A Master Thesis

entitled

Visitor Satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites: The Case of the Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense in the Sultanate of Oman

by

Philipp Jan Carl Herzig

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Faculty of Humanities, University of Southern Denmark
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Faculty of Tourism, University of Girona

_____

Prof. William C. Gartner, Ph.D., University of Ljubljana

_____

Prof. Heba Aziz, Ph.D., German University of Technology in Oman

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BMI	Business Monitor Online
DMO	Destination Management Organization
EICR	European Institute of Cultural Routes
ETC	European Travel Commission
GUtech	German University of Technology in Oman
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events
MOHC	Ministry of Heritage and Culture (Sultanate of Oman)
MOT	Ministry of Tourism (Sultanate of Oman)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMR	Omani Rial
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PCC	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
                Organization

USP   Unique Selling Point

UNWTO   United Nations World Tourism Organization

WEF   World Economic Forum

WHC   World Heritage Centre

WHL   World Heritage List

WHS   World Heritage Site

WTTC   World Travel and Tourism Council

ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense in the Sultanate of Oman regarding visitor satisfaction. Different theories of measurement are discussed with the decision to employ the experience-satisfaction-behavioural intention model. A survey among 250 visitors to the sites is conducted with the aim of gaining knowledge on satisfaction with specific attributes of the places. Furthermore, a content analysis of reviews of the two World Heritage Sites, posted on the tourism-website TripAdvisor gives further insights of (dis)satisfactory factors that influenced visitors' experiences.

The results show that the relationships between experience, satisfaction and behavioural intention are positive and significant. Moreover, certain attributes are especially important for a satisfying visit such as provided facilities on-site and interpretation which was perceived as dissatisfying by many visitors, especially at the Oasis of Bahla due to the lack of information provided. Also, the Outstanding Universal Value which is necessary to become a World Heritage Site often was not communicated to the visitors. However, the study as well as the content analysis reveal that visitors in the majority of cases left the World Heritage Sites satisfied, despite their expression of dissatisfaction with certain attributes.

Keywords: heritage tourism, World Heritage Site, UNESCO, Outstanding Universal Value, site attributes, satisfaction, behavioural intention, Sultanate of Oman

The Museum of the Frankincense Land

NOTICE TO VISITORS

AL – BALEED ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK AND THE MUSEUM OF THE FRANKINCENSE LAND ARE PUBLIC PROPERTY, ANY DAMAGE TO THE PROPERTY WILL BE LEGALLY PURSUED

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تنبيــه للــزوار الكــرام

منتزه البليد الأثري ومتحف أرض اللبان من الممتلكات العامة وأي تخريب أو عبث بمحتوياتهما تضع المتسبب تحت طائلة المسؤولية القضائية.

كما نرجو الإحاطة بما يلي:

١- ممنوع دخول الأطفال تحت سن السادسة إلى المتحف.

٢- ممنوع دخول الأطفال تحت سن الثانية عشرة بمفردهم.

٣- سيكون أولياء الأمور مسؤولون قانوناً عما قد يتسبب به الأطفال من أضرار أي كان نوعها.

٤- ممنوع التصوير داخل المتحف.

The Al-Baleed archaeological park and the Museum of the Frankincense Land were inaugurated on the 23rd of July 2007 during the reign of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said

Under the auspices of HH Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq Al Said Minister of Heritage and Culture

Supervised and executed by HE Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Rowas Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Being one of the fastest growing segments of the industry, heritage tourism has become an important aspect of many country's tourism strategy (Altunel & Erkut, 2015; Huh, Uysal, & McCleary, 2006). It has been recognized as a credible source of economic growth and a tool to erode boundaries between culture, tourism and everyday life (Richards 1996). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has made it their core goal to protect and preserve heritage sites of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) all around the world. These World Heritage Sites (WHS[1]) take a special place in heritage tourism since a designation usually is considered as branding (Timothy 2011) which makes it more visible to potential visitors. Tourists often associate the World Heritage status with certain attributes which include a good level of management as well as a fair amount of on-site interpretation that communicates the universal value of the place (Poria, Reichel & Cohen 2013). In order to contribute to the rather small body of research that has been done on this issue and generally on visitors at UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Adie & Hall 2016; Bloemer & de Ruyter 1998; Zeithaml 2000), this study aims at investigating the relationship between the visitation experience, overall satisfaction and behavioural intention as well as general and more specific factors of satisfaction of visitors at two World Heritage Sites in the Sultanate of Oman.

1.1 Research Background

The study with the focus on the Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Sultanate of Oman adopts Turnbridge and Ashworth's approach that the focus "must shift from the uses of heritage to the users themselves and thus from the producers (whether cultural institutions, governments or enterprises) to the consumers (1996, 69).

Oman is a young tourism destination with great potential. Rising visitor numbers[2] testify for an increasing interest in the country which has all opportunities to learn from mistakes that have been made by other mature destinations in order to

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[1] Hereinafter the term World Heritage Site as well as the acronym WHS are used
[2] cf. Chapter 3.2

balance tourism development and authenticity. Research on visitor satisfaction hereby helps to understand what type of attributes significantly influence satisfaction and which conclusions can be drawn from the results for improvement. It has been argued that "cultural and archaeological sites are not yet sufficiently managed and interpreted" (Mershen 2000, 193) and that many of Oman's attractions are lacking infrastructure. Especially UNESCO World Heritage Sites which can act as main tourism assets need to be managed adequately and presented in a form that supports the development of the tourism sector without jeopardizing its uniqueness. An assessment of how the sites are currently perceived by visitors can significantly support managerial decisions and consequently a healthy buildup of tourism infrastructure.

1.2 Research Objectives

The theoretical frame of the at-hand study is to identify whether significant and positive relationships exists between the experience that the visitor has made, the overall satisfaction and his or her behavioural intention post-visit. The experience hereby consists of several dimensions and attributes which will also be tested in terms of their relationship to overall satisfaction. This approach is employed to understand influencing factors and to identify managerial implications based on the results.

The underlying general goal is to assess how satisfied visitors are with the various attributes of the two UNESCO sites and if visitors perceive the sites significantly different. During the process, it will be identified which attributes are especially valued and where improvements have to be made. Furthermore, hypotheses referring to the influence of the UNESCO label are being tested. Are visitors less satisfied if their main motivation to visit was the World Heritage Site designation and does it influence their satisfaction level if they have been to other UNESCO labelled sites before? This gives insight on whether these visitors expected a certain level of management and if this played a role for their overall satisfaction.

For the purpose of being able to make recommendations to the site management, it will be assessed if relationships between the amount of time and money spent and satisfaction exists and whether they are positive or negative. The answer to the question, if the amount of time spent on-site has an influence on the visitor satisfaction can help to engage the management of creating more incentives for

the visitor to extend their stay and leave satisfied. Also, the result of the influence of money spent during the visit on satisfaction delivers input for the discussion if facilities such as souvenir shops or restaurants are expedient additions to the site in order to increase revenue and ensure a sustainable growth. All recommendations that have been concluded from the results are discussed in Chapter 6 of this study.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Although previous studies conducted by various authors (e.g. Poria et al. 2013; Williams 2005; Yan & Morrison 2005) have dealt with visitation to World Heritage Sites in connection to experience and satisfaction, only very few utilized the approach of comparing the actual experience of the visitor with the overall satisfaction and resulting behavioural intention. Especially when specific attributes of the destination are taken into consideration which are in parts coined to World Heritage Sites, research is lacking behind. As stated by Chen and Chen (2010), also in a tourism context, satisfaction is primarily measured as a function of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences. This method has been introduced by Oliver (1980) and reached broad adoption. However, in many cases World Heritage Sites in countries that are not considered well-established tourism destinations, visitors do not have certain expectations and therefore cannot compare them to their post-evaluation of the visit. Churchill and Surprentant (1982), Dabholkar, Shepherd and Thorpe (2000) and Tse and Wilton (1988) take a similar approach and pledge for neglecting expectations and only contrast experience and satisfaction. As mentioned above, this study will not only analyze the relationship between overall experience and satisfaction but also whether certain dimensions and attributes are especially influencing the satisfaction of the visitor. Facilities and employees, physical appearance, accessibility and interpretation consisting of several attributes are hereby taken into consideration. Ramires, Brandão and Sousa acknowledge the importance of measuring satisfaction at World Heritage Sites to inform "public and private organisations about where to invest" (2016, 11) to satisfy the heritage tourists. The analysis of demographics and travel patterns of visitors to the chosen WHS backs the research on differences between general heritage tourists and visitors to WHS and has "never been directly addressed" (Adie & Hall 2016, 2). The assessment of whether the OUV, which is the crucial factor of a WHS designation, is communicated to and understood by the visitors as well as how

important the factor is a WHS gives insight on the visitor perception of the UNESCO label. This research composition can support management decisions with the goal of increasing visitor satisfaction and comply with the spirit a UNESCO World Heritage designation testifies for.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

For the sake of explaining why the topic of this research is of interest and which hypotheses have been chosen for what reason, Chapter 1 provides a detailed literature review starting with defining heritage tourism from a supply side view. Here, differences between cultural and heritage tourism are pointed out as well as the overall relationship and conflicts between heritage and the tourism industry described as it is seen by other researchers in the field. With regards to the focus of this thesis, literature dealing with the demand side of heritage tourism and segments and characteristics of heritage tourists is highlighted. To provide information on why people visit heritage sites, studies on motivation of heritage tourists is discussed. Moving on to the core of the at-hand study, results from researchers picking up the topic of tourism at UNESCO World Heritage Sites are presented. Furthermore, satisfaction theories that have evolved and used in other studies are discussed in order to find the right fit for this research. After mentioning literature that deals with the relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention, models that developed from the presented theories are discussed with the intention of finding the appropriate theoretical model which can be used with the theory chosen. A modified version of the mode is presented that includes the dimensions which have been used in the study as well as the hypotheses tested for (dis-)confirmation in Chapter 5.1.3.

Chapter 3 gives background information on the case study that is used in this thesis. Important publications as well as organizational bodies of the UNESCO are explained with special focus on the World Heritage List (WHL) and its shortcomings. Next, the tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman is presented while giving indications for the fast development of this sector. At last, the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense, are described with special attention to their OUV and site attributes.

In Chapter 4, a description of the research design and methodology of this study is given. The first part will explain the survey with a special developed questionnaire and how it was composed and evaluated. Part two describes the sample, material and procedure of the content analysis which was conducted for the reviews of the two UNESCO sites in TripAdvisor.com[3] and the comments from visitors stated in the suggestion part of the questionnaire.

At last, the results of the study and the content analysis will be presented. Also, this chapter is split between the survey and content analysis. First, demographics and travel patterns will be stated by using descriptive analysis and differences between the WHS revealed through descriptive statistics. Moreover, the proposed hypotheses will be tested and categorized (supported or rejected) by utilizing correlation analysis, differential analysis and cross tabulation including the Chi-Square Test. Secondly, findings from the content analysis and comments given by participants of the survey will be presented, followed by an overall discussion of key findings of the entire study. The conclusion chapter (6) gives recommendations and lists managerial implications to contribute to the touristic development of World Heritage Sites. Furthermore, it briefly summarizes the study and states its limitations as well as proposals for future research on this topic.

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[3] Hereinafter TripAdvisor

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Supply Side: Heritage Tourism

The tourism industry is growing at a vast speed and has been titled one of the world's largest industries with a current total contribution of 7.61 trillion USD (Statista 2016) and a continuous growth of tourist arrivals for the seventh consecutive year having reached 1.2 billion in 2016 (UNWTO 2016). Cultural and heritage tourism has become the most prosperous segment within the industry (Altunel & Erkut, 2015; Huh et al. 2006) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) acknowledged that heritage tourism has gained high importance for many travelers. Almost 40% of international trips include culture and heritage as part of the experience (Timothy & Boyd 2003) which hardly makes heritage a niche of tourism. The European Commission stated that 60% of European tourists are interested in discovering other cultures and 30% of decisions regarding the travel destinations are based on the availability of heritage sites (EICR 2004) what was reconfirmed in a global perspective in the latest ITB World Travel Trends Report with the conclusion that the generation of "Millennials want authentic travel experiences" (ITB Academy 2016, 27), including discovering new cultures. Already in 2009, the OECD recognized cultural and heritage tourism as important contributors to economic growth whereas this is not only constituted by an increasing number of attractions but also due to the observation that the spectrum of cultural and heritage tourism is broadening and boundaries between culture, tourism and everyday life are eroding (Richards 1996). A new market emerges, making cultural and heritage tourism become a form of leisure (Richards 2001a). Also in terms of robustness, cultural and heritage tourism has shown to be only mildly affected by economic crises of recent years (Bonetti, Simoni & Cercola 2014). This positive image goes back to Stebbins who in 1996 already concluded that cultural and heritage tourism has grown rapidly. The listed reasons for his conclusion such as higher levels of education, growing awareness of the world and the effects of media and telecommunications have not lost on topicality.

2.1.1 Defining cultural and heritage tourism.

The terms cultural and heritage tourism are equipped with a broad variety of definitions. In its Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO defines cultural heritage in a broad sense including monuments, groups of buildings and sites which in detail can be "works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view" (UNESCO 1972). This broad definition is useful in order to "encompass not only major historic sites and institutions but the entire landscape of the region with its geographic base (Bowes 1989, 36). 13 years later the UNWTO describes cultural heritage in connection to tourism as the movement of persons due to cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore, or art or pilgrimages (UNWTO 1985). Following this definition but defining cultural tourism as the umbrella term, Richards (1997) states that cultural tourism includes all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions such as heritage sites, artistically and cultural manifestations, and arts and drama outside their normal place of residence. However, Prentice (1993) describes heritage as not only landscapes, natural history, buildings, artifacts, and cultural traditions which are passed on from generation to generation but every aspect that can be promoted as tourism products. He also differentiates between types of heritage, namely built, natural and cultural heritage.

While in terms of hierarchy, it is agreed upon that cultural and heritage tourism is part of sustainable tourism, it is obvious that there is no widely recognized classification of tourism types when it comes to cultural tourism, heritage tourism, ethnic tourism or arts tourism (Timothy & Boyd 2003). In many cases cultural heritage is the term used and the point of interest in literature (Cadima Ribeiro, Vareiro & Remoaldo, 2012; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Yankholmes & Akyeampong, 2010). Hall and Zeppel (1992) distinguish between cultural and heritage tourism saying that cultural tourism is tied with visual attractions, performing arts, and festivals whereas heritage tourism includes visits to historical sites, buildings, and monuments in its portfolio. Furthermore, heritage tourism is referred to as experiential tourism due to the realization that tourists wish to immerse themselves in the heritage experience. Align with this, Stebbins (1996) acknowledges the psychological factor and sees it as part of

special-interest tourism based on the search for deep cultural experiences. However, agreeing on heritage tourism being only special-interest seems difficult considering the initially presented numbers of the UNWTO and European Commission. To make a clearer distinction, Richards (2001b) proposes the idea of viewing culture as comprised of processes meaning ideas developed by people and the way they live and the outcomes which could be buildings or art. Taking this approach into consideration, the term cultural tourism includes experiencing a certain way of life of the destination visited and goes beyond the visitation of sites and monuments (Timothy & Boyd 2003). Therefore, the element that has reached higher acceptance among authors is the period of time one is considering for the two types of tourism. Heritage tourism is described as the present-day use of the past (Ashworth, 2003; Graham, Ashworth & Turnbridge 2000) and represents linkages to the past which consist of elements of history a society wishes to keep (Hardy 1988). This concludes in heritage being rather selective than exhaustive (Timothy & Boyd 2003; Graham et al. 2000) while cultural tourism encompasses heritage tourism but also contemporary cultural tourism products which can be very new but still authentic and unique. McKercher and du Cros (2002) acknowledge this view and define cultural tourism as an interaction between tourism in general, the use of cultural heritage assets, the consumption of the cultural experiences and products as well as the tourist. Although not bringing a significantly sharper distinction between terms, the definition combines important elements from different authors and enriches the discussion. The significance of even making a clear distinction was questioned by Butler (1997) who is argued that tourists are not interested in labelling their vacation but in their overall satisfaction after leaving the destination. However, to understand the linkages between culture and heritage, a differentiation is constructive.

Also, the term heritage itself is not clearly defined and allows different meanings. Merriman (1991) describes two different ways of interpreting heritage. One being positive and including landscapes, parks institutions et cetera, being preserved for current and future generations while heritage can also be misused when exploiting the past for a commercial purpose. Where consensus was reached and what also has been added to the definition by the OECD (2009) is a classification approach and the statement that heritage tourism does not only consists of tangible products (e.g. buildings and natural areas) but also creative activities and intangible elements such

as ceremonies or the already addressed way of life. Park (2010) follows this approach and affirms that heritage tourism is closely connected to tangible as well as intangible elements, which together are the foundation for a cultural identity. According to Prentice (1993), a further classification can be made based on the type of attraction. To name a few, it can range from for example living cultural heritage such as specific dishes to built heritage but also personal heritage which is connected to tourists' perception of their own heritage (Poria et al. 2001) while other scholars prefer to simply base the judgment on the tourist's motivation of travel. Graham et al. (2000) emphasizes that a holistic approach towards understanding heritage must be taken. Every dimension of culture must be taken into consideration since the term is not only to be applied to historical matters (Turnbridge 1998).

2.1.2 Relationship and conflicts between heritage and tourism.

Several authors have analyzed the relationship between heritage and tourism in their publications (Ashworth, 2000; Ho & du Cros, 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Ashworth (2000) proposes three main schools of thought labelling them automatically harmonious, inevitably in conflict, and potentially sustainable. Furthermore, a framework has been introduced by McKercher, Ho & du Cros (2005) due to the assumption that the relationship between heritage and tourism is intricate owed to its dynamic nature. Seven possible relationships in connection to different stages of the heritage tourism lifecycle have been identified and include denial, unrealistic expectation, parallel existence, conflict, imposed co-management, partnership, and cross purpose (Zhang & Zheng 2014). Denial describes an early stage and can result in not-used cultural heritage asset, parallel existence of heritage and tourism or conflict between the two. Unrealistic expectation can be caused by people in charge of the supply side, for example the site manager. A parallel existence is possible when roles don't overlap and conflicts arise when uncontrolled tourism threatens the 'survival' of the heritage product. Imposed co-management can occur after a conflict situation and means imposing artificial solutions to end the dispute between stakeholders which might jeopardize the cultural integrity (McKercher et al. 2005). Sincere partnerships are rare but can be established when the common goal of providing a satisfying experience to the visitor is agreed upon. When using tourism to justify the use of for example ancient buildings, intangible heritage attributes might be lost. This type of

relationship is referred to as cross purposes relationship and emphasizes the need of finding a balance between conservation and the use of heritage sites for tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000).

As already mentioned, the relationship between tourism and heritage carries a not to be disdained potential of conflicts. Nuryanti (1996) sees the trigger for tension in profitability being put above the preservation of the heritage product. Different types of conflicts can be identified that can occur in the interplay between tourism and heritage (Zhang & Zheng 2014). Resources as simple as land can act as catalyst for clashes between stakeholders when it comes to the prioritization between preservation and community area development (Shetawy & El Khateeb 2009; Stræde & Treue 2006). An obvious source of conflict arises when different interest groups come together. McKercher (2005) describes that sharing an asset when different interests and value sets exist, is highly prone to cause problems. Cultural differences between stakeholders can take effect likewise as well as different conceptual perceptions when it comes to the handling of the heritage site (Evans 2002; Rakic & Chambers 2008). Another potential for conflict can be found in the relationship between human rights and World Heritage Sites (Jokilehtoa 2012; Weena 2012; Zalasinska & Piotrowska, 2012) due to the factors heritage protection, access rights and ownership as well as privacy rights.

Especially relevant for World Heritage Sites is the conflict between commercialization and authenticity. Multiple cases can be found on nearly every continent where concerns about the balance between increasing earnings and respecting the traditional attributes of the site have been stated. Samadi and Yunus (2012) especially the core zone of the World Heritage Site often is threatened by commercialization efforts and therefore suffers from decreasing authenticity. Going back to Merriman (1991) and his distinction between the positive and negative side of heritage with the latter being the manipulation of heritage sites by the heritage industry consequently brings the term 'staged authenticity' into the discussion. MacCannel (1973) introduced the concept in the context of ethnic tourism and interprets that hosts put their culture including themselves on sale in order to create a package for the tourist. If the cultural attributes change when offered as a package, the authenticity provided becomes staged authenticity. On contrast, Crick (1989) points out that

authenticity always is staged when connected to culture since cultures are inventions that are reorganized and develop in various directions. Following this argument, Cohen (1988) coined the term 'emergent authenticity' to describe the evolutionary process. It explains authenticity as a negotiable phenomenon which lets a cultural product appear as inauthentic at first but authentic after a certain period of time. Authenticity is an important attribute (Chhabra, Healy & Sills 2003) and the quality of heritage tourism is enhanced by it (Clapp 1999; Cohen 1988) but the perception of authenticity lies within the individual tourist experiencing the tourism product.

2.2 Demand Side: Heritage Tourists

Timothy and Boyd (2003) describe that scholars define heritage in either a supply-led or demand-led manner whereas a significant part of heritage tourism literature has focused on the supply side (e.g. Smith 1988; Wigle 1994). However, it is important to emblaze the continuously growing demand for vacation with more cultural elements and authentic experiences as opposed to exclusively regenerative holidays (Ritchie and Inkari 2006; Yankholmes and Akyeampong 2010). Especially a transitional phase from the product-led to a more visitor-orientated development that focuses on preferences and experience quality of the tourist (Apostolakis & Jaffry 2005) must be acknowledged. Several studies segmenting and analyzing the profile of cultural tourists exist but only few that explicitly focus on visitors to heritage destinations, especially to UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Ramires et al. 2016). In general, demand can be differentiated in current, latent or unmet and option demand as introduced by Weisbrod in 1965. Current demand is the part of a population that is able or willing to actually participate in tourism. The second category describes the difference between the current demand and the entire potential of participation while option demand is defined as the amount a person is willing to pay for the option of consuming the product in the future. Also, demand for heritage tourism is less elastic and shows less seasonal variation. The listed categories apply for tourism as a whole but also for heritage tourism with the difference that it is directed to heritage tourists (Timothy & Boyd 2003). When aiming to segment heritage tourists it is necessary to distinguish heritage tourists from tourists at heritage places (Poria, Butler & Airey 2003). According to the authors, heritage tourists are interested in the heritage

attributes of the site whereas tourists at heritage places may not be aware of the cultural value of the site but potentially are attracted by other attributes on-site.

2.2.1 Segments and characteristics of heritage tourists.

Understanding heritage tourism as one of the fastest growing segments within tourism itself leads to the need of segmenting it into subcategories in order to gain knowledge on the dimensions that are of interest for the tourist (Huh et al. 2006). Although heritage tourism represents a certain aspect of the global phenomenon of tourism, distinct sub-segments are important to acknowledge and target directly. Kerstetter, Cofer and Graefe (2001) see segmentation as necessary to create programs and promotional campaigns. Finding out about benefits that visitors seek when visiting heritage destinations was the aim of a study conducted through mailing list by Weaver, Kaufman and Yoon (2002) that resulted in the identification of three dimensions ("Escape", "Social" and "Education") and two clusters: "Active Benefit Seekers" and "Loners". The finding for the first cluster showed that they were not as educated as Loners and normally travel in groups with friends or family. In contrast, Loners had a high educational status and are more prone to travel alone. A similar segmentation has been introduced by Timothy and Boyd (2003) who identified passive and serious heritage tourists. Passive heritage tourists who do not visit heritage sites as a predominantly goal but include it in their trip when passing by or when estimating the historic value as sufficient. They show characteristics of mass tourism and do not have the same motivations as serious heritage tourists. This group is passionate about heritage and visiting heritage sites most probably is the purpose of their travel. Align with the approach of segmenting heritage tourists by their level of seriousness, McKercher (2002) identified five segments of heritage tourists in Hong Kong. Dependent on the importance of cultural motives titled as "centrality" and the depth of the experience, he suggests categorizing heritage tourists into "the purposeful" who is characterized by high centrality and depth, "the sightseeing" (high centrality but shallow experience), "the casual" (modest centrality and shallow experience), "the incidental" (low centrality and shallow experience) and lastly "the serendipitous" with low centrality but deep experience. Nyaupana, White and Budruk (2006) address the focus of tourists on heritage and follow a similar kind of classification. Heritage tourists at Native American cultural sites in the state of Arizona were found to be either culture focused

what is comparable with McKercher's purposeful heritage tourist, culture attentive or culture appreciative. Like-minded, more tourism scholars analyzed the different mentalities of tourists visiting heritage sites and identified further segments of which each attach to the level of seriousness the visitor shows in regard to heritage sites (Bywater 1993; Perez 2009).

A more general classification is made through categories such as demographics, geographical characteristics and psychographic characteristics. Demographical data collected in research methods such as surveys can include gender, the level of education or the financial status. Regarding geographic characteristics, looking at the places where tourists travel from can help to understand the scale of a heritage attraction. If, for example, the majority of tourists come from the surrounding areas, it is self-evident that one is dealing with a small-scale heritage site (Timothy & Boyd 2003). Psychographic characteristics are more complex and have to do with understanding the mindset of the visitor. Plog (1973) classified the U.S. population along a psychographic continuum and has also done so for tourists visiting tourist attractions. He describes two extreme poles of which one is the tourist who is simply looking for comfort while the other one likes to accept a challenge. In terms of heritage sites, a challenge could mean travelling to underdeveloped and unmanaged sites which even might be difficult to access.

Segmentation of tourists also involves identifying certain characteristics of heritage tourists that distinguish them from other travelers. In his pioneering work "Cultural Tourism and Business Opportunities for Museums and Heritage" Silberberg (1995) reasons that heritage tourists in general earn more money and also spend more money on vacation. Similar to Weaver et al.'s description of "Loners", he also identifies heritage tourists to be more highly educated than the general public. Furthermore, females are more likely to visit heritage destinations than men and broadly speaking in an older age class (Huh et al. 2006; Kerstetter et al. 2001; Richards 1996). Although Perez (2009) draws the conclusion that the profile of heritage tourists has not changed much over time and findings about certain reoccurring characteristics are in most cases similar, he opposes other authors in terms of age-group and identifies a positive change in the number of younger tourists visiting heritage sites. This leads to the assumption that adolescents are becoming more and more culturally motivated.

2.2.2 Motivation of heritage tourists.

Tourists' motivation to visit heritage sites differ very significantly as well as the emphasis that is put on cultural aspects by each individual visitor (UNWTO & ETC 2005). Analyzing different motivations of heritage tourists is another form of segmentation. Poria, Butler and Alrey (2001) put forward the idea that heritage tourism is a phenomenon not only based on the attributes of the heritage destination but on the motivation and perception to travel to the site. They distinguish three types of heritage tourists: tourists visiting a site that they consider part of their own heritage, those visiting a site that they consider of cultural value but which is not connected to them personally and those visiting the destination due to its classification as heritage although unaware of its designation as heritage (Timothy & Boyd 2003). Therefore, the authors understand heritage tourism as "a subgroup of tourism, in which the main motivation for visiting a site is based on the place's heritage characteristics according to the tourists' perception of their own heritage" (Poria et al. 2001, 1048). In their article "Clarifying Heritage Tourism", Poria et al. declare this definition to be more useful than those only referring to site attributes as provided by (e.g.) Garrod and Fyall (2001) for understanding heritage tourism also with respect to the management of heritage sites.

Chen (1998) discovered two broad motives of tourists for visiting heritage sites: pursuit of knowledge and personal benefits. The greater willingness to learn has become one of the main indicators for heritage tourism when compared with other tourism types (Timothy & Boyd 2003) and is together with novelty part of general travel pull motives identified by Crompton (1979). However, personal benefits include intentions such as health benefits, relaxation, experiencing spirituality or simply sightseeing. Other motives can be researching about one's own heritage, visiting sites as part of work or to fulfil religious longings (Richards 2001b) or even to satisfy morbid curiosity (Timothy & Boyd 2003). A similar approach is followed by (Jang & Cai 2002) who differentiate between physical motivators such as recreation or sports and interpersonal motivators (visiting friends, status) which together fit Chan's category of personal benefits while cultural motivators are connected to being educated about the value of the heritage site. Gnoth (1997) takes a slightly different stand by using broader categories and stating that motivation can develop in terms of inner-directed values (emotional) and outer-directed values (cognitive). However, many authors conclude that the main motivation of tourists visiting heritage places is education while other

aspects such as recreation, entertainment, and personal connection play an additional role in determining heritage tourists' motivation (Poria, Butler & Airey 2004; Poria, Reichel & Biran 2006; Yankholmes & Akyeampong 2010; Goh 2010; Chen & Chen 2010).

2.2.3 Tourism at UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

A special case is World Heritage tourism and refers to heritage sites that are inscribed in the WHL initiated by UNESCO. It can be understood as a brand segment of general heritage tourism (Hall & Piggin 2003). According to Timothy and Nyaupane (2009), many countries try to improve the visibility of their heritage sites with aspiring to have them designated the World Heritage status. A designation usually is perceived as branding (Timothy 2011) or labelling (Yang, Lin & Han 2010) and according to Yang (2014, 74), UNESCO is a powerful but debatable factor and some destinations do not promote it as aggressively as others. However, also for World Heritage Sites it is essential to segment their tourists in order to find the right strategy in terms of visitor experience, revenue generation and preservation (Hall & McArthur 1993). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD (2009) identifies the too general marketing of heritage sites as a core problem for tourism destinations since cultural tourists seek specific experiences and not a large variety of products. This factor comes particularly into play for a World Heritage Site due to its classification under the purview of a unified brand (Hall & Piggin 2003) although the attributes and experiences of WHS vary from destination to destination. Adie and Hall (2016) observed that only very few authors have intended to analyze the segment of World Cultural Heritage tourists although 77.4% of the properties inscribed in the WHL are cultural[4]. Palau-Saumell et al. (2013) agree with this view only listing two other studies examining consumer behaviour at WHS (Poria, Reichel & Cohen 2011) and the influence of the WHS brand on tourists' motivation for visiting WHS (Marcotte & Bordeau 2006).

In terms of demographics, literature with the topic of World Heritage tourism demonstrates similar results in comparison with studies of general heritage tourism. The Australian case study from King and Prideaux (2010) showed that the number of

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[4] Data accessed on March 17th 2017

woman visiting WHS was marginally higher than the one of men. The same observation was made by Wang et al. (2015) for Kanas in China and also Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Vareiro and Santos (2014) noted more female than male visitors to the World Heritage City of Guimaraes, Portugal. Adie and Hall (2016) determined only marginal differences between the number of women and men visiting the considered World Heritage Sites. In terms of education the findings were equal for all three studies showing consistently high education of World Heritage tourists what verifies and goes align with the findings for the general phenomenon of heritage tourism from the literature mentioned before. However, one significant difference was found in terms of scale. Huh et al. (2006) noted that heritage tourists most commonly are from the surrounding area and therefore domestic, World Heritage visitors however appear to be in many cases of international nature. In their exploratory study, Poria, Reichel and Cohen (2013, 273) bring up the point of associations heritage tourists have when confronted with World Heritage. Participants linked the label to being a culturally famous site of major significance to humankind meaning that a designated site has to be of value for the entire human race and not only for a specific group of people. Also, the findings let conclude that World Heritage Sites are declared as national tourist highlights that must be visited. Interestingly enough however, none of the participants recognized the World Heritage Site logo. Also, low awareness was discovered in terms of what the designation of a site as World Heritage represents (Williams 2005) and Yan and Morrison (2007) did not find a strong relationship between awareness of the fact that a site is labelled World Heritage and the decision to visit it. Align with these studies, Hall and Piggin (2001) found out that stakeholders often expected a higher increase in visitor numbers than reached and eventually, Poria et al. (2013) come to the conclusion that the designation does not have a remarkable impact on tourism demand. In contrast, Shackley (1998) illustrates the enrolment of a World Heritage Site as virtually a guarantee of a visitor number increase, due to its international visibility. Also, Bianchi (2002) recognizes a WHS designation as an indicator of quality for international markets. Significant impact on tourist flows and types of visitors has been detected by Ramires et al. (2016) in a study conducted in the World Heritage City of Port, Portugal. Its international image as an attractive tourism destination had been strengthened through the UNESCO label. Adie and Hall (2016) state World Heritage designations seem to be particularly attractive for European tourists with German, English and French visitors on the forefront. Statistics show that 60% of European tourists are

seeking cultural aspects and 30% of destinations were chosen by the offer of heritage sites (Remoaldo et al. 2014). Although the official intention of a listing is to protect global heritage for future generations, the debate between heritage protection and tourism development is ongoing (Palau-Saumell et al. 2013).

