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Visitor Experience in High-Use Areas: A Study of the Hiker Experiencescape at Ryten-Kvalvika, Lofoten

Turistopplevelser i områder med høyt besøkstrykk:
En studie av opplevelsesrommet for turgåere ved
Ryten-Kvalvika, Lofoten

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Nature-based Tourism

Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlig folk.

There is no bad weather, only bad people.

Preface

With this thesis, I finish 6 years of education at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). I feel proud to be a part of this interdisciplinary and environmental-thinking university. One of my main purposes for doing this study is to learn more about the social aspects within protected area management, especially because this aspect has received more attention the last years. English is not my mother tongue and writing the thesis in this language is a personal challenge. However, as my father always says: you get what you want (NO: det man vil får man til). The quote at the previous page was heard when I was in the Norwegian Army, and is related to some of the present findings.

Specific for this thesis, Professor Øystein Aas and Dr Rose Keller as my supervisors receive all my gratitude for advising me through the process. Great thanks also to the board of Lofotodden National Park and the national park manager Ole-Jakob Kvalshaug for housing me during the data sampling period. I also appreciate the way Ole-Jakob gave me insight to national park management and his daily work. Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) also needs my gratitude for funding transport and food costs for the data sampling period. I am excited about the coming Traceless Lofoten Tourism project that the national park management and NINA are executing and look forward to the findings you bring. Thanks also to my fellow students for the daily lunch breaks and great mood.

Friends and family also deserve great thanks for support during the whole education. Special thanks to my dad Morten Steen for proofreading the thesis. Finally, my love Lill Katrin Gorseth deserves lots of thanks for all the support, discussions, and fun moments for several years.

Ås, 16th of May 2022

Eirik Sønstevold

Abstract

Today, urbanisation increases the wish for people to visit nature areas. People gain several personal benefits from the outdoor activities that e.g. nature-based tourism provides. Ryten Mountain and Kvalvika Beach (Ryten-Kvalvika) are two popular attractions for hikers, located side by side in the Lofoten archipelago (Northern Norway). On average, more than 50 000 people annually have visited either one or both these attractions the last years. The attractions are located within Lofotodden National Park, which obligates careful management of natural resources and conservation values as well as high-quality experiences. A visitor survey from the national park in 2019 revealed among other things that visitors were negatively affected by disturbance from other visitors and human waste. To better understand how visitors experience these hikes, this thesis aims to explore impacts on visitor experiences of the hikes to Ryten-Kvalvika.

Using a qualitative approach, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted on-site to explore what factors influenced the hike experiences. Informants with different ages, genders and origins were selected randomly. To synthesise and discuss the findings, an outcome-focused model (OFM) and an experiencescape model was used. Results showed that uncontrollable factors such as weather and views influenced many visitor experiences, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, the results indicated that visitor expectations were of high importance to visitor experiences. Knowledge on visitor experiences is important for optimal management of Norwegian national parks due to the increasing attention of social dimensions in the management strategies. Because this study only covers self-reported perceptions of the experiences, further research on other angles and aspects of the experiences are needed.

Keywords: Visitor management; Experiencescape; Outdoor recreation

Sammendrag

Urbanisering øker menneskers ønske om å besøke naturområder. Folk får flere personlige fordeler av aktiviteter utendørs, som for eksempel naturbasert reiseliv tilbyr. Ryten og Kvalvika (Ryten-Kvalvika) er to populære attraksjoner for turgåere, og er lokalisert nært hverandre på Lofotøyene i Nord-Norge. Mer enn 50 000 har årlig i gjennomsnitt besøkt en eller begge attraksjonene de siste årene. Attraksjonene er lokalisert i Lofotodden nasjonalpark, som plikter til forvaltning av natur, verneverdier og gode opplevelser. En brukerundersøkelse fra nasjonalparken i 2019 viste blant annet at besøkende var negativt påvirket av forstyrrelser fra andre besøkende og menneskelig avfall. For å forstå hvordan besøkende opplever disse turene, forsøker denne studien å utforske påvirkninger på turistopplevelser av turene til Ryten-Kvalvika.

Ved bruk av kvalitativ metode, ble 20 semistrukturerte intervjuer gjennomført i felt for å utforske hvilke faktorer som påvirket turopplevelsene. Informanter av ulik alder, kjønn og opphav ble tilfeldig valgt. For å fremstille og diskutere funnene ble en resultat-orientert modell (OFM) og en modell for opplevelsesrom brukt. Resultatene viste at ukontrollerbare faktorer som vær og utsikt påvirket mange turistopplevelser, både positivt og negativt. Videre indikerte resultatene at forventninger hadde stor påvirkning på opplevelser. Kunnskap om turistopplevelser er viktig for norsk nasjonalparkforvaltning på grunn av økende viktighet av sosiale faktorer i forvaltningen. Denne studien undersøker kun selvrapporterte meninger om opplevelsene, og det trengs mer forskning med andre vinklinger og om andre aspekter av opplevelsene.

Nøkkelord: Besøksforvaltning; Opplevelsesrom; Friluftsliv

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1. Introduction

Increasing human spatial use is one of the biggest threats to nature these days. Living in urban areas increases the need (Elmahdy et al., 2017) and health gain (Cox et al., 2018) of visiting nature areas. Further, people seek outdoor activities to gain mental, physical and other benefits (Holland et al., 2018; Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015). Further, visiting nature areas may represent a contrast to everyday life and give personal benefits (Mehmetoglu, 2007; Weber & Anderson, 2010). Nature-based tourism provides such benefits and is mostly based on activities and experiences. High-quality experiences in natural surroundings may be one of such benefits because of urbanisation.

People are co-creating their own experiences, and decides and defines the quality of their subjective experience (Blumenthal & Jensen, 2019; Kamfjord, 2019, p. 89). This also means that the surroundings impact and facilitate the visitor experiences. All such factors are parts of what Mossberg and Hagen (2007) define as the experiencescape. The experiencescape describes how a customer interacts with surrounding environment, staff and other customers in a current experience. Knowledge of certain experiencescapes is crucial if tourism providers should facilitate high-quality experiences. The exact value of an experience is difficult to measure for a range of reasons. For instance, you can pay for certain experiences, or you can take more ownership of the experience through free public goods. Such public goods and access to nature are crucial to some tourism (Kamfjord, 2019, p. 148-158). Different visitors might argue that a free hike is of higher value than a paid hotel experience. A sustainable line with both economic development and well natural resource management may be difficult and is a future challenge within nature-based tourism (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Hiking is a popular activity, and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2019) list e.g. no requirements for equipment, feasible for all ages, and variations of hike difficulty as reasons to why hiking is a popular activity. Hence, easy access to hiking in nature contributes to more ownership of the experience.

Norway is a popular country for outdoor activities such as hiking. Incredible scenery and outdoor recreation are important advantages for Norway as destination (Innovasjon Norge, 2021). One of the most popular Norwegian destinations is the Lofoten archipelago (hereafter Lofoten). Ryten Mountain and Kvalvika Beach (hereafter Ryten, Kvalvika or Ryten-Kvalvika) located next to each other, are two famous attractions in Lofoten, both for domestic and foreign visitors. Pictures in social media, from friends and newspapers contribute to a self-promotion

of destinations and attractions (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015; Teles da Mota & Pickering, 2020). These factors likely contribute to the high visitor numbers at Ryten and Kvalvika, besides the long history of Lofoten as an attractive destination. Mass tourism and its impacts in Lofoten have received significant public attention in Norway the past years (e.g. Fosslund et al., 2022; Lorentsen & Rørstad, 2019; Norsk Friluftsliv, 2020; Thonhaugen & Fredriksen, 2021). Such high visitor traffic may lead to e.g. path degradation (Lorentzen, 2021; Svajda et al., 2016), more waste (Heslinga et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2012), disturbance of local fauna (Eggen, 2021) or low-quality experiences (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2020). Therefore, high proportion of outdoor activities may have several negative consequences.

Ryten and Kvalvika are located in Lofotodden National Park, which gives obligations for enhanced management of natural resources and tourists. Historically, Norwegian national parks focused on managing the natural resources. In 2015, the Norwegian Environment Agency published a strategy to pay more attention to visitor management, and visitor experiences are now also in focus (Miljødirektoratet, 2015). The strategy says that if conflicts between nature and visitor facilitation occur, the nature should be prioritised. The importance of facilitating and enhancing experience qualities are also highlighted by the local destination management organisation (Destinasjon Lofoten, 2017). However, local managers should facilitate high-quality visitor experiences to Ryten-Kvalvika without degrading nature qualities.

In 2019, a quantitative survey was conducted in the national park to map visitor perceptions and opinions (Lien et al., 2020). It revealed that visitors were concerned about issues such as disturbance from other visitors and seeing trash and human waste along the trails. The present thesis aims to increase the knowledge of how visitors experience this high-use area in Lofoten. If the national park management do not preserve high-quality visitor experience, the region may become less attractive for tourists (Yin et al., 2020) and local economy might suffer accordingly. This study explores visitor expectations, motivations, experiences, and revisit intentions. The following research questions are investigated:

- How do expectations and motivations influence visitor experience of Ryten-Kvalvika?
- What factors are important for visitor experiences and how could these factors be organised in the Ryten-Kvalvika experiencescape?
- How do human impacts influence visitor experiences of Ryten-Kvalvika?
- How do visitors weigh their positive and negative experiencescape dimensions into their overall experience of Ryten-Kvalvika?

2. Theory

In this thesis, an adapted outcome-focused model (OFM) is used as outline to illustrate an experience process (Rice et al., 2020) (Figure 1). Specific for the experience phase, the experiencescape model by Mossberg and Hagen (2007) is used to describe influencing factors. The OFM conceptualizes how value may be gained through an event, which is influenced by perceptions before, during and after the event (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Pre-trip perceptions are referred to as input to the experience shaping expectations. The experience is followed by an evaluation against the expectations and the motivations for doing the activity, forming outcomes. Outcome was not considered in the interview guide (Appendix A) and is therefore not investigated in this thesis. This is because the experience is in focus. The OFM without explicitly measuring outcome is still useful for the study because it illustrates how people get from expectations to experience and that previous outcomes have an impact on current pre-trip perceptions.

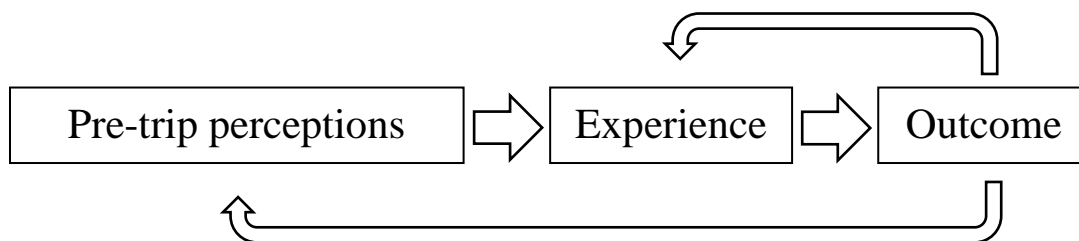


Figure 1. Outcome-focused model (OFM) illustrating how pre-trip perceptions, experience and outcome influence each other. Adapted from Rice et al. (2020).

2.1. Pre-trip perceptions

Pre-trip perceptions are the first phase of the OFM (Figure 1). They are shaped by whatever the visitor knows or believes that the visit will be like. These perceptions may be based on information received from e.g. media (traditional or digital/social), other people, or previous experiences (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Pre-trip perceptions are important in shaping the outcome of the experience (Devesa et al., 2010; Watson, 1989, p. 428). Thus, visitors build expectations before reaching a certain attraction or destination. The fact that people have varying sources of information implies that expectations vary among individuals. However, several factors influence satisfaction, and fulfilled expectations is not necessarily a reason for high satisfaction (Watson, 1989, p. 428).

