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**POPULAR CULTURE AS A POWERFUL DESTINATION  
MARKETING TOOL: AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY**

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# THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the marketing possibilities of popular culture tourism (PCT). There is promise in developing alternative forms of cultural communication and cultural representation in tourism. Specifically, PCT is explored as a way to enhance and reshape the current approach to destination promotion in Australia.

Through the arrival of new and diversified cultural experiences, Australia can improve the existing tourism portfolio. Although there have been many studies which describe the marketing practice of using elements of popular culture in destination promotion, few, if any, effectively address the issue of usability of such methods in Australia.

To understand the nature of the challenge, it is important to acknowledge the diversity inherent within popular culture, as well as the huge diversity of individual experiences and responses to such cultural practices. This work is concerned with the richness of individual experience, the multi-form qualities of interpersonal encounters with popular culture in Australia.

This thesis uses pragmatism as the main interpretive framework, with its powerful ability to disambiguate and clarify the research questions. To study the phenomenon the researcher uses a combination of three research methods: survey research, descriptive study, and exploratory study. Each study contributes a unique perspective to the literature on popular culture tourism. To answer the research questions considerable data comprising 253 detailed questionnaires, 20 unstructured interviews, 648 blogs and social media posts, and marketing materials of over 50 DMOs were collected and analysed. The thesis has six chapters in total.

The first chapter introduces the concept of PCT. It discusses how popular media and tourism, and thoughtful engagement of these forces, have created a phenomenon with great potential and strong commercial and popular impact. PCT is an umbrella term comprising several fields, such as film-induced, literary, and music tourism, as well as special events, and technology tourism, among others. The chapter argues that PCT can encourage youth tourism and help accommodate the needs of tourists coming from diverse households and families (multi-generational groups, singles, 'second' families). The chapter highlights the need to diversify the traditional tourism product by embracing specialty markets.

The second chapter outlines the theoretical framework, rationale, and conceptual structure for the materials to follow. The third chapter introduces Study 1. The first study uses survey data to uncover behaviour patterns and preferences of local popular culture tourists. It compares the events and locations in the context of PCT, and works with important cues (e.g., associations and preferences) and key features (e.g., consumption rates and travel intentions) by matching them with several hypotheses related to the consumption of popular culture.

In Chapter 4, the scope of the investigation widens to include the international perspective. Study 2 is concerned with qualitative aspects of the cultural economy, namely the subjective experiences and expectation of past, existing and potential visitors. This study employs social listening and content analysis to observe and analyse online discussions related to popular culture events and locations in Australia. The captured experiences (impressions, feelings, thoughts, and observations) helped: (1) identify how Australia is being represented in popular culture discourse; (2) identify

how the particular imagery of local popular culture commodities can influence the Australian tourism development strategy.

The last study, Chapter 5, is concerned with practical applications. It offers a rigorous analysis of the marketing strategies that utilise popular culture in destination promotion. It discusses how these integrations are carried out by the DMOs in real-world practices. The chapter identifies seven advanced destination marketing tactics as efficient methods that can be used for tourism promotion in Australia. It offers recommendations and comments on the use of PCT in national tourism campaigns.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the discussion of findings, implications, and limitations. The key findings contribute to the academic literature on cultural tourism. This thesis investigates the possibilities of using location-specific popular culture tools in ‘narrative’ marketing campaigns. The work identifies different PCT activities and their impacts on destination's image and tourists’ experiences. The results and work also emerge as practical solutions for implementation of PCT tools in destination promotion for Australia.

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# Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

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## **1.1 The service sector as Australia's road to economic growth**

The economic analysis performed by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) showed a continued fall in the value of resource exports for two consecutive years: 2015-2016 (Thirlwell, 2017). In the wake of a diminishing contribution to Australia's national income by primary commodity exports, such as iron ore, coal and oil, a need emerges to rebalance the economy with new sources of growth and productivity. Fortunately, according to the same Austrade report, the decline was partially offset by another strong performance – the services exports.

The Australia's trade in services recorded strong growth in 2015-16, with tourism accounting for half of all services exports (Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, 2017). The other productive export services include education, and telecommunications and related entertainment (e.g., TV shows, movies, and digital art). In the view that the economic strength of the service sector will continue to drive strong demand, this study proposes to unite two influential sectors of the service industry – tourism and telecommunications and related entertainment – to create a powerful destination marketing tool. This tool can help Australia's service industry build resilience and productivity, and develop strong and efficient digital marketing capability to remain competitive in the global market.

The telecommunications and entertainment media, from now on popular media, is a non-exhaustive resource that can generate billions in sales and is designed to reach large audiences. It has a far-reaching impact that extends beyond the boundaries of its designated area of influence. According to Tripadvisor's TripBarometer (2016), a global study with 34,026 participants, more than 30% of the travelers' destination choices are influenced by popular media. The popular media and tourism have a long-running history of thoughtfully

engaging with one another for promotional reasons. The changes associated with the expansion of popular media have left its mark on tourism, shaping opinions and the destination identity (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005; Reijnders, 2016; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

## **1.2 Youth, leisure and popular culture**

According to the Tourism Australia's official statistics, young adults are gaining numbers in terms of their representation within international (incoming) tourist traffic. With regards to Australian travel market, for the year ending June 2016 "youth arrivals increased by 10 per cent to 2.0 million, while youth visitor spend reached \$17 billion, up 14 per cent for the same period" (Tourism Australia's International Visitor Survey, 2016). Tourism Australia defines the youth segment as males and females, aged between 15 and 29 years. According to Tourism Australia, the youth market contributes 25% of all visitor arrivals to Australia and 44 per cent of all visitor spend. The youth leisure segment spends more than many other leisure travel segments in Australia mainly due to higher than average length of stay and propensity to combine work, visiting friends and family, and leisure experiences. The renewed focus on the youth market expressed by the Australian tourism authorities greatly influenced the topic choice for this thesis.

The rise of youth leisure is not a new phenomenon and has been around for some time (Boukas, 2012; Dallari & Mariotti, 2016; Ragsdale, Difranceisco, & Pinkerton, 2006). With the whole field undergoing growth and change, new categories of tourists emerge. According to the UNWTO's Asia-Pacific Newsletter (2012), as households and families become more diverse – more multi-generational, more singles, more 'second' families – all businesses will have to adapt to respond accordingly to this diversity.

*Marketing and communications will have to address new needs and wants that result from these emerging family and household structures... For example, communications will have to demonstrate an understanding of the diverse needs of those travelling in multi-generation parties. [The older tourists (55+)] will have a 'younger' outlook than previous generations of older tourists and may well be more adventurous wanting to try new things (UNWTO's Asia-Pacific Newsletter, 2012).*

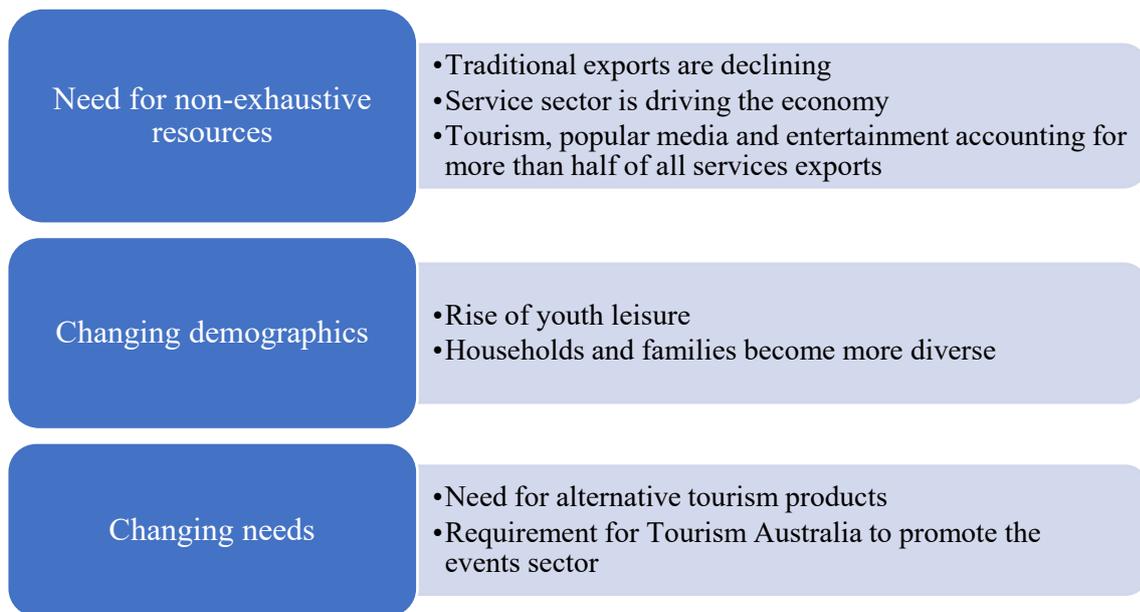
If marketing and communications will have to adjust to new demographic and economic realities, so must tourism. The future of global tourism, explains Nurse (2001), is in the diversification of the traditional tourism product away from mass tourism toward specialty markets. An introduction of alternative tourism products would be an essential step in this direction. When it comes to alternative tourism, considering the realities of Australian travel market which is currently experiencing growth of the youth leisure segment, what alternative path would be most accommodating to the customers?

The TripBarometer (2016) study shows that young adults are most likely to be influenced by popular media when making travel decisions. It is also believed that among the vast audiences of the popular media, young adults happen to be among the top consumers of popular culture (Ingman, 2016; Hintz, Basu, & Broad, 2013; Twenge, 2014). Moreover, popular culture tends to be more accommodating and flexible in dealing with tourists of different ages (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Gottdiener, 2000; McRobbie, 2004; Salkowitz, 2012; Strinati, 2004).

Therefore, it shows capability for accommodation the demographic changes among tourist groups – the multi-generational groups, singles, and 'second' families. It is also important to mention, that the Tourism Australia Act 2004 outlined the requirement for Tourism Australia to place significant efforts into promoting the events sector. This recommendation, explains Stokes (2008), must create a foundation to raise awareness and improve understanding of the

events sector in Australia. With "significant public expenditure injected to promote events" (Stokes, 2008, p. 253), there is an expectation that current tourism strategies utilise events in its promotion material.

The Figure 1.1 sums up and ties together the above-mentioned statements.



**Figure 1.1 Changing needs of the Australian economy**

Despite the many needs, there is a solution that can satisfy the requirements outlined in Figure 1.1. This work offers to consider popular culture tourism (PCT) as an alternative destination development product.

Inexorably appealing to large numbers of people, popular culture is an important part of the entertainment industry, as well as a unique destination marketing tool (Beeton, 2010; Cho, 2011; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Croy, 2010; Fawcett & Cormack, 2001; Gunelius, 2008; Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen, 2013). Its potential to attract vast numbers of visitors has been reported in many influential studies (Reijnders, 2010, 2011, 2016; Roesch, 2010; Salkowitz, 2012; Smith, 2003). Popular culture is actively utilised by destination marketing

organizations (DMOs) as well as tourism businesses (Beeton, 2016; Gibson & Connell, 2003; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). It has proven to be an effective way of reaching out to millions due to its very nature and characteristics.

There can be two ways of approaching popular culture in the context of tourism: 1) a holistic approach – where PCT is explored as a comprehensive multi-category method for destination development.; or 2) hybrid demand-based approach – where among the variety of popular culture activities only two or more (e.g., films and art, or fashion, cosplay and food) participate in the destination development strategies. In the latter approach, the activities are decided after analysing how each individually affects the market. There are very few studies that approach PCT in such a way. Few, if any, investigate popular culture and its many constituent parts, and try to analyse how they compete, interact or reinforce one another. The complexity of these relationships is partially explored in this work. It is necessary to have a deeper understanding of popular culture to discern the potential behind this diverse and powerful tool.

When deciding the thesis title, it was crucial to choose the right words. The phrasings such as “popular culture as business strategy” or “popular culture as a success formula” were deliberately avoided. Instead, the focus was on the word “tool”. Ultimately, it is a tool, not a panacea for current industry challenges. It is important to distinguish between tools and solutions, because no matter how well the tool is designed, no matter what great results it helped achieve in the past, it remains only a tool. The quality of the results a marketing tool helps to procure depends not only on what strategy is being used, but also on how the strategy is being applied (Tsotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). This work explores the different aspects of popular culture that are successfully employed by tourism businesses and DMOs across the

world. It aims to find the best application of PCT to further boost the tourism attractiveness of Australia.

### **1.3 What is popular culture?**

The difficulties with developing a nonbiased definition of popular culture are legendary in academia (Fedorak, 2018). It is a divergent member of the ‘culture’ family: contradictory and often inconsistent. It is a term that is hard to explain and a subject that is hard to teach. Carla Freccero described her experience teaching popular culture by noting her students' reaction. For them "popular culture was a domain of degraded culture" (Freccero, 1999, p.1). Yet this, explains Freccero, provided her with the ideal opportunity to argue the case for the importance of popular culture. It was the “contradictoriness”, the “potential progressive productivity”, the liberalism, and the hidden complexity that finally drew in the students.

Much of what follows is a summary of the different ways in which popular culture has been defined and analysed. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to introduce an all-encompassing analysis of popular culture. Instead, the focus is on formulating the best explanations possible by drawing from three different theoretical perspectives: 1) previous conceptual and empirical research, 2) non-academic information resources, and 3) the researcher’s subjective interpretations. The popular culture is one of those cases, where ‘subjective experience’ variable plays a big role in the investigation of the phenomenon. In some extreme cases, it may hold true that the explanation behind the nature of popular culture depends solely on a subjective perception of a person (or group of persons) at a particular time and place. This may seem counter-intuitive, as the ‘popular’ in popular culture implies a unified comprehensible set of ideas universally accepted by many people. In approaching popular culture, its polycultural nature should lack complexity: (a) must be altogether

apparent and comprehensible, and (b) be amenable to easy interpretation and analysis.

Unfortunately, it is not the case. As Bennett (1980) points out, “the concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys” (p. 18).

Defining popular culture is an ambitious agenda, and a certain hesitation in laying out the ideas is only natural. From linguistic perspective, there may be two approaches to explaining the term popular culture. One, synchronic approach, considers the term at this particular moment in time – the present – without taking its history into account. The other, a diachronic approach, considers the development and evolution of the term through history. Given the complexity of the task, it has been decided to start with the basics, such as providing general description and historical background; followed by synchronic semantics, cultural role and public perception.

One of the distinctive features of popular culture is the dynamic diversity. The dynamism is driven by the advancement of new technology, while its diversity lies within the deeper nature of the phenomenon. It is quite challenging to explain popular culture without fragmenting it, and most attempts to subsume it under one category proved futile (Bennett, 1980; Malinowska & Lebek, 2016; Storey, 1994, 2012). It is in fact a very broad conceptual category. Many people intuitively understand what popular culture means, yet there is no one widely accepted definition. The multifaceted nature of popular culture raises more questions than it answers. Therefore, the aim of this section is to map out the general conceptual landscape of popular culture. As Storey (2009) reflects, "to study popular culture we must first confront the difficulty posed by the term itself" (p. 1).

Before making any attempts to define popular culture, it seems necessary to first examine the term 'culture'. As with popular culture, the term culture has been the subject of numerous elaborate and abstract definitions. One of the earliest definitions of culture, and one still used today, was offered by British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor. Sir Edward Tylor (1871) offered a broad definition, stating that culture in its wide ethnographic sense is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1). In the 20th century American anthropologist Ruth Benedict offered a more succinct definition by characterising culture as a set of ideas and standards that people have in common (Benedict & In Mead, 1959). Years went by and the term culture evolved into something bigger than a set of standards, customs and beliefs. It added symbolism to its pool of meaning. An explanation provided by Geertz (1973) described culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (p. 89). This explanation takes us a step closer to the modern interpretation of the term. According to Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (1999), the contemporary definitions of culture commonly mention shared values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, norms, material objects, and symbolic resources. In their work they propose a simplified explanation of culture, stating that culture is the "rules for living and functioning in society" (p. 10).

The culture is too dynamic to be contained within the borders of a single explanation. The same process of constant change is seen in the popular culture theories. After all, and this may seem like stating the obvious, popular culture is part of culture, thus allowing for the same forces to shape its structure and form.

As with culture, the term popular culture is not static. It evolves and changes as centuries go by, absorbing new meanings and discarding old ones. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the debate persists even today as to the exact meaning of this term. No matter what source is used, a dictionary or an academic work, neither can offer a uniform explanation. That does not mean that the definition does not exist. It simply means there is more than one to choose from.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century dictionary, for example, an old edition of Oxford English Dictionary, popular culture is defined as “the cultural traditions of the ordinary people of a particular community” (Smith, 2009, p. 627). A 21<sup>st</sup> century dictionary, such as Collins English Dictionary (the web version created in 2011 is available online) defines popular culture as “the general culture of a society, including ideas, music, books, and the mass media, as opposed to high culture”. These two definitions, when compared, reveal an interesting fact: popular culture, quite literally, is capable of growth. From cultural traditions of “a particular community”, popular culture transformed into the “general culture of a society”. These examples illustrate how in the course of time popular culture can broaden its influence and stretch beyond the extent of a ‘particular’ community. This gradual yet constant transformation persists probably owing to the fact that social borders become more blurred the further we enter into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and technologies provide easier access to the many cultural resources.

The changes in the definition of popular culture take place not only due to the social evolution of cultures and societies over periods of time. The differences in the interpretation of popular culture occur in coexisting contemporary sources as well. For example, the online Urban Dictionary [UrbanDictionary.com](http://UrbanDictionary.com) defines popular culture as "a widely accepted group of practices or customs" (n.d.). While as the online dictionary [Oxforddictionaries.com](http://Oxforddictionaries.com), developed by the University of Oxford, defines popular culture as a modern culture transmitted via mass

media and aimed particularly at younger people. It is interesting to note that both contemporary definitions do not differentiate between social classes.

The same tendency pertains in academic texts. Depending on the study, the definition varies. In the late 18th and early 19th century in some intellectual circles popular culture has been described as a quasi-mythical folk culture (Storey, 2009). Yet in the capitalist societies there is no so-called authentic folk culture against which to measure the 'inauthenticity' of mass culture (Fiske, 1989). Instead, as some studies suggest, in capitalist societies popular culture is viewed as part of the 'commodity fetishism'. For example, Adorno (1991) uses Marx's theory of commodity fetishism to understand popular culture. For Adorno and the Frankfurt School, commodity fetishism is the basis of the theory on how different cultural forms can secure the domination of capitalism (Strinati, 2004). Naturally, this line of thinking inspired disagreement. In his work Fiske (1989) offers a contrasting perspective. He states: "Popular culture is not consumption, it is culture – the active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system" (p. 23). He further elaborates by saying that "All the culture industries can do is produce a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing process of producing their popular culture" (1989, p. 24). This means that popular culture is far more complex than a mass consumption of a cultural resource. It is an elaborate process of selection and rejection of cultural practices.

There many other definitions of popular culture. For example, popular culture can be seen as a struggle between the subordinate groups and the forces of dominant groups (Gramsci, 2009; Bennett, 2009). There are theories that argue that popular culture is a competitive site for political constructions of 'the people' and their relation to the power bloc (Hall, 2009). These theories describe popular culture as an extremely political concept. Though many definitions

carry political connotations, there are some that assume a more abstract form. For example, De Certeau (1984) defined popular culture as the art of making do with what the system provides. Fiske (2010) wrote that it is the art of being in between. Storey (2009) explained popular culture as an empty conceptual category that can be filled in a wide variety of ways.

The battle of opinions continues as researchers regard the definitions provided as too narrow, or too obscure, or too wordy (Burke, 2009). However, there exists a congruity between definitions. What many academic works on popular culture have in common is the fact that it is mostly defined, implicitly or explicitly, in contrast to or as a product of other conceptual categories, such as folk culture, mass culture, high culture, dominant culture, low culture.

There is a group of definitions that characterise popular culture as an inferior culture. They do so by contrasting it with the culture of the elite. Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci described popular culture as an unofficial culture of the non-elite, the subordinate classes (Burke, 1983, p. xi). This implies that popular culture is related to the lower class and is inferior. As some sociologists say, "the culture that is left over after we have decided what is high culture" (Storey, 1998, pp. 7–8). Which leaves us with yet another definition of popular culture as the culture that is not included into high culture. Storey (2009) explains that popular culture cannot be part of high culture, because to be high culture it has to be difficult. "Being difficult... ensures its exclusive status as high culture" (Storey, 2009, p. 6).

This leads us to a group of definitions that look upon popular culture as mass culture. For example, Dwight Macdonald, a social critic and philosopher, divides Western culture into two cultures: the traditional kind, known as high culture, and the mass culture – a "manufactured wholesale for the market" (Guins & Cruz, 2005, p. 39). In his work *A Theory of Mass Culture*,

he advocates that the "mass culture has developed new media of its own, into which the serious artist rarely ventures: radio, the movies, comic books, detective stories, science-fiction, television" (Guins & Cruz, 2005, p. 39).

As Storey (2009) reflects, another way to look at the definition is to say that popular culture is a temporary mass-produced commercial culture with a short life-span. This means that things considered to be part of popular culture remain so for only a limited time and then fall into oblivion. As with previous cases, this definition attracted a lot of criticism. The critics would point out that William Shakespeare is now seen as the epitome of high culture, yet as late as the 19th century his work was very much a part of popular theatre (Storey, 2009). A more contemporary example is the works of an American director, producer and screenwriter Martin Scorsese. Together with the so-called "movie brats" (Spielberg, Lucas, Coppola, and De Palma) he helped the "film noir" develop into a serious genre, though before the 70s it was often simply referred to as 'melodramas' (Bould, 2005). What started as popular cinema is now the preserve of academics and film makers (Storey, 2012).

Another concept describes popular culture as a postmodern culture that no longer recognises the distinction between high and popular culture (Sontag, 1966, p. 302). It shows the blurring of the distinction between 'authentic' and 'commercial' culture (McRobbie, 1996). Ultimately, it can be concluded that popular culture in its contemporary form is less about social stratification than it used to be in the 20th century. As Sontag (1966) notes, the distinction between high and low culture seems less and less meaningful. The social development is a constant exchange between many layers of cultural soil. What could be considered a work of high culture can become popular, and what is popular can appeal to 'elites', since social tastes are not static.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the many definitions, is the fact that popular culture is a culture that emerged following industrialisation and urbanisation. It is a phenomenon that is now strengthening its positions due to globalization. As Williams (2009) points out, the “culture of a society will always tend to correspond to its contemporary system of interests and values” (p. 68). Therefore, as society develops, so does popular culture.

Perhaps, the controversy surrounding popular culture can never be resolved, for there is no single or right answer. Maybe Storey (2009) is right and there is no simple explanation. One must note that it is not enough to state that popular culture is simply a culture that is widely favoured by many people, because this naturally brings up a new issue: how many supporters does a phenomenon require to be considered popular? Pérez (2014) states that attempting to establish these numbers is simply unpractical. He further concludes that unless the researchers agree on a figure, using the ‘widely favoured’ characteristic is almost useless in the conceptual definition of popular culture. Therefore, as Storey (2009) concludes, a quantitative index is not enough to provide an adequate definition of popular culture.

So far, the discussion has touched upon the findings drawn from many academic sources. Yet those who study popular culture do not necessarily come from an academic background. The non-academic communities and groups that hold discussions about the nature of popular culture consist of people with different levels of education, experience and social circumstances. What unites these popular culture enthusiasts is a true fascination with popular culture phenomenon. They follow the cultural trends, participate in discussions, voice their opinions and deal with criticism just like any other researcher with an academic background. The Internet provides them with necessary tools to explore the phenomenon and share their findings with other people. A good example would be Gary West.

Gary West is a popular culture enthusiast who has been blogging about popular culture since 1999. According to his website, Mrpopculture.com, Mr. West managed to collect a “50,000-page tribute to modern pop culture” (“Contact Mr PopCulture” by Gary West, n.d.). Its main attribute is a timeline diary that features some thousands of pages of text and over 1,000 videos dedicated solely to popular culture. Mr. West gives the following explanation of popular culture:

*You know it when you come to the Internet, listen to music, watch television, app-gaming or go to a movie, concert or stage show. You know the artists, the actors and actresses, sports personalities and the games they play. Today, anything with a buzz is deemed pop culture. The book definition says pop culture is a collection of thoughts, ideas, attitudes, perspectives, images (you name it) preferred by the mainstream population. A sort of common denominator (“What Is Pop Culture, You Ask?” by Gary West, n.d.)*

This intuitive definition is made up of natural observations: you know it when you see it. Words such as ‘common denominator’ and ‘buzz’ indicate the highly exposed nature and recognisability of popular culture. Another liberal definition states: "Pop, aka, ‘Popular’ Culture is where the ‘Cool’ stuff ends up when it gets old" (Delano, 2017).

While reviewing the non-academic sources of popular culture knowledge, one theme seemed to underlie the varied comments – the bidirectional character of popular culture. On one hand, popular culture is strongly associated with works of creative fiction (e.g., superhero characters, various cinematic universes, literary characters); on the other hand, popular culture celebrates the commonplace objects and people of everyday life (Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2 Fiction and mundane in popular culture**

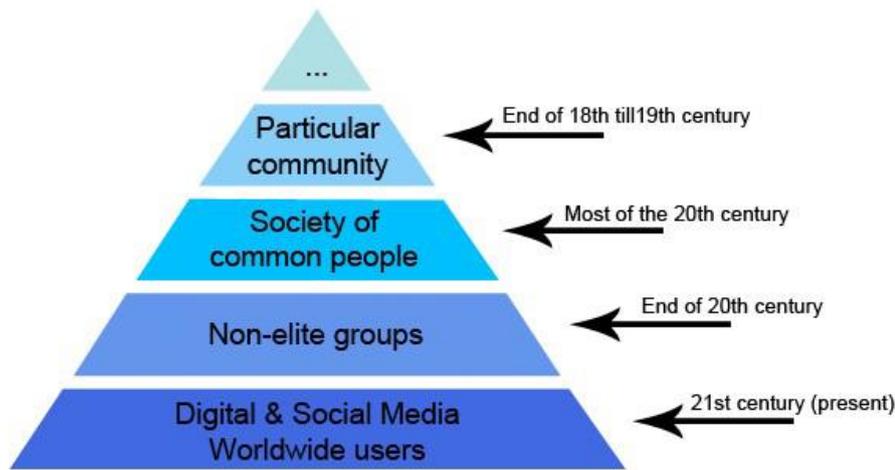
Despite the somewhat expected antagonism between the realms of fiction and mundane, they exist congruously in popular culture. In a way, popular culture is as much about the can of soda as it is about being a Batman.

Again, one must accept defeat and agree that the web sources cannot provide a simple definition of popular culture. However, the investigative process helped capture some general features of popular culture. In a very broad sense, popular culture can be described as:

- 1) a product of mass culture that attracts ubiquitous attention,
- 2) something we see, hear, wear, eat and/or buy on virtually a daily basis, and
- 3) a phenomenon as indefinite as anything related to human behaviour.

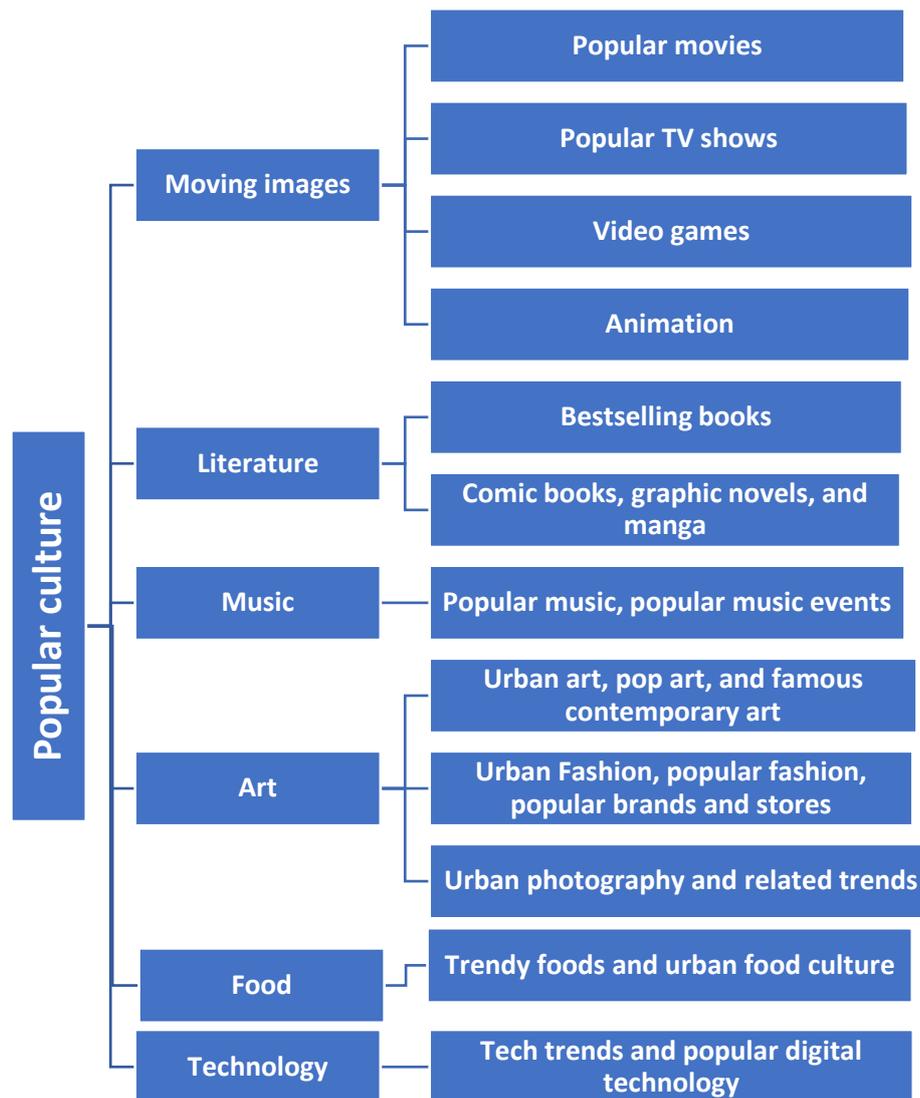
At this point it is sensible to stop any further attempts to finding the perfect definition, as no one definition of popular culture seems able to withstand the critique without inciting new criticism. Instead, all the definitions should be regarded as being complementary rather than in

conflict with each other, for every explanation carries a truth applicable to that present time and the people involved (Figure 1.3).



**Figure 1.3 Popular culture evolution**

To avoid being trapped in an endless discussion of popular culture definition, this study offers a different way to approaching the phenomenon. Perhaps, it is wiser to step away from semantics and move towards pragmatics. Brandom (2008/2010) wrote that semantics and pragmatics, where one is concerned with meaning and the other with use, should be regarded as aspects of one picture. He argues that we can deepen our semantics by the addition of pragmatics: “that what makes some bit of vocabulary mean what it does, is how it is used” (pp. 8-9). This notion could be the key to understanding the phenomenon. Rather than concentrating only on the meaning, the focus should shift towards the use. Perhaps it is possible to make popular culture more comprehensible by dividing it into categories which can then be sorted into main and subsidiary groups (Figure 1.4).



**Figure 1.4 Popular culture categories: main and subsidiary groups**

The list above is not exhaustive. There are many arguments as to what can be counted as popular culture. Recent explanations include body art (e.g., henna art, tattoos, piercings), collectibles (e.g., cars, dolls, Lego toys), sports memorabilia (e.g., baseball cards, jerseys), crafts (e.g., Washi paper art, Malaysian batik painting), mass media, and even leisure activities (e.g., glamping, paddle-boarding) (see Brochado & Pereira, 2017; Fedorak, 2018; McKnight, 2015). Some studies suggest looking at sports as an "avenue of popular culture" (Newkirk, 2002) or consider "sports-spectatorship" as part of popular cultural practice (Edensor, 2002). In tourism research, sports has been a consistent theme over the past several decades, particularly in

Australia (Deery & Jago, 2005; Ritchie & Adair, 2002; Ritchie, Mosedale, & King, 2002), therefore, the decision was made not to focus on sports related content. This study will limit its focus to the categories listed in Figure 1.4.

The technology has yet to establish its niche in popular culture, but the first steps are made, and the future looks promising. Popular culture is transmitted by means of technology, whether it is television, radio, or internet. Therefore, it is rightful to say that without access to modern technologies we do not have or have a very limited access to popular culture, and vice versa: those of us who have unlimited access to technologies are more exposed to popular culture. There is a direct link between popular culture and the development of technologies (Bernstein, 1991; Ito, Okabe, & Matsuda, 2005; Reisinger, 2013). Over the last decade technology became immensely commercial. The products are no longer judged solely on their usability. Instead, they are judged based on their visual appearance and ergonomics. Quoting Don Reisinger, a technology and business writer for CNET, New York Times, Computerworld, and Fortune: "Computers are now personality-extensions, with branding and design to reflect that" (Reisinger, 2013). With the help of such prominent figures as Steve Jobs, technology can be considered as a new addition to popular culture family. More discussion of this perspective can be found in later chapters.

#### **1.4 What is popular culture tourism?**

As it often occurs in science, or in life in general for that matter, all new and emerging phenomena are initially treated with suspicion and a healthy dose of skepticism. And so it happened, that older scientific fields first welcomed tourism studies with traditional condescending scorn.

*We may be loath to admit any relationship to the sandal-footed, camera-toting legions in our midst, the truth is that tourism can be an ideal context for studying issues of political economy, social change and development, natural resource management, and cultural identity (Stronza, 2001, p.261).*

Tourism struggled until the 1990s to be accepted as a standalone field of research in the academic community (Taillon & Jamal, 2009). Conscious of its youthfulness, tourism fought hard to define itself in ways which would give it academic weight (Tribe, 1997). One of the early questions tourism researchers tried to tackle was whether tourism studies is a discipline or a multidisciplinary field. Unfortunately, the map or the boundaries of tourism studies are still not agreed on (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Hall, Williams, & Lew, 2014). Since there seems to be no consensus on this matter, this work assumes the latter. Not only does the multidisciplinary aspect of tourism lead to the definition of tourism as an industry (Valente, 2015), it helps explain the theoretical framework and justify the paradigm choice in later chapters of this thesis.

The other question that troubled tourism researchers was the meaning of the word tourism. The word tourism is problematic, explains Tribe, because it is used in common parlance: “its use is often permissive and imprecise, and thus it can encompass a variety of meanings” (1997, p. 639). Depending on the context, it can be described as an activity, a social or economic phenomenon, a business, or an industry. Tribe (1997), for example, describes it as “an activity engaged in by human beings” that includes “the act of travel from one place to another, a particular set of motives for engaging in that travel (excluding commuting for work), and the engagement in activity at the destination” (p. 640). Mathieson and Wall describe it as “the temporary movement to destinations outside the normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken during the stay, and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourists” (1982, p.

1). The same themes, with an emphasis on the economic and business aspects of tourism, can be found in Ryan's definition of tourism. He describes it as "a study of the demand for and supply of accommodation and supportive services for those staying away from home, and the resultant patterns of expenditure, income creation, and employment" (1991, p. 5). Major players, such as airlines, hotels, travel agents, guides, and tour operators, have increasingly integrated in the industry further blurring the boundaries of tourism. Indeed, Poon argues that "as the boundaries among players are re-defined, what becomes more relevant are the activities along the value chain that they control" (1993, p. 215).

A contemporary definition of tourism, this time offered by the World Tourism Organization, reads as follows:

*Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or nonresidents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure" (UNWTO, 2014).*

In a way, tourism is akin to popular culture. Quite like early tourism, popular culture has played many secondary roles in academic discourse, provoking casual disdain due to its potential lack of intellectual credibility. The connection between popular culture and tourism becomes even more pronounced if you look at it through the lens of sociology. Popular culture, explains Grindstaff (2008), is traditionally perceived as a subfield of sociology, but it can also be a separate arena of inquiry taken up by other disciplines. So is tourism. Combined, popular culture and tourism are yet to make a leading appearance in the scientific world.

Contemporary tourism is very diverse. Tourists are encouraged to explore the most incredible places on, under or even above the earth (Lemelin, Dawson, & Stewart, 2013). The opportunities provided by modern technologies push the boundaries of the travel market further each year, helping the market expand its product range (UNWTO Secretary-General Speech at ITB Berlin, 3 March 2015). As it expands the travel sector interacts with other industries. A good example of such expansion is the giant entertainment industry, which has developed rapidly with the help of communication media. PwC's Cities of Opportunity report (Bothun et al., 2015) shows that less than 30 big urban cities alone are estimated to spend a staggering \$184 billion on the entertainment and related media by 2018 with employment at 6.3 million people. Tourists are among the increasing numbers of those in the entertainment and media driven audiences. Such travel is triggered not only by the real-world images but also by the images from the imaginary worlds (Reijnders, 2010; Shandley, Jamal, & Tanase, 2006). Strange though it may sound, people travelling to such locations are willing to enter the imaginary places of fiction through real places. Jean Baudrillard (1994), to a certain extent, has explained this paradox between reality and simulacra in his work on Simulacra and Simulation, which speaks of relationships among reality, symbols, and modern society. Being a big part of the entertainment world, popular culture has branched beyond that industry and is now aiming to establish itself in tourism. This has created a phenomenon known as popular culture tourism (PCT).

Some researchers believe that PCT started to evolve in the early 1930's, with films causing tourists to rush to different film locations (Roesch, 2010). In the 1950s, an American entrepreneur Walter Elias Disney inspired by the success of early screen tourism opened his first Disneyland. It all started with a desire to build a tourist attraction to entertain fans who wished to visit his production studios in Burbank. Inspired by many screen fans, and his

daughter, Walt Disney created a symbol of modern popular culture – Disneyland, the world's most famous theme park. This symbiosis between early popular culture and tourism was well described by Ritzer & Liska (1997) and Shaw & Williams (2004) in their works about McDisneyfication and tourism.

The early academic studies related to PCT focused mainly on screen (film-induced tourism) tourism. Connell (2012) notes that the first rigorous studies emerged in the early 1990s. As the connection between popular culture and tourism strengthened with every blockbuster and bestseller released, more research papers appeared. The works explaining a variety of phenomena, such as screen tourism (Beeton, 2010; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen, 2013; Roesch, 2010), literary tourism (Fawcett & Cormack, 2001; Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014; Mansfield, 2015), music tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2003, 2005, 2007) start attracting the attention of many tourism stakeholders. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find destination marketing organizations (DMOs) all around the world becoming increasingly interested in the subject of PCT. Despite being a relatively new element of tourism activity, high-profile DMOs utilise PCT in inbound marketing campaigns, most notably in the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Korea (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Connell, 2012; Fawcett & Cormack, 2001).

There is no strict rationale for explaining the success behind PCT. Thornton (2016) observes that more people want a live experience which is not mediated by the screen even though the initial interest may be triggered by it (the screen). Perhaps, as Baudrillard explained back in 1983, with the "real" being produced from models, from matrices, from memory banks – it no longer needs to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal instance. This yearning for “imaginary elsewhere” and an “imaginary elsewhen” (Friedberg, 1993, p. 8)

creates new cultural landscapes, offering a new community to belong to and operate in (Jewell & McKinnon, 2008). The scenario such as Disneyland is an "imaginary effect concealing that reality no more exists outside than inside the bounds of the artificial perimeter" (p. Hlynka & Belland, 1991, p. 454). Beeton (2016) even refers to this type of behaviour as a new cultural pilgrimage.

Further inquiries into the topic of reality and simulacra, reveal one of the more important traits of PCT. Once again quoting Jean Baudrillard:

*When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning... There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 369).*

Nostalgia is often seen as a major driving force of PCT (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Cho, 2011; Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; Lai, 2001; Salkowitz, 2012). Jewell and McKinnon (2008) describe it as a form of "imagined nostalgia", where nostalgia symbolises an "idyllic bygone era" (p. 155) or a romantic ideology (Goulding, 2001). This assumption can explain the significant span of ages (18 through 60+) among pop-culture adult tourists (for more details see Chapter 3).

Another important characteristic of PCT is familiarity. There are many works on authenticity and familiarity in tourism destinations, arguing about the importance of the "equilibrium between authentic features of a tourist destination and familiar elements" (Tasci & Knutson, 2004, p. 85). Tasci and Knutson (2004) describe familiar "as frequently seen or experienced, easily recognised, of everyday occurrence, common, customary, every day, frequent" (p. 88). They argue that people, in general, have a tendency to "be on the safe side", and are more likely to purchase the products that they have already seen, tried, or heard about (p. 88). They further

explain that familiar objects and services at the destination might ensure the sense of security and comfort for those tourists who feel threatened by new environments. There are not many things more familiar than popular culture. The PCT seems like an ideal solution that can help a destination achieve a balanced level of authenticity and familiarity.

In the end, what is popular culture tourism? Lexhagen, Larson, and Lundberg (2014) refer to the term as “tourism induced by pop culture” (p. 134). The definition offered by Lundberg and Lexhagen (2014), which is probably the one most widely agreed upon in the field today, describes PCT as tourism that emerged from pop culture phenomena such as books, films, and music. To make the term more inclusive and reflective of the diversity that permeates popular culture, one must also add that PCT is a unique product concept that offers an experience which combines two powerful sectors of economy: popular entertainment media and tourism.

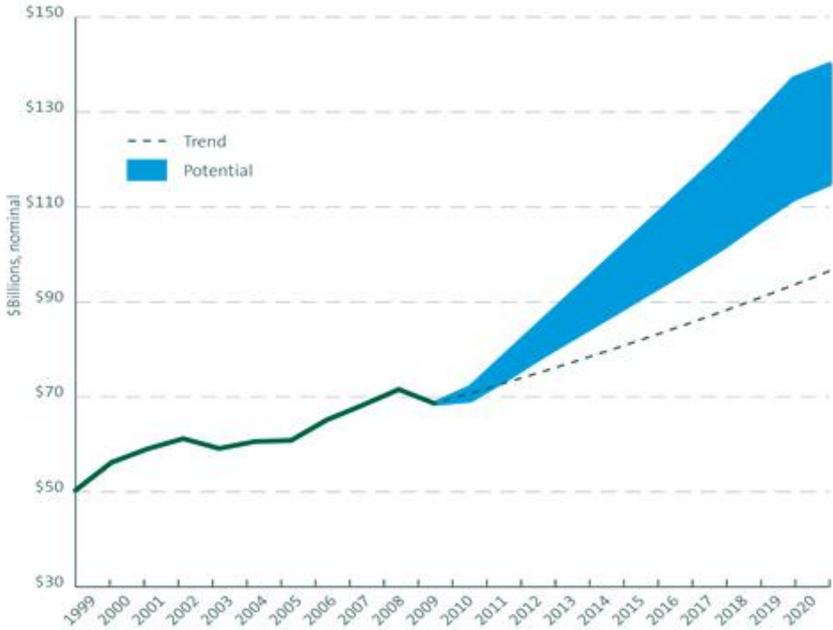
### **1.5 Tourism development programs**

This study approaches the problem of tourism development by analysing the existing policies. All strategic recommendations should always be aligned with current government policies and priorities.

In Australia, both scientific and business communities acknowledge the importance of national tourism strategies. Among the biggest initiatives is the National Tourism 2020 strategy (Tourism 2020, n.d.). The strategy encourages the whole of government to work with the industry to achieve Australia's tourism potential (Tourism Research Australia, 2014). According to the government analysis, achieving the 2020 Tourism Industry Potential would increase tourism's contribution to GDP by as much as 50% to an estimated \$51 billion (Tourism 2020, n.d.). Given the ambitiousness of the endeavour, the construction of new marketing tools

in tourism is likely to be appreciated by multiple stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to consider PCT as a potential valuable contributor to tourism development.

The 2020 Tourism Industry Potential is focused on overnight visitor expenditure. By 2020 the tourism potential is estimated to be between \$115 billion and \$140 billion in overnight expenditure (Figure 1.5). Including the day trips, total expenditure is estimated to be \$135 - \$160 billion (Tourism 2020, n.d.).



Source from [www.tourism.australia.com](http://www.tourism.australia.com), 2011

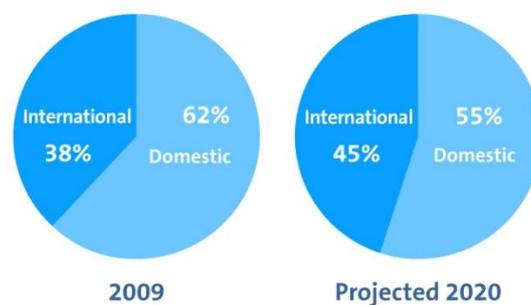
**Figure 1.5 Potential for overnight tourism expenditure by 2020**

The strategy represents a long-term collaboration between industry and the state and territory governments, elevating tourism to the national status as one of the key drivers of Australian economy. The Tourism 2020 was created to encourage all levels of government and industry to work together on improving the industry’s productive capacity. Tourism Australia states that:

*[National tourism strategy] focuses on creating a policy framework that will support industry growth and provide industry with the tools to compete more effectively in the*

*global economy and to take advantage of the opportunities that Asia presents (Tourism 2020, n.d.).*

The Australian tourism authorities place a strong emphasis on Asian tourists, which is not surprising given the spectacular growth of many economies in Asia over the past 30 years. Australia has a unique opportunity to drive demand from Asia. Over the 2010-20 period, Asia is expected to contribute more than half of the projected growth in international visitation with 42% of that growth expected to come from China (Tourism 2020, n.d.). By 2020 domestic tourism expenditure is expected to be 55% of total tourism spend and international expenditure is expected to be 45% (Tourism 2020, n.d.). It is, therefore, important to investigate both domestic and international input when considering PCT strategies.



**Figure 1.6 Domestic versus international expenditure**

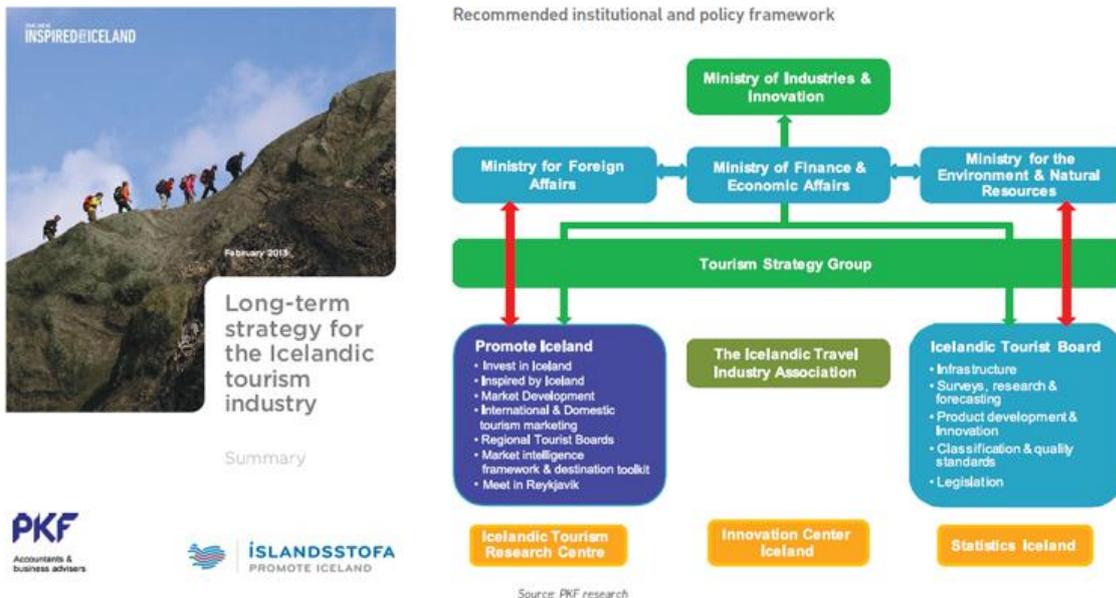
The recent updates (2015) made to the national tourism strategy identify six strategic areas:

1. grow demand from Asia;
2. develop strong and efficient digital marketing capability to remain competitive;
3. encourage investment and reduce the barriers to investment;
4. ensure the supply of transport capacity and infrastructure moves ahead of demand and facilitates tourism traffic;

5. increase labour and skills development, environmental management, and Indigenous engagement in tourism; and
6. build industry resilience, productivity and quality.

A PCT inspired marketing strategy can prove itself most useful in the first, second, fifth and the last of the six strategic areas. This statement will be analysed and researched over the course of this work.

The practice of creating national long-term tourism strategies is not exclusive to Australia. There are many examples of close collaborations between the government sector and the tourism industry that strengthen the positions of the country in the global tourism network. One of the more recent examples is a "Long-term strategy for the Icelandic tourism industry" launched by Promote Iceland (Promote Iceland: Long-term strategy for the Icelandic tourism industry, 2013).



**Figure 1.7 Long-term strategy for the Icelandic tourism**

Note: Retrieved from [www.islandsstofa.is](http://www.islandsstofa.is), 2013

The Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan in Japan, National Tourism Sector Strategy in South Africa, Philippine National Tourism Development Plan, to name but a few – the governments throughout the world work with numerous tourism stakeholders to create tourism development strategies that would help boost local economy. As with any business initiative, an effective tourism development strategy should start with careful planning, which includes data compilation and exploration of existing resources. The first important step in data compilation is to scan the literature and identify sources reporting on current tourism issues.

### **1.6 Gaps in literature and opportunities for research**

Popular culture is studied by sociologists as a cultural phenomenon (Bennett, 2000; Strinati, 2004; McRobbie & McRobbie, 2003), by economists as an effective business strategy and economic concept (Bielby & Harrington, 2008; Fiske, 2010; Goodwin, 1992; Ito, Okabe, & Matsuda, 2005), by marketing experts as suitable environment for promoting and online advertising (Beer & Burrows, 2013; Grossberg et al., 2006; Lewis, 2002). Yet for tourism researchers, the PCT is still a relatively new field of study.

The study of PCT is very fragmented. The first studies were mostly concerned with film-induced tourism: movie fans travelling to different places to see shooting locations. These studies formed a popular study area known as screen tourism. Hot on their heels were music tourism researchers, such as Cohen (1997), who wrote about The Beatles and Liverpool, or Atkinson (1997), who studied New Orleans' historical identification with music tourism. Next came the literary tourism studies. With the growing popularity of e-books and the development of technologies in publishing, literature spreads much faster than it used to, stimulating the growth of literary tourism (Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014; Müller, 2006;

Smith, 2003). Today, a quick internet search reveals hundreds of literary tours: Rowling's Harry Potter (e.g., Warner Bros. Studio Tour London), Brown's Da Vinci Code (e.g., Classic Walks of Paris), 'Anne of Green Gables' tours in Prince Edward Island, Golden's Memoirs of a Geisha in Kyoto (e.g., Kyoto Sights and Nights).

A more recent area of study involves urban food culture and tourism. From Marinetti's Futurist Cookbook, to Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans, to Simpsons D'Ohnuts, to the iconic Coca-Cola bottle – food holds a special place in popular culture. Tourism studies suggests a close link between food and travel (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall, 2005; Hjalager & Richards, 2003; Sims, 2009). The emergence of a new trend that involves travelling to places associated with popular foods or food related TV shows is not unexpected and warrants further investigation (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Lee, Wall, & Kovacs, 2015; Liu, Norman, & Pennington-Gray, 2013). With relatively little research dedicated to urban food trends in tourism, there is still a lot to discover about urban food tourism (Ozturk, 2014; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2016). Similarly, urban arts are yet another new direction for the destination studies. The tourism researchers have only recently begun to take notice of urban arts and contemporary fashion (Huang, 2011; Ng, 2008; Dovey, Wollan, & Woodcock, 2012; Mokras-Grabowska, 2014).

One obvious tendency in tourism studies is the propensity for investigating popular culture components separately. Among the many works on cultural tourism, few, if any, reference PCT as a comprehensive multi-category method for destination development. The studies that would describe the use of several popular culture categories (the hybrid demand-based approach) in destination promotion, especially in the context of one country, are hard to find. There is value in considering the many components of popular culture collectively when

representing a destination. This approach can bring out a whole new variety of experiences that can be a motivation for discovering and implementing new forms of tourism.

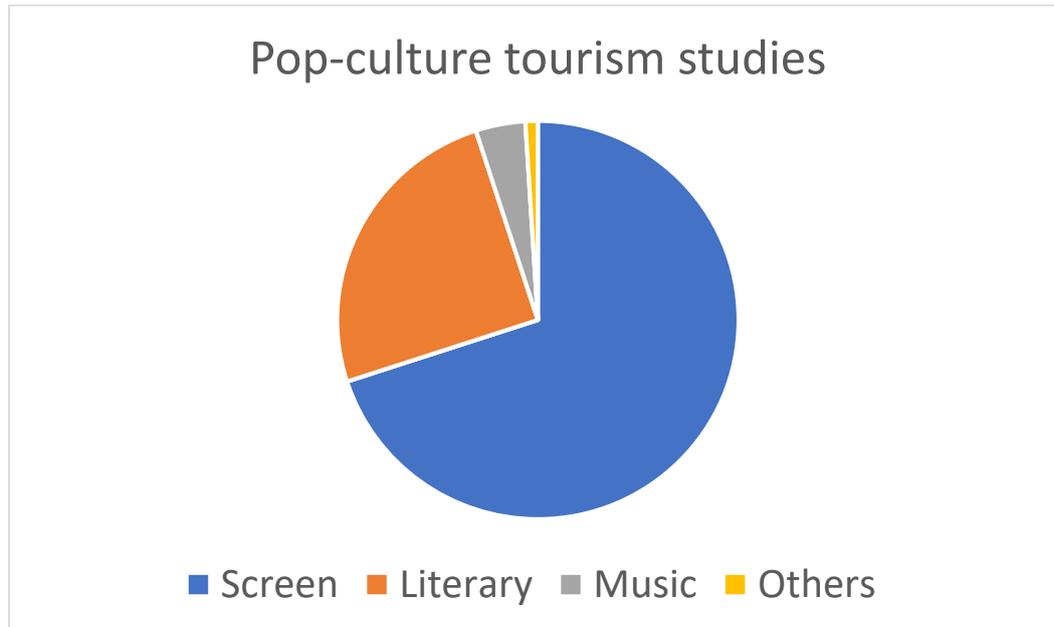
When looking at the current research directions, some popular culture categories in tourism are studied more carefully and frequently than others. For example, a lot of research is aimed at film or screen tourism. Table 1.1 shows a list of randomly chosen highly cited studies on PCT.

Table 1.1 PCT related studies (2000-2016)

Author	Year	Object of study
...	before 2000	Mostly Screen tourism
Fawcett & Cormack	2001	Literary tourism
Smith	2003	Literary tourism
Beeton	2004, 2005a, 2006, 2010	Screen tourism
		Screen tourism
		Screen tourism
		Screen tourism
Gibson & Connell	2005, 2007	Music tourism
		Music tourism
Hudson & Ritchie	2006	Screen tourism
Müller	2006	Literary tourism
Ruoff	2006	Screen tourism
Chua & Iwabuchi	2008	Screen tourism
Gunelius	2008	Literary tourism & Screen tourism
Croy	2010	Screen tourism
Reijnders	2010	Screen tourism
Roesch	2010	Screen tourism
Reijnders	2011	Literary tourism & Screen tourism
Connell	2012	Screen tourism
Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen	2013	Literary tourism & Screen tourism
Hoppen et al.	2014	Literary tourism
Ozturk	2014	Food tourism

Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie	2016	Food tourism
Tzanelli & Yar	2016	Screen tourism

The Figure 1.8 illustrates the distribution of popular culture topics in current tourism research.



**Figure 1.8 The distribution of PCT related topics in current research**

There is a need to further investigate the many categories of PCT and their use in destination promotion. Beeton (2010) found that many studies on screen tourism primarily focus on the numbers of people visiting the locations. The motivation of many researchers is mainly to provide evidence of positive contributions of film tourism to local economies. Beeton argues that researchers must move “beyond the business of film-induced tourism” and concentrate on post-modern epistemologies of authenticity, simulacra and play (2010, p. 3). The researcher supports the statement and applies the same recommendation to PCT. The PCT provides many interesting opportunities for further research.

Existing studies are not enough to satisfy the growing knowledge needs of those who see popular culture as a new force affecting travel choices. Importantly, there are not enough studies that investigate the opportunities of PCT in Australia. This study extends the literature by studying individual and entrepreneurial approaches to marketing Australia through popular culture.

### **1.7 Aims and objectives**

This work explores different attitudes towards diverse popular culture activities available in Australia. There are very few studies that try to explore the many kinds of cultural experiences (particularly popular culture related experiences) that can be obtained by international and local tourists travelling in Australia. This study fills in the gap in current literature by extracting new themes and factors that can help build the cultural value of Australia's tourism.

It is important to note that this study is not about providing evidence that PCT can generate visitor numbers. There is enough evidence supporting this statement (Beeton, 2010; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b; Iwashita, 2006; Tzanelli & Yar, 2016). The main goal is to explore and explain the underlying processes in creating an effective PCT based marketing strategy.

This study is about identifying tourist demand, exploring new directions for tourism development, and finding effective marketing approaches that can utilise PCT. The current investigation seeks to advance the knowledge and experience with PCT by exploring the behaviour patterns of local and international tourists interested in Australia's popular culture.

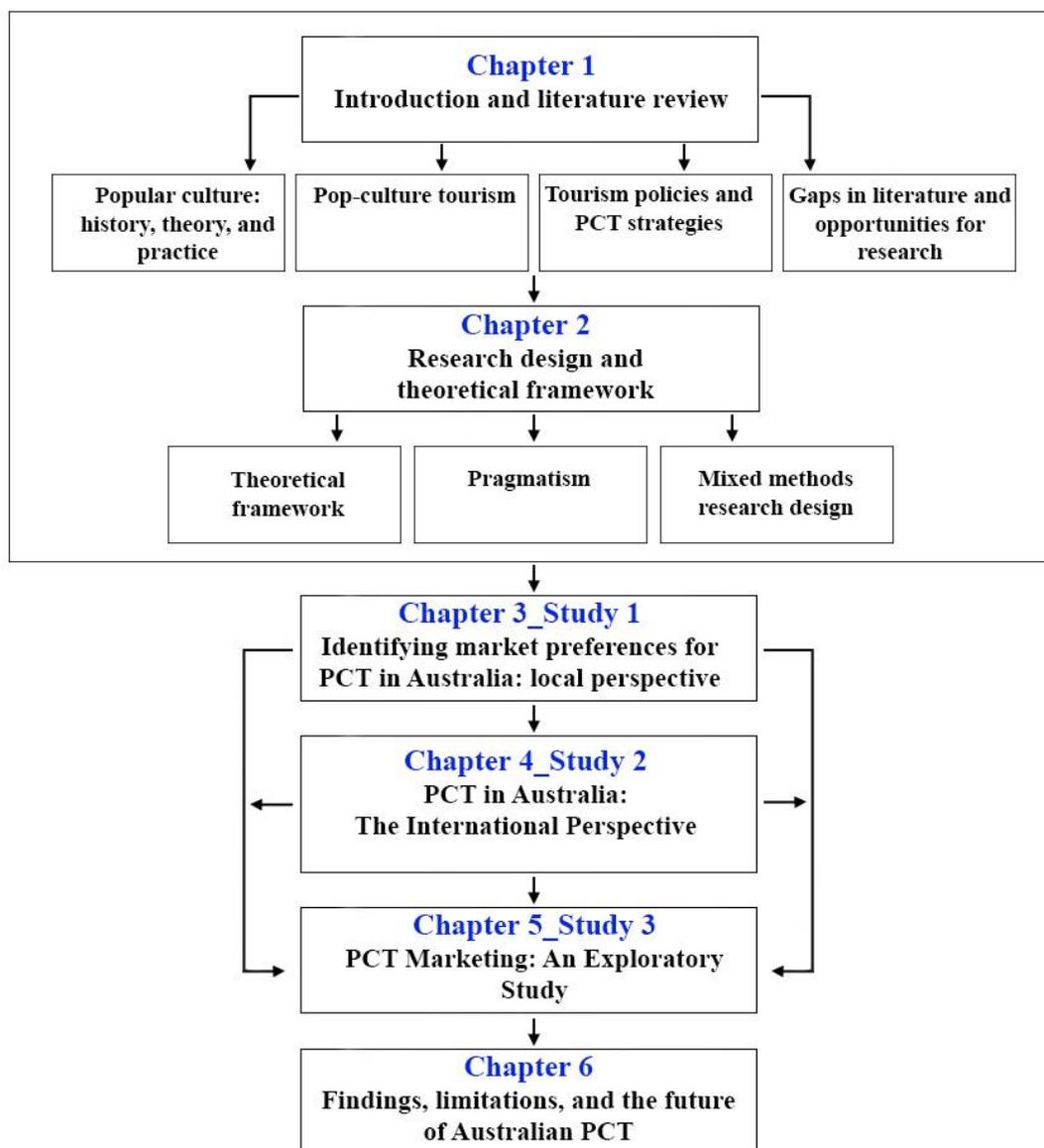
This study aims to establish the readiness of Australian tourism market to adapt new marketing strategies that employ popular culture as its main constituent. This work seeks to:

1. assess the appeal of popular culture events and locations to Australia's domestic tourists (Study 1);
2. assess the appeal of Australia's popular culture events and locations to international audiences (Study 2);
3. explore and construct marketing campaigns around these leading popular culture choices (Study 3);
4. explore the feasibility of mounting such campaigns and see how similar integrations between marketing and PCT are accomplished by DMOs in real-world practices.

There are few, if any, studies that break popular culture into its many constituent parts and analyse how they compete, interact or reinforce one another. This work seeks to understand the complexity of these relationships and to extend our understanding of the complex world of cultural tourism.

## **1.8 Thesis structure**

To study the phenomenon the researcher uses a combination of three research methods: survey research, descriptive study, and exploratory study. Each study contributes a unique perspective to the literature on popular culture tourism. Following the mixed methods development approach to research design (see Chapter 2), the results from Study 1 help inform the method used in Study 2. The combined results help develop the method used in Study 3. Figure 1.9 presents the structure of this thesis.



**Figure 1.9 Thesis structure**

## **1.9 Methodological approaches**

According to Plano Clark and Creswell (2008), the choice of a paradigm always involves an element of subjectivity. This work holds to the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. The pragmatic explanations aim at disambiguating the questions being asked. They offer the view of pragmatism as a technique for clarifying concepts and hypotheses. A clear discussion of the theoretical foundations can be found in Chapter 2.

Pragmatism is commonly associated with mixed methods research design (Cameron, 2011a, 2011b; Creswell, 2013a, 2013b; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This study employs mixed methods development approach to research design, though elements of initiation and complementarity can also be found (see Chapter 2).

Most of the data for Study 1 were obtained by means of survey research combined with field observations and informal interviews conducted in 2016. The Study 2 mainly works with UGC and heavily relies on the content analysis. The decision behind using the social media content was influenced by Fielding, Lee, and Blank (2008), who stated that social media are a significant entertainment medium that dominates popular culture. The data for Study 3 were obtained from government reports, organisational records, tourism boards, scholarly publications, manuals, public Internet sources, books, and tourism promotional material.

### **1.10 Synthesis of the chapter**

This chapter offers a brief discussion of the background and evolution of PCT. It explains how PCT can be beneficial to Australia's tourism. The chapter identifies the gaps and opportunities for research. It lists the main aims and objectives and presents the thesis structure. It also provides a context for the subsequent chapters in this thesis.

