

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) as a marketing tool: An examination of the online phenomenon's potential in the promotion mix of slow tourism destinations

**Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) als
Marketing-Tool: Eine Untersuchung des Potenzials des
Internetphänomens in der Kommunikationspolitik von Slow
Tourism Destinationen**

Bachelor-Thesis

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Kurzfassung

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) ist ein Online-Phänomen, das in letzter Zeit populärer geworden ist und der breiten Masse durch dessen Einsatz in Werbemaßnahmen mancher Marken zugänglich gemacht wurde. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es das Potenzial des Phänomens für den Einsatz in Werbemaßnahmen von Slow Tourism Destinationen zu erforschen und auf Basis der Ergebnisse Handlungsempfehlungen auszusprechen. Die Forschungsfrage die Beantwortung bedarf ist wie ASMR als Instrument in der Kommunikationspolitik von Slow Tourism Destinationen eingesetzt werden kann. Zur Beantwortung dieser Frage wurden eine Literaturrecherche sowie eine Onlineumfrage durchgeführt. Die Studie hat ergeben, dass bei dem Einsatz des Instruments eine klare Wertschätzung von ASMR nach außen hin erkennbar sein sollte, indem Inhalte produziert werden, die wertvoll für die ASMR Gemeinde sind und innerhalb dieser die breiteste mögliche Masse ansprechen. Dies kann dadurch erreicht werden, dass die Vorlieben, die innerhalb der Studie besprochen wurden eingehalten werden, der Fokus des Inhalts auf angemessenen Themen wie Wellness, Natur und Entschleunigung gelegt wird und die für die Destination geeignetste ASMR Marketingmaßnahme ausgewählt wird. Obwohl ASMR auch als Instrument für Offline-Kommunikation so wie Fernseh oder Radio genutzt werden kann, hat die Studie ergeben, dass die ASMR Gemeinde größtenteils Online-Kommunikation via Sponsorings oder selbst produzierte Inhalte vorzieht.

Abstract

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is an online phenomenon that is becoming increasingly popular and has been brought to the attention of the public by brands using it to advertise their products. The goal of this thesis is to evaluate the potential of this phenomenon for promoting slow tourism destinations and to develop recommendations for action based on the findings of the study. The research question the study aims to answer is how slow tourism destinations can use ASMR as a marketing tool in their promotion mix. To answer this question, a literature review was carried out and an online survey addressed to the ASMR community was conducted. The study found that in order to use ASMR as a marketing tool, slow tourism destinations need to show an appreciation for ASMR by producing content that is valuable to the community and appeals to the widest possible audience. This can be achieved by acknowledging and using the preferences of the community as determined in this study, making appropriate themes, such as nature, wellness or slowness, the focus of the marketing content as well as choosing the kind of ASMR marketing most suitable to the destination. While ASMR can be used for offline communication, such as on TV or radio, the study found that the ASMR community greatly preferred online communication, either through sponsorship or, to a lesser extent, though self-produced content.

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1. Introduction

Michelob ULTRA's 2019 Super Bowl advert brought an online phenomenon into the mainstream media and to the attention of millions of people. This perceptual phenomenon is called Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) where individuals experience a tingling sensation in the scalp, neck, shoulders and other parts of the body in response to specific stimuli called ASMR triggers (Fredborg et al. 2018: 1). In its beginnings, it was known to only a few, but over the years it has grown into an online sensation with so-called ASMR videos gathering millions of views on platforms like YouTube.

1.1 Research problem

With increased attention on ASMR, marketers have been looking at how to use it as a tool in their marketing efforts and several brands have produced advertisements using ASMR. These efforts have largely involved a learning by doing approach, with the success of the campaigns varying greatly. As ASMR is a relatively new phenomenon, there is no manual on how to use it successfully as a marketing tool. Marketers lack the information they need, including who exactly the ASMR audience is and what their needs and wants are.

While there has been some research into the phenomenon, it has mainly focused on acknowledging the existence of ASMR and explaining the phenomenon (Barratt and Davis 2015), understanding its effects on individuals (Lochte et al. 2018; Poerio et al. 2018) and connecting it to various other types of physiological responses that people have to certain stimuli (Fredborg et al. 2018; Janik McErlean and Banissy 2018). A few of these studies, however, offer information of interest to marketers, such as the reasons why people engage with ASMR (Barratt and Davis 2015: 5), some personality characteristics of individuals who experience ASMR (Fredborg et al. 2017) and a few trigger preferences (Barratt et al. 2017). Nevertheless, these studies merely offer a glimpse into ASMR as a marketing tool and do not provide a complete picture of it.

The issue with most studies on ASMR is the limited sample size and the main focus of the studies. Representative samples were not always necessary for the above-mentioned studies, and where they were necessary, they could often not be achieved in a satisfying way. In addition, there is no research into marketing and ASMR. Thus, this study aims to include a larger sample size and provide the specific information needed by marketers to use ASMR as a marketing tool.

1.2 Research question and goal

The problem described is one that is pertinent to all markets that potentially wish to use ASMR in their marketing efforts. In this study, this broad problem is applied to a specific market to ensure the manageability of the scope and to make the issue more tangible by providing specific examples. The problem is applied to the slow tourism industry. This industry was chosen due to an apparent commonality with ASMR in their underlying principals and themes.

The study aims to answer one central question: How can slow tourism destinations use ASMR as a marketing tool in their promotion mix? To answer this central question, the study investigates three areas that will assist in answering this question. It will seek to understand how ASMR can be used in marketing in general, how slow tourism currently markets itself and what the commonalities are between ASMR and slow tourism that can be used in marketing efforts. The purpose of the study is to develop recommendations for action that marketers can use as orientation in developing ASMR content for marketing, specifically for slow tourism destinations.

1.3 Methodology and structure of the thesis

Both primary and secondary research is used to answer the research question. In the literature review, the underlying principles of the important concepts are explained so that existing information and previous findings relating to the research question can be adequately identified and categorized. Primary research in the form of an online survey is undertaken to supplement these results and fill the gaps in the required information.

As previously explained, the thesis initially looks at the basic concepts and theories that are important. Chapter 2 explores ASMR in greater detail, characterizing the phenomenon and looking at its uses in marketing. Subsequently, the marketing concepts relevant to ASMR are explained in Chapter 3 before moving on to define slow tourism in the context of the thesis and explore the current marketing used in slow tourism destinations in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 draws the first connections between the concepts discussed, summarizing the existing research findings on the ASMR audience and its preferences and evaluating the opportunities and risks involved in using ASMR in marketing. The methodology of the empirical survey is presented in Chapter 6, while the results of the survey are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 includes a discussion of the findings of the study and the subsequent recommendations. The last chapter briefly summarizes the thesis before reaching the conclusions.

2. ASMR: An online phenomenon

To answer the question of how ASMR can be used in marketing, a greater understanding of the phenomenon is necessary. This chapter aims to understand ASMR by briefly looking at its history, exploring its online discovery and providing a definition for the phenomenon. Existing research is reviewed and discussed and the phenomenon's rise in popularity is examined by assessing the factors contributing to its success. Existing marketing efforts involving ASMR are examined before finally defining the characteristics that describe ASMR in order to provide an understanding of the content of ASMR.

2.1 History of ASMR: Origin and definition

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response is a phenomenon that has recently gained attention in the scientific community. Although ASMR was mentioned online as early as 2007 (Richard 2018), the first peer-reviewed study was not conducted until about 10 years later by Barratt and Davis (2015). Since then, multiple studies have looked into the physiological and psychological mechanisms behind the phenomenon, but a clear understanding of it has not yet been achieved.

While ASMR is a highly individual sensation, most people experiencing it describe a tingling feeling in specific regions of the body. Fredborg et al. (2017: 1) describe ASMR as follows:

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is a perceptual condition in which the presentation of particular audio-visual stimuli triggers intense, pleasurable tingling sensations in the head and neck regions, which may spread to the periphery of the body.

The ASMR sensation was first mentioned in an online health forum in 2007 as a good feeling of unknown origin. Many people recognized the description of that feeling as something they also experienced and this led to the formation of a small online community dedicated to discussing, researching and sharing information about the phenomenon on various websites (Richard 2018: 19–21). People reported having felt the sensation in various situations in their daily lives for years, some even not remembering a time when they did not feel ASMR.

Until 2010 there was no agreed name for the sensation. Many different terms were simultaneously being developed, such as attention-induced head orgasm (AIHO), the weird head sensation (WHS) and the unnamed feeling (UNF) (Young and Blansert 2015: 5). Ultimately, it was the term ASMR that caught on and that is used to refer to the phenomenon. The term ASMR was coined by Jennifer Allen, an active member and driving force of the ASMR

community. Each component of the term autonomous sensory meridian response describes an aspect of the feeling. *Autonomous* indicates that stimuli are unique to every person and that some can potentially stimulate ASMR in themselves. *Sensory* refers to the widespread requirement for stimuli like sounds or sights to experience the feeling. *Meridian* means "greatest prosperity" or "splendor" and acknowledges that the response is deeply relaxing and enjoyable. *Response* indicates that the stimuli activate a specific response (Richard 2018: 21–22).

The ASMR community had its beginnings in 2009 when the YouTube channel WhisperingLife was created. It was the first channel that focused solely on whispered videos or videos with triggers stimulating ASMR (Richard 2018: 19–21). Within a short time, other channels were created for sharing content that was specifically aimed at stimulating a relaxing sensation. Today, several YouTube channels featuring ASMR content have more than a million subscribers and millions of views (ASMR Darling; Gentle Whispering ASMR; Gibi ASMR), illustrating the growing popularity of the phenomenon.

These content creators are commonly known as ASMRtists. They create audio-visual content that is designed to trigger the feelings associated with ASMR by using a combination of various so-called ASMR triggers to produce an euphoric sensation in others (Young and Blansert 2015: 81). In ASMR, triggers include an array of stimuli that are known to elicit ASMR in people. These could be voices, sounds, images, touch or attention given to oneself, another individual or an object (Richard 2018: 17). Triggers are specific to the individual and thus their effect varies widely between individuals who experience ASMR (Fredborg et al. 2018: 1) Some triggers are known to work for many people and are therefore very popular.

As mentioned above, research into the phenomenon has not yet resulted in conclusive evidence on the origin of ASMR and whether it is evolutionary, psychological or physiological. Nevertheless, it has been linked to a number of physical sensations and other theories. These include synesthesia (Barratt and Davis 2015: 12), musical frisson (Fredborg et al. 2017: 2), flow (Barratt et al. 2017: 9), mindfulness (Fredborg et al. 2018: 1) and misophonia (Janik McErlean and Banissy 2018: 2). Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) of individuals with ASMR showed that ASMR activates the same brain regions responsible for social engagement and caring behavior (Lochte et al. 2018: 300, 2018: 302). However, ASMR research is only in its infancy and further studies into the mechanisms underlying ASMR are necessary to obtain a better understanding of how the phenomenon works. On the other hand, a thorough understanding of exactly how ASMR works is not necessary for using ASMR as a marketing

tool. The popularity of ASMR alone is reason to engage with ASMR, as the size of the audience is noteworthy in itself.

2.2 Rise of ASMR as an online phenomenon and a marketing tool

Before the widespread use of the Internet, ASMR was being experienced daily by an undetermined number of people and its existence was unknown to the public or to scientific communities. People did not talk about the sensation or simply assumed it was unique to them.

With the prevalent use of the Internet in today's society, the discussions and subsequent "discovery" of ASMR was only a question of time (Young and Blansert 2015: 78). The Internet provides an environment where people are more comfortable sharing these things with strangers and finding other people that have had the same experiences.

The ASMR community began as no more than a thread in a forum but its popularity has risen rapidly. According to data provided by Google Trends (2019), worldwide searches for the term ASMR began slowly in August 2011 and steadily increased until February 2018. After this, interest in the term grew more rapidly, increasing by 100 percent in only one year from February 2018 and reaching a peak in February 2019. This shows, in particular, that the phenomenon has recently grown dramatically in popularity and interest.

This rise in popularity may be tied to a more widespread knowledge of the phenomenon. Beginning in 2012, media began showing interest in ASMR and there has been media coverage of the phenomenon since then. A few important media moments for ASMR include a discussion of ASMR on Dutch TV in October 2012 (Young and Blansert 2015: 84), an article on ASMR in February 2013 by Nicholas Tufnell in The Huffington Post UK (Young and Blansert 2015: 83), a radio broadcast on National Public Radio about ASMR in March 2013 and Molly Shannon praising ASMR on the TV show Conan in May 2014 (Richard 2018: 22–23). Since the early days of ASMR in the media, the attention on ASMR has been great. As ASMR is especially popular on YouTube, many big creators on the platform have acknowledged ASMR and explored or discussed it in one of their videos (Dawson 2017; Nygaard 2019; Rallison 2016) and W Magazine has started conducting celebrity ASMR interviews on their YouTube channel with big celebrities including Cardi B, Cara Delevingne and Jake Gyllenhaal (W magazine 2019). Multiple TV shows have dedicated airtime to the phenomenon of ASMR (Jimmy Kimmel Live 2018; The Late Show with Stephen Colbert 2019; This Morning 2018) and many articles have been written about it, with a Google News search for the term ASMR finding more than 200,000 articles.

The popularity of ASMR has not only garnered media attention but also the attention of several brands. ASMR has been used with varying success by various brands to advertise their products. Most of these advertising efforts have been in the form of YouTube videos. One of the very first brands to use ASMR was DOVE Chocolate in 2015 with an advertising campaign by BBDO (Beijing) featuring two adverts with ASMR triggers (Doland 2015: online). Since then, other brands have followed. Various adverts have been highly popular on YouTube, such as an ASMR commercial by Ritz Crackers with more than 7 million views or one by Safeguard with 1.8 million views. Nevertheless, using ASMR in advertising does not seem to be fail-safe for successful viral content. Other advertisements that used ASMR have much fewer views, for example a video by National Rail that has less than 50,000 views in total (National Railcards 2019). Successful ASMR adverts, meanwhile, can have an effect on sales, as illustrated by IKEA's ASMR video. IKEA's 25-minute long ASMR video has been watched more than 2.4 million times and showcases their "IKEA dorm room solutions" which, according to Petrova (2019: 2:32-2:38) from CNBC, increased their sales of college dorm items by 27 percent from the previous year.

The most viewed commercial that features ASMR content is probably the Super Bowl advert by Michelob ULTRA, an organic beer brand. The advert which originally aired during Super Bowl 2019 has not only been viewed more than 16 million times on YouTube (Michelob ULTRA 2019), but has led to ASMR being discussed more than ever. Although Michelob ULTRA's relative success shows that using ASMR as a marketing tool can have great benefits, failed ASMR advertisements by other companies also illustrate the need for the advert to first be good content, before being a good commercial.

2.3 Characteristics of ASMR content

Most regular consumers of ASMR content would likely be able to adequately tell if a video or audio file is ASMR content. Nevertheless, this assessment is highly subjective and cannot be applied in a scientific context. It therefore stands to reason that for a study attempting to identify and evaluate ASMR content in commercials and to make recommendations on how ASMR commercials should be executed, what constitutes ASMR content – and thus what can be considered an ASMR commercial – should be evaluated.

ASMR is often described as an audio-visual experience. It therefore seems prudent to include both sound and visuals as the categories which have the characteristics defining ASMR. Additionally, characteristics relating to atmosphere are also incorporated, as Barratt et al.

(2017: 4) found atmosphere to be an important factor in relation to ASMR content. Table 1 below provides an overview of the specific characteristics in each category.

Charateristics of ASMR		
Sound	Visuals	Atmosphere
No loud/sudden noises	Slow, deliberate movements	Relaxing (calm and without urgency)
Low volume (whispered /soft spoken)	No erratic changes in lighting or setting	Focused (attention is on viewer or focused on a specific task)
Little background noise		Caring (viewers wel-being is central)

Table 1 Characteristics of ASMR (own figure)

Sound is essential to ASMR and therefore it is important to consider what characterizes the soundscape of ASMR content. Three main characteristics are used in this study to determine whether the sound in the content is indicative of ASMR content. The first is the absence of loud and/or sudden noises. These sounds are not relaxing and are avoided in ASMR (Richard 2018: 83). The second characteristic is the volume of the voices used in the content. ASMR is characterized by ASMRtists speaking softly or whispering (Richard 2018: 57). The third characteristic is that there is typically little background noise. While ASMR content can have both low and high-quality audio, most ASMRtists try to eliminate any background noise, such as from neighbors walking upstairs, traffic or dogs barking outside. This does not include intentional background noise, such as white noise, but rather any background noise that is disruptive to the experience (Richard n.d.).

In the visual category, there are two characteristics that will be considered concerning their potential for ASMR. First, the nature of movement portrayed in ASMR visuals should be slow and deliberate. Handling an item with care and keeping movement slow can enrich the ASMR experience (Richard 2018: 147) and is thus typically employed. Second, the changes in lighting or setting within one ASMR video should be kept to a minimum and the visuals should avoid being erratic. While reviewing ASMR content, it was noted that the setting in the majority of ASMR videos does not change at all, and when the setting does change (e.g. in ASMR role plays that tell a story), the shift is very gentle.

The last category to consider is the atmosphere portrayed in ASMR content and what characterizes it. Barratt et al. (2017: 6) found that most respondents to their study associated ASMR most strongly with a relaxing and inviting atmosphere. Therefore, relaxing is considered an important characteristic of atmosphere in ASMR, meaning that the content lacks urgency and promotes calmness in the viewer. Another characteristic of the atmosphere is the attention of the ASMRtist, which is purposely directed. To enhance viewer experience, the attention in ASMR content is focused on the viewer (personal attention), an object or a specific

task (Richard 2018: 140; 154). The last atmosphere characteristic is a caring environment. The viewer should get the genuine feeling that the person producing the ASMR content is interested in their well-being, which is shown in the use of encouraging words and an overall caring disposition (Richard 2018: 160).

Where it is necessary in this study to assess whether content is considered ASMR, these characteristics can thus clearly indicate whether the content can be judged as such, or whether it is not sufficiently compatible with the defined characteristics.

This chapter has provided background knowledge of ASMR which will help in understanding how it can be used in marketing. There are different concepts in marketing which should be understood in order to determine which ones are most appropriate for marketing using ASMR content. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. Marketing: Important concepts and dimensions

After looking at the ASMR phenomenon and its elements, the following chapter will explain concepts within the field of marketing that are of essence to this thesis. To answer the research question, an understanding of the concepts and tools used in marketing should be gained and these are identified and discussed in this chapter. The focus is on the marketing concepts and tools that are of relevance in the following chapters, as well as those pertinent to ASMR. The promotion mix and content marketing are explained before the marketing strategies most important to ASMR are discussed. As ASMR content is predominantly found online, the issue of marketing in the digital space in general will be reviewed, before moving on to marketing on YouTube and exploring the possible marketing avenues on the platform that is home to most ASMR content.

3.1 Promotion Mix and Content Marketing

Marketing is an essential component of successful brands and businesses. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2016: 29) marketing is the process through which entities fulfill their wants and needs by creating and exchanging value with others. In business, this means building exchange relationships with customers which are profitable and value-laden for both parties (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 29). The main tools in every marketing mix are the four Ps: product, price, place and promotion. To deliver value, a business needs a *product* that satisfies a market need and it needs to determine the *price* of this product. They need to decide where and by which means they distribute their product (*place*) and they also need to *promote* the

product's existence and worth and engage with their consumers (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 37).

As the study seeks to answer how ASMR can be used for the promotion of slow tourism destinations, an overview of what this promotion entails is described. The promotion mix, or marketing communications mix, consists of five major promotion tools. The first three are *personal selling* which is done by the businesses sales force through personal interaction with the customer to make sales or build customer relationships, *sales promotion* in the form of short-term incentives to persuade customers to purchase and *public relations* which has the goal of building good relationships with the businesses' stakeholders through good publicity and corporate image (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 447). These tools, while part of the promotion mix, are not focused on in this study, as they are more indirect tools of promotion. The tools that are of major relevance for the purposes of this research are *advertising*, which is any non-personal form of paid presentation of ideas or products, and *direct and digital marketing*, which is any form of direct engagement with specific customers or customer communities with the goal of building lasting relationships and receiving immediate responses (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 447). Thus, advertising products and building relationships with consumers are the two major ways in which ASMR can be used as a promotion tool and are, therefore, the focus of the study.

For many marketers, the traditional way of organizing and visualizing promotion by using the promotion mix model is no longer considered sufficient, given the mechanisms a marketer has to operate with. The lines between the tools defined in the promotion mix blur progressively with the inclusion of new media and many marketers think that advertising and promotion are no longer the right terms to describe the scope of their functions. Many consider content marketing to be the concept that suits today's challenges in the digital world. Content marketing managers are responsible for constantly delivering new and fresh content for consumers to enjoy. They create, share and curate their own content and distribute relevant content from other sources (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 450–451).

Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Pulizzi 2014: 5).

Whenever a brand creates content and uses it to connect with their audience to build a relationship or to sell their product they are engaging in content marketing. This is what brands such as IKEA and Michelob ULTRA have done with ASMR. They used the medium of

ASMR to connect with their audience in unique ways while simultaneously promoting their products.

Content can be distributed or hosted by different media, and content marketing identifies the media as either paid, owned, earned or shared. Paid media includes all promotional channels that have to be paid, such as traditional media (TV, print) and some forms of digital media (search adverts, social media display adverts, e-mail marketing). Owned media are channels that are owned or directly controlled by the company, such as company websites or their social media pages. Earned media includes PR media channels such as TV channels, video sites or blogs that are not paid or controlled by the company but feature content about or from the company because of the interest the content generates in audiences. Lastly, shared media includes channels such as social media, blogs or viral videos that consumers share with each other (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 450–451). These tools can be used together for ultimate exposure, for example TV advertisements (paid) that are later put on YouTube (shared).

