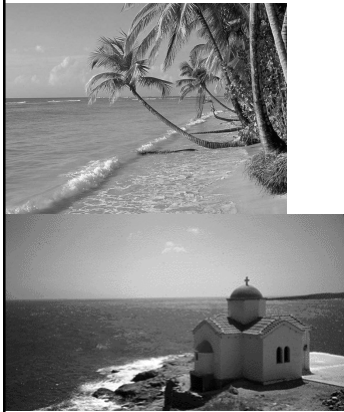
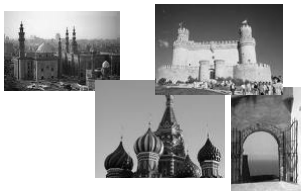


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Travelers' Prior Knowledge and Information Sources Portfolios

**Journal of Information Technology and
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Why searching information?

Maximize utility and reduce uncertainty of a decision
(Stigler, 1961)

↓


Entertainment & communication
(Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998)
Pleasure
(Gursoy & McCleary, 2004)

↓

Daydreaming (Decrop, 2006)
Part of the travel experience (Lee et al., 2007)

2

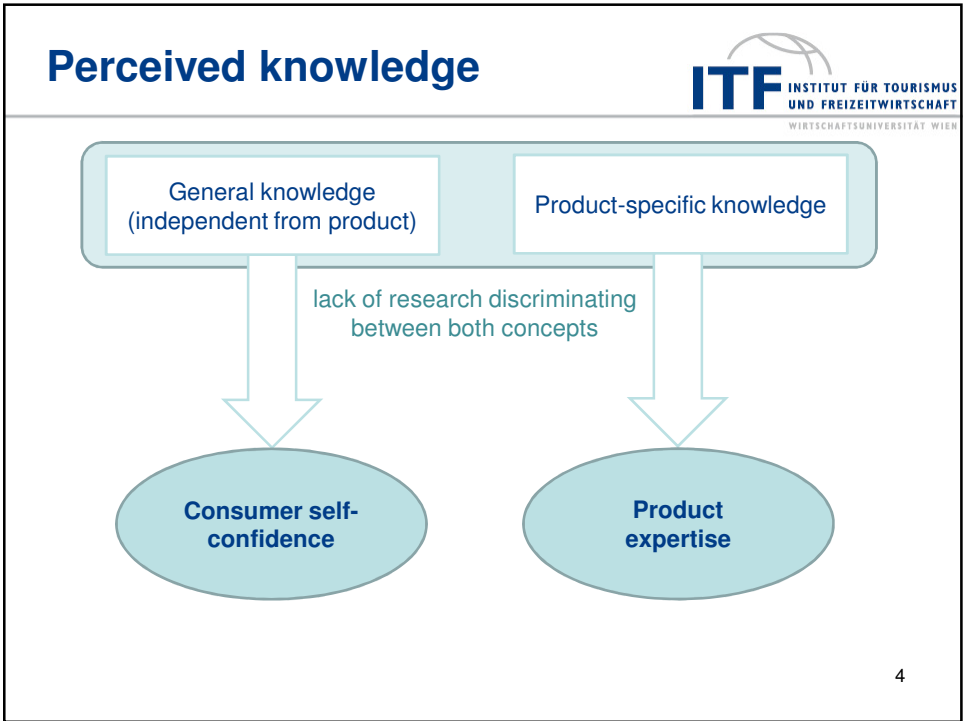
Sources portfolios and search strategies



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Author(s)	Data	Focus	Differences explained by...
Zins (2002)	National Guest Survey for Austria	Search strategies of city versus leisure travelers	Trip-specific characteristics
Bieger and Laesser (2004)	Swiss travel market	Comparison of pre- and post-decision stage	Trip-specific characteristics
Beritelli, Bieger, and Laesser (2007)	Swiss travel market	Influence of Internet on information sources portfolios	Trip-specific characteristics

3



Implications & research questions

...Use of cross-sectional data

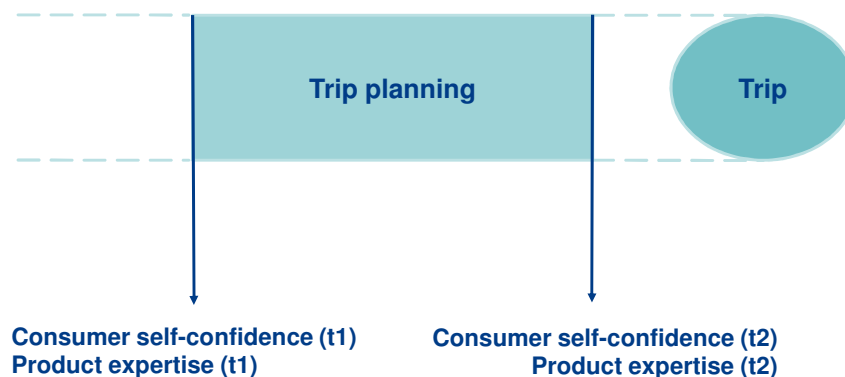
- Which typical patterns of information sources used can be identified taking into consideration that the information search process lasts until the end of the travel experience?
- How do these patterns change from pre-trip information sourcing to during-trip information sourcing?

