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Cultural Behaviour of European Tour Groups in Scotland

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Abstract

This study aims to contribute to the underdeveloped, yet now growing field of research of "Cultural behaviour in Tourism". The study seeks to establish the motivation, satisfaction and behaviour of tourists from different nationalities in a group package tour by focusing on the cases of French, Italian and German tourists on group tours of Scotland.

The role of national cultures in tourism, tourist personality and satisfaction has been analysed individually in various studies, although, they have not been studied jointly. The article investigates the tour behaviour of different nationalities and assesses their level of satisfaction with the tour from the perspective of the tour guide. Questionnaires and interviews findings were gathered to examine the opinion of Scottish tour guides on the cultural behaviours of different nationalities. The aim was to collect information to address the claim that different nationalities have different needs and should be marketed differently from one another. The results show significant differences between the three nationalities.

1 Introduction

The writer has been working in groups operations for a Scottish Inbound Tour Operator between summer 2005 and summer 2008. In her experience European countries tend to be marketed as a unit and they receive a standardized product. The study seeks to establish the motivation, satisfaction and behaviour of tourists from different nationalities in a group package tour by focusing on the cases of French, Italian and German tourists on group tours of Scotland.

Tourism in Scotland is a £4.5bn industry, five percent of Scotland's GDP, and accounts for eight percent of employment (Hay, 2002). Hay & Yeoman (2003) examined the turning scenario of Scottish tourism and explained that by 2015 the ambition is to grow the revenue by 50% and make tourism the number one industry in Scotland. The key players in Scottish tourism are the USA, Germany and France, which provide 35% of the overall number of trips to Scotland, 33% of number of nights and an expenditure of £560 million (VisitScotland, 2008). Scottish Tourism growth is a steady pace of 4.4 per cent per annum since 2003 (Hay & Yeoman, 2003). However, to achieve their future ambitions, VisitScotland and the main tourism stakeholders need to develop a forward-looking marketing strategy. The main aims and objectives of this study were therefore to:

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- Identify the role of the tour guide and their influence on tourist satisfaction and the success of group package tours.
- Examine the tour behaviour of different nationalities and assess their level of tour satisfaction from the perspective of the tour guide.

To identify cultural behaviour and the role of the tour guide an e-mailed questionnaire was developed to collect the tour guides perceptions on different nationalities. To enrich these findings four in-depth interviews were conducted with a director of JAC Travel Scotland Ltd, the biggest inbound tour operator in Scotland, and three tour guides. The aim of these interviews was to explain any possible bias in the answers given in the questionnaire and collect further information on the national cultural differences of tourists.

2 Findings

Quantitative Research Results

Return responses were received from 25 guides who completed a total of 29 questionnaires (some guides tour in different languages and therefore completed more than one questionnaire), which equals to 37% responses. The largest percentage (40%) of the tour guides were of British nationality, with the remaining being Italian (15%), French (20%), and German (24%) as well as Dutch, Spanish and Norwegian (0.3% each). All the responding tour guides were permanently living in Scotland. The guides had a mean number of years of experience in guiding tours of 13.2.

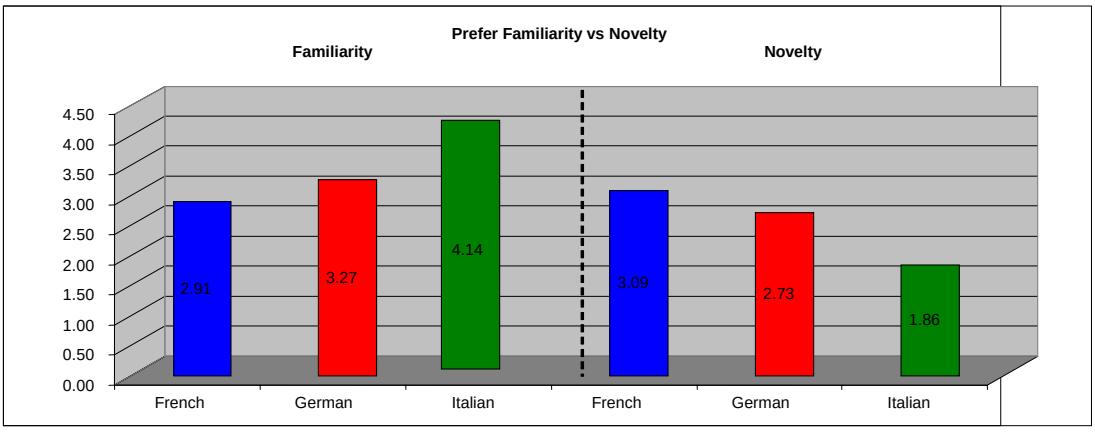
2.1.1 Social factors

In this section, “social factors”, such as socialising within the group, congregating with other nationalities, preference for local food and beverage, interest in speaking to local people and preference for novelty or familiarity, are presented and discussed.

