



Motivations of farm tourism hosts and guests in the South West Tapestry Region, Western Australia: A phenomenological study.

by Gloria Ingram

This paper describes a phenomenological investigation of the experience of farm tourism in the South West Tapestry Region of Western Australia from the perspective of both hosts and guests. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of what motivates people to operate a farm tourism business, and what motivates people to seek farm tourism holidays. In this context, phenomenology was applied as action research into the human dynamics of tourism.

The study employs a combined methodological research model drawn from the work of distinguished phenomenologists to explicate the experience of hosts and guests. The phenomenological descriptions derived through the explication process encapsulate the invariant structures or essence of meaning for each group. The most significant of these structural meanings for guests was the desire to relax in the tranquillity of the rural landscape and so recover from the stresses of their busy city lifestyle. Hosts were highly motivated to meeting new people, especially those with whom they shared a common interest. The motivations for the two groups were found to be highly compatible which augurs well for the future of farm tourism in the region.

Introduction

This research investigates the experience of farm tourism hosts and guests in the South West Tapestry Region of Western Australia, with the purpose of gaining an understanding of what motivates people to operate a farm tourism business, and what motivates people to seek farm tourism holidays.

The study responds in part to a need for visitor expectations expressed by local operators (*South West Region Tourism Strategy*, 1999) and seeks to fill a research gap. Farm tourism is a special interest form of rural tourism, or 'niche' market, which has received very little attention from academic researchers. A literature review

revealed that of the small amount of research worldwide, there has been a predominance in Europe (Clarke, 1999; Dernoï, 1983; Embacher, 1994; Frater, 1983; Ilbery, 1996; Ilbery, Bowler, Clark, Crockett & Shaw, 1998; Oppermann, 1995 & 1996; Pevetz, 1991; Turnock, 1999), the United States and Canada (Morrison, Pearce, Moscardo, Nadkarni & O'Leary, 1996; Weaver & Fennell, 1997) with some studies in New Zealand, notably by Oppermann (1998) and Pearce (1990), and on the eastern seaboard of Australia (Hall, 1995; Hall & Weiler, 1992; Stokes, 1991; Williams, 1995).

In Western Australia research into farm tourism is very much overdue. Prior to the current study,

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no dedicated research has been undertaken specifically in the SWTR, and the only previous academic research was conducted in 1984 (Fry) where the study region formed part of a State-wide project. No articles or works could be found that used phenomenology to study farm tourism, and the application of phenomenology in the field of tourism generally was found to be minimal. The tourism literature makes frequent reference to the need for more research in areas relevant to rural tourism and farm tourism (Butler, Hall and Jenkins, 1998; Oppermann, 1995; Pigram, 1993). Other writers have specifically mentioned the need for more research into motivations of visitors to visit specialist accommodation destinations including farm stays (Morrison et al, 1996; Pearce and Moscardo, 1992).

The Study

The first stage of the research was a background study of the South West Tapestry Region (SWTR) including the development of sociodemographic profiles of individual farm tourism operations participating in the study. The SWTR is a tourism-designated area comprising the local government areas of the City of Bunbury and the Shires of Capel, Collie, Dardanup, Donnybrook/Balingup and Harvey and is located some 150-300 kms from Perth. Its rich and varied landscape, long tradition of farming and proximity to the metropolitan area have led to increasing interest in farm holidays, both by tourists and operators.

The purpose of the sociodemographic profiling was i) to identify trends in farm tourism development in the region, and ii) to set a context for the selection of participants for the phenomenological study. This enabled hosts and guests to be drawn from different farm tourism accommodation types right across the region

Methodology

The method of data collection was through phenomenological interviews involving a small

number of questions which were used as a guideline for in-depth conversations around the topic. These were:

Questions for host interviews

- 1 Can you describe your experiences of the kinds of visitors who stay at your farm / establishment?
- 2 How would you describe your experiences as a (farm) tourism host?
- 3 What do you think are the best experiences of your hosting (farm) tourism?
- 4 What do you find to be the least desirable aspects of farm tourism?
- 5 How do you see your overall relationship with your visitors?

Questions for guest interviews

- 1 Why have you chosen a farm holiday?
- 2 What have been your different experiences of farm tourism?
- 3 What have you enjoyed about farm holidays?
- 4 What have you enjoyed least about farm holidays?
- 5 What has been your experience of your relationship with farm hosts?

