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An exploration of adventure tourism participation and consumption

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AN EXPLORATION OF ADVENTURE TOURISM PARTICIPATION AND CONSUMPTION

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Published works submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of published works

December 2016

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Pomfret, G. (2003). Greenforce. In J. Swarbrooke, C. Beard, S. Leckie & G. Pomfret (Eds.), *Adventure tourism: The new frontier.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (pp.300-306).

Pomfret, G. (2003). Rock climbing in Spain. In J. Swarbrooke, C. Beard, S. Leckie & G. Pomfret (Eds.), *Adventure tourism: The new frontier.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (pp.314-321).

Pomfret, G (2006). Mountaineering adventure tourists: A conceptual framework for research. *Tourism Management*. 27(1), 113-123.

Pomfret, G. (2011). Package mountaineer tourists holidaying in the French Alps: An evaluation of key influences encouraging their participation. *Tourism Management, 32*(3), 501-510.

Pomfret, G. (2012). Personal emotional journeys associated with adventure activities on packaged mountaineering holidays. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 4*, 145-154.

Pomfret, G. & Bramwell, B. (2014). The characteristics and motivational decisions of outdoor adventure tourists: A review and analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *19*(14), 1447-1478.

Pomfret, G. & Doran, A. (2015). Gender and mountaineering tourism. In G. Musa, J. Higham & A. Thompson (Eds.), *Mountaineering tourism* (Routledge studies in contemporary geographies of leisure, tourism and mobility) (pp. 138-155).

ABSTRACT

Growing demand for and supply of adventure tourism activities, particularly packaged adventure holidays, means there is a need to understand adventure tourists. At the start of my research journey, the embryonic nature of adventure tourism research and the limited extant literature about adventure tourists provided the impetus to develop understanding of these tourists as a unique group of adventurers. Accordingly, the aim of this programme of research is to demonstrate the empirical and conceptual contributions that my published works make to the knowledge and understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption.* My research ethos reflects an interpretivist approach and my empirical publications predominantly report on qualitative data drawn from interviews and surveys with adventure tourists. The research contribution is achieved through two Focal Concepts. Firstly, *adventure tourism participation*, i.e.: the different elements which influence tourists to take adventure holidays in the first place. My work explores the distinctive characteristics of adventure tourists and how these influence their decision to participate in adventure tourism, their motivational decisions, risk perceptions, flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) as a motivation for continued participation in adventure tourism, and their lifestyles. My publications are some of the first academic studies to develop new thinking relative to key influences which drive package tourists and independent tourists to participate in adventure tourism. Secondly, *adventure tourism consumption*, i.e.: tourists' experiences of actually consuming adventure activities while on holiday. Adventure is often all-consuming and challenging and this means it can prompt diverse and conflicting emotions, ranging from feelings of fear and risk to deep satisfaction and elation. Consequently, my work investigates the emotional journeys which adventure tourists experience during activity consumption. Additionally, it examines the benefits which tourists gain from consuming adventure, and the influences on their adventure tourism experiences. My publications are some of the foremost studies to develop understanding of *adventure tourism consumption.*

INTRODUCTION

This programme of research consists of a critical appraisal of my published research, followed by nine publications which underpin the contribution of my research. The critical appraisal includes four sections. Section 1 introduces my research, the aim, objectives and Focal Concepts of the programme of research. Section 2 comprises details of my published work, with information about both my sole-authored and co-authored publications. Section 3 reflects on my research journey from its inception and the research philosophy I feel most closely aligned to. This section contains three sub-sections, which are Reflection 1: my personal and educational interests in adventure tourism; Reflection 2: mentoring and collaboration in research; and Reflection 3: the impact of my research. Section 4 is a synthesis of my published work with sub-sections about the overarching contribution of the research, and the Focal Concepts which support this. Focal Concept 1 is *adventure tourism participation* and Focal Concept 2 is *adventure tourism consumption*. Section 5 concludes the critical appraisal. Section 6 is the reference list. Section 7 presents the published works in full.

1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

This programme of research makes a pertinent contribution to understanding *adventure tourism participation and consumption* and to the wider body of knowledge for tourism and recreation studies. It comprises a critical appraisal of my research publications from 2003 to 2015, the purpose of which is to draw together several interlinked publications that reflect one consistent theme: *Adventure tourism participation and consumption: a psychological exploration.* In essence, this programme of research explores the psychological aspects of adventure tourists. The critical appraisal seeks to justify the body of work I have developed and its subsequent contribution to the field of adventure tourism research. It outlines my research journey through reflecting on its different stages, my research philosophy, and how my thinking has evolved over time. The programme of research comprises this critical appraisal, nine publications (see Table 1): five peer-reviewed journal articles, two book chapters and two case studies. Three of the five journal articles, one of the book chapters and both case studies are sole-authored while two of the journal articles and one of the book chapters are co-authored (see Table 2). I selected these published works to include in the programme of research as they all contribute knowledge to understanding *adventure tourism participation and consumption* from a psychological perspective.

1.1. Aim and objectives of the programme of research

This programme of research aims to demonstrate the empirical and conceptual contributions that my published works make to the knowledge and understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption*. In order to achieve this aim, there are four key research objectives:

1. To critically review and reflect on my research journey from its inception to the present to demonstrate my development as a researcher.

2. To evaluate the roles of adventure tourist characteristics, motivational decisions, risk perceptions, flow as a motivation for continued participation in adventure tourism, and the lifestyles of adventure tourists in *adventure tourism participation.*

3. To appraise the emotional journeys which adventure tourists experience during *adventure tourism consumption*, the benefits of *adventure tourism consumption* and the influences on adventure tourism experiences.

4. To assess my contribution to the knowledge and understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption* and the future direction of my research.

1.2. Focal Concepts of the programme of research

My research contributes both empirically and conceptually to an enhanced understanding of the psychological aspects of *adventure tourism participation and consumption* through two Focal Concepts (FCs):

1.2.1. Focal Concept 1: *Adventure tourism participation*

Within this critical appraisal, the term *adventure tourism participation* refers to the different elements which influence tourists to take adventure holidays in the first place. Adventure tourists have distinctive characteristics, relative to their demographic profiles, activity preferences and travel behaviours, and these influence their decision to participate in adventure tourism. Other key elements which encourage participation are their motivational decisions, risk perceptions, flow as a motivation for continued participation in adventure tourism, and the lifestyles of adventure tourists. Flow is 'the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it' (Csikzentmihalyi, 1992, p.4). Several of my published works refer to *adventure tourism participation* and I use the word *participation* as it is a commonly used and accepted term in the field of tourism studies. My publications are some of the first academic studies to develop new thinking relative to key influences which drive package tourists and independent tourists to participate in adventure tourism. They fuse together literature about recreational adventurers and adventure tourists, and report on notable fieldwork findings concerned with participation influences.

1.2.2 Focal Concept 2: *Adventure tourism consumption*

Adventure tourism consumption refers to tourists' experiences of actually consuming adventure activities while on holiday, and the benefits gained from these experiences. Adventure is often all-consuming and challenging and this means it can prompt diverse and conflicting emotions, ranging from feelings of fear and risk to deep satisfaction and elation (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret, 2003). Accordingly, my work explores the emotional journeys which adventure tourists experience during *adventure tourism consumption*. It also examines the benefits of *adventure tourism consumption* and the influences on adventure tourism experiences. My publications are some of the foremost studies to develop understanding of *adventure tourism consumption.* They progress the literature from focusing previously on recreational adventure consumption to package *adventure*

tourism consumption. My published works do not specifically refer to the term *adventure tourism consumption* yet I believe that this phrase succinctly reflects the nature of my research about adventure tourism experiences.

My work delineates the different aforementioned elements of *adventure tourism participation and consumption*, and provides new insights into adventure tourists. Table 1 (Section 2) shows how each publication addresses the two Focal Concepts. These Focal Concepts and their unique contributions to knowledge will be discussed in more depth in Section 4.

The following discussion briefly defines adventure tourism and adventure tourists primarily to provide context to my research and to highlight the complex and diverse nature of this type of tourism and its participants. Adventure tourism and adventure tourists are multifaceted and problematic to define as there are divergent perspectives, activities and participants. Firstly, adventure tourism comprises a broad range of land-, air- and water-based activities which can be short, adrenalin-fuelled encounters such as wind-surfing and bungee jumping, or longer experiences such as mountaineering and cruise expeditions (CIIT 2014). The disparate nature of these activities can result in widely varying experiences for each individual adventure tourist. Secondly, and related to this, 'adventure' is a highly subjective concept which individuals perceive in different ways so, while one tourist may experience adventure activity participation as 'adventurous', another may not (Weber, 2001). People's perceptions of adventure are influenced by personality, lifestyle, and level of skill and experience (1989; Priest, 1999). Thirdly, adventure tourism shares commonalities with other types of tourism, such as activity tourism, volunteer tourism and ecotourism, making it problematic to clearly delineate adventure tourism activities (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret, 2003). Fourthly, *adventure tourism participation and consumption* are thought to involve challenge, risk, uncertain outcomes, insight, excitement, stimulation, novelty, discovery and exploration, contrasting emotions, separation and escapism, focus and absorption, responsibility, commitment, anticipated rewards and play (Cater, 2006; Ewert, 1989; Swarbrooke et al, 2003; Walle, 1997). Yet, there is a lack of consensus about whether adventure tourists who are on commercially organised and guided adventure holidays experience these different elements during activity participation, and if so, to what extent. Fifthly, and related to this, there are two broad categories of adventure tourist: those who go on tightly organised, packaged and guided skills-based courses and holidays - known as 'package adventure tourists' - and those who organise and manage their own adventure holidays, sometimes using guiding services to help them achieve their goals – known as 'independent adventure tourists' (TM 2011). It is thought that each of these categories of adventure tourist share some similarities yet they are also different.