Prefer familiarity to novelty

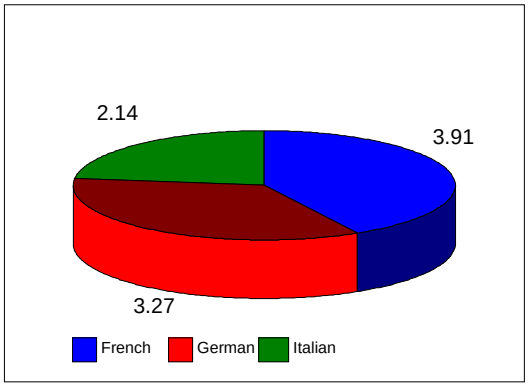
As shown in Figure 1, there are quite marked differences between the perceptions of the three nationalities. The French seem to be the most eager to encounter new and unfamiliar situations and venture into the novelty of the culture and environment. The Italians seem to be the least enthusiastic in exploring unfamiliar areas and with a strong 4.14 out of 5 the guides perceive their need to remain involved in familiar situations and behaviour. The guides perceive German tourists as fairly ‘neutral’ with a slight preference towards familiarity over novelty.

Figure 1



Prefer local food and beverage

Figure 2



The preferences regarding food and drink reflect closely the results of Figure 1. The similarities in responses can be attributed to cultural and national factors, where one is more likely to experience novelty and therefore try new food and beverage; the other will rather look for familiarity and thus not be keen on new experiences.

Visitor Attitudes

In this section, attitudes of visitors from different nationalities are identified. Two different questions have been analysed together to show patterns and correlations.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the questions regarding congregation with other nationalities and interest in speaking to locals scored between fairly neutral 3.18 and positive 4. A possible cause for the factor of hesitation in all groups could be the language barrier.

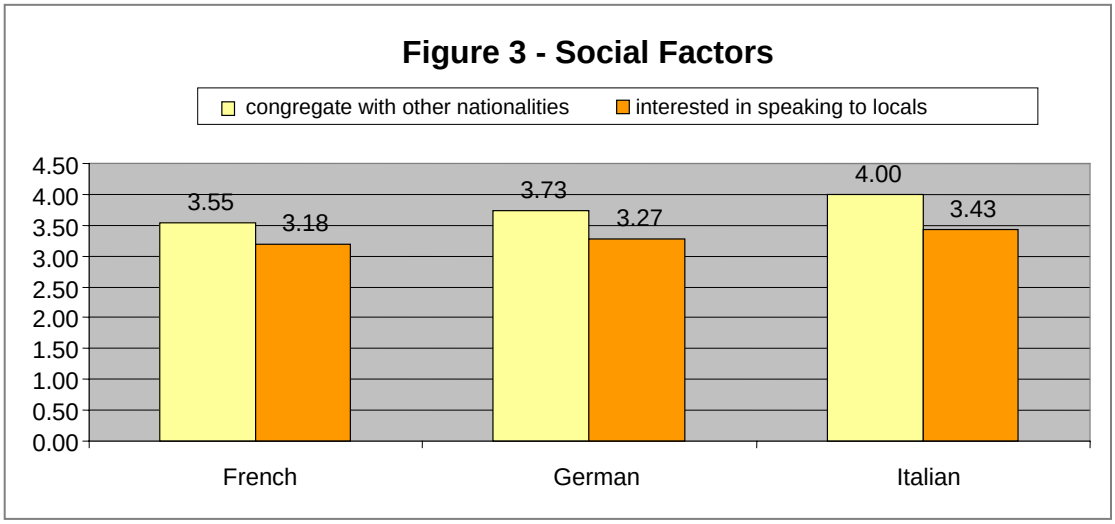
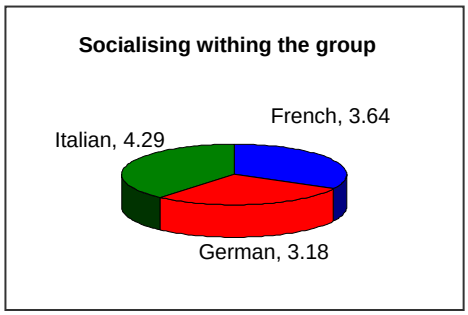


