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# The Holiday Experience and Personal Values: an Irish Case Study

Sean Ruane

*Shannon College of Hotel Management, seanruane@shannoncollege.com*

Deirdre Quinn

*Dublin Institute of Technology, deirdre.quinn@dit.ie*

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## The Holiday Experience and Personal Values: An Irish Case Study

Authors:

(1) Sean T. Ruane  
Shannon College of Hotel Management,  
Shannon Airport,  
Co.Clare,  
Ireland.  
Tel: +35361-712364  
Fax: +35361-475160  
Email: [seanruane@shannoncollege.com](mailto:seanruane@shannoncollege.com)

(2) Dr Deirdre Quinn  
Dublin Institute of Technology,  
Cathal Brugha Street Campus,  
Dublin 1.  
Ireland  
Tel: +3531-4027584  
Email: [deirdre.quinn@dit.ie](mailto:deirdre.quinn@dit.ie)

### ABSTRACT

*Personal values have been a focus of interest for consumer behaviour researchers for many years due to the belief that values influence a person's lifestyle, and therefore provide a useful explanation for the multitude of interests, outlooks on life and consumption priorities that define a person's consumer behaviour (Muller, 1991). Tourist satisfaction is a positive function of both functional congruity between the expectations of the individual and choice of destination, and their perception about themselves. Linking destination image with the self can help in understanding this behaviour by focusing on the specific attributes of the holiday and how they match the values of the holiday taker (Seehyung & Yooshik, 2003). If self-image is based on perception, are products and services consumed because their associated attributes enhances the consumers self-image? (Todd, 2001). The conclusion of this paper is that personal values do not alter a person's holiday behaviour, but rather transcend the holiday experience.*

**KEYWORDS:** holiday experience, personal values, self-image congruence, lifestyle

**Sean T. Ruane** is a lecturer in culinary and business at the Shannon College of Hotel Management, Ireland and a doctoral student at Dublin Institute of Technology. His research interests are in the areas of consumer behaviour in tourism

**Deirdre Quinn** is a lecturer in the Tourism Department at Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland. Her research interests include tourism consumer behaviour and tourism research methodologies. She has completed significant consultancy assignments with the DIT's Tourism Research Centre.

# **THE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL VALUES: AN IRISH CASE STUDY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Personal values have been a focus of interest for consumer behaviour researchers for many years due to the belief that values influence a person's lifestyle, and therefore provide a useful explanation for the multitude of interests, outlooks on life and consumption priorities that define a person's consumer behaviour (Muller, 1991). Muller contended that when tourists are free to choose, their own personal values determined the choice of holiday destination and type of experience they would look for. Fall (2000) states that the study of personal values or (human) values as she describes them, have been cited as far back as 1931. Values are central to people's lives which support the argument for including them in research that examines human attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, (Kamakura and Noval, 1992). However it is Rokeach (1969) who is attributed with using personal values in a practical sense to explore individual behaviour. His theory on values centers on consistency theory, namely that as individuals, people are driven to reduce inconsistency in their lives in order to maintain cognitive balance. All consistency theory is premised on the belief that people are more comfortable with constancy and what is familiar. Rokeach defines values as "an organised set of preferential standards that are used in making selections of objects and actions, resolving conflicts, invoking social sanctions, and coping with need or claims for social and psychological defences of choice made or proposed" (Rokeach, 1979:20). Allen, Ng, & Wilson (2002) refer to values as being "prescriptive", influencing an individuals preferred outcome in any situation. Rokeach (1973) observed that amongst other functions, values help in evaluating the conduct of others with the self. They also help in maintaining self-esteem. Central to the research in this study is the concept proposed by Rokeach (1973) that when consumers engage in a particular behaviour, this will be a reflection of who they are and their own personal values. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the personal values of Irish holiday makers relative to their choice of holiday?

