

**Tourists' vacation choice structure:**  
Influence of values and implications for green  
tourism

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*To Elis and Enso*



# **Abstract**

In the vacation choice structure, denoting how vacation choices such as choice of destination, travel mode, and accommodation, are related and prioritized by tourists, every choice plays an important and unique role. Although it has been recognized that vacation choices inter-relate in several different aspects, previous research has primarily studied the primacy aspect. It can however be argued that to only study the primacy of vacation choices is too limited and that it is necessary to also include other aspects, especially how important a certain vacation choice is to the tourist. This knowledge is important in order to get a more holistic picture of the vacation choice structure, but also for understanding the demand for green tourism. It can be argued that the vacation choice structure has an influence on tourists' possibility to make green choices. This thesis extends present knowledge by analyzing the inter-relation between vacation choices and providing a framework for how the vacation choice structure is related to tourists' green choices. The influence of personal factors such as values and green attitudes on the vacation choice structure and tourists' green choices are also examined. Four studies with quantitative data are included in the present thesis.

The findings of the first study show that the vacation choice structure varies with regard to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices, which further explains the inter-relation between vacation choices. The findings also show that familiarity with a destination has an effect on how important and inflexible the destination choice is experienced. The second study shows how value orientation mediates the relationships between socio-demographic factors and tourists' green attitude. The findings suggest that the relationships vary depending on what vacation choice that is in focus, indicating that it is not possible to talk about a general green attitude in tourism. The study thus contributes to the knowledge about how values and green attitudes in tourism are related.

In the third study, the findings from the second study are advanced by showing a positive relationship between the value type universalism, green attitudes, and tourists' green buying intentions. This further enhances the knowledge about determinants for tourists' green buying intentions. In the final study, the inter-relation between vacation choices are examined by studying the trade-off tourists make between and within various choices in a vacation package. If and when green alternatives are included in the different choices are also studied, as well as the influence of value orientation of tourists' green choices. The study advances the knowledge about the

vacation choice structure and its relation to green tourism. The results also suggest that value orientation does not directly affect the vacation choice structure.

To conclude, the findings of the present thesis show that it is not possible to define a universal vacation choice structure. It is suggested that the motive of the vacation and the choice situation play important roles here. Further, it can be concluded values do influence green buying intentions through green attitudes, but that it is not likely that this intention results in an actual green behavior if the behavior does not give any individual benefits to the tourist. Finally, the findings demonstrate that the vacation choice structure can influence tourists' possibility to make green choices as the most important vacation choice governs to what extent other less important choice alternatives are possible to consider. Taken together, the findings develop theory about the vacation choice structure and its relation to values and green tourism as well as it provides practitioners with important knowledge and suggestions on how to make their work more efficient.

**Key words:** vacation choice structure, values, green attitudes, green tourism

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When I started this research process in 2006, this day somehow seemed to be very far away. It is however well known that ‘time flies’ and after many hours of inspiration and transpiration, after discussing with supervisors, reflecting on comments from reviewers, presenting at conferences, reading, writing, thinking, re-writing, and re-writing again and last but not least, after two maternity leaves, the final product is here at last.

The topic of the present thesis tells about one thing that I love – traveling. Writing this thesis has really been a journey of a special kind, a journey which has included many different choices for me as a researcher. If I should compare this journey to a vacation trip, I am now back home with a wish to share my thoughts, findings and conclusions with you. However, I have not been alone on this trip. Many wonderful people have accompanied me and for this I am very thankful.

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Örebro, December 2012.  
Therese Hedlund



# Preface

This compilation thesis includes a summary and four studies. The studies will be referred to in the text by the following roman numerals:

- I. Hedlund, Therese, Marell, Agneta, & Gärling, Tommy (2011). Inter-related summer vacation choices by Swedish Tourists. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 11(1), 42-53.
- II. Hedlund, Therese, Marell, Agneta, & Gärling, Tommy (2012). The mediating effect of value orientation on the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in Swedish tourists' vacation choices. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 11(1), 16-33.
- III. Hedlund, Therese (2011). The impact of values, environmental concern, and willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment on tourists' intentions to buy ecologically sustainable tourism alternatives. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11(4), 278-288.
- IV. Hedlund, Therese, Bengtsson, Maria, & Nordvall, Anna-Carin (2012). Tourists' vacation choice structure: Exploring the relationship between values, vacation choices, and green tourism. *Manuscript in review for publication*.



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# Introduction

From the moment you wake up in the morning until you fall asleep again at night, life is filled with choices related to consumption. Some choices are frequent and rather simple to make, e.g. what milk or toothpaste to buy at the grocery store. Other choices are more infrequent, complex and demand more effort and involvement from you as an individual. This complexity can be characterized by an inter-relation and dependency between different sub-choices, which for instance is shown in the purchase of a car or a house. For example, buying a house can involve the sub-choices of location, size, number of rooms, heating system, and need for remodeling. All sub-choices in these types of purchase situations relate to each other and the outcome of one choice will often have an influence on other choices. In order to make a final purchase a trade-off between and within different sub-choices takes place. This type of complex choice situation can also be found in the field of tourism and this is the focus of the present thesis.

To go on vacation involves a number of different sub-choices that tourists need to consider one way or another. Previous research has to a great extent focused on one single choice, often the destination choice (Decrop, 1999), but recent literature has suggested that it is important to see vacation choices as a mixture of many different choices, for example travel mode, activity, and accommodation, which interact and depend on each other (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994). It can be assumed that tourists view the various choices in different ways and that the choices are determined by different factors, which add to the complexity of vacation choices. An increased knowledge about the vacation choice structure, denoting how vacation choices are related and prioritized by the tourist, would be of both theoretical and managerial interest but is however scarce in today's literature. The present thesis contributes to current literature by analyzing the inter-relation between sub-choices in a complex choice situation.

This study is performed in one particular context; the tourism context. To go on vacation has historically been a major life event. People have travelled on pilgrimages and made health cure visits, visited family and friends or learned about and experienced foreign cultures (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Today, the reasons for going on vacation are in many ways very similar. Tourism motivators can be 1) educational and cultural, 2) relaxation, adventure, and pleasure, 3) health and recreation, 4) ethnic and family, and 5) social and "competitive" (i.e. to be able to show that one can afford a certain vacation) (Moutinho, 1987; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Other reasons might be connected to escaping from every day routines (Murphy, 1985). Tourism is connected to emotions and motives for tourism are closely

related to the positive feelings of planning and preparing for the vacation, as well as to the post-vacation experience of telling others about the vacation. A vacation is so much more than just the time spent traveling. Tourism is an experience and a way to spend free time.

Another side of tourism is the consequence it has for destinations, local communities, and for the society. Knowledge about the vacation choice structure is important not only in order to understand tourists' vacation choices but also to understand its implications for a broader society. Tourism has many positive influences on a host region, but it is important to also recognize the negative consequences tourism has on our environment. As a response to this, green<sup>1</sup> tourism alternatives have been developed by the tourism industry (Butler, 1991; Dowling & Fennell, 2003). However, a problem is that there is a general low support for this type of tourism. It can be suggested that when the tourist is in a choice dilemma, where different alternatives have to be traded against each other, green alternatives can be of varying importance depending on which sub-choice that is in focus. It is also possible that the vacation choice structure influences to what extent green issues can be prioritized by the tourist. Knowledge about the preferences for green alternatives in inter-related sub-choices and how this inter-relation has an effect on the final choice is however lacking in today's literature. Improved knowledge on green behavior in a complex choice context is valuable for further theory development. In addition, it is important for marketers of green tourism to understand the inter-relationship between vacation choices and how green alternatives are included in this in order to create efficient marketing of green tourism.

In order to further explain the vacation choice structure it is important to see to factors which have an impact on vacation choices. Individuals' values have previously been shown to influence both vacation choices as such (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) but also green attitudes and green choices in particular (Karp, 1996; Stern & Dietz, 1994). This thesis includes the conflict between self-enhancement values (motivating individuals to enhance personal interest) and self-transcendent values (motivating individuals to support the welfare of others and the nature) when trying to explain the vacation choice structure and the conflict between individual and collective interests in green choices.

The results presented in this thesis develop theories regarding inter-related choices in a complex choice situation and how green choices are related to

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<sup>1</sup> The term green is in this thesis used as a word describing consumer behavior that is less harmful to the environment than other types of behavior.

this. The intention is also to provide tourism practitioners with implications on how to efficiently market green tourism. This introductory section is outlined in the following way. First, the duplexity of tourism is discussed. This is followed by a discussion about the complexity of vacation choices. The last part presents the purpose of the thesis.

### **The duplexity of tourism**

Tourism has for decades been seen as a savior to many countries around the world, as the industry often brings hard currency, new income, and jobs to a region (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). Tourism also has a positive influence on the creation of infrastructure, strengthening of communities, stimulation of residents' interest in local history through restoration of historical sights and the creation of a market for local craftsmen (Edgell, 1987; European Commission, 2003). Further, tourism can lead to a raised environmental awareness and the protection of sensitive areas. Unfortunately, all these positive effects also have more negative down sides.

Negative impacts of tourism can be divided into three areas; 1) the physical environment; erosion of mountains, coral reefs, excessive use of water, pollution of sea water and fresh water, creation of carbon dioxide, deforestation, pollution, global warming, loss of biodiversity 2) the social and cultural environment; turning traditional arts and rituals into entertainment and profit, encouraging prostitution, creating overcrowded, noisy places, forcing the Western society into cultures unfamiliar with such way of living (neo-colonialism), cultural imperialism and "an unending pursuit of fun, sun, and sex" (Edgell, 1987, p. 24) and 3) economic environment; local inflation and a demand for imported goods and services, disrupting traditional wage patterns by favoring males and causing the abandonment of traditional ways of earning a living, (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998; Edgell, 1987). These negative sides of tourism may be more or less apparent depending on the destination. As tourism occurs in a wide variety of environments it can be dangerous to refer to its effects in general terms. Tourism destinations can differ in terms of ecosystem resiliency and how intense the destination is developed, transformed and used (Williams, 1987). It can be discussed to what extent the negative effects are results of the behavior and demand of the individual tourist and the role of for example various trip organizers, air lines, and destination developers. This thesis recognizes the negative effects of tourism but do not discuss who is to blame for these negative impacts. What can be concluded is that tourism has both positive and negative influences on a host region, which can be called the duplexity of tourism, and that an understanding of the vacation choice structure and which factors that influence this, can have implications for green tourism.

Since the 1980s, a response to the negative effects of conventional mass tourism has been to develop other forms of tourism (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005), green tourism being one. Green tourism is one dimension of the broader concept sustainable tourism, which is an up-to-date issue discussed worldwide. In these discussions, whether performed in political, societal, or theoretical fora, different definitions have been used. Swarbrooke (1999) defines sustainable tourism as “tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community” (p. 13). Another definition of sustainable tourism is presented by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) who say that “for tourism to be truly sustainable, it needs to protect local and national culture, improve social and individual well-being, and conserve/preserve the surrounding environment” (p. 383). Both these definitions present a similar view of sustainable tourism, a view from which this thesis takes its starting point.

This thesis’ focus is on the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism, but it is still recognized that also the economic and social aspects need to be considered in order to be truly sustainable. From now on, the term sustainable tourism is referring to tourism where both the economic, environmental, and social aspects are included. When only the environmental dimension is discussed, the term green will be used. Green behavior is in this thesis defined as a consumer behavior that is less harmful to the environment than other types of behavior.

### **The complexity of vacation choices**

Tourists’ vacation choices can be described as very complex. First, the tourism product in itself is a complex phenomenon. Second, the interrelation and dependency between vacation choices in the vacation choice structure as well as the trade-off which has to be made between and within vacation choices, makes the whole choice situation complex to tourists. Third, tourists are influenced by both external and personal factors in the choice situation which also adds to the complexity of vacation choices. It can be assumed that all these aspects have an influence on the outcome of tourists’ choices. The following text will describe the three parts of this complexity.

### ***The tourism product***

Previous research has pointed out a number of different characteristics which show that tourism products are complex and multilayered (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Tourism products have the unique characteristics of having both tangible (hotel beds, food) and intangible (service delivery, performances, experiences) elements. However, by mainly



being a service, tourism products also have the characteristics of inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. Tourists are a part of the production process which means that their attitudes, moods, and expectations will affect how they will perceive and evaluate the tourism experience. Further, tourists only have temporary or shared user rights while on vacation (e.g. in hotels). The tourist experience is also greatly influenced by external factors. Some are controlled by the tourism provider such as the way they treat their guests, while others are beyond the control of both the individual tourist and the company that sells the product, for example weather conditions, natural disasters, strikes, or war (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Throughout this thesis, 'tourism services' will be used as a generic umbrella term incorporating both intangible services and tangible goods included in vacation choices.

An additional characteristic pointing to the complexity surrounding tourism services is that vacations are infrequent but often high-value purchases. Many people plan and wait for their vacation all year and often a large part of their yearly budget is set for vacation. This means that the vacation experience as a whole often is very important to the tourist. Further, the way vacations are purchased adds to the complexity. A vacation can be bought in individual parts or in vacation packages. Identical vacation services, regardless of sold separately or bundled, can be purchased simultaneously both directly by the customers and via travel agents (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). To purchase individual parts can be seen as more independent traveling. The tourist chooses and pays for each part, for example travel mode, accommodation, activities, separately. Another way of purchasing vacation is through bundles. Many vacation offerings are created through bundling of two or more services in a single package (c.f. Sheldon & Mak, 1987). Sheldon and Mak (1987) define a vacation bundle as "a combination of the many components of a vacation such as transportation, accommodation, sightseeing, and meals which are sold to customers at a single price" (p. 13). Vacation packages are often valued due to their perceived lower price, lower risk, convenience, and because they minimize the decision-making effort and save time compared to separately bought items (Money & Crofts, 2003; Naylor & Frank, 2001; Sheldon & Mak, 1987). All these unique characteristics of vacations make the choice situation complex and also to some extent different from other types of infrequent purchases, such as the purchase cars or houses, even if they all include inter-related sub-choices.

### ***Inter-related vacation choices***

After describing the duplexity of tourism and the complex characteristics of tourism services, the focus will now turn to the complex inter-relations

between vacation sub-choices, in other words the vacation choice structure. The choice of going on vacation is a multi-attributed choice, which is made up by several sub-choices or attributes. Vacation sub-choices are in this thesis defined as the different attributes a tourist have to consider when going on vacation, e.g. choice of destination, accommodation and travel mode. However, when referring to the various vacation sub-choices included in this thesis, the term vacation choice or attribute will be used interchangeable.

Much focus in previous travel research has been on choice of destination (Decrop, 1999; Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002). It has however been recognized that the vacation choice structure includes a range of choices which need to be considered by the tourist, for example destination, transportation, accommodation, activities, budget, reservations, eating options, shopping time and duration of the trip, travel companion (Moutinho, 1987; Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Dellaert, Ettema, & Lindh, 1998; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000). Some choices are made before departure and others during the actual vacation (Hyde, 2000; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000). Vacation choices differ in planning sequence, importance, flexibility, and dependency (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002), which suggest that a trade-off continuously occur between different vacation choices (e.g. is choice of accommodation more important than choice of travel mode?) as well as between different alternatives or attribute levels within each vacation choice (e.g. is train a more important travel mode than airplane?). This makes vacation choices complex to the tourist. No found study has studied the trade-off between and within vacation choices and therefore this thesis provides an important development of the understanding of the vacation choice structure. This can have implications for both theory development and managerial decisions. Further, the vacation choice structure might have an influence on tourists' green vacation choices as the alternatives available for the tourist to make a trade-off between depend on previously made choices. For marketers to succeed in their marketing actions, it is important to increase the knowledge about the relation between various vacation choices in the vacation choice structure and also about how this is related to tourists' green choices. The first two research questions for this thesis are thus:

*RQ 1. How can the relationships within the vacation choice structure be explained?*

*RQ2. How is the vacation choice structure related to green vacation choices?*

***Factors influencing vacation choices***

Tourists' vacation choices are influenced by a number of different factors and much tourism literature has discussed this issue (e. g. Madrigal & Kahle, 1994; Pitts & Woodside, 1986; Crompton, 1979; Ross, 1994; Cheron & Ritchie, 1982). These factors can be divided into both external and personal factors and their presence adds to the complexity of making vacation choices. The external or contextual factors which have an influence on tourists' choices can be divided into four different groups; 1) choice context (e.g. the views of family and friends, culture, social class) 2) situational (e.g. type of trip, family life cycle, familiarity with the destination), 3) marketing and the media (e.g. advertising campaigns, brochures, TV, newspapers, guidebooks), and 4) national and global political, economic, social, and technological factors (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Decrop & Snelders, 2005; Hyde, 2004). Not all factors have equal importance to all tourists and they may also change during a person's life time due to changes in age and family situation. Further, the purchase of vacations can be seen as both an individual and a joint decision as family members, friends, and significant others all can have an important influence on tourism choices (Moutinho, 1987; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Tangeland & Aas, 2011). To study the social interaction taking place in a joint decision is however not in the scope of this study.

The personal determinants of vacation choices can be divided into four groups, 1) circumstances (e.g. health, disposable income available, leisure time, 2) knowledge (e.g. regarding destinations, the availability of various tourism products, and price differences between competitors), 3) psychological (e.g. values, attitudes, intentions) 4) experiences (e.g. of different types of vacations and destinations and of the products available at the market place) (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Gilbert, 1991). Given the many factors that literature has shown are influential when tourists make vacation choices, a selection of factors needs to be carried out in order to perform a study. Due to the complexity of vacation choices to the tourist, an increased knowledge of personal determinants of vacation choices was of interest for this thesis. Additionally, factors which also have been shown to influence green behaviors were of specific interest for this thesis.

Previous research has shown that values make a significant and strong contribution to the explanation of various environmental beliefs and intentions (de Groot & Steg, 2008). Values can be used as predictors for variables such as attitudes and behavioral intentions (Stern, 2000; Stern & Dietz, 1994). The choice for this thesis was to focus on Schwartz (1992) universal values and the self-enhancement-self-transcendence dimension.

This dimension has previously been used in research on green behavior and values (Schultz, Gouveia, Cameron, Tankha, Schmuck, & Franek, 2005) and previous studies have shown that individuals with a self-transcendent value orientation (i.e. having values which motivate people to endorse the welfare of others and the nature) are more likely to perform a green behavior than people with a self-enhancement value orientation (i.e. having values which motivate people to enhance their own personal interest) (Stern & Dietz, 1994; Stern, Dietz, Kalof, & Guagnano, 1995; Karp, 1996; Dietz, Stern, & Guagnano, 1998). In order to study how these values predict tourists' green attitudes, buying intentions and choices, the following research questions are proposed.