According to Tuten and Solomon (2015: 176), the content that is created should be of value to the target audience otherwise it will not be shared within the community. It is therefore important that the content itself is interesting and engaging, instead of relying on a trendy subject matter. Merely incorporating ASMR into content that is lacking on its own, or that is generally incompatible with the interests of the target community, is insufficient. Content that solves problems, makes people laugh and gives them ideas and visions, on the other hand, is content that will be enjoyed and shared, leading to people connecting with each other and the brand (Pulizzi 2014: 19–20). In the age of social media, in particular, content marketing is a concept that reflects how marketing works.

3.2 Online marketing: Marketing in the digital space

Due to the digital space, marketing is changing rapidly. Since ASMR is a phenomenon that was discovered online and is mainly consumed in the digital space, understanding how marketing works on the Internet is essential for being able to understand how ASMR can be used as a marketing tool.

Any form of marketing that uses the Internet as a tool is considered online marketing. This includes features such as company websites where customers can purchase or consume brand content, online advertising and promotions like display adverts or search-related adverts, personalized e-mail marketing, online videos on hosting platforms or blogs that market the brand (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 540–544). A brand has to choose which of the online marketing tools it is going to use, as each one should be understood to be used effectively.

As a result of online marketing, communication with customers is evolving, resulting in both opportunities and risks which need to be considered. Companies are now able to communicate with their customers through digital platforms on the Internet and thus have a whole new set of marketing tools at their disposal. At the same time, consumers are more informed than ever, having access not only to the information distributed by the company, but also by other consumers, influencers and even the brands competition (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 447–449).

With traditional media, such as television, newspapers, radio and magazines, marketers had full control. This media uses one-way, static broadcast technologies (Zarrella 2010: 1) that allow a company to easily deliver a regulated message to a wide audience (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 447–449). In contrast, digital media is a many-to-many communication that allows for dynamic conversation, facilitates communication with micro markets and fosters a personal customer relationship (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 447–449). This increasingly personalized marketing through the Internet comes at a price: a lack of control over the message that is sent. Other participants in the online space can interact with the sent message in positive, but also in negative, ways.

In summary, it is thus important in online marketing to really understand your target audience, their wants, needs and online behavior. Only if a company knows and considers this information can they market successfully to their customers and potential customers.

One of the most relevant forms of online marketing within the scope of this study is social media marketing. As much of the activity surrounding ASMR takes place on social media platforms such as YouTube, understanding social media marketing is necessary for understanding the typical ways in which ASMR can be used as a marketing tool. Tuten and Solomon (2015: 21) define social media marketing as "the utilization of social media technologies, channels and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders". According to them, the essence of social media marketing is the ability of consumers to actively engage with companies which has led to an informal marketing culture where consumers have greater control (Tuten and Solomon 2015: 23).

Social media is a great equalizer as it is highly cost effective. Small brands can manage a successful social media campaign without a huge monetary investment, and are thus on an equal footing with big brands in this respect (Zarrella 2010: 7). In particular, if these smaller brands have an engaging story to tell, social media is an excellent way for them to advertise, as

this story can give them a competitive advantage in the world of social media (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 49).

For companies, social media is a chance to effectively target their audience and engage with specific communities as well as allow personal interaction at a low cost (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 544–547). In social media marketing, knowing your audience and their digital behavior is essential to success. The marketer has to know where the target audience is active online to be able to market specifically to them and promote the campaign on the appropriate social media channels (Tuten and Solomon 2015: 56–57). The use of social media is often not properly thought through. Brands should ask themselves if the tool they are using is appropriate for their goal or if maybe they should work with other marketing tools that may be more effective but less trendy (Tuten and Solomon 2015: 52). If, for example, a brand's target audience is not active online, social media marketing will be highly ineffective in reaching them.

3.3 Marketing on YouTube

One of the social media platforms on which ASMR content is highly relevant is YouTube. Since ASMR content is predominantly distributed through this social media site, a brief look into how marketing on this platform works is vital for the further understanding of the study.

YouTube was founded in 2005 by former PayPal employees, Chad Hurley, Steve Chan and Jawed Karim (Burgess and Green 2018: 2) and according to Sammis et al. (2016: 140) has a very wide demographic reach age-wise. Marketing on YouTube works mainly with TrueView adverts, a form of paid advertising operated by YouTube. YouTube offers three different TrueView options to advertise on their platform. There are in-search adverts that work the same way as Google Ads, placing your video in the search results if the selected keywords match the search term. In-display adverts are shown together with the suggested videos to the right of a video being viewed if the viewer of the current video matches the determined target audience. Last, there are in-stream adverts, in the form of pre, mid or post-roll ads, reminiscent of TV adverts that interrupt the video being viewed by playing the company's video as an advert (Miles 2014: 199–200). In terms of content marketing, all these options are clearly a form of paid media.

The other way to advertise on YouTube is by using influencers. This cannot be easily classified using the content marketing concept. There is no agreement over the nature of content created by influencers that are paid by brands. Influencer marketing touches different aspects of paid, owned and earned media with influencers being paid, their content often owned by

the company or brand, while the shares, comments and likes the content generates make it earned media (Sammis et al. 2016: 35–38).

Nevertheless, using influencers is highly popular on YouTube. "Influencer marketing is the art and science of engaging people who are influential online to share brand messaging with their audiences in the form of sponsored content" (Sammis et al. 2016: 7). These influential opinion leaders are typically recognized as knowledgeable sources of information with a powerful communication network and thus have a direct or indirect effect on the purchase decisions of their followers (Tuten and Solomon 2015: 122). Social media influencers have the same kind of persuasive capabilities as celebrity endorsers, being the stars of social media with a dedicated fan base that admires and trusts them (Sammis et al. 2016: 8).

As this fan base is the foundation of their success, influencers are careful not to alienate them. A sponsored post by an influencer is not a commercial and therefore never guaranteed to be one hundred percent positive. Influencers have to be able to tell their audience about the brand or product in their own unique way and must be allowed to voice their concerns and the disadvantages relating to the product or service, giving their audience an authentic review of what is being offered. A brand endorsement by an influencer that does not feel genuine can lead to a backlash for both the brand and the influencer (Sammis et al. 2016: 32–33). Thus, the message a brand wants an influencer to deliver has to be one that aligns with who they are and what they say. If the message being delivered has value to the influencer and their audience and the brand provides support material to the influencer that correlates with that message, influencer marketing can be highly successful (Brown and Hayes 2015: 107).

The sponsorship of ASMRtists can be achieved in two different ways. Sponsorships can either be the theme of a whole video, showing the product or service in detail, explaining pricing and engaging with the brand for the duration of the video (see Viktorovna 2017) or they can be in the form of a short mention of the brand or a brief explanation of the offer in an otherwise unrelated ASMR video (see Gibi ASMR 2019).

Although influencers can be a great tool in social media marketing, using them bears the same risks as using celebrity endorsements. It can add instant interest to the message and an appropriate celebrity or influencer with an authentic link to the product may positively influence sales. But there are possible pitfalls, for example controversies around the celebrity a brand is involved with can reflect on the brand itself (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 458–460). This is also true for influencers. Thus, it is important to gather as much information on the influencer and fully understand them before working together with them.

This chapter has discussed knowledge about marketing and the promotion mix as required background for the following chapters. It has been illustrated how marketing works in the digital space and especially on YouTube, and this is important for understanding how ASMR can be employed as a marketing tool. The knowledge gained in this chapter will help to understand the next chapter where the marketing of slow tourism destinations will be examined.

4. Slow tourism: A promising market

The subject of this chapter is the marketing of slow tourism. An understanding of slow tourism and what it entails has to be gained in order to be able to accurately determine what destinations employ it, how they market in general, and in particular how ASMR marketing for these types of destinations can successfully work. The origin of slow tourism is therefore explained and a framework for understanding slow tourism is presented. The framework is then used to develop the characteristics by which slow tourism destinations can be identified. The last part of the chapter includes a small-scale market analysis of the slow tourism market to identify the most current themes in the marketing of slow tourism destinations and to evaluate whether these destinations are using ASMR in any way in their marketing efforts.

4.1 History of slow tourism: Origin and definition

The concept of slow tourism emerged from two other slow concepts originating in Italy: slow food and slow cities (Fullagar et al. 2012: 3). At their core, these two concepts belong to a wider philosophy that promotes the idea of slowness as a lifestyle that is conducive to experiencing any activity in its original, natural and pure form. This can also be applied to many other areas, such as consumption, personal practices or larger organizational efforts (Clancy 2018: 1–3). One of the areas it has also been linked to is tourism.

In its essence, slow tourism is about slower and more responsible consumption and the relationship one has with the world and oneself. This can be recognized in the definition that Callot (2013: 2156) refers to and which he and Babou developed in 2009. This states that slow tourism "is about slowing down the rate of tourism and a guarantee of rediscovering oneself (the physiological and the psychological); it is about low greenhouse gas emissions and it is a synonym of patience, peace of mind, deeper experiences, improved cultural understanding and knowledge".

According to Calzati and Salvo (2018: 33–34), an increased awareness of environmental concerns, a desire for meaningful experiences and interaction with the location being visited, a new consideration for their own physical and psychological well-being and a growing demand for quality by tourists across the world logically led to the emergence of slow tourism and slowness as a product. Slow tourism is able to fulfill these needs as they correspond with the concepts underlining the slow movement in general and slow tourism in particular. The intention of slow tourism is to offer tourists the chance to discover a place in a profound way, by having the time and opportunity to experience the destination's area, its cultural heritage and its inhabitants (Matos 2004: 100).

Another integral aspect of slow tourism is the opportunity for people to temporarily disengage from the fast-paced world in which they live. The simplicity and authenticity of slow tourism provides a powerful counterbalance to the hectic pace of modern life. Tourists have time, and thus a chance at introspection, self-transformation and mindfulness in their relationship with the world as these important aspects of slow travel are helpful in dealing with these issues (Howard 2012: 12–13).

Slow tourism can be practiced by a variety of entities. It can be single companies, such as hotels, or it could be a whole region that follows the slow tourism philosophy. In this research we look at destinations that use slow tourism for marketing purposes. Because the attachment to a particular place (Matos 2004: 100) is one of the most integral parts of slow tourism, focusing on these destination-based marketing efforts is ideal for the scope of the research.

It also is more likely that these destinations have a more refined and directed marketing approach that can thus be better analyzed, as the marketing effort pertains to a whole region and multiple businesses at the same time. As Matos (Matos 2004: 100–101) states, destinations whose multiple stakeholders follow the principles of slowness often organize and formalize their efforts of connecting stakeholders and representing the destination as a slow tourism location by giving this responsibility to a specific entity, for example the local tourist offices.

4.2 Conceptual framework and characteristics

To properly explore the slow tourism market, it is necessary to define the characteristics that best describe slow tourism. These characteristics will help clarify to both the researcher and the reader what slow tourism entails within the scope of this research project and ensure that the identification of slow tourism destinations is consistent and reliable.

Calzati and Salvo (2018: 38–44) developed a conceptual framework for slow tourism which identifies and describes three important paradigms that are common and central themes in the existing research on slow tourism. These three paradigms (experience, sustainability and well-being) will form the foundation for the development of the characteristics of slow tourism shown in Table 2.

The paradigm of experience (Calzati and Salvo 2018: 38–44) places a fundamental importance on slow tourism in conjunction with responsible consumerism and the tourist experience. It states that tourists have become more ethical and responsible in their consumption and are no longer satisfied with passive tourism and prefer to actively shape their tourism experience, becoming active protagonists. They create social value and conscience together with the other stakeholders in the experience they are part of. In this context, slow tourism is in contrast with the increasing environment of consumerism. The characteristics of this paradigm are responsible consumption, providing unique and transformative experiences and giving the tourist the opportunity to participate.

Characteristics of Slow Tourism		
Experience	Sustainability	Well-being
Unique and transformative experiences	Ecological responsibility	Improvement of physical health
Responsible consumption	Social responsibility	Improvement of psychological health
Participatory opportunities	Economical responsibility	Self-discovery

Table 2 Characteristics of Slow Tourism (own figure)

Another concept in slow tourism discussed by Calzati and Salvo (2018: 38–44), is that of sustainability. As a responsible and an ethical form of tourism, slow tourism has to be sustainable on various levels. In contrast to mass tourism, slow tourism focuses on the availability of resources and the improvement of the quality of life at the destination and acknowledges that constant and exponential growth is not viable. It encourages tourists to vacation for longer but less frequently, seeks steady-state tourism and emphasizes the importance of local identity, produce and products. A good slow tourism destination should be responsible with regard to economic, environmental and social concerns and is characterized by development from the bottom up. Economic, environmental and social responsibility are good indicators for the sustainability aspect of slow tourism.

The last paradigm identified by Calzati and Salvo (2018: 38–44) is well-being. The individual tourist's quality of life and especially an improvement in this quality is central to slow tourism. Many aspects of an individual's well-being, such as subjective happiness and life satisfaction, could be reasons for a person to engage in slow tourism. Slow tourism can create rational

benefits such as the creation of respectful relationships with both oneself and others or increased attention on aspects of one's quality of life, such as individual health. The characteristics of this paradigm are the improvement of physical health, the improvement of psychological health and the encouragement of self-discovery.

4.3 Slow tourism destinations marketing and ASMR

Before exploring how slow tourism destinations can use ASMR in marketing, it is of value to evaluate how they currently market themselves and what kind of audio and audio-visual content they feature, with a special focus on assessing whether they already use ASMR in their marketing. As some of the themes that are used in ASMR content, such as massage, spa and relaxation, are themes that also correlate with elements of slow tourism, it is possible that some marketers of slow tourism destinations could already be using ASMR as an interesting marketing tool. They could also be using ASMR inadvertently, without being aware of the phenomenon, simply because the themes they are promoting lend themselves to the calm and relaxing way ASMR content is structured. If some slow tourism destinations are already using ASMR as a tool in their advertising, there could be lessons that can be learned from these practical examples.

A complete analysis of the slow tourism market is not possible within this study. Therefore, a sample will be selected using a modified version of stratified sampling. This method adheres to the principles of random selection while also allowing some influence over sample selection. In stratified sampling, the research subjects are divided into different subgroups and a random sample is selected within each subgroup. This allows for crucial subgroups to be adequately represented within the sample (Denscombe 2017: 38). The modification of the method used here is that the samples within the subgroups will not be truly random but rather dependent upon their ranking in Google search results.

The sample is derived by using three carefully selected search terms that represent the different dimensions of slow travel discussed in the previous chapter. A Google search is conducted using these terms. The first five slow tourism destinations will be selected in order to examine their marketing. The reason for using more than one search term and dividing the research subject into subgroups first is the lack of a search term that covers all the dimensions of slow tourism. The term slow tourism itself should not be used as search term as it is not a term that consumers use, but rather a term that is used in the scientific community (Antz 2011: 31) when discussing the supply side of this type of tourism (McGrath and Sharpley 2018: 58). Because all the facets of slow tourism determined in the previous chapter should be

included in the sample for it to be truly representative of the market, this modified version of stratified sampling was used.

The Google search was conducted using a private browser to avoid browser history influencing the results. Since Google automatically selects the region, this could also influence search results, and thus the region was set to a different country for every search thus ensuring more diverse results than if only one region was used for all searches.

The destinations delivered by the search results were assessed to determine if they truly are slow tourism destinations. The characteristics for slow tourism defined in Chapter 4.3 were used as the reference. If a destination exhibited at least five characteristics that define slow tourism it was included in the analysis. Which of the characteristics of slow tourism the destinations included in the analysis met can be gathered from a table at page A of the appendix.

The marketing efforts of these destinations will then be investigated with a focus on the themes they use in their online promotion and their possible use of ASMR. All media channels of each destination will be taken into account when reviewing their marketing efforts, with a special focus on their website, Facebook page and YouTube channel. To account for the inadvertent use of ASMR, the audio and audio-visual content will be reviewed using the characteristics described in Chapter 2.3. The media content of the destinations needs to fulfill all eight of the characteristics that were established to be considered true ASMR content.

The search terms that were used are *slow nature holiday region*, *relaxing wellness holiday region* and *spiritual experience holiday region*. These terms reflect the main characteristics of slow tourism, i.e. sustainability, well-being and experience. The regions chosen in the Google search settings were the United States, Germany and the Philippines.

The review of the 15 slow tourism destinations selected from the Google search (see appendix page A) revealed that most of the destinations have a strong focus on the themes of health, nature and food and wine. Almost all of the destinations had specific pages on their website dedicated to these themes and many also included them to a large extent in their audio-visual content. Other dominant themes were spirituality, culture, sport/action and adventure with some destinations having a strong focus on some of these while not including any of the others.

Regarding the use of ASMR, the review showed that none of the destinations explicitly labeled any of their content as ASMR and it can thus be concluded that none of them are aware of ASMR or have not yet consciously chosen to use ASMR as a marketing tool. None of the destinations have any content that is purely audio, but all have audio-visual content that they

use for marketing purposes. The typical audio-visual content that all the destinations have on their social media channels are videos of the local landscape, activities that can be experienced and guests enjoying the destination featuring either heavy or light background music with a voice-over promoting the aspects shown in the visuals. The type of music and the often loud voices used in these videos means that they cannot be classified as ASMR content.

Some of the videos from the reviewed destinations have potential as ASMR content, and with some adjustments they could easily be converted into ASMR. The destinations of Tirol and Salzburger Land both have videos in which typical dishes of the region are prepared. As the videos are sped up and have background music they are not ASMR, but by slowing the content down to its original speed and by using the original sounds rather than background music, the content could be transformed to ASMR. Other content that has potential for ASMR are videos from Slovenia and Hawaii that show nature or towns from the destinations without great production value. These videos are organized like a town walkthrough or a static videotaping of a beach with the sounds of wind and waves. As the sound is either lacking or loud and sudden noises are not edited out of the content, these videos are not ASMR, but with a bit more care in their production, they could become ASMR content.

The review also showed that all destinations have video material that could be used to fill an ASMR video, and the shots of nature, relaxation, hiking activities and other similar content could also be used in combination with a whispered or softly-spoken ASMR video about the destination. In summary, it can be concluded that there is potential for using ASMR as a marketing tool in all destinations, with all of them maintaining the necessary social media channels and having some material they could draw from should they chose to engage with ASMR for marketing purposes.

Slow tourism, as it relates to the scope of this research, was defined in this chapter. It was categorized into three dimensions, and the marketing efforts of slow tourism destinations were examined. In reviewing the marketing efforts of the selected slow tourism destinations, it was found that the themes used in their advertising were heavily influenced by health, nature and food and that they do not yet use ASMR as a marketing tool. Taking these findings into account, it is interesting to establish what marketing should consider when developing ASMR content in the following chapter, in order to examine how slow tourism specifically can use this tool for marketing.

5. ASMR in marketing: Factors for success

This chapter takes a closer look at the issues marketers need to consider when seeking to engage ASMR as a marketing tool. There are three main areas that are considered in this chapter. The first two subchapters discuss the question of how ASMR can be used in general as a marketing tool by exploring two issues to find an answer to this question. The first subchapter deals with the makeup of the ASMR community with the aim of determining what kind of target audience the ASMR community is. The second subchapter explores the preferences and dislikes of the ASMR community relating to ASMR content in order to assist in creating the most palatable content for the majority of the community.

Subsequently, the general risks and opportunities involved with ASMR marketing are investigated, with a consideration for what marketers using ASMR should be aware of when choosing to use ASMR, and how opportunities can be used and risks minimized. Throughout the chapter, the potential connections between ASMR and slow tourism and issues that warrant further investigation will be highlighted.

5.1 The ASMR community as a target audience

To successfully market to a target audience it is essential to know who you are marketing to. To create value for a specific audience, the marketer has to understand not only the marketplace but also the audience itself (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 30). It is thus important to know how the ASMR community is constituted and what kind of people can be reached with ASMR advertisements. Only if this information is known, can marketers accurately assess whether the ASMR community is compatible with their personal target audience and whether marketing to them is potentially worthwhile.

To better understand the target audience, it is often segmented according to the information that is most relevant to the marketer. According to Tuten and Solomon (2015: 78–82), there are five ways to segment target markets and audiences: geographic, demographic, psychographic, behavioral and benefit segmentation. In this study we will focus on the first three ways of segmenting, i.e. where the members of the ASMR audience are from (geographic segmentation), what their age, gender and social background is (demographic segmentation) and what kind of personalities, lifestyles and attitudes they have (psychographic segmentation).

Previous studies have not been specifically interested in geographic or demographic data. Demographic data relating to age and gender has been collected within the studies to give a picture of the participants in the study, but the sampling process was not specifically

concerned with selecting a sample that accurately represented the ASMR community. A majority of the studies also have sample sizes that were too small to be able to infer anything about the ASMR community in general. Of the studies that had an adequate sample size, the demographic data suggests that the ASMR community is young, with an average age between 24.6 and 29.4 years and a relatively balanced gender distribution (Barratt and Davis 2015: 3; Fredborg et al. 2017: 3; Poerio et al. 2018: 4). No other demographic information or geographic information has been collected.

Some psychographic data of the ASMR community was obtained in a study that investigated personality dimensions and compared people that experience ASMR to a control group. It found that individuals that experienced ASMR exhibited a higher level of "openness to experience", which is associated with curiosity, unconventionality and fantasy, and "neuroticism", which is associated with anxiety, depression, and self-consciousness (Fredborg et al. 2017: 4, 2017: 2). While the study hypothesized that these factors could be the reason that these people experience ASMR, it is more interesting to marketers that these personality traits are more prevalent in the ASMR community.