## **VALUES AND TOURISM BEHAVIOUR**

Values and the behaviour of tourists while on holiday have received very little academic attention to date. Pitts and Woodside (1986) used Rokeach Value scale to examine personal values in order to further understand leisure and holiday decision making behaviour. A mail survey was used  $n=250$  of South Carolina consumers. Five

popular South Carolina tourist destinations were examined in the study. The research showed that personal values were a significant influencer of behaviour when examined against the choice criteria of the participants compared to their actual behaviour. Muller (1991) used the list of values (LOV) to prove that values based research can be used to segment international tourism markets. Arising out of this research three specific segments were identified, fun and enjoyment orientated, security conscious and art, culture and environmentally aware. Muller's research supported his hypothesis that market segmentation can be based around the importance that tourists place on certain criteria relative to their own personal values (Fall, 2000:8) A study carried out in 1994 by Madrigal and Kahle examined whether behaviour while on holiday differed across various segments relative to the personal values of each segment as a humongous group (Madrigal and Kahle, 1994). Their sample consisted of 394 English-speaking tourists who were on holiday in Scandinavia. Similar to Muller's (1991) study a LOV was used to measure the personal values variable, (Fall, 2000). Some researchers have focused on the role of personal values in determining tourist motivations, (Woosnam, McElroy and Winkle, 2009). However, determinants of tourism behaviour cannot be examined without understanding the various psychological benefits for leisure and tourism. Mannel & Ahola (1987) argue that there are two distinct motivational drivers interacting with each other in all tourism related behaviour, (1) the need to escape from the stress and boredom of routine and (2) the desire to seek recreational opportunities. The desire to escape from the mundane experiences of daily life and to become lost in the surreal world of the holiday is the key motivation for all leisure and holiday behaviour as highlighted by Currie & Gagnon (1999). MacCannell (2002) further develops the need to escape by stating that if tourists are perpetually in motion towards something they do not have, researchers should look for clues to this behaviour in the persons psyche. He argues that society has grown up and unburdened itself of all the guilt associated with excess. Today people want to have it all and believe that they are entitled to have a lifestyle similar to that promoted in advertising and commercials. Holiday destination marketers sell a fantasy in which the holiday maker can lose themselves and enjoy a lifestyle, albeit for a brief period that they would like to have. Linking destination image with the self and personal values can help in understanding this behaviour by focusing on the specific attributes of the holiday and how they match the values of the holiday taker (Seehyung & Yooshik, 2003). This concept was first explored by Baloglu & Brinberg in (1997). Their research highlighted that image has two distinct but internalised components, feelings and beliefs. Feelings relate to the emotional response to an image whereas

beliefs focus on the actual knowledge about the image being viewed. Seehyung & Yooshik (2003) therefore argue that using the attributes of a destination image may be of use in differentiating one destination from another. There is a case to argue for including values in such an approach as it is generally acknowledged that the core values of a society define how products are used. Values can be used to develop a more personalised offering due to their innate nature. Past consumer behaviour models fail to accurately explain tourism behaviour because they view all tourists as being part of one homogenous group. Swarbrooke & Horner (2001) state this is clearly not the case.

### **THE SELF, PERSONAL VALUES AND PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES**

Self-image congruence theory is based on the premise that consumers will pick products or services when the various attributes of that product or service matches some aspect of the *self* (Solomon, Bamossy, & Askegaard 2002). If self-image is based on perception, do consumers purchase products and services because they assume the attributes associated with them reflect the self, or does the consumer feel that the attributes reflect the *self* because they have purchased them? (Todd, 2001). Prior to making a purchase, all consumers have certain expectations about the product or service. How these expectations are fulfilled influences the level of satisfaction felt by the consumer at the end of the process. If the outcome is congruent with these expectations then satisfaction is achieved. How materialistic an individual is will also impact on satisfaction levels post purchase (Richins, 1999). Materialistic consumers have greater expectations regarding purchasing a desired product or service and how this may make them feel afterwards, as opposed to low materialistic consumers. Richins (1999) elaborates further by referring to what he defines as the “conspicuous consumption behaviour” which is associated with the perceived status that will be attained by owning a product or buying a service. Simply put, the more expensive a product or service the greater the perceived status. If one can out consume one’s peers it can contribute to a positive self-image. Satisfaction plays a pivotal role in the holiday experience and therefore also relates to self-image. Currie & Gagnon (1999) support the hypothesis that the expectations an individual has related to a destination have a direct influence on overall satisfaction of a holiday. Tourist satisfaction is a positive function of both functional congruity between expectations of the individual and their choice of destination, their perception of themselves and their own personal values.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

