

**Kicking the bucket or living life to the full? Socio-
psychological motivations for compiling a bucket
list.**

by

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ABSTRACT

In 2007, *The Bucket List* movie was released. It portrayed the story of two terminally ill men who, both with only one year left to live, decide to leave the hospital for the biggest adventure of their lifetime. To do that, they compile a bucket list, which is a list of things they want to do in what remains of their lifetime. Since the release of the movie, the concept of the 'bucket list' has not only become frequently referred to in books, travel guides, films and advertising; it has also been widely adopted by people of all ages and not necessarily facing a terminal illness. Despite its popularity, however, there is a significant gap in the literature with regards to the bucket list, in particular from a tourism perspective. Indeed, the findings from this thesis not only confirm the prevalence of tourism on the typical bucket list, but also explain the motives for having tourism-orientated goals on the list. Yet, to date, only a handful of studies examine bucket lists, predominantly from a gerontological perspective, with just one paper appraising bucket lists from a tourism perspective. Therefore, this thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by both addressing the gap in the literature focusing on the bucket list phenomenon in general as well as utilising an original theory to explain the nature of the bucket.

Essentially, the aim of this thesis was to explore critically why people compile bucket lists. However, the underlying question is whether bucket lists are concerned primarily with living life to the full or with the fear of death, of 'kicking the bucket'. To address this question, Terror Management Theory is employed. This theory posits that people seek meaning in life, in part, to manage insecurities related to the awareness of their death. In other words, by perceiving their lives as meaningful, individuals keep their existential concerns at bay. Not only do bucket lists manifest a negotiation of life's expectancy, but also signify a life well lived, a mark of 'having been there'.

To explore the meaning, nature and motives behind bucket lists, the research in this thesis follows a pragmatism approach through the use of mixed methods. First, data were gathered through an online survey, the outcomes of which informed the subsequent 20 semi-structured interviews. The uniqueness (but also the challenge) of

this research lies in the period during which it was conducted. Following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, not only was it necessary to adapt the methods of enquiry to ensure that the research was undertaken in a safe manner; it was also both important and logical to appraise the implications of the pandemic with regards to people's bucket lists, thereby generating original and up-to-date findings.

Inevitably, perhaps, this research reveals that bucket lists are associated with death. For many, the prospect of death gives birth to their bucket lists through, often as a result of fateful moments – an unexpected turn of destiny. For others, a fear of death is less evident within their bucket lists. What is clear however, is that life cannot proceed without the supervision of death. Yet, how individuals interpret the inevitability of their own death depends on how they live. Bucket lists, then, become a cultural symbol through which life can be validated, reimagined and memorised. With this in mind, this thesis invites the reader to travel through the bucket list journey and to arrive at their own conclusions as to what motivates people to compile a bucket list.

To Live! (from the epic, Impossible)

How could it be possible that I, tousled, might be reduced to

dust,

Might lay down my indefatigable body like a log?

If all my twenty awkward years

Boom like the thick trees — to live! ...

To live! To be torn into shreds by the winds,

To be shed to the ground with the hot leaves,

But only to feel how the arteries push,

To bend with pain, to be whipped-up by frenzy.

Elena Shirman (1930) in Lapidus (2014, p. 73).

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During the 3 years of my PhD journey, I never liked to say ‘my thesis’. Certainly, the ideas are mine and the writings are mine too, but my dedication to and my passion for this thesis were the result of the collective support which I received throughout this journey. In that sense, this thesis is ours. And in this section, I want to address the individuals whose support was invaluable to conducting this thesis. First, of course, I want to thank my supervisory team, Dr. Daniel Wright and Professor Richard Sharpley, for always believing in me. Even during the most challenging times, you always found the right words to keep me believing that I could complete this journey. You listened to my ideas, no matter how irrelevant they were, you guided me without any pressure and of course, you introduced the world of academia to me.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0. The Bucket List premiere

It's difficult to understand the sum of a person's life. Some people will tell you it's measured by the ones left behind. Some believe it can be measured in faith. Some say by love. Other folks say life has no meaning at all. Me... I believe that you measure yourself by the people who measured themselves by you.

(Introduction speech, *The Bucket List* (Zackham, 2007))

On the 15th of December 2007, the 97-minute long movie *The Bucket List* was premiered in Hollywood. Although at first the movie was shown in only 16 cinemas, within weeks it swiftly took off to occupy the screens of 2,915 cinemas across the U.S. (Gray, 2008). This American comedy-drama was filled with patent clichés and predictable plots. Indeed, the movie was subject to several critical reviews, one of which proclaimed it to be a 'silly, fraudulent little buddy comedy that is at times curiously engaging in its depiction of the joys of terminal cancer' Brooks (2008). Nevertheless, the movie received a warm welcome from the public, grossing around \$175 million worldwide (IMDbPro, n.d.).

The two protagonists of the movie meet in hospital in unfortunate circumstances. After both being diagnosed with cancer and given less than a year to live, Carter (Morgan Freeman) and Edward (Jack Nicholson) refuse to accept their fate. In the face of their impending demise, they work collaboratively on their 'bucket list' – a list of things they desire to accomplish before they die (Niemic and Schulenberg, 2011). Their dramatic journey of self-transcendence is infused with light humour stemming from the difference in the characters' attitudes towards life and death. Carter, a conscientious religious philosopher and a family man who worked as a mechanic before illness, confronts Edward – a rich, cynical,

egotistical, serial divorcee atheist who owns 15 hospitals in one of which the two meet (French, 2008). Their ideas of a bucket list are as polar as their backgrounds; whilst Carter dreams of witnessing something truly majestic or helping a complete stranger, Edward demands to get a tattoo, to kiss the most beautiful girl in the world and to skydive (Diamond, 2011). Overall, the pair's bucket list involved: witnessing something majestic, helping a complete stranger, laughing to tears, driving a Shelby Mustang, kissing the most beautiful girl in the world, getting a tattoo, skydiving, visiting Stonehenge, riding a motorcycle on the Great Wall of China, going on a safari, visiting the Taj Mahal, sitting on the great Egyptian pyramids and witnessing joy in life (Samuel, 2017). In the end, the eclectic desires of the protagonists become an amalgam of compromise, adventure and re-evaluation of life.

The movie is imbued with existential dilemmas that are relatable to a wide audience. In the turmoil of 'death denial', Edward and Carter question the meaning of family, love, faith, legacy, and friendship. Carter lifts his spirits by escaping the mundane and completing his life dream – to drive a Shelby Mustang. His journey refreshes him and draws him back to the family. Conversely, his impending death shatters Edward's delusions of immortality imposed by his money, status, connections and power, for he is to return home alone. Like every journey, theirs comes to an end. Here, however, it ends with confrontation, the cause of which was Carter's attempt to reconnect Edward with his daughter with whom the latter lamented his loss of contact. After a short reconnection with his own family, Carter is rushed to the hospital – the cancer has spread to his brain. During surgery, Carter dies. After losing his friend to the illness that was inevitably going to kill him too, Edward reconciles with his daughter and, to his surprise, his granddaughter. After giving his granddaughter a kiss on the cheek, Edward crosses 'kissing the most beautiful girl in the world' off his list. Soon after, he dies too. In the final scene, his assistant takes his ashes to a Himalayan peak where he places them next to Carter's ashes. Finally, the assistant crosses off the last item left on the list – 'to witness something truly majestic'.

Nevertheless, between the poles of extreme and sentimental items on the bucket list, Carter and Edward seem to effortlessly reach a consensus on their travels. Indeed, their journey sees the pair visit China, Nepal, India, France, Egypt and Tanzania (Ryan, 2017). In fact, the film features the iconic views of Chevre d'Or Hotel in France and Everest base camp in Nepal (Iannucci, 2017). It appears, then, that the notion of travel was rather central to Edward and Carter's bucket lists. And unbeknown to the film producers, the same tendency would be repeated in reality in the following decade and beyond.

The movie was a commercial success for the reason that its storyline was far from trivial and, presumably, resonated with many in the audience. Indeed, the idea of existential awareness, the search for meaning and a change of perspective can be traced back from the Dickensian Ebenezer Scrooge to films such as *Ikiru* (1952) and *Wild Strawberries* (1957) (Niemiec and Schulenberg, 2011). *The Bucket List* welcomed positive responses from audiences which echoed in the years that followed. And although the movie attracted predominantly female audiences over 35 years old (Gray, 2008), the concept of the 'bucket list' swiftly evolved, appealing to the masses of varied age, income and health conditions (unlike the progenitors, whose list was mainly a product of their shared illness and death proximity). Indeed, according to Hughes (2018), 'around a fifth of the UK population – roughly 14.4 million people – have made a bucket list of the things they want to achieve'. Furthermore, surveys by Hilton Garden Inn and Hilton Worldwide have revealed that 69% of Americans had a bucket list and 83% of these bucket lists prioritised travel (Garcia, 2011, Hilton, 2015). Significantly, as revealed in one of these surveys (Hilton, 2015), 68% of Americans would rather complete their bucket list trip than receive a generous promotion whilst a more recent survey, conducted by Provision Living, suggests that 95% of the 2,000 surveyed Americans have a bucket list (ProvisionLiving, 2019).

As for travel, it maintains a strong position on Americans' bucket lists (ProvisionLiving, 2019). Specifically, there are on average eight travel destinations on a bucket list (ProvisionLiving, 2019). More importantly, not only do many people have a bucket list but they also actively amend and update it, with 21% of

the respondents changing their bucket lists at least once a month, though the most desired experiences include skydiving, winning the lottery and having kids (ProvisionLiving, 2019). Significantly, the main barriers to completing a bucket list were found to be financial restrictions, a lack of time and family responsibilities (ProvisionLiving, 2019).

In addition, there are currently 930,417 'bucket listers' with 7,749,944 goals to be completed to be found on websites such as Bucketlist.org (2020). It appears, therefore, that the popularity of the bucket list phenomenon continues to increase, albeit in the shadow of research enquiry. In other words, the question of why people compile bucket lists has generally not benefited from academic scrutiny. More specifically, with the notion of travel so significantly central to the trajectory of bucket list experiences, it is surprising that the bucket list phenomenon has yet to be addressed by the tourism academy. With these considerations in mind, the overall purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to address why people compile bucket lists. However, in order to address this question, it is essential to understand the concept of the bucket list, its meaning and its origins.

1.1. The origins of the bucket list

To date, there is no reliable evidence to suggest that the term 'bucket list' was widely used before the release of the film of the same name. Nevertheless, its origins are less obscure; for many, the term originates from the idiom 'to kick the bucket' (Santoso, 2019) which was used in a humorous manner in an attempt to eliminate the unpleasant undertone of its meaning – in the 17th Century, to 'kick the bucket' meant to die (Goldstein, 2019). More specifically, some believe that 'kicking the bucket' originally referred to death by suicide; in 1788, Bath newspapers wrote about one John Marshfield who committed suicide by hanging himself by kicking the bucket away from underneath his feet (Quinion, 2016). Alternatively, the term was also used by butchers in rural Norfolk, who would hang up the slaughtered animal by a steel gambrel which was then commonly

known as a 'bucket' – therefore, 'kicked the bucket' meant that the animal was dead (Quinion, 2016). Finally, another potential origin of the idiom lies in the past burial customs of the Catholic Church, whereby a bucket of holy water was laid at the feet of deceased (Quinion, 2016); this, perhaps, evolved into 'kicking the bucket'. Nevertheless, although it appears that etymologists have yet to reach consensus on the origins of 'kicking the bucket', the dark origins of the concept of the bucket list are clearly evident.

A few centuries and one film later, the term 'bucket list' has evolved into what has been defined as 'a set of meaningful goals that a person hopes to achieve before they die' (Chu, Grünh and Holland, 2018, p. 151). The premise of death is still explicit but, at the same time, the term reminds us of the importance of living life to the fullest; aphoristically, it is an eclectic and obscure amalgam of 'carpe diem' ('seize the day') and 'memento mori' ('remember you must die'). This, then, demands the question of the respective extent of individual's conscious life and death concerns at the moment of creating and pursuing a bucket list and, furthermore, whether this has any effect on the content of the list. Moreover, it is critical to question whether, in the context of the bucket list, the notions of life and death must be mutually exclusive. These questions are central to the research but, in the context of this introductory chapter, it is pertinent here to draw attention to the early uses of bucket lists, particularly before the term 'bucket list' itself was coined.

It was in 1940 that a 15-year-old John Goddard wrote down his 'Life List' – a list of 127 goals he wished to pursue including visiting the Moon, writing a book and exploring the under-waters of the Red Sea (Johngoddard.info, 2017). At the age of 47, he had already crossed off 103 of his adventures, in so doing becoming the first person to kayak the length of the Nile. In his interview with Life Magazine in 1972, Goddard explained what had motivated him to compile his life list: 'all the adults I knew seemed to complain, "Oh, if only I'd done this or that when I was younger". They had let life slip by them. I was sure that if I planned for it, I could have a life of excitement and fun and knowledge' (Woodbury, 1972, p. 66). Hence, existential concerns did not appear to influence Goddard's decision to compile his 'Life List'. That said, it is important to draw attention to his belief that the planning

element of his 'Life List' almost guaranteed a life without regret. Indeed, the planning element of the bucket list is another alluring and significant rationale for its compilation, for it facilitates the anticipation of an internally accepted, meaningful life scenario. This, to Giddens (1991, p. 77), is the path to self-realisation, to living life to the full:

Holding a dialogue with time is the very basis of self-realisation, because it is the essential condition of achieving satisfaction at any given moment- of living life to the full. The future is thought of as resonant with possibilities, yet not left open to the full play of contingency.

Moreover, the desire of people 'to colonise the future for themselves' is, in Giddens's (1991, p.125) view, an internalised, intrinsic motive interwoven with any mundane attempt at life planning. Nonetheless, the planning of a bucket list arguably differs from planning a career or writing a shopping list in the challenge it poses, for it encourages self-actualisation within time-scales unbeknown to anyone. Hence, the need to plan for a meaningful life stems only from a realisation of time and, for Kearn and Jacobsen (2016, p. 59), 'the awareness of time – its stopping, passing, ticking or slipping away – is also an awareness of death'.

Another story supports this argument. After being diagnosed with ALS (Motor Neurone Disease), Bruce Kramer wrote a memoir, *We Know How This Ends. Living while Dying*, in which he sheds light on life with a death sentencing condition (Kramer and Wurzer, 2015). In his contemplation on the allure of bucket lists, he concludes that 'the eyeblink's worth of time we are alive is why the concept of a bucket list is so tempting' (Kramer and Wurzer, 2015, p. 131). With this in mind, it is, perhaps, fair to infer that John Goddard's list was concerned with life planning, which initially derived from the awareness of time which, to some, entails the awareness of death (Kearn and Jacobsen, 2016). If this inference is to any degree correct, it then becomes critical to question whether meticulous life planning disguises or even spares one from existential anxiety. In *On the Shortness of Life*, Seneca (1997, p. 11) confirmed what could now be an assumption about the capability of bucket lists to mediate a fear of death:

...the man who spends all his time on his own needs, who organises every day as though it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the next day. For what new pleasures can any hour now bring him? He has tried everything and enjoyed everything to repletion. For the rest, Fortune can dispose as she likes: his life is now secure.

Existing accounts, then, lead to the question of whether existential concerns are influential in the motivation to compile a bucket list. If they are, then such a list may potentially be a means of mediating with life as much as with death. Indeed, perhaps the involvement of death may be so profound as to suggest that bucket lists can be a form of premortem will for life or, potentially, eulogy material.

A particularly relevant art project was created by Candy Chang (Chang, n.d.). During her experience of bereavement, Candy expressed her loss in a unique way – by creating a chalkboard on an abandoned house in New Orleans with nothing more than an unfinished sentence ‘Before I die I want to...’ for passers-by to complete (DyingMatters, 2016). To her surprise, by the next day the wall was filled with individuals’ wishes and reflections. Since then, the ‘Before I Die’ project has extended worldwide, with over 5,000 ‘memento mori’ walls emerging in 78 countries and in 36 languages (Chang, n.d.). In fact, as part of the project, those who want to bring a mortality wall to their own city are invited to erect the wall with specific guidance from the beforeidieproject.com website. To date, in the UK and Ireland, ‘Before I die’ walls have featured in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Galway, Cork, Dublin, Wolverhampton, Leamington Spa, Peterborough, London, Leeds, Hebden Bridge, Liverpool and High Wycombe (DyingMatters, 2016). According to Grinberg (2013), the recurrent wall themes include well-being, love, travel, helping others and family wishes. In essence, then, these walls are communal bucket lists. One of their interesting features, however, are the guidelines for creating them. Significantly, Chang (n.d.) insists on keeping the word ‘die’ within the title of the chalkboard. To the artist, it is essential that the community confronts mortality compassionately rather than denying it. An important question that emerges, then is: are bucket lists a means of confronting or denying death? This question is considered in Chapter 3 of this thesis. What is more

important in the context of this introductory chapter, however, is that despite its connotations with death, the concept of 'Before I die' received a wide and positive response from the local communities in which the project was established. Alongside an individual's bucket list, this potentially provides a new narrative of how people reflect on their mortality.

The extent to which bucket lists are imbued with death is not known. However, what is certain is that there is a unique interrelationship between bucket lists and death that requires further investigation. To address this gap in knowledge, this research employs the Terror Management Theory (TMT) framework. According to Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Goldenberg (2003), TMT argues that individuals seek meaning in life as well as self-value in order to protect themselves from the inherently human condition of existential fear. In other words, the uniquely human awareness of one's inevitable demise motivates individuals to imbue life with meaning; in order to cope with the problem of death, they keep it 'out of sight, out of mind'. Importantly, however, although TMT frames the bucket list as a means of denying death (rather than accepting it), this research adopts a more neutral stance as to whether bucket lists are indeed about dying or living. That is, it seeks to unveil the tendencies in relation to these existential dilemmas. The manner in which the bucket list phenomenon may be considered within Terror Management Theory is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.2. The Research: Rationale, aims and objectives

There are several reasons for conducting research into the bucket list. First, little is known about the nature of the bucket list phenomenon. Specifically, the extant research is limited to a critical discourse analysis study that briefly discusses the nature of the bucket list within the context of tourism (Thurnell-Read, 2017), a study by Chu et al. (2018) which investigates the relationship between bucket list goals and age, and a single empirical study that explores the use of bucket lists within advance care planning from an American perspective (Periyakoil, Neri and Kraemer, 2018). The remainder of the related literature briefly mentions the

bucket list within the context of palliative care, gerontology, death studies, medicine, religion and spirituality (Armitage, 2018, Niemiec and Schulenberg, 2011, Rohrich, 2015).

Second, as an overlooked phenomenon, the bucket list can be seen as a means of understanding the 'new' tourist, or, more precisely, the 'post-tourist' (Urry, 2002, p. 12); that is, individuals who '...perform the ritual of covering ground' (Feifer, 1986, p. 269) in a playful attempt to collect places previously seen in the myriad of publications such as *Unforgettable Places to See Before you Die* (Davey, 2007), all in order to tick off the items from the bucket list. Hence, the research seeks to go beyond the number of package holidays booked and holiday spending, unveil the tendencies, meanings and desires of those to whom tourism is no more a luxury but 'a right' (Sharpley, 1999, p. 61). Thus, this research has the potential to shine light on contemporary tourism practices and the socio-psychological motives for them. Moreover, as a tool for the personal expression of aspirations, the bucket list can, potentially, be useful for the work of 'travel counsellors' who, according to Crompton (1979, p. 421), go beyond the role of travel agents by not only providing holiday options but, through eliciting the inner motivations for travel, might suggest appropriate travel experiences.

Third, within this context, it is essential to consider the emergence and the role of the bucket list within contemporary culture. That is, it is important to question what the compilation of a bucket list entails for the individual and what meaning he or she attaches to it. Undeniably, bucket lists have become a popular and, arguably, global trend which encompasses a plethora of aspirations. More importantly, it is necessary to ask to what extent bucket lists are concerned with death and dying. Or, perhaps, are bucket lists not concerned with death at all but, rather, about living life to the full? Specifically, the existing literature provides conflicting views on the interrelationship between bucket lists and death (Thurnell-Read, 2017). In order to assess the bucket list phenomenon from this perspective, it is essential to discuss the contemporary perspectives on death and dying.

Finally, the role of travel within bucket lists remains in question. Although travel dominates the bucket list of Americans (ProvisionLiving, 2019), its presence in such lists is not yet explained. Specifically, what role does travel hold within bucket list discourse? This question is also central to the research. Overall, then, the main aim of the research is to enhance our understanding of why people compile bucket lists. In an attempt to answer this question, the research has the following objectives:

Objective 1: To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.

Objective 2: To examine bucket lists in the context of contemporary social perspectives on death and dying.

Objective 3: To explore critically the role of socio-psychological motivations for compiling a bucket list.

Objective 4: To explore to what extent travel in particular features in bucket lists.

1.3. Research paradigm

The very nature of tourism is grounded on society and people (Sharpley, 1999). It is for that reason that the study of bucket list motivations is inherently sociological. To date, much tourism research has remained subject to positivist methodologies (Ayikoru, 2009, Jamal and Choi, 2003), overlooking 'the tacit, the subjective, the discursive or the interpretive' (Hollinshead, 2004, p. 65). The paradigmatic dichotomy is further fuelled by a distinct tension 'between academic and industry-based researchers' (Cooper, 2002, p. 375). That said, tourism studies has more recently experienced a paradigmatic shift towards a more eclectic approach, adapting multi-disciplinary techniques and interpretivist methods (Airey, 2015), albeit with a scholarly struggle of accepting qualitative methodologies (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2015). As Bernard (2000, p. 4) put it: 'We are accustomed to thinking about the success of the physical and biological

sciences, but not about the success of social sciences'. Yet, the social sciences can reveal what is not noticed by the eye of the hard sciences.

This research, therefore, adopts a mixed methods approach through the lens of pragmatism. Importantly, the first stage of data collection (survey) seeks to answer the 'what?' of bucket lists, whereas the second stage of data collection (interviews) deals with the 'why?'. Pragmatism itself originated in the 19th Century based on the works of American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) (Maxcy, 2003). The problem of the incompatibility thesis (which must be addressed when mixed methods are discussed) is outlined in detail in Chapter 5. For now, the focus remains on the pragmatism, which, arguably is the most appropriate paradigm for justifying the choice of mixed methods (Pansiri, 2006). Within pragmatism, decisions about research methods are aligned with their usefulness in answering a particular question (Denscombe, 2017). Therefore, a particular commitment to a certain doctrine simply does not exist. In other words, pragmatists seek a practical solution to a given question, where the flaws of one method are compensated with another method. A more detailed discussion of pragmatism follows in section 5.3.2. Owing to the limited literature regarding bucket lists, this study does not hold any substantial grounds for hypothesising. Therefore, the role of theory is strongly inductive; data will be collected with little pre-conception and analysed with an open mind.

1.4. Overview of methodology

In essence, the research methodology is designed to address the research aim and objectives. In particular, this research design adopts a mixed methods approach utilising both quantitative (survey) and qualitative methods, specifically interviews. This method is selected as a means of exploring the bucket list phenomenon from a number of perspectives, permitting its conceptualisation in a holistic manner (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2013). More precisely, a quantitative survey is employed in order to explore the spectrum of meanings and definitions,

as well as to bestow a degree of concreteness to data. Concurrently, a qualitative approach will validate the emergent themes and seek explanations for them. As summarised below, this research employs a two-stage process in which a mixed method approach is utilised:

1. The first primary research stage of data collection involves the online distribution of a self-administered survey. This aims to establish the key themes for the research. For instance, the questions of definitions of the bucket list and the prevalence of travel are raised. In addition, the survey includes open-ended questions which seek to gathering more authentic data with regards to bucket list definitions and experiences. Findings from the primary stage of data collection will directly inform the direction of the second stage of the research.
2. The second stage of the primary research utilises semi-structured interviews, the purpose of which is to explore and validate the initial findings, as well as elaborating on them with personal examples and interpretations.

In the process of data analysis, quantitative data is collected and analysed through Qualtrics, whilst the qualitative data is coded and explored through NVivo. The chosen approach is open to potential criticism owing to the methodological amalgam. To counter such criticism, it is important to explain that the research does not claim disinfected objectivity. Rather, it challenges the status quo of objective knowledge of the world, since it does not part with one's internalised experience (Schwandt, 1998). As stated by Schwandt (1998, p. 250): 'we can continue to respect the bid to make sense of the conditions of our lives without claiming that either enquirer or actor is the final arbiter of understanding'. This discussion elaborated on further in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

1.5. Thesis structure

Essentially, this thesis unfolds in the same manner as a book; an introduction leads into the main body of the story and, chapter by chapter, it brings the reader to the conclusion where all the threads of research are gathered together in concluding thoughts and remarks. It is important to note that the objectives of this study as established above do not necessarily appear in the following chapters in the order in which they are listed. In fact, the objectives' themes will recur, for they will be evaluated under different perspectives. More importantly, it is acknowledged that the phenomenon of the bucket list may be approached from a variety of different perspectives, many of which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, although it is limited to particular themes, this research seeks to consider the bucket list holistically within the established objectives. It is specifically for the reason that little is known about bucket lists in general that this research is pioneering with regards to many emerging themes surrounding the topic. Therefore, many disciplines and studies are taken into account which, in turn, influence the construction of the literature review. In other words, in developing the literature review in this thesis (Chapters 2, 3 and 4), the notions of the bucket list are traced in research surrounding end-of-life care, gerontology, death studies, social psychology and tourism. The next section introduces and provides an overview of each chapter of the thesis.

1.6. Introduction to the chapters

Chapter 1 begins with the story that brought the concept of the bucket list to life. Specifically, references are made to *The Bucket List*, a movie released in 2007 that established and popularised a hitherto non-existent term, the bucket list. The etymology of the term 'bucket list' is then traced from an 18th Century suicide in Bath to the butchers of rural Norfolk, where the euphemism 'kicking the bucket' was part of contemporary vernacular. Most importantly, however, the chapter outlines the lack of knowledge surrounding the phenomenon of the bucket list, thus emphasizing the importance of this research. Finally, the research aims and

objectives, as well as research paradigm and methods, are discussed to set the scene and the direction of the research.

Chapter 2 unveils the conceptual underpinnings of the bucket list. That is, the themes of death, age and goal setting are discussed. Furthermore, the popularity of the bucket list within the contemporary culture is addressed (Objective 1). Early theories regarding the reasons for compiling a bucket list emerge within this chapter in relation to the themes featured within it.

Chapter 3 introduces the Terror Management Theory (TMT) perspective on the bucket list as a means of death denial. The theory is discussed in detail in relation to social and psychological defence mechanisms against mortality. Contemporary perspectives on death and dying are further elaborated on in Chapter 3 (Objective 2). Furthermore, the account of tourism is examined within the context of Terror Management Theory, leading to the application of bucket lists as a death-defying phenomenon. After addressing some of the socio-psychological motives for compiling a bucket list from a TMT perspective (Objective 3), the chapter concludes with the discussion of whether bucket lists are a means of denying or accepting death, by introducing an alternative Meaning Management Theory.

Chapter 4 continues with the tourism perspective. First, it asserts the place and role of travel within the bucket list phenomenon (Objective 4) by arguing that travel is central to the trajectory of bucket lists. Furthermore, significant attention is drawn to the consumption of the bucket list and the nature of the bucket list experience. Moreover, motivations for tourism are discussed within the context of the bucket list, including the relationship between bucket lists and values. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of salient gaps in knowledge based on existing literature.

Chapter 5 considers the research design and methodology, focusing on how they are applied in order to address the research question. In particular, attention is drawn to pragmatism which underpins this research whilst the use of mixed methods of data collection is justified. The chapter also discusses all stages of data collection, from survey to interviews.

Chapter 6 and 7 present the research findings and themes emerging from data analysis. The findings are presented incrementally from each stage of data collection, demonstrating how the early literature review themes evolved and developed into the coherent concepts and arguments. The main aim of these chapter is to unveil the themes and tendencies emerging from the findings. Importantly, each section is aligned with the specific objective (Objectives 1-4).

Chapter 8 presents the conclusion to the research. In particular, the bucket list phenomenon is conceptualised and its meaning and applications within contemporary society are revisited in line with the findings. The implications and significance of further research are discussed. Finally, the self-reflective section looks back on this PhD journey and concludes the thesis.

1.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has sought to introduce the phenomenon of the bucket list. As becomes apparent, the bucket list has been overlooked by researchers to such an extent that even the origins of the euphemism to ‘kick the bucket’ remain a matter of obscure interpretations. What is clear, however, is that since 2007 when *The Bucket List* movie was released, the phenomenon has swiftly entered contemporary culture, driving the never-ending production of lists of adventurers. Since then, the bucket list has been widely utilised in advertising, publications, media and technology. However, despite its popularity and the passing of more than a decade later since the concept first emerged, the bucket list has yet to receive the academic attention it deserves. Specifically, it is not known why people compile these lists. More importantly, it is not even clear whether bucket lists are driven by the desire to live life to the full or, alternatively, by a fear of death. Finally, it is not explained why travel is so central to the trajectory of bucket list experiences. This research addresses these questions. Most importantly, however, this research is the first empirical study of the nature and meaning of bucket lists. Thus, its importance is conditioned not only by the scarce literature surrounding the topic of bucket list but also by its ability to

overview contemporary society. In other words, just as the study of tourism provides 'a window on our world', so too can the bucket list offer be a lens through which the contemporary society can be observed and reflected upon (Sharpley, 2011b, p. 82).

Before engaging with the key literature, the next chapter further sets the scene for the bucket list research. Similar to a jigsaw, it outlines the borders of the bucket list phenomenon by considering the application and meaning of bucket lists in contemporary society, pondering its deathly connotations and addressing the relationship between bucket lists and age, as well as questioning the importance of goal setting within bucket lists. In essence, Chapter 2 discusses the nature and meaning of the bucket list.

Chapter 2

Setting the Scene

2.0. Setting the scene – conceptual underpinnings of the bucket list

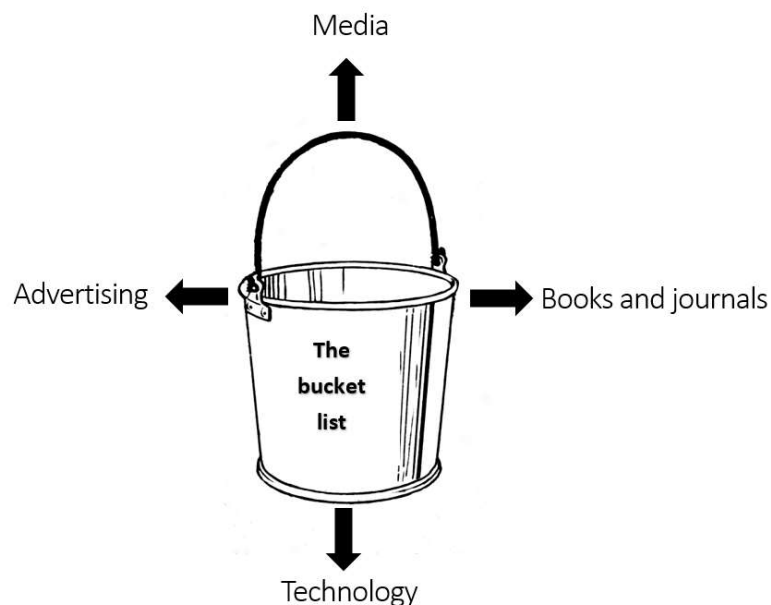
The preceding chapter established the overall aim of this thesis, namely, to explore critically why people compile bucket lists. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to ‘set the scene’ for the research by introducing the concept of the bucket list within the context of contemporary culture. Significant attention is, therefore, paid to the potential capability of bucket lists to reflect the conditions of contemporary society with, in particular, a discussion of the effects of the (at the time of writing) current global pandemic on individuals’ bucket lists, resulting in a variety of reactions – from ‘revenge travel’ to a complete re-evaluation of bucket lists. The chapter also provides the conceptual underpinnings for developing an understanding of bucket lists, facilitating a more coherent discussion in the following chapters. In particular, the role of death-related connotations within bucket lists is examined, followed by a discussion of the relation between bucket lists and age. Finally, the role of goal setting is assessed within the context of bucket lists.

2.1. Bucket lists within contemporary culture: applications and meaning

As mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter, the bucket list phenomenon swiftly entered contemporary culture over the last decade or so. Moreover, as conceptualised in Figure 2.1. below, applications of the concept of the bucket list can be found on various societal platforms, whether within media, advertising, publishing or technology. Soon after the movie *The Bucket List* was released, TV shows such as *The Buried Life* (which follows four young men attempting to compete a list of ‘100 things to do before you die’) and *An Idiot Abroad: The Bucket List* appropriated the concept of the bucket list (Mead, 2014), whilst it also

attracted attention and was discussed at numerous TED talks where the potentially life-inspiring capabilities of the bucket list were addressed (Bell, 2016, Eller, 2014, Terry, 2018). Today, the bucket list is a popular topic for publishers; never-ending journeys are described in books such as *The Bucket List: 1000 Adventures Big & Small* (Stathers, 2017), *The Ultimate Retirement Bucket List* (Billington, 2020), *The Runner's Bucket List* (Malan, 2014), *The Beer Bucket List* (Dredge, 2019) – the list goes on. Essentially, any experiences related to food, drink, travel, music, films and arts are the focus of the emerging bucket list culture, where the potential abundance of life experiences makes the creation of such lists necessary.

Figure 2.1. The use of bucket lists in contemporary culture.



At the same time, such lists require careful planning, organisation and even encouragement. Whereas the original bucket list in the movie was simply written on a piece of paper, today's technology facilitates a new emerging format for the bucket list. Specifically, mobile phone apps, such as 'Soon', 'iWish', 'BUCKiTDREAM' and 'Woovly' (CaringVillage, 2020), not only allow users to organise and visualise bucket list goals, but also encourage them to pursue further goals, share their own experiences and inspire others.

Nor is the bucket list overlooked by the advertising industry. Many brands, such as Malaysia Airlines and Vodafone in 2014, Subaru Impreza in 2016, Coca Cola Zero in 2018, Booking.com and Seat Tarraco in 2019, have incorporated the bucket list concept into their advertising. Following the loss of two planes which claimed the lives of 537 people, however, Malaysia Airlines were criticized for the controversial invitation for customers to list the things that they would like to do before they die (Visentin, 2014). Following a public outcry, Malaysia Airlines renamed the campaign as an ultimate to-do list in order to diminish the morbid undertone of the bucket list (Visentin, 2014). This raises the question of the place of death-related connotations within the bucket list in the context of contemporary culture, which are further addressed in the next section (see Section 2.2.). In the meantime, however, it is necessary to address the meanings of the bucket list.

As emphasised in Chapter 1, little is known about the nature of bucket lists. Nevertheless, what becomes apparent is that bucket lists can be a lens through which society and its values can be observed, be it through travel patterns, attitudes towards death or consumption practices. For instance, Gallagher (2019) reports that individuals' bucket lists are aligned to the identity which they wish to portray online. However, with many places being universally acclaimed as bucket list destinations, this may eventually lead to overtourism at sites such as the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, the Great Wall of China and Machu Picchu in Peru (Gallagher, 2019). Moreover, reliance on social media images for choosing the next bucket list adventure often results in disappointment (Awyong, 2020). In particular, bucket-listers may find themselves let down by the view of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in Iceland without photo filters, or by the size of the Mona Lisa at the Louvre – it measures just 77 x 53cm (Awyong, 2020). Furthermore, as lamented by Mead (2014), bucket lists may trivialize the consumption of places, for they lack profound or repeated engagement with the site. In other words, as Mead (2014) suggests, ten minutes at Stonehenge will suffice to be crossed off the list.

However, the most notable transformation in the significance and nature of bucket lists occurred during the recent global crisis – the Covid-19 pandemic. To

illustrate, according to a study by Travelodge (2020), 57% of Britons have created a quintessentially British bucket list to complete in the wake of the pandemic. On average, their lists included 25 items and required approximately seven years to complete, according to the respondents' estimations. Importantly, a substantial number of respondents (37%) indicated that the creation of a bucket list gave them something to look forward to during the tedium of a national lockdown. Similarly, Compton (2020) suggested that planning travel as part of a bucket list during the pandemic can be one of the more positive coping mechanisms. Furthermore, a study by Pinterest revealed a significant increase in searches for bucket lists (+65%) during the pandemic (Hutchinson, 2020).

In this context, of particular interest is the emerging phenomenon of 'revenge travel' in response to the pandemic (TheHarrisPoll, 2020). This refers to 'people going on extra trips or splurging after the Corona Crisis because they were deprived of that possibility for so long' (Oakly, 2020). Specifically, TheHarrisPoll (2020) surveyed 2,508 individuals in the United States during May 2020, paradoxically finding that participants from the states impacted the most by Covid-19 in terms of the rate of infection were most likely to travel within the next four months when compared those from less affected states. Some of the stated reasons to travel included the desire to reconnect with friends and family, the need for a change scenery and to support the local economy of the chosen destination (TheHarrisPoll, 2020).

However, whilst travel might still remain at the top of some bucket lists, for others the global societal change resulting from the pandemic is reflected in their bucket lists. To illustrate, Irving (2020) reports research findings by The National Lottery which revealed that 52% of people in Northern Ireland have amended their bucket lists as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Specifically, the research showed that the new bucket lists included further concerns about mental health and health and safety of loved ones and overall, a healthier lifestyle (Irving, 2020). Other items on the bucket lists included improving cooking skills, growing one's own vegetables and redesigning one's own garden (Irving, 2020). One of the really important questions to ask within this context is whether such change in bucket lists is correlated simply with the imposed restrictions during lockdown or with

people's increased awareness of mortality. For instance, Compton (2020) suggests that the pandemic amplified people's awareness of time passing and of their inevitable demise.

Why, however, is it important to address the effect of the pandemic on bucket lists? First, as is argued within this section, bucket lists are a reflection of societal conditions in terms of consumption and travel trends and, potentially, in terms of the relationship with death and dying. Thus, it is perhaps inevitable that the Covid-19 outbreak has influenced the nature of bucket lists. Second, and more specifically, Covid-19 had a devastating effect on the tourism and hospitality sectors (Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2020) which are at the heart of the majority of bucket lists (ProvisionLiving, 2019). Therefore, within this context, bucket lists became subject to amendments – from conquering the world to taking over the garden, as reported by Irving (2020).

It is also important to acknowledge here that the research in this thesis commenced before the scenario of a global pandemic could be imagined. Nevertheless, given that it seeks to explore whether bucket lists are about death and dying or living life to the full, it becomes more important not to overlook the effects of the pandemic on the bucket list for, as is becoming apparent, the meaning of the bucket list may well be evolving in the light of recent events. That is, as people come to terms with their own mortality (and that of others) in the face of the pandemic, the undertone of their bucket lists may, too, become more related to death and dying. Hence, the next section reviews that role of death within the bucket list discourse. For now, however, it is justifiable to conclude that bucket lists are interwoven into the conditions of society, reflecting changes in travel and consumption practices and, potentially, relationships with death and dying.

2.2. Bucket list and death

Bucket lists are inevitably associated with the passing of time, with death. As Hefferon (2011, p. 138) posits:

These tend to be lists that are done under the assumption that there is a race against death. This could be a death that is imminent or a 'to do-list' before you die. Either way, there is an implicit challenge against time and mortality. Furthermore, 'bucket lists' or 'life lists' can be lists that are set 'to do' before a specific or momentous change in a person's life (for example, turning 50, getting married, having a baby). Again, there is a challenge to achieve against the clock.

Therefore, with such a strong interrelation with the notion of death, it is critically important to appraise the phenomenon of the bucket list from the perspective of death. This section, therefore, provides an overview of bucket lists and their relationship with death and dying.

2.2.1. Death inconvenience

- There is no reason to believe life is more precious because it is fleeting. Here is a statement. A person has to be told he is going to die before he can begin to live life to the fullest. True or false?
- False. Once your death is established, it becomes impossible to live a satisfying life. DeLillo (1985, p. 285)

Death is inconvenient to the human psyche. As John Cleese has laconically put it: 'Life is a terminal disease, and it is sexually transmitted' (Cleese, 2020). As lamented by many, life can only proceed under the strict supervision of death (Kearl, 1990, Cicirelli, 2001). Although death has attained wide exposure through literature, media and advertising, it nevertheless remains a taboo subject (Ariès and Ranum, 1975, Gorer, 1955) or, at least, a conversation for the 'right place and

time' (Walter, 1991, p. 296). Hence, it becomes even more inconvenient to talk about something as life-assuring as a bucket list in the same sentence as death. After all, it may be self-defeating to dream of parking a Lamborghini underneath one's duplex apartment in central Hong-Kong because such self-importance, status and wealth will numb the crippling awareness that one is no more than a 'breathing piece of defecating meat destined to die and ultimately no more significant than, let's say, a lizard or a potato' (Byrne, Bennick and Shen, 2003). Furthermore, as Jack, from Don DeLillo's novel 'White Noise' suggests: 'Once your death is established, it becomes impossible to live a satisfying life' (DeLillo, 1985, p. 285). Nevertheless, the purpose of this section is to abandon the doom and gloom of the Grim Reaper and to argue that 'remembering the imminence of death keeps the life of mortals on the right track – by endowing it with a purpose that makes every lived moment precious' (Bauman, 2006, p. 32).

In contrast with the conformist dread of death, it can be argued that death is non-harmful. This view is established by the Epicurean school of philosophy which proposes that humans do not live to witness death because the states of being alive and dead are mutually exclusive (Scarre, 2014). Since humans will never physically or mentally experience the state of death it should, therefore, have no impact on the state of being alive. However, Bauman (1992, p. 4) criticises the Epicurean outlook on death, suggesting that death may only be non-harmful to an 'animal existence'. In his view, death is not only the end of a biological existence but also annihilates an individual's cultural attributes – their aspirations, creations and possessions. It may be argued, however, that the loss of these cultural necessities is only as substantial as the attitude towards them, which is influenced by the individual's socio-cultural environment. Therein lies a paradox; although death is one of the greatest certainties in life, its meaning is 'socially and culturally embedded' (Van Brussel and Carpentier, 2014, p. 1). Since death is a social construct, the fear of death is not necessarily universal (Kellehear, 1984) or more precisely, not universally bad. Opposing conventional views, death may be good for life.

Vail, Juhl, Arndt, Vess, Routledge and Rutjens (2012) have already drawn attention to the paradox of the good effects of death in life. To illustrate, they argue that death awareness is a strong 'motivating force in human behaviour' (Vail et al., 2012, p. 2). They go on to suggest that pondering on mortality may facilitate an existential wakeup call that encourages individuals to evaluate and adjust their personal goals to commit to a meaningful existence. Similarly, from an existentialist perspective, it is 'only by acknowledging the certainty of death and the uncertainty of values that individuals can live a rich, fulfilling life' (Martin, Campbell and Henry, 2004, p. 436). On a similar note, Pratt, Tolkach and Kirillova (2019, p. 4) argue that :

Existential philosophy considers death as one of the most important drivers for leading an authentic life because without the fear of death, there would be less motivation to achieve something in life.

This existential awakening facilitates a positive attempt to authentic 'becoming', which is often achieved through goal setting (Kasser and Sheldon, 2004). Kasser and Sheldon (2004, p. 481) believe that studying an individual's goals is 'is useful for understanding humans' relations with the future'. Or as Maslow (2011, p. 29) points out: 'Planfulness and looking into the future ...are of the central stuff or a healthy human nature'. With this in mind, the next section examines the existential awakenings of those who decided to compile a bucket list.

2.2.2. If I die, I must live

To illuminate the spectrum of life goals, Moss (2017) provides an extensive report on bucket lists, the owners of which all happened to have a terminal illness. Their goals vary from extraordinary travel experiences to sentimental returns to a meaningful, nostalgic location. Some report desiring good food and sex, witnessing a total eclipse and reviving a marriage. After receiving a terminal cancer diagnosis, a 29-year-old was prompted to create a bucket list that encouraged her to keep going (Wilcox, 2020). Another 29-year old reported compiling her bucket list immediately after she received a terminal diagnosis

(Granger, 2012). It appears, however, that those who cannot afford to pursue their bucket lists are not left out, since their stories and bucket list aspirations attract generous donations. For instance, following unsuccessful cancer treatment, one 39-year-old set up a GoFundMe account aimed at covering her bills and ticking off her bucket list (Steed, 2020). Similarly, generous donations allowed a 32-year-old to achieve many items on her bucket list, such as going to Berlin and Disneyland in Paris (Lavery, 2018).

The idea of creating a bucket list following encounters with the death of the self or another is consistent throughout the literature. For example, for Rohrich (2015, p. 1130), the creation of his bucket list was triggered by a 'wake-up call' when his friend died. Furthermore, the creation and use of the bucket list is popularised in palliative care. Reporting the importance a patient with advanced metastatic cancer has placed on completing a bucket list, for instance, Portman, Thirwell and Donovan (2018) empathised the capabilities of bucket lists to create meaning for patients with limited life expectancy.

Although many of these accounts discuss the bucket lists of younger individuals, the same dynamic of bucket list creation is also witnessed amongst the older generations. In 2015, at the age of 90, Norma Jean Bauerschmidt was diagnosed with uterine cancer. However, instead of considering treatment, her immediate response to the doctor was: 'I'm 90-years-old, I'm hitting the road!' (Molloy, 2016). Instead of resorting to hospitals and treatments, Norma decided to explore the United States with her son and daughter-in-law. Although her bucket list adventure came to an end at the age of 91, Norma truly lived her life to the full, as documented in the photographs and stories of the subsequent book *Driving Miss Norma*, published by her son and his wife (Bauerschmidt and Liddle, 2017).

Although travel and other adventurous goals are traceable in many bucket lists, some individuals find joy in more mundane goals. For instance, 72-year-old Glenda Seitz compiled her bucket list once her cancer stopped responding to treatment. Unlike other adventurers, she dreamed of doing something that she has never done before – to sit on Santa's lap (Udell, 2018). The abovementioned stories of bucket lists differ in their owners' age and aspirations; however, the common denominator remains the encounter with own and other's mortality.

