than recall methods, especially during an active trips (Larsen, 2007). Even though the tourist experience is more than real-time emotions and evolves after to memories, the tourists' experience develops on-site via real-time participation in the nature based attractions (Campos, Mendes, Valle & Scott, 2015). Data has been collected on-site at Preikestolen throughout one week, including weekends as in different weather conditions including sunny, rainy and foggy days. The chosen timeframe of data collection was May 2017 - the beginning of the season. Figures 2, 3 and 4 include information about the site, hike, and set-up of the study.



Figure 3. The hiking track and distance to the viewpoint plateau, Preikestolen (Preikestolenfjellstue.no, 2017).



Figure 4. Location of Preikestolen, Norway (Preikestolenfjellstue.no, 2017).



Figure 5. The data collection point (parking place) at the study site Preikestolen, Norway.

Measurements

“As researchers, we are encouraged to employ observation skills that allow us to examine something from multiple points of view” (Neuman, 2011, p.164). Triangulation in research increases the credibility of the research by drawing on multiple viewpoints. Researchers triangulate among different sources of data to enhance accuracy of their study (Creswell, 2008). Triangulation is the process of affirming evidence from different individuals in a nature setting types of data such as field notes, and case studies methods of data collection such as observations and interviews. This all enhances in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. Triangulation uses multiple viewpoints to draw out a theme by gazing on multiple viewpoints

and moving towards accuracy and credibility of the research through a variety of sources of information, theory (different theoretical views to plan and analyze data), confirmation, individuals and processes of data collection (Neuman, 2011). This study has applied triangulation by means of multiple observers and multiple measurement methods including interviews and observations.

Interviews

In order to capture the nuances of the tourist experience, this study has chosen in-person interviews as the main data collection method, “providing a way to generate empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, p.67). Tourists are interviewed at the end of the 8-kilometre hike at Preikestolen. Interviews were conducted individually with each tourist. According to Larsen (2007), “tourist experiences may be considered to be psychological phenomena, based in and originating from the individual tourist...and individual experiences, as they are formed within the individual by means of psychological processes is one, but only one, viable focus for tourism research if the aim is to understand (i.e. to explain and predict) tourist behaviour” (p.8).

This statement allows to rely on an individual in-personal approach and conducted interviews were based on semi-structured questions. In order to reveal the nature and hidden details of the tourists’ subjective expressions, visitors were asked to briefly describe their emotions, thoughts and perceptions during the interview based on a set of predefined questions. Research by Kim and Fesenmaier (2015) states that essential aspects of emotion within touristic settings are

important for better understanding an experience service. Interpreting tourist expressions is important in exploring a tourist perspective with a usage of oral or written information (Caru and Cova, 2009). In-person interviews is a good method, allowing researchers to disclose personal matters and it is an alternative way to quantitative methods way to clarify a theory (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Jordan, Gibson & Phillimore, 2004).

The in-person questions have been pretested by 10 tourists in a week before the main data collection for revealing main issues and misunderstandings. Thus, closed questions regarding a prior travel experience, implying answers like “yes/no” , such as “Are you experienced tourists or not”, “How many times have you been to nature based attractions?” were excluded. It has been decided to use open-ended questions, giving to researchers several advantages, such as avoidance of “social desirability” effects and mechanical choice or mere guessing, unlike closed questions (Schuman and Presser, 1996, p.80).

A few rare studies explore a non commodified or more participatory relationship between the tourist and the objective environment such as Walls, Okumus, Wang and Kwun, 2011, study consumer experience, Kim and Jamal, 2007, study existential authenticity perceptions in cultural context; and make the association with existential authenticity. Thereby, in order to achieve this purpose, a series of open-ended questions (Appendix), based on the literature review, underlying theories and input from previous researches and industry managers, were constructed to facilitate the data collection process. In building a relevant theory, the interviews were designed using the principles of the “laddering” technique that has been used in the marketing industry, measuring

consumer attitudes (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). Participants when are in-person interviewed tend to feel freely in expressions and less-influenced by bias (Baker, 1998). In other words, an usage of open-ended questions (e.g., “Why was that important to you?”) were used to encourage tourists to express the matter on a more emotional level. This technique enables the researchers to encompass and show personally valued experiences in respondents’ own opinions, thereby facilitating inductive analysis (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005).

Situated in one location and adopting a case study approach, the research aim was to acknowledge the importance of context in understanding tourists’ perceptions. The interviews’ purpose was to use open-ended questioning to provide insight on the investigation themes. It was also of interest to find out how and why visitors choose trips according to their backgrounds. In developing this insight into related and additional aspects of the experience on the site Preikestolen, a semistructured interview approach was applied. In this study several aspects are matters so semi-structured interviews was the most appropriate method in order to analyze participants’ perceptions (Neuman, 2011).

The questionnaire of this study has been divided into four parts : 1) description of the sample, including occupation, country of origin, travel companions, etc. ; 2) personal prior travel experience; 3) authenticity perceptions define “real time” expressions (subjective perceptions) according to the authenticity of Preikestolen experience; and, 4) post-event evaluation demonstrates confirmation/disconfirmation of expectations and overall satisfaction. Each part is based on the previous findings, that have studied authenticity perceptions in different context,

but all of them are quantitative and none are focused on the tourists emotions, revealing hidden details.

First part of the questionnaire contains a questions, measuring tourist previous nature experience: “Do you feel yourself experience or inexperienced in relation to Preikestolen hiking? Why?”. They reflect a personal description of a previous experience so researcher can categorize tourists. *Second part* of questions is on the subject of decisions to travel experience, exposing tourists’ main motives for visiting Preikestolen: “What are your personal motives that brought you to Preikestolen?”. *Second part* of questions on-site experience, indeed existential authenticity perceptions, such as bodily feelings: “How have you experienced the activity of hiking?”, “How have you visually experienced the landscape?” “- How have you physically experienced the landscape”, Self-making: “There are many things make people saying that they had an “extraordinary” experience. What were these things for you in this trip? Why was that important to you?”. And the last part of questions is a post-travel process, explaining the subjective index AR (difference between an actual situation and one's cognitive characteristics) and overall satisfaction of the trip: “Was the experience as you expected it to be? Why”, “All in all, how do you feel about hiking at Preikestolen?” by ranking from 1 to 10

Observation

Following the triangulation method this study has additionally collected data as derived from observations, strengthening an empirical validity. For developing a better understanding individual's actions and mental states observations can be included to a research in addition (Stewart, 1998; Larsen & Mossberg, 2007). Multiple methods contribute to the overall validity of data collection (Neuman, 2011). Thereby, this study intended to increase the validity of the data while exploring mental and behavioral phenomena. A usage of multiple method data collection provides evidence and a large volume of information, resulting in diverse data (Creswell, 2014). This method, does not show “what's in the head of observants, but shows how they behave in nature” (Book Miller and Dingwall, 1997, p.62).

Hull and Stewart (1995) proposed an observation of landscapes (hiking experience) technique that contains three key elements namely, encountered landscape, sequence and feelings. Observation methods are useful to researchers in a variety of ways. “Landscapes” unite the views, the people and/or the objects in a landscape that are seen; “sequence” demonstrates the order in which these scenes or objects were met; “feelings and thoughts” are subjective expressions experienced during the activity. Hull and Stewart further conclude that mood and satisfaction would emerge to vary during a hiking. (Chhetri, Arrowsmith and Jackson, 2004, p.33). According to Hull and Stewart (1995), in this study have been used relevant items as a basis in order to consider aspects as a part of the tourists' experience of hiking and sightseeing at the site Preikestolen. At various point and time random participants were interrupted and asked

to describe what they are doing and feel at the moment, and rate their current mood. This observation method contributes to an exploration of Preikestolen in order to reveal authenticity of the experience on site.

Sampling procedure

The aim was to establish a varied sample of domestic and international tourists, of a minimum 80 participants in capturing sufficient variance. Residents were not included in the sample due to their different perceptions regarding local attractions. Participants for the sample were chosen randomly at the Preikestolenfjellstue (parking place). Participants were tourists, namely people who had just finished their approximately four-hour hike at the site. All tourists were personally approached after they finished the hike and asked whether they wanted to participate in the study. Not all tourists wanted to be interviewed due to the lack of time and fatigue, some of them did not speak English, others were in a rush to get to the ferry or booked buses with a strict departure time. Data collection has been conducted for one week throughout weekdays and a weekend in from 8th to 15th of May 2017. The data were collected with observation and reviewed each day; the most notable observations have been categorized and grouped, aiming to establish a pattern of tourists' behaviour. As Cohen mentioned that touristic behavior always represents stable and clearly identifiable patterns (1972).