# Chapter 2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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## 2.1 Chapter introduction

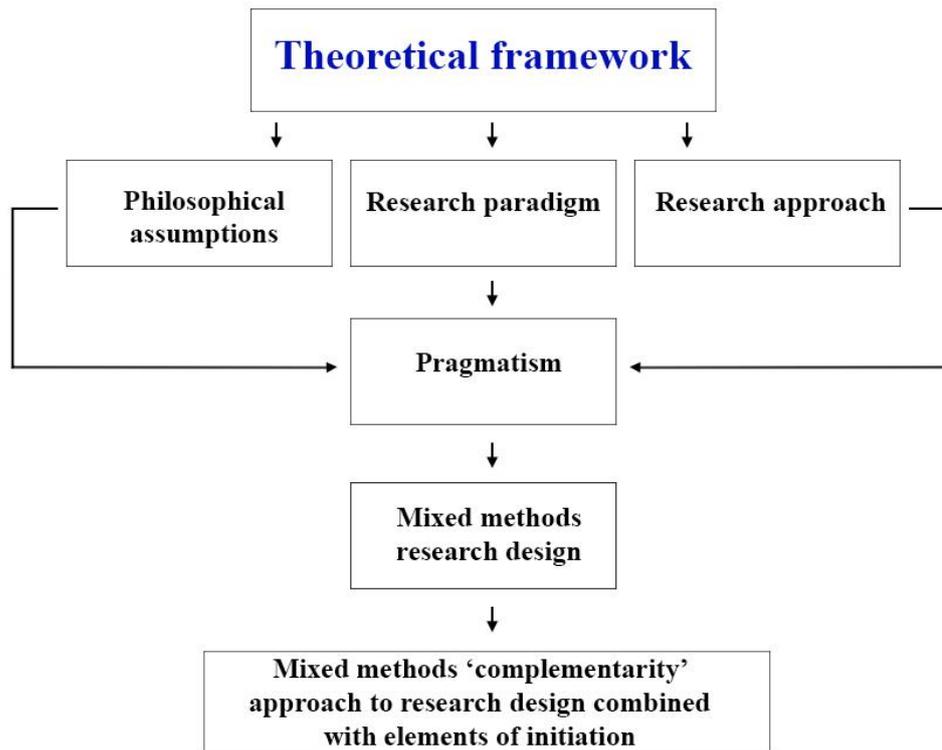
This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that guides this work. The theoretical framework is presented as a unifying theme that links studies one, two and three. It explains how the research questions and design lead naturally to the choice of methodology for sampling and analysis.

The chapter explores the role of the paradigm which is paramount to the choice of methodology and yet is not always effectively addressed in research texts (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). It should be mentioned that this chapter offers a highly theoretical review with little detail as to the exact methodological and reporting instruments used in Studies 1, 2 and 3. The exact methodological principles of each study are discussed in detail in separate chapters<sup>1</sup>.

This chapter starts with a brief discussion on philosophical assumptions and their use in modern research (Figure 2.1). The assumptions are followed by the examination of the philosophical body of a research paradigm. This sets the stage and helps clarify some issues associated with the term paradigm. The chapter discusses the rationale for using pragmatism as the interpretive framework for this study. Later, the pragmatic approach, with its roots in the philosophies of Peirce (1898/1992) and James (1907), helps justify the use of mixed methods design.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to methodology sections in chapters three, four and five.



**Figure 2.1 Chapter structure**

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 The philosophical assumptions in research**

A clear discussion of the research approach permeating the work can help understand the philosophical assumptions that frame the research. Being able to articulate the philosophical assumptions in a research study is a foundation for presenting the study to an audience. As Huff (2009) points out, philosophical assumptions in research shape how we formulate our problem and research questions, and how we seek information to answer these questions. These assumptions are shaped by multiple worldviews based upon our background, the scholarly community, the academic discipline we belong to, our supervisor's contribution and our own unique experiences.

The researchers generally have a certain level of freedom when forming the philosophical assumptions, providing these assumptions work cohesively under one paradigm. The academic field of tourism borrows theories from many existing disciplines: anthropology, geography, sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, political sciences, and law (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). The adopted philosophical assumptions should be able to reflect the multifaceted nature of tourism (Tribe, Dann, & Jamal, 2015).

When choosing a research approach for this study it was imperative to work within a paradigm that can draw from different disciplines and allow necessary flexibility for the assumptions to hold. Maxwell (2008) warns that trying to work within a paradigm that does not fit the assumptions is “like trying to do a physically demanding job in clothes that don't fit – at best you'll be uncomfortable, at worst it will keep you from doing the job well” (p. 224). In some studies, the philosophical assumptions remain hidden from view, though they can be deduced by the reader who strives to find them. They reveal themselves in rendered quotes and laid-out biases; appear in themes, generalizations, and in the research design; manifest in research questions and conclusions. However, this approach carries a certain risk.

It is a common practice for the reviewers to make philosophical assumptions about a study when they evaluate it, especially if the study does not provide a clear stand on issues of epistemology. In a worst-case scenario, when the assumptions between the author and the reviewer diverge, a conclusion may be drawn that the work does not make a genuine contribution to the literature. Therefore, providing a description of the philosophical assumptions that underlie a research may resolve points of difference before they become a focal point for criticism. The awareness of philosophical assumptions will increase the quality

of research and can contribute to the creativity of the researcher (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, care was taken to provide a comprehensive description of the philosophical assumptions that underlie this study.

The philosophical assumptions are embedded within interpretive frameworks that researchers use. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) consider ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology as key assumptions that constitute an interpretive framework. Creswell (2013a) describes each assumption by demonstrating the questions that differing assumptions can raise and answer (Figure 2.2). These questions will later be addressed in Table 2.1.

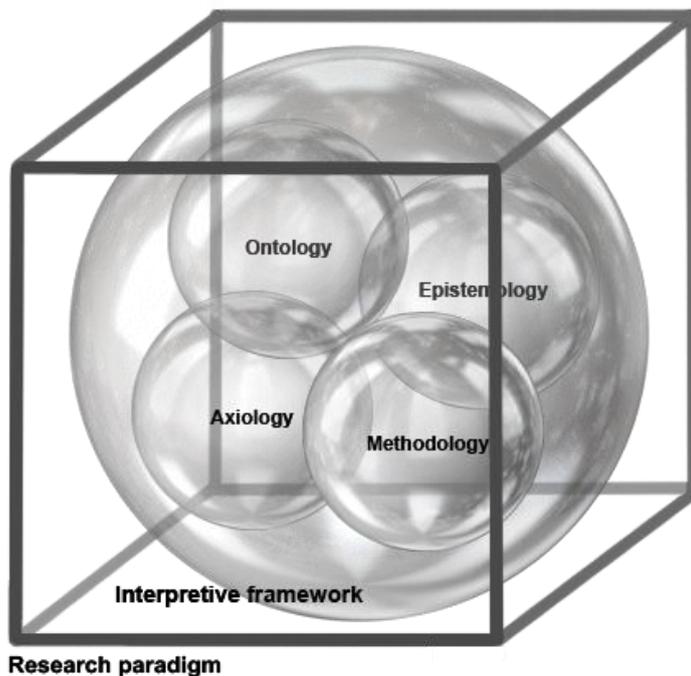
<i>Assumption</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?
Epistemological	What counts as knowledge? How are knowledge claims justified? What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?
Axiological	What is the role of values?
Methodological	What is the process of research? What is the language of research?

**Figure 2.2 Philosophical assumptions and the questions they raise**

Note: Source Creswell (2013a, p. 21)

## 2.2.2 Paradigms and interpretive frameworks

The interpretive framework is sometimes referred to as the paradigm (Mertens, 2005; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Creswell and Poth (2017) reflect that the interpretive frameworks can be seen as “paradigms or beliefs that the researcher brings to the process of research”. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p.84) also link paradigm with the interpretive framework by defining it as “a worldview, together with the various philosophical assumptions associated with that point of view”. This study supports the opinions that see paradigms and interpretive frameworks as closely related, where one is embedded in another (Figure 2.3).



**Figure 2.3 Philosophical body of a research paradigm**

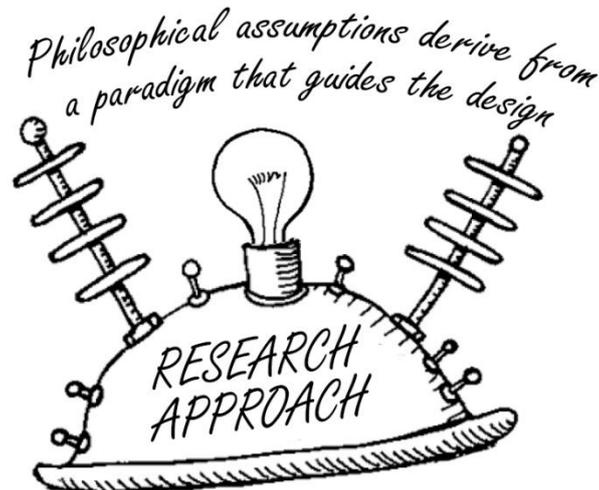
Looking into the history of research, it can be said without exaggeration that the paradigms remain a hot topic for more than 50 years. Even the term paradigm faced a certain amount of resistance when first being introduced to the world of research.

The term paradigm in its contemporary meaning was first used by the American philosopher Thomas Kuhn in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Years later, Morgan (2007) would claim that the book was greatly responsible for the popularity of paradigms as a way to summarise researchers' beliefs. Yet in the 60s, while many acknowledged the originality and importance of Kuhn's ideas, the philosophical reception was somewhat hostile. A chief source of difficulty, argues Morgan (2007), was the great breadth of Kuhn's uses for his concept of paradigms. According to Margaret Masterman, Kuhn used the term "paradigm" in more than 20 unique ways (Weidman & Jacob, 2012, p.20). Later, Kuhn would publish the second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), which included an important postscript in which he tried to clarify the notion of paradigm.

Despite all efforts, Kuhn felt that many critics had failed to appreciate the idea of a paradigm. However, the term persisted, though the notion of paradigm continued to rouse debate. For example, Patton (1982) referred to paradigms as frameworks for thinking about research design, measurement, analysis, and personal involvement; whereas Schwandt (1989, 2001) saw paradigms as worldviews and beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values. Today, many researchers prefer to take the precaution of defining the term paradigm to avoid ambivalence in their work.

The paradigm is not the only term associated with the interpretive framework. Some researchers use the term worldview to describe the basic set of beliefs that guide research (Creswell, 2013a; Guba, 1990). Others prefer the term epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998) or broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2009). Some researchers when referring to a research paradigm mean quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research (Datta, 1994; Gage, 1989; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). To avoid ambiguity, from this

point onwards, the word research paradigm will be used to reflect the philosophical worldviews, practices and theories that guide this research; whereas the quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods will all be referred to as research designs. Combined, they will be called the research approach (Figure 2.4).



**Figure 2.4 Research approach**

### **2.2.3 Paradigms in tourism research**

The worldviews that guide any research are influenced by many factors, one of which is the academic discipline or field of study. Depending on the field of study, there are many paradigms to choose from. For example, juristic or adversarial paradigms are common in law (Barak, 2005); positivist paradigm is dominant within medical research (Bunniss & Kelly, 2010); subjectivism and constructivist paradigms are widely used in arts (Knowles & Cole, 2008). In tourism study, in many cases, the choices vary from constructivist and interpretivist approaches to inquiry, to post-positivism, pragmatism and transformative worldviews. As previously explained, tourism borrows from many disciplines, therefore, it is hardly surprising to find such a vast array of theories used within the field. With so many approaches to choose from, how can one decide which is ‘the one’.

The first step is to get acquainted with the paradigms used within the field. This chapter will discuss post-positivism, constructivism, transformative worldviews, and pragmatism. Each of these paradigms is commonly associated with a certain research design. It should be mentioned beforehand, that simple descriptions such as provided below are incomplete and are given merely to introduce some basic concepts that allow to characterise the paradigms.

To begin with, it seems necessary to say a few words about the paradigm shift. According to Morgan (2007), in the late 1970s the attention to qualitative research began to gain momentum. At the same time, positivism presented what some critics considered to be an "outmoded thinking across a range of academic disciplines" (Morgan, 2007, p.56). The advocates of qualitative research used Kuhn's ideas about paradigm shifts to seek changes to social science methodology. The need for an alternative paradigm or paradigms became apparent. Ultimately, the system was expanded to consider other paradigms, one of which was post-positivism.

In scientific inquiry, post-positivism represents the traditional form of research mainly used by the quantitative researchers. The problems studied by post-positivists, notes Creswell (2013b), identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes, usually through experiments. Phillips and Burbules (2000) explain some of the key assumptions of this position by arguing that post-positivist approach to research is the process of making claims, and then either refining them or abandoning some of them for stronger claims. They add that the research typically starts with the test of a theory. On closer scrutiny, it becomes apparent that the new paradigm retains many of the virtues of the previous system. Guba and Lincoln (2005), when discussing problems concerning defining and bounding paradigms, conclude that there exist considerable areas of overlap between many paradigms.

The constructivism or social constructivism is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2013b; Ponterotto, 2005). The constructivist researchers often deal with interactions among individuals. They focus on the specific contexts in which people live, study and work in order to understand the social and historical background of the participants. The constructivist paradigm can be perceived as an alternative to the positivist paradigm. In contrast to positivism, constructivism “adheres to a relativist position that assumes multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129). Some researchers link constructivism and interpretivism, describing them as related approaches (Morgan, 2007).

The transformative worldview includes groups of researchers that are critical theorists, Marxists, feminists, ethnic and political minorities, and other minority groups (people with disabilities, indigenous and postcolonial peoples, members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, and queer communities). According to Mertens (2007), the transformative paradigm provides a framework for addressing inequality and injustice. Creswell (2013a) reflects that the main difference from the constructivists lies in the fact that the constructivism does not advocate enough for an action agenda that would help marginalized people.

Another group of researchers holds to the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. The pragmatism derives from the works of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, and a number of other pragmatic thinkers such as Richard Rorty, John Murphy, and Michael Quinn Patton. William James (1907) presented pragmatism as a “method for settling metaphysical disputes that might otherwise be interminable” (p.28). He explained that pragmatic clarifications try to disambiguate the questions being asked. He offered his view of pragmatism as a technique for clarifying concepts and hypotheses. Though

some considered this view as a very narrow approach to pragmatism, it served as the foundation for the evolution of the entire concept.

The contemporary pragmatists, such as David L. Morgan, explain that one of the defining features of pragmatism is an emphasis on what difference it makes to believe one thing versus another, or to act one way rather than another (2007, p. 68). He further reflects that the abstract pursuit of knowledge is not central to a pragmatic approach. In the heart of pragmatism lies a doctrine that our values and our politics are always a part of who we are and how we act. At all times, pragmatists should be aware of how their own values shape their research goals, and their writings should reflect their preferred political or social agendas. Pragmatism teaches us to investigate the factors that have the most impact on what we choose to study and how we choose to do so. These notions seem natural in connection with this research topic and reflect the chosen style of data analysis revealed in later chapters.

## **2.3 Research design and methodology**

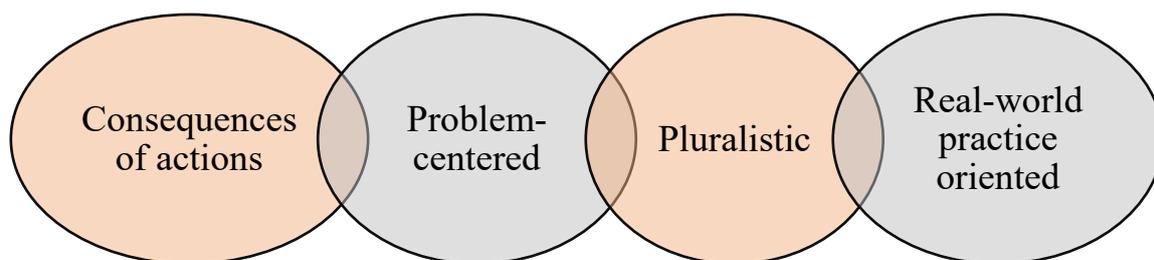
### **2.3.1 The pragmatic approach**

This work determines the value of an idea by its outcome in practice. Study 3 places a strong emphasis on practical solutions. Emirbayer and Maynard (2011) recommend using pragmatism as a creative solving of problems through the application of reflective practice – an approach used in Chapter 4 and 5. It is worth noting that sometimes pragmatic approach may very well raise more questions than it provides answers. Yet, as Debrock (2003) points out, this is what the process of pragmatism is about.

The pragmatic approach investigates the factors that have the most impact on what we choose to study. The aim of this research is to investigate how PCT can help build the resilience and

competitiveness of the Australia's tourism industry. To achieve this, Studies 1 and 2 explore the factors that can stimulate the growth of PCT in Australia, while Study 3 offers a broader perspective on PCT by examining its place in the global economy and the way it is utilised by tourism stakeholders worldwide. Together, the three studies investigate the factors that have the most impact on PCT.

The pragmatism, with its powerful ability to disambiguate the questions, feels like an appropriate paradigm for this research. Creswell (2013b) describes pragmatism by defining four major themes (Figure 2.5):



**Figure 2.5 Important aspects of pragmatism**

Just like Morgan (2007), Creswell (2013b) emphasizes that pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions and consequences. As explained in Chapter 1, popular culture is intended to be a tool. Its effectiveness depends on how well one can use it. The results (consequences) depend on the strategy adopted (actions). Pragmatism is concerned with applications – what works (Creswell, 2013b; Patton, 1990). Popular culture has a lot of applications and can address a variety of market needs. It can be used in marketing and promotion, sold as a product or offered as an incentive. The practical adaptations of popular culture to industry's needs are thoroughly described in Chapter 3-5. The PCT can be a solution to many problems.

It can help lessen the impact of seasonality in tourism, encourage more day and weekend trips, promote rural tourism. It can provide new cultural experiences.

Hammond (2013) states that according to pragmatism knowledge is provisional: truth is what works at the time. This applies to most commercial knowledge (Demarest, 1997). Greenberg (1967), for example, explained that the results of a marketing study have an unknown degree of precision when used for prediction at a later period in time. Yet for those businesses able to make quick market decisions, this approach is most valuable. The studies that investigate current trends look towards pragmatism as it delivers knowledge of a practical kind. In tourism research, the provisional status of knowledge production is highlighted by Tribe, Dann, and Jamal (2015).

Another element of pragmatism according to Creswell (2013b) is pluralism. Tribe, Dann, and Jamal (2015) argue that in tourism studies any given topic should be approached from a variety of angles. The pluralism offers diversity of views rather than a single approach or method, making pragmatic stance most flexible and adaptive. This explains why many pragmatic researchers prefer the mixed methods design, for it works to provide the multi-perspective understanding of a research problem.

According to Mingers (2003) in a study that is conducted from a pluralist perspective, the pluralism extends to ontology, recognising the existence of different realities, objects and relations; epistemology, recognising that there exist different ways and many tools for gaining knowledge; axiology, recognising differing values; and methodology, recognising that the research process involves many approaches to data collection. It is now time to revisit

Creswell’s explanation of philosophical assumptions and the questions they raise (Figure 2.2), and answer these questions using pragmatism as a guiding philosophy (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Philosophical assumptions associated with Pragmatism

Pragmatic approach			
Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Methodology
The reality is what is practical. It is constantly renegotiated and interpreted in the light of its usefulness.	The knowledge is provisional. Truth is what works at the time. Reality can be explained using both objective and subjective evidence.	Knowledge reflects both researchers' and participants' views. Researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that biases are present.	Researcher determines which method to use to answer a specific question. If multiple questions are posed, multiple methods can be used. Mixed-method design is most common.

Broadly grounded in the philosophical assumptions mentioned above, this research has several defining views and limitations:

- High concern with the practical utility of proposed marketing techniques.
- The researcher's interpretations play a key role in this study, allowing for subjectivity that is backed with quality evidence.
- The degree of precision, when used for predicting customer's tastes and general trends, may be found to be lower at a later period.
- The researcher acknowledges the important issues and controversies associated with pragmatism and mixed methods research.

There are views that question pragmatism as a reliable philosophy for tourism research.

Downward and Mearman (2004), for instance, describe pragmatism as a ‘vague’ philosophy

that should not be relied upon. However, this view is challenged by Pansiri (2005). He argues that pragmatism can yield better research insights because of its potential to allow the mixing of methods. While the researcher agrees with Pansiri, the issues associated with the use of this paradigm are acknowledged. Some of these issues will be addressed in the following sections.

It is important to remember that all research paradigms have limitations. Yet this study confidently relies on pragmatism. Once again referring to Plano Clark and Creswell (2008), it should be stressed that the choice of a paradigm always involves an element of subjectivity. William James (2010;1907;2009) succinctly explains the rationale behind using pragmatism by saying that:

*Against rationalism as a pretension and a method, pragmatism is fully armed and militant [...] It has no dogmas, and no doctrines save its method. As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, it lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next someone on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third a chemist investigating a body's properties [...] But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms (p. 41-42).*

Being a pragmatist has proven to be a very efficient strategy for this study. Like other pragmatic studies, this research aims at creating knowledge through the process of discovery. The researcher is prepared to accept any hypothesis on the basis of the available data, and to convey the realistic depiction of the situation, community or phenomenon at the time. No matter the outcome, the process of exploring – on its own – can deliver new knowledge and insights. This approach enables the researcher to be flexible and provides a better capacity to modify a previous statement or decision, if the modification is suggested by the data.

The choice of using a flexible research approach and design has been a great moral support. When studying human behaviour, particularly the consumer behaviour and consumer attitudes, the ability to adapt and modify one's research methods is incredibly helpful. Both the consistency and inconsistency of our preferences is a catalyst behind economic progress. To be able to describe the underlying processes one needs to be adaptable, adjustable and practical. A pragmatic stance delivers just that. Combined with the mixed methods research design, pragmatism is best suited for exploring the elusive nature of the 21st century consumer.

### **2.3.2 Mixed methods research**

The pragmatic approach highlights methodology as an area that connects abstract issues of epistemology with the mechanics of the actual methods. The philosophical school of pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality. This also applies to the research method. The pragmatists can draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions (Creswell, 2013b). They are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs.

There are not enough studies to permit typological generalization about the subject of PCT. With no well-established guidelines, the criteria for the research design, methodology, and data collection procedures become a subjective choice. It is the personal reflection that draws on numerous sources of information that would guide the decision-making processes. Making choices in this way may leave the researcher vulnerable to mistakes and bias. Therefore, an instrument is needed that can:

- counteract the biases in investigations;
- view the problems from multiple perspectives;

- be flexible enough to identify both consistencies and discrepancies in findings;
- enhance the interpretability of the phenomenon;
- bring fresh insights;
- value both objective and subjective knowledge.

Luckily, such instrument exists. The mixed methods approach provides opportunities for the integration of a variety of theoretical perspectives "giving primacy to the importance of the research problem and question (Creswell et al., 2011, p.4). There are many definitions of mixed methods in the literature (e.g., see Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). It is an approach that focuses on the real-life contextual issues, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences; it often has an emergent design, where the methods emerge during the process of the research (Klassen et al., 2012). It allows for the qualitative and quantitative data to be collected concurrently or sequentially (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

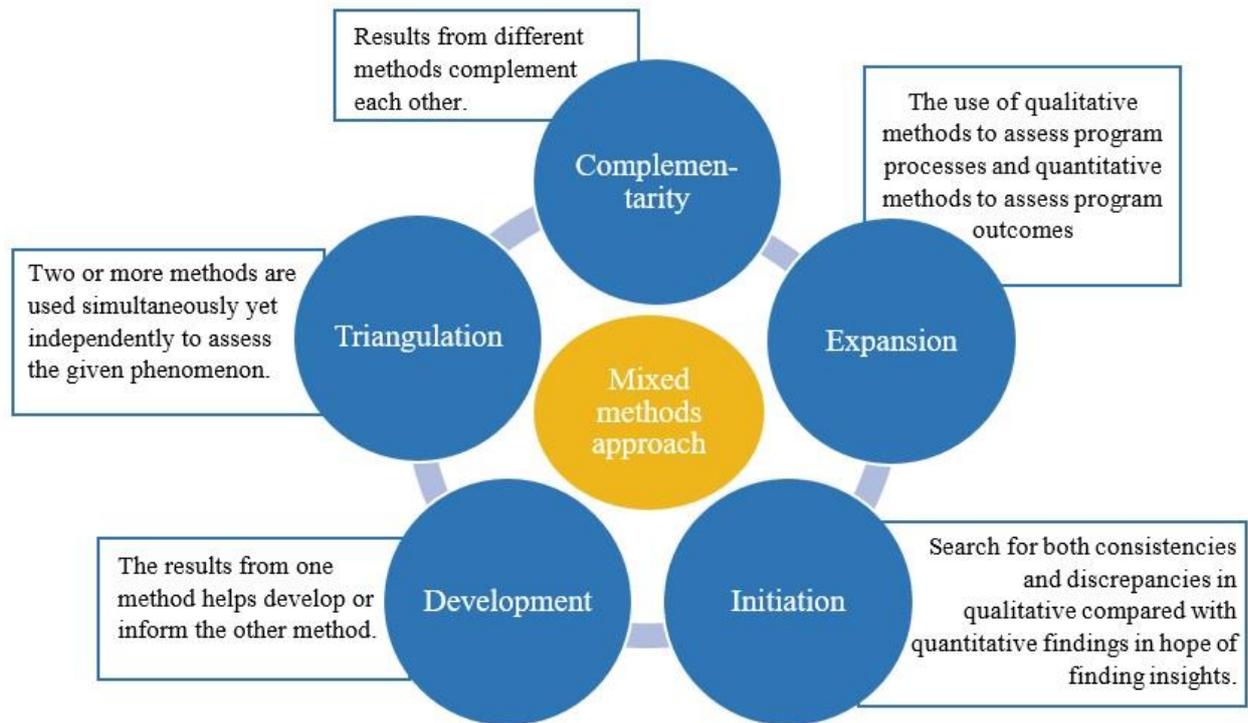
The mixed methods have a flexible point of interface, a point where 'mixing' occurs (Klassen et al., 2012). Depending on the research design, this "point" may occur during data collection (e.g., when both quantitative and qualitative questions are used in the same survey), during data analysis (e.g., when qualitative data are converted into quantitative scores or constructs), and/or during data interpretation stage. Not only that, but mixed methods can bridge diverse philosophical positions, such as postpositivist and pragmatic perspectives, or social constructivist worldviews (Greene, 2007).

The pragmatic approach is commonly associated with mixed methods research design (Cameron, 2011a, 2011b; Creswell, 2013a, 2013b; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Though pragmatism has gained a considerable support as a stance for mixed methods researchers (Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2007), with Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) describing pragmatism as "an attractive philosophical partner" for mixed methods research (p.14), there is still

disagreement whether pragmatism is able to justify the use of mixed methods (Hall, 2012). This argument is not new and goes back to the early purist debates, when both sets of purists, quantitative and qualitative, viewed their methods as the ideal for research, and would advocate the “incompatibility thesis” (Howe, 1992). Eventually, these debates instigated the school of thought sometimes identified as the situationalists.

Unlike purists, the situationalists believed that certain methods can be used in specific situations (Creswell, 1994). Similarly, the pragmatists argued against a false dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative research and advocated for the efficient use of both methods (Cameron, 2011a). The mixed methods research, note Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), offers great promise for any practising researcher who would like to develop techniques “that are closer to what researchers actually use in practice” (p.15). The idea that the use of mixed methodology is somewhat more consistent with the real-world conditions has strongly permeated the thinking of the pragmatists (Baran, 2016; Cameron, 2011a; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Critchley et al. (2003) also describes pragmatism as a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research, while Feilzer (2010) calls it an alternative paradigm that “sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality” (p. 8). Yet both agree that there exist many reasons for using mixed methods design. According to Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), who conducted a comprehensive review of 57 mixed methods studies, there are five purposes for using mixed methods approach: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Figure 2.6).



**Figure 2.6 Five purposes for using mixed methods approach**

Triangulation, as described by Campbell and Fiske (1959), Denzin (1978), and Mathison (1988), is used to offset or counteract the biases in investigations of the same phenomenon. It is done to “strengthen the validity of inquiry results” (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, p. 256). The main idea is that all methods have inherent biases, so the use of only one method to assess a given phenomenon will inevitably yield biased and limited results. Greene and McClintock (1985) explain that the triangulation argument requires that two or more methods are used simultaneously yet independently to assess a given phenomenon.

Mark and Shotland (1987) explain complementarity as a use of different methods to assess different study components or phenomena. Collected in such a manner, the results complement each other. This approach helps identify the threats and enhances the interpretability of assessments of a single phenomenon (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

Development “seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method” (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, p.259). This approach involves the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, where, for example, a quantitative survey could be used to identify a sample for the in-depth qualitative interviews.

Initiation is a search for both consistencies and discrepancies in qualitative and quantitative findings. It is used to discover paradoxes and fresh perspectives in the hope that fresh insights can be invoked by means of contradiction and paradox (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

The mixed methods expansion is commonly associated with the use of qualitative methods to assess program processes and quantitative methods to assess program outcomes (Cook, 1985; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

This thesis employs a mixed methods ‘complementarity’ approach to research design combined with elements of initiation (Figure 2.7).

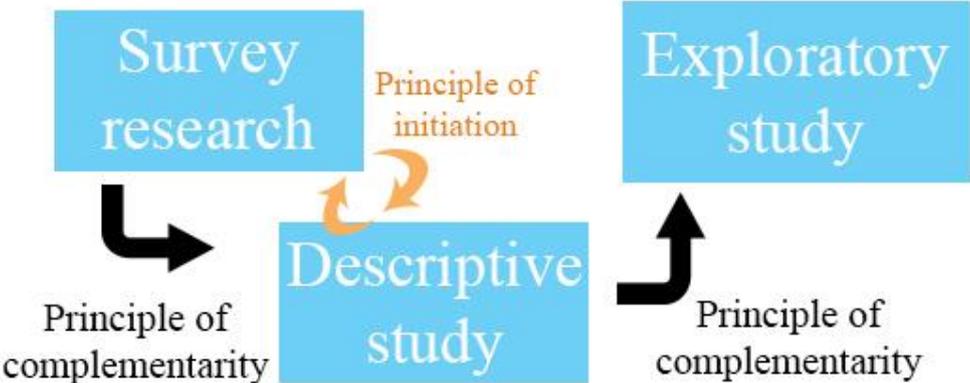


Figure 2.7 The mixed methods ‘complementarity’ approach

The results from Studies 1 and 2 help assess different components of the same phenomenon, where methods used in Study 1 complement that of Study 2. Both methods help identify the biases, consistencies and discrepancies, and enhance the interpretability of PCT. The combined results from Studies 1 and 2 inform the method used in Study 3. They bring fresh insights and original empirical material to provide a rich foundation for the discussion.

The mixed methods research is still in its adolescence, yet it has already been established as a third methodological movement, complementing the existing traditions of quantitative and qualitative movements (Cameron & Miller, 2007; Hall, 2012; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). It is true that past tourism research has been largely dominated by quantitative methods (Beeton, 2005b; Dann, Nash, & Pearce, 1988; Walle, 1997), however current literature indicates an increase in the methodological diversity (Morgan & Bischoff, 2003; Pansiri, 2005; Ritchie, Burns, & Palmer, 2005). The tourism researchers are now encouraged to explore new methodological approaches, as many believe that the field would only benefit from a greater level of epistemological and methodological diversity (Harris, 2006).

### **2.3.3 The challenges of mixed methods research**

Several mixed methods advocates acknowledge the controversies and challenges that face those embarking on mixed methods research (Cameron, 2011a; Mingers, 2001; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). For example, Tashakkori and Teddlie identify six to nine points of controversy in mixed methods design (2003). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) refer to four major crises: representation, legitimation, integration, and politics. Mingers (2001) described four types of barriers to mixed methods research: philosophical, cultural, psychological, and practical. Among the above-mentioned challenges, one of the often-heard issues is the need to document and rigorously defend one's paradigmatic stance in

mixed methods research. The mixed methods research undergoes closer scrutiny than the more traditional methods of inquiry (Cameron, 2011a). This factor contributed to the decision to dedicate the whole second chapter of this thesis to a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework.

Another popular issue deals with the question of competency. A mixed methods researcher must be skilled and competent in both qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as skilled and competent in mixed methods and integrated data analysis. This includes not only a comprehensive understanding of at least two major methodological approaches, but also requires the ability to interpret data meaningfully, and know and understand how to process data using appropriate software. It could be that these challenges are yet another way of strengthening the position of the mixed methods research. There are many examples in history when novelties meet a certain level of resistance before being accepted by the community. We went through this process with qualitative methods and now the mixed methods must tread the same path.

Philosophers warn of the dangers of scientism – the tendency to treat certain research methods and findings of science as the only truth. Yet it seems fitting to end this section by emphasising the equally dangerous tendency to treat philosophy as a similarly infallible method. Rolfe (2013) explains that philosophy provides some extremely powerful analytical tools, but while the philosophical method tends to result in logical conclusions, it does not always guarantee the truth. It is important to be aware of the dangers of placing too much trust in philosophical reasoning at the expense of common sense. Night invariably follows day, but we would not want to say that night is caused by day. That being said, the philosophical assumptions, paradigms and methods used in this study cannot be treated as the only possible truth, but rather one way out of many to ask and answer a question.

## **2.4 Synthesis of the chapter**

This chapter covered the philosophical assumptions that frame the research, and why it is important to provide a description of the philosophical assumptions that underlie a research. The chapter considered the history of research paradigms and acknowledged the importance of Kuhn's ideas. A brief description of several research paradigms has been provided to introduce some basic concepts that allow to characterise paradigms.

The pragmatism has been chosen as the most suitable approach to clarify and answer the research questions. The question of reliability of pragmatism as a philosophy for tourism research has been raised and answered. The reasons behind using the mixed methods approach have been thoroughly discussed. The researcher encouraged to explore new methodological and analytical approaches that may extend current understanding of cultural tourism.

# Chapter 3. IDENTIFYING MARKET PREFERENCES FOR POP-CULTURE RELATED ACTIVITIES

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### **3.1 Chapter introduction**

Study 1 is designed to explore the market preferences for pop-culture related activities in Australia. The investigation places a strong emphasis on the importance of local initiatives. It is essential to understand the development of PCT through the lens of the "homegrown" metaphor. The survey research helps determine and assesses the behaviour patterns of 253 popular culture consumers. The aims of the study are exploration and information gathering. The gathered data are used for: (1) PCT evaluation and behaviour analysis of the local consumers, (2) generating models and testing hypotheses.

The Chapter opens by discussing the importance of diversity in destination promotion. Special attention is paid to events tourism as a prominent component of Australian popular culture scene. The data are collected using the purposive sampling procedure. Prior to the data analysis process, the researcher had no well-defined expectations regarding the outcomes, allowing more opportunity for spontaneous discussions and thoughts as is consistent with the postulates of pragmatism. The results would later guide the design of the destination branding strategies revealed in Chapter 5.

### **3.2 Research context**

#### **3.2.1 Local support in destination development**

Destination development is a topic which has been studied very intensively over the last few decades by research groups in tourism and non-tourism areas alike (Cooper, 1994; Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012; Hosany, Ekinici, & Uysal, 2006; Vanhove, 2017; Weaver, 2000). As a result, tourism research journals published a plethora of studies examining destination development tools and strategies (García, Gómez, & Molina, 2012). While trying hard to

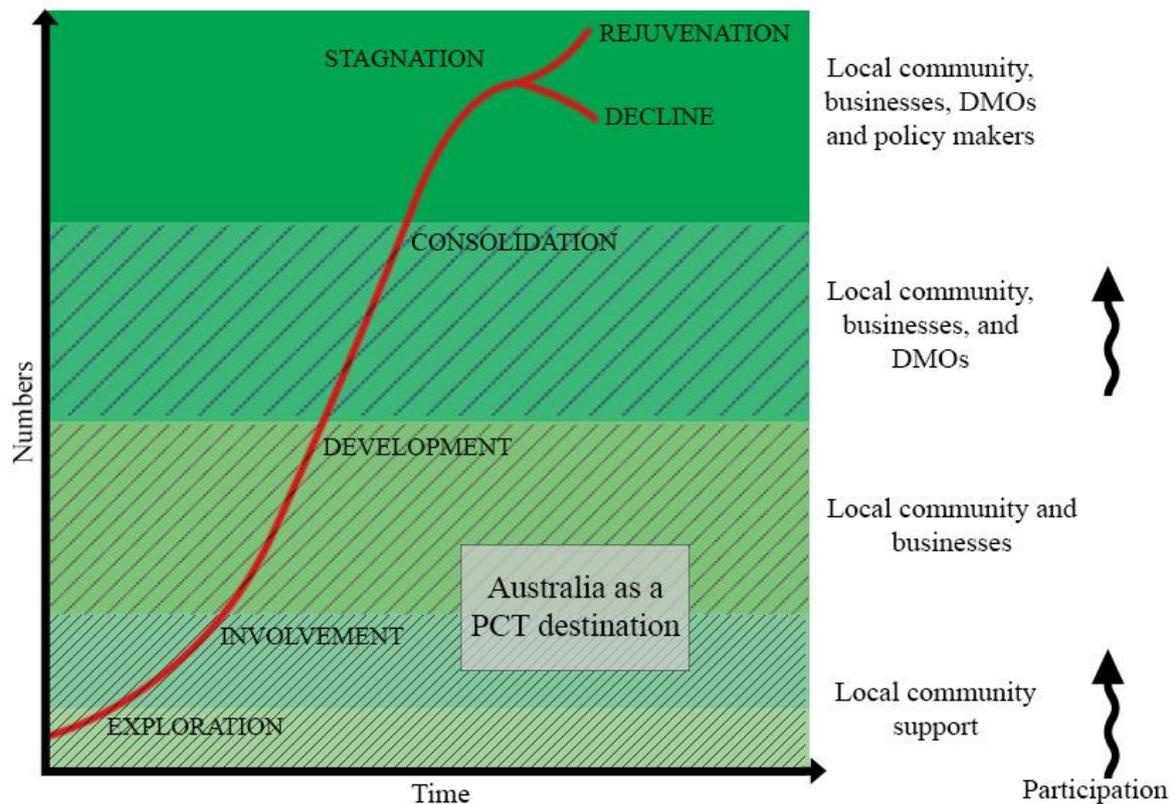
differentiate from their predecessors by creating a sense of novelty and progress, many are built upon older destination development models, such as Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model. Weaver (2000) wrote that "it is difficult to challenge the primacy of Butler's resort cycle" (p. 217) which remains one of the most cited destination development models (Baum, 1998; Butler, 2006; Ma & Hassink, 2013). While not all research supports the life-cycle approach, it is widely acknowledged that the tourist area life cycle is a useful organising framework or tool for setting destination development strategies (Cooper, 1994; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011; Moss, Ryan, & Wagoner, 2003). As Butler (2006) points out, there is enough evidence suggesting that the general pattern of tourist area evolution is consistent with the TALC model.

Butler's TALC model shows six stages through which it is suggested that tourist areas pass: 1) exploration, 2) involvement, 3) development, 4) consolidation, 5) stagnation, followed by either 6) rejuvenation or decline (Butler, 1980). Noronha (1977) has suggested that tourism destinations develop in three stages: through discovery to local response and initiative, and finally to institutionalization. Both stress the importance of local initiatives in destination development. The word 'local' does not only refer to local residents, but also includes domestic tourists. Local initiatives, explains Butler (2006), are extremely important during the early destination development stages. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) express a similar thought by saying that "foreign demand thrives more readily when domestic tourism is well established" (p. 141).

Likewise, a tourism product (experience, service, or even group of products) can pass through similar stages of development. During the exploration stage, the product acquires its 'identity' (i.e., essential features and properties). The supplier-retailer (e.g., tour operator and retail agency) relationships are established during the involvement phase. Gradually, local businesses

and residents become involved in product development and entrepreneurial activities. In the development stage, the tourism product is well defined: the key markets have been established, promotional campaigns raise awareness, and the novelty of the experience gradually dissipates with the steady increase in customer numbers. During the consolidation stage, the market is characterised by the growing number of competitors – the prices start to fluctuate as the product becomes more ‘standard’. At this point, the marketing efforts and advertising are wide-reaching. Both public and private tourism sectors offer similar or complementary services and products. During the stagnation stage, the product reaches its 'plateau' state. It does not attract new customers. After reaching stagnation, the product faces two possible alternatives: rejuvenation or decline. Once again, this example demonstrates the emergence and development of local initiatives.

For Australia, where PCT is in an early stage of development, perhaps barely past the involvement stage, one cannot stress enough the need for continued local support (Figure 3.1). Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer (2010) explain that “tourism development cannot be sustained unless it is developed through local initiatives, consistent with local values and operated in harmony with the local environment, community, and cultures” (p. 381). Similarly, the Australian Office of National Tourism states that cultural tourism should focus on “the lifestyle, heritage, arts, industries and leisure pursuits of the local population” (Csapo, 2012, p. 204). According to Csapo (2012), many definitions of cultural tourism focus on the attraction side of tourism, or the geographical space, or the experiences. Fortunately, he states, “almost all of them focus on and highlight the role of the local population as well” (p. 204). The study of cultural activities and local tourist behaviour patterns, and the knowledge generated through them, are of key importance to ascertain a steady and healthy development of the cultural tourism sector in Australia.



**Figure 3.1 Reinterpretation of Butler's (1980) TALC model using Noronha's (1977) ideas**

The interest generated by the residents and reinforced through continuing support of the domestic tourists, creates that initial spark that can later attract the international attention. According to Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the domestic overnight travel saw strong growth during the year 2017, with expenditure growing by 7% to \$63.7 billion, overnight trips up 7% to 96 million, and nights up 6% to 347 million (Travel by Australians, 2017). The TRA also report that domestic overnight travellers have also been found attending festivals, fairs and related events in growing numbers across the length and breadth of the country. Therefore, the decision was made that the exploratory methods used in this study would primarily be designed to borrow information from the local popular culture communities and domestic tourists in hope that their insights would be helpful in the development of the destination branding strategies revealed in Chapter 5.

### 3.2.2 The importance of diversity in tourism

This chapter seeks to provide information that could help increase the diversity of the tourism sector in Australia. Diversity, reflects Ranaivoson (2012), is always presented from a favourable point of view in many fields of study. The assumption that consumers value diversity “has become a standard assumption in economics, notably as applied to the field of cultural consumption” (Ranaivoson, 2012, p. 1). In tourism, diversity has been recognised through the steady growth of the industry throughout the world. The destinations worldwide are slowly coming to realise the importance of a balanced tourism diversification policy (Benur & Bramwell, 2015; Sharpley, 2002; Wang & Xu, 2011). As Black and Rutledge (1994) point out, it is the diversity of tourism product that makes the destination grow in importance in the international holiday market.

For Australia, diversifying the economy has always been a key stand of the national policy. The PwC’s 15th annual Australian Entertainment & Media Outlook reported that compared to other developed countries, Australia might experience a lower rate of growth in several economic sectors within the next few years (PwC Australia, 2016). The report outlined some potential long-term challenges for the Australian market, saying that Australian industries need diversity to grow:

*We are forecasting low growth ahead, so the time has come for the industry to do things differently. [Embedding diversity] should be considered a strategic imperative in the search for growth (PwC Australia, 2016).*

The same problems have been outlined in the Australia's National Tourism 2020 strategy, where diversity is seen as a key factor in the development of tourism sector. An introduction of the

alternative tourism product, such as PCT, and a rigorous study of the phenomenon could help Australia build resilience and promote development of cultural tourism.

### **3.2.3 Events tourism**

This study offers an extended reflection on some emergent themes in PCT. Even though PCT covers a wide range of activities, a decision was made to concentrate on the events sector rather than the locations (e.g., filming locations or “places of fiction”). This decision was greatly influenced by the literature (Beeton, 2004, 2006; Duxbury, 2014; Hall, 2009; Young & Young, 2008), and the observations formed while investigating the Australia’s PCT sector. The cultural activities currently taking place in Australia indicate a higher level of participation in popular culture events compared to popular culture locations (see the Results section). That being said, this study still investigates popular culture locations, since on the world-wide scale locations make up a noticeable fraction of the PCT. More in-depth discussion is available later in this chapter.

## **3.3 Study aims and hypotheses**

An exploratory data analysis should always precede the more rigorous model building. The aims of this study are exploration and information gathering, while the hypotheses test the predicted relationships. A quantitative approach is used to assess the following information:

**Aim 1** – level of interest in different popular culture activities (events and locations);

**Aim 2** – level of participation in popular culture activities;

**Aim 3** – tourists’ spatial behaviour, pop-culture trends and future perspectives.

The survey research data are used to assesses the behaviour patterns of 253 popular culture consumers. The collected data helped identify the factors that guide the design of the

destination branding strategies revealed in later chapters. The gathered data are used for generating models and testing the following hypotheses:

- H1 - Associations can be an indicator of the level of interest.
- H2 - There is a strong positive association between interest in popular culture categories and the consumption frequency;
- H3 - Past attendance rates can predict future attendance behaviour.
- H4 - There is a positive correlation between the level of interest and the travel distances, specifically:
  - H4a: people who identify themselves as popular culture fans are eager to travel longer distances to attend popular culture (PC) events (the search for a monotonic positive trend).
  - H4b: there is a statistically significant association between interest in attending PC events and the travel distances.

The suggested relations between variables have been tested and analysed. The results are summarized in the following sections.

## **3.4 Methodology**

### **3.4.1 Survey research**

This study describes a research instrument often employed by those interested in the mixed methods approach – the survey research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The survey research, note Visser, Krosnick, and Lavrakas (2000), is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a sample drawn from a well-defined population through the use of a questionnaire. It is an easy to use and relatively cost-efficient tool for eliciting a large amount of data. Surveys are often used in the study of preferences, where the survey form provides an easy

means for respondents to rank some aspect of the variable being measured (Kraska-Miller, 2014). It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the survey data, which is susceptible to social desirability bias and lack of generalizability (Dodou & de Winter, 2014).

When designing a survey, it is necessary to consider several factors, such as: (1) the question types (open or closed), (2) the number and order of questions, (3) the tone, and (4) the data collection context – where all must align with the study objectives (Schuman & Presser, 1981). Deciding to do a survey, note de Leeuw and Dillman (2008), “means committing oneself to work through a myriad of issues each of which is critical to the ultimate success of the survey” (p. 1). There should be a clear pathway that leads from theoretical constructs to survey questions. The concept can be theory driven, the so-called top down strategy, which starts with theoretical constructs and works towards observable variables; or it can be data driven, a bottom up strategy, which starts with observations and works towards theoretical constructs (De Leeuw & Dillman, 2008). This study adopts the bottom up strategy, letting the observations and pilot data shape the research questions.

In preparation for the survey, 20 short informal interviews were carried out with popular culture attendees and staff members of Oz Comic-Con during the field work in 2016 (Appendix 1). The interviews were a valuable tool that aided in the extraction of useful data. The collected data helped: (1) create the initial survey plan, (2) form the wording of the questions and instruments, and (3) shape the final survey design.

The survey questions were divided into three logical groups (Table 3.1). Each group measured a different aspect of consumer behaviour.

Table 3.1 Three groups of survey questions

Type	Information	Label
Group 1	General interest in popular culture	G1Qs
Group 2	Interest in popular culture activities (events and locations)	G2Qs
Group 3	Participation and commitment	G3Qs

Most of the survey data came from Likert scale questions (Appendix 2). Working with Likert scale data can be challenging. Allen and Seaman (2007) advocate that the initial analysis of Likert scale data should involve nonparametric statistics and should heavily rely on the ordinal nature of the data. The ordinal nature of the data means that the response categories have a rank order (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Jamieson, 2004). The problems arise when interpreting the distance between the values. Many researchers, notes Blaikie (2003), treat the intervals between values as equal. However, Alkire et al. (2015) argue that it is incorrect to infer that the distance, or intensity of feeling, between ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ is equivalent to the distances between other consecutive categories on the Likert scale.

There seems to be no strict consensus, even within one discipline, on whether Likert scale data should be treated as ordinal or interval (Knapp, 1990). Jamieson (2004) points out that this is an important issue, because the appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics differ for ordinal and interval variables. Choosing a wrong statistical tool would increase the chance of coming to the wrong conclusion about the significance of the finding. When describing ordinal data, it is preferable to employ the median or the mode as a measure of central tendency (Clegg, 1982; Jamieson, 2004; Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The explanation suggests that the arithmetical manipulations required to calculate the mean are inappropriate for ordinal data (Jamieson, 2004).

Likert scale data involves nonparametric statistics (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Marshall & Jonker, 2011). Nonparametric statistics are often considered to be synonymous with distribution-free statistics, wherein the data do not fit or are not required to fit a normal distribution (Chakraborti, Qiu, & Mukherjee, 2015). The nonparametric statistics do not make assumptions about the probability distributions of the variables. Nonparametric methods are common in behavioural and social sciences and are most useful when assessing preferences (Kraska-Miller, 2014). The statistical analyses performed in this study use SPSS 24.0 for Windows and rely heavily on nonparametric methods. The statistical tests and models being used include Cumulative Odds Ordinal Logistic Regression model, Likelihood-ratio tests, Pearson Goodness-of-fit tests, Spearman's rank-order correlation, rank-based nonparametric Jonckheere-Terpstra test, and Cronbach's alpha as a measure of the reliability.

### **3.4.2 Sampling and data collection**

This study uses a purposive sampling technique, sometimes called judgment sampling, where the choice of participants is deliberate and relies on the qualities the participants possess. According to Tongco (2007), this technique is most effective “when one wants to study a certain cultural domain” with knowledgeable users that are already familiar with the domain (p. 147). The purposive sampling technique can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies. It does not need an underlying theory or a set number of participants. It allows the researcher to prepare the questions and look for subjects who can provide information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Lewis & Sheppard, 2006; Tongco, 2007).

The purposive sampling is most effective when used with the key informant technique, where key informants are individuals who can act as guides to a specific culture (Bernard, 2002; Tongco, 2007). The key informants are generally representative members of the community

of interest who are knowledgeable about the culture and can provide culturally correct information. It is important that the researcher is well informed and knows what to ask about the culture to be able to find knowledgeable and reliable informants most efficiently. Tongco (2007) suggests that asking help from the community would be useful at this point. The community can spread the word and suggest other candidates thus lessening the bias that a researcher brings to sampling and data collection. Tongco (2007) also notes that the purposive sampling is most relevant when studying aspects of a culture not known to all its members. For example, while cosplayers may participate in popular culture events, they have little information as to the participation of gamers.

It must be noted that prior to purposive sampling, the researcher had tried the random sampling technique when doing the survey pilot test, but a lot of missing data rendered most of the responses invalid. The questionnaire was then adjusted to fit a new sampling technique. In the end, the purposive sampling technique proved to be the most successful sampling method for this study. However, unlike random sampling, the purposive sampling method is not free from bias. Barratt, Ferris, and Lenton (2015) and Tongco (2007) warn that in purposive sampling, the interpretation of results should always be limited to the population under study. The researcher must make sure that the results are interpreted in a way that would not mislead the reader into making any generalizations from the findings. Despite the bias, many studies find that the purposive sampling can deliver results that come near the ones obtained with random sampling methods, and in some cases the purposive method does better than the random method (Kruskal & Mosteller, 1979; Tongco, 2007).

An important factor when considering the validity of the results obtained through purposive sampling method is the measure of consistency. The researcher must assess how consistent

the information is across the community. The quality control should be an essential part of the study.

For the study to be topic-specific and meaningful, the survey was distributed to informants who: (a) identified themselves as members of specific interest groups (e.g., gamers, cosplayers, artists, or fan fiction authors), (b) were actively interested in some or all aspects of popular culture (e.g., made public posts about movies, or blogged extensively about games), and/or (c) attended or were considering attending PC events or visiting PC locations. The individuals who received the survey link were considered knowledgeable about popular culture or described themselves as interested in popular culture.

Human ethics committee approval from James Cook University was obtained prior to distributing the survey. Before the launch, the survey was pilot tested in several iterations, resulting in some changes and refinements. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity and were asked to be as objective as possible. The survey distribution goal was to reach a wide variety of age groups and an almost equal percentage of males and females. To avoid the issues associated with the lack of generalizability in survey data, the survey link was distributed in three different ways: (1) via email, (2) through direct messages (e.g., private Facebook messages), (3) through relevant professional or social groups (e.g., the researcher would ask the group administrator to publish the survey link on the main page or in the news feed). This approach allowed to incorporate the sort of controlled randomness that is associated with natural variability in popular culture.

The purposive sample does not necessarily require a diversification of information collecting sources. Yet one source, even a large one (e.g., a social media platform or a forum), does not

yield a good representative sample. The observations show that many forums and online communities have a dominant group or groups that are more active than others, and that the level of forum activity can be time-dependent or time-varying (Van Stekelenburg, Oegema, & Klandermans, 2010). For example, posting a link to a forum where most active members are anime fans, would result in a bias towards a higher prevalence of issues associated with anime. In another example, if the social platform is experiencing a sudden surge in activity due to an upcoming event, for example a film festival, the results might reveal a bias towards film related events. A certain level of control (e.g., multi-period sampling approach, interval sampling approach) must be imposed to reduce the unintended sample bias.

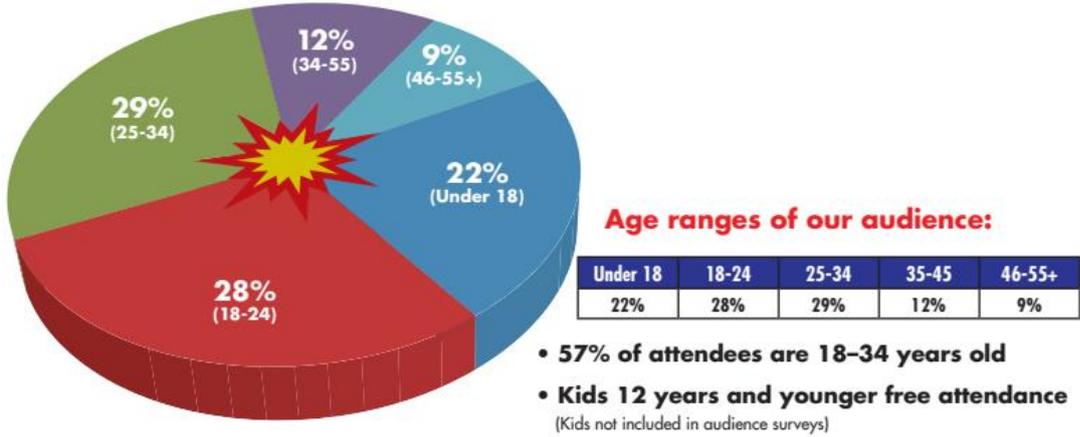
There were no incentives involved. While an incentive might have resulted in greater respondent numbers, it was preferable to engage with an invested audience willing to participate without a reward. An incentive might have triggered a certain bias. If, for example, the respondents were offered a free ticket to a comic-con, how would that influence the answer to a question “How interested are you in attending a popular culture event next year?”. The incentive might propel the respondent to choose ‘interested’ over other options, therefore, creating ‘artificial’ interest.

## **3.5 Results**

### **3.5.1 Demographic characteristics**

Before moving to results, it is necessary to briefly note several important characteristics of the demographic data. The survey called for demographic data related to age, gender and the geographic location. The overall completion rate was high, resulting in a final sample of 253 respondents. The respondents who did not fill in the demographic information properly were not included in the findings.

More than 90% of the respondents answered all the questions of the survey, with only 3% of the respondents completing half of the survey. Approximately 74% of the respondents were young adults under the age of 35 years, with the age group 25 to 34 accounting for nearly 40% of the respondents. Similar demographic results were obtained by the Supanova study in 2017 (Figure 3.2).

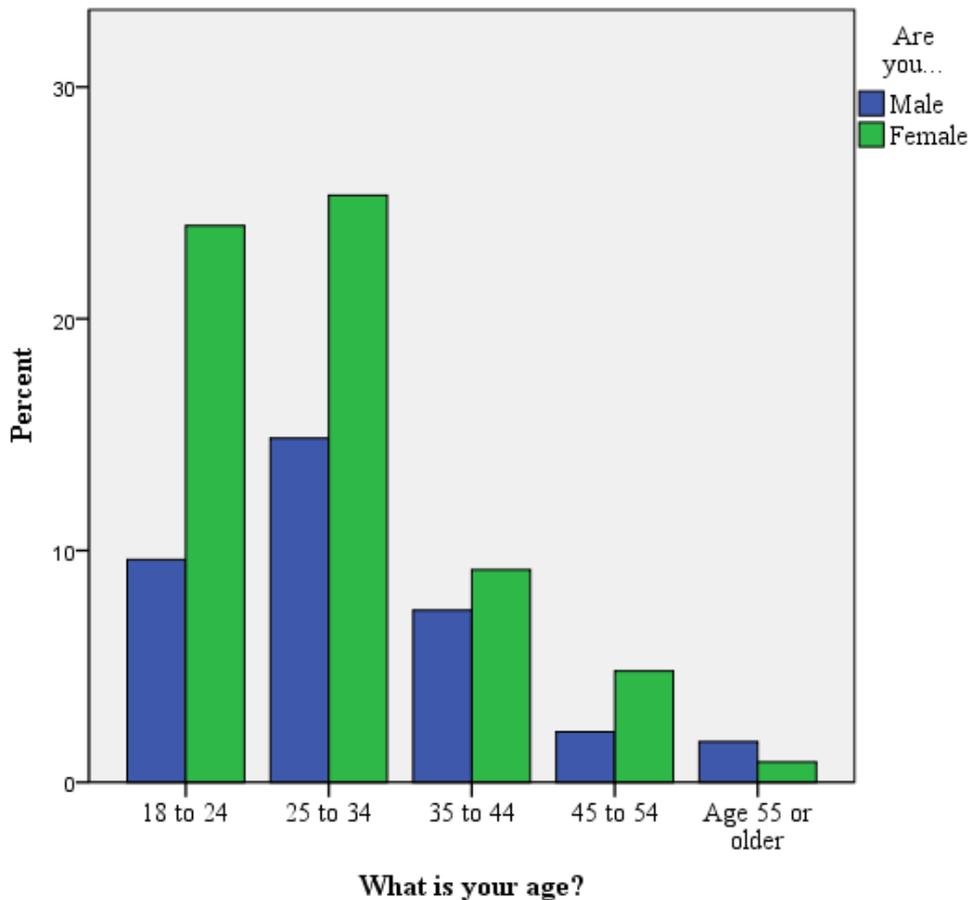


**Figure 3.2 Supanova study results**

Note: The illustration from Supanova exhibitor information pack (2017)

According to the study on Entertainment Industry Economics by Vogel (2014), "the aggregate spending on entertainment is concentrated in the middle-age groups" (p. 16). His report showed that among the young adults (under 35 years), the age group that spends the most on entertainment is that of people between the age of 25 to 34. For researchers who study markets, it is valuable information knowing that the sample has a saturated presence of people with a high spending capacity. Other age groups present in the sample are: 35 to 44 years ( $\approx 16\%$ ), 45 to 54 years ( $\approx 7\%$ ), 55+ years (3%).

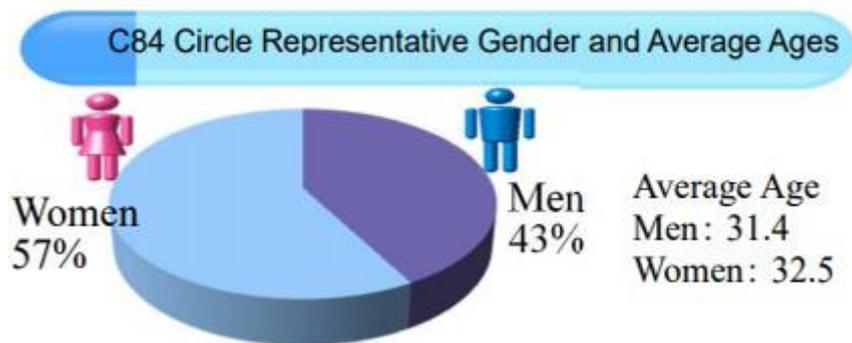
The gender distribution was 36% males and 64% females. Females were prevalent in most of the age groups (Figure 3.3).



**Figure 3.3 Descriptive statistics: gender**

It is hard to give a definitive answer as to why female respondents appear to be more prevalent even though the researcher tried to target equal percentage of males and females. Perhaps, some speculation might be insightful. First, these results support the existing literature that suggests growing number of female activists among pop-culture communities (Bury, 2005; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Mazzarella, 2005). Some popular culture events also report slight increase in female attendees (Supanova exhibitor information pack, 2017). Chua and Iwabuchi (2008), when referring to pop-culture fandom behaviour, note that female fans are transforming the Internet “into their playground where they share experiences, produce their own cultural texts out of the original text, and form a cultural power of their own” (p. 161). It is also interesting to note that in some parts of Asia, specifically Korea and Japan, major PC events historically draw bigger numbers of female attendees. For example, the

statistics from 2014 Comiket in Japan show 57% female attendees and 43% male attendees (Figure 3.4).



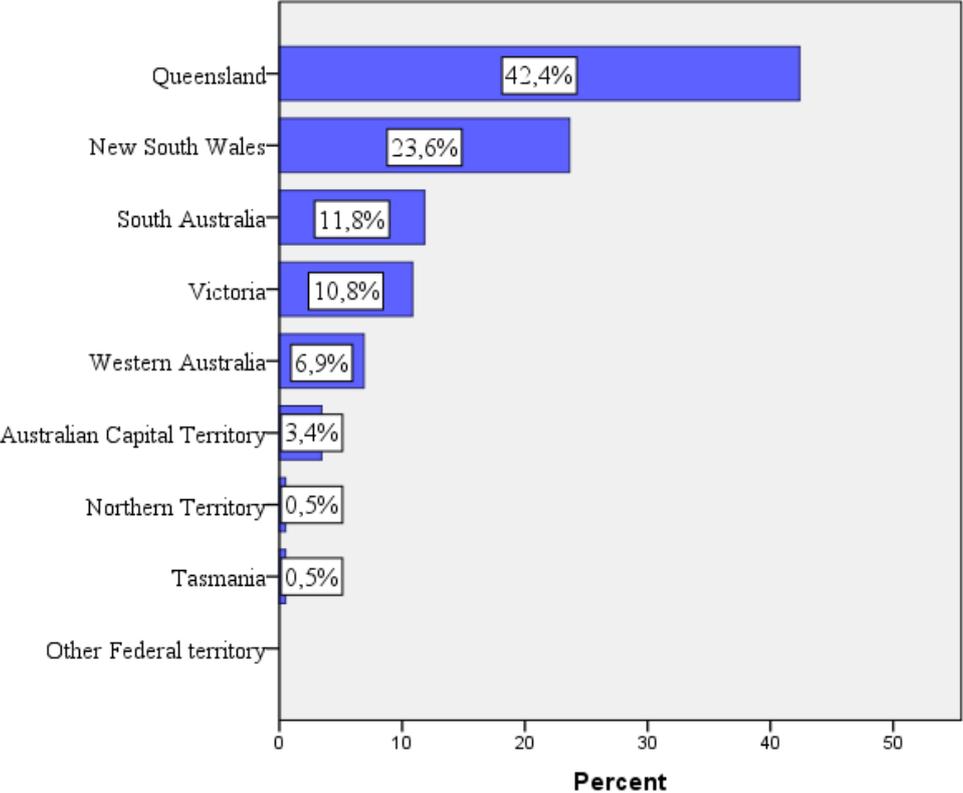
**Figure 3.4 Comiket demographics**

Note: Copyright 2007-2015 COMIKET. Source: <http://www.comiket.co.jp/info-a/WhatIsEng201401.pdf>

Salkowitz (2012), in his book *Comic-Con and the Business of Pop Culture*, notes an increasing number of “proud girl geeks of all ages... that are coming into the social and participative world of [pop-culture] fandom in USA”. It is quite possible that Australian popular culture community is experiencing a similar rise in female numbers in its population.

