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JAMES COOK
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Assessing and enhancing humour in the tourism setting

Thesis submitted by

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Declaration of Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Numbers **H4579** and **H5038**.

Anja Pabel   30 August 2014

Statement of the Contribution of Others

Anja Pabel   30 August 2014

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Preface

I love both tourism and humour! I am pleased to say that I went on not only one but three gap years between my German High School and the start of my time at an Australian university; specifically that of James Cook University. These three years were spent working, studying and travelling mainly throughout the USA, UK and Australia. During my travels as a backpacker, I went on many organised, pre-booked trips and I encountered a lot of humour by tour guides, more so in Australia than anywhere else. During a two-months trip in a tour bus with 14 people from all over the world (Europe, North American, Japan), I was amazed by our tour guide's ability to glue the group together with his down-to-earth sense of humour. Naturally, this was very important at the start of the tour but continued till the end of our journey by which time we were all contributing our own sense of humour.

I often get told by my friends: "you are funny." I am probably not even supposed to have a sense of humour at all, considering the stereotypical image that many people have of Germans. However, I am told that I tend to be the person in my circle of friends that "thinks out loud" too often. These thoughts can come across as sometimes unintentionally and sometimes intentionally funny. I would describe my own sense of humour to be very much based on observational comedy with sarcastic undertones.

Life itself is funny sometimes; I probably would have never enrolled at an Australia university in the first place if it had not been for my "wanderlust." I should also say that it never crossed my mind to study humour academically, but during my honours year at James Cook University, I had the pleasure of meeting the "Professor of Good Times" formally known as Foundation Professor Philip Pearce. The less formal title was given to Prof Pearce because he has dedicated a large part of his life to studying other people's good times. After having a casual conversation with him about the various roles humour plays in tourism, followed by a preview of the existing research on the topic area, the idea of my PhD topic was born.

Abstract

Humour has been widely researched in other academic disciplines; however the topic has almost been overlooked within the field of tourism. Key opportunities exist to examine this underexplored topic in more detail and to highlight the tourism-humour relationship. In this thesis a particular focus was given to exploring the multifaceted construct of humour in a naturalistic way and among multiple tourism audiences.

The overall aim of this thesis research is directed at understanding tourists' responses to humour. In particular the role humour plays in creating enjoyable and engaging tourism experiences is of prime interest. To achieve this overall aim, three studies were conducted, each of which addressed more specific aims. The aim of Study 1 was to develop a greater understanding of the humorous experiences that tourists report in their travel blogs. The aim of Study 2 was to examine tourists' perceptions about the use of humour they encountered at four different tourism settings. The aim of Study 3 was to measure the effect that changing humour scenarios had on tourists and to investigate how various humour variables relate to one another.

This PhD thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter discusses previous studies conducted on the topic of humour and highlights the overall themes guiding this research. Chapter Two identifies the key concepts while focusing on research gaps and opportunities. These key concepts include considerations relating to the multicultural nature of humour, positive psychology and the experience economy, all of which are considered for the value they contribute to tourism studies. The chapter also states that this thesis research takes a multi-method approach guided by the paradigm of pragmatism. Chapters Three, Four and Five deal with each of the studies carried out and explain their specific methods, results and discussions. The tour guide studies in Chapters Four and Five were conducted in Tropical North Queensland (TNQ), Australia.

Study 1, outlined in Chapter Three, consisted of an analysis of humorous episodes in travel blogs. A total sample of 200 travel blogs were sourced from four virtual travel community websites to examine the diverse kinds of humorous travel experiences that tourists report in their blogs. Using thematic content analysis allowed the researcher to identify four broad themes which showed that humour occurring during travel

experiences varied greatly according to the context in which they occurred. The findings in this study are also linked back to pre-existing theories found in the literature, namely the three major humour theories and Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model. This study of travel blogs was a fruitful approach to gaining initial and in-depth insights into the tourist-humour relationship by being able to build a record of the various humorous sources that tourists wrote about and to provide a descriptive overview of what kinds of humorous experiences tourists encounter during their travels.

Study 2, presented in Chapter Four, involved focus groups to uncover participants' perspectives and opinions about the humour they encountered at four tourism settings. The sample consisted of 103 participants. The focus groups allowed for the collection of rich data which related directly to the experiences that tourists had on-site. The results of this study demonstrate that overall humour had a positive effect on participants' tourism experiences. By selecting four different tourism experiences, it was possible to compare how the use of humour differed in these settings. Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model was explored in more detail by individually addressing each category. The results show that humour used by the tour guides increased participants' comfort levels, helped them be more mindful of educational comments made during the tours as well as potentially assisting the creation of pleasant memories to take home. Humour used in tourism presentations also made tourists feel more connected to the tour guides as well as other tourists who were part of the same tour. Moreover, the results show that there are also some tourism settings where participants considered the use of humour as inappropriate. This chapter also highlights the value of humour for tourism operators from the perspectives of the participants and outlines key considerations for tourism businesses who would like to increase their humour efforts. Overall, this study revealed some ways humour can be used to create more entertaining and engaging tourism experiences.

Study 3 is presented in Chapter Five and consisted of a quasi-experiment conducted at two tourism settings. Tourists were exposed to humour manipulation scenarios in order to measure their responses in a questionnaire. Overall, 514 completed questionnaires were collected at the two tourism settings. This third study contributes and builds on the previous two studies by measuring what effect humour had on respondents' comfort, concentration and connection levels. Conducting this study at two tourism settings allowed for a comparative analysis to be undertaken to reveal how humour differed at

both tourism settings. The results identified that the most frequently used categories of humour by the two tourism operations were amusing stories and friendly teasing. Overall, the correlational analysis showed that humour used by the tour guides during tourism experiences contributed significantly to the tourists' comfort, connection and concentration levels. The results also suggest that humour has its role to play in influencing the desire to visit other tourism attractions where humour might be used in similar ways.

The concluding chapter provides an overall synthesis which integrates the key findings of the three studies. This chapter also outlines the theoretical and practical implications based on the findings of this thesis research. A new conceptual framework for the use of humour in tourism settings is proposed to advance knowledge in this area. The limitations of this research are addressed and subsequent recommendations for future studies are made.

Research outputs from this thesis work

This thesis was formatted in accordance with the James Cook University thesis guidelines for a Doctor of Philosophy. Under these guidelines, PhD candidates are encouraged to publish parts of their thesis before submitting it for examination. Hence, parts of this thesis have been presented at academic conferences and published in peer-reviewed publications which are summarised in the list below.

Book chapter:

Pearce, P. and Pabel, A. (2014). Humour, tourism and positive psychology. In S. Filep and P.L. Pearce (Eds) *Tourist Experience and Fulfilment: Insights from Positive Psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge, 17-36

Refereed encyclopaedia entry:

Pabel, A. and Pearce, P.L. (in press). Humor. In J. Jafari and H. Xiao (Eds) *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. Springer Reference

Refereed conference presentations:

Pabel, A. and Pearce, P.L. (2014). An assessment of humour use in tourism settings. In *Proceedings of the 24th Annual CAUTHE Conference* in Brisbane, Australia, 10-13 February 2014, [usb of conference proceedings]

Pabel, A. (2013). Tourists' perceptions about the use of humour in the tourism setting. In *Proceedings of the 19th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network* in Newcastle, Australia 7-9 February 2013, 48-49

Pabel, A. (2012). Humour in the tourism setting - An analysis of travellers' narratives. In *Proceedings of the 24th Conference of the International Society for Humour Studies* in Krakow, Poland 25-29 June 2012, 167

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Chapter One

Introducing humour and the overall themes of this research

Chapter One Overview

1.1 Introduction

This PhD thesis is principally concerned with the role of humour in creating enjoyable and engaging tourism experiences. In particular, it highlights how a) humour is perceived by tourists who have written about humorous episodes during and after their travels and b) considers the reactions of tourists who were exposed to humour delivered by tour guides at various tourism attractions. All tourism settings used in this research for the tour guide studies are located in Tropical North Queensland (TNQ), Australia. As a particular focus, the humorous ways in which many tour guides relate to tourists when delivering factual information presented considerable opportunities for this research.

This chapter commences by introducing the topic of humour as something that should not be taken for granted. Historical information on humour is also provided revealing that over time, the perception of humour has changed from a topic with negative connotations to one which is positively perceived. The challenges of defining what exactly humour is and the difficulties in measuring this construct are outlined. The three major theories of humour are explained. Humour in tourism is then introduced as a topic of growing importance. Several themes highlighting the need for this kind of research are also outlined. It is noted that there is a dearth of research on humour in tourism settings and that previous research on this topic has paid only limited attention to how humour is perceived by tourists themselves. The reasons for choosing a naturalistic approach to the research are described. The penultimate section argues that this research should be of interest to several audiences. Finally the contexts used in this study are explained.

1.2 Introducing the topic of humour

Many people would consider humour a vital part of their lives. Humour is often described as a common language between cultures. Several authors note the universal nature of humour in human experiences because it occurs in all cultures around the world (Alden, Hoyer & Lee, 1993; Johnson & Ball, 2000; Askildson, 2005; Billig, 2005; Lockyer, 2006; Scott, 2007). Humour is characterised by a distinct emotional display through facial expressions such as laughter or smiling (Weisfeld, 1993; Christrup, 2008). Darwin (1872, cited in Weisfeld, 1993) postulated that laughter was a stereotypic behaviour in humans because people from different cultures use the same emotional expression to show that they perceived something to be amusing. These common expressive patterns have led to an interest in the evolutionary functions of humour (cf. Eible-Eibensfeldt, 2009).

Humour is one of the most fascinating yet confusing facets of human behaviour. Some people may wonder in fact if humour is important enough to warrant an academic study. Fortunately many authors encourage the study of humour instead of simply accepting it as one of the mysterious gifts that make life worth living (Durant, 1988). Humour and laughter are important and universal faculties which are relevant to society at large. For

example, Zijderveld (1983) suggests trying to imagine a society without humour where people are confronted with constant seriousness. It is evident that life as such would be "intolerable and suffocatingly intense" (Zijderveld, 1983, p. iv).

The fact that humour and laughter are of benefit for humans is documented in sayings, proverbs and folk wisdom (Ruch, 1993). Laughter as an important humour response is described as a pleasant physical activity where others can join in as one joke often leads to more joking (Vuorela, 2005). In the last few years the effects of humour and laughter on one's health have been treated more seriously. This can be seen by the use of clowns and comedy rooms in hospitals and retirement homes (Baumann & Staedeli, 2005; Ruch & Mueller, 2009; Franzini, 2012). People in today's society are even encouraged to learn how to improve their sense of humour and a huge industry exists to encourage more amusement in our lives such as self-help books, laughing yoga and laughing clubs which appear to be increasing in popularity (Baumann & Staedeli, 2005; Refaie, 2011).

According to O'Quin and Derks (2011) a sense of humour consists of humour appreciation (understanding jokes, humorous stories, and other humour types and perceiving them as funny) and humour production (creating humour that others will perceive as funny). Humour appreciation is a very complex phenomenon since different people prefer different types of humour. While not all people like all types of humour, it is nearly impossible for someone to have no sense of humour at all (Neuendorf & Skalski, 2001). It can also be the case that humour which is perceived by one person as hilarious, another person might consider as sickening (Neuendorf & Skalski, 2001).

Humour appreciation or rejection by an individual is strongly dependent on that person's background, values and previous experiences as well as "the broader social, historical and cultural context in which a communication comes to be defined as funny in the first place" (Refaie, 2011, p. 104). The skill or ability to appreciate humour is likely to exist without a capacity to produce humour but it is unlikely for humour production to exist without an ability to appreciate humour (O'Quin & Derks, 2011). There is considerable work on humour appreciation, both in emotional and in cognitive terms (Thorson & Powell, 1993). According to Thorson and Powell (1993) humour production is more important than humour appreciation. In any detailed study of humour it is apparent that distinctions between humour appreciation and production need to be carefully considered.

1.2.1 A brief history of humour

Finding a definition of humour is a very challenging task. The meaning of the term has changed markedly in the course of history. The trajectory of change is from a morally negative to a morally positive perspective. Aristotle (335 BC cited in Beermann & Ruch, 2009) considered comedy as indicative of inferiority since at that time humour was perceived as a failure of self-mastery. In the early Middle Ages humour was more or less condemned as something obscene especially among the religious orders (Le Goff, 1997). At the same time, it should also be noted that 'jokers' were mostly able to get away with a lot more than other people. In mediaeval times, it was the jokers or court jesters who were able to comment on social structure and question authority in their smart and witty ways while at the same time remaining immune from repercussions (Plester & Orams, 2008).

The term humour is derived from the Latin word '*humorem*' which means body fluids (Martin, 2007). As such it was initially more of a medical term referring to the four basic body fluids of blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. The Greek physician Hippocrates (fourth century B.C.) believed that good health depended on the proper balance of these four fluids and it was assumed that any kind of disease could be traced back to an incorrect mixture of these fluids (Martin, 2007). A dominance of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, or black bile would lead to changes in a person's temperament resulting respectively in optimistic, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic dispositions (McGhee, 1979). These four humours were also assumed to regulate a person's prevailing or immediate temperament. When all four humours were equally balanced, then a person was considered to be in good humour. However when the four humours were imbalanced then a person was perceived to be in a bad humour (Ziegler, 1998).

As medical science progressed, humoural pathology was abandoned but the theory of temperaments as well as the term humour survived (Ruch, 2002). There were times when even laughter was perceived as vice. In England this perception became even more robust after the Protestant Reformation, a time during which comedy and laughter were banned for being considered morally perverse (Morreall, 2010). Then, in the middle of the 16th century humour was referred to as a predominant mood quality, which could be either positive (good humour) or negative (bad humour). Eventually 'good humoured' and 'bad humoured' became recognisable dispositions. Therefore 'to

be in a good humour' means that one is in a cheerful mood (Ruch, 2002). With the rise of the humanistic movement, humour was considered more as a virtue because it contributed to tolerance and benevolence (Beermann & Ruch, 2009). During the 19th century, humour even emerged as a cardinal virtue where being of 'good humour' was associated with a strong and optimistic character (Martin, 2007).

In today's world, people like to be surrounded by people who have a good sense of humour as it is still considered to be a valued characteristic. At present humour is regarded as an umbrella term for anything that is funny, including not only neutral and positive formats, but also negative forms such as sarcasm, satire and ridicule (Ruch, 1996). It appears that many researchers consistently conceive of humour as a positive construct. Lockyer (2006) advises that there are only a small number of studies that focus on negative aspects of humour, for example those that deal with different humour tastes. In the 20th century, humour has been studied as a serious topic of research directed especially towards positive outcomes of using humour in health, education and the workplace (Lockyer, 2006).

On a global scale it might not always be clear what is meant when people speak of 'humour'. According to Billig (2002) humour is universal and can be found in every society, but there can be cultural and individual differences in humour. Ruch (2002) undertook a survey in different parts of the world and found that humour can be viewed as a mood, a talent, a frame of mind, a temperament or a virtue. Esser (2001) adds to these perceptions by considering humour to be a habitual quality. Humour also has several components including humour production, humour appreciation, and coping humour, however the nature and interrelationships of these components are not yet fully known (Ruch, Beermann & Proyer, 2009).

1.2.2 The humour response

Responses to humour can be understood in terms of an emotional, behavioural and physiological framework. Humour can be produced through many forms such as jokes, cartoons, funny stories, films, comedy, parody, and pantomime; however, humour itself is not an emotion (McGhee, 1979). Ruch and Rath (1993) described exhilaration as the emotional response to humour with its various experiential changes. This feeling of

exhilaration is enjoyed as pleasurable and relaxing. The term exhilaration was deemed appropriate by Ruch and Rath (1993) due to its Latin roots where *'hilaris'* means 'cheerful'. The authors perceived previous descriptions of the humour response as too focused on cognitive aspects with inadequate connections to the affective nature of the response. The wider view stems from the belief that when people experience humour, they are not merely restricted to perceiving something as funny, they are also aware of changes in their feeling state and physiology. Martin (2007) refers to the emotional response of humour as mirth which results in a unique feeling of wellbeing, amusement and cheerfulness.

Laughter and smiling are the two expressive behavioural responses showing the emotional presence of mirth (Martin, 2007). Physiologically when humans are laughing there are complex facial interactions occurring between mouth, cheeks, eyes and vocalisation (Martins, 2012). Laughter happens not just in response to humour but also for many reasons including tickling, laughing gas, and seeing someone else laugh (Martins, 2012). While smiling occurs roughly five times more than laughter, it can be misleading as there are many forms of smiling based on the many different facial muscles (Ruch, 2008). If an individual genuinely enjoys humour, the 'Duchenne smile' is displayed which involves the pulling back of the lip corners and the raising of the cheeks causing the eyes to wrinkle (Wiseman, 2007). The Facial Action Coding System (FACS) developed by Ekman and Friesen (1978) is used to assess smiling in more detail. The FACS is a comprehensive facial movement measurement system which describes all visually distinguishable facial activity on the basis of 44 unique action units.

Laughter is another primary indicator of the experience of humour. Types of laughter include chuckles, giggles and belly laughs (Mahony, Burrough & Lippman, 2002). During laughter the human body takes on a more relaxed posture which characterises a reduced readiness to respond to changes in one's surroundings (Ruch, 1993). Reading a joke in solitude rarely evokes laughter (Ruch & Hehl, 1998). However in the presence of others laughter can be enhanced. Having more than one person present is sufficient to facilitate humour-induced smiling and laughter (Chapman, 1983). Additionally, Fridlund (1991) found that participants tested in a solitary set-up smiled more when they knew that a friend was also taking part in the same experiment in another room. Ruch and Ekman (2001) believe that laughter already emerges around the fourth month

during human development and can also be observed among deaf-blind children. They note that this is so even among deaf-blind thalidomide children, who could not 'learn' laughter by touching people's faces. Laughter can also be observed in nonhuman primates where juvenile chimpanzees put on a playface (Ruch & Ekman, 2001). Chimpanzees are also able to replicate the vocalisation of laughter in social play and were found to use laughter for their social advantages including social affiliation and cooperative behaviours by, for example, using laughter to prolong their play sessions (Davila-Ross, Allcock, Thomas & Bard, 2011).

Physiological changes during laughter include an increase in heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and muscular changes such as the contraction of facial, abdominal and thoracic muscles (Miller & Fry, 2009; Sugawara, Tarumi & Tanaka, 2010). The use of these different muscle groups results in a general state of relaxation after intense laughter (Bennett & Lengacher, 2008). Another physiological change is the bringing of tears to the eyes which is more frequent in females or in younger ages (Ruch, 1993). In Sugawara, Tarumi and Tanaka's (2010) study on the effects of laughter on vascular function, the participants' heart rate increased significantly in the first 20 minutes while watching a comedy while blood pressure increased during the entire comedy watching session. The authors indicated, however, that the favourable effects of laughter on vascular function produced only short-acting results as they disappeared within 24 hours.

1.2.3 Searching for a definition of humour

Although humour is a universal experience, numerous scholars have acknowledged the difficulty of finding mutual agreement about a singular, all-encompassing definition of humour (Johnson & Ball, 2000; Ruch, 2001; Heath & Blonder, 2005; Plester & Orams, 2008; Struthers, 2011). Others just accept that there probably never will be a single theory that is able to fully account for humour due to its highly complex and contradictory nature (Skevington & White, 1998; Lockyer, 2006; Krikmann, 2007). The many different theories and conceptualisations which have been produced have added to the richness of humour research (O'Quin & Derks, 2011) but also lead to a rather fragmented range of findings (Struthers, 2011).

In regards to defining and classifying humour, McGhee (1979, p. 8) has noted the 'overwhelming complexity' of the topic. Solomon (1996) acknowledged humour as a complex phenomenon which has cognitive, emotional, physiological, behavioural and physical features. The definition of humour is made more complex in that it also involves different modes as it can be verbal (jokes), graphical (cartoons, caricatures), acoustic (funny music), or behavioural (pantomime) (Ruch, 2001).

Several authors have attempted definitions of humour, some of which are rather simplistic. For example Hay (2000) regards humour to be anything a speaker intends to be funny. Johnson and Ball (2000) define humour by its outcomes rather than by intent. Palmer (1994, p. 3) defines humour as "everything that is actually or potentially funny, and the process by which this 'funniness' occurs." It is also noteworthy to consider that humour as a subjective experience is individually defined in that "what is funny to some is not funny to others" (Johnson & Ball, 2000, p. 18). Clearly not all people respond to the various types of humour in the same way. While some laugh at jokes, others might be offended by them. Finally, it is important to recognise that humour is very dependent on the social context in which it occurs and it is these humorous social interactions that prompt laughter.

Kuipers (2009) takes a different but very interesting approach in defining humour. Instead of providing a further attempt at defining humour, she instead outlined the numerous ingredients of humour to gain a better understanding of how humour works in social life. The final two ingredients contribute to our understanding of why humour is regarded as a confusing phenomenon that can also mark symbolic boundaries.

> Ingredient 1: *Incongruity* since a lot of humour is based on bringing together incompatible elements which contradict people's expectations. Kuipers (2009) states that this incongruity does not need to be an entirely cognitive phenomenon because it is also bound to have moral and social components.

> Ingredient 2: *Non-seriousness* which indicates that humorous communication is uniquely framed from other serious types of communication. Verbal or non-verbal cues are used to signal non-seriousness including for example facial expressions (i.e. smiling, eye brow lifting), gestures, canned laughter in TV shows or a cartoonish-looking book cover (Kuipers, 2009; Franzini, 2012). Other framing devices which are instantly recognised include narrative

conventions that indicate something will be of non-serious content for example: "a man walking into a bar, or a woman at the doctor's" (Kuipers, 2009, p. 222). The feeling that comes with non-seriousness is that of playfulness (McGhee, 1979) and light-heartedness (Kuipers, 2009).

Ingredient 3: *Pleasure* caused by humorous situations. The result of successful humour is expressed visibly through laughter and smiling which are clearly connected with pleasure and sociability.

Ingredient 4: *Sociability,* which is related to the previous ingredient of pleasure, is another ingredient of humour since humour is usually shared with others. Laughter and humour bring people closer together and are helpful in reducing social distance. Kuipers (2009) explains how this shared sociability works: humour can be perceived as an invitation and laughter on the other hand represents that the invitation has been accepted.

Ingredient 5: Humour is *transgression* in that it touches on taboos and sensitive topics. The following examples are noted by Kuipers: sex and gender; death and disease; powerful people and institutions; stupidity, drunkenness, avarice, and dirtiness. Humorous transgression has to be well balanced because if it oversteps the line, then the humour might be lost. On the other hand if the humour does not come close enough to the line, it might be perceived as corny or lame.

Ingredient 6: Humour's link with *aggression, hostility*, and *degradation* which includes for example making fun at the expense of others. Kuipers suggests, however, that not all humour is of an aggressive nature and naturally not every joke should be taken seriously.

While the thesis' author recognises there are positive and negative aspects to humour, for the purpose of this thesis, humour will be defined as: communication or act which results in positive emotional states such as mirth or exhilaration (cf. Ruch, 1993).

1.2.4 Aspects of measuring humour

While defining humour seems a challenging task, there is also no all-encompassing measurement tool (Ruch, Beermann & Proyer, 2009; O'Quin & Derks, 2011). The multidimensional nature of humour makes it a challenge to measure this construct and this difficulty has produced many different measurement tools. An important consideration that complicates humour research is how to separate the cognitive response and the affective response (Thorson & Powell, 1993).

There is also no consensus as to what research methods will lead to the best results. Ruch (2008) suggests that there are about 70 humour instruments that measure various aspects of humour. Many previous studies have operationalised humour in terms of quantitatively derived measures (Chik, Leung & Molloy, 2005). Experimental studies used to measure humour appreciation have applied methods such as self-reports after being exposed to funny films, cartoons and jokes (Krannich, 2001; Ruch & Mueller, 2009). Humour production on the other hand is often measured through writing cartoon captions which are then judged for their funniness, completing jokes exercises and checking of humour knowledge in terms of being able to store and retrieve jokes (O'Quin & Derks, 2011; Feingold & Mazzella, 1991). Other approaches that humour scholars have used to measure the humour response include self-report questionnaires, ability tests, the keeping of humour diaries, informant peer-reports, behavioural observations, interviews and experimental tasks (Martin, 1998; Ruch, 2008).

1.2.5 Theories of humour

The humour literature predominantly refers to three different theories namely superiority theory, incongruity theory and relief theory. Martin (2007) declares that irrespective of how humour is used, it is likely that any humorous communication is based on one of these theories.

Superiority theory

Superiority theory is the oldest theory of humour and laughter. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle were among the first to suggest that laughter is the result of feeling superior to others and jokes are in fact used to evoke such feelings (Spotts, Weinberger & Parsons, 1997). Laughter itself is sometimes regarded as dangerous by revealing boundaries and demarcating differences by identifying those who laugh at a certain type of joke while those who do not laugh are excluded (Carty & Musharbash, 2008). In this theory people laugh at others' weaknesses, stupidity or misfortunes because they feel some sort of triumph over them or feel superior to them in some way (Morreall, 1983; McGhee, 1979). This kind of humour has two effects, firstly it acts as a social corrective in that it keeps human society in order by criticising those who disobey by laughing at them and secondly, it makes people feel part of a group as they can laugh together at others' misfortunes and mistakes (Meyer, 2000; Norrick, 2003; Rogerson-Revell, 2007). As a 17th century pastime it was apparently acceptable for the entertainment of aristocrats to visit insane asylums so they could laugh at mentally ill or deformed people (Morreall, 2010; Martin, 2003). Mercifully, during the rise of humanism in the 18th century such activities were increasingly perceived as vulgar (Martin, 2003). The parental admonition to children "it is rude to laugh" represents a contemporary recognition of the management of humour built on avoiding showing superiority.

Incongruity theory

According to Aristotle, for humour to be successful, incongruity is a necessary condition (McGhee, 1979). This involves humour bringing together two unrelated ideas, concepts or situations in a surprising or unexpected manner. This theory presumes that people laugh at what surprises them, is unexpected, or is odd in a nonthreatening way (McGhee, 1979). Although life itself is full of inconsistencies and absurdities, what incongruities are perceived as funny lies in the eyes of the beholder based on their prior experiences and knowledge (Roth, Yap & Short, 2006). This theory focuses on the unexpected that provokes the humour in a person's mind and is therefore concerned with the cognitive aspects of the humour and how the humour is processed rather than the physiological or emotional effects of humour (Critchley, 2002; Meyer, 2000).

Incongruity just on its own can also result in puzzlement (Forabosco, 1992; Ruch, 1993).

Relief theory

The perspective of relief theory as put forward by Freud (1905, cited in Martin, 2007), is that people use laughter to release built-up nervous energy including sexual or aggressive feelings. Freud postulated humour to be some kind of safety-valve that made it possible to share our feelings without creating unpleasantness and disrupting social harmony. In this way people experience humour and laugh because they sense the opportunity to reduce certain tensions or stressors in their life (Morreall, 1983). Relief theory suggests that humour is related to a person's 'hang ups' where they laugh at things that make them uncomfortable or guilty (Solomon, 1996). A good laugh is enjoyed by most because it is a welcome release from stress and other negative emotions (Morreall, 2010). The physical reactions to humour including "laughter, snickering, guffaws and peeing-in-your pants hysteria" are examples of the release of energy taking place (Roth, Yap & Short, 2006, p. 125).

It should be noted that these three theories are not competing with one another but they should rather be viewed as complementary (Perks, 2012). It is also impossible to compare them as each theory focuses on different aspects of humour. The incongruity theory, based on cognition, attempts to explain the mechanisms of how humour works because it considers necessary conditions for humour to occur. Superiority theory and relief theory are more outcomes focused. The former theory tries to clarify why people find different things funny focusing on their social associations while the latter is about feelings and emotional release. Some humour researchers go so far as to declare that most humour theories are mixed theories and "that humour in its totality is too huge and diverse a phenomenon to be incorporated into a single integrated theory" (Krikmann, 2007, p. 28). The traditional humour theories have also been criticised for merely focusing on the functions or structures of humour and neglecting to consider how humour was actually used by individuals in their social settings (Refaie, 2011).

1.2.6 Styles of humour

Martin et al. (2003) developed a model including four distinct humour styles which can be grouped as adaptive or maladaptive. Adaptive humour is described as playful and accepting in its style and can be used to facilitate relationships with others. Adaptive humour includes affiliative humour and self-enhancing humour, which are considered to be valuable to subjective well-being and relationships with others since they are positively correlated with openness, agreeableness, self-esteem and extraversion. On the other hand, maladaptive humour is subdivided into aggressive humour and self-defeating humour which are referred to as harmful for emotional well-being. Both of these maladaptive types of humour are positively correlated with hostility, aggression and neuroticism (Martin et al., 2003). Each humour style is distinctively defined by Martin et al. (2003):

- Affiliative humour attempts to enhance relationships by saying funny things to amuse others and reducing interpersonal tensions.

- Self-enhancing humour is focused on the self which is exemplified by having a humorous outlook on life and one's ability to use humour as a coping strategy in stressful life situations.

- Aggressive humour is the use of humour to enhance one's own feelings at others' expense; for example sarcasm and ridicule to belittle others.

- Self-defeating humour is based on defensive denial to conceal one's real feelings by saying funny things at one's own expense.

Individuals using aggressive kinds of humour usually do not think about the effects it can have on others. It includes sexist or racist humour, sarcasm, ridicule and mockery. Self-defeating humour is described as a form of defensive denial where funny things are said to amuse others at one's own expense in order to gain the approval of others. By its own definition it can be argued that self-defeating humour fits the category of adapting humour better than the maladaptive cluster as it can facilitate liking and relationships. Three of these four humour styles have the potential to be used in the tourism setting to make a tourist's experience more enjoyable. Naturally, aggressive humour should not be used as it can have a rather negative impact on people's feelings.

1.3 Humour in tourism – A topic of growing importance

Going on a holiday or visiting a tourism attraction with family and friends is considered by most people as a pleasant activity. A trip away from the normal routines of daily life is regarded by many as welcome 'time out' and that alone has emotional benefits for most people. Laughter is also perceived as something pleasurable by most people. Combining the two constructs of tourism and humour into one study to explore what benefits can be gained from experiencing both at the same time appears to be a valuable undertaking. The link in the humour-tourism relationship can be seen in the overarching tourist motivational theme of having fun and a good time which has been acknowledged by many scholars. Edensor (2000) recognised that most people would consider tourism to be a time for play and fun rather than work. Also Frew (2006a) pointed out there are many tourists who have pre-travel motivations purely to have fun and to share a good time through laughter. The holiday time is regarded by many as a playful and enjoyable time and is depicted in this way on holiday postcards (Francesconi, 2011; Wheeller, 2007). Sometimes the tourists themselves become the butt of critical satire because they are perceived as stereotypically funny by the general public because of either the way they dress or behave or both (Cohen, 2010, 2011a).

Smith, MacLeod and Robertson (2010) have suggested that contemporary tourism has become more playful and that the post-tourists have different expectations than traditional or cultural tourists in that they view tourism as a game. Post-tourists are seen as embracing what the tourism industry has to offer in terms of stimulated and commercialised activities. The new leisure tourists apparently want to have fun and be entertained and so they are actively looking for simulated worlds to meet their expectations (Smith, MacLeod & Robertson, 2010). Likewise, Cohen (2011b) argued that fun and enjoyment are becoming increasingly prominent motives for travel which he states is evident from the growing number of man-made attractions such as theme parks, entertainment centres, shows and festival events all around the world.

More and more tourism attractions also feel the need to include more entertainment into their offerings. For example, museums feel the pressure to reposition themselves by providing more entertainment for their visitors in order to compete successfully with amusement parks and shopping malls. The point is to make museums more appealing to a broad market by finding a product that addresses the need to provide a "temple of

culture or palace of amusement" (Van Aalst & Boogaarts, 2002, p. 197). Frew (2006a) also indicated that humour is an important factor in the tourist experience and as such has implications for managing the tourist industry. She also expressed a view that destination managers should provide support for humorous events and festivals. This thesis argues that it may not just be important to create comedic events but it might be worthwhile to encourage tourism attractions to deliberately use humour.

The role of humour in tourism contexts is clearly being appreciated in some industry contexts. This is evident in both awards being presented to businesses which make humour part of their day-to-day operations and the holding of the First International Tourism Cartoon Competition. The 'Humour in Business Award' in New Zealand was designed to celebrate ways in which humour is included in the workplace to make a difference to teamwork, to engage customers and to contribute to overall well-being and productivity of an organisations (Scoop Media, 2008). Prizes are handed out in three categories: sole proprietor, under 20 staff and over 20 staff. Auckland comedian Mike Loder states that for him humour adds a great deal to running a successful business in New Zealand: "Those who understand this powerful tool have the advantage. I'm glad that this is now recognised with a regular annual award" (Scoop Media, 2008). In 2008 this humour award went to a tourism business, the Canyon Swing in Queenstown, which was acknowledged for their use of humour not only for entertaining customers but also for keeping them calm. Apparently customers were very fond of "the farting gnomes, blind van driver and funny telephone prompts" (Scoop Media, 2008).

In 2009 the First International Tourism Cartoon Competition was held in Turkey. The competition was a combined initiative of the Anadolu University Research Centre for Cartoon Art, the (Turkish) Association of Tourism Writers and Journalists (TUYED) and Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research (Cohen, 2011a).

There are also many bodies dedicated to advancing the study of humour in a variety of disciplines. The 'International Society for Humour Studies' hosts an annual conference and distributes the international journal called 'HUMOR The International Journal of Humor Research' which indicates in itself the increasing significance of this topic. There are also several other bodies that contribute to the progression of humour research. The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN) links Australian and New

Zealand humour scholars and practitioners. The Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) in the United Kingdom is dedicated to the academic study of comedy.

While there is a growing body of research on humour, not much empirical research has been done in the context of tourism. Exploring the area of humour in tourism settings is a broad new space that has not been well-researched. It is the purpose of this PhD thesis to fill some of the gaps in the tourism and humour literature by attempting to undertake some landmark studies. The following section will provide further justification for research in this area and will also detail the overall approach for the remainder of the thesis.

1.3.1 Current uses of humour in the tourism industry

There are many tourism businesses that are already using humour and fun as part of their experience offerings for reasons of entertainment and enjoyment. The theme parks of Disney World are good examples of a global tourism business that uses fun and entertainment for its many audiences (Ritzer, 1999). While many visitors perceive Disney World as an enchanted place, the fun is in fact highly commercialised, fabricated and routinely produced (Ritzer, 1999). The demand on employees to enact appropriate emotional states is quite high in terms of scripted interactions since visitors are likely to respond positively to the impression that employees are also having fun (Ritzer, 2002).

Indeed it appears that the employees of a business are the most valuable in initiating humour and fun during interactions with customers. Shaw, Debeehi and Walden (2010) provide the example of how Southwest Airlines employees created fun experiences for travellers which was implemented in such a successful way that it was perceived by travellers as a different experience from all the other airlines available in the North American market. Travellers preferred this fun experience to other airlines in the market which resulted in increased dividends for Southwest Airlines. In the words of Lorraine Grubbs-West, former Executive Vice-President, Southwest Airlines (cited in Shaw, Debeehi & Walden, 2010, p. 10): "Fun was a core strategy at Southwest Airlines. We pretty much had this strategy to ourselves in the airline industry. Our competitors didn't focus on fun. It wasn't until the early 80s, when, due to fuel prices rising significantly

causing every major domestic airline but Southwest to lose money, that our competitors took notice and made 'fun' their strategy too."

Museums and heritage tourism attractions also attempt to bring their educational exhibits to life by using 'edutainment' to entertain visitors (Van Aalst & Boogaarts, 2002). Examples are provided by D'Arcens (2011) who wrote about amusing tourist attractions built on a medieval theme including the Jorvik Viking Centre and The Canterbury Tales attraction. Both can be found in the United Kingdom and use ironic edutainment to recreate the medieval past for today's tourists by presenting history in a compelling way. The experiences are built on medieval appearances and odours from the past. The faces of static mannequins represent medieval people showing filthy and disfigured faces, rotten teeth and soiled clothes. The visitors make fun of these displays and laugh because the disease and dental horrors are from a distant past. Odours play an important part at the Jorvik Centre where visitors are able to take in the distinctive smells of the past. Visitors to this attraction are presented with a 'smells key' to be able to assign what the odours represent. Examples include urine-like smells at the leather tannery or the fumes of a Viking latrine. Comically, some of the smells can even be taken home as part of a Scratch & Sniff souvenir postcard. D'Arcens (2011) acknowledges that the humorous use of smells based on human excrement would appeal in particular to the younger visitors. The implicit satirical critique is mostly based on "the anxieties and hypocrisies of contemporary society rather than at the Middle Ages" (D'Arcens, 2011, p. 155).

Other examples of tourism businesses that effectively apply humour can be found on the internet where tourists upload, for example, You Tube clips of their experiences and comment on the humour they encountered. The Yeoman Warders, also known as Beefeaters of the Tower of London seem very effective in keeping their tourist crowds interested by including a balance of information and humour. There are several YouTube clips showing the audience having fun and interacting with and essentially co-creating their experience with the Beefeaters (For an example refer to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeiW_bWZ2Is).

South Africa's Kulula airline also has a solid internet presence. Photos depicting the humour of the airplanes' livery can be found online as well as You Tube clips and quotes of the humour-filled safety briefings by flight attendants (For an example see:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6ED-tA4ev0). Safety briefings on commercial airlines tend to be identical to one another and this makes most travellers switch to a mindless state. The safety briefings at Kulula are great examples of re-capturing interest. Here are some examples from a Kulula flight attendant making a safety announcement (South Africa Travel Online, 2013): "Please pay attention to the safety announcement, because you will be writing a test shortly" and "To operate your seat belt, insert the metal tab into the buckle, and pull the belt tight. It works just like every other seat belt; and, if you don't know how to operate one by now, then you probably shouldn't be allowed out in public unsupervised."

There is a simple irony in the commentary on how to put on a swim vest on inland flights: "Now on our way to Slaapstad we should be flying over a few swimming pools, four rivers and a large sewerage pond, so in the case of a water-landing you have your own life-jacket under the seat. On instruction from the crew, fasten the life jacket tightly around your waist and pull down the red tags to give you that wonder-bra look. There's a red whistle for survivors and a light to shine in the sharks' eyes." After landing in Cape Town this comment was made: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have landed in Cape Town. Please take all your possessions. Anything left behind will be shared equally between staff. Please note we do not accept unwanted mothers-in-laws or children." Making the familiar seem different using humour helps to gain tourists' attention and puts a smile on their face.

Australian examples that attract tourists for their fun factor include the Henley-on-Todd Regatta. This iconic boat race is held in Alice Springs on a dry river bed each year in August (Rotary Henley on Todd, 2013). Participants enter the regatta in their makeshift boats to run along the Todd River. Another Australian example includes the Wicked Campers which are a campervan hire company that is very popular with backpackers who choose a campervan as their preferred mode of transport to travel around Australia. The suggestive and sometimes witty spray-on comments on these campervans might be one of the features which attract backpackers to hire them in the first place. Some examples include: "Don't steal… The government hates competition"; "I believe in dragons, good men and other fantasy creatures" and "Chuck Norris doesn't read books, he stares them down until he gets the information he wants."

There are also instances of when humour backfires because it is not well-researched. A practical example is that of Tourism Australia's 'Where the bloody hell are you?' campaign which received very mixed responses. The commercial showed iconic Australian beach images and also included Australian slang and humour. Since the commercial was designed to appeal to various international markets, focus groups were conducted with international key market segments who found it to be genuine and "definitely Aussie" (Charbonneau, 2013). The campaign did not succeed due in part to the communication and broadcasting specifications of especially two countries: the United Kingdom which had a problem with the word 'bloody' while Canada found the word 'hell' problematic (Charbonneau, 2013). Tourism Australia apologised by saying that no offence was intended but instead they aimed for a hospitable welcome. When using humorous appeals that are meant to speak to an international audience, it is vital to ensure that the humour does not infringe on the communication and broadcasting standards of other countries.

Another example of testing the boundaries of political correctness is Wicked Campers with their explicit graffiti spray-on slogans on their vans. A list of the presumably ten most shocking slogans can be found on Travelweekly.com.au (2014). Two examples from this list include "Save a whale, harpoon a Jap" and "Drink till she's pretty!" Some people condemn such comments as racist, sexist and misogynistic (Trigger, 2014). In fact, the campervan hire company recently came under attack in July 2014 when a Sydney mother named Paula Orbea started an online petition on Change.org after her 11-year old daughter took offence to the slogan: "in every princess there's a little slut who wants to try it just once" (Gabbott, 2014). The petition appeared very successful and attracted more than 50,000 signatures (Taylor, 2014). As a result of this petition, the company's owner issued a written apology to Paula Orbea and stated that he was committed to changing insensitive slogans over the next six months (Gabbott, 2014).

1.4. The four themes highlighting the need for this thesis research

1.4.1 Scarcity of research on humour in tourism settings

The role of humour in the world of business has tended to be neglected as a topic of research (Thomas & Al-Maskati, 2001). This summary remark is even more applicable to tourism and hospitality studies. One reason for this could be that organisational life stresses responses and values such as seriousness, efficiency and rationality. Another reason is that humour is considered as something marginal to management. Johnson and Ball (2000) state that many businesses fail to see the importance of humour in the business context which may stem from organisational theory which focuses on business as a place of rationality in which humour appears to have no place and that research of this trivial matter is regarded as pointless. Nevertheless humour at the workplace can contribute to better communication, creativity, moral and organisational culture (Holmes, 2006; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006; Plester & Orams, 2008; Plester, 2009). The emerging body of work on humour in the workplace focuses a great deal on human resource management issues. These concerns are only tangentially linked to the present interest in tourists' responses to humour and as such this work is summarised in Appendix A.

Johnson and Ball (2000) acknowledge that there is a lack of research on humour in the hospitality industry. The authors recognised, however, that hospitality is more than the provision of food, drink or accommodation and should also include social interactions which have the potential to transform a stranger into a friend or loyal customer for that matter. To address the gap, Johnson and Ball (2000) investigated the use of humour in licensed retailing venues. They state that "making money and making jokes are compatible activities in licensed retail management" (2000, p. 16). For this reason they argue that management should pay more attention to humour because they consider it as a kind of organisational communication.

The point is made that humour in licensed trade consists of the three elements: its products, staff and customers, all of which are vital for business in general. In their paper, Johnson and Ball (2000) give examples of hospitality businesses who use humour to create a niche for themselves including the American restaurant and bar 'T.G.I. Friday's' and the United Kingdom pub 'It's a Scream.' These two hospitality

organisations chose to emphasise the role of humour by "stressing fun as part of their operations and pursue deliberate actions to promote and use humour" (Johnson & Ball, 2000, p. 21). At the two hospitality settings, humour is deliberately reinforced in various ways: allowing staff to express their individuality in wearing humorous outfits, encouraging humour during meetings and displaying humour in the venue via posters, competitions or live acts (Johnson & Ball, 2000).

Only a few researchers have considered humour in the tourism setting even though tourism has the potential to be a rich source of humour. Tourism is known for bringing together people from all over the world with different language and cultural backgrounds and this has immense potential to result in humorous miscommunication. Moreover, as tourists find themselves in unfamiliar environments, they may engage in rather unusual or inappropriate behaviours since they are away from their normal, everyday surroundings and humour can be used to manage these situations (Wall, 2000). Research by Mitas, Yarnal and Chick (2012) showed how tourism experiences in their social setting have the potential to create positive emotions via amusement from humour, warmth of friendship, interest in activities, and sublime reactions to loss. These positive emotions added value to the tourism experiences of the research participants by helping to build a community among the regular attendants of these activities (Mitas, Yarnal & Chick, 2012).

Humour studies as well as tourism analyses are very fragmented fields of study. There are many academic tribes and disciplines that have contributed to their growth and study. Tourism and hospitality topics have been embraced by disciplines such as geography, political science, law, economics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, strategy, human resource management, operations management and marketing (Jafari, 1990; Pansiri, 2005; Cohen, 2011b). Due to its complex and fragmented nature, Smith (2010, p. 1) asserts that tourism is perhaps one of most complex topics in social science because it can be considered as "a form of human behaviour; a social phenomenon; an economic sector; a policy field; and a source of social, environmental, and economic change."

Humour is also a multi-disciplinary topic of research which has received attention from many disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, literature, linguistics, business studies, advertising, education, health and medicine (Martin, 2007;

Francesconi, 2011). Even though humour has been studied in the past by numerous other disciplines, not much is known about how humour can be used during tourism experiences. A few authors have recently begun to study humour in the context of tourism and acknowledged this area as being neglected until recently (Wall, 2000; Frew, 2006a, 2006b; Pearce, 2009; Cohen, 2011a). Recognising the lack of humour studies in tourism research in general leads to multiple opportunities to make some key contributions to both the tourism literature and the humour literature. The purpose of this PhD research is to address this gap in the tourism literature and examine in more detail how humour is currently used in the tourism setting and how it could be used more effectively to create more enjoyable tourism experiences.

1.4.2 Limited attention paid to humour perceptions by tourists

Theory development to understand the tourism-humour relationship

Some of the previously conducted tourism humour studies endeavoured to advance theories, conceptualisations and typologies for this topic. For example, Frew (2006b) considered two main areas in the relationship of humour and tourism: formal and informal humour. Formal humour involves tourists intentionally visiting humorous event such as comedy festivals or comedic TV and film locations. Comedy festivals such as Montreal's Just for Laughs Comedy Festival, Melbourne's International Comedy Festival and Edinburgh's Festival Fringe represent important pull factors for humour tourists or 'joke junkies' (Frew, 2006b). Hence, she states that destination managers should encourage local humorous events as well as providing support of comedy festivals which due to their high visitation levels help to generate economic benefits for the hosting regions (Frew, 2006b).

Informal humour is the sharing of jokes during difficult travel situations. Essentially people who are going on a holiday are in a good mood but there are various travel experiences that can be upsetting such as flight delays or jetlag (Collins, 2000). Stebbin's (1996) theory of social comic relief describes how humour can be used to defuse awkward situations. This theory of social comic relief was used by Frew (2006b) to explain how humour can also help tourists cope with stressful awkward, frustrating or stressful travel situations. Informal humour can help tourists with transport problems

(traffic jams, airport delays, and cancellations), coping with bad weather conditions, and certain accommodation and food types as well as in the interaction with locals or tourism employees (Frew, 2006b). Humour allows them to gain control of a situation by making it appear as less threatening, difficult or embarrassing (Solomon, 1996).

Tourists may even still benefit from humorous experiences that occurred during their travel experiences after the holiday has finished (Frew, 2006a). Once back at home, remembering funny travel experiences may lead to mental benefits such as increased well-being and social benefits, that is improved relationships with the travel partner. Thinking back and remembering how they felt during humorous travel episodes can also take them back to a more positive frame of mind (Neal, Sirgy & Uysal, 1999). It is these kinds of humorous experiences that are written down in a travel journal or a travel blog to be read again months or even years later to relive ones memories. There are unexplored links here that could investigate the rich emerging work of touristic travel stories and narratives.

Another conceptualisation is Pearce's (2009) 'tourism and humour patterns and pathways' framework which shows the many components and interactions which are possible in the tourism-humour relationship. This multi-faceted model also illustrates the various pathways which can be studied in the tourist-humour relationship including humour source, humour target, tourist context, nature of content, technique, medium, humour type, appropriateness filter and outcomes. Pearce (2009) also suggests that three distinctions can be made in tourism humour. There is humour *about* tourists, humour provided *for* tourists, and humour created and perceived *by* tourists themselves. The following section elaborates on previous studies that focus on each of the three distinctions.

Humour about tourists

Humour about tourists was examined by Cohen (2010) who explored the relationship between jokes about tourists and the stereotypical image of the modern tourist. Cohen stated that even though jokes about tourists are popular, they have been neglected as a basis for tourism research but they can, however, provide insights into tourism situations which might otherwise be overlooked in the literature. His paper is based on

his own collection of tourist jokes in cartoons and comic strips collected between the 1980s and 2000s. In his view, jokes about tourists actually shed light on the "public's perception of tourism as a social phenomenon" (Cohen, 2010, p. 3). The investigated jokes highlight the incongruities to get the humorous point across and these incongruities can also reflect real social situations, such as conforming to or being critical of tourism. For example, the humour in the jokes studied often mocks the tourists' limited cultural capital and pokes fun at their lack of knowledge about travelling.

Another study by Cohen (2011a) included an analysis of 100 of the cartoons which were entered into the First International Tourism Cartoon Competition and explored how the humour in these cartoons was produced. He found that the ordinary tourists in these cartoons were depicted as facing various extraordinary, exaggerated and incongruous situations. Examples include dealing with disorientation and hazards as well as interacting with hosts and animals. Alexeyeff (2008) observed that countless jokes are made about tourists, especially about white western women, by Cook Islanders who use the humour to negotiate their relationship with foreigners. The content of these jokes can include inequalities of global capitalism, images of sexualised femininity, and the Cook Islanders' submissive role in providing labour. While the jokes seem apparently funny to Cook Islanders in dealing with the "cultural prostitution" that tourism brings for them, they may also reveal the exploitative nature of tourism (Alexeyeff, 2008, p. 289). These studies provide some encouraging early indicators that a body of knowledge about tourism and humour is beginning and while much more needs to be done, the available studies indicate there is fertile ground for further exploration.

Humour for tourists

There are many tourism websites and public relations campaigns using humour for general appeal. Humour plays a role in public relations strategies on official tourist websites that need to build favourable relationships with various audiences of multicultural backgrounds (Kang & Mastin, 2008). These researchers found that the way in which messages were presented was just as important as the factual information of the websites they investigated. The ways in which humour was applied on the 44

countries' websites selected for their study, revealed differences between individualistic and collectivist countries. Humorous appeals including animated quizzes and fun videos were used more frequently by individualistic countries such as USA, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, and France. On the other hand, countries with lower individualistic scores focused more on technical aspects of their countries' websites such as storing previous searches, logins and tour planner functions (Kang & Mastin, 2008). A study by Carden (2005) revealed that humour and entertainment appeals exceed factual appeals in travel and tourism public relations efforts. Travel destinations apparently changed their persuasive appeals because of changing travel preferences. While factual appeals were most popular in 2001, the use of humorous appeals increased 32% between 2001 and 2002.

Postcards are a traditional tourism related method of communication. Postcards normally feature landscapes and people of a destination but they can also include humour for tourists and are a way to communicate humour about a destination to family, friends and colleagues at home. Postcard humour is a reasonably underexplored field although the humorous message within them are conveyed in quite direct ways via the interplay of verbal and visual material (Wheeller, 2007; Francesconi, 2011). Cohen's (2007) study of amusing postcards in Thailand is based, for example, on the incongruous image of a wintry character that is Santa Clause in tropical Thai settings. In this case Santa is displayed as travelling by different modes of transport such as by elephant, long-tail boat or tuk-tuk instead of his traditional reindeer-drawn sleigh. These postcards are not just focused on Santa's transportation but also localise his appearance and his participation in local Thai activities.

The humorous postcards created by Donald McGill which depict images of the traditional English seaside holiday of 1950s were investigated by Wheeller (2007). These humorous cards, which were primarily created for a British audience, make cultural references to the English peoples' holiday making at seaside resorts. McGill's postcard humour was built on visuals, double-entendre and innuendo (Wheeller, 2007). Francesconi (2011) undertook an investigation of the multimodally expressed humour on Scottish comic tourism postcards which depict, for example, amusing and stereotypical images that people have about Scottishness including "wind, rain, midges, bagpipes, kilts, sporrans, old coins, golf, skiing, biking, fishing, Nessie" (p. 14). Each of these studies also reveal how the humorous postcards play their role in promoting their

respective destinations: Santa Clause promotes Thailand by becoming a tourist himself and enjoying Thai activities (Cohen, 2007), the saucy seaside postcards showed the fun that was to be had at English seaside resorts (Wheeller, 2007) and the amusing Scottish postcards effectively promote Scottish tourist icons in a pleasant way (Francesconi, 2011). Although postcards are usually intended for tourists, the humour displayed on them can also be about the tourists themselves.

Tourists also interact with the local people of a destination and together they enact a live performance (Stronza, 2001). Some locals actually enjoy their role of toying with tourists who can be easily exploited because of their gullibility and their unfamiliarity with local conditions (Howell, 1994). Humour is, however, not just used by locals to make fun of tourists but also features in exchanges between locals and tourists. A study by Little (2004) considered tourism as a performance. The work explored how local Maya women who work as mobile street vendors in Antigua used performance and humour to sell their handicrafts to tourists. To do this the Maya women work in pairs using carefully planned performances to build rapport with tourists instead of simply using hard selling techniques. Tourists also play their roles in these exchanges. Performances cater to each individual tourist: some are given advice, some are teased, and others are even invited to the vendors' homes (Little, 2004). The use of humour in these performances plays a much bigger role than simply facilitating the sale of handicrafts because it is also a way for the Maya vendors to "understand their place within the structure of tourism and their cultural differences from foreign tourists" (Little, 2004, p. 530). An overview of these record directions is provided in Figure 1.1.
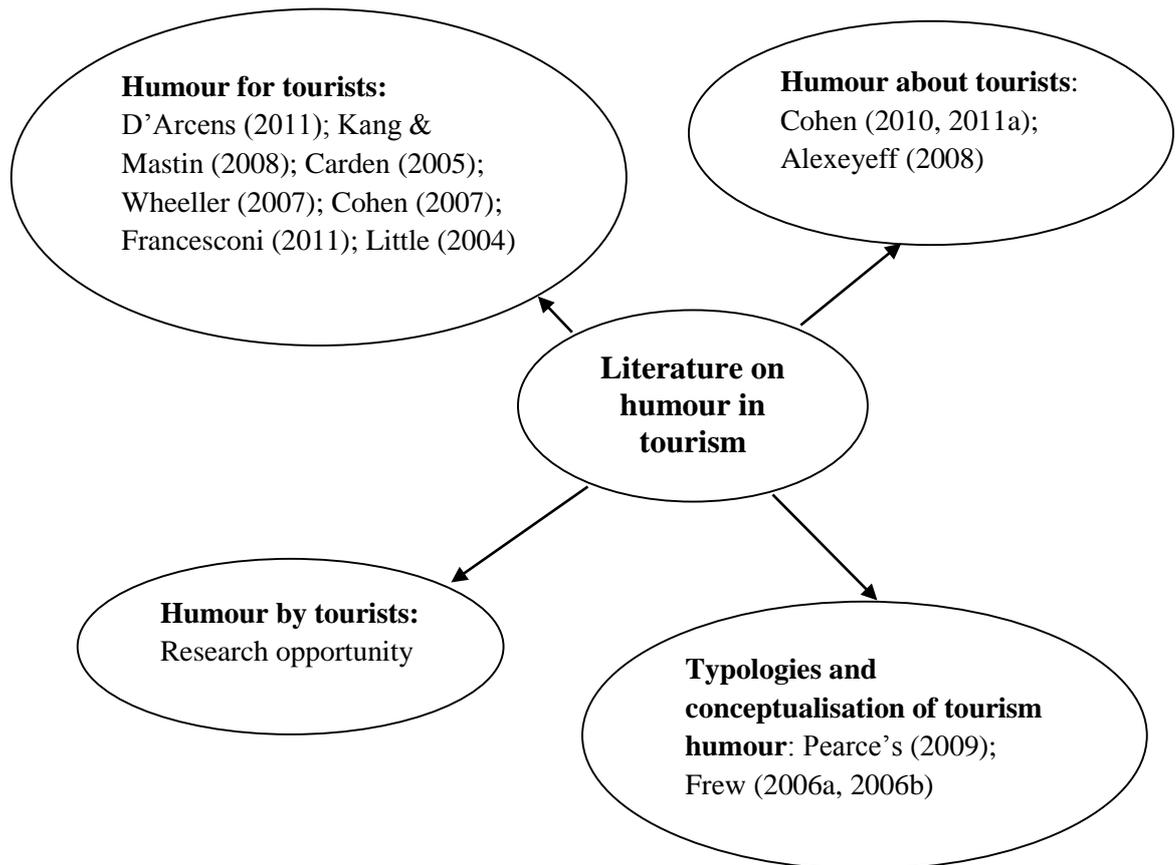
Figure 1.1: Previous research conducted on humour in tourism

Humour perceived by tourists

Little empirical evidence exists concerning how tourists perceive and assess humour as part of their on-site tourism experiences. Consequently, the present research will play a role in filling this void. There will be a focus on how the humour presented to the tourists in on-site presentations is perceived. Pearce (2009) used his own observations after visiting three humour-filled tourism settings (namely The Jungle Cruise in California's Disneyland, Samoa at the Polynesian Cultural Centre and The Canyon Swing in New Zealand) and found that humour in such businesses can play three roles: "it establishes visitor comfort levels, it assists visitor concentration and it establishes connections to tourism presenters" (Pearce, 2009, p. 639). He acknowledged that for a detailed evaluation of the different humour outcomes, empirical data was necessary. This is where the research opportunities for the thesis emerge. There is a need to find out what the tourists themselves think about the humour that is used by tour guides and

other tourism presenters. Additionally, empirical data is required to explore Pearce's (2009) comfort-connection-concentration model while at the same time considering the tourists' perceptions about this model.

1.4.3 Taking a naturalistic approach to studying humour in tourism contexts

Much of the existing research on humour has relied heavily on experimental tasks and behavioural observations conducted in laboratory settings. In these studies research participants mostly sit by themselves and are asked to assess the funniness of various humour stimuli (Martin, 1998, 2007; Ruch, 2008). While these quantitative studies have contributed to scholars' understanding of humour, they underplay the very social phenomenon of humour (Powell & Andresen, 1985; Martin, 2007). Therefore Martin (2007) calls for a need to move out of the laboratory to study instances of humour in naturalistic settings. This request supports the directions taken in this thesis.

Furthermore, many previous humour studies have conceptualised a sense of humour in terms of humour appreciation which involved research participants giving their responses when rating cartoons and jokes (Krannich, 2001; Norrick & Spitz, 2007; Vernon, Martin, Schermer, & Mackie, 2008; Brone, 2008; Ruch & Mueller, 2009). Many of the existing humour theories have a strong emphasis on analysing a joke's structure in order to clarify why something is funny (Mauldin, 2008). Jokes are such a popular way of analysing humour because they are easily identified as distinct from the rest of a conversation and they contain commonly known character types and situations (Mauldin, 2008). By way of contrast, research by Martin and Kuiper (1999) found that much of the humour that we encounter in our daily lives is not at all in response to jokes. In fact the study found that only about 11% of daily laughter occurred in response to jokes while another 17% was elicited by the media such as watching a funny TV show or reading an amusing newspaper article. The overwhelming majority of humour actually happened in response to funny comments that people made or to amusing stories they told (72%). Current researchers advocate the study of conversational humour that is spontaneously produced and have realised that examining humour in a natural context needs to extend work conducted in laboratory settings (Heath & Blonder, 2005; Brone, 2008; Bell, 2009).

A naturalistic approach demands taking contextual factors of the setting into consideration. Being a naturalistic researcher means to go 'out there' to the world with theories and methods in order to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' (Denzin, 1971; Gibbs, 2007). Studying humour away from laboratory settings and focusing more on the natural settings where it takes place would also increase the external validity of humour research (Forgas, 1979). Unmistakably there are many humorous events that happen while tourists travel. The reasons for the humour depend on many situational and subjective variables. The present research takes a more naturalistic approach to the study of humour by largely taking an emic approach to gain insights. To provide a more complex picture of the multiple perspectives and values that people hold about humour, two qualitative studies were conducted in their naturalistic contexts. A third quantitative study was conducted also in its naturalistic setting, to provide additional insights about the phenomenon of humour at tourism sites.

1.4.4 Value of research for various audiences

Different groups and individuals may benefit from this research. Findings and implication of this research will not just be of importance for scholars (tourism and humour scholars alike) but also for tour guides and managers of tourism operations. As previously mentioned, humour studies in the tourism literature are quite scarce. While humour has received attention from many academic tribes, a focus on humour in tourism settings is virtually non-existent and therefore represents a new field to contribute to the advancement of humour research. This research attempts to contribute to the knowledge of humour in tourism by specifically focusing on how tourists perceive and relate to their humorous travel experiences.