Data Analysis

Data has been analyzed as outlined in this section.

Interviews

Preikestolen experience that consists of both sightseeing and hiking has resulted in a set of perceptions, emotions, opinions and expressions as basic subjective qualities from the experience. Chettri et al. in studying landscapes experience categorized data into positive or negative expressions (2004). Also, authentic experience can be determined not only by the object of the tour, but bodily feelings, a sense of self, and intersubjective experiences (Wang, 1999). This is particularly important when exploring motivations for tourism based on activity and sightseeing. “The expected outcome of an experience is based on expectations of feelings and emotions” (Komppula, 2006, p.147). Komppula (2006) also claims that an emotional experience requires both physical and mental presence. The expected outcome of the tourist experience is based on an expectation of a certain type of feeling or emotion.

Collected data derived from participant interviews can be analyzed for patterns and categorized : for in either positive or negative expressions from the experience (Chettri et al, 2002). Measurements of post-event satisfaction is related to what is actually being measured (the validity of the construct). Satisfaction has been perceived as a cognitive process leading to an emotional state, so, this study has analyzed for positive and negative patterns (Chettri et al., 2002; Vitters, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland, 2000) and, in addition, revealed motivational drives and main concepts of authenticity perceptions on Preikestolen site.

NVivo was used as the analysis tool in providing sufficient categorization of responses, using nodes and cases (for each respondent) and searching for patterns across all interviews in finding

key nouns and adjectives. Key analyzed items for each construct were entered into **SPSS 21.0** as a nominal data of either positive or negative (satisfaction), activity-based expressions (authenticity perceptions) and main motives as for demographical data. Altogether it helped to define frequencies and correlating percentages, revealing the difference among tourists with different prior experience.

Results and Analysis

This section outlines and discusses the obtained sample, the main results, managerial implications and, limitations and future research.

The Obtained Sample

Not all tourists were willing to participate in the study, mainly due to lack of time. Tourists willing to participate were interviewed by the researcher. It was not so easy to collect the data, many of tourists were international that did not speak English. There were several buses filled up with tourists, but most of them did not speak English as well. The tourists who made up the sample as derived from convenience sampling at the site consisted of a total [$n = 72$] participants who had just completed a hike at Preikestolen. The sample is described according to gender, age, country of residence, education, occupation, travel type and travel companions(s).

- **Gender:** In all, 42% of the participants were female and 58% were male.
- **Age:** The sample mean age was 33 years old, ranging from 19 and under to 50 and over. With a standard deviation of 8 [$SD = 8$] the age included a kurtosis of .5 and a skewness of .2.

- **Country of residence:** The obtained sample consisted of 70% international tourists (foreign residence) and 30% domestic tourists (holding residence in Norway). Most of the participants were international, domestic that resided in Norway (30%), followed by tourists from Poland (7,5%), Germany (6,8%), China (5%), Spain (6%), United Kingdom (4%), Canada (4,1%), Sweden (4,1%), Netherlands (4,1%), Ukraine (2,7%), Georgia (2,7%), Finland (2,7%), Austria (2,7%), USA (2,7%), Indonesia (2,7%) and others are Thailand, Portugal, Belgium, France, Slovakia, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, France, Romania.
- **Education:** Participants in the study were generally highly educated individuals; most of them had graduated from the university (46%), following that 33% finished only a high school and others are students 11% or about a graduation 11% .
- **Occupation:** Participants occupied a total of different occupations. The largest group was comprised of office workers (17,6%). Following occupations included service/sales clerk (16,2%), primary industry (14,9%), professionals (14,9%), students (13,5%), independent businessmen (8%) and housewives (8%).
- **Travel type:** Visitation was organized by a travel agent (69% of total participants) and others came on self-arranged trip (31%).

Prior travel experience

In order to reveal whether tourist experienced in visiting nature-based attractions or not, in-person question asked to describe shortly prior nature experience, allowing the researcher to explore different subjective reactions to Preikestolen: “*Do you think you are experienced or*

inexperienced tourist in relation to Preikestolen hiking? Why?” seeks to understand their own expression of “being experienced/inexperienced” in relation to Preikestolen landscape. Answers were coded by defining common objective observations that have been made, pointing out characteristics of the experience. In response to question item 1 responses [$n = 74$] as based on counting of tourists’ expressions, results have shown that respondents were mostly inexperienced tourists (68%; $n=50$), experienced (30%; $n=22$) and unspecified with a response “Don’t know” (2%; $n=2$). Each response was analyzed in order to reveal a level of a prior experience. Respondents who characterized themselves as “inexperienced” and/or with a notion of negative emotions such as “hard, difficult, severe, tough, tired, feel bad, and etc”, were categorized as inexperienced tourists. Others who characterized themselves as “experienced” and used words such as “easy, not difficult, light, with no challenges, at all, etc.” perceived as experienced tourists in this case. Some of them were hesitating to answer due to the first visit of nature-based attraction, namely Preikestolen, therefore they were categorized as inexperienced.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Male, age 35, Norway	“I think I am definitely inexperienced when it comes to physical challenges, I’ve been only to some easy go attractions”
Male, age 42, Belgium	“Inexperienced. This hike demands a long walking that I am not used to”
Female, age 44, Sweden	“Experienced, I think. It was not the hardest trip in my life, moreover the path is developed, so I felt comfortable”

Male, age 24, Poland	“I’d call myself experienced. No challenge or stress...I visited many parks and some mountains”
Female, age 32, United Kingdom	“Actually, it is my first time visiting mountain and I felt unprepared. So I’d call myself inexperienced”
Female, age 30, Georgia	“I am quite experienced, did not feel it was hard, I grew up in the mountains in my country and visited many places before”
Female, age 24, USA	“That one felt easy to go, I’d say I am experienced since I travel a lot”
Male, age 28, New Zealand	“Experienced. Warmed up after first climb and then stuck in the line, did not feel it was hard”
Female, age 53, Russia	“Inexperienced. The hike took all my energy, never done something like this before”

Table 1. Most frequent noted descriptions of experience

Authenticity perceptions

Intra-personal perceptions

In developing this concept for tourism studies, Wang (1999) puts forth two dimensions of existential authenticity – intra-personal and inter-personal. ‘Bodily feelings’ are the central concern to tourism. ‘Self-making’ is the other component of intra-personal authenticity. Nowadays, all activities and use of time are rationalized and a break from these norms, through

tourism, can provide a spontaneous activities for tourists, in-line with their true feelings and authentic self (Wang, 1999; Kim and Jamal, 2007).

According to Wang's (1999) notion of existential authenticity, people's' need to escape from a daily routine and achieve extraordinary emotions, motivating them to choose certain destinations in order to satisfy their personal desires. Challenges, rare in everyday life, lead to the self-realization and provide an opportunity to compensate the boredom, through overcoming these challenges a new self is made, which is exhibited in the "flow" experience (Vester, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). According to a basic motivation theory, individual needs and goals generate an uncomfortable level of tension within individuals' minds and bodies and lead people to actions designed to release tension, which satisfy the needs (Goossens, 2000, p.303).

Main motivation

First question was asked in order to reveal main visitors' motives: "***What are the main motives that brought you to Preikestolen?***". After the data has been collected various motives has been revealed. From this point tourists have separated their opinions regarding what motives drove them to visit Preikestolen. Mostly mentioned motivation for inexperienced tourists, visiting Preikestolen, is based on a visual appeal of Preikestolen, that inspired them by pictures they saw on social media (frequency of 26) and experienced tourists (frequency 10):

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Motivations</i>
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Female, age 42, Indonesia (Inexperienced)	“When I first time saw the view of Preikestolen it was mesmerizing! So I am here no matter how hard is the way up”
Male, age 24, Latvia (Inexperienced)	“Pictures. My friend was here and showed me them. The view is worth to visit”
Female, age 33, Austria (Inexperienced)	“For me as a photographer the view is a main point here, I imagine this is how real Norway looks like”
Female, age 36, Poland (Inexperienced)	“Nothing else could bring me here except the view. I am not a big fan of adventures”
Male, age 37, Spain (Inexperienced)	“When I saw the view at the advertisement, I thought I must do that even if I am a bad in hiking, unfortunately”
Female, age 32, Norway (Experienced)	“The view, of course! I couldn’t wait to see this beauty!”
Female, age 24, USA (Experienced)	“Outstanding view”
Male, age 52, Ukraine (Inexperienced)	“We traveled to Norway for that view!”
Female, age 41, Canada (Experienced)	“Panoramic view, of course!”