The use of language to delineate and understand adventure tourism and adventure tourists has evolved over time alongside the development of literature in this field. Accordingly, my publications reflect these terminology changes and I use different expressions to explicate adventure tourists and demarcate them from recreational adventurers and other tourist types. My early work is strongly influenced by literature within the fields of outdoor recreation and sport psychology. I utilise terms such as 'recreational adventurers', 'risky sports participants', 'risk recreationists' and 'sensation seekers' (Ewert, 1989; Robinson, 1992; Zuckerman, 1979) to describe adventure tourists. I

focus on sport-related forms of adventure tourism in several publications (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; TM 2006), reflecting traditional notions of adventure drawn from the aforementioned fields of literature. For instance, in AT 2003a, I explore adventure tourists who partake in physical forms of adventure tourism in outdoor natural environments. I continue to be inspired by these original connotations of adventure in my later publications (TM 2011; TMP 2012; MT 2015), within which mountaineering tourism, an unequivocal adventure activity, is pivotal. Concurrently, my work also reflects the multidimensional nature of adventure tourism. For example, I denote ecotourists, wildlife tourists and charity challenge tourists as adventure tourists in AT 2003a, and I allude to volunteer tourists as adventure tourists in AT 2003b and JOE 2007. I also utilise the phrase 'outdoor adventure tourist' in CIIT 2014 to acknowledge that there are different types of adventure tourist. Furthermore, I have developed the terms 'package adventure tourist' and 'independent adventure tourist' to define different types of adventure tourist. I employ these phrases in TM 2011 and TMP 2012.

The embryonic nature of adventure tourism research, combined with my personal interest in adventure activities, inspired me to further investigate participation and consumption amongst adventure tourists. I was also driven by a desire to enhance understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption* to assist scholars, practitioners and students. From a scholarly perspective, I was keen to develop cutting edge research about adventure tourists and to set them apart from their recreational counterparts as a distinct group of adventurers with discrete participation and consumption behaviours. I wanted to publish research which was accessible and useful to students on tourism, recreation and sport undergraduate and postgraduate degrees which include adventure-related modules. Given the dramatic growth in the demand and supply of adventure tourism, I was keen to offer the industry insights into who adventure tourists are, what drives their participation in adventure holidays and what their experiences of adventure activities are. Like many other special interest forms of tourism, adventure tourism has become increasingly commercialised (Buckley, 2007) and developed in such a way as to appeal to a wide range of mainstream tourists (TM 2011). It is important, therefore, for adventure organisations to understand their tourists so that they can 'carefully match up their clients' skill and experience levels, and also their expectations, with a holiday that is sufficiently, but not overly, challenging' (TMP 2012, p.153). In particular, the publications which reflect my primary research findings (TM 2011; TMP 2012; CIIT 2014) provide a comprehensive appreciation of *adventure tourism participation and consumption* to assist organisations in developing fulfilling adventure holidays for tourists.

When I initially began to explore adventure tourists to write my first publications in this area (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c; TM 2006), I found that the literature was fragmented and there were very few studies which recognised adventure tourists as a unique group of adventurers. Yet, the adventure tourism industry was experiencing considerable growth around this time, particularly in the provision of packaged adventure holidays which catered for a diverse range of adventure tourists, and the demand for such experiences was rising. Recent industry reports suggest that this strong growth continues (Adventure Travel Trade Association [ATTA], 2016; Outdoor Foundation, 2016). I noted that 'while there is a dearth of research that examines mountaineering [or other adventure activities] and its participants in an adventure tourism setting, there is a relative wealth of work from recreational perspectives' (TM 2006, p.114). Consequently, I started to explore

the body of literature about recreational adventurers and this formed the basis both for my early publications and for my more recent work (TM 2011; TMP 2012; CIIT 2014; MT 2015). Using this previous research is helpful as adventure recreation is 'at the heart' of adventure tourism (Weber, 2001, p.361) and inextricable links exist between recreational adventurers and adventure tourists. They frequently share the same resources and facilities, and non-commercial recreation activities which take place in the natural environment often form the basis for tourism activities. Recreational adventure or adventure tourism activity participation can evoke similar social and psychological reactions (Carr, 2001; McKercher, 1996; Tangeland, 2011). Yet, palpable differences exist between these two groups of adventurers and 'pull' motives – those elements which influence tourists' choice of destination (Dann, 1977) - set tourists apart from recreationists. Adventure activity participants can also have different perceptions about whether they are tourists or recreationists, which can be influenced by their views about outdoor activities and the meanings they attribute to them. In essence, the differences between each type of adventurer are highlighted in the quote below:

> *'Outdoor adventure tourists are seen as staying overnight away from home (on holiday) in order to participate in adventure activities in natural environments that are distinct from those in their home regions. While outdoor recreational adventurers probably share many similar characteristics with outdoor adventure tourists, the key difference is that the former group usually participates in adventure activities within their home environment'* (CIIT 2014, p.3).

Figure 1 (TM 2006) usefully illustrates the relationship between tourism and recreation relative to mountaineering. It demonstrates that recreational mountaineering can and often does precede mountaineering tourism. For instance, mountaineers residing in north Wales can partake in day-long mountaineering trips from their home region to the Welsh mountains during the entire year while also participating in holidays several times a year to the Scottish mountains, the Alps or mountainous regions located further afield. Recreational mountaineering trips can develop participants' skills and experience for future mountaineering holidays, and hence they can serve a training purpose. Although this example specifically relates to mountaineering, it also applies to many other adventure activities such as rock climbing, paragliding and canoeing.

Figure 1: The relationship between the tourism and recreational region for mountaineering

2. DETAILS OF PUBLISHED WORKS

Table 1 outlines the nine publications which I have selected for submission. The Table comprises the bibliographic reference and a summary of the specific contribution of each publication. Each full publication is presented in Section 7, and is discussed in more depth in Section 4.

Table 1: Definitive list of published works

Publication Reference	Title of Publication	Type of Publication & Research Approach	Focal Concepts
AT 2003a	Pomfret, G. (2003). The adventure tourist. In J. Swarbrooke, C. Beard, S. Leckie & G. Pomfret (Eds.), *Adventure tourism: The new frontier.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (pp. 55-90).	Book chapter based on a critical review of pertinent literature about adventure tourists.	1 & 2
AT 2003b	Pomfret, G. (2003). Greenforce. In J. Swarbrooke, C. Beard, S. Leckie & G. Pomfret (Eds.), *Adventure tourism: The new frontier.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (pp.300-306).	Case study based on semi-structured interviews with Greenforce holiday participants, and secondary research.	1
AT 2003c	Pomfret, G. (2003). Rock Climbing in Spain. In J. Swarbrooke, C. Beard, S. Leckie & G. Pomfret (Eds.), *Adventure tourism: The new frontier.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (pp.314-321).	Case study based on one semi-structured interview with a renowned rock climber and climbing guide book author, and secondary research.	1
TM 2006	Pomfret, G (2006). Mountaineering adventure tourists: A conceptual framework for research. *Tourism Management*. *27*(1), 113-123.	Paper which develops a conceptual framework specifically about mountaineer tourists.	1 & 2
JOE 2007	Harlow, S. & Pomfret, G. (2007). Evolving environmental tourism experiences in Zambia. *Journal of Ecotourism. 6*(3), 184-209.	Paper drawing upon a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews carried out during a 10 week Greenforce expedition.	1 & 2
TM 2011	Pomfret, G (2011). Package mountaineer tourists holidaying in the French Alps: An evaluation of key influences encouraging their participation. *Tourism Management*. *32*(3), 501-510.	Paper drawing upon a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with package mountaineer tourists in Chamonix (French Alps).	1
TMP 2012	Pomfret, G (2012). Personal emotional journeys associated with adventure activities on packaged mountaineering holidays. *Tourism Management Perspectives.* 4, 145-154.	Paper drawing upon a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews carried out on package mountaineer tourists in Chamonix.	2
CIIT 2014	Pomfret, G. & Bramwell, B. (2014). The characteristics and motivational decisions of outdoor adventure tourists: A review and analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism. 19*(14), 1447-1478.	Paper drawing upon questionnaires with independent mountaineer tourists in Chamonix.	1

MT 2015	Pomfret, G. & Doran, A. (2015). Gender and mountaineering tourism. In G. Musa, J. Higham & A. Thompson (Eds.), *Mountaineering tourism (Contemporary geographies of leisure, tourism and mobility).* Routledge (p.138-155).	Book chapter based on a critical review of pertinent literature about the role of gender in mountaineering tourism participation and experiences.	1 & 2

Table 2 shows my percentage contribution and the role I undertook in each of the three co-authored publications. The percentage contribution stated was agreed with each co-author.

Table 2: Contribution to co-authored publications

Publication and Authors	**My Role**	**My Contribution %** (agreed with co-authors)
JOE 2007	Sue Harlow collected, collated and analysed the primary data and I wrote and edited the paper.	60%
CIIT 2014	I wrote the paper. Bill Bramwell edited the paper and assisted with revisions following the journal article's peer review.	80%
MT 2015	Adele Doran co-authored the book chapter with me, and I edited it.	50%

3. RESEARCH JOURNEY

This section focuses on my research journey and how it has evolved since its inception. Within the following discussion, I consider the research philosophy I feel most closely aligned to. In particular, I develop three specific streams of reflections which have shaped my journey as a researcher. These are: my personal and educational interests; mentoring and collaboration in research; and the impact of my research.

