THE ATTITUDES OF SOLO TRAVELERS

USING Q METHODOLOGY

by

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A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in the Department
of Advertising and Public Relations
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2021

ABSTRACT

As more Americans choose to solo travel for leisure, the need to understand their

attitudes and motivations for wanting to travel alone increases. Based on the Functional Attitude

Theory, the motivations of solo travelers can be influenced by the five attitude functions:

Utilitarian, ego-defensive, social-expressive, value-expressive, and knowledge. By understanding

which attitude function influences solo travel actions, industry professionals in public relations,

advertising, and marketing can develop messaging that resonates strongly with that attitude and

therefore increases the return on investment within this target market. Given the subjectivity of

motivations, the use of Q-Methodology allows for a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the

participant's viewpoint relative to the experience of traveling alone. With Q-Methodology's

focus on the viewpoint of the participant, this study results in quantifying where that viewpoint

intersects among the entire sample and establishes a foundational commonality among solo

travel motivations.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the individuals in my life who have shown me unyielding support and encouragement throughout this journey. Most importantly to my parents whose love and support continue to inspire me every day. Thank you.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

FAT   Functional Attitude Theory

EV   Eigenvalue

ROI   Return on Investment

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INTRODUCTION

The American vacation and tourism market was valued at $232.9 billion in 2015 and has steadily increased over the last five years (Mintel, 2016). While traditional travel companionships (couple's trips, family vacations, etc.) are still the norm for travel arrangements, there has been a rise in Americans choosing solo travel. Solo travel can be defined as, "individuals who go on holiday alone and those who may travel alone but with the set intention of joining others such as on a tour group" (Leith, 2019). The key distinction in a solo traveler is they are choosing to travel without members of their community that they would normally interact with. Additionally, solo travelers do not include individuals traveling alone for business as this form of travel is determined by an employer and is not based on the individual's motivations. As solo travel gains more popularity, travel and hospitality companies are looking to effectively speak to these audiences. Current research on solo travel has been very limited in the past and in general has been focused on subgroups of solo travelers or has relied on outdated research (Stergiou & Airey, 2011). There has been very little exploration into the attitudes that determine the need to travel alone, especially for the American traveler which makes up 21% of global travelers (Couillard, 2020). By understanding the attitudes of solo travelers, companies looking to target this specific audience will be able to craft an effective persuasive message by matching the content of the message to the solo traveler's attitude function (O'Keefe, 2016). The goal of this research is to delve into the attitudes of solo travelers in order to inform professionals

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within the field of communications of what attitude functions (if any) are most representative of

solo travelers. This will open communications professionals to a wider array of opportunities for

high impact communications and increase the efficiency of their campaign objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Solo Travel

A study conducted by Bente Helmtun and Birgit Abelsen (2014) looked into solo tourism

from the perspective of single students in relation to the type of holiday they took and their

gender. The key insight of the study was the definition the authors provided for solo travelers.

While similar to the definition mentioned in the introduction above, Helmtun and Abelsen (2014)

discuss the term "solo tourist" as "an oxymoron in the sense that there are few tourism spaces

within which tourists can be completely alone for a longer period of time" (p. 162). Helmtun and

Abelsen's (2014) clarification here brings to the forefront a needed distinction for this research

as well as for communications professionals looking to target this subpopulation. The majority of

solo travelers aren't physically alone throughout their travel and therefore cannot be defined as

completely solitary for the duration of the trip. In fact, as Helmtun and Abelsen (2014) point out,

many solo travelers will engage with locals, tourism guides / professionals, and other tourists

while traveling. A more recent study by Leith (2019) addresses the impact of lifestyle on the

choice for solo tourism. This study accredits the need to travel solo with the need to seek

solitude, however this form of solitude does not necessarily manifest on a physical level. As

lifestyles steadily become busier, there has become a need to find a clear line between work and

relaxation (Leith, 2019). It is essential to the purpose of this study to then accept Leith's (2019)

argument that wanting to be alone doesn't equate to physical interactions but on a further level of

being "unobserved" by the people they are around and therefore the notion of solitude transitions from physical relativity to a mental point of view. With these clarifications in mind for what can

and cannot be considered solo travel, a definition of this subject group is needed. Based on the general understanding that comes from the phrase "solo travel" (i.e. to travel alone) and the studies mentioned above, this study will define solo travel from this point forward as, "Individuals who travel for leisure without persons they knew prior to the trip. This can include individuals who remain alone for the duration of the trip (in solitude) and / or those with the set intention of joining others such as on a tour group so long as any person they travel with is a total stranger to them from the beginning of the trip."

Though defining solo travel is essential to evaluating the motivations of solo travelers, it does little but set the research context. The next logical step then, is to understand the subject under study – solo travelers. Many prior studies have taken on this task and have developed a rough sketch of this consumer group. However, this research is still at an infantile level of understanding with this study aiming to provide an exploratory understanding to the subject's development.

As was referenced above, Helmtun and Abelsen's (2014) research presents a clearer understanding for the distinction of solo versus traditional travelers, however the subject of their study is narrowed to only collect data from young single students in Norway. This limitation of singles (i.e. marital status) does not account for the motivations of solo travelers who are in relationships (Mintel, 2012). Likewise, young students make up a relatively small percentage of travelers. In a Mintel travel report, 25- to 42-year-olds were more likely to travel given their increased disposable income in comparison to 18- to 24-year-olds (Mintel, 2019). Other recent

studies have focused their efforts on solo travel in relation to a specific gender or age group. For example, Pereira and Silva (2018) developed the understanding of solo travel motivations of females. According to their research, they argue that an important motivation for women traveling solo is "to get out of their comfort zone to develop a sense of autonomy and individuality" (Pereira & Silva, 2018, p.101). Since Pereira and Silva (2018) only extended to an understanding of women's motivations, it invites an inquiry about whether the identified need for autonomy and individuality could be applied to all genders of solo travelers. Their research lacks the evidence to support that this is unique to women solo travels and in retrospect is limiting to the current state of solo travel research. A similar study was published in 2019 with a focus on Vietnamese female student solo travelers. This study by Osman and colleagues (2019) attempted to make a case for the need to focus on female solo travelers over male, asserting that the two genders' travel experiences are significantly different and warrant further understanding of the female's unique experience. Although a focus on female travelers' unique perspective is certainly warranted, this "difference" leaves a gap that fails to contribute insights which identify more universal motivations or that legitimizes the female experience by comparing and contrasting it with the male experience. Not only is there now a gap in the current state of research that is skewing towards the female solo travel experience, but these studies have done little to build the foundation of solo travel research. In its current state for understanding solo travelers, it is presumptuous to focus solely on one demographic grouping. A study by Laesser and colleagues (2008) looked at a sample of the Swiss population through multiple surveys which identified that the current research claiming that the majority of solo travelers were young and female may be inaccurate. The study found that the solo traveler range varies from young to old, single to married, and male to female (Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger, 2008). Unlike Osman

and colleagues (2019), Laesser and colleagues' (2008) study provides more than demographic-skewed assumptions to guide their research and provides further support to the need for researching solo travel without a gender bias at this time. While male and female motivations can differ based on cultural gender norms, it would be erroneous to exclude any gender or age group in solo travel research at this fundamental stage.

In order to study the attitudes and motivations of a solo traveler's behavior, there needs to be an understanding of the current studies' approaches to solo travel research in order to choose the best course of action in relation to the aims of this study. Of the previous studies surrounding solo travel research, there has been some discussion on whether quantitative or qualitative studies are best for their area of study. Many studies have focused on qualitative methods, such as Osman and colleagues' (2019) study on Vietnamese solo travelers that was conducted using interviews. The rationale behind the choice for qualitative is to be able to gain insight into the phenomenon while also being able to include the subjectivity that comes with describing human experiences (Osman, Brown, & Phung, 2019). Despite the need for understanding subjectivity in relation to the solo travel experience, some studies have made the argument that quantitative methods will provide more insight into the current state of research. Heimtun & Abelsen (2014), in comparison, used survey methods to research specific areas of solo travel on a larger scale. Heimtun & Abelsen's (2014) decision to forego qualitative data was attributed to the need to test out findings from a previous qualitative study, which sets precedent that both may be required to better understand this subpopulation. Pereira & Silva (2018), interestingly enough, took a completely different approach to understanding solo travelers by creating a conceptual model based on previous solo travel research. This was a unique perspective into the current state of solo travel research and its application to women solo travelers, but it doesn't take advantage of

the subjectivity qualitative data brings nor the validity of quantitative. Current solo travel

research is dependent on qualitative data for understanding the subjectivity of opinions and

experiences that influence the traveler, but there is a need for the use of quantitative methods for

both providing valid and reliable results as well as the ability to understand the subpopulation as

a whole. Therefore, the usage of Q-methodology, a mixed research method, could further the

current state of research on solo travelers by bringing together the subjectivity of qualitative

methods with the statistical power of quantitative methods (to be described in further detail in a

later section). The usage of mixed methods will allow for a firm foundation to be built both

qualitatively by examining a solo traveler's unique perspective (subjectivity) on their motivation

to travel alone and quantitatively by examining their perspectives with a statistical test. However,

this foundation and understanding of motivations cannot exist without fully understanding what

influences an individual's motivations and behaviors. Within mass communication theory and

research, the Functional Attitude Theory (FAT) developed by Katz in 1960 is a widely used

theory that can be used in conjunction with Q-Methodology to understand the consumer

motivations of solo travelers and how those motivations help marketing professionals better

understand their target audience.