Marketers can use these personality dimensions by appealing to the associated traits. Due to the openness to experience dimension, the ASMR community may be more susceptible to promises of new, unique and transformative experiences and be curious about the participatory opportunities offered by slow tourism. They may, for example, be more open to a historic farming experience, as the unconventional is something they are more comfortable with and because they are naturally curious about new experiences in general. Other themes, such as mental and physical health aspects that are promoted in slow tourism, as well as the encouragement of self-discovery, could be interesting in terms of the neuroticism dimension, as this could counter the depression and anxiety issues associated with this dimension. Slow tourism destinations could put a focus on their health and wellness programs when advertising to the ASMR community, encouraging them to visit the destination to improve their mental health.

No information about the lifestyle or attitudes of the ASMR community is revealed in the existing research. The lifestyle choices of the ASMR communities regarding travel and holidaying are especially relevant in the scope of this study and are explored in the primary research of the thesis, as they might be a better or less suitable a target audience depending on their travel habits and preferences.

5.2 Preferences and aversions of the ASMR community

To successfully use ASMR as a marketing tool, it should be understood by the marketer. The goal of any advertising campaign is to reach as many people as possible with the content produced. When it comes to ASMR, marketers thus need to know what the preferences and dislikes of the majority of the ASMR community are when it comes to ASMR content. Ideally, all individuals in the ASMR community would have the same wants and needs relating to ASMR content, but preferences vary widely within the community. Triggers that are relaxing to some individuals can produce the opposite reaction in others, making them angry or distressed (Janik McErlean and Banissy 2018: 2). It is therefore essential to know the triggers, themes and other issues that the majority of the ASMR community do not like so that marketers can avoid them in their ASMR content and also to know what they do like or find agreeable so these can be included.

There is some secondary data about the communities' preferences and dislikes relating to ASMR content that is important for marketers that want to produce the most marketable and least problematic content possible. This includes audio setup, triggers, trigger objects and the setting of ASMR videos.

Regarding audio in ASMR content, a study by Barratt et al. (2017: 7–9) found that the majority of participants preferred low-pitched content. Most participants also found a binaural audio setup to be more effective in eliciting tingles while background music in their ASMR content prevented them from experiencing strong tingles. The study also established that sounds in ASMR content need to be realistic and true to the sound of the object shown or action performed (Barratt et al. 2017: 6). The most optimal audio settings in ASMR content are thus low-pitched, realistic, binaural and without music. As music is an important element in audio and visual marketing, and also with slow tourism destinations as discussed in the previous chapter, forgoing its use in ASMR is an especially important point for marketers to remember. Information about preferences regarding quality of the sound and the overall importance of the audio component in ASMR content were not found and should be determined in the primary data collection.

It has already been established that the setting or atmosphere is essential in ASMR. Participants in a study noted that the atmosphere of their favorite ASMR video was best described as relaxed, inviting, happy and organized (Barratt et al. 2017: 5). Marketers thus need to find ways to facilitate such an atmosphere, instead of the often action-packed atmosphere typically found in promotional content.

The objects being used and explored by the ASMRtist are often an integral part of the ASMR experience for viewers and listeners. While ASMR content exists in which trigger objects play no role (e.g. whispered or softly-spoken rambles), in most ASMR content the ASMRtist engages with some kind of object to elicit ASMR in their viewers. According to Barratt et al.'s (2017: 7) study, the object used needs to produce a good sound for it to be a good object for ASMR. Furthermore, the ASMRtist should focus on the material the object is made of and on small visual details that are unique to the object for optimal ASMR stimulation. If the ASMRtist does not directly interact with the viewer in the content, most viewers prefer the object to be handled expertly as opposed to a trial-and-error approach. This means that confident and efficient handling of an object is preferred. The distance of the camera from the object should vary depending on what the object or action is in the ASMR video. Most viewers want small, detailed actions to be close to the camera (60 cm or closer) while larger actions should take place further from the camera (60 cm – 1 m) (Barratt et al. 2017: 7). In summary, marketers that include objects in their ASMR content need to make sure that the object makes good sounds, is handled expertly if there is no direct viewer engagement, is shown close-up when exploring its detail and that a wider camera angle is used when not specifically focusing on the details of the object.

The central components in ASMR content are the triggers used by the ASMRtist. There is a great variety of these triggers and individuals react to them in diverse ways. For marketers, it is advisable to use triggers that are attractive to most of the community. Several studies have investigated the triggers that are most effective in eliciting ASMR. The most common tingle-inducing triggers are whispering (65-75%), personal attention (65-75.7%), soft speaking (74%), hair play (73%), crisp sounds (64%), hand movements (47.6-53%), tapping (51%) and scratching (47%) (Barratt and Davis 2015: 6; Cash et al. 2018: 7; Poerio et al. 2018: 6). The problem with this data is that it only asked if triggers induced tingles. For marketers, however, it is important to know which triggers are liked, regardless of their ability to induce tingles in viewers. Thus, this question should be addressed again in the primary research.

As mentioned before, some triggers are relaxing for some people, while in others they can lead to misophonia, which means "hatred of sound" and is characterized by a special sensitivity to (especially human-made) sound (Jastreboff and Jastreboff 2002: 77). Studies of ASMR suggest that within the ASMR community the prevalence of misophonia is unusually high, with some studies citing misophonia in as much as 43% of their ASMR participants (Barratt et al. 2017: 5; Janik McErlean and Banissy 2018: 11). For marketers, it is therefore also valuable to know which triggers are mostly disliked so that they can avoid using these triggers in their content. This data should also be gathered in the primary research.

Marketers should also make sure that only one or two triggers are used simultaneously in the content they produce, for example only tapping or tapping with whispering. It was found that most individuals can appreciate two triggers at the same time (47%), with a smaller number only being able to handle one trigger (24%) (Barratt et al. 2017: 5). If the marketers want to be on the safe side, only one trigger should be used at any given time. The trigger should then be employed for between one and 10 minutes according to the preferences of the majority (68%) (Barratt et al. 2017: 5).

5.3 Opportunities and risks associated with ASMR

There are many promising opportunities that ASMR marketing offers, but at the same time there are also potentially negative consequences that can result from engaging with the tool. Marketers need to weigh these opportunities and risks against each other when considering the use of this new tool. There are some examples that show that using ASMR can be a successful marketing strategy, but being aware of all possible positive and negative outcomes is necessary for making an informed decision.

A practical reason for marketers to use ASMR as a marketing tool is the option to keep marketing costs low. As ASMR is a phenomenon that is mainly encountered online, the cost-effectiveness associated with social media marketing (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 544–547) is also true for the use of ASMR. Costs can be kept very low, especially if the content is produced for online communication, where quality can be lower than for traditional media.

Despite the low cost of producing ASMR content, it has the capacity to be viewed by thousands, if not millions, of people, which is also a big opportunity for marketers. If ASMR content of advertisers is valuable and engaging, it can potentially hold the attention of and be discussed and shared online by the ASMR community or even popular media outlets. The TV advert that Michelob ULTRA produced gained attention not only during its airing at the Super Bowl, but was also featured in several articles because of its use of ASMR (Schonfeld 2019; Tiffany 2019). But even content that is exclusively produced for YouTube, such as the ASMR video by IKEA, can gain significant attention from the ASMR community. The IKEA spot has been shared and discussed within the ASMR community in both private Facebook groups, such as *ASMR Discussion & Research Forum*, and on the ASMR Reddit thread (u/Machinax 2017).

A big advantage of ASMR adverts is that individuals can return to the content if it is good enough to watch more than once. Some viewers come back to their favorite videos even years later to rewatch them. One of the most watched ASMR videos by Gentle Whispering is six years old and still has regular new comments from people proclaiming it one of their favorite

videos that they come back to regularly (Viktorovna 2012). If sufficient effort is put into creating ASMR content, marketers could create a long-lasting advertisement.

One study found that individuals with ASMR have higher than average scores for depression and that engaging in ASMR helps them to improve their mood (Barratt and Davis 2015: 7). Advertising with ASMR could therefore potentially lead to a positive association with the company producing branded ASMR content as the content helps the viewer deal with difficult issues. It is possible that some kind of loyalty or fondness could develop for the company featured in the content.

Of course, there are also risks and disadvantages involved in using ASMR. One is the often negative perception of ASMR by people outside of the community. Many first time viewers that have seen ASMR before and are unable to experience it can find it to be weird (Good Morning America 2019: 2:11; Rallison 2016: 8:41) and could thus develop a negative association with a brand using it in their marketing efforts.

An even bigger risk is the confusion of ASMR content with a form of sexual content. As ASMR is often deeply personal and intimate, ASMR videos are thus perceived as something sexual to the unwitting viewer. Even the companies largely involved in this trend, such as YouTube and PayPal, don't fully understand the phenomenon, and this is evidenced by PayPal banning some big ASMRtists for supposedly violating their sexual content policy (Manavis 2018: online). There is no denying that there is a part of the community that plays into the sexual side of ASMR. This subgenre of ASMR is called ASMRotica and often involves triggers and scenarios that are more sexual in nature such as kissing, licking or girlfriend roleplays. Where mainstream ASMRtists don't appreciate comments that refer to sexuality in any way, the ASMRotica subgenre welcomes these kind of viewers (Lindsay 2015: online). Still, ASMR is not inherently sexual and most ASMR content is not made with the intention of sexual stimulation, but it is true that the intimacy involved in ASMR can evoke sexual feelings. According to a study from 2015, only 5% of participants use ASMR for sexual stimulation (Barratt and Davis 2015: 5). Nevertheless, it is a risk that has to be considered by marketers and may be a reason to not engage with ASMR, especially if any association with something that can be sexualized is counterintuitive to the brand's values (e.g. a children's toys company).

This risk might be even more critical if the marketing measure involving ASMR is supposed to be on TV. We do not yet know if ASMR truly has potential outside of the online space. Michelob ULTRA did run a TV advert with ASMR during the 2019 Super Bowl and reactions were mixed. While many tweets about the advert were positive, the majority them were negative, with people being confused about or uncomfortable with it (Johnson 2019: online).

While it is also possible that people not belonging to the ASMR community watch an ASMR advert in an online space, this is guaranteed with a TV advert. This unwanted negative association may be a reason for many marketers to limit ASMR marketing to the digital space or to abandon it altogether.

Another problem might be the attitude of the ASMR community towards companies using ASMR as a marketing tool. It is possible that they may see it as an opportunistic move by the company and an exploitation of their community and something they care about. While studies have shown that users welcome well-targeted online advertising and marketing as long as it is tasteful and appropriate (Kotler and Armstrong 2016: 533), this may be different for ASMR as it is deeply personal for some members of the community. The community's feelings towards using ASMR as a marketing tool should therefore be explored in the primary research.

If marketers do not put enough effort into the content, there is also the risk of negative feedback and feelings from the ASMR audience. Some ASMR commercials have not resonated well with the ASMR audience, such as the hour-long soothing grill sounds by Applebee's Grill & Bar. Viewers bemoaned the lack of interaction in the video and the repetitive and uninterrupted soundscape, labeling the video as sad (Applebee's Grill & Bar 2018). This risk could be directly addressed by putting the required effort into the content. Della Mathew, Creative Director of the ASMR IKEA advert, explained in an interview with CNBC that the community appreciated how genuinely they tried to produce real ASMR content (Petrova 2019: 2:09-2:28), thus resulting in positive feedback and appreciation of the content.

In summary, marketers need to weigh the opportunities against the risks and should determine whether the large audience, the low costs of ASMR marketing and the positive feelings from viewers towards brands respectfully engaging with ASMR is worth the potential risks of being associated with a "weird" phenomenon that is sometimes mistaken for something sexual.

In reviewing the makeup of the ASMR community, its preferences and aversions regarding the ASMR content they consume and the potential opportunities and risks associated with ASMR marketing, an initial exploration into how ASMR can be used as a marketing tool has been achieved. At the same time, gaps in the knowledge necessary to properly answer the research question also became apparent in this review.

6. Empirical Research: Methodology and survey design

The need for primary research has been established in the previous chapters. As ASMR is a phenomenon that has not been extensively researched, there is an absence of information in the existing literature that is needed to thoroughly answer the research question. There is thus a necessity for primary research to be conducted with the goal of gaining information on this missing knowledge to fully answer how ASMR can be used in the marketing of slow tourism destinations.

This chapter explains the research framework and the methods applied to gather information. The design of the survey questionnaire is explained and the sampling method described. Last, the data collection process and the analysis of the collected data will be reviewed.

6.1 Research framework and design

A quantitative approach was chosen for the research because reliable data about the ASMR community needs to be gathered. While a qualitative approach is normally chosen to answer an exploratory question, the nature of ASMR means that any data collected this way would be highly unreliable. ASMR is an extremely individual sensation, which means that interviewing only a few people will not deliver an accurate picture of the beliefs and attitudes of the ASMR community and as little research has been done experts can only offer theories, not true knowledge. As the goal of this research is to develop recommendations for actions on the basis of the wants, needs and preferences of this community and the composition of the community is one of the pressing questions that needs to be answered, reliable and generalizable data covering these issues needs to be collected. Only a quantitative approach can achieve this.

To successfully design an empirical study, an understanding of the related themes is necessary. For this research, the literature review in the previous chapters has provided this understanding. The literature review is a key to establishing the importance of the study, by connecting it to the current scientific dialog in the literature and ascertaining the gaps in the prior studies (Creswell 2010: 25).

The literature review and a small-scale analysis of the marketing efforts of slow tourism destinations has provided leading information regarding the research question, but there were also some questions that could not be answered through this. These are mainly the questions pertaining to how ASMR can generally be used in marketing, with insufficient available data on the preferences and aversions of the ASMR community regarding ASMR content and no quantitative data available on the attitudes of the community towards ASMR in advertising.

There are also still questions concerning the connection of slow tourism and ASMR since there is a lack of demographic information regarding the viability of the ASMR community as a target audience for slow tourism.

The method selected to gather the necessary information was a survey. This method is best suited if trends, attitudes and opinions of the population are being studied and makes the generalization of results possible due to the statistical description of characteristics within a sample (Creswell 2010: 145). This method was chosen since the goal was to gather information that is generalizable and accurately describes the populations attitudes and opinions.

From the previous statements, the information that was to be collected largely concerned the ASMR community. This community was thus the research population that was examined. The size of the population could not be exactly determined, but several of the big YouTube channels have more than 2 million subscribers. It can thus be determined that the research population is at least 2 million. According to Denscombe (2017: 46–47), the required sample size for representative data does not increase significantly with research populations larger than 5,000, which means that knowing the precise population size is unnecessary. As the goal is to have generalizable data, a large sample is desirable. For a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 384 should deliver sufficiently representative data (Denscombe 2017: 46–47).

6.2 Research instruments – Questionnaire rationale

The survey instrument used in the survey design is an online self-completion questionnaire (see appendix page B-J). Online questionnaires are known to be highly objective due to their high level of standardization and lack of interference from the researcher. To increase the objectivity, the understandability of the questions was confirmed through a pretest of the survey using six participants recruited via a Facebook group dedicated to ASMR research. This also provided an opportunity to include more response options for questions regarding ASMR consumption, as pretest participants experienced the sensation themselves and could offer additional perspectives on various questions, thus minimizing the influence of the researcher. Still, the decision to include open-response options for many of the questions (see, for example, Q.5, Q.8, Q.9) so that respondents of the final questionnaire were able to express their unique ASMR experiences, admittedly lowers the objectivity of the results of these questions as these then had to be interpreted by the researcher. Nevertheless, the open-response options were deemed necessary due to the highly subjective experience that ASMR provides.

The questionnaire aimed to address the knowledge gaps discussed in Chapter 6.1 by focusing on different objectives that correspond to the gaps found in the literature review. Each of the questionnaire items (individual questions) supports one of the following objectives:

- **Determine who, among the survey participants, belongs to the research population:** Questions about frequency of ASMR consumption, time of knowledge about the phenomenon; (Q.1, Q.2).
- **Determine the composition of the population (ASMR community):** Questions about age, gender, country of residence, social status (including education, living situation, occupation); (Q.24, Q.25, Q.26, Q.27, Q.28, Q.29).
- **Asses the travel behavior of the population:** Questions about frequency of holidays, preferred types of holidays and importance of traveling; (Q.19, Q.20, Q.21).
- **Asses the technical preferences of the population relating to ASMR content:** Questions about the importance of sound verses visuals, preferences regarding audio and visual quality; (Q.11, Q.12).
- **Asses the content-related preferences/aversions of the population regarding ASMR content:** Questions about triggers that encourage/discourage watching ASMR content, preferred content type, importance of theme of content, suitability of certain themes for ASMR content; (Q.6, Q.8, Q.9, Q.10).
- **Asses general preferences of the population regarding ASMR content:** Questions about platforms used for consumption of ASMR content, preferred content length, factors discouraging engagement with content, preferred gender of ASMRtist; (Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.7).
- **Determine the familiarity of the population with ASMR marketing:** Questions about knowledge of advertisements involving ASMR and experience of sponsored content; (Q.13, Q.16).
- **Evaluate the population's attitude towards marketing with ASMR:** Questions about perception of ASMR advertisements and sponsorship in ASMR; (Q.15, Q.17).
- **Evaluate the population's preferences regarding marketing with ASMR:** Questions about reasons for watching ASMR advertisements, preferred type of ASMR marketing options; (Q.14, Q.18).
- **Asses the familiarity of the population with slow tourism:** Questions about knowledge of the term, association of its significance; (Q.22, Q.23).

The structure of the questionnaire did not directly follow these objectives, but was rather designed in a way that was supposed to keep participants engaged. To motivate potential respondents, the statement at the beginning of the questionnaire explained the purpose and composition of the survey, making references to the need for participation and the possibility of receiving the survey results. In this section, assurances of anonymity and information about the survey's origin were also provided to establish the legitimacy of the survey and ensure

internal validity. The questionnaire started with questions about ASMR consumption habits and preferences, which are easiest to answer and of most interest to the ASMR community and thus are best able to engage participants. This was followed by a section on ASMR in advertising and the respondents travel habits, with demographic questions being asked at the end due to the sensitive nature of this information. This sequence, from easy to complex and from trivial to sensitive, ensures greater success in completion rates (Denscombe 2017: 193).

The objectives and the questions pertaining to the participants were developed with a consideration of the survey participants in mind. To minimize the response burden for the participant, only those questions necessary to answer the objectives were included, thus reducing the time participants needed to fill out the survey. Also, the wording of the questions and responses was kept as short and simple as possible so that confusion regarding the questions could be minimized. Where necessary, examples and explanations were given to facilitate a better understanding of what was being asked. A variety of question types were used in the design of the questionnaire to both decrease the likelihood of participants becoming bored as well as making sure participants were paying attention, thus countering questionnaire fatigue (Denscombe 2017: 195).

Formulating objectives and only asking the questions needed to address these objectives ensures that the survey measures what it is intended to measure, thus ensuring the validity of the research. To further establish internal validity, respondents were asked to skip questions they were uncomfortable with, as people tend to give false answers to sensitive questions if they are uncomfortable with them.

6.3 Sampling and data collection

As the goal of the survey was to gather representative data, sampling needed to be as random as possible. The most reliable way to gather representative data is through probability sampling which requires sufficient background knowledge of the research population (Denscombe 2017: 34–35). This would typically be some kind of list detailing the members of the research population, but no such list exists for the ASMR community. As no information for probability sampling was available, non-probability sampling was employed. A convenience sample by method of an opt-in was employed in which respondents were not addressed in person but rather chose to participate in the survey of their own desire. In the scope of this study the sample drawn by this method is sufficient to both generalize the data and make conclusions.

The survey was distributed online through the survey service Umfrage Online. A common problem with online surveys is that they skew results by excluding parts of the research population without Internet access. As ASMR is an online phenomenon and it is consumed in the digital space, access to the Internet is a prerequisite for any individual in the research population, thus making this distribution method valid. To reach the largest possible population of ASMR viewers, the survey was distributed on YouTube, which is the most used platform for ASMR. It was decided not to distribute the survey on the ASMR Reddit thread or Facebook groups dedicated to ASMR where the number of people highly invested in ASMR might be higher than in the general population. By distributing on YouTube, casual as well as dedicated viewers could be reached, thus ensuring a sample as representative as possible in non-probability sampling.

Distribution on YouTube was limited to the comment sections of the top 20 ASMR channels (see Appendix page K) on the platform. The top channels were selected according to their subscriber count, and those with the most subscribers were selected. To get a more representative sample, channels that focus on just one specific ASMR trigger were excluded, such as SAS-ASMR (eating videos) or Satisfying Slime ASMR (slime videos). As this kind of content can also be sorted into other YouTube trend genres such as "mukbang" or "oddly satisfying", they could possibly have many non-ASMR viewers or could bias the sample toward particular ASMR consumption habits (e.g. like trigger eating). Also, ASMR channels of minors were excluded, as comments are disabled on these channels as per YouTube policy and this function was necessary to distribute the survey.

Over a period of one week, the link to the survey was commented under each new video posted on the selected channels. After an initial low response rate to posting the survey link as an original comment the approach was changed. After the first day, the link was shared by commenting on existing comments on the video that had been liked and commented on by many people and which had a high visibility in the comments section. This increased the visibility of the link and led to a much better response rate. After one week the survey had 1,125 responses of which 1,016 were complete.

As no retest of the survey could be done within the scope of this study, nothing definitive could be concluded regarding the level of reliability of the survey results. Due to the nature of online surveys, it could be true that a second round of data collection would not yield the exact same results, as it is not possible to reach the same people again. The use of standardization in the questions asked should nevertheless deliver some reliability of the results.