A review of the personal values literature suggests that personal values do play a pivotal role in tourism consumer behaviour. Therefore the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the personal values of Irish holiday makers relative to their choice of holiday? To answer this question personal values and tourism as an experience needs to be explored during the three stages of a holiday,

1. the planning stage
2. the holiday experience
3. upon return to everyday life

These objectives are based on staged consumer tourism decision making models, (Mountinho, 1887:17, & Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:54) and on previous research into tourism as an experience, (Mannell & Iso Ahola, 1987; Chon & Olsen, 1991; Currie & Gagnon, 1999, MacCannell, 2002).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Pizam and Mansfeld (2000) state that qualitative inquiry starts with a guiding hypothesis which may lead to a few broad questions that the researcher has in mind, which inform the designing of the research project, (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2000:339). The focus of this study adopts an interpretive social sciences paradigm concerned with exploring how the personal values of individuals can be used to look for possible congruence with the types of holidays they go on and the experiences they have before, during and after the holiday. Data was collected through sympathetic participation (Weber, 1978:4-5) whereby the data is collected from the perspective of the holiday taker and the researcher enters the participants' social world. Social science has a lot to offer researchers who wish to study values, and specifically personal values, as it allows the researcher to explore the embedded meaning of the various personal values of the participants. Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) suggest that consumer behaviour research should focus increased attention on the mental state of the consumer surrounding the act of consumption and in particular on consumer fantasies, feelings and fun. In this endeavour the study focused purely on personal values and the holiday experience. Focus groups and depth interviews were conducted and transcripts of the conversations analysed so that the more subtle contexts could be examined in minute detail. Two focus groups were conducted prior to the depth interviews, with twelve Irish Nationals from the South West of Ireland who were selected using a snowball approach, (Knight, 2002) whereby once a respondent was recruited they were asked if they could think of

anyone else who might be suitable as a possible candidate. The groups comprised eight and four participants respectively with a mixture of male and female and educational backgrounds. All of them were selected based on a detailed screening questionnaire and the shared characteristic of a love of travel, (Wright & Crimp, 2000). A similar approach was used to recruit participants for the in-depth interviews. The participants for the in-depth interviews were totally different and unrelated to those that took part in both focus groups. Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2003) suggest that the depth interview allows the researcher to collect both attitudinal and behavioural data from the participant which spans all time frames, (past, present and future). This technique was applied to this study in the twelve in-depth interviews conducted.

The purpose of these focus groups was to explore the attributes of the holiday experience and Rokeach's (1973) list of terminal and instrumental values. As each stage of the discussion finished the interviewer summarised the key themes before moving on to the next topic. A flip chart was used to write down comments by participants so that further discussion might ensue. Following on from the focus groups the twelve in-depth interviews were conducted to explore in greater depth the themes arising from the focus groups (attributes of a holiday). Each interview lasted on average one hour and was conducted at a location of the participants choosing. Interviews were taped as advocated by Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug (2001) and then transcribed at a later date.

As most previous research on values presented Rokeach's 36 terminal and instrumental values to the participants at the start of the interview, see (Boot, 1981; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994; Madrigal, 1995; Erdem, Oumlil & Tuncalp, 1999; Allen, 2001; Allen, et al. 2002; McGuire, Garvan, Saha & O'Donnell, 2005) this study initially explored the participants ability to come up with some or any of the values by themselves. The purpose of this approach was to explore to what degree were participants aware of their own personal values. Each participant was then given a value survey adopted from McGuire et al. (2005), which they were asked to rank in order of importance in their everyday lives. Unlike the McGuire et al. (2005) survey that removed a certain number of the values because of possible semantic association, this study used all 36 values. Content analysis of the transcripts was used to tease out themes common to all twelve respondents in relation to values and the holiday experience.

## RESULTS

The results of the research will be presented by objective. This is so as to make connections between the findings and the presented literature. However it is necessary to contextualise what the term personal values meant to all the participants of both the two focus groups and the twelve in-depth interviews.

