INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL TRIPS:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Margie Campbell-Price

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ABSTRACT

For many decades school groups have actively engaged in experiences outside the classroom. More recently, school-led tourism has expanded to include international school trips especially undertaken by schools in developed, (Western), neoliberal nations. Whilst these trips traditionally focused on foreign language and cultural learning they have diversified to include a wide range of curriculum-related subjects and extra-curricular activities. However, the growth in participation in these trips has not been matched by academic attention or analysis. This thesis addresses the dearth of research by exploring the justifications, motivations and experiences behind international school trips and how learning is perceived and positioned within these trips. The inclusion of the active voice of multiple stakeholders (i.e., young people, their parents and school leaders) is a new way of appraising international school trip experiences. This qualitative study involved twenty-three focus group interviews (six with parents, nine with young people and eight with school leaders), carried out in six New Zealand secondary schools that had groups either preparing for or recently returned from an international trip. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and three global themes relating to the aim of the thesis were identified.

The findings corroborate the existing literature that learning is an integral part of international field trips and illustrate a detailed understanding of the nature of learning within these experiences. All three stakeholder groups used learning, at least in part, to justify taking part in these experiences. The thesis goes beyond the current literature by suggesting that it is through the formal and informal structures, along with the relationships that evolve in the social spaces of these trips that young people are empowered to personalise their learning. Although each stakeholder group referred to the prescribed learning that was expected through an international school trip, the learning that was gained was attributed to the ‘sum of the parts’ of the whole experience. The findings have enhanced understandings of what rewarding international school trip experiences look like.

This thesis concludes by highlighting three main points. Firstly, there are similarities between the motivations for school-led trips and the wider tourism phenomenon. Secondly, it is extremely important to capture a multiple stakeholder perspective when undertaking research that involves the active engagement of young people, their parents and school leaders with an
international school trip. This thesis has shown that there is considerable overlap of perspectives between stakeholders even though they might express it differently. Finally, the thesis suggests that the longer term impacts of the formal and informal learning experienced on these types of trips has been overlooked and needs further attention.
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CHAPTER 1.  INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introducing the research and chapter

In my profession as a lecturer in teacher education I have a tacit knowledge of the contemporary context of schooling and the intent of the New Zealand national curriculum. The national curriculum emphasises the implementation of inclusive school-designed curriculum rather than one that leads to the exclusion of particular groups of students, whether exclusion is based on dis/ability, economic or sociocultural factors (Ministry of Education, 2007a). My role means that I advocate for the enrichment of classroom learning through the inclusion of experiences outside the classroom. However, in doing so I often urge my ‘trainee teacher’ students to ‘look locally’ at the immense resources in any local community as a means to enable frequent experiences that foster a sense of familiarity and connectedness.

As well as encouragement for locally based experiences outside the classroom within New Zealand (Irwin, Straker & Hill, 2012: Ministry of Education, 2009), an increasing number of schools are ‘heading overseas’ on international trips. Whilst domestic trips have, and arguably still do dominate the school-led tourism landscape, the apparent move to offer more international trips stimulated my curiosity about why this was happening, what the perceived benefits might be and to whom. Given the significant costs involved in any international travel from New Zealand, engagement and participation in an international school trip is optional and thus undertaken voluntarily - for the school leaders approving a trip, the teachers and students participating, and the parents in giving consent for their children to participate.

One trip in particular intrigued me. A teaching colleague had organised and led a three-week trip for the school hockey team to the United Kingdom (UK) during the New Zealand summer holidays (December/January). At the time the hockey team was the highest performing school team in their region and competed in the premier national schools tournament. Australia was dominating international hockey during this period, and it would have seemed logical to tour there - if the trip was about improving the performance of the hockey squad. Upon the return from the UK, the team continued to succeed at a regional level, but its performance at a national level did not match previous levels and they were subsequently relegated from the top national tournament. Despite the relegation, the trip to the UK was reported by the trip leader, parents and young people to have been a raging success for all involved. It seemed that the trip was less about the hockey and more about the sum of its parts. Its value came from the long lead-in time of fundraising and preparation, the collective identity amongst the
travelling group and as members of a school community, the social experience of travelling together, and sharing new and iconic experiences.

Reportage of these trips in the local Dunedin and New Zealand media conveyed trips as “a real eye-opener” (Lewis, 2012: 24), hugely successful in “stimulating interest in a subject” (Stevens, 2008: 30), and the departure on a Shakespeare-focused trip to the United Kingdom a reward for having “worked tirelessly for months, fundraising more than $20,000 towards their trip” (Lewis, 2013: 2). Some even made ‘grand claims’ about the impact of these experiences with one student reporting on a sports trip to China “they left as boys and returned as men” (Cameron, 2008: 7). Overwhelmingly, these trips were reported positively and uncritically, alluding to how influential they were in expanding young peoples’ horizons, shifting their attitudes and perceptions, and strengthening a collective sense of school identity amongst those who travelled away together.

However, for all the positive stories reported, there have also been reports of the underlying tensions about the high cost of participation. Although some commentators acknowledged the inherent learning and “wonderful experiences” for those who participate (Young & Carville, 2014b: 1), skepticism has been evident about the extent to which these trips were clever marketing ploys by schools (van Beynen, 2013; Young & Carville, 2013b). Parents and their children have actively discussed the cost versus benefit of participation in these trips, along with negotiation between parents, their children and school leaders about how these costs would be met (Ibbotson, 2014; van Kempen, 2012; Woods, 2004; Young & Carville, 2013b). Parents have also alluded to the pester power (Carr, 2011) exerted by their children who asserted their desires for a peer-related tourism experience that was distinct from one with their parents (Carr, 2006; Decrop, 2005; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004).

The somewhat uncritical nature of the emerging discourse in school staffrooms, amongst parents and young people, and in the media, along with the lack of academic analysis about these trips are the impetus for this study. Moreover, as an educator it became apparent to me that these international trips relate more to tourism than educators think they do. Scholars in tourism and education have come from differing perspectives in the ways they have conceptualised and researched school-led tourism (or schools tourism) and educational experiences outside the classroom respectively, despite the seemingly obvious relationship between them. Throughout this thesis, and through answering the research aim and objective
outlined below, I will illuminate how the differing perspectives of tourism and education literature can be interwoven.

1.2 Research aim and objective

Within a wider conceptualisation of school-led tourism (see Section 1.4), this thesis focuses on international school trips.

The aim of this research is to explore the justifications, motivations and experiences of stakeholders (young people, their parents and school leaders) associated with an international school trip. Justifications refer to the broader context in which stakeholders choose to engage with an international school trip. Motivations are framed to mean the participants’ stated reasons for engaging with these trips. Experiences refer to the actual involvement, feelings, practices and understandings of stakeholders over the time in which they are engaging with an international school trip.

The following objective is contained within the overall aim:
- How is learning perceived and positioned within the international school trip experience?

This research explores the stakeholder groups involved in these trips – the young people, their parents and the school leaders. Given the school-led nature of these experiences, the multiple stakeholder perspectives enables an insight into the extent to which the experiences are educational and how the learning value is perceived.

This chapter now goes on to explain why a multi-stakeholder perspective was undertaken before going on to conceptualise school-led tourism. It then discusses the New Zealand context in order to situate the research and concludes with a brief overview of the rest of the thesis.

1.3 Why seek the voice of multiple stakeholders?

International school trips require the ‘buy in’ and active participation of each stakeholder group associated with the experience (i.e., the young people, their parent/s, and school
leaders). The research positions each stakeholder as an active participant in constructing his/her knowledge and views about his/her justifications, motivations and experiences. Furthermore, it acknowledges the dynamic and changing relationships between young people and their parents, students and their teachers/school leaders, parents and their child’s teachers/school leaders, as well as the relationships between young people and their peers, teaching colleagues, and amongst parents. Therefore examining each stakeholder group allows for an understanding of their inter-relationships and how agency between them is exercised (Carr, 2011) in relation to these international school trip experiences.

Those who participate in an international school trip do so as a group and yet Schanzel, Yeoman and Backer (2012b: 6) argue that most research about tourism experiences gives attention to the “representations of the self (tourist) and the other (host)” and thus overlooks the group nature in which many of these experiences are undertaken. The limitations of “grafting theories about individual tourist behaviour onto group contexts” (Schanzel et al., 2012b: 6) applies to international school trips as it overlooks the sociality, dynamics, influence and power relationships between and amongst both travelling and non-travelling group members. This further justifies an examination of the perspectives of multiple stakeholders to gain insights into how sociality, relationships and group composition influence the overall experience (Larsen, 2008), including learning. Moreover, it addresses Carr’s (2011: 172) argument that assessing “the multiple and potentially conflicting views of all stakeholders” can advance understandings of school-led tourism in general.

Each stakeholder group has active agency in relation to these trips. Agency is interpreted as being “capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree” (Sewell, 1992: 20). Hence, agency is relational. As people come together to form social relations, these inter-relationships take on patterns of behaviour that have a collective rather than individual significance (Bakewell, 2010). In this research, agency takes place within individual relationships such as between young people and their parents. Agency also exists within and between social or structured groups such as amongst teachers, parents or young peoples’ peer groups.

Although individuals and groups have agency it does not mean that they have equal power or influence. For instance, children and young people use their agency to influence their parents through their interpersonal and negotiation skills to advocate, pester, and bargain (Hill &
Tisdall, 1997), although they may have little possession of power. Young people can also wield their influence by resisting to engage with these experiences, particularly if their parents and teachers are encouraging them to do so (Bush, 2006; Willis, 1977). Within parent-child relationships, the power generally sits with the parents, who hold and use their authority to protect and provide (Lewis, 2006b). Jenks (2005) and Carr (2011) pointed out that parents control access to money and children and young people have limited access to it. In the context of an international school trip, the parents have the legal responsibility to give their consent for their child’s participation. In doing so, they might also exercise their power to use the trip as a bargaining tool to establish the behaviours and attitudes they expect from their child in order to give their support and consent, and to establish expectations for how the costs of the trip will be met.

The formal status held by school leaders enables them to influence colleagues, parents and young people through the use of their personal and professional qualities to influence them to engage with school-led tourism experiences. For instance, if they are perceived positively, they can be seen as confident in their ability to communicate, be empathetic, be decisive and firm, organise, lead others, facilitate learning and negotiate (Bushner, 2006; Parsons, 1986). Moreover, their institutional status gives them the authority to make decisions, manage resources, control the teaching and learning processes, and time during these experiences (Bush, 2006). It is also worth remembering that within the context of a school, social relationships are more often than not organised and framed by legal responsibilities and hierarchies.

There is a growing body of research that frames (children and) young people as social actors and experts in understanding their worlds whose views can and ought to be taken seriously (e.g., Alderson, 2008; Carr, 2011; Christensen & James, 2008; James & Prout, 1997; Mahon, Glendinning, Clarke & Craig, 1996; Nairn, Munro & Smith, 2005; O’Kane, 2008; Scott, 2008; Taylor and Smith, 2009a). As Pulfall and Unsworth (2004: 9) suggest:

As social beings, children are inherently agentive, and they voice their views in order to be heard, to persuade, to move others to action. As children act and ask to be heard, they are both building and experiencing their social reality and constructing their identity in the process. Neither their social reality nor their identity are elements in isolation from their social world. They are both parts of a mutual and ongoing construction.

This shift towards researching with young people seeks to engage them directly, and contrasts earlier approaches where they were treated as passive subjects where their perspectives were
interpreted as second hand data through either parents’ or teachers’ views (Alderson, 2008; Barker & Weller, 2003; David, Edwards & Alldred, 2001; O’Kane, 2008; Wyness, 2006). Similarly, Mahon et al. (1996) argue that it cannot be assumed that adult proxies such as parents or teachers are able to give valid accounts of the views of children and young people. Therefore, including the young people’s voices in this research has allowed the findings to highlight the inclusive dialogue between the stakeholders.

Researching with parents similarly enables a first hand account of their justifications, motivations and experiences, insights that are currently lacking in academic literature. In doing so it shifts the emphasis from the representation of teachers and school leaders speaking on behalf of their communities as the expert voice in relation to school-based/led experiences (Carr, 2011; Larsen and Jenssen, 2004; Zink, 2004). Whilst the school leaders’ voice is equally important to represent, the exclusion of parents’ voices in most school tourism research similarly allows for only a ‘second hand’ picture to emerge of the importance of these experiences. Thus bringing together the voices of the three different stakeholder groups allows for more in-depth understandings to develop about each group’s justifications, motivations and experiences with these trips. It also illustrates the overlapping nature and understandings that exist between and within stakeholder groups and highlights that there is a broader need to gather multiple stakeholder viewpoints in research such as this.

1.4 Conceptualising school-led tourism

For many decades, school groups have actively engaged in experiences outside the classroom and they constitute a legitimate segment of the tourism market (Boyes, 2012; Carr, 2011; Cooper, 1999; Haddock, 2007a, 2007b; Lynch, 2006; Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003, 2008). However, they have tended to be poorly recognised, researched and understood. Several authors (Carr, 2011; Cooper, 1999; Ritchie, 2003; Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003, 2008) have attributed this lack of recognition by the tourism industry to a poor understanding of this market’s characteristics, its scope, significance and value, and the factors that both constrain and enable its activity.

The education-led discourse and research on school-led tourism has focused on the justifications for, experiences of and issues associated with these experiences. In particular, the educational benefits of school trips have dominated the educational discourse. These have
reflected the function of schools to design and provide structured experiences that enable student learning and achievement (e.g., Boyes, 2012; Campbell-Price, 2012; Cosgriff, 2008; Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2006; Lynch, 2000, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Rivers, 2006; Zink & Burrows, 2008). Consequently, there is a lack of recognition by school and educational leaders that school groups are also active participants in a tourism experience.

As such, while these experiences utilise the tourism infrastructure (Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003; 2007), tourism is not explicitly used in the language of school leaders or education researchers (e.g., Ballantyne & Packer, 2002, 2005; Boyes, 2012; Campbell-Price, 2012; Cosgriff, 2008; Department for Education and Skills, 2006; Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Lynch, 2000, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Rivers, 2006; Zink & Burrows, 2008). Instead, these experiences have been labeled by terms such as ‘education outside the classroom’ in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009), ‘learning outside the classroom’ in the United Kingdom (Office for Standards in Education [OFSED], 2004, 2008a), ‘out-of-school’ or ‘informal learning’ (e.g., Carr, 2011; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Tofield, Coll, Vyle & Bolstad, 2003); ‘field trips’ (e.g., Falk & Dierking, 1997; Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2008; Jakubowski, 2003; Nairn, 1999), or ‘school trips’ (e.g., Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004).

In this thesis, school-led tourism is defined as travel experiences outside of the school that are approved, organised and facilitated by adult members of the school community who have delegated responsibilities for these functions. These adult members of a school community may be parents or employees who act as representatives on its governing board, teachers, members of its senior leadership group, or people in designated leadership roles such as sports or cultural co-ordinators, or coaches. This definition is a variation of Carr’s (2011: 95) definition for school-based tourism experiences, which consists of “travel experiences outside the classroom designed and organised by the school.” The main point of difference in these definitions is that school-led tourism experiences take place outside of the school, not just the classroom. An earlier related definition by Ritchie et al. (2003: 130) was similarly inclusive of all school-related experiences that are organised by schools. Their definition for schools’ educational tourism incorporated “all school/field trips organised by primary and secondary schools for children between 5 and 18 years of age, as well as language schools, where people travel abroad to a school to learn a foreign language.”
Ritchie et al’s. (2003) definition captures the wide range of experiences facilitated by schools that are similarly encompassed by the definitions given by Carr (2011) and used in this thesis. However, in giving a nod to potential international school trips, it tends to suggest that these trips are only those with a foreign language learning focus. International school trips are becoming increasingly diverse and so any definitions of school-led tourism need to be sufficiently broad to capture this diversity.

In the following discussion of school-led tourism experiences, a closer analysis will be made of what is perceived to be curriculum-based experiences with those considered extra to the curriculum. Given the diverse range of these experiences offered by schools there are several ways in which these have been categorised by educational authorities and scholars.

Ritchie et al. (2003, 2008) and Carr (2011) broadly categorised school-led tourism experiences into trips that are curriculum-based or extra-curricular based excursions or trips. Curriculum-based are directly related to lessons taught in the classroom in subject areas and are an integral part or an extension of the formal learning experience (Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008). Given the explicit connection to classroom learning (and particularly in senior schools to assessment), these experiences might also be considered to be compulsory for students. These experiences are undertaken in contexts that allow learning to ‘come alive’ and engage individuals actively in experiences that allow concepts and theories learned in class to be applied in other contexts (Carr, 2011; Lai 1999; Ministry of Education, 2009; Nairn, 2005). With their strong links to classroom learning these curriculum-based experiences are focused around cognitive learning, although they may also incorporate generalist skills (Carr, 2011).

In contrast, extra-curricular excursions incorporate those activities that are based on the personal interests of individuals and are not necessarily linked directly to classroom-based curriculum (Carr, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008). These include but are not limited to sport, culture or arts related trips (Carr, 2011, Ministry of Education, 2009). Participation in these school-based activities and excursions is mostly optional.

So far, school-led tourism has been conceptualised and categorised into experiences that are curriculum-based and extra-curricular, and compulsory and non-compulsory. Any of these school-led tourism experiences could be undertaken in domestic or international contexts, although factors such as cost and time influence the extent to which any school-led tourism experience can be deemed to be compulsory. Further differentiation of these experiences can
be made according to temporal and spatial dimensions, and these dimensions can influence the nature of learning through these experiences. For example, school-led experiences involve short duration excursions, overnight and multi-night trips, and in the case of international trips can extend to multiple weeks (Ritchie, 2003). They may take place in familiar or unfamiliar urban or rural places, places that are nearby or far away from the school, and in environments that may require different skills to move around successfully, especially in unfamiliar or different environments. For example, young people may need to apply their mobility skills to navigate in highly populated urban areas, through bush or down rivers, each of which may be familiar or unfamiliar to particular groups. Trips that are of longer duration can allow for powerful and deep learning, in particular they are perceived to allow for life skills development and the strengthening of relationships between school leaders and young people participants (Ministry of Education, 2009).

International school trips are yet another category and their focus might encompass curriculum-based subjects or extra-curricular activities. Given the cost and time commitments often involved in an international trip, especially from geographically isolated places such as New Zealand, issues of choice and consent come into play (although it is important to note that choice and consent apply to all school-led tourism experiences, not just international trips). It is therefore worth adding that individuals may feel or exert pressure to participate or support the participation of others (van Beynen, 2013; Young & Carville, 2013b), particularly when they are linked to curriculum-based subjects. International school trips are situated within the wider conceptualisation of school-led tourism as defined above. In this thesis an international school trip is defined as any trip to an international destination or destinations, comprising students and at least one member of the teaching staff, travelling as a group and identifiable to the school to which they belong.

Having conceptualised and categorised school-led tourism attention now turns to conceptualising the position and nature of learning within these experiences.

1.4.1 Learning within school-led tourism
Ritchie (2003) positioned school-led tourism within a broader conceptualisation of educational tourism that recognised spatial, temporal and motivational elements. In this conceptualisation, learning was an important motivation for educational tourists although Ritchie (2003) pointed out that the extent to which this was a priority differentiated ‘tourism
first’ from those that are ‘education first’. His conceptualisation took account of the dynamic nature of both tourism and learning and acknowledged that the growth in participation in formal education might lead to more potential segments of educational tourism. Within the contextual framework of a changing external tourism and education environment, he positioned educational tourism as the intersection between education and tourism, before further differentiation into ‘education first’ and ‘tourism first’ motivations. In this model, school-led tourism was positioned as ‘education first’, taken to mean that participants are “primarily motivated by education and learning but may be classified as tourists even if they are not perceived to be tourists or if tourism is not their primary motivation” (Ritchie, 2003: 11). However, this does not give an insight into the nature of the perceived learning, whether it is perceived similarly by participants and how important that learning is for different stakeholder groups, such as young people, their parents, trip leaders, senior school leaders and members of a school’s governing board. Generally, a governing board or school leaders would be highly unlikely to approve a school-led tourism experience that was not underpinned by clearly stated learning reasons (DfES, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009). This supports Ritchie’s (2003) argument that school-led tourism is driven by an ‘education first’ motive.

The espoused learning benefits associated with school-led tourism experiences have been dominated by the adult voices of teachers, educational leaders or researchers (Carr, 2011; Larsen and Jenssen, 2004; Zink, 2004) and they focus on the benefits for the children or young people for whom these experiences are provided. Hence, little is known about the nature of the learning that is anticipated or gained through these experiences, particularly from other stakeholders - the young people and their parents. Rarely have parents and young people been asked about their own motivations and priorities relating to these experiences.

It has already been noted that scholars and practitioners in education and tourism have approached school-led tourism from different perspectives. Although there is some recognition of school-led tourism by the tourism industry and in tourism research (e.g. Carr, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003; 2008), educational and school leaders and researchers do not necessarily consider that they are participating in a tourism experience. However, irrespective of whether educational tourists have learning as their primary or secondary motivation they are considered tourists and have distinct tourism impacts and needs (Bywater, 1993; Cooper, 1999; Ritchie, 2003; Seekings, 1998). Moreover, they utilise tourism infrastructure. Arguably, the engagement of school groups in a plethora of experiences generates demand for specific
services, constructed facilities, entertainment and other infrastructure (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999). The emergence of specialist school tourism focused companies (e.g., World Challenge, Student Horizons, International School Tours; also see Chapter Four, section 4.3), school-focused events (e.g., Rock Quest, Big Sing, Blue Skies tournament), outdoor education centres and educational services at attractions such as museums, zoos and art galleries illustrate the broad engagement of schools in this arena and of engagement of the tourism industry with the education sector.

Groups on an international school trip do more than simply use the tourism infrastructure. They are actively engaging with the tourism space. They often engage in short duration host-guest interactions (Lewis, 2012b; Ministry of Education, 2014) and embed their experiences in the locality as they actively learn about their surroundings (Campbell-Price, 2012; Richards & Wilson, 2006). For example, a forthcoming international school trip to New York and the surrounding area intends to extend:

understanding and engaging in the ideas that underpin the English learning and literature, [to achieve this the] tour programme will include Times Square, Harlem, Ground Zero, the Empire State Building, the White House and Smithsonian museums. (Ibbotson, 2014: 10)

School-led tourism also has motivational similarities to other tourism experiences such as the desire to escape from the routines and obligations of everyday life (Larsen, 2008). In the context of school-led tourism, Lai (1999) reported young people’s desire to escape from the routines of the classroom. Larsen and Jenssen (2004) highlighted the social motives for school trips and this echoed other researchers who recognised the social motive of young people to ‘be with’ their peers and develop a sense of their ‘social self’ in their holiday experiences (e.g., Carr, 2006; Small, 2008; Tucker, 2007).

All tourism experiences arguably include a learning component (Carr, 2011; Ritchie, 2003) and learning is not exclusive to educational or school-led tourism experiences. As Carr (2011: 108) pointed out “tourism does offer a potentially stimulating and free-choice learning environment that may be more akin to the conceptualisation of play.” He raised the question about the extent to which teachers might act to structure learning in a way that resembles the formal school environment in school-led tourism experiences, and in doing so, whether potential learning opportunities through fun and free choice are overlooked. This thesis will therefore consider how learning is perceived and positioned within international school trips.
These discussions therefore illustrate the diverse dimensions inherent in all school-led tourism experiences. Whilst this thesis focuses specifically on international school trips, these trips are set within a broader understanding of school-led tourism where what is learnt, how it is learnt and how this sits within understandings of curriculum are becoming increasingly complex. In order to provide context for the rest of the thesis, the next section outlines New Zealand’s social and educational environment.

1.5 The New Zealand context

This research is situated in Aotearoa New Zealand. This section introduces the context in which New Zealanders live and are educated as young people to better understand the distinctive characteristics that may influence school-led tourism and particularly engagement in international school trips. New Zealand is a small country with a landmass of 268,021 square kilometres, located in the south-western Pacific Ocean. It is of a comparable size to the United Kingdom or the Philippines and has a similar population to Ireland, Singapore and Norway. New Zealand comprises two main islands, the North Island and South Island (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Despite its geographic location far from the global centres of Europe, Asia and the United States of America (USA) it is closely connected to them. For a geographically isolated nation, political scientist Robert Patman (2006: 93) stated that New Zealand is unique because it “has shown a presence on the international stage that is out of proportion for its size.” Although New Zealand is a member of the British Commonwealth it is a Pacific country in location and increasingly in orientation, for business and identity (Freeman & Higgins, 2013).

Its population is small and stable at just four and a half million people (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The population is unevenly distributed, with three-quarters living in the North Island. Of those, one third are concentrated in the largest city, Auckland. Increasingly, the majority (86%) of New Zealanders live in urban areas (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, 2010). A significant number of New Zealanders live abroad, estimated at 600,000, of which 477,000 live in Australia (Freeman and Higgins, 2013. Many of these people are young New Zealanders who, after completing secondary school or tertiary (higher) education, go abroad for their Overseas Experience (OE), a cultural institution and common ‘rite of passage’ across

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1 Aotearoa New Zealand is both the Māori and English name. It is acceptable to use either Aotearoa or New Zealand, or both together.
generations (Bell, 2002; Freeman and Higgins, 2013; Gilkison & Pether, 2009; Wilson, 2014). This highlights the expectations amongst many young New Zealanders to include international travel experiences as an integral aspect of growing up in New Zealand (Nairn, Higgins & Sligo, 2012).

Politically and socially, New Zealand is a bicultural nation. Its two main cultures are Māori (the indigenous people) and European (Pākehā); although its population is increasingly multicultural. The bicultural mandate for New Zealand was set down in the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, signed between Māori and Queen Victoria (Smith, 1998). The Treaty gave the British the right to govern New Zealand and develop British settlement, but with it, guaranteed to ensure Māori full protection of their interests, status and full citizenship rights. However, promises were not always upheld and in recent years successive governments have reached settlements with many New Zealand tribes (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The majority of the population is of European ethnicity (67%), followed by Māori (14.6%), Asian people (9.2%); Pacific peoples from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands (6.9%) and other (12.1%)² (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The demographic for Pacific and Māori residents is younger and faster growing, and they have higher fertility rates than the general populace. Children under the age of 15 years make up a quarter of New Zealand’s total population and this has remained steady over the past five census counts. Children and young people are brought up in a variety of family structures (Freeman & Higgins, 2013).

Similar to many other western/developed countries New Zealand has a democratically elected government and operates within a neo-liberal policy framework (Nairn, Higgins & Sligo, 2012). The Education Act 1877 established national, compulsory, secular, and free primary schooling (Codd & Openshaw, 2005). Currently, schooling is compulsory for children and young people from age 6–16 and ‘free’ until aged 18. However, there are a number of required and associated costs: for books and stationery, activities such as school camps and field trips, uniforms and exam fees. Voluntary donations are also sought from parents; the cost of these and the fundraising efforts needed within school communities is currently gaining attention in the media discourse (e.g., Harvey & Neale, 2012; Jones, 2014). Along with the state (government) schools, there is a well-developed network of private schools where fees are charged. The quality of New Zealand’s school system is high and it scores well on international rankings for educational achievement (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2013;

² People who identified with more than one ethnic group are included in each ethnic population so the percentages add up to more than 100 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).
Morris & Patterson, 2013). However, there are disparities in achievement with large differences between those achieving well and a tail of under-achievement, represented predominantly by young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, and Māori and Pacific Island ethnicity (Adams & Codd, 2005; Wylie, 2012).

Educational reforms, similar to those in Australia and the UK were implemented in the late 1980s and 1990s. These reforms created an education market place that resulted in competition between schools, giving parents choice about which school their children enrolled in (Nairn et al., 2012). A lively discourse currently exists that centres on the impact of school choice on school reputations (Robertson & Dale, 2002), particularly around public perceptions that ‘rich schools equals good schools and poor schools equals bad schools’ (e.g., Adams & Codd, 2005; University of Auckland, 2011; Jones, 2014). Corresponding with this was the increased retention of young people in the senior secondary school, with a need for schools to create programmes for an increasingly diverse cohort that transition into a multitude of further study, employment or other pathways (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008). The reputation of a school has become increasingly important for those parents and children who can choose ‘which school’ to attend. School leaders are increasingly aware of their ‘brand’ and the factors that may positively influence people to enrol in their school (University of Auckland, 2011). Opportunities to participate in experiences such as international school trips can be seen to assist the positive profiling of a school amongst its community (van Beynen, 2013; Young and Carville, 2013b).

Again, as seen in many other countries such as in Australia, England, Scotland and Singapore there has been a revision of the curriculum and qualification systems to align with 21st century discourses (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014; Department of Education, 2014; Education Scotland, 2011; Ministry of Education Singapore, 2014b). In New Zealand there has been relentless revision and redevelopment of both curriculum and qualifications since the 1990s (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; O’Neill & O’Neill, 2008; Wylie, 2012). In the senior school years, the curriculum is dominated by assessment for qualifications. Consequently, the flexibility and spontaneity that the curriculum was designed to allow is perceived by educators to be constrained by tightly structured subjects and timetables, along with a relentless schedule of assessment (Bolstad and Gilbert, 2008; Wylie, 2012).
New Zealand schools have a rich history of field trips, outdoor education and extra-curricular activities which are perceived to increase engagement in school life and contribute to cognitive, personal and social learning (Boyes, 2012; Lewis, 2014; Lynch, 2006). Engagement in a diverse range of school-led tourism is an integral dimension of school experiences for New Zealand children and young people (Haddock, 2007a, 2007b). Traditionally, these experiences have taken place in the domestic context. However, with the emergence of internationalisation across the education sector (Ministry of Education, 2007a), greater attention has come on to opportunities that allow young people to engage in active learning in an international context. This reflects the global emphasis on internationalisation which has permeated education systems as a means to grow globally aware and culturally competent citizens in a mobile society (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008; Sweeney. n.d).

The chapter now concludes with a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.6 Thesis structure

The thesis has been separated into two sections. Section One (Chapters Two, Three and Four) introduces the theoretical context for the thesis, specifically addressing young people and parents (Chapter Two); learning, education and schools (Chapter Three); and school-led tourism (Chapter Four). Chapter Five separates the two sections and outlines the methodological framework and methods used to collect and interpret the data.

Section Two (Chapters Six, Seven and Eight) introduces the empirical chapters. Each chapter discusses and illustrates the themes that emerged from the data, with Chapter Six discussing experiencing difference, Chapter Seven the active learning experiences in an international context and Chapter Eight the relationships and responsibilities.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis by discussing the significance of the findings in relation to the research aim and objective. The chapter also looks ahead to consider potential avenues for further research.
SECTION ONE. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The theoretical considerations for this thesis are largely derived from three main academic areas: young people and parents; learning, education and schools; and tourism. School-led tourism, within which international school trips are positioned, is located at the confluence of these three areas and is the central context for this research. The theoretical elements that are drawn on are depicted in Figure A and they are examined in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

Figure A Theoretical framework

Chapter Two examines current conceptualisations of young people and parents. The social construction of young people of secondary school age as adolescents implies a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. As such, their lives as they are now, along with a brief consideration of their anticipated post-school lives are considered within the context of their own identity development amongst peers and within families. Contemporary social constructions of parents are also examined, as are the parent-child relationships and how these
relationships are managed as children and young people age. The examination of the social constructions and inter-relationships of school-age young people and their parents allows for insight into the factors that might influence their respective motivations and justifications to engage with international school trips.

Chapter Three focuses on learning, education and schools. This chapter sets the scene for understanding how learning is understood within academic and school contexts and the importance of both formalised and informal learning is stressed throughout the chapter. It firstly considers the role that education can play in the socialisation and advancement of young people. This is followed by an examination of the theories and nature of learning, particularly the active learning processes that enhance learning in informal contexts, such as in school-led tourism experiences. The contemporary school context is also discussed to situate the context for school-led tourism experiences, especially the emergence of international school trips.

Chapter Four focuses on the broad context of school-led tourism and begins by introducing the nature, scale and significance of school-led tourism before examining the educational reasons why it exists. It continues the discussion in Chapter Three, to consider the learning-related reasons why people might engage in these experiences and reiterates the disjuncture between education and tourism literature. This chapter highlights the importance of understanding the potentially contrasting motivations and justifications of multiple stakeholders and how this might influence their expectations for and experiences of an international school trip.
CHAPTER 2. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS
2.1 Introducing the chapter

Participation in an international school trip is generally voluntary and takes a significant commitment of time and cost for the groups travelling. In the first instance, school leaders initiate, approve and organise the trip. The participation of young people requires their own active agency to influence, negotiate with, and gain the support and approval of their parents. Secondary school-age young people are conceptualised in contemporary western society as adolescents and this is considered a transitory period between childhood and adulthood (Gullota, Adams & Markstrom, 2000; Hill and Tisdall, 1997). As social actors and active agents in their own lives, young people are constantly negotiating their position during this period. Consequently, the parent-child relationship is a dynamic one, based around negotiations of power, agency, dependency and independency.

As this thesis explores the justifications, motivations and experiences of multiple stakeholders associated with an international school trip, it is important to better understand the factors that may influence young people to participate; and their parents to support and potentially encourage or discourage their child’s participation. Moreover, the cost, temporal and spatial dimensions involved in these experiences positions it beyond the daily parent-child inter-relationships and weekly household budget. Therefore, engagement with these experiences might reveal insights into the ways in which individual agency is used to negotiate participation, and the ways in which the inter-relationships between parents and their children might be influenced by the spatial and temporal dimensions of an international trip.

This chapter examines contemporary western understandings of childhood, a discourse that has been largely conceptualised by adults and in relation to adult competencies, freedoms and responsibilities. In light of the focus on secondary school-age young people in this thesis, particular emphasis is placed on the period of adolescence, a blurry and ambiguous period of transition between childhood and adulthood (Head, 2007). The chapter then goes on to examine contemporary Western conceptualisations of parenthood, and the standardised parenting expectations, behaviours and practices associated with being a ‘good parent’. This leads to a discussion about the parent-child relationship and how individual agency, influence and power are ‘managed.’ The discussion is based on the premise that the interactions and interrelationships between children and their parent/s are shaped by ideals and changes within contemporary society and the social construction of the family. While this thesis is about young people and parents it is important to acknowledge the diversity of families structures
and that the parent-child relationship exists within a family structure, whatever that structure might be (Pryor, 2006).

2.2 Conceptualising children, young people and childhood

The term ‘child’, thus children, utilises the definition adopted by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which includes every human being below the age of 18. Some countries, including New Zealand, also use the term young people to distinguish older children from young or very young children (Nairn & Smith, 2003; Powell, Graham, Taylor, Newell & Fitzgerald, 2011; Taylor & Smith, 2009a). In this thesis the term young people is used to recognise secondary-age children as older children, usually between 13 and 18 years.

In the simplest sense, childhood encompasses the period from birth until the end of adolescence, and is distinct from adult phases of the life cycle. Carr (2011: 4) refers to it as an umbrella term, incorporating “a variety of sub-life stages, such as infancy, toddlerhood, preschool age, school age, adolescence and youth.” While each of these sub-life stages has developmental or legal markers, the boundaries between them are often blurred. Although a definition may be straightforward if based on these markers, it can overlook underlying sociocultural constructs (Prout & James, 1997). Thus, contemporary conceptions of what childhood is like or should be are socially constructed, largely defined in relation to adults and by adults, and have strong western origins (Carr, 2011; Corsaro, 2005; Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Jenks, 2005; Smith & Taylor, 2000; Solberg, 1997; Tapp & Henaghan, 2000; Uprichard, 2008). Moreover, Holloway and Valentine (2000) assert that not only are children conceptualised in relation to adults, their identities are also classed, racialised and gendered.

The past three decades have seen much discussion and debate about the different constructions of children and childhood, with two dominant approaches represented in the literature - one conceptualising the ‘becoming’ child, and the other the ‘being’ child. Traditionally, children have been seen as ‘not yet adult’, or ‘adults in the making’ without the skills and features of the adults they will become; and childhood has been a time associated with ‘innocence’, play, learning, education and a lack of work; and not being constrained by adult obligations (Carr, 2011; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Mayall, 2002; Uprichard, 2008). Childhood therefore, has traditionally enabled children the time and experiences to ‘become’ citizens in the future. It has been, and still is the role of parents, schools and society to protect
and support the child to ‘become’. In contrast, the ‘being’ child is seen as a social actor in his or her own right, who has views about being a child and is actively constructing his or her own ‘childhood’ in increasingly the discourse about childhood (Brannen & O’Brien, 1995; Quortrup, Bardy, Sgritta & Wintersberger, 1994; Uprichard, 2008). Further, Prout and James (1990: 8) urge that:

children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes.

However, the notions of being either a ‘becoming’ or a ‘being’ child are problematic. Smith and Bjøtke (2009) argue that the discourse of children as lacking competence and requiring protection and nurturing, in the process of ‘becoming’ persons rather than persons now has often been used to deny them agency and limit their rights. On the other hand, acknowledging children as different from adults but competent social actors and contributors to their own lives and society now (at home, school, in work and in the community) can be interpreted as denying children their childhood (Taylor and Smith, 2009a) and neglects looking forward to the future experiences of becoming adult (Uprichard, 2008).

Childhood, as with all stages of life, is temporary. Prout and James (1997: 29) argue that the temporality of childhood has received little attention, and contributes to the problematic nature of the ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ discourse about childhood. The explicitly future orientation of the ‘becoming’ child focuses on what the child will be (as a future adult) rather than what the child is, as a young human being with everyday realities of being a child now. The notion of a ‘becoming’ child as ‘not yet competent’ implies that competency is something that is acquired the closer one comes to being an adult, and by implication that it is an adult characteristic that children cannot possess. Alanen and Mayall (2001) challenged this notion of competency and emphasised that competency is context dependent. Therefore, children and adults can be competent and incompetent depending on what they are faced with. Uprichard (2008) suggested that competence is derived from relational observations, whereby an individual reflects on his/her own competency in relation to what others can do. In this context, ‘others’ can be other children or adults.

As a way forward, Uprichard (2008) proposed that children be conceptualised as both ‘being’ and ‘becoming.’ She argued that this approach acknowledges that characteristics such as competency and dependency are associated with both children and adults. This supports Lee’s
(2002) suggestion that children and adults are all in the process of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ with one another, gives a more conceptually realistic representation of adults and children, and reduces some of the distinctions that make children different to adults. Taylor and Smith (2009a) also argue that it is not contradictory that children can exercise agency while continuing to depend on nurturance, support or regulation from adults. There are however social constructions or categories such as age that may create ‘thresholds’ between what constitutes a ‘child’ from an ‘adult’. Similarly, the social constructions of time and temporality within the human life course acknowledge that childhood is followed by adulthood. Adolescence, widely referred to in the literature as a broad transitional period, beginning during childhood, and marking the transition between childhood and adulthood will be addressed in the following section.

2.3 Young people and the conceptualisation of adolescence

Conceptualising adolescence is arguably more challenging than conceptualising childhood. The start of adolescence can be marked biologically by the onset of puberty, however the end of adolescence is much less clear, although it is commonly considered to be the point at which one ‘becomes’ an adult (Carr, 2011; Gluckman, 2011; Gullotta et al., 2000; Hill and Tisdall, 1997). In Western societies it is now a complex and prolonged period in the human life course, with its length influenced by the declining age of puberty and a rising age at which young people are fully accepted as adults in western societies (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002; Gluckman, Low & Franko, 2011; Gullota et al., 2000). Its complexity is due to a broader set of considerations and components including socio-cultural, behavioural, neurobiological, legal and chronological, which Carr (2006) also noted may be spatially and temporally specific.

Biological substrates indicate the start of puberty, whereby hormonal changes lead to physical and psychological changes allowing for reproductive competence. This phase typically starts between 7 and 12 years of age for girls and between 8 and 13 years for boys, with the process usually occurring over a 3 to 5 year period (Gluckman et al., 2011). During this time, an increase in sex hormones contributes to changes in physical features and brain functions and an increase in psychosexual thoughts, which, in turn, are reflected in the interests and behavior of the young person transitioning puberty. As such, Gluckman et al. (2011: 21) argued that there:
is a presumed relationship between this psychosexual maturation and the changed way in which young people socialise and interact with their peers, and start engaging in attention seeking behaviours in relation to these peers.

Some aspects of (non-sex hormone) brain function maturation (such as impulse control, judgment, evaluation of risk and wisdom) appear to mature independently or partially independently of puberty. When this cluster of behaviours is deemed to be ‘mature’, an individual can be accepted as an adult. However, when this happens is highly variable among individuals, therefore societies tend to formalise it by determining legal ages to define adulthood or maturity. These social milestones or legal markers, such as the legal age to buy alcohol, vote, leave school, have sexual intercourse, be eligible to join the armed forces, drive a motor vehicle, marry and enter full time employment vary considerably within and across societies (Carr, 2011; Gluckman et al., 2011; Gullotta et al., 2000). However, Gluckman (2011) has reported that there is often a ‘mismatch’ between society’s recognition of adult ‘status’, reflected in the legal age markers, and impulse control and judgment which are the last brain functions to mature, often not until well into the third decade of life.

Clearly then, adolescence is a broad period of transition between childhood and adulthood, with multiple, vague and arguably contradictory boundaries (Gulotta et al., 2000; Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Sibley, 1995). Moreover, Sibley (1995: 34) described adolescence as an ambiguous zone within which the “child/adult boundary can be variously located according to who is doing the categorising”. Skelton (2000) contended that determining when a person is a child and when a person is an adult is problematic for social science researchers. This is particularly so for young people who are at an ambiguous age and where the social and liminal spaces they occupy are firmly scripted into what they can or cannot do. Thus, while adolescents are denied access to the adult world, they attempt to distance themselves from the world of the child, although often maintain some links with childhood (Skelton, 2000). Gullotta et al. (2000) summarised adolescence as a period of phasing into adulthood, in which young people are given increasing responsibilities with each new granted freedom. Thus, it is a period of experimentation, practising making decisions, making mistakes and hopefully learning from them, and of gradually assuming new freedoms while building towards adult responsibilities. Nonetheless, the experiences and decisions during these years are shaped by both childhood experiences and the young person’s anticipated future (Holstein-Beck, 1995).

The formation of identity is a gradual process through the lifespan. Gullotta et al. (2000) asserted that this is more intense during adolescence and is linked to the aspirations and
demands associated with adulthood (Hendry, Schucksmith, Love and Glendinning, 1993). Gullota et al. (2000) contend that in the search for identity, the adolescent experiments with many roles, shifting back and forth, both consciously and unconsciously in an attempt to ‘find the real me’, and his or her place in the world. Adolescents successfully acquire an identity according to Head (2007: 157) from “matching a realistic sense of self, what one is like and is good at, with a sound sense of the world, recognizing what opportunities exist.” When asked about their youth identities, Nairn et al. (2012) reported that young people were puzzled by the term ‘identity’ and stated that it was not a word they would apply to themselves. Although they were happy to discuss things such as their decision-making about education and career pathways, and about the choices they make in relation to leisure, music and clothing they did not view this as ‘identity.’ As such Nairn et al. (2012: 19) stated “identity is socially constructed, fluid and multifaceted, taking place in relationships with others.” Therefore, it is through relationships with others in the family, with peers, in institutions such as schools, neighbourhoods and communities that young people craft their identities.

Historically, the transition from formal education into paid employment has been another marker of the end of childhood (Carr, 2011; Hill & Tisdall, 1997). However, with more young people delaying their entry to the workforce and extending their learning in either formal or informal settings, Carr (2011) claimed that the chronological definition of childhood has thus been extended. Similarly, Christie (2009: 127) observed that “middle-class discourses about the value of higher education have become pervasive and now define the expectations of young people from across the class spectrum.”

The subsequent deferment into the workforce has also been matched by deferment into other traditional markers of adulthood, including leaving the family home, marriage and transitions to parenthood (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002). Maguire, Ball & Macrae (2001: 198) referred to the increasingly fluid boundaries between childhood and adulthood, in particular with reference to the post-school years as being characterised by “flexibility, maneuverability, postponement, delay and interruption”. Furthermore, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) asserted that there are few clear timetables to govern young people's navigation through the many pathways into work. Evans (2008: 1665) similarly argued that:

the transition from childhood to adulthood is no longer one which is predetermined and mapped out with defined stages and rites of passage, but that individuals are free to choose their own life path, with structures, such as class, gender, religion, etc., no longer determining an individuals’ future.
The theoretical concept of individualisation, which is associated with social change in western societies has, according to Brannen and Nilsen (2002) destandardised and desequenced the lifecourse, and created a ‘choice biography’. Nairn et al. (2012: 17) similarly found that the traditional life-courses associated with previous generations had broken down and been replaced by the “complexity of concurrent transitions.” This means that young people do not expect to be in a single job for their lifetime and they move between education and employment on an ongoing basis. Consequently, young people were aware of and expected to use their agency and perceived that they were individually responsible for making good choices about every aspect of their lives (Macguire et al., 2001; Nairn et al., 2012; Wyn & Dwyer, 2000). The expectation for overseas travel and experience, including overseas employment featured prominently in the consciousness of the young people in Nairn et al.’s (2012) research, to the point that for many it was perceived as a fundamental component of their transition into ‘proper adulthood’. Although this thesis focuses on school-age young people, their ‘being and becoming’ construction, is based on their present lives as well as their anticipated futures and is reinforced by their perceived ‘in-between’ status. Therefore, anticipating and preparing for future pathways forms much of the discourse during their secondary schooling (Head, 2007; Nairn et al., 2012).

2.4 Conceptualising parents, parenthood and the ‘good parent’

The concept of family is deeply embedded in our lives at an individual, community and societal level. Dumon (1997) reinforced that irrespective of the diversity of family forms, the common characteristic of families is that they all serve as person-supporting networks. The unique nature of families as social groups are reflected by several characteristics and conditions, which Daly (1992) notes as privacy, permanent relationships, shared traditions, intense involvement, a collective consciousness not readily available to others, and a collage of individual interests and qualities. In this thesis the focus is on the nature of the parent-child relationships and how they are managed, while recognising that they can exist within a diversity of familial relationships (Pryor, 2006).

The UNCRC, adopted by United Nations member countries in 1989 provided a benchmark for children’s rights advocates, and shifted the emphasis from children as ‘objects of concern’ to children as agentive social actors in their own right whose entitlements “straddle moral, political and social agendas” (Matthews, 2005: 1). Thus, the UNCRC recognises the potential
of children and young people to share perspectives as participative actors and enrich decision-making processes. In order for this to happen, Klammer (2006) contended that the relationship between adults and children must shift to an interactive one where parents, teachers and other adults interacting with children are negotiators and facilitators rather than ‘mere’ providers, protectors or advocates. This places responsibility on adults to “create spaces and promote processes designed to enable and empower children to express their views, be consulted and to influence decisions” (Klammer, 2006: 230). As Head (2007) noted, successfully negotiating adolescence involves negotiation and compromise. To achieve this, young people need to have those spaces that allow for their views to be heard and to be empowered to progressively gain more freedom.

The position of children as a private responsibility implies that parents are held responsible for the growth and development of their children, and also their overall success in life (Carr, 2011; Lewis, 2006; Shaw, 2010). The contribution that effective parenting and cohesive families can make in enabling children and adolescents to be resilient and make positive transitions to adulthood has been heavily researched, documented and publically discussed (Gluckman, 2011; Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Lewis, 2006; Smart Sanson & Toumbourou, 2008; Smith & Taylor, 2000).

Contemporary conceptions of childhood are built around the ‘emotionally priceless’ child (Schanzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012b). Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argued that as relationships between adults become more individualised, the emotional links between adults and children become more attractive, with suggestions that parents are increasingly living through their children (Gillis, 2003), and seeking emotional gratification from them (Pryor, 2006), thus increasing the power of children. This has led to many parents being anxious about upsetting their children and disrupting the emotional tie between them. Pryor (2006) suggested that this is particularly apparent when parents live apart from their children and worry about alienating them when they discipline them, or when both parents work full-time and regard the time they spend with their children as precious and insubstantial.

Shifting trends in Western society of smaller family size, later parenthood, more educated parents, increased maternal employment and comparatively high living standards have contributed to the rise of the aforementioned ‘emotionally priceless’ child, particularly evident amongst middle class families (Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Lewis, 2006; Pryor, 2006; Sayer, Bianchi & Robinson, 2004). This has resulted in the increased psychological investment in
their children and shifting power relationships between parents and their children. With fewer children in the family they have become the focus of intense attention and a major source of emotional gratification for adults (Lewis, 2006b). Furthermore, Pryor (2006) contended that given the rise in the number of parents who separate or divorce, there is some justification in regarding the parent-child relationship as more durable than the parent-parent relationship. Based on their everyday experiences, some parents claim that when they have children, their own time, money and space is reduced; and their career prospects are eroded (Quotrup, 1997). Carr (2011) recognised that children and young people assert their influence and power over parents to meet their own desires. However, without their own money or access to it limited by parental control pre-teenage children utilise ‘tools’ to persuade, bargain and pester their parents in order to meet their own desires (Carr, 2011).

The social construction of ‘good parents’ places an emphasis on the many responsibilities parents have for their children and is associated with the construction of the child as someone who is vulnerable and needs to be nurtured and cared for (Carr, 2011; Coakley, 2006; Jamison & Gilbert, 2000; Pryor, 2006). The proliferation of discussion and advice for parents through parenting books, television programmes and other media, targets parents about ‘good’ parenting practices and behaviours, as well as holding them up to public scrutiny.

Parenting practices strongly focus on ‘involvement’ with an expectation that parents will play an important role in their children’s day-to-day lives (Kazura, 2000; Daly, 2001). This includes assisting with daily routines, engagement with and support in their organised activities including school-based ‘extra-curricular’ activities (Coakley, 2006; Kazura, 2000). While more evident amongst educated, white, middle-class men (Craig, 2006) father involvement is considered to benefit children in terms of their social, emotional and physical development (Shaw, 2010). The media and public commentary constantly remind mothers to care for their child’s emotional, social, psychological, intellectual and development needs (Allat, 1993). This has contributed to the ideology of ‘intensive mothering’, where women are seen to be selfless and ‘sacrificial’, focusing on their children’s needs and wishes, often to the exclusion of their own personal requirements and desires (Shaw, 2010).

Shaw (2008, 2010) contends that the terms ‘helicopter parenting’, ‘paranoid parenting’ or ‘hyper-parenting’ have been used by commentators to describe the continuous vigilance and strategies parents, particularly mothers, use to avoid risk and protect their children from an ever-broadening range of societal issues and dangers. Moreover, this intervention by parents
extends to key life decisions that were traditionally made independently by young people as they enter adulthood (Yeoman, McMahon-Beattie, Lord & Parker-Hodds, 2012).

The increasing sense of responsibility that parents feel for their children’s healthy development and safety has led to greater parental control over, and manipulation of children’s play and leisure in directions the parents believe will maximise the developmental benefits and minimise risk or adverse consequences (Carr, 2011; Hill & Tisdall, 1997). Pre-teen children therefore have diminished opportunities for free play without adult supervision and intervention. Concerns have been raised by child development experts (Guldberg, 2009), and increasingly in public discourse, that free play, autonomy, self-expression and choice are important for children’s development. As a reaction to the ‘anxious parent’ there is an increasing advocacy by parents who want their children to gain freedom and independence, and not wrap them in cotton wool (Schanzel et al., 2012b).

The decline in free play has seen a corresponding expansion of childrens’ involvement in organised activities, especially amongst the middle classes. Shaw (2010) suggested that parents believe organised activities are ‘good’ for their children because they provide developmental and achievement advantages. Guldberg (2009) added that organised activities are ‘safe’, in that they are facilitated and controlled by adults and are typically age and gender-segregated. Although the facilitation of children’s participation in these activities reflects current ideologies of ‘good’ parenting, it increases their own workload and can lead to complex family timelines and schedules. Furthermore, the associated costs of participating in such activities add pressure to the family budget and often results in parents making sacrifices about their own leisure engagement. Although parents continue to encourage purposive activities for their child, during adolescence young people themselves assert greater independence in seeking out activities with their peers as peer relationships become increasingly important to them (Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Larson, Gillman & Richards, 1997).