6.4 Data analysis

An essential step in empirical research is an analysis of the data collected. Several data analysis programs were used to analyze the data in the study. The built-in data analysis tool of Umfrage Online was mainly used for univariate analysis. The raw data was also transferred to both Microsoft Excel for a graphic illustration of the results and further analysis and to SPSS for a more complex bivariate and multivariate analysis of the data. Open questions and open-response options were reviewed and categorized according to commonalities in the answers. A graphic representation of the data was created by using the charts in Microsoft Excel (see appendix page L-T). The results obtained through this data analysis are discussed in the following chapter.

7. Empirical research: Results

The previous chapter explained the methodology used in the primary research of this study and gave an overview of how the data presented in this chapter was collected and analyzed. This data is reviewed in this chapter.

The objectives defined in Chapter 6.2 are answered in this chapter. First, the composition of the ASMR community is analyzed, before describing the preferences and aversions relating to ASMR content. The general attitude towards marketing with ASMR is reviewed as well as the attitude towards and knowledge of slow tourism.

As mentioned, 1,125 data sets were collected of which 1,016 were complete and usable. Of these 1,016 data sets, several were excluded despite being complete. The first reason for this was the age of the respondents. All participants younger than 16 were excluded for ethical and research-related reasons. Children younger than 16 do not travel on their own or book holidays and thus are not relevant to this research. The second reason for excluding respondents was that, according to their response to the questions on frequency of consumption and length of knowledge of the phenomenon, they were not considered part of the research population. Individuals that do not consume ASMR obviously do not belong to the research population and were thus excluded. Similarly, individuals that have not known about the phenomenon for a long time (less than one month) were excluded due to their possible lack of knowledge about ASMR. These exclusions reduced the total number of usable data sets to 979.

7.1 The ASMR community

One of the questionnaire objectives was to determine the composition of the population of the ASMR community by reviewing the demographic information collected in the survey (Q.24-29). Demographic information is of interest to marketers as they can use it to assess whether the community they are considering advertising to is a viable target audience and relevant to their marketing strategy.

According to the survey, the percentage of male individuals is higher in the ASMR community than that of female individuals. Of the respondents, 60.5% were male in contrast to 37.5% females and 2% identifying with other genders, such as binary, agender or genderfluid. While this clearly shows a prevalence of males in the ASMR community, it has little effect on how to market to the ASMR community as the focus of advertising should be on the ASMR aspect not on the dominant gender in the population.

The average age of the respondents was 24.6 years. Only 2% were over the age of 45 and 6% between 36 and 45. The majority of respondents were young with 24% being between 26 and 35, 60% being between 18 and 25 and 8% being younger than 18. This clearly shows that the ASMR community in general is a very young one. Slow tourism destinations could therefore potentially use ASMR as a way to communicate with a younger demographic and audiences that are typically reached less through more traditional marketing strategies.

Respondents came mainly from North America (58.3%) and Europe (32.6%). Only a few respondents came from Australia and Oceania (3.7%), Asia (2.5%) and South America (2.4%) and the prevalence of ASMR in Africa seems to be close to nonexistent (0.2%). It therefore seems logical to conclude that, especially for slow tourism destinations in North America and Europe, ASMR advertising is a way to reach audiences.

To get an idea of the social status of members within the ASMR community, their occupation, living situation and level of education were analyzed. Most members of the population were either in some form of employment or were still students. Only 12.7% did not work at all, with 2.3% unable to work, 0.2% retired and 10.2% currently unemployed (2.4% were not looking for work and 7.8% were looking for work). The number of respondents at either school or university (43.2%) was nearly the same as for those that were employed (44.2%). Of the respondents that work, 30.3% were full-time, 10.6% part-time and 3.3% self-employed. A large part of the population, namely those employed, thus have the funds for holidays and are an interesting target audience. The students, on the other hand, may have fewer funds, but they do have the necessary time required for slow tourism. If destinations have offers that are

feasible on a student budget, this large part of the population could also be interesting to market to.

The level of education obtained by the population is largely within the academic or secondary tier. Only 8.5% of the respondents have had primary education or a lesser level of schooling than this. A large part had a secondary education, which was either incomplete (8.1%) or complete (31%). More than half the population has had at least some tertiary education, with 17.5% having an incomplete tertiary education, 25.5% a bachelor's degree, 7.5% a master's degree and 0.8% a doctorate. Although respondents were asked to use the incomplete options only where they had dropped out, bivariate analysis showed that 40% of incomplete secondary education and 53% of incomplete secondary education stemmed from students currently enrolled in school or university choosing those options. It is thus likely that large parts of the population will, in the future, attain a more advanced education.

The living situation of the population is the last demographic question that was reviewed. Only very few respondents lived together with children (3.7%), 0.7% with only children and 3% with children and their spouse. Of the respondents, 9.7% lived with a spouse or partner, while 14.2% lived alone and 12.5% had roommates. The vast majority (59.9%) of respondents lived with their parents or grandparents, which is most likely a reflection of the high number of students as well as the relatively young age of the population. Slightly more than half the respondents living with parents or grandparents were students and more than 60% were 21 or younger. These results indicate that marketing to families is not that compatible with the makeup of the ASMR community, and marketers should instead focus on the experiences young people can have with their friends at the destination.

7.2 The ideal ASMR content

Three of the questionnaire objectives were geared towards assessing the preferences of the research population regarding the ASMR content they consume. These objectives are examined in order to answer how ASMR content should ideally be designed. This will illustrate how to capture the attention of most of the ASMR community by catering to their preferences and thus will give an idea of how ASMR can be successfully used in marketing.

The general preferences of respondents are reviewed first. One of the questions asked was where respondents consumed their ASMR content. Almost the entire population (99.7%) consumed their ASMR content on YouTube, with nearly half of them not using any additional platforms. Other platforms used were Spotify (29.6%), Twitch (19.3%), the Tingles app (12.6%), Instagram (9.7%), other music streaming services (3.6%) and various other platforms (2.3%).

Although about half of the respondents also used other platforms than YouTube, this was still the most popular platform. Nearly the entire ASMR community can be reached on YouTube, thus making ASMR marketing on it the most viable option to reach a large part of the ASMR community.

Most of the population preferred their ASMR videos to be between 20 and 60 minutes long (73.2% for 20–30 minutes and 64.9% for 30–60 minutes). Only about 7% wanted content that is less than 10 minutes or more than 120 minutes long. Videos of 10 to 20 minutes in length were preferred by 32.4% and videos between 60 and 120 minutes appealed to 19.4%.

Regarding the gender of the ASMRtist, respondents preferred female actors (73%), with only 0.6% preferring male ASMRtists and 26.4% liking both genders equally. Using a female ASMRtist in ASMR content for marketing is thus the most recommendable action as 99.4% either prefer female ASMRtist or do not care about the gender.

When asked what kinds of things discouraged the respondents from watching an ASMR video or what made them discontinue watching, many of the suggested issues did not seem to be a problem for the majority of respondents as can be seen in Figure 1. Problematic issues

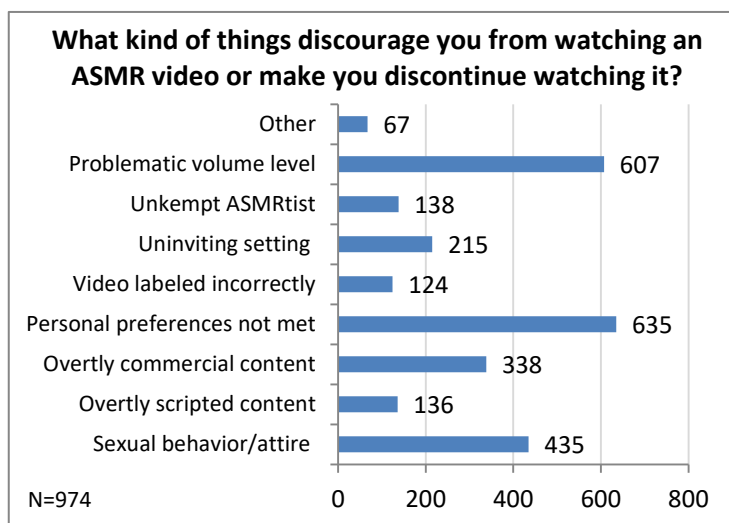


Figure 1 Factors discouraging ASMR consumption (own figure)

included a perceived sexual behavior or attire of the ASMRtist, with 44.7% not watching videos involving this, and overtly commercial content, with 34.7% disliking this. This is particularly relevant to the research question. Issues with the volume level of the video (too loud, quiet, etc.) were problematic for a large number of the respondents (62.3%). The response given most often (65.2%) was that if the content does not meet personal preferences (length, ASMRtist, triggers, etc.) respondents will not engage with that content. This illustrates the need for marketers to know and take into account the preferences of the majority to reach as many of the ASMR community as possible with their content.

In summary, the general preference of the ASMR community is content that is available on YouTube, of medium length and featuring a female ASMRtist. To appeal to the ASMR community at large, these factors need to be satisfied. Also, overtly commercialising content

and displaying sexual behavior should be avoided. Good sound should be a focus and content needs to meet the preferences of the average ASMR viewer so that it is interesting to the community.

The preferences of the community regarding technical equipment and video quality were assessed in questions eleven and twelve. Most respondents found the sound in ASMR content to be more important than the visuals, as can be seen in figure 2 showing the distribution of

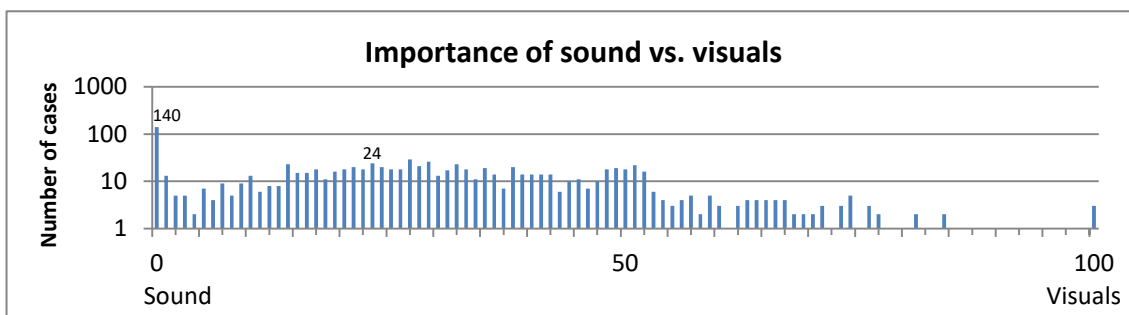


Figure 2 Importance of sounds and visuals in ASMR content (own figure)

responses. When ranking importance from zero to one hundred, with zero meaning sound is most important and one hundred meaning visuals are most important, the average rating of respondents was 28.2 with a standard deviation of 20.1. The majority (72.2%) of respondents found sound to be more important than visuals, choosing values below 40, while only 6.1% chose values above 60 thus rating visuals as more important.

Regarding the quality of audio and visuals, respondents greatly preferred high quality for both. For audio, 86.5% favored high quality in their ASMR content in contrast to only 2.2% preferring low quality. For visuals, 55.7% of the participants favored high quality, as opposed to 5.4% preferring low quality, with the rest of respondents not caring about visual quality.

In summary, for at least half of the ASMR community, good ASMR content focuses strongly on sound quality while still taking into consideration good visual quality.

The last preference area that was examined in the survey was content. In ASMR there are different kinds of content that viewers seek. When asked about their favorite kinds of content, viewers preferred roleplays (74.9%) and trigger compilations with talking (81.7%) to rambles (50.9%) and trigger compilations without talking (44%).

Questions regarding the themes of ASMR videos were also asked in order to evaluate the population's content preferences. Almost half the respondents (49.5%) found the theme of the video to be somewhat important for their relaxation, 33.4% didn't find the theme important at all and relied on the right triggers to relax, while 15.8% require an appropriate theme to relax and thus considered the theme of the content to be very important. The rest of respondents (1.2%) mainly stated that the importance of the theme varied according to the type of ASMR

content they consumed, with the theme being much more important in roleplays. These qualitative answers could be confirmed by looking at how the preferred content influences the outcome of the importance of themes. As can be seen in the table 3, when filtered by roleplay and trigger compilation without talking, results reflect the statements observed in the qualitative answers. In general, it can nevertheless be said that choosing themes that are

	All	Roleplay	Tigger compilation w/o talking
Not important at all	33,4%	28,0%	37,6%
Very important	15,8%	19,4%	11,4%

Table 3 Cross table importance and kind of theme (own table)

appropriate for ASMR is significant as about 82.9% found the theme of the content to be at least somewhat important.

The themes that the community finds appropriate for use in ASMR content can be seen in Figure 3. Of these, nature, relaxing holiday, slowness and deceleration, spa and wellness, mental health and self-discovery were rated as very appropriate themes. Themes that did not resonate well at all were action and crime, while respondents seemed to be divided on the

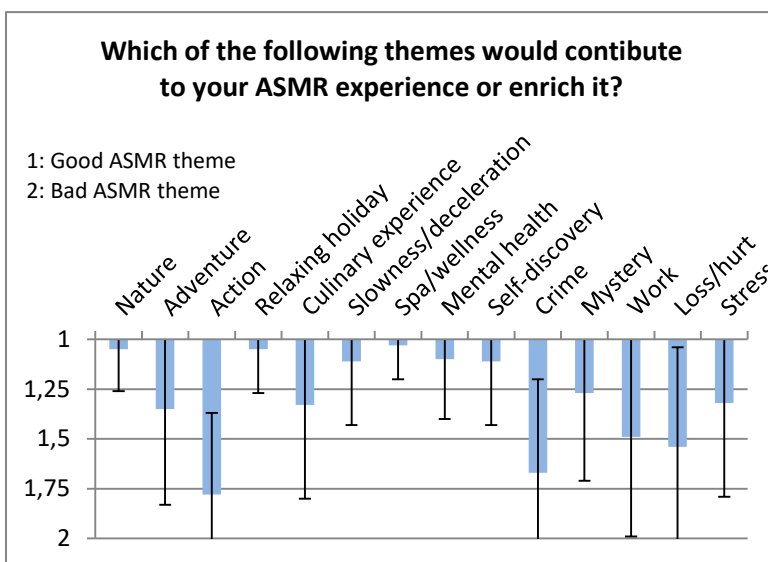


Figure 3 Appropriateness of ASMR themes (own figure)

question of work and loss and hurt. Many found mystery, adventure, stress and culinary experiences appropriate themes, although a significant number of respondents did not like these themes, leading to a high standard deviation. These themes should thus, ideally, not be used.

The last content-related issue is the trigger preference of respondents. Respondents answered that the inclusion of whispering, soft speaking, personal attention, hand movements, camera touching, positive affirmations, tapping and hair sounds would encourage them to engage with ASMR content. At least 70% of the respondents gave these triggers ratings between one and three and only a maximum of 11% gave ratings between five and seven, with one indicating strong encouragement and seven indicating strong discouragement to watch the content. These triggers can thus be included in commercial ASMR content without fear of discouraging large numbers of viewers from consuming it. The only trigger that would discourage a majority of respondents from watching was mouth sounds related to eating. This trigger should therefore be excluded from marketing content. Respondents were divided on both sticky

sounds and crinkling and these triggers should thus be used with caution and rather be avoided altogether. Triggers such as paper sounds, non-eating mouth sounds, scratching and unintelligible or inaudible whispering were rated positively by at least 50%, but simultaneously discouraged between 20% and 36% from watching and as such should be treated equally cautiously.

In summary, the content-related preferences of the ASMR community are roleplays or trigger compilations with talking that involves appropriate themes such as nature, holidays, wellness and self-discovery and which includes well-liked triggers, for example whispering, tapping, personal attention and hand movements.

7.3 ASMR as a marketing tool

The survey aimed to examine how the ASMR community generally feels about ASMR in marketing. The evaluation of the community's familiarity with, attitude towards and preferences regarding ASMR marketing were the objectives that were defined to assist in answering this question.

The first objective was to determine how familiar the community is with ASMR marketing. Both familiarity with ASMR advertising in general and advertising in the form of sponsorship was examined. Respondents were more aware of sponsorship than they were of other ASMR adverts, with 91.5% having watched content that involved sponsorship. In contrast, only 51.8% remembered seeing an ASMR advertisement, with almost half of them having watched the Super Bowl advertisement and about 10% mentioning the IKEA advert or the advert by Reese Canada for their Peanut Butter Cups. The results show that the ASMR community is much more familiar with sponsorship as a form of ASMR marketing than they are with any other type of ASMR advertisements.

To evaluate the population's attitude towards marketing with ASMR, respondents were asked how they perceive ASMR advertising. The response given most often was that respondents were happy about the recognition ASMR receives (59.4%) and that as long as the content is good, they liked ASMR advertising (46.1%). At the same time, a few also felt that ASMR is being misrepresented by companies using it to advertise (27%) and a fraction of respondents even felt that ASMR advertising is an exploitation of their community (10.1%). Most respondents using the open-response option (8.1%) explained that while ASMR ads can be good, it really depends on the effort the companies put in. Many expressed concerns about advertisers not understanding the concept underlying ASMR and only using it for moneymaking or gimmicky purposes. Many felt that ASMR is about helping others and that

companies need to respect that. Respondent 58454927, for example, stated that the services of companies using ASMR advertising should have a connection to the essence of ASMR, such as relaxation, self-care or massage. In summary, these opinions made it clear that the company has to invest time in understanding ASMR and that they have to be respectful of the community's values when engaging with them, but can generally expect a mostly positive reaction from the community.

The community's stance on sponsorships was also evaluated. The vast majority (91.2%) of respondents were fine with ASMRtists doing sponsored content, with only 2.8% not liking it. Most respondents (62.2%) also said that they watch sponsored content while only few (3%) do not engage with content that includes any form of sponsorship. The community largely (76.1%) recognized the fact that ASMRtists need sponsorships to make a living and to generate a stable income and were therefore of the opinion that sponsorship is a good thing. Of the respondents, 60.9% said that indicating when content is sponsored is important to them. Consequently, marketing by way of a sponsorship with a known ASMRtist seems to be a valid way to use ASMR as a marketing tool, as most of the community has a very positive attitude towards sponsorship.

The respondents' preferences regarding ASMR marketing were evaluated by asking for their reasons to engage with ASMR advertisements and their favored type of ASMR marketing options. In the open-response question about the reasons the respondents engaged with ASMR advertisements, many respondents said that they were intrigued by the concept of using ASMR for advertising purposes and were curious if it worked and how the company would approach ASMR. This curiosity was mentioned many times in conjunction with it being the first ASMR advertisement that respondents had seen, thus making them unaware of how companies would employ ASMR as a marketing tool. Some respondents also mentioned actively seeking out the advertisement after having heard about it through other means, such as ASMRtists, Facebook groups and other media channels. Another large proportion of the respondents engaged with the content because they considered it to be genuinely good ASMR that makes them tingle or relax and which includes triggers they like. As curiosity about ASMR advertising will likely become less prominent with a more widespread use of the tool, successful ASMR adverts need to make sure that the content they display truly enables an ASMR experience instead of relying on curiosity alone.

When asked which are the two advertising types that they like best for ASMR marketing, the majority of respondents (76.2%) indicated they favor ASMR videos by ASMRtists which feature a short segment dedicated to the sponsor of the video. The other option liked by at least half

of respondents (50.7%) was a short ASMR advertisement that plays before their selected YouTube video. A sponsorship video where the whole content of the video is dedicated to the sponsorship was selected by 32.6%. The other options (a short original ASMR advert on the company's YouTube channel, a long original ASMR advert on the company's YouTube channel and a short ASMR advert in traditional media such as TV) all only got approval from about 10% of the respondents. Thus, if companies want to use ways to advertise that are easily accepted by the ASMR community, sponsorship and YouTube TrueView adverts are the most reliable way.

In conclusion, the data collected in the survey suggests that in order to use ASMR as a marketing tool with success, companies have to take several things into account. They have to understand and respect the rules and values of the community and seek to produce content that not only advertises their products or services but also adds value to the community. Valuable content is content that not only makes the members of the community curious but gives them tingles or relaxes them, as for other ASMR content. The community is most familiar with the approach of sponsorship but is also open to ASMR adverts on YouTube videos, thus offering companies different ways of engaging with them.

7.4 ASMR and slow tourism

In the survey, questions about travel in general and slow tourism in particular were posed to get a feeling for how familiar the population is with slow tourism and to assess if they could be a viable target audience when it comes to their travel behavior. The first objective evaluated is the population's familiarity with slow tourism and the associations connected to it.

The term slow tourism or travel is not well known within the ASMR community. Only about 7% of the respondents knew what the term meant, the rest indicated that they had not heard of the term before. When asked what they instinctively associated with the terms slow travel and tourism, four major themes could be identified from their responses. The first theme associated with slow tourism was taking more time, taking it easy and not hurrying during the holiday. Connected to these associations, the respondents also mentioned taking time for themselves and staying for longer periods of time at the holiday destination. Another major theme was the lack of stress and feelings of relaxation associated with the phenomenon. In this context, a lack of technology, simplicity and distance from one's daily life and the struggles that come with it were sometimes mentioned. Another topic that was discussed was really getting to know the place one is visiting. Immersing oneself in the culture of the place, conversing with the locals and trying to understand them was something that was also associated with slow tourism. The last theme identified was having less of a plan for the

holiday. Some respondents suggested having no fixed plan or set schedule at all, while others suggested only having a rough plan but being open to other ideas or having less items on the schedule than on a traditional holiday.

Other topics mentioned, although less often than the four themes mentioned above, were traveling slower by choosing transportation that may not be the fastest and particular kinds of holidays such as wellness and spa or hiking and nature holidays. Quite a few respondents also associated the off-season or unpopular tourist destinations with slow tourism. Only a few respondents described the exact opposite of slow tourism, such as visiting many places during a holiday or having a very short holiday, or gave answers that seemed out of context, such as bad weather or showing destinations in advertisements. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that, in general, the population intuitively has a rather positive understanding of the term slow tourism. The main themes associated with the term were feelings such as relaxation, taking time, immersion in an experience and less-busy schedules. The term could thus potentially even be directly used in marketing efforts due to the positive resonance that it received. Even though the term is not typically used in advertisements, the survey responses suggest that doing so could be positive.