Three hosts and three guests were interviewed in the phenomenological stage of the study. The interviews were taped and participants were given assurances of confidentiality and advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Care was taken to introduce variety into the selection of hosts and guests to increase the generalisability of the findings. The three hosts had been operating a farm tourism business for different lengths of time, ranging from one to several years, and there were also considerable differences in the types of farm tourism

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accommodation offered, varying from separate self-contained 'cottages' or chalets to a separate fully-equipped guest house on the farm property, and in-house bed and breakfast accommodation. There was variation of farming type across the properties, and in two of the three operations farm tourism was only a contributor to income while in the third, income from farm tourism was beginning to equal the income from farming.

All three guests had taken a recent farm holiday at one of the farm tourism establishments in the South West Tapestry Region, but none of them had stayed at the farms of the hosts interviewed in the phenomenological study. They ranged from a young family to an elderly couple and a middle-aged business couple. The guests were selected from different types of farm tourism accommodation. All of the guests were from the Perth metropolitan area, which was the predominant source group.

During the interviews I considered participants as co-researchers as they were allowing me to share in their lived experience (see Pollio, Henley & Thompson, 1997). I placed myself in the *phenomenological attitude* and employed the phenomenological technique of *bracketing*. Being in the phenomenological attitude enables the researcher to become receptive to the meaning structure of all significant experience (Schweitzer, 1998a). Bracketing involves the setting aside of all knowledge, biases and assumptions about the phenomenon. It also requires a critical analysis of the researcher's own biases and beliefs through a continuing process of reflexivity throughout the entire phenomenological research process (Edwards, 2001; Schweitzer, 1998).

Explication of the transcripts
For the phenomenological explication I have applied a combination model taken from Robert Schweitzer's model (Schweitzer, 1998) which builds on the work of Amedeo Giorgi (1997), and Clarke Moustakas' adaptation of methods of

analysis suggested by Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1973) and Keen (1975) (Moustakas, 1994: 121-122). I have also adopted a research key pioneered by Stuart Devenish (2000) and I have modelled my explication of interpretive themes on the work of Patricia Sherwood (2001). My phenomenological research model is set out below with references to source models/authors as indicated.

Phenomenological Research Model Used in Farm Tourism Research

Ideographic stage

1. Initial reading of the transcript to gain a sense of the data (Schweitzer-Giorgi).
2. Separation into discreet sections of text *Natural Meaning Units (NMUs)* (Schweitzer-Giorgi).
3. Development of a *research key* with likely categories for sorting the NMUs (Devenish).
4. Sorting of the NMUs according to the research key categories (Devenish).
5. Transformation of categories to *central themes* by elimination of excess material (Moustakas-Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen).
6. Construction of a *textural description* of the experience based on the central themes, illustrated by excerpts from the transcript (Moustakas-Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen).
7. Composition of a *structural description* of the researcher's understanding of the co-researcher's experience using a process of imaginative variation (Moustakas-Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen).
8. Derivation of *individual interpretive* themes from the textural descriptions using the original text as a referent. The themes are developed according to each co-researcher's relationship to self, others and the lifeworld to consistently

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reflect the underlying philosophical principles of phenomenological analysis (Sherwood).

Nomothetic stage

9. Clustering of individual interpretive themes into *major interpretive themes* (Sherwood).

10. *Explication of major interpretive themes* with reference to the individual extended descriptions and the original transcripts (Sherwood).

11. Synthesis of explicated major interpretive themes to arrive at a final composite *extended description* of the lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Schweitzer, Sherwood).

Findings

Explication of major interpretive themes of hosting farm tourism (condensed)

Individual interpretive themes of hosting farm tourism were explicated according to eight inclusive major themes. Host co-researchers have been given fictitious names.

1. Operators experience hosting farm tourism as an enjoyable occupation

Hosting farm tourism is a complex people-oriented business. The notion of having strangers come to stay in a person's home or on their property requires a people-focused approach. All operators experienced overall satisfaction with their hosting experience as well as pride in having performed their role successfully, although they related to hosting in different ways.

Angela (Host 1) derived satisfaction from being able to offer people a place where they could relax and get away from the noise and the traffic in the city. She found people loved the quiet walks, and the children all loved the animals. There was also the satisfaction of meeting

different people, social interaction and learning through experience.