Another important aspect is the management of World Heritage Sites. According to Poria et al. (2013), tourists associated World Heritage Sites with a more professional management that provides not only all necessary facilities such as toilets and on-site transportation what justifies higher entrance fees, but also the appropriate interpretation what again connects to the omnipresent desire of heritage tourists to gain knowledge. Also, heritage places should not be seen as an isolated attraction but included in the dynamics of the surrounding area. The social, cultural and economic reality as well as the interplay between culture, leisure and tourism has to be considered when targeting a holistic tourism development (Ramires et al. 2016).

The described lack of studies that deal with visitors to UNESCO World Heritage Sites is the starting point and where the study at-hand intends to fill a gap and provide results and new findings in the context of UNESCO sites in a young tourism destination with respect to visitor satisfaction and post-visit behaviour. Furthermore, the study shall support the composing of management strategies for World Heritage Site development.

2.3 Defining Satisfaction

Going one step back to the discussion of defining heritage tourism, Butler (1997) questioned the relevance of assigning clear labels, stating that whether or not the tourist left the destination satisfied and having enjoyed the experience is at last the most important aspect. However, according to Engledow, satisfaction also is undefined although "everybody knows what it is" (1977, 87). Methods of measure are not provided and "its lack is both a gap and a dead end in marketing principles" (McNeal 1969, 32), although literature related to satisfaction in the tourism field dates back to at least the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission reports of 1962 (Manning 1986).

For the purpose of identifying significant dimensions of tourists' satisfaction, Pizam, Neumann and Reichel suggest the definition "a collection of tourists' attitudes

about specific domains in the vacationing experience" (1978, 317) and Ölander includes the "favourableness of the individual's subjective evaluation" (1977, 49) to explain the construct of tourist satisfaction. Although acknowledging the fact that these are early works and that research develops, also authors of more recent publications have not reached consensus yet (Kozak & Rimmington 2000), recognizing that the nature of satisfaction is ambiguous (De Rojas & Camarero 2008). Lee, Kyle and Scott (2012) define satisfaction as a collective evaluation of individual experiences while Rust and Oliver (1994) illustrate it as the degree to which one believes that an experience evokes positive feelings, connecting it to the state of mind that derive from the interaction with the destination (Trinh & Ryan 2013). Following the latter approach, different researchers have included the aspect of tourist's emotions when measuring satisfaction in tourism (Baker & Crompton 2000; Poria et al. 2006; Palau-Saumell et al. 2013). At the center of the discussion lies the heritage experience as the key outcome of tourism (Timothy & Boyd 2003). The authors state that the heritage tourism experience takes place in an experiential heritage environment and can be influenced by various elements such as supply and demand, the management of the attraction and how it is presented to the visitor. De Rojas and Camarero (2008) agree with this point and add that tourist satisfaction is often determined by the entire experience obtained which should be made of leisure, culture, education and social interactions.

A resulting satisfaction from qualitative performance experiences is widely agreed upon to be crucially important due to its convincing connection to behavioural intention. Various researchers describe that satisfaction affects not only the consumption of goods and services at the destination but also the intention to revisit as well as a positive post-visit word-of-mouth communication (Aksu, İçigen and Ehtiyar 2010; Beeho & Prentice 1997; Hallowell 1996; Pizam 1994). Kozak and Rimmington (2000) follow this line of thought and argue that this knowledge needs to be utilized for destination marketing in order to be successful. If the objective of satisfaction among tourists is accomplished, it consequently will lead to an increase of tourism numbers, greater tolerance of price increases, increased loyalty in the future, enhanced reputation as well as enhanced profitability and political support (Baker & Crompton 2000, 786). To achieve these goals, managers need to adjust their services to meet visitors' needs "when designating their heritage sustainability strategies" (Chen & Chen 2010, 34). Referring to heritage tourism in particular, priorities have to be in order to

provide satisfying experiences through well-presented tourism products including walkways, lighting, interpretation and intangibles and thus positively influence perceived quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention (De Rojas & Camarero 2008; Lee, Petrick & Crompton 2007).

As stated before, neither consensus exists as to what determines customer satisfaction nor is agreed upon a clear method on how to measure satisfaction (De Rojas & Camarero 2008). Marketing literature has mainly reflected two approaches to customer satisfaction research (Kozak & Rimmington 2000). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) lead the American school with the expectation-perception gap model and consider customer satisfaction as the negative or positive outcome when comparing initial expectations and perceived performance. Oliver's expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (1980) which fits this school of thought has received high acceptance due to its broad application possibilities (Pizam & Milman 1993). In contrast, the Nordic school led by Gronroos (1990) chooses a completely different perspective to measuring customer satisfaction. The main idea is that satisfaction only results from the actual quality performance as perceived by the consumer (Cronin & Taylor 1992; Kozak & Rimmington 2000). Various other concepts have been introduced such as Sirgy's congruity model (1984), the performance-only model (Pizam et al. 1978), the equity theory by Fisk and Young (1985), the norm theory (Cadotte, Woodruff & Jenkins 1987) or as a more recent trend and mentioned above, the inclusion of emotions as an influential factor (Palau-Saumell et al. 2013). However, measuring satisfaction by comparing expectations with the actual performance and measuring satisfaction by only taking the actual experience into consideration are the main two theories that have been used in literature dealing with satisfaction at tourism destinations and in particular, heritage sites.

2.3.1 Expectations and satisfaction versus experience and satisfaction.

Generally, expectations are defined as performance of establishment, ideal performance or desired performance (Teas 1994, 134). According to Oliver (1980) expectations are influenced by the product itself including one's prior experience, the context in which the possibility to purchase the product was communicated (e.g. salespeople) and individual characteristics of the consumer (e.g. persuasibility or

personal distortion). As already mentioned, Oliver's approach to measuring satisfaction has been adopted by many researchers in the field of service quality (Babakus & Boller 1992; Lewis & Booms 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988). The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm assesses satisfaction by relating the perceived quality to initial expectations against which it is either confirmed when meeting the expectations, negatively disconfirmed if the customer is disappointed or positively disconfirmed when expectations have been exceeded (Baker & Crompton 2000). Oliver defines satisfaction as "a function of an initial standard and some perceived discrepancy from the initial reference point" and states that "satisfaction soon decays into one's overall attitude toward purchasing products" (1980, 460). Three approaches to conceptualizing a pre-comparison standard have been suggested. The equitable performance represents the comparison between the consumer's investment and the perceived rewards, ideal product performance serves as optimal product performance a consumer would hope for while the expected product performance is used for the product's most likely performance (Tse & Wilton 1988, 205). Discrepancies between expectations and the actual experience represent a psychological conflict that is also referred to as the positive version of the assimilation theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) due to the tendency of individuals to over adjust satisfaction when expectations are high and under adjusting in the case of lower expectations. According to Montero, "in these circumstances, expectations are a driver of satisfaction" (2010, 8). Stated by Chen and Chen (2010), also in tourism context, satisfaction is primarily measured as a function of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences. Aksu et al. (2010) agree and state that it is generally accepted that tourists have expectations after selecting a destination to visit and that the satisfaction is connected to the initial expectations and Kozak and Rimmington (2000) acknowledged an increasing number of studies investigating customer satisfaction in tourism and travel. Chon and Olsen (1991) discovered a solid correlation between tourists' expectations and their satisfaction with the destination and also Pizam and Milman (1993) provided research with the result of disconfirmations being relatively good predictors of overall satisfaction.

However, the debate focused on whether analyzing expectation confirmation and disconfirmation or measuring satisfaction exclusively in regard to the actual experience is more appropriate has not bared a clear result (Cronin & Taylor 1992;

Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1996; Teas 1993). Although multiple studies have applied Oliver's paradigm, Dabholkar et al. (2000) remark that most of them have found a poor fit for the disconfirmation model. Cronin and Taylor state that that only "little if any theoretical or empirical evidence supports the relevance of the expectation-performance gap" (1992, 56) theory and label it as inadequate for research on service quality. With respect to the publications by Bolton and Drew (1991), Churchill and Surprenant (1982) and others, Cronin and Taylor add that the marketing literature supports the superiority of simple performance-based measures. Spreng and Olshavsky (1992) as well as Teas (1993) describe the disconfirmation model as suffering from conceptual, theoretical and measurement problems. Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml (1993) describe another deficit of the construct referring to the case that customers might update their expectations when receiving new information or being influenced by advertisements and social environment which have shown to affect destination choice (Mill & Morrison 1992). The traditional approach assumes that expectations before and after the experience are identical and does not account for the fact that expectations may change over time (Dabholkar et al. 2000) although research shows that it is important to consider (Boulding et al. 1993). Hence, if consumers evaluate their experience against their initial expectations at a stride, it is not evident if they state their original or modified expectations (Meyer & Westerbarkey 1996). Although there is no consensus on how or when to measure customer satisfaction, a great amount of authors pledge for an overall post-purchase evaluation of satisfaction as an effective response to a specific consumptive experience (Fornell 1992; Linder-Pelz 1982). Bolton and Drew (1991) concluded that perceived service quality is strongly affected by the current performance and that the impact of expectations is relatively weak and transitory or as put by Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983) only introduces redundancy. Furthermore, they suggest perceiving disconfirmation solely as a mediator but not as defining towards perception of quality (Cronin & Taylor 1992). The outcome of a study conducted by Churchill and Surprenant (1982) likewise determines that performance alone influences satisfaction and Dabholkar et al. attest studies that are only measuring perceptions while ignoring expectations completely a "good predictive power" (2000, 140). They add that measuring only perception also is more attractive since it only requires half the number of items that the disconfirmation approach needs to include. In their investigation of different satisfaction comparison standards, Tse and Wilton (1988) argue that a

customer will always be satisfied if a product performs well, regardless of expectations that have existed pre-purchase and hence expectations should not be considered an influencing factor. On these grounds, satisfaction is considered purely experiential and a "psychological state that can only be derived from interaction with the destination" (Baker & Crompton 2000, 788).

To understand what makes an experience valuable, Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed an experience quality scale with the factors hedonics (affective responses), peace of mind (physical and psychological safety), involvement (being able to choose and control offers) and recognition as in the sense of feeling important to the service providers. Kao, Huang and Wu (2008) followed this example for a study on theme parks and likewise conceived experiential quality by four factors. Immersion relates to involvement which lets the consumer to perceive time as passing quickly while surprise refers to the uniqueness of the offer. Participation touches upon the interaction between consumer and the product and fun simply implies happiness and enjoyment. In addition, Kao, Huang and Wu were able to establish the result of a positive relationship between the experiential quality and satisfaction which furthermore influences behavioural intentions positively (Chen & Chen 2010) which was again confirmed by Yang and Lin (2014) for World Heritage Sites.

The literature reviewed for the discussion between different approaches to the measurement of customer satisfaction generated hypothesis one (H1) for the study on visitor satisfaction at Omani UNESCO sites:

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between "Experience Quality" and "Satisfaction"

2.3.2 The relationship between the quality of destination attributes and satisfaction.

To get a sufficient knowledge of the tourists' behaviour and their satisfaction towards the destination or a set of attributes is essential for managers to promoting the destination (Yoon & Uysal 2005). The critical role of attribute performance in determining satisfaction has received wide attention in various studies (Chi & Qu 2008; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; Meng, Tepanon & Uysal 2008; Pizam et al. 1978). Pizam et al. (1978) were one of the first researchers to introduce the idea to measure tourist

satisfaction based on identifying and analyzing the different dimensions of destination performance and defining satisfaction levels for each of them. Churchill and Surprenant (1982) agreed with this opinion and stated that quality can be measured in terms of attribute performance. In their study on a resort destination, Meng et al. (2008) noted that the most important indicator for satisfaction was the evaluation of attribute performance. Furthermore, Chi and Qu concluded that "it can be said that tourists' overall satisfaction was determined by destination image and attribute satisfaction" (2008, 632).

Significant variance in number and nature of attributes that are considered relevant for sparking satisfaction among tourists at destinations can be found in literature of the tourism field (Dorfman 1979; Pearce 1982). Kozak and Rimmington (2000) argue that neither the possibility of a distinctive grouping of tourists by attributes that are important to them to be satisfied with the visit nor if the importance of certain attributes is connected to sustaining repeat visits and stimulating recommendations from the visitors to others has been clarified. However, various studies (Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen & Santos 2004; Pizam & Milman 1993) concluded that identifying satisfaction of different customer segments with specific destination attributes as well as related behavioural intentions is achievable and that destination attributes have a significant role. Ramires et al. (2016) agree with this view and state that satisfaction with specific attributes is highly influential for the overall satisfaction with the visit and facilitates the decision to return to the destination or recommend it to fellow travelers. De Rojas and Camarero explain that "visitors seek a total experience, including leisure, culture, education and social interaction" (2008: 525) and Spreng, Mackenzie and Olshavsky define overall satisfaction as "an affective state that is the emotional reaction to a product or service" and argue that "attribute satisfaction is not the only antecedent of overall satisfaction" (1996, 12 & 17). Consequently, they come up with two antecedents of overall satisfaction which they specify as attribute satisfaction and information satisfaction. Attribute satisfaction is "the consumer's subjective judgment resulting from observations of attribute performance and information satisfaction the "subjective satisfaction judgment of the information used in choosing a product" (Spreng et al. 1996, 17 & 18). A variety of researchers have found that it is important to measure satisfaction with each of the attributes because (dis)satisfaction with one of them leads to (dis)satisfaction overall (Kozak & Rimmington 2000; Pizam et al. 1978;

Rust, Zahorik & Keininghan 1996). Pizam et al. refer to this phenomenon as "halo effect" and additionally state that measurement becomes rather complex in the tourism context since most products from other industries are homogeneous and uniform while "the tourism product is an intangible composite of many interrelated components" (1978, 316). In consideration of these findings and in the context of heritage tourism, it is essential that the presentation of the heritage product stimulates the interest and involvement of the visitor. De Rojas and Camarero (2008) list location, internal distribution, walkways, lighting and informative panels as examples. Especially the latter has repeatedly named as an important determinant of overall satisfaction. It allows the visitor to feel a stronger connection to the heritage and increase the possibility that the visitor spends more time at the site and is encouraged to spend money at the gift shop (Poria, Biran & Reichel 2009; De Rojas & Camarero 2008). According to Trinh & Ryan, tourists are becoming more and more concerned with "not just being there, but with participating, learning and experiencing the 'there' they visit" (2013, 241) and Poria et al. (2009) highlight the importance of acknowledging interpretation as a key factor of the overall experience.

Notwithstanding that interpretation is fundamental, different places need to focus on different attributes that also influence the satisfaction of their visitors. While traditional villages, monuments and temples were discovered as important to heritage tourists in Thailand (Peleggi 1996), Andersen, Prentice and Guerin (1997) identified castles, gardens and historical buildings as predominantly meaningful in Denmark. Visitors in China however named traditional festivals, historical events and beautiful scenic heritage as main factors of significance. Ultimately, choices made by visitors and, subsequently, the behavioural pattern is strongly influenced by satisfaction, therefore identifying primary attributes is of relevance for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) and the strategy implemented for the tourism destination (Huh et al. 2006). Attributes with high influence of satisfaction are specific elements of tourism supply such as gastronomy, accommodation, culture and entertainment and hospitality (Ramires et al. 2016) whereas others are more generic (Kozak & Rimmington 2000). These specific attributes of tourism supply have been recognized as important to tourists in large parts and should be paid special attention to. As Pavesi, Gartner and Guillet (2015) as well as Ramires et al. (2016) argue, also other attributes going beyond the supply of culture and heritage such as mobility, accessibility,

cleanliness and safety as well as hospitality are well-worth highlighting as important satisfaction factors (Ramires et al. 2016). Timothy and Boyd (2003) emphasize that establishing shopping facilities creates motivation for tourists to spend money and can act as a main contributor to revenues at heritage sites. On the Isle of Man, Prentice (1993) observed that meals, snacks and gifts summed up into one-fifth of tourists' expenditure and although it is important to not disturb the heritage aspect, Timothy and Boyd (2003) confirm this discovery and state that shopping makes up 20-50% of total on-site expenditure and hence is one of the main activities that tourists undertake when travelling. Furthermore, a positive shopping experience can also add to an increase of overall satisfaction. What should be noted is that all the discussed attributes fall in the category of controllable elements. Uncontrollable attributes such as scenery and weather are not taken into consideration since taking influence is not possible even if they lead to dissatisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington 2000).

According to Poria et al. (2003), only few studies (e.g. Jusoh, Masron, Hamid & Shahrin 2013; Poria, Reichel & Cohen 2013; Theo, Khan & Rahim 2014) have been conducted which focus on the importance of certain attributes of a UNESCO World Heritage Site as pull factors although it seems essential to a deepened understanding of the heritage tourism phenomenon. Analyzing the relationship between the perception of attributes and the tourists is paramount to understand the general motivation to visit a heritage site (Poria et al. 2004). In the study on the historic city of Melaka in Malaysia which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, it was that due to the constant arrival of tourists, infrastructure played a crucial role in order to make the site attractive for tourists (Jusoh et al. 2013). In the context of the Alta Museum in Norway which is associated with a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Johanson and Olsen (2010) noted that location is an important attribute and that visitors spent more time on activities such as relaxing in the café and browsing through the gift shop than looking at the exhibits. Furthermore, Poria, Reichel and Cohen (2013) concluded that visitors do not require a site to be attributed as antique but rather significant to human culture.

The above discussed literature concludes that an experience consists of several dimensions with associated attributes which need to be assed to be able to comment on overall satisfaction. Due to this, four sub-hypotheses are added to H1, each

discussing the relationship between individual experience quality dimensions and overall satisfaction:

H1a: There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Facilities and employees" and overall "Satisfaction"

H1b: There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Physical appearance and maintenance" and overall "Satisfaction"

H1c: There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Accessibility" and overall "Satisfaction"

H1d: There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Interpretation" and overall "Satisfaction"

2.3.3 The relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention.

Something most studies with the topic of customer satisfaction have in common, regardless of which theory was followed, is the recognized relationship between the experience, satisfaction and behavioural intention (e.g. Olsen 2002; Chen & Tsai 2007; Chen & Chen 2010; Palau-Saumell et al. 2013). Palau-Saumell et al. (2013) demonstrated in their study that influence of satisfaction towards tourists' behavioural intentions exist, similar to Baker and Crompton (2000) who state that a direct relationship between the quality of the experience and user satisfaction often has been found when included in the model (e.g. Churchill & Surprenant 1982; Tse & Wilton 1988). Furthermore, the authors concluded that satisfaction is a useful predictor of the behavioural intentions.

Behavioural intentions are defined as the subjective probability that a particular action will be taken by the consumer (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) and are associated with the ability to get the consumer to say positive things, recommend to others, spend more time and money and as an overall goal, to be loyal (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1996). Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as the highest level of commitment which can be categorized in cognitive (perception of quality), affective (attachment and positive attitude), conative (commitment or plan to repurchase) and action (high willingness to act). According to Yang and Peterson (2004), action loyalty is difficult to measure and hence, most researchers rely on conative loyalty. The relationship

between satisfaction and loyalty has been widely test, specifically in heritage tourism (Chen & Chen 2010). In the tourism context, loyalty also is reflected in the intention to revisit but "such measures are not always appropriate in tourism" (Trinh & Ryan 2013, 242) and thus, repeated visits are an unreliable indicator. In heritage tourism, a high proportion of tourists will rather visit other heritage destinations (McIntosh 2004; Moscardo, Morrison, Pearce, Lang & O'Leary 1996). Therefore, positive behavioural intention is more frequently measured in the tourists' willingness to recommend, visit similar places or pay a higher price (Chen & Tsai 2007; Oppermann 2000). Customer loyalty therefore represents a key goal for the management due to the fact that loyal customers act as free word-of-mouth advertising agents (Shoemaker & Lewis 1999) and its effect on a company's long-term viability and sustainability (Chen & Chen 2010). On top of that, positive recommendations received by acquaintances and friends are considered the most trusted source of information according to Williams and Soutar (2009). In order to evaluate loyalty, measurements can be subdivided into attitudinal measures and behavioural measures. The former implies "a specific desire to continue a relationship" (Chen & Chen 2010, 31) while the latter refers to repeated advocacy. Tourism providers employ these measurements and invest effort in evaluating and improving their performance and consequently enhancing the customers' satisfaction level to achieve increased visitation and revenues (Baker & Crompton 2000).

The found relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention from previous studies delivers the input for hypothesis two (H2) which will be tested to gain knowledge on this relationship at UNESCO sites in Oman:

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between "Satisfaction" and Behavioural Intention

To acknowledge that heritage sites are unique and that naturally, different results can be achieved for each of the World Heritage Sites which are part of this study, hypotheses are introduced that refer to significant differences between them. The relationships of H1 and H2 will be tested for each site respectively:

H3: There is a significant difference in "Experience Quality" between the analysed UNESCO sites

H3a: There is a significant difference in "Satisfaction" between the analysed UNESCO sites

H3b: There is a significant difference in "Behavioural Intention" between the analysed UNESCO sites

Due to the intention of this study to give insight on other factors that can have an influence on customer satisfaction, additional hypotheses are introduced that have not been widely discussed in previous literature. However, they connect to the general discussion of heritage tourists and their travel behaviour. H4 and H4a are used to find out whether satisfaction is influenced by the way the visitor shapes his stay at the site.

H4: Visitors who spent more money on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit

H4a: Visitors who spent more time on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit

Furthermore, analysis is conducted to identify if satisfaction decreases when the UNESCO label is the main reason to visit the site due to specific attributes that might be demanded and connected with the designation. Correspondingly, it is also tested whether the level of satisfaction is influenced when visitors already have experienced other UNESCO sites on the globe

H4b: Visitors whose main reason to visit the site was the UNESCO label were significantly less satisfied with their visit

H4c: Visitors who have visited other UNESCO sites before were significantly less satisfied with their visit

At last, hypotheses five and six are proposed to gain knowledge on how spending on-site can be increased. For managerial purposes, the relationship between the duration of the visit and the amount of money that was spent on-site. Additionally, it is tested whether the travel type (cruise, travel package, self-organized, business or other) influences the spending behaviour of the tourist while visiting the World Heritage Site. In that effect, two more hypotheses are tested for the purpose of this study:

H5: There is a significant relationship between the time and money spent on-site

H6: There is a significant relationship between the nature of the visitor's trip and the money spent

2.3.4 Previous models.

Different models employed in literature to assess customer satisfaction have been alluded to in the previous subchapters. Especially the cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions, introduced by Oliver (1980) has been mentioned repeatedly due to its wide acceptance especially in earlier studies. Satisfaction is seen as a function of an initial standard and the discrepancy between it and the perceived quality of the experience. Hereby, expectations are thought to create a frame of reference which is used to make a judgment.

De Rojas and Camarero (2008) act on the suggested model and modify it to a combination of cognitive and emotional aspects. Aspects that are considered are expectations, perceived quality, disconfirmation, pleasure, mood, satisfaction and intensification. The results confirmed the model and valid statements could be made. For example, the authors found that the effect of perceived quality on satisfaction was stronger than the effect of emotions and that mood strengthens the cognitive path towards satisfaction. Mazis, Ahtola and Klippel (1975), Pizam et al. (1978) as well as Tonge and Moore (2007) argue that an identification of different performance dimensions is the basis for a following determination of importance for each of them. Useful data for evaluating satisfaction have been found following this procedure considering that the importance that consumers attach to the dimensions can vary depending on the product. Trinh and Ryan (2013) proposed a model for museum visitation where the motives of the tourists are those of fulfilling their interest in history and culture as a degree of involvement. Also included is the aspect of how tourists perceive the displaying of items. The satisfaction also is influenced by the context meaning if tourists visited solely to experience the museum or if it was only a redundant part of a holiday. Further included in the model is the factor of recommendations which is connected to overall behaviour such as revisiting the museum. Due to measurement errors, not all relationships had been verified but the authors were able to confirm a stronger connection between the assessment of displays and the tourists' satisfaction. As mentioned before, the concept of emotion has also been included in satisfaction

measuring studies. Palau-Saumell (2013) applied this approach for the case of La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona as a World Heritage Building. Not only tourists' emotions were considered but also the effect of employee displayed emotion on the tourists' satisfaction. It was acknowledged that tourists' emotions were found to be influenced by whether the site was considered part of his or her heritage (Poria, Reichel & Biran 2006) and that the environment of consumption alters the emotional state and feelings (Babin, Chebat & Michon 2004). Satisfaction was analyzed in terms of overall satisfaction and behavioural intentions as possible repeated visits and positive recommendations. Also tested was the moderator effect of knowledge of the fact that La Sagrada Familia is a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the relationships between the site and tourists' emotions, employee displayed emotions and tourists' emotions, tourists' emotions and satisfaction and eventually satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The findings showed that tourists' emotions are an important factor in visits to heritage sites but in contrast employee displayed emotions only has a weak linkage the emotions of the tourist. The strongest causal relationship was found between tourists' emotions and their overall satisfaction and the influence of satisfaction over tourists' behavioural intentions was confirmed. In all relationships, the effect of knowledge of the UNESCO label was existent and resulting in a higher significance between the mentioned relationships for the tourists who were informed that they are visiting a World Heritage Site.

Chen and Chen (2010) investigated the interrelation between experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intention. Experience quality is the holistic evaluation of the experience and was defined as "tourists' affective responses to their desired social-psychological benefits" (2010, 30). Perceived value is considered the overall assessment of the utility based on the trade-off between benefit and investment or cost (cf. Zeithaml 1988; Lovelock 2000). Satisfaction was measured in accordance to Oliver's (1980) disconfirmation model and consequently described as the discrepancy between prior expectations and perceived performance. Align with the general understanding of behavioural intention in a tourism context, the degree of loyalty was measured regarding intentions to revisit and the willingness to recommend. As a result, Chen and Chen confirmed their model to be reliable and meaningful to test the hypothesized relationships especially between experience quality, perceived value and satisfaction. Olsen (2002) also expected a positive

correlation between performance quality and repurchase loyalty and structured the model in a way that satisfaction acts as a mediator between quality and loyalty. Accordingly, the model therefore has quality performance as a basis which leads to loyalty, mediated by satisfaction. A high positive correlation between quality and satisfaction was discovered and an overall acceptable fit across all products that were part of the study. Baker and Crompton (2000) developed a structural equations model for a festival study that hypothesized that performance quality has a direct effect on behavioural intentions and indirectly affecting them through satisfaction. Furthermore, satisfaction was estimated to have a direct effect on the customer's behaviour and due to its two-pronged approach, it was hypothesized that perceptions measure data will have a better fit in the model than the subjective disconfirmation measure data. The findings confirm that performance quality had a significant effect on satisfaction and in turn, satisfaction significantly influenced tourists' post-visit behaviour. Final and conclusive, "overall performance had a total effect on behavioural intentions" (Baker & Crompton 2000, 797) and the relationship quality – satisfaction – behavioural intention was established.

2.3.5 Conceptual model of the study.

Considering the discussion of the relationships and differences between expectations, experiences and satisfaction and the models presented, a conceptual model for the study of tourist satisfaction at two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman is proposed. The relationship between expectations and satisfaction will not be included due to its downsides in several aspects. Although the review of literature has shown that expectations have been employed as an indicator of satisfaction in several studies (Babakus & Boller 1992; Lewis & Booms 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988), various authors have identified issues such as the change of expectations during the visit (Dabholkar et al. 2000; Boulding et al. 1993).

Considering the often very limited time tourists can spend when visiting sites, the assessment of experiences before the visit and then completing the questionnaire after the visit does not seem feasible for this study due to the risk of unwillingness of tourists to be involved in the study twice during their visit. Additionally, the Sultanate of Oman is a relatively young tourism destination and tourists might not have clear expectations about their visit. One can argue that visitors have certain expectations

because of the internationally known UNESCO label but it cannot be expected that the majority of tourists is aware of the fact that the site they are visiting is recognized as World Heritage. Therefore, this study will employ the model of Baker and Crompton who described satisfaction as being "purely experiential […] that can only be derived from interaction with the destination" (2000, 788) and state a positive relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention. Furthermore, Baker and Crompton describe that the visitation experience consists of specific dimensions what Pizam et al. (1978) and Tonge and Moore (2007) also stated in their publications which conclude that an identification of different performance dimensions is important to analyse experience in a holistic manner. For the purpose of this study, the model of Baker and Crompton which was introduced for a study on festivals was modified to incorporate the dimensions considered important for the experience at the two Omani UNESCO sites.

In this study and in accordance with the proposed model, the relationships between experience, satisfaction and behavioural intention will be tested. It is hypothesized that a positive and significant relationship between experience quality and satisfaction (H1), between satisfaction and behavioural intention (H2) and between each dimension of the experience and satisfaction (H1a; H1b; H1c; H1d) exist. Figure 1 graphically presents the hypotheses as well as the experience quality dimensions that together form the overall experience.
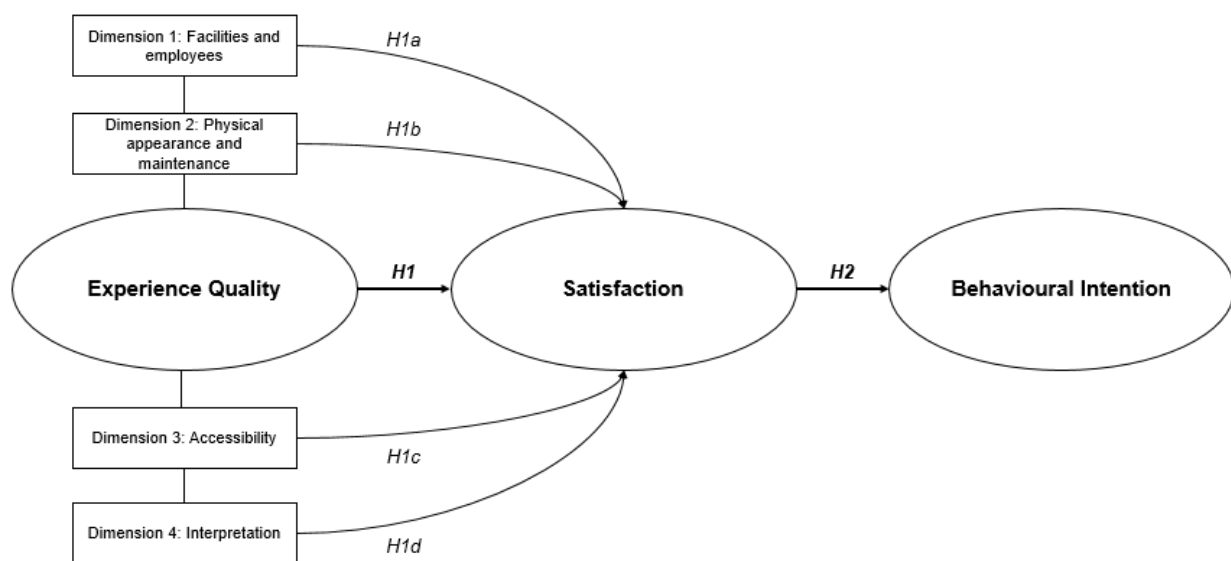
Figure 1. Conceptual Model for the purpose of this study; modified version of Baker & Crompton (2000).

Figure 2 extents the proposed model and includes all hypotheses that are tested in this study. H3 together with H3a and H3b refer to expected significant differences in experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention between the UNESCO sites which are assumed due to the different stages of development respectively. Furthermore, hypothesized is the increase of satisfaction with the amount of money (H4) and time (H4a) spent on-site and that the satisfaction level is lower when tourists' main reason to visit was the UNESCO label (H4b) and or have visited UNESCO sites before (H4c). Lastly, the assumptions are made that a significant relationship between time and money spent (H5), as well between travel type and money spent (H6) on-site exist.
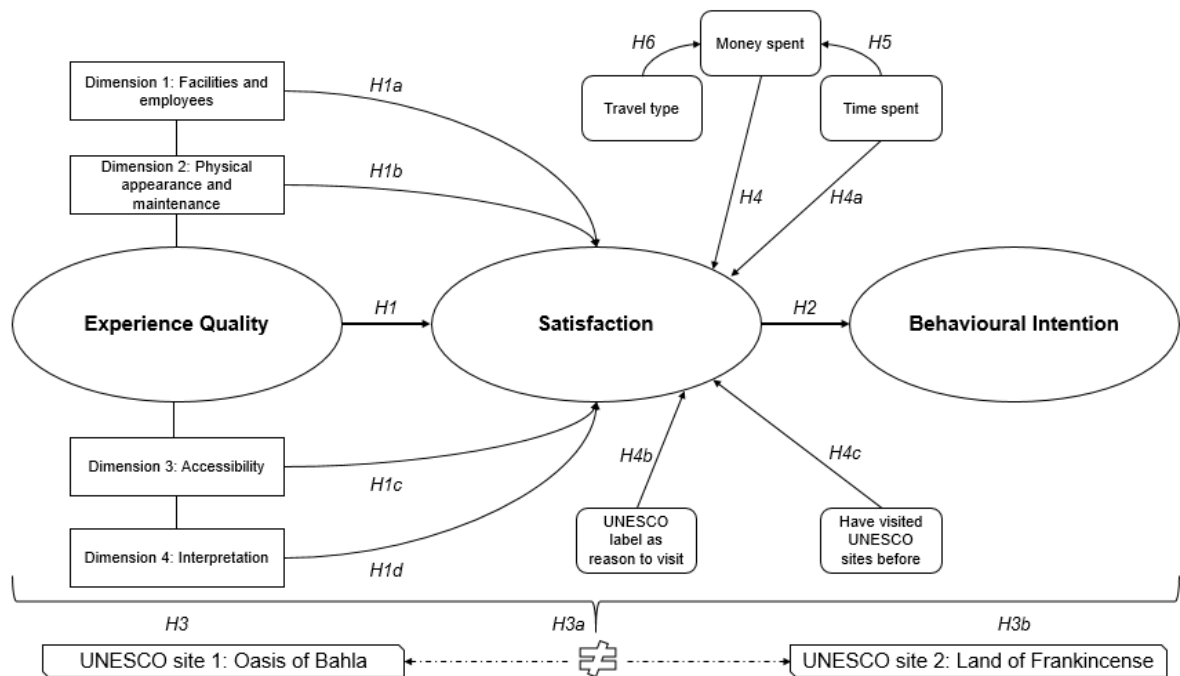
Figure 2. Extension of Conceptual Model for the purpose of this study.