The greater number of female respondents can be partially explained by the wording of the ‘call for the survey’. An observation formed during the data collection showed that female respondents were more likely to respond to the call for the survey if it suggested that the results of the research could benefit the community. Such results are not uncommon. It has been recognised that women are more open to altruistic or helping behaviour (Heilman, 2001; Simmons & Emanuele, 2007). Simmons and Emanuele (2007) report that the “society places more expectations on women to be altruistic and to act in an altruistic manner” (p. 546). It is likely that, when given the opportunity, women will engage in altruistic behaviour (Heilman & Chen, 2005). The previous research on altruism has shown that sex is a significant factor in the determination of the choice to volunteer (Heilman, 2001; Neymotin, 2016; Simmons & Emanuele, 2007).

The results showed that among the 253 respondents, 90% were Australian permanent residents or citizens, and 10% were temporary or non-Australian residents. Figure 3.5 shows that most of the Australian respondents came from Queensland ( $\approx 42\%$ ), followed by New South Wales ( $\approx 24\%$ ), South Australia ( $\approx 12\%$ ), and Victoria ( $\approx 11\%$ ).



**Figure 3.5 Descriptive statistics: residency**

Temporary or non-Australian residents were mostly students (52%), people visiting friends and family in Australia (22%), and leisure tourists (13%). The prevailing number of Australians in the survey data pool encouraged the idea of making the second study address the phenomenon from the international perspective.

### **3.5.2 Aim 1**

Harper (2000) explains that the rules of social marketing suggest that effective communication begins with knowing your target audience. He further points out that by examining the popular culture it is possible to form the guide for “predicting behavioral choices and for determining the strategies necessary to change and influence those choices” (p. 19). Earlier, it was mentioned that the survey questions are divided into three logical groups. The “level of interest” was predominantly explored by the G1Qs.

#### **3.5.2.1 Pop-culture associations**

The G1Qs start with an open-ended question which asked respondents to write down an association with the word popular culture. This question is meant to help further understand the term popular culture and see whether the interpretations of the term covered in Chapter 1 are comprehensive. The question reads: “When I think of pop-culture, the first that comes to mind is...”. It was not specified how to describe the association: in a word or in a sentence. While many respondents (approximately 75%) gave only one association (e.g., anime, movies, super heroes), others were more elaborate. A word cloud was created to visualise the uncoded text responses (Figure 3.6). A word cloud, state McNaught and Lam (2010), is helpful when working with raw text data, particularly when looking for keywords in a free form text. Visualizing the responses to open ended text questions helps categorise the responses during the later coding process. The more frequently the word appears in the text, the more highlighted and prominent is its representation in the cloud (McNaught & Lam, 2010).

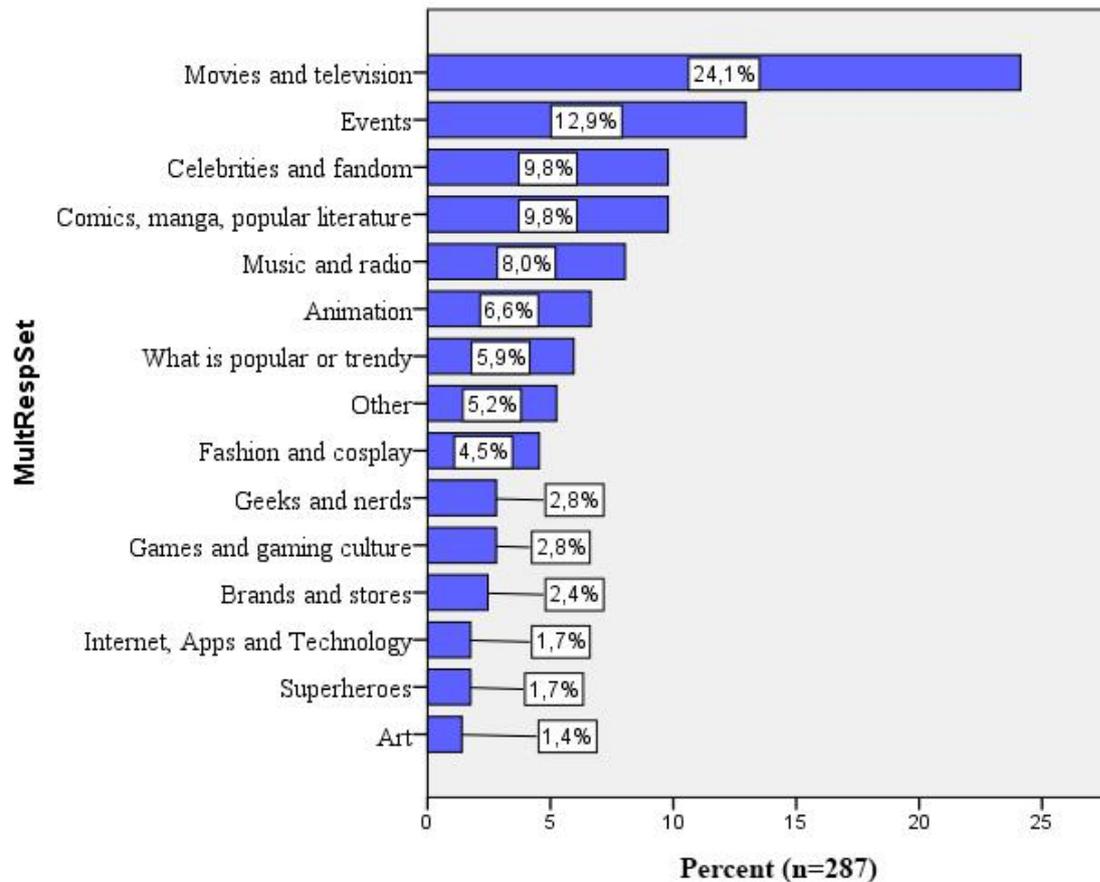


The further analysis of associations helped recode the text into a system of categories. This resulted in 15 categories. The results are presented in the Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Association categories

1= Comics, manga, popular literature	9= Art
2= Animation	10= Events and locations
3= Geek culture	11= What is popular or trendy
4= Movies and television	12= Fashion and cosplay
5= Celebrities and fandom	13= Games and gaming culture
6= Internet, Apps and Technology	14= Superheroes
7= Brands and stores	15= Other
8= Music and radio	

The responses such as “Anime, manga and music” were coded as 2,1,8, resulting in three variables. The variables were analysed as a set. Figure 3.7 is a frequencies bar chart built to illustrate the results.



**Figure 3.7 Associations bar chart**

According to the results, approximately 24% of the popular culture associations were related to movies (e.g., films, cinema) and television (e.g., shows, news, TV ads). Approximately 13% of the associations were related to events (e.g., conventions, festivals, concerts). Surprisingly few respondents (only 2) associate popular culture with locations (these responses were coded as Other). Nearly 10% of the associations were linked to celebrities and fandom. The category ‘other’ consisted of rare cases, such as the above-mentioned locations, and associations like ‘cult’ or ‘fun’.

Further work with associations showed a positive link between associations and interests. This inspired an investigation of whether it is possible to predict the ordinal dependent variable, the level of interest, given one dichotomous independent variable such as an

association category. In other words, can associations indicate interest. This hypothesis, from now on *H1*, while not being a paramount component of the study, allowed the researcher to test some of the essential techniques necessary for working with ordinal data.

### **3.5.2.2 Hypothesis 1**

Working with nonparametric data shapes the way the questions should be asked. The *H1* proposes to evaluate whether the respondents who, for example, answered ‘movies’ to the association question, would be likely to score higher (5\_Somewhat interested to 7\_Very interested) on “interested in movies” question. Or whether the person, whose association with the word popular culture was “events”, would likely score higher on “interested in popular culture events” questions. Since the respondents’ answers were very diverse, resulting in many association categories, only the popular association categories (with high number of respondents) were chosen for the analysis.

The exploration began with identifying the appropriate statistical tests. Since the measured variables were: a) ordinal variables – dependent, and b) dichotomous variables (yes/no association) – independent, a cumulative odds Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) model was chosen to predict the dependent variable. The OLR is used to predict an ordinal dependent variable given one or more independent variables, if the dependent variable has three or more ordered categories (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The OLR determines: (1) if the independent variable or variables have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable, and (2) how well the model predicts the dependent variable.

For dichotomous independent variables (yes/no association), the OLR helps to explore the odds that one group (e.g., respondents with “events” association) had a higher or lower value

on the dependent variable (e.g., interest in attending PC events) compared to the second group (respondents with no “events” associations). Before running the cumulative odds OLR in SPSS, two assumptions must be met to provide a valid result: (1) there should be no multicollinearity (Allison, 2012; Menard, 2002), and (2) the assumption of proportional odds must be met (Liu, 2008).

Allison (2012) explains that multicollinearity occurs “when there are strong linear dependencies among explanatory variables” (p. 60). She further explains, that if two or more predictor variables are highly correlated with one another, it becomes hard to get good estimates of their distinct effects on a dependent variable. Testing for multicollinearity ensures that there are no issues in calculating an OLR. However, as Menard (2002) explains, “if there is only one predictor, multicollinearity is not an issue” (p.5). Therefore, it is safe to assume that the first assumption has been met.

An important assumption that should not be violated when performing a cumulative logistic regression is the assumption of proportional odds (Kelly, 2017). The proportional odds, sometimes also called cumulative odds model, is a generalization of a binary logistic regression model (O’Connell, 2006). This assumption means that the independent variable “has an identical effect at each cumulative split of the ordinal dependent variable” (“Ordinal Regression using SPSS Statistics”, n.d.). In other words, the relationship between every possible pair of response levels is the same (Kelly, 2017).

The assumption of proportional odds can be tested using the Test of parallel lines, where the null hypothesis states that the slope coefficients in the model are the same across response categories. In other words, the lines of the same slope are parallel. If the null hypothesis is

rejected, meaning the significance of the Chi-Square statistic is  $p < .05$ , the assumption of proportional odds is violated. Otherwise, if the null hypothesis is not rejected ( $p > .05$ ), the assumption of proportional odds is met. Before testing the assumption, the association categories were grouped to form the following combinations (Table 3.3):

Table 3.3 Combinations of association and behaviour

Combination	Association	Behaviour
1	Association 'Movies and Television'	Behavior: a) "Interested in movies", b) "Interested in TV shows"
2	Association 'Events'	Behaviour "Likely to attend an event"
3	Association 'Music'	Behaviour "Interested in music"
4	Association 'Comics, manga, literature'	Behaviour a) "Interested in comics, manga" b) "Interested in literature"

The results from the Test of parallel lines for combinations 1a and 1b are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Test of parallel lines for combinations 1a and 1b

Combination 1a_Test of Parallel Lines <sup>a</sup>					Combination 1b_Test of Parallel Lines <sup>a</sup>				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	46.595				Null Hypothesis	50.403			
General	38.014	8.582	5	<b>.13</b>	General	39.751	10.653	5	<b>.06</b>

The null hypothesis states that the location parameters (slope coefficients) are the same across response categories.  
a. Link function: Logit.

The null hypothesis is not rejected because the significance of the Chi-Square statistic for combination 1a is .13 ( $> .05$ ), and for 1b [ $p = .06$ ]. The other combinations produced following results:

- combination 2 ( $p = .54$ ),

- combination 3 ( $p = .17$ ),
- combination 4a ( $p = .37$ ),
- combination 4b ( $p = .31$ ).

The assumption of proportional odds has been met.

In SPSS, there are several ways to assess the overall fit of the chosen regression model. In this case, the likelihood-ratio test and Pearson goodness-of-fit test were chosen as the assessment tools. The likelihood-ratio test looks at the change in model fit when comparing the full model to the intercept-only model; whereas Pearson's chi-square statistics test whether the observed data are consistent with the fitted model.

In SPSS, the likelihood-ratio test is presented in the Model Fitting Information table, and the Pearson goodness-of-fit test is shown in the Goodness-of-Fit table. The Model Fitting Information table shows a comparison between a model without any explanatory variables (Intercept Only) and the model with all the explanatory variables (the 'Final' model - which in our case contains only one variable). The final model statistically significantly predicts the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model if  $p < .05$ . In other words, if  $p < .05$ , the model gives better predictions than if "you just guessed based on the marginal probabilities for the outcome categories" (Running an Ordinal Regression on SPSS, 2011).

The situation is opposite for the Pearson goodness-of-fit test, where having  $p$  values  $> .05$ , would indicate a good model fit, meaning the data and the model predictions are similar and that you have a good model. Table 3.5 shows the overall fit of the chosen regression models (for all combinations).

Table 3.5 Assessing the overall fit of the chosen regression model

Combinations	Model Fitting Information	Pearson goodness-of-fit test
--------------	---------------------------	------------------------------

1a	p = .168 ✗	p = .118 ✓
1b	p = .012 ✓	p = .090 ✓
2	p = .001 ✓	p = .729 ✓
3	p = .008 ✓	p = .211 ✓
4a	p = .005 ✓	p = .365 ✓
4b	p = .334 ✗	p = .263 ✓

The statistically significant Chi-Square statistic ( $p < .05$ ) in the middle column of Table 3.5 indicates that the Final model gives a significant improvement over the baseline intercept-only model. Yet combinations 1a and 4b show that the Final model did not show significant improvement over the baseline intercept-only model.

When assessing the overall fit of the model, it is sometimes recommended to look at other methods of indexing the goodness of fit, for example the Pseudo R-square (pseudo  $R^2$ ) Statistics (Running an Ordinal Regression on SPSS, 2011). The pseudo  $R^2$  shows the proportion of variance in the outcome that can be explained by the independent/explanatory variables. The larger the  $R^2$  values the more of the variation in the outcome can be explained. In this case, the pseudo  $R^2$  values (e.g. Nagelkerke) for all combinations were low, the highest being 4.7% (combination 2). The low  $R^2$  values indicate that a model containing only association is likely to be a poor predictor of the behaviour/preference since the independent variable explains a relatively small proportion of the variation between associations and the preferences.

The parameter estimates table (Table 3.6) further explores the relationship between the explanatory variables and the outcome. The parameter estimates table summarises the effect of each predictor. While interpretation of this model can prove difficult, the values in the table can give important insights into the effects of the predictors in the model. Luckily, the interpretation of dichotomous variables is arguably the easiest of the different types of

independent variables. For example, for the combination 2, the coding for the dichotomous variable was such that participants who chose associations other than “Events” were coded as 0, and those who chose “Events” were coded as 1. By default, in SPSS the last category is the reference category (Table 3.6). Therefore, the reference category for [Assoc\_Events=0] was [Assoc\_Events=1].

Table 3.6 Parameter estimates table for Combination 2

Parameter Estimates											
Parameter		B	Std. Error	95% Wald Confidence Interval		Hypothesis Test			Exp (B)	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
				Lower	Upper	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.		Lower	Upper
Threshold	[Likely_Attend_Event=1]	-3.925	.485	-4.875	-2.976	65.634	1	.000	.020	.008	.051
	[Likely_Attend_Event=2]	-3.162	.442	-4.028	-2.295	51.180	1	.000	.042	.018	.101
	[Likely_Attend_Event=3]	-2.746	.428	-3.585	-1.908	41.213	1	.000	.064	.028	.148
	[Likely_Attend_Event=4]	-2.343	.418	-3.162	-1.525	31.473	1	.000	.096	.042	.218
	[Likely_Attend_Event=5]	-1.822	.408	-2.621	-1.023	19.966	1	.000	.162	.073	.360
	[Likely_Attend_Event=6]	-1.323	.400	-2.107	-.538	10.925	1	.001	.266	.122	.584
[Assoc_Events=0]		-1.24	.423	-2.069	-.410	8.575	1	.003	.290	.126	.664
[Assoc_Events=1]		0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.

Dependent Variable: How likely are you to: - Attend a pop-culture event? Model: (Threshold), Assoc\_Events

In the highlighted section of the table, the coefficient for [Assoc\_Events=0] is -1,24 ("B" column). This parameter estimate represents the change in the log odds of being in this category rather than the reference category [Assoc\_Events=1]. The positive coefficients mean higher scores on the dependent variable compared to the reference category, while negative coefficients mean lower scores on the dependent variable compared to the reference category (Running an Ordinal Regression on SPSS, 2011). For the dichotomous variable, the odds ratio is the exponential of the log odds of the slope coefficient, meaning the exponential of -1.24 which is .290 (the value in the "Exp(B)" column). The interpretation of the results for the table above would be: the odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable

[Likely to Attend Events] for [Assoc\_Events=0] versus [Assoc\_Events=1] is .290 ( $e^{-1.24} = 0.29$ ), 95% CI [.126, .664], a statistically significant effect,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.575$ ,  $p = .003$ . In layman's terms, people who do not associate popular culture with events are less likely to attend events than people who do.

A more detailed explanation of the Parameter Estimates table model is provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Parameters from the ordinal regression of associations on preferences for combination 2

Reference category: [Assoc_Events=1]							
Threshold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Threshold coefficients (cumulative logits)		-3.925	-3.162	-2.746	-2.343	-1.822	-1.323
Cumulative odds [exp(CumLogit)]		.020	.042	.064	.096	.162	.266
Cumulative Proportion [1/(1+exp.(CumLogit))]	1	.98	.96	.94	.91	.86	.79
Category probability	.02	.02	.02	.03	.05	.07	.79

The table above shows the predicted probability of being in a certain category for those coded [Assoc\_Events=1]. For example, the probability of being in category 7 (Very Likely) for those respondents with the association “Events” is 79%. This also means that for Assoc\_Events=0, the odds of scoring lower (being in a low interest category) on the dependent variable (Likely to Attend Events) are considerably higher than that of Assoc\_Events=1. These calculations provide a clear and simple explanation of how the ordinal regression model works.

Unfortunately, not all combinations produced a statistically significant effect:

- combination 1a:  $\chi^2(1) = 1.857$ ,  $p = .173$  (Movies/Interest in Movies);
- combination 1b:  $\chi^2(1) = 5.996$ ,  $p = .014$  (TV/Interest in TV shows);
- combination 2:  $\chi^2(1) = 8.575$ ,  $p = .003$  (Events/Interest in Events);
- combination 3:  $\chi^2(1) = 6.672$ ,  $p = .010$  (Music/Interest in Music);
- combination 4a:  $\chi^2(1) = 7.349$ ,  $p = .007$  (Comics.../Interest in comics/manga);

- combination 4b:  $\chi^2(1) = .964$ ,  $p = .326$  (Literature/Interest in literature).

Those that had produced a statistically significant effect, showed the same probability pattern as combination 2: for those coded [Assoc\_X=0], the odds of scoring higher on the dependent variable are considerably lower than that of [Assoc\_X=1].

This completes the ‘association/interest level’ OLR model analysis. A conclusion can be drawn that even though the associations by themselves cannot predict the dependent variable [Interest] and explain a relatively small proportion of the variation between associations and the interest, there still seems to be a positive correlation between them. The associations can potentially serve as an indicator for the presence of interest in a certain popular culture category. It is important to remember, however, that a model is only “an approximation of reality and cannot take everything into account” (Klein, 1981, p. 50). Fischbein (1987) adds that the interpretation of a model can be reader-dependent and involves a certain level of intuitive thought and 'subjective' understanding, which can lead to inaccuracies in reading.

### **3.5.2.3 Level of interest in popular culture**

The main task of the G1Qs was to examine the general level of interest in popular culture. The questions set out to investigate the respondents’ level of engagement with popular culture in hope to uncover some behavioural patterns. Since many of the G1Qs were closely related and formed logical groups (see Appendix 2), Cronbach's alpha was used to check for the internal consistency and reliability of the measurements. This procedure is commonly used with Likert scales and shows the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under similar conditions with the same subjects ("Quantitative Research: Reliability and Validity", n.d.). The design of the G1Qs ensured that most questions that

contributed to the scale contributed in the same manner (7-point Likert scale questions with answers coded 1=Strongly disagree to 7=Strongly agree), thus making them easy to use in SPSS. As an example, the results for G1Qs 1\_1 to 1\_3 are offered in Table 3.8.

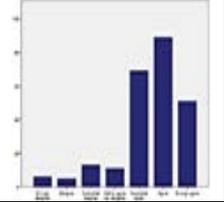
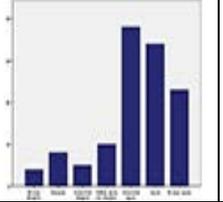
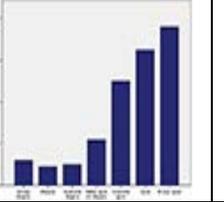
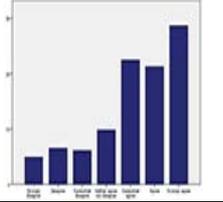
Table 3.8 Reliability statistics table for the G1Qs

	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1_1	7.138	.742	.610	.824
Q1_2	7.126	.840	.707	.723
Q1_3	9.077	.678	.501	.875
<b>Reliability Statistics</b>				
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items	
.867	.869		3	

A good level of internal consistency differs depending on what source one might refer to, although most recommend  $\alpha$  values of 0.7 or higher (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In this example Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is .867, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" column, shows how the calculated Cronbach's alpha value would behave when a specific item is removed from the scale. Overall, according to the reliability and consistency test results, it can be concluded that the survey measurements were reliable.

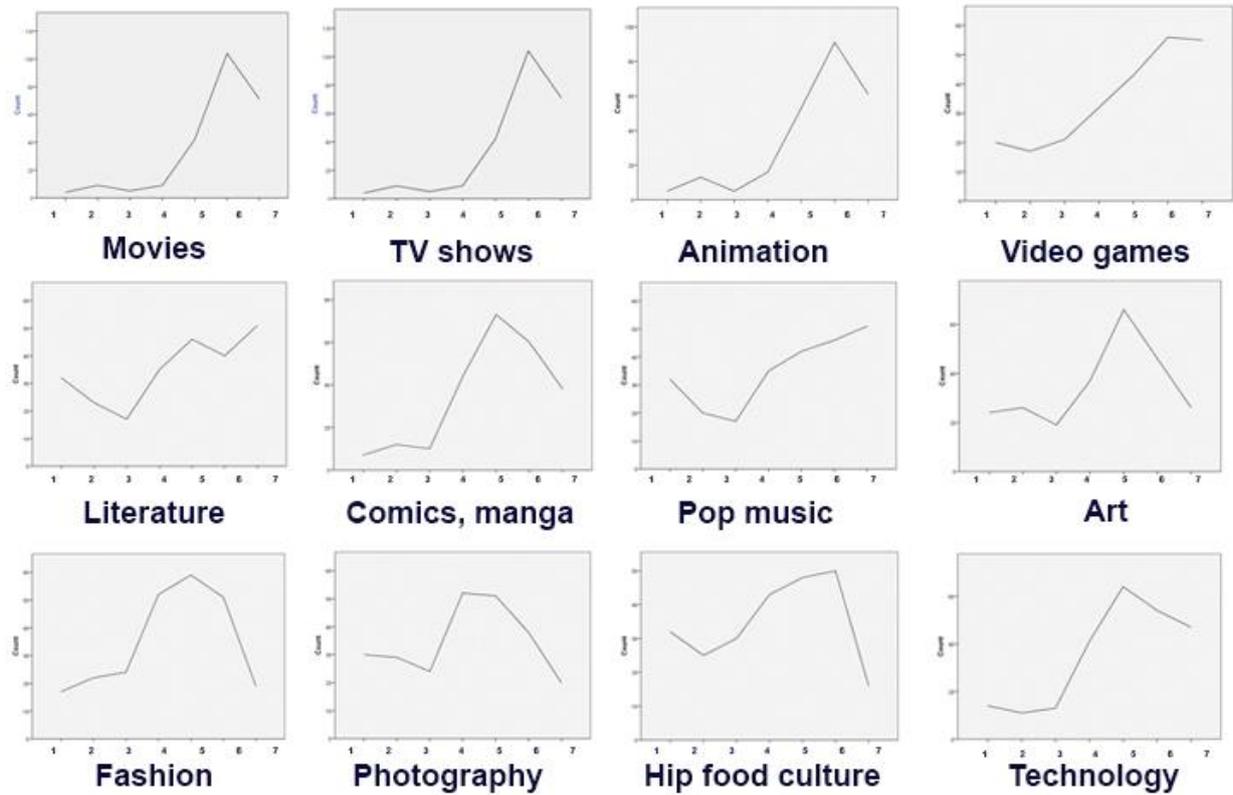
The G1Qs deliver important information that helps assess the overall interest in popular culture (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9 Medians and percentiles for Q1\_1 to Q1\_4

Statistics						
Please indicate your agreement with the following statements		q1_1 I am familiar with latest pop-culture trends	q1_2 I follow pop-culture news	q1_3 I consider myself a pop-culture fan	q1_4 I like meeting/would like to meet with other pop-culture fans	
Median		6	5	6	5.5	
Charts						
Percentiles	25	5	5	5	4	
	50	6	5	6	5.5	
	75	6	6	7	7	

The high values of the median (ranging from 5 to 6) indicate that most respondents were in the ‘positive/active’ category, the middle scores in the lowest 25th percentile being no less than 4 (neutral). Many respondents (approximately 76%) had chosen “Somewhat agree” to “Strongly agree” when asked whether they considered themselves popular culture fans, with a big number of the respondents (approximately 30%) choosing “Strongly agree”. The majority of the respondents (83%) were somewhat to very familiar with popular culture trends, among which 55% had chosen “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. A large number of respondents (75%) tried to follow popular culture news.

The participants showed a relatively high interest in many popular culture categories (Figure 3.8). Here, the 7-point Likert scale ranges from "1-Not interested at all" to "7-Very interested" (see Appendix 2).

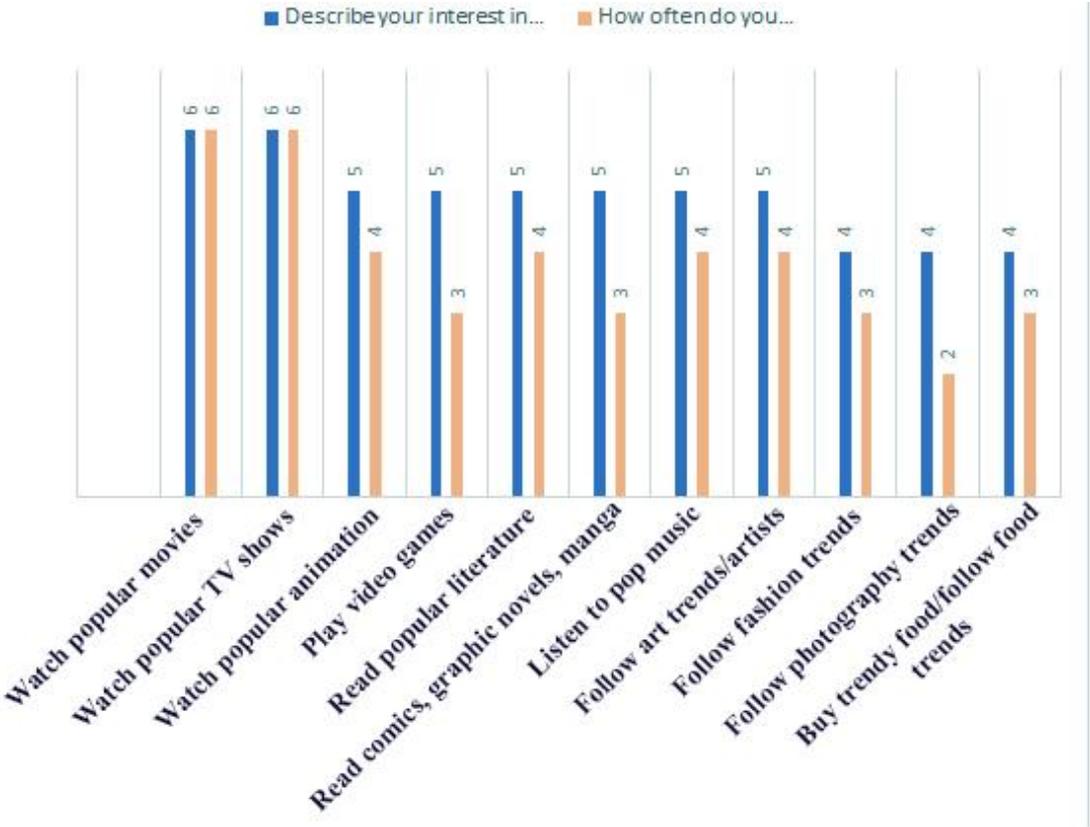


Describe your interest in...												
	Popular movies	TV shows	Anime	Video games	Popular literature	Comics, manga	Pop Music	Pop Art	Fashion	Photography trends	Trendy foods, hip food culture	Tech trends
Median	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5
Percentiles	25	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
	50	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5
	75	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	6

**Figure 3.8 Interest in pop-culture subcategories**

The movies and TV shows have been identified as most likable or attractive (median of 6), while fashion, photography, and food trends aroused somewhat neutral emotions. All other subcategories fall in-between, scoring a median of 5 (Somewhat interested). The obtained results closely match those in Figure 3.9, which compares the medians of the two variables: level of interest (colour-coded blue) and consumption frequency (colour-coded orange). The

consumption frequency levels show, for example, how often the respondents watch movies, play games, read manga (for the scale labels see Q4 in Appendix 2).



**Figure 3.9 Consumption frequency**

Looking at Figure 3.9, the video games subcategory seems to have a lower level of consumption to interest. While respondents seemed to be somewhat interested in video games, the consumption level was lower than expected, resulting in a median of 3 “Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have”. This behaviour can be partially explained by the situation existing within the video games market in Australia. With the average prices on video games growing steadily for some years now, the consumers complain that the prices are too high resulting in lower purchase intention (Parker, 2012; Serrels, 2010). According to the study conducted by the Australian consumer group CHOICE, the “review of PS4 and Xbox One games such as Battlefield 4, Call of Duty: Ghosts, and

Destiny found the games will cost 37% more in Australia than in the United States, reinforcing the digital discrimination faced by local gamers” (“Aussie gamers are under attack”, 2013).

One could also argue that the average ‘gamer’ is younger than the survey’s target audience (18+ years). Therefore, the sample cannot provide reliable information and understanding of the gaming behaviour. However, this view of the age is a common misconception. Many studies show that the average age of a gamer fluctuates between 29 and 35 (Chaney, Lin, & Chaney, 2004; Cole & Griffiths, 2007; Kuss, Griffiths, & Pontes, 2017; Milliron, Plinske, & Noonan-Terry, 2008). According to the national research with a random sample of 1606 Australian households prepared by Bond University for the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia, playing computer games competes with other media such as TV, movies and music (Brand, 2007). The high consumption rates of popular movies and TV shows could be associated with the reduced time spent gaming. A similar assumption can be made regarding comic books, manga and graphic novels, though there is less evidence supporting this opinion.

Just like video games, comics, manga and graphic novels show lower consumption rates than corresponding interest levels. Two factors may be considered to contribute to the situation. First, the comic book culture, though being strong in America and some parts of Asia (Bongco, 2014; Chua & Iwabuchi 2008; Salkowitz, 2012), is not as influential or well developed in Australia (Maynard, 2016). Although, some researchers, for example Patrick (2015), state that comic books are eagerly consumed by Australian readers, though not much research is available to support the statement. The second factor is the price. Hobbs (2012) reports that the majority of the comics "are imported into Australia from the USA due to the

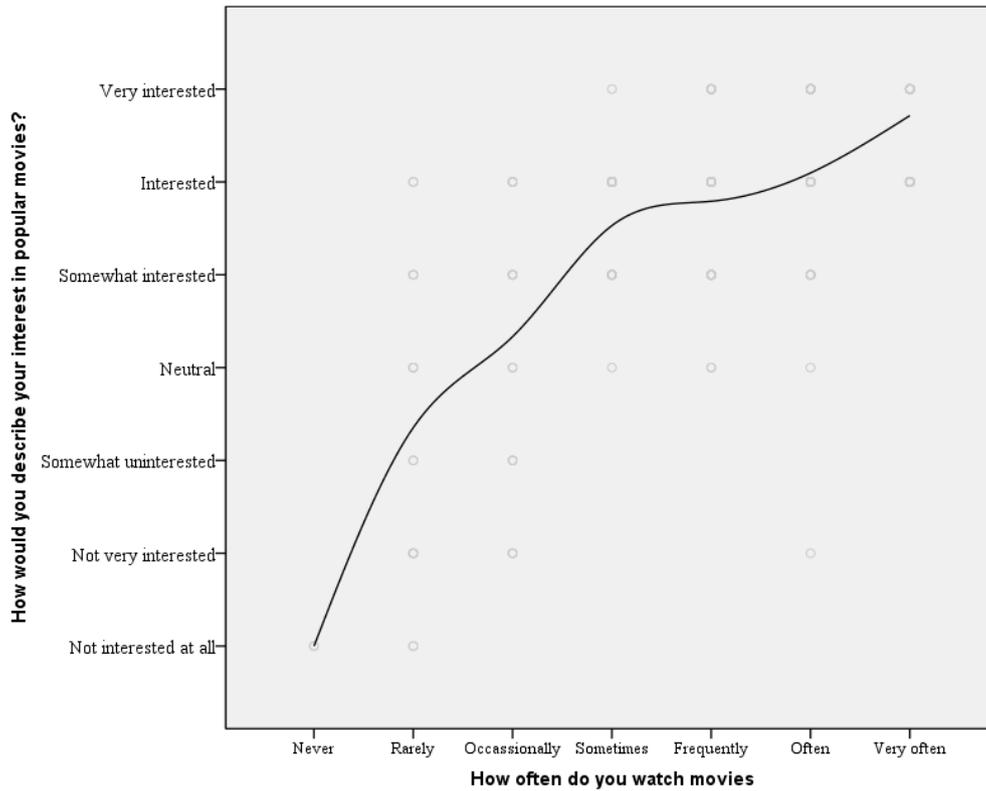
high costs of production in Australia" (p.1). The relatively small Australian domestic market struggles to keep the prices of the products competitive. He also notes that very few comic books are written in Australia, which does not help increase the popularity of the product.

In most cases, a high level of interest in a certain subcategory is often followed by a high level of consumption. From these observations a hypothesis (H2) has been formulated to suggest that there is a strong positive association between the interest in popular culture categories and the consumption frequency.

### **3.5.2.4 Hypothesis 2**

The Spearman's rank-order correlation has been used to measure the strength and direction of the association between the ordinal variables in H2. The Spearman's rank-order correlation is a nonparametric (distribution-free) rank statistic proposed to measure "a monotone association that is used when the distribution of data make Pearson's correlation coefficient undesirable or misleading" (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011, p. 89). Unlike Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, note Hauke and Kossowski (2011), it does not require the variables to be measured on interval scales, and is often used when working with ordinal variables. The correlation coefficient can take values from +1 to -1, indicating a perfect positive (+1) or negative (-1) association of ranks, with a correlation coefficient of zero indicating no association between the ranks.

One of the most important assumptions that is required for Spearman's correlation is the need for a monotonic relationship between the two variables. It is possible to check the assumption using SPSS's scatterplots. The scatterplots for all subcategories showed enough evidence to suggest the relationship is monotonic (Figure 3.10).



**Figure 3.10 An example of monotonic relationship between the two variables in H2**

The results of the Spearman's rank-order correlation for H2 are available in Table 3.10.

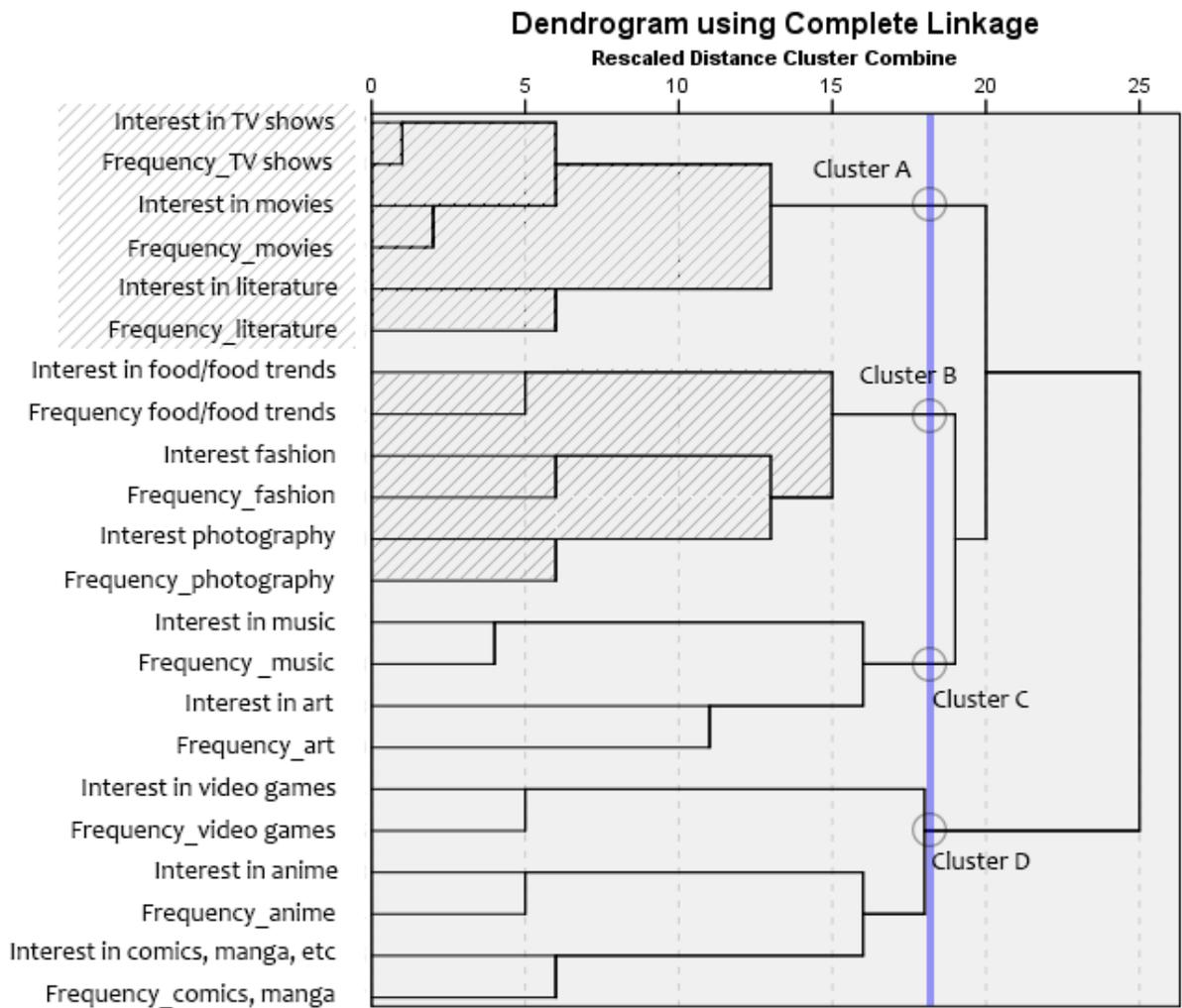
**Table 3.10 Spearman's rank-order correlation for H2**

		How often do you watch movies	How often do you watch TV shows	How often do you watch Animation	How often do you play games	How often do you read popular literature	How often do you read comics, manga	How often do you listen to music	How often do you follow popular art trends/artists	How often do you follow fashion trends	How often do you follow photography trends	How often do you buy trendy foods/follow food trends
Interest in Popular movies	Correlation Coefficient	.702**	.514**	.143*	.064	.312**	.143*	.164*	.219**	.188**	.199**	.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.025	.316	.000	.026	.010	.001	.003	.002	.197
Interest in Popular TV shows	Correlation Coefficient	.609**	.785**	.162*	.088	.281**	.125	.185**	.250**	.158*	.166**	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.011	.172	.000	.052	.004	.000	.014	.009	.207
Interest in Popular animation	Correlation Coefficient	.255**	.102	.858**	.468**	.112	.528*	.052	.253**	.125	.190**	.148*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.111	.000	.000	.081	.000	.417	.000	.051	.003	.021
Interest in Popular video games	Correlation Coefficient	.142*	-.005	.500**	.859**	-.045	.408*	-.026	.044	.040	.143*	.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.944	.000	.000	.487	.000	.683	.491	.533	.026	.779
Interest in Popular literature	Correlation Coefficient	.264**	.264**	.105	-.039	.698**	.231*	.071	.268**	.177**	.132*	.135*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.103	.543	.000	.000	.271	.000	.005	.039	.035

Interest in Comic books, graphic novels, manga	Correlation Coefficient	.275**	.152*	.549**	.451**	.270**	.860*	-.056	.222**	.101	.159*	.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018	.000	.000	.000	.000	.385	.000	.115	.013	.212
Interest in Pop Music	Correlation Coefficient	.229**	.232**	.091	-.018	.148*	.064	.804**	.542**	.432**	.341**	.286**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.155	.774	.021	.317	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interest in Pop Art	Correlation Coefficient	.182**	.130*	.271**	.104	.251**	.303*	.239**	.558**	.456**	.513**	.290**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.042	.000	.104	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interest in Pop Fashion	Correlation Coefficient	.254**	.189**	.197**	.098	.234**	.153*	.452**	.459**	.793**	.518**	.467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.002	.126	.000	.017	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interest in Photography trends	Correlation Coefficient	.217**	.140*	.232**	.176**	.162*	.103	.327**	.417**	.563**	.792**	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.029	.000	.006	.011	.108	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interest in Trendy foods and hip food culture	Correlation Coefficient	.200**	.131*	.146*	.076	.178**	.102	.378**	.344**	.598**	.533**	.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.041	.022	.238	.005	.111	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).                      *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).												

The blue cells in the table show a positive association between the ranks of the interest↔consumption variables. The Spearman correlation coefficients in this table suggest a strong positive correlation ( $r_s > .55$ ). Thus, H2 is accepted. The pink cells point out other positive correlations.

There is one more way to visualise the interest↔consumption relations. The hierarchical cluster analysis can simplify the understanding of the data (Greenacre, 2008). Below is a graph or tree (Figure 3.11) where the variables are joined together in a hierarchical fashion from the closest (most similar) to the furthest apart (most different). The hierarchical clustering process looks for pairs that are the most similar (closest) in the sense of having the lowest dissimilarity. The complete linkage method was chosen as the type of hierarchical clustering.



**Figure 3.11 Dendrogram**

Figure 3.11 is another way of looking at the structure of relations identified in Table 3.10. The ‘tree’ clusters cases in terms of their correlations. It is possible to see that there are several pairs of cases that are fairly close, for example, “Interest in TV shows” and “Frequency\_TV shows”, or “Interest in music” and “Frequency\_music” – similar connections can be seen in Table 3.10. The cases that are joined by lines further down the tree (closer to the left side) are most similar, while those that are joined further up the tree (near the right side) are most different.

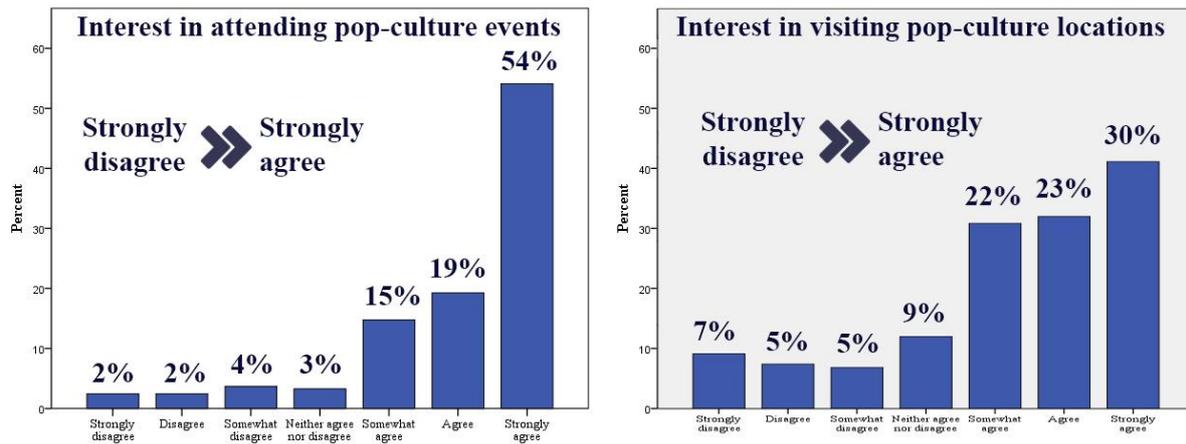
It is impossible to interpret all the linkages, as the investigation of these would require a separate study. However, it is interesting to note that items in Cluster D (manga, anime, and games) are frequently associated with a certain culture – the otaku culture (see Galbraith, 2014; Winge, 2006) – and are often investigated together. It is good to know that the data agree reasonably well with current investigative trends within the popular culture field.

### **3.5.3 Aim 2**

The G2Qs seek information related to popular culture activities (e.g., attending events, visiting certain locations). They explore the role of events and location in PCT and help clarify the issues involved. The G2Qs and G3Qs also explore the spatial behaviour patterns of popular culture consumers in Australia.

#### **3.5.3.1 Popular culture events and popular culture locations**

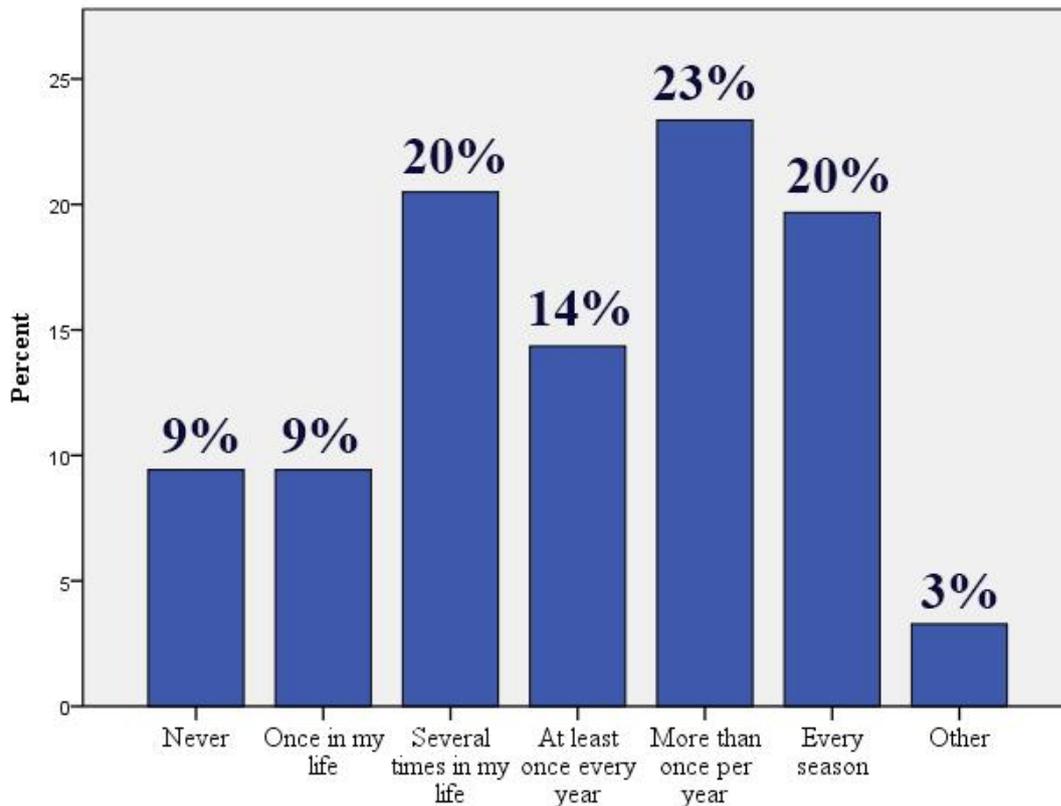
In cultural tourism, the discussion inevitably centers around events and locations. Not only can events and locations agglomerate many different popular culture related activities in one location, they offer great opportunities to observe the consumer behaviour. The G2Qs were designed to gather as much information on popular culture (PC) events and location as possible in a manner that would not make the survey too lengthy. The survey results reveal a high interest in both PC events and PC locations (Figure 3.12).



**Figure 3.12 Interest in attending events and visiting locations**

First, 88% of the respondents are somewhat to very interested in attending pop-culture events, among which 54% are very interested. While 75% are somewhat to very interested in travelling to PC locations, among which 30% are very interested. The evidence suggests that PC events attract more attention than PC locations.

Figure 3.13 shows the general attendance rate for PC events and locations, where 90% of the respondents have attended PC events or been to PC locations.

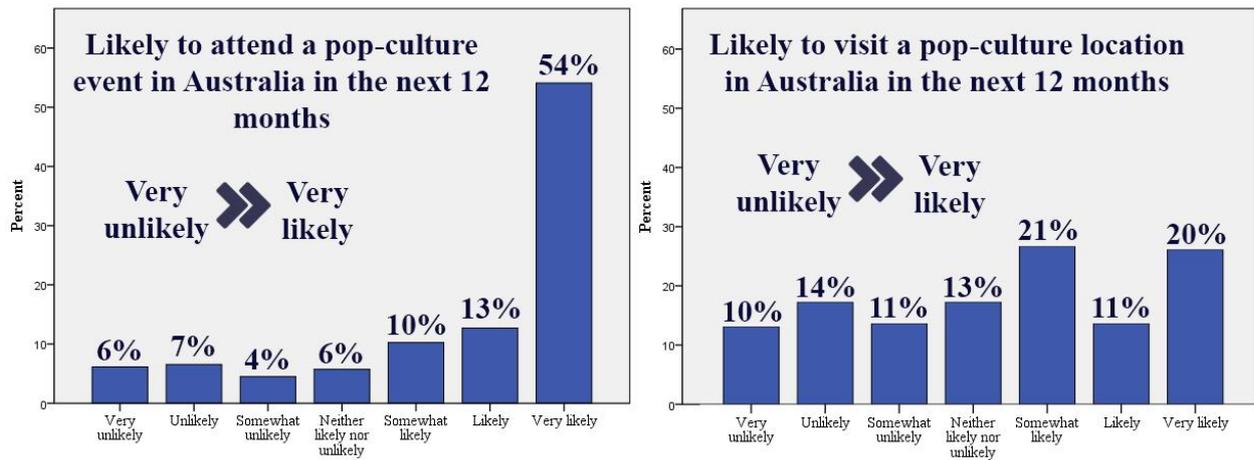


**Have you ever attended a pop-culture event or been to a pop-culture location?**

**Figure 3.13 Attendance rate for pop-culture events and locations**

For total activity of all subjects, 60% of the respondents attend PC events and visit PC locations at least once a year, among which over 40% have an attendance rate of two times per year or higher. The category ‘Other’, an open-ended question, includes those respondents who attend events more than once a year, and sometimes more than once a season. The example answers are: "At least 6 times a year", "about 15 this year", "so far almost 10", "Attended many as exhibitor".

The high past attendance rates are further complemented by the ‘future’ (intended) attendance. Figure 3.14 describes the likeliness of attending a PC event or visiting a PC location in Australia in the next 12 months.



**Figure 3.14 Future attendance**

The majority of the respondents (67%) are “Likely” to “Very likely” to attend a PC event in the next 12 months, with 54% choosing “Very likely”. The PC locations are nearly twice as less likely to be visited, with only 31% of the respondents answering “Likely” to “Very likely”. These results can be partially explained by a fewer number of PC locations available in Australia compared to those in US, Canada, UK, or China, where popular culture locations (e.g., movie sets and filming locations) attract a significantly larger number of visitors. The map on Thetake.com (Figure 3.15) shows the following world-famous movie locations, with Australia capturing a relatively small amount of interest among screen fans.



**Figure 3.15 The world map of screen locations**

Note: Retrieved from <https://thetake.com/locations>.



In contrast to PC locations, events are more ‘controlled’. They require a communal effort of many stakeholders and careful planning. The PC events, in general, are very mobile (e.g., exhibitions may take place in different places). Unlike PC locations, that are usually tied to a particular area, most PC events can move from one location to another. A good example is Oz Comic-Con in Australia that travels from state to state attracting a wide audience. This feature gives events a certain advantage over locations.

**3.5.3.2 Hypothesis 3**

The attendance patterns provide the first hints that the past attendance can predict future attendance behaviour. To test the hypothesis H3, previously described statistical models have been used (the OLR). When running correlation procedures in SPSS, it has been found that several variables may influence the attendance behaviour. To help investigate the mechanisms underlying the possible future attendance behaviour several new dichotomous variables were created (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11 New dichotomous variables for testing H3

Variables	Coding
Past attendance rates	1 (YES) — At least once a year or more; otherwise 0 (NO).
Interested in attending PC events/locations	1 (YES) — “Somewhat” to “Strongly agree”; otherwise 0 (NO)

Once again, an OLR was used to investigate the relationship. Since the OLR procedure has been described in detail earlier in the chapter, Table 3.12 and 3.13 will show only the summary of the results.

Table 3.12 Collinearity statistics for H3

Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Interested in PC events	.693	1.443
	Interested in PC locations	.789	1.267
	Attended events/locations in the past	.821	1.218
Dependent Variable: How likely are you to attend a PC event in Australia in the next 12 months?			

Since the “Tolerance” values were greater than 0.1 and VIF (variance inflation factor) values were less than 10, there was no problem with collinearity detected in this data set. For detailed description of the multicollinearity setup, see, for example, Mansfield and Helms (1982), and Belsley, Kuh, and Welsch (1980). The assumption of proportional odds has also been met, where  $\chi^2(15) = 11.033$ ,  $p = .750$ , meaning the difference in model fit is considered small and not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicated that the model was a good fit to the observed data,  $\chi^2(33) = 40.797$ ,  $p = .165$  ( $p > .05$ ).

When interpreting the parameter estimates table, it is important to remember that the value in the "B" column represents the change in the log odds of being in this category rather than the reference category. In this case, it is a comparison of being an 'irregular' attendee (i.e., past\_attend\_No) versus being a regular attendee. Positive coefficients mean higher scores on the dependent variable compared to the reference category, and vice versa. Looking at Table 3.13, one can see a decrease in the log odds of -1.63 of scoring higher on the dependent variable (i.e., likely to attend events) for “non-regular” attendees compared to more regular attendees (see the interpretation of Table 3.6 in the previous section). In other words, those who attend PC events less than once a year are less likely to attend PC events in the future. The same can be said for the other explanatory variables. Those who showed little interest in PC events and locations were less likely to score higher on the dependent variable.

Table 3.13 Parameter estimates for H3

Parameter	B	Std. Error	95% Wald Confidence Interval		Hypothesis Test				Exp (B)	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
			Lower	Upper	Wald	Chi- d f	Sig.	Lower		Upper	
Threshold	[Likely_attend=1]	-3.56	.249	-4.042	-3.067	204.203	1	.000	.029	.018	.047
	[Likely_attend=2]	-2.89	.207	-3.302	-2.489	194.902	1	.000	.055	.037	.083
	[Likely_attend=3]	-2.53	.188	-2.894	-2.157	180.238	1	.000	.080	.055	.116
	[Likely_attend=4]	-2.11	.168	-2.441	-1.781	157.281	1	.000	.121	.087	.168

	[Likely_attend=5]	-1.54	.144	-1.822	-1.259	115.069	1	.000	.214	.162	.284
	[Likely_attend=6]	-1.00	.125	-1.246	-.754	63.497	1	.000	.368	.288	.470
	[Past_Attend_No=0]	-1.63	.179	-1.985	-1.283	83.290	1	.000	.195	.137	.277
	[Past_Attend_Yes=1]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
	[Interest_Events_No=0]	-1.09	.265	-1.612	-.575	17.105	1	.000	.335	.199	.562
	[Interest_Events_Yes=1]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
	[Interest_Loc_No=0]	-.74	.188	-1.110	-.372	15.522	1	.000	.477	.330	.689
	[Interest_Loc_Yes=1]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
Dependent Variable: How likely are you to attend a PC event in Australia in the next 12 months?											
a. Set to zero because this parameter is redundant.											

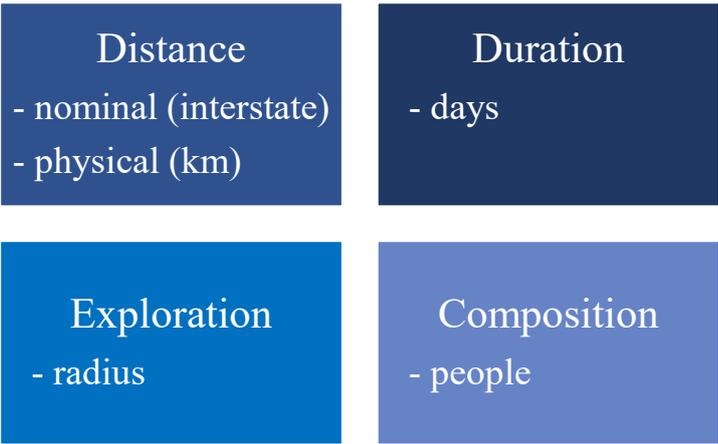
The coefficients from the parameter estimates table represent the rate of change in the response per one unit change of the predictor, assuming all other predictors are held constant. The odds for attendees who do not attend the events on a regular basis to attend a PC event in the future is 0.195, 95% CI [.137, .277] times that of more regular attendees, a statistically significant effect:  $\chi^2(1) = 83.290$ ,  $p < .001$ . The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for those who are not interested in attending events versus more interested attendees is 0.335, 95% CI [.199, .562], a statistically significant effect,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.105$ ,  $p < .001$ . The odds for those who are not interested in attending PC locations to attend PC events in the future was 0.477, 95% CI [.330, .689] times that of more interested attendees, a statistically significant effect:  $\chi^2(1) = 15.522$ ,  $p < .001$ . Lastly, the final model statistically significantly predicted the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model,  $\chi^2(3) = 177.038$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, H3 can be accepted: past attendance rates can predict future attendance behaviour. Yet, as the results suggest, the predictions become more accurate when personal interests (more variables) are taken into the account.

### 3.5.3.3 Tourists' spatial behaviour

The literature suggests that tourists' spatial behaviour is an important research problem in tourism today (Asero, Gozzo, & Tomaselli, 2016; Shoval & Isaacson, 2009; Xiao-Ting, & Bi-Hu, 2012). Mansfeld (1990), reflecting on spatial behaviour, wrote that in the past the study

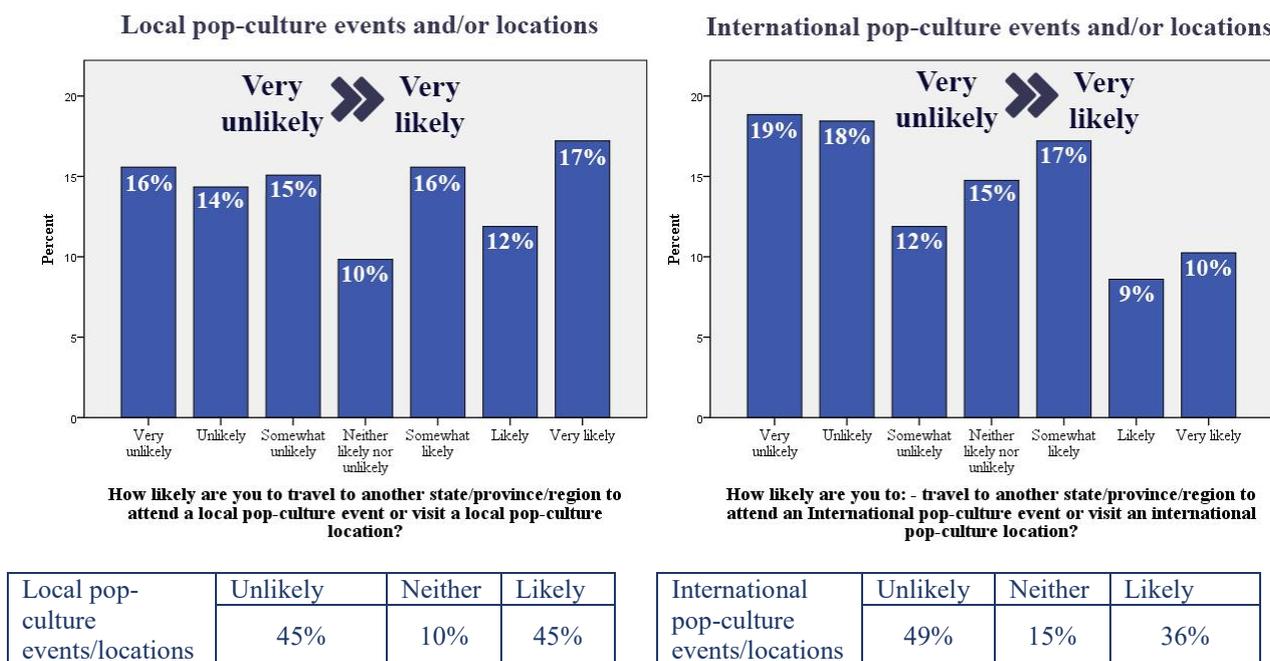
of tourist decision-making and that of tourist flows went on independently of one another. The current studies merge these two aspects. They explain that the general spatial behaviour pattern is a product of many sub-patterns created by different groups of tourists driven by different motives (Modsching et al., 2006; Xiao-ting, 2009; Xiao-Ting, & Bi-Hu, 2012).

The G2Qs and G3Qs aim at discovering some of the spatial behaviour patterns of popular culture consumers in Australia, while maintaining a commitment to monitoring the PC events and locations. The Q7 to Q11 questions explore the following behaviour tendencies: (1) distance travelled, (2) duration of stay, (3) desire or willingness to explore, (4) group composition (Figure 3.17)



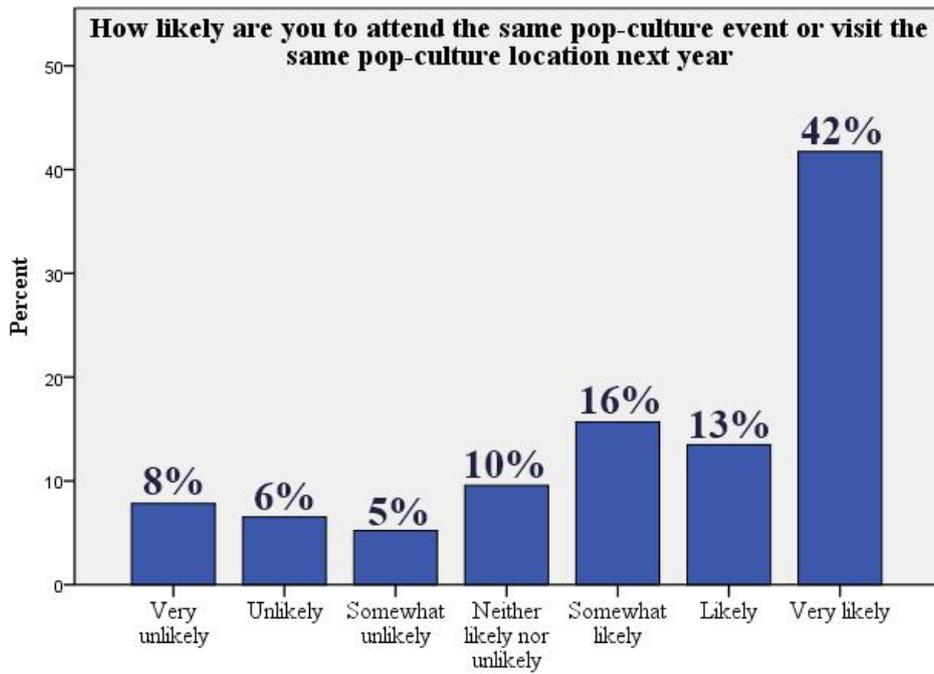
**Figure 3.17 The spatial behaviour patterns**

The nominal distances were measured by asking the respondents to rate how likely they are to travel to another state, province, or region to attend: (1) local PC events and/or locations, and (2) international PC events and/or locations. The results are given in Figure 3.18.