Table 2. Most frequent noted descriptions of motivations as a visual appeal

Participants expressed Preikestolen as a must-see attraction among inexperienced (frequency of 11) and experienced (frequency 4).

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Female, age 18, France (Inexperienced)	“All my friends were here, they said I must not miss it”
Female, age 28, China (Inexperienced)	“Tour operator said it’s a must see attraction in our list”
Male, age 33, Germany (Inexperienced)	“I did not think much about it. I had just two days and it was a first must do in Norway”
Male, age 24, Poland (Experienced)	“I searched in Google and it was one of the “first things what to do in Norway”
Male, age 37, Spain (Inexperienced)	“When I saw the view at the advertisement, I thought I must do that even if I am a bad hiker, unfortunately”
Female, age 44, Sweden (Experienced)	“Norway means fjords, so I came to see an iconic place”

Table 3. Most frequent noted descriptions of motivations as a must see

The most interesting motivation expressed by many participants is to have something to brag about of inexperienced tourists (frequency of 7) and experienced (2) : Male, 32, Spain, “*My friends will envy me!*”; Female, 23, China, “*To make the best picture for my Instagram*”, Female, 42, Poland, “*To show my friends how good my life is*”. Other motivations are “to try something new” for inexperienced (frequency 6), wilderness experienced (frequency 4), hiking (frequency of 2), recommended by others (frequency of 3), have fun (frequency of 3) or as part of another trip (frequency of 3).

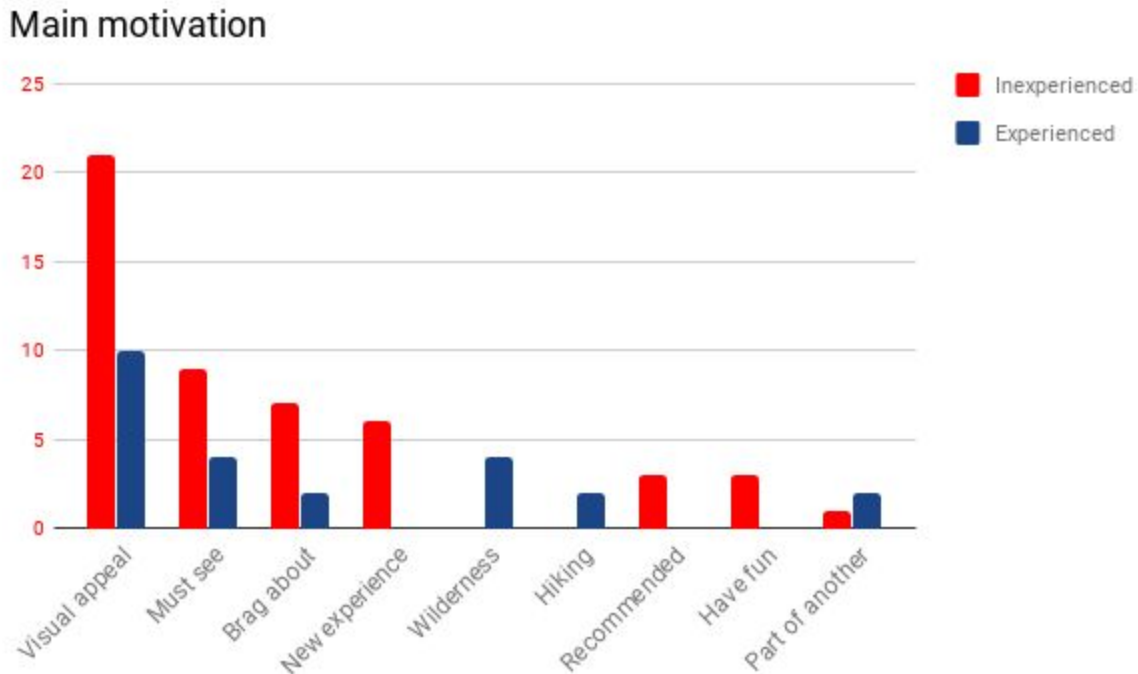


Figure 6. Main motivation for visiting Preikestolen (inexperienced and experienced)

Visual experience

First question aids to reveal main “bodily-feelings” of tourists, asking them (item 1): “**How have you visually experienced the Preikestolen landscape?**”. In response to question item 1 responses [$n = 74$] as based on counting of positive and negative analysis of tourists’ expressions and previous categorization of tourists on experienced and inexperienced, results have shown that visual experience was almost equally positively perceived by tourists (72% and 68%) and negatively respectively (20% and 26%), 8% and 6% were unspecified. The outcome of the experience is visualized on Figure 7.

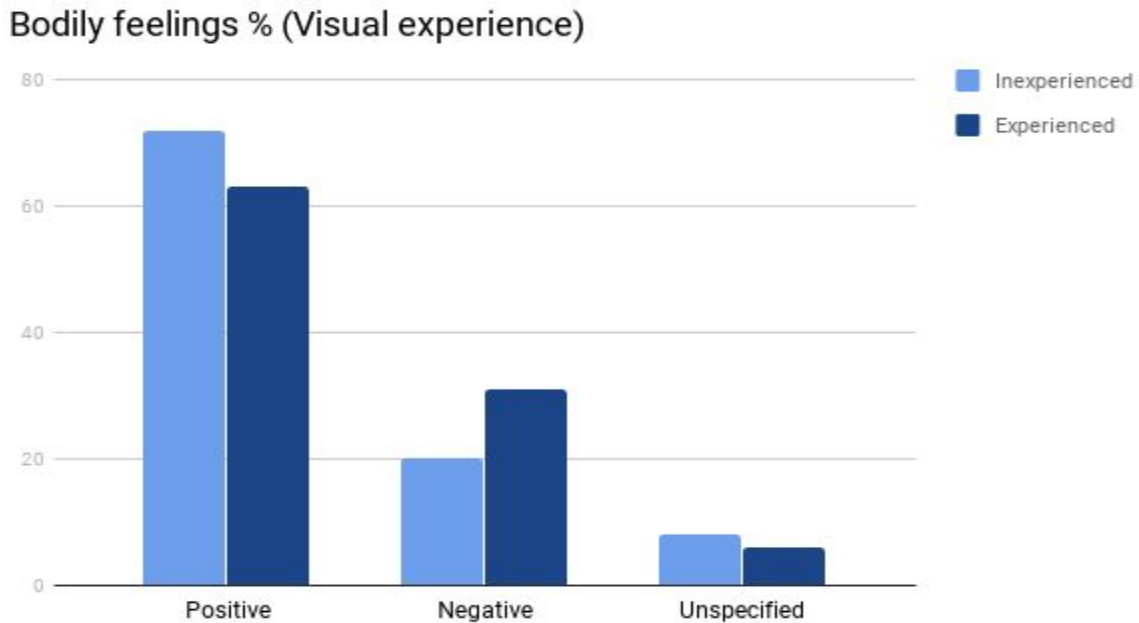


Figure 7. Visual experience of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Analysis is provided by qualitative positive and negative expressions, mentioned by tourists and categorized into groups of adjectives. Most participants perceived Preikestolen in terms of the sublime, feeling of being overwhelmed by different emotions: amazing (14%), unique (11%), scary (10%), stunning, incredible (3%), unbelievable (3%), spectacular (2%), one of the most (2%), wild (1%) and pure nature (1%). Negative emotions were expressed mainly by experienced tourists and some of them were correlated with a previous experience (Table 6): it is nice but... (18%), "I saw scarier" (11%), quite usual (9%), not so impressive (4%).