The other questions asked regarding travel were meant to assess the population's travel behavior. These are relevant in evaluating whether the population is a valid target audience of slow tourism destinations. The questions therefore looked at the frequency and importance of travel as well as at the kinds of holidays the population prefers.

The majority of respondents had been on at least one holiday in the last two years, with only 19.7% indicating that they did not go on holiday at all. Most of those who did go on holiday went 2–3 times (37.7%), 18.1% went on only one holiday, 16.2% went 4–5 times and 8.3% went 6 times or more. This means that the vast majority is actively holidaying and respondents are therefore potential customers for slow tourism destinations.

Respondents were also asked what kinds of holidays they preferred. The most popular kinds were VFR travel (visit friends and relatives) (58.3%), city trips (54.1%), beach and bathing holidays (45%) and adventure holidays (39.8%). Less people indicated that they liked the kind of holidays that are associated with slow tourism, such as cultural trips (30.5%), hiking holidays (21.9%), spa and wellness holidays (19.1%), educational travel (18.9%) and gourmet tours (7.4%). Still, there were a significant number of respondents that were open to at least one of the types of holidays associated with slow tourism (58.5%) and the ASMR community could therefore be a viable target audience for slow tourism advertisements.

The importance respondents attribute to traveling and holidaying was assessed by asking the respondents to rate it from zero, being very important, to one hundred, being not important at all. The importance of holidaying was rated with a mean of 40.97 and a standard deviation of 29.27. Participants thus lean more towards holidays being important, but responses were broadly scattered, as can be seen in figure 4.

When looking more closely into the responses, more than half of the participants agreed that holidaying is important, choosing values under 40, while 27.4% found traveling not so important (values over 60) and 20.3% of respondents attributed an average importance to it

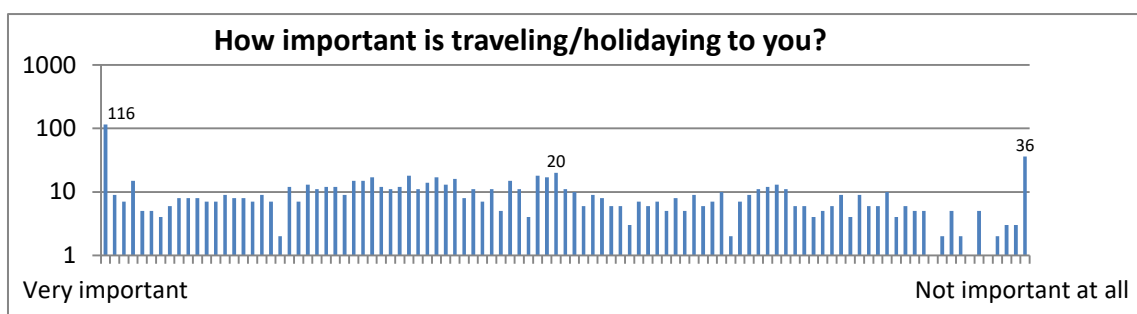


Figure 4 Importance of traveling to the ASMR community (own figure)

(values between 40 and 60). In summary, the research population can be a viable target audience as they generally are active travelers, attach importance to their holiday time and are open to the kinds of holidays associated with slow tourism.

8. Discussion and recommendations for action

This chapter combines the knowledge gathered from the literature, the small-scale analysis of the slow tourism market and the empirical research. It discusses the findings and develops recommendations for action that brands and companies in general and slow tourism destinations in particular can use to aid in designing ASMR marketing content. The focus of this chapter is a description of the factors that slow tourism destinations have to consider when deciding to use ASMR in their marketing efforts. After a brief discussion of the results of the study, the recommendations for action, and the answer to the research question, are reviewed.

8.1 Discussion

The information from the literature review and the primary data from the survey provide the base for answering the research question posed in the introduction: How can slow tourism destinations use ASMR as a marketing tool in their promotion mix? As the previous chapter and the literature review illustrated, using ASMR for marketing slow tourism destinations is a

viable option. The demographic of the ASMR community make it an interesting target audience for slow tourism destinations. The community is mostly open to brands and companies using ASMR for advertising purposes as long as the marketers put in the effort needed to produce valuable and good ASMR content that stays true to the nature of ASMR and the values of the community. Many of the themes that respondents rated as suitable for ASMR are themes that are inherent to slow tourism and which slow tourism destinations are already using in their promotion, such as nature, relaxation and wellness. The results clearly indicate what good ASMR content needs to incorporate in terms of triggers, themes and other related issues, such as using a female ASMRtists and focusing on high-quality sound. They also show what should be omitted to ensure that the content appeals to a wide audience, for example eating sounds. A thorough answer to the research question is given in the recommendations for action in the following chapter.

The data collected in the survey showed that the ASMR community is relatively young, mostly unattached and educated. The younger age of the community in particular could explain the findings in other studies that state that those in the ASMR community describe themselves as more depressed than the general public and that they use ASMR to combat these feelings and relax (Fredborg et al. 2017: 4). The younger age of the community may be an explanation for this high prevalence of depression in the community as Twenge et al. (2019: 185) found that rates of depression are increasing in both adolescents and young adults, and young adults, according to the data from the survey, make up the majority of the ASMR community.

Another result of the research is the finding that the issue of sexualizing ASMR is a point of contention not only from outward but also from within the community. Parts of the community seem to be uncomfortable with the emergence of ASMRotica, as discussed in Chapter 5.3, and this was illustrated by a large number of respondents in the survey indicating that overtly sexual behavior or attire of the ASMRtist discouraged them from engaging with that content.

The study also found that the theme of an ASMR video has at least some importance to the majority of the community. Nonetheless, the kinds of themes that are favored by individuals may vary widely. While there were some themes that the vast majority of the community favored, the community was very divided on other themes. This may explain the often very diverse and creative content landscape of the ASMR genre. It is often joked within the community that one can type anything into the YouTube search bar and add ASMR to it and there is almost a guarantee that there will be an ASMR video about it.

The questions relating to marketing show that although the attitude towards ASMR marketing is generally positive, a part of the community nevertheless has reservations regarding the use of ASMR in advertising. Misrepresenting ASMR is a particular issue that the community has with ASMR advertising. This may stem from the negativity associated with ASMR by being labeled as something sexual in the media (Cash et al. 2018: 2) and by the general public largely perceiving ASMR as something weird. The community may feel particularly protective of the phenomenon because they use it to relax and sleep (Barratt and Davis 2015: 5) and thus may have a very positive, healing image of the phenomenon which they think is threatened by people ridiculing it which can be a result of ASMR advertising content that is seen by people outside of the community.

Another important aspect relating to ASMR advertising is that the community greatly prefers sponsorships and pre-roll adverts to other types of ASMR marketing, even though some of the adverts produced by companies such as Michelob ULTRA and IKEA have been viewed often. The reason for this did not become clear in the research. It could be that this preference comes from a greater familiarity of sponsorship and pre-roll adverts. The data showed that almost the entire community has seen sponsored content and are thus highly familiar with the concept. It could also be that sponsorship is more accepted because it directly helps the ASMRtist, instead of only furthering a company agenda.

Although there is little previous research into the aspects pertaining to the research question of this thesis, the results of the primary research do confirm some claims made in previous studies while, at the same time, contradicting other results.

The mean age of the population of 24.6 is similar to the demographic information participants provided in other studies. Barratt and Davis' (2015: 3) study population has the exact same mean age while several other studies have a mean age of around 29 (Fredborg et al. 2017: 3; Janik McErlean and Banissy 2018: 3; Poerio et al. 2018: 4). These studies did not include individuals under the age of 18 which could explain their higher average age. The relatively young demographic of the community could be due to younger individuals being more comfortable with the Internet and thus being more open to using ASMR for depression, stress and other difficulties described by Barratt and Davis (2015: 7–8). Another explanation is that younger people were more likely to participate in the study due to them having more time to complete the survey, being more active on YouTube or being more proficient in using the social media aspect of YouTube and thus more active in the comment section where the survey was distributed.

The questions regarding sound and visuals in ASMR clearly indicate that sound is more important than visuals for viewers, but that a high quality for both sound and visuals is preferred by the community. This focus on good sounds has been previously explored to a certain degree by Barratt et al. (2017: 8) who found that most of their respondents preferred binaural content, which is typically associated with better overall sound in videos due to the more complex setup required for true binaural recordings. They also found that sounds should be as realistic as possible to stimulate ASMR in viewers, which could be a reason why most of the community prefers high quality sound where the sounds can be heard in detail.

One of the results of this survey contradicts the findings of previous studies. In comparison with the results of previous studies, the number of male versus female individuals in the community is much higher, which was unexpected. In previous studies with more than 200 participants, the distribution of gender was much more balanced with results around a 50/50 distribution (Barratt and Davis 2015: 3; Fredborg et al. 2017: 3; Poerio et al. 2018: 4) whereas in this study it was closer to a 60/40 distribution. It could be that, due to the higher number female ASMRtists included in the distribution method, the audience reached was more heavily male and the survey thus distributed to more males than females. Another possible explanation is that males were for some reason more inclined to participate in the survey than females.

The remainder of the questions were new questions that have not been explored in the scope of previous studies. It is therefore not possible for these new results to confirm or contradict previous research results.

In contrast to previous studies on ASMR, this study did not aim to understand the origin of the phenomenon or how it functions, but rather it aimed to understand the community around it. Their preferences regarding content and attitudes toward marketing were assessed, thereby painting a picture of the ASMR community at large. While the results of this study were not meant to explain the phenomenon, they nevertheless hold value for those seeking to understand it better. The data on preferred triggers and types of content could be used in future studies to select and create ASMR content for laboratory purposes which is effective for the widest possible audience, thus enabling the researchers to elicit ASMR in most participants. Moreover, further studies could look into why some of the triggers are liked by a majority while others work only for a selected few.

The study also provides the scientific community with first data on the ASMR community's attitude towards using ASMR as a marketing tool. As only a few questions regarding this issue were posed, a deeper understanding, particularly regarding other market segments besides

slow tourism, needs to be gained in future studies. This study, for example, does not answer why the community prefers certain ASMR marketing types to others, which would be interesting to explore, nor does it look into the compatibility of ASMR with other markets besides slow tourism.

At the same time, the opinions gathered to understand the community's attitude toward ASMR marketing provides insight into the fact that the ASMR community is very protective of the positive environment it offers and the values that are prevalent in the community. It could be that these positive feelings and the secure environment enable ASMR, which would be in line with previous research that states that most individuals in the community need a certain environment and atmosphere to experience ASMR (Barratt and Davis 2015: 6). Future studies could look into the possible relationship between a secure environment and ASMR to confirm this theory.

Looking at the results of the study, it became clear that the sampling method also had some significant limitations. The method was specifically chosen to get a more representative sample by distributing it on YouTube so that individuals normally not interested in ASMR research could potentially come across it. Although it is, therefore, more representative than previous studies which recruited respondents from Facebook groups and forums dedicated to ASMR research, an even more representative sample could be drawn. As the questionnaire was only distributed on YouTube, it excluded individuals that consumed their ASMR content exclusively on other ASMR platforms. Future studies should therefore use additional platforms, such as Twitch and the Tingles app, to distribute their questionnaires. Nevertheless, in the scope of this study the results are sufficient to make recommendations for action in the next chapters.

8.2 Recommendations for action

The recommendations for action are described in this chapter. The initial considerations that should be made when thinking about using ASMR, such as evaluating whether ASMR is the right tool for the brand, are examined before discussing the marketing decisions. After the factors that need to be kept in mind regarding the production of ASMR content are assessed, the distribution of the content is evaluated.

8.2.1 Initial considerations: ASMR and the brand

Before deciding on using ASMR in any way to market a product, service or brand, there are some considerations that marketers need to bear in mind. Opportunities and risks have to be

weighed and important questions need to be answered before moving ahead and planning an ASMR advertising campaign.

First, marketers need to ask themselves if the ASMR audience is a relevant target audience for their particular business. The ASMR audience is a young one and mostly unattached with the majority still living with their parents or grandparents. Many of the ASMR audience still attend school or university and thus most likely have less financial resources than the average person. Products and services geared towards parents, high-income individuals and seniors are thus not really suited to ASMR marketing. If the target audience of a company does not fit with the young, unattached ASMR community, this tool would not be appropriate for them to use.

These are the factors a slow tourism destination has to consider when thinking about using ASMR. From the findings of this study, most of the ASMR community consider traveling to be important, are active travelers and are interested in the kinds of holidays associated with slow tourism, and thus can be considered a viable target audience for slow tourism destinations in general. In cases where mainly families or seniors are the target audience, slow tourism destinations should not use ASMR marketing. If they are instead looking to include younger individuals in their advertising efforts, ASMR may be a way to achieve this. If they are searching to gain more social media presence, this demographic is ideal for achieving these goals as 73% of people between 14 and 29 and 55% of people between 30 and 49 use mobile data while traveling to access social media, among other things (FUR Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen e.V. 2015: 31).

Another aspect to consider is whether or not ASMR in general is something that is an appropriate marketing strategy for a brand seeking to use with it, regardless of the target audience. Most of the time, marketing with ASMR takes place in the digital space. A brand wanting to engage in ASMR should thus already have a social media presence. This should not be a problem for most slow tourism destinations as all of the destinations did have social media channels in the review of the slow tourism market.

Brands should also decide whether ASMR fits the brand image. According to Liz Taylor, the chief creative officer of the Michelob ULTRA Super Bowl advert, ASMR was chosen because the essence of the phenomenon, the good feelings it induces and the balance it promotes, fits with the message the brand wanted to send about their beer, an organic beer that associates itself with terms like health and wellness (Petrova 2019: 1:24-1:53). The data collected in the primary research also illustrates that brands whose messages fit with the values of ASMR are more likely to be accepted by the community. Brands thus need to consider whether the themes and values connected to the brand fit with those of the ASMR community.

The primary research suggests that there is a fit for slow tourism destinations. Themes that were considered appropriate for ASMR content were largely themes that slow tourism embraces. The themes of slowness, wellness, nature and relaxation lend themselves to ASMR content and slow tourism destinations and are therefore perfectly suited to be used in ASMR marketing efforts.

The last consideration before deciding whether to use ASMR is if the associated risks are worth the opportunities it offers to the brand. Brands that portray themselves as family-friendly might want to distance themselves from using ASMR as people outside the community often mistake ASMR content for sexual content.

8.2.2 Marketing decisions: Ways to advertise with ASMR

If a company has decided that ASMR is a good fit and they want to use it for advertising, there are further decisions that have to be addressed with respect to the different ways in which to advertise with ASMR. The most important decision is whether the marketer seeks to employ ASMR as a tool in online or offline communication.

TV and radio are the traditional offline media on which ASMR could be used for advertising. This kind of advertising is not popular within the ASMR community with only a few of the respondents in the primary study favoring this kind of ASMR marketing. Nevertheless, the Michelob ULTRA advert during the Super Bowl showed that it can be somewhat successful, as even though slightly more than half of reactions on Twitter were negative (Johnson 2019: online), the advert gained the attention of both potential customers and the media. The risk in using ASMR in traditional media is that it not only reaches people who appreciate and use ASMR in their lives but also the general public that, in large part, finds ASMR to be weird, as established in Chapter 5.3. Because of this, the cost of traditional media and the fact that the community itself does not seem to like this way of ASMR marketing very much, it is more advisable to use ASMR as a tool in online communication instead of using it in the more traditional media channels.

The ways in which ASMR marketing can be used in online communication is through social media platforms, either by the company itself or through influencer marketing. Limiting advertising to the digital space makes it possible for marketers to advertise specifically to the ASMR community who will be able to better appreciate the ASMR content offered. If marketers decide to use ASMR in the digital space, the main decision to be made is whether they should produce the ASMR content themselves or engage with influencers within the

ASMR community in the form of sponsorship. Both of these options have advantages and disadvantages.

With self-produced content, the obvious advantage is the full control that the marketer has over the subject matter of the content and the message that the content conveys. There is no third party involved making miscommunication and differing agendas less likely. At the same time, the effort that needs to be put into producing the content will be high, especially if those involved with the project do not have a good grasp of ASMR and its community. The primary research clearly showed that if the ASMR content of companies is good, respects ASMR and represents it accurately, the community is much more willing to accept the content. It is therefore important to understand ASMR and the ASMR community, which requires effort on the side of the marketer. It thus takes time to research and immerse oneself in the community to produce good ASMR content.

Influencer marketing in the form of sponsorships, in contrast, requires much less of the marketer's time. As the actual production of the content is left to the influencer, in this case the ASMRtist, the time the marketer needs is limited to their communication with the influencer. As shown in Chapter 3.3, the marketer needs to give most of the creative control to the ASMRtist and be satisfied with only providing the general direction. While expectations should be clearly communicated with the influencer, the exact way in which the influencer achieves the goals and desires of the company needs to be left to them. The marketer also needs to be aware that the exact message of the content will be controlled by the ASMRtist and the content produced may, thus, not always be completely what the company originally had in mind.

As with any company, slow tourism destinations have to weigh which of their requirements and resources best fit which kind of ASMR marketing. Deciding which approach to take largely depends on which resources are available and how important creative control and ownership of the content is for them. Small regional destinations with little financial resources might not have the opportunity to work with established ASMRtists and it may thus be more advisable for them to produce their own content. Larger, established destinations, on the other hand, could have the monetary resources to sponsor an ASMRtist and little available time to produce the advert and could, therefore, approach an ASMRtist for a sponsorship. If a destination wants a high degree of control over the content produced they should produce the ASMR content themselves.

8.2.3 The creative component: ASMR content

The next step in using ASMR as a marketing tool is to produce the ASMR content. Depending on the method of ASMR marketing selected, the creation of the ASMR content will differ.

As mentioned before, the marketer should first familiarize themselves with ASMR content and the ASMR community for self-produced content (for online and offline purposes). The next decision is to select a theme that is well-suited to ASMR and which will be the focus of the content. Arguably, one of the most important factors to decide on is which triggers should be included in the content. Chapter 7.2 illustrates the most important preferences and aversions of the ASMR community that should be considered in this context. This includes triggers that are well-liked, such as whispering and personal attention, and those which a large part of the community does not appreciate, such as mouth sounds during eating. For this phase, marketers also need to choose someone to act as the ASMRtist, keeping in mind that most of the community prefers female voices. If no artist is featured visually in the content, for example in a trigger compilation, people who can expertly perform the tasks in the content should be used as the community prefers expert handling of objects and tasks in that instance (see Chapter 5.2).

A factor that was not a significant part of this research is how to achieve the high quality of sound most viewers of ASMR content prefer. Marketers who decide to produce their own content need to use equipment (microphones, amplifiers, etc.) that will optimize the sounds and visuals of the content. While these issues were not discussed within the scope of this study, they should nevertheless be considered and relevant literature should be studied to acquire the needed knowledge.

Some themes suited to self-produced content for slow tourism destinations could be, for example, nature or spa and wellness. An idea for a self-produced ASMR video could be to showcase a typical massage experience at the destination in a trigger video without voices. A massage therapist could demonstrate three different massage techniques on a model, with the focus on the sounds of the materials involved, such as towel sounds, skin-on-skin sounds, the clicking sounds of the stones of a hot stone massage, the sounds of the massage oil and so on. One could also interview a nature guide of the destination that softly answers questions about their most impressive experiences with the nature and wildlife of the area. An option for a low cost and time efficient production could use the visuals of an existing video of the nature and activities that can be experienced at a destination and overlaying it with a whispered ASMR voice-over.

If a company chooses to work with an ASMRtist, they have less to do with the actual production and creative process, but there are, nevertheless, important steps that are necessary when producing successful content using sponsorships. As discussed in Chapter 3.3, the most important aspect for a successful collaboration with an influencer is clear and forward communication. Marketers need to outline their expectations, sketch out the general idea for the sponsored video and clearly state the issues that are essential for the cooperation to take place. While some general demands can be made, for example regarding the theme of the video and aspects that need to be showcased, marketers need to leave the details to the ASMRtist. It is therefore essential to find the most appropriate influencer beforehand and evaluate whether the kind of videos that are typically produced by them include the kind of content looked for in a sponsorship.

An idea for a full-length, sponsored video could, for example, be a report of a holiday by an ASMRtist that has been invited to the destination for a weekend. The ASMRtist could tell the audience about the destination, the activities they experienced and show off products or items found on the trip that are tingle-inducing. For a short sponsorship segment within a video, marketers could provide the ASMRtist with pictures and videos of the destination as well as information about the destination and possible activities in the area that the artist could then incorporate in the segment.

No matter which approach is chosen, marketers need to be aware that whoever produces the content and appears in it needs to be genuine in their efforts. As Della Mathew, creative director of the IKEA advert, stated in an interview (Petrova 2019: 2:09-2:28), the community appreciated their content because they were genuine in their effort to stay true to what ASMR is. This is thus essential for the success of ASMR marketing content, as marketers can show their appreciation for ASMR in this way.

8.2.4 Distribution channels: Making content available

The last step in using ASMR as a marketing tool is making the produced content available to the target audience. For content produced for offline communication, such as TV and radio, the marketer needs to purchase airtime on the appropriate radio stations and TV channels.

In online communication there are several ways that content can be distributed. The most central platform for ASMR content is YouTube, as discussed previously in this research. Depending on whether the content in question is self-produced or produced within a sponsorship, the channels on which the content appears will differ.