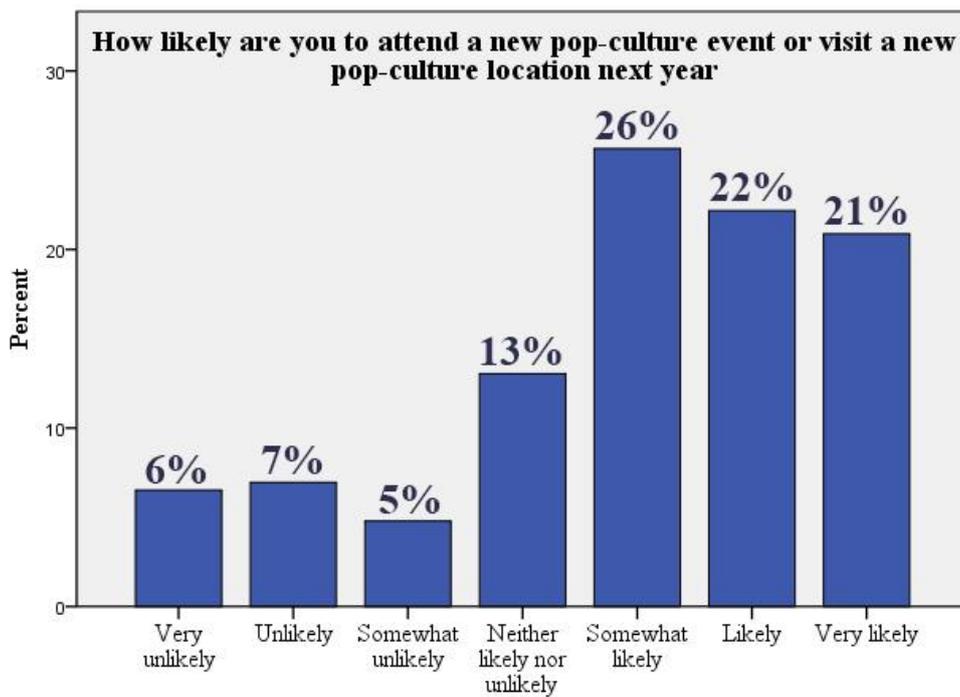
**Figure 3.18 Likelihood to travel to another state, province, or region**

For local events and locations, 45% of the respondents are somewhat to very likely to travel interstate, with the same number of respondents somewhat to very unlikely. For international events and locations, 36% are somewhat to very likely to travel interstate, while 49% are somewhat to very unlikely to do so. These results may seem surprising. Logically, one would assume a higher level of enthusiasm for international events, since international events usually come with more ‘bells and whistles’. There are a few plausible explanations as to why local events seem to encourage more travel. First, most large-scale Australian PC events have long established relationships with local pop-culture communities. They run on a regular schedule, offer competitive prices, and have a high number of repeat customers (Maynard, 2017; Noble, 2016). The survey results support this view and show that the majority of the respondents like to repeatedly attend the same PC event or visit the same location (as shown in Figure 3.19).



**Figure 3.19 Repeated attendance**

More than 70% of the respondents are somewhat to very likely to attend the same event the following year, with the majority (42%) choosing “Very likely”. This does not necessarily imply that the respondents are not open to new experiences (Figure 3.20).



**Figure 3.20 Likelihood to attend a new event or visit a new location**

Nearly 70% of the respondents are somewhat to very likely to try a new event, but the confidence level is lower: only 21% are “Very Likely”. However, the reassuring open-mindedness of the respondents is a much-desired context for building future marketing strategies.

The “willingness to travel to another state/province/region” reveals information only about the nominal distances. Those living on the state borders would find it easier to travel interstate as opposed to those living in the central part of the state or on the islands. The survey addresses this issue by offering a ‘physical distance’ question that reveals the distances (km) the respondents are willing to travel to attend an event or see a location (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14 The physical distances (km) the respondents are willing to travel to attend an event or see a location

How far would you consider travelling?		
Residents	Mean	Std. Dev.
New South Wales	1039	739
Queensland	996	832
South Australia	1147	788
Victoria	919	757
Western Australia	947	918
Australian Capital Territory	1198	781
Total	1020	795

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Permanent Australian resident/citizens	1020	795
Others	607	721
Total	975	796

Table 3.14 shows the mean distance each group is ready to travel. The average mean distance scores reported by permanent residents/citizens is 1020 km. The means between states do not differ significantly. The outliers, such as Northern Territory and Tasmania, were removed due to low number of respondents (<1%). The non-residents (non-Australians) would prefer to

travel less, the average mean score being 607 km. Together, the average mean distance score is 975 km for residents plus non-residents.

A slider question type was used to measure the average distances, with the maximum distance point set to  $\geq 2000$  km. The average distance between all state capitals for the Australian mainland is 1800 km by air, or 2200 km by car. The average distance between Group A state capitals for the Australian mainland is 955 km by air, or 1200 km by car (Figure 3.21).

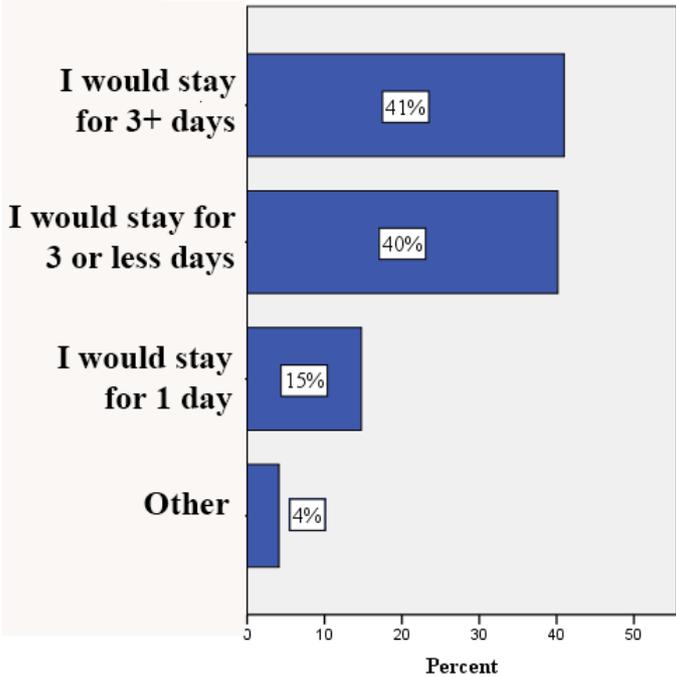


**Figure 3.21 Group A state capitals for the Australian mainland**

The results indicate that while the respondents would consider travelling to the neighboring states, particularly respondents from Group A (Figure 3.21), they are much less likely to travel between the coasts (east↔west or south↔north). The respondents from Western Australia are less likely to travel interstate. These findings are consistent with the results of

the National Visitor Survey for year 2017. The Tourism Research Australia reports that the intrastate holiday market leads the way, compensating for lower interstate holiday activity (Travel by Australians, 2017).

The next behaviour pattern – the duration – reveals the following results (Figure 3.22):

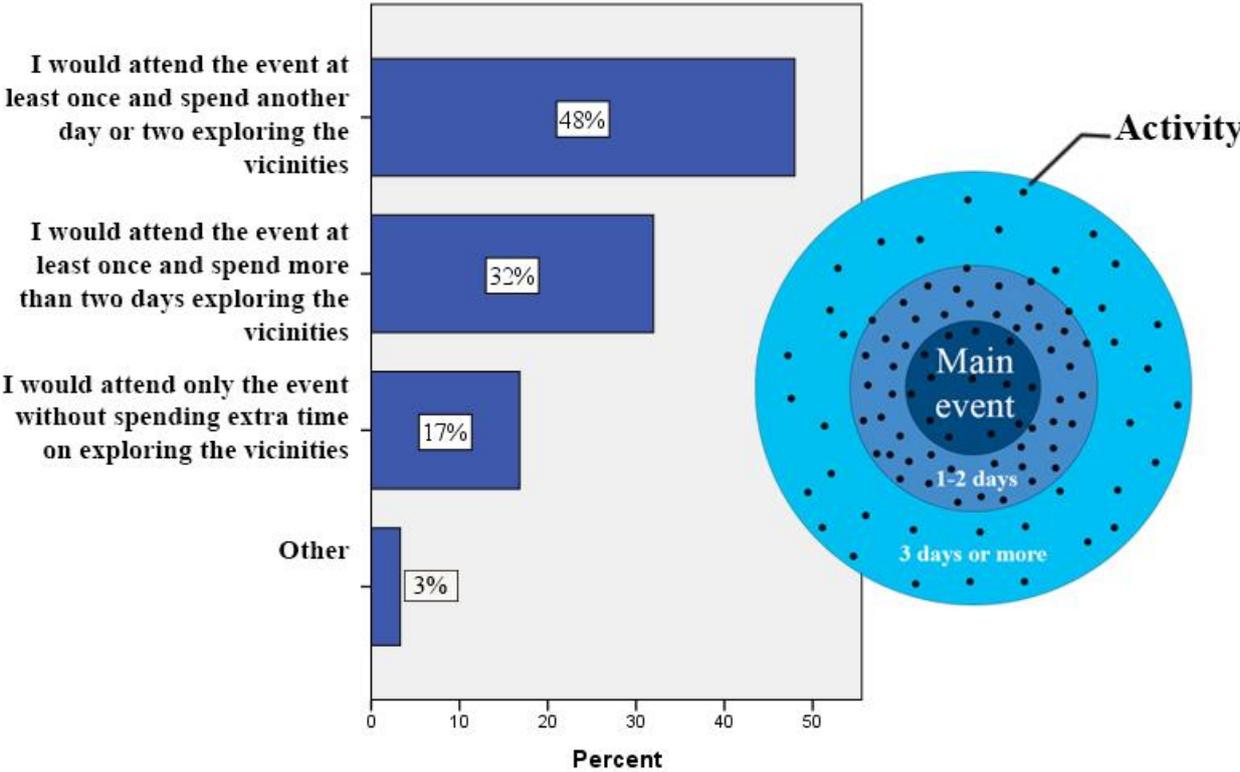


**Figure 3.22 Duration of stay**

In this question the respondents were asked about the preferred duration of their stay when travelling. If the respondents were to travel to another state/province/region to attend a PC event or visit a PC location, the majority (41%) would prefer to stay for the whole duration of the event, even if the event is longer than 3 days. Similarly, 40% would prefer to stay 2-3 days, and only 15% would make it a one-day trip. The category “other” includes answers such as “depends on how much I can afford”, or “depends on how much faith I have in the event”. Again, these findings are very consistent with the data published by the TRA. According to

the Domestic tourism statistics (2016), the average stay of those travelling for leisure ranges from 2.4 to 5.2 nights depending on the state, with a total average of 3.9 nights per trip.

The exploration pattern consists of a hypothetical radius. The rationale underlying this approach is that the exploration radius becomes larger the more time people spend outside their main activity. This is particularly true for events tourists with a fixed agenda. For example, the person decides to spend three days on a trip, of which only one day will be dedicated to the main activity (e.g., attending a PC event). The remaining days are for exploration. It can be assumed that the more ‘free’ days the individual has, the bigger the exploration radius. In this case, the exploration pattern can be understood by analysing Figure 3.23



**Figure 3.23 Exploration pattern**

The majority (48%) of the respondents are willing to spend a day or two exploring the vicinities, while 32% are ready to dedicate more than two days to exploration. Only 17%

would rather spend all their time on the main activity. The category other (3%) includes answers such as "maybe take time during the event for some sightseeing". Of course, the exploration capacity of a destination depends on the diversity of the attractions and their remoteness (Alegre & Pou, 2006). The behaviour patterns suggest a desire or willingness to explore (involvement) versus a tendency to avoid moving through or interacting with the destination (avoidance), as indexed by the exploration intention (pattern) above.

The Q11 investigates the group composition (e.g., travelling alone or with family members). Campo-Martínez et al. (2010) point out that although group composition is usually taken into consideration by most DMOs, the variable does not receive enough attention in the academic world. Seeking to learn more about the tourists' spatial behaviour, Campo-Martínez et al. report several interesting findings: (1) tourists travelling with a partner are more explorative, and are more likely to return (repeat their visit); (2) tourists travelling with friends experience the destination the least, however their overall average satisfaction with the destination is usually high; (3) tourists travelling alone produce mixed behaviour patterns (or do not follow any one particular pattern), and behave in a significantly different way than the rest of tourists. These observations are quite valuable and should be taken into consideration when exploring the tourists' behaviour and the factors that influence it.

The group composition information data show that 42% of the respondents would prefer to travel to PC events/locations in a group of two: 31% with a friend or a partner, and 11% with a family member. Many (27%) would rather travel in a group of three or more people, or travel in big mixed groups (with friends and family – 14%), or just family (4%). Only 12% would travel by themselves. The 1% remained undecided. The results are summarised in Figure 3.24.

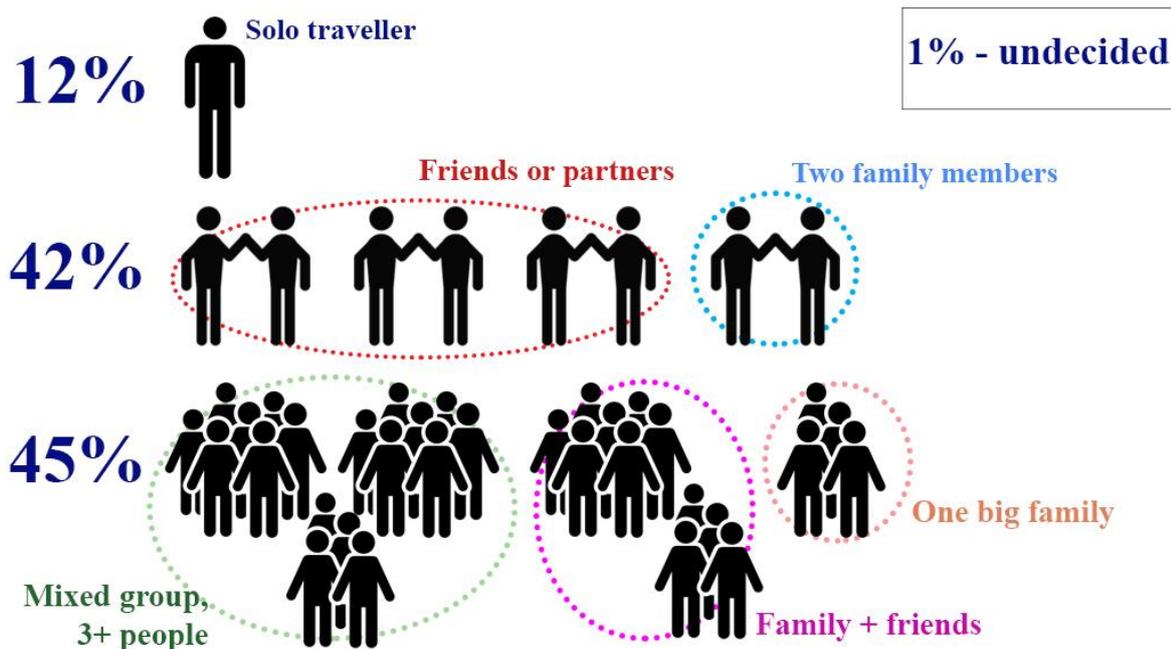


Figure 3.24 Group composition

Alegre and Pou (2006) suggest that the group characteristics, namely the number of people in a party, can influence the length of stay. A chi-square test of independence was conducted between duration of stay and number of people travelling (Table 3.15). To meet the test assumptions, some of the categories had been collapsed.

Table 3.15 Days\_Spent on a trip \* Group\_Composition Crosstabulation

			Group_Composition			Total
			Solo	Two people	Three or more people	
Days_Spent	One-day trip	Count	9	21	6	36
		Expected Count	4.3	15.5	16.2	36
		% within Days_Spent	25%	58.3%	16.7%	100%
		% within Group_Comp	32.1%	21%	5.7%	15.5%
		Adjusted Residual	2.6	2.0	-3.7	
	Three or less days	Count	9	39	50	98
		Expected Count	11.8	42.1	44.2	98
		% within Days_Spent	9.2%	39.8%	51%	100%
		% within Group_Comp	32.1%	39.0%	47.6%	42.1%

	Adjusted Residual	-1.1	-0.8	1.6	
Three+ days	Count	10	40	49	99
	Expected Count	11.9	42.5	44.6	99
	% within Days_Spent	10.1%	40.4%	49.5%	100%
	% within Group_Comp	35.7%	40%	46.7%	42.5%
	Adjusted Residual	-0.8	-0.7	1.2	
Total	Count	28	100	105	233
	Expected Count	28	100	105	233
	% within Days_Spent	12%	42.9%	45.1%	100%
	% within Group_Comp	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3.15 shows that, for example, out of 99 people who would travel for more than 3 days, 10% would be solo travelers, 40% would be in a group of two, and 50% would be in a party of three or more people. Similarly, among those travelling for less than 3 days, 9% would be solo travelers, 40% would be in a group of two, and 51% would be in a party of three or more people. However, among one-day travellers 25% would be solo, 58% would travel in a group of two, and 17% would travel in a party of three or more people. The two largest adjusted standardized residuals were for solo travellers going a one-day trip (adjusted standardized residual of 2.6), and three or more people going on a one-day trip (adjusted standardized residual of -3.7). The positive adjusted standardized residual indicates that there are more observed frequencies than expected frequencies, and the negative adjusted standardized residual indicates that there are less observed frequencies than expected frequencies. The obtained results support the theoretical predictions of Campo-Martínez et al. (2010) about solo travellers, and Alegre and Pou (2006) about bigger family groups travelling longer than couples.

The results revealed that approximately 90% of the expected cell frequencies were greater than five. There was a statistically significant association between duration of stay and

number of people travelling,  $\chi^2(4) = 16.013, p = .003$ . The strength of association was small, Cramer's  $V = .185$  (Cohen, 1988).

### 3.5.3.4 Hypothesis 4

The hypothesis H4a has been formulated to suggest that those who identify themselves as popular culture fans are willing to travel longer distances. Prior to consulting the data, a prediction was made that there is a monotonic positive trend, meaning that the medians increase or decrease as the groups of the ordinal variables increase (stronger agreement) or decrease (lesser agreement). A preliminary analysis suggested a positive correlation between interest in popular culture and the travel distances (Figure 3.25).

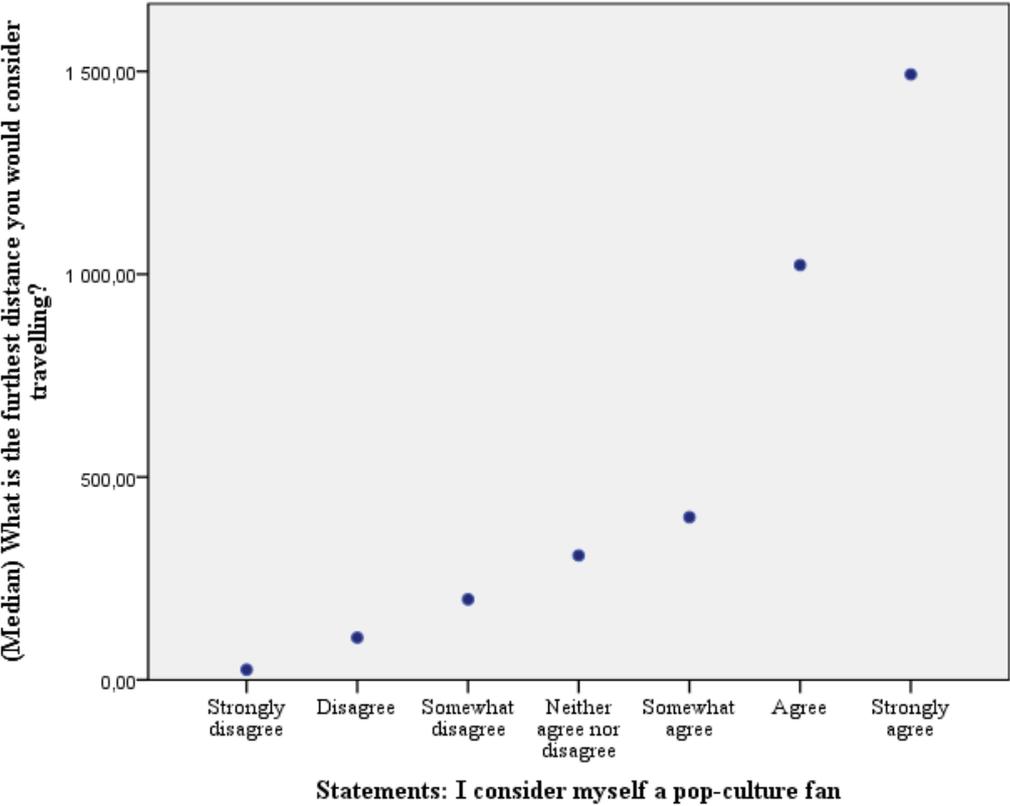


Figure 3.25 A preliminary analysis for H4

The graph above suggests that the distance scores increase as the levels of agreement with the statement rises. For better visual representation, SPSS suggested to “bin” the distances into 4

groups: (1)  $\leq 500$  km, (2) 501 to 1000 km, (3) 1001 to 1500 km, (4)  $\geq 1501$  km. The median distance is a more useful measure of central tendency in this situation, because, as stated by Dudala, Reddy, and Prabhu (2014), it is less influenced by the outliers. Since the goal is to assess differences between groups on an ordinal independent variable, one must use a rank-based nonparametric test.

The rank-based nonparametric Jonckheere-Terpstra test has been used to determine whether there is a statistically significant monotonic trend between the ordinal independent variable (being a PC fan) and the continuous dependent variable (distance travelled). The Jonckheere-Terpstra test produces a more powerful result than Kruskal-Wallis H test as it postulates an order for the medians (Kruska-Miller, 2014). The null hypothesis of the Jonckheere-Terpstra test states that the median energy level in the seven groups of the ordinal independent variable are identical in the population:

$$H_0: \theta_1 = \theta_2 = \theta_3 = \dots = \theta_n$$

The  $\theta$  represents the median, the subscripts represent the groups of the independent variable, and  $n$  = number of groups of the ordinal independent variable.

Before running the test in SPSS, it was necessary to meet the distributional assumption of the Jonckheere-Terpstra test. This assumption considers the distribution of scores for each group of the ordinal independent variable to determine whether they have the same shape, similar shape, or a different shape. The results produced indicated that the distribution of scores have somewhat similar shapes. In an ideal example, the Jonckheere-Terpstra test assumes that the distribution shapes are the same, however the test is fairly robust to this assumption, such that it can also be used when the distributions assume a somewhat similar shape (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

The median distances for each of the seven groups of the independent variable, as shown in the Table 3.16, provide two useful pieces of information.

Table 3.16 H4a: median distance levels report for each of the seven groups

Report		*Binned values (km):
How far would you consider travelling? (Binned*)		
Please describe your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: - I consider myself a pop-culture fan.		
Strongly disagree	Median 1.00	
Disagree	1.00	
Somewhat disagree	1.00	
Neither agree nor disagree	1.00	
Somewhat agree	1.00	
Agree	3.00	
Strongly agree	3.00	

First, they show the differences in medians of the dependent variable between the groups of the independent variable. Second, they show the pattern of differences in medians and the direction of the "trend", where the results suggest that the median distances increase with increasing agreement level. The distances in the high agreement groups “Agree” to “Strongly agree” appear to be higher than in the other groups, with the medians increasing to 3. The results from the Jonckheere-Terpstra test are shown in the Hypothesis Test Summary table below (Table 3.17):

Table 3.17 Jonckheere-Terpstra test summary

### Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of How far would you consider travelling to attend a pop-culture event or see a pop-culture location? - What is the furthest distance you would consider travelling? (Binned) is the same across categories of Please describe your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: - I consider myself a pop-culture fan.	Independent-Samples Jonckheere-Terpstra Test for Ordered Alternatives	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

<b>Total N</b>	224
<b>Test Statistic</b>	12 343,000
<b>Standard Error</b>	509,127
<b>Standardized Test Statistic</b>	5,149
<b>Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)</b>	,000

The standardized test statistic is 5.149 and, importantly, it is positive, which indicates that there is an increasing monotonic trend. The "Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)" row will help determine whether this increasing monotonic trend is statistically significant. Since the  $p < .05$ , there is a statistically significant monotonic trend. However, this p-value is only relevant for the two-sided hypothesis test, which disregards the direction of the relationship. Since it was hypothesised which direction the medians would take, the one-sided hypothesis test is needed in order to get the correct p-value. This can be easily achieved by dividing the p-value obtained from this test by 2: the "Sig." value is ".000", this means that  $p < .0005$ ,  $\Rightarrow p = .00025$  (i.e.,  $.0005 \div 2 = .00025$ ). Since the new p value satisfies  $p < .05$ , it can be safely assumed that the Jonckheere-Terpstra test has determined that there is a statistically significant increasing monotonic trend in median distances,  $p = .00025$ .

While a statistically significant Jonckheere-Terpstra test indicates that there is an increasing monotonic trend, it does not indicate how strong this trend is. Kendall's tau-b ( $\tau_b$ ) (Kendall, 1938), can be used to measure the effect size following the Jonckheere-Terpstra test (Kraska-Miller, 2014). The value of Kendall's tau-b is shown in the "Correlation Coefficient" row of the Correlations table, as shown below (Table 3.18):

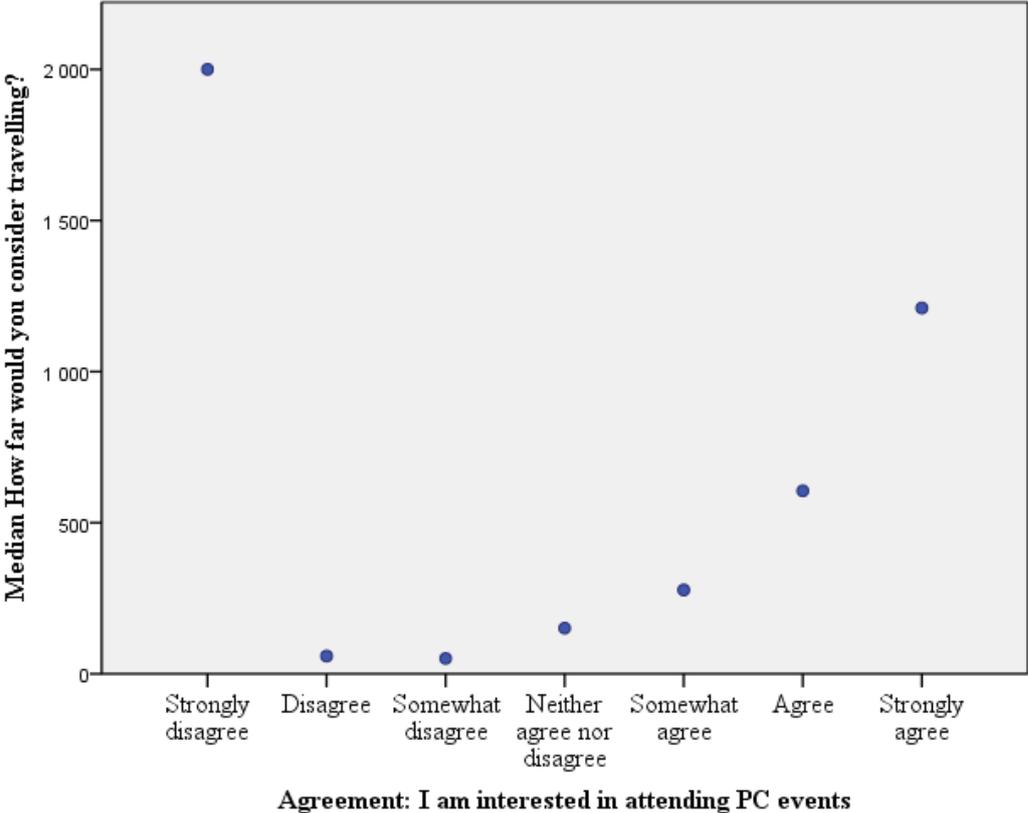
Table 3.18 Kendall's tau-b

Correlations				
			Statement: I consider myself a pop-culture fan	How far would you consider travelling?
Kendall's tau_b	Please describe your agreement or disagreement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.289**
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
		N	225	224
	How far would you consider travelling?	Correlation Coefficient	.289**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
		N	224	224
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).				

The closer Kendall's tau-b is to zero, the weaker the association, and the closer Kendall's tau-b is to +1 or -1, the stronger the association. As the sign of Kendall's tau-b is positive, the distances travelled increase as the agreement level increases. The Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient in this example ( $\tau_b = .289$ ) suggests a moderate association. In respect of the null hypotheses, there is a statistically significant monotonic trend ( $p < .05$ ), therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the H4a.

Since H4 suggests that there is a positive correlation between the level of interest in popular culture and travel distances – a broader statement than that of H4a – an attempt was made to determine whether there is a statistically significant monotonic trend between another pair of variables: the ordinal independent variable (Interest in attending events) and the continuous

dependent variable (distance travelled). In this hypothesis (H4b) the results indicate that the distribution of scores for each group of the ordinal independent variable do not have a similar shape. It is possible to see the problem by looking at Figure 3.26.



**Figure 3.26 H4b: outlier**

The figure above clearly shows an outlier. A more detailed report in Table 3.19 shows how the median in group “Strongly disagree” differs from all other groups.

Table 3.19 The outlier in H4b as shown in Figure 3.26

Agreement: I am interested in attending PC events	Median
Strongly disagree	4.00
Disagree	1.00
Somewhat disagree	1.00
Neither agree nor disagree	1.00
Somewhat agree	1.00
Agree	2.00
Strongly agree	3.00

Therefore, it is impossible to run the Jonckheere-Terpstra test for H4b. However, Kendall's tau-b can still be used as a measure of the strength and direction of association between a continuous and an ordinal variable. The null hypothesis for this test would be:  $H_0: \tau_b = 0$ , where the correlation coefficient is equal to zero. The results are presented in Table 3.20.

Table 3.20 Kendall's tau-b for 4Hb

Correlations				
			How far would you consider travelling?	Agreement: I am interested in attending PC events
Kendall's tau_b	How far would you consider travelling?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.261**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	242	242
	Agreement: I am interested in attending PC events	Correlation Coefficient	.261**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	242	244

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the sign of Kendall's tau-b is positive, it is possible to conclude that there is a positive monotonic association between the interest in attending PC events and the distance the person is willing to travel, which was statistically significant,  $\tau_b = .261$ ,  $p < .0005$ . The strength of the association is moderate. We can reject the null hypothesis and accept H4b.

### 3.5.4 Aim 3 and the creative question

An important objective of this study is to obtain a better understanding of popular culture trends and to develop an analytical and modelling capability that would enable this knowledge to be applied in later chapters. Feldman and Dagan (1995) explain that trends can be discovered by searching for deviations from the expected models. They describe such procedure as a "nontrivial extraction of implicit, previously unknown, and potentially useful information from given data" (p. 112). Quite a few discoveries have already been described in this chapter, but there are a few more to address.

The question Q12 played an important role in discovering trends and future projections (see Appendix 2). It asked the respondents to organise a PC event that would include activities "you and your acquaintances are most likely to enjoy". Unlike more straightforward questions about likes and dislikes, this question asked the respondents to look beyond themselves and their own preferences. It encouraged to think of the activities that would help “boost the overall attendance”. Here, the personal objectives (personal preferences) must coincide with that of the business needs (creating a successful event). For the researcher, this question is a way to reach a wider audience without increasing the survey pool. The results are presented in Table 3.21.

Table 3.21 Frequencies table for Q12

Fan-favourite movie events (newest trailers, panels, latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, costumes, etc.)		Fan-favourite TV shows and related activities (newest trailers, panels, latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, costumes, etc.)		Games (video, card, tabletop games, construction, etc.)	
Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent
10%	41.3	10%	43.9	10%	67.0
15%	13.0	15%	14.3	15%	14.3
20%	<b>17.0</b>	20%	<b>15.7</b>	20%	<b>10.0</b>
25%	9.6	25%	7.4	25%	2.2
> 25%	<b>19.1</b>	> 25%	<b>18.7</b>	> 25%	6.5
Total	100.0	Total	100.0	Total	100.0

Anime and manga (latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, cosplay, etc.)		Popular literature and comic books (book signing, bestsellers, panels, related toys and merchandise, etc.)		Pop music related activities (e.g. K-pop, J-pop, dance battles, soundtracks, music videos, group dance, etc.)	
Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent
10%	73.4	10%	73.9	10%	81.7
15%	11.4	15%	9.1	15%	5.2
20%	6.6	20%	7.8	20%	6.1
25%	2.2	25%	2.6	25%	2.6
> 25%	6.6	> 25%	6.5	> 25%	4.3
Total	100.0	Total	100.0	Total	100.0

Pop art, photography and pop fashion activities (art booths, panels, showrooms, expo, competitions, etc.)		Trendy foods (food trucks, vendors, fantasy foods, workshops, chef battles, recipes, cocktails, tutorials, etc.)		Gadgets and technology (trends, new products, displays, collectables, showrooms)	
Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent	Budget (%)	Percent
10%	78.6	10%	71.3	10%	74.8
15%	7.9	15%	8.7	15%	12.2
20%	7.0	20%	10.0	20%	7.8
25%	1.7	25%	1.7	25%	2.2
More than 25%	4.8	More than 25%	8.3	More than 25%	3.0
Total	100.0	Total	100.0	Total	100.0

The big budgets are highlighted in red and blue, with movies (e.g. over 19% of respondents spent over 25% of their budget on movies), TV shows, and food accounting for the highest budgets. A simplified interpretation of highest budgets from Table 3.21 is offered below (Figure 3.27).

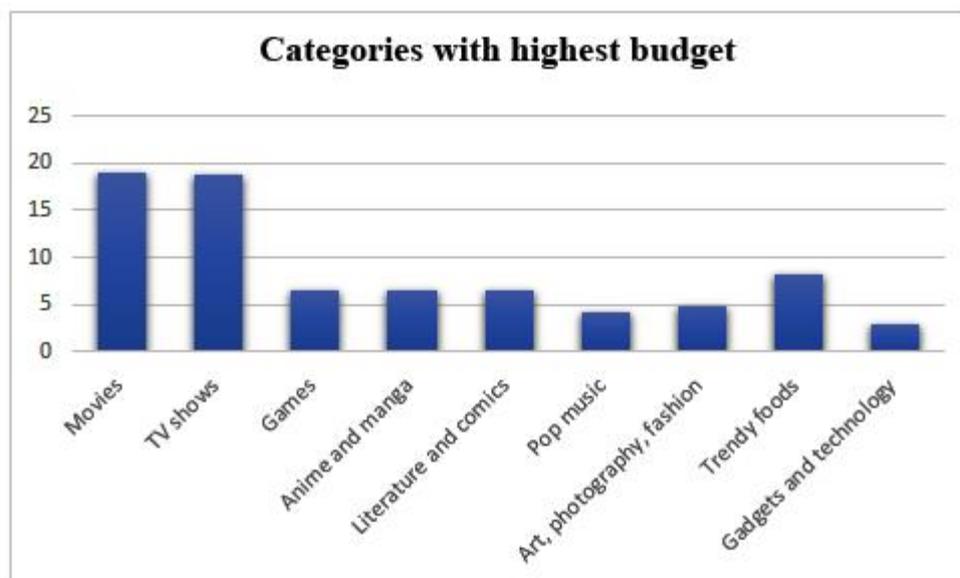


Figure 3.27 Q12: highest budgets (over 25%)

With movies and TV shows once again being given the highest score, the category “trendy foods” receives the third place, with many respondents allocating 25 and more percent of their budget on food. Three categories – “games”, “technology”, and “popular literature and

comics” – scored well among mid-level budgets (15-20%). The lowest budgets were assigned to “pop music”, and “art, photography, fashion” categories. These findings are consistent with the previous observations.

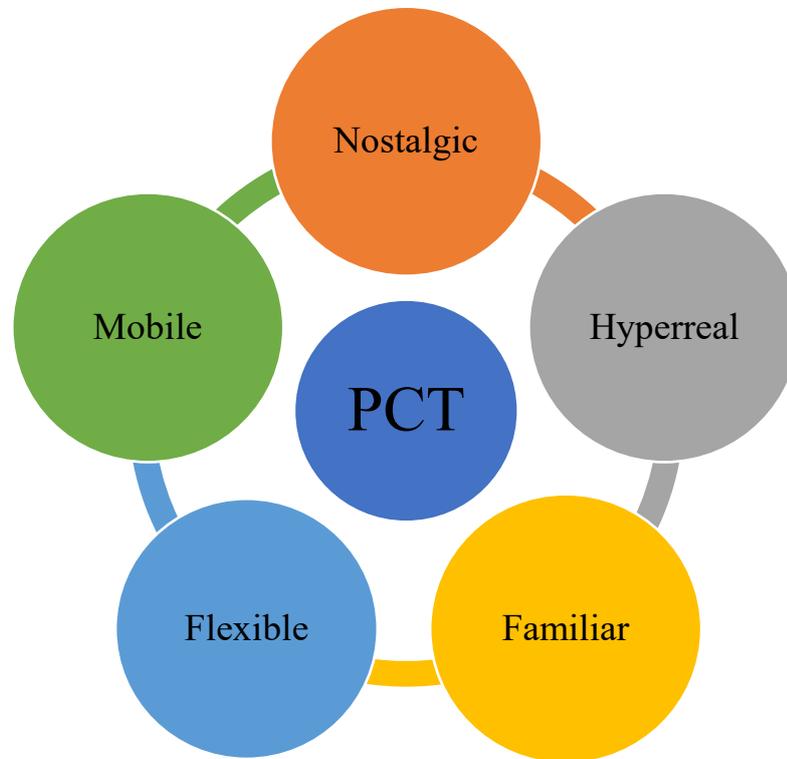
With regards to the sudden popularity of the category “food”, a plausible explanation can be glimpsed from the work of Cohen and Avieli ‘Food in tourism - attraction and impediment’ (2004). They explain that in popular literature, particularly the promotional tourism literature, food at a destination is generally presented as an attraction. It is expected to treat it as such. It does not come as a surprise that the respondents emphasised food when seeking ways to boost the attendance. In fact, this intuitive decision provides great insight as to the product preference in PCT (more in Chapter 4).

### **3.5.5 Discussion**

#### **3.5.5.1 Unique features of PCT**

As discussed in Chapter 1, tourism must adapt to the diverse needs of those travelling in multi-generation parties: grandparents with young grandchildren, children with elderly parents, grandchildren accompanying elderly grandparents, or many generations of one family travelling together. With many populations aging rapidly (Alegre & Pou, 2006; Chatterji et al., 2008; Kulik et al., 2014), all businesses will have to address new needs and wants that result from these emerging family and household structures. UNWTO's Asia-Pacific Newsletter (2012) explains that the older tourists (55+) now have a ‘younger’ outlook than previous generations of older tourists. They are more adventurous, wanting to try new things, and are more likely to share joint activities with other members of the family. In addition, Chapter 1 highlights other changes in households and families – more singles, more ‘second’ families – all sharing different interest and coming from diverse backgrounds. Finding a

tourist activity that could respond accordingly to this diversity may be a challenge. Due to its unique features the PCT can accommodate the needs of the changing demographics (Figure 3.28).



**Figure 3.28 Unique features of PCT**

The diversity that comes with PCT is enough to satisfy the multi-generational tourist groups, yet remain flexible enough to be tailored to individual travellers.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, nostalgia is often seen as a major driving force of PCT (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Cho, 2011; Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; Lai, 2001; Salkowitz, 2012). The literature suggests that PCT can perform well across a broad span of ages. The demographics of the survey support this statement. This is one of the major strengths of PCT – the ability to adapt to the everchanging demographics of tourism.

The data on travel distances indicate that pop-culture tourists are ready to travel long distances, where travelling between states does not seem to be a problem. This should also be recognised as one of the strengths of the PCT. Tourism often suffers from over-exposure and tourist congestion (spatial concentration) in certain locations, while depriving tourism businesses in neighboring areas (Tosun, Timothy, & Öztürk, 2003). Scholars, such as Amelung, Nicholls, and Viner (2007), Lew (2003), Oppermann (1994), argue that spatial concentration in tourism perpetuates class and regional inequalities, and stimulates economic, environmental and social problems. More 'mobile' forms of tourism (e.g., PC events: festivals, exhibitions, concerts, conventions) can potentially decrease the tension and help with issues related to tourist congestion.

The ability to be 'mobile' (not be tied to one location) offers PC events a good strategic advantage over more traditional tourism activities. In PCT, many events are gated as well as limited in time, making the assessment of the visitor expenditure a much easier task (Frechtling, 2006). These results emphasise the importance of considering events a priority direction in the development of PCT in Australia. The events could certainly play a dominant role in marketing Australia as a PCT destination as they provide more flexibility for the implementation of the strategies.

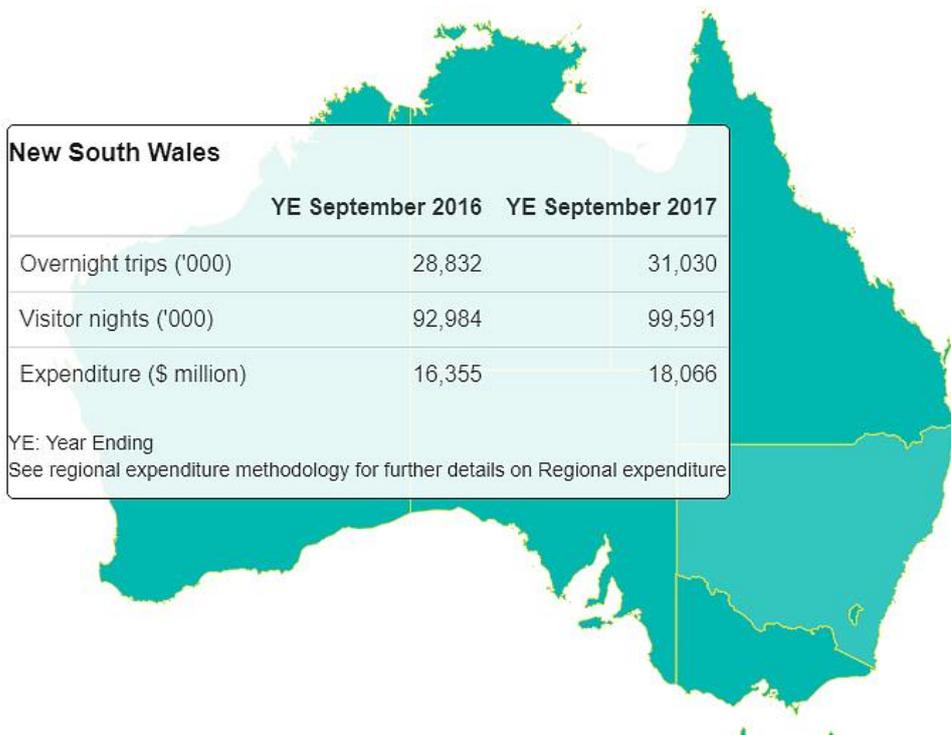
#### **3.5.5.2 Economic benefits of PCT**

The visitor expenditure estimates are essential for producing comprehensive estimates of tourism's economic impact. Looking at the data from the present study, it is possible to sketch a broad psychological model of an average pop-culture tourist in Australia. With the help of this model, it is possible to calculate an average income to the area from a single PC event.

A number of methods and models have been proposed to measure the economic benefits of events (Frechtling, 2006). The majority begin with the estimation of the expenditures at an event or a defined site (Getz, 2005; Tyrrell & Johnston, 2001; Vanhove, 2017). The expenditure models, states Frechtling (2006), “rest on a foundation of certain expenditure-related data that are readily available and relatively sound” (p. 31). He proposes a simple expenditure ratio model to produce a measure of total spending by visitors in the area. A similar model will be used below.

The following scenario is offered as an example. A convention is happening in NSW. Its previous attendance rate was 40,000 people (average attendance rate for Supanova conventions in NSW) over the span of three days. The data suggest that over 70% of the respondents are likely to attend the same PC event the following year, which somewhat guarantees the event an attendance of over 28,000 people. Data also suggest that many popular culture fans (70%) are likely to try a new event (where 21% are “Very Likely”). Therefore, in an optimistic scenario, the event will secure the same attendance rates. In fact, the Supanova 2017 Exhibitor information pack highlights that the event attendance rates grow each year.

Approximately 45% of the respondents are likely to travel interstate. The majority (41%) would travel for 3 or more days, with up to two days likely to be devoted to exploring the area. Many travellers, as data suggest, would travel in a group of three or more people (45%). According to the statistics for NSW published by the TRA (Figure 3.29), the average visitor expenditure per night is approximately \$180:



**Figure 3.29 Trip expenditure statistic for NSW**

Note: Illustration from the Travel by Australians (2017), retrieved from [https://www.tra.gov.au/tra/nvs/nvs\\_sep\\_2017.html#MPT\\_ItemizedExpenditure](https://www.tra.gov.au/tra/nvs/nvs_sep_2017.html#MPT_ItemizedExpenditure)

In an optimistic scenario, the average income to the area from a single event from interstate domestic travellers would be:

$$PA * IT(\%) * (Exp * \bar{n}) \approx 9.720 \text{ (\$ million)}$$

where PA – past attendance numbers, IT – interstate travellers (%), Exp - average visitor expenditure per night,  $\bar{n}$  - average nights per trip per state based on the TRA data, adjusted to survey data (3 nights). The total does not include the intrastate travellers, exhibitors (on average 100 teams), invited guests (on average 200), and sponsors (numbers suggested by the Supanova Event Programme, 2017). Given the number of large-scale popular culture events that happen in Australia within a year (Figure 3.30), the income generated can be impressive.



Figure 3.30 Pop-culture events by state

### 3.6 Future steps

In Australia, cultural assets can play an important role in tourism development. The DMOs should increase the variety of cultural experiences featured in current tourism marketing campaigns. More effort should be expended to advertising cultural events. The alternative cultural activities, such as those driven or inspired by popular culture, are becoming increasingly popular with tourists (Lundberg & Ziakas, 2018). The national DMOs should consider including PC events into their events calendars. The local tourism businesses could feature more cultural events in their promotional materials.

The next study will focus on the international perception of PC activities in Australia. It is necessary to explore the phenomenon from both domestic and international perspectives to

create distinctive solutions that would be specific and helpful for the local business environment.

### **3.7 Limitations**

The social desirability bias (SDB) is one of the most common sources of bias affecting the validity of survey research findings. People, state Chung and Monroe (2003), have a need to appear more society-oriented and altruistic than they actually are. A common source of SDB in survey research is the researcher. The researcher's voice, identity, appearance, and behaviour may influence study participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Abbey, Parkhill, & Koss, 2005; Banks & Martey, 2016). The phrasing of the questions can influence people's reporting (Gideon, 2012). Yet data scientist Stephens-Davidowitz advocates that with online surveys, within the privacy of one's internet browser, the respondents are more likely to express honest opinions than they would in the traditional surveys (Dubner, 2017).

Grimm (2010) reports that SDB is a major issue when the scope of the study involves socially sensitive issues. Could SDB be less expected in a survey on popular culture – a topic that can hardly be considered sensitive? The answer is yes, SDB may still manifest itself. For example, male participants might not admit to playing games. They might think that it is somewhat emasculating or unsophisticated. Wright (2005) reports another big limitation of online survey research – the self-selection bias (Thompson et al., 2003). He points out that in any given online community, there are individuals who are more likely to complete an online survey, leading to a systematic bias.

All studies are susceptible to at least one source of bias. The researchers must acknowledge the bias in their samples and provide some rationalisations for their choices (Campbell, 1989). To minimise bias, it is sometimes recommended to use multiple techniques, and combine

online surveys with participant observation, interviews, conversations, or social listening.

Perhaps a qualitative method may help resolve some of the issues. These and other limitations will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

### **3.8 Synthesis of the chapter**

This chapter highlights the importance of local support in destination development. It argues that local initiatives are extremely important during the early product development stages.

The chapter also highlights the importance of diversity in tourism and addresses the challenges of the events tourism sector. To explore the current state and challenges of cultural tourism, the chapter introduces Study 1. Study 1 employs online survey research as the main data collection method.

The observations formed while investigating the Australia's PCT sector reveal high interest in cultural events and high events attendance rates. The results indicate a positive link between current and future attendance behaviour. The findings suggest that in Australia, PC events have better application potential than PC locations. The gathered data were used for generating and testing the following hypotheses:

- H1 - Associations as an indicator of interest;
- H2 - Association between the interest level and the consumption frequency;
- H3 - Past attendance as a predictor of future attendance behaviour;
- H4 - Correlation between the level of interest and distances travelled.

The statistical tests being used include Cumulative Odds OLR model, Likelihood-ratio tests, Pearson Goodness-of-fit tests, Spearman's rank-order correlation, rank-based nonparametric Jonckheere-Terpstra test, and Cronbach's alpha as a measure of the reliability.

A big section is dedicated to tourists' spatial behaviour. The spatial behaviour is described as a product of many sub-patterns created by different groups of tourists. The investigation focused on following patterns: nominal and physical distances travelled, duration of stay, desire or willingness to explore, and group composition. The collected data helped produce estimates of the economic impact of PC events.

The creative question "Q12" played an important role in discovering trends and future projections. It introduced "food" as an important popular culture category. It reinforced earlier findings, suggesting high interest level in following PC categories: fan-favourite movie events, fan-favourite TV shows and related activities, and gaming. These results suggest a healthy level of cultural curiosity among PC events attendees.

Study 1 offers to concentrate on PC events as a priority direction in the development of PCT in Australia. The study suggests exploring the phenomenon from many directions, namely by introducing the international perspective (Study 2).

# Chapter 4. PCT IN AUSTRALIA: THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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## 4.1 Chapter introduction

In 2003, Gibson and Connell argued that tourism has been somewhat neglected in the literature on cultural economy. Today, however, tourism is recognised as one of the major suppliers of cultural experiences (Csapo, 2012; Richards, 2016; Smith, Waterton, & Watson, 2012). The arguments developed here are concerned with qualitative aspects of the cultural economy, namely the subjective experiences and expectation of past, existing and potential visitors.

Any type of experience is always interpreted by the individual in terms of his or her expectations, reactions, understanding of the world and the circumstances at hand (Bourguignon, 1970). It is the task of this study to capture the great variety of these experiences (impressions, feelings, thoughts, and observations) and help: (1) identify how Australia is being represented in popular culture discourse; (2) find how the particular imagery of local popular culture commodities can influence the Australian tourism development strategy.

Study 2 is a qualitative descriptive study that heavily relies on user-generated content as an important source of data. The study employs maximum variation sampling and purposeful random sampling to capture various experiences that can help illuminate the research questions from multiple perspectives. The insights obtained from the study have important practical implications. They influence the design and structure of Chapter 5.

## **4.2 Research context**

### **4.2.1 Social listening**

Many companies are turning to social media to test their products and services. Social media are a vital part of every marketing effort (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Lipsman et al., 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media platforms allow businesses to listen to their consumers, to note their experiences with similar products, and understand their expectations. This investigative process is called social listening. Researchers use social listening as a prelude to content analysis (Cole-Lewis et al., 2015). Although social listening is mostly used for commercial purposes (Powell et al., 2016), there are many reports of successfully using social listening for investigating trends and understanding human experiences (Killian & McManus, 2015; Sharma, 2015).

The current investigation asked for international reviews that were: (1) informal and unstructured, (2) presented in any language, (3) limited to 2014-2018, (4) collected from people living in different geographical locations, (5) not affected by the researcher's expectations. Social listening proved to be most informative, practical, and cost-efficient solution for this study.

Social listening can be invaluable when working with difficult social concepts that are hard to measure using more formal, traditional research methods such as questionnaires or experiments. The current study employs active social listening as a means for: (a) investigating cultural preferences, (b) getting to know potential customers, and (c) tracking user-specific events. These steps deliver an understanding of the role of popular culture in destination development.

#### 4.2.2 Modern approach to cultural tourism

All the themes that have emerged from this study can be linked to different types of cultural activity. It is, therefore, important to briefly discuss the modern cultural landscape and understand how it connects to tourism. This section will touch on a few aspects of heritage and urban tourism. It will also provide examples of cultural attractions that can shape the identity and character of a place.

The nature and scope of tourism development, reflects Butcher (2001), is determined by both natural and cultural attractions. Attracting cultural tourists has long become a common strategy for countries seeking to conserve traditional and to develop new cultural resources (Richards & Munsters, 2010). The cultural tourism resource remains popular with policy-makers, points out Richards (2016), because it attracts high-quality, high-spending tourists while at the same time providing economic support needed for cultural development. Yet cultural policies and objectives are not always clear even to those actively engaged in related work. Many face a dilemma in which, rather than trying for new ways to explore culture, tourism organisations and cultural institutions capitalise on the past by producing mainly 'heritage'<sup>2</sup>.

The scientific community widely accepts that culture is not a bounded, unchanging entity. Culture is dynamic rather than static. However, when thinking about cultural tourism, the immediate association that many have is that with heritage assets (Chiabai, Paskaleva, & Lombardi, 2013; McKercher, McKercher, & Du Cros, 2002; Richards, 1996; Willson & McIntosh, 2007). This conventional view of cultural tourism leaves many DMOs and tourism

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<sup>2</sup> To clarify, the online Cambridge dictionary defines heritage as "features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance" (see [dictionary.cambridge.org](https://dictionary.cambridge.org)).

businesses blind to possibilities associated with new cultural resources. The fossilization of cultural tourism, where cultural tourists are mainly offered the past perspective on local way of life, is a trap. It is an issue all tourism stakeholders should always be mindful of, as it may cause them to ultimately lose sight of what is important and attractive about culture. As Hewison (1987) ironically pointed out:

*“If the only new thing we have to offer is an improved version of the past, then today can only be inferior to yesterday. Hypnotised by images of the past, we risk losing all capacity for creative change.” (p. 10)*

The heritage tourism, though it satisfies many of our cultural needs as well as some of our nostalgic longings, is only but one of the many ways to explore ‘the place’. For example, the cultural tourism can be applied to explore the effects of the urbanization processes on local life and economy. It can be perceived as a complex hybridisation of modern culture and place (Cave, Ryan, & Panakera, 2003). Like most urban centers, urban cultural tourism has a high physical density of structures, people, and events. It is associated with social and cultural heterogeneity, can be economically multifunctional and socio-politically sensitive, and has a centrality within urban networks (see Ashworth & Page, 2011; Spirou, 2011). As a result, major urban centers have always been the stage for concentrations of many forms of cultural activity (Gibson & Connell, 2003; Pearce, 2001; Quinn, 2010).

From street art (e.g., East Side Gallery on Mühlenstraße in Berlin, Hosier and Rutledge lanes in Melbourne, Shoreditch district and Brick Lane in London), to street festivals (e.g., food truck festivals, pop-up street fairs, street carnivals), to fashion districts (e.g., Harajuku in Tokyo, Camden Town in London, Los Angeles Fashion District), to urban gaming (e.g., location-based games like Pokémon Go, gaming districts like Akihabara) – the modern approach to cultural tourism has come to inspire awe among travellers and researchers alike

(Picard & Robinson, 2006; Shaw, Bagwell, & Karmowska, 2004; Quinn, 2010). This increase in attention “reflects the growth of tourism in cities and its resulting associated policy issues” (Pearce, 2001, p. 927). Pearce (2001) offered a possible explanation as to why the urban cultural tourism is gaining in both popularity and publicity. He suggested that the growing demand from tourists visiting the historic cities has put forward the problems associated with increased visitation, thus diverting the tourist flow to less populous areas. Tourism, he states, is “seen more and more as a strategic sector for urban revitalization in cities” (p. 927).

Many of the modern cultural urban attractions are part of the popular culture scene. The popular culture is responsible for the inspiration that initiates the creative process: from urban art, to urban fashion, to urban festivals, to gaming – to name just a few. Popular culture can help shape the identity and character of a place. Take, for example, the active use of mascots in destination promotion, like the yuru kyara (ゆるキャラ) in Japan. Yuru kyara represent places, events, or commodities, and are ubiquitous in contemporary Japan (Occhi, 2012). According to Japan Trends, yuru kyara are a mascot representative of a city or a prefecture, “whose primary mission is to promote and vitalize its local culture and community” (Mina, 2013). Sometimes enacted by humans in costume, the “lovable in the obvious way that facilitates money-making” cartoon characters are closely tied to locations (Mina, 2013) and can be “compared to historical deities and demons” (Occhi, 2012, p.109). They may have cartoonish features, explains Occhi (2012), but they are anthropomorphic, and act as social agents within specific contexts to endorse actions related to local identity and civil society. These kyara occupy a prominent position in the Japanese pop-culture aesthetic called kawaii (for more information, see Kinsella, 2013; Miller, 2011; Tan, 2014).

This study looks at cultural tourism activities that are inspired, contain elements, or are closely associated with popular culture. The activities investigated include: event launches, celebrations, public events, exhibitions, displays, workshops, together with a variety of other special events. Apart from events, some general attitudes towards Australian cultural activities and policies are also being investigated.

#### **4.2.3 Pop-culture events in destination promotion**

Jago et al. (2003) advocate that events have become an increasingly significant component of destination branding. They are important contributors to the host's destination brand and carry important destination marketing messages. To explore the potential uses for events in destination promotion, it is first necessary to look at some examples of what destination marketers do when using events in destination branding. To limit the scope of the task, the focus is on popular culture related events.

As far as PC events are concerned, among western countries the US events seem to hold the most excitement and perhaps the most substantive attendance numbers. If any proof were required, states Salkowitz (2012), just look at the San Diego Comic-Con International:

*“...the sprawling pop culture festival that takes over San Diego for a week every July and contributes an estimated \$163 million to the local economy. Comic-Con draws upwards of 130,000 people (more by some estimates) and sells out almost instantly, with millions more following the proceedings online or through news reports (Salkowitz, 2012, p. 8).*

As of 2017, San Diego Comic-Con International generated up to 162,922 hotel room nights, resulting in 82,800,000 US dollars of annual spending by the attendees (Rowe, 2017). The San Diego Comic-Con, though being the most famous, is not the only giant in the country. The New York Comic-Con sold a record of 200,000 tickets in 2017, which is 20,000 more

tickets than in 2016 (MacDonald, 2017). Today, pop-culture conventions are important contributors to cultural tourism, with popular culture events growing rapidly as cities and countries are trying to catch up with global trends (see Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1 Comic conventions worldwide**

Among Asian countries, Comiket is by far the most attended event with over 500,000 participants (Ishikawa, 2008). First held in 1975 by comic book fans, it is now a three-day event that is held twice a year by a volunteer organization in the Tokyo Big Sight venue. The Comiket event in 2016 drew approximately 210,000 attendees on its third day for a total of approximately 550,000 attendees over three days ("Comic Market 91 Attracts 550,000 Attendees Across 3 Days", 2016).

When it comes to PC events attendees, it is hard to distinguish between residents and tourists. Perhaps, they are all local people looking for an escape from the daily routine. Most conventions do not publish the exact statistics, but according to the Comic Market Today brochure published by the Comiket in December 2009, the international desk at Comiket is "increasingly strained", and the languages demanded continue to increase (Ichikawa, 2009). The same brochure admits that the total number of overseas participants is impossible to

calculate, but subjective staff estimations indicate that the numbers are increasing. The Comiket's website statistic shows that 8% of the clicks come from overseas users (mostly Taiwan, USA, China and Korea). Similarly, Salkowitz (2012) notes the presence of many tourists travelling to San Diego to specifically attend the San Diego Comic-Con. Even though there are no exact numbers, there is evidence of attendees flying from all over the country to attend the event.

*Over the next two days, in airports all around the world, underground rivers of fandom were bursting out into the open, forming the tributaries of a mighty torrent surging toward San Diego. When we landed at Lindbergh Field three hours later, we saw more likely suspects in the crowd filtering toward the taxi stand, pulled inexorably together like the pools of liquid metal reconstituting the “bad cop” cyborg in the final moments of Terminator 2 (Salkowitz, 2012, p. 25).*

According to the reports from city's tourism bureau, San Diego plays host to more than 30 million visitors annually, generating more than \$700 million in state and local tax revenue (San Diego Industry Research, 2016). The San Diego Comic-Con makes up more than a quarter of the year's traffic by itself (Javier, 2016).

The pop-culture conventions constitute only one aspect of cultural tourism experiences. Originally emerging as an urban–cosmopolitan activity, the PCT is now reaching beyond the borders of the city. It is particularly noticeable in Australia, where PCT is stepping outside its comfortable urban setting and moving into the non-metropolitan areas. This transition is sometimes described as counter-urban migration (Gibson & Connell, 2003). A good example of such migration would be the Australian bush doof culture. Similar examples include the American Coachella festival, Alfa Future People in Russia, and Bestival in UK. They all share the same concept: escape from the city, remote rural setting, bohemian atmosphere, and explosion of electronic and popular dance music. According to Gibson and Connell (2003),

the doof culture is “informed and influenced by the attitudes and style of backpacker cultures” (p. 164)<sup>3</sup>.

As a global social phenomenon popular culture is not impartial to political and social debates. It is a social sponge that soaks up the values and beliefs of a generation and raises issues and ideas that are either advocated or condemned. In this way, popular culture serves as an important message bearer. This, among other reasons, is why many marketing experts are enticed by popular culture and attempt to exploit it for their commercial interests (Fiske, 2010; Giroux, 2012; Iwashita, 2006; Lee & Bai, 2016). If we are offered a power to narrate to the world, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, does it really matter that we use a Pokémon to go with it?

### **4.3 The need for product diversification**

When it comes to tourism, most travellers are used to thinking about Australia in a certain, sometimes one-dimensional way: as a nature-tourism destination or a sports tourism destination. Since Australia is widely known for its natural attractions, such as national and marine parks (Butler & Boyd, 2000; Eagles & McCool, 2002; Orams, 2002; Tonge & Moore, 2007), wildlife (Higginbottom et al., 2001; Higginbottom & Scott, 2008), and sports (Buckley, 2002; Evers, 2009; Higham, 2009) – considerable effort is put into nature, sports, and agricultural tourism, while other areas remain somewhat neglected (see discussion in Chapter 3). However, the reality keeps proving that the economic and cultural identities of Australia can be surprisingly variegated. Australia must explore the hidden possibilities by investing in the development or refinement of new areas, such as cultural tourism, or special events tourism.

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<sup>3</sup> The doof topic is discussed in detail in the Results section of this study.

There may be a few reasons as to why the tourism marketing policy is relatively conservative in Australia. Part of the problem could be the traditional view of Australia as an all-year nature and summer sports destination, where the universal perception of the destination feeds the current marketing policy and vice versa, creating a dangerous loop. The common line of thought is that the existing methods are known to be tried and true, so why change what works? As the Internet would say “If it fits, it sits”. Price (1993) states that this type of approach underlies the process of discounting future values, where the income today is worth more than the same or even higher income tomorrow. This thinking is extremely hard to turn around, more so when working with big institutions and systems of government.

