Master Thesis

Responsible tourism positioning and self-presentation on Instagram by tourists

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Abstract

There is often a lack of responsible action from the tourists. Nowadays, tourists are highly influenced by social media, and social media is often advertising tourism which is not responsible but quite the opposite – harmful for local nature or/and society, or/and economy. Nevertheless, there is are positive progress in Instagram - tourists are posting contents related to responsible tourism every day on Instagram. Due to the persuasion power of user-generated content in social media, this phenomenon has considerable potential in changing tourists behaviour to the more responsible one. Therefore, the main objective of this thesis is to develop a bottom-up conceptualisation of the phenomenon and increase the knowledge and understanding of how tourists' are positioning responsible tourism on Instagram. Furthermore, through this communication of responsible tourism, tourists are presenting themselves to their audience whether they are aware of it or not. Therefore, self-presentation in this thesis is accessed as well.

In the theory section, the following topics are discussed and reviewed: sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, responsible tourist behaviour, social media, tourists' self-presentation on social media, self-presentation strategies, Instagram – site under investigation and communication through Instagram postings. These topics are building the thesis theoretical framework; however, the three-dimensional theoretical framework of responsible tourism is providing a perspective/lens through which the presentation of responsible tourism by tourists on Instagram is examined. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of responsible tourism is used to generate themes and subthemes. Moreover, the theory of strategic self-presentation by Jones (1990) is applied to create an understanding of how authors (tourists) of sampled postings are presenting themselves through the postings tagged with hashtag 'responsible tourism'.

In this thesis, interpretivism paradigm is used to explain how research problems are understood and addressed. Furthermore, the ontological position of this thesis is relativism, and the epistemological position of this thesis is subjective. This thesis is applying abductive research approach of data reasoning by constantly moving back and forth from one type of research activity to another, and between empirical to theoretical dimensions of analysis - matching between theory and reality. In this thesis, in collecting qualitative data from Instagram, the research method of a non-participation covert netnography is applied. The data are analysed by using qualitative thematic analysis. Themes are abductively developed - data-driven codes and theory-driven ones are developed.

In this thesis, it has been concluded that almost half of the sampled 126 postings have been positioning responsible tourism within three dimensions of responsible tourism. Other postings in which responsible tourism within these three dimensions are not found have positioning responsible tourism as nature travel, architecture travel, travel where locals are encountered and travel with posing in front of the camera. However, in sampled Instagram postings environment is a leading topic in these postings. Furthermore, in sampled postings, tourists are represented frequently by the use of ingratiation strategy or competence (self-promotion) strategy. However, only in a few postings, exemplification strategy has been used, and, in even fewer, Intimidation strategy was detected. Moreover, in none of the sampled postings, the supplication strategy was found as a self-presentation strategy.

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1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, and it contributes to a great deal of the world's economy. According to The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2019), in 2018, the tourism sector accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and 319 million jobs or 10% of total employment. However, with the rapid growth tourism is increasingly leaving a negative impact on nature, local economy and local society (Postma & Dirk, 2017).

In order to address this issue, the principle of sustainable tourism was introduced by The World Tourism Organisation as early as in 1988. However, according to Sustainabletourism.net (2013), the word sustainability is often overused and misunderstood; therefore, expression 'responsible tourism' was adopted. In the 1st International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (2002) responsible tourism was introduced as a way of maximising the positive and minimising the negative impacts of tourism to create better places for people to live in and for people to visit. The conference explained that responsible tourism is about taking responsibility by different tourism stakeholders (e.g. governments, tourism businesses, local people and tourists) for achieving sustainable tourism. International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, Harold Goodwin (2012) stated: "*Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility, responding, taking action to address the social, economic and environmental issues of sustainability that arise in destinations. {...}"* (cited in Goodwin et al., 2012).

In support of sustainability goals, many tourism businesses, governmental and intergovernmental organisations make efforts to reduce the adverse effects of tourism; however, there is often a lack of responsible action from the tourists. According to Budeanu (2007), compared to all the efforts of other stakeholders, tourist share less interest to adopt sustainable lifestyles during their holidays or support responsible tourism products. Moreover, many tourists' destination choices and their behaviour during travel are highly influenced by social media, and often it is not contributing to responsible tourism.

There is one social media platform which stands out in this context – it is Instagram. It has transformed how many tourists choose their next destination and how they act during their travel (Do, 2018). For example, according to Facebook Business (2018), 60% of millennials (anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (Dimock, 2019)) turn to this free photo and video sharing app for inspiration on where to go and what to see. Furthermore, Hayhurt (2017) in Travolution

states that the study for UK-based holiday rental home insurance provider 'Schofields' indicated that 40% of surveyed millennials are crucial on how ´instagramable´ a destination is.

Often, Instagram users are accused of ruining destinations around the world. Dickinson (2019) in the Telegraph, states that by the cause of 'geotagging' function, one of Paris´ most romantic streets – ´Rue Crémieux´ has been ruined. Lately, there have been too many social media pilgrims trying to get 'that' picture. Another example is from the Greek islands. These islands have gained enormous popularity among tourists in Instagram, and some locals say that it is not possible to get an authentic Greek experience on Santorini and Mykonos, or any other Greek island with an airport because of the overflow of tourists (Mack, 2020). Many Instagram users are not considering how their posted content will affect the sustainability of the local economy, nature and society.

However, responsible tourism discourse is currently trending on Instagram among tourists - there are many tourists posting content related to responsible tourism every day. Due to the persuasion power of user-generated content (UGC) in social media, this phenomenon has considerable potential in changing tourists behaviour to the more responsible one (Han et al., 2018). However, it is not clear on how responsible tourism is currently positioned on Instagram by tourists. By researching UGC on Instagram, it is possible to generate knowledge of tourists' understandings of responsible tourism, or indeed of how tourists represent their own activities as 'responsible'. By analyzing Instagram postings related to responsible tourism, it is possible to understand how the posters are presenting themselves and how they are constructing their online identity through these postings. According to Goffman (1959), the staged performance takes place whenever there is social interaction. Whether the performer is aware of it or not, self-presentation is always the product of social interaction.

2. Problem formulation and research question

A variety of studies have explored how marketing constructs responsibility issues (e.g. Caruana & Crane, 2008, 2011; Frey & George, 2010), few have explored tourists' own understandings of responsible tourism (e.g. Robert et al., 2014); however, there is no research on how responsible tourism is constructed on Instagram by tourists. Therefore, the main objective of this thesis is to to develop a bottom-up conceptualisation of the phenomenon and increase the knowledge and understanding of the tourists' presentation of responsible tourism on Instagram. Furthermore, this thesis author acknowledges that this particular social interaction under investigation (like any other social interaction) is a staged performance, and self-presentation (an intentional and tangible component of identity) is the product of this social interaction. Therefore, this thesis seeks to examine tourists' presentation of responsible tourism on Instagram and their self-presentation through these Instagram posts.

Based on all of the above, the research question is formulated as follows:

How do tourists position responsible tourism on Instagram postings, and how do these tourists present themselves through these postings?

3. Theory
3.1 Sustainable tourism

Nowadays, the emergence of tourism as one of the biggest industries worldwide and one of the fastest-growing economic sectors raises frequent discussions about the concept of sustainability applied to tourism. This topic is frequently discussed not only among scholars but also among other stakeholders (e.g. tourism businesses, tourists, locals and governmental and intergovernmental organisations). However, it is relevant to look back and investigate where did the sustainable tourism concept come from and what it actually is?

One of the first places were sustainability and sustainable development has been discussed was at the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) in 1987. In this commission, sustainable development was explained as *"{...} a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*WCED, 1987). The underlying idea of it is similar to the seventh generation philosophy of the Native American Iroquois Confederacy: *"We do not inherit the Earth from our forefathers, but borrow it from our children".* Back in the past, Native Americans were considering the effects of their actions on nature and how it will affect the next generations in the future.

Many tourism researchers have used the Brundtland Commission's sustainable development concept as a basis for discussions of sustainable tourism. The World Tourism Organisation followed by the Brundtland Commission's sustainable development concept. It proposed the principle of sustainable tourism as early as 1988: *"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system."* (cited in Ecological Tourism in Europe, n.d. p. 9). This definition describes the complexity of the issues surrounding the concept of sustainable tourism, but it allows a variety of approaches and interpretations of the idea.

Manny tourism scholars have used this definition as a basis for understanding sustainable tourism. For example, Swarbrooke (1999) in his book wrote a simplified description of sustainable tourism: *"tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community" (p. 13).* It means that cultural, natural, historical and

other tourist resources are managed and preserved in the way that benefits present society and can be used in the future (Robinson, 2009).

However, later definitions of sustainable tourism mention stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism and emphasise three interconnected pillars of sustainable tourism: 1) environmental, 2) social, 3) economic. For example, UNWTO (2005) defined sustainable tourism as "*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities"* (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p. 12). It simplified ways that could explain an environmental dimension deals with natural resources and cultural and historical heritage; a social dimension deals with the social and cultural impact on the host population and an economical dimension deals with maximising economic benefits of tourism and minimising economic costs of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999 cited in Candela & Figini, 2012).

The UNEP together with UNWTO in their report in 2005 published guidelines for political decision-makers to achieve more sustainability within the tourism and presented twelve aims of sustainable tourism development and their relationship with all three pillars of sustainability mentioned above (see figure 1.). In figure 1. it is possible to see that all the pillars of sustainability are interconnected.
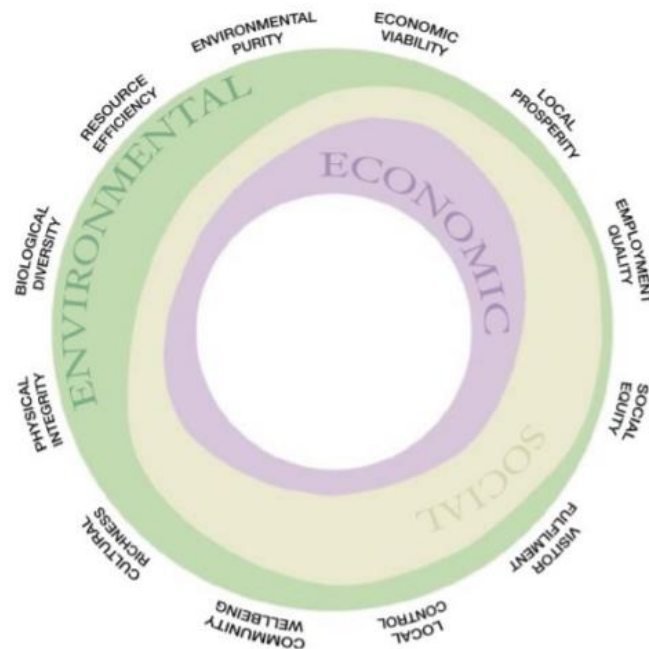

Figure 1. Relationship between the twelve aims and the three pillars of sustainability. Source: UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p. 20.

However, tourism researchers have often been focusing only on environment aspect and have given less attention to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable tourism. Perhaps it is not a surprising fact since the natural environment has been considered as a key pull factor for tourists to visit a particular destination. (e.g. Kassean and Gassita (2013) explored tourists push and pull motivations to visit Mauritius as a tourist destination, and it was found that key pull-based motives were the special climate and weather, unique flora and fauna, the exquisite landscape and scenery, the exotic ambience and atmosphere, exotic beaches.) Nevertheless, many of the researchers argue that tourism sustainability must be addressed by giving equal priority to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Furthermore, according to Sustainabletourism.net (2013), the word sustainability is often overused and misunderstood; therefore, expression 'responsible tourism' was adopted. However, there is an interconnection between sustainable tourism and responsible tourism - sustainability can be understood as a theory – concept, but a responsibility as a practice - appropriate action (Mihalic, 2016). Mihalic (2016) stated that the current understanding of responsible tourism behaviour is based on the concept of sustainable tourism. Therefore he suggested joining two existing terms – sustainable tourism and responsible tourism in a new term - responsustainable tourism.

3.1.1 Responsible tourism

The idea of responsibility in tourism has appeared already in 1980 in Manila Declaration (UNWTO, 1980). However, it gained its popularity after responsible tourism was introduced in the 1st *International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (2002)* as a way different tourism stakeholders (e.g. governments, tourism businesses, local people and tourists) can take responsibility to maximise the positive and minimise the negative impacts of tourism to create destination as a better place to live in and to visit. This conference was attended by 280 representatives from all sectors of tourism from 20 countries and a declaration on responsible tourism was developed (World Travel Market, n.d). Since then, its popularity has been growing because of increasing international pressure on the tourism sector to address environmental, social and economic issues (Frey & George, 2010). To date, there is a great deal of research emerging in the field of responsible tourism. There are researches from business perspectives (e.g. Manente et al., 2012), locals or host perspectives (e.g. Sin, 2010) and tourists' perspectives (e.g. Mahrouse, 2011).

However, many tourism researchers, the same as in above discussed sustainable tourism, have focused only on environment aspect and have been neglecting economic and social aspects of responsible tourism (e.g. Dolnicar, 2010; Lemelin et al., 2008; Stanford 2008). Nevertheless, for those researches who are trying to understand responsibility in the tourism context should use a multifaceted approach to address environmental, social and economic issues of sustainability that arise in destinations (Weeden, 2014).

How mentioned above, responsible tourism is not only based on its recognition on the part of local stakeholders, practitioners, and researchers but also on the environmental, economic and social consciousness by a growing number of tourists. This master thesis main focus is on tourists presentation on responsible tourism and therefore, the chapter below will look more into responsible tourists and their responsible travel behaviour.