*RQ 3. How can the relationships between tourists' values, green attitudes, and green buying intentions be described?*

*RQ 4. How do tourists' values influence the vacation choice structure and green vacation choices?*

### **Purpose**

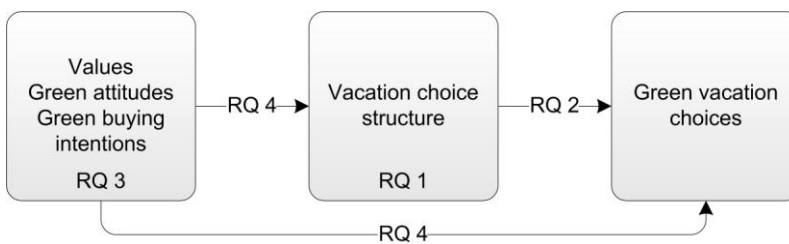
The focus of the present thesis is on the vacation choice structure and the complexity which surrounds tourists' vacation choices. To summarize the previous discussion, the complexity of vacation choices can be characterized in three ways. First, the various tangible and intangible tourism services included in vacation choices make vacation as a phenomenon complex to tourists. Second, it can be proposed that vacation choices interact and depend on each other and that the vacation choice structure is created by tourists making a trade-off between various vacation choices and also between different alternatives within each vacation choice. The vacation choice structure depends on how tourists value each choice with regard to sequency, importance, flexibility, and contingency (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002), but it has not been studied how these dimensions affect the choice structure. Third, the complexity is further characterized by the influence of both external and personal factors on tourists in the choice situation. No previous study has focused on explaining the relationships within a choice structure in this type of complex choice situation and the influence values and attitudes, as personal factors, have on this structure. This thesis therefore makes an important contribution to existing literature in consumer behavior.

Further, the present thesis adds to the knowledge about green consumer behavior. As it is possible for tourists to be more or less green when making trade-offs within the vacation choice structure this thesis also includes the structure's relation to tourists' green choices. In order to draw conclusions about green vacation choices it is important not only to know how this issue

is preferred in a trade-off situation, but also to know to what extent tourists' green choices are affected by the vacation choice structure and also by values.

This thesis' main purpose is to analyze inter-related choices in a complex choice situation and more specifically to develop theory about the vacation choice structure. It also aims at providing a framework for how the vacation choice structure is related to tourists' green choices. Four research questions have been raised and by exploring these questions, the purpose of the present thesis will be accomplished. Following the main purpose, this thesis has three sub-purposes, which all relate to the four research questions. The first sub-purpose is to explain the inter-relations between vacation choices. The second sub-purpose is to analyze how values and green attitudes influence the vacation choice structure with a main focus on green vacation choices. The third sub-purpose is to evaluate the effect of the vacation choice structure on tourists' possibilities to make green vacation choices.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model used in this thesis. The model has its base in previous literature, but does not provide a complete picture of factors which influence tourists' green choices. It highlights the factors and relationships which are of importance for this thesis and also shows how the four research questions are related to the concepts. The model illustrates the central aspects which serve as a basis for the empirical studies as well as for the analysis and discussion of the results in this thesis.



**Figure 1. Conceptual model and overview of research questions**

### **Outline of the thesis**

The present thesis is outlined in the following way. This introductory chapter is succeeded by a part about green tourism, presenting the context in which this thesis is written. This is followed by a literature review focusing on tourism choice models, the vacation choice structure and the trade-off occurring in a choice situation. The theoretical chapter ends with a section concerning determinants of green behavior. Thereafter, a presentation of the methodological considerations and the more practical data collections is given. This is followed by a summary of the four empirical studies included

## INTRODUCTION

in this thesis. Lastly, a discussion related to the purposes of this thesis is presented, as well as main conclusions, theoretical and managerial implications, and suggestions for further research.

## Green tourism

The aim with this chapter is to give an introduction to the empirical field chosen for this thesis. The text starts with a short presentation of the tourism industry in economic figures, followed by an introduction to the concept sustainable tourism. The chapter then focuses on green tourism and a discussion about the supply and demand for this type of tourism. The section ends with a discussion about tourists' heterogeneity.

### Tourism statistics

Tourism is an important industry which has increased significantly over the last decades. According to the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourism has globally increased by more than 110 percent since 1991. During the last years, the Middle East and Asia have been responsible for a large part of the world wide increase. Focusing only on Europe, the increase of tourism has been almost 80 percent. UNWTO predicts that international global tourism will increase with an additional 70 percent (to 1.6 billion trips) until 2020. Globally, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals, and automotive products as an export category. Depending on type of country, the contribution of tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) varies. For advanced and diversified economies, the contribution can be between two and ten percent to GDP. In countries or regions where tourism is a key economic sector, the contribution to GDP can be even higher (UNWTO, 2011).

During 2010, the total turnover for tourism in Sweden increased by 3.2 percent to almost 255 billion SEK and 7.8 percent of Swedish households' total consumption was related to tourism. The export value of tourism (foreign visitors' consumption in Sweden) makes a very important contribution to the Swedish economy. As a comparison, tourism has more than 50 percent higher export value than the export of steel and iron, and more than double export value than the Swedish car export. Adding to this, the tourism industry also has had the ability to boost employment during the recent years (Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, 2011). Despite all the positive and important effects of tourism, the global challenge for the future is however how to achieve greener tourism.

### The concept sustainable tourism

Sustainable development as a concept was discussed already in the 1960-70s in for example the context of developing societies in the Third World. Countries in Asia and Africa then sought to close the wealth gap between themselves and the developed countries and some of them used very short-term exploitative ways to reach this goal. This resulted in a discussion about

how development could be more sustainable (Swarbrooke, 1999; Dryzek, 2005).

The growing concerns about our world were in 1987 visualized by the Brundtland Commission's *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The Brundtland report put forward that economic growth had to be ecologically and socially sound (Swarbrooke, 1999). It discussed the global environment and development and placed the term sustainable development on the global agenda (Redclift, 2005). It argued that sustainable development "meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43) and combined issues which previously had been considered competing with each other; development, global environmental issues, population, peace and security, and social justice (Dryzek, 2005). To achieve sustainable development it is important to find a balance between conflicting economic, environmental, and social objectives (Ioannides, 2001).

Five years later, in 1992, a comprehensive plan of action, *Agenda 21*, was taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The 171 nation delegates present at the conference all approved of sustainable development and a commission to implement *Agenda 21* was established by the United Nations (UN) (Dryzek, 2005). *Agenda 21* had, among other things, the goal to ensure "that travel and tourism provide a source of income for many people; that travel and tourism contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystem; that international trade in travel and tourism services takes place on a sustainable basis; and that environmental protection is an integral part of tourism development" (United Nation Resolution 1998/40:1).

The term sustainable tourism appeared in the tourism industry already in the end of the 1980s, since the Brundtland report had made tourism academics and practitioners think about sustainable development in their own field. At that time, the term "green tourism" was more commonly used in the industry and the environmental dimension of sustainability has also later dominated the debates about sustainable tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999). In 1998 the United Nations Economic and Social Council proposed to the UN General Assembly to designate year 2002 to the International Year of Ecotourism. They believed it to be a good way of achieving the goals of *Agenda 21* in promoting the development and the protection of the environment (United Nation Resolution 1998/40:1). The UN General Assembly accepted the proposal and the designation strongly contributed to an increased awareness of the consequences that tourism brings to our



nature and our society. In 2008, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria were launched by the United Nations Foundation, UNWTO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Rainforest Alliance at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress. The new criteria were developed to offer a common framework to guide the emerging practice of sustainable tourism (UNWTO, 2009).

Twenty-five years ago, in 1987, Edgell wrote about an increasing interest in the impact of tourism on the environment. “The challenge for tourism in the next twenty-five years is to plan and develop it and to invest in tourism facilities to improve rather than degrade the environment” (p. 25). The following text will show how the tourism industry has handled this challenge, but also how the efforts made by the industry have been met by tourists.

### **The supply of green tourism**

For consumers to be green in their everyday life there is a need for producers to provide green alternatives to choose from (The Swedish Government Report SOU2005:51). In order to create green tourism alternatives at destinations, businesses and organizations should cooperate. It is important to look beyond the rivalry among tourist businesses (Hassan, 2000) and work together to attract tourists. However, the relations between the three parts of sustainable development (economic, environmental, and social) can be a challenge to handle for the tourism industry as they can be both consistent or in conflict with each other (see for example The Swedish Government Official Report SOU 2005:51 for a general analysis). It may therefore be a challenge for tourism regions to consider all three aspects when they are developing their destination. Knowledge about how these three aspects are related to each other is interesting and necessary but before this analysis can be performed it is important to analyze each aspect separately. This thesis therefore focuses on only the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism.

Tourism businesses are looking at different green development strategies and techniques and one of the most common tools used for influencing tourists' choices are eco-labels (Budeanu, 2007). Eco-labels and environmental accreditations can be used for different purposes, e.g. in marketing, for promoting national interest, education, and lobbying (Buckley, 2001). Eco-labels also serve as important information to consumers who wish to make informed choices, especially due to the intangibility of services in the tourism sector (Weaver, 2006). Tourism eco-labeling was introduced in 1985 when the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe awarded its first Blue Flag label for beaches and

marinas (Pieterse, 2004) and since then, the most rapid growth has been in Europe. A global certification available is the Green Globe 21, which is the travel and tourism industries' worldwide certification label for sustainable management and operations (Green Globe, 2012). In 2002, The Swedish Ecotourism Association, together with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and VisitSweden, developed the first quality label for ecotourism on the northern hemisphere called Nature's Best. Those who receive this label are organizers that fulfill the criteria of for example respecting the limitations of the destination by minimizing the negative impacts on local nature and culture, support the local economy, making all the operators activities green, and contribute actively to nature and cultural conservation (Nature's Best, 2010). There are today 179 arrangements from 87 Swedish companies accredited with the label Nature's Best, providing everything from bird watching and dog sledging to horseback riding and fishing (Nature's Best, 2012).

Another tourism accreditation for hotels, hostels, and camping grounds available in Sweden is the Green Key. The Green Key is run by Keep Sweden Tidy and the accreditation is given to facilities that meet certain criteria regarding, for example, the use of water, waste management, and energy usage (Keep Sweden Tidy, 2010). The Green Key is also used outside of Sweden and is today represented in 16 other countries (The Green Key, 2010). After reviewing a number of tourism studies from across the world, Chafe (2005) concluded that a majority of tour operators say that they have, or are planning to introduce, responsible tourism policies. However, it was unusual that tourists asked about these issues and therefore the tour operators did not feel an external pressure to be more sustainable (Chafe, 2005). This lack of consumer recognition is thus a major weakness with tourism eco labels. Another problem with tourism eco labels is the risk of green washing as it for some accreditations is enough to pay the application fee and commit to become more sustainable, without a follow up of the actual work performed. Further, a company can receive an eco-label based on meeting one criterion, while continuing to perform activities which are harmful to the environment but not included in the criteria inventory (Weaver, 2006). A stricter control of worldwide tourism eco labels might therefore be necessary in the future. It should also be noted that tourism companies can be more or less sustainable without necessarily be accredited with an eco-label. These companies are however harder to find information about for both consumers and researchers.

### **The demand for green tourism**

The focus of tourism consumption is to a great extent a focus on the self. For many tourists, vacation is a time for slowing down and escaping from the

grind of everyday life. A social dilemma exists, where tourists have to make a choice of maximizing immediate selfish interests or maximizing long term collective interests. For example, the benefits tourists gain from traveling by airplane to a destination, paying a lower price for a non-green tourism alternative and not recycle or conserve energy at a destination are selfish and immediate, while the negative environmental consequences from such a behavior are often uncertain consequences in the future. Never the less, they are damaging to our environment. Further, if some tourists want to take on a collective responsibility, the three parts of sustainability (economic, environmental, and social dimensions) may also be in conflict with each other within the individual tourist. For example, visiting a country in need for money from the outside world would benefit the economy in that country. Conflicting with this would be if this specific country is very far away and the tourist has to go there by airplane, which would be harmful to the environment. These are all examples of the trade-off that tourists need to make in the choice situation, i.e. show the complexity of vacation choices.

Previous studies have shown that environmental concern and responses to eco-labels have low priority among tourists (Sharpley, 2001). Barr, Shaw, Coles, and Prillwitz (2010) show that individuals, who in their everyday life at home were very committed to green behavior, found it difficult to transfer this behavior into other contexts such as tourism. These individuals were aware of the damage of flying on the environment and were willing to pay extra taxes to compensate for this. They were however not willing to reduce their overall flying habits, which suggests that having a green behavior at home can for some tourists justify a lack of green consciousness while on vacation. This indicates that values and green attitudes may influence consumer behavior differently depending on choice context, which makes the results of this thesis an important contribution to existing literature.

Further reasons for the lack of response to eco-labels and green tourism might be that there are too many different eco-labels on the international market which make tourists confused (Fairweather, Maslin, & Simmons, 2005). Another possible explanation is the lack of knowledge among tourists. Fairweather et al. (2005) showed that only 33 percent of international visitors to New Zealand had ever seen or heard about tourism eco-labels. Wurzinger & Johansson (2006) found that tourists participating in a Swedish eco-labeled tourism activity knew somewhat more about ecotourism than other types of tourists, but still, some of the ecotourists did not even know about the concept of ecotourism even if they participated in such an activity. In line with this, results from my web-based survey carried out in 2007 showed that 41 percent of the respondents were not aware of the existence of tourism eco-labels in Sweden. Only 1 percent had ever made a

trip accredited with the eco-label Nature's Best. Dodds, Graci, and Holmes (2010) show that less than 50 percent of the international visitors to two islands in Southeast Asia had knowledge about the concept sustainable tourism. All these studies point in the same direction, that the knowledge about tourism eco-labels and green tourism is not so widespread among people. Other discouraging results from my survey from 2007 showed that tourists in general do not trust eco-labeled products and they believe that their individual effort does not make a difference for the environment. Marketers therefore have a challenging job of increasing the knowledge and trust in green tourism alternatives. In order for them to do so, research targeting tourists' vacation choice structure and green choices are of eminent importance.

### **Different shades of green tourists**

Several studies have found results which show that green tourists can be divided into different typologies depending on different "shades of green" (e.g. Palacio & McCool, 1997; Diamantis, 1999; Weaver & Lawton, 2002). Green tourists may be concerned about wildlife, transport, recreational activities, conservation, resource use, pollution, new buildings, and operational practices of tourism organizations. Many of these issues are inter-related, for example transport and pollution.

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) propose a continuum which shows tourists' different shades of green. The continuum ranges from not at all green, through light green and dark green, to finally totally green in the other end of the continuum. They also propose hypothetical examples of what the different shades might mean in tourism practice. Tourists who are not at all green read about what tourism organizers say about green issues and sustainable tourism but they have a shallow interest in green issues in general and do not make any sacrifices to support the environment. A large part of the population belongs to this shade of green. Light green tourists think about green issues and try to perform a more green behavior, for example reduce water consumption if water is scarce at a destination. Toward a darker shade of green, we find tourists who consciously seek more information about specific environmental issues and for example use public transportation to the destination and while on vacation. The tourist is willing to make some minor sacrifices to support this view. Tourists belonging to the darkest shade of green would for example boycott hotels and destination with a bad green reputation and make major sacrifices to protect the environment. This group is a small proportion of the world's population. At the extreme of the continuum tourists who do not take any vacations at all due to green reasons can be found (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007).

As tourists are a heterogeneous group, they will have different shades of green due to differences in their awareness and knowledge of the issue, general attitudes toward the environment, other priorities in life, or health, family commitments, and housing (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). It can also be suggested that a more specific green attitude toward tourism would influence which shade of green a tourist belong to. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) propose that a green tourist might be influenced by different motivators; 1) an altruistic belief that it is necessary to protect the environment, 2) a desire to feel good about their own tourism behavior, and 3) a wish to improve their image among friends and family by being seen as having an environmental concern. By examining values as determinants of green attitudes, intentions, and choices, the results of the present thesis will show to what extent values can be seen as motivators of green behavior.

## Consumer choices and green behaviors

Due to the nature of tourism and vacation choices, a number of different disciplines are involved in tourism research, for example marketing, geography, anthropology, human behavior, and political science (Gunn, 1987). Depending on the type of problems that are identified by the researcher, explaining factors are found in theories from various disciplines. This thesis focuses on consumer vacation choices and green behaviors and consequently draws from theories in consumer behavior and psychology. The purpose of this chapter is to explain and clarify the theoretical rational of the research problems as well as present to the reader what has and has not been done in the area.

### Tourism choice models

Many different choice theories have emerged from the mid-1900s and to present date, trying to explain how individuals make choices and which factors that influence the decision making process, e.g. the expected utility theory (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947), prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), regret theory (Bell, 1982), satisfying theory (Simon, 1956), the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985). These theories have been tested in various contexts, but until this date, no single theory has been developed that describe, explain, or predict consumer choices across different disciplines. It is also questionable if one single theory can explain all decision processes (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

When Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell published their book *Consumer Behavior* in 1968, this was the first general consumer behavior textbook. Together with models developed by Howard and Sheth (1969) and Nicosia (1966) these models are seen as the grand model of consumer behavior. These models share some common features as they all 1) focus on tangible goods and not on services, 2) see consumer behavior as a decision process, 3) focus mainly on individual behavior and not on joint or family decision making, 4) see the consumer as rational and believe that all behavior can be explained, 5) view buying behavior as purposive and propose that the consumer actively seek both internal and external information in the decision making process, 6) believe that the consumer limit the information absorbed, 7) include some type of feedback, which means that the purchase outcome will influence future purchases, and 8) have proven to be useful in organizing and presenting information but they do not give a clear answer on the attitude-intention-behavior sequence (Gilbert, 1991; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

The grand models of consumer behavior were not designed to explain choices relating to services, but have still been used as a starting point for tourism researchers in order to explain tourists' decision making processes and choices. Today's tourism models can still be criticized for not fully incorporating the unique characteristics of services in modeling tourists' choices (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Never the less, three types of tourism choice models have emerged in the literature; microeconomic models, cognitive models, and interpretive models (Decrop, 2006). Microeconomic models try to explain tourism behavior by using traditional demand models with a normative focus on how the consumer should behave. How and why tourists behave as they do is not integrated in the models and as these questions are of interest in the present thesis, the microeconomic models are therefore not relevant for this study.