Following hypotheses have been chosen to be assessed in this study. The results are presented in Chapter 5 with Table 18 extending the Table 1 below with another column stating support or rejection.

Table 1
List of Hypotheses

Hypotheses

H1   *There is a positive and significant relationship between "Experience Quality" and "Satisfaction"*

H1a   *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Facilities and employees" and overall "Satisfaction"*

H1b   *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Physical appearance and maintenance" and overall "Satisfaction"*

H1c   *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Accessibility" and overall "Satisfaction"*

H1d   *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Interpretation" and "Satisfaction"*

H2   *There is a positive and significant relationship between "Satisfaction" and "Behavioural Intention"*

H3   *There is a significant difference in "Experience Quality" between the analysed UNESCO sites*

H3a   *There is a significant difference in "Satisfaction" between the analysed UNESCO sites*

H3b   *There is a significant difference in "Behavioural Intention" between the analysed UNESCO sites*

H4   *Visitors who spent more money on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*

H4a   *Visitors who spent more time on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*

H4b   *Visitors whose main reason to visit the site was the UNESCO label were significantly more satisfied with their visit*

H4c   *Visitors who have visited other UNESCO sites before were significantly less satisfied with their visit*

H5   *There is a significant relationship between the time spent on-site and the money spent*

H6   *There is a significant relationship between the nature of the visitor's trip and the money spent*

The reviewed literature in this chapter has been the basis for the development of this study's hypotheses. Note that they are not labelled according to their importance but with the purpose of grouping them[5].

1. *H1-H1d*: Both WHS are looked at in combination. The point of interest is the measurement of relationships between the overall quality of the experience, its dimensions and overall satisfaction.

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[5] cf. Chapter 4.1.2 for structure of the questionnaire and explanation of variables, dimensions and attributes

2. *H2*: This hypothesis analyses the relationship between the overall satisfaction and behavioural intention of the visitor after the visit. Again, this is done for with the entire data collected from both sites.

3. *H3-H3b*: This group contains hypotheses made regarding significant differences between the two sites in terms of experience, satisfaction and intentions of the visitors.

4. *H4-4c*: The aim of the hypotheses in the fourth group is to find out whether certain characteristics or certain behaviour of the visitors has an influence on the overall satisfaction.

5. *H5* & *H6*: This group was created to gain knowledge on influence factors on the amount of money the visitor spent on-site. The goal was to gain information that has practical and monetary benefit for the WHS management which can be used immediately.

The purpose of the compilation of hypotheses is to gain beneficial information on the status of visitor satisfaction at the Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense UNESCO sites. To understand the value of the information of groups 3 to 5, the theoretical knowledge gained from the literature review must be verified. Therefore, the relationships between variables, dimensions and attributes (groups 1 and 2) are tested to acknowledge whether they significant and positive or negative. Only then, the results of the other hypotheses with connection to the Omani case study unfold their benefit and can be used to improve conditions at the World Heritage sites.

CHAPTER 3: THE CASE OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN OMAN

In the following, the objects of investigation of the study – two of the four UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman – will be presented. To give sufficient information on the context, an introduction to UNESCO will be given as an expansion of the discussion about tourism at World Heritage Sites of the literature review (Chapter 2.2.3). The World Heritage Convention and List, the Committee, Fund and World Heritage Centre will be explained as well as the interplay between preservation and tourism with an analysis of the general criticism on the WHL discussed.

Moreover, the status of the Omani travel and tourism industry will be presented in Chapter 3.2 to give clarity in which economic and social context the World Heritage Sites are embedded since the Sultanate still remains a shadowy existence in terms of tourism visibility. At last, the two UNESCO sites of Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense are presented to provide insight on their current status and future perspective.

3.1 UNESCO World Heritage

According to UNESCO, "the cultural and natural heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only of each nation, but of humanity as a whole". In order to ensure its proper identification and protection to "avoid loss, through deterioration or disappearance" (WHC 2016, 1), Member States adopted the World Heritage Convention in 1972.

3.1.1 The World Heritage Convention.

UNESCO is responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication and has laid the ground for an international approach for cultural and natural heritage protection with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972). Approved by the General Conference in 1972, the convention notes that heritage is increasingly threatened with destruction, considers that the disappearance of any item would mean a harmful impoverishment and that protection often remains incomplete on a national level due to economic, scientific and technological limitations. Furthermore, it is

declared that the organization will maintain and increase knowledge by assuring conservation and protection of the world's heritage to safeguard the unique and irreplaceable property. It is considered that parts of heritage are of outstanding interest and value; hence need protection by granting collective assistance. The convention was the first document to provide a legal, administrative and financial framework for international heritage protection. It also introduces the term World Heritage which stands for heritage that "transcends all political and geographic boundaries" (ICOMOS 1993, 1).

193 countries adhered to the World Heritage Convention and are referred to as state parties. They are encouraged to ensure participation of a variety of stakeholders in the identification, nomination and protection of heritage sites with an exceptional and universal value, making them World Heritage Sites. Furthermore, state parties should bring together heritage experts regularly to discuss implementation of the convention and acknowledge the collective interest of heritage protection while fully maintaining their sovereignty. Each country has the responsibility to identify, nominate, protect, present and transmit cultural and natural heritage found within their borders. Policies have to be adopted that give heritage a function in the community and heritage protection needs to be integrated in planning programmes. All appropriate measures for protection of the heritage have to be taken and educational and information programmes should be used to "strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples" (WHC 2016, 3) as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. In return to those requirements, the international community promises to support the protection and conversation of heritage in each state party.

3.1.2 The World Heritage List.

In order to define and collect sites of exceptional and universal value, the Convention has established the WHL in which cultural and natural properties that fulfil the requirements are inscribed. These requirements are stated in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2016) and hereby define what the Committee considers a property with Outstanding Universal Value. The term refers to "cultural and/or natural significance which is as exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity" (WHC 2016, 11). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that a

property of high national interest is automatically considered to be of universal value for mankind. The criteria for the assessment of OUV are listed in paragraph 77 of the Operational Guidelines and for cultural heritage include that nominated properties shall be considered a "(i) masterpiece of human creative genius; (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values […] on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; (iii) bear unique or at last exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization […]; (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape […]; (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-sue, or sea-use which is representative of a culture […]; (vi) be directly tangibly associated with events or living traditions […]"[6] (WHC 2016, 17). The Convention aims at implementing their Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible WHL (2002) which was designed to encourage more countries to become State Parties and "maintain a reasonable balance between cultural and natural heritage on the World Heritage List" (WHC 2016, 12). Currently, 1052 properties from 165 state parties are listed[7] and no formal limit is imposed on the total number of properties to be inscribed. To keep the balance between the numbers of properties of State Parties, the WHC requests its members to reflect on the possible over- or underrepresentation of their heritage sites and proposing only properties of underrepresented categories.

The Tentative List of a State Party includes properties that are considered to be suitable for nomination to the WHL. Nominations are not considered by UNESCO if they have not been inscribed on the Tentative List before. The WHC considers the Tentative List a "planning and evaluation tool" (WHC 2016, 16) which should be developed with the support of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) to identify gaps in the WHL and avoid the mentioned overrepresentation. Furthermore, the World Heritage Committee publishes a List of World Heritage in Danger. Properties that are on the WHL, face serious and specific danger (e.g. destruction, significant alteration or abandonment) with major operations needed to conserve it are included in the list (WHC 2016). Danger is understood as ascertained danger (specific and proven) which can be the deterioration of materials or loss of

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[6] List continued for natural heritage: "(vii) contain superlative natural phenomena […]; (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history […]; (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes […]; (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats […]" (WHC 2016, 17-18)
[7] Data accessed on February 17th 2017

authenticity and potential danger (threats that could have deleterious effects) such as lack of conversation policies or a possible future armed conflict. In order to have a property listed on the WHL, a series of steps have to be taken which starts with the preparation of the nomination document. All relevant information (identification, description, justification, state of conversation, protection, management, monitoring etc.) should be included and the final document submitted to the Secretariat. Eventually, the World Heritage Committee has the final saying whether a property should or should not be included in the WHL. If the decision is made not to inscribe a property, it may not be nominated again except under exceptional circumstances (e.g. new discoveries or scientific information).

1. Tentative List
Inventory which provides a forecast of properties that a State Party may decide to submit

2. The Nomination File
Necessary documentation about the property which is supported by the WHC

3. The Advisory Bodies
Nominated property is independently evaluated by either ICOMOS or IUCN

4. The World Heritage Committee
The WHC makes the final decision on the inscription on the WHL

5. The Criteria Selection
According to the Operational Guidelines at least one of the 10 OUV-criteria have to be met

Figure 3. Simplified nomination process of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO n.d.-a).

3.1.3 The World Heritage Committee.

The World Heritage Committee administers the Convention and is in charge of its implementation. Meetings of 21 of the State Parties which are held once a year include topics regarding the allocation of the World Heritage Fund and examination of nominations (UNESCO n.D.-b). Furthermore, the Committee acts when properties are mismanaged, decides on inscription and deletion of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger and generally informs the public about its activities and decisions.

3.1.4 The World Heritage Fund.

A fund financed by the State parties in form of compulsory and voluntary contributions for the protection of the heritage of Outstanding Universal Value has been established by the Convention in conformity with the financial regulations of UNESCO and can be allocated upon request. Reasons can be the urgent prevention of damage or support in terms of studies, expert consultations or staff training (ICOMOS 1993). Also, long-term support in form of loans can be requested for the purpose of protection and development.

3.1.5 The World Heritage Centre (Secretariat to the World Heritage Committee).

In order to assist the World Heritage Committee, a secretariat has been appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO in 1992. It is the "focal point and coordinator within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage" (UNESCO 2017 n.D.-c). According to the Operational Guidelines, the main tasks of the Centre are the organization of meetings (General Assembly and Committee), implementation of resolutions of the Assembly and the Committee's decisions, managing nomination entries, coordinating the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible WHL and international assistance, periodic reporting, coordination of Reactive monitoring (for sites in danger), generating extra-budgetary resources, assisting implementation of the Committee's programmes and projects and promoting the Convention by providing information to states and the general public.

3.1.6 National and international responsibilities.

The levels of government that play a role in the protection and tourism related to World Heritage Sites differ by country and site. The approach depends on the "respective government's philosophy and involvement in tourism and conversation" (ICOMOS 1993, 3). Only the national government is obliged to adapt to the rules of the Convention concerning the protection and management of the World Heritage Sites. In case of a federal or non-unitary form of government, the organization within the member country can be different but the Convention ensures that solely the national government is the State Party and communication partner (Article 34). The obligations imposed on national government relate to authenticity and management, as well as

education and protection. The government is able to delegate tasks and responsibilities to other levels of government but only the national government is held accountable. This means that the national laws have to be executed to ensure that the requirements are met by lower levels of government (UNESCO will not reach out to other levels of government than the national level).

3.1.7 Tourism at World Heritage Sites and shortcomings of the WHL.

As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, an inscription in the WHL is often understood to go along with severe increase of visitor numbers and economic benefits although this assumption was at least challenged by the results of various studies (e.g. Poria et al. 2013; Williams 2005; Yan & Morrison 2005). However, according to ICOMOS, "being listed as a World Heritage Site enhances a property's attractiveness to tourists" and therefore it is essential "to ensure that nothing is done to prejudice the listing" (ICOMOS 1993, 4). ICOMOS stands for the International Council on Monuments and Sites and is an Advisory Body[8] to the World Heritage Committee. It is a non-governmental organisation (headquarters in Paris, France) founded in 1965 with the role to promote the application of conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage. Tasks and activities are developed from the International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter). The Council advises the implementation of the Convention with their expertise, assist the WHC and the development and implementation of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible WHL. Furthermore, it monitors the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and evaluate nominations for inscription (WHC 2016).

In its Site Manager's Handbook, ICOMOS states that tourism at World Heritage Sites is "a substantial income earner [which] can frequently assist with the conversation of World Heritage Sites [but] can also threaten their authenticity, preservation and proper management" (ICOMOS 1993, 4). It is recommended that national governments consider all requirements of the tourism infrastructure before nominating the site and whether it will impact the listing. The degree of authenticity and the level of site management will be described in the nomination and therefore changes for tourism should not negatively affect these factors. If the site is already on the WHL and

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[8] Together with ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

tourism is supposed to be introduced, the government is obliged to follow the requirements for authenticity and management of the World Heritage Convention. If heritage sites are threatened, action plans should be developed in order to avoid de-listing. Hunt (2012) states that tourism is simultaneously one of the purposes of the World Heritage Convention and a major threat for the World Heritage Sites. "Where UNESCO treads, the tourist bulldozer is sure to follow" (Wainwright 2015) was stated in an article in the British newspaper The Guardian and refers to the criticism that UNESCO accelerates the destruction that they seek to preserve. Speaking of the consumerism around World Heritage Sites, the New York Times quotes Francesco Bandarin, assistant director-general of UNESCO, saying that "consumption and preservation do not go together" and that "if a site is within an hour of a harbour, it becomes inundated by a flood of tourism" (Erlanger 2012). It shows that the organization is aware of the issue but according to Wainwright seems "more ineffectual than ever" (2015). For example, the Great Wall of China has been under high pressure due to tourist numbers and damaged sections have been rebuilt "in a Disneyfied incarnation of the original" (Wainwright 2015). Related to this, it is argued that UNESCO appears to be powerless considering destruction of sites for example in Syria and Iraq but "its impotence can also be felt closer to home" (Wainwright 2015). Eruptions of towers along London's South Bank due to steroidal plans triggered UNESCO to issue a warning and threaten to include the site to the endangered list. However, after intense lobbying, the decision was dropped and "priorities crumbled under the weight of bureaucracy and outside influence" (The Independent 2009). Only two sites have ever been removed from the WHL adding to the assumption that threats are not often backed by actions. In 2007, an Oryx conservation sanctuary in Oman was removed due to a 90% downsizing of the park by the government for oil production. 2009, the building of a bridge fundamentally changed the appearance of baroque palaces in the German city of Dresden and the city lost the UNESCO stamp. The removal from the WHL is UNESCO's ultimate sanction but also the inclusion into the list is under criticism. Although the Outstanding Universal Value has to be proven by meeting at least one of the 10 presented criteria, sites have been included that led to discussion also inside the organization. The closed Iwami Ginzan silver mine in Japan of which existence most people were unaware of, did fulfil at least three of the criteria in the opinion of Japanese tourist authorities. ICOMOS strongly disagreed stating that none of the criteria were met but the campaigning continued and the site

eventually was inscribed. This case adds to the risk of UNESCO being perceived as a "lame duck in a straitjacket" (The Independent 2009).

ICOMOS furthermore recommends that when a site is inscribed but threatened, also the country's citizens should take legal action against its government if breaches of the World Heritage Convention are recognized but also international action will be taken. The International Cultural Tourism Charter (1999) which was adopted by ICOMOS at the 12th General Assembly refers to the dynamic interaction between tourism and cultural heritage and states that "tourism should bring benefits to host communities and provide an important means and motivation for them to care and maintain their heritage and cultural practices" (ICOMOS 1999, 1). What is meant by this is described in the 2014 Florence Declaration on Heritage and Landscape as Human Values. For example, a community engagement in tourism can be fostered through entrepreneurship, cultural production or volunteer activities. Also, community traditions should be kept alive in order to maintain authenticity (ICOMOS 2014). The debate of communities in or around World Heritage Site is also addressed by Pedersen (2002) in his Practical Manual for World Heritage Site Managers. The author states that tourism may not attract sufficient visitation quickly enough to generate revenues that meet the economic expectations of the local community and therefore might be considered to be of no useful purpose. In this sense, it can be a burden for the locals when the economic benefits only reach other segments of the population such as airline companies, hotels and other foreign companies. Community involvement is not always made easy since studies have shown that start-up credits are difficult to get for members of the local communities and more often a certain training is needed before one can participate in tourism activities. Furthermore, seasonality implies a scattered distribution of tourists throughout the year and tends to create temporary employment. "Some cultures can adapt positively to external influences while other cannot" but tourism acceptance generally "depends greatly on the extent to which the attraction reflects the needs and desires of local people and their integration into the industry" (Pedersen 2002, 33-34). When an involvement in terms of tourism participation has been achieved, the possibility of "cultural commodification" arises which can mean that for example performances are made solely for the entertainment of the visitor without a strong connection to the community's traditions what leads to an "erosion of cultural practices" (Pedersen 2002, 34). Article 5 of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage clearly mentions that "a general policy which

aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes" (UNESCO 1972, 3) but Pedersen (2002) argues that economic development from tourism does not always translate into community participation and that only little relationship between tourism development and quality of life can be found.

However, to save community's traditions and to include the aspects of culture that are non-physical, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was introduced in 2003 which is linked to the World Heritage Convention by the subsequent Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2004). The 2003 Convention recognizes intangible aspects in culture and "advocates the consideration of [for example] oral traditions and expressions, including language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices" (Roders & Oers 2011, 7). The idea was broadly appreciated but simultaneously criticism was expressed that recognition is given to traditions "that might have little aesthetic value to any group except the one that practices it" (Erlanger 2012). Although 150 countries have joined the 2003 Convention, listing intangible heritage is referred to as being controversial and the United States for example have not become a State Party yet. Controversial because there is no broad agreement on a definition as the concept often is referred to as too vague and subjective. However, UNESCO defines it as "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" and states that it is "constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity" (UNESCO 2003, 2). The definition includes the aspect of change of heritage which is directly linked to the debate of authenticity and integrity of World Heritage listings. While those terms do not play a role in the Convention, the Operational Guidelines state that inscribed sites need to meet the conditions of authenticity which range besides others from form and design to use and function and sprit and feeling. The WHC itself explains that "attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of [a] place" (WHC 2015, 19). Integrity describes the "wholeness and intactness of […] heritage and its attributes"

(WHC 2015, 19) which refers not only to the expression of Outstanding Universal Value but also an adequate size which ensures a complete representation of required features. Due to the broad definitions given by the WHC, authenticity and integrity of a site has to be judged in its own cultural context (Alberts & Hazen 2010) and therefore it is difficult to assess when a place is authentic and integrated and difficulties increase when it has to be identified whether a site has lost its authenticity and integrity. It gets even more complex when one considers that tension between the two concepts exists "because measures that reconstruct appropriate contextual material" as it is demanded for integrity by the WHC "may compromise its authenticity" (Alberts & Hazen 2010, 62) since the WHC also states that in relation to authenticity that reconstructions are only justifiable in exceptional circumstances (WHC 2015). Borders and limits are not clearly defined and it depends on the site in question how the notions are applied and also whether a change in the tangible or intangible heritage also leads to a change or loss of authenticity and integrity.

Another final aspect of debates around World Heritage Sites that has been referred to in Chapter 2.2.3 and has to be mentioned again here is the expectation of visitors towards certain attributes at World Heritage Sites. Poria et al. (2003) argue that WHS designation promotes the image of a high management and service level since it also influences entrance fees and prices of lodging. Visitors equate the WHS status with a developed tourism service, sophisticated tourism infrastructure and safety measures. Those expectations are not always met and "if you go to a lot of World Heritage sites and ask for management plans with budgets and priorities, they don't exist" and not "even […] basic maps" (The Independent 2015) are provided. Hall and Piggins gained similar results for their study on World Heritage Sites in 22 OECD countries. What was especially striking is the fact that it is not self-evident that the Outstanding Universal Value which is the paramount feature of a UNESCO site is communicated to the visitor. "Less than half of the sites have specific areas for the explanation of the World Heritage Convention and why the sites were granted WHS" (Hall & Piggins 2001, 103).

The described aspects are only some of the issues that the World Heritage program is facing. "The Convention which attempted to create a machine for protection and preservation of the world's most important natural and cultural treasures, must begin the inquiry" and although the motives were noble, "the goals embedded in the text of

the Convention were not given room to thrive (Keough 2011, 600). Broad language and ambiguous interpretation allows for external influence when it come to the designation of sites, the allocation of funding and level of management and preservation. The power of the Convention has been questioned in various cases and not always cut a good figure. A revision as it has been done for the Operational Guidelines is a chance to develop the convention, adapt to current challenges and include measures for the supply as well as the demand side.

3.2 The Tourism Sector in Oman

Although the Sultanate of Oman "emerged as a new tourist destination" (Mershen 2007, 188) only in the mid-1990s, the government with its leader Sultan Qaboos ibn Said is "highly supportive of the tourism industry" (BMI 2016, 21) and sustainable development – which still is a very current topic with 2017 being declared the International Year of Sustainable Tourism by the UNWTO – in order to "diversify into other business areas" than oil and gas (Subramoniam, Al-Essai, Al- Marashadi & Al-Kindi 2010, 1). After 160 other countries, Oman wants to be a tourism destination and the outlook for the Omani tourism sector is widely regarded to as thoroughly positive (BMI 2016) with steadily increasing arrivals (WTTC 2016). What makes Oman different from already established tourism destinations such as the cities of Dubai or Abu Dhabi is that the Sultanate offers a variety of tourism products but especially a rich and unique cultural heritage. Due to the late opening of the Sultanate towards tourism and "the delayed advent of modernity", its entry "coincided with an increased concern for preserving the national heritage" (Mershen 2007, 192). Muhammad Ali Said, Director of Tourism in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce remarked that the government is "not out to sell Oman on her fine beaches but rather to attract visitors interested in our heritage history and archaeology" (Mershen 2007, 193).

3.2.1 Diversification of the economy and tourism statistics.

Tourism has been identified "as one of the key areas for generating alternate methods of generating income in Oman (Subramoniam et al. 2010, 1). The limited oil resources in Oman and the price drop down to less than 30 USD a barrel between June 2014 and 2016 reconfirmed this reform to be necessary as "long called for by international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF" (Cornock 2016).

Hereby, the strategy focuses on "high-end tourists or the niche market" (Subramoniam et al. 2010, 5) to increase revenue through without turning the country into a mass tourism destination. However, a diversification has already been targeted for a longer time and according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said stated that "the future of our coming generations resides […]in energetically utilizing our country's national resources" and that "Oman will be the best expression of the Arabian experience" within the GCC region being "a distinct, highly attractive quality tourist destination that showcases Oman's natural assets, culture, heritage and people, and delivers a highly competitive regional tourism experience. Oman will offer a diverse range of high quality tourism products throughout the country with facilities and services that provide desirable destinations and activities year-round" (Abdul-Ghani 2006, 74-75).

This strategy has paid off and Oman stands its ground despite its proximity to high-quality competition from the United Arab Emirates and does not lag in the initiative (Erikson & Erikson 2001). The Sultanate is considered top ten of the fastest growing destinations for leisure travel spending in the period from 2016 to 2026 what can also be traced back to being ranked 4th safest country (WEF 2017) in the world and enjoying peace and maintaining "strong relations with neighbours" (Business Today 2017), despite its proximity to a war-torn region. The World Economic Report 2017 additionally states that along with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Oman has "upgraded [the] cultural resources significantly more than the regional average" (WEF 2017, 17). Although Oman's tourism industry is still one of the smallest markets in the Middle East, visitor numbers are rising steadily which makes the country an attractive destination for investments (BMI 2017). Direct GDP contribution was 188mn USD (3.2%) and is forecasted to rise by 8.1% in 2017 (rise by 6% p.a. from 2017-2027) whereas total contribution was calculated to be 7.3% in 2016 with a forecasted rise of 8.1% for the current year (WEF 2017). According to the NCSI (n.D.), almost 1.4mn tourists arrived to Oman in 2016. This is an increase of 7.49% in comparison to the year before and an over 20% increase to the number of 2014. Accordingly, international tourism receipts are considered to develop positively and are calculated to be 2.19bn USD in 2017 and 2.9bn USD in 2021 which is an increase of 10.6% and 46.5% respectively compared to 2014 (BMI 2017).
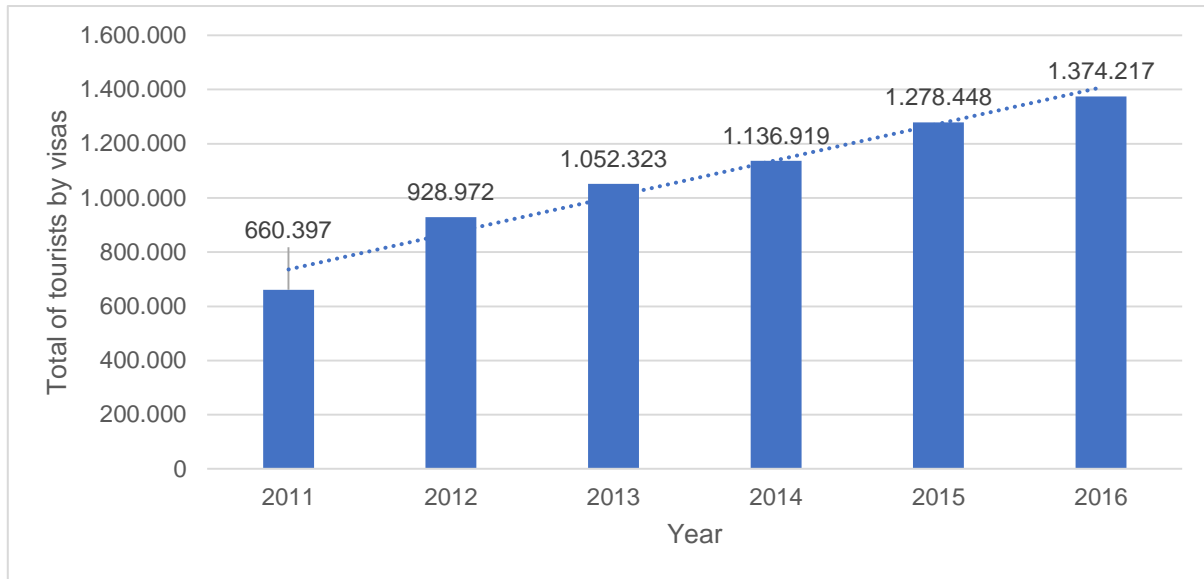
Figure 4. Development of total of tourists by visas from 2011-2016 (data taken from NCSI n.D.).

The largest group of inbound tourists are coming from the Gulf region, followed by other Arab states, Asians, Europeans, Americans, Africans and Oceania. Divided by months, although October to April is considered the tourist season in Oman, August (ca. 450,000) shows a peak in 2015 while June (ca. 120,000) has the lowest arrival numbers. Cruise ship visitors who arrive especially in the tourist season (almost no cruise ship arrivals from July to September) are included in these numbers (NCSI 2015). For January 2017, this travel type accounted for almost 18.5% of the total visitor arrival number. An indicator of the government's strategy to prevent mass tourism in the country is the number of 5-stars hotels that are established preferentially. While there were no hotels in the 1970s, several luxury hotels were opened in Muscat in the mid-1980s which were mainly supposed to have businessmen as guests. In 1987, also tourist groups and individual tourists were more and more accepted into the country and shortly before the turn of the millennium, "the number of hotels had almost doubled from 52 to 102" (Mershen 2007, 192) with many of the important brands of luxury hotels represented. According to BMI (2017, 6), with Hilton and InterContinental "a number of new hotels are set to open in Oman" in 2018 and 2019 but the development will also include "two three-star properties (Al Irfan International Hotel and Muttrah Corniche) which will expand the mid-range sector of the market".

3.2.2 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Business Monitor International conducted a SWOT-Analysis in the Oman Tourism Report for the second quarter of 2017. The strong governmental support for tourism and ambitious growth targets are highlighted as indicators of the country's willingness to develop the sector. Oman offers a variety of tourism products. In terms of natural attractions, different kinds of whales and dolphins and over 400 species of birds are to be found and natural reserves for species such as hyenas, leopards, desert foxes and antelopes have been established (Subramoniam et al. 2010). Although the United Nations Environmental Program declared Oman to be a country with one of the best records in environmental conversation (Font 2006), it was also the first country ever to have a Natural World Heritage removed from the UNESCO WHL. In 2007 Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary lost its status due to a 90% reduction of the protected area for hydrocarbon prospection. BMI furthermore states that Oman also offers "a wealth of historical [and] cultural sites" (BMI 2017, 7). Museums and forts can be found in the capital Muscat and the ancient capital of Oman, Nizwa, "is rich in historical and cultural highlights, and was selected as Capital of Islamic Culture in the Arab Region for 2015" (Oxford Business Group 2016). With the Oasis of Bahla, the Archaeological Sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al-Ayn, the Land of Frankincense and the Aflaj Irrigation Systems, the Sultanate currently has four cultural sites inscribed in the WHL. Also, MICE tourism is tapped with the opening of the Oman Convention Centre in Muscat. In terms of markets, other Gulf countries are believed to be a solid source, especially because of the moderate temperatures in the south of the country. Moreover, with the deep-sea port of Sohar, Oman is able to function as a cruise ship destination which complements the expansion and diversification of routes and airlines of the air travel industry. However, the latter is still considered a weakness of the Omani tourism sector since most carriers have their final destination in Dubai which makes Oman still heavily rely upon domestic tourism. The launch of Salam Air, a daughter-company of Oman Air, which so far operates between Muscat and Dubai and Muscat and Salalah, is ought to improve this situation. BMI generally considers the tourism industry in Oman as less well developed and promoted than some of the other Gulf destinations. Also, the lack of capacity in budget and middle-class hotels do not foster the development. Opportunities for the country are the new Muscat airport which has a capacity for 12mn passengers and is supposed to be opened at the end of the year, increasing cruise

ships arrivals and the attractiveness for large inbound markets such as India and Malaysia as an Islamic destination. The main threats for the Omani tourism industry are falling global oil prices which directly impact the budget for the sector and instability in the region. Moreover, BMI states that "any terrorist attacks stemming from Oman's friendly relations with the US would severely affect international tourism" (2017, 8). Other threats relate to the organization and management of tourism. For example, the responsibilities of ministries are not always clearly defined. "The MoT [Ministry of Tourism] is currently the regulator, policy maker and promoter, and there is discussion among stakeholders as to whether the latter function should be distributed more widely" (Oxford Business Group 2016).

In terms of destination management "gaps have been identified" when it comes to "continuity in visitor experience and tourist infrastructure throughout the country" (Oxford Business Group 2016). This also applies to cultural tourism which has mainly focused on restored forts, fortresses, archaeological sites and traditional markets (souqs). In this context, Mershen argues that "it should be mentioned that cultural and archaeological sites are not yet sufficiently managed and interpreted" (2000, 193). Furthermore, it is stated that many of Oman's attractions are not adequately accessible and are lacking infrastructure such as accommodation and dining facilities (Al-Shaybany 2001). As an example, Mershen refers to Misfat Al-Abriyin, a mountain village that has become a tourist attraction due to its authenticity and describes that tourists would "leave the village without having been able to spend money even on a cup of tea, because of the entire lack of tourist facilities" (2000, 197). At the same time, tourists would frequently cause disturbance to the locals because no guidance is provided. Although these statements have been made regarding an earlier stage of Oman tourism, the results of the at-hand study presented in Chapter 5 indicate that they cannot yet be considered fundamentally outdated. Another challenge for the future that can have severe impact on the success of the Omani tourism industry but is being tackled currently is attractiveness of the sector for young people seeking to start a career. Cornock (2016) describes that numbers of Omanis who are attracted to the industry are rising but traditionally in the young people's perception it is not a field of work that promises job security and strong career chances. Bontenbai and Aziz discovered that students of the Oman Tourism College "expected to find a job easily, and believed they would be able to earn a decent salary, and have opportunities for an internationally oriented career" but at the same time for half of the respondents, tourism

was not the first choice for higher education and job preferences were concentrated on the airline industry compared to the accommodation or food and beverages businesses which are "particularly in need of Omanisation[9]" (2013, 241). Additionally, results of the survey showed that 25% of graduates from 2004 to 2010 ended up working in the tourism sector. However, "efforts to change these negative perceptions are now underway" (Cornock 2016) and the Ministry of Tourism is promoting the sector and universities and colleges are being encouraged to offer the appropriate education.