Another reason could be the risk-reward nexus. The central theme is that the risks faced by institutions when implementing new policies or programmes outweigh the potential benefits. Will redirecting one’s energy to youth tourism segment (backpackers, international students, volunteer tourists, seasonal workers) take away from the family-friendly image of the destination? Will the push towards urban tourism divert those interested in eco-tourism in rural areas? In a situation where the market is too strong, overheated, and prone to the influence of fashion (see Baum’s (2001) notes on the impact of fashion on tourist behaviour), it is difficult to make a market commitment.

However, nature tourism is a highly capitalised industry (Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2011; Ham & Weiler, 2012; Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001), and so is sports (Gunn, 2012; Higham, 2009; Ritchie & Adair, 2002). It is becoming difficult to continuously rely on the same mass-marketed tourism product while aiming to achieve a balanced, sustainable approach to tourism development. The countries relying on a single strategy for the

destination marketing are in a high-risk group (Bhandari, 2010; Bonet, 2003; Middleton, 2001). They are more likely to suffer from stagnation and even decline, due to the oversaturated market and the ever-growing competition among destinations. The UNWTO guides encourage the tourism industry to increase the competitiveness of their destinations by “evaluating the scope and diversity of existing and potential tourism resources” and addressing the existing challenges of product similarity (Product Development and Diversification, n.d.).

While it is comfortable and safe to capitalise on existing competencies, there are certain risks that need to be addressed. Today, there is a growing body of knowledge about the impacts of climate change on nature-based tourism resources. Many studies predict that under climate change, the Australian mountain tourism (Pickering & Buckley, 2010), marine parks (De’ath et al., 2012; Sweatman, Delean, & Syms, 2011), forests (Garavito et al., 2015), and agriculture (Stokes & Howden, 2010) would suffer changes, to an extent where these changes might have a negative impact on local tourism economy. Zeppel and Beaumont (2012) are also concerned about the potential negative impacts of extreme weather events (cyclones, flooding, and heatwaves) on tourism infrastructure. This makes Australian tourism increasingly vulnerable to climate-induced shocks. It is for this reason that countries try to exercise a balanced approach to destination marketing, where, for example, a nature-based tourism is complemented by the cultural products, and vice-versa (Hall & Page, 2012).

Australia is certainly aware of the lack of differentiation in its tourism product portfolio and is making attempts to offset that by offering, for example, health (wellness and medical) tourism (Voigt et al., 2011), volunteer tourism (Lyons et al., 2012), music tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2003; Gibson & Connell, 2012/2016), and indigenous tourism (Mercer, 2005; Strickland-

Munro & Moore, 2013; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010). However, many of the above researchers agree that federal and state tourism organisations do not sufficiently participate in developing and promoting new tourism products. Some go as far as to claim that the Australian government agencies' knowledge does not address the reality of the situation. For example, in relations to indigenous tourism, Whitford and Ruhanen (2010) conclude that despite the effort, there is a certain disconnect between government-mandated curriculum and the reality of tourist demand. They argue that, in practice, the policies do not translate into sustainable visitor flows for many indigenous tourism businesses. Gibson and Connell (2012/2016) also note the insufficient financial support of local initiatives where lack of funds makes it difficult to obtain adequate infrastructure that could help handle large influxes of visitors. To meet visitors' complex needs, a more flexible marketing approach is needed, perhaps one that would include alternative tourism development.

Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer (2010) stress that alternative tourism development should “place a strong emphasis on contact and understanding between the hosts and the tourists” (p. 382). The investigation of current trends may provide some insights as to the future direction of tourism development.

#### **4.4 Aims**

This qualitative study deals with human experience. It explores the ongoing flow or stream of experiences related to Australian popular culture. The main objectives can be described as follows:

- explore feedback (concentrating on unique experiences) generated by international visitors and travellers to identify strengths and weaknesses of Australian pop-culture attractions;

- concentrate on providing a straight forward description and comprehensive summary of Australian pop-culture events as experienced by international attendees;
- describe and map the current festivals environment;
- looks into individuals' expectations and experiences pre- and post- attendance to identify important elements that shape opinions;
- investigate methods for exploiting such feedback to generate product recommendations;
- seek out ways to adjusted and reinforce current tourism marketing strategies to improve user satisfaction and product development in cultural tourism.

This study complements Study 1 by focusing on the international perspective. It completes the investigation of current trends and preferences in PCT, making it possible to move on to the last study (Study 3) which is dedicated to practical applications of pop-culture marketing tools. The insights obtained from this study can build basic guidelines for future tourism development strategies. Additionally, the information obtained provides an interesting cross-cultural comparison of preferences for activities, services and products in Australia.

## **4.5 Methodology**

### **4.5.1 Qualitative descriptive research**

Human experience is a difficult area to study. It requires methods that can facilitate the investigation of experience and take notice of the particular characteristics of that experience. Polkinghorne (2005) notes that qualitative methods are best designed to study the experiential life of people.

Study 2 is a qualitative descriptive study that is best suited for eliciting broad themes and patterns. It is a study designed to search for both consistencies and discrepancies in qualitative

compared with quantitative findings (principle of initiation<sup>4</sup>). It seeks fresh perspectives in hope of finding interesting results. The study is designed to explore the phenomenon in a way suited to offer insight.

This qualitative descriptive study encourages the use of less invasive research methodologies. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), the goal of a qualitative descriptive study is to provide a comprehensive summary of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals. They state that a qualitative descriptive approach is a design of choice when a straight forward description of a phenomenon is required: "It is an approach that is very useful when researchers want to know, regarding events, who were involved, what was involved, and where did things take place" (p. 256).

This method tries to avoid the "posturing" and "methodological acrobatics" when seeking the "epistemological credibility", notes Sandelowski (2000, pp. 334-335). Sandelowski (2000) also notes that a qualitative descriptive study is less interpretive than an interpretive description in that it does not require the researcher to move as far from or into the data, and does not need highly abstract rendering of data. This method is appropriate in relation to the purpose of this study and adheres to the principles of pragmatism (Neergaard et al., 2009).

A description always depends on the perceptions, experiences, expectations, and sensibilities of the describer. As such, it comes with a bias toward interpreting data in a certain way. The goal of the qualitative description, as opposed to, say, phenomenological description, is to keep the interpretation at a low-inference level. For example, when looking at a feedback, one researcher may focus on the feelings (happiness, excitement, anticipation), while the other

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Chapter 2 for more details.

researcher may concentrate on the event description (queues, crowds, noise). With low-inference descriptions, both researchers will agree with each other's descriptions as being accurate, even if they did not feature the same facts in their analysis. This 'practicality' avoids many interpretation problems. With this approach, what is chosen to be described must always be something that most observers would agree on as being a fact (Sandelowski, 2000).

The phenomenological or ethnographic descriptions may present events by assuming different formal interpretations, therefore, making researchers add their own interpretive spin on what is being said or written. Such interpretations require researchers to see "beyond their data", and demand "reading into, between, and over" the words and scenes (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 336). The underlying principle of qualitative descriptive study is to avoid reading into, between, and over, if possible.

#### **4.5.2 User-generated content**

Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) name content analysis a useful technique which employs a relatively low level of interpretation, making it perfect for qualitative descriptive studies. The content analysis is a general term used to describe a number of different strategies that may be applied to the production of messages (Neuendorf, 2016). Depending on the study, the content analysis can be as simple or as complex as the investigation demands. However, Neuendorf (2016) warns against using content analysis to make conclusions about the source or receiver based on the message content alone.

Recent years have seen a transformation in the type of investigative methods used in qualitative research. The Internet has become an integral part of everyday life to an extent where a number of countries have, in varying forms, formally recognised Internet access as a

basic human right (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013). The web is the ultimate, most widely exploited electronic data interchange medium. According to Agichtein et al. (2008), since early 2000s the user-generated content (UGC) has become increasingly popular on the web. In tourism literature, the benefits of using UGC have been widely discussed, stressing its importance in viral marketing, customer relationship management, and product development (Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides, 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Sigala, Christou, & Gretzel, 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). That being said, this study heavily relies on such content.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe UGC as "the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media" (p. 61). It has the validity to speak for the community, yet at the same time maintain the intimacy and candor of a focus group. The popular UGC domains include forums, blogs, booking systems, photo and video sharing communities, as well as big social networking platforms (for example, Facebook, Google+, Twitter) that use a combination of these tools. In UGC, apart from the content itself, there is a wide array of non-content information, such as social tags, links, and ratings – all successfully employed in information retrieval tasks (Clements, De Vries, & Reinders, 2010).

Several sources were used to gather data for this study: the traditional UGC platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, the Question-Answer portals (Quora, Zhihu, Douban, and reddit), blogs and forums (e.g., Kakao Story, Naver blog, City Data, Baidu), and photo and video sharing applications (Youtube, Instagram). While some social media platforms, such as Facebook, are often used as a research tool (Kosinski et al., 2015; Yi, 2014), others are yet to make their way. Agichtein et al. (2008) point out that community-driven Question-Answer (Q&A) portals are gaining audience in recent years. Among these are Quora, Zhihu, Yahoo!, reddit. The Q&A portals use a reciprocal questioning-answering procedure where users can

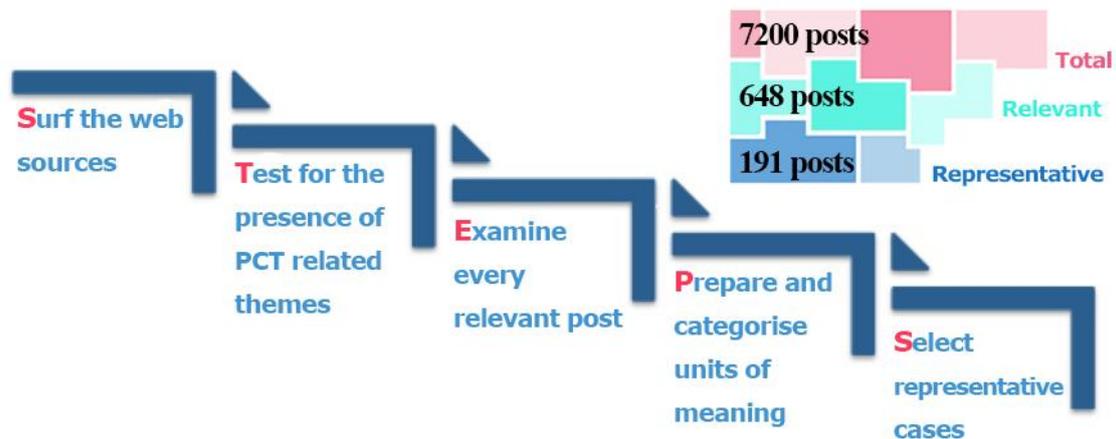
ask and answer each other's questions. It is an efficient tool for obtaining information. Beneath a seemingly trivial question-answer structure lies an effective and logical self-regulating system (Agichtein et al., 2008). The participants are encouraged to regulate the whole system by upvoting and downvoting both questions and answers. Together, the users work as a live filtering mechanism, deciding what is important and real.

There are certain challenges when working with UGC, for example, low-quality, abusive content, lack of demographic information. If the researcher is working with international or multicultural content, there is a subsequent need for translation. However, for the information retrieval tasks, the UGC presents inherent advantages over professional 'published' (mediated by a publisher) media. The absence of censorship, opportunity to conceal one's identity, a sense of immediacy through interactivity, ability to facilitate relationships – the UGC helps researchers work within a more naturalistic setting.

### **4.5.3 Sampling and data collection**

The method chosen for this study focuses on the differences between and similarities within generated codes and categories. The data collection includes observations, examination of records, reviews, videos, photographs, and other documents that connect to the research questions. Like many qualitative research studies, this study is characterised by simultaneous data collection and analysis. The presentation of data includes a straight forward descriptive summary of the informative contents of the data organised in a logical manner.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) state that qualitative researchers should always provide a rationale for decisions made regarding the number of cases used. Here, the data collection strategy was based on the following 'STEPS' logic (Figure 4.2):



**Figure 4.2 The STEPS logic**

In preparation for this study the researcher examined over 7200 posts (e.g., blogs, Q&A posts, forum messages, photo and video entries) from more than 15 social media portals and platforms. The search combinations used include keywords and hashtags: Australia, Australian, Aussie, Australian events, Australian culture, as well as non-English variations of the same words. Of 7200 posts, only 648 (approximately 8%) were identified as topic-specific. These were further narrowed to 191 information rich cases (over 22,000 words of content with supporting graphics). Following the analysis, the results were presented in the form of emerging meta-themes, sub-themes and categories. All data were analysed concurrently with data collection. This approach helped decide when the sample was ‘saturated’ (i.e., new themes stop emerging) so data collection could cease.

Neergaard et al. (2009) note that purposeful sampling techniques are often used in qualitative descriptive studies. Particularly useful is the maximum variation sampling. The maximum variation sampling allows the researcher to explore the different manifestations of the same phenomenon across a broad range of demographically varied cases (Sandelowski, 1995). The researcher may also choose to sample typical and unusual cases, in order to describe the phenomenon as it tends to appear or uncommonly appears (Sandelowski, 2000). This contrast

enables the researcher to see how differently the same events register with the participants.

Patton (1987) advocates that choosing participants with various experiences helps illuminate the research questions from multiple perspectives. Study 2 uses two sampling techniques to identify information-rich cases. The data set consists of two samples (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 The sampling techniques used in Study 2

	<i>Sample P</i>	<i>Sample M</i>
<b><i>SAMPLING</i></b>	Purposeful random sampling	Maximum variation sampling
<b><i>SIZE</i></b>	95 cases	96 cases
<b><i>OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase the credibility of results;</li> <li>- use the randomized sampling strategy to select a smaller number of cases from a large pool of available cases that qualify;</li> <li>- capture issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- select cases with maximum variation;</li> <li>- identify important common patterns that cut across variations;</li> <li>- illustrate what is typical, normal, or atypical.</li> </ul>
<b><i>LIMITATIONS</i></b>	Not as representative of the population as the probability random sample.	Though the method enlightens the studied phenomenon from many different angles, it does not offer in-depth conceptual explanations as to why certain themes are emerging, nor make judgements about whether the occurrences are, or are not, desirable.

The Sample P (SP) consists of user posts that describe popular culture events (e.g., conventions, festivals, concerts, exhibitions). All posts were created by users who identified themselves as non-Australians living in Australia (e.g., temporary residents, visitors, international students) or non-Australians living outside Australia. To check the latter condition, special attention was paid to the user profile information and the geolocation tags attached to the entry. The SP posts are information rich cases that describe impressions,

feelings, thoughts, and observations. The SP posts do not date back further than 2014. The Figure 4.3 provides an exemplary SP post.



Figure 4.3 Exemplary SP post<sup>5</sup>.

This post is created by an international student currently studying in Melbourne, Australia. The post has a date, the user information is detailed and public, and the content is related to the research topic (an Oz Comic-Con review). For SP posts, the word count density is  $M = 100$ ,  $SD = 143$ . The cases that had a small word count (under 30 words) were mostly images and photo reviews with attached hashtags as theme indicators. The justification for including small word count posts is the visual appeal, status or popularity of the message<sup>6</sup>. Lui, Li, and Choy (2007) point out that the discussion messages are usually short, so small word count is

<sup>5</sup> In the message, the author compares the Australian Oz Comic-con to the Tokyo Big Sight comics market Comiket. The author concludes that though being “compact”, the event was fun to attend.

<sup>6</sup> For example, a Q&A message upvoted by many members of the community, or an Instagram post with many ‘likes’, which makes it a popular search result for a given search query.

expected. An effort was made not to include more than two posts from the same user to maintain diversity and case richness.

Similar conditions were applied to Sample M (SM). However, the SM cases are not related to events. The SM data describe Australian popular culture trends, issues, future directions, and other cultural topics, such as urban art scene, fashion scene, food trends. Figure 4.4 shows an exemplary SM post<sup>7</sup>.



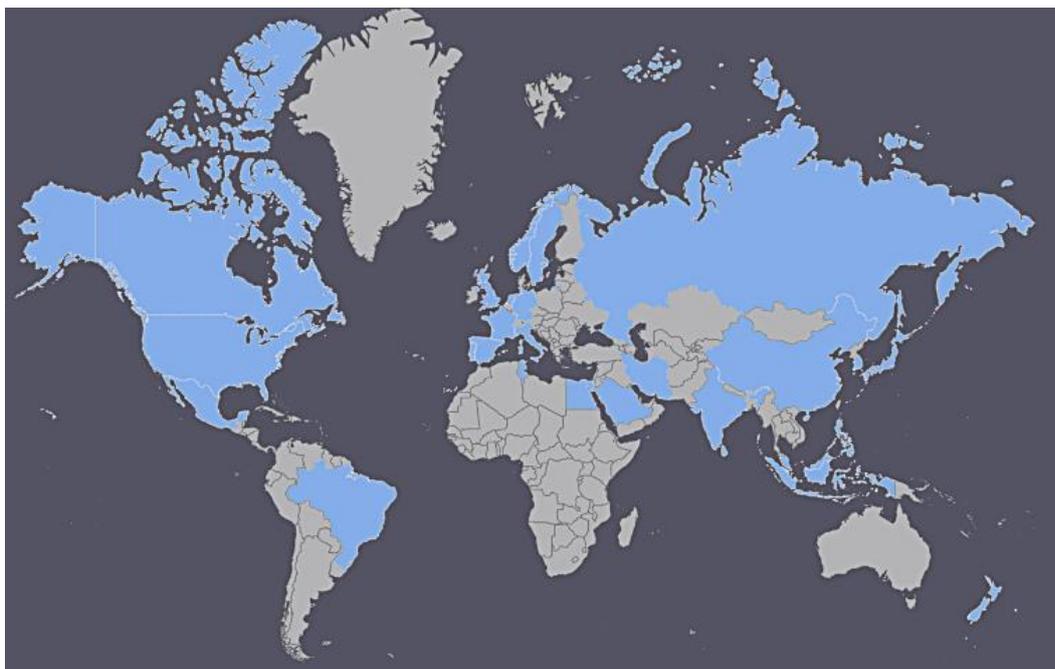
**Figure 4.4 Exemplary SM post**

For SM posts, the word count density is  $M = 123$ ,  $SD = 165$ . The researcher follows the advice of Graneheim and Lundman (2004), who suggest using concepts of abstraction when describing and condensing the text, since it “emphasises descriptions and interpretations on a higher logical level” (p. 106). Examples of abstraction, offered by Graneheim and Lundman (2004), include the creations of codes, categories and themes. These abstractions help the researcher answer certain questions regarding the credibility of the qualitative study. The credibility of research findings deals with how well codes, categories, and themes describe the data. It is important that no relevant data have been excluded or irrelevant data included. The credibility is also a question of how to judge the similarities within and differences between

<sup>7</sup> The post has a date (May 2018), the content is related to the research topic, and the author is a Canadian living in Gatineau, Quebec.

categories. One way to approach this, suggest Graneheim and Lundman (2004), is to show representative quotations from the transcribed text. To meet the credibility requirements, the representative quotations are introduced in the Results section of the study.

The Australian tourism authorities place a strong emphasis on Asian tourists (“Tourism 2020”, 2011; “China-Australia Year of Tourism 2017”, 2016; Seaton, 2014; “South Korea Market Profile”, 2017). Therefore, special attention was paid to Asian popular media (e.g., Kakao Story, Naver, Zhihu, Douban, Quora Japan). A map of the representative range of data sources by country is constructed to show the geochart of this study (Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.5 Geochart of the study**

The geochart shows that the selection represents different parts of the world, thus maintaining the principle of geographic diversity (more information in the Results section).

Any researcher working with UGC at some point faces the problem of finding and accessing relevant data. There is so much content flooding the web that information retrieval is an

object of study in its own right. This study makes use of tags and hashtags (#) to help with information retrieval tasks. Social tagging is a relatively new and useful tool designed to help navigate in the web space. In general, the tags can be assumed to describe user's interests, tastes and needs (Cantador, Bellogín, & Vallet, 2010). The tags form an unstructured classification scheme that can be used to search for items of interest and discover new topics, traits, and leads.

To work effectively with UGC, the knowledge of social media and the technology that underpins social media is essential. When developing marketing strategies that target specific markets, for example, non-English speaking markets, it is preferable for the knowledge to extend beyond traditional western media. To better understand the consumer and to develop a more 'global' perspective, one must consider using more localised social platforms and portals, such as Naver (Korea), Kakao Story (Korea), Quora Japan, Douban (China), Baidu forums (China), Zhihu portal (China). These sources, though not as widely known as Facebook or Instagram, attract a more specific audience: one that, by and large, speaks the same language, has similar cultural traditions, and similar cultural attitudes. It is at these more local levels that social platforms and portals gain several advantages over traditional western social media: 1) they provide access to a more specific population, thereby reducing the filtering time; 2) they provide a more 'cozy' environment for the users (i.e. interaction is happening within a group with shared national or ethnographic affiliations); 3) they offer true communication that is not hampered by the language barrier (e.g., users are not forced to post in English if they want to be understood by the majority of users). One can assume that people tend to be more outspoken about the foreign culture when communicating with people who do not belong to that cultural group: less self-censorship and political correctness. As Hughes (2011) notes, sometimes the notion of what is "offensive" or "inappropriate" or "racist" takes

on such broad and intrusive dimensions, forcing others into such elaborate stratagems to avoid "giving offence", that open debate becomes nearly impossible.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) note that UGC is a content that must be "created outside of professional routines and practices" (p. 61). Therefore, advertising and promotion materials, tourism materials, paid campaigns, and other professional content were excluded from the study. However, if the professional content had any relevant user comments attached to it, the comments would enter the data pool, given they comply with proposed selection criteria.

#### **4.5.4 Limitations**

The interpretation and understanding of meanings are central in qualitative research. Great care must be taken to prevent the loss of meaning. Unfortunately, incomplete sentences, grammatically incorrect sentences, slang, and idiomatic expressions are frequent occurrences in the UGC. The Internet language uses a lot of abbreviations and acronyms, which have a way of appearing, disappearing, and changing rapidly (Squires, 2010). This generates additional challenges in the interpretation of meaning. For example, Chinese forums use "COS" instead of cosplay, or use the term "gweilo" to point out westerners, or Tu'Ao which can mean anything from bogan, to rustic, to conservative, or 'wild' Australian lifestyle<sup>8</sup>. The knowledge of and ability to interpret online language helps researchers in information retrieval tasks. Those who are not familiar with slang and colloquial expressions, particularly when working with content in a foreign language, may have difficulties understanding the text and may not derive the correct messages from it.

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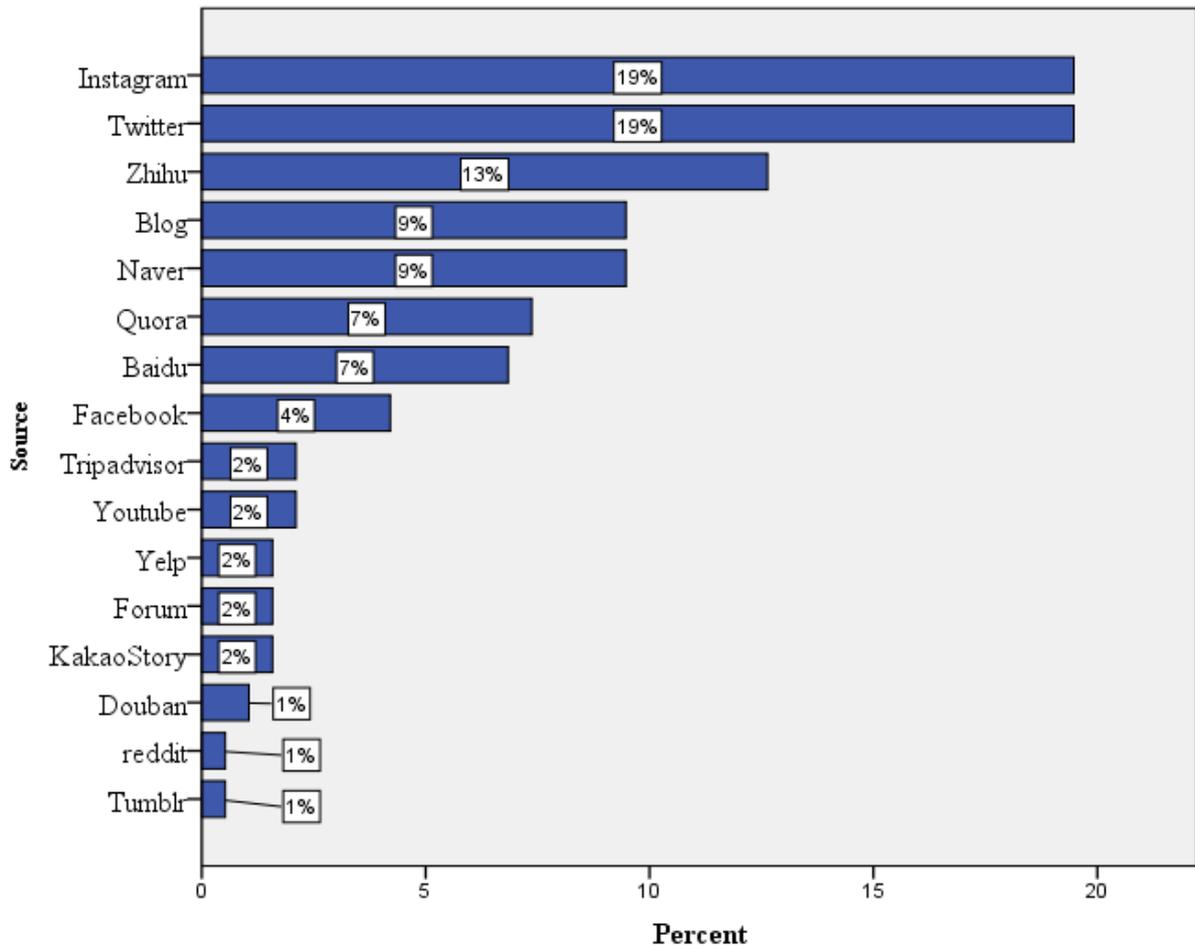
<sup>8</sup> For more information see <https://www.quora.com/Why-do-some-Chinese-call-Australia-TuAo-%E5%9C%9F%E6%BE%B3-literally-means-Crony-Aus>.

As has been mentioned earlier, maximum variation sampling does not always offer in-depth conceptual explanations of the observed behaviours or gathered opinions. The variety has always been the main criterion in choosing this particular method. By using the maximum variation sampling, the researcher tries to collect as much data as possible, allowing to capture “all of the elements of an event that come together to make it the event that it is” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 336). In an attempt to cover as many different cases as possible, certain concessions are inevitable. While it is an appropriate method for this study, in other disciplines such an approach is sometimes perceived as an important study limitation.

## **4.6 Results**

### **4.6.1 General characteristics**

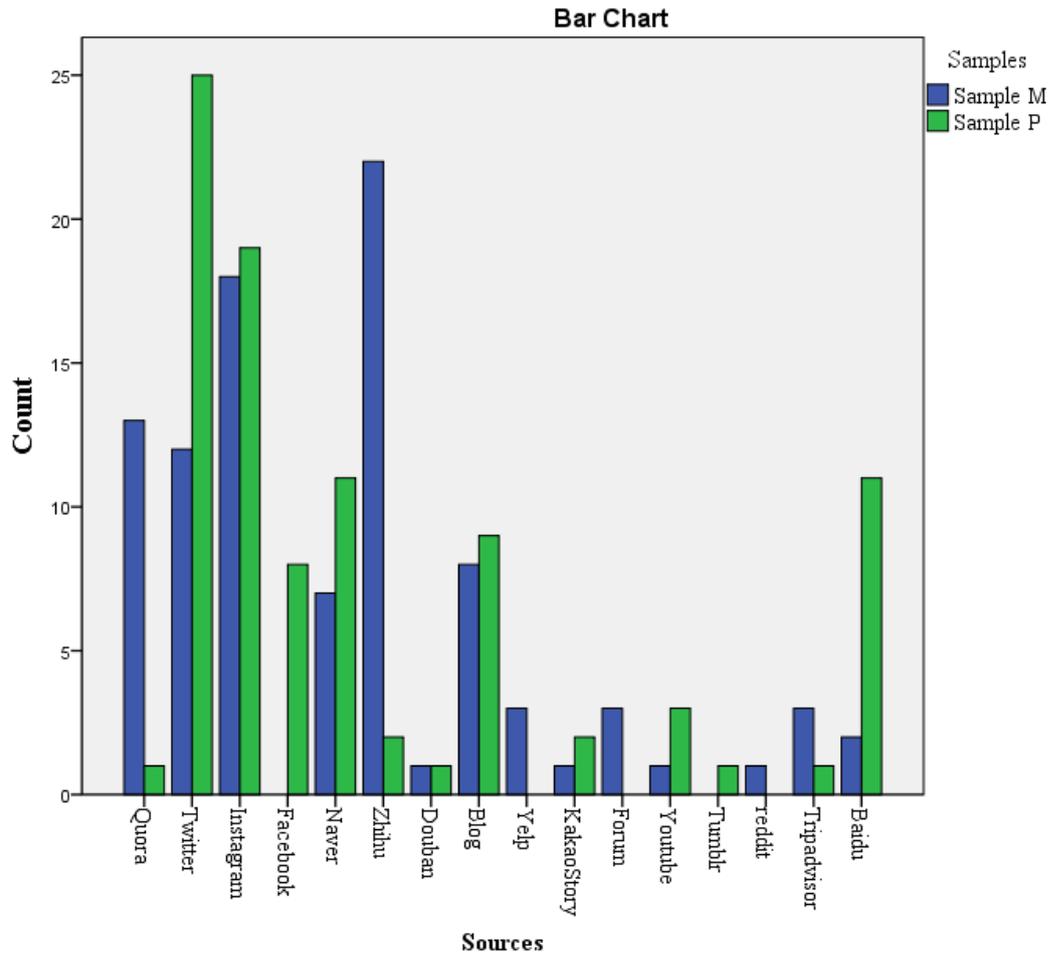
For qualitative studies, Polkinghorne (2005) encourages researchers to work with a variety of sources that are "most likely to inform the researcher about the character of the experience being explored" (p. 142). Here, the researcher works with data collected from 16 sources (Figure 4.6).



**Figure 4.6 Data sources for Study 2**

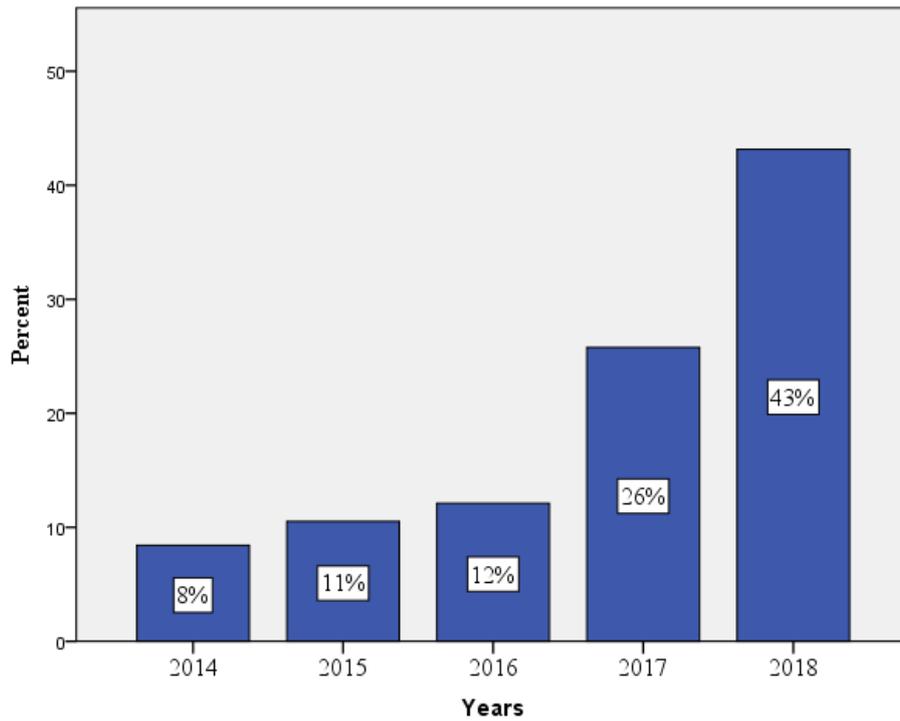
The sources used are Instagram and Twitter (both 19%), followed by Zhihu 13%, Naver and user blogs (both 9%), Quora and Baidu (both 7%), while the rest share the remaining 17%.

Some sources mainly deliver SP data (for e.g., Baidu, Twitter), while others mostly provide SM data (for e.g., Zhihu, Quora) (Figure 4.7).



**Figure 4.7 Sources and samples crosstabulations chart**

Most reviews came from Chinese users 23%, followed by Korean users 17%, Japanese users 14%, USA users 11%, UK users 6%, and Indonesian users 4%. The other 24 countries make up the remaining 25%. Polkinghorne (2005) notes that the experience and the emerging themes should be treated with special reference to the time. The timeframe is outlined in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.8 The timeframe for Study 2**

Figure 4.8 shows that collected data are up-to-date and satisfy the study criteria. The user posts were coded as positive, negative or neutral, where neutral posts state only facts without providing a direct cue about the author's feelings. The majority, 70% of the posts, were positive, 24% maintained a neutral position, and 6% were negative in their expressions.

The final data tree is presented in Figure 4.9.

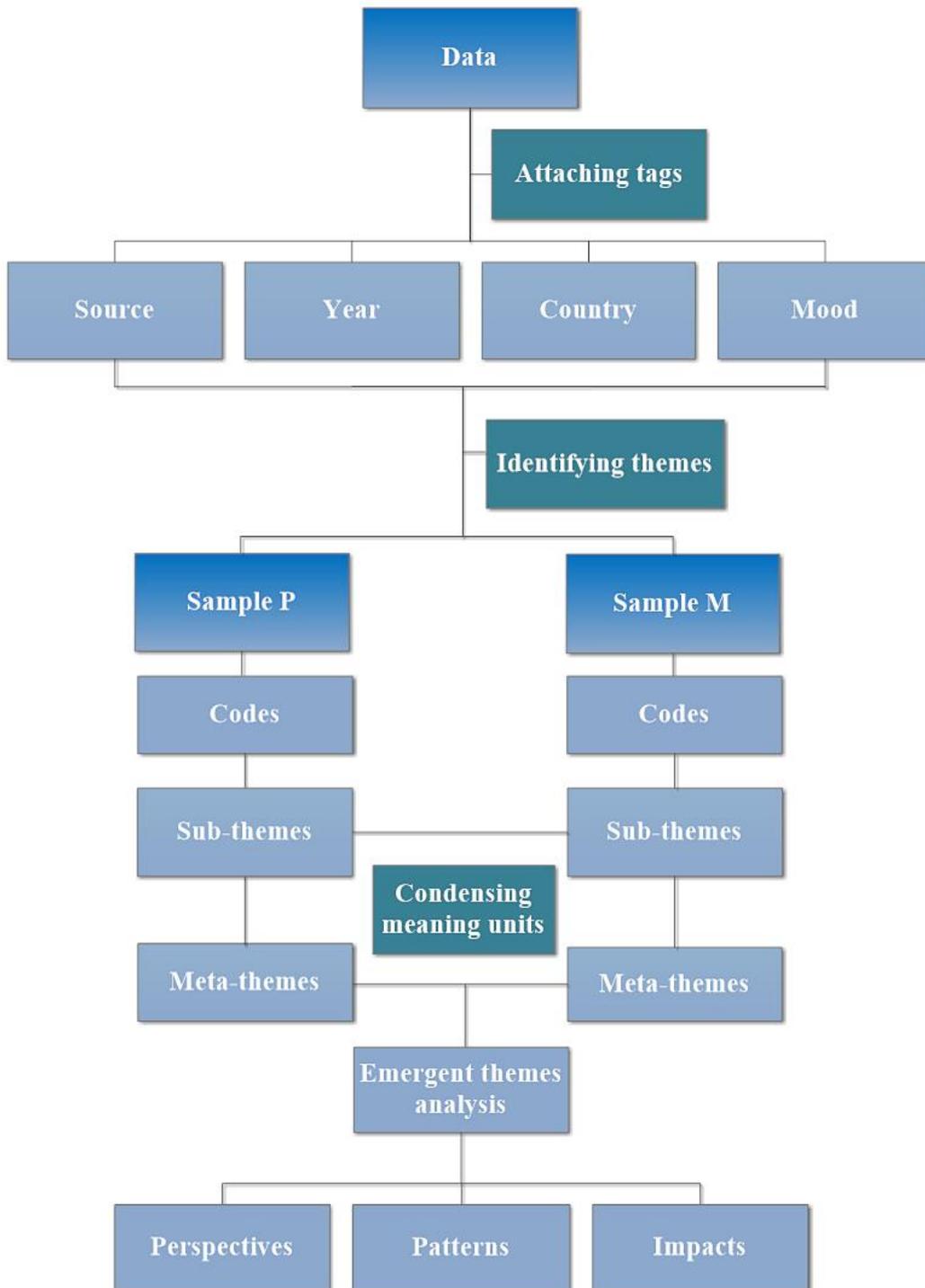


Figure 4.9 Data tree

## 4.6.2 Sample P

### 4.6.2.1 Meta-themes, sub-themes, and categories

The SP sample consists of 95 information rich cases retrieved from 16 different sources. The data were coded manually by the researcher and trained research assistant. The researcher and trained assistant independently coded half of the reviews. Through a process of code revision and re-coding, strong levels of intercoder reliability were established.

The mood of the user reviews is predominantly positive (77% positive, 16% neutral, 7% negative). The analysis revealed five meta-themes (conventions, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, and competitions) and 10 categories (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 The SP meta-themes and categories

Categories	Meta-themes % of total					Total
	Convention	Festival	Concert	Exhibition	Competition	
Comic conventions	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32%
Gaming events	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%
Film festivals	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Music events	2%	10%	14%	0%	0%	26%
Doofs	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	16%
Toys events	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	3%
Food truck events	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Urban festivals	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Cosplay events	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Anime events	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	36%	45%	14%	2%	3%	100%

The themes and categories helped organise and analyse the users' narratives. From the data, the researcher extracted 25 sub-themes (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 The SP sub-themes

	The sub-themes	
1	Smaller scale of local events	Conventions
2	Consumption levels of Western popular culture and Eastern popular culture	
3	Greater accessibility and availability of activities at the events	

4	Growing popularity of local conventions	
5	No big crowds, no long waiting lines	
6	Good range of products, higher prices	
7	Many more children and families in attendance	
8	Not enough publicity: festivals and conventions	Festivals & conventions
9	Young and close-knit community	
10	Advanced cosplay events	
11	Use of pop-culture events in destination promotion	
12	Noticeable influence of western culture	
13	Unique bush doof events	Festivals
14	Cultural film festivals	
15	Doof festivals, arts and community engagement	
16	Festival experiences can improve attendees' psychological wellbeing	
17	Incorporating Aboriginal teachings into the cultural programme	
18	Local appreciation of food truck festivals	
19	Food truck events and food prices	
20	Popular culture weeks – parades, conventions and cultural festivities	
21	The educational role of popular culture events	
22	Celebrating Asian popular culture through K-pop, J-pop, and C-pop events	Concerts
23	Promoting modern technology through popular culture events	Exhibitions and conventions
24	Toy exhibitions and trial play events	
25	International gaming competitions and rise of eSports	Competitions

Each sub-theme is associated with a meta-theme and falls within a certain category. All sub-themes are discussed in detail below. It is necessary to note that the use of percentage measures and size-specific indices has limitations for interpreting the results as the study design asks for unique cases and diversity. The categories cannot be effectively compared to one another. For example, if 20% of the cases discuss cosplay and only 10% discuss urban arts it is not necessarily an indication of cosplay events being twice as popular as the arts events. It is simply an indication of cosplay events having more unique features.

#### 4.6.2.2 Comic conventions and cosplay events

The number of comic conventions (comic-cons) in Australia has been steadily growing since mid-2000s. There are currently four big conventions happening every year – Madman Anime Festival, Oz Comic-Con, Supanova, and SMASH! – and over 20 smaller local conventions (e.g., MagnetiCon in Townsville, BrisCon in Brisbane, AVCon in Adelaide, Animaga in Melbourne, GAMMA.CON in Canberra). For many local conventions, the attendance and generated interest is high enough for the events to run entirely on volunteer support. For example, GAMMA.CON claims to be “staffed 100% by volunteers” (“About Gamma.Con”, 2018). The AVCON (2018) also states that the event is run by a dedicated group of volunteers known as Team AVCon. The MagnetiCon in Townsville could not have happened without the volunteers’ support. In 2018, even public spaces such as libraries are caught up in the explosive growth of conventions. For example, The Comic Con-versation Library Festival (CCV) is dedicated to “Celebrating the best of local comic culture with events, exhibitions and talks across Sydney libraries” (“Comic Con-versation 2018 July 9 to July 22”, 2018).

The atmosphere of conventions is friendly and approachable to a point when even more conservative communities are attracted by the idea of having their own convention. For example, Indigenous Comic Con is coming to Australia in 2019. According to their website, they are “planning on hosting the first ever Indigenous Comic Con in Australia as we seek to engage a global audience in changing perceptions of Indigenous people at home and abroad” (“We're heading to Australia!", 2018).

The international media seems to be watching Australia’s conventions with interest. For example, シネマトウデイ ([www.cinematoday.jp](http://www.cinematoday.jp)) recognises SMASH!, Supanova, and Oz Comic-Con as Australian biggest pop-culture events that are similar to the comic conventions

of USA (“What about foreign otaku and fan activities?”, 2016). The international reviewers, overall, express positive feelings about Australian conventions. The analysis reports many positive, two negative, and one neutral aspects of Australian comic-cons (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Australian comic-cons: positive, negative and neutral aspects

Positive	Family friendly, popular with many people, great fun, elaborate cosplay, big variety of activities, no long waiting lines, worth attending
Negative	Expensive merchandise, might be crowded
Neutral	Not enough Asian pop-culture

The feelings were expressed in various ways through multiple descriptors. The authors would report positive surprise, joy, anticipation, appreciation, confusion, frustration, to name but a few. The feelings were also described using pictorial descriptors such as emoticons and emoji. Below, is an example of a positive representative quotation, where the event helped improve the attendee's psychological wellbeing:

*I've made friends by going to the right place to find them. Go to places that relate to you. Example: Supanova, it's almost impossible to not make a friend there [...] These sort of activities can also really help with all sorts of mental illnesses like Depression and anxiety. I know from personal experience (SP1<sub>c-c</sub>)<sup>9</sup>.*

In this post, the author writes about his or her experience with Supanova. The important message is that Australian comic conventions are friendly and helpful. They are hospitable, which means that anyone and everyone is welcome to attend. The theme of friendliness figures widely in the reviews.

*[Oz Comic-Con] There were a lot of visitors who cosplayed quite a bit, and I enjoyed just walking through the venue. Everyone was happy to pose for photos. There were*

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<sup>9</sup> From here onwards, the researcher tried to preserve the original style and grammar of all user texts.

*also many families and children, sometimes all family members would cosplay together. Even those who were not interested in cosplay enjoyed activities such as comics, anime, Star Wars, video games [...] In Australia, cosplay seems to be accepted by a wide range of people, and in large cities, we sometimes saw people walking in costumes... (SP31<sub>c-c</sub>).*

An interesting feature of Australian comic conventions is that they have many children and families in attendance. In comparison, the atmosphere of the famous American San Diego Comic-Con is such, that even grown-ups find it difficult to maneuver through the complex maze of the exhibitors, not to mention the legendary fan queues (Dixon, 2017; Salkowitz, 2012), see Figure 4.10.



**Figure 4.10 San Diego Comic-Con**

Note: Photo by GeekShot (Dixon, 2017)

The Australian comic-cons are family-friendly probably because they are smaller than their western cousins (in terms of attendee numbers) and more compact (smaller venues). For example, in one blog post a US blogger is talking to an Australian cosplayer. They discuss the

similarities and differences between the comic-cons in two countries. Parts of the conversation are provided below.

*...I'm Australian born and raised, but lived and worked in the States [...] The larger American events, like NYCC, were a bit intimidating; I wasn't used to conventions that big, that busy, or that long [...] Compared to many other countries, the Australian cosplay community is quite small and young, and usually very close knit. Everyone knows everyone, often including the convention staff or volunteers...*

*We don't have many conventions, and they are often on a smaller scale, feeling more like a family reunion and a game of "Where's Wally/Waldo" where everyone is Wally/Waldo, but I've heard we have a higher convention attendance per capita than the USA...*

*There isn't the same adult culture around conventions, with many more children and families in attendance, usually ending at "family-friendly hours", with going out for food and drinks with friends, or playing games becoming evening traditions, rather than underwear parties, raves, or burlesque. [In US] I found the catcalling and physical contact very confronting, and was shocked when cosplayers were often referred to by racial labels, such as "black Sailor Moon" instead of just "Sailor Moon"... (SP78<sub>c-c</sub>).*

According to reviews, the smaller size of the Australian conventions does not seem to be a problem.

*I participated in the Australian version of Comiket 'Oz Comic-con'. Compared to the Tokyo Big Sight comics market, it is very small, but you can enjoy a variety of works/produce, including beautiful cosplays, as well as photography events (for fee) with celebrities, though compact, it was still fun (SP20<sub>c-c</sub>).*

Similar results were reported in another study, where the researcher compared local UK conventions to USA conventions (Ansell, 2015). In that study, the attendees saw the smaller size of local conventions as a sign of being "indie", where "indie" stands for independent and unique.

The different formats of the user posts (texts, photos, videos) made it possible to explore the events from different angles. In video posts, for example, the first impressions would not necessarily match the conclusions. For example, the author of SP61<sub>c-c</sub> describes his experience of attending Supanova 2018 in Melbourne by vlogging (online video blogging). The vlog opens with the description of the venue as “very big, similar to the national stadium”. The author later concludes that the "convention is medium scope. A lot of empty spaces". The same author talks about the prices and the range of products and services for sale.

*[Supanova] The stuff here is really expensive. Better find what you like and order online. The masks look nice, but I won't buy any [...] Lots of dolls here... Lots of cosplay materials. Finally, a Chinese booth... Wow, the stuff here is very expensive. Let's continue. A lot of plush toys. Lots of figmas [フィグマ] here [...] Oh, here they sell wigs. Really expensive. I won't buy anything here... If there is free stuff I will happily take it. Otherwise, I won't get anything. I might buy if it is \$2 or less. Not very much different from Chinese conventions in terms of what they sell here. Main difference is the people (SP61<sub>c-c</sub>).*

The issue of price and variety is a recurring theme.

*[Oz Comic-Con] Hello, this is JUN! Following the last post, I will be posting about the recent Australian comic con! After taking pictures with Jason Momoa, I started to look at Comic-con in earnest! [...] It was filled with booths [...] Comic-con was selling a variety of figures. Not to mention the most basic Funko pop! figure themes - all so varied. Superheroes, Game characters, Harry Potter, etc. and of course Disney [...] So there were a lot of booths selling comic books. There were a lot of talented artists involved [...] There were many items related to comics: comics, posters, and so on. Pictures with the stars' autographs were also available! But my wallet was too light...(SP94<sub>c-c</sub>).*

Among the few complaints that surfaced, most were related to the merchandise prices being too high. Only a few were concerned with the price of the event tickets.

*[Oz Comic-Con] Queuing...half an hour...there are still many lines to stand in today but it's worth it! Really expensive [...] Too expensive... The purse is crying. But it's worth getting a photo signed [...] Getting the tickets now... (SP54<sub>c-e</sub>).*

While most international attendees seemed happy with the variety of booths and products on display, a few mentioned that there was not enough Asian pop-culture. For example, in post SM38<sub>p-c</sub> the author makes observations on ACG (anime, comics, games) culture in Australia.

*In the course of my investigation, I rarely saw Eastern cosplay on display [...] In addition, there are only small number of booths selling Oriental figures at popular conventions. Therefore, from these findings, it can be seen that the Eastern theme has some popularity in Australia, but the development is relatively slow... (SM38<sub>p-c</sub>).*

The comments that follow mainly agree with the author's conclusions.

*I went to the biggest convention in Sydney Smash (although I only visited once), I didn't see much oriental cosplay, and there were few oriental booths... (SM39<sub>p-c</sub>).*

A few posts mention long queues and crowds. Many of the mentioned queues were formed by guests who were trying to attend an autograph or photograph sessions. The size of the Australian comic-cons makes it possible for the attendees to queue for and get more than one autograph or photo, or even attend several panels without having to spend half a day standing in lines. Whereas at bigger conventions, such as Summer Comiket in Japan (Figure 4.11), people will be queuing for hours just to enter the convention and attend one session (Clegg, 2015; Stimson, 2016).



**Figure 4.11 Comiket queue in 2013**

Note: Photo retrieved from <https://www.deviantart.com/bazsg/art/THE-QUEUE-for-Comiket-396295234>.

All the reviewers that mention cosplay events agree that Australian cosplay scene is ‘thriving’ in the sense that the cosplayers seem to be proud and serious about their designs, and many deliver beautiful costumes.

*Madman Anime Festival Day 1! Enjoying myself lots so far ~~~~ lovely cosplays and everyone is so friendly ! 🤩❤️🌟@MadFest #Brisbane (SP65<sub>c-c</sub>).*

*[Oz Comic-Con] Here are some Cosplay bars. 99% of cosplay here is all beautiful, occasionally you can see a few generations of Kakashi sensei... (SP59<sub>c-c</sub>).*

*Unexpectedly, I came across a lot of cosplayers. The guests of Supanova were especially popular. A wide range of personality and collector's edition costumes attracted a lot of attention [...] This friend said it took him more than three hours to prepare his body art. It was a strange and fun experience (SP47<sub>c-c</sub>).*

The Australian cosplay events, though not as big as comic-cons, have their own dedicated audience. Most cosplay events happen prior to or after the conventions, which makes it possible to have pop-culture weeks. For example, Queensland celebrates the QPoW on the

Broadbeach – a cosplay event which coincides with Supanova Comic-con and the Gold Coast Film Festival. Unfortunately, these events often remain unnoticed by international visitors. Several people even noted that they had found out about the events by accident.

*Feel so happy I can die. Gold Coast, Australia, had come here for the beach, and then saw a group of cosplayers with a retro look, and inexplicably ended up at a Doctor Who seminar (SP60<sub>c-c</sub>).*

Several patterns emerge from these data. The Australian conventions are small to medium sized events, family-friendly and hospitable. Many conventions are run by enthusiasts and volunteers. The overarching themes are (a) friendliness, (b) great variety of things to do and buy, (c) beautiful cosplay, (d) the compact size of events, (e) high prices on certain products, (f) prevalence of western pop-culture themes.

#### **4.6.2.3 Music festivals, music concerts, and music conventions**

The meta-theme “festivals” was very popular with international reviewers. Within the theme, the category that was most reviewed and had the most sub-themes attached to it was “doofs”. Since not everyone is acquainted with the term doof, some introductory information is required.

The strategies that involve the use of music to promote tourism and stimulate regional development are scarcely new. According to Gibson and Connell (2012/2016), since the early 1800s European cities staged festivals to encourage social relations, generate trade, and draw in people from the outside. While many destination marketers are aware of the opportunities offered by music tourism, not all successfully use the knowledge of current music trends in destination promotion (Gibson & Connell, 2007; Moore, 2013). In fact, the tourism scene is so saturated, that some events are simply overlooked or understudied (Green, 2017; Dineen, 2015). This is the case with Australian bush doofs, where the information seems to get lost in

the vast sea of content. While doof festivals generate enthusiastic followings in Australia (John, 2010; Luckman, 2014; Tramacchi, 2000), they do not appear to receive much support from tourism authorities.

Australia, along with US, are probably the biggest providers of music 'bush festivals' or doofs. A bush doof, as described by Smith (2018), is "an outdoor dance party... that uses the grass as its dance floor", adding that "Australia is undoubtedly the cradle of the bush doof" (Figure 4.12).



**Figure 4.12 A bush doof party (compilation of public social media photos)**

A bush doof, states Luckman (2003), is "one localized manifestation of a global cultural movement... the overseas family tree which is being steadily and extensively chronicled" (p. 315). It is true that EDM (electronic dance music) concept is not new to tourism, and that the

EDM festivals are quite common in the growing festival industry (Butler, 2006a; Dineen, 2015). Yet the Australian approach to EDM festivals, particularly bush festivals, is unique. The reason lies in the country's geography: feeling of open 'spaciness' and wilderness, be it desert, rocky, or lush tropical terrain. Australia has a real spirit to being stomped, notes Luckman (2003), and if you ever saw a doof, it is very much about stomping the earth (John, 2001, 2010).

The origins of the word can be traced to the term "doof doof", which in Aussie slang stands for the heavy bass beats in electronic music. According to Smith (2018), the bush doof emerged in the early 1990s, when dance parties were held in the warehouses and other industrial areas of Sydney. They soon started attracting too much attention from police and local councils. Under the pressure from local law enforcement forces, the parties moved to the more remote and less populated areas. The first ticketed bush doof festival Earthcore was held in Victoria in 1993. Lewis and Ross (1995), reflecting on the early Sydney dance party scene, quote a local party organizer, who said that "[In Australia] It's a unique experience of humans self-expressing together... not dissimilar in form and content to some local religious meetings" (p. 55). It may be that the possibility of self-expression in "ritualized social celebrations with their peers" (Lewis & Ross, 1995, p. 55) in a sunny climate with large spaces of undeveloped 'raw' land is what inspires young adults from all over the world to attend doof festivals. It is perhaps the main distinguishing feature of the Australian outdoor party scene as compared to other renowned party destinations, such as Spain's Ibiza, Goa in India, Thailand's party islands, or Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

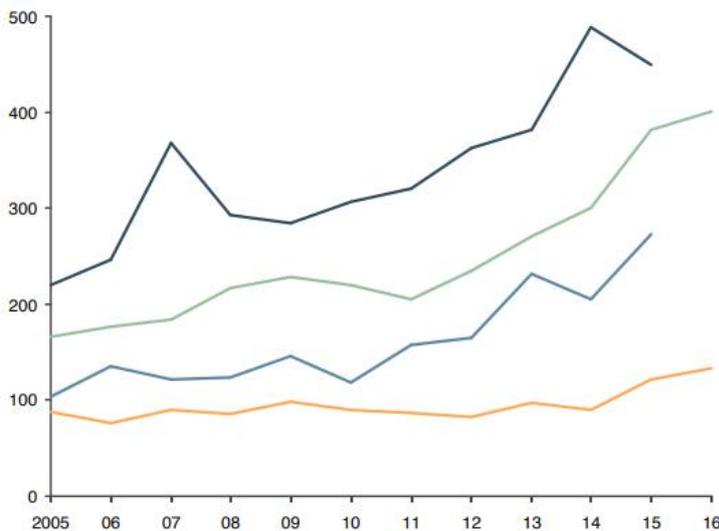
The Australian bush doofs, reflects Smith (2018), are quite unique: "light shows, art installations, workshops, serene rural settings...the occasional narcotic here or there" together

with affordable tickets and camping – doofs offer an exclusive sensory experience. Luckman (2003) notes the linkage between bush doofs and indigenous cultural practices, and often quotes John (2001), who implied association with Aboriginal inter-tribal gatherings and Aboriginal corroboree. For doof participants, the experience is a lot more personal and inward, explains Luckman (2003); it is an "experience outside of confined walls... a brief pause for all of us, to get out of "it", the city, for real" ("Earthcore – the original bush doof", n.d.).

Some might question whether a bush doof festival can be considered as a pop-culture event. Originally, the doofs belonged to the underground music movement, and explicitly positioned themselves as a separate rave-culture scene. Recently, there have been changes in Australian rave culture, with studies reporting the commercialisation of the dance party scene. It is all part of becoming a global phenomenon, reflect Siokou and Moore (2008), with more sponsors, more attendees, changes in the "vibe", new drug-related practices – all contributing to commodification and popularisation of rave dance party scene in Australia. Today, it is not uncommon to hear popular music beats, see elements of hipster culture, and neo-bohemian vibes presenting themselves at doofs.

Prior to this study, the researcher had little to no awareness of the thriving Australian bush dance scene. Many user posts also express surprise at how much diversity there is to the Australian festival scene. According to the Victoria's Creative Industry Festivals Review published by in March 2018, the TRA data suggest that the popularity of the regional and creative festivals (music and dance festivals, arts festivals, cultural festivals) has been steadily increasing over the past decade (see Figure 4.13).

**Visitors to festivals / fairs or cultural events in Melbourne and Regional Victoria\* (CY2005-15/16)\*\***  
Thousands of visitors



CAGR%  
(2005-10)(10/11-15/16)\*\*

Domestic visitors (overnight) to a Regional Victorian festival	6.8	8.0
Domestic visitors (overnight) to a Metro Victorian festival	2.6	18.2
International Visitors to regional Victoria who attended a festival in Australia	0.5	6.7
International Visitors metro Victoria who attended a festival in Australia	3.6	14.4

Note: \* Overnight visitors on a stopover who elected that a leisure activity on their travels was visiting festivals / fairs or cultural events. Visitors travelled 40km or more to the destination; Visitors surveyed elected that they attended a festival / fair or cultural event somewhere on their trip and visited Victoria. This does not mean that all visitors have visited a festival in Victoria / Melbourne on their stay; \*\*National Visitor Survey data is runs until 2015, while International Visitor survey data runs until 2016

Source: National Visitor Survey; International Visitor Survey

### Figure 4.13 Tourist visitation at both regional and Melbourne festivals

Note: Data retrieved from Victoria's Creative Industry Festivals Review (2018)

Yet the cultural festivals do not appear to be featured prominently in national tourism campaigns. Additionally, not enough effort goes into marketing the unique Australian EDM sub-culture. Even the above-mentioned review recommends making festivals a "priority area for government" and encourages "to add high value support to festivals" (Victoria's Creative Industry Festivals Review, 2018, pp.17-18).

It would be unfair to say that doof festivals do not receive media attention, they certainly do. However, they are somewhat overlooked by the Australian DMOs. Currently, there are no big tourism campaigns that would highlight the achievements and excitement surrounding the Australian bush dance scene. A plausible explanation could be hiding within the somewhat chequered history of doof parties, something Gibson and Pagan (2000) described as "agony of ecstasy", "moral panic", and "social deviance". While some destinations embrace their 'dark past' by turning it into an effective tourism marketing strategy (see Fonseca, Seabra, & Silva,

2015; Lennon & Foley, 2000), others shy away from it. However, bush doofs have already begun the shift towards containment rather than opposition, promoting the commercialisation and accepting the surveillance and control through state regulation (Gibson & Pagan, 2000; "What's the significance of Australia's first pill-testing trial?", 2018).

Some may argue that bush doofs are not featured in tourism campaigns because they cannot be representative of 'a place' due to the lack of authenticity. To many people they may seem placeless, meaning one festival is indistinguishable from the other. However, Gibson and Pagan (2000) argue that "Dance music's relative anonymity and placelessness, exacerbated by its emphasis on beat and bassline over lyrics, allows dance music experiences to be inscribed with meaning in localised places". They note that the place lends the event special significance: the ambience, the realism, the aesthetical value. The distinguishing characteristic of this relationship, and a large portion of its inherent appeal, is that, when combined, both event and place can be experienced in a more participative and idiosyncratic way. Therefore, the place becomes as much part of the agenda as the event itself. Gibson and Connell (2003) also advocate that music connects to certain places, and that such association creates patterns of demand that can translate into new local cultural economies, and even become means of transforming places.

Many doof events in Australia (i.e., Rabbits Eat Lettuce, Rainbow Serpent Festival, Tomorrowland, Earthcore, Luminosity Beach Festival, Mountain Sounds Festival, Pitch Festival, Esoteric Festival, ConFest, Babylon Festival, Earth Frequency Festival, to name just a few) show strong affiliation with their location. They encourage community engagement and promote the attractiveness of rural settings.

*Rabbits Eat Lettuce began in 2008 as a tribal Easter party on the mid-north-coast of NSW and has become an underground tradition in the area [...] [We] will return to our valley paradise, located inland from Byron Bay NSW [...] that is surrounded by sand stone cliffs and state forest (Rabbits Eat Lettuce, 2018).*

*On a cool and sunny weekend towards the end of June around 60 dedicated Rainbow community members along with staff worked diligently at our festival home planting close to 4,000 trees and shrubs and performing maintenance work on those planted last year (Rainbow Serpent Reveg Project, 2018).*

*Esoteric Festival will be held at the same venue as last year amongst the gumtrees in Donald, Western Victoria [...] There's an old legend, a tale, a folklore, about mystic legends of the forest, not just any forest, an enigmatic and entrancing forest that inspires and tickles the curiosity of those whom are adventurous enough [...] With tall trees that interweave, branch to branch in collocated rows, whispering sacred knowledge as they accompany you from realm-to-realm (Esoteric Festival, 2018).*

The Australian bush festivals offer a great opportunity to promote remote locations that may otherwise remain unnoticed by the tourists. There is an obvious need for a diversity of approaches that can enable tourism organisation to fully utilise the distinctive and appealing attributes of bush festivals and their locations. It is important that more attention is paid to destination marketing through available cultural instruments. The distinctive Australian bush dance scene seems to be a wonderful opportunity to diversify the traditional tourism campaigns which have hardly changed since 2010<sup>10</sup>.

The analysis reports four positive, two negative, and one neutral aspects of the Australian music festivals (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Australian festivals: positive, negative and neutral aspects

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Tourism Australia Dundee Super Bowl Ad (2018), Tourism Australia and Chris Hemsworth Ad (2016), Tourism Australia's "There's Nothing Like Australia" campaign (2012) - all exploit the same themes.

Positive	Unique and fun, emotional connection, community engagement, remote locations
Negative	Not enough arts/cultural activities; sometimes bad waste management
Neutral	Drugs

The data reveal sentiments, successes and challenges experienced while attending the doof festivals. The emotional landscape of the experiences reveals enthusiasm, excitement, joy, and the feeling of unitedness among the doof attendees.

*[Esoteric Festival] 🙌❤️ Thank you very much to all who were there until the end 🙌 it just was awesome! #interactivenoise #spintwist #psytrancefamily #esotericfestival2018 #edgebookings #trancefamily #trancefamilyaustralia #australia #australianfestivals (SP22<sub>m-f</sub>).*

*Finally, there's the famed bush doof culture. I have to admit that psytrance music isn't really my thing, but I attended a bush doof last year to truly immerse myself in ozzie experience. At Earth Frequency there was a strong focus on environmentalism, diversity and community (SP90<sub>m-f</sub>).*

*I knew that the only place I wanted to welcome in the new year was at Lost Paradise. This is THE festival I had been dying to attend ever since I started researching the best music festivals in Australia, and now that I've experienced it for myself, I'm actually still in awe about how incredible these 3 days were... (SP39<sub>m-f</sub>).*

The users discuss the distinctiveness of the Australian bush festivals.

*Ancient Greece gifted the world democracy, while the Egyptians invented paper. Australia's greatest contribution to human civilization is probably the bush doof (SP35<sub>m-f</sub>).*

*I was recently lucky enough to spend a year living and working in Australia. It's an uncanny experience, being an Englishman down under. Everything is strangely familiar, yet there are thousands of cultural differences to wrap your head around..Yet there was one Australian tradition in particular that blew my mind – a distinctive medley of*

*counterculture, cranium-bending trance music and outback romanticism. I'm talking, of course, about the storied 'bush doof'... (SP90<sub>m-f</sub>).*

A few people commented on the lack of cultural activities (e.g., arts, crafts workshops) and poor waste management, but all these comments were generally limited to younger festivals, such as Pitch Music & Arts Festival, or Lost Paradise.