One of the most significant discussions on the nature of the bucket list is offered by Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 63), who argues that the current bucket list discourse is not a 'vehicle for existential reflexivity'. In other words, he suggests that those compiling a bucket list do not engage in pondering life's transience and, moreover, he claims that bucket lists are 'shorn of any overt association with the finality of death and mortality that might urge us to reflect on the meaning and values of life' (Thurnell-Read, 2017, p. 63). However, this thesis adopts a difference stance, proposing that bucket lists are extensive in their capabilities of buffering existential anxiety, creating meaning, memories and legacy as noted by the end-of-life care and death studies researchers (Chou, Two and Woodard, 2005; Niemec and Schulenberg, 2011; Periyakoil, 2018, Portman, Thirwell and Donovan, 2018).

From another perspective, Kearn and Jacobsen (2016, p. 74) argue that the bucket list phenomenon is 'bound up with a new death ethos, one perfectly in tune with the course of late modern economies'. The ideology of the new death ethos replaces eulogies with elaborate ticked-off bucket lists. As Kearn and Jacobsen (2016) observe, with weakened faith the premise of 'carpe diem' fits conveniently into the way that the promise of the afterlife is no longer necessary (Kearn and Jacobsen, 2016); a new meaning of death is emerging which integrates unprecedented rituals, for 'death comes to those who have lived fully and who have completed their living' (Kearn and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 74).

To summarise, then, it is important to consider the relationship between death and bucket lists from a positive trajectory. The stories of individuals with terminal illness illuminate the desire triggered by existential awakening to live. Nevertheless, although the relationship between the bucket list and death has been established to some extent, further examination is necessary to confirm why the bucket list is in such demand once an individual confronts their own or a significant other's mortality. Kramer and Wurzer (2015, p. 132) suggest that 'the diagnosis of a disease that you know will kill you only increases the urgency of such a list'. This then leads to the question of whether the fleeting condition of life must be acknowledged before a bucket list might be compiled. As Carstensen, Isaacowitz and Charles (1999, p. 165) argue, 'People are always aware of time—

not only of clock and calendar time, but of lifetime'. Therefore, the next section attempts to examine the relationship between bucket lists and age.

2.3. The 'when' of the bucket list

In their survey, ProvisionLiving (2019) asked respondents about how their bucket lists started. A substantial proportion (38%) suggested that they commenced their bucket lists when they got to a certain age. Samuel (2017) agrees that reaching a certain age may trigger the decision to produce such a list although Prince (2017) argues that it is millennials in particular who are likely to not only have a bucket list, but also to complete it. Nevertheless, within the literature, nothing specific is known or revealed about the age at which someone is more likely to be compile a bucket list. What is notable, however, is that bucket lists are applicable to people of all ages, being a product of existential crises or fateful moments as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Indeed, as Periyakoil (2018, p. 652) suggests: 'For some, the items on their bucket list may be a wish list of fantasies, such as winning the lottery. For others, the bucket list can serve several concrete purposes'. This then, raises the question of what causes alterations in the orientation of bucket list goals and whether it is related to age? What justifies this discussion is that there exists no profound understanding of how age dictates attitudes towards bucket lists. Moreover, it is even less certain whether changes in age are replicated in changes in the orientation of bucket list goals. This section, therefore, discusses the implications of age for bucket lists.

To date, three studies have assessed the effect of age/perceived time horizons on bucket list goal orientations (Chou et al., 2005, Chu et al., 2018, Periyakoil, 2018). In a study undertaken prior to the term bucket list being coined, Chou et al. (2005) asked 167 undergraduate nursing students from the Chang Jung Christian University in Taiwan to list five things that they would wish to do if they had only 6 months left to live. Given the sample of their study (students), it did not reflect the effect of age on goal orientations, although it identified some of the trends for goals under the limited time horizon.

A study by Periyakoil (2018) gathered 3056 responses across America, revealing that 91.2% of participants had a bucket list. The findings from their survey concluded that age, alongside spirituality and health, directly impacted bucket list goal orientations. More specifically, it was found that participants who were under 70 years of age and for whom faith was important were most likely to have a bucket list (94.9%), whilst those who were over 61 years of age and for whom faith was not important were least likely to have a bucket list (31.8%). Moreover, the study also concluded that, perhaps unsurprisingly, older participants were less likely to engage with 'daring' activities on their bucket lists when compared to their younger counterparts.

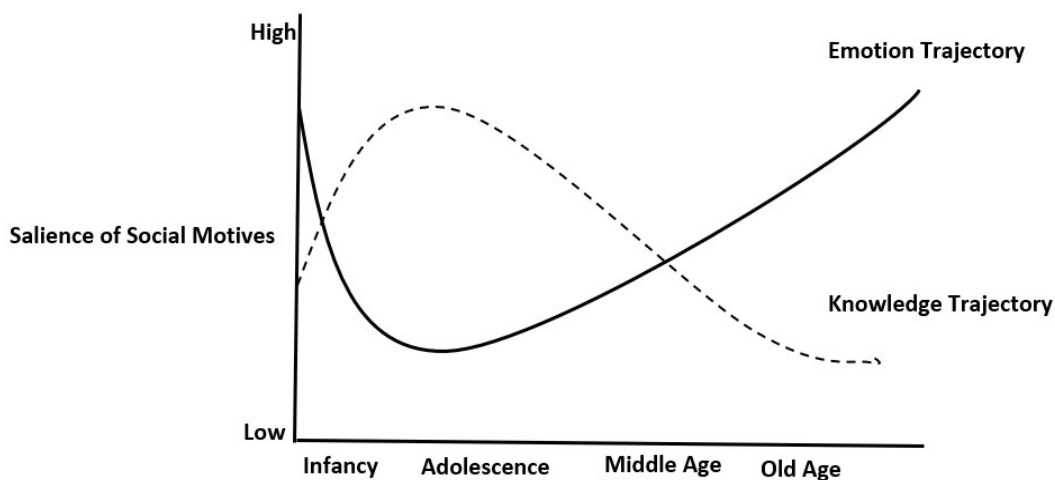
Finally, a study by Chu et al. (2018) has, arguably, provided the most detailed account of the effect of age and time horizon on bucket list goal orientations. Specifically, the researchers assigned three groups of participants which included (i) an open time horizon, (ii) a 6 month-to-live time horizon and (iii) a 1 week-to-live time horizon, where each group would write down their goals depending on their time horizon. The authors then coded the goals in line with socioemotional selectivity theory (SST) and psychosocial development theory (PDT).

Essentially, SST 'claims that the perception of time plays a fundamental role in the selection and pursuit of social goals' (Carstensen et al., 1999, p. 165) and 'as a person's time horizon changes, one goal may be prioritized over the others to meet developmental demands' (Chu et al., 2018, p. 151). Significantly, Carstensen et al. (1999, p. 165) suggest that 'time perception is integral to human motivation'. For instance, when time is perceived as limited, meaningless activities are avoided, alongside the interest in novel information, for it is inevitably intertwined with future directions. Rather, individuals tend to focus on the present than on the future, for 'uncertainty about possible length of human life is of considerable symbolic significance for elderly people, who live in a state of perpetual doubt' (Laslett, 1989, p. 13).

In contrast, when the future is perceived as open-ended, individuals are more likely to engage in long-term goals (Carstensen, 1995). Thus, rather than seeking acquisition of knowledge under lifetime constraints, individuals are more likely to seek emotional goals (Carstensen et al., 1999). Within this context, 'the category

of knowledge-related goals refers to acquisitive behaviour geared toward learning about the social and physical world', whilst emotion-seeking 'refers in its broadest sense to the regulation of emotional states via contact with others' (Carstensen et al., 1999, p. 166). Moreover, the emotional search also refers to 'the desire to find meaning in life, gain emotional intimacy, and establish feelings of social embeddedness' (Carstensen et al., 1999, p. 166). Essentially, then, from the SST perspective, when an individual's time horizon encounters boundaries (typically associated with older age), they become more selective with the type of goal that they want to get involved with (Deniz and Yozgat, 2013; Giasson, Liao and Carstensen, 2019). Specifically, they engage more with meaningful social ties rather than expansion of horizons (Carstensen, Fung and Charles, 2003). Figure 2.2. illustrates the variation of goal orientations across the life span.

Figure 2.2. Idealized Model of Socioemotional Selectivity Theory.



Source: Adapted from Carstensen *et al.* (2003)

At the same time, PDT, based on works by Erikson (1963), identifies eight stages through which an individual passes during their lifetime. Research by Sheldon and Kasser (2001) measured personal strivings against the four Eriksonian themes of identity, intimacy, generativity (strivings towards creativity and productivity, the result of which will, most likely, outlast an individual) and ego-integrity (striving

towards the development of understanding oneself and one's place within the world). At the most basic level, according to PDT, as individuals age, they are more likely to engage in generativity and ego-integrity personal strivings, rather than in identity and intimacy. Their findings confirmed that 'older persons were more concerned than younger persons with generativity and ego integrity and less concerned with identity' whilst the intimacy strivings were not significantly lower than that of the younger counterparts (Sheldon and Kasser, 2001, p. 498).

In their study regarding age/time horizon effect on the bucket list, Chu et al. (2018) came across the similar findings posited by the two theories. Specifically, 'controlling for age, participants in the constrained time-horizon condition generated more emotional meaningfulness goals but fewer knowledge seeking and self-concept goals than participants in the open-ended time-horizon condition'. This finding echoes the fundamental tenets of SST. That is, participants who had a limited perspective on time left were more likely to engage with goals that offered a 'potential for emotional reward' (Carstensen, 1995, p. 153) rather than with goals that are associated with the novel and the unfamiliar. Importantly, the goal orientation changed drastically when conditions were moved from the 6-month to the 1-week time horizon, which confirms the proposition that perceived time horizon impacts bucket list goal orientations.

Furthermore, in line with PDT, the findings revealed that participants from the constrained time horizon group were more likely to engage in goals associated with intimacy and ego-integrity and less likely to strive for identity and generativity goals than those with an open-ended time horizon. These findings slightly differ to those of Sheldon and Kasser (2001), where generativity contributed significantly towards older participants' strivings. Nevertheless, Chu et al. (2018, p. 159) conclude: 'When foreseeing an end of their life, people tend to spend more efforts in seeking intimacy and peacefulness rather than pursuing self-enhancement'. Moreover, identity goals were most popular on bucket lists across all time-horizon conditions. As Chu et al. (2018, p. 159) explain: 'identity goals might be essential parts of the self throughout the adult lifespan – even when approaching endings'.

With this in mind, it is important to ask the question: how does age relate to bucket lists in general? As evidenced in the studies by Chu et al. (2018) and Periyakoil (2018), age has a significant impact on an individual's decision to compile a bucket list and, consequently, on its goal orientations. Specifically, Chu et al. (2018) demonstrated that with a limited time horizon, which tends to be associated with older age, individuals seem to seek meaningful goals, the familiar and trusted. At the same time, individuals with an open-ended time horizon 'prioritize broadening and self-actualization motives' (Chu et al., 2018, p. 159). On the same note, Agronin (2016) proposes use of the term 'gerotranscendence', coined by social gerontologist Lars Tornstam, within the context of bucket lists. The term refers to an 'age-conferred shift from an egocentric bucket-list mentality to a more altruistic perspective' (Agronin, 2016). Essentially, this shift refers to a stage where bucket lists become imbued with deeper meanings rather than transitory, self-centred goals. However, with a limited number of studies considering bucket lists and age, it is essential to widen the observation towards age and goal setting. This is the focus of the next section.

2.3.1. Age and goals

Age plays a significant role in predicting which goals will bring the greatest happiness and satisfaction to the individual (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014). Riediger, Freund and Baltes (2005, p. 85) explain the changes in goal setting for older adults in particular:

Although with increasing age individuals might gain in social status, material belongings or practical knowledge, other important resources such as physical functioning or time to live decrease. Therefore, it should be an adaptive strategy for older adults to invest their remaining resources 'economically' into goals that do not interfere with, but ideally facilitate, each other.

It is, therefore, adequate to expect that the goals of the same individual will vary drastically if compared in early or later adulthood. As Freund (2020, p. 506) suggests:

As life circumstances change with age (e.g., having fewer financial resources, being faced with health-related problems of oneself or one's partner as is particularly the case in very old age), so do our preferences. The goals we considered to be worthy to be put on the bucket list in middle adulthood might no longer be as attractive in old age.

Restructuring of goals often reflects the recalibration of values (Thurnher, 1974). Thurnher (1974), who studied goals, values and life evaluation at the pre-retirement stage, observed that amongst the pre-retired group, the popular goals included settling of material affairs, travel, relocation and leisure. Other goals also included health care and retirement.

However, despite the anticipation of future goal attainment, respondents regretfully lamented on abandoned goals from their younger years: 'I was set to put the world on fire when I was 21. I wanted to make a big splash. But I think those were just growing pains' (Thurnher, 1974, p. 91). Regret of abandoned goals is specifically associated with the career path that never happened. Nevertheless, looking forward to their goals, the participants recurrently mentioned the notion of legacy such as 'leaving the world a better place' or 'leaving your mark' (Thurnher, 1974). Indeed, it is important to note the notion of legacy is not unfamiliar to bucket lists, as is further discussed in Chapter 3. To this, Butler (1970, p. 123) suggests the term 'historicity':

The issue of continuity, the interconnectedness of generations, and that fact that older people are very frequently increasingly preoccupied by leaving a mark or trace are important. They become interested in posterity or become avid readers of history, or readers or writers of memoirs. These efforts to transcend mortality might be called historicity. It is a search for identity beyond the grave. But it too may become overriding – not a healthy expression of the progression

of the generations, but a narcissistic manifestation. Rather than a genuine concern for posterity, the motivations reflected may be personal vanity, the desire to live vicariously through one's children, and the like.

Cross and Markus (1970) adopted an alternative approach of the projection of possible self across the lifespan. Possible selves refer to 'representations of one's self in future states' (Cross and Markus, 1970, p. 231). As they suggest, possible selves are deeply related to an individual's aspirations, where one can be satisfied with being a 'world traveller' after a summer vacation whilst another will need to circle the globe before resting (Cross and Markus, 1970, p. 233). Table 2.1. provides insights into the desired possible selves across the lifespan. As can be seen in the table, the majority of possible self-aspirations are, essentially, similar to a bucket list and age has a significant influence on the possible selves' orientations. For example, the younger age group (18-24) frequently strive towards transitions into adulthood with an established career and family.

Table 2.1: Projections of possible selves across age groups

Age	Possible Selves projections
Group	
18-24	Famous musician, successful businessman, thin, good father/husband/friend, intelligent, both academically and socially, street smart, good psychologist, cultured, many interests, hobbies, vacationing in Florida or California, being a success in my career, having a happy family, graduating from college with a high grade point, being a good wife and mother, becoming rich through hard work and determination, being healthy throughout my life.
25-39	Parent, traveller, independent businessman, living in the eastern U.S., musician, missionary, baseball season ticket holder, baseball team owner, grandparent, growing old with my wife, a more loving and caring person, to have enough money to live comfortably, a better nurse, to have a steady relationship with a warm, loving guy, to stay

	energetic until I die, a good guitar player, stay in good health and in shape.
40-59	Successful at work, a good husband and father, better tennis player, comfortably retired, put my children through the colleges of their choice, more community oriented, financially secure, healthy, available to friends, able to provide services to others, intellectually stimulated, close relationships with family, retired, able to enjoy travel, able to enjoy environment, enjoying what I'm doing.
60 +	Good grandparent, content and satisfied, being a sympathetic friend, liking people, learning, facing whatever the future will be with a positive mood, being an 'active' old person, being able to continue to learn and grow, being useful and able to help others, being a loving and loved person, being independents, writing a publishable article.

Source: Adapted from Cross and Markus (1970).

Of importance are the adjectives used; that is, the youngest group tends to be 'famous', 'successful', 'good'. At the same time, such a tendency is not observed in the older age group (25-39). Instead, this age group aims to consolidate personal identity and settle down. Significantly, the age group of 40-59 did not indicate the desire for 'new beginnings', instead, they lean towards the enjoyment of their current roles (Cross and Markus, 1970, p. 241). The 60+ age group strive towards development of self within established roles to even a greater extent than the age group of 40-59. Nevertheless, self-development and growth are still vital for this age group, as they wish to stay active and publish (Cross and Markus, 1970). Similar tendencies are uncovered in research by Nurmi (1992) who reported that younger adults prioritised family and career affairs, middle-aged adults anticipated children and property related goals, whilst older adults invested in goals associated with retirement, health and leisure. Moreover, Reker, Peacock and Wong (1987, p. 47) argue that the need for goal-orientated behaviour may decrease with older age:

Whereas young adults have a strong need to achieve new goals and to look toward future potentialities, elderly people can look back at their past and find meaning in what they have accomplished in life.

Similarly, Brandtstädter, Rothermund, Kranz and Kühn (2010, p. 153) agree that an increasing awareness of mortality tends to decrease strivings for extrinsic goals by shifting towards 'timeless' goals associated with ego-transcendence. Alternatively, Freund (2020, p. 506) suggests that 'older adults do, in fact, place high importance on social goals and derive much satisfaction from social relations'. Thus, the relationship between bucket list goals and older age is, to an extent, ambivalent.

Although these studies are merely indicative of bucket list goal orientations in relation to age, they do, nevertheless, provide valuable insights. In particular, it is asserted that younger adults tend to focus on goals associated with novelty and success, particularly in education, career and relationships. Older adults, conversely, tend to cherish established social roles, although self-development and growth are nonetheless important. To provide a further holistic overview of the potential relationship between bucket lists and age, the next section examines the relationship between death and age.

2.3.2. Death and age

Death is present within the bucket list discourse. As mentioned earlier, developing a terminal condition may be one reason why individuals decide to compile and pursue a bucket list. Nevertheless, bucket lists appeal to many ages; bucket list guides are published for ages from high school (Mitchell, 2015) to retirement (Billington, 2020). Importantly, Freund (2020) has coined the term the 'bucket list effect' to refer to postponement of bucket list goals to later years in life; such a delay occurs owing to longer lifespans, globalisation and the weakening of age expectations (Freund, 2020). Bucket lists, according to Freund (2020, p. 501), 'are less constrained by social norms regarding their timing, their content, or the means by which to pursue them compared to work and family goals earlier in the life span'. Moreover, another reason why individuals might compile a bucket list is because it 'allows them to put off some of the nonessential fun goals they feel

they cannot easily pursue during earlier phases of the life span to the time after retirement' (Freund, 2020, p. 501). Similarly, Armitage (2018, p. 281) concludes that 'the period of our lives reserved for our bucket list is, in fact, when we're least able to complete it'. An important question to ask, then, is whether the urge to complete bucket list activities increases at a later age owing to the perceived greater proximity of death. After all, an individual's relationship with death is likely to transform throughout their lifespan. This section addresses these questions.

The relationship between a fear of death and age is, without a doubt, controversial, as will later become evident. What is certain, however, is that the young and the old differ in their attitudes towards death. Specifically, there are four ways in which young and old differ in their attitudes to the inevitable (Kalish and Reynolds, 1977). First, age groups differ in their religious involvement. That is, older individuals tend to be more religious and hold stronger beliefs in an afterlife than younger or middle-aged adults (Wong, Reker and Gesser, 1994). Second, the young and the old differ in the way in which they have experienced death (Kalish and Reynolds, 1977); older people are more likely to have witnessed death, for instance, than the young. Third, the degree to which they approach the subject of death differs and, finally, the extent to which individuals have truly accepted the certainty of death differs across the lifespan (Kalish and Reynolds, 1977). What is particularly notable is that denial of death is, most often, associated with younger individuals (Cicirelli, 2003).

What is most important, however, is that there is a negative correlation between age and the fear of death. There is a presumption, as suggested by Kastenbaum (2004), that as a perceived lifespan shrinks, death fears significantly accelerate. However, this presumption is, to some extent, incorrect. Specifically, whilst some researchers argue that elderly individuals experience a greater sense of despair owing to their proximity to death (Abengozar, Bueno and Vega, 1999), many argue that death fears appear to occupy the minds of the younger age group rather than the older one (Cicirelli, 2001, Cicirelli, 2003, Kalish and Reynolds, 1977, Wong et al., 1994). Moreover, according to Wong et al. (1994), a diminishing fear of death at a later age is accompanied by a greater degree of death acceptance.

Although 'young adults feel that they have a long time in which to carry out all their projects and goals' (Abengoza et al., 1999, p. 446), as a result they are, paradoxically, more likely to experience death anxiety and deny it.

The relationship between age and death attitudes is valuable to the bucket list discourse. In particular, it is important to answer the earlier addressed question. That is, 'the bucket list effect' (Freund, 2020) is unlikely to be the outcome of the increasing proximity of death and death fear. As discussed earlier, death fears are at their prime amongst young adults. Therefore, if bucket lists are indeed influenced by existential concerns, the previous discussion explains the prevalence of the bucket lists amongst young adults. This question, however, is at the core of this research. The next section now attempts to appraise the relationship between tourism and age, with travel being a core item on many bucket lists.

2.3.3. Tourism and age

Tourism is important to the bucket list discourse. According to Periyakoil (2018), travel is one of the most popular goals on people's bucket lists. And importantly, age plays a significant role in establishing when one travels, with what frequency, how and for what purpose. That is, just as age impacts on bucket list goal orientations, so too does it have an effect on the type of tourism that an individual will engage in (Gibson and Yiannakis, 2002). According to Sharpley (1999, p. 126):

An individual's age will determine, to a great extent, the type of tourism that he or she participates in. A younger person is more likely to be attracted to independent travel or, perhaps, to the '18-30' style of beach package holiday, whereas older tourists may be less inclined to subject themselves to the relative uncertainty or possible discomfort of independent travel. Equally, an older person may, in a touristic sense, be more experienced and demand more specialised forms of tourism.

Furthermore, according to McGuire, Boyd and Tedrick (2004, p. 193), 'travel is typically at the top of the list to pursue in retirement'. Although travel remains an important element of leisure in later years, the format may change from solo travelling to travelling in groups (Argyle, 1996) with a deeper emphasis on education and preparation for the journey (Gibson, 2002). Significantly, educational travel plays an important role in later years (McGuire et al., 2004). Essentially, then, although knowledge-seeking is, arguably, the inevitable aspect of tourist activity, with age this process becomes more selective. That is, at a later age more preparation is put in place to establish comfort and the activities to be undertaken during the holiday.

Moreover, Anderson and Langmeyer (1982) suggest that older individuals have, arguably, a greater amount of disposable income, which directly influences their holiday patterns. For instance, older individuals are likely to go away for longer; as seen in the study by Anderson and Langmeyer (1982, p. 22), individuals over 50 years old were likely stay 10 to 15 nights at their holiday destination, which suggests that 'nonhectic, preplanned [*sic*], leisurely travel is most popular in this group'. The authors outline the key differences as follows:

The under-50 group travels for outdoor recreation and visiting man-made amusement facilities; the over-50 group does not. The under-50 group travels in the spur of the moment at times, perhaps only for a weekend; the over-50 is unlikely to do so. The under-50 group spends significantly less on vacation travel than the over-50 group, and the over-50 group is more likely to spend over \$1,000 than any other amount of money.

Furthermore, older travellers are more likely to participate in sightseeing, restaurant dining, visiting historical sites and shopping, and less likely to engage in fishing, sunbathing and camping (Patterson, 2006). Preoccupation with self-fulfilment and new experiences is also associated with older age groups (Patterson, 2017) which, to an extent, competes with the search for the familiar proposed by Carstensen (1995) when the future time perception is limited, as discussed above. Nevertheless, within the bucket list context, these findings provide a basis for many initial assumptions. First, it is possible that older

individuals will less likely engage in solitary bucket list activities, especially those associated with travel. Second, whilst older individuals may refuse a sudden backpacking trip to India, within their bucket lists they may be able to afford (economically and temporally) longer-lasting bucket list journeys, such as extensive cruises or visiting all continents in one go. Finally, a financial element of bucket lists may not be a significant constraint for older participants, although it must be acknowledged that not all older people enjoy financial security.

As is seen, in many age-related discussions, whether with regards to bucket lists, goals, death anxiety or tourism, age plays a significant role in determining people's attitude, action or inaction. Some of these attitudes are contradictory when compared to another; however, they do nevertheless provide valuable insights into the relationship between bucket lists and age.

Despite that, it is important to ask whether the aforementioned tendencies do, indeed, replicate themselves in 'real life'. For example, AKFP (2020) reports findings from a survey conducted in 2015 amongst 1,157 adults over 45 years of age from the UK. The findings conclude that although bucket lists of a middle to older age group differ in a sense that they include goals such as retirement, they also include goals such as learning a new language or writing a script or a book. Moreover, a study reported by The Scotsman (2018) suggests that a quarter of the older age group aspire to see the Northern Lights, to visit all the continents and to experience a ride in a gondola. Finally, Horovitz (2018) discusses the story of two ladies in their 90's who continuously pursue their bucket lists. As reported, Cecile Tegler, 92, dreamt of attending college, where she eventually learned how to operate a computer. At the same time, Mildred 'Milly' Reeves, 97, pursued her dream of controlling an airplane, albeit for only 15 minutes. These experiences, according to Horovitz (2018), have inspired the two to pursue further dreams as a part of their bucket list. It therefore becomes questionable whether age is just a number within the context of bucket lists, or whether the abovementioned accounts are the exception rather than the norm. Either way, without a doubt, age has an impact on bucket lists and, as demonstrated by Chu et al. (2018), also on bucket list goal orientations. However, further research is required to grasp the interconnection between age and the decision to compile a bucket list.

Nevertheless, as it has been highlighted within this section, an individual's goals vary significantly depending on their age. Overall, the study of goals, which are central to bucket lists, can explain a plethora of reasons why goals are constructed and what they entail for the individual. It is for this reason that the next section addresses goals within the context of the bucket list.

2.4. Bucket list and goals

Periyakoil (2018) uses the words 'bucket list' and 'goals' interchangeably. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, Chu et al. (2018, p. 151) define a bucket list as 'a set of meaningful goals'. Indeed, the former cannot exist without the latter. As McCall (2018) observes, bucket lists facilitate effective goal setting in the sense that goals are essential in motivating individuals towards their achievements. Despite the relationship between bucket lists and goal setting, however, they are rarely acknowledged within the same context. In other words, the importance and impact of goal setting within bucket lists is overlooked in the key subject literature (Chu et al., 2018, Periyakoil, 2018, Thurnell-Read, 2017). Therefore, this section seeks to shine light on the nature of goal setting, its benefits and its application within the context of bucket lists.

2.4.1. Goals

It is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking to the future
- sub specie aeternitatis. (Frankl, 1946).

Goals can be defined as 'a cognitive representation of a future object that an organism is committed to approach or avoid' (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009, p. 58). Hefferon (2011, p. 137) suggests that goals are 'motivational objectives by which we direct our lives'. Importantly, however, goals differ from motivation in the sense that goals are associated with an 'end state' for which the individuals strive

whereas motivation is the driver for goal directed behaviour (Kwortnik and Ross, 2007). Significantly, goals are most often aligned with people's identities. As Moskowitz (2009, p. 311) notes:

We can conceive of people as striving to attain certain higher-order goals, called 'self-defining goals'. The desired end-state of such goals is specifying an identity (such as being a professional musician, or a research scientist, or an athlete, etc.)

In other words, engagement in goal pursuit can bestow the individual with desired characteristics and even identity. Moskowitz and Grant (2009) go as far as to suggest that by knowing someone's goal, one can make realistic predictions about the individual in question. Following this argument, it is proposed in Chapter 4 that an individual's bucket list can shine a light on their identity and their life aspirations. What is particularly relevant is that, according to Hefferon (2011), goals which are written down and even discussed with others are more likely to be completed when compared to undocumented goals and, hence, within this context, writing down a bucket list is potentially a sign of commitment to the goals listed. With this in mind, then, it is critical to ask: why do people, after all, construct their goals?

First, goals are ultimately concerned with meaning. As Frankl (1946, p. 105) states:

Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideas and values! A public - opinion poll was conducted a few years ago in France. The results showed that 89 percent of the people polled admitted that man needs "something" for the sake of which to live.

Similarly, Emmons (2003) agrees that goals orient individuals towards meaningful being, albeit acknowledging that not all goals are meaningful. Quite the opposite – it is important to note that some goals are 'trivial and shallow' and however much they may contribute to daily life, they nevertheless lack the capacity to contribute to life's meaning (Emmons, 2003, p. 107). Nevertheless, Emmons (2003, p. 107) highlights that:

Goals are essential components of a person's experience of his or her life as meaningful and contribute to the process by which people construe their lives as meaningful or worthwhile.

Furthermore, Emmons (2003) stresses that not all goals are created equally, in the sense that goals associated with intimacy, generativity and spirituality will render more meaning and well-being to the individual than goals associated with power. In a similar manner, within the context of bucket lists, some goals will provide a more lasting effect on individual's lives than others. However, most important is the impact of goals on individuals' well-being and happiness.

According to Emmons (2003), research into the interrelationship between goals and well-being commenced in the mid-1980. As elements of future orientation, goals provide a useful metric for examining the positive trajectories without which life would lack its purpose and structure (Emmons, 2003). As Emmons (2003, p. 106) proposes:

Goal attainment is a major benchmark for the experience of wellbeing. When asked what makes for a happy, fulfilling, and meaningful life, people spontaneously discuss their life goals, wishes, and dreams for the future.

Significantly, McGregor and Little (1998, p. 505) further suggest that goal efficacy is associated with happiness as well as well-being, for 'people feel better when they are doing well and when they expect to be doing well in the future'. Within this context, happiness and well-being are not merely attributed to goal achievement, but also to the process of progression towards the goal (Cantor and Sanderson, 1999). Importantly, Cantor and Sanderson (1999) note that commitment to goals is an adaptive coping mechanism, valuable at times of uncertainty and adversity. As Hefferon (2011) outlines, 'Goals and making lists of short-term and life goals are important for our well-being and even daily survival'. Furthermore, Hefferon (2011) suggests that goals, in a way, provide individuals with a sense of purpose, for they add meaning to life and help maintain a dialogue with time. In essence, Hefferon (2011) argues, those who have goals to pursue are significantly happier when compared to those who do not. Within this context,

then, having a bucket list may potentially have a positive effect on an individual's well-being by sustaining the focus on positive future experiences. The capability of creating the bucket list as a coping mechanism has been mentioned earlier, with the example of the soaring number of bucket lists compiled during the Covid-19 pandemic (Travelodge, 2020). Therefore, it is assumed that the positive effects of goal-setting outlined within this section will also echo through the bucket lists. However, one of the most important theories to address within this context is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Therefore, the next section appraises SDT within the bucket list context.

2.4.2. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

According to Hefferon (2011), there are two research traditions within goal theory: the first focuses on the progress of goal pursuit whilst the second considers the context of goals and the reasons for their implementations. Significantly, SDT refers to the latter tradition. That is, as a theory of human motivation, SDT explores the meanings of life goals (Koestner and Hope, 2014); from the SDT perspective, individuals pursue goals that satisfy their needs. Specifically, this refers to the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2000). However, as Deci and Ryan (2000) note, goal-directed behaviour may not be directly aimed at need satisfaction; rather, an individual may focus on an interesting and important goal which will allow need satisfaction as a result. Within this context, competence relates to the need for knowledge seeking and skill mastery, whereas relatedness supports the need for cohesion, connection and care for others (Hefferon, 2011). Furthermore, autonomy refers to self-directed behaviour, the desire to choose one's own actions aligned with a sense of self (Hefferon, 2011). Autonomy is particularly important in goal pursuit. More specifically, as Koestner and Hope (2014) posit, autonomous goals, which are influenced internally rather than by external forces, tend to be more successful in their achievement and implementation. For instance, according to Koestner and Hope (2014), achieving an autonomous fitness goal would more likely enhance an

individual's well-being when compared to the achievement of the same goal under the external pressure. However, the need for autonomy does not refer to individualism. Rather, 'autonomy is about volitional, harmonious, and integrated functioning, in contrast to more pressured, conflicted, or alienated experiences' (Koestner and Hope, 2014, p. 402). Moreover, Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that autonomously driven goal-directed behaviour that is internally aligned with an individual's sense of self is more likely to achieve the result benefitting health and well-being. At the same time, the involvement of cultural differences is important within the autonomy of goals discourse. As elaborated by Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 247):

Within the American culture, people tend to feel volitional and autonomous when they are making their own decisions, for that is consistent with values that have been well internalized. However, in some East Asian cultures, people may feel more volitional and autonomous when endorsing and enacting values of those with whom they identify.

Furthermore, Kasser and Ryan (1993) emphasize that only certain goals lead to the satisfaction of psychological needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) and well-being. More specifically, Kasser and Ryan (1993) differentiate between two types of goals – extrinsic and intrinsic. Importantly, intrinsic aspirations have the capability to satisfy the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy, whereas extrinsic aspirations are, most often, not autonomous for they seek external reward (Koestner and Hope, 2014). Moreover, extrinsic goals tend to be associated with financial and social success alongside attractive physical appearance, whereas intrinsic goals concentrate on affiliation, community and acceptance (Sheldon and Kasser, 2008). In other words, whilst extrinsic goals seek external reward, intrinsically motivated goals require no external pressures to be achieved (Hefferon, 2011). Grant and Gelety (2009) summarise the key differences as follows:

Intrinsic goals involve goals of affiliation, personal growth, and community contribution. These goals directly satisfy the three basic psychological needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy.

Extrinsic goals, on the other hand, involve goals of wealth, fame, and image attainment. These goals emphasize a focus on obtaining external contingent approval and signs of worth.

However, within the context of SDT, one of the main differences between intrinsic and extrinsic goals is the way in which they affect the individual's well-being and sense of self-actualisation (Emmons, 2003). For example, Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) investigated the different effects of extrinsic and intrinsic goal pursuits. In one study (Kasser and Ryan, 1993) they determined that intrinsically-oriented goals are associated with increased well-being and less distress. Conversely, aspirations linked to financial success (extrinsic goals) are associated with 'less self-actualization, less vitality, more depression, and more anxiety' (Kasser and Ryan, 1993, p. 420). Similarly, in their subsequent study, Kasser and Ryan (1996) highlighted that intrinsic motivations are congruent with growth as well as self-actualisation whilst, in contrast, extrinsically orientated goals lead to greater distress (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). Thus, they concluded '...the suggestions within American culture that well-being and happiness can be found through striving to become rich, famous and attractive may themselves be chimerical' (Kasser and Ryan, 1996, p. 286). Importantly, as Deci and Ryan (2000) assert, whilst the need for competence prevails across all motivations, be it intrinsic or extrinsic, perceived autonomy is necessary for the motivation to be intrinsic or self-determined. In other words, in order to be intrinsic, an individual's goals must be internally influenced and driven without the expectation of external pressure or reward.

Furthermore, Weinstein, Ryan and Deci (2012) suggest that satisfaction of the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy is not only beneficial to the discovery of the sense of self but is also key to developing life's meaning. Conversely, deprivation of the three basic needs will lead to a decrease in well-being and meaninglessness (Weinstein et al., 2012). However, Weinstein et al. (2012) argue that true life's meaning is to be derived specifically from intrinsic goal pursuits and attainments. Importantly, within this context, meaning is not referred to as a need itself. Rather, it is the result of satisfying the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy, which leads to 'the eudaimonic ideal of

living in accord with abiding values and pursuing those ends that matter most' (Weinstein et al., 2012).

Overall, then, what does the SDT perspective add to the bucket list discourse? First, from the SDT perspective, it is evident that not all bucket lists will satisfy the three psychological needs and, therefore, will vary in the extent to which they will enhance an individual's sense of well-being. Furthermore, bucket list goals will also vary to the extent that they are influenced intrinsically or extrinsically. That is, goals that are internally initiated and pursued by the individual without external guidance will be more epiphanic, congruent with growth and self-actualisation. On the other hand, goals that are associated with fame, financial success, good looks or other outcomes requiring external reward will bring less happiness to the individual than anticipated. In fact, such goals may be associated with lower well-being, depression and loss of sense of self. Importantly, in order to reap the rewards of well-being, growth and self-actualisation, an individual's bucket list must be autonomous. However, although it could be assumed that most bucket list goals would be initiated internally, in reality this might not be the case. As with many consumer choices influenced by their 'Instagrammable' experiences of others (Hosie, 2017), it is questionable to what extent the premise of autonomy is present within bucket list discourse. What is certain, however, is that bucket lists have the capability to satisfy the basic psychological needs posed by SDT, albeit the extent to which each goal will bring meaning, growth, well-being and self-actualisation will vary depending on the nature of the goal in question.

2.4.3. Self-Determination Theory and foreword to Terror Management Theory

Despite the positive capabilities of intrinsic goals to bestow meaning, well-being, self-actualisation and growth, as discussed above, many people nevertheless strive towards extrinsic goals (Kasser and Sheldon, 2004, 2008). What should be noted here prior to considering Terror Management Theory (TMT) in the next chapter is that death plays an important role in goal setting. More specifically,

Kasser and Sheldon (2004) found that individuals who wrote about death, as opposed to music, were more likely to list extrinsic goal pursuits for the future. It appears then, that reminders of death exacerbate extrinsic pursuits. As will be seen in Chapter 3, this is supported by the tenets of TMT. How, then does TMT relate to SDT?

At the most basic level, TMT describes the processes of death denial. The fact that individuals deny their death is not disputed by SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2004); rather, from an SDT perspective, growth, connection and integration cannot be the results of rigorous mortality concealment (Ryan and Deci, 2004). Furthermore, SDT views death anxiety as an emotion that requires management and regulation by the processes associated with the three needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy, for the defensive processes prescribed by TMT will not suffice to encourage positive change, such as growth and well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Within this context, it is suggested that, ideally, encounters with death should facilitate a more 'authentic engagement with life' (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p. 258). Such tendencies echo the tenets of Meaning Management Theory, which is also discussed in Chapter 3. What is essential to establish at this point, however, is that the two theories – SDT and TMT – attempt to explain human behaviour, but the former accuses the latter of the lack of authenticity, meaning and connectedness.

Whilst this research does not deny the value of SDT within bucket list discourse, the next chapter provides an account of connectedness and meaning within TMT to the same extent that it discusses the negative connotations, such as compulsive behaviours and materialism. What is unique about TMT is that it truly has the capability to bring out the best and the worst tendencies in individuals, depending on their cultural practices and sources of self-esteem. Nevertheless, TMT is not void of meaning and need for connectedness, legacy and love. Indeed, these all are reactions to death defiance rather than embracement, but their accusation of being inauthentic from an SDT perspective are questionable. Specifically, although the path to meaning significantly differs between the two theories, the destination remains the same. As Kastenbaum (2004, p. 37) suggests: "Acceptance" and "denial" are used in a variety of ways, and sometimes their meanings become so blurred that they mislead more than they help'. With this in

mind, the next chapter carefully unfolds the death denial scenario, leading to the ultimate question: are bucket lists concerned with death denial or acceptance? The next chapter addresses this question.

2.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has aimed to outline some of the fundamental concepts surrounding bucket lists. First, the question of bucket lists within contemporary culture was raised, with a specific reference to the Covid-19 pandemic. Significantly, it is proposed that bucket lists can be a lens through which the relationship with travel, consumption practices and even death and dying may be observed and reflected upon. To add to the latter, this chapter also reviewed the accounts of those who created their bucket lists in the face of death due to their illnesses. Contrary to Chapter 3, this chapter presents death as a means of existential awakening, triggering an urge to live life to the full. However, if death is one of the catalysts for the creation of bucket lists, would chronological proximity to death, associated with older age, further increase the urgency to create such lists? This chapter attempted to answer this question assessing the impact of age on bucket lists from the perspectives of existing studies, goal setting, death and tourism.

Overall, it appears that age is not just a number within bucket list discourse for age will, to an extent, dictate an individual's bucket list goal orientations. To summarize the abovementioned discussion, the young and the old differ in the extent to which they seek meaningful activities within their bucket lists. That is not to say that younger individuals' goals are shallow or trivial. However, older individuals will most likely only engage with bucket list activities if they perceive them as intrinsically rewarding. In other words, a limited perceived time horizon influences selectivity toward life defining experiences, of which there is a plethora.

Finally, the chapter addressed the nature of goals within bucket lists. As mentioned earlier, it appears that writing down a list of goals facilitates its

successful completion. Furthermore, goals significantly align with individuals' identities, provide meaning and contribute towards well-being and happiness. From the SDT perspective, bucket list goals which are intrinsically motivated can satisfy the basic psychological needs resulting in increased well-being, growth and self-actualisation. In contrast, goals which are extrinsically motivated will most likely lead to a diluted sense of self, lower well-being and depression. The comparison is made between SDT and TMT as an early introduction to Chapter 3. It is important to outline at this point, that from an SDT perspective, the 'denial' scenario proposed by TMT lacks meaning and authenticity, facilitating a somewhat unhealthy reaction to the confrontation with death. This, however, is merely one side of the argument for, as argued later in Chapter 3, the denial of death may provoke positive trajectories of human behaviour, including the need for belongingness, meaning, legacy and even prosocial behaviour. The next chapter attempts to appraise the TMT holistically, that is, describing the good, the bad and the ugly outcomes of death denial.

Chapter 3

Terror Management Theory

3.0. Introduction

This chapter begins by explaining the tenets of Terror Management Theory. Further discussion examines the effects of mortality salience on people's behaviours in terms of the need for self-esteem and support of the cultural worldview. In particular and based on the outcomes of studies reviewed in this chapter risky, daring and meaningful behaviour is explained as a reaction to mortality salience. Specific reference is also made to 'fateful moments'. That is, the chapter considers the manner in which unexpected life-turning events may impact on the sense of mortality and, as a consequence, on individual behaviour. Subsequently, a relationship between tourism and Terror Management Theory is proposed, informing a broader conclusion with regards to the contribution of Terror Management Theory to understanding the bucket list phenomenon. Overall, then, this chapter addresses various scenarios of the denial of death within the broader question of whether the bucket list is about denying or accepting death; the chapter ends with a discussion of this question through the lens of an alternative theory of Meaning Management.

3.1. The origins of Terror Management Theory

The three progenitors of Terror Management Theory (TMT), Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg and Tom Pyszczynski, met in the late 1970s during their experimental social psychology doctoral programme at the University of Kansas (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski, 2015). Soon, the three came to realise their common interest in the motivations of human behaviour. In fact, the two questions that interested them most were: 'why we so desperately crave self-

esteem, and why do we fear, loathe, and sometimes seek to obliterate people who are different from ourselves' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. ix). Subsequently, in 1983, they found the answers to these questions in the works of the cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker. Becker's work, especially his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Denial of Death* (Becker, 1997), was inspired by the ideas of various renowned thinkers, including Soren Kierkegaard, Otto Rank, Sigmund Freud, William James, Charles Darwin, Gregory Zilboorg, Norman Brown, Eric Fromm and Robert Jay Lifton (Darrel and Pyszczynski, 2016). According to Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Koole (2004a), Becker argued in *The Denial of Death* that one of the key distinguishing characteristics of human beings is that they are self-aware and, therefore, aware of the fact that they exist and will, eventually, perish. This knowledge, according to Becker, creates a significant existential terror that is strong enough to influence the development of cultures and social institutions. Solomon et al. (2015, p. x) describe the motivating force of death awareness as follows:

Over the course of human history, the terror of death has guided the development of art, religion, language, economics, and science. It raised the pyramids in Egypt and razed the Twin Towers in Manhattan. At a more personalised level, recognition of our mortality leads us to love fancy cars, tan ourselves to an unhealthy crisp, max out our credit cards, drive like lunatics, itch for a fight with a perceived enemy, and crave fame, however ephemeral, even if we have to drink yak urine on Survivor to get it.

Inspired by works of Becker, Solomon, in 1984 Greenberg and Pyszczynski first presented what is now known as TMT to the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. They recall their first presentation as follows:

The audience started drifting away as soon as we mentioned that our theory was influenced by sociology, anthropology, existential philosophy, and psychoanalysis. When we got to the ideas of Marx, Kierkegaard, Freud, and Becker, renowned psychologists were storming the conference room exits. (Solomon et al., 2015, p. ix)

Their initial attempt to publish their work was even less well received; 'The American Psychologist rejected our first formal presentation of TMT with a one-line review: "I have no doubt that these ideas are of absolutely no interest to any psychologist, alive or dead." We had been hoping that at least the dead might have shown some interest' (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski, 2004, p. 15). However, after persistently asking the editors to justify their rejection, they discovered that that it was because of the lack of any empirical support. Consequently, they set out to compensate for this initial failure and today, more than 30 years later, the TMT literature consists of 'over 500 experiments conducted in over 30 different countries the world over' (Darrel and Pyszczynski, 2016, p. 6).

Essentially, the core of TMT can 'be boiled down to a more simple equation: to cope with the problem of death, people convince themselves that they are somehow immortal' (Lifshin, Helm and Greenberg, 2017, p. 81). Moreover, as argued by Solomon et al. (2015, p. x), 'the fear of death is one of the primary driving forces of human action'. The uniqueness of TMT then lies in its empirical capabilities to explain how the awareness of death changes, motivates, aggravates and improves human behaviour.

With the omnipresence of death in the contemporary world, including from terrorist attacks, natural disasters and pandemics, the inability to cope with existential concerns may develop into serious mental health disorders and phobias (Solomon et al., 2015, Yalom, 2011). Indeed, 'death is now a permanent, invisible yet watchful and closely watched presence in every human undertaking, deeply felt, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week' (Bauman, 2006, p. 41).

With this in mind, it is pertinent to ask: 'why aren't we all shrivelled and cowering in a corner, and, to borrow a phrase from Woody Allen, "groping for a valium the size of a hockey puck?"' (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser and Sheldon, 2004, p. 199). To that, the answer is perhaps simple. In order to soothe existential hysteria, societies have invented 'cultural symbols which do not age or decay' or, in short, culture (Becker, 1975, p. 3).