Low expectations may influence trip motivations (Watson, 1989, p. 428), but trip motivations also influence visitor expectations (Manning, 2011, p. 171). These pre-hike perceptions are

closely related to push and pull factors. Push factors are recognized by something internal that gets people to leave their home area to visit other areas. People going on a holiday often seek outcomes they cannot get at their home place (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 74), for instance mental benefits or physical activity (Holland et al., 2018; Mehmetoglu & Normann, 2013; Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015). Such push factors are not considered further in this study of visitor experiences because Ryten-Kvalvika perceptions are in focus.

Pull factors are recognized by external aspects that pulls and motivates people to a certain area or specific activities, i.e. those that explain why the traveller visit a certain destination. For instance, experiencing unique nature is considered to be very important (6.7 out of 7) for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika (Lien et al., 2020). Often more than one motivation is sought for recreation participation (Manning, 2011, p. 169). Further, Llodra-Riera et al. (2015) suggested that information sources consulted by tourists, e.g. social media, are influencing motivations for visiting a certain place. Based on the Lofotodden National Park visitor survey (Lien et al., 2020), these information sources are likely to be highly relevant for Lofoten motivations. Therefore, such motivations describe the pull factors for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika.

2.2. Experience

The experience is the second phase of the OFM (Figure 1). Experiences are subjective perceptions of a current situation, and several factors may influence the experience. The experiencescape model by Mossberg and Hagen (2007) contain several interactions that influence the experience between the tourist and the scape. The customer interacts with staff, other customers, and the environment in what they label the experiencescape. To put their model in this context, the respective labels are named service, people and surroundings.

Visitors may experience activities based on several factors. First, a way of describing an experience is through the relation to the activity. The visitor can have an experience based on mental or physical presence (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 50). Further, the visitor experience is sometimes shaped by the visitor itself, and the experience relies on the ability to do the activity. For instance, a wheelchair visitor may not reach the peak of Ryten and therefore have another experience of the hike than walking visitors. Second, the visitor may experience an activity based on absorption level in the activity. The experience may go into the visitor, or the visitor may go into the experience. Visitors may passively have, or actively create their experiences. Going into an experience may be positive or negative, but generally more

immersive (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 51). Ultimately, variations of presence and immersion impact the experiences.

The surroundings influence experiences. In commercial settings, a company will design the surroundings to increase experience and generate more sales (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 115). For this thesis, the surroundings are nature which is free access for the public. Local managers are also obliged by national authorities to manage visitors and facilitate for good visitor experiences (Miljødirektoratet, 2015). Sufficient management is needed because management can enhance or detract to experiences (Sorakunnas, 2020). Local managers are therefore considered as responsible for designing parts of the surroundings. On the other hand, a visitor may not bother who is offering a product or service as long as they become satisfied (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 117). For instance, it may not matter to a visitor if the boardwalks are built by landowners or the national park managers. And the visitor might not care at all about whether there is a boardwalk or not, as long as the weather is nice and the right midnight sun photos can be taken. To summarise, the national park managers are responsible for facilitating the surroundings, which among other things is to ensure good visitor experiences.

The experiencescape also contains social elements, and other visitors are considered an important influencing factor within the experiencescape (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 141). Other visitors is considered to have a greater impact in non-commercial settings like nature compared to commercial settings (Sorakunnas, 2020). This is because products and services do not play a major role in non-commercial settings. The influence of other visitors on the experience can be both positive and negative (Kim, 2010; Pietilä & Fagerholm, 2016). For instance, 14% of Lofotodden National Park visitors said they thought other visitors affected experiences negatively, which is considered high compared to other national parks in the region (Lien et al., 2020). Noise, human waste, and flying drones are examples of what was said to be annoying with other visitors. Further, crowding is the factor that often influence visitor experience. Manning (2011, p.117) illustrates that visitors who feel crowded have likely seen more people than expected. Thus, the relation between experience and expectations is again highlighted, and interacting with other visitors is a key element in most tourism experiencescapes.

The latter external factor Mossberg and Hagen (2007) considers is the service, which in this case is represented by the work of managers and other facilitating actors (e.g. parking employees). The condition of the path, including path maintenance is an example of what national park managers are responsible for, and several studies have looked at the

environmental aspect of the paths (e.g. Kling et al., 2017; Svajda et al., 2016). Thus, visitors may also interact indirectly with managers through management facilities.

2.3. Outcome

Outcome is the last phase of the OFM (Figure 1) and defines what a visitor has gained of value from the experience. The motivation for a certain activity may be influenced by the expected outcome (Home et al., 2012). Outcome can be assessed in different ways, and in recreation research outcome can be assessed by measuring (1) overall satisfaction (Arlinghaus, 2006) or (2) consumer-surplus (Yeh et al., 2016), or by measuring (3) how visitors assess specific outcomes of e.g. the nature experience, having a high-quality experience with family or friends, or relaxation (Kil et al., 2021). In a long-term perspective, outcomes might turn into what is often called benefits, such as improved quality of life or better health (Driver, 2008). The outcome of a certain experience may be caused by several dimensions. For instance, high satisfaction is not necessarily caused by a perfect, faultless recreation experience (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). An experience with high quality recreation may also contain negative elements, and therefore not necessarily give high satisfaction. Further, the level of satisfaction may influence the loyalty and motivation for a revisit (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 79). If a visitor returns, the previous visit(s) may influence the pre-trip perceptions and later the experience and outcome. To summarise, several elements such as expectations, previous experiences and current experience-evaluations affect the outcome of the experiences.

3. Methods

This chapter presents the study area and how the study is conducted and give insight to where and how the data gathering found place. The interview guide, information given to the informants and pictures from the study area are presented in the appendix.

3.1. Study area

The Lofoten archipelago is located in Northern Norway, approximately at the 68th latitude. There are six municipalities administrating the seven main islands. All the islands go under the common name of Lofoten. Fishing and tourism are the two main economic foundations for the area (Karlsson & Dale, 2019). The landscape is characterised by steep mountains close to the sea with otherwise lush nature, which is distinctive in a global scale. Dimensions like ruggedness, sophistication, naturalness and activeness contribute to Lofoten being a popular destination (Seljeseth & Korneliussen, 2015).

In 2015, the Moskenes municipality initiated a process for designation of a new national park named Lofotodden National Park (Karlsson & Dale, 2019). It was officially established in June 2018 and is located at the outermost end of the Moskenes island. 99 km² is preserved, while 13 km² of these as sea, which makes it as one of the smallest national parks in Norway. Lofotodden National Park is established to preserve a large nature area with distinctive biodiversity and landscape (Text box 1) (Forskrift om vern av Lofotodden nasjonalpark i Moskenes og Flakstad, 2018; Forslag til verneplan for Lofotodden nasjonalpark, 2018). The national park designation gives obligations to keep the area untouched and well preserved. Further, the national park regulation lists up what is allowed and not, for the managers as well as for visitors. Some visitors may not know these regulations (Lien et al., 2020), but the visitors are still responsible to know them. For instance, section 7 says that visitors have to behave gently and take into account the local animal and plant life (Forskrift om vern av Lofotodden nasjonalpark i Moskenes og Flakstad, 2018). Other restrictions from the regulation are that it is not allowed to use motorised vehicles, including e.g. snow mobiles, helicopters and drones.

Section 1. Objectives for Lofotodden National Park

The objective of Lofotodden National Park is to preserve a large natural area that contains a distinctive natural diversity with special emphasis on landscapes without heavier encroachments, habitats, species, and geological deposits.

The objective of the national park is further to take care of:

- a) a unique and coastal alpine landscape with very great landscape and natural historical value
- b) representative and distinctive ecosystems with great variation in biodiversity, including species, populations, habitat types, geology, and ecological processes
- c) genetic characteristics of mountain plants in one of the areas in Norway that have been longest free from ice, and of oceanic species on the northern border of their distribution area
- d) important habitat types such as rocky and rockslide areas, calcareous coastal mountains, and dunes
- e) species-rich areas in the habitat types cultivated field bed and boreal heath
- f) habitat for several endangered species, including black-legged kittiwake, black guillemot, European shag, and pasture fungus
- g) valuable cultural monuments
- h) an important reference area for studying development in nature, especially related to geological processes, climate change and significance for the establishment of forests in northern areas with oceanic climates.

The public shall be given the opportunity for an undisturbed experience of nature through the practice of nature-friendly and simple outdoor life with a small degree of technical facilitation.

Many visitors of Lofotodden National Park are first time visitors, and Ryten and Kvalvika have a medium-great importance (4,8 out of 7) of why visitors come to the national park (Lien et al., 2020). Ryten and Kvalvika are considered two of the most popular attractions in the national park, and they are located north in the national park, with short distance in-between (Figure 2). Some visitors visit both Ryten and Kvalvika during the same hike, and it is estimated that 45 662 (2018), 66 338 (2019), 50 762 (2020) and 43 685 (2021) people visited either one or both of these attractions the past years (Appendix D) (Lofoten Friluftsråd, 2021). People may hike from Torsfjord or Innersand to reach both Ryten and Kvalvika. Both of the routes are categorised as intermediate difficult hikes by the Norwegian hike planner UT.no (Lofoten Friluftsråd, n.d.-a; Lofoten Friluftsråd, n.d.-b), but information can also be found from other sources like Destination Lofoten, Visit Norway, Instagram and books. Ryten rises 543 meters above sea level, and is characteristic with a view of Kvalvika, the surrounding mountains and the Norwegian sea in the west. Many people take the stereotypic *Ryten photography* close to

the peak of Ryten, and it looks like you are hanging from a rock in free fall above Kvalvika. Kvalvika is one of the more famous beaches in Lofoten, with many campers on nights with great weather. From Kvalvika, you can see the midnight sun in the horizons to the west. Pictures from the study area are shown in Appendix C.

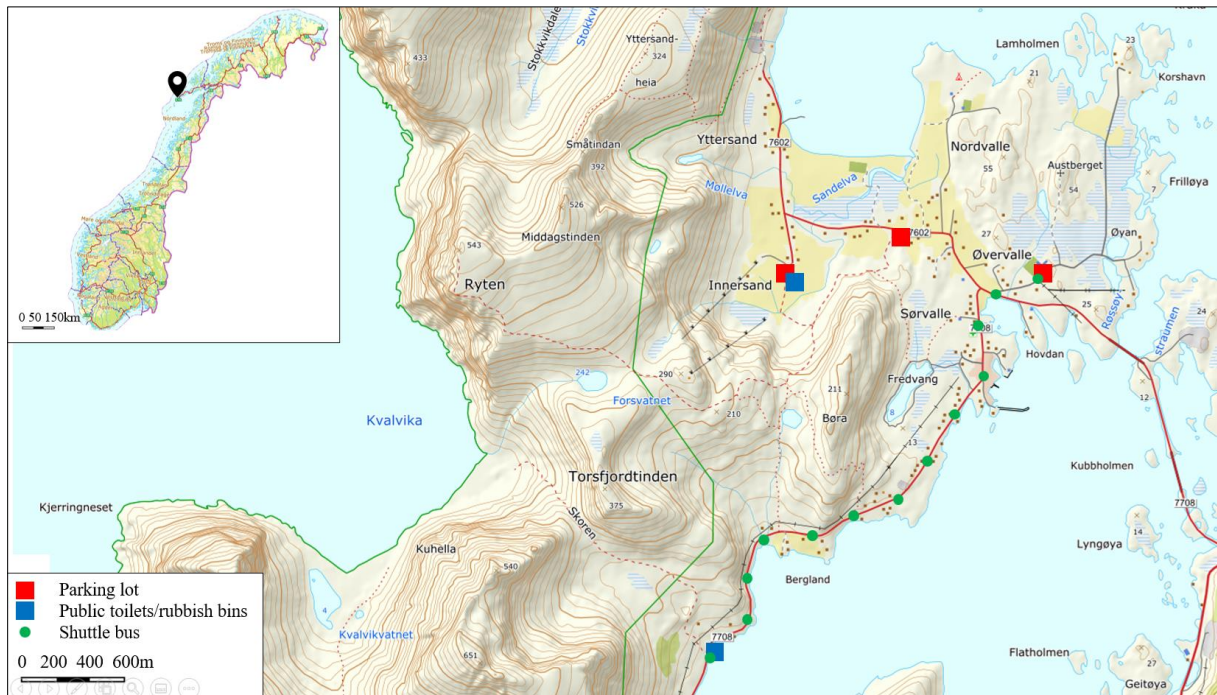


Figure 2. Location of Ryten Mountain, Kvalvika Beach and associated facilities for the summer 2021. Adapted from NIBIO Kilden .