Tourism research has traditionally embraced a positivist philosophy with many studies focusing on 'empiricism, quantification, neutrality, objectivity, distance, validity, and reliability' (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007, p.18). When I first began publishing about adventure tourism, limited contributions from interpretivist tourism researchers existed (Riley & Love, 2000) and tourism studies were criticised for paying little attention to interpretive discourse and subjectivity (Hollinshead, 2004). Yet, tourism research paradigms changed as researchers started to adopt innovative research approaches and methodologies, and their publications started to feature in special issues of journals (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). They began to break 'new epistemological, methodological, social activist, and moral ground' (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005, p.291) as increasingly, tourism scholars affiliated themselves to interpretivism. My work adheres to the pivotal tenets of interpretivist research in that it centres on qualitative values, an inductive approach, a flexible and data-driven research design, and recognition of multiple viewpoints concerning the research topic (Hammersley, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Veal, 2006). This involves exploring 'the social phenomenon as if through the eyes of the people being researched' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p.28) then developing subjective interpretations of this phenomenon. While my research is most closely aligned to an interpretive perspective, I am aware that different philosophies can be adopted contingent on researchers' views of reality, their definition of acceptable knowledge, and their values (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). I also hold the view that rather than thinking of philosophy from a distinctive perspective, it can usefully be viewed as a multidimensional set of continua (Niglas, 2010). With this in mind, I am sympathetic to pragmatic approaches which focus on the real-world usefulness of research and 'the theory's capacity to solve human problems' (Powell, 2001, p.884) rather than establishing a universal truth or reality - concepts which are contested and more in accordance with a positivist approach. Similar to interpretivists, pragmatists acknowledge the existence of multiple realities, believing that there are many different ways to undertake research (Saunders et al, 2012), and they strive to progress research through the collection and interpretation of trustworthy and relevant data (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008). Since I position myself within interpretivist traditions, I am a 'second generation scholar' (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007, p.21) in tourism studies. Such scholars have evolved from first generation researchers, who were academics from a range of disciplines working hard to develop tourism as a legitimate field of study (Jamal & Kim, 2005). My interest in investigating smaller and more specialised groups of tourists who participate in adventure tourism (a niche form of tourism) reflects a move away from tourism scholars purely studying mass tourism, primarily using quantitative approaches (Veal, 2006).

My research reflects my personal interest in outdoor natural environments and the adventure activities available in such settings. As I am an 'outdoors person' who actively participates in several adventure activities (including mountaineering, running, cycling and rock climbing), I felt that I could easily connect with the mountaineer tourists who I

interviewed and surveyed during the fieldwork phase of my research journey in Chamonix (key fieldwork findings are published in TM 2011; TMP 2012; CIIT 2014). I believed that I could immerse myself into the social world of these tourists because of shared commonalities. This was facilitated by my involvement in social events with package mountaineer tourists (e.g.: welcome meetings and meals out provided by the mountaineering tour operators), and informal conversations with independent mountaineer tourists while they were taking a break from rock climbing, which provided me with an opportunity to get to know potential participants a little before I interviewed or surveyed them. In the spirit of interpretivist enquiry, and in 'opposition to the idea that research should be a standardised and impersonal process – to any requirement that the personal be suppressed in the name of science' (Hammersley, 2013, p.13), a combination of these pre-interview informal meetings followed by in-depth interviews and detailed questionnaire responses provided opportunities to enter the social worlds of participants.

My commitment to interpretivism resulted in an inductive orientation towards theory and data, characterised by flexibility within the research design, collecting data to investigate a phenomenon, examining data and accumulating knowledge, creating categories during data analysis rather than imposing pre-determined ones, generating untested conclusions, and generalising from the particular to the general (Hammersley, 2013; Saldaña, 2011, Saunders et al, 2012). In short, my research is data-driven. Theories and concepts are generated based on emergent themes from the fieldwork data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). See, for example: the generation of data driven concepts and case studies in JOE 2007, AT 2003b and AT 2003c; the use of qualitative interview data to develop insights into the key influences which encouraged package mountaineering holiday participation and the personal emotional journeys experienced by such tourists in TM 2011 and TMP 2012 and; use of questionnaire data to advance theoretical insights about the characteristics and motivational decisions of independent mountaineer tourists in CIIT 2014. I am not, however, suggesting that my existing knowledge of adventure tourists had no influence on the design of my fieldwork or the development of ideas for publications. I have published conceptual-based works (AT 2003a; MT 2015; TM 2006) which have helped me to develop new ideas for research. For instance, I designed a conceptual framework of mountaineer tourists (TM 2006) and while this encouraged me to consider certain *adventure tourism participation and consumption* concepts when designing my fieldwork, I did not impose this framework on my empirical findings.

The personal interpretations which adventure tourists attribute to their adventure holiday experiences, and their reasons for partaking in adventure activities, reflect prominent elements of my research. The interviews which I carried out involved delving deep into the lived experiences of tourists to ascertain their subjective explanations or 'sense-making' about adventure. Through adopting a semi-structured approach to the interviews, I encouraged a two-way dialogue with my respondents and this was facilitated by setting up interviews in informal settings such as cafes and bars. I worked collaboratively with the interviewees to co-produce and develop knowledge, reflecting an interpretive approach (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Throughout the interviews, I enabled interviewees to provide detailed narratives pertinent to their *adventure tourism participation and consumption*. I asked questions and pursued relevant descriptions using further questioning. I prompted them to talk candidly about what influenced them to participate in a mountaineering holiday, and what experiences they encountered during participation.

The interviews generated rich material which was analysed reflectively to allow for subjective meanings to be unpicked (Jennings, 2001). Once I had completed the interviews - 38 in total - and transcribed the data, I employed the 'framework' approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, p.173). This method involves 'a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting material according to key issues and themes' (p177), and it is based on a number of fundamental principles which begin with reading through and becoming familiar with the transcribed data to meaningful interpretation of the data to establish the meaning of different themes. The questionnaires (reported in CIIT 2014) generated qualitative data from a series of open questions which explored the meanings respondents' attributed to their mountaineering holiday experiences to ascertain their motivations. In particular, several of these questions were designed to determine the motivational influence of flow on respondents' continued participation in mountaineering activities.

A useful illustration of tourists' sense-making of adventure is demonstrated in TMP 2012. This journal article reports on the personal interpretations which mountaineer tourists ascribe to their emotional journeys during adventure activity participation. It considers their perceptions of risk and the role of the guide in managing these perceptions and reducing potential risks. While a small number of respondents felt at risk while involved in mountaineering, most did not feel in danger, most likely because they held a strong belief that their guide would ensure their safety. For the latter group, positive interpretations of risk and the social roles played by both the respondents and their guide encouraged an enjoyable mountaineering experience. Subjective interpretations are also prominent within one of my co-authored papers (JOE 2007) which investigates the evolving environmental tourism experiences of volunteers and their personal development during a volunteer expedition. The focus of the fieldwork was on volunteers' experiences and their feelings towards those experiences. Interviews (carried out by the co-author) used storytelling to encourage respondents to provide free-flowing descriptions of their volunteering experiences, and the interviewer became immersed into expedition life. Findings highlighted that throughout the expedition, the volunteers' social world impacted on their experiences with social groups and organisational structure being particularly influential. In all the latter mentioned studies which explore tourists' personal interpretations through semi-structured interviews about their *adventure tourism participation and consumption*, I am strongly aware of my own subjectivity in interpreting the interview data and developing analytical themes. Accordingly, I worked collaboratively with Professor Bramwell to check through my examination of the interview transcripts and the key themes which had evolved. I believe that through collectively discussing the interview data, the credibility of the published findings was enhanced.

The following discussion reflects upon important considerations which have influenced my research journey and how I have developed as a researcher.

3.1 Reflection 1: My personal and educational interests in adventure tourism

As aforementioned, I have a strong personal interest in adventure activities. At the time of writing my first publications (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c) I regularly participated in outdoor pursuits both at home and while on holiday, and this inspired me to further investigate participation and consumption of this niche form of tourism. In the early stages

of my research journey, reviewing pertinent literature about adventure activity participants revealed a dearth of research about adventure tourists while contrastingly, there was a comprehensive understanding of recreational adventurers. In 2002, I went on an Alpine mountaineering course to Chamonix in the French Alps, and during this, I talked about my research interests with the mountaineering organisation I had booked my holiday with – Icicle Mountaineering - and the mountaineering guides. They expressed an interest in my desire to develop an understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption*, and when I returned to Chamonix in 2007 to carry out my fieldwork research, some of my respondents were package mountaineer tourists who were participating in mountaineering courses with Icicle Mountaineering. On publishing three journal articles (TM 2011; TMP 2012; CIIT 2014) based on my empirical research in Chamonix, I circulated these to the key mountaineering organisations I worked with to collect fieldwork: Icicle Mountaineering, Jagged Globe, British Mountaineering Council, and the Office de Haute et Moyenne Montagne (a mountaineering information centre in Chamonix). These organisations appreciated the key findings within the publications, commenting on their value to better understanding their clients. They noted the importance of my research in the absence of industry-based investigations about adventure tourists, particularly mountaineer tourists in the Chamonix region.

My research and my general interest in adventure tourism literature has strongly influenced my teaching of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Increasingly, I have been able to adopt the practice of research-informed teaching, bringing my publications into the classroom on several of my modules. In particular, I teach a block of sessions about adventure tourism to undergraduate final year students on a module called 'Contemporary Challenges in Tourism'. Within this block and its associated adventure tourism assignment, I explore perceptions of adventure and risk, and introduce my publications which are relevant to this theme (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c; TM 2006; TM, 2011). In the academic year 2016-2017, I am developing and module-leading 'International Adventure Tourism' for second year undergraduate tourism students. This will provide me with an excellent opportunity to progress with my research-informed teaching, and help to drive my research in this field. I have supervised both postgraduate and undergraduate students undertaking adventure tourism dissertations and projects. These supervisions have provided me with many opportunities to guide students using my research expertise about *adventure tourism participation and consumption*. At doctoral level, with the Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) students, I have delivered sessions about my research journey and my published works as part of the Contemporary Issues in Organisation and Management module. I am Director of Studies for Adele Doran (also co-author for MT 2015) whose PhD is about female adventure tourists, the constraints they encounter before and during *adventure tourism participation*, how they negotiate these constraints, and the benefits they gain. These examples palpably demonstrate how my research has directly impacted on students at SHU. While I am advancing knowledge and understanding within my field through my publications, I am concurrently positively influencing their student experience. I am providing a learning environment informed by research which facilitates students' understanding of knowledge creation and its application in different contexts. I am also encouraging the development of critical analysis skills and informed decision-making (HEFCE, 2006). As a researcher, I feel I have benefitted from the experience of teaching about adventure tourism based on my research. Working with students has stimulated my thinking, providing me with opportunities to try out new ideas

for further research and to explore my existing published work. My research and my research informed teaching have also enhanced my profile at Sheffield Hallam University.