3.2. Scenarios for dealing with dread

The overwhelming majority of people are aware of the inevitability of their death. Moreover, humans are the only living creatures ‘for whom our own existence is the problem’ (Yalom, 2011, p. 200), regardless of how openly it is admitted. Many, however, do not ponder their existential concerns until the fateful moment strikes. Indeed, for many, thoughts of death are repressed from consciousness (Walter, 1996, p. 60). But die they must and, therefore, to avoid living out their days shaken by debilitating terror, they resort to something that imbues their existence with meaning, namely, cultural practices. Throughout history and different societies and cultures, people have mediated death in many ways, for example from keeping a skull at the table to sleeping near coffins or drinking out of a human skull (Solomon et al., 2015). The gaze upon death, the mortal confrontation – ‘Memento Mori’ – appeared in 15th Century European portraits as a burdensome reminder of the finitude of life. Later, in the 17th Century, these reminders were replaced with vanitas-paintings in which the human skull was a central feature and a symbol of mortality (Pound, 2019) whilst, more generally, philosophers, artists and writers have encompassed existential concerns throughout the ages (Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2012).

To Bauman (2006, p. 31), ‘All human cultures can be decoded as ingenious contraptions calculated to make life with the awareness of mortality liveable.’ Essentially, then, within the context of TMT, cultural worldviews locate an individual’s standards and values within the meaningful, culturally constructed universe (Juhl and Routledge, 2016). As Kogan (2010, p. 124) observes, ‘how we live determines how we die’; culture serves as a roadmap for the journey from birth to death, ensuring that the individual feels like a significant part of the cultural path. To Martens, Goldenberg and Greenberg (2005, p. 224), each culture provides its own narrative to elevate the individual above mere animalistic existence, whether through being ‘good Christians, great warriors, spiritual healers, computer wizards, skilled weavers, or the next great novelist’. Essentially then, culture, in a subjectively nurturing manner, prescribes an existential narrative so that individuals who abide by cultural norms feel significant within their universe. In other words, cultural worldviews allow people to buffer

existential anxiety and, when their thoughts turn to death, they become even more likely to abide by the rules of their cultural worldview (Vail, Juhl, Arndt, Vess, Routledge and Rutjens, 2012). In contrast, as Yalom (2011, p. 117), observes: 'Adults who are racked with death anxiety are not odd birds who have contracted some exotic disease, but men and women whose family and culture have failed to knit the proper protective clothing for them to withstand the icy chill of mortality'.

3.2.1. Literal immortality

The creation of culture solved the problem of death in the sense that cultural worldviews offer an appealing scenario of immortality. Specifically, cultural worldviews allow individuals to gain a sense of immortality through literal (religious) and symbolic (secular) immortality (Wisman and Heflick, 2016). For instance, literal immortality or, more often, religious immortality, offers salvation, heaven, nirvana, reincarnation, Gardens of Delight and other pathways, whilst symbolic immortality involves becoming a part of the 'enduring culture tied to the past and the future (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 102). Alternatively stated, literal immortality is 'the promise that one will never physically die, or that some vital aspect of the self will survive', whilst symbolic immortality 'promises that we will still be part of something eternal after our last breath, that some symbolic vestige of the self will persist in perpetuity' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 84). Yetzer, Pyszczynski and Greenberg (2018, p. 244) further elaborate on these terms:

Typically linked to the culture's religious beliefs, literal immortality is the belief that life extends beyond the physical world into some form of afterlife, such as heaven, reincarnation, or nirvana. Symbolic immortality, on the other hand, is the hope of transcending physical death by living on in the hearts and minds of the living, or by leaving tangible artifacts of one's existence in the physical world.

For instance, 'we allay concerns about death by investing in a cultural worldview, and shoring up self-esteem within the context of that worldview to gain a sense

of either literal or symbolic immortality (e.g., “if I'm a good Christian, I'll live forever,” or “if I'm a prolific scientist, I'll be remembered for generations to come”)' (Cohen, Sullivan, Solomon, Greenberg and Ogilvie, 2011, p. 89). Interestingly, more than 100 experiments have demonstrated that, regardless of which cultural worldview the individual follows, increasing death thoughts encourage individuals to defend their cultural worldview more robustly (Koole and Van Den Berg, 2004).

Furthermore, as proposed by Solomon et al. (2015), the search for literal immortality has been evident in human existence since earliest times; many historical artefacts survive as silent reminders of such attempts at immortality. For instance, the Chinese emperor Qin Shihuangdi believed he was destined to rule in perpetuity beyond the realms of death, so he planned and constructed a tomb with ‘an entire army of life-sized terra-cotta warriors and horses to protect him in the thereafter’ (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 85). The Egyptian royals shared similar beliefs and it is for this reason that clothing, food, toiletries and even jewellery have been found hidden in their pyramid tombs (Solomon et al., 2015). Alternatively, the folklore of many countries promised immortality, whether through Japanese concept of Horaisan – an island with an eternal spring destined to eliminate malaise and age – the Hindu Pool of Youth, the Greek Ambrosia or the Russian apple of youth, water of life or even egg of immortality belonging to Kashcey the Deathless.

Today, with a decline in cultural devotion and adherence to religious practices, notably in the UK, (Gorer, 1955), a new narrative of literal immortality has evolved facilitated by technological advances. For instance, cryogenic freezing at Alcor Life Extension Foundation offers the return to life, albeit after a period of defrosting, once a death cure has been found (Solomon et al., 2015). Alternatively, the merging of the human body with artificial materials that are amendable, replaceable and even more reliable than organic tissues is increasing; although contemporary procedures for the replacement of knees, fingers, elbows, shoulders and joints are common, according to Benecke (2002), these could in the future be expanded to include artificial, electronic eyeballs, veins and nasal bones. Essentially, then, once all parts of the human organism can be replaced and

sustained artificially, death will be no more (for humanity, as it is known today would perish). Therefore, literal immortality offers a myriad of scenarios although, within TMT studies, it is most often referred to as religious immortality. Several studies have demonstrated that religious beliefs, particularly beliefs in the afterlife, negate existential fears (Harding, Flannelly, Weaver and Costa, 2005; Kogan, 2010; Wisman and Heflick, 2016). After all, as Yalom (2011, p. 5) writes, death anxiety is 'the mother of all religions'.

3.2.2. Symbolic Immortality

In contrast, symbolic immortality does not deny death. Rather, those who abide by its promise try to ensure that their existence will not perish, that their names will not be 'written in water' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 103). In support of this, Becker (1975) writes:

This is a mankind's age-old dilemma in the face of death: it is the meaning of the thing that is of paramount importance; what man really fears is not so much extinction, but extinction with insignificance.

Thus, individuals seek the continuity of their name in many shapes and forms. These, according to Solomon et al. (2015), can include the desire to have offspring, to become rich and famous or to become a national hero. For instance, Solomon et al. (2015, p. 104) summarise existing research on the desire to have children, suggesting that 'after being primed with death thoughts, Chinese participants were more resistant to nation's one-child-per-family policy, and Americans indicated that they were more likely to name future offspring after themselves'. Similarly, other research has revealed an increased birth rate in the aftermath of 9/11 (Wisman and Goldenberg, 2005), a phenomenon described by Yalom (2011, p. 87) as rippling:

Rippling is cousin to many strategies that share the heart-wrenching longing to project oneself into the future. Most apparent is the desire

to project oneself biologically through children transmitting our genes, or through organ donation, in which our heart beats for another and our corneas permit vision.

As an 'avenue to immortality', having children, according to Wisman and Goldenberg (2005), provides people with a sense of value and meaning, for they inevitably leave a reminder of their existence behind for the years to come. Similarly, on a biological level, Lifshin et al. (2017) propose that leaving a genetic legacy is another important death-defying outcome of having children. Suffice to say, then, it is argued that having children functions as a psychological shield against existential anxieties and is, therefore, one form of symbolic death transcendence.

Another interesting symbolic scenario entails the search for fame, whether receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame or being praised in an article in the local paper. Solomon et al. (2015) explain that fame is, to some extent, associated with immortality. To illustrate, they recall a study in which the participants indicated their belief that 'a plane is less likely to crash if a famous person is among the passengers, because proximity to a famous person confers upon you some magical sense of your immortality' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 107). Similarly, another study demonstrated that once participants pondered on their death, they were more interested in purchasing a star that would be named after them from YourStar.com (Solomon et al., 2015). Nevertheless, at a more mundane level, fame can be achieved within one's area of expertise. For instance, symbolically, 'a businessman may derive a figurative sense of immortality by knowing that he has contributed to a corporate enterprise that has the potential to exist in perpetuity' (Arndt et al., 2004, p. 199). However, as these authors lament, striving towards fame may take a morbid turn: 'How many times do I have to kill before I get my name in the paper or some national attention?' was the complaint of a Kansas murderer in 1978. And at times, symbolic and literal death transcendence serve as a dangerous amalgam; for example, Greenberg (2008) explains that the 9/11 attack was, essentially, a cultural worldview war in which terrorists, who perceived themselves as martyrs, believed they would not only enter history but also qualify for a blissful afterlife.

Most common, however, is the appeal of wealth. An individual's possessions, accumulated as a result of materialistic tendencies, may provide a sense of immortality since, more often than not, they outlive their owner (Belk, 1988). According to Arndt et al. (2004), existential anxieties increase materialistic orientations although as Zaleskiewicz et al. (2013) explain, money does not play an instrumental role; rather it is a matter of the symbolic signalling of status and self-worth. They further explain that 'acquiring symbols of power, status, and wealth then serves the superordinate goal of acquiring a sense of enduring significance for one's finite and fragile existence' (Zaleskiewicz et al., 2013, p. 57). Arndt et al. (2004, p. 203) illustrate the appeal of wealth as follows:

Cash, and the fantastic appeal of what money can buy – for example, the spa-tanned and gym fit, cosmetically and surgically enhanced, dressed and jeweled "to kill," perpetually young, sexually alluring, thinner-than-a-piece-of-linguini woman; the buff swashbuckling "player" with the sculpted hair and personally tailored Armani suit fondling the keys to his Mercedes with one hand and the aforementioned woman with the other – provide a way for humans to distance themselves from the disturbing realization that they are animals destined to die.

In the *Escape from Evil*, Becker (1975, p. 81) emphatically extolls the immortal powers of gold for it not only 'buys bodyguards, bullet-proof glass, and better medical care', but also 'radiates its powers even after one's death' in the sense of the inheritance of possessions. More importantly, however, as an individual's refined accumulations symbolically communicate their self-worth, they are often preceding their owner's legacy. As DeLillo (1985, p. 38) suggests, 'The dead have faces, automobiles. If you don't know a name, you know a street name, a dog's name. "He drove an orange Mazda". You know a couple of useless things about a person that become major facts of identification and cosmic placement when he dies...'. The relevance of possessions to symbolic immortality is revealed in various studies. For instance, Mandel and Smeesters (2008) reported increased overconsumption, excessive shopping, eating and drinking in the wake of 9/11, whilst Mandel and Heine (1999) revealed that, after answering death-related

questions, participants in their research demonstrated an increased interest in luxurious items. Essentially then, multiple studies confirm that increased death anxiety accelerates materialistic behaviour (Arndt et al., 2004, Kasser and Sheldon, 2000, Mandel and Heine, 1999).

To summarise, then, there are two general scenarios of transcending death, on the one hand literal, mainly through religion, and on the other hand symbolic – through leaving one’s name in history by one means or another. Hence, people try to forget about the decaying nature of their biological selves through either complex means of qualifying for a happy afterlife or a more simplistic approach, such as getting tattoos, which ‘convey meaning and significance and thereby reinforce that we are more than mere animals’ (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 156). Each of these culturally prescribed scenarios help people to deal with existential anxieties. Nevertheless, although the existence of a cultural worldview helps to transcend death, it does not eradicate death anxiety by itself. In other words, more important than the mere existence of the cultural worldview is the belief on the part of the individual that they meaningfully meet the standards that are prescribed by that cultural worldview (Solomon et al., 2004). This belief is referred to as self-esteem.

3.2.3. Self-esteem

As indicated earlier, Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski were interested in not only the superiority of people’s perceived cultural worldview, but also their need to boost and bolster their self-esteem. Self-esteem is, essentially, ‘the feeling that one is a valuable participant in a meaningful universe’ (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 39); following a certain cultural worldview path does not alone suffice to keep existential anxieties at bay, for the belief that one is a meaningful contributor to the cultural narrative is as valuable as the mere existence of culture. The need for self-esteem is universal since it is the protective cocoon that shields people from reminders of their mortality, yet means of accruing of self-esteem vary

significantly from one person to another. This is illustrated by Pyszczynski et al. (2004b, p. 437):

Whereas beating another person to a cab, loudly proclaiming one's successes, and demonstrating one's individuality and relative immunity to concerns about others might lead a typical urban American to feel valuable, the same behavior might lead to feelings of shame and dramatic drops in self-esteem for a typical Japanese urbanite, who would feel better about him or herself after stepping back to offer the cab to another person, playing down accomplishments and crediting colleagues for their role in the group effort, and blending into the group.

Self-esteem is, therefore, largely a socio-psychological construct (Davis, 2012, Pyszczynski et al., 2004b) that bestows individuals with its anxiety buffering capabilities.

There are several scenarios in which someone's self-esteem may be threatened. The first occurs when they lose confidence in their cultural worldview, which may be as a result of fateful moments, such as divorce, job change or marriage (Giddens, 1991, Solomon et al., 2015). Fateful moments are considered in more detail below (see section 3.3.) The second generally appears when they ponder on their own mortality and believe that they have not left a significant legacy (Mandel and Smeesters, 2008). With this in mind, it is important to note that the pursuit of self-esteem is an ongoing process that allows individuals to function amid all existential concerns (Pyszczynski et al., 2004b). However, when self-esteem is low, individuals attempt to overcompensate for it through either defending their cultural worldview or boosting the 'damaged' aspect of self-esteem through specific behaviour.

For instance, as Solomon et al. (2015) describe, after contemplating their death, those who accumulate their self-esteem through driving tend to drive faster (Taubman - Ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer, 1999). Similarly, those who achieve self-esteem through physical fitness report a greater intention to exercise whilst similarly, those who value their physical appearance are more concerned with their beauty rituals (Solomon et al., 2015). This, however, is not to suggest that

driving recklessly or having a haircut inevitably involves the search for self-esteem as a shield against terror (Solomon et al., 2015). Nevertheless, there is evidence that some people engage in risky behaviour after pondering on their mortality. Thinking about one's own death may elicit the desire to enhance self-esteem through reckless activities, to 'climb rocks, drive fast, have casual sex, ride a motorcycle, sky-dive, drink large quantities of alcohol, snowboard, try heroin, hang-glide, bungee-jump, and go whitewater rafting' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 181). Paradoxically, then, after an encounter with mortality, individuals may indulge in activities which bring the possibility of sudden death even closer as long as it shores up their self-esteem. Though contradictory, the denial of death takes the form of flirtation with death which, consequently, enhances the feeling of being alive and safe (for the immediately enhanced self-esteem will buffer any existential concerns).

Some of the behaviours that enhance self-esteem include the desire for fame, sex, family, a legacy of the name, prosocial behaviour, dedication to one's work or hobby and even 'digital immortality, that is by sustaining a symbolic representation of oneself across platforms such as Facebook' (Lifshin et al., 2017, p. 84, Solomon et al., 2015, Yalom, 2011). In addition, Greenberg (2008, p. 53) suggests that from a TMT perspective, striving for self-esteem can explain 'small prosocial actions, such as leaving the maid a tip when checking out of a hotel, and large prosocial actions, such as working dedicatedly to develop a vaccine that saves millions of lives'. Significantly, then, self-esteem is a force that protects individuals against death anxiety, and cracks within this protective shield will trigger behaviour that correlates with their overall cultural worldview. It is undoubtedly a strong motivating force which can lead individuals to achieve their deserved name in history, whether with good or bad connotations. For instance, those with unstable self-esteem and whose claims to self-worth are impinged upon by their environment tend to grapple with aggression and violence. To illustrate, Greenberg (2008) suggests that the unstable self-esteem of the perpetrators was one of the reasons (amongst others) for the Columbine High School massacre and Virginia Tech attack. Conversely, as discussed shortly, striving for self-esteem and worldview defence may also facilitate acts of

kindness, that is, prosocial behaviour. However, before that discussion is pursued, it is important to introduce the core hypothesis of TMT, namely, mortality salience.

3.2.4. Mortality salience

Mortality salience (MS) refers to the reminder of one's own death, akin to the expression 'memento mori'. In the research environment, academics traditionally tend to explore mortality salience by asking participants to contemplate their death or afterlife (Lifshin et al., 2017). A consideration of mortality salience is then encouraged with questions such as: 'Please describe briefly the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you' or, 'What do you think happens to you as you physically die and once you are physically dead?' (Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2011, p. 390). However, in day-to-day environments, mortality salience may be experienced after seeing images of fatalities, going past a cemetery or wearing a T-shirt with a skull (Lifshin et al., 2017). The mortality salience hypothesis, therefore, proposes that whilst adherence to cultural worldviews and the maintenance of self-esteem produce certain beliefs that protect the individual against death anxiety, once mortality is made salient, individuals will more rigorously defend their beliefs (Solomon et al., 2004). However, according to Lifshin et al. (2017), people with high self-esteem do not demonstrate an array of traditional MS responses. For instance, Solomon et al. (2015) demonstrated that when participants' self-esteem was purposefully inflated (intelligence boost) they demonstrated a less anxious response to a threat (which in this case was an electric shock). Essentially, then, 'when mortality is made salient, individuals increase their efforts to live up to the standards upon which their self-esteem is based' (Ferraro, Shiv and Bettman, 2005).

Again, such an effect was demonstrated in the wake of 9/11; when people's mortality became salient, many reported to have overeaten, drunk, smoked, shopped, but also have spent more time with families and attended church services (Ferraro et al., 2005). Unsurprisingly, during the 2019 Covid-19 pandemic,

similar behaviours have been indicated with 'bulk buying' (Dodgson, 2020), increased alcohol consumption (Dewey, 2020) and even religious devotion (Coppen, 2020), where '15 per cent of those who 'seldom or never pray' and 24 per cent of those who do not belong to any religion have prayed about the virus'. Similarly, MS in the midst of a global pandemic triggered both negative (stereotyping, prejudice, aggression) (Edwards, 2020) and prosocial (community help, selflessness) behaviours (Van Brown, 2020), both of which are justified by TMT. Furthermore, MS, according to Kasser and Sheldon (2000), may increase greed and materialism but, conversely, Shim and White (2017a) suggest that MS increases the need for deeper meaning to which prosocial behaviour may perhaps contribute.

As mentioned earlier, an increased desire to be a worthy individual within a universe after contemplating one's mortality is not a novel phenomenon (Jonas, Schimel, Greenberg and Pyszczynski, 2002). From a TMT perspective, the Scrooge effect takes place in normal life, whereby individuals tend to express more prosocial behaviour once reminded of their mortality. As demonstrated by Jonas et al. (2002, p. 1345), 'when interviewed in front of a funeral home, and thereby reminded of mortality, people showed a more favourable attitude toward charitable causes than when interviewed three blocks from the mortuary'. However, a second study by the same researchers confirmed nationalist underpinnings following MS, for 'people donated more money to charities that supported projects in America but did not increase giving to international projects (Jonas et al., 2002, p. 1348). Essentially, then, death reminders facilitate positive prosocial behaviour (Vail et al., 2012). However, it is important to justify why altruistic 'Samaritanism' is one of the reactions to MS.

An interesting outcome of a study by Hirschberger, Ein-Dor and Almakias's (2008) was that whilst participants were primed with death thoughts, they demonstrated prosocial behaviour in terms of charity donations. However, at the same time, after MS, the participants were less likely to sign organ donation cards. Such peculiar preferences in charitable values are explained by suggesting that individuals 'sometimes abandon these values when faced with actual or symbolic threats to the self' (Hirschberger et al., 2008, p. 674). Indeed, once reminded of

their own death, many tend to 'dodge' death out of their consciousness. This is also referred to as 'bracketing out' death, as discussed by Stone and Sharpley (2008, p. 581). In other words, this describes the persistent attempt to keep death thoughts 'out of sight, out of mind'. In particular, adults tend to strive towards positive thoughts, comfort foods and even luxurious products once reminded of their mortality (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 26) or otherwise utilise diversionary tactics to remove the presence of death thoughts. Overall, then, prosocial behaviour, following MS, boosts people's self-esteem and allows them to feel worthy within their cultural narrative (Hirschberger et al., 2008). However, there exist two defense mechanisms to mortality salience; that is, according to Strachan, Pyszczynski, Solomon & Greenberg (2001), there are 'two modes of dealing with death'. On the one hand, proximal defences deal, in general, with immediate and rational thoughts of death by distraction and 'distortion in perception of reality' (Strachan et al., 2001, p. 123). Here, death is addressed in concrete terms, be it through the denial of any vulnerability or engagement in health goals (Biran and Buda, 2018). On the other hand, distal defences deal with the inevitability of the fact of death. Here, death is not particularly conscious and it is not dealt with in a rational manner. Rather, people delve into a cultural worldview that they ascribe to, becoming, for example, a good Christian, a loving parent or an established academic (Strachan et al., 2001). In other words, distal defences deal with death symbolically by utilising self-esteem and adherence to a cultural worldview (Biran and Buda, 2018).

Within the context of bucket lists, proximal and distal defence mechanisms are particularly relevant. Perhaps, those who rigorously deny having a bucket lists are, ultimately, reacting through proximal defences? And those who construct long, adventurous lists are more likely to utilise their distal defences? In order to confirm these propositions, it is important to establish whether the concept of the bucket lists does, indeed, result in increased mortality salience. This question is more broadly discussed in the research findings in Chapters 7 and 8.

3.2.5. Personal relationships

Another path to suspending existential concerns, bolstering self-esteem and supporting cultural worldviews is through the development of close connections and relationships. According to Lifshin et al. (2017, p. 84), 'Personal relationships can grant people a sense of security and immortality in a number of ways. They can provide people a sense of meaning, attachment, security, belonging, self-esteem and the sense that they have a generative effect on others'. Following the MS hypothesis, then, it is important to question whether an encounter with death thoughts would facilitate a stronger need for personal attachments. Several studies have examined the effects of MS on attachment (Mikulincer and Florian, 2000; Plusnin, Pepping and Kashima, 2018; Smieja, Kalaska and Adamczyk, 2006; Taubman-Ben-Ari, Findler and Mikulincer, 2002), all reaching the similar conclusion that MS increases the striving for personal attachment as well as increasing the perceived partner's attractiveness (Smieja et al., 2006). A similar tendency was observed amongst populations after significant encounters with death. For instance, after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the number of divorces in Oklahoma decreased significantly and the birth rates increased beyond expectations (Tompkins, 2020, Vail et al., 2012), whilst the same occurred after the events of 9/11 (Wisman and Goldenberg, 2005). However, it is important to note that opposing opinions exist with regards to physical intimacy within TMT theory. Whilst some argue that exposure to death decreases interest in sex, owing to the fact that it reminds individuals of the animal (mortal) nature of human bodies (Solomon et al., 2015, Wisman and Goldenberg, 2005). Yalom (2011, p. 212) argues that sex, 'the vital life force, often counters thoughts of death' by temporarily pushing death thoughts out of consciousness, whilst Plusnin et al. (2018) assert that intimate relationships enhance that feeling of being alive. Essentially, then, opinions on the capabilities of intimate relationships to conceal death thoughts vary. That said, however, there is no doubt that 'committed romantic relationships can help people feel secure in the shadow of death (Lifshin et al., 2017, p. 84). It is, therefore, important to note some of the reasons why a close relationship facilitates shielding against death anxiety.

First, one reason why personal relationships buffer death thoughts is the 'safe' base they form for offspring (Plusnin et al., 2018). They enable people to preserve not only their genetic legacy but also the symbolic self by raising their children within the universe of their cultural worldview and their values (Wisman and Goldenberg, 2005). Second, close relationships satisfy the basic desire for comfort and support in times of need (Plusnin et al., 2018). This is particularly reassuring when both partners support and share a cultural worldview. In fact, MS influences the search for a partner who reinforces a shared cultural worldview (Plusnin et al. (2018). Third, close relationships allow the symbolic transcendence of death in that individuals do not fear being forgotten about. Essentially, they preserve an individual's identity after death, albeit in memory; as Belk (1988, p. 156) argues, symbolically, partners, children and friends are an extension of the self and, subsequently, there is a 'sense of self-loss during divorce and at the death of a spouse, child, or close friend'. Finally, personal relationships allow the individual to feel part of a larger social entity, from their partner's family or a circle of friends to a larger community, resulting in a stronger connection with the world and thereby facilitating symbolic death transcendence and an increase in self-esteem (Plusnin et al., 2018). It is clear, then, that striving for personal relationships is one response to MS which, just like having children or donating to a charity, can reinforce an individual's cultural worldview and self-esteem.

Overall, it seems that one key characteristic for which all individuals strive for through any means possible is, from a TMT perspective, meaning. This can be found through acquiring fame or leaving a rich legacy, through having children or completing ground-breaking research, through leaving publications and works of art, or getting a tattoo, getting married or having casual sex, ageing with grace, or going out with a bang – all of these decisions are interwoven with the individual's chosen existential narrative at the core of which is the awareness of death. After all, 'fear of death is universal, albeit with varying degrees of awareness' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 209). Therefore, individuals deny their kinship with other species, since their lives transcend beyond physiological existence, through the meaning that they give to their environments and themselves. As Becker (1997, p. 157) writes, 'human beings are the only things that mediate meaning, which is to say

that they give the only human meaning we can know'. Therefore, extinction without significance and meaning is, itself, even worse than death (Becker, 1997).

Steger, Oishi and Kashdan (2009, p. 43) define meaning as a belief that people have made sense out of their life, found it to be significant and perceive that they have accomplished a certain purpose. The elusive quest for meaning, is, then, at the core of human existence in that, perhaps, 'the search for a personal sense of meaning is the most important motivating force in our lives' (Cozzolino and Blackie, 2013, p. 33). The need for meaning is even more urgent when death awareness is heightened, especially in the event of fateful moments (Juhl and Routledge, 2016; Routledge et al., 2011). At the same time, an individual's belief that their life is meaningful buffers existential concerns and allows them to deal with illness, stress and other fateful moments (Routledge et al., 2011). However, Reker et al. (1987, p. 44) introduce another perspective on personal meaning, whereby 'having a sense of personal meaning means having a purpose and striving toward a goal or goals', which also allows the buffering of existential crises. With this in mind, it is proposed that, from a TMT perspective, bucket lists are another means of confronting one's mortality, albeit in a playful manner. It is argued that the need for a bucket list stems from the fact of life's finality and it, therefore, permits the anticipation a meaningful autobiography, and, in some cases, legacy. Since a sense of meaning is particularly important during developmental and existential crises, bucket lists, as organised reminders of time left on Earth, allow one to return to a sense of normality by taking certain control over events that are carefully planned to happen in the future. Therefore, the next section discusses bucket lists from a TMT perspective, and examines the effect of fateful moments and bucket list orientations.

3.3. Fateful moments

It has already been established that the bucket list is interconnected with existential awakening as a result of, for example, a terminal illness or the loss of someone significant. However, the bucket list is not merely an outcome of confronted fatality. This section asserts that bucket lists are a means of anticipated autobiography, where selfhood is negotiated throughout the 'passages of time' (Giddens, 1991, p. 79). Hence, it is not surprising why many bucket lists revolve around significant milestones, such as graduation, a 21st birthday, relationships, marriage, children, retirement and many others. More so, bucket lists are a means of bribing the future, when 'fateful moments' unfold in an unanticipated manner, such as a divorce, job loss or lottery win (Giddens, 1991, p. 113). Whilst significant life transitions and existential crossroads do not necessarily provoke death thoughts, they do, however, inevitably threaten the 'protective cocoon which defends the individual's ontological security, because the 'business as usual' attitude that is so important to that cocoon is inevitably broken through' (Giddens, 1991, p. 114).

Essentially, fateful moments are events that shatter an individual's anticipated life scenario to the point where they can move forward only after conscious readjustment (Giddens, 1991). Similarly, Yalom (2011, p. 36) describes these as 'awakening experiences' amongst which are grief, illnesses, break ups, significant birthdays, traumas, empty nests, job loss, retirement and even powerful dreams. Therefore, although it seems that fateful moments are predominantly encountered as a result of negative or traumatic events, they do sometimes appear as a part of positive planning in the light of life changes. For instance, starting a new project, becoming a parent or buying one's first house can trigger behavioural changes which aim to adjust life's trajectory in a certain manner. Hence, fateful moments are often engineered and even sought after since, in a symbolical manner, they manifest the turn of life – a positive readjustment. It is within these moments that the individual has the least and, equally, the most power to anticipate the continuum of their selfhood and their autobiography. Consequently, these can range from New Year's resolutions, giving up bad habits and reevaluating life priorities to overall future life planning, depending on the

individual's cultural worldview. Bucket lists are, essentially, the buffer mechanisms for overcoming fateful moments, for they enable people to take control of and narrate their autobiography, predominantly through positive, internalised experiences. Therefore, when the protective capabilities of an individual's cocoon are shattered, individuals find solace in organising and planning experiences that reinforce their lost sense of self-significance and self-control.

3.3.1. Fateful moments and goal pursuits

Carter remembers his previous bucket list conducted in his young adulthood:

-Back then I had things like :
'Make a million dollars, first black president.' -Young man's wishes.
Thought I'd make up a new list,
but then...'
(Zackham, 2007)

One of the central characters of the movie *The Bucket List*, Carter, was bitterly reminiscing the bucket list of his younger years. Back then, before life got in the way, he dreamt of grand events. Having received a terminal diagnosis, he knew that these early goals would never become reality, yet neither did he desire them. Nevertheless, a new bucket list was emerging. This time, he did not dream of a presidency or a million dollars. Instead, Carter wished to find joy in his life, to laugh until he cried, to witness something truly majestic.

It appears that when life does not go according to 'the plan', when people cannot preserve 'the recognisable uniqueness of face and name for the times to come, including the times that will follow their bearer's death' they may experience the unconscious dread of finitude in the face of which all culturally erected mechanisms of defence are shattered (Bauman, 2006, p. 35). The breaking of the protective cocoon may be referred to, from a TMT perspective, as the breaking of self-esteem. As discussed above, self-esteem, within this context, refers to 'the feeling that one is a valuable participant in a meaningful universe' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 39). Thus, the capabilities of self-esteem are central to one's existential

well-being as a 'foundation of psychological fortitude' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 40). When an individual's self-esteem is threatened, they experience the heightened need to compensate for it so that when repaired, their self-esteem can continue 'filtering out' their 'deeply rooted existential fears surrounding our vulnerability and mortality' (Goldenberg, Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Solomon, 2000, p.201). Specifically, then, the role of the self-esteem is to act as a 'protective shield designed to control the potential for terror that results from awareness of the horrifying possibility that we humans are merely transient animals groping to survive in a meaningless universe, destined only to die and decay' (Pyszczynski et al., 2004b, p. 436)

However, how individuals reinforce their self-esteem is deeply internalised and, therefore, unique to themselves and their cultural worldview. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the intensity of recovering self-esteem after fateful moments depends on the strength of 'fatality'. That is, the damage to self-esteem will vary according to different fateful moments, such as going through a divorce or experiencing a terminal illness, in the sense that the latter is more likely to activate conscious death thoughts as opposed to the former which may only trigger death thoughts on the verge of consciousness. Undeniably, when confronting mortality, 'people undergo a shift' towards their value systems (Arndt et al., 2004, p. 210); however, the intensity of the shift is, arguably, influenced by the intensity of exposure to death. Therefore, if bucket lists are compiled as a result of fateful moments, it can be argued that they will differ in certain ways depending on the intensity of the event that influenced the decision to compile such a list. Moreover, it can be argued that subsequent fateful moments can also trigger the readjustment of the bucket list goal orientation.

To date, several accounts recollect the effects of significant fateful moments triggering different behavioural responses. As Seneca pondered:

...when at last some illness has reminded them of their mortality, how terrified do they die, as if they were not just passing out of life but being dragged out of it. They exclaim that they were fools because they have not really lived, and that if only they can recover from this illness they will live in leisure. (Seneca, 1997, p. 16)

People's reactions to exposure to death are immense in their variety. However, the premise of goal setting in the context of bucket lists proposes a peculiar relationship. Specifically, Vail et al. (2012, p. 6) argue that when death thoughts are unconscious, individuals tend to 'repair' their self-esteem by way of 'culturally prescribed' extrinsic goal pursuit. In contrast, those who consciously encounter death thoughts tend to trivialise the extrinsic pursuits and 'reorient' towards 'intrinsically meaningful goals' (Vail et al., 2012, p. 6). Undeniably, then, all (conscious and unconscious) encounters with death inevitably trigger, to some extent, 'recalibration of the self' (Cozzolino and Blackie, 2013, p. 48). It appears, therefore, that 'impersonal' reminders of death may, for example, trigger overt materialism (Arndt et al., 2004), whereas survivors of a close brush with 'personal' death will commit towards personal, intrinsic values (Martin, Campbell and Henry, 2004). To date, no study has investigated the effects of fatal moments on conscious and unconscious death thought accessibility and their consequent influence on intrinsic and extrinsic bucket list pursuits. The research in this thesis will, however, examine the role of death concerns in bucket lists and the potential relationship with specific bucket list goal orientations.

Essentially, then, the premise of fateful moments is critically important within the context of the bucket list. Specifically, fateful moments can trigger the creation of the bucket list or meaningfully influence its readjustment in light of fateful events. As Chu et al. (2018, p. 151) suggest: 'Different from general life goals, a bucket list is typically created when a person realizes the fragility and finitude of life, such as being diagnosed with a fatal disease or facing a natural disaster'. Similarly, Kramer and Wurzer (2015, p. 132) note that 'the diagnosis of a disease that you know will kill you only increases the urgency of such a list'. On a similar note, Ramanayake, McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2017, p. 74) argue that:

Sudden unexpected loss such as the death of a loved one can be seen as a traumatic loss. The experience may raise questions about one's own mortality which can lead people to think about how to use the remaining precious lifetime effectively.

Most importantly, when personal crises strike, bucket lists provide an opportunity for meaning – whether that involves restoring order to life through positive event

planning or planning for activities to recover the threatened self-esteem. After all, 'perceived meaning and purpose in life may play an important role in coping with developmental crises' (Reker et al., 1987, p. 44) and, thus, a bucket list provides those in crisis with both meaning and purpose which, arguably, may eventually facilitate returning to 'business as usual'. Although bucket list goals may be rather abstract or even challenging in their implementation, they allow one to ponder and amend the trajectory of life. Though significant life changes require time and effort, bucket lists instantly empower individuals to negotiate and restore their identity through their anticipated autobiography.

3.3.2. The pursuit of the ordinary and the extraordinary

Edward reads Carter's bucket list:
-'Help a complete stranger for the good.' 'Laugh until I cry.' Not to be judgmental, but -- This is extremely weak. (Zackham, 2007)

The *Bucket List* movie characters, Edward and Carter, disagree with what deserves to be on the bucket list. Whilst Edward wants to experience something as extraordinary as skydiving, Carter would be content with laughing to tears. It is interesting to note that when the movie was first released, it received some negative reviews owing to its allegedly unrealistic storyline. To illustrate:

"The Bucket List" is a movie about two old codgers who are nothing like people, both suffering from cancer that is nothing like cancer, and setting off on adventures that are nothing like possible. I urgently advise hospitals: Do not make the DVD available to your patients; there may be an outbreak of bedpans thrown at TV screens. (Ebert (2008)

To Ebert (2008), who had suffered from cancer just like the storyline characters, the idea that Edward and Carter would rise from their hospital beds and set off to conquer the world seemed unlikely, for a 'real' bucket list in such circumstances

would have included: 'keeping down a full meal, having a triumphant bowel movement, keeping your energy up in the afternoon, letting your loved ones know you love them, and convincing the doc your reports of pain are real and not merely disguising your desire to become a drug addict'. At the time, Ebert could not predict the rise and evolution of the witty catchphrase from a fairly average movie into a complex social phenomenon.

Yet, despite these early criticisms of the movie, extraordinary experiences, such as travel or skydiving, are central to the bucket list discourse for people of a variety of ages and health conditions. For example, there is a plethora of inspirational accounts of terminally ill people who undertake great adventures as a part of their bucket list (Bauerschmidt and Liddle, 2017, Granger, 2012, Lavery, 2018, Wilcox, 2020). Equally, there are those who compile their bucket lists from somewhat ordinary experiences, such as getting to sit on Santa's lap one Christmas (Udell, 2018). One question that needs to be asked, therefore, is why some people seek extraordinary experiences on their bucket lists whilst others are content with ordinary experiences.

Previous studies have mostly defined extraordinary experiences as something that is 'uncommon, infrequent, and go[es] beyond the realm of everyday life' (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014, p. 2). This definition has been broadened to include activities such as career accomplishments, cultural experiences and significant milestones. There are specific characteristics that indicate the extraordinary experience, such as heightened excitement, expenditure, publicity, physical effort, self-definition and risk involvement. Moreover, extraordinary experiences remain in an individual's memory for a prolonged time and thus, are more self-defining (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014). Perhaps, to some extent, extraordinary activities may facilitate the experience of flow: 'a subjective state that people report when they are completely involved in something to the point of forgetting time, fatigue, and everything else but the activity itself' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 230). Importantly, Csikszentmihalyi (2014, p.229) explained how he examined the reason why individuals engage in 'autotelic activities', that is, activities undertaken for their own sake. The conclusion of his research was that individuals experienced such joy from an undertaken activity,

be it rock climbing, drama or chess playing, that they would go to great lengths to experience it once again. This was later described by Csikszentmihalyi as the 'flow experience' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 230).

Goal setting and flow are not disparate concepts. In fact, the lack of goals or goal directed behaviour, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1997), can result even in poor physical health along with a loss of concentration and motivation. An example of that is 'Sunday neurosis', or a feeling of hysteria and depression due to a lack of goal directed behaviour experienced during the weekend (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 65). Importantly, then, goals and the experience of flow are inextricably linked: '...flow tends to occur when the activity one engages in contains a clear set of goals. These goals serve to add direction and purpose to behavior' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 231).

In contrast, ordinary experiences are common; they tend to appear in everyday life. This, however, does not imply that ordinary experiences do not deserve due regard or are boring. Rather, the nature of ordinary experiences rests in the preciousness of the mundane and familiar, where one could 'stop and smell the roses', indulge in a favourite treat, meet the sunrise, organise a Sunday dinner for the family or see an old friend (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014, p. 3).

From this perspective, it is important to note that *The Bucket List* movie showcased a significant change in the trajectory of experiences, from extraordinary to ordinary, where the two protagonists 'set off on extraordinary adventures (e.g., peaking mountains, sky diving), only to find their greatest fulfilment upon returning home and spending quiet moments with their families at the kitchen table and in the backyard' (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014, p. 1). Moreover, when the first fateful moment struck in the form of a terminal disease, Edward was still pursuing extraordinary experiences, such as skydiving and getting a tattoo. Once Edward encountered another fateful moment – the loss of his friend Carter to the same illness that was eventually going to take him – he began to cross off internalised, ordinary bucket list goals, such as kissing the most beautiful girl in the world (his granddaughter) and helping a complete stranger (Carter).

Returning to the question of why some people pursue extraordinary goals whilst others are content with the ordinary, the existing literature points towards the answer of perceived death proximity. For instance, research by Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013) proposed that whilst younger participants were actively deriving enjoyment from extraordinary experiences, older participants preferred enjoying ordinary experiences. Mogilner and Bhattacharjee (2014, p. 12) explain:

While extraordinary experiences are self-defining throughout life, ordinary experiences become more self-defining as people age, contributing to happiness as much as extraordinary experiences later in life.

Therefore, ordinary goals provide as sufficient a degree of meaning and happiness as extraordinary goals when ‘individuals have limited time remaining’ (Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014, p. 1). Similarly, Yalom (2011, p. 34), who worked with cancer patients for over 10 years, noted that they ‘communicated more deeply with those they loved, and appreciated more keenly the elemental facts of life - the changing seasons, the beauty of nature, the last Christmas or New Year’. Research by Mogilner, Kamvar and Aaker (2010) similarly highlighted that young individuals seek happiness in excitement whilst, for older individuals, happiness stems from peaceful events. Finally, another significant study focuses on age and goal selection, arguing that individuals with a limited life span focus on the ‘the maximization of their emotionally meaningful experience’ (Lang and Carstensen, 2002, p. 137). The question of age and goal pursuits was addressed earlier, in Chapter 2.

A critical argument may arise over whether it is possible to objectively separate ordinary and extraordinary pursuits. In response, Mogilner and Bhattacharjee (2014, p. 13) suggest the following:

Even though each experience is unique to a particular individual at a particular moment, the infinite array of possible experiences—ranging from adventurous vacations, to career accomplishments, to life milestones like graduations or weddings, to annual holidays, to a particularly moving aria at the opera, to an inventive wine-paired meal

at a world famous restaurant, to a comfy meal at a favorite neighborhood restaurant, to a pizza night on the couch with the family—can be meaningfully grouped into one of two categories: the extraordinary or the ordinary.

Thus, for example, tourism was once an extraordinary activity, for the ‘touristic journey lies in the non-ordinary sphere of existence, the goal is symbolically sacred and morally on a higher plane than the regards of the ordinary workaday world’ (Graburn, 1989, p. 28). Today, however, whilst tourist objects, such as the Eiffel Tower or Taj Mahal, remain extraordinary sites/sights, the ‘tourist practices’ have, arguably, become ordinary (Urry, 2002, p. 114). In other words, not all tourism is extraordinary.

As discussed further in the research, the recalibration of oneself after encounters with personal death are sufficiently explained by TMT. Although fateful moments do not always directly remind people of their mortality, they nevertheless underline the illusion of control over life events and to a certain extent, therefore, their vulnerability. However, as demonstrated in previous sections, fateful moments do not only break the protective cocoon or shatter an individual’s self-esteem; they also facilitate positive psychological growth, the reevaluation of life priorities and meaning. For these reasons, this thesis seeks to ask questions regarding the influence of death thoughts on people’s bucket lists as well as to examine the extent to which it would be important for the individual to complete their bucket list after the fateful moment (terminal illness). The presence of fateful moments is inevitable in people’s lives and the way in which they recover from them is deeply internalised. However, as argued in this section, compiling a bucket list is one of the ways, in Giddens’s terms, to ‘colonise the future’ for oneself and to narrate and anticipate one’s future autobiography, albeit in the format of a list.

Having briefly explored the effects of fateful moments on people’s bucket list goal orientations, it is essential to discuss the possibility of potential inter-relationships between tourism and TMT. The next section examines this relationship, drawing attention to the existing cross-disciplinary account in the form of dark tourism and

TMT. Furthermore, the importance of meaning within TMT and tourism is discussed.

3.4. Terror Management Theory and tourism

The inter-relationship between tourism and TMT has yet to be examined other than primarily within the context of dark tourism. It is for this reason that this section commences with a review of the single documented study by Biran and Buda (2018), which assesses that relationship between TMT and dark tourism. The argument is then developed that tourism and TMT are in fact interrelated in the sense that tourism may buffer existential concerns by way of meaning-making, symbolic death transcendence and enhanced self-esteem. Finally, the discussion leads to examining the phenomenon of bucket lists within the TMT framework.

3.4.1. Terror Management Theory and dark tourism

As noted above, to date no strong link exists between tourism studies and TMT, with the exception of dark tourism accounts, and a couple of papers. For instance, Nanni and Ulqinaku (2020) examined the capabilities of virtual tours to alleviate mortality threats, whilst Kwak and Hong (2017) explored the effect of TMT on travel intentions. Specifically, Biran and Buda (2018) pioneered the first, concrete account of TMT within dark tourism studies. Dark tourism refers to travel to places of 'deaths, disasters and atrocities' (Stone, 2006, p. 145). To Buda (2015, p. 43), the act of travel to such places alludes to a confrontation with 'one's own fear of death'. It may then be asked how the principles of TMT relate to dark tourism. According to Biran and Buda (2018, p. 524), dark tourism activates cultural worldview defences as a result of education and 'moral instructions' provided at the sites of atrocity. Furthermore, following the cultural worldview defence, they argue that a sense of literal immortality may appear at dark tourism sites for those

who have witnessed the death and disasters first-hand. Moreover, Pratt, Tolkach and Kirillova (2019) note that:

From the existential standpoint, encountering the death of others while travelling may help tourists face their own mortality and jumpstart the meaning-making process to come to terms with this existential given.

Finally, Biran and Buda (2018, p. 525) suggest a potential self-esteem boost within people's cultural worldview, since 'visits to sites such as Gallipoli, Auschwitz, or places of genocide in Rwanda or Cambodia are encouraged, socially rewarded, and even considered obligatory, as they are seen as educational, commemorative, and central to the identity of certain social groups'. Therefore, they believe that, on the one hand, dark tourists inevitably confront their own mortality at sites of death, but that, on the other hand, such acts of travel, as a form of 'meaningful entertainment', significantly buffer their existential concerns through the cultural worldview defence (Biran and Buda, 2018, p. 523).

Despite the death-related connotations within each concept, TMT and dark tourism are not exactly interconnected, for TMT concerns itself with the denial of death whilst the latter predisposes the confrontation with death. Nevertheless, Biran and Buda (2018) make a unique attempt to intertwine both principles, suggesting that dark tourism buffers existential concerns through cultural worldview, self-esteem and symbolic death transcendence. Therefore, despite major differences, TMT and dark tourism are not mutually exclusive concepts. However, it is then important to ask the question of how 'traditional' tourism might relate to the TMT. To this, Biran and Buda (2018, p. 526) propose 'that tourism participation, as a whole, can provide opportunities for buffering existential fears through self-esteem enhancement'. Significantly, however, they call for further research into 'fundamental interrelationships between death fears and tourism' (Biran and Buda, 2018, p. 526). For these reasons, the next section evaluates the potential connection between tourism and TMT by arguing that tourism buffers existential anxiety by way of increased self-esteem and meaningfulness. Furthermore, the concept of meaning is examined within TMT and tourism.