Self-produced videos can only be distributed on the company's YouTube channel, whereas sponsorship content can either be on the company-owned channel, the channel of the ASMRtist or both, depending on the sponsorship contract. The advantage of distributing the video on the ASMRtist's channel is the automatic sharing of the content with subscribers of the channel. On the other hand, hosting the content on the company's channel enables marketers to make use of the YouTube TrueView adverts discussed in Chapter 3.3, by making the content appear as an advertisement on videos connected to ASMR. If possible, hosting the content on both a company-owned channel and the ASMRtist's channel would be ideal.

To maximize the visibility of the content it needs to be shared on other social media platforms. The company should link to the ASMR content from their website, advertise it through tweets, show a teaser on Instagram and link to the YouTube video on any other platforms they are active on. The ASMR content can also be uploaded to Facebook and shared with the audience there. This will all lead to increased visibility of the content in general and on YouTube in particular, due to the YouTube algorithms. To optimize visibility, marketers can research search engine optimization, which, when correctly employed, makes content more easy to find on the different search engines (Elmansy 2013: 4).

Active commenting on the video also makes the content more visible on YouTube, as well as getting the video liked by viewers, as evidenced by content creators across the platform asking their viewers for likes and comments. Companies should thus actively interact with viewers in the comment section of YouTube, liking and commenting on positive reactions where viewers praise the content, but also reacting to well-meant critique, which shows the community their willingness to improve.

If slow tourism destinations follow these recommendations, they should be able to produce ASMR content for marketing purposes which will be appreciated by the ASMR community and will promote their destinations in a positive way.

9. Conclusion and outlook

This research aimed to identify ways in which slow tourism destinations could make use of ASMR as a tool within their promotion mix. The goal was to develop recommendations for action that would guide businesses in general and slow tourism destinations in particular through the considerations that have to be made in order to use this new tool to promote their services and products and to form connections with their audiences.

In order to reach these goals, a relatively new tool under scrutiny, ASMR, was discussed. The premise was that in order to properly employ the tool it had to be understood and therefore the history and origin of ASMR and the ASMR marketing efforts of companies were thematized before the characteristics that best identified ASMR content were determined. These characteristics then helped in understanding the tool as well as identifying it for this thesis.

Important marketing concepts were then explained to gain an understanding of the underlying mechanisms of advertising. This understanding was necessary to clarify the ways in which ASMR could be used as a marketing tool within the field of marketing.

The term slow tourism was then explored by discussing its origin and the various definitions in the scientific community. As the definition of the term was very ambiguous, characteristics defining slow tourism were formulated using a preexisting framework. With the help of these characteristics, an analysis of the marketing efforts in slow tourism destinations could be undertaken to help identify common themes in their marketing as well as the absence of the use of ASMR as a marketing tool.

A comprehensive literature review on ASMR helped to identify the factors that are important in successfully using ASMR in marketing. Examining the composition of the ASMR community and its preferences regarding ASMR content and evaluating the opportunities and risks involved in using ASMR as a tool facilitated a first glimpse of the important issues connected to the use of ASMR as a tool, as well as the gaps in knowledge of the tool that were needed to answer the research question.

The identification of these gaps helped select the most appropriate method of collecting the data needed to answer the research question. For this, a survey was conducted via an online questionnaire with appropriate questions. By reviewing and analyzing the results of the questionnaire, an answer to the research question could be developed.

The combined results of the literature review and the survey illustrate that ASMR can be a viable marketing tool for slow tourism destinations. If slow tourism destinations acknowledge and use the information from this thesis, they can use ASMR in several ways. These options, described in detail in the recommendations for action, all have their advantages and disadvantages, but they can all ultimately be viable ways to use ASMR.

Although least recommended, ASMR can be used in TV to gain the attention of audiences by presenting them with something special and unique which has rarely been seen before. This relies heavily on the viewers curiosity about this new way of advertising and thus may be less effective in the future.

The more common way to use ASMR is in online advertising. By providing content on the platforms where ASMR is present, marketers are able to communicate directly with the ASMR community and tailor their offers and messages to their specific needs.

Marketers can either produce ASMR content themselves, which necessitates an understanding of the phenomenon and a thorough study of the community they are interacting with. While marketers have greater control over the content and messages being sent this way, they have to acquire the expertise to produce content in the way ASMRtists do.

With sponsorships, this is much less of a problem. By sponsoring an ASMRtist, the marketer makes use of their expertise and their direct connection to the ASMR community, but has to accept less control over the exact message that is being sent and what the end product looks like.

In all these cases, the preferences of the ASMR community regarding ASMR content have to be observed so that the content is palatable to the widest possible ASMR audience. Marketers need to respect the community's values in order to avoid being seen as exploiting the phenomenon as well as show their appreciation for ASMR as a tool for healing and relaxation to many in the community.

In summary, this thesis has achieved its goal, which was to showcase the ways in which ASMR can be used in the marketing of slow tourism destinations. It revealed the general compatibility of ASMR and slow tourism and has also provided advice on how this compatibility can be used in practice. Although some questions remain and the field of ASMR marketing has to be explored further, this thesis has provided a first glance at ASMR as a marketing tool by presenting its uses for slow tourism destinations.

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Appendix

List of destinations and the characteristics they meet

Characteristics of Slow Tourism										
Destination	Unique and transformative experiences	Responsible consumption	Participatory opportunities	Ecological responsibility	Social responsibility	Economic responsibility	Improvement of health		Self-discovery	
							Improvement of physical health	Improvement of psychological health		
"Slow nature holiday region" with regional setting United States										
Bavaria	x	x	x				x	x		
Banff and Lake Louise	x	x					x	x	x	
Sonoma County	x	x		x			x	x		
Aruba	x				x		x	x	x	
Hawaii		x		x			x	x	x	
"relaxing wellness holiday region" with regional setting Germany										
Triol	x	x		x			x	x		
Lithuania	x	x		x			x	x		
Slovenia	x		x		x		x		x	
Hohe Tauern	x	x		x	x		x			
Steiermark		x		x	x		x	x		
"spiritual experience holiday region" with regional setting Philippines										
Maldives	x	x	x				x	x		
India	x			x	x		x	x		
Waikato	x	x	x	x			x			
Nepal	x		x				x	x	x	
Salzburger Land		x	x	x			x	x		

Survey questionnaire

ASMR and marketing

Welcome to my survey!

Hello fellow ASMR viewers!

Thank you so much for wanting to participate in my study. Every completed survey helps me a lot and I appreciate you taking some time to do so.

As part of my bachelor's degree in leisure studies at the University of Applied Sciences in Bremen I am currently working on my thesis. I have chosen to do research about ASMR. My thesis will look into ASMR and how it can be used to market products, brands and especially slow tourism destinations. Thus there will thus be questions about your ASMR consumption as well as parts related to marketing.

The study will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You can even take a break from it and come back later if you want to, so an interim ASMR session is totally possible. :)

Rest assured that all your answers and data will be kept confidential and that it is processed completely anonymously.

As a result of this process I hope to gain a better understanding of the ASMR community how marketing with ASMR should be done. If you are interested in reading the finished thesis or have any questions or concerns email me (mabode@stud.hs-bremen.de).

If you are ready click next to begin with the survey!

Marisa :)

ASMR consumption

1. How often do you consume ASMR content?

- I do not consume ASMR content
- Once a month or less
- Several times a month
- Several times a week
- Every day

2. How long have you known about the term ASMR and the ASMR community? ⓘ

- Since 2010 when the term was coined
- 6-8 years
- 3-5 years
- Between one month and 2 years
- Less than a month

3. Where do you consume ASMR content?

Choose all that apply.

- YouTube
- Spotify
- iTunes
- Amazon Music
- Twitch
- Tingles App
- Instagram
- Other (please specify)

4. How long are the videos you prefer to watch?

Multiple selection possible.

(If for example your preferred video length is between 20 and 40 minutes, please select the two options that include that time period.)

- Less than 5 min
- 5 - 10 min
- 10 - 20 min
- 20 - 30 min
- 30 min - 1 h
- 1 - 2 h
- More than 2 h

**5. What kind of things discourage you from watching an ASMR video or make you discontinue watching it?
Select all that apply.**

Multiple selection possible.

- (Perceived) sexual behavior/attire by the ASMRtist
- Overtly scripted content
- Overtly commercial content
- Personal preferences (triggers, length, etc.) not met
- Video labeled incorrectly
- Uninviting setting (untidy, sloppy, cluttered, etc.)
- Unkempt ASMRtist
- Problematic volume level (too quiet/loud)
- Other (please specify)

6. Please rate the following triggers according to the likeliness that they encourage or discourage you to start watching or to continue watching an ASMR video, with 7 being strongly encouraging and 1 being strongly discouraging.

	7 (strongly encouraging)	6	5	4	3	2	1 (strongly discouraging)	Don't know
Soft speaking voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whispering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inaudible/unintelligible whispering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tapping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crinkling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scratching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sticky sounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-eating mouth sounds (licking, kissing, smacking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eating mouth sounds (drinking, eating, mukbang, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hair sounds (brushing, styling, movement)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paper sounds (page turning, cutting paper, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hand movements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camera touching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive affirmations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What kind of ASMRtist do you like best?

- Male
- Female
- I like both equally

8. What kind of ASMR content do you like watching/listening to?

Multiple selection possible.

- Roleplays
- Rambles
- Trigger compilations (with talking)
- Trigger compilations (without talking)
- Other (please specify)

9. How important is the theme of the video for you to get tingles/get relaxed?

- Not at all, I just need the right triggers.
- Somewhat important, some themes distract me from relaxing.
- Very important, the theme is part of what makes me relax.
- Other (please specify)

10. Which of the following themes would contribute to your ASMR experience or enrich it?

	Good theme for ASMR	Bad theme for ASMR	Don't know
Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relaxing holiday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-discovery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mystery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Action	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spa/wellness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culinary experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Loss/hurt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slowness/deceleration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


11. Which is more important in ASMR? Sound or visuals?

Sound Visuals

12. What is your preference quality-wise regarding the following features in ASMR content?

	High quality	Low quality	Don't care
Audio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ASMR in advertising

13. Have you ever watched/heard an advertisement that used ASMR? If yes, please indicate what kind of advertisement it was. 

No

Yes (please specify kind)

14. What were your reasons for deciding to watch/hear the ASMR ad, if you had the possibility of disengaging (e.g. skip ad, switch channels, etc.)?

If you have never watched an ASMR ad please skip this question.

15. How do you perceive advertisements that use ASMR?

Multiple selection possible.

- I'm happy that ASMR gets more recognition.
- It's an exploitation of our community.
- If they are good I like it. The more content the better.
- I feel like ASMR is being misrepresented by companies using ASMR to advertise.
- Other (please specify)

16. Have you ever watched an ASMR video that was sponsored?

- No
- Yes
- I'm not sure

17. This question is about your take on sponsorships. Please select all statements that you agree with.

Multiple selection possible.

- I'm fine with ASMRtists doing sponsored videos.
- I don't like it if ASMRtists make sponsored videos.
- Correctly indicating the sponsorship is important.
- ASMRtists need sponsorships to make a living so they are a good thing.
- I watch sponsored content.
- I don't watch sponsored content.

18. Of all options choose the two (2) types of ASMR marketing that you would like most/find best of the options provided.

- Pre-roll ads (short ASMR ad before YouTube video)
- ASMR video about sponsorship (ASMRtists whole video is about the sponsored business, e.g. Gentle Whispering and Blue Apron)
- ASMR video with sponsorship (short segment in ASMRtists video about sponsored business, e.g. Gibi ASMR and Honey)
- Short original ASMR ad (ASMR content by business on their own channel, e.g. Safeguard ad)
- Long original video ads (ASMR content by business on their own channel, e.g. IKEA ad)
- Short ASMR ad on traditional media (radio, Tv, e.g. Michelob Ultra Superbowl ad)

Holidays and slow tourism

19. How many times did you go on a holiday (1 night and more) within the last 2 years?

- I did not go on a holiday
- Once
- 2-3 times
- 4-5 times
- 6-7 times
- 8 times or more

20. What kind of holiday trips do you like to do?

Multiple selection possible.

- VFR travel (Visiting Friends and Relatives)
- City trip
- Adventure holiday
- Cultural journey
- Spa/wellness holiday
- Hiking holiday
- Beach and bathing holiday
- Educational travel
- Gourmet tour

21. How important is traveling/holidaying to you?

Very important Not important at all

22. Do you know the term slow tourism/travel?

- yes
- no

23. What do you think slow tourism/travel is? What are things, themes and feelings that you (instinctively) associate with it?

Demographic information

The demographic data will give us a better idea of how the composition of the ASMR community. Please remember that your answers are anonymous. Still, if you feel any uncomfortableness in answering some of these questions, you can simply skip them. :)

24. What year were you born in? 

25. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other (please specify)

26. Where do you live?

27. What is your current living situation? Living...

... alone

... with parents/grandparents

... with spouse/partner

... with children

... with spouse/partner + children

... with roommates

28. What is your current occupation?

- Employed (full-time)
- Employed (part-time)
- Unemployed (currently looking for work)
- Unemployed (currently not looking for work)
- Student (school or university)
- Self-employed
- Retired
- Unable to work

29. What is the highest level of education you achieved/completed?

If you chose to drop out at a certain level please use the (incomplete) options.

- Did not attend school
- Some primary education (incomplete)
- Primary education
- Some secondary education (incomplete)
- Secondary education
- Some tertiary education (incomplete)
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate

Page 6

Thank you so much for participating! You have been a great help.

I wish you the best sleep, relaxation and tingles in the world!

» [Umleitung auf Schlussseite von Umfrage Online \(ändern\)](#)

List of channels included in the survey design

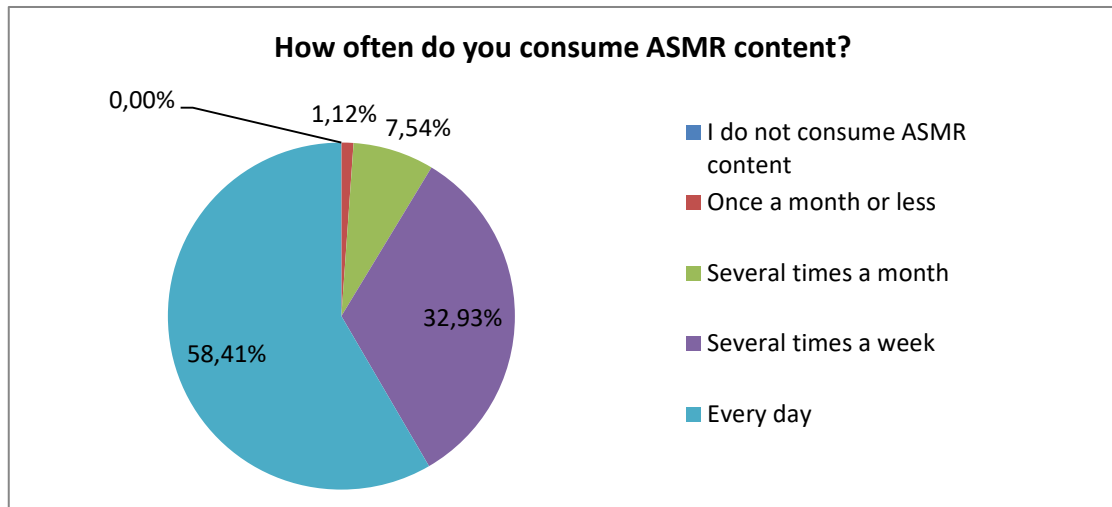
20 Top ASMR channels

Name	Subscribers	Link
ASMR Cherry Crush	688 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCp5oSl262QFM0sjKj_kYILA
ASMRSurge	701 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCIKOy_q2VWDv1vzeoi7KgNw
WhispersRed ASMR	720 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UC2nyigZS5YNDrCu_pih809w
Karuna Satori ASMR	730 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCR3m5LGZuqORVdUZ1KaieYg
Latte ASMR	750 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCQe2Y7V-C9bNMAcCJCBvzQQ
MassageASMR	770 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCGOfiuubHnhVrc9IEcSk1Nw
Love ASMR by Ana Muñoz	800 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZ6cGrTvlInU9995L8l06Vw
ASMR Glow	810 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCFmL725KKPx2URVPvH3Gp8w
Palagea ASMR	860 thousand	www.youtube.com/channel/UCNlMeUt5nOTQ-yfjXzRKVKA
ASMR KittyClaw	1,1 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCo-gAYrvd7WlrcRsNueddtQ
asmr zeitgeist	1,1 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCzGEGjOCbgv9z9SF71Qyl7g
ASMRMagic	1,1 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UChRkD8ElaVdk7OBQAgx8JrQ
FrivolousFox ASMR	1,1 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNfsDH8sZe13u7rSxaEBkw
Sweet Carol	1,2 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCTFCMkTZPwi_PjerXYxDscA
ASMR Suna	1,3 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UChYcJLnVxqgO3SkM6vKX9aw
Chynaunique ASMR	1,3 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCbpfb0DCFzjsQ18aQXXylA
Gentle Whispering ASMR	1,6 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UC6gLIAnzg7eJ8VuXDCZ_vg
ASMR PPOMO	1,7 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCAtFkapSeoEGPxm5bC3tvaw
Gibi ASMR	1,9 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCE6acMV3m35znLcf0JGNn7Q
ASMR Darling	2,3 million	www.youtube.com/channel/UCikebqFWoT3QC9axUbXCPYw