Sligo and Nairn (2013) reported that parents are preoccupied with their children’s success at school and in other aspects of their lives, with success generally interpreted to mean doing well, getting good results and achieving. To expedite this, parents are studious in seeking out the ‘best schools’ and monitoring many aspects of their children’s lives. The pressure to keep them busy and safe involves mothers in particular spending time transporting children to their outside-school activities (Sligo & Nairn, 2013). Young people are aware of their parents’ efforts and sacrifice, particularly their investment of time and money into their education,
argued Nairn et al. (2012). As such, young people were aware that this investment, along with their own efforts were likely to be rewarded in the education system.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined that young people of secondary school age are ‘older children’ and conceptualised as adolescents. The ‘in-between-ness’ experienced by young people revealed a broad period of transition with multiple, vague and contradictory boundaries that straddle the vulnerability and protection associated with being a child, and the freedoms and responsibilities associated with becoming an adult. Therefore, in acknowledging young people as ‘being and becoming’, they were conceptualised as social actors who actively exert their agency to influence their behaviour and interactions with others.

Parenting focused on the western discourse of the ‘good’ parent construct, in which parents make sacrifices in order to meet the needs of their ‘emotionally priceless’ child/children. ‘Involved’ or ‘helicopter’ parents referred to the intensive and purposeful investment of parents’ energy and time in their children’s activities and schooling, in order to keep them safe and do what it takes to set them up for a successful future. This indicates that parents might be willing to support the participation of their child in an international school trip if they perceive it has educational benefits and could thus be an investment in their future, even if it might mean sacrificing some of their own interests and desires. Attention now turns to learning, education and schools in order to understand how learning might be perceived and positioned within an international school trip.
3.1 Introducing the chapter

This thesis explores the justifications, motivations and experiences of multiple stakeholders associated with international school trips. The generally voluntary participation in these trips suggests that those who support or participate in them perceive there are benefits. Given that their school-led nature it is likely that the educational value of these is an important justification. In Chapter One, international school trips were positioned within a wider conceptualisation of school-led tourism. This chapter conceptualises education and learning in order to comprehend how learning might be perceived and positioned within school-led tourism experiences. To do this, the nature of learning is discussed before a consideration of the factors that differentiate the quality of learning.

The chapter then goes on to consider the context and conditions that allow learning, specifically where and how learning takes place. Particular emphasis is given to informal learning contexts and the free choice, experiential and social nature of learning that can be stimulated in informal contexts. This is important because school-led tourism often takes place in informal contexts. The agency of and interplay between learners and facilitators in the learning process is discussed to better understand how this might apply in school-led tourism experiences. As these experiences are school-led, the contemporary school context is discussed to situate the context of school-led tourism experiences, and particularly the offering of international school trips.

3.2 What is education?

Education, learning and schooling are closely intertwined. Many people regard education as synonymous with the provision of schooling\(^3\), which is interpreted as a formal and institutionalised system of teaching, learning and assessment. This aligns with Smith’s (1982) definition of education as “the organized, systematic effort to foster learning, to establish the conditions, and to provide the activities through which learning can occur.” Along with the belief that education equals ‘schooling’ is the assumption that the more ‘schooling’ one has, the better educated he or she becomes. While ‘schooling’ may be considered as the means to achieve external ends such as achievement for qualifications or gaining employment, learning

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\(^3\) Schooling includes early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, and tertiary or higher education.
contains the notion of intrinsic worth or value (Adams & Bethell, 2005). It is important to clarify however, that learning and education are not limited to ‘schooling’. As Smith (1982) noted in his definition, education involves the systematic effort to foster learning, with attention to the conditions and activities through which it is enabled. This is reflected by the investment by governments in educational services in these informal contexts. However, it is the formal education system that gains the intense political attention, scrutiny, and funding. Informal contexts, such as those in the tourism space, museums and environmental centres are recognised as complementary learning contexts to formalised ‘schooling.’ Although the aims and functions of education are contested, it is seen as a public good and is thus a political activity that represents and reproduces a particular view of society (Busher, 2006; Clark, 2005; Dillon & Maguire, 2007).

Education is viewed by governments as “critical for national development, for maintaining and improving economic competitiveness, and resolving social and cultural problems” (Clark, 2005: 149). Although the purpose of educational institutions may be evident through the policies and priorities established by governments, a consensus about what it means to be ‘well educated’ is more difficult to reach. What is generally agreed is that parents send their children to school with the hope and expectation that they will be educated, even though the characteristics and qualities of what being educated means is likely to mean different things to different people (Dillon & Macguire, 2007; Wylie, 2012).

In western democratic countries education has been driven by two dominant social ideologies - social equity and individual choice, although more recently an ideology focused on developed educated citizens in a democratic society has become more prominent (Clark, 2005). Consequentially, governments invest in and retain control of their education system in order to steer it to undertake the functions they believe are important to meet national goals and priorities (Adams & Bethell, 2005; Busher, 2006; Clark, 2005; Ray, 2009; Wylie, 2012; Wyn, 2007).

The value of education as a public good is reflected in government-led directives for curriculum, establishing priorities and visioning statements. For example, in Australia, education is positioned as central to building a democratic, equitable and just society (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008); whereas New Zealand aims for a “world-leading education system that equips all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values to be successful citizens in the 21st-century”
Quite what an educated person or an educated society is continues to be debated and reflective of the ideology of governments over time, as well as societal and individual beliefs and values.

3.3 Conceptualising the nature of learning

Despite its everyday use, learning is a challenging term to define and has a myriad of interpretations. Its everydayness suggests something simple and yet it is complex in all that it describes. Learning is an individualised lifelong process that can occur anywhere, at any time (Killen 2009; St.George & Bourke, 2008). Thus, learning can happen in countless environments which include formal institutional settings, such as early learning centres, schools and higher education; in informal community-based settings and programmes such as zoos, museums, night classes and guided walks; and the unstructured, informal learning that can occur in everyday life (St George & Bourke, 2008). The ongoing, individualised, and often incidental nature of learning is thus distinguished from the more conscious, planned and systematic processes associated with education (Ritchie, 2003).

According to Falk and Dierkling (2000: 136), all learning is contextual, and “people [learn] through a constant process of relating past experiences to the present, connecting what is happening in the present to what has happened in the past.” Falk (2005) draws on the advances in cognitive and neuro-science stating that any new learning, whether simple or complex, contributes to the building of a web of complex interconnected neural nets. Learning is a highly individualised process, each individual has their own unique ‘wiring’ in their head and responds to similar stimuli in different ways. Furthermore, learning refers to changes in and interconnections between feelings, attitudes and behaviours as well as the neural changes relating to facts and concepts (Falk, 2005).

The diverse nature of learning has been the focus of much research, along with efforts to categorise it. Examples of these include the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning (e.g., Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1965; Gagne, Briggs & Wagner, 1992); left and right brain hemispheres and their associated types of thought (Williams, 1983); eight intelligence potentials or multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006) and seven thinking dispositions (Perkins, 1992). Educators have used these classifications to recognise that individuals learn in diverse ways. Consequently, teachers have been encouraged to utilise
a variety of teaching, learning, and assessment approaches to meet the needs and interests of diverse learners and to avoid favouring one domain or intelligence over another (Alton-Lee, 2003).

As a lifelong process, learning is also cumulative. Understanding is acquired through an accumulation of experiences that have been derived from many different sources over time (Falk, 2005; Killen, 2009). Learning occurs when there is a change in understanding and behaviour that results from encountering and thinking about new experiences (Spady, 2001). Thinking about these new experiences is considered “an enterprise of meaning-making within particular contexts” (Lovat & Smith, 2003: 71) and “making connections, identifying patterns, and organizing previously unrelated bits of knowledge, behavior and action into new patterned wholes” (Killen, 2009: 3). This active construction and reconstruction of mental frameworks to gain knowledge and expand understanding is consistent with constructivist theories of learning. Not only do people learn in individual ways, they also learn in multiple contexts. For example, young people learn alongside peers; with different teachers, coaches and facilitators; in school, with the family, and in out-of-school contexts (St. George & Bourke, 2008).

Research about learning has increasingly shifted from laboratories to more realistic and complex settings, such as in educational institutions, informal learning contexts and the workplace (St. George & Bourke, 2008). In these non-laboratory settings it became clear that learners played an active and strategic role in their own learning and could no longer be perceived as passive receivers of information (Jones, Palincsar, Ogle & Carr, 1987). Bolstad and Gilbert (2012) argue that current research clearly shows that people do not learn well as ‘spectators’, and that good learning requires active engagement in the ‘whole game’ rather than passively receiving bite-sized, pre-packaged bits of knowledge. Accordingly, St. George and Bourke (2008: 125) argue:

The learner is now seen as someone who actively uses prior knowledge and strategies to understand what is required in learning tasks, to monitor and regulate their learning, and to achieve learning goals. Knowledge and skills are seen as becoming more complex as they are revisited over time, and both experience and age influence learning and thinking.

This view of learners as active, independent constructors of meaningful knowledge contrasts with earlier views that knowledge was acquired solely in response to appropriately sequenced learning materials and tasks assigned by a teacher. Individuals need to learn how to learn (Killen, 2009). The acquisition of learning strategies, which are plans and routines for
remembering, learning or solving problems play an important role in learning how to learn (St. George & Bourke, 2008). Within a constructivist view of learning, the explicit teaching of strategies and metacognitive skills is encouraged. Costa (1991) suggests that metacognitive skills are evident when people have a growing consciousness and know what they know and what they do not know. As individuals develop new knowledge for themselves and feel responsible for their own learning, they are encouraged to evaluate their own learning and their learning processes. When they can do this they are considered to be metacognitive 4.

Constructivism recognises that new knowledge is constructed on the basis of prior knowledge; thus it is considered to be knowledge-dependent (Resnick, 1989). Those that facilitate learning assist by checking for relevant prior knowledge, discerning its validity and clarifying when there are misconceptions. St George and Bourke (2008) suggest that learning is situated in particular physical and social contexts, social in nature, and distributed across the individual, other people and learning strategies or tools. Hence, learning is not just a solo activity – it is a social process.

Social constructivism is a variation of the constructivist approach, where learning is treated as a social process, and learners acquire knowledge through interaction with their environment and others (Killen, 2009). Learning is seen to be facilitated through interaction with others, and is influenced by prior ideas and feelings (Barker, 2012, Falk, 2005). Thus, a social constructivist view shifts the emphasis from learners ‘being taught’ to constructing knowledge through doing things with others (Watkins, 2005). In a school or school-led setting, both the teachers and students are considered to be active participants. Collectively they use their agency to interact with others by sharing their ideas, responses and prior knowledge. Together they co-construct the development of shared meanings that are derived from shared activities, whether they occur in the classroom, or in an informal context (Cullen, 2001; Killen, 2009).

Globally, social constructivism is influential in school curricula, and is encouraged through relevant contexts that connect to the learner’s real-life world. Alton-Lee (2003: v) also emphasised the importance of teachers incorporating inclusive approaches for socially constructed learning, so that it caters for cultural diversity and diverse learners, in which diversity encompasses “many characteristics, including ethnicity, socio-economic

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4 Metacognition refers to the knowledge and control of one’s own cognitive processes and actions. Marzano, Hughes, Jones, Pressseisen Rankin & Schor (1988: 9) state that it involves “being aware of our thinking as we perform specific tasks and then using this awareness to control what we are doing.”
background, home language, gender, special needs, disability and giftedness.” Barker (2012: 37) notes that the everyday use of social constructivism jargon permeates teacher practice vocabulary with common use of terms such as ‘beginning with where the learner is at’, ‘interactive teaching’, ‘facilitating the learning’, and ‘group work’.

Where the social, collaborative nature of learning is emphasised knowledge is constructed and understanding gained through multiple sources of information and experience, and the dialogue and interaction with others. The learning conditions are optimised through the interdependence of both the social and academic elements (Brophy, 2001) and with attention directed to the intellectual, emotional, social and cultural factors in learning (St. George & Bourke, 2008). In applying this to the school context, Alton-Lee (2003) reinforces the influential role teachers play in directly interacting with students, in selecting pedagogical approaches and in shaping the peer culture within classrooms. The presence of peers and the dynamics between them influences the learning environment. Caring, supportive and inclusive practices and interactions between the teacher and students enhance a learning environment (Alton-Lee & Nuthall, 1990; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Killen, 2009).

The influence of and inter-relationships between peers is influential on young people’s learning. Young people have a need for social connectedness and the amount of time spent with their peers increases throughout childhood and adolescence (Head, 2007). Rubin, Bukowski and Parker (1998) suggest that pro-social peer relationships in adolescence promote self-concept, identity development and perspective taking. Many young people are motivated to come to school to be with their friends, because of their “need to be accepted, to belong and sometimes to influence others” (Carroll-Lind & Raskauskas, 2008: 101). Accordingly, groups are an integral part of school life and the quality of the social dynamics amongst peers determines whether young people feel a sense of belonging to the group or not.

Given the social nature of learning, the inclusion of learning situations that foster peer interactions contributes both to the need for affiliation and as a constructive force to enhance learning (Carroll-Lind & Raskauskas, 2008). The explicit teaching of group dynamics and assisting young people become self-aware of their ability to relate to others, is increasingly evident in curricula statements (for example, Alton-Lee, 2003; Australian Curriculum,

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5 Pedagogy is concerned with the relationship between learning and teaching. Loughran (2010) argues that understanding the interplay between teaching and learning and learning and teaching reinforces that the two exist together and influence each other. Therefore, teachers’ selection of pedagogical approaches should be influenced by their understanding of their students and their learning.
Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013: Ministry of Education, 2007). Arguably, the opportunity to voluntarily participate in a school-led tourism experience with peers offers young people another avenue in which to extend their peer relationships, be accepted, belong, and influence or be influenced by others.

In acknowledging that school-led tourism experiences are undertaken in a group, it is argued that the social constructivist approach is influential. In this context a group is considered more than a collection of individuals in the same space. It is recognised as a learning community (Wenger, 1998) where shared meanings are co-constructed and develop from shared activities and experiences (Cullen, 2001). Through the interactions between group members, along with the facilitation and pedagogical approaches utilised by teachers or other guides, meaning-making, understanding and learning can be constructed. Further examination of the context and approaches to learning that apply in the school-led tourism experience follows later in this chapter. Before that, it is important to note that learning varies in quality, and this is influenced by the quality of teaching and the motivation of the individual learner.

### 3.4 Learning quality

In stating, “whatever is involved in learning, some people do it better than others”, Killen (2009: 4) alluded to the notion of learning quality. Although a clear definition of learning quality has not yet evolved, various scholars (e.g., Killen, 2009; Nightingale and O’Neil, 1994; Perkins and Blythe, 1994; Warburton, 2003) have contributed to the discourse about what constitutes high-quality learning. Nightingale and O’Neil (1994) suggested that high-quality learning relates to what learners are able to do. For instance, it is evident when individuals are able to apply their knowledge to solve problems, form and substantiate independent thought and communicate their ideas to others, and perceive relationships between their existing knowledge and the new things they are learning. They are able to retain newly acquired knowledge for a long time; use analytical, synthesising and questioning strategies in order to create new knowledge for themselves; and use their curiosity to further their understanding (Nightingale & O’Neil, 1994). Some authors (Beattie, Collins and McInnes, 1997; Killen, 2009; Warburton, 2003) use the terms deep and surface to distinguish between learning quality and to differentiate between how individuals approach learning.
Although a common definition of the terms deep and surface learning is still evolving, these terms are used to distinguish between high (deep) and low (surface) levels of understanding (Killen, 2009; Warburton, 2003), and between individuals’ approach (motivation) to learning (Beattie et al., 1997; Warburton, 2003). While knowledge can be considered as the retention or reproduction of facts or information, understanding indicates that a person not only possesses knowledge, but can also do certain things with that knowledge (Perkins, 1992). Those with deep understanding are able to think and act flexibly, to use knowledge learned in one situation and apply it in new and different situations (Killen, 2009). Thus, a person with the ability to apply some knowledge in many, different, complex and unfamiliar situations would be considered to have greater depth of understanding than a person who could apply that knowledge in a few, simple and familiar situations. Perkins and Blythe (1994: 5) suggest that deep understanding is reflected in an individual’s ability “to do a variety of thought-demanding things with a topic – like explaining, finding evidence with examples, generalizing, applying analogizing, and representing the topic in a new way.”

Deep understanding is an element of intellectual quality (Killen, 2009). Individuals who have developed intellectual quality are able to distinguish significant ideas from the incidental details, and engage in higher-order thinking and substantive written or verbal communication (Department of Education and Training, 2003). They recognise that knowledge is conditional: that it is open to question, debate or different ways of interpretation. In contrast, surface understanding typically reflects the memorisation of facts without making connections or looking for patterns, and the acceptance of ideas and information without questioning (Wiske, 1998). The difference between individuals who have deep or surface understanding reflects their motivation and approach to learning, and the strategies (pedagogical approaches) that enhance deep rather than surface understanding (Perkins, 2001).

In order to think in a particular way (e.g., creatively, critically, open-mindedly), a person must have the capacity (skills and dispositions) to think that way, the inclination or motivation to make the effort to think that way, and must have the sensitivity to recognise the occasions when it is appropriate to think that way (Killen, 2009). Teachers play an important role in using pedagogical approaches and strategies that explicitly help students develop their capacity to understand deeply. These strategies are sequenced and practised to develop learners’ confidence and capabilities in thinking, applying knowledge, generalising, abstracting and transferring knowledge (Costa, 2001; Perkins & Blythe, 1994).
However, Warburton (2003) cautioned that deep learning cannot be externally imposed on learners. In advocating for learning in informal learning contexts (see 3.6), he recommended that less emphasis should placed on curriculum content and more on contextual interpretation, along with the value of small group discussions. Additionally, a more relaxed structure that contrasts with the highly structured school timetables might allow a greater degree of self-direction and interaction amongst learners that may in turn lead to deeper learning (Warburton, 2003).

### 3.5 Learning, engagement and motivation

Learning, engagement and motivation, while closely linked are not the same things. In relation to school-based learning, Nuthall (2007: 35) offered the following warning about equating motivation and engagement with learning:

> Much of what goes on in classrooms is based on the belief that if students are interested and involved in an activity, they will learn from it. Being attentive and engaged is equated with learning. However, students can be highly motivated and actively engaged in interesting classroom activities, yet not be learning anything new. Learning requires motivation, but motivation does not necessarily lead to learning.

St. George and Riley (2008) add that motivation helps to power individuals’ learning but is insufficient on its own for learning and achievement to occur. Here, motivation is used “to explain the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour” (Brophy, 2004: 3) and Brophy argues that the theory of motivation as a general disposition and as a situation-specific context is useful.

Some people with motivation as a disposition demonstrate a desire to learn and achieve, whereas for others, their motivation may be situation-specific, in which their interest is aroused and apparent only when they can see usefulness or enjoyment in the activity. Participation in an international school trip is generally optional and school leaders, young people and their parents each have their own motives to engage with these experiences. Therefore, the motivation to engage with the trip might not be the same level as the motivation to fundraise or undertake other expected preparatory activities.

St George and Riley (2008) suggest that teachers should create challenging learning environments that foster autonomy and personal control. Students’ curiosity is more likely to
be aroused if the learning activities are embedded in interesting and meaningful contexts.
When something has intrinsic value, an individual is more likely to engage in it for its own
sake or enjoyment. When students are intrinsically motivated they are more likely to actively
engage with their learning, select challenging tasks, show greater conceptual understanding,
be creative, and experience more pleasure and enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In education there is greater expectation for learning to be engaging and relevant for the
students, while recognising their diverse motivations (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008). As Prensky
(2008: 64) states, “…our twenty-first century students are different. We can no longer spew
content at them and expect them to learn it. They have to see it as worthwhile to their lives
and want to learn whatever it is.”

If students can see direct and useful connections between what they are learning and their real
world, their learning will be valued and have meaning in ways that are relevant to them and
their understanding of the world (Hurd, 1997; Killen, 2009; Rivers, 2006). It is argued that
school-led tourism is presented to young people as personally relevant and worthwhile.
Importantly, it offers learning in real-life contexts that connect learning in a more holistic
integrated way. Although these excursions are often linked to curriculum learning and
assessment, the experiences themselves often stimulate the aesthetic, emotional and sensual
aspects of learning (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Office for
Standards in Education [Ofsted], 2008a).

3.6 Young people, teachers and learning

An important starting point for teachers is to understand their students and their learning.
Nuthall (2007: 15) pointed out that “teaching is about adjusting to the here-and-now
circumstances of particular students” and in doing so, teachers should look at learning from
the learners’ point of view. Bourke’s (2008) research sought to gain the student voice in
understanding how they perceived their learning. She found that young people who had a
more sophisticated view of their learning actively used their agency in the learning process.
By this they intentionally applied their own knowledge and perceived learning as exciting
because there were multiple solutions to a problem. These sophisticated and engaged learners
reinforced the socially constructed nature of learning and the important role their peers play in
facilitating their understanding and meaning-making (Bourke, 2008). Importantly, Bourke
(2008) found that the young people perceived they used their agency more actively in their out-of-school learning contexts. This reinforces the close links between choice, personal relevance and social interaction in allowing active learning and the quest for understanding.

Teachers play an important role in creating a learning culture in which students feel treated as individuals with a worthwhile contribution to make (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). St George and Riley (2008) drew on a range of New Zealand studies that concluded that motivation to learn tends to be high when teachers are perceived to be caring and students feel they belong. However, this means more than teachers simply showing emotional warmth and friendliness. Brophy (2004) contends that an emphasis on the task, learning goals and personal improvement is as important as an encouraging supportive environment. This means that students will have a good chance of success when they have a clear idea of what to do, how to do it, and why it is relevant. Hattie (2009: 239) adds that a constructive learning culture is one “where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity …and where participants can feel safe to learn, re-learn, and explore knowledge and understanding.”

Although learning culture is significant, learning is multilayered and what the teacher does, although publically observable in terms of activities, routines, and behaviours, is just one part of it. As St George and Bourke (2008: 129) state “there is also the semiprivate world of peer relationships.” Beyond that,

there is the private world of the student’s mind where individual learning and thinking takes place, interwoven with the activities and experiences of the context. Here too, there are links between life in and out of school (St George and Bourke, 2008: 129).

3.7 Learning contexts and approaches

People attach memories to what they learn and the way they learn it (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) and when it is exciting and fun, their approach to learning tends to be more positive and engaged (Bourke, 2008). Therefore, the learning setting is influential. Drawing on social science examples, Aitken & Sinnema (2008: 185) recognised the value of first-hand, real authentic experience, which they defined in the pedagogical sense as encompassing “activities that either match or directly replicate reality or that require participation in real situations beyond the classroom.” While noting that first-hand experiences do not have to involve going out of the school, they join others that advocate for connecting classroom learning with “real
life’ applications or experiences outside the classroom to stimulate student interest (e.g., Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Carr, 2011; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Hurd, 1999; Lai, 1999; Lynch, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Tofield, et al., 2003). The challenge for educators is to determine the context and conditions in which this can most effectively occur.

Recent decades have seen considerable discourse in relation to the relative merits of formal and informal learning contexts, and free-choice and experiential approaches to learning (e.g., Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Tofield et al., 2003). Increasingly there is recognition by educators that different contexts and approaches can be complementary, and learning is strengthened when coherent connections are made between them.

As previously stated, learning can take place at anytime and anywhere. Some authors have differentiated learning environments as either formal or informal (e.g., Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Falk & Dierkling, 1997; Griffen & Symington, 1997; Hohenstein & King, 2007). Formal learning contexts have historically referred to institutionalised education settings such as early learning centres, schools and universities; whereas informal contexts refer to the types of learning that take place outside of these settings, such as in museums, zoos and through tourism (Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Griffen, 2004). Falk (2005) explained that the terms formal and non-formal, or informal originated from a reaction to the synonymous use of learning, school and education, and tended to overlook the informal learning that takes place outside of educational institutions. A key element of informal contexts is that they are seen to offer free-choice learning experiences (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Tofield et al., 2003).

Free-choice learning refers to learning that is driven by the underlying motivation and interest of the learner rather than learning that has been prescribed by teachers, curricula or achievement-related objectives (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Falk, 2005). Thus, free-choice learning is centred on the idea that learning is most effective when the learner actively takes charge of the learning process (Carr, 2011), and is voluntary, non-sequential and self-paced (Falk, 2005; Falk and Dierking, 2000; Griffin & Symington, 1997). However, the construct of free-choice learning appears to overlook the role teachers or facilitators can play in utilising pedagogical approaches to facilitate learning. Moreover, it suggests that individual learners have the tools to independently construct their own learning and understanding, and that the
presence of teachers assumes they ‘teach’ with highly prescriptive and structured approaches to learning that constrain any kind of individual choice and self-pacing. (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Falk, 2005).

Falk (2005: 273) points out that “free-choice learning is a relative, rather than an absolute construct.” Therefore, in order to be considered free-choice, individuals must perceive they have choice and control of how and what they interact with in a learning environment. He adds that individuals may differ in what they perceive to be ‘free-choice’ or compulsory, and thus free-choice learning is a psychological rather than context-driven construct. A further point is that almost all free-choice learning involves some facilitation, instruction, interaction with others and/or carefully crafted pedagogy embedded in interactive or static displays and multimedia (Falk, 2005). Additionally the educative intentions of free-choice learning centres such as museums and zoos are important in enabling visitors to have the sorts of experiences they want them to have (Tofield et al., 2003) and to increase revenue through visitation (Carr, 2011). Therefore, it is questionable to make the assumption that informal contexts are inherently free-choice learning environments if, for example, the excursion by a school group is compulsory for the students, and the learning experiences highly structured and prescriptive.

A further point made repeatedly by researchers is that it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of an individual’s learning within the limits of a single visit or infrequent experience in informal contexts (e.g., Anderson, Lucas & Ginns, 2003; Cox-Petersen, Marsh, Kisiel & Melber, 2003; Falk and Dierkling, 1997, 2000; Griffen, 2004; Hein, 1998), and that learning can be short-lived when undertaken in isolation (Ballantyne and Packer, 2005). This supports the argument that classroom experiences should be connected with those in informal contexts. These together, complement, enrich, extend and support school-based learning (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Cox-Petersen et al., 2003; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Rivers, 2006; Tofield et al., 2003). Beyond the potential opportunities for free-choice learning, visits to (informal) contexts outside the classroom offer some wider learning benefits.

The novelty and authenticity that can be experienced first-hand in contexts outside the classroom can contribute to and enrich learning in ways that cannot be replicated at school (DfES, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Rivers, 2006). The opportunity for individuals to engage emotionally is heightened when they experience real life examples. Ballantyne and Packer (2002) confirmed that students who had engaged in environmental
education programmes in natural areas enjoyed the novelty value and emotional aspects much more than the learning activities themselves. New, surprising, complex or ambiguous stimuli resulted in curiosity and exploratory behaviour. Additionally, emotionally charged observations such as seeing wildlife in their natural environment aroused empathy and became an aesthetic experience which were observed and reported (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002). The emotional aspects of activities and events provide important contextual memory prompts that assist later recall and may also lead to more sustainable impacts on their learning, values and behaviours than if they were not emotionally engaged (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Haddock, 2007b; Ofsted, 2008a; Peacock, 2006; Woods, 2004).

It is not just the context outside the classroom that can contribute to learning; it is also the wider experience of being away from the constraints and normality of the everyday school classroom. Lai (1999) argued that students appreciate the rarity and relative freedom gained from field trips. These experiences offer new perspectives to concepts covered in class, and he observed students being more proactive in their learning. There is wide acknowledgement that the less formal structure of a field trip fosters social interaction (Carr, 2011; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Nairn, 1999; Zink, 2004), with Lai (1999) reporting improved rapport between teachers and students.

Likewise, Nairn (1999) reported that it was the social, rather than the cognitive outcomes that were remembered most by students on a geography field trip. However, she cautioned about the largely taken-for-granted assumption that all students will cope with and enjoy the experience, noting that field trips that involve physical exertion privileges physically able, young bodies. Discomfort during or exclusion from these experiences can have negative impacts on the learning for some individuals and might lead to non-participation (Lineham, 2003; Nairn, 2003; Small, 2008).

Zink (2004) used the student voice to offer insights into what was important to them in outdoor education experiences. The students acknowledged that these experiences allow them to learn outdoor-related skills, build relationships and develop dispositions such as tolerance. However, what happened in-between the structured activities were most important to them. The ‘in-between times and spaces’ offered students free-choice about how they used that time. That free-choice allowed them to use their agency to generate fun and iconic moments that formed vivid memories long after they had returned from their trip. Additionally, it was during those times and spaces that they perceived they made their long-term friendships. This
finding disrupted the prevailing discourse that there is a causal relationship between structured (outdoor) pursuit-based activities and the development of social skills and self-concept (Zink, 2004; Zink & Burrows, 2008). Instead, the free-choice times and spaces between these activities led to the most enduring elements for the students. This points to an important challenge for those who lead school-led tourism experiences. Teachers are expected to use their agency to structure these experiences in ways that allow young people to learn, ensure safety and are deemed to be value for money. Increasingly, educational authorities and school leaders are stressing the importance of clearly articulated learning objectives for these experiences (e.g., DfES, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009; Rivers, 2006). Therefore, teachers play an important role in balancing the expectations to structure learning experiences in ways that meet the stated outcomes, whilst also allowing students to feel empowered to make their own choices and exercise some autonomy during these experiences (Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Griffin & Symington, 1997).

Ballantyne and Packer (2005) suggest that field trips should not be over-structured, to better enable the emotional and social (affective) elements to come to the fore. However, they echo other authors who recommend strong connections between classroom learning and field experiences to consolidate learning (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Jakubowski, 2003; Lai, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2009; Rivers, 2006; Tofield et al., 2003). The importance of making these connections prompted Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1998) to suggest that teachers carefully consider where they position fieldwork in a unit of work\(^6\) so that the benefits of it can be drawn on more fully after the experience/s. This reinforces the importance of reflection and de-briefing to distill the meaning from direct active learning experiences in informal contexts. Direct experience and reflection are fundamental for experiential learning (Kolb, 1984).

Experiences that engage learners actively are referred to as experiential learning. Whilst ‘learning through doing’ and ‘direct experience’ are fundamental to experiential learning, it is the action-reflection cycle that enables individuals to make meaning from their experiences (Henton, 1996; Joplin, 1995; Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Kolb, 1984). Reflection is a learned process and some individuals are better at extracting meaning and doing something with it than others. Although experiential learning is closely linked to play, free-choice learning and informal learning contexts, it also underpins everyday practice in the more formal school environments of science laboratories, art rooms, technology rooms, gymnasiums and regular

\(^6\) A unit of work refers to a sequence of learning experiences within a discrete topic or to meet intended learning objectives.
classrooms. It can be entirely self-driven or framed by a facilitator, such as a teacher or coach. For example, mentors and judges in reality television shows have popularised the role of facilitator for experiential learning. Kolb (1984) referred to it as a cyclical process involving four key stages: direct experiences, reflecting on that experience, thinking and acting.

The experiential learning process begins when individuals engage in a new experience or re-engage with something they have encountered before. During this action phase, individuals have autonomy over their own actions in how to approach a topic or problem, and to make their own decisions. Reflection usually begins by querying “what happened?” A deeper consideration of “why did this happen?” and “how did this happen?” follows. These questions encourage thinking about the meaning of their experiences and make connections between previous understanding and the current experience. From here, the generalising and abstracting phase of reflection focuses on the “how might?”, “what if?”, “so what?” and “now what?” questions that consider how the learning might apply in the next or future experience or transfer to other aspects of their lives (Henton, 1996; Kolb, 1984).

Frequent action-reflection experiences encourage individuals to think more deeply, critically, and encourage transfer of learning into action through successive phases of the cycle. Greater familiarity with and practice of this process are likely to lead to greater independence and depth in making meaning from incidental and intentional experiences. In the school context, teachers play an important role in scaffolding and framing experiences in ways that engage the individual, give sufficient responsibility and autonomy to challenge and encourage decision-making, while also giving enough support and feedback to stimulate experimentation and enable progress and to guide the reflection process (Henton, 1996; Joplin, 1995; Luckner & Nadler, 1997; Ministry of Education, 2004).

Direct, real and active learning experiences are central to school-led tourism, as they are in any field experiences. The freedom from familiar schedules, sustained time spent with peers and teachers, and the novelty aspect of new and different experiences offer numerous opportunities for meaning-making and reflection. Reflection can be self-initiated, mediated in the context of the group, or debriefed through a teacher-led inquiry (Luckner & Nadler, 1997; Ministry of Education, 2004).

Until now, this chapter has focused on the nature of learning, the factors that influence learning such as the context, approaches and actions of and interactions between facilitators
and the learners in order to understand how learning might be perceived and positioned within school-led tourism experiences. The focus now shifts to the role and function of schools to better understand the context from which school-led tourism is generated.

### 3.8 Schools and schooling

Societies place such value on education that it is one of the few compulsory experiences for children and young people (Clark, 2005; Claxton, 2008). Although there are educational alternatives outside of the formal education system (Carr, 2011), most people undertake their formal education in educational institutions. Schools are purposeful communities primarily focused on the academic, personal and social development of people (Busher, 2006; Clark, 2005; Claxton, 2008). School attendance means that children and young people are in the care of teachers for a significant period of their lives, therefore education takes on a care and custodial role and an implicit component of teachers’ work is viewed as being in loco parentis, which means in place of a parent (Clark, 2005). Therefore, schooling plays a role in socialising children and young people into a set of moral values and cultural practices that are perceived to enable them to become fully functional adult members of the societies in which they live and move.

Schools, along with other formalised educational institutions, contribute to the all-round development of young people. Wyn (2007) argued that it is increasingly important for educational agendas to assist young people to develop the capacities and skills that will enable them to live well and enhance social cohesion (also see Pring, 1995). Some personal attributes are seen to be essential and teachers direct some of their attention toward developing young peoples’ dispositions, such as honesty, tolerance, respect and cooperation (Dillon & Maguire, 2007). Wyn (2009) noted that although these are more evident in recent policy and curricular documents (e.g., Education Scotland, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2007a; Qualifications and Curriculum Authority/Department for Education and Employment, 1999) their enactment in schools “is compromised by economistic policy imperatives” (Wyn, 2007: 35). These documents, while they enable young people to develop the capacities to ‘live well’, more strongly emphasise acquiring the skills, credentials and qualifications to move either into further study and qualifications, or directly into the world of work, and thus ensure a country’s international competitiveness (Clark, 2005; Wyn, 2007).
It is the classrooms, school grounds, playing fields and school trips which are influential places and experiences through which children and young people gain knowledge and skills, develop interests and understanding, form friendships, and encounter difference and uncertainty. Teachers are relied on to guide and supervise, and peers learn to give and take from each other (Wylie, 2012). As noted earlier, the quality of the relationship between students and their teachers is highly influential on the quality of student learning and achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003). In a study carried out by Bishop & Berryman (2006: 254) students emphasised:

the importance of teachers caring for them, having high expectations for them, knowing what students needed to learn, knowing how to lead students to this knowledge, and being able to manage classrooms in ways that supported their learning.

Teaching is complex, demanding, and interactive, and as Nuthall (2007) pointed out, not all teachers are effective all the time, in all situations, or with all kinds of learners. O’Neill & O’Neill (2008: 10) explained that

teachers have a crucial role to play in mediating both the official curriculum and the realities of learners’ lives. Building on familial foundations, they shape the micro-context in which students develop educational knowledge, skills and dispositions to make sense of the world, to form their identities and, develop capacities through which to exert greater control over their lives…

Students provide the teacher with their greatest accountability measure. Bourke (2008: 157) asserted that it is “through their students that the teacher is most challenged, most confronted with everyday problems, and most often provided with those moments of joy and illumination about what it means to learn and what it means to teach.”

Hence, teachers listening to and learning to understand students builds learning communities. Mitra (2003, 2004) noted that students’ sense of self-worth is increased when they are given voice and agency over decisions, such as through student forums. In contrast, Smyth (2006: 285) argues “when students feel that their lives, experiences, cultures, and aspirations are ignored, trivialized, or denigrated, they develop a hostility to the institution of school.” Thus, teachers play an important role in the development of students’ sense of self-worth. Through their daily interactions with students teachers can open their eyes to new and different possibilities and options. This may be even more powerful through more sustained interactions in experiences such as wider school activities and school-led tourism experiences.
Education and schooling are often thought of as the route for social advancement, whereby through hard work young people can ‘improve their lot’ and participate in or achieve things their parents may only have dreamed about (Clark, 2005; Nairn et al., 2012). However, Clark (2005) utilised the concepts of social and cultural capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) to argue that educational institutions reproduce social and cultural inequalities. This means that young people from more privileged backgrounds often have a better chance of success in education because what is taught, assessed and examined is what is valued, represented and familiar to them (Fitzpatrick & Locke, 2008).

Social capital refers to the quality and durability of relationships, acquaintances and social networks. Nairn et al. (2012: 24) explain that these forms of capital come from discursive and material resources, and are “conferred by virtue of relationship networks, family background and knowledge acquisition.” Culture is interpreted as “a body of knowledge, tacit understandings, values and language use” (Clark, 2005: 146), which is acquired from one’s family and embodied in a personalised sense in the individual as ‘habitus’. Habitus is demonstrated through dispositions such as confidence, self-assurance and accent; in cultural goods such as computers, musical instruments and books; and through experiences such as travel or attendance at live concerts. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge accumulated through education and upbringing and is generally used to refer to the “middle-class transmission of knowledge and cultural norms from one generation to another” (Nairn et al., 2012: 24).

The cultural capital of the dominant (middle-class) group is embedded in schools as “curriculum, attitudes, rules and traditions, appears ‘natural’, with all children seemingly having access to it” (Clarke, 2005: 147). For young people from the dominant group there is continuity between home and school. In contrast, the young people who do not possess the dominant habitus and cultural capital might experience a divide or even conflict between the attitudes and traditions of home and school, and thus have a higher chance of failing. However, young people from less privileged backgrounds assimilate by adopting the habitus of the school and in doing so, can gain social advancement through their schooling (Archer, 2007; Clark, 2005; Lewis, 2000)

The desire for social advancement and gathering the cultural capital associated with the dominant ‘successful’ groups may justify the current trend to enrol children and young people in the perceived ‘good’ schools, particularly those located in wealthier communities (Adams
& Codd, 2005; Nairn et al., 2012; Ware, 2011). Enrolment in perceived ‘good schools’ might be one step towards social advancement. Arguably, further advancement is associated with young people’s becoming involved in the plethora of extra-curricular activities, participating in school-led tourism experiences and ‘being successful’.

Over time, as society and economies have changed, more and more has been expected from schools. There is a greater awareness of the costs to society and individuals when students leave school without a solid platform of knowledge, skills and the ability to communicate, or without a will to persist, keep learning, and try new things (Wylie, 2012). In the past, schools and the community did not expect that every young person would find school worthwhile. In accepting that “school wasn’t for me” there was also an understanding that availability of work would provide a meaningful alternative (Claxton, 2008; Codd & Openshaw, 2005; Nairn et al., 2012). This is no longer the case and consequently high expectations are placed on schools to prepare young people for a meaningful and productive future. As Wylie (2012: 12) notes, schools are expected to:

engage with individual students’ interests and effort daily through experiences that both nurture and challenge them, that enlarge their knowledge of things that matter, and that give them the confidence, initiative and resilience they need in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

As stated in earlier chapters, by the time young people leave school they are expected to be equipped with a qualification that will enable them to undertake further study or enable them to enter the workforce (Nairn et al., 2012). Globally, governments set targets to raise levels of achievement and the percentages of young people gaining qualifications from secondary school and in tertiary education (e.g., Manning, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2011). The past 25 years has seen a dramatic increase in the retention of young people in school beyond the post compulsory years (in New Zealand and the UK for example, that is 16 years). Consequently, secondary schools are required to cater for a more diverse cohort of learners through a meaningful, relevant curriculum (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008) and optional activities to pursue their personal interests.

A shift to neo-liberal policies in western demographic countries in the latter decades of the twentieth century resulted in an ‘educational market’ (Nairn et al., 2012; Thrupp, 1999; Wells, 1996; Wylie, 2012). Its key idea is that education is a market and that it is at its most efficient when there is sufficient competition to give the consumers (parents, children and young people) a genuine choice of educational goods and services. Although many teachers and
education researchers opposed school choice, it had considerable popular appeal particularly for parents, providing them with expanded options for their children’s education (Macguire & Dillon, 2007; Nairn et al., 2012). However, researchers have found that advantage was disproportionately available to those with greater economic, social and cultural capital (Nash, 1999; Robertson & Dale, 2002; Thrupp, 1999; Wells, 1996). Moreover, parents and young people in cities have greater choice over ‘which school’, compared to those in provincial or rural towns where there is limited or no choice unless they have the economic resources to enrol their children in boarding schools. As Gerwirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995: 2) explained, a quasi-market was inserted:

The education market (like all markets) is intended to be driven by self-interest: first, the self-interest of parents, as consumers, choosing schools that will provide maximum advantage to their children; second, the self-interest of schools or their senior managers, as producers, in making policy decisions that are based upon ensuring that their institutions thrive, or at least survive, in the marketplace . . . The result is meant to be competition, emulation and rivalry: survival can only be ensured by attracting consumers away from other schools.

A school’s reputation has become a fundamental element of parental choice (Robertson & Dale, 2002). Wylie (2012) found that competition between schools for students is more the norm than the exception. To encourage enrolments, some schools are spending more on marketing and property than they would like. League tables, published in the media are reported as influential in making decisions about where children are enrolled (Adams & Codd, 2005; Macguire & Dillon, 2007; Robertson & Dale, 2002; Smithers, 2013). Achievement results are ‘high stakes’ and schools are caught in a political agenda that is relentless in its pursuit of ‘standards’, where teacher accountability and raising student outcomes require compliance and relentless measurement through assessment (Bourke, 2008). Student engagement is regarded as a crucial mechanism to increase participation in learning that will then translate into better results for schools. Based on that argument, Smyth (2006) pointed out out that it is ironic that some researchers have reported that the disengagement of students from their own learning has been attributed to the increased focus on standards and the associated pressures on both teachers and students.

As noted in Chapter One, there is a perception, and possibly a reality, that school-led tourism opportunities are great marketing ploys. Arguably, alongside league tables and decile ratings\(^7\) (which categorise schools according to the socio-economic wealth of the communities in which they are located in New Zealand), the decision to enrol a young person in a secondary

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\(^7\)Decile ratings are defined in Chapter Five, Section 5.8.2.
school is influenced by its reputation for academic achievement, as well as its profile and achievement in sport and cultural activities (Adams & Codd, 2005; Nairn et al., 2012; University of Auckland, 2011). Increasingly, the range of enrichment options available for young people to participate in as a means to increase their cultural capital, such as through school-led tourism experiences, becomes important when weighing up the choices between schools.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter began by arguing that the perceived educational value is likely to be used as a justification for school-led tourism experiences. This was followed by discussing what education is and what being educated means before examining the nature of learning. Although learning is individualised and can take place anywhere and anytime, it does not occur in isolation. Instead, it is constructed on the basis of prior knowledge and is situated in physical and social contexts.

As this thesis focuses on international school trips within a wider conceptualisation of school-led tourism, the value of informal learning contexts, typically those settings outside the classroom were acknowledged for the way in which they can link classroom experiences to ‘real’ or first-hand contexts. These contexts were seen to stimulate active learning experiences that enable learners to apply theories or concepts they have learned in the more formal classroom contexts. It is important that teachers use their agency to structure these experiences to allow space for learners to have some freedom and autonomy over their experience-driven learning. Informal out-of-class learning is perceived to complement learning that takes place in the more formal classroom environment, in particular the way that it stimulates emotional and aesthetic responses and the socially constructed meaning through interaction between learners and teachers in a more relaxed environment.

The chapter finished by discussing the contemporary context of schools, particularly in relation to the important role they play in the socialisation and social advancement of children and young people. In a competitive model of schooling where (some) parents and their children can exercise their agency to choose which school they will enrol in, schools are mindful of their reputations and need to be perceived positively in their communities. Although it was noted that the quality of the relationships between learners and teachers is
influential in student achievement, the academic performance of schools along with the extra-curricular opportunities and successes are important contributors to a school’s public profile. School-led tourism experiences were acknowledged as part of these enrichment offerings and they are the focus of Chapter Four.
CHAPTER 4. SCHOOL-LED TOURISM
4.1 Introducing the chapter

This chapter builds on the concepts relating to school-led tourism that were introduced in Chapter One. It develops a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of school-led tourism defined in Chapter One as travel experiences outside of the school that are approved, organised and facilitated by the members of the school community. The chapter begins by examining the nature and scale of school-led tourism. Although the presence of school groups is noticeable in environments outside of the school grounds, researchers have acknowledged the challenges in quantifying the market. Arguably this contributes to its lack of recognition in the tourism industry (Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008). An examination of the nature of school-led tourism revealed that the categorisations of these experiences are more complex when consideration is given to the temporal and spatial dimensions and the extent to which participation in them is compulsory or voluntary.

The chapter then explores the reasons that school-led tourism exists. It builds on the theories of learning that were discussed in Chapter Three to establish a theoretical understanding of how learning might be perceived and positioned within school-led tourism experiences in general. Consideration is also given to how this might apply in international school trips.

Finally the chapter examines why people might voluntarily participate in school-led tourism experiences or support the participation of others. As this thesis explores the justifications, motivations and experiences of these stakeholders associated with international school trips, emphasis is placed on the factors that might influence different stakeholders to choose to engage with international school trips.

4.2 The nature of school-led tourism

As discussed in Chapter One, school-led tourism experiences have traditionally been divided into those that are curriculum-based and those that are extra-curricular (Carr, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003; 2008). Curriculum-based field trips usually refer to those that are overtly linked to the formal school curriculum and offer experiential learning opportunities that apply concepts acquired in learning areas (subject disciplines) in real world contexts (Carr, 2011; Lai, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2009; Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008) and to stimulate interest in particular subjects (Campbell-Price, 2012; Ibbotson, 2014; Jakubowski, 2003; Lynch, 2006; Ministry of
Education, 2014; Stevens, 2008). Opportunities to practise foreign language skills and engage in cultural practices have long been a justification for curriculum-based international school trips (Ritchie et al., 2003).

In contrast, extra-curricular activities and trips offer opportunities for young people to pursue and extend their personal interests through sporting, arts, cultural or service activities and events (Carr, 2011; Lewis, 2012; Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008; The Star, 2012). Participation in them is strongly encouraged and usually undertaken voluntarily in some schools. Extra-curricular activities are perceived to contribute to the holistic development of young people (Lewis, 2014; Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2014a) and are an important element of a school’s culture and profile. The significant contribution of these activities to school life is often reflected in the way these activities are typically positioned alongside curriculum-related information on many school websites. Moreover, the achievement of young people in these areas is encouraged and valued by schools, as the following ‘welcoming statements’ on the home pages of school websites suggest. Firstly, from Waimea College, a state co-educational school in New Zealand:

… is committed to providing a high-quality education for its students and emphasises the importance of achieving personal standards of excellence in academic, sporting, cultural and recreational activities (www.waimea.school.nz).

Similarly, the website for Melbourne Grammar School in Australia states the school:

. . . fosters excellence through learning and leadership and offers an educational experience ranging across intellectual, social, cultural, spiritual and physical pursuits (www.mgs.vic.edu.au).

Experiences and trips beyond the classroom and school perimeter contribute towards young people achieving in the broad range of dimensions in these statements.

Carr (2011) positioned outdoor education experiences and trips alongside visits to zoos, wildlife parks and urban centres where the variety of experiences on offer have more in common with general tourism experiences. Carr (2011: 96) labeled these experiences as non-curriculum based school-led tourism because of their apparently “less specifically targeted learning outcomes.” A further reason for this categorisation and their apparent lack of curriculum links might be due to the way in which they are scheduled as one-off events and might not be linked to a regularly scheduled subject or a specific extra-curricular activity. Ofsted (2008a) reported that in the United Kingdom many secondary schools arranged social or recreational trips such as skiing, or sightseeing in London. As optional extra-curricular
trips, Ofsted (2008a) noted that most of these trips took place during weekends or school holidays. One of the attractions of combining in-school learning with out-of-school learning is the complementary ways in which each context offers possibilities for different learning objectives (Hohenstein & King, 2007). Overall, the range of school-led tourism experiences offered by schools is perceived to contribute to a rich and balanced education (Education Scotland, no date; Ministry of Education, 2007a; 2009; Ofsted, 2008a; 2008b).

School-led tourism experiences have also been differentiated according to the temporal and spatial dimensions, and the nature of learning that these experiences are perceived to allow. Ritchie (2003) conceptualised school-led tourism as ‘education first’ in comparing it to other forms of educational tourism that might be engaged in primarily ‘tourism first’ motives. The following sections of this chapter consider what the ‘education first’ motives might be by examining the motives of different stakeholder groups and how the experiences of learning have been reported in the literature.

As already outlined, learning can take place in range of places outside of the school. The nature of learning is perceived to be influenced by the resources, services, amenities of the place itself, whether it is for example, a natural, constructed facility or urban environment. The extent to which the place is familiar or different for young people might also influence what learning is enabled. The spatial and temporal dimensions are differentiated according to such things as their proximity to the school, accessibility and the time away. These also influence the nature of learning. For example, the school environment allows for informal and formal learning and play; the local ‘backyard’ environment enables young people to develop skills and confidence to explore by foot, bicycle, car or public transport heritage sites, streets and landscapes, sport or recreation facilities, attend live events, or engage in volunteer projects (Ministry of Education, 2009; Ofsted, 2008a).

Places further afield enable young people to gain confidence in and appreciate environments that might contrast with their own home environments, and are seen to stimulate curiosity and imagination (Ministry of Education, 2009). Residential or other multi-day experiences, where young people stay away from home, are viewed as a powerful way to develop life skills and provide opportunities to strengthen the relationship between young people and their teachers (Education Scotland, n.d). These may extend to international school trips which present young people with opportunities to experience other cultures, languages, landscapes and economies. Having established that school-led tourism can encompass a wide range of short
and long duration experiences that may take place close to or far away from the school, and utilise a diverse range of contexts, attention now turns to its scale and significance.

4.3 The scale and significance of school-led tourism

The significance and scale of school-led tourism has been relatively unrecognised in the academic literature. In part, this might be linked to the different perspectives from which tourism and education have been conceptualised, researched and practised school-led tourism. As Ritchie (2003) pointed out, the size and potential of educational tourism as a whole has been largely under-recognised and has consequently received little interest from tourism researchers and industry.

Although educational visits are an integral part of school life and an important source of visitors to tourist attractions, Cooper and Latham (1988b) noted that scant research existed that examined the significance or pattern of these visits. Although school groups may not be perceived by attractions to be ‘high yield, big business’, Ritchie et al. (2008) argued that they increase the profile of attractions, particularly because the word-of-mouth recommendations of children and young people may lead to their own repeat visitation along with their parents. Moreover, they pointed out that the schools market is very loyal and will repeat their visits if perceived to be a successful experience. This was reinforced by March (2000) who reported the Japanese school excursion market is lucrative for travel wholesalers because schools will travel to a destination at least two or three years in succession due to the time and money that is involved in arranging a new destination. Therefore, there is a need for those managing the demands for school-led tourism, such as the attractions and services, to better understand the needs, characteristics and constraints of this market (Cooper, 1999; Cooper & Latham 1988b; Ritchie & Coughlan, 2004; Ritchie et al., 2003; 2008).