3.4.2. On meaning within tourism and TMT

Meaning is central to TMT. 'Individuals universally need and want meaning' (Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2014, p. 53), since it allows them to 'cope with frightening realities' (Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2011). Taubman - Ben-Ari (2011, p. 386) defines meaning as 'an individually constructed, culturally based cognitive system that influences one's choice of activities and goals, and endows life with a sense of purpose, personal worth, and fulfilment'. Thus, meaning, from a TMT perspective, is intertwined with the notion of death, for it is impossible to contemplate meaning without acknowledging death (Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2014). Specifically, Taubman - Ben-Ari (2011) argues that 'thinking about meaning in life increases the accessibility of death thoughts' whilst Frankl (1946, p. 151) observed that 'the potentialities to fulfil a meaning are affected by the irreversibility of our lives'. Moreover, a lack of meaning – that is, life without goals, values and ideals – is deeply associated with low quality of life, stress and illness (Frankl, 1946, Routledge et al., 2011, Steger et al., 2009, Yalom, 2011).

Therefore, the notion of meaning is inescapably fundamental to buffering existential anxieties (Routledge et al., 2008). As Becker (1975) argues, the fear of insignificance is deeper than the fear of death itself; hence, 'our knowledge of the inescapability of death gives rise to a potential for paralyzing existential terror, and one effective way to cope with this terror is to imbue life with meaning' (Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2014). Moreover, an individual's thoughts of death trigger a profound desire for meaning as well as the 'the consideration of more expansive time horizons' (Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2014, p. 57). Taubman - Ben-Ari (2011, p. 395) comments on the dilemma of the relationship between meaning and finitude: 'On the one hand, a person must be aware of his or her mortality in order to strive for meaning in life. On the other hand, however, this awareness of the inevitability of death must be repressed in order to live a full and meaningful life'. With this in mind, it is essential to assess the manner in which meaning keeps death thoughts at bay.

First, at the most basic level, meaning elevates individuals above their creatureliness. As Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Goldenberg (2003, p. 315) highlight:

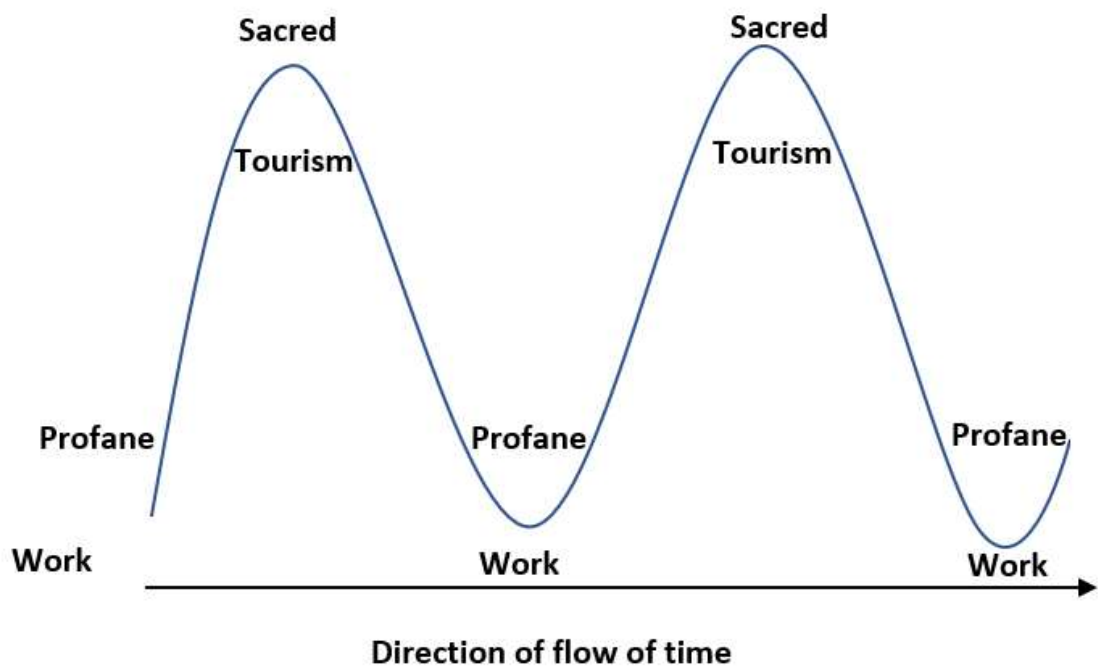
... each individual's self and identity, goals and aspirations, occupations and titles, are humanly created adornments, disguises draped over an animal that is no more unique or significant than any individual cockroach, kangaroo, or kumquat.

Second, according to Tomer (2014), meaning making is another sophisticated technique for attaining self-esteem, or symbolic immortality. Specifically, 'Living meaningfully might change the concept of death itself' (Tomer (2014)). Although some find the tenets of TMT insufficient to explain the processes of meaning making and growth (Ryan and Deci, 2004), it is nevertheless important to note that meaning is one of many by-products, such as excessive consumption, religiosity or fame, which are attained in the attempt to conceal one's mortality. Thus, as opposed to positive psychology, meaning making is one of the potential paths to symbolic immortality within the TMT worldview. After all, meaninglessness is, according to Frankl (1946), a pathway to death.

In the case of tourism, the notion of meaning is omnipotent. As Sharpley (2011a) argues, tourism possesses a plethora of meanings which accommodate an individual's needs and desires. Specifically, tourism has become a sacral manifest of existence within the contemporary world which signifies personal transitions (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005), such as 'emergence into adulthood', career change or divorce (Graburn, 1983, p. 13). To Graburn (1989, p. 26), 'holidays (holy, sacred days now celebrated by traveling away from home) are what makes "life worth living" as though ordinary life is not life or at least not the kind of life worth living.' Moreover, Graburn (1989) developed a model (Figure 3.1), which signified the sacred tourist endeavours alongside the profane episodes of mundane work life, where 'vacation times and tourism are described as "I was really living, living it up ... I've never felt so alive," in contrast to the daily humdrum often termed a "dog's life", since dogs are not thought to "vacation"'. Essentially, then, to Graburn (1983), the passage of time was commemorated by what, in Maslow's (2012) terms would be called 'peak experiences'. In tourism, places may be chosen and utilised in accordance with people's inner needs (Sharpley and Jepson, 2011), for it may offer existential transformation (Kirillova, Lehto and Cai, 2017),

self-fulfilment (Graburn, 1989) and self-actualisation (Allcock, 1988). As Graburn (1989, p. 22) suggested, tourism is 'functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives'

Figure 3.1. Flow of time pattern.



Source: Adapted from Graburn (1989)

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that not all tourism is purposefully meaningful. To Cohen (1974, p. 532), the most common purposes of travel remain 'pleasure, recreation and culture'. Significantly, Cohen (1979, p. 183) differentiates meaning in tourism on a continuum between the 'Recreational Mode' and the 'Existential Mode' of touristic experience. Within the recreational mode, the 'tourist gets what he really wants – the pleasure of entertainment, for which authenticity is largely irrelevant' (Cohen, 1979, p. 184), whereas the existential mode is 'motivated by the quest for meaning' (Cohen, 1979, p. 192). Essentially then, it is important to recognise that although touristic activities can

be a source of meaning, meaningful experiences are not necessarily always sought.

Essentially, then, it is clear that meaning and self-transcendence are present within both TMT and tourism discourses. Nevertheless, no attempt has yet been made to explain the potential interconnection between TMT and tourism, apart from the papers mentioned in section 3.4.1. After all, the relationship between tourism and death has, beyond the realm of dark tourism, suicide tourism and dark hospitality, remained 'full of contrasts, contradictions and irony' (Pratt et al., 2019, p. 1). Thus, the next section attempts to draw on this unique relationship.

3.4.3. TMT and tourism: 'To see Paris and die'

Little is known about the relationship between tourism and TMT outside the dark tourism framework. Moreover, since travel became 'regularised' (Giddens, 1991, p. 136), it almost epitomises a death-less environment (Barker, 2015). However, as referred to above, Graburn (1989, p. 27) introduced an alternative perspective on the act of travel as a symbolic death whereby, in the process of parting with the familiar environment, individuals experience an excited and nervous parting with the ordinary life :

Because we are departing ordinary life and may never return, we take out additional insurance, put our affairs in order, often make a new will, and leave "final" instructions concerning the watering, the pets, and the finances. We say goodbye as we depart and some even cry a little, as at a funeral, for we are dying symbolically.

Symbolic death may also follow tourists on their journey should they experience a strong, ecstatic sensation of joy (which is often associated with adventures), or peak experiences. An interesting death paradox lies in peak experiences: on the one hand, death fears and other vulnerabilities are abated in peak experiences (Maslow, 1970). On the other hand, 'la petite mort' lurks on the verge of uncontrollable happiness where one could think: 'I could die now and it would be all right' (Maslow, 2011). A similar expression is applied to the idiom, 'To see Paris

and die', which is the Soviet version of the 'Vedi Napoli e poi Muori' or 'See Naples and die!'. As Gilburd (2018, p. 2) explains:

The idiom meant that Paris was the ultimate fulfilment of life's aspirations, with nothing else left to experience. And the idiom also intimated the willingness to pay with one's life: death was the ultimate price for seeing Paris.

For many, indeed, as seen in *The Bucket List* movie, 'arrangements for one's death include travel to fulfil life dreams' (Pratt et al., 2019, p. 5).

Finally, death may be actively flirted with as an act of death denial whilst travelling, where life-death experiences are sought. This, according to Pratt et al. (2019), can occur during extreme adventure tourism, war zone tourism and volunteer tourism. Death encounters may also be present in legacy tourism (McCain and Ray, 2003). As Palmer (2004, p. 60) comments, such 'death-defying activities are hallmarks of subcultural legitimacy'. This is also referred to as 'dicing with death' where travel 'becomes travail' (Dann, 1998, p. 31). As discussed before, flirting with death is another ultimate means of death-defying which, by contributing to an individual's self-esteem, alleviates any death concerns (Lifshin et al., 2017, Vail et al., 2012).

Having assessed the place of symbolic death within tourism beyond the confining concepts of dark tourism, suicide tourism or dark hospitality, it is important to consider how exactly is tourism intertwined with TMT. In other words, can tourism alleviate existential concerns? This section now proposes an interconnection between tourism and TMT by suggesting that tourism may have death anxiety buffering capabilities at the self-esteem and symbolic level.

First, Biran and Buda (2018, p. 526) argue that 'tourism participation, as a whole, can provide opportunities for buffering existential fears through self-esteem enhancement'. That is, because tourism is so central to the individual's selfhood (Desforges, 2000), engaging in tourism allows one to feel good about oneself for various reasons: be it from self-enhancement (tan, mastering new skills, novel experiences), holiday romances or reconstructed identity: 'Peasant for a Day' or 'Queen (King) for a Day' (Gottlieb, 1982). The relationship between tourism and

identity negotiation is not novel for tourism studies (Desforges, 2000), since 'travel can help in the rediscovery of self and the identity of self in everyday life', (Hunter-Jones (2003, p. 194). Moreover, as tourism 'is attributed to a desire to fulfil a status need imposed by one's social environment or as a means of role conformity, in that it is considered desirable to occasionally escape from normal routine' (Pearce and Caltabiano, 1983, p. 16), it becomes a convenient platform to negotiate an individual's self-esteem. Furthermore, Graburn (1989, p. 23) goes as far as to argue that 'normal adults travel and those who do not are disadvantaged', suggesting that tourism is a socially imposed activity whereby those who enjoy the benefit of travel are superior to those to do not. Thus, from Graburn's (1989) perspective, the ability to travel becomes a mark of social supremacy and identity.

From a less extreme viewpoint, Ragheb (1996) proposes that tourism is an arena within which the needs for love, belongingness, purpose, meaning and esteem are negotiated. To Ragheb (1996, p. 252), 'leisure has attributes that can cover and meet many of the needs for the search for meaning'. Thus, the relationship between tourism and self-esteem is interconnected, for tourism allows the expansion of the individual's self-esteem and therefore alleviates any existential concerns.

On another note, tourism allows for symbolic death transcendence, when an individual's travel routes are revisited and relived, even after their demise. That is, an individual's journey survives the test of time, as with Marco Polo's adventures, Pheidippides's Athens Marathon or the Dyatlov Pass Journey. Ultimate journeys may be passed as a legacy across families, as in the case of Edmund Hillary – the first man to reach the summit of Mount Everest – and his son, Peter Hillary, who relived his parent's adventure by also climbing Mount Everest. These cases transcend death on a symbolic level by perpetuating the individual's name with a means of attaching it to the place. Moreover, with repeating journeys running through generations, they also facilitate nostalgia. Importantly, findings by Routledge et al. (2011, p. 638) suggest that nostalgia decreases death thought accessibility and allows individuals 'to ponder questions about the greater purpose of their lives'. Nostalgia itself is associated with bitter-

sweet grieving over the idealised past: 'Nostalgia focuses on the fact that the past cannot return, and so as a consequence emphasizes feelings of loss' (Jarratt and Gammon, 2016). Significantly, then, research by Routledge et al. (2011, p. 647) asserts that 'nostalgia is a psychological resource that can be harnessed to derive and sustain a sense of meaning in life', hence, buffering death concerns (Juhl and Routledge, 2016). Moreover, nostalgia also contributes to the increase of self-esteem and social bonds (Routledge et al., 2008). Therefore, nostalgia serves as yet another function of TMT. Importantly, the existing interrelationship between tourism and nostalgia (Jarratt and Gammon, 2016) opens up more opportunities to appraise tourism from a TMT perspective. In other words, by looking back on tourism experiences, it can be argued that an individual's existential anxieties may be buffered through life's meaning reinforcement.

Furthermore, it may be argued that, similar to dark tourism, conventional tourism may be appraised as a form of meaningful entertainment (Biran and Buda, 2018). As Hughes (2013, p. 72) argues, swift changes in society, alongside an emerging need to renegotiate one's own identity, has led to increased desire for 'meaningful' tourism. Within this context, meaningful entertainment refers to receiving joy beyond hedonic pleasure. Rather, it refers to entertainment that provokes awe and inspiration, as well as contemplation of life's meaning and humanity (Rieger, Frischlich, Högden, Kauf, Schramm and Tappe, 2015). Indeed, according to Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 59), 'tourism experience can be represented as transformational, as a moment of epiphany leading to self-actualization'. Specifically, then, the eudaimonic orientations of travel experiences, or the feeling of profound satisfaction and joy (Pearce, 2005), positively correlate with the search for meaning in life (Hofer, 2013). Moreover, participation in meaningful entertainment further amplifies an individual's self-esteem (Rieger et al., 2015). As for the relationship with TMT, (Rieger et al., 2015) summarise that:

Enhancing people's sense of self-worth and meaning in life via meaningful entertainment matches the assumption described within terror management theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986) that people need to cope with the potential terror emerging

from death reminiscences by engaging in symbolic activities—such as basking in the sun....

Furthermore, Biran and Buda (2018) assert that meaningful entertainment buffers existential concerns through a means of supporting an individual's cultural worldview. Thus, the individual that engages in tourism as a mode of meaningful entertainment supports the cultural worldview by acting as a worthy member within that worldview (self-esteem). However, within tourism, meaning is also derived from identity formation as a result of consumption. Thus, it is important to address tourism consumption practices, subsequent identity formation and, as argued later, enhanced self-esteem.

According to Sharpley (2018, p. 84), Western societies have experienced a shift from modernity to postmodernity, which is described as 'less rigid, structured state'. This transition has, inevitably, impacted on key societal characteristics. To name just a few, Sharpley (2018) identifies the de-differentiation of the present and past, with nostalgia becoming one of the characteristics of postmodernity (Pretes, 1995). Another feature of postmodernity concerns the blurred distinctions between class; in postmodern cultures, people's roles are not predetermined according to which background they are born into to the same extent as under modernity. Moreover, in postmodern cultures, the distinction between reality and its representations is also blurred – 'postmodern society is dominated by image, by pastiche and by reproductions that lack depth and substance' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 66). To illustrate, the emergence of 'fake news', 'catfishing' and 'Fake a Vacation' websites are examples of the indistinctiveness between reality and representations. Fifteen minutes of fame has emerged as a possibility for anyone with the 'living theatre' of TV game shows (Urry, 2002, p. 77). The use of the Internet has further exacerbated the fifteen minutes culture: 'Today, anyone with a cell phone who is camera-savvy enough to document himself stumbling around in a drunken stupor is a YouTube upload away from notoriety, albeit quite fleeting' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 106). It is important to note that a full discussion of the characteristics of postmodernity is well beyond the scope of this thesis. Arguably, however, one of the defining characteristics of postmodernity is the emergence of consumer culture, which may be defined as

‘the character, significance and role of the consumption of commodities, services and experiences within modern societies’, according to Sharpley (2018, p. 154).

Certainly, postmodernity has changed the way in which products and services are consumed. In the modern cultural condition, an individual’s identity was aligned to his or her social class; in postmodernity, the process of de-differentiation drives individuals to accrue other methods of creating and establishing self-identity (Sharpley, 2018). Specifically, in the postmodern era, where ‘traditional social markers no longer exist’, self-identity is expressed through consumption (Sharpley, 2018, p. 162). To illustrate, Sharpley (2018) provides an example of purchasing a motor car. Although the purpose of such a purchase is simply to get from point A to point B in the most efficient manner, for many the acquisition of the motor car goes beyond its utilitarian purpose, for ‘the car is, arguably, one of the most powerful status symbols of the contemporary era’ (Sharpley, 2018, p. 157). Thus, in the postmodern world, consumption of the product or service goes beyond its primary purpose (need); rather it becomes a characteristic of the individual in question (want). This tendency is, inevitably, echoed in tourism, which, in postmodern society ‘becomes a commodity to be consumed’ (Pretes, 1995, p. 2).

More specifically, in tourism, consumption may be considered as a means of classification (Sharpley, 2018). Since ‘traditional’ classification is a marker of modernity, in postmodernity tourism consumption becomes a means of forming identity and status (Sharpley, 2018, Swarbrook and Horner, 2007). It is because individuals enact their ‘ideal self-images’ through their consumption practices, as posited by Huffman, Ratneshwar and Mick (2003, p. 11), that the successful achievement of the desired image may lead to the increased self-esteem. Additionally, from a self-esteem perspective, consumers are motivated to purchase products and services that are aligned with their perceptions of their ideal selves (Sirgy, 1982). Therefore, from a TMT perspective, individuals’ buying power and habits are ‘a pervasive barometer of self-worth’, for ‘it tells us not only how much our car is worth, but how much we are worth as the person who holds the keys’ (Arndt et al., 2004, p. 203). Essentially then, it may be argued that the need to enhance one’s own identity and self-esteem is especially felt within the

postmodern era. In this case, tourism, as a commodity, allegedly offers yet another path to buffering existential concerns through enhanced self-identity, expression of taste and status.

Finally, as discussed in this section, tourism may facilitate a symbolic death transcendence as tourists follow the paths associated with immortal names or as family-favourite destinations are passed down generations and reminisced, provoking a sense of nostalgia. Furthermore, tourism in an allegedly postmodern era allows one to enhance self-identity through tourism consumption. Although this section highlights only a brief proposition of how tourism relates to TMT, further research is needed to establish a concrete account between the two disciplines. Nevertheless, the next section discusses the potential relationship between the bucket list and TMT.

3.4.4. Terror Management Theory and ‘kicking the bucket’

Within the limited extant literature, the question of whether bucket lists are about ‘kicking the bucket’ or living life to the full remains unanswered. Some argue that bucket lists are reminders of the ‘certainty of death and the uncertainty of life’(Chu et al., 2018) whereas others believe that ‘a bucket list is not about dying but about living’ (Peterson, 2011). This thesis acknowledges that ‘the foreground of life is only possible with the background of death’(Kearl, 1990, p. 3) and, therefore, the notions of life and death are, most likely, not mutually exclusive within this context. As confirmed later in this thesis (Chapter 8), how we live does, indeed, determine how we die. To illustrate the life/death dilemma of bucket lists, it is essential to refer to Cicirelli (2001, p. 715) who wrote that: ‘The meaning of death and life are interdependent. Life gains its meaning from the fact of death’. And yet, it is important to highlight the involvement of death in the phenomenon of the bucket list, for it is ‘the eyeblink's worth of time we are alive is why the concept of a bucket list is so tempting’(Kramer and Wurzer, 2015, p. 131).

Undoubtedly, the threat of death is present in bucket lists, albeit to a hitherto unknown extent. It is this unique macabre undertone that differentiates bucket lists from everyday plans. As Chu et al. (2018, p. 153) observe:

With such awareness of life fragility, a bucket list may differ from general life goals in the underlying socioemotional motivations, even when the person has an open-ended time horizon. In particular, a person may have more concerns about preparations for death and the matters after death when they are making a bucket list, rather than when they are listing general life goals.

To explain the difference between general life goals and bucket lists, Chu et al. (2018) emphasise that bucket lists involve goals aimed at enhancing life's meaningfulness, or goals which have been long overlooked but suddenly become prioritised, such as 'visiting the parent's hometown in a foreign country and compiling a family history for one's offspring'. However, it is essential to question how this profound feature of the bucket list allows one to draw on the interconnection between bucket lists and TMT. The answer is not singular, for it is strongly believed that bucket lists satisfy an array of needs that keep existential anxiety at bay. That said, one of the most obvious elements of TMT is, of course, the involvement of mortality salience in the process of compiling a bucket list.

To some extent, death echoes throughout the bucket list. After all, the term itself is defined as 'a list of things to do before one dies' (Goldstein, 2019). Those who compile a bucket list, consciously or not, inevitably confront their mortality. The presence of death may not be sharply felt, since the promise of the bucket list is to disguise our finitude in an array of dreamlike experiences. As Jones (2020) notes: 'Bucket lists are like that; they allow you to keep busy – to live it up until the end'. Thus, completing a bucket list becomes a process of a mild denial of death where, most likely, the never-ending list suggests that the owner will live for long enough to complete it. In this sense, the deliberate non-completion of a bucket list may constitute to a process of a profound death denial, whereby the mortality associated with bucket lists is 'out of sight, out of mind'. As Cozzolino and Blackie (2013, p. 35) put it, 'Given a choice to actively contemplate mortality

or to escape thoughts of death altogether, most individuals would likely choose the latter option’.

With that in mind, the association between bucket lists and TMT emerges further. As Ritzema (2013) put it, ‘Checking off items on a bucket list seems to be a modern version of the denial of death that Ernest Becker thought was so central to human motivation’. French (2008) also assets the strong association of *The Bucket List* movie with the key principles of Becker, who inspired the birth of TMT. Mortality salience within bucket list is also aroused with the notion of fateful moments. That is, with many accounts of bucket lists arising from personal crises (Granger, 2012, Lavery, 2018, Marshall, 2019, Molloy, 2016, Portman et al., 2018, Rohrich, 2015, Udell, 2018), bucket listers are inevitably confronted with mortality salience, the extent of which influences their goal orientations. As Chu et al. (2018, p. 159) argue:

...it is likely that making a bucket list, especially when a person realizes that they have limited time to live, may arouse certain degrees of mortality salience...

Perhaps it is this confrontation with the transient state of life that imbues bucket lists with deep meaning. For example, Kramer and Wurzer (2015, p. 652) discuss the meaning attached to bucket lists as follows:

It is a tangible recognition of our mortality and the transience of our lifespans. It allows us to reflect on our personal values and identify important life milestones and experiences that we want to have before we die. Finally, it is a sign of hope and future orientation.

Essentially, then, bucket lists are not ‘shorn of any overt association with the finality of death and mortality that might urge us to reflect on the meaning and values of life’, as originally proposed by Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 63). Quite the opposite; bucket lists cater for an array of needs and meanings, from meaning-based coping for the terminally ill (Portman et al., 2018) to eliminating potential regrets (Armitage, 2018), finding solace (Kearl and Jacobsen, 2016) and creating legacy (Scott, 2020). Thus, the notion of meaning is critical from a TMT

perspective, since 'the ability to find meaning as central to the ability to cope with threatening realities' (Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2011, p. 395).

Another interesting aspect of the bucket list is the influence of cultural worldview. Specifically, many items on the bucket lists are significantly influenced by the individual's environment. Indeed, 'goals can be primed outside of awareness from the environments' (Moskowitz and Grant, 2009, p. 204). As Martin (2019) explains: 'whether influenced by similar pop culture, movies, school lessons or social media, we all seem to want to head to the same bucket list hot-spot'. Similarly, Riemer (2020, p. 1) suggests that bucket lists are 'catalogues of imaginaries, shared images that exist on our lists and in our cultural and social imaginations'. Rudert, Reutner, Walker and Greifeneder (2015) continue with this proposition by agreeing that 'the internet and the popular literature market are full of advice, telling people which places to see, which books to read, and which activities to do before they die'. In this sense, then, a person who chooses to pursue the predisposed list of things to do may feel they are a contributor to the shared cultural worldview, where there are things that must be done in order to qualify for worthiness. In the case for tourism, MacCannell (2013) illustrated this dilemma: 'modern international sightseeing possesses its own moral structure, a collective sense that certain sights must be seen'.

Furthermore, ticking items off a bucket list contribute to a sense of achievement and fulfilment (Keinan and Kivetz, 2010), potentially contributing to an individual's self-esteem that is central to the tenets of TMT, as discussed previously. To illustrate, Thurnell-Read (2017) draws on the interconnection between bucket lists and identity construction, specifically in the tourism context. Significantly, he argues that:

The central principle of the Bucket List is, therefore, that travel experiences are a means of measuring one's worth as an individual engaged in a life which is worthy and meaningful.

Therefore, completion of a bucket list may positively correlate with the individual's self-esteem which, in turns, holds existential concerns at bay. Hence,

bucket lists can support an individual's cultural worldview and sustain self-esteem.

On a different note, a bucket list reflects the current condition of death within society. Specifically, Kearl and Jacobsen (2016, p. 68) consider whether 'the allure (and social control potency) of traditional transcendent life goals is fading; existence in the here-and-now is what matters most in the highly materialistic West'. Similarly, Kramer and Wurzer (2015, p. 131) lament that it is the compelling theme of contemporary society which is drawn to slogans of 'Live With Fire'(Reebok), 'Live For Now' (Pepsi), and 'Life is short, stay awake for it' (Caribou). As DeLillo (1985, p. 283) express it, within contemporary society 'every death is premature'. Similarly, Kearl and Jacobsen (2016, p. 64) observe that: 'The liminal realm between life and death is shifting from being postmortem to premortem'. It is for this new 'death ethos' that bucket lists are needed not to end (Kearl and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 74). Indeed, it is proposed within this thesis that bucket lists are never ending. The never ending desire for new goals is a tragically human condition, as suggested by Maslow (1970, p. 7):

The human being is a wanting animal and rarely reaches a state of complete satisfaction except for a short time. As one desire is satisfied, another pops up to take its place. When this is satisfied, still another comes into the foreground, and so on. It is a characteristic of human beings throughout their whole lives that they are practically always desiring something.

Moreover, within this new death ethos, the prospect of afterlife is waning (Kearl and Jacobsen, 2016). Instead, the new postself emerges, with carefully selected video and auditory recordings aimed to satisfy the need for legacy. As Unruh (1983, p. 343) posits:

Throughout their lives, people acquire objects and imbue them with personal meanings which represent past accomplishments, talents, journeys, and sentiments. When people are dying, some objects become artefacts of their personal history. The accumulation of

artefacts is a strategy by which the dying preserve identities over time and communicate their importance to survivors.

Within this context, bucket lists may reinforce the process of identity solidification for the deceased. Indeed, the notion of the postself is important here as it refers to 'the way one wants to be remembered after death' (Wojtkowiak and Rutjens, 2011, p. 137). According to Kamerman (2003), the postself is, generally, future-oriented and socially influenced. Within the concept of the postself, 'what is being preserved after death is a self-concept which existed during life, was acknowledged by others, and had become a significant aspect of the dead person's self' (Unruh, 1983, p. 340). In their study, Wojtkowiak and Rutjens (2011) found that when individuals affirm their postself image, their mortality concerns tend to decrease. In other words, thinking about one's own character as it will be seen by others after death allows one to mediate existential anxieties. With this in mind, bucket lists may also potentially mediate death concerns as they facilitate anticipation of the future and the goals allegedly related to an individual's identity. In this way, bucket lists may, arguably, be a means of constructing the postself.

Essentially, then, bucket lists become a part of an individual's legacy. To illustrate, 'with fully checked-off bucket lists, we have a tangible measure of completeness to share at funerals. The items themselves are largely defined by the market' (Kearl and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 74). With such a concrete legacy, 'the compensations of some eternal afterlife are no longer necessary' (Kearl and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 74).

Finally, bucket lists may transcend death on a symbolic level. As presented in *The Bucket List* movie, the list continues to be ticked off even after the protagonist's death. That is, his best friend takes over the list and when death meets him, his employee completes the final goal on the list for both deceased friends. Essentially, then, the bucket list appears to have an element of legacy whereby goals can be completed in someone's memory. Importantly, this proposition does not stem from the romanticised film view, for such a scenario has appeared in 'real' life. Specifically, after the death of her husband, Nicola, his wife, continues to completing his unfinished bucket list (Scott (2020). She has seen Ayers Rock

and the Great Barrier Reef as well as skydived and she intends to run the London Marathon. She has admitted that, despite her loss, her husband still continues to guide her through new experiences to be completed in his memory. Although an exception rather than common practice, this story portrays the capability of bucket lists to transcend death on a symbolic level by leaving the bucket list as a part of legacy. Thus, the relationship between legacy and bucket lists is also examined within this research.

So far, the question of whether bucket lists are about the fear of death or a lust for life remains open. Perhaps, bucket lists are a legitimate way of justifying excessive consumption. It is important to acknowledge that this question will pose a significant challenge in further research which Solomon et al. (2015, p. 211) have previously encountered:

Many of our fellow scientists argued that they do not think about death all that much, so it was inconceivable that death fears could pervade just about everything people think, feel, and do. Others were willing to grant in principle that the Grim Reaper weighs in on the scale of human affairs but insisted that there was no way to confirm that notion empirically, and consequently cogitations about mortal matters would never get beyond hipster party chatter.

An individual's preference for associating the bucket list with life or death may itself, perhaps, reveal much about their attitude to death, or even about their culture. Despite the potential findings, it is virtually impossible to overlook the death-related connotations of the bucket list. This, however, does not undermine the adventurous, dream-like tone of the bucket list. Moreover, the association with TMT does not imbue bucket lists with instant paralysing dread. Indeed, as discussed within this section, quite the opposite might be the case: bucket lists have a capability to mediate and, as seen in some cases, to conquer death. As Bauman (2006, p. 32) suggests: 'Remembering the imminence of death keeps the life of mortals on the right track by endowing it with a purpose that makes every lived moment precious'. Although death thoughts may be present or denied in the process of creating bucket lists, this does not eradicate the death-related

connotations of the bucket list, but neither does it undermine the possibility of meaning-making, excitement and joy within bucket lists.

3.5. Considerations outside the Terror Management Theory framework

Having established some of the scenarios in which bucket lists may bracket out the fear of death within the TMT framework, some discussion is still required on mediating death anxiety outside TMT. The following section briefly examines some death anxiety models and the potential pathways through which bucket lists buffer death anxiety. Furthermore, the critical question is raised of whether bucket lists are concerned with the denial or acceptance of death. The two rival theories of attitudes towards death are discussed to address this question.

3.5.1. Bucket lists: mediating death anxiety.

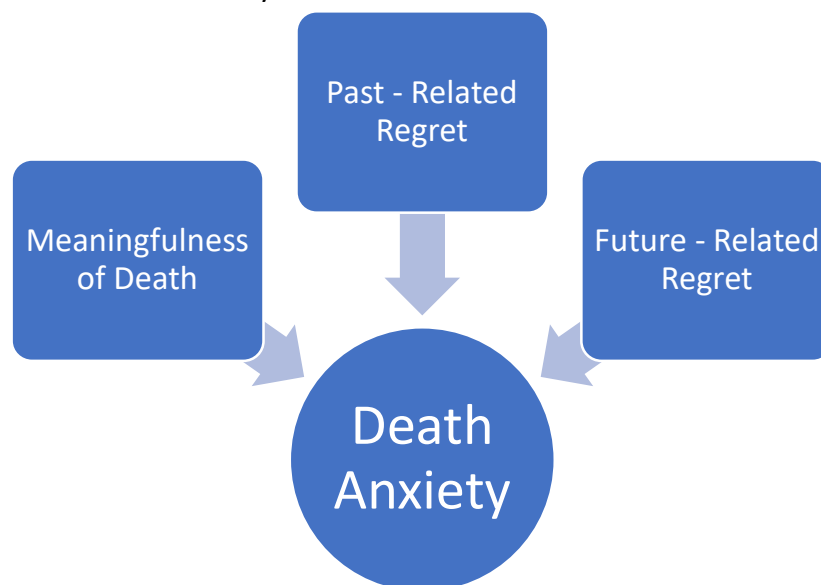
As mentioned earlier, death is inconvenient to the human psyche and such inconvenience may cause incomprehensible anxiety or ‘an unconsciously organised state of fear’ (Giddens, 1991, p. 44). According to Becker (1997), death anxiety could lead to severe psychopathologies, such as schizophrenia. Solomon et al. (2015) add eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, depression and even suicide to the list of death anxiety-spawned illnesses. Although this discussion does not seek to dwell on the universality of death anxiety, what is certain, however, is that death anxiety poses a tremendous existential challenge to the individual. This section, however, provides an account of how death anxiety can be mediated through the means of bucket lists, which extends the aforementioned accounts of TMT.

According to Kastenbaum (2004), most self-report studies reveal a moderately low level of death anxiety. Specifically, three out of four individuals report no death anxiety. Nevertheless, these findings should not be taken at face value, for

many individuals may repress and deny their thoughts of death and consequent anxiety (Kastenbaum, 2004). As suggested by Kellehear (2007, p. 55), 'Death-denial, combined with the equally fertile desire for pleasure, are the engine rooms of all human activity'. It is essential to establish that the fear of death, and anxiety associated with it, is not unitary. That is, an individual might be anxious about just one aspect of death, be it the unknown or the loss of consciousness. Examples of different types of anxiety and fear are provided later.

Importantly, Tomer and Eliason (1996) developed a death anxiety model (Figure 3.2.). According to them, there are three determinants of death anxiety: (i) meaningfulness of death; (ii) past-related regret; and (iii), future-related regret (Tomer and Eliason, 1996). First, meaningfulness of death refers to the perception of death as wasted and absurd. At the same time, the meaning of death is largely determined by individuals' beliefs about the world as well as their place within that world. Past-related regret denotes remorse about the life goals that have never taken place. Finally, future-related regret refers to the disappointment on the shortage of the future in the context of desired goals. To combat the determinants of death anxiety, Tomer and Eliason (1996) suggested the use of self-transcending processes (generative and self-detachment) to mediate with death meaninglessness, the use of life review to override past-related regret, and the use of life planning to eliminate future-related regret.

Figure 3.2: Death anxiety model

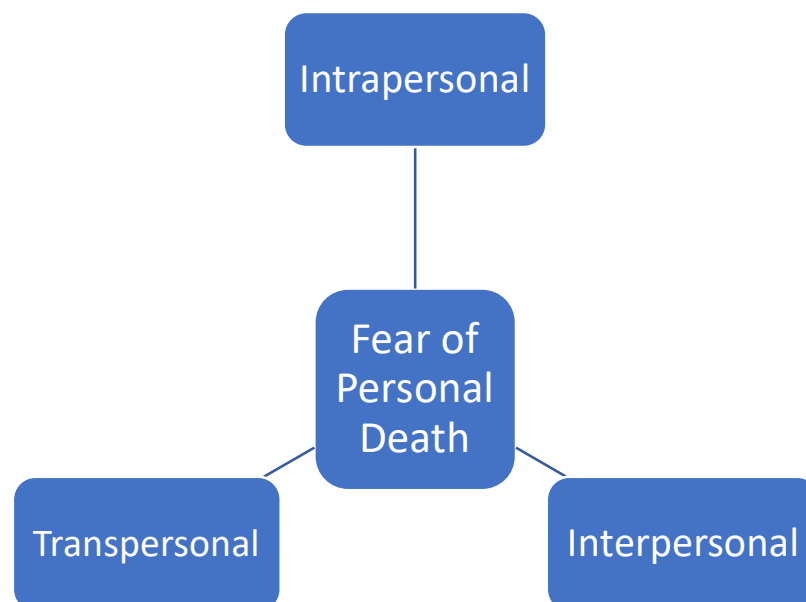


Source: Adapted from Tomer and Eliason (1996)

Within the context of life planning, 'consideration and redefinition of one's main life goals' must take place (Tomer and Eliason, 1996, p. 355). Thus, in a sense, bucket lists are a means of mediating the future-related regret death anxiety. At the same time, in retrospect, completed bucket list, akin to life review, may remove past-related regrets. Moreover, completed bucket lists as a measurement of a life fully lived (Kearl, 1990) may, essentially, satisfy the meaningfulness of death. Therefore, bucket lists may have the capability of mediating death anxiety.

Another multidimensional fear of death model was introduced by Florian and Kravetz (1983) (Figure 3.3.). The authors developed the 'Fear of Personal Death' scale, which proposed three components of fear: intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal. The first, intrapersonal component refers to the 'Fear of loss of self-fulfilment and self-annihilation' (Florian and Kravetz, 1983, p. 605) whilst second, the interpersonal fear denotes a fear of a perishing identity after demise and fear of leaving family and friend.

Figure 3.3: Three components of the fear of personal death



Source: Adapted from Florian and Kravetz (1983)

Third, transpersonal fear represents a fear of the unknown or fear of punishment in the afterlife (Florian and Kravetz, 1983). However, Wong (2007, p. 68) suggests

that 'living a full life can at least reduce the fear of failure in self-fulfilment'. Thus, with bucket lists becoming a recurring theme of living life to the full, one could argue that bucket lists can mediate the intrapersonal fear of death. Moreover, goals such as financial stability, leaving an inheritance, providing for the family or leaving a mark in history may, upon completion, potentially eliminate the interpersonal fear of death (Wong, 2007). Finally, goals associated with spirituality and religion, such as pilgrimage, religious festivals or memorising a holy book, can potentially mitigate the transpersonal fear of death, since 'active commitment to religious belief and practice tends to reduce the intensity of manifest fear of death' (Florian and Kravetz, 1983, p. 601). The appearance of such goals within the bucket list discourse can be observed in Table 6.18. of Chapter 6.

Finally, bucket lists can mediate anxiety from a Meaning Management Theory (MMT) perspective. According to Wong (2007, p. 70) MMT refers to:

...the need to manage meaning-related processes, such as meaning-seeking and meaning-making, in order to understand who we are (identity), what really matters (values), where we are headed (purpose), and how to live the good life in spite of suffering and death (happiness).

As opposed to TMT, MMT proposes that death can be accepted rather than denied. As Wong (2011, p. 8) further explains:

We can never escape from the reality of death, but we can always use our capacity for meaning, spirituality and narrative construction to transform death anxiety. If we regard death as a reminder of our own mortality and the need to live authentically, then death anxiety will not only facilitate death acceptance, but also encourage self-actualization and self-transcendence.

Therefore, from an MMT perspective, bucket lists may, in fact, facilitate death acceptance through imbuing the remaining years to live with as many meaningful experiences as possible. Thus, death anxiety, rather than facilitating denial,

promotes death acceptance which then results in a search for meaning, growth and self-transcendence.

This section has provided an overview of some death anxiety/fear models and the potential scenarios in which bucket lists can mediate death anxiety. The models by Tomer and Eliason (1996) and Florian and Kravetz (1983) reveal that death anxiety has many faces. At the same time, the MMT proposed by Wong (2007) asserts that death anxiety may be conquered by accepting death and 'moving on' with the journey of growth, meaning-making and self-transcendence. Importantly these theories provide an alternative outlook on the death buffering capabilities of the bucket list to that of TMT whilst, as discussed, the multiplicity of bucket list goal orientation provides a feasible scenario for mediating various components of death anxiety. However, the critical question to arise is whether bucket lists are, in fact, the product of a death denying society or the outcome of death acceptance. In other words, should bucket lists be appraised from a positive existential psychology stance such as MMT, or from a rather 'negative' strand of existential psychology such as TMT? The next section addresses this question.

3.5.2. Bucket list: acceptance or denial

EDWARD:-Ever think about suicide?
CARTER: -Suicide? Lord, no.
EDWARD: - Thought so. Stage one.
CARTER: - What?
EDWARD: -The five stages.
CARTER:- Oh, denial, anger, bargaining,
depression, acceptance.
EDWARD: - Of course you're not thinking of
suicide. You're in stage one. Denial.
CARTER: - What stage are you in?
EDWARD: - Denial.
CARTER: - And thinking of suicide.(Zackham, 2007)

The two protagonists of *The Bucket List* movie unwittingly pondered their location within the Kübler-Ross model. Despite different thoughts on the potentiality of suicide (presumably to escape facing their terminal conditions), both knew that

they were in the stage of denial; that is, disbelief of their conditions (Kübler-Ross, Wessler and Avioli, 1972). It could be questioned whether Carter and Edward ever achieve the stage of acceptance in the process of completing their bucket lists. The movie never answers this question. Thus, another dilemma arises. That is, is the bucket list associated with the denial of death or the acceptance of death? It is important to note that although this thesis adopts the denial scenario through the application of TMT, alternative views in the form of MMT are nevertheless discussed.

To start, it is essential to establish the processes of death acceptance, since the processes of death denial have already been established in this chapter. Notably, Wong, Reker and Gesser (1994) developed a three-component 'Model of Death Acceptance'. First, 'neutral acceptance' refers to the perspective where death is neither welcomed nor feared; it is merely accepted by the individuals as a given of the human condition (Wong et al., 1994, p. 122). The second perspective – 'approach acceptance' – refers to what is known within TMT as a literal immortality (Wong et al., 1994, p. 126). In other words, approach acceptance embraces the spiritual belief in a happy afterlife. Finally, the 'escape acceptance' welcomes death, for the condition of living is perceived as worse than death could ever be (Wong et al., 1994, p. 127). Often, assisted suicide is the outcome of death escape acceptance (Wong, 2007). Within this context, it is important to note that death acceptance is not the opposite of death anxiety for however strongly death may be accepted, 'we can never be completely free from death anxiety' (Wong, 2007, p. 69).

Essentially, there are five tenets of MMT (Wong, 2007). First, MMT recognises that the incorporation of spiritual dimensions can facilitate death acceptance in a better manner than when spiritual values or beliefs are missing. Second, a sense of meaning and purpose in life offer the best protection against the fears of death as well as contributing to the individual's well-being. Third, the quest for meaning is central to human existence in the face of death. Fourth, meaning can be discovered everywhere (here Wong refers to Frankl's (1946) *Man's Search for Meaning*, suggesting that meaning can be even found in Nazi concentration camps), and its discovery is necessary to withstand suffering and death. Finally,

avoidance and approach motivational tendencies may complement positive motivation. That is, 'the tendency to avoid death and seek a happy life can work together to maximize our motivation to live and die well' (Wong, 2007, p. 73). Furthermore, MMT proposes three processes of accepting death: meaning-seeking, meaning-making and meaning-reconstruction (Wong, 2007). Whilst the former refers to the quest for meaning, meaning-making 'focuses on the processes of actively construing, constructing and creating meanings' through 'social construction, storytelling, goal-striving, and personal development' (Wong, 2007, p. 75). Finally, meaning-reconstruction concerns a thorough re-examination of the past, as a result of which re-examination of existing meanings and assumptions takes place. Overall, then, 'MMT suggests that we should view death as our master teacher rather than monster terror' (Wong, 2007, p. 78). With this in mind, it is important to establish how MMT relates to TMT and which of the two perspectives has a stronger claim to examining the bucket list phenomenon.

MMT proposes that death must be accepted and embraced in order to live a happy and meaningful life and, as a result, to experience a meaningful, peaceful death. Conversely, TMT suggests that it is impossible for individuals to proceed 'business as usual' under the realization of their impending death. Thus, to protect themselves from the all-occupying terror, individuals conceal and deny their death through a spectrum of cultural practices, many of which have been outlined above in this chapter. However, although Wong (2007, p. 79) does not deny the legitimacy of TMT, he nevertheless believes that 'it cannot be the whole story about how humans cope with the reality of death'. Within the context of bucket lists, the following quote by Wong (2007, p. 80) illustrates the conflicting perspectives between TMT and MMT:

One of the problems with TMT is that when mortality salience energizes one to pursue whatever dreams one has, it would be interpreted as an unconscious defensive mechanism rather than an intrinsically motivated conscious choice to accomplish one's major life goals.

In other words, whilst TMT interprets the creation of the bucket list as a result of death denial, MMT posits that such action is a step towards death acceptance and

self-actualisation. To Wong (2007), the motive of avoiding death thoughts is inferior to the idea of living a meaningful life. Furthermore, Wong (2007) argues that although the increase in striving towards cultural practices and self-esteem activities is shared by both TMT and MMT, the reasons for these strivings generally differ. Specifically, whilst TMT attempts to bracket out death, MMT attempts to embrace and accept death. Importantly, Wong (2007, p. 81) finds a compromise between TMT and MMT by suggesting that:

We need defensive responses to protect our ego against anxieties, uncertainties, and threats, but we also need the authentic, creative responses to pursue our dreams and what life has to offer.

However, it is important to question the extent to which the defence mechanisms of TMT can be deemed inauthentic. Indeed, whilst overt materialism associated with TMT (Arndt et al., 2004) possesses negative complications for finding meaning in life (Belk, 1988), it nevertheless arguably remains an authentic reaction towards the un/conscious thoughts of death. Undoubtedly, the MMT perspective is more joyous and positive than TMT, but it is also more clinical. In other words, many can engage in binge-eating or splashing out on unnecessary goods to forget about death, whilst only a few can truly accept death without the involvement of what Wong (2007, p. 83) calls 'meaning-centered counselling'. TMT is rather more reactive and instant, whilst MMT is pro-active and time-consuming. However, both theories can be complementary to each other rather than mutually exclusive. Thus, within bucket list discourse, perhaps, bucket lists can be a means of both accepting and denying death, depending on individuals' circumstances, age and life experiences.