Figure 4

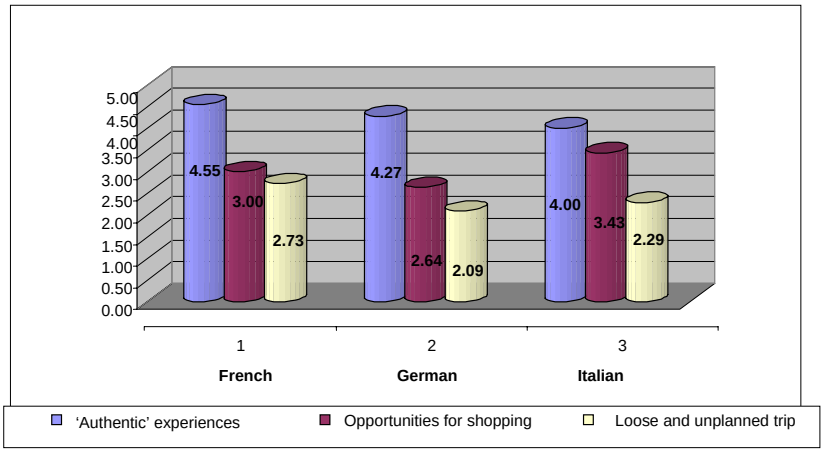


However, if we contrast the above findings with those in Figure 4 we can discern some differences between the nationalities. The Italians have scored the highest marks which suggest that they are the most likely to opt for novelty or speaking to the locals, and they like to socialise within the group. On the other hand, the Germans appear to be fairly keen to discover different areas of the new destination but least likely to socialise within the tour group. The French tourists have scored the lowest marks in terms of interacting with the host culture but are more likely than German tourists to socialise within their own tour group.

2.1.2 Activity preferences

In this part the type of activities that tourists from different nationalities like to see included in their trip are discussed. Three questions have been analysed based on the need to show the activities undertaken in proportion to the other activities proposed: want to see authentic vs. staged; shop constantly vs. never shop and choose a loose and unplanned trip vs. strict and rigid trip. All three nationalities are keen to have 'authentic' experiences, with the French respondents' giving this aspect the highest rating. The Germans appear to be least keen on a loose or unplanned trip. The Italians had the highest preference for shopping of the three groups.

Figure 5: Preferred activities

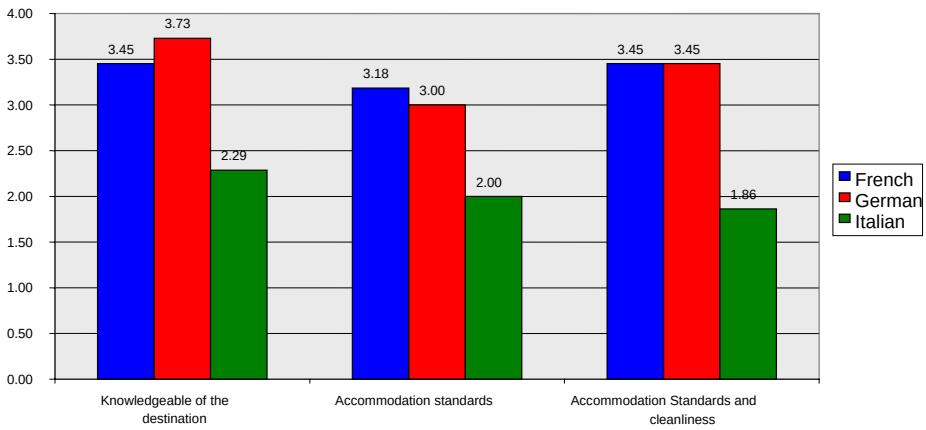


2.1.3 Satisfaction during and after tour

It is important for the aim of this research to identify if there is any correlation between the mean score on the behavioural characteristics and the level of satisfaction during and after the tour. In order to find this information the reminder of the chapter has been divided in four different areas: accommodation and hospitality services and standards, cultural information received during the tour, and the weather. These areas were identified during the first meeting with the guides.

Accommodation and services standards

Figure 6: Knowledge of the standards and satisfaction during and after tour

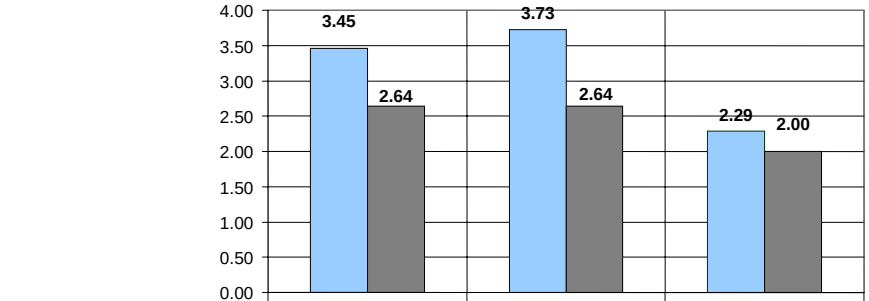


The guides were asked to evaluate the perception of satisfaction on the accommodation standards, cleanliness, service and hospitality. In Figure 6 the satisfaction with "accommodation standards and cleanliness" during and after the tour is compared with the "tourist's knowledge of the destination's standards", to identify if there is any correlation between the two variables.