...Consumer knowledge not investigated as descriptor

- Which impact do different patterns of information sourcing during trip planning have on the change of knowledge-related factors such as consumer self-confidence and product expertise?

5

Framework of the study



6

Conceptualizations used

- **Consumer self-confidence:** an individual's perceived knowledge or ability to **handle consumption-relevant activities** which are not specific to a product domain or category but which refer to **overall marketplace decisions** and behaviours

- **Product expertise:** an individual's perceived knowledge concerning **travel-related aspects** such as decision making and information search in the **context of trip planning**

7

Information Sources Used


<i>Information sources used</i>	<i>Pre-trip stage</i>	<i>Usage ratio (pre-trip)</i>	<i>During-trip stage</i>	<i>Usage ratio (during-trip)</i>
	<i>n =</i>		<i>n =</i>	
Tour operator brochures	514	60 %	195	23 %
Tour operator websites	447	62 %	143	30 %
Travel agencies	514	54 %	195	15 %
Travel agency websites	447	41 %	143	14 %
Convention & visitor bureaus	514	27 %	195	41 %
Convention & visitor bureau websites	447	41 %	143	32 %
Hotel/accommodation brochures	514	42 %	195	47 %
Hotel/accommodation websites	447	58 %	143	47 %
Travel guides/journals	514	48 %	195	68 %
Online travel guides/journals	447	39 %	143	32 %
General internet pages	447	59 %	143	32 %
Other internet sources	447	36 %	143	11 %
Friends/relatives	514	61 %	195	34 %
Communities/ fora	447	27 %	143	14 %
Own experiences	514	82 %	195	30 %

Information source	Cluster					
	<i>Traditionalists</i>	<i>Autodidacts</i>	<i>Socializers</i>	<i>Non-commercialists</i>	<i>Commercialists</i>	<i>Independents</i>
Tour operator brochures	6.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	9.3	0.6
Tour operator websites	3.7	0.1	0.2	0.2	10.1	0.6
Travel agencies	5.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	7.8	0.5
Travel agency websites	2.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	8.2	0.3
Conv. & visitor bureaus	0.3	0.7	1.4	3.4	0.2	0.2
CVB websites	1.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	5.1	0.5
Hotel / accomm. brochures	0.3	1.3	2.3	5.2	0.4	0.4
Hotel / accomm. websites	2.9	0.2	0.2	0.2	9.9	1.0
Travel guides / journals	0.5	1.6	3.9	7.2	0.5	0.5
Online travel guides / jour.	1.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	8.1	0.4
General internet pages	0.1	1.4	2.7	6.4	0.2	0.4
Other internet sources	0.0	1.0	1.2	2.3	0.0	0.1
Friends / relatives	0.2	1.9	7.3	12.8	0.1	0.5
Communities / fora	1.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	4.6	0.2
Own experiences	0.2	9.5	3.7	14.0	0.4	0.7

Pre-trip	During-trip				Total
	<i>Autodidacts</i>	<i>Socializers</i>	<i>Non-commercialists</i>	<i>Independents</i>	
Traditionalists	44	41	13	49	147
Commercialists	2	9	12	2	25
Independents	107	56	8	171	342
Total	153	106	33	222	514

Note: The rows show the pre-trip and the columns the during-trip cluster membership

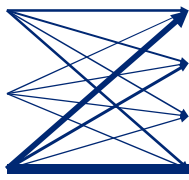
Shifters and non-shifters



Traditionalists

Commercialists

Independents



Autodidacts

Socializers


Non-commercialists

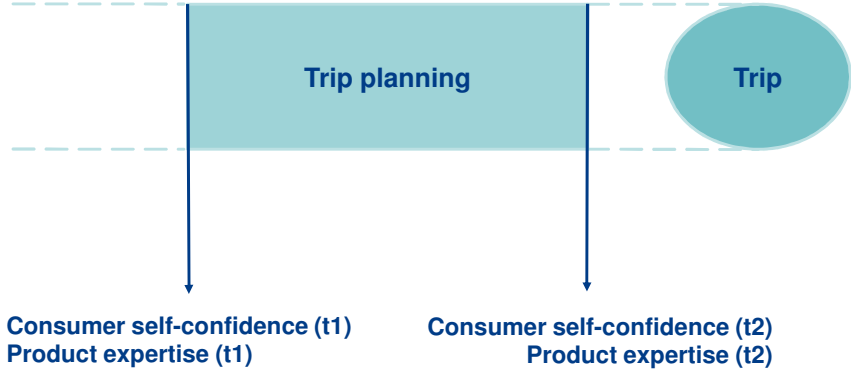
Independents

Note: Left hand: before the trip; right hand: during the trip.
The width of the arrows is related to the frequency of cluster membership before and during the trip.