Various reports point to significant mobility by school groups. Cooper (1999) assessed the European school travel market and estimated that approximately 100 millions day excursions were made by school groups to attractions such as theme parks, museums, gardens and zoos. He estimated an additional 15-20 million trips were made annually by children and young people unaccompanied by their parents and assumed to be in school groups for field trips, language learning or an exchange programme (Cooper, 1999). In 1998, a total of 936 schools from Japan were reported to have travelled internationally, according to the Japan Shugaku
Ryoko Association (Japan Travel Bureau, 1998). These do not take into account the large number of extra-curricular trips, defined by Japan Travel Bureau (1998: 2) as “members of clubs involving sports, foreign languages and other interests during their school vacation.” In New Zealand, Haddock’s (2007a; 2007b) research supported Boyes and Zink’s (2005) earlier report that revealed a high level of engagement by primary and secondary schools in experiences outside the classroom to support all learning areas. Furthermore, the extensive engagement of schools in co-curricular activities was such that school principals in the local Dunedin (New Zealand) media were venting their frustrations at the disruption they were causing to the daily and weekly timetables of schools, and the potential impact on student achievement (Lewis, 2014).

Disparate as it is, the literature that quantified aspects of the school-led tourism market have indicated that schools are indeed active contributors to the tourism industry. The presence of school groups at sporting facilities, tourist attractions, in departure lounges, on hiking trails and in ski areas is a further tangible way to sense the dynamism of this market. Media coverage of different school-related competitions, events and trips also suggests that schools are actively engaged in a wide range of tourism experiences, domestically and internationally (in New Zealand for example, Alderson, 2014; Anderson, 2013; Ibbotson, 2014; Lewis, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014).

Gathering statistics on international school trips is made difficult due to the devolved nature of school decision-making. For instance, in New Zealand this means that school leaders do not need to seek approval from or report to any educational authority about their engagement in these experiences. However, local Dunedin examples from newspapers or school websites revealed a wide range of international school trips. This is illustrated by a selection of those covered in a local newspaper, The Otago Daily Times (ODT). The ODT has reported on a language and cultural trip that included a sister-school exchange to China (Stevens, 2008), a cultural trip to the United Kingdom touring “some of England’s greatest theatre and drama venues” (Lewis, 2013: 2), a “life-changing adventure – a 17 day trek . . . to Mt Everest Base Camp” (Marquet, 2013: 25), a month-long expedition to Africa aimed “to teach the . . . pupils life skills and expand their minds outside the classroom” (Lewis, 2012: 24); and a three-week sporting and cultural tour to London and Europe that included visits to war memorials, sporting fixtures and musical performances, and was an ‘event’ as part of the school’s 150th celebrations (Lewis, 2013). Alongside the expansion of international school trips has been
increased commodification through the emergence of commercial operators that facilitate the organisation of these experiences for inbound and outbound school trips. These include:

- Student Horizons, (www.studenthorizons.co.nz)
- World Challenge (www.worldchallenge.co.nz),
- International School Tours (www.internationalschooltours.com.au),
- Educating Adventures (www.educatingadventures.com).

The emergence of specialist schools tourism focused companies indicate that there is some recognition within the tourism industry that school-led tourism is, in fact, a distinct segment of the tourism market.

Considerable school-led tourism is taking place, with school groups engaging in short duration locally based excursions through to multi-week trips to distant places. The nature of school-led tourism is diverse, with compulsory curriculum-based learning through to an extensive range of optional experiences. As school-led tourism experiences, Ritchie (2003) conceptualised these experiences from a motivational perspective as ‘education first’ (see 1.4) which suggests that there are perceived learning benefits. The following section considers the nature of the perceived educational benefits, firstly examining the nature of learning in informal (out of the classroom) contexts, and then the justifications and motivations that stakeholders may have to engage with them.

### 4.4 Why school-led tourism exists

This section builds on the concepts introduced in Chapter Three (see sections 3.3 and 3.7) about the nature of learning, and how it is influenced by different approaches (e.g., experiential, free-choice) and differentiated environments (e.g., informal and formal contexts). Educational authorities encourage schools to look beyond the classroom for opportunities to enrich their students’ learning (Education Scotland, n.d; 2011; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2009; Ofsted, 2008a, 2008b). For example, New Zealand’s Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) Guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2009), while not a curriculum document per se, clearly reinforces the relationship between the national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b) and learning outside the classroom. This is evident in statements that claim “EOTC can support the aspiration for broad and deep learning in real-life contexts within and across the learning areas of the national curriculum”
(Ministry of Education, 2009: 6). It goes so far as to state that “The vision of New Zealand’s national curriculum cannot be achieved inside classrooms alone” (p7). Sobel (2005: 2) urged schools to use “the river as the text book and the town becomes the classroom”, and in doing so reinforces that curriculum learning should be enacted seamlessly in a classroom with a ‘backyard’ that is not bound by classroom walls or perimeter fences.

Similarly, the British government encouraged schools to give all young people the opportunity to “experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development” (DfES, 2006: 00). Moreover, educational authorities stressed that opportunities to participate are expected to be inclusive of all young people “whatever their age, ability or circumstances” (DfES, 2006: 00 and Ministry of Education, 2009: 6). Schools therefore have a responsibility to offer a range of school-led tourism experiences that are relevant and accessible for the age and dis/ability of young people, and take account of their socio-cultural and socio-economic situations. This is, notwithstanding the optional experiences undertaken voluntarily that may be of longer duration, take place in more challenging or unfamiliar contexts, and incur greater costs such as in international school trips.

In establishing the spatial context for school-led tourism experiences, Carr (2011) referred to the special places outside the classroom that offer educational and recreational value. These special environments have long been seen as authentic learning contexts in which children and young people can broaden their horizons, construct their own learning, deepen their understanding of concepts learned in class, and ‘bring alive’ classroom learning by connecting and applying it to the ‘real world’ (Cooper and Latham, 1988a; DfES, 2006; Floyd, 2002; Haddock and Sword, 2004, Harrison, 1970; Jakubowski, 2003; Lai, 1999; Lynch, 2006; Nespor, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Ritchie et al., 2003; 2008). The active learning experience young people might have directly with the phenomena they are studying, to gain knowledge about the ‘real world’ beyond the school classroom or university, is at the heart of the epistemology of many field trips (Nairn, 2005).

In the education discourse the term authentic is used to describe the nature of the learning experiences that individuals engage with and the context in which they take place (e.g., Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Alton-Lee, 2003; Campbell-Price, 2012; Cosgriff & Thevenard, 2012). This refers to active learning experiences that allow individuals to develop and apply skills in relevant, meaningful contexts. For instance, in the Arts, this may mean composing,
choreographing a piece of work, or performing it to a live audience. Similarly, in an outdoor context, it could be applying navigational techniques to hike from one location to another. Opportunities to develop and apply skills involve direct experience, where the individual has (some) autonomy over the process and outcomes. A key element of this experiential process involves action and reflection, in which individuals make meaning of the experience and consider how it may then be applied in the next or future scenarios (see Chapter Three, section 3.7).

The use of the term authentic is also used to describe contexts in which these experiences occur and these are often situated in spaces outside the classroom. This can imply that there is a divide between the contrived or ‘not quite real world’ of the classroom in comparison to the ‘real world’ outside of the classroom or school perimeter. The unlimited range of ‘real world spaces’ includes for example, natural environments, streetscapes, coalmines, farms, churches, factories or museums (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; DfES, 2006; Falk, Moussouri & Coulson, 1998; Floyd, 2002; Griffen, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2009; Power, Taylor, Rees & Jones, 2009; Rivers, 2006; Tofield et al., 2003). As has been previously stated, young people can experience these spaces next door to their school or by travelling to the other side of the world.

Hence, an authentic experience refers to the ‘realness’ of the experience – the ‘real world’, ‘real people’, ‘real life problems’, or as one teacher said, “You can talk about something, plan for something, and show them photos, but nothing beats the real deal.” (Ministry of Education, 2009: 7). This indicates that young people could experience the ‘real deal’ by engaging in a ‘real world’ issue in the classroom with the input of a ‘real person’ whose presence, insights and/or experience enable the students to gain a first hand understanding. Alternatively, it could mean that it is a combination of being in the ‘real place’ and interacting with the ‘real people’ to give that direct engagement and experience. Therefore, an authentic learning experience is one where individuals directly interact with real places, people or concepts (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Jakubowski, 2003; Nairn, 2005). Additionally, the temporal dimension can also allow real opportunities for young people to develop dispositions, especially over sustained periods of time such as on multi-day trips in similar ways to those reported by young tourists (Brown, 2009; Gmelch, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2009; Noy, 2004; Pearce & Foster, 2006).
Literature from both the tourism and educational fields generally acknowledges that informal contexts, such as those associated with school-led tourism experiences, offer less structure and more freedom for participants to actively engage and interact with others and the environment (Carr, 2011; Lai, 1999; Nespor, 2000; Urry, 2002; Woods, 2004; Zink, 2004; Zink & Burrows, 2008). They have been reported to support cognitive learning through enrichment (Alton-Lee, 2003; Campbell-Price, 2012; Cosgriff & Thevenard, 2012; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Rivers, 2006); prompt aesthetic and emotional connections (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Woods, 2004); and challenge students’ perceptions and attitudes (Alton-Lee, 2003; Robertson, 2001; Tringham, 2006). Several researchers have found that the social, affective, emotional and aesthetic dimensions have resonated in participants’ memories more than the cognitive learning (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Lai, 1999; Woods, 2004; Zink, 2004).

Additionally, these trips are seen to support the identity development and ‘soft skills’ such as sociality and enhancement of relationships (Feuer, 2009; Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Lynch, 2006; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler & Henderson, 2007; Zink, 2004, 2008). Carr (2011) alluded to the perceptions of fun, enjoyment and unstructured learning opportunities that are associated with these sorts of experiences. In doing so, he highlighted a tension between the benefits of free choice and informality and structure that is usually imposed during these experiences. To justify these experiences, teachers are expected to specify learning outcomes to convey the serious nature of the experience (Ballantyne & Packer, 2002, 2005; Jakubowski, 2003; Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jensen, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2009; Rivers, 2006; Zink, 2004).

Pearce and Foster (2006: 1287) describe the necessary contextual conditions for generic skill development to take place through travel experiences which might similarly apply through school-led tourism experiences. It takes “internal motivation, self-initiated activity, involvement in the experience, and the experience of novelty and opportunities to reflect on the experience with others.” They note that learning is particularly contingent upon reflection – this can take place in a number of ways and may be undertaken individually in text, social media or photographs; be socially constructed through mediation with peers, or directly facilitated by a teacher or guide (Pearce & Foster, 2006) (see Chapter Three, section 3.3 and 3.7).
Extended school-led tourism experiences, in terms of time away and distance from home, allow young people to escape from their daily obligations and routines of home. They also encounter a displacement from the physical and emotional support, and protection of their parents. During these experiences young people have genuine opportunities to develop the personal and social skills or capacities, such as managing themselves and their relationships with others in contexts away from home (Education Scotland, 2011; MCEETYA, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2007; Wyn, 2007b). The displacement from the familiarity of home and school life, along with the escape from obligations, can allow space for different interaction, play and social interaction. In turn this might encourage individuals to reflect and challenge the status quo, which may then lead to some personal change (Ryan, 2002). It is during these more intensified contexts that school leaders are expected to guide and supervise, and peers learn to give and take from each other (Wylie, 2012).

There are some further learning benefits that school-led tourism experiences with an international dimension might offer participants. Immersion in a foreign speaking environment has been reported as worthwhile in assisting participants to gain proficiency in a foreign language, along with gaining knowledge and understanding of the host country (Carr, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2003; 2008; Smith & Jenner, 1997; Stevens, 2008; Teichler, 1996). In a similar way to learning through other school-led tourism experiences, with the exception of foreign language learning, the ‘general education’, and development of generic or ‘soft skills’ has been reported more widely than academic or cognitive learning through study abroad experiences (Brown, 2009; Carlson and Widaman, 1988; Gmelch, 2004; Lumkes Jr, Hallett & Vallade, 2012; Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011). For example, Gmelch (2004) reported that the most enduring impact of the study abroad experience was not the cognitive gains. Instead it was the students’ personal development, including such things as adaptability, ability to cope with minor adversity and independence.

The dearth of research that has explored the educational experiences of international school trips has necessitated a consideration of the literature that has reported on study abroad experiences of post-secondary age young people. From these experiences, young people have reported a greater international understanding and ‘world-mindedness’ (Carlson & Widaman, 1988) which was described as a heightened political concern, cross-cultural interest and cosmopolitanism, along with more objectivity about their own country. Similarly, Lumkes Jr et al. (2012) found that an agriculture-focused study trip to China had minimal impact on their students’ knowledge but it profoundly altered their cultural self-awareness and outlook on
global politics. They concluded that it was the study abroad experience that enabled a different lens through which the students could reflect on what they had taken for granted in their own lives (e.g., what it means to be an American and to come from a privileged upbringing), and in that way had developed their intercultural sensitivity. These studies have illustrated some specific learning benefits that international school trips could also offer young people.

Having worked to establish the scope and nature of school-led tourism, along with the educational reasons why it exists, attention now turns to the reasons why people might choose to participate in it.

4.5 Why participate voluntarily in school-led tourism

In Chapter One, school-led tourism experiences were conceptualised and differentiated into those that are curriculum or extra-curricular, compulsory and non-compulsory, and they may be domestic or international trips. These categorisations were revisited earlier in this chapter. It was established that school-led tourism experiences require approval from the school leadership, along with consent from parents for their children’s participation (British Standards Institution, 2014; DfES, n.d; Ministry of Education, 2009). Given the legal responsibility placed on schools to ensure that these experiences are of educational value and safe for the participants, school leaders have significant influence and power to decide the structure of these experiences, to manage the behaviour of participants and control the teaching and learning processes (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Schools rely heavily on financial contributions from parents, or young people themselves, to meet the cost of residential and other experiences outside the classroom in the United Kingdom (Boffey, 2011; Fox, 2011; Ofsted, 2008a), as is the case elsewhere (Anderson, 2010; Jones, 2014; Lewis, 2012b; Young & Carville, 2013b; Woods, 2014). For trips that involve additional costs or involve periods of time beyond normal school hours, stretching from overnight to multi-night or multi-week experiences, participation shifts from compulsory or at least expected, to voluntary. Parents can decide not to grant consent for their child’s participation in a trip if it involves activities undertaken in environments where they perceive a high level of risk, or simply do not wish their child to be involved (Ministry of Education, 2009). They use their power to act on behalf of their children’s wishes, or may use
their power to act on what they perceive as the best decision and this may not be the same as their child’s wishes (Carr, 2011; Gram, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2009). In other words, the young person may be willing to participate and not gain parental consent, and vice versa. Young people also play their part to exert their desire or resistance to participate (Gram, 2007). However, even though each stakeholder has agency, influence and power are not evenly distributed. Little is known about the extent to which parents and young people influence decisions about their participation and at which phase of the school-led tourism experience their voices are heard. This is something that this thesis, at least in part aimed to address. This section focuses on the reasons why school leaders, parents and young people choose to participate voluntarily in school-led tourism and specifically in an international school trip.

An individual’s agency to participate (or not), or encourage another person to participate (or not); such as a young person encouraging a peer, a parent encouraging their child, reflects their motivation and justification about the perceived benefits (or lack of perceived benefits) from participating. All school-led tourism experiences require logistical planning and organisation (British Standards Institution, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2009), sufficient ‘buy in’ from the young people and their parents to meet the additional cost, and a commitment from the school leadership to coordinate and lead the experience. For trips that are of a longer duration, further afield and more costly for participants, the commitment made by participants increases. This might place challenges on peoples’ finances, interrupt other commitments young people have, and create disruption for school leaders to their work or personal lives. Therefore, deciding to participate suggests that the trip should offer perceived benefits for those involved.

Although educational benefits might be used to justify a trip (this is addressed shortly) there may also be general tourism motives that encourage participants to engage in these experiences. Krippendorf (1986) suggested that the desire to escape from home and the responsibilities of everyday life provide a ‘push’ motive to engage in tourism. Learning and education, along with self-fulfilment, were noted by Iso-Ahola (1983) as important intrinsic rewards that are valid motives on their own, or alongside the desire to escape, or avoid something. The tourism space offers young people and their teachers escape and breathing space from their busy, structured school and personal lives (Lewis, 2014; Nairn et al., 2012; Wylie, 2012), in the same way it does for other people engaging in tourism experiences.
In Chapter Two it was established that peer relationships become increasingly important to young people during adolescence. Larsen and Jenssen (2004: 46) noted that young people are “often deeply involved in forming and expressing their identities, and they commonly conform more to norms of the peer group than to those of their parents and other adults”. During this stage there are also cognitive and social changes that include and lead to an increased idealism, along with a desire for autonomy and identity (Santrock, 1997). It is not surprising therefore, that young people look for opportunities, such as school-led tourism, to bond with others outside of their families, and to explore their capacities, limits and liaisons.

Literature from both tourism and school-led tourism indicates that the social motivator is important for young people. The time away from their families offers young people greater freedom and choice (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). Small’s (2008: 784) research with adolescent girls reported positive holiday experiences as ones that were associated with “independence, self-esteem, and being in control”. They valued the spaces in which they could resist being under the parental gaze and saw holidays as sites where the family bonds could be loosened rather than strengthened. Carr’s (2006) research compared the holiday motivations and desires of adolescents and their parents. He found that parents and adolescents shared the desire to get away, relax, be with friends and have new experiences. However, he noted that adolescents ranked the social aspects of making new friends, partying and dancing, and shopping as more important than their parents. Parents, by contrast, ranked enriching their education, visiting sites of heritage and historic value, and experiencing nature more highly than the adolescents. Carr’s (2006) research highlighted the potential for compromise and conflict if young people do not have their voice heard about their desires in their holiday experiences, and also in their school-led tourism experiences.

The strength of the social motivator for young people to participate in a school trip was highlighted in Larssen and Jensen’s (2004) Norwegian-based research. The young people described ‘travelling and being with’ as more significant than the travelling to or from. In other words, the social experience was more important than where they went and what they did. Zink (2004) and Zink and Burrows (2008) claimed that it was the ‘dots in between’ the structured activities that young people remembered most vividly from their school-led (outdoor education) experiences. These enduring memories were generated by sociality and fun, and were perceived by young people as the times in which their long-term friendships are established. Similarly, Small (2008: 785) reported the importance of playful social pursuits in holiday experiences, and that adolescent girls reported the “shared fun, excitement, and
adventure through physical activities” were more important than learning and education. This emphasises the importance of asking young people what they want from a school-led tourism experience. Understanding their motivation and negotiating the extent to which their wishes can be accommodated may reduce disappointment and conflict during the experience. Moreover, if the social motivation to ‘be with’ their peers is as or more important than the destination, it gives weight to the questions raised in media articles about the justification for these experiences and why schools are selecting increasingly exotic and far-flung destinations (van Beynan, 2013; Fox, 2011; Young & Carville, 2013b).

However, it would be naïve to expect that the group dynamics on school-led tourism experiences are consistently positive and that fun underlines all experiences. Although the social motive is important for many young people, caution is needed to not assume that this is the case for them all. Small (2008) reported that along with positive holiday memories that were associated with physicality, freedom from others, fun and social interaction, for some young people there were also negative memories of embarrassment, guilt, fear and shame. Similarly, Larssen and Jensen (2004) alluded to this by acknowledging some young people expressed their concern about not getting on with others, being left out, and the possibility of conflict amongst classmates on their school trip. Small (2008) argued for research that expands the knowledge of the meanings of young people’s tourism experiences that takes account of those who are not just representative of the mainstream, privileged, able-bodied, but also include those who are less privileged and marginalised. By including the voices of young people, along with parents and school leaders in this research, insights might be gained about differing views of the group dynamics and social interaction as they anticipate and experience international school trips.

In backpacker research, Noy (2004) noted that the voices of those who may have counter narratives, such as being disappointed with an experience are generally silenced. With respect to school-led tourism experiences, this might be similarly reflected if school assemblies or school newsletters only give ‘voice’ to those who ‘fitted in’ with the assumed social and performative norms of the group. This resonated with Nairn (1999, 2003) who warned that assumptions about the social bonding associated with field trip experiences do not always eventuate in practice. She argued that a hidden curriculum exists within the social space of fieldtrips (in higher/tertiary education), one that constitutes both spoken and unspoken assumptions about gender, sexuality, physicality and ‘race’. In summer camp research, Van Slyck (2006) found that the hegemonic construction of masculinity was reinforced through
hyper-masculine, risk-taking activities through traditional (single-sex) summer camps. However, in recent decades the American summer camp movement has diversified in the range of activities and specific populations they cater for (e.g., Feuer, 2009; Vincke and van Heeringen, 2004). While school-led tourism experiences may cater for young people with special interests, particularly extra-curricular trips, it is likely that the group of young people and accompanying school leaders may not all fit the assumed norms or share the dominant cultural practices. Therefore, those that lead these experiences should heed Nairn, Higgitt & Vanneste (2000) advice to give greater consideration to ensure the emotional safety of field trip participants. They argued for inclusive practices to mitigate the possible exclusion of those who do not fit the assumed norms, such as those who are not able bodied, may not be heterosexual, have family responsibilities or different cultural practices.

The social influences of classmates, teachers and former students were all found to be influential in motivating students to participate in a tourism field trip in higher education (Goh and Ritchie, 2011). They inferred that students might experience some form of social pressure to participate in order to gain approval from their peers. Goh and Ritchie (2011) noted the tangibility of the experience conveyed through word-of-mouth messages from former participants in reducing their level of perceived risk, and influencing their intentions and behaviour. It is therefore likely that tangible messages conveyed by previous participants (including young people, parents and school leaders) about the nature of the experiences might similarly influence potential participants and their parents.

However, for some of the more expensive school-tourism experiences, such as international school trips, media reports have indicated that some active negotiation has taken place between parents and their children about the potential benefits of these experiences and how the cost of participation will be met (e.g., Anderson, 2010; van Beynen, 2013; Fox, 2011; Woods, 2004; Young & Carville, 2013b). Some parents had alluded to the pester power exercised by their children in order to participate and other parents “stumped up with the cash upfront” (Young & Carville, 2013b: 1). The value of these experiences was perceived by both parents and school leaders as holistic more than specific, with statements such as “worthwhile life experience”, and learning “how lucky she is.” However, not all views about these trips were consistently positive – the 45 online responses to Young & Carville’s (2013b) article illustrates there is an intensity of opinions, mostly by parents, which justifies the inclusion of parents’ views in this thesis.
Parents’ concerted cultivation of their child’s activities for their educational value and being seen to do the right thing in supporting their child’s future through enriching experiences may mean their own identity as ‘good parents’ is enhanced (Carr, 2011; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere & Havitz, 2008; Jeanes, 2010; Johns & Gyimothy, 2002; Schanzel et al., 2012b; Shaw, 2010). It has been reported that Japanese parents place such high importance on their children’s educational experiences that they would alter their household budgets to ensure their children get these opportunities (Japan Travel Bureau, 1998). This would suggest that some school-led tourism experiences, particularly international school trips, might be perceived by parents as a way to strengthen their children’s cultural capital.

Travel is perceived to be an investment in life experiences, and done the ‘right way’ is a means to build cultural capital (Bell, 2002; Bourdieu, 1977; Desforges, 1998; Frandberg, 2006, 2009; Pearce & Foster, 2006; Urry, 2002). As discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.8) an individual’s cultural capital is often judged by their linguistic skills, educational qualifications, interpersonal skills (Zepke and Leach, 2007), intercultural competence (Behrnd & Porzett, 2012) and mobility competence (Frandberg, 2009). Munt (1994) argued that ‘appropriate’ travel experiences can act as an informal qualification, with an individual’s passport acting as a record of accumulated achievement, knowledge and experiences. Similarly, Desforges (1998) claimed that travel experiences serve as a sign of distinction, where those who have travelled gain access to a social class or club of people who have been away on a significant trip. Frandberg, (2009: 652) argued “foreign travel is a form of cultural consumption with which we signal taste, lifestyle, and values to our social environment.” As such, it plays a role in defining who is included in or excluded from particular social groups (Munt, 1994; New Zealand Press Association, 2005; Urry, 2002).

In the case of young people, parents have significant influence in determining how much and in what ways they travel abroad while growing up. If parents view travelling as an important part of their quality of life and a marker of their social group, Frandberg (2009: 653) suggested that they would be “keen to mediate the competencies gained through, and needed for, travelling to their children.” Thus, a young person’s travel behaviour is influenced by his or her parents’ resources and mobility-related preferences. However, as a young person’s social environment broadens, such as through their school networks and peer relationships, they may begin to form a mobility pattern that differs from that of their family (Carr, 2011; Frandberg, 2009).
By offering school-led tourism opportunities to young people who might otherwise miss out on other travel experiences because of socio-economic, socio-cultural or geographic factors, schools might play a role in mitigating this form of sociospatial exclusion (Shaw & Thomas, 2006). The travel biographies and competencies of teachers are of relevance in enacting these experiences – their personal travel capital is likely to be a factor in initiating or leading these experiences, and in gaining the trust of principals and Boards of Trustees to responsibly and safely facilitate these experiences (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Internationally there is an increasing awareness of the need to grow citizens, societies and economies with the ability to engage and prosper. The future prosperity of individuals, countries and organisations requires them to have the knowledge and competencies to understand and work in international contexts (Doyle, Gendall, Tait, Meyer, Hoek, McKenzie & Loorparg, 2008; Sweeney, n.d). To achieve this, countries individually and collaboratively have and continue to establish policies, strategies and initiatives that support this. Internationalisation in education has expanded significantly in the past few decades with study abroad and student exchange programmes well developed globally, especially within higher (tertiary) education (e.g., Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Gmelch, 2004; Nash, 1976; Osler, 1998; Teichler, 1996). In New Zealand the International Education Agenda 2007-2012 (Ministry of Education, 2007a) seeks to support initiatives that allow students to develop well-developed global knowledge, especially of Asia and the Pacific, to develop skills to succeed in multi-cultural and multi-lingual settings which strengthens their own cultural identity through international interactions and experiences, and enables them to be outward looking and enterprising. Increasing the mobility of young people is just one aspect through which these objectives can be achieved (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

In the absence of evidence-based literature about the justification for international school trips, the following excerpt offers an insight into how and why schools might adopt internationalisation priorities into their school, with respect to international school trips. This narrative comes from the Rector’s message about the reasons why 63 students were “preparing to head off on four different overseas adventures during the holiday break” in an end of (school) term online newsletter (Christine Leighton, www.stac.school.nz, 2013). She wrote:

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8. The term ‘Rector’ equates to a school principal. St Andrew’s College is a decile 10 independent co-educational school. Within its city it is referred to as an ‘elite’ school, due to its wealthy community and its reputation as a high-achieving school. This school offers a broad range of school-led tourism experiences and individual student exchanges. Currently, it is uncommon to see a comprehensive statement on a school’s website justifying their ‘trips overseas’. 
... to experience different lifestyles and cultures and give service to those communities. Over years, [the school] has developed strong relationships with these communities ... they [have] become more meaningful.

... future opportunities for our students will be enriched by being able to speak confidently and effectively in a language other than English.

A school-wide goal ... is to grow global awareness because we believe that young people today have a responsibility to make the world a better place – to watch out for each other, to seek better living standards, put an end to extreme poverty, to preserve our planet and to work for peace.

Education is the first stepping stone to a better world and it’s achieved by sharing knowledge and different perspectives. ... we better come to understand each other, to appreciate and celebrate our inevitable differences and to minimise the potential causes of conflict.

Although this is a long quotation, the excerpt illustrated the way in which the professional and pedagogical knowledge of the Rector on behalf of the school, was used to communicate the benefits of these experiences to parents, students and the wider community (Buscher, 2006). In doing so, the justifications of the potential value of these experiences for young people’s futures was presented in a compelling manner. The message of the educational benefits and the positive way in which their participation may enhance their futures might be a powerful influence on ‘good parents’ who wish to support their children’s education and future (Carr, 2011; Jeanes, 2010; Schanzel et al., 2012; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

In the competitive neo-liberal context of school choice (see Chapter Three, section 3.8), school-led tourism experiences can enhance the reputation of the school and be an underlying motive to offer them. Some commentators have labelled high profile trips, particularly to international destinations as marketing ploys for schools, with the ‘sky high’ costs leading to increased inequality amongst schools (Anderson, 2010; Fox, 2011; Young & Carville, 2013a; 2013b; van Beynen, 2013; Woods, 2004). In Young & Carville (2013b: 1) Angela Roberts, president of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) acknowledged the “absolutely valuable” role of education outside the classroom experiences and that international schools trips were a “wonderful experience for the kids.” However, she questioned whether they justified the attention given to them by participants. She stated:

It’s a great marketing exercise being able to say, ‘We send our kids to Nasa or our geography class goes to the Amazon,’ and photos of the overseas trips are often prominently displayed on school websites.
Likewise, van Beynen (2013: C11) asserted that “the whole overseas jaunt becomes a huge distraction to why teachers and their pupils are at school”, particularly with the time and effort that goes into organising and fundraising. He alluded to the difficulty of being left behind when a trip departs and that it contradicts societies where people expect to have equitable access to and opportunities within education. His comment acknowledged the careful line schools must take to offer opportunities that appeal and have value while at the same time are not perceived to be exclusive and favour only certain groups of young people. In the UK, Revell (2004) questioned whether serious educational visits and learning experiences were losing out to the ‘school jollies’ to leisure attractions. He pointed out that experiencing Disneyland in Paris was a leisure, not a French language experience and raised similar questions about those who were able to participate in these experiences and those who might be excluded because of the associated costs.

However, it cannot be assumed that the reputation of a school will be advanced through school-led tourism. When things go wrong the negative publicity has the potential to damage school reputations. Harmful outcomes including fatalities that have resulted from these experiences have been analysed through coronial inquests or government-led reviews, the media (e.g., AAP, 2012; Adams, 2008; BBC News, 2007; Davies, 2012; Dominion Post, 2008; Foster, 2007; Malvern, 2008; New Zealand Government, 2008; Otago Daily Times, 2008; Stokes, 2007, Wade, 2009) and in the academic literature (e.g., Beedie & Bourne, 2005; Brookes, 2007, 2011; Brookes, Corkill QC, B. & Smith, M, 2009; Haddock & Sword, 2004; Tarrant, 2011). In light of the expansion of international school trips and other youth focused international outdoor experiences and the occurrence of fatalities during those experiences, Brookes (2011) argued that greater consideration needs to go into analysing the risks that are associated with different conditions in international destinations to those at home.

Government-led reviews have resulted in revised guidelines for good practice in all experiences outside the classroom (e.g., Ministry of Education, 2009), managing traumatic incidents (e.g., Ministry of Education, 2010), greater compliance for adventure activities (Department of Labour, 2011), and new standards in the United Kingdom (British Standards Institution, 2014). Moreover, schools have been encouraged by educational authorities to review and strengthen their practice guidelines and policies to ensure school-led experiences have positive learning and safety outcomes (Curtis, 2005; Kelly, 2005; Meikle, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009).
Negative outcomes from school-led tourism experiences are not limited to fatalities. A school’s reputation can also be harmed through incidents that are reported in the media, and relate to the behaviour of students, and by implication, the supervision given by adult group members. Attention in the media focused on the incidents themselves such as shoplifting (Alderson, 2014; Kjaer, 2010; Roxburgh, 2006) and alcohol use (Grunwell, 2010; New Zealand Press Association, 2007; Radio New Zealand, 2010), but importantly raised questions about how the school leaders dealt with the situation during the trip and whether the school implemented appropriate consequences upon their return.

One case in particular highlighted the fallout from an art and history trip to Greece undertaken by an ‘elite’ Australian private school. As reported in the media, the trip descended into one more like ‘schoolies’ than school excursion, with smoking, drinking and a lack of supervision resulting in one student alleging that she had been raped (Baird, 2004; Gannon, 2007; Pelly, 2004). The school’s treatment of the girl, who was expelled from the school, drew public attention and created a scandal, which later played out in a legal case of the student versus the school. An element in the fallout from this case was the way in which the imperative of the school to maintain its reputation figured prominently in the way it managed the crisis, and was perceived to eclipse the needs of the individual student. Moreover, it highlighted the unpredictable spaces in which school-led tourism takes place. The temporal and spatial displacement meant that the behaviour of teachers and students was not regulated in the ways that they were in the regular times and spaces of the school grounds. Consequentially, Gannon (2007) emphasised that when organising school-led tourism experiences consideration is needed about how young people are managed in the sometimes unpredictable and risky spaces in which they take place.

There have been other consequences from the well-publicised fatalities or serious harm incidents incurred by participants during school-led tourism experiences. Parents, teachers and educational leaders have responded with an increased aversion to risk and subsequent organisational tasks required to meet the safety expectations and requirements (Carr, 2011; stuff.co.nz, 2008; Vasagar, 2011) or fear of legal action being taken (Taylor, 2005). As Carr (2011: 71) stated, “parents’ conceptualisation of themselves as good parents is closely bound up with the quality of care they provide for their children.” Therefore, their identification as a good parent and a school’s reputation as a ‘good school’ might be adversely affected if incidents occur that cause harm, whether that be physical, emotional or social harm. Fears of losing school-led tourism experiences as part of the overall school-related educational
experiences has led to further media discourse, with much of it focusing on the value of free play and engagement with risk (e.g., Asthana, 2006; Bell, 2004; Kemp, 2006; Revell, 2002; ). For example, Kemp (2006) alluded to the emphasis by society to have young people constantly engaged in learning opportunities and activities under the instruction or supervision of adults, describing this as a form of societal ‘panic.’ He highlighted some of the points of tension for school leaders as well as parents, particularly in how to achieve the balance between structure, supervision, risk, freedom and independence that may also be applied in school-led tourism experiences.

It is clear that the voice of educators is more prevalent in the literature about learning experiences outside the classroom, and that it typically focuses on the educational benefits for their students. Teachers’ participation in school-led tourism is also voluntary, yet there is an absence of literature that sheds light on their own experiences or what motivates them personally. Stirling (2006, 2008) reported that teachers’ field trip practice was influenced by the episteme of their own field trip experiences as students. For teachers who engage with school-led tourism, they emphasise the value of these experiences and also the “huge undertaking” to prepare for these experiences on top of their daily school work (Woods, 2004). Despite their active agency and influence in these experiences, there remains a dearth of literature that examines the personal motives of teachers to engage in these experiences. This justifies the inclusion of the views of school leaders about their motivations and justifications to engage with international school trips in this thesis.

4.6 Chapter summary

School-led tourism is a diverse phenomenon. It encompasses a range of experiences that might be curriculum-based or focused on personal interests through extra-curricular activities. The temporal and spatial dimensions further add to the variety and nature of learning experiences and influence the level and types of risk, and the cost of participation. Importantly, from an educational perspective, it is the opportunity for young people to have active learning experiences in relevant contexts that justifies these experiences. Attempts to quantify the school-led tourism market have been disjointed and unsystematic. However, the anecdotal and literature-based evidence suggests that globally it is an active and growing market.
School-led tourism engages multiple stakeholders. Although each group of stakeholders might have similar motives to engage with school-led tourism, it is important to acknowledge that these differ amongst individuals. While some individuals are motivated by these opportunities and positive about the experiences, there might be others who resist or do not share the same views about these experiences. This chapter has drawn on the literature to examine a range of possible justifications and motivations for people to voluntarily engage in school-led tourism experiences. Educational authorities encourage schools to utilise environments outside the classroom for learning and to develop strategies to internationalise learning experiences for their students. Schools, while driven by learning-focused justifications, might also perceive these experiences as ways to enhance their school’s profile and reputation within the community. Part of being constructed as a ‘good parent’ involves the cultivation of their children’s educational experiences and cultural capital, whilst ensuring they are protected from unwelcome risk. Young people expressed the importance of the social motivator and this fits with the importance of forming their own identity during adolescence. Moreover, learning through these experiences was reported to be less about the cognitive gains and more about the development of ‘soft skills’ and the emotional and aesthetic connections that they made with people and places.

Chapters Two, Three and Four have provided the theoretical context and framework for this thesis. Attention now turns to the research approach and methods utilised to collect empirical material. The link between the theoretical framework and the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the empirical material is the focus of Chapter Five.
CHAPTER 5. THE RESEARCH APPROACH
5.1 Introducing the chapter

The overall purpose of this thesis is to examine the justifications, motivations and experiences of multiple stakeholders associated with an international school trip. This chapter links the three previous literature-based chapters with the following three empirical chapters. It explains the approach and method used to collect, interpret and analyse the empirical material needed to meet the thesis aim and objectives.

The chapter begins with a justification for taking a pragmatic approach to the research as a means to enable situation-responsiveness in conducting school-based research. The methodological challenges and issues in relation to conducting school-based fieldwork and researching with children and young people are discussed, along with the strategies used to address them. The chapter goes on to discuss the reasons for collecting qualitative data to address the research questions, before explaining why focus group interviews were selected as the method. As is important in qualitative research, my positionality is outlined along with the reflexive screens that influence our understanding and ways of knowing as researchers. Following that, the research design and the process used to recruit participants, collect data, document, interpret and analyse data are described in detail to conclude the chapter.

5.2 A pragmatic stance - enabling situation responsiveness

Conducting research is a strategic process that requires thought and creativity. Thus, the selection of data collection methods has generated significant discussion, debate and publication of literature (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). O’Leary (2004: 1) argues that the research process requires the researcher to constantly assess, reassess and make decisions about “the best possible means for obtaining trustworthy information, carrying out appropriate analysis, and drawing credible conclusions”. As Davidson and Tolich (2003) note, there is no one right way to approach research. However, some authors (e.g., Guba, 1990; Lather, 2006; Peshkin, 2000, 2001; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004) argue that research needs to be grounded on the choice of an appropriate paradigm. The term paradigm is closely associated with Thomas Kuhn’s research concerning the history of science (Kuhn, 1962). He argued that researchers who share a commitment to a particular paradigm are thus committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. This is reflected in Bryman’s (1988: 4) definition of
a paradigm as a “cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted, and so on”. Paradigms are human constructions (Guba, 1990) and are distinguished by their ontological stance (worldview and beliefs), epistemology (the way things must be known) and methodology (way things must be investigated). Thus, paradigms are “important theoretical constructs for illuminating fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality” (Patton, 2002: 72). Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 19) add that a researcher’s paradigm is an interpretive framework, which is “guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied”.

Nevertheless, Patton (2002: 71) challenges the rigidity of paradigms, arguing that they reveal “value-laden prejudices about what constitute credible and valuable contributions to knowledge.” Consequently, these prejudices act in a similar way to which blinkers narrow a horse’s vision, thus limiting a researcher’s methodological choices, flexibility and creativity. Furthermore, by pigeonholing a researcher into particular paradigms, his/her freedom to question the assumptions that underpin it is inhibited, as is his/her freedom to make appropriate or situation-responsive decisions throughout the research process.

As an alternative, Patton (2002) makes the case for an a-paradigmatic stance, which is based on the concept of pragmatism. He argues that a pragmatic stance aims to replace the one-sided paradigm allegiance and its associated methodological orthodoxy by increasing the methodological options available to researchers. Although pragmatism contemplates different worldviews and paradigmatic stances, it focuses attention on “judging the quality of the study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within a particular context for a specific audience” (Patton, 2002: 71-72). Being pragmatic enables the researcher to be situation-responsive, by emphasising the importance of selecting the most appropriate data collection methods in relation to the specific research context and the resources available. The data collection methods in this thesis are therefore based on a pragmatic stance, which enabled methodological decisions to be made with consideration for several important factors: the research questions, conducting research within a school context, collecting data from multiple stakeholder groups, the resources available, and in response to the challenges experienced.
5.3  Research aim and objective

The research aim and objective, along with a justification for the inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives, were addressed in Chapter One (Sections 1.2 and 1.3 respectively).

As a reminder, the overall aim for this research is to explore the justifications, motivations and experiences of stakeholders (young people, their parents and school leaders) associated with an international school trip?

The following objective is contained within the overall aim:

- How is learning perceived and positioned within the international school trip experience?

The research aim and objective sought the perspectives of multiple stakeholders who were associated with an international school trip, therefore it was necessary to gain access to each stakeholder group. Each of these trips was a school-led and organised experience, therefore direct and personal contact with participants was accessed through school gatekeepers and data collected within the school setting. This is an approach consistent with qualitative inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002), and the most commonly sought site for research with school-age young people (Carr, 2011; David et al, 2001; Heath, Charles, Crow & Wiles, 2007). School-based research necessitates the researcher to consider several factors that relate to undertaking research in school settings and with young people. The decision to collect qualitative data to address the research aim and objective is discussed in Section 5.5.

5.4  Researching in school settings and with young people

This research focused on international school trips that were organised and led by school personnel. The decision to collect data in the school environment necessitated that access to the multiple stakeholders be negotiated through schools gatekeepers. Several authors have reported the challenges researchers can face in gaining access to children and young people as research participants, with adult gatekeepers providing the most significant barrier (e.g., Bodgan & Biklen, 2007; Bushin, 2007; Carr, 2006; Powell, Graham, Taylor, Newell & Fitzgerald, 2011). Despite this, the recruitment of children and young people is most
commonly sought through the educational system (Carr, 2011; Heath, Charles, Crow & Wiles, 2007; Powell et al., 2011). This is due to the perception that schools give access to a representative sample of young people in a particular locality (David et al., 2001), they are places where children and young people spend large amounts of time, and schools, once access has been gained, can offer organisational convenience (Heath et al., 2007). In this research the school principal held the key that would allow access to the parents, young people and other school leaders. The challenges experienced in recruiting schools by firstly gaining the approval of school principals and how they were overcome are discussed in Section 5.8.2.

Even with the consent of the school principal to undertake research, researchers have reported that the school setting presents a range of issues. In a school setting a further level of consent is usually needed through the parents (a further level of gatekeepers) in order to gain access to children and young people (Heath et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2011). As David et al. (2001: 351) reflected on their own “protracted negotiations” to gain access to children and young people for their research, they recognised that even though schools might wish to accord children agency in consent procedures and the research itself, they nonetheless exercised significant power over them through the layers of gatekeepers with whom access needed to be negotiated.

A key factor in conducting ethical research is to ensure that participants give their informed consent to participate (O’Leary, 2004; Miller & Bell, 2002; Patton, 2002). The British Educational Research Association (BERA) defined informed consent as “the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway” (BERA, 2004: 6). They can only do this when they have a full understanding of what their requested involvement is, which includes the time commitment, what they are being asked to do, what topics may be addressed, and whether there are any potential physical or emotional risks. Informed consent therefore implies that participants have the intellectual capacity and psychological maturity to understand and engage in the research, be able to make their own decisions about participation, participate voluntarily with the right to discontinue without disadvantage or pressure, and be fully informed about the intended use of the research findings. However, David et al. (2001) pointed out that too often consent has been viewed as a ‘one-off’ event at the outset, and is based on participants having sufficient information to know and understand what they are getting themselves into. Some researchers have challenged this, instead suggesting that consent should be an ongoing
process that is renegotiated over time (Alderson, 1995; Morrow & Richards, 1996), referred to by Heath et al. (2007) as ‘process consent’. Even researchers can rarely, if ever “know the full extent of what participation may entail, or predict in advance all the possible outcomes of participation” (Heath et al., 2007: 404). In this research, each participant was involved in a single focus group interview. The recruitment process (outlined in Section 5.8.2) ensured that each participant had received written information about the research and agreed to participate prior to the focus group interviews. Despite this, participants were reminded that they had a right to withdraw from the focus group interview at any time. However, I was mindful that potentially some individuals might have felt uncomfortable if they decided they no longer wanted to take part once the focus group interview was underway. To mitigate this risk, participants were encouraged to contribute but individuals were not pressurised for answers.

Although gatekeepers can be a barrier to access research participants, overly protective ethical review and approval processes within institutions have also been cited as barriers in undertaking research (Powell et al., 2011). This further adds to the complications when seeking children and young people as research participants. In Powell et al.’s. (2011) international study they found that institutional ethics committees were more concerned about risk and the potential to be sued than the ethical issues themselves. Another frustration is related to the refusal of some ethics committees to recognise children and young people’s ability to provide their own consent, instead insisting on the use of assent by adults. This undermines the respect afforded to children and young people, where their ability to express their agency arises from their competency at decision-making (Heath et al, 2007) and effectively disempowers them (Carr, 2011). Requiring parental consent suggests that children and young people are not sufficiently ‘adult’ to comprehend the nature of the research, their participation in it, and the potential consequences, and are therefore positioned as vulnerable and in need of protection (Carr, 2011). Irrespective of the misgivings researchers may have about the levels of consent required, Heath et al. (2007) noted that they rarely have influence on the decision-making of organisations or institutions and had to comply with their decisions and work with the institutional constraints placed on them.

Punch (2002) suggested that although the school environment is a place for children and young people to learn and as such is ‘their space’, schools are organised and controlled by adults. Similarly, Barker and Weller (2003: 51) discussed the issue of spatiality, in that “adults and existing power relations in institutions and spaces in which children spend their time have a much wider impact upon research with children”. Thus, young people may
conform to the ‘legitimate’ or acceptable forms of communication, or as Punch (2002b) suggested, feel pressurised to give ‘correct’ answers to research questions by answering them in the way they anticipate an adult would want to hear. Likewise, Carr (2011) suggested that the social authority of adults as ‘authority figures’ can create barriers between adult researchers and adolescents, with the latter potentially rejecting the authoritarianism of the researcher as a way to assert their own identity. This, he claimed, has significant implications when undertaking focus groups with children within a school environment and he suggested that focus groups held in less formal spaces might be more productive and interactive. However, differentiating the setting for different stakeholders might reinforce to young people that they need ‘different’ requirements because of their age or role as young people in comparison to adult participants. Potentially, the use of alternative settings could have undermined their agency as competent active agents to express their views within the school setting.

Arguably, it is not just the young people who are potentially affected by the power relationships within a school when participating in research in school settings. The social authority of teachers and the school’s senior leadership might similarly intimidate parents when they are research participants in these environments. Unlike students and teachers, parents must ‘check in’ to the school’s reception and their access to move freely around the school or to interact with teachers and/or their children on school premises is subject to the permission of school gatekeepers. Like their children they are also subject to the social authority and power relationships held by school leaders within school settings. Even within the school leaders’ participant cohort (that was often made up of teachers and members of the school’s senior leadership team) there might be power relationships amongst them. Along with ensuring individuals were not pressurized to give responses, it was also important to build trust amongst stakeholder participants and to reassure them that their responses would be treated confidentiality and not shared with other stakeholder group participants. Other strategies used in focus group interviews that might have reduced power relationships are addressed in Section 5.10.
5.5 Choosing to collect qualitative data

To address the research aim and objective qualitative data was sought to explore the perspectives and meanings of the research participants (young people, their parents and school leaders) in their own words, in order to investigate their justifications, motivations and experiences in relation to an international school trip. Qualitative research is “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3), makes the world visible, and attempts to understand it in terms of the meanings people bring to it. It is built on the assumption that human action is constructed, not caused (Cresswell, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Choosing to collect qualitative data has been influenced by the constructivist and social constructivist views of learning (see Chapter Three, Section 3.3) where knowledge is constructed on the basis of prior knowledge and situated in particular physical and social contexts (Resnick, 1989; St. George & Bourke, 2008).

Although the collection of qualitative data was deemed the most appropriate approach, its advantages and disadvantages were considered alongside those of quantitative methods in relation to the research aim and objective. Qualitative research methods typically produce an abundance of information that can increase the depth of understanding about a concept or situation, although it is usually drawn from a much smaller number of people. In comparison, quantitative research relies on large samples, from which the statistical analysis of aggregated data offers broad, generalisable and succinct findings (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research relies on the variety of interpretations that people have about events in their lives (Taylor & Smith, 2009b), through open-ended responses expressed in their own words. The rich data collected through qualitative methods allows for the construction of meaning rather than the more generalisable and shallow data associated with quantitative methods. Patton (2002) acknowledges that the longer, more detailed and varied content of qualitative findings are neither systematic nor standardised. Consequently, the process of analysis can be messy and difficult (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Feldman, 1995).

Qualitative methods allow for the exploration of ideas, meanings and understandings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Furthermore, Mason (2002) advocates for the flexibility and sensitivity that qualitative techniques offer to the research context. Qualitative research does not claim allegiance to any

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9 From now on, participants will be used to refer to all stakeholder groups.
particular paradigm, theory or discipline (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Neither is there a single ‘right way’ to conduct it; however, qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 8. Original emphasis).

Clearly then, such knowledge can be gained through direct interaction with young people, their parents and school leaders to “yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, feelings, opinions, and knowledge” (Patton, 2002: 4). Following the decision to collect qualitative data to address the research questions, focus group interviews were then considered the most appropriate method to use for research involving multiple stakeholders within a school setting.

5.6 Choosing focus group interviews to collect qualitative data

The empirical material for this research was generated using focus group interviews, which are similar to other qualitative research methods in that they enable researchers to have access to the opinions, attitudes and experiences of individuals within a group setting. However, in contrast to individual interviews, focus group interviews offer a collective, collaborative and empowering approach to research (Patton, 2002). Thomas (2004: 200) noted their effectiveness in “capturing the complexities of motivation” and this made them well suited to address the questions driving this research. The decision to employ focus group interviews was based on an examination of their strengths and weaknesses as a qualitative data collection method, and their appropriateness for the research questions, participants and for the school-based research context.

Focus group interviews emerged out of focused interviews in the 1950’s and were used initially by market researchers, who recognised that many consumer decisions are made in a social context. Although primarily an interview, discussion around a theme is enabled through the social context and direct interaction between participants (Patton, 2002). A key difference between focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews is that participants are able to voice their own views and consider them in the context of the views of others (Patton, 2002, Taylor & Smith, 2009b; Thomas, 2004). As Rubin and Rubin (1995: 140) note:
In focus groups, the goal is to let people spark off one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances of the original problem that any one individual might not have thought of. Sometimes a totally different understanding of a problem emerges from the group discussion.

Kruegar and Casey (2000) argue that the quality of data is enhanced through the interaction between participants who tend to provide moderating ‘checks and balances’ on each other, thus reducing extreme or false views. Participants in focus group interviews are neither expected to reach a consensus, or to disagree, but the extent to which views are similar or dissimilar can be assessed quickly (Patton, 2002). However, Morgan (1997: 15) points out that focus group interviews have dual tendencies. The first is the tendency towards conformity, in which participants hold back from expressing views they would say in private (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), or risk negative reactions from others (Patton, 2002). The second is the tendency to polarise, in which some participants may express more extreme views in a group than they may in private. This can be problematic amongst young people, at a time where acceptance is an important part of identity development (Gluckman, 2011; Gullota et al., 2000). Consequently, group discussions can lead to a superficial consensus where some participants defer to those who are more outspoken. Therefore, highly personal or controversial issues are sometimes deemed unsuitable for focus group interviews, although this can be mitigated by skillful facilitation (Morgan, 1997). The focus of the questions driving this research was not considered highly personal or controversial. Although a variety of views were anticipated, participants had chosen to engage with an international school trip and shared a common interest.

Participants in focus group interviews are usually relatively homogenous (Kitzinger, 1994a, 1994b) and ‘participant friendly’ (Christensen & James, 2008). Madriz (2000: 36) noted that they are a productive means of gaining the voice of marginalised groups, in that they provide “a safe environment where people can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socio-economic, ethnic and gender backgrounds”. In grouping people together as peers (such as young people, parents or teaching colleagues) in this research, participants were more likely to describe their experiences and share their opinions using their own ‘locally relevant’ terms, rather than language or concepts they think will please the researcher (Thomas, 2004).

Taylor and Smith (2009b) argue that focus group interviews are particularly useful for children and young people in comparison to individual interviews because they reduce the
power and control of the interviewer, and in doing so reduces problems in bridging the generation gap when the interviewer is an adult (Robinson & Kellett, 2004). As Carr (2011) notes, young people are keen to establish and assert their identity, which can be problematic in accepting adult researchers into their world. Therefore, focus group interviews offer a positive approach to engage them and counteract their possible anti-authoritarianism. Furthermore, they have been reported as stimulating, fun and an effective forum for participants to reflect on experiences (Taylor & Smith, 2009b). Focus group interviews with an ‘outsider’ researcher arguably gives them the space in which to freely express their views.