3.1.1.1 Responsible tourist behaviour
Goodwin and Pender (2005) in their definition of responsible tourism have emphasised the tourist role within all three responsible tourism dimensions: 1) economic, 2) social and 3) environmental. They state that responsible tourism is a *"business and consumer response to some of the major economic, social and environmental issues, which affect our world. It is about travelling in a better way and about taking responsibility for the impacts that our actions have socially and economically on others and on their social, cultural and natural environment"* (p.303).

However, tourists rarely act responsibly within all three dimensions, because tourism products are complex, and it needs extra time, effort, and knowledge to plan responsible travel *(*Weeden, 2008). Compared to all the efforts of other stakeholders, tourist share less interest to adopt sustainable lifestyles during their holidays or support responsible tourism products because of lack of awareness of options available, or because tourists do not want to make sacrifices on their holidays (Miller et al., 2010; Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). Even responsible tourists do not always act responsibly during their travel because they also want to enjoy themselves, have fun and relax (Weeden, 2008). Often, they are compromised by being the only partly responsible tourists, for example, by focusing solely on the environmental impacts of their holidays (ibid). Weeden (2014) interviewed 24 responsible travellers and asked them to describe their responsible travel behaviour. They mentioned that this type of responsible travel behaviour as travelling independently, supporting local enterprises, using public transport, avoiding flying on holiday, spending time outdoors, communicating with locals,

observing local custom and dressing appropriately, staying in locally owned accommodation, staying off the 'beaten track', staying in eco-friendly accommodation, travelling with a responsible tour operator, buying holiday from a tour operator in the country of destination.

However, there are many guidelines available on how to be a responsible tourist. For example, to facilitate the understanding of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by tourists, The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (2017) developed a brochure with tips for a responsible traveller based on the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This brochure presented tips within five themes: 1) honour your hosts and our shared heritage, 2) protect our planet, 3) support the local economy, 4) be an informed traveller, 5) be a respectful traveller (see in table 1) However, responsible tourist behaviour does not limit with these tips. According to Goodwin and Font (2013) *"People are concerned about a wide range of different economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. The range of issues is large and people focus on what matters most to them, in their place. The Responsible Tourism agenda is broad and there is an acceptance within it that people will, and should, define their own priorities."*

Honour your hosts and our common heritage	1)Research your destination to learn about local customs, traditions and social conditions. It's a great way to build an understanding of the local community and excitement for your adventure ahead. 2)Learn to speak a few words in the local language. This can help you connect with the local community and its people in a more meaningful way. 3)Experience and respect all that makes an international destination different and unique, from its history, architecture, religion, dress and communication codes, to its music, art and cuisine. 4)Always ask before taking photographs of other people as their privacy matter as much as yours.
Protect our planet	1)Reduce your environmental impact by being a guardian of natural resources, especially forests and wetlands. 2)Respect wildlife and their natural habitats. 3)Purchase products that aren't made using endangered plants or animals. 4)In protected areas, access only the places open to visitors. 5)Reduce your water and energy consumption whenever possible. 6)Leave only a minimum footprint and a good impression behind.
Support the local	1)Buy locally-made handcrafts and products. 2)Respect livelihoods of local vendors and artisans by paying a fair price. 3)Do not buy counterfeit products or items that are prohibited by national/ international regulations. 4)Hire local guides with in-depth knowledge of the area.

Be an informed	1)Take appropriate health and safety precautions before and during your trip. 2)Know how to access medical care or contact your embassy in case of an emergency. 3)Research well before engaging in voluntourism. 4)Choose tourism operators with environmental policies and community projects in place.
Be a respectful traveller	1)Observe national laws and regulations. 2)Respect human rights and protect children from exploitation. Abusing children is a crime. 3) Refrain from giving money to begging children and support community projects instead. 4)Take photos instead of protected cultural artefacts as souvenirs of your trip. 5)Provide honest travel reviews upon your return and promote your positive experiences.

Table 1. Tips for a Responsible Traveller. Source: The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, 2017.

Responsible tourism behaviour is also quite simply buying responsible tourism products. In Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) consumer research, identified that income, marital status, occupation, gender and education are potential indicators of willingness to pay for responsible products (Roberts, 1995). A more recent report on responsible tourists within USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and France claims that consumers of responsible tourism products tend to be of all age groups (but mostly retirees and youth), well-educated, evenly spread across both genders and have a higher than average income (SNV, 2009). The same research found that responsible tourism *"consumers have a higher than average social consciousness and therefore seek interactive holidays that provide an enriching experience distinct from their day-to-day lives"* (SNV, 2009, p. 34). (see figure 2.)
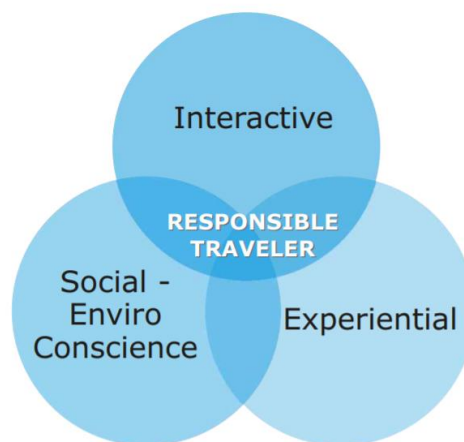

Figure 2. Summary of the Key Elements of the Responsible Traveler. Source: SNV, 2009, p. 35.

3.2 Social media

'Consumer-generated media' commonly known as 'social media' is one of the prime examples of digital development (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Discussions on how to define social media continues, and there are many different definitions available. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explained social media as *"a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content"* (p.61). However, Zeng (2013) have explained social media in a more sophisticated way: *"Social media has emerged as the new way in which people connect socially, by integrating information and communication technology (such as mobile and web-based technologies), social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. It is actually more than a new way to communicate, but refers to an entire online environment built on people's contributions and interactions"* (p. 1).

There are many social media sites available online, and they differ from each other in multiple ways. For example, the content of social media comes in various forms of repositories, e.g. review sites (Yelp), blogs (Tumblr), microblogs (Twitter), wikis (Wikipedia), multimedia sharing sites (YouTube), and social networking sites (Facebook and Instagram) (Holsapple, Hsiao and Pakath, 2014). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) looked more into the characterisation of social media. They categorised social media platforms by two dimensions: social presence and media richness, and self-presentation and self-disclosure (see table 2.). Regarding social presence and media richness, applications such as collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia) and blogs represent the lowest scores because they are usually text-based and are limited to relatively simple exchange. The middle level represents social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) and content communities (e.g., YouTube, Pinterest) which, besides text-based communications, allows sharing pictures, videos, and other forms of media. The highest-ranked are virtual games and virtual social worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft, Second Life) because these social media sites try to simulate all dimensions of face-to-face interaction in a cyber world. Concerning self-presentation and self-disclosure, blogs are ranked higher than collaborative projects, as collaborative projects usually are focused on a specific content area. Likewise, social networking sites present more self-disclosure than content communities. Lastly, virtual social worlds allow a higher level of self-disclosure than virtual game worlds because the latter is ruled by game rules.

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Table 2. Classification of Social Media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure. Source: Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 62.

Furthermore, social media has become one of the most powerful online networking tools, and it has been integrated into social and economic life in the real world (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Its popularity is growing every year, and according to 'We Are Social' and 'Hootsuite' report (2020), in January 2020, 3.8 billion people were active social media users, that is around 49% of the global population (active social media users are those that had logged into social media platform/s during the last 30 days from the day when data was collected). Social media's popularity is also growing within tourism. Nowadays, the way travel is planned and consumed has been significantly affected by social media (Hudson & Thal, 2013). Social media is used in the travel planning process for information search and holidays experience sharing (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Influence from social media has a strong potential in affecting the final decision on holiday plans (Fotis at al, 2012). Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) explained it with the fact that tourism products have experiential nature and potential tourists can rely on shared experiences online by other tourists. Furthermore, multiple recent tourism researchers have recognised social media communication as a useful tool to encourage higher responsible travel behaviour, and it will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.2.1 Responsible tourism communication on social media

Tourism is experiencing rapid growth, and it is increasingly leaving a negative impact on nature, local economy and local society (Postma & Dirk, 2017). Therefore, there is an increasing need for action which encourage a grater responsible tourist behaviour. One effective way is through the use of communication. Many scholars have stated that communication is an essential visitor management tool capable of influencing appropriate tourist behaviour (e.g. Krippendorf 1984; Gunn 1988; Eber 1992, Forsyth 1996). However, past scholars have particularly emphasized the effectiveness of social media communication in

changing tourist behaviour to more responsible and sustainable (e.g. Kane, Chiru & Ciuchete, 2012; Chonga, 2018; Nawijn, 2017).

Nowadays, social networks have become one of the most dominant methods of communication - around 49% of the world's population in January 2020 was using some form of social media to communicate (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2020). The emergence of social media has enhanced communication to an unprecedented intensity (Budeanu, 2013). Unlimited construction and wide distribution of content in social media matches with the postmodern interest of tourists in learning and communication (Hughes, 1995) and have become part of contemporary tourists' holiday experience (Budeanu, 2013). Social media is frequently used in the travel planning process for information search and after holidays experience sharing (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Tourists tend to belive and appreciate reviews and recommendations of other tourists rather than commercial messages which have been created by companies (Information Resources Management Association, 2014). User-generated content (UGC) is an alternative to commercial marketing - tourists can create collective and also critical content of their experiences and thoughts (ibid), and it can facilitate consensus regarding sustainable tourism (Budeanu, 2013). According to Budeanu (2013), social media is an effective channel to encourage sustainably aware demand through sharing experiences.

The World Bank Group report (2018) suggested that social media travel influencers could be used as an effective communication vehicle to drive more sustainable outcomes in tourism. For a lot of people 'social media travel influencer' is a person with a high reach. However, according to Hayley (2019), social media travel influencer is a person who posts content on social media about tourism and who has the ability to influence the behaviour or opinions of others within the area of travel and tourism. "*There is no prerequisite for any set number of followers, views, engagement rates etc. Quite simply, a Travel Influencer is a person who can influence others, on whatever scale that may be.*" (Haley, 2019). That means that tourists who post content on social media about responsible tourism can be defined as travel influencers.

Furthermore, there is an increase of UGC that encourages more responsible travel behaviour because tourists are becoming more concerned about responsible travel behaviour. They are becoming more aware of the impacts due to their travel behaviour to the local economy, society and environment (Batat & Prentovic, 2014). Multiple recent tourism researchers have recognised UGC on social media communication as a useful tool to reflect and influence tourists' perceptions and attitudes towards responsible travel behaviour and even to convince tourists to behave more responsibility during their travel. Kane, Chiru, and

Ciuchete (2012) found that UGC on Facebook can build the necessary links between tourists' green values and behavioural change. Han, McCabe, Wanga and Chonga (2018) highlighted the effectiveness of social media channels with UGC providing persuasive communications able to impact sustainable behaviours in tourism. Hardeman, Font and Nawijn (2017) found that the online messages regarding sustainability in tourism were more persuasive than those provided by tour operators. Furthermore, Boley, Magnini and Tuten (2013) suggest that some tourists who post travel pictures on a social media site, have different travel and consumption behaviours regarding responsible travel behaviour than the ones who do not post pictures, e.g. they tend to purchase local and regional speciality items. It can be explained with the fact that these tourists are trying to present themselves in social media in a positive light to increase social attractiveness. According to Goffman (1959), staged performance takes place whenever there is social interaction, and whether the performer is aware of it or not self-presentation is always the product of social interaction. The concept of tourists' self-presentation on social media is discussed in the next chapter.

3.3 Tourists` Self-Presentation on Social Media

After the emergence of social media, tourists gradually use social media channels for a variety of reasons. However, whenever tourists are posting pictures, texts, sound and any other symbols, whether they know it or not, they are presenting themselves online. According to Leary (1995), self-presentation is *''the process of controlling how one is perceived by other people''* (p. 2). Goffman (1959) conceptualized social interaction as a stage performance and suggested that self-presentation is intentional and tangible component of identity. In the context of travel, tourists engage in complex intraself negotiations to project online the desired impression in response to others' feedback since people are concerned about how others perceive them (Goffman, 1959). The people can check impressions of their presented identity by checking online feedback; for example, how many likes, positive comments and shares post has received. According to Belk (2013), *"every time we check our social media sites we are effectively checking to see who we are, who we were, and who we seem to be becoming"* (p. 492). Feedbacks are really important for humans since we get to know ourselves by how others react to us (Zhao, 2005). *"In other words, our sense of self is really our perception of society's evaluation of us"* (Robinson, 2007, p. 94-95).

In social media, people have great control over their self-presentation since communication online can be managed more strategically (Ellison et al., 2007). The hyperpersonal model can be used to understand this self-presentation mechanism in social

media context (Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal model suggests that the unique features of computer-mediated communication — the reduced cues environment and asynchronous communication—allow people to selectively self-present themselves (Walther, 1996). People on the internet can easily highlight specific characteristics while masking others in order to give positive impressions and to earn the approval of others (Walther, 2007). Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) stated that *"self- presentation can be seen as a product of discourse between the audience and the performing tourist who tries to achieve a certain goal"* (p.80). Higgins (1987) conceptualised three types of self domains based on the standpoints of the actor and/or an imagined audience: the ideal self (composed of qualities that the actor or others wish for him/her to possess), the ought self (comprises qualities that the actor or others expect him/her to possess due to an obligation), and the actual self (composed of stable qualities the actor or others believe s/he possesses).

Moreover, on social media, it is possible to see social desirability bias - tendency to underreport socially undesirable attitudes and behaviours and to over-report more desirable attributes. Theory by Paulhus (1984) suggests that social desirability bias consists of two components - impression management (purposeful presentation of self to fit into a situation or please an audience) and self-deception (the motivation to maintain a positive self-concept). These two components are possible to see also in the travel context in social media - sometimes tourists purposefully present travel stories to present themselves in the desired way to fit into a particular situation or simply please an audience, and to maintain a positive self-concept.