Functional Attitude Theory

In the advertising, marketing, and public relations industries, persuasion is the skill most

often used to encourage desired behavior. However, persuasion outcomes can be ineffective if

the message is not in agreement with the beliefs and attitudes of the target audience. This is the

driving force of the Functional Attitude Theory (FAT; Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White,

1956). Attitudes are the "evaluative judgment of (reaction to) an object" and "are important

determinants of behavior" (O'Keefe, 2016, p. 34). By understanding attitudes, and therefore its

influence of an individual's behavior, professionals can focus their messaging to align with the attitudes their target audience holds in relation to company's / message sender's branding. The rationale behind crafting messaging to match a message receiver's (the target audience) attitude is that the persuasive message will resonate stronger with the receiver and the likelihood of the adoption of the desired behavior will increase substantially. FAT proposes there are five different functions of attitudes. Each function serves a different role and often can be combined with another function to meet the needs of the individual about a complex subject. By understanding how they relate to the receiver; industry professionals can target the attitude by which function(s) it serves and increase the overall persuasiveness of their argument. The most commonly used functions associated with FAT are utilitarian, ego-defensive, social-adjustive, value-expressive, and knowledge.

Utilitarian attitudes are defined as, "formed and held in order to provide persons with an efficient way to distinguish objects that bring pleasure and objects that produce pain" (Carpenter et al., 2013, p. 106). Utilitarian functions allow the message receiver to maximize the benefits and minimize the consequences of an action. Carpenter and colleagues (2013) supported the ideas that to craft messages that resonate with utilitarian attitudes, the best strategy is to identify how those benefits will positively impact the receiver and highlight those in the messaging.

Ego-defensive attitudes are understood to boost the receiver's self-esteem and enable them to avoid acknowledging their failures, shortfalls in personality, or undesirable behavior (Carpenter et al., 2013). By boosting the receiver's self-esteem and focusing on their positive behaviors, the ego-defensive function acts as an unconscious defense mechanism to mentally protect themselves. Essentially, the receiver is able to avoid unattractive aspects of themselves and focus on their desired motivations to encourage positive behavior. The best strategy to

develop a message for a receiver who holds an ego-defensive attitude is to highlight how the product will improve their self-opinion and avoid statements that will lead to negatively targeting their self-esteem.

Social-expressive (also known as social-adjustive) attitudes are influenced by how the receiver wants others to view them (Carpenter et al., 2013). It directly relates to how they interact with members of their social group and how they want that group to view them in relation to their behaviors. The most common message strategy used to target this function in developing the persuasive message should to promote the desired action as being accepted and approved of by the receiver's peers.

Value-expressive attitudes, on the other hand, are not used for acceptance into a social group (Carpenter et al., 2013). Instead these attitudes ensure the receiver's action will be in agreement with the values they uphold internally. The key to targeting a value-expressive attitude is tailoring the message to be in alignment with the value that is upheld by the receiver or at least to ensure the content of the message does not conflict with the receiver's values.

Finally, the knowledge attitude function's purpose is to increase the receiver's intelligence and understanding of the world around them (Carpenter et al., 2013). Messages that are well received by individuals with knowledge attitudes should use logical, fact-based statements that provide a clear understanding of the desired action as well how the desired behavior will increase their knowledge of the subject.

Functional attitude theory has been applied to studies on consumer motivations and in the marketing / advertising / public relations industries for decades. For example, Schlosser (2003a) used FAT to explain how the environment while shopping can impact the function of the attitudes a consumer holds (see also, Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). The study found that the

atmosphere can trigger social-adjustive function attitude depending on how the store's aesthetic is perceived. Another study by Schlosser (2003b) found that attitude functions could be influenced by the internet. She identified that consumers were predisposed to form knowledge attitudes when using the internet and that it acts as a situational cue (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). Both of her studies cement the notion that the usage of FAT and the attitudes consumers develop can be influenced by the situation in which they are developed and therefore rely heavily on the subjectivity of the attitude's function. By subjectively looking at the behavior that is influenced by the attitude function, researchers are able to determine which function is influencing certain people. Locander & Spivey (1978) give the following example, "one student might like going to college because he is intellectually stimulated by classes [knowledge function]… Another student might like college just as much, but for a different reason – going to college makes him feel special because he is the only person from his small hometown attending a university [social-adjustive]… The functional approach recognizes these two 'individual differences' by explaining that two attitudes of equal magnitude can be the products of different motives" (Locander & Spivey, 1978. pp.576-577).

Locander & Spivey's (1978) study laid the groundwork for the practicality of using FAT in understanding motivations and the actions of consumers. The study hypothesized that one's attitude about something (and the subsequent influence of the attitude on their motivation) is directly dependent on the function of said attitude (Locander & Spivey, 1978). The results of the study proved Katz's theoretical work as well as the application of FAT and concluded that when the attitude in question is positive, the attitude function that the consumer associates with that attitude will also be positive. Locander & Spivey (1978) went a step further in their analysis with the notion that if an industry professional wants to persuade specific individuals, as long as the

persuasive appeal matches the attitude function that the individuals hold, they will be more likely to be persuaded. The study does address the concerns of attempts to change attitude and while it is a valid concern for when the desired action is not congruent with the audience's attitude, for the purpose of this study it is not a necessary consideration as this study focuses on tailoring the message to the attitude the solo traveler already holds, not to mention the added difficulty and time it takes to encourage an attitude change (Locander & Spivey, 1978). With exploring the attitude functions of solo travelers, if a function(s) is identified as a dominant influence for this specific population, then industry professionals would simply need to create persuasive messages that appeal to that function. This "matching" is formally known as the function matching effect. A 2012 meta-analysis study conducted on the effect identified that functional matching leads to increased persuasiveness of the message while "counter attitudinal" messages have the opposite effect (Carpenter, 2012). With the understanding that solo travel is the less common form of leisure travel in the United States, the rationale behind doing so (and therefore breaking from the societal norm) will develop an attitude function that ultimately separates solo travelers from traditional leisure travelers. This difference then requires separate approaches to the message appeals that are created to persuade either group. Understanding which functions are influencing solo traveler behavior and matching the persuasive message will allow professionals to tailor their messaging to this specific audience as well as inform them of their beliefs and attitudes that can later lead to better communications across the leisure travel industry.

With this understanding of FAT and how it impacts the actions of a consumer (and in this case the solo travel consumer), it is imperative that this study is able to encapsulate a well-rounded understanding of why individuals solo travel from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Industry professionals will be able to properly match their persuasive message to

solo travelers' attitude functions while also providing them insights into which function would make a message less effective.

Q Methodology

Q-Methodology was developed in 1935 by William Stephenson and uses a form of factor analysis to evaluate the subjective viewpoint of participants and group them according to their shared viewpoint. Stergiou and Airey's (2011) analysis of the use of Q-Methodology in tourism describes Q-Method as, "a method for the scientific study of human subjectivity" (Stergiou & Airey, 2011, p. 313). While the method has been used across multiple disciplines for close to a century, (clinical psychology, political science, healthcare studies, human geography) it has rarely been used in tourism research (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In part, this can be justified in the widely accepted practice of R-methodology (traditional statistical analyses) which allows for generalized findings that are applicable to the general population at large. However, using Q-Methodology differs by focusing on the perspectives of the participants in order to extrapolate patterns that are relevant to the given situation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). These patterns validate the individual's point of view qualitatively and can provide statistical significance that is found in R-methodology. This subjectivity and analysis of the participant's perspective is usually overlooked in most quantitative R-methodology. Given travel and tourism, especially solo travel, is majorly impacted by the personal experiences and opinions of the travelers (Richards & Morrill, 2019), the ability to analyze these perspectives in relation to the subject will give further insight into the patterns of choice and motivation that the participants share while also looking at the participants and their opinions holistically (Stergiou & Airey, 2011).

A 2007 study by Dewar and colleagues worked to bridge the gap in tourism research and Q-Methodology. The study used Q-Methodology to determine how different cultural groups

perceive photographs of travel products and destinations (Dewar, Li, & Davis, 2007). In this specific case, the researchers used images for respondents to rank rather than statements. This is one of the many benefits of using Q-Methodology, as the respondents could still impose their own perspective and viewpoint on the images just as they would a statement (Dewar, Li, Davis, 2007). With a traditional Q-Method approach, a participant will be given a set of cards (between 20-80 although the averages range from 40-60) that have a unique statement in each. They will be instructed to sort those statements into a ranking type system based on their experience with the topic. This adjustment the 2007 study made to the method strengthens the appeal of being able to objectively analyze and explore a subjective response while also opening new possibilities to the usage of Q-Method in tourism (Dewar et al., 2007).

Another Q-Method study that can provide insight into this novel research method is Cook and colleagues' 1975, "Experimental Design and Q-Methodology: Improving the Analysis of Attitude Change". While the 1975 attitude-focused study differs greatly from this study in terms of theoretical approach and application, it provides an explanation into how Q-Method can be used to in conjunction with understanding attitudes. The study does an excellent job of demonstrating the subjectivity of the multiple viewpoints and upon running the analysis of those differences, factors are formed that categorize those who hold the same attitudes into a common factor (Cook, Scioli, & Brown, 1975). By this analysis of attitudes using Q-Methodology, there can be agreement that this research method would be applicable to understanding the attitude archetypes of solo travelers.

It would be short-sighted not to identify the limitations Q-Methodology poses, especially with its lack of popularity in this area of research. As Dewar and colleagues (2007) point out, Q-Methodology "aims to describe a population of viewpoints, not the distribution of viewpoints...

in a population" (Dewar et al., 2007, p. 18). Because the sample size is small in comparison to other quantitative methods (for example for the 2007 study the p-sample was 27, Watts and Stenner recommend the number of participants be half as many the number of statements), additional studies would be needed to validate if the results were applicable to a generalized population following a Q-Methodological approach. A similar limitation discussed is the q-statements themselves (Dewar et al., 2007; Watts & Stenner, 2012). A Q-Method study must account for all potential viewpoints to include in the concourse and q-sort. If these statements are not carefully structured and vetted to fully encompass the topic in question, the validity and reliability of the resulting factors will not be true to reality. While these limitations can affect the outcome of the study, being aware and working to mitigate them as much as possible, allows for the benefits of Q-Methodology to persevere and optimize the final factor results.