Therefore, it is important to question whether there are any complications for assessing the bucket list phenomenon from the perspective of existential psychology rather than positive psychology. To this, Hefferon (2011, p. 84) suggests that since both areas of psychology concern themselves with the two fundamental questions of 'what is a good life' and 'what makes life worth living?', 'the separation appears ignorant and slightly dangerous'. Death only 'focuses and clarifies' (Wong and Tomer, 2011, p. 103), as much as it confuses and drives humanity towards the heroic and the reckless (Solomon et al., 2015). Hence, the effects of death echo in both positive and existential psychology for both revolve around meaning-making, albeit for different reasons as is seen in MMT

and TMT. For these reasons, it appears appropriate to use the TMT perspective to appraise the phenomenon of the bucket list inasmuch there is no claim that the theory will holistically explain the phenomenon. Rather, TMT sheds light on important contemporary issues of death and dying attitudes, cultural practices and consumption, within which the bucket list gains more meaning and understanding.

3.6. Chapter summary

This chapter has established the framework for the bucket list research, that is TMT. More importantly, however, it has examined the contemporary social perspectives on death and dying, be it anxiety, denial or acceptance. As discussed, little is known about the relationship between leisure and TMT. Even less is written about death and tourism, outside the realms of dark tourism, suicide tourism and dark hospitality (Pratt et al., 2019). Drawing from the initial accounts of dark tourism and TMT proposed by Biran and Buda (2018), this chapter attempted to draw on the unique potential relationship between TMT and tourism, since tourism is central to bucket list experiences. Specifically, the two areas are drawn together upon their notion of meaning-making, self-esteem and symbolic death transcendence. From this, the potential relationship between bucket lists and TMT is explored. As mentioned earlier, bucket lists are inevitably associated with a notion of death. Thus, from a TMT perspective, bucket lists are a means of death denial. However, this denial takes place in a meaning-making, transcending form. The next chapter now appraises bucket lists from a tourism perspective.

Chapter 4

Bucket lists: The tourism perspective

4.0. The field of enquiry

Tourism has a plethora of meanings. It can be considered from the perspective of demand, supply, law, sustainability, politics and ethics: the list goes on. Moreover, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive, for the action of one inevitably causes an outcome within another. It is for that reason that this section attempts to establish the pivotal field of inquiry – the fluid, ubiquitous and meaning-imbued phenomenon of tourism.

Tourism, primarily, is a 'social activity' (Sharpley, 1999, p. 303) and therefore has the capacity to reflect the processes of societal modernisation and change. However, despite its 'social significance', it has long been considered to lack due attention from social scientists (Cohen, 1979, p. 531), not to mention the methodological obstacles to investigating this abstract phenomenon: tourism possesses an intricate kaleidoscope of meanings. To illustrate, an individual tourist's 'personal cultural context' is capable of bestowing a variety of different meanings to the same experience (Sharpley, 2011a, p. 295). It is for this reason, perhaps, that 'the tourist' no longer exists as a type (Cohen, 1979, p. 180) and nor does 'the traveller'. Long endured social change has brought tourism and its actors to a landscape which could not be further away from its origins.

In his critical polemic, Boorstin (1961) argues that it was the desire for novelty and the unfamiliar fuelled by an incurable sense of curiosity that has motivated people to travel since the dawn of time. However, as travel facilities became more widespread, improved and affordable, more people travelled further, faster and more frequently at the cost of experience itself, which became 'diluted, contrived, prefabricated' (Boorstin, 1961, p. 79). Bereft of adventure, challenge and risk, the traveller imminently became a tourist. Subsequent technological advancements

and the pervasive media left tourists shorn of the unfamiliar and surprising, their repressed imagination no longer thriving on imagining the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower or the Taj Mahal.

The tourist could still travel, but no longer to explore, as the surprise of discovery was replaced with the verification of what had been engraved in their mind, perhaps more vividly than the original could ever be. As a by-product of postmodernisation, one could gaze upon iconic landscapes from the comfort of home with the use of television and the Internet (Urry, 2002). It was then that a tourist substitute allegedly emerged: the 'post-tourist' (Urry, 2002, p. 74). Consumption, entertainment, play and 'the tourist gaze' became the kapellmeister of postmodern society (Lyon, 2008, p. 74), where distinctions between 'representations' and 'reality' vanished (Urry, 2002, p. 77). Metaphorically, Urry (2002, p. 81) compares this condition to a 'melting pot of the old and the new, of the nostalgic and the futuristic, of the 'natural' and the 'artificial', of the youthful and the mature, of high culture and of low, and of modernism and the postmodern'. It is somewhere near the bottom of this melting pot where a new tourism phenomenon was brewed – the Bucket List.

4.1. Bucket list and tourism research

Travel has long been central to the trajectory of life fulfilment. When John Goddard, the first documented person to compile a physical list of things he wanted to achieve in life, finished his list (see Chapter 1), the majority of goals, directly and indirectly, involved travel, as demonstrated in Figure 4.1. (Woodbury, 1972). The remaining goals revolved around mastering skills, such as writing, playing a musical instrument, skiing, ensuring that his name was not 'written in water' through writing a book, publishing an article and visiting the Moon. At the time of compiling the list in 1939, Goddard prioritised love affairs the least, putting them 126th out of 127 goals. More than half a century later, the trend remains the same with travel holding the top position on bucket lists (ProvisionLiving, 2019).

In 2005, two years before *The Bucket List* movie was released, undergraduate nursing students from the Chang Jung Christian University in Taiwan were asked

Table 4.1: John Goddard's 'Life List'.

<p>Explore: Nile River Amazon River Congo River Colorado River Yangtze River Niger River Orinoco River Rio Coco</p> <p>Study primitive cultures in: The Congo New Guinea Brazil Borneo The Sudan Australia Kenya The Philippines Tanzania Ethiopia Nigeria Alaska</p> <p>Climb: Mt. Everest Mt. Aconcagua Mt. McKinley Mt. Huascaran Mt. Kilimanjaro Mt. Ararat Mt. Kenya Mt. Cook Mt. Popocatepetl The Matterhorn Mt. Rainier Mt. Fuji Mt. Vesuvius Mt. Bromo Grand Tetons Mt. Baldy</p> <p>Carry out careers in medicine and exploration Visit every country in the world Study Navaho and Hopi Indians</p>	<p>Learn to fly a plane Ride horse in Rose Parade</p> <p>Photograph: Iguacu Falls Victoria Falls Sutherland Falls Yosemite Falls Niagara Falls</p> <p>Retrace travels of Marco Polo and Alexander the Great</p> <p>Explore underwater: Coral Reefs of Florida Great Barrier Reef Red Sea Fiji Islands The Bahamas Explore Okefenokee Swamp and the Everglades</p> <p>Visit: North and South Poles Great Wall of China Panama and Suez Canals Easter Island The Galapagos Islands Vatican City The Taj Mahal The Eiffel Tower The Blue Grotto The Tower of London The Leaning Tower of Pisa The Sacred Well of Chi-Chen-Itza Climb Ayers Rock in Australia Follow River Jordan from Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea</p> <p>Swim in: Lake Victoria Lake Superior Lake Tanganyika Lake Titicaca Lake Nicaragua</p>	<p>Become an Eagle Scout Dive in a Submarine Land on and take off from an aircraft carrier Fly in a blimp, balloon and glider Ride an elephant, camel, ostrich and bronco Skin dive to 40 feet and hold breath two and a half minutes underwater Catch a ten-pound lobster and a ten-inch abalone Play flute and violin Type 50 words in a minute Make a parachute jump Learn water and snow skiing Go on a church mission Follow the John Muir trail Study native medicines and bring back useful ones Bag camera trophies of elephant, lion, rhino, cheetah, cape buffalo and whale Learn to fence Learn jujitsu Teach a college course Watch a cremation ceremony in Bali Explore depths of the sea Appear in a Tarzan movie Own a horse, chimpanzee, ocelot and coyote Become a ham radio operator Write a book Publish an article in National Geographic Magazine High-jump five feet Weigh 175 pounds stripped Perform 200 sit-ups and 20 pull-ups Learn French, Spanish and Arabic Study dragon lizard on Komodo Island Visit birthplace of Grandfather Sorenson in Denmark</p>	<p>Visit birthplace of Grandfather Goddard in England Ship aboard a freighter as a seaman Read the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica Read the Bible from cover to cover Read the works of Shakespeare, Plato, Aristotle, Dickens, Thoreau, Rousseau, Hemingway, Twain, Burroughs, Talmage, Tolstoy, Longfellow, Keats, Poe, Bacon, Whittier and Emerson Become familiar with the compositions of Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Ibert, Mendelsohn, Lalo, Milhaud, Ravel, Rimski-Korsakov, Respighi, Rachmaninoff, Paganini, Stravinsky, Toch, Tchaikovsky, Verdi Become proficient in the use of a plane, motorcycle, tractor, surfboard, rifle, pistol, canoe, microscope, football, basketball, bow and arrow, lariat and boomerang Compose music Play Clair de Lune on the piano Watch fire walking ceremony in Bali and Surinam Milk a poisonous snake Light a match with 22 rifle Visit a movie studio Climb Cheops' pyramid Become a member of the Explorers' Club and the Adventurers' Club Learn to play polo Travel through the Grand Canyon on foot and by boat Circumnavigate the globe Visit the moon Marry and have children Live to see the 21st century.</p>
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Source: Adapted from Woodbury (1972)

to list five things they would do if they had only six months to live. The results of the study revealed that the idea of travelling held a stronger position than ‘telling family ‘I love you’’ or ‘being with a lover’ amongst the Taiwanese undergraduates (Chou et al., 2005, p. 56).

Similar findings emerged from research following the release of *The Bucket List* which itself further cemented the interconnection between bucket lists and travel. For example, a UK-based survey conducted by the Post Office invited participants to share their bucket list ideas (Smith, 2013). This revealed that 53% of respondents preferred travelling the world to getting married, buying a new home or having a child (Smith, 2013). Similarly, Periyakoil (2018), who conducted the first systematic study investigating bucket lists, also confirmed the prevalence of travel on them. As discussed above, tourism has long been central to the notion of living life to the full: along with their significant popularity, travelling around the world remains at the top of bucket lists almost universally. Whether a young adventurer, a married couple, a terminally ill individual or a retired professional, tourism caters for the kaleidoscope of their desires and needs. This unique phenomena is, in its entirety, explained by Sharpley (2011a, p. 295):

...tourism possesses different meanings to different consumers in relation to their personal cultural context; to some, for example, it may represent spiritual refreshment, to others the fulfilment of dreams or fantasies.

However, one may ask: what exactly does travel bring to the bucket list discourse? Why does it claim a dominant part on individuals’ bucket lists? To answer this question, it is essential to understand the nature of travel as an experience. The next section appraises the role of experiential purchases, providing further justification for the prevalence of travel on bucket lists.

4.2. The nature of the bucket list experience.

Thus far in this thesis, it has been established that bucket lists facilitate the negotiation of selfhood, especially following a fateful moment (see Chapter 3). More generally, in everyday life, understanding of the self supports an individual's ontological security and, in an era when consumption is a 'defining characteristic of social life' (Sharpley, 2011a, p. 294), an individual's sense of being is questioned, confirmed and expressed through their possessions (Benson, 2004). Within the bucket list discourse, desired experiences range from road trips to hair implants. Many of these experiences pursue a certain acquisition, be it tangible, such as hair, or intangible, such as a vacation. However, the common denominator of these goals is that most of them are purchased. Moreover, according to Hughes (2018), it will cost 15 years' worth of salary, or £428,000, to complete a typical bucket list. Therefore, the question that needs to be asked is: what is the nature of bucket list purchases and do certain 'types' of purchases point to valid theories? Below, the nature of widely pursued purchases and the reasons behind them are explored.

The first issue to address is whether consumption, or more precisely purchasing material goods and /or experiences, is related to happiness. This question has been addressed by many scholars since Aristotle; in ancient times, scholars identified two distinct sources of happiness, namely, hedonia and eudamonia (Gilovich, Kumar and Jampol, 2015). Hedonia refers to fleeting experiences of pleasure, whilst eudamonia signifies a broader sense of contentment, satisfaction and happiness in being the true self (Gilovich et al., 2015). To date, as lamented by Gilovich et al. (2015), many researchers have paid little attention to these distinct sources of happiness, relying instead on superficial accounts of happiness defined by participants themselves. Nevertheless, this shortcoming has to some extent been compensated for by advanced research into happiness derived from material and experiential purchases. Material purchases can be defined as those where the acquisition of mostly physical goods is central to the individual (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). It encompasses the intention to own mostly tangible possessions, such as cars, jewellery or houses, that will remain in ownership for a

prolonged period of time (Carter and Gilovich, 2012). In contrast, experiential purchases represent the intentional pursuit of intangible and fleeting experiences, such as skydiving, vacation or a ballet performance (Carter, 2018).

A much-debated question, then, is whether individuals derive more happiness from 'wearing the right brand of swimsuit' at the beach (Schmitt, Joško Brakus and Zarantonello, 2015) or spending 'less on the swimsuit and more on enjoying the beach' (Gilovich et al., 2015, p. 184). Moreover, some researchers dispute whether the contrast between material and experiential is necessary, for in a consumer society these purchases come hand in hand (Schmitt et al., 2015). Indeed, material and experiential purchases may sometimes be blurred in their interpretation. To illustrate this, Carter and Gilovich (2012, p. 1305) observe that 'extravagant spa vacations and lavish parties signal status just as effectively as a Phillippe Patek watch or a luxury automobile'. Furthermore, Schmitt et al. (2015, p. 167) call such a distinction a 'false dichotomy', by suggesting that a meal out or a vacation are not experiential in nature as people still exchange money for tangible goods, such as food, drink, an airline ticket and a bed in a hotel. To Pine and Gilmore (1999), getting coffee can be either a material good if bought at the supermarket, or an experiential purchase if enjoyed at an authentic café in Venice. Acknowledging the ambiguity of the experience interpretation, this thesis nevertheless follows the advice of Gilovich et al. (2015, p. 180) by not fearing the 'fuzziness' of the material and experiential distinction. The next section, therefore, examines the way in which material and experiential purchases influence individuals in terms of happiness and narrated identity.

4.2.1. 'I am what I buy': happiness, the material and the experiential.

There is a growing body of research that recognises the effects of consumption on individuals' happiness (Carter and Gilovich, 2012, Kumar and Gilovich, 2015, Mogilner and Bhattacharjee, 2014, Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). Several studies have been undertaken with the intention of identifying whether material and

experiential purchases differ in the extent to which they make the consumer happy (Carter and Gilovich, 2012, Kumar and Gilovich, 2015, Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). Surprisingly, identical results have emerged: the participants indicated that they derived more happiness from experiential consumption. Several reasons were proposed to justify these findings.

As discussed earlier, although material possessions are powerful signals of prosperity, from a Veblenian perspective, the 'gentleman of leisure' is capable of indicating wealth even through experiential consumption, should he provide a 'convincing account' that such an experience has taken place (Veblen, 1994, p. 28). Whilst it is necessary to showcase the trophies from hunting, postcards from exotic travel or at least a fridge magnet from one of the Costas, today such an endeavour is unnecessary, especially in the case of travel. First, contemporary society is moving towards not perceiving tourism as a luxury anymore, but rather as 'a right' (Sharpley, 1999, p. 61). Therefore, accounts of personal travel merge into everyday talk as casually as weather conversations. However, for those who want to create a convincing account of travel, they resort to social media where 'evidence', such as pictures and videos can be provided. Besides, today, a travel experience does not necessarily have to involve physical movement from point A to point B, for the convincing evidence of travel can be bought from a 'Fake A Vacation' website. According to Palmer (2019), around 56% of young people use Photoshop services to share on social media. With help from 'Fake A Vacation' and a 'holiday' charge between £38-£70, people can receive quite convincing photographs of themselves in iconic surroundings, as well as receive 'educative' information about a destination they 'visit', in order to sustain a convincing account on social media (Palmer, 2019). Examples of such inadvertently ecologically conscious 'travellers' exemplify one of the primary reasons why experiential purchases provide enduring happiness.

In essence, the results from numerous studies explain that enduring happiness results from experiential as opposed to material purchases because of their ability to construct identity in the most authentic manner (Carter and Gilovich, 2012, Kumar and Gilovich, 2015). To illustrate, several studies by Carter and Gilovich (2012, p. 1313) revealed that 'people tend to define themselves more in terms of

their experiential purchases than their possessions.’ Moreover, when talking about life, participants tended to refer to their experiential purchases as opposed to material purchases (Carter and Gilovich, 2012). Kumar and Gilovich (2015) explain such a tendency by relating it to the pleasure of storytelling, which experiential purchases fuel. Most importantly, however, storytelling allows people to construct and sustain their identity. Thus, Kumar and Gilovich (2015, p. 2) suggest that: ‘the more we talk about the time we climbed Mt. Rainier, the more fully we become “a mountain climber”’. Therefore, with the prevalence of experiential purchases, such as travel, on bucket lists, it is then critical to consider whether the experience of the bucket list goal is as important as the ability to talk about it.

A similar question has been addressed by Peterson (2011): ‘How many items on a typical bucket list would be deleted if someone were not allowed to talk about them to others? A likely answer: Many of them.’ The true answer to this question does not yet exist, although a peculiar outcome emerged in (2015) study. Ninety-eight participants were asked about their top two destinations for a beach holiday. Once the participants established their options, they were then presented with a hypothetical choice: to have a vacation at the first destination, yet never to speak of it, or to have a holiday at their second-best destination and speak freely of it. Interestingly, 67% of participants decided to choose the second-best destination so they could talk about it instead of their top-rated holiday which they could never share with others (Kumar and Gilovich, 2015). Gilovich and Gallo (2019, p. 6) then explain that ‘people are more likely to talk about their experiences than their possessions, making their experiences live on in the stories they tell and in the back and forth, socially binding nature of conversation’. Therefore, it appears, the ability to narrate the experience consolidates the mere fact of it happening in the first place. However, there are other perspectives on why experiential goals are more superior than material.

The idea of experiential lists is not novel, as discovered by Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 15):

Fodor's Travel Publications, which issues vacation guides for scores of places around the world, recently published Peter Guttman's "escapist scrapbook," which described twenty-eight adventures in which potential travellers can immerse themselves. Consider the diversity of activities - some old, some new, but all very intense experiences: houseboating, portaging, mountain biking, cattle driving, bobsledding, tall-ship sailing, tornado chasing, canyoneering, wagon training, seal viewing, iceberg tracking, puffin birding, race-car driving, hot-air ballooning, rock-climbing, spelunking, white-water rafting, canoeing, heli-hiking, hut-to-hut hiking, whale kissing, llama trekking, barnstorming, land yachting, historic battle re-enacting, iceboating, polar bearing, and dogsledding.

The 'ing' of experience is repeated in America's bucket list survey, where travelling is the top choice (ProvisionLiving, 2019). The centrality of travelling to the trajectory of the bucket list experiences inevitably underlines the experiential component of goals. However, it is critical to question, what makes experiential goals so prevalent on bucket lists? The following section examines some of the perspectives on this question.

Extensive research by Gilovich and Gallo (2019) highlights the plasticity of experiential purchases. That is, 'because experiential purchases tend to be more tightly connected to a person's sense of self than material purchases, the pursuit of experiences tends to expand the sense of self more than material acquisitions do' (Gilovich and Gallo, 2019, p. 7). Since experiential purchases are deeply internalised and, essentially, associated with one's selfhood, individuals negotiate and amend them in retrospect to sustain their identity. This way, over time, even initially disappointing experiences are seen as more satisfying. This 'rosy view' is, as explained by Gilovich and Gallo (2019:7), prevalent since 'people's experiences tend to be a bigger part of who they are, [hence] the motivation to view them favorably is more intense'.

Interestingly, from a TMT perspective, there is also a strong preference for experiential purchases once the individuals ponder their own mortality. Specifically, (Shim and White, 2017a) argue that such a choice is explained by the search for meaningful activities which are particularly associated with experiential, rather than material, purchases. In one of their four studies, Shim and White (2017a, p. 881) created a chalkboard wall which allowed the 227 participants to complete the phrase 'Before I die, I want to...' with their own personal messages. They found that the participants expressed a stronger inclination to engage in experiences such as skydiving rather than acquiring a material item, such as a Ferrari (Shim and White, 2017b). To Shim and White (2017a), 'experiential purchases are particularly associated with a person's true self' and, therefore, more meaningful for an individual. Significantly, then, their study further emphasises the meaningful role of experiential purchase within one's selfhood.

Another important point, however, is the longitude of the experiential goal. As some argue, the superiority of an experiential purchase lies in the anticipation that it provides, as well as the retrospect that allows one to savour and relive experiences in memory (Alba and Williams, 2013, Gilovich and Gallo, 2019, Kwornik and Ross, 2007). For travel, specifically, the notion of collecting experiences to reflect on in the future is especially significant, for 'the true consumption experience may be the shared 'looking forward to looking back'; that is, the shared experience of something different or even dangerous that will be re-lived in later conversations' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 184). Furthermore, tourism, as an 'increasingly pervasive form of consumption, may be considered to be the pursuit of happiness' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 186). However, it is important to question whether the prevalence of experiential goals in the form of travel on the bucket list is only due to positive self-negotiations of the identity. Perhaps, in contrast to the arguably over-symbolic signals of material purchases, experiential goals facilitate more subtle signals of one's self-worth. Potentially, experiential goals are a novel form of conspicuous consumption that goes beyond the traditional, overt Veblenian perspective. Therefore, the next section examines the utilisation of bucket list experiences in the form of an 'experiential CV'.

4.2.2. Construction of 'Experiential CV'; or, 'I am what my bucket list says I am'

Essentially, then, it is clear that the bucket list is, primarily, a collection of mainly experiential goals, largely involving travel. The majority of bucket lists are allegedly meaningful and, therefore, go beyond the simple need to be 'ticked off' in principle. Some experiences, however, acquire their significance more so because of their ability to be 'ticked off' as a statement. Although these activities are very similar to those on the bucket list (for example, staying in an ice hotel or visiting 50 states of the US), completing them is as important, if not more so, than the experience, for they contribute to one's 'experiential CV'. An experiential CV refers to a collection of experiential items which, when checked off, bestow a sense of accomplishment and progress on their implementer (Keinan, Bellezza and Paharia, 2019). This necessarily questions the difference between bucket lists and experiential CVs. Although both concepts are related, the experiential CV has, arguably, a stronger element of conspicuous consumption than does the bucket list in that translucency and visibility of experience is key to experiential CV. As one of the respondents in research by Keinan and Kivetz (2010, p. 941) commented:

I need to show proof that I have been there, and I can do this by posting an entry that features a picture of me with the welcome sign of whichever state I am visiting.

Therefore, it seems, that from a travel perspective, the experiential CV has little place for a deeper intrinsic search; rather, it is a carefully selected, utilitarian list of things that are particularly interesting to the individual but, more importantly, convey the right message about their status. As Urry (2002, p. 42) observes: 'there are clearly many holiday destinations which are consumed not because they are intrinsically superior but because they convey taste or superior status'. Similarly, Giddens (1991, p. 198) concludes that 'appearance replaces essence as the visible signs of successful consumption come actually to outweigh the use-values of the goods and services in question themselves'. To Bocoock (1993, p. 112), consumption is deeply intertwined with identity formation, which explains its centrality 'to people's lives in western capitalism'. Therefore, consumption, as a 'defining characteristic of social life' (Sharpley, 2011a, p. 294), allows one to enjoy

not only what is consumed but also the process of consumption as well for its capabilities to assert and signal status, wealth, personality and, as discussed shortly, identity.

Indisputably, then, travel satisfies the requirement of conspicuous leisure for 'in order to be reputable it must be wasteful' (Veblen, 1973, p. 60). Although travel has, arguably, become a 'necessity' for many, it cannot be considered as a utilitarian need. Furthermore, since 'the gentleman of leisure should, for the sake of his good name, be able to give a convincing account' (Veblen, 1994, p. 28), travellers have long created convincing accounts of their leisurely pastimes, from sending 'Wish you were here' cards to stockpiling souvenirs and, most recently, to spotlighting their travels through social media (Bronner and Hoog, 2018). However, there is a different perspective on traveller's motives when it comes to conspicuous consumption. Specifically, Bronner and Hoog (2018, p. 99) found that although '65% of the vacationers are interested in communicating about their holiday', the general motive of these communications was not concerned with showing off wealth and status. Rather, the participants were more interested in expressing their identity and personality by way of the conspicuous consumption of their holiday.

Indeed, the contemporary traveller strives towards not so much the consumption of the experience itself, but towards the 'markers of identity' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 178). Therefore, inevitably, 'in claiming that something is 'mine,' we also come to believe that the object is 'me'' (Belk, 1988, p. 141). According to Belk (1988), individuals internalise places and experiences to the extent they perceive them as the extension of the self. However, as seen with the range of motives for consumption, 'we cannot hope to understand consumer behaviour without first gaining some understanding of the meanings that consumers attach to possessions' (Belk, 1988, p. 139). Without a doubt, bucket lists are, from a consumption perspective, lists of collectable experiences, the completion of which, more often than not, requires financial support. However, it is not clear how strongly the completion of the bucket list requires the financial support of their owners. This research attempts to answer this question.

4.3 Bucket lists and identity

A bucket list is a lens through which the relationship between leisure, tourism and identity may be observed. According to Gammon (2014, p. 237):

Our leisure choices not only have the potential to realise who we truly are, but also to communicate to others a more informed sense of who we are as well as who we would ideally like to be.

Specifically, leisure is an ideal playground for identity validation or deception (Gammon, 2014). Similarly, tourism provides a plethora of scenarios in which an individual's identity may be negotiated whilst anticipating the holiday, being away and, finally, narrating the stories about the holidays (Desforges, 2000). The use of social media only fuels and solidifies a personal account of travel and their intended representation. Within this context, bucket lists provide a unique opportunity to express oneself through personal accounts of travel, adventures and other experiences significant to one's biography. This section, therefore, evaluates the interrelation between bucket lists and identity negotiation, as well as raising some critical questions to address within this research.

4.3.1 Travel and identity

An individual's self, according to Giddens (1991, p. 52), is an 'amorphous phenomenon' in a sense that an individual's identity, as opposed to an object's identity, is constantly evolving. As defined by Giddens (1991, p. 53), identity 'is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography'. Essentially, then, identity refers to an explicit narrative of the self (Giddens, 1991). This narrative changes yearly, or even daily, as an individual personates different identities (Bond and Falk, 2013). Importantly, whilst many identifications align with an individual's gender, race and culture, the majority tend to reflect 'more ephemeral and dynamic traits such as personal preferences, interests or personal relationships' (Bond and Falk, 2013, p. 431). Moreover, often the environment determines which part of the kaleidoscope of identities becomes salient within a

given environment (parent, traveller, entertainer, a quiet one, etc.) (Bond and Falk, 2013). It is for this reason that in tourism, where the environment is novel, the individual may become whomever he/she wants without being caught out. This, however, is not merely a characteristic of tourism, as suggested by Cohen (2010b, p. 291), but a feature of Western society:

Constructing and maintaining a stable personal identity has become an ongoing issue for many individuals in late modern western society largely due to changes in social organisation wherein choice has increasingly replaced obligation or tradition.

Within this context, Cohen (2010b) refers to the term 'multiphrenia', coined by Gergen (1991, p. 73), which refers to a 'chaotic splitting of a whole identity to accommodate disparate audiences' (Banks, 2017, p. 420). Specifically, multiphrenia may take place when travellers are overexposed to the 'Other' to such an extent that they lose the sense of their personal identity (Cohen, 2010b). However, most tourism studies focus on how identity is developed and negotiated within tourism, rather than metaphorically lost. For example, Barker (2015, p. 79) suggests that:

Travel is the perfect experience to discover the other, but also to encounter your own self. Perceiving the difference and assimilating the other are travelling practices firmly attached to the transformation of one's identity.

Indeed, tourism can be recognised for its capability to 'transition' and 'transform' one's identity through travel experiences (Bond and Falk, 2013, p. 435). Moreover, according to Bond and Falk (2013, p. 437): 'Tourism can be used as a means of maintaining, reconfirming or establishing new aspects of identity'. To them, even the most hedonistic act, such as sitting under a palm tree on the beach, can be observed through an identity motivation lens. Specifically, one could possess the identity of a busy individual in whose mind all successful people must rest under the palm tree on the exotic beach (Bond and Falk, 2013).

According to Desforges (2000, p. 930) 'Tourism practices, and the ways in which they are imagined and enacted, become central to the construction of the

self'. Travel and its narrations are deeply incorporated into the individual's biography (Desforages, 2000). Furthermore, Galani-Moutafi (2000, p. 205) described this process as an 'inward voyage', where '...tourists can be considered observers who gaze into the elsewhere and the Other, while looking for their own reflection'. More importantly, however, tourism provides an arena for escaping or negotiating one's own identity, which can be further cherished and narrated years after the trip has taken place (Sharpley, 2018). As Sharpley (2018, p. 161) writes:

More important is the fact that the consumption of tourism is a shared experience, where tourists consume tourism to be themselves, to escape from themselves or to share the unusual with others. In the last of these, the true consumption experience may be shared 'looking forward to looking back'; that is the shared experience of something different or even dangerous that will be re-lived in later conversations.

Moreover, as Cohen (2010a) argues, 'Tourism may afford increased contact with an array of cultural praxes and ways of life that can challenge notions of self'. Specifically, then, as much as tourists can express their identity within travel, their travel experiences can also constitute who they are or are trying to be. For example, a study by Bronner and Hoog (2018, p. 96) highlighted that 'more than 60% of the vacationers agree that the way people spend their summer holiday says something about what kind of a person someone is'. Importantly, such identity demonstration was found to be mostly attributable to younger vacationers.

Thus, the notion of narration, of story-telling, is central to identity negotiation in tourism, with around 65% of tourists intending to communicate about their vacations (Bronner and Hoog, 2018). Moreover, as previously noted, a study by Kumar and Gilovich (2015, p. 4) revealed that 67% of vacationers 'would rather have their second-favorite vacation that they could talk about rather than their top-rated vacation they could not discuss with others'.

Essentially, then, tourists do not merely seek experiences of places. Rather, they strive towards the 'experience of self in place' (Bosangit, Hibbert and McCabe, 2015, p.3) where self could be negotiated, expressed and, consequently, narrated. Importantly, to Bosangit et al. (2015, p. 4), individuals engage in storytelling not only to revive fond memories, but to express one's identity with a means of carefully selected experiences, for 'Travel narratives are not only reflective of travel experiences but also of the self'. Furthermore, McCabe and Foster (2006, p. 194) note that:

Experiences of tourism achieve a type of iconic status in people's lives, as they communicate the story of their worlds into the bigger picture of lived identities created through actions, attitudes and values, the type of person 'we like to think we are'.

However, also important is the notion of the online allure and identity creation. As Gammon (2014) suggests: 'Social networking sites therefore potentially offer an additional space in which to manage the self'. The appeal of online images also has a significant effect on individual travel choice. As Hosie (2017) reports, 40.1% of millennials choose their holiday destinations depending on their 'Instagrammability' rather than other factors, such as cost of alcohol (24%), personal development (22.6%), local cuisine (9.4%) and opportunities for sightseeing (3.9%). Moreover, according to Condor (2020), for Generation Z, 90% of holidays choices are influenced by social media, with 36% choosing their holiday following posts about a specific destination on social media. The use of social media whilst on holiday has been termed as 'smoasting', as suggested by Sunday Reporter (2012) which highlighted a study by T-Mobile revealing that 51% of Britons actively broadcast photos of themselves at popular locations, but only 45% of those will do so if the location is seen as 'glamorous and will make them look good'. Furthermore, Haines (2018) reports that 39% of millennials perceive online holiday photos as important as the holiday itself. Moreover, 29% of millennials would simply decline the holiday if they were unable to broadcast it on social media (Haines, 2018). Significantly, then, social networks provide an unprecedented freedom to manipulate the self through meaningful experiences shared before large audiences. As Gammon (2014, p. 252) suggests: 'The digital

self can with ease be manipulated and regularly edited to promote and endorse successful, fun and interesting lives'. Instantly, the online life may become a better representation of real life, as long as it is accepted as such by the observers. Within this context, Sharpley (2018, p. 180) notes that 'tourists now experience their holidays or travels through the minds and imagination of those they share their stories with on social media'.

With this in mind, bucket lists offer an array of opportunities for narrating an individual's identity. First, a bucket list can reflect one's goals and aspirations. By knowing someone's goals, 'we can make veridical predictions about that person', according to Moskowitz and Grant (2009, p. 6). Second, these goals become widely shared and communicated. As illustrated earlier, there are 7,745,529 goals shared and 443,214 bucket lists achieved and listed on the bucketlist.org website (Bucketlist.org, 2020). The popularity of such platforms is fuelled by the desire to express personal bucket list orientations. Finally, the completion of the bucket list can be showcased on social media, portraying an image largely influenced by the goals on the list. Thus, although some view bucket lists merely as a lens for reflecting the relationship between identity creation and tourism (Thurnell-Read, 2017), it may be justified to say that bucket lists can shine a light on an individual's identity regardless of the tourism element. Within this context, then, it can be argued that identity creation is one of the motives for compiling a bucket list. There are, however, other motives for travel on the bucket list. To establish them, it is necessary to review some of the theories of motivations. The next section addresses some of the perspectives on tourist motivations.

4.4. Bucket lists and perspectives on tourist motivations

The study of tourist motivations takes a peculiar role within tourism research. Even though tourism took its' time to transform naturally from being a luxury into a 'psychological necessity' (Plog, 2001, p. 23), the question of tourism motivation remains an unresolved discourse. For instance, Krippendorf (1986, p. 523) argued that 'the wish to make discoveries and really learn is hardly present at all' within

tourist motivations. MacCannell (2013) proposed that, to some degree, most tourists wish to be involved with society and culture. On another note, Epperson (1983, p. 32) suggested that tourists motivation lies in an attempt 'to substitute a vacation for the psychiatrist couch. Others may be running away from life'. The challenges of tourism research, including motivation, are lamented by Krippendorf (1999, p. 47):

Going a step further, these motives, and the phenomenon of travel in general, can be interpreted in many ways, little of which, however, can be conclusively proved. The literature on tourism is full of different explanations and interpretations. The truth will probably not lie in one or the other of these theories, but in a mixture of various interpretations. Which does not make the thing any simpler.

Despite the blurred vision of 'truth' in tourism research, this section attempts to discuss some of the theories of tourist motivation. However, before that discussion takes place, it is necessary to define motivation and to consider some implications of researching tourist motivation.

From an etymological perspective, the word 'motivation' comes from the Latin 'movere', which translates as 'to move' (Dann, 1981, p. 198). However, Dann (1981, p.205) defines motivation as 'A meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an actor or group of actors to travel, and which is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision'. Within this definition, a meaningful state of mind refers to such that is conscious and reasonable, albeit not necessarily rational (Dann, 1981). Both Dann (1981) and Crompton (1979) noted that it is the question of 'why', rather than 'how' that underpins the research of tourist motivation. To Maslow (1970), 'the study of motivation must be in part the study of the ultimate human goals or desires or needs'. This particular notion is important, for the purpose of travel must not be mistaken for motivation, since tourists may share the purpose of travel (for example, rest and relax) but pursue it for different motives (Fodness, 1994). But this issue does not conclude the challenges of researching tourist motivation. Since the emergence of pleasure travel, tourist operators have attempted to understand why exactly people travel (Epperson, 1983) but despite the long wait, an appropriate approach to analysing and exploring tourist motivation has yet to emerge (Sharpley,

2018). There are several challenges to studying tourist motivations; however, Dann (1981, p. 209) outlined four different implications:

1. Tourists May not Wish to Reflect on Real Travel Motives
2. Tourists May be Unable to Reflect on Real Travel Motives
3. Tourists May not Wish to Express Real Travel Motives
4. Tourists May not be Able to Express Real Travel Motives

Since it might be challenging to formulate and express the real travel motive, it is important for the researcher to 'uncover' the conscious (and sometimes unconscious) reasons for travelling (Dann, 1981). More specifically, tourist motivation must be appraised holistically. As Iso-Ahola (1983, p. 47) suggested: 'recreational travel behaviour – be it feelings, thoughts, beliefs, decisions or actual behaviours – cannot be observed in either a social vacuum or time vacuum. People function in social environments which they influence, and which influence them'. On a similar note, Sharpley (2018, p. 129) concluded that 'motivation often results from societal values, norms and pressures which are internalised and become psychological needs'. Thus, the study of tourist motivation is, indeed, multifaceted and filled with different perspectives and interpretations. Nevertheless, it requires attention for:

Modern tourism has become one of the strongest and most remarkable phenomena of the time. To discover its true nature, one must attempt to understand how the various components are connected to each other, and what are the causes and effects, the conjectures and the realities. One must first grasp the workings of the mechanism before he can determine the means of controlling, changing, and improving it (Krippendorf, 1986, p. 518).

Without a claim to an in-depth discussion, this section touches upon some of the existing theories of tourist motivations. Table 4.2. illustrates the theories outlined within this section.

4.4.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

With little doubt, one of the most popular theories of human motivation is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Originally developed in 1940 within the field of clinical psychology, Maslow's theory has since been widely adopted in business (Sharpley, 2018). Moreover, the theory has been widely applied in the field of tourism, influencing a variety of motivation theories including Dann's (1977) push and pull theory as well as Pearce and Lee's (2005) TCP. In general, according to Maslow (1943) there are five different classification of all individuals' needs. Those needs are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

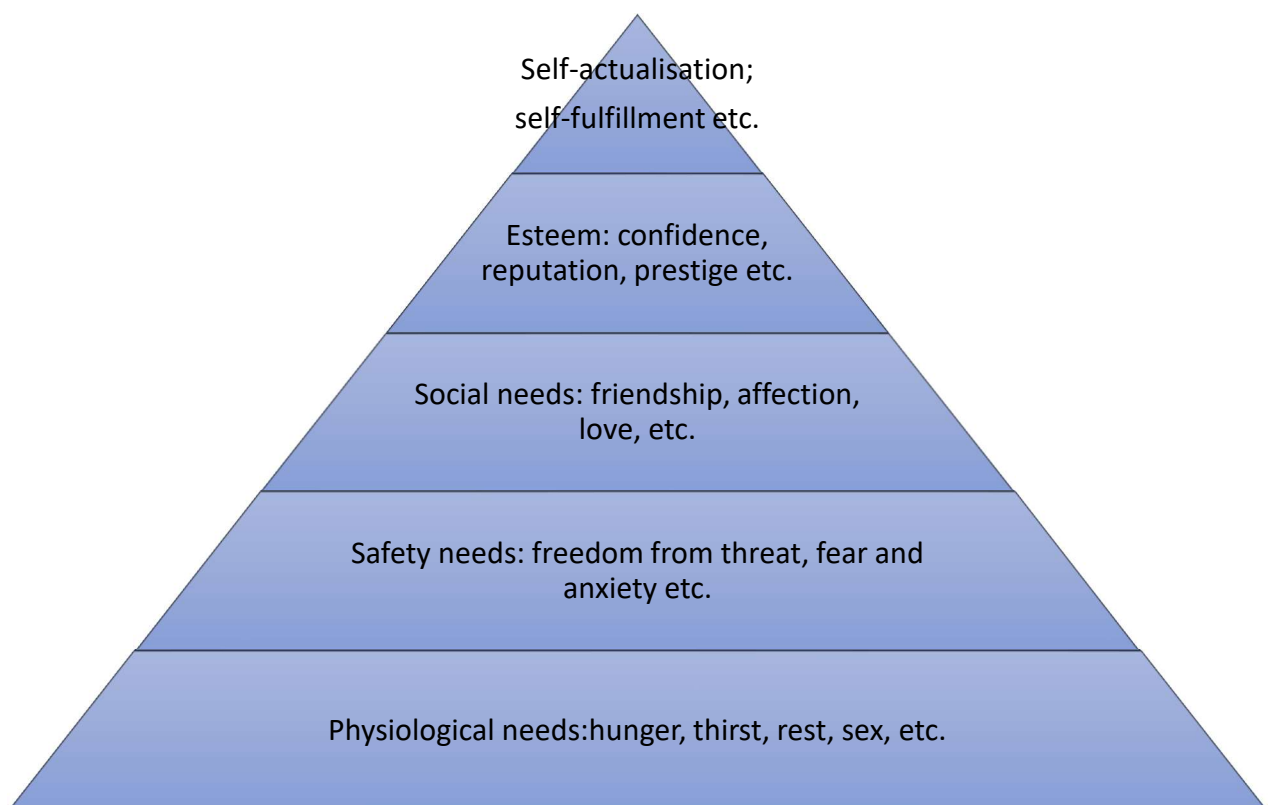
Table 4.2. Theories of tourist motivations.

Author and Year	Theory Name	Outline
Maslow (1943)	Hierarchy of needs theory	Explains that human behaviour is the outcome of various needs that occur in a hierarchal order and the fulfilment of one need leads to an awareness of the next level of need.
Dann (1977)	Push and pull theory of tourist motivation	Builds a theoretical framework based on two concepts: anomie and eco-enhancement.
Crompton (1979)	Socio-psychological motivations to travel	Identifies seven socio-psychological motives and two cultural motives that drive individuals to travel.
Iso-Ahola (1982)	Social psychology model of tourism	Based on push and pull effects, asserts that personal escape and search and interpersonal escape and search motivate tourism and recreation.
Pearce and Lee (2005)	TCP	Theory purports that travel motivation could be identified as patterns and combinations of multiple motives that are influenced by previous travel experience and age.

Source: Adapted from Yousaf, Amin and Santos (2018, p. 204).

below. The pyramid shape of the figure is explained by the fact that Maslow originally suggested that the illustrated needs are formed as a hierarchy, although he later dismissed this claim (Sharpley, 2018). If all the needs are dismissed, the individual strives towards satisfying the most basic- physiological needs. Once those have been satisfied, the individual 'moves' up the hierarchy. The theory, however, may appear overly simplistic to grasp the phenomenon of tourist motivation. As Yousaf, Amin and Santos (2018) suggest, different tourists have different needs resulting in further need for segmentation of needs and motivations at any given moment. Furthermore, as tourists travel, their 'experiential CV' expands, leading to a change in preferences and needs. Nevertheless, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a solid basis for exploring tourist motivation.

Figure 4.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Source: Adapted from Maslow (1943) and Sharpley (2018).

4.4.2. Dann's Push and Pull theory of tourist motivations

In the most simple terms, tourist motivation comes down to the simple fact of tourists' 'individual and interpersonal incompleteness' (Dann, 2016, p. 630). This notion forms the basis of the push and pull theory of tourist motivation. The push factor is based in individual's wish to surpass the feeling of isolation of everyday life, or simply, 'get away from it all' (Dann, 1977, p. 187). Specifically, Dann (1981) identified two push factors: anomie and ego-enhancement, where anomie refers to a sense of meaninglessness and ego-enhancement is associated with the deprivation of self status in the individual. Within that context, tourism is seen not only as an escape from anomic society, but also as a means of boosting self esteem by occasional 'trip-dropping' (Dann, 1981, p. 191). Sharpley (2018, p. 136) described the feeling of anomie as so powerful that individuals may wish to say 'stop the world, I want to get off'. Similarly, Krippendorf (1986, p. 523) outlined a sense of anomie in society, specifically in relation to work:

Nowadays, the need to travel is above all created by society and marked by the ordinary. People leave because they no longer feel at ease where they are, where they work, and where they live. They feel an urgent need to rid themselves temporarily of the burdens imposed by the everyday work, home and leisure scenes, in order to be in a fit state, to pick the burden up again.

In Dann's research (1977) based on tourists in Barbados, it was highlighted that anomic tourists were more likely to be married and belong to more privileged socio-economic groups. On the contrary, those seeking ego-enhancement were from a lower socio-economic background and were more likely to be female. These tourists would therefore desire a sense of recognition, attention and even appreciation. Thus, returning to the context of bucket lists, it is possible to allege that ticking off items of the list (especially through a means of travel), may lead to a process of ego-enhancement:

In addition to offering unusual and collectable experiences, an increasing number of products and services provide consumers with

tools and advice on how to collect such experiences. Life-list books, such as *1,000 Places to Visit Before You Die* (New York Times #1 best seller) and *1,001 Foods You Must Taste before You Die*, and various Web sites help consumers check off the things they have done and create lists of experiences they want to collect in the future (Keinan and Kivetz, 2010, p. 948).

Such a collection of experiences not only adds to individuals' experiential CV, but also enhances a sense of self-esteem and importance. Although the discussion tends to focus, in general, on the socio-psychological push factors, it is, nevertheless, important to outline the existence and relevance of pull factors. Importantly, pull factors are those which attract a tourist to a specific resort. They can be related to sunshine, sea, sand and so on. According to Sharpley (2018), the distinction between both push and pull factors is fundamental to understanding the motivation and the demand for tourism. As he suggests in relation to push and pull factors:

In both cases, however, tourists are motivated by the prospect of 'reward'. In other words, people feel the need to travel not only because of the sense of normlessness and meaninglessness imposed upon them by modern society but also by the need to be recognised, to have their ego or confidence boosted, to personally and psychologically gain from tourism. (Sharpley (2018, p. 139)

Although Dann's work (1977) may be criticised for overlooking other possible motivations, it remains one of the many popular theories for understanding tourist motivations.

4.4.3. Crompton's Socio-psychological motivations to travel

Importantly, Crompton (1979) himself encountered a challenge in establishing tourist motivations. Specifically, in his research, he found that tourists struggled explaining

their own motives for travel. Nevertheless, he identified seven socio-psychological (push) motives for travel. These were: escape from a perceived mundane environment; exploration and evaluation of self; relaxation; prestige; regression; enhancement of kinship relationships; and facilitation of social interaction. Table 4.3. below outlines the seven motives in detail.

Table 4.3. Crompton’s seven socio-psychological motivations to travel.