Table 2
SWOT Analysis of the tourism sector of Oman (modified from BMI 2017)

SWOT Element	Item
Strengths	- governmental support for tourism - large variety of tourism products - other Gulf countries are a solid source of tourists - able to accommodate cruise ships
Weaknesses	- strong competition from the UAE - only few direct air connections - lack of mid-scale hotels - market still depends highly on domestic tourism
Opportunities	- new Muscat airport with higher capacity - strong cruise ship arrivals - India and Malaysia with strong inbound tourism potential - New tourism projects in development
Threats	- economic and political uncertainty - terrorist attacks which would harm friendly political relations regional political and security instability - falling global oil prices

3.2.3 Oman Tourism Strategy 2040.

To foster the development of the entire tourism sector and diversify GDP contribution, the Oman Tourism Strategy 2040 which runs from 2015 to 2040 has been launched under the Ministry of Tourism's planning mandate together with the Spanish

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[9] Effort of the government to increase the share of Omani employees compared to international labour force

consultancy firm THR Innovative Tourism Advisors. The goals are to make the Sultanate a top of mind destination for vacations and meetings, attracting more than five million international tourists which would mean an increase of around 260% compared to the tourist arrival number for 2016[10]. According to THR and the Ministry of Tourism, the three guiding principles hereby are implemented to improve the quality of life of the people of Oman while also benefiting the other stakeholders. Cultivating the Omani culture, heritage and traditions and preserving the natural resources and ensure its sustainability. Through smart growth by targeting fewer premium visitors who spend more time and money for greater benefit with fewer negative impacts on culture and environment and by concentrating on Oman's competitive advantages which is the authentic Arabian experience, tourism is ought to become the main economic driver and provide more than 500,000 jobs and increase the number of local economies and SME's from 99 in 2015 to 1,200 in 2040. Part of the authentic Arabian experience are also the heritage sites of the Sultanate. The UNESCO sites are mentioned as "main tangible […] assets" and the cultivation of them is also part of the guiding principles. The lack of management and interpretation "in most locations of interest, even those classified as UNESCO World Heritage sites" (THR 2016, 31 & 61) is referred to as a current issue that can result in a loss of attractiveness of the destination if not addressed. One approach is to include these sites into clusters to consequently tackle the lack of tourism infrastructure.

The Sultanate of Oman has high potential to achieve its ambitious goals for the tourism sector. If a balance between "what makes Oman special and generating a bigger contribution to GDP through diversification" (Oxford Business Group 2016) is obtained and a careful planning and thoughtful rollout process managed, the destination is fit to compete in the region and might even stand out through its competitive advantages which still need to be further developed and promoted.

3.3   UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman

The Sultanate of Oman accepted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage on Tuesday 6th of October 1981. As mentioned before, four cultural sites are inscribed in the WHL after the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary

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[10] 1.374.217 according to NCSI (n.D); cf Chapter 3.2

(former World Natural Heritage Site) lost its status in 2007. For the purpose of this study, two of the sites have been chosen due to their level of touristic development[11]. The Archaeological Sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al-Ayn and Aflaj Irrigation Systems of Oman are also sites of OUV but are not under management for touristic purposes yet although it is possible to visit them.

Several public bodies oversee culture and heritage in Oman. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage (MOHC) is involved in the restoration and preservation of forts, castles such as Bahla Fort and other buildings falling into the heritage category. Furthermore, archaeological excavations and museums are part of the portfolio of the MOHC. Although archaeological discoveries are an important part of the Land of Frankincense UNESCO site, it is included in the scope of the office of Advisor to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs which "is developing several archaeological sites and providing them with utilities to serve the goals of cultural and archaeological tourism" (Times of Oman 2016). Besides other authorities involved in heritage in Oman (e.g. the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources for the Aflaj system UNESCO site), the Ministry of Tourism's (MOT) task is to develop the sites for tourism. The MOT becomes in charge of the sites as soon as the MOHC considers the restorations complete. Before this process is initiated, the UNESCO sites are not organized in a way to attract visitors. Land of Frankincense does not suffer from the bureaucracy due to their belonging to another ministry but at the Oasis of Bahla which has not been transferred to the MOT yet, the consequences of the process become visible.

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[11] cf. Chapter 4

Figure 5. Location of Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense UNESCO sites (modified from World Atlas n.D.).

3.3.1 Oasis of Bahla.

After 20 years of restoration, Bahla Fort which is located in the Al Dakhiliya region opened its gates to the public in 2012. Due to its poor condition during this period and discussion on how the work was done, it was moved to the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger in 1988, only one year after the Oasis of Bahla of which the fort is part was awarded the World Heritage status. After consultation with experts from UNESCO and a management plan "for the Bahla Fort and Oasis settlement in Oman to protect the area from further degradation" (Atkins n.D.) developed by Atkins consultancy firm, the site regained its former status in 2004.

The Oasis of Bahla includes Bahla Fort with the adjacent Friday Mosque but also the surrounding mud-brick settlement and palm grove. According to UNESCO (n.D.-a), the oasis owes its prosperity to the Banu Nebhan tribe which was the

dominant group in the area from 12th to end of the 15th century. The Bahla Fort is a significant example for the technique of using unbaked bricks and stone foundations and emphasizes the power of the tribe at that time who dominated the central Omani region and made Bahla their capital. The fort consists of an extensive wall with multiple watchtowers and gateways which make it a labyrinth of mud brick dwellings. Parts of the Aflaj Irrigation System which also is inscribed in the WHL as a separate site was used to manage the watering of the oasis. Furthermore, the souq (traditional market) which was located within easy surveillance from the fort was is included in the UNESCO site. "The Bahla Fort and oasis settlement with its perimeter fortification are an outstanding example of a type of defensive architectural ensemble that enabled dominant tribes to achieve prosperity in Oman and the Arabian Peninsula during the late medieval period" (UNESCO n.D.-a) which fulfills criteria iv[12] and makes it of Outstanding Universal Value. In terms of integrity, UNESCO stated that Bahla Fort together with the Friday mosque is inseparable from the whole oasis settlement. Only together they can be considered a complete historic walled complex. The mostly earthen structure is vulnerable to outside effects and modern restoration techniques would harm the authenticity. Fortunately, form, design and materials that are important for the Outstanding Universal Value have retained the authenticity which was on the line between 1988 and 2004. Rainy seasons out the mud brick foundations at risk and consolidation works were partly carried out with inappropriate material in the early 1990s. In 1995, staff training increased knowledge and awareness which led to a strong improvement of the situation and the maintaining of authenticity. However, UNESCO (n.D.-a) states that Bahla "remains a thriving settlement [and] authenticity is vulnerable to the abandonment of traditional vernacular houses" and a change in construction material and method related to the souq can decrease the overall authenticity. The Omani Law for National Heritage Protection (1980) protects the oasis which is controlled by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in Muscat. The current management plan includes conservation of the mosque and gateways as well as developing guidelines for rehabilitation of various parts of the fort. Furthermore, the electrification of the fort and installation of an on-site museum is regulated in the plan.

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[12] Outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape

Figure 6. Oasis of Bahla (Bahla Fort) 2017.

Visitor numbers to the Oasis of Bahla are registered and divided in multiple categories. Presented in Figure 7 are the number of tourists, number of Omanis visiting the site and the total number which also includes students, official delegations and visitors younger than 12[13]. The months with the highest number of visitors are January (3,467) and December (3,479) whereas June (195), July (854) and July (805) show the fewest visitors. This indicates that seasonality for the Oasis of Bahla is very strong and that the site normally is not part of travel plans in summer months.

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[13] cf. Appendix 6
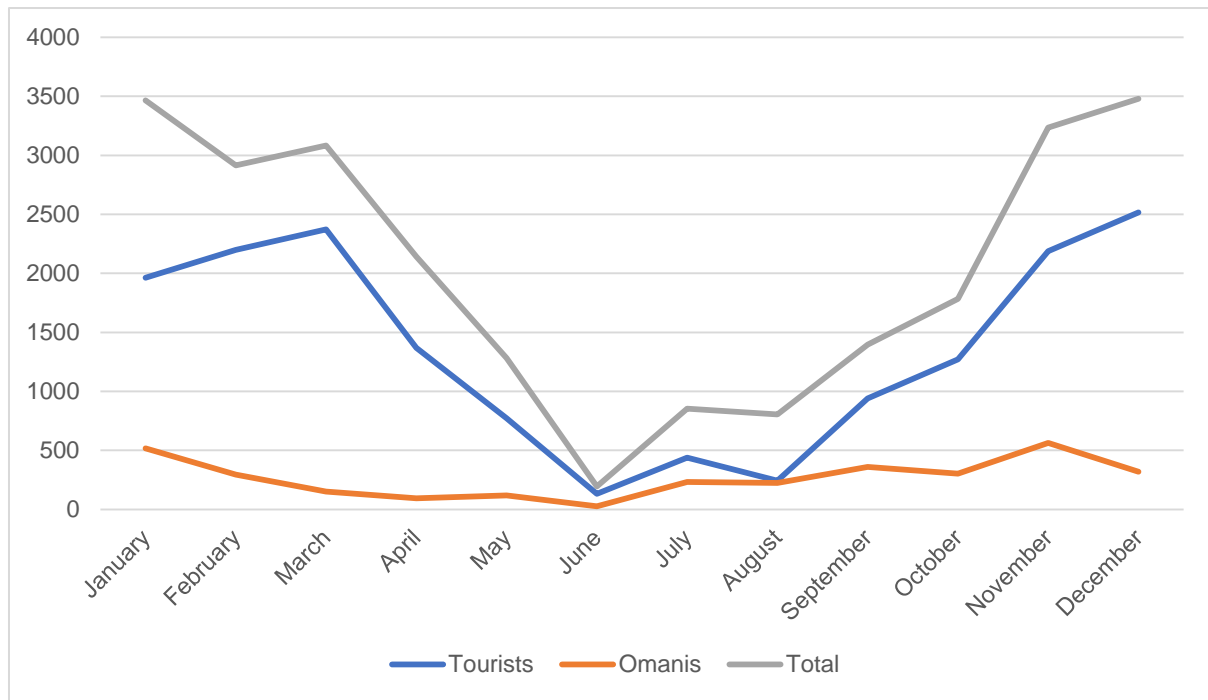
Figure 7. Visitor numbers to the Oasis of Bahla for 2016 (provided by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture).

In comparison to other larger tourist attractions in a radius of 200km and taking into account visitor numbers in 2016 (except for Al-Hoota cave where the last accessible total number of the year is 2012), the Oasis of Bahla has not received the same attention by visitors yet. Al-Hoota cave is around 20km from Bahla and received a similar number of visitors whereas Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar which is part of the Al Hajar Mountains was reached by times 6.5 more visitors. The visitor numbers of Bahla are accountable for around 8.7% of the total number for forts and castles of the Sultanate.
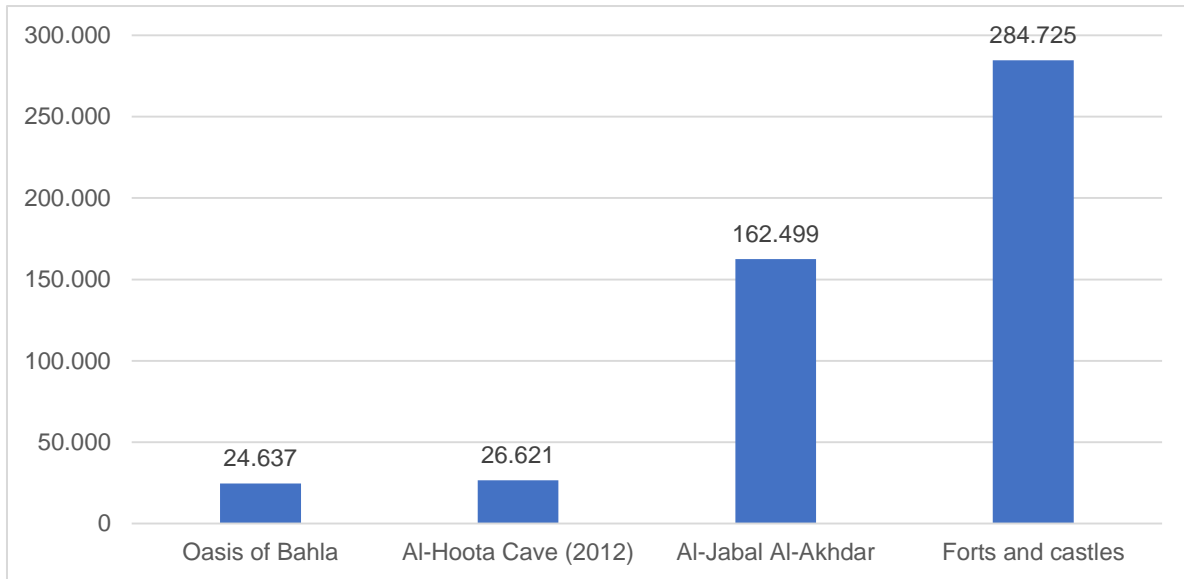
Figure 8. Comparison of visitor numbers between major attractions for 2016 (provided by the Ministry of Tourism).

3.3.1.1 Assessment of site attributes.

In order to give insight on the current situation at the UNESCO site of the Oasis of Bahla, a brief site assessment has been conducted which refers to the dimensions of the questionnaire which has been handed out to the visitors on-site[14]. The assessment has been done by the author in March 2017.

Other employees apart from the cashier at the entrance who greets visitors and issues the tickets (0.5 OMR[15] for adults and 0.2 OMR for children) and the cleaning staff employees are not at the site. Souvenir shop, restaurant or visitor center are not available but resting areas and public toilets in good condition are provided. Two rooms are labeled but signposting or indications of directions are lacking. The entire site is very well maintained and clean. For visitors who do not suffer from disabilities it is fairly easy to move around the site although its size and many stairs can be tiring. In terms of accessibility, the site is easily recognizable from the main road although signage is kept to a minimum. Roads leading to the site are in appropriate condition and a large car park is provided. To inform the visitor about the history of the site, a room has been equipped with information panels about the Friday Mosque. Apart from a Din-A-4 page stating information in Arabic or English which is handed out to only a few visitors, this

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[14] cf. Chapter 4.1.2
[15] 1OMR equals USD2.6 or EUR2.32 (May 29th 2017)

is the only form of interpretation that can be found. Visitors are free to bring their own guides but they cannot be spontaneously employed on the site. Also, online information is not provided apart from a short text authored by the official tourism webpage of Oman.

3.3.2 Land of Frankincense.

The World Heritage Site that was inscribed in the WHL as Land of Frankincense in the year 2000 is located in the Dhofar region and consists of four components. Together they are a testimony of the civilizations of south Arabia and the trade of frankincense which is considered to be one of the most important luxury items in antiquity transported and sold from the Mediterranean and Read sea regions to Mesopotamia, India and China.

Khor Rori, in operation between the 4th and 5th century B.C. and Al-Baleed (between 8th and 16th century AD) are the names for the two successive ports which form together with an outpost close to the Great Desert Rub Al Khali under the name of Shisr and the frankincense trees of Wadi Dawka the unique way of distribution of frankincense. The port of Khor Rori which has also been referred to as the Moscha Limen is located 40km to the east of Salalah in short distance to a "khor", a sweet-water outlet. Remains of a fortress are still evident and are part of the antique defense system. According to inscriptions, Khor Rori was refounded in the 1st century and used to control the Dhofar incense trade. According to UNESCO Al-Baleed, a harbor and eponym for the town gained importance as a trading hub (e.g. products of the Ming dynasty in exchange for frankincense) along the "Silk Road to the Sea" was partially destroyed in the 13th century and "radical changes to trading patterns imposed by Portuguese and other European trading nations sealed the fate of the town" (n.D.-b). The agricultural oasis and caravan site Shisr lies about 180km north of Salalah and was a station for water supply between the ports and the hinterlands from where the frankincense was brought. From the frankincense trees of Wadi Dawkah frankincense is still harvested today and represents the fourth part of the frankincense trail and the World Heritage Site.

Figure 9. Images taken from Land of Frankincense 2017.

"The Land of Frankincense sites include all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal value" (UNESCO n.d.-b). Criterion iii[16] is complied with through importance of the frankincense trade in the antiquity and the Oasis if Shisr as well as Khor Rori and Al-Baleed are significant examples medieval fortified settlements which fulfills requirements of criterion iv[17]. Furthermore, the size of the sites is sufficient and represent all features which are important to indicate significance. Attributes are in good condition and functions are fully maintained. Development has not affected the properties no threats are observed by UNESCO due to its appropriate protection by the government with the Royal Decree No. 6/80 and Royal Decree No. 16/2001. Additionally, buffer zones and fencing requirements have been respected. These factors together with the fact that the archaeological sites had no inhabitants in centuries lead to the conclusion that "the authenticity of the property is not open to questions" (UNESCO n.D.-b). A management plan is in place which has led to further

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[16] Bear unique or at last exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization
[17] Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape

protection of the sites against interventions by visitors for example by access paths that have introduced. A visitor interpretation center is available in Khor Rori and Al-Baleed respectively to manage the number of visitors and give historical information. A similar facility is currently planned for the Oasis of Shisr which is part of the strategy "to inform regional, interregional and international visitors about the rich tradition of the Land of Frankincense" (UNESCO n.D.-b).

Figure 10 illustrates the visitor numbers to the archaeological park and the Land of Frankincense since the official opening of the museum on July 23, 2007 until the end of 2016. With a minor drop in 2010, numbers have been increasing steadily with a rise of over 330% between 2007 and 2016 and an average progression of 20%.
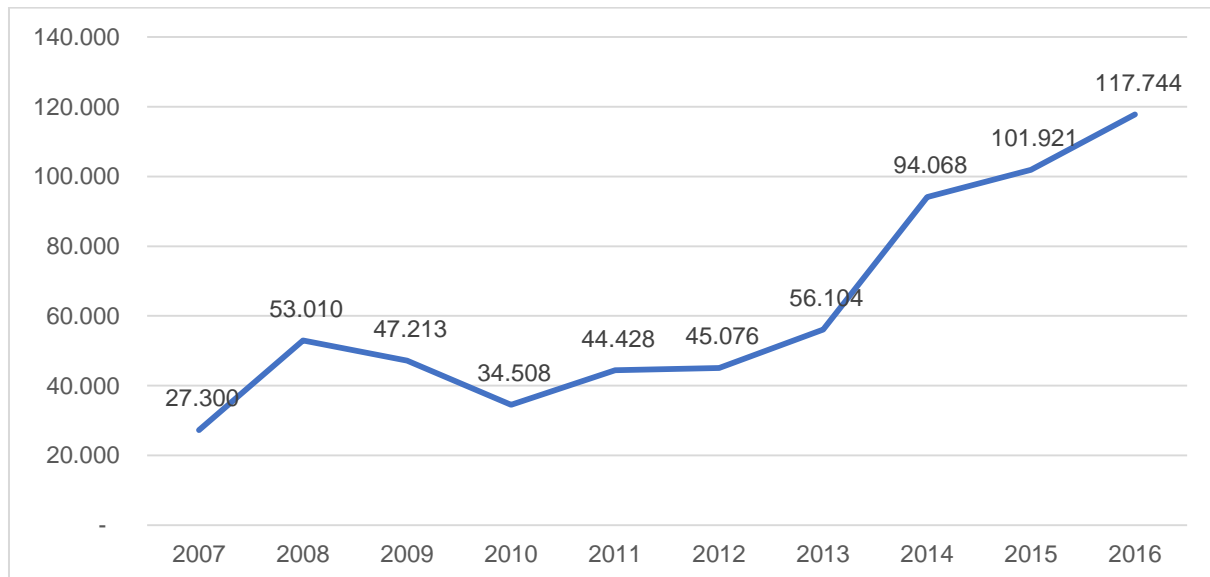
Figure 10. Visitor numbers to the Land of Frankincense 2007-2016 (provided by the Office of His Majesty the Sultan's Advisor for Cultural Affairs).

3.3.2.1 *Assessment of site attributes.*

Also for the Land of Frankincense a site assessment has been conducted with the same pattern as for the Oasis of Bahla. Also, here the assessment of site attributes has been done in March 2017. It must be acknowledged that due to organizational reasons the assessment as well as the entire survey have been conducted at the archaeological site of Al-Baleed and the associated museum. This means that the observations stated in the following refer only to this part of the UNESCO World

Heritage site. However, the official name "Land of Frankincense" that was registered as WHS will be used.

Land of Frankincense is easily accessible due to well-maintained roads although signage is just sufficient. Private cars can be parked in front of the site with the request of a fee. The site provides a small shop for food and beverages and also offers souvenirs to the visitors. Rest areas are available as well as public toilets. The on-site museum which is split into a maritime hall and an exhibition about the history of Oman is the main visitor center. Although a great number of directions is not given, it is easy to get an overview to see all parts of the place. Besides staff in charge of the selling tickets, running the souvenir and snack shops, cleaning and security, at least one employee is available who provides information. The museum part of the site is easy accessible by walking and for an extra fee, the archaeological part can be accessed with an electronic cart which is operated by a staff member. However, it is also possible to walk along the ruins if the visitor prefers. While online information sources do not present a multitude of information, the museum provides the main part of the interpretation with displays describing the exhibits in Arabic and English language and short movies presented on-demand. Also in various spots around the archaeological site of Al-Baleed, information panels can be found. At the time the observations were made, brochures were only available in Arabic with the information that brochures in multiple languages will provided soon. Similar to the Oasis of Bahla, tourist guides were employed by visitors or the travel agency in charge. On-site, neither audio nor tourist guides are available.

3.3.3 Comparison of visitor numbers at Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense.

In 2016, a total of 117,744 visitors arrived at the Land of Frankincense which is almost four times the number for the Oasis of Bahla.
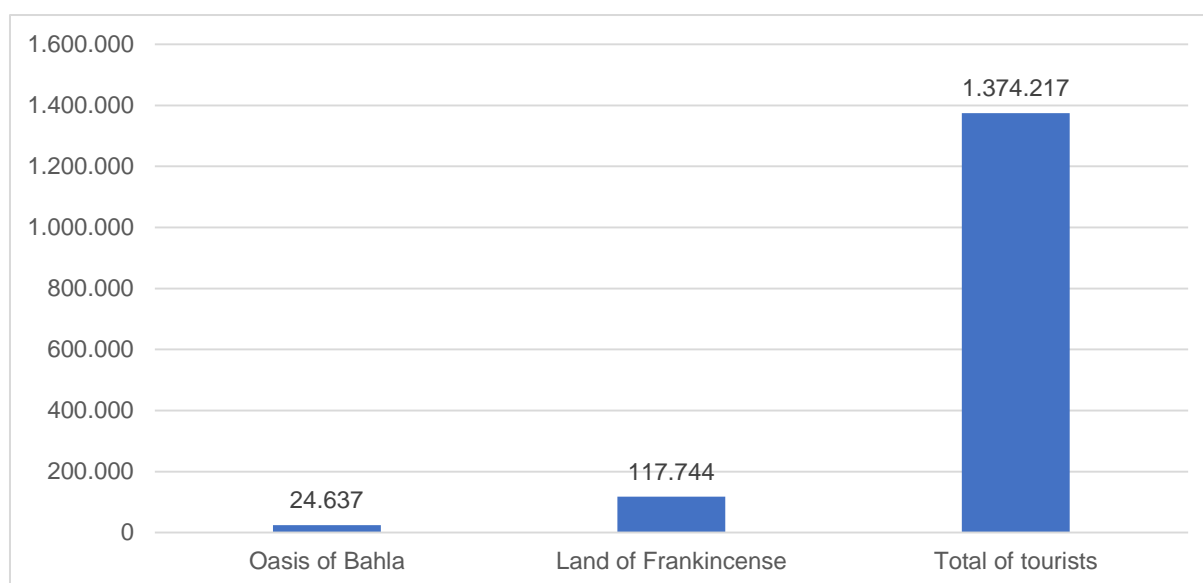
Figure 11. Comparison between visitor numbers to the Oasis of Bahla, Land of Frankincense and total of tourists to Oman by visas (2016).

Related to the total arrivals to the Sultanate of Oman, the Oasis of Bahla has received around 2% and the Land of Frankincense slightly over 8.5% of visitors.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the study area and the sample of the survey, as well as the material used and procedures followed. Due to the fact that two different methods have been utilized[18], the methodology chapter will first refer to the survey conducted and as a second part explain the use of content analysis in this study.

4.1 Part one: Survey

In order to achieve the objective of gaining information on visitor satisfaction at UNESCO sites in Oman, data have been gathered through the distribution of questionnaires. Results have been analysed to test and confirm or disconfirm previous hypotheses.

4.1.1 Study area and sample.

The heritage sites chosen for the conduction of the cross-sectional study had to fulfil three main criteria: (i) to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, (ii) made accessible to the general public with clear entrances and exits and therefore open for tourism and (iii) be under management what implies that employees are on-site which was crucial for the distribution of the questionnaires. Four UNESCO sites exist in the Sultanate of Oman but only two of them met all requirements: the Oasis of Bahla in the Nizwa region, approximately 200 kilometres from the capital Muscat and the Land of Frankincense, a UNESCO site located in the south of the country in Salalah (Dhofar province). Here, the study has been conducted at the archaeological site of Al-Baleed with the associated on-site museum[19]. Al-Baleed has been considered the best option to reach as many visitors as possible due to the fact that a clear entrance and exit exist and a large number of tourist groups will visit this place. However, for the purpose of the study, the official name Land of Frankincense has been used which includes also the other sites as described in Chapter 3.3.2. Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense

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[18] Questionnaire survey and content analysis
[19] Although the Land of Frankincense UNESCO sites include multiple sites (cf. Chapter 3.3.2)

qualified as study objects since they were awarded the UNESCO label and are managed as a touristic attraction[20].

Since the aim of the study was to measure visitor satisfaction at Omani UNESCO sites, the target population was not restricted to tourists but included Omani residents as well. The recruitment of voluntary participants of this target group was carried out randomly, hence a convenience sample was gathered without a designation of visitors to certain groups (e.g. test group). The participants were informed that the survey was anonymous and results would be used for research purposes only. Respondents had to be at least 18 years of age and no incentive, apart from the academic contribution that was supported by the visitor's participation and a GUtech pen, was given. In total, 118 female and 132 male participants were counted with 36.4% younger than 35 years and 63.6% 35 years and older. More than 90% (90.4%) were international tourists in comparison to about 10% (9.6%) Omani residents.

4.1.2 Material.

To test the hypotheses derived from the literature review, a questionnaire was developed from reviewed literature with similar research goals[21]. The questionnaire consists of five main sections (in accordance with the hypothesized research model[22]). These sections include general 'Demographic information', 'Travel pattern and further information', 'Experience Quality', 'Satisfaction' and 'Behavioural Intention'. The latter three sections ('Experience Quality', 'Satisfaction' and 'Behavioural Intention') are the variables used in the study. Each section is divided into a different number of items (for the demographical and travel pattern sections) or attributes, whereas Experience Quality is divided into four dimensions ('Facilities and employees', 'Physical appearance and maintenance', 'Accessibility', 'Interpretation') which then include further attributes. The division and the literature from which questions were taken from is summarized in Table 3. To ensure validity and reliability, sections, items and attributes were generated in accordance with the reviewed literature and adapted for the purpose of this study. A 5-point Likert-scale was applied for the study which has widely been used in similar research on customer and visitor satisfaction (e.g. Vareiro

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[20] cf. Chapter 3.3
[21] cf. Appendices 3 & 4
[22] cf. Chapter 2.3.5

et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2015; Palau-Saumell et al. 2015; Trinh & Ryan 2013; De Rojas & Camarero 2008) and ranged from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*. Here, the option *Not applicable* was given and explained to be chosen if the assessed attribute has not been encountered or was simply not existent on-site. Furthermore, the translation and back-translation process (Brislin 1970) has been used by the author (native German-speaker) in order to provide an English and German version of the questionnaire and ensure consistency. An introductory text explaining the purpose of the study and stating the handling of data with high confidentiality could be found on top of the questionnaire.

4.1.2.1 *Demographics and travel pattern.*

According to Timothy and Boyd "three of the most common ways that managers and marketers divide the market for their products and services are based on their demographic, geographic and psychographic characteristics" (2003, 64). This knowledge helps to determine people's desires and needs. In terms of demographic and geographic characteristics, questions referring to age, gender, level of education and the distance that had been travelled to reach the site (tourist or resident) support this intention. Accordingly, these items have been included in the questionnaire of this study. Furthermore, Timothy and Boyd (2003) state that it is helpful for managers to understand previous and current travel patterns and behaviour which led to an inclusion of several items asking about travel characteristics of the visitor. The number of visits to the country, type of travel and source of information were assessed to gain more information on the visitor to the UNESCO sites. Another question of the questionnaire had the purpose to identify how well the heritage site is advertised and where visitors became aware of its existence. This item allowed multiple responses. Due to the ambition to assess the significance of the UNESCO designation, items that specifically focus on the impact of the UNESCO label and the visitor's experience with the site have been included. If the visitor had been to other UNESCO sites before was asked to find out about his or her experience and to test whether this has an effect on the overall satisfaction. To identify whether the UNESCO label was the main reason for the visit had a similar purpose since it was ought to show if visitors expect a certain quality of the site and therefore might be less satisfied than others. Additionally, visitors whose main reason to visit was the World Heritage designation were asked to give a short statement about the reason of its listing. This was done to assess whether the

visitors who are aware that the site is included on the WHL also know the reason for it (the OUV). To gain information on the economic impact of opening the sites to the public, visitors were asked to state how much money they spent on-site and which items were purchased. Furthermore, the duration of their visit was assessed.

The last item of the travel pattern section ("In comparison with what I expected from this visit, my experience has been"[23]) functioned as a reinsurance that the most appropriate theoretical model had been used. As discussed in Chapter 2.3.1, consensus on the right measurement of satisfaction has not been reached among researchers. Due to the described issues that occur with testing experiences (Tse & Wilton 1988), it was decided to rely on the experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention model without including the pre-visit expectations of the visitors. However, the visitor was asked to compare the experience with his or her expectations before the trip to identify whether a significant relationship exists and if expectations should be included in future studies. For this item, a 5-point Likert-scale referring to expectation measurement (Oliver 1980) was employed which ranged from *Much worse* to *Much better* but also left the option of stating that one had no expectation before (*Don't know*). Apart from the mentioned items that required further explanation, all items included options that were supposed to be chosen by the respondent so that no writing was necessary. In two cases, the choice *Other* was given to take into account that the visitors answer does not fit any of the given options.

4.1.2.2 Sections, dimensions and attributes.

Participants of the study were asked to evaluate their experience at the World Heritage Site based on a pool of 20 destination attributes. As mentioned before, these attributes were clustered into four dimensions which were not stated on the questionnaire but used for the purpose of analysis. As described by Timothy and Boyd (2003), facilities (e.g. toilets, visitor center etc.) play a major role in tourism and hence were included for the survey. Furthermore, the visitor was asked to state his or her level of agreement with statements referring to the contact with the employees and the local community. Cleanliness, safety and entertainment factor for children were part of the second dimensions while the third evaluated the experience of travelling to the site. Both dimensions have been considered important by several authors (e.g. Ramires

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[23] cf. Table 3

2016; Jusoh et al. 2013) and therefore were added to this study. The fourth dimension which was included for the evaluation of the experience quality targeted the perception of visitors regarding the provided information and interpretation at the site. The importance of these items for satisfaction have been highlighted in previous literature (e.g. De Rojas & Camarero 2008; Lee, Petrick & Crompton 2007) and thus, visitors were asked to evaluate the quality of information panels, brochures and guides. The fifth item of the dimension *Interpretation* was included to identify whether the visitor has learned why the heritage sites is considered to be of universal cultural value. The evaluation of this question ought to shed light on the emphasis that is put on explaining for which reasons the site was awarded the UNESCO label.

The fourth section (*Satisfaction*) aimed at assessing the visitors' satisfaction with their visit to the World Heritage Site. Items referred to satisfaction with provided information, service, the management's effort to make the site interesting and enjoyable and a concluding evaluation of overall satisfaction. After *Experience Quality* this section represented the second part of the theoretical model of this study. As the last section of the questionnaire and third part of the model, *Behavioural Intention* of the visitors was surveyed. Instead of the intention to return to the site, the items asked referred to the intention to recommend and visit other UNESCO sites in Oman based on the experience made. In These items have been proven to be better indicators for future behaviour in the tourism context (McIntosh 2004; Moscardo & Pearce 1999; Prentice 1993). At last, visitors should state their willingness to pay a higher entrance fee to enter the site as it has been done in previous studies (e.g. Chen & Tsai 2007; Oppermann 2000). This item was included to provide basic information for future calculation of prices. The last request for the visitor was to state further comments or suggestions in relation to their visit to the site. This data was used for the content analysis referred to in Chapter 5.2.