Futhermore, Desforges (2000) indicates that it is important for tourists to share their travel stories because through sharing their experiences, tourists can reflect on their travel experiences that (re)produce their sense of self. The way how a narrative is constructed depends on who the audience is and how the tourist wishes to present themselves (Daley, 2007). Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) stated that tourists who share their travel stories selectively by highlighting positive aspects of their travel are likely to generate positive feedback and more considerable attention from social media friends. According to Desforges (2000), "*the full process of the anticipation of holidays, the act of travel, and the narration of holiday stories on return are all tied into an imagination and performance which enables tourists to think of themselves as particular sorts of persons*" (p. 930). Belk and Yeh (2011) in a study on tourist photography argue that photographies taken by tourists are more representative of the self as a tourist than it is about the people and places encountered during the travel. Futhermore, Urry and Larsen (2011) by using Goffman's self-presentation theory as fundament suggested that

tourists have present, future, imagined audiences in mind when they produce pictures during their travels.

3.3.1 Self-presentation strategies

Erving Goffman (1959) was one of the first one to conceptualise the self-presentation phenomenon. In his work '*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' he used dramatic metaphors to explain the way how people presents themselves in a face to face interactions. He theorized social interaction as a stage performance where people act as performers who strategically present certain impressions by accentuating some things about themselves and concealing others from the audience. However, many scholars have been trying to extended Goffman's theory by identifying strategies of self-presentation. One of the most popular theory was by Jones (1990) where he identified five strategies of self-presentation for face-to-face communication drawn from research in interpersonal communication: ingratiation, competence, intimidation, exemplification and supplication. A study from Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett and Tedeschi (1999) added seven additional types of self-presentation to Jones (1990) early suggested five types of self-presentation excuse, justification, disclaimers, self-handicapping, apology, entitlement and blasting, and changed the name from competence to enhancement. This scale was developed to measure different self-presentations that appear in everyday life (Lee et al., 1999).

Self-presentation strategies were first developed for face-to-face communication; however, many studies have applied the self-presentation tactics to the online context. For example, Dominick (1999) applied all five Jones (1990) suggested strategies of self-presentation in a study about personal homepages on the internet, and he found that all five impression management tactics proposed by Jones (1990) in offline communication extended to the online setting of personal home pages. However, a lot of past studies about self-presentation on social media have been arguing that three of Jones (1990) proposed categories - competence, ingratiation, and supplication - are the most common types of self-presentation observed in online interaction (e.g. Chua & Choib, 2010). However, in this study, the thesis author decided to use all five dimensions from Jones (1990) study: (1) ingratiation, (2) competence (self-promotion), (3) intimidation, (4) exemplification and (5) supplication.

(1)   According to Jones and Pittman (1982), a person using ingratiation strategy has a goal to get others like him so he can get some advantage from them. It aims to increase social attractiveness by being perceived as modest, sincere, friendly, funny, caring, and easy to talk to (Leary, 1996, cited in Wong, 2012). Some of the tactics of ingratiation are saying positive

things about others or saying mildly negative things about yourself, as well as doing favours, agreeing with others, giving gifts, using statements of modesty, familiarity, and humour (Dominick, 1999). According to Zywica and Danowski (2008), social networking sites users by utilising the ingratiation strategy may foster their image or manipulate their personality or behaviour to appear attractive online (Zywica & Danowski, 2008).

(2)   According to Dominick (1999), the goal of the competence (self-promotion) strategy is "to be perceived as skilled and qualified. Common characteristics include claims about abilities, accomplishments, performance, and qualifications." (p. 648). People using competence (self-promotion) strategy are motivated to be achievers and to be regarded as a successful, effective, or productive person (Wong, 2012). According to Sheldon and Bryant (2016), self-promotion is the main reason behind Instagram since the main motives of Instagram are for narcissistic purposes – active Instagram users are trying to appear cool and be perceived in a positive light. Competence strategy can be seen even seen on Instagram when individual display abilities to provide useful information to their contacts (Chu & Choi, 2010).

(3)   According to Dominick (1999), "Persons using [Intimidation] strategy have power as their goal. Typical characteristics are threats, statements of anger, and potential unpleasantness." (p. 648). It is used to induce fear in a target and increase the effectiveness of contingent threats (Jones and Pittman, 1982). There are some nonverbal behaviours associated with this strategy (Jones, 1990).

(4)   "Exemplification: The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as morally superior or possessing high moral standards. Characteristics include ideological commitment or militancy for a cause, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline." (Dominick, 1999, p. 648). People who are applying this strategy on Instagram are trying to to be respected and admired by others by showing their moral and integrity, by portraying himself as someone who cares, discipline, honest, generous, and willing to sacrifice to be respected and admired (Alim, 2014). Individuals using this self-presentation strategy go above and beyond the call of duty to appear dedicated (Jones, 1990).

(5)   Dominick (1999) has explained that the goal of supplication tactics is "nurturance or appearing helpless so that others will come to your aid. Characteristics of this self-presentational approach include pleas for help and self-deprecation." (p. 648). Individuals who are applying this tactic are trying to get others' care, protection, help and support or to avoid responsibilities and to make excuses for poor performance (Wong, 2012). According to Jones (1990), there are some nonverbal behaviours associated with this strategy.

3.4 Instagram – site under investigation

Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger launched Instagram in 2010 as a free iPhone application for sharing pictures with friends (Blystone, 2019). This application was launched on Apple's (AAPL) iOS on 6th of October in 2010, and just in one day it reached up to 25000 users and became the top free photo-sharing app (ibid.). Kevin Systrom, the co-founder of Instagram, on the post on Quora described the unbelievable speed in which the app becomes famous: *"First off, we have to say that we never expected the overwhelming response that we've seen. We went from literally a handful of users to the #1 free photography app in a matter of hours."* (Quora, 2011). Remarkably, it took only eight weeks for Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger to develop the Instagram app, and already within a year and a half, Facebook had acquired the company for $1 billion in cash and stock (Blystone, 2019).

Nowadays, Instagram is one of the most popular social media sites. In January 2020, Instagram was ranked the sixth most popular social media site worldwide by reaching 1 billion monthly active accounts (Statista, 2020a). The majority of Instagram users are aged 18-34, respectively 30% of global Instagram audiences were aged between 18-24 and 35% were aged between 25 and 34 years (Statista, 2020b). For a lot of Instagram users, Instagram takes an important part of their everyday life. For example, 63% of Instagram users log into this social media site at least once per day, and on average Instagram users spend 28 minutes per day on the platform (Newberry, 2020).

Nowadays, Instagram is a free photo, and video sharing app available not only on Apple iOS but also on Android and Windows Phone and everyone who is aged 13 and older can create a free account (Help.instagram.com, 2020a). According to Help.instagram.com (2020a), Instagram users can upload photos and videos and share them with other Instagram users. However, Instagram goes beyond just sharing photos and videos. Its features are private messaging, group messaging, calls and video calls, video editing tools, image editing, filters for images and videos, live video streaming, text and drawing tool, stories feature (post available for twenty-four hours only), location tagging (geotags), Instagram user tagging, liking, commenting, hashtags (recognise and categorise the posted content), search functionality, survey and questions (possible to create questions and surveys in stories), public or private profiles, notifications (GetApp, 2019). Moreover, Instagram by using algorithms personalises feed for each user. According to Help.instagram.com (2020b), *"the photos and videos we think you care about most will appear towards the top of your feed. In addition to*

seeing content from people and hashtags you follow, you may also see suggested accounts that are relevant to your interests."

Moreover, Instagram has two different types of user accounts available: personal and business. The personal account is available for every person who uses Instagram, but the business profile is an advanced Instagram profile for businesses. It was launched in 2016, and additional features of this profile are Instagram Insights, contact information, and promotions of posts (InstagramBusiness, 2019).

### 3.4.1 Communication through Instagram postings

A significant part of contemporary communication is happening on Instagram. There are more than 100 million photos and videos uploaded on Instagram per day, more than 500 million Instagram stories shared per day and approximately 4.2 Instagram likes per day (Aslam, 2020). Furthermore, as indicated in the chapter above, communication on Instagram is advanced and multimodal - Instagram users can interact with each other not only through Instagram posts and Instagram story function but also through private chats, calls and video calls. However, most of the communication in Instagram happens around visuals since Instagram's primary feature is photo/video sharing. Russmann and Svenssonshift (2017) have stated that *"[visuals on social media] arguably transform how we relate to each other and the world around us, as well as how we perceive and construct our sense of self"* (p. 2017). Furthermore, visuals on social media besides contribution towards elaboration on "who we are" also provides highly strategic and reflexive communication in order to give a specific impression of the sent information (Russmann, Svenssonshift, 2017).

Undeniably development of networked, ubiquitous cameras on devices like smartphones is responsible for the rise of visual communication on social media. However, there are more important reasons why Instagram main focus is on visuals and why even older social media platforms increasingly are focusing on visuals. According to McCoy (2017) human's attention increasingly becomes strained and challenged by the overflow of information, and therefore visual content takes an increasing role in social media consumption and construction. Already in 1971, social scientist Simon noted that information overload impacts people's attention: *"a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention"* (p. 40). Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli and Pizzetti (2018) have stated that *"images offer a more direct way of communicating and experiencing human relations and understanding events and situations than text-based communications"* (p.362). Moreover, considerable research in the field of visual communication has found that images are more effective in gaining and

increasing the viewer's attention than text-based communication (e.g., Barthes, 1977, Fahmy et al., 2014). Recipients remember visual information much better than verbal or textual information (Paivio, 1971).

The next paragraphs in this chapter will look more into visual and textual communication that happens only through Instagram posts since the posts are the primary function of Instagram, and this master thesis main focus is to analyse Instagram postings.

In this study, there is a drawn difference between postings and posts - a posting is only the information provided by the poster, and a post may also include comments and likes from followers. Each Instagram posting must include an image or short video. Furthermore, the author of the posting additionally can add a caption, multiple hashtags and location tag (geotag). Other Instagram users (for public Instagram postings) and followers (for private Instagram postings) can like and add comments to the post, send the post to other users within Instagram, share the post with people through different online communication channels (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Gmail), see who has liked the post, save the post to the collection, see and like comments from other Instagram users, and answer to other Instagram user comments (see picture 1). Everything in Instagram post is shaped around the posted image, which can be framed, filtered and edited by use of Instagram provided tools before being distributed.
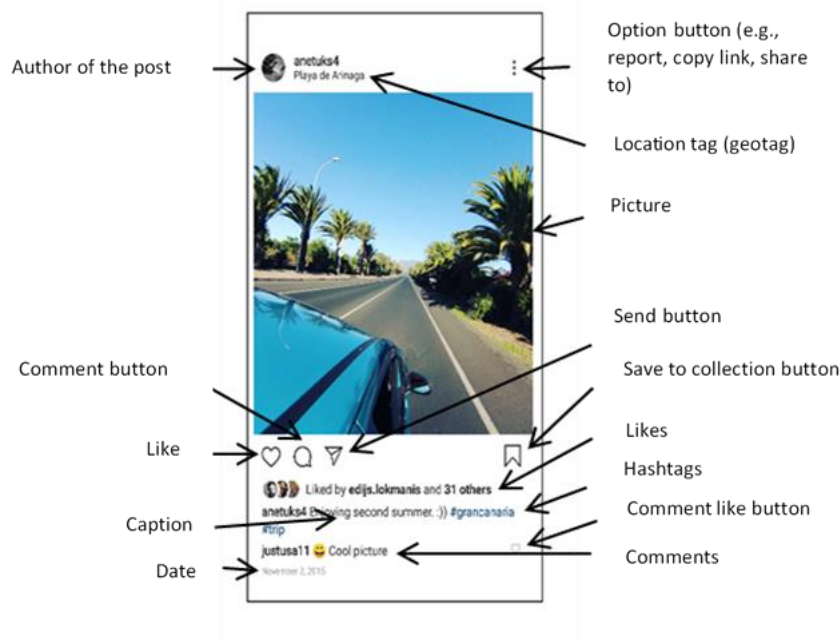
Picture 1. The example of Instagram post. Source: from own Instagram profile.

As discussed above, a posting on Instagram in addition to the picture can also consist of caption, hashtags and location tag (geotag). Users of Instagram can post a caption under the

posted picture. Pixlee (n.d) explained that *"a user can add a caption to an image to explain and contextualise the subject of the photo. Instagram captions can include hashtags and tags"* (Pixlee, n.d). Visual images are often understood as additional modes of communication complementing written or spoken text which help the viewer to understand a message faster (Russmann, Svenssonshift, 2017). However, in the photo-sharing app Instagram, it is all the way around - texts are made to complement pictures. The caption removal from the image creates a significant loss of context (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). Furthermore, it is argued that images that also use captions are more effective in communicating messages (Russmann & Svensson, 2017).

Instagram users in pictures captions can also add hashtags. Hashtags are created by using the hash character (#) in front of word or phrase which does not have spaces between words. A hashtag on Instagram is a dynamic, user-generated type of label or metadata tag, which makes it easier for other users to find posted images of the same topic (Anon, 2016). However, besides connecting similar images, hashtags also can serve as a symbol of membership of a community (Yang et al., 2012). Furthermore, besides above-mentioned functions *"hashtags are also used to abbreviate messages and to add some kind of a stylistic touch to what is being said"* (Anon, 2016, p. 140). Hashtags are often used by researchers to search for topic related user-generated content on social media.