*[Pitch Music & Arts Festival] Great effort with the lineup and sound but came away feeling like the festival as a whole was a shadow of it's former (first year) self [...] There also seemed to be far less art installations this year...things seemed scattered about few and far inbetween (SP26<sub>m-f</sub>).*

*Every purchase of a drink at Lost Paradise included a \$1 can deposit, so if you returned the can to the recycle station they'd refund \$1 per can. To my surprise, everyone was still just finishing their beers and tossing them on the floor (SP39<sub>m-f</sub>).*

The EDM festivals are known to have high rates of drug use and drug-related activity (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016; John, 2015; Salomone et al., 2017). According to Dilkes-Frayne (2016) the bush doofs produce "a liminal quality and feelings... enabling different norms and identities to emerge, including those around drug use" (p.28). She further reflects that the spatial layout of campsite areas warrants the visible consumption and the reciprocal transfer of drugs between people who share the same space (dance space, lounge space, camp space). While drug abuse is an issue of concern for regulatory agencies, the doof attendees do not seem to mind it as much<sup>11</sup>.

*As with any party culture, doof culture is inextricably linked to drug culture. MDMA, LSD, various methamphetamines and psilocybin mushrooms are the most popular substances at doofs, they are seen as the sort of benevolent drugs, taken to enhance the*

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<sup>11</sup> Reddit has a number of confidential discussions about substance use at music festivals. For example, see [https://www.reddit.com/r/Drugs/comments/3u0vay/reflections\\_on\\_my\\_time\\_at\\_strawberry\\_fields](https://www.reddit.com/r/Drugs/comments/3u0vay/reflections_on_my_time_at_strawberry_fields).

*experience of the music and your connections to the people around you (Richards, 2017).*

It seems that most people simply accept it as part of the experience.

*No one at these festivals wants to even know who they are between Monday and Friday [...] most people were flying high, dancing their asses off until eight in the morning. All in all, it was a great experience. I have ticked music festival in Australia off my list (SP92 *m-f*).*

*Strawberry Fields is a festival that describes itself as an indie electronic rave in the Australian bush, it would have to fall into the most unique festival I went to throughout my time in Australia. Strawberry Fields is exactly what you would think an electronic rave would be, with a lot of open drugs, morning Tai Chi, and all night parties with a fist pumping bass beat that vibrates your tent as you fall asleep (SP95 *m-f*).*

Australia has a great variety of music festivals that take place all over the country. The traditional EDM festivals that take place in Australia (e.g., Harbourlife, Stereosonic, Sensation, Field Day) are similar to those happening in other countries. Some, like St Kilda Festival, are free, while others can range in price from 120 AUD to 700 AUD. They are best suited for people who are not willing to leave behind the comforts of the city. Some music festivals offer a mix of traditional and contemporary music, visual arts and street performances (e.g., WOMADelaide), others feature rock music (e.g., Homebake), or celebrate independent music styles such as jazz-funk, future soul, indie pop (e.g., Laneway Festival). Most reviewers report that Australia has a great variety of music and is a great destination for music lovers in general.

*If you like music, you must not miss big festivals during your stay in Australia. There wasn't much information about the Australian festivals on this blog, so I had to search it and compile it. Let's check it out, so we do not miss our favorite artists coming to Australia... (SP80 *m-f*).*

*Music is very much a part of Australian culture and just another facet to enjoy about life down under. And the great thing about the large festivals is that they're "roaming" festivals, meaning the same festival happens in multiple places around the country. This is especially key in as big of a country as Australia, and just goes to show how much they love their music (SP95 m-f).*

While doof festivals have a strong affiliation with place, most music concerts have little influence on the location. The music concerts are inherently performer dependent, short-term events with flexible schedules. They are somewhat detached from 'the place' and are designed to provide universal entertainment to global audience. They are immutable, meaning they can move freely from country to country, in any direction, without significant distortion or loss of function. For the most part, music concerts that take place in Australia are similar to the repertoire of any other country. What sets apart the Australian music concert scene is its geographical proximity to Asian countries. With the cultural diversity that stems from Australia being among the more receptive to immigration countries among western nations (Markus, 2014; United Nations International Migration Report, 2017), comes the responsiveness to the consumers' needs.

The diverse population and the music-listening habits among people of differing backgrounds suggest that Australia is more likely to exchange and share music across cultures (Keith & Giuffre, 2014). From the acknowledgment of Asian popular music on Australian television to hosting big pop music conventions (KCON Australia) – one can easily notice a recent increase in numbers of events associated with K-pop, J-pop, and C-pop music. Australia's media landscape is changing following online feedback from fans, report Keith and Giuffre (2014). It is expected, since the "Asian diaspora in Australia consists of recent immigrants as well as second- and third-generation residents, and a large number of international students

from China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and beyond”

(Keith & Giuffre, p.94).

*The first time I flew from NZ to see EXO perform right in front of me - legends!! #EXO #KConAustralia #Heaven by EXO with Kai focus and thirsty screaming 😁😁 Worth every penny flying from NZ to see them!! (SP43<sub>m-c</sub>).*

*[...] K-pop is still quite popular in Sydney. Every year, there are some Korean stars' concerts (something called KCon) (SM75<sub>m</sub>).*

The SM data will provide more information about the current music trends in Australia.

Several patterns emerge from these data: (1) Australian music festivals spark international interest, (2) Australian bush doofs are unique and generate enthusiastic followings, (3) Australia has enough music festivals set up across the country to cater to every musical impulse, (4) the media landscape reveals steadily increasing popularity of Asian pop music in Australia.

#### **4.6.2.4 Food truck festivals**

There are many reasons for including food tourism into destination branding. In Singapore, the absence of scenic landscapes and lack of heritage attractions has encouraged new forms of cultural activities organised around the theme of ethnicity: festivals, cultural performances, and food (Hall & Page, 2012). In Australia, where the average household food expenditure mainly comprises expenditure on meals out and fast foods (31% of average household food expenditure) (Hogan, 2017), food does not only provide entertainment. It indicates levels of social understanding and tolerance for differences (Finkelstein, 2003).

There is a tendency among developed countries for cities to strive towards "antiseptic and culturally sterile" look to an extent when both culture and heritage become completely engulfed

by urban development (Hall & Page, 2012, p.18). The food trends also experience daily pressures to adapt and conform, becoming less 'cultural' and more culture-neutral. The appearance of the global or chain restaurants in the marketplace and the ubiquity of the fast-food outlets has a significant impact on general attitudes toward food. However, "culture always finds a way of emerging from within the cracks in urban planning" (Oakes & Wang, 2016, p.3). When it comes to food, what "emerges from within" can be described as urban food culture.

Simply put, an urban food culture is "food eaten in the urban milieu" (Tellström, Gustafsson, & Mossberg, 2006, p. 138). It includes fast food and street food, together with the food vans, food trucks, and food pop-up events. Whether urban food culture creates fundamental shift in the food system and should be treated as an important social practice is a question of ongoing debate (Dobernig, Veen, & Oosterveer, 2016; Sonnino, 2016). There is little question, however, whether urban food culture is part of popular culture. It certainly is (see Chambers, 2002; Parasecoli, 2008).

Tellström, Gustafsson, and Mossberg (2006) note that urban consumers often lack expertise in judging food quality due to the lack of time to assess food objectively. Instead they rely on brand names to serve as a reliable signal of quality. Conversely, the Australian lifestyle, often described as more relaxed and stereotypically informal (Willoughby, Starks, & Taylor-Leech, 2013) enables earnest exploration and food contemplation. This has put pressure on the food industry to be more creative and resourceful (Frost et al., 2010; Laing & Frost, 2016). As a result, the urban food culture in Australia is seen as an attraction force by many tourists (Kraig & Sen, 2013; Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003).

*The variety of things to do is the most awesome aspect of living here [Melbourne]: famous restaurant scene - hundreds of amazing restaurant and bars. The markets -*

*especially the night markets which have food trucks, bars and entertainment. The city makes the most of the outdoors - the gardens and parks; lots of outdoor eating and drinking... (SM1j).*

The most reviewed urban food events are the food truck events. It is believed that the food truck movement gained considerable momentum around 2010s and soon became a national phenomenon in the US (Martin, 2014). In a couple of years, Australia saw its own food truck movement sweep the country like a storm. For example, Fork on the Road, Adelaide's food truck event, started posting photos of the first happy customers in 2012.

*What started from one good idea that became the first Fork on the Road in Victoria Square in November 2012 ended up becoming, 8 events in the next 6 months in 7 locations in the city and inner city with over 45,000 people in total attending (“What is Fork?”, n.d.).*

The small and brightly decorated food trucks soon became regulars in many Australian urban neighborhoods (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14 Food truck festivals in Australia

Today, most Australian states offer food truck events. For example, The Food Truck Park in Melbourne launched in 2014 hosted 69 events in 2017 and has nearly 40,000 followers on Facebook alone. The Food Truck Carnival Co. currently runs food truck events in 12 locations across Victoria and has close to 39,000 followers. Western Australia has Global Beats & Eats Festival, and The Food Truck Rumble. The Queensland's Regional Flavours Festival showcases a great variety of local foods (from street to gourmet food) served in restaurants and pop-up street eateries: "Expect everything from caramel milk and caramel-coated apples to cakes in a jar and vegan cheeses, as well as free-flowing Queensland wine" (Tucker-Evans, 2018).

Though food truck events mainly target local consumers, the events also attract international visitors. According to the data, most international visitors seem to find out about the events when already in the country. Just like with conventions, some people come across the events

completely by accident. The reasons to attend are different. Some want to experience specific foods (e.g., desserts, popular local food, international food), while others use food truck events as an excuse to get together. Several reviewers described the food truck events as an interesting way to enjoy food.

*"Food Trucks in Braddon" is a funny way to eat, especially in Canberra, Australia [...] There are many national dishes! The good thing about food trucks is that it's fun to pick what to eat :) More trucks come in the summer. The trucks are mobile too. I wish we had more. A place to sit and eat. It's pretty big :) (SP50<sub>f-j</sub>).*

Quite a few reviews point out that the events can be expensive. A few people mention that food events are small-scale, however they do not see that as a problem.

Several patterns emerge from these data: (1) there are many urban food events in Australia, (2) the number of food truck events is growing, (3) food trucks are a fun way to experience popular foods, (4) food trucks can offer a great variety of national and international dishes, (5) food truck events can be expensive, (6) the food trucks are seen as part of local culture – “an Aussie thing”.

#### **4.6.2.5 Film festivals**

Movies and related activities are an important facet of popular culture favoured by attendees of local PC events (see Study 1). Yet Study 2 shows that Australian movie-related events do not generate as much interest among international reviewers. It has been mentioned in previous chapters that due to a small number of world-famous movie locations, Australia captures a relatively small amount of interest among screen fans. While the situation is slowly

improving<sup>12</sup>, it is not nearly as good as that of the USA, UK, Canada, and New Zealand. In an effort to balance the situation, Australia offers an impressive number of film festivals (Figure 4.15). The film festival economy has been a topic of academic research for over two decades (Stevens, 2016; Stringer, 2001; Turan, 2003; De Valck, 2007).



**Figure 4.15 Film festivals in Australia**

Note: Print screen from <http://filmfestivalsaustralia.com>.

According to Stevens (2016) "film festivals have become pervasive", filling the annual calendars of urban spectacles across Australia (p. 250). He further notes that Sydney and Melbourne host nearly 40 film festivals apiece with new events emerging every year.

<sup>12</sup> For example, recent popular television series such as Please Like Me and Top of the Lake are closely tied to locations and heavily feature Melbourne and Sydney generating interest among movie fans.

The analysis reports one positive and one neutral aspects of Australian film festivals: (a) good variety being the positive aspect, (b) need for more cultural film festivals being the neutral one. The data show that people who attend film festivals are usually long-term visitors (e.g., students, visitors on a working holiday visa). They attend because festivals are part of the urban attractions and are actively advertised by local DMOs. A few posts named nostalgia as a motivational force for attendance. In this case, a film festival would serve as a cultural link or a way to express a belonging to a particular cultural group.

Many cultural film festivals (e.g., Japanese Film Festival, Indian Film Festival, Chinese Film Festival), attract bicultural audiences. There is a lot of literature on the psychological impact of being bicultural and the process of acculturation (see Barrios & Egan, 2002; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Evidence suggests that popular culture, particularly movies and television, serve as a cultural link in the lives of immigrants and their families (Dasgupta, 1996; Vazquez, 2013). The ability to reconnect with the heritage culture, even if only through popular media, may prevent one from losing a cultural identity or having to choose one culture over the other. It is, therefore, beneficial for Australia to continue expanding its cultural repertoire to accommodate the multicultural needs of its growing population.

Many state tourism authorities take a serious approach to marketing film festivals. For example, the [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au) Events Calendar features a plethora of film festivals, with one or two film festivals mentioned nearly every month since the end of 2017 (e.g., Indonesian Film Festival, Bendigo Queer Film Festival, St Kilda Film Festival, German Film Festival, Ukrainian Film Festival, Volvo Scandinavian Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival). Tourism Australia's Upcoming Australian Events 2017 programme covered five

film festivals: Sydney Film Festival, Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Cinéfestoz, and Tropfest Australia.

While film festivals do not necessarily attract big numbers of international visitors, they can contribute to the development of urban spaces and local tourism. Several patterns emerge from collected data: (1) film festivals are part of the urban agenda, (2) Australia offers a variety of international film festivals.

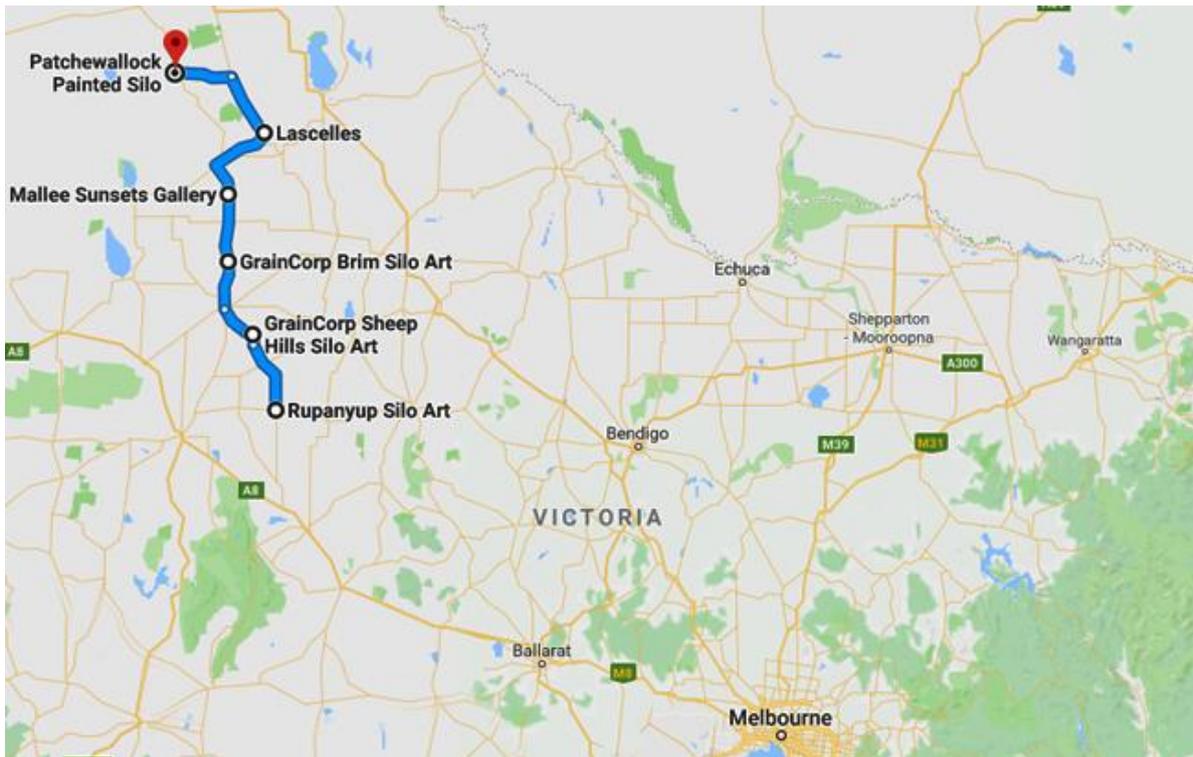
#### **4.6.2.6 Urban arts festivals**

The urban arts festivals play an important role in developing urban landscapes (Quinn, 2013). They promote the space, support pedestrian activity, and enhance the location attractiveness using public art. According to the Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts prepared by the Australia Council for the Arts in 2015, the proportion of Australians who attend arts events is approximately 70% for both regions and major cities. The same report shows that the number of annual international arts tourists in Australia is steadily growing, reaching 2,4 million people in 2015.

In Australia, there are currently ten big urban arts festivals, half of them being annual events. Nearly all events offer live mural art, music, street theatre, art exhibitions, and creative workshops. The Brisbane Street Art Festival (BSAF), for example, collaborates with more than 50 artists to showcase art pieces (including live mural art) across 27 different locations around Brisbane. The Wonderwalls Festival, a street art and graffiti festival, offers live art, guided tours, open air gallery, and free workshops. The Fremantle International Street Arts Festival combines street art with street theatre, transforming the historic streets of Fremantle into theatre stages. The local councils take an active role in events promotion and planning to help support urban development as well as monitor the effectiveness of these events.

The Australian arts festival market is a growing market with good investment potential. For example, the Fringe World Festival, one of the largest annual arts events in Australia, has grown to become the third largest Fringe Festival in the world (“Fringe World Festival”, n.d.). The Fringe impact report shows that the 2018 Festival featured 155 venues and achieved more than 900,000 attendances from free and ticketed events (“Fringe impact report reveals future plans for growth”, 2018).

Most urban arts events take place in big urban centers. However, Australia also promotes and supports many regional urban arts activities. For example, the annual Wall to Wall Festival is held in Benalla - "Victoria's Rural Street Art Capital" ("Benalla Street Art", n.d.). Going rural is currently a growing trend in Australia. Many rural communities are suffering from a range of issues including drought and population attrition. The remarkable street art is an attempt to revitalise some of the smaller towns across Australia. The result of such initiative is the famous 190-kilometre Silo Art Trail (Figure 4.16).



**Figure 4.16 The Silo Art Trail**

The collected data reveal a steady interest in urban arts events.

*The Wall to Wall festival is held annually over a weekend in March in Benalla [...] During the festival, people come to watch street artists from all over the world paint murals on walls around the town. After 4 years' worth of festivals, there are now over 50 murals spread out around Benalla which you can come see at any time of year, not just during the event. The town center is so compact that you can easily walk around and view most of the murals within an hour. With this street art festival as its claim to fame, Benalla is openly vying to be the street art capital of Australia (SM87<sub>a</sub>).*

The analysis reports mainly positive attitude towards urban arts events. The international reviewers point out the great variety of activities available at the events, the educational and social significance of street art, the strong pool of local talent, and high quality of artistic and technical skills. The government support sends a positive message about the societal respect for the artistic accomplishments of local and international urban artists.

#### **4.6.2.7 Gaming events and toy exhibitions**

In April 2016 the Senate Environment and Communication References Committee released a report that recommended the Australian Government to introduce a new funding scheme for video games development that would encourage and introduce technology startups in cultural and regional centers ("Game on: more than playing around. The future of Australia's video game development industry", 2016). Early in 2018 it was revealed that the recommendations of this document would not be implemented (Wilson, 2018). Unlike Canada, which offers tax breaks, grants and support for their games industry (The Alberta Game Development Industry, 2015), the Australian games industry cannot count on any serious support from the government at present.

Despite the difficulties, the pop-culture community is optimistic. As is the tendency with all popular culture conventions in Australia, gaming exhibitions and conventions have been growing their numbers since early 2010s. As of today, Australia hosts five big annual gaming conventions (PAX Australia, RTX Sydney, Supanova, Oz Comic-Con, AVCon) and over a dozen smaller ones.

The past two years have witnessed new exciting events happening in the Australian gaming community – the eSports events. The eSports, or electronic sports, are organised multiplayer video game competitions. The most common video game genres played at eSports are real-time strategies (RTS), first-person shooters (FPS), multiplayer online battle arenas (MOBA), and different hybrid versions of MMOs (massively multiplayer online games). In 2018 Australia will host The Melbourne Esports Open, the biggest ever eSports event to take place in the country. Previously, Australia's biggest annual eSports event was IEM Sydney with a \$310,000 prize pool. The government estimates that the Melbourne Esports Open will

generate up to \$25 million for the Victorian economy over the next five years (Minister for Tourism and Major Events, 2018).

It will be interesting to see how the announcement of 2018 gaming events will reflect on the domestic and international visitor numbers. The past events, though created mostly for the domestic market, still generated some international attention.

*'Rift Rivals: Pacific Rift' Japanese representatives 'DetonatioN FocusMe' are competing against the rivals in Australia from July 2nd to 5th! LJL's greatest DFM will take place on the Australian land! Cheers! Thank you (SP64g).*

Just like most comic conventions in Australia, gaming conventions and exhibitions are family friendly.

*Above is the last year's games EXPO in Sydney. I did not take too many photos that would show children, but there are a large number of Australian parents with their children at the exhibition (SM53g).*

The toys competitions and exhibitions seem to become more popular in Australia. The Gunpla Builders World Cup event took place in Australia in 2018, the annual Sydney Brick Show featuring the latest original LEGO brick had a great show in 2018, and Hasbro launched a Power of the Primes trial play event in 2017. There are not many international posts that discuss Australian toys related events, but the few that can be found are mostly positive. The fact that international visitors attend these events is already a big step forward for the industry.

The introduction of eSports events, the rising number of gaming conventions, the world-famous toys companies (e.g., Lego, Hasbro, Funko) making exhibitions in Australia – all indicate possibilities for further tourism development.

### 4.6.3 Sample M

#### 4.6.3.1 Meta-themes and sub-themes

The SM data, 96 cases, come from 14 different sources. The data were coded manually by the researcher and trained research assistant. Most of the information was sourced from Zhihu portal (23% of the data), followed by Instagram (19%), Quora (14%), and Twitter (13%), the rest comes from private blogs. All sources employ slightly different information sharing tools, creating different foci of interest within the discussions.

The Sample M has less structure compared to Sample P. The SM content moves away from relatively objective descriptors (e.g., size, location, physical environment), towards the more difficult to measure sentiments, such as personal preferences, feelings, attitudes, mood, and interpretations. The meta-themes and categories crosstab table is offered below (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 The SM meta-themes and sub-themes

Meta-themes		Sub-themes											Total	
		Food	Eastern influence	Fashion	Cosplay	PC trends	Western influence	Gaming	Art	Music	Movies & TV shows	Unique culture		Literature
Cultural trends	% within	-	11%	-	-	42%	32%	-	-	-	-	16%	-	100%
	% of Total	-	2%	-	-	9%	6%	-	-	-	-	3%	-	20%
Fashion & cosplay	% within	-	-	82%	18%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%
	% of Total	-	-	15%	3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Gaming culture	% within	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	100%
	% of Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	2%
Urban culture	% within	37%	-	-	-	-	-	-	63%	-	-	-	-	100%
	% of Total	16%	-	-	-	-	-	-	28%	-	-	-	-	44%
Music & literature	% within	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	83%	-	-	17%	100%
	% of Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-	1%	6%
Movies & TV shows	% within	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	100%
	% of Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%	-	-	10%
<b>% of Total</b>		<b>16%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>

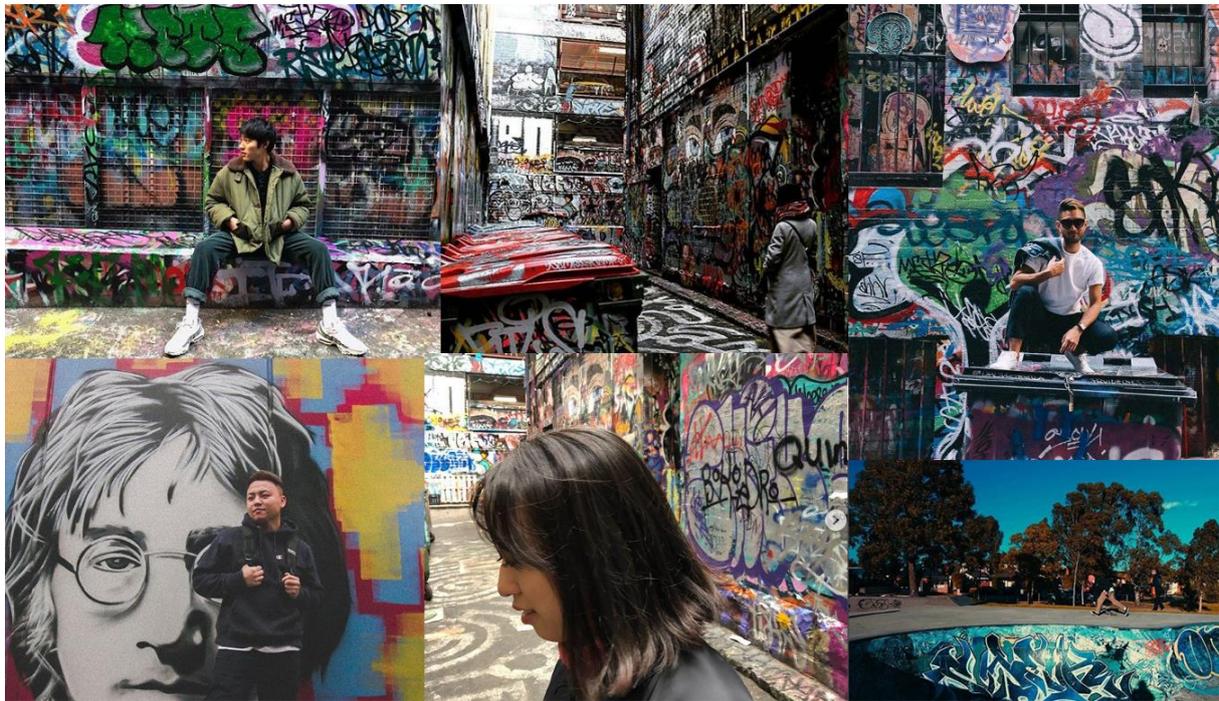
The Table above shows that the most discussed meta-theme was Urban culture (44% of total). Within the theme, the discussions focused on food (37%) and art (63%). The “cultural trends” was also a popular meta-theme (20% of total data), with the discussion focusing on Eastern and Western influences, as well as recent trends and unique features of Australian popular culture. The meta-theme “Fashion and cosplay” and its sub-themes account for 18% of total data, with fashion being the most popular sub-theme. The remaining meta-themes account for 18% of data and include: movies and TV shows 10%, music and literature 6%, and gaming culture 2%. Once again, the data reveal mainly positive attitudes towards Australian popular culture: 63% positive, 33% neutral, 4% negative reviews.

#### **4.6.3.2 Urban art and public space**

The urban art is a broad category that includes urban architecture, urban design and urban planning, and public art. Like many social ideas, the concept of public art has undergone radical changes in the last century. For example, the image of street art has changed from being vandalism and pollution to becoming an acknowledged art form (Merrill, 2015; Schacter, 2008). The Australian tourism industry has embraced the change and created conditions for the art form to thrive. The NSW government mentions street art in their Cultural Tourism Toolkit which has "the dual aim of encouraging the growth of regional arts and culture and making them a vital part of the visitor experience" (Cultural Tourism Toolkit, 2016, p.3).

Tourism Australia's Annual Report 2014/2015 describes Melbourne's street art as a necessary tool for artistic expression (Annual Report 2014/2015, 2015). This decision to embrace the urban arts and use it as a tool for transforming public space has forever changed the local

street culture. The tourists were soon crowding the streets and using street art as a backdrop for their pictures (Figure 4.17).



**Figure 4.17** The street art photos made in Melbourne by international visitors in 2018

Like the yuru kyara in Japan, the Australian urban art is a great way to shape the identity and character of a place.

*Melbourne has one of the most vibrant ‘street art’ cultures in the world, which is encouraged and curated. The ‘shabby’ graffiti lined area of the city is actually supported public art (SM10<sub>a</sub>).*

*This was my second visit to Melbourne, and it really is one of the most incredible cities to walk around. There’s just so much personality here. [Photo] #urbanandstreet #visitmelbourne I love all the rooftop bars, delicious coffee, and pretty wild nightlife. It truly is the cultural capital of Australia! [Next comment] Man this is insane! I love street art! I loooove graffiti!! This is awesome!! 🤔💕🥰 (SM136<sub>a</sub>).*

*[Street art is] What you will see the most in Melbourne's Street... I luv it!!! (SM20<sub>a</sub>). Very beautiful streets with rich street culture. Ate loads of food and saw a whole dead rabbit on sale. #Aussietrip... (SM24<sub>a</sub>).*

The street art is considered a perishable art which reflects the rapid changes in society (Sălcudean, 2012). It is a part of popular culture which has many political undertones and social themes embedded in the art (Chambers, 2002). Its unique way of telling a story through use of graphic emotions is appealing and simple, and not too intrusive.

*These streets undergo constant artistic change because of what is happening on the walls [...] The works that have touched me most in all that I have seen are certainly those of Adnate, an artist committed to the aboriginal cause. It must be said that many Australians do not really know this part of the history of their country. Its goal is to educate the general public (SM19<sub>a</sub>).*

Through many months of research, the researcher was not able to find any openly negative comments about Australian street art culture. The general descriptors used were cool, unique, colourful, rich, awesome, vibrant. There is no significant work done to promote urban arts as Australia's cultural experience. For example, the above-mentioned Tourism Australia's 160-page report 2014/2015 has less than 100 words dedicated to street art (Annual Report 2014/2015, 2015). If one were to carefully study the Tourism Australia's website, it is possible to find mentions of street art in the category "Culture" under "Australia's hippest neighbourhoods" where there are two mentions of street art, both less than 80 words: under "Fitzroy, Melbourne", and "Melbourne's hidden gems" (one location - Hosier Lane); or, with a more thorough search, find street art mentions under "Discover hidden streets and vibrant artistic spaces in Australia's capital cities". A purposeful search will reveal results, but at a glance urban art can be easily overlooked. The efforts of local tourism stakeholders and regional councils, though sound, are not enough to make Australia's urban art a statement piece in country's tourism portfolio.

Perhaps, what is holding the urban arts back, is the fear that street art is not authentic to Australia. It is fair to say that street art is more often associated with American and European cultures (Schacter, 2013; Young, 2013). It may be that national tourism organisations feel that the street art cannot be a part of the national tourism package because it does not speak 'Australian' to the international market. While this is a topic for debate, the fact that the urban arts attract international tourists is a certainty.

#### **4.6.3.3 Urban food culture**

Eating food is not only a physical, but also a cultural process. When tourists are experiencing local cuisine, they are experiencing local culture (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010). By eating popular foods, such as street food and fast food, the tourists are unwittingly exposed to popular culture. It is, therefore, important to study the current food trends and understand how they fit into the world of popular culture.

The research report by Hogan (2017) for the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences shows that Australia's food industry has been relatively successful in competing with non-food industries in recent decade. As trade in food and drink develops, it has an effect on tourism, note Hall and Mitchell (2003). In fact, food becomes a part of regional development strategy (Hall et al., 2009). In Europe, for example, visits to vineyards and local cheese makers have been a part of organised travel probably since the times of ancient Greece and Rome. In Italy, just like in many other Mediterranean destinations, food tourism is an essential part of any tourist activity (Bertella, 2011; Du Rand & Heath, 2006; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Hjalager & Richards, 2003; Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012).

The Asian countries are also fueling the food tourism trend (Horng & Tsai, 2010). One obvious example is Singapore, where local foods have long become a selling point for the Singapore Tourism Board (Henderson, 2004; Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011). Is Australia capable of keeping up with the rest of the world when facing the excessively competitive food tourism market? Before answering the question, it is necessary to take a step back and explore the current food scene.

The Australian food scene is exciting and has a solid international reputation (Bannerman, 2008; Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; Larranaga, 2013; Wang, Taplin, Brown, 2011). The climate and the land allow for a great number of tropical and sub-tropical fruits, as well as nuts, fish, meat, poultry and eggs, organic and bio-dynamic foods to be farmed. In Australia, the 'LORE food' (LOcal and REgional food and meal culture – term devised by Tellström, Gustafsson, and Mossberg (2006)) and urban food culture are not a dichotomy. Instead, they exist in a symbiotic relationship and deliver great results (see Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015; Dowd & Burke, 2013; Pearson et al, 2011).

The results from a study on food tourism in Australia by Robinson and Getz (2014) suggest that many Australians prefer semi-formal social arrangements such as groups dining out together regularly. As mentioned previously, an average household in Australia spends over 30% of the average household food budget on meals out (Hogan, 2017). This being considered, it is of no surprise that Australians pay attention to affordable options such as fast food and street food, which includes barbeques, food vans and food trucks. Today, nearly every city in Australia offers food truck and barbeque experience. According to the Australian Mobile Food Vendors Group there are over 3000 food trucks in Victoria alone (2018 statistics), which is a considerable growth from 1500 trucks in 2016 (Waters, 2018).

Robinson and Getz (2014) note that tourists place a high value “on that which they perceive to be authentic” (p. 692). Many travellers have learnt to believe that ‘barbequing’ and ‘food trucking’ is an ‘Aussie thing’ (Khamis, 2012; Moroye, 2015). The Tourism Australia reinforces the image by making posts such as:

*The ice cream truck is a cultural icon in Australia – locals have been buying icy treats from these brightly coloured vans for decades [...] This modern twist on an original tradition [playfully decorated, vintage vehicles] offers great insight into Australia’s changing food preferences, and delicious ice cream to boot – look out for these five trucks on your next trip (An Australian summer classic, reinvented: meet the modern ice cream truck (n.d.)).*

As a result, the food trucks and associated street food have become a genuine tourist attraction.

*Beach food truck mecca – Australia! Australian food trucks are different depending on the food they sell. It is largely divided into food vans and food trucks. Food vans are more like processing hot milk, coffee, ice cream [...] (SM26f).*

According to Martin (2014), the acceptance of food trucks as part of the urban food network reveals how the city councils are working to build a space that appeals to young urban professionals. Some assume it to be part of the ‘hipster’ culture, and they are probably right (Martin, 2014; Sinclair & Carr, 2018).

*[Melbourne food truck] The vibe is hipster and relaxed, highly recommend going, even if it's just for a coffee. I've always liked this spot as a place that welcomes families, hipsters and everyone in between in a unique and warm environment (SM92f).*

It is often mentioned in the local media that the food capital of Australia is Melbourne (Cann, 2017; Preston, 2015; Stevens & Breaden, 2014). The popular literature supports the notion (Henry, 2008), and so do many tourists.

*[Melbourne] The variety of things to do is the most awesome aspect of living here: Famous restaurant scene - hundreds of amazing restaurant and bars. The markets - especially the night markets which have food trucks, bars and entertainment ... (SM1f).*

Melbourne is certainly a good place to start exploring Australian food scene. The urban food culture in Melbourne is thriving. Just a quick search using hashtag #メルボルン [Melbourne] would reveal not hundreds, but thousands of food related posts. On Instagram, for example, a great number of food posts are about street food and fast food. An interval search for hashtag #メルボルン [Melbourne] (Figure 4.18) reveals that when looking through a set number of posts per search (NPS) on random days, 25-33% of food posts are about street food and fast food (e.g., burgers, chips, fries, shakes, pizza, doughnuts, wraps, ice-cream cones, sushi rolls).



**Figure 4.18 Interval search for category “food”**

The same interval search but this time for hashtag #멜버른 (‘Melbourne’ in Korean) reveals the following results (Figure 4.19):



preference towards familiar food. Their study on tourist food preferences shows that the Chinese tourists travelling in Australia crave Chinese food. Even the participants who are enthusiastic to try local food find themselves craving Chinese food: “Although many of the participants were eager to try local food, they explicitly stated that it was impossible for them to consume local food at every meal” (p. 998). The observations from this study support the findings of Chang, Kivela, and Mak (2010).

Today, it seems that Australia can satisfy any food craving. The efforts to bring together West and East to create a memorable dining experience is a recurring theme in Australian cuisine. The Australian food culture is as diverse as its population, notes Bannerman (2008), adding that “Modern Australians have inherited a “cuisine of incomers”” (p. 10).

*Fitzroy is home to the most eclectic mix of cuisines, and I thoroughly enjoyed a most authentic bowl of ramen at Shop Ramen and excellent sushi rolls at Momo Sushi (do go before 11am if you want try their special nigiri because those really run out fast!). Other highly-reviewed options that I really wanted to try but didn't have the time to are Hammer & Tong (Modern Australian cuisine featuring a wicked soft shell crab burger), Sir Charles (Asian-inspired cafe with apparently fantastic brunch and coffee), Jimmy Grants (Melbourne's best souvlaki bar) and Breizoz French Creperie (supposedly the best crepes in Melbourne!) (SM96f).*

What is interesting about Australia, and what makes it such a great foodie destination, is that many fast/street food outlets do not belong to big fast food restaurant chains. In fact, the majority of restaurants, food stalls, coffee shops, and food trucks are independent small to medium sized businesses. See, for example, the Value added by Industry 2013-14 data (Table 4.7) retrieved from the Small Business in the Australian Economy government report (Small Business Counts, 2016). The small business share is 33% in the food and accommodation sectors, with medium sized businesses being the leaders.

Table 4.7 Value added by Industry 2013-14 data

**Value added by Industry 2013-14**

Industry sectors	Small business \$m	Medium business \$m	Large business \$m	Total value added \$m	Small business share %
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	22,010	4,390	1,138	27,538	80%
Rental, hiring & real estate services	53,773	6,942	6,667	67,382	80%
Other services	17,342	8,055	4,225	29,622	59%
Construction	50,432	27,588	30,333	108,353	47%
Professional, scientific & technical services	42,482	29,179	30,595	102,256	42%
Health care & social assistance	25,257	13,702	27,607	66,566	38%
Wholesale trade	22,637	20,058	24,098	66,793	34%
Retail trade	24,254	14,420	32,775	71,449	34%
Accommodation & food services	12,262	15,233	9,479	36,974	33%
Administrative & support services	13,642	15,576	20,981	50,199	27%
Transport, postal & warehousing	15,489	11,999	39,561	67,049	23%
Public administration & safety	1,219	1,856	2,580	5,655	22%
Arts & recreation services	2,622	3,621	5,417	11,660	22%
Manufacturing	18,530	28,840	50,177	97,547	19%
Education & training	3,540	9,970	10,177	23,687	15%
Mining	12,453	13,334	98,689	124,476	10%
Information media & telecommunications	2,642	3,334	29,964	35,940	7%
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	2,814	5,462	35,768	44,044	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343,400</b>	<b>233,559</b>	<b>460,231</b>	<b>1,037,190</b>	

Source: ABS Catalogue No. 8155.0 Australian Industry 2013-14 Page 5, ASBFEO Calculations

Many reviews note that the Australian urban food culture is an 'indie' culture, where 'indie' means that both the style and mode of production is not mainstream. Australia can offer a comforting and familiar food concept, for example a burger, and make it look and taste different and exciting.

*I had the pleasure of calling this neighborhood home for 4 days while solo travelling, and fell hopelessly in love with the many hidden gems that Fitzroy had to offer [...] There are a staggering number of cafes here that afford excellent brunch, and I was rather upset that I was limited by the number of days I had to check out all the different options. My top favourites were the recommendations I received from my Airbnb host: Stagger Lee's and Grub Food Van. Stagger Lee's might look like your typical industrial cafe, but it dishes out the most gorgeous and Instagram-worthy dishes I've ever seen that taste as amazing as they look (SM96).*

A recent study on Australia's Food Tourism Experiences by Kim (2016) suggests that the Australian food tourism has further room to improve its marketing strategies and should put more effort into promoting different types of local food experiences. While the gourmet food sector has always received generous attention from national DMOs, the more approachable urban food scene is somewhat lacking in attention and promotional consistency. The urban food culture does not get enough spotlight in national campaigns. While the DMOs may argue about the cultural authenticity and whether the experience is remarkable enough, the researcher suggests looking at the data and accepting the undeniable popularity of 'simple' urban food experiences. In fact, Yang (2011) points out that cultural authenticity is not necessarily a concern for tourists, because they are mainly in search of enjoyment and relaxation on their visits. Yang further adds that "tourists share a fairly pragmatic understanding of authenticity" (p.331).

Food always has an emphasised association with place (Tellström, Gustafsson, & Mossberg, 2006). Promotion of the relationship between food and tourism should continue to be an essential component of the destination marketing and tourism development (Hall & Mitchell, 2003). Currently, in Australia, where food plays an important role in destination promotion, the variety of food experiences featured in the tourism marketing campaigns is somewhat limited.

#### **4.6.3.4 Fashion and the image of national dress**

Fashion holds an important place in popular culture (Barnard, 2013; Craik, 2009; Fiske, 2010). There are many retail brands (e.g., Converse, Forever 21, ウィゴ (WEGO), Pull&Bear, Forbidden Planet, CHUU) and online shopping giants (e.g., Dolls Kill, Hot Topic, AbsoluteCult) that are directly associated with and influenced by popular culture trends. It is

normal for fashion inspiration to borrow from popular culture, and it becomes easier with every passing year as the technologies speed up the process of communication.

Our engagement with fashion brands not only reflects our tastes but influences our ability to make sense of broader public discourses. The fashion can be culture-neutral or culturally charged, cosmopolitan or local, be representative of a country (e.g., Kawaii fashion, Cheongsam Fashion, Bollywood Fashion) or be associated with a region, district, state (e.g., Harajuku fashion, Flamenco fashion, Hawaiian fashion). The fashion industry employs reinvented forms of national dress to show affinity with a particular culture or nation.

Craik (2009) points out that “where there is customary dress, this is usually the dress of indigenous inhabitants” (p. 411). What about new cultures? Should they borrow from countries of close cultural affinity, gradually extending to embrace other fashions that are less culturally familiar. Should they attempt to adopt the indigenous outlook? What if the politics of adopting indigenous dress as a national symbol are complicated or even controversial? In other words, what about Australia?

Often, the idea of fashion being a characteristic of Australian culture is seen as "a non sequitur", reflects Craik (2009, p. 410). At best, an Australian fashion style is merely seen as a type of practical, casual, and sporty wear (Berry, 2012; Craik, 2009). The functionality of clothing has been of primary concern to Australian designers, notes Berry (2012). In some respects, suggest Craik (2009), such ‘practicality’ can be regarded as emblematic of Australia's ‘bush’ past: meaning the dress code was a response to climate and lifestyle. In more recent years, activities such as swimming, surfing, and tanning helped shape the development of the Australian fashion and dress. Although this is a “dominant stereotype of

national dress” (p. 416), reflects Craik (2009), it is not the only image of Australianness in fashion. Overall, concludes Craik (2009), the dominant features can be summarised as "bush" wear, swim and surfwear, Australiana and indigenous design. These are the foundations of the national dress in Australia.

While researchers struggle with the idea of ‘distinctive’ Australian fashion and debate about the national dress, the non-academic circles seem to be less concerned with "what is really Australian" and more interested in "how it looks". The data reveal that most discussions revolve around five topics:

- (1) the development of the Australian fashion industry;
- (2) the low number of international fashion brands operating in the country;
- (3) the trendiness of local style;
- (4) what influences the fashion choices;
- (5) the distinctive features.

The first topic is concerned with the development of fashion industry, specifically, why it is less developed compared to other western countries. The common suggestions are the difficult logistics, the geography of the country, and the seasonal differences between the northern and southern hemispheres. Most reviews conclude that Australia has less well-known international brands and fashion retailers.

*The reason is that Australia's special geographical location and climate have caused Australia's quarterly apparel demands to be the opposite of mainstream mainland China, Asia and Europe. [...] Australia is in the southern hemisphere, the headquarters of HM and ZARA, and the warehouse headquarters are in the northern hemisphere. When we may need summer clothes, Australia needs winter clothes. It takes time and money, and it is not clear how big the Australian market will be. Any brand will be cautious (SM40).*

*People who have lived in Australia will have a very clear feeling that there are not many options when it comes to shopping. Australia's underdevelopment of its fashion industry is often reflected in the absence of many international brands (SM50<sub>f1</sub>).*

Does fewer international brands mean more market share for the local brands? According to the data – not necessarily.

*[Australian] street fashion is not as good as in Europe. As far as I know, many people buy online from abroad. The local population is too small. The country is still much less populated than Beijing. Also given how scattered the many cities are, the delivery is strenuous. Local brands occasionally look good, but I feel that their style is not consistent [...] Australian designs are bizarre, on a hanger looks very fashionable, but wearing it is awkward, unless you write avant-garde on your forehead (SM42<sub>f</sub>).*

Given the results, which suggest that there are not many international brands and a very modest number of local fashion brands, what can Australia offer to the fashion world?

*Now, let me summarize everything. Basically, when students arrive in Australia, they feel that Australia is boring. However, over time, after a long period of study here, it gradually becomes more and more obvious that Australia actually has its own unique beauty, and the Australian fashion industry also has its unique style (SM50<sub>f1</sub>).*

A popular theme in fashion discussions was concerned with fashion choices and styling: why Australians wear what they wear.

*Lovin Aussie dressing style! As what they wear reflects cultural diversity and it is easy for people to have outdoor activities when they dress in casual style! (SM50<sub>f7</sub>).*

Some would comment that Australians are not really into fashion because it is “not a necessity”. What they wear is guided by their lifestyle, where barbeques, outdoor sports, and hot weather

call for casual and comfortable attire. One reviewer even argued that healthy appearance is more important than clothing.

*Australia is more polarized, formal dress is very formal, casual wear is very casual. There is no middle ground. Reasons I can think of: 1. It's too hot, so less clothes, meaning hard to match. 2. Weather is too good. I can go to the beach or the outdoor bbq on weekends. I can't care to be bothered with shopping. 3. The clothes are really expensive. Many Australians will go to Hong Kong for holiday shopping, stock up for one year. 4. Most importantly, boys and girls like strength. The healthy appearance is far more popular than clothing (SM48j).*

Several reviews point out that Australian style changes dramatically from day to night. While the day wear is supposed to be comfortable, a good night out asks for elegant, sensual, and assertive clothing. Overall, the most common descriptors used to describe Australian fashion are: casual, plain, sporty, sexy, playful, revealing, unique, confident.

*I personally like fashion here, because it is simple, stylish, feminine and not coy. This is a picture from a clothing store. In Australia, a lot of clothing is about daring exposure. If you walk the streets, you can easily spot women wearing this kind of dress. It feels stylish even though it is quite simple! (SM72j).*

*I felt that everyone was wearing something casual. The streets were full of people wearing sports pants. Special kind would even walk barefoot and that felt particularly unacceptable. And then, some Australians would wear the sort of trousers that Southeast Asian monks love to wear, which are the particularly loose Aladdin harem pants. I think I don't really understand their fashion...(SM50j6).*

Most of the fashion related data were collected from Chinese and Korean forums and blogs. Fashion is a growing industry in Korea. According to Kim, Jung Choo, and Yoon (2013) the big three fashion retailers – ZARA, Uniqlo, and H&M – have reported an average 77% sales increase from 2008 to 2013. The Korean fashion consumers show great interest in newest

fashion trends and would often discuss brands performance on social media (Kim, Jung Choo, & Yoon, 2013). As do the Chinese consumers. Together, they create a lot of content. It is not surprising, since the Chinese fashion industry is one of the most dynamic in the world (Zhao, 2013). The country's retail sales continue to increase year after year reaching about \$860 billion in 2006 (Yu, 2011) and growing to \$1.4 trillion in 2018 according to the statistics from English.gov.cn. The fashion industry has grown so much over the past decade that more and more studies point out the vacuous excess in consumption-driven societies and raise issues of ethical consumption (Kim, Jung Choo, & Yoon, 2013; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Shah, 2015).

The data suggest that Australian fashion receives more praise than criticism. It generates sizeable interest on social media. The international reviewers hardly ever mention Indigenous fashion, on that account, there is room for improvement in this sector. It seems that the number of current fashion events (e.g., Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, Melbourne Fashion Week, Telstra Perth Fashion Festival, Australian Fashion Council events, Australian Retail Festival) is sufficient to satisfy the tourism demand.

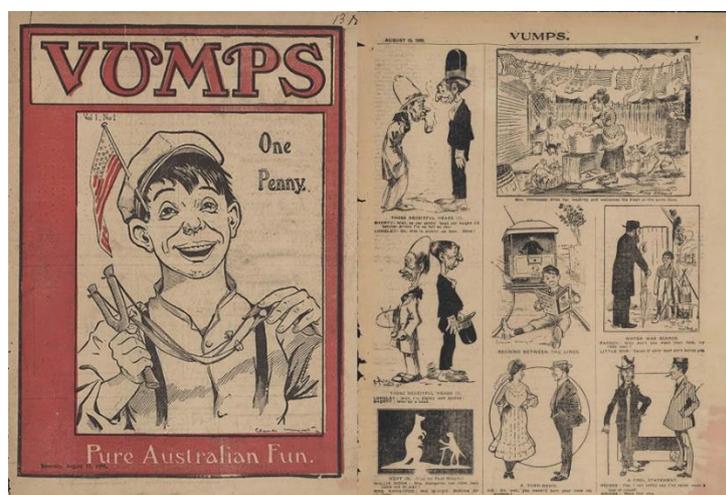
#### **4.6.2.4 Popular literature, music and movies**

The data show that, generally, Australian popular literature gets labelled as English-speaking content and by default becomes part of the American-European productions in the eyes of international audience.

*[Why do we rarely hear about Australian music, movies, and literature?] Australia does have a lot of good works, but because it's an English-speaking country, it's easy to be considered a work of Europe and America (SM74).*

The Australia's Council for the Arts recognises the problem and stresses the importance of promoting Australian writers internationally "to ensure Australia is recognised for its great artists" (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018). While the Australian written artistic works include many literary art forms, the one discussed here will be the one most often mentioned in the international reviews – the Australian comic books. First, the researcher must address a common question: are comic books considered literature? The short answer is 'yes', because comic books are: (a) books, (b) written artistic works, (c) contain writing that has lasting value, (d) a printed and published material, (e) they get awarded literary prizes. For a more detailed answer see Bongco (2014), Chute (2008), or Klock (2002).

Just like in the United States, Australian comic books evolved from newspapers. According to Lent (2009), the first local comic book was published in 1934. Another source notes that evidence points towards *Vumps* (1908) as the first Australian comic-paper (Best, 2014). The facts vary because there is no consensus as to what should be considered true comic style art. Many people confuse illustrated prose and glossy magazine verse with comic style art, notes Best (2014). The *Vumps*, unlike previous newspaper strips (e.g., *The Melbourne Cartoon*, *The Bull Ant*), actually stated that it was a comic paper.



*The cover was black and white with red lettering and a red border and it proudly proclaimed that the comic contained 'Pure Australian Fun'... the Australian boy should not be allowed to live his life in obscurity, therefore this paper will chronicle his doings. He will henceforth be known as Vumps (Best, 2014).*

Unfortunately, despite the quality, Vumps did not get past the first issue.

Ever since the 1900s the industry will be slowly growing, stalling from time to time (1950s to late-1970s), but always recovering (Maynard, 2012). In the year of 1945 Mercier will create his first outrageously bizarre comics. Following his example, more Australian artists will begin experimenting with irony and humour. In late 1940s - early 1950s, the market will be flooded by the American and English comics. It would take the Australian comic book creators years to find a way to 'break' through the mainstream noise.

Today, most Australian comics are most known as 'indie' productions. The image of being different from the mainstream is what helps the industry survive and be noticed. According to the article OWNAINDI Q&A with the Australian Comic Journal, the terms "creator-owned" and "independent" are very familiar to people who enjoy comics, especially Australian comics, since they are mostly considered indie (Chaloner, 2017). In an article "Writers On Writing" (2017), Fionn McCabe, who teaches classes on collaborative art making in the USA, and Ben Juers, a cartoonist and illustrator, comment on the Australian comic scene by saying: "The Australian indie comics scene is vibrant because it's small and allows for a sense of proximity to people whose work you admire". With the US comics leading the western market, and Japan monopolising the East, the Australian industry made a brave choice of going indie. Brave, because going 'indie' comes at a price: these comics are not easy to come by.

*[Australian comics] may not be the easiest to find (in fact, they're not!) but Australian comics are definitely worth the investment (and they do exist!) (Graphic Novels at Libraries: Australian Comics, 2017).*

An interesting discussion of “the whole Australian comics thing” was offered by Dr. Paul Mason on his “The Soldier Legacy” blog (Mason, 2014). In his blog he quotes a comic book creator Dean Rankine and explains why he agrees with what has been said.

*Dean Rankine: If you compare them [Australian comics] to the books on the shelves at a comic book store (indie publications or not) they are NOT as good. [Yet] Making shit comics is an absolute must because making shit comics is how we learn to make good comics [...] I think when we talk about Australian comics not succeeding, we are asking the wrong question. Why can't we have a publisher like the 'big two'? Because I believe they are leftovers from another time that I don't think will repeat itself. They have decades and decades of iconic characters and stories to draw on (get it? Draw!). Which I think in this day and age it would be impossible to mimic.*

*Paul Mason: Comics are grass-roots products. In this nation brought up on sports and sparse population areas (unlike the more centralized, and much larger markets for the US and Europe), it's a stretch to change the mindset of “comics are kid's stuff”. It's hard. Egos for the sake of egos, an invisible and small market, and no distribution... (Mason, 2014).*

Lately, Australian comics culture is experiencing resurgence due to the popularity of comics events. There has been a focus on comics at writing festivals, comic-cons, art exhibitions. The comics have been featured in art galleries and libraries (Maynard, 2017). Even schools host workshops and live demonstrations of comics culture. This cross-pollination between comics, creative industries, and the educational sector has increased the recognition of comics in the public sphere. This means that comics-related projects are receiving more public funding. The

fact that Australian comics are being recognised as a medium and can further develop and survive, advocates Maynard (2017), enriches Australian culture.

The story repeats itself with Australian films. Granted, the Australian film industry is doing better than comics, and the situation seems to be improving (see Beeton, 2001, 2004; Scott & Biron, 2010), but the ‘indie’ label is still attached to many productions (Ryan, 2010a, 2010b; Sutton, 2018).

*[Australian] movies try to be different from international movies by being realistically-violent (The Proposition), offensive (Romper Stomper, Bad Boy Bubby) or just plain bland (Red Dog). Still, to my mind, there was a golden age of cinema which flourished for a decade championed by the likes of directors like Peter Weir, George Miller, Fred Schepisi and Phillip Noyce (SM78).*

The SM data show that international audience do not know or hear much about Australian films. Many people would still remember Steve Irwin or mention the old Mad Max movies, but mostly the movie discussions would revolve around “I didn’t know it was Australian”.

*[In Indonesia] not many people know about Australian music, film or actors and actresses even though they might be know some of them, like Chris "Thor" Hemsworth for example, most Indonesian will think he is American actor (SM61).*

The professional content (e.g., online magazines, film critics) will certainly feature the latest Australian movies, but the UGC follows its own laws.

*About the Australian community, I said that although I didn’t seem to hear about any good movies from there, Australia does have a lot of good works, but because it’s an English-speaking country, it’s easy to be considered a work of Europe and America (SM74).*

Several reviews mention the growing popularity of Australian horror movies. The Australian horror as a genre is flourishing (McGillvray, 2018; Ryan, 2010a; Wood, 2017). The movies are often described as gothic if they detail urban settings, or rural horror (also known as Australian bush horror) if the integral component is rural landscape (Balanzategui, 2017). Scott and Biron (2010) explain that while rural space may appear passive and familiar, in the context of a movie the Australian rural landscape becomes a source of genuine fear.

*When one thinks of Australia they often picture the sun, beaches, and surfing. But underneath it's glossy veneer, there are horrors lurking in the outback (McGillvray, 2018).*

There are many reasons why horror movies appeal to audience. Andrade and Cohen's (2007) work on why people choose experiences known to elicit negative feelings is a great study to look at.

Like horror movies, the Australian TV shows (including the television show franchises) seem to be gaining a following (Cunningham, 2010; Kirkwood, 2014; Morahan, 2018). Some of the success can be attributed to the Broadcasting Services Act of 1992. According to Scarlata (2015), since the introduction of television in Australia in 1950s the local industry has been put on a diet of imported content. The changes came when national media authorities decided to promote local productions and to develop "a sense of Australian identity character and cultural diversity" (Broadcasting Services (Australian Content) Standard, 2016). They introduced new acts, such as Broadcasting Services Act 1992, which require all commercial FTA television licensees "to broadcast an annual minimum transmission quota of 55% Australian programming between 6 am and midnight" (Australian TV content, 2017). The intervention helped Australian producers get higher returns, employees get higher pay,

suppliers get better deals, and at the end of the chain the consumers get a better product. As of today, Australia can offer high quality shows that generate a lot of interest (e.g., MasterChef Australia, Top of the Lake, Wentworth, Please Like Me).

The one element of Australian popular culture that successfully breaks through the Western pop-culture noise is music. The Australian music has been popular with Western charts probably since the 1960s (see Breen, 2006; McFarlane, 2017; Tschmuck, 2013). The ‘Australian music’ can be defined as music released by musicians with an Australian origin. For example, Kylie Minogue is counted as Australian singer even if her records were produced outside Australia.

The Australian music has been successful in many genres. In the 60-70s it was pop and soft rock (e.g., Bee Gees, Olivia Newton-John, Helen Reddy); in the 80s – hard rock and new wave (e.g., AC/DC, INXS); in the 90s it was alternative pop (e.g., Savage Garden) and gothic rock (Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds); the 2000s – electronic music (e.g., The Avalanches), indie rock (e.g., Jet), and dance pop (e.g., Kylie Minogue). Recently, it is more about the psychedelic rock (e.g., Tame Impala, Jagwar Ma, Pond) and indie pop (Gotye). The cultural pot that is Australia is importing music just like they import movies. Nevertheless, Australia produces a lot of quality music content. A quality that is recognised and associated with Australia. According to the reviews, Australia has found its niche and became the ‘alternative’ music scene as opposed to “Taylor Swift America”.

## **4.7 Discussion**

The combined results from Study 1 and 2 offer useful insights into designing PCT strategies. They offer suggestions and prospects for future developments. The explored issues include:

tourists' spatial behaviour, general international perception, local opportunities and challenges, current trends and future directions. These factors are important not only because they provide structure to the somewhat elusive concept of popular culture, but also because they highlight the important aspects. The findings complement each other and would not be as comprehensive in isolation.

The PCT has many directions in which to develop. It can branch of into the events tourism, or focus on specific locations, or be a highly advertised activity with a tour-based structure. The findings helped establish the key sectors in need of development and identify the most prospective areas that can be flagged for further, more detailed, investigation. It is now evident that in the context of Australia's PCT, the PC events have more advantages and better prospects than PC locations. That while 'movies' is a popular category with local pop-culture fans it does not translate well into events that would interest the international visitors. That music is a broad and influential category that works well both as a stand-alone product and as an event. It was great to discover how Australian street art can work both as an urban and rural inspiration, and see how urban food culture prompted the development of food truck events. It is interesting to discover the popularity of gaming conventions and how they encouraged Australia to host eSports events. To understand how different sectors and markets link and interact is to see the future paths for PCT.

The researcher believes that by implementing popular culture, Australian tourism will be in a better position to make further breakthroughs and will add more youth and family tourists to the existing tourist pool. It is impossible not to notice the issues associated with climate change and tourism. For a country that heavily relies on nature tourism these warning signs must be addressed at an early stage. The national tourism industry must build resilience to climate shocks by implementing new tourism-development scenarios.

At present, Tourism Australia actively advertises nature related activities, sports events, and gourmet wine and food festivals. For example, Tourism Australia's "12 Queensland events you shouldn't miss in 2018"<sup>13</sup> features seven sports events, two music festivals (country music and iconic Australian vocalists and rock bands), one food and wine festival, and two cultural festivals (folk and Aboriginal art). "There's Nothing Like Australia" (global consumer marketing campaign designed by Tourism Australia in 2018) features pristine beaches, quality wines, world-class restaurants, and national parks. The most recent campaign, Tourism Australia's Dundee Super Bowl Ad 2018, features Chris Hemsworth – widely known as Marvel's superhero Thor. While the campaign employs an element of popular culture, the experiences being advertised hardly involve any cultural activities. In fact, the activities and locations featured in this campaign, namely, the national parks, beaches, vineyards, world-class restaurants, and water sports – are very much the same across many, many campaigns (see, for example, "Thirty years of Tourism Australia: A history of iconic ads", 2018). One obvious conclusion drawn from the study of tourism campaigns from 2010 onwards, is that Tourism Australia prefers a generic, virtually culture-neutral approach to tourism marketing. This approach is very limiting. It is hard to think of a scenario where ignoring cultural assets is a winning marketing strategy.

The last issue that needs to be addressed in this section is the notion that Australia does not have a 'distinct' culture. While conducting this study one reoccurring theme was the belief of young Australians that Australia has no culture. On the contrary, older Australians (40+) would try to refute the statement. This is not a new debate. This issue was raised by the founding director of AsiaLink Arts, University of Melbourne, Alison Carroll. "The

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<sup>13</sup> Available on the 'Marketing events to the public' web page: <http://www.tourism.australia.com/en/news-and-industry-tools/events/marketing-events-to-the-public.html>.

(pejorative) comment about being a “young” country (with no time to build “culture”) always gets to me”, states Carroll (2017). She further notes: “It’s the old mantra that Europeans and Asian cultures, like China, use: an argument that suits cultures which have remained in one place for a long time” (fifth paragraph). The researcher must agree that there are comments about Australian culture struggling to communicate the clear image as to what represents the national identity. However, while Australians seem to be more critical of their culture, the international reception of Australian culture seems to be quite positive.

Carroll (2017) further notes that it is unclear why after 50 years of work the Australian authorities have failed to promote Australian culture among young Australians. Is it because the councils are ineffective in telling Australians of its work or is there something wrong with the message? The researcher believes that part of the responsibility lies with the issue called the ‘cultural cringe’.

*Jazz, rap or R and B music is often described by Australians as having more 'soul' or 'rhythm' if it is made in America; comedy is more likely to be 'a classic' if it comes from Britain; crime dramas appear more 'real' if set in gritty New Jersey than in orderly Adelaide. These are examples of a much longer established discourse in Australia - of a 'cultural cringe' held towards local expressions when compared against imports from much larger, well-established centres of cultural production (Gibson & Klocker, 2004, p. 431).*

Gibson and Klocker's study dates back to 2004, but the issue still exists. Further work is required to examine the different ways in which this problem can be addressed.

## **4.8 Conclusions**

The researcher strongly believes in the role of popular culture as a global unifying force. Emerging from this belief is a viewpoint that suggests that global forms of belonging

encourage responsibility, social responsiveness, and political action. It can act effectively both as a business and social instrument. Implementing popular culture into national cultural arsenal will not take away from the ‘authenticity’ but rather offer a comfortable ‘welcome’ and introduction to national character and current interests of a country. The popular culture can help balance the image and form the mainstream memory of the national culture. The data collected in this study make it easier to approach the more creative and practical part revealed in Chapter 5.

#### **4.9 Synthesis of the chapter**

The chapter introduces the research context by raising questions related to modern cultural tourism and value of events in destination promotion. The discussion on product diversification is used as an explanation that would lead to the understanding of national tourism marketing policy.

The Study 2 is a qualitative descriptive study that closely works with user-generated content. The researcher employs social listening as a prelude to content analysis. The data are collected from 16 sources. Of 7200 user posts, 648 were identified as topic-specific. These were further narrowed to 191 information rich cases using two sampling techniques: purposeful random sampling and maximum variation sampling. The results section is divided into two parts: Sample P results and Sample M results. The results are presented in the form of emerging meta-themes, sub-themes and categories. The presentation of data includes a straight forward descriptive summary of the informative contents of the data.