This study also intends to help the tourism industry to improve humour practice. Tour guides play a vital role in facilitating a quality tourism experience irrespective of the tour setting (Black & Weiler, 2005). Apart from roles such as leader and communicator, a tour guide also needs to be an entertainer aiming to produce positive feelings and a warm atmosphere for the tourists (Heung, 2008). As already noted, more and more contemporary businesses are including humour along with other ingredients to entertain and provide fun to their day-to-day operations (Ball & Johnson, 2000). Humour can

also play an important role in tourism interpretation. Moscardo, Woods and Saltzer (2004) recognise that effective interpretation should include humour, metaphors and analogies when explanations are given to tourists. Handbooks of tour guiding often recommend that tour guides use humour but tour guides are mostly left to their own devices in sourcing and selecting humorous material which needs to be appropriate and tasteful to appeal to a large variety of tourist audiences.

The research might be able to offer value not just to tour guides but also to managers of tourism operations wishing to increase their humorous efforts. One purpose of this research is to inform practice by finding out if using humour could potentially contribute to the bottom line of tourism operators and if so, how. Following Flyvbjerg's (2001) guidelines about conducting phronetic social science (to be explained in detail in Chapter Two), this research will focus on practical implications gained from real-world situations. Information detailing how humour used by tourism operators is appreciated by tourists forms a part of the research scope of this thesis.

1.5 The research context of the study

A number of tourism destinations (i.e. UK, USA, and New Zealand) were considered when deciding on the choice of locations for this set of thesis studies. A decision was made to undertake data collection in Australia, more precisely Tropical North Queensland (TNQ). Australia appeared to be a perfect location to study the use of humour at tourism attractions since Australians are commonly known as "very friendly and helpful people, with a great sense of humour and a natural ability to tell jokes and play with words" (Yes Australia, 2006). Australians are perceived to be gregarious, outgoing and rather informal socially (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 2012).

Lewis (2006, p. 209) described Australia's high temperatures and summer heat as contributing to a general laissez-faire attitude where idioms such as "no worries" or "She'll be all right in the end" are frequently used. The warm climatic conditions have brought about a lifestyle that is very much focused on the outdoors, be it the beach or the countryside (DFAT, 2012). Furthermore Australia is based on an egalitarian society and lacks clearly defined social conventions. According to Lewis (2006) moderate

swearing is not something that is considered taboo. Arguably, Australians are very cheerful human beings and there are not many nationalities that can match their affability (Robertson, 2013).

While English is Australia's national language, Australians also have their own unique colloquial language called 'Strine', a term invented by Australian author, graphic designer and abstract painter Alistair Morrison in 1964 (National Archives of Australia, 2014). The Australian language itself is described as "fascinating, young, vibrant, irreverent, humorous, and inventive" (Lewis, 2006, p. 206). There are many words and expressions which may appear rather confusing or odd to international visitors but for Australians they are very common. 'Strine' is often combined with the Australian sense of humour which tends to be loaded with irony and irreverence (DFTA, 2012). Examples are reverse nicknames such as calling someone with red hair 'bluey' or abbreviations of many words and adding of an 'o' or 'ie' on the end (Tourism Australia, 2014). Lewis gives the following advice when dealing with Australian humour:

- "Jokes and anecdotes are very popular. A sense of humour is essential for getting the best out of Australians.

- Sarcasm and irony are popular, but when exercising them, let kindness shine through.

- Although Australians often appear irreverent, take their irony with a pinch of salt. Many rough-and-ready Australians have hearts of gold" (2006, p. 211).

Tropical North Queensland's tourism industry as key economic driver

Tropical North Queensland seemed an appropriate site for this research as it is located in the far north east of Queensland, Australia and is known for its tropical climate, enjoyable, laidback lifestyle and local characters (Tourism and Events Queensland, 2014). Figure 1.2 shows a map of the study location. The region provides access to two World Heritage sites, the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Queensland, which are major drawcards for people to visit and live (Advance Cairns, 2011). TNQ attracted 2.2 million international and domestic tourists for the year ending 2012 (Tourism and Events Queensland, 2013). For Cairns, the biggest town in TNQ, tourism represents one

of the key economic drivers of the region and has contributed an estimated $12.4 billion to the Cairns economy in the last five years (Cairns Regional Council, 2012).

Figure 1.2: Map of Tropical North Queensland

Research undertaken by Thompson and Prideaux (2012) with a total sample of 3808 respondents showed that the top five travel motives to visit TNQ include: (1) visiting the Great Barrier Reef (GBR); (2) rest and relaxation; (3) visiting the rainforest; (4)

experiencing the natural environment and (5) seeing Australian wildlife. Providing tourists to this region with enjoyable and fun experiences that they will remember and recommend to others can provide further benefits for the tourism industry in terms of positive word of mouth and repeat visitation. In this setting, interactions naturally take place between tourists from different countries and local tour guides. It is these humorous conversations which can potentially lead to positive memories that the tourists take home from their stay in the tropics. Conversations of the humorous kind between tour guides and tourists are given special focus in Studies 2 and 3 (Chapters Four and Five).

1.6 Summary

Five key issues can be developed from this review introducing humour:

1. The widespread nature of humour and its diverse character.

2. The complexities of defining humour with centrality given to humour appreciation and production.

3. The value of the tourism-humour relationship but its underexplored nature.

4. The value of naturalistic, non-laboratory research for multiple audiences.

5. Australia and the tropics as viable research setting with an exciting sense of humour.

Together these points prepare the research agenda for this thesis. A more conceptual analysis of the approaches which can be taken to understand and frame tourism humour studies are considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Key concepts, paradigmatic considerations, overall research design and aims

Chapter Two Overview

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this section includes sections examining the key concepts that inform this thesis. Since tourism brings together people from all over the world, considerations are given to the multicultural nature of humour. The links between positive psychology and humour are noted and connected for their value for tourism studies. The section on the experience economy highlights the role of tour guides as stagers in creating enjoyable experiences. There is also a section reflecting on the nature

of the research. The multi-method approach taken for this research is guided by the paradigm of pragmatism. The conceptual framework is based on Flyvbjerg's (2001) concept of phronesis with its focus on context-dependent knowledge and how context influences the phenomenon under study.

2.2 Multicultural nature of humour

Humour is a universal human phenomenon that is found in all cultures of the world (Alden, Hoyer & Lee, 1993; Askildson, 2005; Billig, 2005; Scott, 2007). The ways to use humour as well as its purpose and timing in social interaction vary between languages and cultures (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Lin and Tan (2010) state that different cultures have their own set of rules, values and norms of what is acceptable in humour use. The various kinds of humour that produce laughter offer potential insights into shared values, beliefs and meaning (Johnson & Ball, 2000). Certain types of humour can be difficult to understand not only due to language translation problems but also because there are different tolerance levels for humour across cultures, both for what humour means and how people are meant to respond to it (Vuorela, 2005; Pearce, 2008; Lin & Tan, 2010). Humour is also based on an insider knowledge of a culture where sharing a joke can be seen as cracking a secret code requiring common background knowledge and cultural capital (Dolitsky, 1983; Critchley, 2002; Vuorela, 2005; Lin & Tan, 2010).

A nation whose people have a good sense of humour is rarely disliked. Ruch (2002) put forward that a sense of humour can in fact be regarded as a national characteristic where people are either known for having a sense of humour (i.e. British humour) or lacking a sense of humour (i.e. Germans, Japanese). It should be noted though that cultural stereotyping can be completely inaccurate and quite harmful especially when an individual does not fit a particular stereotype (Van der Wagen & Goonetilleke, 2009). Lewis (2006) stated that nationalities actually struggle to understand one another because of several divisive factors including language, ideology and geography. Christie Davies (1988) has widely researched the topic of ethnic humour and he found that many countries tell jokes about the alleged 'stupidity' of their neighbours or regional minorities. Examples include the British making fun of the Irish, the French

making fun of the Belgians, Australians making fun of New Zealanders and the list goes on. The telling of such jokes at the expense of another group provides the tellers with a feeling of superiority. These kinds of jokes are mostly directed towards those from the less developed peripheries where humour is used to make fun of anything that is geographically remote, economically less advanced and culturally or linguistically different (Davies, 1988). It is by humour then that we identify ourselves with particular people who share our values (Vuorela, 2005). Ethnic humour can be grounded in various topics such as race, religion, language, physical appearances, geographical location and customs. This type of humour is often built on stereotypes, overgeneralisation and exaggerations about accents and gestures (Davies, 1990). Naturally the targets of humour are less likely to perceive it as funny (Lewis, 2006).

Wiseman (2002, 2007) on his journey of attempting to discover the world's funniest joke conducted one of the largest scientific studies into humour. The twelve months study had people from around the globe submit their favourite joke and then ask others to rate the jokes' perceived level of humour. This experimental study received a place in the Guinness Book of World Records due to its success: at the end of the study they received over 40,000 jokes and nearly two million people participated in the rating of the jokes. Joke submissions were censored to exclude material that would be perceived as too "rude and filthy" (Wiseman, 2007, p. 176). This action was deemed necessary because Wiseman and his research team had no control over who visited their website to submit or rate the jokes. The results of his study revealed some national differences in humour appreciation which are outlined in the following section including some example jokes.

The British, Irish, Australians and New Zealanders preferred humour involving word plays such as:

Patient: "Doctor, I've got a strawberry stuck up my bum."

Doctor: "I've got some cream for that."

People from USA and Canada favoured jokes that included a sense of superiority where some groups of people are made to look stupid, for example:

Texan: "Where are you from?"

Harvard graduate: "I come from a place where we do not end our sentences with prepositions."

Texan: "Okay – where are you from, jackass?"

Wiseman (2002) noted that many European nations, for example people from Belgium, Denmark and France showed a preference for jokes that were surreal in nature:

An Alsatian went to a telegram office, took out a blank form and wrote:

"Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof."

The clerk examined the paper and politely told the dog: "There are only nine words here. You could send another 'Woof' for the same price."

"But," the dog replied, "That would make no sense at all."

German respondents rated most jokes as funny and did not show a strong preference but instead liked a wide range of different humour. These findings have implications for this thesis because it recognised the importance of peoples' cultural background in how humour is appreciated. The greater our understanding of different cultures is, the more likely we are to communicate humour effectively (Wiseman, 2002), which is certainly very important for tourism contexts.

2.2.1 Cross-cultural differences in humour appreciation

The management of different nationalities and cultures is an important consideration in tourism study and practice. In his book 'When Cultures Collide,' Lewis (2006) offered a number of interesting and meaningful cultural comparisons. He stated that people from within various cultures see things from different angles and perspectives based on clear

traditions and sequences of behaviour. There are, however, also some basic concepts which are shared and enable us to make some generalisations that can be considered as a national characteristic. Lewis (2006, p. xvii) found that the "inhabitants of any country possess certain core beliefs and assumptions of reality which will manifest themselves in their behaviour". It is these national characteristics that make it possible to predict to a certain degree how for example Europeans, North Americans or Asians will react to humour. Lewis warns however that such generalisation can easily lead to stereotypes. Awareness about the cultural roots of national behaviour gives tourism managers some opportunity to plan and manage their approach to humour.

Culture and language are important components in understanding how humour can be perceived by other nations. Culture is based on the national concepts we learn as we grow up and that become our core beliefs while language is also built on the national character of a country and can lead to misunderstandings (Lewis, 2006). The following bullet points provide examples of how language and communication patterns of a culture influence its humour usage:

• The nature of American English is described as quick, mobile, opportunistic, casual and with humorous channels which all reveal the young history and character of the United States. American discourse is filled with wisecrack, quips, barbed retorts and exaggerations which in the view of some other nationalities may seem to be going "over the top" (Lewis, 2006, p. 74).

• British English is quite smooth and polite in its discourse and tries to show respect to others. The British frequently engage in friendly talk using numerous forms of humour to keep a conversation going. Humour to the British is in fact considered a saving grace in life (Lewis, 2006).

• The German language is a "no-nonsense entity with long, compound words often expressing complex concepts" (Lewis, 2006, p. 11) which might give people of different national background the expectation that the content of a conversation is based on serious content. Furthermore, the communication style of German people is perceived as direct, frank and often loud.

• The Japanese speech mechanism is built on being utterly polite in their conversational style and this can lead to vagueness of expression. Japanese tend to take conversational

content too literally. Lewis (2006) advises that Japanese people will laugh if told a joke, but more so because they want to be polite. It is less likely for them to have understood the joke because they are preoccupied and nervous about potential tongue-in-cheek utterances.

• Based on an egalitarian society, Australian English barely features any regional variations. The Australian ideology values a fair go and Australians may not always respect an authority figure which is why a great deal of humour is provocative and barbed in nature. Lewis (2006, p. 207) depicts Australian English as "humorous, inventive, original and bursting with vitality." There are many humorous words and expressions in the Australian English which are unlikely to be found in other languages, i.e. banana bender = Queenslander, grizzle = complain and across the ditch = New Zealand.

Since humour crosses national boundaries it appears to be quite difficult to understand. This seems to be the case especially in eastern cultures. Cultures based on Confucian and Buddhist beliefs value sincerity and politeness and are very unlikely to see the funny side in jokes about religion, sex and marginalised groups of society (Lewis, 2006). Asians prefer humour that is more subtle in its approach and only indirectly reprimands someone else. Cultural and social taboos among the Chinese foster a more harmless and witty kind of humour while western culture appears to like an aggressive and sexual content in their jokes (Yue, 2011). Indian and Chinese people prefer the use of humorous parables combining wisdom and critique, which are not perceived as particularly funny by people in western countries (Lewis, 2006).

According to Yue (2011), Chinese people seem to have a love-hate relationship with humour. Humour in Chinese culture appears to be a marginalised feature in conversations (Lin & Tan, 2010). In fact, a word for humour (yōumò) did not exist in the Chinese language until a Chinese scholar by the name of Lin Yutang created the term in 1924 to bridge its meaning with the western term (Qian, 2007). Based on the Taoist tradition humour is considered to be something positive because it is compatible with contributing to witty and harmonious interactions. On the other hand, it also has some negative connotations due to Confucian conservatism where humour is seen an inferior form of communication that is associated with intellectual shallowness, moral

indecency, low taste and vulgarity. Over centuries it appeared then that the expression of humour was suppressed. Yue (2011, p. 464) reports that "Chinese people have never been comfortable with humour as they had to constantly ensure that they would laugh at the right time, in the right matter, and with right person." Research by Watson (1997) which was conducted in Hong Kong revealed that people are regarded with suspicion if they are too friendly and smiling all the time.

Although being humorous is regarded as a distinguishing and distinctive trait for a Chinese citizen, there are studies to suggest that Chinese people actually regard humour as a desirable trait. Liao (2007) found that while undergraduates at a Taiwanese university perceived themselves to be not particularly funny, they were in envy of Americans' sense of humour. A further study of Chinese undergraduates in Hong Kong and Huhehot revealed that humour was essentially perceived as something highly important for everyday life but that the majority of them regarded themselves as non-humorous (Yue, 2011). If Chinese people wanted to become more appreciative of humour, they would first have to acknowledge their biases against humour based on the "appreciation-despising complex" as well as needing to identify techniques to overcome residual negativity (Yue, 2011, p. 475).

Lin and Tan (2010) reported a study on Singaporean humour and collected the opinions locals had about humour. The findings show that much of Singapore's humour is based "on 'Singlish' and Chinese dialects, satires of current affairs as well as influences from western culture" (Lin & Tan, 2010, p. 60). They also found that the majority of Singaporeans thought Singaporeans had little sense of humour and regarded local comedians as unfunny and weak. The reasons for this underdeveloped humour industry are Asian face-consciousness, i.e. being unable or afraid of laughing at themselves as well as restrictions of censorship that make it challenging to be creative with humour.

Korea could be considered an Asian exception because they like to attempt humour (Lewis, 2006). Koreans are described by Lewis (2006) as energetic conversationalists who regard themselves as different from the Japanese and Chinese because they believe they can handle Westerners better than other Asians. Nevertheless, as is common in other Asian countries, attention still needs to be paid to respecting their *kibun*, which can be translated as "face" or "reputation" (Lewis, 2006, p. 503). Loss of face or reputation is regarded as something very serious in Korea.

With all these differences in humour appreciation, one might asked if there is an international kind of humour. Lewis (2006) noted that there is in fact humour that is laughed at by most nationalities, for example slapstick which is age-old in its use. There are also jokes which are known across borders including the one about who must jump first out of the airplane, elephant jokes, restaurant jokes and many more (Lewis, 2006).

Translating humour into other languages does present challenges. Lewis (2006) acknowledges that many international jokes actually have a 'national rinse' to it. A study by Martinez-Sierra (2006) noted the many cultural, intertextual and linguistic considerations which were essential in translating humour based on the TV series The Simpsons from English into Spanish. He found that while most of the humorous and cultural elements could be translated from English to Spanish, at times the Spanish version suffered either partial or total loss of their humorous load. Martinez-Sierra (2006) stresses that it is necessary to have some kind of shared background knowledge between the source and the target language, although sometimes it was essential to retain the foreign context of the humour in order to make it work.

All of these previous considerations make humour a very subjective and context-specific experience. Tourism provides superior opportunities to study humour since national differences can be explored. This PhD research attempts to uncover some national differences based on its study location of Tropical North Queensland where the key international source markets include Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, China and Germany (Tourism and Events Queensland, 2010).

2.3 Positive psychology and humour

2.3.1 An introduction to positive psychology

Another substantial source of ideas pertaining to humour but not yet fully incorporated into the general tourism literature is the work of positive psychology. After World War II, psychology was principally dedicated to improving the functioning of damaged individuals (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). For this reason psychology focused on problems in human existence including for example anxiety, anger, depression, aggression, schizophrenia and violence (Seligman, 2002). With this focus on solving

problems, positive emotions were rather marginalised (Fredrickson, 1998). Attention to healing processes and avoiding negative emotions still have a high priority in psychology but as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 7) point out, psychological treatment is not just about "fixing what is broken", it is also about "nurturing what is best".

For this reason it is not enough to merely help those who suffer, but it is stressed that "the majority of 'normal' people also need examples and advice to reach a richer and more fulfilling existence" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 10). An important fact to consider is that happiness is causal and brings many more benefits than just feeling good. As found by Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) happy people are healthier, more successful, and more socially engaged. Moreover, it is the positive qualities which have the potential to build resilience and act as a defence against problems, stressors, and disorders of life (Gable & Heidt, 2005). The complete science of psychology should include an understanding of not only suffering but also how happiness is achieved (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005.)

Positive psychology is the umbrella term given to "the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, p. 410). It is also defined as the study that makes life worth living as it attempts to investigate "the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions" (Gable & Heidt, 2005, p. 104). The core of the positive psychology approach is to find strategies to enhance emotional, social and psychological well-being. It stresses the importance of love, work and play in everyday life to achieve the individually constructed 'full life' (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). Positive psychology also considers positive institutions and communities because it acknowledges that people's experiences lie within a larger social context (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

2.3.2 The benefits of positive emotions

Being able to cultivate positive emotions is important in achieving psychological growth and well-being. Fredrickson (1998, 2001) explains in her "broaden-and-build theory" the importance of positive emotions such as mirth and exhilaration to broaden

one's momentary thought-action repertoire. Fredrickson's theory suggests that positive emotions enhance peoples' intellectual resources by widening their range of thoughts and this makes it easier for people to see the interconnections in their thoughts. Contrarily, negative emotions lead to a limiting effect on peoples' attention and can also lead to pessimistic thinking (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Positive emotions have been found not to be durable because pleasurable experiences fade over time since people come to take them for granted (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005). According to Diener, Lucas and Scollon (2006) this kind of emotional adaptation is referred to as hedonic treadmill. Furthermore, people may not feel ever-lasting joy due to prevailing circumstances that they are exposed to. This is because of the different phenomenological realities that people create depending on how they relate to their experiences (Garland et al., 2010). However, even though positive emotions are not durable, they still have a facilitating effect on learning. The intellectual performance of students was increased by simply asking them to think for a minute of happy moments in their lives before a learning or writing a test (Fredrickson, 1998).

Fredrickson's theory also points out that people are able to increase their social and psychological resources through positive emotions. For these reasons, she states that positive emotions are not just worth cultivating as a pleasurable end state, but also as a means to achieving psychological well-being. There are times when people are not experiencing persistent positive emotions, but Fredrickson (2001) reports that the effects of positive emotions can act as a reserve that can be drawn on in different emotional states. Positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment and love, not only broaden a person's attention which lead to more creative problem-solving, they also build a person's social and intellectual resources.

2.3.3 Positive psychology and humour

Humour was given only peripheral importance in psychology during the 20th century, however as a topic of research it was rediscovered in the 1970s with a focus on the cognitive aspects of humour studied experimentally (Ruch, 2008). This all changed after 2000 with the rise of positive psychology when Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi made

this component of the discipline popular by dedicating an entire edition of *American Psychologist* to positive psychology.

In their handbook of Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV), Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classify which strengths and virtues are needed for human thriving and therefore contribute to a good life. According to the CSV there are six overarching virtues which are desired by every culture across the world: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. A total of 24 character strengths were assigned to these six virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In this framework of strengths and virtues, humour as a character strength is listed under the virtue of transcendence which is associated with a hopeful and optimistic perspective on life and describes humour as liking to laugh and bring smiles to other people.

Humour is correlated with subjective well-being through being able to maintain a good mood, enjoying non-serious communication, being composed and cheerful even when adversity strikes and using wit to influence the emotional states in others (Ruch, 2002; Beermann & Ruch, 2009; Mueller & Ruch, 2011). Morreall (2010) perceives humour to be a way in which we can foster qualities such as patience, tolerance, open-mindedness, humility, perseverance and courage. Furthermore, the use of humour may be motivated by goals such as making others feel good, fostering relationships and strengthening group morale which may all help to lead a more satisfying life (Ruch, 2002). Research by Beermann and Ruch (2009) revealed that humour was strongly compatible with the virtues of humanity, wisdom and transcendence because it appears to integrate goodwill.

Additionally, Beermann and Ruch (2009) found that certain aspects of humour can lead to positive effects on life satisfaction and can indeed be viewed as virtuous particularly when the humour included spreading good cheer, being amused by everyday absurdities and by one's own embarrassing episodes. The ability to "laugh at oneself" is often considered a core component of the sense of humour (Beermann, Gander, Hiltebrand, Wyss, & Ruch, 2009). Peterson and Seligman (2004) put forward the view that it is possible for people to create their own environments. To lead an engaged and pleasurable life demands a certain amount of action and commitment by individuals themselves (Proyer, Ruch & Chen, 2012). In this case, people can be viewed as active seekers of environments, situations and cognitive states of cheerfulness and playfulness.

There are clear links here to the work of Martin et al. (2003) in terms of self-enhancing humour and self-defeating humour. Self-enhancing humour is about having a humorous outlook on life in general and embracing humour as a copying strategy to deal with all sorts of situations. Self-deprecating kinds of humour are about using humour at one's own expense and being able to laugh at oneself.

Laughter, itself is an expression of joy and happiness, indicates "a carefree, playful state of mind" (Willmann, 1940, p. 82). According to McGhee (1979) humour is a form of play. For McGhee playfulness is characterised as a frame of mind and is a prerequisite for a sense of humour. McGhee's definition of humour includes being able to play with ideas or having a playful frame of mind both of which can be seen as useful to comprehend and enjoy humour. This playfulness as a human ability can be especially observed in children. However, as a child gets older, he or she gradually loses the ability to be playful due to the influences of socialisation.

Barnett (2007) defines a playful person as someone who has the tendency to frame situations in a manner so that they provide amusement, humour and entertainment to themselves as well as to others. Such people normally enjoy clowning around and acting in silly ways. Fredrickson (1998) explains that the positive emotion of joy sparks a tendency to play which for her means many forms of play such as physical and social play but also intellectual forms of play including "just plain fooling around" (p. 305). Proyer and Ruch (2011) made a link between exhibiting playfulness and experiencing positive emotions that can contribute to the 'good life.' They consider humour to be the strongest predictor of playfulness in adults. For them playfulness is positively related to intellectual and emotional strengths in humans which can lead to better social interactions. Playfulness in adults is linked to "good character" for people who are known to display behaviours of spontaneity, expressiveness, creativity, fun and silliness (Proyer & Ruch, 2011, p. 1).

Gorovoy (2009) acknowledges that the relationship between cheerfulness and life satisfaction is indirect and complex, but she states that having this character strength may result in a subjective evaluation where the individual can be more satisfied with life. This might be due to cheerful people having larger social networks, better developed social skills and higher self-esteem. Kahneman et al. (2004) go so far as to suggest that measuring national well-being as opposed to Gross Domestic Product is a

better way to inform policy. Non-cheerful people can learn to be more cheerful with the help of cognitive-behavioural techniques that aim to reinforce specific beliefs and behaviours (Ruch, 2002). Learning to get back in touch with one's sense of humour is possible and there are many books which can help in addition to the comic sections in newspapers, movie, TV and on stage (Ruch, 2008). Humour skills programmes are also offered to enhance one's appreciation and production of humour (Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011; Franzini, 2012). Many hospitals and retirement homes now employ clowns or include humour therapy to encourage a more cheerful atmosphere for their patients (Ruch & Mueller, 2009). Such visits cause a positive distraction for patients, make them laugh and improve the quality of their stay.

2.3.4 The role of humour in contributing to well-being and happiness

The literature on psychological well-being ties in nicely with the happiness generating properties of humour. Happiness was found to enhance people's health which for Veenhoven (2008) has practical implications for preventive health care programs that should promote healthier people by making them happier. In answering the question about what makes a life worth living, many people might presume that leading a good life is the same as having a happy life (Brulde, 2007). In Brulde's view "to have a good life is to have a lot of positive final value (and little or no negative final value) in one's life" (2007, p. 2). To be certain that an individual is leading a good life, he or she ought to evaluate it in a positive way. It follows that it is up to a person to include activities in their daily lives that make them happy as well as how they overcome troublesome situations.

Humour and laughter have positive effects on psychological and physiological functioning such as making us feel relaxed due to reducing muscle tension, and stress linked chemicals, and at the same time increasing oxygen in the blood and emitting endorphins (Costa & Kallick, 2000; Morreall, 2010). Laughter is also helpful in reducing anxieties and boosting activities of the immune system, which are key reasons for introducing humour rooms and comedy carts into hospitals (Morreall, 2010). In a study by Kuiper and Borowicz-Sibenik (2005) humour was in fact linked with fewer

depressive symptoms. Appendix B includes more information on the effect of humour on health.

How humour is perceived is highly dependent on its situational context (Ruch & Hehl 1998; Martin 2007). Participants in Lu and Gilmore's (2004) study defined happiness as experiencing joy, elation and enjoyment and these feelings were also manifested in smiling and laughing. Ongoing humour amongst others is a generator of smiling and laughing. Crawford and Caltabiano (2011) showed that people who have daily humour in their lives, for example by taking part in a humour skills program, improved their emotional well-being. More specifically the study revealed that the humour group, compared to the control group and social group, resulted in a significant increase in emotional well-being. In their study, emotional well-being rose as measured by scores for optimism, positive thinking, self-efficacy and perception of control and lower scores were recorded for perceived stress, depression and anxiety. In addition to taking part in a humour skills program, there are other ways to include more humour in a person's daily life: watching a comedy movie, going to a comedy festival, and arguably and of special interest to this thesis, visiting tourism attractions where humour is well and widely used.

As an adaptive coping strategy, humour is regarded as a key way to regulate one's emotions due to the positive and stress-moderating effects humour can have in adverse situations (MacKinlay, 2004; Kuiper & Borowicz-Sibernic, 2005; Samson & Gross, 2011). Having a sense of humour enhances perception of control and thus empowers an individual to deal more effectively with emotional aspects of the negative situation (MacKinlay, 2004; Helvik, Jacobsen, Svebak, & Hallberg, 2007; Stroobants, 2009; Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011). The perceived level of control a person has over a difficult situation is central to their ability to cope. Humour was found to enhance perceived level of control because it enables an individual to reframe an adverse experience through the social and cognitive components of humour (Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011). This is also called "perspective shifting" where humour and laughter permit a person to build their tolerance and move beyond the problematic issue by seeing the "ridiculousness of a situation" (MacKinlay, 2004, p. 53).

According to Pallant (2000), it is in fact the perception of control that an individual has over the emotional concerns of a threatening situation that is more important than the

general adjustment over the situation itself. Interestingly, Samson and Gross (2011) argue that different kinds of humour are used to deal with numerous situations: they state that positive humour might be used to reappraise a situation while negative humour enables us to emotionally distance ourselves from negative situations. For example Willis (2002) considers irony and black humour as a safety valve to communicate one's fears and pains.

2.3.5 Positive psychology and tourism

The link between tourism and positive psychology is very interesting. Csikszentmihalyi (in Filep & Pearce, 2014) stated that it is difficult to understand why tourism research does not have a stronger presence in positive psychology since it is an intervention that can add so much to people's quality of life. Considering that holidays are normally associated with relaxation and fun, it should be interesting to examine humour during tourism experiences and the effects for enhancing peoples' subjective well-being. There are only a few researchers that have made the connection between tourism and positive psychology (Filep, 2008; Pearce, 2009; Filep & Pearce, 2014). Filep (2008) makes the interesting point by saying that once we understand happiness we have the key to understanding satisfaction since the two concepts appear to be directly related. More broadly, Pearce (2009) recognises that for the whole planet, tourism is one of the largest commercial activities that people are involved in to create happiness for themselves. It would appear that this global effort to build positive experiences should be linked more closely to humour studies.

A study by Mitas, Yarnal and Chick (2012) based on two tourism settings, a Civil War battlefield tour and a model airplane contest, showed how tourism in its social setting creates positive emotions. The study identified four themes that generated positive emotions at these two tourism settings: amusement from humour, warmth of friendship, interest in activities, and sublime reactions to loss (Mitas, Yarnal & Chick, 2012). The theme most applicable to this research is amusement from humour in the creation of positive emotions. At both study sites participants used humour to make their interactions more amusing and the resulting laughter and enthusiastic gestures indicated positive emotions. At one point during the Civil War battlefield tour, the tour bus got

stuck on a rural road which resulted in a one hour breakdown generating lots of joking and laughter. Humour was also used during lectures which presented a break in between all the facts, names and numbers. These humorous time fillers were welcomed by the participants who took the opportunity to relax their poses and look at each other after jokes but were then ready to receive more information from their tour guides. It was also clearly stated that humour exchanged between participants was of a friendly nature and not sarcastic, cruel or negative.

Positive emotions created during these experiences added value to the experiences and helped build a community among the regular participants of these activities (Mitas, Yarnal & Chick, 2012). When participants laughed because of their jokes and funny stories, they appeared to be moving physically and emotionally closer to one another. Their study calls for more research to be undertaken to explore the links between positive emotions and commercial outcomes such as word-of-mouth loyalty. The fact that humour and laughter contribute to people being happy is not simply common sense knowledge (Carty & Musharbash, 2008) but evidence for this has also been provided by previous humour studies using positive psychology perspectives. Humour, if used deliberately and appropriately should also contribute to the quality of the tourism experience. Consequently, it is important to find out what perspectives tourists hold about humour. Departing from a tour or an attraction in a positive state of mind could mean that tourists would evaluate their experiences in more favourable terms. The question is how and why this is achieved from the perspectives of tourists. Tourism operators should have a particular interest in finding out about the various outcomes that humour has on the tourists' mood, impressions and overall experience.

In most circumstances tourists are likely to experience positive emotions during their holidays. It is however unclear how and in what way humour contributes to tourists having a good time. Furthermore, Diener, Scollon, Oishi, Dzokoto and Suh (2000) highlighted that holidays can be stressful (delayed flights, lost reservations, long waiting periods), include conflicts (trying to keep every family member happy) and even have boring periods. For this reason it would also be valuable to find out how humour can be helpful in dealing with holiday experiences which are less pleasing in nature.

2.4 The experience economy

2.4.1 Introducing the concepts of McDonaldization and Disneyization

A further domain that informs this research is that of the experience economy. The experience economy which is described by Pine and Gilmore (1999) as a new economic era provided many businesses with a fresh perspective emphasising the value of creating more enjoyable and unforgettable experiences. In the earlier stages of the economic progression, the production of commodities, goods and services was enough to satisfy customers' needs for survival, materialism, knowledge and solving problems (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Darmer & Sundbo, 2008). Although customers these days have more choice in terms of products and services than ever before, satisfaction seems to be declining (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Frow & Payne, 2007). More and more consumers are bored with today's machine-like efficiency which emerged as a result of too much rationalisation.

Ritzer (1999, 2000) asserts that all this rationalisation based on systematisation, formalisation and consistency makes the human contact that is part of many business transactions appear to be monotonous, predictable and almost 'robot-like'. Some examples of this include mechanical voices that customers encounter in various consumption settings, i.e. while getting on and leaving shuttle busses, hotel wake up services and announcements in airplanes informing passengers how to use their seatbelts (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). It is argued by Ritzer (1999, 2002) that increased efficiency through rationalisation has produced customer disenchantment with the sincerity and intimacy of personal interactions. This is exemplified by the cold impression that many business settings give these days and also by the increasingly superficial exchanges between customers and employees. This is referred to as the McDonaldization of jobs where many actions to be performed are based on specific, routinised and scripted interactions with customers (Ritzer, 2002).

Arguably, more and more customers feel irritated by the false friendliness and routinised behaviour they are confronted with during many experiences. There seems to be not much scope for creativity, spontaneity and natural interactions to take place. In the end this may lead to inefficiencies for businesses in finding it more difficult to gain repeat business from their customers. This is why customers increasingly demand a re-

enchantment of the marketplace (Ritzer, 2002). Enchantment here lies in the intrinsic nature of an experience (Ritzer, 2000). When paying more attention to the experiential side of consumption situations it is important to not just provide the customer with what they want but also how it is done (Shaw, Debeehi & Walden, 2010).

A parallel concept to McDonaldization is Disneyization which is the process through which the principles of Disney theme parks are becoming more and more exemplified in our modern society (Bryman, 2004). The notion is about making consumption experiences of any kind that would normally be viewed as rather mundane seem more attractive, interesting and appealing. While Ritzer's (1999, 2000) concept of McDonaldization was linked to the processes of fast-food restaurants such as rationalisation and homogeneity, the focus of Disneyization is on differentiation and the spectacular. Bryman (2004) suggests that the two concepts should not be thought of as competing but rather as parallel processes which clearly show some of the development taking place in modern society. By using theme parks as a reference, Disneyization as a framework is built on four dimensions to making goods and services more alluring:

1. Theming is the process of applying a particular theme or narrative (i.e. history, geography, film, music, sport) to a setting to make it appear more interesting. Theming is used increasingly in restaurants (Hard Rock Café; Planet Hollywood), shopping centres (West Edmonton Mall, Canada; Mall of Emirates, Dubai), and tourism locations (Finland's Santa Claus Land; London's Jack the Ripper tour).

2. Hybrid consumption is defined as combining several forms of consumption experiences in one location to encourage customers to spend more time and money in this location.

3. Merchandising is the promoting of goods such as t-shirts, mugs, soft toys, pens, books, clothing, sweets, watches and others which bear the logo of a particular product or service. These examples represent reminders of having visited a certain place or having partook in a particular experience.

4. Performative labour refers to employees becoming actors on a stage (workplace) delivering their theatrical performances (jobs). Performative labour is also closely linked to emotional labour and aesthetic labour which are terms which will be discussed in more detail at a later point in this chapter.

These four dimensions represent ways to attract customers and extract further revenue from them. They also act as points of differentiation and therefore ensure that the consumption experience remains in the customers' memory (Bryman, 2004). In contemporary society people are constantly stimulated and entertained through TV, movies, computer games and social media. For this reason, Bryman (2004, p. 16) has argued that customers now expect to be entertained "even when entertainment is not the main focus of the activity". In a consumer world that has been standardised through the processes of McDonaldization, the inclusion of appropriate forms of humour into tourism experiences could represent businesses with opportunities to re-enchant and better entertain tourists.

2.4.2 The experience economy and its link to tourism

Pine and Gilmore's (1999) book on the experience economy offers insights into how businesses can establish new ways to add value to their operations. They state that nowadays it is no longer sufficient to simply sell products and services, since customers "want to have an interesting life, experience new aspects of life or new places, be entertained and learn in an enjoyable way" (Darmer & Sundbo, 2008, p. 3). For this to happen businesses have to stage their experience offerings. The analogy of a stage is presented where every business is encouraged to use "services as the stage and goods as props to engage an individual in a way that creates a memorable event" (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 98).

The staging of experiences is nothing new to the tourism industry, but as Smith, MacLeod and Robertson (2010) report experiences seem to be playing a more important role within the tourism industry. More and more visitor attractions are actively promoting the experiences they offer, instead of merely focusing on their product's aesthetic and educational qualities (Smith, MacLeod & Robertson, 2010). For Pine and Gilmore (1999) this is achieved by providing customers with the opportunity to actively connect with the experience by participate in more engaging ways. Co-creation appears to play an integral role in making experiences happen. There is a growing importance of making service offerings "more like participatory than merely spectator events" (Williams & Anderson, 2005, p. 22). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) acknowledge

co-creation experiences are the basis for value creation. They express that high-quality interactions that allow customers to co-construct their experience are a major source of competitive advantage. In this regard, it is up to the customer to choose how they would like to interact with the experience environment, the service provider and other customers that are present (Walls, Okumus, Wang & Kwun, 2011).

As mentioned in Chapter One, several scholars have noted that there is a 'push' in tourism to fulfil the human need to have fun. Cohen (2011b) acknowledges fun and enjoyment as every increasing travel motives. Berger (2006) also noted that tourists wish to see what the world holds for them in regards to pleasurable and amusing experiences. The new leisure tourist is apparently more and more looking to have fun and be entertained which can be seen in the increasing creation and popularity of stimulated worlds such as theme parks and shopping malls (Smith, MacLeod & Robertson, 2010).

Communications during guided tours are usually a two-way process where the tourism presenters encourage input and questions from the tourists (Ballantyne, Crabtree, Ham, Hughes & Weiler, 2000). This co-creation is vital for generating compelling and engaging customer experiences. Memorable experiences are co-created by all parties involved in experiences (Gibbs & Richie, 2010). Not surprisingly that also includes the tourist as an active participant in the experience (Andersson, 2007). Tourists create their own experiences through the conversations and interactions they have while on a trip with the tour guide but also with other tourists who take part in the same activity (Christrup, 2008; Frow & Payne, 2007). These interactions do not always need to be goal-directed but can also be based on feelings and fun. The argument in the previous paragraph highlights the need for co-creation experiences. Thus a further research opportunity of this thesis is to find out what role humour plays in creating memorable experiences.

2.4.3 The tour guide as experience stager

Tour guides operate in a large range of different settings such as museums, historic sites, galleries, national parks, and cities (Pastorelli, 2003). They play an important role in influencing the overall satisfaction of the tour offered irrespective of the tour setting

(Ap & Wong, 2001; McDonnell, 2001; Pastorelli, 2003; Black & Weiler, 2005). Tour guides need to have many attributes such as be knowledgeable, able to organise others, be informative and be capable of controlling their groups of tourists (Collins, 2000; Moss, 2009). However apart from their roles as organisers and communicators, tour guides also need to be entertainers aiming to produce positive feelings and a warm atmosphere for the tourists (Heung, 2008).

It is important to recognise that tourists at a national park or any other attraction are a voluntary and non-captive audience who decide for themselves if they want to stay and pay attention or if the presentation is too tedious or technical to understand. If the latter is the case, they will shift their attention to something else (Ham, 1992). Non-captive audiences expect that information is presented in an informal and non-academic way. Some of the approaches that are motivating include providing interest, fun, entertainment and possibilities of self-enrichment (Ham, 1992). Ap and Wong (2001) found that professionalism in tour guiding is associated with making tourists happy, providing a positive impression of a destination and satisfying tourists in such a way that they are encouraged to return to a specific location. Effective tour guiding is therefore dependent on the guide's ability to build a good connection with the people they are guiding.

A tour guide plays a pivotal role for tourism businesses through the communication and interpretation provided (Ballantyne et al., 2000). While the content of the interpretation material is always based on facts such as the history, culture, geography, and politics of a place, there should also be a focus on inspiring and entertaining visitors. The challenge is to find the right balance between education and fun which have appeal to various people. Collins (2000) suggests that most people taking part in a guided tour will remember the 'fillers' which are used to make the commentary come alive. Likewise, McArthur (1998, p. 63) illustrated the point by stating "good interpretation is still thought about at breakfast the next morning, or over the dinner table the next week."

Freeman Tilden was a pioneer in recognising the importance of inspiring interpretation. Tilden's (1957) interpretation principles are still highly relevant in current guiding principles of interpretation. Based on his own involvement with National Parks in the United States, he concluded that interpretation is best achieved by highlighting

meanings and relationships through personal experiences and illustrative material instead of merely transferring factual information (Tilden, 1957).

According to Wang, Hieh and Chen (2002), it is a tour guides' presentation skills that can either make or break a tour. The content of the information and how this information is presented by tour guides influences the overall impression of a tour. On the positive side McDonnell (2001) found that it was essential for tour guides to be knowledgeable about their area (41%), to use humour and fun to develop good rapport with passengers (33%), to give interesting commentary (15%) and to be easy to understand (5%). Negative comments about tour guides included not being enthusiastic and personable (3%) and being difficult to understand in terms of their accent (3%). Thus the way in which the interpretational material is provided can reinforce the message (Jennings & Weiler, 2006).

Apart from attention-grabbing presentation skills, a tour guide's communication competencies also play a vital role. Reisinger and Waryszak (1994) count the communication skills of a tour guide as a vital element that contributes to tourists' perception of overall tour quality. This does not only include verbal abilities but also non-verbal elements (such as gestures, gaze and smiling) and interactional patterns (including for example greetings and displaying of appropriate emotions). Research with key individuals involved in tour guiding conducted by Ap and Wong's (2001) study clearly showed that a tour guide's professionalism is linked to their communication skills, product knowledge and an attitude build on respect and willingness to help.

A study by Leclerc and Martin (2004) found that differences exist in the perception of important communication competencies between tourists from France, Germany and the United States. Tourists were asked to complete a questionnaire measuring the importance of three verbal communication competencies (language adaptability, interpersonal inclusion, and assertiveness) as well as four nonverbal skills (approachability, poise, attentiveness, and touch) of tour guides. The results showed that American tourists ranked all nonverbal and verbal competencies as more important than the European tourists did except for one dimension (assertiveness). For example, approachability (conceptualised as smiling, laughing, pleasant and facial expression) and attentiveness (conceptualised as maintaining direct eye contact, paying close

attention and using gestures) were regarded as more important communication competence skills for tour guides by the American group than for the European group of tourists. These findings show that Americans prefer tour guides who are informal as well as expressive (Leclerc & Martin, 2004).

The use of humour in tour guide's interpretation efforts

Numerous definitions of what interpretation is can be found in the literature but the one by Ham (1992, p. 3) is clear: "Environmental interpretation involves translating the technical language of a natural science or related field into terms and ideas that people who are not scientists can readily understand. And it involves doing it in a way that is entertaining and interesting to these people." One fundamental point of interpretation is that it should contribute to an increased appreciation of the environment where the guided tour takes place (Pastorelli, 2003). Interpretation should not be delivered in the same way as educational approaches in classrooms. Several scholars have recognised that effective interpretation not only contributes to the quality of the tourist experience but it can also enhance the commercial feasibility of tourism businesses (Ham, 1992; Moscardo, 1998; Jennings & Weiler, 2006). Interpretation is able to produce a mindful state in the visitors which should enable them to gain new insights or better understandings about the places they visit (Moscardo, 1996). Making visitors aware of and promoting their understanding and appreciation of places in terms of their culture, history and heritage is one of the key elements of interpretation (Stewart, Hayward, Devlin & Kirby, 1998).

Another key element of effective interpretation when dealing with a very diverse audience, as in the case of most tourist groups, is to keep the information relevant and to keep the audience engaged (Carmody, 2011). As previously mentioned humour has also been found to be useful in tourism interpretation. Moscardo, Woods and Saltzer (2004) state that effective interpretation should include humour, metaphors and analogies when explanations are given to tourists. This can be achieved by means of creating connections between peoples' knowledge and the information that is provided (Ballantyne et al., 2000). This can be done through the use of illustrations to explain complex ideas, the inclusion of human components to accompany technical facts, the

use of analogies, metaphors, stories and humour to illustrate points (Ham, 1992; Carmody, 2011).

'Being mindful' means that an individual is actively engaged in the present and sensitive to both context and perspective (Carson & Langer, 2006). Because mindfulness represents consciousness at a level that is characterised by attentiveness and vividness, Brown and Ryan (2003) suggest that mindfulness could contribute to the enjoyment of an experience. Adding humour to certain situations can create increased mindfulness by "forcing people to see a new and unexpected side to a given situation" (Carson & Langer, 2006, p. 41). Peoples' mindfulness capacities depend on individual factors such as willingness to sustain attention but also on a variety of external factors that can either sharpen or cloud peoples' mindfulness levels (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Using humour to enhance peoples' mindfulness is unmistakably related to external factors such as listening to a humorous comment made by a tour guide or reading a humorous remark on a tourism leaflet.

Making the humorous performance work

Bryman (2004) states that there are several types of labour such as emotional labour, aesthetic labour and performative labour. These three types of labour are increasingly being recognised as important factors shaping how customers perceive the quality of services. Each of these three labour forms can be perceived as a main feature in creating positive and memorable impressions and points of differentiation in the minds of customers. More importantly for this research is that all three labour types are helpful for successful humour delivery.

Emotional labour is about showing the right emotions to make a certain type of humour work for its situation. In this case it would involve the tourism employees to be cheerful and pleasant. The display of positive emotions through smiling is supposed to make the audience feel good. Based on the concept of Disneyization, it is the ever smiling Disney employee who gives the audience an impression that they are having fun too and are not actual engaging in real work. Work by Hochschild (1979) states that excessive emotional labour can be a problem because it leads to adverse psychological consequence. It is important that employees are still able to be themselves instead of

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just robotically repeating a script. Employees should be allowed to go beyond a given script and also be able to express their personality.

Aesthetic labour is about the displaying the right attitudes and expressing the right look and sound for the humour to work well with the rest of the experience that is on offer. Bryman (2004) predicts that aesthetic labour will become increasingly important in commercial settings through the use of appropriate clothing, make up and props. He cites the example of a living heritage museum where staff members become actors who once they are in their costumes are perceived as more credible in their delivery of long-forgotten skills.

Performative labour is established through the combined effort of emotional and aesthetic labour. Work is performance and therefore performative labour includes functional considerations to perform a role with character. Franzini (2012) acknowledged that the delivery of humour is just as important as the content of the humour itself. Facial expressions, gestures and vocal variety are important elements for successful humour delivery which can all be developed through practice (Powell & Andresen, 1985; Franzini, 2012). Smiling, laughing, nodding slowly, tightening of the lips, winking, rolling of the eyes, uplifting one eyebrow can be added to the verbal cues to make the humour work (Hancock, 2004; Caucci & Kreuz, 2012). Another consideration is being able to manage the timing effectively with the use of pauses and silences employed to generate curiosity in the audience and build momentum in telling a joke without giving it away before the punch line is spoken (Stroobants, 2009).

Struthers (2011) observed that humour is an elusive subject and its many different conceptualisations make it a challenging task to give comprehensive guidance for its use. This might be an issue for tour guides, who in many tour guide handbooks are often encouraged to use humour. These handbooks, however, hardly ever include any specific guidance in regards to what humour will work and what is appropriate. It is undoubtedly a challenging task for tour guides to research humour that they feel comfortable about including into their commentary. Initially many tour guides may also not be comfortable about using humour straight away, but it may be something that they wish to develop as they gain more practical experience in their job. This research attempts to find out what kinds of humour are appropriate to use and offers some guidance to tour guides and

other tourism employees as to how humour is used successfully at several tourism settings.

2.5 Paradigmatic considerations

2.5.1 Finding the right research perspective

Commitment to the philosophical assumptions of a paradigm is necessary because a particular research project is framed around the chosen paradigm that guides researchers in the decisions to be made. Such choices also reflect a researcher's view of how the social world is constructed (Pansiri, 2009; Hammersley, 2012). Lynch (2005) acknowledges that many researchers actually have trouble in positioning themselves in reflexive ways. Dunkley (2007) states, however, that it is very important for researchers to know their own presence and perspectives for a given research study. Being reflexive in this process is valuable because the researcher has to recognise how their own thinking influences the research (Yin, 2011).

In order to find a suitable paradigmatic approach for this research, there are a number of important questions which need to be addressed relating to paradigm selection. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) define a paradigm "as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator not only in choices of methods but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." Slevitch (2011) describes a paradigm as the set of beliefs that a specific academic discipline abides by and which may fundamentally prevent the advocates of one paradigm from accepting the strands of another. A particular worldview also includes assumptions about how reality is constructed, this might be a singular reality or multiply constructed realities (Yin, 2011). Depending on the specific information needs, these considerations are important in establishing and guiding the creation of knowledge of a study. The two dominant paradigms of positivism/postpositivism and interpretivism/constructivism are briefly introduced in the following paragraphs.

Positivism and post-positivism are often discussed in the literature as 'science research' or 'the scientific method' (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The positivist philosophy emphasises the importance of scientific objectivity based on the notion that reality is

fixed and that there is a universal truth where human behaviour is predictable and can be observed and uncovered by the researcher (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2008; Jennings, 2010; Yin, 2011). The positivistic model is typically used to test theory and relies on quantitative techniques of data collection such as experimentation and surveys with methods of analysis including statistics investigating the causal relationships among variables (Creswell, 2009; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Interpretivism and constructivism consider social reality to be a joint product of peoples' multiple perspectives where truth is created by listening to the value-laden participants' views and the researcher's interpretation of this reality considering their own background (Creswell, 2007; Jennings, 2010; Yin, 2011). The constructivist researcher mostly relies on qualitative data collection methods and analysis but has also been known to mix some methods and analysis (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the constructions that people (including the researcher) hold (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This is achieved by looking for patterns of meaning and can involve developing theories instead of testing theory (Creswell, 2009).

Due to some dissatisfaction with the existing dominant research paradigms, other research approaches have emerged after realising that the researchers' styles and approaches did not fit the dominant research paradigms (Mertens, 2005). Some of the other approaches include transformative paradigms such as critical theory, the feminist paradigm, chaos and complexity theory, and pragmatism. The critical theory paradigm attempts to understand, through research, the position of minority groups and stresses that research should cause some change for these oppressed groups (Mertens, 2005; Jennings, 2010). The feminist perspective paradigm provides a balanced gender angle in the creation of knowledge by focusing its research efforts on the role and experiences of women (Jennings, 2010). Chaos and complexity theories recognise that life is unstable and ever-changing and tries to study the dynamics of systems (Jennings, 2010). Pragmatism as a paradigm focuses on problem-centred approaches based on their real-life settings (Mertens, 2005).

There are some scholars that prefer one paradigmatic approach over another and continue to defend their position. Traditionally, many tourism studies relied on positivism with its scientific methods, rigorously collected quantitative data and

statistical analyses (Walle, 1997; Aguinaldo, 2004; Lynch, 2005; Pansiri, 2005). In recent years, the use of qualitative approaches have increased in management and tourism/hospitality studies compared to traditional quantitative approaches (Pansiri, 2005; Pernecky, 2007; Slevitch, 2011). This appears to be a strong movement since many researchers have recognised that tourism experiences are historically, socio-culturally and temporally framed. Such experiences are also based on several interactions as well as being grounded in the tourists' own (re)constructions of their experiences (Jennings & Weiler, 2006). Some scholars argue that qualitative approaches are better suited to deal with complex tourism dynamics and that value-free research is hardly every possible because everything we deal with is influenced by our own beliefs, value system and also by our personal circumstances (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Wheeller, 2004; Athens, 2010).

2.5.2 Qualitative and quantitative methodologies explained

Many authors acknowledge that although qualitative and quantitative approaches are different in their ontological and epistemological assumptions, there is the possibility to combine the two in a complementary way (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002). It is also possible to combine analysis of both types of data. For example, Elliott (2005) states that qualitative data can be analysed using numeric techniques and that quantities based data can be transformed into narrative forms. Since ontology, epistemology and methodology are essential components of any research process (Pernecky, 2007), the following section will provide a definition for each of these terms and outline how each process applies to qualitative and quantitative research.

Ontology concerns a researcher's philosophical beliefs about what constitutes the nature of reality (Yin, 2011). The epistemological position of a researcher regards their view on knowledge creation in terms of how the studied phenomenon can be understood (Hammersley, 2003; Slevitch, 2011). A useful explanation about the differences of methodology and methods is provided by Lyons (2000): methodology is concerned with the theoretical guidelines about how the research is to be conducted while methods are the specific tools or procedures employed to collect and analyse data.

Giving a rather amusing illustration, Roth (2002, p. 352) describes quantitative researcher as "quantnoids" and qualitative researchers as "schmoozers" who evidently live on different planets but can be placed in the same galaxy under certain circumstances. According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) the impression arises that there are certain paradigms that favour qualitative or quantitative approaches. Qualitative data is mostly created by the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm while quantitative data is generated within the positivist or post-positivist paradigm (Greene & Caracelli, 1997). Nevertheless there is in fact no paradigm that explicitly prohibits the use of a particular methodological approach (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

The previous statement however may not be agreed upon by the so called 'purists' from the dominant research paradigms. Some take the view that research paradigms should not be mixed and therefore reject philosophical worldviews that mix the approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The literature outlines the various issues of compatibility between worldviews and methods when mixing quantitative and qualitative research because each approach has been built on different philosophical assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2012). During the paradigm debates of the 1980s and 1990s, those who advocated the use of quantitative methods and those dedicated to qualitative studies strongly criticised each other (Yin, 2011). The scholars on each side of this debate defended their own worldview by belittling and discrediting each other's methods (Yin, 2011).

In social research it became more of a norm to measure phenomena objectively using quantitative methods while also subjectively exploring the reality through the lens of research participants. The contemporary acceptance of mixing methodological approaches is based on the notion that the issues of incompatibility should not be sustained. Instead of simply focusing on one method, qualitative or quantitative, mixed method designs provide a pragmatic alternative demonstrating that it is more vital for research to advance instead of focusing on paradigm conflicts (Yin, 2011). The following paragraphs outline the main differences between quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative research

This research approach and its data are predominantly based on numeric forms such as scores on scales to ensure inferential statistics can be used to analyse the data (Creswell, 2012). Generalisability and representativeness are the overall purpose of the quantitative approach (Creswell, 2012). In regards to paradigms, the quantitative approach is built on positivism and postpositivism (Jennings, 2006; Slevitch, 2011). Ontologically, the quantitative tradition positions itself on an objective reality where only one ultimate truth exists (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002; Aguinaldo, 2004; Jennings, 2006; Slevitch, 2011). This objective view of reality means that in epistemological terms, the researcher and the research subjects are separate entities and that it is possible for the researcher to investigate an issues without affecting it and without being biased by the issue (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Truth is achieved by stating how things are and by founding results on their objective reality (Aguinaldo, 2004; Slevitch, 2011).

Quantitative methodologies are experimental and manipulative in nature where the collected data are meant to reproduce the objective reality. Quantitative research tests hypothesis, examines cause and effect relationships and minimises biases, so that generalisations and predictions can be made (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Frequent methods include questionnaires, observations, experiments and quasi-experiments (Jennings, 2010). Quantitative data collection methods tend to be more closed-ended, i.e. clearly set response categories (Creswell, 2012). An important consideration is also given to sample sizes which need to be large enough to ensure representativeness and generalisability of results (Slevitch, 2011).

Quantitative data has many advantages including relatively quick data collection, being able to test and validate theories, the data analysis is less time-consuming, being able to generalise findings if data are based on a random sample and allow for quantitative predictions to be made (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Some limitations include that the response categories chosen may not reflect the local populations' understandings. Furthermore the created knowledge may be too abstract to be applied to a specific local context. Therefore it is important that researchers clearly address the usefulness and workability of findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Qualitative research

The overall purpose of the qualitative approach is to make sense of the diverse and unique perspectives of research participants and to study their meaning under real-world conditions (Lyons, 2000; Yin, 2011). The qualitative approach consists of paradigms such as interpretivism and constructivism, terms which are virtually synonymous (Slevitch, 2011). Ontologically, the qualitative approaches do not stress the existence of a single objective reality, but rather emphasise that reality is socially constructed, interpreted and recreated based on peoples' experiences and interactions (Lyons, 2000; Jennings, 2010). Qualitative epistemology is subjective and value-laden which signifies that the world is made up of multiple realities (Gibbs, 2007; Jennings, 2006, 2010). These numerous mental constructions are socially and experientially based and depend on the individuals who hold them (Lincoln, 1994).

This is especially true for a sense of humour because different people perceive humour in different ways based on numerous subjective characteristics, i.e. gender, age, culture, etc. The epistemology is therefore subjective and variable in nature rather than fixed (Lyons, 2000). The researcher and the participant create knowledge by merging into an interactive unit and create meaning based on their interactions (Lincoln, 1994; Lyons, 2000). The epistemological approach assumes a relativist belief based on the many realities which can be discovered from individual experiences (Pernecky, 2007). Qualitative researchers wish to make sense of peoples' lives from the perspectives of the participants (Simmons, 1995; Noy, 2004; Creswell, 2012). Therefore the insider's view or 'emic perspective' of research participants is valued (Jennings, 2010).

A benefit of qualitative data collection methods is that they are more open-ended in their approach where for example the researcher asks the respondent certain types of questions and the respondents are free to express themselves and to shape the response in their own way (Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2012). Sample size is normally not a pressing concern in qualitative methodology since the emphasis is on understanding the rich information about the perspectives collected from a small number of participants as opposed to testing hypothesis (Alaszewski, 2006; Slevitch, 2011).

Methods employed are chosen for their interpretive value and are often undertaken in a naturalistic context. In this way the researcher is able to collect contextual factors relating to the research phenomenon and the respondents are less likely to be inhibited

by the confines or artificiality of a laboratory setting (Yin, 2011). Qualitative methods include for example participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups or exploring documents such as diaries or photographs (Lyons, 2000; Creswell, 2009; Jennings, 2010; Yin, 2011). The analysis itself is based on words or images which means that codes, categories or themes are created to analyse the data (Creswell, 2012). The focus of the analysis is on presenting meaning as conveyed by research participants to make sense of their thoughts, language and actions (Lynch, 2005). A major disadvantage is that findings cannot be generalised to other settings due to small sample sizes. Further disadvantages include that data collection and analysis take longer compared to quantitative ways of collecting and analysing data and the findings may also reflect the researcher's own biases (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

2.5.3 The challenge of finding a paradigm for humour research

Researchers in today's diverse academic world need to use various approaches to investigate complex issues in society (Creswell, 2012). For example, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 15) acknowledge that today's research issues are "becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, complex and dynamic." As already noted in Chapter One, the fields of tourism and humour are often regarded as fragmented fields of study due to their multi-disciplinary content where many academic tribes and disciplines have attempted to contribute to their advance and increased understanding. The realities of social research in the twenty first century call for a paradigm that is flexible, absorbent and multilayered (Denscombe, 2008) and where using various research methods that complement one another can provide superior research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004).

Finding a research paradigm that accommodates the multi-dimensional construct of humour is a challenging undertaking. Ruch (2001) stated that it was not feasible to examine this multifaceted phenomenon under a single paradigm. Although various methods are at the disposal of humour researchers, regrettably there are few papers that use mixed methods in humour research (Lockyer, 2006). However, humour researchers and humour research in more general are sometimes faced with skepticism, hostility and

ridicule based on studying this 'unserious' topic which is the reason why Lockyer states that adopting mixed methods adds to the credibility of the study area.

There are also some authors who believe that simply using quantitative mono-methods do not give enough "credence to individual meanings or the subjectivity of humour" (Struthers, 2011, p. 452). In his research on teachers' use of humour in adult education, Struthers applied mixed methods and noted that this was not only a logical consideration but also essential to enhance the understanding of the personal complexities involved. Adhering to the recommendations of previous humour researchers such as Ruch (2001), Lockyer (2006) and Struthers (2011), it was decided that the mixing of qualitative and quantitative approaches would be most appropriate in this study of humour in tourism. It seemed essential due to humour having psychological, sociological and physiological features that affect its use as well as its outcomes (Struthers, 2011).