Geotagging function on Instagram provides an opportunity to add a location for the post. It is possible to choose from offered nearby locations or type any other location of the poster's own choice. Manikonda, Hu and Kambhampati (2014) in their research stated that Instagram posts are on average 31 times more likely to use geotagging than tweets on Twitter. They explained this phenomenon by the fact that people like to use Instagram to record their daily lives and to share their location with their friends. Furthermore, it is possible to see that Instagram users often use geotagging while they are travelling. However, in National Geographic webpage Christina Djossa (2019) suggests not to geotag while travelling because geotagging can fuel overtourism and expose the privacy of vulnerable people and wildlife. Nevertheless, geotagging presents unique opportunities for researchers to explore location-based trends.

4. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodological design of this thesis is presented by taking inspiration from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) proposed research onion model. Their proposed research onion has six layers: 1) research philosophy, 2) research approach, 3) research strategy, 4) research choice, 5) research horizon and 6) research techniques and procedures. However, the thesis author decided to take an example from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) proposed research onion model and to create a new research onion by adjusting layers to illustrate how this thesis has moved through different stages of research design. Thesis research onion has eight layers: 1) research paradigm, 2) the approach of data reasoning, 3) the approach of data collection, 4) research method, 5) data collection procedure, 6) data analysis method, 7) ethical consideration of the research and 8) the trustworthiness of the research (see figure 3). Each of the layers indicates an important aspect which has been looked at when deciding on an appropriate methodology for this thesis. However, the outer layer was unwrapped first to see the inner layer - choices made in the outer layers have informed decisions of inner layers.

This research onion has significantly helped to strengthen the thesis since research author has systematically moved through different stages which a researcher must access in order to develop an effective methodology. Furthermore, by providing explanations and justification for each layer of methodological desitions, trustfulness of the research has been maximised.
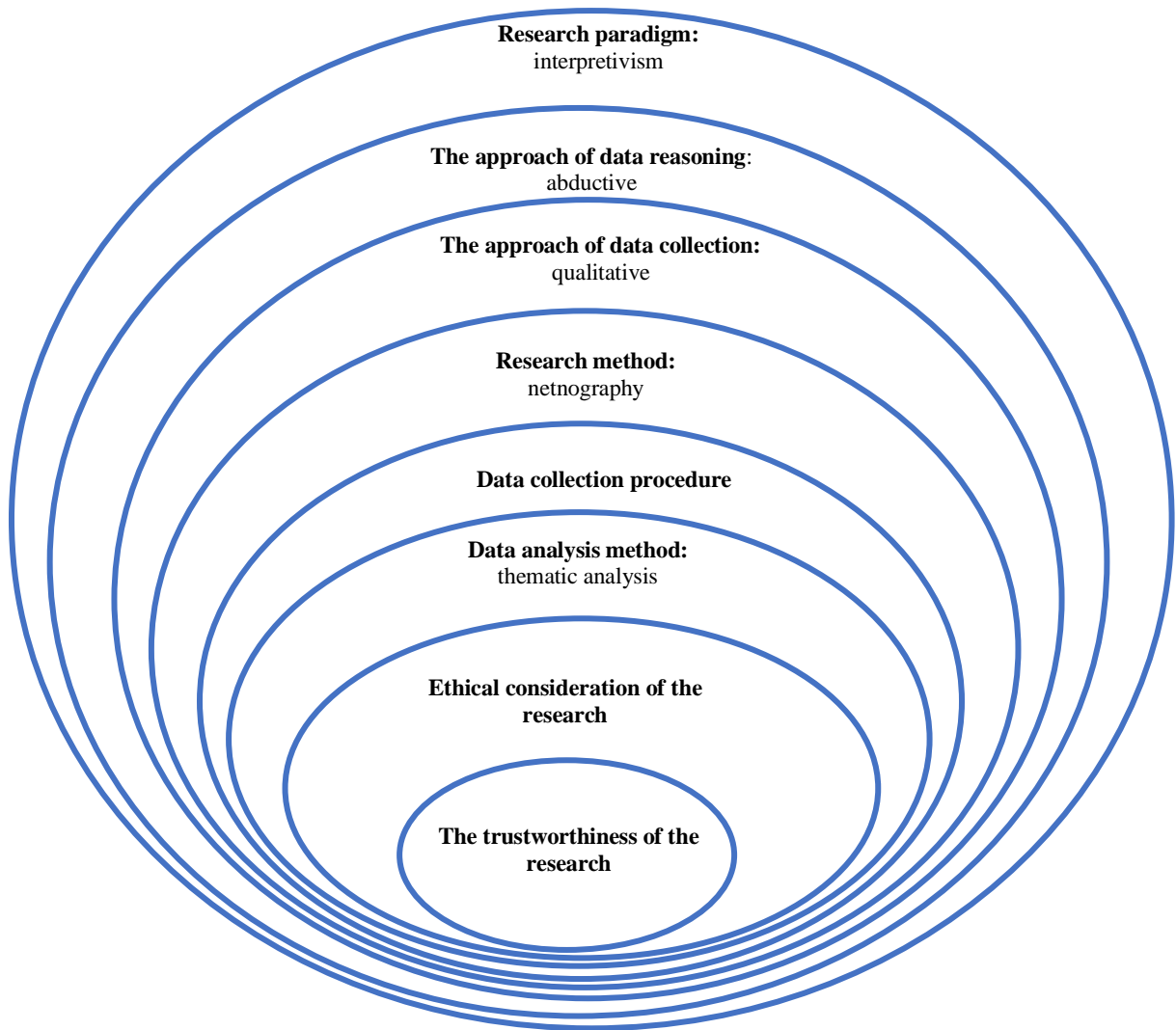
Figure 3. Thesis methodological design. Source: adapted from Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012).

4.1 Research paradigm

According to Kuhn (1962), a research paradigm is *"the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed"*. Guba (1990) proposed that the way how researcher responds to ontological, epistemological and methodological questions characterise the research paradigm. These questions are: *"(1) Ontological: What is the nature of the 'knowable'"? Or, what is the nature of 'reality'? (2) Epistemological: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)? (3) Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?"* (Guba, 1990, p. 18).

Different researchers have applied many different types of research paradigms to their researches. In the social science context, Porta and Keating (2008) discussed four following paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, humanism and interpretivism. In this thesis,

interpretivism paradigm can be used to explain how research problems have been understood and addressed. Interpretivist paradigm is originally rooted in the arguments that history and social science cannot be studied with the same methods used in physics and the other natural sciences because human - unlike atoms, chemicals, and even most non-human forms of life interprets their world and then acts based on such interpretation (Hammersley, 2013).

This thesis adopts a relativist ontology in which a phenomenon may have many interpretations rather than a single truth that can be measured (Pham, 2018). Author of this project believes that reality is individually constructed and there are as many different realities as there are people. The interpretive paradigm in this thesis is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences and ideas of individuals. The epistemological position of this thesis is subjective. Thesis author believes that there is a strong linkage between the researcher and research subject because people cannot be separated from their knowledge. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that to a certain level, this thesis outcome is affected by the author's interpretation, knowledge, belief system, cultural preference or ways of thinking. Porta and Keating (2008) have suggested that within interpretivism paradigm *"the world can be understood not as an objective reality, but as a series of interpretations that people within society give of their position; the social scientist, in turn, interprets these interpretations"* (p.25). Thesis author by interpreting standpoints the individuals pursues to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its unique context instead of generalising the base of understanding for a wider population.

4.2 The approach of data reasoning

There are three different forms of research approach when it comes to data reasoning: deduction, induction and abduction. Induction and deduction are two of the most used approaches in scientific literature, but abduction is the least familiar mode of reasoning and the mode that was systematised most recently (Given, 2008). However, an abductive research approach is most suitable for the objective of this exploratory study, since abductive research can explain, develop or change the theoretical framework before, during or after the research process (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Furthermore, this thesis is applying a qualitative research approach, and according to Given (2008), abduction offers a great promise as a potential primary mode of reasoning for qualitative research.

This thesis has been moving back and forth between deductive and inductive approaches. It has constantly been moving back and forth from one type of research activity to another, and between empirical to theoretical dimensions of analysis - matching between

theory and reality. Instead of spending most of the time on the literature review at the beginning of research process, thesis author already in the first phase of this thesis engaged in the investigation of Instagram posts to adopt the boundaries to the real world and to focus on relevant literature and theory. Furthermore, in this thesis, comparisons and interpretations have been made in searching for patterns and the best possible explanations of the researched phenomenon. Dubois and Gadde (2002) have stated that by applying the abductive research approach, the researcher can expand his understanding of both theory and empirical phenomena. It is also important to mention that abduction played an essential part in data analysis – theme development was directed both by the empirical content and the previously formulated theoretical point of departure. Lipscomb (2012) in his paper, acknowledged that abduction might play an important part in qualitative data analysis – specifically, in the identification of themes, codes, and categories.

4.3 The approach of data collection

Creswell (2014) in his book, discussed three approaches of data collection: 1) qualitative, 2) quantitative, and 3) mixed methods. In this thesis, a qualitative research approach is used to explore, understand and later interpret the individual tourist presentation of responsible tourism on Instagram. Strauss and Corbin (1990) have stated that *"by the term qualitative research we mean any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. […] Some of the data may be quantified […] but the analysis itself is a qualitative one."* (p.17). Qualitative research approach generates a different type of knowledge than a quantitative research approach - quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalisation of findings, but qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have explained that *"[…] qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."* (p. 3)

Futhermore, Salmons (2016) have described a new way to categorise qualitative data collection methods based on differentiation according to the degree of direct interaction the researcher has with the data and with participants (cited in Sloan & Haase, 2016). These three categories are: extant (research using existing materials developed without the researcher's influence), elicited (research using data elicited from participants in response to the researcher's questions) and enacted (research using data generated with participants during the study) (Salmons, 2016, cited in Sloan & Haase, 2016). This thesis is applying extant method

- posts from 10 randomly selected days from 1st of January till 1st of April has been collected on the 15th of April and qualitatively analysed without direct contact between thesis author and authors of the posts. This method can be characterised as an unobtrusive observation of the Instagram community.

It was beneficial for the thesis to apply the above-described data collection method because it enabled to examine authentic and naturally-occurring communication and behaviour of research subjects. It reduced the biases that result from the intrusion of the researcher or measurement instrument. However, the disadvantage of unobtrusive observation was that the thesis author was able to gather a very limited range of information.

4.4 Research method

In collecting qualitative data from Instagram, the research method of netnography has been applied as it seems the most appropriate in the way it enables a researcher to collect online content by observation. Netnography developed by Robert V. Kozinets in 1998 as a method is a relatively new approach in the methodical field; however, its popularity is increasing together with the social media evaluation (Kozinets, 2020).

Kozinets (2012) has explained that *"netnography is participant-observational research based in online fieldwork. It uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon"* (p. 3). In simple words, netnography can be explained as a qualitative research method that adapts ethnography to the Internet to understand social interactions and experiences. Initially, netnography strongly emphasised that the researcher needs to fully participate in the online community being studied and it needs to be supported by online interviews (Kozinets, 1998). However, recently it has been suggested that netnographic study of online communities also may take place without any intervention or participation by the researcher (Bryman, 2016). Kozinets (2020) states that netnographic research may consist of *"interviews, data scraping, archival work, online observation, and active engagement with new forms of data collection, visualisation, thematic analysis, and field-level rhetorical representation."* (p.5).

In this thesis, the Instagram postings posted by tourists under hashtag '#responsibletourism' have been examined using a non-participation covert approach, also referred to as 'lurking' (Dholakia & Zhang, 2004; Bryman, 2016). This approach allows researchers to observe or lurk without taking an active part, such as asking questions, commenting, or revealing the

researcher's identity (Dholakia & Zhang 2004; Bryman 2016). This approach eliminates reactivity – research subjects can not adjust their online behaviour when they are studied because they do not know about the researcher's presence (Bryman, 2016). Disadvantages of this approach is that researcher can only analyse the data available online - the researcher can not use any other form of data collection method than observation (ibid.). Furthermore, since the researcher is using a non-participatory covert approach, the online conversation can not be influenced, intruded or steered by the researchers' agenda; however, it enables the researcher to examine authentic and naturally-occurring communication and behaviour of research subjects (Dholakia & Zhang, 2004). Moreover, there have been a lot of discussions and disagreement among the researchers about the ethics of this method; however, the ethics of this thesis will be addressed in chapter 4.7.

In this thesis, the observation process started by creating a new Instagram profile on the 1st of January. According to Kozinets (2002), marks an "entree" in the community being studied. In the first phase of this thesis writing process, postings posted by tourists on Instagram with hashtag '#responsibletourism' or with hashtag '#sustainabletourism' was observed for one week to get insights and understanding of how tourists present responsible tourism in Instagram. As Kozinets (1998) have suggested, it is a way to learn the sensitising concepts and the content matter. However, later in the thesis writing process, it was decided to analyse postings posted by tourists with hashtag '#resposnibletourism' from ten randomly selected days from the 1st of January until the 1st of April. These posts were downloaded from Instagram on the 15th of April, and according to Kozinets (2015), it can be called as work with online archival data, since these posts were posted a while ago from the date when posts were downloaded. Process of primary data collection is further discussed in the next chapter.