There are four parallel tracks as part of the same path several places from Innersand to Ryten. When it is raining and the paths get wet and muddy, visitors may seek to walk on vegetation next to the path where it is not slippery. Further, this contributes to making new tracks. Other places closer to Ryten, the path is several meters wide as shown in Appendix C (Thonhaugen & Fredriksen, 2021). To consider the path degradation, landowners together with the national park managers have built boardwalks some places. Further, the local municipality is in process for certifying the hike to Ryten as one of the Norwegian Scenic Hikes (Lofotodden Nasjonalparkstyre, 2022). Then, they will be able to assign money to recover, restore and maintain the paths on this hike (Klima- og miljødepartementet, 2021). The path Innersand-Ryten does not have any permanent markers or signs, but some signs are at the path Torsfjord-Kvalvika. Additionally, some temporary path markers were put out on both hikes July 14th-15th, 2021. Some signs about guiding visitors to follow a certain path were also put out as seen in Appendix C.

In 2021 there was a parking lot administrated by a local farmer at Innersand, which costed 100 NOK for a vehicle. The parking lot also hosted toilets (no costs), rubbish bins and a small shop for selling snacks. A parking lot was also located at Fredvang School (100 NOK) and another on in-between these two parking lots (100 NOK). There was also a shuttle bus driving from Fredvang School to Torsfjord for a limited period of time during the summer (50 NOK one way, 90 NOK both ways). At Torsfjord, there were no parking facilities, but a toilet (10 NOK) and rubbish bins were carried out by the municipality.

3.2. Methodology

Research design

For this thesis, a qualitative case study design is applied. A qualitative study seek to explore the variety and deeper aspects of the visitor experiences and opinions (Kvale et al., 2015, p. 47). Walliman (2016, p. 50) reflects that words are far less precise than numbers, and that a qualitative approach may cause varying interpretations and valuation. This study seeks to explore the variety of opinions by the visitors of Ryten-Kvalvika. A study like this gives informants the opportunity to describe their answers and opinions more deeply. Additionally, informants can use their own words and bring up what they personally mean is the most important information.

The study is constructed as a case study. Gerring (2004) defines a case study as an *intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units*. This study aim to explore and understand the variety of perceptions and experiences within visitors of a certain area. Yin (2012, p. 5) reflects that case studies are relevant when the researcher asks descriptive or explanatory questions. Further, this study is conducted with a single-case design which means that only one case is studied within a single context. To illustrate, this thesis is studying all the visitors of Ryten-Kvalvika, not separating them into several user groups or comparing them to visitors of other areas. Neither do I compare Ryten-Kvalvika with another attraction in a national park.

The interviews are semi-structured, which means that they have a structure for topics and some questions the interviewee will be asked. Kallio et al. (2016) argue that the benefits of semi-structured interviews are that the researcher has the opportunity to ask follow-up questions that are not a part of the interview guide. A semi-structured approach also makes both the researcher and the informant able to steer the interview (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). For this thesis, 7 main topics are used (background information, trip motivations, national park, overall experience,

crowding and human waste, management tools and other comments). The entire interview guide is shown in Appendix A. Pilot testing of the interview guide is an important step to test if informants understand the questions and answer what is wanted (Kallio et al., 2016; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The pilot interview did not bring any answers related to the national park designation, and questions directly about this was therefore added in the interview guide. This was done to explore if and how the national park influence visitors pre-trip perceptions and experiences.

The interviews are done on-site while walking, which is an increasingly used methodology within investigation of people-landscape relations (Macpherson, 2016). On-sites interviews means that the informants still are within the experiencescape (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007). Evans and Jones (2011) reflect that having an interview while walking allows natural rhythm in a conversation. It gives natural breaks and may even provide richer perspectives than stationary and indoor interviews (Heijnen et al., 2021). Most of the interviews were held on the move, but some interviews were also stationary. The walking interviews make the researcher able to observe the informant reactions, body language and how the environment is during a part of their hike (Clark & Emmel, 2010). An additional observed advantage may also be that people are more likely to participate in a walking interview because it does not take of their time. Then the participants still can move towards their target A disadvantage with walking interviews is that weather, interactions with other people and other surroundings along the way creates uncertainty, and can be a distraction for the informant (Heijnen et al., 2021). For instance, some other visitors asked the researcher and an informant about the further conditions for the hike. The current interview may also be a factor that influences the informant experience of the hike, which was reflected by an informant. The informants evaluate their experience all the time, and opinions about experience and satisfaction may therefore occur even if the entire experience is not finished. To summarise, walking interviews gives changing environments and a natural rhythm for the interview conversation.

To get a representative sample of the study group, it is important to gather information when the study group is present in the area (Walliman, 2016, p. 110). Therefore, 20 interviews were conducted in the area of Ryten and Kvalvika within the period of July 15th – August 7th, 2021. This period is chosen because the highest visitor numbers occur in late July (Lofoten Friluftsråd, 2021). Table 1 shows an overview of participating informants. Most of the interviews were done on the path from Ryten towards Innersand. Additionally, an interview was done from Ryten towards Kvalvika. Stationary interviews were done either standing or sitting in the

environment. Three of the informants are interviewed before they reached one of the attractions Ryten or Kvalvika, while the remaining 17 informants were interviewed after they reached Ryten or Kvalvika. 50% of the informants are Norwegians, and the other 50% are from several countries. Non-probability sampling method is used for this thesis and is based on non-random selection of a whole population (Walliman, 2016, p. 110), which means that the informants are not picked randomly within a whole population. Only visitors of Ryten-Kvalvika are considered, and there may be some population groups that deviates from this hike. For instance, the hike is not accessible for wheelchair users.

Table 1. Overview of demographic and interview-related variations among the informants.

ID	Sex	Age	Group	Origin	Before/after reaching Ryten or Kvalvika	Walking/stationary interview
1	M	26	Friends	Kongsberg (Norway)	After	W
2	F	47	Family	Trondheim (Norway)	After	W
3	M	24	Partner	Oslo (Norway)	After	S
4	F	54	Partner	Bergen (Norway)	After	W
5	F	43	Alone	Oslo (Norway)	After	W
6	M	24	Family	Oslo (Norway)	After	S
7	M	37	Alone	Sweden	After	S
8	M	27	Alone	England	After	W
9	F	40	Alone	Germany	After	W
10	F	52	Partner	Asker (Norway)	After	W
11	F	38	Alone	Sweden (Canadian origin)	After	W
12	M	43	Family	Switzerland	Before	W
13	M	40	Partner	Sweden (German origin)	After	W
14	F	23	Family	Germany	Before	W
15	M	25	Alone	Czech Republic	After	W
16	M	22	Alone	Germany	Before	S
17	M	23	Friend	Harstad (Norway, Swedish origin)	After	W
18	M	58	Partner	Tønsberg (Norway)	After	W
19	F	26	Friend	Trondheim (Norway)	After	W
20	M	60	Partner	Netherlands	After	W

Within the user group of Ryten-Kvalvika, quota sampling is considered. Quota sampling is when the researcher picks randomly within certain user groups (Walliman, 2016, p. 115), e.g. different ages, genders and origins in this case. This is done consequently to get data from different cultures and backgrounds. When meeting certain people, they were asked if they would participate in an interview for a master thesis. They were told that the interviews are anonymously, and the records will be deleted after end of the project. An information letter

(Appendix B) was also given to informants that participated, which contained information about the thesis, informant rights and contact information to the researcher with associated supervisors. Interviews were done in both Norwegian and English to reduce language barriers. Informants that spoke Swedish were interviewed in Norwegian. All interviews were recorded with a mobile phone with external microphone, but some recordings were disturbed by wind sounds and partly difficult to transcribe. This disturbance has not influenced a big part of the data and is considered having a low impact on the reliability of the data. After a day with interviews, the audio files were uploaded to a personal Google Drive folder to save a backup of the file.

Analysis

After the field work, transcribing the interviews was done manually with the audio track on the mobile phone and transcribing into Microsoft Word. Informants that spoke Swedish were transcribed into Norwegian. However, it is important that the tape is transcribed exactly, which also includes tones of the voice, thinking breaks, etc. Parenthesis were used to mark if people laughed, and thinking breaks were symbolised either by dots or phrases people said like *ehm*, *hmm*, *eeeh*. The transcribing session of the analysis was done during September and early October 2021.

The next step for the analysis is to structure the transcribed material, which was done in several steps during January-March 2022. Quantitative research are handled with statistical procedures, but qualitative research needs to structure the gathered information through coding, clustering and summarising (Walliman, 2016, p. 164). This means that you look for topics and reflections that are relevant to the study, and put them into different categories and codes (subcategories). To illustrate, Table 2 shows an example of how categories and codes were applied to the transcripts. Here, an answer like *And, yeah those wooden planks. I love them, because it makes the path totally easier* could for instance be categorised and coded as *making hike easier* → *boardwalks* or *boardwalks* → *positive experience*. This illustrated that there are no correct or incorrect codes. The codes and categories are influenced by the researcher. Hence, coding discussions with supervisors and a fellow student were applied to increase the reliability and the precision of the coding.

Table 2. Examples of how the coding was conducted. The answers are to the question “What do you consider to be the most positive about your experience on this hike?”

Citations	Categories and codes
Eeh. Well, I, even though it was not foggy, it’s always the fact that I reached the highest point. That’s when I feel the biggest satisfaction, let’s say.	Category: Positive experience Code: Reaching the peak
And I would also that the people overall, that they are very positive and friendly, we say hi to each other, and also ask how far is it, how long it takes, if it’s difficult, more fit and stuff. So I would definitely mention people as well	Category: Positive experience Code: Meeting other people
And, yeah those wooden planks. I love them, because it makes the path totally easier.	Category: Positive experience Code: Boardwalks
And maybe, there was this path when I was climbing from the beach to the Ryten, and it was under rocks and it was a bit messy there because there was really no path, so I would think that putting some signs there would make it easier I guess.	Category: Management Code: Should be more signs

Reliability

Reliability defines the credibility of a study (Golafshani, 2003). There may be several sources to error, and the researcher is important for the reliability within qualitative research (Walliman, 2016, p. 47). Questions that lead informants to certain answers are not recommended. For instance, it is desirable to rather ask *how your overall experience is* than *how good your overall experience is*. Therefore, open-ending questions received attention during the interviews. More direct questions were asked in some cases to clarify the answers, such as *so you prefer less crowding than this?*. Further, the wind disturbance on the audio records may have had a negative impact on the data, but it is considered to have low importance because only small parts got lost. Language may also have been a source of error, because the researcher and many of the foreign informants do not have English as a mother tongue. Also, for the transcribing session, the Swedish interviews were transcribed into Norwegian, and some error may have occurred. The sample size is considered to have a low impact in the reliability with 20 interviews. Galvin (2015) argue that the number of qualitative interviews should be at least 12, and more than 30 gives definitely saturation, but this may vary among studied. Thus, the overall reliability for the data is considered to be relatively high.