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Male, age 35, Norway, Inexperienced	“It just blew my mind...exciting”
Male, age 24, Poland, Experienced	“It did not impress me so much, I saw much higher mountains”
Female, age 44, Sweden, Experienced	“It was really nice, even if I was at much higher and scarier places”
Male, 28, New Zealand, Experienced	“It’s so charming, like whole Norway”
Male, age 37, Spain, Inexperienced	“Mesmerizing! I am speechless”
Female, age 18, France, Inexperienced	“I held a breath! Fantastic!”
Female, age 33, Austria, Experienced	“That’s why I came! Unbelievable”
Female, 42, Indonesia, Inexperienced	“I’ve never seen such a beauty!”
Female, age 24, USA, Experienced	“Norwegian pure nature”

Table 4. Most frequently noted expressions regarding visual experience

Physical experience

Second question in order to define the extent of physical experience of tourists, asking them (item 2): ***“How have you physically experienced the Preikestolen landscape?”***. In response to question item 2 responses [$n = 74$] as based on counting of positive and negative analysis of tourists’ expressions and previous categorization into experienced and inexperienced tourists,

results have surprisingly shown that physical experience was perceived at the large extent negatively by both groups. Positive responses of both groups were 64%; n=36 and 41%; n=7 relatively; and negative expressions were 33%; n=18 and 57%; n=11, 2 and 3 could not specified. Inexperienced tourists mainly expressed “easy” (frequency 6), “not easy, but achievable” (frequency 10); “not so difficult as I expected” (frequency 8); “difficult, but ok” (frequency 4); “steep but achievable” (frequency 3); most experienced tourists described it as “easy” likewise (frequency 5) and “good for being out” (frequency 2). Negative adjectives and expressions of experienced tourists were categorized into groups: “difficult” (10); “demanding” (5), “tough” (3); and inexperienced tourists: “too easy” (frequency 8), “isn’t challengeable” (3). The outcome of the experience is visualized on Figure 6.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Male, age 35, Norway (Inexperienced)	“It was not easy for me, but it was definitely still enjoyable and I'd do it again”
Male, age 24, Poland (Experienced)	“Great hike, not demanding”
Female, age 44, Sweden (Experienced)	“Nice exercise and easy way up”
Male, age 42, Italy (Inexperienced)	“Nice climb-walk, not so demanding yet very rewarding”
Male, age 32, Belgium (Inexperienced)	“I was a little afraid of the hike but I feel good”
Female, age 29, Latvia (Inexperienced)	“Rough if you're not in shape, but not impossible”

Female, age 33, Austria (Experienced)	“Was an amazing walk to the top”
Male, age 27, Norway (Experienced)	“Great medium level hike”
Female, age 24, USA (Experienced)	“Easy since I am fit enough”

Table 5. Most frequently noted positive expressions regarding physical experience

The most interesting difference in responses derived from negative expressions of experienced and inexperienced tourists.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Male, age 28, Spain (Inexperienced)	“This one was so hard for me, very demanding, I should’ve practice more”
Male, age 42, Slovakia (Experienced)	“All these steps annoyed me so much, did not feel that it was a challenge ”
Female, age 44, Sweden (Experienced)	“I had several stops waiting for people to go, was not a real hike for me”
Female, age 53, Russia (Inexperienced)	“Nobody told me that here are so many steep rocks and narrow paths, my knees are soaring”
Female, age 30, Georgia (Experienced)	“Too easy. I had to take a hidden path allowed me to hike normally”
Female, age 33, United Kingdom, Inexperienced	“I feel very exhausted, that was tough”

Female, age 51, Poland, Inexperienced	“I feel like I need few resting days now, had to use sticks while was descending, too difficult”
Male, age 23, Sweden, Experienced	“My workout in the GYM much harder, I did not enjoy”
Male, 28, New Zealand, Experienced	“Too easy and reminds me walking in a park...”

Table 6. Most frequently noted negative expressions regarding physical experience

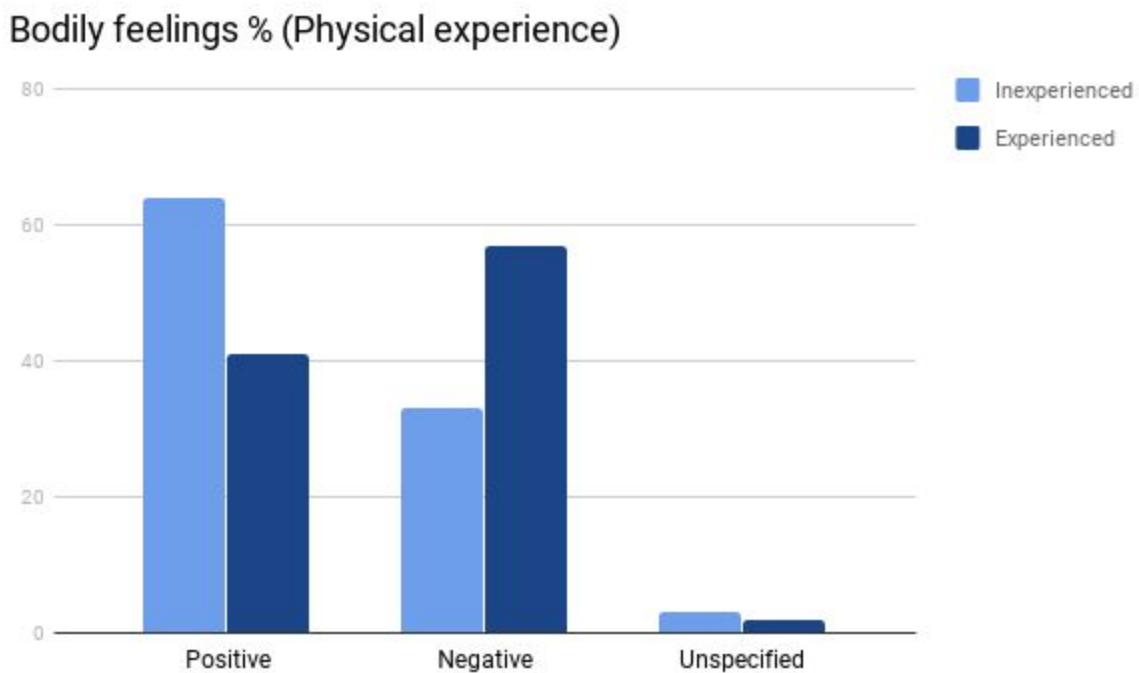


Figure 8. Physical experience of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Self-making (emotional and/or physical transformation)

Other question was asked in order to reveal visitors' self-achievements with subjective expressions: ***“There are many things make people saying that they had an “extraordinary” experience. What are these things for you in this trip?”*** Responses of experienced and inexperienced tourists were divided into two groups. Inexperienced tourists mostly used a notion of unusual adventurous experience (frequency 22), being close to the nature (10), “experiencing thrill” (6), “belonging” (4), “relaxation (4)”, “excitement” (2), “being among others (2)”, connected with strongly positive adjectives, such as unbelievable, great, majestic, etc.; very few could not specified.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Female, age 42, Indonesia (Inexperienced)	“Sitting on the edge! I felt so scary. It was a very unusual feeling”
Male, age 33, Germany (Inexperienced)	“Hiking by itself, never done it before”
Female, age 33, Austria (Inexperienced)	“Admiring the view and pure nature, that was extraordinary”
Male, age 37, Spain (Inexperienced)	“Walking among those rocks, being so high. Because it’s different from a city life”
Female, age 53, Russia (Inexperienced)	“I will always remember this majestic view. Great experience”
Male, age 35, Norway (Inexperienced)	“Strange, but swimming in the lake made me feel so content. Because in our world to find a pure nature isn’t so easy”

Male, age 52, Ukraine (Inexperienced)	“I got sick in my stomach sitting on the edge, but that was so exciting”
Female, age 26, China (Inexperienced)	“Admiring the view was the most amazing”
Male, age 52, USA (Inexperienced)	“This hike was a great achievement for my age. Proud of myself”

Table 7. Most frequently noted descriptions (inexperienced tourists)

Experienced tourists had slightly different expressions: mostly mentioned was visual experience (frequency 6), experiencing thrill (3), “no extraordinary” (4), “just a usual trip” (4), connected with adjectives, such as “quite good”, “nice”, “not new”, etc..