With the understanding of the impact FAT and function matching has on the persuasiveness of messaging as well as how Q-Methodology provides the ideal method to understanding solo travelers qualitatively and quantitatively, it is inevitable for an exploratory style research question to be posed:

RQ: What attitude function archetypes influence solo travel?

METHODS

With the current state of solo travel research largely unexamined, the need to explore this phenomenon further leads to the need for a Q-Methodological approach for this subject.

Concourse of Statements

The first step in performing a Q-Methodological study, a concourse was created to provide all possible viewpoints a participant will have of the subject being research. While the statements can be found organically through interviews, conversations, or forms of discussion on the subject or "ready-made" through pre-existing sources such as previous research that has been conducted around the subject, there are no limits to the sources used to develop a well-rounded concourse (so long as the results provide thorough and inclusive statements that focus on all subjective viewpoints (feelings and emotions) (Stergiou & Airey, 2011). Once all possible statements are developed, a representative number of these statements will be extracted and form the q-set. Often researchers will ensure the selected statements fall into predetermined categories that will provide further insight and structure to the participant's viewpoints (Stergiou & Airey, 2011). As discussed above, a proper q-set should have between 40-60 statements (or twice as many as the number of participants). It is commonly accepted by Q-Methodological researchers that q-sets with fewer than 40 statements erroneously leave out important viewpoints to the subject of the study. On the other hand, when sets are comprised of over 80 statements, participants become overwhelmed and the results of the q-sort can be negatively impacted by too many choices and fatigue (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

In this study, a concourse of statements focusing on what motivates individuals to travel alone was created based on comments of solo travelers from a public solo travel discussion forum (Reddit, r/solotravel) as well as a quantitative study conducted by Richards and Morrill (2019), "Motivations of global Millennial Travelers." The study provided a theoretical perspective of motivations of travelers while being adjustable to the application of solo travelers. The public forum from solo traveler comments aided in validating the need for statements taken from the 2019 study and added additional perspectives that are unique to solo travelers. Appendix A identifies the 60 q-set statements developed from the concourse and the statements were divided into the appropriate attitude function category. To ensure each attitude function was represented equally, an equal number of cards were created in support of a utilitarian attitude, ego-defensive attitude, social-expressive attitude, value-expressive attitude, and knowledge attitude. Following the creation of the q-set, a Qualtrics questionnaire was developed to allow for participants to participate remotely. The choice to conduct the sorting of statements digitally rather than in person eliminated complications associated with travel and COVID-19 but is supported by Watts & Stenner's thorough explanation of adapting Q-Methodology to be conducted online (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 87-88).

Participants

The next step in conducting Q-Methodological research is the recruitment of participants (known as the person sample, or P-sample). The P-sample is most effective with small numbers as a large P-sample increases the potential for contradiction of the study's results (too many viewpoints will result in the dilution of the significance of potential factors), an additional distinction in the function of Q-Methodology versus other quantitative methods (Stergiou & Airey, 2011). The recruitment of the P-sample is not dependent on stringent sampling.

Participants who hold clear views or experiences related to the subject of study are ideal for Q-Methodology. Stergiou and Airey's (2011) statement in regard to Q-Methodology that "its nature is exploratory" is a supplemental argument in understanding the recruitment process by focusing on the viewpoint of the participants rather than their demographics (Stergiou & Airey, 2011).

With this in mind, participants were recruited through online social media discussion groups that focus on solo travel. This was an ideal location as a recruitment source since majority of the participants already classified themselves as solo travelers by being a member of the group and therefore it was more likely potential participants would hold a strong viewpoint on solo travel. The online discussion groups used were Reddit's Solo Travel subreddit, Facebook's Solo Travelers, Facebook's USA Solo Travelers, Facebook's Disney Solo Travelers and Facebook's Female Solo Travelers. In order to be eligible for the study, participate had to be a solo traveler (defined as "Individuals who travel for leisure without persons they knew prior to the trip. This can include individuals who remain alone for the duration of the trip and / or those with the set intention of joining others such as on a tour group so long as any person they travel with is a total stranger to them at the start"), from the United States (this requirement ensured that the participants all share a similar cultural background and eliminated the potential for an extraneous variable in the study), and over the age of 18 (the age of consent). Males and females were both eligible for this study. While they can hold very different views on solo travel (which has been taken into account in multiple previous studies like Pereira & Silva's (2018) study on female solo travelers), for the purpose of this exploratory study it was premature in the understanding of solo traveler attitudes to focus on one specific gender at this time. A final note on participants, based on Watts and Stenner's Doing Q Methodology (2012), it is recommended to calculate the ideal number of participants in the study by taking half as many participants by the number of

statements in the q-sort. Therefore, this study featured 30 participants which is based on the 60-statement concourse discussed above.

Procedure

Individuals in the groups mentioned above were first given a link to a preliminary survey (see appendices for copies of both the preliminary and second surveys) and were asked a set of question designed to determine their eligibility into the study as well as to provide their email if they wished to participate in the second survey. Once the participants' eligibility was determined, they then were given access to a second Qualtrics survey and were given a set of 60 statements to sort into the three most appropriate categories (like me with 15 statements, unlike me with 15 statements, and neutral with 30 statements). The participants were then directed to a second screen with three new categories (most like me, a lot like me, like me) and were shown the 15 statements they placed into like me. They were then instructed to place 3 statements in to the most like me category, 5 statements into the a lot like me category, and 7 statements into the like me category. The same process was followed for the 15 statements they sorted into unlike me (3 statements into most unlike me, 5 statements into a lot unlike me, and 7 statements into unlike me) and the 30 neutral statements (9 statements into somewhat like me, 9 statements into somewhat unlike me, and 12 statements into neither like me or unlike me). After the sorting of the like me and unlike me categories, participants were asked to describe why they ranked the 3 statements into the most like me and most unlike me category. Following the sorting of the statements (known as the development of their individual q-sort), participants were asked a series of qualitative questions to better understand them as a solo traveler as well as demographic questions to better understand the p-sample.

Upon competition of the second survey and the sorting of items, the participant's response could then be used to compile and develop a full q-sort. The sorting of the categories above creates the below structure of the individual's viewpoint, which results in 30 individual sorting charts (called q-sorts).
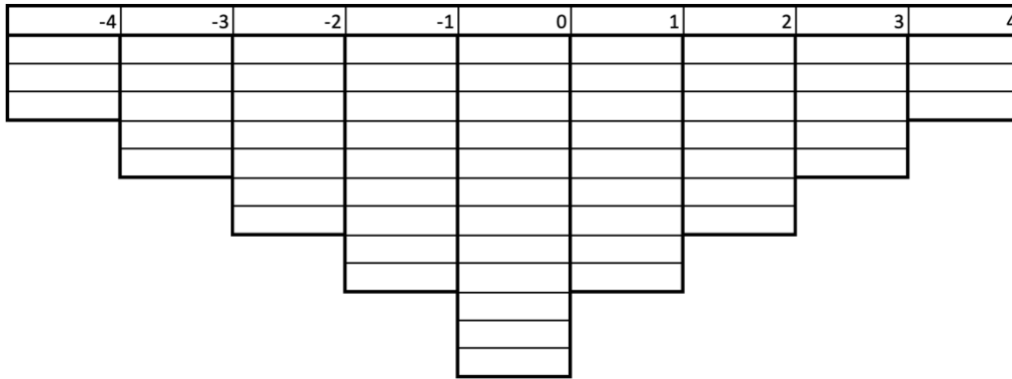
Figure 1 – Q-Sort Chart

Analytic Procedure

Following the development of the participant q-sorts, the data is manually entered into a statistical software. Unique to Q-Methodology, the traditional SPSS cannot be used for the Q-factor analysis necessary for the method. This type of factor analysis, called a centroid factor analysis, puts the participant's viewpoints (their q-sorts) into common factors rather than reducing the statements into a common factor. Because of this reversal in the organization of the analysis, special software had been developed to run the analysis. PQ Method and Ken-Q are both free versions of the software and a combination of both have been used in this analysis (Banasick, n.d.; Schmolck, 2021). Both software programs work the same way, however PQ Method requires Windows to run the analysis while Ken-Q is a web browser-based program.

Once all of the q-sorts were developed, the data was manually input into the software program by entering the statements that were included in each category from smallest to largest (-4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4). After the 30 q-sorts were entered, the software developed a

correlation matrix. This matrix is the basis of which q-sorts were similar and which were dissimilar. The next step is to determine the number of factors to include in the study. Watts & Stenner provide a thorough explanation of the considerations that need to be taken into account when determining the number of factors to include (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 98-110). Along with the correlation matrix, both programs provide unrotated factor loading charts which provide the amount of variance (similarity) each q-sort has on a given factor. Both software programs allow you to develop these factor-loading charts based on the number of factors to be included in the study. In the beginning, it is recommended to run a unrotated factor loading with more factors than necessary to ensure a significant factor is not left out. It is important to note that the first factor loading will be the factor that accounts for the most similarity amongst the q-sorts and each additional factor will decrease in its study variance from there (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 100).

The first step in determining the number of factors is to ensure that each factor has an Eigenvalue (EV) (included in the factor loading chart) of 1.00 or higher. This exclusion is known as the Kaiser-Guttman criterion and is the widely used significance cut-off point as an EV of less than 1.00 would account for less of the study variance than a q-sort (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 106).

Next in determining the number of factors is examining the variance percentage. Watts & Stenner (2012) advise a total variance percentage of 35% - 40% or above as a "sound solution" (p. 105). Once both the EVs and total variance % are reviewed, the next deciding factor is examining the loadings themselves. By calculating the significant factor loading $(2.58 \times \sqrt{no. of items in Q set}, p\text{-}value = 0.01)$, for this study the significant factor loading comes out to 0.33, however to be more inclusive in the viewpoints included in the study a

significant factor loading of 0.4 was used at the 0.05 p-value) review each loading for each factor and ensure there is at least 2 or more significant factor loadings in each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012, 107). For the data collected in this study, a three-factor solution and a four-factor solution were considered. Ultimately a three-factor solution was ideal as the three factors have EVs over 1.00, a total variance percentage of 43%, and had at least eight factor loadings in each factor. The four-factor solution was ultimately ruled out after only having two factor loadings and an EV of 0.98.