4.5 Data collection procedure

In order to collect only publicly available Instagram posts (posts available for all Instagram users) and to exclude privately posted posts (posts available only for followers*),* a new Instagram profile was developed with no connections with other Instagram users (profile was not following any Instagram profiles). According to Instagram Help Center (2020), *"If your account is set to private and you add a hashtag to your post, the post won't appear publicly on the corresponding hashtag page. Only your approved followers will be able to see your posts on hashtag pages or in Instagram Direct messages."*

In the first phase of the data collection process, the thesis author did hashtag (#) research to see which hashtags should be used to gather data. In Instagram search function

thesis author searched for following hashtags: '#responsibletourism', '#responsibletourist', '#responsibletourists', '#sustainabletourism', '#sustainabletourist', '#sustainabletourists'. It was decided to search for hashtags in relations to both responsible tourism and sustainable tourism because in this thesis sustainability is understood as a concept, but a responsibility as practice and many people might use these terms in the same context. From all of these hashtags, the most used hashtag in public posts was '#sustainabletourism' (202078 publicly posted posts (the number was collected on the 15th of April)) the second most used hashtag was '#responsibletourism'(119284 publicly posted posts (the number was collected on the 15th of April)). However, for data collection, it was decided to use only hashtag '#responsibletourism' because it was observed that tourists in Instagram use this hashtag more often than hashtag '#sustainabletourism.' Hashtag '#sustainabletourism' was frequently used by different kind of tourism organisation and tourism-related companies. After the hashtag was picked for data collection, it was time to decide upon a sampling approach.

Sampling can be defined as a process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study, and it is one of the most important aspects in a research design (Mathers et al. 1998). Robinson (2014) has stated that central role in the practice of qualitative methods plays sampling and he proposed a four-point sampling approach: (1) defining a sample universe; (2) deciding upon a sample size; (3) selecting a sampling strategy; and (4) sample sourcing.

First, the inclusion of a criteria has been used to define the sample universe. It was decided that postings need to be posted by tourists with hashtag '#responsibletourism', due to the fact that this thesis is investigating how responsible tourism is present by tourists on Instagram. As discussed above, the hashtag which would be used in sampling data has been chosen by researching which hashtag has been used by tourists more often. Second, before collecting the postings from Instagram, there was no strict decision made on how many postings needed to be collected; however, a provisional sample number was indicated (around 100 postings). It was indicated that the sample sizes should not be too small because each post provides a limited amount of content, and it also should not be too big since this is qualitative research. Third, when it comes to sampling strategy, it was decided to apply random sampling –to sample all the posts posted by tourists with hashtag '#responsibletourism' from ten randomly selected days from 1st of January till 1st of April. Robinson (2014) explains *that "random sampling is the process of selecting cases from a list of all (or most) cases within the sample universe population using some kind of random selection procedure"* (p. 31). Last, a sample was sourced by using the Instagram search function, which allows searching after

publicly posted posts which have used the hashtag '#responisbletourism'. In the sourcing process, a covert approach was adopted; the researcher did not interact with posting authors, informed consent was not sought, and post authors were not debriefed.

Ten randomly selected days were 1st of January, 15th of January, 20th of January, 1st of February, 15th of February, 20th of February, 1st of March, 15th of March, 20th of March and 1st of April. It was interesting to see that many authors of sampled 126 postings in their Instagram profile bio is indicating that they are travellers. Furthermore, the thesis author absorbed that authors for the rest of 173 postings which were not posted by tourists and which were not included in the study often were tourism businesses, tourism associations, tourism organizations, tour agencies and guides.

4.6 Data analysis method

In this thesis, a qualitative thematic analysis has been used as a data analysis method. In this thesis, abduction played an important part in qualitative data analysis – specifically, in the identification of themes, codes, and categories. The approach integrated data-driven codes with theory-driven ones. Furthermore, these thematic analyses include both semantic and latent elements.To conduct thematic analysis thesis author have used Braun's and Clark's (2006) suggested steps: 1) familiarising yourself with your data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes and 6) producing the report.

First, the thesis author familiarised herself with the sampled posts by looking at posted pictures and reading captions multiple times. During this process, initial ideas were noted down. Second, the codes were developed about interesting features of the data across the entire data set, and relevant data to each code was collected. Third, established codes from the previous step were merged into potential themes, and all data relevant to potential themes were gathered. Fourth, themes were reviewed by checking if they work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. In this step, also a thematic map of the analysis was generated. Fifth, the specifics of each theme were refined by doing ongoing analysis. Furthermore, in this step, the overall story that the analysis tells was discovered, and clear definitions and names for each theme were generated. In the last step of this thematic analysis, vivid and compelling extract examples were selected, and final analysis of these extracts were done relating back to the research question and literature. During this process, analysis was produced.

4.7 Ethical consideration of the research

Conducting research by using Instagram as a method of data collection raises specific ethical issues regarding anonymity, informed consent, and privacy. By following recommendations of The Association of Internet Researchers (2020) the ethical issues of data collection and use was considered already in the first phase of this thesis. Project author had to find a way how to deal with ethics from a distance since this thesis is analysing data from Instagram and connection with subjects is non-existent. Christensen and Larsen (2020) have stated that *"to act 'ethically' [when dealing with digital data] will become inherently more challenging because we need to rethink how to treat our participants when they are no longer in front of us."* (Christensen & Larsen, 2020, p. 2).

Digital ethics has become a field of its own; however, there are many disagreements between researchers. According to Fuchs (2018), there are two extremes within internet research ethics: one argues that information online is out there and can and should be analysed without regard to ethical considerations, but the other argues that researcher must obtain informed consent for every piece of data gathered online. However, this thesis applies ethical guidelines for internet research which is neither of two extremes mentioned above - it can be seen as a happy medium between them.

In this thesis, a covert approach was adopted; the researcher did not interact with post authors, informed consent was not sought, and post authors were not debriefed. However, gathered data was anonymised and sensitive data was not studied. Consequently, Instagram posts can be analysed without gaining consent from post authors as long as the data is collected in a public situation where those observed would expect to be observed by strangers, research subjects are no identifiable, are protected from potential harm, are unaware of being researched and researcher is only 'lurker' – data from the internet is gathered with no researcher participation (British Psychological Society, 2013; Townsend & Wallace, 2016; Bryman, 2012; British Psychological Society, 2020). The British Psychological Society's (2013) Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research suggests: *"Where it is reasonable to argue that there is likely no perception and/or expectation of privacy (or where scientific/social value and/or research validity considerations are deemed to justify undisclosed observation), use of research data without gaining valid consent may be justifiable."* (p. 7).

In this thesis, the online observation took place in a public situation where those observed would expect to be observed by strangers - all of the posts collected for the study are classified as public and viewable by any Instagram users. It can be assumed that publishing Instagram post publicly signals that a post is for the public consumption, and it does not contain

information that is perceived by a publisher as sensitive. Furthermore, all off these posts have used the hashtag '#responsibletourism' to reach a broad public who are interested in responsible tourism. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that such posts have a public character: the authors expect and want to be observed by strangers. Moreover, this thesis is happening within the tourism context, and for most of the people research topic is not sensitive; therefore, it can be assumed that informed consent is not a must. Furthermore, it would be not practical and maybe even not possible to conduct consent from all posts authors.

Certainly, vital steps were taken to protect the identity of individual subjects whose posts were used in the study. Names of the post authors were changed, and any sensitive data (e.g. Instagram names) were deleted from the dataset when storing and processing the data. Furthermore, it was decided to not reproduce any pictures from these posts to protect the identity of post authors and to avoid picture copyright infringement. In Aalborg University's copyright guidelines (2020) stated that: *"According to the Danish Copyright Act, you are as a rule not permitted to use other people's pictures and graphics unless you have the permission of the copyright owner."* However, quotes from original posts were used in the analysis to support researcher claims, illuminate experience, illustrate ideas and evoke emotion. In this thesis, captions were treated as 'published text', that precludes the permission of the post author for data use. This was in line with Aalborg University's copyright guidelines (2020): *"If it is a case of reproducing plain text from e.g. a Facebook update, it is in accordance with rules regarding quotations: You may quote from published material if it is in accordance with 'good practice and to the extent conditioned by the purpose'.*

Furthermore, in the final phase of the analysis, all sampled posts were reviewed one more time in the Instagram page to make sure that sampled posts have not been deleted, the content of the posts have not been changed, or status of the posts has not been changed to private. According to Laestadius (2018) *"the removal of content, deletion of entire posts, or changing an account to private may signal that a post contains information that is perceived by a user as sensitive and not for public consumption. [...] Even if consent is seen as implied by the fact that a post is public, removing that post from public access may suggest a withdrawal of consent."* (p. 13).

4.8 The trustworthiness of the research

Postitivsts often have been questioning the trustworthiness of qualitative research, perhaps because in qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed the same way as in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). However, there have been different

terminologies suggested by qualitative researchers to measure the trustworthiness of qualitative research. To evaluate the trustworthiness of this thesis the following four measures were suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) will be used: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability and (4) confirmability.

Credibility (in preference to internal validity) is one of the most crucial aspects in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, and it is about defining how compatible the findings are with reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998, cited in Shenton, 2004). The credibility of this thesis is accessed by using some of Shenton's (2004) suggested provisions which promote confidence that the phenomena under scrutiny are recorded accurately. However, these provisions are modified to address the quality of this particular non-participatory netnographic study.

Firstly, in the first phase of the thesis writing process, while before the first data collection took place, the thesis author developed an early familiarisation with the content of Instagram posts publicly posted with hashtag '#responsibletourism'. Furthermore, in this process, the thesis author generated an understanding of characteristics of these posts authors. This process helped the thesis author to focus on relevant academical literature and theory already in the first phase of the research. Furthermore, the development of an early familiarity with the Instagram content and post authors increased the confidence that phenomena under scrutiny are recorded accurately.

Secondly, tourists posted Instagram posts with hashtag '#responsibletourism' have been randomly sampled for the analysis. Random sampling may neutralise charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants (Shenton, 2004), and it also helps to ensure that within the sample any unknown influences are distributed evenly (Preece, 1994, cited in Shenton, 2004). However, Shenton (2004) emphasises that "*a significant disadvantage of random method, however, stems from the fact that, since the researcher has no control over the choice of informants, it is possible that quiet, uncooperative or inarticulate individuals may be selected."* *(p. 65).* In this thesis context, there was no such a risk since only data posted on Instagram was analyzed an each Instagram post must consist of at least picture.

Thirdly, there were frequent debriefing sessions between thesis writer and her supervisor. In this process, the thesis author's vision towards researched phenomena was widened by the supervisor's shared experiences and perceptions. Furthermore, during this process, approaches, methods, ideas and interpretations were discussed, and it helped thesis author to recognise her

own biases and preferences. According to Shenton (2004), frequent debriefing sessions can increase the credibility of the research.

Fourthly, the thesis author's qualifications and background have been made explicit to increase readers trust to the thesis writer. According to Patton (1990), in qualitative research the researcher plays a significant role in data collection and analysis, and, therefore, the credibility of the researcher is especially important in this kind of research (cited in Shenton, 2004).

Fifth, a thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny has been provided in this thesis. According to Shenton (2004), *"detailed description in this area can be an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them"* (p. 69).

Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability) refers to having sufficient detail of the fieldwork to enable the reader to judge whether the prevailing environment is similar to the situation with which he or she is familiar, and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to other situations and contexts (Shenton, 2004). Stake (1994) and Denscombe (1998) suggest that *"although each case may be unique, it is also an example within a broader group and, as a result, the prospect of transferability should not be immediately rejected"* (cited in Shenton, 2004, p. 69). Therefore, even though this thesis has focused on analysing specific 126 Instagram posts with specific characteristics, it might be possible to some extent to apply the findings to other settings. In order for readers to independently access whether and to what level are the reported findings from this thesis transferable to other situations, the thesis author has provided a rich, detailed description of the research context, structures, assumptions and processes revealed from the data.

Dependability (in preference to reliability) requires the researcher to provide sufficient details and documentation of the methods employed so that the study can be scrutinised and replicated (Cameron, 2011). *"The meeting of the dependability criterion is difficult in qualitative work, although researchers should at least strive to enable a future investigator to repeat the study"* (Shenton, 2004, p. 63). In this thesis, methods employed have been reported in detail in the methodology section, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. Research design discussed in the methodology section can be seen as a prototype model.

Confirmability (in preference to objectivity) refers to ensuring that the study's findings emerge from the data and not the researcher's own predispositions (Shenton, 2004). However, according to Bryman (2016), it is impossible to stay completely objective; yet, the researcher should try not to allow his feelings and values influence the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it. The thesis author carried out the project in good faith and to some level was objective and did not let her feelings and values to influence the research process and results. However, due to the fact that interpretivism paradigm has been applied in this thesis, outcomes are unquestionably affected by the thesis author's interpretation, knowledge, belief system, cultural preference or ways of thinking. However, to increase the level of confirmability, there have been used quotes from original posts. Moreover, analysis is supported by existing literature and theories. Nevertheless, the original posts in appendixes have not been published to protect the privacy of post authors.

5. Analysis

This exploratory research purpose is to investigate how responsible tourism is presented on Instagram by tourists and how these presentations of responsible tourism are representing posters – tourists. It should be noted that this research is focusing mainly on the postings - only on the information provided by the poster. Therefore, the data analysed in this thesis is only from postings - comments and likes are not included in this analysis.

The author of this theses decided to choose thematic analysis as a method of dealing with data. Thesis author developed themes and subthemes by using the theoretical framework of responsible tourism. The two themes are: 1) presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism and 2) presenting responsible tourism outside of three pillars of responsible tourism. With the first theme – 'presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism' six subthemes were identified: 1) presenting environmentally responsible tourism, 2) presenting environmentally-economically responsible tourism, 3) presenting economically-socially responsible tourism, 4) presenting environmentally - economically-socially responsible tourism, 5) presenting environmentally-socially responsible tourism, 6) presenting socially responsible tourism. Furthermore, the second theme – 'presenting responsible tourism outside of three pillars of responsible tourism' has four subthemes: 1) nature travels, 2) experiencing locals, 3) experiencing architecture, 4) this is me. Themes and subthemes were developed in a way that all sampled postings can be coded under only one subtheme. Moreover, within all subthemes, it will be analyzed how tourists are presenting themselves by postings these postings about responsible tourism. However, before approaching themes, it is relevant to describe the data sample.