The result of the comparison is that both German and French have a good knowledge of the destination (Scotland) and their knowledge is reflected on the level of satisfaction, which is just as high. On the other hand, Italians have a very limited knowledge of the destination standards and they tend, therefore, to be less satisfied. A product up selling by the Italian agency could cause this or their expectative of standards being shaped by the standards back home. The cultural possible reasons are discussed after in this paper.

The knowledge of a destination and its standards has also been analysed as a variable itself. As represented in Figure 7, it can be noted the strong difference between the French and Germans compared to the Italians. The Italians have the lowest level of knowledge between the three nationalities; Germans, again, scored the highest results with 3.73 out of 5 on knowledge of the destination and 2.64 on knowledge of the standards.

Figure 7



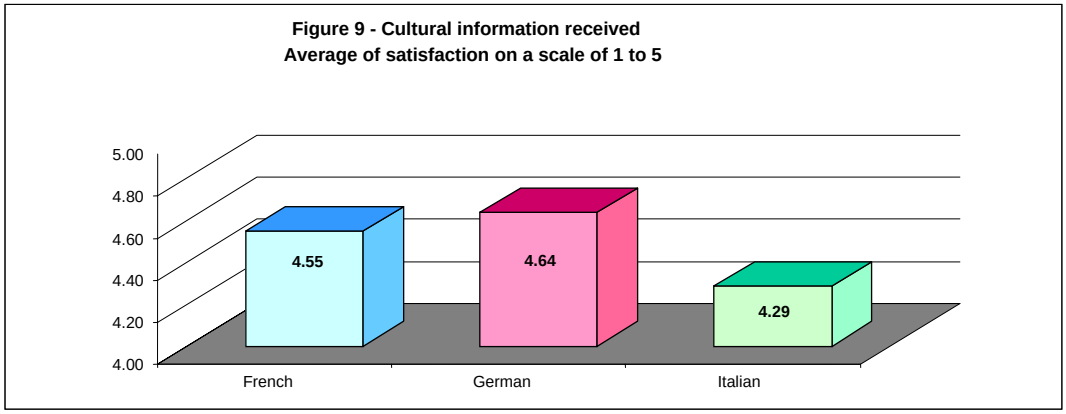
	French	German	Italian
Knowledge of destination	3.45	3.73	2.29
Level of Information on destination standards	2.64	2.64	2.00

In Figure 8, the satisfaction of different nationalities with the services and hospitality received from the staff in hotels, restaurants standards and local's cordiality is presented. The results show a moderate to fairly good level of satisfaction within the three areas discussed and for all three nationalities.

Figure 8 - Satisfaction with hotel, restaurant and locals' hospitality

Cultural information received

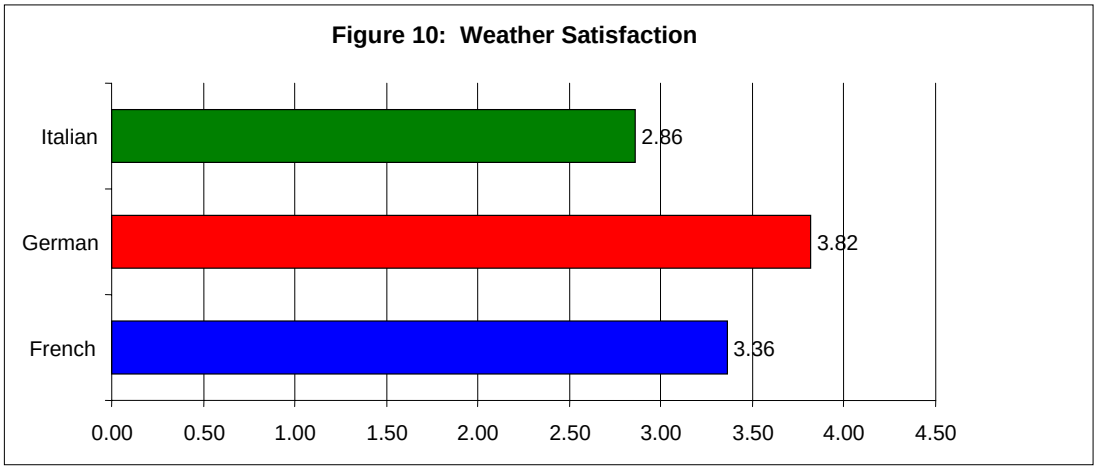
The guides were then asked to state their perceptions of the satisfaction of the tourists with the cultural information they received. In contrast to the other parts, the questions scored really high with satisfaction being on an average of 4.49 out of 5.0.



However, since the guides were the provider of the cultural information these results have not been used as variables in discussing satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the weather

The second most mentioned factor from the guides during the discussion was the weather. Therefore, this question, especially for a country like Scotland, needed to be asked. The results to the answer show a certain similarity between the nationalities with a slight more satisfaction coming from the Germans, which could be explained by the similarities in climates between the two countries. On the other hand, the Italian and French had an average satisfaction score of around 2.8 and 3.4 respectively.