My published research, for example, is also used for teaching students on adventure tourism modules and courses in other UK universities. Some of my publications are recommended readings for undergraduate students taking adventure tourism modules as part of their degrees in different HE institutions. For instance, at Aberystwyth University, TM 2006 is part of a seminar session on its adventure tourism module for second year undergraduate students. The text book: *Adventure Tourism: The New Frontier*, which features in my published works (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c), has been used as a core text for modules on undergraduate adventure tourism degrees, including University of the Highlands and Islands (BA (Hons) Adventure Tourism Management) and Southampton Solent University (BA (Hons) Adventure and Outdoor Management). This wider dissemination of my published research beyond the academic community has boosted my profile at other universities as a researcher in adventure tourism.

3.2 Reflection 2: Mentoring and collaboration in research

As previously noted, throughout my research journey, I have been both the sole author of my published works and I have also worked collaboratively with other colleagues (see Table 2). In the early stages of my research, I worked with three other colleagues to produce the book *Adventure tourism: The New Frontier* (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c). This was an extremely beneficial process as it provided me with an opportunity to learn from more experienced researchers, to discuss ideas for the book chapters I was involved in writing, and to receive feedback about the content and structure of my written work. This was a period of intense transition from being a lecturer with a course leader role to developing my research career alongside these roles. The mentoring I received from the colleagues I wrote the book with was invaluable and it inspired me to continue honing my research skills in the field of adventure tourism. I sole-authored my next publication (TM 2006), which involved designing the conceptual framework of mountaineer tourists, and I was mentored by our Professor in International Tourism Studies: Professor Bill Bramwell, who is now Emeritus Professor. Given his considerable research expertise and experience of publishing peer-reviewed journal articles and editing the Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Bill's support and feedback helped me to improve my academic writing skills, to think more critically about the key issues I was investigating, and to successfully publish in one of the top-ranking international tourism journals – Tourism Management (ABS 4*).

For my next publication (JOE 2007), I worked with an alumnus who had studied on the MSc Tourism and Environmental Management course at SHU: Sue Harlow. Using the fieldwork data Sue collected while on a Greenforce expedition in Zambia, I wrote the journal article and Sue checked through drafts and provided feedback. Taking the lead on writing this paper made me realise how much I had already learnt about writing publishable articles for peer-reviewed international journals. I felt that I could provide a good steer on the content and structure of the paper, taking into account the strong academic contribution it would make. Following on from this publication, I worked together with Professor Bill Bramwell to co-author the journal article: Bramwell, B. & Pomfret, G. (2007). Planning for Lake and Lake Shore Tourism: Complexity, Coordination and Adaptation. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*. 18(1), 43-66. While this article is not related to *adventure tourism participation and consumption* - and accordingly is not

included in my definitive list of published works (see Table 1) - this experience also shaped me as a researcher. My main involvement in this paper was to carry out fieldwork research in the form of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with officials of key organisations relevant to local tourism in the Lake District. I also assisted in co-authoring this journal article and checking through drafts. From doing this, I developed skills in interview techniques and I worked with Bill to transcribe the interview findings, identifying recurring, important themes and analysing interview data. This experience helped me in designing the fieldwork research for my investigations in Chamonix, carrying out interviews and questionnaires, and collating and analysing the fieldwork data. As aforementioned, the interview findings were examined in TM 2011 and TMP 2012, while the questionnaire findings were considered in CIIT 2014.

Since starting my research journey, I feel I have developed a wealth of experience and expertise in the aforementioned areas. I appreciate the mutual benefits of working with others either on co-authored publications or in receiving support from mentors. I also found this experience useful when co-authoring my most recent publication (MT 2015) which I part-wrote and fully edited. For this book chapter, the co-author (Adele Doran) and I each independently read and reviewed relevant literature, then we jointly made decisions about the most pertinent literature themes. Through reading chapter drafts, collaboratively re-working these, and constantly editing and refining the piece, we developed a final accepted version for publication. This has led to further collaborative work with the co-author.

3.3. Reflection 3: The impact of my research

Throughout my research journey, I believe that my published works have had an impact in both furthering academic knowledge and understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption*, and in developing industry awareness of adventure tourists, as mentioned in Section 1.

In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) I successfully submitted 4 publications, 3 of which form part of the publication list for this programme of research: AT 2003a, TM 2006 and JOE 2007. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) I submitted 2 publications which form part of this programme of research: TM 2011 and TMP 2012. These journal articles were externally reviewed as part of the REF process, and they achieved a 3/4* rating, but were not subsequently returned to REF2014 due to an insufficient number of publications. Contributing to RAE/REF and to the research performance of Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) has confirmed my ability to produce high quality publications as well as boosting my external profile and enhancing my status as a researcher both in the UK and internationally. Further affirmation of this is that several of my journal articles are published in internationally renowned, highly ranked tourism journals, as detailed below.

- TM 2006 & TM 2011 are both published in Tourism Management. This journal is ranked as 4* in the ABS Academic Journal Guide 2015. Its impact rating is 2.554. It is ranked as category A* in the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List 2013.
- CIIT 2014 is published in Current Issues in Tourism. This journal is ranked as 2* in the ABS Academic Journal Guide 2015. Its impact rating is 0.918.

- JOE 2007 is published in the Journal of Ecotourism. The journal is ranked as category B in the ABDC Journal Quality List 2013, and 1* in the ABS Academic Journal Guide 2015.

My earliest publications (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; AT 2003c) feature in *Adventure Tourism: The New Frontier*, for which I was one of four authors and editors. Aside from the published pieces in this book which relate to adventure tourists, I also wrote Chapter 8 titled 'Risk Management' (p.169-184) and a case study titled '180° Adventures' (p.326-329). This was the first academic text book about adventure tourism and, as such, it made an original contribution to developing an understanding of this type of tourism. A review of this book (Bentley, 2005) shortly after its publication highlighted the paucity of research on adventure tourism at that time, and reiterated the need for further investigations in this field. The reviewer concluded that the book 'provides a much needed analysis of this expanding sector of the international tourism market, and is a useful compilation of current knowledge and thought in the area' and 'an important function of the book is to identify these knowledge gaps and hopefully stimulate research efforts to address them in the not too distant future' (p.636).

Evidence of the impact of my journal articles can be seen by looking at the citations of my different publications using Google Scholar as at 15th December 2016. In particular, the 222 citations which my first published journal article (TM 2006) has received highlight the valuable contribution that this conceptual paper about mountaineering tourism participation and consumption makes to the literature in this field.

- TM 2006 (Tourism Management) cited by 222
- JOE 2007 (Journal of Ecotourism) cited by 27
- TM 2011 (Tourism Management) cited by 87
- TMP 2012 (Tourism Management Perspectives) cited by 13
- CIIT 2014 (Current Issues in Tourism) cited by 10

I have presented papers at all four International Adventure Conferences (IAC) and at the 18th Nordic Symposium in Tourism and Hospitality Research. I also co-organised the 4th IAC 2015 (http://www.adventureconference2015.co.uk/) which we hosted at SHU in September 2015. Participating in these conferences has been beneficial to my research career in several ways. Firstly, it has been a good opportunity to disseminate my research to both domestic and international audiences to increase its impact. Secondly, I have used these events to 'test out' my ideas for journal articles and I have received valuable feedback from delegates, which has led to the successful publishing of TM 2011, TM 2012 and CIIT 2014. Thirdly, I have benefitted through networking with other adventure researchers and sharing research ideas. The conferences are part organised by the Adventure Tourism Research Association (ATRA). The primary purpose of ATRA is to bring together an academic and practitioner community around the core areas of interest in adventure tourism and outdoor recreation. I am an active member of this association and I have attended, organised and participated in ATRA seminars on a regular basis. In June 2014, I co-organised a one day ATRA seminar at Sheffield Hallam University. At this seminar I co-presented (with Adele Doran) our ideas for the book chapter about gender and mountaineering tourism (MT 2015). Post-presentation, we received some useful feedback about how to further develop the chapter. I am also a member of the Outdoor Recreation Research Group (ORRG), which is the first cross-disciplinary research group in the UK to investigate the growing sector of

outdoor recreation. The group has 11 core members across 6 different departments within SHU.

In developing my research career, I have become increasingly recognised amongst my peers as one of the leading specialists in research about *adventure tourism participation and consumption*. I regularly peer-review papers for tourism and leisure journals. I have reviewed adventure tourism and adventure recreation journal articles for: Tourism Management, Current Issues in Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, International Journal of Tourism Research, Journal of Ecotourism, Annals of Leisure Research, Mountain Research and Development, Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, and Tourism Management Perspectives. Through doing this, I have developed a more in-depth understanding about a range of themes relative to adventure tourism. Acting as a reviewer has encouraged me to reflect on my research outputs and helped me to develop my academic writing skills. I have also acted as an external examiner for two PhD students who researched adventure tourism. This role has been invaluable in encouraging me to reflect on my own development as a researcher and in learning about different research designs and methodologies used to address adventure tourism issues.