Cognitive choice models focus on socio-psychological variables and processes involved in making choices (Decrop, 2006) and a distinction can be made between structural and process approaches (Svenson, 1979). Structural models, i.e. choice-set models, focus on the relation between input (available information about alternatives) and output (choice between alternatives). Making a choice involves an evaluation and selection where different destinations in the consideration set are compared on an attribute or alternative basis. Um and Crompton (1990) developed a framework which included three sets of variables; external inputs (e.g. social and marketing influences), internal inputs (e.g. personal characteristics, motives, values, and attitudes), and cognitive constructs (e.g. "an integration of external and internal inputs, into the awareness set of destinations and the evoked set of destinations" (Um & Crompton, 1990, p. 436). Destinations included in the awareness set are all destinations known to the tourist. Which these are, depends on subjective beliefs based on passive or occasional gathering of information. The evoked set includes destinations which remain after an evaluation of the awareness set based on internal inputs. Formation of beliefs through an active information search will influence the final step in the model, which is choice of a destination from the evoked set. Another structural model is proposed by Woodside & Lysonski (1989). This model is similar to the one developed by Um and Crompton (1990) but adds the variables affective associations, tourist's destination preferences, and intentions to visit a particular destination.

The use of structural models can help researchers to understand how tourists reach a final choice in one specific sub-choice and how the trade-off is made within this sub-choice. However, the focus in these models has been on the destination choice, i.e. ignoring that vacation choices are so much more than just the choice of destination. Further, structural models have been criticized

for not including all variables and relationships that may be involved in destination choices and that the choice context is missing (Decrop, 2006). The models do not include the inter-relation between vacation choices and the effect trade-off between and within sub-choices can have on the final choice. As the present thesis focuses the inter-relation between choices and on the outcome of the trade-off more than the trade-off process in itself, structural models are not further considered in the analysis.

The second approach in cognitive choice models are process models. These models do not focus much on the choice itself but rather on psychobehavioral factors which affect tourists in their decision making and on the way they come to a final choice (e.g. Wahab et al., 1976; Schmall, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Mansfeld, 1992; van Raaij & Francken, 1984; Moutinho, 1987; Goodall, 1988; Middleton, 1994). Most process models are sequential and suggest that decision making goes through different stages, typically problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, choice, and post-choice processes (Decrop, 2006). They do not pay much attention to the structural relationships between input and output and put more focus on the mental processes that underlie decision making. Similar to the structural models, the process models can be helpful when analyzing separate vacation choices and how tourists reach a final choice for each of these choices. It can be suggested that the decision process tourists go through varies depending on which vacation choice that is in focus as some choices are more deliberate than others (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Both structural and process models can however be criticized for viewing tourist behavior as too rational (Decrop, 1999). People are not entirely rational when making choices (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998) and both situational and social factors (Decrop & Snelders, 2004) influence them to act in a bounded rational way. Further, process models suggest that the first choice always is whether or not to go on a vacation and that tourism only include high-involvement choices (Decrop, 2006). The present thesis supports a somewhat contrary view which says that vacation choices can be both high and low involvement choices. This view is also in line with research presented by Björk and Jansson (2008). The main reason for why the present thesis does not further consider process models are however that the focus here is not on tourists' formalized multi-stage decision making processes preceding each vacation choice, but on the inter-relation between vacation choices.

As previously noted, an important criticism of structural and process models is that they fail to recognize the inter-relationship between vacation choices (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Woodside & MacDonald, 1994). This gap in tourism choice models is filled to some extent by the interpretive models.



These models (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Teare, 1994) take the choice context into account and also recognize that many different components and processes are involved in tourism choices (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). They also take new variables and hypotheses into account which were not included in the traditional models. Interpretive models take the personal, social, and cultural context into account (Decrop, 2006) and leave the deterministic approach presented by earlier models.

Many tourism models deal with only one aspect of vacation choices, for example destination (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), activities (Moscardo, Morrison, Pearce, Lang, & O'Leary, 1996), or accommodation (Teare, 1994). The first scholars who try to make a distinction between different vacation sub-choices are Woodside and MacDonald (1994). As the main purpose of the present thesis is to analyze inter-related choices in a complex choice situation and more specifically to develop theory about the vacation choice structure, this thesis takes its starting point in the interpretive model proposed by Woodside and MacDonald (1994). A further elaboration on this will be made in the following sections.

### **The vacation choice structure**

A structure of vacation choices can be suggested as the choices influence and depend on each other (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Dellaert et al., 1998). Every choice plays a unique role in the total picture of going on vacation (Tay, McCarthy, & Fletcher, 1996) and it is therefore of interest to increase the knowledge of the relationship between the different vacation choices.

Woodside and MacDonald (1994) argued that it is necessary to look beyond the earlier tourist choice models which only see a cause-and-effect linear relationship between included variables. They proposed that it is important to capture the interaction between different choices and to go beyond the destination choice. Eight different choices (destination, activity, travel mode, accommodation, visiting attractions, eating options, destination areas and routes, self-gifts and other durable purchases) were identified and it was proposed that these may be activated by four principal start nodes related to the information acquisition and processing sequence. Relationships between the different vacation choices were also proposed by the authors (see Figure 2 and Table 1) and suggested for empirical testing. It was stated that causality (the double-sided arrows) is not determined beforehand but depending on each individual tourist. The model assumed that triggering events activate initial vacation choices which then spreads over time to other choices, which was a very different approach from the previous deterministic tourism choice models. The researchers also pointed out that there is a need

to further research the inter-relation between the different vacation choices and this sparked other scholars to further extend this thinking.

Hyde (2000) extended the framework presented by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) by adding three new aspects. By studying travel parties visiting New Zealand, he identified a sequence in which sub-choices were made. Choice of secondary destinations was made before departure, then choice of travel route, and lastly choice of attractions and activities. This can be seen as a first empirical test of the relationships between vacation choices suggested by Woodside and MacDonald (1994). It is however important to note that the relationships were only studied with regard to primacy, i.e. planning sequence. Second, he made a distinction between processes which occur before departure to a vacation destination and those that occur while the tourist is at a destination. He suggested that pre-trip choices are high involvement, deliberate and reasoned choices, while on vacation, tourists may be more hedonistic and spontaneous in their choices. Lastly, he explicitly stated the most influential information sources before departure and while on vacation.

Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002) further developed theory about the vacation choice structure by stating that “a planning structure can be determined by triangulating centrality (i.e., importance), rigidity (i.e., flexibility), and planning sequence to reveal the hierarchical planning order of each element in a trip planning process”. The same authors (Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000) also carried out an empirical study where they identified three different types of vacation choices which they related to different stages in the trip planning process. The study extended the knowledge about the vacation choice structure by adding other aspects than primacy. The first identified stage, defined as core choices, included primary destination, time and duration of the trip, travel companion, accommodation, travel route, and overall travel budget. Core choices are made early in the decision process and planned in advance of the trip. They are likely to be important and inflexible to the individual. Secondary choices are included in the following stage and thus made at a later point in time, even if the individual seems to give notice to these choices prior to the trip. Secondary choices are seen as less important and rigid to the individual. Activities and attractions were defined as secondary choices, while rest stops, food stops, where to go shopping, what to buy, and gift budget were seen as peripheral choices. Peripheral choices were often made en route. They are not as important and inflexible as secondary choices (Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000). It is however important to note that they did not include the travel mode choice and they did not empirically examine the relationships between the different choices.

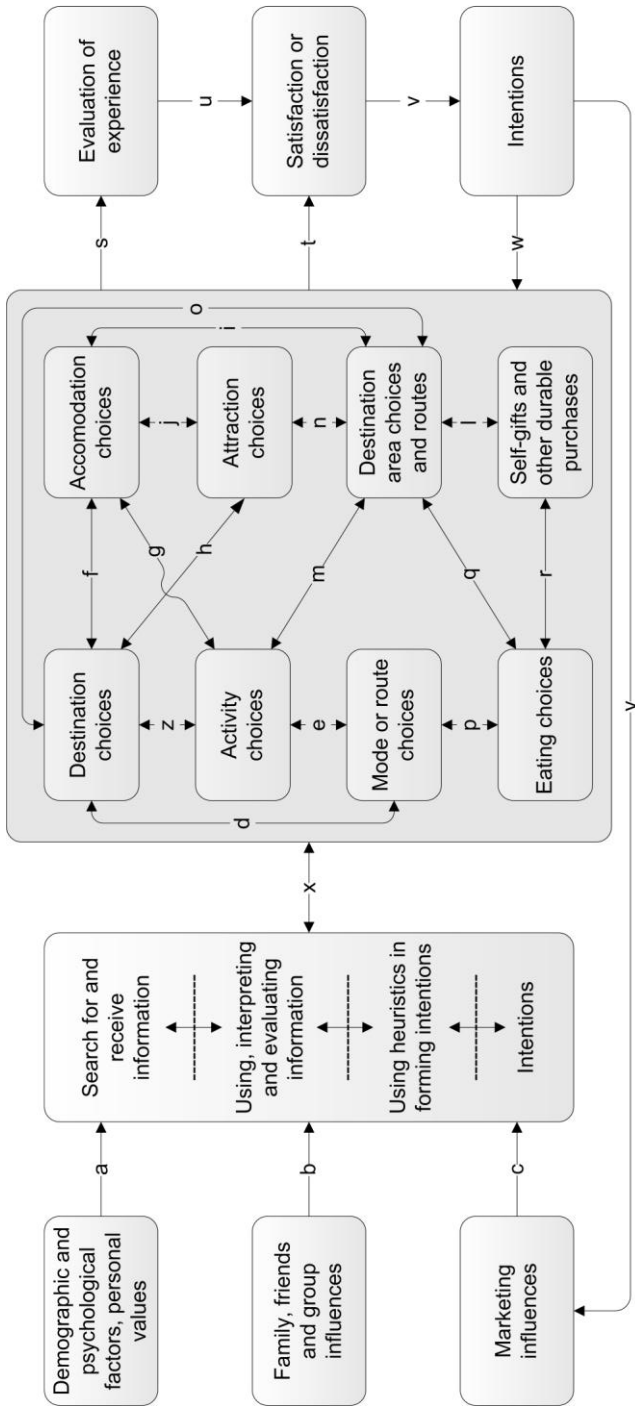


Figure 2. General systems framework of customer choice decisions of tourism services (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994)

**Table 1. Woodside and MacDonald’s set of propositions (1994)**

Number	Arrow	Proposition
1	a	Both leisure and business travel are influenced strongly by levels of income and education, and the value systems of households members.
2	b	Family, friends, and group influence strongly affects the activation of choice sets and the selection of particular options in the choice sets.
3	c	For some travelers, marketing influences in the form of 1) travel agent recommendations, 2) scheduled media advertising, 3) direct mail, especially visitors information guides, and 4) travel shows have substantial influence on activation traveler choice sets and the selection of specific options.
4	w	Intentions toward returning to a destination visited previously affect traveler decision choices [familiarity].
5	x	Travelers search and use of information have dramatic impacts on their travel choices: destination visitors who are high information users participate in more activities, spend more money per day in the destination area, have more positive evaluations about their experiences, and have higher intentions compared to low information users and nonusers.
6	d	Mode or route choices may cause destination choices, and vice versa.
7, 8	e, p	For some important leisure traveler segments, mode or route choices often cause activity choices and eating choices, and vice versa.
9-13	i, l, m, n, q	For some important traveler segments, local destination area choices and travel routes in the destination area have bi-directional influences on activity choices, eating choices, self-gifts and other durable purchases, attractions visited choices, and accommodation choices.
14-16	f, h, z	Substantial bi-directional influences occur between destination choices with accommodation choices, attraction choices, and activity choices, for some important leisure travel segments.
17-19	i, j, n	For some important leisure traveler segments, accommodation choices, attraction choices and destination area choices substantially affect one another.
20-21	l, r	For some important leisure traveler segments, self-gifts and other durable purchases, destination area choices or routes, and eating choices substantially affect one another.
22	s	Leisure travelers evaluate the quality of many of their choice experiences.
23	t	Choice experiences influence the leisure traveler’s overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the total trip or visit experience.
24, 25	v, u	Evaluation of the quality of the experiences affects intentions through satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Another way to handle the structure of multiple vacation choices is proposed by Dellaert et al. (1998). Their focus was, as in Hyde (2000), primarily on the primacy aspect of the vacation choice structure. When asking respondents about intended trips, choices of destination and travel companion were made early (on average 6 to 7 months prior to departure). These choices were followed by choices of accommodation and trip duration (on average 5.5 months prior to departure) and later by choice of exact departure date (5

months) and booking (3 to 4 months). However, there were large individual differences in timing of the different choices and choices of what to do during the vacation and what travel mode to use were not considered. Dellaert et al. (1998) also suggested that the strong inter-relation among vacation choices make them depend on each other. For example, if choice of destination precedes choice of accommodation, choice of accommodation is depending on the available accommodations at the chosen destination. Further, Woodside and King (2001) discuss the concept of a purchase consumption system (PCS), a sequence of purchases made by the consumer in which the purchase of one item leads to the purchase of others. Their results show that several choices are dependent and triggered by prior choices (purchases). Choice of destination and activity/attraction choices (level 1) were made early in time and interacted with each other. These two choices were in most cases followed by choice of accommodation and travel mode (level 2). The latter two choices appear to be made independently of each other and it was not possible to distinguish if choice of accommodation was made prior or following travel mode choices. Both were thus made before departure to the destination. Level 3 choices were made at the destination and included choice of retail purchases, dining choices and choice of routes taken around the primary destination.

In summary, Woodside and MacDonald (1994) proposed a distinction between different vacation choices but they did not empirically test the inter-relation between the various choices. This was further explored by Hyde (2000), Fesenmaier and Jeng (2000), Dellaert et al. (1998), and Woodside and King (2001) who tried to identify a general structure of vacation choices. A review of these studies suggests that it might not be possible to talk about a general vacation choice structure, where the order of all choices is set in advance. The “logical” reasoning that the decision to go on vacation or not is the first decision to be made is not to be taken for certain (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). For example, last minutes vacation bookings are becoming increasingly popular (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) and this may be one example of the choice of departure time is made before the choice of going on vacation or not. The present thesis will further analyzes the relationship between vacation choices by expanding the discussion based on Jeng and Fesenmaier (2000; 2002) who suggests that a vacation choice structure can be understood by viewing core choices as being the first choice made, being the most important, inflexible, and also have an impact on other choices.

It can further be suggested that the choice situation and the context play an important role for the vacation choice structure, which also was suggested in the above mentioned studies (Hyde, 2000; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000; Dellaert et al., 1998; Woodside & King, 2001). Hyde (2004) suggests that the

differences in sequence and timing of vacation choices found in previous literature (Hyde, 2000; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000; King & Woodside, 2001<sup>2</sup>) may be explained by the tourist's familiarity with the destination. The effect of familiarity on the vacation choice structure was also suggested in the model presented by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) (see Figure 2 and Table 1).

To take a starting point in literature which suggests that vacation choices should be seen in relation to other choices was necessary in order to increase the knowledge about the vacation choice structure. This starting point also opened up for the possibility to examine if each vacation choice was viewed differently by tourists and if this has an effect on green choices.

### **The trade-off process**

For all single choices, tourists have a set of different alternatives to choose from, i.e. they need to make a trade-off between alternatives to reach a final choice. For example, the tourist arrives at the airport at the vacation destination and has to decide on how to get to the hotel. He or she can choose between taking the local bus which costs SEK 30, makes many stops, and takes 60 minutes; an express bus which costs SEK 100, makes no stops, and takes 40 minutes; or an express train which costs SEK 260, makes no stops and takes 20 minutes. After considering pros and cons with each alternative a choice is made. All three services attract customers, which imply that all people do not make the same trade-off in a choice situation. The outcome of this trade-off is a choice that suits an individual's preferences and values. By studying consumers' trade-off, knowledge is gained about the importance of different attributes to the consumer. This knowledge can serve as a guide for marketing decisions, but is also of theoretical importance as it increases the understanding for the relationship between vacation choices. Attributes are in this thesis seen as the various vacation choices the tourist has to consider in the choice situation.

General theory about consumer choices states that attributes included in a choice vary according to potential consequences, desirability to the consumer and the willingness of the consumer to make a trade-off between the different attributes. The consumer may be more or less certain about different attributes and may sometimes lack information about some attribute levels (Bettman et al., 1998). The interaction and dependency between different vacation choices suggest that tourists continuously have to make trade-offs between different vacation choices (e.g. accommodation,

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<sup>2</sup> The findings from King and Woodside (2001) are identical with the findings of Woodside and King (2001) previously described in the text.

travel mode), but also between different levels within each choice (e.g. airplane, bus or train within the travel mode choice). The trade-off does not always have to be conscious, especially if one alternative is much more important than the others or if the tourist only has relevant information about one alternative. However, in other situations, tourists have to weigh the available alternatives against each other and in order to arrive at a final choice, a person needs to give up on one characteristic in order to gain another (Moutinho, 1987; Claxton, 1987). For example, give up low price to gain flexibility, give up on convenience to gain satisfaction, give up convenient location to gain quieter surroundings, give up expected weather conditions in order to enjoy a certain tourist activity, or give up a greener transportation alternative if it is not possible to use this to the desired destination. In order to reveal tourists preferences and force them to make a conscious trade-off, the present thesis used conjoint analysis. This will however be further discussed in the research method section.

Due to the dependency between vacation choices it can be assumed that the outcome of one trade-off process can influence and condition the available alternatives in other sub-choices (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Dellaert et al., 1998). For example, assume that the most important vacation choice is choice of destination and the tourist chooses the Canary Islands. This would limit the available alternatives in the travel mode choice (only airplane would be suitable) and consequently influence the trade-off process when choosing travel mode. Thus, the trade-off situation may have different prerequisites depending on where in the structure the vacation choice is placed. The outcome of a trade-off situation is depending on the individual tourist and his or hers previous experience, knowledge, and involvement in the choice. Tourism services are usually considered to be choices were the individual is high involved and thus uses an extensive decision making approach. This is due to the high costs (monetary, time wise) that usually are put into the choices (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). However, as vacation choices include many different types of choices, different decision making approaches may be used depending on what kind of choice that is in focus (Decrop & Snelders, 2005).

The outcome of the trade-off process, i.e. the final choice, is a result of both the internal and external factors previously described as factors which influence vacation choices. It should however be noted that in a complex choice structure as vacations, different heuristics are often used to simplify the trade-off process. Heuristics, or mental “rules of thumb”, are used as shortcuts to simplify the trade-off process between satisfying different needs and humans’ limited cognitive capacity (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This means that individuals are not entirely rational in the way they make

choices, but instead are influenced by factors which motivate and constrain them in a trade-off situation (Bettman et al., 1998). Which heuristics that is used can be depending on the choice situation, whether the individual confronts or avoids the conflict inherent in the choice and also on how complex and important the individual perceives the choice. This thesis is written from the standpoint that individuals do not have perfect information about all available alternatives in a choice situation and therefore are influenced by various factors, such as values and attitudes, and also use heuristics when making choices. As the focus of the present thesis is on the outcome of the trade-off process and factors which influence this outcome and not on the mental processes behind reaching this outcome, heuristics will not be further discussed in this thesis.