4. Results

In this chapter, selected results from the interviews are presented. The outline follows the OFM (Figure 1) with motivations and expectations as part of the pre-trip perceptions. Later, positive dimensions, negative dimensions and overall experiences are presented. These positive and negative dimensions shape what is later called the hiker experiencescape of Ryten-Kvalvika. Last, the intentions for revisitation are presented.

4.1. Pre-trip perceptions

In this section, informant impressions and expectations to the hike before the trip are presented. Aspects like motivation for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika, expectations of the hike, and how important this hike was for the entire Lofoten visit are presented. The following data were mainly gathered through direct questions about why they visited this certain place and what expectations they had for the hike. However, informants also brought up how they derived some of their motivations and expectations from information sources.

The motivations and expectations were influenced by varying sources to information. As ID19 said, *when you see that other people have been here, and they share their experiences with pictures and stuff. Then you make some expectations about how it will be and how it looks like.* Ryten-Kvalvika was by several informants reflected as one of the most recommended attractions in Lofoten. Things like social media, books, internet research, Google Maps and friends were mentioned as sources where informants got information of the hikes. Among other things, the sources described this hike as beautiful and as one out of two recommended hikes in this area of Lofoten. ID19 reflected this hike to be a *must* when they already were visiting Lofoten. A movie about two surfers at Kvalvika was also mentioned as a motivating factor for visiting this area. It is plausible that varying information sources contributed to varied motivations and expectations.

Motivations

The informant motivation provides insight to what they found as the main pull-factors for the area. Valuable and positive nature experiences was commonly answered for why informants visited Norway, Lofoten and Ryten-Kvalvika. Foreign informants expressed the right of public access as a motivation for visiting Norway, because it allows visitors to camp and walk wherever they want. On a question about how important this hike was for their entire Lofoten visit, several informants said that it was not necessarily important while others stated it to be very important. For instance, ID3 expressed Kvalvika as one of the main reasons to why they

visited Lofoten and elaborated that *it seemed like a cool place*. Alternatively, ID8 did a multi-day hike through the national park to explore the Moskenes island, and Ryten-Kvalvika was therefore a *side-mission* of the hike. This implied that Ryten-Kvalvika is not the primary motivation for ID8 to come here. Thus, there were many motivations for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika, while the spectacular nature and the accessibility were most often mentioned.

The accessibility is a factor several informants mentioned about their Ryten-Kvalvika motivation. Kvalvika was by some informants described as an attraction for those who want to see all the beaches of Lofoten and those who want to camp at beaches. ID7 is motivated by camping at the most beautiful beaches of Lofoten and said that he *chose Kvalvika tonight because [...] you can't come here by car. So, then it won't be camping in the same way. It gets more personal*. ID5 wanted a medium-length hike, but that the hikes to Ryten-Kvalvika were described as easy attracted several informants. ID12 hiked with spouse and kids and said that the hike *looked nice, and it's doable with the kids. And, not for far from the house we are renting, so it sounded pretty cool*. Thus, the difficulty of the hike influenced informant motivation for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika.

Several other factors influenced motivations for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika. First, weather influenced informant motivation for these hikes. ID11 reflected no motivation for doing this hike if the weather was too bad. ID14 said that *the weather isn't that good today. And [they] read about a very nice beach, so [they] wanted to see the beach and, yeah most of it probably because of the weather. And [they] thought it would be possible, also with rain*. Second, some informants stated the national park designation have no influence on their Ryten-Kvalvika motivation. Third, on a question about how a hypothetical tourist tax would influence motivation for coming here, ID18 said it would not make the holiday significantly more expensive and did not have any objections to a tourist tax. Thus, it would not influence the motivation for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika, which was partially supported by other informants who said their motivation for visiting Lofoten would not be reduced with a tourist tax for entire Lofoten. Last, on a question about a hypothetical requirement for watching a video about e.g. behaviour and regulations, ID10 said it would be strange to watch a video, but it would not influence the motivation for visiting Lofoten if the video lasted just for a minute. Conversely, an informant said that a video would give the perception that this area has really many visitors, which could influence the motivation for coming here. To summarise, many factors influenced and might hypothetically influence informant motivations to visit Ryten-Kvalvika. Such motivations may impact what visitors expect for the experience.

Expectations

Expectations varied among the informants and included several topics. ID16 had no expectations and elaborated that *everything is just a big surprise*. The previous knowledge to the national park was varying, but some informants said they expected something very nice or lush vegetation in national parks. Further, many informants had expectations especially to nature, landscape and view. A typical example is ID3, who expected *beautiful white beaches, turquoise sea, massive mountains right next to the sea, and that the landscape should be very idyllic*. Words like untouched nature, steep mountains, beautiful beaches, beautiful nature, beautiful colours and beautiful scenery were expressed by many informants. Further, several informants brought up expectations to view, which was not further specified, but view of the surrounding landscape is considered in this case. However, expectations to the surroundings were discovered.

ID14: National park expectations

[...] when I hear about a national park, I might expect something very nice, probably. Something like more spectacular than other things, but I think it's not really an influence, no.

Expectations to other visitors were also found, and informants expected less people, more people, and this certain numbers of people. Some expected less people due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Several informants expected more people on this hike than other hikes in Lofoten. ID5 compared this hike with hikes in other popular mountain areas in Norway like Rondane and Jotunheimen and expected more waste on this hike due to many visitors. Further, when some informants expected many people, temporal displacement appeared. For instance, ID4 said that they started hiking early in the morning to avoid the masses of people. She also expressed uncertainty about the accessibility and expected well-maintained paths due to the national park designation. The expectations are therefore varying, and several informants link visitor numbers to path wearing.

ID4: Path expectations

[...] maybe a bit rockier paths because it's a national park here. So [I expected] maybe more maintained so everyone follows the same path. Because there are big scars in the nature with so many people walking in all directions and the paths go in all directions. It takes a while for the nature to recover, I think. [...] due to the national park, I'd expect that it was more canalised where people should walk, so people don't walk in all directions.

Several other expectations were brought up by informants. For weather, the informants expected all conditions due to the weather forecasts. For accessibility, informants expected the hike to be easy, well facilitated and having well-maintained paths. On a question about video-educating visitors to behave correctly, ID2 said a video could give the perception that it is more beautiful here than other places and implied that a video may influence expectations. However, many factors were influencing hike expectations, which makes the basis for the experiences.

4.2. Actual experiences

In this subchapter, informant reflections and opinions about experiences are presented in sections of positive and negative dimensions. Table 3 shows an overview of how different on-site factors influenced the informant experiencescape.

Table 3. An overview of influencing factors to visitor experiences of Ryten-Kvalvika. The factors “tourist tax” and “video” represent how these management actions hypothetically influence visitor experiences. The factor “national park managers” have no direct impacts but are considered due to later discussions.

Label	Factor	Positive influence	Negative influence
Surroundings	View	- Landscape - Nice view during the entire hike.	- Low visibility - Lack of view
	Weather	- Sunny and fair conditions - Changing weather - Being in the clouds - Bad weather = less crowding	- Rain - Wind - Fog
	Nature	- The light - Colours - Lush nature	
	National Park	- Fun to visit national parks	
	Waste	- Low amounts observed	- Observing waste - Marine waste - Sheep poop
	Accessibility	- Easy hike - Boardwalks (especially on rainy days) - Boardwalks take care of nature	- Worn paths (wide, muddy) - Bad paths = dangerous, difficult to hike
People	Other visitors	- Meeting other people - Hiking with friends - Room to space out	- Walk in line
Service	Tourist tax*		- The parking fee is already expensive
	Video*		- Would feel stupid
	Parking		- 100 NOK is expensive
	National park managers**		

* Hypothetical impacts

** No direct impacts

Positive experience dimensions

Informants were asked about what they considered to be the most positive things with their experiences. Positive answers from other questions related to their experience are also presented. For instance, previous knowledge to the national park designation varied, and informants found it fun to visit national parks. Some informants mentioned fulfilled expectations as a positive effect on the experience. Informants also found it positive to be outdoors, be active and enjoy nature. ID8 seemed amazed and found it difficult to put into words how his experience was and elaborated that the *night on Horseid Beach was maybe the best place [he's] ever been*.

Further, words like untouched nature, beautiful nature, the light, the colours, nature tressure, lush nature and a magnificent view were used to describe the Ryten-Kvalvika surroundings. Several informants highlighted the fact that the mountains meet the sea, which they found spectacular. ID2 said it was great that you can reach both the beach and the mountain during the same hike. The view of Kvalvika from Ryten is also mentioned. Moreover, ID19 stated the view to be nice during the entire hike to Ryten. View and visibility seemed to depend on the weather, and some informants mentioned great weather as crucial for a positive experience. Additionally, some informants reflected that being in the clouds also was an experience and that changing weather was spectacular. ID6 started the hike in the fog, but the weather turned sunny when he reached Ryten, which was perceived as *very nice*. ID2 found an *advantage of having bad weather, because [she] can imagine this hike being such that you may walk in line on days with nice weather*. Given the above, several surrounding factors had a positive impact on the experiences.

ID19: Other visitors

I'm positively surprised [about the numbers of visitors here]. I don't think this is especially crowded compared to what I expected. [...] and it's popular to be tourist in our own country. So, I'd expected more people, but there have been evenly with people, and we've met people during the entire hike. The fact that you meet other people here is a part of the experience of course. You hear different languages, and I find it fun, which is a part of the experience. But we haven't walked in line, or the crowds haven't made it difficult to walk here. So, that has been better than expected, which applies for all the hikes we've done in Lofoten.

Other visitors were a main part of the Ryten-Kvalvika experiencescape. Informants brought up social aspects like meeting other people and hiking with friends as positive factors. Further, ID16 reflected that he likes the variation of visiting nature areas with low and high levels of crowding. ID11 enjoyed that there was room to space out, while ID19 said it was fun to hear different languages during the hike. The fact that other people were active, and hikers were among all ages were also a positive dimension. ID12 added that people in Norway and Sweden seem respectful to nature and that high visitor numbers were okay *as long as they respect the trail*. Furthermore, informants reflected that they expected more waste due to high visitor numbers and were positively surprised by the low amounts of waste. To waste, ID4 would not bother if she saw waste, but was surprised about how clean the area was. Some informants were confronted with that more than 60 pieces of waste were observed on the path the current day, they responded that they probably were too busy with looking at the view and minding their steps as reasons to why they did not notice the waste. Thus, other visitors within the experiencescape seemed to have a positive impact.

ID16: Boardwalks

But I was happy to see [the boardwalks]. In New Zealand, the hikes are in good conditions as well, like this. And, I have done so much hikes that are worse, so the last hikes I've done there was just muddy and nobody was carrying about them. So, this is a really good one.

I also like the picture of it, so it's like looking in this direction where you have a lot of wooden planks, I like that. It's really, yeah, I think it's a really nice thing.

The path and the difficulty of the hike were positive impacts for several informants. The fact that the hike was easy and not too long had a positive effect on some informants. Several informants highlighted the easy accessibility and well-built boardwalks as positive dimensions. Additionally, bad paths where there are no boardwalks did not necessarily have a negative impact and seemed to be related to the weather. For instance, the boardwalks seemed to have a stronger positive impact for informants on rainy days with wet and muddy areas, like ID2 who not expected the boardwalks to be like this and found it very positive. Others describe the boardwalks as *super great, really great, really good, really positive, fantastic and way above the expectations*, respectively. ID18 reflected that it was nice that the boardwalks were built a bit up from the ground, which *takes care of the nature in a good way*. However, on a hypothetical question if boardwalks for the entire hike to Ryten-Kvalvika were preferred, some informants said that would be too much and boardwalks are only necessary where there is mud

and peats. Thus, what some informants stated as easy accessibility had a positive impact on their experience.