Further justification for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches lie in the numerous benefits outlined in the previous literature. Since each method has its unique weaknesses, combining methods would therefore help to compensate for the limitations of one method by complementing it with another approach (Lyons, 2000; Breakwell, 2000a; Pansiri, 2005; Denscombe, 2008). Also, the use of multiple methods is sometimes necessary to "provide an innovative slant to a problem" (Goulding, 1999, p. 862). Further benefits of mixing methods are noted by Denscombe (2008) such as improving the accuracy of data and being able to build on and follow up on the results of the previous studies. By being able to verify the findings of one study with evidence from two or more other studies or sources, it is possible to achieve internal and external validity (Pansiri, 2005; Jennings, 2006; Yin, 2011). Logically, if two or more different approaches lead to the similar conclusions, then researchers can be more confident about the validity of their findings. Using triangulation, researchers who collect and analyse data using different methods or from various sources are able to not only add richness to their findings but find greater support for their interpretations (Lyons, 2000; Veal, 2006). It was decided that using a multi-method approach for this thesis research would create a more complete picture about the phenomenon compared to using a mono-method approach (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Lockyer, 2006; Denscombe, 2008; Creswell, 2012).

2.6 Pragmatism – the paradigm guiding this PhD thesis

The philosophical framework that embeds and explicitly defends the use of mixed methodologies is pragmatism (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Denscombe, 2008; Creswell, 2012). As a paradigm, pragmatism does not position itself on either side of positivist or interpretivist beliefs of reality but instead advocates the use of mixed methods (Pansiri, 2005; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) define mixed method research as "a class of research where the researcher mixes and combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study." The Collins English Dictionary (2014) describes pragmatism as "advocating behaviour that is dictated more by practical consequences than by theory or dogma". Given that there is not a lot of theory on the tourism-humour relationship in the literature, it appeared sensible to have the paradigm of pragmatism guide this present PhD research.

In regards to the historical development of this research paradigm, Hammersley (2012) stated that pragmatism emerged in the second half of the 19th century in the United States but that it was founded on readings of German philosophy, in particular the readings of Kant and Hegel. Pragmatism was apparently first used in an article titled 'How to make our ideas clear' by Charles Sanders Peirce in 1878 (Pansiri, 2005). One of the most important considerations in research for Peirce was the practical meaning of the investigated concepts with its application to real-world context (Hammersley, 2012). Ormerod (2006, p. 892) noted that this worldview can also be traced back to the academic sceptics of classical antiquity who argued that it was impossible to find knowledge about the real truth and therefore it was better to "make do with plausible information adequate to the needs of practice."

The characteristics of pragmatism have been noted by various scholars. Pragmatists discard having to force a choice between "between positivism and interpretivism with regard to methods, logic and epistemology" (Pansiri, 2005, p.198). Forcing such as choice is regarded as imposing limits on the assumption of knowledge creation (Morgan, 2007). Pragmatism is the philosophical movement that goes beyond the paradigm wars and offers a logical and practical alternative to researchers (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Denscombe, 2008). Proponents of pragmatic inquiry seek a common ground between purely quantitative or qualitative approaches by emphasising

the problem-driven nature of inquiry (Denscombe, 2008). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note that pragmatism rejects traditional dualism (e.g. facts vs. values, subjectivism vs. objectivism) and advocates a more common sense philosophy where methodologies are chosen based on how well they will provide solutions to problems. In a similar view, Creswell (2009, p. 11) states that pragmatism enables the researcher to use "multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions." Pragmatists view the world not as absolute unity (Creswell, 2009) but rather recognise the natural and physical world as well as the social and psychological work of people conveyed via language, culture and subjective thought (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

According to Goldkuhl (2012) the pragmatist ontology recognises that the world is constantly changing. In order to bring about desired actions and changes, they must be guided by knowledge and purpose. The creation of new knowledge should be founded on its practical consequences of the concept studied. Research questions are therefore formulated based on the practical requirements of decision making at a particular time in a particular context (Ormerod, 2006). Pragmatism prioritises the research problem and uses research methods that are most suitable in answering the research questions (Lyons, 2000; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Niaz, 2008; Denscombe, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011). The active role of the researcher as an instrument in the collection and analysis of data is emphasised through reflexivity. This is because the researcher needs to be aware of his or her own actions and the observations of others' actions when participating in practice (Goldkuhl, 2012). Because pragmatist research results are dependent on their time and context, different methods are selected based on the current empirical situation (Ormerod, 2006; Goldkuhl, 2012).

Research paradigms ought to be viewed as descriptions rather than prescriptions for researchers and based on this premise is it more important to give higher priority to the practical demands of a research problem than being too concerned about philosophical assumptions (Greene & Caracelli, 1997). Pragmatists use a 'what works' tactic where they intuitively choose research processes that will best fit with the research questions (Creswell, 2009). This practical point of view was also advocated by Edwards (2010) who suggested that different research aims required different methods. In this research the mixing of methods was considered to be the most valuable in gaining a better understanding of how tourists relate to and perceive humour during their tourism experiences. In part this called for a study of a qualitative nature. Secondly, it was also

important to assess if tourists' humour appreciation could be enhanced through the use of an intervention and this called for a study of quantitative nature.

2.6.1 The mixed method design selected for this research

Creswell (2012, p. 540-547) presents several procedural designs when using mixed methods: the convergent parallel design; the explanatory sequential design; the exploratory sequential design; the embedded design; the transformative design and the multiphase design. The multiphase mixed methods design was found to be most applicable to this PhD research. Creswell (2012) described this approach as investigating a topic through a series of phases or separate studies. These multiple studies can be conducted over time either concurrently or in sequence. The multiphase design enables the researcher to address several research questions that all enhance the understanding of one overall research topic. Using this design requires clear understanding of the overall project topic, knowledge of various methods and also ability to link the findings of the multiple studies together to be able to address the common research aim (Creswell, 2012).

The use of various methods in this present research allowed for a better understanding of what different research participants thought about humour based on the different tourism settings with their various contextual factors. The quantitative approach taken in Study 3 used a questionnaire which included scales that allowed respondents to rate the perceived level of humour of their experience. While these scales were very valuable in providing numerical detail about participants' perceptions of humour, it was the focus group sessions in Study 2 that uncovered why certain things were funny and how it made the respondents feel to be exposed to all that humour. Similarly, the complexity and detail captured through the exploration of the humorous travel blog episodes in Study 1 would have never been possible by using simply quantitative methods.

In order to visualise the procedures undertaken in a mixed method project, Creswell (2012) recommends a diagram of the procedure. As shown in Figure 2.1 the data collection of the chosen multiphase mixed design happened in sequence where the two qualitative studies were conducted first and were then followed by a quantitative study

to provide greater detail by examining the numerical data collected through a questionnaire. The numerical information was needed to not only enrich but also back up the qualitative findings. The findings of each study were helpful in guiding and supporting each other. The final evaluation phase where the findings of the studies were synthesised was a challenging and enlightening final stage of the research.
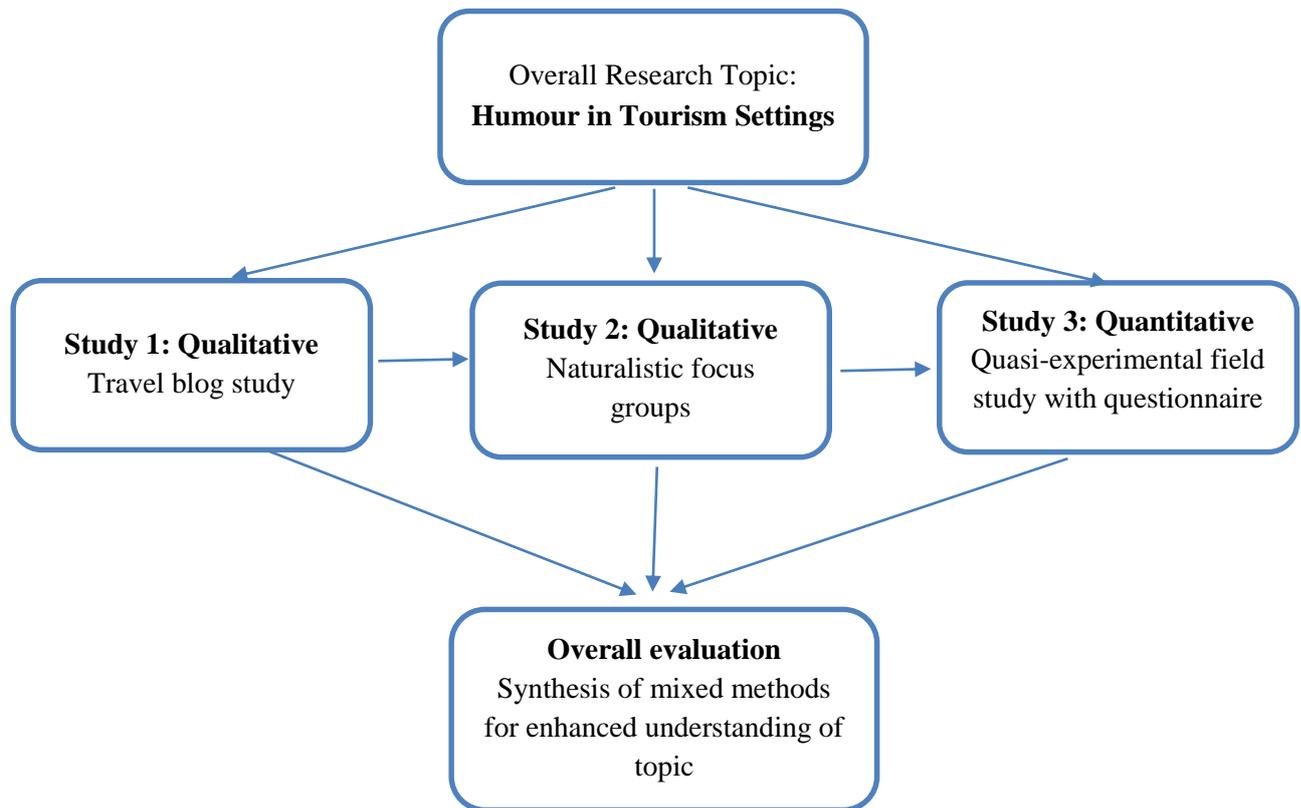
Figure 2.1: The multiphase mixed methods design chosen for this PhD research

2.7 Phronesis – the conceptual framework guiding this research

The conceptual framework of this PhD thesis is built on Flyvbjerg's (2001) concept of phronesis. In his book 'Making Social Science Matter' Flyvbjerg contributed to the debate on the science wars. He made an interesting argument about why social sciences are still considered to be in a pre-paradigmatic stage and also reflected on the issue of why social research is unable to create theories as the natural sciences do. For Flyvbjerg, adopting a contemporary interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of phronesis offered a way out of the science wars. In this view the social sciences appear

misguided in the attempt to emulate the natural sciences by trying to develop predictive and explanatory theory. Due to the complexity and unpredictability of human experiences this has never been possible and will never be possible. Instead the study of human activity should focus on practical experiences, context and human judgement and not on universals and predictability. Aristotle, as opposed to Socrates and Plato, assumed that human behaviours could be better understood by emphasising individual cases and their specific contexts.

Flyvbjerg explains the attraction of natural sciences to many researchers due to its simplicity where much progress was founded on explanation and prediction of context-independent theories. For this reason it was also not surprising that social scientists in their attempt to study human affairs emulated the natural science paradigm for guidance. Social science is strong where the natural science is weak. Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 3) points out that although "the social sciences have not contributed much to explanatory and predictive theory, neither have the natural sciences contributed to the reflexive analysis and discussion of values and interests" which are also vital for the development of any society. Phronetic social science is the practical, intellectual activity that is helpful in clarifying and addressing real-life problems and possibilities faced by humans and societies.

The resources, methods and apparatus available to study human activity are not as refined as those available in the study of nature. Also concerning the object of study itself, making inferences about the self-reflecting nature of humans compared to the study of physical objects is much more complex. While natural science theories tend to be explicit, universal and predictive, finding such a parallel for social science is according to Flyvbjerg impossible due to human social life being so multifaceted and unpredictable. It is because of the multiple interpretations by people and the varying contexts in which these interpretations take place that predictive social science theories have not been developed. Theories by definition are meant to be context-independent and be based on truly explanatory rules. An actual 'maturity' of the social science might therefore never be achieved because the context-specific interpretations humans make are too complex and unstable and negate the requirement of a theory in terms of predictability.

Phronesis and its links to pragmatism

Flyvbjerg (2001) refers to the work of Aristotle, who categorised the three different kinds of intellectual virtues: episteme, techne and phronesis.

- Episteme is concerned with theories and scientific knowledge. It is characterised as being universal, analytical and context-independent. The modern words in use today for episteme are epistemic and epistemology.

- Techne is defined as craft and art that is characterised as being concrete, variable and context-dependent. Its contemporary terms are technology and technical.

- Phronesis is an ancient Greek word that is often translated at 'practical wisdom'. Aristotle regarded phronesis as the most important of the intellectual virtues because it went beyond episteme (scientific knowledge) and techne (technical knowledge). It is the intellectual ability that is most relevant to praxis because it employs practical value-rationality to determine what it takes to live well. It is based on experience, intuition and common sense. It is characterised as pragmatic, variable and context-dependent and oriented towards action. In our contemporary world there is no equivalent term for phronesis. Due to its focus on specific research cases, situationally dependent information is considered more important that universal and theoretical rules.

With its focus on practicality and context dependent information, phronesis harmonises quite well with pragmatism as paradigm guiding for this research. When examining the empirical findings of a given research project then it is vital to consider its practical consequences in terms of what actions need to be taken next (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism attempts to assist human problem-solving by focusing on the practical consequences of an idea as opposed to argue about how truth and reality can be found (Powell, 2001; Ormerod, 2006; Goldkuhl, 2012). Phronesis, in a similar fashion to pragmatism places high regard on reality based on social experiences in action and events (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism does what phronetic social science is all about: it shifts the attention from the paradigm debate to one that is focused on practice (Denscombe, 2008).

Phronetic social science is about making social science useful and relevant to real people in real-life settings by looking in detail at the particular rather than general context-independent knowledge. When studying humans and society at large, Aristotle instead of looking for universals and consulting theory, saw more purpose in debating about particular affairs and how they could contribute to better praxis. Therefore the goal of phronetic social science is to produce input to social praxis rather than developing definitive, empirically verifiable knowledge. Accordingly, theories and conceptualisations should always be confronted with and modified based on what needs to be done in action.

Phronesis is gained through experience and practical judgment founded in their contextual settings. To achieve its goal, phronetic social science makes use of qualitative as well as quantitative methods. In a similar fashion to pragmatism, phronesis is problem-driven rather than methodology-driven. The choice of methods is driven by the circumstances of the research at hand and dependent on what is likely to find the best answers to the research questions (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Phronesis as theoretical framework

Phronetic social science is distinguished by finding the answers to four value-rational questions. Flyvbjerg (2001, 2006) states that phronetic social sciences is practised when researchers in their given areas place these questions at the core of their research and if the public finds value in using the answers in their deliberations about praxis. The four questions are shown in Table 2.1 with their respective links to the thesis work.

Table 2.1: Phronetic social science and its four value-rational questions

Phronetic social science and its four value-rational questions:	Considering the value of humour in tourism settings:
1. Where are we going?	- Identifies the role of humour in creating entertaining and pleasurable tourism experiences.
2. Who gains and who loses, by which mechanism of power?	- Discusses who are the winners and losers in applying humour in tourism settings.

3. Is it desirable?	- Discusses the findings in terms of the experience economy indicating the role of humour in creating engaging, enjoyable and memorable tourism experiences.
4. What should be done?	- Considers some of the key findings in terms of its practicality.

These four questions suggested by Flyvbjerg will be considered in Chapter Six based on the key findings from this research.

The importance of a naturalistic research context

Since Flyvbjerg stresses that it is important to learn about the context specific factor occurring in real-life settings in order to make practical decisions, the present research focuses on collecting data in their naturalistic settings. Many tourism scholars have recognised that the "phenomenon of tourism occurs in various places and spaces and each of these places and spaces have associated meaning which are socially constructed by peoples within and without those places and spaces" (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006, p. 79). Likewise humour can be expressed in many different ways and is very dependent on the context in which it is used (Wimer & Beins, 2008; Stroobants, 2009). The immediate context-specific situations in which humour occurs can have an influence on whether something is perceived as funny or not (Van Giffen & Maher, 1995; Beermann & Ruch, 2009). Humour research in tourism also needs to be embedded in its context or otherwise unsubstantiated findings may be the result. Therefore consideration is given to the naturalistic contexts in which the humour is deployed.

The social sciences have long been criticised for conducting studies of social perceptions and behaviour in a laboratory setting. These studies are absent of external validity because they are removed from their situational context (Forgas, 1979). Any kinds of perception and behaviour being studied should be situated within the setting and interactional arena in which they take place (Denzin, 1971). It is exactly these principles that are difficult if not impossible to reconstruct in laboratory studies. This is why several humour studies conducted in a laboratory setting are not very successful in observing and investigating naturally occurring humour responses.

Denzin (1971) acknowledged that it is also possible for the naturalistic investigator to enter people's minds retrospectively through stories they tell about their past experiences and actions. To comprehend how social reality is constructed for people, naturalistic research seeks rich descriptions of people as they are interacting in their native habitats (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Several approaches can be taken to explore how people see their world, for example by analysing experiences that individuals have, viewing their interactions or investigating documents of experiences and interactions (Gibbs, 2007).

Qualitative research is frequently used to collect data in their naturalistic contexts, i.e. by speaking to research participants at the site where they are experiencing the phenomenon under study (Lyons, 2000; Creswell, 2007). According to Gubrium and Holstein (1997) previous naturalistic studies have already been conducted in various settings including taverns, street corners, hospitals, school grounds and many others and the interpretations based on these localities have been very insightful. Nevertheless, experimental and particularly quasi-experimental studies can also be conducted in real-world settings as was the case in this thesis.

The contexts in which humour occurred in tourism settings was a very important consideration for this PhD research. The sampling procedure for the travel blog study used purposive sampling in order to ensure that each blog did in fact include humorous episodes. Tourism operators for the focus groups study and survey study were chosen using phenomenon sampling. Pearce (2011) pointed out that much attention is always given to selecting individual participants but in this case the phenomenon in which the tourists were embedded when they experienced humour was just as important if not even more important than the individual participant. The tourism phenomena studied were therefore contextualised in their real world settings and interpreted within the specific context in which they took place (Jennings, 2006; Yin, 2011).

There are however also limitations to studying phenomena naturalistically. Athens (2010) recognised that while it is important to explore a phenomena in their naturally ongoing character, one must also acknowledge that it is nearly impossible to conduct a study in which the natural integrity of the issue under investigation is not at least to some degree violated. It is therefore recommended that the data collection methods

which are chosen respect the natural integrity as much as possible while still considering the practical realities of the study (Athens, 2010).

2.8 Summary of research gaps and aim of research

2.8.1 Research gaps and opportunities

From the previous review of literature outlined in this chapter and the overall themes highlighted in Chapter One, it is apparent that several opportunities exist to investigate humour in the tourism setting based on the following key contributions:

• There is a lack of the study of humour in tourism research especially how humour is perceived *by* tourists. The current research project attempts to fill this gap by exploring humorous travel blog episodes and investigating the perceptions research participants had to humour they encountered at various tourism settings.

• Earlier studies predominantly used jokes or cartoons in their investigation of humour conducted in laboratories. The proposed research takes a more naturalistic and context-specific approach in its assessment of humour.

• The concept of humour as identified by the positive psychology literature has not yet been fully incorporated into tourism studies. Supported by contemporary positive psychology for the importance of positive emotions in peoples' lives, this research attempts to find out what effect humour has on tourists' impressions and at the same time collect data to explore Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model with empirical data.

• The experiences economy highlights the importance of creating enjoyable and memorable experiences for customers. This research explores how humour contributes to creating entertaining and engaging on-site tourism experiences.

• Since tourism brings together people from numerous nationalities, opportunities exist in uncovering national differences in how humour at tourism settings is appreciated.

• Giving particular emphasis to the practicality of any findings, tour guides and tourism operators with an interest of increasing their humour efforts should find this research

valuable in finding out about the various outcomes that humour has on the tourists' mood, impressions and overall experience.

2.8.2 Aim of the research

The overall aim of this research was to explore the role of humour in the tourism setting in creating more enjoyable on-site tourism experiences. To achieve this overall aim, each of the three studies deals in more detail with specific aims.

Study 1: The overall aim of the blog study was to develop a greater understanding of the humorous experiences that tourists have during their travels. The specific aims can be identified as follows:

1. Profile the 'who' and 'where' of the humorous content.

2. Identify what kinds of humorous travel experiences tourists report in their travel blogs.

3. Explore and classify the humorous blog episodes according to pre-existing theories found in the literature namely by humour theories and Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

Study 2: The purpose of the focus group study was to examine tourists' perceptions about the use of humour during tourism experiences by sampling several tourism businesses. The specific aims to be addressed are as follows:

1. Identify what kinds of humour were used by the tourism operators.

2. Explore the participants' responses according to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

3. Explore if there were downsides to the use of humour in tourism settings.

4. Establish why it is valuable for tourism operators to use humour.

5. Identify key considerations for tourism operators about what they need to know when using humour.

6. Highlight any differences stemming from the naturalistic contexts in which humour was used at the four tourism settings.

Study 3: The intent of the quasi-experimental field study was to measure the effect humour had on participants and to develop a better understanding of how key variables relate to one another. The following specific aims are addressed:

1. Identify what categories of humour were used most frequently during tourism experiences.

2. Establish the effect of changing humour treatment scenarios on respondents' satisfaction levels.

3. Evaluate the impact humour has on respondents' tourism experience.

4. Assess the outcomes of humour with special focus given to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

5. Determine what effect humour has on respondents' potential future visits.

2.9 Overall thesis outline

Taking into consideration the importance of naturalistic and context-specific research highlighted in the literature review, an overview of the epistemology of this research can be made: knowing and understanding how humour is perceived in tourism settings needs to consider how meaning is created by research participants based on the setting where and under what conditions the tourism experiences take place. For these reasons, the research aimed to collect data based on their naturalistic contexts.

Shown in Figure 2.2 is an overview of the overall chapter outline of this PhD thesis. Chapter One has introduced the topic of humour and highlighted the overall themes guiding this research. This present chapter has identified the key concepts while

focusing on research gaps and opportunities. It was also stated that this PhD thesis takes a multiphase mixed method approach under the paradigm of pragmatism. The next three chapters deal with each of the studies carried out and explain their specific methods, results and discussions. Finally in Chapter Six an overall synthesis of all three studies leads to general implications and conclusions.
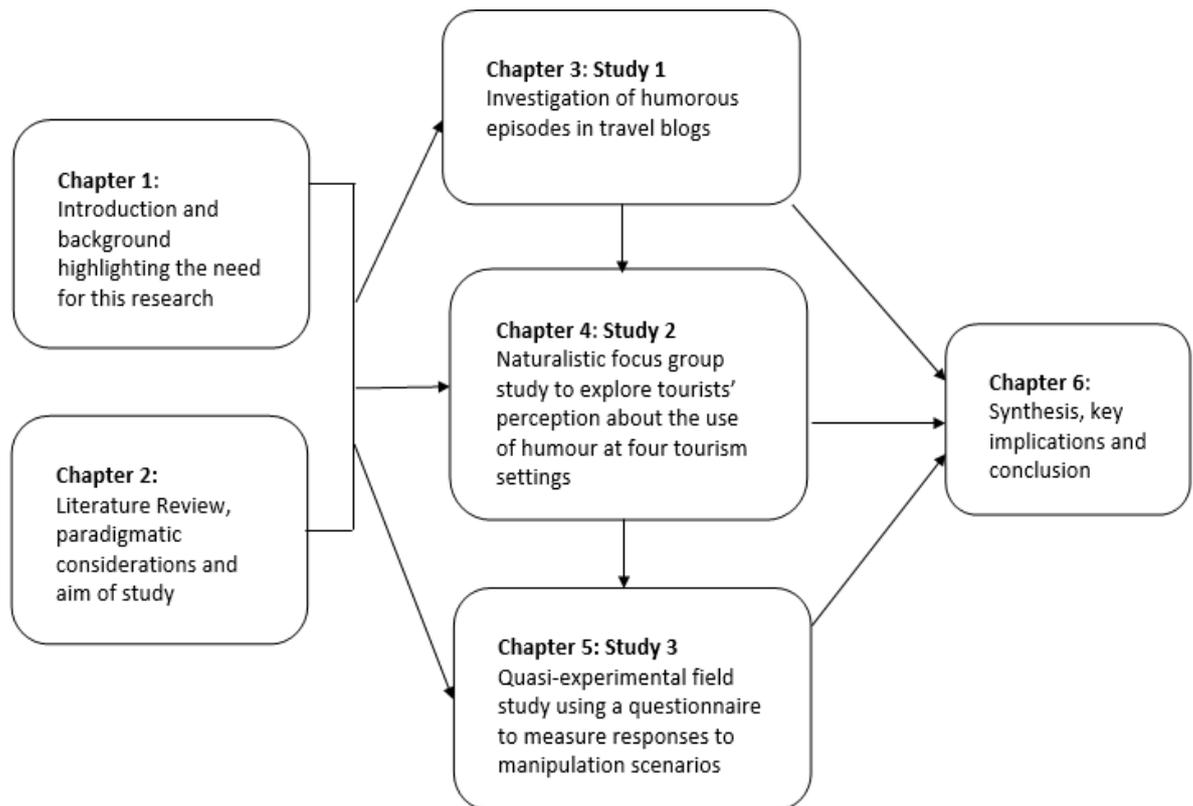
Figure 2.2: Chapter outline of thesis

Chapter Three

Study 1: An analysis of humorous episodes in travel blogs

Chapter Three Overview

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Aim of the study
3.3 Using blogs as a research methods
3.4 Methods
      3.4.1 Sampling of blog entries
      3.4.2 Selection of blog entries
      3.4.3 Analysis of humorous blog episodes
      3.4.4 Ethical conduct
      3.4.5 Perceived level of humour of blog episodes
      3.4.6 Profile of the blogging tourists
3.5 Results
      3.5.1 Parties involved in the humorous blog episodes
      3.5.2 Results of content-driven coding
      3.5.3 Results of concept-driven coding
3.6 Discussion
3.7 Summary

3.1 Introduction

As already stated in Chapter One, many previous studies of humour have used jokes or cartoons in experiments conducted in the laboratory. Martin (2007) argued that these studies do not provide much detail on how humour is naturally expressed in everyday social interactions. The current research project adopts a more naturalistic approach to researching the topic of humour in the tourism setting. One way of achieving this is by examining travel narratives. Humans tell stories to make sense of their experiences and therefore narration is a useful method for interpreting human experience (Alaszewski, 2006; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2008). In the past people used journals or letters to record their thoughts, feelings and events (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). These days many people use blogs to express their thoughts and opinions electronically (Kay, 2003; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005).

This chapter explores the humorous episodes that tourists reported from a sample of 200 travel blogs. This qualitative study is descriptive as well as exploratory in nature. It is descriptive in nature because it is interested in the 'who' and 'what' (Jennings, 2010) and it describes the phenomenon of interest based on the individual bloggers' beliefs and attitudes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It is also exploratory because using travel blogs as a method of research for this study offers valuable preliminary insights into the topic of humour in tourism. Also exploratory research is usually conducted when little is known about the topic of interest (Jennings, 2010) which is the case with studies investigating the tourism-humour relationship.

In line with the naturalistic theme of this research, online narratives such as travel blogs were considered the best approach to access the bloggers' viewpoints without any contamination taking place through the actual research processes (Alaszewski, 2006; Hookway, 2008; Volo, 2010). The use of travel blogs was considered fit for the purpose for the present study because it generated a unique dataset consisting of humorous occurrences which varied greatly according to the context in which they took place. Furthermore the open and unstructured nature of the travel blogs made it possible to uncover descriptive information on the varied humorous experiences of the bloggers.

3.2 Aim of the study

The overall aim of this blog study was to develop a greater understanding of the humorous experiences that tourists have during their travels. The specific aims can be identified as follows:

1. Profile the 'who' and 'where' of the humorous content.

2. Identify what kinds of humorous travel experiences tourists report in their travel blogs.

3. Explore and classify the humorous blog episodes according to pre-existing theories found in the literature namely by humour theories and Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

3.3 Using blogs as a research methods

The narrative approach

In the last two decades, the stories that people tell about themselves in their everyday situations have attracted a great deal of interest in social and human research (Noy, 2004; Elliott, 2005; Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). The growing interest in storytelling stems from the need to add more elements about personal experiences into the research process (Lee, 2000). Narratives are invaluable in this regard because they include a personal dimension (Gibbs, 2007) and therefore enable the researcher to gain access to the story tellers' perceptions of the world (Alaszewski, 2006). Some scholars see narrative research as a move away from positivist modes of inquiry because as researchers they do not adhere to the belief that there is a single and absolute truth in human reality but rather pluralism and subjectivity prevail (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 2005).

Telling stories is how people make sense of themselves and store their experiences as memories (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Moscardo, 2010). For this reason narratives represent a useful way for interpreting human experiences and also offer insights into how meaning is assigned to various events and activities (Alaszewski, 2006; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2008). In research, narratives are valuable because storytellers do not simply reproduce the past but interpret it in their own way based on their understanding of the world (Gibbs, 2007). Hence it is up to the storyteller to decide what events to write about and how they are organised and connected to make them meaningful to others (Riessman, 2005).

Narratives as a method of research

Narrative research uses or analyses narrative materials to learn about a social phenomenon, historical events, or personality (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). These kinds of data are usually generated through personally reflective methods such as the keeping of diaries, letter writing, storytelling, newspaper and magazine articles, oral life stories gained during interviews, memoirs and autobiographical writing (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Lee, 2000;

Gibbs, 2007). The use of narratives as a method makes it possible to gather unique and rich data that cannot be obtained from other collection methods such as experiments or questionnaires (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). There are a variety of ways in which the material collected in narratives can be analysed including, for example, focusing on content, structure, style, as well as the motives, attitudes and beliefs of the characters in the stories (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Gibbs, 2007). Like every research technique, using narratives as a method has both strengths and weaknesses. Table 3.1 outlines the strengths and weaknesses of using online narratives.

Table 3.1: Strengths and weaknesses of using online narratives

Strengths of using online narratives
- Ability to access hard-to-reach groups and the possibility of sampling over wide geographical areas (Snee, 2010; Alaszewski, 2006)   - Less costly in terms of money and time when cross-national research is attempted because travel is not required (Lee, 2000)   - Allows for collection of rich data which cannot be gained from experiments or observations (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998)   - Online narratives are considered to be a valuable approach in researching moods, emotions, impressions of tourists in a naturally-occurring context (Kozinets, 2001; Volo, 2010)   - The sheer variety of topics available on the worldwide web is greater than any researcher can practically assemble (Volo, 2009)   - Benefits of obtaining high volumes of data (Lee, 2000) that are easily downloaded and automatically transcribed (Kozinets, 2001)   - Access to activities, perceptions and feelings of a blogger which are free of researcher-elicited responses (Alaszewski, 2006; Volo, 2010)   - Opportunity to imply interesting conclusions from a small number of rich narratives if these are subjected to critical interpretation (Kozinets, 2001)   - Flexibility as a research method since narratives can be used with a range of research designs and supplement other methods (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Alaszewski, 2006)   - Breakwell and Wood (2000) summarise the advantages as familiarity, cost-effective, intimacy, spontaneity and historicity   - Blogs are often regarded as more credible and trustworthy than traditional marketing communication (Akehurst, 2009)
Weaknesses of using online narratives
- The analysis of narratives is highly time-consuming (Akehurst, 2009; Carson, 2008; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998)   - Online content can be overwhelming and researchers might suffer from information overload or lose sight of their original research questions (Breakwell & Wood, 2000; Kozinets, 2001; Hookway, 2008)   - The content of online narratives cannot be presumed as representative of the general population; bloggers have been described as 'self-designated authorities' and therefore

it is not usually viable to make generalisations (Gelb & Sundaram, 2002; Volo, 2010)
- Documentation of a bloggers' identifying details is not always possible (Snee, 2010)
- This approach requires robust interpretive skills of the researcher since sometimes only limited online communication is available with a narrow focus which can be misleading (Kozinets, 2001)
- The personal nature of blogs and diaries can potentially make them a biased source (Alaszewski, 2006)
- The content in some blogs can be highly opinionated and therefore researchers have to consider issues regarding the credibility and honesty (Mack, Blose & Pan, 2008)
- With unsolicited diaries, the researcher has limited control over structure or what kind data will be provided (Breakwell & Wood, 2000; Alaszewski, 2006)

Narrative inquiries attempt to make sense of and understand experiences from the perspective of the participants involved (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2005). Hence narratives represent an emic approach or the insider's perspective in conducting research for several reasons: Firstly, it is possible to learn about the subjective experiences that matter to the world of the story teller (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Martin, Woodside & Dehuang, 2006). Secondly, the remembered life events and experiences in stories are chosen and framed based on what is important to the storyteller and not driven by the researcher (Gibbs, 2007; Riessman, 2005). Thirdly, storytellers do not merely reintegrate what happened to them in the past but they interpret experiences in their own way (Riessman, 2005).

The naturalistic nature of narratives

The telling of stories is a natural part of life and therefore narratives are known to most people (Creswell, 2012). In fact Alaszewski (2006) recognised blog writing and diary keeping as common social practices which exist irrespective of research taking place or not. Research on narratives and diaries can also be considered naturalistic because of the themes summarised by Alaszewski (2006) including no or limited intrusion through any research processes and the use of natural language since stories are presented in the teller's own words. More importantly, narratives also include information on the real-life situational contexts which influences how the storying of an experience is shaped (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Such information can at times be very detailed providing personal commentary and descriptions of settings, events, partners, activities and can also include emotional details such as feelings (Alaszewski, 2006; Dunkley, 2007).

The content analysis of travel writings with all its textual and graphical information is considered naturalistic because it allows researchers to investigate data which has not been changed or edited by the research subjects due to the presence and influences of a researcher as might be the case with interviews or questionnaire studies (Smith, 2010). Unobtrusive methods are defined as data that are collected without having to prompt research subjects for information and opinions (Smith, 2010). Examples of unobtrusive methods include observation and document analysis.

The importance of narratives to the tourist experience

Narratives are central to the tourist experience, not just entertaining reading material, since they function as useful sources for analysis and provide useful insights to advance our understanding of tourism experiences (Moscardo, 2010; Pearce, 2011). Leisure studies in general have a long history in using narratives as Fullagar (2002, p. 60) pointed out, because they allow researchers to explore "motivations, desires and images that shape the self through leisure." Berger (2006) makes the point that the stories from our travels are likely to be some of the most important moments of our lives.

The centrality of travel stories can be seen as the reasons why travellers keep a journal or a blog to write about the places they have visited, the activities they engaged in and the people they encountered during their travels. Noy (2004) interpreted tourists as narrators, whose encounters are communicated through dramatic and exciting stories and underpinned by the unique experiences of authenticity and adventure. With the increasing popularity of blogs on the web, these kinds of readily available data are used more and more for the qualitative assessments of a variety of tourism phenomena (Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007).

Research conducted by Pearce, Murphy, and Brymer (2009) found that 29% of backpackers used the Internet to create blogs to tell others about their travels. Blogs can include many aspects of travel experiences such as anticipation before the holiday, actual experiences whilst at the destination, attractions visited, the use of tourism-related facilities and cultural aspects of a destination (Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007; Akehurst, 2009; Volo, 2010). Hence, the use of blogs was considered a worthy approach for this blog study. Travel writing always has a point of view because it is

based on the consciousness of the writer and what is important to them. It is up to the travel bloggers themselves to note what they found worthy of comment and to emphasise what they like or criticise in their blog (Smith, 2010). This is why travel writers will write about some topics while they neglect to write about others.

Tourist blogs as narratives

Travel blogs are a relatively new kind of narrative that can be a useful source of material accessing tourists' experiences (Bosangit, McCabe & Hibbert, 2009). Within social media, blogs appear to have emerged as a very important research subject in travel and tourism (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). In today's "computer-literate, information-based society" it is weblogs which are used increasingly as a form of narration (Kay, 2003, p. 30). A weblog or blog is an online diary where individuals record information, thoughts and opinions electronically to share their stories (Kay, 2003; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005). There were approximately 181 million blogs around the world at the end of 2011 and this number keeps growing on a daily basis (NMIncite, 2012). Statistics for blogs published by WordPress.com (2014) state that over 409 million people read around 14.5 billion pages of blogs each month and that 42.6 million new posts are produced every month. Volo (2010, p. 301) describes blogs as the "researcher-uncontaminated description" of a travellers' experiences where the blogs under investigation represent the expressions and views of the blogger rather than researcher-elicited responses.

For Volo (2009) tourism represents a marketplace that is full of experiences and it is in the minds of the tourists that the experiences are created, remembered and re-told. Numerous previous studies on travel blogs have researched tourist's behaviour patterns as well as their evaluations of destinations. Bosangit, McCabe and Hibbert (2009, p. 61) state that travel blogs can be considered "as textual artefacts to gain insights into how tourists construct order and make meaning from their experiences." As such they allow researchers an opportunity to explore tourists' naturally occurring behaviours and are helpful in uncovering thoughts, moods and meaning (Kozinets, 2001).

Tourists write blogs for a variety of reasons including self-expression, the sharing of experiences, social interaction with like-minded people, up-dating family and friends

and making recommendations to prospective visitors (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007; Buhalis & Law, 2008; Volo, 2010). Virtual travel communities seem to have appeared as one of the most popular ways for travellers to post their travel diaries (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In these virtual travel communities, blogs do not only rely on textual information and photographs to show their observations about a specific destination but offer the option to upload audio and video files which provide further opportunities to report and comment on experiences (Akehurst, 2009; Bosangit, McCabe & Hibbert, 2009).

Focusing on humorous episodes

The research by Forgas (1979) argued for episodes as a fruitful approach in explaining the naturalistic, everyday social behaviour of people. He defined episodes as cognitive representations of interaction sequences in a specific cultural environment (Forgas, 1979). He also noted the importance of studying behaviours in their naturally-occurring contexts rather than manipulating variables within a laboratory setting because the resulting behaviours would be more helpful in understanding the subjective and special meanings which individuals assign to them.

Humans, as social actors are always engaged in interpreting and giving meaning to their settings (McCabe, 2007). Episodic representations are not just based on cognitive processes but also tend to be affective in character (Forgas, 1981). More specifically Forgas (1981) explains that when people remember a specific episode, what comes to their mind instantly is not the location, the time of the day or the characters involved in the episode but the overall affective reaction of all things combined. To summarise, a focus on blog episodes provides key opportunities to identify and explore the humour which tourists experience during their travel.

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Sampling of blog entries

In qualitative research the goal for sampling is the selection of meaningful cases to be able to explore key themes (Flick, 2002; Smith, 2010). Therefore naturalistic research takes a purposeful approach when selecting cases so that these cases will offer as much insights into the phenomenon under study as possible (Alaszewski, 2006). The sampling strategy chosen for this blog study was purposive sampling because the researcher had to ensure that the travel blogs to be investigated included humorous travel experiences. This sampling technique involves deliberately selecting cases to be studied because these cases address the issue under investigation and they contribute richness and relevance to research questions (Flick, 2002; Gibbs, 2007; Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2012). For Creswell (2012) purposive sampling can be applied to individuals as well as study settings. Previous studies on blog entries have revealed the merit in using purposive sampling by being able to locate blogs that were particularly relevant (Volo, 2010). The use of purposive sampling is common in internet research where Kozinets (2001) explained that many previous studies were based on carefully chosen online communication messages to interpret a particular issue.

Since using blogs as a method of data collection is relatively new, Volo (2010) noted there are few standard procedures for locating, coding and interpreting blog narratives. Travel blogs for this study were selected using a variation of Shifman and Lemish's (2010) approach. Their study used the internet to analyse contemporary online humour about gender and in the process they developed a practical method for locating and coding appropriate online texts. Figure 3.1 shows the approach taken for the present study. The first step involved locating appropriate travel related blog websites using "Google blog search" (http://www.google.com/blogsearch) to search for the description of "travel blog websites". Selection of suitable websites was based on an initial scan of the websites' content for humorous and funny material. Websites were only chosen if the researcher had direct access to the content of the blogs without having to follow any registry or membership protocols. Four travel blog websites were selected for further analysis: Travelblog.org, Travelpod.com, Travbuddy.com and Mytripjournal.com. All

these websites are virtual travel communities which provide travellers with free web space to publish their online travel diaries.
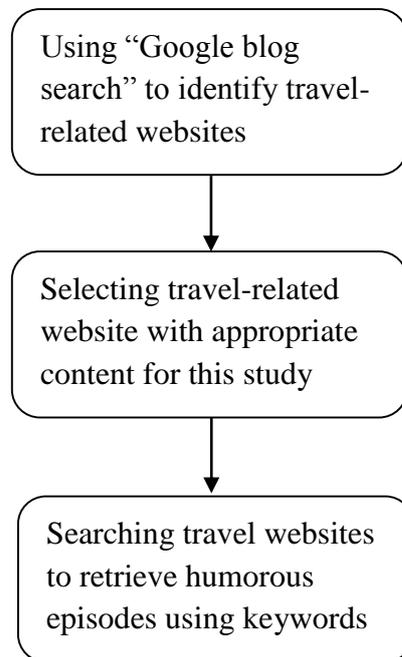
Figure 3.1: Sampling approach

3.4.2 Selection of blog entries

Having clear objectives as to what is to be investigated in blogs can help to reduce the "noise" returned by the search engines (Carson, 2008). Five keywords were chosen to ensure a wide range of blogs written by different tourists was used for final analysis. The online thesaurus Thesaurus.com was used to obtain synonyms for humorous. The five keywords used to search for humorous episodes within the travel blogs included humorous, funny, comical, hilarious and amusing. The chosen keywords allowed for the search of a large quantity of humorous content in the blogs. For example in June 2011 the travel website Travelpod.com yielded the following number of entries: "humorous" 1,384 entries, "funny" 59,162 entries, "comical" 2,229 entries, "hilarious" 14,930 entries and "comical" 2,331 entries.

As shown in Table 3.2, ten blogs were selected per keyword and per travel blog website using systematic approach. The first two blogs on every webpage were selected until the

required number of ten was achieved. A total of 200 blogs was chosen during the period from June and July 2011. All travel blogs were retrieved for further analysis into a separate Word document noting its date of retrieval and URL.

Table 3.2: Blog selection based on keywords and travel blog websites

	Humorous	Funny	Comical	Hilarious	Amusing	Total
Travelpod.com	10	10	10	10	10	50
Travelblog.org	10	10	10	10	10	50
Mytripjournal.com	10	10	10	10	10	50
Travbuddy.com	10	10	10	10	10	50
				Total number of selected blogs:		200

When selecting blogs the following rules were observed to adhere to the research aims. If one of the first two webpage entries was a forum entry and not an actual blog, then this entry was not included in the dataset. Blogs in a language other than English were not used even if they included the keywords. Furthermore, when the pre-selected keywords were the name for a place, river, or hotel, then this blog entry was also by-passed, i.e. 'Funny River is 15 miles down Funny River Road from Soldotna (...).' If one of the selected keywords appeared in the comment section below the blog, this entry was also by-passed as the focus was on the humour within the blogs and not the comments made to a blog. If an entry was merely based on a funny or humorous photo, it was not used and the next blog on the webpage was selected as the focus of this research was on tourists' narratives. After reading the travel blogs, it was sometimes the case that a blog contained more than one humorous blog episode. In an attempt to be as systematic as possible, the second humorous episode was selected for inclusion into the dataset. Finally, an Excel spreadsheet was created to note down information for the following categories: blog ID, gender, origin of tourist, country visited when humorous episode happened, the content of the humorous episode and who was involved when the humour occurred.

It needs to be acknowledged that travel blogs are expressions of one's self as well as about the personal experiences one has during a holiday. Mack, Blose and Pan (2008) stated that the content in some blogs can be highly opinionated and therefore researchers have to consider issues in regards to their credibility and honesty. Overall, it is because of the subjective nature of experiences that makes it almost impossible to tell what an honest account is and what is not. By choosing to select five keywords to build an appropriate sample of different bloggers, it was still possible to gain a fairly good understanding of what bloggers perceived to be funny during their travels.

3.4.3 Analysis of humorous blog episodes

There are several approaches which can be used to analyse a narrative: (a) holistic versus categorical approaches and (b) content versus form (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). In the first approach a decision needs to be made regarding what the focus of the analysis will be: for example, is it the entire narrative or a section from the complete text? In the second approach the researcher decides between the content of the narrative, that is what happened and who participated, or the form of the story, such as plot structure, time frames, narrator style, word choice and feelings evoked. In the present study, the researcher was more interested on a focused component, more specifically the humorous episodes within the travel blogs, and less interested in the complete narrative. Furthermore, the focus was on the content of the travel blog such as finding out what happened and who participated during the humorous account rather than its form or structure. Therefore traveller blogs were explored using the categorical-content mode of analysis which was based on the steps suggested by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998).

1. Extraction of humorous episodes from the travel blogs based on the research question:

All travellers' blogs were carefully read and topics containing a humorous episode were highlighted in the text. These highlighted episodes were extracted from the rest of the travel stories for further exploration.

2. Definition of the content categories:

All humorous episodes were read several times to gain familiarity with the content of the blogs and to identify, organise and reconfirm identified themes that emerged (Veal, 2006; Alaszewski, 2006). According to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998), there are two ways to define themes and categories, both of which were undertaken in this blog study. Firstly, categories were classified into major emerging themes after careful reading of the material. This is also referred to as content-driving coding (Gibbs, 2007). Secondly, categories were also organised using predefined categories based on existing theory which is also known as concept-driven coding (Gibbs, 2007). The pre-existing theories chosen in this context were the theories of humour, namely superiority, incongruity and relief theories and Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

3. Organisation of material into the categories:

While reading and re-reading the blogs, the researcher recorded notable, short thematic ideas which were later used to construct the coding frame (Gibbs, 2007). The process of constantly comparing any new emerging codes with the previous text is very important in ensuring that the new codes add to already established themes (Alaszewski, 2006). During this process independent judges were used to establish reliability with the coding of the researcher.

4. Drawing of conclusions from the results:

To answer the research questions of this blog study, the emergent theme and content categories were counted and tabulated.

Using Leximancer to analyse the humorous episodes

A text analytics tool called Leximancer was also used to analyse the content of the blog episodes. Leximancer was helpful in analysing the dataset for several reasons: firstly, Leximancer analysis provides a visual rendition of the material in the form of

conceptual maps which include the main themes contained in the text and how they are related to one another. Secondly, coder reliability can be an issue during coding processes and lead to human interpretation biases or inconsistencies due to preconceived ideas or expectations by the human coders (Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Compared to manual coding, Leximancer offers advantages such as being able to deal with large amounts of data without bias, increases reliability and facilitates reproducibility (Penn-Edwards, 2010). The use of the Leximancer software assisted this study greatly by adding objectivity to the findings. This was achieved by helping the researcher avoid fixating on particular anecdotal evidence or single striking examples (Smith & Humphreys, 2006).

Leximancer works by examining texts for the presence and frequency of concepts and then extracts key themes, concepts and sentiments for visual presentation. The software goes beyond keyword searching and measures the co-occurrence of concepts found within documents (Leximancer, 2011). Clusters of concepts are gathered together in theme circles which summarise the main ideas for each specific cluster. The themes that emerge during analysis in the concept maps are "heat-mapped" where warm colours (red, orange, brown) indicate the most important themes and cool colours (blue, green) signify less important themes (Leximancer, 2011). In this study, the Leximancer analysis was run on the entire dataset of humorous blog episodes to establish what themes and concepts would emerge.

3.4.4 Ethical conduct

Research using unobtrusive means of collecting data, as was the case in this blog study, warrants a note of the ethical conduct of this research. Data collection methods such as observational studies are often criticised for not respecting the personal autonomy of the research subjects (Lee, 2000). For example, some diaries are created for private consumption while others are produced for public consumption (Breakwell & Wood, 2000). Diaries of a private nature are problematic because they include private thoughts (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Public diaries are those that can be found in archives or any other public information sources (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Ethical considerations of this kind are also present for internet research where the boundaries between private and

public are often blurred (Lee, 2000; Snee, 2010). Emails between people are usually regarded as private and therefore permission is required for their use in research. Anything openly distributed such as on bulletin boards or newsgroups is in the public domain and can be reproduced for the purpose of research without permission (Lee, 2000).

The question remains whether blogs are public or private material. The blogs which were sampled in this study were treated as public data since access to the blogs did not require any registry or membership protocols which needed to be followed to read their content. Human subject research ethics usually demands that researchers gain permission of the research participants when the chosen data collection technique involves direct interaction between the researcher and the research participant (Kozinets, 2010). This however is not the case if the blogs to be collected and analysed are publically accessible on the internet and where no direct interactions are taking place (Kozinets, 2010). Other researchers concur that blogs should be treated as being in the public domain due to the fact that they are publicly available and therefore it is argued that the requirement for consent should be waived (Hookway, 2008; Snee, 2010).

An important note was made by Snee (2010) who stated that bloggers may actually want to be recognised for the blog content. When citing specific blogs was necessary, the researcher tried to contact the author of the blog to gain permission to reproduce the humorous episode for this thesis. Therefore blog episodes which are directly quoted in this thesis have permission by the blog authors to be included. Where no response was received by a blog author but a particular blog episode was still considered useful for representation in the study, the blogs were de-identified as well as rephrased to safeguard the identity of the blog author. In considering how confidentiality could be maintained, the researcher did not record the identity of bloggers which included neither their real names nor any online pseudonyms they used. Instead participants' blogs were numbered when referring to the humorous content.

3.4.5 Perceived level of humour of blog episodes

The humorous episodes from each of the 200 blogs were rated by the researcher for their level of humour on a scale from 0 (not at all humorous) to 5 (very humorous). As a checking procedure, a judging panel was used to independently code and rate the humour level of twenty randomly selected blogs. The nineteen members of the judging panel consisted of males and females of various ages and different nationalities. The judges' scores were averaged to yield an overall perceived humour score. The ratings between the researcher and the judging panel differed in the degree of perceived level of humour as can be seen in Figure 3.2.
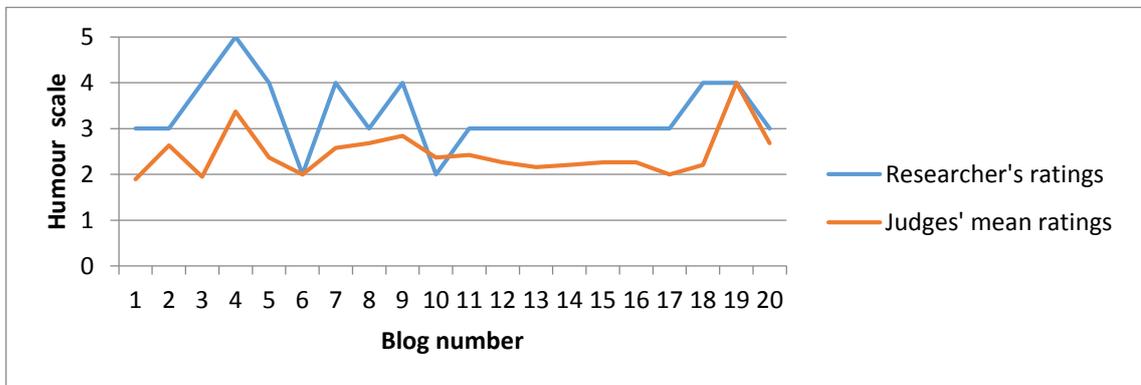
Figure 3.2: Comparison of researcher's ratings with the mean ratings of the judging panel

The judges did not just rate twenty blogs for their perceived level of humour but were also asked to code the blogs using the categories from the humour theories and the outcomes of humour. For this purpose they were given clear instructions with the definitions of the humour theories and the outcomes of humour as well as instructions as to how to code their humorous blog episodes. Percentage agreement and Cohen's kappa were calculated to check for interrater agreement. The average percentage agreement between the researcher's ratings and the judges' ratings for the humour theories was 53.1% and for the humour outcomes was 50%. The kappa for the humour theories was 0.28 and 0.22 for the humour outcomes. These kappa values represent only a 'fair' strength of agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

The rather low and unsatisfactory levels of interrater agreement are likely to stem from the ambiguous nature of humour that makes it challenging to conceptualise (Neuendorf, 2002, cited in Shifman & Lemish, 2010). Some of the judges expressed that they found it quite difficult to choose between humour theories. This might be explained by reviewing one of the kappa assumptions which state that categories need to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive (Cohen, 1960). Also Kerlinger and Lee (2000) suggest that coding categories should be mutually exclusive. This however cannot be fully assured with either the humour theories or the humour outcomes due to the ambiguous nature of humour. Furthermore, as already outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis that it can be difficult to fit humour into neat categories. Krikmann (2007, p. 28) further explains that most humour theories are mixed theories and "that humour in its totality is too huge and multiform a phenomenon to be incorporated into a single integrated theory". A similar issue is to be expected with the comfort-concentration-connection outcomes categories. If a person feels connected to another person because their sense of humour made them laugh, then inevitably this person would also feel an increased level of comfort. Likewise, one's overall level of comfort could be enhanced even though a certain humorous comment was meant to be attention grabbing.

Moreover, considering the importance of the context in which humour takes place, there are some humorous stories which when retold at a later point in time may not seem funny. This is again because humour relies on the context in which it occurs (Mann, 1991). This is also referred to as the 'you-had-to-be-there syndrome' by Carty and Musharbash (2008) who recognised the difficulty in conveying the perceived level of humour of a situation which had taken place at an earlier time. Therefore something that appeared funny when it happened may not seem very humorous to people who were not present when it first happened. However, researchers have to make do with reflections and interpretations of past situations (Shaw, Debeehi & Walden, 2010).

3.4.6 Profile of the blogging tourists

Basic demographic details including gender and origin of each blogging tourist were collected. From the available information, nearly half of bloggers were female (47%). Male bloggers were able to be identified 31.5% of the time. There were also situations

where the blogs were written by more than one person such as couples (15%) and groups of friends (4.5%). It was impossible to tell the gender of two per cent of the bloggers as this information was not openly disclosed. In terms of origin, the bloggers came mainly from the United States (35.5%), followed by the United Kingdom and Ireland (20%), Canada (14%), Australia and New Zealand (13%), Europe (6.5%), Asia (4.5%), South Africa (1%) and the Middle East (0.5%). It was not possible to find the origin details for 5% of the bloggers since this information was not disclosed.

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Parties involved in the humorous blog episodes

The first aim was addressed by profiling the 'who' and 'where' of the humorous episodes. The humorous travel experiences reported in this blog study occurred across the regions of the world: Asia and the Pacific (44%), the Americas (24.5%), Europe (19.5%), Africa (8.5%) and in the Middle East (3.5%). The range of parties involved in the humorous blog episodes was quite diverse. *Locals* (33%) were frequently mentioned in the blogs and referred to people such as tour guides, bus/taxi drivers, sales people, security guards, host families, teachers, interpreters, hotel employees, restaurant employees and customs officers. *Fellow travellers* (36.0%) included friends, roommates, family members or colleagues who were travelling with the blogging tourists. The blogging *tourists themselves* (26.0%) were a substantial focus. Humorous discoveries made in their immediate surroundings during their travels included such elements as humorous signs and names, amusing observations of wildlife and funny toilet experiences. *Other travellers* (4%) were also noted as a source of humour. This group included individuals who had no direct relationship with the blogging tourists and included blog episodes which entailed, for example, overhearing other travellers' funny conversation.

3.5.2 Results of content-driven coding

To address the second aim of this study which was concerned with identifying what kinds of humorous travel experiences tourists report in their travel blogs, thematic content analysis was conducted. Following the advice of Gibbs (2007) to keep the coding process as consistent as possible, short descriptions of the defining features of each evolving category were made while reading each humorous episode. During the coding process, it was these descriptions of the defining features of the thematic categories that also helped in achieving data saturation. In this way, the development of content-driven categories were not pre-defined by any material in the literature but emerged through the analysis. According to Bowen (2008) data saturation takes place when the same categories repeatedly arise within the data and no more new information is added.

Four broad themes could be identified: (1) travel essentials and novelty, (2) humorous episodes that can happen to everyone, (3) social influence and control of humour and (4) the observant tourist. These four broad themes are linked to themes identified through the Leximancer analysis at a later point in this chapter. Table 3.3 outlines the overall themes, categories and the defining features of each category.

Table 3.3: Themes and content categories of humorous episodes with their defining features

Theme	Category	Defining feature	N
Travel essentials and novelty	Other countries, other customs	Humour that happens as a result of different cultures colliding or when certain things are simply done differently in other countries.	12
	Humour experienced while shopping	Humour experiences while shopping including funny aspects that were spotted and funny bargaining experiences.	3
	Humour experienced while in accommodation	Humorous things experienced or seen while in accommodation.	4
	Humorous dining or restaurant experience	Humour experienced during a dining situation or while in a restaurant.	6
	Humour experienced at attractions	Humour perceived in a museums or cultural centres.	6
	Humorous border crossings/transit situations	Humour that occurred during a border crossing or transit situation of any kind of transport, i.e. bus, taxi.	5
	Toilet experience	Humour involving toilet experiences of a different kind.	5
Humorous episodes that can happen to everyone	Embarrassing but funny	Humorous episodes which are perceived as embarrassing at the time they happened but funny later on.	5
	The funny and the bizarre	Humorous occurrences which are odd or unusual in nature.	6
	Clumsily funny	Humour involving people who lack physical coordination.	9
	Funny mishaps	Humour involving unfortunate situation which turned out to be funny in the end.	11
	Wild night out/drunken behaviour	Humour experienced during a night out or drunken behaviour.	8
Social influence and control of humour	Fun with communication	Humour involving accents, lost in translation moments, miscommunication, overhearing other people's conversations, etc.	28
	Making fun of others	Making fun of someone else or something else.	11
	Humour involving looks and body parts	Humour which involves looks, appearance, dress and body parts of people.	15
	Pranks & jokes	Humour which involves joking around with others or playing pranks on others.	5
The observant tourist	Unintentionally funny	Humorous occurrences which happened unintentionally but were funny all the same.	26
	Signs/prints/names	Humour where signs, prints, written instructions and the names of places were perceived as funny.	21
	Wildlife as a source of humour	Humour which involves the behaviours and noises of animals.	11
	Creepy crawlies	Humour involving insects and bugs.	3

Travel essentials and novelty

This theme includes humorous experiences which occurred in relations to core tourism activities such as shopping, staying in accommodation, at attractions, in restaurants, in hotels, during border crossings, and dealing with different cultures as well as toilet experiences. Some examples of humorous episodes which occurred while shopping include a funny and entertaining bargaining experience, or laughing at bikinis made from fur while window shopping in Alaska or accidentally knocking over an entire shampoo display when reaching for a specific brand of shampoo. Humour experienced at attractions mainly occurred in museums or cultural centres. Examples include finding displays and stories funny which were encountered in museums. Alternatively, some bloggers found one of the museums they visited fairly boring and therefore started to mimic the postures of statures to amuse themselves. At a cultural centre in Polynesia, one of the bloggers posed with the tiki god statue of fertility which resulted in much laughter from other tourists and in many people offering their congratulations. Humorous examples during dining experiences were based on using a western style for eating with chop sticks or being entertained by waiters as they put on a special act. In accommodation settings the humour reported was based on laughing at the micro-bathroom in a hotel room in Paris, or making fun of the snoring sounds of a sleeping friend in a hostel room.

Going to the toilet in a foreign country can also be a source for humour. Examples include setting off an alarm when pressing a button on a Japanese toilet which was thought to be the button for the flush. Humour also resulted from the simple request of wishing to go to the bathroom which was mistaken for the wish to take a bath and hence caused considerable confusion. Another tourist travelling in South America was humorous in recommending carrying toilet paper at all times and knowing the whereabouts of the closest public toilet since the unfamiliar local food can upset many travellers' stomachs. There was also humour that occurred due to being exposed to a different culture; for example Korean children laughing at one tourist's inability to bow in the correct way; or having 25 passengers sit in a minivan playing loud music in Barbados which was in fact only made for a maximum of 15 passengers; having a first encounter with ladyboys in a cabaret in Thailand and experiencing the wife-carrying championships in Finland.

Humorous episodes that can happen to everyone

This theme was based on humorous episodes which do not necessarily need to occur within a travel or tourism context. Humour in this category for example includes embarrassing situations and drunken behaviour which are likely to happen in circumstances beyond tourism. Some examples of the 'embarrassing but funny' category include descriptions of when a friend of a blogging tourist got stuck in a Cu Chi tunnel in Vietnam or when another tourist's swimming shorts tore while cave climbing in Laos. Humorous episodes which seemed funny but bizarre at the same time include a tourist writing about a woman who got almost completely undressed while waiting at a bus stop. Another humorous episode recounts the experience of a group of tourists who were absorbed in people watching whilst having dinner at a restaurant in Italy when rather surprisingly "Superman" walked past in complete costume and convincing Superman demeanour. The group found this incident both surprising and hilarious.