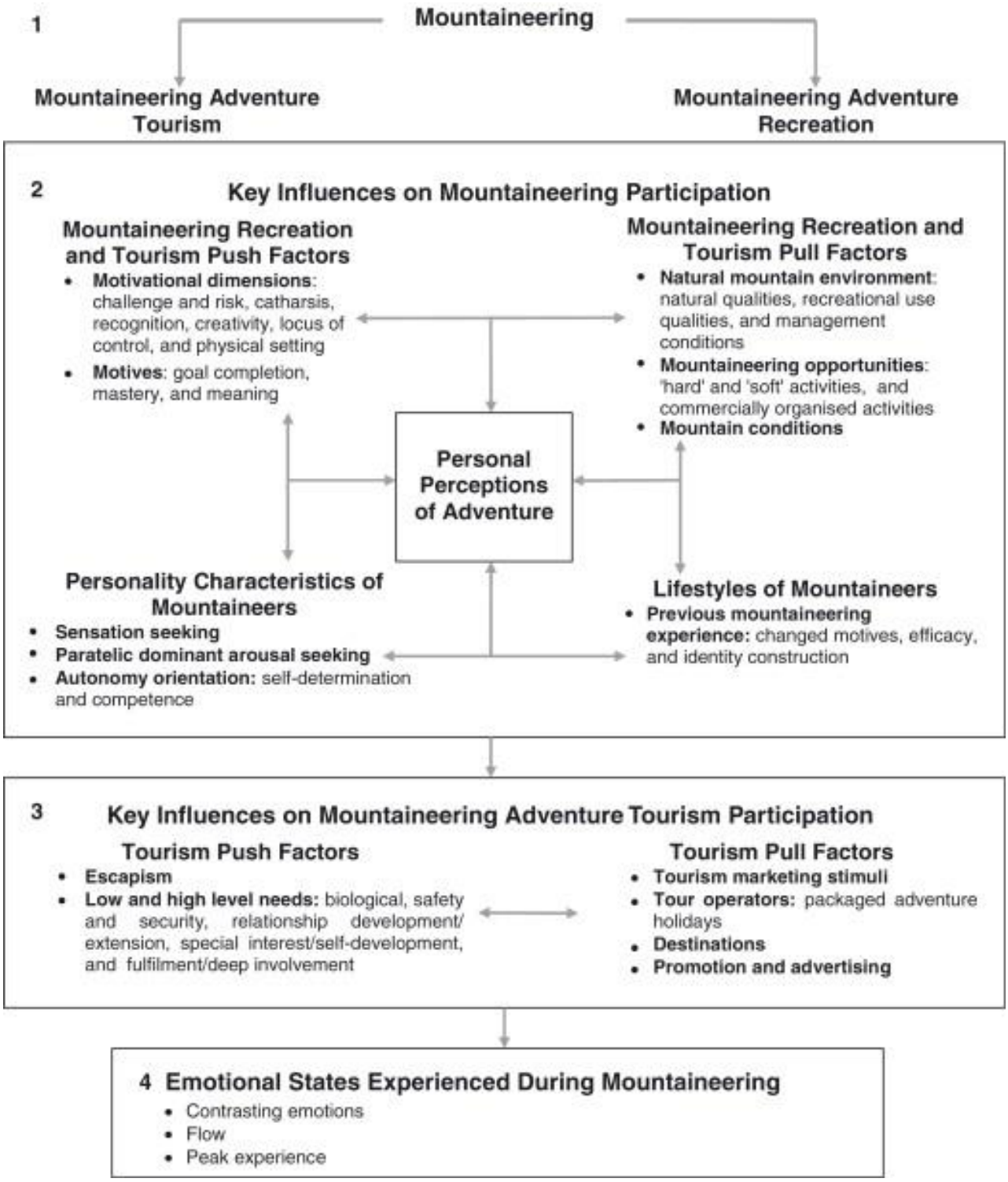
4. SYNTHESIS OF THE WORK

This section explores the overarching contribution of my research - *adventure tourism participation and consumption: a psychological exploration*, which is underpinned by the two Focal Concepts identified in Section 1. The publications discussed within each Focal Concept independently demonstrate the development of valuable knowledge about adventure tourists yet they also amalgamate to reinforce this contribution. Focal Concept 1 considers *adventure tourism participation* comprising the key themes of characteristics of adventure tourists, motivational decisions of adventure tourists, risk perceptions, flow as a motivation for continued participation in adventure tourism, and lifestyles of adventure tourists. Focal Concept 2 explores *adventure tourism consumption* and centres on emotional journeys experienced by adventure tourists, benefits of *adventure tourism consumption*, and influences on adventure tourism experiences.

To illustrate how my published works are interlinked to form a coherent whole to understand *adventure tourism participation and consumption*, two conceptual frameworks are presented below (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Figure 2 is the original conceptual framework (TM 2006) which I designed based on the body of literature about recreational adventurers. While the framework specifically considers mountaineering, it also provides a constructive lens to analyse other types of adventure tourist. The journal article within which this framework is presented (TM 2006) explores the strong associations that recreational adventurers and adventure tourists have with one another, yet it concurrently considers potential differences, thereby justifying the need to carry out further research on adventure tourists as a distinct category to recreational adventurers. Figure 2 differs from previous research on mountaineers in that it adopts a multi-dimensional approach and 'it recognises the interrelatedness of the influences on mountaineering participation, acknowledges the convergence of tourism and recreation in an adventure setting, and emphasises the importance of investigating mountaineers during their actual participation' (TM, 2006, p. 113). Section 1 of the framework draws attention to the strong association between mountaineering tourism and mountaineering recreation. While it is generally accepted that tourism and recreation are fusing, at the time of writing this paper (TM 2006), this fusion relative to recreational adventure and adventure tourism had not been fully explored. Section 2 illustrates the key interrelated influences on mountaineering: push and pull factors (Dann, 1977), personality characteristics, lifestyle elements, and personal perceptions of adventure. These influences reflect *adventure tourism participation.* Section 3 represents tourism push and pull motives, again echoing *adventure tourism participation.* Section 4 highlights the emotional states encountered during adventure activity participation, inclusive of mountaineering. How individuals experience mountaineering and their emotional states during involvement result from the combined influences which originally encouraged them to participate. This section reflects *adventure tourism consumption.*

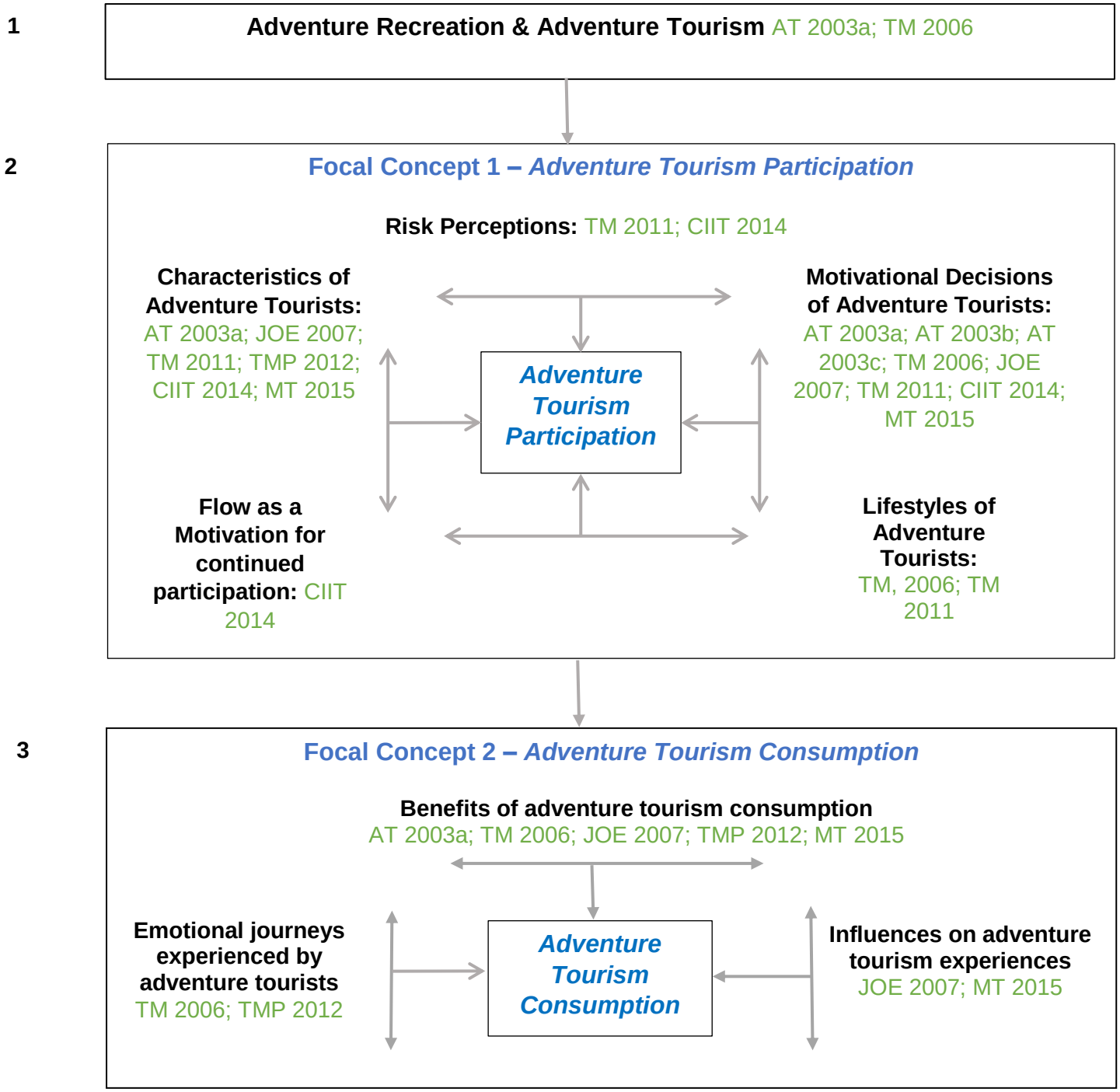
Figure 3 presents an adapted version of the original conceptual framework (TM 2006) and it illustrates the different interlinked publications within this programme of research, and how they unite to form a coherent whole reflecting *adventure tourism participation and consumption*. The key themes within this model are modified from the original framework and presented in black while the corresponding publications are shown in green. The two Focal Concepts are represented in blue.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework: key influences on people's participation in mountaineering and experiences during involvement



Source: TM 2006

Figure 3: Adapted conceptual framework: *adventure tourism participation and consumption*



4.1. Focal Concept 1: *Adventure tourism participation*

Table 3 briefly outlines the contributions which specific publications make towards understanding *adventure tourism participation*, and section 2 of Figure 3 represents the themes and the publications covered in Focal Concept 1. The overarching contribution concerns the distinctive characteristics of adventure tourists and the key influences on their adventure holiday participation. My work on this Focal Concept explores the motivational decisions of adventure tourists because these are most influential on buying intentions, choices and behaviour (Park & Yoon, 2009; Schneider & Vogt, 2012). I have also written about other key participation influences including risk perceptions, flow and lifestyle.