Carol (Host 3), a teacher, derived great pleasure in particular from showing the children the animals, teaching them not to be afraid of animals, and teaching them about farm life. She and her partner felt very satisfied that they had supplied everything guests might want. They were content that guests had enjoyed their holiday, and found that the knowledge that people brought with them was of great benefit, especially for their children.

For Betty (Host 2) there was the special challenge of bed and breakfast, and despite some guests whom she and her partner didn't relate to well causing concern, the overall experience was pleasurable as most of the guests were people of their own age and they found they had a lot in common with them.

2. Operators experience meeting new people as a benefit of farm tourism.

Meeting new people has generally been experienced positively by all three operators and they enjoy spending time with their guests. One of the positive benefits of meeting new people is the knowledge they bring from the world 'outside' the farm. For Carol's partner this includes learning about farm practices overseas from visitors who are farmers. This contact helps them to feel involved in what might be termed the international farming community, and is very beneficial to their children who might otherwise feel isolated.

3. Operators feel that being a farm tourism host is a learning experience.

The operators experienced hosting farm tourism as a challenge which required learning to accept difficulties, gain confidence, become flexible and be willing to change their lifestyle to adapt to other people.

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Betty and partner learned the hard way. When they first started in business they set their prices too low and, as a result, attracted people they didn't feel comfortable with. After they increased their prices in line with other providers in the district, they attracted different kinds of people. Betty was nervous at first but gradually gained confidence. They have learned to give people what they want. The need to be available to assist guests at any time was also reflected in Carol's experience of the role of being a farm tourism host.

Betty and Bob described bad experiences involving children whose parents had not supervised them well and had allowed them to maltreat the hosts' valuable animals. They were shocked by an incident where a guest's son set fire to the neighbouring operator/farmer's shed. After that, her neighbour closed his farm tourism business.

4. Operators experience family unity in farm tourism hosting

The occupation of hosting was shared with a partner in each of the operator's experience. They supported each other in meeting the challenge, sharing in the tasks and sharing in the pleasure of meeting new people and socialising with guests. Betty described her partner as a "people person" who took guests out around the property and to see the animals. Carol was happy to see her children getting involved and taking over some of the farm activities when children their age came to stay, while her partner enjoyed the showing new guests around the farm.

In Angela's case it was her partner who was responsible for expanding the business by building two more guest cottages.

The male partner can add a sense of security. Betty felt quite isolated and vulnerable when some undesirable "feral" people turned up and wanted to stay. Part of the reason she did not

want to accept them was because her partner was away at the time.

5. Operators experience pleasure in helping city children learn to appreciate animals.

Angela's experience of being a farm host definitely includes children. As a teacher, Carol felt a special connection with the children. Betty on the other hand says they really want people to have contact with the animals, but was disapproving of badly-behaved children who frightened their animals. She related positive experiences where whole families had spent quality time with the animals.

6. Operators experience great pleasure in the friendships they have formed with people of similar age and interests

All hosts experienced friendly feelings towards their guests. Betty and Bob's relationships with their guests were influenced by whether they considered them to be people they would choose as friends. Their favourite guests were from their own (older) age group. Angela and her partner enjoyed social contacts with guests during their stay, sharing meals and going out together. However, in Angela's case, these friendships have only been for the duration of the holiday although they have kept in touch with those who come back every year. During the short time Carol and her partner had been in business, guests shared her partner's interest in farming while Carol (a teacher) was happiest with the children.

7. Operators have experienced tension in relating to guests who have different values and expectations from their own.

Hosts have expressed tensions in coping with relationships with people who have different values from their own. An example of this was the perplexity expressed by Angela regarding the behaviour of her Asian visitors. In hosting

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people from a different cultural background from her own, of which she had little knowledge, she was stepping out of her comfort zone, resulting in confusion, and inability to understand their behaviour. Where she shared something in common, namely the preparation of meals, there was a good rapport between herself and an Asian visitor.

Tensions were also experienced by Angela where guests were seen to be exceptionally demanding. Hosts set their own rules according to their own standards and when they feel these are violated anger and frustration has been part of their experience of hosting.

Betty also experienced situations where she felt compromised. One couple said they expected privacy and Betty felt they hadn't understood that bed and breakfast accommodation was within the home. When they left after only an hour, she felt "terrible, dreadful ... he was unable to tell us what he wanted". In the early days of her business she was unable to relate to the kinds of guests attracted by their cheaper prices, as they came from a different social world from Betty's.