**Figure 1 Respondents response to what the term *Personal Values* means to them**

1. 'It's personal circumstances'	2. '...being treated as a human being'
3. 'It's what means most to you'	4. 'Honesty'
5. 'Respect'	6. 'Committed'
7. 'Friendliness'	8. 'Protective of family'
9. '...you try to blend'	10. 'Proud to be Irish'
11. 'Gregarious, Social'	12. 'Goals in life'
13. 'Security'	14. 'Cleanliness'
15. 'What's familiar'	16. 'Punctuality'
17. 'Excitement'	18. 'Morality'

The most interesting finding from this stage in the research process was the level of difficulty experienced by all participants to conceptualise personal values as can be seen for the totality of personal values suggested by all participants in fig 1. Although there is a certain similarity between the values that the respondents arrived at and those of Rokeach, (1973), *Friendliness*, (true friendship), *Cleanliness*, (Clean), *Excitement*, (An exciting life) and *Protective of family*, (Family Security); it must be remembered that these are the combined list of values arising out of two focus groups and twelve depth interviews. No one respondent or group of respondents ever managed more than one or two of the eighteen instrumental and eighteen terminal values as presented by Rokeach, (1973). It was clear from the findings that none of the respondents fully understood what was meant by the term *personal values* until such time as they were presented with the value survey instrument. What happened then could best be described using the analogy of a *light going on*? Whereas all the respondents fully understood all thirty six values on the value survey instrument, it seemed as if they did not possess the ability to organise their own personal values in such a methodical fashion as presented in the value survey. This is probably the most significant finding from this stage in the research; since most

value based research presents some form of adapted value instrument to the respondents to begin with, instead of getting the respondents to come up with the values themselves.

#### *Influences on personal values*

The findings highlighted two influences in particular that all respondents agreed had an enormous influence on the formation of their personal values, *family* and *religion*. In most cases, respondents selected their father as having the most influence on them and the values they developed growing up, '*...my father, he really didn't say too much but if you were watching him at all, you saw a guy who was just an absolutely amazing man in the way he respected people*'. Family in general was also attributed to having an influence on the personal values of respondents, '*...my family would have been considered to come from a good family background, we were lucky that we were all brought up well*'. The most resounding value passed on from parent to child within the family setting appears to have been *honesty*. '*...I can still hear my mother saying always tell the truth, if you are honest you don't have to worry*'. Or as another respondent put it, '*my values have been drilled into me by my father and mother*'.

When asked to consider what other types of influences would have impacted on the personal values of respondents, *life experience* was suggested. By this respondents meant such things as experiences they may have had growing up outside of their family. '*...maybe experiences you had when you were growing up, I think if you had a bad experience of friendship when growing up it might have put you off having friends*'. Other respondents suggested that sometimes-different experiences while growing up had the effect of making them stand back and re-evaluate their lives, '*these could be either positive or negative life experiences*'.

Travel was attributed with moulding personal values while still young, as some respondents stated, '*it broadens your horizons*', or '*it makes you realise the worlds a bigger place*'. A respondent from one of the two focus groups stated that, '*whether your parents travelled or not and whether they took you with them or not*', could influence one's personal values from an early age. Sometimes travel can have a negative impact on a person values, one respondent stated that he wasn't ever racist before he started travelling, but openly admitted to having become so through his travels to such countries as South Africa and India. This particular respondent spends a lot of time in South Africa and when asked had he become accustomed to thinking about Black people differently, he did admit that this was possibly the case.

This leads on to the final influence on personal values as highlighted through the findings, that of *culture*. All respondents commented on what they described as *Irish* culture. That Irish people are known the world over for being gregarious, fun loving and honest, a theme that was present throughout all the discussion relating to personal values. A lot of respondents attributed this reputation to the fact that Ireland down through its history has been dominated by other cultures, which in the minds of the respondents has made us *unassuming* and *gentle*. As one respondent put it, '*...we could never afford to build a wall around ourselves*'. One respondent's description of Irish people if she was to try and explain what it meant to be Irish to an alien from another planet was, '*we will take you with us, we may get drunk, but we will bring you back safe and we won't try to take over your planet*'.