Table 3: Contribution to knowledge for Focal Concept 1

Publication Reference	Contribution to knowledge about *adventure tourism participation*
AT 2003a	Through reviewing pertinent literature, this book chapter explores the distinctive characteristics of adventure tourists and the diverse motivations which influence their decision to participate in adventure tourism.
AT 2003b **AT 2003c**	These two short case studies outline two different types of adventure holiday, volunteering and rock climbing, and provide insights into the characteristics and motivational decisions of these adventure tourists.
TM 2006	The conceptual framework presented within this journal article (Figure 2) centres on the key influences on mountaineering participation, namely mountaineers' push and pull motivations, personality characteristics and lifestyles. It draws together recreational adventure and adventure tourism literature.
JOE 2007	Through primary research, this journal article investigates, in part, the motivational decisions which encourage volunteer tourists to participate in environmental tourism expeditions, hence it enhances understanding of this type of adventure tourist.
TM 2011	This journal article adds new knowledge to previous work on mountaineers and develops a fuller understanding of package mountaineer tourists. Additionally, it provides an insight into package adventure holiday participation through exploring its main influences. The article reports on primary research findings, specifically examining the influences of lifestyles, risk, skills development and experience, and the mountaineering organisation and guide.
CIIT 2014	This journal article provides a critical review of existing studies of outdoor adventure participants, and motivational decisions encouraging activity participation. Furthermore, it evaluates the results from a case study on mountaineer tourists against the research themes and gaps identified from the review of the literature. It also explores the concept of flow and its motivational importance for continued participation in mountaineering holidays.
MT 2015	This book chapter appraises the role of gender in mountaineering tourism, specifically focusing on gender's influence on mountaineering motivation.

4.1.1. Characteristics of adventure tourists

The impetus for my work on the characteristics of adventure tourists evolved from a recognition that limited studies existed and that there were notable ambiguities in findings. Earlier studies did not accurately reflect rapidly changing consumer trends and the characteristics of present-day adventure tourists. For instance, Sung (2004) established that

adventure tourists were mainly men (68%), and women were more likely to participate in softer forms of adventure while later work (ATTA, 2010; 2013) showed a more even gender split (57% of adventure tourists are male) with no major differences between hard and soft adventure participation. Prior research has examined package adventure tourists and independent adventure tourists together (ATTA, 2010; 2013; Muller & Cleaver, 2000; Muller & O'Cass, 2001; Patterson, 2006; Sung, 2004) yet I believe that there is a need to examine the two groups separately as potential differences exist. For instance, whereas adventure tourism organisations tend to generate an 'illusion of risk' (Holyfield, Jonas & Zajicek, 2004, p.175) for package adventure tourists, independent adventure tourists are responsible for managing their own risks.

Scholars and industry bodies consent that adventure tourists are very diverse, and that they have differing demographic profiles, travel behaviours and activity preferences. I argue that because of discrepancies in defining this type of tourist – identified in section 1 - and the wide spectra of activities involved, it is problematic to compare findings from the relatively limited range of different studies so as to provide a consistent account of these tourists. My work has confirmed this while also developing new thinking about the characteristics of adventure tourists. My publications have contributed towards understanding who adventure tourists are through synthesising the literature about recreational adventurers and adventure tourists in a 'focused and consistent way' to 'encourage future fruitful exchanges of insights between these two research areas' (CIIT, 2014; p.2). My research has demonstrated that the characteristics of adventure tourists, while sharing some commonalities, are distinctive from those of recreational adventurers. As a starting point (AT 2003a; TM 2006) I reviewed and amalgamated extant literature about recreational adventurers to provide insights into adventure tourists. Using interview data, previous research and industry sources, my research also explored specific types of adventure tourist, namely mountaineers, rock climbers and volunteers, to exemplify their distinguishing characteristics (AT 2003b; AT 2003c; JOE 2007; TM 2011). My work has also separately investigated the characteristics of package adventure tourists and independent adventure tourists (TM 2011; CIIT 2014) through empirical research, and it has ascertained similarities as well as differences.

4.1.2. Motivational decisions of adventure tourists

The motivational decisions of adventure tourists form an important part of my published work, as highlighted in Table 3, and I have contributed both conceptually and empirically to research on this theme. Adventure tourists are enthused by diverse motives including fun, excitement, new experiences, personal development (Sung, Morrison & O'Leary, 1997), risk (Ewert, 1985) and - intertwined with risk - sensation seeking (Zuckermann, 1979). My work has fused together literature about the motivational decisions of recreational adventurers and adventure tourists to offer new understandings about the latter group and differentiate them from recreationists (AT 2003a; TM 2006). It has contributed towards understanding pull motives, those elements which influence tourists' choice of destination such as the destination's natural setting and its distinctiveness from the tourist's home setting, the supply of adventure tourism services and facilities, and the promotion of adventure tourism products (TM, 2006). It has also developed understanding of push motives, those factors which are internally generated and socio-psychological (Dann, 1977). Furthermore, through empirical research my publications (TM

2011; CIIT 2014) have demonstrated a range of motives which drive mountaineer tourists, establishing similarities as well as differences between package and independent mountaineer tourists. Skills development, experience and summiting Alpine mountain peaks encourage package mountaineering holiday participation (TM 2011), and independent mountaineer tourists are similarly motivated (CIIT 2014). Nonetheless, while the experiences of package mountaineer tourists are shaped by guides (Beedie, 2003), independent mountaineer tourists are responsible for making their own decisions and for their own safety on the mountains.

My work contributes not only to understanding mountaineer tourist motivation but also more widely towards the fragmented literature around adventure tourism motivation. My empirical and conceptual research findings reflect specific mountaineering holiday and volunteer tourist motives yet they also indicate the generic motives which encourage adventure holiday participation (AT 2003a; TM 2006; JOE 2007; TM 2011; CIIT 2014). This is shown through Table 4 (CIIT 2014), which highlights the narrow range of adventure activities previously examined and the limited number of studies which focus on adventure tourists. It demonstrates the dearth of research specifically on the motivational decisions of mountaineer tourists and highlights how my work contributes to this field, following on from Carr's (1997) work. It reveals shared motives across different activity types, such as the natural environment (mountaineering, hiking, white water rafting and kayaking), and motivational variations, for instance skiers are motivated by relaxation and multiple-activity participants are driven by fear, thrill and excitement. Additionally, my work on volunteer tourists (JOE 2007) establishes similarities between their motivational decisions and those of other adventure tourist types. Volunteer tourists are most strongly motivated by the natural environment and conservation, knowledge development, challenge, previous experience and environmental attitude. Challenge is a particularly common adventure motive and doing volunteering work in a developing country provides an opportunity for respondents to explore their own physical and mental limits, and to develop 'the inner strength needed to face living, working and surviving in an expedition environment for a sustained period of time' (JOE, 2007, p.193).

My publications demonstrate that the motives of adventure tourists do not act in isolation but that they are influenced by the level of adventure activity experience, age and gender (TM 2011; CIIT, 2014; MT 2015). For instance, MT 2015 considers the motivations which encourage mountaineering participation, but it differs from my other work in that it specifically examines the literature around gender's role. While there is limited research in this area, findings suggest that motivational disparities exist between men and women. For activities such as canoeing and sea kayaking, males participate because of risk-taking, sensation seeking and self-image reasons. By contrast, women are motivated more by social reasons such as developing friendships and being part of a team (Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo & Voight, 2013; O'Connell, 2010).

Table 4: Motivations of adventure tourists

Adventure activity	Motives	Authors
Hiking	Relax mentally, get away, challenge, feel close to nature and sense of accomplishment	den Breejen (2007)
Mountaineering	Aesthetic and physical enjoyment of mountain environment, educational, psychological, physiological, safety (use of guides), ease of organisation, skills development, gaining experience, natural environment, availability of mountaineering opportunities, mountain conditions and supporting infrastructure	Carr (1997) and Pomfret (2006, 2011)
Multiple activities	Rush, fear, thrill, excitement, uncertain outcomes, danger and risk, challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, stimulation and excitement, escapism and separation, exploration and discovery, absorption and focus, contrasting emotions, boredom avoidance, sense of adventure, change of environment, knowledge, insight, learn about other people, places and cultures	Buckley (2011), Cater (2006), Patterson and Pan (2007), Schneider and Vogt (2012), Swarbrooke et al. (2003), Tsaur, Lin, and Liu (2013), Walle (1997) and Weber (2001)
Skiing	Thrill, relaxation, social atmosphere, snow conditions, fun, excitement, achievement, challenge, safety, quality of accommodation, hills and trails, resort services, range of ski runs and terrain	Holden (1999), Klenosky, Gengler, and Mulvey (1993) and Richards (1996)
White-water rafting and kayaking	New experience, enjoyment, socialising, natural environment, flow and playfulness	Fluker and Turner (2000) and Wu and Liang (2012)

Source: CIIT 2014

4.1.3. Risk perceptions

The role of risk in *adventure tourism participation* is a prominent theme within my work, as highlighted in the previous section. My publications (AT 2003a; AT 2003b; TM 2011; CIIT 2014) contribute towards comprehending risk perceptions for adventure tourists and the extent to which risk motivates participation. The attention that risk has been given in recreational adventure literature, and, to a lesser extent in adventure tourism studies, encouraged me to explore risk perceptions for adventure tourists. Some scholars assert that risk is a crucial element of recreational adventure experiences which motivates people to participate in adventure activities (e.g.: Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1989; Meier, 1978; Miles, 1978), sometimes to such an extent that extreme adventurers willingly take risks to get close to the 'edge' so that they can experience a complete departure from their usual self (Lois, 2005). By contrast, others argue that while risk is integral to adventure, it is not a primary driver of activity participation. As such, 'danger exists and minimising it is part of the skill of mountaineering, but danger has little to do with the motives of most climbers'

(Walter, 1984, p.73). While uncertainty exists about the role of risk in motivating recreational adventurers, there is even more doubt about its influence on *adventure tourism participation* as research in this area is less well-established.