Motive	Description
1. Escape from a perceived mundane environment	A temporary change of environment was a frequently expressed respondent motive. Even the most prized living environments sometimes became mundane to those living there.
2. Exploration and evaluation of self	Self-discovery emerged as a result of transposition into a new situation. The novelty of the physical and social context appeared to be an essential ingredient in the process. These insights into the person's self could not be achieved by staying at home or visiting friends and relatives.
3. Relaxation	Relaxation meant taking the time to pursue activities of interest. The activities selected were often a reflection of the increased time available at the vacation destination.
4. Prestige	Although some respondents suggested prestige was a primary motivating factor in other people's trips, few of them accepted that there was any prestige motive involved in their own pleasure vacation decisions.
5. Regression	Some respondents suggested that a pleasure vacation provided an opportunity to do things which were inconceivable within the context of their usual lifestyles. The things respondents cited were often puerile, irrational, and more reminiscent of adolescent or child-like behavior than mature adult behavior.
6. Enhancement of kinship relationships	Many respondents perceived the pleasure vacation as a time when family members were brought close together. Hence, the pleasure vacation served as a medium through which family relationships could be enhanced or enriched.
7. Facilitation of social interaction	It was evident that an important motive for some respondents going on a pleasure vacation was to meet new people in different locations. These trips were people oriented rather than place oriented.

Source: Adapted from Crompton (1979)

Along with the seven socio-psychological motives, Crompton (1979) also outlined two cultural motives: novelty and education. Within this context, novelty refers to actually experiencing something, rather than merely knowing about it, whereas education refers to the feeling that something is ought to be seen due to its 'distinctive phenomenon' (Crompton, 1979, p. 421).

Within the context of bucket lists, Crompton's socio-psychological motives may indeed explain some of the reasons why individuals compile a bucket list. Although Crompton's seven socio-psychological and two cultural motives may not exhaust an array of possible tourist motivations, they nevertheless provide good groundwork for exploring tourist motivations.

4.4.4. Iso-Ahola's Social psychology model of tourism

Iso Ahola's work (Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987) is, in a sense, complementary of Dann's (1977) study. That is, just as Dann (1977) outlined two forces of tourism motivation – anomie and ego-enhancement – so too did Iso-Ahola also highlight two motivational forces – seeking and escaping. However, the difference between two authors' positions, according to Sharpley (2018), lies in the fact that Dann appraised seeking/escaping as socially determined whilst Iso-Ahola argued that tourists seek and escape merely from personal environments. That said, both authors are in agreement that tourists are, after all, motivated by the possibility of reward (Sharpley, 2018).

Within this context, then, it is important to explain the meaning of seeking and escaping. According to Iso-Ahola (1982, p. 259), seeking referred to 'the desire to obtain psychological (intrinsic) rewards through travel in a contrasting (new or old) environment', whilst escaping entailed 'the desire to leave the everyday environment behind oneself'. These motivational forces simultaneously influence the individual's behaviour (Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987). Both forces may simultaneously impact the decision to compile a bucket list – a desire to get away from it all, and the appeal of the potential destination. Importantly, similar to Dann (1977), Iso-Ahola (1983, p. 48)

recognised the effect of travel (in this case, conspicuous travel) on an individual's self-esteem:

An important social psychological aspect of recreational travel is people's desire to talk about their travel experiences to others. In the case of wilderness hiking, this makes the idea of solitude even more relative. Even though a person may hike alone, the hiker talks about it to others before and after the actual experience. So, one may ask rhetorically: How many recreational travellers would continue to travel if there were no opportunity to share their experiences? A guess is that many individuals like to share their personal travel experiences not only in order to compare them to those of others and because such experiences provide a convenient topic for conversation, but also because they may be perceived to be one way of increasing one's social status and self-esteem.

According to Iso-Ahola (1983, p. 48), the more one travels, the more likely one is to be perceived in 'high esteem and status'. This, again, is very relevant to the concept of bucket lists, as ticking off multiple items may, indeed, increase an individual's self-esteem. That said, returning to the idea of 'deathless' tourism experiences, tourists perhaps seek invincible environments where risky (not conforming with everyday) behaviour may be engaged in. Since tourism may enhance the individual's sense of self-esteem, whilst on holiday, individuals' existential anxieties may be buffered to the point where the individual will engage in activities outside their comfort and safety. Seeking 'deathless' environments through tourism experiences may also be complimented with escaping from an ontologically insecure everyday environment. Although this idea is novel to this thesis, it nevertheless may require further investigation in the future. Although in a way, similar to Dann's anomie and ego-enhancement, Iso-Ahola's work extends the discussion of tourist motivation from a psychological rather than sociological standpoint.

4.4.5. Pearce and Lee's (2005) Travel Career Pattern (TCP).

Pearce and Lee's (2005) theory of tourist motivation has been largely influenced by Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory of motivation. Initially, their theory was called the Travel Career Ladder (TCL). Essentially, TCL proposed that tourists progress 'upward through the levels of motivation when accumulating travel experiences', with those levels being relaxation, security, relationship, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Pearce and Lee, 2005, p. 227). One of the main assumptions of this theoretical framework was that travel motivation changes in line with the accumulation of travel experiences. In other words, as tourists progress through the ladder of tourist experiences, their motivation progresses towards self-actualisation. This idea (albeit in relation to goal setting) is also mentioned earlier with regards to Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST), which posits that individuals' goals and the motives for them change across their lifespan. This is particularly relevant to the concept of the bucket list in the sense that individuals arrange their bucket lists subject to what has already been experienced. In other words, an individual's 'travel career' (Pearce and Lee, 2005, p. 228) can, arguably, determine the directions of bucket list items.

Although at first Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) posited that travel motives move strictly through the five hierarchical levels in line with the travel career, later Pearce and Lee (2005, p. 228) established that rather than a 'ladder', travel motives could be identified as a 'pattern' and a combination of several motivations that are not only influenced by previous travel experiences, but also age. This, therefore, resulted in a more updated theory of tourists motivation – the Travel Career Pattern (TCP). As mentioned earlier, that question of age is particularly important within the bucket list discourse. In line with SST, it is argued that as individuals progress through their lifetime, they become more selective with the goals they assign to themselves. In other words, one may argue that many tourists wish to reach the level of self-actualisation, yet, this matter is even more pressing for those who reached a certain point in their travel career or have lived to an older age. Either way, TCP offers another interesting lens through which the tourist motivations for compiling a bucket list that involves travel may be appraised.

4.5. Tourism, Covid-19 and bucket lists.

On the 31st of December, 2019, Wuhan, China reported a first case of pneumonia of unknown cause (Gössling et al., 2021). Of course, to contain the virus, which was named 'Covid-19', China implemented regional lockdowns. However, by mid-March 2020, the virus was established in 146 countries, mainly carried through air travel (Gössling et al., 2021). At the time, the extent of the crisis was not known – after all, the tourism industry had withstood disasters such as the 9/11 terrorist attack (2001), the SARS outbreak of 2003 and the MERS outbreak of 2015. Generally, the tourism industry had remained resilient towards unprecedented external factors (Gössling et al., 2020). However, Covid-19 was different. Travel and tourism was amongst the most affected sectors, putting around 100 million tourism related jobs at risk (UNWTO, 2021). Many disruptions in the tourism industry were caused immediately. From the Carnival's Diamond Princess cruiseship being stranded off the coast of Japan after a confirmed coronavirus outbreak to 3,000 hotel room cancellations in Northern Ireland (predominantly by Chinese tourists), as well as a 75% decline in hotel occupancy in mainland China (Hudson, 2020). Covid-19 affected almost every part of the global tourism, hospitality and events sector, from international flights to festivals and restaurants.

For many, it is likely that their bucket lists were paused, especially because of travel restrictions. As outlined in section 2.1., many adapted their bucket lists towards goals that were more feasible. However, it is not yet known what effect Covid-19 has had on bucket lists. Part of Stage 2 of data collection (interviews) focused on that question, generating interesting results (see section 7.3.4.).

It is unknown what the future will bring for tourism, hospitality and events industries, as the Covid-19 pandemic is still unfolding. Some predict a post-Covid era of tremendous change in the industry (Traskevich and Fontanari, 2021), whilst others predict an eventual return to normality (Pappas, 2021). Either way, this crisis has only further highlighted the importance and pressures of the tourism industry, as well as its resilience. The next section of this chapter provides a summary of key themes discussed.

4.6. Bucket lists and values.

The Bucket List discourse strays far from its initial conception as a means to structure one's life and actions around personal priorities and values and, in doing, to find self-actualisation (Turnell-Read, 2017, p. 63).

Surprisingly, contemporary bucket lists are to Turnell-Read (2017) bereft of personal priorities and values, the pursuit of which may result in self-actualisation. Rather, Turnell-Read (2017, p. 63) argues that bucket lists merely result in an 'unending cycle of experience acquisition'. This thesis, however, argues the opposite. Whilst there is agreement that bucket lists are, to some extent, a product of consumer society, conspicuous consumption and ego-enhancement, they are nevertheless aligned with individual values.

It is important here to define what values are. First, values are 'the dominant force in shaping people's ideas, attitudes and opinions' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 149). Sharpley (2018, p. 149) continues to suggest that 'values represent a set of prescriptive beliefs that guide the choice or evaluation of potential behaviour'. In essence, then, values become a map for the bucket list item's direction. Maslow (2012, p. 64) outlines the questions of 'final values' (philosophical/religious/humanistic/ethical) as follows:

What is the good life? What is the good man? The good woman? What is the good society and what is my relation to it? What are my obligations to society? What is best for my children? What is justice? Truth? Virtue? What is my relation to nature, to death, to aging, to pain, to illness? How can I live a zestful, enjoyable, meaningful life? What is my responsibility to my brothers? Who are my brothers? What shall I be loyal to? What must I be ready to die for?

Whilst not all of these questions are at the heart of the bucket list's formation, the dilemma of how to live a meaningful life is arguably present within the bucket list discourse. In other words, the fluidity of life can be pondered through the abstractness of the bucket list in order to make sense out of life – to find meaning (for further discussion on bucket lists and meaning, please refer to Chapter 7). Indeed, some bucket lists may appear rather superficial, where individuals merely chase, for example, a

holiday tan, but the deeper meaning of it may be associated with self-esteem. In contrast, more 'serious' forms of bucket lists may signal the dominance of spiritual values in bucket list goals consisting of pilgrimage or memorising of the Holy Book. Whilst these examples may appear as the polar opposites, they are nonetheless not bereft of an individual's values underpinning them.

Indeed, how individuals formulate their bucket list may depend on their values. Such values, then, may be congruent with an individual's age, spirituality, experiences and fateful moments (for examples, please see Participant 19 story in Chapter 7 on the shift between materialistic and spiritual values as a result of a tragic fateful moment – their grandmother's death). To this point, Rokeach (1973, pp. 5-6) argues:

If values were completely stable, individuals and social change would be impossible. If values were completely unstable, continuity of human personality and society would be impossible. Any conception of human values, if it is to be fruitful, must be able to account for the enduring character of values as well as for their changing character.

Sharpley (2018, p. 149) extends this point by suggesting that 'an individual tourist's value system may, in theory, adapt according to social or cultural influences'. It is therefore, perhaps, appropriate to suggest that the bucket list may reflect an individual's values within a larger consumer society.

As Scott (2020) suggests, bucket lists do indeed allow one to get in touch with their values. Similarly, Periyakoil *et al.* (2018, p. 652) also concur that the bucket list 'allows us to reflect on our personal values and identify important life milestones and experiences that we want to have before we die'. However, the question may arise as to whether the context of personal values may predict the direction of bucket list goals. Whilst the answer to this question is not yet asserted, Madrigal's (1995) study may point towards the right direction within the context of tourism. That is, Madrigal (1995) hypothesised that internally motivated values (for example, good relationships, fulfillment, joy) can be associated positively with allocentrism – the search for novel experiences – whilst external values (respect, security and sense of belonging) are associated with psychocentrism, or the search for the familiar. His study concluded that personal values, are, indeed, good predictors of an individual's behaviour.

Another interesting study by Crandall and Rasmussen (1975) measured how values relate to the purpose in life. Their study identified that purpose in life was associated with low scores of pleasure and comfort, suggesting that a hedonic lifestyle can lead to an 'existential vacuum' (Crandall and Rasmussen, 1975, p. 485), whereas religious orientations were identified as developing more profound meaning in life. Interestingly, whilst the latter finding confirms some of the tenets of the TMT, the former (hedonic lifestyle) can arguably also support an individual's worldview and sustain their self-esteem. After all, values are 'the weapons that we all employ in order to maintain and enhance self-esteem' (Rokeach, 1973, p. 14). For example, a bucket list goal such as 'memorising the Holy Book' may signal that completion of such a goal will result in enhanced self-esteem and a cultural worldview within which one values being a good Christian.

Whilst a more profound, and, arguably, needed discussion on the presence of values in the formation of bucket lists is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is nevertheless perhaps correct to assert that bucket lists are subject to an individual's values at a given time. Hence, it may be argued that an individual's bucket lists may change during their lifetime, reflecting a change in their values. This, however, remains yet another interesting area for future research.

4.7. Gaps in knowledge.

Before beginning to delve into the research findings, it is important to return to the key gaps in knowledge (existing literature) that this research aims to address. However, when discussing the bucket list literature, it is perhaps easier to identify the existing, rather than missing literature, given the scarce number of sources mentioning bucket lists. To name a few, the key writers who discuss bucket lists within the context applicable to this research are Thurnell-Read (2017), who provided a tourism perspective on bucket lists, Chu et al. (2018) who appraised the relationship between bucket list goals and age, Freund (2020) who invented the term the 'bucket list effect' to refer to postponement of bucket list goals to later years in life and, finally, Periyakoil et al.

(2018) who discussed bucket lists within the context of advance care planning. Whilst these sources generally influenced the discussions in this thesis, be it in agreement or disagreement, many areas remain unclear within the bucket list discourse.

First, the popularity and the format of the bucket list are not firmly established. That is, it remains unclear how familiar individuals are with the term, whilst it is still not known how many individuals write down their bucket list and whether bucket lists can take any other forms. Chapter 6 in particular deals with these questions. Second, it remains uncertain as to what extent bucket lists are a lens through which contemporary society may be observed. That is, it is expected that bucket lists can shed light on consumption practices (particularly in tourism) and conspicuous consumption, identity creation, the anticipation of bucket list adventures in the background of the global Covid-19 pandemic and the relationship between age and bucket lists. Whilst Chapter 2 discussed the latter in detail from the perspectives of tourism, death, goals and socioemotional selectivity theory, it still remains unclear in terms of the extant literature how a young person's bucket list will differ to that of an older person.

Matters become even more complicated with regards to the relationship between bucket lists and death. Although largely appraised from a perspective of death denial (Chapter 3), a bucket list may well be a means of death acceptance, which is further explored in Chapter 7. Drawing on the writings by Becker (1975), Giddens (1991), Yalom (2011) and Solomon et al. (2015), it became apparent that the interconnection between bucket lists and death needs further investigation, despite Thurnell-Read's (2017, p.63) argument that bucket lists are 'shorn of any overt association with the finality of death'. Importantly, the only work that briefly appraises bucket lists within the context of death is that of Kearl and Jacobsen (2016, p. 74), who proposed that bucket lists fit the new death ethos, where death must take only those who had lived life to the full, leaving their ticked-off bucket lists as a legacy. Considering that, other than Kearl and Jacobsen (2016), no other sources discuss bucket lists from the perspective of death and dying, the question of whether bucket lists are about living life to the full or the fear of death remains unanswered. Furthermore, the role of legacy within the bucket list discourse requires further attention.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, apart from the Thurnell-Read's (2017) tourism-focused paper and the survey by ProvisionLiving (2019), nothing points to the prevalence of

tourism within bucket lists. That is, not only it is not known whether tourism does appear predominantly on the bucket list but also, the role of travel within bucket lists remains unclear. In other words, it has yet to be established why tourism may be a dominant item on the bucket list. Finally, no existing literature points towards an understanding of the motivations for compiling a bucket list. However, given that tourism may be an overarching item on the bucket list, as demonstrated by ProvisionLiving (2019), some of the tourist motivations presented in this chapter (see Dann 1981 and Iso-Ahola 1983) may point towards the motives for having travel on the bucket list.

Overall, then, the existing literature is rather limited within the bucket list discourse. It is beyond the scope of this section to outline all the possible directions in the literature where bucket lists remain overlooked but, nevertheless, the key salient gaps in knowledge in relation to the directions of this thesis have been outlined within this section. This has further established the necessity of researching and understanding the bucket list, in particular from a travel perspective. To fulfill these gaps in knowledge, Chapters 6 and 7 seek to establish an understanding of the currently 'grey' areas outlined within this section – that is, the popularity and format of the bucket list, the role of bucket lists within contemporary culture and death perspectives as well as the role of travel within bucket lists.

4.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter opened with an appraisal of the absence of bucket lists within tourism literature. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the phenomenon of bucket lists remains significantly overlooked. Despite the first documented bucket list or, at the time, the 'life list' being compiled back in 1939 by John Goddard, little attention has been paid to the bucket list. It is for that reason that this chapter aimed to discuss the nature of the bucket list from a tourism perspective. That is, this chapter largely focused on the experiential nature of the bucket list (and, in particular, tourism) and the effect it has on individual's sense of happiness, values, fulfillment and identity. The discussion then proceeded to review bucket list and tourism related goals as central to identity

creation. Finally, the chapter concluded with a brief overview of five well established theories of tourist motivation. Although too early to conclude, it is however becoming obvious that the strong relationship between bucket lists and identity narration can result in a motivation such as ego- enhancement (Dann, 1977). That said, the motivation for compiling a bucket list remains a complex question to be answered in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 5

Research methodology, design and methods

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the philosophical underpinnings (methodology) of the research, with a focus on research design and methods. Importantly, it introduces and explains the adoption of the mixed methods approach as well as providing the justification and argument in favour of 'compatibilism' or the blurring of 'methodological lines' (Howe, 1988, p. 15). More specifically, the chapter seeks to consider the benefits (as well as the disadvantages) of mixed method research, despite the apparent conflict between epistemology and methods that is resisted by some under the 'tyranny of methodological dogma' (Howe, 1988, p. 15). In so doing, in part to avoid the polemic on the 'paradigm wars' (Bryman, 2008a, p. 14) and generally influenced by Thomas Kuhn (1970) and the associated judgement of objectivity, the chapter explains the adoption of the pragmatic approach in this research. Furthermore, to outline the direction of research, detailed diagrams are presented throughout the chapter to illustrate the research design.

First, however, it is important to revisit the overall aim of the research alongside its objectives as a framework for the subsequent discussion. As established in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is to explore critically why people compile bucket lists. The question immediately poses significant challenges owing to the limited extant of literature addressing the topic, not least within the field of tourism and leisure; indeed, the bucket list phenomenon remains surprisingly overlooked within much of the academic literature. Hence, in seeking to achieve the research aim, it is essential to commence by developing a conceptual understanding of what a bucket list is and its relevance to contemporary society

and culture. In other words, considering the 'what' of bucket lists must precede the 'why' in as much as the need or want to compile a bucket list may only be explained by building on knowledge and understanding of the nature of the bucket list phenomenon. Therefore, in order to achieve its aim, this thesis has the following objectives:

Objective 1: To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.

Objective 2: To examine bucket lists within contemporary social perspectives on death and dying.

Objective 3: To explore critically the role of socio-psychological motivations for compiling a bucket list.

Objective 4: To explore to what extent travel in particular features in bucket lists.

As mentioned earlier, a pragmatic approach has been adopted in this research. Preceding a more profound discussion on the role of pragmatism, however it may be questioned what pragmatism brings to the bucket list research. The answer is rather complex but, nevertheless, requires elaboration here. First, by adopting pragmatism, this research concurs with the viewpoint of single and multiple realities of pragmatism (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). That is, within the context of bucket lists it is important to acknowledge that there are two distinct visions of the bucket list – those of bucket list holders and of those who deny such ownership (each are equally important). In order to capture both 'realities' or visions, two different sets of questions for the interviews were established (as can be seen in Appendix B).

Secondly, one may ask: might such a fluid and abstract concept as a bucket list be explained? Surely, no single method could satisfy the enquiry holistically? Therefore, a mixed methods approach is used (commonly associated with pragmatism). Moreover, the use of a mixed methods approach allows one to compensate for the flaws of mono-method, precisely in the way that quantitative data deals with 'what' of the bucket list whilst qualitative data deals with 'why'.

Finally, as from any pragmatic study, practical recommendations - or ‘actions’ – must be identified. Therefore, in Chapter 8, this thesis not only proposes recommendations for further research, but also identifies areas where the concept of bucket lists is underutilised. In other words, the pragmatic approach allows one to uncover and explain the phenomenon of the bucket list in a holistic manner, by shining light at different sets of data and providing practical implications for it. A more in-depth discussion on the role of pragmatism in research follows in section 5.3.2.

5.1. Methodology

The following table outlines the key aspects of research methodology adopted in this thesis.

Table 5.1. Summary of research methodology

Philosophy	Pragmatism
Research design	The explanatory sequential design
Research approach	Inductive
Research Methods	Stage 1. Online survey Stage 2. In-depth semi-structured interviews
Research Analysis	Stage 1. Qualtrics Stage 2. NVivo Thematic Analysis

Table 5.1. outlines the core methodological characteristics of this research. Importantly, within the social sciences the term methodology refers to the way in which the research is conducted (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Moreover, that methodology is generally influenced by the researcher’s interests, assumptions and purposes (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). With that in mind, the researcher’s stance in this study is that a single method of inquiry would not bring the reader as close as possible towards understanding the bucket list. As seen in Table 5.1,

this research adopts the philosophy of pragmatism. The term 'pragmatism' derives from Greek term 'pragma', which translates as action and which also explains the nature of words such as 'practice' and 'practical' (Pansiri, 2006, p. 224). This, to some extent, encapsulates the core of the philosophy of pragmatism, although a more detailed discussion on this philosophical stance is provided later in the section 5.3.2. Table 5.1. also draws attention to the research design which, in essence, is a 'specific direction in a research study' (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 11). In this case, the research takes the form of an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. That is, the explanatory characteristic is based on the fact that the initial quantitative findings are further explained by means of subsequent qualitative data collection and analysis, whilst the sequential characteristic refers to the stages of data collection in relation to each other. Thus, sequential design purports that quantitative data collection is followed by the qualitative phase (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) and, hence, it follows that this research utilises multiple methods of data collection. Although the justification for the mixed methods approach follows later, it is important to underline here the methodological stance adopted by echoing words of Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 12) that 'no single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience'. Nevertheless, as discussed later, an attempt is made to get as close as possible to the 'truth' of the bucket list experience through the use of methods deemed most appropriate.

In addition, the research adopts an inductive approach with regards to the role of theory. This particular approach occurs when the researcher 'begins with as open a mind and as few preconceptions as possible, allowing theory to emerge from the data' (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 90). said, O'Reilly (2009, p. 91) challenges the possibility of a completely open mind, for 'Everyone starts out with some preconceived ideas, and some (even lay) theories about how the world works'. As mentioned in Chapter 8, the author did hold some preconceptions about the nature of the bucket list. That said, these were identified and acknowledged as a barrier to the impartial analysis of data. Recognising these beliefs allowed for them to be put aside, thereby permitting the data to lead the journey with impartial interpretation and explanation of the results. More generally, however,

the employment of the inductive approach within this thesis reveals the researcher's approach to uncovering data and is generally influenced by the lack of pre-existing knowledge surrounding the research subject area.

Thus, in an attempt to 'build' knowledge with regards to the phenomenon of the bucket list, this research comprised two stages of research, the first stage being an online survey followed by the second stage based on semi-structured interviews. Considering the limitation of literature surrounding bucket lists, it was deemed impossible to grasp the phenomenon of bucket lists merely through one stage of data collection. The description of the data collection process is provided later in section 5.5. Finally, the data were analysed using the appropriate software. In particular, Qualtrics was used to administer the survey and analyse the data generated, whilst the interviews were transcribed (verbatim) and analysed through NVivo software.

Having briefly outlined the methodological characteristics of the research, the next sections now go on to provide an in-depth discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of the research and the methods employed.

5.2 Research paradigms

As this chapter unfolds, the question of methods should be approached cautiously, for the discussion of the procedures utilised merely answers the question of the 'how' rather than the 'why' of the research rationale. In other words, it is first necessary to address the philosophical underpinnings of the research before a discussion of methods may take place. The reasoning is that, as Hughes (1990, p. 11) justifies: 'The relevance of the philosophical issues mentioned arises from the fact that every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world'. Similarly, Bryman (2004, p. 4) suggests that 'methods are not simply neutral tools: they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined'. Therefore, to address these viewpoints,

the researcher must uncover their worldview in relation to the matters of ontology and epistemology. These are also referred to as paradigms which, in essence, are a set of universal concepts or worldviews (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Tribe, 2009). Understanding the core of epistemological and ontological paradigms may not itself be the key to valid knowledge production, but it is argued that understanding one's position within this field bestows a degree of credibility to one's work (Ayikoru, 2009). Thus, the questions of ontology and epistemology are further addressed with reference to this research.

In the most simple terms, the question of ontology addresses 'what kind of things are there in the world?' (Hughes, 1990, p. 5). Hence, the primary concern of the ontological position is to question 'whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors' (Bryman, 2008b, p. 18). This distinction is generally referred to in terms of constructivism and objectivism. The former argues that 'knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind' (Schwandt, 1998, p. 236), whereas the latter attends to the idea that 'social phenomena confronts us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence' (Bryman, 2008b, p. 18). Importantly, constructivists generally favour qualitative approaches, the aim being to understand the nature and meaning of the phenomena shaped, albeit subjectively, by the participants' views (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Alternatively, objectivism is associated with quantitative approaches which measure the phenomena and meanings that are isolated and independent from social actors. Interestingly, Schwandt (1998, p. 236) proposes the idea of radical constructivism, for '...we cannot know such a thing as an independent, objective world that stands apart from our experience of it. Hence we cannot speak of knowledge as somehow corresponding to, mirroring, or representing that world'. Yet, curiously, Schwandt (1998, p. 250) also proposes the abandoning of 'dichotomous thinking' for 'we can continue to respect the bid to make sense of the conditions of our lives without claiming that either enquirer or actor is the final arbiter of understanding'. Nevertheless, these paradigmatic distinctions exist with their separate, unique claims to what constitutes reality

and knowledge. What is more important, though, is that the questions of ontology and epistemology are 'inextricably interlinked' (Platenkamp and Botterill, 2013, p. 118). Hence, further attention must be paid to the matter of epistemology.

As observed above, the questions of ontology and epistemology are unavoidably intertwined, for 'Claims about what exists in the world almost inevitably lead to questions about how what exists is made known' (Hughes, 1990, p. 6). Therefore, in essence, the question of epistemology is concerned with the way in which the world is known to us (Hughes, 1990). In other words, it questions the claim to the warrantable knowledge itself (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992). This understanding, according to Henwood and Pidgeon (1992), broadly influences data collection, analysis and interpretation. Generally, there are two dominating epistemological positions, namely, positivism and interpretivism.

5.2.1. On positivism

The roots of positivism lie in the works of René Descartes (1596-1650) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727), whilst the sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857) adopted the positivist lens as a means of appraising the social world (Jennings, 2010). Interestingly, Comte perceived sociology, or what he called 'social physics', to be on the same level as mathematics, physics, chemistry and other hard sciences that objectively describe reality (Watts, 2013, p. 248). Positivism also tends to be associated with the physical sciences, for it is 'objective and value-neutral' (Jennings, 2010, p. 442). From a positivist ontological perspective, the world is governed by laws that are stable and can be explained and predicted (Jennings, 2010), whilst Kolakowski (1995) characterises positivist doctrine as such that it 'separates the wheat from the chaff in any statement about the world'. For a long time, social scientists believed that the application of the same methods as the ones attributed to natural sciences, such as physics, would allow one to reach the apex of knowledge (Hughes, 1990). And indeed, positivist methods have been successfully applied in the social sciences (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998), such as in Durkheim's *Suicide* (1951), where 'the laws of society were revealed by a properly

constituted science' (Durkheim 1951, cited in Hughes 1990, p. 32), providing lasting insight into relations between family, income, religion and suicide in a capitalist society. Nevertheless, at times, the 'brute facts' associated with positivist methods cannot fully unveil the tacit world of human meanings and emotions (Hughes, 1990, p. 115).

Similarly, tourism as a social science (Holden, 2006) is largely dominated by positivist methodologies (Ayikoru, 2009). However, it is important to note that, generally, tourism research falls under two broad headings: (i) business and industry and (ii) social and cultural phenomena (Ritchie et al., 2016). This, as Cooper (2016, p. 375) notes, underpins 'the constant tension between academic and industry based researchers'. Nevertheless, in tourism research, there exists, to some extent, quantitative favouritism (Jamal and Choi (2003). Consequently, whilst analysing the state of qualitative research in tourism, Wilson, Mura, Sharif and Wijesinghe (2019, p. 13) lament on the lack of attempts to 'propel new ways of thinking outside the current positivist orthodoxies', going on to suggest that tourism research is 'an opportunistic arena for innovative, playful and hybrid ways of appraising social phenomena'. At the same time, Airey (2015, p. 8) suggests that tourism research is no longer is purely positivist, with quantitative dogma being replaced by 'eclectic multi-disciplinarity'. For instance, *Annals of Tourism Research* claim that 60% of research papers embrace an interpretivist paradigm (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2015). Whilst consensus on paradigmatic debates may not be reached within the tourism milieu, there exists increasing criticism of applying positivist methods to social science research. To illustrate, Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 106) conclude that:

Human behaviour, unlike that of physical objects, cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities. Qualitative data, it is asserted, can provide rich insights into human behaviour.

Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 106) and Hammersley (1995) provide the intra-paradigmatic criticism of positivism by suggesting that it has no place and application in social sciences, within which meanings are socially constructed by 'human actors'. It is for that reason that the bucket list, being a social construct,

could not be explained merely through the lens of positivism. One could suppose, then, that the shift towards interpretivist methods in the social sciences would eliminate any grounds for a debate. Nevertheless, the interpretivist paradigm is not met with fewer challenges than positivism. The next section briefly outlines the nature of the interpretivist paradigm.

5.2.2. On interpretivism

Schwandt (1998) notes that terms such as interpretivism and constructivism generally belong to the lexicon of social science researchers. Interpretivism refers to the term 'given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism' (Bryman, 2008b, p. 15) and, within the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is thought to be produced through mere interpretation (Ayikoru, 2009). As mentioned in the previous section, the positivist orthodoxy is subject to criticism from the perspective of enquiries that attempt to unveil human meanings and emotions, yet neither is the adoption of an interpretivist stance bereft of challenges and criticisms. Schwandt (1998, p. 224) highlights one of the key challenges of interpretivism as: 'The paradox of how to develop an objective interpretive science of subjective human experience thus arrives'. In other words, because interpretivism 'is committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's own perspective' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 3), that perspective is challenged in terms of verifiability, validity, generalisability and overall objectivity.

Nevertheless, one could question whether sterilised objectivity genuinely exists. This issue is addressed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 5) who argue that 'Objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations'. To further their argument, they conclude that:

Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated on the words of- and between- the observer and the observed. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 12)

In other words, the interpretive researcher attempts to uncover meanings from within the subjects' minds in order to see the world through their lenses (Veal, 2018). That apparent objectivity within social enquiry is not challenged by the interpretive researcher but is, rather, embraced. Although this section adopts a

Table 5.2. Philosophical assumptions of the main paradigms.

Philosophical assumption	Question	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological assumption (the nature of reality).	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is objective and singular, separate from the researcher.	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants.
Epistemological assumption (what constitutes valid knowledge).	What counts as knowledge? How are knowledge claims justified? What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Researcher is independent of that being researched.	Researcher interacts with that being researched.
Axiological assumption (the role of values).	What is the role of values?	Research is value-free and unbiased.	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and biases are present.
Methodological assumption (the process of research).	What is the process of research?	Process is deductive. Study of cause and effect with a static design (categories are	Process is inductive. Study of mutual simultaneous shaping of factors with an

		<p>isolated beforehand).</p> <p>Research is context free.</p> <p>Generalizations lead to prediction, explanation and understanding.</p> <p>Results are accurate and reliable through validity and reliability.</p>	<p>emerging design (categories are identified during the process).</p> <p>Research is context bound.</p> <p>Patterns and/or theories are developed for understanding.</p> <p>Findings are accurate and reliable through verification.</p>
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Source: Adapted from Creswell (2012, p. 21) and Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 58).

similar attitude to that of Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 63) by abstaining from the use of the terms ‘quantitative and qualitative’ in the context of paradigms (for they generally belong to the context of data), nevertheless, it is important to note that, according to Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 57), interpretative research is in broad terms a type of research in which findings are not derived ‘from the statistical analysis of quantitative data’. That said, this research could not proceed merely with an interpretivist stance, for it would be impossible to capture the popularity of bucket lists, the format of bucket lists and the attitudes towards bucket lists across numerous variables within a wider sample. Table 5.2 above elaborates on key ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological assumptions of the two competing paradigms.

Having discussed the dominant paradigms and their associated methodological ideologies, this section could content itself with the information presented thus far, had it not been for the utilisation of the mixture of methods belonging to differing paradigms within the one study. In other words, the use of a mixed

methods approach gives rise to one of the most challenging obstacles facing a novice researcher, that is, the 'incompatibility thesis'. The next section addresses the concept of incompatibility in detail and justifies the selected methods.

5.3. Incompatibility thesis and mixed method approach

One of the most crucial stages within the paradigm wars was the decline of the mono-method era in favour of mixed methods research (Bryman, 2008a). In essence, the paradigm wars were born out of debates surrounding qualitative and quantitative research within the context of epistemology (Bryman, 2006b). The mono-method era (in which an exclusively qualitative or quantitative technique was utilised) could not persist once research combined both techniques (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). However, the escape from the mono-method paradigm was largely criticised by means of the incompatibility thesis (Howe, 1988).

The incompatibility thesis posited that 'quantitative and qualitative paradigms could not coexist' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005b, p. 270). Despite the mixed methods approach which evolved in the 1960s and reached its apex by the 1980s followed by the emergence of mixed methods models in the 1990s, purists remain sceptical about mixing the 'uncompromisingly different worldviews' for, undeniably, qualitative and quantitative paradigms 'operate under different ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions about the goal and nature of research (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005b, p. 270). However, in opposition to the incompatibility thesis, the argument for the 'compatibility thesis' was developed (Howe, 1988, p. 10). In essence, the compatibility thesis posits that methodological eclecticism is not necessarily a negative phenomenon and points, on many levels, towards the inseparability of quantitative and qualitative methods (Howe, 1988). Although the blurring of methodological lines remains problematic for certain researchers, Howe (1988, p. 15) argues that:

The growing tendency of educational researchers to resist the tyranny of methodological dogma is a good thing. It is high time to close down the quantitative versus qualitative conversation.

In support of this view, Bryman (2006b) offers further reasons for abandoning the presumptions of incompatibility. In particular, he argues that the association between research methods and philosophical paradigms is borderline hereditary, for methods can, in fact, be independent from epistemology. Similarly, Biesta (2010, p. 98) deems paradigmatic distinctions as an 'unhelpful concept', as 'it tends to bring under one heading a range of different ideas and assumptions that do not necessarily have to go together'. Therefore, another key characteristic of the mixed methods research is 'paradigm pluralism' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010, p. 9), which allows the researcher to acknowledge different philosophical stances.

Essentially, then, the rejection of the incompatibility thesis spurred the development and maturation of methodological eclecticism (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010), although Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) argue that, as a paradigm, mixed methods still remain in adolescence and, to some extent, cause confusion amongst novice researchers. Nevertheless, regardless of claims to the state of mixed methods research, it is clear that methodological pluralism deserves acknowledgement in the research milieu. Importantly, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) predict an even wider mix of methods as researchers become more comfortable with crossing paradigmatic boundaries. As Johnson and Gray (2010, p. 72) conclude:

Conceptually speaking, it is important to acknowledge that there is no singular descriptive or explanatory conceptual system that, as Plato would say, "carves nature at its joints" (i.e., a perfect conceptual scheme that is a natural kind, precisely matching reality). Multiple disciplinary perspectives have much to add to our understanding of our world and, often, they need to be interconnected. The same claim operates at the level of philosophy.

The tension between purists and ‘connoisseurs of methods’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010, p. 8) is unlikely to vanish in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, it is likely that research adopting methodological eclecticism will develop and become more sophisticated. To avoid adopting the common misconceptions surrounding mixed methods research and its dominant philosophy – pragmatism – the remainder of this section focuses on the definitions and typologies of mixed methods research to lay the foundation for the subsequent discussion on pragmatism.

First, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of mixed methods. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010), several authors (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, Greene, 2007) attempted to define and explain the term ‘mixed methods’, in so doing spawning different terminologies to define the field, including amongst others ‘multimethod research’, ‘multiple methods’, ‘blended research’ and ‘integrated research’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010, p. 19). Eventually, however, consensus was reached on ‘mixed methods research’ as the most common term for the field (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010, p. 19). That said, Creswell (2010) questions the distinction between methods and methodology within the context of this debate. According to him, methods summarize the ‘procedures of data collection, data analysis and possibly interpretation’ (Creswell, 2010, p. 51), whilst methodology refers an all-encompassing journey from the worldview to the ‘procedures of inquiry’. Thus, he proposes a use of the term ‘mixed research’ to illustrate the mixing of research rather than sheer methods (Creswell, 2010, p. 53). Denscombe (2017, p. 162) summarises that the plethora of ‘names’ given to the field of the mixed methods research is the ‘testimony to the variety of ways in which research can be mixed and the many aspects of the research process that can be involved’.

It appears, then, that whatever term is used, the predominant idea remains the same or, as a general Maths rule suggests ‘changing the order of the addends does not change the sum’. That said, at this point it is necessary to examine the meaning behind mixed methods research. Traditionally, it is defined in technical terms as a research design that implements both quantitative and qualitative methods within one study (Cameron and Miller, 2007, Iaquinto, 2018, Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). However, Greene (2007, p. 20) defines mixed methods

beyond its technicalities, appraising it rather as a plural means of examining the world:

A mixed methods way of thinking is a stance or an orientation toward social research and evaluation that is rooted in a multiplistic mental model and that actively invites to participate in a dialogue – at the large table of empirical enquiry – multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple way of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished.

Mixed methods research facilitates the appraisal of the world using ‘the best’ of the two main paradigms, outlined above. That, however, does not necessarily lead to the ‘idealised’, new ‘third research movement’ (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). In fact, as well as advantages, there are numerous disadvantages to mixed methods research, as outlined in Table 5.3 below. Amongst the disadvantages, it is necessary to acknowledge that mixed methods research requires extensive time owing to research data collection. In addition, the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches requires the researcher to be familiar with both methods. Moreover, when one of the methods is used to validate the findings from another method, the research may result in non-alignment of findings.

Finally, Denscombe (2007, p. 119) refers to the blurred paths of qualitative and quantitative research, for ‘qualitative social research involves some quantification and measurement; quantitative social research involves some element of interpretation’. One may, therefore, question why researchers proceed with mixed methods research. It can be argued, however, that the benefits of mixed methods research outweigh its disadvantages. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 7) note that every researcher who embarks on mixed methods research should ‘provide a justification for the use of this approach’.

Table 5.3. Advantages and disadvantages of mixed methods research.

Advantages of Mixed Methods Research	Disadvantages of Mixed Methods Research
A better understanding of the thing that is being studied	The time and cost of the research project can increase
A practical, problem-driven approach to research	The researcher needs to develop skills in more than one method
Clearer links between different methods and different kinds of data	Findings from different methods might not corroborate one another
Compensating strengths and weaknesses	The QUAL/QUAN distinction tends to oversimplify matters

Source: Adapted from Denscombe (2017, pp. 175-176).

To justify such a choice it is necessary to refer to Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), who outline five reasons for mixing methods within one study. These are illustrated in Table 5.4. Notably, for this study, complementarity is particularly important, which means that the results of the second stage of data collection (interviews) will permit elaboration on the initial results from the survey. In other words, one method would compensate for the limitations of another method. This alone, however, does not fully justify the choice of mixed methods for this study. That is, another important reason for using mixed methods is what Bryman (2006a, p. 106) refers to as ‘completeness’; the use of quantitative and qualitative methods can facilitate a ‘more comprehensive account of the area of enquiry’.

Table 5.4. Reasons for Mixing Methods according to Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989, p. 259).

Reason	Explanation
1. Triangulation	Triangulation or greater validity refers to the traditional view that quantitative and qualitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated.
2. Complementarity	Complementarity seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.
3. Development	Development seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
4. Initiation	Initiation seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from the other method.
5. Expansion	Expansion seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.

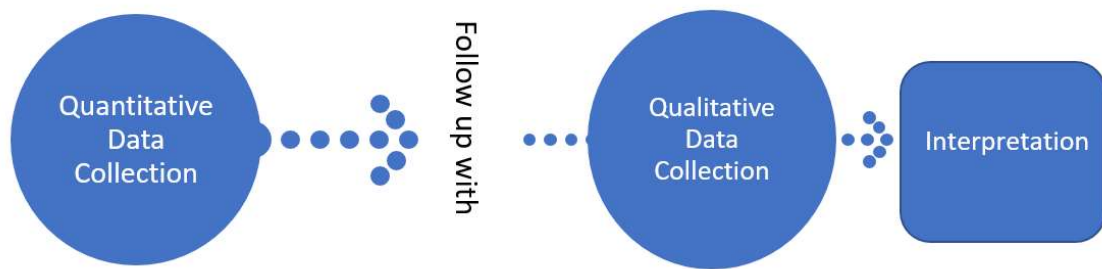
Source: Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 62).

One of the key challenges facing the novice mixed methods researcher is establishing what kind of mixed methods design to use. According to Jason and Glenwick (2016), there are at least 35 different types of mixed method designs. In essence, however, there are two elements to deciding the research design. First is the priority, which refers to the dominance (or equality) of both methods within one research. Second is the timing, which relates to when the qualitative and quantitative data collection processes are implemented against one another (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). As previously noted, this research adopts an explanatory sequential design which is explained in further detail in the following section.

5.3.1. Explanatory sequential design

In this study, one of the most pivotal questions prior to the data collection was which mixed methods design to adopt. After all, the aim was not only to examine why people have bucket lists; the challenge lay in the fact that little if anything was known about bucket lists. Therefore, the purpose of the design was to appraise and develop some initial ideas about bucket lists, followed by a more in-depth examination based on the initial results. Thus, the choice of methods was as follows: to examine the nature of bucket lists on a larger scale through a quantitative method, followed by developing the initial findings by means of the qualitative method. In Morse's (1991) terms, this sequence would be illustrated as QUAN → qual, where the dominant method is based on quantitative data collection to be followed up by qualitative findings. With that in mind, then, the explanatory sequential design is initiated in two distinct phases, where the quantitative method 'has the priority for addressing the study's questions' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 71). The dominance of QUAN within this study has two implications. First, as mentioned earlier, quantitative data to a great extent influences the types of questions to be posed to respondents in the second stage of data collection. Secondly, quantitative data may inform the type of participants to be selected for the subsequent stage of the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 222), the overall aim of such a design is 'to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results', and, therefore, it is essential 'to tie together or to connect the quantitative results to the qualitative data collection'. In that sense, the generation of qualitative data in this study aimed to explain the confusing or contradictory results of the survey. Finally, the results are interpreted separately, each at their own time. However, it is important to emphasise consistently how the qualitative data extend the outcomes of a quantitative method (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). For better illustration of the design, Figure 5.1. outlines key steps in the process of the explanatory sequential design.

Figure 5.1. The explanatory sequential design.



Source: Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 69)

Prior to considering pragmatism, it is important to summarise the key points discussed so far. One of the strongest misconceptions in both mixed methods research and pragmatism is the belief that, should this methodological path be selected, ‘anything goes’ (Denscombe, 2017, p. 173). Hence, the preceding discussion on the emergence and the utilisation of the mixed methods research has emphasised its rigour with regards to the procedures and processes it involves. And as Denscombe (2017, p. 174) reassures, the mixed methods approach has now earned a ‘recognised name and research credibility’. However, for some, pragmatism mistakenly implies ‘a certain lack of principles underlying a course of action’ (Denscombe, 2017, p. 173). Therefore, it should be stressed at this point that this is not the case for a pragmatism researcher; indeed, the next section of this chapter addresses that misconception and describes the nature of pragmatism.

5.3.2. Pragmatism

It is necessary to discuss pragmatism, the approach adopted by this research, within the context of mixed methods approach. Importantly, Pansiri (2006, p. 223) goes as far as to suggest that pragmatism is ‘the best paradigm for justifying the use of mixed-methods research’, a view echoed by Iaquinto (2018) who argues that pragmatism underpins mixed methods research. As with mixed methods

research, the rationale for pragmatism is to compensate for the pitfalls of mono-method research (Pansiri, 2006), yet this is not the only purpose of pragmatism.

Ormerod (2006, p. 892) defines pragmatism as a:

...philosophical doctrine that can be traced back to the academic sceptics of classical antiquity who denied the possibility of achieving authentic knowledge regarding the real truth and taught that we must make do with plausible information adequate to the needs of practice.

Therefore, in pragmatism, decisions about the appropriate methods of research stem from their usefulness in addressing a specific question that is being investigated (Denscombe, 2017). Perhaps one of the defining features of pragmatism is the attitude towards what was described earlier as the 'paradigm wars'; as Bryman (2008a) suggests, the pragmatist researcher purposefully overlooks paradigmatic distinctions between qualitative or quantitative research. Occasionally, paradigmatic recognition may occur, but it is swiftly dismissed in the interest of answering the research question with the most appropriate tools (Bryman, 2008a). In essence, pragmatists contrast directly with purists who advocate the incompatibility thesis (Cameron and Miller, 2007). Similarly, Veal (2018) suggests that pragmatism commits to neither positivist nor interpretivist paradigms; rather, it utilises or combines them at different points of a given study. Florczak (2014, p. 281) summarises the nature of pragmatism by concluding that:

...the scientist or researcher must turn away from a priori reasons, from fixed principles, and from absolutes and deal only in facts as they exist related to a problem at hand. The goal is resolution of the problem. It does not mean that the scientist or researcher must discard all logic and rigor; it only means that staunchly abiding with paradigmatic dogma that blocks the movement toward a greater common good is not in the interest of humankind.