Table 3
List of references for Variables/Dimensions and Items/Attributes used in the questionnaire

Variable/Dimension	Item/Attribute	References
Travel pattern and further Information	If you are a tourist, how often have you visited the Sultanate of Oman (including the current visit)?	Wang et al. 2015
	What is the nature of your trip?	Wang et al. 2015
	How did you find out about this UNESCO site (multiple answers possible)?	Palau-Saumell et al. 2013
	Your main reason for visiting this site is the fact that it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site	Palau-Saumell et al. 2013
	The duration of my visit to this UNESCO site was	Palau-Saumell et al. 2013
	During my visit to this UNESCO site I have spent money on (multiple answers possible)	Ashworth & Johnson 1996
	Have you visited other UNESCO World Heritage Sites before?	Palau-Saumell et al. 2013
	In comparison with what I expected from this visit, my experience has been	De Rojas & Camarero 2008

Experience Quality

Facilities and employees	Toilets were clean and properly marked on site	Aksu et al. 2010
	The souvenir shop offered good quality arts and crafts of Oman	Aksu et al. 2010
	Good quality restaurants were available on site	Huh et al. 2006
	The visitor center was informative	Huh et al. 2006
	There were sufficient rest areas available on site	Chen & Chen 2010
	Signposting and directions inside the site were helpful	Palau-Saumell et al. 2013
	Employees were helpful and available when needed	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
	Employees were knowledgeable about the site	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
	I had the chance to engage with members of the local community	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
Physical appearance and maintenance	This site was clean and litter free	Ramires 2016; Aksu et al. 2010
	This site had good safety measures	Aksu et al. 2010
	It was easy to move around the site	Huh et al. 2006

	This site was interesting for children and young adults	Frost & Laing 2016
Accessibility	Roads leading to the site were in good condition	Ramires 2016; Jusoh et al. 2013; Aksu et al. 2010
	It was easy to find the site from the main road	Aksu et al. 2010; Jusoh et al. 2013
Interpretation	Information panels were well-placed, easy and interesting to read	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
	Brochures were available, well-designed and informative	Kozak & Rimmington 2010
	Audio guides were of high quality and informative	Huh, Uysal & McCleary 2006
	Tourist guides were well-informed and engaging	Huh, Uysal & McCleary 2006
	I was informed about the universal and cultural value of this UNESCO site	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
Satisfaction	I was satisfied with the information provided at this UNESCO site	Aksu et al. 2010
	I was satisfied with the services I received at this UNESCO site	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
	I was satisfied with the management's effort to make this UNESCO site entertaining and enjoyable	Remoaldo et al. 2014

	I am overall satisfied with the visit to this UNESCO site	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
Behavioural Intention	I would recommend other people to visit this UNESCO site	De Rojas & Camarero 2008
	I would be willing to pay more to enter this UNESCO site	Baker & Crompton 2000
	Based on my visit here, I will visit other UNESCO sites in Oman	McKercher 2002

In terms of software, IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used for analysis. Statistical tools that were used are descriptive analysis, descriptive statistics, differential analysis, correlation analysis and cross tabulation.

4.1.3 Procedure.

The author of the study has been a guest student at the German University of Technology in Muscat (Sultanate of Oman) in the period of February to May 2017. Members of this research facility helped to ensure the comprehensibility of statements and questions in connection to the provided answer options, a pilot-test was conducted from February 27th 2017 to March 2nd 2017 with 16 participants acquired from the German University of Technology (GUtech) in Muscat, Oman. Lack of clarity and ambiguities were resolved and suggestions included in the revision of the questionnaire.

The data was collected over a four-week period from March 5th 2017 to April 2nd 2017 in Oasis of Bahla and March 14th 2017 to April 11th 2017 for Land of Frankincense. Those dates were chosen due to the period the author was present in the country and despite the fact that the touristic season was coming to an end, enough participants were expected to be found. For both sites in total, 350 questionnaires[24] were prepared and distributed. 250 were filled in adequately and considered valid

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[24] On Din-A4 paper together with a pen that the visitor could keep

(N=250), 17 could not be used due to incompletion (5%) and 83 were not handed in again or visitors refused to participate (24%), response rate: 71%[25]).

60% of the valid questionnaires (N_a=150) were completed in Oasis of Bahla and 40% (N_b=100) for Land of Frankincense. In Bahla, the questionnaires were distributed to the visitors during regular opening hours and by the cashier after their visit[26]. A soon as an individual or a tourist group finished their visit, they were asked if a participation in the survey would be possible. Here, on the first day the author was present to hand out questionnaires personally, observe the location and get in touch with the visitors and speak to the management of the site.

In Land of Frankincense, the same process was planned but due to certain difficulties, the author was present during the last three days of the survey and actively recruiting participants. The majority of questionnaires were filled in during this period of time hence the data collection period in Land of Frankincense was considerably reduced to the period from April 9th 2017 to April 11th 2017[27]. This procedure explains the differences in sample size between the two sites. Again, visitors were asked to participate after their visit. Specific instructions were not given to the respondents since they were stated on the questionnaire. However, in some cases it was explained that the option *Not applicable* should be used if he or she is not able to respond to the question or statement. Time to fill in the questionnaire ranged between 5 and 10 minutes and respondents were free to choose where to complete it. After the distribution period, the author collected the questionnaires from Oasis of Bahla World Heritage site or taken back to the research facility from Land of Frankincense respectively.

4.1.3.1 *Statistical data analysis.*

The analysis of the data and testing of hypotheses was done with IBM SPSS and with the support of an experienced researcher from the tourism and logistics department of the German University of Technology in Muscat. All items and attributes were coded and filled into the SPSS worksheet. A column for *Place* was added to differentiate between the UNESCO sites Oasis of Bahla (=1) and Land of Frankincense

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[25] This data refers to both sites together
[26] The distribution of the questionnaires was done by employees of the sites due to the distance between research facility where the author was located and World Heritage Sites
[27] Distribution during regular opening hours

(=2). Demographical and travel behaviour information were entered as nominal measures whereas attributes and items of the sections *Experience Quality*, *Satisfaction* and *Behavioural Intention* were characterised as scale measures. For the items that included the option of multiple answers the coding had to include combinations of answer options. Therefore, it was identified which combinations were chosen by respondents to include them in SPSS. The combinations were coded and added as further answer options in the same manner as the individual options that were given. For example, the question referring to sources of information about the heritage site originally provided seven response options. 15 different combinations of responses were included resulting in a total of 22 possible answers to the question. An important part of the process that has to be acknowledged was the merging of the responses *Not applicable* (option 6 on the scale) and *Neither agree nor disagree* (option 3 on the scale). Originally, answer option 3 was meant to be chosen if the visitor did not have an opinion and option 6, if the attribute did not exist on-site or was not encountered. However, this intention turned out to be problematic and often not acknowledged by the visitors which became evident in multiple conversations with the visitors. Another decisive factor was that a sixth item on the scale jeopardizes the intended gradation of agreement-level since it appears after the highest level (option 5 on the scale: *Strongly agree*). Although it had been possible to deal with the latter issue, it was decided to merge the options since both state no satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the attribute. Through this adaption it was assured that the sample size did not change since all answers were still included in the analysis and the validity of results was not crucially affected or influenced.

Demographics and travel pattern were presented through descriptive analysis and sections and dimensions evaluated by employing descriptive statistics. Differential analysis was used to analyse differences between the two UNESCO sites whereas correlation analysis provided results to test hypotheses dealing with significance of relationships between sections and dimensions. In order to test relationships between individual items and gain knowledge on connections between certain types of behaviour, Cross tabulation and Pearson Chi-Square Test were utilized. The basic descriptive analysis was conducted to gain information about the chosen sample and the travel behaviour. Furthermore, differences between the UNESCO sites were identified. Frequencies and percentages together with mean score and standard

deviation were examined through descriptive statistics. Mean scores were analysed to make statements regarding the perceived experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention. This process was followed for each heritage site individually. Correlation analysis was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. The Pearson coefficient of relationships between sections and dimensions indicated significance and provided evidence to draw conclusions. Differences between the analysed UNESCO sites in terms of mean scores were identified through differential analysis. The resulting Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)-tables with the associated p-values provided the requested information for the testing of H3 and H4. Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested by utilizing cross tabulation and the Pearson Chi-square test which provided information about relationships between scale measures. Sections, dimensions, attributes or items were considered to be equal in importance and therefore not weighted.

4.2 Part two: Content Analysis

In addition to the survey, a content analysis of the online travel consumer network TripAdvisor which claims to be the largest of its kind (TripAdvisor n.D.-a) and provides user-generated content (especially reviews on tourism products but also hotel and flights booking, vacation rentals, restaurant finding and travel guides) has been conducted for unobtrusive research in order to gain more information on visitor satisfaction at the analysed UNESCO sites. The steps described in the process-section are in accordance with the guidelines described by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016). To enrich this data, the comments and suggestions stated on the questionnaires have been analysed in a similar but shortened process and separated from the content analysis of TripAdvisor.

4.2.1 Sample.

206 reviews have been found for Bahla Fort which is the name listed on the webpage instead of the all-including Oasis of Bahla (TripAdvisor n.D.-b). No restrictions were made and all 206 have been included into the analysis. The same applies for Land of Frankincense where 319 reviews were counted on two different TripAdvisor webpages. 14 for the archaeological sites of Al-Baleed (TripAdvisor n.D.-c) and 305 for the Museum of Land of Frankincense (TripAdvisor n.D.-d). Due to the

fact that data was collected over a one-week period, the number of reviews changed but on the final date, the mentioned amount of reviews was published on the webpages. For the suggestion section of the questionnaire, 61 were counted for Oasis of Bahla and 12 for Land of Frankincense.

4.2.2 Material.

To remain consistent with the data analysis of the survey, the same structure of sections and dimensions has been used for the content analysis. Furthermore, Microsoft Excel 2016 was the tool utilized for the quantitative analysis.

4.2.3 Procedure.

The data for the content analysis has been gathered in the period of February 13th 2017 to February 19th 2017. The reviews have been copied into one Microsoft Word 2016-file for each UNESCO site since reviews on TripAdvisor.com are not shown all at once but are separated by page number. This allowed for an easier search for specific words or phrases. Additionally, the reviews were numbered to retrieve information individually if necessary. In order to be able to transform the qualitative data in a quantitative form, an Excel sheet was prepared with a column for each item of the questionnaire. Every column was split again into positive, neutral and negative. Then, every review was read and analysed for mentions of the questionnaire items. If an opinion towards an item was identified, it was marked in the Excel sheet as positive, neutral or negative depending on the attitude of the reviewer. As a main characteristic of content analysis, manifest as well as latent content have been considered. This means that direct positive, neutral and negative mentions have been included, but also the underlying meaning considered with a judgement of the author on how the review should be categorized. Mentions have been classified as neutral when the item was mentioned without an indication of positive or negative perception. Cases of reviews containing opinions towards multiple items has led to a higher number of mentions than reviews. The frequencies of mentions as well as the percentages then have been entered in a table and added for each section and dimension. Furthermore, comments that were made repeatedly but did not fit the sections of the questionnaire have been acknowledged and referred to in the presentation of results[28]. The qualitative data of

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[28] cf. Chapter 5.2

the questionnaire have been read and analysed with the focus of gathering reoccurring suggestions, complaints or comments. For each attribute mentioned, the author decided for a phrase that represents all comments referring to this specific attribute. These have been listed and presented in a table with frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

This Chapter is divided into two main sections with multiple subsections. Part one contains quantitative data and describes and analyses the results of the survey that was conducted at the UNESCO sites in Oman. In the descriptive analysis, the demographic profiles and travel patterns of the respondents will be described for each site and in comparison, while descriptive statistics are used in order to present the answers given for each of the questionnaire dimensions as well as individual attributes which show interesting results. Furthermore, differential analysis is utilized to present significant differences between the rating of dimensions and attributes of the two UNESCO sites. For the testing of hypotheses, correlation analysis in connection with analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been used to evaluate the questionnaire dimensions with special focus on the hypotheses stated in the literature review. Cross tabulation and Pearson Chi-Square Test provides is the utilized analysis tool to test relations between travel patterns.

Part two highlights the qualitative data gained from a content analysis of the TripAdvisor pages of the two UNESCO sites in Oman. To enrich this data, the comments given by participants of the survey are added and analysed with regard to the dimensions and attributes of the questionnaire. In both cases, qualitative data is refined into quantitative data in order to be analysed. Demographic data does not influence this part of the analysis due to the lack of this information on the website. At last, the main findings will be presented and the achievement of research objectives discussed. The results are linked to the previous research presented in the literature review.

5.1 Part one: Survey

350 surveys in total were distributed to the visitors of the two UNESCO sites in Bahla (Oasis of Bahla) and Salalah (Land of Frankincense). 250 were determined to be usable after sorting out blanks and questionnaires with unanswered questions crucial for the assessment of hypothesis validation. Accordingly, 250 questionnaires filled in by visitors to the Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense UNESCO sites have finally been analysed.

5.1.1 Descriptive analysis.

In the descriptive analysis, the demographic profiles and travel pattern of the entire sample (250 questionnaires) will be presented. Furthermore, main demographical and travel behavioural differences between visitors of the two sites that have been found will be mentioned.

5.1.1.1 Demographic profile of respondents.

Table 4 summarizes the demographic information gained from the survey. A relatively even gender distribution was found with a share of around 47% female and 53% male respondents. The strongest representation in terms of age was found in the group of 25-34 years with 28.8%. The following groups showed a balanced outcome with 15.6% for 35-44 years and 16.8% for the age between 45-54 and 16.8% for 55-64. The two ends of the spectrum are 7.6% of young adults between 18 and 24 and 14.4% senior citizens of the age of 65 and older. The sample mainly consisted of visitors with academic background. Combining the positive responses to the options *University* (32.8%), *Graduate* (47.2%) and *PhD* (8.4%) leads to a total of 88.4%. 11.6% of the visitors answered that they have received basic education which includes all possibilities outside university education. To get an approximate idea of the journey that the visitor made, the question of residency was asked. 90.4% respondent to be an international tourist and accordingly, 9.6% are residents of the Sultanate of Oman. This does not mean that these visitors are native Omanis but that they are not in a situation of only visiting the country and most probably permanently live and work in Oman. The question of residence also was the only one with noticeable differences between Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense. In Bahla, 17% stated to be Omani residents (83% international tourists) and in Land of Frankincense, only 4.7% are residents (95.3% international tourists). All other demographical questions showed very similar answers and distributions for both UNESCO sites.

Table 4
Results for the analysis of demographics (frequencies and percentages) of the study sample

1.	Demographics	F.	%
1.1	**Gender**		
	Female	118	47.2
	Male	132	52.8
1.2	**Age**		
	18-24	19	7.6
	25-34	72	28.8
	35-44	39	15.6
	45-54	42	16.8
	55-64	42	16.8
	65 and over	36	14.4
1.3	**Education**		
	Basic	29	11.6
	University	82	32.8
	Graduate	118	47.2
	PhD	21	8.4
1.4	**Residency**		
	A resident of Oman	24	9.6
	An International Tourist	226	90.4

5.1.1.2 *Travel pattern and further information.*

The main portion with 76.4% of respondents were first-time visitors to the Sultanate of Oman. 9.6% had visited the country once before and 4.4% have visited 3

or more times including the current visit. With 60%, the assessment of trip nature showed a high number of visitors who organize their trips themselves. Almost 31% used arranged trips as either part of a *cruise* (11.6%) or *package tour* (19.2%). Only 4% stated to visit the site during a business trip and more than 5% used other arrangements. *Books and guides* showed to be the main information source for respondents through which they found out about the UNESCO site. Almost 30% used only this option and for 46% it was the only source or one among others (combinations of sources including *books and guides*). 10.4% were informed by friends or relatives, 11.6% used the internet, 12% received the information from their travel agency and for 7.2% it was simply part of their booked package. The remaining percentages distribute among respondents that stated that they used multiple sources of information and represent combinations of the available options[29]. In terms of motivation, over 70% answered that the UNESCO label was not their main reason to visit the site which consequently leaves almost 30% of visitors who mainly were attracted by the certification. Length of stay was assessed with the options *less than 1 hour*, *1-2 hours* and *more than 2 hours*. 44.8% chose the first and 48% chose the second option making it 92.8% of respondents who did only stayed up to two hours and 7.2% who stayed longer on the premises.

In terms of economic impact, 38% spent between 1 and 5 OMR and almost 45% spent less than 1 OMR. 4.8% spent between 6 and 10 OMR and 1.2% between 11 and 15 OMR. More than 15 OMR was spent by 5.6% of respondents. Most times, visitors only spent their money on entrance fees (50.4%) and 29.2% did not spend money at all which is made possible by the advance payment in the cases of cruises and package tours. This means that almost 80% of visitors who participated in the study did not spend any money at all or only on the required entrance fee. Food and beverages were purchased by 4%, Souvenirs by 2.4%, 0.8% employed a tourist guide and 5.6% spent it in other ways. 7.6% chose a combination of offered products. More than 81% of the respondents were not new to heritage sites and have visited UNESCO World Heritage Sites before whereas almost 19% perambulated a heritage site with the UNESCO label for the first time. The question referring to the comparison between the visitor's expectation and his or her actual experience showed that a fair number of respondents probably did not have expectations before visiting or could not decide

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[29] cf. Table 4

whether it was better or worse than expected. Over half of the visitors (50.8%) answered that their experience had been *neither worse nor better* or that they "*Don't know*. However, only 7.2% expected more from their stay, 28% stated that they liked their visit more than expected and 14% had a *much better* experience than imagined.

Noteworthy differences between the two UNESCO sites have been found in five of the nine questions regarding travel pattern and further information. In Oasis of Bahla, the number of tourists who came to Oman for the first time was appreciably higher (84.7%) than in Land of Frankincense (64%). Also, the travel type differed due to the difference in locations. Over 79% of visitors in Bahla organized their trip by themselves whereas only 31% did the same for their visit to Land of Frankincense. Cruise and package tours only was the chosen way of travelling for 16% of visitors in Bahla but in Land of Frankincense it accounted for 53% of the visitors. Accordingly, 40% of respondents found out about Land of Frankincense through their travel agency or the package provider while only 5.4% gained knowledge the same way for Oasis of Bahla. For the latter, over 41% used books and guides as the primary source of information whereas Land of Frankincense visitors did make use of this option only in small parts (12%). Another difference was found in the spending pattern. In Bahla, 2% stated that they have spent more than 15 OMR. In Land of Frankincense 11% spent around this amount. When considering the options on which visitors spent money on, Oasis of Bahla stands out with almost a rate of 90% of visitors who only paid entrance fee or did not spend money at all. Although not as high, also for Land of Frankincense, a major part of visitors who do not spend money or only on the entrance fee was identified (64%).

Table 5
Results of the analysis of travel pattern
and further information (frequencies and
percentages) of the study sample*.*

2.	Travel pattern and further information	F.	%	Travel pattern and further information	F.	%
2.1	**Number of visits**			**2.4** UNESCO label as main visitation reason		
	1 time	191	76.4	Yes	74	29.6
	2 times	24	9.6	No	176	70.4
	3 times	4	1.6	**2.5** Spending during visit		
	More than 3 times	7	2.8	Less than one OMR	126	50.4
				1-5 OMR	95	38.0
2.2	**Nature of trip**			6-10 OMR	12	4.8
	Cruise	29	11.6	11-15 OMR	3	1.2
	Package tour	48	19.2	More than 15 OMR	14	5.6
	Self-organized	150	60.0			
	Business travel	10	4.0	**2.6** Purchased items		
	Other	13	5.2	Did not spend money	73	29.2
				Entrance fee	126	50.4
2.3	**Source of knowledge about UNESCO site**			Food & beverages	10	4.0
	Friends and relatives	26	10.4	Souvenirs	6	2.4
	Internet	29	11.6	Tourist guide	2	.8
	Media	7	2.8	Other	14	5.6
	Books & guides	74	29.6	Food & beverages + Other	1	.4
	Travel agency	30	12.0	Food & beverages + Souvenirs	4	1.6
	Part of package	18	7.2	Food & beverages + Tourist guide	2	.8
	Other	11	4.4			
	Internet + Books & guides	15	6.0			

Books & guides + Other	2	.8
Friends and relatives + Books & guides	12	4.8
Internet + Media + Books & guides	2	.8
Media + Other	1	.4
Internet + Media + Books & guides + Travel agency	1	.4
Books & guides + Travel agency	5	2.0
Friends & relatives + Internet	3	1.2
Friends & relatives + Internet + Books & guides + Part of package	2	.8
Friends and relatives + Other	2	.8
Travel agency + Other	1	.4
Friends and relatives + Internet + Books & guides	2	.8
Friend and relatives + Media	1	.4
Internet + Travel agency	5	2.0
Friend and relatives + Travel agency + Part of package	1	.4

Entrance fee + Souvenirs + Tourist guide	1	.4
Souvenirs + Other	1	.4
Entrance fee + Food & beverages	5	2.0
Entrance fee + Food & beverages + Tourist guide	1	.4
Tourist guide + Other	1	.4
Entrance fee + Souvenirs + Other	1	.4
Food & beverages + Souvenirs + Other	2	.8

2.7 Visitation of other UNESCO WHS

Yes	203	81.2
No	47	18.8

2.8 Comparison of expectations and experience

Much worse	5	2.0
Worse	13	5.2
Neither worse nor better	97	38.8
Better	70	28.0
Much Better	35	14
Don't know	30	12.0

5.1.2 Descriptive statistics.

The descriptive statistics present the visitor ratings of the dimensions and attributes as well as the overall satisfaction and post-visit behavioural intentions of the tourist for each of the analysed UNESCO sites. Four dimensions can be found with a different number of attributes included in each of them (*Facilities and Employees* with 9 attributes, *Physical appearance and maintenance* with 4 attributes, *Accessibility* with 2 attributes and *Interpretation* with 5 attributes[30]). Considered are the calculated means whereas 3 is the middle choice (*Neither agree nor disagree*) of the 5-point-Likert, including the answer option *Not applicable* as explained in Chapter 5. As it can be found in tables 6 and 7, the scale ranges from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*. The tables present the four dimensions of the overall experience (3. *Experience Quality*) with each of the measured attributes. 4. *Satisfaction* and 5. *Behavioural Intention* are focused on separately due to their character of overall evaluation without asking for specific attributes. Reasoned by the explanations made in the methodology, the mean categories were developed in order of grasping the positive or negative amplitudes deriving from the answers *Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* and *Not applicable*. Therefore, means from 1 to 2.99 were considered unsatisfactory, means from 3 to 3.49 labelled indifferent and from 3.5 to 5 referred to as satisfactory.

At last, this procedure leads the way to the comparison with focus on significance between the dimensions and attributes of Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense in Chapter 5.1.3.1.

5.1.2.1 Satisfactory, indifferent and unsatisfactory dimensions of Oasis of Bahla.

The results indicated that in the perception of the respondents, two of the dimensions were satisfactory, one was measured as indifferent and one of them had to be considered unsatisfactory. In terms of the 20 attributes, nine were found to be satisfactory, six as indifferent and five as dissatisfactory.

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[30] cf. Table 6

5.1.2.1.1 Satisfactory dimensions.

The mean score for the dimension 3.2 *Physical appearance and maintenance* consisting of four attributes was 4.0600. Therefore, it is slightly above the *Agree*-level and can be considered satisfactory as perceived by the visitors. Going into detail and looking at the attributes, each of them reaches a score above 3.5. Cleanliness often is an important attribute of a site for visitors and the mean score of 4.6333, which also is the highest for the entire study on Oasis of Bahla, shows that the visitors appreciated the management's effort with 72.7% strongly agreeing that the site was clean and litter free. Furthermore, visitors agreed that it was easy to move around the site without major impairments. 56% also agreed (26%) or strongly agreed (30%) that the site also was appealing and entertaining for children and young adults (mean: 3.7600). Safety measures have overall been considered as sufficient although the mean score is only slightly above the indifferent-level (3.5467).

In terms of dimension 3.3 *Accessibility* provided the highest satisfaction for visitors in Oasis of Bahla with a mean score of 4.3967. 94% of respondents agreed (46.7%) or strongly agreed (47.3%) with the statement *Roads leading to the site were in good condition.* Also, visitors considered it to be easy to find the site from the main road which is probably due to the fort protruding from its surrounding.

5.1.2.1.2 Indifferent dimension.

3.1 *Facilities and employees* was the largest dimension consisting of nine attributes. Overall the dimension scored a mean of 3.333 but the mean for the attributes range from 2.7467 to 4.0800. This is due to its characteristic of representing a rather general dimension that asked about various attributes with different themes. Washrooms (4.0800) and resting areas (3.8133) scored means clearly above average. Almost 59% of respondents considered the employees to be helpful and available when needed leading to a positive mean of 3.7733. Visitors were indifferent about the level of knowledge employees can provide about the site which leads to the assumption that most visitors did not ask for further information. Statements regarding the souvenir shop, restaurants and the visitor center understandably scored means which show indifference simply due to the lack of those facilities.

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Two attributes in this dimension scored means in the dissatisfactory-range. Signposting and directions inside the site were not considered to be helpful or sufficient (2.7467). Due to the size of the fort, visitors might get lost inside the premises and were hoping for clear directions towards the exit as well signs for the different parts of the fort. Furthermore, most visitors did not feel like they had a chance to get in touch with the local community. However, with the mean almost scoring the perfect middle (2.9933) it has to be concluded that the visitors were not dissatisfied but simply did not get in touch with Omanis from the area.

5.1.2.1.3 Dissatisfactory dimension.

For Oasis of Bahla, the dimension 3.4 *Interpretation* was marginally rated as dissatisfactory by the respondents with a mean of 2.9187. This score is very close to being considered indifferent, however, single attributes show a clearer tendency.

Information panels scored a mean almost in the middle with a minimal negative amplitude. As it was one of the main complaint voiced by visitors and stated under the suggestion part of the questionnaire, this finding leads to the assumption that many visitors chose the option *Not applicable* since it was stated to do so when a certain attribute is not existent. Since only very few panels could be found on the site, it must be assumed that the mean score would have been a lot lower if the option of *Not applicable* had not been given. A similar reasoning applies to the attributes of audio guides (2.8067) and tourists guides (3.000) since the site itself does not offer them. However, some visitors bring guides from other companies which most probably had an influence on their opinion towards this attribute stated in the questionnaire. The lowest mean (2.6133) in this dimension and simultaneously the lowest in the entire survey for Oasis of Bahla was scored by the statement asking for the opinion on brochures at site. The fact that some visitors received a small flyer did not impact the satisfaction in a positive way. Additionally, one of the main attributes connected to the spirit of the UNESCO convention (1972) did receive a score slightly above average. 51 out of 150 people felt well-informed about the universal value of the UNESCO site, 68 were undecided or stated the lack of explanation and 31 clearly attested their dissatisfaction.

5.1.2.2 Experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention.

The overall experience including all dimensions and attributes resulted in a mean of 3.6772 which shows a clear tendency towards satisfaction. The drivers of this result are the dimensions of physical appearance and accessibility.

In terms of satisfaction (mean: 3.3383), the results show a balanced picture with means ranging from 2.8200 to 3.7600. The latter and therefore highest score was achieved by the attribute asking for an evaluation of satisfaction with the entire trip. 60% were agreed and strongly agreed that they were overall satisfied with the visit to the UNESCO site. 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed while 30% were undecided. 42% stated that they agree and strongly agree that the management makes an effort to make the site entertaining and enjoyable and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The services provided were appealing to 54 out of 150 people while 23 left dissatisfied with this attribute. More than 25% were satisfied with the information provided but 57% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (mean: 2.8200) which is the most negative rated attribute in the estimation of overall satisfaction. Despite of this mix of opinions for satisfaction, over 80% of respondents made clear that they would recommend other people to visit the site (mean: 4.2067) and 61.3% would visit other UNESCO sites in Oman based on their visit to Oasis of Bahla. An increased entrance fee would also be accepted by over 45% of the sample for Bahla and refused by 21% leaving 34% of visitors who did not have an opinion on this matter.

Table 6
Results of the analysis of variables and dimensions (frequencies and percentages) for the Oasis of Bahla

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	
3.	**Experience Quality**											**3.6772**
3.1	*Facilities and Employees*											*3.333*
3.1.1	Toilets were clean and	2	1.3	5	3.3	44	29.3	27	18.0	72	48.0	4.0800

	properly marked on site										
3.1.2	The souvenir shop offered good quality arts and crafts of Oman	4	2.7	3	2.0	126	84.0	6	4.0	11	7.3	3.1133
3.1.3	Good quality restaurants were available on site	5	3.3	3	2.0	129	86.0	4	2.7	9	6.0	3.0600
3.1.4	The visitor center was informative	12	8.0	12	8.0	93	62.0	19	12.7	14	9.3	3.0733
3.1.5	There were sufficient rest areas available on site	0	0	8	5.3	44	29.3	66	44.0	32	21.3	3.8133
3.1.6	Signposting and directions inside the site were helpful	23	15.3	50	33.3	37	24.7	22	14.7	18	12.0	2.7467
3.1.7	Employees were helpful and available when needed	1	.7	13	8.7	48	32.0	45	30.0	43	28.7	3.7733
3.1.8	Employees were knowledgeable about the site	3	2.0	6	4.0	98	65.3	22	14.7	21	14.0	3.3467
3.1.9	I had the chance to engage with members of	11	7.3	20	13.3	91	60.7	15	10.0	13	8.7	2.9933

the local community

3.2	***Physical appearance and maintenance***										*4.0600*
3.2.1	This site was clean and litter free	0	0	2	1.3	10	6.7	29	19.3	109	72.7	4.6333
3.2.2	This site had good safety measures	2	1.3	22	14.7	52	34.7	40	26.7	34	22.7	3.5467
3.2.3	It was easy to move around the site	1	.7	4	2.7	14	9.3	61	40.7	70	46.7	4.3000
3.2.4	This site was interesting for children and young adults	3	2.0	9	6.0	54	36.0	39	26.0	45	30.0	3.7600
3.3	***Accessibility***										*4.3967*
3.3.1	Roads leading to the site were in good condition	0	0	2	1.3	7	4.7	70	46.7	71	47.3	4.4000
3.3.2	It was easy to find the site from the main road	0	0	4	2.7	15	10.0	49	32.7	82	54.7	4.3933
3.4	***Interpretation***										*2.9187*
3.4.1	Information panels were well-placed, easy and interesting to read	25	16.7	21	14.0	61	40.7	20	13.3	23	15.3	2.9667

3.4.2	Brochures were available, well-designed and informative	33	22.0	26	17.3	69	46.0	10	6.7	12	8.0	2.6133
3.4.3	Audio guides were of high quality and informative	21	14.0	9	6.0	106	70.7	6	4.0	8	5.3	2.8067
3.4.4	Tourist guides were well-informed and engaging	13	8.7	6	4.0	110	73.3	10	6.7	11	7.3	3.0000
3.4.5	I was informed about the universal and cultural value of this UNESCO site	18	12.0	13	8.7	68	45.3	22	14.7	29	19.3	3.2067
4.	**Satisfaction**										**3.3383**
4.1	I was satisfied with the information provided at this UNESCO site	25	16.7	32	21.3	55	36.7	21	14.0	17	11.3	2.8200
4.2	I was satisfied with the services I received at this UNESCO site	11	7.3	12	8.0	73	48.7	26	17.3	28	18.7	3.3200
4.3	I was satisfied with the	7	4.7	8	5.3	72	48.0	36	24.0	27	18.0	3.4533

	management's effort to make this UNESCO site entertaining and enjoyable										
4.4	I am overall satisfied with the visit to this UNESCO site	4	2.7	11	7.3	45	30.0	47	31.3	43	28.7	3.7600
5.	**Behavioural Intention**										**3.8222**
5.1	I would recommend other people to visit this UNESCO site	1	.7	5	3.3	23	15.3	54	36.0	67	44.7	4.2067
4.2	I would be willing to pay more to enter this UNESCO site	10	6.7	21	14.0	51	34.0	33	22.0	35	23.3	3.4133
5.3	Based on my visit here, I will visit other UNESCO sites in Oman	1	.7	2	1.3	55	36.7	53	35.3	39	26.0	3.8467

5.1.2.3 Satisfactory, indifferent and unsatisfactory dimensions of Land of Frankincense.

In case of the UNESCO site of Land of Frankincense, all four dimensions have been identified as satisfactory for visitors according to categories that have been established for the means. However, two of the dimensions were very close to being considered as indifferent and also six attributes did not achieve a satisfactory level but

have been perceived as indifferent by the respondents. Accordingly, the remaining fourteen attributes are above the mean of 3.5.