After carefully considering the number of factors to include in the study, the rotation method was determined for the analysis. The need for rotating the factors is to improve the visibility of the similarities of the factor's shared viewpoints. The rotation is simply to allow for the program to view the factors and compare the similarities between them on multiple dimensions. There are two methods commonly used, by-hand rotations and Varimax. By-hand rotation allows for the greatest amount of subjectivity but also is threatened by bias from the researcher. Therefore, varimax rotates the factors based on statistical criteria and allows for the maximum amount of study variance, however by relying on the computer it limits the subjectivity available with by-hand. For this study, varimax rotation was selected in order to minimize potential bias. Upon the initial review of the rotation, an "eyeball analysis" was conducted by reviewing the rotated factor loadings, comparing each q-sort loading to the significant factor loading value calculated earlier. The 30-individual q-sorts were then compared across the three-factors and if one of the factor loadings for the q-sort had a score over 0.4 then it was flagged for that factor. If a q-sort's loadings did not have a score over 0.4, then it was considered non-significant and not flagged. If a q-sort's loadings had a score over 0.4 in multiple factors, then it was considered confounded and not flagged.

Once the significant loadings for each factor were flagged, the software program created the final output of data and in Ken-Q, the program developed factor arrays showing the placement of each statement from the q-set into what the final common viewpoint was for that factor (Banasick, S. (n.d.)). These results provided the subjectivity and patterns of the study quantitatively, while the survey data provided additional insight into the qualitative results of the factor arrays (through the follow up questions which are what completes the picture and provides the qualitative aspect of the method) (Stergiou & Airey, 2011).

RESULTS

Of the 30 solo travelers that participated in this study, 37% had solo traveled over 15 times, 40% solo traveled 1-5 times, and 23% solo traveled 6-14 times. Of their solo trips, the participants had traveled to 35 states and 75 different countries spanning Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Australia, and Africa. Additionally, 8 participants reported solo traveling on cruises (itineraries including the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Bahamas, and Mexico). Demographically, 20% of the participants were under 30, 20% between 31-40, 10% between 41-49, 30% between 50-59, and 20% over the age of 60. Females made up 80% of the participants while 20% were male. Finally, majority (86%) of the participants have either a bachelor's or master's degree, 73% have an ethnicity of Caucasian, 83% have an income of $60,000 or more (with 43% having an income over $90,000), and a marital status of divorced (37%), married (21%), never married (32%), or other (10%).

During the analysis of the data collected, 3 factors were extracted and rotated based upon each factor having over 1.00 EV, having multiple significant factor loadings of 0.33 (p-value = 0.01) or higher (based on the significant factor loading value that was calculated specifically for this study), and the unrotated factors made of 43% of the study's total variance (which the minimum ideal range for a Q-Method study is 35%-40%). A varimax rotation was conducted and 8 q-sorts in each factor were flagged for having a factor loading of over 0.40 (p-value = 0.05) (Factor 1: q-sorts 3,8,10,14,18,23,24,27; Factor 2: 4,7,13,16,19,21,22,25; Factor 3:

2,5,6,9,15,20,28,29), with q-sorts 1,11,26 being non-significant and 12,17,30 being confounded.

A 0.40 factor loading was used in order to allow the most viewpoints possible with in the factors.

Factor Matrix with Defining Sorts Flagged

No.		Respond.	FG	Ftr 1	flag	Ftr 2	flag	Ftr 3	flag	h2
1	Q-sort 1	F1-10		0.3522		-0.0139		0.1596		0.1497
2	Q-sort 2	F3-2		0.2429		-0.167		0.6546	Flagged	0.5154
3	Q-sort 3	F1-7		0.5107	Flagged	0.3918		0.3736		0.554
4	Q-sort 4	F2-7		0.2204		0.4706	Flagged	0.3209		0.373
5	Q-sort 5	F3-8		0.328		0.1873		0.4905	Flagged	0.3833
6	Q-sort 6	F3-1		0.0886		0.1176		0.6888	Flagged	0.4962
7	Q-sort 7	F2-8		0.3774		0.453	Flagged	0.3952		0.5038
8	Q-sort 8	F1-2		0.6874	Flagged	0.0876		0.3197		0.5824
9	Q-sort 9	F3-3		0.0833		-0.0177		0.6529	Flagged	0.4335
10	Q-sort 10	F1-8		0.4124	Flagged	0.0606		0.2163		0.2206
11	Q-sort 11	F1-11		0.1967		0.0903		0.1958		0.0852
12	Q-sort 12	F3-7		0.4003		0.0706		0.5364		0.453
13	Q-sort 13	F2-1		-0.0481		0.819	Flagged	0.0302		0.674
14	Q-sort 14	F1-1		0.7568	Flagged	0.309		0.1992		0.7079
15	Q-sort 15	F3-6		0.329		0.0984		0.593	Flagged	0.4696
16	Q-sort 16	F2-6		0.2493		0.5064	Flagged	-0.1108		0.3309
17	Q-sort 17	F1-3		0.6454		0.2076		0.5186		0.7286
18	Q-sort 18	F1-9		0.4041	Flagged	0.054		0.0118		0.1664
19	Q-sort 19	F2-2		-0.047		0.7807	Flagged	-0.0694		0.6165
20	Q-sort 20	F3-4		0.3398		0.0434		0.6386	Flagged	0.5252
21	Q-sort 21	F2-9		0.2992		0.4323	Flagged	0.2612		0.3446
22	Q-sort 22	F2-3		0.1334		0.6816	Flagged	0.1619		0.5086
23	Q-sort 23	F1-4		0.6231	Flagged	0.0032		0.0909		0.3966
24	Q-sort 24	F1-6		0.5683	Flagged	0.2196		0.1359		0.3896
25	Q-sort 25	F2-4		0.1492		0.676	Flagged	0.0667		0.4838
26	Q-sort 26	F2-10		0.1752		0.3172		0.1421		0.1515
27	Q-sort 28	F1-5		0.5918	Flagged	0.2782		0.1674		0.4556
28	Q-sort 29	F3-5		0.1327		0.2601		0.5945	Flagged	0.4387
29	Q-sort 30	F3-9		0.0518		0.2617		0.4541	Flagged	0.2774
30	Q-sort 27	F2-5		0.082		0.5391		0.442		0.4928
% Expln Var				14		14		15		

Table 1 - Rotated Factor Loading Matrix

Based on the rotated factor matrix and flagged loadings, Ken-Q produced three factor q-sorts in the output that encompasses the shared viewpoint of the participant's q-sorts included in each factor (see Figures 1, 2, & 3). Based on those factor q-sorts, the charts below outline the key statements for each factor as well as which statements are ranked higher in that specific factor and which attitude functions are associated with the statement.

Factor 1 – The "Eat, Pray, Love" viewpoint

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
14. I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	7. I solo travel when I need a break from my day-to-day.	8. My travel personality doesn't match with my friends or family.	5. Solo travel's flexibility outweighs the costs.	1. Solo travel is more rewarding than traveling with a companion.	2. The pros of solo travel outweigh the cons.	12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.	11. I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.	6. Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.
16. Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	24. I have to post on social media about all of the places I have traveled to alone.	10. I am guaranteed a good experience if I travel alone.	15. I like to tell stories about my other travel experiences while solo traveling.	3. Traveling with someone can be a burden.	4. Solo travel is better than traveling with others.	27. Solo travel is fulfilling.	20. I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.	18. I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.
23. Solo travel makes me look cultured to others.	31. My role models also solo travel.	21. I like to share my culture with others when I solo travel.	19. I like to form new relationships with the locals while solo traveling.	9. Solo travel is easier.	17. My friends praise me for "having the courage to travel alone".	41. Solo travel is a valuable personal investment.	35. I feel satisfied by solo travel experiences.	26. Solo travel makes me happy.
	38. Solo travel lets me share my values with others.	22. Solo travel makes me look adventurous to others.	29. I don't have to be "on" while solo traveling.	13. I like to tell my friends about my solo travels.	25. Solo travel makes me feel independent.	44. Solo travel lets me be who I am.	46. Solo travel is a part of who I am.	
	43. I want to challenge myself by solo traveling	33. Solo travel makes me think positively of myself.	51. Solo travel lets me develop my skills.	30. Solo traveling lets me be more self-sufficient.	28. I like who I am when I solo travel.	47. I value being alone.	49. I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.	
		58. I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.	52. Solo travel lets me observe people.	32. Solo travel lets me be my best.	34. Solo travel makes me feel free.	48. I can make the most of my trip by myself.		
		59. I have learned how to be alone by solo traveling.	54. I've learned more about myself as a solo traveler.	36. I don't feel judged by my choices while traveling alone.	42. I value the independence solo travel gives me.	57. I solo travel so I can have new experiences.		
			56. I've learned valuable life lessons as a solo traveler.	37. Solo travel reflects my values.	50. Solo travel lets me learn new information.			
			60. I have become more aware because of solo traveling.	39. I value making the most of my time when traveling.	55. I've learned more about other people as a solo traveler.			
				40. Solo travel is a valuable monetary investment.				
				45. Solo travel lets me self-reflect.				
				53. I've always wanted to learn about how other people live.				