8. Operators experience feelings of frustration, guilt and anxiety

Angela described her emotions after her dog had bitten a couple of children, one belonging to a guest. She said it was "frightening" and "an awful experience". Since then she is constantly worried about the dog, having to keep it tied up when children around, but not wanting to put the dog down. Another "worry" in relation to guest safety is the pool.

There were particular tensions around the issues of shared space and privacy in a bed and breakfast leading to frustration for the hosts. Betty was proud of learning to supply a very special breakfast. She expressed frustration that people don't really understand what is meant by bed and breakfast. There is an expectation that

guests will go out for all other meals. As the kitchen is in the centre of the house next to the lounge made available to guests, Betty felt she couldn't cook and eat in front of the guests, thus she felt obliged to go out for meals, which consequently cut into the profits of the business. This whole issue was a constant source of anxiety for Betty.

Betty also experienced frustration over conflicting values that prevented her from communicating fully with guests on other issues. She was unable to fully explain to a couple who used excessive amounts of toilet paper that there was a risk of blocking up the septic system. In terms of personal safety and protection of property Betty felt quite threatened by a couple whom she described as "feral", especially since she was alone on the property at the time. Another emotion experienced by Betty was one of anger when children maltreated their valuable and much-loved alpacas. Her anger was also directed at parents who expect someone else to look after their children.

Composite extended description of the experience of hosting farm tourism

Hosting farm tourism is an occupation which provides considerable enjoyment to hosts. Personal satisfaction is derived from succeeding in a complex challenge involving a diverse range of strangers, and from knowing that people have enjoyed their holiday. Seeing city children interact with and learn about farm animals is particularly satisfying for the host. Hosts experience enjoyment in meeting new people, who are experienced as bringing variety and a connection to the world outside the farm. Where there are two hosts (co-hosts) their skills and interests complement each other, adding to the efficiency of the business and the satisfaction gained by each partner as each relates in a different way to the guests. Some hosts are more farm-oriented and others are more people-oriented, while some prefer to be with the children.

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Hosting is an enriching experience for hosts' children, thus providing another source of satisfaction to the host, both in seeing them interact with new children, and in the knowledge that hosting is a family business and therefore very good for the unity of the family. Hosting is more rewarding where the guests have something in common with the hosts, such as age, background, and interests. Hosts frequently enjoy social interaction with guests and may develop lasting friendships with visitors who come back often to stay at the farm.

Hosting involves being adaptable, and being available to look after the needs of the guests. There are also sacrifices to be made such as having to stay on the property while guests are staying, and having to make lifestyle changes. This is particularly true in bed and breakfast where care is taken to maintain privacy in a shared living situation under the same roof as the hosts. Hosting farm tourism is a learning experience. As hosts gain more experience from having different types of people stay, they become more adept in recognising people's needs. This is a gradual process which sometimes has to be learned by trial and error. Some of the difficulties hosts have to overcome are nervousness, lack of confidence, and lack of knowledge about the best way to run the business. Each host develops their own rules and their guests often conform to the kinds of people the host relates well to. This is influenced by repeat business from guests who have related well to hosts and to the type of farmstay. For example, families with small children like to stay at farms providing access to a range of farm animals, and the farmstay where the hosts prefer older people does not accept children.

Some of the challenging aspects of running a farm tourism business are having to deal with people you don't like, dealing with people's different habits and different value systems. This involves tensions in decision-making, and anxiety over personal safety and that of animals

and one's property, causing feelings of anger in the host. The hosting situation in bed and breakfast is more difficult as hosts must contend with problems caused through sharing the same space.

Another challenge is cross-cultural communication and understanding of overseas visitors who may have a very different view of the farm holiday and very different expectations of what the host should be offering. The experience of confronting a new culture can be frustrating and confusing for hosts. Hosts experience stress when they are unable to fulfil the needs of visitors, and particularly so where incidents occur which harm or injure guests.

Explication of major interpretive themes of being a farm tourism guest (condensed)

Individual themes of the experience of being a farm tourism guest are explicated according to the following inclusive major themes. Guest co-researchers have been given fictitious names.

Guests experience the countryside as both uplifting and peaceful.

The countryside is experienced as uplifting, having the power to recharge the batteries, and supply fresh clean air, peace and tranquillity. Debbie (Guest 1) is so inspired by the landscape that she imagines herself living in the country. Even the guest chalet she stayed in takes on this dimension as she can see herself in the "little house". She describes her experience quite poetically, in terms of a "misty feeling" and "lovely quiet open spaces".