The category of humorous occurrences based on 'clumsy behaviour' refers to people whose lack of physical coordination leads to other people laughing. One example was of a blogger's friend who tripped over when leaving the Coliseum, much to the enjoyment of bystanders. Another episode described a tourist who while helping to fix a roof during his farm stay, fell through the roof and landed safely on the wicker chair below with paint brush still in hand. The category of 'funny mishaps' goes beyond issues of physical coordination. This category includes humour that involved situations which might be perceived as unfortunate at the time they happened but turned out to be funny at the end such as sitting in the back of a taxi with two older women who got car sick and vomited for most of the journey. The category of 'wild night out/drunken behaviour' included examples such as having one of the blogger's friends passing out after drinking too much and getting his head stuck in an automatic doorway that was repeatedly closing on his head.

Social influence and control of humour

Much of the humour in this theme is based on the interactions with other people including fellow travellers and locals. The category of 'fun with communication'

involves humour caused by lost in translation moments, unusual accents and miscommunication – the latter seemed to be a relatively frequent occurrence. One tourist noted in her blog that her Swahili is still not improving when she realised that at dinner, she order 'wealth' instead of 'rice'. Another tourist in China noted the many humorous but fruitless attempts to find the Yu Yuan Gardens after asking numerous locals. The category of 'making fun of others' included for example one blogging tourist making fun of a friend for his embarrassing dance moves. Another tourist on a cruise ship suggested that due to the many obese people, the ballast calculations of the ship would need careful recalculation. The same category also included features of the visited setting which some tourists commented on in amusing ways such as emphasising local infrastructure and traffic conditions in some countries.

The humour category involving 'looks and body parts' is focused on people's physical appearances and how others dress. An example includes a wife writing about her very tall husband getting a massage from a blind masseuse in Cambodia and the surprise in the masseuse's expression when she was trying to find his feet and could not believe how long his legs were. Another tourist reported a humorous experience which entailed cross-dressing for the amusement of everyone on-board a Zambezi river cruise. The 'pranks and jokes' category includes playing tricks on others, for example a tourist who pretended to be in possession of a never-ending jar of peanut butter but was eventually found out by fellow travellers who found him secretly refilling the jar. Pranks were also played on locals such as one tourist pretending to be a bouncer in front of an American night club by asking people for their IDs or capitalising on Indonesian people who wanted to take photos of two white tourists and ended up charging the Indonesian locals 20 cents per photo taken.

The observant tourist

This theme involved humour episodes reflecting instances of tourists being observant about their immediate travel surroundings and therefore also able to discover humorous incidents. The category of 'unintentionally funny situations' include examples of one tourist describing how she found it amusing when the rental car's navigational system kept giving false driving directions even though the destination had been found. Another episode included a tourist detailing how she locked herself out of her caravan

and had to go in her pyjamas to ask for another camper's mobile phone to call for help. There was also one tourist who in an attempt to refill her friends' empty glasses with a wine bottle had difficulty but then realized after a while that she had forgotten to take the cork out. Several blogging tourists also wrote about 'signs, prints or names' they found humorous, many of which were supported by photos in their blogs. Examples of a humorous sign include a 'dial a cow' sign on a road in South Africa. Many examples of humorous t-shirt prints were mentioned many of which were based on either 'Chinglish' (Chinese English) or 'Konglish' (Hong Kong English).

'Wildlife' was also a frequent source of humour in the travel blogs. One tourist wrote about a humorous episode where a monkey stole the camera of another traveller. Another tourist gave a detailed account about the funny behaviours and noises that the hippos made close to her campsite in Africa. Yet another tourist wrote about a humorous camel riding experience since it made her laugh to see the look of surprise on other peoples' faces when the camels got up from the ground. Lastly, the category of 'creepy crawlies' involved for example a funny comparison between Dutch and Canadian mosquitoes in the blog of a tourist. Other humorous episodes were caused by the presence of cockroaches either under mattresses or in the shower.

Analysis of humorous blog episodes using Leximancer

Apart from manual content analysis, Leximancer was used to analyse the entire dataset of humorous blog episodes to establish what themes and concepts would emerge. Because blog episodes were selected using the five keywords of humorous, funny, comical, hilarious and amusing, these terms were removed from the analysis to avoid unnecessarily biasing the Leximancer output. Figure 3.3 represents the summary of themes which Leximancer identified during analysis of the humorous blog episodes. The themes shown in Table 3.4 are ranked in terms of their relative importance.

Table 3.4: Themes and connectivity of blog episodes

| Theme	Connectivity
Day	100%
Room	63%
People	61%
Walked	61%
Guy	42%
Look	23%
Man	14%
Things	12%
Course	12%
Water	5%
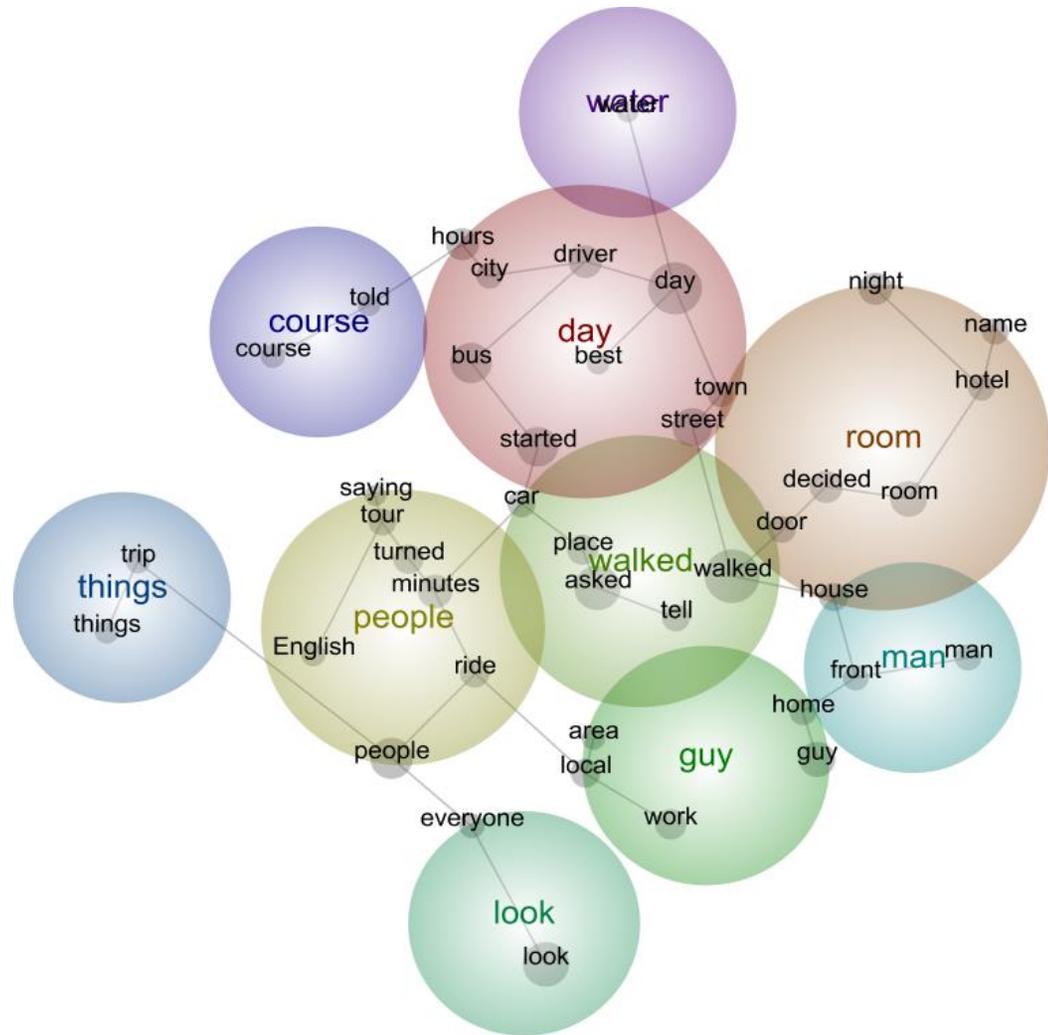
Figure 3.3: Content of blog episodes clustered into themes through Leximancer analysis

This section focuses on the top four themes that were identified through the Leximancer analysis because they were found to be of a connectivity of greater than 50% as shown in Table 3.4. The most important theme was identified as *'day'*. Essentially in their blogs, many tourists took the opportunity to write about the experiences they had during their days of travelling. Concepts which were related most closely to this theme include bus, driver, street, city, town, best and hours. These concepts show that the content of the humorous blog episodes included descriptions of the tourists' explorations such as sightseeing activities in a town or city at the destination. Several tourists also included their own observations of the local traffic and infrastructure conditions in their blogs. For example, one tourists mentioned in her blog the pleasures of being in a city again: "When I finally arrived in Phnom Penh I was excited to be in a city once again and able to enjoy modern conveniences such as ATMs and tuk-tuks. I find it comical that I have apparently altered my definition of 'modern' to now include rickety old carts pulled by mini-motorcycles for transportation." Taking local bus tours were also enjoyed as this tourist wrote in his blog: "The singing in the bus was most entertaining, four part harmonies, traditional mountain ditties."

'Room' was revealed as second most important theme by Leximancer. This theme was closely located with concepts such as hotel, name, night, door, decided and house. Some of the humour in this theme was in fact accommodation related. One illustration is that the size of bathrooms can be a cause for laughter: "After amusing ourselves laughing at the micro-bathroom in our room, we remember that we're starving. We quietly exit the hotel past the snoring desk clerk who is sprawled out on the lobby sofa in the dark, and creep out into the dark streets of Paris searching for something to eat." The theme of 'room' also included the concept of name and this indicates that tourists in this sample were quite observant of their new surroundings once at a destination and reported on any funny aspects they noticed such as the names of places and stores.

'People' was recognised as the third most important theme by Leximancer. This theme included concepts such as English, ride, tour, saying and minutes. Having humorous encounters with other people including, for example, locals and fellow travellers can be cause of lost in translation moments or humorous miscommunications: "Our tour guide had an impressive quantity of English words in his vocabulary, but unfortunately, he didn't really know how to put them together properly to make grammatically correct sentences. After hearing "Louis has sorry for… (microphone cut out)… Louis makes

apology due to… (microphone cut out)… Louis gives you remorse because… (microphone cut out)… Hijo de Puta (Spanish swearing)", Erin and I couldn't help but just looking at each other and laughing.

'Walked' was mentioned as the fourth most important theme which was related to concepts including place, asked, car and tell. Many blogs included descriptions of the humorous encounters that were made while walking around at places of interest in the destination countries. Laughing at her own clumsiness provided amusement for a beach tourist who described in her blog how she attempted to walk gracefully out of the water but got thrown over by the breaking waves which made it hard for her to leave the water but in the end all she could do was laugh at herself.

The themes identified through the Leximancer analysis align with the themes established through manual coding by the researcher. The theme of 'day' identified through the Leximancer analysis can be linked to the theme of 'the observant tourist' established by the researcher through content-driven coding. During the day many hours were spent by the tourists exploring various places and it was here that many observations were made, for example amusing signs and prints. The Leximancer theme of 'room' included concepts such as hotel, room and door which align to the theme of 'travel essentials and novelty' because it included amongst others humour that was experienced at various accommodation settings.

Parallels can also be made between the Leximancer theme of 'people' and the theme of 'social influence and control of humour' found by the researcher. Amusing encounters with, for example, locals and fellow travellers were frequently mentioned. To a certain degree the Leximancer theme of 'walked' aligns with the theme of 'humorous episodes that can happen to everyone' because this theme links with the many clumsy or unusual occurrences that were made while walking around at the destination countries.

3.5.3 Results of concept-driven coding

Concept-driven coding was used to address the third aim of the study. Concept-driven coding is based on having pre-defined thematic ideas before starting to read a particular narrative (Gibbs, 2007). Typically, these ideas already exist in the research literature

(Gibbs, 2007; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). The categories chosen to classify the humorous episodes included the three major theories of humour which were introduced and explained in Chapter One of this thesis (superiority theory, incongruity theory and relief theory). Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection construct was also used to analyse the data. The construct appeared appropriate because it ties in well with the literature on positive psychology because it has the potential to "establish visitor comfort levels, to assist visitor concentration and to establish connections to tourism presenters" (Pearce, 2009, p. 639). For the purpose of this study these three outcomes were defined as follows:

Comfort - Humour used to enhance the comfort of the people involved in a situation. This includes humour which helps to create a pleasant atmosphere and to reduce stressful, awkward or frustrating travel situation and where humour made people feel that they have gained some level of control.

Concentration – Humour used to broaden people's attention and to capture their level of interest. This helps to keep people mindful and mentally engaged with what is going on since they need to actively listen to what is being said to 'get the joke'.

Connection – Humour used to bring people together. Such humour fosters interpersonal relationships and causes feelings of liking and rapport.

Table 3.5 shows the researcher's classifications of humour found in the travel blogs based on concept-driven coding.

Table 3.5: Classifications of humour in blog episodes (n = 200)

Humour theories (%)		Humour outcomes (%)	
Incongruity theory	47	Comfort	64
Superiority theory	27	Concentration	9
Relief theory	26	Connection	27

1. Humour theories

<u>Incongruity theory</u>

Nearly half of the humour (47%) was grounded on incongruity theory where many of the blogging tourists paid attention to their immediate surroundings and reported funny aspects they noticed. For example, after exploring Buddha statues in Thailand, two tourists felt that it was time for something to eat and so they stopped at "Poo Restaurant" which they noted was a rather comical name for an eatery. Humour based on incongruity focuses on the unexpected that provokes the humour in a person's mind. One tourist was rather surprised to find guns everywhere in Israel and made an interesting comparison between Israel and America while also commenting on the funny side of things:

"I am not a fan of guns, though, I saw them everywhere in Israel and they weren't bothersome in the slightest bit. I think the main difference between seeing weapons in the U.S. and then in Israel is as follows. In Israel, everyone, and I mean everyone (over the age of 18), is fully trained to handle weapons - and the gun you carry indicates your military experience and particular responsibility to society. It's mainly 20-somethings walking around with the guns...and they carry them openly and responsibly. People don't abuse guns in Israel the way Americans do. That's a fact. What I do think is hilarious though are the 20-something guys who carry their machine guns out with them on dates to make their date feel protected. They literally sling the gun over their shoulder while licking their ice-cream cone. It's truly amazing."

Other tourists to Israel might also define such a situation as unexpected and surprising which is the essence of the incongruity theory and cause them to perceive the situation as humorous. Another example of incongruity theory is reported by two tourists travelling around South America who wrote:

"One thing that I find amusing in Peru is the preoccupation of all hotels and guest houses with your occupation when you check in. By law, each accommodation stop has to record details of all the guests that stay there, including name, passport number and occupation. If you are an international spy, someone who craves privacy or just an idiot you can end up writing all manner of things in this space over the course of a 3 month trip. Pierpaolo and I have so far been logged as astronauts, hand models and

jockeys depending on our mood at the time of check in. But perhaps the finest one I heard was British lad who was going around South America, his trip funded by his excellent work as a cigarette lighter repairman."

The playful nature of this interaction is cast as a running joke between the two friends while travelling South America. For these two tourists, the constant need of accommodation providers to find out about their occupation seemed a bit out of place and they decided to have fun with these requests which they clearly did not take seriously.

Superiority theory

The findings from the researcher's own coding indicate that 27 percent of humour was based on superiority theory which is about making fun of people and about things which were considered funny, i.e. local traffic and infrastructure conditions in other countries. For example, one tourist's attention was caught by road signs in India requesting drivers to reduce their speed. In his blog he pointed out that for him this is rather funny since the roads in India are in such bad conditions that speeding would not be possible even if the visitor wanted to. Another tourist on a cruise ship holiday found people watching on-board to be a very entertaining activity and noted in her blog that with some passengers it was hard to see if they were wearing a bathing suit or not due to the "many rolls of fat". These instances show that making fun or laughing at these situations makes the blogging tourists feel superior in some way.

Relief theory

Relief theory (26%) was also observed and included many episodes where tourists laughed at funny instances that occurred during their travels. One tourist wrote about the activities of her night out with her fellow travellers and described how she and many others ended up treating the tables as a dance floor. She "fell off the table and got a nice bump" on the head which she apparently found hilarious. Another tourist wrote about a rainy day in England and described having a "movie moment" when a bus drove past

her and covered her completely with water. After this incident she "started laughing really hard" and remarked in her blog "that was awesome".

Yet another example is that of a tourist who wrote about going for a swim in New Zealand with her friends when a couple came up to them enquiring if it was okay for them to get in as well, but naked since they were nudists. She said yes since she thought the couple was joking, however as soon as she agreed ten other nudists joined in as well. In her blog she described how she and her friends had trouble containing their laughter:

"We were cracking ourselves up. It was hard not to look, I mean, come on. I really wanted a picture, just for proof this actually happened, but thought that might be a bit much. At one point, they started going over the top... lol... the hot water comes from this small waterfall type thing and they were standing in it and saying 'June' - a guy would strike a pose... they were acting out calendar poses and we about died of laughter. But it was that kind of classroom laughter where you know you're not supposed to laugh, so it makes it even worse! Finally, they all left and it was back to just us."

While this episode clearly shows that the group of friends was surprised by the presence of the nudists, it also illustrates relief theory. While at first sight they might have felt quite uncomfortable by the presence of twelve naked fellow swimmers, they also had to release their built up laughter especially once the calendar poses started.

2. Humour outcomes

Comfort

Findings show that the majority of humour used in the travel blogs was based on comfort (64%). As previously mentioned, the comfort category includes humour used to create a pleasant atmosphere for all people involved in a situation. The blogging tourists did indeed write about incidences that probably were carried out 'just for the fun of it' and consequently enhanced the comfort of a given situation such as amusing themselves in a boring museum by trying to imitate the poses of statures or by tricking fellow travellers into believing to be in possession of a never-ending jar of peanut butter.

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Other comfort enhancing circumstances included seeing the funny side of things even if the circumstances might have been quite uncomfortable when they happened such as reflecting positively on a sleepless night due to a snoring roommate. Several bloggers also noted rather frustrating travel situation such as lengthy, overly complicated border crossings when entering some Asian countries but they were able to point out humorous things to amuse themselves during these times. Likewise, having encounters with cockroaches in India and in Indonesia which were described as being "bigger, meaner and faster" than other cockroaches made for fine amusement.

Humour also helped the blogging tourists to cope with awkward situations. One tourist wrote about his money exchange experience in Uzbekistan where the money seemed to be worth so little that he saw people walking around with plastic bags full of cash. Travel situations of the embarrassing kind were also presented such as when a tourist reported on her first laundry experience in Abu Dhabi. While she anticipated her dirty laundry to be discreetly taken to the back, it was instead dumped on the counter in front of her and everyone else in the shop could see all items including her dirty underwear. Additionally, the embarrassment was enhanced because all items were counted twice.

Concentration

This category was defined as humour that was used to capture peoples' level of interest and their attention and make them mindful of the present situation. In the blog dataset this category was represented by 9%. An example of a relevant humorous episode included one of the tourists attending a first aid course. In her blog she described the many humour filled episodes created by the two instructors who made sure that everyone paid attention by wiggling their own behinds while performing compressions or pretending to make out with a mannequin in a corner. In the following episode, a tourist wrote about her Vietnamese tour guide:

"His English is superb, strongly American accent inflected and he will prove to be the most friendly, expressive and informative guide I have had in my journey around the world so far. He is humorous and honest, comedicly spelling out the difference for us between things referred to as 'Free' and 'Included' in tour packages like his. "Lunch and dinner today will be provided for you. These are not "free". Note. They are

"Included", that's "included". You have already paid us for your meals. Note people, nothing is "free" in Vietnam!"

While this episode clearly shows that this blogging tourist was listening with interest to what her Vietnamese tour guide had to say, it can also be used as an example to illustrate how interpersonal relationships can be fostered.

Another tourist went to the Wife Carrying Championships in Finland where most of this competition was carried out between Finland and Estonia. Even though this tourist did not speak any Finnish or Estonian, she understood enough to work out that the two nationalities were talking down one another which she found very amusing. Numerous tourists also reported signs or t-shirt prints which they perceived as funny. For them to spot these sign and prints they had to be mindful of their surrounding in order to share these sights with others by reporting them in their blogs.

Connections

A further outcome of humour states that humour can be used to foster interpersonal relationships and build good rapport with other people. This outcome was found in 27% of the blog dataset. One tourist described taking a taxi with a friend in Calcutta where the taxi driver suddenly shouted "Bandega" which the two passengers repeated several time. This caused the taxi driver to laugh and ended up being an ice-breaker for further conversation. Another example included a humorous episode where a waitress made paper hats with hilarious sayings because a group of travelling friends had missed some the night's entertainment. This resulted in increased liking of the waitress but also built links among the friends. Tour guides also seemed to play an important role in establishing rapport between people. Several blog examples mentioned tour guides and their hilarious ways. One such tour guide in Venice was cited for saying that Venetian people do not gain weight because of the four hundred and twenty bridges which made a group of tourists laugh.

Connections can also be established by bringing ideas together. This is similar to the incongruity theory of humour which brings together two unrelated ideas or concept in a surprising or unexpected manner to cause people to laugh. Two bloggers travelling through Egypt were frequently asked where they were from. When they replied Canada,

the responses included 'Canada Dry', 'Canada Dry or Canada Wet?' or 'Canada Dry, No Woman No Cry'. The two tourists found this rather surprising since they were not able to find a single bottle of Canada Dry in Egypt. One more example included a blogger being given directions to a bar which asked her to walk along a certain street and then to turn left at the giant frog. In her mind she wondered what "the giant frog" could possibly mean, if it was a statue of a frog or a name for a business. Eventually she made the connection herself by discovering that it was a sign of a giant green frog.

3.6 Discussion

Using a qualitative approach in this study offered insights about the various humorous experiences that tourists report in their blogs. The humorous episodes varied greatly according to the context in which they occurred. The first aim was addressed by identifying the various people that the blogging tourists referred to in their blogs. Fellow travellers seemed to be one of the greatest sources of humour while travelling. Humorous incidents frequently evolve when people travel with their friends or make new friendships during their trips. Stefanova (2012) states that humour is very similar to play. Both, humour and play involve observing and reacting to changes in the environment. Having a fellow traveller or friend share a humorous sighting can contribute to tourists having positive experiences during their travels. Proyer and Ruch (2011) indicate that humour is the single best predictor of playfulness which can lead to the "good life" since it impacts on peoples' subjective and psychological well-being.

The second aim of the study was addressed by identifying what kinds of humorous travel experiences tourists report in their stories. Content analysis revealed that various themes and categories could be identified. These classifications were accompanied by citing select cases to allow the readers of this study to appreciate the material presented in the humorous blog content. The four broad themes that could be identified show that humour occurring during travel experiences is rather varied. The manual coding of the researcher was cross referenced with an analysis of the humorous blog episodes using Leximancer. The links between the themes identified through the Leximancer analysis with the themes found by the researcher were highlighted. This added objectivity to the findings and also increased reliability of the findings (Penn-Edwards, 2010).

Investigating tourists' stories represents a valuable way of finding out more about humour which occurs in a naturalistic way. This is because it is up to the blogging tourists to choose the events to be written about (Riessman, 2005). The memory stores and retrieves information in an episodic kind of fashion where stories "include inciting incidents, experiences, outcomes/evaluations and summaries" (Woodside, Cruickshank & Dehuang, 2007, p.163). This blog study showed that many tourists choose in fact to write about their humorous travel experiences by citing the activities and the people included in their stories while at the same time interpreting them in their own ways. The blog episodes investigated in this study show that humour can be socially as well as experientially based but can also be dependent on other individuals. Stefanova (2012) argued that when people have humorous experiences, they also recognise traits of their own culture, their own background experiences and personal characteristics as humorous. For Stefanova any humorous cases prompt a moment of education about what is funny.

The third aim was fulfilled by classifying the humorous blogs episodes into pre-defined categories which were established using the existing literature. The three major humour theories were clearly present in the travel blogs and were illustrated by rich descriptions. The examples also revealed the different interpretations that were given to the situations by the blogging tourists. In accordance with the superiority theory, some tourists felt superior to others in various ways (Morreall, 1983; McGhee, 1979) such as by comparing the local travel and infrastructure conditions of a destination with that of their home countries. Travel blogs also included episodes of tourists making fun of other tourists' bodily shapes which was sometimes done for personal amusement behind sun glasses. Nevertheless it is making fun of other peoples' characteristics and can also be seen as building in-group connections (Meyer, 2000; Rogerson-Revell, 2007).

Humour based on incongruity theory was frequently presented. Dining at restaurants with peculiar names such as "Poo Restaurant" can be perceived as odd for many tourists since a restaurant name in the western world is unlikely to include a word that entails human waste products. Moreover, blog episodes such as those discussing guns in Israel or Peruvian accommodation providers' need to find out about guest personal details were also perceived as humorous since they were surprising and unexpected in nature (Attardo & Raskin, 1991; McGhee, 1979). The release of nervous energy was also presented in the blog examples in the case of the twelve nudists which might have first

been experienced as embarrassing but turned into complete amusement for the blogging tourist and her friends (Freud, 1905 cited in Martin, 2007). Relief theory also entailed making fun of one's own 'hang ups' (Solomon, 1996) which was shown in the blog episode of one tourist accidentally falling off a table while dancing on it.

The results in this study, concerning Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model can be linked to the existing literature in positive psychology. Locals and other travellers were frequently referred to in the blog episodes. Having an amusing time with the locals of a destination or other travellers can lead to further positive emotions but also built relations between people. Fredrickson (1998, 2001) explained this outcome through her broaden-and-build theory where positive emotions broaden people's attention span and also build their social resources. The blogging tourists shared the humorous discoveries they made during their travels with their readers. Perceiving such episodes as joyful and amusing as well as having a humorous outlook on life can help people to feel better (cf. Martin et al., 2003).

Gibbs (2007) made the point that through narration, the story teller informs us about what kind of person they think they are or would like us to think they are. Kozinets (2001) also stated that the content mentioned in online narratives contributed to how bloggers present themselves and their "carefully cultivated self-image." By including humorous travel episodes in their online travel stories, the blogging tourists use the humour not simply to amuse other people such as family members, friends at home and even strangers. They also show that these funny episodes represented something important and meaningful during their travel because the inclusion of this content indicates that these blogging tourists do have a humorous outlook on life. These ways of using humour can be linked to Martin et al. (2003) uses of self-enhancing and affiliative humour.

3.7 Summary

Content analysis of travel blogs allowed the researcher to gain useful and in-depth insights into the tourist-humour relationship. The content analysis enabled the researcher to build a record of the sources that tourists perceived to be humorous during their travels and these could be categorised into four broad themes which show how

humour occurring during travel experiences varied. The three major humour theories were used as pre-defined categories which revealed the varying interpretations that the blogging tourists gave to the amusing episodes they encountered. The findings of this blog study were also linked to the existing literature in positive psychology using Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

Chapter Four

Study 2: Tourists' perceptions about the use of humour - A qualitative study at four tourism settings

Chapter Four Overview

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore tourists' perceptions about the use of humour at four typical but different tourism operations in TNQ, Australia. Very little is known about how tourists receive and engage with the humour that is presented to them during tourism experiences and how humour actually influences the tourist experience. Therefore the purpose of this chapter was to understand how humour is perceived through the eyes of the tourists. The study used a qualitative methodology because this allowed the researcher to uncover some of the emotional responses to humour which would otherwise be difficult to capture. Naturalistic focus group interviews were conducted to identify tourists' perspectives and beliefs about the humour they

encountered. The naturalistic nature of these focus group interviews was based on their setting and their timing since they occurred during the participants' activities on the day of the booked tourism experience, i.e. at the tourist attraction or as part of a day tour. Four tourism settings were chosen in this study to sample a range of humour uses and to look for patterns of meaning in how humour was perceived by tourists.

4.2 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore tourists' perceptions about the use of humour during tourism experiences by sampling several tourism businesses. The specific aims to be addressed are as follows:

1. Identify what kinds of humour were used by the tourism operators.

2. Explore the participants' responses according to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

3. Explore if there were downsides to the use of humour in tourism settings.

4. Establish why it is valuable for tourism operators to use humour.

5. Identify key considerations for tourism operators about what they need to know when using humour.

6. Highlight any differences stemming from the naturalistic contexts in which humour was used at the four tourism settings.

4.3 Using focus groups as a research method

Focus groups produce qualitative data with the purpose of getting as close as possible to participants' understandings of and perspectives on certain issues (Millward, 2000; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Focus groups are very popular in market research where they are invaluable for exploring consumers' attitudes and preferences which could lead to improvements of products and services (Langford & McDonagh, 2003). They are also a widely applied research method and are embraced by researchers in

various academic fields including education, sociology, communications, health sciences, organisation behaviour, program evaluation, psychotherapy, social psychology, gerontology, political science and policy research (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

Krueger and Casey (2009, p. 2) define focus groups as "a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment." Focus groups are interactive and synergistic in nature and therefore provide rich data about opinions, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and impressions of the individuals taking part (Millward, 2000; Langford & McDonagh, 2003; Seymour, 2004; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). It is important that the group of individuals who are part of the focus groups have some common interest or characteristic that is discussed during a session (Seymour, 2004). The results of each session are influenced by the contextual circumstances, composition, dynamics and interactions amongst the participants of each group (Flick, 2002; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Smith, 2010).

Focus groups as a research method can stand alone or be successfully combined with other research methods. In combination with other research methods, they can either be a useful first step for the development of a questionnaire or be used as a way to validate findings from other methods especially if other research methods have produced inconclusive outcomes (Millward, 2000; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Focus groups are inappropriate when statistical projections and generalisations beyond the focus group members are required (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Instead the goal of focus groups is to gain insights and a better understanding about unexplored topics (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The unique strengths and weaknesses of the focus group method are highlighted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Strengths and weaknesses of the focus group method

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Yield rich data expressed in the participants' own words with the opportunity to probe to clarify responses (Langford & McDonagh, 2003; Stewart,	- Focus groups can be logistically challenging to schedule and moderate (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). - Due to the open-ended nature and

Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Smith, 2010).

- Flexibility of method since they can be adapted to most topics, settings and type of participants (Ives, 2003; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

- Interactive group environment enables participants to listen to others and reflect on their own opinions and experiences and build on responses of one another's comments (Kirsch, 2001; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Smith, 2010).

- The effect of this synergy can often lead to ideas that would have not been thought about otherwise (Langford & McDonagh, 2003).

- Participants are not constrained in their response choices as they are with questionnaires (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

- In comparison to individual interviews, the synergy and dynamics of the shared efforts of a group are an advantage since a greater range of insights can be generated (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

- Bigger sample sizes possible when conducting several focus groups as opposed to one-on-one interviews (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

- Relative ease in which they can be conducted and also people generally enjoy taking part in them (Maguire, 2003).

- Cost efficient in cases when there is no need to rent venues or pay the research participants (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

- Focus groups as a method can be self-contained or successfully used with other qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and observation for the purpose of triangulation of data (Breakwell, 2000b; Langford & McDonagh, 2003; Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

unstructured nature of focus groups, findings can be time-consuming and problematic to summarise (Flick, 2002; Langford & McDonagh, 2003).

- Care should be taken when generalising beyond the groups and settings examined in the projects (Gibbs, 2007; Smith, 2010).

- Difficulties in managing larger focus groups since they can be hard to control as some respondents dominate in contributing their ideas (Maguire, 2003; Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

- Finding consensus on questions can be difficult at times (Creswell, 2012).

- Statistical estimates are not warranted due to small sample size and convenience sampling mostly used (Langford & McDonagh, 2003; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

- Social desirability affects what respondents say in terms of conforming to the opinion of the overall group (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Creswell, 2012).

- Issues of privacy and embarrassment when dealing with sensitive material (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

Appropriateness of focus groups as a research method in this study

Focus groups are a useful method especially for exploratory research where only little is known about a topic (Bruseberg & McDonagh, 2003; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). This was a main consideration for choosing focus groups in this study because only limited research exists on the phenomenon of humour in tourism settings. The discussions and interactions generated through the focus groups were helpful in gaining useful data to increase knowledge about this topic. This method was also considered appropriate since questions would be answered based on the free flow of information between participants. In this way it was possible to collect information on the different opinions and attitudes that research participants had when discussing the multifaceted construct of humour.

Naturalistic and informal focus groups

In keeping with Flyvbjerg's (2001) statement that the meanings that participants give to topics are context dependent, the focus groups chosen as the method for Study 2 were naturalistic and informal in nature. The actual location of the focus groups was an important consideration in this study for two reasons: firstly, the location needed to be convenient for the participants and secondly, the researcher needed impressions of the tourists' experiences to be as fresh as possible.

Informal focus groups are described by Schensul (1999) as situations where people gather informally to discuss topics of interest often stimulated by the presence of a researcher. The naturalistic nature of informal focus groups is also based on their spontaneous timing because they tend to occur in the normal course of an activity or conversation (Schensul, 1999; Tunnell, 1977). Furthermore, a study by Bruseberg and McDonagh (2003) noted that some focus group facilities with their one-way mirrors may be overly formal and even intimidating to participants. Therefore instead of inviting focus group participants to come to a venue chosen by the researcher and removing them from the context in which their experiences took place, all focus groups were conducted at the actual site of the tourism attraction on the same day that the participants had their tourism experiences.

The composition of individuals who came together in a focus group should also be kept as natural as possible, i.e. where individuals already know each other prior to the focus group taking place, such as family members, friends and colleagues. This has been found to create opportunities for natural conversations to take place (Eckhardt & Bengtssen, 2010). The apparent familiarity between participants assists in breaking the ice and reassures that richer discussions may take place (Bruseberg & McDonagh, 2003). The focus groups conducted in this study also included people who had known each other prior to the sessions taking place. For example the groups included family members, friends and people who met while at the tourism setting. The presence of familiar social relations and a naturalistic setting made the focus groups more convenient and comfortable for participants (Eckhardt & Bengtssen, 2010).

4.4 Methods

4.4.1 Selection of tourism operators

It was anticipated that the use of humour would be different at different tourism settings and therefore the meaning of how humour could potentially be used would also take on different forms due to the varied contexts in which the humour was performed. For this reason, tourism businesses for this study were selected using phenomenon sampling. Pearce (2011) pointed out that considerable attention is usually given to selecting individual participants but sampling the actual variants or examples of the tourism phenomenon of interest can be just as important. For this reason particular consideration was given to selecting the tourism operations. The businesses selected as cases needed to be different in nature in order to enhance the range and scope of humour applications being studied. The following types of tourism experiences were chosen: a wildlife tourism operator, a nature-based tourism operator, an adventure tourism operator and a marine (Great Barrier Reef) tourism operator.

Another very important criterion for this study was to make sure that the selected tourism operators did in fact include humour in their communications and interactions with tourists. As an external justification, web-based phenomenon sampling was used to identify tourism businesses that were already using humour successfully by reading

through comments on TripAdvisor. As a review website, TripAdvisor enables consumers to leave comments about a range of tourism-related services and experiences such as accommodation, restaurants, attractions and tour operators. The researcher thoroughly reviewed TripAdvisor comments on various tourism businesses to identify tours and attractions where the use of humour was a persistent theme. Reoccurring comments about the humour at a particular tourism setting were used as public acknowledgement of successful humour application. The tourism operators using a great deal of humour were then contacted to see if they wished to be part of this research. The four tourism operators that agreed to be part in this study are introduced in the following section.

Descriptions of the tourism operations

Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is a wildlife attraction situated approximately 40 minutes north of Cairns. The park is known to be the first place in Australia to breed crocodiles in captivity and has dedicated substantial resources to the conservation of this large predator (Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, 2013). The park offers educational and entertaining presentations about crocodiles, snakes, cassowaries, koalas, quolls and other wildlife at several times throughout the day (Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, 2013). The onsite restaurant overlooking the lagoon presents visitors with the opportunity to not just spot crocodiles but also to order a crocodile burger. That in itself might be considered quite humorous by some visitors to the park: being able to eat the main attraction.

Barefoot Tours offers one day guided tours to the many natural attractions of the Atherton Tablelands. Tourists have the chance to swim at many sites such as Millaa Milla Waterfall, volcanic crater lakes and Josephine Falls with its natural waterslide (Barefoot Tours, 2013). An indication for this tour's use of humour can already be seen on the brochure (see Figure 4.1) which informs potential customers: "Warning! This tour contains laughter!!" Furthermore in the "What to Bring" section on the back of the brochure, visitors are instructed to bring not only the usual objects of swimmers, towel, sunscreen, camera, etc. but they are also specifically told to bring a "pointy hat". This pointy hat is used as "drop bear protection" and the entire drop bear story is later told in great details to all people on the bus.

Figure 4.1: Front (left) and back (right) of Barefoot Tours brochure

Raging Thunder Adventures offers many adventure tourism activities including white-water rafting, reef-rafting, sea kayaking on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and hot air ballooning in the largest commercial balloon. The focus of this study was the white-water rafting experience which takes place on the Tully River. The trip departs daily from Cairns and during the five hours spent white-water rafting, visitors are informed about the region's history and natural wonders by the river guides. Prior rafting experience is not necessary since all tuition is provided on the day (Raging Thunder

Adventures, 2011). While the river guides are highly trained and place lots of emphasis on safety, they also use humour to create a very entertaining and comfortable environment throughout the day.

Down Under Cruise & Dive (DUCD) is a Cairns based Great Barrier Reef cruise and scuba diving company. The company's vessel 'Osprey V' departs daily to two outer GBR locations. There are a vast number of activities on offer such as guided snorkelling tours, glass bottom boat tours, introductory and certified dives as well as scenic helicopter flights (Down Under Cruise & Dive, 2013). All activities give passengers the opportunity to experience as much as possible of their day on the GBR. As advertised on the company's website, passengers "are guaranteed of good times, great value and a safe, fun filled adventure" (Down Under Cruise & Dive, 2013). Humour is included in the safety talks on the trip to the reef as well as on the homeward trip by an entertainer.

These four tourism settings were chosen for this study since each represents a unique and different experience on offer in the Cairns area and they also align with the travel motives for coming to the Cairns region as identified by Thompson and Prideaux (2012): visiting the GBR (Down Under Cruise & Dive); experiencing the natural environment (Barefoot Tours); seeing Australian wildlife (Hartley's Crocodile Adventures) and taking part in adventure activities (Raging Thunder Adventures).

4.4.2 On-site procedure

Permission to gain access to each of the four study locations was obtained from the relevant business personnel, who were informed why their tourism attraction was chosen for this research project, how long the researcher would have to be on-site and that key findings of the study would be returned to them in the form of a factsheet. Since the study included human participants, the appropriate human ethics clearance was received from the James Cook University Ethics Committee. Focus groups were conducted at the various tourism settings from June to November 2012.

At each tourism setting, the focus groups were conducted towards the end of the tourism experience. This approach ensured that participants had spent a reasonable amount of time on tour or at the attraction and therefore had sufficient opportunity to experience

the humour on offer. Table 4.2 details the exact location and scheduling of the focus groups. Potential participants were approached and informed about the purpose of the study. To ensure that only tourists to TNQ partook in the study, a filter question was asked to find out where potential participants were from. After signing the informed consent form, focus groups commenced. Focus groups were informal in nature and lasted from 10-30 minutes. Every participants was presented with a Cairns postcard as a token of appreciation. All focus group discussions were audio-recorded for later transcription.

Table 4.2: Location and timing of focus groups

Tourism setting	Hartley's Crocodile Adventures	Barefoot Tours	Raging Thunder	DUCD's Osprey V
Location of focus groups	Exit area of attraction	Picnic area at Josephine Falls	In "end of trip" hotel in the region before driving back or on the bus trip back to Cairns	On the boat
Scheduling of focus groups	As people were exiting the venue	Final stop on the tour before returning to Cairns	After the white-water rafting activity took place	During the homeward journey to Cairns

The management of the groups followed a consistent focus group protocol where the same researcher conducted all focus group sessions and the same question schedule was used (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The focus group discussions allowed for the collection of rich data which related directly to the experiences that tourists had onsite. Participants described many aspects of their experience including interactions they had with tour guides, the environment overall and their feelings. The researcher noticed that even during the focus groups, participants showed that they had fun and displayed non-verbal signs of cheerfulness when describing their experiences such as smiling and laughing with the fellow participants. Straight after each focus group, personal field notes were taken about the researcher's own observations, thoughts and any issues that affected the sessions. Depending on the tourism settings there were, for example, some issues with noise in the immediate environment that slightly affected the recordings of

the sessions, i.e. idling buses at the exit at one on-site location, loud cicadas at another location, and the sound of helicopters.

4.4.3 Sampling of focus group participants

Participants in this study were recruited spontaneously using convenience sampling. Generally focus groups are not used to make inferences about larger populations but instead to understand how participants perceive a situation (Millward, 2000; Krueger & Casey, 2009). Focus group participants were selected because they had something in common based on the knowledge and experience they were able to contribute to this research (Millward, 2000; Flick, 2002; Smith, 2010). The commonality in this study was that focus groups were conducted with tourists who had visited certain tourist attractions and were asked about their opinions of the humour they encountered.

In terms of the number of focus groups, Smith (2010) suggested that at least two focus groups should be completed to provide assurance about the findings. In order to identify any patterns or trends, it is advisable to conduct a series of at least three separate sessions (Langford & McDonagh, 2003). In the present research study, the number of focus groups was determined by using Krueger and Casey's (2001) concept of theoretical saturation. Thus, focus groups with new participants were continued until no new insights or information was gained and a similar range of responses was received. Krueger and Casey (2001) stated that this occurs usually after three to four focus groups. Overall, this study conducted 29 focus groups with 103 participants. While this may appear to be more than the numbers suggested by other researchers, it should be noted that the focus group set-ups were diverse including four different tourism settings as well as tourists of different age groups and nationalities.

Another consideration included deciding on how many people to include in each focus group. In the marketing context large groups of 8-12 people are traditionally used (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). However several authors have noted that groups over 10 participants appeared to be more difficult to manage, since not everyone might get the opportunity to voice their opinions (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Therefore smaller focus groups are becoming more and more popular for several reasons. Eckhardt and Bengtssen (2010)

found that a group of four participants was ideal in their study because it generated the most natural discussions. Smaller groups of three to five are also easier to recruit and control and make participants feel more at ease and give them plenty of opportunity to share their ideas (Langford & McDonagh, 2003; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). The focus groups in this study were also kept quite small and were mostly carried out with two to six participants. This small group number made them relatively easy to host at the different tourism settings.

4.4.4 Question schedule

Care was taken to develop open-ended questions that participants could easily relate to from their personal experience and specific situations (Seymour, 2004; Krueger & Casey, 2009). As previously mentioned, the same question schedule was followed during the course of each focus group session. This was done for two reasons: firstly, it ensured that the right information was collected to answer the study's aims. Secondly, the questions asked made comparative analysis of the four settings a more streamlined process because the data generated could be linked to the topics discussed (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Krueger & Casey, 2009).

The sequence of the questions followed a general to more specific trajectory (Flick, 2002; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). The more general questions were asked first including questions about feelings and general opinions which participants had about the humour they experienced at the various tourism settings. This was followed by the more specific questions enquiring for example about Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model and other key questions. Table 4.3 includes the question schedule used in this study. Peek and Fothergill (2009) suggested ending a focus group by asking participants if there was anything else they would like to add. This final question ensured that the topic was sufficiently covered and gave participants a last chance to contribute any thoughts they had about the use of humour in tourism settings. In fact some interesting responses were received to this question. One participant, for example, noted that she never thought about humour in tourism before which gives a clear indication that using focus groups was an appropriate method in letting respondents freely discuss this topic in their own words.

Table 4.3: Question schedule for focus groups

Starting the session: Introductory questions asked at the beginning of the focus group to get the participants thinking about the topic.
What did you think about the tour guides' use of humour?
Why do you think the tour guide used humour?
What kind of humour was used?
Do you feel that the humour was appropriate?
Key questions: questions of major concern for this study.
Think back about the humour used today at this particular tourism setting. How did it make you feel?
What effect did the use of humour have on your overall comfort today?
Do you think that the humour used today affected your interest in what was being said?
Do you think that the humour used during the tour helped you learn something new?
Please tell me what you think about the idea that humour helps to increase social bonds between people. Do you think that was achieved today?
With all the humour used today what are your thoughts about the tour guide?
Do you think there are disadvantages of using humour in a multicultural tourism setting such as this one?
Can you think of tourism settings or situations where it would be inappropriate to use humour?
Ending questions to bring the session to a close.
Is there anything else you would like to share?

4.4.5 Data analysis methods

Transcription of focus groups

All focus groups were transcribed by the researcher for analysis. As recommended by Krueger and Casey (2009), the task of transcribing the focus groups by the researcher can improve analysis. During the lengthy activity of transcribing, the researcher was indeed able to obtain an overview of the data. This detailed familiarity with the material

enabled a codebook to be created by the researcher (Lyons, 2000). The emerging codes and categories were updated when reading the transcripts a second time (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

Analysis of focus groups

Analysing data collected from interviews and focus groups can be overwhelming and challenging due to the huge amount of information collected and most researchers find it difficult to find a starting point (Breakwell, 2000b; Lyons, 2000). Contemporary computer software can be helpful with the quantitative analysis of the content including counting and sorting of codes (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Using software packages for qualitative analysis can also be helpful with linking and displaying of data (Kozinets, 2001). In this case, the transcripts were analysed using two different kinds of computer software: NVivo (version 10) and Leximancer.

Data analysis using the NVivo software was based on the identification of relevant themes or categories based on frequency of comments and agreement of the topic (Krueger & Casey, 2001). NVivo was helpful because it allowed the researcher to develop a coding system by being able to highlight and categorise the various sections within the transcripts into themes based on common properties by using various colours (Bazeley, 2007). In NVivo, the themes with common properties are referred to as nodes (Bazeley & Richards, 2003). These nodes are stored with the exact reference to the original text in the transcript relevant to that particular theme, so that the researcher was continually able to see how her developed themes linked back to its data source. The option to write memos was another helpful feature in NVivo because the researcher was able to leave descriptions and thoughts about how thematic ideas developed through the coding process (Bazeley & Richards, 2003). Similarly to Study 1, the analysis with the Leximancer software was undertaken to add objectivity to the findings since no input was required by the researcher as to what codes and themes were to emerge. Leximancer was also helpful in providing a visual display of the findings comparing the four tourism settings.

Since Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model was used to guide the questioning during the focus groups, the transcripts were scrutinised for information to

contribute to this model. When participants' responses addressed more than one category, then these responses were coded under each category that they addressed. The remainder of the data was analysed in an inductive way by searching for emerging thematic categories (Lyons, 2000). It was important to use expressions of both positive and negative attitudes about the topic in order to capture their overall context (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). This was achieved by looking specifically for negative cases or instances when participants disapproved of humour in tourism settings (Gibbs, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009). Investigating negative cases is vital in order to understand why they occurred and what circumstances produced them (Gibbs, 2007).

Findings in this study are supported by quotations from the research participants (Kirsch, 2001). In using appropriate quotes as evidence, the research reflects the voice of the participants and builds trust in the findings (Creswell, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009). To give the reader a better picture of what was said by respondents, Kruger & Casey (2009) suggested using three quotes for each coding category.

Interrater agreement

The process of categorising and analysing qualitative material relies heavily on the judgment of a single researcher which can result in potential biases (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). In order to check the reliability of the coding undertaken in NVivo, one other person who had no previous involvement with this study was asked to independently code eight of the 29 focus group transcripts. This represents approximately 25 percent of the transcripts. Selecting a subsample of about 10 to 25 percent of an entire dataset for re-coding by independent judges was recommended by Wimmer and Dominick (2000). Two transcripts of each of the four tourism settings were selected and handed to the independent coder with detailed instructions as to how to code the content to identify major themes. Each theme came with short descriptions to make the coding process as clear as possible. Using the kappa measure of agreement, the interrater reliability was calculated to be 0.71 which according to Landis and Koch (1977) represents substantial agreement.

4.4.6 Profile of respondents

As shown in Table 4.4, focus group participants were quite diverse in terms of gender mix, age groups and nationalities.

Table 4.4: Demographic details of focus group participants (n = 103)

Hartley's	n=31	Barefoot Tours	n=23	Raging Thunder	n=28	DUCD's Osprey V	n=21
No of FGs	11	No of FGs	**5**	No of FGs	6	No of FGs	7
Smallest group	2	Smallest group	4	Smallest group	4	Smallest group	2
Biggest group	5	Biggest group	5	Biggest group	6	Biggest group	3
Gender							
Male	14	Male	7	Male	15	Male	10
Female	17	Female	16	Female	13	Female	11
Age group							
<20	5	<20	2	<20	0	<20	1
21-30	14	21-30	19	21-30	22	21-30	7
31-40	0	31-40	1	31-40	4	31-40	8
41-50	0	41-50	1	41-50	1	41-50	3
51-60	3	51-60	0	51-60	1	51-60	1
>60	9	>60	0	>60	0	>60	1
Nationality							
NZ	4	USA	6	Ireland	6	Belgium	2
UK	4	Germany	3	Australia	1	Sweden	1
Germany	5	UK	4	UK	8	Canada	1
Australia	14	Canada	6	Germany	3	Italy	1
Canada	2	Netherlands	1	Netherlands	3	UK	8
Austria	2	Belgium	1	Canada	1	Brazil	3
		Ireland	2	China	4	Switzerland	2
				India	2	Australia	3
Travel Experience							
<5	8	<5	8	<5	9	<5	8
5 to 10	6	5 to 10	13	5 to 10	17	5 to 10	6
>10	17	>10	2	>10	2	>10	7

Focus group participants were also asked to reflect on how experienced they were as tourists by commenting on how many times previously they had been part of a tour similar to the one they had experienced on the day of data collection. In the case of Hartley's, 17 participants stated that they had previously visited a similar wildlife

attraction more than ten times. Other participants (n = 13) seemed fairly experienced (5 to 10 times) with going on similar guided day tours such as Barefoot Tours. There were also participants (n = 17) who noted they had previously been white-water rafting (5 to 10 times).

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Kinds of humour used

In answering the first research aim regarding what kinds of humour were used by the four tourism operators, the following section addresses the participants' responses for each tourism setting and also states specific examples of humour as noted by the participants.

Hartley's Crocodile Adventures

Many respondents found that the humour was based on the context that presented itself throughout their tourism experiences. One participant liked that the information was delivered in a light-hearted way: "I really like the way even when he is trying to inform you that he tries to do it in a way that is still kind of humorous and I thought that was really nice. He is telling you a story about crocodiles and he is telling you something really informative but yet he gives it in a funny, kind of joking way." Another respondent contributed this example: "With delicate topics too, they were talking about mating of crocodiles which they made jokes about to explain it."

Humour also included safety issues by making light of the many dangers that could happen if one encountered a crocodile: "Well and sort of funny scenarios like if the boat stops you have to get out and push. You know that kind of stuff." Another individual put it quite simple: "A lot of jokes about getting eaten." For example, in the case that the boat would sink during the crocodile lagoon cruise, tourists were encouraged by the guide to swim next to someone that was swimming slower than themselves. Many humorous comments were also based on the actual context of what is happening in the

audience at a specific point in time. For example, at one instance when more tourists wanted to join a presentation and were looking for seats, a tour guide offered to "create more space by feeding a few misbehaving kids to the crocodiles".

The tour guides at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures also used many instances of self-deprecatory humour, where the tour guides applied the humour to themselves or mocked some of their colleagues who were standing close by, as this participant noted: "They made fun of each other and themselves too." Another respondent made the following observations: "The most that I noticed was actually toward the audience or other co-workers in the group. They basically light-heartedly make fun about the people in the audience or people in the group. But everybody knew the spirit of it so it was kind of grease the wheels and get everything going."

Many instances of the humour against the audience was based around stereotypical images of the nationalities that were present in the audience by asking people where they were from. For example, participants noticed humorous comments about the British, Germans and "making fun of us, Kiwis." The researcher observed that considerable care was taken not to single anyone out but that tour guides directed comments evenly to the various groups in the audience. Some tour guides seemed to have a never-ending repertoire of jokes because irrespective of where people in the audience were from, the right kind of joke or humorous comment appeared to flow naturally from their lips to generate audience laughter. There was not only humour involving all sorts of nationalities but also certain cities within Australia, i.e. Perth, Adelaide, Sydney. Numerous funny interactions were also created by asking tourists what they did for a living. One individual recalled this: "He asked somebody 'What are you studying?' and the reply was politics which produced the retort 'Ah, politicians feed quite well to the crocodiles'."

Barefoot tours

Overall, many participants stated that the humour at Barefoot Tours was quite varied. One respondent observed: "He's got a few jokes and quite a few stories as well which obviously you would get being a tour guide but he knows how to tell a story as well. Just the little things when we are talking about something and he will add a bit of

humour to it, to make it a bit jokey. It's sort of a mix." Animals encountered along the way were personalised by giving them names: "I don't know if you noticed that he called every animal Steve today. Steve, the bush turkey. Steve, the spider."

Other kinds of humour included "cheeky sarcasm"; "irony"; "analogies" and "dry kind of humour or just going on a rant with the drop bears." A *drop bear* is a term which refers to a common Australian joke directed at international tourists which suggests that a species of bear (similar to koalas) drop onto people's heads from the Australian trees. It is pure fiction but has become an established cliché through being used in television advertisements and in general public humour. Other humorous stories were also told to gain the tourists' attention: "Anecdotes, he was very informative." Some stories were built up during the day: "He'll take one of the anecdotes earlier in the day and then use it later on in conjunction with something else."

The ice breaker activity at the start of the tour was remembered with a lot of laughter by most participants. One participant explained: "The first thing that was awesome on the bus was when he asked us a series of five questions. They were really good, he asked your name, where you are from, how long you are in Cairns for, what your relationship status is and (…) whether you fold or scrunch. But it's great because it gets people to start laughing." It is these five rather simple questions that seemed to break the ice between groups of people who had just met on a bus. Respondents stated that once they got over the initial confusion with the final fold or scrunch question, things started to become more fun and interactive. One participant recalled: "He started out by asking us five questions and one of them was how do we use our toilet paper and I feel once you know that about a person, you are a lot more likely go out there and be like 'Hey how long are you in Cairns for?'" Another respondent made this comment about the 'fold or scrunch' question: "So people start talking about it and they are listening to other people. As an individual, like I came today by myself and I was like oh gosh I hope everything is going to be ok. But the moment this question gets asked and you hear other people's answers, then you get to know how other people are." Initially this German respondent felt a bit reserved about answering the "fold and scrunch" question but stated that she did anyway: "We were the first who answered and first I thought no I'll say nothing about it and then I said it and everyone in the bus said it. So it doesn't feel uncomfortable and you feel a little bit closer maybe in the group because you told a little secret with something like that."

Raging Thunder white-water rafting

A funny analogy was used to explain the white-water rafting grading system by one river guide on the bus ride from Cairns to the Tully River. There are a total of six grades of difficulty in white-water rafting and the Tully River itself offers rapids up to grade 4. The river guide compared grade 1 to having a bubble bath in a spa while grade 6 was compared to going down a water fall. Respondents noted that river guides used a great deal of friendly teasing. For example one respondent's comment was: "My favourite part of the humour of today was when he kept singling out my friend Dan for being absolutely terrible at paddling the boat." With up to six to eight people in each raft, the river guides also made the experience more comical by coming up with nicknames for each person in the raft: "He wasn't calling us by our first names. He made up nicknames, my name is Sonya and he was like 'Sun'." Another participant adds with a smile: "He just called me 'Darl' because he couldn't get my name. Darl!" While this particular participant did not appear to mind being called 'Darl', in another focus group it was noted that some of the humour included: "A bit of misogyny and sexism, that kind of thing like gentle but... misogyny is perhaps a quite strong word and it shouldn't be taken too literally. It wasn't offensive and it wasn't said offensively. It was more sort of light-hearted banter more than harsh sexist remarks. So it was ok."

White-water rafting being more of an adventure activity, the river guides also used overstatements intending to increase the thrill of the experience while being funny at the same time. A respondent gave an example of an overstatement: "They just made it more dangerous even for simple things, they tried to make it more dangerous and make it funnier. Remember something simple like a twig 'Look be careful with the twig' and stuff." Due to several rafts going down the Tully River in proximity to one another, the playfulness of the experience was also enhanced by interacting with river guides and tourists on other rafts. One person recalled: "And they bantered with the other boats as well. So we were splashing with them."

It can be assumed that humour used in any given raft is actually adapted to the dynamics of the people coming together as the following statement indicated: "The humour was adapted to the context. I must say though because we were an all-men boat, so there were some jokes about women in there. Maybe it could have been taken to offence by others people, if there were women in the boat I would say."

Down Under Cruise and Dive's Osprey V

The humour on Osprey V, the cruiser travelling to the Great Barrier Reef, was fairly visual in nature by making safety and snorkelling briefings as engaging as possible and to be able to deliver the information to a varied audience. One participant noted: "They imitated by doing actions as well, so if you really don't understand you kind of saw it and it puts you at ease because they are having a laugh about it." This imitation approach underpinning the humour was enhanced by the fact that the safety briefing at the start of the trip was presented by two entertaining members of the crew. For some of the focus group respondents the crew members appeared to form an effective comedy duo. This "double act" by the crew members was perceived as something that made the delivery of the briefing an entertaining experience because it had the passengers laughing and captured their attention. One respondent stated: "We had the straight guy and the comedian. You got the guy telling more of the rules with sort of humour at times but obviously you had the comedian to the side to inject the humour." Another individual agreed by saying: "I liked the fact that one guy was playing the serious role and the other guy was taking the funny role." Another participant said in agreement: "Yeah it was like a double act, it was too. It was like again to getting the crowd involved because they were laughing, so you knew that they heard what they were saying and I thought it was appropriate because remember there are so many different cultures here, different languages and people laughing, everybody was laughing. And you have the whole boat, the whole audience and it got their attention." Another respondent mentioned that this was important for the delivery of information for the following purpose: "So you can still trust the person who is more serious and still enjoy the fun of the other guy."

Care was also taken that much the humour could be easily understood by the many people of various national and language backgrounds. For example the "sick bag joke" involved one crew member demonstrating how to use a sick bag "if the motion of the ocean becomes too much" by saying that if anybody was not sure how to use the bag, to simply open it up and follow the instruction at the bottom of the bag written in 14 different language. The universal nature of the "sick back joke" was pointed out by a respondent: "I think that British humour, Australians might get that whereas someone from for example Germany, you might not get our humour and similarly I might not get your humour. So I think there is a lot of humour that is worldwide and everyone

understands the sick bag joke." Furthermore, smokers and seasick people were advised by the crew to go to the back of the boat, so "they could talk about death together".

The use of Australian humour

Many respondents, domestic or international had no problems in recognising much of the humour as being "Australian humour." One participant simply stated: "Very Aussie. Lots of jokes and sarcasm." Many domestic respondents noted that they were familiar with this kind of humour: "I think they just came out and spoke plain Australian and put in Australian humour in tourism." It appeared that including Australian humour at some tourism settings would make sense to enhance the enjoyment of tourists' experiences, for example at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, a focus group participant noted: "When they asked to raise their hands of how many people are from Australia, it looked like ninety per cent of the audience is Australian, so you would use Australian humour anyway." One Australian respondent explained that she felt "sort of connected with the Australian humour of it" and she continued to state: "I really like that because I'm like yes I got it, you know what I mean, it feels very familiar. So for me yeah I felt more connected with it because of that but I don't know about you guys."

Travelling in Australia, there might be a certain expectation that interactions with Australian tour guides will be of the amusing kind. One respondent generalised across the Australian culture by saying: "I think in Australia yeah, definitely because it is so their culture. It's just the way they are, to have a laugh." Some Australian participants were concerned about the rather dry and direct nature of the Australian humour: "Some people might take offense to it but it is funny. But being Australian we are very used to having blunt humour." The overstated nature of some of the Australian humour seemed to worry others: "I'm quite amazed and they may overdue it here: the 'G'day mate' and women are called 'Darling.' I mean it's really loaded here but you do hear it in other places in Australia." Another participant noted that there might be certain cultures who may not be as appreciative of humour: "Or if you were with different cultures where people are serious about things for example Muslim culture probably wouldn't appreciate it but in Australia that's what we do."