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Female, age 32, Norway, Experienced	“View is amazing, but for me personally the trip was not extraordinary. I like much harder trips”
Female, age 30, Georgia, Experienced	“Sitting on the edge was the best moment! I like adrenalin”
Male, age 24, Poland, Experienced	“View is worth to visit, but the entire trip I felt boring, I prefer adventures”
Female, age 41, Canada, Experienced	“It was a usual trip for me, not challengeable since I am very active, but the view is very beautiful”

Female, age 44, Sweden, Experienced	“It was quite good, just being away, but wouldn’t call it extraordinary”
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Table 8. Most frequently noted descriptions (experienced tourists)

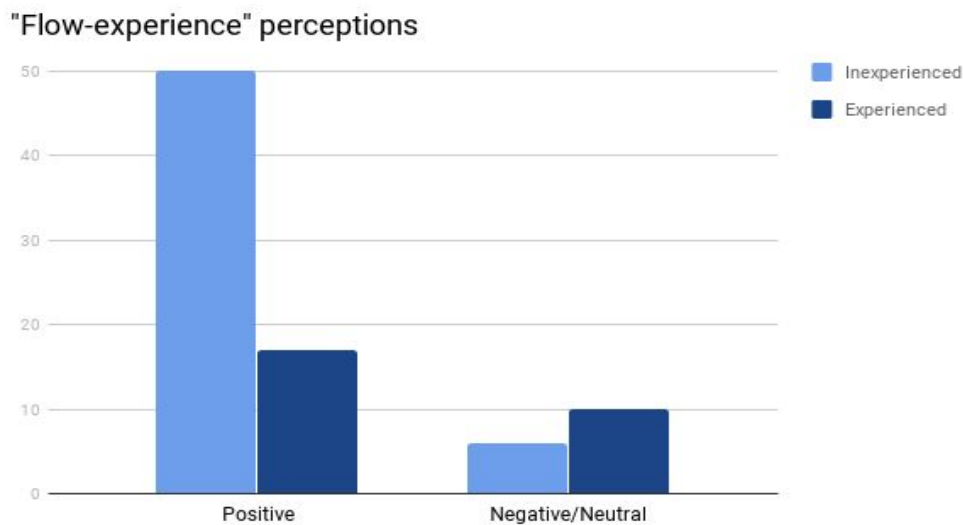


Figure 9. “Flow-experience” of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Inter-personal perceptions

Inter-personal authenticity is the second dimension of existential authenticity, also composed of two parts – family ties and *communitas*. Tourists in search of authentic experiences are not just seeking an authentic other, or a ‘true’ self, but they are also in search of authenticity of, and between, themselves (Wang, 1999, p.364). “The state of spontaneous *communitas* soon evolves

into normative *communitas* where another set of social roles and statuses is created” (Kim and Jamal, 2007, p.195). Tourists, experiencing a journey, attempt to become a part of temporary *communitas*, sharing their emotions and feeling of a social belonging.

Observation (on-site)

In order to reveal socializing pattern tourists have been observed at Preikestolen during several days. Many of them have been observed photographing themselves and the landscape, making videos. The main interest was the viewpoint - plateau as shown in Figure 10. At the plateau, crowd of tourists was observed. Tourists for the opportunity to sit or stand on the edge, to make pictures with a panoramic view, for that they had to wait for others, thus they did not start their return hike before good pictures are captured. While waiting for their turn, tourists are resting, talking, having meals, playing with dogs and kids. The narrow path to and plateau itself become very crowded and noisy place. Right after this moment was captured, they start a return hiking.



Figure 10. Tourists at the viewpoint. One of the spots for observation.

Most tourists have been observed hiking in a slow manner, in particular during the return hike down. Hiking on the way up consists of three steep climbs, at some parts with stone steps. Though, observation was made not in a high season, however, lines with people on the ways up and down made hiking much slower. People were resting or eating right on the path, interfering with walking (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Main path to the Preikestolen viewpoint. One of the spots for observation.

One interesting detail has been observed between the tourists regarding footwear and hiking gear as suitable for climbing rocks and four-hour hike. Many tourists were not well prepared: there were tourists wearing usual sport shoes, sandals and even one female on heels. Many of them were complaining about soaring legs, aching knees and feet. Most of these tourists included first time and inexperienced hikers, wearing sometimes too warm, inappropriate clothes, such as jeans, skirts, very tight uncomfortable trousers, carrying usual handbags instead of backpacks. Tourists often carried with them heavy photography equipment, making their hike even harder. There is an important role for observing the people and their interactions, movements attention and moods. In groups the issue of social interaction is important. In order to reveal whether tourists make social ties during the trip, visitors were approached by the researcher and observed

in the natural settings. The aim is to find out about actual feelings and concerns rather than the informant's rationalisation of the matter. Main patterns were captured during the observation. Tourists were asked, while having brakes and talking to each other on the way up and down, several questions in order to define their behaviour: "Have you met here"? "How does socializing make you feel?". At the same time body language and emotions were noticed and captured on the paper.

The results have shown a large amount of visitors were socializing all the time. Before approaching the observed body languages have shown various expressions, such as smiling, emotional gesticulation and movements, eating together, taking pictures, having fun, sitting and resting together. Most frequently noted answers have shown that tourists were accompanied by at least one companion (friend, family member, colleague) or met a partner/group of people in the trip. There were just few people with no company, found by the researcher in remote places, staying away from the main path. They mainly were making video/photographies or admiring the view. Some of them were quickly jumping and running through the crowd, wearing sport uniform.



Figure 12. Tourists on the way up to Preikestolen. One of the spots for observation.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Expressions</i>
Two visitors (sitting on the bench, resting)	“Me and my wife came together. We always do that; It feels great to be with someone (looked relaxed)”
Group of visitors (stopped by the lake, taking pictures)	“No, we drove from Bergen for a weekend. Feel good, better to be with friends than alone” (looked excited)
Couple with a child (having a break before a steep climb)	“It’s our traditional family trip. I feel good being with someone, aids to remember it after” ()

Group of visitors with a dog (sitting on the ground, having meals)	“We are a big company, taking this trip as a part of bigger one. We always hike as a group, it’s much more enjoyable (talking loud, feeding a dog)”
Several visitors with children (having meals, kids are climbing onto stones)	“We’ve met on the parking, I feel nice to be friendly and it’s more fun for kids (smiling)”
Two visitors (taking picture)	“She is my friend and I took her here. It’s nice to be with friends (smiling)”
Two visitors (taking pictures, asked the researcher to take a common picture)	“We are friends. I feel great, otherwise, who else would be taking pictures (laughing)”
Visitors (about to climb up the rock, finishing their meals)	“We are colleagues, this is our work trip...makes us closer, helps to get to know each other closer”

Table 9. Most frequently noted expressions regarding interaction on the site

Post-event evaluation

According to Swan and Trawick (1981) suggested that disconfirmation of expectations determines a level of satisfaction with the service that in turn influences return purchases. The disconfirmation of expectations is the most immediate influence on satisfaction (Oliver 1993). In order to develop a better understanding visitors’ perceptions of authentic experience, participants were asked whether the experience was in line with their expectations by the following question: **“Was the experience as you expected it to be?”**. The analysis of all the responses has shown a different emotional context of visitors’ expressions. Inexperienced tourists mostly mentioned difficulties regarding the hiking activity and their less expectations; experienced visitors mainly

showed a concern about physical experience likewise, but in a different meaning - they were expected hiking, but got involved into a mass activity. Viewpoints capturing the most frequent noted expectations are outlined in Table 12.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Male, age 35, Norway	“The hike was more difficult, but was rewarded by the view”
Male, age 32, Belgium	“No expectations, but was surprised that it was so tough”
Female, age 29, Latvia	“Hiking was much harder”
Female, age 42, Indonesia	“Longer walk as I expected, feel exhausted”
Female, age 51, Poland	“I thought the hike would be easier than it is indeed”
Female, age 18, France	“Didn’t know what to expect, was my first time, but it’s definitely worth to go”
Male, age 37, Spain	“Physically it was much harder than I expected, but the view is amazing”
Female, age 53, Russia	“It was better than I expected, wild nature, fjord...it is tough but worth to visit”
Male, age 42, Norway	“Was as I expected..wild”

Table 10. Most frequently noted positive and negative expressions (Inexperienced visitors)

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Female, age 30, Georgia	“I expected less people! So crowded at some places!”
Male, age 23, Sweden	“The amazing view was as I expected, but too many people up there!”
Male, 28, New Zealand	“Expected less people, couldn’t catch up my usual rhythm”
Female, age 33, Austria	“Didn’t think that the hike will disappoint me so much, but the view as great as expected”
Female, age 24, USA	“Not exactly, expected less noise and crowd”
Male, age 25, Norway	“As expected, crowd, but awesome view”
Male, age 56, Norway	“As expected, nice walk”

Table 11. Most frequently noted positive and negative expressions (Experienced visitors)

Overall satisfaction

In developing a better insight into the visitors’ experiences after having been at the site, participants were asked: “All in all, how do you feel about hiking at Preikestolen?” by rating Preikestolen on a scale ranging from 1 – 10. The majority of the total of participants [$n = 74$] gave a sufficient mark. The highest mark 10 on the scale was rated mostly among inexperienced tourists (frequency 12), the lowest 6 was rated only by two visitors; among experienced tourists the highest mark 10 was ranked only by two visitors, mostly Preikestolen was ranked with 7

(frequency 9) and 8 (frequency 4). Figure 13 demonstrates the ratings given by tourists, based on the perceptions of the site Preikestolen.