My publications contribute towards understanding risk perceptions both for package adventure tourists and independent adventure tourists. Findings from my empirical research (TM 2011; CIIT, 2014) broadly reflect those from previous investigations on recreational adventurers, with mixed findings about risk perceptions and the motivational importance of risk. Package mountaineer tourists participate in a commodified form of adventure within which 'there exists something of a paradox whereby the more detailed, planned and logistically smooth an itinerary becomes the more removed the experience is from the experience of adventure' (Beedie & Hudson, 2003, p.627). While these tourists can be experienced mountaineers, they tend to be less experienced than their independent counterparts and more motivated by skills' development and experience (TM 2011).

My key findings were that 'risk did not motivate the majority of respondents [package mountaineer tourists] to participate in their package mountaineering holiday' (TM 2011, p.506). Nonetheless, they acknowledged that mountaineering was risky, albeit they assumed that it was the role of the mountaineering organisation and the guide to effectively manage any potential risks and to keep them safe. Risk did not act as a strong motive for independent mountaineer tourists either, suggesting that risk can either be a primary or secondary element of adventure (Kane & Tucker, 2004; Varley, 2006; Walle, 1997). A common theme for both types of tourist was that they were not risk-averse and they recognised the importance of minimising potential dangers in a calculated way so that they exert some control over their participation.

4.1.4. Flow as a motivation for continued participation

Flow motivates continued participation in adventure activities (Csikzentmihalyi, 1979) and adventure tourism (Seifert & Hedderson, 2001; Wu & Liang, 2012) yet most prior work on recreational adventurers and adventure tourists has focused on the flow experience during activity participation rather than its motivational importance. My work contributes insights into how flow can motivate tourists to continue partaking in adventure holidays because of its associated benefits. Flow 'offers a compelling reason why the entire experience of adventure is so greatly appreciated by participants' (TMP 2012, p.147). It can be achieved if there is a balance between participants' perceived level of skill and their perceived level of challenge, known as the 'golden rule of flow' (Jackson & Csikzentmihalyi, 1999, p.16). Other dimensions also interplay in the flow experience, including a sense of control, loss of self-consciousness and complete concentration on the activity (Jackson & Csikzentmihalyi, 1999) and the overall result is one of deep satisfaction and exhilaration. My work has synthesised literature related to theoretical aspects of flow (AT 2003a; TMP 2012; CIIT, 2014) and explored the motivational force of flow through empirical research (CIIT 2014) to offer new insights specifically about adventure tourists. For mountaineering tourists with previous mountaineering experience, several flow dimensions - such as goal attainment, challenge, feelings of risk, immersion in the natural environment and complete absorption during mountaineering - encouraged respondents to feel euphoric both during and after mountaineering activity participation. Past mountaineering experience encouraged these tourists to deal with feelings of risk in a calm and positive way. The

challenges associated with their experiences often induced risk and fear yet they still continued to partake in mountaineering holidays.

4.1.5. Lifestyles of adventure tourists

My research has explored how lifestyle influences *adventure tourism participation*. In particular, it has demonstrated that adventure tourists tend to also participate in recreational adventure activities within their home environment, and this influences their decision to take adventure holidays. Whereas previous research has focused solely on the lifestyles of recreational adventurers, my work has examined how people's participation in recreational adventure influences their decision to take adventure holidays, and how such experiences can be an extension of their lifestyles.

The influence of lifestyle on *adventure tourism participation* is examined in two of my publications which specifically consider mountaineer tourists (TM 2006; TM 2011). I synthesise pertinent literature about the lifestyles of mountaineers and ascertain that past mountaineering experience, both within the home environment and within adventure destinations, influences mountaineering holiday participation (TM 2006). My empirical research similarly reveals the importance of mountaineering to the lifestyles of mountaineer tourists (TM 2011). Some were considered to be serious leisure participants, defined as 'the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for a participant to find a career in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge' (Stebbins, 1992, p.3). Mountaineering was integral to their lifestyles. Some had participated in mountaineering activities from a very young age, and they had undertaken mountaineering qualifications, which is a clear indication of their commitment to mountaineering at home. Many 'used their free time at home to regularly participate in activities such as indoor and outdoor climbing, walking and running, and to go on mountaineering short breaks at the weekend within the UK' (TM 2011, p.504). As noted earlier all interviewees were on packaged mountaineering courses, and they were strongly motivated by skills' development and gaining experience. This is an indication of their commitment to mountaineering and, combined with their recreational mountaineering activities, it alludes to serious leisure. Accordingly, I contend that while there is a palpable link between recreational adventure and serious leisure, likewise this is apparent for adventure tourists who regularly participate in recreational adventure.

4.2. Focal Concept 2: *Adventure tourism consumption*

Table 5 briefly outlines the contributions which specific publications make towards understanding *adventure tourism consumption*. Furthermore, section 3 of Figure 3 represents the themes and the publications covered in Focal Concept 2 (FC2). In considering consumption, the published works explore the emotional journeys, and the negative and positive feelings which adventure tourists experience during activity participation. They also examine the specific benefits which adventure tourists gain from partaking in activities, and the influences on adventure tourism experiences.

Table 5: Contribution to knowledge for Focal Concept 2

Publication Reference	Contribution to knowledge about *adventure tourism consumption*
AT 2003a	Through reviewing pertinent literature, this book chapter explores the flow concept relative to adventure tourism experiences.
TM 2006	The conceptual framework presented within this journal article (Figure 2) focuses on the emotional states experienced during mountaineering, including contrasting emotions, flow and peak experience.
JOE 2007	Through primary research, this journal article investigates, in part, the experiences and benefits associated with volunteer tourism participation.
TMP 2012	This journal article focuses on the personal emotional journeys associated with adventure activities on packaged mountaineering holidays.
MT 2015	This book chapter appraises, in part, gendered experiences within mountaineering tourism. It specifically examines the expectations of male and female mountaineers, and how these influence their mountaineering experiences.

4.2.1. Emotional journeys experienced by adventure tourists

My publications (see Table 5) explore the emotional journeys experienced by adventure tourists while they are consuming their activities, i.e. their journeys during participation. The prominence given to emotional journeys in the recreational adventure literature, and the lack of understanding about how adventure tourists experienced adventure activities encouraged me to investigate this. My work provides insights into the emotional journeys encountered by mountaineering tourists during activity participation, reflecting their emotional peaks and troughs (TM 2006; TMP 2012).

Given that adventure tourism involves challenges, perceived or real risks, uncertain outcomes and commitment, amongst other elements (Cater, 2006; Ewert, 1989; Swarbrooke et al, 2003; Walle, 1997), many different negative and positive emotions are experienced during activity participation. Adventure tourists may encounter intense and rich emotional journeys, and this intensity is influenced by such factors as past experience and personal perceptions of adventure and risk (Morgan, Moore & Mansell, 2005; Weber, 2001). It is also affected by the degree to which an adventure holiday is commodified as the latter involves attempts 'to deliver a planned, controlled version of an activity usually defined as dangerous and unpredictable' (Fletcher, 2010, p.6). Adventure tourists' experiences can elicit waves of 'terror and elation, joy and despair, [and] anxiety and pleasure' (Swarbrooke et al, 2003, p.14). While there is extant research about the emotional journeys of recreational mountaineers and adventurers (e.g. Breivik, 1996; Delle Fave, Bassi & Massimini, 2003; Priest & Bunting, 1993), at the time of writing AT 2003a and TM 2006, little was known about these journeys for adventure tourists.

From my empirical research (TMP 2012) I found that respondents' accounts revealed 'a multifarious mix of emotions, ranging from euphoria to abject misery, and they frequently referred to feeling downbeat, particularly while engaged in demanding mountaineering activities' (TMP, 2012, p.150). These emotions reflect the sheer effort and energy expended in working towards demanding self-set goals during mountaineering. On reaching these goals, most respondents dismissed any negative feelings so that they could revel in their

achievements. For example, one respondent expressed feelings of anxiety before starting to climb Mont Blanc, and felt exhausted while trekking up the mountain. Yet, on summiting, he felt elated, noting that 'when I got to the top, I felt pretty cold but at the same time amazingly elevated' (p.150). Another respondent had doubts about his ability to reach the top of Mont Blanc. Before the climb, he reflected that 'I'm really not convinced I'm going to be able to do this' (p.150) yet on summiting he enthused that 'the top was awesome! It was absolutely exhilarating and we'd been building up to it for two and a half years' (p.151). Some respondents were worried about being outside their comfort zone yet, despite these concerns, they coped with the challenges they faced and out their confidence in the guide to assume responsibility for their actions. In essence, the interview findings highlight the emotional peaks and troughs experienced by respondents during mountaineering, and the similarities with recreational mountaineers' emotional journeys.

4.2.2. Benefits of *adventure tourism consumption*

This section considers the benefits which tourists enjoy both during and after *adventure tourism consumption*. It starts with a discussion about the beneficial effects associated with flow experiences for mountaineer tourists, then continues with an examination of volunteer tourism experiences.