#### *The planning stage of a holiday and values*

A number of the respondents stated that planning a holiday created a sense of *fantasy* and *escape* from their everyday lives. Others referred to becoming *lost* or feeling as if they were *suspended in time* while planning their holiday. A sense of *anticipation* was also referenced repeatedly by respondents in the focus groups and the in-depth interviews. Some respondents described *feeling giddy* when reviewing brochures or looking up websites as part of the booking process. Depending on their stated personal values and how they ranked them it is clear that personal values were influencing purchasing behaviour for participants. All of the above are connected in one form or another with *Quality of Life Values*, such as *a comfortable life, equality, happiness, freedom, an exciting life and pleasure*. Seven of the twelve participants of the in-depth interviews had ranked responsibility values such as *logical, responsible* and *self-controlled* as being very important or extremely important to them and these were also reflected in the type of holiday they generally booked and what they looked for during the planning stage of their holiday. This was reflected in that they looked for holidays which were family centred and away from night clubs that might attract boisterous behaviour and is representative of the importance of being *self-controlled* while on holiday linking in with Rokeach's responsibility values of *logical, responsible* and *self-controlled*.

#### *The holiday experience and values*

Most of the respondent's stated that having a plan of what to do while on holiday was very important which can be attributed to stated levels of importance rated by respondents for *achievement* and *recognition* values with nine out of the 12 in-depth interview respondents rating a *sense of accomplishment* as being very important to

them while on holiday. This sense of accomplishment was manifested in the desire to maximise the experience and getting to do as much as possible and see and experience as much as possible while on holiday. Respondents *described getting in the holiday mood* and that the holiday started for some at the airport, whereas for others it didn't start until they arrived at their destination. Recent changes in security at airports was cited as adding an extra layer of stress to going on holiday and how for some respondents it meant that they didn't really begin to relax until they were at their final holiday destination. These findings are connected with *peace values* as categorised by Rokeach. Values such as *national security* were rated as extremely important by three of the twelve in-depth interview respondents. Other respondents described *feeling exotic* while on holiday which can be associated with the desire for an *exciting life* and Rokeach's *quality of life values*. Ten out of the twelve respondents from the in-depth interviews rated *an exciting life* as very important to them and going on holiday allowed them to transcend the boredom of everyday life and live a more desired life, a more exciting life albeit for only two weeks of their holiday. One respondent likes diving while on holiday, he described it as *'like being in another world, you are totally removed from the everyday pressures of life'*. Having a *comfortable life* also rated highly in connection with *quality of life values* with seven of the twelve respondents from the in-depth interviews stating that they felt pampered while on holiday. Eight of the twelve stated that they enjoyed a sense of *freedom* while on holiday; they felt free to indulge themselves in pastimes and activities without feeling guilty because they were on holiday. One respondent stated a preference for *'being in water rather than on land, it is complete freedom...we are constantly surrounded by people and things, it's the complete freedom of being alone'*. This could be eating out every night for two weeks, shopping, or taking part in activities such as water sports or day trips that they would not get to experience in their everyday lives back home or be able to justify spending money on. Fig 2 on the next page summarises the feelings associated with being on holiday as described by respondents from both the focus groups and the in-depth interviews.

**Fig 2 Recurring Themes Describing the Holiday Experience**

<b>Attributes of the holiday:</b>	<i>'...just having loads of things to do'</i> <i>'...meeting people from different cultures'</i> <i>'...sense of adventure'</i> <i>'...guaranteed sunshine, a nice beach'</i> <i>'...good food, nice hotel, value for money'</i>
<b>Fantasy:</b>	<i>'...you're booking a place and you don't really know what it is like'</i> <i>'...it would just blow my mind'</i> <i>'...500 or 600 years ago people were doing exactly the same thing as me...'</i>
<b>Personal comfort zone:</b>	<i>'France was great, once you got there it was safe'</i> <i>'you didn't realise you were going to be hassled- all they wanted was your money'</i> <i>' I have never really been anywhere where I couldn't speak some of the language'</i>
<b>Maximising the Experience:</b>	<i>'...the holiday starts when you get there'</i> <i>'...not getting any nasty surprise when you get there'</i> <i>'...even if it was just to jump in for a swim, I would want to start making things happen'</i>
<b>Not wanting it to end:</b>	<i>'...coming home is like a reality check'</i> <i>'...spending the last of the holiday money at home'</i> <i>'...you have photographs, it keeps it in your head'</i>