5.1 Data sample

In this thesis, 126 randomly selected Instagram postings publicly posted by tourists with hashtag '#responisbletourism' have been analyzed. 101 of these postings consists of a single picture and captions, 25 postings consist of more than one photo and captions. 89 postings had been uploaded by females, 31 by males and 6 by a couple (female and male). Gender was discerned from posting-uploaders' display pictures, user-names and Instagram profile bio. Several of the sampled postings had been uploaded by the same individuals; 2 individuals had posted four postings, 2 individual had posted three postings, and 11 individuals had posted two postings. Thus the postings had been uploaded by 103 different individuals (67 females; 30 males; 6 couples).

Due to the observational nature of the research, demographics such as age and ethnicity cannot be verified. However, 72 of posting authors in their Instagram bio have stated where they come from: 22 USA, 13 Findland, 7 India, 4 Spain, 3 Italy, 3 England, 3 Slovakia, 3 France, 3 Germany, 2 Netherlands, 1 Mexico, 1 Irland, 1 Costa Rica, 1 Morocco, 1 Portugal, 1 Philipines, 1 Vanuatu, 1 Japan, 1 Iran. It is not surprising that the most of posting authors have stated that they come from the USA since, according to Statista (2020), the leading country based on Instagram audience size in April 2020 was the USA with 120 million Instagram users. However, it is interesting that 13 posting authors have stated that they come from a small country in Europe - Finland. It could be explained by the fact that sustainability is a hot topic in Finland. For example, in VisitFinlad.com webpage, sustainable travel in Finland is actively presented. Other postings' authors have not identified where they come from; however, some of these individuals in their Instagram bio have stated that they are global citizens, and they are based worldwide. That indicates that travelling is their lifestyle.

In all sampled postings, the average number of likes was 190, and the average number of comments was 8. Furthermore, the engagement rate per posting was calculated; the lowest engagement rate was 0,06%, the highest engagement rate was 70,31%, but median engagement rate was 11,39%. According to Chen (2020) in Instagram median engagement rate in 2020 is 1.60%; however, it needs to be kept in the mind that the more followers Instagram profile has, the lower engagement rate per postings tends to be (Rabo, 2020). It can be explained with the fact that interacting with a small community is very different than interacting with a massive community. It can also be seen in sampled postings that highest engagement rate reached posting with one of the smallest follower numbers.

See Table 3 for the descriptive statistics of the analysed postings. (Descriptive statistics of each analysed posting is possible to see in appendix 1.)

	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Number of likes	190	5	2486
Number of comments	8	0	89
Number of followers	5613	58	91800
Engagment rate for post*	11,39%	0,06%	70,31%

$$* \ Engagement \ rate = \frac{(number \ of \ comments + number \ of \ likes)}{number \ of \ followers}$$

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of analysed postings. Source: own

5.2 Presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism

In order to understand how and how frequently in sampled Instagram postings tourists have positioned responsible tourism within its three pillars, it was relevant to look after features of economically, environmentally and socially responsible tourism. In this thematic analysis, the posting is seen as a unity consisting of two main components: image and captions. The unity of visual and textual analysis has been recognised as critical to entirely making sense of Instagram data (Highfield & Leaver, 2014). According to Sloan and Quan-Haase (2017) "*removing an image from its caption and vice versa creates a significant loss of context*" (p. 8).
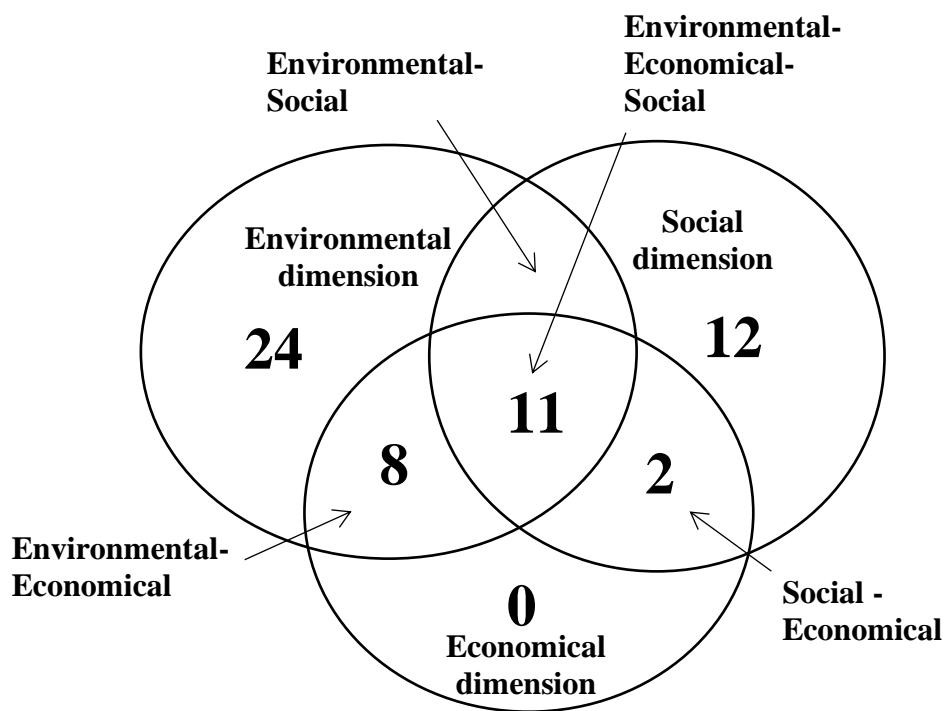
Figure 4. Responsible tourism presentation within three pillars of responsible tourism. Source: own

Thesis author was looking in postings for both direct and indirect presentation of responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism. In all sampled postings (126 in total) responsible tourism within at least one of three responsible tourism dimensions was detected in 57 postings (45.2%). Environmentally responsible tourism was found in 24 postings, combination of environmentally and economically responsible tourism in 8 postings, socially responsible tourism in 12 postings, a combination of socially and economically responsible tourism in 2 postings and responsible tourism within all three pillars of responsible

tourism in 11 postings (see figure 4). Furthermore, in each of this dimension posters self-presentation has been accessed since, according to Goffman's dramaturgical theory (1959), Instagram postings can be seen as a front stage where individuals present themselves selectively by using different self-presentation strategies.

5.2.1 Presenting environmentally responsible tourism

As discussed above, in 24 postings, environmentally responsible tourism was detected. All of these postings were about nature conservation - "*the protection, preservation, management, or restoration of wildlife and natural resources such as forests and water*" ." (American Heritage® Student Science Dictionary, 2014). Furthermore, all pictures of these postings were nature-oriented: the main focus in almost all images was on landscapes and in few images on animals.

The main topic of many of these postings is about lessening tourists trash impact on nature. Several authors of these postings in captions are inviting tourists not to pollute the environment and be responsible for their own trash. For example, Joel in posting nr. 5 requests: "*If you visit this place Just remember not to litter the place*". Furthermore, in all of these postings, beautiful pictures with nature have been posted. For example, in posting nr. 1, Halle shares a photo of a clean, beautiful beach with only two persons in it. After reading the picture's captions, it is possible to conclude that with this picture, she is trying to show how beautiful the ocean is when it is clean and not overcrowded, and how enjoyable it is for tourists when it is in this state. Furthermore, with this posting, she is trying to show what tourists can loose if they are not acting responsibly towards the environment when they are travelling. Joel and Hella in postings discussed above are pressing themselves as caring, pleasant people who care about the environment around them. Both of them have used James (1990) suggested self-presentation strategy – ingratiation. According to Jones and Pittman (1982), a person using ingratiation strategy has a goal to get others like him so he can get some advantage from them. Most likely, the benefits what these posting authors are expecting from the posting viewers are likes, comments, shares and follow requests.

However, some of the postings go further than just talking about how tourists should not litter the destination with their trash. For example, Cora in captions of posting nr. 74. is suggesting for mountain hikers who are visiting the most remote places to take their garbage down with them and not to put it in the mountain hut or shelter trash bins, because it is tough for people to remove all these trash from an isolated area in the mountains. This posting she

accompanies with a picture with herself in the mountains with a hiking backpack full of garbage. Similarly, Santa in the posting nr. 112 presents herself as a responsible tourist by not only taking care of her trash but also picking up the plastic waste left by other tourists. She states that the reason for this action is to protect this remote, beautiful destination from being spoiled by tourists, as it has already happened in a lot of popular tourist destinations. Likewise, Leaf in the post nr. 101. shared a story from his travel where he spent the afternoon volunteering to clean up stunning Bamboo Bay together with volunteer-led movement – 'Trash Hero' which drives change within communities around the world, motivating and supporting them to clean and prevent plastic waste. Furthermore, in this posting, he posted a selfie with himself and working gloves. All authors of the postings mentioned in this paragraph (posting 74; 112; 101) have used self-presentation strategy – exemplification. According to Jones (1990), individuals using this self-presentation strategy go above and beyond the call of duty to appear dedicated. Dominick (1999) has explained that "*The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as morally superior or possessing high moral standards.*" (p. 648). Undeniably, these posting authors did more than they were supposed to do as tourists – Santa and Leaf took care of other tourist garbage and Cora carried her own trash down the mountain even though there were trash bins available. In these postings, they are showcasing themselves as tourists who are possessing high moral standards and trying to serve as a model for how a tourist should behave.

Besides trashing context, in a few captions, it is discussed on how tourists should act responsibly towards wildlife. For example, Brenda in posting nr. 11 is stating*: "not to make too much noise. [...] Don't feed birds. Be a responsible traveller."* In this posting, she has used ingratiation strategy (Jones, 1990) - aiming to increase social attractiveness by being perceived as a sincere, caring and pleasant person. Furthermore, in posting nr. 6. Grace raises awareness of the fact that there is a need for extensive research before tourists choose accommodations and activities. In this posting, she shares a picture with a stunning view with water bungalows in the ocean. With the first look, this picture creates a craving for a vacation in this beautiful resort. However, in the captions, she indicates that water bungalows on the top of coral reefs are overshadowing them and it causes death for these coral reefs since the algae that live inside the coral can not photosynthesise and can not provide food for the coral polyps. She emphasises that many of the influencers who are heavily involved in raising awareness of coral reef degradation are 'hypocrites' because they are also the ones advertising that they are staying in the resorts that are built on top of the coral reef. Grace ends her posting with a phrase: *"We need to do better"*. In this posting, it was possible to detect two of James (1990) proposed self-

presentation strategies: ingratiation and intimidation. By using ingratiation strategy (James, 1990), she has been trying to increase social attractiveness by presenting herself in a positive light by raising awareness about coral riff protection. Intimidation strategy (1990) has been used to call out travel influencers who choose to stay in this water bungalows that are built on the coral riffs even though they are heavily involved in raising awareness of coral reef degradation. She uses statements of anger and calls them hypocrites.

In a few other captions, the authors discussed how tourists should be responsible for their carbon footprint. For example, in the posting nr. 14. Katja accompanies a picture from a beautiful tourist destination with captions where she educates the readers about how a traveller can minimise the plane emissions when there is a significant necessity to fly and when there is no other environmentally friendlier transportation option available than flying. Katja's advices are to fly light, to fly in economy class, to avoid flight with layovers, to try booking with the airline with new aircraft and to look for information about airlines emissions. Furthermore, this posting emphasised that there is a need to create awareness among people about the environmental hazards of flying so more people would be discouraged from flying as much possible. In this posting, Katja is presenting herself as a smart, thoughtful, caring, responsible traveller who cares about minimising not only her own travel carbon footprint but also other traveller carbon footprint by educating people and providing them with useful information. According to Jone's (1990) self-presentation strategy model, these self-presentation behaviours can be defined as ingratiation strategy. Another example of a posting about carbon footprint in tourism is a posting nr. 72. where Julia shares a stunning picture with herself with an enormous mountain behind her and tells about her decision to change travel habits - instead of flying, she started to travel locally. She invites other travellers to look around and appreciate the beautiful things around them and begin to travel more locally. At the end of the posting Julia is inviting readers for discussion in the comment section about their flying practices. In this posting, she is trying to be perceived as a successful and effective person by emphasizing to others the environmental importance of her decision to change her travel habits. Furthermore, she is trying to use her example to convince other Instagram users to travel more locally. According to Jones (1990), this self-presentation strategy is called as competence (self-promotion) strategy. According to Sheldon and Bryant (2016), self-promotion is the main reason behind Instagram since the main motives of Instagram are for narcissistic purposes – active Instagram users are trying to appear cool and be perceived in a positive light.

Furthermore, in a few postings, it is indicated how bad it is to geotag the destination on Instagram. For example, Hale in posting nr. 89 is stating that she is never posting the location of untouched places because there are, what she calls, 'human predators' looking for them. Similarly, Santa in posting nr. 112 states that she is not going to post the location of the place she visited because then this untouched, unexplored location will be destroyed by tourists. According to Jones' self-presentation model, Helle in posting nr. 89 and Santa in the posting nr. 112 have used competence (self-promotion) strategy to gain competence as a skilled and qualified responsible tourist who knows the danger of geotagging and is not using this Instagram function.

5.2.2 Presenting environmentally-economically responsible tourism

As stated above, in 8 postings, environmentally-economically responsible tourism is indirectly and directly mentioned and discussed. All of these postings are within the topic of animal welfare. According to The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Code (2019) animal welfare means *"the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies". (*p.1). Predictably all images shared in these postings display animals. Theses author decided to put these postings within the environmental-economical dimension of responsible tourism because they all are discussing and presenting ways how tourists can use their money responsibly to improve the life for animals who have suffered from tourists in the past. For example, by visiting and financially supporting animal rescue centres and not engaging in activities where animals have been exploited, tourists are acting both environmentally and economically responsibly. Interestingly, all of these postings were related to elephant exploitation in Thailand for touristic purposes.