My research interest in flow stemmed from prior investigations on recreational adventurers which reveal its strong association with adventure activity participation, and the beneficial effects of flow experiences (e.g.: Csikzentmihalyi, 1979; Jones, Hollenhorst & Perna, 2003). Earlier in this critical appraisal, I examine flow's motivational importance (FC1), but here, I consider how flow is important to adventure tourism experiences. My publications (AT 2003a; TM 2006; TMP 2012) therefore contribute towards understanding adventure tourists' experiences of flow and the benefits they gain from enjoying flow. They demonstrate that flow is a highly positive emotional state experienced during mountaineering participation (TM 2006) and rock climbing (AT 2003a), and it evokes 'an overall feeling of happiness and an improved quality of life' (AT 2003a, p.82). This reflects the most beneficial element of flow, which is 'a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark for what life should be like' (Csikzentmihalyi, 1992, p.3). My empirical research reveals that package mountaineer tourists allude to intensely emotional peaks and troughs, ultimately resulting in flow or a flow-like state and feelings of deep satisfaction and euphoria (TMP 2012). In this sense, my research signals the importance of flow or flow-like states to enjoyable and fulfilling adventure tourism experiences.

Of particular interest is that package mountaineer tourists on highly commodified adventure holidays experienced flow in a similar way to recreational adventurers, despite palpable differences between the two types of experience. I reflect that while respondents were not 'exposed to completely unadulterated adventure' (TMP, 2012, p.153), they still felt challenged, pushed themselves beyond their comfort zones, they experienced contrasting emotions and enjoyed flow or flow-like experiences. Different dimensions of flow permeate their entire experience, particularly a perceived positive challenge to skill balance, one of flow's key elements (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). They pushed themselves beyond their 'comfort zone' to overcome any challenges they encountered during mountaineering participation. They felt that they could do this because their guide 'had assessed their

ability, assumed responsibility for their actions, and considered them sufficiently competent to cope with the mountaineering activities that they were doing' (TMP 2012, p.151). Here, I agree with Cater's (2006) assertions that participants in commodified adventure experiences '*play* with their fears' (p.321) in the knowledge that they are ultimately safe. They often reported only fleeting moments of pleasure while actually doing mountaineering, yet post-completion and after a period of reflection, they felt profound, long-lasting happiness and fulfilment. Respondents also spoke about feeling as if they were in 'another world', 'in a zone' and 'on a different planet' while mountaineering. The challenging nature of mountaineering, the benefits of being in the natural environment, and the strong desire for respondents to develop their skills generated this emotional state. Such a state reflects the presence of other flow dimensions apparent in respondents' descriptions. For instance, the 'action-awareness merging' element (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p.19) and 'concentration on the task in hand' (Ibid, p.23) both encourage participants to completely escape from reality so that they can focus on and enjoy the moment. When so absorbed in the activity, the transformation of time, which is another flow dimension, results in participants experiencing either a diminished or extended sense of time.

While volunteer tourism is distinct to mountaineering tourism, both types have interrelated features and reflect the core elements of adventure (AT 2003a). My work reveals that volunteer tourists enjoy different types of benefit related to personal development: spiritual emotions, self-concept, resource appreciation and environmental tasks (JOE 2007). In particular, mountaineer tourists and volunteer tourists share similarities in the spiritual benefits they encounter. Volunteer tourists benefitted spiritually from being in the natural environment and enjoyed 'awe inspiring' (JOE 2007, p.196) experiences which were akin to flow-like states. As one respondent reported: 'it [the natural environment] is really hard to put into words … it just kind of gets to you or strikes you in some way and you just feel incredible' (p.195). Over time, respondents became more sensitive to and immersed in their natural surroundings, increasingly enjoying the associated spiritual benefits. They alluded to enhancing their self-concept, which was reflected through their descriptions of improved self-confidence, development of knowledge and feelings of pride and achievement.

4.2.3. Influences on adventure tourism experiences

My work demonstrates that, like adventure tourism motivations, different factors both positively and negatively influence the nature and quality of adventure tourism experiences. Different people view adventure in different ways. Therefore, 'an adventure for one person, in a particular place, at any given time, may not be an adventure for another, or for the same person in a different place or time' (Priest, 1999, p.160). My publications highlight the importance of group bonding, organisational structure, past experience and gender as influential on adventure tourism experiences (JOE 2007; MT 2015). For volunteer tourists, group bonding and cohesion influenced their experiences and while some enjoyed learning from others and found this to be inspiring, some found it difficult to constantly live and work with the rest of the volunteers, and some were concerned about how they were perceived by others in the group and the staff. The structure of the volunteer organisation and the way in which the expedition was run also influenced volunteers' experiences. Those with previous conservation experience were

more critical of the way in which the expedition was managed and this led to frustrations amongst them (JOE 2007). The role of gender is particularly pertinent to mountaineer tourism experiences. Mountaineering has a long tradition of masculinity and, accordingly, it is represented, perceived and experienced as an activity which embodies core hegemonic masculine features (Frohlick, 2005; Ortner, 1999). In synthesising extant literature, I (along with the co-author) find that this is the case relative to the expectations of female and male mountaineers based on their past experiences, although there are differing perspectives. Men expect women mountaineers to have masculine traits while concurrently presuming they are less competent, more interested in the social aspects of mountaineering, less involved in clubs, and prioritise family commitments over mountaineering. By contrast, women assume their male counterparts to be strongly focused on mountaineering, more skilled, and to be more involved in clubs. Some argue that these gendered expectations influence the experience of mountaineering for both men and women (Kiewa, 2001; Moscosco-Sanchez, 2008; Robinson, 2008). For instance, some male climbers prefer to climb with other men as they feel women hold them back, but, contrastingly, some women choose not to climb with men as they feel the latter curtail their progress. Alternatively, other work (e.g. Plate, 2007; Robinson, 2008) reveals that men and women climbers report that they have the same experience, whether they are climbing with men or with women, and they are equally focused on the activity. I conclude that 'rather than focusing on gender differences and how these restrict participation, the positive experiences which men and women enjoy during mountaineering participation with their gender opposites need to be explored' (MT 2015, p.148).

5. CONCLUSION

This critical appraisal and the nine publications have demonstrated the contribution that my published works have made towards progressing understanding of *adventure tourism participation and consumption.* I have fully addressed the aim of the programme of research and its research objectives both within this critical appraisal and within the published works. Research objective 1 is explored in Section 3, within which I critically review and reflect on my research journey, commenting on my research philosophy and the three streams of reflections which have shaped my journey as a researcher: 1. my personal and educational interests; 2. mentoring and collaboration in research; and 3. the impact of my research. For research objectives 2, 3 and 4 I developed two Focal Concepts which synthesise and discuss relevant themes and key points from each of my publications. Specifically, these Focal Concepts present new insights into *adventure tourism participation and consumption* through advancing knowledge about the different elements which influence tourists to take adventure holidays in the first place (*adventure tourism participation*) and tourists' experience of actually consuming adventure activities while on holiday (*adventure tourism consumption*). Discussion of these Focal Concepts relative to my publications is within Section 4, and here Figures 2 and 3 usefully demonstrate my research journey and how it has evolved over time and with experience as a researcher.

The future direction of my research, which is part of my final research objective (4), is now considered. Although my published works have made important contributions to understanding adventure tourists, this remains an under-researched topic. There is a need to conduct further research in many different areas, including: developing more comprehensive profiles and typologies of adventure tourists; comparative studies of packaged adventure tourists and independent adventure tourists, different types of adventure tourists (e.g. ecotourists, wildlife tourists and volunteer tourists), and experienced and inexperienced groups of adventure tourists; the application of theoretical concepts such as reversal theory (Apter, 1982), edgework (Lyng, 1990), sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1979) and serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992) to understand adventure tourists; particular adventure tourist growth markets such as female adventure tourists and family adventure tourists; the constraints and negotiation strategies experienced by adventure tourists; and, gendered motivations and gendered experiences in adventure tourism.

My current and future research agenda will focus on developing a deeper understanding of family adventure tourism participation and consumption. While this is a growth market in adventure tourism, I also have a strong personal interest in these groups of tourists and regularly go on family adventure holidays. I have written a full draft of a conceptual article, which I intend to submit to the following peer-reviewed journal by March 2017:

- Pomfret, G. (2017). Family adventure tourists: an evaluation of motivations, experiences and benefits. In preparation for *International Journal of Tourism Research.* (ABS 2*/Impact Factor: 1.31).

This paper reviews existing research pertinent to family adventure tourists, and develops a conceptual framework to highlight current understanding of these tourists. It explores three key themes related to the aforementioned objectives. Firstly, it considers the motivations of family adventure tourists. Secondly, it explores the experiences of adventure

tourism for families, and thirdly, it examines the benefits of *adventure tourism participation*. In the final section, a conceptual framework of family adventure tourists illustrates the emergent themes from the literature and identifies future research directions. I plan to carry out fieldwork research (subject to funding) on groups of family adventure tourists in July 2017 to further develop my research in this area. I will continue to adopt an interpretivist approach, using whole family group interviews and visual methods, for instance, through encouraging children to draw pictures of their adventure holiday experiences, and asking family group members to talk about photos of their holidays. I intend to write a journal article with the draft title:

- Pomfret, G. (2017). An exploration of family adventure tourism motives, experiences and benefits for children and their parents. In preparation for *Tourism Management.* (ABS 4*).

Aside from my interests in family adventure tourists, I am keen to continue collaborating with other researchers and I have co-authored the following journal article, due to be submitted by mid-February 2017:

- Doran, A. & Pomfret, G. (2017). Phenomenology-based ethnographic exploration of the role of self-efficacy in constraint negotiation for mountaineer tourists. In preparation for *Tourism Management.* (ABS 4*).

Furthermore, I am working with colleagues in the tourism team to write a journal article about the brand personalities of adventure destinations.

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