Figure 2 - Factor 1

Factor 1: Factor Arrays	Number	Statement	Function
Item Ranked at +4			
	6	Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.	Utilitarian
	18	I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	26	Solo travel makes me happy.	Ego-Defensive
Items Ranked Higher in Factor 1 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	17	My friends praise me for "having the courage to travel alone".	Social Adjustive
	18	I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	22	Solo travel makes me look adventurous to others.	Social Adjustive
	26	Solo travel makes me happy.	Ego-defensive
	28	I like who I am when I solo travel.	Ego-defensive
	32	Solo travel lets me be my best.	Ego-defensive
	35	I feel satisfied by solo travel experiences.	Ego-defensive
	37	Solo travel reflects my values.	Value-Expressive
	44	Solo travel lets me be who I am.	Value-Expressive
	46	Solo travel is a part of who I am.	Value-Expressive
Items Ranked Lower in Factor 1 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	7	I solo travel when I need a break from my day-to-day.	Utiliarian
	10	I am guaranteed a good experience if I travel alone.	Utiliarian
	16	Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	Social Adjustive
	23	Solo travel makes me look cultured to others.	Social Adjustive
	33	Solo travel makes me think positively of myself.	Ego-Defensive
	38	Solo travel lets me share my values with others.	Value-Expressive
	39	I value making the most of my time when traveling.	Value-Expressive
	43	I want to challenge myself by solo traveling	Value-Expressive
	54	I've learned more about myself as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	56	I've learned valuable life lessons as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	58	I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.	Knowledge
	59	I have learned how to be alone by solo traveling.	Knowledge
	60	I have become more aware because of solo traveling.	Knowledge
Iteams Ranked at -4			
	14	I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	Social Adjustive
	16	Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	Social Adjustive
	23	Solo travel makes me look cultured to others.	Social Adjustive

Table 2 - Factor Array 1

The q-sorts that make up this shared viewpoint are 3 (Female, 57, divorced), 8 (Female, 59, divorced), 10 (Female, 64, divorced), 14 (Female, 62, divorced), 18 (Female, 70, never married), 23 (Female, 52, never married), 24 (Female, 65, divorced), 27(Female, 30, married). The utilitarian (22% Like Me), ego-defensive (24%) and value-expressive functions (24%) have the highest influence on the behavior of solo travelers that share this viewpoint. Statements 6, 18 and 26 are ranked highest in the factor. These statements all focus on the solo traveler finding fulfillment in their actions. The participant in q-sort 24 said, "I love travelling alone as I do not have to stick to any schedule. I can be spontaneous or change a travel plan without worrying about others I might be traveling with. You know, sleep when I want, get up early without disturbing another, eat when it suits me. If I choose to spend an entire day shopping or lying by the pool or beach, I can do so. I really enjoy learning about the many interesting cultures in the world and have learned how we are all the same with the same needs and core values, yet eat different foods, wear different clothing and have so many differences. Travelling solo allows me to either keep to myself or choose to interact with locals or other travelers. I have met some fabulous people whilst traveling alone who are still friends to this day. I have travelled with others many times as well and one doesn't have the same opportunity to interact with others. This is a big part of why I love to travel alone." This factor is not driven by the social adjustive function which was ranked 42% *unlike me.* The participant in q-sort 27 said, "When I chose to solo travel, I do it for myself not for social status." This statement establishes a theme within this factor of self-fulfillment, discovery, and a disinterest in how the traveler wants others to view them. Additionally, this factor prioritized being happy, being their best, and their satisfaction through solo travel higher than any other factor in this study.

Factor 2 – The Long Distance Learner viewpoint

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
3. Traveling with someone can be a burden.	4. Solo travel is better than traveling with others.	2. The pros of solo travel outweigh the cons.	5. Solo travel's flexibility outweighs the costs.	11. I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.	6. Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.	12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.	39. I value making the most of my time when traveling.	20. I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.
31. My role models also solo travel.	14. I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	7. I solo travel when I need a break from my day-to-day.	9. Solo travel is easier.	13. I like to tell my friends about my solo travels.	19. I like to form new relationships with the locals while solo traveling.	27. Solo travel is fulfilli	52. Solo travel lets me observe people.	49. I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.
1. Solo travel is more rewarding than traveling with a companion.	22. Solo travel makes me look adventurous to others.	8. My travel personality doesn't match with my friends or family.	10. I am guaranteed a good experience if I travel alone.	17. My friends praise me for "having the courage to travel alone".	25. Solo travel makes me feel independent.	41. Solo travel is a valuable personal investment.	54. I've learned more about myself as a solo traveler.	58. I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.
	23. Solo travel makes me look cultured to others.	16. Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	15. I like to tell stories about my other travel experiences while solo traveling.	21. I like to share my culture with others when I solo travel.	26. Solo travel makes me happy.	45. Solo travel lets me self-reflect.	56. I've learned valuable life lessons as a solo traveler.	
	24. I have to post on social media about all of the places I have traveled to alone.	29. I don't have to be "on" while solo traveling.	18. I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	28. I like who I am when I solo travel.	33. Solo travel makes me think positively of myself.	50. Solo travel lets me learn new information.	57. I solo travel so I can have new experiences.	
		32. Solo travel lets me be my best.	37. Solo travel reflects my values.	30. Solo traveling lets me be more self-sufficient.	35. I feel satisfied by solo travel experiences.	53. I've always wanted to learn about how other people live.		
		36. I don't feel judged by my choices while traveling alone.	38. Solo travel lets me share my values with others.	34. Solo travel makes me feel free.	51. Solo travel lets me develop my skills.	60. I have become more aware because of solo traveling.		
			44. Solo travel lets me be who I am.	40. Solo travel is a valuable monetary investment.	55. I've learned more about other people as a solo traveler.			
			47. I value being alone.	42. I value the independence solo travel gives me.	59. I have learned how to be alone by solo traveling.			
				43. I want to challenge myself by solo traveling				
				46. Solo travel is a part of who I am.				
				48. I can make the most of my trip by myself.				

Figure 3 - Factor 2

Factor 2: Factor Arrays	Number	Statement	Function
Item Ranked at +4			
	58	I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.	Knowlegde
	49	I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.	Knowlegde
	20	I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.	Social Adjustive
Items Ranked Higher in Factor 2 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	14	I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	Social Adjustive
	16	Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	Social Adjustive
	19	I like to form new relationships with the locals while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	20	I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.	Social Adjustive
	21	I like to share my culture with others when I solo travel.	Social Adjustive
	33	Solo travel makes me think positively of myself.	Ego-Defensive
	38	Solo travel lets me share my values with others.	Value-Expressive
	39	I value making the most of my time when traveling.	Value-Expressive
	45	Solo travel lets me self-reflect.	Value-Expressive
	49	I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.	Knowledge
	50	Solo travel lets me learn new information.	Knowledge
	51	Solo travel lets me develop my skills.	Knowledge
	52	Solo travel lets me observe people.	Knowledge
	53	I've always wanted to learn about how other people live.	Knowledge
	54	I've learned more about myself as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	55	I've learned more about other people as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	56	I've learned valuable life lessons as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	57	I solo travel so I can have new experiences.	Knowledge
	58	I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.	Knowledge
	59	I have learned how to be alone by solo traveling.	Knowledge
	60	I have become more aware because of solo traveling.	Knowledge
Items Ranked Lower in Factor 2 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	1	Solo travel is more rewarding than traveling with a companion.	Utilitarian
	2	The pros of solo travel outweigh the cons.	Utilitarian
	3	Traveling with someone can be a burden.	Utilitarian
	4	Solo travel is better than traveling with others.	Utilitarian
	6	Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.	Utilitarian
	9	Solo travel is easier.	Utilitarian
	11	I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.	Utilitarian
	26	Solo travel makes me happy.	Ego-Defensive
	29	I don't have to be "on" while solo traveling.	Ego-Defensive
	31	My role models also solo travel.	Ego-Defensive
	32	Solo travel lets me be my best.	Ego-Defensive
	34	Solo travel makes me feel free.	Ego-Defensive
	36	I don't feel judged by my choices while traveling alone.	Ego-Defensive
	42	I value the independence solo travel gives me.	Value-Expressive
	44	Solo travel lets me be who I am.	Value-Expressive
	47	I value being alone.	Value-Expressive
	48	I can make the most of my trip by myself.	Value-Expressive
Items Ranked at -4			
	3	Traveling with someone can be a burden.	Utilitarian
	31	My role models also solo travel.	Ego-Defensive
	1	Solo travel is more rewarding than traveling with a companion.	Utilitarian

Table 3 – Factor 2 Array

The participant q-sorts that influence this factor are 4 (female, 49, never married), 7 (female, 58, divorced), 13 (female, 54 widowed), 16 (female, 35, divorced), 19 (female, 55, divorced), 21 (male, 52, married), 22 (female, 34, never married), and 25 (female, 24, never married). This factor shows knowledge (58% *like me*) as the prevalent attitude function. Solo travelers in this factor want to learn about other cultures, people, themselves, and gain new experiences. Unlike factor one which wanted to maximize their flexibility by solo traveling, factor 2 cares less about whether they travel alone or not and instead prioritize the knowledge function. Based on the sorting of statements as well as the follow up questions, this factor group primarily solo travels out of need and less because it is their preference. A prime example of this is the participant from q-sort 16's answer to why they solo travel, "I spend the majority of my time working and I highly value the time I have to travel, so I make the most of the time I have. However, I am single, and my friends don't always want to go to afford to go to the places I want to see. So, I am forced to solo travel, or else I'll be held back from seeing and doing the things that matter to me." This prioritization of gaining knowledge and need to maximize their time is expressed in the high ranking of statements 39 and 49. Additionally, this factor had the value-expressive attitude function as 42% *unlike me* which again supports that this group doesn't solo travel because they value being alone or that it is their preferred method of travel but instead that the knowledge function is overpowering the other functions.