International respondents also appeared to have enjoyed the "Aussie humour." It seemed to be perceived as something that helped tourists from other countries to get a better idea about Australia and its people: "Because people are coming over here to get the real deal of what it's like and the guides are trying to put that into it the whole time." One respondent commented on the true-blue Aussie character of his tour guide: "He is very like local, he is from Cairns. He speaks the laidback language, he knows a lot of stuff about the nature and about the animals that live out here." For another participant it seemed to be a matter of 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do': "I think if you come to Australia, you have to respect their culture and that culture is taking the piss. So you got to get used to it." However, there were also some international respondents who expressed apprehension about not being able to understand the punch line of some humour. One person commented: "Actually it was really hard to get the pun out of it because he uses really hard English, like Australian English. So if you listen to any foreign people I think it's really hard to get the pun of the humour he used." Another concern was for international tourists to misunderstand Australian humour: "I think some of it overseas tourists wouldn't have understood some of it as it was Australian humour."

No matter what kind of humour was used during the actual on-site tourism experiences, it was noted that the humour was carefully selected so as not to cause offence: "He was careful, he said some things that were a bit on the line, to actually not apologise for it but he was treading a fine line but take it as it was meant." Another participant observed: "Nothing too rude but sort of pushed the boundary a little bit with a few things but never went over it." Overall the humour was in harmony with the rest of the experience: "But I didn't think, I mean they are well-versed and well-educated. They didn't seem to do anything that would offend any other cultures or religions or whatever."

4.5.2 Participants' thoughts on Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model

The second aim was to explore participants' responses to questions regarding Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model. Responses were sorted in accordance

with each of the three categories of this model starting with comfort followed by concentration and connection. Participants actually achieved consensus about the comfort-enhancing properties of humour experienced at the four tourism settings. Many respondents described how the humour affected their mood. In some instances very short statements were used by respondents in describing how the humour made them feel: "happy, relaxed, more at ease, a lot calmer, comfortable, jovial, very positive, and friendly." Some respondents commented on the homely feel that humour created which can be illustrated with the following quotes:

"It made me feel comfortable, like at home you know."

"Yeah you feel welcome and participate."

 "Well it made me feel more welcome, more at home."

"Yeah, make people relax, break the ice, introduce themselves to the crowd, make them feel at home and feel comfortable."

"It almost feels like you are going on a tour with your family."

Comfort

Humour appeared helpful in making participants feel comfortable in new settings and situations. One respondent at Barefoot Tours explained that the humour made her feel: "More at ease especially since I'm travelling by myself and in a foreign country." One more participant felt comfortable in listening to the humour but did not feel that he had to actively contribute: "I felt really at ease and with his use of humour as well, you didn't have to be involved but you felt involved in the stories. And just as you were saying with him bringing up the stories, you might have something to add to it." Another focus group participant stated: "I think once the humour is out and therefore you feel a bit more comfortable, I think that's where the barriers break down and you do notice that." Figure 4.2 shows in what ways humour contributed to participants' comfort and how this was achieved. The following paragraphs will give examples of participants' comments for these categories.
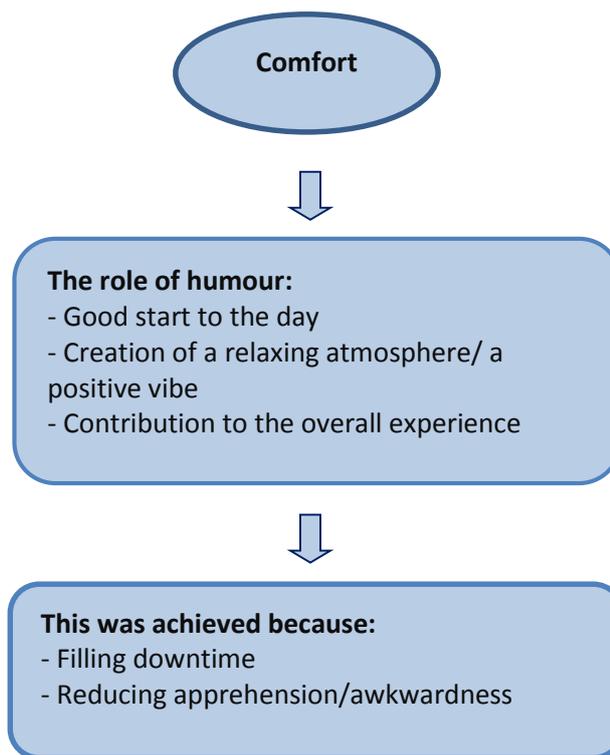
Figure 4.2: The comfort component of humour in the tourist situations studied

<u>The role of humour in creating comfort</u>

Humour helps to get the day/tour off to a good start

Most tour guides used humour right at the start of the tour experience. One respondent felt that the humour signalled what was to come: "He sets you at ease, you know 'High five', 'It's going to be a good day guys', it kind of really gives you that feeling where 'Ok I don't feel too bad, I think it's going to be a good day regardless'." Another respondent thought: "It was very good. Very bonding with the people who were there. It makes the experience more enjoyable. It puts you in a good mood for the rest of the trip basically. A good start." Another participant stated that the humour affected her mood in positive ways: "It brightens up your day. This morning I woke up groggy and tired and he cracks a joke or something and you smile and just gets you in the mood."

Applying humour during safety announcement and briefings straight up at the start of the tour also acted as an ice breaker: "It kind of breaks the tension and they use it as an ice breaker because we are all from different parts of the world." Comparing the start

with the end of the tour, another respondent made this comment: "This morning we were all quieter and just now we are all having a good banter. We are all joining in and having a laugh and making jokes. So we are all just feeling more comfortable."

Humour creates a relaxing atmosphere on-site

Many respondents commented on how the humour affected the ambiance overall. Agreement was achieved by describing humour to have the following effect: "chilled, easy-going, relaxing, entertaining, it made things more dynamic, enjoyable, it lightens the atmosphere." On the request to elaborate on how and why humour seemed to achieve a more relaxing atmosphere, participants expressed different perspectives. One viewpoint was that humour allowed for a certain level of trust to be established: "Because I think it's a diverse group. I think in the boat they always have different nationalities, so it's very hard to tell a joke in a different language, believe me it's very hard, and so I think it's to get a relaxing atmosphere and to integrate trust via the jokes."

Another standpoint was that the humour also appeared to create a more open atmosphere where tourists felt comfortable in approaching others: "It makes you feel so much more relaxed and comfortable and it's easier to talk to them and ask them questions and have a lot of fun on the tour." An interesting point was made by another respondent who noted that it was quite a process to make people feel this way: "First you must mmh, it's a process to feel comfortable. Now we are at the end of the tour and we can look back at the whole day and think about it but it is the time, it is not one moment; it is a process I think to feel comfortable with the tour and the people."

Humour creates a positive vibe that is easy to be picked up by everyone

With tourism bringing people together from different nationalities, cultures and languages, it is to be expected that situations might emerge where not everything is understood but that humour was in fact something that most people could associate with: "Actually humour bridges language because even when they don't understand, when people laugh that is a common bond." One participant expressed that even when not understanding every joke, it could encourage people to approach others to clarify

the content of a joke: "I think that you probably capture the majority but there will always be a minority that won't understand it but I think even then, they will probably ask somebody or they'll ask somebody who did get it within their group and it just encourages some sort of bonding and I think it's a nice thing." Some respondents indicated that although it might be hard to understand all of the humour, it is the sight and sound of laughter can influence people's mood and creates an impression that they are going to have a good time. The following comment was made by a respondent: "Well, I think with the many nationalities even those that couldn't speak English, which I noticed there was a few, they tend to laugh or seemed to join in and feel relaxed."

Humour contributes to the experience

The humour of the tour guides appeared to add to the enjoyment of the day at all four tourism settings. One participant said: "He was funny. He made the bus trip enjoyable because of that, instead of just sitting in there and doing nothing." Respondents also noted that it was easier for most people to have a good time: "I think everyone was just really relaxed and having a good time because of the fact that humour was used." It also seemed that the humorous style set their tour experience apart from what other tours were offering: "I guess the other thing is that it is just so different from what you can expect from a tour, it makes it more enjoyable."

Being able to laugh and have fun also had an impact on how the overall tourism experience was perceived. One respondent acknowledged that laughing so much made her trip a better one: "And also it just kind of makes your day a bit more fun if you are laughing. It just makes it a lot nicer I think." Another participant's opinion was that humour helped to enhance the playfulness of the tour experience: "I think it give it the playfulness as well because it should be a playful thing mixed in with it to make it more fun." Humour seemed to be used throughout the day which was liked by this respondent: "I think that was one of the things we particularly liked because the first talk we had really was the fun one but then the boat fellow he was hilarious and we had a lot of fun." If the humour was absent, this participant had her reservations by stating: "You don't want somebody who is boring. You need somebody who is going to make it more fun."

<u>How was this achieved?</u>

While the previous section stated in what ways humour enhanced respondents' comfort levels, the next paragraphs outline how this was achieved, that is by filling downtime and by reducing awkwardness and apprehension.

Filling downtime through humour

One way in which humour was used to enhance the comfort of the tourists was by 'filling downtime'. At each of the various tourism settings, there were times when tourists were merely sitting around and watching, waiting for things to happen and it was up to the tour guides to keep the audience interested and entertained. For example the goal of the 'Crocodile Attack Show' at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is for the keepers to get the crocodile to demonstrate the death roll and head shake. Considering that the crocodiles are not tame animals that will "perform" based on certain calls or signs, they are enticed to demonstrate the death roll using a dead chicken. This can take time as one participant noted: "Yeah, especially you know in the crocodile show for quite a long period the crocodile is sitting under the water not doing anything. So you are there to watch the crocodile but he is talking for 15 minutes and joking with the audience. So you are definitely keeping more attention than if you were sitting in silence because the crocodile is under water." Another individual noted: "The shows last between about 15 to 30 minutes, to keep someone active at that time you've got a whole crowd, so I think they do that pretty well."

At Raging Thunder the humour was also used to fill the downtime especially between rafting down rapids. One respondent observed: "There were some parts you know where we have to wait. We had to wait for the other boats and he was always speaking and made some jokes. So the time you were waiting he has his conversations." Another tourist agreed that the humour was useful in filling the gaps: "He kept it down to the moments we all had quiet time where we were perhaps waiting for another boat to come past or whatever. That was when he'd start making jokes but when it was time to concentrate and sort of really get into the activity, we got into the activity." The river guides played an enormous part in making the downtime as comfortable and fun for the tourists in the rafts as possible as this participants mentioned: "I think it was a really good thing. It made everyone feel comfortable straight away. He was really assertive and you know there were no real awkward moments for anything because he filled the

gaps when we were rowing and the downtime. He made it more seemingly comfortable and by the end of the day we were all laughing and joking quite naturally anyway. So he was sort of making really that little step that made it a bit better for everyone."

The humour-induced safety briefing on Osprey V is delivered to the tourists at the start of the cruise when the boat is heading to its first GBR location. This journey lasts approximately 40-50 minutes and having a humour-filled briefing was important for this respondent who commented: "It distracts from the journey" which shows yet again that humour fills gaps when it is necessary.

At Barefoot Tours, a considerable amount of time is spent in the bus driving from one point of interest to another. One tourist referenced: "Yeah, I think on other tours if they were different we would fall asleep on the bus but he would make sure that everyone was engaged. And if he saw that someone was asleep he would call a sound on it." To which another respondent added: "He slammed on the breaks a couple of times 'everyone hold on, it's awake'."

Humour reduces awkwardness and apprehension

Participants mentioned that they felt the humour helped to reduce awkward moments: "But even just by having fun, you kind of have to feel comfortable and you have to relate to the other people and enjoy their company instead of just being awkward." An example was produced by a participant from Raging Thunder who pointed out that the humour helped to reduce awkward moments: "To keep you entertained because there are some times when you are not going down rapids so to break the monotony, when you are just sitting there."

Respondents also considered humour as a great way to defuse any of their anxieties and nervousness. Using humour during presentations about crocodiles at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures certainly did its bit in reducing peoples' fear about crocodiles. One comment was: "Yes, here with crocodiles many people are scared and then humour is the thing that they don't have to be scared." Another individual added: "It takes the tension of that moment when you think 'My God he is getting very close to that crocodile." An alternative opinion was that being overly serious about crocodiles could

frighten people off: "It is risky I can imagine and if you are serious about the whole issue it makes the audience more anxious I think."

Many tourism experiences expose people to unfamiliar situations or settings they have not been exposed to before and humour contributes a little bit of calm, as this participant explained: "Yeah, if you are out of your element, you want to feel more comfortable and if somebody is going to make you laugh then you are going to open up." One example is that of going snorkelling and scuba diving for the first time which can be daunting for some as this respondent described: "When we were getting to the first reef (…), obviously we are all together on the bench downstairs and you know we are facing the same kind of problem especially when people don't do snorkelling every day. So it's probably easier to have a laugh with somebody."

White-water rafting is undoubtedly a somewhat dangerous adventure-based activity, so there will always be people who are quite nervous at the beginning. Humour and laughter are able to contribute to the tourists' relaxation and overall enjoyment as this respondent expressed: "It is a quite dangerous thing and some people might be quite nervous about doing it, so to loosen their apprehension." This seemed to be the case especially with first-time white-water rafters: "That's our first time to do the rafting, so a few of our ladies felt nervous and scared. He included humour to make them feel easy and be calm."

Concentration

The attention-grabbing properties of humour appeared to be highly relevant while the tourism experience was taking place. As shown in Figure 4.3, the concentration component of humour was created in two ways: during the actual tourism experience as well as post experiences through the creation of positive memories.
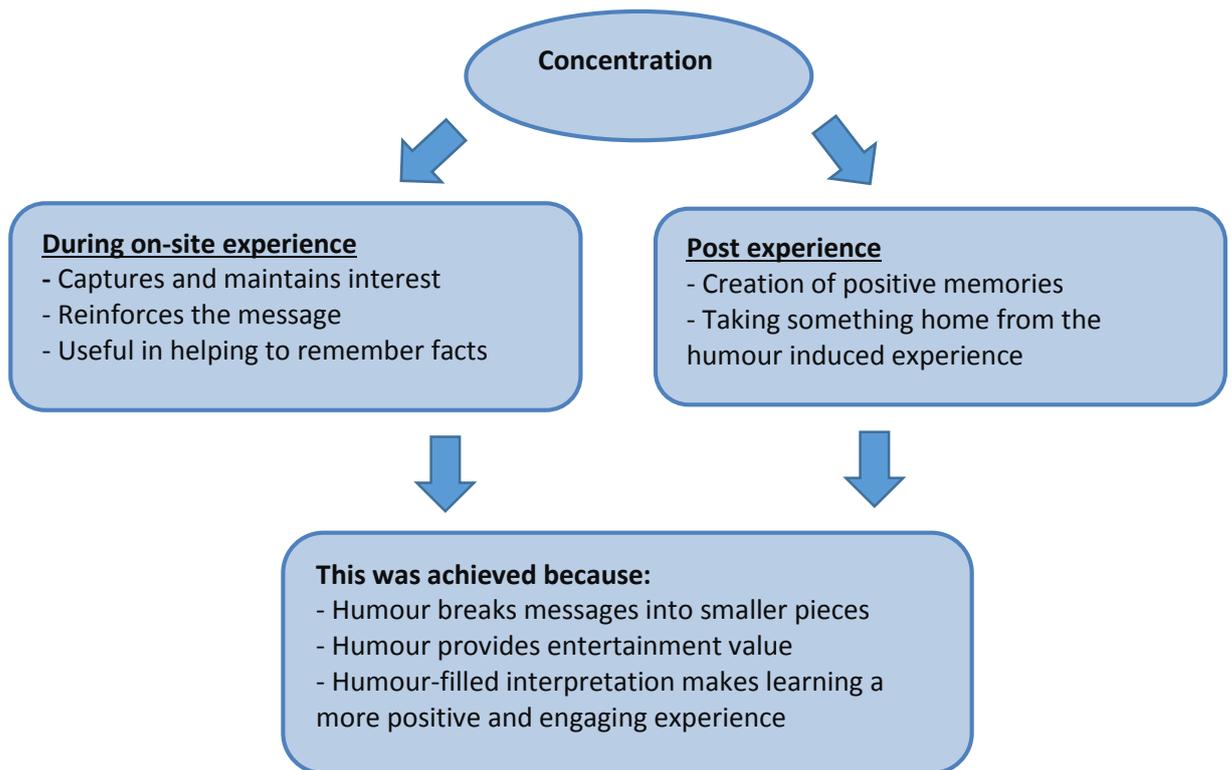
Figure 4.3: The concentration component of humour in the tourist situations studied

1. During the on-site tourism experience

Humour captured and maintained the participants' interest

Humour was helpful during the tourism presentations because it helped to draw tourists' attention to what was said which was appreciated by many respondents. One individual said: "He got my interest and right away I was kind of waiting for the next joke or something. What is he going to do next?" The humour also assisted in making the presentations appear less rigid as this participant noted: "It keeps people interested in a way that isn't too structured. And I think people are more interested when it's something funny, more so than if it is just information being told to you." Participants also mentioned that it felt like they were subconsciously drawn to what was being said: "I didn't feel like I had to listen but it increased my interest like I wanted to hear what was going on next. So in that way it definitely increased my level of interest." This respondent added that it was a "good idea to have humour. It sort of keeps people awake." The response by another participants clarified why: "Because you don't want to miss the punch line, see, you are listening, yeah."

Humour did not only capture the tourists' interest but it also ensured that the interest was maintained. One participant commented: "It definitely kept you engaged because you are constantly listening to and then it just didn't get boring, so it was way better to have that I think." Another individual expressed that his interest was easily maintained: "He could have continued talking, we were happy to sit back and hear more." Safety announcements or other instructional information delivered throughout the day was filled with humour which assisted in keeping the tourists' interest. This was noticed by quite a few respondents. One said: "I thought it was good with serious information you know information that people have to know but it was funny you know." Trying to find an explanations for why this was happening, this participant commented: "So it's still a very serious message. It's all about security, it's not fun to deliver really but he did it in a very funny way. So you were still listening to a serious message because of the use of humour." Another participant compared her tourism experience with others and noted: "You can compare it with a safety brief they give on a plane when it's taking off, there is no humour there and like the gentleman said here people switch off. And this way here they retain the peoples' interest. Even though I was sitting the other way I turned around purposefully to watch them."

Reinforcing a message through the attention-grabbing properties of humour

Also mentioned by participants was the notion that the humour actually successfully reinforced the message of what was being said. A respondent noticed: "Most of the points of what they were talking about was education. They were educating travellers and they used the humour as part of that education. There were educating us about physiological things and safety around snakes and crocodiles. So they were using humour to pass on the education." The humour as well as the liveliness of the presentation style also helped participants stay attentive: "It sort of keeps peoples' interest focused." For this reason respondents felt they paid more attention to what tour guides were saying. One respondent observed the responsiveness of other tourists to the humour and noted: "It was total attention, absolute attention which made it easy for those who wanted to hear it anyway. There was no backroom chatter. So they had people's attention."

Respondents also noted the way in which humour and jokes were included in the many stories conveyed throughout the day, helped them to keep engaged with the educational material. One respondent acknowledged that humour helped him stay mindful: "Yeah, and it's a good process of learning. A tremendous process that you can use humour alone to get people's attention better than if you seriously bash them over the head with knowledge. But if you are using humour the knowledge sinks in a lot more I think." By being more engaged with the material, there were some respondents who said they gained more from their experience compared to other tours they had been on: "Yeah, for sure because I was saying I was paying more attention to what he was saying instead of a regular tour guide that was just straight to the fact. So I learned a bunch of new things because I was listening, because I wanted to hear what he had to say about nature and the history of this whole area. He kind of gave a lot of information."

When being given explanations about something, several respondents acknowledged that focusing only on the factual material would make them 'switch off'. A participant explained: "We enjoyed the experience more I think rather than dry 'This is a crocodile, it's 500 million years old bla bla. It just lightened it up and made it more interesting. I thought it did so anyway." Furthermore, non-English speaking respondents noted that including humour in the presentations allowed them to understand some of the topics better. This response by an international respondent from Switzerland illustrates this point: "Sometimes I only understand very little of what is being said but when they use humour I understand a lot more because it's an easy language. That works very well for me."

Useful in helping to remember facts

Many respondents commented that the humour would help them remember something or that they had learned new things because they felt they were actively listening and paying attention to what the tour guides said in the various tourism settings. One participant thought he listened more mindfully because he enjoyed the humorous content of the presentations: "I think that you are more likely to remember the information he is telling you because he might slide in a joke and so you might just remember something. If it's a funny joke and it is related to something he is telling you about what we are looking at, you'll remember it." Also many participants had no

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problems reiterating some examples of what they had learned during the day. One such example is the story told during Barefoot Tours of how the name for kangaroo came into existence: "I learned that kangaroo means 'I don't know' or 'I don't understand' in a certain Aboriginal language and that's how it came to be. The story was that the English came and they ask 'What do you call this animal?' and an Aboriginal man said 'kangaroo' which means 'I don't know', so they thought this must be a kangaroo."

Another example that would be remembered by one of the participant at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is what to do if people are bitten by a snake: "Only with Australian snakes it stays in the skin so you put a compression bandage on it and it holds in the area. Cutting and sucking is a no-no because if you've got a cut in your mouth, the joke was the snake gets two for one. A 'two for one deal' because it bites one person and then it gets you." Another tourist repeated an example of snake's changing eating habits: "Well, we were watching the lecture on the snakes and we were unaware that the red-bellied black snake is changing its dietary habits and it's also changing its pattern of survival, it's able to now tolerate cane toads and it's one of the biggest predators they have now in the bush he reckons. So he said basically it's doing its public service today and in Australia that sort of thing gets it into your head."

2. Post experience

Creation of positive memories to take home

The analysis of focus groups transcripts revealed that humour was not just important during the on-site experience but also post experience in terms of positive memories that tourists would be able to take home with them. One respondent expressed: "I definitely remember more about today because of the humour. If it wasn't there I probably wouldn't have the same kind of memories from today." Since holidays are of such a limited time, having a good time seemed to be high on the agenda for this participant had: "I'm only here for a certain amount of time, this is like the primary tour that I want to do. Well I'm here and I want it to be really memorable and I want to have a really good time and that's what I had, so I think humour played a really good part in that." Explaining that laughter would help remember the pleasant time he had, this participant said: "I think most people when they say they enjoyed something, it's

because they enjoyed the laughing and having a good time and stuff like that and so you are more likely to remember it. I know the time in my life that I remember the most are the time that I remember laughing, so it helps to people relate to that."

The tour guides themselves seemed to stand out for some respondents in the creation of positive memories: "He made sure people have a good day and he's done that by getting us involved with each other, having a laugh with each other and feeling comfortable with each other. It just increased the fun we had, it makes it a more memorable day." There were a few respondents who compared their tourism experiences to previous ones and the verdict was that the funny guides were very influential in creating pleasant memories for a tour or an attraction overall. A participant expressed: "It helps make the tour more memorable. You remember it for these reasons. We've been on many and you know and the ones that we remember most is the one with funny guide." To which another participant replied: "The funny ones, the characters yeah!" Hence the feeling of happiness that was generated throughout the day because of the humorous tour guides is helpful in creating a remembered happiness which tourists are likely to share with family and friends once they are back at their place of origin.

How was this achieved?

The previous paragraphs included considerations of how the humour contributed to respondents' on-site concentration levels and the creation of positive memories. The following section outlines in what ways this was achieved, that is by using humour to break down information into smaller pieces and by making presentations more entertaining through humour-induced interpretation.

Breaking information up into smaller pieces

Several respondents recognised that the telling of humorous anecdotes and stories were helpful in breaking the educational messages into smaller, digestible pieces. A respondent recalled: "I thought that it really added to the experience. I think that's part of what makes them interesting, the humour thrown in with the info. It broke up all the information because they are obviously very good at giving information about the

creatures. But I think it broke it up a bit rather than it just to be like a lecture." While it is indeed possible for tourists to disconnect with the material being delivered, a little bit of humour might be helpful in bringing them back to the information as this participant explained: "I think a joke from time to time is really a good for the attention of the customer because then you can relax a bit and then after the joke or after the laughter you can focus again." Another participant was in agreement and commented that listening to the tour guides was "easier because it's not only facts, facts, facts but something that has a break and you can laugh and then it's going on."

The entertainment value

The majority of respondents recalled that the humour added to the entertainment value of the experience and that this entertainment aspect was important to be present in tourism presentations. One respondent expressed his liking towards using humour to entertain tourists by saying: "I think you need it. I think it keeps the audience engaged and I think it makes the show more entertaining." Another participant mentioned that the tour guide did a remarkable job with the information delivery: "Like someone who is sharing his knowledge, not like he's teaching you. It's more entertaining and not teaching. Infotainment." The entertainment factor was also important for ensuring that tourists kept paying attention to what was said as this respondent explained: "If you keep the audience entertained they don't go and quiet off." Another individuals observed: "I think it was entertaining, not fun as hell, but entertaining. I think it keeps people comfortable." This statement indicates that the humour does not need to be over the top in nature but simply enough for information delivery to be perceived as entertaining and engaging.

The importance of humour-induced interpretation

Good interpretation needs to be attention arresting and this is achieved, amongst others through using humour. One respondent compared her humour-induced tour experience with previous tours she had been on where humour apparently did not play a noteworthy role: "He wasn't just all jokes, he would put a lot of facts into what he was saying. And so when he got on his microphone, I noticed I paid attention to that a lot

more than what I have on previous tours. So I wasn't sure if it was going to be a joke or if it was going to be a fact. So I needed to pay attention to this. But I have been on other tours were people start talking and just kind of tone out and look at something else." It also mattered that there was the right mix of information and jokes: "There was also a lot of serious value, a lot of serious information about the environment but he did that in a funny way." Another important feature was how the stories were told as one respondent mentioned: "How he is telling his stories, he is humorous and not boring. Telling stories about Aborigines with funny stuff in it. Telling stories about butterflies which are normally not really interesting."

Connections

Building connections with others was found to be present in two ways as shown in Figure 4.4: connections with other tourists on-site and connections with the tour guide.
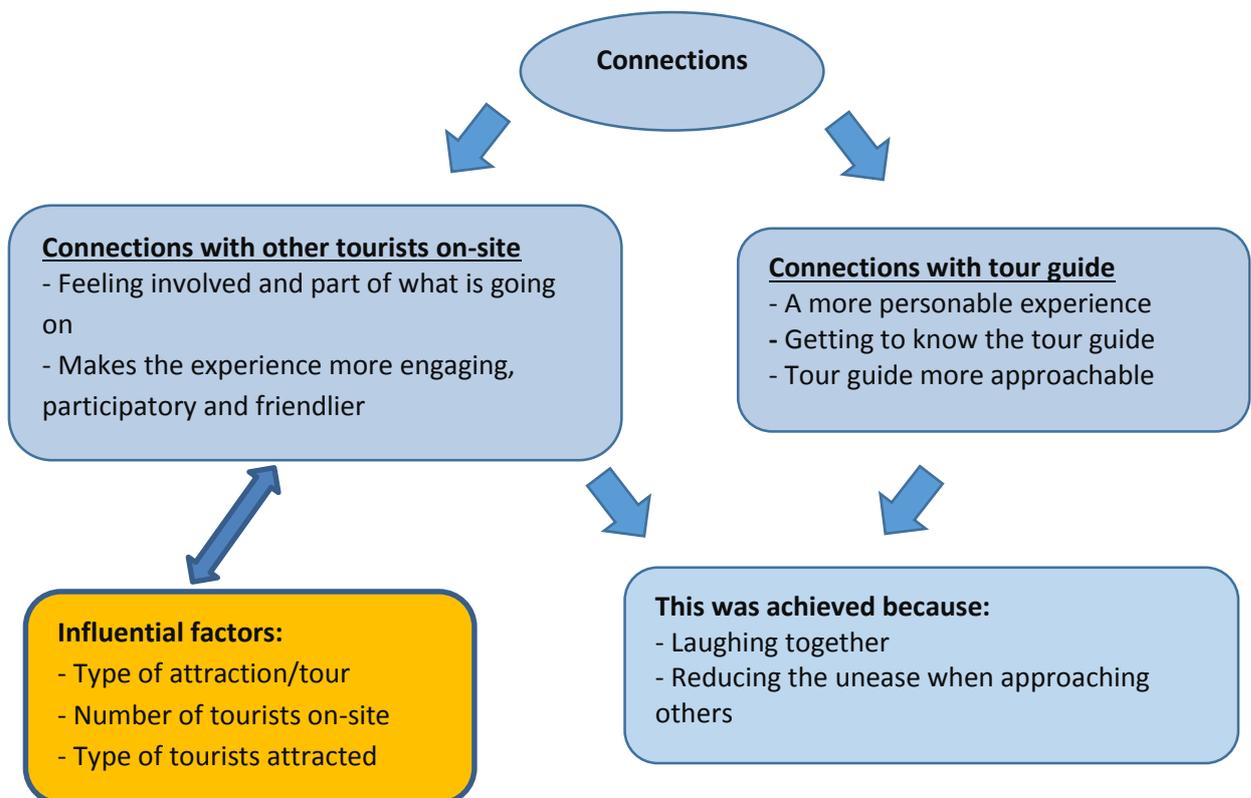
Figure 4.4: The connection component of humour in the tourist situations studied

Feeling involved with the tourism experience

Many participants offered the view that the humour contributed to the group-feeling for the day. The bonding process appeared to play a central part in the focus groups conducted at Raging Thunder where the following comment was made: "We were all interacting as part of a group." Many of the participants who were interviewed during the Raging Thunder focus groups also indicated that the humour contributed to making them feel part of a team: "If you tell a joke and everybody is laughing, you do something together, right? This makes you feel like a team." Another respondent gave his idea on why the team building was happening: "Yeah we got our interaction based about humour because everyone associates with humour and it's like a human instinct to want to laugh so as soon as this happens you sort of build up your team. We had two guys in our group who we didn't know but the way we got to become friends with them was through humour which is because it happens where they were laughing about something."

While the bonding process initiated through humour was more likely to occur between the small groups of six to eight people who came together in the white-water rafts, there were also respondents who made comments of this nature about the large group aboard Osprey V. One respondent stated that: "I think it was a pretty good thing they did and I think was fine when they said: 'All guys you don't know each other, so turn to the guys next to you and say hey I could save your life today and shake hands'. Like I said it was a good ice breaker." Another passenger pointed out that if she had come on the reef trip by herself, the humour at the beginning would have made it easier for her to connect with other people: "I looked at my friend when they were making the jokes, we looked at each other and I came back and smiled but I think if you are travelling by yourself you could look at anyone just like that and smile because you heard the same joke."

The ice breaker activity at the start of Barefoot Tours appeared to be distinctive in building connections between the tourists on the bus. One participant recalled: "It's really important I found at the start, those first few moments where he is trying to get us to introduce ourselves and he did it in a funny way and it made it easier to talk about yourself." Making connections during their trip appeared especially important for the backpacker market that was largely attracted to Barefoot Tours: "So it was really

comfortable and engaging and we spent all day together with people that come from all over and we really came together to create a community. He created a community with humour and it was brilliant, it was really beautiful."

Due to the constant coming and going of visitors at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, only a few respondents noted that connections with other people on-site were achieved. One person mentioned that any potential connections were actually rather short: "Well you feel like connected when the joke goes or they say something funny and everybody laughs; you are part of a whole. It's a split second connection." To a few respondents the humour also created a way to talk to people: "Yeah, it gives you kind of a pathway to actually talk if you know what I mean. It creates conversation for you. So they were like 'Aw, you are English' and then someone would turn around and go 'So you are from England, whereabouts?' and it kind of creates that ability to talk about something." An audience is able to relate to one another on the basis of agreeing to the humour: "The crowd related to each other because you are laughing and you glance at the next person: Yeah that was funny."

Humour makes the experience more engaging and participatory

Many respondents at the various tourism settings expressed that they thought humour made the experience more engaging and gave them the opportunity to participate. A participant on Osprey V expressed: "It engages the audience. It makes you feel part of something as opposed to just being a spectator. So when we were on the boat, I felt part of a big group and we were having a laugh and it was a giggle." The engagement that was achieved through the humour also contributed to the experience at Raging Thunder, where one participant commented: "I mean you're like together for five or six hours on the boat with just seven people and I think it's important that the guide makes the group feel close and makes some jokes." The humour used at Barefoot Tours appeared to add to the dynamics of the group of people coming together in the 20-seater bus: "I just felt like he created a group environment and a cohesiveness where none existed at 8 o'clock this morning." Moreover, at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures this respondent acknowledged that humour also appeared to keep children involved: "They engaged the kids a lot and I think they are the hardest to kind of keep still."

It appeared easier to form connections between tourists because many respondents actually mentioned that the atmosphere felt friendlier because of humour. One participant stated: "It feels like a different environment, kind of like it is more transactional, it makes you feel very I guess collegial in a way, kind of like friends of most. It makes it a more engaged experience." Some participants offered their explanations about why the atmosphere seemed more "transactional" and "collegial". One comment was: "I mean that whole thing about humour breaking down barriers, when you are in a situation where you have nothing in common with someone, and the easiest way to make friends is to laugh with them." A different participant noted: "And I think when the guide says something funny and is sort of humorous everyone can associate with this." To which another participant replied: "Yeah, it's the commonality between the groups." For this reason it appeared that tourists forming connections did not happen in isolation, they first had to feel comfortable to do so and humour seemed to play a crucial role in breaking down initial boundaries.

Furthermore, humour appeared to create opportunities for co-creation: "Today it was a nice way of using humour and it was not too much and the other people tried to be funny." Another participant agreed by saying: "It made me want to join in on the conversation and kind of made me interact." For yet another respondent it was important for the communication did not only come from the tour guides: "I guess it highlights the importance of social interaction, instead of just a one-way kind of transaction of information. To me that made it that much more enjoyable." The humour appeared to create a more social atmosphere: "It makes you feel more social with people, you are not afraid to go up to talk to them because he got such a laid back sense of humour that right away everyone feels like they are part of the group and you can go up and talk to whoever."

2. Connections with the tour guide

A more personable tour guiding experience

The humour also made the tour guides seem very personable. One participant stated: "He is not like a tour guide, he is more like a friend showing you around." Another respondent noted that his guide was not "like a university lecturer where he just speaks

and you get bored and you disengage whereas if he tells a joke or two, you are listening and you listen to what he says and you laugh. It just seems like more of a mate than a tour guide, if you know what I mean?"

At all settings, participants expressed that they felt more connected to their tour guide because of the humour they used. At Barefoot Tours, a participant voiced: "Oh, it definitely fostered a bond with him." Positive relationships were also fostered between the white-water rafting groups and their river guides: "You feel like you can go for a beer with him and you can talk to him, no problem." Even in tourism settings such as Hartley's Crocodile Adventures where the tourist crowds are much bigger, the connection with the tourism presenter existed for this respondent: "You had a connection to the guide. It was rather like a friend telling you something and not like a strict guide just telling the facts about the animal." The impression of bonds being formed to the tourism presenters was also acknowledged on the reef boat Osprey V: "Yeah, I think that's definitely, even though you might not understand the whole context of the joke you laugh along with the rest of the crowd and you certainly feel more connected to the person who is up there."

Getting to know the tourism presenter

Because of the humour used by their tourist guides, many respondents felt they became fairly familiar with their guides. One respondent said: "It feels like you got to know them a bit better." A participant at Raging Thunder mentioned the need to have humour to make people feel at ease and if that was achieved then the tour guide was highly regarded amongst the group of tourists: "And because he is quite humorous, you had a lot of respect for him and you felt like whatever he said you do sort of thing which is good I suppose in that sort of environment because it is quite dangerous and you need to ease up and follow what he says." Something that was noticed almost across all settings by respondents was the perception of a lack of a divide between the tour group and the tour guide: "It separates the divide in between the person who is giving the presentation and the audience. It kind of makes you feel like you are more included and that barrier is broken."

A more approachable tourism presenter

Participants at all settings mentioned that humour made their tour guides more approachable. A respondent at Raging Thunder commented: "It made him seem a bit more down to earth and easier to talk to." Tour guides at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures also appeared more accessible: "I felt comfortable enough to walk to him afterwards and ask him questions. They seemed like approachable nice people like not stiff, not scary, and not boring." This very elaborate response was given by a focus group participant at Barefoot Tours who explained why she was comfortable to ask anything she needed to know: "I learned an immense amount and I enjoyed myself and I was engaged and I felt comfortable. I'm a bit of a geek and I'm an older demographic than most of the people that I'm travelling with, so that's something I'm really conscious of. There are things in the forest that I want to know about, I love rainforest and I felt comfortable saying 'I need to know about this'." A similar response was given by a respondent on Osprey V: "You could have approached anyone of those guides there and ask a question, (…) they were very approachable, which makes you feel relaxed, you can approach them, and it's not a silly question. You are very open I think by that whole approach."

How was this achieved?

The previous paragraphs outlined out connections with other tourists on-site and with the tour guides were fostered. The following paragraphs identify in what ways this was achieved, notably by laughing together and through using humour to reduce any uneasiness in approaching others.

Laughing together in the multi-cultural setting that is tourism

Laughing together played a role in making respondents feel more connected: "It kind of brought the group together with the jokes. You know so we had a laugh about each other." Having a laugh together was also noted as a bonding agent by this respondent who said: "The fact that they make you laugh, that means everybody is laughing, so everybody is doing this one same thing at the same time which somehow connects

people and makes it easier later to engage in conversation." Another participant pointed out that: "Humour is a good way to build a bridge." It may be exactly this "bridge-building" character of humour that provides people with a little bit of self-assurance when approaching others.

There were also participants who expressed some concern for people who were not responding to the humour: "I suppose different cultures have different sense of humours. I noticed in some of the other cultures they weren't laughing you know and I think either they didn't understand or it was just the differences." It needs to be acknowledged that for humour to work in tourism settings, it has to be reasonably easy to understand and universal in nature so that the majority of the tourism audience can in fact appreciate it. One participant on Osprey V commented on how simple but effective the humour was by referring to the sick bag joke: "I think also that whole sick bag joke, he said 'if you don't know how to use it there are many languages (written inside the bag), that's quite funny because it's universal, everyone knows if you are going to be sick you grab that bag. And I think that works for wherever you are from because they have them on the airplanes all the time and every single person can relate to that."

Humour reduces uneasiness in approaching others

For the younger market joining the trip on Barefoot Tours, there seemed to be some apprehension regarding whom they were going to meet on the tour. A person explained: "Because we all didn't know each other. Whenever you start something new, you are kind of sitting there waiting who is going to say something and how are we going to talk to each other. The guide gave us something that we could all talk to each other easily." The five ice breaker questions at the start gave people on the bus a funny way to open conversations which seemed to appeal to this respondent: "It just gives you something to talk about by him starting off and doing it in a friendly and inviting way. So we all sort of started talking to each other because he was sort of friendly and inviting us to talk and give us the opportunity to and making it fun for us to be able to tell the stories."

The river guides at Raging Thunder have a similar approach of using humour to get people in the boats to connect to one another. A respondent recalled: "He wasn't making fun of people, he was more making the jokes at himself and that gave people the

opportunity to perhaps become acquainted with others and not feel any pressure and then eventually obviously like we said they came out of their shell later on and further down the track as opposed to being forced into action." Because the majority of people associate with humour, it seems to work as this participant expressed: "I think it's a common thing in any culture, humour and laughter. It gets people involved because obviously he sees more cultural people every day, various people, so he wants to get involved and work in a team, so the telling humour is good."

Influential factors in forming connections with other tourists

How well tourists connected appeared to be dependent on a variety of factors, for example the actual tourism setting and the number of other tourists at the site. In a wildlife attraction such as Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, where high numbers of visitors are entering and leaving the park, it can be difficult to create connections: "Maybe not in a setting like Hartley's where there is a lot of coming and going of visitors. But on tours with smaller tourist numbers and especially when these tourists find themselves in a confined environment, i.e. a tour bus or a reef boat then it is more likely to be achieved." Visitors at Hartley's are also presented with the chance to choose the presentation or activities they would like to go to and that means there is a constant visitor stream happening where people take part in different activities which can also make it more difficult to connect with other people. One participant explained: "If it would have been like a tour, all the group all like 40 people going from point to point or from station to station probably yes it would. But inside here you got your own choice, you can go there and there, so it's always split up a little bit. So if it's a big group, like 40 people coming with the bus and going in and they are doing all together, I would say yeah."

For these reasons of tourist numbers and tourist mobility, participants at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures acknowledged that while humour enhanced their experience, any connections that were achieved were more with the tourism presenter and less with other tourists on-site. One person mentioned: "I guess in a way but maybe more with the tour guides rather than the other people that were there." Similarly, an individual on Osprey V, which also takes large numbers of up to 70 tourists, made this comment: "Not that much but just like smiling with you. I think if you are already coming on this

boat with friends, you probably stay with your people. If I had come alone, probably I'd try to talk more to people." Essentially there is only so much that can be achieved through humour in terms of fostering connections. It also needs to be acknowledged that humour appreciation is highly dependent on the individuals themselves.

Using Leximancer to add objectivity to the findings

As mentioned at the start of the finding section, Leximancer was used to analyse the focus group transcripts, so the findings of this study were not merely reliant on the researcher's subjective interpretations. The overall concept map shown in Figure 4.5 is based on all focus group transcripts being combined into one document for Leximancer analysis. This concept map indicates that Pearce's comfort-concentration-connection categories also emerged during the analysis with Leximancer. The component of comfort is present with a theme connectivity of 82% as shown in Table 4.5. Theme connectivity is the summed co-occurrence counts of each concept within the theme. It therefore provides an estimate of the coverage of a theme across the data (Leximancer, 2011). The theme itself includes concepts such as 'feel', 'comfortable', 'fun' and 'day.' These words indicate that focus group participants referred to the comfort and fun that was created during their tourism experience.

Building connections with others is present with a theme connectivity of 80%. This theme includes concepts such as 'guide', 'group' and 'tour.' This theme illustrates that forming connections with the guide or others on a tour was discussed by participants during the focus group sessions. The theme of concentration with its connectivity of 61% is addressed in the bottom left of the overall concept map and includes concepts such as 'attention', 'audience', 'remember' and 'understand.' These concepts indicate that focus group participants spoke about the attention-arresting effects of humour for the audience. The concept of 'remember' shows the link to the post-experience concentration discussed in this study where humour was influential in leading to the creation of positive memories to take home.

Table 4.5: Themes and connectivity of focus group transcripts

| Theme	Connectivity
People	100%
Comfort	82%
Connection	80%
Humour	71%
Concentration	61%
Funny	37%
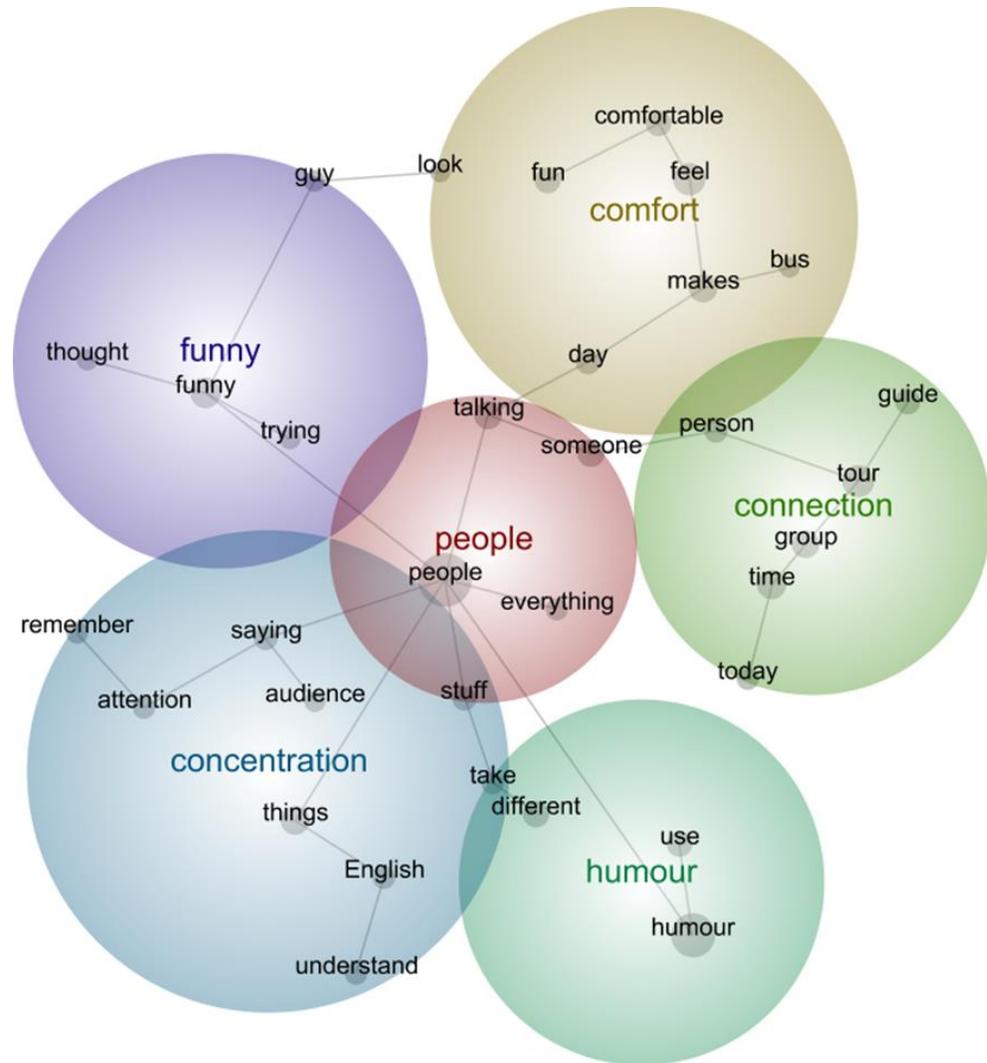
Figure 4.5: Content of all transcripts clustered into themes through Leximancer analysis

4.5.3 The downsides or negatives to be considered when using humour

The third aim was to explore if there were any downsides to using humour in tourism settings. There were many diverse themes that focus group participants spoke about. These themes were sorted in the following way: too much humour, staged/forced humour, considerations for people who might not understand or misinterpret humour and humour that causes offence. There is also a section outlining some tourism settings where the use of humour was perceived as inappropriate by participants.

Too much humour or over-the-top use of humour

The disadvantages to employing humour in tourism settings depends on many variables including the context and the content of the humour used. Some respondents disapproved of using too much humour. One respondent commented: "I think as far as the humour is concerned, I think it is certainly helpful for tourism. But I also think that too much of it is no longer good. There comes a time when you feel that you are no longer taken seriously as a tourist." Another respondent gave this more detailed response of why she did not like too many jokes during tourism presentations: "I mean I don't like it when and it didn't happen here when the whole thing is just joke joke joke. That gets monotonous. It does you know, all these little innuendos and things but these guys today they gave the information with a smattering of jokes and humour in between and that was good." Others agreed by saying that humour was good when it added to the more factual material as a way to enliven the presentation, "but only if they can use it properly though and not go overboard." A further respondent commented that it was important to find a balanced approach to using humour during more interpretational messages: "We didn't come for a comedy show, we came for information."

An issue with using too much humour is running the risk of not being taken seriously: "Well some people might not then take you seriously but it also depends on the type of tour you are on." When making jokes about the stereotypes of certain nationalities, i.e. "Germans who are always drunk or snap-happy Japanese," it was considered to be important to not go overboard and not to constantly pick on the same nationality but rather become involved with various nationality on an equal basis. One respondent

explained: "If one guide was totally taking the mickey out of a certain country and if you are from that country, you feel like it's a bit of a joke, rather than a proper tour. If you had a massive group like this with lots of backpackers it's ok but if you have older people like my parents, you might put in a little bit here and there but you couldn't just do it all the time because it could be quite offensive or they might think I paid so much for this tour and they are just taking the mickey."

Humour that feels staged

Concern was also expressed for people who lack a sense of humour and for this reason might be a bit opposed towards the tour in general: "I could imagine people that haven't got a sense of humour not liking it. If you didn't have a sense of humour and you wanted to hear safety stuff, I bet they'd hated it like that." There was one focus group where participants perceived the humour they encountered as unnatural which made them feel a bit awkward at times. One participant said: "I thought it was funny but sometimes it felt like, it sounded a bit like he was staged. I wanted it to be natural." To which another participant of the same group commented: "Sometimes it seemed like he was just making jokes for the sake of it. Sometimes funny but most of the time I thought it was a little bit over the top and a little bit irritating." It should be noted here that after a few days, numerous tour guides would have obviously become aware of the researcher's presence and the intent of the study. This may have had a "Hawthorne effect" on some of the guides who may have felt that they had to include more humour into their presentations which was obviously noted as forced by some of their audience members. The idea of the Hawthorne effect is the tendency of research subjects to change their behaviours once they are aware that they are participating in an experiment (Jones, 1992).

Some tourists might not understand the humour

Another disadvantage noted was that because tourism settings bring together people from many countries and language backgrounds, that some people might not be able understand the humour. The language barrier was something many respondents considered a possible barrier. One respondent stated: "But I think it's also down to

language. I had a look around and the Japanese and Chinese didn't understand a word. They use many nuances on English and Australian slang, so probably if you don't understand the background of it that might be an issue." Another respondent had a similar view: "Especially in tourism I'd like to say you could have a whole mob of people and half of them understand and half of them don't. So somebody might pick up something differently to others. You got to keep a balance there especially the guides; I suppose they got to keep a balance which is not easy to do but it's an experience thing that you learn as you go." Another issue is that some humour might be difficult to be translated into other languages and might therefore be lost in translation. One individual noted: "I was just going to say English phrasing, the use of phrasing with humour in English can be quite different to other languages."

The humour could be taken literally or misinterpreted

If people have difficulty understanding humour, there might also be the danger of it being taken as serious or literal communication. This may cause concerns as one respondent mentioned: "Maybe if English isn't their first language, with certain expressions they might take it literally. So then they wouldn't understand where that joke is coming from." Misinterpretation of humour represented another issue: "You know like sometimes people will think that sarcasm is actually being the truth like as it what people are actually saying and they could really misinterpret it and be offended." Ultimately not being able to understand all the humour can lead to tourists thinking that they might be missing out on the humour and therefore feel foolish or embarrassed: "The thing is that sometimes it can be embarrassing if everybody is laughing and you just don't get it because a lot of our colloquial language is used in humour so that could be a disadvantage."

The humour might cause offence

Another major disadvantage would be people actually taking offence because of humour. Many respondents thought that culture played a role when it came to taking offence. A comment was: "I think you have to be careful because of other culture of other people and feel offended easier." Another respondent also considered cultural

values as important when using humour: "And then sometimes people are easily offended and some cultures are very different and less liberal than the western culture that I grew up in. And so what we call banter which would be to have a laugh with someone may actually be offensive to someone else. And it's a dangerous game I guess." One respondent considered the use of humour at her place of origin: "You can offend. I mean obviously we live in Dubai and it is most impinging and we work with all kinds of different nationalities and there are certain things we couldn't say with certain people of certain nationalities because it might offend them. So I think if you are going to be funny to keep it light."

Offence may also be caused because of the content of the humour employed as this participant articulated: "You could offend somebody, you could offend people. I noticed these guys didn't do any blatantly sexual humour. They certainly didn't do any women bashing or religions humour." In general, gender stereotypical humour was considered as offending if not used appropriately: "You might offend people maybe, for example if you tell the guy jokes and maybe there are some women from other cultures, they might be offended." Last but not least when evaluating why humour may cause offence is the fact that humour is very individualistic phenomenon and subjective in nature as this individual stated: "Some people might get offended by it so it's hard to know. It depends on the person." While another respondent puts it this way: "Probably people could get offended because there are so many different types of people but I think that's life and it happens in every situation."

Tourism situations where the use of humour would be perceived as inappropriate

Respondents were asked if they could think of any tourism settings where they would find the use of humour inappropriate. A few of respondents had a very pro-humour approach by stating: "I think in tourism humour is needed. I think it's needed. I can't think of a place where humour wouldn't be wanted I guess as long it is not over the top. I do think that humour is needed in most tourist cases." A further comment was: "I think humour is good anywhere." However there were also participants who reflected on previous tourist attractions they had been to and would perceive the use of humour unsuitable.

<u>Humour used in airlines</u>

Certain humour was considered as off limit when it was to be used in airlines. A respondent stated: "I guess an airline, certain humour would be very inappropriate like joking about explosives and bombs." Another respondent gave an example from her tour experience and why she thought the same joke could have been taken the wrong way in another tourism location: "I don't know if there is a limit to humour, I guess you shouldn't be offensive. There are different types of humour and I think that definitely you can't be offensive in certain areas of tourism. I was just thinking about airlines and earlier today, he was like 'Oh, there are some Americans on board, so don't mention anything about terrorism or bombs.' And so I think that maybe if we were on a plane, then maybe he wouldn't have then said that joke because some people might freak out but we weren't on the plane, so it was appropriate."

<u>Safety briefings and humour</u>

Safety briefings were an area where some respondents expressed that humour should be toned down. While humour is in fact used during safety talks, for example, on reef boats and also during pre-flight announcements on airplanes, there were some participants who indicated that when the tourism activity was more of a risky nature, the use of humour might feel out of place. One respondent described: "In a safety situation where you are going on a sort of adrenaline thing and you got to get safety points across, you got to dig down and therefore you have to pay attention." The timing of the humour seemed to be a key concern for this respondent: "Anything where safety is paramount. There is a time for seriousness and there is a time for jokes. If you are giving like a safety brief then I'd say yeah minimise the jokes but other than that there is always room for a bit of humour." Finally, another participant pointed out: "I think in a really serious setting where there is literally a chance that you could die and when there are strict policies that need to be followed there should be no humour there."

<u>Dark tourism settings</u>

Numerous participants also indicated that any places associated with tragedy or sadness should not include humour. Participants considered that using humour in locations such as religious sites, war memorials, and museums on nationalism would be too insensitive and offensive. The following comments show some examples of what respondents said: "Anything related to war or something I think comedy is not appropriate." In agreement another respondent stated: "Yeah, I think there are some situations where you have to be serious, so I think the world wars or nationalism." Religious sites which are of special significance for people should also not be treated as a joking matter as this participant articulated: "Jerusalem because the people are too religious and the people who go there are really religious. So they don't think that anything there will be a joke. It's very important to them."

Some respondents also specified locations where the use of humour would feel inapt. For example places of sorrow were frequently mentioned: the Auschwitz concentrations camp; Holocaust museums; the Killing Fields in Cambodia; Pearl Harbour; museums to do with the dropping of nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Robben Island; the Normandy and the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania. There were respondents who acknowledged that it would be most difficult to include humour at these dark tourism settings which also attract large numbers of tourists. One respondent noted: "If you are going to Arlington Cemetery in Washington D.C. or Pearl Harbour, that's not a place to be cracking jokes unless you can do it in a very very tactful way which I doubt most people could."

To which another participant commented that the nature of the tourism setting would play a role in regards to using humour or not: "And probably most people wouldn't want to try to use humour because it could be taken completely the wrong way and seen as really inappropriate. So I think things that are a little bit more serious like museums. If it was a dinosaur museum then humour would work but when it is something like a controversial issue I would probably stay away from trying to do that." Considering the virtuous properties of humour, this participant found humour suitable to be used because it could be helpful in lightening the experience: "Not really because I think there is a saying that laughter is the best medicine. Even with something like a war memorial, I think people should get to the point where they can find humour in things. I

mean not that you wouldn't respect it but to also not just focus on the depressing side of that."

Some respondents indicated that if humour was used in any dark tourism locations, then it should be unrelated to the upsetting or controversial topic in the tourism presentation and instead focus on something uplifting in nature. In the words of a participant: "I think you can still use humour in a memorial or a war museum of some kind but then you have to be careful and do your humour slightly off topic I'd say because it relieves the depression and you know it's sometimes quite hard stories to hear. So to lighten things up a little bit I think it's not bad." In another example, two focus group participants had their own small debate about what would be appropriate in what locations. One participant expressed: "I think it depends which attraction it is for example if you are going to Check Point Charley, I think it's definitely not the place where you should use humour because it's not funny or a Jewish museum or something like that." To which another respondent argued: "Yes, you can. In these times you can put the humour in it but you have to know when you use your humour."

4.5.4 Value of humour for tourism businesses

The fourth aim of this study was to establish in what ways humour could create value for tourism businesses. From the participants' view, humour could be helpful for tourism businesses by promoting the tourism experience in several ways. The responses were categorised into seven major themes through the content analysis and are outlined in the following paragraphs.

1. Creating an enjoyable day and a satisfying tourism experience

Overall, humour used during tourist presentations made for an enjoyable day and therefore also a satisfying experience. One respondent noted: "I just think it makes it more enjoyable." It is also evident that it was important for the participants to learn something new while at the same time having an enjoyable experience: "Life is serious enough you know. You don't want to come to something like this and... I mean I came to learn, so I learned a lot but it was a quite enjoyable day." Humour appeared to play

an important role in giving people a good time: "And also it just kind of makes your day a bit more fun if you are laughing. So it just makes the whole trip out more exciting and better." A result of having a great tourism experience is the formation of positive memories to take home. As previously mentioned in the section on post-experience concentration, it seemed important for participants to have good memories to take home and having a humorous tour guide certainly contributed to this. One respondent commented: "He created an experience for us to remember."

2. *Humour contributed to making it 'a stand out tourism experience'*

The humour seemed to have made quite an impact on several respondents and the following statements show that having humour can create the impression of an exclusive product. One respondent observed: "I never had anything like that before." Another put his enjoyment with the tour into two words: "Definitely unique." Yet another individual showed his appreciation: "I think it makes it more appealing. It's not the typical tour." The humour and the connections that were fostered between the tourist groups and the tour guides made the experience feel different and special. One participant noted that his tour experience would have been just like any other if it had not included humour: "I would probably say this is one of the best tours I've been on. I just think it's just so chilled, so easy-going. I've been on tour where I can't even tell you the tour guide's name but you come to see the sights, don't you? But this has been a good tour, good tour."

The majority of the participants in all four tourism settings stated that humour and how it was used actually made a difference to their tourism experience. One quote to make this evident was: "I don't think any of us really knew what we were going to get before we came here but I think it's tied it all together with the humour of the guides and it really made the day." Another respondent stated that the humour: "Definitely makes the tour. I think without it, it's just a bit bland and it can get boring, maybe even a bit repetitive but I thought it was fantastic. All the guides we had today were great, weren't they? It definitely made the day for me anyway." Interestingly, some participants said their experience would have lacked something if the humour would have been absent: "I think it's great. I loved it. I can't imagine them not using humour." Another participant voiced: "I don't think that my tour would have been the same if it wasn't there."

3. Repeat visits

From a marketing perspective, there also appeared to be value in using humour since some respondents expressed the wish for repeat visits: "It makes you want to come back and do it again just because it's funny and it's fun. If it wasn't humorous I probably wouldn't come back." Another respondent stated: "I think I would do the tour again just to hang out with him. Honestly!" Based on the notion that the tour guide gave everyone such a good time by including humour and making it fun, one participant articulated that he would like re-do the tour or book another tour with the same company if this option existed: "I agree with everyone else that you feel like you'd recommend it to others and that you are happy to do it again or do something similar that was run by the same company."

4. Wish to linger

Focus group participants also expressed the wish to stay for a longer period of time at certain tourism settings. This is important in settings such as Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, where visitors can leave as they please after they have paid their entry fee. A few respondents actually made comments indicative of their wish to linger. One person said: "I think it relaxes people and it keeps them interested to go to the next show as opposed to saying 'That was really boring. Let's leave'." Another individual added: "Yeah, it felt more comfortable. That is it if you feel more comfortable in that environment, they obviously want you stay as long as you want. So the more comfortable you feel the more time you are happy to spent just cruising around and walking around the enclosure instead of them being quite rigid towards you and obviously you just quickly walk around and have a look and then move on." Yet another participant explained that the humour had an impact on his visitation: "I was going to say that if it wasn't an enjoyable day; you would have gone a long time, you know hours ago, had it not been engaging." The humour apparently gave participants the reassurance to make the most of their time and go to as many shows and displays as possible. The next comment shows the extent of time this respondent spent at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures: "Obviously it worked because what time is it? Ten after four, we got here just before ten o'clock. So whatever they were doing, they were doing right."