2.2 Qualitative research analyses

To increase the already available information an interview was conducted with the director of group travel and product development of JAC Travel Scotland Ltd. This interview covered the pre-touring development and discussed the difficulties in building relationships between the inbound tour operator and the foreign travel agencies. During the interview four main subjects were discussed: (1) the background of the company and their position in the tourism market, (2) the main issues in quality control and performance which define satisfaction, (3) the different national needs and expectations and (4) the company's approaches to these issues. In the second part of this chapter the post-tour overall satisfaction will be discussed with the help of the findings extracted from the interviews undertaken with three tour guides.

2.2.1 Pre-tour product development

Mrs Karen Robertson, the interviewee, has 15 years experience within the tourism industry; she has been working with the company for 9 years. Based on this experience, she was asked to explain the company's approach to product development and quality control with particular focus on the nationalities chosen for this study. Product development in JAC is based on the market trends, with particular collaboration with VisitScotland marketing campaigns, Scottish Destination Management Association (SDMA) aims and objectives and the prospects of Scottish Tourism Forum (STF), which is also recognised as the voice of industry. Therefore, the product development takes into consideration the different involvement and requests from the Scottish tourism stakeholders. Mrs Robertson explained that Scotland is an extremely expensive destination, which tends to create high expectations from the tourists it attracts.

2.2.2 Issues with satisfaction

Suppliers

JAC Travel, like many other tour operators, has to rely on the collaboration with other suppliers to create a comprehensive package tour. These suppliers are usually coach companies, hotels, B&Bs and Guesthouses, visitors' attractions, restaurants and tour guides. To maintain the high expectations of the customers, all of these suppliers have to deliver services of exceptional quality and to the standards they have been attributed. However, during the interviews it was recognised that accommodation is a worrying issue when talking about group package tours (GPT). This is caused by the interest of the hotel to move from the groups business to the FIT ('for individual travel') business, which is more profitable and enhances the image of the hotel. Therefore, the accommodation availability for groups is scarce and sometimes the standards are low.

Although JAC travel performs different quality as well as health and safety checks, the limited availability of rooms, the high seasonality, and the increasing demand sometimes cause a compromising choice of supplier, which could be detrimental to the client experience.

The same issue was brought up when discussing how tour guides are selected to guide for different clients. The guides used by JAC tend to be qualified to the professional standards of the STGA (Scottish Tourist Guide Association). However, Karen pointed out that during a tour guides also have to deal with complaints and other unexpected situations, e.g. a tour participant needing to be taken to the hospital. These are personal and individual skills, which are difficult to teach, and it is very important for the success of the tour that a skilled tour guide has been selected.

Standards and Up-selling

Another issue identified when discussing customer satisfaction is the differences in standards between the various countries, which rarely correspond to the same level of quality. Scottish standards are very different from the European basic standards, which induce the costumers to perceive Scotland as a very expensive destination that it is not value for money.

In addition there are problems in collaborating with foreign tour agencies throughout Europe. To over-compensate for the high prices of Scotland, the tour agencies tend to up-sell the tourist product to their clients, which causes a false perception of the destination that in turn induces dissatisfaction when it is not met during the tour.

2.2.3 National Needs

Based on the company's figures, the GPT market is in constant growth, with the existing markets (France, Germany, Holland) still displaying strong demand and new up-coming markets (Japan, Russia and new EU member states) getting more interested in Scotland.

Karen perceived many differences between different nationalities needs; however, she also recognised certain strong similarities. These included the need for the travel agencies to communicate in the language of the travel agency. This builds strong relationships and increases the trust between the two companies, which is extremely important on such an intangible service as tourism. For this reason JAC Travel has a multi-national staff where ten different languages are spoken.

The differences between the various nationalities during business development are mainly based on timings, costs, and knowledge of the country, which are correlated with the guides' answers to the questionnaires.

For instance, in JAC's experience German agents tend to negotiate a group quote minimum a year in advance, because they are very specific on the product they want to offer to their clients. If they have a good knowledge of the country they cut costs on local tour guides, and they also prefer to employ a German tour leader. The French are very price-sensitive. They are the most demanding regarding accommodation standards, extra services and costs and insist on dealing with a (fluent) French speaker. They will nevertheless confirm an all inclusive tour involving three meals a day, drinks, extra entrances and events all included in the package. The Italians are the most difficult in the operational stage rather than in the business development negotiation. This is mainly caused by their delay in confirming tours in the year and the last minute holiday bookings by the Italian clients.

2.3 Post-tour tour guide analysis

To add more depth to the findings from the questionnaire and to clarify any bias or misleading questions, interviews were conducted with three guides. Their answers have been divided in two main categories: the issues encountered and the differences in nationalities.