Factor 3 – The All About Me viewpoint

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
14. I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	16. Solo travel makes me look interesting to others.	8. My travel personality doesn't match with my friends or family.	13. I like to tell my friends about my solo travels.	5. Solo travel's flexibility outweighs the costs.	2. The pros of solo travel outweigh the cons.	4. Solo travel is better than traveling with others.	3. Traveling with someone can be a burden.	6. Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.
18. I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	19. I like to form new relationships with the locals while solo traveling.	15. I like to tell stories about my other travel experiences while solo traveling.	28. I like who I am when I solo travel.	7. I solo travel when I need a break from my day-to-day.	27. Solo travel is fulfilling.	9. Solo travel is easier.	12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.	11. I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.
24. I have to post on social media about all of the places I have traveled to alone.	21. I like to share my culture with others when I solo travel.	17. My friends praise me for "having the courage to travel alone".	32. Solo travel lets me be my best.	1. Solo travel is more rewarding than traveling with a companion.	30. Solo traveling lets me be more self-sufficient.	25. Solo travel makes me feel independent.	26. Solo travel makes me happy.	42. I value the independence solo travel gives me.
	22. Solo travel makes me look adventurous to others.	20. I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.	33. Solo travel makes me think positively of myself.	10. I am guaranteed a good experience if I travel alone.	35. I feel satisfied by solo travel experiences.	29. I don't have to be "on" while solo traveling.	47. I value being alone.	
	23. Solo travel makes me look cultured to others.	31. My role models also solo travel.	37. Solo travel reflects my values.	40. Solo travel is a valuable monetary investment.	36. I don't feel judged by my choices while traveling alone.	34. Solo travel makes me feel free.	48. I can make the most of my trip by myself.	
		38. Solo travel lets me share my values with others.	46. Solo travel is a part of who I am.	43. I want to challenge myself by solo traveling	41. Solo travel is a valuable personal investment.	39. I value making the most of my time when traveling.		
		53. I've always wanted to learn about how other people live.	51. Solo travel lets me develop my skills.	45. Solo travel lets me self-reflect.	44. Solo travel lets me be who I am.	49. I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.		
			52. Solo travel lets me observe people.	50. Solo travel lets me learn new information.	54. I've learned more about myself as a solo traveler.			
			55. I've learned more about other people as a solo traveler.	56. I've learned valuable life lessons as a solo traveler.	57. I solo travel so I can have new experiences.			
				58. I've learned about how I react in different situations by solo traveling.				
				59. I have learned how to be alone by solo traveling.				
				60. I have become more aware because of solo traveling.				

Figure 4 - Factor 3

Factor 3: Factor Arrays	Number	Statement	Function
Item Ranked at +4			
	11	I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.	Utilitarian
	42	I value the independence solo travel gives me.	Value-Expressive
	6	Solo travel means I can go wherever I want, whenever I want.	Utilitarian
Items Ranked Higher in Factor 3 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	3	Traveling with someone can be a burden.	Utilitarian
	4	Solo travel is better than traveling with others.	Utilitarian
	5	Solo travel's flexibility outweighs the costs.	Utilitarian
	7	I solo travel when I need a break from my day-to-day.	Utilitarian
	9	Solo travel is easier.	Utilitarian
	10	I am guaranteed a good experience if I travel alone.	Utilitarian
	11	I don't have to worry about someone else when solo traveling.	Utilitarian
	12	I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.	Utilitarian
	25	Solo travel makes me feel independent.	Ego-Defensive
	29	I don't have to be "on" while solo traveling.	Ego-Defensive
	30	Solo traveling lets me be more self-sufficient.	Ego-Defensive
	31	My role models also solo travel.	Ego-Defensive
	34	Solo travel makes me feel free.	Ego-Defensive
	36	I don't feel judged by my choices while traveling alone.	Ego-Defensive
	42	I value the independence solo travel gives me.	Value-Expressive
	47	I value being alone.	Value-Expressive
	48	I can make the most of my trip by myself.	Value-Expressive
Items Ranked Lower in Factor 3 Array than in Other Factor Arrays			
	13	I like to tell my friends about my solo travels.	Social Adjustive
	14	I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	Social Adjustive
	15	I like to tell stories about my other travel experiences while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	17	My friends praise me for "having the courage to travel alone".	Social Adjustive
	18	I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	19	I like to form new relationships with the locals while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	20	I like to meet people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.	Social Adjustive
	21	I like to share my culture with others when I solo travel.	Social Adjustive
	24	I have to post on social media about all of the places I have traveled to alone.	Social Adjustive
	27	Solo travel is fulfilling.	Ego-Defensive
	28	I like who I am when I solo travel.	Ego-Defensive
	41	Solo travel is a valuable personal investment.	Value-Expressive
	46	Solo travel is a part of who I am.	Value-Expressive
	49	I like to learn about the cultures of the places I visit.	Knowledge
	53	I've always wanted to learn about how other people live.	Knowledge
	55	I've learned more about other people as a solo traveler.	Knowledge
	57	I solo travel so I can have new experiences.	Knowledge
Items Ranked at -4			
	18	I like to form new relationships with other travelers I meet while solo traveling.	Social Adjustive
	14	I believe solo travel increases my social standing.	Social Adjustive
	24	I have to post on social media about all of the places I have traveled to alone.	Social Adjustive

Table 4 - Factor 3 Array

Factor three was influenced by q-sorts 2 (male, 25, never married), 5 (female, 46, never married), 6 (female, 36, never married), 9 (male, 36, married), 15 (male, 67, married), 20 (male, 62, widowed), 28 (female, 24, never married), 29 (female, 32, married). Factor three holds the utilitarian function as *most like me* at 38% (only 4% *unlike me*) and the social-adjustive function at 68%. This factor ranked majority of the social adjustive statements the lowest and each participant q-sort in this factor stated that they were unconcerned with how others viewed them as their reasons for ranking statements *most unlike me.* This factor viewpoint is primarily influenced by the utilitarian function. They look to maximize the positive aspect of travel by going solo in order to avoid the negative aspects that arise when traveling with others. Additionally, based on this group having value-expressive statements at 26% *like me* and statement 42 being ranked one of three statements *most like me,* this group places independence as an important value they hold. Knowledge was ranked *neither like me or unlike me* at 42% which can confirm that this factor is influenced to solo travel primarily by the benefits they receive from solo traveling and how it matches the values they hold. Qualitatively, factor three follow-up questions were quite different among the participants in this factor. In factors 1 and 2, the follow-up questions had similar themes and wording to their answers. In factor 3, however, the specific reasons for certain rankings or why they solo travel were very diverse. Q-sort 2 participant's response explained, "I'm an introvert so I enjoy being alone much more than being with other people. This also lets me focus on my own priorities and interests while travelling instead of compromising on less interesting activities or sights". On the other hand, q-sort 28 participant's response was, "When I travel alone, I am able to do what I want, when I want without having to worry about others, which allows me to maximize my time. Solo travel makes me happy because sometimes just getting to be in a new (or familiar) space to yourself is

refreshing." Both statements show this viewpoint shares a similar rationale of self-gratification and prioritizing their self-interests in their solo travel behavior.

DISCUSSION

At this point of this study, it is imperative to discuss the deeper meaning of the results above. Understanding the implications of this study practically and theoretically can further the current state of research in FAT and Q-Methodology as well as provide useful context for industry practitioners in advertising, public relations, and marketing.

Practical Implications

With the foundations explained in the literature review on understanding attitudes and how crafting messages that match the attitude functions of the target audience will increase the likelihood of ideal behavior adoption, the three factors above provide insight into the possible attitude functions a solo traveler can have. First, it is abundantly clear that based on this set of participants, social-adjustive attitudes have the least influence on solo traveler behavior. Given that each group ranked this function lowest consistently and in follow-up questions it was said multiple time that *how others viewed them did not influence their decision to solo travel;* industry professionals should avoid these types of fruitless message appeals. Factors one and three are closer in their viewpoints than factor two and a carefully constructed messaging strategy that meets the functions for both factors (which would be a primarily utilitarian function), has the potential to match the attitudes of solo travelers that fall into factor one and three. It is important to note, factor two should not be ignored for the sake of matching the most attitude functions in the message. Considering how much the knowledge function influenced the factor 2 solo travelers, there is potential that messages targeting this attitude function, could have a potential for higher ROI.

At the very least, this research provides practitioners an understanding of how to convey messages to this target audience. But going a step further, this information can also be used to determine who these solo travelers are and how to use data from their online activities to reach them. For example with factor 2, we know they hold a positive attitude towards the knowledge function, so if a company can use website data to find individuals who have interests that are in line with factor 2 (travel, solo travel, cultures, regional food and drink, their specific destination, etc), they can select those types of individuals to receive their function-matched targeted message and increase the likelihood that their message is being most receptively and persuasively received by the right person. This also allows for specific campaigns to develop various iterations of their theme that match the different function and then be distributed to individuals who hold that function.

Interestingly, this research isn't only valuable when attempting to understand solo travelers. This method could be adopted to better understand travelers overall. In fact, given the nature of FAT as well as Q-Method, if a practitioner adjusts the q-set statements to align with traditional traveler viewpoints, this same study can be conducted to provide further insight into travelers overall. With the high cost of other qualitative methods, this procedure could be used in place of, or as an informative precursor to, focus groups and then be the foundation for a larger scale study of the population as a whole. Further broadening the realm of possibilities for the use of FAT and Q-Methodology together, this type of study has potential to be replicated across multiple subjects. Meaning this combination of theory and method, could be used to understand the motivations of other audience segments. As long as the population under study is also undergoing a conscious cognitive decision-making process and the development of the

concourse of statements is exhaustive, this exploratory approach should yield viewpoints that can be measured to determine their influence on motivations for the populations at large.