5.1.2.3.1 Satisfactory dimensions.

The dimension 3.1 *Facilities and Employees* achieved a mean (3.5833) close to the middle of the scale. The attributes washrooms, souvenir shop and visitor centre showed a slight tendency towards being satisfactory whereas the snack offer did not provoke a clear opinion (mean: 3.1700). Rest areas were perceived as sufficient by 71% of visitors and 57% agreed that signposting and directions are satisfactory. 57% found employees to be helpful and available when needed and 41% answered indifferently. This leaves only 2% of unsatisfied visitors. The same applies for the knowledge of the employees with 49% satisfied, 47% indifferent and 2% unsatisfied respondents. The attribute of engagement with the local community did not foment a clear disposition with a mean of 3.1700.

Also, the mean score 3.5120 of 3.4 *Interpretation* did not let conclude strong opinions. Audio guides are not available on-site and consequently the mean shows an indifferent result (3.2500). The positive tendency can only be explained by a non-consistent completion of the questionnaire by a small group of respondents. The mean for tourist guides (3.5800) allows to determine a positive tendency although tourist guides are not provided by the site but are employed by the visitor or corresponding travel companies. The attribute *Brochures* achieved an indifferent reaction as well as the statement asking the visitor about the information on the universal value of the UNESCO site. 51% gained knowledge about the universal cultural value of the place whereas 17% did not feel satisfied with what they have learned. In this regard, information panels were perceived to be well-placed and interesting by 64% of respondents and 8% did not consider themselves satisfied with this attribute.

The highest ranked attributes can be found in the dimension 3.2 *Physical appearance and maintenance* which scored an overall mean of 4.1025. In the same manner as in Oasis of Bahla, cleanliness was the highest rated attribute (mean: 4.4900) and considered to be highly satisfying by 87% (agree: 20%; strongly agree: 67%) of the visitors. Second highest mean was achieved when asking for agreement or disagreement with the statement *It was easy to move around the site*. Again, 87% agreed (26%) and strongly agreed (61%). Additionally, safety measures were judged

to be sufficient (mean: 4.0800) and the entertainment for children and young adults reached a mean of 3.3600.

The dimension with the second highest mean was found to be 3.3 *Accessibility* (3.9350). 33% neither agreed or disagreed with the statement *Roads leading to the site were in good condition* but 26% agreed and 38% strongly agreed. Convenience in terms of finding the UNESCO site scored a mean of 3.8900 with only 4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the site is easy to find from the main road. 40% neither agreed nor disagreed and 56% agreed or strongly agreed. The somewhat high number of respondents without a clear opinion might be due to the usage of busses and taxis that had been witnessed on-site.

5.1.2.4 *Experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention.*

A mean of 3.7832 was calculated for the satisfaction with all the attributes combined (3. *Experience Quality*). This is similar to the result discovered for Oasis of Bahla[31]).

However, a considerably higher mean was found for the overall satisfaction of the respondents. The result of 3.9675 let the author conclude that most of the visitors left the site with a feeling for satisfaction. This is also indicated by the individual means for the four different attributes. 70% were satisfied with the information provided on-site and 12% did not receive as much information as they would have liked. 37% agreed to be satisfied with the received services and 28% even strongly agreed. 4% could not agree and 31% neither agreed nor disagreed. 74 out of 100 visitors agreed (42) and strongly agreed (32) to be satisfied with the management's effort to make the site interesting and enjoyable. Ultimately, 79% of visitors stated that they can agree or strongly agree with being overall satisfied with their visit to Land of Frankincense. Not a single visitor stated to strongly disagree and only 3% could not agree with the statement while 18% could not decide.

The positive behavioural intentions of the visitors were slightly weaker than in Oasis of Bahla with a mean of 3.7733. Nonetheless, 83% of respondents would recommend the UNESCO site to other people and 4% would refrain from doing so. 6% will not visit other UNESCO sites in Oman based on their visit in Land of Frankincense

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[31] cf. Chapter 5.1.2.2

though 72% agree or strongly agree to visit one or more of the remaining World Heritage Sites in Oman. 28% stated that they cannot support an increase of entrance fees and 36% did not have an opinion on the matter. The residuary percentage (36%) would be willing to pay more to enter the UNESCO site.

Table 7
Results of the analysis of variables and dimensions (frequencies and percentages) for the Land of Frankincense

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	
3.	**Experience Quality**											**3.7832**
3.1	*Facilities and Employees*											*3.5833*
3.1.1	Toilets were clean and properly marked on site	0	0	10	10.0	27	27.0	40	40.0	23	23.0	3.7600
3.1.2	The souvenir shop offered good quality arts and crafts of Oman	0	0	1	1.0	49	49.0	43	43.0	7	7.0	3.5600
3.1.3	Good quality restaurants were available on site	0	0	5	5.0	77	77.0	14	14.0	4	4.0	3.1700
3.1.4	The visitor center was informative	2	2.0	3	3.0	45	45.0	36	36.0	14	14.0	3.5700
3.1.5	There were sufficient rest areas	0	0	7	7.0	22	22.0	41	41.0	30	30.0	3.9400

3.1.6	Signposting and directions inside the site were helpful	0	0	13	13.0	30	30.0	43	43.0	14	14.0	3.5800
3.1.7	Employees were helpful and available when needed	0	0	2	2.0	41	41.0	25	25.0	32	32.0	3.8700
3.1.8	Employees were knowledgeable about the site	2	2.0	2	2.0	47	47.0	29	29.0	20	20.0	3.6300
3.1.9	I had the chance to engage with members of the local community	3	3.0	12	12.0	60	60.0	15	15.0	10	10.0	3.1700
3.2	***Physical appearance and maintenance***										***4.1025***
3.2.1	This site was clean and litter free	1	1.0	3	3.0	9	9.0	20	20.0	67	67.0	4.4900
3.2.2	This site had good safety measures	0	0	2	2.0	27	27.0	32	32.0	39	39.0	4.0800
3.2.3	It was easy to move around the site	0	0	0	0	13	13.0	26	26.0	61	61.0	4.4800
3.2.4	This site was interesting for children and young adults	2	2.0	16	16.0	39	39.0	30	30.0	13	13.0	3.3600

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3.3	***Accessibility***											***3.9350***
3.3.1	Roads leading to the site were in good condition	1	1.0	2	2.0	33	33.0	26	26.0	38	38.0	3.9800
3.3.2	It was easy to find the site from the main road	1	1.0	3	3.0	40	40.0	18	18.0	38	38.0	3.8900
3.4	***Interpretation***											***3.5120***
3.4.1	Information panels were well-placed, easy and interesting to read	2	2.0	6	6.0	28	28.0	37	37.0	27	27.0	3.8100
3.4.2	Brochures were available, well-designed and informative	2	2.0	7	7.0	52	52.0	24	24.0	15	15.0	3.4300
3.4.3	Audio guides were of high quality and informative	4	4.0	0	0	70	70.0	19	19.0	7	7.0	3.2500
3.4.4	Tourist guides were well-informed and engaging	2	2.0	5	5.0	45	45.0	29	29.0	19	19.0	3.5800
3.4.5	I was informed about the universal and cultural value of this	5	5.0	12	12.0	32	32.0	31	31.0	20	20.0	3.4900

UNESCO
site

4.	**Satisfaction**										**3.9675**
4.1	I was satisfied with the information provided at this UNESCO site	2	2.0	10	10.0	18	18.0	42	42.0	28	28.0	3.8400
4.2	I was satisfied with the services I received at this UNESCO site	2	2.0	2	2.0	31	31.0	37	37.0	28	28.0	3.8700
4.3	I was satisfied with the management's effort to make this UNESCO site entertaining and enjoyable	1	1.0	1	1.0	24	24.0	42	42.0	32	32.0	4.0300
4.4	I am overall satisfied with the visit to this UNESCO site	0	0	3	3.0	18	18.0	42	42.0	37	37.0	4.1300
5.	**Behavioural Intention**										**3.7733**
5.1	I would recommend other people to visit this UNESCO site	2	2.0	2	2.0	11	11.0	42	42.0	43	43.0	4.2200

5.2	I would be willing to pay more to enter this UNESCO site	8	8.0	20	20.0	36	36.0	20	20.0	16	16.0	3.1600
5.3	Based on my visit here, I will visit other UNESCO sites in Oman	0	0	6	6.0	22	22.0	44	44.0	28	28.0	3.9400

5.1.3 Testing of hypotheses.

Purposively for this study, six major hypotheses are being proposed and tested whereas H1 includes four, H3 two and H4 three sub-hypotheses. For the first part and through correlation analysis (Pearson Correlation), the relationship between experience and satisfaction (H1), the four dimensions and satisfaction (H1a; H1b; H1c; H1d) as well as the relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention (H2) are tested for significance. Secondly, differential analysis with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is employed to find evidence for the support or rejection of hypotheses H3, H3a and H3b which involve significant differences between the two UNESCO sites in terms of experience (H3), satisfaction (H3a) and behavioural intention (H3b) and general assumptions regarding the relationship between travel pattern and satisfaction (H4; H4a; H4b; H4c). At last, relationships within the travel pattern are being assessed by utilizing Cross tabulation and the Pearson Chi-Square Test to indicate if the results are significant. Hypothesis 5 supposes that a connection between the time spent on-site and the amount of money that was spent (H5) exists while hypothesis 6 relates the nature of the visitor's trip to the spending (H6) to explore if for example cruise passengers are willing to spend more than visitors on self-organized trips.

5.1.3.1 Correlation analysis.

The correlation analysis is conducted in order to assess the strength of the examined relationship with the available statistical data. A high correlation indicates a strong relationship whereas a low correlation coefficient means that a relationship is

hardly existent. For the Pearson Correlation which is used in this research and moreover widely in sciences, the coefficient is calculated by the division of covariance by the product of the standard deviation. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient (PCC) can range from -1.00 (total negative linear correlation) to +1.00 (total positive linear correlation). The correlation output from SPSS allows a further insight with regards to significance of the relationships. If the analysis fails to find a relationship with 99% significance at the 0.01 level (indicated with two stars in SPSS, e.g. .677**), the process continues with checking for a significance of 95% at the 0.05 level (2-tailed; indicated with one star in SPSS, e.g. .677*). Both cases represent significance but indicate the difference in strength of the relationship.

Hypothesis 1

H1: *There is a positive and significant relationship between "Experience Quality" and "Satisfaction"*

For the WHS of Oasis of Bahla (ρ=.735**) as well as for Land of Frankincense (ρ=.561**) and the overall analysis of both sites combined (ρ=.667**) a positive and significant relationship has been found. This means that if the perceived quality of the experience is high, the satisfaction will be high and an increase in perceived experience quality triggers an increase in satisfaction. The coefficient is higher for Oasis of Bahla which indicates that visitors to the site connected their experience even more strongly to their overall satisfaction. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed and can be accepted.
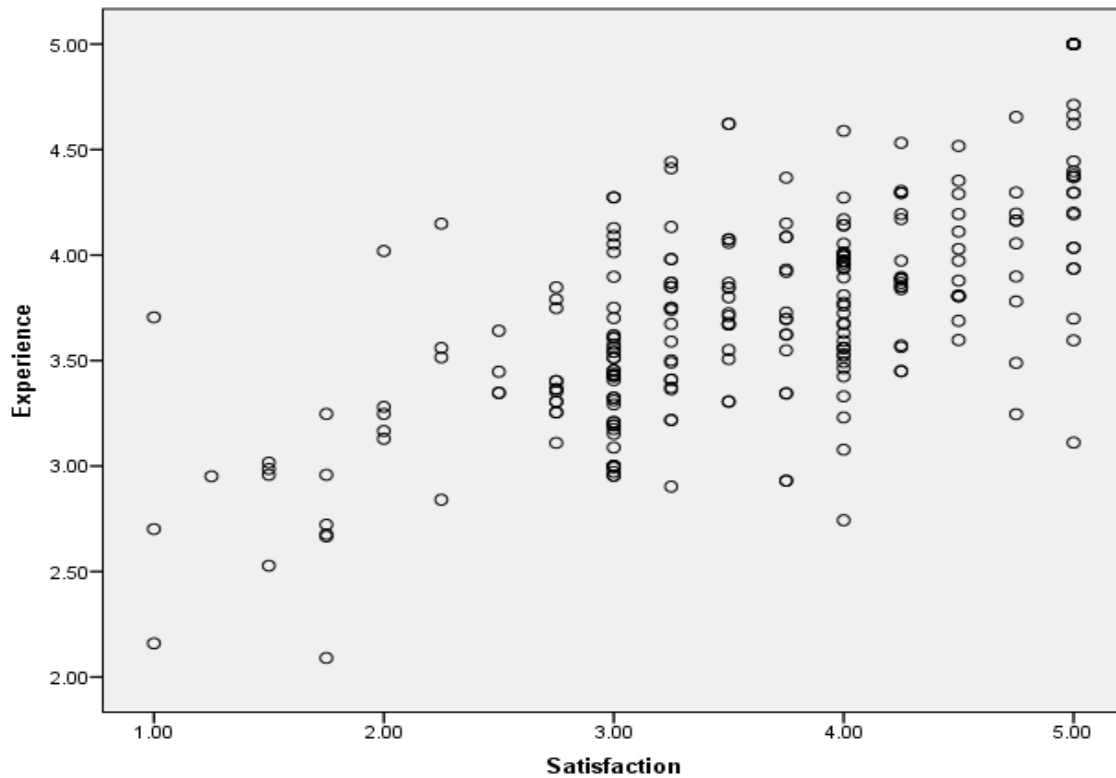
Figure 12. Scatter-diagram of the relationship between experience and satisfaction for the entire sample.

The scatter-diagram illustrates the positive relationship between the experience and satisfaction for the whole sample and underlines its significance.

Hypothesis 1a

H1a: *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Facilities and employees" and overall "Satisfaction"*

Hypothesis 1a is supported by the findings and can be accepted since, also between *Facilities and employees* and *Satisfaction* a positive and significant relationship exists. Again, the strongest relationship was found for Oasis of Bahla with a PCC of ϱ=.711**. For Land of Frankincense, the coefficient amounts to ϱ=.521** and overall to ϱ=.672**. The coefficients indicate that the satisfaction with the facilities on-site play an important role for the overall satisfaction and that changes made for the attributes in this dimension have an effect on the customer's overall evaluation of the visit.

Hypothesis 1b

H1b: *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Physical appearance and maintenance" and overall "Satisfaction"*

The physical appearance of the Oasis of Bahla World Heritage Site reveals a strong relationship between its perception by the visitor and the satisfaction (ρ=.493**). For Land of Frankincense a similar finding was made with a PCC of ρ=.310**). Overall the correlation analysis results in a significance coefficient of ρ=.411**. Generally, the coefficient is lower than for the first dimensions (*Facilities and employees*) but nonetheless the relationship is highly significant in all cases and therefore H1b was supported by the findings.

Hypothesis 1c

H1c: *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Accessibility" and overall "Satisfaction"*

Although still a positive and significant correlation, the relationship between *Accessibility* and *Satisfaction* shows the lowest coefficients for Oasis of Bahla (ρ=.378**), Land of Frankincense (ρ =.321**) and for both sides in total (ρ=.210**). Although the means of transportation can be considered different for the two UNESCO sites (Oasis of Bahla often reached by car whereas in Frankincense busses are used in the majority of cases), the results show that it is not the most important factor for the visitor and that other dimensions have a stronger relationship with the overall satisfaction. However, significance is recognized and also Hypothesis 1c is accepted due to its support from the findings.

Hypothesis 1d

H1d: *There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Interpretation" and overall "Satisfaction"*

For hypothesis 1d, findings likewise provide support for the acceptance. For the overall analysis and individually for Land of Frankincense, the Pearson Correlation Coefficients let conclude that *Interpretation* has the strongest relationship with *Satisfaction* when comparing the relationships between the other dimensions and *Satisfaction*. Overall ρ=.692** and for Land of Frankincense ρ=.523** which indicates

that interpretation and learning on-site is essential for the visitor and strongly influences the satisfaction. Also for Oasis of Bahla the relationship is highly significant (ϱ=.707**) but not as strong as between the perceived quality of facilities and overall satisfaction.
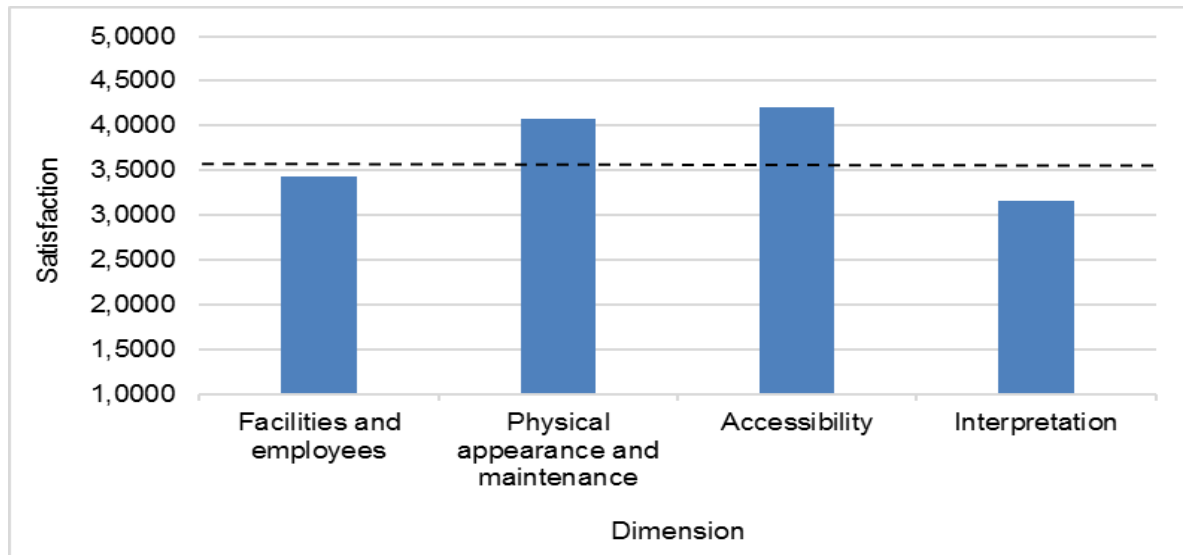
Figure 13. Comparison of means between the dimensions and satisfaction for the entire sample.

Hypothesis 2

H2: *There is a positive and significant relationship between "Satisfaction" and "Behavioural Intention"*

It was proven that the perceived quality of the entire experience influences the overall satisfaction of the visitor. As a second step, it is analysed if the relationship continues and *Satisfaction* also has a positive and significant relationship with the *Behavioural Intention* of the visitor post-visit. The Pearson Correlation clearly gives evidence that this relationship exists in a strong form for each case. For Oasis of Bahla the PCC is ϱ=.563** and for Land of Frankincense ϱ=.754** which is the strongest relationship overall that has been found out of the relationships analysed for this site. Assessing the relationship for both WHS together results in ϱ=.579** which is also highly significant. With the findings discussed, H2 is supported and therefore accepted as confirmed.

Table 8
Results of the analysis of significance between dimensions and satisfaction and satisfaction and behavioural intention

		Satisfaction			Behavioural Intention		
		Oasis of Bahla	Frankin. Land	Combined	Oasis of Bahla	Frankin. Land	Combined
3.	Experience Quality	.735**	.561**	.667**	.465**	.509**	.475**
3.1	Facilities and employees	.711**	.521**	.672**	.422**	.503**	.432**
3.2	Physical appearance	.493**	.310**	.411**	.353**	.335**	.344**
3.3	Accessibility	.378**	.321**	.210**	.369**	.336**	.343**
3.4	Interpretation	.707**	.523**	.692**	.341**	.351**	.311**
4	Satisfaction	/	/	/	.563**	.754**	.579**
5	Behavioural Intention	.563**	.754**	.579**	/	/	/

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5.1.3.2 Differential analysis.

For two reasons, a differential analysis has been conducted. First, it was important to gain knowledge on the significant differences between the dimensions and attributes of the two UNESCO sites (hypotheses 3-5). In order to identify significance, the means for Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense have been compared with the attributes in the dependent list. The resulting ANOVA-table showed the comparison of attributes and dimensions of the experience as well as differences in overall satisfaction and behavioural intention. What should be kept in mind is the already mentioned influence of the middle answer *Neither agree nor disagree* which was the intended option for the respondents when the specific attribute was not available on-site.

Secondly, connections between travel behaviour and satisfaction were to be assessed (hypothesis 6-6c) for the purpose of identifying patterns that help to understand if certain factors also have influence on satisfaction. Here, the entire sample has been used to assess the overall significance but all tests have been conducted again for each individual site. Only when significant differences between the sites were identified, they were mentioned below. In the following, hypotheses 3 to 6c are being tested with respect to the relationship between means and the calculated significance. Confirmation or dismissal of the hypotheses is based on these findings. However, Table 11 also provides information for each site individually and important differences are mentioned.

It was decided to declare differences as significant when a *p*-value of ≤0.05 has been identified resulting in a percentage of confidence of 95% which leaves a 5% mistake chance. In general, only dimensions and attributes that fit this categorization are being mentioned.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There is a significant difference in Experience Quality" between the analysed UNESCO sites

The statistical test provided by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) states a probability value of .112 for the overall experience that visitors had at the sites. This shows that there is no significant difference in the overall experience of the visitor when including all four dimensions (*Facilities and employees*, *Physical appearance and maintenance*, *Accessibility* and *Interpretation*). However, significance can be found in three of the four dimensions and 13 of the 20 attributes.

Facilities and employees with a *p*-value of .001 clearly demonstrates significant differences. In terms of attributes, the ratings for washrooms (.012), the souvenir shop (.000) and the visitor centre (.000) likewise are significantly different between the sites. A logical explanation for the differences of the latter named attributes is the lack of them at Oasis of Bahla. A souvenir shop is not existent and neither a visitor centre is available on-site. A 100% significance was also computed in regard to signposting and directions indicating entrance, exit and general points of interest. Here, Land of Frankincense reaches considerably higher means for two reasons. Again, direction or supportive signposting is not available at the WHS of Oasis of Bahla except for a sign

leading to the washrooms. Some of the rooms of the fort have names on them but due to the size of the fort, those plates cannot be seen from most places. Land of Frankincense, although also comprised of a large area does not face the same problem since the path along the site is easily recognizable and the museum can be seen from anywhere on-site. However, the survey results also indicated that visitors are not completely satisfied with the arrangement and therefore improvements are needed at both World Heritage Sites. Another significant difference (.012) was identified for the perceived knowledge of employees. Visitors were more satisfied with the knowledge provided at Land of Frankincense, however, it is not clear whether visitors also based this evaluation on their tour guides which have been employed considerably more frequently in Land of Frankincense, although they are not part of the WHS. Furthermore, Bahla has fewer employees and usually the cashier providing the tickets is the only human source of information. This is why it has to be considered that many visitors did have less contact with employees in Bahla which degrades the mean although it is still clearly pending in the positive range.

Although the dimension *Physical appearance and maintenance* does not show significance, two of the attributes have been perceived differently by respondents. Even though visitors acknowledged a sufficient level of safety at both sites, a *p*-value of .000 was identified. Reasons for this significance of 100% can lie in the nature of the two sites. While Land of Frankincense is easy to explore, Oasis of Bahla consists of many individual rooms connected by stairs which let the visitor walk on different levels of the fort. Certainly, this holds more risks to fall and cause an injury but at the same time, a large array of security barriers would change the appearance of the WHS and include materials that were not common at the point of emergence. Furthermore, connected to the nature of the UNESCO sites might be the significant difference in the perception of suitability for children. At Oasis of Bahla, children seem to be more entertained than in Land of Frankincense what can be connected to the mentioned lack of barriers which allows the visitor to explore almost the entire fort.

Accessibility reveals 100% significance for both included attributes and therefore for the whole dimension (.000). Road condition and easiness in finding the particular site from the main road have been perceived positive for Land of Frankincense but extraordinarily high means were achieved for Oasis of Bahla. Although both sites are located close to main roads, Bahla provokes attention through

its size and can be seen from kilometres away. Another assumption to explain the difference is the usage of transport to reach the sites. While most of the visitors use cars to visit Oasis of Bahla, it was recognized that often large groups arrive to Land of Frankincense with coaches or smaller groups and families with taxis and therefore probably have no perception and are indifferent of these attributes. The assumption is also supported by the significant higher amount of cruise ship passengers in Land of Frankincense who are driven to the site and therefore do not have to find the WHS on their own.

For five out of six attributes of the *Interpretation* dimension a significance level of 100% has been computed which also applies for the overall result. Information panels are nearly not to be found in Oasis of Bahla whereas Land of Frankincense provides information especially in the museums on-site. This led to a significant difference in satisfaction for the visitor. The same applies for tourists guides since most visitors visited Oasis of Bahla without a guide and therefore were indifferent about the quality. Usually, larger groups of visitors were taken through the premises of Land of Frankincense which justifies an opinion regarding satisfaction with the service. Also, a higher satisfaction level was reached in terms of provided brochures in Land of Frankincense with a *p*-level of .000 in comparison to Oasis of Bahla where brochures are not provided.

Although significant differences have been found for a variety of attributes and three out of four dimensions, the overall experience at the two WHS has not been perceived significantly different. This means that hypothesis 3 is not supported by the findings of the survey and must be rejected.

Hypothesis 3a

H3a: *There is a significant difference in "Satisfaction" between the analysed UNESCO sites*

Difference in satisfaction was expected to be found in the comparison between Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense. This hypothesis is support by the *p*-level (.000) computed. The information received in Oasis of Bahla have not been perceived as satisfying for most of the visitors. Interpretation was not sufficient and visitors did not feel like they learned enough from the visit. A higher level of satisfaction was achieved for Land of Frankincense. Also, service is perceived significantly different

between the sites although in neither of the cases visitors were generally dissatisfied. The same applies to the statement that the management's effort to make the site entertaining and enjoyable was satisfying on which the better part of respondents at both sites agree. The conclusive statement regarding the overall satisfaction shows a *p*-level of .003 and therefore also has been perceived significantly different in comparison. Visitors in Land of Frankincense showed a higher satisfaction level in overall terms which was to be expected considering the significance of the previous items. In both cases, visitors were thoroughly satisfied but the availability of certain facilities and interpretation on-site was decisive for the general view.

Hypothesis 3b

H3b: *There is a significant difference in "Behavioural Intention" between the analysed UNESCO sites*

The differential analysis showed no significance between stated behavioural intentions at Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense. Although various attributes have been rated significantly different, in each case the results give evidence (with an over 90% conformity) that visitors value the World Heritage Sites enough in order to confidently recommend it to other people. Also, an increase of entrance fees was not dismissed for either of the sites and for a large part of the respondents a visit to another UNESCO site in Oman is possible based on the experience in Bahla or Land of Frankincense. Accordingly, hypothesis 3b has not been supported by the research and has to be rejected.

Table 9
Results of the analysis of significant differences between Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense

Satisfaction Level	Oasis of Bahla Mean	Land of Frankincense Mean	Sig. *p*-Value
3.	**Experience Quality**		
	3.6772	**3.7832**	**.112**
3.1	*Facilities and employees*		
	3.3333	*3.5833*	*.001*
3.1.1	4.0800	3.7600	.012
3.1.2	3.1133	3.5600	.000
3.1.3	3.0600	3.1700	.169
3.1.4	3.0733	3.5700	.000
3.1.5	3.8133	3.9400	.254
3.1.6	2.7467	3.5800	.000
3.1.7	3.7733	3.8700	.431
3.1.8	3.3467	3.6300	.012
3.1.9	2.9933	3.1700	.136
3.2	*Physical appearance and maintenance*		
	4.0600	*4.1025*	*.583*
3.2.1	4.6333	4.4900	.141
3.2.2	3.5467	4.0800	.000
3.2.3	4.3000	4.4800	.071
3.2.4	3.7600	3.3600	.002
3.3	*Accessibility*		
	4.3967	*3.9359*	*.000*
3.3.1	4.4000	3.9800	.000
3.3.2	4.3933	3.8900	.000
3.4	*Interpretation*		

	2.9187	*3.5120*	*.000*
3.4.1	2.9667	3.8100	.000
3.4.2	2.6133	3.4300	.000
3.4.3	2.8067	3.2500	.000
3.4.4	3.0000	3.5800	.000
3.4.5	3.2067	3.4900	.060
4.	**Satisfaction**		
	3.3383	**3.9675**	**.000**
4.1	2.8200	3.8400	.000
4.2	3.3200	3.8700	.000
4.3	3.4533	4.0300	.000
4.4	3.7600	4.1300	.003
5.	**Behavioural Intention**		
	3.8222	**3.7733**	**.638**
5.1	4.2067	4.2200	.906
5.2	3.4133	3.1600	.096
5.3	3.8467	3.9400	.398

Hypothesis 4

H4: *Visitors who spent more money on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*

As can be identified from the significance coefficient in Table 12, in the cases of Oasis of Bahla (*p*-value: .001) and the overall sample (*p*-value: .000), significant differences in satisfaction can be found among visitors who spent *less than 1 OMR*, *1 to 5 OMR*, *6 to 10 OMR*, *10 to 15 OMR* and *more than 15 OMR*. Apart from *more than 15 OMR*, the mean of satisfaction rises in each category indicating a higher satisfaction with the visit when more money was spent on-site up to a certain point. Although it was not the case for Land of Frankincense, the findings show that visitors do not feel less satisfied when they spend more money. In contrast, their satisfaction increases from purchasing food and beverages for relaxation and regaining energy. Also wondering around the souvenir shop including buying something to remember the visit seems to

satisfy the respondent. Considering these findings and the emphasis of the whole sample, hypothesis 4 can be accepted.

Hypothesis 4a

H4a: *Visitors who spent more time on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*

The duration of the overall visit does not seem to be an influencing factor towards satisfaction. In none of the cases a significance coefficient equal or lower .05 was identified. Although means of satisfaction are also increasing in each duration category of the entire sample (*less than 1 hour*, *1-2 hours*, *more than 2 hours*), the rise cannot be considered significant, and hence hypothesis 4a is disconfirmed.

Hypothesis 4b

H4b: *Visitors whose main reason to visit the site was the UNESCO label were significantly less satisfied with their visit*

Also, hypothesis 4b has to be rejected due to non-significance. The assumption was made to assess whether visitors expect highly developed sites when visiting because of the UNESCO label. This is not supported by the results and therefore satisfaction level is not dependent on the UNESCO label as main driver to visit the heritage site.

Hypothesis 4c

H4c: *Visitors who have visited other UNESCO sites before were significantly less satisfied with their visit*

The *p*-value of .353 reveal that experienced UNESCO World Heritage Site visitors do not have a significantly different satisfaction level than visitors who set foot on a designated site for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman. Therefore, having seen other UNESCO sites before and being able to compare does not influence one's satisfaction when visiting another WHS. Accordingly, hypothesis 4c has to be rejected.

Table 10
Results of the analysis of significant differences in satisfaction between items
Spending, Duration and Reason

| | Satisfaction | | |
| | Sig. | | |
	Oasis of Bahla	Land of Frankincense	Complete sample
Money spent on-site	*.001*	.091	*.000*
Time spent on-site	.278	.063	.229
UNESCO label as reason to visit	.189	.789	.302
Visited other UNESCO sites before	.151	.174	.353

5.1.3.3 Cross tabulation and Pearson Chi-Square Test.

Cross tabulation is a joint frequency distribution. The associated Pearson Chi-square Test or Chi-square test of associations is a nonparametric test and used to discover relationships between categorical variables. The found asymptotic significance (2-sided) indicates whether a significant relationship exists or if the variables act independently. Similar to the differential analysis, a significance ≤0.05 represents a strong relationship where .000 is the highest achievable significance. Significance coefficients >0.05 are considered too weak and therefore indicate a non-significant relationship between variables. The presented numbers in this section are computed from data of the entire sample. Differences in significance between the sites were checked in order to confirm or dismiss the hypotheses but the result were similar for Oasis of Bahla, Land of Frankincense and both sites combined.

Hypothesis 5

H5: *There is a significant relationship between the time and money spent on-site*

According to the Chi-square presented in Table 13, the duration of the visit is not connected to the amount of money that is being spent. Visitors who inspect the site for a longer time do not tend to spend more money and therefore a significant relationship is not found and hypothesis 5 rejected.

Hypothesis 6

H6: *There is a significant relationship between the nature of the visitor's trip and the money spent*

Different types of travelers have spent different amounts of money according to an asymptotic significance of .000 seen in Table 13. Especially cruise passengers and visitors who visited the sites as part of a travel package spent more money than self-organizers and business travelers. This might be due to a larger budget for these visitor types who are usually older than visitors who organize trips on their own or travel because of business. The Chi-square (not listed in Table 13 since not part of the hypotheses) confirms this assumption with a 100% significance between age-group and nature of the trip. Correspondingly, the assumed relationship between trip nature and spending exists and is significant which leads to the acceptance of hypothesis 6.