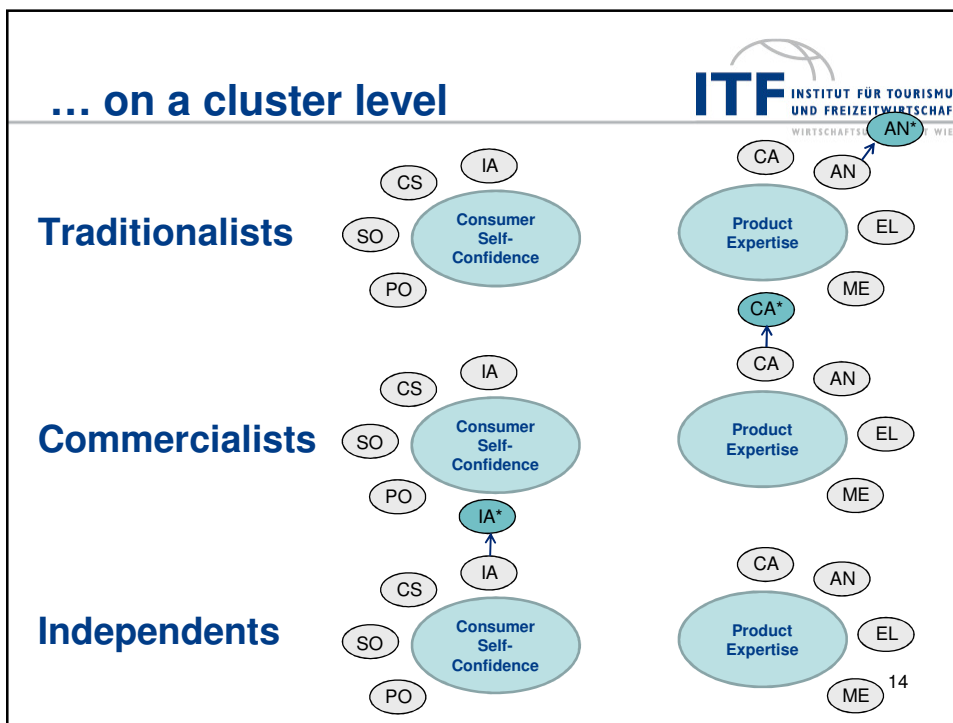
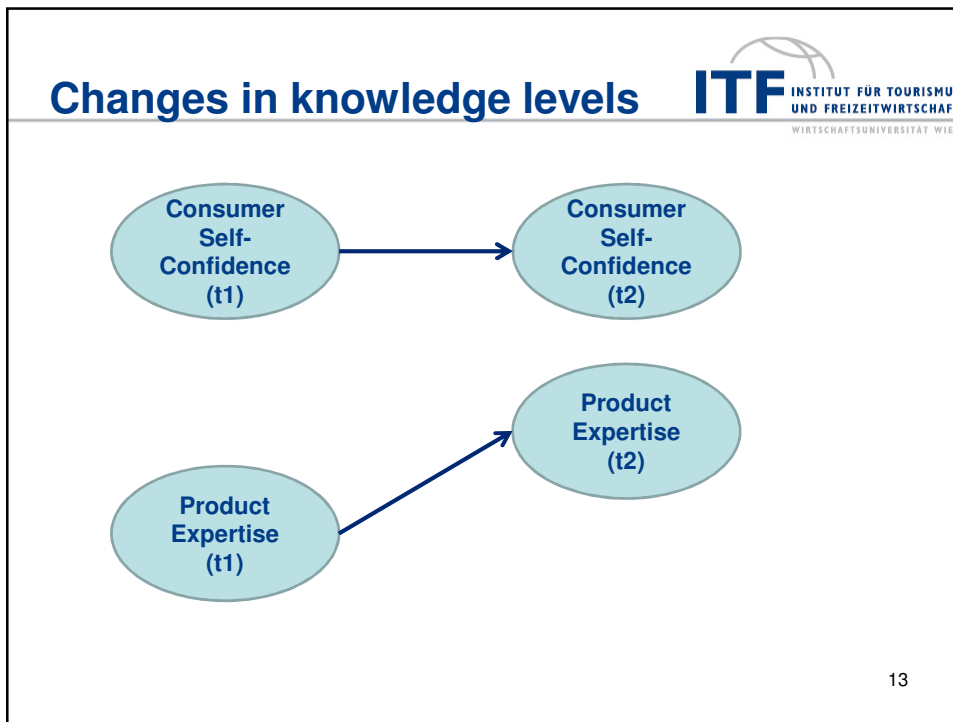
11

Framework of the study





12



Conclusion

- **6 typical patterns for information sourcing taking into consideration that the information search process lasts until the end of the travel experience**
- **Shifters as well as non-shifters**
- **Information search increases the level of knowledge**
- **Knowledge dimensions do change to a different degree depending on the cluster membership**

15

Limitations

- **High knowledge levels**
- **Small sample size limits generalizability**
- **No distinction between complete and incomplete travel plans**
- **No distinction between trip characteristics (such as length of stay, organization etc.)**
- **No distinction between travel decisions**
- **Source usage as sole measure (no variation in cognitive effort considered)**

16