2.3.1 Issues encountered

In the questionnaire the answers regarding "socialising" and integrating with the locals had left a feeling of mystery, as none of the nationality particularly surpassed the other. Therefore, this question was re-asked of the guides with the aim to get more details about it. In common agreement, the guides explained that the people who usually participate to a GPT holiday tend *not* to speak English (or at least not very well) and they are therefore not usually confident about making contact with the local community.

If there is an interest in finding out information regarding the host community, it is usually the tour guide that will cover this subject, as s/he acts as a mediator between the tourists and the locals.

Additionally, the lack of communication with natives is rarely based on lack of interest from the tourists but more an impediment caused by the language barrier, which is recognised by the tour guides as a down point in the production of quality services by the Scottish tourism industry.

Two other issues arose when analysing the questionnaires: the first one had to do with the lack of knowledge of the cultural aspects of the destination and the other was the lack of knowledge on the destination standards.

ITALIAN	GERMAN
Lack of knowledge of the destination Limited information on stereotypes: – Loch Ness Monster – Bagpipes – Tartans – William Wallace	Connoisseurs of the destination: – Geography – Heritage

The same results have been recognised on the analysis of the knowledge of standards in the destination. The guides seem to acknowledge the low standards of accommodation in Scotland as one of the biggest issues when guiding. The Italian guide interviewed explained that his personal approach and technique is to down-sell the hotel and prepare the tourists to the worst case scenario; he adds, "That it is usually the best way to pleasantly surprise them".

2.3.2 Differences in nationalities

The guides were then asked questions regarding nationalities' preferences on the structure of the tour. Planned and unplanned tours have a particular meaning which emerged from the interviews. According to the French guide French tourists want their tour to be extremely rigid and to stick to the activities proposed in the itinerary, i.e. all the attractions and the hotels stated in the program will have to remain unvaried. She related an incident where a visit had to be cancelled because of external circumstances, and the tourists "felt like somebody was stealing from them"; they regarded the error as a financial loss and a waste of their money. On the other hand, the Italians were seen as flexible regarding the schedules of the tour – although they would try to gain extra and/or different visits while at the destination, which they see as a sign of superiority and as a free gift, this "will make them really satisfied".

Finally, Germans are unlikely to perceive a change of the programme caused by external factors as a loss or a reason for complaints; however, they will feel really disappointed if they have been out booked to a different hotel since the booking will have been made far in advance.

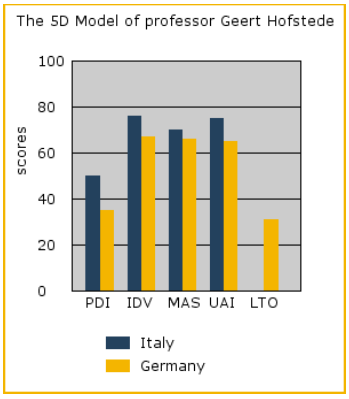
Discussing further the subject of complaints with regard to tourists of different nationalities, it was suggested that Italian tourists are complainers by nature; however, they will rarely complain to the tour guide preferring instead to take their complaint to a higher level or ask for compensation. German tourists do not complain easily; however, when they do they tend to be very pragmatic and sensible; they will document their complaints in writing, collect signatures and attach pictures as evidence of their claims.

French tourists, on the other hand, appear to complain and ask for reimbursement frequently if they perceive that the product is not value for money. However, the questionnaire responses suggest that the level of satisfaction with the group tours is fairly high so perhaps it is the case that overall French tourists are content but there is still room for improvement.

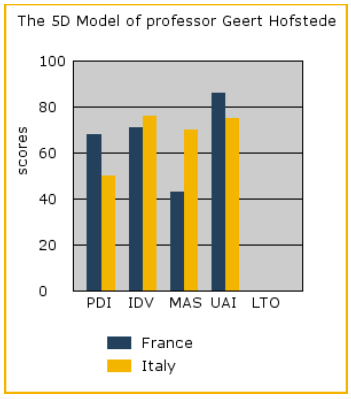
Social standing, especially for the French and Italian groups, was also raised. In many cases the guides pointed out that the tourist behaviour varies a lot based on the tourist social class and their interests will be different. For instance a group where two distinct social classes are represented could be very difficult to manage because of their differences in interest. In the case of the Germans, class differences were not mentioned. Instead, it is common for the group to have particular interest, i.e. gardening, and therefore the tour takes a more distinct turn.

3 Discussion of Findings

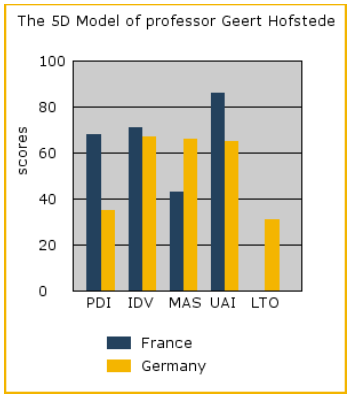
The findings, in correlation to the already defined models on cultural behaviour, are discussed. Hofstede's four dimensions will be applied where possible to the answers given in the questionnaires and, to a certain extent, they will be applied to the cultural behaviour in tourism. A similar approach will be taken when applying Plog's model of tourist personality to the findings. Represented in Models 1- 3 are Hofstede's results for each country studied in comparison to the other. Indeed, of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (See **Appendix A** for a glossary of terms), UAI[1] and power distance have been shown to influence differences among cultures in tourism behaviour (Dawar et al., 1996).