Eddie (Guest 2) discovered the farm holiday quite by accident while searching for the peace and tranquillity he yearned for to fill his lifeworld. He and his wife loved the peacefulness and the whole ambience of country life. He even thought about retiring to the country. Fiona (Guest 3) was also desiring a quiet haven where she could enjoy beautiful scenery and hills which

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would rekindle her memories of growing up in the country.

2. Guests experience the farm tourism holiday as a panacea for the stresses of a busy lifestyle.

Busy lifestyle, noise, traffic congestion, pollution are part of life for most city dwellers. Guests experienced a complete contrast to these aspects of their world when they spent time in the country on a farm tourism holiday. Fiona experienced the country as a place to be away from people and the pressures of business, somewhere to “recharge the batteries”. For Debbie the best thing about farm tourism holidays is that “no-one has to go any where”. It also gives her the chance for a break from domestic duties.

3. Guests experience seeing children learning from and enjoying farm activities.

Guests have expressed positive feelings regarding seeing children interacting with farm animals. They all felt that city children have little, if any, contact with farm animals, so that being on the farm is good for them. These sentiments are related to their own childhood experience. Eddie and Fiona both grew up in the country or on a farm.

Debbie and her family had experienced several different types of farmstay accommodation, but the one she enjoyed most was the one where she could be sure that the children would be happily occupied with low-key, safe, interaction with farm animals to suit her specifications. This meant that she wouldn't have to worry about their safety, would know they were enjoying themselves and would then be able to relax with her partner.

4. Guests experience a heightened sense of family togetherness on a farm tourism holiday.

Eddie and his wife both experienced the peace and tranquillity they were searching for. They loved the whole holiday and the “little town” so much that they felt they belonged. For Debbie, the essence of her farm tourism experience was closeness of the family unit. The children's enjoyment was linked directly to having all the activities in one place. Fiona's experience of the farm holiday life is one of ongoing companionship with a partner she grew up with in the country and with whom she has sought out country holiday experiences in the past.

5. Guests relive happy memories of past times spent on the farm and in the country.

One of the objects accessed in the lifeworld is memory of past experience. Two of the three guests relived experiences on the farm from long ago, experiences that had influenced their choice to take a farm holiday. Eddie recalls the good times he spent in the country as a child, especially at Christmas time. Fiona recalled her childhood in a country town in New South Wales, with her husband, and other farm and country holidays they had taken in England.

6. Guests experience country people as friendly and welcoming towards visitors.

Country hospitality is one of the recurring themes of farm tourism literature (Lane, 1994; Moscardo, Morrison & Pearce, 1996; Pearce, 1990). Farm tourism guests participating in the study experienced country people as very friendly and helpful, especially to visitors. This was in contrast to city people who were seen by Fiona to be more introverted. Eddie's experience of city people was that they were unwilling to talk to strangers, while in the country his experience was quite the opposite. Debbie liked hosts to be friendly but to keep their distance.

7. Guests enjoy meaningful and lasting friendships with hosts with whom they share common interests.

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Guests have experienced instant bonding with hosts that mark the beginning of friendships that guests are keen to continue. Fiona experiences that special quality of attraction and bonding as “likemindedness”, a quality that transcends other similarities such as age. While both Fiona and her partner and Eddie and his partner had developed a special bonds with a host, which drew them back to the same farmstay for a repeat visits, Debbie preferred to keep her distance from hosts and had tried several different farm tourism destinations.

Guests experience anxiety and discomfort in socialising with people they don't know.

Debbie had visited several farm tourism establishments in the area and had experienced stress in eating with the hosts. Similarly, the wife of Guest 2 (Eddie) mentioned that she would feel very awkward eating with strangers as she would feel obliged to help with preparation of the meal and cleaning up, which she would rather not do when she was on holiday. This theme is extended to include dislike of socialising with people with whom there is no common bond. This was Fiona's experience when their first preferred farm tourism establishment changed hands and they didn't like the new owners, leading them to search for another farmstay operated by people who held similar values to their own.

Composite extended description of the experience of being a farm tourism guest

The enjoyment of a farm tourism holiday is linked to the beauty, peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Guests experience a sense of renewal as they recover from the stresses of their busy lifestyle, whether it be coping with an active family, running a business or simply living in the city. They experience the country as a place of clean air, free from pollution and the noise of traffic.