### **Influencers on green behavior**

Green behavior is a well-researched area in various disciplines with various perspectives. Two different research traditions from applied psychology can though be seen; applied behavioral analysis and studies concerning the influence of attitudinal and personality characteristics. Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) criticize the former tradition of seeing the individual as a rational utility maximize, a critique also put forward in this thesis. Many studies have shown that environmental behavior is influenced by both attitudes and other personal factors and this is the approach taken in this thesis.

Stern (1992) proposes that individual green behavior is a function of psychological determinants (e.g. values, attitudes, beliefs, motives), interpersonal variables (e.g. communication, social norms), situational structure (e.g. the level of solidarity of a community facing a commons dilemma), and contextual factors (e.g. socio-demographic status, control of environmentally significant technology, economic incentives). The factor which influences an individual the most can vary greatly across behaviors and places (Stern, 2008). Green behavior is thus a complex area to study. Several different studies have focused on values as determinants of green related attitudes and behavior (e.g. Karp, 1996; Stern & Dietz, 1994; Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993; Stern, et al., 1995; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999; Vaske & Donnelly, 1999; Poortinga, Steg, & Vlek, 2004; Schultz et al., 2005; Steg, Dreijerink, & Abrahamse, 2005; Oreg & Gerro, 2006; Hansla, Gamble, Juliusson, & Gärling, 2008a). The influence of values and green attitudes on the vacation choice structure is however scarcely researched and in focus of the present thesis.

Several studies have applied the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory developed by Stern (2000), which combines value theory (Schwartz, 1992) and norm-



activation theory (Schwartz, 1977) when studying the relationship between values and green behavior. The VBN theory proposes that this relationship is influenced by factors such as beliefs (for example environmental concern) and personal norms and this has been empirically validated in several studies (e.g. Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Steg et al., 2005; Jansson, Marell, & Nordlund, 2011). Also in tourism literature, personal norms have been shown to influence green behavior (e.g. Mehmetoglu, 2010a). It can however be suggested that in models including both values, environmental concern, and personal norms, the importance of personal norms affects the explaining power of the other factors, hence personal norms becomes too dominant. In order to test the influence of values on green attitudes, intentions and choices, the present thesis therefore excludes personal norms.

### ***Values and value orientation***

Value theory suggests that behavior can be determined by individuals' general values. Values are conceptualized as guiding principles central in an individual's life. Similar values clustered together form an individual's value orientation (Rokeach, 1973; see Rohan, 2000 for an analysis of the value construct). Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) generated a conceptual definition of values: "Values (a) are concepts or beliefs, (b) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (c) transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (p. 878). Further, the total number of values that individuals may consider is rather small. For that reason, compared to other antecedents of behavior, such as specific beliefs and attitudes, values provide an efficient instrument for describing and explaining similarities and differences between individuals, groups, nations, and cultures (Rokeach, 1973).

Schwartz' (1992) value theory includes ten distinct value types related to underlying motivational structures. He proposes that the structure of the human value system is universal, which means that people are different only in relation to the relative importance they place on a set of universally central value types. The value system include two dimensions; openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence. The dimension labeled openness to change-conservation describes the conflict between being motivated to follow the "own intellectual and emotional interests in unpredictable and uncertain directions" and "preserve the status quo and the certainty it provides in relationships with close others, institutions, and traditions" (p. 43). The self-enhancement-self-transcendence dimension relates to the conflict between values that motivate people to enhance their own personal interest (also at the sake of others) and values that motivate people to endorse the welfare of others and the nature. Research examining the relationship between values

and green behavior has exclusively applied the self-enhancement-self-transcendence dimension (Schultz et al., 2005) and this is also the focus in the present thesis.

The self-enhancement-self-transcendence dimension includes four of the ten identified value types. Self-enhancement values focus on individual outcomes and express the degree to which goals and ideals directly linked to benefits to oneself are valued. This value orientation includes the value types power and achievement. Self-transcendence measures the degree to which people value goals and ideals not directly linked to the self and includes the value types universalism and benevolence. The focus is here on social context outcomes (Schultz & Zelezny, 1999; Schultz, 2001; Schwartz, 1992; Rohan, 2000).

The representative values of the value type power are social power (control over others, dominance), authority (the right to lead and command), and wealth (material possessions, money), whereas achievement includes the values successful (achieving goals), capable (competent, effective, efficient), and ambitious (hardworking, aspiring). Universalism includes altruism towards humankind and comprises values such as equality (equal opportunities for all), social justice (correcting injustices, care for the weak), and a world of peace (free of war and conflict) and is opposite to power values. Further, benevolence encompasses altruism towards in-groups (mostly within the family) and includes values such as helpful (working for the welfare of others), forgiving (willing to forgive others), and responsible (dependable, reliable) and is opposite to achievement in the self-enhancement-self-transcendence continuum (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009) (See Table 2). Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz (2009) state that it is difficult for individuals to simultaneously pursue both self-enhancement and self-transcendent values. As a result, a person emphasizing one leads to her or him deemphasizing the other.

**Table 2. Value types (derived from Schwartz, 1992)**

<i>Power</i>
Social power (control over others, dominance)
Authority (the right to lead and command others)
Wealth (material possessions, money)
<i>Achievement</i>
Successful (achieving goals)
Capable (competent, effective, efficient)
Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)
<i>Universalism</i>
Equality (equal opportunities for all)
Social justice (correcting injustice, care for the weak)
A world of peace (free of war and conflict)
<i>Benevolence</i>
Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
Forgiving (willing to forgive others)
Responsible (dependable, reliable)

Green behavior can be seen as a social dilemma, where the individual experiences a conflict between private and collective interests (Dawes, 1980). It is not to be taken for certain that individuals always are behaving in order to maximize the outcome for one self. Research suggests that depending on value orientation, some individuals would be willing to behave green even if it means giving up on egoistic motives. A general finding is that green behaviors are positively related to self-transcendence values, while negatively related to opposite self-enhancement values. The differences between power and achievement suggest however that they may influence attitudes and behavior differently (Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Stern & Dietz, 1994; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999, Hansla et al., 2008a). Karp (1996) used Schwartz's measure of values when examining the influence of values on environmental behavior. Values which were found to have a positive influence on environmental behavior were close to a self-transcendent value orientation, whereas values with a negative influence on pro-environmental behavior were close to the self-enhancement value orientation.

Value orientation can also be more specific than the universal values defined by Schwartz (1992). One example is environmental values and scholars have characterized these as; homocentric, ecocentric, and egocentric values (Merchant, 1992), shallow versus deep ecology (Naess & Rothenberg, 1989), social-altruistic, biospheric, and egoistic values (Stern et al., 1995; Stern et al., 1993; Stern & Dietz, 1994), and anthropocentric versus ecocentric values

(Thompson & Barton, 1994). However, Stern et al. (1995) found that Schwartz (1992) self-enhancement value orientation was closely related to an egoistic value orientation (concern for the self). Further, Schwartz's self-transcendent value orientation includes all items that reflect both social-altruistic (concern for other people) and biospheric (concern for plants and animals) value orientation (Stern et al., 1993; Stern & Dietz, 1994). Since the focus of the present thesis is not only to study the influence of values on green choices, but also their influence on the vacation choice structure, the decision was made to apply the value theory model with universal values proposed by Schwartz (1992).

In tourism research, the relationship between values and tourism behavior have been studied by several scholars (e. g. Boote, 1981; Pitts & Woodside, 1986; Dalen, 1989; Muller, 1991; Madrigal & Kahle, 1994; McCleary & Choi, 1999; Ekinici & Chen, 2002; Mehmetoglu, Hines, Graumann, & Greibrokk, 2010). The focus in many of these studies has been on values as a segmentation criterion and not to empirically test the effect personal values have on the vacation choice structure, which for instance was suggested by Woodside and MacDonald (1994). Further, the relationship between values, green attitudes and the outcome of vacation choices is scarcely researched and therefore this thesis fills a gap in existing tourism literature. It can be assumed that tourists with a self-transcendent value orientation would be more likely to have a green attitude and choose green alternatives, than those with a self-enhancement value orientation.

### ***Attitudes***

An attitude is a mental state that refers to some specific object. It represents an individual's consistent tendency to respond favorably or unfavorably toward the object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). A primary reason for measuring attitudes is to understand why people behave the way they do. What people consider important in a choice situation can help marketing managers to develop and implement effective marketing programs (McDougall & Munro, 1987).

Values differ from attitudes in their abstractness and in their hierarchical ordering by importance (Schwartz, 1992). Rokeach (1968) differentiate values from attitudes by stating that "an attitude represents several beliefs focused on a specific object or situation, a value is a single belief that transcendentally guides actions and judgments across specific objects and situations (p.160). Moutinho (1987) states that values are not directed toward a specific person or object whereas attitudes are more articulated and directed towards a specific object. Attitudes must build on something stable and relatively enduring and values can be this ground. Values are more

general and presumable more stable than attitudes (Stern et al., 1995). Based on this discussion, it is assumed in this thesis that an individual's value orientation serve as a basis for attitudes and that green attitudes in tourism might differ depending on the tourist's value orientation.

Attitudes can range from very general to very specific. An important consideration is how closely one's attitudes are connected to his or hers underlying value system, also referred to as centrality. For example, a strong link between a positive attitude towards foreign travel and having personal values of being independent, broad-minded, and imaginative would create a reasonably central attitude. As values are rather stable in a person, a more central attitude is more difficult to change. Further, the more intense an attitude is, the more difficult it is to change (McDougall & Munro, 1987). This suggests that if a tourist have a self-enhancement value orientation and a negative attitude towards green behavior in tourism, this attitude would be very difficult to change. Two different attitudes are in focus in this thesis, as detailed in the following review.

#### *Environmental concern*

Environmental concern can be defined as an attitude towards both general and specific environmental issues (Fransson & Gärling, 1999). Environmental concern is in this thesis defined as a specific measure of the importance placed on making green choices in specific vacation choices. Many previous studies have focused on environmental concern towards a general unspecified environmental problem (Schultz, 2001; Schultz et al, 2005) and have examined the underlying factors of environmental concern. One research stream points to socio-demographic factors such as age, income, or education (see Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980) as influencing individuals' to an environmental concern. A second stream sees environmental concern as rooted in universal values (Stern et al., 1993; Stern et al. 1995). There are numerous of studies examining the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior respectively (e.g. Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996; Stern et al., 1993; Arcury & Christianson, 1990; Dunlap & Van Liere, 1984; Dunlap & Jones, 2002; Xiao & McCright, 2007; Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003). The results of these studies have however been mixed, which can be due to cultural or contextual factors or depending on if the environmental concern is defined as general or connected to a specific behavior. Of the two research streams, this thesis focuses on the influence of universal values. Previous research has shown that environmental concern is influenced by individuals' value orientation (Hansla et al., 2008a; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999; Stern & Dietz, 1994) and also that there is a link between socio-demographic factors and value orientation in the sense that people

with similar socio-demographics also might be similar in values (Fairweather et al., 2005). It is therefore possible that value orientation can provide further explanations to the mixed results between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in vacation choices.

The relationship between environmental concern and green behavior has been examined in many studies. The findings show that a strong environmental concern increase the likelihood of green behavior (e.g. Roberts & Bacon, 1997; Minton & Rose, 1997; Schlegelmilch, Bohlen, & Diamantopoulos, 1996; Kim & Choi, 2005; Thøgersen, 2000). In tourism literature, a number of studies have examined the relationship between environmental concern and tourism behavior (Wurzinger & Johansson, 2006; Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009; Mehmetoglu, 2010b). Tourists with a green attitude and an environmental awareness are more likely to engage in green behaviors than tourists who are not concerned with green issues (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Luzar, Diagne, Gan, & Henning, 1998; Weaver & Lawton, 2002). Mehmetoglu (2010b) found that environmental concern positively influenced the green behavioral intention both at home and at the destination. Previous research has however not examined if tourists' environmental concern differ depending on which vacation choice that is in focus, which is assumed in this thesis.

#### *Willingness to pay for environmental protection*

Willingness to pay for environmental protection can function as a measurement of to what degree individuals are willing to take on any responsibility of their own regarding environmental work. It can also be defined as a pro-environmental attitude (Thøgersen, 2000). Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) propose that values and green attitudes have a positive effect on individuals' willingness to spend more for green products. The variable willingness to pay is not typically included in attitude studies, but for example Stern and Dietz (1994) included measures regarding willingness to pay extra taxes to protect the environment when examining environmental concern. As having a willingness to pay for environmental protection is attitudinal in nature, the decision was made to treat this variable as an attitude in the present thesis.

Consumers' willingness to pay for environmental protection has been studied in several different contexts, e.g. when purchasing tourism products (e.g. Fairweather et al, 2005; Choi, Parsa, Sigala, & Putrevu, 2009), electricity (e.g. Farhar, 1999; Hansla, Gamble, Juliusson, & Gärling, 2008b; Hansla, 2011), or general green products (e.g. Simintiras, Schlegelmilch, & Diamantopoulos, 1994; Laroche et al., 2001). Previous research has shown that this willingness has an effect on different green behavior (e.g. Gelissen,

2007). Laroche et al. (2001) found a relationship between values and consumers' willingness to pay for green products. Individuals who stated that collectivism and security (a concern for other people) were important values in their everyday lives were more ecologically conscious and thus more willing to spend more for green products than those who were more individualistic. Hansla (2011) found that individuals with a self-transcendent value orientation stated that they were more willing to pay for eco-labeled electricity than individuals with a self-enhancement value orientation. Further, Thøgersen (2000) found that having a willingness to pay higher taxes, prices and accept cuts in living standard in order to protect the environment have a positive influence on the attention paid to an (unspecified) eco-labeled product, thus leading to a green buying intention.

In tourism literature, studies have examined tourists' willingness to pay for conservation measures at the destination (e.g. Becken, 2007; Lindsey & Holmes, 2002; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Scott, Christie, & Tench, 2003; Han, Hsu, Lee, & Sheu, 2011). A study by Choi et al. (2009) showed that university students from Greece and the United States have a stronger willingness to pay for hotels with an environmentally responsible practice than for hotels that do not have this practice. Further, Dodds et al. (2010) found that a majority of the examined tourists (young, single, well-educated, and earned above-average income) were willing to pay a tax to support environmental and social protection. Mehmetoglu (2010b) found that the willingness to pay for green holidays were higher if individuals had a higher income, a higher level of personal environmental norm, and were women. The results of these studies show that various socio-demographic factors influence tourists' willingness to pay for environmental protection. However, research regarding the relationship between values, environmental concern, and willingness to pay is however scarce in the tourism context.

### ***The values-attitude-behavior gap***

The relationships between values, attitudes, and behavior have been researched by many scholars with mixed results. Some studies have shown that the relationships exists, (e.g. Homer & Kahle, 1988; Vaske & Donnelly, 1999) while others have found less strong or no significant relationships. For example, Schultz et al. (2005) found support for a link between values and attitudes about environmental issues, but that these variables only explained a small amount of variance in environmental behaviors. Some studies also include intentions as a step in between attitudes and behavior (e.g. Bagozzi, 1992).

As previously stated, it is assumed in this thesis that individual's values serve as a basis for attitudes. This relationship has not been as questioned in

previous literature as the relationship between attitudes and behavior. Attitudes are generally good predictors of behavior, but certain factors might affect the strength of this relationship. Regan and Fazio (1977) propose that the focus should not be on if attitudes predict behavior, but when they do. The trick is to determine which factors that will influence the relationship to be strong or weak. In the context of green behavior, Mainieri, Barnett, Valdero, Unipan, and Oskamp (1997) suggest four different explanations for why the relationship between attitudes and behavior may be inconsistent; 1) low correlations between environmental behaviors, 2) attitude and behavior have been measured by different levels of specificity, 3) effects of extraneous variables, and 4) lack of measurement reliability and validity. In the tourism context, McDougall and Munro (1987) have put forward the following factors; 1) how well the correspondence is between attitude and behavior measures 2) to what extent the behavior is influenced by situational factors 3) how important it is to the individual to comply with social norms, 4) how important the attitude is to the individual and 5) how the attitude is formed. Two important conclusions relevant for this thesis can be drawn from this. First, researchers have a significant responsibility when designing their data collection in order to be able to draw conclusions about the effect of attitudes on behavior. Second, tourists can be constrained by various factors which can make it difficult for them to behave according to their attitudes. This may also be true for the effect values have on behavior. In the present thesis, the first issue is controlled for by taking certain actions when designing the two data collections (see a further discussion in the research method section). The second issue is further elaborated upon in the discussion section of this thesis.

To extend the discussion about the value-attitude-behavior gap it should be noted that some scholars also add behavioral intentions as a step between attitudes and behavior and say that intentions specify a likelihood of performing a certain action (e.g. Ajzen, 1985). Other researchers in various contexts have only focused on the relationship between attitudes and intentions (e.g. Becker, Seligman, Fazio, & Darley, 1981; Thøgersen, 1994; Mehmetoglu, 2010b; Barber, Taylor, & Deale, 2010) and in some cases they draw conclusions about behavior. What can be seen is that several studies which claim to study behavior, actually are measuring behavioral intentions. It therefore seems to be confusion in the literature of the difference between behavioral intentions and actual behavior. This thesis examines the relationships between values and attitudes (Study II), values, attitudes, and buying intentions (Study III) and the influence of values on tourists' vacation choice structure and green vacation choices (Study IV). No study included in this thesis examines actual behavior, i.e. a situation where tourists have made an actual purchase. However, by integrating the knowledge received



from the different studies, a discussion is carried out about the relationship between values, attitudes, intentions, and behavior in tourism in the discussion section of this thesis.

### **Conclusions drawn from the literature review**

The aim of this thesis is to develop theory regarding inter-related choices in a complex choice situation and how green choices are related to this. The literature review presented in this chapter served the purpose of explaining and clarifying the theoretical rational of the research problems as well as presenting previous research in the area.

In order to answer the four presented research questions and by that fulfil the purpose of this thesis, two main theoretical areas are central; consumer choices and psychological determinants of (green) behavior. By reviewing the literature, it has been found that the vacation choice structure is proposed to include choices which vary in importance, inflexibility, independence and primacy. Each choice is made in a trade-off process where the outcome of one choice might limit other available choice alternatives in the vacation choice structure. This might influence to what extent it is possible for the tourist to consider green alternatives in less important choices.