Unlike other forms of qualitative fieldwork approaches such as participant observation, Madriz (2000) points out that focus group interviews typically take place away from the natural contexts where other social interactions take place. However, the school context is a familiar naturalistic context for participants in this research, although several authors (e.g., Carr, 2011; Nairn et al., 2005) note that power relationships exist within the school setting and there are particular ‘rules of play’ according to one’s role within the school. Although young people and parents are members of school communities, schools have hierarchical power relationships. School leaders and teachers hold the power in setting expectations and reinforcing standards for language, behaviour and personal presentation. This may extend to unspoken expectations in that participants feel pressured to ‘keep to the party line’. Consequently the freedom of young people and parents to express themselves could be minimalised. To enable the free flow of opinions facilitators need to reassure confidentiality and to ensure the space has adequate privacy. As the ‘outsider’ researcher, access needed to be negotiated to undertake this research in a setting that ‘belongs’ to the participants. In doing so, I was mindful of the need to negotiate access with consideration to their ‘rules of engagement’, such as fitting in with their timetable and space (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007).

The effectiveness of focus group interviews relies on the sensitivity and expertise of the facilitator to guide discussion and manage group dynamics. Noting that the competency of the facilitator is important, Taylor and Smith (2009b) argue that in a focus group interview the facilitator has less influence on the participants who have more freedom to move the discussion at their own pace and in the light of their own knowledge and interests. This more dynamic process encourages spontaneous responses from members of the group and avoids a ‘question and answer’ format, and, as such is effective at breaking down the researcher/researched power relationships (Thomas, 2004). Madriz (2000) contends that as focus group interviews emphasise the collective, rather than individual, the facilitator should
encourage and empower group participants to speak up and interact with each other. Therefore, the challenge for the facilitator is to be able to quickly establish rapport to encourage the free flow of ideas, discussion and interaction amongst the participants and remain ‘on topic’. At the same time the facilitator needs to be confident enough to shift the focus from dominant participants, follow new or unexpected threads that emerge in the discussion, and manage time.

An advantage of focus group interviews is that they promote “greater discussion and idea generation than would be possible in individual interviews” (Taylor and Smith, 2009b: 36), and a consequential yield of data within a short period of time, from which major themes can be identified (Morgan, 1997; Thomas, 2004). However, the group nature of the interviews means that fewer questions can be asked and the response time for individuals is less than in one-on-one interviews (Patton, 2002; Taylor & Smith, 2009b; Thomas, 2004). Focus group interviews not only were an appropriate method to collect qualitative data to address the research questions, but also had the potential to recruit a range of participants and generate significant data in a short time which positioned them as a pragmatic method to mitigate some of the challenges of researching in a school setting (see Section 5.4). Presenting the ‘gatekeepers’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Carr, 2006) with a request that was feasible and realistic within the constraints of a busy structured school timetable was more likely to be considered favourably.

The qualitative data yielded from focus group interviews are not isolated to direct quotations, but include observational data regarding embodiment, the interview setting, and the interactions (or lack of) between participants (Nairn et al., 2005). This means that a sole facilitator has to manage the group processes and ‘tune in’ to the observed and ‘experienced’ dynamics and expressive behavior within the group, including such things as banter, silence, gestures and laughter (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). These group processes and dynamics added further depth to the data that later enabled the interpretation of words as well as the contextual prompts such as tone, energy, humour, and tension within a group’s dynamics in relation to their perspectives of an international school trip.
5.7 Researcher background and reflexivity in qualitative research

Janesick (2000: 384) noted “qualitative researchers have open minds, but not empty minds”. Similarly, Carr (2011: 175) warns that researchers should “identify their own positionality and be aware of how this can influence the nature of the material they collect and how it is analysed.” It is therefore important that when conducting qualitative research, researchers identify the ‘subjective lenses’ through which they may see, construct, or make sense of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). Similarly, Phillimore and Goodson (2004: 17) noted that a:

researcher’s standpoint, values and biases – that is, their cultural background, ethnicity, age, class, gender, sexuality, and so on – play a role in shaping the researcher’s historical trajectory, and the way in which they interpret phenomena and construct texts.

It is also relevant that I discuss my own background, particularly in relation to my familiarity with the secondary school context.

My background for this research is drawn from my experiences as a teacher and educator. During a 15-year career as a secondary school teacher I engaged in, led and have fond memories of numerous school trips within New Zealand, most of them for outdoor education and sporting fixtures. I had an insider’s working knowledge about being a teacher, the social world of school trips, teaching and learning, and the social and organisational constructs of schools. I have positive personal reflections about and confidence in my experience facilitating groups, ability to tune in to group dynamics, establish collegial relationships with teachers and school leaders, and familiarity with teacher-parent relationships. More recently, my professional work in teacher education has enabled me to maintain my familiarity with the secondary school context, and I am a regular ‘visitor with a role’ to secondary schools when observing teacher education students on their teaching practical. Adapting quickly to spaces and environments on the turf of others is a necessity in my visits to schools.

It is not just my professional experiences that may have shaped this research project, but my background as an employed, European, middle-aged female, with a postgraduate education that may mean I unconsciously bring some biases or subjectivities into the research process and in the production of data. Additionally, I am not a parent but over many years have had, and to continue to have very close and involved relationships with nieces and nephews. Reflexivity, Patton (2002: 64) contends, “has entered the qualitative lexicon as a way of emphasising the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness, and
ownership of one’s perspective”, and is widely regarded as a methodological necessity in research (Barker & Weller, 2003; Christensen & James 2008). Being aware of my own positionality is one way of reminding myself that these experiences and values may influence my interactions with participants and the interpretation of their perspectives. An adaptation of Patton’s (2002) conceptualisation of reflexivity is illustrated in Figure 5.1 and serves as a guide to me in this process. Along with Patton’s (2002) advocacy to continually question what one knows and how one knows it, Wolcott (1990: 132) suggests that researchers ‘be candid’ about sharing feelings, while being cautious about making judgments, observing that “little words of judgment creep into all kinds of sentences but can be rounded up and marched right off the page again”.

**Reflexive screens that influence our understanding and ways of knowing**

As researcher, self questioning and being attentive to:

- What do I know?
- How do I know what I know?
- What shapes and has shaped my perspective?
- With what voice do I share my perspective?
- What do I do with what I have found?
- How do I balance my biases and subjectivities to protect the dignity and welfare of the participants?

Research participants:

- What do they know?
- How do they know what they know?
- What shapes and has shaped their worldview?
- How do they perceive me?
- Why?
- How do I know them?
- How do I perceive them?
- How may they be influenced by what I do with what I have found?

**Construction of knowledge through social interaction**

Figure 5.1 Researching reflexively. Adapted from Patton’s (2002) discussion of reflexivity and O’Leary’s (2004) exploration of power and ethics in research
5.8 Research design

Thus far, this chapter has focused on discussing why a pragmatic approach was taken for this research, why qualitative data was collected and why focus group interviews with multiple stakeholders were deemed an appropriate method to address the research aim and objective and generate empirical data. A description of the actual research process now follows.

5.8.1 Inclusion criteria

The in-depth focus of qualitative inquiry typically draws on relatively small ‘information-rich’ samples that are selected purposefully (Patton, 2002). Participants who were likely to illuminate the research questions were sought from secondary school communities that were undertaking an international school trip during 2009. These trips could be for any purpose (e.g., subject based, language or culture, or extra-curricular trips such as for music or sport). International school trips were school-led, which meant organised by and led by school leaders for a group of their students.

5.8.2 Recruitment strategies

Consideration was given to the challenges of gaining access through school gatekeepers when deciding the approach to recruit participants for the research. The barriers faced by researchers seeking to conduct research within the context of the school were discussed in Section 5.4. It was hoped that this research might gain the interest and support of school gatekeepers by positioning the research as relevant to schools that are engaging in international school trips as part of the wider Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) discourse. Secondly, by disclosing some of my professional background the school gatekeepers might perceive me as trustworthy in terms of my insights into the secondary school context and ability to engage with the stakeholder groups I intended to recruit.

The process of recruiting participants followed the granting of ethics approval by the University of Otago to conduct research involving human participants. Initially, an ‘opt in’ (Alderson, 1995) recruitment process was utilised, in which involvement in the study would be initiated by potential participants in response to an emailed letter of invitation (Appendix A). This emailed letter was sent to secondary school principals in four principals’ networks in
geographically-based zones (The New Zealand Principals Council)\textsuperscript{10}. The chairpersons of the four (of ten) zones, with whom contact had already been established (Appendix B), acted as the conduit to distribute the letter by email to principals in their respective zones. The four zones were selected to recruit participants that represent a geographic and demographic spread of secondary schools (e.g., from the North and South Island, large cities to rural communities; single sex and coeducational; independent, state, and state-integrated; and a range of decile ratings\textsuperscript{11}). Each chairperson was telephoned as a follow up – to ask if they had circulated the email letter and if not to ask for their support in doing so. Each person indicated their willingness to circulate the emailed letter of introduction and invitation to the principals in their zone.

However, the Regional Chairpersons cautioned me to not expect a high level of response by conveying “schools are very busy places and research a low priority” (Regional Chairperson, Zone 2; 2009). A nil response from school principals followed and it became apparent that the ‘opt in’ strategy relied on layers of gatekeepers (Regional Chairpersons, Principals or Principals Executive Assistants) filtering the letter of invitation. Encouraging school principals to opt in, in response to an emailed letter without a direct approach from the researcher did not engage their interest sufficiently to motivate them to respond.

A change of strategy was required. This led to a direct approach made to schools that were offering international trips during 2009. Research to identify schools that met these criteria involved making contact with my existing networks within schools, including principals who were well-situated and aware of these sorts of activities taking place within their own and other schools. Independent searches were made of school websites and newspapers to identify reportage of international school trips. This is similar to what Patton (2002) describes as a snowball or chain sampling approach, whereby well-situated people give recommendations of who to contact, who might then lead on to further contacts and so on. An advantage of using these contacts and searching media publications and websites was that it enabled a more purposeful focus on the schools that would be eligible to participate. My 2009 fieldwork notes recorded feedback from one principal who stated “that there seem to be lots of schools doing

\textsuperscript{10} The New Zealand Principals Council has established ten zones to group schools geographically within New Zealand. \url{http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.pho/about-us} Accessed 12 November 2008.

\textsuperscript{11} Decile ratings rank schools into ten layers, each of ten percent groupings, based on the socio-economic wealth of the community in which a school is located and from which it draws its students. The highest decile ranking is 10 and represents the 10% of schools located in the wealthiest communities. Schools with a decile ranking of 1 represents the 10% of schools that are located in the least wealthy communities (Adams and Hamer, 2005; New Zealand Ministry of Education. \textit{Deciles Information}. \url{http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/Schools/Operations/Resourcing} Accessed 12 November 2008).
some pretty amazing (exotic) trips” and that she thought the intended methods to gather data from multiple stakeholder groups “added a really good dimension, even though the logistics may present a bit of a challenge”.

By April 2009 a small but ‘snowballing’ list of schools to approach had been compiled. These were South Island schools but nevertheless represented a variety of communities and types of schools. Although the school principal was the ultimate gatekeeper from whom approval must be gained in order to recruit participants from his/her school, they were not necessarily the best first point of contact. At this stage, three school principals declined the invitation to participate for varying reasons – one did “not participate in research” (20 March 2009), another noted that “it is interesting research but we do not wish to participate” (4 May 2009), and the third principal stated that having read the information sheet did not “think that our [school] trip meets the criteria for your research so will regretfully decline” (2 June 2009). It became apparent that approaching the teacher leading the trip or a member of the school’s senior leadership team who was associated with the trip was an effective way to stimulate their interest and willingness to engage in the research. This approach is supported by Bogdan & Biklen (2007: 85), who refer to it as working “first to court your potential subjects”. A personal first approach by telephone proved to be more effective than emailing, to introduce the research and invite their participation. Furthermore, by conveying my awareness of their specific trip (e.g., “your cultural trip to China”) enabled a more personalised and focused way to seek their participation. If the first point of contact person agreed to engage with the research, a next step was negotiated. In most cases, the contact person raised the opportunity with the principal and this was followed by a telephone call from myself. This approach resulted in nine school principals giving their consent for their school to participate.

Undertaking research in a school setting with multiple stakeholders involved multiple layers of information and consent. In practice this meant that firstly the school principal needed to give his/her informed consent to permit participants from his/her school to participate. Following this, consent was then required from the school leaders and students associated with the trip(s) to participate in the focus group interviews. Parents of the students associated with the trip were requested to give informed consent for their son or daughter to participate, and/or for the parents themselves to participate as members of the parents stakeholder group. This meant multiple information sheets and consent forms, with slightly different wording for the principal, from whom approval was sought for his/her school to participate. Information
sheets for the other stakeholders were for their personal participation and in the case of parents, their individual participation and/or that of their child) (Appendix C).

To facilitate the logistical arrangements for focus group interviews a school-based liaison person was identified and became the person with whom ongoing communication was established. Appendix I outlines the assistance I sought from them. Logistical arrangements included recruiting the focus group interview participants and arranging the location, date and time for them to take place, and facilitating the paperwork amongst participants. Each of them varied in their responsiveness to communication (email or telephone) about setting dates and times for the focus group interviews. Despite regular contact with them by telephone, voice message or email, and their willingness and enthusiasm to undertake the role, three schools did not participate because it became impossible to establish a date/dates with the liaison person.

I was mindful that informed consent implies the voluntary nature of participation and the right for participants to discontinue at any point (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; O’Leary, 2004; Patton, 2002). At no stage did a liaison person withdraw the consent, which had been given by the principal and themselves, however I was mindful of the persistence needed to firm up arrangements but was aware that ‘too much’ persistence could lead to them withdrawing consent. Therefore, once a date had been negotiated I confirmed by email and telephone that my own travel and accommodation arrangements were in place and “I was looking forward to conducting the fieldwork with them on the specified date”.

5.9 Participants

A total of six schools offering eight international school trips (one school was undertaking three trips) participated in this research. Scheduling of the focus group interviews captured a mixture of schools that were preparing for the trip and those who had returned. Table 5.1 summarises the participating schools’ demographics, trips taken and focus group interviews carried out for each school.
Table 5.1 Summary of participating schools, trips taken and focus group interviews conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Trip destination</th>
<th>Trip duration</th>
<th>Type of trip</th>
<th>Focus groups conducted pre or post trip</th>
<th>Focus conducted with School leaders (SL), Parents (P), Young People (YP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Independent, co-educational.</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Cultural and service Living in village Including a host-school component</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes P Yes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 1350 Decile 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>State, co-educational</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Cultural Including a host-school exchange</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes P Yes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 1200 Decile 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>State, single sex (Girls)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Cultural and language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes (group of students from previous trip) Yes Yes Yes (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 1400 Decile 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>State, co-educational</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>Language and culture Including 4 weeks of home stay and school attendance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes P Yes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 700 Decile 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>State, single sex (Boys)</td>
<td>Australia, Brisbane and Gold Coast</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Sport – Rugby. Training, team building and competition matches</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes P Yes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 730 Decile 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>State, co-educational</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Language and culture Included language school, home hosting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes P Yes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll 1450 Decile 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Cultural and social studies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes No YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Australia - Gold Coast</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Sport – Football, Rugby. Team building and tournament</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SL Yes No YP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To retain the anonymity of each school Table 5.1 does not identify the city in which they are located, and each participating school was assigned a letter A-F. The participating schools represented a range of school types with a mix of independent (private) and state (public), co-educational and single sex, and decile ratings. The type of international trips ranged from subject-focused, language and culture, and service-based and involved travel to a variety of destinations. The shortest trips were for ten days and the longest trip was for a 5-week duration. Three of the trips were limited to participants who studied a foreign language (German – School D, French – School F, Japanese – School C) and the sports trips were offered to students who played either soccer (football) or rugby (School F), or rugby (School E). The other trips were open to students who were interested in travelling to Vanuatu for a cultural and service-oriented trip (School A) and China for a cultural trip (School B). School F was offering three overseas trips during 2009 and the liaison teacher was willing to recruit participants associated with each of these trips. In light of the impact of the global recession, there was some uncertainty about whether the proposed trip to Samoa would take place. Figure 5.2 identifies the South Island locations from which the participating schools departed and the destinations to which they travelled.

Figure 5.2 Map of city of origin and the destination travelled to (identified by country or major city)
5.10 Focus group interviews

5.10.1 Logistics and setting

Arrangements were made to conduct focus group interviews at each school via the liaison teacher. International school trips are a school-led activity and the school setting was an appropriate setting for the interviews to take place. The school is familiar for all participants and usually the place in which information is held and preparation in relation to the trip takes place. To increase the possibility of recruiting parents from outlying areas or parents whose children boarded at school, the liaison people of Schools A and C aligned the focus groups with school events that the parents were already coming to the school for such as parent-teacher interviews. Furthermore, the school location enabled both the student and school leader groups to ‘pop in’ between their other commitments, thus minimising disruption to their busy schedules.

Through my contact with the liaison person from each school, each was aware of the assistance required to make the research feasible (see Appendix I). Specifically, this meant recruiting the participants for each stakeholder group, scheduling a day/days and times, and arranging a suitable space (with a power source for digital recorder) for implementing focus group interviews. The rooms included classrooms, meeting rooms and boardrooms. Focus group interviews took place at times that suited the participants: during the school day, after school, evenings and in the case of one school, the school holidays. In most cases, the requested 1–1½ hours was available for focus group interviews. Focus group interviews with young people were the most time constrained, due to the need to fit in to the one-hour scheduled class time, lunchtimes or after school. Had these extended beyond the allocated time to build on the free flow of discussion and willingness of the young people to continue it would have impacted on their day and may have disrupted a much wider group of young people and teachers. Moreover, I did not want to compromise the goodwill that had been shown to me by the liaison teacher and/or school principal.

Participant numbers in each group varied. The average numbers were: young people (seven), parents (five) and school leaders (three). The numbers were sufficient to enable interaction amongst participants (Madriz, 2000; Patton, 2002; Taylor and Smith, 2009b). When asked, liaison teachers assured me that they had recruited student and parent participants inclusively. This meant that their participation was due to availability and willingness to be involved, and not as a result of screening to recruit those they perceived would be the most informative,
positive, controversial or ‘difficult.’ In the focus group interviews there were mixed views, so this might suggest there had not been any intentional screening in order to convey a particular perspective.

A total of 24 focus group interviews were carried out. All of the focus group interviews were carried out during 2009, with the exception of school E which occurred during 2010. The liaison teacher at School F was unable to organise focus group interviews with the parents of the young people travelling on the rugby and football trip to the Gold Coast, or those associated with the trip to Samoa (about which there was uncertainty whether it would take place during 2009) during the 2-day period in which I was conducting fieldwork in that city. A complete set of focus group interviews was carried out with school leaders, parents and young people at each of the other schools. Table 5.1 indicates whether they were conducted before or after the trip (pre or post trip).

5.10.2 Procedures and content
Following arrival at the allocated room and the commencement of the first focus group interview, desks and chairs were arranged into a circle or square arrangement. This encouraged an inclusive setting in which each participant, including me as the facilitator, could engage directly with each other through expressive behaviour (such as eye contact and gesture) and voice. An audio recorder was utilised to enable me to focus on the questions, development of the dialogue and interaction between participants. Moreover, I was aware of Patton’s (2002: 380) reminder that the “prize sought by the qualitative inquirer” is the raw data of participants words and quotations, from which “data interpretation and analysis involve making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said.”

However, as Nairn et al. (2005: 228) noted, a circular seating arrangement differs to conventional classroom seating, which in addition to the presence of a centrally positioned audio-recorder may have the effect of making participants “feel more visible and audible than they felt comfortable with”. Hence, it was important to put participants at ease and invite their contributions but not pressurise them to speak.
The free flow of discussion, idea generation and interaction amongst focus group participants relies on the crucial moderating role played by the facilitator. Although confident in my experience of facilitating groups and tuning in to their dynamics quickly (Madriz, 2000; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), I concur with the experience of Nairn et al. (2005: 227) of “establishing rapport and eliciting information” (original emphasis) within the short timeframe. I was aware that my prior socialisation and experience in school settings might be portrayed through my voice and body language, and read by others as an assumption of authority (Nairn et al., 2005). Therefore, acknowledging and reflecting on my own positionality seemed more important to me than striving to be or assuming I was neutral in my role. The one aspect that I consciously considered was my personal presentation. I aimed to dress in a way that would be perceived as appropriate for a visitor to the school, adopting a smart casual style that was professional but neither intimidating or too casual when meeting school principals, leaders and teachers, parents and the young people.

Prior to the start of each focus group interview, a check was made that participants had read the previously distributed information sheet and given their informed consent by signing the consent form. For the groups of young people in particular, I reinforced that their participation was welcome and voluntary. This was done because they may have felt pressured by adult authority figures (parents, the liaison teacher or other school leaders) to participate (Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Silijepcevic & Chapman, 2008; Mahon, Glendinning, Clarke and Craig, 1996). While comfortable with a student withdrawing at any stage during the focus group interview, I could not guarantee that the student may not have felt pressurised to remain, in case there were judgments made by the liaison teacher about his/her early departure and return to class.

Each focus group began with an introduction to the protocol (Appendix J). This included a welcome, brief background to myself and the research, including that there are other participating schools, and where and to whom the findings might be reported. Following this, the time frame for the focus group interview was stated, along with the structure and the kind of participation sought from them. They were invited to answer questions without compulsion to do so. Before commencing the participants were given an indication of the key themes that questions would focus on in order to get a sense of how the focus group interview would develop (Appendix K).
The presence of the audio recorder was explained, along with informing participants that I would be taking notes sporadically throughout in order to capture their words and quotations as important qualitative data, should a fault occur with the audio recorder. There were no objections to its use. Participants were asked to state their names as an introduction and to help identify who said what when later tracking conversations. At the time I reassured them that their identity would remain anonymous and that when including quotations in writing, each participant would be allocated an alpha letter.

A semi-structured open questioning format was utilised for focus group interviews (Appendix K). This enabled sufficient structure to ensure that the empirical material collected was relevant to address the research questions (Thomas, 2004). In addition, it ensured consistency and comparability within and across the participating schools, while at the same time it allowed the flexibility to probe issues or threads that arose during the focus group interview (Patton, 2002) and to draw out contextual understanding (Thomas, 2004). In constructing the question format I drew on my professional experience in secondary schools to ensure the questions used familiar language and construction to that used in a school setting and to elicit responses from participants. This aligns with Barker and Weller’s (2003) research, which found that the young people advised researchers to use more conventional terms rather than trendy young people’s terms.

5.10.3 The experience
The groups of young people were the only stakeholder groups that on occasion had an individual dominate the responses or assume a group spokesperson role. When this occurred, I adjusted my stance to shift the emphasis from the ‘spokesperson’ to an attempt to engage others, or by asking them whether there was agreement or a different perspective. However, group dynamics are what they are, therefore enabling personalities to emerge and interact was as relevant as it was for me to intervene and control the natural interaction and established dynamics within the group.

Although the focus group interviews were largely conducted in a relaxed manner, it was challenging at times to genuinely hold back as facilitator. I related to Kitzinger’s (1994b) experience in which as facilitator, I was never passive. Instead, I was aware that my role was at times interventionist, as I strived to maximise interaction between participants by encouraging debate and challenging them to think beyond their first comments. Although the
questions were sequenced into themes, there was a need to be responsive to them sharing their thoughts and experiences in ways that addressed later questions earlier (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Similarly, some earlier questions were later revisited if I felt they had not been explored sufficiently. During the focus group interviews I tried to remind myself of Mazzei’s (2003) advice that data can still be rich, even with limited spoken data, although it is more slippery to generate meaning by interpreting silence and laughter than through words.

The focus groups in this research were to some extent pre-existing groups, defined by Kitzinger (1994a: 105) as “clusters of people who knew each other through living, working or socialising together”. Hence, the participants already knew each other and had interest in and/or experience of an international school trip. Therefore they were able to relate comments to actual incidents and tap into their collective remembering.

Timekeeping was an important element of facilitating and participants had the opportunity to add whatever they wished as the focus group interview was drawing towards an end. Patton’s (2002: 386) claim that focus group interviews tend to be enjoyable for participants because they draw “on human tendencies as social animals” was reflected in the numerous comments made by participants and recorded in my field notes such as, “That was fun/enjoyable”, “This was great to get together again” (especially for parents), “This was a great opportunity to reflect” (on our experience in relation to this trip). These responses reflected the socially constructed nature of meaning-making and reinforced the effectiveness of focus group interviews to collect data.

5.10.4 Documenting focus group interviews

Brief field notes were made immediately following each focus group interview. In these, conversational comments or other interactions with people that were separate to the focus group interviews were noted, along with personal reflections of general impressions of the elements of interaction between participants. Specifically, these related to interactions between focus group participants such as how mood, energy levels, group dynamics, and non-verbal communication such as gestures and laughter were perceived. Contextual reminders such as distractions were also noted as reminders during the later data interpretation and analysis phases. As previously discussed, it was not uncommon for multiple focus group interviews to be scheduled within a single day, especially for the schools located outside
Dunedin. Thus, the lack of quiet time for reflection between them and before returning to work had the potential to compromise my recall if I did not at least make hasty field notes.

Audio-recordings were also checked following each focus group interview, firstly to ensure that it had indeed been recorded and secondly to get a sense of its quality and clarity. Midway through the fieldwork, I sensed that I was beginning to ‘hear the same things by different people in different schools. These emerging and repeating themes indicated a level of saturation (O’Leary, 2004), where few new threads of data were emerging. By the time focus group interviews had been conducted at School E in 2010, I was confident that there was a level of trustworthiness and reliability emerging from the data (Patton, 2002) and that saturation point had been reached.

Each focus group interview was assigned a code. This code identified its transcript number in the process of interpretation. That code is used as an identifier in the empirical chapters (Chapters Six, Seven and Eight). The code includes a reference to the transcript number, trip destination and stakeholder participant group. For example, the code T10.C.P refers to Transcript 10, trip to China, Parents. This is illustrated fully in Table 5.2 along with key elements that refer to the school, destination travelled to, trip duration, type of group and the focus group participant stakeholders.
Table 5.2 Focus group participant code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Trip destination</th>
<th>Trip duration</th>
<th>Type of trip</th>
<th>Focus group participant codes: SL = School leaders P = Parents YP = Young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Service and culture</td>
<td>T1.V.SL T2.V.P T3.V.YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Culture and language</td>
<td>T4.J.SL T5.J.YPg (outbound) T6.J.YPr (returned from previous trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Australia (Brisbane &amp; Gold Coast)</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Sport - Rugby</td>
<td>T20.GC&amp;B.YP T21.GC&amp;B.P T22.GC&amp;B.SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Language and culture</td>
<td>T11.F.SL T12.F.YP T13.F.P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11 Interpretation and analysis of the empirical data

In determining how to proceed with the interpretation of the empirical material, I was mindful of Anfara, Brown and Mangione (2002: 29) who called for “the public disclosure of processes” in qualitative research, working from “the basic premise that how researchers account for and disclose their approach to all aspects of the research process are key to evaluating their work substantively and methodologically.”

Other researchers (e.g., Attride-Stirling, 2001; Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Patton, 2002) have articulated similar thoughts about the need for full, transparent accounts of data analysis procedures. What follows is an account of the rationale within which the analysis was
conducted, and the actual process used to interpret and analyse the data that constituted this study.

Different researchers have defined data analysis in various ways. Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 121) stated “the process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a nonmathematical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions.”

Kvale (1996: 148) noted that to analyse means to separate something into parts. Hatch (2002) stressed that it involves a search for meaning:

> . . . a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organising and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories.

As Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 140) pointed out, “all researchers develop their own ways of analysing qualitative data,” and this is influenced by the focus of the inquiry, the theoretical basis and the ‘self as instrument’ (Kvale, 1996; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Patton, 2002). The process of analysis in this research utilised an inductive approach to enable participants’ meaning to emerge from the data (Hatch, 2002, Patton, 2002), and involved a systematic yet iterative process to develop a thematic analysis of empirical material (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to organise and analyse qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic networks “aim to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes” (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 387) and they are not a new method, and they share the key features of any hermeneutic analysis.

Thematic networks are web-like networks that provide a three-level graphic representation of the themes that also illustrate the relationships between them (Attride-Stirling, 2001). At the lower level, basic themes are simple statements that are characteristic of the data. On their own they say very little and therefore need to be read within the context of other basic themes. Organising themes are the middle order themes that organise basic themes into clusters of similar issues or ideas. Their role is to enhance the meaning and significance of a broader global theme that unites several organising themes. Global themes are the macro themes that summarise and make sense of clusters of organising and basic themes. Once a thematic network has been constructed, it serves as an illustrative tool. Figure 5.3 illustrates a thematic
network, showing the global theme that anchors two organizing themes and a further eight basic themes.

Figure 5.3 Illustration of a thematic network, anchored by a global theme, and supported by two organising themes and eight basic themes

However, despite the use of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that the lack of a clear agreement about what it is and how to go about it has limited its brand awareness in comparison to other named analysis methods such as grounded theory (Tuckett, 2005). Attride-Stirling (2001) and Braun and Clarke (2006) offered guidance to the phases to conduct a thematic analysis, of which an amalgamation of these phases was utilised. The process followed is now outlined.
5.11.1 Phase One: Familiarisation with the data

This involved two key stages. The first stage was transcribing the focus group interviews. In this process individual participants were each assigned an alpha letter to track comments in the dialogue. This assisted with the later interpretation by noting contrasting views, potential tensions or agreements (and between whom), as well as identifying some of the personalities within each group (that may have also been referred to by other stakeholder groups from the same school). However, it was not always straightforward to accurately match voices to individuals. During the focus group interviews it was more important to encourage interaction and the free flow of discussion than interrupt it by restating names for later identification.

The second stage involved re-listening to the audio-recordings which enabled inaccuracies to be corrected on the transcribed material. To gain a sense of the whole, each transcript was read, with notations made at the relevant sections from field notes, or from the audio-recordings relating to the nature of interaction amongst the participants, such as cues including silence, banter and laughter to be noted at the relevant sections. Each of these phases enabled a strong sense of familiarity with the data, along with an intuitive sense of emerging ideas.

5.11.2 Phase Two: Generating initial codes

Further focused reading of each transcript sought to unearth the key ideas expressed by participants while relating them back to the research aim and objective. Full and equal attention was given to each data item in each transcript. Items in the form of key words or ideas were highlighted on each transcript in the column alongside the data item, and summary notes were made on the front of each transcript.

5.11.3 Phase Three: Development of themes

As an iterative process, themes were drafted as the key ideas were repeated through the focused reading and coding phase. Initially, three overarching themes emerged with related themes assigned. Ideas that did not seem to fit with any theme during this phase were not discarded, and were set aside as miscellaneous (Braun & Clark, 2006). By the end of this phase three thematic networks had been drafted.
5.11.4 Phase Four: Review of themes and thematic networks

During this phase each of the three thematic networks was coded using a system that coded each global theme (by number), organizing themes (by alpha letter), and basic themes (by number). This is illustrated in Figure 5.4: Thematic network to show coding for the first thematic network, which will be discussed in Chapter Six (Section 6.1).

![Thematic Network Diagram]

Figure 5.4 First thematic network (Figure 6.2) showing the coding system

Using these codes, each thematic network was re-read in turn to identify data items that illustrated the draft basic codes. The code (e.g., 2B/4 – Global theme 2, Organising theme B, Basic theme 4) was then marked in the column of the transcript. This process was repeated for
each global theme. At that point, each transcript had been read a minimum of six times and I was very familiar with the content of each. The coding process had identified several data items that were represented in more than one global theme. Those double ups were double-coded. Decisions about where they were most appropriately positioned were deferred until further consolidation of the thematic networks took place.

The final process in Phase Four was to organise the data items into documents that represented each level of the three thematic networks in a systematic way. Each coded data item was copied from the transcript and pasted into a new document arranged into the thematic networks. To do this, each thematic network was dealt with in turn and data items were copied and pasted into each. By the end of this stage, each transcript had been read a further three times, albeit purposively looking for the relevant codes.

**5.11.5 Phase Five: Refinement of themes**

The data items in each thematic network were read, with further consideration given to the appropriateness of their location in the basic theme and relationship to the organising and global themes. This resulted in some movement of data extracts to other themes or repositioning of basic or organising themes.

**5.11.6 Phase Six: Written analysis**

The process of writing the three empirical-based chapters, each focused on one of the three global themes, enabled further refinement of each thematic network. Refinement was in the form of repositioning elements of a thematic network, or re-naming themes to ensure coherence between the data extracts and the themes. As in all previous phases, it was organic and iterative, with much going back and forth until a cohesive argument was made for each global theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the written analysis that follows in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight decisions were carefully made to ensure that sufficient description and direct quotations were included to contextualise the situation and of the people being represented. As such it is grounded in “thick description” rather than to “be so ‘thin’ as to remove context or meaning” (Patton, 2002: 503).
5.12 **Who’s who**

This thesis investigates multiple stakeholders, each with inter-relationships with each other. The nature of the relationships between participants influences what terms they use for each other. Although the terms young people, parents and school leaders are used to reference each stakeholder group, this is not necessarily the way each of these stakeholder groups described themselves or the other stakeholders.

5.13 **Chapter summary**

This chapter has described and explained the research approach and methods used in this thesis. It has discussed the challenges associated with school-based research and researching with children and young people. The decision to collect qualitative data and use focus group interviews was justified as the method to address the research question. It was acknowledged that qualitative data analysis processes have not been clearly articulated in the research literature and there is no single way to carry out the process. Therefore, care was taken to outline the exact processes used to document, interpret and analyse the data that resulted in three thematic networks.

Section Two introduces the analysis of the empirical material gathered to address the research aim and objective that frames this research, along with an introduction to the resulting three global themes that are then presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.
SECTION TWO. INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS
Three global themes resulted from the thematic analysis of the focus group interview data. Each of the three global themes in Figure B acts as the anchor of their own separate thematic network that is comprised of organising and basic themes (see Chapter Five).

Figure B: International school trips thematic network: Three global themes illustrating how they address the overall research question

Chapter Six analyses the first global theme that focuses on experiencing difference. In doing so, it illustrates how all of the stakeholder groups were motivated by the opportunity an international school trip offered young people to engage with new and unfamiliar experiences. The chapter goes on to specifically explore how young people expressed curiosity, excitement and anxiety as they anticipated and experienced these opportunities. The adult participants perceived that these new and different experiences were one way in which these young people would learn and gain new points of reference from which to reflect, compare and contrast, and better understand their lives at home.
Chapter Seven focuses on active learning experiences in the international context. It highlights that travelling to an international destination offers young people opportunities for active and authentic learning. All participants perceived that learning is contextualised through individual interaction with the host community; experiences related to time, space and mobility; and in bringing alive subject-related learning or through immersion in language and culture. The chapter then goes on to discuss how school leaders’ actions allowed learning to be focused around experience and the social construction of meaning. This deliberate positioning enabled spaces within the itinerary to allow young people to initiate their own learning when it was relevant to them.

Chapter Eight focuses on relationships built amongst and between stakeholder groups. In doing so, it focuses on how these relationships consequently enable social learning. In particular, young people were motivated by the social and supportive nature of these group experiences whilst parents expressed the trust they assigned to school leaders to guide and supervise their children safely. Participants revealed how they perceived that the power dynamics shifted during these experiences to increase independence for the young people. Consequently, a variety of expectations and responsibilities were placed on and negotiated between stakeholders in order to allow the young people to earn their right to participate in these trips and gain an element of freedom once participating in the trips. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the justification for international school trips was expressed predominantly by adults as a result of the perceived benefits and justifications of the learning and travelling experiences of this type of travel.
CHAPTER 6. LEARNING THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENCE
6.1 Introducing the chapter

This chapter examines the first global theme of experiencing difference. The perspectives of different stakeholder groups are highlighted and illustrate how each group was motivated by the opportunities international school trips offered young people to engage with new and unfamiliar experiences. This global theme encompasses two organising themes: new experiences, and unfamiliar experiences. A further eight basic themes complete the thematic network (Figure 6.1).

![Figure 6.1 Global theme Experience difference](image)

Figure 6.1 Global theme *Experience difference*
### 6.2 New experiences

Four related basic themes constitute the organising theme *New experiences*. International school trips offer an *opportunity of a lifetime* and through these experiences young people have the opportunity to *expand their horizons*. *Food experiences* illustrates how young people express their agency with respect to new and different experiences and the predominantly adult perception that through new and different experiences young people may *shift their attitude* particularly about home (Figure 6.2).

![Diagram of New experiences]

Phrases such as “try something new” and “experience something different” were consistently peppered across all focus group interviews. Cohen (1972) stressed that the desire for something different, whether it be sights, cultures or customs, is simply because it is different to the familiarity of the home environment. Participants on an international school trip sought to escape from a perceived mundane or taken-for-granted environment to a new and different environment which was perceived to offer novelty and the opportunity to broaden their horizons. Desforges (2000) argued that travel plays a role in providing new experiences and the quest for new experiences is important for young people.
6.2.1 An opportunity of a lifetime

The opportunity to participate in an international school trip was perceived by some to be a “golden opportunity” (T10.C.P). The parent participants considered their children’s opportunities in comparison to their own school experiences. In doing so, they reflected that their own school-led tourism experiences were more limited and local: “I think we went to a dairy factory down the road” (T13.F.P). In comparison, they expressed how “lucky” their children were to have these opportunities, as one parent acknowledged that he was “jealous” of his child’s “life time opportunity” (T18.G.P).

Parents who had only experienced international travel later in their adult lives, if at all, further emphasised their children’s opportunity of a lifetime. Some reflected that they had “different priorities” when they were younger adults such as “putting all our money into the farm” (T18.G.P). Others noted that they had made sacrifices in order to support their children’s opportunities; as this mother said, “We’re going to wait for the kids to finish school before we can go overseas” (T13.F.P). This suggests that as parents approach the period of ‘empty nest’, the period where their children have entered adulthood, or in this case left school (Clemens & Axelson, 1985) they look forward to it as the time when they may (eventually) have the disposable income to engage in international holiday experiences themselves (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). Moreover, it reinforces one of the features in the social construction of ‘good parents’ (Carr, 2011; Irvine, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Shaw, 2010), where parents set aside their own interests and desires in order to invest in their children’s experiences (Irvine, 2006).

Through information sessions and other preparatory activities (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.2.1), parents had been influenced by the persuasive messages conveyed by school leaders and young people who had participated in previous international school trips, and perceived that these opportunities were worth seizing. A parent summed up the ‘lifetime opportunity’ claim by stating that the itinerary enabled young people to get to places that “Joe Bloggs as a tourist would never get to” (T18.G.P). This referred to both the perceived value for money and the range of ‘off the beaten track’ experiences that other tourists would not have access to (Noy, 2004). An example of this was the experience of being hosted by peers and their families, arranged through a host school as stated by this parent:

…[The young people are] actually going to live in family homes. . . It’s the best opportunity for him, he can never get that again . . . When he is thirty or forty or

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12 As a reminder, the code used to reference the data quotations was described in Table 5.2
whatever, he can look back... it’s the kind of experience that we can’t have because we never did it while we were at school. (T19.G.P)

Young people were similarly convinced by school leaders who conveyed the special opportunity of an international school trip, with this statement reflective of many: “I don’t think I could do this [what we will do on the trip] when I am older because I won’t have had the same opportunities that I have had as a school student” (T9.C.YP). This suggests that they also perceived that travelling on a school-led trip opened up experiences that they would be unlikely to encounter through other travel experiences such as those with their families or in other future experiences. Typically, these were enabled through visits to schools and interacting with young people in a different culture, as these young people anticipating their trip to Samoa discussed:

B: I’ll quite enjoy seeing the school and how different it is to the schools that we have here.

D: Yeah, I’m just looking forward to staying with all the tribes, because in future, if you save up enough money you’ll always be able to go back to Samoa. But it will be a lot harder to go over and spend time with the tribes and the schools...

F: Um, just seeing what we have been studying [colonisation] for so long will be good. (T15.S.YP)

In this quote, the young people acknowledged that access to the school to observe, interact with host peers and participate in aspects of school life was arranged by school leaders and was an opportunity they could get only as members of a school-led trip (Also see Chapter Seven, Section 7.2). Moreover, they perceived that through the trip they would be able to relate their classroom-based learning to the real context (DfES, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009). The focus on learning and the access to the host community were both perceived as unique features of a school-led trip. A further view expressed was that these new experiences were considered positively in the way they assisted young people to expand their horizons.

6.2.2 Expanding horizons

The following quote illustrates how some young people expressed their desire for new experiences as an escape from the everyday familiarity of their lives at home and as a way to relieve the boredom from familiarity (Cohen, 1972; Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001). In getting away they would expand their horizons, simply by experiencing new things:

G: I’m looking forward to getting out of the country for the first time...
D: Yeah, just getting away from my family [group laugh], ‘cause there are lots of things here that you see everyday.
B: Yeah and you get bored with it.
G: And you want to experience new things instead of the same old stuff.
(T15.S.YP)

A key element in enabling young people to expand their horizons was perceived to sit in the differences a destination offered to that of their home environment. The greater the contrast with home the more eager parents were to support their child’s participation as this parent stated:

I thought China was a brilliant destination because it’s so different. People say ‘Oh why don’t you go to Australia. Why don’t you go to England?’ But to me, they were just a bigger form of New Zealand. China is totally different when it comes to culture. (T10.C.P)

Likewise, parents of young people travelling to Japan were motivated by the difference and contrasts with home that Japan would offer their children, along with their perception that it was a safe destination (this trip preceded the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan):

B: I like that the culture it quite different to ours. If it was just Australia, [my child] has been there before, we’ve been there on holiday, so I don’t think I would have been quite so keen. But the fact that she’s actually going over there to Japan and will come home with a whole different outlook and different experience is the way I like it. . . as long as it was a different experience I am keen for her to go . . .
D: Yeah, not just across ‘The Ditch’ [to Australia]. It’s a whole new experience.
B: Exciting, isn’t it?
D: … well we’ve lived in [several provincial cities and towns] where they are little places, so then for them to go to those huge busy cities . . .
C: Jam packed with people . . .
D: Yeah, eye-opening . . . and there’s more things to do.
B: And the fashion sense and everything. The girls will be like ‘Oh!’ you know? Because they do wear a lot of high heeled shoes [in Japan].
D: Yeah. And then there’s the traditional Japan sort of sitting right beside the modern. I mean I’ve never been there, but they say it’s just this incredible land of contrasts really. But then it doesn’t sort of have the extreme poverty that you would get in some of the other Asian countries. You know, like Cambodia or Vietnam where you sort of seem to get the extremes. That’s my understanding of it anyway.
B: Yeah, and there’s no real threats with war or anything like that like in Afghanistan or somewhere. You know, I feel quite safe about that. (T7.J.P)
These parents used their knowledge and understanding of Japan to express their support for their children’s participation based on the cultural and spatial contrasts they would experience. They did not perceive the same worth if the destination was simply a “bigger form of New Zealand” (T10.C.P). They anticipated that their children’s eyes would be opened through the contrasts based on their own perceptions of ‘otherness’ and difference (Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001). With reference to Japan, they perceived that these contrasts would be between fashion and busy city lifestyles and their own practical semi-rural lives, as well as the juxaposition of very old traditions and architecture and the very modern. However, as important as difference was, parents also expressed their desire that their children would not be exposed to the more risky elements of difference such as extreme poverty or danger.

School leaders who had led a trip to China conveyed what they had wanted young people to gain through these new and different experiences in China:

E: We are living in the global village and the kids need to know what this corner of the world [New Zealand] is like in comparison to other places like China, particularly in the way the environment is treated so that they learn to protect what we have.

D: The other thing is it’s just the scale of things. If you go from our ‘big city’ to 20,000,000 people… you know they go from our bus service and 50kph to a 430kph train um, you know… and just the size of the buildings and the density of people, and the way that people interact with each other in such closeness. Then, when you go out to the likes of Tibet and one person per 1000 hectares, you just see the desolation and the big distances and just another totally different culture. (T8.C.SL)

Through first hand experience they wanted young people to get a sense of how people interact with each other and deal with issues (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008), particularly where the environment, culture and demography contrasts so sharply with New Zealand. This was seen as important because the school leaders understood the impacts and issues associated with globalisation (Held & McGrew, 2007). Through their experience in China they asserted that young people would better understand why cultural groups interact the way they do (Carlson & Widaman; 1988; Lumkes et al., 2012) and that the space and relatively unspoiled environment in New Zealand should not be taken for granted.

Adults frequently mentioned contrasting population density, and conveyed a view that young people who had not yet travelled to densely populated countries were either naive or had a gap in their experience. They argued that through an international school trip young people’s horizons would be extended and in turn that would lead to a greater appreciation of their
home country. Moreover, faster, busier places and more challenging experiences would help prepare them for future travel experiences:

It is also extending them beyond [home city], our children here are relatively naive, aren’t they? They live in a very small community. Everything’s five minutes away, and it doesn’t make crowds and size pressures. (T17.G.SL)

Similarly, the leader of a trip to France suggested how her students might have been perceived as naïve by the “professional host families” (T11.F.SL) who frequently hosted young people studying at the local French language school:

They [host families] are used to hosting kids but they’re used to having European kids who know how to catch buses and how to use a map to find their way around. Our kids had never caught a bus in their life. Here in [home city] you don’t do it, you walk or you bike or you take the car. And they had never looked at a map of a town. They just had no idea. So for one or two of them that was quite a challenge, which they overcame. At the end of the week [in the homestay] they were fine. (T11.F.SL)

Both of the quotes above reflected the deliberate actions of the school leaders to put young people in these situations where they might learn through these experiences. Although their inexperience may have been a starting point, school leaders observed that when young people have to work things out independently, they learned to navigate their way in new environments with increased confidence. This is at the heart of the experiential approach to learning (Frandberg, 2009, 2010; Henton, 1996; Ministry of Education, 2009).

6.2.3 Food experiences

The voice of young people dominated the discourse around food experiences. In cultural settings that were perceived to be very different to home these experiences illustrated how young people’s agency allowed them to express their curiosity and anxiety in relation to the experience itself. The anticipation of these experiences was influenced by adults who informed them that food would be not only be different but also they were expected to embrace that difference: “Don’t ask what you’re eating. Just try it. If you don’t like it, they won’t be offended but you actually have to try it” (T7.J.P). On the Japan trip, young people were to be home hosted by families and spend time at the host school. Specific activities during this time were to introduce them to cultural practices around food and a cooking day at the school:

D: I’m a little worried about the food over there.
B: I love sushi.
D: I’m not sure about shellfish.
E: I’m a vegetarian. I can eat rice.
M\textsuperscript{13}: What happens if they give you food that’s not vegetarian?
E: I will probably be very inquisitive about what I’m eating, every time I eat it. But no, they won’t feed me other stuff if they know. The teacher…will probably make sure that I have got a family who can cater for that.
B: They have lots of sashimi, which is raw fish. Are you guys excited about that?
D: Oh, I’ve decided I am becoming a vegetarian! (T5.J.YP)

In this dialogue, young people expressed their curiosity and willingness to try most new food offered to them. However, they also expressed some anxiety about how their individual needs may be met and anticipated how their teacher may mitigate difficult situations they might find themselves in, especially with host families. The dialogue below illustrates a lively recollection by young people of their culinary travel experiences in China:

D: I remember when we tried duck, that tasted good.
C: I remember trying the camel.
M: It seems that you extended your taste buds over there.
G: Yeah.
C: You had to.
G: Although I just starved.
E: Well I’m a vegan so I don’t eat any dairy products, eggs or meat. I thought it would be a real challenge to find anything at all to eat and I was considering like starting to eat meat before the trip, but I found out that there was a lot of stuff to eat. I tried everything that I could eat. I experienced different cuisine.
D: I tried the spiciest food. Oh man!
C: That was really nice that dish.
G: Don’t go there!
D: I had that chicken foot.
[Everyone talking].
G: Oh chicken! [everyone talking]
I: We were sick after that.
M: Did you expect that the food was going to challenge you before you went?
I: … I thought it would be kind of like the Arts Centre Chinese Takeaway [in their home city] and get some egg fried noodles, maybe some rice. But over there is so much different to what you expect, and by the end of the trip you just need some like home cooked food. . .
D: Like rice every meal, breakfast, lunch…

\textsuperscript{13} M: Is the researcher.
I: For breakfast it’s just like rice and vegetables like you’d have at lunch or dinner. It was just the same thing over and over again, and like it was good at the start, but yeah it got really boring.

C: . . . I remember a few meals when we were in China and we didn’t have rice. After a while that ended up feeling weird.

B: You learn chopsticks.

D: Pros at chopsticks!

M: Did you anticipate that before you went away? You know, knowing what to expect with the food?

C: I was worried about all this but it was really good food.

D: I was expecting dog and all that stuff that we don’t have here and stuff, but there wasn’t really that much.

G: Um, I expected not that nice food, but it turned out we got to have meals that these restaurants, most meals all inclusive of the tour company. It was all paid for. (T9.C.YP)

Young people expected food in China would be different. The dialogue indicates that most of them embraced the novelty and perceived risk associated with trying different food. Access to international foods at home gave young people a stereotypical idea about what to expect but they were surprised by the variety and tastiness. Their views reflected Elsrud’s (2001) discussion of the suspicion with which people perceived meat in countries like China, based on the mythology that meat was branded as from stray wandering animals in contrast to the farmed healthy animals in their own country. The ‘collective sickness’ that followed a meal of chicken or chicken feet echoes Elsrud’s (2001) analysis that these experiences show how close they had got to China by taking these risks with food and that they had distanced themselves from other more bland safe experiences. However, the dialogue also suggests that although there was the presence of riskier street-styled food, their regular food experiences took place within restaurants organised by a tour company. It appeared that these restaurants provided a haven in which they could choose to expand their taste buds while at the same time opt for the more familiar safe options. Over time the novelty of new food wore off and foods such as rice became boring and repetitive. Where food, through its novelty value, represented a highlight or peak experience, over time it reverted to more of a supporting experience and as part of that comfort foods became more desirable (Quan & Wang, 2004). The claim that “sometimes I just felt like some home cooked food” (T9.C.YP) was endorsed by peers.

Western ideals about cleanliness and how to kill animals appeared to remain unchallenged, as the dialogue reveals:
G: There were only a few incidents where we actually saw you know the disgusting side of the food, like some market where there was meat on benches . . .

[Everyone talking]

C: Or skinning snakes on concrete with a razorblade. I don’t think that would have been very hygienic.

B: Yeah, we went down the markets and there was a cage of like chickens and bunny rabbits and stuff, and if you wanted to buy one they would kill it for you right there and then.

D: If someone wanted a chicken, they just killed it, like right there and then.

[Everyone talking]. (T9.C.YP)

The public nature of killing animals, in terms of a place that is accessible to, and in view of people, along with the simple equipment used (a razorblade) reinforced young people’s perceptions of ‘dirty food’ in China and remained as something to be wary of (Elsrud, 2001). Nevertheless, these different experiences enabled them narrate adventurous stories about their experiences upon their return (Desforges, 2000; Noy, 2004).

6.2.4 Attitudinal shift

Adult participants perceived that new experiences were one way in which young people would gain new points of reference from which to reflect on and better understand their own lives at home. Parents in particular wanted their children to return with a greater appreciation of their own lives at home. As one parent stated “I hope that she [daughter] will come back with a whole new perspective” (T7.J.P). In perceiving that a different perspective could be an outcome, a parent reflected on her own ‘going away and returning home’ experiences:

Well it makes them [the young people] appreciate home too. You know, when you go and travel you love your holiday but you always like to get back home. I think [my child] probably needs a bit of that at the moment – just to come home and say ‘Oh it’s not that bad.’ (T7.J.P)

This quote suggests two things. One is that the return to the familiarity of home can be a relief from the ‘foreignness’ of travel and that in turn, the change of place and time away leads to a greater appreciation of home (Noy, 2004; Wilson, 2014). Secondly, the parent alludes to a possible tension in the dynamic between parent and child, in which the young person is expressing boredom or a taking-things-for-granted attitude. That sentiment was acknowledged by another parent that “teenagers at this age get a bit blasé here, you know – it’s not exciting and all that sort of thing ” (T7.J.P). These tensions are discussed by several authors (e.g.,
Blichfelt, Pedersen, Johansen & Hansen, 2010; Gullota et al., 2000; Smart, et al., 2008; Small, 2008) who pointed out that young people assert their own desires and points of view during adolescence. The ways in which they express their views and desires can be interpreted by parents as a challenge to the status quo within the parent-child-family dynamic.