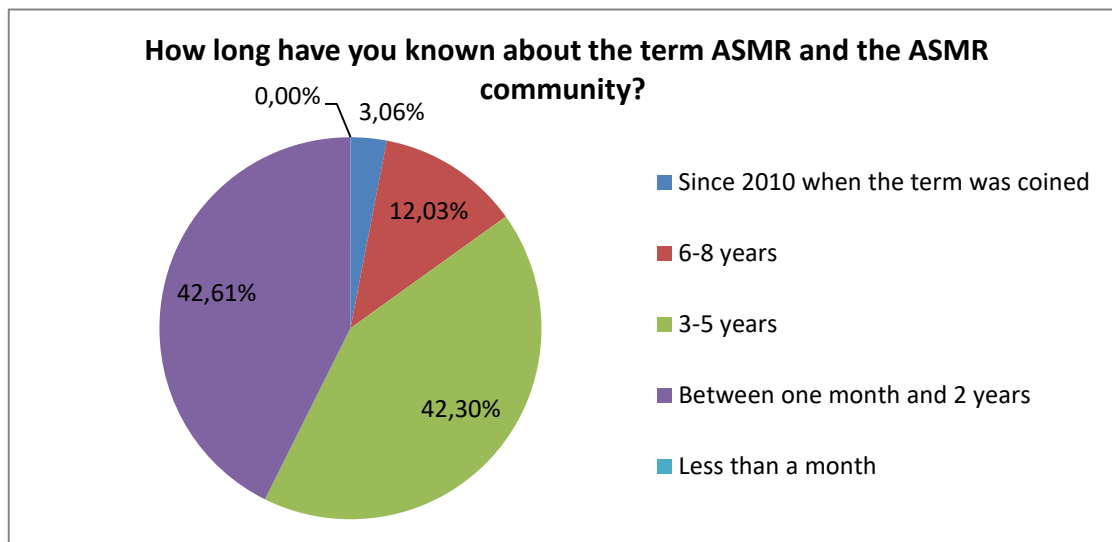
Status as of 10th of Mai 2019

Graphic analysis of survey results

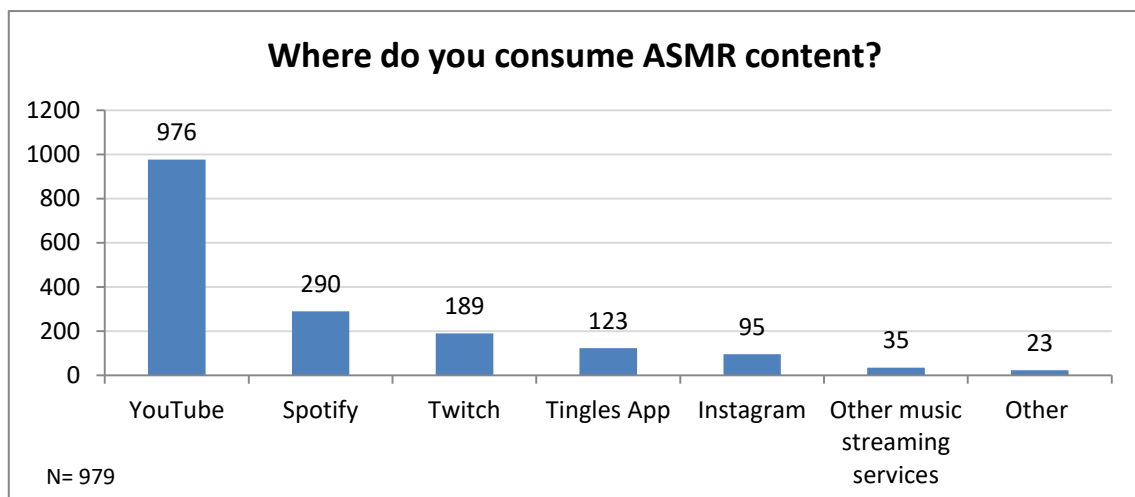
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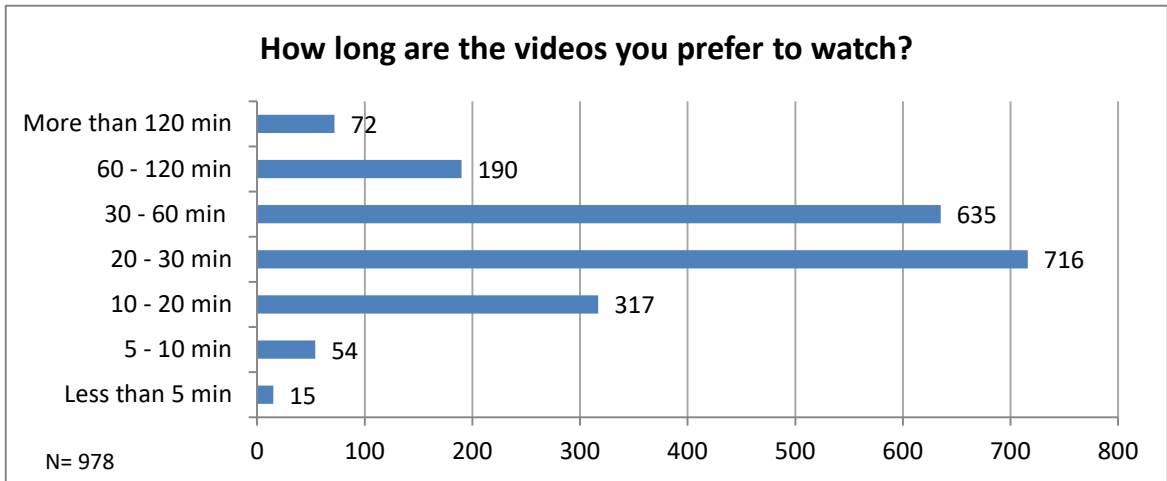
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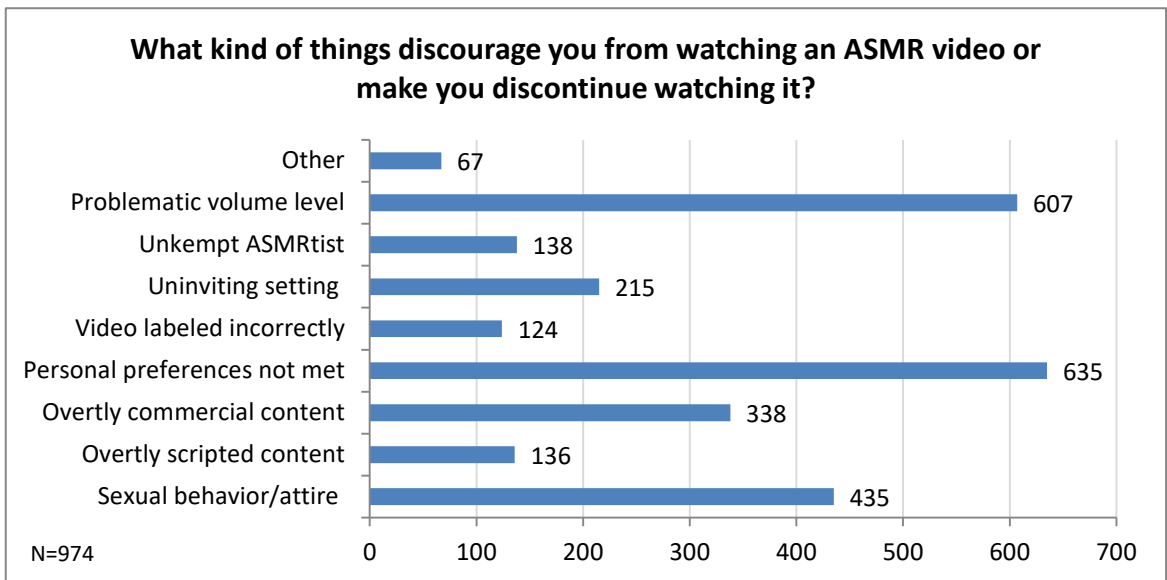
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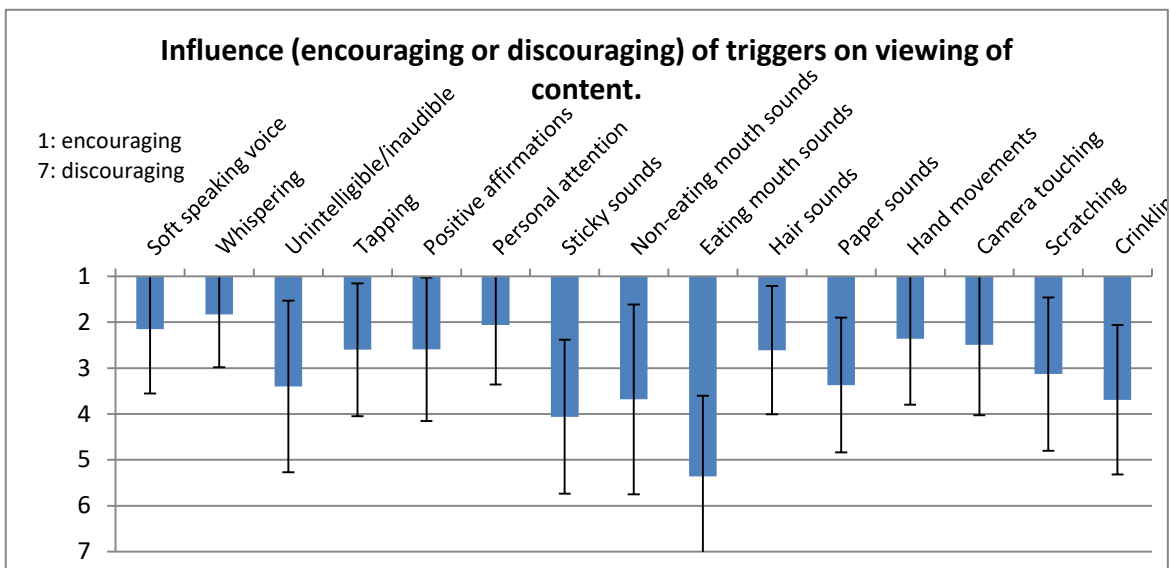
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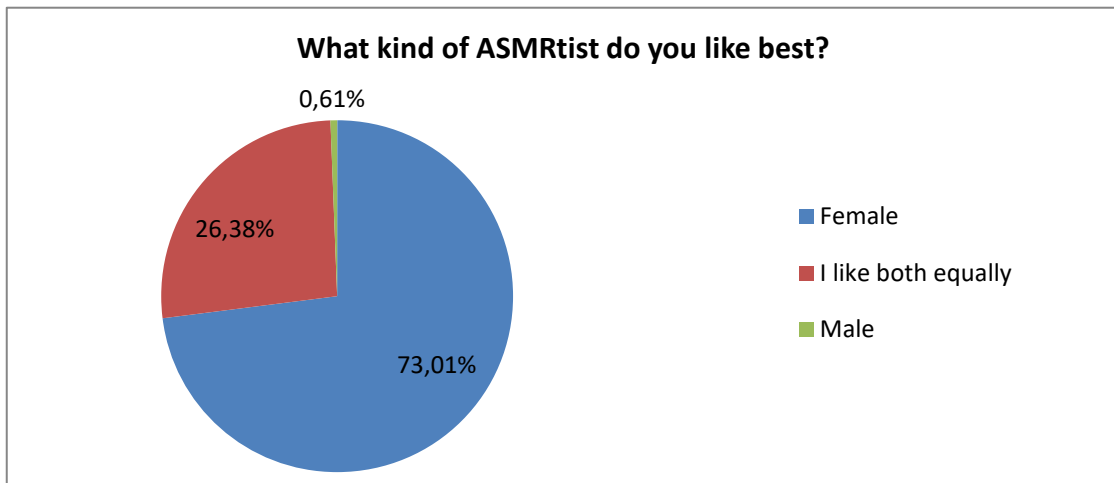
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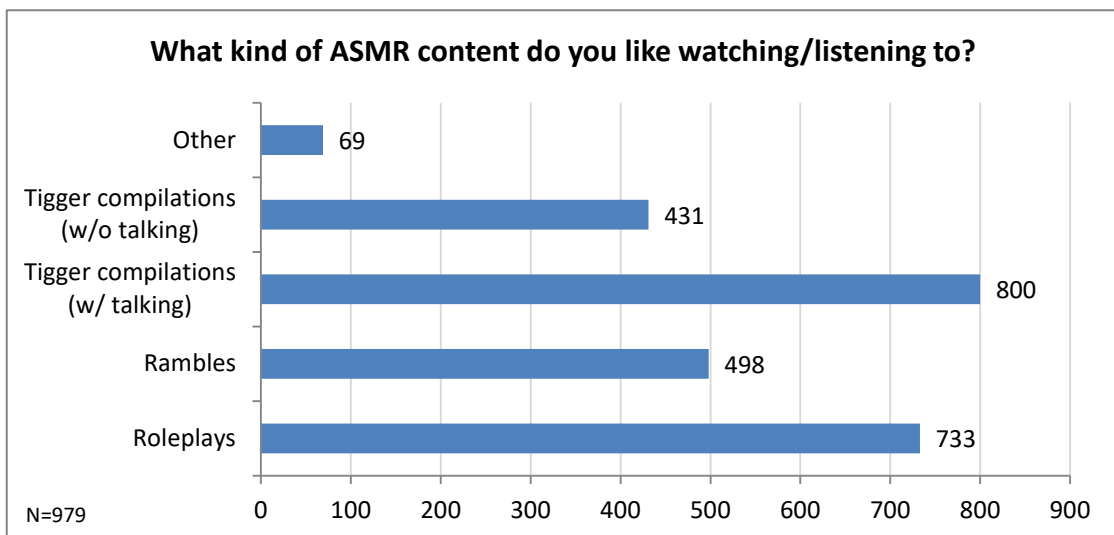
Question 6



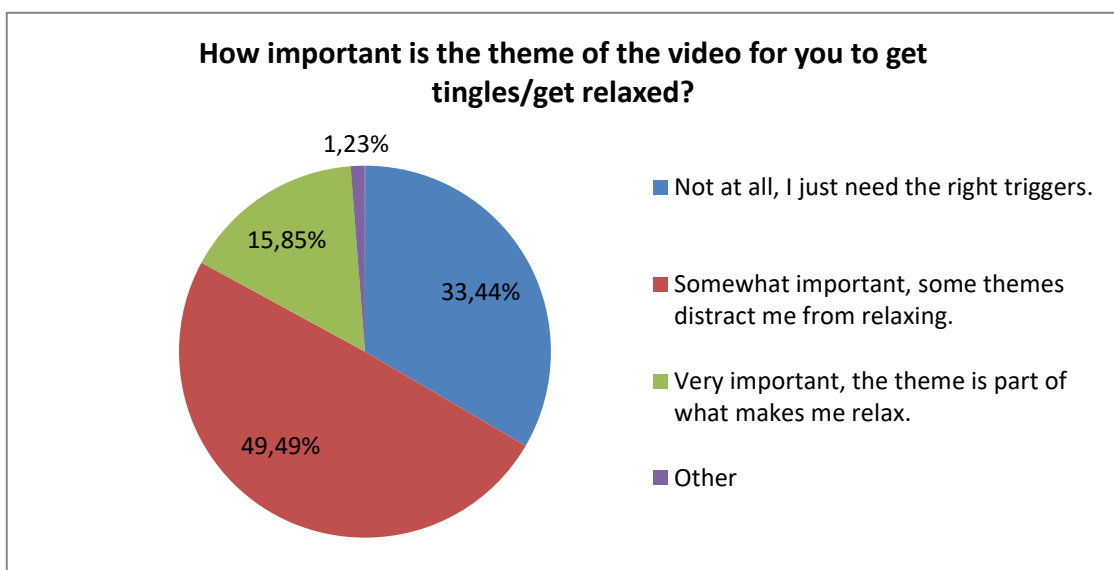
Question 7



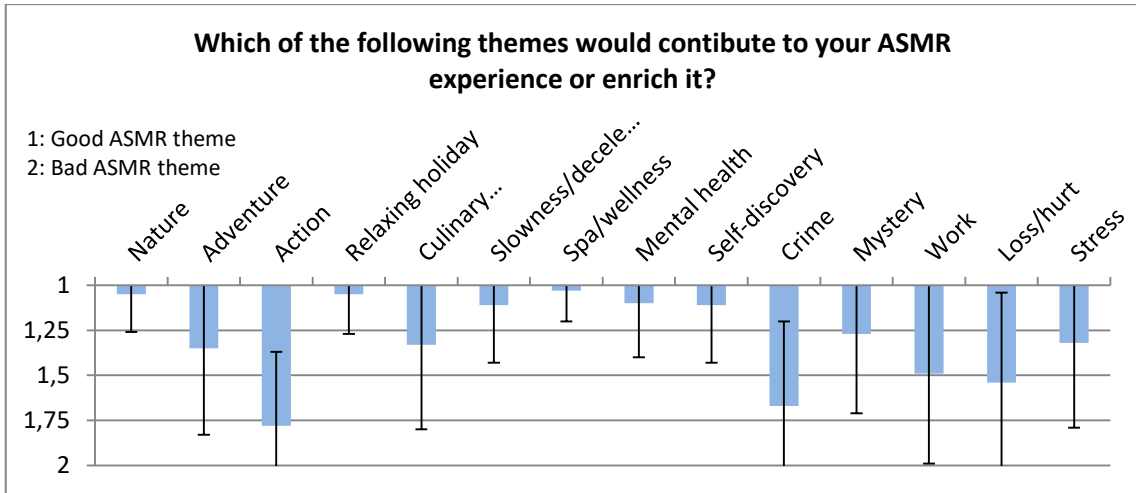
Question 8



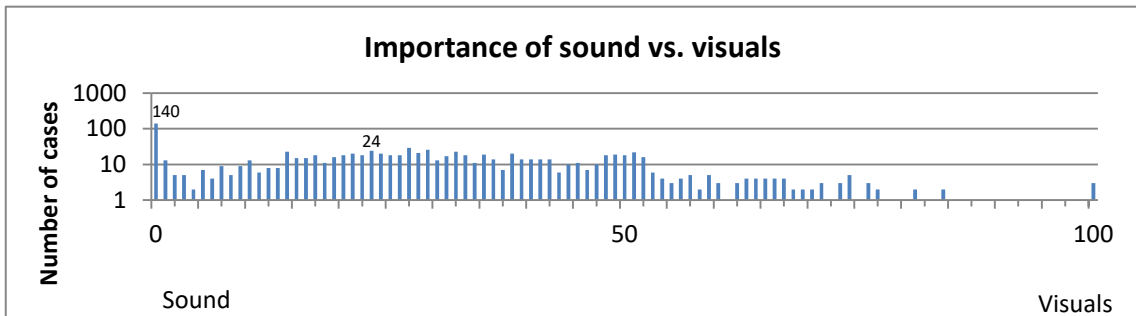
Question 9



Question 10



Question 11

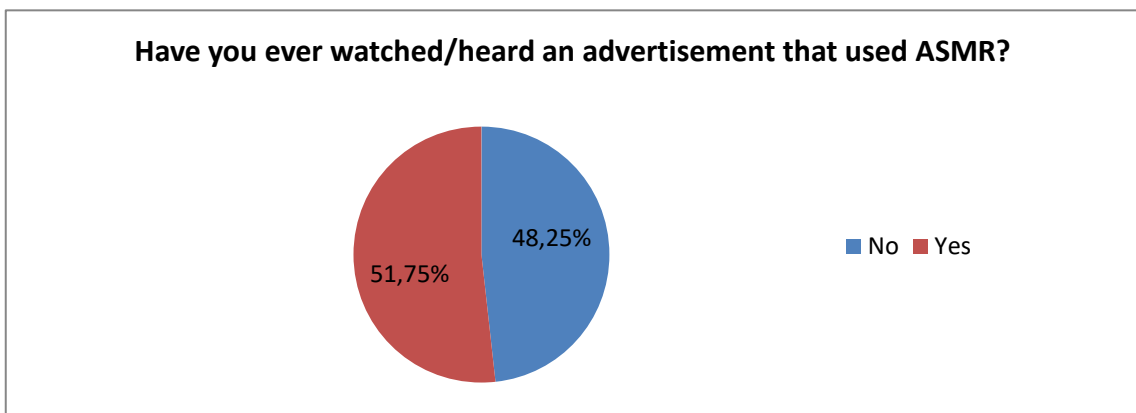


Question 12

What is your preference quality-wise regarding the following features in ASMR content?

	High quality		Low quality		Don't care	N= 979	
	Σ	%	Σ	%		∅	±
Audio	847	86,52	21	2,15	111	1,02	0,15
Visuals	545	55,67	53	5,41	381	1,09	0,28

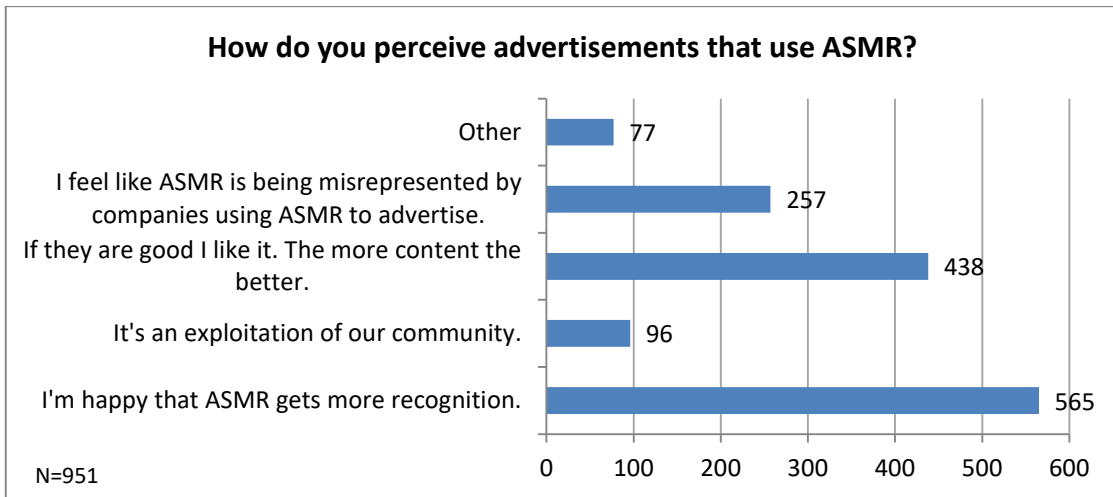
Question 13



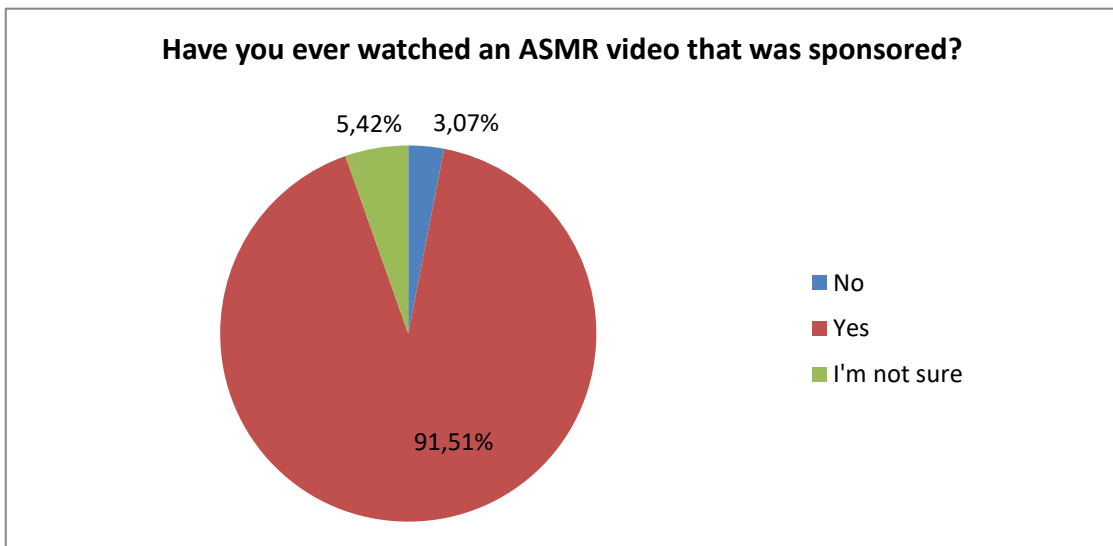
Question 14

Open question, no graphic.