Negative experience dimensions

A specific question about what informants considered to be the most negative about their experience was asked. Answers informants brought up from other questions are also presented. Two of the informants responded *nothing* as negative to their experience. Further, weather was also a negative factor. ID7 said partly jokingly that the bad weather is the only negative factor, while ID1 and ID3 expressed disappointment to the bad weather. Bad weather was however a very common answer for negative experience impact. Rain, wind, fog, and cold temperatures were reflected as bad weather by the informants. Some informants also highlighted that people cannot influence the weather. Thus, even if bad weather had a directly negative impact, some informants seemed more acceptable to it.

ID7: Weather

[...] the weather, but there's nothing I can influence today. I've been quite lucky with the weather in Lofoten and had sun for all days. So, it's really nothing negative. But you surely meet someone who has something negative to say, it usually is like that.

Weather conditions may have influenced the informants also indirectly through worn paths. ID12 stated that you can see the path from long distance and described it as not beautiful. Rainy days with following muddy paths were negative factors. An informant brought up that it was difficult to walk some places because of the mud. Further, the worn paths were described as *not beautiful* and *not really nice*. The fact that the paths were wide and muddy were also mentioned as negative. Spatial displacement was brought up and informants said it was easier to rather walk on the vegetation next to the path compared to on the path. ID14 was interviewed early in the hike but expressed uncertainty if the bad paths could be dangerous or would make it difficult to reach Kvalvika or Ryten. On a question about boardwalks for the entire hike to Ryten, ID17 expressed negativity and that it would give the hike a more touristic and less naturalistic expressions. Apart from weather conditions and path maintenance, an informant found it negative that the hike was hard. Within the data sampling period, local managers put out temporary markers along the path, and an informant missed markers all the way up to Ryten and expressed uncertainty about not knowing whether he was on the correct path to Ryten. However, worn paths were negative by several reasons, and some informants linked the worn paths to high visitor numbers.

ID14: Crowding

Hmm, I might think that it's too touristic or let's say, when you're doing a hike or when I'm doing a hike, I like to be like, close to nature [...]. So, I think I would prefer hiking without meeting anybody to hike with a huge amount of people, so, it would've affected me negatively.

High visitor numbers influenced the informants differently. Some informants brought up crowding as a negative effect. ID17 said on a bad weather day that there was *a bit too many people* and *nature [...] is a place where you don't have to walk in line*. The words *walk in line* were also used by several other informants as something negative. Further, some informants had seen waste during their hike, which they described as negative. The waste was noticed at Ryten-Kvalvika and other areas of Lofoten. Additionally, several informants said it would not be fun to walk in waste. Marine waste observed at Kvalvika was also considered as a negative impact, but the informants understood that marine waste originated from other places on earth. ID3 said that *people try to burn things which are not burnable, and just lays them in the firepits* and that *it gives a negative impression that there is waste laying around on an idyllic place like this*. ID3 also found the sheep poop laying around the camp spots at Kvalvika as negative. Thus, crowding, waste and sheep poop were negative factors to the experiences.

ID15: Hypothetical tourist tax

I would be definitely surprised. And, yeah, of course a bit more negative because that's, also losing a bit of its nature identity let's say. That there has to be a, this kind of thing, and, yeah.

If I could choose for the next time for, about going somewhere where the taxes are not collecting I would definitely rather go there. And also, I would maybe think that since they need to collect taxes here, maybe the hike is not really worth it because they somehow need to get money to repair it or something. And also for the rubbish bins and toilets, yeah, since there are none, I would really considerate, yeah, not useful for me personally. Like if I don't use the rubbish bins and toilets of course.

Facilities to host such high visitor numbers are crucial. Due to the parking, ID11 stated the parking fee at 100 NOK to be expensive but would anyway come here *because [the area] looks really good*. Another informant had parking issues because money was forgotten. Further, the facilities at the parking lots were reflected, with toilets and rubbish bins as facilities that should be there. To fund such facilities, a question about hypothetical tourist tax were asked. Some informants already found the parking fee to be *a bit expensive* or *very heavy*, which implied a negativity to tourist tax. ID5 said the experience would still be nice, but a tourist tax would

bother and slightly reduce the experience. ID15 said that if the tax was for Ryten-Kvalvika only, he would rather search for hikes without taxes. Towards a hypothetical video for behavioural education, ID5 would feel stupid if a video should teach her. However, facilities related to visiting Ryten-Kvalvika may have a negative impact on the experience.

Overall experience

No questions were asked directly about the outcome or level of satisfaction. However, overall experience may give a perception of how satisfied or how positive and negative dimensions weigh against each other. The answered variations emphasize that experiences are individual and subjective. Overall experience was explored through an open-ended question before asking about the specific positive and negative dimensions. Further, this may have an impact on whether informants would come back or not, which is also presented in this section.

On a question about their overall experience, none of the informants reported only negative factors. A pattern for many informants was that they answered with describing positive and negative factors but were overall satisfied. ID17 emphasizes the mix of positive and negative answers with saying *if you don't mind the bad weather, it has been an okay hike*. The variations show that the experiences were influenced by different factors with different impact levels. ID8 described his night on Horseid Beach as *maybe the best place ever been*. The experience was by ID13 compared with being at Hauklandstranda Beach, which was partly chaotic, not pleasant and with lots of music and disturbance. The Ryten-Kvalvika hike was rather calm and super nice (ID13). Some informants used the terms *as expected* or *fulfilled expectations* as descriptions about their overall experience and seemed satisfied with the experience. However, other elements of positive overall experiences were also covered.

ID19: Overall experience

[...] *the total experience is very very good. Very easy to hike, varying terrain which I like, and great view during the entire hike.*

Some informants stated satisfaction about being outdoors. ID20 reflected that it was great even without reaching Ryten and enjoyed the physical part of the hike. ID2 said you cannot be indoors all the time as a reason to be outdoors. To the overall experience question, some informants shortly answered with words like *beautiful, pretty cool, toptop, gorgeous, lots of nature, veryvery nice and beautiful nature* were stated. Further, view was brought up. ID11 reflected the views as *really good* and understood that this hike was popular. View was also described as incredible, and ID19 said *you don't have to reach the peak to get this beautiful*

view. Ultimately, the view seemed related to weather conditions, which also influenced overall experience.

ID14: Overall experience

I really enjoy it, so, but as I said, I probably thought that the ways would be better. I mean now here it's better, but as we started the way up it was very like wet and slippy, but the nature is beautiful and this, like, no rubbish or anything here. And not a lot of parkers, so I think it's good.

Weather conditions varied, and some experiences depended highly on this. Two informants (ID18 and ID3) scaled their experience to 10 and 6 out of 10, respectively, due to great and bad weather. ID18 also added that the experience would be 2 out of 10 if it rained, the rain would cause muddy paths and if there was no visibility. ID4 had a typical answer for several informants and stated the experience to be *a bit ruined by the [bad] weather, but no one can do anything about it, and it's similar for everyone, so absolutely fine*. Thus, weather seemed to have a small directly negative impact on informants. Further, it also influenced informants indirectly with making the paths wetter and muddier. Some informants said they had a nice experience, but they expected or would like the paths to be better. Due to crowding, ID7 camped at Kvalvika and was satisfied that even if there were more people than expected, Kvalvika was so big that he still got privacy. Overall, many informants seemed to be happy with their experiences even though several factors were influencing them negatively.

4.3. Intentions for revisitation

Revisit intention is a measurement of visitor motivation to revisit. Such motivations may be influenced by the current on-site experience or satisfaction. Informants were asked how their experience influence whether they will return or not. Several informants said they may revisit in the future, but for the coming years they would rather explore new areas they had not been to before. Additionally, some informants said they may do this hike again if they travel with other people than they did this time. In fact, several informants said it is likely that they visit other places of Lofoten rather than Ryten-Kvalvika. To illustrate, ID19 said they leave Lofoten later the current day and showed motivation to come back to visit other places of Lofoten. ID10 had been in Lofoten many times because she has family here, which also makes her more likely to return. Ultimately, informants stated varying motivation for revisiting Lofoten and Ryten-Kvalvika.

ID19: Revisit intention

Primarily I may visit other places of Lofoten if I return. But if I travel with other people, it is more likely that vi do this hike again. But for my own, I think there are other places I would like to see first when I return. So, it depends on who I'm travelling with. It's very likely that I do this hike again if I bring family or other people.

Revisit motivation related to the weather was also detected. Some informants said that bad weather motivates them to not do this hike next time they visit Lofoten. Conversely, other informants said they would like to do this hike again if they come back to Lofoten and the weather is better. ID15 *would definitely go for this hike next time [...] if it's sunny, and at least not raining, and it's not that foggy as today. [...] this is worth visiting twice.* This statement was supported by ID5 who did not bother if she does the same hike two, three or four times. Some informants said that they would like to come back to see the view they have missed.

Travel distance is another factor influencing whether visitors will return to Lofoten. ID7 stated that also Norwegians think it is really far to travel to Lofoten if you do not use trains or airplanes. He elaborated that the Covid-19 pandemic had limited the possibilities of reaching Lofoten through Norrbotten in northern Sweden. ID12 was a pro-environmentally friendly person who used train and a rented car to reach Lofoten from Switzerland. He added that this area is so far from home that they probably not will come back, which was supported by ID20 from the Netherlands. Thus, long travel distance towards Lofoten may reduce the revisit motivation.

5. Discussion

5.1. The hiker experiencescape of Ryten-Kvalvika

To summarise the main findings, the identified experiences are used to develop a hiker experiencescape model (Figure 3) adapted from Mossberg and Hagen (2007). The hiker experiencescape contains the categories *surroundings*, *other visitors*, and *service*, each with including their respective factors. All these factors except from *national park managers* represent detected impacts on visitor experiences of hiking to Ryten-Kvalvika. *National park managers* are still included because they have an indirect impact through several other factors. The figure does not specify whether the factors have a positive or negative impact, since some of them were assessed as positive among some informants and negative among others. For such details, see Table 1.