The inter-relation between vacation choices in the vacation choice structure is influenced by both external and internal factors. The focus for this thesis is internal factors; values, attitudes, and intentions. This thesis departs from the standpoint that values influence attitudes, which then influence buying intentions. The relationship between values, attitudes, intentions and actual behavior has been debated by many scholars. It is proposed in this thesis that a positive attitude towards an object or situation and a stated intention to behave in a manner supporting this attitude, will make it more likely that an actual behavior will be carried out. An increased knowledge about these relationships is valuable for developing existing theory in the field of consumer choices in a complex choice context and is important in order to increase the understanding of the vacation choice structure and green vacation choices.

## **Research method**

Within the field of consumer behavior there are many possible approaches and methods which can be used to gain knowledge about the consumer, each with its own advantages and drawbacks. This chapter gives an insight to the methodological choices made in this research process as well to the more practical data collection procedures.

### **Methodological choices in the research process**

This thesis takes its starting point in the individual's world of ideas as it focuses on the vacation choice structure from the perspective of the individual. The choice of theory for the present thesis indicates the research strategy. The theoretical focus is on interpretive models, showing that I see vacation choices as inter-related and belonging to a vacation choice structure. My view as a researcher in consumer behavior is that many factors, although all of them are not studied in this thesis, can have an effect on choice. The interpretive models take personal, social and cultural context into consideration (Decrop, 2006) and this way of approaching tourists' choices is congruent with my own understanding of vacation choices. This is also expressed in the thesis as values and attitudes are integrated in the studies. I also take the choice context into consideration as I study both independent and charter trip vacations.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of consumer behavior, but also to the tourism literature. It is however necessary to decide what factors to include in the scope of a dissertation and this thesis is based on literature originating from consumer behavior and psychology. A thorough literature review identified theoretical gaps regarding the inter-relation between vacation choices and the vacation choice structure's relation to tourists' green choices as well as the role played by values and green attitudes. From this, four research questions were developed. The theoretical framework reviewed in this thesis is based on the choice model presented by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) and later Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002) as well as the value theory model presented by Schwartz (1992) as these were, as previously discussed, found appropriate to explain the chosen research questions. The aim with this thesis is thus to build on existing theory in order to improve it.

### ***Choice of research method***

The research questions formulated in this thesis served as a base for the choice of a quantitative research method. Due to the complexity of vacation choices, the relationships between different vacation choices and how values and attitudes determine intentions and behavior can be difficult to physically

observe as well as difficult for a tourist to put into words. It is not even for certain that tourists are aware of their own vacation choice structure. A quantitative technique has the potential to measure the different constructs and then test the relationships between the different constructs by using statistical techniques. Thus, a quantitative technique therefore seemed to be the most appropriate for this thesis. Further, as knowledge about the inter-relation between sub-choices in a complex choice situation is of importance for marketers in several different contexts, tourism being one, it was necessary that the results from this thesis were generalizable to a broader population. For this reason, a quantitative research technique with a large sample is often used (Bryman, 2011). The results of the present thesis are generalizable to other tourists with the same characteristics and in the same context as the tourists examined in this thesis, but the findings can also, to some extent, be generalized to other contexts including this type of multiple sub-choices. The thesis seeks to explain the relationships within the vacation choice structure, but it does not say that there is a universal vacation choice structure for all tourists. It is recognized that tourists are a heterogeneous group of people and that the vacation choice structure can vary between different types of tourists and during a tourist's life time. This thesis does not seek to find a universal vacation choice structure but to examine the relation and trade-off between choices included in the structure.

Two different quantitative techniques were used to collect the data. The first data collection was a survey with a cross-sectional design (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Bryman, 2011) and the second was a conjoint study (Green & Rao, 1971). Both were web-based. The goal with the first data collection was to collect quantitative data concerning several different variables in order to analyze different relationships between them and also to examine differences between individuals depending on value orientation. It can be discussed if the results of this thesis in any way have been affected by the fact that cross-sectional studies only see to a "snapshot in time". For example, an alternative to the survey used in the first data collection could have been to carry out a longitudinal study where the same respondents would have been asked repeatedly about their thoughts regarding a coming vacation. This would have eliminated the risk of respondents not remembering correctly how the choices were made, which unfortunately is a possibility when respondents are giving answers to questions retrospectively. Another caveat is that when answering questions retrospectively, the respondents are influenced by the whole vacation experience when they answer the questionnaire. This might have affected the answers in the sense that attributes could have been rated differently than it would have been made if the question was asked during the planning process. However, as it can be difficult to capture the planning period for a specific vacation trip and

consequently hard to know when in time to start to ask the respondents about their vacation choices, the choice of doing a retrospective cross-sectional study seemed to be the most appropriate in order to fulfill the purpose of the present thesis.

The second data collection was conducted as a conjoint study where the respondents had to make a choice between different vacation packages. A conjoint analysis is an experimental technique and it was a logical continuation on the findings of the first survey. The goal with the second data collection was to examine tourists' preferences for green alternatives in vacation choices and also to give an insight into the vacation choice structure. Conjoint analysis is a method which study consumer trade-offs among multi-attribute products or services (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) and consequently is often used in order to reveal preferences for different attributes. By using conjoint analysis, tourists were experimentally put in a complex choice situation and forced to make a trade-off between and within vacation choices included in the presented packages. Consequently, they had to expose the importance of each vacation attribute and attribute level and show how vacation choices inter-related. Conjoint analysis was therefore considered to be the best available method to use for answering the research questions. A further discussion about the data collection methods can be found below the heading data collection.

The last, but not least, reason for choosing these types of data collection methods was to avoid the possible effect of the interviewer on the respondent. This can be especially relevant when studying something as delicate as green behavior as people in an interview situation might have an inclination of giving a more socially and culturally acceptable image of themselves and therefore not answering truly to questions (Bryman, 2011). For example, respondents claiming that they are greener in their attitudes and behavior than they actually are. This is called the social desirability bias (Leggett, Kleckner, Boyle, Dufield, & Mitchell, 2003; Chung & Monroe, 2003). It has been found that one possible way of minimizing the effect of the social desirability bias is to use anonymous data collection methods instead of face-to-face interviews (Oppenheim, 1992). In the present thesis, web questionnaires without any personal contact with the respondents were used to minimize the effect of this bias.

### **Population and sample**

In order to study the structure and outcome of tourists' vacation choices it was important to find respondents who are tourists or at least have the potential to be tourists. In order to get a general picture of the vacation choice structure, the focus was to find 'mainstream' tourists and not to

examine tourists who in advance could be seen as for example more or less green or belonging to a narrow tourism segment, e.g. very adventurous tourists. 'Mainstream' tourists can be tourists who visit well-established vacation destinations, use ordinary travel modes, and do not require very specific arrangements. Both general independent travelers and charter tourists are examples of tourists who can be seen as 'mainstream' tourists. The data collections were based on samples drawn from two different web panels and it was assumed that the majority of these web-panel members could be defined as 'mainstream' tourists. The use of a web panel in research has both advantages and disadvantages. An advantage is that the respondents have agreed in advance to participate in the data collection which increases the likelihood of a high response rate. Further, using a web panel is a less expensive and quicker data collection tool than using for example personal interviews or direct mail surveys. A disadvantage with this choice of data collection is that the members of the web panel might not be representative of the target population at large (Hair et al., 2006).

The first data collection (the survey) used a sample from a web panel belonging to an external market research company. The web panel member had previously been recruited by telephone or through the Internet. The sample was representative for the Internet users of Sweden between the ages of 20 and 70. The usage rate of Internet in Sweden is one of the highest in Europe (Statistics Sweden, 2007). With respect to sex, age, and annual income, the sample differed only marginally from the population of Swedish residents (Statistics Sweden, 2008). Higher education was however more frequent in the sample than in the Swedish population. The representativeness of the sample can always be discussed, but it is very difficult to estimate the degree of the bias. It is however not likely that the results are affected and in order to draw conclusions about mainstream tourists and their vacation choice structure, this sample was defined as appropriate.

The second data collection (the experiment) used a sample drawn from a web panel belonging to a Swedish charter trip provider. The panel consists of about 30 000 people who have voluntarily signed up to be a part of the panel and assumingly have an interest in traveling. This sample has the same disadvantages as previously discussed, but also some advantages relevant for this thesis. When tourists choose between various charter tourism packages they are forced to simultaneously make a trade-off between and within different vacation choice, i.e. reveal a vacation choice structure. As the vacation choice structure is in focus in the present thesis, it was important to also include this type of choice situation in the study. The choice to use charter tourists, or at least people with a potential interest in charter

tourism, was therefore appropriate and consequently it was also appropriate to draw the sample from this type of web panel. Further, and as previously explained, charter tourists can be seen as belonging to the group of mainstream tourists for which this thesis aims to draw conclusions about.

The two different data collections will be further discussed below, but a remark about the two samples for this thesis is that they are viewed as comparable to each other with regard to socio-demographic characteristics and value orientation. Some differences could however be found with regard to sex and education. The first sample had a majority of male respondents (55 percent), compared to the second sample (31 percent). Further, the first sample had a larger proportion of college or university educated respondents (59 percent compared to 45 percent). A comparison between the respondents' value orientation in the two samples shows that the self-transcendent – self-enhancement continuum in the first sample varied from -3.61 to 2.92 and in the second sample from -3.52 to 2.97. This demonstrates that the two samples are very similar regarding value orientation, but it does not show if the respondents on an aggregated level worldwide have a more self-transcendent or self-enhancement value orientation. Previous research has shown that people in countries with high gender equality, which Sweden is considered to be (Lister, 2009), self-transcendent values are more important to people than self-enhancement values (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009). It is therefore possible that all respondents in the included studies have a more or less self-transcendent value orientation. This does not affect the results per se but should be acknowledged if the results regarding value orientation are compared with findings based on the answers from respondents from countries which are very different from Sweden in culture and gender equality.

### **Data collection I - The survey**

The first data collection was made in September and October 2007 and involved a web-based survey sent by e-mail to members of a web panel. The questionnaire was submitted to the market research company and they sent out e-mails with a link to the survey until 1003 responses were collected. The questionnaire was designed with questions which asked the respondents to retrospectively give their answers about a vacation that had been carried out in June, July, or August that year. These months were chosen because Swedish leisure travel peak during the summer (Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, 2011). The respondents could not proceed in the questionnaire without giving an answer (due to technical settings) and therefore the study had no missing data.

The first questionnaire was developed in the early stage of the research process. The focus in this questionnaire was to generate knowledge about the vacation choice structure, individuals values, green attitudes, and as well as the respondents' buying intentions for green vacation alternatives. The questionnaire was developed after an extensive literature review. The purpose of the literature review was to review what previously had been studied in order to develop relevant research questions which built on current research. Research questions for Study I, II, and III was consequently developed on basis of this literature review. Another purpose of the literature review was to create valid theoretical constructs that could be used in the questionnaire. The used constructs all had a theoretical underpinning, but how they were measured was more or less elaborated upon based on results of previous research.

To pre-test the questionnaire and also the different constructs, an early version of the questionnaire was sent out by mail to 100 respondents whose addresses were randomly collected from the Swedish National Tax Office. A number of these respondents were contacted by telephone and asked some short questions about the design and content of the questionnaire. Additionally, a number of colleagues at Umeå School of Business (at present Umeå School of Business and Economics) were asked to fill out the questionnaire and report back on how they perceived both content and design. Smaller changes to the questionnaire were made after these tests. This process made sure that the concepts were as valid and reliable as possible.

### ***Measures and analysis***

The idea of studying the vacation choice structure followed the reading of Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002), who suggested a vacation choice structure but did not test it empirically. Other studies (e.g. Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000; Dellaert et al., 1998; Woodside & King, 2000) empirically showed a sequential structure but did not test the inter-relation between different vacation choices, suggested by Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002). No existing scales were thus found which examined this inter-relation between vacation choices. Consequently, the questions measuring vacation choices' primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other vacation choices were developed by the authors.

The respondents' values were measured by using an existing scale developed by Schwartz (1992). However, from the original 16 values employed by Schwartz, 12 were included in the present measurement of value orientation. These values have previously been shown to be the most robust indicators of self-enhancement and self-transcendent value orientation (Schwartz, 1992)

and have also been used in recent Swedish studies (Hansla, 2011; Hansla et al., 2008a, 2008b). Schwartz (1992) discusses if respondents really report their own personal value priorities when responding to this type of value survey, or if they report the normatively approved ideas of their own group or culture. Even if the respondents are asked about the “what values are important to ME as guiding principles in MY life” (p. 50) he raised the question if it is possible to talk about a social desirability bias. However, after empirical analyses, Schwartz (1992) could conclude that responses primarily reflect personal value priorities.

The concept environmental concern has commonly been measured by using the new ecological paradigm (NEP) scale developed by Dunlap and colleagues (1978, 2000). The NEP scale is a general measure and aims at measuring people’s view on the human-environment relationship. By using the NEP scale, respondents can among other things, be seen as having either an social-altruistic, biospheric, or egoistic environmental concern (Schultz, 2001). Previous research has however found that it is better to measure a specific action in a specific context by using a more specific measure of environmental concern (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995; Moisander & Uusitalo, 1995) and research regarding attitudes toward green issues have started to abandon the examination of general environmental concern and instead focused on a more differentiated conceptualization of environmental attitude formations (Schultz & Zelezny, 1999). Further, Lück, (2003) concludes that the NEP scale is not always the best measurement of environmental concern in the tourism context and that it has to be further tested.

The above discussion led to the decision to use a more narrow measurement of environmental concern in the present thesis. The developed measurement was consequently focused on the weight the respondents placed on green issues in specific vacation choices. By not using the NEP scale in this questionnaire, it could be assumed that the study lost the possibility to draw conclusions about the respondents’ type of environmental concern. However, as previous research has shown that Schwartz (1992) self-enhancement and self-transcendent value orientations are closely related to egoistic, social-altruistic, and biospheric environmental concerns the possibility to draw conclusions about type of environmental concern (if necessary) was not lost (Stern et al., 1995; Stern et al., 1993; Hansla et al., 2008a).

The measurement of the respondents’ willingness to pay for environmental protection has previously been used by Thøgersen (2000) but in a different context. This thesis used the same questions but changed the wording to match vacation choices. Intentions to buy green tourism alternatives were



not measured by using an existing scale. Instead, the questions were developed by the author and directly asked the respondents about their buying intentions for various vacation choices.

The data from the survey was analyzed by using various statistical techniques, guided by the objectives of the different studies. The techniques used were analysis of variance (ANOVA), Bonferroni-adjusted t-test, ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple linear regression analysis, Sobel test of mediation, and structural equation modeling. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales.

### ***Response rate and non-response analysis***

To receive the 1003 responses, the survey was sent out to a total of 4444 people in Sweden, which gave a response rate of 23 percent. No reminders were sent out to the ones who received the e-mail in the first round (numbers not known). Instead, new e-mails were sent out to other members of the web panel until asked number of respondents ( $\geq 1000$ ) was achieved. This procedure led to a response rate of 23 percent and it should be noted that the response rate probably would have been higher if reminding e-mails or telephone calls were used instead of sending out new e-mails to new panel members.

An attempt to analyze the characteristics of the persons who received the e-mail, but chose not to complete the survey was done by contacting the market research company. They could unfortunately not provide this information. Possible explanations for the non-responses could however be that these people had not been on a vacation during the proposed months (June, July, and August 2007), or they did not have time or prioritize taking part in this particular survey. A member of a web panel is not obliged to answer all surveys sent out to her or him and therefore there is a risk that some surveys are neglected.

For Study I, II, and III presented in this thesis, 681 respondents were used, giving a response rate of 15 percent (see Table 3). The 322 respondents who completed the survey but whose answers were not used in the analyses had not made a vacation trip during the proposed months. They had only answered to questions about value orientation, response to eco-labels, and socio-demographics and were therefore excluded. An analysis of these answers shows that they differ from the respondents used in the studies in two ways; income and occupation. First of all, 41.9 percent of the non-qualified respondents had an income below 200 000 SEK and 6.8 percent had an income exceeding 400 000 SEK. This is to be compared to 29.5 percent (low income) and 12.2 percent (high income) of the qualified

respondents. This suggests that income may be an influencing factor on the possibility to go on vacation. Secondly, the respondents differed in occupation. Of the non-qualified respondents, 49.4 percent worked full time and 16.8 percent were retired. This is to be compared to 61.5 percent (full time) and 10.4 percent (retired) of the qualified respondents. The differences in income are assumingly closely related to the differences in occupation. It can be discussed if the 322 respondents who had not been on a vacation should have been incorporated in the studies. It would however have been impossible to incorporate them in Study I as they did not give an answer to the questions used in this analysis. For Study II and III it would have been possible to incorporate their answers regarding value orientation, response to eco-labels, and socio-demographics. However, as these studies also included questions about environmental concern, which the non-qualified respondents had not answered to, the choice was made to exclude them from all analyses.

The non-qualified respondents made up 32 percent of the total number of respondents who answered the survey. It can therefore be argued that out of the 3441 respondents who received the e-mail with a link to the survey but chose not to respond to it, about 30 percent would not have been qualified to answer the survey, i.e. they had not been on a vacation trip during the proposed months. This means that the true number of qualified respondents should be about 3000, indicating a more true response rate of 23 percent for the studies based on the first survey.

### **Data collection II – The experiment**

The second data collection was performed in May and June, 2010 by using the software from Sawtooth Software SSI Web 7.0.4. At this time, a deeper theoretical knowledge had been gained by me. In the relationship between values, attitudes, buying intentions, and actual purchase, the first survey had stopped on buying intentions. What was of both theoretical and managerial interest was however to also study a choice situation which was more representative for an actual choice. Much thought was given on this and how data on this matter could be collected. While doing a second literature review, conjoint analysis caught my interest and I read more about this type of data collection. Instead of having the respondents to rate how likely it is that a purchase will be made (buying intention), conjoint analysis opened up for a more realistic choice situation where the respondents had to make a trade-off between different attributes in the choice situation. It is however not claimed in this thesis that the use of conjoint analysis is an examination of actual purchases.

By focusing on the trade-off between and within vacation choices, the second data collection centered on the importance of vacation choices. The results of the studies based on the first data collection showed that importance varied between vacation choices and this was also suggested by Jeng & Fesenmaier (2002). The first survey had the individuals to rank different features and determinants of vacation choices, but as vacation choices are complex and the findings of Study I indicated this complexity, it felt necessary to test this in a more experimental setting. Study I also implied that tourists make a trade-off between different attributes (vacation choices) and this trade-off was also very interesting to study from both a theoretical and managerial perspective.