Additionally, Howe (1988, p. 13) makes another observation regarding the concept of 'truth' within the pragmatist view:

For pragmatists, "truth" is a normative concept, like "good," and "truth is what works" is best seen not as a theory or definition, but as

the pragmatists" attempt to say something interesting about the nature of truth and to suggest, in particular, that knowledge claims cannot be totally abstracted from contingent beliefs, interests, and projects.

From a historical perspective, pragmatism is not new (Morgan, 2007). It was introduced during the 19th century by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce, and later continued by many, such as Williams James, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead and Arthur F. Bentley (Maxcy, 2003), all of whom supported the rejection of traditional ontological and epistemological assumptions. With reference to its history, Maxcy (2003, p. 52) argues that ‘Pragmatism offers historical strands and warrants for the new discourse of social science research, which embraces plurality of method and multiple methods philosophies’. Historically, pragmatists refuted positivist objectivity or constructivist objectivity, for only the most appropriate means of answering the question were considered (Iaquinto, 2018) or, as Biesta (2010, p. 96) puts it, ‘the utility of research means for research ends’. However, pragmatism is even more complex than some of the characteristics outlined above. To draw holistically on the defining characteristics of this philosophy, Bryman (2006, p. 116) regards it as a ‘distinctive philosophy’), Table 5.5. summarises and explains the key characteristics of pragmatism.

Table 5.5. Characteristics of pragmatism.

Characteristic	Explanation
Individuality	Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality.
Freedom of choice	Researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. The doors are open to different worldviews and different assumptions.
Divided worldview	Pragmatists tend not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analysing data rather than subscribing to only one way.

Provisional truth	Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind.
The 'what' and 'how' of research	The pragmatist researchers look to the what and how of research based on the intended consequences – where they want to go with it.
Importance of context	Pragmatists agree that research always occurs on social, historical, political, and other context.
Externality of the world	Pragmatists believe in an external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind. But they believe that we need to stop asking questions about reality and the laws of nature.

Source: Adapted from Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp. 10-11).

It is evident, then, that within pragmatism the commitment to a certain philosophical doctrine is non-existent (Bryman, 2006b). Therefore, the incompatibility thesis is not a matter of concern for a pragmatist. In essence this of it in terms of the outcomes and what you can do with what comes out of it. I mean I'm a really pragmatic academic'. research echoes the view of Respondent 16 in Bryman's (2006b) research: 'Erm, so I guess I don't tend to think of it as a— at a philosophical level, I tend to think

It is important to reiterate that pragmatism does not present a practice where 'anything goes'. As discussed thus far, pragmatism has distinct features and characteristics, yet its standing in relation to the worldview issues of positivism and interpretivism may be questioned. To illustrate this most effectively, it may be useful to return to Table 5.2. and develop a comparison between the two main paradigms and pragmatism – this is established in Table 5.6. As is demonstrated, the essence of pragmatism encapsulates the idea that there exists a most practical way of addressing a research question. Pragmatist ontology is concerned predominantly with 'actions and change', where the world is in the 'constant state of becoming' (Goldkuhl, 2012, p. 139). To pragmatists, objective reality exists separately from human experience. At the same time, however, it can only be

encountered through a means of human experience (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Pragmatist epistemology views knowledge as something different to reality; knowledge is constructed in order to manage existence within the world and to take part in the world (Goldkuhl, 2012). In essence, then, pragmatism objects to the idea of viewing ‘truth’ as something that can be ‘determined once and for all’ (Pansiri, 2005, p. 197).

Generally, pragmatists are in consensus with an idea that knowledge is socially constructed (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019), where truth itself is inherently provisional. Importantly, pragmatism is also concerned with ‘action’ and ‘change’ and the ‘interplay between knowledge and action’ (Goldkuhl, 2012, p. 136).

In other words, the researcher does not merely observe the world; rather they intervene in the world. Each idea must have a practical consequence.

Table 5.6. Comparison of philosophical assumptions of the main paradigms and pragmatism.

Philosophical assumption	Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontological assumption (the nature of reality).	Reality is objective and singular, separate from the researcher.	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants.	Singular and multiple realities (e.g., researchers test hypotheses and provide multiple perspectives).
Epistemological assumption (what constitutes valid knowledge).	Researcher is independent of that being researched.	Researcher interacts with that being researched.	Practicality (e.g., researchers collect data by “what works” to address research question).
Axiological assumption (the role of values).	Research is value-free and unbiased.	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and biases are present.	Multiple stances (e.g., researchers include both biased and unbiased perspectives).

<p>Methodological assumption (the process of research).</p>	<p>Process is deductive.</p> <p>Study of cause and effect with a static design (categories are isolated beforehand).</p> <p>Research is context free.</p> <p>Generalizations lead to prediction, explanation and understanding.</p> <p>Results are accurate and reliable through validity and reliability.</p>	<p>Process is inductive.</p> <p>Study of mutual simultaneous shaping of factors with an emerging design (categories are identified during the process).</p> <p>Research is context bound.</p> <p>Patterns and/or theories are developed for understanding.</p> <p>Findings are accurate and reliable through verification.</p>	<p>Combining (e.g., researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data and mix them).</p>
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Source: Adapted from Creswell (2012, p. 21), Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 58) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 42).

As Kaushik and Walsh (2019, p. 257) comment on the role of action within pragmatism:

Pragmatist philosophy holds that human actions can never be separated from the past experiences and from the beliefs that have originated from those experiences. Human thoughts are thus intrinsically linked to action. People take actions based on the possible consequences of their action, and they use the results of their actions to predict the consequences of similar actions in the future. A major contention of pragmatist philosophy is that meaning of human actions and beliefs is found in their consequences. External forces do not determine humans; they are themselves capable of shaping their experience through their actions and intelligence. Pragmatists believe that reality is not static—it changes at every turn of events. Similarly, the world is also not static—it is in a constant state of becoming. The world is also changed through actions—action is the way to change existence. Actions have the role of an intermediary. Therefore, actions are pivotal in pragmatism.

Within that context, it is the search for action – for practical solutions through a means varied methods – that drives pragmatist research.

To summarise, pragmatism presents sound counter-arguments to the incompatibility thesis, as it illustrates a ‘radical departure from age-old philosophical arguments about the nature of reality and the possibility of truth’ (Morgan, 2014, p. 1049). Specifically, as a new, emerging paradigm, pragmatism overlooks (to some extent) philosophical dogmas which treat social research through a lens of ontology, epistemology and methodology. As Kaushik and Walsh (2019, p. 259) illustrate:

Pragmatist researchers do not simply push aside philosophical arguments, particularly the metaphysical arguments, to get their research done. Rather, they have come to a conclusion, after careful consideration of the effort and involvement, that the broader philosophical arguments can never be solved. Why? Because, meaning is inseparable from human experience and needs and is dependent upon context.

More importantly, however, pragmatism empowers researchers to overcome some of the methodological pitfalls; the inclusion of the quantitative method compensates for the non-generalisability of the qualitative method, whilst qualitative data facilitates explanation and elaboration of quantitative data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005a). This point is particularly relevant to this research and becomes more translucent as this section proceeds to the research design. For the time being, it is, perhaps, wise to refer to the words of Denzin (1970, p. 298): ‘Methods are like the kaleidoscope – depending on how they are approached, held, and acted toward, different observations will be revealed’. This idea is indeed applicable to pragmatism, where the notion of ‘truth’ is contextual. In essence, then, for those who distance themselves from the dread of the incompatibility thesis, pragmatism offers a pathway of dual compensation for the weaknesses of each method and the freedom of choice of techniques. However, rather than a paradigm where ‘anything goes’, it is important to note that pragmatism uses the most rational methods in order to open the window on the potential practical solutions, change and action within a given study. The next

section overviews the design of this research, followed by the description of research methods.

5.4. Research design

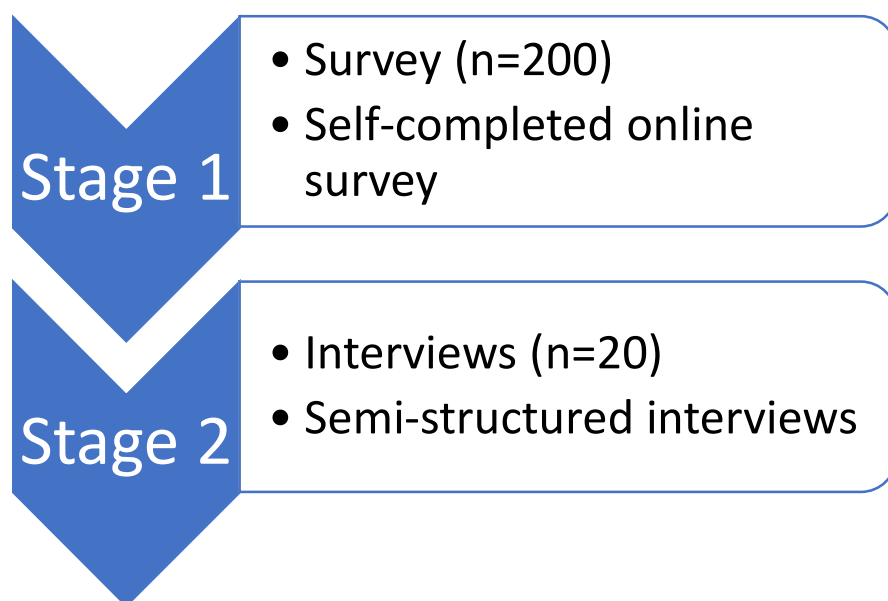
The role of theory within this research is inductive; the researcher enters the world of bucket list meanings without any initial preconceptions. This approach, in general, allows theory to emerge from the data (O'Reilly, 2009). Such an approach tends to be associated with qualitative researchers (Finn, Elliot-White and Walton, (2000), who 'often explicitly reject a deductive approach, arguing that the social world is too complex and messy for patterns, laws, and regularities to make any sense' (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 90). Moreover, O'Reilly (2009) argues that pre-existing theory restricts the researcher's findings. One may question, then, the role of TMT theory (see Chapter 3) within the thesis. In this context, it is important to note that TMT informs this research, yet it does not overshadow the emergence of other trends and themes and takes only a modest place within the data analysis. In other words, although traces of TMT were expected to arise due to its presence in associated literature, there was nevertheless an equal chance that TMT would appear to be absent in this research. Regardless of the outcome, it was expected that the research would produce interesting findings without being driven solely by TMT. To summarise, at the outset of this research, no solid hypothesis was held. Rather, the intention was to attempt an appraisal of the bucket list phenomenon in a holistic manner, utilising the mixed methods approach. Therefore, the two-stage research design was proposed.

The structure of the research design is presented in Figure 5.2. First, 200 self-completed surveys were distributed online through social media platforms, adopting a convenience sampling technique. The surveys were then analysed through Qualtrics, in particular using a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, as the majority of the data was ordinal (Likert scale). At the second stage of data collection, 20 online interviews took place via the Teams platform. Initially, it was expected that the interviews would take place face-to-face; however, the COVID-

19 pandemic had serious implications for face-to-face contact and, sadly, it was during the peak of the second coronavirus wave in the UK that the interviews were scheduled to take place. The effects of the pandemic on this particular study are noted at the end of this chapter. Nevertheless, the semi-structured interviews were completed through purposeful sampling by March, 2021. They were recorded and transcribed through NVivo transcription and analysed through the NVivo software, utilising a thematic analysis approach.

This section has very briefly summarised the role of theory and the research design. An initial observation was made on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this research and, as mentioned earlier, to maintain transparency in the research processes and implications, the chapter will conclude with an overview of the effects of the pandemic on the direction and progress of this research. As for the research design, however, it is believed that it will enable further exploration of the clearly under-researched phenomenon of bucket lists. Therefore, the next section of the chapter elaborates further on each of the stages of data collection and analysis within this thesis.

Figure 5.2. Research design: number of completed surveys/interviews and survey/interview structure.



5.5. Research methods: survey

The next sections overview the survey purpose, distribution and analysis, as well as outline in detail the processes involved in each step. A discussion on advantages and disadvantages of surveys is presented, along with one of the key findings from the survey.

5.5.1. Survey purpose

Overall, the purpose of the survey was to elicit as much data as possible about bucket lists and to generate data that would point to the right direction for the second stage of data collection. In general, the survey included a range of socio-demographic and attitudinal questions within the context of bucket lists. It was deemed particularly important to establish ‘the basics’ of the bucket list – the most ‘accepted’ definition, the predominance of travel, the popularity of the concept within contemporary culture and, of course, the role of death within the compilation bucket lists. Therefore, the survey was expected to lay the foundations for:

- a) Establishing ‘the basics’, where data demonstrated a persuading result (strong agreement/ disagreement) or,
- b) Establishing an area that requires further elaboration through Stage 2, where data did not demonstrate a strong position, or an explainable correlation.

As will become evident in the next chapter, the results of the survey satisfy both expectations of the data.

A survey was selected as the first stage of the multi-method research as clear benefits of utilising this method were recognised. That said, however, during the process of distribution and analysis of surveys, several challenges were encountered. Table 5.7, adapted from Bryman (2008b), reflects on the key advantages and disadvantages of using surveys that were encountered during this

research, with a commentary outlining how it affected the research progress. However, despite some of the challenges outlined in Table 5.8 and also despite technical issues related to one of the questions, overall the survey produced a satisfactory amount and quality of data. This challenge will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.5.2. Survey distribution

Initially, in order to test the flow of the survey, 15 pilot Qualtrics questionnaires were distributed to friends and colleagues. All feedback was positive and, therefore, it was decided to proceed with the wider distribution of the survey. It is important to note that, at this point the survey was tested multiple times by the

Table 5.7. Advantages and disadvantages of surveys with commentary.

Advantages (commentary)	Disadvantages (commentary)
<p>Cheaper to administer</p> <p>Whilst in 'normal' times (pre-pandemic), the researcher would need to account for interview expenses such as travel, due to the move to online interviewing, this particular advantage has not been felt. That said, a certain expense has been attributed to the transcription of interview data, whereas the survey data did not require such a paid service).</p>	<p>Cannot prompt and probe</p> <p>(Unlike with the interviews, surveys did not allow the question to be explained to the respondent in the event that they were having difficulty understanding it. Moreover, some of the peculiar answers within the survey could not be asked to be elaborated on due to survey's anonymity).</p>
<p>Quicker to administer</p> <p>(Indeed, when comparing to the rate of completing interviews, surveys were demonstrated to be a quicker way to gather data from more people than an interview ever could).</p>	<p>Greater risk of missing data</p> <p>(There was a significant number of surveys where data was missing. This, according to Bryman (2008), generally occurs when respondents are bored, or cannot relate to data. However, one of the key issues with the survey was the 'glitch' with one of the questions, which occurred when participants used a mobile phone to complete the survey. It is believed, that this technical issue</p>

	accounted for the majority of incomplete surveys).
<p>No interviewer variability</p> <p>(Some of the questions posed in the interview involved, arguably, somewhat self-confronting questions with regards to conspicuous consumption and death attitudes. It is, therefore, likely that the 'social desirability bias', which occurs when the interviewer is present, could impact the results of survey (Bryman, 2008b, p. 218).</p>	<p>Do not know who answers</p> <p>(Anonymity of survey, at times, resulted in nuisance data, that was irrelevant to the research).</p>
<p>Convenience for respondents</p> <p>(The respondents could complete the survey at a speed and time that was convenient for them).</p>	<p>Difficulty in asking other kinds of questions</p> <p>(Several open questions were asked in the survey, which at times were left incomplete. This, according to Bryman (2008) occurs because, more often than not, respondents do not want to write a lot of information).</p>

Source: Adapted from Bryman (2008, pp. 2018-2019).

researcher via mobile phone/ personal computer to ensure the correct flow of the survey. The report demonstrating all survey questions and data can be seen in Appendix A. Survey distribution began in July 2020 and continued until December 2020. The process of data collection adopted non-probability sampling, in particular, a convenience sample, which was available 'by virtue of its accessibility' (Bryman, 2008b, p. 183). The challenge of this sampling technique lies in the non-generalisability of findings. In other words, although it does not allow one to generate definite findings, it can provide a 'springboard for further research'. It is believed that the use of multi-methods within this research would allow for the separation of the wheat from the chaff in the variety of generated data. Therefore, the questionnaire was deemed substantial for establishing the meaning of 'bucket lists' and the dominance of travel within them. Specifically, the dominance of travel within bucket lists was measured through both attitudinal questions and through open ended questions, where participants were asked to write down the top 5 things on their bucket list. An example of results from such a question can be seen below in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3. One of the key findings from the convenience sample survey.

Top 5 items on your bucket list.



As mentioned previously, the survey was distributed online, predominantly through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. Some requests to complete surveys were made to colleagues and friends of colleagues. Unfortunately, the process of data collection proved to be slower than expected, yet one of the key mistakes was late familiarisation with data reports that were part of the Qualtrics package. In late autumn (November), it became apparent that a number of incomplete surveys would ‘stop’ at one specific question.

After careful examination, it became apparent that question No. 9 was the catalyst for missing data that followed after it. As mentioned in the introduction, the flow of survey had been tested on numerous occasions on a personal mobile device (Samsung S9); however, in retrospect, the same test on an Apple iPhone7 revealed that the answer options would not let the participants scroll down to submit the answer and proceed with the survey. It is, therefore, believed that some different browsers displayed different visual resolutions of questions. Nevertheless, 200 surveys were successfully completed by participants. Although initially perceived as a failure, after a consultation with the supervisory team, it was appraised as a learning curve. In future research, however, (should such an

opportunity be arise), a much closer, more rigorous control over data will be implemented.

5.5.3. Survey analysis

Prior to data collection, it was decided that both data distribution and data analysis would be performed through Qualtrics software. Once the data had been collected, a request was made to extend the original Qualtrics version to StatsIQ in order to run more sophisticated analyses. Such an option also minimised the possibility of mistakes during data input into alternative software such as SPSS.

Owing to the type of data collected (predominantly ordinal data), Spearman's rho was deemed appropriate to observe correlations between two variables (Bryman, 2008b). In essence, Spearman's rho is 'a measure of strengths and direction of the relationship between two ordinal variables', which is especially appropriate for the use of Likert scales. However, whilst correlation can indicate a relationship between two variables, its strengths and direction, 'there's absolutely no assumption that an independent variable actually causes a dependent variable' (Bernard, 2000, p. 559). Similar to Pearson's correlation, Spearman's coefficients range from -1 to +1. Spearman's correlation coefficient (r_s) can be read as follows:

6. $r_s = 0$ – no association

7. $r_s = +1/-1$ - perfect monotonic relationship (Schober, 2018).

Therefore, the further away from 0 the coefficient is, the stronger the relationship, whilst +/- indicate a positive or a negative correlation. Overall, Spearman's test provides two figures: r_s – the correlation coefficient and P- the significance value. As with other statistical tests, the P value must be lower than 0.05 in order to be statistically significant. The results of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient tests can be observed in the first part of Chapter 6 alongside other descriptive data derived from the first stage of data collection.

5.6. Research methods: interviews

The next section of this chapter is dedicated to the second stage of data collection – the interviews – with particular attention being paid to the conduct of interviews during the pandemic through video-conferencing. Both the advantages and disadvantages of such method are discussed. Furthermore, aspects of thematic analysis (employed in this research) are discussed and illustrated in Figure 5.4.

5.6.1. Interview purpose

The second stage of data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. These sought to uncover what it means for an individual to have or not to have a bucket list, alongside motivations for either choice. As Cassell and Symon (2004, p. 11) outline, the goal of any interview is to ‘see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand how and why they have come to have this particular perspective.’ Importantly, whilst the structure of the interviews was quite relaxed and free flowing, the clear interview guide was still followed as closely as possible. The interview guide can be seen in Appendix B. The interviews were generally informed by the data produced in the first stage of the empirical research although it is important to note that the scope of the interviews widened in comparison to that of the surveys owing to the emerging coronavirus crisis. That is, it was important to recognise the effects of COVID-19 on bucket lists and, therefore, an additional question was added to the interview that was unplanned during the first stage of data analysis.

The interviews took place between October 2020 and March 2021, during the second and deadlier peak of coronavirus. The challenges of undertaking research during a period of national restrictions are considered in detail later but, suffice to say at this stage, that every single interviewee raised the topic of COVID-19 without any prompts. This was particularly interesting and unique in terms of original contribution to knowledge; not only, as previously noted, was the

literature on bucket lists in general extremely limited, but research into bucket lists during a pandemic and its effect on them in particular was non-existent.

The overarching goal of conducting the interviews was to examine why people have bucket lists. However, whether or not the interviewees had a bucket list was not critically important. In general, there was a good split between the two categories of non/bucket list holders and it was believed that those who did not have a bucket list could describe how they perceived the purpose of bucket lists as effectively as those who did. Two sets of interview questions were designed for the two groups but although the questions varied in the manner that they were addressed, the nature of the questions remained the same. Without exception, each interviewee was aware of the term 'bucket list'. Nevertheless, what is most interesting is that a significant number of participants could not decide whether they had or did not have a bucket list. On one occasion, the participant decided to switch from non-bucket list holder's questions to those set for those who have a bucket list. Indeed, this shift in the participant's position contributed to the discussion on what a bucket list is/is not detailed later in Chapter 6 (part 2). This fluidity in understanding of the possession of bucket lists was the exact reason why it was not critical to distinguish between interviewees who had or did not have a bucket list. Appendix B presents the two interview guides. In addition, a sample transcript of an interview is provided in Appendix E. To create a better understanding of the sample involved in the interviews, Appendix F outlines sample characteristics.

Overall, the interview process, in Kvale's (2009, p. 112) terms, allows the researcher to become 'wiser'; the researcher 'may learn throughout an investigation. The conversations with the subjects can extend and alter his or her understanding of the phenomena investigated' (Kvale, 2009, p. 112). Certainly, in retrospect, the interviews contributed greatly to the extension of knowledge surrounding bucket lists, not only by elaborating on the questions posed at the first stage of data collection, but also by introducing new elements of knowledge and contributing to understanding the bucket list experience, discussed at length in Chapter 6 (part 2).

Important to note here is the mode of interviewing. Owing to the ongoing pandemic and subsequent restrictions on social contact, it was necessary to conduct the interviews via video-conferencing. For this, the Microsoft Teams platform was selected. Little research has been published on online interviewing, although convincing conclusions can be drawn from studies on video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Skype. Table 5.8 below synthesises the issues surrounding data collection via teleconferencing platforms. As can be seen, data collection through video-conferencing offers both advantages and disadvantages although within the context of this research (taking place during the COVID-19 outbreak), a fundamental benefit of the opportunity to conduct interviews on Teams was that the research could actually be progressed.

Table 5.8. Advantages and disadvantages of videoconferencing data collection.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapport <p>Compared to other modes of interviewing, for example via the telephone, interviews via the teleconferencing platform facilitate and maintain rapport between the researcher and the interviewee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty connecting <p>Interviewees may experience some degree of difficulty in joining the meeting. In particular, this can be linked to bad Internet connection, outdated hardware, or limited webcam and microphone functionality.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience <p>Teleconferencing platforms provide greater access, time effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call quality and reliability issues <p>Issues relating to video and audio quality may arise due to poor Internet connection or outdated devices. This can result in dropped calls, lost call connection and lag.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers of geography <p>Videoconferencing (unlike face-to-face interviewing) allows instant access to the interviewees who live abroad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to Internet or technology. <p>Videoconferencing interviewing necessitates the interviewee to have access to Internet and technology. Such access may not always be available to the potential interviewee.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort of location <p>Both parties (interviewee and researcher) may feel more at ease due to being in their comfortable surroundings (home or office).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impossibility of observation <p>This point is particularly important for ethnographic studies, where the researcher should be enmeshed with the subjects and the environment.</p>
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Source: Adapted from Archibald *et al.* (2019) and Nehls *et al.* (2015).

The next section of the chapter now briefly discusses the interview collection stage, followed by a detailed outline of interview analysis.

5.6.2 Interview collection

Similar to the survey, the interviews employed purposive, non-probability sampling. Again, it is important to mention that this research does not aim to make any generalisations; rather, it attempts to find the answers to the questions established in relation to the bucket list phenomenon. Nevertheless, as Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005b) suggest, a discussion on sampling should not be omitted, for that might encourage the novice researcher to believe that sampling is not relevant to qualitative research but only to the quantitative domain. Therefore, despite the sampling strategy being purposeful, it remains necessary to discuss the processes behind it in the context of this chapter. As Polkinghorne (2005, p. 140) summarises with regards to purposeful sampling:

Such selections are purposeful and sought out; the selection should not be random or left to chance. The concern is not how much data were gathered or from how many sources but whether the data that were collected are sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understanding an experience.

To a great extent, the choice of interviewees was influenced by the survey as some participants had provided unprompted positive feedback on the survey or had expressed an interest in the research area. They were consequently informed

about the second stage of data collection and invited to participate in the interviews. Moreover, during the interviewee selection, some survey participants were asked if they wished to participate in the interviewees. Overall, most of the interviewees were individuals who had, prior to the interview, taken part in the survey.

During the interviewee selection process and confirmation of participation, the pandemic and its consequential lockdowns was not yet in sight. However, as interview time approached, it was necessary to reconfirm potential interviewees' participation in the light of the unfolding pandemic and the new emerging format of interviewing. Unfortunately, some earlier confirmed participants dropped out at this stage for personal reasons, perhaps linked to the pandemic. Nevertheless, 20 interviews were ultimately arranged. The interviews lasted from around 30 minutes to up to 2 hours. Each interview was recorded and transcribed (verbatim) using NVivo transcription services. Finally, as part of this research focuses on the impact of age on bucket lists, it was necessary to include participants of various ages. This was one of the most important criteria during the interviewee selection process. A relatively even distribution of age was achieved (not completely even due to the Covid-19 declines in interview accepts, due to personal circumstances/inability to perform an interview online) , yielding some important insights into the relationship between age and bucket lists, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Having discussed and justified the method of sampling, it is important to reflect briefly on the impact of COVID-19 on interviewee recruitment. Inevitably, perhaps, not only the unwelcome shift to online interviewing but also the personal impact of the pandemic on potential participants limited their ability or enthusiasm to participate. Consequently, recruiting participants, though not impossible, became rather challenging. Nevertheless, the desired number of interviews was achieved by maintaining contact with people who had previously expressed an interest in participating in Stage 2 of the research. Furthermore, a proactive search amongst my personal and professional contacts took place in anticipation of potentially cancelled interviews. The next section discusses the analysis of interviews.

5.6.3 Interview analysis

All interviews were recorded using an Olympus DM-770 recorder. The interviews were then uploaded onto a university password protected PC and transcribed (verbatim) using the NVivo transcription service – the recording is uploaded and then transcribed by the software. The accuracy of transcription varies, with words such as ‘travel’ being mistaken for ‘trouble’, for example. Nevertheless, the NVivo software reduced the general 8 hours of transcription per 1 hour recording to around 6 hours. After transcription was complete, it was uploaded to NVivo for analysis.

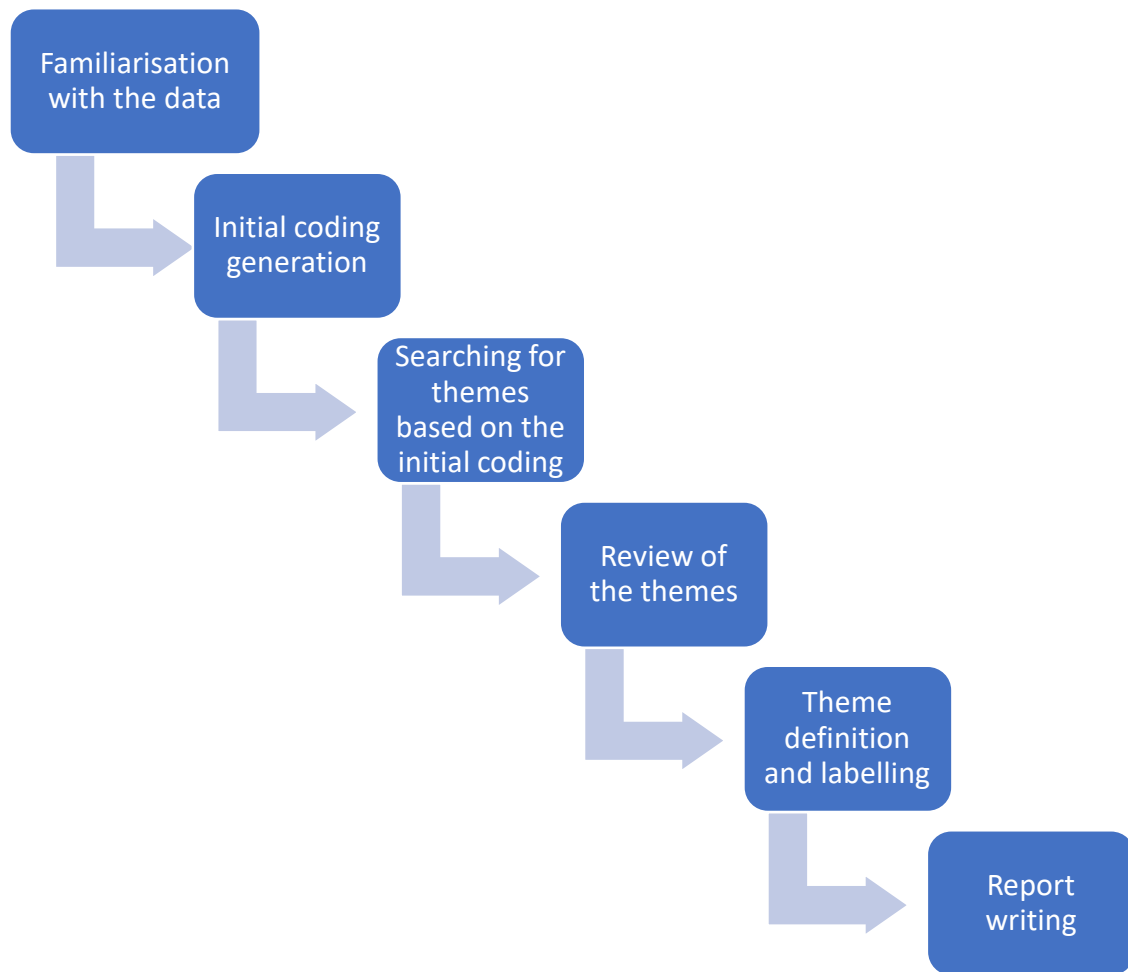
Whilst working with the qualitative data, this research adopted a thematic analysis approach. First proposed in 1943, thematic analysis is closely associated with qualitative methods (Howitt and Cramer, 2014). It is not particularly associated with any theoretical underpinnings (Howitt and Cramer, 2014), though this is not to suggest that there is no structure to this type of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Howitt and Cramer (2014) suggest that researchers who adopt a thematic analysis approach familiarise themselves with the data throughout the data collection and transcription processes.

There are several advantages to applying thematic analysis to data. First, it is a flexible, relatively easy method to learn that is accessible to novice researchers with little experience of working with qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Second, the results of data analysis are generally accessible and illustrative, as data are represented with ‘thick description’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 97). And finally, the application of thematic analysis facilitates generation of unanticipated results as well as socio-psychological interpretations of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Overall, thematic analysis is concerned with ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. For some time, and, despite its popularity, no clear guidance on how to conduct thematic analysis existed until Braun and Clarke (2006) explained the six steps it involves. These steps are outlined and explained in Table 5.9, whilst Figure 5.4. below provides a simplified view of them.

What is particularly noteworthy is the definition and language surrounding 'themes'. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82), a theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set'. However, it is not calculated by quantifiable means or proportions; rather, a theme is assigned when it encapsulates information that is relevant to the research question. Of particular importance is the language that is assigned to the themes. For example, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the use of such terms as the theme 'emerged' or 'discovered' is not appropriate in the context of thematic analysis, for it is the researcher who identifies the themes. In other words, the themes are not hidden in text for the researcher to uncover but exist only in the researcher's individual interpretation and are subject to being purposefully constructed. Hence, it is inaccurate to claim that the research gives voice to the participants. Rather, these voices are carved out to examine a specific narrative. Thus, the language used around themes is carefully considered within the second part of Chapter 6. The next section considers the ethical considerations around data collection.

Figure 5.4. Illustration of the six steps of thematic analysis.



Source: Adapted from Howitt and Cramer (2014, p. 380).

5.7. Ethical considerations

Research undertaken for this thesis did not involve any elements that would contradict ethical norms established by the University of Central Lancashire. Both stages of data collection – the survey and the interviews – included a question confirming participants’ consent. For example, the survey could only be completed once participants had read and agreed to take part in the research. Likewise, during the interviews, the consent form was read out to the interviewee and only once the interviewee had agreed to all the points outlined in the consent

form could the interview proceed. Each verbal consent record was stored alongside the interview record.

Table 5.9. Six phases of thematic analysis.

Six phases of thematic analysis	
1. Familiarisation with data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generation of initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Search for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Review of themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Definition of themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Production of report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87).

No information was stored in a paper format, rather it was stored on a password protected University systems laptop, to which nobody else, other than the researcher, had access. In addition, each participant received a Participant Information Sheet which they were encouraged to read before agreeing to the interview. The Participant Information Sheet can be seen in Appendix C, and the verbal consent form in Appendix D. Confidentiality was particularly important

and, for that reason, each participant's name was changed to 'Participant [number]'. All information generated at both stages of data collection was stored on a university PC and protected by password. Throughout the research, only the researcher had access to transcripts and audio recordings as well as other data-related documentation. The only change that took place following ethical approval for the research to proceed concerned the format of the interviews. As previously discussed, it was initially planned that the interviews would be conducted face-to-face but, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, online interviewing was adopted. Following consultation with the supervisory team, further ethical approval was deemed unnecessary as the university guidelines on research in lockdown were closely followed. The next section of this chapter extends the discussion on the effects of COVID-19 on the research processes and direction.

5.8. Overview of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on this research.

As mentioned earlier, the decision to include this section was made by the researcher and the supervisory team in order to maintain transparency and to evaluate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the direction and progress of this research. Importantly, the intention here is not to justify any flaws within this research; rather, it is to give voice to the research taking place in unprecedented circumstances. Also, it should be noted that an attempt has been made to remain objective throughout the thesis; however, this section indulges in a degree of subjectivity, for the experience of undertaking research during the pandemic most likely varies from one individual to another. Hence, the following is a personal perspective on how decisions were taken regarding the direction and progress of research. To avoid unnecessary detail, three key periods before and during the pandemic are elaborated on: the start of the research, the critical point of the first wave of the pandemic, and the current state.

- **January 2019: 'The start'**

When this research commenced, in January 2019, there was no indication that a worldwide pandemic would strike. The words such as 'lockdown', 'self-isolation' or 'reproduction number' were not in the daily public lexicon. In other words, there were no obvious obstacles to this study that could be identified at that time. Hence, my research was going to take a traditional journey, involving the excitement of travel between interviewees, the joys of long, private discussions over a cup of tea, deep conversations with fellow researchers in the postgraduate research office and, of course, the ever-welcomed meetings with the supervisory team. Much to my delight, for just over a year, this PhD journey was, indeed, filled with in-class training sessions, face-to-face meetings, conversations in corridors and all the other little moments so dearly missed at the present time of writing. So far, the research progress was on track, but then came the pandemic.

- **April 2020: 'The first wave'**

The peak of the first wave of the pandemic occurred in April 2020. Nothing prepared academia for the changes that it was asked to implement. All teaching that was underway at the time was moved online as were, more specifically, postgraduate research student supervision and training sessions. Academic colleagues adapted their delivery methods to educate students in the safest and most effective manner but, for novice researchers, the pandemic had a tremendous effect on their research quality, mental health and wellbeing (Byrom, 2020). And, to a greater or lesser extent, I found myself similarly affected, specifically in terms of progress and direction. To put it into perspective, at the time, the equivalent number of deaths from four Boeing 737-800 crashes were occurring daily; and at that time, the chapter that I was researching and writing was based on TMT, itself a rather macabre concept. The build-up of stress was overtaking my best intentions and, for some time, my writing process was put on hold. Nevertheless, during this difficult period, my transfer from MPhil to PhD was successfully achieved and new directions in the research were emerging. In other words, it was impossible to think of bucket lists independently from the

context of the pandemic. Therefore, for the second stage of research, I included questions assessing the effect that Covid-19 was having on bucket lists in the interviews. This proved to be important, not only because interesting themes were uncovered but also because every single interviewee, without exception, spontaneously introduced the subject of Covid-19. And looking back, my belief in my abilities as a researcher was finally restored after I won the university's 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. Despite my restored motivation, however, a new challenge was emerging: the completion of interviews. After a discussion with my supervisory team, it was decided that the interviews would take place online via Teams. However, at that time, it was unclear what benefits and challenges that mode of data collection would pose.

- **February 2021**

This final section illustrates my progress and reflections as the time at which this paragraph is being written. At this stage, almost all interviews have been completed so it is appropriate to reflect on the effects that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the final stage of my data collection. To begin with the advantages, using Teams as a platform has been to some extent very convenient. As the main platform for the provision of online education at the University of Central Lancashire during the pandemic, it has been fairly easy use in both setting up meetings and recording interviews. Another key benefit of using Teams is, without a doubt, accessibility. First, much time was saved by not having to travel for interviews and, consequently, multiple interviews could be conducted just in one day. Second, using Teams allowed me to interview participants from abroad. However, the pandemic also took its toll on the research process. First, one of the main challenges was selecting appropriate participants. Unfortunately, the initial, 'confirmed' list of participants was disrupted as many could not take part in the interview owing to personal issues, the cause of which, in general, was Covid-19. Second, technological issues impinged on some of the interviews, specifically when the Wi-Fi connection proved to be too slow. And finally, of course, the rapport between myself as interviewer and my participants was more limited via Teams than it would have been had the interviews been conducted face-to-face.

Nevertheless, the final stage of data collection has almost been completed and my fascination in subject of bucket lists remains as strong as ever. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has taken its toll on the progress and direction of the research, but encouragement from my supervisory team kept it on track. However, the challenge of researching in the pandemic is not yet over and it is, in all likelihood, too early to assess the impact of the tragedy that has affected so many. However, as the current 'second wave' of the pandemic in the UK is receding, a sense of hope is beginning to emerge. It is hard to decide what lessons can be learned from this journey, but it is likely that in the not-too-distant future, the books on academic resilience will employ the current pandemic as an example. After all, it was my ability to stay focused, instead of letting despondency take over, that allowed this research to continue. Perhaps, many will call that resilience. Personally, this has so far been more than a PhD journey; it has been a big lesson in life that cannot be explained in words other than those by Frankl (1946, p. 86) (who is referred to on numerous occasions in this thesis): 'Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way'.

5.9. Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the philosophical underpinnings of the research and explained and justified the methods employed during the two stages of data collection. As discussed, the pragmatic stance on research underpinned the most appropriate selection of methods to answer the clearly under-researched question of why people have bucket lists. Thus, the first stage of data – the survey – sought to establish the key concepts and areas of inquiry within the context of bucket lists, whilst the second stage of research – the interviews – built on the data generated by the survey and elaborated on particular findings. The following chapter now considers critically the findings from the first stage of data collection (the survey). Subsequently, Chapter 7 then continues with the findings from the second stage (interviews).

Chapter 6

Research findings – Phase 1: Survey

6.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the outcomes of the first stage of the empirical research. As explained in the preceding methodology chapter, a mixed method approach is adopted, specifically a quantitative survey followed by qualitative, semi-structured in-depth interviews. The research findings are presented in this and the following chapter in that order; in this way, it is possible to track the development of concepts, from emergent themes of the survey to their metamorphoses and development reflected in more complex interview data. This, however, does not undermine the significance of the survey data. On the contrary, the survey data not only establish key themes around the subject of bucket lists, but also confirm some of the early assumptions proposed in the literature review. Importantly, the survey introduces the conceptual underpinnings for the emerging themes which are, generally, influenced by the literature review. Essentially, then, the quantitative and qualitative data complement each other, enhancing the overall rigour of the research. This chapter, therefore, presents and discusses the outcomes of the survey before the following chapter goes on to consider the outcomes of the interviews. Together, the results considered in these two chapters contribute to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of the bucket list.

6.1. The survey outcomes

It is first important to emphasise that, as discussed in Chapter 5, the survey employed non-probability sampling and, therefore, that the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. Nevertheless, the data from the survey are

valuable inasmuch as they establish some initial trends and themes around the subject of bucket lists.

Some of the characteristics of the sample are worth discussing at this point. The largest age group (36.50% of respondents) comprised those aged between 18 and 30; perhaps remarkably, 45% of respondents claimed to travel 2 to 3 times a year, 41% described themselves as religious with the majority of these (68.29%) identifying as Christian. Surprisingly, however, no statistically significant findings were derived from correlations with the religion variable and, therefore, this variable is omitted from the wider discussion below. Indeed, only the relevant and statistically significant data are presented and discussed in the following sections. Descriptive data are presented visually as word clouds, as well as semantically interpreted in tables with examples of participants' responses.

As discussed earlier, the literature review significantly informed the construction of the survey questionnaire and, hence, many questions echo the propositions emerging from the literature review. Hence, several themes in the discussion below reflect these, as follows:

- 1) Age
- 2) Identity
- 3) Consumption
- 4) Death

Each of the highlighted themes reveals an intricate relationship with bucket lists. Furthermore, each of the themes is correlated against others in order to determine the relationship between them within the context of bucket lists. Relevant tables associated with each theme are provided throughout this chapter. Importantly, attention is also drawn to the characteristics of the bucket list and the role of travel, and the presentation of attitudinal data (Likert scales) paints a clear picture with regards to some assumptions raised within the literature review. Based on the data from the survey, the question of whether bucket lists are about the fear of death or the lust for life is addressed. Moreover, the popularity and future of the bucket list phenomenon is assessed alongside

questions such as whether bucket lists have an end or whether bucket list adventures are performed solo. As mentioned earlier, the findings from the survey inform the content and focus of the subsequent interviews, the outcomes of which are considered later in this chapter.

6.1.1. Presentation of data

The first stage of primary research is, with the exception of descriptive data, presented in tables. Overall, there are three types of tables presented. The first demonstrates attitudinal data from the Likert scale variables, providing an insight into respondents dis/agreement with a range of statements. A five-point Likert scale, from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' as the anchor points, was employed. The second type of table demonstrates the results of statistical tests. Specifically, non-parametric tests were implemented, where each set of ordinal data was cross tested against another set of ordinal or demographic data in order to establish a meaningful correlation. As the majority of data consisted of ordinal data, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient or Spearman's rho was applied. Essentially, Spearman's rho is the equivalent of Pearson's r ; however, Spearman's rho is mostly used when working with a pair of ordinal data or ordinal and interval/ratio data (Bryman, 2008b) and it produces slightly different results to those of Pearson's r (Finn, Elliott-White and Walton, 2000). Within survey data analysis, Spearman's rho is used when correlating two sets of data, producing two values. First, Spearman's rho can be 'either positive or negative' and will be within the range of -1 and +1 (Bryman, 2008b, p. 329). This value is called the correlation coefficient and is represented as r_s . The second value refers to the significance level of the correlation and is represented as P . For the correlation to be statistically significant, the P value must be lower than 0.05; the closer the P value is to zero, the more significant the correlation is. When the correlation is positive, the value of one variable increases alongside the increase in the other variable. Therefore, a negative correlation occurs when one value increases whilst the other value decreases (Veal, 2018). Importantly, correlation must not be confused

with causation, since the assumption of causation ‘requires evidence and analytical judgement beyond what the coefficients can provide’ (Finn et al., 2000, p. 200). Finally, the third type of tables follows at the end of the research findings, where the bucket list experience is discussed. Essentially, two tables represent the bucket list goal and goal orientations in order of their popularity, as indicated by the respondents.

6.2. Kicking the bucket list or living life to the full?

‘A list of items to do that, when completed, will make death easier to accept’ (a survey respondent’s definition of the bucket list).

A first key aim of the questionnaire was to identify and explore respondents’ attitudes towards the meaning and significance of the bucket list. Putting it another way, it is notable that consensus does not exist with regards to a definition of the bucket list. For example, Lexico (2020) defines it as ‘a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime’; alternatively, CambridgeDictionary (2020) defines it as a ‘a list of the things that a person would like to do or achieve before they die’. Although the two definitions appear similar, a distinction is nevertheless in evidence between an emphasis on living or ‘before I die’. It is for this reason that this section attempts to establish from the survey results whether bucket lists are associated with life or death. Importantly, the findings from the questionnaire should be regarded rather definitive, and provide the grounds for further investigation into the significance of bucket lists. Table 6.1 below compares the attitudinal scales of the two definitions for bucket lists (i.e.: life and death). As can be seen from the table, differences in participants’ agreement on the two definitions is minimal, although the definition ‘A bucket list is a list of things that I want to do in my lifetime’ received a slightly higher percentage of agreement across participants.

However, the association between bucket lists and phrases ‘YOLO’ (‘You Only Live Once’) and ‘Memento Mori’ (‘Remember that you must die’), as indicated Table 6.1, suggests that respondents were far more likely to associate bucket lists with

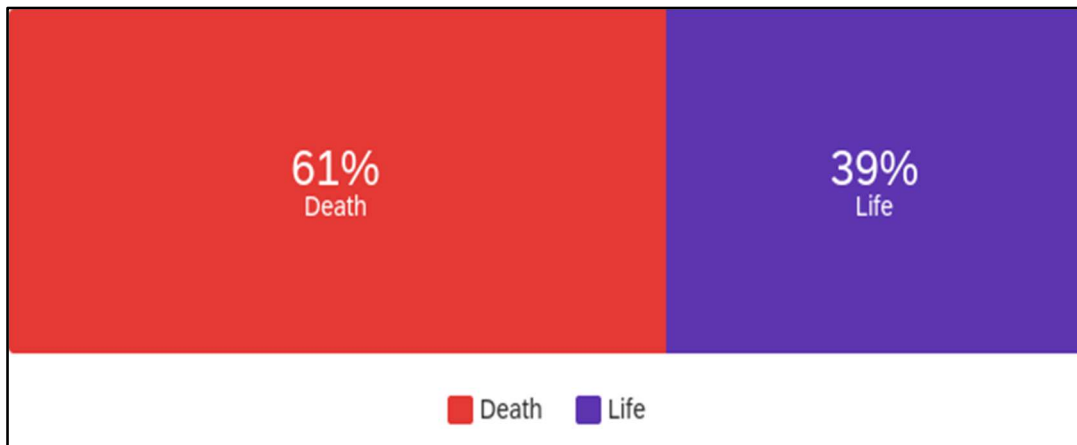
a rather lively ‘YOLO’ than its macabre counterpart ‘Memento Mori’. Although this finding is not critical in shifting the meaning of the bucket list towards death or life distinctions, it does provide some indication that bucket lists are more about ‘seizing the day’ rather than dwelling on the imminence of death.