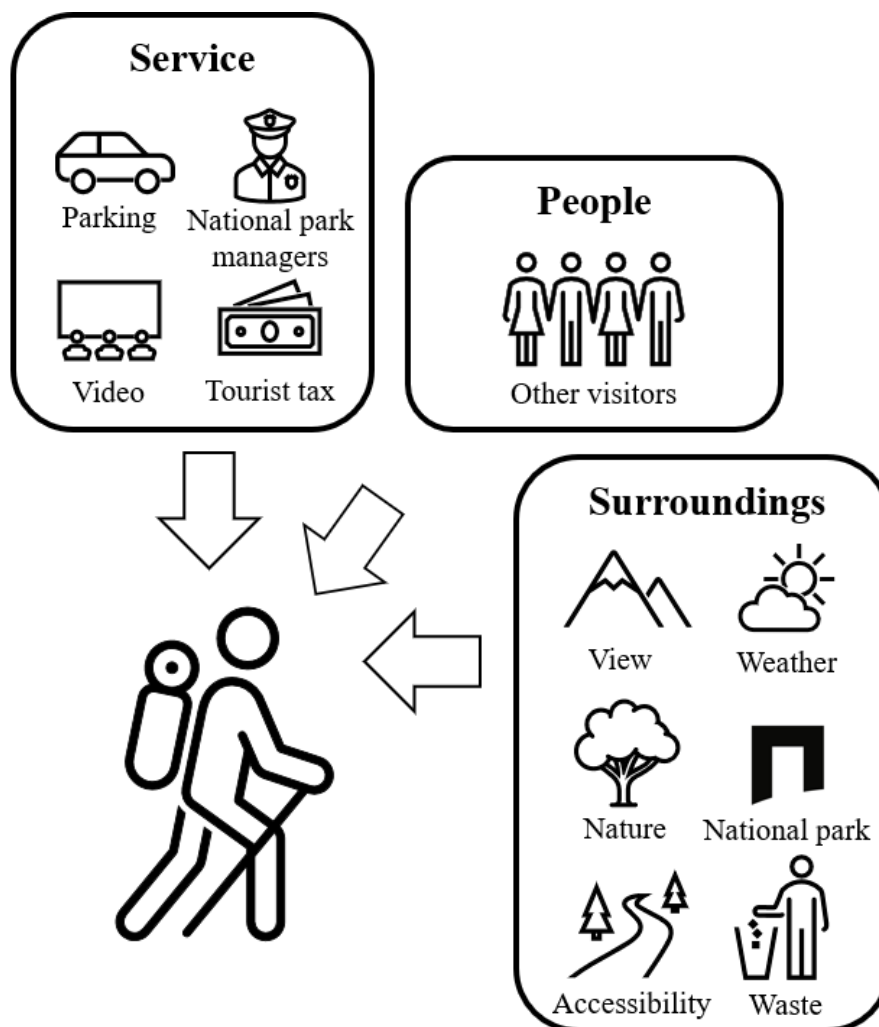


Figure 3. The hiker experiencescape of Ryten-Kvalvika. Adapted from Mossberg and Hagen (2007)

Variations were found for several influencing factors. Expectations towards spectacular nature was a common answer. This seems related to the motivation because spectacular nature also was a common answer to why people are visiting Ryten-Kvalvika. However, variations of how important Ryten-Kvalvika was for the entire Lofoten visit varied. The hike accessibility and the public recommendations of these hikes were important motivations for some. Due to crowding, Norwegian informants tended to expect more visitors than foreign informants. However, the varying expectations and motivations may have had a significant impact on informant experience.

Also for experiences, variations were found among the informants. Experiences that met personal expectations was a common factor for high-quality experiences. Further, nice weather, high visibility, boardwalks, spectacular nature, and small amounts of waste had positive impacts on informants. The national park designation seemed to have a positive impact on top of the listed impacts. Bad weather was negative to many informants, but also mentioned as a positive impact because of less people. Furthermore, bad weather seemed to impact also indirectly with wet paths and low visibility. Crowding seemed to have a small impact on many of the informants, even though some informants discussed the numbers of visitors to have a negative influence on the experience. Overall, informants seemed to be satisfied with their experiences, which illustrated that the positive outweighed the negative dimensions of the experiencescape.

Informants expressed motivation for revisitation, which may be affected by the current experience. Some informants stated they may come back to Ryten-Kvalvika, but not necessarily within the first years. Further, some informants said they rather would visit other places of Lofoten if they return to the region.

5.2. Main research contributions

In the following section, the main findings are discussed in terms of the three categories of the Ryten-Kvalvika experiencescape: surroundings, people and service (Table 3, Figure 3). The relation between the experiences and intentions for revisitation are also discussed.

Surroundings

The findings show that there are several motivations for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika. Nature, landscape and view were often mentioned, and the same pattern is found for the actual experience. Chui et al. (2010) argued that if the surroundings are important, visitors may be

cite-centric or cite-specific. Several informants seem to be cite-centric because the landscape and nature is more important than the specific Ryten-Kvalvika area itself. However, informants that reflected Ryten-Kvalvika to have a high importance for the Lofoten visit may be cite-specific. Such visitor characteristics described by Chui et al. (2010) contributes to understand personal motivations for certain destinations and attractions.

Experiences are one of the main offerings of a national park (Sorakunnas, 2020), and a national park may increase the amount of visitors to an area (Fredman et al., 2007). However, the national park does not seem to attract people to this certain area itself, and Lien et al. (2020) suggested the reason to be that the national park was recently established. But the present findings show that even if informants know the national park designation previous the hike, the national park is not the primary attraction for the hike to Ryten-Kvalvika. Similarly, a national park designation may increase the value of the area (Reinius & Fredman, 2007), and may be a reason to why people visit nature attractions in (e.g. Ryten-Kvalvika) rather than outside the national park. This supports the findings that the national park increases informant experiences. Thus, the designation of Lofotodden National Park may be an important reason for visiting Ryten-Kvalvika even if the national park is not the primary motivation for this hike.

Weather is not a described factor in the experiencescape by Mossberg and Hagen (2007), but does have an impact on Ryten-Kvalvika visitors. Even if weather conditions are unchangeable, informants said that the weather had both big negative and positive impact on the experience. This is supported by Pietilä and Kangas (2015) who found that visitors associated low-quality experiences with weather (and mosquitos). On the other side, the present findings of enjoyment to bad weather may occur because it pushes people to their limits (Sorakunnas, 2020). A previous study from a nearby region, Vesterålen, showed that tourists are satisfied with the weather conditions (Denstadli et al., 2011). The study argued that people expected rough weather, which implies that expectations were different from the present Ryten-Kvalvika visitors. Denstadli et al. (2011) also found that most weather aspects had a relatively small impact on visitor behaviour such as changed plans. This is contradicting some of the informants who tended to displace temporally and spatially with bad weather. Thus, weather was an important factor within the Ryten-Kvalvika experiencescape.

People

Other visitors had both positive and negative impacts on informants. Previous research mainly focus on crowding as a negative impact (Pietilä & Fagerholm, 2016). Some informants still seemed satisfied with the experience which is in line with Pietilä and Fagerholm (2016).

Fossgard and Fredman (2019) discussed that perceptions of crowding may be low within specialised activities (kayaking and biking), which implies that people are more sensitive to crowding when doing no-specialised activities such as hiking. A reason why some informants are not sensitive may be coping such as e.g. temporal displacement (Manning, 2009, p. 110; Pietilä & Fagerholm, 2016). A reason why some are less sensitive to crowding may be high prevalence of news about mass tourism in Lofoten (e.g. Fosslund et al., 2022; Lorentsen & Rørstad, 2019; Thonhaugen & Fredriksen, 2021), which contributes to build informants' expectations about many visitors. However, the findings show that crowding impacts the experiences differently for each informant. Coping and expectations may be reasons to high crowding acceptance.

Distance to the visiting nature area may have an impact on the crowding perceptions. Kil et al. (2015) discussed that people with long distance to the visiting nature area prefers less people. Present findings show that foreign informants tended to be more sensitive to crowds compared to Norwegian informants, even if many Norwegian visitors also may be defined as distant visitors. That Norwegian informants seemed less sensitive to crowding may be because of the already discussed news articles about high visitor numbers. Thus, varying expectations between informants seem to influence crowding sensitivity.

Service

Managing expectations are important to ensure high-quality experiences (Pietilä & Fagerholm, 2016; Rice et al., 2020). This is highlighted through some informants that answered fulfilled expectations as positive to their experiences. Managing expectations for this hike may be difficult, among other things because of the many news articles about high visitor numbers in Lofoten (e.g. Fosslund et al., 2022; Lorentsen & Rørstad, 2019; Thonhaugen & Fredriksen, 2021). Sæþórsdóttir et al. (2020) showed that media focuses mostly on negative factors rather than positive factors such as level of visitor satisfaction. However, national park managers should rely on independent media. As suggested by (Kil et al., 2015), information should be distributed by public or associated actors. It is important to reach the visitors with information wherever they seek for information. Moreover, several studies recommend that tourism organisations should rather give more trust to information in social media (Chung & Koo, 2015; Narangajavana et al., 2017). Again, this may be a difficult aim for the management because this will lead to less control over the distributed information. To summarise, managing visitor expectations is considered important to ensure high-quality experiences for visitors to Ryten-

Kvalvika. Managing expectations may be difficult due to information distributed by independent actors.

On-site management is also needed to facilitate high-quality experiences. For instance, paths require high maintenance when they are exposed to high traffic, especially if bad weather occur (Fossgard & Fredman, 2019). Informants described bad path conditions to be a negative impact on the experience in line with Pietilä and Kangas (2015), but it seemed to not influence their overall experience significantly. However, Kil et al. (2015) argued that distant visitors prefer less development of paths and such facilities, which contradicts many of the present informants who liked the boardwalks. The contradicting findings may be caused by different expectations. The respondents to Kil et al. (2015) mostly sought environmental exploration (wildlife, birds, wetlands, less common vegetation and flowers), while the present informants also sought for outdoor recreation and hiking with friends. Thus, even if the present informants expressed pre-trip perceptions of an untouched area, they seemed to prefer easy accessibility. Well management to keep paths maintained are therefore necessary to ensure overall experiences.

The right of public access may be a challenge for national park managers, and facilities like boardwalks, toilets and rubbish bins may be difficult to fund. Kamfjord (2019, p. 113-114) addressed the tourism paradox, the fact that some attractions are based on public goods like e.g. nature. The paradox also considers that no one are responsible for funding things like path maintenance and other necessary facilities. To illustrate from Ryten-Kvalvika, there is a farmer at Innersand that runs his own parking business with parking taxes, a shop, toilets and rubbish bins. These are crucial facilities for a popular hike like Ryten-Kvalvika. Further, the farmer has together with other landowners built boardwalks some places. They are not required to maintain the paths in such conditions, but the national park managers likely appreciate them and the parking facilities. However, previous discussions highlight the need to handle such facilities and path maintenance to facilitate high-quality experiences.

Revisitation

The overall experience may influence the intentions for revisitation. Additionally, experiences from nature increases the willingness to experience nature later (Soga & Gaston, 2016). A study from Vesterålen, a similar Norwegian destination to Lofoten, showed that only 13 % do not want to return (Denstadli et al., 2011), which is partially confirmed with the present findings. However, several informants mentioned that they would rather visit other places of Lofoten. This implies that Ryten-Kvalvika may be a typical bucket list attraction and that the informants are cite-centric (Chui et al., 2010) in a way that the characteristic landscape is an important

motivation. Thus, the characteristic nature and landscape that Lofoten hosts are important for revisit intention.

5.3. Management implications

Based on the visitor numbers (Appendix D), one could argue that high purists do not like it at Ryten-Kvalvika. The results show that visitors seek Ryten-Kvalvika because of the nature and landscape. Interestingly, a recent visitor survey from the area shows that visitors are satisfied with the accessibility and management, independently of purism level (Lien et al., 2020). The present findings support that enhanced management is preferred, and e.g. more path maintenance is needed to enhance visitor experiences. This is in line with Vistad and Vorkinn (2012) who argued that Norwegian national park visitors seek high quality nature experiences simultaneously as they prefer comfort and safety. Thus, enhanced nature management can ensure or even enhance experiences among all purism levels.

National park managers impact the experiences indirectly through management of e.g. facilities and accessibility. Kandampully et al. (2022) discussed that service and experience are linked from a customer's point of view, which implies that a visitor does not bother who made the boardwalks. This highlights the need for good service from the national park managers to keep paths well maintained and needed facilities available. This is important because national park managers in Norway should ensure high-quality experiences in addition to preserve natural resources (Miljødirektoratet, 2015). However, Dybsand (2020) suggested that tourism providers should pay more attention to controllable factors instead of uncontrollable factors. The findings illustrate that such management is needed and will enhance visitor experiences at Ryten-Kvalvika.