Theoretical Implications

While there are many practical applications of this research as discussed above, it is important to note the theoretical implications of this study on FAT. The ultimate purpose of FAT is to understand an individual's behavior and this study shows how those behaviors are influenced by multiple attitude functions at once. By having the additional qualitative questions through Q-Methodology, the post-hoc analysis showed the deeper nuances of their motivations. For example in factor 2, at first glance it is clear they solo travel because they want to learn and gain knowledge but in comparing the factor array to the answers for why the participants selected their top three statements, it was evident that the social adjustive function that initially emerged as the second most representative reason for their solo travel behavior showed to have a different interpretation to the participants. This factor ranked statement 20 ("I like to meet other people from different backgrounds when I solo travel.") as one of their top three statements and while it is considered social adjustive, the participants actually hold this statement under the knowledge function as it is about learning about people different from themselves. This factor also showed that they prefer to travel with others but the need to gain knowledge and experiences influenced them to solo travel and not wait for others to go with them. The knowledge function dictated the interpretation of the social-adjustive function in the instance. This tells future FAT researchers that it is possible for individuals to hold multiple attitude functions about a subject that influence their behavior and it is possible for some functions to dominate others. By understanding how the functions interreact and build a complex combination of attitudes that influence behavior, a better insight of an individual's behavior and the motivations that

determine that behavior can be established. Additionally, the functions themselves are inherently subjective as the individual is defining the meaning of each function and can vary by each person. Understanding the meaning the individual puts behind specific functions would further the usage of FAT and allow for a better understanding of their motivations.

An additional consideration on the theoretical implications of this study should be addressed in the combination of FAT and Q-Methodology. Q-Methodology has been applied across a wide array of subjects, even in the advertising/public relations/marketing industry. This study demonstrates the unique ability to use the theoretical component and provide a more introspective understanding of those motivations by the shear nature of Q-methodology and its ability to emphasize subjectivity on to a statistical result. The use of FAT answers the question of why the individual performs certain behaviors, what is their motivation for that behavior, how this behavior satisfies them, and the use of Q-Methodology answers the question of what similar motivations do a group of individuals hold that influences their behavior around a subject. In prior research using Q-Methodology, the method has most commonly been formatted to examine the uses and gratification of the subject from the participant's point of view. With the use of FAT, a deeper meaning of their point of view can be examined and provide a more practical understanding of the participants' responses for advertising, public relations, and marketing practitioners.

Limitations and Recommendations

At this point, it is imperative to acknowledge what limitations there are to all assumptions made based off of the study's results. Given the methodology used and the examination of just 30 participants in the study, these identified factors cannot be generalized to the solo travel population as a whole. There is potential for these conclusions to hold true on a larger scale,

which would need to be confirmed using a larger sample size and a quantitative statistical procedure. Doing so may allow practitioners to identify the most prevalent archetypes to target their messages to. Additionally, considering American culture norms and gender norms within said culture, a further study (using both Q-Methodological and R-Methodological procedure) would bring to light a better understanding of if (and how) males and females hold attitude functions towards solo travel. Both of these aims are beyond the scope of this study, which has now developed a solid foundation that future studies can build upon.

Additionally, it is important to note the limitations of conducting the study online versus in-person. The method is traditionally performed in person; however, this can be both costly and time consuming, and impractical in certain societal conditions (such as those experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic under which this study was conducted). In-person q-sorts allow for the participants to be less fatigued in their sorting of statements as well as allows them to make changes to the initial sorting of statements later on. Online q-sorts still allow for changes to be made but it can be more taxing. Additional effort must be undertaken by the researcher to verify correct compilation of q-sorts and reach out to participants if there is an error as well as ensure that the participants to providing thoughtful responses. The advantage of online q-sorts, however, is that the responses to the follow-up questions can be more introspective, offer more rich data for analysis, and provide a more insightful understanding of the participant's choices. In person, such responses tend to be more self-aware and brief and constrained by the immediate moment in which they are offered.

CONCLUSIONS

With solo travel gaining popularity in the United States, understanding the motivations of that behavior is essential to developing effective advertising, public relations, and marketing communications to this consumer segment. This study, using FAT and Q-Methodology, surmised that there are common attitude functions influencing the motivations of solo travelers and there is potential for industry professionals to use these results to improve the effectiveness of their messages that are intended to resonate positively with solo travelers. While limited by the small subject size, the findings here have a strong statistical foundation and clear implications, and they encourage further evaluations of the broader population for generalizable insights about this consumer segment and their behavior. Lastly, by the nature of using both FAT and Q-Methodology, this study provides further insights into not only solo travelers at the forefront but has implications for future study in the travel and tourism industry as well as for FAT research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Q-Set Statements and Corresponding Attitude Function

Q-SET STATEMENTS	CORRESPONDING ATTITUDE FUNCTION
SOLO TRAVEL IS MORE REWARDING THAN TRAVELING WITH A COMPANION.	Utilitarian (U)
THE PROS OF SOLO TRAVEL OUTWEIGH THE CONS.	U
TRAVELING WITH SOMEONE CAN BE A BURDEN	U
SOLO TRAVEL IS BETTER THAN TRAVELING WITH OTHERS.	U
SOLO TRAVEL'S FLEXIBILITY OUTWEIGHS THE COSTS.	U
SOLO TRAVEL MEANS I CAN GO WHEREVER I WANT, WHENEVER I WANT.	U
I SOLO TRAVEL WHEN I NEED A BREAK FROM MY DAY TO DAY.	U
MY TRAVEL PERSONALITY DOESN'T MATCH WITH MY FRIENDS OR FAMILY.	U
SOLO TRAVEL IS EASIER.	U
I AM GUARANTEED A GOOD EXPERIENCE IF I TRAVEL ALONE.	U
I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE WHEN SOLO TRAVELING.	U
I CAN BE SPONTANEOUS IF I TRAVEL ALONE.	U
I LIKE TO TELL MY FRIENDS ABOUT MY SOLO TRAVELS.	Social Adjustive (SA)
I BELIEVE SOLO TRAVEL INCREASES MY SOCIAL STANDING.	SA
I LIKE TO TELL STORIES ABOUT MY OTHER TRAVEL EXPERIENCES WHILE SOLO TRAVELING.	SA
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME LOOK INTERESTING TO OTHERS.	SA

MY FRIENDS PRAISE ME FOR "HAVING THE COURAGE TO TRAVEL ALONE".	SA
I LIKE TO FORM NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER TRAVELERS I MEET WHILE SOLO TRAVELING.	SA
I LIKE TO FORM NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LOCALS WHILE SOLO TRAVELING.	SA
I LIKE TO MEET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS WHEN I SOLO TRAVEL.	SA
I LIKE TO SHARE MY CULTURE WITH OTHERS WHEN I SOLO TRAVEL.	SA
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME LOOK ADVENTUROUS TO OTHERS.	SA
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME LOOK CULTURED TO OTHERS.	SA
I HAVE TO POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT ALL OF THE PLACES I HAVE TRAVELED TO ALONE.	SA
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME FEEL INDEPENDENT.	Ego-Defensive (ED)
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME HAPPY.	ED
SOLO TRAVEL IS FULFILLING.	ED
I LIKE WHO I AM WHEN I SOLO TRAVEL.	ED
I DON'T HAVE TO BE "ON" WHILE SOLO TRAVELING.	ED
SOLO TRAVELING LETS ME BE MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT.	ED
MY ROLE MODELS ALSO SOLO TRAVEL.	ED
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME BE MY BEST.	ED
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME THINK POSITIVELY OF MYSELF.	ED
SOLO TRAVEL MAKES ME FEEL FREE.	ED
I FEEL SATISFIED BY SOLO TRAVEL EXPERIENCES.	ED
I DON'T FEEL JUDGED BY MY CHOICES WHILE TRAVELING ALONE.	ED

SOLO TRAVEL REFLECTS MY VALUES.	VALUE-EXPRESIVE (VE)
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME SHARE MY VALUES WITH OTHERS.	VE
I VALUE MAKING THE MOST OF MY TIME WHEN TRAVELING.	VE
SOLO TRAVEL IS A VALUABLE MONETARY INVESTMENT.	VE
SOLO TRAVEL IS A VALUABLE PERSONAL INVESTMENT.	VE
I VALUE THE INDEPENDENCE SOLO TRAVEL GIVES ME.	VE
I WANT TO CHALLENGE MYSELF BY SOLO TRAVELING	VE
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME BE WHO I AM.	VE
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME SELF-REFLECT.	VE
SOLO TRAVEL IS A PART OF WHO I AM.	VE
I VALUE BEING ALONE.	VE
I CAN MAKE THE MOST OF MY TRIP BY MYSELF.	VE
I LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT THE CULTURES OF THE PLACES I VISIT.	Knowledge (K)
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME LEARN NEW INFORMATION.	K
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME DEVELOP ME SKILLS.	K
SOLO TRAVEL LETS ME OBSERVE PEOPLE.	K
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT HOW OTHER PEOPLE LIVE.	K
I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT MYSELF AS A SOLO TRAVELER.	K
I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE AS A SOLO TRAVELER.	K
I SOLO TRAVEL SO I CAN HAVE NEW EXPERIENCES.	K
I'VE LEARNED ABOUT HOW I REACT IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS BY SOLO TRAVELING.	K
I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO BE ALONE BY SOLO TRAVELING.	K
I HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE BECAUSE OF SOLO TRAVELING.	K
I'VE LEARNED VALUABLE LIFE LESSONS AS A SOLO TRAVELER.	K

Appendix B:
Solo Traveler Recruitment Survey

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:

Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@research.ua.edu.

○ I agree to participate in this study.
○ I do not agree to participate in this study.

Are you from the United States?

○ Yes
○ No

Have you ever participated in the following type of travel?

Individuals who travel for leisure without persons they knew prior to the trip. This can include individuals who remain alone for the duration of the trip and / or those with the set intention of joining others such as on a tour group so long as any person they travel with is a total stranger to them at the start. Here after refered to as Solo Travel.

○ Yes
○ No

When was the last time you solo traveled?

○ In the last month.
○ In the last three months.
○ In the last six months.
○ In the last year.
○ [   ] Other

How many times have you solo traveled?

[▼]

Please list all of the destinations that you have visited as a solo traveler.

[   ]

Would you be willing to participate in an additional survey about solo travel?

○ Yes
○ No

Thank you for your interest in our study. Please fill out the contact information below so we may contact you if selected to participate, after which your contact information will be deleted. Your information will remain confidential.