Another parent used her agency to give her child the freedom to be independent from the family so that through the combination of time away and different experiences, he would settle down and also reflect with ‘fresh eyes’ on his life at home:

I wanted to give him an excessive amount of freedom in the hope that he would actually settle, it would settle him down more than broaden his horizons, almost to the point of perhaps even culture shock. You know, to realise that by being in the most polluted city [in China] that New Zealand’s actually a really good place. (T10.C.P)

The parent perceived the experience of culture shock as fundamental to a corresponding shift in attitude. Not all parents however were as confident that the freedom and independence would lead to ‘settled young people’ upon their return. Although wanting his son’s horizons to be expanded this parent speculated that “He might find it too quiet when he gets home. And making it worse, I can imagine him being in a bad mood because he’ll be over tired” (T18.G.P). Another parent stated that through the experience of the European lifestyle in Germany “My biggest fear is that he’s going to love it over there and I’ll never hear the end of it . . . cause he is not really into the things that we do [as a family]”. (T18.G.P)

Sell (2004) discussed the varied responses by those who had returned home from extended international experiences, and noted that most people returned with a mixture of greater appreciation and a sense of claustrophobia from the over-familiarity of home. These responses are reflected in the hopes and fears of the parents. Although the parents did not elaborate on what ‘settling down’ entailed, they suggested that it is about conforming to the social ideals (Wilson, 2014) of doing something worthwhile with their experiences such as studying towards their future, and accepting their responsibility within the family in doing chores. The hints of anxiety expressed by some parents in the quotes above suggest that although they wanted to give their children the freedom to have a significant experience independent of the family, it is paired with vulnerability for themselves that this might disrupt current family dynamics.
Changes can and do happen, at least for some. This parent described how his child was expressing a greater level of interest in what was happening within his family. This shift began during his trip to China through Skype conversations:

. . . all we’d get from him was ‘Yep. Yep. Yep.’ Half way through the trip it’s ‘How’s the oldest brother going at his job? How’s the middle one going with his learning of Chinese?’ And ‘How’s Mum and Dad?’ Hello, is this the same kid?! That’s carried on so that now that he’s home he doesn’t just say ‘Yeah gidday’ - he’s asking more questions and being more interactive with people. (T10.C.P)

The sustained level of interaction since his return home suggests that the displacement from familial relationships and interactions enabled this young person the space to reflect on the strength and meaning of these relationships. Another parent noted his child had returned from the same trip “more determined . . . more positive . . . more mature and more open-minded” (T10.C.P). The combination of new, unfamiliar and different experiences over an extended time away from home was perceived to offer young people opportunities for ‘soft skill’ learning (see Chapter Four, section 4.4). These ‘soft skills’ are discussed in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight. The attitudinal shifts and soft skills development were in part about gaining and then using and applying that informal learning into other experiences (Feur, 2009; Pearce & Foster, 2007; Thurber et al., 2007).

Until now, this section has focused on the anticipation of parents that their children would return with fresh insights and adjusted perceptions, which in turn might lead to an attitudinal shift. In contrast, young people used their agency to express their desire to engage in new and different experiences for their own sake. On reflection, some acknowledged that they had reconsidered their assumptions and perceptions, and adjusted their attitudes. A young person who acknowledged that the trip to China had influenced his desire to take more ownership about his own future illustrates this in the following quote:

After going to China and having that experience you think, ‘Wow, this is something completely new, just imagine what else is out there.’ It kind of makes you want to think about at home, like wanting to change your lifestyle and doing more with travelling and moving on from the things that hold you back. (T9.C.YP)

Having previously discussed the desire and vulnerability of parents in giving their children the independence to have these experiences, this statement indicated that these changes can take place. A challenge for parents and school leaders is to accommodate these changes in a way that enables young people to build on them (Beames, 2004; Bell, 2003). The single parent in the following quote had worked alongside her child for eighteen months to raise the
money for the trip. She expressed how she had encouraged her child to recognise what she had gained from her trip to China and to do something worthwhile with it in her future. She recollected what she had said to her child, “. . . the opportunity to be well-off and travel is open to everybody. It’s up to you to use your experience and your education to put yourself in that position so you can travel and even help different people.” (T10.C.P).

As Beames (2004) and Bell (2003) suggested, role adjustment and greater autonomy enables young people to utilise significant experiences as a rite of passage to the next phase of life. The quote above suggests that the parent has pointed out to her child how she could use this experience to enhance her own future and that of others. However, the extent to which this may happen will be influenced by how much ownership is assigned to the young person to ‘do something’ with her experience. The autonomy, rather than parent-driven pressure, allows the young person the space to decide what, how and when to utilise the experiences from the trip in a way that influences her future.

School leaders, especially those who had led numerous school-led tourism experiences assert that attitudinal changes are subtle, even if they might appear significant when they first return. One stated “We actually want them to think about their own lives, in relation to other people’s lives, and not just randomly adopt all these other ways of doing things” (T11.F.SL). Another added that spending time in another culture enables them to “get a better understanding” but a real attitudinal shift may take much longer to materialise “I swear that some of these kids won’t even click until they maybe get to twenty five, thirty or whatever and then they’ll look back and realise how it has affected them.” (T14.S.SL)

This was illustrated by one school leader who had previously led trips to Cambodia, claiming that the “totally in your face . . . bathing in this incredible difference” can be confronting for young people, and yet when they return home, normal routines and behaviours do return:

It’s very hard when they first get there, to cope with the difference and gradually adjust, and then when they get home they actually find it really hard, even after only two weeks. They actually look around and see all the things that they’ve got in their living room and that, and they just have to step back. But it doesn’t take long to get back to normal . . . (T14.B,GC&S.SL).

This illustrates that experiences that can be starkly contrasting to their everyday home lives do not necessarily translate into sustained attitudinal changes, or if there are changes when they take place. The dearth of studies that have assessed the long-term impacts of new and different experiences through international school trips (and other travel by young people
such as backpackers, gap year and overseas experience) suggests that this is worthy of future investigation.

6.3 Unfamiliar experiences

The second organising theme centres on the experiences that were different and unfamiliar. In a similar way to the previous organising theme, adult participants perceived that different experiences were one way in which these young people could learn and gain new points of reference from which to reflect on and better understand their lives at home. Young people used their agency to express how they approached unfamiliar experiences, particularly those that extended them beyond their comfort zone. Moreover, they expressed how the direct experiences of different everyday life activities and school life enabled them to make comparisons to their lives at homes.

This organising theme Unfamiliar experiences is comprised of four basic themes: Outside the comfort zone; Experiencing and being the Other; Comparing with their lives at home, and Comparing school life (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Organising theme Unfamiliar experiences
6.3.1 Outside the comfort zone

Everyday routines gain greater prominence when undertaken in a different and unfamiliar environment. Larsen (2008: 22) highlighted “how many tourist practices are embodied, habitual and involve ordinary objects, places and practices.” (original emphasis) He argued that much of the tourist experience involves mundane or everyday tasks. The agency of the young people allowed them to express their anxiety about engaging in these everyday activities in an unfamiliar context, especially those that pushed them outside their comfort zone. In the following quote, young people discuss their upcoming trip to Japan and their awareness that bathing is undertaken differently to how it is at home:

G: In some houses you have to share bath water.
E: Yeah, but that’s in the old kind of houses. Even if they do, they’ll have some sort of alternative for us if we can’t bear to do this.
G: I hope so.
M: But that’s part of the cultural experience isn’t it?
E: It is. I get that too, but there’s a line that you have to draw because they’ve got public baths which is where the whole town goes and bathes together in this big bath. Yeah there’s sort of a point where you don’t really want to go to.
G: But that’s a western mindset.
E: It is, but still.
C: No thank you!
B: I don’t mind missing out on that culture! (T5.J.YPg).

Although the desire to experience difference was a strong motivation for participants, this quote illustrates the debate among young people about how much difference is perceived to be acceptable. Privacy and unlimited access to fresh water at home for personal maintenance routines contrasted sharply with their perceptions that they would be expected to share bathwater in the home of the host family or undertake communal bathing in public spaces. Not only did they express their anxiety about how they would cope, there were elements of naivety about other cultures’ realities. The differing points of view revealed the contrasts in their perceptions about how far they should be expected to step outside their comfort zone.

Young people who wished to participate in the trip to Japan had to use their agency to gain selection and this is discussed in Chapter Eight (Section 8.3.1). One of the criteria was to express their willingness to try new things as part of embracing a different cultural experience. It was not surprising then that when young people did not fulfil that commitment,
their peers were perplexed and it led to moments of tension. This was illustrated by young people who had returned from the previous trip to Japan:

B: Remember when [peer] wouldn’t like try to squat toilet - we’d tell her what to do, but she was ‘No I don’t want to do that!’ We’d be getting annoyed at her because she wasn’t embracing what was in front of her.

D: It was the same with that other one that was really quiet. She wasn’t willing to try anything. And there was this girl she wouldn’t try any new food. She didn’t try anything. It was like why are you here if you don’t want to experience new things?

C: Yeah.
B: Yeah.
D: I mean it’s part of the trip and she just didn’t try anything. It got quite annoying. I got quite annoyed with her. She didn’t want a bar of it. It’s like ‘Come on, try things!’ (T6.J.YPr)

Individuals responded to difference in varying ways even when they had indicated their motivation to encounter it. When people appeared unwilling to stretch beyond their comfort zone to engage in unfamiliar experiences, their peers illustrated how they used their agency to try to influence each other’s behaviour in response to the situations they encounter.

Young people expressed their fear of fitting in, especially with host families, using incorrect etiquette and not being understood. It was the anticipation of these experiences that pushed them outside their comfort zone. This is illustrated by young people anticipating their trip to Japan: “I’m worried about fitting in with the host family” and “doing something wrong” particularly where there are different cultural practices and etiquette, such as “taking your shoes off” in Japan (T5.J.YPg). Apprehension had been influenced by listening to the experiences of school leaders and young people on previous trips, such as the previous trip to Germany: “Apparently they were frozen and they couldn’t get a single word of German out” when they first arrived (T19.G.YP). Despite the fact that the previous group who had travelled to Germany had prepared in a similar way to the young people currently anticipating their trip, they had heard that when the previous group actually arrived in Germany and had to communicate, their language skills ‘abandoned’ them because they were nervous and overwhelmed.

The humiliation of not being understood was not the only language-related concern for the young people. They also expressed their concerns about the potential embarrassment of being misunderstood. This was illustrated by this young person anticipating his trip to Germany: “I’m worried about insulting people when I’m not meaning to” or “Meaning to say one thing
when it actually means something else.” For example “If you say my friend it means she is your girlfriend, whereas if you say a friend, it’s just a friend. So it’s something we’ve got to be careful about” (T19.G.YP). School leaders justified their actions to expose young people to these authentic experiences as an important way to learn:

an excellent way to get students to think about their learning in an authentic manner; when students know that their language skills will be tested in the most trying environment imaginable. (Ministry of Education, 2014)

The direct experience of having to use their language skills in ways where they have to respond ‘as it happens’ is a key element of experiential learning. Being challenged and having sufficient autonomy to work things out for themselves can allow language development and an opportunity to reflect on how an individual responds to challenges or anxiety (Henton, 1996; Ministry of Education, 2009, 2014).

Although young people expressed their apprehension about how they might react in these situations, they prepared for them in a variety of ways, and in collaboration or with the guidance of parents, school leaders and peers. The preparation helped raise their awareness of what to expect and how to manage it. In turn, although they expected to be outside their comfort zones, making the unknown more familiar and ‘safe’ helped them cope:

I think with all our researching beforehand, I think that helped a lot. It sort of puts you at ease. Also, [the teachers] had been before and they would tell us stories and that was good. (T6.J.YPg)

Through the various preparatory tasks, young people were ready to encounter the ‘real contexts’ and to actively engage with a range of experiences. Despite this, learners need to be open to the possibilities and responsive to the situations they find themselves in. Through the preparation, experience and reflection phases of the experiential learning cycle, learners will each make meaning about what they have learned (Henton, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Luckner & Nadler, 1997). Experiential learning is further discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Young people travel on international school trips with peers but not necessarily their friends. The peer nature of the experience was a strong motivation for many of them (see Sections 8.2.1, 8.2.2 and 8.2.3). Some young people demonstrated their willingness to extend their peer relationships beyond their friendship group. Some parents expressed a more cautious perspective about what was considered an unfamiliar experience:

She’s only got one friend going and it’s kind of really put her out of her comfort zone. Usually she does everything in a big group of all her friends. I was quite surprised that she wanted to go and her best friend is not going. The friend that is
going is just a distant friend, so it’s quite good that she’s gone and done this without having to hold someone else’s hand, or have someone hold her hand….. it’s another skill for when they leave school. That they are capable of doing things without worrying what their friends are all doing. . . . I think this has helped her be able to make some decisions on her own. (T7.J.P)

Although positive that her child is extending beyond her friendship group, this parent perceived that her child might be vulnerable until new friendships form, hinting at the ‘involved’ protective role parents play as young people navigate their peer relationships (Shaw, 2008, 2010). Nevertheless, the parent perceives that through this experience her child will learn to how to be more confident and make independent decisions deemed to be important for future scenarios. Klammer (2006) emphasised the role ‘good parents’ play by supporting those experiences perceived to support their child’s development (this is also discussed in Section 7.3.2).

6.3.2 Experiencing and being the Other

The desire to experience difference was expressed by all stakeholders. For those who had returned from their trips, both the young people and their parents recounted that the unfamiliarity they encountered was about the places, performance of daily tasks and the people they interacted with. The experience of the constructed Other (Desforges, 2000; Eslrud, 2001; Urry, 2002) focused on the different physicality of people in the host community. One immediate point of difference was the unfamiliar carrying of weapons in both China and Vanuatu. Young people had acknowledged that despite the fact that security guards were armed in China they were surprised that they also appeared friendly:

G: But they are quite nice people. Quite friendly people you know. You smile at them and they usually smile back, but sometimes they get angry.

E: Even security guards with shotguns walk around and smile at you. (T9.C.YP)

Parents also recounted their children’s experiences of and with the people of Vanuatu. Although a parent reported that his son had “loved the people . . . the totally different ethnicity” (T2.V.P) there had nevertheless been an initial impression of intimidation. This was apparently due to the physicality of the local people, particularly the men who carried machetes with them. A parent reported how his son had commented that:

. . . everyone wanders around with a machete . . . the first time they saw these very strong, big, black men wandering up and down the street all carrying machetes, he said it was actually quite intimidating and overwhelming. But again as they realised that they used the machete for everything and they just became quite
confident and didn’t worry about it anymore. I would have been a little intimidated seeing that. (T2.V.P)

Although the young people were not objectifying the Other, through these experiences they recognised that the differences were not just with the Other but also that they themselves were ‘different’ in another culture. Through interaction the differences in cultural norms and gender interactions also became points that later led to ‘meaning-making’, as young people shared their experiences with their peers, school leaders and parents:

I mean we got stories about the way the school was run too. And the fact that the boys and the girls were separate. And [my son] told a story once about his buddy Joshua, and he was sitting in the library I think, and Joshua was sitting beside a young girl in the library, and [my son] came in and Joshua saw [my son] come in and he just went “Oh” to the girl “Get Out.” You know, dismissed the girl, and the girl immediately got up and moved away so that [my son] could come and sit down. And [my son] was horrified with that, because of course that’s not actually the way they’ve been brought up to treat girls. . . . I think what he learnt when he thought about it was just that it was different. Things are different. In Vanuatu the boys are, he felt, in control. They were the leaders. And the separation. Did any of the others talk about the separation between the girls and the boys? Although they did suspect that there was lots of things going on in the trees behind the school [laughs]. (T2.V.P)

The parent went on to suggest how she and her son had discussed that the important thing was not to judge difference as better or worse but acknowledge that there may be reasons why things are the way they are in other cultures:

It’s not necessarily that we do it better. It’s just different. It’s the way things are in Vanuatu, and . . . you accept it. And the girls had to accept it I suppose. Even though . . . I would have found it very hard to accept. (T2.V.P)

Another parent reported the ‘happiness’ of the local people, a point that was made by school leaders and the young people themselves:

[my child] sort of sheepishly showed me [photos], he wasn’t wanting to downgrade the simplicity of their environment and was actually very humble in the way he spoke. He did also say how happy they were. They seemed to be very happy and you know you could tell by some of the pictures that he [son] had of the children, especially the younger ones. They were absolutely priceless - they’re beautiful. (T2.V.P)

It appeared that in their conversations at home, the young people had tried to make connections between the extent to which material resources, education and different cultural practices could link to happiness, and how that compared to their own privileged lives at home. This is similar to the way which young people who have undertaken Gap years have

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14 Not his real name.
also made similar recollections (Johan, 2009). The pleasure of the experience was expressed by young people, with one young person saying what her peers had repeated several times “Going to the primary school and playing and singing and stuff. . . the highlight of the whole trip was seeing all these kids and they are so happy .. .” (T3.V.YP)

For young people travelling to Samoa, their concerns focused more on the way in which their wealth may be ‘assumed’ by the local community because “the people know that we give them money, so they might expect a bit [of money] from us, I’m not sure but guessing they might” and just “the colour of our skin and stuff, they think we’re loaded” (T15.S.YP). Their consideration of how they may be perceived as the Other in Samoa reflected their inexperience, along with some underlying prejudices. Although they had acquired knowledge through their classroom learning, these young people had not yet had the contextual experiences to apply it and reflect on those experiences.

Some young people expressed their enjoyment of being the Other and the attention it afforded them. This was highlighted by young people who discussed their experiences and feelings of being like “rock stars” during a spontaneous basketball game in China:

G: Some of the places we visited weren’t used to tourists, so we were treated very, very differently. We were treated very very well . . . we were treated like rock stars. Like everyone looked at us. We played basketball and everyone was looking down from the building at us.

Several: Yeah, that was cool.

G: It was because we were Western people.

B: There was like a handful of people playing basketball and as soon as our boys started playing there were probably about 30 people looking from this big building. People were hanging out the windows or watching and cheering and stuff. Yeah, it was pretty cool. (T9.C.YP)

The experiences of being the Other or of experiencing the Other were typically recounted by young people and their parents. The narration of these stories at home and amongst their peers had been ways for young people to make meaning from these experiences and to recognise how they may have had their perceptions or attitudes challenged. School leaders knew that the young people would encounter these (Other) experiences and used them as a justification for these informal learning experiences.
6.3.3 *Comparing with their lives at home*

Young people expressed their motivation to experience the way in which their peers in other cultures live their daily lives. The unfamiliarity of these experiences enabled them to observe what contrasted with their lives at home. These comparisons were perceived to only be possible through experience: “I wouldn’t have understood that until I went [there]” (T9.C.YP). This young person who had returned from France illustrated this:

> There’s no room to park your car. You don’t really build above two stories here and over there that would usually be a grand house. So over there they’re just packed into apartments. They just build up where we build out. (T12.F.YP)

This statement was reinforced by the teacher who led the trip to France, who argued that it is not until young people experience unfamiliarity that they have a point of reference from which to make comparisons with what is familiar. She stated:

> They all live in apartments [in France], they’re not houses like we have. They’re in tiny apartments. They realise ‘Wow, we’ve got so much space’ and things like that. I’ve seen it before with my own kids when they suddenly realise things are different to at home … When they are away they find out more about themselves and where they’re from. And they think more about home. They think about things that they haven’t thought about before, and they appreciate things. (T11.F.SL)

Through observation and experiences young people learn about what is different to home, and about what is familiar and taken-for-granted in their own lives. In the examples above, they had not considered the familiarity of their living space, particularly the open space as part of individual family dwellings as anything other than the norm. In recognising difference it seemed that it had translated into a new appreciation of what they had previously taken-for-granted.

This is not to suggest that young people travel to international destinations on these trips as blank slates. They depart with perceptions that have been influenced by their own prior knowledge and inter-relationships with others. Consequently, some young people found that their perceptions of the destination were disrupted through their experiences. For example, one young person reflected on his expectations to experience poverty in China but did not anticipate such a modern business-focused country: “but I didn’t expect it [poverty] would be at the level it was, and I didn’t expect all the modern-ness of China either” (T9.C.YP). In this case, the poverty had been more than was expected. This disruption of perceptions was similarly noted by a parent whose child had been on the same trip:
He’s come back with a totally different perception of what China was. All he had seen [before the trip] was ‘Made in China, Made in China’ and he’s heard so many stories about ‘It’s all made in China because it’s cheap labour and poor conditions’ . . . but now he’s come back with an understanding that there are wealthy businessmen in China. (T10.C.P)

This brief dialogue between two of the young people illustrates how they are trying to make meaning of how these experiences influenced their perceptions of China and New Zealand:

   B:    I sort of realised that New Zealand is significantly over-priced for everything.
   C:    Yeah, you change your thinking . . .
   [Lots of people talking].
   B:    Like at first you think China’s cheap, and then you go to China and you think, ‘No, New Zealand is a rip off.’ (T9.C.YP)

These quotations suggest that through their experiences in China the young people have encountered unexpected confusion in the contrasts between rich-poor and traditional-modern within China. Their confusion led them to reconsider how they understood New Zealand and China in relation to development-related concepts such as East-West, Global North and South and minority-majority (Downes, 2013). Their experiences had allowed them to question their prior knowledge in relation to their new experiences to construct new learning and understandings (also see Chapter Three, Section 3.3).

Direct involvement enabled young people to express the specific nature of what they experienced and how it influenced their attitudes towards their lives at home. The following dialogue illustrates how young people reflected on their experiences in China to consider how they now appreciated how lucky they were to live in a clean environment:

   E:    . . . you don’t really know how lucky you are until you go overseas and see some of the things that are going on, and we’re really nice and clean here, you know?
   I:    Well in China all the cities are kind of different [to each other]. It’s not really like in New Zealand where cities are kind of slightly different. But in China it’s like in some cities there’ll be slums and poverty, and then in other cities there’ll be tall skyscrapers and you’ll be envious of some cities. You know, you’d wish you’d want to live in China, and then you’ll be like ‘Wow, what a country that we live in! Like thank God that we have all this clean stuff and that we live in clean homes and stuff like that.’ Yeah, and I wasn’t expecting to come out with that experience. (T9.C.YP)
China’s huge population, in contrast to New Zealand’s provoked young people to reflect on their own place in the world, and the relative significance (or lack of) of New Zealand as a country:

B  I learnt that you sort of think about yourself a lot in New Zealand. And when I came back from China I realised that there is like 6.5 billion other people on the planet that probably are quite important, and I don’t really matter very much. You sort of realise that you come from a really insignificant country, and it doesn’t matter on the world scale. (T9.C.YP)

This is further illustrated by the teacher who led the trip to France:

It gives them this incredible sense of what it means to be a New Zealander and what we have. They question what is our culture and what is our identity and how do we explain ourselves to other people? That’s just what happened to these kids when they were in France, it’s like they have to explain themselves. They have to describe themselves and to think about their country and what it is about it that might interest other people. They haven’t thought about these things before. (T11.F.SL)

This school leader points to the potential for learning through the encountering unfamiliar experiences on international school trips. At one level it is about being able to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the destination and home. At another, deeper level, it is about considering what and how factors influence the way things are and create those differences. These sorts of structured school-led international school trips, along with independent extended holidays, are learning experiences that may increase young people’s “understanding of who they are and their position in the world” (Carr, 2011: 101) and develop a more attuned understanding of their own national identity (Wilson, 2014).

6.3.4 Comparing school life

Interactions with peers in host schools were perceived as another way in which young people might learn about difference. Most of the trips incorporated experiences in a host school. These ranged from a single day ‘taster’, through to a four-week immersion in regular classes on the trip to Germany. Often these visits included home hosting by families (this is addressed more in Chapter Seven, Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.3). The shorter visits enabled observations of difference, where comparisons could be made to their own school regarding things such as the physical layout. This is illustrated by a young person who had visited China: “The school itself was actually massive. How high was it? Like twenty five floors. Our school would look like nothing [in comparison]”. (T9.C.YP)
A visit to a school in Vanuatu reinforced how young people framed their interpretation of difference within a development discourse (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Downes, 2013). From the outset this trip was based on service, described by a school leader as “helping out and hopefully getting some joy out of helping make a difference in communities that are not as fortunate as our own” (T1.V.SL). The interaction between the visiting and host peers was positioned in a way that the participants in the focus group interviews (the ‘visitors’), because of their privilege had things to contribute that would help their host peers. Young people expressed the view that their experiences in the local school/s were a highlight and this was attributed to the input they made “We took over some art resources and other things, and taught some art activities to the kids [in the primary school]. They really loved it!” (T3.V.YP)

In contrast, the single day spent in the secondary school with their peers was enough and they expressed their perception that they had nothing to gain from spending longer in that context:

B: Well, the second day [we were there] we had to spend in the school, like a normal school day.
   [group talking]
C: . . . we didn't really want to spend a whole day in each class again.
   [group talking]
B: It was really boring.
C: Yeah.
   [group talking and laughing]
C: And half the teachers didn't show up, so all you did was like sit there.
(T3.V.YP)

That ‘boring’ experience of school did, on reflection, make these young people realise that they were fortunate to have the educational opportunities and resources that they did. The following quote illustrates how they reflected on the flippant attitude they sometimes bring to their schooling, specifically in the way they wait to be guided by their teachers:

C: I’ve learned to respect things more - I mean appreciate things more.
D: Yeah.
F: Yeah, definitely.
G: Yeah, we worry about the smallest things compared to the people we met.
C: Like teachers not showing up to class, they just like get on with their work without a teacher and we’d be like, ‘No teacher, we can’t do any work!’
(T3.V.YP)
The interactions between young people at the school in Vanuatu were shared with their parents upon their return home. Parent participants shared what they understood their children had learned from their experiences. In the following quote a parent discusses what she understood to be the differing aspirations between the young people in the two cultures. Even the most senior [Vanuatu] student leader in the school, who was perceived to be intelligent, ‘only’ aspired to do something within his local community, such as run a business:

They all had a buddy, and [my son] was buddied up with the Head Boy at the school called Matthew\textsuperscript{15}. And he said Matthew was a really bright boy. He was doing this physics work that [my son] said ‘Oh, I couldn’t make heads nor tails of.’ He said he talked to Matthew about what he was going to do when he left school. . . he wanted to drive a cruise boat - that was his aspiration. [My son] said most of the young people he talked to, their aspirations were to own a shop in the market, to be a driver, to own a boat. Maybe one or two had aspirations to come to New Zealand but that was it. He was fascinated at the fact that that was fine by them. . . that was what they wanted. They were happy to do those things and they just had this plan in life that was totally different to what we think for our kids, or what they think. (T2.V.P).

This highlighted cultural differences in how young people anticipated their life trajectories and what it meant to be successful. Both sought independence in their futures and aimed for similar things. The difference lay in the means by which they expected to achieve it. It seemed that ambition and success for the Vanuatu young people were linked to running a business in their home community. In contrast, young New Zealanders are increasingly aware that notions of success are linked to the expectation to undertake tertiary education at institutions that are often located outside their home town or city. Following this, they are then expected to engage in a career in the globalised job market, and to select a career from a multitude of options (Nairn et al., 2012; Wyn, 2007).

One participating school had an established reciprocal school exchange arrangement with a Japanese school embedded into their programme (also see Chapter Eight, Section 8.4.2). Through this arrangement facilitated by the school leaders, young people have the opportunity to experience how their host peers experience school life. Young people who had returned from Japan discussed their experiences reflecting on the differences they observed:

B I was looking forward to seeing their school and how it was structured. . . They have big sinks to clean them and they just casually go and clean their teeth. . . They’ve got real old desks and old chairs and it’s just really surprising because you’d think they’d have all this technology like we do. We have interactive white boards and clicker things and they don’t appear to have that. And it’s real old fashioned.

\textsuperscript{15} Not his real name.
C: But it’s good though.
D: Yeah, keeping traditional stuff. It’s good.
B: They’ve got really old tennis courts and stuff like that.
C: And they’re second best school in Kumagaya and it is really nothing like what we have got really. I like the facilities here.
M: So did it give you quite an appreciation of what you’ve got here?
C: Yeah definitely. And the colour is something else. The walls here are all painted quite crazy bright and there it’s grey and brown…
D: Yeah, just really plain and boring. (T6.J.YPr)

These comments illustrate the differences observed in the physical environment and how the young people made comparisons to their own school. They were surprised at the apparent lack of technology, given Japan’s prominent reputation in this area. In noticing the old fashioned, plain and boring physical environment and the lack of technology in the Japanese school, they recognised how fortunate they were to be part of a school that they perceived to be vibrant and ‘savvy’. In the dialogue below, the young people continue to discuss the contrasts, this time about the student-teacher relationship and the pedagogical approaches used in the classroom:

C: And there is no interaction between the teacher and the students.
B: Yeah. Very studious. You know, you write that down I’ll copy that. And the students were falling asleep in class. They all study until really late, they’re all like studying. And we woke up at 6 and on the train she’d [host peer] be asleep. It’s crazy. My host sister - she’d go to bed at 4 (am) and she’d wake up at like 4.30, and do her chores or whatever and then study. And I’d just feel like “Are you crazy?” (T6.J.YPr)

Through their observation of the lack of student-teacher interaction and the transmission style of teaching and learning (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Killen, 2009), the young people were surprised at how seriously their Japanese peers approached their schoolwork. They recognised that they engaged with their own teachers and approach their learning differently. In the final section of the dialogue, the young people acknowledge how they have learned about the competitive environment in which their host peers study so hard to succeed:

D: Because they’ve got such competitiveness to get into the uni’s over there. It’s crazy. They’re studying, studying.
C: They cram at school, after school … and I suppose when they came here it was really different. [The visit by the Japanese students preceded the trip to Japan].
B: I remember, um . . . we have prep [in the hostel] for an hour and a half or something and I remember taking [visiting peer] with me and I thought ‘Oh, she’s going to find this so weird’, like we have to sit silently and do all this
study. But that must be quite normal for her, like sort of being forced to study. It doesn’t seem to be very healthy. Like the person I stayed with, she got quite sick and I think she left school for a wee bit because she was so wiped out, and lots of pressure from the system of getting into university and stuff. (T6.J.YP)

The time they spent in Japan in a host school and interacting with their host peers allowed them to compare and contrast how differently their counterparts experienced school life. Moreover, as they discussed and interpreted their own experiences of the Japanese school system, they were actively and socially constructing their opinions about the relative merits and weaknesses of each system (Barker, 2012; Falk, 2005; Killen 2009; Watkins, 2005).

6.4 Chapter summary

Through an examination of the two contributory organising themes, the global theme of experience difference has been discussed in this chapter. All of the stakeholder groups were motivated by the opportunities an international school trip offered young people to engage in new and different experiences. The adult participants perceived that these experiences were one way in which young people would learn and gain new points of reference from which to compare and contrast and better understand their lives at home.

Through the spatial and cultural differences young people would and did encounter, the school leaders perceived that for some it might be the first time they noticed unfamiliarity and difference. More importantly, they argued that young people would be stimulated to not just notice difference, but also use their experiences to reflect and think more deeply about the factors that influenced why those differences exist.

In contrast, parents recognised the uniqueness afforded by an international school trip. They perceived that their children would gain access to and interact directly with the host community in ways that could not be replicated through other experiences, such as family holidays. Moreover, parents expressed their hope that, by allowing their children to travel away and engage in new and unfamiliar experiences, they would return home with a greater appreciation of their taken-for-granted family, home and school lives.
Young people expressed curiosity, excitement and anxiety as they anticipated and experienced new and unfamiliar situations. More specifically, they were mindful that they would not simply ‘be in’ or spectate novelty or difference. Instead, they realised that through the interaction with host schools, families and communities, their experiences would be embedded in the locality. Consequently, this prompted them to express their apprehension and anxiety about being outside their comfort zones. This was particularly in relation to how they might cope with culturally different practices without the insularity of the group’s presence.

Young people were intensely interested in the ways in which young people in the host community experienced their lives differently to their own. Through their own voices or those of their parents or school leaders, it was evident that they had not only observed and experienced difference; they had also evaluated the ways in which it contrasted with home and the extent to which their perceptions had been adjusted. The deliberate actions of school leaders to position experiences that allowed young people to engage in active learning form the focus of Chapter Seven, to which attention is now focused.
CHAPTER 7. ACTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT
7.1 Introducing the chapter

In this chapter, the perception that travelling to an international context offers young people a context for authentic learning is critically examined.

The global theme *Active learning experiences in an international context* is the second of three global themes. The global theme comprises three organising themes: Interaction at a local level, learning to travel, and the destination makes things real. A further nine basic themes complete the thematic network (Figure 7.1).

![Diagram](image-url)

Figure 7.1 Global theme *Active learning experiences in an international context*
Through this thematic network, the perceptions of all participants that learning is contextualised through opportunities offered in an international context is critically examined. Specifically, it explores the opportunities for individuals to interact with the host community; experiences related to time, space and mobility; and place were perceived to be relevant contexts to enable authentic learning experiences. The chapter then discusses how school leaders’ actions allowed learning to be focused around experience and the social construction of meaning. Through this deliberate positioning young people had the space and autonomy to initiate and construct their own learning when it was relevant to them.

As this chapter focuses on active learning experiences within an international context, it is timely to again acknowledge the problematic nature of the term authenticity within tourism literature, which was discussed from an education perspective in Chapter Four (Section 4.4). This thesis argues that groups participating in international school trips are engaging with the tourism space. In this chapter, authenticity is positioned in this discussion within a learning framework. As has been previously established, contemporary curricula and educational literature emphasise the importance of relevance for learners (e.g., Alton-Lee, 2003; Education Scotland, 2011; Killen, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2007b). In this regard, relevance is considered in relation to its perceived importance for the learner and its significance to the ‘real world’ (Campbell-Price, 2012; Cosgriff & Thevenard, 2012; Hohenstein & King, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2009, 2014; Nairn, 2005). Experiences that enable learners to engage directly with ‘real’ experiences (e.g., real places, people, issues) are perceived as ‘authentic’: they lead to the construction of meaning. These are thus interpreted as authentic learning experiences and relate to both the nature of the learning experiences and the context in which they take place. Within the school-led tourism space, international school trips are perceived to offer socially, physically and intellectually interactive experiences between individuals and the context. These contexts, whether they refer to place, people, time or space, are perceived to allow for authentic active learning. Therefore, when talking about authenticity, the meaning is coming much more strongly from the learning perspective than from the tourism perspective.

7.2 Interaction at a local level

Three basic themes constitute this organising theme (Figure 7.2). Opportunities to interact with the host community were made possible through experiences in host schools and with
families in their homes. These local interactions were perceived to be *experiences that are not touristic*; and that enabled young people to *develop cultural understanding*. School leaders deliberately structured itineraries that created spaces in which young people could engage in these experiences and through them construct their own meaning.

![Diagram of Organising theme Interaction at a local level]

Figure 7.2 Organising theme *Interaction at a local level*

### 7.2.1 *Interaction with host peers*

School leaders deliberately structured itineraries that included space for young people to engage directly with the host community. Arrangements whereby young people experienced school life and were hosted in family homes as a means to experience difference were discussed in Chapter Six (see Sections 6.3.1-6.3.4).

At the heart of these local experiences is the interaction between the host and visiting peers, through which they share aspects of everyday home and school life. Young people perceived that these interactions allowed them to experience the culture, then which they would understand better. This is illustrated by young people as they anticipated their trip to Japan: “experiencing the home life” would allow them to “actually get into the culture”. This contrasted with staying in a hotel where they thought, “you’d just feel like you were going on a normal holiday” (T5.J.YPg) and by implication would insulate them from learning about the culture.
Young people who had participated in the previous trip reinforced the value of experiencing everyday life with their host peers:

... We got a taste of everything. We were always doing something, and we just sort of got into school, community, and the activities that they do out of school, like everyday life. (T6.J.YPr)

The duration of time spent in host schools varies. It was evident that the nuances of everyday living and the strength of the relationships were more evident for those who stayed a week or longer in family homes and attended host schools. One young person was surprised that “everyone was crying and it was really emotional” saying goodbye to host students and families after just a week (T6.J.YPr). Along with her peers, she acknowledged that the more these experiences are embraced, the greater the connection and learning can be: “they were here [in our home town] to experience our culture and we were there to experience their culture, and so you’re there for the experience and so you embrace it so much that it just has such an effect on you” (T6.J.YPr). The strength of this culturally-focused trip was attributed to the way in which school leaders deliberately positioned this experience as part of an ongoing reciprocal school-school exchange.

Likewise, young people who had returned from a trip to China reflected positively on the brief time they spent in a Chinese school, describing it as “awesome”, “my highlight” and their Chinese peers as “friendly” and “lovely”, and that they had “bonded with them straight away” (T9.C.YP). Most agreed that they would have liked to spend more time in the school, “I’d have liked to have gone to the classes with them”, although one noted that their lack of the [Chinese] language might limit how much more they could gain from the experience: “You’d be kind of standing there with them, they’re all speaking Chinese, we don’t understand” (T9.C.YP). To extend their time in a meaningful way they would rely on the school leaders who held the responsibility to negotiate these school to school arrangements on behalf of their students. The school leaders, whose own observations recognised the significance of this experience, noted this. This led them to discuss how they might be able to modify the school-based interaction, should they offer future trips to China:

D: For many of our students, the highlight was the short period of time that we spent in the school in Wuhan, and it was a real regret that we actually spent so little time there.

C: They were talking and exploring and the Chinese students were teaching our students Chinese, and we were teaching them English. It was really lovely to see that interaction between those students.
D: Time in the classroom would be a waste [because of language problems]. I think we could organise some joint activities like drama, music and sport to use the talent we have amongst our students. (T8.C.SL)

Aspects of everyday life were more evident when members of the travelling group were also hosted in homes, including school leaders who referred to their own experiences in Japan:

C: Yeah, certainly in terms of living economically… And the way they recycle.

B: Every day was a recycling day. Every day with my host teacher, I’d be off to the recycling station on the way [to school]. (T4.J.SL)

Through these interactive everyday school and home experiences, young people and their school leaders were engaging in what they perceived as experientially unique experiences. The actions of school leaders to arrange these experiences allowed the host school to become the context for ‘off-the-beaten-track’ interactions with host peers and families. The opportunities reflected elements associated with tourist experiences, however participants did not perceive their (host) school-based experiences to fit into that ‘pigeonhole’. Nonetheless, their motives to engage in experientially unique, ‘real’ experiences echo the motivations of other modern, and particularly young tourists (Noy, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Uriely, Yonay & Simchai, 2002; Urry, 2000, 2002).

7.2.2 Not being a tourist

When participants described their interactive experiences within the host community, they differentiated these from what they perceived to be tourist experiences. On the trip to Vanuatu, the group stayed in a village and interacted with young people in the local school. Young people therefore claimed that they participated in, rather than observed the local everyday life, giving them a ‘behind the scenes’ experience:

We weren’t like tourists because we were actually like them [the people in Vanuatu], we were doing what they do pretty much most of the time. Like, if we were tourists we would sort of go and watch them do their every day stuff . . . (T3.V.YP)

This echoed the young people who were anticipating their trip to Samoa: “our teacher wants us to see how they live, not how we go on holiday” (T15.S.YP). To achieve this, their itinerary was mostly focused on teacher-structured experiences that involved “making traditional stuff, like we learn how to make tapa cloth”, “we learn how to weave” and “we will go to church” (T15.S.YP). Consequently they differentiated these experiences from those
they perceived to be the tourist experiences they would participate in: “staying in a resort when we first arrive to just relax and get used to the heat” “when we will just be down by the beach and relax” (T15.S.YP). Here, the differentiation is made between engaging in the cultural experience and relaxing in more hedonistic activities such as swimming or when insulated from the local community in the tourist-focused resort.

Young people who had travelled to China also explained that they had shared a meal with an “actual citizen” in her own home. In their view, these were ‘backstage’ experiences (Pearce and Moscardo, 1986) that ‘normal tourists’ would not have access to:

G: . . . we got to do things that a normal group wouldn’t have got to do. For example, we got to have lunch in one of the poorer regions of Beijing, where a lot of it was demolished for the Beijing Olympics. There were many other examples like that throughout the trip where we wouldn’t have normally got if we were just a group of tourists.

D: . . . we had lunch at an actual citizen’s house. She cooked us a really nice meal and stuff, and made us feel at home. We got to go into her house and experience it full on. (T9.C.YP)

Parents also emphasised that the access to the homes of the people in the host community and interaction in public spaces such as streets, differentiated the cultural trip from a tourist experience. This perception was reinforced as they recounted their children’s experiences:

D: I thought it was more of a cultural exchange because when they first got there they arranged for them to go to a normal family’s house and have a meal with them. They got to see how little that house was and how they had to live in one or two rooms. They got to just go down the streets at night. The teachers would take them and they’d jump in and play badminton on one street, and then dance with people and watch displays, and they just were drawn into the crowd to join in. Um, yeah they spoke of getting to see different things that tourists wouldn’t see.

B: The areas that they went to weren’t tourist areas. Yeah sure, the pandas were touristy type things but there were a lot of areas that they went to where they were probably the only white people in the whole village at that particular time. So therefore those people accepted them more into their groups and were prepared to interact with them a lot more than the big cities where you could have gone to all the big cities and “Oh that’s just another tourist place, don’t worry about it” sort of thing. (T10.C.P)

The parents did not elaborate why they perceived that their “white” children were a rare presence in the village. What it suggests it that their children were ‘off the beaten track’ and this enabled them to encounter ‘real people’ (Noy, 2004) as the constructed Other (Elsrud, 2001; Urry, 2002). On the other hand, their own children’s presence in the village constructed them as the Other amongst the local people. Moreover, they argued that the perceived lack of
tourist presence and curiosity about each Other enabled a greater level of interaction between local people and their children than would be possible in the tourist-oriented areas. Parents acknowledged the influence of school leaders, who facilitated some of these interactions:

C: I think the age of them too they probably got more out of it than a group of adults. They probably acted different. Like going and playing badminton or basketball with the locals. I can’t imagine a group of adults doing much like that. They were probably more open to that sort of thing.

D: [My child] had marked down [as a goal] to fly a kite over there and when they were there she saw all the Chinese people flying kites. And so [the teacher] approached this old man in the park who was flying a kite and asked if he would let her fly it. So it was just different things that they got to do. They said they went down the street one night and there were those big dragonheads. They were all round the back, so they got to play with them [the dragonheads].

B: Yeah, whereas an adult or older group, there’s no way they would have done that. And that’s why I think [teacher] was very right in what he said to the other adults “Hey, this is for the students. It’s not for the adults.”

(T10.C.P)

This dialogue illustrates the important relationship between the school leaders and the young people (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The parents perceived that this particular school leader understood the personalities and interests of the young people by deliberately acting on behalf of the young people to facilitate opportunities. Parents also perceived that the school leaders were prepared to assertively put their views forward amongst the other trip leaders if they thought the emphasis was shifting away from the young people. All participants perceived that the interactive experiences within the host community discussed in this section provided a context through which cultural learning and understanding were fostered.

7.2.3 Develop cultural understanding

School leaders positioned culturally focused trips such as those already discussed in this chapter as a means for young people to develop their cultural awareness and understanding. Examples from the cultural trips to Japan illustrates how young people expressed their anticipation and described their experiences of cultural learning (see also Chapter Six, section 6.3.1 and 6.3.4). The actions of the school leaders to structure these experiences so that young people have the opportunity to apply this learning during the trip and later upon their return to school.
School-aged young people spend a significant portion of their time in school (Clark, 2005) and it is a significant aspect of their lives at that time. Experiencing school in another culture was perceived by young people to be one way to make direct comparisons to their own experiences. The increased awareness of how their school lives were experienced differently, along with a better cultural understanding of the competitive nature of education in Japan was illustrated in Chapter Six (Section 6.3.4). Previous experience hosting their Japanese peers in their homes and at school had motivated young people to want to experience Japanese culture and to find out for themselves if the Japanese emphasis on studying was true. Young people who were anticipating their trip illustrated this:

C: I want a new understanding of a different country.
F: Yeah we might think that we have it hard and we’ll go there and maybe understand that we really have it easy.
E: They stay at school until like 5 o’clock every night. I couldn’t do that.
C: [When she was here] my [Japanese] friend said that study is more important than sleep over there. She’s like, “I don’t want to go back.” She didn’t want to go back because there’s too much work. (T5.J.YPg)

In another example, the young people reflected on their previous experience of hosting Japanese peers at their own school and homes. These reflections revealed their own perceptions of different cultural etiquette, such as their impression of shyness amongst the young Japanese people. Bearing that in mind, they expressed concern about how their own more boisterous nature may be experienced by their Japanese hosts:

G: She wouldn’t speak. She didn’t do anything. Like you had to tell her that it was OK for her to sit down. She was very shy.
B: Yeah she was aye? You had to say “Hi” to her first and she was like “Oh, hi” [quietly]. If I sat down then she would sit down.
G: She just stood there a lot. It’s like “It’s alright to move you know.”
C: But we might be like that when we go over.
E: I’ll be sitting there going “what do we do? What can’t we do?”
C: Even the slippers thing freaks me out.
   [Lots of interaction]
G: I’m a bit boisterous. I’ll probably make myself at home!
B: I don’t want to disrespect their culture by doing something wrong.
C: Yeah, because people keep telling me it’s like really culturally insensitive to touch a Japanese child on the head or to bow with your hands in front of you and you’re just like what if I’m really offending someone?
G: I’ll definitely do it. I’ll be like… ‘oh crap, sorry’.
   [Laughter] (T5.J.YPg)
The school leaders associated with both Japanese trips (2007 and 2009) stated that the trips were “overwhelmingly about understanding - understanding people” (T4.J.SL). On these trips, the first week was spent hosted in a Japanese school and in host family homes. Travelling as a group but independently of those at their host school, to Hiroshima and Kyoto followed this. School leaders argued that it was important to structure the itinerary in an appropriate order so that the cultural learning may be realised. In doing so, they sought feedback from previous trip participants: “We asked the kids what they thought when we came back and unquestionably they said it was good to go [touring] after [the host school exchange]” (T4.J.SL).

These contrasting experiences allowed the young people to acknowledge that their trip itinerary gave them “the best of both worlds”, in that “we get to experience their life and be a tourist as well” (T6.J.YPr). They perceived the tourist experiences as those where they engaged with visitor attractions such as Disneyland, shopping, and travelling as a group to visit “the temples, museums, shrines, castles, the Kyoto Tower and the Peace Park Museum” (T6.J.YPr). In other words, “touristy things” were “the famous attractions – like if you go to Kyoto and Hiroshima, they’re the things you do” (T6.J.YPr). For the young people who were anticipating their trip to Japan they also perceived that the time they would spend travelling “on our own” as a school group would give them the freedom to relax with each other and “feel like you were going on a normal holiday” (T5.J.YPg). This illustrates the importance of balancing what they perceived as the more serious cultural learning parts of their trip with the social, more relaxed group experiences to allow space for sociality, and also the space to be reflexive and socially construct meaning from their experiences.

School leaders’ own observations supported this and acted to ensure the itinerary retained the most appropriate structure to allow young people to apply their learning in new situations:

B: I’ll never forget those kids when we were in Hiroshima - they said to us “Look at all those other tourists”, meaning other school groups. Because they’d been home-stayed they said themselves that they then experienced places like Hiroshima in a whole different way than if they’d just come in cold or gone into it as a school trip. I think that that was really quite startling and quite moving. They felt that they were so much a part of Japanese culture in that short space of time. They then understood stuff that they then saw in a whole different way.

B: I think they had learned about the way the Japanese conduct themselves in daily life - you know just quiet, observing. I observed it when we were in a dining room having breakfast at the hotel. Our students were all there sitting down eating their breakfast and then these Australians came in. Yeah, just the way that they came in, the way they acted, our students were like “Oh
that’s not the right way to go about doing things.” They knew after being hosted with the Japanese I suppose, they observed how you behave in a train, how you’re not loud and yabbering away. You just sit there quietly.

C: Yeah, they knew how you behave in a crowd.

B: And so when we went travelling they carried on with those behaviours. (T4.J.SL)

Although the young people may have differentiated the itinerary into two components, the cultural exchange (host school and family experience) and the tourist experience (travelling together), the school leaders had deliberately structured it this way. In doing so they utilised an experiential approach to learning (Henton, 1996; Joplin, 1995). This began with focused cultural interaction and was followed by further experiences in Japan in which they had opportunities to socially construct meaning from their experiences and apply that learning. Through direct interaction with their Japanese host peers and families, the young people had observed behaviours and engaged in everyday routines. Through their individual or socially constructed reflections they had made meaning of these experiences (Henton, 1996; Kolb, 1984). As they continued into the next phase of their trip, they then applied that learning to conduct themselves in a culturally appropriate manner (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). As their school leaders observed, the learning was evident when the young people noticed other tourists not behaving with the appropriate cultural etiquette.

Upon their return to school, a small group of young people from the trip to Japan suggested that their own school could do better at integrating international students into their own school community. This young person illustrated this:

We just gained a deep understanding of their culture. After we got back we wanted to make our school more culturally aware of others. Yeah, we want them to learn about other people’s perspectives and way of life so that we’re not just single-minded. We became more exposed and open to the ways of others. We came back more aware. And we came back and talked at assemblies and all that kind of stuff. We wanted to get our other students really inspired, teach them so that they want to learn about other places and people. It is about continuous learning really. (T6.J.YPr)

This resulted in a student-led initiative to create a new role within the school’s prefect\textsuperscript{16} system, called Global Citizen Prefects. Students appointed to that role developed student-led initiatives and events to engage all students to better understand and interact with the international students in their school community. This illustrates the action-reflection process of experiential learning (Henton, 1996), in which the “so what?” and “now what?” questions

\textsuperscript{16}School prefects are senior students with delegated leadership positions in a school.
lead to action. The young people recognised that not only had they developed their cultural understanding, they were also empowered to do something with it. Their learning had been internalised rather than externally imposed (Warburton, 2003) and reflected the depth of understanding to be able to apply it to other contexts (Killen, 2009; Perkins, 1992).

School leaders illustrated other examples that reflect the potential for cultural learning through appropriately structured international school trips. The following example illustrated how school leaders appreciated the way in which the young people they had taken to China returned with a more innate sense of cultural sensitivity:

It is so wonderful to be with students who have met Asian people and they just love them to bits. When they come back and they hear someone being racist they probably think “Oh, that’s not right” because they have had that cultural experience. (T8.C.SL)

This school leader asserted that the learning young people have gained through these experiences becomes evident when they encounter racist attitudes or comments following their return home. Therefore, school leaders are supported by young people in the way they might question their peers as a way to counteract racism. Another example was given by a school leader who had received an email from a student who had participated in a trip she had led to Cambodia. The former student acknowledged how:

It had changed the way she interacted with international students now that she was at university. . . . She has learned some protocols about how you behave when eating and talking to people from other cultures. She wrote to me saying this was a legacy of her going on the Cambodia trip, that that she’s got a much richer life now because she is prepared to see the differences and accept them and learn from them. (T14.B,GC&S.SL)

These examples further reinforce how some young people have reflected on these experiences to utilise their learned cultural awareness upon their return and apply it in other aspects of their lives (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Killen, 2009; Perkins, 1992). However, as discussed in Chapter Six (section 6.2.4) the dearth of academic analysis into the long-term impact of these experiences implies that this currently relies on anecdotal evidence.

Young people perceived that the experiences where they were engaged with the host community, interacting and participating in everyday or cultural activities with their host peers (such as going to school, weaving, cooking) were their ‘non-tourist’ activities. In contrast, they perceived that the time travelling together as a group, sightseeing, exploring or relaxing were ‘tourist’ activities. What became apparent was that it was the combination of
experiences that contributed to their cultural awareness and understanding. School leaders suggested that cultural understanding takes time to develop. In their observations or interactions with young people following the return home, they noted that they recognised their learning when they realised that there are different ways to approach situations than they might have done previously, for example with international students at their school or in their lives beyond school.