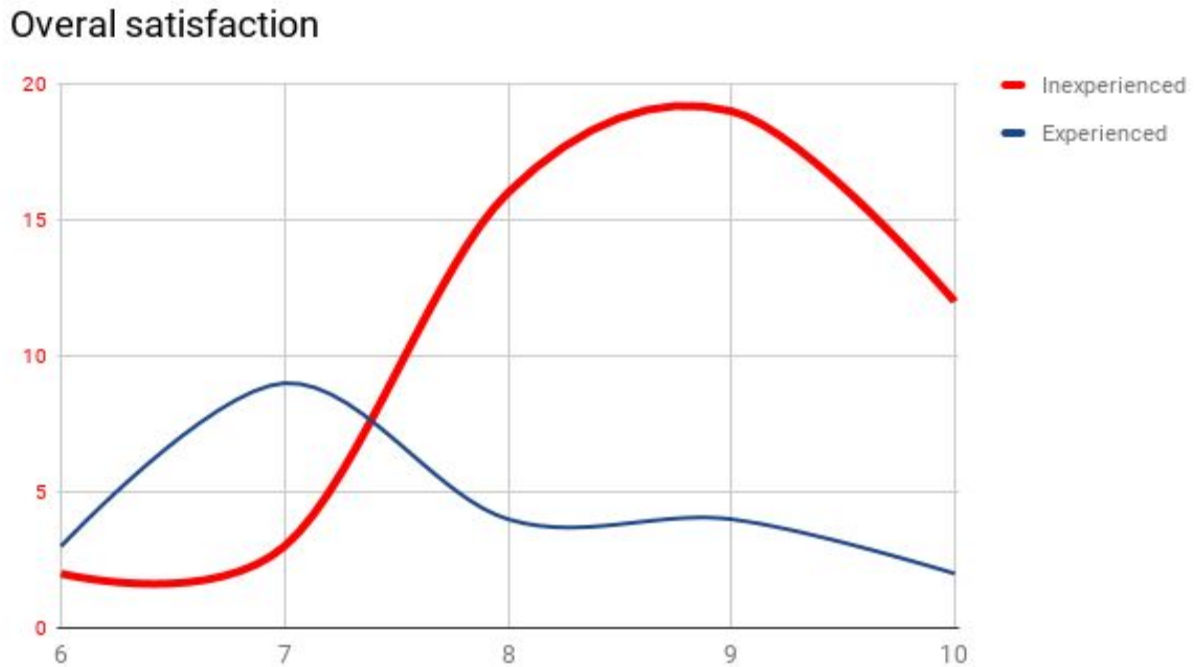


Figure 13. Overall satisfaction with Preikestolen experience by inexperienced and experienced tourists

Discussion

This study has aimed to empirically explore the tourist experience and their subjective perceptions according to their prior travel experience at the site of Preikestolen. In providing an insight of what kind of tourists visit Preikestolen and their personal expressions, aiding to disclose the current situation for managers. This section has discussed the results as derived from defining the tourist and exploring their perceptions of authentic experience. Additionally, relevant hidden aspects of the experience at the site Preikestolen have been discussed.

Tourists

First of all, answering on the research question 1: “What types of tourists visit Preikestolen?”, results have shown that tourists at Preikestolen are mainly international (65%) inexperienced or mainstream tourists - 60% of the obtained sample, and domestic tourists (35%) experienced (30%). These numbers do not represent the annual statistic of Region Stavanger regarding visitation of Rogaland county, the obtained sample is not a representative due to its' small size and a low season (beginning of May). According to this report, main tourists visiting Rogaland are domestic tourists as based on country of residence. As analyzed by Region Stavanger Germans, Finnis, Brites, Swedes, and tourists from other European countries are the main visitors. Further common countries include Canada, Spain, France, Russia, China (regionstavanger-ryfylke, 2017). Norwegians often spent their holidays within Norway, but the

data was collecting during normal working days, moreover, it was the beginning of a cruise season, attracting more foreigners than domestic tourists.

In addition, according to simple statistical data, pre-travel process of both experienced and inexperienced tourists consists of buying tour packages, tickets and rarely they arrange trips by themselves. These findings also have been observed during the entire trip, showing that mostly of tourists are inexperienced or taking this trip first time. Experienced tourists were observed highly prepared, sometimes at remote viewpoints, seeking another angle. McKercher (2001) concluded that these two groups have different motives, consumption patterns, and intended activities, following that further motives shaped, according to their travel experience, have shown a difference between experienced and inexperienced tourists.

Authenticity perceptions

Following the literature, this research aimed to explore authenticity that tourists search for and tend to focus on feelings, emotions, sensations, relationships, and sense of self. First of all, Intrapersonal perceptions that consist of Self-Making and Bodily Feelings.

Bodily feelings: Visual experience

Main motives, as a part of pre-travel process, for inexperienced tourists were mostly “visual appeal of Preikestolen”, “must see attraction”, “try something new and” and need to “something to brag about”, namely sharing and demonstrating experience to friends or on social media. In addition to the main pattern, responses of experienced tourists have shown other motives that

differ from inexperienced tourists motivation. Visual appeal was still crucial, but others such as “wilderness”, “hiking” and “part of another trip” demonstrated another vector of interest. Thus, findings obviously demonstrate that treating tourists as a single homogeneous group can be a misleading for tour operators. Consequently, in this case tourists can be categorized as “hard” and “soft” nature tourists, based on their prior nature-based experiences with a use of level of interest and degree of physical rigour in order to highlight a gap between them (Laarman and Durst (1987). While mainstream tourists or first time visitors explore a destination in a shallow way, travel widely through and establish their expectations on the basis of information obtained from external sources, such as tourism suppliers, travel intermediaries, friends and relatives; repeat tourists seek for a deeper engagement with an attraction and set their expectations on the basis of previous experiences (Lau and McKercher, 2004). Following that on the foundation of simple statistics with the aid of qualitative analysis, the second research question has been answered and Hypothesis 1: “*Different prior experience forms significantly different tourists’ motivations*” has been confirmed.

Primary formed motivations for tourism include recreation, relaxation, which place the bodily feelings, at the center of tourism experience (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994; Wang, 1999). Even more so, the body is a central to the experience of landscapes and becomes both sensual and symbolic (Featherstone et al., 1991; Wellard, 2009). While the body is used by people as a sensor for feelings, both physically and emotionally, it also displays a personal identity, including many features such as level of fitness, health, class, age, etc. (Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone et al.,

1991; Wellard, 2009). All this foregoes “bodily feelings” needs, which tourists seek for in their experiences. From the data two main concerns of Preikestolen visitors have derived: Visual and Physical perceptions of the experience. First of all, visual aspect of the experience by means of sightseeing at Preikestolen has been perceived highly positive and emotionally charged, described by “incredible”, “amazing”, “spectacular”, “breathtaking”. Preikestolen visitors were mainly interested in the landscape as a part of natural environment: “Norwegian pure nature; raw nature; pure beauty”. According to Post-modernism, these notions show a strong interest of contemporary tourists for the natural “real” experience (via MacCannel). This explains a growing mainstream flow towards natural authentic experience as a preference of post-modern tourists (Uriely, 1997).

Searching for an appropriate empirical material has revealed that papers studied nature-based tourism have never been using a concept “social media” as a motivational drive for both types of tourists in a landscape context. According to recent literature, Internet has fundamentally reshaped the way tourism related information is distributed and the way people plan for and consume travel (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In last 10 years, two “mega trends” have noticeably emerged on the Internet, underscoring changes that can significantly impact the tourism system. First, tourists post and share their personal experiences and opinions with an assist of social media Websites, such as SnapChat, Messenger, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, using blogs, tagging, creating virtual communities and sharing these files via YouTube and Flickr, have gained substantial popularity in online travelers’ use of the Internet (Gretzel, 2006; Pan,

MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007). At the same time, the Internet also mediates tourism experiences as tourists use these social media sites to portray, reconstruct and relive their trips (Pudliner, 2007; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009).