Model 1: Italy vs. Germany



Model 2: France vs. Italy



Model 3: France vs. Germany

[1] Uncertainty Avoidance Index

According to Hofstede, Germans are the least individualist out of the three nationalities studied. This means that they feel more comfortable travelling as part of a group, which would explain their preference for a GPT. On the other hand, Italians are seen as the most individualist. Thus, it could be argued that those Italians who opt for a GPT fall into Plog's "near-dependable" category, which will mean that they rather not take risks and prefer to be guided and accompanied by someone who knows the destination.

Of course, GPT could be categorised as the choice of holiday that any tourist identified as "dependable" and "near-dependable" by Plog would purchase. However, the distinction in this case is between the nationalities that have the GPT in common as a preferred holiday type and therefore a different approach is needed. The range of activities chosen by the nationalities could be correlated to their personality and the German and French attitudes to experiencing novelty and trying different food and beverage could be described as near-venturer or venturer. On the other hand, the Italian tourists' need for familiarity puts them in the near-dependent category. However, it could be argued that Plog's model applies to the individual choice of destination more than to the group choices of activities; the author feels that a certain level of correlation between Plog's research and Hofstede's dimension exists.

According to Hofstede French people were found to have a very high UAI, which implies that they do not tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity and would feel uncomfortable in unstructured situations. By contrast, the questionnaire findings of this study showed the French tourist to be the most eager in terms of searching for novelty and experiencing local food and beverage. However, uncertainty avoiding cultures try to reduce the option of novel situations by introducing firm laws and rules, safety and security methods. Therefore, as the interview data indicated, although the French tourists are looking for novelty experiences they also strictly plan their tour and tend to have an all inclusive package. By contrast, the German tourists who tend to plan ahead (cf. interview data) nevertheless also have an inclination to look for novelty, real situation and local products. This is consistent with Hofstede's conceptualisation that Germans have a lower UAI and tend to be more "phlegmatic and contemplative" (Hofstede, 1991). In the question regarding socialising within the group, the Italians scored the highest and the French the lowest. This could be explained by the need to congregate with people of their own culture who speak the same language, in an environment where the cross-cultural setting are different in cultural, speak different languages, and have different values and perceptions of the world (Bochner 1982; Sutton 1967).

The results show that there is a strong correlation between Plog's tourist personality model and the concepts of national culture dimensions developed by Hofstede. Although both models are only applicable to a certain extent, a pattern could be identified between high uncertainty avoidance index and dependable tourists and high individualism context against collectivism and its implication with choosing a group package tour as a holiday option. However, it is important to notice that these are only some variables in examining the differences in tourist behaviour and they should not be used as the only solution.

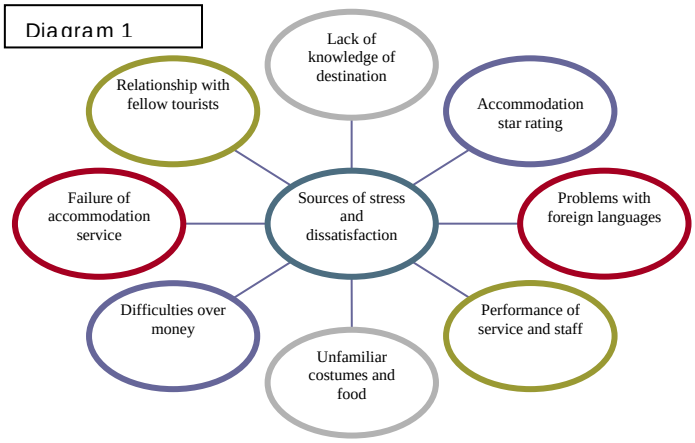
The findings also suggest that the role of the tour guide is important for the success of a group package tour generally. This is because the role of the tour guide is not just to provide information and directions but also, and more importantly, to assist in the cultural understanding between the tourist and the host destination. Therefore, the guide's understanding of national culture and of the host community culture will help him/her provide an appropriately tailored service. Additionally, this role is significantly important for the success of the tour and, as shown in the results, the tour guide's ways of communication could change the tourists' perceptions and expectations of a package and, therefore, transform their dis/satisfaction.