Table 11
Results of the analysis of significant differences in satisfaction between items Spending, Duration and Nature.

		Money spent on-site				
		Less than 1 OMR	1-5 OMR	6-10 OMR	11-15 OMR	More than 15 OMR
Time spent on-site	Less than 1 hour	53.2%	40.0%	16.7%	33.3%	28.6%
	1-2 hours	42.1%	51.6%	66.7%	66.7%	57.1%
	More than 2 hours	4.8%	8.4%	16.7%	0.0%	14.3%
	Chi-square: .115					
Nature of the trip	Cruise	14.3%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	Package tour	23.0%	12.6%	25.0%	66.7%	14.3%
	Self-organized	54.8%	76.8%	41.7%	33.3%	14.3%
	Business travel	3.2%	4.2%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%

| Other | 4.8% | 2.1% | 16.7% | 0.0% | 21.4% |

Chi-square: .000

5.2 Part two: Content analysis of TripAdvisor and survey comments

Content analysis is an analytical technique and used in this chapter to code and categorise the data received from the English-language version of TripAdvisor and comments of the *Suggestions*-section of the conducted survey to analyse them quantitatively. Although in most cases, statements and reviews clearly referred to certain attributes of the World Heritage Sites, it should be considered that the analysis of qualitative data in the context of a content analysis is subjective, interpretative and descriptive. In addition, it must be acknowledged that most reviews and comments are written in a very general way and mostly refer to overall satisfaction or behavioural intention but not to individual attributes. Also, percentages stated in the tables are calculated from the entire number of reviews. For example, a 40% overall satisfaction cannot be understood as a 60% dissatisfaction rate. It simply states that 40% of the whole sample of reviews have referred to the overall satisfaction and therefore have been counted. Other reviews might just describe the visit but do not evaluate it in a positive or negative manner. However, as presented in Chapter 4.2, the process follows the rules of content analysis and the best of the author's knowledge and belief, using professional diligence.

In the following, content analysis is conducted for the UNESCO sites of Oasis of Bahla as well as Land of Frankincense. Tables 14 and 16 present the data perceived from TripAdvisor. The dimensions and attributes are taken from the questionnaire (here, phrases of the original questionnaire are not used and only the actual attribute is named) and review comments have been analysed and categorized. Attributes of the original questionnaire that have not been mentioned have been deleted from the table. The section *Other comments* lists other remarks that have been made but do not fit the questionnaire dimensions. Tables 15 and 17 list phrases that appeared in this or a similar way in the *Suggestions*-section of the conducted survey. Similar to the process for the reviews, the comments were counted, converted to percentage and analysed for the sake of interpretation. In both cases, the description of results is not

conducted in a holistic manner since only the most notable numbers are mentioned, however, all numbers can be found in the tables below.

5.2.1 Content analysis of TripAdvisor for Oasis of Bahla.

In total, 206 reviews were analysed for Oasis of Bahla on TripAdvisor (TripAdvisor n.D.-b) which is the full number of reviews that was available for Oasis of Bahla on TripAdvisor on March 28th 2017. The Oasis of Bahla received four out of five stars in total (31% excellent, 46% very good, 18% average, 3% poor, 0% terrible) and was ranked third place out of 11 "things to do in Nizwa". Furthermore, it received the "Certificate of Excellence" which is awarded when sites "consistently earn great reviews from travelers" (TripAdvisor n.D.-e).

As for the overall experience, positive and negative remarks are balanced. The individual dimensions and attributes of the experience are not mentioned in most reviews but they have been referred to. In the case of *Facilities and employees*, the condition of the washrooms has been noticed positively whereas the lack of a souvenir shop, restaurants and a visitor centre was perceived as adverse by one review each only. Nine reviews referred to missing signposting and directions to comfortably move through the site. *Physical appearance and maintenance* received 14 (6.8%) positive and four negative mentions (1.9%). In this dimension, especially cleanliness of the site as well as the easiness to move around and the fun of exploring for kids was mentioned positively. For the latter, in many cases, the safety was mentioned at the same time (e.g. "kids will love it but do supervise them"; "watch your young kids as several staircases don't have railings"). The individual attributes of the dimension *Interpretation* usually have not been mentioned. However, interpretation and information was an important focus in many of the reviews which can be seen in the part of *Satisfaction*. Here, 51 reviews refer to the information provided on-site and emphasise the disappointment of its lack and in some cases mention examples of other forts where they received a better interpretation.

> *"I wish there was more information about the buildings and the history"*

> *"Bahla could do with some information to help visitors gain a deeper insight into the life of the fort"*

"The only big problem is that there is no information about the fort. Seriously, no information at all. If you need a pamphlet or two to enjoy your visit, then many you should visit one of the other forts"

"Unfortunately, although the restoration has been done to a high standard there is absolutely no information available for visitors (unlike nearby Jabrin Fort which has an audio guide available for visitors and where each room has been decorated with objects relating to the room's original purpose)"

However, 42 reviewers state their overall satisfaction with the visit to Oasis of Bahla and in many cases the authors who mentioned the lack of interpretation also informed the reader that they did not regret the visit but enjoyed the stay nonetheless. This shows that although interpretation is important, the fort itself is very entertaining for the visitor which foretells a strongly increasing satisfaction when interpretation of the site has been realised.

"Bahla is just […] impressive. Its location, overlooking the city, the size, the complexity of its architecture"

"A UNESCO World Heritage Site and rightly so!"

"Imposing castle that's much better than Nizwa's. The major let-down is that there isn't a scrap of information about any of it"

"Beautifully restored but no information"

"Even better if there was more information available about the history of the fort and what each room was used for. A very interesting visit, nonetheless"

"Don't expect a lot of information […] as signs are minimal. But the site speaks for itself"

Fittingly, none of the reviewers remark that he or she would not recommend visiting Oasis of Bahla. In contrast, 21 reviews clearly include a recommendation for potential visitors to experience the place themselves. Another interesting information that was found is that 18 of the reviews mentioned that they perceived the entrance fee to be very cheap and some would consider paying more.

"We enjoyed visiting this fort and recommend to you as well"

"I highly recommend visiting. It's worth the drive from Muscat"

"You get the sense of Arabian majesty whilst wandering around […]. Highly recommended"

"I think it will get better with time, especially if they produce […] guidebooks or information boards"

"We were not charged an entry fee but would have happily paid to experience this amazing building"

"Inexpensive entrance fee"

Furthermore, two comments were mentioned repeatedly in around 30% of the reviews. Opening hours often were not clear enough for visitors and many found the site to be closed when they tried visiting it. What has to be said is that this comment in many cases was made by reviewers who visited the site during restorations or shortly after. The last mentioning of unclear opening hours was in 2013, therefore, visitors seem to have had better experiences in recent years. 62 (30.1%) of reviewers on TripAdvisor highly appreciate the restoration and conservation of the fort. Visitors perceive the fort as "beautifully restored" and claim it to be a "wonderful" and "well restored historical monument".

Table 12
Results of the content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews for Oasis of Bahla

		Mention (of 206 reviews)					
	Dimension/Attribute	Positive		Neutral		Negative	
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%
3.	**Experience Quality**	**22**	**10.7**	**1**	**0.5**	**24**	**11.7**
3.1	***Facilities and employees***	*3*	*1.5*	*1*	*0.5*	*13*	*6.3*
3.1.1	Toilets	3	1.5	1	0.5	1	0.5
3.1.2	Souvenir shop					1	0.5
3.1.3	Restaurant					1	0.5
3.1.4	Visitor centre					1	0.5

3.1.6	Signposting and directions					9	4.4
3.2	*Physical appearance and maintenance*	*14*	*6.8*			*4*	*1.9*
3.2.1	Cleanliness	4	1.9				
3.2.2	Safety					2	1
3.2.3	Moving on-site	5	2.4			2	1
3.2.4	Children entertainment	5	2.4				
3.3	*Accessibility*	*2*	*1*			*2*	*1*
3.3.2	Visibility from main road	2	1			2	1
3.4	*Interpretation*	*3*	*1.5*			*5*	*2.4*
3.4.1	Information panels	1	0.5			1	0.5
3.4.2	Brochures					1	0.5
3.4.3	Audio guides	1	0.5			2	1
3.4.4	Tourist guides	1	0.5			1	0.5
4.	**Satisfaction**	**42**	**20.4**	**9**	**4.4**	**51**	**24.8**
4.1	Information provided					49	23.8
4.2	Service received			1	0.5		
4.3	Entertainment and enjoyment	1	0.5				
4.4	Overall satisfaction	42	20.4	8	3.9	2	1
5.	**Behavioural Intention**	**39**	**18.9**	**7**	**3.4**		
5.1	Recommendation	21	10.2	2	1		
5.2	Ticket price	18	8.7	5	2.4		
	Other comments						
	Conservation	62	30.1				
	Opening hours					60	29.1

Mention of multiple attributes in one review possible

5.2.2 Content analysis of survey comments for Oasis of Bahla.

Suggestions and comments of the respondents that participated in the author's UNESCO site survey present similar patterns to the previous analysis. Table 15 lists phrases about the attributes referred from highest to lowest percentage of mention. The main suggestion as also described for the TripAdvisor analysis is to have

interpretation on-site to enable the visitor to learn from the visit to the fort. Especially information panels were mentioned by almost 79% and maps, audio guides, brochures, tourists guides and visitor centre as part of site-interpretation add up to over 36%. Other aspects that were mentioned refer to insufficient directions, missing garbage cans, the lack of shops specially to purchase water, need for safety improvements and more signage on major roads to reach the WHS. Again, like the content analysis of Chapter 5.2.1, the beauty of the site was emphasised by several respondents and represents the positive perception of the building itself.

"More signage! Great site, but not a lot of information"

"Please: brochures, information panels. Site should be marked on major roads (21, 15). Functions + architecture of the fort is so interesting but nowhere explained"

"Oasis of Bahla is an enormously impressive place. But it is complicated. Much more explanation needed. A simple plan would be a start"

"Please, put more panels and explanations inside the site. Beautiful place anyway"

"It was not easy to get around as no signs are leading the way – I almost got lost […]. Information on the site should be improved […]. However, it was worth coming and to see this impressive site which has been well preserved"

Table 13
Results of the content analysis of survey comments for Oasis of Bahla

Comment	Mention (of 61 comments)	
	F.	%
Information panels missing	48	78.7
Beautiful site	13	21.3
Directions missing	8	13.1
Map missing	7	11.5
Audio guide missing	7	11.5

Brochure missing	5	8.2
Garbage can missing	3	4.9
Tourist guides missing	2	3.3
Shop missing	2	3.3
Safety needs improvement	2	3.3
Visitor center missing	1	1.6
Signs on major roads missing	1	1.6

Mention of multiple attributes in one comment possible

The findings of the TripAdvisor and survey suggestions content analysis clearly indicate the current issues but more importantly the huge potential of the Oasis of Bahla UNESCO World Heritage Site. The majority of comments refer to missing interpretation but likewise emphasise the beauty of the place. Almost no online reviewer or survey participant stated his or her overall dissatisfaction and in many cases Oasis of Bahla was perceived as recommendable to other visitors. Furthermore, the restoration and conservation was mentioned in a very positive way. As soon as the management of the WHS implements a strategy for the interpretation and is able to explain the universal cultural value which has been confirmed by UNESCO, Oasis of Bahla could rise to be one of the touristic highlights in the Sultanate.

5.2.3 Content analysis of TripAdvisor for Land of Frankincense.

The UNESCO site of Land of Frankincense is reviewed on two separated pages on TripAdvisor. 14 reviews were found for the archaeological sites of Al-Baleed (TripAdvisor n.D.-c) which are listed number 16 out of 38 things to do in Salalah. It received 4 out of 5 stars in total (27% excellent, 54% very good, 13% average, 0% poor, 4% terrible). The Museum of Land of Frankincense (TripAdvisor n.D.-d) is ranked 5th place, received 305 reviews with 4 out of 5 stars in total (36% excellent, 42% very good, 17% average, 3% poor, 0% terrible) and was also granted the Certificate of Excellence.

Overall experience scores 15% positively worded reviews and 12.5% negative statements. Each of the individual dimensions are balanced in terms of satisfied and unsatisfied visitors. For *Facilities and employees*, the souvenir shop was especially mentioned as providing good offers by six reviews. Children entertainment was an

attribute that reoccurred in several reviews, also with mixed opinions. Five reviews pointed out that it was an enjoyable visit to the site with children whereas 16 reviewers stated the opposite. For the most part, negative opinions were voiced by parents of small children under the age of six due to the fact that they are not allowed inside the museum.

"If you are a fan of history and especially on maritime history it is worth the trip, however, for a family with 2 little kids, definitely not the right place"

"We didn't bother to go inside leaving our toddler out alone. What a waste of time"

Interpretation received 5% of positive and 3.4% negative feedback. Information panels were received as sufficient but tourist guides did not fulfil the expectations of seven reviewers. Here it must be stated again that the tourist guides work independently from the WHS and are usually employed by tourism companies or the visitors themselves. More meaningful are the numbers for satisfaction with the visit and behavioural intention. Similar to Oasis of Bahla, reviews often only refer to these aspects and do not describe individual attributes of the site. 5% of reviews described dissatisfaction with the visit while over 59% stated to be satisfied. Although some attributes were perceived to be dissatisfying, the general impression that visitors gained from the visit was very positive for most of the reviewers. Also, not even 1% intended not to recommend the site whereas almost 30% stated the opposite and would recommend to fellow potential visitors. Furthermore, 10 reviewers would pay a higher entrance fee to be able to revisit the WHS.

"Fascinating, especially when seen with nearby museum"

"A must visit place to learn about history"

"Do not miss the museum"

"Nice archaeological place and beautiful scenery but unfortunately no-on on the site to guide you or give further explanations"

An additional statement that has been made 10 times referred to the ban of photography inside the museum. Visitors were disappointed that it was not possible to take pictures of the displayed objects in order remember the visit or show the

impressions to friends and relatives. When asked for reasons for the prohibition, the management stated that it is due to copyright claims and protection of the exhibits.

"Couldn't take photos inside which was a negative"

"Great accessible place, great for getting an illustrated history lesson of the Salalah area. Only sad part was there were no photographs allowed in the exhibit areas"

Table 14
Results of the content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews for Land of Frankincense

Dimension/Attribute		Mention (of 319 reviews)					
		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%
3.	**Experience Quality**	**48**	**15**	**12**	**3.8**	**40**	**12.5**
3.1	*Facilities and employees*	*18*	*5.6*	*10*	*3.1*	*10*	*3.1*
3.1.1	Toilets	3	0.9	4	1.3	2	0.6
3.1.2	Souvenir shop	6	1.9	3	0.9	1	0.3
3.1.3	Restaurant	3	0.9	1	0.3	1	0.3
3.1.4	Visitor centre			2	0.6		
3.1.5	Rest areas					1	0.3
3.1.6	Signposting and directions	2	0.6				
3.1.7	Helpful employees	3	0.9			3	0.9
3.1.8	Knowledgeable employees	1	0.3			2	0.6
3.2	*Physical appearance and maintenance*	*12*	*3.8*	*1*	*0.3*	*16*	*5*
3.2.1	Cleanliness	1	0.3				
3.2.3	Moving on-site	6	1.9				
3.2.4	Children entertainment	5	1.6	1	0.3	16	5
3.3	*Accessibility*	*2*	*0.6*			*3*	*0.9*
3.3.1	Road condition					1	0.3

3.3.2	Visibility from main road	2	0.6			2	0.6
3.4	*Interpretation*	*16*	*5*	*1*	*0.3*	*11*	*3.4*
3.4.1	Information panels	14	4.4			4	1.3
3.4.4	Tourist guides	2	0.6	1	0.3	7	2.2
4.	**Satisfaction**	**189**	**59.2**	**38**	**11.9**	**16**	**5**
4.1	Information provided	43	13.5	11	3.4	8	2.5
4.3	Entertainment and enjoyment	1	0.3				
4.4	Overall satisfaction	146	45.8	27	8.5	8	2.5
5.	**Behavioural Intention**	**104**	**32.6**	**31**	**9.7**	**3**	**0.9**
5.1	Recommendation	94	29.5	5	1.6	2	0.6
5.2	Ticket price	10	3.1	26	8.2	1	0.3
	Other Comments						
	Photography forbidden					10	3.1

Mention of multiple attributes in one review possible

5.2.4 Content analysis of survey comments for Land of Frankincense.

Suggestions for Land of Frankincense were low in numbers which might be due to the different distribution of travel types compared to Oasis of Bahla. Groups of visitors who were part of cruises or travel packages had very limited time to explore the site. Therefore, visitors often were not able to take more time for the questionnaire than it took to tick off the boxes. However, although the main mentioned issue was the already described ban of photography inside the museum, the suggestions that were made revealed some other aspects than the content analysis of TripAdvisor. Two visitors stated on the questionnaire and more in personal discussions on-site that they were confused with the name Land of Frankincense since they expected to learn more about frankincense instead of general Omani history.

"Photographs are not allowed. That's not state of the art for such a place"

"Museum should change its name. Where is the Frankincense?"

Also, interpretation was not sufficient for 10 of the 12 respondents, referring to missing maps and brochures as well as information on the universal cultural value. Additionally, visitors asked for information on frankincense and more information

panels which also should be made available in more languages than English and Arabic.

"Need more information. No clue why it is UNESCO"

"No insight into the frankincense culture"

Furthermore, more entertainment for children was demanded and an expansion of the shop to an actual restaurant suggested. One visitor also wondered why the souvenir shop was closed although the site itself was open which was perceived as an attenuation of the visitation quality. On the other hand, the same visitor praised the well-done organization of the site in general.

"English brochures should be made available for foreign guests. Museum shops are closed. I would have liked to spend some money to purchase souvenirs. Photography should be permitted as long as the guests don't use flash. The museum is really well organised"

Table 15
Results of the content analysis of survey comments for Land of Frankincense

Comment	Mention (12)	
	F.	%
Photography should be allowed	3	25
Name of the site is misleading	2	16.7
Maps are missing	2	16.7
Brochures are missing	2	16.7
Entertainment for children is missing	2	16.7
More information about Frankincense is needed	2	16.7
More languages on information panels are needed	2	16.7
More information panels are needed	1	8.3
More information on why it is UNESCO is needed	1	8.3
Restaurants are missing	1	8.3
Shops were closed although site was open	1	8.3

The site is well-organized	1	8.3

Mention of multiple attributes in one comment possible

Generally, visitors are very satisfied with their visit to Land of Frankincense. The analysis of TripAdvisor reviews indicate that visits are enjoyable and especially the museum often is praised to be unexpectedly entertaining. Although the offered interpretation is appreciated, reviewers demand more information in general to be educated about the site, frankincense and the cultural value of the place. Also, it is wished for the allowance to take photos and parents would welcome a disestablishment of age restrictions.

5.3   Discussion of Key Findings

In this subchapter, main findings of the presented study are highlighted, discussed and connected to the literature presented in the literature review. The demographic profile and travel pattern of the respondents are summarized and compared with findings from similar studies. Furthermore, the hypotheses described, analysed and confirmed or dismissed in Chapter 5.1.3 are reflected upon with evidence from other researchers respectively. Moreover, Table 18 sums up the results of the hypotheses testing.

5.3.1   Demographic profile and travel pattern.

The profile of the respondents (Table 4) who participated in this study shows strong similarities with findings in other studies assessing heritage sites. Although King and Prideuax (2010), Wang et al. (2015) and Remoaldo et al. (2014) reported a higher amount of woman visiting heritage sites, the differences always were only marginal which is also confirmed by Adie and Hall (2016) for three World Heritage Sites in Serbia, Morocco and the USA. For the survey conducted in this study of WHS in Oman, the outcome also showed marginal differences in gender distribution with a slightly higher amount of men (52.8%) than women (47.2%) visiting. Therefore, there is no indication that the UNESCO sites of Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense have a stronger attraction for either gender and that the usual spreading of gender at heritage sites applies. In terms of age of heritage tourists, the literature in earlier years often concluded that heritage tourists are usually older than tourists in general (Huh & Uysal

2006; Kerstetter et al. 2001; Richards 1996). However, Perez (2009) opposed this view and identifies a positive change in the number of younger tourists visiting heritage sites. This development is also evident in the findings presented for the UNESCO sites in Oman with the age-group 25-34 years being the strongest (28.8%) while 35-44 follows with 15.6%. The findings illustrate that the typical age distribution among heritage tourists is fading with many young people being more and more involved in cultural aspects of the society, willing to learn and participate in this form of tourism. Also, the country itself can play a role since travelling to Oman might still be considered more of an adventure and therefore is especially attractive for young people. The awareness includes a signal to the management of heritage sites: this healthy development needs support from the supply side of heritage tourism. Young people are used to being entertained and need to gain a level of involvement from the site to not lose interest in the heritage site too quickly and spend more time and money while visiting.

Another important aspect of the assessment of the visitors' demographic profile was the level of education. 88.4% of participants stated an academic background of either currently a student, graduate or with Philosophical Doctorate (PhD). This is aligned with the findings from Silberberg (1995) and Weaver et al. (2002) who identified heritage tourists to be more highly educated than the general public. Adie and Hall (2016) confirm these results for World Heritage Sites showing consistently high education of visitors. In terms of scale, UNESCO sites in Oman can be considered to reach a "world"-level according to the "Scales of heritage" presented by Timothy (1997). 90.4% of respondents stated to be international tourists and only 9.6% are residents of the Sultanate of Oman. Huh et al. (2006) describes similar findings, noting that especially UNESCO World Heritage visitors in many cases are internationals whereas regular heritage sites attract a higher number of domestic visitors. Adie and Hall (2016) state that especially visitors from Europe, with German, English and French visitors on the forefront, are particularly attracted by World Heritage Sites. Although not specifically assessed by the survey, contact with visitors provided the author of this study with similar observations for Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense.

Travel types of visitors differed between Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense due to the differences in location. Oasis of Bahla is part of the Nizwa region and located over 200 kilometres away from the capital Muscat. This led to a high number of visitors who organized the trip themselves and were not part of cruises

or travel packages whereas more than half of the respondents at Land of Frankincense which is located close to the city centre and harbour stated to be part of this kind of travel arrangement. Through the factor of travel type an effort can be made to segment visitors in respect to the segmentation of Timothy and Boyd (2003). Visitors who organise the trip themselves can be considered more serious heritage tourists than those who are part of a pre-organized tour (passive heritage tourists). The same can be done using the segmentation introduced by Poria et al. (2003) who differentiate between heritage tourists (self-organized) and tourists at heritage sites (cruise, travel package). Accordingly, to the distribution of travel types, visitors of Land of Frankincense often gained their knowledge about the site from the travel agency although the main source of information overall was found to be books and guides. Online sources were only used by 11.6% of respondents which is remarkable considering the age distribution. A reason for this percentage most probably is the lack of online representation of the UNESCO sites which are only described on governmental webpages or the official UNESCO domain.

Another interesting result which puts the UNESCO label as pull-factor into perspective is the disconfirmation of the assumption that the UNESCO label is a main motivation for visitors to visit heritage sites with over 70% of respondents stating that they had other reasons. Other authors gained similar results and Yan and Morrison (2007) likewise did not find a strong relationship between awareness of the fact that a site is labelled World Heritage and the decision to visit it. Also, Poria et al. (2013) conclude that the designations do not have a remarkable impact on tourism demand. Although a UNESCO designation can still be considered an important part of marketing, this and other studies show that processes inside the organization and the general image need improvement to not entirely lose credibility and relevance. Additionally, the review of similar studies showed that visitors associate a World Heritage Site with a more professional management that provides more than toilets and on-site transportation to justify higher entrance fees. Already in 2000, Mershen argued that in Oman, cultural and archaeological sites are not yet sufficiently managed and lack the appropriate infrastructure. This goes against recommendations of ICOMOS which state in the site manager's handbook (ICOMOS 1993) that national governments should consider all required aspects of tourism infrastructure which would be necessary to satisfy the visitors, before nominating the site.

In the Omani case however, the hypothesis that visitors whose main motive to visit World Heritage Sites in Oman was the UNESCO label were less satisfied had to be rejected due to insignificance. This also depends on the way the site is promoted. Many countries use the label to improve the visibility of the heritage product (Timothy & Nyaupane 2009) and some destinations do not promote it as aggressively as others. Also, the OECD remarks that marketing of heritage sites often is too broad and that especially UNESCO sites need to be marketed more individually to emphasise the specific attributes of the place. In the case of Oman, its strong position as a very safe country for visitors with four listed World Heritage Sites[32] is a good fundament to extent marketing efforts and make use of the international acknowledged label to increase attention although this alone is not a universal remedy as proven by this and other presented studies. Although the sites are mentioned on the official Omani tourism webpages, individual pages would be needed that give general information about the value of the place but also list opening hours and contact possibilities.

Questions referring to time and money spent on-site also provided insight on possible improvements. Most visitors (92.8%) only stayed up to two hours and 83% spent between less than 1 and up to 5 OMR. In connection to the analysis of what the money was spent on it can be said that most visitors only spent it on entrance fees and in some cases on food and beverages. For the case of Oasis of Bahla this is due to the lack of facilities that would even give the option to spend money. In Land of Frankincense, spending was higher since snacks and drinks as well as souvenirs are provided. Although visitors who are part of cruises or travel packages had a fixed schedule of departure and therefore very limited time, those groups were identified to spend the most money. It can be assumed that those types of visitors generally have a higher budget during vacation. A higher spending on-site is not only interesting because of the economic benefit for the supplier but also because results of this study showed that customer satisfaction increases proportionally with the amount of money spent (up to a certain limit). However, time and money spent on-site did not show a significant relationship.

The question referring to expectations was included in the questionnaire in order to be reassured that the chosen model fits the conducted study. The result of over half

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[32] On the Arabian Peninsula: Oman: 4; Saudi-Arabia: 4; Iraq: 4: Jordan: 4; Yemen: 3; UAE: 1; Qatar: 1; Kuwait: 0 cultural World Heritage Sites

of the respondents being indifferent of their expectations confirmed the assumption that expectations are not a good indicator of satisfaction, especially for Oman which is a young tourism destination that is often visited for the first time (76.4% first-time Oman tourists in this study) what complicates having specific expectations. This finding can be considered a confirmation that measuring the actual experience and relate it to satisfaction is efficient and in this case superior to Oliver's (1980) disconfirmation theory.

5.3.2 Experience quality and satisfaction.

Timothy and Boyd stated in 2003 that the actual heritage experience is the centre of the discussion of satisfaction. In the case of this study, visitors perceived the quality of the overall experience to be valuable which had a positive and highly significant relationship with the overall satisfaction proven using correlation analysis. Therefore, the first part of the model that refers to this relationship has been confirmed and is align with the findings of De Rojas and Camarero (2008) who pointed out that visitor satisfaction often is determined by the entire experience obtained.
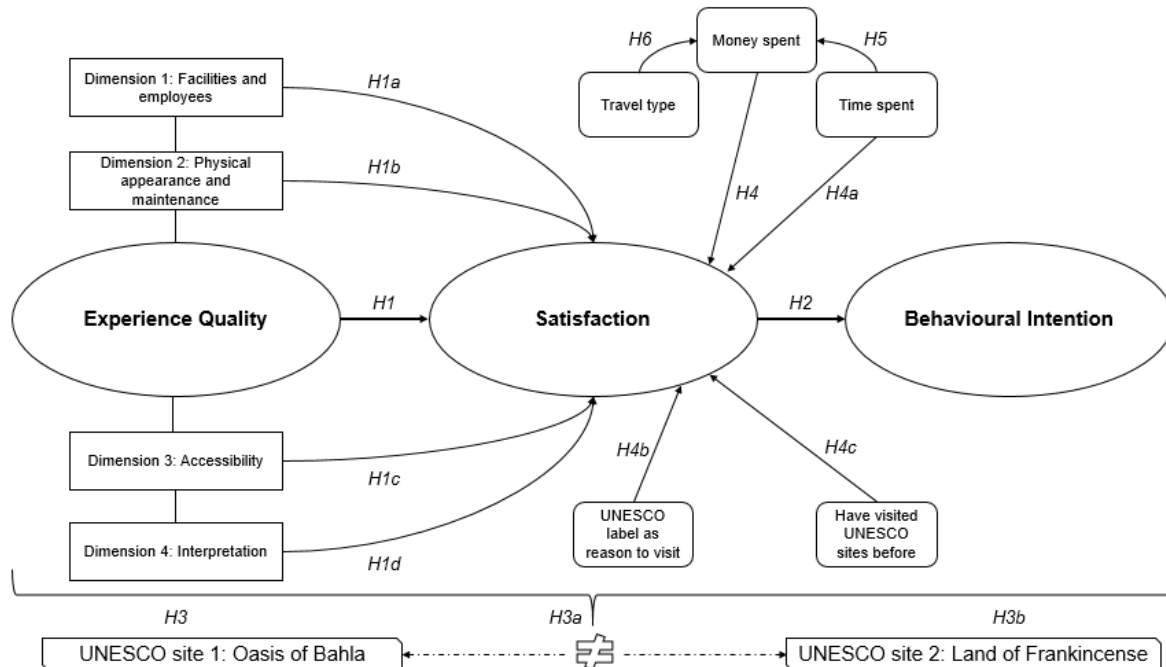
Also Kao, Huang and Wu (2008) concluded that a positive relationship between the experiential quality and overall satisfaction exists. Furthermore, the relationship in comparison to the findings for expectations confirm that experience is a better indicator of satisfaction what has been stated above and explained by Tse and Wilton (1988)

who argue that a customer will always be satisfied if a product performs well, regardless of expectations that have existed before the purchase or use of service.

5.3.2.1 Dimensions and satisfaction.

All hypotheses stating that positive and significant relationships between the individual dimensions of the experience with their associated attributes and satisfaction exist have been supported by the findings of this study. Moreover, the relationships were all identified to be at .01-level and therefore are highly significant. This process is in accordance with the publication of Pizam et al. (1978) who were among the first researchers to introduce the idea to measure satisfaction based on different dimensions of destination performance which was supported by Churchill and Surprenant (1982) who stated that quality can be measured with attribute performance.

In the case of the dimension *Facilities and employees*, findings provided evidence that certain facilities are important to increase customer satisfaction. For the Oasis of Bahla, the lack of restaurants and souvenir shops was noted negatively by visitors and also for Land of Frankincense, evaluation of these facilities (also mentioned as suggestion on questionnaires or in reviews on TripAdvisor) leave room for improvement. As discussed in the literature review, Timothy and Boyd (2003) as well as Prentice (1993) emphasized the importance of establishing shopping facilities since they are main contributors to economic revenues at heritage sites, making up to 50% of total on-site expenditure. For the Alta Museum in Norway, which is associated with a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Johanson and Olsen (2010) also noted that visitors spent more time in the café and browsing through the gift shop than looking at the exhibits. This shows that attributes going beyond the supply of culture and heritage play a role. Align with this perception, Ramires et al. (2016) named mobility, cleanliness and safety as other attributes of this category. These have been included in the dimension *Physical appearance and maintenance* and referred to by multiple visitors and reviewers. Especially the cleanliness of both UNESCO sites has been highly appreciated. What has to be improved in both cases is the entertainment factor for children. Visitors with kids were unsatisfied with the age restriction of the museum in Land of Frankincense since they were not able to enter without leaving one parent with the child. For Oasis of Bahla it was remarked that children enjoyed the stay but safety measures must be improved. *Accessibility* had the weakest relationship with

satisfaction but was still highly significant. Also, Jusoh et al. (2013) identified accessibility to play an important role to make the site attractive for visitors. Roads leading to Oasis of Bahla were perceived as well-developed while visitors in Land of Frankincense were mostly indifferent about the quality.

Interpretation was specifically interesting since the strongest relationship with satisfaction was identified for the overall sample and for Land of Frankincense. This agrees with findings from several authors (Poria et al. 2004; Poria et al. 2006; Yankholmes & Akyeampong 2010; Goh 2010; Chen & Chen 2010) who concluded that the main motivation of visitors visiting heritage sites is education and that the strong willingness to learn is one of the most significant motivations for heritage tourists which Chen (1998) referred to as the pursuit of knowledge. In this study, the importance of interpretation was identified in each part of the executed analysis. Especially for Oasis of Bahla where almost no interpretation is provided, visitors were dissatisfied with the situation which resulted in a mean of 2.8200 and multiple mention in the suggestion part of the questionnaire and in reviews on TripAdvisor. Especially brochures were referred to by visitors as the fastest, easiest and cheapest way to provide visitors with information. The findings confirm the discoveries of other authors who make clear that visitors who come to heritage sites are highly interested in learning about the history of the place through information panels, brochures, guides and other tools of education and also the statement in the article of The Independent (2015) which criticizes that too often, not even basic maps are provided at WHS. De Rojas and Camarero (2008) also list interpretation as an important determinant of overall satisfaction and argue that it increases the strength of the relationship between site and visitor and results in longer duration of the visit with an increase in monetary spending on-site.