The international reviews revealed insights which could contribute significantly to the state of fundamental knowledge of PCT. The results suggest that Australia’s strength lies in cultural

events. Through the arrival of new and diversified cultural experiences, Australia can improve the existing tourism portfolio. For destinations like Australia, where natural resources outweigh the heritage ones, the alternative cultural attractions (e.g., food truck festivals, doof events, urban arts festivals and art trails, eSports, and pop-culture conventions) can be a way to generate a whole new range of tourism experiences. Using the results from Study 1 and 2, the next chapter aims to explore several marketing approaches that utilise popular culture in destination development strategies.

# Chapter 5. PCT MARKETING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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## **5.1 Chapter introduction**

The traditional approach to destination promotion is in need of revision. The PCT is offered as a solution to diversifying the tourism product offer in Australia. The Study 3 offers a rigorous analysis of the marketing strategies that utilise popular culture in destination promotion. It explains how PCT can: (1) help build resilience and productivity of Australian tourism, and (2) develop strong and efficient digital marketing capability to remain competitive in the global market. It discusses how these integrations (between popular culture and tourism, popular culture and technology) are carried out by the DMOs in real-world practices.

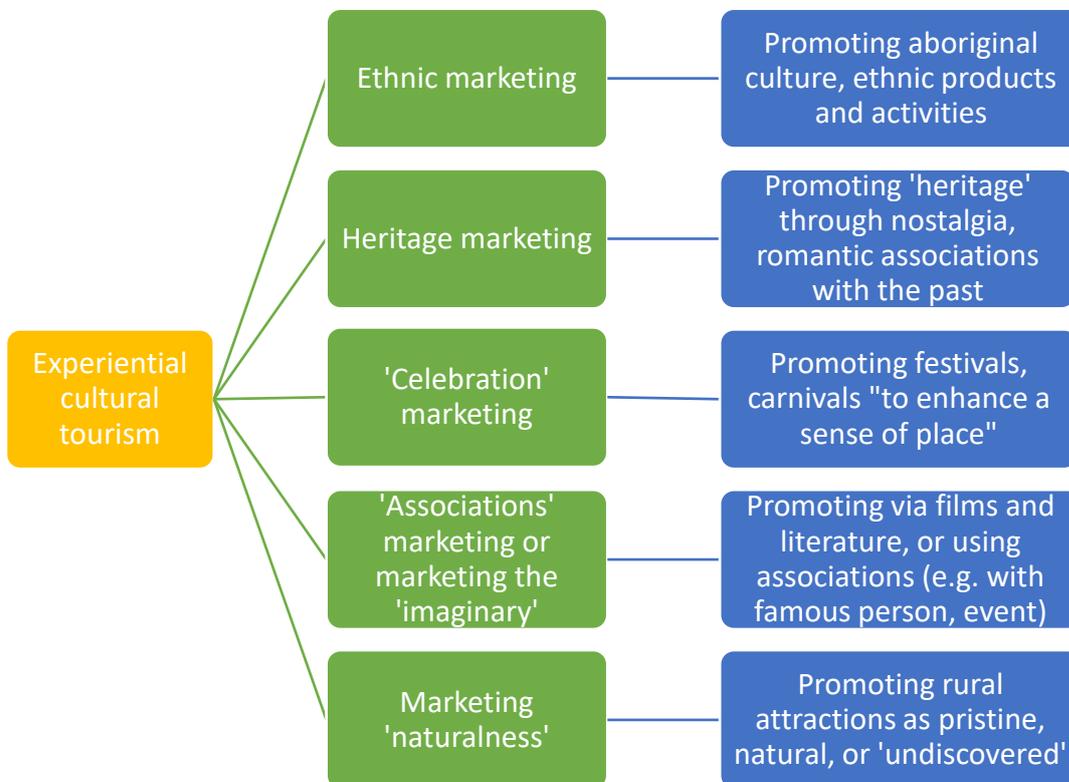
The chapter provides examples of marketing strategies built around leading popular culture choices. It offers many examples of practical application. A three-step model was built to guide the marketing decision process.

## **5.2 Research context**

### **5.2.1 Marketing in cultural tourism**

The tourism industry is surrounded by an overwhelming amount of marketing clutter. The amount of marketing tools and channels has greatly increased in recent years (Fyall & Garrod, 2005; Middleton et al., 2009; Niininen, Buhalis, & March, 2007). While it means that there is a wide range of tactics to choose from and tools to work with, it also means more room for mistakes. Bad decisions can lead to less effective and overly expensive marketing campaigns. In the extremely competitive environment such as tourism, the potential price of a misdirected marketing effort can be extremely high. A careful study of existing marketing approaches and potential ways of improving upon them is a key preparatory step in strategy formulation.

The cultural tourism literature offers a lot of marketing advice. A very interesting work is that of Richard Prentice (2001). Prentice (2001) suggests approaching cultural tourism as an experience, where tourists are invited to explore and to discover on their own and at their own pace, as opposed to consuming pre-packaged producer-led standardized experiences. He explores different marketing strategies used in cultural tourism and explains how to utilise the cultural capital. The summary of his ideas is presented in Figure 5.1



**Figure 5.1 A summary of marketing tactics from Prentice's (2001) study**

He describes the “celebration” marketing as a means to enhance or celebrate a sense of place.

Marketing the imaginary is described as "fact and fiction blending in appreciation" (p. 21).

Other cultural tourism studies offer:

- urban tourism marketing (Jansen-Verbeke & Van Rekom, 1996),

- collaborative cultural marketing (McDonnell & Burton, 2005),
- segmentation marketing (McKercher et al., 2002),
- 'community' marketing or bottom-up approach (Kolb, 2006, p.13),
- de-marketing approach (e.g. tactics that "shift pressure away from fragile areas to more robust ones") (McKercher, McKercher, & Du Cros, 2002, p. 202).

The above-mentioned approaches represent only a small sample of the potential marketing methods that can be used in cultural tourism. The choice is truly overwhelming.

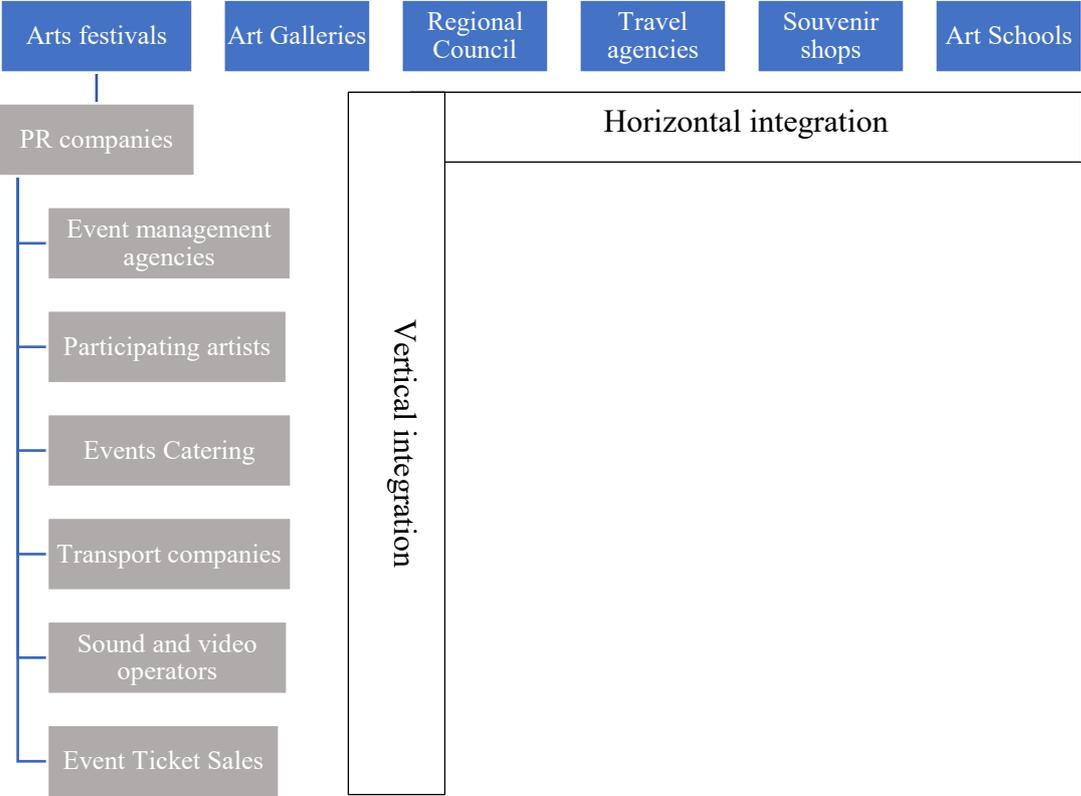
Prior to choosing a marketing approach, the DMO must first consider several factors:

- type of experience,
- integration (horizontal or vertical) policy,
- geography or scope,
- key stakeholders,
- key objectives,
- offshore or onshore promotion strategies.

The foci of cultural tourism today are extremely wide. The type of experience will determine how the activity/attraction is to be advertised and later consumed, i.e. independently or in a group. It determines whether the cultural experience is an 'immediate' experience (e.g., walking the streets, eating at a restaurant) or mediated (e.g., using a tour guide); whether it is a 'packaged' offer (group tour) or an individual 'non-touristy' tourist experience (Prentice, 2001; Richards, 1996).

Integration is another important factor for consideration. Tourism must be considered as complex network that involves a large number of businesses. The success is dependent on efficient coordination and integration of many products, services and resources (Haugland et

al., 2011). When planning a destination promotion campaign, it is necessary to decide how the campaign will integrate with existing sector initiatives. In a vertical integration, the campaign relates to businesses that are adjacent in a vertical orientation, namely when two businesses work in the same service sector. If it is a horizontal integration, it can be a number of different initiatives and businesses from different sectors united by one goal, theme or idea. Figure 5.2 introduces two integration strategies that can be chosen to promote, for example, urban arts.



**Figure 5.2 Types of integration**

In the above example, the vertical integration strategy employs arts events, particularly arts festivals, as the main attraction for promoting arts. It encourages the related businesses to work together. In the horizontal integration strategy, the different institutions and businesses would normally work independently but towards the same goal (help promote arts). Both approaches have their relative strengths and weaknesses. A combination of the two is possible

but will lead to problems because of increased complexity. The ‘combined’ approach will ask for bigger budgets, more resources and more personnel, longer time frames, greater commitment from all participants, and add priority problems.

The geography or scope must also be taken into consideration. Whether it be rural or urban areas, regions or states, national or local initiatives – the scope must be determined from the start to establish the right parameters of what is to be accomplished. Depending on the circumstances, a national tourism campaign can choose to promote only one region in preparation for, say, its upcoming fall and winter season. Equally, the scope may be a whole country or even group of countries.

The community engagement, particularly the interaction with tourism stakeholders, must be an essential part of tourism planning. For a big DMO it is not realistic to address every tourism stakeholder. Instead, it is more practical to identify key businesses or key influencers that would set an example and guide the remaining stakeholders. The recommended step would be to make a compilation of business portfolios and subsequent analysis.

The tourism organization must be clear about the key objectives. The objectives will decide whether it is necessary to have one promotion campaign or a series of campaigns. The issues to be considered must include but not be limited to: (a) key market/s, (b) seasonality, (c) tourist demographics (d) sustainability and tourism impact.

Depending on the key objectives, the DMOs must decide how they want to promote their campaign: offshore or onshore. The offshore campaigns mainly focus on international tourists and take place outside the country, while onshore tourism campaigns take place in the country and target both domestic and international tourists. McDonnell and Burton (2005) note that

the majority of visitors coming to Australia do not make decisions about visiting cultural attractions until they arrive. This statement is supported by the data in Study 2. They recommend limiting the offshore promotion budgets and instead redirect the finances to "promotion at the destination" (p. 23).

Of course, a well-planned marketing strategy cannot guarantee success, but it certainly increases its chances. All considered, the last step in the preparation process is to investigate what attractions are currently being offered on the market. This step will help decide how the strategy can complement the existing services and products. It is important to note that DMOs have different objectives compared to tourism businesses (i.e. tour operators, travel agencies, hotels). A DMO is a body, usually publicly funded, which is responsible for the overall marketing planning. This includes joint marketing activities within the boundaries of the destination (Morgan, Elbe, & de Esteban Curiel, 2009). As such, its goals are more attuned to accentuating the positive features of all participating businesses and creating a compelling story around the experience. Both the current tourist attractions and responsibilities of DMOs will be discussed in the next section.

### **5.2.2 Australian attractions on online platforms**

As suggested in the previous section, an important preparatory step in tourism marketing is to investigate existing offers (products, services, experiences permeating the market). One of the more efficient ways is to explore the products and services offered on online tourism platforms. The one platform that will be offered as an example in this section is TripAdvisor. The TripAdvisor platform is often used by travel managers to give recommendations as to what to do and what to see (Must-dos and Must-sees). While experienced travel managers can make

suggestions based on their experience, new tourism workers look to online tourism platforms for guidance, as do many tourists.

The researcher must point out the existing dichotomy between what the DMOs show as the 'Must-dos' and 'Must-sees' and what the tourists actually prefer to do and see. This is not unusual in tourism and, despite what many might think, is not wrong. In fact, it is acceptable and necessary for the DMOs and official tourism boards to be separated if ever so slightly from the existing demand-supply network. While it is necessary to provide consumers with as much information as possible about "How, Where and What", it is not wrong to re-direct the tourists' gaze in a different direction by offering alternative or new products. Being able to observe rather than participate is what gives the DMOs the impartiality when circumstances demand a more drastic course of action. This also gives the DMOs ability to spot trends in development. That being said, the DMOs must still perform an occasional sweeping market analysis particularly when planning a new campaign.

The official figures for market volumes tend to highlight the consumption of 'high' culture, and as such ignore much of the experiential tourism product (Prentice, 2001). Yet there is enough evidence suggesting that tourists are equally interested in "everyday culture" (McDonnell & Burton, 2005; Pearce, 2007; Prentice, 2001). An Australian study by McDonnell and Burton (2005) suggests that the demand for 'high' cultural attractions is greater among first-time visitors, while seasoned travellers are more driven by curiosity to see how others live their lives on a day-to-day basis. The appeal of 'high' culture in tourism is overrated. To support this statement, one must look at the current demand.

The recent developments in Australian tourism are well represented in existing destination platforms and online tourism services, particularly TripAdvisor. The summary of the most popular attractions in 2018 in Australia as listed on TripAdvisor is presented in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1 TripAdvisor’s Top 30 attractions in 2018 in Australia (by state)

TRIPADVISOR									
2018, Top 30 attractions	NSW	WA	QLD	VIC	SA	TAS	NT	Total	%
Nature (beach, ocean, river, island, mountain, forest, creek, waterfall)	3	13	15	3	5	13	8	60	28.6
Heritage sights (historic village, heritage museum, memorial, heritage building)	1	4	4	2	0	2	1	14	6.7
Other cultural attractions (theatre, museum, gallery, arts centre, distinctive building, cemetery)	5	4	3	3	5	1	4	25	11.9
National parks and caves	0	6	2	2	2	7	12	31	14.8
Gardens	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	8	3.8
Wildlife sanctuary, zoo, wildlife safari	1	0	2	0	3	3	2	11	5.2
Food (restaurant, brewery, wine cellar, winery, food festival)	7	0	1	7	10	1	0	26	12.4
Tours (bus, tram, boat, train, ferry, aircraft), visitor centers and tour agencies	3	1	2	3	3	1	1	14	6.7
Other urban sights (public art, dock, port, stadium, harbour, street, railway, playground, recreation parks)	3	0	0	4	0	1	1	9	4.3
Other (walk, trail, lookout, drive)	5	1	0	3	0	1	1	11	5.2
Performance (show, dance)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>						

While “nature” and “national parks and caves” remain the leading attractions (28.6% and 14.8%, respectively), next popular categories – the “food” and “other cultural attractions” – are not too far behind (12.4% and 11.9%, respectively). The researcher must point out the noticeable presence of urban activities in many popular categories (urban sights, tours, other cultural attractions, performances). For example, the public art (silo art and street art) is featured among top things to see. It seems that in Australia urban activities (the city and its

buildings, street performances, public art, and city tours) are just as attractive to tourists as high culture (museums, galleries, theatres). The difficult part is to persuade the DMOs.

Some clarification is required as to how destination platforms decide “top attractions”. There are two ways to decide the popularity of a service or an attraction. The service or attraction can be: (1) a featured attraction, where the online platform decides which attractions deserve to be at the top of the search results; (2) a reviewed attraction, where the popularity is determined by an algorithm which combines user rating and number of user reviews. The “featured” and “reviewed” categories are separate because they use slightly different selection methods. To select the ‘featured’ attractions online platforms can use: (a) sophisticated ranking algorithms, or/and (b) commercial marketing tactics (where involved tourism stakeholders pay a fee to appear at the top of the search results). The “reviewed” category usually employs simpler algorithms (e.g., the Bayesian average). According to TripAdvisor’s website, this platform uses an algorithm that combines review scores in a way where more recent reviews have higher value than older ones, while also considering the total number of reviews. They promise that their "Popularity Ranking algorithm is designed to provide a statistical measure of confidence about the current experience" (“Everything You Need to Know About the TripAdvisor Popularity Ranking”, 2018).

Some destinations rely on ‘high’ culture more than others. It is undeniable, that high culture is a generator of income and tourist numbers, but applying this formula ‘high culture=tourists’ to every case is wrong and impractical. Australia should find a way to balance its marketing campaign in a way that would provide opportunities for its many cultural attractions. The inclusion of popular culture may be able to provide that ‘balance’ and promote the diversity of cultural experience in Australian. Besides, Australia will not be the first country to try this

method. The effectiveness of this decision is reflected in the growth of popular culture tools in destination marketing and the many new PCT campaigns that have fueled the economy in recent years.

### **5.2.3 The role of DMOs in strategic marketing**

McKercher, McKercher, and Du Cros (2002) point out that few cultural attractions take marketing plans seriously. As a result, they are placed in a reactive position, having to respond to tourist demand rather than leading it. For that reason, it is important for the DMOs to take the lead, to communicate with the tourism stakeholders, and to provide endorsement, support, and strategic information to key businesses (hoping that these businesses will set the tone for everyone else). This, among all the roles that DMOs play, is the most important and probably the most difficult role (Minguzzi, 2006; Pechlaner, Volgger, & Herntrei, 2012).

The DMOs are often blamed for the insufficient knowledge of tourists' preferences and online search behaviour (Choi, Lehto, & O'Leary, 2007; Munar, 2011). This criticism implies that the DMOs do not 100% manage to fulfill their role as information centers. It has been noted earlier that DMOs must act more as observers rather than participants of the market. As observers, they are supposed to be more objective, more accepting, and more flexible when it comes to trends analysis and strategic planning. When DMOs deviate from their main objective of being long-term travel and tourism strategists, they start making mistakes. For example, the mistake of being too involved with the current market affairs. The mistake of thinking that endorsing some products is more important than working towards developing others. Further, the mistake of not providing current and sufficient information about the destination's attractions, particularly new attractions. The researcher believes that this is what has been afflicting the DMOs in Australia. To be fair, this problem is not in any way unique

to Australia but has been reported in many other countries (Choi, Lehto, & O'Leary, 2007; Pike, 2005).

In 2016 Dredge explored whether DMOs are on a path to redundancy. She noted that the failure for DMOs to understand and accept their strategic responsibilities makes researchers question whether such bodies are even necessary as an intermediary body in the tourism system. She also notes that contemporary tourists are more mobile, the demand is more flexible, the boundaries between locations are more permeable – everything is socially, politically, spatially and economically more “fluid”, and this fluidity is problematic for many DMOs.

Today, the DMOs are under great pressure: they must adapt to the realities of the new information age and learn to select the most appropriate communication channels and technologies. They must re-orientate their activities, embrace social responsibility and sustainability, focus on strategising, and build new alternative coalitions between society, government and businesses. The resilience and ability to successfully accommodate and cope with new social responsibilities will decide whether DMOs can continue to exist in the changing economy of tourism.

### **5.3 Aims**

This chapter aims to understand current PCT practices and to analyse the marketing environment and competitive structure of PCT worldwide. Mapping the activity of PCT provides data on how this labour contributes to the economy. The goal is to provide the best possible examples of existing and functional PCT marketing techniques. Rather than formal

hypothesis testing, this exploratory study examines the key issues surrounding PCT marketing: the methods, the implementation, the implications and practical use.

Aims:

- describe and map the PCT related strategies used in a range of countries;
- assess Australia's PCT sector and make comparisons with international benchmarks;
- estimate the potential value and significance of PCT to Australia's economy;
- recommend actions that will improve and further develop the cultural tourism sector in Australia.

It is the task of the national DMO to always aim at a better image of Australia as a tourist destination. This means stepping outside the comfort zone and trying new approaches in destination promotion. The aim of this chapter is to develop recommendations that could help diversify the national destination branding strategies. The recommendations are guided by the insights and results from Studies 1 and 2.

## **5.4 Methodology**

This study is an exploratory study that aims to research a phenomenon that has not been studied clearly, with intention to establish a more homogeneous and complete knowledge of PCT, develop practical recommendations, and establish a stronger connection between popular culture and tourism. This study improves the final research design by providing examples of practical applications of popular culture theory in tourism business practices. As an exploratory study, the goal is to develop initial evidence about the nature of PCT marketing and its role in destination development. This study relies on secondary research and informal qualitative approaches (discussions with other researchers whose interests lie in similar areas, informal interviews with local DMOs, and field observations).

Fielding, Lee and Blank (2008), reflecting on how we continuously leave more digital traces behind as we communicate, note that the world “is increasingly becoming self-documenting and self-archiving” (p. 8). Most public-sector organizations keep their action plans accessible for public by posting them online. By analysing these plans, the researcher can obtain a valuable insight into the recent advances and marketing activities of the DMOs across the world. To find these posts, the researcher methodically examined several types of sources: corporate websites, government websites and digital archives, press releases, major news websites, web-based tourism discussion boards, news blogs, journal papers, books, reports, and conference papers.

Using the purposeful sampling techniques, 50 DMOs were selected for the study, ranging from big state-run organizations to more local entities. All 50 DMOs demonstrate the use of popular culture tools in destination promotion. The chosen sampling technique is a type of a non-probability sampling method that is most effective when one needs to study certain units or cases “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713). The purposive sample is designed “to pick a small number of cases that will yield the most information about a particular phenomenon” (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 83). In this case, the researcher was looking at active public organization responsible for tourism development whose marketing strategy utilised popular culture tools in destination development.

The methodology used in this study places a strong emphasis on non-reactive data collection techniques. The non-reactive data collection procedures are especially suitable for collecting data from large pre-existing databases in order to generate new information. Luckily, the Internet provides an ocean of opportunities for non-reactive data collection. Therefore, to obtain data on the destination marketing techniques, a specific type of online research

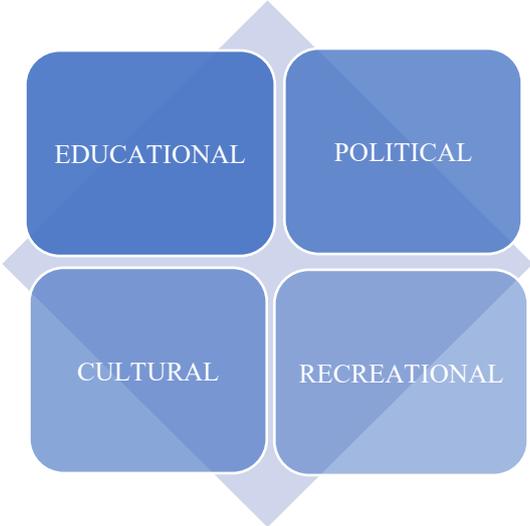


participating DMO employed innovative popular culture inspired marketing tactics that had been used alone or in combination with others in strategy formation within the last 3-4 years.

Many DMOs heavily rely on traditional marketing methods in destination promotion, however, some adopt new approaches. The new marketing methods do not necessarily substitute the existing ones, but rather add depth to existing marketing campaigns by targeting new audiences. It is beyond the scope of this study to cover all new destination marketing techniques that employ popular culture, instead the focus of this study is on seven new destination marketing tactics. Before moving on to the tactics, it is necessary to look at the four types of objectives that allow the use of popular culture tools in destination promotion.

**5.5.2 PCT: tools and objectives**

When collecting and analysing data, the researcher has identified four types of objectives that allow the use of popular culture tools in destination promotion (Figure 5.4).



**Figure 5.4 Popular culture tools in destination promotion: the objectives**

### 5.5.2.1 The educational objective

The best way to demonstrate the use of popular culture as an educational tool in tourism is to explore the tradition of using mascots. A tradition, because mascots have been used in tourism for decades. Think back to the 1980 Summer Olympics held in Moscow, Soviet Union. Those collecting the Olympic memorabilia are well acquainted with this symbol of the Moscow Summer Olympics (Figure 5.5):



**Figure 5.5** Moscow Summer Olympics mascot Mishka

Mishka, the bear mascot of the 1980, has deep roots in Russian-Soviet history, folklore and popular culture. The beloved character of many children's books and cartoons was designed to entertain but mostly educate Olympic tourists about the culture of the country which they are about to visit (Символика Олимпиады-80 в Москве. Справка [The symbol of the Olympic games-80 in Moscow. Fact sheet], 2010). The officials thought that if tourists were to learn only one thing about the country, let it be the country's favourite childhood character Mishka. In 2018, the tradition is still strong. The official mascot of the 2018 FIFA World Cup is

Zabivaka the Wolf. The mascot was so popular it became the symbol of Russian events tourism for the year 2018 (Shatohina, 2018).

Chapter 4 mentions the use of yuru kyara in destination promotion in Japan. Like Japan, Australia has its own examples. The Gold Coast's official airport ambassador Goldie “reflects the friendly and fun nature of the Gold Coast” and is “a local who loves everything about the Gold Coast and wants to share his enthusiasm for the city with visitors and locals alike” (Gold Coast airport introduces new mascot, 2018). Goldie, the happy cartoonish airplane character, does not only greet guests in the airport, but also attends various Gold Coast events throughout the year.

Goldie is not the only mascot employed by the tourism officials. The initiative “Go explore the Gold Coast with Borobi” was launched for tourists travelling to the Gold Coast for the 2018 Commonwealth Games (Media Statements, Minister for Transport and Main Roads, 2018). Borobi is a cute anime-style koala with blue fur and fictional back story that was revealed in April 2016 (Figure 5.6). Borobi is not only featured on the go explore cards that “help travel around the city with ease”, but personally visits some of the iconic locations and generates images and footage that help educate visitors about the region (Media Statements, Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, 2017).



**Figure 5.6 Regional mascots Borobi and Goldie**

Not all mascots are fictional. In 2017 Tourism Australia has appointed the Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra as one of the ambassadors for the “Friends of Australia” programme (IndiaToday, 2017). This appointment was supposed to help further cement the close ties between both countries and cultures – Australia and India. Parineeti Chopra was to travel the country, take breath-taking pictures, and share her travel experiences on social media. Her itinerary is even featured on the official Tourism Australia website (Parineeti Chopra's Australian itinerary, n.d.). Apart from praising local wildlife and beaches, Chopra also describes Australia as a perfect international location for shooting Bollywood movies, adding that some of the cult Bollywood films were actually shot in Australia (Parineeti Chopra explains why Australia is important for Bollywood, 2018). The opportunity for mascots, as popular culture tools, offers a first insight into an array of marketing opportunities for a destination such as Australia.

Another Australian initiative took place in NSW, where the State Library together with the History Council of NSW offered to educate visitors about the important cultural changes of the 20th century by introducing them to the post war popular culture (“What Goes Pop!”, 2017). Similar popular culture experience was offered by the National Museum of Malaysia in 2018. The researcher attended this exhibition which offered to educate both local and international guests about the creative history of Malaysia through local popular culture artifacts (Figure 5.7).



**Figure 5.7 National Museum of Malaysia exhibits popular culture**

At a subjective level, it was a great experience, both educational and entertaining, that offered a new and unexpected perspective on Malaysian political, cultural and creative history.

The influence of popular culture on today's world has led scholars to examine the integration of popular culture into the educational system. The changing patterns of culture resulting from highly connected world, migration rates and population sizes encourage the use of popular

culture as means to identify with familiar themes of friendship, family, justice, love, sports, to name a few (Ashcraft, 2003; Buckingham, 2002; Ho, 2006). The notions such as "travel is broadening" and "tourism is educational" are commonly accepted in literature (Crain, 1996; Herzig, 2017; Hiwasaki, 2000; Jafari, 2003; Richards, 2007). It is only logical that there is an increasing interest in the educational aspects of popular culture in tourism context. This is particularly true for international students. Richards (2007) notes that one of the reasons why youth travellers, particularly students, are important for cultural tourism "is because of the strong link between cultural consumption and education" (p. 15). The people in education tend to consume more culture, explains Richards (2007), and not just high culture, but popular culture as well. There is a link between the growth of cultural tourism and participation in higher education (Richards, 2007). The same methods that employ popular culture in education can be applied to tourism. Through an eclectic mix of interactive media technologies, comprehensible cultural and artistic practices, and popular forms of social interactions, popular culture helps tourists adjust to the unusual environment and engage with new cultures.

#### **5.5.2.2 The political objective**

There are many examples of political influence found in popular culture (Street, 2004; Street, Inthorn, & Scott, 2015; Van Zoonen, 2005). The bond between tourism and politics is also undeniably strong (Hall, 1994; Richter, 1989; Singh, Timothy, & Dowling, 2003). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that PCT can also have political undertones. One of the most famous examples of using popular culture as a political objective, is the event that took place on Monday, May 19, 2008. On this day, Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism announced that Hello Kitty is to represent the country in China and Hong Kong as the official tourism ambassador. The pop culture icon Hello Kitty, the first non-human to have been

assigned an official ambassadorial role, was a success. Many news agencies (HuffPost, South China Morning Post, New York Daily News, Daily Mail, The Independent) covered the event on their political news page. For many, the move was a genius way to boost visitors under the “Visit Japan” campaign, as well as help improve the difficult state of China-Japan relations. This was not her first political assignment either. In 2004, Hello Kitty raised \$150,000 for UNICEF's girls' education programs (Annual report 2004 UNICEF, 2005).

Like the Two-Face fictional character from American comic books, popular culture has two sides, pretty and ugly. They co-exist quite peacefully and are inextricably linked as the two sides of the same coin. The PCT inherited this feature and adopted it brilliantly in some of its promotional and political marketing campaigns. A good example can be found in Berlin, where a complicated political history of the city is now offered as a tourist attraction. One of the means of artistic expression that links politics, tourism and popular culture is the city's street art. According to Goethe-Institut, graffiti and street art is tied in with a tradition of leftist protest movements that used walls as the bearers of political messages in the 1980s (Lüber & Gegenheimer, 2017). Years passed but the scene is still active and is committed to the original idea of street art as an urban political statement (Lüber & Gegenheimer, 2017) (Figure 5.8).



**Figure 5.8 Berlin's political art scene**

On the Berlin's official travel website ([visitBerlin.de](http://visitBerlin.de)) there are numerous mentions of street art, the recent being the "Berlin Mural Fest 2018" and "Streetunicity - political education from the street for the street".

A more subtle example is the one that comes from Kazakhstan. The Baikonur Cosmodrome is a spaceport located in Kazakhstan, 40 km from the city of Baikonur, that is being leased to Russia as a space launch facility. Baikonur, a place highly associated with political paranoia and inter-governmental rivalries, has been closed to the public for decades. It is now open and is known as a center for cosmic tourism. In the early 2000's, both as a political gesture and way to earn profit, Baikonur Cosmodrome turned its famous launch site into a tourist destination. Baikonur is now doing well enough for the local tourism officials to announce the launch of yet another long-term strategic programme that would focus on improving infrastructure to help bring in more 'space' tourists (New Infrastructure for Baikonur tourists, 2018).

For many Russians and former Soviet citizens a tour to Baikonur Cosmodrome is a genuine ‘popular culture’ dream come true (see “Where is Baikonur Cosmodrome?”, 2018). For the older generation, Baikonur is a place where cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (real Soviet superhero) went into space, and an inspiration behind many Russian science-fiction novels (e.g., Strugatsky novels, Bulychov novels) and TV series (e.g., Guest from the Future) (Figure 5.9).



**Figure 5.9 Baikonur inspired themes in Soviet popular culture**

For the younger generation, it is a scene from the popular video game Call of Duty, and a famous sight from ‘The Launch Acceleration’ episode of the Big Bang Theory, as well as a featured location from the popular Dark Tourist Netflix TV series. Despite being a place of

controversy, even with complicated politics and expensive tours, Baikonur Cosmodrome is one true “geeky” destination (Beiser et al., 2011; Timmermans, 2014).

### **5.5.2.3 The cultural objective**

There are no strict boundaries between cultural, political, recreational and educational objectives in PCT. In fact, the many applications participate in one another's construction. Some practices rely on PCT to carry political messages, others want PCT to be purely recreational. The cultural objective can be explained as a direct portrayal of local culture 'as it is lived' or 'as it was lived'. With this objective tourism acts as a lens on the social world which by intercepting a portion of local culture is trying to magnify some of the local cultural practices. In this scenario, popular culture is not a supporting actor, but the star of the show – and is important on its own.

A popular example includes Harajuku. Harajuku is a symbolic place for popular culture enthusiasts in Tokyo – the mecca of local kawaii and moe culture. Originally intended for local communities, this destination soon became a popular fashion and shopping district among tourists (Gagné, 2008, Ng, 2008; Onohara, 2011). Strictly speaking, Harajuku exists not to entertain or educate tourists, but to celebrate popular culture and all the glitz that comes with it. As a matter of fact, some Harajuku shop owners have recently been expressing fatigue with international tourists. The tension escalated to a point where a number of reports describing discriminatory signs on shops have made the headlines in Japan (Kikuchi, 2017). This is a serious issue since Japan's National Tourism Organization website ([www.japan.travel](http://www.japan.travel)) actively promotes Japanese popular culture sights to foreign visitors. In view of the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, the Japanese government issued The Act on the

Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons Originating from Outside Japan (The Ministry of Justice, 2016).

Similarly, Hollywood Boulevard in California, USA is a destination that celebrates Western popular culture through its many references to theatre, Hollywood, Disney movies, and favourite celebrities. The official tourist guide to Los Angeles ([www.discoverlosangeles.com](http://www.discoverlosangeles.com)) describes Hollywood Boulevard as "a Los Angeles cultural icon, with museums, landmarks and other attractions that celebrate L.A.'s rich film and entertainment heritage" (Famous Attractions on Hollywood Boulevard, 2016). It is a place of pilgrimage that binds together the past, the present and the future of American popular culture, and is inspirational for tourists and locals alike (Figure 5.10).

*Along its stretch from Highland Avenue to Orange Drive, you can find a day's worth of activities that will give you a true Hollywood experience. You never know who you'll run into! Arnold Schwarzenegger recently shocked fans by making an appearance at Madame Tussauds Hollywood (Famous Attractions on Hollywood Boulevard, 2016).*



**Figure 5.10 Famous Attractions on Hollywood Boulevard**

#### **5.5.2.4 The recreational objective**

No matter the key objective, popular culture will always serve recreational function. In tourism, whether it is bridging a cultural gap or improving political climate, the overarching principle of popular culture is to achieve entertainment. One of the purest examples of tourism taking advantage of popular culture is the case of Disney Parks. Since the 'theme park' concept has been extensively covered in tourism literature (Formica & Olsen, 1998; Milman, 1988; Richards, 2002; Ritzer & Liska, 2004), the example offered here is that of Disney Cruise Line. The Disney cruise ships rate high on many review forums and online tourism platforms (e.g., CruiseCritic, Yelp, TripAdvisor).

*Disney Cruises are one of the best vacations I've ever been on (get this, it was ultimately for the kids)! If you know anything about Disney, they really put their hearts into anything that they do. Oh boy, did they really make this Cruise on the Wonder Ship an awesome one... My daughter and step daughter had tremendous fun. The 11 year old said dad, "This is the best vacation ever!" Now keep in mind, she's been to*

*Mexico, Hawaii, Jamaica, Florida, California and even Idaho on vacation... I highly recommend this cruise! (Disney Cruise was super great!!!, 2010).*

A cruise is a great way to travel and explore destinations and is among the more comfortable ways of travelling with children (Charleston, 2016; Dowling, 2006; Kwortnik, 2008). Theme parks and cruise lines are not the only Disney attractions available for tourists. There are resorts, theatre performances, and art exhibitions available in many countries. In 2018 Disney will be celebrating the 90th anniversary of Mickey Mouse. The Disney.co.uk promises global anniversary celebrations.

A great question to ask is: where does film tourism, literary tourism and music tourism fit within this scheme? The answer is: it depends. If popular culture is yet another way of promoting an already existing popular location, then the objective would be ‘recreational’. For example, Udaipur in Rajasthan has always been famous for its architecture and landscaping, its main attractions including the City Palace, the Jagdish Temple, Lake Pichola, and Lake Palace, but Bollywood productions have provided the much necessary boost to the morale and ailing economy of the location (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2009; Osborne, 2011). Udaipur is an attraction for all cultural tourists, no matter their cultural allegiance.

If popular culture is responsible for creating a new tourist sight, for example as an aftermath of a movie or a literary masterpiece, then the objective can be described as cultural. It is cultural, because, as explained earlier, “the popular culture is not a supporting actor, but the Star of the show – and is important on its own”. A good example is Forks in Washington, USA, which became a famous pop-culture location due to the popularity of the Twilight series. Prior to the Twilight series, Forks was barely noticeable on tourist maps (see Chapter 3). Other famous examples include 221B Baker Street in London, Prince Edward Island and

the Green Gables House, Bangor in Maine (fictionalized as “Derry” in Stephen King’s works), and the Hobbiton in Matamata, New Zealand.

**5.5.3 The destination marketing tactics**

**5.5.3.1 Traditional vs advanced destination marketing tactics**

At the beginning of the chapter, the researcher provided examples of several marketing techniques used in cultural tourism. Are the same techniques applicable to PCT and what other established marketing practices are currently being used in destination promotion? By reviewing academic papers (e.g., Beeton, 2005a, 2010; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Fawcett & Cormack, 2001; Gibson & Connell, 2005; Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014; Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen, 2013; Richards, 2003; Ritzer & Liska, 2004) and analysing strategies that utilise popular culture in destination promotion, a list of commonly used PCT marketing tactics was created. Over 30 destination websites have been analysed to ensure that these tactics have a practical application. The same approach was later used to identify the advanced destination marketing tactics. The created list is presented in Table 5.2. This information serves as a baseline for future comparisons when identifying the advanced marketing methods.

Table 5.2 Traditional marketing tactics used in PCT

1) Mastering product-placement strategies
2) Inviting travel specialists, travel writers and other media professionals to see locations/events
3) Engaging the celebrities to promote the location
4) Joining film commissions
5) Offering grants and tax credits, as well as other incentives to encourage studios to film at the location
6) Selling popular culture memorabilia
7) Doing and marketing cultural festivals
8) Promoting film/TV tours and walks, and creating site maps for pop-culture tourists

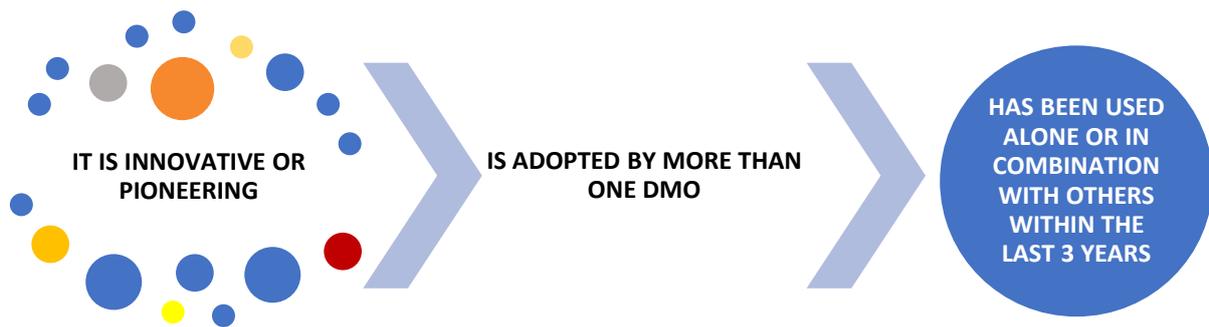
The table above provides a list of eight traditional marketing tactics that utilise popular culture in destination promotion. These traditional tourism marketing methods are widely used by all levels of DMOs. These methods have a stable reputation for attracting a certain number of tourists. The marketing budget based on this approach does not take long to prepare, and the associated costs are well known. While they are not always budget-friendly, the risk factor is relatively low, as opposed to risks that come with new marketing tactics that are yet to prove effective.

Many DMOs rely heavily on traditional marketing methods but a highly competitive environment of the tourism market calls for innovation. This exploratory study concentrates on the existing and emerging marketing practices to discover new destination marketing approaches suitable for PCT. The new marketing methods do not necessarily replace the existing ones, but rather add depth to the existing marketing campaigns by targeting new audiences. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to cover all new marketing tactics. Instead, the focus of this study is on seven advanced destination marketing approaches that can assist in the growth of cultural tourism (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Advanced destination marketing tactics

<b>N1</b> Using digital travel content and immersive digital reality for location promotion
<b>N2</b> Mastering collaborative marketing
<b>N3</b> Creating “camera ready” communities
<b>N4</b> Focusing on UGC and ‘#hashtag’ marketing
<b>N5</b> Offering free marketing workshops and raising Google visibility
<b>N6</b> Exploring new possibilities for cross-marketing by co-creating content for big VOD services providers (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu)
<b>N7</b> Using popular culture to introduce new tourism experiences

Every chosen tactic complies with following criteria:



The next section will illustrate the use of the advanced marketing approaches by providing examples and discussing the implications of the study findings for future tourism development.

### 5.5.3.2 Implications

This section gives a more detailed description of the advanced destination marketing tactics and provides examples of practical application. Implications for destination marketers are also discussed.

#### **Tactic N1:** *Using digital travel content and immersive digital reality for location promotion*

The use of digital travel content, such as destination guide applications for location promotion, is a recent marketing technique used by Visit Britain and I Amsterdam ("ArrivalGuide: free guide to Amsterdam", 2016). Destination applications such as PXCom's in-flight entertainment applications and ArrivalGuides are an example of smart use of digital destination-related content. The company PXCom uses inflight entertainment systems to provide the passengers with multimedia destination-related information, whereas ArrivalGuides is a destination content provider with a vast network of high quality and up-to-date destination information and city guides. Their strategic partnership in September 2014 unveiled a new era of destination guide applications:

*PXCom & ArrivalGuides partner to bring a new channel for destination guides, currently used online by over 340 distribution partners... Fully integrated into ArrivalGuides' standard offering, PXCom offers DMOs a new channel, where content can be adapted to the traveling situation, in the selected languages. On the opposite side, local tourism players have now the opportunity to promote their property on board, in an interactive way. The partnership between ArrivalGuides and the DMOs is a perfect lever to build confidence in this unmatched communication platform (Nedog, 2015).*

This is good news for many popular culture tourists who prefer flying to their destination. The ArrivalGuides with the help of PXCom's in-flight applications can deliver an assortment of information on everything from film tours and walks, to film and site maps for tourists.



**Figure 5.11 A screenshot of Harry Potter tour from ArrivalGuides website**

These destination guide applications offer a new take on traditional marketing approaches to information delivery. The DMO websites, such as VisitBritain.com and VisitLondon.com, share their content with ArrivalGuides to offer any tourist all available information on their object of interest.

Nowadays acronyms such as VR and AR are perhaps as common as FAQ and DIY. They are the ‘jargon du jour’ for many advanced popular media users. Such wide acceptance does not come as a surprise, for the influence of the popular media is most evident when it comes to promoting new exciting products. The computer-generated environments such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented reality (AR) are becoming powerful marketing tools (Bulearca & Tamarjan, 2010; Lui, Piccoli, & Ives, 2007). These computer-generated environments are created with the help of immersive digital technology that combines elements of the real world with virtual elements, allowing interaction between objects, both real and virtual, in real time. While many marketing organizations are only just beginning to discover immersive digital reality (IDR) technology such as VR and AR (Pereira et al., 2014), some players are ahead of the game.

The potential of VR in future tourism marketing practice has been recognised in recent tourism literature. Huang et al.'s (2016) study results show that the application of VR environments leads to higher travel intention because of greater perception of autonomy and relatedness of the users. A good example of VR inspired marketing strategy is the collaboration between Screen NSW and The City of Sydney (the local tourism government authority for central Sydney and surrounds). The Screen NSW is part of New South Wales government initiative that was established to "assist, promote and strengthen the screen industry in NSW [...] encourage employment in all aspects of screen production, encourage investment in the industry, enhance the industry's export potential" ("ScreenNSW: Who We Are", n.d.). Their new project ‘360 Vision’ is Australia’s first ever Virtual Reality development initiative. The ‘360 Vision’, along with other projects run by Screen NSW and The City of Sydney, aims to: 1) “encourage more international film production in Sydney for the economic benefit of Sydney economy”, and 2) to “promote the enjoyment of screen

culture by Sydneysiders and tourists for cultural and economic benefit” (“About Sydney City of Film”, n.d.). Projects like ‘360 Vision’ are part of the competitive strategy used by the state DMO to secure its position in the emerging field of digital tourism.

The AR, though not as widely used as VR, already sets marketing trends in tourism and hospitality field (Qiu, 2016). The success of the mobile game Pokemon Go released in 2016 demonstrates the power of AR technology. Only three days after the release of the game, the number of daily active users already approximated that of Twitter (Skrebels, 2016). In 2015-2016 it was common to see large numbers of people gathering around local landmarks to collect pokemon. The “Pokémon Go Sydney Walk” that got together over 2000 players at the Sydney Opera House is only one example of the AR events (Rossignol, 2016). In 2018, Indian tourism officials announced a launch of pilot AR interventions for heritage sites Cubbon Park, Bangalore Palace, Tipu Sultan’s Summer Palace, Bangalore Fort, Lalbagh, and now Vittala Temple in Hampi. The tourism secretary Anil Kumar announced that AR platforms will be helping the tourism department in development of 20 popular tourist sites (Shekhar, 2018).

The IDR technology, due to its diverse functionality, offers tourism many useful applications that deserve greater attention from tourism researchers and stakeholders. The destination marketers can use IDR technology to integrate sensory experience into their communication strategies, utilising experience-based marketing to support the tourist's information search and decision-making process (Cheng & Cho, 2011; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003; Huang et al., 2016). Despite the potential benefits, the use of IDR technology among tourism organisations is at best in its infancy. The collected data show that even among big tourism businesses, the adoption level of IDR technology is still basic. The AR technology may not be a full-fledged

tourism marketing tool yet, but it certainly sets the trend. Combining immersive digital realities with popular culture may cater to young tourists and families. Simply having interactive digital mascots accompany you on an adventure might be a new interesting way of boosting tourist experience through the use of technology and popular culture.

**Tactic N2: *Mastering collaborative marketing***

Tourism destination marketing involves many stakeholders and a complex product offer. The complexity and interdependency among stakeholders has helped create many local tourism marketing alliances (Palmer & Bejou, 1995). Gray (1989) refers to collaboration as “a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain” (p. 227). The collaboration is “seen to take place at individual, organizational, national, regional and international levels, all geared towards addressing common issues” (Hill & Lewis, 2015, p. 76). The collaborative efforts are encouraged at each of these levels as they foster a greater degree of consensus and joint decision-making (Okazaki, 2008).

Collaboration is particularly important in destination marketing efforts due to the complex nature of the tourism industry. Relevant studies suggest that collaborative marketing is a practical solution to various challenges in destination marketing (Wang & Xiang, 2007) and is effective in building consistent brand identity and offering competitive value proposition (Park, Cai & Lehto, 2009). This study already touched upon several examples of marketing collaborations in the tourism field, but there has been little discussion on international collaborations in screen (film) tourism. The screen tourism stands out very conspicuously as being the most used popular culture tool in destination promotion.

A good example of an international level of collaboration is The Thailand-India cine connect project.

*The objective of the Thailand-India cine connect project is to connect Thai and Indian people in film businesses together as well as to explore the business opportunities, particularly in the areas of promoting Thailand as a film shooting location (Koumelis, 2016).*

Another collaboration, this time between the The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and state DMOs, illustrates a national level of collaboration in tourism. In 2012 The Ministry of Tourism of India has instituted a National Tourism Award “Most Film Promotion Friendly State/UT” to encourage the state DMOs, Governments and Union Territories to facilitate filming in their state or territory. Two years later, the Press Information Bureau, Government Of India, released a document titled “Potential for Film Tourism in the Country”, which “recognizes films as a powerful tool for promotion of tourism destinations and locations” in India (Press Information Bureau, 2014, p.1).

In Korea, a national level of collaboration between popular culture and tourism is seen in a phenomenon described as the Korean wave (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008). In recent years Korea has transformed from being “an obscure cultural backwater” to a new vibrant center of cultural production (Joo, 2011, p. 490). The success of Korean popular culture has become a point of national pride, states Joo (2011). It is not uncommon for Korean DMOs to use popular culture as a springboard for destination promotion, notes Lee (2011). The Korean Wave made “people flock to Korea to visit locations where their favourite shows were filmed, giving an unexpected boost to tourism” (Joo, 2011, p. 490). He further describes how the Korean tourism authorities noticed that the intention to visit Korea increased after a release of

a successful Korean TV drama. This link has fueled the national collaborative marketing efforts and positioned Korea as a popular culture destination on tourism maps.

On an organizational level, a collaboration between stakeholders can sometimes be of a less explicit character. For example, Tourism New Zealand offers tourism stakeholders and travel media cross-marketing opportunities together with free access to its Visual Library. This library contains a collection of images and footages that can be used in the promotion of New Zealand as a tourist destination. Ever since the first Lord of the Rings movie, New Zealand has been popular as a film location (Jones & Smith, 2005). In attempt to further capitalise on screen exposure, Tourism New Zealand offers many informative resources and free sales tools for tourism stakeholders to help “visualise the New Zealand experience” (“100% Pure New Zealand”, n.d.). The latest ‘sales tools’ include film location maps and videos on Disney’s film Pete’s Dragon.

*We think there is a great opportunity for you to showcase your vacation product to New Zealand and we’ve included some tools that can help you do just that... we think the content we’re sharing with you can be used to promote all of new New Zealand (Disney’s Pete’s Dragon, n.d.).*

Such collaborations enable organisations to absorb innovation, which ultimately leads to higher survival rates (Zach, 2012).

A more recent example of an organizational marketing collaboration inspired by popular culture is 2016 Family Ambassador Campaign launched in New York, USA. NYC & Company, the city’s destination marketing organization, has teamed with Nickelodeon, an American television network, to promote New York as a family friendly location. Their project ‘Discover NYC with Team Turtles’ is using the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

characters to guide families around New York and help them experience the most family-friendly things to do and see.

*The multigenerational appeal was key with our selection of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles... People traditionally haven't thought of New York City as a family destination but that is changing. With this campaign, we're relinquishing full control of the brand and letting the turtles tell their story about the city (Peltier, 2016).*

On an individual level, the marketing collaboration example was discussed when mentioning Parineeti Chopra's collaboration with Tourism Australia. The DMOs' collaboration with partners has long been recognised as essential to creating cohesive tourism products (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

### **Tactic N3:** *Creating "camera ready" communities*

A recent trend in destination marketing is creating camera ready communities by encouraging communities to streamline permitting processes that would allow 'location shooting'. The location shooting is an important part of a filming process since it has several advantages over filming in a studio ("Shooting On Location Vs. In Studio", 2016; "Studio vs. Field: Which one is Right for You?", 2016).

In Georgia, Camera Ready Communities program connects film and TV productions with county liaisons across the state to provide local expertise and support. Georgia's Convention and Visitors bureaus (CVBs) have long realised the benefits of community involvement. The first Camera Ready Communities program preparations began early in 2010. The aim was to train and certify Georgia counties to work effectively with production companies and provide one-on-one assistance in every aspect of production, from location scouting and film permits to traffic control, catering and lodging. Among the first Camera Ready communities was Columbus, Georgia's second-largest city (Okamoto, 2011). The Columbus area is very

familiar with popular culture: from “The Green Berets” being filmed locally by movie legend John Wayne in 1960s, to “Tank,” a comedy featuring James Garner and Shirley Jones in the 1980s, to Mel Gibson’s “We Were Soldiers” (2002). More recent was the filming of the “Need for Speed” movie in 2013. Given the history, The Columbus Camera Ready Community has enough strength to help Georgia become a tourism destination capable of attracting considerable numbers of screen tourists.

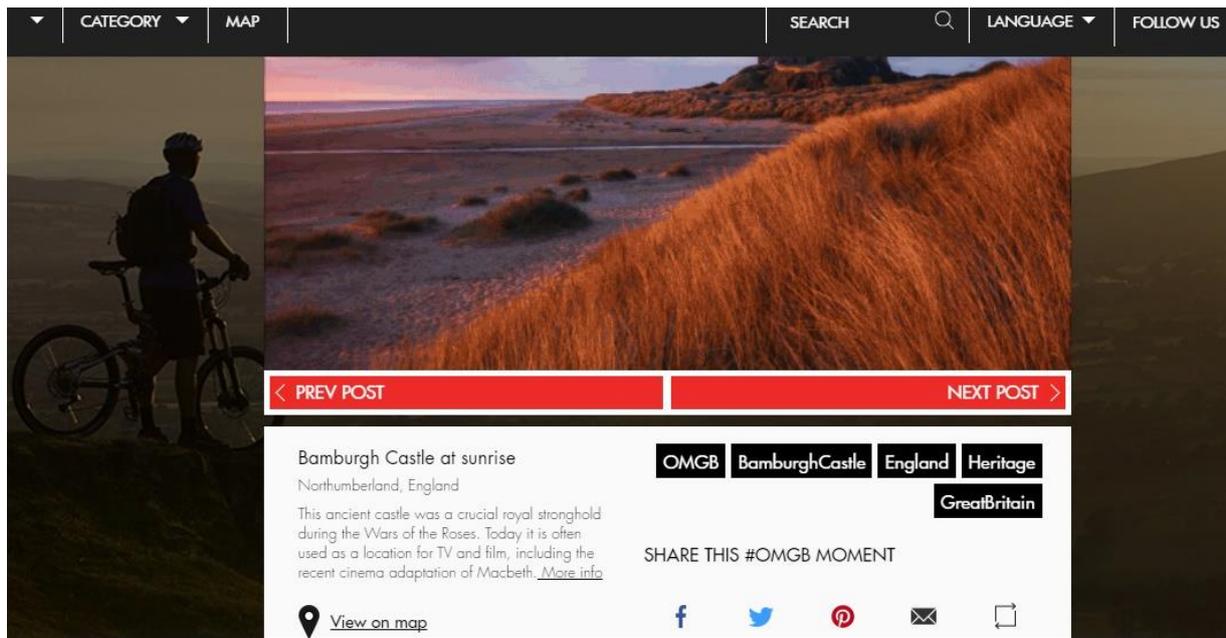
Another US example of a Camera Ready Community is Texas. The Film Friendly Texas (FFTX) program run by the Texas Film Commission aims to connect filmmakers to locations across the state. The communities are encouraged to streamline permitting processes that would allow a film production to close streets for filming scenes. The FFTX program also provides ongoing training and guidance to help communities effectively accommodate on-location filming and market their communities as filming destinations.

A more recent example took place in Townsville, Australia. In 2015, the Townsville City Council introduced the ‘Film Friendly Council’ initiative. The researcher participated in the preparation of the project which was designed to “offer the screen industry a variety of assistance as well as a streamlined application process” (Film and Creative Industries, 2016). The initiative soon came to include the Palm Island, Hinchinbrook, Burdekin and Charters Towers. Together, the Councils and local DMOs created the Screen Locations Guide showcasing information and photographs of locations from all over the region. The Guide “adds to that character-filled regional towns with diverse architectural appeal, beach and island backdrops and tropical landscapes” (Screen Locations Guide, 2016). The Mayor of Townsville described the program as a significant opportunity for economic and cultural advancement.

**Tactic N4:** *Focusing on UGC and ‘hashtag’ marketing*

The User Generated Content (UGC) is re-shaping the way people process news, gossip and even research. The UGC is “creating new viewing patterns and social interaction” by encouraging users to be more creative, and businesses to seek new business opportunities (Cha et al., 2007, p. 1). While not new to tourism marketing, the UGC is still relatively new to PCT.

In its current campaigns, Visit Britain places a strong emphasis on user-generated content when targeting tourists. A campaign known as "#OMGB moment" is a true example of a UGC derived marketing. Launched on 14 January 2016, #OMGB GREAT Britain - Home of Amazing Moments is “an evolution of our [VisitBritain/VisitEngland] previous marketing campaigns and a new over-arching proposition in promoting tourism” (#OMGB - GREAT Britain - Home of Amazing Moments campaign, 2016). Designed for tourists seeking firsthand experiences, #OMGB website is a great tool for searching, planning and choosing popular culture tours (Figure 5.12).



**Figure 5.12 #OMGB campaign**

The idea behind the campaign is very simple: it encourages people to upload images of their own memorable moments using the hashtag #OMGB. These moments and experiences are then showcased through digital, TV, print and outdoor marketing activity. If a tourist is seeking, for example, a firsthand experience of a British film location or willing to share his or her own experiences, #OMGB is a good way to start. The #OMGB campaign is going global and has already been launched in Australia and China on September 2016.

In tourism research a lot has been said about popular food destinations, such as Hong Kong or Singapore (Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011; Son & Xu, 2013), yet not much research has been done on food in the context of PCT. It is surprising, since tagging food, particularly street food (see Chapter 4), is a well-established and fashionable activity among tourists (Liu, Norman, & Pennington-Gray, 2013; Ranteallo & Andilolo, 2017; Stojanovic, Ognjanov, & Filipovic, 2010).

The 'hashtag' marketing is gaining a following in tourism industry. Few understand it better than Beautiful Destinations. The Beautiful Destinations is a creative force behind the largest travel community on social media. Their past and current clients include many DMOs and hotel chains: Starwood Hotels, Hilton, Airbnb, NYC & Company, I Love New York, Tourism Ireland, Macao Government Tourism Office, Philippines Department of Tourism, Slovenian Tourist Board, Burj Al Arab, MGM Resorts, as well as Forbes Travel Guide, Food & Wine and many others. Their marketing efforts concentrate on "visual storytelling" through UGC (Beautiful Destinations: Our Story, n.d.).

In 2017, the Macao Government Tourism Office collaborated with the Beautiful Destinations to launch a Food and Markets campaign. The campaign used hashtags (#WowMacao, #MacaoMoments, #TasteOfMacao) to tell the story of local food culture. The campaign introduced some of the best local street food and market experiences (Figure 5.13).



**Figure 5.13 Macao Government Tourism Office and Beautiful Destinations' Food and Markets campaign**

Another example of UGC in tourism marketing takes place in Dubai. In 2014, the Dubai Tourism and Burj Al Arab Jumeirah hotel were preparing for a big tourism campaign. One of the aims was to generate a bigger social media following. The company recruited Beautiful Destinations team to work on the problem. The Beautiful Destinations hosted a meeting of social media influencers at the hotel and asked every visitor to begin using the hashtag #mydubai to introduce lesser-known shots of the city. The best photos were projected on to the Burj's sail-like exterior. As a result, the hotel's bookings grew 38% during the month of the campaign (Usborne, 2018).

The UGC and #hashtag marketing approach hold great potential for new collaborations in the PCT field. The DMOs can utilise this tool to create new stories and describe the existing ones

(Figure 5.14). It is a budget friendly marketing tactic with high visual appeal and clear message that can target a wide audience.

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Figure 5.14 Hashtag marketing

The destinations do not necessarily need a marketing agency to utilise UGC and #hashtag marketing. The Guam Visitors Bureau encourages both residents and visitors to post their experiences using “#instaGuam”. In Guam “we need to have "instagrammable" experiences that can be shared around the world”, advocates Destination Management Committee chairman Monte Mesa (Mesa, 2018).

**Tactic N5:** *Offering free marketing workshops and raising Google visibility*

The new technologies and the rapid changes in the business environment and consumer needs continue to challenge tourism in many ways (Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000). In this environment, note Mistilis, Buhalis, and Gretzel (2014), destinations need an efficient and responsive process to harness latest skills and knowledge. They must develop pathways to meet the technological changes and move to new marketing channels (Buhalis & Wagner, 2013).

The DMOs have the ability not only to give strategic advice but also provide educational support. It is also important to educate the existing tourism businesses how to effectively use new marketing tools. In tourism, many businesses can jointly benefit from free marketing workshops and on-line marketing support (Mistilis, Buhalis, & Gretzel, 2014; Novelli, Schmitz, & Spencer, 2006). An easy-to-learn and easy-to-teach technique that improves online 'visibility' is Google's “Google My Business” smart tool. It focuses on improving the quality and visibility of the destinations within Google's search and travel planning products. One of first countries to recognise the importance of this tool was USA.

In 2018, the Kentucky Department of Tourism partnered with a tourism marketing agency to deliver Google services and products to local DMOs and businesses. The Kentucky

Department of Tourism states that “It is crucial that travel destinations have robust business listings and high-quality imagery that captures the beauty and quality of their destination. The state cooperative Google Program will accomplish this goal for our department and our tourism industry” (Kentucky Department of Tourism first in nation to launch state cooperative Google program, 2018). The Kentucky Department of Tourism is the first US destination to launch this initiative which is already being described as “a benefit for the state as a whole, as well as the individual local destinations and local businesses” (Kentucky Department of Tourism first in nation to launch state cooperative Google program, 2018).

Apart from Google programs, there are many other online sources that give free advice and blog about innovation in tourism (e.g., Tourism eSchool, Tourism Tribe, Tourism Marketing Agency, Sustaining Tourism). The government agencies, for example Business Queensland ([www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au)), offer an array of “digital readiness tools” and free webinars that include social media skills, search engine optimization (SEO), and guides on building websites (Managing your tourism business online, 2018). However, not all tourism businesses are aware of the existing government initiatives. It is the responsibility of DMOs to facilitate the flow of information within and between local and national tourism stakeholders.

**Tactic N6:** *Exploring new possibilities for cross-marketing by co-creating content for big VOD services providers (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu)*

In the context of product placement, a destination serves mainly as a scenic backdrop. By co-creating content for popular ‘video on demand’ (VOD) service providers, the destination can become the main topic of the conversation. The success of Netflix or Amazon Prime (Ruiz-Navas and Miyazaki, 2017; Walker et al., 2017) should inspire DMOs to think about the possibilities of promoting locations with the help of VOD providers. Since most travel

campaigns eventually find themselves on YouTube, where their appearance is hardly noticeable among other ‘viral’ content, perhaps it is more feasible to work with alternative digital platforms.

An interesting idea was voiced by Xiang, Pan, and Fesenmaier in 2009, who conceptualised “the long tail” within a travel planning context. In marketing, the long tail is used to refer to a large number of products that sell in small quantities, as opposed to small number of best-selling products. In tourism, the long tail refers to unique and less well-known tourism attractions that “reflect the idiosyncratic and multi-faceted nature of the destination” but often have a low visibility (Xiang, Pan, & Fesenmaier, 2009, p. 1). Xiang, Pan, and Fesenmaier state that the long tail technology enabled business models (such as Amazon Prime, Hulu and NetFlix) have the power to market and sell harder-to-find or less known content. They further note that the long tail model is particularly applicable to tourism. The tourists who would rather avoid conventional and over-crowded locations are the main driving force of the long tail enabled travel experiences (Conway & Timms, 2010; Matos, 2004; Pearce & Gretzel, 2012).