7.3 Learning to travel

For most of the young people who participated in this research an international school trip was either their first international trip or the first undertaken without their parents. These trips were therefore perceived as opportunities to engage actively with experiences related to time, space and mobility. Without the presence of parents, adults perceived the trips as opportunities for young people to learn to manage themselves more independently away from home.

These opportunities were perceived to be contextualised through the active engagement with new modes of transport, in places that were densely populated and using languages other than English. Young people expressed their anxiety and excitement as they anticipated and experienced these opportunities. Parents guided their children as they prepared for these experiences. The school leaders, while supportive, were deliberate in creating spaces that allowed young people to actively engage with the opportunities and challenges in a way that encouraged a sense of independence.

Three basic themes constitute the organising theme Learning to travel: international school trips offer opportunities to develop mobility competencies; a relevant aspect of this is the ability to travel light and to manage oneself away from home (Figure 7.3).
7.3 Organising theme: *Learning to travel*

7.3.1 Developing mobility competencies

Some adult participants perceived that young people’s futures would involve global mobility, through which international school trips could “set them up with travel skills” (T8.C.SL). Furthermore, some parents supported their child to engage in these experiences, especially if they valued international travel themselves: “we’ve both travelled and think it’s important for them to (have an) experience outside of New Zealand” (T7.J.P). School leaders acknowledged that young people had differing previous travel experiences with their families, and were mindful that some “had never flown at all”, and “a lot of them hadn’t left the South Island [of New Zealand], so it was a big thing” (T8.C.SL). These opportunities were therefore perceived to be a ‘stepping stone’ as a way to learn the travel skills that would be useful in their future travel experiences:

E: . . . it’s just all so foreign to them, they’re just “Oh, how do we do this?” and you know, it’s just something they’ve got to learn I suppose.

D: It will be good for them for when they travel on their own, having done this it won’t be nearly as big. Some things will already be quite familiar to them. It’s a bit of a stepping stone for them. (T18.G.P)
Irrespective of their previous travel, young people took action to pursue these opportunities independently of their families and friends. These young people, who were anticipating their trip to Japan, illustrate their willingness to pursue their own interests:

D: None of my friends want to travel so if I ever want to get anywhere I’m going to have to ditch them and go myself.

M: So you’ve put your hand up to do something independently?

D: Yeah. I won’t get anywhere if I follow them all my life.

C: They must be ‘nutters’ [mad]. I just love travelling! (T5.J.YPg)

The desire expressed by their children to seek these experiences was recognised by parents, who in turn placed responsibility on their children to put in the effort to prepare as illustrated by this parent:

Yeah, it was all her own motivation and effort. She had to do it, she wanted to go, so she had to put the legwork in and do it, because Mum and Dad couldn’t do it for her. I’d said, “Well I haven’t even been overseas.” So I couldn’t help her anyway . . . (T7.J.P)

Frandberg (2009) argued that parents who themselves travelled frequently or lived near to major transport nodes prioritised the development of mobility competencies for their children. The quotations above suggest that adult participants perceived that international school trips might offer young people opportunities to develop these competencies. This was particularly relevant for those who might have some social, economic or spatial ‘disadvantages’ (Shaw & Thomas, 2006). These included those whose families have not previously had international travel experiences together, or were unable to meet the financial cost or time commitment to undertake these experiences with their child or as a family. The time and costs are further magnified given the geographic isolation of New Zealand. This contributes to the perception that some young people had a spatial disadvantage, whereby the distance and associated costs makes international travel no casual undertaking. Therefore, an international school trip was perceived to mitigate some of these constraints and assist young people to develop mobility competencies. This is illustrated in Chapter Eight (section 8.3.1 and 8.4.1), where parents and young people acknowledge how difficult or impossible it would be to support more than one family member to participate in an international travel experience. The quotations above illustrated that it can also be the agency of young people to initiate their own mobility pattern (Carr, 2011; Frandberg, 2009), as well as parents and school leaders to influence the participation of young people.
The school leaders are responsible for the welfare of the group during an international trip and trust is placed in their expertise by parents and young people to manage the situations they encounter. The teacher leading the trip to Germany argued that destination and language knowledge, along with knowing how to utilise public transport in specific locations is essential when leading a group in Germany.

She stated:

Catching a train is actually quite an experience. In Germany trains are a big means of transport. And if it says the train leaves at 12.59, it will leave at 59 minutes, and not at 13 minutes past. It’s actually very precise and you have to be fast as well, to hop on, hop off. If you didn’t have an understanding of this and the language and European culture you couldn’t take a group away to there. (T17.G.SL)

Just as the precision timing of trains in Germany was noted above, young people reflected on their experiences of public transport in Japan. As illustrated below, they remembered the way in which people rushed in a crowded space as a stressful experience:

D: . . . being around so many people especially on the trains, it’s just way busier. . . . There are people running everywhere. When we’d go to school in the morning we had to take the train and there’d be businessmen running around. Just being with so many people was kind of scary. (T6.J.YPr)

As they considered whether to participate in an international school trip, young people and their parents were influenced by the information and stories communicated by school leaders and young people who had undertaken previous trips. These shared stories, illustrate the potential influence on the young people who were anticipating their own trip to Japan. In the following dialogue, young people express their anxiety about how they may experience crowds, language problems and public transport. They perceived the manifestation of risk through confusion and isolation. This is illustrated as they discuss that they “have lots of things to worry about”:

G: What’s the thing you guys are most worried about going to Japan?
B: Not knowing any Japanese.
C: Yeah, being completely and utterly confused out of my mind.
M: In what way?
C: By not being able to understand what they’re talking about, what’s going on and also just possibly getting lost.
G: Yeah. I’m terrified I’m going to get lost and separated.
[Lots of agreement]
B: Yeah I’ve got this image in my head of you guys all getting on the Bullet train and just leaving and I’m just standing there with all these people I don’t know walking around me. (T5.J.YPg)

Their fear had influenced them to recognise the importance of strategies to manage the risk:

We’ll have smaller groups. So we all have to find our group leader and then get on the train all together. The whole [smaller] group will be left if anything happens, so one person won’t be left behind on their own. (T5.J.YPg)

Despite expressing their ‘worry’ and ‘terror’ of isolation and not being understood, they are reassured by the strategy that has been devised. As Frost et al. (2008) argue, an important part of children and young people’s development is gained by exposing them to risk. Appropriate risk allows them learn to distinguish between things that may challenge them and dangers to avoid. Through experiences perceived to contain risk, they learn that making mistakes or when things do not go according to plan, they gain confidence (Frost et al., 2008; Haddock & Sword, 2004).

However, young people and their parents are influenced to take part by the ability of school leaders to convince them that the perceived risks are worth taking (see Section 8.2). The legal responsibility for a group’s welfare rests with the school leaders. This means they have a responsibility to demonstrate effective practice in devising risk management strategies and to take action to implement these strategies should the situation arise (British Standards Institution, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2009). However, the potential for learning can only be realised, and the welfare of all participants ensured, if all participants share the responsibility (Ministry of Education, 2009). The young person quoted above illustrates an example of this shared responsibility, as they know there is a strategy in place should an individual become isolated from the group. This is echoed in the following dialogue between school leaders on that trip who outlined the strategy for using the train system in Japan:

B: For our risk management when we’re travelling on trains [as a group], the students have a little piece of paper for every train trip that we’re going to go on. They get given it just before we board the train in the morning of that day, and it says where they’re travelling from and to that day - the train timetable, where we’re staying that night. They’ve got a little card that’s written in Japanese saying, if they miss the train “I’ve become separated from my group. These are my travel plans for today. Please help me get onto a train. I have a rail pass” and the Japanese are always very obliging to help out. We haven’t had any situations like those yet for them to use that, but that’s what we’ve got anyway.

C: And [when in their homestay] they’ve also got a little card that they have to fill in where their homestay is and their cell phone. And we do other wee
things . . . you’re all divided into little groups with [senior student] leaders, and so the idea is that within 10 seconds you can split up and find your little group.

B: And each group is divided up, so you can always sight each other really quickly and do that. (T3.J.SL)

In this example, shared responsibility means that the school leaders had devised a good practice strategy, and had communicated it to the young people, who in turn had a responsibility to be familiar with the strategy and to adhere to it, should they find themselves in that situation (Ministry of Education, 2009). Despite these strategies, school leaders still revealed their unease that they may lose one of their young people on a train. However, their understanding of the Japanese culture reassured them that the risk was associated with the busyness associated with a train station, not with the trustworthiness of the host community:

B: I think the only concern I have is losing a kid on a train, but we’ve got those procedures in place. That’s the only concern I ever have.

C: Because it’s a bigger city that they just have no comprehension of. But it’s so incredibly safe. (T3.J.SL)

These school leaders revealed that carrying the responsibility for the group brings a degree of uneasiness. This reinforced the importance of trust and the quality of relationships between the young people and the school leaders to enable safe and constructive experiences. Nevertheless, school leaders were adamant that young people must actively engage in these experiences in a learning culture where they feel safe to explore and “where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity” (Hattie, 2009: 239). Given this opportunity to explore and make mistakes, one stated, “I learnt that the kids actually learn very fast. They regain the confidence almost after a day” (T8.C.SL). A school leader who led a rugby trip to Australia illustrates the type of experiential learning approach in the following quote:

They learned a lot of personal responsibility . . . going through airports and things like that which as adults and experienced travellers we have done a thousand times and it is sort of second nature to us . . . I am a great one for just live and learn, you can make a mistake and it is not the end of the world. I left them to it, to find their own way through Immigration and Customs . . . I think the boys they were sort of looking out for ‘Mum’ and “Can you help me do this?” But I think they had to learn and stand on their own two feet because that will hold them in good stead for later in their lives. (T22.B&GC.SL)

Through the deliberate action by this school leader to ‘stand back’, he encouraged the young people to work things out for themselves. This is illustrated in Chapter Eight (section 8.2.1 and 8.2.4) where young people express their desire to engage in this way. Even so, they also
revealed that they were reassured by the presence of school leaders nearby, from whom they could seek advice:

Like just going through the Customs, you’re scared about what’s going to happen. You don’t understand the language. You don’t know if they’re angry or if you’re going to get in trouble for something that’s in your bag that you’re not sure about. You always go and check with your teacher to make sure. (T9.C.YP)

The discussion on learning to travel has focused on the development of mobility competencies. Through the actions of school leaders, space is created within a supportive framework that allows young people to directly engage with different modes of transport and negotiate their way through unfamiliar situations. Whether an international school trip is perceived as a stepping stone for future travel or as an experience in itself, an integral aspect of learning to travel was perceived to be an opportunity to learn to manage oneself away from home.

7.3.2 Managing self away from home

Adults overwhelmingly expressed the view that international school trips offered young people an authentic opportunity to learn skills associated with travelling and to manage themselves away from home. As one parent stated, “It’s a great learning curve for the kids, using passports, working out foreign exchange rates. . .” (T10.C.P). A distant destination such as Germany had perceived advantages, “cause it’s far away, not just flicking over to Australia, there is a lot more to it and they’ve got to think on so many levels” (T18.G.P). This was a strong justification for them as they supported their child’s participation.

The temporal and spatial dimensions of these trips implied that many young people would be the furthest distance away from home and for the longest period of time so far in their lives. As one parent said, “she had never been apart from us for three weeks so what was that going to bring emotionally?” (T13.F.P). Parents in particular expressed their feelings of anxiety about how their children might cope with the sustained physical separation from home. This is illustrated in the following dialogue between parents as they anticipated their children’s trip to Japan:

C: They don’t have the family network to fall back on. As a mother I just dread the thought of something happening - you know, my baby, oh! But I think, “No, you haven’t got Mum and Dad just to fall back on.”

D: Yeah so they have to make decisions for themselves.

B: And make the right decisions.
This illustrates the tensions expressed by parents – on one hand they were motivated to encourage their children to be independent, especially in making sensible independent decisions. On the other hand, as parents they expressed concern that their child might feel vulnerable without the presence of and intervention by parents (Allat, 1993; Shaw, 2008, 2010). Additionally, it became clear that coping with the separation was not just something the young people had to deal with. A single parent whose child had returned from the trip to France illustrated the extent of her own vulnerability and dependency on her child in the parent-child relationship:

I was probably anxious for myself because I’ve never been apart from her for three weeks . . . and not over that distance or where I couldn’t pick up a phone [to talk to her]. So with the time difference and texting her . . . and trying to get in contact and not hearing stuff. I’d go onto the [trip] website and it wasn’t updated, or I hadn’t heard from her . . . (T13.F.P)

An integral part of the social construction of a ‘good parent’ is related to having time to ‘be there’ for their children and to assist them emotionally through their transition towards independence (Carr, 2011). The physical and emotional separation between parent and child is intensified through an international school trip. Lareau (2003) found that middle class parents actively engage in the concerted cultivation of their children’s talents and skills by actively fostering their participation in organised activities such as in these trips. Smaller family size (Sayer, Bianchi & Robinson, 2004), combined with an increasing parental investment of time and resources in their children (Mintz, 2004) has resulted in the social construction of the increasingly ‘precious child’ (see also Chapter Two, section 2.4). Alongside this, a shift in the power relationships between parents and their children has ensued. Accordingly, the parent-child relationship becomes an interactive process of mutual influence (Handel, Cahill & Elkin, 2007). It was apparent that parents as well as their children experienced the dependency and vulnerability as they prepared for the period of separation. This was experienced even more intensely by a single parent, where the parent-child relationship has been more durable than that of the parent-parent relationship (Pryor, 2006).
For this parent, the impending separation reflected that of parents entering the ‘empty nest’ life stage (Clemens & Axelson, 1985).

Nevertheless, parent participants emphasised how they used their agency to support their child’s preparation so that they might manage themselves away from home. Through their own actions, parents incorporated strategies to assist their child’s preparation for these experiences. These included ‘dinner table chats’ to help their children consider how they might deal with the situations they encounter and mitigate their pre-trip anxiety, as one mother illustrated:

… I’ll say [to my child], “How’s the Japanese going? Have you learnt anything new?” We’ll sit down for tea and “What are you going to say at the meal table in Japan?” She’ll say, “Oh I’m not sure. I’ll work something out.” I just try and encourage … we’ll talk and she’ll say, “Oh Mum it will be the longest I’ve been away from everyone”. I’d say “Oh you’ll be alright.” So yeah, just working through problems that may happen, and scenarios. (T7.J.P)

The privacy of the parent-child relationship within the family social group allows young people to express their own vulnerability (Daly, 2003). In turn, parents adopted a nurturing role to reassure and assist in their child’s preparation. It was common for parents, especially mothers, to convey the ways in which they prompted their children to consider how they would manage their personal effects and care. In the following quote, parents discussed the strategies that they had encouraged their children to adopt:

C: I made sure that [my child] was thinking about her own personal things. Like she can be quite forgetful. She had just got contact lenses and that was going to be a big test for her to look after them because she would have been in a bit of trouble if she lost them because she can’t see very well without them. So they were right up there with looking after the Passport. When she came home she had only left a sweatshirt somewhere on a train. We were really pleased. She must have really made an effort!

D: The other thing I kept stressing were the things like washing and cleanliness, to keep herself healthy while she was away. It was the issues of the [different styled] toilets . . . and always using sanitisers and wet wipes. I said if you run out buy more! (T10.C.P)

Craig (2006) and Roxburgh (2006) noted gender differences in the way parents focus their attention with mothers’ time with children was more involved with childcare and maintenance. Parent participants also reflected this where mothers were more dominant as they conveyed their actions to encourage their children to look after their personal care and maintenance.
School leaders perceived that young people had greater freedom to learn through an international school trip experience, without their parents’ presence. The following quote illustrated how a school leader utilised an experiential approach to learning, in which the learner engages directly with a situation and practises decision-making, through which the consequences allow meaning to be constructed:

... a parent might say “You shouldn’t have done this and you shouldn’t have done that.” I’d have to say, they’re totally immersed into such a different culture, of course they made mistakes and they did some silly things, but they’re learning, and they needed the freedom to make some decisions and learn the consequences. (T8.C.SL)

In this example, parents were perceived to meddle in their children’s decision-making, and in doing so stifled their freedom to learn and develop confidence. A further example illustrates one of these situations where one young person had to resolve how she would deal with the consequences of her action or inaction on a train:

The kids were very funny with the trains. I remember one day one of them going to the toilet and coming saying “I’m not going. It’s revolting, I’m not going!” And I said “That’s fine, but we’re on here for 8 hours.” “Well what am I going to do?” I said, “I don’t know, you’ll just have to resolve that one.” (T8.C.SL)

An international school trip, like any extended school-led tourism experience, involved different inter-relationships and group dynamics to those at home. Although the peer experience was perceived as a strong motivation for young people to participate (see Chapter Eight, section 8.2.3), the unfamiliarity of the experiences and the constant presence of their peers can create tensions in relationships. School leaders argued that young people have the capacity to work things out themselves:

... they actually allowed themselves space and each other space. A couple of them are ‘only children’ and others come from bigger families so they were able to be tolerant of each other. I don’t think I heard any overly cross words, maybe near the end of the trip but they just sort of slid away quietly and did their own thing but not far away. (T22.B&GC.SL)

This is not to say that school leaders leave young people entirely to their own devices. Although they deliberately position space for young people to actively engage in different situations, school leaders acted in ways that supported the young people’s emotional and social wellbeing. The existing relationships between school leaders and the young people assist them in identifying who may be challenged in different situations. A school leader, who described the ways in which they support their young people during their experiences with host families in Japan, illustrated this:
We get together and have discussions around it in the morning, when we’re there [at the host school], and sometimes you need to let them say a few of things and get them out of the way. But they know that it’s about coping and they know that it is such an honour for the family to have them and they have to respect that. I was thinking about one who is a farm girl who really wanted to be outside and have her animals but was always inside with her host family. But she voiced how she felt and coped during the week. (T4.J.SL)

This suggested that school leaders firmly reinforced to young people that their opportunity to learn came with a responsibility that ‘it is not just about you’ and that an important part of learning is to accept that everything might not be perfect. The ability to deal with that unfamiliarity or discomfort is an important aspect of developing as a person and learning to cope. Young people who had returned from a previous trip to Japan reinforced this approach:

D: You sort of get to know yourself a little more too. In such a massive city, it’s like “Oh my gosh!” But you deal with situations if you get stuck. You just cope.

C: It was your own responsibility to look after yourself. There was no teacher and no parent looking out just for you. (T6.J.YPr)

Parents expressed a sense of relief when their children returned from their trips and had evidently coped with the experience. However, they varied in the extent to which they perceived this continued following their return home: “Yeah, she’s more confident but I am not sure she is more mature” (T10.C.P), and an acknowledgement that ‘normal transmission has been resumed’ “They are teenagers - get real!” (T21.B&GC.P). The latter quotation suggests a level of acceptance by the parent that real change takes time and a single experience cannot be expected to be a ‘magic bullet’ to transform a young person into a state of consistent maturity. One parent expressed how she was mystified that her child had apparently managed herself independently in France, in that she had effectively performed tasks that she was unwilling or not confident enough to do in her own community. However, upon her return she had reverted to her previous behaviour. Consequently, the parent had deliberately held back from doing things for her child, as a way to encourage her to take responsibility and ‘do something’ with her learning:

Believe it or not she’s not a very confident person in herself with it comes to going into shops and buying things. And yet she did it all in another language! I mean she won’t even get on a bus here on her own. So now she’s been overseas I think well you know, “You have to go to the counter [in a shop or business, for example] and get that. That’s your responsibility.” (T13.F.P)

This section has given some insights into how an international school trip is perceived as having the potential for young people to learn some travel skills, including the development
of mobility competencies and how to manage away from home. The extent to which new behaviours, such as self-management, transfer into other areas of their lives following their return home is not yet supported by academic analysis. This further emphasises the argument discussed earlier (Chapters Six, section 6.2.4) for research into the longer term impacts of these trips. The temporal and spatial dimensions of such trips put young people in the situation where their inter-relationships occur outside of the family. As such, the travelling group becomes an alternative person-supporting network (Dumon, 1997) to the family. Pearce and Foster (2006) argue that generic skill development through travel experiences is contingent upon contextual factors such as active involvement in the experience, internal motivation, novelty and opportunities to reflect on the experience with others.

It was apparent that parents in particular perceived that learning to manage self is made possible through an international school trip. Their voices dominated in the interpretation of this theme and they discussed the actions they had taken to prepare their children to cope away from the presence of the family network. The actions of school leaders deliberately created space for young people to engage actively in new experiences and reflect on them. Competencies such as self-management develop with practice over time (Ministry of Education, 2007b; Wyn, 2007). The challenge for parents, school leaders and young people is to individually and collectively exert their agency to create and use further opportunities to sustain and build on the learning from these experiences (Beames, 2004; Bell, 2003).

7.4 The destination makes things real

In the third organising theme in the thematic network, *Active learning experiences in an international context*, the destination was emphasised as being instrumental to contextualise learning opportunities. Four related basic themes constitute this organising theme: *Immersion in language and culture*, *Contextualising subject-based learning*, *Experiences you cannot get at home*, and *Making memories from experiences*. As a school-led tourism experience, all participants made close links to where these experiences took place and the possibilities for “what we have learned at school” (T15.S.YP) to be applied in the authentic context.
7.4.1 Immersion in language and culture

Traditionally, international school-led tourism experiences have been linked to curriculum-based foreign language learning (Carr, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003). These experiences have been credited for their potential to motivate young people to develop language skills and knowledge in ways that are not possible in the classroom or in their own country (Ritchie et al., 2003). It is still evident as a justification with a widely held view that “there’s nothing like going to a country to galvanise language knowledge, that’s for sure” (T18.G.P) especially for young people who study foreign languages. Foreign environments enable immersion in the foreign language (Ministry of Education, 2014) and this was perceived by participants as giving purpose to their classroom learning through authentic opportunities to develop language skills. The justification to give purpose and make it real was summarised by a school leader:

I just really wanted to make what we do in the classroom real. It gives them some understanding of what it’s all about and just makes it easier to bring it into the classroom. (T11.F.SL)
Parents were influenced by the perception that immersion in the culture and language would assist their child’s learning “I think that being immersed in the language and attending school in Germany will really help him when he comes back and does his assessment” (T18.G.P).

This echoes Carr’s (2011) claim that the justification for an educational component that might directly translate to cognitive and achievement improvement is one way to gain the support of agencies and parents. Young people were also motivated by the opportunities to experience the real context:

Yeah, being in the real environment rather than listening to tapes and classroom stuff and just having conversations amongst our class, we actually got to talk to real French people. (T12.F.YP)

Another young person argued that simply being immersed in a foreign environment enabled the development of language skills:

Even if you’re not speaking the language you are exposed [to it]. You’re having to listen to it. You’re standing on a train and you think “Oh, I know what that means. . . . just being amongst it.” (T6.J.YPr)

However, some participants, particularly parents noted the difficulty in sustaining the improvements, following their return home. As this parent said:

I think while you’re immersed in it you start to learn, and then when you’re not in that situation any more it very quickly goes into the background. You lose that learning that you had. [My child] is really struggling now. When she first came back she was finding her French better because it was very fresh in her mind, the sounds, and now she’s struggling again. . . . (T12.F.P)

Young people who were anticipating their trip to Germany considered how the experience might assist their academic achievement, “I suppose it might help my grades, in a way” (T19.G.YP). Further elaboration indicated that listening to the constant and naturalistic pacing of the language would help understand how the language works, as they discuss:

F: We’ll get used to Germans speaking to us because they’ll speak a lot faster than our teacher does.

C: We’ll have a better understanding how the language works. (T19.G.YP)

However, young people reported that their experience of immersion was not always a comfortable one. This was illustrated by young people who had returned from their trip to France:

C: I found for the first couple of days it was absolutely petrifying. In class you kind of get used to it, but you go over there and you realise how much of an idiot you sound.
G: Yeah, it was hard, but it got easier. (T12.F.YP)

This illustrates how active direct engagement is at the heart of experiential learning (Henton, 1996; Ministry of Education, 2004), and that learning is not solely cognitive. Affective elements such as fear and embarrassment are often described as part of the response to this situation (Kolb, 1984; Luckner & Nadler, 1997). The learner had some autonomy to decide how to respond and determine which strategies to utilise as a way to move forward from “petrifying” to greater confidence.

Some young people acknowledged that the unfamiliarity and novelty of a different environment took priority over language development at the beginning of their international school trip. These factors contributed to their “petrifying” experiences when they first arrived in France. It appeared that there are many things to adjust to and young people needed to consider what elements to focus on. An insight into where young people might have prioritised their attention indicated that “getting into and adjusting to the culture” (T19.G.YP) and “learning about the people and how they are” (T9.C.YP) preceded their focus on language skills. This was reinforced by one participant who had travelled to Japan and contended that if “We went now, I’d be more focused on the language because we already know about the culture” (T6.J.YPr).

School leaders deliberately assist young people to prepare for these immersion experiences. In some cases, young people may be immersed in a foreign language environment without having formally studied the language. In these cases school leaders offered some opportunities to learn key words and phrases “so that they find ways of asking or doing” (T4.J.SL). She described these strategies:

They always have the handy phrase list, which they can always point to with their host family. So they get the basics. This time round I’ve recorded a few things on MP3 files and emailed them to them for them to practise. And there’s also a lot of stuff on the Internet now that they can use to go through and learn a few wee bits and pieces. (T4.J.SL)

The young people anticipating their trip to Japan expressed their anxiety about how they might communicate with their host families. In doing so, they discussed the way in which they would use their agency through a range of strategies:

E: We’ll be OK.

B: I’ll struggle.

C: I’ll draw pictures.
D: Yeah, they do respond to pictures quite well actually.
B: What if you can’t draw?
C: I’d do Charades.
E: Yeah you can get a book or something and point to pictures.
C: Or that phrase sheet that we’ve got. (T5.J.YPg)

The teacher of German had deliberately scaffolded\textsuperscript{17} the learning experiences with her German students to prepare them for listening and speaking German on their trip:

\ldots before when we went and over there, I would make more of an effort to constantly speak German. I noticed that very quickly the Year 11’s [15 year olds] would understand me and reply in English. But it was just faster language learning there. The Year 12’s [16 year olds] were faster able to reply in German. (T17.G.SL)

The teacher’s competence with German gave the young people confidence, especially if they were to find themselves in difficult situations. However, they were aware of her expectations for them to speak German and take responsibility to communicate independently:
E: Yeah, she [teacher] knows the place, and she knows the language…
B: Not that she’s going to help us with that apparently.
E: Yeah apparently she imposes it on us when we’re over there and makes us order things in German.
C: Yeah, she’ll only help us if it’s really serious.
B: Yeah, she’s not going to nanny us.
C: Otherwise why would we bother? (T19.G.YP)

This illustrates the deliberate action of the teacher to prepare young people through solely using of German in class so that they might be prepared and able to quickly adjust to being immersed in the German environment. This intended to equip young people with confidence in their language, and as a means for them to effectively develop the capacity to manage themselves in an unfamiliar environment (Ministry of Education, 2007a, 2009). The young people themselves reinforced their desire to improve their German and be as independent as possible. They acknowledged the security they felt as a result of their teacher’s competence with German but they did not expect nor want to be “nannied.”

\textsuperscript{17} Scaffolding is a pedagogical strategy in which the teacher provides a student with enough help to complete a task and then gradually decreases the help as the student learns to work and/or perform the task independently (Killen, 2009).
The teacher of French who led the trip to France outlined how she had also scaffolded her students’ experiences to allow development of their language skills when they arrived in France. During the first week they attended a language school during the mornings and were individually home-hosted in the evenings where they were expected to communicate in French. She observed that the young people were initiating their own learning because it was relevant to them at that time:

One afternoon, during the bus trip I heard “How do you say this?” and “How do you say that?” There was an obvious motivation there that you don’t get in the classroom at home because “I’m going to have a go and do it [practise with host family] at night.” (T11.F.SL)

During the afternoons in the following week when they stayed together in a village the programme included “some independence to explore in a foreign speaking place” (T11.F.SL), which she noted is very challenging for young people from an English-speaking environment. During this time together the young people were given tasks that required them to apply their skills, for example to prepare their own dinners in small groups:

They went to the market where they had to buy food. They had a budget they had to stick to and had to work out what they wanted and purchase it from the local vendors, all in French. They had to put their vocab into sentences and ask and respond to questions.” (T11.F.SL)

This illustrates Brophy’s (2004) argument that students will have a good chance of success if they have a clear idea of what the task is, how to do it and perceive that it is relevant to their learning. St George & Riley (2008) emphasised that intrinsic motivation is fostered when the learning environment is challenging and allows students to develop autonomy in their approach to learning and understanding. Examples of this were given by school leaders to illustrate how young people took personal control of their learning, when they felt it was relevant. The following example illustrates school leaders’ observations of their students during their cultural trip to China:

F: During the long overnight train I saw him sitting there with one earphone of his iPod in his ear. He’s got a little Chinese boy opposite him. ... we videoed it, because he [the Chinese boy] was saying “Get with the play. Get with the play.” He would say it in Chinese and then [our student] would say it in English. And they were practising with each other. . . . He was learning the language, and was putting himself in situations where he could practise.

E: . . . So when the language was relevant to them they wanted to learn more than to say, “How are you?” They really want to learn to say “How big, how small?” I also heard them talking and asking in the computer for words they needed. (T8.C.SL)
The justification for immersion in a foreign language environment was supported as a context to develop language skills. However, it was a surprise for some participants that the gains made were either not sustained or did not translate into better performances following their return home. As one parent stated, she may have been naïve in presuming that the changes would be greater than actually occurred:

When she was over there [in France] she really enjoyed the conversational basics but now she’s starting to get a bit more into the technical side of it. I just presumed that she would fly through, but she’s starting to say “Oh, I’m just not getting it” or “I’m finding it a bit harder.” . . . It may have been slightly naïve on my part [to expect her language to have improved more] but that hasn’t quite happened. . . . On saying that, I think that the trip was definitely worth it because the benefits far outweigh any other thing. (T12.F.P)

This highlights that although her child’s language skills had developed it was particularly in relation to conversational basics. Although the trip was structured to improve language skills and offer a cultural experience, it was mostly undertaken in a group context. Experiences were structured to enable students to apply their language in authentic tasks such as buying food from local people at the market. However, the group environment arguably insulated young people from the expectation to continuously remain immersed in the language. Although there might have been some disappointment by participants that the gains in language skills were not sustained as anticipated, the parent above argues that the sum of the parts of the trip made it a worthwhile experience.

The voluntary nature of participation in these experiences is perceived by school leaders to present challenges in connecting the experiences to those back in the classroom. This was illustrated by the teacher of French who reinforced the sensitivity with which she needed to refer to these experiences following the return to the classroom in the presence of young people who had not participated:

One of the trickiest things is working out how much you can talk about it afterwards. I don’t want to alienate the ones that didn’t go [on the trip]. But you also want them to understand what it was all about as well and build on the experiences. It was a bit of a challenge for me to work that one through. (T11.F.SL)

In fact, this teacher revealed that she could share the experiences of France more freely with younger classes through stories, photos and resources. In doing so, she perceived that it enhanced her teaching and may influence them to be motivated to participate in a future trip:

I talk about it with the Year 9s, who weren’t involved [in the trip], and I say “When we were in France in April …” and it seems more real I think. And I have
photos [from that trip] that I have categorised for when we’re doing a topic on shops and shopping, for example. (T12.F.SL)

Similarly, a teacher of Japanese was motivated by the professional benefit she gained from participating as part of the school leadership group on a trip to Japan. In addition to gathering new ideas and resources for her teaching, she noted:

It’s great professional development [for teachers]. It just gives you that opportunity to practise that more difficult Japanese than what I’m maybe teaching. (T4.J.SL)

Those who advocate for contextualised learning experiences in authentic contexts contend that learning is strengthened when it is connected to classroom experiences (e.g., Hohenstein & King, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2009; Peacock, 2006; Rivers, 2006). Therefore, the voluntary participation in these experiences can make it ‘uncomfortable’ for teachers who might feel that their ability to capitalise on the experiences are reduced. The challenge for them is to devise strategies to build on the experiences gained in a way that is inclusive of those who were not able to participate in the experience.

7.4.2 Contextualising subject-based learning

A common objective for international school trips was to bring learning alive through active place-based learning experiences (Carr, 2003; Ritchie et al., 2003, 2008; Mcguiness & Simm, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2009; Ternan, Chalkley & Elmes, 1999). Some of these experiences were linked to specific curriculum subjects, or learning areas (Ministry of Education, 2007a) such as foreign languages and social studies. All participants perceived that travelling to and experiencing the places they had learned about at school enabled learning to be contextualised. Cultural trips were perceived to open up opportunities to actively engage and learn through place-related experiences (see also Chapter Six, sections 6.2.3, 6.3.1–6.3.4). Therefore, the sites where people learn are not just backdrops to learning – they are an integral part of how and what people learn (Brown, 2012).

Some young people were motivated to participate in these experiences because they anticipated they would be meaningful and memorable. In turn they anticipated that it might assist their academic performance, particularly in assessment tasks:

B: I think it will help our schoolwork because it’s more memorable.

[group talking]

C: … ’cause we were there.
In light of this, it is important to note that the expectations for improved academic performance were not expressed by participants as the strongest motivation to participate or as the most significant outcome from these experiences. Instead, the learning emphasis was focused on the realness of the destination to stimulate interest and ‘bring alive’ classroom learning.

School leaders influenced the expectations for the enrichment of classroom learning. The teacher of German who led the trip to Germany illustrated an example of this in the way Berlin was included as an add-on option in the itinerary (following nearly four weeks where young people attended a German school and were hosted in family homes). Berlin was positioned as a place that enabled young people to contextualise the cultural and historical knowledge that is embedded in their subject learning: “In Year 11 and 12 we cover Berlin as a city and its history.” It thus was perceived to offer a “cultural experience and also bring alive what we have done in class” (T17.G.SL). Further benefits were perceived for the:

. . . students who study history, so they know a lot about the Second World War. With Berlin, they’ll actually get the opportunity to go to one of those Holocaust memorials and we can go to the Jewish Museum. . . . Whatever they learn here at school they will be able to see. (T17.G.SL)

When the fundraising efforts (this is discussed more in Chapter Eight, section 8.3.1) were lacking the momentum needed to reach the targeted funds, the school leader used her agency and influence by threatening to either cancel the trip, or cancel the Berlin component in order to energise the fundraising:

It’s where the government is and it’s part of our German curriculum so there are a lot of things to do there. . . . we were talking about the [current] recession and that fundraising was a bit slow. When I talked to the parents, to get them onto the fundraising and not just put it all on me, I actually threatened them that we might have to completely cancel the trip. It was a very good measurement for them, because nobody wanted to say to their child “Oh sorry, the trip is off”. And then I said, “OK, well, we could also scrap [leave out] Berlin.” I had quite a lot of the parents saying “Well if we actually send our kid over there they have to go to Berlin.” (T17.G.SL)

Following this, the fundraising effort improved and Berlin remained on the itinerary. However, the example illustrated that the power to decide whether the trip or add-on visit to Berlin took place was held by the school. The school leader exerted her influence to re-
energise the fundraising effort by applying pressure to the parents, and in turn their children, to take greater responsibility if they wanted to participate in the experience.

Globally, educational curricular statements seek to develop learners’ sense of curiosity and capability to understand ideas and concepts deeply (e.g., Education Scotland, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2007b). The school leaders recounted a scenario from the trip to China that illustrated the way in which some of the young people had questioned the validity of a story interpreted to them by a guide:

D: They knew jolly well that when certain things were said [by tour guides]. … it didn’t take them long to realise, “Hang on a minute, this isn’t quite right …”

F: Later, in the hotel at night I went to send some emails and I noticed that they were going onto [Internet] sites. They were checking out the information. They would say, “That’s not right.” Or “Look what I’ve found. Look at this. There it is.” And then they would all get around the computer and discuss it. So they were using that time, and I mean we’d only spend a short amount of time (on the Internet) because we had to pay.

C: Yeah, they were very questioning. (T8.C.SL)

The school leaders had previously described the travelling group as comprised of a “full spectrum” of abilities, and they also noted that at “the top end are some of the brightest and most intelligent students in the school” (T8.C.SL). This indicated that the opportunity to participate in the trip to China was inclusive of a diverse range of young people, and amongst them were competent self-directed learners. As Warburton (2003) noted, deep learning cannot be externally imposed on learners. In the example illustrated above, school leaders had observed the young people socially constructing their understanding. In doing so, they were connecting their prior knowledge with the information their guide had communicated to them and noted the irregularities (Killen, 2009). Their curiosity to clarify their understanding then led to independent student-led research on the Internet at their own cost. Young people used their agency to independently respond to their experiences. The school leaders used their agency to deliberately refrain from correcting errors, instead allowing the young people to question and undertake their own meaning-making processes.

The young people discussed a different example. The twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 had prompted them to recall their experiences soon after returning from China.

I: I was in my bedroom and heard Tiananmen Square on the television in the lounge. If I hadn’t gone to China I’d probably just carried on getting ready
for school. But I rushed to the television to see what was on about China. Been there. Done that.

B: We knew the geography of it, so we knew where the photos were taken - we knew where people were killed.

E: What’s also really odd is that when we were there, was the fact that Chinese people around us had no idea of what actually happened there.

H: It would be because they wouldn’t teach it.

I: Our tour guide denied that it happened.

D: They’re really like, very secretive people, sort of.

H: They do keep some things quite hidden like Tiananmen Square, but they also accept responsibility for some things like the Cultural Revolution where millions of people died. But I don’t really understand why they keep Tiananmen Square a secret. . . . the rest of the world knows about it and yet the people that live there don’t know anything about it. (T8.C.YP)

Through their experiences in China, the young people had related their own prior knowledge of Tiananmen Square and the Cultural Revolution to their place-related experiences. The mismatch of their knowledge with their experiences stimulated them to question and think beyond a factual understanding to consider more deeply why there were different interpretations of these events (Killen, 2009; Perkins & Blythe, 1994). The young people went on to discuss what they observed to be unusual behaviour by local people at Tiananmen Square.

E: I didn’t expect it to be like it was.

E: It was actually quite creepy.

G: One person in our tour group, he drew a tank and a person standing in front of it on a wall, and the next day it’d been rubbed off.

E: Yeah, it was like an hour later it had been rubbed off.

D: Yeah, not long after, it was gone.

E: And the teacher wrote, “All speech should be free”, and it got changed to “All flowers should be free” or something.

D: Anyone was allowed to go and write something on the wall but anything that caused any controversy was erased and replaced with something else.

H: Yeah, really weird. (T8.C.YP)

The young people did not clarify whether these people they referred to were residents, Chinese visitors, or officials. However, their presence at that place added a dimension that might not otherwise have been had just through their classroom experiences (Rivers, 2006). The unexpected behaviour they had observed appeared to have provided an important
contextual prompt (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005) that assisted with their later recall of memory and stimulated their social construction of meaning (Barker, 2012; Falk, 2005).

7.4.3 Experiences you cannot get at home

The claim made by many participants, particularly school leaders, was that “to learn it when in the actual context, it makes more sense than when you just learn it from the classroom” (T8.C.SL). Not only does the ‘real’ context bring learning alive, it also enables people to engage with the context in ways they might not otherwise. Parents perceived that to understand “what it was like to be a youth in that [French] culture” (T13.F.P) was only possible by being in the French culture. As she stated:

You can’t get that here. You can’t sit in a café here and be surrounded by people who are speaking French. You just can’t do it, so you have to go there and be a part of it. (T13.F.P)

The experience of ‘being there’ also makes things real as this young person explained:

I take Japanese and I’ve learnt about the culture but it doesn’t really seem real yet, because to learn about something is not the same as seeing it. We can see photos, but you still have to experience it to understand it. (T5.J.YP)

Before the group departed for Japan they had been influenced through their preparation that included hearing stories told by participants from the previous trip to Japan. These stories recounted “a really emotional and eye-opening experience” (T6.J.YPr) and gave them expectations of the “eerie feelings” they would be likely to experience when visiting Hiroshima:

D: . . . the atomic bomb site. We’ve seen lots of photographs of the aftermath.

B: And the shadow that’s just imprinted on the concrete of that guy sitting on the steps.

E: I think it will be like the sort of eerie feelings that you’d get if you went to like one of the concentration camps in Germany.

D: Or the killing fields in Cambodia.

C: Yeah, anywhere really where that kind of disaster has happened. (T5.J.YP)

The young people show some knowledge about historical events and how they may put that knowledge into practice, transfer their feelings and experience these sites. They understand that the trip to Japan will allow them to contextualise that knowledge and their feelings when they experience these historical sites.
Real-life experiences are perceived to heighten people’s emotional engagement with a place, event, object, concept, issue or people (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Ofsted, 2008a; Woods, 2004). On the trip to France a brief excursion to Le Quesnoy\(^{18}\) for an Anzac Day\(^{19}\) commemoration illustrated a further example of engaging emotionally with a place and an event. Parent participants expressed their perceptions that it had been a “very emotional” experience for the young people, and probably “brought them into reality a bit” after all the other “exciting” aspects of their trip (T13.F.P). One young person stated:

. . . going over there and there was the big kind of war memorial where there was the big wall that New Zealanders scaled to save the town. It was just like really moving and... it did make you proud. I mean you really felt like your ancestors had done something cool. (T12.F.YP)

Through the experience of ‘being there’ in the place where this event took place and “walking around the village with the local people as the stories were told” (T12.F.YP) the young people were able to relate to the physical and tactical challenge the New Zealand soldiers had faced. Additionally, the way in which they experienced how the people of the village publicly demonstrated their depth of gratitude contributed to their sense of national pride and emotional understanding.

To enable the emotional and affective elements to come to the fore, Ballantyne and Packer (2005) suggest keeping learning experiences in informal contexts relatively unstructured. School leaders concurred with this, remarking that there is a balance between being adequately prepared while also keeping things open enough for young people to make their own meaning from experiences. This extends to letting them make mistakes and learn from them, even in historically sensitive places, such as Hiroshima:

B: I think you’ve always got to check that line between “there’s stuff that we’re going to tell you, but there’s stuff that you must experience to understand.” And be really careful to not tell them everything - you’ve got to keep it open. The business of travel is to learn by experience. . . . I remember last time when we were in Hiroshima, one of the girls was asking some probably outrageous questions of the guide. And one of our staff said to me “Oh yeah but she should have known this, this and this.” And I said, “Yeah, but her questions were really honest and they were about where her learning was at.” She would have learnt more from that than us telling her before, well you know, “It’s like this and you can’t say this, that or the other.” There is so much to prepare them for, but there is so much that you actually help

\(^{18}\) New Zealand soldiers were instrumental in freeing the French people of Le Quesnoy from the Germans during the Second World War.

\(^{19}\) Anzac Day is remembered annually on 25 April to remember the fallen New Zealanders and Australians that fell in the battle of Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. While the battle of Gallipoli remains to the fore, all New Zealand and Australia men and women that have served in the military are remembered.
them experience and allow them to inquire and gain by experiences.
(T.J.SL)

This illustrates some of the key elements of the experiential learning process. Firstly, preparation allowed the learner to come to the experience with some prior knowledge and understanding. Secondly, school leaders acted in a way that avoided or at least minimised intervention. Individuals approached their learning differently and needed the autonomy to inquire and respond to the situations they encounter. Thirdly, the school leader acknowledged that mistakes or errors of judgement have the potential to become learning experiences. Finally, a constructive learning culture is enhanced within a supportive encouraging environment, and guided by experienced facilitators (Brophy, 2004; Hattie, 2009).

7.4.4 Making memories from experiences

Tourism experiences offer iconic moments that are distinct from the mundane everyday (Carr, 2011). Young people conveyed how they returned from their trips with many stories, a point reinforced by parents. It was often acknowledged by participants that their memories were recollected when prompted, such as during the focus group interview in the context of their peers: “This is making me all excited, just remembering everything. It’s putting me in this really cool mind-frame” (T6.J.YPr).

Young people perceived that their most vivid memories related to experiences where they had been playful, physically engaged, socially interactive, or an experience that triggered an emotional or aesthetic response at the time (Zink, 2004). A group of young people who had experienced the Gobi Desert on their trip to China described their exhilaration:

We got to ride camels and we got to toboggan down sand dunes and yeah we got to see the sunrise or the sunset behind the sand dunes, and yeah that was really lovely. (T9.C.YP)

Some parents and school leaders were motivated by the possibility that positive memories could result from an international school trip. The desire of parents and a school leader to “construct enduring rather than merely transitory images” (Carr, 2011: 27) reflected the value they placed on the importance of memories through a sports trip to Australia:

C: It is really important as a team to help build memories of their school year. I think it will be fantastic to look back on and say that was a really amazing tour and going away on a trip like that enriched the friends they made.

B: It is probably the highlight of most of their school lives for some. (T21.B&GC.P)
Likewise, the school leader who was also the coach had clear sporting objectives but was also motivated to create a memory and highlight of their school experience:

I wanted it to be one of the highlights of their time at school. I wanted two or three of the boys that are leaving [school] to have written in their profile highlights in the school magazine that the highlight for 2010 was their trip to Australia. (T22.B&GC.SL)

In school communities this arguably contributed to a ‘feel good’ factor and sense of gratitude to the school for the opportunity and experience (see Chapter Eight, section 8.4.1). This is illustrated by this parent reflecting on her child’s experience in France:

. . . I was really surprised with how much they bonded over there - and the fun time! They had a lot of fun and I think that’s fantastic because these are memories. These are lifetime memories. So I think that’s brilliant. It might not have been on the agenda to have a lot of fun, but they sure did. (T13.F.P)

Another parent recognised the iconic moments her child had experienced; however she realised that returning from such an intense experience led to a period of readjustment:

I mean sure it was fantastic. My [child] came home … she had so many photos. She didn’t stop talking about it. And it was like “Wow” so I wasn’t prepared for that, because she was like, she had to come down, into work, into the normality of life - day after day. “We’re back now. This is the real world.” And it took a while for her to adjust back, because she was on such a high. (T13.F.P)

The parent perceived that as her child moves through life her memories will remain as a reference point that may in some way influence her future, even though only glimpses of change are evident at present:

Through life you have things that happen, they’re a crucial part of your life, they’re life changing. And I consider that this trip is bound to be one for [child], because she might not realise it right now, but I think it will be one of those things “When I was 15 years old I went with a school group to France. This is what we did.” And there will be developments, changes in her that have come about because of that trip. I don’t know exactly what they might be - sometimes I think I can see glimpses of the changes… (T13.F.P)

The thematic networks have illustrated that participants discussed a variety of motivations and experiences in relation to international school trips, of whom a few explicitly stated that memory generation was a motive. However, several factors contributed to what may be considered as intense experiences of place and interaction with others. Over time, these iconic moments may be constructed as enduring memories of young people’s time at school. In turn, positive memories might contribute to the construction of ‘good schools’, ‘good parents’ and ‘good teachers’.
Chapter summary

Chapter Seven has focused on school-led tourism undertaken within an international context and the opportunities afforded for active learning experiences. This global theme was described and discussed through its three contributory organising themes. All participants perceived that learning is contextualised through: individual interactions with the host community; experiences related to time, space and mobility; and place.

School leaders deliberately structured trip itineraries to focus learning around active engagement and experience. Direct interaction within the local community, particularly with host peers, embedded the experience in the locality and enabled young people to learn about the host people and their surroundings. Through these real experiences, young people and school leaders recognised where learning was applied in later situations and experiences in a culturally responsive way.

The temporal and spatial dimensions of an international trip were perceived to offer opportunities for young people to develop mobility competencies. Their active engagement with different languages and unfamiliar mobility processes enabled them to learn how to move with increasing confidence in these situations. However, the dimensions of time and space revealed vulnerability amongst parents as they acknowledged that the physical separation from their children might be equally as challenging for them as it might be for their children. In light of this, parents, particularly mothers, assisted their children to devise strategies to manage themselves away from home over an extended period without parental intervention.

Destinations were deliberately selected by school leaders to enable contextualised learning - of a foreign language, cultural understanding and to bring subject-based learning alive. School leaders’ actions before the trip helped prepare young people for the active learning experiences they would encounter. However, they intentionally kept sufficient flexibility during the trip so that young people used their agency to initiate their own learning, individually or socially, with others when it was relevant to them. All participants acknowledged that engaging with the ‘real’ context fostered emotional and aesthetic dimensions of learning to occur in relation to the subject and context in ways that they perceived were only possible by ‘being there’. The third global theme focuses on the inter-
relationships between each stakeholder group and how these influence the relationships and responsibilities in relation to an international school trip. This is discussed in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER 8. RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
8.1 Introducing the chapter

Chapter Seven discussed participants’ perceptions that travelling to an international context opened up opportunities for young people to engage in active learning. Through the deliberate actions of school leaders, learning was focused around experience with space for young people to initiate and socially construct their learning. Experiences related to time, space and mobility; people and place were perceived to contextualise a variety of learning opportunities.

This chapter discusses the third and final thematic network that has been identified in this research. Specifically this thematic network, *Relationships and responsibilities*, focuses on the data themes that emerged about the relationships built amongst and between stakeholder groups and the social learning that ensued. It begins by contrasting the expectations by young people and their parents for a social yet secure and supervised experience. Young people were motivated by the social and group nature of the experience, with the support and guidance of the accompanying school leaders. Their parents expressed the trust they assigned to school leaders to guide the learning and supervise their children safely.

The chapter goes on to discuss the variety of expectations and responsibilities placed on and negotiated between stakeholders to allow young people to participate in the trip. The inter-relationships between travelling group members illustrated how young people and school leaders exerted agency in ways that were perceived to enable a well-functioning group experience. Finally, the chapter concludes by suggesting adults predominantly express the justification for international school trips. These justifications were based on the perceptions that learning opportunities were made possible by these experiences. Additionally, they perceived that through these experiences the school might be positioned positively in the community as well as achieve some internationalisation objectives.

The global theme *Relationships and responsibilities* comprises three organizing themes: A shared and supervised group experience, enabling personal and social development, and building school communities. A further eight basic themes complete the thematic network (Figure 8.1).
8.2 A shared and supervised group experience

The organising theme, *A shared and supervised group experience* (Figure 8.2) is supported by four basic themes that interpret the participants’ perceptions and understanding of a school-led tourism experience as a shared and supervised group experience.
8.2.1 A ‘secure’ experience

Young people expressed their motivation to participate in a supportive group experience, and they were aware that their parents held the power to permit them to participate. To gain their parents’ support, they acknowledged that their parents would need to be convinced that the experience would be structured to ensure learning value and supervised so that it would be safe:

B: I’ve always wanted to travel and it’s a great opportunity, great experience.
M: Because it’s with school?
B: Yeah, and it’s got some educational purposes behind it, not just for the hang of it.
D: If we were just going away with friends to somewhere else, my Mum wouldn’t let me go because it wouldn’t be supervised and controlled or structured. (T5.J.YPg)

Additionally, young people added that the social nature of the trip appealed, and that they also were influenced by the knowledge that previous trips had been successful, and therefore was reputable:

What’s good going on the school trip is going with schoolmates. Also going at this age and sort of having a structured tour, guided by people who have been there before and done that kind of trip. (T5.J.YPg)
These young people realised that as a school-led trip, it would have structure and a learning purpose. They perceived that these two elements, together with the supervision by teachers, were likely to positively influence their parents to gain their support to participate. They also alluded to the ‘sticking points’ about which parents respond to their child’s active agency which may have been exhibited as ‘pester power’ (Carr, 2011), when deciding whether or not to permit their participation in other experiences.