As the last part of interpretation, the communication of the value of the WHS has been assessed. The universal cultural value as the main reason for a site to be designated as UNESCO World Heritage Site was not made explicit to all visitors. 66% of them stated to not be fully informed at Oasis of Bahla while 49% confirm the same for Land of Frankincense. This result is similar to findings from other studies which found out that it is not self-evident that the OUV is communicated. As mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3, Hall and Piggins found out that less than half of the sites that were analysed had specific areas to explain the reason for its designation and the World

Heritage Convention. That the visitor leaves the site without knowing its value in too many cases is a major problem and needs to be addressed by UNESCO.

Poria et al. (2013, 273) found out that visitors link the UNESCO label to "culturally famous" sites with a major significance to humankind. The quality of information provided about the universal cultural value needs to be in accordance with this image in order to give a meaning to the label besides the requirements for protection and conservation.

5.3.2.2 Satisfaction and behavioural intention.

The second part of the model that suggests a positive and significant relationship between visitor satisfaction and post-visit behavioural intention has been confirmed through correlation analysis in all cases measured (Oasis of Bahla, Land of Frankincense and both sites combined). For Land of Frankincense it was the strongest relationship of the entire study. This relationship also has been confirmed by several other studies (e.g. Olsen 2002; Chen & Tsai 2007; Chen & Chen 2010; Palau-Saumell et al. 2013) stating that satisfaction is a useful predictor of tourist behaviour after the visit. Hereby, the intention to revisit the site is not the best indicator for heritage sites as discussed by Trinh and Ryan (2013). Therefore, the intention to recommend the place to others, visit similar sites in the future and agreeing on an increase of entrance fees (Chen & Tsai 2007; Oppermann 2000) were the more favorable indicators of positive behavioural intention.

Generally speaking, visitors to Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense who participated in the study left the respective World Heritage Site satisfied. Both sites achieved a mean above the level of indifference which is a positive result. However, a significant difference was found since Land of Frankincense scored a .6292 higher overall mean but also higher means for every statement included in the overall satisfaction part of the questionnaire. Information provided, service received and entertainment on-site were perceived to be of higher quality than in Bahla although also here, positive means have been identified. These results can be related to the higher satisfaction with facilities and interpretation on-site in particular. As stated before, facilities beyond the supply of heritage are highly valued and in heritage tourism, education can be said to be the most important aspect as explained before. The content analysis of respondents' suggestions and reviews on TripAdvisor

confirmed the findings with visitors stating multiple times that facilities such as shops are needed in Bahla and also improved in Land of Frankincense and even more frequently that interpretation has been severely missed or again for Land of Frankincense, can be improved. The fact that an overall satisfaction has been clearly achieved in each case proves the high quality of the heritage itself that already is sufficient to provide the visitor with a positive experience and indicates the increase of tourist satisfaction that can be achieved when implementing or improving the discussed attributes.

Considering the described results in terms of satisfaction, it is interesting to acknowledge the non-significant differences between behavioural intentions stated for Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense. Although visitors were differently satisfied with each site, they gave similar responses for the willingness to recommend the site, pay a higher entrance fee and visit other UNESCO sites in Oman based on the experience made. For both sites, visitors stated positive behavioural intentions and overall agreed to recommend the WHS to other people or visit another site with UNESCO label in Oman. What should be emphasized is the willingness to pay more to enter the site in the future. This repeats the assumption for satisfaction and is a strong indicator for the rich potential of the heritage sites.

Table 16
Results of the testing of hypotheses

	Hypothesis	**Test result**
H1	*There is a positive and significant relationship between "Experience Quality" and "Satisfaction"*	Supported
H1a	*There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Facilities and employees" and overall "Satisfaction"*	Supported
H1b	*There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Physical appearance and maintenance" and overall "Satisfaction"*	Supported
H1c	*There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Accessibility" and overall "Satisfaction"*	Supported
H1d	*There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension "Interpretation" and "Satisfaction"*	Supported
H2	*There is a positive and significant relationship between "Satisfaction" and "Behavioural Intention"*	Supported

H3	*There is a significant difference in "Experience Quality" between the analysed UNESCO sites*	Rejected
H3a	*There is a significant difference in "Satisfaction" between the analysed UNESCO sites*	Supported
H3b	*There is a significant difference in "Behavioural Intention" between the analysed UNESCO sites*	Rejected
H4	*Visitors who spent more money on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*	Supported
H4a	*Visitors who spent more time on-site were significantly more satisfied with their visit*	Rejected
H4b	*Visitors whose main reason to visit the site was the UNESCO label were significantly less satisfied with their visit*	Rejected
H4c	*Visitors who have visited other UNESCO sites before were significantly less satisfied with their visit*	Rejected
H5	*There is a significant relationship between the time spent on-site and the money spent*	Rejected
H6	*There is a significant relationship between the nature of the visitor's trip and the money spent*	Supported

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the experiences visitors make at the World Heritage Sites studied, directly influence their satisfaction and behavioural intention. Furthermore, every attribute that was tested had a positive and significant relationship with the satisfaction and hence is important for the visitor. According to the results presented, on-site interpretation was named a paramount attribute for visitors in the survey and the content analysis and was one of the main reasons for differences in satisfaction between the Oasis of Bahla and Land of Frankincense. Similar results were found for tourism facilities such as souvenir shops and restaurants. Although for both sites, these attributes were not perceived as satisfactory for a majority of visitors, the Land of Frankincense reached higher satisfaction and stronger behavioural intention due to the fact that the Oasis of Bahla does neither provide interpretation nor interpretation facilities. Another striking finding was that most of the visitors were not satisfied with the knowledge they gained on the OUV, which is one of the key aspects of the respective site. However, the study also showed that in general, visitors were overall satisfied with the visit and that they would recommend it to other people which lets to conclude that both World Heritage Sites have a strong potential to become a major tourism site in the Sultanate of Oman if deficits are compensated. Another objective of the study was to assess other aspects of satisfaction in relation to the UNESCO World Heritage label. The hypotheses that visitors are less satisfied with the site if their main reason to visit was the WHS label and also if they have visited other WHS before, were not supported. This means that even though these visitors might have had specific expectations due to the UNESCO label, this did not have a strong impact on their satisfaction even though they might not have been fulfilled. Lastly, the testing of relationships between the amount of time and money spent on-site and satisfaction resulted in a negative outcome for the influence of time but a significant and positive outcome for the amount of money spent on-site and thus the overall satisfaction. Against the usual assumption that visitors would be more satisfied if their visit was cheap, the satisfaction increased when the visitor was able to spend money on food, beverages and souvenirs.

All findings contributed to gaining a deeper insight into tourism at World Heritage Sites and improvements that can be made. In this special case, for the first time,

UNESCO sites in the Sultanate of Oman have been used as case studies which helped to understand the relevant issues of a young tourism destination promoting its heritage to tourists. As stated in the introduction, only few studies which measure attribute significance for satisfaction have been conducted so far and none have been found that deal with the influence of other factors such as experience with UNESCO sites or money spent on-site on overall satisfaction. Another main contribution and objective of this study is the input for World Heritage Site managers to improving their quality of performance and enhancing the level of satisfaction as well as informing public and private organisations about where to invest which consequently leads to increased visitation and revenues (Ramires et al. 2016; Baker & Crompton 2000). Identifying the importance of specific attributes helps to improve the site efficiently. Also, the discussion about the value of the UNESCO label has been enriched with the results that the OUV too rarely is communicated to the visitor and the importance of the label seems to decrease. Furthermore, the results contributed to the ongoing discussion of how to measure visitor satisfaction and which model to use. Here it has to be stated that the decision should be connected to the maturity of the site in terms of tourism development. For a young tourism destination like Oman, visitors often are not able to formulate their expectations, hence it makes sense to only relate the actual experience to satisfaction. For a well-known destination, comparing expectations to the experience and eventually to the satisfaction might be the superior option. On top of that, the gain of knowledge on the demographics of World Heritage tourists supports the small body of research that has been done on the potential differences between general heritage tourists and those who visit World Heritage Sites.

6.1 Recommendations and Managerial Implications

From the findings that have been made in this study, recommendations can be made for three different levels of authority.

Starting with UNESCO, the primarily responsible organisation for World Heritage Sites, comments on the questionnaire as well as reviews on TripAdvisor have shown how much visitors appreciated for example the restoration efforts at the Oasis of Bahla, but at the same time heavily criticized the lack of information that has been provided. Although UNESCO is not in charge of developing the site for tourism, the organization does state in its convention that appreciation of the place should be

strengthened by implementing educational and information programs to inform the public and communicate the OUV of the site. The outcomes of this and other studies indicate that this objective has not been achieved which consequently means that it would be recommendable for UNESCO to get more involved in the tourism at World Heritage Sites. Besides other criticism that has been stated in Chapter 3.1.7, putting the OUV across to the visitor should be of major concern as it is an essential part of the experience the visitor makes at the site.

Also on national level improvements can be made. In the case of Oman, it became evident that the structure of ministries is very complex which can lead to confusion and inefficiency. The collaboration between the different authorities involved in protecting and developing World Heritage Sites needs revision and the handover of responsibilities must be clearly regulated and made transparent. Here, it could be efficient to establish an Omani UNESCO commission which is in charge of only the UNESCO sites and therefore would unburden the other ministries and develop the WHS more efficiently. Furthermore, the government must live up to the statements that have been made in the tourism strategy for 2040 which states that the WHS are main tangible assets which means that a lot more must be done to promote these sites. The designation of the UNESCO label should have a purpose. If it is solely emotional, the current status is sufficient since the places are under protection. However, if the purpose is to use the sites for tourism, efforts should be made to communicate its existence to the potential visitors through online representations which include all necessary information, develop on-site facilities and provide interpretation. At the same time, the balance between tourism infrastructure with an increase in revenue and authenticity has to remain through smart growth and a focus on sustainability. This is especially important since Oman needs to protect its Unique Selling Point (USP) which is the authentic Arabian experience with its heritage and alive community traditions. Hereby, the government can learn from other mature tourism destinations to avoid mistakes that have been made in this field already.

Finally, the management of the World Heritage Sites is the executive authority on location. The results of the study have made clear that visitors missed informative interpretation of the heritage site that was visited. The review of literature has shown that heritage tourists are eager to learn and this wish should be fulfilled through information panels, brochures, guides and other tools of education. Another

characteristic of heritage tourists that has become evident is the willingness to spend money during the visit. Silberberg described this phenomenon already in 1995 and in the Omani case, visitors' satisfaction increased with higher spending and possibilities to buy food, beverages and souvenirs. These opportunities were often either missed or perceived as improvable. This is a chance that should be used by the government since providing information and spending opportunities would mean an increase not only in revenue but also visitor satisfaction which heavily depends on attributes beyond culture and heritage as results have shown.

6.2   Limitations

Naturally, the presented study implicates limitations. First, it makes a static analysis, in the sense that it was conducted over a certain period of time. Therefore, only an excerpt of visitor opinions can be shown and results might have been different at another point of time. Also, questionnaires have only been handed out in English (and German in Land of Frankincense) which excluded visitors who are not able to speak either language. For the content analysis, this issue was avoided through the translation function of TripAdvisor, however, one should note that translation mistakes are possible. Furthermore, it cannot be secured that reviews which were included in the content analysis are authentic and do not origin from members of management or other interest groups.

6.3   Future Research

For future work on this topic it would be interesting to conduct similar studies during other periods of the year and compare the results to identify whether the findings of this study are representative for visitors throughout the entire year or only show specific opinions. Longitudinal studies would provide the most well-grounded and useful results and give information on the dynamics of World Heritage visitor demographics, travel patterns and attribute satisfaction. Especially when the level of interpretation and facilities has been improved, a new satisfaction study that compares results to the one at-hand could provide evidence for the assumption that satisfaction significantly increases.

It has to be kept in mind is that results of this type of study could be very different for other World Heritage Sites, even within the same country. For the Omani case, only two sites with a certain level of management have been included in the study, leaving two more for further analysis. In general, measuring satisfaction at World Heritage Sites is important to develop the heritage tourism market which has been grown for the last decades and will continue to be an important branch within international tourism.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Confirmation of the German University of Technology in Oman that the research is conducted in the interest of the Faculty of Business and Economics
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- Appendix 6: Visitor statistics 2016-2017 for Oasis of Bahla (provided by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture)
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Appendix 1: Confirmation of the German University of Technology in Oman that the research is conducted in the interest of the Faculty of Business and Economics

1 مارس 2017

إلى من يهمه الأمر

يقوم الطالب فيليب هرتزج بعمل دراسة حول درجة رضا زوار مواقع التراث العالمي في سلطنة عمان عن تجربتهم السياحية. ويتطلب هذا عمل مسح لزوار ثلاث مواقع في سلطنة عمان وهم موقع البليد وخور روري في محافظة ظفار، موقع فلج دارس وفلج الخطمين المدرجين ضمن موقع أنظمة الري – الأفلاج وموقع قلعة بهلا بمحافظة الداخلية. برجاء التكرم بالتعاون معه في اتمام هذا البحث الهام علما بأن البيانات التي سيجمعها الطالب ستستخدم فقط للأغراض الأكاديمية .

هذا علما بأني أقوم بالإشراف على هذه الرسالة بكلية إدارة الأعمال والاقتصاد بالجامعة الألمانية للتكنولوجيا في عمان GUtech يمكن لكم التواصل معي على هاتف 99426842 لمزيد من المعلومات.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام،

أ.د. هبة الله عبد العزيز

رئيسة قسم اللوجستيات والسياحة وإدارة الخدمات

كلية الأقتصاد وإدارة الأعمال

Heba.aziz@gutech.edu.om

Appendix 2: Allowance of the MoT to conduct the survey at Land of Frankincense

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Office of the Adviser to
His Majesty the Sultan
for Cultural Affairs
Muscat

مكتب
مستشار جلالة السلطان
للشؤون الثقافية
مسقط

الإشـــارة: م ش ث/ع م/٢٤٦/٢٠١٧م
التاريـــخ:٦ رجـــــب ١٤٣٨هـ
الموافـــق:٣ إبريــــــل ٢٠١٧م

الأستاذ الدكتور/ هبة الله عزيز   المحترمة
رئيسة قسم اللوجستيات والسياحة وإدارة الخدمات
كلية الأقتصاد وإدارة الأعمال
الجامعة الألمانية للتكنولوجيا في عمان

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،،

بالإشارة إلى خطابكم المؤرخ بتاريخ ١ رجب ١٤٣٨هـ الموافق ٢٨ مارس ٢٠١٧م، حول البحث الذي يقوم به الطالب فيليب هرتزج عن درجة رضا زوار مواقع التراث العالمي في سلطنة عمان وعن تجربتهم السياحية في موقعي البليد وسمهرم.

أود إفادتكم بأنه تم توجيه الفاضل / غانم بن سعيد الشنفري "مدير دائرة مواقع أرض اللبان" لتسهيل مهمة المذكور، ويمكن التواصل المباشر على هاتف رقم (٢٣٢٠٢٥٧٧ /٢٣٢٠٢٥٦٦).

وتقبلوا وافر التقدير،،،

الدكتور / سعيد بن ناصر بن علي السالمي
مدير عام مكتب المستشار

نسخة مع التحية:
الفاضل / غانم بن سعيد الشنفري   المحترم
مدير دائرة مواقع أرض اللبان

Appendix 3: Questionnaire to measure tourists' satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman (English version)

Welcome to one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important survey measuring tourists' satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites (in the questionnaire referred to as "UNESCO site" or only "site") in Oman. We would like to gain your thoughts and opinions to improve experiences for the future. This survey should only take 4-5 minutes to complete. All data obtained will be handled with high confidentiality, no personal identification is required.

General information
Gender □ Female   □ Male
Age □ 18-24   □ 25-34   □ 35-44   □ 45-54   □ 55-64   □ 65 and over
Education □ Basic   □ University   □ Graduate   □ PhD
I am □ A resident of Oman   □ An international tourist
If you are a tourist, how often have you visited the Sultanate of Oman (including the current visit)? □ 1 time   □ 2 times □ 3 times □ More than 3 times
What is the nature of your trip? □ Cruise   □ Package tour   □ Self-organized   □ Business travel   □ Other
How did you find out about this UNESCO site (multiple answers possible)? □ Friends & relatives   □ Internet   □ Media   □ Books & guides   □ Travel agency   □ Part of package □ Other
Your main reason for visiting this site is the fact that it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site □ Yes   □ No If yes, please mention why it is listed:
The duration of my visit to this UNESCO site was □ Less than 1 hour □ 1-2 hours   □ More than 2 hours
During my visit to this UNESCO site, I have spent □ Less than 1 OMR □ 1-5 OMR   □ 6-10 OMR   □ 11-15 OMR   □ More than 15 OMR
During my visit to this UNESCO site I have spent money on (multiple answers possible) □ Did not spend money   □ Only entrance fee   □ Food & beverages   □ Souvenirs   □ Tourist guide   □ Audio guide □ Other

Have you visited other UNESCO World Heritage Sites before?

□ Yes   □ No

In comparison with what I expected from this visit, my experience has been

□ Much worse   □ Worse   □ Neither worse nor better   □ Better   □ Much better   □ Don't know

Please turn the page

Please choose "Not applicable" if not used/not existent	Strongly disagree ☹	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree ☺	Agree	Strongly agree ☺	Not applicable
Your visit						
Toilets were clean and properly marked on site	□	□	□	□	□	□
The souvenir shop offered good quality arts and crafts of Oman	□	□	□	□	□	□
Good quality restaurants were available on site	□	□	□	□	□	□
The visitor center was informative	□	□	□	□	□	□
There were sufficient rest areas available on site	□	□	□	□	□	□
Signposting and directions inside the site were helpful	□	□	□	□	□	□
Employees were helpful and available when needed	□	□	□	□	□	□
Employees were knowledgeable about the site	□	□	□	□	□	□
I had the chance to engage with members of the local community	□	□	□	□	□	□
This site was clean and litter free	□	□	□	□	□	□
This site had good safety measures	□	□	□	□	□	□
It was easy to move around the site	□	□	□	□	□	□
This site was interesting for children and young adults	□	□	□	□	□	□
Roads leading to the site were in good condition	□	□	□	□	□	□
It was easy to find the site from the main road	□	□	□	□	□	□
Information panels were well-placed, easy and interesting to read	□	□	□	□	□	□
Brochures were available, well-designed and informative	□	□	□	□	□	□
Audio guides were of high quality and informative	□	□	□	□	□	□
Tourist guides were well-informed and engaging	□	□	□	□	□	□

I was informed about the universal and cultural value of this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I was satisfied with the information provided at this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was satisfied with the services I received at this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was satisfied with the management's effort to make this UNESCO site entertaining and enjoyable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am overall satisfied with the visit to this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I would recommend other people to visit this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would be willing to pay more to enter this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Based on my visit here, I will visit other UNESCO sites in Oman	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Suggestions
Please write here any suggestions for improvement

Contact
Philipp Herzig
German University of Technology in Oman
PO Box 1816, Athaibah PC 130
Faculty of Business and Economics
web: http://www.gutech.edu.om/
mailto: philipp.herzig@gutech.edu.om

Thank you very much for your participation, your opinion is highly valued

Appendix 4: Questionnaire to measure tourists' satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman (German version)

Willkommen bei einer der UNESCO-Welterbestätten im Oman,
Vielen Dank, dass Sie bei dieser Umfrage über die Zufriedenheit der Touristen beim Besuch von UNESCO-Welterbestätten im Oman teilnehmen. Wir würden gerne Ihre Gedanken und Meinungen erfahren, um Besuche in der Zukunft noch angenehmer zu gestalten. Diese Umfrage sollte nur 4-5 Minuten dauern. Alle Daten werden mit hoher Vertraulichkeit behandelt, es ist keine persönliche Identifizierung erforderlich.

Generelle Informationen
Geschlecht □ weiblich □ männlich
Alter □ 18-24 □ 25-34 □ 35-44 □ 45-54 □ 55-64 □ 65 and älter
Bildung □ Schuldbildung □ Studium □ abgeschlossenes Studium □ Doktortitel
Ich bin □ omanischer Bürger □ Internationaler Tourist
Wenn Sie Tourist sind, wie oft haben Sie den Oman schon besucht (inklusive des aktuellen Besuchs)? □ 1 Besuch □ 2 Besuche □ 3 Besuche □ mehr als 3 Besuche
Welcher Natur ist Ihre Reise? □ Kreuzfahrt □ Reisepaket □ selbst organisiert □ Geschäftsreise □ Anderes
Wie haben Sie von dieser UNESCO-Welterbestätte erfahren (mehrere Antworten möglich)? □ Freunde & Verwandte □ Internet □ Medien □ Bücher & Guides □ Reiseagentur □ Teil des Reisepakets □ Anderes
Ihr Hauptgrund für den Besuch war das UNESCO-Siegel für die Kulturstätte □ Ja □ Nein Wenn ja, bitte beschreiben Sie kurz, warum es das Siegel erhalten hat:
Die Dauer meines Besuchs betrug □ weniger als 1 Stunde □ 1-2 Stunden □ mehr als 2 Stunden
Während meines Aufenthaltes habe ich ausgegeben □ weniger als 1 OMR □ 1-5 OMR □ 6-10 OMR □ 11-15 OMR □ mehr als 15 OMR
Während meines Aufenthaltes habe ich Geld ausgegeben für (mehrere Antworten möglich) □ habe kein Geld ausgegeben □ Eintritt □ Essen & Getränke □ Souvenirs □ Reiseführer □ Audioführer □ Anderes
Haben Sie schon andere UNESCO-Welterbestätten besucht (weltweit)?

□ Ja □ Nein

Im Vergleich zu meinen Erwartungen war mein Aufenthalt

□ viel schlechter □ schlechter □ weder schlechter noch besser □ besser □ viel besser □ weiß nicht

Bitte Seite wenden

Bitte kreuzen Sie "nicht beantwortbar" an, wenn nicht existent/nicht benutzt	stimme überhaupt nicht zu ☹	stimme eher nicht zu	weder noch ☺	stimme zu	stimme voll und ganz zu ☺	nicht beantwort-bar
Ihr Besuch						
Toiletten waren sauber und leicht zu finden	□	□	□	□	□	□
Der Souvenirshop hatte ein gutes Angebot von traditionellen omanischen Produkten	□	□	□	□	□	□
Qualitativ gutes Essensangebot war vorzufinden	□	□	□	□	□	□
Das Informationscenter war informativ	□	□	□	□	□	□
Es gab ausreichend Ausruhmöglichkeiten (Bänke etc.)	□	□	□	□	□	□
Schilder und Wegweiser waren hilfreich	□	□	□	□	□	□
Mitarbeiter waren bemüht zu helfen	□	□	□	□	□	□
Mitarbeiter waren informiert und konnten Fragen beantworten	□	□	□	□	□	□
Ich hatte die Chance mit Anwohnern in Kontakt zu kommen	□	□	□	□	□	□
Die Stätte war sauber	□	□	□	□	□	□
Die Stätte hatte ausreichende Sicherheitsmaßnahmen vorzuweisen	□	□	□	□	□	□
Es war unbeschwerlich sich durch die Stätte zu bewegen	□	□	□	□	□	□
Die Stätte war interessant für Kinder und Jugendliche	□	□	□	□	□	□
Straßen die zur Stätte führen sind in gutem Zustand	□	□	□	□	□	□
Es war einfach die Stätte von der Hauptstraße zu finden	□	□	□	□	□	□
Informationstafeln waren gut positioniert und informativ	□	□	□	□	□	□
Broschüren waren vorhanden und informativ	□	□	□	□	□	□
Audioführer waren informativ	□	□	□	□	□	□
Reiseführer waren gut informiert und die Ausführungen waren interessant	□	□	□	□	□	□

Ich wurde über den universellen und kulturellen Wert dieser UNESCO-Stätte ausreichend informiert	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ich war mit den erhaltenen Informationen über diese Stätte zufrieden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich war mit dem erhaltenen Service in dieser Stätte zufrieden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich war mit dem Bestreben des Managements diese Stätte interessant und angenehm zu gestalten zufrieden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insgesamt bin ich mit dem Besuch zufrieden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ich würde diese UNESCO-Stätte weiterempfehlen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich wäre bereit mehr Eintritt für diese Stätte zu bezahlen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basierend auf meinem Besuch hier, möchte ich weitere UNESCO-Stätten im Oman besuchen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Vorschläge
Bitte notieren Sie hier eventuelle Vorschläge für Verbesserungen

Appendix 5: Example of filled-in questionnaire (Oasis of Bahla)

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GU tech RWTHAACHEN
الجامعة الألمانية للتكنولوجيا في عمان
German University of Technology in Oman

German University of Technology in Oman (Faculty of Business and Economics)

Survey of tourists' satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman

Welcome to one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important survey measuring tourists' satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites (in the questionnaire referred to as "UNESCO site" or only "site") in Oman. We would like to gain your thoughts and opinions to improve experiences for the future. This survey should only take 4-5 minutes to complete. All data obtained will be handled with high confidentiality, no personal identification is required.

General information

Gender
☑ Female   ☒ Male

Age
☐ 18-24   ☐ 25-34   ☐ 35-44   ☒ 45-54   ☐ 55-64   ☐ 65 and over

Education
☐ Basic   ☐ University   ☒ Graduate   ☐ PhD

I am
☐ A resident of Oman   ☒ An international tourist

If you are a tourist, how often have you visited the Sultanate of Oman (including the current visit)?
☒ 1 time   ☐ 2 times   ☐ 3 times   ☐ More than 3 times

What is the nature of your trip?
☐ Cruise   ☐ Package tour   ☒ Self-organized   ☐ Business travel   ☐ Other

How did you find out about this UNESCO site (multiple answers possible)?
☐ Friends & relatives   ☒ Internet   ☐ Media   ☒ Books & guides   ☐ Travel agency   ☐ Part of package
☐ Other

Your main reason for visiting this site is the fact that it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
☐ Yes   ☒ No
If yes, please mention why it is listed:

The duration of my visit to this UNESCO site was
☐ Less than 1 hour   ☒ 1-2 hours   ☐ More than 2 hours

During my visit to this UNESCO site, I have spent   *entrance fee / what else would be here to spend money on. no gift shop ?*
☐ Less than 1 OMR   ☒ 1-5 OMR   ☐ 6-10 OMR   ☐ 11-15 OMR   ☐ More than 15 OMR

During my visit to this UNESCO site I have spent money on (multiple answers possible)
☐ Did not spend money   ☒ Only entrance fee   ☐ Food & beverages   ☐ Souvenirs   ☐ Tourist guide   ☐ Audio guide
☐ Other

Have you visited other UNESCO World Heritage Sites before?
☒ Yes   ☐ No

In comparison with what I expected from this visit, my experience has been
☐ Much worse   ☐ Worse   ☒ Neither worse nor better   ☐ Better   ☐ Much better   ☐ Don't know

Please turn the page

Please choose "Not applicable" if not used/not existent	Strongly disagree ☹	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree ☺	Agree	Strongly agree ☺	Not applicable
Your visit						
Toilets were clean and properly marked on site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
The souvenir shop offered good quality arts and crafts of Oman	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Good quality restaurants were available on site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
The visitor center was informative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
There were sufficient rest areas available on site	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Signposting and directions inside the site were helpful	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employees were helpful and available when needed	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employees were knowledgeable about the site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
I had the chance to engage with members of the local community	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This site was clean and litter free	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
This site had good safety measures	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
It was easy to move around the site	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
This site was interesting for children and young adults	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Roads leading to the site were in good condition	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
It was easy to find the site from the main road	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Information panels were well-placed, easy and interesting to read	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Brochures were available, well-designed and informative	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audio guides were of high quality and informative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Tourist guides were well-informed and engaging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
I was informed about the universal and cultural value of this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
I was satisfied with the information provided at this UNESCO site	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was satisfied with the services I received at this UNESCO site	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was satisfied with the management's effort to make this UNESCO site entertaining and enjoyable	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am overall satisfied with the visit to this UNESCO site	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would recommend other people to visit this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
I would be willing to pay more to enter this UNESCO site	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Based on my visit here, I will visit other UNESCO sites in Oman	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Suggestions

Please write here any suggestions for improvement

informative panels, guiding map through various rooms would have been helpful.

Contact
Philipp Herzig
German University of Technology in Oman
PO Box 1816, Athaibah PC 130
Faculty of Business and Economics
web: http://www.gutech.edu.om/
mailto: philipp.herzig@gutech.edu.om

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Thank you very much for your participation, your opinion is highly valued!

Appendix 6: Visitor statistics 2016-2017 for Oasis of Bahla (provided by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture)

إحصائية زوار قلعة بهلاء لعام 2016م

طلاب المدارس		زوار مقيمون			وفود سياحية			وفود رسمية			العمانيين	اقل من سنة 12	مجموع الزوار	عدد الزيارات	الشهر
الخاصة	العامة	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون					
79	67	4	0	0	1905	53	5	0	0	0	517	837	3467	900	يناير
0	64	0	0	0	2135	52	11	0	0	0	295	359	2916	822	فبراير
0	237	7	0	0	2351	12	10	3	100	0	150	2014	3084	833	مارس
28	506	7	0	0	1345	24	0	0	0	0	95	137	2142	513	ابريل
0	267	2	0	0	754	15	2	0	0	40	117	84	1281	314	مايو
14	0	9	0	0	126	2	4	0	0	0	27	13	195	68	يونيو
0	104	28	0	1	403	4	32	0	0	0	232	50	854	218	يوليو
0	262	15	7	0	209	16	18	0	0	0	225	53	805	193	اغسطس
0	16	6	4	0	892	27	22	0	0	0	359	71	1397	430	سبتمبر
0	44	20	6	0	1266	2	2	0	0	0	302	141	1783	621	اكتوبر
49	171	60	19	0	2175	12	2	0	0	0	564	182	3234	973	نوفمبر
0	454	45	11	0	2471	29	17	0	0	4	319	129	3479	1014	ديسمبر
170	2192	203	47	1	16032	248	125	3	100	44	3202	4070	24637	6899	المجموع

إحصائية زوار قلعة بهلاء لعام 2017م

طلاب المدارس		زوار مقيمون			وفود سياحية			وفود رسمية			العمانيين	اقل من سنة 12	مجموع الزوار	عدد الزيارات	الشهر
الخاصة	العامة	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون	أجانب	عرب آخرون	مجلس التعاون					
308	443	41	19	0	2593	11	33	0	0	15	501	97	4026	1092	يناير
0	34	49	14	0	2524	25	2	0	0	0	346	106	3104	973	فبراير
															مارس
															ابريل
															مايو
															يونيو
															يوليو
															اغسطس
															سبتمبر
															اكتوبر
															نوفمبر
															ديسمبر
															المجموع

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Appendix 7: Visitor statistics 2007-2016 for Land of Frankincense (provided by the Office of His Majesty the Sultan's Advisor for Cultural Affairs)

<div dir="rtl">

أعداد زوار منتزه البليد الأثري و متحف أرض اللبان
منذ الإفتتاح الرسمي للمتحف في ٢٣ يوليو ٢٠٠٧م
إلى نهاية العام ٢٠١٦م

</div>

المجموع Total	وفود رسمية VIP (Gov)	طلبة Students	سواح Tourists	السنة Year
		فئـة الزوار		
٢٧٣٠٠	٥٠٣	٧٣٠	٢٦٠٦٧	٢٠٠٧
٥٣٠١٠	٦٧٨	٢٧٩٣	٤٩٥٣٩	٢٠٠٨
٤٧٢١٣	١٠٩٧	١٢٤٦	٤٤٨٧٠	٢٠٠٩
٣٤٥٠٨	٨٢٢	٢٠٣٠	٣١٦٥٦	٢٠١٠
٤٤٤٢٨	٧١٥	٢٥٠٨	٤١٢٠٥	٢٠١١
٤٥٠٧٦	٨١٥	٢٢١٨	٤٢٠٤٣	٢٠١٢
٥٦١٠٤	٧٨٧	٢٣٣٣	٥٢٩٨٤	٢٠١٣
٩٤٠٦٨	٩٦٤	٢٣٩٣	٩٠٧١١	٢٠١٤
١٠١٩٢١	٢٢٩٦	١٦٥٧	٩٧٩٦٨	٢٠١٥
١١٧٧٤٤	٩٦٤	١٧٦٤	١١٥٠١٦	٢٠١٦
٦٢١٣٧٢ الإجمالي العام 621372	٩٦٤١ زائر رسمي	١٩٦٧٢ طالب	٥٩٢٠٥٩ سائح	إجمالي الفئة

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