44

What is your name? (This will only be used to contact you if you are selected to participate in the study)

First Name and Last Initial

What is your email address? (This will only be used to contact you if you are selected to participate in the study)

Email Address

What is your best daytime telephone number? (This will only be used to contact you if you are selected to participate in the study as a back up if you can not be reached through email.)

Daytime Telephone Number

Please leave any additional information that you would like us to know in the space provided below.

Solo Traveler Main Q-Sort Survey

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact: Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@research.ua.edu.

Do you agree to participate?

○ Yes
○ No

Have you ever solo traveled?

Solo travel is defined as: Individuals who travel for leisure without persons they knew prior to the trip. This can include individuals who remain alone for the duration of the trip and / or those with the set intention of joining others such as on a tour group so long as any person they travel with is a total stranger to them at the start.

○ Yes
○ No

How many times have you solo traveled?

Thank you! Let's get started! The cards on the left each have a statement reflecting a feeling or opinion about Solo Travel. First we want to know how you feel generally about each of the statements.

Instructions (Please read me!):

Simply drag-and-drop the statements on the left into one of the three Groups on the right as you think is appropriate. Please carefully think through each choice and take as much time as you need.

* Don't worry about ranking the statements in specific order yet.
** IGNORE the numbers in (#.) - those are for our own record keeping only.
*** Please put 15 statements in Like Me and Not Like Me, and 30 in neutral (these can also be statements you are unsure of or you have met the maximum amount of statements in the other boxes). You can come back and make changes to your answers later if you choose.

Please place the following statements about solo travel into the category that you believe best reflects you.

Items

32. Solo travel lets me be my best.

60 / 60

Like Me. (15 statements)

Unlike Me. (15 statements)

Neutral. (30 statements)

You will now see that the statements about solo travel that you put into the **Like Me** box on the left. On the right are categories for most like me, a lot like me, like me. Please sort the statements into the category that best fits you. Each is limited to a certain number of statements for each, please only put the correct number of statements in each category.

If a statement you previously marked as like me does not fit into the appropriate category, you may go back to the previous question and change your answer.

Please take as much time as needed to carefully consider each choice.

Items

12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.

Most Like Me (3 statements)

A Lot Like Me (5 statements)

Like Me (7 statements)

Please review your responses to the question above. Please explain your three "Most Like Me" selections in the box below. There is no limit to the length of your answer.

You will now see that the statements about solo travel that you put into the **Unlike Me** box on the left. On the right are categories for most unlike me, unlike me a lot, unlike me. Please sort the statements into the category that best fits you. Each is limited to a certain number of statements for each, please only put the correct number of statements in each category.

If a statement you previously marked as unlike me does not fit into the appropriate category, you may go back to the previous questions and change your answers.

Please take as much time as needed to carefully consider each choice.

Items

12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.
solo traveling.
traveling.

Most Unlike Me (3 statements)

Unlike Me A Lot (5 statements)

Unlike Me (7 statements)

Please review your responses to the question above. Please explain your three "Most Unlike Me" selections in the box below. There is no limit to the length of your answer.

You will now see that the statements about solo travel that you put into the **neutral** box on the left. On the right are categories for somewhat like me, neutral, somewhat unlike me. Please sort the statements into the category that best fits you. Each is limited to a certain number of statements for each, please only put the correct number of statements in each category.

If a statement you previously marked as neutral does not fit into the appropriate category, you may go back to the previous questions and change your answers.

Please take as much time as needed to carefully consider each choice.

Items

12. I can be spontaneous if I travel alone.
solo traveling.
traveling.

Somewhat Like Me. (9 statements)

Neutral. (12 statements)

Somewhat Unlike Me. (9 statements)

We have only a few more questions for you. First, in your own
words why do you solo travel?

[text box]

Where have you solo traveled?

[text box]

What do you like most about solo travel?

[text box]

What do you dislike most about solo travel?

[text box]

How did you get into solo travel? (recommended by family,
friends, learned about it through the internet, etc.)

[text box]

Which of the following do you prefer?

○ Solitary travel
○ Solo travel
○ Traveling with friends
○ Traveling with family
○ I have no preference towards solo travel versus traveling with a companion

Please rate the following that best fits you.

	Extremely satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Moderately dissatisfied
How I feel about traveling with friends and family for leisure.	○	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about solo traveling.	○	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my vacation while planning it.	○	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my vacation while on vacation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my vacation once I return home.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about solo travel or might be important that wasn't addressed above?

Thank you so much for your participation. We are almost to the end, below are a series of demographic questions. Again, any information you provide is completely confidential.

First, What is your year of birth?

What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female
○ Transgender, transsexual or gender non-conforming
○ _____ Other (please specify)
○ Prefer not to answer.

What is the highest level of school or degree you have completed?

○ Less than high school
○ High school graduate
○ Some college but no degree
○ Associate degree (2 year)
○ Bachelor's degree (4 year)
○ Master's degree
○ Professional degree (e.g. JD, MD, DO)
○ Doctorate

What is your marital status?

○ Married
○ Widowed
○ Divorced
○ Separated
○ Never married

What is your household income?

○ Less than $10,000
○ $10,000 - $19,999
○ $20,000 - $29,999
○ $30,000 - $39,999
○ $40,000 - $49,999
○ $50,000 - $59,999
○ $60,000 - $69,999
○ $70,000 - $79,999
○ $80,000 - $89,999
○ $90,000 - $99,999
○ $100,000 - $149,999
○ More than $150,000

What is your ethnicity?

○ White
○ Black or African American
○ American Indian or Alaska Native
○ Asian
○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
○ Other

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letters

See pages below.

December 4, 2020

Hannah Williamson
Department of Advertising & Public Relations
College of Communication and Information Sciences
Box 870172

Re: IRB # 20-10-3990: "Solo Travelers and their attitude function archetypes found using Q-Methodology"

Dear Ms. Williamson:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under exempt review category 2 as outlined below:
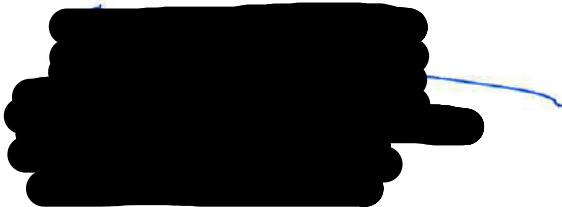
(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

The approval for your application will lapse on December 3, 2021. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Sincerely,

Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Consent Form Key Information:

- Participate in a 30 – 60 minute study about solo travel.
- Take 2 surveys (1 preliminary about 5-10 minutes and 1 main about 30 minutes – 1 hour).
- No information collected that will connect the participant's identity with the responses provided.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to explore further into the motivations and actions of solo travelers so that public relations, advertising, and marketing industry professionals can better craft messages that will resonate with this type of traveler.

What you will do in the study: Participants will be asked to complete a preliminary survey asking for them to share their experience as a solo traveler. This information is completely voluntary and may be skipped should they feel they do not want to answer any question. They will also be asked if they would like to participate in a follow up survey about their solo travel opinions. If they respond yes, they will be asked to provide their first name and last initial, email, and phone number. While this information does not allow for total anonymity, this information is ONLY to be used to contact the respondent so instruct them on how to complete the second survey. This information will be omitted once the respondent has completed the second survey and the respondents will not be identified by this information in the study. Respondents can expect to be initially emailed with the directions for completing the second survey. No other contact will be needed once the respondent completes the second survey.

In the second survey, respondents will be asked to answer questions relating to solo travel, rank statements of opinion, and answer follow up questions for explanation for ranking certain statements. Respondents may skip any question and choose to quit the study at any time. At the end of the survey, respondents will be asked to answer demographic questions. These will NOT be connected to their contact information provided in the preliminary survey. The questions are optional and participants can choose to not answer any question as well as end the survey at any time.

Time required: The study will require about 1 hour of your time. The preliminary survey will require about 5-10 minutes to complete, the main survey will require about 30 minutes up to about 1 hour of your time (this is an approximate, for some the survey may take more or less time depending on the respondent).

Risks: There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us better understand solo travelers in order to better advertise or market travel and tourism services to them in the future

Alternative: The alternative is non-participation.

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EXPIRATION DATE: 12/3/2021

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Confidentiality: Information collected in this study will be completely confidential. The contact information provided will only be used to contact you to participate in the second survey and afterwards will be deleted. Only the primary investigator will have access to this information and will be the point of contact. Both surveys will be conducting using a secure survey platform, Qualtrics. The data from this survey will be securely saved to UA Box and password protected. Any identifying data from the first survey will not be saved or used in once the respondent participates in the second survey. Information connected to the participant that is used in the study will be assigned a code number and if the information is discussed in the study report, the responses will only be identified with that number.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to withdraw from the study: If you want to withdraw from the study (either the preliminary survey or the main survey), you can close the internet browser window to withdraw. If you agree to participate in the second study but change your mind, contact the principal investigator and she will delete your response and you will not be contacted to participate in the second study. If you withdraw from the main survey after being selected to participate, please contact the principal investigator so she can delete your information and any in progress responses. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact the principal investigator (contact information is below). If you choose to withdraw from the study for any reason, any data collected will be destroyed promptly.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact, contact:
Name of Principal Investigator: Hannah Williamson
Title: Graduate Student
Department Name: Advertising and Public Relations, College of Communications & Information Sciences
Telephone: 813-528-5065
Email address: hkwilliamson1@crimson.ua.edu

Faculty Advisor's Name: Dr. Steven Holiday
Department Name: Advertising and Public Relations, College of Communications & Information Sciences
Telephone: 205-348-8387
Email address: holiday@apr.ua.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:
Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@research.ua.edu.

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Agreement: (This question will be the first survey question and a forced response. If the participant selects "I do not agree" they will be sent to the end of the survey. A signature will not be required as it impacts the confidentiality of the respondent)

☐ I agree to participate in the research study described above.

☐ I do not agree to participate in the research study described above.