The second questionnaire was designed as a web based survey and an e-mail together with some short information about the study was sent out to 4000 web panel members. The introductory text in the e-mail was written together with a copy writer employed at the charter trip provider which owned the web panel. The e-mail looked similar to the surveys which they usually send out, except for that it was clear that the charter trip provider was cooperating with Umeå School of Business (at present Umeå School of Business and Economics) in this matter. The measurement of value orientation was also in this questionnaire based on the scale used by Schwartz (1992). The full questionnaire was pre-tested before it was sent out to the respondents in the web panel. The pre-test included 48 respondents recruited by convenience sampling. The comments received from the pre-test were included in the design of the final questionnaire and some minor changes were made.

### ***Choice-based conjoint analysis***

The data was analyzed using choice-based conjoint (CBC) analysis, which involves a choice experiment where the respondent is asked to choose one alternative from a comparative set of alternatives. Conjoint analysis is a technique used to analyze consumer preferences (Green, Krieger, & Wind, 2001) and appeared in marketing literature in 1971 when Green and Rao published their article “Conjoint Measurement for Quantifying Judgmental Data” in the *Journal of Marketing Research*. Conjoint analysis has since then become more and more popular in both academia (Green & Srinivasan, 1978, 1990; Green et al., 2001) and among practitioners (Wittink & Cattin, 1989; Wittink, Vriens, & Burhenne, 1994). In conjoint analysis, a product or service is described by sets of attribute levels and a primary purpose is to model human behavior by asking the respondents about their interest in these “complete” products or services (McCullough, 2002). The result will be based on the trade-off between the chosen attributes. To avoid respondent overload, the number of attributes and levels should be carefully considered. In a full-profile design (like CBC), all attributes are present simultaneously

to the respondents and an ideal design should therefore not include more than six attributes (Green & Srinivasan, 1978, 1990; McCullough, 2002). Secondly, conjoint analysis does not give an absolute sign of the importance of attributes in all possible circumstances. The attributes and levels included in a study are the ones considered by the respondent, and by including other attributes and levels the results may be different. It is therefore very important to be careful in choice of attributes and levels, and also to define attributes correctly (Orme, 2010).

The attributes for this study was carefully chosen based on both theoretical and empirical ground. To test the design of the CBC, efficiency tests were performed to ensure adequate statistical power (see Study IV for more detailed information on the questionnaire).

### ***Response rate and non-response analysis***

A link to the web questionnaire was sent out to 4000 randomly chosen panel members and usable answers were received from 732 respondents (see Table 3). The wish to analyze the characteristics of the individuals who chose not to respond to the questionnaire could unfortunately not be fulfilled. However, it was possible to receive some data regarding the web panel as a whole. Women made up 72 percent of the panel and the largest age group was between 45 and 54 years old. This was very similar to the characteristics of the respondents, which had 69 percent women and a mean age of 52 years. A difference between the web panel and the respondents could though be observed regarding education. Of all panel members, the largest group (47 percent) included those with high school as the highest level of education, whereas this group was smaller in the present study. Here, the group with college or university as highest education was the largest (45 percent). The data from the whole web panel showed that during the last *two years*, 36 percent had been of 1-2 charter trips, 47 percent on 3-5 charter trips, and 13 percent on six or more charter trips. The same type of question was asked to the respondents, but with the time span of *12 months*. The results showed similar numbers for the respondents; 62 percent (1-2 trips), 14 percent (3-5 trips), and 1 percent (>5 trips). This is not fully comparable numbers but it still indicates that the respondents travel a bit less than the overall member of the web panel. From this description it can be concluded that the individuals who were part of the sample but chose not to answer the questionnaire probably are relatively similar the respondents regarding sex and age. The respondents are to some extent more educated than the non-respondents, which is a common bias in many surveys.

**Table 3. Response rate for the two data collections**

<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Usable responses</b>	<b>Usable response rate</b>
Survey	4444	1003	23%	681	15%
Experiment	4000	732	18%	732	18%

### **The examined vacation choices**

A number of different vacation choices need to be considered by the tourists in the vacation choice situation (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Moutinho, 1987; Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000; Woodside & King, 2001). In Study I, choice of destination, activity, travel mode, and time of departure were examined in order to study the vacation choice structure. Study II focused on environmental concern in choice of destination, activity, travel mode, time of departure, accommodation, and length of trip. Study III included environmental concern in choice of activity, travel mode, time of departure, accommodation, and length of trip, as well as green buying intentions regarding choice of destination, travel mode, and accommodation. Finally, Study IV examined choice of travel mode, accommodation, type of trip, and willingness to pay for the charter trip provider's green work at the destination in order to study the outcome of the trade-off process. These choices are all (except for the willingness to pay for the charter trip providers' green work at the destination) available choices for consumers at the market place today. As for Study IV, the selected attributes were chosen because they often are part of vacation packages offered to potential tourists when they seek information before their departure. Further, the selection of choices was discussed with one of the leading charter trip provider's in Sweden. This gave the study legitimacy from also the industry's point of view. Lastly, it can also be argued that all included choices in the two data collections are generic vacation choices which more or less always have to be considered by tourists.

Choice of destination denotes deciding where to go on vacation. In the three first studies, choice of destination was included as a choice that the respondents should either relate to other vacation choices regarding primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other vacation choices (Study I), rate their environmental concern in (Study II) or rate to what extent they consider eco labels when choosing destination (Study III). Choice of destination was not per se included in Study IV as we did not want to restrict the respondents by mentioning some random destinations in the presented packages. However, it felt impossible to disregard the fact that choice of destination is often an important part of a vacation and a realistic

charter vacation package always include a choice of where to go. Therefore, the attribute type of trip was included. By choosing if they wanted to go on a sunbathing or swimming trip, a thematic trip, or a big city trip the aim was to have the respondents to feel that they in some way could control choice of destination.

Choice of activity was defined as the main activity which was performed at the destination. The respondents had to relate this choice to other vacation choices (Study I) and to rate their environmental concern in this choice (Study II). The attribute named type of trip, which was used in Study IV, is also related to choice of activity as making this choice indicated the respondents' interest in the three different types of main vacation activities.

Travel mode was included in all four studies and was defined as the main way of transportation to the chosen destination. In Study I the respondents had to relate this choice to other vacation choices and in Study II they had to rate their environmental concern in this choice. Study III included to what extent they considered what was best for the environment when choosing travel mode and in Study IV the respondents had to rate if airplane, train, or bus was the most preferred travel mode. Choice of departure time was defined as when during the year the vacation took place and was examined in Study I (in relation to other vacation choices) and Study II (environmental concern). Choice of length of trip was explained as how long time the tourist was away from home during the vacation and this was only examined in Study II (environmental concern).

Accommodation choice was included in Study II, III, and IV. This choice was defined as the main accommodation used during the vacation. The respondents had to rate their environmental concern in this choice (Study II), to what extent they consider eco labels when choosing accommodation (Study III), and if they preferred a three star eco-labeled hotel, a five star eco-labeled hotel, a three star non labeled hotel, or a five star non labeled hotel (Study IV). The last vacation choice included in this thesis is environmental protection (the willingness to pay for the charter trip provider's green work at the destination (Study IV)). The respondents had to choose if they wanted to the charter trip provider to perform basic green work (no extra cost for the tourist), developed green work (5 percent extra cost for the tourist), or well developed green work (10 percent extra cost for the tourist).

### ***The environmental impact of vacation choices***

The different vacation choices can have more or less impact on the environment. The destination per se cannot be argued to be more or less

green. However, it is possible for tourists to have various degrees of environmental concern in their choice of destination and their choices may impact the environment. For example depending on how far the tourists travel to reach the destination and the degree to which the environment at the destination (the nature) is damaged by tourists spending their vacation there. Choice of activity and travel mode can both have direct impacts on the environment, while type of trip is a bit more difficult to rank with respect to green alternatives. However, including this activity attribute in a vacation package was necessary in order to provide realistic vacation packages.

Further, choice of departure date can have a possible impact on the environment if the chosen destination has a nature or wild life that is disturbed during certain times of the year. The choice of length of trip does not per se have a direct impact on the environment. Yet, combined with choices of destination or travel mode it will have positive or negative impacts on the environment. For example, other things being equal, longer vacation trips entailing travel to farther away destinations are more damaging to the environment than shorter vacation trips to closer destinations. In choice of accommodation, the tourists may have the possibility to choose a housing alternative which is actively working to minimize the negative impact on the environment by reducing resource consumption (water and energy) and waste generation. Finally, the willingness to pay for the charter trip provider's green work at the destination can have an impact on the host region's environment since a well-developed green work is seen as less environmentally harmful than a basic green work.

### **Clarification of terminology**

When writing this thesis, some differences in terminology have been used in the different studies. In order to clarify this, the following text will discuss these concepts with regard to their meaning in this thesis.

#### ***Green tourism***

The environmental dimension of sustainable tourism, also called green tourism, is as previously stated, the focus of this thesis. To define a green tourist is a bit difficult, but the simplest way is to say that it is a person who respects our environment while being on vacation and behaves in a way that is not harmful to it. As this thesis states, there are many ways in which a tourist can choose to be more or less green, for example through choice of transportation, activity, and accommodation. However, the present study does not aim at thoroughly define the green tourist. In the studies included in the present thesis different words have been used to refer to green issues. The terms ecologically sustainable, pro-environmental and environmentally friendly have all been used interchangeably in different parts of this thesis.

The intention has however always been to describe something that is green, with other words, less harmful to the environment.

***Willingness to pay for environmental protection***

The concept willingness to pay for environmental protection is in this thesis seen as an attitude towards green behavior. In the model in Study III, one construct is named stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment. This construct is measured by asking the respondents about their willingness to pay higher taxes, higher prices and accept cuts in living standard to protect the environment, derived from Thøgersen (2000) as a way to measure pro-environmental attitude. The term financial endorsement of protecting the environment is also used in Study III. Both these terms (stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment and financial endorsement of protecting the environment) are however different words defining the respondents willingness to pay for environmental protection.

In study IV, one attribute measures what type of environmental work at the destination the respondents' prefer the charter trip provider to be engaged in. The attribute levels available for the respondents to choose from are connected to different costs for the respondents, thus measuring their willingness to pay for having someone else (i.e. the charter trip provider) protecting the environment in a trade-off situation.



## Summary of studies

In a compilation thesis, it is important that the included studies all contribute to the overall purpose of the thesis. This chapter aims at giving an overview of the four included studies and also show how each of them fit into the present thesis. The chapter also includes a figure which gives a detailed overview of the constructs and attributes included in the four studies and how they are connected to the conceptual model of the thesis. As has been previously pointed out, some differences in terminology has been used in this thesis. In the extended abstracts included in this chapter, the terms which are used in the original studies are also used in the abstracts. In the cases where these terms differ from the terms used in the summary of this thesis, the term used in the summary is put in parenthesis.

### Presenting the four studies

In order to give an overview of the four studies included in this thesis, Table 4 shows the purpose and main results of each study. It also gives information about the included measures, the time and method used for data collection, the sample and how the data was analyzed.

In the present thesis, the aim with Study I is to show the complex context of vacation choices and study the vacation choice structure. The inter-relation between four vacation choices was examined with regard to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices. Study II shows evidence of the complex nature of vacation choices and contributes to the knowledge about the relationship between individual values and green attitudes. The focus is here on the green attitude environmental concern in six different vacation choices and how value orientation mediates the relationships between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern. The third study (Study III) advances the results from Study II by also include green buying intentions to the relationship between values and green attitudes. Finally, Study IV contributes to the knowledge about the vacation choice structure by applying a conjoint analysis where tourists have to make trade-offs between and within different choices (attributes). Further, the results show the outcome of the trade-off process in relation to green vacation choices. The study also shows the direct influence of values on the vacation choice structure.

In close connection to the extended abstracts of each study presented in this chapter, a miniature model of the constructs and relations examined in each specific study is presented. These four models are in the end of this chapter consolidated into one model (Figure 3) in order to give a visual overview of how the four studies relate to each other and also to the research questions

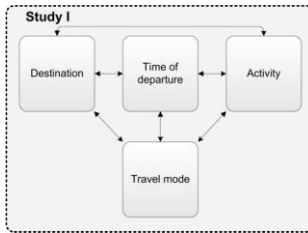
and the theoretical framework. Each miniature model is more closely discussed in connection to Figure 3 and should only be seen as a visual guide in the extended abstracts.

Table 4. The four studies

<b>Study</b>	<b>Study I –</b> Inter-related vacation choices by Swedish tourists	<b>Study II –</b> The mediating effect of value orientation on the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in Swedish tourists' vacation choices	<b>Study III –</b> The impact of values, environmental concern, and willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment on tourists' intentions to buy ecologically sustainable tourism alternatives	<b>Study IV –</b> Tourists' vacation choice structure: Exploring the relationship between values, vacation choices, and green tourism
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Purpose</b> To investigate how vacation choices made prior to departure are made with regard to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices. The study also investigates whether the targeted choices differ in primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices depending on how familiar the tourist is with the destination.	To investigate whether and to what extent the relationships between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in vacation choices are mediated by differences in individuals' value orientation.	To develop and test a model that explains the potential influence of tourists' values, environmental concern, and stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection) on ecologically sustainable (green) buying intentions.	To explore the trade-off between and within vacation choices in order to understand the inter-relation and structure of vacation choices and also to see if and when green aspects are included in the choice of vacation packages. A second purpose with this study is to explore how value orientation influences tourists' green vacation choices.
<b>Measures</b>	Primacy, importance, inflexibility, impact, familiarity	Values, environmental concern, socio-demographic factors	Universalism, benevolence, power, achievement, environmental concern, stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection), intentions to buy ecologically sustainable tourism (green) alternatives	Values, choice of travel mode, type of trip, accommodation, the willingness to financially support the charter trip provider's green work at the destination

<b>Method</b>	Web-based questionnaire	Web-based questionnaire	Web-based questionnaire, Choice-based conjoint analysis
<b>Time</b>	Sept – Oct 2007	Sept – Oct 2007	May – June 2010
<b>Sample</b>	681 individuals belonging to a web panel	681 individuals belonging to a web panel	732 individuals belonging to a web panel
<b>Research design</b>	ANOVAs, Bonferroni-adjusted t-tests	Ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple linear regression analyses, Sobel tests of mediation	Choice-based conjoint analysis
<b>Main results</b>	<p>Expanded understanding on how vacation choices inter-relate with regard to importance, inflexibility, impact on other choices, and primacy.</p> <p>Indicating that no single vacation choice is seen as the most important, the most inflexible, the one having the most impact on other choices, and made earliest in time. However, choice of destination has three of these characteristics (importance, impact, and primacy).</p> <p>Indicating that familiarity with the destination has an effect on how important and inflexible the destination choice is experienced.</p>	<p>Expanded understanding of the relationship between values, green attitudes, and ecologically sustainable (green) buying intentions in vacation choices.</p> <p>Indicating that there is a positive relationship between universalism, environmental concern, stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection), and the intentions to buy ecologically sustainable (green) tourism alternatives.</p>	<p>Expanded understanding of the trade-off between and within vacation choices included in a charter vacation package.</p> <p>Indicating that charter tourists clearly make a distinction between vacation choices with regard to their importance in a trade-off situation and that travel mode is the most important choice.</p> <p>Indicating that green preferences only could be found in choice of accommodation. This might be the result of tourists' aspiration for status and that it is important for tourists that green choices give the individual benefits.</p> <p>Indicating that individuals' value orientation does not affect vacation choices to a great extent.</p>

## Study I. Inter-related vacation choices



Hedlund, Therese, Marell, Agneta, & Gärling, Tommy (2011). Inter-related summer vacation choices by Swedish tourists. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 11(1), 42-53.

Previous tourism studies have often focused on one single vacation choice, often the destination choice (Decrop, 1999; Tay et al., 1996). However, other scholars have recognized that vacation choice include many different choices which are inter-related (e.g. Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Dellaert et al., 1998). Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002) suggested a hierarchical vacation structure where vacation choices can be structured according to when in the decision process they are made and how important and inflexible they are to the tourist. They also proposed that travel choices follow a contingent process where one choice would condition later choices. Previous research has however not examined if the vacation choice made earliest in time, also is the most important, inflexible, and has the most impact on other vacation choices. This study focused on four different vacation choices; destination, departure time, activity, and travel mode, and the first purpose was to examine if these choices vary with respect to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices. Further, Hyde (2004) suggested that familiarity with a destination can affect the vacation structure. The second purpose was consequently to examine if the targeted vacation choices varied regarding primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices depending on how familiar the tourist was with the destination.

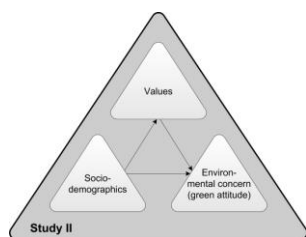
The data was gathered by web-based questionnaires. The analyses were based on answers from 681 respondents who had been on a summer vacation, stayed away for at least three nights, and paid for the accommodation themselves. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) showed that it was possible to rank the four vacation choices according to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices. It was however not possible to say that choices made early in the decision process are more important, more inflexible, and have a greater impact on other choices. Choice of destination had the characteristics of being the first choice to be made (together with travel mode), the most important, and having the most impact on other choices (together with activity). It was however the most

flexible vacation choice. This is important implications for marketers as it suggests that it can be a wise idea to focus marketing effort on the destination choice.

Factors which may influence the planning of vacation choices (vacation choice structure) might be situational constraints, e.g. the need to make early reservations, what type of vacation (self-organized or vacation package) that is in focus, or travel company. Choice of activity was the last choice to be made and was sometimes even made at the destination. This implies that it is possible to make a distinction between vacation choices made before departure and at the destination. This can be of importance for marketers as the possibility to reach tourists with arguments in the media and through campaigns is likely to be better for choices made before departure as these assumingly are more deliberate.

Further, the results showed that familiarity with the destination influenced the importance and inflexibility the respondents experienced in the destination choice. Tourists highly familiar with a destination rated the destination choice to be more important and more inflexible than those tourists who never had visited a certain destination before. Information about a destination prior to departure would make the tourist more familiar with the destination and not subject to last minute changes. This further strengthens the argument that marketing efforts should be focusing on the destination choice.

## **Study II. The relationship between socio-demographic factors, values, and environmental concern in vacation choices**



Hedlund, Therese, Marell, Agneta, & Gärling, Tommy (2012). The mediating effect of value orientation on the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in Swedish tourists' vacation choices. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 11(1), 16-33.