Guests enjoy the scenic qualities of the country and can imagine living in the country. They

relate to and, in a sense feel they own it, if only for a short time. For some, the country and farm lifestyle brings back memories of pleasant times spent in the country or on farms in their youth.

Guests experience farm tourism as being with and among friendly people. The friendly ethos of the country is seen to extend to everybody, from hosts to other guests and to other people living in the area. Once guests have met and relate well to a host there is often an ongoing relationship that encourages them to go back again and again to repeat the enjoyable experience. The bonds that bring guests and hosts together are those of sharing common interests and tastes that surpass the obvious commonalities such as age. Where guests have not liked the host, they have not returned to that farmstay. The closest relationship between guests and hosts was at a bed and breakfast type of farmstay. Guests staying in self-catering chalets valued their privacy and opportunity to be separate. Being a farm tourism guest in a situation where meals are shared with the family can be extremely enjoyable for some, yet stressful and intimidating for others, depending on the level of friendship achieved.

For the guest with a family of young children, farm activities are delightful, a learning experience for the children and a way of keeping them occupied and happy so that the family as a whole has an enjoyable holiday. Some guests don't like to feel pressured about anything at all, they like leisurely activities such as walking or reading. Being on holiday on the farm is a space in the lifeworld where personal relationships flourish and family harmony is maintained.

Conclusion

The motivations expressed by guests emphasised their attraction to the rural lifestyle as they relived their holidays as a positive experience. Their major motivation was the opportunity to recover from the stress of city life in the relaxing ambience of the countryside. This finding

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reaffirms views expressed in the literature concerning the appeal of farm and country life to city dwellers (Hall, 1995; Lane, 1994; Moscardo, Morrison & Pearce, 1996; Pearce, 1990) and the ability of rural lifestyle to reduce stress of urban living (Pearce, 1990; Pigram, 1993).

Hosts' strongest motivations were meeting people, especially those with whom they shared a common interest. This supports Ryan's (1991: 27) suggestion that people with a common interest sharing an experience is an important determinant of a successful holiday. Hosts were also motivated to provide enjoyable holidays on the farm offering peace and tranquillity in a beautiful setting, meaningful activities for children and, above all, an opportunity for visitors to relax and revitalise themselves. My findings in relation to hosts reflect important elements of sociability contained in Pearce's (1990) social situation analysis of host/guest relationships in farm tourism in New Zealand. They also support the findings Stokes (1991) in her study of motivations of farm tourism operators in the Eastern States of Australia, and studies by Oppermann in Germany (Oppermann, 1995) and New Zealand (Oppermann, 1998).

Motivations of hosts and guests are found to be complementary, therefore compatible. Guests have desired the sorts of experience that hosts have been offering, and many friendships have developed. The desire of hosts to adapt to people's needs, and to provide an enjoyable holiday including a learning experience for children, provides a positive match with the expectations of guests. It was one of the aims of this research to identify any areas in which the farm tourism sector could improve its performance and therefore its successful future in the region.

My analysis of motivations of guests found them to be consistent with the psychocentric types of tourists according to Plog's (1987) psychographic profiles, in that all guests

interviewed had travelled within a short distance from their place of residence to a destination that was not culturally different from their own. In terms of this target group, the findings will encourage the industry to continue to target this market as the most likely to generate the kinds of visitors hosts are most comfortable with. The findings indicate that no major overhauls or product or service are required, although some cross-cultural training would be a useful addition for those establishment which are not accustomed to hosting overseas visitors, as well as some further research into why overseas guests in seek or fail to choose farm tourism holidays.

The challenge of this research has been in applying phenomenological analysis in an area that has typically been researched either by quantitative surveys, content analysis or ethnographically. The experience has been rewarding and I am grateful to my co-researchers for allowing me to share in the world of their lived experience and to become part of their lifeworld. My research has demonstrated the value of phenomenology as an applied research methodology and shows the potential for further application of phenomenology in tourism research. The extended descriptions clearly reflect guests' desire to escape the stress of city dwelling by seeking farm tourism holidays, and hosts' desire to meet and interact with new people. Pearce (1990: 350) has identified a growing trend for visitors to avoid large hotel accommodation and a trend towards "experiencing a holiday, not just participating". The importance of satisfying host/guest relationships to the quality of the experience and the success of the tourism venture is validated by the findings of compatibility in motivations expressed by both hosts and guests in this research.

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