5. Opportunities for value creation

Another important aspect from a marketing perspective is that respondents felt they received better value for their money. One respondent from a focus group with Barefoot Tours declared: "Because realistically this whole tour that we have done today, you could rent a car and do it yourself but I'd rather do with him because he gives you more information." A similar statement was made by a respondent at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures: "It's 30 bucks, it is quite an amount of money if you think about it and I think it's worthwhile. And it's due to the guides' work." Humour also contributed to the experience of a respondent at Raging Thunder who acknowledged: "You are more engaged with someone if you find it funny and if you find them interesting. And it gets to the situation of what we are doing and it was amazing anyway, but then to do it with someone who can keep it fun as well it made the experience worth and definitely value add." The following statement summed it up: "Yeah, you feel like you got your money's worth."

6. Opportunities for word-of-mouth

The positive feelings generated through the humour are opportunities for free marketing because many respondents expressed that they would tell others about the good times they had at the particular tourism settings: "That everybody's got a good feeling going to an attraction because if we are going out and we had fun, then we are just going to spread it all around the world, like putting it on Facebook or something like this. So for the tourist spot it would be very, very important that everybody feels comfortable." Another respondent indicated: "The humour is important for having a good time. If he would just put out the facts and facts and facts I would say it's... Just for instance, I would not go out and recommend it to somebody but after seeing the day today, I would go like 'Oh yeah, it's a great thing' you know." In fact, numerous participants commented that the humour used during their tourism experience would impact on the recommendations they made other people: "It's also good word-of-mouth. People will remember the tour, so they can tell people about it."

Having had a great experience can turn tourists into walking advertising boards as this respondent explained: "I think it's important like if you see it from the side of making

money, you need the word-of-mouth and when you are like 'I have been on that tour and it was so good. We were just laughing all the time', it's a better ad for your company than it would be like when you go on a tour and you can just tell 'Oh I've been there, I've been there, I've been there.' But you are not like 'I've had such a good day and it was just awesome being there.'" Another respondent also said she would mention her tour experience to others: "And also I find that his humour is a good way of marketing himself because now we are going to go and tell our friends if they are in Cairns I'll definitely recommend him."

7. A more professional image

When humour is used appropriately and it is enjoyed by the audience, then it can contribute to a more professional image of the tourism business. One participant put it this way: "It gives you the impression they are actually more professional because they know their stuff well enough to be able to make it fun." However there might also be potential that humour might backfire: "I think you have to know your stuff before you start using humour because if you don't, you really give a very bad impression that you are not professional enough. So if you are not secure in your job, in your knowledge then I'd say don't use humour." Another respondent commented that it was vital for tour guides to be well-versed with any educational material of their tourism presentation before they started to use any humour: "But the guide has to be proficient with it. There are some guides who try to do funny but they are not and that then creates a distance between us."

Making a tourism experience fun through the use of humour is something that comes with experience and this is why persons new to the tour guiding industry might find it relatively difficult to use humour at the start of their career. One respondent noted: "Having to read through instructions does not help. If you'd been here for a long time you'll have a joke for a bit and it all makes you feel relaxed." Once a tour guide knows their instructional and interpretation material well enough, the use of humour was something considered to develop in due course: "I always figured if people know what they are doing well enough and have a high enough confidence level that they can relax and joke a little bit. They know a lot." One respondent further recognised that humour:

"is part of the arsenal of good public speaking, they are entertainers as well as informers."

4.5.5 Key considerations for tourism businesses

Another very important aim of this study was to identify any key considerations for tourism operators in regards to what needs to be known if they wished to include more humour in their tourism presentations. The following section details participants' thoughts on what they considered key features.

Considering the specific tourism setting

Respondents made the point that how humour was applied depended on the actual tourism setting: "I think it will depend on the attraction though." In certain settings where the actual experience is based on adrenalin and fun such as white-water rafting, humour would seem more appropriate than for example an art gallery which is more intellectual in nature. This is illustrated by the following statement by one respondent: "I think humour has its place. If you went to an art gallery and someone slapped quite a few jokes with you it would be a bit strange." There are other tourism settings where the use of humour would seem more sensible than in other settings: "If it's for example religious one, probably they don't want to joke about it. But if it's a vacation just like a reef boat or Disneyworld or whatever, they are for having fun but you need to be careful."

The tour guide's confidence in using humour

Some respondents conveyed that is was important for the tour guides to be confident in their humour delivery. One participant conveyed: "It's very much dependent on the presenters themselves whether they have the capability to do it." Another individual commented on the tour guides' attitude: "I think it's mostly about the attitude of the guide whether they are self-assured and they are experienced and they are not just trying to be funny. Because trying to be funny and not comfortable is too forced and it really

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doesn't work well." The comfort of the guide when presenting humour seemed an important consideration: "If it had been a tour guide who was stiff with their humour and just tried too hard, then we would all have different answers." Respondents also acknowledged the natural demeanour or personality of the tour guides should come into play: "You have to have the right character to do it like the guys here. It takes the right sort of person to do it because if it's forced humour it'd be awful."

Therefore the authenticity of the humour delivery seemed to play a central role: "That the guides are authentic, that they don't play a role like they are an actress." If the feeling of authenticity was not perceived, then the humour might come across as too fake which most people probably would not enjoy. One individual said about her tour guide: "He is just very comfortable with the humour and it's natural, so it works but it was somebody else like me, I'm not that naturally funny and so I couldn't do that tour, it would seem forced and kitschy and very, very fake and it wouldn't work. I think you would have the opposite reaction of people."

The tourists' individuality

Tourism as a multicultural phenomenon can make it difficult to accommodate everyone's humour needs. One respondent pointed out: "I think we all have our own culture so we have our own set of humour as well. I think it's very hard in different settings with different nationalities to find that common ground." Another participant expressed that there are some nationalities where you would not joke about certain things: "You probably shouldn't talk about certain taboos in different countries that you can't joke about obviously." On the more optimistic side some respondent deliberated about the universal properties of humour. One respondent stated: "Something that we found from personal experience and between us we've seen quite a lot of different settings and we are quite experienced travellers, so what's quite a nice thing to find is that a lot of things that people consider funny or humorous are universal anyway. So it's always quite a reassuring thing to see that even if somebody is from a different culture you can still laugh about the same things."

When using humour at tourism settings, it also appeared vital to consider the target market or groups of customers which a particular tourism location actually attracted and

acknowledging their diversity: "I think you just have to take into account your target audience and adapt your humour to the tourists that you are with, your target audience." One respondent considered the age range of various customers: "I think it depends on the group. If it's like a younger crowd and that's what you want to attract, definitely. But sometimes say if it's like an older group that are coming to learn stuff, they might be sometimes upset with the silliness of it." One key feature would be to keep the humour sensible and respectful: "Again as long as the humour is clean and it's not nasty humour, I don't see a problem with it." Humour should also be kept clean in order to avoid misunderstandings and not be hurtful to anyone so that everyone has a cheerful experience: "You got to keep it common so that everybody is happy at the end of it."

Natural humour delivery

In the participants' views, humour should not come across as too scripted or staged: "If they are natural with it and not if it's going to be really staged." Another person gave this detailed response on why natural humour delivery mattered for her: "I've done tours who did things like that who are just you know ha ha ha (fake laughter) and it's like 'please god stop it'. But if it's the right person delivering it, then it feels like a gift. It feels like they are really doing you a service instead of they are doing their job. So I think if it's done appropriately then it'll be great." In order to convey the naturalness in the humour delivery, it mattered how the humour was delivered and that there was a certain level of enthusiasm from the tour guide when information was presented: "It's just the way he tells stories I suppose. And it's just like informative humour almost. Like he'll be talking about this animal or that animal but relates it back to human aspects."

Many focus group participants commented on what a good job tour guides did in presenting humour in a natural way: "And he is not too much, he is not trying too hard to be funny. It obviously comes quite naturally and easily to him which I think is what tour guides need." Another feature that emerged from the focus groups is that for the natural humour delivery to occur, respondents had the impression that the tour guides actually enjoy the work they were doing. One respondent noted: "And I think actually the way they deliver it, it makes you really get that they enjoy what they are doing as

well. That they are natural about it and that comes through." Another respondent commented: "If you enjoy what you do then I don't think it needs to be scripted."

Relevance of the humour

As far as respondents were concerned it was crucial for the humour to have some sort of relevance to the subject being talking about. The following comment illustrates this point: "The most important thing if you are utilising humour in presentations is that it fits in the context of what is being said, not just the jokes. He didn't really make jokes, he used humour more as part of the context structure." Respondents also noticed that the use of humour was not exaggerated but fitted well into the situations when it was used: "They were funny buy also informatively funny. They got their point across quite well."

The relevance of the humour was also noticed when messages of a more serious nature were delivered, for example during safety briefings. One respondent highlighted: "I think humour is crucial to delivering like a serious message once again, so it enforces the message." Another tourist observed about her tour guide: "He has done a good job, especially in the bus and for the safety instructions the humour was good." Striking the right balance of facts and humour can be difficult to achieve but if done appropriately, it contributes to the tourists overall experience. One person mentioned: "Because we are not on a study tour, we are out here to be entertained. You feel that you are here on holidays, you want to be entertained but you want to learn something at the same time."

Considering the entire performance

Many respondents also noticed that it was not simply about the verbal presentation of humour but the entire performance and the mannerisms of the tour guides which mattered when delivering humour. The following quotes make this evident: "It's not just humour, it's also I think how people act, and it's the movements they make. So it's not just the verbal humour, it's also the performance as well. So it's like if you go to see a play, it's not just about the words, it's also about how they bring it to the audience." A further comment was: "A lot of it has to do with the way somebody says something. If

you speak in a very monotone voice, no-one is going to listen. He is very animated in his voice and in his movements. So that made it more interesting to listen to."

Interestingly, respondents at Raging Thunder stated that they were able to tell when their river guide was on the "funny trail" and when it was necessary to get a serious point across. One respondent explained: "Whenever we had to focus we had to focus whenever we were rowing. He could be in the middle of telling a joke and the next thing he was like 'Ok focus', we'll do what we have to do here and he finished the joke then when we got through it." To which another individual added: "And even his voice when he was sitting there, chatting and having a joke he was kind of relaxed but then when he wanted to focus you could hear it in his voice."

Reading the humour response of the audience and reacting accordingly

Many respondents seemed astonished by their tour guide's natural ability to read their audience in terms of how their humour was taken, i.e. if offence was taken. One tourist, for example, noted: "His calibration was very intuitive." The tour guides appeared to be able to sense the situation and adjusted their humour around it: "He was very good at reading the situation and morphing it to something else, he will adapt to whatever the humour is of the group." A common impression made by respondents was that tour guides checked their audiences' humour appreciation at the start of the tourism experience to see how far the humour could be pushed without crossing any lines. The following statement gives an indication of this: "He read us fairly well at the start and he knew we were able to take the joking he was doing with us whereas with someone who couldn't read just so well they might push it a bit too far and end up offending us."

Tour guides were also successful in considering their audiences' reaction to humour when making further jokes. One participant said: "I guess the people who do the things, they just have to gauge their audience and if it goes down like the lead balloon they got to change tack." Another respondent voiced: "He definitely felt out the tone of everybody. He didn't push any limits."

The following diagram in Figure 4.6 was constructed based on the findings outlined in this focus group study. It shows how humour can create value during tourism experiences especially in an Australian tourism context and also stresses the importance of considering any potential downsides that could happen during the delivery of humour. Moreover, the diagram outlines key features which tourism operators should consider if they would like to increase their humour efforts.

Knowledge about humour delivery
- Knowing what kinds of humour are safe to be used
- Considering the use of Australian humour
- Being aware of the value humour can have for tourism businesses

Necessity to consider the downsides of humour
- The disadvantages of using humour
- Tourism settings where humour was considered inappropriate

Key considerations for tourism operators
- Considering the specific tourism setting
- Tour guide's confidence in using humour
- The importance of natural humour delivery
- Relevance of humour
- Considering the entire performance
- Reading and reacting to the audiences' humour response

Figure 4.6: Major features to be aware of when using humour in tourism settings

4.5.6 Highlighting the differences in humour use based on the four settings

The final aim of this study was to highlight any differences in humour based on the individual tourism settings. The Leximancer software was helpful in addressing this aim. The Leximancer analysis was run on all focus group transcripts but this time with the specific instructions of creating concept tags for each of the four tourism operators. Using this option allowed the researcher to see where each of the four tourism businesses were located as a tag within the overall map. This Leximancer feature is useful for making comparisons between the four tourism businesses within the data as well as exploring any similarities and differences that exist between them (Leximancer, 2011). The concept map displayed in Figure 4.7 includes the names of the tourism settings as concept tags. The concepts discussed during the focus groups conducted at a particular tourism setting settle near the tag of that tourism setting in the concept map. Table 4.6 shows the themes and their connectivity identified through the Leximancer analysis. The top three themes in this case are people (100%), feel (88%) and humour (74%).

Table 4.6: Themes and connectivity of focus group transcripts

Theme	Connectivity
People	100%
Feel	88%
Humour	74%
Jokes	53%
Different	32%
Tour	17%
Guide	16%
Audience	05%
Look	04%

Figure 4.7: Overall concept map of all focus group transcripts with tourism operators' names as concept tags

The tag of Barefoot Tours is located in the vicinity of concepts such as 'tour', 'tell', 'guide' and 'comfortable'. Naturally, the guides at Barefoot Tours played a great part in what kind of experience the tourists had. The guide apparently made a positive impression on the participants because the majority of respondents felt that the humour they experienced made them feel more comfortable and added to their experience. Respondents also noted that the humour added to the fun of their day and made it also easier to start connecting to the rest of the group on the bus.

In the overall concept map the tag of Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is located close to concepts such as 'humour', 'audience', 'attention' and 'remember'. In such a large setting such as Hartley's Crocodile Adventures it can be quite challenging to keep their large audience alert and entertained. In general, respondents noted that the humour aided their attention levels when they were presented with educational messages because they were not just based on facts. Most participants also expressed liking that humour created good levels of audience interaction between the guides and the audience and made the experience more engaging. However the building of relationships as it was the case with the smaller number of tourists at Barefoot Tours (20 people in the tour bus) or Raging Thunder (six to eight people in one raft) did not occur.

Osprey V's concept tag is situated close to concepts such as 'serious', 'different', 'understand' and 'English'. Many focus group participants identified that a business venture which hosts large numbers of people from all around the world on the confined spaces of a boat, that there would naturally be some issues with being able to understand everyone. The problem is arguably made more difficult by the issue of varied language competencies. Even serious messages for example about safety instructions seemed to contribute to the fun for respondents because they were delivered in an amusing way.

The concept tag of Raging Thunder is located close to concepts such as 'jokes', 'person', 'fun', and 'laugh'. The humour used by the river guides contributed the fun to the experience. Many respondents expressed the view that the humour made them laugh and also acted as conversation starter because of the light-hearted environment created through the humour. Several respondents also noted that the humour and the particular way in which it was used, represented a way to immerse themselves into the experience by getting them excited and making the experience more engaging and entertaining.

4.6 Discussion

Each individual conceptualises their reality differently depending on where they are in the world (Krueger & Casey, 2009). This is because participants reflect on their own experiences in different ways based on their different expectations and cultural awareness as well as attention spans which impact on how their tourism experiences are perceived (Richards, 2001). The focus group method was chosen in this study to help gain better insights about how individual respondents conceptualised the humour encountered at four tourism settings. This emic approach searched for how participants interpret their world and their experiences (Smith, 2010). By carefully listening to what participants had to say, useful information was collected about their thoughts and opinions of humour in tourism. Since all focus group sessions were conducted on-site, impressions were still fresh and many respondents provided examples from their personal experiences based on the humour they had observed in the tour setting.

This study revealed that the humour used by tour guides was quite diverse and did not simply entail the telling of canned jokes but instead much of the humour was based on finding amusing opportunities based on a given situation. Domestic as well as international participants liked and related to the "Aussie humour" of some tour guides. However it needs to be recognised that having an Australian tour guide is not always warranted, because many foreigners work in tourism because of their ability to speak a second language.

This study revealed that humour is able to create a positive atmosphere in tourism settings that can easily be picked up by others. Laughter is contagious and can also happen in response to other people laughing. Even simply smiling can be infectious (Johnson & Ball, 2000). Since a smiling face is indicative of a positive mood in most cultures, several authors recommend that tour guides smile, be relaxed and have fun since an audience will pick up on these cues and start to match these moods (Ham, 1992; Pastorelli, 2003). The contagiousness of humour has been documented in various studies where it has been shown that humour is able to not just elevate one's personal mood but also do the same for bystanders (McGhee, 1976; Provine, 2000). This appears to be caused by a feeling of relaxing bemusement that people have when they see others laugh heartily. This laughter contagion effect works for friends as well as for strangers

(Provine, 2000). The way in which emotions influence tourism experiences would also have an impact for those tourists whose English is not proficient enough to understand all the humour. Christrup (2008) stated that emotions can be read physically, consciously or unconsciously, and this is why emotions are contagious. Therefore even tourists whose level of English is not good enough to understand all of the humour, they can still see and hear the laughter of other people and recognise the fun and share in the atmosphere.

Humour clearly contributed to the enjoyment of participants' experiences. A study by Smith, MacLeod and Robertson (2010) revealed that tourists expect to be actively engaged by having sensory and emotional reactions to their experiences instead of simply passively absorbing information. There is merit then in applying humour in tourism settings since many participants felt more involved, engaged and actually part of their tourism experiences. In some instances, the humour was even co-created with other tourists attempting to make humorous comments or when tour guides played humour off one another with their colleagues, i.e. with other guides in the crocodile attack show, on the reef cruise or between river guides in several white-water rafts.

One fairly surprising finding of this study for the researcher was that participants thought that humour would contribute not just to their on-site tourism experience but also have an effect after their actual tourism experiences through the creation of memories. As shown in the numerous comments by participants, they felt that their experiences would stay with them longer because they created positive memories of them. The emotional distinctiveness of some experiences where strong emotional responses are created makes them more easily remembered (Schmidt, 1991). Emotions actually seem to play a role in how memories are presented. Interestingly, Forgas (1981) made the point that when we remember an affective episode in our lives that instead of thinking straight away about the location, the time of day or people involved in the episode, we rather think of the overall emotional impression of all these components.

The mnemonic effect of a lot of humour might therefore not simply be linked to its bizarreness effect but the way in which it makes people feel at ease and increases their attention which leads to better retention of information (Powell & Andresen, 1985). This suggests that emotions and cognition are not occurring separately but are linked to one another (Forgas, 2001). Affective states influence what we learn, what we

remember and also the kinds of evaluations and judgments we make (Forgas, 2001; Forgas & Ciarrochi, 2001). Affective states also have an immense impact on peoples' memories. When in a happy mood people are more likely remember positive occurrences that happened in their previous life (Forgas, 2001). The mood biased evaluation of tourism services in the memories of tourists is something that tourism operators can use to their advantage. When people are made to feel welcome and positive because of appropriate humour use at a tourism setting, they are likely to form positive impressions, not only of the tour guides who delivered the humour but also of the tourism attraction.

Being in a positive mood at the time of an experience makes it easier to recall positive episodes (Forgas & Ciarrochi, 2001). This is even the case for a later point in time irrespective of the mood state one is in when an episode is recalled (Mattila, 1998). Peoples' mood affects memory and influences their evaluations of how satisfied they are with certain products and services. Sirakaya, Petrick and Choi (2004) suggested that inducing people into a positive mood would have benefits for tourism businesses. Their study investigated the effect of mood on service evaluation of holiday makers on a cruise holiday. The study found that mood states of tourists did have an effect of how the cruise was evaluated, more specifically that lower levels of satisfaction were received from participants who were in a lower or bad mood during the evaluation stage. This exemplifies the importance of being able to manage customer satisfaction and evaluation for service industries such as tourism. Since moods actually influence customer satisfaction ratings, there are practical implications for managers in considering the emotional and mood based context in which satisfaction scores are collected (Sirakaya, Petrick & Choi, 2004).

Having positive memories of a tourism experience can be of immense value for tourism operators in various ways. Participants voiced the wish to stay longer at an attraction and also the wish for repeat visits of not the same tour but possibly a tour that was run by the same company. This links to the concept of transferred loyalty identified by Pearce and Kang (2009) who stated that due to the psychological attachment with certain types of tour experiences that future holiday activities should preferably have similar attributes. As a result, opportunities exist for tourism operators to co-promote and on-sell humorous tourism experiences in other regions of the country (Frew, 2006a; Pearce & Kang, 2009). Participants also mentioned that they would recommend their

humour-filled tourism experiences to others. It might be exactly for these kinds of reasons that more and more businesses are opting to re-define and re-design themselves as not simply a business that supplies a service but as a business that is a source of memories (Williams & Anderson, 2005).

Building connections between the tour guide and the audience was very much present at all four tourism settings. The various moments that tourists had with tour guides acted as reference point for their memories, feelings and reflections (Pastorelli, 2003). Humour that is used appropriately by tour guides obviously builds a foundation for a positive relationship which tourists are likely to remember favourably. However depending on the actual settings, it was not always possible to build relationships easily with other tourists on-site. The ability to connect was highly dependent on the type and context of the attraction and the number of tourist attracted to the site in the first place. Pastorelli (2003) acknowledged that it is possible to build a connection to people even before a tour begins, for example through promotional activities. The Barefoot Tours brochure shown in Figure 4.1 is a stand-out example where humour and fun are clearly advertised before the tour takes place, making tourists aware that humour is something they purchase when they book this particular tour.

What this study also shows is the impossibility of separating the comfort-concentration-connection outcomes from one another. The relevant interesting comments provided by participants, who felt that they connected to others on the same trip because they felt comfortable to do so, highlighted this issue. For this reason it seems that tourists forming connections does not happen in isolation, they first have to feel comfortable to do so and humour seemed to play a crucial role in breaking down initial boundaries. Humour and laughter appeared to be a solid foundation to create a bond with others present. Therefore the humorous outcomes of comfort, concentration and connection are not mutually exclusive but interdependent.

The results of this study also highlighted some cautionary considerations for the use of humour at tourism settings. The content of the humour itself should be relevant to what is presented. When stereotypical humour was used at the tourism settings (Japanese tourists taking too many photos, Chinese tourists shopping too much, German tourists drinking too much beer) then it mattered how the humour was delivered in terms of the communication style, i.e. tone of voice and non-verbal cues such as body language. It

was also important not to single out a nationality but that tour guides had an equal pick of the various groups in the audience. In general, Blackmore's (2011) research on the perspectives of upper-secondary students on how they perceived teachers using humour during classroom discourse, found the following forms of humour as inappropriate: sexist remarks, racism, religion, morbidity, political views, physical appearance and sarcasm which is belittling in nature. Clearly, any of these forms of humour would be perceived as counterproductive for the use in tourism settings because they can be hurtful.

Another issue noted in the results section was that humour could be misunderstood or misinterpreted due to cultural issues or language barriers. This has important implications for tourism operators since they are involved in managing diverse audiences in terms of demographics, expectations and previous experiences. Especially with humour appreciation there seem to be cultural and individual differences which should be taken into consideration (Billig, 2002). When specific humour styles do not meet or are mismatched or certain groups do not have the required knowledge to decode a joke, then symbolic boundaries are drawn (Kuipers, 2009). These symbolic boundaries highlight social differences and feelings which are hardly ever associated as neutral (Kuipers, 2009). For humour to be appropriate, Refaie (2011) recommended establishing a common ground between the presenters of the humour and their audience in terms of assumptions and value that are applicable for their context. If a joke is regarded as too threatening to the listeners' sense of identity, then the humorous comment or joke may create situations that are perceived as irritating and annoying. Therefore the cultural awareness and sensitivities of tour guides are central when delivering humour.

Depending on certain cultural backgrounds, Pastorelli (2003) recommended that tour guides pay attention to the individual situation in which humour is to be used and to be observant about people's behaviours. This was also a major theme that emerged from the focus group discussions. Many participants were quite surprised at their tour guide's "natural" ability to read the humour response of their tourism audiences and then appropriately reacting to these responses. This was done especially at the beginning of a tour or a presentation, where tour guides attempted to feel out what kinds of humour would be appropriate to use. Quotes from the respondents such as "able to sense the situation" and "morphing it into something else" make it evident that tour guides have

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some kind of 'sixth sense' in intuiting if their audience like their humour or not. This is a well-toned skill, learnt though experience and attention to others and their feedback. During data collection the researcher was able to have casual conversations with the tour guides after the focus group discussions had finished. One tour guide stated that he "watched people's eyes" to see what effect the humorous comments had on the tourists. The tour guide also conveyed that it was quite easy for him to spot when certain types of humour were not considered a source of laughter or when a particular joke had crossed the line. Franzini (2012) also stated that it was important to observe the reactions of the audience and to pay attention to any forms of visual feedback. For example frowning is a good indication of inappropriate humour.

In acknowledging the individuality of tourists in terms of their different tastes in humour, it is vital to use humour which is appealing to a wide audience without offending, alienating or embarrassing visitors. For this reason, Collins (2000) advised that tour guides should refrain from telling feeble and bad-taste jokes. Because once these jokes and related crude comments are made, they cannot be withdrawn and can be detrimental to the overall tourism experience (Pastorelli, 2003). When using humour it is vital to use common sense and follow the ATT rule which implies that any humorous remarks should be appropriate (A), tasteful (T) and timely (T) (Pastorelli, 2003).

A further downside noted by participants was that of perceiving humour as too much or over-the-top. Excessive amounts of humour can fall flat and are then considered counterproductive because they act as a distractor rather than a message enforcer (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Eisend, 2009; Chan, 2010). The use of too much humour was perceived by participants to affect the professionalism and credibility of the tour guides since humour used in excess was considered as foolish or clownish and no longer knowledgeable and amusing. In finding the right levels of humour, Powell and Andresen (1985) recommended carefully designing any humorous material so it has some kind of relevance to the comments presented. Furthermore, humorous comments should be strategically placed where they appear most appropriate with the remainder of the message (DeWinstanley & Bjork, 2002). Another downside was that humour by tour guides could be perceived as staged, forced, fake or unnatural. In order to ensure that humour delivery is as natural as possible, tour guides should be as genuine as possible in their delivery without distorting their own character too much (Perks, 2012).

Some participants noted that using humour gave tourism presenters the impression of professionalism because for them to be using humour in the first place, they would have to know the content of their educational messages inside-out. In fact Ap and Wong (2001) found that professionalism in tour guiding is associated with making tourists happy and satisfied in such a way that they are encouraged to return to a specific location. The results also show that participants perceived that they received better value for their money. This finding is similar to Johnson and Ball (2000) who found that humour added value to the hospitality settings in their study.

The findings also showed that the enthusiasm of the tourism presenters mattered in creating a comfortable environment. This concurs with the work by Bryman (2004) who argued that emotional labour, aesthetic labour and performative labour are increasingly recognised as important factors in how the quality of services are perceived by customers. These three forms of labour evidently have an important role to play in successful humour delivery by creating positive and memorable impressions (Bryman, 2004). The study by Johnson and Ball (2000) also showed that humour created value not just for the customers but also staff members as a vital component of their everyday work.

By particularly looking for any negative cases and responses to the humour in this study, the divergent views of participants were taken into consideration (Bazeley, 2009). Overall there was only one focus group that expressed slightly negative comments about the humour they encountered because for them it felt staged and not natural. In qualitative work, it is important not to ignore such cases but rather to learn from them because they provide an idea that such responses could be possible for more participants, had the sample been larger (Bazeley, 2009). Further variations were also highlighted across the different tourism settings. At tourism settings where large numbers of tourists come together and where tourists tend to be quite mobile, the forming of relationships with other tourists on-site is less likely to happen but is still highly likely to occur with the tour guide.

4.7 Summary

In summary, the findings of this focus group study demonstrate that overall humour had a positive effect on participants' tourism experiences. By selecting four different tourism experiences, it was possible to examine how humour was used in these settings and to highlight some similarities and differences. Pearce's comfort-concentration-connection model was explored in more detail by individually addressing each category and answering exactly how each category was contributing to the tourist experience. The comfort-enhancing outcomes of humour were consistently applied at all focus groups except for one such group who expressed that their tour guide's humour felt staged and therefore made the situation a bit awkward. The concentration outcomes also applied to all four tourism settings in terms of increasing participants' interest in the topics spoken about and enhancing their attention. The findings indicate that the connection outcome did not consistently emerge over all four settings. The connection outcome happened more frequently with smaller tours/attraction while at bigger tourism settings it was more difficult to build connection with others. These findings were supported with quotations from the research participants' views that emerged during the focus group interviews.

It was also interesting to see that humour and laughter came quite naturally to most focus group participants when discussing their experiences and giving examples of some of the humour they had just experienced on tour or on-site. This study offers a preliminary understanding of how humour can be used more effectively during tourism experiences to make them more engaging and entertaining. Key considerations for tourism operators were also identified. In the next chapter, a related but precise set of aims are pursued which are directed at measuring and assessing the outcomes of humour in more detail using a quasi-experimental field study.

Chapter Five

Study 3: Measuring the effect of enhancing humour at two tourism settings

Chapter Five Overview

5.1 Introduction

This study attempted to describe in more detail tourists' opinions towards humour by quantitatively measuring their responses at two tourism settings. It was already established in Study 2 that humour is used differently by different tourism operators depending on the various contexts in which it is performed. The two tourism settings selected for the present research were also different in nature and therefore allowed for a comparative analysis to be undertaken to reveal tourists' responses to the planned extension of those forms of humour.

Although the use of qualitative methods are more prevalent when researchers are interested in the subjective world of people, there are times when researchers are more interested in uncovering whether and to what extent a certain intervention or

manipulation influences one or more outcome variables (Mark, 2010). Also as Gorovoy (2009) pointed out, the use of quantitative methods are not uncommon in investigating people's subjective world. Ruch (1998) noted that much of the previous research on humour has placed great emphasis on the development of questionnaires at the expense of other approaches but that the choice of a certain measurement tool over another should depend on the topic that is investigated.

5.2 Aim of the study

The intent of this quasi-experimental field study was to measure the effect that changing humour scenarios had on tourists and to investigate how key variables relate to one another. The following specific aims are addressed:

1. Identify what categories of humour were used most frequently during tourism experiences.

2. Establish the effect of changing humour treatment scenarios on respondents' satisfaction levels.

3. Evaluate the impact humour has on respondents' tourism experience.

4. Assess the outcomes of humour with special focus given to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model.

5. Determine what effect humour has on respondents' future visits.

5.3 Adopting a quasi-experimental design

A cross-sectional, field-based, quasi-experimental study was conducted at two tourism settings employing a survey based questionnaire to measure tourists' responses. Cross-sectional designs provide information about respondents' opinions and attitudes at one point in time (Creswell, 2012). The cross-sectional design in this study made it possible to compare responses between groups and between tourism settings. At this point it might also be helpful to explain the differences between true experimental designs and

quasi-experimental designs by comparing the two. True experiments are characterised by: random assignment of respondents to different groups or treatments; the manipulation of the independent variables and measurement of the dependent variables (Goldstein & Renault, 2004; Kirk, 2009; Creswell, 2012).

Randomisation based on statistical probability ensures that "there should be no systematic difference on any rival causal factors between the cases receiving the treatment and those that do not" (Goldstein & Renault, 2004, p. 738). However there are times when it is impractical or unethical to randomly assign participants to treatment conditions (Fife-Schaw, 2000a; Goldstein & Renault, 2004; Kirk, 2009; Creswell, 2012). There could also be practical considerations which can limit the researcher's control over some situations (Fife-Schaw, 2000a). For example in most tourism settings it is up to tourists themselves, and not a researcher, to decide what activities or shows the tourists would like to attend during their tourism experience. It would clearly be inappropriate to tell them they could not be part of certain activities or shows because of research based needs about sampling and statistical probability.

A study which has all the characteristics of an experiment but where respondents are not randomly assigned to treatment groups is referred to as a quasi-experiment (Creswell, 2002). Also it is more common for quasi-experiments to be conducted in the field as opposed to a laboratory setting. However, researchers operating in real-life settings often have limited control over segregating or minimising confounding variables which might influence the relationship between the other variables (Fife-Schaw, 2000a; Alaszewski, 2006; Creswell, 2012). In regards to confounding variables which might have influenced this study, it needs to be recognised that the researcher had no control over aspects such as the respondents' individual humour appreciation, their attitudes towards humour and prior experience with other tourism experiences. Any of these aspects could have influenced their responses to the questionnaire in this study.

Naturalistic quasi-experimenting

Quasi-experiments, especially when they are conducted in the field are valuable research designs for explaining whether certain manipulations have an effect on the outcomes between different groups. Lee (2000, p. 142) defined a field experiment as

"an experiment conducted outside the laboratory context." Field experiments performed in their natural setting give an investigator better opportunities to observe naturally occurring events and behaviours. Additionally, it is still possible to introduce some kind of intervention or treatment into a field-based location to observe and measure its consequences and to reveal any interesting relationships (Tunnell, 1977; Weick, 1968). However, it is imperative that large scale manipulations, that could cause too much disturbance, should be avoided to keep a study as natural as possible. Weick (1968) referred to this as "tempered naturalness" where a natural setting is only slightly modified to observe how behaviours are changing.

Tunnell (1977) mentioned three dimensions to keep field research as natural as possible, including natural setting, natural behaviour and natural treatment, each of which bring a research project closer to the real world. *Natural setting* refers to any setting outside the laboratory where people would naturally gather. *Natural behaviour* is characterised through naturally occurring behaviour and responses, such as behaviour that would exist even without the experimental manipulation taking place. *Natural treatment* refers to naturally occurring discrete events to which the research participants are exposed. The more of these natural dimensions are actually combined in a given research study, the greater the degree of generalisability of the research findings (Tunnell, 1977).

These natural research dimensions were also applied in this study. The natural setting was guaranteed through the background situation of the chosen tourism settings where the study took place. The natural treatment is represented by the manipulations utilised in this study where participants were exposed to three different scenarios which are explained in the section labelled 'Manipulation of the treatment scenarios.' The natural behaviour was measured by participants' reactions and perceptions to humour on various scales. These measures effectively formalise the quite natural or everyday question of asking people whether they found a presentation or situation amusing.

There are several advantages to adhering to the three natural dimensions of research proposed by Tunnell (1977). First, the findings of the research are bound to be more meaningful because they were conducted in their real world setting. Second, combining all three natural dimensions adds not only richness to the research but also improves its external validity (Tunnell, 1977). While it is not advised to generalise findings from any one study, the use of real-life settings, behaviours and treatments makes the research

findings more applicable to other settings than research conducted in laboratories (Tunnell, 1977; Flyvbjerg, 2001). Of course, the specific and individual contexts of some settings make full generalisability and full confirmation of theories a misplaced undertaking especially considering that social, cultural and historical changes continue to take place in real-life settings (Tunnell, 1977).

Appropriateness of the survey method in this study

In tourism studies, surveys are one of the most commonly used methods for conducting primary research (Weaver & Lawton, 2006). Survey research using questionnaires enables researchers to collect interval or ratio-level data and therefore creates the opportunity to statistically analyse data to test specific research questions in some sophisticated ways (Creswell, 2012). Using a questionnaire in this study was considered appropriate because a questionnaire could be distributed to larger samples than was the case in Studies 1 and 2. Furthermore a questionnaire-based survey method was considered suitable because the researcher wished to examine the relationships among variables. Surveys represent an objective epistemological position (Jennings, 2010) where researchers are detached from the topic being investigated (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Table 5.1 summarises some of the strength and weaknesses of the survey method.

Table 5.1: Strengths and weaknesses of the survey method

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Simple and versatile to use, offering wide geographical distribution at low cost (Fife-Schaw, 2000b; Jennings, 2010) - Data describe trends on issues under investigation (Creswell, 2012) and possible causes that may influence responses (Fife-Schaw, 2000b) - Flexibility of questionnaires as instruments since a variety of different questions can be asked including open-ended and closed-ended response formats (Jennings, 2010) - Since the same questions are asked and	- Impossible to capture the full range of potential responses due to closed-ended formats that generate forced choices (Fife-Schaw, 2000b; Sarantakos, 2005) - Potential for social desirability bias where respondents present themselves in a more positive light (Davis & Rose, 2000) - If the researcher is not present, then a lower response rate may be the result (Jennings, 2010) - If the researcher is present, then this may lead to "interviewer bias" depending on the researcher's appearance, mannerism

the similar responses are received to closed-ended questions, uniformity is maintained which makes comparisons easier (Jennings, 2010) - Useful tool in identifying opinions and attitudes about issues (Creswell, 2012) - Surveys can be collected and processed quickly (Jennings, 2010) - Self-administered surveys require minimal supervision since the respondent does most of the work linked to the questionnaire such as reading and responding (Jennings, 2010) - Participants get to complete the questionnaire in their own pace and have the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any issues if researcher is present (Jennings, 2010)	and language (Jennings, 2010) - Participants may consider the timing of being intercepted by a researcher as inconvenient and intrusive (Jennings, 2010)

5.4 Methods

5.4.1 Selection of tourism settings

This study continued with the naturalistic theme that was taken in the previous two studies. The naturalistic cases in this study where two real-life, commercial tourism settings especially chosen because they were already successful in including humour in their tourism presentations. When selecting tourism operators for this study, a similar approach was taken to that in Study 2. The travel review website TripAdvisor was used to access public acknowledgement that the businesses were successful in their application of humour. The two tourism settings chosen are Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours and Hartley's Crocodile Adventures.

Description of the tourism settings

Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours (referred to as Jungle Surfing for the remainder of this chapter) is an adventure tourism attraction based in Cape Tribulation which is approximately two hours north of Cairns. This experience represents a unique way to view the ancient Daintree rainforest. Tourists are fitted into harnesses that enable them to glide through the canopy of the rainforest on flying fox ziplines while two to five tour

guides constantly watch over their safety as well as providing interpretation about the ecosystem of this World Heritage Listed rainforest (Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours, 2013). The experience is offered eight times daily and lasts approximately two hours. Every tour is limited to 13 people. The company's brochure promises that the experience will be "fun and educational." At the beginning of the experience, every person it fitted with a helmet. This seemingly common safety activity is already a reason for much smiling and laughter to take place since each helmet has a name written on it and it is up to the person wearing the helmet to take on their new persona. This is arguably helpful in creating a more relaxed atmosphere and for connecting with others on tour. Figure 5.1 shows some examples of the helmets.

Figure 5.1: Helmets with amusing names handed out by Jungle Surfing guides

Hartley's Crocodile Adventures (referred to as Hartley's for the remainder of this chapter) was already introduced in Chapter Four. Crocodile conservation plays an important role at this award-winning tourist attraction. The park offers educational and entertaining presentations including crocodiles, snakes, cassowaries, koalas, quolls and other wildlife at several times throughout the day (Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, 2013).

Both tourism operators were contacted to gain permission to be on-site. Since the study included human participants, the appropriate human ethics clearance was received from the James Cook University Ethics Committee.

5.4.2 Manipulation of the treatment scenarios

This quasi-experimental field research exposed tourists to three scenarios to document their effects on respondents. The actual treatment variable were different humour scenarios, which attempted to measure any effects that potential increases in humour would have on the dependent outcome variables of humour responses. The dependent variables were measured on scales and included scale items to rate the perceived level of humour of tour guides, Pearce's comfort-concentration-connection model and the overall satisfaction with the tourism experience.

When working with different manipulation scenarios, it is important to have an appropriate control or comparison group to ensure that unusual effects are not due to peripheral factors (Mark, 2010). The quasi-experimental design in this study consisted of several phases. The first phase was regarded as a comparison condition because no experimental manipulation was applied. This allowed the researcher to see how respondents would typically respond to the humour provided by the tour guides. Having such a baseline situation also acknowledged that humour was already a natural occurrence at the two chosen tourism settings.

In an attempt to experimentally increase the humour, the second phase included asking tour guides to be as funny as they possibly could through their own initiated humorous efforts. The third phase involved increasing humour efforts by asking tour guides to add humorous material sourced by the researcher into their tourism scripts. Appendix C includes the humorous material handed to the guides. Tour guides were prompted to remember and use five of the comments with which they were most comfortable. It was anticipated that such a quasi-experimental set-up would allow the researcher to make comparisons between the three treatment scenarios.

Sourcing of humorous material

The humorous material given to the guides was sourced from the internet from joke collection websites and websites outlining funny rainforest related facts. This proved to be a more difficult undertaking for the researcher than was anticipated. Finding humorous material which could be handed to tour guides was a lengthy process and did

not include many direct hits. Keeping this in mind, it can be recognised how challenging it is for tour guides to source their own humorous materials. Once a good selection of humorous comments and facts were found, the material was checked for its appropriateness by a panel of judges including two tour guides, two academics and two lay people who stated there was no offensive materials included. The materials were judged to be reasonably good examples of puns and nonsense humour.

5.4.3 Questionnaire design

A three-page questionnaire was designed to address the aim of this study. The length of the questionnaire needed to be kept rather short considering that it was handed out at the end of respondents' tourism experiences, either as they were exiting or preparing to leave the setting. Veal (2006) commented that on-site or intercept surveys cannot usually be as long as for example mail surveys or household surveys since respondents may only have limited time. The questionnaire included a variety of closed-ended and scale responses. Open-ended questions were also included to provide respondents the opportunity to express themselves freely in their own words if they wished (Frazer & Lawley, 2000). Confidentiality of respondents was ensured since no personal information was collected, i.e. name, address or email details. If respondents wished to find out about the results of this study, they were encouraged to contact the researcher who included her contact details on the information sheet handed to each respondent. A copy of the information sheet can be found in Appendix D.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections which followed from more general humour questions relating to all kinds of tourism settings and then moved to more specific questions that related to the use of humour at the chosen tourism settings. Appendix E includes a copy of the questionnaire. Westwood (2007) stressed that it is important to make research techniques look enticing to potential respondents especially when attempting to collect data from people who are in the midst of holiday taking and tourism experiences. This can be achieved by developing research techniques that "unleash the constraints of socially conformist responses" by incorporating elements of play and fun which are considered as being "pleasurable rather than mundane and onerous" by the participants (Westwood, 2007, p. 294). Keeping this suggestion in

mind, section one of the questionnaire included four cartoons to assess respondents' humour appreciation. Having the four cartoons on the front page made the questionnaire look like fun to complete and was actually very successful in enticing potential respondents. Section one also included a question that prompted respondent to write down their favourite joke to test their humour production.

The four cartoons shown on page one of the questionnaire were selected from CartoonStock.com, a searchable database of humorous illustrations, animations and cartoons by some of the world's best cartoonists (CartoonStock, 2013). Initially the researcher chose 20 cartoons, all of which were based around a rainforest/wildlife theme since the tourist attractions chosen for this study were located in or in proximity of rainforest locations of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The 20 cartoons were rated by 17 colleagues and friends of the researcher for their level of humour and the top four rated cartoons were selected for the questionnaire. The 17 cartoon raters were of different gender, ages (25-65 years) and nationalities (Australian, Indian, Russian, British, Germany, Slovakian, Chinese, Brazilian, and Mexican).

After establishing what raters perceived to be the four funniest cartoons, CartoonStock was contacted for pricing information and licensing rights to include the four cartoons in the questionnaire for this study. The four cartoons were purchased for GB£ 12 per cartoon. After CartoonStock received payment for the cartoons, a customer service representative of this organisation attached high resolution versions of the four cartoons to an email to the researcher. Furthermore, the representative also made the researcher aware that when using the cartoons, a credit acknowledging their source as "www.CartoonStock.com" should be placed in their immediate vicinity. This instruction was duly followed by the researcher.

Section two of the questionnaire was focused on identifying some of the influences that humour had on respondents' tourism experiences on previous occasions and in more general terms. In a sentence completion exercise, respondents were asked to write down why in their opinion humour should be encouraged in tourism settings. Respondents were asked in another sentence completion exercise if they could think of any tourism situations where the use of humour might seem inappropriate. This section also included open-ended questions to explore what meaning humour had for respondents during their

previous travels and gave respondents the opportunity to share any of their previous travel stories where humour played a key role.

The third section included questions regarding how respondents perceived the humour they experienced in the context of the two data collection sites. One question in this section identified the various humour categories that were used at both tourism settings. These categories were based on Long and Graesser's (1988) classification scheme of humour (Refer to Appendix F for a full descriptions of these categories of humour). Furthermore, a total of eight scales were used to collect information about the respondents' awareness of the humour as well as their overall satisfaction rating. Two more questions in this section dealt with respondents' future intention to go to attractions or on tours that used humour in a similar way to the humour they had encountered at the data collection sites and if they had previously been to an attraction where humour was used in a similar fashion. The last question asked respondents to state if any of the humour they encountered was offensive to them.

Following Veal's (2006) suggestion, demographic questions were asked at the end of the questionnaire. Therefore the final questionnaire section collected the demographic details of respondents including their gender, age, country of residence, travel party and travel experience. Information collected on demographic details as well as questions concerning the respondents' humour appreciation were used to characterise respondents into various groups. Completion time of the questionnaire was between 10-15 minutes with many respondents expressing that it was fun to complete due to the cartoons on page one. Table 5.2 indicates the reasons and precedents of questions asked in the survey instrument.

Table 5.2: Reasons underlying and precedents for the questions in the questionnaire

Questions	Reason	Precedents/tailored design
1	Identifying potential differences based on respondents' backgrounds	Humour appreciation; respondents asked to rate level of humour of four cartoon images
2	Identifying potential differences based on respondents' backgrounds	Humour production; respondents prompted to write down their favourite joke
3	Perceived impact of humour on the tourism experience	Sentence completion exercises

4	Respondents' previous experience with humour in tourism settings	Identifying tourism situations where humour previously played a key role
5	Respondents' previous experience with humour in tourism settings	Frew's (2006b) work on humour in tourism where humour is helpful to relieve awkward and stressful travel situations
6	Perceptions/knowledge of respondents	Long and Graesser's (1988) classifications of humour
7	Response to guide humour scale item	Measuring the respondents' perceived level of humour
8	Outcomes of humour–connection	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
9	Outcomes of humour–connection	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
10	Outcomes of humour–concentration	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
11	Outcomes of humour–concentration	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
12	Outcomes of humour–comfort	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
13	Outcomes of humour-comfort	Pearce's (2009) comfort, concentration and connection model
14	Overall satisfaction scale item	Measuring the impact of humour on satisfaction with overall tourism experience
15	Potential future intention of respondents to go on similar tours	Pearce and Kang's (2009) work on repeat visitors and transferred loyalty
16	Identifying experience with other settings where humour was used similarly	Previous experience with similar tours and attractions
17	Identifying offensive material during tourism presentation	Kuiper's (2009) work on symbolic boundaries
18	Demographic question	General
19	Demographic question	General
20	Demographic question	General
21	Demographic question	General
22	Travel experience of respondents	General
23	Travel experience of respondents	General
24	Anything else to share	Offer respondents with final opportunity to add information

Development of scales used in the questionnaire

Scales are a popular way to measure people's responses by asking them to use a cross or line to mark their agreement to specific statements (Fife-Schaw, 2000b). In this regard the questionnaire used Likert scales to capture the responses. Carifio and Perla (2007, p.

114) defined the Likert response format as "a technology for capturing information the stimulus questions elicit." There is much controversy in the literature whether Likert scales produce ordinal or interval data. Such considerations influence the ways the data can be analysed.

Jamieson (2004) assumes Likert scales offer only ordinal levels of measurement because their response categories have a rank order but the intervals between the points are not presumed equal. However treating Likert scales as ordinal data prevents the use of more sophisticated statistical techniques (Carifio & Perla, 2008). Brown (2011) holds the view that parametric statistics can be applied to Likert scales if they can be approximated to be interval scales and if they contain multiple items. Creswell (2012) noted that it has actually become common practice to regard Likert scales as approximating interval rating scales although one cannot be assured that equal intervals exist between response categories. For this reason, Likert scales tend to be treated as having both ordinal and interval scale properties. It depends on how the researchers themselves think of their scales that determines the choice of statistical tests to use (Creswell, 2012).

In this study, the researcher decided to follow the guidelines of Carifio & Perla (2007) for the construction of scale items. The two authors made the point that Likert scales are interval in nature if they have certain characteristics such as they must have an underlying continuum along with rank ordering value points. More specifically they suggested using "a 100 millimetre response line with semantic anchors on each end" (Carifio & Perla, 2007, p. 109). Furthermore, the scale should at a minimum consist of six to eight sensibly related items to produce interval data (Cronbach, Gleser, Nanda & Rajaratnam, 1972). Once these characteristics are followed, it is appropriate to use parametric tests to analyse Likert scales (Carifio & Perla, 2008).

In this study's questionnaire, the Likert scale instrument consisted of eight items on a 10-point response format measured on a 100 millimetre response line. The first response item measured perceived level of tour guide humour which is referred to as 'ratings of guide humour' in this study (RoGH); six response items were constructed based on Pearce's (2009) model of humour to measure the respondents' levels of comfort, concentration and connection; and the final response item measured respondents' satisfaction with the overall experience.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency of the eight-item scale of humour developed for this questionnaire study. Internal consistency indicates the degree to which items in a scale 'hang together' and measure the same concept by showing the interrelatedness of the items within the test (Pallant, 2007; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The value of Cronbach's Alpha for both tourism settings combined was 0.89 suggesting a very good level of internal consistency (Pallant, 2007). The Cronbach's Alpha for the respective tourism settings was 0.91 at Jungle Surfing and 0.87 at Hartley's.

Pilot testing of questionnaire

Initially the questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure that future respondents would have no difficulty in understanding the questions and were clear on how to complete the instrument (Creswell, 2012). Other benefits of pilot testing a survey instrument include being able to ensure that the order of questions flows naturally and to check how long the instrument takes to be completed (Jennings, 2010). The questionnaire was handed to five friends of the researcher with special instructions to note down any ambiguities and mistakes that could be discovered. Four friends had previously been to either one or even both of the tourism settings chosen in this study and therefore had experience with these tourism settings. Based on the comments received, the researcher made some appropriate but quite limited changes.

5.4.4 On-site procedures

The questionnaire was administered immediately following the tourism experiences ensuring that tourists' impressions of the humour they experienced during on-site presentations were still fresh. Potential respondents were approached by the researcher and informed of the purpose of the study. An information sheet was handed to every respondent outlining that the study was voluntary and confidential. People interested in being part of the study gave their verbal informed consent and were handed the questionnaire. The researcher remained in the vicinity of the respondents while they completed their questionnaires. That way, if any problems emerged during the

completion of the survey, respondents had the chance to ask for clarification. A postcard was handed to every respondent as a small token of appreciation for their participation.

Although tourism operators for this study were selected using a planned assessment of the phenomenon, convenience sampling was used for the actual distribution of questionnaires on-site. Convenience sampling is described by Creswell (2012) as a sampling technique where research participants are selected because they are willing and available to take part in a study. Since this sampling technique is non-random, it is impossible to say how representative a sample is of the population but the responses should still provide useful information in answering the set research questions (Creswell, 2012). Employing convenience sampling enabled the researcher to make contact with large numbers of respondents quickly and cost effectively (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003). In terms of sample size itself, Creswell (2012) recommended to collect data from as large a sample as possible because then there would be less chance that the selected sample is different from the population. Considering this suggestion the data was collected during school holidays to maximise response opportunities. Surveys were administered in August and September 2013. The number of questionnaires collected in this study was linked to the number of scenarios used. The researcher considered 100 completed questionnaires per scenario which was sufficient to run appropriate statistical analysis.

Data collection at Jungle Surfing was conducted at the Snake House which is the meeting point for self-drive tourists. It is called the Snake House because it holds snakes for tourists to observe and also acts as a shop to give people the opportunity to buy souvenirs from the Jungle Surfing experience. Table 5.3 outlines the particulars of data collection at Jungle Surfing.

Table 5.3: Data collection at Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours

Title	Baseline scenario	Manipulation scenario 1	Manipulation scenario 2
Location	Snake House	Snake House	Snake House
Lengths of time	4 days	4 days	4 days
Number of responses	103	107	100
Task	Measure responses to humour as it typically occurs during the tour	Tour guides asked by researcher to be as funny as they can be	Tour guides asked to use additional humorous material sourced by researcher

Data collection at Hartley's included only two manipulation scenarios because at this study location it was the researcher's intention to produce a stronger manipulation by combining manipulation scenarios 1 and 2 used at Jungle Surfing into one treatment scenario. However the head tour guide at Hartley's was not keen to use the humorous material and decided that they would merely try to be as funny as they could be. His reasoning was that humour was merely used to add to the experience at this attraction and that their focus was never on delivering outright jokes because if jokes fell flat then it would be hard to recover and reconnect with the audience. Table 5.4 displays more information on the data collection at Harley's.

Table 5.4: Data collection at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures

Title	Baseline scenario	Manipulation scenario 1
Location	Exit of attraction	Exit of attraction
Lengths of time	3 days	3 days
Number of responses	101	103
Task	Measure responses to humour as it typically occurs during the tour	Tour guides asked by researcher to be as funny as they can be

5.4.5 Analysis of questionnaire data

SPSS (version 20) and Leximancer were used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics were used to highlight any overall tendencies in the data. In order to make

comparisons between groups, settings and the various manipulation scenarios, inferential statistics were used to examine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variables. Correlational statistical tests were used to describe the degree to which variables relate to one another. Comments to open-ended questions were manually sorted or subjected to Leximancer analysis.

5.4.6 Profile of respondents

The total sample size across both data collection sites was 514 respondents. The respondents' gender split was approximately equal: female (55.7%) and male (44.3%). The sample consisted of domestic (66.9%) and international (33.1%) respondents. Table 5.5 shows the respondents' place of origin, age groups and travel party in more detail.

Table 5.5: Demographic details of respondents (n = 514)

	%	n
Origin:		
Domestic	66.9	341
International	33.1	169
International respondents from:		
United Kingdom	9.4	48
Continental Europe	9.0	46
North America	7.8	40
New Zealand	5.3	27
Other	1.6	8
Age groups:		
Under 20 years	3.4	17
20-29 years	25.6	130
30-39 years	19.7	100
40-49 years	25.8	131
50-59 years	16.2	82
Over 60 years	9.3	47
Travel party:		
Alone	2.6	13
Friends	21.0	107
Couple	31.8	162
Family with kids	34.4	175
Relatives	10.2	52

To establish respondents' level of travel experience, they were asked how many domestic and international holidays they had been on in the last three years. Table 5.6 indicates that respondents were keen travellers: more than half (55.2%) had been on one to two domestic holidays and many (61.4%) had also travelled internationally for their holiday.

Table 5.6: Respondents' travel experience

	Domestic holidays (%)	International holidays (%)
Less than 1 per year	28.4	61.4
1 to 2 per year	55.2	32.3
More than 2 per year	16.4	6.4

The visitor profile of each data collection site was as follows: The sample at Jungle Surfing consisted of 310 respondents of which 59.7% were female. More than half of the respondents were Australian (57.7%) while international respondents came from North America (12.1%), the United Kingdom (11.7%), Continental Europe (10.1%), and New Zealand (6.5%). The respondents' average age was 39 years. The sample at Hartley's (n = 204) was more evenly divided in terms of gender with 49.5% being female. The majority of respondents were from Australia (80.8%) and the international sample came from Continental Europe (7.4%), the United Kingdom (5.9%), New Zealand (3.4%) and North America (1.5%). The average age of respondents was 40 years.

5.5 Results

5.5.1 Humour appreciation of cartoons

To measure the appreciation of cartoons, respondents had three response categories for each of the four cartoons (1 = a little bit funny, 2 = quite funny, 3 = very funny). Figure 5.2 shows the humour responses to each of the four cartoons combining the two tourism settings. Cartoon 3 (27.8%) was most liked by respondents, followed by Cartoon 2 (22.2%) and Cartoon 4 (10.7%). By calculating the sum of all responses to the cartoons,

the responses were converted into a new variable 'humour appreciation of cartoons.' This measure was employed in subsequent analysis to test if respondents' appreciation of the four cartoons actually influenced how the various scale items were perceived.
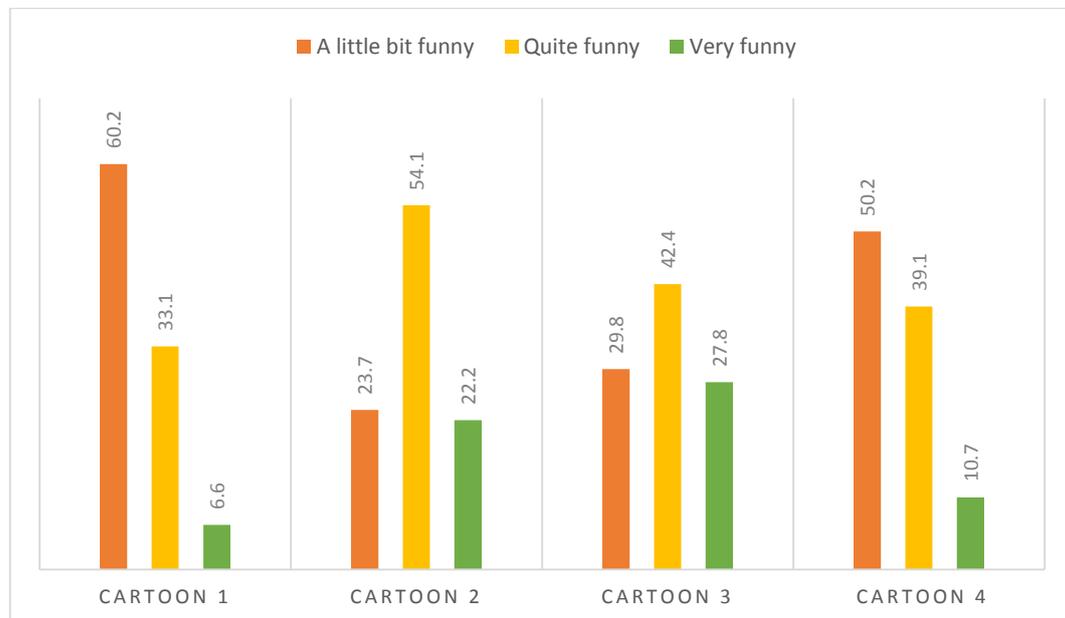
Figure 5.2: Humour responses to cartoons (n = 514)

5.5.2 Humour production skills of respondents

The humour production skill of respondents was established by prompting them to write down their favourite joke. Of the 310 respondents at Jungle Surfing, 119 (38.4%) comments were received while 191 (61.5%) respondents left the response field for this question blank. Of the 119 responses received, 70 entries were actual jokes, 29 entries were excuses for not writing a joke down and another 20 misunderstood the question. It is interesting to note that of the 70 jokes, more than half were written down by female respondents (n = 40, 57.2%). Male respondents contributed only 30 of the jokes (42.8%).

It was also interesting to read the various excuses respondents wrote down for not writing down a joke: "I don't have one/I can't think of one" (n = 16); "I can never remember jokes/I always forget" (n = 9); "joke is too long/not enough space" (n = 2)

and finally there were non-English speakers who apologised for not knowing an English joke to write down (n = 2). In terms of respondents who misunderstood the question, it can only be assumed that the wording of the question was ambiguous. Respondents were prompted to write down their favourite joke in the following way: 'Please write down your own favourite joke'. This question was misinterpreted by 20 respondents who thought it referred to the four cartoons which is why they wrote down which cartoon they liked the most. A selection of jokes which were written down by respondents can be found in Appendix G.

At Hartley's, male respondents wrote down (n = 33; 56.9%) jokes more frequently than female respondents (n = 25; 43.1%). Over half of the respondents left this question blank (n = 131, 64.2%). Of the 73 (35.8%) responses received, 58 were jokes, 13 were excuses and after changing the wording in which the question was asked for respondents' favourite joke, only two people misunderstood the intend of this question. Following the ambiguities which troubled some respondents at Jungle Surfing, the question was reformulated and was now asked in the following way: 'Please write down your own favourite personal joke'. This seemed much clearer to participants. For the excuses, the following responses were received: "I don't have one/I can't think of one" (n = 10); "I can never remember jokes/I always forget" (n =1) and "too rude/I can only remember inappropriate jokes" (n = 2).