*Returning to everyday life and values*

On returning home respondents cited the feeling of *not wanting it (the holiday) to end*. In some cases the feeling was so intense that respondents described feeling

*sick to their stomachs* at the thought of having to come home. Anxiety levels increased for some respondents in anticipating what *might be waiting back home*, such as bills to be paid, and the stresses of everyday life. Having that *Glenroe*<sup>1</sup> feeling was described by all respondents in an Irish context in the days leading up to the end of their holiday. This feeling is reflective of a sense of returning to everyday life and that their desired lifestyle was over and it was back to reality.

Tying in with the concept of desiring a different lifestyle to the one experienced on a daily basis, that of stress and all that goes with working, most respondents became quite animated when exploring what their ideal lifestyle would be. Interestingly it wasn't to have a high flying lifestyle that appealed to them, in a lot of cases it was a desire for a more simple lifestyle, free from stress, the idea of being cut off, lost on some deserted island, *'I would love a little house in France, growing organic vegetables with my animals running around me, it would be so easy'*. For a lot of respondents, going on holiday is equated with not just getting physically away, *'you actually have to get away, out of the country'*, but getting away mentally as well. What appears to contribute to this concept of getting away mentally revolves around breaking away from the daily routine, *'I think you try and forget about what you have left behind and you just enjoy it, it is like you just switch off completely'*, and some respondents stated that for them they wouldn't necessarily have to leave Ireland to achieve this, once they were, *'doing something completely different from what you normally do'*. Another contributing factor for feeling cut off was the idea of not knowing anyone, and more importantly, no body knowing the respondent, the association here was one of being free, *'there is a feeling of freedom, you are not going through your normal routine'*. One respondent stated that going away affects her physiologically, she suffers from hyper-tension (high blood pressure) and she has to take medication to regulate it, but she has observed that when she is on holiday she stops taking her medication and yet her blood pressure is lower than what it would be at home while taking her medication. Technology has made it harder for people to feel cut off or removed from their daily lives, the mobile phone means that you are now contactable where ever you go, some respondents chose to deal with this head on by electing to turn off their mobiles while on holiday, *'on our trip to*

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<sup>1</sup> Glenroe was a drama shown on Irish National Television in the 1980's at 8.00pm on a Sunday night in winter time and respondents citing having that Glenroe feeling before returning from holiday as being similar to the feeling of watching the drama on a Sunday night and knowing the weekend was over and they were going back to work the next day.

*France, both of us threw them in the suitcase and the batteries went dead, and both of us commented what a great feeling that was'.*

## **IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Mannell & Iso Ahola (1987) has been among the strongest proponents of the theory that tourism is essentially an experience based activity. The findings from this study support the theory that the experience of a holiday can be classified as taking place before, during and after the holiday has been consumed, (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2003; Le Bel & Dubé, 1998). The study also supported the hypothesis put forward by Currie and Gagnon (1999) that tourism as an experience involves the tourist crossing the limen and entering what they call the liminoidal state where they can enjoy a feeling of being liberated from all their worries. However, this is dependent on certain expectations being realised by the tourist. As most of these expectations are formed during the anticipation phase as described by Swarbrooke & Horner (2003) the findings of this study highlight that fantasy plays an important role in contributing to the formation of expectations during the planning or anticipation phase as support by the participants' comments, *'...you are transposing yourself to the destination...in your head you are almost there...'* Once inside the liminoidal state the tourist's behaviour changes from that of their home environment, (Currie & Gagnon, 1999: 119). Participants' expressed a sense of freedom, *'it is like being in another world...'*, *'you are totally removed from the everyday pressures of life...'*, *'nobody knows you, and you feel way more comfortable'*. Closely linked with being inside the liminoidal state is the concept of prescriptions as highlighted by Le Bel & Dubé (1998). Prescriptions refer to either approval or prohibition of behaviour. Tourists will allow themselves to indulge in behaviours purely because they are at leisure or on holidays and this theory was supported by the findings from this study. Participants' spoke about *'allowing themselves to have a beer in the middle of the day and not feel guilty because they were on holidays'*.