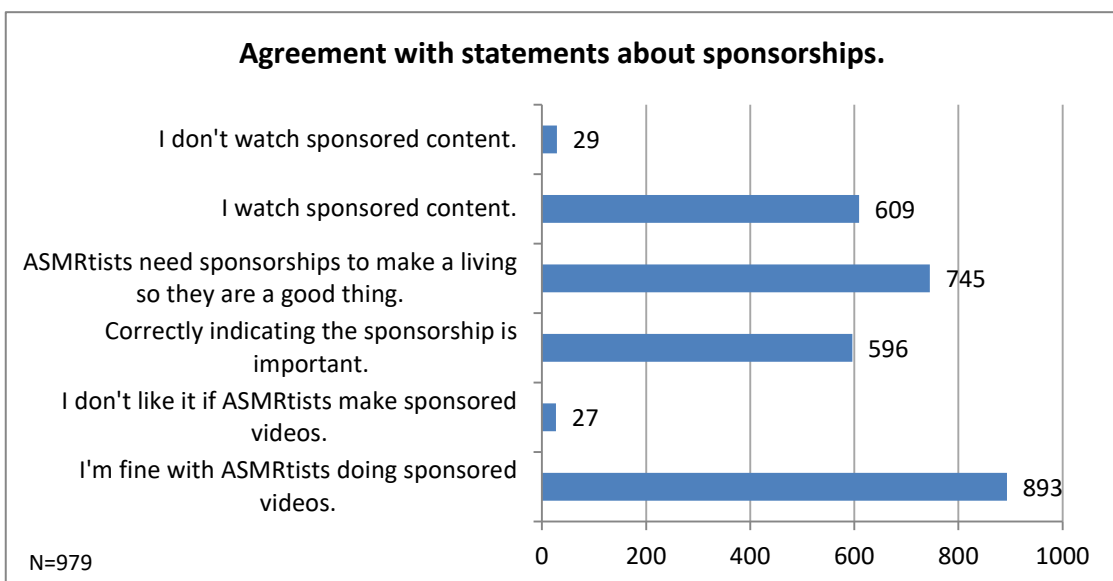
Question 15



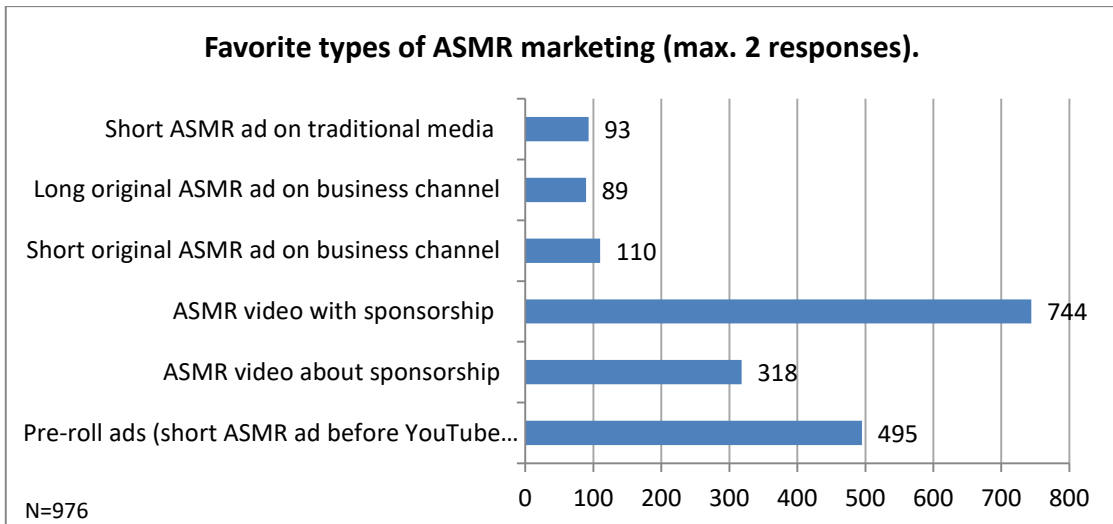
Question 16



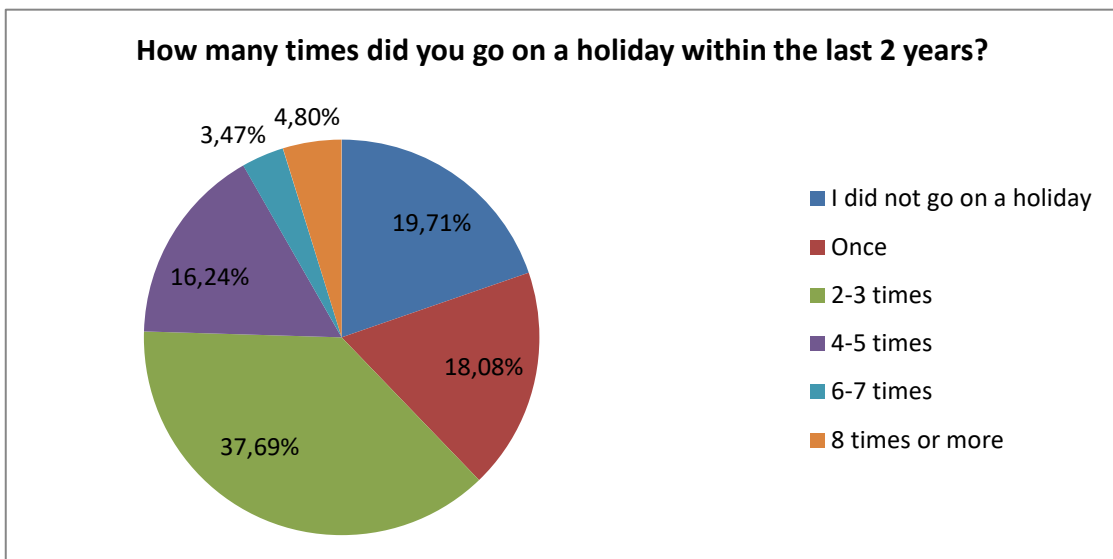
Question 17



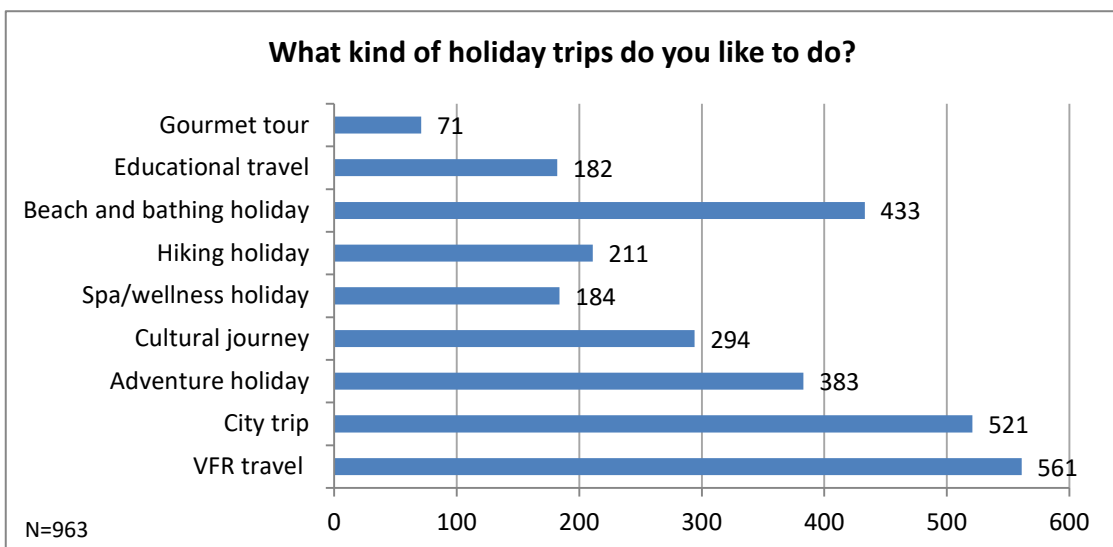
Question 18



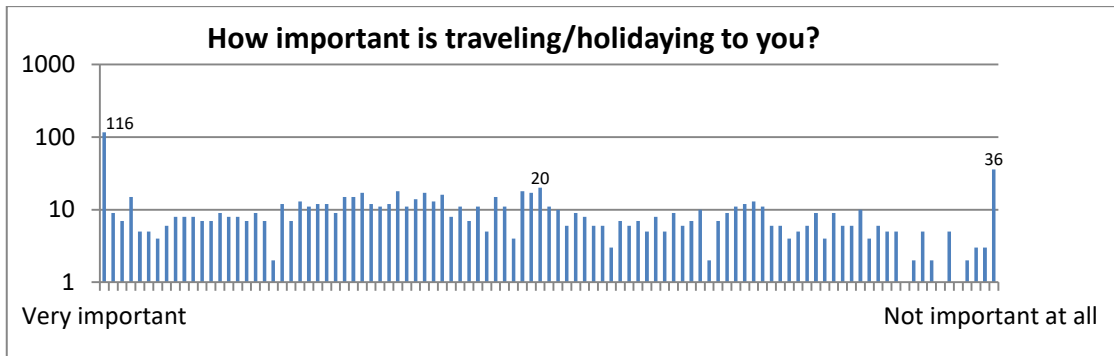
Question 19



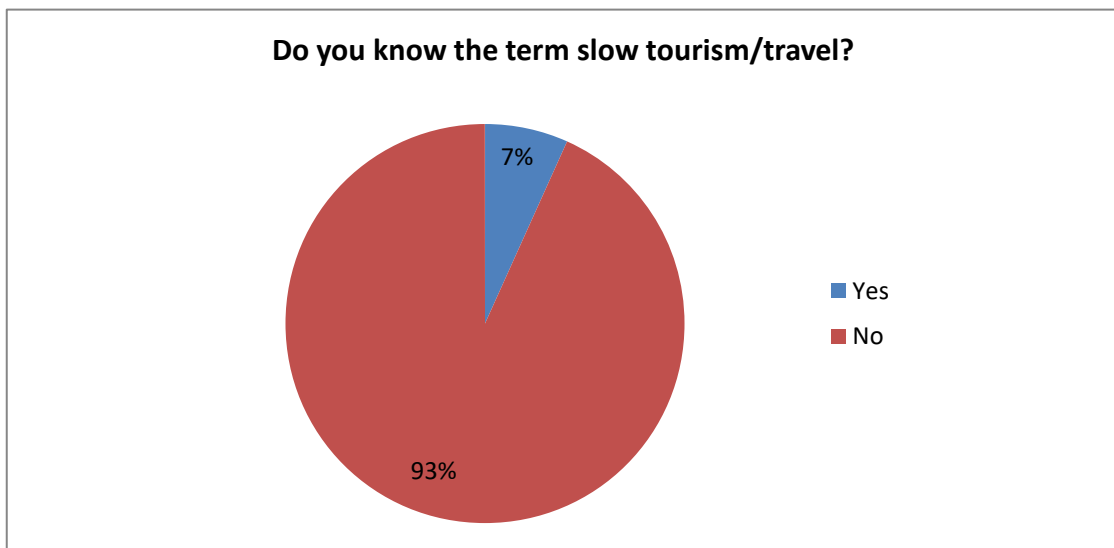
Question 20



Question 21



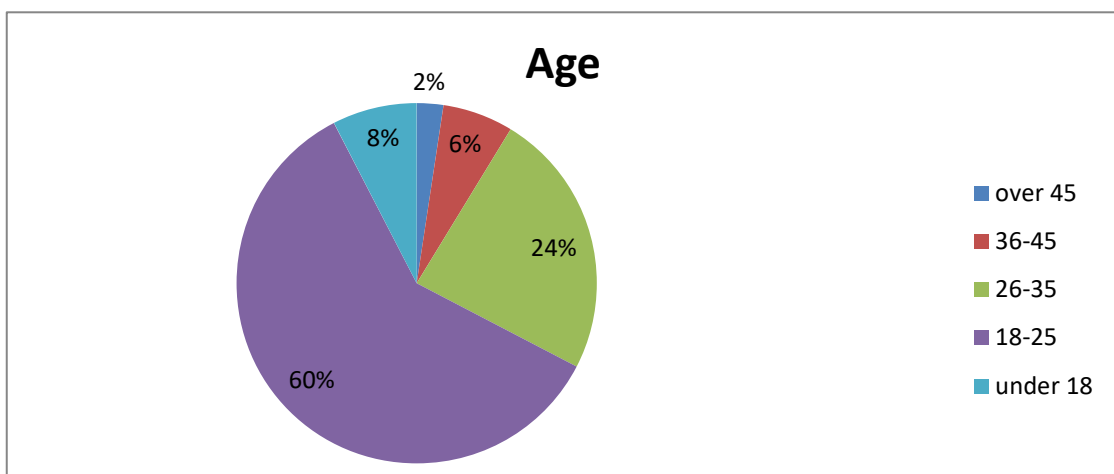
Question 22



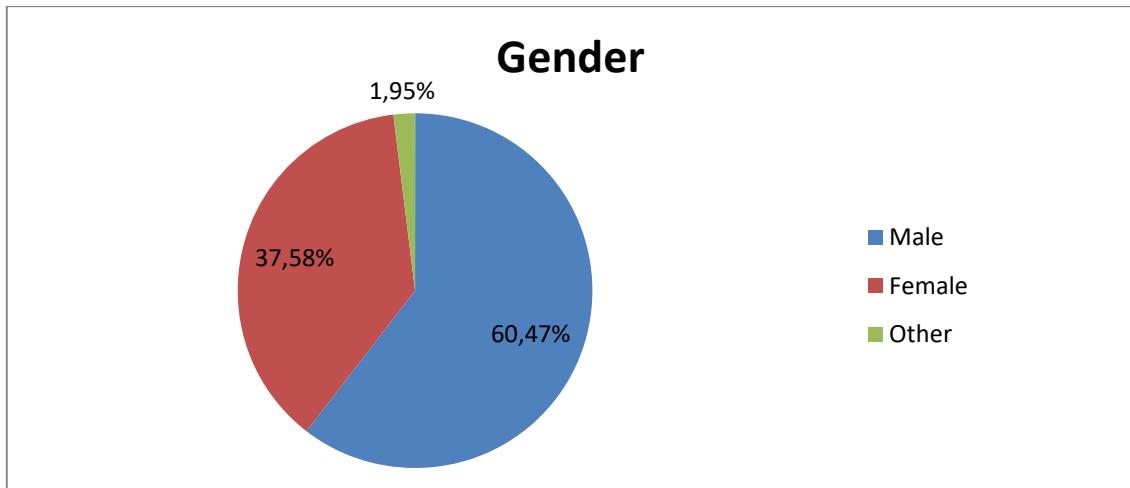
Question 23

Open question, no graphic.

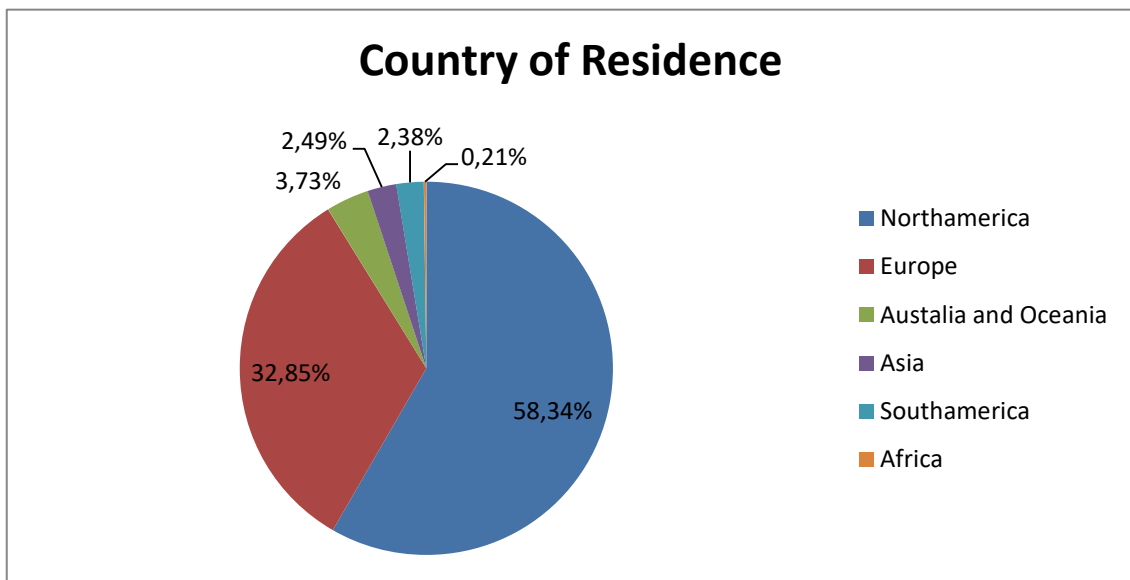
Question 24



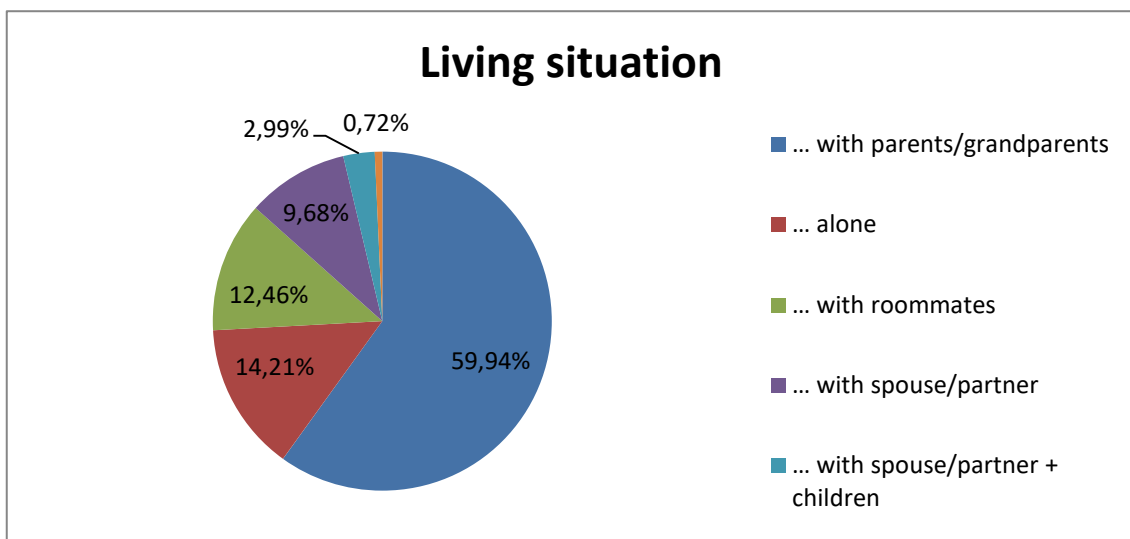
Question 25



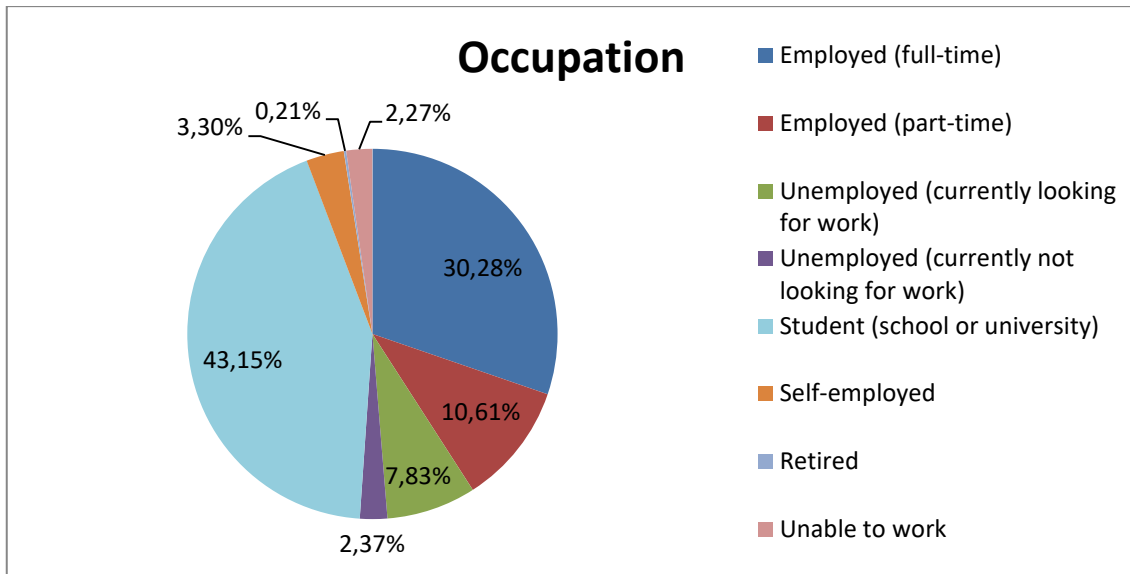
Question 26



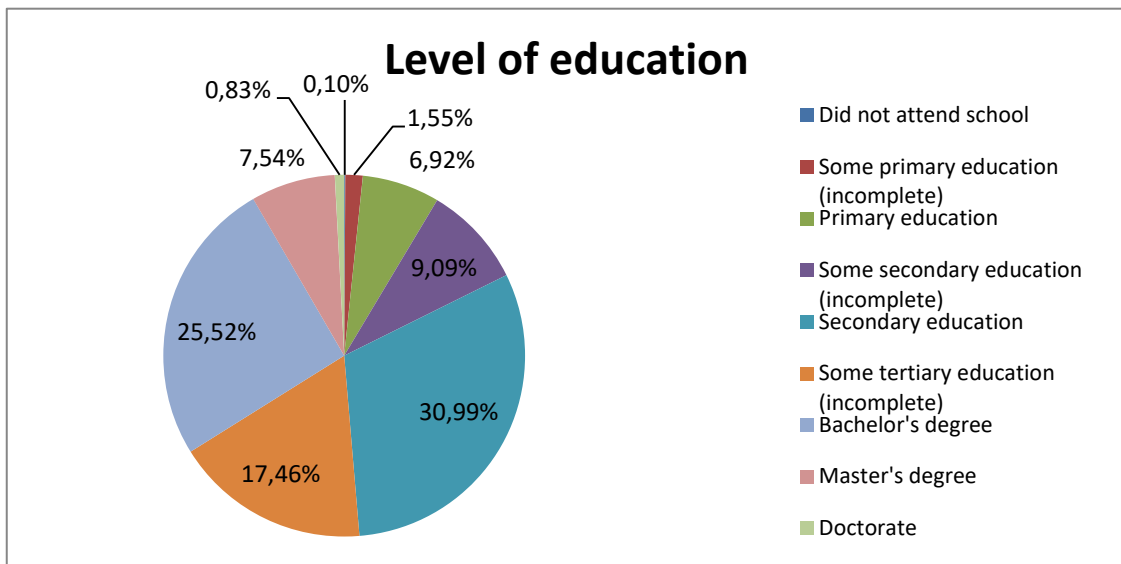
Question 27



Question 28



Question 29



Eidesstattliche Versicherung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Die Stellen der Arbeit, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen wurden, sind durch Angaben der Herkunft kenntlich gemacht.

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Nur bei zusätzlicher elektronischer Abgabe: Ich versichere, dass die eingereichte elektronische Version der Arbeit vollständig mit der Druckversion übereinstimmt.

Ort, Datum

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Matrikelnummer 5006579