5.5.3 Categories of humour

In answering the first aim of this study, respondents were asked to tick the categories of humour that they noted in the tour guide's presentations of their tourism experiences. Figure 5.3 displays the humour categories that were identified by respondents. Both tourism operators used "amusing stories" as the number one way to deliver humour followed by the approach labelled "friendly teasing". The third most popular way to convey humour at the Jungle Surfing operation included the use of "funny exaggerations" while at Hartley's, it was the tour guides who "targeted the humour at themselves". It should be noted that the humour categories are not mutually exclusive because in some cases it was possible for a tour guides to use more than one category at the same time to enhance their humorous effects.
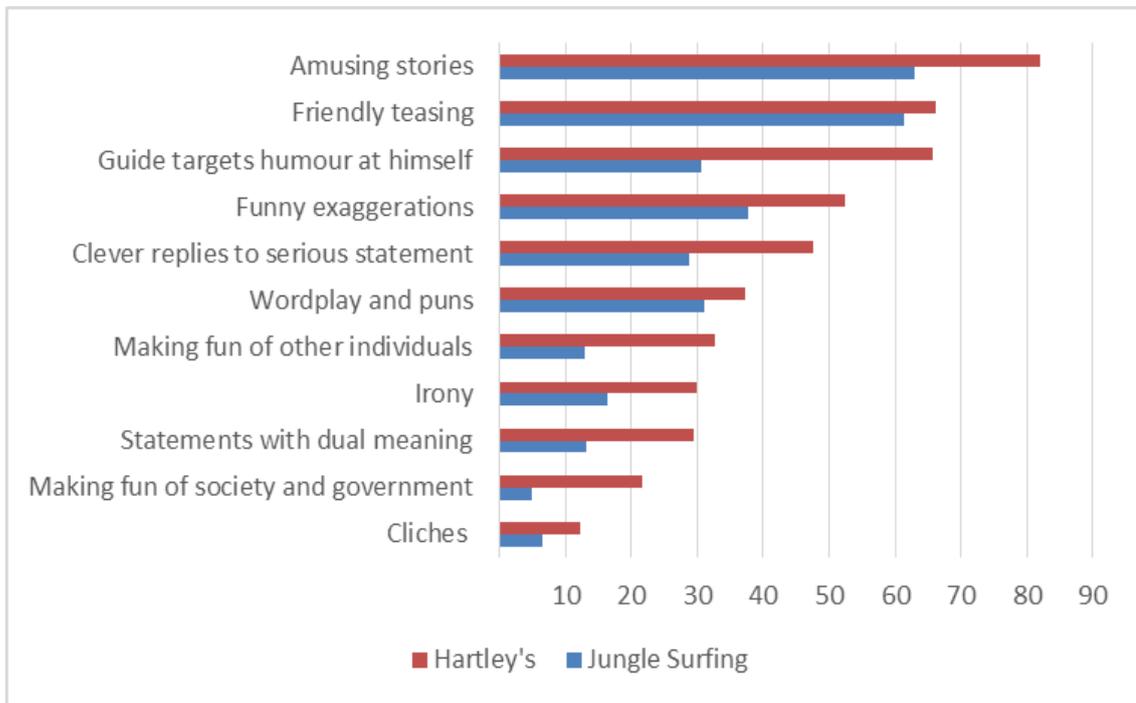
Figure 5.3: Humour categories used during tourism presentations (%)

Also all respondents were asked if any of the humour that they heard during their experience was perceived as offensive. Out of 514 who answered this question, 99.0% said no. The one per cent (n = 5) who ticked yes to this questions gave the following answers as to what was regarded as offensive to them:

- But not too bad, only mentioning my fear from heights.

- Possibly about killing of crocodiles.

- Just didn't like the humour used to describe crocs eating other animals in jest, i.e. dogs.

5.5.4 Effect of manipulation scenarios

The second aim attempted to assess the effect of changing humour treatment scenarios on respondents' answers. Initially this study was planned with only Jungle Surfing. However after realising that the manipulation scenarios did not work according to the

researcher's expectations, it was decided after discussions with the supervisory team, that it would be worthwhile to observe if a similar outcome would be the result at a second tourism operation. This is why the study was then also undertaken at Hartley's. This time however the manipulation was simplified and included only two scenarios instead of three. The first scenario included tourists being exposed to the normal scripts that tour guides usually used during their presentations. The second scenario included asking the tour guides to be as humorous as they can be during their speeches to the tourists.

None of the changes created through the manipulation scenarios showed a statistically significant result. Figure 5.4 shows the overall trend in mean ratings between the manipulation scenarios. The scale on the Y-axis was reduced from $0 - 10$ to $6 - 9$, in order to make the actual results visible to some degree. The humour scale item at Jungle Surfing shows a downward trend between the different manipulation scenarios of humour while the satisfaction scale item appears to stay unchanged. The trend at Hartley's for both the perceived level of humour scale item and the satisfaction scale item display an upward tendency indicating that humour was potentially successful in creating more enjoyable and satisfying on-site tourism experiences. The complexities inherent in these results are considered in full in the discussion section.
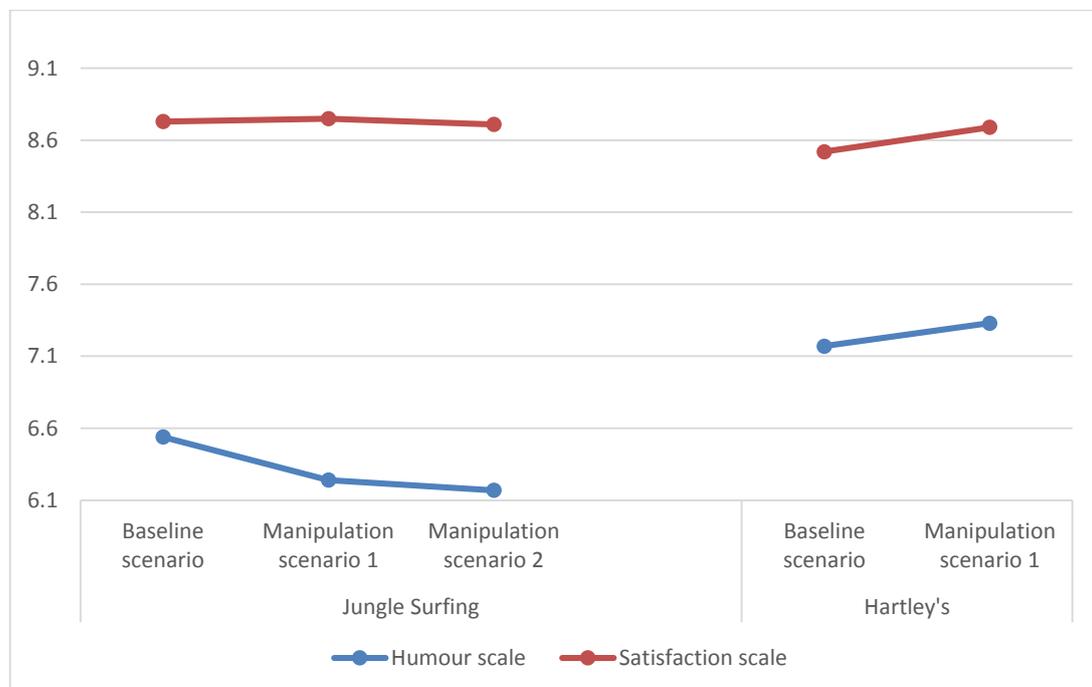
Figure 5.4: Outcome of the various scenarios

5.5.5 Impact of humour on tourism experiences

In addressing the third aim of this study which attempted to find out what impact humour had on respondents' tourism experiences, several questions prompted respondents to think of any impacts humour had on their previous travel experiences.

Perceptions of why humour should be encouraged in tourism settings

The questionnaire instructed respondents to complete the following sentence: Humour in tourism should be encouraged because… When responding to this question, it appeared that participants mostly reflected on their recent tourism experiences which in this case were the two tourism settings chosen in this study. The open-ended nature of this questionnaire item made it appropriate to use the textual analysis tool Leximancer.

As shown in Table 5.7, the top three themes that emerged from the Leximancer analysis at Jungle Surfing were 'people', 'experience' and 'feel.' This is also illustrated in Figure 5.5. Respondents at Jungle Surfing expressed that humour should be encouraged because it made people have a positive time, followed by making the experience a happier one. Being able to control one's anxious feelings through laughter also appeared to be crucial at an adventure tourism setting such as Jungle Surfing. The theme of 'calms' indicated that respondents thought that the humour was helpful in calming nervous participants during the tourism activity. Laughter itself also emerged as a theme which means it was noted as a reason as to why humour in tourism should be encouraged.

Table 5.7: Themes and connectivity of respondents' answers at Jungle Surfing of why humour in tourism settings should be encouraged

Theme	Connectivity
People	100%
Experience	52%
Feel	38%
Laugh	30%
Calms	25%
Group	22%
Activity	02%
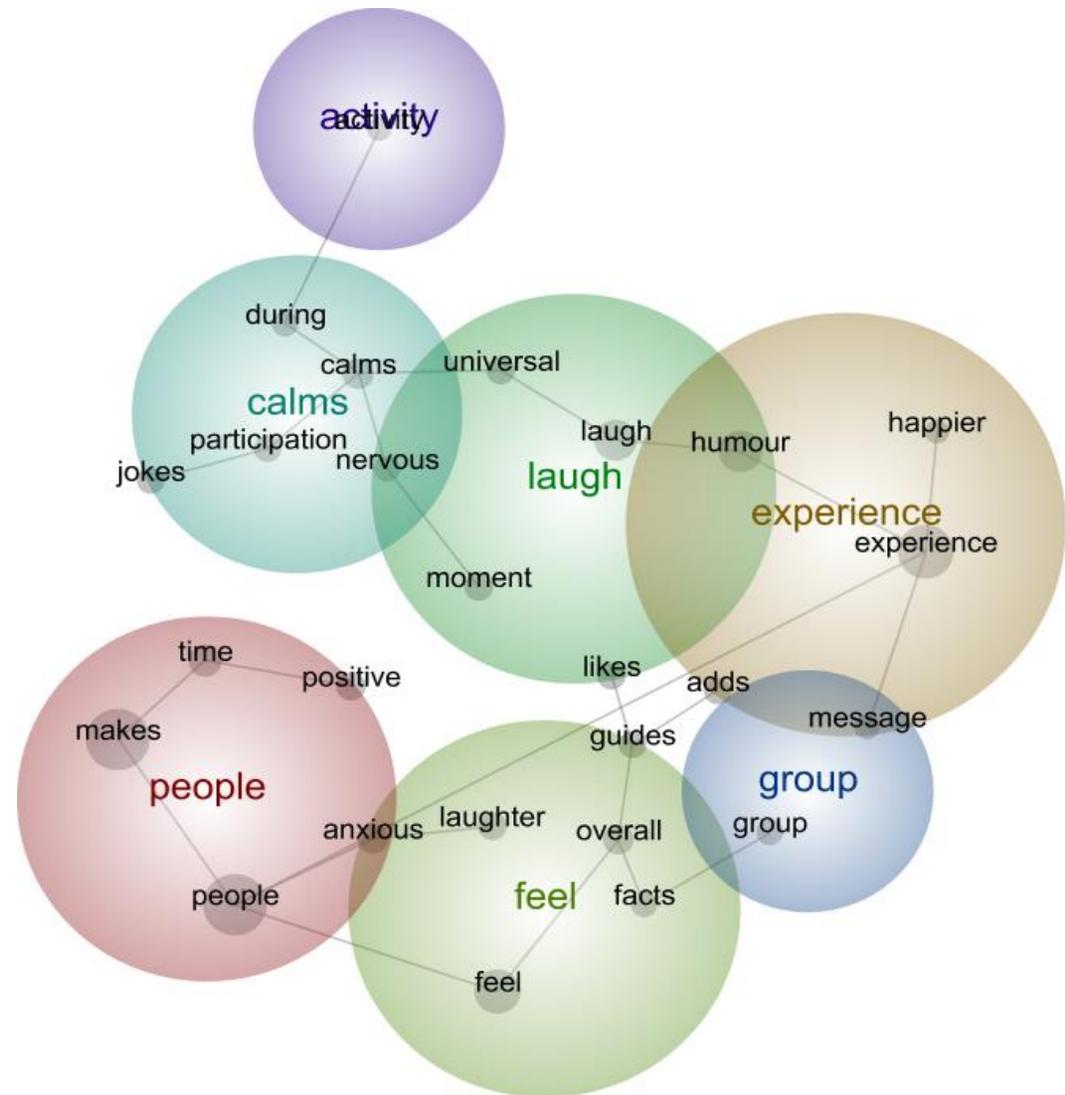
Figure 5.5: Jungle Surfing respondents' answers of why humour in tourism should be encouraged

The Leximancer concept map in Figure 5.6 generated for Hartley's indicated the top three themes as 'makes', 'fun' and 'people.' The theme of connectivity as shown in Table 5.8 is based on the summed co-occurrence of each concept within each theme. Respondents at Hartley's indicated that humour should be encouraged because of how it affected the experience, i.e. by making it a relaxed or a better experience. Secondly, humour should be encouraged because it contributed to the fun of the day and made people feel involved in what was happening. Thirdly respondents specified that other people appeared to have a good time because of all the laughter that was generated. Other themes which emerged from this sentence completion exercise included humour contributing to the enjoyment of the day and the attention-arresting properties of humour.

Table 5.8: Theme and connectivity of respondents' answers at Hartley's of why humour in tourism settings should be encouraged

Theme	Connectivity
Makes	100%
Fun	66%
People	55%
Enjoyable	31%
Attention	31%
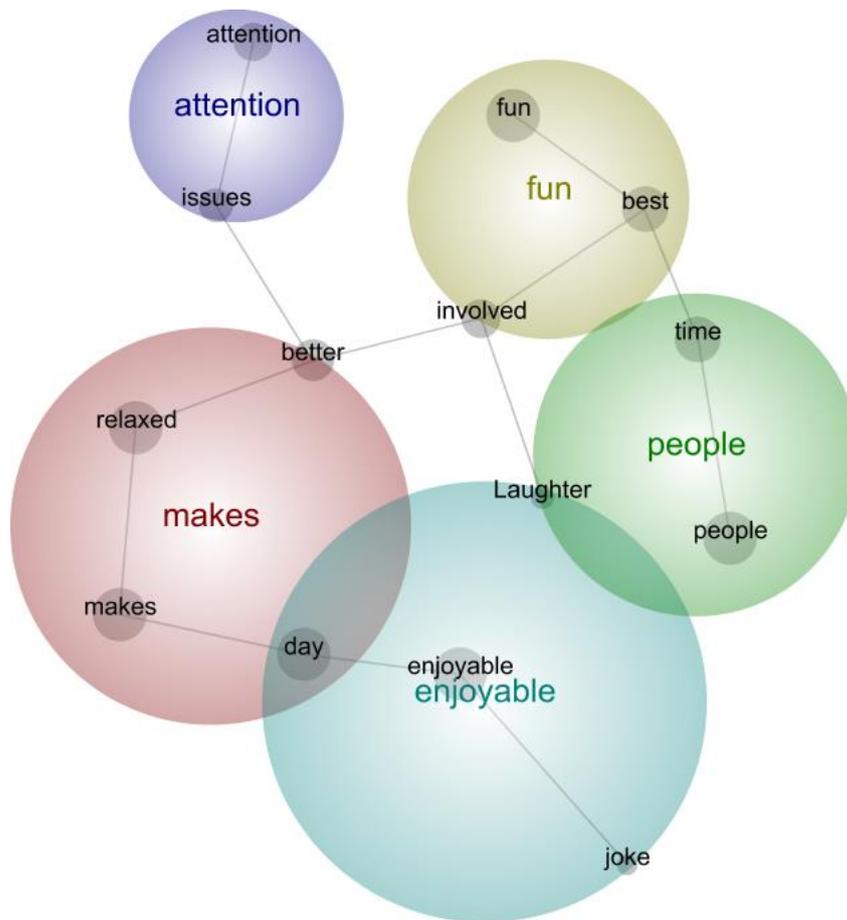
Figure 5.6: Hartley's respondents' answers of why humour in tourism should be encouraged

Tourism settings or situations where humour is considered inappropriate

Another sentence completion exercise requested respondents to think of any tourism situations where the use of humour would be inappropriate. Figure 5.7 and Table 5.9 show the responses received at Jungle Surfing identifying 'situations' which involve racism, war and situations involving dangerous elements and religion to be inappropriate sources for humour. Secondly, anything that involved people's 'safety' should not be dealt as a laughing matter. 'Cultural' tourism sites also emerged as something that should mostly be treated seriously. Respondents at Jungle Surfing also conveyed the view that making fun of persons or animals that are hurt would be inappropriate.

Table 5.9: Themes and connectivity of respondents' answers at Jungle Surfing of tourism situations where humour is inappropriate

Theme	Connectivity
Situations	100%
Safety	69%
Cultural	41%
Jokes	25%
Different	16%
Hurt	14%
Places	06%
Sensitive	04%
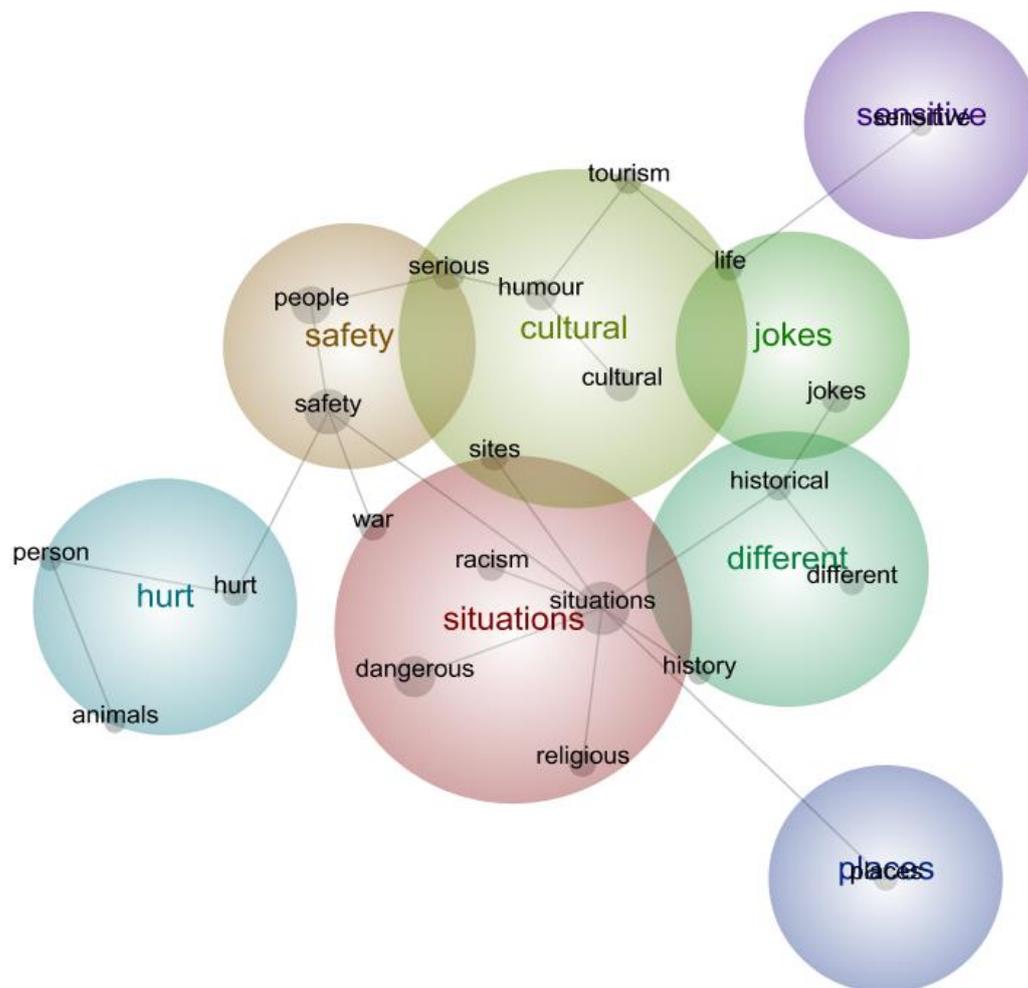
Figure 5.7: Jungle Surfing's respondents' answers of tourism situations where humour is inappropriate

The responses received at Hartley's are illustrated in Figure 5.8 and Table 5.10 which indicate that participants believed 'humour' was inappropriate when serious matters such as safety were the target for the humour. The second most important theme that emerged from the responses considered it inappropriate to make fun of other 'peoples' cultural' characteristics There were some participants who noted down that they could think of 'none'; that is, they were unable to identify any tourism situations where the use of humour would be considered as inappropriate. Memorials, places of tragedy or associated with war were also locations where humour would be unsuitable. Finally, the use of 'inappropriate' jokes themselves was referred to as undesirable.

Table 5.10: Themes and connectivity of respondents' answers at Hartley's of tourism situations where humour is inappropriate

Theme	Connectivity
Humour	100%
People	86%
None	74%
Situation	70%
Inappropriate	62%
Someone	44%
War	16%
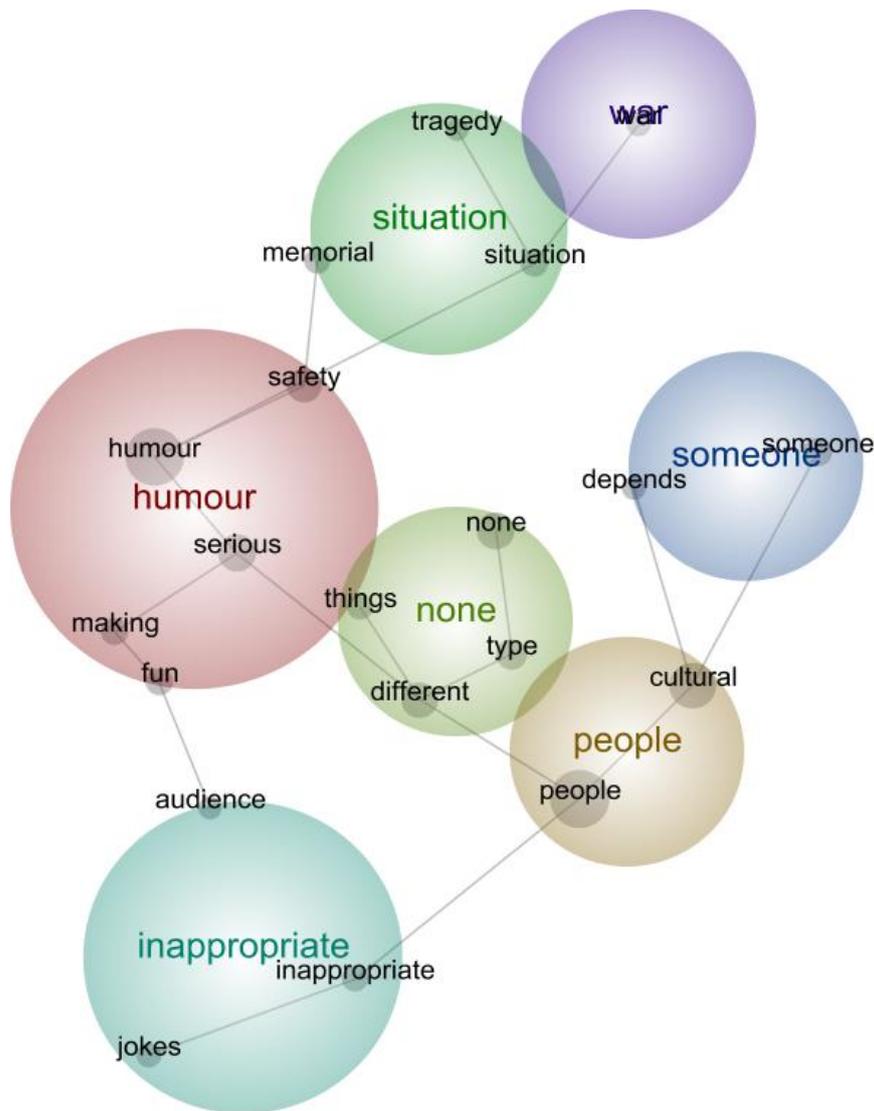
Figure 5.8: Hartley's respondents' answers of tourism situations where humour is inappropriate

Previous tourism experiences where humour played a key role

Nearly half (49.3%, n = 235) of the entire sample of respondents said they had encountered a situation where humour played a key role during their previous travels. Two hundred of these respondents took the opportunity to complete the open-ended component of this question and revealed how and why humour had played a key role during previous travels. As shown in Table 5.11 the responses to the question were divided into two groups:

1. Humour provided for tourists (n = 162), mostly by tourism presenters such as tour guides, drivers, and

2. Humour provided by tourists (n = 36), mostly provided by family, friends and fellow travellers.

Table 5.11: Tourism experiences where humour played a key role

Humour	Provided for tourists (n = 162)	Provided by tourists (n = 36)
Interest/attention	27	0
Break the ice/bonding	11	10
Makes experience memorable	6	0
Entertainment/fun	36	3
Kids engagement	3	1
Alleviate anxieties	12	4
Lighten the mood/atmosphere	14	4
Makes experience different	6	1
Filling downtime/relieving boredom	4	1
Coping strategy	1	12
Stating name/location of actual tourism businesses	42	0

Some examples of the respondents' comments are noted in the following tables. The section limits itself to the categories that occurred most frequently and allows the reader to see how these categories emerged through content analysis. Comments shown in Table 5.12 show examples of humour provided *for* tourists and the quotes focus on the following categories: interest/attention; breaking the ice/bonding; entertainment/fun; alleviating anxieties and lightening the mood.

Table 5.12: Humour provided for tourists

Interest/attention
- Guided tour at Mossman Gorge. The guide was very educational but had a brilliant sense of humour and told funny stories which kept a large group very interested the whole time.
- Tour at Fremantle Prison (WA) - guide was relating a lot of quite detailed information

about the history of the prison and humour kept people engaged and paying attention.

- On a coral reef boat 'Calypso' - used humour to keep people engaged and interested but got serious messages across regarding marine biology.

- Rafting - makes the whole experience more enjoyable and more personal. Makes you listen to the instructor and not get too bored.

- During the crocodile feeding today, the guide told some funny stories to act as fun - key warnings about crocodiles.

Break the ice/bonding

- When people seemed to be huddled by themselves and not talking. It opened people up, made them friendlier.

- Nearly every group tourism activity where used to bring a group of people who don't know each other together or to entertain.

- Humour by tour guides helps people bond and share a laugh together.

- With Vietnamese tour guides - "broke the ice."

Entertainment/fun

- Three day trek in Chang Mai. It would have been boring and a lot of walking if the guides didn't make it entertaining e.g. telling jokes, making us eat weird things.

- Ghost Tour at night in York (UK). Guide was fantastic at telling stories of all extremes!! Grim and frightening but also hilarious.

- Tower of London, be-heading was made to be quite a comedic situation.

- On boating trips, operators pretending to have little or no training. It has the reverse effect in that it provides re-assurance.

Alleviate anxiety

- Cape Tribulation jungle swing - helps calm nerves, made the experience fun.

- Skydiving - helped me calm down.

- Cage shark diving - used to release tension in a potential stressful situation

- Scuba diving on Great Barrier Reef. Both my children were nervous and the instructor used humour to deflect their anxieties.

- At a zoo, we had the option of holding "scary animals" (baby croc for example). The humorous tour guide created a calm atmosphere where once terrified people (like myself) participated.

- Canyon swing in Queenstown. Helps to get people over fear.

- White-water rafting, minimise people's unrealistic fears.

Lighten the mood/atmosphere
- Guide's humour lightened up the tour atmosphere
- Scuba guide in Vanuatu, gave us a very enjoyable first scuba trip by keeping the atmosphere light.
- On almost all tours, humour is provided as it creates a calm, relaxed environment.
- Overseas Contiki tour - tour manager told jokes during trip, lightened the mood.
- Driving to destination, fuel tank on empty. Driver made a game out of who could guess when the bus would stop rather than getting stressed about the lack of fuel.

Comments in Table 5.13 relate to humour provided *by* tourists and include the following categories: breaking the ice/bonding; alleviating anxieties and where humour was used as a coping strategy.

Table 5.13: Humour provided by tourists

Breaking the ice/bonding
- Lost in translation moments are the best with language barriers. Also genuine humour is great in tour guides.
- Open the way for conversation and lighten the mood.
- Two days out at sea with 30 strangers, humour is the ice breaker.
Alleviate anxiety
- Especially when you're scared e.g. before your first dive.
- Made my wife more comfortable about diving.
- With adrenaline stuff. Makes you feel more confident.
- At AJ Hackett Mingin Swing the other day. It was an anxiety situation and our humour helped us get over the anxiety.
Coping strategy (difficult, problematic, embarrassing travel incidences)
- When travelling in Rome with lots of other tours around us. Our tour guide was hilarious which made dealing with the crowds so much easier.
- Too many to recall. A lot about toilets in bad condition in Africa. Many around fellow travellers getting diarrhea.
- Walking up volcano in Costa Rica in pouring rain and mud. "This is the worst day of my life" said our five year old - lots of adult laughter!

Using humour to cope with awkward travel situation

Nearly a third of respondents (n = 148, 28.8%) reported that they remembered an incident where they personally used humour to cope with an awkward travel situation. Of these people, 118 took the opportunity to write down information reporting how and why humour helped to deal with these awkward travel moments. The comments were subjected to content analysis and 14 categories were established. Table 5.14 shows all categories, their number of instances and provides examples of the respondents' comments.

Table 5.14: Content analysis of humour that helped respondents cope with awkward travel situation

Category	N	Examples
Make the best of the situation	19	- Bus broken down at Kings Canyon. Joked about it was an extreme way to get a free camel burger. - Car broke down at the top of Harbour Bridge Sydney – "enjoy the view of Sydney Harbour." - Flight got cancelled and took a bus for 12 hours. You had to make yourself laugh and not be too upset.
Lighten the mood	13	- Bus broke down on a tour and while we were all a little angry, making jokes about being stranded lightened the mood as we all connected. - When my bus arrived at the hotel and the cargo door was opened, my bag fell out. I said "Not bad, you even get the bags to unload themselves." - Whenever I travel, I'm Australian!
Comforting others	10	- When someone was scared to bungee jump. - Lost people trying to help the other lost people. - Calm nerves of fellow air passengers.
Coping mechanism	10	- In overcrowded places, e.g. getting onto/off of planes. - First trip overseas in Europe and our bus trip's first visit to unusual toilets. I asked at the first trip meeting "Who stole all the toilets overnight?" Everyone laughed and realised that we all had to cope with new ways of doing things. - Family holiday in China - food on one particular trip was so awful we only survived it through good humour of the kids!
Filling downtime	9	- To lighten the situation when something is not going very well, e.g. long queues, waiting for food to arrive after a long wait. - When on a tourist coach that broke down (for approx. 3 hours) there were people who became worried and humour eased the situation. - Long flights become boring and bumpy. Start people watching and wonder where they are from and find funny names for them.

Breaking the ice/bonding	8	- Sitting next to strangers. - On Kuranda train to make the passengers opposite laugh, told them to smile when getting photo taken. - Light hearted break the ice joke/comment about weather or stereotype.
Language barriers	8	- Lost in translation - my Coke Light was in fact understood as "coconut." - We were in Lombok, Indonesia - our driver didn't speak much English and communication was confusing and difficult - we ended up playing charades to get our point across! - Watching movies in different languages whilst making up your own lines to cope with long bus rides.
Difficult situations	7	- Getting out of difficult situations at border crossings. - Phuket when we were stuck in a Police coup and not able to leave the country as airport was stormed by political activists. - Travelling as part of a small group in the USA. We kept being pulled aside and tested for drugs, terrorism, etc. It was frustrating so we made a joke of it to vent.
Motion sickness	7	- I am not a good traveller - get motion sickness, so do laugh at myself for my weakness. - Travel sickness: made a joke as I was getting sick. - When people get sick from water and food during travel, it can be funny to talk about bodily reactions so that the person knows what to do about their situation.
Alleviate anxieties	7	- In Thailand our tuk-tuk ride was really scary and a bit dangerous, we kept making jokes about the end and it made it easier. - Visiting Michaelmas Cay - laughed off any threat of possible dangers that may have existed on the reef. - I can't think of an exact example, but on several occasions when rock climbing in Victoria and trekking in New Zealand and Nepal I've used humour to cope with feeling anxious or exhausted in my adventurous situations, chatting away with my travelling companion and making light of it.
Embarrassing situations	6	- My husband spilt his drink in his lap on the plane ride here. We all joked about it including the air hostess and other passengers to cover a potentially embarrassing situation. - Walked into the wrong hotel room to a naked man. - Laughed when I walked into a street sign when in Canada.
Awkward situations	5	- Travelling there was no toilet and we joked it could be worse and be no paper. - Being squished into a minibus in Thailand with too many people sitting on top of people. - In Berlin we stayed at a hostel with a very awkward older man who made our sleeping arrangements a bit uncomfortable, but we used jokes and humour to take away our discomfort and make it through each night.
Kids engagement	5	- Children in the back seat crying because of long journey. Told jokes, played funny games to distract them. - When my kids fight, I try to use humour to dissipate the situation. - Children behaving badly - feed them to the local animals!

Conflict resolution	4	- I would try to make myself the butt of the situation to divert anger, etc. - When someone's being a prick. - Laugh it off when someone says something that might be taken the wrong way.

5.5.6 Assessing the outcomes of humour

Rating of the on-site tour guide humour

The fourth aim of this study attempted to assess respondents' answers while focusing in particular on the comfort-concentration-connection outcomes of humour in tourism settings found by Pearce (2009). Respondents were asked to indicate on various scales what they thought about the humour they encountered at the two tourism settings. Table 5.15 shows the mean ratings (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each of the eight scales of respondents' ratings. The means show that both tourism settings were perceived in quite similar ways. In terms of response to guide humour, the guides Hartley's appeared to be perceived as funnier by one entire scale point compared to the guides at Jungle Surfing.

Table 5.15: Mean ratings and standard deviations of scale items

Scale item	M	SD	M	SD
Ratings of guides' humour (RoGH)	6.3	1.9	7.3	1.7
Made me feel at ease with the tour	7.5	1.8	7.7	1.6
Creation of cheerful atmosphere	8.1	1.7	8.3	1.5
Keeps me more alert	6.0	2.0	7.1	1.8
Helps me understand explanations	6.1	2.0	6.7	1.9
Connection with the tour guide	7.2	1.8	7.5	1.5
Connection with other tourists	6.7	2.1	5.8	2.2
Satisfaction with overall experience	8.7	1.4	8.6	1.2

Keeping people's minds engaged and alert was also rated much higher at Hartley's by one scale point compared to Jungle Surfing. Jungle Surfing is very much a physical and adventurous activity were people might already be naturally attentive. Comparatively at Hartley's there is a lot of sitting around and simply observing almost all activities on offer. The humour here might play a much more important role in keeping people attentive and engaged.

Connections with the tour guides based on humour delivery were perceived almost equally while connections with other tourists on-site were rated much higher at Jungle Surfing that at Hartley's. As already discovered in Study 2, the forming of connection with other people on-site is influenced by the overall tourism context. At Jungle Surfing only up to 13 tourists are going on one trip with two to three jungle guides while at Hartley's there is a constant coming and going of tourists who are able to choose from the various activities they would like to be part of: crocodile cruise, crocodile attack show, snake show, cassowary feeding or koala feeding. It was interesting to notice that the satisfaction ratings for the experience overall was rated almost equal by participants.

Correlational analysis

The RoGH scale item, or perceived level of humour, was correlated with the other scale items included in the questionnaire using the Pearson correlation coefficient. This was done to establish what effect RoGH had on respondents' comfort levels, concentration levels, connection levels and overall satisfaction with the tour. Results are illustrated in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Correlations between RoGH item and other scale items

Rating of Guides' Humour (RoGH) and:	Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours	Hartley's Crocodile Adventures
-Made me feel more at ease with the tour	r = .62, n = 308, p < .0001	r = .59, n = 204, p < .0001
-Created a cheerful atmosphere	r = .67, n = 309, p < .0001	r = .64, n = 204, p < .0001
-Helped me to stay more alert	r = .53, n = 308, p < .0001	r = .55, n = 204, p < .0001
-Helped me to understand explanations better	r = .55, n = 308, p < .0001	r = .52, n = 203, p < .0001
-Connect more easily with the tour guide	r = .67, n = 309, p < .0001	r = .63, n = 204, p < .0001
-Connect more easily with other people on tour	r = .56, n = 308, p < .0001	r = .37, n = 204, p < .0001
-Satisfaction with experience overall	r = .43, n = 309, p < .0001	r = .60, n = 204, p < .0001

The responses received at Jungle Surfing showed strong positive relationships between the RoGH measure and how easily respondents felt they connected with their tour guides and with other people on the same tour. The perceived humour was also related to making respondents more alert and helping them understand the explanations better. The RoGH item also showed strong correlations between making people feel more at ease with the tour and creating a cheerful atmosphere. The relationship between the RoGH item and overall satisfaction showed merely a moderately strong relationship (r =.43, n = 309, p < .0001) for this setting.

At Hartley's, the RoGH item was also positively associated with feeling at ease, attentiveness, and respondents perceiving that they related to their tour guides more

easily. The experience at Hartley's is characterised by the constant streaming of tourists who move around the many different shows offered. This spectator mobility makes forming connections between the guide and the audience and among the tourists somewhat difficult. The correlation at Hartley's between RoGH and connecting with other people indicated a smaller relationship ($r = .37$, $n = 204$, $p < .0001$) than was the case for Jungle Surfing ($r = .56$, $n = 308$, $p < .0001$). At Jungle Surfing, where the guides spend nearly two hours with small groups of up to 13 people, the potential to develop humour-based bonds with the tourists is, arguably, achieved more easily.

Interestingly, the RoGH item showed a much stronger correlation with the overall satisfaction score at Hartley's ($r = .60$, $n = 204$, $p < .0001$) than at Jungle Surfing Tours ($r = .43$, $n = 309$, $p < .0001$). This indicates that humour and how it is related to tourists' overall satisfaction and, undoubtedly, the role of other mediating variables can be quite context specific. Although the correlations in this analysis provide an indication that the relationships between the variables are rather strong, Pallant (2007) warned to not mistake correlation for causality since there can be other possible influences that can affect study results.

In order to find out what group of people were most appreciative of the humour provided by tour guides, the results in Table 5.17 shows details of who gave the highest ratings for the RoGH scale, by rating the humour as 8 out of 10, 9 out of 10 and 10 out of 10. At both settings, it appeared to be female respondents coming from Australia who liked the tour guide's humour the most. There was an age difference between the two tourism settings whereby female respondents most appreciative of tour guide humour at Jungle Surfing were younger than the female respondents at Hartley's.

Table 5.17: Overview of respondents giving the highest humour ratings

Highly humoured	Jungle Surfing (n = 88)	Hartley's (n = 94)
Gender	F (69.3%)	F (53.2%)
Age group	20-29 (36.8%)	40-49 (36.6%)
World region	Australia (55.7%)	Australia (84%)
Travel party	Couple (36.0%)	Family with children (50.0%)

Group comparisons for scale items for the entire sample

The lack of specific empirical studies of humour offer an opportunity to investigate demographic profile links and humour responses. This material is not hypothesis driven but is presented as a resource for further studies.

Comparison by gender

Using the entire sample by combining the datasets of both tourism settings, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores on all scale items for males and females. There were no significant differences in scores for the RoGH item, connections with tour guide and connections with others. However statistically significant differences between the genders were found for the comfort and concentration scale items.

The comfort enhancing properties of humour seemed to play a greater role for female respondents (M = 7.71, SD = 1.7) than it did for male respondents (M = 7.33, SD = 1.6; t (508) = - 2.3, p =.016) in terms of making them feel at ease with the tour. A similar result was found for humour creating a cheerful atmosphere with female respondents (M = 8.29, SD = 1.6) reporting a higher mean score than male respondents (M = 7.99, SD = 1.6; t (509) = - 2.0, p =.04). The concentration outcome of humour also appeared to have a greater effect on female respondents (M = 6.59, SD = 2.0) in terms of making them more alert than male respondents (M = 6.20, SD = 1.8; t (508) = - 2.1, p =.03). The same was the case for understanding explanations better where female respondents (M = 6.50, SD = 2.0) reported a higher mean score than male respondents (M = 6.06, SD = 2.0; t (507) = - 2.4, p =.015). In terms of overall satisfaction score, females (M = 8.85, SD = 1.1) also showed a higher mean rating than males respondents (M = 8.47, SD = 1.4; t (509) = - 3.1, p =.002).

Comparison by age groups

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the impact of age groups on the various scale items. Subjects were divided into six groups according to their age: under 20 years; 20-29 years; 30-39 years; 40-49 years; 50-59 years and over

65 years. There was a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$ for two age groups: the 20-29 year olds and the 50-59 year olds in three of the scales. The scale which allowed respondents to rate whether they connected more easily to their guides through humour was statistically significant for the 20-29 year olds and 50-59 years old: $F (5, 500) = 2.4$, $p = 0.035$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test showed that the mean scores for the 20-29 year olds ($M = 7.78$, $SD = 1.4$) were significantly different from the 50-59 years old ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 2.2$) indicating that the younger age group perceived that they connected better with their tour guides than the more mature age group.

The scale measuring if humour helped respondents to stay more alert was also statistically significant for the 20-29 year olds and 50-59 years old: $F (5, 499) = 2.6$, $p = 0.021$. Once more it was the 20-29 year olds ($M = 6.72$, $SD = 1.6$) who showed significantly higher mean scores than the 50-59 years old ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 2.1$). Finally there was another significant difference between 20-29 year olds and 50-59 years old in the scale measuring whether humour made them feel more at ease with the tour: $F (5, 499) = 2.6$, $p = 0.019$. Again, it was the 20-29 year olds ($M = 7.98$, $SD = 1.4$) who reported a higher mean score than the 50-59 year olds ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 1.8$).

Comparison of domestic and international respondents

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare each of the scale items for domestic and international respondents. Significant differences in scores for domestic respondents ($M = 7.49$, $SD = 1.6$) and international respondents ($M = 7.10$, $SD = 1.8$) could be found for the scale item measuring if the humour helped to connect more easily with the tour guide $t (507) = 2.3$, $p = 0.023$ (two-tailed) with domestic respondents showing a higher mean rating. Mean scores measuring whether respondents thought the humour helped them stay more alert were also significantly different for domestic respondents ($M = 6.61$, $SD = 1.9$) and international respondents ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 2.0$); $t (506) = 2.9$, $p = 0.003$ (two-tailed). The differences in this case revealed that Australian respondents felt that it was easier to connect with their tour guides and stay more alert than international respondents did because they probably related more with the Australian humour that was presented at the two Australian tourism settings.

Comparison by international world regions

An ANOVA was used to reveal any impacts the international places of origin (UK (n = 48), Continental Europe (n = 46), North America (n = 40) and New Zealand (n = 27)) had on the scales. None of the scales showed a statistically significant difference except the satisfaction scale. The satisfaction scale was statistically different in mean score for Continental Europe and the United Kingdom: $F_{(3, 157)} = 5.0$, $p = 0.002$. The Post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that mean scores for the UK (M = 9.06, SD = 0.9) were significantly different than the mean scores for Continental Europe (M = 7.96, SD = 1.5). In this case the respondents from the UK seemed to be statistically more satisfied with their overall experience than respondents from Continental Europe.

It should be noted that Australia (n = 341, M = 8.75, SD = 1.2) was deleted in the ANOVA because when it was included in the analysis it violated the homogeneity of variance assumption due to unequal sample sizes (the Australian sample was much larger than the international places of origin). The mean score for the Australian sample is presented here as a benchmark point.

Comparison by travel groups

Statistically significant results were revealed through an ANOVA between the five travel groups. A significant effect was found for the scale item between respondents travelling on their own (M = 7.31, SD = 1.8) and respondents travelling with their friends (M = 6.29, SD = 1.7) measuring perceived level of humour of tour guides: $F_{(4, 503)} = 2.5$, $p = 0.039$. Another scale item which returned a significant effect for humour was helping to understand explanations better: $F_{(4, 501)} = 2.7$, $p = 0.024$, were respondents travelling alone (M = 7.38, SD = 1.8) received higher mean scores than respondents travelling with their friends (M = 5.93, SD = 1.9). It might be highly likely that respondents travelling on their own were fully able to focus on what tour guides were saying without any distractions from friends or other family members around them.

Comparison by humour appreciation and humour production

As noted before, the ratings to the four cartoons (1 = a little bit funny, 2 = quite funny, 3 = very funny) were transformed into a new variable called 'humour appreciation of cartoons' by adding up the ratings for each cartoon made by respondents into their total sum. Table 5.18 shows the cut-off points on which the various humour appreciation categories are based on.

Table 5.18: Cut-off points for humour appreciation categories

Sum of cartoon ratings	Humour appreciation of cartoons
1 to 4	Low humour appreciation
5 to 8	Medium humour appreciation
9 to 12	High humour appreciation

An ANOVA was conducted to reveal the impact of 'humour appreciation of cartoons' with the ratings of the other scale items. Based on the three groups that were created for the new variable, there were statistically significant differences in mean scores for all scale items except for the overall satisfaction item as can be seen in Table 5.19. The results in this table clearly show that with increased levels of humour appreciation of cartoons, the respondents' scores on the various humour scale response items also increased.

Table 5.19: Mean scores of scale items with increasing humour appreciation levels

ANOVA	Low humour appreciation of cartoons	Medium humour appreciation of cartoons	High humour appreciation of cartoons	F statistic
Response to guide humour	M = 5.82, SD = 2.1*	M = 6.70, SD = 1.7*	M = 6.95, SD = 1.6*	F (2, 510) = 4.6, p= 0.009
Feel more at ease with the tour	M = 6.79, SD = 2.1*	M = 7.49, SD = 1.8*	M = 8.03, SD = 1.4*	F (2, 509) = 6.8, p= 0.001
Creation of a cheerful atmosphere	M = 7.41, SD = 1.9*	M = 8.14, SD = 1.6*	M = 8.46, SD = 1.5*	F (2, 510) = 4.9, p= 0.007
Increased alertness through humour	M = 6.09, SD = 2.1	M = 6.30, SD = 2.0*	M = 6.92, SD = 1.9*	F (2, 509) = 4.1, p= 0.017
Understanding explanations better	M = 5.59, SD = 2.6*	M = 6.20, SD = 2.0*	M = 6.93, SD = 1.8*	F (2, 508) = 7.3, p= 0.001
Connections with tour guide	M = 6.91, SD = 2.2	M = 7.30, SD = 1.7	M = 7.71, SD = 1.7	F (2, 510) = 3.1, p= 0.044
Connections with others on - site	M = 5.74, SD = 2.3*	M = 6.27, SD = 2.3	M = 6.94, SD = 1.9*	F (2, 509) = 4.8, p= 0.008
Satisfaction with experience overall	M = 8.5, SD = 1.1	M = 8.65, SD = 1.4	M = 8.87, SD = 1.2	F (2, 510) = 1.3, p= 0.262

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.7 Influence of humour on potential future visits

The final aim was to find out what possible outcomes successful humour delivery can have on potential future visits. More than half of respondents (57.5%) at both tourism settings said they had previously been to tourist attractions where humour was used in a similar way to that encountered at the two tourism settings. Considering that humour is delivered in such successful and professional ways at both settings, it is unsurprising to reveal that the majority of respondents (95.9%) reported that they would like to go on more tours or attractions that used humour in a similar way as it was used at the two tourism attractions. The response to this question was 94.4% at Jungle Surfing and 98.0% at Hartley's.

5.6 Discussion

The findings of this study show that the categories of humour most frequently used by the two tourism operators were "amusing stories" and "friendly teasing". These humour devices are easy to understand and work well with many kinds of tourist audiences. For the tour guides these categories of humour also appeared to be straightforward to apply. In a wildlife attraction such as Hartley's the telling of amusing stories is a useful way to engage with members of the audience and to capture their attention. During the crocodile attack show it can take up to 40 to 50 minutes to get the crocodile to demonstrate the 'death role' and during that time it is up to the guides to entertain the audience. At Jungle Surfing the use of amusing stories and friendly teasing were also the two most popular ways to deliver humour. The third most popular way to convey humour at the Jungle Surfing operation included the use of "funny exaggerations" while at Hartley's, it was the tour guides who "target the humour at themselves".

Due to the adventurous and physical nature of jungle surfing, where tourists are hanging up to 20 meters off the ground while gliding in the canopy of a rainforest, the use of exaggerations and overstatements presumably contributes to enhancing the thrill of the experience. With the much larger and mobile tourist audiences that gather at Hartley's, the tour guides' self-deprecating humour was employed quite frequently. Obviously the use of self-deprecating humour is a very safe option which is perceived as non-threatening because the humour was either targeted at the tour guides themselves or aimed at their colleagues instead of anyone specific in the audience. For example, many tour guides tell their audience about funny incidences that resulted in personal embarrassment which others readily understand. Perks (2012) noted that there are other kinds of humour that tour guides could use including verbal jesting, puns and irony which are usually perceived as appropriate by audiences because they demonstrate the presenter's cleverness.

The sentence completion exercise which asked respondents to state why they thought humour in tourism should be encouraged showed some differences in responses according to the two tourism settings. At Jungle Surfing (See Figure 5.5), respondents noted the calming effect of humour and laughter more frequently which undoubtedly helped them deal with their anxieties and nerves while taking part in the adventure tourism activity. On the other hand, respondents at Hartley's noted that humour made

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their wildlife park experience a more relaxing and enjoyable one (See Figure 5.6). Moreover the attention-arresting properties of humour seemed to play a more important role at Hartley's than it did at Jungle Surfing in drawing in people's attention during the various wildlife presentations. This is likely to relate to the contextual factors of the two tourism settings, where humour was clearly perceived differently by the respondents.

In both tourism settings, no statistically significant results were obtained for the various scale items after experimentally increasing the effect of humour. There are several explanations as to why the manipulation scenarios did not have a more substantial effect on participants' responses. First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that individual differences exist in regards to peoples' humour appreciation based on their gender, age, nationality, previous experiences and many other factors. Secondly, while the tour guides showed their goodwill in using the provided humorous material in their tourism presentations, there may have been situations that arose during the tours that made it impossible to be consistent in their humour effort across different contexts.

In providing explanations on why the various manipulation scenarios did not have the hypothesised enhancing effect, there are four points to consider. Firstly, there may have been issues associated with the Hawthorne effect where the guide's awareness of being part of an experiment may have led to changes in their behaviours. Secondly, the humour intervention itself was "staged" in nature with asking the tour guides to remember jokes and humorous stories which were sourced by the researcher. This material was not organic to each day or event of the actual tourism settings and this clearly opposes the findings made in Chapter Four which argue for natural humour delivery. Potential future studies may therefore need to rely on humour generated from the spontaneity of the day as opposed to using canned jokes.

A further explanation would be that the instructions given to the tour guides may have been ambiguous or not clear enough. From the onset of this study it was recognised that the researcher only had limited control over how humour could be manipulated. Also, since the researcher relied on the tour guides' goodwill, it is problematic to say how much of the instructions from the researcher were followed by the tour guides. Therefore good liaisons with the management staff are necessary when organising similar quasi-experimental studies in the future that highlight exactly what is required.

The final point involves acknowledging the potential of a ceiling effect. Both tourism settings in this study were selected using previous tourists' comments on TripAdvisor in establishing that the two settings were already very successful in their application of humour. It appears that the treatments chosen in this study were only minor considering the overall scheme of these two award winning tourism attractions who are already successful in their humour delivery. Humour interventions similar to the ones conducted in this study may be more successful with other tourism operators who are not already so proficient in their humour delivery. The effect on the humour outcomes are highly dependent on the size of the increase of the manipulation, which in this case may not have been sufficient. In line with the naturalistic theme of this research it was not practical to use bigger or more dramatic interventions, such as maybe employing a professional comedian. Mark (2010) recognised that there are always going to be potential complexities and contingencies existing in the world that can make interventions have varied effects for different types of contexts.

It can sometimes be the case that data in experimental studies are not showing the hypothesised effect due to extraneous variables that also affect the outcome measures (Breakwell, 2000a). As shown at Hartley's, where the head tour guide had reservations about including the humorous material sourced by the researcher, conducting quasi-experiments in real commercial settings can be problematic at times. Incorporating various measures may be useful for the research project but might be less suitable for the real-life tourism settings where the studies are conducted. In this case it led to restrictions in how the study was carried out due to the head tour guide's concern. Practical issues when working in real commercial tourism environments have also been acknowledged by Reiser and Simmons (2005) who note that quasi-experimental studies can be complex, include design constraints, lack of control over various external background factors and are often a time and resource consuming process. However, the authors still acknowledge the importance of using a naturalist study design irrespective of certain constraints.

Assessing the outcomes of humour it was found that younger respondents (20-29 year olds) reported statistically higher mean scores than more mature respondents (50-59 year olds) for connecting with tour guides, being more alert and feeling more at ease with a tour through humour. Therefore age was found to play its role in humour appreciation. Knuuttila (2010, p. 34) pointed out that a sense of humour actually

developed with increasing age due to the acquirement of "enough life experience to be able to discriminate between serious and non-serious matters", however he also noted that he had previously met children and young people with a good appreciation for humour. The issue to note here is that there may be a strong self-selection operating where young backpackers might be particularly attracted to the Jungle Surfing style of experience with its publicity for fun.

Significantly different mean scores were also found between the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. In this case the respondents from the United Kingdom seemed to be statistically more satisfied with their overall experience than respondents from Continental Europe. This result may indicate that language capabilities play a central role in understanding humour. Respondents from the United Kingdom are more proficient in understanding humour delivered in Australian English than respondents from Continental Europe might be. Additionally, a national alignment in United Kingdom and Australian humour styles has been suggested by Robertson (2013).

It was also found that participants who visited the attractions on their own rated the tour guides' humour as significantly funnier and also returned a significant effect for humour helping to understand explanations better compared to respondents travelling with others. When travelling alone there are likely to be less distractions than having a group of friends or family members around who might be competing for a person's attention with what the tour guide is saying. For this reason a person travelling alone would also be able to listen more attentively to what is said by tour guides and understand their explanations better.

Another interesting finding was to discover that the various scale items measuring the outcomes of humour were rated higher when respondents indicated a higher appreciation for the humour in the four cartoons. In this case, the respondents' individuality in terms of their age, place of origin, travel composition as well as the humour appreciation of the four cartoon images highlight the subjective nature of humour.

Since the majority of respondents (95.9%) indicated that they would visit other attractions where humour was used in a similar fashion, there is little doubt that the emotional rewards of these kinds of humorous experiences were important to respondents. There could in fact be a motivational imperative that Pearce and Kang

(2009) referred to as the concept of transferred loyalty, where tourists prefer to have tourism experiences with similar environmental attributes. This is manifested by visiting places and settings which are similar but not identical to those which had been visited on previous occasions.

Other useful insights gained from this study included finding out that respondents with the highest levels of on-site humour appreciation (ratings of 8/10 to 10/10) were more likely to be Australian females. The study also showed that humour had a greater impact on the female respondents' comfort levels, concentration levels and satisfaction levels. Perhaps it is worthwhile to consider that majority of tour guides in this investigation happened to be male. Previous studies on the differences in how a sense of humour is perceived by gender groups may cast a light on this finding. Experiments undertaken by Bressler, Martin and Balshine (2006) showed, for example, that humour production and appreciation was valued differently: women valued a partner who was skilful in producing humour but who was also receptive of their humour while men merely preferred it when women were receptive to their humour. It was also interesting to note that at Jungle Surfing, more than half of the jokes written down in the humour production question came from female respondents. This is in contradiction with findings of other studies that usually consider men as the active joke teller while women are only passively receiving humour and not actually producing humour themselves (Kotthoff, 2006).

5.7 Summary

This third study contributes and builds on the previous two studies by measuring what effect humour had on respondents' comfort, concentration and connection levels. By selecting two different tourism attractions it was possible to identify factors that contributed to a better understanding of the differences in using humour in terms of humour categories and impacts of humour. Overall, the correlational analysis showed that the humour used by the tour guides during tourism experiences contributed significantly to the tourists' comfort, connection and concentration levels. Personal observations by the researcher affirmed that laughter and smiles were indeed frequent occurrences at both tourism settings. Irrespective of the manipulation scenarios not

showing the hypothesised effect of increases in response to tour guide humour and overall satisfaction level, it is argued that the quasi-experimental design presented in this study provided a valuable contribution to advance the understanding of the tourism-humour relationship.

Chapter Six

Synthesis, implications and conclusion

Chapter Six Overview

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a research synthesis which integrates the findings and pursues the implications from all three studies of this research. After recapturing the key findings of each study, theoretical and practical contributions of this research are highlighted. By using Flyvbjerg's concept of phronetic social sciences as a theoretical framework, it is possible to point out some key implications for tourism operators wishing to increase their humour use. The limitations of this research are addressed and subsequent recommendations for future studies are made.

6.2 Recapturing the key findings of each study

Three landmark studies were conducted to achieve the overall aim of this thesis research. The key findings of each study are recaptured in the following sections.

Study 1 – Exploration of humorous travel episodes

Study 1 included an analysis of 200 travel blogs. The aim of this study was to develop a greater understanding of the humorous experiences that tourists reported in these blogs. Through thematic content analysis, the humorous experiences were categorised into four broad themes: (1) travel essentials and novelty, (2) humorous episodes that can happen to everyone, (3) social influence and control of humour and (4) the observant tourist. Together these categories and the instances they represent reveal that humour occurring during tourism experiences is quite diverse depending on its context and people involved.

The content of the humorous blog episodes was also categorised into the three major humour theories and Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model. From the viewpoint of relief theory, humour allowed the blogging tourists to cope with any awkward and embarrassing situations they encountered during their travels. Numerous tourists also wrote about travel episodes which they perceived as strange or were unexpected in nature which related to the incongruity theory of humour. The superiority theory of humour was also present with several of the tourists writing about certain aspects that were made fun of, i.e. bad infrastructure conditions and the appearance and behaviours of some people.

In regards to Pearce's (2009) model, the category of comfort appeared most frequently in the travel blogs. The humour in these episodes appeared to be used mostly in self-enhancing ways such as alleviating boredom or seeing the funny side of things even if the circumstances might have been quite uncomfortable when they happened. The concentration category was present with several tourists writing about episodes when tour guides made funny comments. Additionally concentration was evident as revealed through reporting numerous amusing signs and t-shirts spotted during the bloggers' travels. The category of connection showed that humour was used to foster interpersonal relationships and build good rapport with other people. The tourists often referred to humour based on interactions with locals and other travellers in the blog episodes. Having an amusing time with the locals of a destination or other travellers can lead to further positive emotions but also built relations between people.

Study 2 – Perceptions of humour as part of on-site experience

The purpose of Study 2 was to explore tourists' perceptions about the use of humour during tourism experiences by sampling several tourism businesses. The focus groups conducted with 103 participants made it possible to gather their opinions and perspectives about the humour used at four tourism settings. The study explored Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model in detail and highlighted how and why each of the three categories materialised for the focus group participants based on the experiences they had at the four tourism settings. This study also established some of the downsides of humour in tourism settings such as using too much humour and humour that might be perceived as staged or forced. Considerations was also given to people who might not understand or misinterpret humour and humour that might cause offence. There was also a section that highlighted some tourism settings where humour may seem inappropriate such as in dark tourism setting and that care should be taken when using humour in airlines and in safety briefings.

Furthermore, the study ascertained why using humour can be of value for tourism operators. Responses were categorised into seven major themes through content analysis and included being able to create an enjoyable day and a tourism experience that is perceived as unique through humour. There was also the potential to generate repeat visits, extended periods of stay at an attraction, the impression of added value, opportunities for word-of-mouth referrals and a more professional image. Also key considerations which tourism businesses should be aware of when using humour were identified. These considerations included being aware of the specific tourism setting, the tourist's individuality, the tour guide's confidence in using humour, the relevance of humour used, and the tour guide's ability to read the humour response of an audience and then react accordingly. It was also important to focus on the entire performance in how humour was presented and to ensure that humour delivery was as natural as possible.

Finally, the study highlighted some differences in how humour was applied based on the individual tourism settings. The results indicated that the concentration category of humour applies more to tourism attractions such as Hartley's Crocodile Adventures where educational presentations are an important part of the experiential offering. For more adventures or fun tourism activities such as white-water rafting or going on a tour

bus, the comfort enhancing properties of humour seemed to play a bigger role. In regards to what types of humour were most liked by the different nationalities who took part in the focus group interviews, it must be said that even though the range of responses was diverse and rich, no inferences were made in regards to what nationality groups preferred what type of humour due to the limited number of focus group participants. None of the nationality groups interviewed, were large enough to claim as a representative sample.