This opens many possibilities for cross-promotion. A DMO may find it easier to market an ‘exotic’ travel experience on a platform that is driven by the long tail business model. The alternative tourism destinations, such as those driven or inspired by popular culture, may find their potential consumers among customers of VOD services. In fact, some Netflix movies and TV series are already increasing tourist numbers by attracting screen tourists (Archibald & Johnston, 2018; Aubé, 2018; Macaulay, 2018). Some VOD content, for example the Netflix's Dark Tourist, can spark controversies yet still carry many tourism marketing opportunities (see Rowney (2018) and Salisbury (2018) for additional information).

Xiang, Pan, and Fesenmaier (2009) state that it is important for the destination to provide the means by which travelers can access information about the idiosyncratic (e.g., small, unique and interesting) tourism-related experiences. Therefore, there must be a technology that can provide access to “the long tail” services, a technology that understands the unique travel desires and needs of an individual user. Xiang, Pan, and Fesenmaier (2009) never made a direct claim that VODs can be that technology. However, their work was written in 2009 and the success of VODs has become more pronounced only in recent years (Bellante, Vilaridi, & Rossi, 2013; Dias & Navarro, 2018; Franck, 2017).

**Tactic N7:** *Using popular culture to introduce new tourism experiences*

The technology is one of the latest additions to popular culture family. As discussed in Chapter 1, technology is no longer judged solely on its usability. We now speak of it in terms of culture: Google culture (Schmidt & Rosenberg, 2014; Steiber & Alänge, 2013), iPod culture (Bull, 2015), iPhone culture (Ames, 2013; Goggin, 2009), Android culture (Danova, 2014). In turn, popular technology introduces other forms of culture, for example 'selfies' culture, vlogging culture, and gaming culture. The popular technology, which includes both products and providers, is an essential part of our daily lives, and seeing it introduce new forms of tourism – the ‘technology tourism’ – is exciting. It represents an important advance in making tech-tourism a viable alternative to traditional tourism for destinations that have a rich technological background.

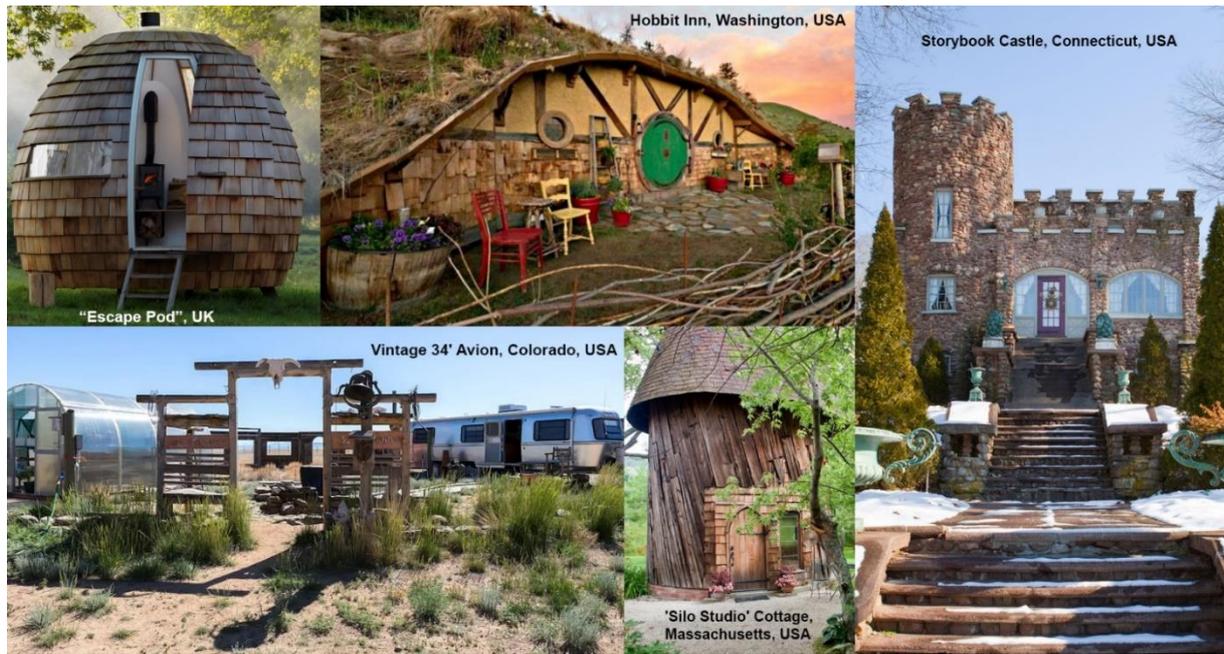
For some, travelling to see Google, Amazon or Twitter headquarters is similar to visiting a national historic landmark. “You can't fly halfway around the world to San Francisco and not

at least attempt to sneak a peek at some tech company headquarters”, write travel bloggers from Chase The Horizon (Visiting Google and Twitter headquarters In San Francisco, 2015).

*It was here, in 1938, that Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard built an audio oscillator, the first creation of the company that would ultimately bear their names. And that has made this unassuming structure, with its barn-style green door, into not only a national historic landmark, but a planetary shrine: the birthplace of Silicon Valley (The Boston Globe, 2018).*

The Amazon Seattle headquarters offers guided tours, while Apple has a Visitor Center: “the Apple Park Visitor Center offers guests a place to learn, explore, shop, and more” (Apple Park Visitor Center, n.d.). In California, the home of Silicon Valley, technology tourism is already affecting the tourism industry (see, for example, the tech tours on Visitcalifornia.com). The hospitality industry is also affected by the ‘tech bug’. For example, Hotel Zetta, located in the techy-savvy SoMa district, has a VR room in the lobby. The Starwood hotels showcase robot-butlers in their Cupertino Aloft Hotel.

A new tourism trend inspired by popular culture and the pop-up movement is the pop-up hotels and fantasy tiny-house homestay experiences. While tiny-house rentals can be as comfortable and as familiar as traditional hotel rooms, some are truly magical (Figure 5.15).



**Figure 5.15 Tiny House hotels and B&B's (print screens from official websites)**

Most tiny holiday rental cottages and hotels are available through Airbnb. Some are local businesses, while others are a government initiative aimed at providing new travel experiences. For example, Switzerland Tourism has designed eleven pop-up hotels that “aim to provide travellers with new experiences from different and surprising perspectives” (Millimaci, 2018). The designs vary from futuristic capsule design, to ‘Rapunzel’ tower, to a “habitable work of art over the trendy Milchbar that you’ll hardly want to leave” (Swiss Pop-up Hotels, n.d.). All designs are available on [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com) (see examples in Figure 5.16).



**Figure 5.16 Pop-up Swiss hotels**

According to Cheung (2001), popular culture can serve as a valuable tool that can help people cope with the difficult task of building and maintaining an identity. Just like people, some destinations are interested in constructing alternative narrative identities that can serve as proxies for the official histories. New Orleans, for example, is building up a reputation as a ‘dark’ gothic tourism spot. Prompted by voodoo legends (Fandrich, 2007; Ferguson, 2016) and popular culture tourists (Kroger, 2013), New Orleans is now a prominent ghost and vampire destination. The tours offered on Viator.com include New Orleans Vampire Tour; New Orleans Ghost, Voodoo and Vampire Tour; New Orleans' City of the Dead Tour, to name a few. The New Orleans & Company, formerly known as the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, has seized the opportunity to capitalise on the dark legacy and is now promoting vampire shops, haunted houses, witches’ tours, and 'monster' parades.

*New Orleans is known for its haunted history... You'll find an abundance of options for haunted group tours, especially in the French Quarter, which is filled with stories of ghosts and ghouls in most every building [...] If music festivals are your thing, be sure to purchase a ticket to Voodoo Music + Arts Experience over Halloween, which is an annual event that takes over the City Park Festival Grounds" (Visit New Orleans, n.d.).*

*"Then there's Boutique du Vampyre in the French Quarter, which claims to be the only vampire shop in the country, open to both mortals and vampires since 2003. They offer tours, coffin-shaped backpacks, capes, you know... the usual" (New Orleans and Vampires, n.d.).*

Another recent PCT inspired initiative takes place in Peru, 20 km from Cusco. To save local wetlands and promote rural tourism, the Huasao area is now luring tourists by offering statues of Ents (race of beings from Tolkien's fantasy series) and reproductions of Groot (character from the Guardians of the Galaxy series). The statues (some of them over 5 meters tall) and figures are set amid the lagoons and forests of Huasao wetlands. The local officials claim that nearly a thousand people are visiting Huasao every week, the majority of visitors under the age of 30 (Magical Film Figures Lure Youth to Explore Peruvian Wetland, 2018). While the Peruvian environmentalists are happy that the tourists are making selfies with the statues, the main idea is to make the visitors "walk away having learned the vital role wetlands play as habitat for birds and bees as well as cleaning water and preventing floods". By using popular culture icons, the local authorities want to attract young tourists hoping "to spark their appreciation of nature" (Magical Film Figures Lure Youth to Explore Peruvian Wetland, 2018).

The above examples are just a few illustrations of how popular culture can be used to introduce new tourism experiences. The described marketing tactics can be used separately or

in conjunction with one another. They can serve different purposes, from educational to recreational. No matter the approach, the DMOs must align their strategic decisions with the key factors discussed in the research context section.

#### **5.5.4 A narrative marketing approach**

##### **5.5.4.1 Australia's PCT sector**

Australia has all the right ingredients for becoming a great PCT destination. The local popular culture communities are enthusiastic and supportive of PC events (see Study 1 results). The popular culture fans are willing to travel interstate and show high levels of interest and involvement in popular culture activities. The high interest levels drive the consumption and inspire creativity. There is enough 'idiosyncrasy' in Australian popular culture to be considered new and attractive. At the same time, it exudes enough familiarity for global tourists with mainstream tastes to feel comfortable (see Study 2 results).

Today, despite the emergence of new power players among Asian countries, the influence of the western popular culture is still big. Australia, the biggest carrier of western culture in the Asia-Pacific region, has an opportunity to become a unique center of popular culture in the region. It can aspire to create something distinct that would resonate with both Western and Eastern audiences. Besides, Australia is conveniently close to the growing Asian market and offers a great range of direct flights (Figure 5.17).



**Figure 5.17 Flight times to Sydney**

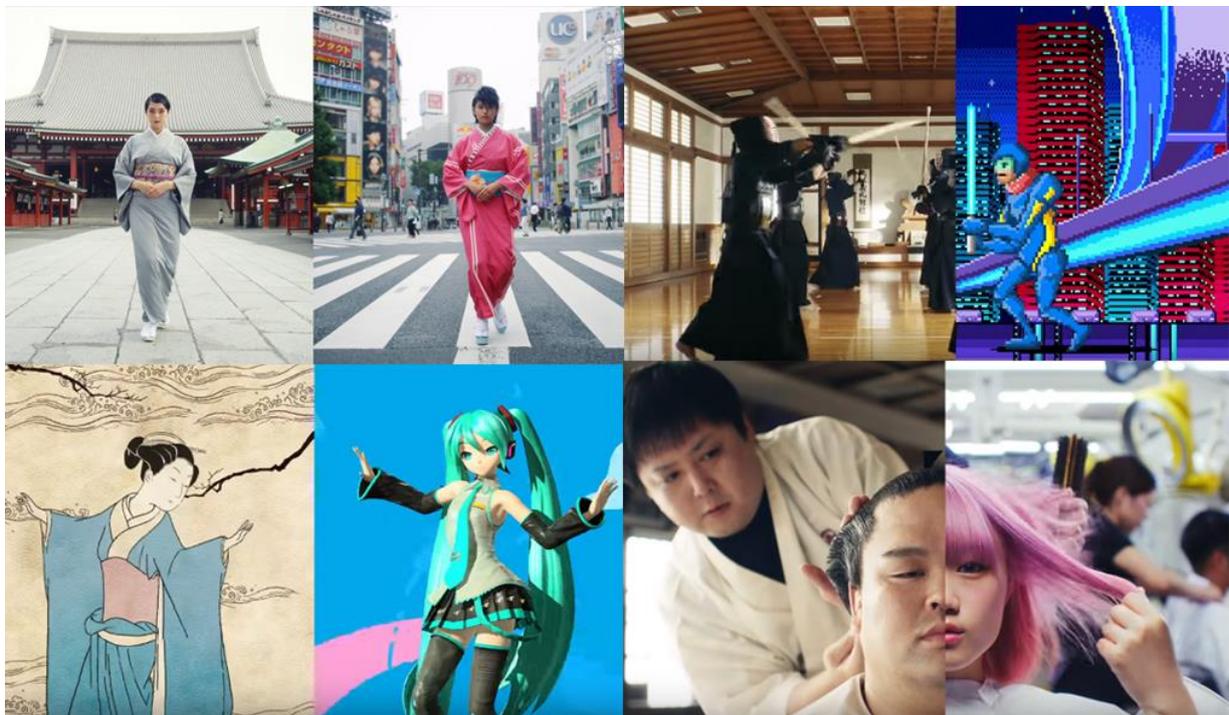
Australia’s strength lies in PC events. Many Australian PC events already have a dedicated fan following and established cultural traditions. It is within the power of the DMOs to increase the visibility of these events, to seize this opportunity to narrate a different story, a cultural story, about Australia. Providing information and creating stories is why DMOs are so important to the tourism industry. One cannot stress enough that Australia has a great story to tell: the solemn and heartfelt silo art, the eclectic street art, the welcoming family-friendly conventions, the 'hipster' food culture and quirky food trucks, the liberating bush doofs, and the informal unrestricted fashion – a place where all ‘mainstream’ somehow fits perfectly with local practices of “indie” culture.

The studies suggest that a key component of effective tourism marketing is building an emotional relationship with the consumer through focused communications campaigns (Prideaux & Cooper, 2003). The DMOs must choose an appropriate method to enable the relationship and build the communication. There are many ways to narrate stories to international audience. A most common narrative marketing approach used in tourism is a

travel campaign. In the field of tourism, the narrative marketing is particularly important since tourism products are characterised by their experiential values (Tussyadiah, Park, & Fesenmaier, 2011).

#### 5.5.4.2 Tourism campaigns and popular culture

One of the recent campaigns that actively utilises popular culture in destination marketing is the Tokyo's Old Meets New 2017 tourism promotion campaign. The campaign uses comparisons to tell the story of contemporary Japan (Figure 5.18)



**Figure 5.18 The Old Meets New promotion video images**

*In Tokyo, the traditional and the cutting edge are intertwined in all fields, from cuisine and the arts, to architecture, and the city is a constant source of new inspirations (Tokyo Tokyo, 2017).*

This juxtaposition of traditional culture and popular culture accurately describes the current Japanese cultural climate. Japan is probably among the few countries in the world to fully embrace the old and the new in terms of both technologies and cultural settings. This

campaign offers an authentic feel for the place and artfully exploits nostalgia and modernistic metaphors in storytelling.

Another smart use of popular culture in destination promotion was demonstrated by VisitBritain in their GREAT Britain campaign.

*Whether it's rock concerts on rooftops, interactive soundwalls or worldwide ad campaigns, over the past four years our GREAT campaign has helped draw record-breaking numbers of people to Britain (Our GREAT story so far - international, 2016).*

Unlike Japan, the Great Britain's campaign utilises the country's popularity as a filming location. The campaign includes many popular culture references that colour the story and traverse cultural barriers (Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19 The GREAT Britain campaign

There are many other campaigns that feature popular culture attractions and use popular culture tools in destination promotion, for example The Tourism Ireland Game of Thrones Campaign, Travel Oregon's "Oregon, Only Slightly Exaggerated" campaign, Korea Tourism Organization's "Have you ever...?" campaign. They tell a story: about history, about culture, about life, about discovery. The stories they tell are about people with different preferences and different cultural backgrounds who can relate to each other and enjoy the experience together.

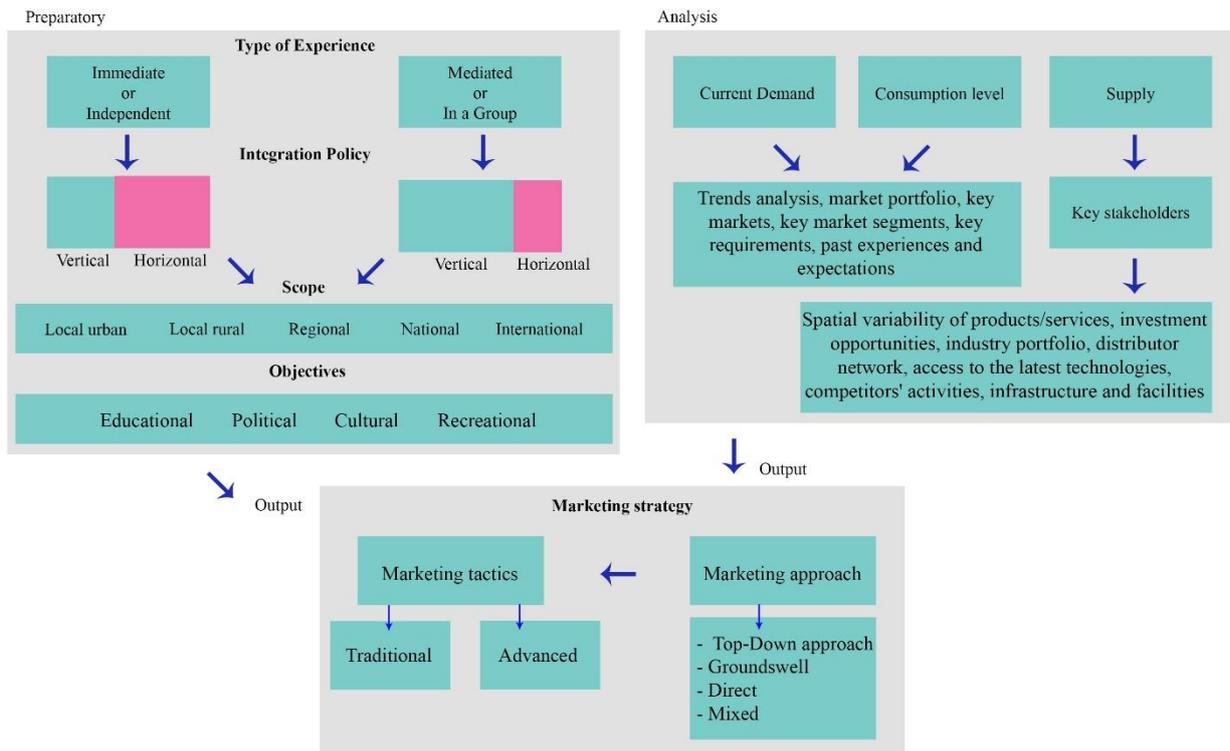
Australia can use these examples as an inspiration for creating new or improving the existing tourism development programmes. The advanced marketing tactics can be developed to target specific markets, which can have a positive impact on the growth of the international tourism and potentially contribute to the regional economic growth.

#### **5.5.4.3 The three-step marketing decision model**

The marketing decisions and strategic tourism planning require knowledge of many factors of the preparation process, including the existing tourism demand, product range, resources, logistics, and growth potential. The three-step marketing decision model<sup>14</sup> in Figure 5.20 illustrates the following planning approach delivered in three stages (preparatory, analysis and output):

---

<sup>14</sup> A larger illustration is available in Appendix 4



**Figure 5.20 Three-step marketing model**

This decision model illustrates the different steps of the PCT planning procedure. The ‘output’ marketing strategy depends on the chosen marketing approach. The marketing approach can be top-down, where the DMOs use events, PR campaigns, large-scale advertising, and well-known influencers (e.g., celebrities, bloggers, vloggers) – to ‘inform’ the marketplace about new tourism products or services. When advertising and promotional campaigns are unattainable, the groundswell method might prove effective. This approach usually employs word-of-mouth marketing, social networking, and online communities (Harris & Rae, 2009). With the direct approach, the DMOs directly interact with the key stakeholders and encourage the B2C and B2B interactions. In this context, the DMOs act as researchers, legislators, funding-providers, and innovation hubs. All these approaches can be blended to create a “mixed” approach. In mixed approach, the top-down methods can be used to support a direct marketing approach, or the groundswell can be complementary to a top-down approach.

In Australia, the PCT introduction process can begin by planning a top-down approach. In later stages, the mixed approach might prove beneficial. More recommendations are provided in the section below.

## **5.5 Discussion**

Every country has its own approach to destination promotion: some countries prefer offshore campaigns, while others focus on the onshore promotion strategies. When combining the present results with those from previous studies, there is evidence that for Australia's cultural tourism the onshore promotion strategy might prove more effective than that of offshore. The onshore campaigns are usually considered less costly and more sensitive to demand fluctuations. The DMOs have a better control over the visibility of the advertisement locations and it is easier to change or add promotion material when necessary. For Australia, the PCT market expansion via in-country promotion could be a good start point to finding the best marketing solution.

Marketing destinations is different from conventional business marketing. It is not merely a current expense, but a long-term strategic activity and should be regarded as an investment. Morgan and Pritchard (2012) compare marketing to regular exercising, where you get stable results only if the routine is an ongoing high-intensity process. In tourism, particularly when launching a new campaign, marketing is more akin to facing the unexpected, where the results depend on one's preparedness and response rate. Therefore, when launching a campaign, a rigorous interval analysis of the effects of the marketing interventions is required on a weekly to monthly basis. A good understanding of the existing tourism offers is of paramount importance.

The examples from this study show that there are many ways of integrating popular culture into the destination development process. For Australia, a conservative country from the destination marketing point of view, the first steps can be initiated by employing the collaborative marketing approach. The collaborations can take place on the state or local levels. The state level collaborations include state tourism authorities working closely with each other to determine the best way to create an optimum experience for visitors. Here, the aim is both to market the destinations and to increase the numbers of sellers through investment in a range of destination goods and services.

The local collaborations include DMOs working closely with local tourism businesses. This collaborative initiative has potential to benefit a large number of tourism stakeholders. It has been recommended throughout this work that DMOs take a more serious approach to promoting local PC events (e.g., food truck festivals, doof festivals, urban arts festivals, fashion festivals). The recommendations for initiating the collaborative process are as follows:

- maintain a festival calendar,
- improve advocacy for the sector,
- offer marketing support (e.g., co-marketing efforts with state DMOs),
- review funding strategies,
- offer training and skill development,
- plan for importing talent from abroad,
- create an open contact directory for more efficient communications,
- share the best practices with other businesses.

Another relatively low-cost and high-efficiency marketing approach for Australia is the UGC and #hashtag marketing. This approach is perfect for onshore marketing campaigns. The advertising efforts can include but not be limited to: social media marketing, airport

advertising, digital advertising and digital screens across popular tourist routes and onboard public transport vehicles. The digital screens, for example, can not only promote the tourist attractions but also encourage visitors to use specific hashtags when sharing their experiences on social media (Figure 5.21).



**Figure 5.21 Creative example of hashtag marketing**

Australia, as the previous examples show, already has some good experience with immersive digital reality tools. It is of importance to continue with this work through further exploration. The IDR technology in tourism can serve both educational and recreational objectives. Perhaps Australia can follow the example of the Indian tourism board and try some of the recent AR technologies in destination promotion. The education sector is already involved in IDR, with national institutions offering diplomas in such areas as Virtual and Augmented Reality (e.g., Deakin University, RMIT University) and opening immersive laboratories (The University of Sydney). Tourism should keep up with the pace of technological progress and

provide support for economic and social development. Speaking of technology, the Australian tourism businesses can only benefit from more educational programmes targeting digital marketing skills. Even simple workshops, such as How to work with Google Adwords, How to make videos for YouTube, How to use drones for aerial photography, can increase the quality of local digital content.

The researcher recommends against dividing PCT into separate areas of interest (e.g., film tourism, music tourism, or arts tourism). The first reason being that Australia does not yet have a strong leader within the PCT sector. The second reason is explained by Heitmann (2010), who questioned whether stand-alone activities such as film tourism deserve its own planning agenda in the destination development process. The discussion shows that there is potential for conflict due to the different levels of power and investment involved in the destination development process. Connell (2005) also comments on the limited life-span of film and television-induced tourism, which makes them a risky business option for many tourism stakeholders. As Heitmann (2010) concludes, perhaps the film tourism should not be considered in its own right. Yet a holistic approach to PCT is a viable option.

There will certainly be questions whether marketing PCT in Australia is worth the effort. Despite the numerous examples of successful application of popular culture in destination promotion, there is a chance that this approach might not be suitable for Australia. It is possible yet pointless to speculate on why that might be so, if indeed it is so. Instead, one can think back to all the examples that portray popular culture as an exciting and inevitable part of the future cultural landscape. The PC events in Australia are known and appreciated within the cultural community. Most international visitors who encounter local popular culture view it as a positive and educational experience. There is simply no need to justify promoting PCT

in Australia as it is an existing influential entity in the local community and will eventually become a big part of the national tourism product. Yet it might be beneficial for it to happen sooner rather than later.

In 2008, note Frost et al. (2010), the international inbound tourism to Australia was stagnating. The country relied on advertising rather than developing new products and experiences. It was waiting “for another great ad to come along and save us” (Frost et al., 2010, p. 99). The only exception seemed to be Melbourne, where for the first time international tourists were spending more money than in Sydney. The success was attributed to Melbourne linking the existing tourism campaign to experiences: “Melbourne has things to do, not just things to look at”, encouraged the tourism campaigns (Frost et al., 2010, p. 99). Perhaps, it is time to reconsider the existing marketing strategies and follow the example of Melbourne by offering more unique experiences rather than finding new ways to look at old things. Based on this approach, Australia can launch one or several campaigns that promote experiences as much as the locations (Figure 5.22).





**Figure 5.22 Examples of cultural campaigns**

A campaign that: (1) encourages creative freedom through arts events, dance events, and music events; (2) promotes cultural diversity and curiosity towards other cultures through food festivals, movie festivals, and other cultural events; (3) offers arts and imaginative enrichment as motives for cultural consumption. These and similar campaigns can enrich the tourist offer, allow the extension of the tourist season (since most cultural activities happen all year round), and introduce tourists to new locations that have been otherwise overlooked.

## **5.6 Conclusions and limitations**

For many tourism destinations it is imperative to explore alternative tourism revenues and diversify the tourism offerings (Angelevska-Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012; Christou, 2012; Fons, Fierro, & y Patiño, 2011). The alternative tourism may be regarded as an early form of recognition and adoption of sustainability (Oriade & Evans, 2011). As an alternative tourism product, popular culture is very flexible and can offer innovative and flexible services to a market that is willing to adopt it as a strategy. It is a form of highly engaged, alternative, sustainable form of tourism. It can be used in both horizontal and vertical integration strategies, can be successful on a large (represent national culture) and small (promote local cultural experiences) geographic scales, and be utilised in both onshore and offshore campaigns. The PCT can promote both locations and experiences and does not require excessive capital and extensive infrastructure. Yet as a sector, it may need time to develop its identity along with the tools and strategies that will serve its cause. If implemented and encouraged, PCT can be a smart marketing solution to diversifying Australia's tourism portfolio.

The study calls for further analysis of the advanced destination marketing tactics. The researcher, though providing recommendations, does not offer explicit guidance on how to implement the advanced tactics, therefore, a more rigorous research effort is required to establish the optimum process.

## **5.7 Synthesis of the chapter**

The chapter opens with a discussion of marketing strategies used in cultural tourism. In this section, the researcher examines the work of Richard Prentice (2001), who explained how to utilise the cultural capital using different marketing strategies (e.g., heritage marketing,

celebration marketing, and associations marketing). The section contains a short literature review of the existing marketing approaches used in cultural tourism.

Next, the researcher argues that DMOs must consider several factors prior to making marketing decisions: a) type of experience, b) integration, c) scope, d) key stakeholders and key objectives, e) offshore or onshore promotion campaigns. This section also deals with the investigation of online products and services offered on the tourism platform Tripadvisor, specifically, the top 210 attractions in Australia in 2018.

The role of DMOs in strategic marketing is another serious issue addressed in this chapter. The researcher explores the strategic and social responsibilities of the DMOs and tries to understand whether such bodies are necessary as an intermediary body in the tourism system. As in previous chapters, the chapter provides a detailed account of the aims and methodology used.

The results section provides examples of current marketing practices used by tourism organisations worldwide. This section identifies four types of objectives – educational, political, cultural and recreational – that allow the use of popular culture tools in destination promotion. It offers examples of tools that can be used with different marketing strategies. The researcher lists eight traditional marketing tactics that utilise popular culture in destination promotion. This information serves as a baseline for future comparisons when identifying the advanced marketing tactics. The researcher illustrates the use of the advanced marketing approaches by providing examples and discussing the implications of the study findings for future tourism development.

The discussion section applies the advanced marketing tactics to the Australian market. It provides examples of the many ways of integrating popular culture into the destination development process. The chapter ends with conclusions which support PCT as a smart marketing solution to diversifying Australia's tourism portfolio.

# Chapter 6. FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

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## **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings, implications and limitations of the studies. It highlights some of the key considerations that explain why PCT is important to Australian tourism industry. The chapter outlines the findings from Study 1, 2 and 3. The research contributions section explores how PCT can shape the destination's image and tourists' experiences. It argues that few studies have systematically explored the PCT as a comprehensive multi-category method for destination development. The discussion that follows explores how popular culture can affect the future structure of tourism. It argues for the balance between authenticity and familiarity. The chapter articulates the idea that PCT can generate a whole new range of tourism experiences. In conclusion, this chapter reviews the limitations of the current studies and proposes directions for further research.

## **6.2 Research findings**

### **6.2.1 Findings from Study 1**

The findings suggest that PCT is a growing tourism segment and a promising alternative to traditional tourism. The results suggest a growing recognition of PC events as ways to diversify and sustain tourism as an agent for socio-cultural and economic development. The findings from the survey reveal high levels of interest in Australian PC events and locations among local popular culture consumers.

As noted in Chapter 1, the young adults are gaining numbers in terms of their representation within the tourist traffic. The introduction of cultural experiences that specifically cater to younger audience is expected to have a positive influence on the tourism demand. The results also support the view that Australian PC events have a broad and family-friendly appeal and can, therefore, generate interest among tourists travelling as a family, and tourists travelling in

multi-generation parties. The study identified attractive attributes of local popular culture, listing movies, TV shows, literature, anime, music, gaming, art, and comics/manga as areas of interest for the local popular culture consumers. The study also identified ‘food’ as a potential influential category in PCT (Figure 6.1). These categories would also prove popular with the international audience (Study 2).



**Figure 6.1 Attractive attributes of local popular culture**

As a non-exhaustive ‘experiential’ tourism resource, the PCT has advantages over more traditional forms of tourism, such as nature-based tourism or sports tourism (e.g., surfing, skiing, mountaineering) which are more susceptible to climate change and climate related hazards.

The results suggest that PC events inspire enthusiastic following, tending to have rather high levels of attendance. The results also indicate that in Australia, PC events generate more interest and attendee numbers than PC locations. The analysis suggests that the past

attendance can predict future attendance behaviour. With good past attendance rates, the future of PCT looks promising.

Study 1 explores tourists' spatial behaviour. The spatial behaviour is described as a product of many sub-patterns created by different groups of domestic tourists. The investigation focused on following patterns: nominal and physical distances travelled, duration of stay, desire or willingness to explore, and group composition. The data suggest that popular culture enthusiasts in Australia are willing to travel interstate to attend PC events or visit PC locations. This intention to travel long distance is a positive indicator for domestic travels. The domestic tourists shape the demand and supply sides of the PCT market. The domestic interest is crucial to PCT development.

The results suggest that many popular culture enthusiasts are willing to expand their cultural curiosity by considering participating in new events/visiting new locations. At the same time, the respondents show attachment towards the existing PC events/PC locations. These results suggest a healthy level of cultural curiosity among the local PC community. The group composition patterns suggest that PC events attendees prefer to share their experience with others by traveling to destinations with friends, partners and family members.

The hypotheses tested reveal that: (1) there is a strong positive association between interest in popular culture and the consumption frequency, (2) past attendance can predict future attendance behaviour, (3) there is a positive correlation between the level of interest and travel distances. The Study 1 argues that tourism often suffers from tourist congestion and that more 'mobile' forms of tourism can decrease the tension and provide opportunities for advertising less known locations. The study offers to concentrate on PC events as a priority direction in the

development of PCT in Australia. The study also suggests examining the phenomenon from many directions, namely by introducing the international perspective.

### **6.2.2 Findings from Study 2**

In 1997 Reisinger and Turner argued that understanding cultural needs, expectations, and preferences of international tourists is an important factor that determines the success of the tourism industry. Study 2 further reiterates the importance of investigating modern cultural tourists' behaviour by examining the experiences of international 'cultural' tourists in Australia.

This qualitative descriptive study worked with data collected from multiple sources. The different sources enabled the users to post through their favourite social media platforms in their native languages. Over 600 posts were identified as topic-specific. These were further narrowed to 191 information rich cases using two sampling techniques: purposeful random sampling and maximum variation sampling. The results section was divided into two parts: Sample P results and Sample M results.

The SP data analysis revealed five meta-themes (conventions, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, and competitions) and 10 categories. The themes and categories helped organise and analyse the users' narratives (Figure 6.2). From the data, the researcher extracted 25 sub-themes. The categories and sub-themes helped detect new directions for PCT development.



Figure 6.2 Study 2: summary of the users' narratives

The most discussed SM meta-themes include urban culture, recent cultural trends, and developments in the arts sector. The study explored the urban arts scene and how it can transform public spaces. The data suggest that public art can shift the attention from urban centers to rural areas, which is invaluable for fighting seasonality and congestion in tourist areas. The study also explored the trends in urban food culture. The data suggest that the Australian food trucks and street food festivals are considered attractive by many tourists. The data also suggest that culinary diversity can satisfy many tourists' food cravings (i.e. address the "core eating behavior") which is thought to be important for Asian tourists holidaying in Australia. The Western and Eastern influences are a recurring theme in Australian popular culture.

The SM data suggest that themes such as Australian fashion and cosplay are sufficiently exciting and might play a role in travel decisions. The study highlights the need to promote local art forms and art works internationally, which can improve the cultural image of

Australia. The SM and SP data corroborate the view that wildlife, sports and gourmet food are not the only Australian attractions that can generate tourist numbers. There is promise in developing new cultural products and experiences. The diversification of the tourism offer will improve the tourist and recreational potential of the country.

It is interesting to note the slight difference in popular culture preferences of local and international audiences. Where local popular culture enthusiasts show a preference for 'general' popular culture activities (e.g., comic-cons, cosplay shows, film events), many international visitors wanted more culture-specific experiences. This was particularly noticeable with US and European reviews, where travellers looked for experiences 'off the beaten path' (e.g., silo art) and eagerly participated in immersive experiences with local communities in far flung locations (e.g., bush doofs). Despite the differences, most participants expressed support for local PC events and asked for more experiences involving popular culture.

### **6.2.3 Findings from Study 3**

The qualitative exploratory study examined several marketing strategies used in cultural tourism. It outlined the important factors that must be considered prior to making strategic marketing decisions. A three-step marketing decision model was created to guide the decision-making process.

The researcher identified four types of objectives – educational, political, cultural and recreational – that allow the use of popular culture tools in destination promotion. The study described several marketing tactics – traditional and advanced – that utilise popular culture in

destination development strategies. The reporting was rich in examples of practical applications of the discussed marketing methods.

Study 3 provides suggestions on how to implement and adapt the tactics embodied in this research to Australian tourism market. It concludes that for Australia, the onshore narrative promotion campaigns might prove effective. It argues that Australia has all the right ingredients for becoming a great popular culture destination. It notes that despite the emergence of many new power players, Australia can effectively compete with other destinations by adopting a customer-focused cultural approach to tourism promotion: creating images and identities through greater focus on experiential tourism. Other issues discussed in Study 3 include: the role of DMOs in destination promotion, a current range of Australian tourism products, and the diversity of cultural experiences in PCT.

### **6.3 Research contributions**

This work makes a contribution to the academic literature on cultural tourism by identifying different PCT activities and their impacts on destination's image and tourists' experiences. It proposes a new integrative and functional framework for the study of PCT. It uses a rich base to contemplate the value of PCT for Australian tourism. In the context of Australian tourism, this study brings together many works on cultural tourism (Hall & McArthur, 1996; Zeppel & Hall, 1992; Butler, 2007; Frost, 2010; Gibson & Connell, 2003; Laing & Frost, 2016; Robinson & Getz, 2014; Maynard, 2016; Beeton, 2004; Scott & Biron, 2010). Among the many works on cultural tourism in Australia, none reference the PCT as a comprehensive multi-category method for destination development. Few Australian studies have systematically explored the possibilities of using location-specific popular culture tools in 'narrative' marketing campaigns.

This work makes a contribution by exploring recent tourists' attitudes towards diverse popular culture activities available in Australia. There are very few studies that try to explore the many kinds of cultural experiences that can be obtained by popular culture tourists travelling to Australia. Some, like Hughes (2013), Quinn (2013), and Brown and James (2012), touch upon older cultural events (mostly dedicated to arts); Gibson and Connell (2012/2016) limit the scope of their research to music events. This study fills in the gap by extracting new themes and factors that can build the cultural value of Australian events in the tourism context. By looking at the opportunities and challenges of PCT from different perspectives, by asking questions and observing behaviours, and by exploring different media and resources, the researcher has, arguably, identified a genuine potential for PCT.

To study the phenomenon the researcher used a combination of three research strategies: survey research, a descriptive study, and an exploratory study. Each study contributes a unique perspective to the literature on popular culture tourism. This work provides evidence that the inclusion of popular culture as a new weapon in the tourism marketing arsenal can have a long-lasting and positive effect on the future of the Australian tourism. In doing so, it presents another contribution to literature regarding the effective use of popular culture tools in destination marketing. The work demonstrates the use of popular culture tools in marketing strategies worldwide. The many examples of cultural consumption provide a clearer understanding of the concept of PCT marketing.

The PCT has been presented here as a complementary product that can add value to the traditional tourism experience. The PCT shows promise as a resilience building strategy as well as serving as a motivation for discovering and implementing new forms of tourism. Through the arrival of new and diversified experiences, Australia can restructure and improve

the existing tourism portfolio. Blain, Levy, and Ritchie (2005) note that the image of a destination conveys the overall idea or experience that the visitors can expect at the destination. The current tourism image lacks some essential information about the diverse cultural experiences available in Australia. The recommendation is to incorporate more cultural products into existing tourism campaigns and develop new marketing strategies that would utilise popular culture events in destination promotion.

Finally, this study makes a contribution in terms of practicality. Guided by the philosophy of pragmatism, where the objective is the unrelenting search for the facts (Lee & Nickerson, 2010) with a focus on experience, consequences, context, and problems (Shields, 1996), this study provides many examples of practical applications of popular culture tools in destination promotion. No matter the objective: educational, cultural, political or recreational – popular culture tools are versatile and applicable to many tourism businesses. For DMOs, this work yields valuable information on patterns and trends in cultural tourism consumption. By offering both local and international perspectives, this work provides DMOs with more flexibility in many applications of popular culture in destination promotion. For tourism businesses, this work can provide inspiration and direction for developing this type of tourism. It can also be a motivation for designing and exploring new tourism products. For a tourism researcher, this work identifies the gaps in knowledge on the subject matter and the lines of enquiry that need to be pursued (e.g., the social and economic impact of PCT, the appropriate use and the sustainability of PCT, the cultural consumption patterns of different populations interested in PCT).

The next section is dedicated to the continuation of this topic and will introduce the implications of the findings to Australian tourism and tourism in general.

## 6.4 Discussion and implications

As a service industry, tourism has many tangible and intangible elements incorporated into its sales strategy. Major tangible elements include transportation, accommodation, food and recreation. Major intangible elements relate to: (1) the process of developing a motivation for becoming a tourist, (2) the decision-making processes that a tourist undergoes before making a purchase; (3) the processes that take place across stages: pre-purchase, the purchase, core experience, and post-experience and the quality of that experience. The recent advancements in travel search engines – the hotel search engines (e.g., Airbnb, TripAdvisor, Booking.com), flight search engines (e.g., Skyscanner, Amadeus Flight Search, Google Flights), cruise finders (e.g., CruiseDirect, Cruise Finder, Cruise Critic) – have eased the process of selling tangibles (Paraskevas et al., 2011; Rangaswamy, Giles, & Seres, 2009). Unfortunately, intangible elements in a service driven industry, due to their abstract nature, and conscious and unconscious processes involved, require more time, energy and skill. Herein lies the challenge for tourism industry. An already tough competition is further enhanced by the fact that many companies provide a somewhat standard set of tangibles. This leads to intense preoccupation with the quality of service and quality of experience provided to enhance the overall tourism experience (Kandampully, 2000; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Today, the consumers unquestionably desire experiences, and more and more tourism businesses are responding by explicitly designing and promoting them (Pearce, 2011; Scott, Laws, & Boksberger, 2013). This, among other reasons, is what inspired the researcher to explore the use of popular culture in destination promotion.

Australia is being increasingly exposed to tourists from a wide range of cultural backgrounds (Pearce & Wu, 2017; Reisinger & Turner, 1997). Tasci and Knutson (2004) argue that while the authentic qualities of a destination are attractive to many tourists, some degree of

familiarity should be supplied for the comfort qualities of the tourist experience. They note that for some tourists being exposed to “the less familiar stimuli of the authentic features” might be difficult due to a lack of “well-developed knowledge structures for unfamiliar objects and events” (p. 87). The popular culture may buffer international tourists against being overwhelmed or disoriented by the new experiences and new information by providing a moderate amount of familiarity. Prentice (2001) notes that cultural tourists consume similarity “as an assembly of generic cultural themes” (p.13) and consume difference as an appreciation of essential ‘otherness’ of new cultures. A balance of authenticity and familiarity in a tourism destination should not be overlooked by the supply side of the tourism (Tasci & Knutson, 2004).

While popular culture provides a comfortable level of informality, sometimes amounting to nothing more than an amusing sideshow, it can also act as an education tool for destination in an interactive way which is understandable for both young and old. Like the superhero stories that foster imagined national identities and representations of place and society (Garrett, 2014), popular culture can be used to construct new place-identities and introduce narratives of modernity. These narratives do not exclude heritage traditions but rather reinforce the innovative spirit of the destination and lead to the integration of the past with the present.

For destinations like Australia, where natural tourism resources outweigh the cultural ones, using PCT can be a way to generate a whole new range of tourism experiences. The PCT supports the use of technology (e.g., AR, VR, digital guides) as a mediator of these experiences. The popular culture’s natural propensity to follow the gaze of others (i.e. look where someone else is looking) can be used for uncovering trends that may otherwise go unnoticed. In the world where fast-thinking and decision-making is prized and seen as the

precursor of success, keeping up with trends is paramount for competitive advantage, particularly in an industry as competitive as tourism.

In its diversity, popular culture does not have many rivals. This diversity should be embraced as one seeks to work with popular culture. The researcher must understand why a human mind finds itself enchanted by the imaginative powers of popular culture: why following a fictional character through a real-life terrain is as inspiring and intriguing to some, as is heritage sightseeing to others. The PCT can inspire strong emotions and great admiration in its followers comparable, in some cases, to the emotions of religious pilgrims. Moore (1980), for example, had noted the Walt Disney World in Florida can be seen as a pilgrimage center for contemporary Americans, and described their journeys there as “playful pilgrimages” (pp. 207-217). Many more examples of popular culture pilgrimages are available in the work of Bickerdike (2015) on *The Secular Religion of Fandom*, and in *The Pilgrimage in Popular Culture* by Reader and Walter (2016).

In the past, the potential of popular culture was not often fully recognised by DMOs despite the evidence of successful applications of popular culture tools in destination promotion (Bolan & Williams, 2008; Hudson, 2014; McKercher, Ho, & du Cros, 2004). Today, as more tourism organisations promote PCT related experiences (Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen, 2013; Reader & Walter, 2016; Reijnders, 2016), popular culture is becoming a trend-setter in the tourism field.

The three studies enabled the researcher to open-mindedly explore several perspectives on PCT in general and PCT marketing in particular. The need to explore the local perspective was encouraged by Butler (2006) and Berthon et al. (2012). They encourage the marketers to

broaden their search and explore local trends when gathering data. Combined with the international evaluation of popular culture activities in Australia, the studies helped identify several factors that distinguish Australian popular culture:

- the attractiveness of local PC events and active support of local PC community;
- Australian PC events have many children and families in attendance;
- PC events can travel from state to state across Australia – convenient for local consumers;
- local PC events favour western popular culture, though eastern popular culture is steadily growing in popularity;
- local popular culture enthusiasts are willing to travel long distances to attend events/locations;
- the steady growth of popular culture festivals, particularly music and dance, urban arts, and food festivals;
- the recognizable 'Australianness' of certain PC activities;
- counter-urban migration tendencies among bush doof attendees, arts festival-goers, food festival attendees;
- the opportunities for regional development through use of popular culture.

According to the State of the Industry 2016–17 (2018) report by Tourism Research Australia, the "propensity for international visitors to disperse into Australia's regions declined" in 2016–17, with visitors preferring capital cities and the Gold Coast (p. 9). The tourist trail maps from Study 2 suggest that popular culture events can be used to reshape the flow of tourists from traditional tourism centers, thereby promoting the development of less well-known, highly developed tourist locations. Some events, like urban arts and doofs, have already contributed to creating new tourism trails that lead to regional areas.

Popular culture activities do not suffer much from seasonality and can be used in development strategies in both high and low seasons. The PC events, though mainly clustered along the south-east coast, can nonetheless be found in many other areas, including islands. The funding

needed for creating an event (e.g., a festival) can be considerably less than that needed to establish a new tourist resort (e.g., building new tourism infrastructure). Some may argue that events do not generate enough bed nights. However, the data show that PC events can generate average number of bed nights (the 'average' being determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics). There is potential to generate bed night numbers comparable to those of conventional resorts (for domestic tourism).

The PC events do not only impact the economy but can also affect the lifestyles of people and the physical environment within the host community. For example, arts festivals do not only function as tourist attractions, but also contribute to arts development, enhance venue infrastructures, encourage local creativity and animate local involvement (Quinn, 2006).

Devaney (2017) points out that turning to popular culture to introduce difficult topics is one strategy we can use to help people express their opinions and work with sensitive, but important issues. In regard to Australia, PC events can be used to incorporate aboriginal teachings into the cultural programme, thus uniting modern culture with archaic traditions, the past and the present. As Luckman (2003) pointed out, this approach offers an opportunity to explain more about the culture and traditions of native tribes and can help build a dialogue of reconciliation and understanding.

This work offers many recommendations for improving the cultural sector of Australian tourism industry. One more recommendation that could help diversify the cultural sector, would be the employment of larger numbers of bilingual employees and consultants. The knowledge of Malay, Filipino, Hindi, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and other languages common to the Asia-Pacific region could facilitate the dialogues between the countries and even launch a cultural exchange. The PwC's research shows that by 2030, four of the world's five largest economies would be in Asia, and the region would account for more than 50% of

global GDP (PwC Australia, 2016). The PCT is an ideal intermediary business solution. By transcending the differences, it highlights the similarities, bringing together people, cultures and businesses.

## **6.5 Limitations**

According to Patton (1999), the researcher is the instrument in an inquiry, so any report must also include information about the researcher. As a former tourism worker, and a person who often acted as a liaison between the industry and the DMOs, the researcher exhibits a stronger business perspective on PCT and, therefore, might have overlooked the more spiritual experiences associated with popular culture consumption. By focusing on the possibilities and opportunities, the researcher fails to address in detail other interrelated processes:

vulnerability, sustainability and reliability of PCT. Though all three issues have been raised in studies one to three, more discussion could have been developed about the social implications and risks (e.g., discussions of local policies, regulations, and challenges for businesses). The researcher recognises that the present work is directed towards practical application a little more than is traditional for tourism studies.

Mistakes have been made when conducting the survey. The offered definition of popular culture could have been more detailed. The popular culture categories could have been more clearly explained and be more comprehensive. The survey probably should have been limited to Australian residents. However, only few international participants filled in the questionnaire, so the oversight is minor. More attempts should have been made to include more diverse communities. For example, the arts community (e.g., illustrators, fashion designers, photographers) are heavily outnumbered by PC convention attendees, manga readers, cosplayers, gamers. The researcher should have tried to be more specific regarding

the PC subcategories: if movies then what genre, if music then what kind. By way of justification, exploratory work does produce insights and a better understanding of what to do in further work. For the present, the results stand as an initial awareness of the themes studied.

The descriptive study has been a relatively straight forward process. The number of participating user entries was defined by the number of emerging themes. Questions could be raised whether the short posts (under 20 words) should have entered the data pool. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are studies that argue against filtering out small word texts, particularly when working with UGC. Mistakes may have been made when translating the reviews. A small portion of meaning may have been lost due to inaccuracies in translation or insufficient knowledge of colloquialisms and slang. Though the researcher is happy with the demographics of the users who participated in the study, perhaps more attention could have been allocated to US reviews. Perhaps, a more thorough search of Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean sources could have been beneficial. Yet the researcher allowed the streaming data to dictate the direction of the inquiry, meaning that no special attempts have been made to capture reviews from specific countries.

The last study, though saturated with examples, could have had a longer section allocated to the 'creative' component of the study (i.e. designing campaigns). The sustainability and social impacts report could have been beneficial for the chapter. The recommendations and implementation strategies could have been more detailed and supported by time frames and associated costs. Yet most popular culture activities depend on many independent factors and need to be customized to suit the particular application, which makes detailed recommendations somewhat problematic. Additionally, the limitations of exploratory research are that it recognises more openly than quantitative research the researcher's identity,

background and honest beliefs about the creation of the data and the analysis of the data (Seaman & Eves, 2010). In this spirit, these self-criticisms are applied in a post-study appraisal, but they do not negate the advocacy for PCT which the research suggests.

## **6.6 The future of PCT**

Tourists are a part of the rising numbers of people in the popular, media driven audiences. The impact of popular media on the tourism industry has been explored by many researchers and is still hotly debated (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Yen & Teng, 2015; Leung et al., 2013). With more destinations interested in working with new forms of experiential tourism, with media trends spreading faster due to technological advances, popular culture and tourism will continue to work together creating new experiences. The future of PCT seems bright.

The technological innovations and popular media have a profound effect on how tourism destinations are perceived and consumed (Bennett, 1993; Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007; Mirk & Hlavacs, 2015). There is much literature and a lot of debate on whether the effect is positive or negative. For example, as immersive digital technologies continue to evolve, more destinations try to capture tourists' attention by introducing AR, VR and mixed digital realities to create new experiences. Some argue that social media and immersive technologies compete with tourism by delivering new forms of entertainment (Dwyer et al., 2009), or may even provide a threat to the travel industry (Cheong, 1995). Others believe that the effect is positive and will help the industry to maximise the available opportunities in the world market (Buhalis, 2004; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2009; Huang et al., 2016). Despite the difference in opinions, most agree that tourism industry is well suited to implement media trends and experience-enhancing technologies.

Australia has an opportunity to work with a great variety of exciting popular culture products. It is within the power of the DMOs and tourism stakeholders to improve the visibility of PC locations and PC events by introducing medium to large scale onshore campaigns. Such plans can attract the much-needed funding from international tourists and provide an opportunity for pursuing economic growth in the cultural tourism sector. With many options to choose from (e.g. urban festivals, conventions, exhibitions, bush festivals, food truck events, city tours), the PCT can be flexible and accommodating to nearly any space and tourist interest.

Australia can build upon the existing world-wide PCT practices or create new ones. If no steps are taken to promote local PC products, the chances are that they might never reach the international arena, or it will be extremely difficult for them to do so. There are many projects that seek to reinforce the image of popular culture among local population, such as Sydney's Local Government Environment Plan that allows murals and street artworks to be produced without need for council approval (ABC Radio Sydney, 2017), or a 2018 initiative by the Victorian government, who announced that food trucks, music and festivals "will form part of a major new VicHealth program" designed to "tempt teens away from their screens" by introducing festivals combining food trucks, arts and sports (VicHealth, 2018). The tourism organisations can participate in these initiatives by introducing Australian popular culture and related activities to international visitors.

Popular culture, though consisting of a recognizable and familiar collection of values, attitudes, beliefs, norms, objects, and symbols, is not homogeneous. Like McDonald's, that adjusts to populations by introducing different menus depending on the country (e.g., Nasi Lemak Burger, Teriyaki burger, Bulgogi Burger), popular culture adjusts to the communities it represents. When exploring local popular culture, one can find out how communities

preserve their identity in environments, particularly urban environments, that strive towards culture-neutral façades. It is surprising, what discoveries await a curious mind. Be it a socially charged graffiti wall, a maid café, a strumming of a flamenco guitar, a hip-hop street dance performance, a busy hawker centre, matryoshka dolls sitting on a counter – all tell a different story and add context to information obtained from a new environment. Though PCT talks in a universal language, the images and experiences it creates can be very place-specific, and in being so highlight the destination's rich intangible heritage. There exists a strong link between popular culture and urban revitalization (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Hannigan, 2005; Hughes, 1999), popular culture and place identity (Bennett, 2000; Iwashita, 2006; Katsumata & Iida, 2011) which makes it nearly impossible to discount the rejuvenating effect of PCT.

For Australia, PCT is full of opportunities and challenges. The strategic objectives of PCT are not only to promote economic growth, but also support local cultural production and strengthen community identity. To remain resilient in the face of challenges, economic, environmental and cultural, there is an interest in implementing PCT as part of the tourism agenda. It is the hope of the researcher that this study will direct the attention of tourism stakeholders to consider programs that can foster and promote popular culture tourism in Australia.

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### *Appendix 1. The informal interview questions*

How often do you attend popular culture events or visit popular culture locations?

You usually attend these events/visit these locations by yourself or with...?

Would you describe yourself as a popular culture fan? Why?

Can you describe your emotions, feelings and impressions of today's event?

Are you likely to attend a popular culture event or visit a popular culture location again?

Why?

Would you consider travelling interstate to attend an event/visit a location?

Would you like to make/design/host your own cultural event some day? What would it be?

Do you think Australia has a future as a popular culture destination? Why?

**Appendix 2. The survey for Study 1**

Q1) Please describe your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am familiar with latest pop-culture trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I follow pop-culture news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider myself a pop-culture fan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like meeting/would like to meet with other pop-culture fans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2) When I think of pop-culture, the first that comes to mind is:

(Please write your answer in the space provided)

Q3) How would you describe your interest in the following pop-culture subcategories?

	Not interested at all (1)	Not very interested (2)	Somewhat uninterested (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat interested (5)	Interested (6)	Very interested (7)
Movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV shows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Animation/ anime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Popular literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comic books, graphic novels, manga...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Art/art trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fashion trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photography trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trendy foods and hip food culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tech trends (e.g., augmented and virtual reality, AI, 3D printing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4) How often do you...? Please use the table below as a reference.

- 1 Never

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- 2 Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have

---

- 3 Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have

---

- 4 Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have

---

- 5 Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have

---

- 6 Often, in about 90% of the chances I could have

---

- 7 Very often

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Occasionally (3)	Sometimes (4)	Frequently (5)	Often (6)	Very often (7)
Watch popular movies	<input type="radio"/>						
Watch popular TV shows	<input type="radio"/>						
Watch animation/anime	<input type="radio"/>						
Play video games	<input type="radio"/>						
Read popular literature	<input type="radio"/>						
Read comic books, graphic novels, manga...	<input type="radio"/>						
Listen to popular music	<input type="radio"/>						
Follow art trends/artists	<input type="radio"/>						
Follow fashion trends	<input type="radio"/>						
Follow photography trends	<input type="radio"/>						
Buy trendy foods/follow food trends	<input type="radio"/>						

Q5) Have you ever attended a popular culture event (e.g. convention, Game Expo, Anime festival, Modern art expo, pop music festival, Food Truck festival, etc.) or been to a popular culture location (filming location, pop-culture related site, place from fictional texts, and/or other place strongly associated with popular culture)?

- Never
- Once in my life
- Several times in my life
- At least once every year
- More than once per year
- Every season
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q6) Please describe your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am interested in attending popular culture events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in visiting popular culture locations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7) How likely are you to:

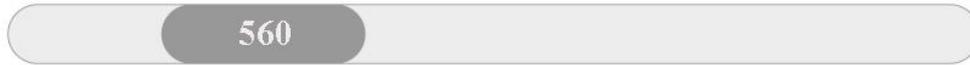
	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat unlikely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Somewhat likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very likely (7)
Attend a popular culture event in Australia in the next 12 months?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit a popular culture location in Australia in the next 12 months?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel to another state/province/region to attend a <b>local</b> pop-culture event or visit a <b>local</b> pop-culture location?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
travel to another state/province/region to attend an <b>international</b> pop-culture event or visit an <b>international</b> pop-culture location?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8) How far would you consider travelling to attend a popular culture event or see a popular culture location?

What is the furthest distance you would consider travelling: from 0 km to  $\geq 2000$

0 km

$\geq 2000$  km



Q9) If you were to travel to another state/province/region to attend a popular culture event or see a popular culture location, you would...

- I would make it a one-day trip
- I would stay for the whole duration of the event, if the event is less than 3 days
- I would stay for the whole duration of the event, even if the event is more than 3 days
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q10) If you were to travel to another state/province/region to attend a popular culture event or see a popular culture location, you would...

- I would attend the event at least once and spend another day or two exploring the vicinities
- I would attend the event at least once and spend more than two days exploring the vicinities
- I would attend only the event without spending extra time on exploring the vicinities
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q11) If you were to attend a popular culture event or visit a popular culture location, you would rather...

- Go by yourself
- Invite a partner/friend to join you
- Go in a group of three or more people
- Go with a family member
- Invite all your family with you
- Invite both friends and family to join you
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q12) You are to organise your own popular culture event. Think of the activities to include in your program that might help boost the attendance. Make your decision based on what activities you and your acquaintances are most likely to enjoy.

Decide on the activity and decide how much of your budget you would like to spend on it.

Total sum must not exceed 100%.

- \_\_\_\_\_ % Fan-favourite movie events (e.g., newest trailers, panels, latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, costumes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Fan-favourite TV shows and related activities (e.g., newest trailers, panels, latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, costumes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Top games (e.g., video, card, tabletop games, construction)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Anime & Manga (e.g., latest releases, related toys and merchandise, autographs, cosplay)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Popular literature and comic books (e.g., book signing, bestsellers, panels, related toys and merchandise)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Popular music and related activities (e.g., K-pop, J-pop, dance battles, soundtracks, music videos, group dance)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Popular art, photography and trendy fashion activities (e.g., art booths, panels, showrooms, expo, competitions)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Trendy foods and related events (e.g., food trucks, vendors, fantasy foods, workshops, chef battles, recipes, cocktails, tutorials)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Gadgets and technology (e.g., trends, new products, displays, collectables, showrooms)
- \_\_\_\_\_ % Total budget
- (max 100)

Q13) How likely are you to...

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat unlikely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Somewhat likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very likely (7)
Attend the <b>same</b> pop-culture event or visit the same pop-culture location next year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend a <b>new</b> pop-culture event or visit a new pop-culture location next year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14) How much do you agree with the following statement?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia <b>is</b> a serious popular culture destination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Australia <b>can</b> become a serious popular culture destination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15) What is your age?

- Under 18 years
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- Age 55 or older

Q16) Are you...

- Male
- Female

Q17) Are you...

- Permanent Australian resident/citizen
- Temporary Australian resident or living outside Australia

Q18) Please choose below if applicable:

I live in...

- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory
- Other

Display This Question:

Only If Are you... Temporary Australian resident or living outside Australia Is Selected

Q19) If you are a temporary Australian resident, what is the purpose of your visit?

- Leisure
- Business
- Visiting friends or family
- Study
- Transit
- Other

Display This Question:  
 Only If Are you... Temporary Australian resident or living outside Australia Is Selected

Q20) How likely are you to...

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat unlikely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Somewhat likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very likely (7)
visit Australia to attend an International popular culture event or visit a famous popular culture location?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:  
 Only If Are you... Temporary Australian resident or living outside Australia Is Selected

Q21) How likely are your friends or family members to...

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat unlikely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Somewhat likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very likely (7)
visit Australia to attend an International popular culture event or visit a famous popular culture location?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### ***Appendix 3. The list of DMOs for Study 3***

1. Auckland Tourism [www.aucklandtourism.co.nz](http://www.aucklandtourism.co.nz)
2. City of Sydney <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au>
3. Destination Canada <https://www.canada.travel>
4. Destination Gold Coast <https://www.destinationgoldcoast.com>
5. Discover Forks Washington <https://forkswa.com>
6. Discover Los Angeles [www.discoverlosangeles.com](http://www.discoverlosangeles.com)
7. Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus <https://www.gacvb.com>
8. Go Tokyo <https://www.gotokyo.org>
9. Goa Department of Tourism <http://www.goatourism.gov.in/>
10. Guam Visitors Bureau <https://www.guamvisitorsbureau.com>
11. I amsterdam <https://www.iamsterdam.com>
12. Japan National Tourism Organization <https://www.jnto.org.au>
13. Kazakhstan Tourism Committee [Комитет индустрии туризма] <https://mks.gov.kz>
14. Kentucky Tourism <https://www.kentuckytourism.com>
15. Kerala Tourism <https://www.keralatourism.org>
16. Kuala Lumpur Tourism Bureau [www.visitkl.gov.my](http://www.visitkl.gov.my)
17. Macao Government Tourism Office [en.macaotourism.gov.mo](http://en.macaotourism.gov.mo)
18. Ministry of Tourism India [tourism.gov.in](http://tourism.gov.in)
19. Niagara Falls Tourism <https://www.niagarafallstourism.com>
20. Peru Travel <https://www.peru.travel>
21. Romania Tourism <http://www.romaniatourism.com>
22. South Australian Tourism Commission [tourism.sa.gov.au](http://tourism.sa.gov.au)
23. Switzerland Tourism <https://www.myswitzerland.com>

24. The Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation  
<https://www.russiatourism.ru>
25. The Official Guide to New York City <https://www.nycgo.com>
26. Tourism Australia <http://www.tourism.australia.com>
27. Tourism Authority of Thailand <https://www.tourismthailand.org>
28. Tourism Ireland <https://www.tourismireland.com>
29. Tourism New Zealand <https://www.newzealand.com>
30. Tourism Prince Edward Island <https://www.tourismpei.com>
31. Tourism Townsville, North Queensland  
<https://www.townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au>
32. Tourism Vancouver <https://www.tourismvancouver.com>
33. Travel Oregon <https://traveloregon.com>
34. TravelTexas <https://www.traveltexas.com>
35. Turismo de España <https://www.spain.info>
36. Visit Berlin <https://www.visitberlin.de>
37. Visit Britain <https://www.visitbritain.com>
38. Visit California <https://www.visitcalifornia.com/>
39. Visit Dubai <https://www.visitdubai.com>
40. Visit London <https://www.visitlondon.com>
41. Visit Maine <https://visitmaine.com>
42. Visit Melbourne <https://www.visitmelbourne.com>
43. Visit New Orleans <https://www.neworleans.com>
44. Visit NSW <https://www.visitnsw.com>
45. Visit Seoul <http://english.visitseoul.net/index>
46. Visit Singapore [www.visitsingapore.com](http://www.visitsingapore.com)

47. Visit Småland <https://www.visitsmaland.se>
48. Visit The USA <https://www.visittheusa.com>
49. VisitKorea [english.visitkorea.or.kr](http://english.visitkorea.or.kr)
50. VisitScotland <https://www.visitscotland.com>

## Appendix 4. The 3-step marketing decision model