According to the simplified OFM (Figure 1), the visitors evaluate the experience after it actually happens (Mossberg & Hagen, 2007, p. 79). However, the evaluations may start already after getting the first impressions. For instance, a visitor may start to evaluate the experience already during the first minutes of the hike. This supports that some informants reflected fulfilled expectations as positive dimensions and seemed satisfied even before reaching the main attraction of the hike, and that level of satisfaction in some cases are highly related to pre-trip perceptions (Arlinghaus, 2006; Devesa et al., 2010). This highlights the need for managers to consider pre-trip perceptions to ensure high-quality experiences. More studies also support that service quality has a direct impact on visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions, e.g. Lee et al. (2004). Such satisfied experiences may lead to revisit intentions (Rodger et al., 2012), which

not necessarily is a goal for the national park itself. But the national park management could contribute to high satisfaction and increased revisitation, which may have a ripple effect for local providers. Thus, focus on visitor expectations and experiences may have a positive impact on the local community.

5.4. Limitations and research needs

Walking interviews were the main selected methodology to explore visitors pre-trip perceptions and experiences. Also, stationary interviews were conducted to reduce the impact on visitor plans. The ability of walking with the informants where they were supposed to walk anyway, is experienced as a way of lowering the threshold to participate in the study. When conducting on-site interviews, surroundings can be a distraction (Heijnen et al., 2021), which was another observation in some cases. Some informants were waiting for other visitors next to the boardwalks and some sections of the hike were steep and difficult. Thus, conducting the interviews from the peak of Ryten would rather be suitable for reducing such surrounding impacts. Another solution to inhibit such impacts could be to arrange the interviews indoors. However, then the aspect of doing interviews in the field would lapse. With walking interviews, the researcher expected that informants suddenly would observe and come up with topics like e.g. waste and path degradation and following opinions about them. This occurred a couple of times, but was not as common as expected. Thus, the walking interview methodology did not provide the expected approach, but was still useful to get on-site results.

The study aims to explore visitor pre-trip perceptions and their experiences. Since the interviews are done on-site, biases to pre-trip perceptions may have occurred. Also, the outcome was unfortunately not explored. Godovykh and Tasci (2020) argue that existing experience research do not capture the totality of visitor experiences, which is the case for this study as well. For instance, with only having qualitative interviews, only personal opinions towards experiences are reflected. With a qualitative approach, some may find it imprecise to outer opinions through words (Walliman, 2016, p. 50). A mixed methods approach would be more suitable to cover all aspects of the experiences. However, the chosen methods of this study lay basis for future research about hiker experiences in protected areas.

To cover all experience aspects, Kandampully et al. (2022) argued that researchers should include both experiencescape and servicescape features. They add that the servicescape will give a broader approach to the social aspects of the experiences. It would therefore be interesting to closely study the management impacts on the experiences, which is an indirect

impact based on the present findings. Furthermore, to monitor if or how different measurements influence visitor experience, quantitative research is suitable. A quantitative study was conducted in 2019 (Lien et al., 2020), and future monitoring is needed to evaluate if future managerial impacts enhance the experiences or not. This is crucial to gain knowledge of social dimensions of nature management.

6. Conclusion

This is the first qualitative study of experiences in Lofotodden National Park. It increases the current knowledge about visitor experiences in Norway and shows the variations of expectations and experiences. The findings show that the combination of spectacular nature and easy accessibility are the main motivations for several visitors. The pre-trip perceptions to the hikes are shown to have an impact on the overall experience. However, the overall experiences seem to be shaped mainly by weather for many informants, but presence of landscape view was also an important impact. It is interesting that such uncontrollable factors seem to be of higher importance than controllable factors (e.g. path maintenance). Further, those reflecting high-quality overall experiences seem immersed by the spectacular nature.

Norwegian authorities highlight the importance of visitor management in protected areas. With this present knowledge, local managers can easier prioritise future measurements to e.g. facilitate high-quality visitor experiences. The study only covers self-reported perceptions of the visitor experiences. To explore the experiences from several angles, other methods are needed. This includes studying a combination of experiencescape and servicescape and a mix of the study approaches.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Interview guide

Background information

1. Alder?
Age?
2. Kjønn?
Gender?
3. Hvem har du med deg på tur (familie, venner, etc)?
Who is joining you on this hike (family, friends, etc)?
4. Hvor er dere fra (Lofoten, Norge, annet land)?
Where are you from (Lofoten Islands, Norway, other country)?
 - 4a. Hvilket fylke i Norge/annet land?
4a. Which county/region in Norway/other country?
5. Hvor lenge har du vært i Lofoten (inkluderer hele Lofoten)?
How long have you been in Lofoten (includes all Lofoten Islands) so far?
6. Hvor lenge blir du i Lofoten (inkluderer hele Lofoten)?
How long are you staying in Lofoten (includes all Lofoten Islands)?
7. Har du sett og lest Lofotvettreglene i løpet av turen din?
Have you seen and read the Lofoten Rules during your trip?

Pre-trip perceptions

8. Hvorfor besøker du akkurat denne delen av Lofoten (Lofotodden)?
Why do you visit this certain place of Lofoten (Lofotodden)?
 - 8a. Hvor viktig er Ryten/Kvalvika for ditt Lofoten-besøk (inkluderer hele Lofoten)?
8a. How important is Ryten/Kvalvika for your visit to Lofoten (includes all Lofoten Islands)?
9. Hva slags forventninger hadde du før du kom hit til Lofotodden?
What did you expect to experience here in Lofotodden before you came to visit?

National Park

10. Visste du på forhånd at det er nasjonalpark her?
Previous your hike, did you know there is a national park here?
11. Hva tenker du om at det er en nasjonalpark her?
What do you think about having a national park here?

Experience

12. Hvordan er din opplevelse av Lofotodden?

How is your overall experience Lofotodden?

13. Hva opplever du som særlig positivt ved opplevelsen av Lofotodden?

What do you consider to be most positive about your experience of Lofotodden thus far?

14. Hva opplever du som særlig negativt ved opplevelsen av Lofotodden?

What do you consider to be most negative about your experience of Lofotodden thus far?

15. Når du kommer hjem, hvordan vil du omtale opplevelsen av Lofotodden til venner, familie, etc?

When you return home, how will you talk about Lofotodden to friends, family, etc?

16. Tror du opplevelsen på turen så langt påvirker lysten din til å komme tilbake til Lofotodden? Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?

Do you think your experience on this trip thus far will influence whether you will come back to Lofotodden or not? Why or why not?

Crowding and human waste

17. Hva synes du om at antallet turister i dette området?

What do you think about the numbers of tourists in this area?

18. Har du sett forsøpling eller annen forurensning på turen din i dag?

Have you noticed waste along the trail or in other areas you have hiked today?

18a. Hva føler du på når du ser dette?

18a. *How does seeing waste makes you feel?*

19. Selv om ikke har sett forsøpling eller annen forurensning i dag, har du sett det i andre områder av Lofoten?

Even if you have not seen waste today, have you noticed waste in other areas of Lofoten during your trip?

20. Lofotodden Nasjonalparkstyre mener området har et forsøplingsproblem. Er du enig eller uenig i denne påstanden basert på din opplevelse her? Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?

The national park board considers Lofotodden to have a waste problem. Would you agree with this statement based on your experience here? Why or why not?

21. Hva er grunnen til at du ikke legger merke til søppelet tror du?

Why do you not notice the waste?

Management tools

22. Hvordan hadde du reagert hvis du hadde sett mobile toaletter eller søppelkasser på Kvalvika, ved Ryten eller diverse steder langs stien?

How would you react if there are toilets or rubbish bins at Kvalvika Beach, at Ryten Mountain or at multiple locations along the trails?

23. Hvordan hadde du reagert hvis du måtte se en video om sporløs ferdsel før du fikk lov til å gå tur i dette området?

How would you react if you had to watch a video about how to “leave no trace” before you were allowed to go hiking here?

24. Hva tenker du om en mulig avgift som alle besøkende må betale til støtte for avfallshåndtering, tilrettelegging og annet vedlikehold av denne nasjonalparken?

What do you think about a possible tourist tax that visitors have to pay to support waste management, facilitation, and other maintenance of this national park?

Interview close

25. Takk for at du tok deg tid til intervjuet. Er det noe du ikke har fått sagt, som du gjerne ville si?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Do you have any other opinions regarding what we have talked about that you would like to add now?

Appendix B. Information letter that was given to informants

Norsk

Ved å bli med på dette intervjuet godtar du at opplysningene du oppgir (bortsett fra personopplysninger) blir brukt i min masteroppgave.

Jeg er en masterstudent i naturbasert reiseliv ved Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet (NMBU). I min masteroppgave skal jeg bruke intervjuer for å undersøke besøkendes opplevelse av de nordlige områdene av Lofotodden nasjonalpark. Jeg ønsker å få en større forståelse av turistens opplevelser i og av naturen. Jeg vil også undersøke hvordan turister vurderer og gjør avveininger mellom mulige positive og negative sider av deres opplevelse i populære områder som Lofotodden nasjonalpark. Med intervjuer ønsker jeg å få en dypere forståelse av turistenes forventninger av Lofotodden, Lofoten generelt, motivasjonen for turen, og hvordan forsøpling, forurensning og andre turister påvirker den totale opplevelsen i Lofotodden. Dette innebærer at vi gjør et intervju om din som straks blir anonymisert. Jeg forventer å møte flest nordmenn på grunn av Covid-19, og det vil bli spennende å sammenligne resultatene mine med en brukerundersøkelse som ble gjort her i 2019. Masteroppgaven min skal leveres i mai 2022.

Denne studien er i samarbeid med et nyoppstartet prosjekt, kalt *Sporløs Lofotturisme*. Prosjektet er i regi av Norsk Institutt for Naturforskning (NINA) og NMBU i samarbeid med Lofotodden nasjonalparkstyre. Prosjektet skal se på effektene høye besøkstall har på naturmiljøet og prøve å redusere den menneskelige påvirkningen på naturen og miljøet. Sluttresultatene skal bidra til en forbedret forvaltning av nasjonalparken. Masteroppgaven min er finansiert av NMBU, NINA og Lofotodden Nasjonalparkstyre. Jeg ønsker å ta lydopptak av intervjuet, for å sikre at jeg får med meg alt du sier. Lydopptaket skal slettes så fort jeg har transkribert det, slik at jeg ikke innehar opptak av stemmen din/deres. Prosjektet følger nasjonale retningslinjer for personvern og intervjuene kommer ikke til å kunne bli koblet til deg som person. Du har også en klagerett til Datatilsynet. Du vil forbli anonym, og direktisiteter jeg eventuelt bruker vil også forbli anonyme. Jeg kommer også til å notere litt underveis om ting jeg observerer. Dersom du ønsker å lese gjennom transkripsjonen før jeg analyserer det kan jeg sende deg det via kryptert e-post, da trenger jeg e-postadressen din. Du kan også kontakte meg når som helst etter intervjuet om du vil lese gjennom transkripsjonen eller korrigere opplysningene. Deltakelsen din er frivillig, og du kan trekke deg når som helst innen mai 2022 uten særskilt begrunnelse.

Kontaktinfo finner du nederst i dokumentet.

English

By joining this interview, you agree that the information you provide (apart from personal information) will be used in my master's thesis.

I am a master graduate student in nature-based tourism at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). For my master thesis I am conducting interviews to explore the visitor experience of the northern area of Lofotodden National Park. In my master thesis, my aim is to get a better understanding of visitors' experiences in and about nature. I will also investigate how visitors evaluate and make trade-offs between potentially positive and negative aspects of their experiences in popular areas like Lofotodden National Park. Through interviews, I hope to get a deeper knowledge into the visitors' expectations of Lofotodden, Lofoten in general, their trip motivations, and how seeing visitor-generated waste and crowds here in Lofotodden influence their overall trip experience. I expect to meet mostly Norwegians due to Covid-19, and it would be interesting to figure out how my findings compare to a visitor survey that was done here in 2019. My master thesis will be delivered in May 2022.