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Consumers' vacation choices have a large environmental and economic impact on a host region, both of positive and negative character (Aronsson, 2000; Dowling & Fennell, 2003; Middleton & Hawkins, 1998). Few tourists are however willing to make any changes to their vacation plans to make

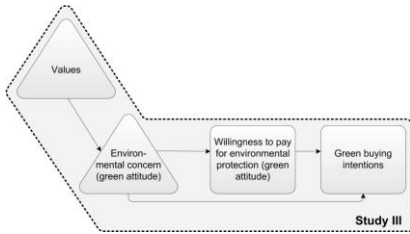
them more environmentally responsible (Barr et al., 2010; Miller, Rathouse, Scarles, Holmes, & Tribe, 2010), which has resulted in a low market share for this type of tourism. It is of great importance to decrease the negative effects of tourism and one step towards this is to learn more about the determinants of environmental concern in vacation choices. Previous studies (e.g. Arcury & Christianson, 1990; Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996) have found mixed results in the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern and in order to further explain these results it can be suggested that individuals' value orientation influence this relationship. The purpose of the present study was therefore to investigate whether and to what extent the relationships between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in vacation choices are mediated by differences in individuals' value orientation.

A web-based questionnaire was used to gather the data for this study. The respondents were tourists who had been on a summer vacation, stayed away for at least three nights, and paid themselves for the accommodation (N=681). OLS multiple linear regressions showed that the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern differed depending on which vacation choice that was in focus and also that the mediating effects of value orientation differed depending on vacation choice. Full mediation of value orientation was observed for age in the activity choice which means that for old (>56 yrs) people to have an environmental concern in their main activity choice they need to have a self-transcendent value orientation. Partial mediation of value orientation was observed in all other vacation choices except for time of departure. In choice of destination, the partial mediation was found in the relationship between age and environmental concern; in choice of main activity between sex and environmental concern; in choice of travel mode between income and environmental concern and age and environmental concern; in choice of accommodation between income and environmental concern, age and environmental concern, and sex and environmental concern. Finally, in choice of length of trip, a partial mediation of value orientation was found between age and environmental concern and sex and environmental concern.

The study concludes that socio-demographic factors do not have an invariant influence on environmental concern in a tourism context and it is necessary to acknowledge the complexity of vacation choices, i.e. that individuals with different socio-demographic characteristics are more or less environmentally concerned depending on which vacation choice that is in focus. However, the destination choice had the highest ratings of environmental concern. The findings have implications for marketers of green tourism as they show that

it is important to design messages that not only attract a certain socio-demographic group, but also to focus on messages that attract tourists who make sustainable (green) vacation choices due to altruistic reasons.

### **Study III. The impact of values, environmental concern, and willingness to pay for environmental protection on tourists' green buying intentions**



Hedlund, Therese (2011). The impact of values, environmental concern, and willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment on tourists' intentions to buy ecologically sustainable tourism alternatives. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11(4), 278-288.

Tourism is a growing industry and even if it has many positive effects on a host region, the growth of tourism and traveling leads to an increased strain on our environment. A shift towards more sustainable tourism would therefore have beneficial environmental effects. The market share for sustainable tourism is however still marginal. Previous research has shown a relationship between individuals' values, attitudes (environmental concern), and behavior (e.g. Ekinici & Chen, 2002; Steg et al., 2005; Hansla et al., 2008a). It has also been shown that tourists vary in both value orientation and environmental concern (e.g. Formica & Uysal, 2002; Mehmetoglu, 2010b) and that these factors may influence tourists' ecologically sustainable (green) buying intentions. Further, as many green tourism alternatives are more expensive than their less sustainable counterparts, tourists need to be willing to pay extra to make ecologically sustainable (green) choices. In order to better understand tourists' ecologically sustainable (green) buying intentions, the purpose of the present study was to develop and test a model that explains the potential influence of tourists' value orientation, environmental concern, and stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection) on ecologically sustainable (green) buying intentions.

The data was collected through a web-based questionnaire and the analyses were based on 681 respondents. These respondents were tourists who had been on a summer vacation, stayed away for at least three nights, and paid themselves for the accommodation. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the model and the results show that the value construct



universalism was positively related to environmental concern, environmental concern was positively related to both the stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection) and the intention to buy ecologically sustainable (green) tourism alternatives. Also the stated willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment was positively related to the intention to buy ecologically sustainable (green) tourism alternatives. Three hypothesized relations were not significant, thus disconfirming that the value constructs benevolence, power, and achievement would have a relationship with environmental concern.

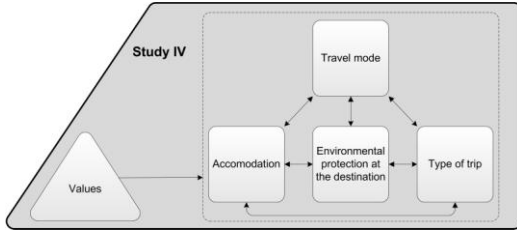
The positive relationship between universalism and environmental concern showed that individuals who value equality, social justice, and peace on earth are more likely to have an environmental concern in vacation choices than those who do not. Since universalism includes altruism towards all people and the nature (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009) and having an environmental concern is beneficial to the whole society in the long term, this result is not unexpected. This should be contrasted with the non-significant relationship between benevolence and environmental concern. Benevolence values include protecting the welfare of people with whom one is close to (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009) and individuals who ascribe to benevolence values might not see a link between caring for the environment and caring for your close kin, and consequently do not have a strong environmental concern in vacation choices.

The relationships between the value constructs achievement and power on the one hand and environmental concern on the other hand were not significant. This can be due to context-specific issues or to the fact that the sample had a more self-transcendent (universalism and benevolence) value orientation than self-enhancement (achievement and power) value orientation. The positive relationship between environmental concern and the willingness to accept economic sacrifices to protect the environment (willingness to pay for environmental protection) and also the between these two constructs and ecologically sustainable (green) behavior intentions suggests that tourists who have a green attitude may be more interested in tourism consumption that reflect that concern.

The present study has marketing implications such as the importance of concentrating to marketing efforts which are appealing to tourists with altruistic values towards humankind and those who have an environmental concern in vacation choices. It should however be noted that improving green awareness not always leads to green behaviors. Miller et al. (2010)

suggest that behavioral change rather can be a result of tourists developing a feeling of personal responsibility for the environmental impacts of tourism.

### Study IV. Tourists' vacation choice structure



Hedlund, Therese, Bengtsson, Maria & Nordvall, Anna-Carin (2012). Tourists' vacation choice structure: Exploring the relationship between values, vacation choices, and green tourism. *Manuscript in review for publication.*

Charter tourism can have both positive and negative effects on a region seen from a green perspective. Green tourism has attracted an increased interest in the industry (Dowling & Fennell, 2003) but the problem is that tourists often are passive (Chafe, 2005) and this has resulted in a low market share for this type of tourism (Sharpley, 2001). In order to increase the consumption of green tourism it is important to further analyze tourists' vacation choice structure and its relation to green vacation choices. The purpose of the present study was therefore to explore the trade-off made between and within several vacation choices in a charter vacation package and also to see if and when green aspects are included in these choices. As it can be suggested that value orientation is an explaining factor to the low demand of green tourism, a second purpose was to explore how value orientation influences tourists' green vacation choices.

The responses of 732 individuals were used in a choice-based conjoint analysis. The vacation choices examined were travel mode to the destination, accommodation, type of trip, and willingness to financially support the charter trip provider's green work at the destination. The findings showed that travel mode was the most important vacation choice, whereas type of trip was the second most important choice. This was followed by accommodation and the charter trip provider's green work at the destination. No differences regarding importance were observed due to value orientation. The results further showed that airplane, eco-labeled hotel (regardless number of quality stars), sunbathing and swimming, and basic environmental work at the destination were the most preferred levels for each of the four vacation choices. Individuals with a self-enhancement value orientation preferred to use airplane to a greater extent than those with a self-transcendent value orientation. Further, choosing a thematic trip was more preferred among those with a self-transcendent value orientation.

A contribution of the present findings is that tourists make a clear distinction between vacation choices with regard to importance in a trade-off situation and that travel mode is very important for charter tourists. This can be interpreted as airplane being the most accessible and certain choice to charter tourists. It is also suggested that situational factors influence the importance of vacation choices.

The dependency between vacation choices suggests that the importance of travel mode influences tourists' possibility to make green choices, thus limits the available alternatives in less important choices. This implies that it is important for the development of green tourism that green alternatives are available at charter destinations to which tourists fly by airplane. The findings further showed that green alternatives only were considered in choice of accommodation. One suggested explanation for this is tourists' aspiration for status and that tourists choose green alternatives only when it gives them an individual benefit. This implies that tourists could be turned towards more self-sacrificing (green) choices by activating status motives and that marketers should focus on highlighting the individual benefits with green choices. It is also proposed that tourists might make greener choices if their behavior is visible to others, thus again indicating that their behavior needs to give them individual benefits.

Finally, the findings showed that tourists in a choice situation make similar choices no matter of their value orientation. This can be explained by the case the tourists are inconsistent decision makers and that value orientation is just one dimension affecting tourist choices, but also that even if the outcome of choices is the same it might be a difference in motives (altruistic or selfish) behind them.

### **Visual overview of the four studies**

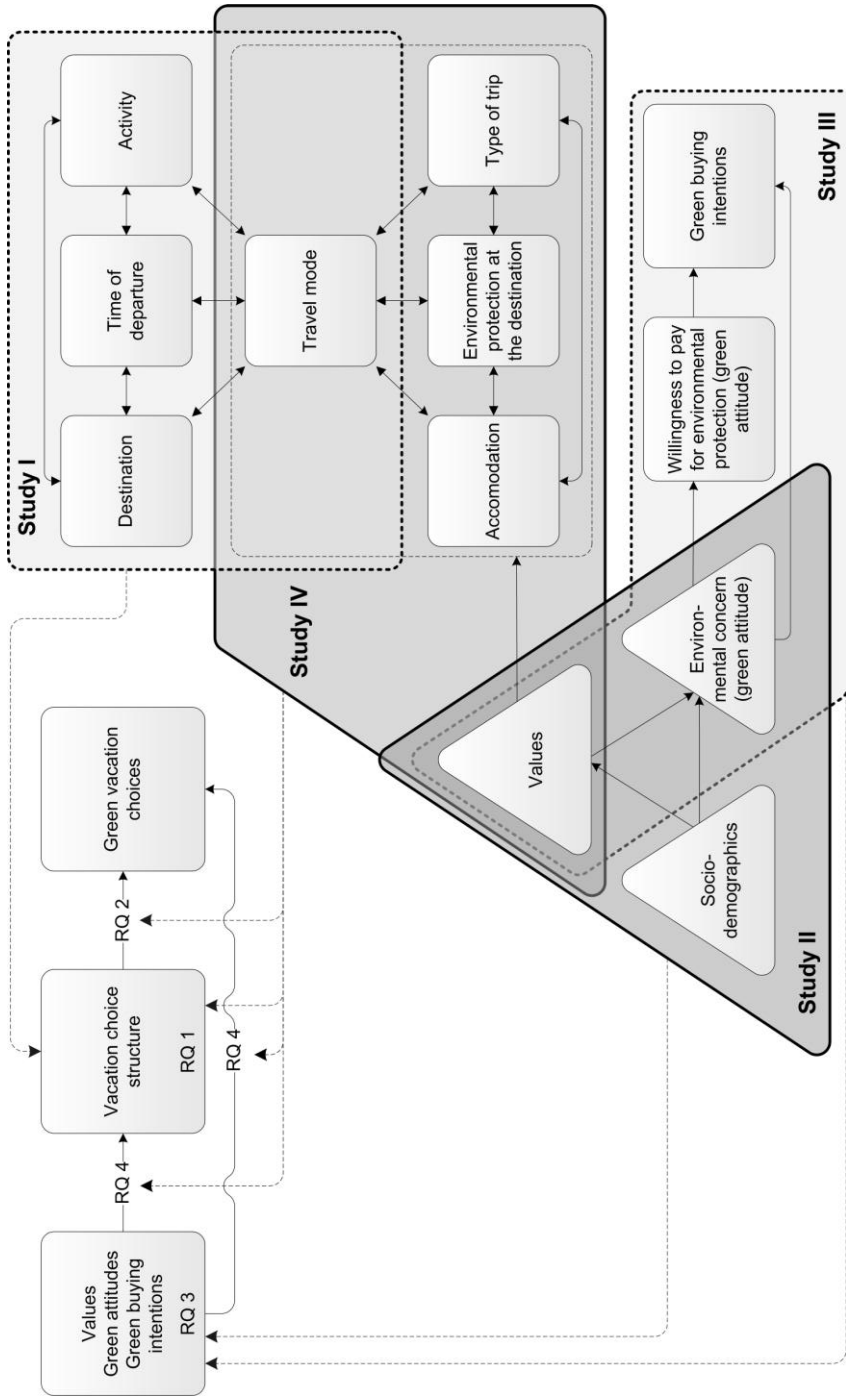
The intention with Figure 3 is to give an overview of the constructs and attributes included in the different studies and how the studies relate to the research questions and the theoretical framework. The model has its base in literature since the studies to a great extent builds on relationships which are suggested in previous research. However, the present thesis integrates the different concepts in a way which develops theory about the vacation choice structure and how it relates to tourists' green choices.

Study I examines the relationship between the four vacation choices destination, time of departure, activity and travel mode, in order to study the structure of vacation choices (RQ 1). The double-headed arrows indicate that the relationships between the vacation choices, i.e. the vacation choice structure, are examined with regard to primacy, importance, inflexibility and

impact on other choices. Study II focuses on the mediating effect of individuals' value orientation on the relationship between socio-demographic factors and environmental concern in six different vacation choices (RQ 3), while Study III examines the relationships between values, green attitudes (defined as environmental concern in vacation choices and willingness to pay for environmental protection), and green buying intentions (RQ 3).

Study IV examines the vacation choice structure by studying how consumers evaluate different services included in a vacation package (RQ 1). The double-headed arrows indicate that the relationships between the different choices are studied by examining the trade-off between and within the vacation choices, i.e. the vacation choice structure. Study IV also analyzes how the vacation choice structure relates to tourists' green choices (RQ 2) by examining the outcome of the trade-off process. The fourth study further attempts to analyze how tourists' values influence both the vacation choice structure and green vacation choices (RQ 4). The relationships between the four studies and the research questions are illustrated with dashed arrows. No single study examines the whole chain of relationships (from values to actual choices), but the summarising chapter of this compilation thesis provides a discussion about this issue.

Figure 3. Overview of the four studies



## **Discussion and synthesis of research findings**

The main purpose of this thesis was to analyze inter-related choices in a complex choice situation and more specifically to develop theory about the vacation choice structure. The thesis also shows how values and green attitudes influence the vacation choice structure as well as how the vacation choice structure is related to tourists' green choices. The unique characteristics of tourism services make tourists' vacation choices both complex and multilayered (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The complexity is also apparent in the inter-relation and dependency between vacation choices as well as in the influence of personal factors such as values and attitudes. By studying inter-related choices in the tourism context, the results can also be generalized to other contexts involving inter-related choices thus contributing to consumer behavior literature in a wider sense. The findings also give implications to practitioners in the tourism industry as well as to practitioners in related contexts. These implications will however be further discussed in the conclusion section of this thesis.

The theoretical framework used for this thesis is based on the choice model presented by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) and the relationship between vacation choices proposed by Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002). Further, Schwartz (1992) value theory serves as a base for the examining of values as determinants of tourists' green attitudes, buying intentions, and choices. By taking this starting point, previously used variables have been used to predict intentions in a new behavioral field.

Four studies were performed in order to answer the research questions and by that fulfil the purpose of the thesis. The findings, which are presented in the text below, are related to the three sub-purposes and show the inter-relation between choices in the vacation choice structure, how values and green attitudes influence the vacation choice structure, and the effect of the vacation choice structure on tourists' possibilities to make green vacation choices.

### **The vacation choice structure**

The findings of the present thesis show that vacation choices are inter-related similar to what was proposed by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) and varies according to primacy, importance, inflexibility, and impact on other choices, which is in line with Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002). It was however not possible to show that one single choice had the characteristics of a core choice. Choice of destination was the choice first to be made (together with travel mode), the most important and having the most impact

on other choices (together with choice of activity), i.e. most similar to a core choice. It was however the most flexible choice, thus not supporting the proposal by Fesenmaier & Jeng (2000; 2002) saying that a core choice also should be inflexible. A reason for this might be that in relation to the other vacation choices, choice of destination was viewed as important by the respondents, but that the destination per se was flexible and could be changed.

Previous literature trying to identify a general vacation choice structure has focused on the primacy aspect, i.e. when in time the different vacation choices were made (Hyde, 2000; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000; Dellaert et al., 1998; Woodside and King, 2001). The results of Study I (Hedlund, Marell, & Gärling, 2011) show that choice of destination and travel mode were made first in time and that they were not possible to separate. This gives evidence of a close connection between the two choices which may be explained by tourists' pre-set opinions. It is possible that many tourists have a pre-set opinion on what type of travel mode that is appropriate to a certain destination or that they always use a certain way of transportation when going on vacation and that these pre-set opinions limit tourists' to see other alternatives. The primacy of certain vacation choices can also be an effect of uncontrollable external factors, for example that the purchase of a charter vacation trip requires that the tourist makes all major choices before departure or a need to make early reservations. It can therefore be claimed that to only study the timing or primacy of vacation choices is too limited. In order to get a more holistic picture of the vacation choice structure it is crucial to also focus on which choice that is most important to tourists. The findings of the present thesis provide evidence for the conclusion that a choice made early in time does not necessarily mean that the choice is viewed as important to the tourist, which is an important development of existing theory.

It can be proposed that the vacation choice which is viewed as the most important choice also can be seen as the choice that is most preferred by the tourist. As previous research has suggested a dependency between vacation choices, saying that one choice conditions or set the basis for later choices (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Dellaert et al., 1998; Woodside & King, 2001), it can be argued that the most important vacation choice is the choice which conditions other choices in the vacation choice structure, i.e. that the outcome of the most important choice influences which alternatives that are available for the tourist to choose from in less important choices in the structure. However, which specific choice that is perceived as most important may vary. In Study I, the most important choice was choice of destination, followed by choice of departure time and activity. The least

important choice was travel mode. The results from Study IV (Hedlund, Bengtsson, & Nordvall, 2012) showed that travel mode was the most important vacation choice, followed by type of trip. Choice of accommodation and the charter trip provider's green work at the destination were the least important choices. Type of trip can be seen as both relating to choice of activity and choice of destination as a choosing between a thematic trip, big city trip, or sunbathing and swimming gives an indication on what activities the tourist prioritize to take part in during vacation, but also that destinations offering these types of activities may be limited. The following discussion will thus offer possible explanations to these mixed results regarding the vacation choice structure.