The results of the investigation brought about some interesting factors regarding the different expectations nationalities have and the differences in the activities chosen. It has been suggested that German tourists search for novelty, not staged experiences and like a strictly planned and rigid programme. If these expectations are not met, they will be dissatisfied and they will ask for reimbursement. French tourists want to see novelty, try local food and beverage; however, they prefer not to mix with the other participants of the group or speak to the locals. Their main concern is information and therefore, if this aim is not achieved they will be extremely dissatisfied.

Italian tourists tend not be interested in trying local food and beverage and see novelty; they enjoy the feeling of familiarity. In a GPT it is noticeable that the resemblance in the cultural background is definitely related to common attraction, taste, amplifying familiarity, and social communication between the participants (Brewer and Campbell 1976). This could be identified as the reason for Italian tourists' preference to mix with other participants but not with local people.

The guides also contributed to the explanation in social differences between the three nationalities and highlighted the communication problems caused by language barriers. This issue, sometimes, contributes to loss of emotional well-being (Lynch 1960), and inhibits social interaction (Robinson & Nemetz 1988). Moreover, the model "source of stress" adapted from Bowie and Chang (2005) could be applied to the primary research findings with correlation the factors which lead to dissatisfaction.

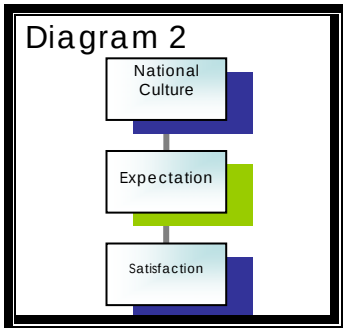
Diagram1 shows the links between the GPT issues raised by the tour guides and the stressed factors showed by Bowie and Chang (2005). In the author's opinion, these factors together lead to strong dissatisfaction.



The results have also shown how the different nationalities react differently to service and experience satisfaction. Based on their primary attraction to different activities, their satisfaction may vary. As indicated by Hughes (1991) satisfaction can be analysed, based on the level of the tourist expectations, and the capability of the environment to meet these expectations. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the inequality between these two elements can lead to dissatisfaction.

Satisfaction also depends on perceptions. The more positive perceptions, the more likely the destination provides tourists with satisfaction and the more likely tourists will visit it again (Crompton 1979). In the case of the GPT, it has been noticed that the tour guide and a good knowledge of the nationality's expectations can change this perception and enhance the focus of the tourist on different aspects of the destination.

In Diagram 2, the links between tourist national culture, expectation and satisfaction are conceptually summarised. The writer believes that national culture predisposes the tourist group to a certain type of expectation and if the destination meets these expectations the tourists will experience satisfaction.



However, the up-selling of the foreign tour agencies has proved to increase the level of expectations and consequently, where the standards were not met, enhance the level of dissatisfaction. Additionally, the guide has been identified as the key player in satisfying customer's expectations and the main service provider. This role gives them the opportunity to "interpret" the product provided and modify the tourists' expectations.

3.1 Issues arising

The tourism industry has the tendency to promote the same product across different markets. In this study it has been brought to the attention of the reader that different nationalities, even within the geographical confines of Western Europe, have diverse needs and expectations. Although the difficulty of market segmentation is known, it is important to focus on consumer needs to reduce the risks of dissatisfaction and increase the possibility of the return visits.

This case study suggests that the Italians prefer a more staged tour, which will involve chain and standardised hotels to maintain the feeling of familiarity that they need. In the case of the Germans and the French a more adventurous tour should be produced giving them more opportunities to experience the host community and local products. Their accommodation should be traditional and typically Scottish and they should be served local food.

3.2 Limitations and future research

Several limitations were encountered when interpreting the results of the study. The analysis of culture through a questionnaire survey can be problematic because of the abstract concept of culture itself. Therefore, the main concept of culture has been synthesised into typical cultural behaviours and tourist activities. This study has adapted a way of measuring cultural differences from other studies to ensure reliability. However, a better method of research may improve the findings and the use of bigger sample size would improve the validity of the results.

Nevertheless, while recognising that broaden aspects of Italian, French and German tourists was not possible because of to the small sample, it is felt that precise differences which could apply to these national cultures did come into view and they have been the focus of this study.

The scope of this research was to show the differences between nationalities and propose a more selective way of marketing, with the assumption that knowing the consumer's needs and expectations would help the tourism industry to produce a product more specific to their clients' needs. The whole research shows that motivations and satisfactions vary according to cultural and national differences.

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Appendix A: Hofstede's Socio-cultural Dimensions

IDV **Individualism** on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word 'collectivism' in this sense has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world.

LTO **Longterm Orientation** versus short-term orientation: this fifth dimension was found in a study among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars It can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'. Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension are found in the teachings of Confucius, the most influential Chinese philosopher who lived around 500 B.C.; however, the dimension also applies to countries without a Confucian heritage.

MAS **Masculinity** versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values.

PDI **Power Distance Index** that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that 'all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others'.

UAI **Uncertainty Avoidance Index** deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Source: http://www.geert-hofstede.com/