As part of the visual experience at Preikestolen, results have shown photography, namely “something to brag about”, to be an additional important motivation and activity as part of the sightseeing. As shown in the observation results section, a crowd of tourists was observed at the plateau. Further results indicated the additional factor “crowd” that has been mentioned by both types of tourists and considered as one of the most disturbing factor during the trip: being stuck or spending time waiting in line in order to take a photograph can be considered as a “sacrifice”. Taking into account that due to the increasingly growing interest to social media, can be concluded that even if a main motive for visiting Preikestolen is “sightseeing” based on its’ visual appeal, it will be still accompanied by the photography making. Photography at the site facilitated the online sharing of images through social media platforms and resulting the increasing number of visitors. Thus, important to settle the visitation order and decrease negative responses. Because sightseeing of landscapes is not pleasing without a framed visual experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Physical experience

Results have shown hiking has not been experienced positively by the majority of tourists. Chettri et al. (2004) argued people in the contemporary world tend avoid challenges. Those who

visits landscapes for hiking, on the other hand, prefer challenges and diverse climbs, seeking to explore the “real nature” (Chettri et al., 2004). The responses to physical experience have shown the difference in perceptions between experienced and inexperienced tourists. Due to the notion of sightseeing as a main drive for visiting Preikestolen for inexperienced tourists, their positive responses to physical experience were only 64% and 33% negative. Mostly noted positive expressions were “easy”, “not easy, but achievable”; “not really difficult as I expected”; negative relatively are: “nobody told me that it is so difficult”, “tough hike”, “it was not easy”, “my knees are souring”. However, the majority of experienced tourists (57%) surprisingly have not expressed positive reaction either with “isn’t a challenge”, “too easy” accompanied with a notion of “crowd”; and positively 41% with “good hike”, “easy way up”.

Results of this study, however, seem to confirm from the notion of a challenge: the more experienced tourists demand, the more physical involvement to the activity of Preikestolen hiking and, vice versa, inexperienced tourists mainly came for visual experience and simply become “hiking visitors” in the context of Preikestolen. Already mentioned before in the literature theory of “flow”, focusing on the interaction and balance between a body’s capacity, individual’s skills level and a level of challenge when individual engaged in an intrinsically motivated activity (Csikszentmihaiyi, 1997). Most inexperienced tourists had the expectations the hike to be shorter and easier than the actual hike is. In case of Preikestolen hiking is just a “consequence” of going up to the viewpoint and perceived as goal-oriented.

Self-making

Various social and self regulations based on everyday life causes a boredom and dissatisfaction of personal “Self”. Tourists participate in different activities to achieve non ordinary emotions, which are impossible to experience in a daily life. “The participation of serious tourists reflected a clear desire for transformation of everyday self to another more desired one” (Kim and Jamal, 2007, p.190). This alternative (or desired) self was constructed through a combination of hiking activity and visual sightseeing. As derived from question “*There are many things make people saying that they had an “extraordinary” experience. What were these things for you in this trip? Why?*”, Preikestolen landscape have been expressed by inexperienced tourists as unique and new experience (“was my first hiking, never done it before”, “great experience, new for me”), feeling of belonging to the nature (“to admire this pure nature”), experiencing thrill (“i sat on the edge, that was so scary!”), relaxation, excitement (“sitting on the edge was so exciting”), being among others, connected with strongly positive adjectives, such as unbelievable, great, majestic, etc.; very few could not specified.

Slightly different reaction to Preikestolen has been observed among experienced tourists and expressed with “quite ok”, “nice”, “good”, “nice, but not extraordinary”, “amazing view, but boring hike”, etc. Many of the responses were characterized as neutral or negative. Visitors highlighted that trip for them “was good, because of the view but usual”; negative emotions have been expressed including “disappointed because of the crowd, lines and nature disturbance”. Results indicate that mainly experienced tourists were concerned about these consequences of a

mass tourism at the site. Furthermore, a number of tourists experienced negative emotions by interacting with other tourists. According to Cohen (1979) the degree of authenticity increases when tourists are aware of modernity trends, that bring equity and customized experience, and alienate from them. Individuals that are more aware of the quality and authenticity degree of their experience, judge a tourist product stricter, applying certain “check points” or “conditions”, than those who are less aware and concerned.

Going back to the research question 2: “How does a prior experience influence tourists’ perceptions of Preikestolen?”, it can be explained by notion of different interests and “backgrounds”, cause to various interpretations of one tourist product (Ooi, 2005). Typical *hard-core/dedicated* tourist is characterised by searching a gain of personal experience, expecting a deep engagement with nature, more physical activities and, especially, challenges (Lindberg, 1991) . “Soft” or *mainstream/causal* ecotourist, on the other hand, “typically interacts with nature in a shallow way, seeks comfort, expects services, puts emphasis on interpretation rather than physical challenges” (Reichel, Uriely and Shani, 2008, p.25).

Furthermore, these different experiences affect their interactions, interpretations of attractions at the particular moment dependent on their mood and personal feelings, even if they are doing the same thing in the same place. Even if all tourists say that they enjoyed themselves during an experience, it does not necessarily mean that they all had the same existing and memorable experiences (Ooi, 2005). In general, all these expressions about Preikestolen experience point out the need of modern tourist to be emotionally engage into an activity. If the activity does not arise

any “specific, non ordinary feelings”, it causes boredom and inauthenticity. People that possesses previous inauthentic travel experience will consume tourism products labeled as “authentic” much easier (Cohen 1979).

Inter-Personal Perceptions: touristic communitas

In the Wang’s notion Inter-Personal authentic experience related to a creating social connection on a trip, gaining the need of interacting. Family tourism is a typical example of experiencing inter-personal authenticity, where each individual experiences their true selves within a “togetherness”. According to Turner (1974), when tourists “make their journey they are looking for the center that is endowed with most sacred values and charged with high emotions” (p.47). People tend to enter and form communitas that characterized by liminality, any conditions that differ from everyday life, where any inter-personal relationships occur without ordinary social boundaries and rules based on their common journey purpose or humanity (Bui, Wilkins, and Lee, 2014). While observing tourist in the natural settings (on the site), the main pattern has been revealed. Majority of visitors came with at least on companion (friend, family member, colleague) or made a temporary (liminal) relationships on the trip. With other words, observation has disclosed that visitors, both experienced and inexperienced seek for interaction or “being with Others”, at the same time emotions while they interact are gained by satisfaction of this need. Different tourists were asked “*How does socializing make you feel?*” and responses have shown the great pleasure of being with someone and sharing the experience. While interacting

tourists were mostly expressing pleasure: laughing, relaxing, taking pictures, talking, and etc. Several tourists met on the trip, mentioned that “It’s nice to be with a company”.

Bruner (1995) observes inter-personal authenticity or friendship of a tour group as one of the most important things about the entire touristic experience (p.230). He explains tourism as an intensive and concentrated time of sociality and emotional experience, bringing not only visual or physical experience, but also pleasure in seeing these sights “*in the context of the tour group*” (Bruner 1995) or “*in the company of others*” (Urry 1990). In other words, Wang (2002) points out that perceived authentic experience depends not only by seeing things but also sharing the pleasure and communicating with other tourists, seeing the same together (p.365). Altogether, this prove that no matter how skilled are tourists during the Preikestolen trip, they do need social interactions as a part of Self-identity process.

Post-event evaluation

By defining expectations as desires or wants of consumers regarding a service, namely, what they *should be* offered rather than *would be* offered by tourist product. These expectations may not be met, may be exceeded, or may be matched, their confirmation or disconfirmation led to an overall satisfaction. As it reflected from responses main disconfirmation of inexperienced tourists was long hiking activity: “wasn’t expect that it will be so tough”, “hiking was much longer”, “was expecting a shorter hike”, etc., and for inexperienced tourists is slow hiking and crowd: “was expected less people”, “the hike was slow, had to stop few times”, “the view is

amazing, but too crowded up there”, etc. It can be concluded that less experienced visitors were informationally unprepared about the hike or it can be caused by the lack of physical expertise and knowledge of nature-based activities requirements. With experienced tourists is vice versa - they expect physical engagement into hiking activity. Recently derived construct “crowd” mostly mentioned by more skilled tourists, caused a frustration and inauthenticity of experience. The disconfirmation of expectations is the most immediate influence on satisfaction (Oliver 1993).

Following that the Hypothesis 2: “Different motivations will differently influence tourist perceptions towards existential authenticity of Preikestolen” can be confirmed based on the main results, which indicated that inexperienced tourists mostly due to the lack of experience and knowledge concerned about the “visual appeal (main motivation), “social media content” and novelty of the experience”, they expect easy activities, no obstacles and “shallow” nature, they do not motivate by involving into a harsh physical activities or real danger. Experienced tourists, possessing a better expertise, seek for a gaining of their experience and challenges. Dissatisfaction of needs, expectations and motivations leads to inauthenticity of experience.