When traveling independently, as a majority of the respondents did in Study I, other factors than the destination per se might influence the tourist to view the destination choice as important. For example, it might be that family or friends live at the visited destination and the primary motive is social and/or emotional. This is related to the findings stating that tourists who were highly familiar with a destination, which tourists might be if family or friends live there, rated choice of destination to be more important than those who never had visited the destination before. It is also possible that familiarity with a destination increased tangibility and therefore made the choice more easy to relate to and consequently more important.

When going on a charter vacation, there are often other motives for traveling, e.g. climate (Jacobsen & Dann, 2009) and convenience (Sheldon & Mak, 1987), and therefore travel mode may become more important. It is also possible that if tourists are not familiar with the destination of a charter trip, travel mode is the most tangible aspect which tourists are the most certain about and consequently it becomes most important. This argument is also supported by the findings of Popkowski Leszczyc, Pracejus, and Shen (2008) who say that consumers use the value of a certain attribute to infer the value of less certain attribute in an evaluation of a bundle. Further, charter tourists have a strong tradition of flying to a charter destination, especially if you live in northern Europe. This is probably also connected to the found importance of sunbathing and swimming. Due to Sweden's location and climate, Swedish charter tourists have to travel quite far in order to be sure that they will be able to perform these activities and therefore travel mode becomes very important. Thus, situational factors have an influence on the vacation choice structure. It is also necessary to note that type of trip, seen as closely related to choice of destination, was the second most important vacation choice for charter tourist and consequently also regarded as rather important.



Summarizing the previous discussion, the present findings show that choice of destination and travel mode are important choices for tourists and it is proposed that the outcome of these choices will have an effect on less important choices in the structure. It is suggested that the vacation choice structure and trade-off depend on the motive of the vacation and on situational factors. Tourists are subjective in their judgments and may also be influenced by the choice situation, i.e. if the choices are made separately as in independent traveling or in a vacation package. It is therefore not possible to talk about a universal vacation choice structure, a knowledge which was suggested but not empirically tested by Woodside and Macdonald (1994), and therefore an important contribution of the present thesis to existing theory. This conclusion is also supported by the results from Study IV which say that the trade-off between vacation choices does not change due to tourists' value orientation. When examining the importance of vacation choices, tourists with different value orientations have the same view of which choice that was the most important.

### **The influence of tourists' values and green attitudes on the vacation choice structure**

The results in this thesis provide evidence of how individuals' values directly influence the vacation choice structure but also how values influence the vacation choice structure for green vacation choices through green attitudes. As previously mentioned, the findings show that values have no direct effect on tourists' importance values of vacation choices. However, as the main focus regarding the effect of values on the vacation choice structure was on green vacation choices, the following text will concentrate on this issue. On the attribute level, the findings show that airplane was a more preferred mode of transportation among tourists with a self-enhancement value orientation than among those with a self-transcendent value orientation, showing that tourists with a self-enhancement value orientation made a choice which can be seen as better to the self than for a collective good. Choice of airplane can be seen as less green than the other available alternatives and this result is in line with previous research stating that green behavior is negatively related to a self-enhancement value orientation (Karp, 1996; Nordlund & Garvill, 2002). Tourists can be driven by both altruistic and selfish motives and sometimes different motives can result in the same outcome in a choice situation, which may explain why value orientation does not seem to be a very strong direct influencer of vacation choices.

To make choices within the vacation choice structure is in this thesis seen as a performing a behavior and one aim with the present thesis is consequently to discuss the relationship between values, attitudes, and behavior. Much debate in previous literature has discussed this relationship, often with a

focus on the link between attitudes, intentions, and actual behavior. However, the preconception in this thesis was that green attitudes and intentions at least make it more likely that a green tourism behavior will be carried out and therefore these relationships were studied. This view has been supported in several other studies in the tourism context (e.g. Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Kim & Choi, 2005; Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Luzar et al., 1998; Weaver & Lawton, 2002), but also by scholars examining other types of behaviors.

In the relationship between values and green attitudes, the findings show that tourists with a self-transcendent value orientation reported a stronger environmental concern than those with a self-enhancement value orientation. Further, it was shown that the strength of tourists' green attitudes differ depending on which vacation choice that is in focus. This implies that the term 'different shades of green' (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) is not only relevant for tourism as a whole, but to separate vacation choices. Green attitudes are strongest in choice of destination, closely followed by choice of activity and accommodation. This indicates that it is not enough to talk about a general green attitude in tourism, but that it differs depending on what type of vacation choice that is in focus. The results also show that green attitudes are weakest in the choice that has the most impact in the vacation choice structure, i.e. choice of travel mode. This finding has important consequences for the demand of green tourism.

Having a strong buying intention for one type of vacation choice alternative, e.g. airplane, can be seen as ascribing high importance to that alternative and consequently is an effect on buying intentions also an effect on the vacation choice structure and the trade-off that occur in the vacation choice structure. The findings show an indirect influence of the value type universalism (included in a self-transcendent value orientation) on green buying intentions through attitudes. It is therefore proposed that the trade-off between different levels within each vacation choice is affected by values and green attitudes. It can however be discussed how strong this effect is. On one hand, the strongest green attitudes were found in the destination choice, i.e. tourists thought that it was most important that green issues were considered in choice of destination. On the other hand, tourists were not willing to pay any extra money to support the charter trip provider's green work at the destination. This indicates a discrepancy between attitude and behavior which supports a conclusion that the link between attitudes and behavior might not be so strong. It is easy to have a green attitude but when it comes to actually trading attribute levels against each other, green attitude had more or less disappeared. This can be due to the social desirability bias (Chung & Monroe, 2003) which influences tourists to state green attitudes

and intentions, but not act according to them in the actual purchase situation or that tourists are inconsistent decision makers. For example, that a green behavior at home may justify a non-green behavior while on vacation (Barr et al., 2010). It can also be argued that as long as tourists do not have to give up anything of their own resources (e.g. money or time) it is more likely that they have a green behavior. As soon as this behavior starts to demand resources, a green behavior is not so likely.

The weak link between green attitudes and behavior suggests that other explanations of the present findings are relevant. One proposal is the influence of status. Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh (2010) argue that buying green products or services is an altruistic behavior that shows to the world that the individual is willing and able to make purchases which benefit the environment, traits that could be associated with status. Their results show that status motives increase the desire for green products when shopping in public and also when green products are more expensive than non-green products. These findings can possibly explain the results of the present study, where tourists were willing to choose a green five star accommodation over an assumingly less expensive non-green three star accommodation, but not financially support the charter trip provider's green work at the destination. Choice of accommodation is visible to others and could assumingly give the tourists an individual benefit (status) compared to the more implicit behavior of financially supporting someone else's (i.e. the charter trip provider) green work at a destination. This indicates that it is possible that tourists with a self-enhancement value orientation make choices with a green and more self-sacrificing outcome if it gives them an individual benefit. Of the three motivators for green tourism behavior presented by Swarbrooke and Horner (2007), these findings indicate that a wish to improve the image among friends and family by being seen as having an environmental concern, might be a more relevant motivator than tourists having an altruistic belief that it is important to protect the environment or a desire to feel good about their own tourism behavior.

### **The effect of vacation choice structure on tourists' green choices**

Making green vacation choices can be understood as a social dilemma where tourists have to make a trade-off between short-term individual gains and long-term collective gains (e.g. environmental protection). Many previous studies have focused on green tourist behavior performed at the destination (Dolnicar, Crouch, & Long, 2008). In contrast to previous research, this thesis focuses on several vacation choices and the outcome of trade-off between and within them in a choice situation. The findings suggest that the

vacation choice structure influences tourists' possibilities to make green choices.

The previously proposed dependency between vacation choices (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Dellaert et al., 1998; Woodside & King, 2001) is also relevant when discussing green choices. The importance of choice of destination can be seen as connected to the importance of traveling by airplane as both where to go on vacation and travel mode are closely related to each other. They are both influential choices in the vacation choice structure and the outcome of these choices therefore has a great impact on green choices. First of all, the importance of airplane in the vacation choice structure makes going on vacation overall rather environmentally harmful. Second, when the tourist arrives by airplane to a destination, only a limited number of accommodations, activities, restaurants etcetera, are available at this specific destination. This means that a green alternative has to be available at this destination in order for tourists to be able to choose it. If not so, the choices of travel mode and destination have limited the possibility to make a green choice.

If an important choice in the vacation choice structure also is a choice where the tourist has a central (McDougall & Munro, 1987) and strong green attitude, it is more likely that a green vacation alternative will be chosen. However, it can also be suggested that the vacation structure may hinder tourists to act according to their value orientation and green attitudes. If the type of vacation choice in which a tourist wants to be green is less important to the tourist and therefore do not have a strong position in the vacation choice structure, i.e. is dependent on other choices, the outcome of more important choices may hinder the tourist to make a green choice. For example, the findings show that tourists have a fairly strong environmental concern in choice of accommodation and also that they prefer green accommodations in a trade-off situation, but also that this choice is not seen as the most important choice in the vacation choice structure. Consequently, it is possible that a more important choice, e.g. destination, may hinder tourists who want to express their environmental concern in choice of accommodation if it these accommodations are not available at the destination.

## Conclusions and implications

By developing theory about the vacation choice structure and relating this to tourists' green vacation choices this thesis renders a number of theoretical contributions and managerial implications. In line with previous research (e.g. Moutinho, 1987; Woodside & MacDonald, 1994; Dellaert et al., 1998; Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000) the present thesis proposes that several different vacation choices have to be considered by the tourist. In fact, the findings show that it is of most importance to view them all separately as they are not determined by exactly the same factors. For example, the strength of tourists' green attitudes differs in the examined vacation choices, implying that a general green attitude does not exist in tourism and that it is important to see vacation choices as separate entities. Further, vacation choices relate and depend on each other and the relations between them are more complex than previously found.

When assessing the vacation choice structure it was found that it is not enough to just look at the primacy of vacation choices, as has been done in previous literature, but to also include factors such as importance to the tourist. A major contribution of this thesis is that it is not sufficient to say that a choice made early in time mean that the choice is viewed as important to the tourist. This thesis demonstrates that choice of travel mode and destination are important vacation choices and it is proposed that the outcome of these choices govern the vacation choice structure to a great extent in the sense that the available choice alternatives in less important choices become fewer. It can be concluded that the vacation choice structure varies depending on choice situation, i.e. if the tourist travels independently or goes on a charter trip. It is also suggested that the motive of the vacation, for example social or convenience, has an influence on the vacation choice structure. An important conclusion is therefore that it is not possible to define a universal vacation choice structure. Tourists make a "vacation career", thus that personal and situational changes influence the tourist during the lifetime.

It can further be concluded that a direct effect of values on the vacation choice structure only exists for green vacation choices and that this effect is marginal. An indirect effect of values on vacation choices is however present in the results. It can be concluded that values have an influence of tourists' green attitudes and also on green buying intentions. However, the contrary findings between green attitudes and behavior suggest that tourists are egoistic and that they choose green alternatives only if it gives them individual benefits or as long as it does not demand any extra resources from them.

As choices within the vacation choice structure have an impact on each other, it can be concluded that the possibility to make green choices is depending on the vacation choice structure. The inter-relation between vacation choices in the vacation choice structure can hinder tourists to make choices according to their value orientation and green attitudes. The most important choice has an impact on available alternatives in less important choices and this dependency can make it impossible to choose green alternatives even if the tourist has value orientation and attitudes which supports a green choice.

The relationship between the choice structure and green behavior is also relevant in other contexts, e.g. that the dependency between sub-choices may influence the possibility to choose green alternatives. It is however important to note that a vacation mostly includes choices regarding services, while other complex choices to a great extent include product features. It is therefore possible that the characteristics of services have an influence on the choice structure, which is different from choices regarding more tangible aspects. Tangibility can, for instance, have an effect on the importance of a choice in a service context, which is not relevant in another type of contexts.

### **Managerial implications**

The interest for, and importance of, this thesis' findings outside the academic world has been shown continuously during the writing process. For example, an interview with me in the local newspaper in Umeå in 2009 resulted in broadcast time in both national TV and radio where I discussed the results of my first data collection. I have also been invited as a speaker for tourism entrepreneurs in the county of Västerbotten. Further, the cooperation with one of Sweden's largest charter trip providers and their interest for my findings show that the tourism industry has a demand for research in this area. The following text will thus discuss various managerial implications of the present findings from a marketing strategic perspective.

One aim with this thesis was to make contributions to the field of tourism, both theoretically and practically. How practitioner in the tourism industry can use the findings is therefore of high relevance in the present research. However, by analyzing the vacation choice structure, the findings can to some extent also be generalized to other contexts involving similar types of multiple sub-choices, for example the purchase of a house or a car, thus contributing to practitioners in a wider field than just tourism. It is relevant for marketers in both tourism and in these other contexts to realize that the purchase of their service or product is not only one single choice for the consumers, but several different choices. Additional important knowledge is

that these choices inter-relate in a complex way which consequently has an influence on the final outcome (e.g. what service or product that finally is purchased). This knowledge can be helpful in order to design effective marketing strategies. An essential implication is also that factors such as values, attitudes, and socio-demographics can influence each sub-choice differently and that this can have an effect on how to communicate with the target audience.

The findings of the present thesis show that it is not possible to define a universal vacation choice structure. However, the knowledge that sub-choices relate to each other regarding importance, primacy, inflexibility and impact on other choices can be valuable to marketers both in and outside of tourism. The results show that it was not possible to find one choice with all these characteristics (i.e. a core choice) and consequently marketers should be aware of that an early choice in time not necessarily means that it is an important choice to the consumer. It is suggested that the most important choice has an impact on subsequent choices and consequently governs the choice structure to a great extent. It is therefore important for marketers to identify this type of choice in each context. For marketers in the tourism context, the results show that choice of destination and choice of travel mode (airplane) were important choices to tourists. This knowledge is of vital nature for marketers as it can be effective to concentrate marketing efforts in these choices.

By relating the vacation choice structure to green vacation choices, the findings have several implications for marketers of green tourism alternatives. As important choices can be said to govern other choices in the vacation choice structure, marketers should try to make green alternatives certain and important to consumers. It is however likely that tourists, at least from Northern Europe, will continue to prefer flying to destinations with a warm climate. This implies that tourism businesses who want to provide green alternatives should focus on changes at the destinations. One way to approach this is to ensure that these changes are included in the price since the findings show that tourists are egoistic and in general not willing to pay an extra cost for green alternatives. Another approach is to enable tourists to make visible green choices at the destination, as it seems more likely that tourists perform a green behavior when it is visible to others other than when it is done in private. For example, an effective strategy could be to further develop green or eco-labeled hotels, but also to focus on other visible alternatives at the destination such as green activities and green restaurants. The suggested relationship between status motives and green behavior implies that one way to increase the demand for green tourism is to make

green choices trendy and more related to high status. Marketers can here play an important role.

The findings show that green attitudes and intentions not always result in a choice of a green alternative in a trade-off situation. Marketers might be able to strengthen this relationship. Tourists need to reach over the threshold where convenience and money becomes less important and see the benefits of green behavior as superior to the costs in the trade-off situation. It is therefore highly important that tourism marketers highlight the individual benefits of green behavior in their marketing. Further, I agree with the suggestions by Miller et al. (2010) that it is important that tourists develop a feeling of personal responsibility for the environmental impact of tourism and here marketers can have a great influence. It is also necessary that the tourism industry develops trustworthy eco-labels in order to increase the demand for green tourism. Sharpley (2001) states that eco-labels play a positive role for those people who actively seek green vacation alternatives and that they can be designed to encourage green tourism behavior.

### **Limitations and further research**

This thesis provides a number of theoretical and managerial contributions, but it also has limitations. Some of these limitations are discussed in the included studies and also in the research method section in this summary. The following text will thus acknowledge some main limitations and also highlight interesting avenues for further research.

One main limitation relates to the research context. The results of the present thesis are based on vacations during the Swedish summer time (data collection I) or to a destination with a warm climate (data collection II) and by that ignoring winter vacations, weekend vacations and other types of vacations that might occur throughout the year. Since the vacation choices included in the studies are of general character, it is not likely that the choice of season has affected the results to a great extent. However, as the findings show that the vacation choice structure seems to be dependent on the motive of the vacation it is possible that the vacation choice structure is different for a weekend trip than for a longer vacation. The effect of motives on tourists' vacation choice structure and also on green behavior could therefore be further explored in future studies.

Another limitation relates to the vacation choices included in the two data collections. A researcher only gets answers to the questions asked and consequently the results of the present thesis are dependent on the vacation choices included in the studies. As discussed in the method section of this summary, the included choices (except for the charter trip providers' green



work at the destination) are of generic character and thus always included in the vacation choice structure. It is possible that the findings would have shown a somewhat different structure if other choices were included. However, it is likely that these choices are of more secondary or peripheral character (Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000) and consequently not so important to the tourists. It is thus encouraged that future research develop the knowledge about the vacation choice structure by including more choices.

The influence of values on the vacation choice structure and on green choices was found to be not very strong, although in line with previous research. The results thus confirm and expand previous knowledge in the field of consumer choices and green behavior. However, there is a possibility that the results will be more robust if other explaining variables are included in future studies. A suggestion is also to examine if the explanatory power of values changes if other factors are added to the research model. Moreover, it should be noted that the results are influenced by a Swedish context and culture, which implies that empirical data from other countries may have an effect on the relationship between values and behavior.

This thesis discusses the relationship between intentions and behavior, thus it does not measure actual behavior. Of course, reality is more complex than can ever be set up in an experiment and by not studying actual behavior it can be questioned if it is possible to draw conclusions about behavior. However, it is still argued that the methods used in this thesis are reliable ways of analyzing the trade-off between vacation choices and by that the vacation choice structure. Further studies are however much encouraged to examine the vacation choice structure when tourists make actual purchases.

The aim of the present thesis was not to focus on various constraints which may influence tourists' vacation choice structure. However, many tourism choice models do not include constraints and it should be recognized that tourists may feel constrained by socioeconomic, demographic, physical, political, and sometimes cultural factors when making choices (Hudson, 1999; Mansfeld, 1992). As these constraints can have an effect on the vacation choice structure and also on the possibility to make green choices, it is proposed that future studies should examine this. Further, a suggested explanation of the present findings in this thesis is that status motives influence tourists in their green behavior. However, no found study has examined this in the tourism context and therefore this is an interesting avenue for future research. This knowledge would contribute to the development of theory and practice in this field.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Finally, the present thesis examines mainstream tourists and consequently it is not certain that the results are valid for any more extreme groups of tourists, for example very green or adventurous tourists. An interesting avenue for further research is therefore to test if the findings are applicable to also other groups of tourists.

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