Study 3 – Assessment of humour outcomes

The purpose of Study 3 was to assess the effect humour had on participants. Using a quasi-experimental field study, respondents were exposed to various manipulation scenarios to measure their responses to various humour stimuli. Overall, 514 completed questionnaires were collected from two tourism settings. This study identified the most frequently used categories of humour during tourism experiences as amusing stories and friendly teasing. It was also established that the outcomes of the changing manipulation scenarios did not produce significant results and explanations were offered for this set of outcomes. In identifying the respondents' perceptions as to why humour should be encouraged in tourism settings, some differences inherent to the two tourism settings chosen in this study were highlighted. Respondents at the more adventurous tourism setting of Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours noted the calming effect that humour had. The responses received at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures specified that the humour contributed to the enjoyment of the day as well as affecting tourists' attention levels.

The Likert scale items used to assess the outcomes of humour based on Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model also identified some of the differences in humour use based on the two settings especially in regards to the concentration and connection outcomes. Keeping peoples' minds engaged and alert appeared more important at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures than it did at Jungle Surfing. Alternatively, connections were more likely to be fostered at Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours due to their smaller tour groups. Correlational analysis showed that overall humour seemed to play a greater role for female respondents in terms of making them feel comfortable and gaining and keeping their attention. The results also clearly showed that with increased levels of humour appreciation, as assessed by cartoons in the questionnaire, the

respondents' scores on the various humour scale response items also increased. In terms of potential future visits, humour seemed to have a very positive effect since the study revealed that the majority of respondents (95.9%) reported that they would like to go on more tours or attractions that used humour in a similar way as it was used at the two tourism attractions.

In order to reveal any impacts the international places of origin (UK (n = 48), Continental Europe (n = 46), North America (n = 40) and New Zealand (n = 27)) had on the various scales, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted with the survey data. Except for the satisfaction scale, none of the other scales showed a statistically significant difference. In this case the satisfaction scale was statistically different in mean score for Continental Europe and the United Kingdom: $F_{(3, 157)} = 5.0$, $p = 0.002$. The Post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that mean scores for the UK (M = 9.06, SD = 0.9) were significantly different than the mean scores for Continental Europe (M = 7.96, SD = 1.5). This indicates that the respondents from the UK seemed to be statistically more satisfied with their overall experience than respondents from Continental Europe.

6.3 Implications and applications of this research

In terms of advancing knowledge in this area of research, this thesis research makes theoretical and practical contributions. A theoretical contribution lies in having seized the opportunity to explore and add on to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model by showing specifically how each of the three categories contributed to tourists' experiences. Another major contribution lies in outlining the links of the tourism-humour relationship with positive psychology. A further contribution involves proposing a new conceptual model for humour in tourism settings based on the findings of this research. Finally, practical contributions are outlined in the form of potentially useful tips for tourism operators who wish to use humour as a source of creating enjoyable and engaging experiences for tourists.

6.3.1 Theoretical implications

Exploring and adding on to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model

One theoretical contribution of this research lies in exploring and adding on to Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model. In his paper, Pearce (2009, p. 639) stated that "humour establishes visitor comfort levels, it assists visitor concentration and it establishes connections to tourism presenters." This particular model was addressed in each of the three studies to highlight how each of the categories were applied. In particular the results of Study 2 show in detail, in Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4., how each of the categories is occurring from the perspective of the focus group participants.

Furthermore in adding on to this particular model, the findings of this research also illustrated that the concentration outcome of humour does not only occur during on-site tourism experiences, but humour also contributed to the formation of positive memories for tourists to take home. Another addition to the model is made by acknowledging that humour is not only helpful in establishing connections to tourism presenters but it also has an important role to play in fostering connections with other tourists who might be present at a tourism setting. It was also recognised that there are some influential factors that can impact on how connections are formed, for example, the size of a tourism setting, the type of the attraction or tour, the number of tourists on-site as well as the type of tourists a particular tourism setting attracts in the first place.

Links to Positive Psychology

Another theoretical contribution of this research lies in enhancing the link between tourism and positive psychology. In this section, Pearce's (2009) comfort-concentration-connection model is used to highlight how each category of this model relates to the previous literature on positive psychology as well as to provide a comparative interpretation of the three undertaken studies.

Comfort

It became evident that for the majority of participants the humour provided a great deal of enjoyment irrespective of the various settings. The findings across the three studies indicate that humour was influential in making tourism experiences more enjoyable by providing positive emotions and fun. The results of this research also revealed some of the positive benefits that tourists gained from humour such as filling downtime, relieving boredom and successful dealing with awkward or stressful travel situations. In particular the findings of Study 1 showed that tourists did not only rely on their tour guides to be humorous but instead also used humour to provide fun for themselves based on the immediate environments they found themselves in. Perceiving situations as joyful and amusing as well as having a humorous outlook on life helps people to feel better in a given situation. Martin et al., (2003) referred to this as self-enhancing humour, which involves people who are able to use humour as a coping strategy in all sorts of life situations.

At the tourism settings chosen for Studies 2 and 3, humour was indeed part of the experience offering. The tour guides at these tourism settings used humour to expertly manipulate the atmosphere to one where the tourists felt comfortable to be in novel situations. The use of humour also appeared to play a major role in calming peoples' nerves before adventure tourism activities such as scuba diving, white-water rafting and jungle surfing. Research by Mitas, Yarnal and Chick (2012) found that positive emotions such as amusement, warmth, interest and awe play a crucial part in tourists' experiences. One finding in Study 2 was that humour provided a good start during the various tourism experiences by creating a relaxing atmosphere that was readily appreciated by everyone. The laughter generated made research participants feel happy to be part of their tourism experiences. Moreover, the contagious nature of humour and laughter also appeared to make it possible to pick up on the positive atmosphere for people whose English might not be as good.

Concentration

By achieving a more relaxed atmosphere at the various tourism settings, respondents appeared to be more receptive to instructional messages. Previous research has found

that people who are in a positive mood seemed to be paying more attention and were also open to new information (Powell & Andresen, 1985; Schmidt, 1991). This also concurs with Moscardo (2009) who reported that mindful tourists are more likely to pay attention to management/safety requests on-site and are more likely to learn due to increased awareness.

The findings of studies 2 and 3 showed that humour was also used to entertain tourists and to enliven interpretation material to gain their attention, which is obviously useful not just for classroom settings (Meeus & Mahieu, 2009). The findings were consistent with the view that contemporary tourists prefer to have active, multisensory and emotionally rich experiences, instead of simply passively absorbing information (Smith, MacLeod & Robertson, 2010). Humour was useful for breaking the interpretation messages into smaller digestible pieces and reinforced relevant parts of the message.

Overall, many participants stated that they felt through the humour they were more involved and engaged with their tourism experiences which is likely to have a positive effect on their attention and learning. Emotionally arousing occasions like these are excellent attention-grabbers and also tend to be better remembered than events of a more neutral kind (Medina, 2008). For Carlson (2011) little doubt exists that solving the incongruities found in a lot of humour plays a central part in humour appreciation, but he also acknowledged that the memory advantage of humour may also be due to other aspects of humour. Others have recognised that emotions and cognition are not occurring separately but are linked to one another and that affective states can clearly influence what we learn, what we remember and also the kinds of evaluations and judgments we make (Forgas, 2001; Medina, 2008).

Another important finding of Study 2 in relation to the concentration outcome was that respondents felt that humour would have an effect in regards to the formation of memories. Numerous comments were made during the focus groups stating that their humour-induced tourism experiences would probably stay with them for a long time through the means of creating positive memories. This is because the emotional distinctiveness of some experiences where strong emotional responses are created makes them easy to remember (Schmidt, 1991). Therefore such pleasant and fun holiday experiences are likely to play a role after the holiday has already ended.

Previously Frew (2006a) noted that tourists benefit from thinking back to the humorous times they had during their holiday.

Remembering such travel experiences may lead to psychological benefits such as increased well-being and social benefits because memories of this kind can reinstate positive frames of mind (Neal, Sirgy & Uysal, 1999). This line of argument also can be linked to Fredrickson's (2001) work that stated the importance of positive emotions as a durable personal resource. Positive emotions go beyond their acquisition and can act as a reserve that can be drawn on when we are in different emotional states (Fredrickson, 2001). Remembering a pleasant and fun holiday experience may be a very good example of such a reserve that can be drawn on during a sombre day. Study 1 revealed that many tourists write about their humorous experiences in a travel journal or a travel blog so they can relive their own memories months or even years later.

Connections

The research findings showed that humour played an important role in creating an atmosphere where many tourists felt comfortable forming connection with others. Fredrickson (1998, 2001) explained in her "broaden and build theory" the importance of positive emotions to broaden one's momentary thought-action repertoire. Positive emotions not only broaden a person's attention but they also build their social resources. The blog episodes in Study 1 illustrated that humour was in fact used as an ice-breaker in various situation in order to connect with other people more easily. Locals and other travellers were frequently referred to in the blog episodes. Having an amusing time with the locals of a destination or other travellers can lead to positive emotions but also built relations between people.

In Study 2 numerous illustrative examples were provided by focus group participants who felt that they connected with their tour guides on a more personal level due to their humorous presentations. Humour that is used appropriately by tour guides obviously builds a foundation for a warmer relationship which tourists will remember positively. Indeed joke telling was found to be quite powerful in conveying something personal about the joke teller. Norrick (2003, p. 1344) recognised that humour can make "a person's presence more strongly felt in a multi-party conversation".

The findings in Study 2 and 3 also illustrated that humour played a role in making tourism experiences more interactive and transactional because respondents perceived it was easier to initiate a conversation with others around them by acting as a successful ice breaker. Tour guides as the social facilitators of the tourism activities play an important part in encouraging interactions between group members (Pastorelli, 2003). This research showed how humour was successfully used to break the ice in a bus or a boat full of stranger by creating a positive social setting where tourists felt at ease. Using humour was also shown to be helpful for gaining the trust of an audience when delivering interpretation material. For example, some research participants stated that humour gave tour guides a more credible and professional image. To participants, the use of humour indicated that their tour guides were very knowledgeable about delivering safety and education messages. Such implied competence was seen as a prerequisite for the effective use of humour.

Proposing a conceptual model for humour in tourism settings

Key considerations for the use of humour at tourism settings were highlighted in all three studies. Following from these considerations, it is possible to propose a new conceptual model for the use of humour in tourism settings. As shown in Figure 6.1, this model considers the components which are necessary for successful delivery of humour including the specific tourism setting, the contextual factors on the day of the tour, the tourist's individuality and the tourism presenters. All these components influence how humour is perceived in terms the various outcomes of humour including comfort, concentration and connections.

The model also shows the interrelatedness of the three categories of comfort, concentration and connection which was acknowledged for its use in tourism. The data showed that none of these three categories were likely to happen in isolation because being comfortable in a tourism settings allowed tourists to socially connect with the tour guide as well as other people in their tour group. Similarly, when humour was used to capture the tourists' interest and attention and this was done in a humorous way, then respondents felt comfortable. In Figure 6.1, this interrelatedness is shown by including the three outcomes in a circle.

Although tourists themselves are very likely to use humour amongst their personal travel groups, once they take part in a formal tourism activity then a great deal of responsibility lies with the tour guides in ensuring that the experience is a positive one for tourists and a rewarding experience for the tour guides themselves (Pastorelli, 2003). Differences in how humour is conveyed by tourism presenters and perceived by tourists are dependent on their respective tourism settings and contextual factors. Further research into this topic might uncover more elements that are likely to impact the tourism-humour relationship.

This conceptual model differs from Pearce's (2009) pattern and pathways model of humour, in that the proposed model focuses less on the many pathways that are possible in the tourism-humour relationship. Instead it focuses on the outcomes of humour in term of comfort, concentration and connections by highlighting their interrelatedness in this new model. The new model also places high emphasis on the various external factors, i.e. the specific tourism setting, any contextual factors, the tourists' individuality and the tourism presenters, that shape to what degree the three outcomes of humour might be present at certain tourism settings.

Specific tourism setting

Type of tourist attraction

Target audience attracted

Use of humour appropriate for setting

Contextual factors

Size of the tour group

Weather

Tourist flows and mobility

Pre-existing mood states of tourists

Tourist's individuality

Diversity of tourism audiences

Individual perspectives on humour

English language capabilities

Travel composition

Tourism presenter

Ability to delivery humour

Pre-planned vs spontaneous forms of humour

Personality and communication skills of tour guide

Connection

Comfort

Concentration

Figure 6.1: A conceptual model for the use of humour during tourism experiences

Specific tourism setting

Most of the humour explored in this research originated from the multiple perceptions of numerous individuals who were exposed to humour in various tourism settings. Analysing and interpreting quality tourism experiences needs to happen within the specific places they take place and by the specific people who are part of a tourism setting (Jennings, 2006). This research suggested that the type of tourist attraction and the target audience it attracts may have implications for how humour is used in the first place. In the end it can only be acknowledged that humour used in tourism settings is rather setting specific and cannot be applied successfully to all tourism contexts. Generally speaking for humour in tourism to work it needs to be appropriate to its respective setting and fit the requirements of the given situation. There are also certain tourism places where the use of humour would be very inappropriate as has been identified in this research.

The various tourism settings selected in this research were diverse in nature and differences could be detected in how humour was applied. Tourism operators of the more adventurous kind such as Raging Thunder white-water rafting and Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours were very successful in using humour to relieve tourists' anxieties and to foster connections between people during the tourism experience. Hartley's Crocodile Adventures and Down Under Cruise and Dive applied humour to their advantage by creating a cheerful atmosphere as well as by making tourists more mindful of any educational and instructional messages that needed to be presented. Barefoot Tours was considered very successful for using humour to create enjoyment through laughter and connections through humorous engagement.

Contextual factors

The interactions between tourist and tourism presenter are likely to be influenced by many contextual factors, some of which might even be impossible to control or change, i.e. the weather, the mood states of people coming on a tour, tourist flow and mobility. This research showed that the size of a tour group is likely to have an impact on the use of humour during interactions between tourist and tourism presenter. Wimer and Beins (2008, p. 351) recognised that humour does "not occur in a vacuum" because people

usually rely on the humour responses of others. Moreover, Provine (2000) found that laughter is 30 times more likely to happen when in company with others than when being alone. This will also have implications on how individual tourists react to humour. The findings of Studies 2 and 3 stressed that tourism settings with much larger tourist numbers and high tourist mobility, are still very successful in using humour to enhance tourists' comfort and concentration level but less with forming connections amongst tourists. The pre-existing mood states of tourists when they enter an attraction can also affect how they perceive a tourism experience (Crilley, 2011). This may also include the mood states of the people they travel with.

One of the main points that would also need to be considered is that tour guides are dealing with very diverse audiences in tourism in terms of gender, age, nationality, culture and language. For some audience members humour may therefore be too difficult to understand because words in a humorous comment can have multiple meanings or they may lack the previous knowledge in solving a joke's incongruity (Carlson, 2011). For this reason, it is vital to keep any humour rather simple and easy to understand. Yip and Martin (2006) found that the use of affiliative and self-enhancing styles of humour were very beneficial for starting up conversations with strangers and for initiating connections between people.

The tourists' individuality

In regards to the tourists' individuality it is vital to acknowledge that individuals consume their experiences differently through their own perspectives and therefore no experience or event would be the same for all tourists (Richards, 2001). Furthermore, large inter-individual differences exist in perceiving humour and responding to humour (Zweyer, Velker & Ruch, 2004). Humour appreciation or rejection by an individual is strongly dependent on that person's background, values and previous experiences as well as "the broader social, historical and cultural context in which a communication comes to be defined as funny in the first place" (Refaie, 2011, p. 104).

What this study showed was that the appreciation of humour in presentations by tour guides depended on the tourists' English language capabilities, their expectations of the tourism experience as well as their attention span. Moreover, tourist audiences tend to

be very diverse in terms of their demographic background, their unique interests, expectations, motivations, characteristics and intellectual abilities (Pastorelli, 2003). Tourists also tend to be diverse in their travel composition. They can travel either by themselves, as couples or in groups of people (Pastorelli, 2003). These travel composition can also have an impact on tourists' attention spans, i.e. to what extent they are likely to pay attention to presentations by tour guides. All these considerations can make it a challenging undertaking for tour guides to establish the right kind and the right amount of humour when connecting with their tourist audiences.

The tourism presenters

This research revealed that a tour guide's previous experience with, confidence in and ability to use humour are very influential factors in making people feel comfortable. Numerous research participants stated that it was important that a tour guide was able to read an audiences' reaction to humour and then to react to any discomfort. Pastorelli (2003) noted that an important skill for a tour guide was listening to their audience with an open mind and be willing to adapt to varying conditions. Using the experience economy's analogy of viewing work as theatre, the actual acting out of the desired experiences is undertaken by employees who via the experience are attempting to connect with their audience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). If the interactions between customers and employees are performed in an enjoyable and engaging way then this will also enhance a customers' general image of the business (Sundbo & Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2008).

A tour guide's ability to communicate in tourism contexts also appeared vital in creating enjoyable and entertaining tourism presentations. Communication skills such as being able to provide attention-grabbing information by telling interesting stories contributes to tourists' perception of overall tour quality (Reisinger & Waryszak, 1994). The use of appropriate communication styles concurs with Bryman's (2004) types of emotional, aesthetic and performative labour. By combining these three types of labour, a humour performance includes not only verbal abilities via its communication style but also non-verbal competencies such as gestures and facial expressions.

It is essential that business owners and operators of any commercial settings need to ensure that the experiences they offer tourists are deliberate (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). While the humour can be encouraged and pre-planned to a certain degree, the actual delivery of the humour and performance put into it, is very much dependent on the staff member. This research showed that spontaneous interactions between tourists and tour guides seemed to take place on many occasions. Lugosi (2008) recognised that some memorable experiences appear to the customer to be spontaneous because they are more suggestive of stand-up comedy than a formal play. The personality of a tour guide is likely to matter in creating a lasting impression shaping what tourists remember from the tour experience. For this reason tour guides need to be "professional while being friendly, they need to ensure the safety of a group while being relaxed, and they need to be serious while having fun" (Pastorelli, 2003, p. 27).

While a tour guide's use of humour is a well-honed skill, humour production skills can in fact be learnt through experience and attention to others and their feedback. According to Flyvbjerg (2001, 2006) on-the-job experience is very helpful in this regard. For example this could entail practical on-the-job wisdom to discriminate between situations when humour is applicable and when it may not be applicable based on various considerations such as feelings from the audience, weather on a specific day and experience of the tour guide.

6.3.2 Practical implications

This research offers practical contributions for tourism businesses wishing to enhance tourist experiences with the use of humour. Presentations made to tourists often include humour, however no empirical work has existed on how humour is actually perceived by the tourist audiences. Therefore a key contribution of this thesis focused on filling this existing gap in the literature by conducting three landmark studies on how humour is experienced by tourists during their travels and tourism experiences. Most people would associate tourism with involving fun and having a good time and therefore humour appears to be a welcome feature in tourism experiences. The correlations of the various scale items used in Study 3 showed significantly positive relationships which demonstrates the importance of having humour during the tourism experiences.

Humour has been identified in playing an important role in elevating tourist's mood for the better by providing laughter and engagement. Tourists who are in a positive mood, are more likely to evaluate their experiences in a positive way. This in turn also influences their satisfaction rating of the experience and this has practical implications for tourism managers who need to consider the overall atmosphere they create for tourists (Sirakaya, Petrick & Choi, 2004).

For humour to be used effectively so that all its beneficial outcomes in terms of comfort, connection and concentration can be utilised, it is important to ensure that it is respectful, ethical and legal (Pastorelli, 2003). This should include acknowledging that not all humour is perceived in the same way by people which is especially the case when dealing with multi-cultural audiences. This research also identified some of the downsides to using humour during tourism experiences, such as the use of too much humour or humour that feels unnatural. Ineffective delivery by tour guides in this regards can have adverse effects on tourists' enjoyment of their tourism experiences.

Collecting data at real-life, commercial tourism settings in Studies 2 and 3, all of which already used humour to their advantage, contributed to a better understanding of how humour can be successfully applied at other tourism settings. Both studies identified which forms of humour were most popular in the delivery of tourism presentations. This study showed that the most frequently used categories of humour were also the safest. The telling of amusing stories, funny exaggerations, friendly teasing and self-deprecating humour are safe options to use when dealing with varied audiences. The reason for this might be that tourists are unlikely to find them offensive and because these categories are straight-forward to deliver by tour guides. Moreover, the Australianness of a lot of the humour appealed to domestic and international participants alike. When using humour about certain stereotypes of tourist audiences, it appeared essential to take an equal pick rather than singling any nationality out. This also shows the importance of tour guides to be knowledgeable about cultural awareness and certain sensitivities.

The data also showed that humour was applied differently at the various tourism settings. The content and the amount of humour to be used depends on the settings, the contextual factors and the interactions between tour guides and tourists. For example, with more adventurous tourism settings humour can be used either to have a calming

effect but also to make an experience even more exhilarating depending on the likings of tourists. At other settings, it might be the attention-arresting properties of humour that are likely to play a more important role. This research also showed that the size of a tourism setting mattered in how humour was perceived. Evidently, tourism experiences based on smaller tour groups are more likely to develop humour-based bonds with the tourists.

Considerations for using humour in marketing purposes might also beneficial for tourism managers. The TV commercials of various products and services include humour appeals and in the case of this research, some tourism operators already used humour in their brochures or on their websites. These kinds of pre-experience marketing efforts might already build a certain level of curiosity and expectation of a good time in potential customers. Such humour appeals might be especially successful with females who were shown to be more appreciative of humour in this research. It is important to ensure that any marketing and promotional efforts should fit with the rest of the experience (Australian Heritage Commission, 2001).

6.4. Linking the findings of this research with Flyvbjerg's (2001) framework of phronetic social science

In the following section, the findings of all three studies are used to ratify Flyvbjerg's four value-rational questions of phronetic social science. Flyvbjerg (2001) himself emphasised that no individual would ever be wise and experienced enough to have complete answers to these four questions. Social scientists are, however, expected to find partial answers to the questions in relations to their area of expertise and then continue to be engaged in ongoing social dialogue about the topic in uncovering what else could be done to understand it even further (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Table 6.1 summarises how each question is addressed with the findings of this research.

Table 6.1: Recapturing the four questions of phronetic social science

Phronetic social science and its four value-rational questions:	Considering the value of humour in tourism settings:
1. Where are we going?	- Identifies the role of humour in creating entertaining and pleasurable tourism experiences.
2. Who gains and who loses, by which mechanism of power?	- Discusses who are the winners and losers in applying humour in tourism settings.
3. Is it desirable?	- Discusses the findings in terms of the experience economy indicating the role of humour in creating engaging, enjoyable and memorable tourism experiences.
4. What should be done?	- Considers some of the key findings in terms of its practicality.

6.4.1 Question 1: Where are we going with humour in tourism?

Tourism experiences are very dynamic activities and depend on the context in which they take place and the atmosphere and interactions that are created within these contexts. Participants of this research perceived that the use of humour during their tourism experiences made their experience more entertaining and pleasurable. The positive atmosphere that was created through humour made people feel at ease and made it easier to build rapport with other people on-site. Smuts (2010) defined pleasurable experiences by simply stating that they are those that feel good and this is why they are desired by most people. Interestingly though, it is quite difficult for most people to explain or be specific about what exactly makes a particular experience feel good or pleasurable (Smuts, 2010).

Tour guides who used humour during the tour appeared to be better liked by participants. However for this to happen the humour delivery needed to be natural and respectful. Beyond knowing what humour was appropriate in certain settings, most tour guides in this research were also able to read the audience for their reactions to humour. This revealed that while some of the humour appeared to be embedded and written for certain tour activities, i.e. the use of pre-fabricated humorous comments in safety

briefings, the actual comic elements of a situation were also important (Pearce, 2008). For example, the use of friendly teasing and self-deprecating humour was based on the specific interactions that occurred between the tourists and their guides.

6.4.2 Question 2: Who gains and who loses by what mechanism of power?

The second question of the phronetic social science network considers who gains and who loses? The findings of this study show that much is gained when humour is used during tourism experiences not just for the tourists but also for the tourism presenters. Presuming that humour used during tourism experiences is based on adaptive forms of humour (Martin et al., 2003) to create a more cheerful atmosphere for all parties involved, then there should only be winners and no losers.

Gains for tourists

There are multiple benefits that tourists gain from the use of humour in tourism settings. Respondents appeared to feel more involved with their tourism activities and that would make them remember their experience for a long time after it happened. Apart from the three outcomes of comfort, concentration and connections, tourists also profited from using humour to deal with difficult and awkward travel situations. In the context of tourism, Frew (2006b) applied Stebbin's social comic relief theory to see if humour could be used to help reduce awkward, frustrating or embarrassing travel situations. The use of humour in such situations would allow tourists to gain control of a situation by making it appear as less embarrassing or threatening (cf. Solomon, 1996). Some of the results of this research clearly link with these ideas. The humorous blog episodes analysed in Study 1 did in fact show that humour was used to alleviate frustrating travel situations, i.e. to make lengthy border crossings or transit situations more bearable. Numerous blog episodes also described how tourists used humour to amuse themselves in boring situations such as playing tricks on fellow travellers just for the fun of it. This concurs with Pohancsek (2010) who stated that humour is valuable in its own right by offering individuals the opportunity to redefine their situations more positively which in this case is about using humour to enhance fun and pleasure during boring times.

The findings of Study 3 also revealed that humour played a role in coping with awkward, embarrassing and stressful travel situations. The findings confirmed that humour was used to make the best of a situation gone wrong; to lighten the mood; to comfort others; to cope with difficult and embarrassing situations such as motion sickness; to alleviate anxieties and to resolve conflicts. In these instances humour functions as an attitude adjuster that helps people in dealing more efficiently with challenging situations (Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011). According to Pallant (2000) it is in fact the perception of control an individual has over the emotional concerns of a threatening situation that are more important than the general power over the situation itself. As Crawford and Caltabiano's (2011) study showed, having a sense of humour enhances perceptions of control and thus empowers an individual to deal more effectively with emotional aspects of the stressful situation.

Gains for tourism presenters

Numerous participants of this research pointed out that their tour guides used humour to deliver safety messages and to reinforce appropriate behaviours by conveying rules and regulations in a fun way. Randall and Rollins (2009) highlighted tour guide success in terms of fulfilling their instrumental role including the delivery of safety briefings. They found that the social dimension of tour guiding included employing humour to build a positive group atmosphere as well as to diffuse any intragroup tensions. Interestingly when humour was not used to achieve these strategies for social integration and tension management, then group dynamics were found to deteriorate (Randall & Rollins, 2009). Employing humour as a control mechanism can be a positive, facilitating and integrating approach in influencing inappropriate behaviours (Woods, 1983; Hay, 2000). This control function of humour is important when considering the implications of power in phronetic social science. Through humour, tour guides are able to indicate what the rules and appropriate behaviours are.

6.4.3 Question 3: Is humour in tourism desirable?

One of the opportunities of this research was to explore the links of humour to the experience economy by highlighting the role of humour in creating enjoyable and memorable on-site experiences. Findings indicated that humour was not only helpful in creating enjoyment and entertainment but also contributed to the vividness of tourist experiences because it made participants feel engaged and involved. Participants made the point that humour was useful in providing opportunities for co-creation rather than making them feel like spectators with only one-way communications taking place. While humour can be delivered by the tourism presenters, it can also be initiated or co-created by the tourists on-site to keep the laughter of a tour group going.

In terms of co-creation, it is acknowledged that responses to humour do not only result in laughter or smiling. As part of her research, Hay (2001) established other response strategies involving co-creating the humour. Hereby the initiator's humour is approved of when the listener chooses to produce more humour. As the results of Study 2 showed the response to humour is not simply laughter but can also include some tourists making an attempt at telling a humorous story or a joke. Participants also perceived that humour created value for themselves by contributing to making the tourism activity a 'stand-out' performance. Value was also created for the tourism operators in terms of generating positive memories which tourists are likely to spread as positive word-of-mouth.

Further benefits for both, the tourists and the tourism businesses, include value creation in terms of more opportunities for repeat business and means of differentiation from others in the marketplace (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Shaw, Debeehi & Walden, 2010). Some participants voiced their interest in going on another tour that might have been offered by the same tourism business. Also the majority of respondents (95.9%) of Study 3 reported that they would like to go on more tours or attractions that used humour in a similar way as it was used at the two tourism attractions. Mitas, Yarnal and Chick (2012) noted that the humour-loving atmosphere of some tourism experiences motivated tourists to return to these tourism experiences. There are links here to a concept of transferred loyalty coined by Pearce and Kang (2009) who state that due to the psychological attachment of a certain type of tour experience, future holiday activities should preferably have similar attributes. This could result in opportunities for

tourism operators in terms of setting up partnerships to co-promote and on-sell humorous tourism experiences in other regions of the country (Frew, 2006a; Pearce & Kang, 2009).

6.4.4 Question 4: What should be done?

Outcomes of humour can either be positive and beneficial or negative and detrimental. Therefore it is important to ensure that humour delivery is designed appropriately for its tourism setting and audience. A little bit of humorous commentary during a tourism presentation can go a long way in creating a more enjoyable and pleasant experience for the tourists on-site. It is not necessary for tourism presenters to become stand-up comedians or clowns. As Collins (2000) suggested it is the 'fillers' presented during a guided tour which make the commentary come alive and which most people will remember. Contrarily, the use of too much humour can distract from the messages being presented (Chan, 2010; Blackmore, 2011). This issue of distraction has people preoccupied with the humorous parts and less on processing other elements of the message. It is therefore important to apply humour in moderation and to try to make it relevant to the points that need to be presented. The best approach would be to design for uses of humour that act to illustrate important educational points which are more readily recalled than dry commentary (Powell & Andresen, 1985).

For tourism organisations who would like to introduce more humour to create enjoyable and entertaining experiences for tourists, the concepts of McDonaldization and Disneyization are useful considerations. In re-enchanting the experience, several scholars have pointed out that it was vital to pay more attention to the experiential side of the consumption situation by focusing on how services are provided (Ritzer, 2002; Shaw, Debeehi & Walden, 2010). From a practical perspective, this links back to Bryman' (2004) three kinds of labour. In order to make humour work successfully, the links to emotional labour on part of the tourism employees appear most relevant. Lashley (1995) noted that if the required positive emotions are not displayed, then an experience can be perceived as below average or poor.

Aesthetically tour guides should be able to display the right attitudes and express the right expressions and sounds for humour to work well with the rest of a presentation. The display of positive emotions is in fact such an important component of service delivery that it increasingly tends to be associated with the quality of a service itself (Bryman, 2004). This has implications for sending the right non-verbal communication signals, i.e. smiling, when humour is delivered. In this way, an audience will associate any humorous remarks in a more favourable light.

Performative labour combines the efforts of emotional and aesthetic labour by focusing on the content and the delivery of the humour to be presented. For successful humour delivery the performance could include managing the timing of punchlines and pauses with appropriate gestures such as nodding slowly or rolling of the eyes (Hancock, 2004; Stroobants, 2009; Caucci & Kreuz, 2012). Many respondents appeared to be quite surprised by the tour guides' ability to read the humour responses of the audience. In this case, tour guides observed their audiences' responses and reacted appropriately by adapting their forthcoming humour attempts to the likings of the audience in terms of their content and presentation style.

6.5 Limitations and recommendations for future study

Study 1: Analysis of humorous episodes in travel blogs

Study 1 showed that using blogs as a research method was helpful in gaining initial insights into tourists' humorous experiences, however using blogs as a data source does not come without its limitations. Firstly, the analysis of blogs in this study was solely based on blogs written in the English language. Secondly, bloggers represent a self-selected subgroup of tourists (Thelwall, 2006; Volo, 2010) and their perspectives may not be fully representative of all tourists (Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). For these reasons care should be taken when the findings are generalised beyond the study sample (Woodside, Cruickshank & Dehuang, 2007). Another disadvantage is that analysing blogs is a very time-consuming activity (Akehurst, 2009; Carson, 2008).

Future analysis of humorous travel experiences could focus on online forums instead of blogs. Online forums give travellers the opportunity to express their experiences in a

much more concise way, making analysis a less time-consuming activity for researchers. For example while searching for blogs on TravBuddy.com, the researcher found a forum called "funny travel experiences" which invited travellers to share their stories of this nature. Forums are more to the point and might offer opportunities for comparative studies building on the present work. Another worthwhile idea for a future study could be an investigation of humour found in photos and videos uploaded on travel websites. An investigation of the humorous themes found in these visual methods can also contribute to knowledge about humour that takes place during tourist experiences.

Furthermore, in recognising that humour can also be based on negative or maladaptive styles (Martin et al., 2003), it might be worthwhile undertaking to read through blogs or comments on TripAdvisor that capture reactions to negative encounters of humour during tourism experiences. In line with this there is also potential to develop an online survey tool which prompts possible respondents to share any stories where offensive humour was used that made people feel uncomfortable.

Study 2: Focus group discussions to understand tourists' perceptions on humour

The findings of Study 2 are based on non-probability sampling which might have led to a sampling bias (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Also as with most qualitative study techniques, findings should not be immediately generalised beyond the groups or settings that were studied (Gibbs, 2007; Smith, 2010). However these limitations do not substantially reduce the contributions of Study 2. The results in this study were based on discussions with 103 participants from four settings who were chosen because they had a knowledge base that mattered to the purpose of this study. This is because they had partaken in humorous tourism experiences and wanted to talk about their experiences with the researcher.

Further studies may include other tourism settings where humour is appropriately used such as airlines, travel agencies, and front-desk positions of hotels. Furthermore, the replication of these results in other countries, or even in other parts of Australia, are future research directions. Potential future studies may also be conducted on a longitudinal basis to provide an overview over any trends. Another worthwhile

undertaking for future studies could include a post trip follow-up study which is conducted at a later stage to find out what tourists actually remember from their past humorous tourism experiences. Another potential idea for future research includes the use of participant observations by the researcher. By carefully observing the presentations of tour guides, valuable insights could be gained not simply in regards to the kinds of humorous commentary used but also how and at what times humour was included into the tour.

Study 3: Assessment of humour outcomes

The final study had a number of limitations which limit its overall effectiveness: First, since the questionnaire was handed out in English only and not translated into any other languages, it was essentially only completed by respondents who were able to read and write in English. Therefore a certain degree of respondent bias cannot be ruled out. Also convenience sampling was used for the distribution of questionnaires in this study. While convenience sampling has the advantage of saving time and money, it also has the disadvantage of limiting credibility due to selection bias (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 2000).

Moreover, the study used correlational analysis, however there are certain dangers of making inferences about the causality of results because some correlations may indeed be caused by a third extraneous variable (Davis & Rose, 2000). What influences any extraneous variables may have had on how humour perception at any of the tourism settings is hard to judge and beyond the control by researchers, for example, the number of people on-site, the weather, the mood of tourists and tour guides on-site on the days of data collection and other variables which could have influenced participants' humour appreciation. As a result of all these limitations, caution should be taken when generalising the results of this study beyond the survey population. While it is acknowledged that this study was not based on a random sample, it can be argued that the sample was sufficiently large and diverse in terms of gender, age groups and nationalities to offer an important set of results describing how humour impacts certain types of tourism experiences.

Future research would be helpful in checking if the results of Study 3 can be replicated in other tourism settings and with other study populations. Potential future research studies could include tourism operators who are not using humour to such a successful level as was the case with the tourism operators chosen for Study 3 to measure any changes in how humour is perceived based on varying treatment scenarios. Furthermore, instead of using a cross-sectional design, a longitudinal research design could be helpful for future surveys of this kind in identifying useful trends across the different seasons (peak, shoulder, off-peak) and between market segments.

Limitations applying to the entire research project

As with all research methods there is potential for bias since it is human nature to be seen in a favourable light. In particular studies conducted on people's perspectives on humour, subjectivity biases need to be acknowledged since most people clearly enjoy and are enthusiastic about humour (Cann, Zapata & Davis, 2011). Especially in western societies, most people would consider themselves to have above average sense of humour because it is perceived to be such a valuable characteristic (Crawford & Gressley, 1991). It would be difficult to find a person who does not like humour or who does not think of themselves as being humorous to some degree. Franzini (2012) stated that having a sense of humour is a quality nearly all of us claim in ourselves. Furthermore, research by Neuendorf and Skalski (2001, p. 4) found that skewed distributions might be the result of the majority of respondents being likely to agree with statements that measure a good sense of humour since "no one admits to having a poor sense of humour." While this thesis research recognises that humour is a very subjective experience, any inflated self-report biases cannot be ruled out.

Many theories and models of various research contexts are developed based on European or North American cultures which are not always relevant in other cultures. Since northern Australia and the study area are currently receiving an ever increasing number of Asian visitors especially from China and Japan, future studies can be worthwhile in highlighting how these cultures perceive and appreciate humour, for example by translating the humour questionnaire used in Study 3 into Mandarin or Japanese. Research of this kind might reveal any challenges in adopting humour styles to various new source markets coming to Tropical North Queensland.

6.6 Concluding comments

This thesis research set out to gain a better understanding of the role humour plays in creating enjoyable on-site tourism experiences at various tourism settings. The research methods which were considered fit for this purpose consisted of travel blogs, naturalistic focus groups and a questionnaire study to measure the effect of a quasi-experimental field study. It was revealed through linking the studies with theoretical concepts and approaches and by providing empirical material that humour consistently contributed to ensuring that tourists had a great time which they thought they would remember well into the future. It is therefore suggested that humour has an important role to play during tourism experiences by fusing entertainment and education. As more owners and managers of tourism businesses come to realise the benefits of using humour in creating friendly and effective interactions that tourists are likely to remember, they might be interested in including humour in a broader array of tourism settings.

Tourism managers wishing to add more humour to their presentations may find it useful to learn from the various tourism attractions selected for this project because their humour use was well regarded by previous tourists who visited the attractions. Tour guides and tourism managers may learn from these particular contexts and transfer this knowledge to their own tours and attractions. Humour may not apply to all tourism settings but this research has shown that is it likely to contribute to making many tourists' experiences more enjoyable.

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Appendix A

Humour in the workplace

More and more studies on workplace humour are emerging in the literature focusing on the various benefits that it can have. Humour and play appear to be valuable for workplaces especially since employees spend about one-third of their waking hours at work (Pohancsek, 2010). Franzini (2012) states that humour has been falsely considered as a distraction of an organisation's mission of efficiency and profitability. Business is all about being "sober, serious, hard-working, aggressing, single minded and humourless" (p. 82). He also points out that the number one reason for many employees to leave their jobs is because they are unhappy.

Humour has been shown to contribute to the development of the organisational culture at workplaces where it was not only tolerated but also encouraged (Plester & Orams, 2008). For example, a study by Avolio, Howell and Sosik (1999) observed that when managers or leaders used humour or playfulness in their management style, this had positive impacts on group performance. Moreover, humour can be used as conflict resolution (depending on the seriousness of the conflict and the relationship of the participants) to promote group cohesion (Norrick & Spitz, 2007).

Humour can also be considered as a workplace communication style which naturally can have many social functions depending on its motives. Humour and laughter are helpful in lightening the atmosphere which can enhance communication and strengthen in-group bonds (Ruch, 1993). It has also been shown to foster collegiality amongst employees by creating positive affect through amusement and entertainment (Holmes, 2006). For this reason, the use of humour has also benefits of making new employees feel welcome when they are integrated into a new workplace's organisational structure. Humour is also helpful as a coping strategy to deal with boring and repetitive work, to relieve tension, to soften requests and directives, to manage job-related pressures, to get creative and to improve camaraderie (Mauldin, 2008; Plester, 2009).

Due to its ambiguity, humour is helpful when expressing precarious opinions. Several studies have shown that humour contributed to workplace culture by making organisational situations more bearable. For example, humour allowed the 'jokers'

amongst employees the opportunity to vent their frustrations against management, push boundaries and influence the culture (Plester & Orams, 2008; Plester, 2009). Similar to mediaeval times, it is the workplace jokers or corporate clowns who are able to voice their questioning of authority without threating it (Plester & Orams, 2008). To appear less aggressive in their approach they often use self-deprecating humour.

When applying humour in the workplace, care should be taken due to differences in individual senses of humour (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). There are some cases when humour at the workplace has been shown to be negative, offensive and counter-productive in nature which can be challenging for managers to deal with (Plester & Orams, 2008; Pohancsek, 2010). Some authors even warn that workplace humour can also be a distraction from the job, cause offense and hurt credibility (Lyttle, 2007). When using humour in multicultural business meetings, it should be handled with care as some humour can be perceived differently across nations and cultures (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Also within the context of business meeting, Mulholland (1997) found that the use of some humour might be perceived as too individualistic and therefore could have a negative effect on the group. For example, the teasing and leg-pulling which many Australians would consider normal in their day-to-day interaction, can make Asians feel uncomfortable.

There are several ways to incorporate more humour and fun into the workplace. In their blog, Ryan and Associates Australia (2008) made some suggestions such as introducing fun in work spaces through photos, stickers and posters; having a 'Dress for Fun Friday' which might include silly earrings, fun hats, etc. Also considering that boring meetings are bad for productivity, Ryan and Associates Australia recommend making humour a KPI of meetings by starting them with a joke or funny story. Another way would be to organise fun contests to build rapport and camaraderie, such as a paper plane contest. Many more suggestions are made in their blog: http://www.ryanandassociates.com.au/humourart5.htm. Businesses also have the option to hire so-called "humour consultants" who promote the use of humour in the workplace as a method of improving worker morale and productivity (Humour Consulting Group, n.d., Franzini, 2012). In this regards humour is viewed as a planned activity that can be controlled and used as a tool for success.

Appendix B

Humour in health studies

While it is common knowledge that we feel more relaxed and happy after a massive laughter session, there are nonetheless many studies trying to uncover the health benefits of humour and laughter in scientific ways. For Fry (1994) laughter bears resemblance with a state of relaxation one has after doing exercise which might be due to the physiological changes occurring in the body. Some of these changes during laughter include an increase of blood pressure and muscular changes (Miller & Fry, 2009; Sugawara, Tarumi & Tanaka, 2010). This also explains why many people feel less tense after they had a good laugh (McGhee, 1996).

Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, (2004) indicate that numerous clinical studies on humour mostly relate to its positive impacts on health and psychological well-being such as reducing pain or improving immunity. This is achieved through the positive emotional states, such as mirth and exhilaration, which are the results of humour and laughter are therapeutic for relieving tension and anxiety (Kuiper & Martin 1998). Humour was also found to help people age well (Solomon, 1996). Moreover, humour was shown to be a successful coping mechanism for people with a chronic illness. For example, patients suffering from arthritis related pain who used humour to cope with their daily stresses showed fewer depressive symptoms and were also able to maintain a sense of optimism and perspective in the face of adversity (Skevington & White, 1998). The effect of humour and exercise on mood and anxiety have been tested by Scabo (2003) who revealed that both had a similarly positive effect on psychological distress and positive well-being but the study also found that humour had greater anxiety-lowering effects than did exercise.

Some of the health benefits of humour may be overstated since some of their evidence is rather inconclusive (Ruch & Zweyer, 2001). There are some scholars who question the applicability of humour intervention in healthcare because so many studies are based on correlational studies conducted on healthy undergraduates in the laboratory (McCreaddie & Wiggins, 2009). Needless to say that the link in the humour-health relationship is rather complex and it might be for this reason that several studies were unsuccessful in their attempt to replicate findings due to mixed results and inconsistent

findings (Kuiper et al., 2004; Samson & Gross, 2011). It is because of these reasons that Martin (2001) calls for more carefully conducted research to be more confident about the link between humour and health.

Appendix C

Humorous material given to tour guides:

Interesting facts – Did you know…

The male cassowary cares for the eggs while the female moves on

The female does not care for the eggs or the chicks but moves on to lay eggs in the nests of several other males. The male incubates the eggs for 50–52 days, removing or adding litter to regulate the temperature and then protects the brown-striped chicks that stay in the nest for about nine months, defending them fiercely against all potential predators, including humans.

A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out

Crocodiles cannot stick their tongue out. Crocodiles have tongues that are attached to the bottom of their mouths. Since it's attached, of course they are unable to stick it out and make rude noises at us upstart mammals.

Butterflies taste with their feet

Taste receptors on a butterfly's feet help it find its host plant and locate food. A female butterfly lands on different plants, drumming the leaves with her feet to make the plant release its juices. Spines on the back of her legs have chemo-receptors that detect the right match of plant chemicals. When she identifies the right plant, she lays her eggs. A butterfly will also step on its food, using organs that sense dissolved sugars to taste food sources like fermenting fruit.

Butterflies employ all kinds of tricks to keep from being eaten

Butterflies rank pretty low on the food chain, with lots of hungry predators happy to make a meal of them. Some butterflies fold their wings to blend in to the background, using camouflage to render themselves all but invisible to predators. Others try the opposite strategy, wearing vibrant colours and patterns that boldly announce their presence. Bright coloured insects often pack a toxic punch if eaten, so predators learn to avoid them. Some butterflies aren't toxic at all, but pattern themselves after other species known for their toxicity. By mimicking their foul-tasting cousins, they repel predators.

Kan Ghu Ru means "We don't understand!"

Some anthropological findings are funny only in retrospect because when cultures first interact, there are bound to be mistakes. When the English settlers landed in Australia, they noticed a strange animal that jumped extremely high and far. They asked the Aboriginal people using body language and signs trying to ask them about this animal. They responded with "Kan Ghu Ru". The English then adopted the word Kangaroo. What the Aboriginal people were really trying to say was "we don't understand you", "Kan Ghu Ru".

The male praying mantis cannot copulate while its head is attached to its body. The female initiates sex by ripping the male's head off.

A cockroach will live nine days without its head, before it starves to death.

The emu has a brain that is about the same size as its eyeball.

On average, people fear **spiders** more than they do death.

The average human eats eight **spiders** in their lifetime at night.

You are more likely to be killed by a Champagne cork than by a poisonous **spider.**

Time for a few jokes:

A tourist was being led through the jungle of the Wet Tropics.

"Is it true," he asked, "that a crocodile won't attack you if you carry a flashlight?"

"That depends," replied the guide, "on how fast you carry the flashlight."

+++

Tourist: The flies are awfully thick around here. Don't you ever shoo them?

Local guide: No, we just let them go barefoot.

+++

Tour guide to his audience: If you want to know more, ask a question. If you want to know less, just look really bored.

+++

An infant wallaby was orphaned. Fortunately though, a family of squirrels took it in and raised it as one of their own. This adoption led to some peculiar behaviour on the part of the wallaby. It had a tendency to scurry up trees like its step-siblings instead of hopping along the ground. And it ate acorns and nuts. By the time it was half grown, the wallaby realised that it was different, so it went to its step-parents to discuss the problem. He said he was unsure of his place in the universe and was generally forlorn. His step-parents advised, "Don't scurry. Be hoppy."

+++

A koala walks into a restaurant, sits down, and orders a sandwich. He eats the sandwich, pulls out a gun, and shoots the waiter dead. As the koala stands up to go, the manager shouts, "Hey! Where are you going? You just shot my waiter, and you didn't even pay for your sandwich!" The koala shouts back "Hey, man, I'm a KOALA! Look it up!" The manager opens his dictionary and reads: "Koala: a fuzzy tree-dwelling animal who eats shoots and leaves."

Tree Jokes:

What do you say to a rainforest that is about to be cut down?

Run Forest....Run!

How did the idiot hurt himself raking leaves?

He fell out of the tree!

What did the tree wear to the pool party?

Swimming trunks!

How do trees get on the internet?

They log in.

Did you hear about the tree who no longer wanted to be a tree?

He branched out.

What's a tree that fits in your hand?

A PALM TREE!

Bush Turkey Jokes:

Why did the bush turkey cross the road?

It was the chicken's day off!

Why did the bush turkey cross the road twice?

To prove he wasn't chicken!

Where do you find a bush turkey with no legs?

Exactly where you left it!

What do you call it when it rains bush turkeys?

Foul weather!

Why did the police arrest the bush turkey?

They suspected it of fowl play!

Which side of a bush turkey has the most feathers?

The outside!

What's the most musical part of a bush turkey?

The drumstick!

Dingo Jokes:

What do you call a nutty dog in Australia?

A dingo-ling!

How do you catch a dingo?

Make a noise like a bone!

What do you get if you cross a Beatle and an Australian dog?

Dingo Starr!

Frog Jokes:

What happens when a frog parks in a no-parking space?

It gets toad away!

What is a frog's favourite exercise?

Jumping Jacks!

Why are frogs so happy?

Because they eat what bugs them!

What did one frog say to the other?

Time's sure fun when you're having flies!

What is a frog's favourite cold drink?

Croak-a-cola!

What is a frog's favourite music?

Hip hop!

How did the toad die?

It Kermited suicide!

How does a frog feel when he has a broken leg?

Unhoppy!

Parrot Jokes:

What do you get when you cross a parrot and a shark?

A bird that talks your ear off!

What do you get if you cross a centipede and a parrot?

A walkie-talkie!

Snake Jokes:

What do you call a snake who works for the government?

A civil serpent!

What is snake's favourite subject?

Hiss-tory!

What do you get when you cross a snake and a pie?

A pie-thon!

What snakes are good at doing sums?

Adders!

Why are snakes hard to fool?

You can't pull their leg!

What are a snake's favourite magic spells?

Abra-da-cobra and adder-ca-dabra!

What's long, green and goes "hith"?

A snake with a lisp!

What do you call a snake with a great personality?

A snake charmer!

Bug and Insect Jokes:

Two flies are on the porch. Which one is an actor?

The one on the screen!

What do you get when you cross a sheep and a honey bee?

Bah-humbug!

Why do bees have sticky hair?

Because they have honeycombs!

What do you get when you cross a walrus with a bee?

A wallaby!

How do fleas travel from place to place?

By itch-hiking!

What is an insect's favourite sport?

Cricket!

Miscellaneous Jokes:

If a crocodile makes shoes, what does a banana make?

Slippers!

What do you call a crocodile detective?

An investi-gator!

What is out of bounds?

A tired kangaroo!

What's small and cuddly and bright purple?

A koala holding his breath!

What kind of animal goes OOM?

A cow walking backwards!

Appendix D

INFORMATION SHEET

Humour in Tourism Questionnaire

You are invited to take part in a research project about the use of humour in the tourism setting. The study is being conducted by Anja Pabel and will contribute to a PhD in Tourism at James Cook University.

The attached questionnaire is voluntary and completely anonymous. We do not require any of your personal details in this survey which should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

The data from the study will be used in research publications such as academic journals and/or books. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact myself, Anja Pabel or my supervisor, Professor Philip Pearce. Please retain this page for your future reference.

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Appendix E

Humour in Tourism Questionnaire

1. Let's start by having some fun! Please rate the following cartoons for their funniness:

"What should we do? It's an endangered animal eating an endangered plant!"

A little bit funny	Quite funny	Very funny
○	○	○
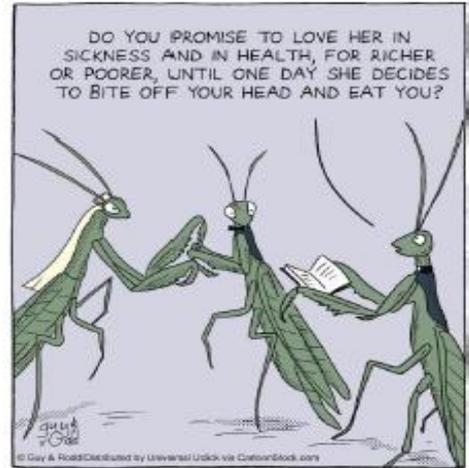
DO YOU PROMISE TO LOVE HER IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, FOR RICHER OR POORER, UNTIL ONE DAY SHE DECIDES TO BITE OFF YOUR HEAD AND EAT YOU?

A little bit funny	Quite funny	Very funny
○	○	○

$600 MAY BE A LOT FOR A PAIR OF BOOTS, BUT THIS WAS THE BEST PURCHASE OF MY LIFE.

A little bit funny	Quite funny	Very funny
○	○	○

THE STRANGE WORLD OF MR. MUM

LOCAL   LONG DISTANCE

A little bit funny	Quite funny	Very funny
○	○	○

2. Please write down your own favourite personal joke:

....
....
....

In this section I would like to ask about your opinion to the topic of humour in tourism.

3. Please complete the following sentences in just a few words:

Humour in tourism should be <u>encouraged</u> because:

In which tourism situations might humour be <u>inappropriate</u> and why?

----

4. On any of <u>your previous travels</u> have you encountered a situation where humour played a key role?

○ Yes   ○ No   **If <u>yes</u>, please briefly tell me about it:**

----

5. Can you remember an incident where you personally used humour to <u>cope with an awkward travel situation</u>? ○ Yes   ○ No   **If <u>yes</u>, please tell me about this incident:**

----

6. What <u>categories of humour</u> were used during the tour today? Please <u>tick all that apply</u>:

○ Telling of amusing stories
○ Wordplays and puns
○ Friendly teasing
○ The guide targets humour at him/herself
○ Irony
○ Making fun of society and government

○ Making fun of other individuals
○ Funny exaggerations or understatements
○ Clever replies to serious statements
○ Statements with dual meaning
○ Playing with clichés or frozen expressions
○ Other:_____

7. How <u>funny</u> did you think your <u>tour guides</u> were today? (Please circle the appropriate number to represent your opinion)

Not funny   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   *Very funny*

8. The humour used today allowed me to <u>connect</u> more easily with <u>the tour guides</u>: (Please circle the appropriate number to represent your opinion)

Did not connect   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   *Connected well*

9. The humour allowed me to <u>connect</u> more easily with <u>other people</u> on this tour: (Please circle the appropriate number)

Did not connect   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   *Connected well*

10. The humour used today helped to keep me <u>more alert</u>: (Please circle the appropriate number)

<u>Less alert</u> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → *More alert*

11. The humour used today helped me to <u>understand explanations better</u>:

Less understandable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → *More understandable*

12. The humour today made me <u>feel more at ease</u> with the tour:

Less at ease 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → *More at ease*

13. The humour used today <u>created a cheerful atmosphere</u>:

Not cheerful 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → *Very cheerful*

14. How <u>satisfied</u> are you with today's <u>overall experience</u>:

Not satisfied 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → *Very satisfied*

15. Would you like to go on <u>more tours or attractions</u> using humour as it was used today? ○ Yes ○ No

16. Have you previously been on a tour or visited an attraction <u>where humour was used</u> as it was today?
○ Yes ○ No   If <u>yes</u>, please tell me the <u>name of the tour/attraction</u>:

----

17. Was any of the humour used today <u>offensive to you</u>?   ○ Yes ○ No   If <u>yes</u>, please specify:

Finally, some questions about you:

18. Are <u>you</u>: ○ Male   ○ Female

19. In what <u>year</u> were you born: _____

20. Where do you usually <u>live</u>?

Australia (postcode) _____

Overseas (country) _____

21. Which of these best describe your immediate <u>travel party</u>?
○ Alone   ○ Couple (partner/spouse)
○ Friends ○ Family with children
○ Club   ○ Relatives
○ Other: _____

22. How many <u>domestic</u> holidays have you been on in the <u>last 3 years</u>? _____

23. How many <u>international</u> holidays have you been on in the <u>last 3 years</u>? _____

24. Is there <u>anything</u> else you would like to share?

THANK YOU! Your participation is much appreciated. ☺

Appendix F

Long and Graesser's (1988) eleven categories of humour

1. *Irony*—a statement in which the literal meaning is opposite to the intended meaning.

2. *Satire*—humour that makes fun of social institutions or social policy, aggressive in nature.

3. *Sarcasm*— humour that targets an individual rather than an institution, aggressive in nature.

4. *Overstatement and understatement*—involves changing the meaning of something another person has said by repeating it with a different emphasis.

5. *Self-deprecation*—humour targeted at oneself as the object of humour. This is done for several reasons such as demonstrating modesty or putting others at ease.

6. *Teasing*—humorous remarks directed at someone's personal appearance or habits. The intention of teasing is not to seriously insult or offend.

7. *Replies to rhetorical questions*—involves giving an answer to a question that violates conversational expectations and causes surprise. This is mostly done to entertain.

8. *Clever replies to serious statements*—clever, incongruous reply to a statement or question that was meant to be serious.

9. *Double entendres*—a statement or word is deliberately misperceived or misconstrued in order to evoke a dual meaning.

10. *Transformations of frozen expressions*—transforming well-known phrases or folk-sayings into novel statements.

11. *Puns*—humorous use of a word that evokes a second meaning.

Appendix G

Some example jokes provided by respondents at Jungle Surfing:

A guy walked into a bar and said 'Ouch'.

Why do seagulls fly over the sea? Because if they flew over the bay, they would be bagels!

An Irish man walked out the Pub!

What is the hardest part of skydiving? Ans: The ground.

Q: What do you call a fly with no legs? A: A walk!

Why did the cow win an award? For being out standing in its field.

Mid-summer my husband said "how time flies, two more nights having sex and it will be xmas..."

A man was found dead inside his ice-cream van covered in hundreds and thousands. Police believe he tried to top himself.

What do you get when you put a snowman and a vampire together? Frostbite!

Where does Napoleon keep his armies? - At the end of his sleeves!!

What's the difference between "tired" and "exhausted"? When you run in front of a car, you get tired. When you run after a car, you get exhausted.

Q: Why did the bubble gum cross the road? A: It was stuck to the chicken's foot!

I don't tend to remember jokes as my husband thinks he is so funny - I tune out.

Two muffins are in an oven. One muffin says to the other: "Gooday this oven's bloody hot ay?" The other muffin replies "Shit! A talking muffin!"

What is the difference between your wife and your job? After 5 years your job still sucks. (Inappropriate for mixed company!)

I'm a Brit - What is a joke?

Can't think of one sorry! Watching my husband turn upside down today was funny though!

What do you call a dinosaur with one eye? A Doyouthinkhesawus!

How do you get a fat woman into bed? Piece of cake.

What do you call a Frenchman wearing flip flops? Philippe Philoppe

Why did the golfer take another pair of pants with him? Because he got a hole in one.

Chinaman turns up for his dustman job. His boss says "Where's your bin?" - "I been to Hong Kong" - "No, where's your wheelie bin?" - "I really been to Hong Kong!"

What do you call a cheese that is not yours? Nacho cheese.

Why do squirrels swim on their back? To keep their nuts dry.

Your brain (referring to Baldrick from Blackadder (BBC comedy)) is like the 8-eyed purple, man-eating fish of Aberdeen. - "In what way Sir?" - "It doesn't exist!"

Some example jokes provided by respondents at Hartley's:

A horse walks into a bar and the barman says "Why the long face?"

Two blondes walked into a bar. You think one of them would have seen it. Ha Ha

Why was the sand wet? Because the seaweed!

Why do giraffs have long necks? Because they have very stinky feet!

Q: What do you cook crocodiles in? A: A crock pot.

A man sees a man carrying a long long cane. Are you a pole vaultor? - No I'm German and how do you know my name is Walter?

My husband!

Why is a pirate called a pirate? Because the Aaarrr!

Q: What did the snail say when he hitched a ride on a tortoise? A: WEEEEEEE!

Why aren't the people living in Port Douglas allowed to be buried in Port Douglas cemetery? Because they are not dead yet!

A toothless termite sat down at a bar and asked: Where's the bar tender?

Q: What do you get when you cross a lemon with a cat? A: Sour puss.

An Aussie and an Englishman met each other on the battle front. The English guy asks the Aussie: "Did you come here to die?" The Aussie says: "No mate, came here yesterday."

There are 2 men stuck on an island and they are kidnapped by cannibals, they beg and they beg the cannibals' chief not to kill them. So the cannibal chief gives them 2 tasks. The first task: they had to collect 10 fruit and the second task he will tell them later. So the 2 men went into the jungle and one of them collected 10 grapes, so the cannibal chief tells him the second task was to shove the 10 grapes up his bum and not flinch or laugh. This went on to the 9th grape when the man burst out laughing. "Why did you laugh? You almost made it! Now I'll have to eat you." cries the cannibal chief. "Well" says the guy "I couldn't stop thinking about my mate... he's out there collecting 10 pineapples!!!"

Why did the toilet roll, roll down the hill? To get to the bottom.

Why did the Jelly Bean want to go to school? Because he wanted to be a Smartie.

What type of bees make milk? - Boobies.

Fellow walks into a bar with a cane toad on his head. Barman says "What's that?" Cane toad said "Beats me! It started off as a pimple on my bum!"

Why do crabs not share? - Because they're shellfish!

The crocodile guy pretending to fall into the water. Made the kids happy.