Security proved to be a significant issue as highlighted by the findings and collaborated by the literature. The planning stage of the holiday held strong associations with security from the point of view of ensuring that there were no surprises or unforeseen circumstance. This appears to have a direct link with Maslow's (1954) need for safety. Safety also manifested itself in the form that the act of booking a holiday became a safety net. Once the holiday was booked the participant knew he/she was going to get away, they were going to escape. Mazanec, Zins, & Dolimar (1998) refer to what they call a vacation lifestyle. They

describe it as a temporary phenomenon into which people escape which reflects the need to escape by all the participants' from this study.

Consumer literature has long supported the view that people attach nostalgic meanings to their possessions, and this view was supported by this study with participants forming what Engel, Blackwell & Minard (1995) describe as nostalgic benchmarks of a different time with trips they had taken, '*...before I went anywhere I was the quietest person you could even meet, and now that I have travelled and seen some of the world, it gives you confidence*'. For this participant the nostalgia associated with travel centres around coming of age, of growing up. Le Bel & Dubé (1998) noted that changes in the posture and cadence of participants voices when reliving memories of past tourism experiences indicated a transition to a deeper recollection of detail and a more vivid account of the events surrounding the memory, a phenomenon also observed in this study.

The foundation of all consumer behaviour according to Welk (1997) is the desire to satisfy a need or want and is therefore directly linked to achieving happiness, satisfaction or at least satiation of the desire. All of the participants from this study cited a need to get away and forget about everything. Intermingled with desire is the sense of longing, which can only be quelled by answering the desire, but Belk et al. (2003) argue that this sense of longing only begins again with the formation of a new desire, or in the case of this study a longing to go away again. Wanting to return to the same destination indicates a desire to relive the experience all over again, Belk et al. (2003).

With regards to personal values and what may influence them, the study highlighted two particular sources of influence, that of family and religion. The findings also support a theory put forward by Rokeach (1973) that over the life of an individual, outside influences also impact upon their value set, '*maybe experiences you had when you were growing up*'. Previous work on values, Allen (2001) had indicated values were semantically related such as the value of achievement being linked with the value of accomplishment. However these could have different meanings for participants which were reflected in this study. Most of the participants from this study perceived the value *a comfortable life* to mean having plenty of money.

As the literature suggests values play an important role in defining a person's self-image. The findings support this view with all of the participants agreeing that their completed value survey defined them as individuals, '*...that is me*'. When considering

values as being part of a total belief system that is interconnected, the findings from this study would support the theory put forward by Solomon et al. (1999) that changes made to any part of an individual's total beliefs should affect other parts of the same belief system. Participants from this study spoke about their values changing as they progressed through life and as a result their behaviour changed. One participant, who purported to be quite shy before he started travelling, has in recent years changed and become more assertive and outgoing, The most interesting finding from this study was the connection between values and the travel behaviour of the participants. The need for an exciting life as a motivator for travel was recorded by all participants. All of the participants were gregarious and outgoing which supported the view put forward by Madrigal (1995) that internally motivated values such as excitement are positively connected with outgoing people or as Maslow (1954) describes them, '*self-actualisers*'. Participants from this study reported feeling '*giddy*' with excitement prior to going away on a trip. Others stated that the idea of getting away just '*blew their mind*'.

Rokeach (1973) argues that if an individual engages in a specific behaviour it should reflect their values. The findings from this study would suggest a strong connection between the personal values of the participant and their holiday behaviour. None of them changed dramatically and engaged in unusual or out of character behaviour while on holiday, rather they absorbed themselves in behaviour that they didn't get an opportunity to experience at home, such as eating out every night, shopping or partaking in water sports. The behaviour of participants while on holiday or their own self-image was not something they had given a great thought to prior to participating in this study. In fact self-image as a concept appeared to be a sensitive subject for most of them and not something they were particularly aware of which supports the view put forward by Todd (2001) that self-image is subliminal and not something that individuals are consciously aware of.

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