Overall satisfaction with Preikestolen experience

The answer for the following research question 3: “How different tourists perceive the authenticity of Preikestolen hiking experience?”, can be defined from responses regarding visitation to the site Preikestolen. In general terms experience was ranked by a majority of inexperienced tourists as a “great hike that worth to visit”, “unique experience” and, “one of the best experiences in my life”. From this angle tourists perceive Preikestolen as a must-see

attraction. The overall satisfaction was rated much higher by inexperienced tourists with an average nine as rated on a one to ten scale. Among experienced tourists the highest mark 9 was ranked only by two visitors, mostly of them ranked Preikestolen with 7 and 8 relatively. As a sightseeing was coupled to a challenging for inexperienced tourists and frustrating for experienced tourists hike, the visual experience, however, was positively rated enough to develop an authenticity of experience, but more for inexperienced tourists than experienced, caused by mentioned before process of acceptance operates without assimilation resistance (Eckblad's schema theory).

AR index in case of Preikestolen much lower among experienced tourists and causes a boredom and frustration; mostly noted emotions among experienced tourists were "usual, ok, quite good, annoying crowd, etc.". Likewise, among inexperienced tourists this index is very high. The experience has been characterized by expressions such as "exciting, amazing, wonderful, scary, breathtaking". According to the Eckblad's scheme theory, the quality of an affective experience is partly determined by the amount of AR produced in the situation" (Vitterse, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland, 2000, p.436). These results have confirmed the following *Hypothesis 3*: Tourists perceptions of authenticity will significantly affect tourists satisfaction after visiting Preikestolen.

Conclusion

It can be assumed that nature-based attractions can satisfy all needs of different types of tourists only by a scenic visual appeal, that will diminish the struggles with a hiking. In this case, Preikestolen visitors experienced different feelings, according to their capabilities and expertise. One tourist can enjoy the 8-kilometer hiking through rocks and steep climbs, but others might perceive this “enjoyable” trip for the purpose of visual experience, as a factor that causes frustration.

Results of this study have shown that main aspect of authenticity experience by both types of tourists is a visual appeal, however, their perceptions divided into different groups. For majority of inexperienced tourists the hiking by itself brings negative emotions, moreover their prior knowledge does not allow them to shape appropriate expectations towards physical engagement. Mostly their interactions with a Preikestolen landscape have been observed as a shallow and goal-oriented (the view), focusing mostly on visual consumption (admiring the view, pictures, videos). “Ideal” authentic experience for visitors without a prior experience is without harsh challenges, even if they willing to “try something new”. Therefore, too much efforts for achieving the goal of a trip can lead to frustration and disappointment.

On the other hand, experienced tourists, likewise, highly rated a visual experience, but another crucial aspect of their perceptions related to the authentic experience is the need to gain their skills. Results have demonstrated, that visitors with higher expertise level expect a deeper immerse and interaction with a nature, not with a mass flow. Crowd that is one of the main

characteristic of the mass attractions, causes irritation, frustration, boredom and other negative emotions. Their needs to use or even increase capabilities, to release bodily feelings, in order to achieve authentic emotions, are not completely satisfied by a mass destination. The Overall Satisfaction ranking has shown that both of types perceive Preikestolen as a “worth to visit” destination, however the level of satisfaction is different. The more tourists experienced - the less they felt making their Self-Identities unlike inexperienced tourists. These results also demonstrate that when conceptualizing nature-based tourist, scholars should treat motivation and activity dimensions separately. For instance, tourists of Preikestolen become “hikers” not because of their personal motivation, but because of the circumstances. The achievement of making the entire trip physically easier to complete the Preikestolen hike by developing extra paths or round trips, might have contribute to the perceived positive experience as a part of hiking experience for both types of tourists.

Managerial Implications

Managers may consider these findings when promoting a certain destination. Knowing basic motivational drives, such as “escape of everyday life,” “enjoy the excitement of sightseeing,” or “try something new and challenging”, that related to different types of nature-based tourists can help to meet all the personal needs, based on their perceptions. Nowadays, tourists seek for an authentic experience and want the participate into something “exciting and thrilling”, making them feel that they gain extraordinary emotions that are not easily met in an everyday life. An approach of this nature would place the product in the minds of potential visitors based on their

particular needs and motivations. Thereby, managers can use indemnity forms before their clients go hiking, sightseeing, or joining some adventurous trips. The information will help to reveal their current experience and will allow managers to prepare them mentally and physically for an experience that they might not expecting at some extent.

There is the need to talk about a proper gear, specialities of the landscapes, considering visitors capabilities. This will help to decrease negative experience of forthcoming events and will meet their “authentic Self”. A business cannot give an experience to the consumer; it can only create the appropriate circumstances and the environment in which the consumer can have an experience (Mossberg, 2007, p.60). For instance, decreasing the time limit of the hiking activity for inexperienced tourists by providing additional ways of movements will increase the overall satisfaction and amount of repeat-tourists.

Limitations of this study

In this study the same, as other studies there were some lacks and lags. The major limitation is that the data collection procedure took part in the beginning of the season, moreover there were several days with bad weather conditions, so the researchers had to postpone the sampling. Next one is that due to the international character of the Preikestolen destination, there were many visitors that did not speak English, so a team of the researchers, speaking various languages, would improve the representativeness of the sample. In addition, there was a hard work to collect

all the responses alone, and also, the observation on site was ran only twice due to the lack of time and capability to encompass all the spots on the way.

There was a lack of time for creating a questionnaire. It would be more reliable to measure prior travel experience with testing, ranking or construct with various items. Another limitation is that sometimes was hard to interpret people's' emotions such as "OK", "so so", and so on, They were rated as neutral.

Future possible research area

Future possible research can be focused on other dimensions (backgrounds) of personality, influence visitors' perceptions, such as gender, nationality, level of fitness. In that way the pattern of tourist behaviour will be much more purer for aiding tourism industry meet all the expectations. There is also a better possibility to understand nature of the relationship between all the backgrounds and subjective perceptions is to ran a quantitative analysis with a large sample.

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List of Tables

Table 1. Most frequent noted descriptions of experience

Table 2. Most frequent noted descriptions of motivations as a visual appeal

Table 3. Most frequent noted descriptions of motivations as a must see

Table 4. Most frequently noted expressions regarding visual experience

Table 5. Most frequently noted positive expressions regarding physical experience

Table 6. Most frequently noted positive expressions regarding physical experience

Table 7. Most frequently noted descriptions (inexperienced tourists)

Table 8. Most frequently noted descriptions (experienced tourists)

Table 9. Most frequently noted expressions regarding interaction on the site

Table 10. Most frequently noted positive and negative expressions regarding (inexperienced tourists)

Table 11. Most frequently noted positive and negative expressions regarding (inexperienced tourists)

List of Figures

Figure 1. Affective Responses as a Function of Assimilation Resistance

Figure 2. General research model for empirical exploration of the tourist experience based on the literature review

Figure 3. The hiking track and distance to the viewpoint plateau, Preikestolen

Figure 4. Location of Preikestolen, Norway

Figure 5. The data collection point (parking place) at the study site Preikestolen, Norway

Figure 6. Main motivation for visiting Preikestolen (inexperienced and experienced)

Figure 7. Visual experience of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Figure 8. Physical experience of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Figure 9. “Flow-experience” of Preikestolen (experienced and inexperienced tourists)

Figure 10. Tourists at the viewpoint. One of the spots for observation

Figure 11. Main path to the Preikestolen viewpoint. One of the spots for observation

Figure 12. Tourists on the way up to Preikestolen. One of the spots for observation.

Figure 13. Overall satisfaction with Preikestolen experience by inexperienced and experienced tourists

Appendix

In-Person Questionnaire

Description

Gender:

Age:

Country of residence:

Education:

Occupation:

Travel type:

Transport type:

Travel companion(s):

Prior travel experience

- Do you feel yourself experience or inexperienced in relation to Preikestolen hiking? Why?

Authenticity perceptions

- What are the main motives that brought you to Preikestolen?

- There are many things make people saying that they had an “extraordinary” experience.

What were these things for you in this trip? Why?

- How have you visually experienced the landscape?

- How have you physically experienced the landscape?

Post-event evaluation

- Was the experience as you expected it to be?

- All in all, how do you feel about hiking at Preikestolen?