This study is related to a new project for Lofotodden National Park called *Traceless Lofoten Tourism*. The project is directed by Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) and NMBU with close relation to the board of Lofotodden National Park. The project shall consider the effects of the high numbers of visitors and try to reduce the human impacts on local nature and environment. The ending results shall lead to an improved future national park management. My master thesis is financed by NMBU, NINA and the Lofotodden National Park board. I want to audio record the interview, to make sure I do not lose any important citations and data. The audio record will be deleted as soon as I have transcribed it, so I don't have any audio records of your voice. The project follows national personal privacy protection laws, and the use of interview material will not be connected to any particular person. You also have the right to complain to the Norwegian Data Inspectorate. Your contribution to this project will remain anonymous and any direct citations I may use for my thesis will be codified. I will also make some notes during the interview such as environmental and social context observations. If you want to read the transcriptions before I analyse the material for themes, please provide me your email address and I will send them to you via encrypted e-mail. You may also contact me at any time after the interview and your return home to request the interview transcription or if you have any corrections to your statements. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time by May 2022 without special reasons.

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Appendix C. Pictures from study area

All photos are by Eirik Sønstevold.

C.1. Kvalvika Beach

The picture shows Kvalvika Beach on an early August night with great weather. Counted tents were approximately 40-50 this night.



C.2. Ryten Mountain

The picture shows the popular photo location close to the peak of Ryten. The stereotypic Ryten picture visitors often take is at the rock next to the 3rd person from left. Kvalvika is down to the left of this picture. The vegetation is highly worn considering the high visitor numbers.



C.3. Worn paths in the area of Innersand-Ryten

The picture shows a typical wet area along the path from Innersand to Ryten. There is a boardwalk in the upper right corner. Local managers also have put out some rocks additionally to the berg in the middle of the picture to try to canalise the visitors.



C.4. Vulnerable vegetation signs

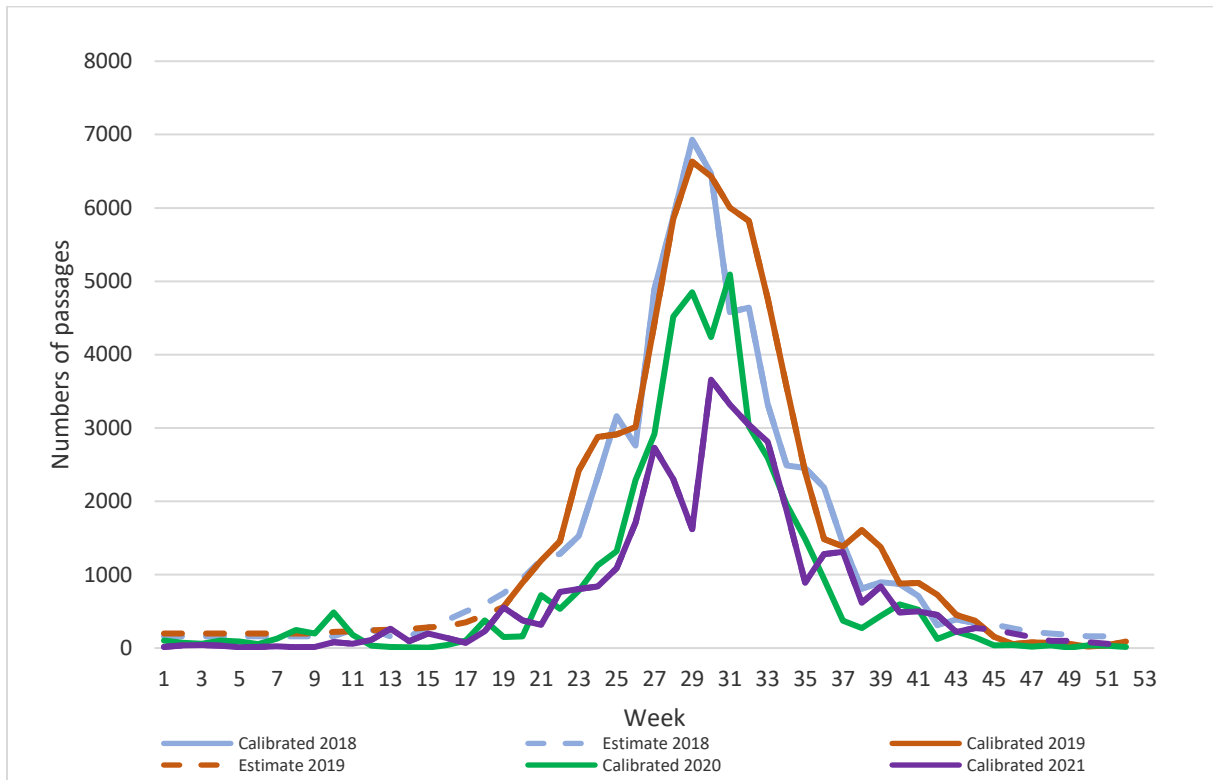
The picture shows a sign that the local manager has put out during the study period. The sign applies to canalise visitors to the same track of the path. Further on this path there are 4 parallel tracks as part of the same path. The picture is from the path from Innersand to Ryten.



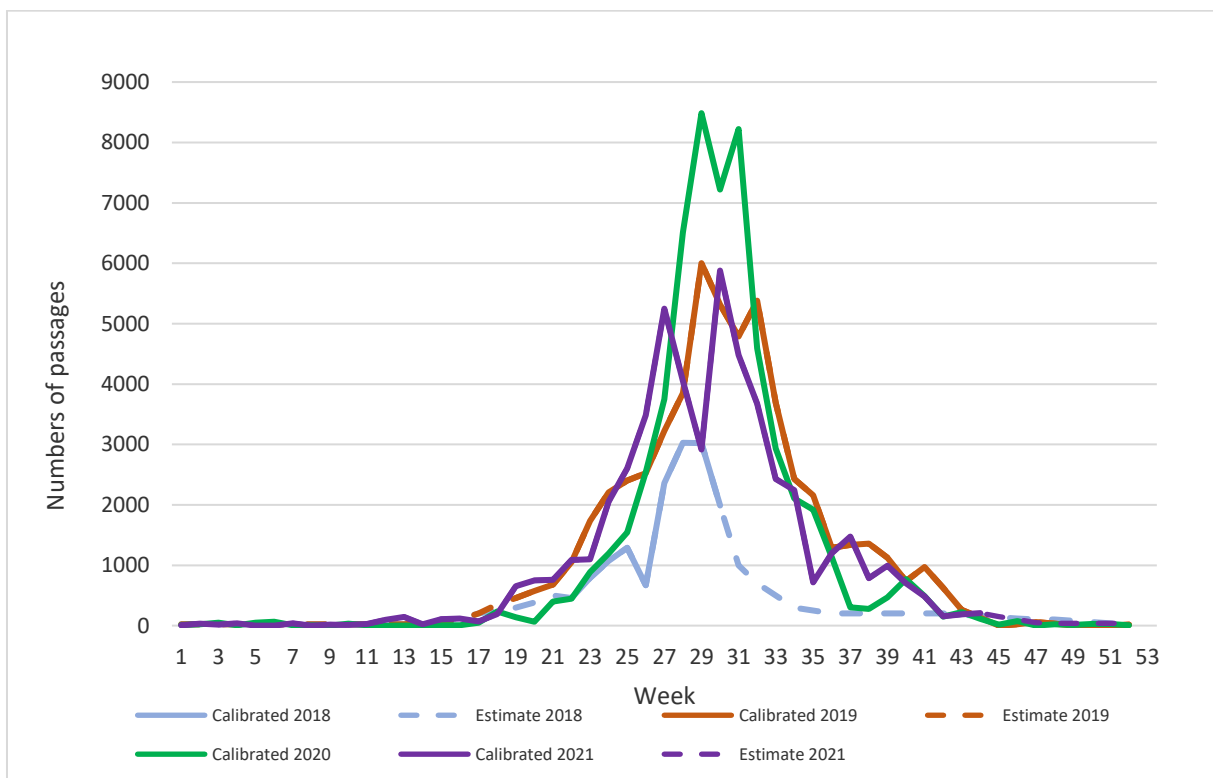
Appendix D. Traffic counters at Ryten-Kvalvika

To get approximately visitor numbers, *numbers of passages* should be divided by 2.

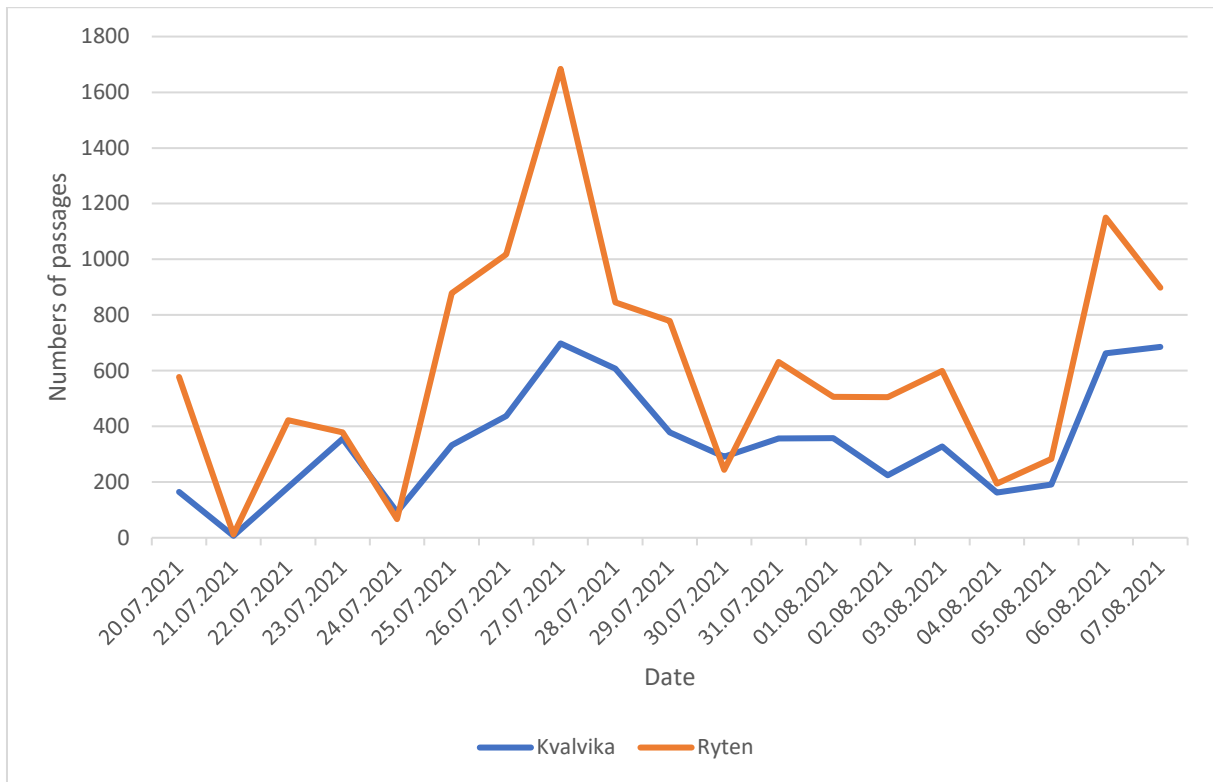
D.1. Weekly traffic counters Kvalvika 2018-2021 (Lofoten Friluftsråd, 2021)



D.2. Weekly traffic counters Ryten 2018-2021 (Lofoten Friluftsråd, 2021)



D.3. Daily traffic counters 2021 (Andersen, 2022)





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