Almost all of these postings were about Phuket Elephant Sanctuary in Thailand. In these postings, authors shared their ethical encounter with these huge animals and emphasised how good life these animals have in this park compared to the places where they were exploited for touristic and other needs. Furthermore, multiple of these postings stressed how good job this place is doing by not only taking care of these animals but also by educating visitors about elephant protection. In many of these postings' captions, authors shared their feelings how this visit made them feel hearing about cruelty these animals have experienced, e.g. *"[...] it touches my heart to know that the elephants here are rescued from such cruelty and have a final home where they roam, bathe and socialise freely"* (Cassandra, posting 73). Furthermore, some of these postings emphasised how important it is to visit and financially support elephant sanctuary: *"the money from tourist visits goes back into feeding them, keeping the sanctuary*

pristine and ensuring their health and safety" (Ester, posting 53). In all of these postings, posters have used the competence (self-promotion) strategy proposed by Jones (1990) and have been presenting themselves as intelligent, knowledgeable, responsible tourists. Furthermore, in all of these postings, they have emphasized the importance of their actions – by visiting Phuket Elephant Sanctuary they have not only experienced an ethical encounter with these animals, but they also have financially supported elephants which have been suffered from tourists before.

However, almost all of these postings have shared pictures with posting authors being close to elephants, for example, rubbing them, feeding them, bathing them etc. These pictures are controversial with the text in the pictures' captions where posters are positioning themselves as people who are against animal exploitation for touristic needs since, to some level, tourist actions displayed in these pictures could still be seen as animal exploitation for touristic needs since natural elephant behaviour is disrupted. However, Lindsay in the posting nr. 102. shares picture with the elephant being far away and in captions reminds other tourists to do research before they choose their activities: *"It is so important to do your research and support only ethical tourism. From the outside, it might seem like they are well cared for, but if you are offered riding or bathing with them or any kind of interaction that would disrupt their natural behaviours and instincts, it simply cannot be ethical and kind."*

Other two postings which were not related to Phuket Elephant Sanctuary shared two miracle stories on how elephants were saved from tourists. With sharing these stories, the posters are trying to open the eyes of tourists on how cruel it is to engage with touristic activities where animals are exploited. In posting nr. 4. Jake shares the story of how he acted far beyond the responsibility of responsible tourist. He used his money to buy a little elephant who was suffering from tourists. He transported him to the rescue centre, where he could live a peaceful life and will no be longer exploited to entertain the tourists. In this posting, he shared a selfy with him and with the elephant he saved. Jake has used exemplification strategy (Jones, 1990) to present himself to the posting viewers as a person who cares about animals and who is ready to act above and beyond the call of duty. Furthermore, through this posting, he is setting an example for other tourists. According to Alim (2014) people that are using this strategy on Instagram are trying to to be respected and admired by others and showing their moral and integrity, by portraying himself as someone who cares, discipline, honest, generous, and willing to sacrifice to be respected and admired. In another posting - in posting nr. 120., Blanche shares the story of how 78 elephants were miraculously freed for the first time in 44 years

because there were no more tourists to ride them because of COVID-19 outbreak. (COVID-19 is influenza virus which was the reason why the tourism industry among other industries was almost entirely stopped worldwide in 2020.) In this posting, Blanche has used an ingratiation strategy (Jones, 1990) by providing interesting information about how deathly virus improved the life for a lot of elephants. According to Wong (2012), people who are using this self-presentation strategy are aiming to increase social attractiveness.

5.2.3 Presenting economically-socially responsible tourism

In 2 Instagram postings, the responsible tourism within the economic and social dimensions was detected. In both postings, the topic of income inequality in the tourism industry was touched. Issac in posting 75. and Stephan in posting 77. suggests that tourists should choose their activities carefully to support employment and income-earning opportunities for the host community and to contribute to the poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, both postings indicated that there is a need for the development of meaningful connections between local people and tourists. Issan and Stephan both gave examples of what they did during their trips. Isan bought products from the local market to learn about local people and to support the local farmers instead of the big food chains. Stephan hired local porters to keep the money in the community and to experience a place in a more meaningful way by learning from locals. Furthermore, Stephan shared a picture with an enormous gorilla which he encountered during his hike and emphasised how undeniably important it was for his safety to hire these experienced porters. Issac and Stephan in these two postings have used competence (self-promotion) strategy (Jones, 1990) to present themselves. They are trying to be perceived as skilled and qualified travellers who during their travels are able to make the right decisions which positively affects themselves and local people, and who are able to provide useful information to posting viewers.

5.2.4 Presenting environmentally -economically-socially responsible tourism

Responsible tourism within all three dimensions of responsible tourism was detected in 11 postings. All of these postings suggest to other travellers to choose their activities, accommodations and destinations carefully since their travel activities can have both a negative and a positive impact on the local environment, economy, society and culture. In almost all of these postings, it is stated that tourists should carefully research and plan their activities so that the negative effect of tourism would be minimised and positive impact will be maximised. For instance, Charlotte in the posting nr. 3. states that with 'bucket-list mentality' people end up

choosing the same site or activity that everyone else on Instagram is looking for; however, it contributes to overtourism and also travel experiences are just consumed. *"But places and people are not ours to consume; we must travel with the mindset of learning, growing, and experiencing new cultures, perspectives, people, food, and ideas. There are, however, choices we can make to travel more ethically and sustainably. One way is to choose our activities carefully."* (Charlotte, posting 3).

In the multiple captions, authors state examples of what kind of responsible travel choices they have done during their travel to maximise the positive impact on the local environment, economic, society and culture. For instance, Charlotte hired a local guide to keep the money in the community and to experience a place in a more meaningful way (posting 3), Harriet visited the local organic farm to support the local organic farmer (posting 16), and Kani stayed in an eco-accommodation run by local people to immerse herself in the region and also to make sure that the money she spent is directly supporting the local villages (posting 10). Furthermore, the bigger picture on how important it is for the local community that tourists make responsible travel choices were drawn in the posting nr 10.: *"In this family-run lodge, all the staff and guides (nearly 50 locals) came from the remote villages of Semonkong, who otherwise have no choice but to go to the capital Maseru or further to South Africa to work. Some have even reverse-migrated in the process"* (Kani, posting 10). In all of these postings discussed in this paragraph (postings 10; 3; 16), posting authors have been stating what they have done to travel responsibly and what difference has it made in a bigger picture and how other people can follow their example. According to Jones (1990), this self-presentation behaviour can be regarded as competence (self-promotion). According to Dominick (1999), the goal of the competence (self-promotion) strategy is *"to be perceived as skilled and qualified. Common characteristics include claims about abilities, accomplishments, performance, and qualifications."* (p. 648). Undeniably, authors of these postings are trying to be perceived as skilled and qualified responsible travelers by claiming their responsible tourism performances during their travel.

5.2.5 Presenting environmentally-socially responsible tourism

In 2 postings, environmentally-socially responsible tourism was detected. In both postings, awareness is raised about environmental problems within two destinations mentioned in postings and how does it affect local people. These two postings' authors during their travel have met locals and learned about their struggle in relation to the polluted environment around them.

Jefferson in posting nr. 65 has posted a photo of dark skin man with a lot of plastic trash tangled on his back. In picture's captions, he explains that this local Ladakhi man is trying to save his world from *"the 'very highly sophisticated, well off and educated travellers' from the plains. The ones who nonchalantly roll down their windows and chuck water bottles, chips packets and empty tetra packs out."* He ends his postings with a phrase:*"Keep away from this paradise if you belong to this tribe of highly sophisticated, well off educated travellers! Karma will find you!"* Ulrika in the posting nr. 79 shares three pictures of herself in Jakarta. In posting's captions, she raises awareness about the fact that Jakarta is sinking in a fast phase and putting its 10million population at risk. Furthermore, in the posting's captions, she voices her opinion about the local government's effort in improving this situation: *"Moving to Borneo won't solve Jakarta's problems, which are expected to worsen with climate change. Until governments take proactive steps to reduce their carbon footprint and take care of the environment, they will not be able to out run Mother Nature."*

In these two postings discussed above, Ulrika and Jefferson have presented themselves as responsible tourists that cares but not only about having a good time during their travels but also about learning about local people and their struggle. In both of these postings, ingratiation strategy (Jones, 1990) has been indirectly used. Both postings' authors are trying to become more likeable in other Instagram users eyes by appearing in these postings in a positive light as caring persons who care about people and the environment around them. Moreover, in posting nr. 65. Jefferson has used one more of Jones (1990) self-presentation strategies – intimidation. He has used a statement of anger and threat targeted towards what he calls 'well off educated travellers' who do not take care of their trash. According to Jones and Pittman (1982), intimidation is used to induce fear in a target and increase the effectiveness of contingent threats.

5.2.6 Presenting socially responsible tourism

As stated above in 12 postings, socially responsible tourism has been presented. In many of these postings, posters are directly discussing how tourists should act socially responsibly when they are travelling. For example, Shivya in posting nr. 8 raises discussion if it is ethically correct to visit slump areas during travel, Lelde in posting nr. 95 invites others not to fabricate postings and show the reality of places and people they see in the most beautiful way that they can capture it and share it with others and Tara in posting nr. 98 emphasis how big a difference it can make if tourists positively interact with locals and pay at least a little effort to learn about them. Shivya, Lelde and Tara in these postings have presented themselves

by use of ingratiation strategy (Jones, 1990). They have been aiming to gain likability from others by discussing different social issues regarding tourism.

Furthermore, a few postings coded under this subdimension talks about volunteering tourism. For example, Maria in posting nr. 2 has posted a beautiful picture with the river surrounded by huge mountains, and in the captions, she talks about what is global citizenship and why it was important for her to volunteer in the small village in Laos. *"Global citizenship is based on the idea that we exist as human beings, and through volunteering overseas, we were able to connect and empower people on the complete opposite side of the world from home."* (Maria, posting 2). In this posting, Maria is trying to be perceived as a skilled responsible tourist by claiming the importance of her volunteering activities in the small village in Laos. Furthermore, she has been educating posting viewers about global citizenship and why it is important. According to Jones (1990) self-presentation strategy model, these actions can be regarded as the competence (self-promotion) strategy. According to Wong (2012), people using competence (self-promotion) strategy are motivated to be achievers and to be regarded as a successful, effective, or productive person (Wong, 2012).

During the time when the thesis was written, and when data from Instagram was collected, there was a highly contagious virus outbreak causing many deaths worldwide. On 11 of March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic, and there were many different measures applied worldwide to keep people distant from each other to limit COVID-19 spread. Therefore, many of the postings collected in March and April months are talking about COVID-19. Many of these postings are coded under this subdimension because they are inviting people to be socially responsible tourists and not to travel during the COVID-19 virus outbreak. For example, Maxine in posting nr. 28 has shared a picture taken from her balcony and in picture's captions are inviting travellers to share photos with surroundings around them. She insists people be responsible for themselves and people around them and to not traveller anywhere during COVID-19 outbreak. Furthermore, she encourages people to open eyes and appreciate the beauty around them. *"Trust me, you'll be surprised how much cool things there are around you that you somehow just haven't noticed before"* (Maxine, posting 28). Another example is from posting nr. 48 where Vera has posted some of her favourite photos from her travels, and she suggests people follow government's guidelines to stay inside and not to travel. In the posting's captions, Vera writes: *"Travel has been a very important necessity in my life and it pains me to say now is not the time to travel, internationally or locally. […] We all need to do our part to contain and conquer this monster*

[COVID-19]. We all want life to go back to whatever is normal for you. The sooner we collectively act, the sooner we can get 2020 back on track. " (Vera, posting 48). These two postings represent Vera and Maxine in a positive light as smart and caring people who knows how to increase their social attractiveness by raising awareness about how important it is for everyone to contribute towards situations improvement. Furthermore, Maxine is trying to build a closer bond with posting viewers by inviting people to post pictures from the place they are staying during COVID-19 outbreak. According to Jones (1990) self-presentation model, these actions can be coded under ingratiation strategy.

5.3 Presenting responsible tourism outside of three pillars of responsible tourism

As stated above, the thesis author was looking in picture captions for both direct and indirect presentation of responsible tourism by tourists/travellers within three pillars of responsible tourism. However, in 69 postings, it was not possible to identify responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism. Nevertheless, it is still relevant to investigate what these postings' authors have been posting with hashtag '#responsibletourism'. By investigating shared pictures and pictures' captions, five subthemes have been developed: nature travels (36 postings), experiencing locals (4 postings), experiencing architecture (6 postings), this is me (17 postings).

5.3.1 Nature travels

In many of the postings (36 postings) which were not coded under the theme – 'Presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism' posting authors have positioned responsible tourism as travel close to nature. In these postings, tourists have shared their travel stories (in the form of pictures and texts) from their nature travels. Even though these postings are about nature travels, it was not possible to identify responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism. Environmentally responsible tourism is more than just travelling close to nature – it is tourism which minimizes negative environmental impacts of tourism (International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, 2002).

In almost all of these postings, there have been posted pictures with beautiful landscapes. In many of these landscape pictures' captions tourists have shared their travel experience from travelling close to nature and have stated how magical and breathtaking it was to be so close to nature. For example, Rhianna in posting nr. 29 shares a picture with a wild river and in captions writes: *"If there's one thing I've learned while travelling, it's that you should always turn around, look up, take a moment to appreciate every single angle. You never*

know what view awaits on the other side of that beautiful destination. [...] I love living in a big city, but I find the moment I'm amongst trees, rivers or fields, I'm reminded to breathe, to pause. Everything gets reset." Another example is from posting nr. 26 where Louise has posted a picture with beautiful stony beach and in the captions she states: *"While most people favor sandy beaches, I can't help but love coral beaches like this one in Bonaire. There's something so calming about the sound of the water washing over the coral... it's almost like it's own sort of music."* These two postings represent posting authors as travellers who know how to stop for a moment in an everyday rush and look deeper into nature, think, enjoy and just breath in. In both of these postings, the authors are presenting themselves by using ingratiation strategy, which was proposed by Jones (1990). Through these postings, they are trying to increase their likability by talking about their travel experiences close to nature and by presenting themselves in a positive light as persons who apricate the nature around them.