The young people expressed that the quality of the relationship they had with the school leaders was as important as their ability to supervise. Young people commented on this as they reflected on their trip to Japan:

The teachers really wanted to be there themselves and they really loved it. It was something they’ve obviously wanted to do or enjoy doing - like looking after other people, organising it as well as the travelling and being exposed to the culture it just made them want to do it even more. So it made their job fun and it passed onto us. (T6.J.YPr)

This suggests that young people perceived that the school leaders were motivated by the destination itself, but more importantly, that they were genuinely interested in being with and sharing the experience with them. The supervision was perceived as nurturing and caring. They found this particularly reassuring if they encountered issues that potentially influenced their emotional wellbeing:

I think we had really good teachers with us. They were really enthusiastic. They were so willing to help you if you had a problem. If you had issues they helped to resolve them. Most of the issues we had were kind of petty. And if you had issues with your host families and stuff, you knew you could go to the teacher because you sort of had that trust with them. (T6.J.YPr)

Although school leaders’ caring nature was appreciated, young people also stated that they did not want to have things done for them. Instead, they wanted to engage directly with the experience themselves, as these young people anticipating their trip to Germany said:

C: She’ll only tell us stuff if we don’t understand. And it’s helpful that she’s not just telling us.
F: Or doing everything for us.
C: Because otherwise what’s the point in going?
B: We can experience it for ourselves. (T19.G.YP)

This indicated that they have some self-efficacy around their language competence and readiness to experience things themselves. They perceived that their teacher had prepared them sufficiently and understood their aspirations to take responsibility for their learning.
through experience upon their arrival in Germany, albeit with her sideline support (Ministry of Education, 2007a; 2009).

Parents were influenced by the messages conveyed by school leaders and participants from previous trips when they considered whether to permit their child’s participation. Information sessions arranged by the school were persuasive, and parents heard about the proposed trip and gained an insight into experiences from previous trips. Decisions were often based on word-of-mouth recommendations, personal observations and a proven track record of ‘good trips.’ Parents discussing the influence of an information session at the school illustrate this:

C: There were quite a few parents and they had the people that had gone last year, some of the girls spoke at it, and then the teachers that were going this year spoke as well. That meeting was good. It was informative. I think they’ve done it before - it’s tried and true. . . . I thought they’re pretty on top of it.

D: Well organised and the teachers taking them seem capable and the students seem to have gone through that process of having to go through and be chosen. They’ve got to stick to a certain standard be able to go.

C: And they haven’t ever had any problems. (T7.J.P)

Likewise, parents reflected on the influence of their informal networks within the wider school community through which they received word-of-mouth advice and reassurance. These interactions were confidence-builders for parents and their children:

D: [My son] goes to someone’s house after school and their son did the German exchange last year, so he’s been talking to him about it and getting wee pointers.

C: And they all had a great time.

D: Yeah they had a wonderful time so that’s been a plus for him to know a little bit more what to expect and to talk to him about things. I talked to his mum and asked questions as well for things I’m not sure about and it definitely helped. (T18.G.P)

The group focus of a school-led travel experience was perceived to offer an alternative person-supporting network (Dumon, 1997) to the family, whereby the interactions and relationships within the group act as a network (Schanzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012a). Parents conveyed how this reassured them that their child would be cared for, supervised and supported:

C: It feels safe, because they’re going with the teacher and the class, . . . they’re being looked after, so it’s not as though he’s going to go on the plane himself and you’ve got to worry about him. He’s being supervised and stuff. . . . and he’s got his classmates there, so he’s not getting isolated.
F: It’s sort of ‘half way’ isn’t it, it’s not completely independent, but it’s not a family thing either. (T18/G.P)

The quality of the relationship between school leaders and young people was an important factor for parents, just as it was for their children. If collective fundraising activities had been undertaken, the inter-relationships between each stakeholder group were credited for the way in which they contributed to relationship building. Some parents noted that they got “that extra bit of comfort” about the formation of a group identity before departure stating, “it was really great to see how they got on” (T18.G.P). The ability of school leaders to inter-relate with young people effectively and professionally as a group during the trip was perceived as integral to a positive experience.

I think both teachers are just so good with the kids. They really have lots of fun with them. I don’t think it was too hard. I don’t think there was too much discipline needed either. (T13.F.P)

Several authors (e.g., Carr, 2011; Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Zink, 2004) have pointed out that the informal contexts in which (school-led tourism) learning experiences take place create a social space that is different to the regular classroom. In these contexts young people perceived the informality has enabled teachers to be perceived as ‘real people.’ Given the importance of the quality of the teacher-student relationships and the way it enhances student engagement and learning (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006), these school-led tourism experiences have the potential to contribute to the strengthening of these relationships.

Parents and young people similarly expressed the desire to have school leaders that nurtured rather than ‘smothered’. However, parents were more explicit about the trust they placed on the school leaders to supervise. In this regard they identified some of the actions they expected them to assume, such as managing the behaviour of and dynamics amongst the group:

C: Trust in the school I suppose.
E: I just appreciated the fact that it was supervised and that they would make sure the kids behave and get on with others. So really I put my trust in him (son) and in the teachers. (T2.V.P)

A further example illustrates a parent’s perception that the school leader had the specific destination and language knowledge, skills and experience to manage a group of young people safely in Germany:
It’s safe because she knows where she’s going. She knows the way around, knows all the best options, things to take them on so, they’re going to see the highlights … getting through all the airports and how big they are, and how quickly you’ve got to move. The kids will just amble through but just having someone with that experience knowing that they’ve got to be here and here by a certain time.  

(T18.G.P)

Despite their expectations to supervise their children parents did not assign their trust solely to the school leaders. Several conveyed how they had used their agency to explain to their child that they were also expected to act in a self-responsible manner. A single parent explained that in permitting her child to participate in the trip to China, she placed her trust in and transferred the responsibility for her child onto the accompanying teachers. In doing so, she acknowledged that it also presented an opportunity for her child to share that responsibility by managing herself:

If something went wrong I had to put my trust and faith in the teachers going and in the kids. I also talked to her and said “You’ve got to look after yourself now.” So the responsibility was really on the kids as well as the teachers. And they thought it was like giving them their chance to grow up and let go. It was also letting go of them and knowing that if she got sick over there, there was nothing I could do about it. I had to just be broadminded and let her know that she had to take responsibility for herself. (T10.C.P)

School leaders acknowledged the level of trust placed on them, as was expressed by a young teacher preparing to lead her first international school trip to Samoa: “it is quite trusting for the parents to allow us to take their kids away. We might have had one or two meetings with them, but they don’t really know us” (T14.B,GCS&SL).

Trip leaders carry the responsibility on behalf of the school’s leadership, who, as has already been stated, have legal responsibilities for the learning and care of their students and employees (British Standards Institute, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2009). Senior school leaders who participated in focus group interviews focused on the essential skill sets (competencies) and personal attributes trip leaders required for them to approve the trip. Without this expertise, such trips would be unlikely to proceed as this Principal explains:

We would struggle to find someone who’s more competent with the language. You can’t just take children over there and just be semi-confident with the language operating in that environment. The school puts a lot of trust in her. She shows an enormous amount of skill with these things. If we had doubts about her we would obviously say, “This cannot go ahead”. (T17.G.SL)
The level of responsibility placed on those leading school trips is not taken lightly. Even when there is an evident level of enjoyment amongst trip leaders, there is an ever-present awareness that difficult decisions may have to be made and when this happens they can be draining:

C: There’s a lot of work involved and it’s not a holiday. It’s enjoyable and it’s satisfying. There’s quite a lot of reward, just seeing what the kids get out of it. Yeah, but it isn’t a holiday because you are still responsible for those kids. Knowing you are going overseas, if something were to happen it just magnifies the situation.

E: Yeah it’s quite nerve wracking. I have had things happen and it takes it out of you. You just get so anxious, and then you don’t sleep so well and then you’re a bit sort of harder to function the next day… It’s all on you.

(T14.B.GC&S.SL)

These comments made by school leaders echo a comment made in a radio documentary by a teacher who stated, “Leading these trips is not for the faint hearted” (Woods (2004). The protective role of the ‘good parent’ is thus transferred to other adults. Traditionally, this is referred to as in loco parentis. However, current guidelines for EOTC in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009) require that school leaders provide a level of care beyond that which a prudent conservative parent would provide, to one that meets professional best practice standards. Schools operate within a legal framework that formalises the trust and level of responsibility placed on school leaders to operate safe experiences for participants (Ministry of Education, 2009). This implies that there are particular competencies and attributes school leaders should possess within the supervision structure for the trip, such as destination knowledge, specialist language skills, the ability to supervise young people and manage their behaviour, and cultural etiquette. (Ministry of Education, 2009). Adult participants perceived that the supervised nature of these experiences was seen as an appropriate introduction for young people’s future travel experiences.

8.2.2 A travel experience in its own right

The perception that an international school trip could assist young people to develop skills that would prepare them for future travel experiences was discussed in Chapter Seven (section 7.3). Typically, the young people who were anticipating their trip were mostly focused on the present trip as an experience in itself and did not view it in terms of how it might influence their future travel experiences. When asked whether they perceived that their trip to Germany might influence them to travel internationally in the future, their ambivalence was illustrated:

B: Probably.
E: Yeah.
A contrasting perspective emerged from some participants who had returned from their trips. Young people who had returned from their trip to Japan reflected on their memories, “Like talking about this, it’s like ‘I want to go back’” (T6.J.YPr). However, one of them noted that she would like to do similar things but would now “go without the school and be independent” because this would give “a whole new perspective”, particularly in having to “survive, especially with lots of trains to catch” (T6.J.YPr). They agreed that travelling at the age of 15 or 16 with the school was considered a “wonderful way” to travel in that “we had a two week taste and now we are ready for more” (T6.J.YPr). They appreciated that “being with the school was a safety net. You know, someone was there to help you. If you were by yourself you might get stuck” (T6.J.YPr). This supports the perception that an international school trip assists young people to gain new skills within a secure environment, and acts as a stepping-stone to build confidence for independent future travel.

Young people acknowledged that the social experience of travelling with a school group was a unique characteristic of their trip and one that could not be replicated in other travel experiences. The dialogue reflects their present interest in the group experience, such as they encountered:

F:  It kind of did [make me want to travel again] but I know that it won’t be the same as our trip.

C:  It was special.

F:  Yeah, it won’t be as a group dynamic or anything, it would be on your own or with another person.

D:  I think it was a fantastic experience to go somewhere with a group of your friends. Because as [peer] was saying, you’re probably going to travel but it will be with a partner or family or something, which is completely different. It would still be a good experience, but it’s just so much more fun with your friends. More laid back I think.

F:  It didn’t feel like a school trip though. You kind of just felt like a big group of friends with a supervisor.

B:  She [teacher] was still in charge, but she didn’t really take on a teacher role. (T12.F.YP)

This suggests that the social interaction and composition of the group in the way they each performed their role were influential in the overall school-led tourism experience (Yarnal & Kerstetter, 2005) through which young people developed a sense of social self (Tucker,
Thus, these experiences are travel experiences in their own right, not to merely prepare young people for their future travel experiences.

### 8.2.3 Travelling with peers

Young people expressed their desire to have a group experience shared with their peers. The social nature of a group experience was a key motivator and highlight of young people’s and school leaders’ experiences. This was illustrated through the words of participants and the joking, banter and laughing that was peppered throughout the focus group interviews, particularly those who had returned from their trips. Participants in sports trips expressed the social motivation:

> I’ve represented other [sports] teams and been on trips for that [to tournaments], and you’ve got to be real serious and play hard for that, so you don’t get to do fun stuff. So with this trip I’m going for the fun, not the sport, and it will be good to go to theme parks and just muck round with all my mates and stuff. (T16.B&GC.YP)

This was endorsed by a teammate who agreed that the memories are stronger if they are shared with friends, “You remember so much more if your friends go, like what you did over there and stuff” (T16.B&GC.YP). Similarly, members of a soccer (football) team had set ambitious performance goals during and following their trip to Australia; however, they considered travelling together as an important part of being in the team and considered themselves “quite tight as friends” (T16.B&GC.YP). As one member of the team noted:

> The aim of our trip is to be prepared for Nationals [following the trip] and get the best placing we can so, but nah free time is cool too, like hanging out with mates and stuff … (T16.B&GC.YP)

Research undertaken by Sport New Zealand (2012) reported high levels of engagement in sport within New Zealand, especially amongst school-age children and young people. The report found that the social motive to be with peers was a crucial factor in their decision to participate and remain in sport. When young people had the opportunity to ‘muck around’ with their peers, this translated into higher levels of participation. This reinforces Larsen, Gillman and Richards’ (1997) finding that young people gain more pleasurable social leisure experiences with their friends, who provide an escape from the world and are also connected to the fun factor (Francis & Kentel, 2008). Therefore, balancing out the training or competitive elements of a trip with the relaxation and social elements was an important consideration for the structure of a sport-focused, or indeed any other trip.
Despite the strength of the social motive, some young people engaged in an international school trip as a way to assert their independence and expand their peer network beyond their immediate friendship groups. One person perceived that she could actually “be herself” without the presence of her closest friends. When asked how important it was who else went on the trip, her peer said:

It didn’t really faze me whether I went with them [friends] or not because if anything it might enable me to actually being able to enjoy myself in another country and not worry about what other people think. (T5.J.YPg)

This illustrates that the young people acknowledge they have formed a ‘new’ friendship group based on their own interests, in this case in the trip to Japan, as distinct to “our own friends”. This is consistent with literature that argues the importance of peer relationships as part of identity formation during adolescence (e.g., Gullota et al., 1999; Hendry et al., 1993; Nairn et al., 2012). Smart et al. (2008) and Carr (2011) contend that the attempts by young people to assert their own desires and identities can create stress on the parent-child relationship. The willingness to assert their desires in ways that may differ to their close friends suggests that the formation of identity relates to a dynamic inter-relationship between friends and peers as well as within the parent-child relationship.

The dialogue above continued, and one young person added that the regular preparatory meetings had allowed them “to know each other so much anyway” (T5.J.YPg), and through that they had become: “Our own little family. . . It’s a bit cheesy, isn’t it? It’s like we know each other so well that it just doesn’t matter if we have our own friends there or not” (T5.J.YPg).

The way in which a travelling group was perceived as an alternative person-supporting network to the family was discussed in Chapter Seven (section 7.3.2). Although young people did not use that term, they recognised that a network of peers and adults with its own identity would be supportive. This made an international school trip “definitely better to be in a group with other people in the same situation” (T19.G.YP) than to be on an international individual exchange. Familiarity with each other was also perceived as important for the mutual support it could offer in unfamiliar situations, “we’re not complete strangers - we’ll still know someone over there” (T19.G.YP). Additionally, young people perceived that it would allow them to relax in the familiarity and company of their peers and mitigate any feelings they may have of homesickness:
D: We’ll probably like it after being with our host families, we’ll probably be like homesick by then. And it will be good to be with our friends.
F: Yeah, and with people who speak English and who are familiar to us.
D: …we’ll be talking and able to use really “slang-as” words. (T5.J.YPg)

It was not just the young people who acknowledged the relevance of the shared group experience. Parents, whose children had returned from a trip to France, illustrated this:

C: These were all new experiences, and they were sharing those all at once. When you go overseas it’s such a buzz, and so at their age, it just would have been even more intensified.
D: . . . they had so much fun . . . they really let their hair down! But they did seem to take the language side of it and their experience at Le Quesnoy quite seriously.
C: . . . there were just like so many experiences they shared . . .
B: And sharing it with a group of people that they might not all actually socialise with in the real world back at school and stuff. So it’s like different personalities and they’ve all grown together as a group, and yeah had fun. (T13.F.P)

These parents reflected on their own recollections of the ‘buzz’ of tourism experiences and the potential that these iconic moments might become enduring memories that distinguished them from the mundane everyday (Carr, 2011). Despite the acknowledgement or even delight in the fun their children had reported, they nevertheless reinforced their understanding that the learning, or ‘serious stuff’ had not been overlooked in the overall experience. Moreover, they acknowledged how their children were asserting their agency to expand their peer network and individually and collectively forge their identities (Smart et al., 2008). As Shaw and Dawson (2001) point out, adolescents increasingly seek independence from their parents. Tourism experiences offer a means for them to construct their identity as distinct from a child within their family (Blichfeldt et al., 2010; Carr, 2011; Small, 2008), and thus international school trips have the potential to fulfil these desires.

With this in mind, parents commented on the different dynamic between a school-led group and a family group in the tourism experience: “It is going with their peers. I think that is a huge advantage too. Going with me just would not be the same experience” (T18.G.P).

Others noted that it is the presence of their peers that creates a different vibe and experience:

C: Being there as a whole group of boys they had a blast, yeah it is not like just going there with your family.
B: And they feed off each other like [my son] wouldn’t go on a couple of the rides at Dream World when we were there last time but the way the boys ‘work on you’ meant that he did them this time. (T21.GC&B.P)

School leaders cited the dynamic between parents and their children, and teachers and their students as a justification to exercise their agency to resist the inclusion of parents in the travelling group. Each relationship had differing power dynamics and there was a sense that the presence of parents can create an “awkwardness” that was provoked by potentially conflicting desires, and have the impact of “cramping the style” and the freedom of the young people (T14.B,GC&S.SL). As a school leader stated:

> When you bring parents into that mix, it muddies the whole thing. And it creates more conflict in other things and other issues. It also can stop the kids from being able to be freer, growing, and interacting with the other kids, you know? (T8.C.SL)

Any school-led tourism experience replicates the dynamics and power relationships within the learning environment of the school. In these contexts school leaders are empowered to supervise, guide learning and construct a positive learning culture (Ministry of Education, 2009). Therefore, the inclusion of parents with their own desires and behaviours into school-led tourism experiences might be perceived to bring tension into that learning culture. School leaders perceived that parents might have altered this dynamic and compromised the ability for school leaders to facilitate the group dynamics and learning. Additionally, it reinforced the distinction between school-led tourism experiences from other tourism experiences undertaken by families. The way in which the power dynamic is enacted, including its perceived fluidity around freedom versus control is discussed in the following section.

### 8.2.4 Freedom versus control

Until now, this chapter has focused on supervised group experiences that are perceived to be safe for the participants. As the discussion has illustrated, senior school leaders, parents and young people place their trust in the specialist skills, competencies and personal attributes of the accompanying school leaders, and in the risk management strategies they implemented. Moreover, they perceived school leaders as ‘good people’ who are genuinely interested in and related well to the young people for whom they had responsibility. The hierarchy of school structures and power relationships, where teachers carried the supervisory responsibility for learning and safety, is similarly reflected in a school-led tourism experience. This means that they are entrusted to plan an itinerary and supervision structure that enabled young people to
be safely guided in their learning. However, young people perceived that they were also given freedom at times to independently explore and choose how they used their time and this is illustrated in the examples below. The first quotation illustrates how young people welcomed and experienced their perceived independence during their trip to Japan:

D: We’d always get free time during the evenings. And they’d give us money for tea, and you could spend it all, which was good.

B: We never told them [the teachers] though that we could ‘pocket a little’ for shopping.

D: Yeah they [teachers] always let us go and do things. We spent most of our time in the photo booths and vending machines in the arcades.

C: We just had a time to be back by. And you just had to sign in and sign out. So yeah we did get a lot of time. It was cool like finding your way around the streets and stuff.

B: The week where we were travelling as our own group, it was really cool. I didn’t really expect to be sort of let out, you know in this big city. . . like “off you go and buy yourself some dinner.” It’s giving you that freedom to go and explore. That’s part of travelling. That’s part of the experience. I really appreciated them letting us do that because you know ‘We go to school’…. (T6.J.YPr)

The replication of power relationships is illustrated by their surprise and appreciation that they were given freedom to make their own choices about where they ate and how they spent their time in the evenings because they were (student) members of a school community. Although they perceived this as freedom, and they explained later why they thought they were granted that freedom, it was nevertheless a planned strategy by the trip leaders. The ‘dinner allowance’ strategy enabled young people the opportunity to independently make their own choices. In turn, the young people exerted their agency to make their own decisions about how they spent that allowance.

Similarly, on a cultural trip to China, the evenings provided space within the structured itinerary for the young people to make some of their own decisions about how they spent that time: “… we didn’t do anything much after dinner. And we had a bit of free time to either stay in the restaurant or go around the area near our hotel” (T9.C.YP). It was only “after certain hours that we had to meet up with the teachers” (T9.C.YP). Shopping, usually in small groups gave them independence and the opportunity to interact with locals,

We were also given time where we might be at a market or on a shopping street, and we’d meet back here in an hour, so we got an hour to go around, buy stuff in little groups and do what we wanted. (T9.C.YP)
On the trip to France, young people perceived that they were granted a “good amount” of freedom, assigned to them as a selection of choices, because their school leader “understands us” (T12.F.YP):

G: …when we had a spare moment, she’d say “OK, well you can either come sightseeing to this certain place or you can go shopping or go off and do your own thing.”

I: She definitely had things exactly set out and you had to follow that quite rigidly, but then there were a lot of free spots where she gave you a lot of choices for what you wanted to do.

D: But it was a good amount of free time and organised stuff. (T12.F.YP)

On a sports trip to Australia, young people perceived that the spaces in between competition games were open to negotiation between all members of the group to decide how to spend that time. They had been told by their coach (and trip leader):

We’ll just do whatever the team wants to decide collectively. As well as going to the theme parks he said we’re pretty flexible and do whatever the boys want to do. If they want to sit on the beach then go sit on the beach, if they want to go shopping we’ll go shopping. We’ve been away together a few times before so even if we split and go in two different directions, it doesn’t worry us. (T16.B&GC.YP)

The itinerary for the sports trip was based around a different schedule to other trips. However, the structure of competition games afforded the legitimacy for the trip. The perceived freedom assigned to young people to negotiate how their free time was used was based on previous experiences through which trusting relationships had formed between the trip leader and the young people.

Young people who had travelled to Japan perceived that they were assigned greater independence as the school leaders “gauged where and who they were” (T6.J.YPr) in terms of their readiness to accept the freedom. They based their perceptions on their cultural readiness which reflected their learning over their time in Japan:

Having stayed [the previous week] with our host families, we learned all the traditional, cultural practices. Then when we went out to restaurants in Hiroshima we applied what we learned. (T6.J.YPr)

Accordingly, they accepted the trust placed in them by the school leaders and treated it not just as freedom but also as a responsibility:

We were trusted. Because no-one broke that trust, like no-one said anything they weren’t supposed to, it meant that we were allowed to do that and so they were going to be able to continue that [on future trips]. (T6.J.YPr)
The development of a trusting relationship between young people and the school leaders was also perceived by young people to be an important factor in being granted greater independence during their trip to China:

G: As time went on we got more and more relaxed about things like that. They [the teachers] trusted us.

M: Why do you think that developed and did that seem appropriate at the time?

D: We’d been in China for quite a while and we started getting used to it. We knew to look for like signposts where we could find our way back, so we’d grown independence and confidence going off into smaller groups.

G: And our language had improved. (T9.C.YP)

However, a more important factor for these young people was their perception that there had been a shift in power amongst the adults who were leading the trip. Initially, school leaders with the cultural and language expertise ‘took charge’ of the travelling group. As time went on the “adult power changed” and shifted to other teachers, each of whom had “much more trust in us” and were “not as strict” (T9.C.YP). This was appreciated as a “much better arrangement” (T9.C.YP). A similar perspective was recounted by a teacher who alluded to tensions between the adults about conflicting views about what was important to the young people:

I had specifically got assurances from various [teachers] that the focus of the trip was most definitely student orientated, and that the kids came first. That was really important to me because I was very aware that sometimes there are different tensions and different desires and I was really concerned about that. . . . Very, very occasionally there were a few tensions at times where I think some people didn’t necessarily want them to be children. They actually wanted them to be more adult . . . perhaps playing basketball or playing with some kids in a park was not what they thought they were there for. . . . those of us who are very focused on the students said “This is really important that these kids get out and burn up a bit of energy and have some games and be children.” (T10.C.P)

This illustrated that the tension and conflict needed to be managed between the adult members of the group. The management of group dynamics entails agency and negotiation between all group members. In the example above, the tension appeared to stem from a confusion of role differentiation within the supervision structure (Perriam, 2006/07). In these supervision structures, the staff should collectively possess the competencies and attributes required to supervise a specific school-led tourism experience, within which there should be clear role differentiation, including who is best suited to make decisions to best meet the desires of young people for playfulness (Ministry of Education, 2009).
School leaders associated with the previous and forthcoming trips to Japan argued that it was important to allow young people space to “stretch their wings” (T4.J.SL). The relaxation of power allowed more active agency to be assigned to the young people. The school leaders perceived this as an important opportunity for young people to manage themselves and “make their way” (T4.J.SL). They discussed:

C:  … once we got back to the hotel we had a bit of a chill out time and then said “Right, it’s dinner time - here’s your dinner allowance, you can go off. You must be in groups of no less than 3”, yeah, a bit of risk management, “and we expect that you’ll be back here checking in with us by this time.” They were brilliant.

B:  Some would say, “Oh we’re too tired, we’re just going to stay in our rooms.”

C:  Just going out navigating in a large city is quite huge. But they would often quite like it when we’d say we’re all going to have dinner together somewhere it was sort of like “Oh!” [a sigh of relief].

B:  We thought it was really important that they actually went out there and did that stuff too. They didn’t have everything sanctioned for them. There’s no point taking them somewhere where there’s no element of a little bit of risk and making your way. (T4.J.SL)

For both the school leaders and the young people, the perception of having agency and trust was the important factor. How they exerted their agency and decided how to spend their time was noticed and the school leaders did not intervene.

In this section, the voice of young people and school leaders has been dominant. The inter-relationships and power dynamics were experienced between those who participated in trips. Earlier in this organising theme, parents conveyed their expectations for their children to experience a supervised and secure international trip. It was apparent that the pre-trip discourse focused on how the learning and safety, not their freedom, would be managed. This may be attributed to parents voicing their concerns about risk and safety (Carr, 2011; Robertson, 2001), particularly in the face of media reportage of high profile incidents (e.g., AAP, 2012; BBC, 2007; Clarke, 2007; Malvern, 2008; Vass & Eriksen, 2008). Participants were travelling to a range of destinations that were perceived to expose young people to health, safety or emotional risks that were different to those they encounter in their home environment (Carr, 2011). Brookes (2011) recommends a greater analysis of risk for experiences undertaken in international contexts, particularly with consideration for elements that differ to the home environment such as climate, the presence of animals or sanitation.
School leaders had convinced parents and young people that the strategies in place and their previous track record of managing groups in unfamiliar destinations would assure them of a safe experience. It was thus a surprise, albeit a good surprise, that some parents reflected on the unexpected freedom their children were given during the trip:

There was a reasonable amount [of freedom], probably a little bit more than what I thought they would have … I thought “Oh, I’m quite pleased I didn’t know about that” [before the trip] because in retrospect I think it was fantastic because they are old enough. They were given freedom to go out in certain timeframes so it wasn’t wide open. I was quite surprised about that. They had some really great experiences just in being let loose - going and choosing where they were going to eat and exploring in Paris. You know, they had to get there and they had to order food and interact with locals. And so it was great. So they did have quite a lot of time when they absolutely had to sink or swim. And from what I gather, they all seemed really up to the mark. (T13.F.P)

This section has discussed the dynamics of the inter-relationships between all stakeholder groups with respect to how the group experience would be supervised. Each stakeholder group perceived that they used their agency to influence the power relationships. Young people interpreted the relaxation of the power and their increased freedom as a result of their readiness for independence and being trusted. School leaders had a different perspective, where they perceived the transfer of responsibility as a deliberate action so that young people had the opportunity to learn. As such, school leaders perceived these as opportunities for free choice learning (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Griffin & Symington, 1999). In contrast, young people perceived this as freedom to make choices about how they spent their time rather than as an opportunity to learn. Within the parameters established by the school leaders, such as time parameters, task expectations (e.g., to purchase and consume a meal), or group size (e.g., being “in groups of no less than three”, T4.J.SL), the young people perceived that they had choice and control over what and how they interacted in the learning environment. This aligns with Falk’s (2005) description of free-choice learning, which pointed out that the perception of choice and control makes it a relative, rather than absolute construct.

During the focus group interviews frequent reference was made to shopping. For young people it was an activity that satisfied a motivation: “I can’t wait to try those vending machines – you can buy anything from them!” (T5.J.YP), “Yeah, going to the malls will be cool” (T20.B&GC.YP), and “We spent heaps of time in the markets at night” (T9.C.YP). School leaders observed and commented on young people and their motivation for and prowess at shopping: “God, they can shop” (T11.F.SL), “I was horrified at how much the
boys wanted to shop” (T22.B&GC.SL), and “even though most of them didn’t have much money they were sure able to find some bargains – things I wouldn’t find” (T8.C.SL). This illustrated that the spaces of time that were allocated, whether they were perceived to be freedom based on trust or the transfer of responsibility to allow learning, were utilised in ways that allowed free choice learning. Shopping afforded them autonomy to explore and interact with the host community, through which they could manage their time and money and apply their communication skills.

8.3 Enabling personal and social development

In the second organising theme in the thematic network *Relationships and responsibilities*, the inter-relationships and power dynamics between stakeholder groups are discussed. Adult stakeholder groups negotiated and assigned a variety of expectations and responsibilities in order that young people could earn the right to participate in an international school trip. It revealed that the power dynamics were somewhat hierarchical, with the least power held by the young people in relation to their parents, and the ultimate power held by the school leaders. The organising theme goes on to discuss the ways in which young people and school leaders interacted and influenced the group dynamics during the trip. Overall, the expectations, responsibilities and inter-relationships are perceived to contribute to young people’s personal and social development.

The organising theme, *Enabling personal and social development* (Figure 8.3) is supported by two basic themes: Earning the right to participate and Sociality and group dynamics.
8.3.1 *Earning the right to participate*

An international school trip is not a casual undertaking. Participation incurred preparation time, significant cost and commitment – a view that was repeatedly stated by all participant groups. Adults typically held a strong view, hence the dominance of their voice, that young people needed to demonstrate their commitment in order to participate in the trip rather than take their participation for granted. To do this, parents and school leaders used their power to place processes and responsibilities onto young people so that it reinforced the privilege and optional nature of participation. The optional and “special” nature of a “big trip” (T17.G.SL) was reinforced by school leaders and was used to motivate young people and stimulate them to make the required effort such as in fundraising or undertaking other preparatory activities. The teacher leading the trip to Germany illustrated this:

… for a lot of students they have a lot of motivation because they know it’s a special thing to go on the big trip and they know they need to work for it. It’s an option. (T17.G.SL)

Each school had different processes and expectations to gain selection onto a travelling group or to fundraise a portion of the trip costs. A casual approach was noted by one school leader who indicated that sports trips to Australia are popular and usually well subscribed by young
people: “Sometimes we have had a trial process to select them and other times it was pretty much who stuck their hand up” (T14.B,GC&S.SL).

A more common view from school leaders was that young people needed to justify why they deserved to gain this kind of experience. One school incorporated an application process that involved a letter of application, followed by an interview that was facilitated by senior school students who had participated in the previous trip. This was perceived by school leaders to have two advantages. Firstly, it diffused the power of the teacher-in-charge and reduced potential scrutiny of perceived favouritism. Secondly, it allowed previous student participants to influence which young people were selected, based on their perceptions of who would positively contribute to the group and the service-based activities. Importantly, it conveyed to the senior students that their opinions were listened to:

. . . when teachers are doing it, it's really easy to select the students that you teach and know . . . this year the students [from the previous trip] selected three kids that were new to the school . . . that probably gave out a message to others that it's not a popularity contest, or just the most ‘known kids’ that get to go. (T1.V.SL)

Another school, with a well-established biannual trip to Japan based around a school-school relationship, also had a formalised application process. Applications were open to young people who studied Japanese and those who did not. Each applicant was required to articulate her rationale and demonstrate the attitudinal or behavioural attributes required to be part of the group. A school leader stated what was to be addressed in a letter of application:

Why would they like to go on the trip? What have they got to offer the group? What do they have to offer a host family? What experiences do they have of other cultures? Um, why would they be a good ambassador for our school? Are they still prepared to be a part of the group if friends aren’t selected? How would they feel they’d cope when they were hosted by someone who didn’t speak much English? (T4.J.SL)

Parents perceived that this process of application was fair and appreciated that it was not restricted to high achievers or those who could afford it: “They had to sit down and think about why they should be able to go. Because sometimes they just take it for granted, so it’s quite good” (T7.J.P). There was a general agreement amongst the parents that their children needed to self-advocate:

E: I didn’t help [my child] with the questions. I said it had to come from her why she wanted to go. I wasn’t going! Because she’d actually answered that herself she was quite proud that she’d made it.

D: It was the same with [my child]. She had to do it herself - she wanted to go so she had to put the legwork in and do it because Mum and Dad couldn’t
do it for her. I’d said, “Well I haven’t even been overseas” - so I couldn’t help her anyway. (T7.J.P)

These parents acknowledged that having empowered their children to advocate for themselves had resulted in a sense of personal achievement when they were successful. The school leaders expressed their desire to give opportunities to young people who wanted to broaden their experiences. This reflects the intent of educational authorities (e.g., DfES, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2009) to encourage all young people to experience the world beyond the classroom for learning and personal development, irrespective of their ability or circumstances. However, school leaders argued that although an inclusive approach to selection was important, young people needed to display the ‘right attitude’, particularly when taking into account the temporal and spatial aspects of an international trip and the impact on those they were travelling with. That is not to say, however, that a travelling group needed to be comprised solely of a homogenous group of ‘model’ young people:

C: I think their trustworthiness and we do look a wee bit at their record over time. But more looking at the student where they’re at now, and how the trip would benefit that student and how they can grow and learn from it.

B: There might have been a student who might have done a few silly things when they were younger, but if they’ve shown they’ve grown, and in their application they’re talking about the different things that they think they’d benefit from it. We always also consult with the different teachers. “How did they think the girls would be to go on the trip too?” So they’ve got a bit of input and that really gives us some really great insights as to the whole student…

C: There’s always a mix of [year] levels so I’d say it’s never a predictable or homogenous group.

B: They come from a whole raft of different places and experiences.

C: And different homes as well. (T4.J.SL)

Even with the process that included senior students to influence the selection, school leaders held the power to decide which young people participated in an international trip. Ultimately, those leading the trip have to “feel comfortable” with whom they are taking away and that “they can rely on those girls and feel that they will respond, or else it is not worth it” (T4.J.SL). Sound judgment and the confidence to say no are two of the competencies expected by trip leaders (Ministry of Education, 2009). If they felt that a participant might present a risk that might not be able to be managed within the supervision structure of a trip, they reserved the right to exclude that participant. For example:

B: … one student who applied - we thought it would be a great opportunity for her, but she was not good at listening to instructions. I had a wee bit of a
provisional contract and said “Listen, we need to see you displaying this behaviour - paying attention in your classes, listening to instructions and acting upon them.” Her behaviour didn’t change, and therefore I said I could not take her. I didn’t feel that I could trust that she would meet us when we said. It was hard, but she knew she hadn’t changed and she knew what she had to do, and didn’t.

C: ... I remember [young person] not wanting to eat the sort of foods that she’d be exposed to and being a bit ‘blanket’ about it. So we had an interview with her family and we just went through what would need to happen. She decided she would give it a go, and she did. Full credit to her how she came through! (T4.J.SL)

This illustrated a level of transparency in the way feedback is given to young people who may be borderline selections. School leaders transferred agency to them to ‘step up’, with clear statements about the shift in attitude or behaviour that needed to be evident if they wanted to be selected. Parents also expressed their interpretation of the attitudes and behaviours needed by young people who wanted to be part of a travelling group on the trip to China:

I think they said initially at the start as long as the student didn’t misbehave. . . . if he was constantly being pulled up for bunking [missing class] or stuff like that they might have had to make some changes, but none of the students that chose to go [misbehaved before the trip]…(T10.C.P)

Meeting the financial cost of the trip presented a significant hurdle in earning the right to participate in a trip. One school principal that had been a representative on the executive committee of the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ) for some years stated that some schools, her own included, advertised their schedule of international school trips three years in advance and had compiled a list of ‘school-approved’ fundraising activities (personal communication, 2010). This forewarned young people and their parents of opportunities to fundraise and intended to reduce the financial barrier by suggesting ways in which they could plan to meet the costs through fundraising. Each school involved in this research expected young people to undertake fundraising activities. The extent to which they were a compulsory school-led group activity or independently arranged by the young people and their parents varied. Irrespective of how supportive parents were to have their child participate in a trip, most were very clear about the commitment they expected from their child to earn a portion of the total cost of the trip.

Some school leader participants indicated that parents had occasionally interpreted their children’s fundraising effort as a justification for them to influence the structure of the trip,
which in turn led to tension between the school leader and group of parents. He commented about how he exerted his authority to resolve the matter:

Early on we had some parents who thought that the boys were doing a lot of the fundraising themselves so they [parents] thought they should have more input to what they are doing on the trip. I pretty much knocked that on the head in the second meeting. I called [the Principal] along . . . probably two or three of the parents who thought that it should be a more social thing were told it was a school trip and it was for rugby development . . . (T22.B&GC.SL)

Although the rhetoric (e.g., Van Beynen, 2013; Woods, 2004; Young & Carville, 2013a, 2013b) suggested that overseas trips engage those who can afford it, a somewhat different picture emerged in this research. Instead, parents who were not in a position to pay the full cost of the trip capitalised on their child’s desire to go on the trip by negotiating an arrangement:

I was fully supportive and as a single parent, I said to [my child] “I will fully support you, but there is going to be a lot of fundraising.” I told her I would support her right through it but any fundraising she had to work alongside me, and I would always be there for her. We both agreed and we did any fundraising that came up. (T10.C.P)

Parents commented that at times it was tiresome ‘staying firm’ to the agreement they had negotiated with their children about the shared responsibility to meet the trip costs. Even parents who may have been able to afford to pay for the trip stressed that it was important to reinforce the optional nature of the trip and that participation was a privilege. This was perceived as a way to reinforce values they thought were important such as goal setting, organisation and following through with a commitment. It also allowed them to resist giving in to their child’s pester power:

…I said [to my child], “It was an agreement - you have to come up with it [the money she agreed to earn]”, and I get really angry because we have a child that just wants to go “I don’t want to save my money” and I said, “Well, that’s not right. You make a commitment and you have to carry through with it.” She doesn’t like putting any of her money into it. I’ve probably been quite strict. My husband said “Oh don’t be like that” but I thought, “No, that’s life. You make a decision, and there are some families and some children that can’t [afford to] go. So you don’t get it all handed on a plate”. (T7.J.P)

The value of effort was further reinforced by some parents, who perceived that a big fundraising effort gave the young people a “personal stake” in its success (T18.G.P), “Our kids sweated blood” (T10.C.P). As time came closer to departure, even young people who may have “dragged the chain in their effort can see the finish line and are determined to have a great experience because they have earned it” (T21.B&GC.P). This echoed the sentiments
from Lumkes Jr et al.’s (2012) findings which found the students who had made a personal investment in paying for their study abroad course gained more meaning from their experiences.

Additionally, parents were quick to point out the broader benefits of their child earning a portion of the cost of his or her trip, such as finding a job and gaining independence. The following quote was reflective of many: “She’s actually gone out and got a job and saved some money . . . and it’s also given her confidence” (T7.J.P).

A young person’s participation in an international school trip depended on agreement with parents about how the costs of the trip and other associated costs, such as spending money, would be met. Few, if any young people had independently raised the money solely through their individual effort. This reinforced Carr (2011) and Jenks’ (2005) arguments that children and young people in Western societies generally have limited access to significant funds of their own, and even when they do, “access to it is still often controlled by parents” (Carr, 2011: 43). Therefore, parents can and did exert power over their children in the way they negotiated how the cost of a trip will be met. One young person, who acknowledged the power his parents held as to whether his efforts measured up, illustrated this:

> There is a lot of arse-kissing too. You had to stay on your parents’ good side, otherwise they could always pull out “I’m paying for you to go to France so you can stay in line and do your chores all the time.” (T12.F.YP)

Until now, this section has represented the dominance of adult voices, which expressed the view that participation in an international school trip had to be earned, rather than it being a right. Moreover, effort was valued as a way to teach or reinforce values. Typically, young people were not motivated by what they might learn from the effort required to raise funds for their trip. Some young people mentioned the inconvenience of the effort required in order to participate, especially in relation to their social life:

> It’s been kind of depressing because the last few times I have had to say, “No, I can’t go to town. I’ve got to save my money because I’m not even halfway to my spending money yet.” (T5.J.YPg)

However, on reflection, they acknowledged that there might be benefits such as learning to save and understand the value of the money earned through their part time employment:

> F: … now we've had motivation to save [for a trip], instead of just earning money to spend.

> I: I think when you actually earn the money you tend to want to save it more, because you know how hard you've worked for it. When you get handouts
you don't know how hard someone's really worked to get that money.
(T15.S.YP)

The quotation suggests that for those young people who were employed or had gained employment in part-time jobs, parents had exerted their power to expect at least a portion of the money earned was to be allocated to the trip cost. Although regular part time employment is common amongst young people, a motivation for them to undertake this employment is typically to use it for their own discretionary use. O’Neill (2010) reported that more that half of the 16 and 17 year olds in New Zealand participate in regular part-time employment. Most were motivated to work to earn money, which was typically used for spending on extra items for their personal use. A smaller proportion saved for study-related reasons, and even fewer earned money to support their families. The significant cost to participate in an international school trip might have been the first time some young people had to save for an education-related activity rather than for their own personal use. Earning their own money allowed them to take part in an activity with their peers, which, if they had not earned it might have created a social divider if they had had to forgo the trip (Gasson & Calder, 2013).

Young people were aware that they each had different family and financial situations. Despite this, individuals had to deal with their own situations:

You’ve just got to concentrate on saving your own money, and also my Dad’s at Police College now, so my Mum’s doing the single parent thing with four kids. So I’ve got to be able to figure everything out as to what I’m going to do and when I’m going to do it. (T5.J.YP)

As Nairn et al. (2012: 18) noted, material resources are unevenly distributed, and “young people are frequently required to reconsider and renegotiate their plans as they come face to face with setbacks, disappointments and constraints.” In the case of the young person above, she was aware that she had to deal with her own situation. If she wanted to participate in the trip she had to exert her own agency to meet the commitment she had made with her parents. School leaders also noted the effort some parents made to create opportunities for their children:

I hadn’t realised the support from the parents and how they were totally dedicated to getting their kids over there. What struck me is that the kids that I took generally were not particularly wealthy. They were from very average families who had quite a lot of hardships on the way, and the parents have just busted their guts for these kids to go and get an experience that they’ve never had themselves. One kid, she’s got three brothers, nobody in the family had ever been overseas before. This trip was a huge deal for this family. (T11.F.SL)
This reflects the sentiment made by many school leaders that participants in an international school trip came from a wide range of family backgrounds with differing material resources. For some, these experiences enabled their children to have experiences they had not yet been able to engage in themselves (Clark, 2005). Through the time and energy spent to support and facilitate their child’s educational experiences (Allat, 1993), some parents were shaping and reproducing advantage across generations. For others, this was used as a way to build their social capital and gain social advancement for their children (Clark, 2005; Nairn et al., 2012).

8.3.2 Sociality and group dynamics
The motivation for a shared group experience was discussed in section 8.2. In particular, the school-led group nature was perceived to offer a supportive and supervised experience where the temporal and spatial dimensions removed young people from the physical presence of their parents for an extended period. Therefore, sociality and the ability to travel and live together over an extended period, “all day, everyday, 24/7” (T12.F.YP) was perceived as a core element of an international school trip. A parent stated pragmatically that, “they were all together for ten days in fairly close, cramped quarters. That meant they just had to get on. There was no room for histrionics” (T2.V.P). However, parents recognised that their children “haven’t got Mum and Dad” or “the family network to fall back on” (T7.J.P). Therefore, they placed their trust in school leaders to facilitate a harmonious group experience.

One school leader commented that the young people on the trip “are a great bunch of kids, and I certainly wouldn’t have gone into it if I hadn’t known that” (T11.F.SL). This suggested that the social nature of travelling with a group is a similar motive for school leaders as it is for young people, especially when they enjoy the company of those in the group (Larsen & Jenssen, 2004). However, they acknowledged that the experience itself is a dynamic one. They recognised that the way young people are at school does not necessarily reflect how they might be when they are away from home and overseas for an extended period:

We know them in class, but you don’t know what they are like away from the classroom. . . . Yeah, kids are different when you get into different situations. (T14.B,GC&S.SL)

Hence, school leaders advocated for “building your team as you go” (T8.C.SL). As teachers, they stood by their knowledge of and ability to work with a diverse range of young people. As such, they felt they were equipped with strategies to assist them to develop their social and
group skills. The following examples illustrate the inter-relationships between school leaders and young people on the trip to China, firstly in the voice of school leaders:

… they are adolescents, aren’t they? It’s all about “I, me, my” a lot of the time. One minute they’re great and the next minute they don’t want to know you, and there’s a whole lot of volatility. Then you get on the other side of the world with a different culture and there are people everywhere. You don’t really know them. Once you get away like that you get a chance to get to know each other. This is part of the richness of it – and things do happen. The kids work their way through it and you don’t over react. (T8.C.SL)

Dynamics exist within any group and conflict is part of any group as noted by this school leader: “I don’t think conflict is a bad thing - it means that everybody’s got an opinion and they’re being heard. Even on the journey we had conflict but we still resolved it” (T8.C.SL).

This highlights that all members of a group are active social actors and they expressed their views. Where conflict emerged, it was important that it was worked through and resolved. In turn, this was perceived to lead on to constructive relationships, which endured well beyond the trip:

F: We had a couple of restorative conferences … when we see each other now we know each other, and we’ve built really strong relationships with the students. We’re a bit like family really, aren’t we?

C: From the trip two years ago, when we’re out on the town and see the kids from that trip they always stop and come over and have a chat. There’s a hell of a relationship that’s actually built up. (T8.C.SL)

The young people who had returned from their trip to China reinforced the points made by school leaders that “the group thing really started as soon as we got on the plane. That’s when we were really united and became real close” (T9.C.YP). However, they were, at times, frustrated by peers who were “drama queens” or started “stupid arguments” (T9.C.YP). A peer who they considered to be “antisocial towards everyone” stretched their patience, even though they recognised he had a disability and therefore a “reason for it” (T9.C.YP). As one said: “You need to have a certain maturity to be able to go overseas”. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that “having time to ourselves and just doing things to get away from everyone and have our breaks” helped “take our minds off it” (T9.C.YP). At other times, the teachers facilitated a “group get together to sort out these problems, and evaluated how we thought we were doing etc. That was good for me” (T8.C.YP).

Overall, the following point summed up the perspectives of the majority of young people who had returned from their overseas trip: “When you’re with a whole group for nearly a month,
there’s bound to be some sort of conflicts around, but I didn’t expect such great bonds with everyone and stuff” (T9.C.YP).

The extended nature of a trip overseas compels those on the travelling group to manage their relationships with others in order to develop a functioning group.

It was not just the school leaders who got to know the ‘real’ young person once away from the classroom or school environment. Young people similarly stated that their impressions of the accompanying school leaders shifted as a result of their shared trip experiences. As some were anticipating their trip to Japan, they speculated about how their school principal might replicate her authority in Japan:

   D: She’s going to be so on to us about uniforms and things.
   E: Yeah. We won’t be able to wear our multiple sets of earrings and necklaces and rings.
   C: I reckon she’ll be quite relaxed [everyone talking at once]
   D: We’re going to have to be on our best behaviour the whole time.
   E: I know, it’s just added pressure knowing she’ll be there.
   C: In front of the host school she might be, but I think the last week [when just our group] she’ll be quite cruisy.
   B: Yeah, because we won’t be in our uniform then. (T5.J.YPg)

In this dialogue they based their perceptions on their observations and experiences of the principal at school. As an authority figure, they wondered how her authority might influence their own experience and enjoyment. They speculated that her focus would replicate what they observed at school, that the standard of uniform and behaviour must convey a positive image of the school. Following their experience at the host school where these things would be noticed, young people perceived that the principal might relax and enjoy the experience and as a result so might they.

Young people and their parents acknowledged that an international school trip had enabled a relaxed environment and more informal inter-relationships between the adult and young people who travelled together (Lai, 1999; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Zink, 2004). In particular, they commented that they had learned more about, and gained respect for, their school leaders, as this parent stated following her child’s return from a trip to China:

   …she understands the big responsibility teachers have, how they give up their own time … over and above…. When they were there at night, the different teachers were quite willing to go out with them so that they could even have some
more fun time that wasn’t actually on the agenda. She said, “They were tired Mum, but they still went out with us and were willing to give up their time.” (T10.C.P)

Similarly, parents of boys who went on a rugby trip acknowledged that the boys had “given more respect to their coach” [a teacher] because he had offered the trip. This “was more than other teachers have done for them [the team]” (T21.B&GC.P). Furthermore, the parents perceived that the school leaders were role models for their sport, “the boys can see that people are truly passionate, they are not just talking the talk, they are actually doing the stuff” (T21.B&GC.P). The time away in the presence of each other as a group also allowed young people to “see them as real people … because they got to know them better” (T10.C.P). In particular, “getting the right teacher is really important” to create the tone and experience that young people perceive as positive, and this required having the balance “of authority and respect” (T9.C.YP). In this light, the construction of ‘good teachers’ was based on elements that reflect the construct of ‘good parents.’ This is illustrated in the way the teachers set aside their own desires and made sacrifices so that young people could have their desires and interests met (Irvine, 2006), and through doing what they can do to aid the development of the young people (Carr, 2011; Shaw, Havitz & Delemere, 2008).

It was not only the young people who were challenged as they managed themselves and their relationships with others during their trip. Tension and conflict also arose at times between the adult members of the group. Several parents recounted incidents in which their children had used their agency to support a school leader who appeared to be vulnerable or not coping with a situation. A parent reported a situation where another accompanying adult had inappropriately confronted a school leader:

... one of the adults had abruptly brought up something in front of all the students. [My child] said she and the other students were really uncomfortable about it and it wasn’t fair. She said to me “That’s adults, Mum, they should know better than to say it in front of students, but also say it to someone who is an authority figure to us. That shouldn’t have happened. We felt so sorry for her. Later, a group of us went to see her to see if she was alright”. I thought it was really good that they had obviously thought about what was right and wrong, even with adults, and did something about it.” (T10.C.P)

This illustrates that group members used their agency to resolve conflict and support each other and that in turn enabled them to form an alternative person-supporting network to that of their families (Dumon, 1997). The national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b) states that opportunities to develop competencies, such as managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing occur in social contexts. An international trip challenged group
members to interact with others in a more sustained social context than they might encounter through regular school experiences. Through this, it is suggested that some young people had learned “when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently” (Ministry of Education, 2007b: 12). Some adults observed that young people had gained confidence in their competencies upon their return. Some commented on their immediate impressions, “she is more confident but I am not sure she is more mature” (T10.C.P). Others argued that real change occurred over time, “It is not always what shows immediately” (T21.B&GC.SL). Further research is required to gain a deeper understanding of the long-term personal and social development changes that follow an international school trip. Through their interpersonal relationships with school leaders and peers, young people had developed an appreciation of the opportunities their school offered and for the school leaders who made them possible.

8.4 Building school communities and networks

The final organising theme, Building school communities and networks in this thematic network Relationships and responsibilities (Figure 8.4) focuses on the justification for international school trips as a vehicle through which the school itself might benefit. The adult voice dominated this organising theme, in the way that they acknowledged how an international school trip could enhance its relationship, profile and networks within the immediate school and local community. School leaders have responsibilities to other educational stakeholders such as educational authorities that establish learning priorities. In this regard, an international school trip was perceived by school leaders as one way to achieve internationalisation strategies. Two basic themes constitute this organising theme; School-community profile and Internationalisation objectives.
8.4.1 School-community profile

The perceptions of all participants that an international school trip offered young people enriched contextualised learning opportunities have been discussed previously. School leaders commented that they often received messages from parents that expressed gratitude for the experience and how it had impacted on their children. As one said:

… I had quite a lot of parents who told me afterwards “Wow, my kid’s really growing up.” One was quite impressed because before we went, she said, “My son finally got himself together. He got a job in order that he’d have pocket money. He is focused because he knows he needs to save money”, so she was “Thank you, thank you” which I found quite interesting. (T1.G.SL)

Similarly:

We’ve had lovely cards and stuff about how grateful they’ve been for their kid’s experience. I think they’re surprised at the tolerance of their own children when they’re away and how well they’ve coped, that comes across. They’re always staggered at how close they’ve become … at how much the kids saw and did and experienced in such a short amount of time. It’s always been quite overwhelmingly, yeah, they’re really grateful about the whole experience. (T4.J.SL)

At a personal level, school leaders acknowledged that these messages made the effort seem worthwhile: “I was exhausted at the end – it took months of my energy to organise but it was
such a buzz. I knew it was an absolute highlight for the kids” (T11.F.SL). Moreover, the effectiveness of word-of-mouth communication amongst young people and their parents in the local community was perceived as a powerful way to assist in profiling the school. In some cases, these experiences reinforced the sense of pride associated with attending a ‘privileged’ school, as a parent illustrated:

B: …He’s always absolutely loved the school and everything it offers. But he not only loves the school, but he now understands what it can offer in terms of service.