Furthermore, in some of these landscape pictures' captions authors have shared more than personal travel experience from their nature travel - they have shared facts and information about a destination. For example, Irvin in posting nr. 50 shares picture with river and in captions writes: *"Beginning from its congruent with Mukungwa at 20Km North-West of Kigali, the river flows gently towards Kigali as if to just swallow Nyabugogo en route southwards to meet Akanyaru, another 20 Km downstream. It is at this point that the river becomes Akagera.*" Irvin in this posting is positioning himself as a competent person who is able to share interesting information about the destination to posting viewers. According to Jones (1990) proposed five self-presentation strategies, this behaviour could be interpreted as an ingratiation strategy.

Furthermore, in a couple of postings under this subtheme, there have been posted pictures with animals. For example, Teo in posting nr. 7 have posted a picture with dogs pulling dog sledge and in captions writes*: "Was such a fun race! We stopped racing at 170km/230km. Super happy with my team, they ate everything I gave them, all kept going and kept a good speed. "* In this posting, Teo is trying to increase his social attractiveness on Instagram by sharing an interesting travel experience close to nature with dogs. According to Jones (1990), it is ingratiation strategy.

5.3.2 Experiencing locals

Four postings of 69 postings in which responsible travel behaviour within three pillars of responsible tourism was not detected were coded under the subtheme experiencing locals. In these postings, pictures with locals are posted, and in picture captions, stories from encounters with locals are shared. However, it was decided not to code these postings under

subtheme 'socioculturally responsible tourism' because simply sharing stories about tourists and locals encounter can not be identified as socioculturally responsible tourism. Socioculturally responsible tourism is more than meeting locals. Una Vaina Bien Spanish (2020) in their webpage has defined socially responsible tourism as *"tourism that aims to limit or mitigate the potential negative impacts that it may have on visited communities"*.

Marc in posting nr. 68 has shared a portrait with a local girl, and in picture captions, have written multiple different hashtags besides hashtag '#responsibletourism'. Some of these hashtags are '#cambodian', '#childrenphoto', '#travelphotography', '#asiangirl', '#sadeyes', '#browneyes', '#brownhair', '#beautygirl', '#brownies', '#kids', '#childmodel', '#lovely'. Furthermore, in the picture's captions, he has identified that he is a professional photographer who likes to travel and capture a beautiful moment from his journeys. Similarly Kevin in posting nr. 81 has shared a portrait with a little local girl from his trip to Colombia. Furthermore, also in the last two postings under this subtheme (posting 115 and 124) Michae shares his pictures where he has photographed local people from local farmer marked. For example, in picture nr. 124 it is possible to see a family of three (mum, dad and little daughter) in their flower shop. In picture captions, he writes: *"A family sits among the bright yellow petals of their flower shop. I love the way the Dad is sort of side-eyeing his daughter with a grin, while she sips her milk without a care".* In all of these postings, posting authors have used a competence (self-promotion) strategy (Jones, 1990) to present themselves in a positive light as skilled and qualified photographers who love to travel and capture pictures during their journey and who pays attention to little details in their photos.

However, the thesis author finds it controversial that local kids are the main subject of all of these photos, and still all of these photos are hashtagged with hashtag '#responsibeltourism'. Travelling responsibly also means taking great care to avoid exploiting the children which tourists encounter on the road (Raymond, 2019). The Project Childhood Prevention Pillar (2013) in their report ''The Child Safe Traveller'' have explained that 'child safe tourism' is part of 'responsible tourism' and it recognises its impact on children (both direct or indirect) and takes an active role in contributing to a safer tourism environment for children. Even if these postings' authors have asked for consent, it is still unethical and dangerous to post a picture with someone else's children in social media. In the Vice article, 'Stop Picking Up Random African Children and Posting Them on Instagram', Dipo Faloyin (2019) states that photographing children during travel is self-serving, reductive, and disrespectful.

5.3.3 Experiencing architecture

There are 6 postings which were coded under this subtheme. In these postings, responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism was not identified; however, posting authors have positioned responsible tourism as travel where local architecture is experienced.

For example, Elisa in posting nr. 15 have shared a picture with ancient construction and in captions have explained that it is a stepwell from the city of Ahmedabad. Furthermore, in picture's captions, she has expressed how special this construction is: *"To be honest, it's impossible to show the detail and wonderful work applied in this delicate construction"* (Elisa, posting 15). Another example is from posting nr. 118 where Olive has posted a picture with a colourful temple in Thailand and states that she has been in Thailand and Vietnam and has seen considerable differences in religion in these two countries. Olive further explains that *"the temples of Thailand are grand, full of color and Buddhist. In Vietnam, the temples are dedicated to influential people such as national heroes and emperors and they are red, to symbolize strenght."* Elisa and Olive in these two postings have presented themselves as persons who are interested in architecture when they are travelling and as persons who have an eye for spotting details and differences in different buildings. According to Jones (1990) developed a five-dimensional model of self-presentation strategies; these two posting authors have used an ingratiation strategy. Undeniably, Elisa and Olive with these two postings are trying to gain positive feedback from posting viewers by presenting themselves in a positive light by sharing interesting information in their postings.

5.3.4   It is me

The last developed subtheme for postings which position responsible tourism outside of the three pillars of responsible tourism is called 'It is me'. Seventeen postings of all sample belong to this subtheme. All postings of this subtheme consist of pictures from the travel of a posing person who has been identified as posting author, and none of these postings could be coded under any other subtheme discussed above. Almost all of these postings do not have any text in captions besides few hashtags, and this is one of the reasons why it was not possible to group these posting under any other subdimension discussed above.

In all of these postings, the main focus has been on authors physical appearance presentation on Instagram. Furthermore, all of these postings identify that these posing pictures are from visiting different destinations. For example, Layli in posting nr. 24 has posted a picture with herself posing in a beautiful dress on the background of flowers in the Dominica Republic.

In this picture, she has a big beautiful smile and wind is blowing her hair in her face. Another example can be mentioned from the posting nr. 31 where Nikie has posted a picture with herself posing at the promenade in Dubai. It is clear that in these two examples and all other postings grouped under this subtheme, posting authors are trying to increase social attractiveness in Instagram by presenting their physical appearance and by indicating that they have visited specific tourist destinations. In this case, Instagram satisfies their desire to show-off fine travel experiences and to some level their wealth. According to Jones (1990), this behaviour can be regarded as ingratiation strategy.

6. Conclusion

This exploratory research purpose was to investigate how responsible tourism is positioned on Instagram by tourists and how these presentations of responsible tourism are representing posters – tourists. However, it was decided to focus only on postings, and therefore in this thesis, only data from postings have been analysed - comments and likes are not included in this analysis. To answer to the research question, this thesis used an abductive research approach - thesis has been moving back and forth between deductive and inductive approaches. It has constantly been moving back and forth from one type of research activity to another, and between empirical to theoretical dimensions of analysis - matching between theory and reality.

In collecting qualitative data from Instagram, the research method of netnography developed by Kozinets (1998) was applied. In this thesis, the Instagram postings posted by tourists under hashtag '#responsibletourism' have been examined using a non-participation covert approach, also referred to as 'lurking' (Dholakia & Zhang, 2004; Bryman, 2016). From ten randomly selected days from the first four-month of 2020, 126 postings posted by tourists were sampled.

Qualitative thematic analysis was used to interpret these 126 sampled Instagram postings. Abduction played an important part in qualitative data analysis – specifically, in the identification of themes, codes, and categories. The approach integrated data-driven codes with theory-driven ones. The three-dimensional theoretical framework of responsible tourism was chosen to provide a perspective/lens through which the presentation of responsible tourism by tourists on Instagram was examined. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of responsible tourism was used to generate themes and subthemes. After tourists' representations of responsible tourism were interpreted, the theory of strategic self-presentation by Jones (1990) was applied to generate understanding of how authors (tourists) of sampled postings have been presenting themselves through these postings.

In the first step of the analysis, the thesis author was searching in sampled postings for both direct and indirect presentation of responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism. In all sampled postings (126 in total) responsible tourism within at least one of three responsible tourism dimensions was detected in 57 postings (45.2%). In many of the postings coded under the theme 'Presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism' authors of postings have been shared their responsible travel behaviour and inviting others to follow their examples. Furthermore, there were also many postings which were

providing useful information on how other tourists during their travel can behave as responsible tourists.

Environmentally responsible tourism was found in 24 postings. In the literature review, it was concluded that many tourism researchers have focused only on environment aspect and have been neglecting economic and social aspects of responsible tourism. It is possible to see similarity also in the analysis of this thesis– many of the sampled postings which were coded under the theme - 'Presenting responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism' has been within the environmental dimension of responsible tourism. All of these postings were about nature conservation. Furthermore, all pictures of these postings were nature-oriented: the main focus in almost all images was on landscapes and in few images on animals. The main topic of many of these postings was about lessening tourists trash impact on nature. Furthermore, in a few captions, it was discussed how tourists should act responsibility towards wildlife. In a few other captions, the authors discussed how tourists should be responsible for their carbon footprint, but in the other two postings, it was indicated how bad it is to geotag the destination on Instagram.

Combination of environmentally and economically responsible tourism was presented in 8 sampled postings. All of these postings are within the topic of animal welfare. *(p.1).* Predictably all images shared in these postings displayed animals. Almost all of these postings were about Phuket Elephant Sanctuary in Thailand. In these postings, authors shared their ethical encounter with these huge animals and emphasised how important it is to support this place financially. However, almost all of the pictures in these postings were controversial with the text in the pictures' captions. All of these posting authors positioned themselves as people who are against animal exploitation for touristic needs. To some level, tourist actions displayed in these pictures could still be seen as animal exploitation for touristic needs since natural elephant behaviour is disrupted.

Socially responsible tourism was detected in 12 postings. In many of these postings, posters are directly discussing how tourists should act socially responsibly when they are travelling. Furthermore, a few postings coded under this subdimension talked about volunteering tourism. Moreover, during the time when the thesis was written, there was a highly contagious virus outbreak called COVID-19. Few of the sampled postings collected in March and April months are talking about COVID-19 and were inviting people to be socially responsible tourists and not to travel during the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

A combination of socially and economically responsible tourism was detected in 2 postings. In both postings, the topic of income inequality in the tourism industry was touched.

Responsible tourism within all three pillars of responsible tourism was detected in 11 postings. All of these postings suggest to other travellers to choose their activities, accommodations and destinations carefully since their travel activities can have both a negative and a positive impact on the local environment, economy, society and culture.

Sampled postings in which responsible tourism within the three-dimensional theoretical framework of responsible tourism was not detected were coded under the theme 'Presenting responsible tourism outside of three pillars of responsible tourism'. The majority of these postings where representing responsible tourism as travel close to nature. In these postings, tourists have shared their travel stories from their nature travels. However, according to International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (2002) environmentally responsible tourism is more than just travelling close to nature – it is tourism which minimises negative environmental impacts of tourism, and therefore these postings could not be coded under subtheme 'presenting environmentally responsible tourism'.

Four postings of 69 postings in which responsible travel behaviour within three pillars of responsible tourism was not detected were coded under the subtheme experiencing locals. In these postings, pictures with locals are posted, and in picture captions, stories from encounters with locals are shared. However, the thesis author finds it controversial that local kids are the main subject of all of these photos, and still all of these photos are hashtagged with hashtag '#responsibeltourism'. Travelling responsibly also means taking great care to avoid exploiting the children which tourists encounter on the road (Raymond, 2019).

There are 6 postings which were coded under this subtheme 'Experiencing architecture'. In these postings, responsible tourism within three pillars of responsible tourism was not identified; however, posting authors have positioned responsible tourism as travel where local architecture is experienced.

The last developed subtheme for postings which position responsible tourism outside of three pillars of responsible tourism is called 'It is me'. Seventeen postings of all sample belong to this subtheme. All postings of this subtheme consist of pictures from the travel of a posing person who has been identified as posting author, and none of these postings could be coded under any other subtheme discussed above. Almost all of these postings do not have any text in captions besides few hashtags, and this is one of the reasons why it was not possible to group these posting under any other subdimension discussed above.

By interpreting the self-presentation in sampled postings thesis author found out that in a majority of sampled postings posters (tourists) have been represented by the use of ingratiation strategy or competence (self-promotion) strategy. However, only in a few postings, exemplification strategy has been used, and fewer, Intimidation strategy was detected. Moreover, in none of the sampled postings, the supplication strategy was found as a self-presentation strategy. These findings to some level are similar to Chua and Choib (2010) studies where they researched self-presentation on social media and argued that three of Jones (1990) proposed categories (competence, ingratiation, and supplication) are the most common types of self-presentation observed in online interaction (e.g. Chua & Choib, 2010). Moreover, in all of the sampled posting, it is possible to see social desirability bias - tendency to underreport socially undesirable attitudes and behaviours and to over-report more desirable attributes.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that the epistemological position of this thesis was subjective. Thesis author believed that there is a strong linkage between the researcher and research subject because people cannot be separated from their knowledge. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that to a certain level, this thesis outcome has been affected by the author's interpretation, knowledge, belief system, cultural preference or ways of thinking. The thesis author by interpreting the standpoints the individuals pursued to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its unique context instead of generalising the base of understanding for a wider population.

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