C: Yeah, they were incredibly proud to be from [school name] over there. I mean you saw the photos, half the time they were in their [school logo] singlets and t-shirts.  (T2.V.P)

These parents perceived that such experiences reinforced the privilege that their children enjoyed as members of a private school. Moreover, they perceived that schools in less wealthy communities would be unlikely to offer young people such opportunities:

I mean, a school like ours could afford to do this, but could a school like [a less wealthy school in the city] afford to send kids to Vanuatu? Maybe, but only with lots of fundraising.  (T2.V.P)

In reality, one of these ‘schools on the other side of town’ offered international school trips and had participated in this research. Parents of young people who had participated in the trip to China reinforced the public perception that schools that were located in less wealthy communities were unlikely to offer these opportunities to their students:

C: . . . when I say, “She’s been to China” they [people in the community] say “Oh” [enthusiastically], and it gives the school ‘good press’. They think this school must struggle with its [low] socio-economic [catchment of students], so it’s just a win-win situation to increase its profile in the community.

B: The school’s in the area that is certainly not seen as being one of your high-flying schools in the city.

D: Yeah, the opportunity is there for anybody. I mean I’m a single income parent. I’m on the benefit at the moment, and we still managed to get her there. You know? It’s there for anybody. … I think [our school] gives a lot of opportunities to the kids, and it’s accessible to anybody. (T10.C.P)

The dialogue illustrates a tension amongst parents that related to the perception that schools in wealthier (higher decile) communities were better because they offered experiences, such as international school trips, that schools in less wealthy (lower decile) communities could not afford. An active debate exists in New Zealand communities around the (mis)perceptions that high decile equates to high performing, better quality and better opportunities. In contrast, low decile are (mis)perceived to equate to underperforming, less quality and fewer opportunities
(Adams & Codd, 2005; University of Auckland, 2011). Parent participants stated that young people, along with their parents, can have pride in their school irrespective of their decile label, a point supported by educational leaders (University of Auckland, 2011). An important factor for the single income parent in the previous quote is that the school has offered her child an opportunity for educational and social advancement through her educational experiences (O’Neill & Nash, 2005). A school leader reinforced this:

… our [school’s] parents can’t afford it, being a low decile school. But they can’t afford to go themselves, yet they still want to get their children there, and they’re quite lucky really because they want their kids to experience what they haven’t. And they send them off. And there’s no way that they could afford for two [in the family] to go. (T8.C.SL)

In contrast, participation in an international school trip was one way in which ‘the right’ social and cultural capital were reproduced in a wealthier school community (Bourdieu, 1984; O’Neill & Nash, 2005). Following an international school trip, the parents indicated how they advocated for the school and what it had offered their children as a way to counteract what they perceived as unjustified perceptions within the local community. This was summed up by a parent:

It is a good thing for the school as well as parents to say, “Hey look, we have teams that go overseas and we do this even though we don’t have a lot of money … and we can still manage to do this”. (T21.B&GC.P)

Therefore, the word-of-mouth message conveyed by young people and their parents was perceived by adults to be an effective way to positively adjust or reinforce the position of a school within its community.

The media discourse associated with international school trips in New Zealand focused on the competition between schools “to keep up with the fantastic programme offered . . . down the road” (van Beynen, 2013: C11), and the ways in which they are used as a “great marketing exercise” (Young & Carville, 2013b: 1). It is a careful line that school leaders need to navigate so that they create opportunities for their young people that enable their educational advancement, and for some young people, social advancement. Irrespective of the communities in which these schools were located, there were young people who do not participate, through their own or their parents’ choice, or decisions made by school leaders. This suggested why some school leaders expressed their need to “tread carefully” (T11.F.SL) in regard to these experiences, to alleviate issues relating to exclusion from a trip, or the impact on other teachers and their classes “because you’re taking kids out of other people’s classes” (T11.F.SL).
8.4.2 Internationalisation objectives

Although school leaders did not refer to the term internationalisation, they nonetheless articulated ways in which an international school trip could achieve internationalisation objectives (e.g., Ministry of Education, 2007a; 2007b; 2014). Previous discussions have illustrated how these experiences are perceived to enhance global knowledge and cultural awareness (see Chapters Six and Seven, sections 6.2, 6.3 and 7.2), linguistic skills (see Chapter Seven, section 7.4.1), and strengthen young people’s own identity as New Zealanders (see Chapter Six, section 6.3.3). Throughout these discussion chapters, the emphasis has focused on the perceived benefits of an international school trip for young people and for the school. The professional benefits for teachers was also briefly discussed in Chapter Seven (section 7.4.1). Some school leaders recognised that teachers could also benefit from these experiences and enrich internationalisation perspectives within their own classroom practice:

We have an application process, and so staff members write a letter of application as to why they would like to go, and what they can see as the benefits for them as a person, and also for maybe their teaching. They need to state how they can use that information to help or enlighten their students. (T1J.SL)

The deliberate action of school leaders to establish relationships with schools in other countries allowed space for anticipated learning to occur. As noted in Chapters Six and Seven (see sections 6.3.4, 7.2.1) these relationships ranged from ‘one-off” interactions through to formalised reciprocal agreements. The reciprocal exchange relationship between a participating New Zealand school and a school in Japan illustrated an established strategy that enabled cultural exchange “where we visit probably every two years and they also reciprocate” (T4.J.SL). School leaders stressed that the strength of the relationship rested in the links between the schools and their supporting communities: “it’s about us as a community linking to another community, and that’s become really really strong” (T4.J.SL). Hence, the relationship described by school leaders as “the whole works” (T4.J.SL) engaged young people, their families and staff from both schools as well as members of the wider community. A formal signed agreement includes cultural outcomes and “some sort of interchange with the kids intellectually” (T4.J.SL). These objectives may differ for each school, and a school leader noted that the Japanese are:

… very focused when they come here - they want English lessons. They want to see that when their [students] leave they’ve actually been doing something because they have an entry test and an exit test and get the certificate to show that they’ve made progress. So they’ve got that academic purpose behind their trip - improving their English. (T4.J.SL)
A greater number of young people from Japan travel to New Zealand for the cultural trip and they do so on an annual basis. In comparison, fewer young people from New Zealand travel on the biannual trip to Japan for the reciprocal experience. School leaders explained that this is due to the value Japanese people place on advancing oneself through international experiences:

…they will send about 27-30 people very easily, whereas we tend to have fewer [students] going back. I suppose it’s just a difference in culture because in Japan their parents will pay everything for them to go. That’s really important. Here, for families it is ‘an extra’ and the kids will fundraise to get there, whereas in Japan it’s seen as advantage to you to go and have that experience. It’s seen as the way to advance yourself. (T4.J.SL)

This reciprocal arrangement acknowledged and accommodated the different objectives sought by Japanese school groups and those sought by its New Zealand counterparts. This in itself acknowledged the cultural differences in the priorities placed on international experiences within young people’s schooling. Ritchie, et al. (2003:141) noted, “the desire of [Japanese] parents to provide their offspring with the best possible educational opportunities.” They added that the strength of this desire is such that even in times of economic recession, Japanese parents will prioritise these international school experiences and alter the household budget to make funds available for their child to participate. Although a different picture has been illustrated for young New Zealanders, one that is based on voluntary participation, the normalisation of these experiences might increasingly pressurise parents to similarly make sacrifices in other areas of their household budgets to allow their children to participate. Some might perceive that this is already evident.

8.5 Chapter summary

Through an examination of the three contributory organising themes, the global theme of relationships and responsibilities has been described and discussed in this chapter. It found that the agency of and inter-relationships between, each stakeholder group consequently enabled personal and social learning to take place through international school trips. Before the trips took place, a variety of expectations and responsibilities were placed on and negotiated between stakeholders in order to allow young people to earn their right to participate in these trips.
Young people and their parents were influenced to participate in an international school trip by endorsements from those associated with previous trips, the quality of the relationships between young people and school leaders, and the competencies exhibited by school leaders. Although a peer-focused group experience was an important motivation for young people, along with their parents they assigned responsibility to the accompanying school leaders to supervise and guide their learning.

The international school trip offered an insight into the changing parent-child dynamic during adolescence. These trips offered young people an opportunity to expand their peer network and increase their independence from parents as part of their identity formation. As such, the travelling group that was comprised of peers and school leaders formed an alternative person-supporting network to the family during the trip.

Throughout a trip, the inter-relationships between school leaders and young people were dynamic. As school leaders developed their trust in young people and young people developed their confidence, the power dynamic appeared to shift. Young people interpreted this as an acknowledgement of the trust assigned to them to afford them greater freedom and independence. School leaders came at it from a different perspective, and argued they gauged young people’s readiness for greater responsibility through which they would learn.

The adult voice dominated the final section that suggested that the justification for international school trips were a result of the perceived learning benefits from this type of travel. Moreover, these experiences were perceived to assist schools achieve internationalisation strategies, and were one way for schools to position themselves positively within the community.
CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION
9.1 Introducing the chapter

Overall, this thesis has considered school-led tourism and more specifically, international school trips from a multiple stakeholder perspective. It has been concerned with examining the justifications, motivations and experiences of those associated with international school trips. The multiple stakeholder perspective was sought because each stakeholder group was positioned as an active agent capable of exerting some degree of influence and control over their own participation or the participation of others in an international school trip.

This final chapter focuses on the contributions of the thesis to the wider academic literature. It begins by addressing the ways in which the research aim and objective were met and leads to a discussion of the most significant findings and insights. It concludes by considering some areas for future research that might further extend the issues that have arisen through this thesis.

9.2 Revisiting the research aim and objective

The research aim and objective were stated in Chapter One and are re-visited here. The aim that framed the research explored the justifications, motivations and experiences of stakeholders (young people, their parents and school leaders) associated with international school trips. In their responses, the key drivers for stakeholders to participate in or support the participation of others in an international school trip were illustrated and discussed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. These revealed similarities between the motivations for school-led (international) trips and the broader tourism phenomenon.

The desire to experience difference was a widely expressed motivation and aligns with wider tourism literature (e.g., Cohen, 1972; Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001). Through an international travel experience young people sought to escape their familiar, everyday routines, expand their horizons and gain fresh perspectives through new and unfamiliar experiences embedded in the (different) localities in which they were experienced (Richards & Wilson, 2006). All participants positively viewed destinations that were different to young people’s lives at home. As they anticipated and encountered difference, the young people expressed feelings of anxiety, excitement and challenge about how they might and did adapt to and cope with new and unfamiliar experiences. Through these experiences, the adults in
particular argued that young people would gain the opportunity to reflect on the familiarity of ‘home’ through a lens of difference and concurrently broaden their global-mindedness. However, this was not always the case, for instance the groups that travelled to Australia for sports trips sought difference in their experience but not necessarily in a destination. For these participants, the difference in these trips lay in the opportunities for competition-based experiences with unfamiliar opposition, and in the opportunities that fostered sociality together as a group over an extended time.

The group nature of an international school trip was a motivation, justification and important part of the overall experience for all stakeholder groups. The importance of relationships and the social nature of these experiences was consistently emphasised. Young people stressed the importance of a peer experience and sociality as a motive to participate in these trips, and this was similarly reported in their reflections of the experience. Parents and young people referred to the skills of accompanying school leaders to build and manage relationships in ways that contribute to a positive and supported group experience. Not only were accompanying school leaders expected to manage group safety and the learning experiences, as individuals they were also expected to be a ‘good person’ who fosters sociality and fun, nurtures and guides, while at the same time manages conflict or tension amongst group members. School leaders recognised sociality as a motivation and a pedagogical process through which they structured formalised and free choice learning opportunities. These opportunities were perceived to allow young people to develop their ability to manage themselves and their relationships with others, and to co-construct meaning from their experiences as a social learning process. This research has extended the arguments of researchers such as Larsen and Jenssen (2004) and Zink (2004) that the social experience is an important aspect of school-led tourism experiences for all stakeholders. It has added fresh insights into how individual agency, group composition and dynamics influence the relationships between and amongst the travelling and non-travelling group members engaged in international school trips. In highlighting these aspects, I have addressed some of the gaps emphasised by Schanzel et al (2012b) who argue that the group nature of many tourism experiences has, to date, been inadequately analysed.

Secondly, the objective sought to examine how learning is perceived and positioned within the international school trip experience. The findings corroborate the existing literature that learning is an integral part of these experiences (Carr, 2011; Ritchie et al, 2003, 2008). All stakeholder groups used learning, at least in part, to justify taking part in these experiences.
As a school-led experience, the power to approve and organise these trips can be seen to be held by the school, however without the ‘buy in’ and support of the young people and their parents these trips would not materialise. School leaders used their education-focused arguments to convince young people and their parents about the learning benefits young people would gain through these experiences. The nature of learning in and through international school trips was heavily influenced by the context in which they took place and the pedagogical approaches incorporated by the school leaders, who were seen to have overall control of the itineraries. Active learning experiences where young people are immersed in new and different cultural, physical and social environments were perceived by all stakeholders to be at the heart of learning in and through international school trips.

Specific destinations were perceived to be instrumental in allowing subject-based learning to come alive, such as experiencing important cultural or historical sites, or practising a foreign language while immersed in that language and culture. However, it was the way in which itineraries were structured and the deliberate actions of school leaders to scaffold experiences that influenced the active engagement and explicit reflection of young people in these experiences and their perceived level of autonomy. Pre-trip preparation allowed young people to develop awareness of cultural practices and strategies that would assist them as individuals and as a group to cope in different environments. In particular, it helped set them up to engage directly in experiences where they had to manage themselves away from the support of the travelling group, such as in host family situations (as discussed in Chapters Six and Seven).

Learning was strongly influenced by the temporal and spatial dimensions of the trips. In other words, the longer the time away and the further from home meant that young people had to learn to manage themselves away from the support and intervention of their parents and family network, and within a group dynamic with different adult-young person inter-relationships. Parents saw this separation as a good thing for their children to develop their independence and they helped prepare them with self-management strategies before they departed. Although school leaders were perceived to be caring and in some cases nurturing, they appeared to be less interventionist in their approach than parents, instead they supported and encouraged young people to be independent and take responsibility for their actions and consequences. It was clear that international school trips were viewed as a powerful way to develop important competencies (Ministry of Education, 2007b; 2009) or ‘soft skills’, in similar ways to other international travel experiences that have been reported by young travellers (Gmelch, 2004; Noy, 2004; Pearce & Foster, 2006).
The extended time away from the constraints and distractions of home, school and individual commitments were perceived to allow for a relaxed group environment and yet intense travel experience on international school trips. The optional nature of participation in these trips inferred that although trips might have a subject focus, they were not directly linked to specific assessments. This opened up the learning possibilities to incorporate more generic rather than prescribed outcomes and supports the arguments made by education and tourism researchers about the value of informal learning contexts and free-choice learning (e.g., Carr, 2011; Falk, 2005; Lai, 1999; Hohenstein & King, 2007). The potential for holistic, deep and reflexive learning through these trips is an important finding in this thesis. The individualised, anytime, anywhere nature of learning was often illustrated by participants. Individuals responded to the same experiences in different ways. Some reflected on their emotional response, whereas others reflected on the sensory or social nature of the experience, whilst others focused on the extent to which their current knowledge had been reinforced, extended or challenged. Through reflection in their own private thoughts, conversations with peers, school leaders or their parents, or through facilitated discussions, individuals had opportunities to construct meaning from their experiences.

Through the focus group interviews, it was evident that some young people had continued to learn from their international trip experiences well after their return home. They independently made connections between their trip experiences and new experiences they encountered and applied their learning to ‘do something’ with their knowledge in these situations. This was illustrated by the young people who had initiated the role of global prefects at their school following their return home, to better support international students and develop global understanding amongst their own school community (see Chapter Seven, section 7.2.3). The action-reflection experiences during and following trips encouraged some individuals to think more deeply and critically, and transfer the learning into new situations upon their return home (Henton, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Caution is needed however in making grand claims that learning gained through these experiences is sustained after the return home. While there were examples given of sustained learning and a belief especially amongst the adult participants that this would happen, it seemed that this relied on anecdotes rather than evidence. Potential opportunities to capitalise on the learning were lost or at least minimised so that non-participants would not feel excluded. Additionally, it appeared that limited adjustments had been made within some parent-child relationships and within schools’ to accommodate the changes within the young
people following their return. Although adults discussed their hope that young people would develop soft skills such as independence and self-direction, it seems that some young people quickly slipped back into pre-trip behaviours. In acknowledging the effort that goes into preparing young people for these experiences, by school leaders, parents and the young people themselves, I suggest that similar effort be paid to develop strategies to accommodate the ways in which these experiences have impacted on young people so that the benefits may be sustained (Beames, 2004).

9.3 Research insights and contributions

The first contribution of this thesis is through the methodological approach used. Understanding multiple stakeholder viewpoints is a novel approach to appraising and understanding international school trips. While there is a dearth of academic research specifically about international school trips, there has been some research into why school-led tourism exists and/or the nature of these experiences. This has focused on single stakeholder groups such as young people (e.g., Falk and Dierking, 1997; Zink, 2004) or young people and their teachers (e.g., Lai, 1999; Larsen and Jenssen, 2004); visitor attraction personnel (e.g., Peacock, 2006; Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003; 2008), or educational and school leaders (e.g., Zink and Boyes, 2005). Until now, the voice of parents has remained largely absent from the academic literature in relation to international school trips and school-led tourism in general. Although some insights into multiple stakeholder views about international school trips have been briefly considered in sporadic media reportage (e.g., Fox, 2011; van Beynen, 2013; Woods, 2004; Young & Carville, 2013a; 2013b), this thesis has added an academic analysis of the phenomenon. It has not only gained the multiple stakeholder views, but it has also integrated their views to consider the inter-relationships between them and to gain a ‘big picture’ understanding of the justifications, motivations and experiences of international school trips.

One of the most important findings is the evident overlap of perspectives between stakeholders. While each stakeholder group might have expressed things differently they often said similar things. They also often knew, understood and re-iterated in the focus group interviews the points made by other stakeholders in their own focus group interviews. Although each stakeholder group (and individuals within them) conveyed their own perspectives, there were frequent occurrences where school leaders and parents reported what
the young people had also said. There were also instances where school leaders reported what parents had said and vice versa, and young people reported similar understandings of parent or school leaders’ perspectives. It became apparent that there were relationships and formal and informal interaction between and within stakeholder groups in relation to these trips.

Some insights were gained into the nature of the relationships between stakeholders that would not have been evident without a multiple stakeholder perspective. As an example, the inclusion of parents’ perspectives revealed their aspirations for their children in the way they supported their children’s participation in these trips and the extent to which many of them make sacrifices in order that the young people may participate. Together, their aspirations and sacrifices reinforced their construction as ‘good parents’. Moreover, insights were gained into the ways in which some parents actively manage their children’s lives and assisted them to prepare to manage themselves during an extended time away from home. Some parents also expressed their own vulnerability as they ‘let go’ of their children so that they could participate in these trips. The temporal and spatial dimensions of these trips highlighted their own feelings of anxiety and separation, and conveyed their sense that this was a window to their children’s more independent future lives and their own future status as ‘empty nesters’.

The multiple stakeholder perspective also allowed for an insight into the ways in which each stakeholder group influenced the international school trip experience at the individual or group level. The extended time away, faraway distances travelled and the associated cost of these trips meant that they were conveyed to parents and young people as optional, and thus participated in voluntarily. Several school leaders stated that they sought to make these trips inclusive of young people from a range of backgrounds, a view that was reinforced by some parents. This generally led to active negotiation and re-negotiation between young people and their parents, young people and school leaders, and school leaders and parents about what was required to earn the right to participate in, and to sustain that commitment to these trips. There were many examples given by participants about the ‘pressures’ put on them within their individual relationships and collectively as groups to earn and retain the right to participate in these trips during the pre-trip phase. The explicitly optional nature of participation conveyed by school leaders to young people and their parents, and by parents to their children reinforced the hierarchy of power between stakeholders. This was illustrated through the ways in which parents and school leaders negotiated and reinforced the agreements made with the young people to raise funds, demonstrate the ‘right’ attitude and commitment in order to give consent, or gain and maintain selection in a travelling group. Within the parent-child
relationship, several parents argued for the constructive ways in which these negotiations had helped their children ‘step up’ and accept their assigned responsibility to get something that they wanted, and not rely on their parents to meet all of the costs. In doing so, parents also perceived that this was an important learning opportunity for their children that would be applied in their future lives.

The second contribution of this thesis explicitly links schools and tourism through the development of a nuanced understanding of the distinctive nature of international school trips. In Chapter One it was acknowledged that the diverse and broad school-led tourism phenomenon is poorly understood and researched. This was attributed to a lack of recognition by school and educational leaders that school groups are active participants in a tourism experience, and a poor understanding by the tourism industry of the market’s characteristics, significance and value, and the factors that constrain and enable its activity.

The findings illustrate the ways in which participants on an international school trip actively engage with, and learn in and through the tourism space. In some trips, the host-visitor interactions (of varying duration) arranged through school-to-school relationships enabled interaction between host-visitor peers. It was through the experiences of daily school and home life that young people gained cultural awareness along with an understanding of difference and being different. However, participants perceived that these everyday school or home-based interactions and experiences were more focused on learning and therefore not tourist experiences. This was particularly so when they contrasted these experiences with their other, more insular and touristic experiences. What they seemed not to recognise was that all of their experiences, home stays or tourist sites, involved (at least some) aspects of tourism. As has already been noted, participants in international school trips were similarly motivated to those engaging in other forms of tourism. For instance, they sought escape from the familiar taken-for-granted everyday routines and obligations of school and home to travel to destinations that allowed them to experience difference and encounter what they perceived as experientially unique involvement in those locations. Additionally, the social motive to travel away with others, particularly for young people to travel in a group with their peers accompanied by adults that are familiar to them but not their parents allowed them to develop a sense of their social self in the tourism experience.

As with many tourism experiences that include an overt learning component, learning is central to international school trips. This thesis has illustrated a detailed understanding of the
nature of learning within these experiences and in particular how it is closely related to the ways in which participants actively engage with the tourism space. Learning in and through international school trips is individualised and multifaceted, and influenced by temporal, spatial and social dimensions. The actions of school leaders were important to allow space within the structure of these trips to give individuals some autonomy and choice, and to foster direct active engagement in different contexts and activities. In turn, this opened possibilities for cognitive, emotional and aesthetic connections to be made through experiences in new, unfamiliar and different places. Moreover, the extended time away from home and the differences experienced in unfamiliar or faraway locations intensified the opportunities for social interaction and developing personal and social skills and capacities, such as self-management, confidence and communication.

This research goes beyond earlier work about school tourism by Carr (2011) and schools’ educational tourism by Ritchie et al (2003, 2008). Importantly, it recognises the contemporary context in which schooling exists, for instance, that of developments in curriculum, internationalisation agendas and a market model of schooling based on competition and school choice. It illustrates a different perspective to the way in which Ritchie (2003) positioned schools tourism (within which international school trips sit) as ‘education first’ rather than ‘tourism first’ in his segmentation model of educational tourism. Rather than simply grafting theories from other literature focused on tourism (such as backpacker or gap year tourism) or learning in informal contexts (such as museums, zoos and field trips), the inclusion of the voices of all who engaged with international school trips the research has added new understandings and depth to the school tourism literature.

The third contribution of this thesis is that the ‘sum-of-the-parts’, or the whole experience of an international school trip is important. It became clear that all participants perceived value in engaging with an international school trip. Importantly, the research has enhanced understandings of what rewarding international school trip experiences look like. Through experiences that were structured and unstructured; new, unfamiliar and different; and with different dynamics and interactions between adults and young people to that of parent-child relationships, young people were seen to be able to develop ‘soft skills’ and competencies that would assist them in their future lives. Although stakeholder groups expressed it differently, they argued that through these experiences young people would gain fresh perspectives, confidence and resilience. Parents ‘hoped’ for these changes, school leaders intuitively knew it would happen, and the young people tended to acknowledge it upon reflection. More
broadly, these trips were seen by some to add to the cultural capital of young people (Bourdieu, 1884), enhanced parents’ reputation as ‘good parents’ (Carr, 2011; Pryor, 2006), and helped to strengthen the relationships amongst stakeholder groups and profile a school positively within its community (Young & Carville, 2013a).

9.4 Future research directions

Several avenues of future research have arisen from this thesis. Firstly, an analysis of the longer-term impacts of international school trips should be undertaken. This thesis captured a snapshot of participants’ views either in the pre or post trip phase of their engagement in an international school trip. Given the espoused benefits of these experiences, especially expressed by adult participants regarding how they might positively influence young people’s futures, further research that examines whether there are longer-term benefits of these experiences that gain a more focused and nuanced understanding of the nature of these impacts, would extend the findings of this thesis. Future studies may include paying closer attention to whether the learning gained from these experiences has been sustained or influenced young people’s future pathways and if so, in what way (such as in further education, career choices, travel experiences or altruistic endeavours). This could include an exploration of the ways in which each stakeholder group accommodates the changes in young people, particularly the development of ‘soft skills’ to allow for those changes to be sustained and further extended.

Secondly, further research could be undertaken about the personal motivations and experiences of those who lead an international trip. Despite the same question schedule being used for all stakeholders in this research, there were arguably silences in the views expressed by school leaders. Young people spoke of their own personal motivations and parents also shared their motives to support their child’s participation. Almost without exception, school leaders framed their motives through the benefits to students learning, curriculum-related outcomes, wider school benefits or the reasons why they initiated the trip or selected the destination. There was never mention of personal motivations from the school leaders; in fact, the framing of the justifications for the trips through the school raised as many questions as the school leaders answered. To carry this further, young people often referred to how much their accompanying school leaders ‘loved’ the experience, ‘loved’ being with them, and ‘loved’ sharing the culture they were engaging with. Despite this, there appeared to be a
discrepancy between what might have been the school leaders hidden thoughts and motivations and the professional responses they thought they should give, as if it was not appropriate to share their actual motives. Hence, future research could focus on the personal motives of school leaders to engage in these experiences and to examine the influence of their own educational experiences, previous travel and work experiences.

Finally, the stakeholders who were engaged with an international school trip were the focus of this thesis. Irrespective of how they first responded to the opportunity to engage with the trip and the personal constraints they may have faced (such as meeting the cost of the trip), they had decided that the benefits outweighed the negatives. It is acknowledged that there would be parents, young people and school leaders who, for whatever reason, resisted engaging with these trips and so their voices were silent in this research. Consideration should be given in future research to those stakeholders who chose not to, or could not engage with these experiences in order to identify the constraints to their participation and to gain an insight about the extent to which their views compare and contrast with those who do participate.

In conclusion, in establishing the context for this thesis reference was made to one particular international school trip that had intrigued me. The ‘hockey trip’ from New Zealand to the United Kingdom was considered by those who participated as a raging success, despite the lack of improvement in the team’s performance in the following hockey season. It seemed that its success was due to the sum of its parts. A similar story emerged in this research where international school trips were perceived by participants to deliver diverse benefits. For the young people and school leaders who travelled away together, they repeatedly referred to the ‘whole experience’ rather than any one aspect in particular. The social experience, with peers and adults that were not their parents; the relevant, real and experiential learning; the collective identity as part of a school; and the experiences that pushed them outside their comfort zones and exhilaration of new, exciting experiences all contributed to their sense of a ‘great trip’. Whilst I have perhaps not found an ‘answer’ to my questioning of that particular hockey trip, the findings from this thesis illustrate the (continuing and growing) significance of international school-led trips, highlighting both the timeliness of this research and the need for more integrated research in and across the tourism and education literature.


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Appendix A: Letter to Principals

Dear Principal

I am writing to ask you to consider taking part in a research project I am carrying out to investigate the reasons why schools are undertaking school trips to international destinations if you have a group or groups of students at your school undertaking a trip overseas during 2009.

I am a Principal Lecturer in teacher education at the University of Otago College of Education, where I have been employed since 1998. I am currently the Head of Department, Curriculum Development and Teaching. Prior to 1998 I was a secondary school teacher for over 15 years and Head of Department in Physical Education, Outdoor Education and Health Education. I have an extensive background in Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) and am Course Coordinator for the EOTC course in our Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) qualification. I am currently undertaking a PhD supervised within the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago.

The purpose of the research is twofold – to investigate the key motivators to initiate, support and undertake an overseas school trip. I am particularly interested in exploring the relationship between learning, travel and selection of the destination; through the perspectives of school leaders, the parents/legal guardians, and the students involved. Secondly, this research will complete the thesis requirement for my PhD. The research will add to the body of literature about experiences outside the classroom, more specifically the links between learning, destination and travel through the perspectives of those involved in such trips. Along with forwarding a research report to participating schools, I also aim to publish an article in the journal set: Research Information for Teachers: NZCER Press.

With your approval I would like to carry out focus groups with three groups of “stakeholders” involved with the trip(s):

1. Those who initiate or give consent for the trip to go ahead (usually the Teacher-in-charge and the Principal respectively)
2. Those who give consent for individual students to participate (the parents or legal guardians)
3. Those for whom the trip is provided (the students).

I hope that you will support this research, and although I seek to recruit participants and hold these focus groups on your school premises, at times suitable for the school, the school will not be responsible for administering the research. Its feasibility however, will rely on a staff member being willing to act as a liaison person so that I may be advised of ways to contact prospective participants and arrange focus groups at a time suitable for the school.

I have attached an Information sheet about the research project to give further details about its purpose and methods.
This project has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee.

If you are willing to participate in this project, or would like to discuss it with me, please contact me or my supervisor, Dr Tara Duncan. I would be very grateful if you would consider my request favourably.

Yours faithfully,

Margie Campbell-Price
03 4794948
margie.campbell-price@otago.ac.nz

Dr Tara Duncan
03 4793486
tduncan@business.otago.ac.nz
Appendix B – Letter to Regional Chairperson

XXXXX
XXX, XXX, XXX Secondary Principals’ Council representative
XXXXX High School

Dear XXX

I am writing to seek your support in identifying secondary schools which may be willing to participate in a research project I am carrying out. The purpose of my research is to investigate the reasons why some secondary schools are undertaking trips to international destinations.

To carry out this project I need to identify secondary schools in or near Wellington who are undertaking one (or more) overseas trip(s), organised by the school with a group of students during 2009. I am seeking a total of eight schools, two from Wellington and two from each of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin to participate in the research.

I have contacted XXXXX, SPC secretary, and he has suggested that I approach you in the first instance as the local SPC representative. I hope that you can assist me by utilising the network of principals in your NZSPC zone to either inform me of schools that I could approach or to circulate an electronic letter from me to schools in or near Wellington (a copy of it follows this letter). I envisage that this could be achieved by either:

- Drawing on your knowledge of schools in your region who are undertaking one or more overseas trips in 2009. If you are aware of these schools (it doesn’t need to be all of them) and could forward me the school name, I could then make an approach directly to the principal.
- Circulating a letter to principals introducing the research project and a request for participants via your email circulation list.
- Mentioning this research project at an upcoming regional meeting.

Ideally I am aiming to have a range of schools participate in the research - should there be more than two schools in Wellington undertaking trips and willing to participate, I will base the selection on achieving a range of schools (co-educational/single sex, state/integrated/independent, and a range of deciles), and types of trips (e.g., curricular based, cultural, sporting, service).

20 Group – indicates a group of at least three students with an accompanying teacher. It does not include individual students travelling overseas for exchanges or students from the same school who may be part of another representative group (e.g., Provincial team or cultural group), unless the school is clearly part of the wider group.
This research has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. I have attached a letter for school principals to introduce the research and the kind of participation sought. I intend to carry out the bulk of the fieldwork during Term 2 but can extend it into Term 3 if necessary.

I would be very grateful if you could contact me by email or telephone to advise me whether you are able to assist and how, or to advise me of other means by which I could find out how to identify schools undertaking overseas trips in 2009. I am very happy to discuss this with you should you need further clarification.

Thank you very much in anticipation

Kind regards

Margie Campbell-Price
University of Otago College of Education
Phone 03 479 4948
margie.campbell-price@otago.ac.nz
Appendix C: Information for School Principals

SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain my research project and invite your school to participate in it. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether to participate or not. If you decide to participate it is much appreciated. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering this request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This research aims to find out why secondary schools are deciding to travel overseas for school trips. I would like to explore the key motivators to initiate, support and undertake an overseas school trip. I am particularly interested in exploring the relationship between learning, travel and selection of the destination; through the perspectives of school leaders/legal guardians, and the students involved.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

I would like to seek three types of participants from your school:

1. Those who are school leaders – including those who initiate and/or the leader the trip, and those who give approval for it to go ahead (usually this will mean the teacher-in-charge and the Principal respectively. It may also include a Board of Trustees member).

2. Those who give consent for individual students to participate in the school trip (parents or legal guardians).

3. The students who will be participating in the trip.

Those who are asked to participate will be involved in a trip travelling overseas that is organised by the school for a group of students during 2009.
What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, I will be seeking to facilitate three focus groups with each of the participant groups mentioned above (school leaders, parents/legal guardians, students). Each of these focus groups will address open-ended questions around the following themes – rationale and reasons for undertaking the trip, impacts of the trip, the level of support given for the trip, and selection and significance of the destination.

If your school is offering more than one trip overseas in 2009, there would be the opportunity for a second focus group with each of the parent/legal guardians and student groups. This would give further valuable insights.

The duration of each focus group would be between one and one and a half hours. I anticipate that the focus groups with students will be scheduled during the normal school day. I will be guided by you or a school liaison person as to the most suitable time for the focus groups with the school leaders and parents/legal guardians. If you are willing to involve your school in this project, I will discuss with you who should be the liaison person at your school if it is not you.

It is intended that each focus group will have 6-8 participants, although the School Leaders group may be less than that. To recruit participants for the focus groups the following process is intended:

1. School leaders group – I would be guided by you or the liaison person about who to send an information sheet and consent form to.

2. Parents/legal guardians group - all parents/legal guardians of students participating in the trip will be sent an information sheet and consent form inviting them to participate in the focus group. Of those who agree to participate, their names will then be drawn randomly out of a hat to select a maximum of eight participants.

3. Student participants – all students participating in the school trip will be sent an information sheet and consent form inviting them to participate. Of those who agree to participate, their names will be drawn randomly out of a hat to select a maximum of eight participants.

Through the information sheet inviting parents/legal guardians to participate in the research, they will be informed of my request to also seek student participants for a focus group. Included in their information sheet is a consent form – asking them to give consent for themselves to participate in the parents/legal guardian focus group, and to give consent for their son/daughter to participate in the student focus group.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage of any kind to yourself or your school.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself or your school of any kind.
What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?
The focus groups will be facilitated by the researcher and include open ended questions around four key themes. The semi-structured question format allows for some flexibility and development of ideas and concepts. The focus group question schedule has been reviewed by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee although the precise questions cannot be determined in advance. If the line of questioning develops in such a way that a participant/participants feel hesitant or uncomfortable, he/she will be reminded of their right to decline any particular question(s) and that he/she may withdraw from the project at any stage.

Data collected during the focus groups will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The researcher will also make field notes during and after each focus group to record key features of the focus group that may not be evident in the audio-tape (e.g., non-verbal cues). Should any assistance be sought to transcribe focus group recordings, the transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement before starting the work which states that he/she must not disclose any information he/she hears or sees in carrying out this task. The audio recordings will be returned to the researcher, along with the transcripts so that all focus group data is held solely by the researcher. The same agreement to confidentiality applies to the researcher.

Following the analysis of the data, it will be used to publish the findings, firstly in the PhD thesis, and following this, through relevant conference presentations and journal publications. Your school will receive a research report which will be targeted at the journal set: Research Information for Teachers: NZCER Press. Neither your school nor your students will be identified because pseudonyms will be assigned.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. However, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed. Caution is advised in the electronic transmission of sensitive material.

What if Participants have any Questions?
If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Margie Campbell-Price or Dr Tara Duncan (Supervisor)
University of Otago College of Education Department of Tourism
University Tel Number: 03 4794948 University Tel Number: 03 4793486

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix D: Consent form for Principals

SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My participation in the project and that of my school is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. The data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;

4. I understand that this project involves an open-questioning technique following a semi-structured format. However, the precise nature of the questions which will be asked may alter depending on how the discussion develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the focus group, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that I may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage.

5. I will be invited to enter a draw for book vouchers for me personally. This is offered to encourage me to participate and recognises the contribution of my time and opinions to the study.

6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity and that of the school through the use of pseudonyms.

7. A third party (i.e. professional transcription service) may have access to the audio-recording of focus group whilst the focus group data is being transcribed. I also know that this recording will be returned to the researcher once the transcription is completed.
I agree to take part in this project.

................................................................. (Signature of participant)
(Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX E: INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain my research project and invite you to participate in it. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether to participate or not. If you decide to participate it is much appreciated. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering this request. The Principal, XXX has given consent for the school to participate in the research.

What is the Aim of the Project?
This research aims to find out why secondary schools are deciding to travel overseas for school trips. I would like to explore the key motivators to initiate, support and undertake an overseas school trip. I am particularly interested in exploring the relationship between learning, travel and selection of the destination; through the perspectives of school leaders/legal guardians, and the students involved.

What Type of Participants are being sought?
I am seeking three types of participants from the school:
1. Those who are school leaders (who initiate and/or the leader the trip, and those who give approval for it to go ahead, usually this will mean the teacher-in-charge and the Principal respectively, and may include a member of the Board of Trustees). This is why I am seeking your consent to participate.
2. Those who give consent for individual students to participate in the school trip (parents or legal guardians).
3. The students who will be participating in the trip.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?
Should you agree to take part in this project, I will be seeking to facilitate a focus group with school leaders. The focus group will address open-ended questions around the following themes – rationale and reasons for undertaking the trip, impacts of the trip, the level of support given for the trip, and selection and significance of the destination.

The focus group is expected to last for up to one and a half hours and will have a maximum of 8 participants. If you are willing to participate in the School Leaders focus group please complete the consent form and return it to XXX. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage of any kind to yourself. No preparation will be required for the focus group.
Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?
The focus groups will be facilitated by the researcher and include open ended questions around four key themes. The semi-structured question format allows for some flexibility and development of ideas and concepts. The focus group question schedule has been reviewed by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee although the precise questions cannot be determined in advance. If the line of questioning develops in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable, you have the right to decline any particular question(s) and you may withdraw from the project at any stage.

Data collected during the focus groups will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The researcher will also make field notes during and after each focus group to record key features of the focus group that may not be evident in the audio-tape (e.g., non-verbal cues). Should any assistance be sought to transcribe focus group recordings, the transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement before starting the work which states that he/she must not disclose any information he/she hears of sees in carrying out this task. The audio recordings will be returned to the researcher, along with the transcripts so that all focus group data is held solely by the researcher. The same agreement to confidentiality applies to the researcher.

Following the analysis of the data, it will be used to publish the findings, firstly in the PhD thesis, and following this, through relevant conference presentations and journal publications. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish. Neither you, the school nor the students will be identified because pseudonyms will be assigned.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. However, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed. Caution is advised in the electronic transmission of sensitive material.

What if Participants have any Questions?
If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either: -
Margie Campbell-Price or Dr Tara Duncan (Supervisor)
University of Otago College of Education Department of Tourism
University Tel Number: - 03 4794948 University Tel Number: - 03 4793486
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix F: Consent form for School leaders

SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

CONSENT FORM FOR
SCHOOL LEADERS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. The data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;
4. I understand that this project involves an open-questioning technique following a semi-structured format. However, the precise nature of the questions which will be asked may alter depending on how the discussion develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the focus group, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that I may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage.
5. I will be invited to enter a draw for book vouchers for me personally. This is offered to encourage me to participate and recognises the contribution of my time and opinions to the study.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity and that of the school through the use of pseudonyms.
7. A third party (i.e. professional transcription service) may have access to the audio-recording of focus group whilst the focus group data is being transcribed. I also know that this recording will be returned to the researcher once the transcription is completed.

I agree to take part in this project.

.............................................................................................................  ..............................................
(Signature of participant)   (Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix G: Consent form for Parents/Legal Guardians

**SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS**

**CONSENT FORM FOR**

**PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS**

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. The data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;
4. I understand that this project involves an open-questioning technique following a semi-structured format. However, the precise nature of the questions which will be asked may alter depending on how the discussion develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the focus group, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that I may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage.
5. I will be invited to enter a draw for book vouchers for me personally. This is offered to encourage me to participate and recognises the contribution of my time and opinions to the study.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity and that of the school through the use of pseudonyms.
7. A third party (i.e. professional transcription service) may have access to the audio-recording of focus group whilst the focus group data is being transcribed. I also know that this recording will be returned to the researcher once the transcription is completed.

I agree to take part in this project as a focus group participant.

............................................................................  ............................................
(Signature of participant)  (Date)
I agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this project as a focus group participant. I know that:

1. My child’s participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw my child from the project at any time without any disadvantage.

........................................................................................................................................
(Signature of parent/legal guardian)       (Date)

........................................................................................................................................
(Name of son/daughter)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix H: Consent form for Students

SCHOOL TRIPS: WHY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS ARE TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. The data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;
4. I understand that this project involves an open-questioning technique following a semi-structured format. However, the precise nature of the questions which will be asked may alter depending on how the discussion develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the focus group, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that I may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage.
5. I will be invited to enter a draw for book vouchers for me personally. This is offered to encourage me to participate and recognises the contribution of my time and opinions to the study.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity and that of the school through the use of pseudonyms.
7. A third party (i.e. professional transcription service) may have access to the audio-recording of focus group whilst the focus group data is being transcribed. I also know that this recording will be returned to the researcher once the transcription is completed.

I agree to take part in this project.

............................................................................. ............................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix I: Letter to liaison teacher (generic)

Letterhead
The Liaison person
School XXXXX
Postal address
TOWN/CITY

Dear X

Recently, your Principal, Mr/Mrs XXX gave consent for (School Name) to participate in a research project I am carrying out to investigate the reasons why schools are undertaking school trips to international destinations. He/she confirmed that the XXX (group of students) will be travelling to XXX (destination) for XXX (purpose) in XXX (month) 2009. Your name was given to me as the liaison person to contact in order to carry out this research in your school. I would like to thank you for being willing to have this role.

The purpose of the research is twofold – to complete the thesis requirement for my PhD, and to investigate the key motivators to initiate, support and undertake an overseas school trip. I am particularly interested in exploring the relationship between learning, travel and selection of the destination; through the perspectives of school leaders, the parents/legal guardians, and the students involved.

The research will involve me facilitating focus groups with three groups of “stakeholders” involved with the trip(s):
1. Those who initiate or give consent for the trip to go ahead (usually the Teacher-in-charge and the Principal respectively)
2. Those who give consent for individual students to participate (the parents or legal guardians)
3. Those for whom the trip is provided (the students).

Your role as the liaison person is vital in making this research feasible. In particular, I will seek your assistance in identifying the names and means for me to contact potential focus group participants, to advise me on appropriate timing to schedule them, and to assist with arranging a suitable room in the school for the focus groups to be carried out. Neither you nor the school will be responsible for the administration of this aspect of the research and the role of school liaison is not intended to be an onerous task.

I have attached an Information sheet about the research project to give further details about its purpose and methods.

My PhD research is supervised within the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago. However, I am a Principal Lecturer in teacher education at the University of Otago College of Education, where I have been employed since 1998. I am currently the Head of Department, Curriculum Development and Teaching. Prior to 1998 I was a secondary school teacher and Head of Department in Physical Education, Outdoor Education and Health Education. I have an extensive background in Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) and am Course Coordinator for the EOTC course in our Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary)
qualification. I am fully aware of the many demands and busy lives for all who are employed in schools.

This project has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. I would be very grateful if you would accept the role of being the liaison person in your school and thus enable participants involved in this school trip to contribute their perspectives and insights to this research. Should you have any questions at all please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Tara Duncan.

Yours faithfully,

Margie Campbell-Price
03 4794948
margie.campbell-price@otago.ac.nz

Dr Tara Duncan
03 4793486
tduncan@business.otago.ac.nz
Appendix J: Focus group protocol

Focus group protocol

Welcome them to the focus group.
- Thank you for being willing to participate.
- Check everyone has completed the consent form.
- As a gesture of my appreciation for you taking part in this focus group you will be eligible for the draw for a $60 book voucher. If your name is the lucky one drawn from the hat, it is for you personally. The liaison person will get it to you.
- A bit about me – I was a secondary school teacher for over 15 years, and am now a lecturer in teacher education at the University of Otago. I work closely with students who will be secondary teachers next year. My subject areas are PE, Health Ed, Outdoor Ed and Tourism. I am also doing my PhD.

Outline of the project:
- What the project is about. My research objectives: To investigate the key motivators and reasons why school are initiating, supporting and undertaking trips overseas trips. Overall, I am interested in finding out what the relationship is between learning, travel and the destination the group is travelling to. I am also facilitating focus groups with parents/school leaders/students to give me the opportunity to see what is similar and different in their views. Each group has a set of questions based around the same themes.
- Up to eight schools will be participating in this research. At present they are all likely to be South Island schools.
- The findings of this research will be written up in my PhD thesis, and I will be aiming to present them at a range of conferences, and publish a couple of articles in related journals such as Set: Research information for teachers (NZCER Press). Also, a research report that summarises the findings is intended.

Outline of the focus group:
- Is expected to last between 1 – 1 and ½ hours
- All of you are invited to answer all of the questions – if you don’t want to answer a question you do not need to. Some questions I will aim to get an answer from each of you, for other questions, if you have something to say, then please do so.
- A focus group allows you to interact with each others answers – all I ask is that each person gets a fair opportunity to answer and to hold back from dominating the discussion.
- You can ask for clarification to any questions (and if you wish to ask for more information after the focus group, my contact details are on the information sheets you have)
- This focus group is being audio-recorded. Although I will be asking you to state your names and they will be recorded, by the time the data is transcribed and written up, pseudonyms will be used to maintain anonymity. All data, audio and written will be kept securely by me.
- It will be really helpful if you state your name at the beginning of your response to help with relating responses to participants when I later listen and/or transcribe the focus group discussion.
- I will be making field notes after each focus group.
The four themes for the questions are around:

The rationale/reasons for the trip
The perceived impact of the trip and/or real impact from the experience of the trip (for those groups that have been)
The level of support for the trip
The selection of the destination (state the place)

For the school leaders and student group – there will also be a few questions about the school, you, previous travel experience etc.
Appendix K: Focus group interview question format

*Focus group questions – complete list of those approved by University of Otago Human Ethics committee*

The school leaders/decision makers (Principal, Teacher-in-charge etc).

*Initiating the idea*
Describe the proposed trip – Who is going (e.g., group of students, common interest)? Where are they going? For how long? Is the trip during term time or school holidays? Who are the adults that will be accompanying them? Do these adults have specific roles? What will the (tour) group be doing? How long has the school/group of students been preparing for this trip?

What or who initiated the idea to undertake a trip overseas? (e.g., Was it because of a particular group of students? Is this part of an established programme of incorporating overseas trips for this subject/activity/group of students? Did the students qualify for an event? Is it about broadening the students’ horizons? What influence did the teacher/leader have in initiating or supporting this trip?)

What is the position and profile of overseas school trips in your school? (e.g., rare, one-off, an emerging number and range of them, part of an established profile).

*Rationale for the trip*
What are the reasons for doing this trip? Is it linked to national curriculum or education guidelines?

What are the perceived benefits for the students? For the school? For the teachers/adults involved? For the subject/activity?

How did you gain approval and support for the trip? From the Principal? From the Board of Trustees? From the parents? From the students?

*Impact of the trip*
Does this trip replace another one (for example, a similar one within New Zealand)?

What kind of profile does this trip have within the school? Within the community?

Do you think this trip will have any impact on this group of students (in relation to their involvement in this subject/activity/the school/outside school involvement)? Do you think this trip will have any impact on other groups of students? In what way?

Are there other groups of students and teachers that are now proposing overseas trips? Why? Why not?
**Level of support**
In what way is the school making a commitment to get behind this trip? (e.g., fundraising, language learning, employing specialist tour organisers).

**Selection of the destination**
What influenced your decision to choose this destination?
What particularly appeals about the destination?
Is there anything that concerns you about the destination?

**Other information relevant to the individual school context that will be collected:**
What are the demographics of the school – (e.g. roll, co-educational/single sex, rural/urban and population of the town or city, state/integrated/independent, ethnicity).
What leadership experience does the teacher-in-charge bring? (e.g. previous leadership of school trips within New Zealand and overseas previous international travel experience).
Where are overseas trips positioned within your school programme and profile? – (e.g. data on how many groups have travelled overseas in the past three years. What trips are planned in 2009 and 2010? Who are these groups? Why are they going?)

**For the parents, legal guardians.**

**Initiating the idea**
What was your first response when this trip was suggested to you?
How did you hear about it?

**Rationale for the trip**
What do you think are the reasons for your son/daughter doing this trip?
What do you think are the perceived benefits for the students? For the school? For the teachers/adults involved? For the subject/activity? For your family?

**Support for your son/daughter participating in this trip**
Giving consent for your son or daughter to participate in this trip indicates that you support it. Can you describe your level of support (totally supportive.................significant hesitations)? Why is this?
Can you describe the type of support you are giving/have given to your son/daughter to participate in this trip? (e.g., financial support, emotional support)
Impact of your son/daughter’s involvement in this trip
Has your child’s involvement in this trip had any impact on other family activities?
Has the trip had any impact on your son/daughter’s involvement in other activities? (e.g., schoolwork, involvement in other activities at school/outside school/employment/subject choice)

Selection of the destination
What is your view about the destination(s)?
In your view is it a relevant destination for this subject/activity? Why/Why not?
What particularly appeals about the destination(s)?
Is there anything that concerns you about the destination(s)?

For the student participants

Reasons for the trip
In your view, what are the reasons the school has decided to support this school trip? Are these the same reasons you want to go?
What do you think will be the benefits of the trip for you as students? For the school? For the subject/activity?
What are you expecting to gain from the trip?

Impact of the trip
Are you doing much preparation for this trip? What sort of preparation? Has that been a good thing? In what way? Why? Why not?
Have you made any sacrifices in order to participate in this trip? What are they? (e.g., given up holidays to earn money, given up other co-curricular activities, chosen different subjects).
Do you see these sacrifices as a good thing or a bad thing? Why?
Do you expect this trip may influence your decision to travel overseas again? In what way? Why? Why not?

Level of support
What are you most looking forward to?
Are you nervous, apprehensive or anxious about any aspects of the trip? What? Why? How much? (e.g., language difficulties, culture shock, being “left out”/social isolation, worry about family sacrifices/pressure on them).
The significance of the destination
Why do you think that (the destination) was selected as the destination for this trip?
Did you as students have any input into influencing where you are going? In what way?
What appeals to you most about the destination?
Is there anything about the destination that you are anxious about?

Demographic information to collect from the participants in the focus group:
• What age/year level are you?
• What school trips of at least two consecutive days have you been on in the past two years (at this school) within New Zealand, overseas?
• Have you ever travelled internationally before? Where did you go? With whom? Why did you go?
• Have you travelled within New Zealand? Where? With whom? What for?