Table 6.1: Measurement of agreement with bucket list definitions and associations

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
A bucket list is a list of things that I want to do in my lifetime	0.50%	1.00%	2.50%	15.00%	81.00%
A bucket list involves things that I would like to do before I die	1.00%	0.50%	4.50%	14.50%	79.50%
My bucket list can be associated with the phrase ‘you only live once’	7.00%	10.50%	19.00%	42.00%	21.50%
My bucket list can be associated with the phrase ‘Memento Mori’, which translates to ‘Remember that you must die’	15.50%	20.50%	36.00%	17.00%	11.00%

There is another perspective on this issue. Specifically, participants were asked to explain the term ‘bucket list’ in their own words, and their responses were semantically interpreted into the categories of ‘Death’ and ‘Life’. The category ‘Death’ comprised all definitions that included words such as ‘death’, ‘demise’ or ‘kicking the bucket’, whereas ‘Life’ category included all other responses, typically: ‘A guideline for adventures and goals you’d like to achieve in the long-term’. Thus, as demonstrated Figure 6.1, 61% of participants’ responses included a variation or synonym of ‘death or dying’, perhaps confirming Chu et al. (2018) proposition that that bucket lists may arouse a sense of mortality salience since they provoke the thought of individuals’ fact of death (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Figure 6.1: Respondents' definitions of the term 'bucket list'



Nevertheless, owing to the differences in the abovementioned findings, it is not possible to draw a conclusion with regards to the dichotomic relationship between bucket lists and the concepts of death and life. That said, the survey participants' own definitions point to the emergence of the notion of death underpinning the significance of bucket lists. Moreover, illustrating some of the themes across participants' definitions of bucket lists, Figure 6.2. provides the 10 most common words used in defining the term. Interestingly, the top three words defining bucket lists were: 'things', 'list', and 'experience'.

Figure 6.2: Top 10 words defining the bucket list.



Overall, then, it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding the significance of the bucket list from the survey, for two reasons. First, the results are mixed regarding the significance of the bucket list. Whilst the attitudinal scales suggest they are about living life to the full, respondents' textual inputs point to the opposite – that bucket lists are, indeed, about death.

Second, the meaning and nature of the bucket list is, most likely, unique and deeply personal to each individual, their age and life experiences. Therefore, it is only possible to establish confidently the nature of the term through deep dialogue. Nevertheless, from the survey findings, some characteristics of bucket lists were more substantial and address some of the critically important questions identified in earlier chapters. The next section considers some of these key questions.

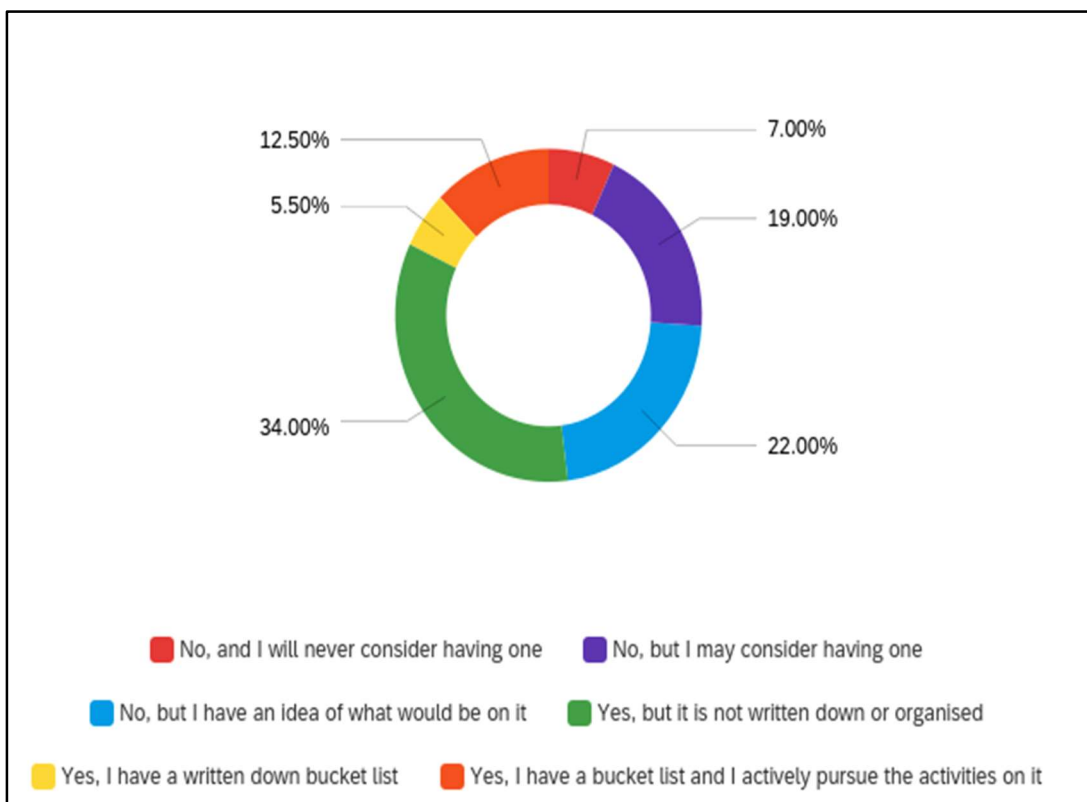
6.3. Bucket list characteristics: Jumping on the bandwagon or 'kicking the bucket'.

The maturity of the term 'bucket list' is impressive; in the 13 years since the premier of the movie of the same name, it has been successfully popularised in books, travel guides, films, media and advertising. From celebrities and to ordinary people, from young to old – many have succumbed to the attraction of the bucket list. Nevertheless, it is not known exactly how many people actually have a list. Moreover, the question arises whether the bucket list is merely a contemporary bandwagon destined to eventually disappear or, indeed, a meaningful concept that guides and brings order to people's aspirations throughout their lifetime. It is also important to ask the question whether bucket lists even have an end for, as proposed in Chapter 3, people may maintain one as long as life goes on. Moreover, it is critical to ask whether the bucket list journey really is a lone journey, as proposed by Cochrane (2012). And finally, are bucket lists prescriptive and repetitive in their nature, or do they provide the freedom to choose meaningful activities for each individual? These questions were central to establishing some of the characteristics of the bucket list.

6.3.1. Popularity of the bucket list

ProvisionLiving (2019) reported that 95% of Americans have a bucket list. In comparison, recent data suggests that only 57% of Britons compiled a bucket list during a national lockdown (EHotelier, 2020). Whilst the findings of the survey in this research do not relate solely to the British public, they nevertheless provide some unique insights into the popularity of the term. As can be seen in Figure 6.3, 52% of respondents claimed to have a bucket list in one form or another. Importantly, a substantial proportion (34%) indicated that they had a bucket list, although it was not written down or organised, a finding that is critical to understanding the format of the bucket list. Specifically, it suggests that bucket list may more likely be an abstract concept that individuals keep in mind rather than on paper. Interestingly, even some of those who suggested that they did not have a bucket list indicated that they had an idea of what would be on it (22.00%).

Figure 6.3: Popularity of the bucket list



This finding is particularly notable, for it raises the question of what distinguishes ‘bucket listers’ from ‘non-bucket listers’. It may be that all individuals have long-term dreams and aspirations, but those who are determined to actively pursue them may count themselves as having a bucket list. Hence, the data in Figure 6.3 provide valuable insights into the popularity of bucket lists but, nevertheless, point to questions regarding the format of the bucket list and the characteristics of the ‘bucket lister’.

6.3.2. Bucket list trends

The concept of the bucket list has existed since 2007. Although it is evident that it remains a popular contemporary phenomenon, its future is unclear. Specifically, it is not known whether the bucket list will remain in frequent use or, perhaps, outlive its usefulness as do other popular contemporary trends. To examine this question, respondents were asked to express their attitude as to whether they thought that the bucket list is a trend that will pass. As indicated in the Table 6.2, the majority (62.50%) of respondents strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement ‘I think that the bucket list is a trend that will pass’. In other words, the majority believed that the bucket list is not merely a contemporary trend that will disappear. Rather, it will become established in people’s vocabularies and encourage more owners of goal-filled lists.

It is not, of course, possible to predict from these data exactly how long the term will sustain its popularity. Nonetheless, not only has the concept, as noted above, become increasingly popular over the last 13 years but also, as indicated in Figure 6.3, a majority of participants admitted to having a bucket list. Hence, although only time will reveal the longevity of the bucket list phenomenon, the survey results suggest its popularity will not decline in the foreseeable future. However, it can then be asked: why has the phenomenon survived for so long? If, indeed, the bucket list is bereft of a deeper meaning or of existential dilemmas, as (Thurnell-Read, 2017) suggests, or simply offers repetitive proclamations of what should be desired, would it have remained as popular for such a substantial period

of time? Hence, the next section examines the notion of freedom of choice and meaning within the bucket list.

6.3.3. Freedom and meaning

Not everyone appraises bucket lists for their meaning and the freedom to acquire it. To Martin (2019), bucket lists are ‘a mind dump of pretty places you saw on Instagram’. Similarly, Goldstein (2019) laments the obligatory nature of bucket lists whilst equally, Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 62) argues that bucket lists are merely ‘declarations of what should be desired’. However, are bucket lists indeed bereft of meaningful experiences and the freedom to choose them? One of the survey questions addressed this characteristic of bucket lists.

Table 6.2: Characteristics of the bucket list

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I think that the bucket list is a trend that will pass	27.50%	35.00%	23.00%	9.00%	5.50%
A bucket list gives me freedom to choose meaningful experiences for myself.	2.00%	5.50%	19.00%	33.00%	40.50%
The majority of my bucket list activities involve doing things on my own	12.00%	19.00%	31.00%	23.00%	15.00%
My bucket list has an end	25.00%	29.00%	32.50%	7.00%	6.50%

As is evident in the Table 6.2, the overwhelming majority (73.50%) of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement ‘A bucket list gives me freedom to choose meaningful experiences for myself’, whilst just 7.5% strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with this statement. It is important to draw attention to the two aspects of ‘freedom’ and ‘meaning’ in this statement. First, the notion of freedom refers to the ability of the ‘bucket lister’ to choose experiences individually without being influenced by external pressures, such as social media, advertising or peer pressure. Second, meaning refers to the nature

of those experiences. Specifically, these activities can, in fact, be adventurous, relaxing or self-actualising but, most importantly, they are associated with a unique meaning that the individual assigns to them. Thus, this statement is critical in establishing the interrelationship between bucket lists and meaning; however, it has further implications for statements concerned with the theme of consumption: 'I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me', and with the theme of death: 'If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me' (here, the word 'experiences' is substituted by 'activities'). These are discussed later (see Section 6.6).

6.3.4. Lonely bucket lists

As mentioned earlier, bucket lists are, according to the survey respondents, lists of freely chosen meaningful experiences. However, it is not known whether these experiences are strongly individualised or undertaken within a circle of family and friends. To Cochrane (2012):

It can be useful to have defined goals, of course, but the lists seem to encourage a strange blend of highly individualised behaviour and conformity, a situation in which everyone is hurtling, alone, towards similar goals.

Moreover, Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 64) lamented that: 'There is rarely any mention of which other individuals (friends, family or intimate partners) might experience a particular activity alongside you and, further, the majority of items listed are directed at specific activities which bring benefits to the individual only'.

To explore this issue, respondents were asked to express their attitude toward the statement: 'The majority of my bucket list activities involves doing things on my own'. The findings were not conclusive. Specifically, 38% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement; at the same time, 31% of respondents strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement (Table

6.2). Although there is a slight indication that more bucket list activities are undertaken alone, no conclusions can be drawn from these data alone. Most likely, then, bucket lists include a combination of experiences which are performed alone/with family and friends depending on the individual's age, marital and family status. In fact, drawing from discussions in Chapter 2 regarding age and bucket list goal orientations, it is more likely that younger age groups will implement their bucket list activities on their own, whilst older individuals will prefer a familiar company on the journey of ticking off their goals. This assumption is considered within 'The Age and Bucket List' section of this chapter (section 6.4 below).

6.3.5. The end of the bucket list

An important question regarding bucket list characteristics refers to the completion of the bucket list; are bucket lists ever completed or do they continue to be updated or added to and in the process of completion for as long as an individual breathes? The typically human desire for new goals and aspirations is mentioned briefly in Chapter 3 (Maslow, 1970) and it is proposed that bucket lists, as a reflection of contemporary society, reflect the continuing desire or need for new experiences in line with the new death ethos. As Maslow (2011, p. 31) suggested, 'The more one gets, the more one wants, so that this kind of wanting is endless and can never be attained or satisfied'. Contentment, then, may become a threat as an existential void, with nothing left to strive for (Hefferon, 2011). To Wong (2011), contentment spells death.

To examine this dilemma, participants were asked to express their attitude towards the statement 'My bucket list has an end'. The majority of respondents (54%) strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement, whilst only 13.5% strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. This supports the earlier supposition regarding the completion of bucket lists – that is, bucket lists do not have an end. Rather, the accumulation of desired activities and goals continues throughout people's lifetime, with the majority of bucket lists,

arguably, destined to never be finished. It is not precisely clear from these findings why respondents' bucket lists lack a definitive end. What is likely, however, is that bucket lists could accompany their owners throughout their lifespan, reflecting the vital changes in their autobiography.

6.3.6. Summary

This section has examined some of the early questions regarding the nature of bucket lists. First, the popularity and, to some extent, the format of the bucket list was addressed. Second, it was important to question whether bucket lists are merely a temporary trend destined to fade into insignificance, as have many trends before. In addition, the freedom of choosing bucket list experiences and their meaningfulness were questioned. The implementation of the bucket list was also examined within the context of lone goal completion. Finally, the question of whether bucket lists have an end was addressed. It is important to note that although the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population owing to the non-probability sample, they nevertheless provide some interesting insights into the bucket list phenomenon.

Specifically, the survey revealed that most of participants (52%) had a bucket list but, of these, surprisingly, a substantial proportion (34%) did not organise it or write it down. This finding is significant in proposing that, in many instances, bucket lists are an abstract concept rather than an organised list. This contrasts with the finding that the second most popular word in participants' definitions of the bucket list was 'list'. Thus, although listing desired experiences is at the heart of bucket list compilation, it may take a form of a thought, idea or memory, rather than a written list.

Another significant finding was that participants agreed that the bucket list is not a trend that will pass. Considering that the term has been successfully utilised for over a decade, this finding is certainly a positive indication of the bucket list's future. Moreover, it was necessary to challenge the prescriptive nature of the bucket list and the meaningfulness attached to the bucket list experiences. A

significant majority of participants agreed that bucket lists gave them the freedom to choose meaningful experiences for themselves. However, little certainty accompanied the next characteristic of bucket lists. Specifically, the respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the statement 'The majority of my bucket list activities involves doing things on my own'. Whilst 38% of respondents cumulatively agreed with the statement, 31% strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with it. Hence, no definite conclusion can be derived from this finding. However, in line with the discussions in Chapter 2, a proposition was made suggesting that as people age, they are more likely to choose the familiar circle to accompany them on their bucket list journey. This theme is revisited in the next section.

Finally, in Chapter 3, it was proposed that it was likely that bucket lists do not have an end. This unique characteristic of the bucket list was further tested. That is, the participants were asked to express their attitude towards whether their bucket list had an end. Surprisingly, the majority indicated that their bucket list did not (54%). It is not yet known why bucket lists are endless, or whether individuals strive toward completing them. Overall, however, these findings offer many issues to be explored in greater detail in the next (interviews) stage of research. The next section discusses the relationship between bucket lists and age.

6.4. Age and bucket list

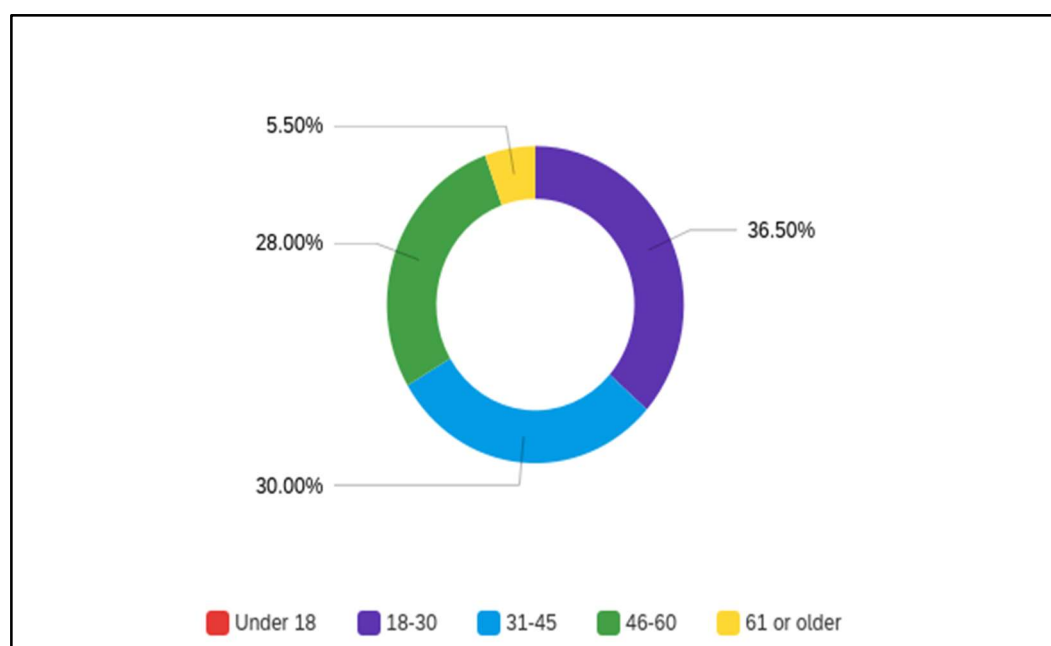
The relationship between bucket lists and age is undeniably significant to the study of bucket lists. As discussed in Chapter 2, age can be a predictor of the likelihood of having a bucket list (Periyakoil, 2018), as well as a predictor of bucket list goal orientations (Chu et al., 2018). To recap, studies of goals and age reveal that older individuals' goals vary to those of younger individuals. Specifically, whilst younger individuals strive for more daring goals (Periyakoil, 2018) as well as goals associated with novelty, education, career and family (Nurmi, 1992), older individuals seek goals that are more meaningful, familiar and educative. The

notion of legacy, retirement and generativity are also central to the goals of older age group (Nurmi, 1992). Many of these assumptions are based on literature focused on the interrelation between goals and age. However, this section aims to observe some of the new and emerging trends in the relationship between bucket lists and age.

6.4.1. Age and bucket list characteristics

To establish the relationship between bucket lists and age, all survey respondents were asked to indicate their age group. As seen in the Figure 6.4, the majority of respondents were in the age group of 18 to 30 (36.5%), followed by the second largest age group of 31 to 45 years of age. Unfortunately, the age group of 61 and older represented only 5.5% of respondents. No respondents under the age of 18 were included in the study. Spearman’s correlation tests were run between age variable and bucket list characteristics (discussed above). Only two characteristics demonstrated a statistically significant correlation.

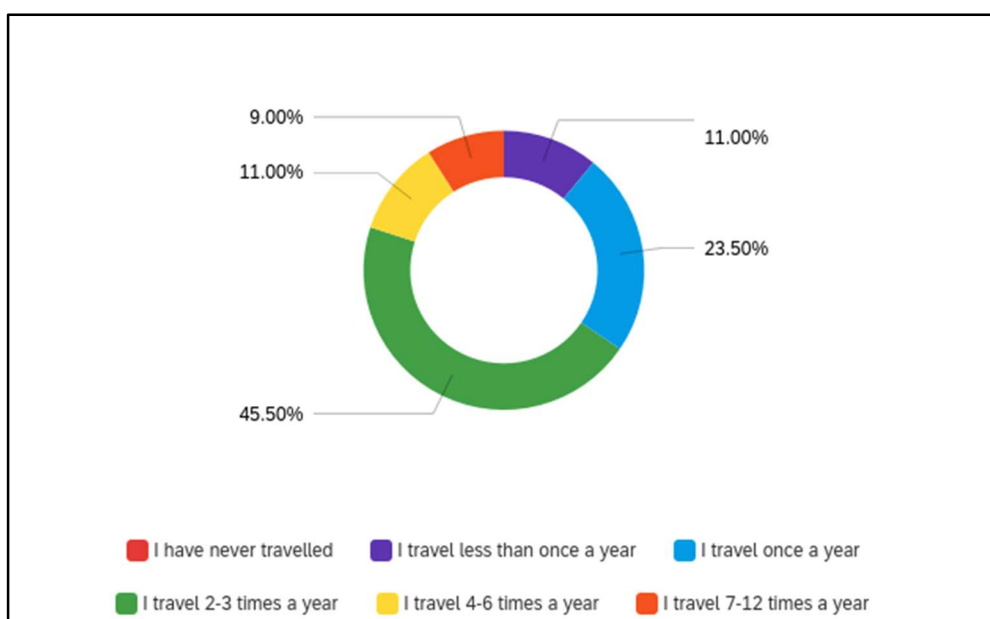
Figure 6.4: Respondent age groups



First, there was a subtle positive correlation between respondents' age and the statement 'I think that the bucket list is a trend that will pass', $r_s = .193$, $p = .006$. Specifically, then, as age increased, respondents were slightly more likely to agree that the bucket list is a trend that will pass. The reason for such a result is hitherto unknown. However, in line with earlier predictions, the statement 'The majority of my bucket list activities involve doing things on my own' was subtly negatively correlated with the respondents' age, $r_s = -.199$, $p = .004$. That is, as age increased, the respondents were slightly more likely to disagree with the statement. As discussed in Chapter 2, the younger individuals are more likely to embrace novel and even transitory experiences, whilst older individuals are more inclined to prioritise meaningful goals, including generativity goals, that may include more social contact (Chu et al., 2018). Surprisingly, no statistically significant relationship was established between age and other bucket list characteristics ('A bucket list gives me freedom to choose meaningful experiences for myself' and 'My bucket list has an end').

Another interesting correlation appeared between age and travel. Overall, to examine the participants' travel background, a question regarding the frequency of travel was addressed. As seen in the Figure 6.5, the largest number of participants travelled 2-3 time a year (45.5%), followed by a group who travelled once a year (23.5%). The correlations of travel background with age revealed an interesting result.

Figure 6.5: Respondents' travel background



Specifically, travel background and participants' age were positively correlated $r_s=.262$, $p=.000$. This finding is consistent with the findings by AgeUK (2012), who suggested that individuals in their 60s are likely to travel more frequently than those in their 20s. At the same time, however, when age was correlated with the statement 'A bucket list is a product of my wanderlust', the correlation was negative, $r_s=-.221$, $p=.001$. With this in mind, although the older age group tends to travel more frequently than the younger age group (reflecting greater economic capital and/or leisure time), their travel is less likely to be bucket list-related given that, for the older age group, the bucket list is not likely to be a product of wanderlust. Essentially, then, bucket lists are more likely to be imbued with travel related activities for the younger age groups. Although travel takes a significant priority at later age, it is less likely to be a part of the bucket list for older participants.

6.4.2. Age and identity

There is, undoubtedly, a peculiar relationship between bucket lists and age. As seen in previous findings, age impacts on the perception of bucket lists as a lasting trend and dictates the implementation of the bucket list (alone/accompanied). Based on previous research by Chu et al. (2018), younger individuals prioritise identity goals far more than older individuals. This raises the question of whether the definition of oneself through experiences becomes less valuable with age or, as suggested by Mogilner and Bhattacharjee (2014), the nature of defining experiences changes with age. Although the survey did not examine the latter question, some useful insights are nevertheless offered with regards to bucket lists, age and identity.

First, the interrelationship between bucket lists and identity is worth noting. For instance, 69.5% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me'. As later discussed, other variables within the identity group demonstrated significant

indications for assuming the interrelationship between bucket lists and identity expression. Despite this, however, the opposite trend was established as respondents age group increased. As demonstrated in Table 6.3, there were several statistically significant negative correlations between age and identity. First, as age group increased, the participants were slightly less likely to somewhat agree with the statement ‘I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me’. A similar tendency occurred with another variable: as the age group increased, the participants were more likely to somewhat disagree with the statement ‘My life ambitions are on my bucket list’.

Table 6.3: Correlations of age and identity variables

Statement	‘P’ value	‘r _s ’ value
I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me	.000	-.290
My life ambitions are on my bucket list	.000	-.253
I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family	.002	-.216
I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media	.000	-.281
I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them	.004	.199

Unfortunately, no statistically significant relationship was uncovered between the variables of age and popularity of the bucket list. Consequently, no assumptions can be with regards to whether older age groups engage with bucket lists less in/frequently. However, the results in the Table 6.3 may potentially indicate that younger respondents are more likely to express their identity and ambitions through the bucket list than older respondents. The same tendency appeared in the variables concerning identity creation. That is, a negative correlation appeared between respondents’ age and the statements ‘I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family’ and ‘I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media’. Although the proportion of over 65’s using

social media is significantly smaller than that of younger adults (Perrin, 2015), it is still uncertain why older adults would share their bucket list activities with their friends and family less than younger adults. Again, these findings could be justified by the fact that older adults may not engage in bucket lists as much as younger adults; however, no data from the survey can support this proposition. Nevertheless, perhaps defining one's identity through goals is a decreasing tendency as people age, as identified by Chu et al. (2018). Surprisingly, the last statistically significant relationship revealed a subtly positive correlation between age and the statement 'I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them' (Table 6.3). Perhaps the negotiation of identity through bucket lists is less essential for older groups. That said, the sustainment of 'the good name' received less agreement from the younger age group, as seen in the latter statement. Although these findings do not indicate the popularity of bucket lists across the lifespan, they may, however, indicate that younger age groups are slightly more likely to engage in identity expression and negotiation through their bucket lists.

6.4.3. Age and consumption

Consumption practices change across the lifespan. For instance, according to Condor (2020), as age increases, budget tends to influence travel decisions to a smaller extent. This may be explained by the increase in disposable income at a later age (Anderson and Langmeyer, 1982). Specifically, as reported by Anderson and Langmeyer (1982), those over 50 are spending a substantially higher sum on their holidays than those under the age of 50. With completed bucket lists costing up to fifteen years' worth of salary (Hughes, 2018), they are, inevitably a product to be consumed. This section briefly assesses the correlations between age and consumption variables.

Table 6.4: Correlations of age and consumption variable

Statement	'P' value	'r _s ' value
If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them	-.202	.004
A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do.	-.304	.000

As seen in Table 6.4, only two consumption-related statements produced a statistically significant correlation with the age variable. First, there is a subtly negative correlation between the age and the statement 'If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them'. This finding could be explained from two standpoints. The first echoes Anderson and Langmeyer (1982) suggestion that older individuals have a higher proportion of disposable income to spend on leisure. Therefore, from this perspective, the financial aspect of the bucket list is less likely to be a constraint for an older age group than a younger one. From another perspective, however, age may determine the type of goals that the individual pursues. To illustrate, Mogilner and Bhattacharjee (2014) report the shift from extraordinary to ordinary experiences as future time perspective decreases. Notably, Mogilner and Bhattacharjee (2014, p. 3) suggest that:

...younger people are likely to pursue happiness through novel social interactions, new information, and unfamiliar or exciting consumption choices, whereas older people are likely to seek happiness by prioritizing existing social relationships, emotional fulfilment, and familiar or calming consumption choices.

Therefore, finances may be less of a constraint for an older age group, for their bucket list may consist of different goals, such as seeing children graduate, falling in love or learning a new language. As Freund (2020, p. 506) suggests:

Given that people already vary substantially regarding what kinds of activities they can afford after retirement, ranging from fancy travels

to exotic places to inexpensive hobbies such as joining a choir or volunteering in a soup kitchen, having to deal with less financial resources might simply mean that more people select less expensive items to put on their bucket list.

It may also be for these reasons that older participants do not treat a bucket list as a shopping list – as seen in the next variable. Specifically, there is a negative correlation between participants' age and the statement 'A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do' (Table 6.4). This finding raises a question regarding the number of goals on an individual's bucket list depending on their age. Perhaps, younger participants have an extended, constantly revised list of goals as opposed to a more defined and smaller list at an older age. After all, 'sufficient time remaining for goal actualization is a necessary condition for any future-oriented behaviour' (Li, 2019, p. 1235). The question regarding the number of goals across the lifespan has not yet been addressed.

6.4.4. Age and death-related connotations

As discussed in Chapter 2, age affects attitudes towards death. Paradoxically, younger individuals are more likely to experience death fear (Kastenbaum, 2004) than older individuals; older individuals are more likely to accept death whilst younger groups tend to deny it (Cicirelli, 2003). However, the age variable was only statistically significant with two 'death' variables, as seen in the Table 6.5. First, a negative correlation appeared between age and the statement 'A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy'. Looking ahead, it is important to mention that, surprisingly, a substantial number of participants (39%) strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement 'A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy'.

Table 6.5: Correlations of age and death variables

Statement	'P' value	'r _s ' value
A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy	.000	-.273
I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved	.000	-.247

Therefore, considering that the notion of legacy is important for older age groups (Thurnher, 1974), it can be argued that that the negative correlation between the two variables does not represent the relationship between the concept of legacy and age. Rather, as age increases, respondents are less likely to see bucket lists as form of legacy. At the same time, younger participants are more likely to agree with the statement. The second negative correlation (as seen in the Table 6.5) concerns age and the statement 'I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved'. Again, a similar tendency appeared with this statement. That is, the negative correlation is unlikely to demonstrate a relationship between age and the desire to always be remembered. Since the discussion is led within the bucket list discourse, the respondents have likely referred to 'things that I have achieved' to the bucket list. Therefore, as their age increases, respondents are less likely to agree with the statement. For bucket lists, this finding may suggest that older individuals do not perceive their bucket list adventures as a part of their legacy and therefore, do not wish to be remembered by them. Nevertheless, the notion of legacy remains a very important topic for further discussion.

6.4.5. Summary

Age is not just a number within the bucket list discourse. As revealed in this section, there is a negative correlation between the meaning that individuals attach to their bucket lists and their age. Specifically, as age group increased, the participants were more likely to see bucket lists as a transient trend. Despite the positive correlation between age and travel, older age groups were unlikely to see their bucket lists as a product of their wanderlust.

Furthermore, as age group increased, the respondents were less likely to agree with defining themselves through the bucket list concept. That is, the majority of identity variables negatively correlated with the age variable. A similar tendency occurred with the consumption variables. Specifically, with age, respondents are less likely to treat their bucket list as a shopping list, although the cost of the bucket list does not seem to be a constraint. Finally, there is a negative correlation between age and 'death' variables. To be more precise, as the age group increases, the respondents are less likely to agree with bucket lists being a part of their legacy or constituting to the memories by which respondents want to be remembered. This then raises the question of whether bucket lists are a phenomenon predominantly for the young? This is unlikely, since bucket lists are popular amongst older individuals as well (Periyakoil, 2018). However, the meaning which is assigned to the bucket list is likely to change with age, depending on personal experiences and circumstances. Regardless, this is an important question to address during further stages of the research.

Finally, undoubtedly one of the most peculiar findings refers to the relationship between age, identity expression and a desire to post on social media. Due to the negative correlation with the statement 'I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media', several ideas might be proposed. Initially, it could be assumed that social media is of less importance with increased age. However, research by Pamara *et al.* (2015) which employed the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (previously discussed in Chapter 2), points towards the importance of social media, such as Facebook, at an older age owing to its ability to reduce a sense of loneliness and social isolation. Interestingly, for older age groups the selection of friends on Facebook was more specific, consisting of people who were actual friends. Therefore, the relationship between age, bucket lists and the desire to unique experiences on social media is questionable. That said, self-expression, perhaps, appears to be less of importance to older social media users, as established by Lehtinen *et al.* (2009, p.50), where one interviewee suggested: 'If someone of my age put her photo on the net, I would think she is a little silly and empty-headed'. Although this might certainly not be the case for everyone in general, what nevertheless might be a plausible explanation here is the need for

validation. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, research by Cross and Markus (1970) suggested that as people age, they require fewer identity validating goals because their identity is established. Whilst social media undoubtedly provides a sense of identity validation, this might be irrelevant to the generation of older users. Nevertheless, as this relationship is considered here solely on the basis of the existing literature, it remains another potential area for exploring in future studies.

6.5. Bucket lists and identity

A relationship undoubtedly exists between bucket lists and identity. Although Thurnell-Read (2017) describes this relationship more generally as a reflection of tourism, this section attempts to argue that such a relationship exists outside the realm of tourism. That is, bucket lists are representations of people’s aspirations, life goals and dreams that could tell others a lot about the individual. To examine the extent to which the respondents perceived bucket lists to be an extension of themselves, six identity-related questions were asked.

Table 6.6: Bucket lists and identity

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me	2.50%	8.50%	19.50%	42.00%	27.50%
My life ambitions are on my bucket list	12.50%	16.00%	26.50%	27.50%	17.50%
I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family	7.00%	20.50%	25.00%	30.00%	17.50%
I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media.	28.00%	17.00%	18.50%	27.00%	9.50%
I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful.	27.00%	15.00%	32.00%	17.00%	9.00%
I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them.	17.00%	19.50%	24.50%	21.50%	17.50%

Using a five-point Likert scale, individuals identified their attitudes towards each statement, as indicated in Table 6.6 above. The results provide important insights into the relationship between bucket lists and identity.

6.5.1. I am who my bucket list says I am

To measure the extent to which the respondents agreed with the relationship between bucket lists and identity, two questions were asked. First, respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the statement 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me'. The majority, 69.5% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. Second, respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the statement 'My life ambitions are on my bucket list'. Importantly, a substantial proportion of participants (45%) also strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with this statement, as seen in Table 6.6. These findings support the proposition regarding the centrality of identity to bucket list discourse. Specifically, compiling a bucket list may be another method of expressing oneself, but not necessarily through personal ambitions.

Although a substantial proportion of respondents agreed with the statement 'My life ambitions are on my bucket list', a smaller number agreed with the statement than had been anticipated. This may reflect possible negative connotations of the word ambition, defined as 'an ardent desire for rank, fame, or power' (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Moreover, goals such as, for example, reconnecting with family or to getting a pet as a part of a bucket list may not necessarily be defined as ambitions (rather, it could be a life goal/dream/desire). This finding may, nevertheless, be insightful in terms of how people define what is on their bucket list. As seen in Figure 6.2, the most popular terms for bucket list definitions are 'list' and 'things'. Interestingly, the word 'goal' is the eighth most popular word in the definition of the bucket list. At the same time, the word 'ambition' was not mentioned once in respondents' definitions for the bucket list. This potentially explains the significant drop in percentage between the first and the second statement. In essence, then, it can be suggested that people's bucket lists can tell others a lot about them; however, they do not necessarily reflect an individuals' ambitions. This leads to the question of what exactly bucket lists might reveal about their owners. This is addressed later in the research.

6.5.2. Communicating the bucket list

Within the context of bucket lists and identity, it was important to establish whether bucket lists could express an individual's identity. With the majority (69.5%) of respondents cumulatively agreeing with the statement, it was essential to further question how bucket lists are communicated between the individual and others. Specifically, it was crucial to question to what extent social media played a part in respondents' broadcasting of their lists or, alternatively, whether their bucket lists were likely to be only shared with friends and family. To examine this, respondents were asked to express their attitudes towards statements such as 'I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family' and 'I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media'. Interestingly, whilst a substantial percentage of respondents (47.5%) strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the former statement, some 45% of the respondents strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the latter (Table 6.6). Importantly then, according to the findings, bucket lists are not necessarily a means for expressing oneself to a wider online audience; rather, they are communicated to those close to the individual.

6.5.3. Judging by the bucket list

Having established the interconnection between bucket lists and identity, it was important to question to what extent this interrelationship would affect people if their bucket list were criticised. To answer this, two statements were presented: 'I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful' and 'I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them'. First, many respondents (42%) strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement 'I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful' (Table 6.6). On a similar note, only 39% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement 'I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them'. It appears then, although bucket lists can

communicate an individual’s identity to specific audiences, the attitudes of others have little impact on the pursuit of goals on individual’s bucket lists. In other words, according to these findings, alongside bucket list characteristics, bucket lists are, albeit to an extent, independent from the ‘outsider’s’ input, be it criticism or approval.

6.5.4. Identity and travel

The interconnection between travel and identity is critical to tourism research (Desforges, 2000). Particularly important is the manner in which tourism transforms people’s identities before, during and after a vacation. Within this relationship, a significant role is accorded to the notion of storytelling, where the individual’s narrative evolves into the ideal version of the self. The use of social media has furthered this phenomenon by delivering travel accounts directly to a wider audience. Essentially, then, tourism as a product becomes consumed through the minds of those before whom these accounts are carefully presented (Sharpley, 2018). Undeniably, there is a peculiar relationship between social media and travel. It was essential to examine how this relationship would evolve within the context of bucket lists.

Table 6.7: Social media and bucket list travel

Statement (against ‘I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media).	‘P’ value	‘r _s ’ value
Travel contributes to the majority of things on my bucket list.	.000	.314
A bucket list is a product of my wanderlust	.002	.209

Significantly, as seen in the Table 6.7, a relationship exists between bucket list travel and the enjoyment of sharing experiences through social media. Specifically, there is a positive correlation between the statements ‘I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media’ and ‘Travel contributed to the majority of things on my bucket

list'. Similarly, there is a positive correlation between enjoyment of sharing unique moments on social media and the statement 'A bucket list is a product of my wanderlust'. Although these findings further confirm the positive interrelationship between tourism and social media, as discussed in Chapter 2, they nevertheless raise critical questions central to bucket list discourse. That is, Thurnell-Read (2017) proposed that bucket lists are a lens through which the relationship between tourism and identity may be observed. However, it is important to ask the question whether bucket lists are bereft of identity-expressing capabilities if they do not involve an element of travel. Moreover, to what extent does tourism elucidate an individual's identity within the context of bucket lists? And finally, are non-tourism related goals on bucket lists also active contributors to identity creation? A discussion of these issues is extended in the interviews stage of the research.

6.5.5. Bucket list identity and consumption.

Consumption-based identity is not a novel phenomenon. Indeed, people's possessions or their experiences can signal a great deal of information to outsiders (Therkelsen and Gram, 2008). And even more than material possessions, experiences, of which there are plenty on individuals' bucket lists, contribute to the construction of identity (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). As Benson (2004, p. 83) suggests: 'We seek, express, confirm, and ascertain our sense of being through what we have'. To establish the relationship between the bucket list identity and consumption variables, correlation tests were run. Only two relationships were statistically significant, as seen in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Identity and consumption

Statement (against I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me).	'P' value	'r _s ' value
A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do	.000	.491
Having a bucket list makes me feel less guilty about spending money or needing a holiday	.000	.209

Specifically, there is a strong positive correlation between the statements 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me' and 'A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do'. The role of the latter statement is particularly interesting. First, it portrays bucket lists from a consumerist, shopping list-like perspective, where experiences are of such abundance that they require listing. Within the identity context, however, this listing assumes a different tone. That is, bucket list experiences, as an extension of the self, are carefully selected and organised into a anticipated autobiography rather than a shopping list, for they may truly represent who one really is. To what extent this proposition is true is a test for the next stage of research. Nevertheless, there is also a positive correlation between the statements 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me' and 'Having a bucket list makes me feel less guilty about spending money or needing a holiday' (Table 6.8). This correlation points towards bucket lists as a product of consumer society and greed, where bucket list experiences are never ending but always costing. However, the extent to which bucket list can be a means of conspicuous consumption is examined later.

6.5.6. Bucket list identity and death

Undeniably, bucket lists are to a great extent associated with death. At the same time, however, it is becoming clear from the findings emerging from this research that there is a unique and intricate relationship between bucket lists and identity. Hence, this section addressed the question of whether the two bucket list-associated notions of death and identity can be also intertwined in their meaning. Specifically, how can the notion of identity inform the relationship between bucket lists and death? Although the findings can neither be generalised nor perceived as causal, they do, nevertheless, provide unique insights into this complex relationship between the two concepts. As seen in Table 6.9, two statements revealed a statistically significant correlation against the statement 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me'. First, there was a positive correlation between the identity statement and the statement 'A bucket list can, in a way be a part of my legacy'.

Second, there was also a positive correlation between the identity statement and the statement ‘I want to always be remembered by the things that I have achieved’ (Table 6.9). Within this context, then, the descriptive nature of the bucket list may not only serve as an anticipated autobiography during an individual’s lifetime but also as a eulogy when one passes away. Significantly, bucket lists consist of unique experiences, which generally speak for their owner in a positive manner, be it for adventurousness, bravery, originality, kindness or knowledgeability. Indeed, they serve as reminders of the best of the qualities of the bucket-lister. This confirms the Kearn and Jacobsen (2016, p. 74) proposition that: ‘With fully checked-off bucket lists, we have a tangible measure of completeness to share at funerals’. Importantly, bucket lists provide a narrative of, arguably, the best moments of an individual’s life which symbolically shape their life summary. Indeed, the premise of life-well-lived can therefore be measured by completed bucket lists. Moreover, these findings extend the notion of bucket lists and identity beyond the realm of tourism, attributing identity creation capabilities to bucket lists overall. Although these findings are only indicative of the role of bucket lists and identity after the demise, they nevertheless provide an interesting basis for further discussion in the next step of the research.

Table 6.9: Identity and legacy

Statement (against I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me).	‘P’ value	‘r_s’ value
A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy	.000	.273
I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved	.001	.221

6.5.7. Summary

As discussed within this section, bucket lists are a means of expressing people’s identity to others. Specifically, the notion of bucket list identity has been appraised from the perspectives of travel, consumption and death. One of the key questions raised within this section was whether bucket lists can reflect an individual’s identity outside the

tourism discourse. The consumption perspective acknowledged bucket lists as a technique for anticipating a personal autobiography through carefully selected experiences. The relationship between consumption and identity is not novel and therefore, several correlations were anticipated. However, the correlations between death (in particular, legacy) variables and identity were surprising. That said, a death perspective asserted bucket lists as an expression of the self during and beyond the individual's lifetime, where completed bucket lists can serve as measures of a life-well-lived. Significantly, the notion of bucket lists as legacy was introduced.

As seen from the findings, the role of travel is significant to the bucket list discourse. Even more so, it is actively facilitated through the use of social media where experiences can be edited and presented in their idealised form. Despite some interesting insights, however, the question remains whether bucket lists can tell much about the individual merely due to the prevalence of tourism on the bucket list? Or perhaps, all goals on the bucket list can draw a rather holistic description of the individual? These questions are addressed in further stages of research.

6.6. Bucket lists and consumption

By their very nature, bucket lists are a collection of experiences, the acquisition of which requires at least some economic input. Specifically, in order to complete a bucket list, sufficient disposable income is required, estimated by Hughes (2018) to be , on average, at least £428,000. Hence, a 'traditional' bucket list – which may include travel, a wedding, buying a house or skydiving – does not come at a cheap price. Thus, just like any other products and services, bucket lists too, are products, albeit predominantly experiential, which can be purchased, exchanged, cancelled or gifted. Within this context, then, it is important to question whether bucket lists are a means of conspicuous consumption or greed, whether they are the successful product of a carefully marketed fear of missing out (FOMO) or, perhaps, whether they are just extensive shopping lists awaiting their completion as soon as an individual's budget permits. Finally, how central is the monetary dilemma to the completion of the bucket

list? These questions were addressed in the survey and, as seen in the Table 6.10, the responses provide interesting insights into the consumption of the bucket list.

6.6.1. Conspicuous bucket lists

The statement ‘I think that a bucket list is about showing off your economic and social status’ arose from the proposition that bucket lists can, in fact, be a product of conspicuous consumption in Veblenian terms. That is, bucket lists are completed and presented before a wider audience to showcase one’s financial power. However, this proposition did not receive the agreement from the respondents, with the majority (65.5%) strongly disagreeing-somewhat disagreeing with the statement (as seen in Table 6.10). Nevertheless, this finding could be the subject of debate. Specifically,

Table 6.10: Bucket lists and consumption

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I think that a bucket list is about showing off your economic and social	39.00%	26.50%	17.50%	11.00%	6.00%
Having a bucket list makes me feel less guilty about spending money or needing a holiday.	18.00%	25.50%	36.00%	13.00%	7.50%
I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me	9.50%	12.00%	17.00%	37.50%	24.00%
If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them.	6.00%	19.50%	17.00%	28.00%	29.50%
A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do	5.00%	8.50%	12.50%	37.00%	37.00%

although a majority disagreed with the statement ‘I think that a bucket list is about showing off your economic and social status’, a substantial number of respondents (47.5%) suggested that they liked to share their bucket list activities with friends and family, as well as on social media (37%). Considering that social media is the playground for enacting a certain image, these data question the extent to which the original statement is true. Perhaps bucket lists are not necessarily compiled to create a

semblance of wealth but, nevertheless, it is important to admit that they do often become a narrative of financial success.

At the same time, it is important to point out that bucket lists are not a means of disguising the need for a holiday. In fact, 43.5% of respondents strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement 'Having a bucket list makes me feel less guilty about spending money or needing a holiday'. Essentially then, according to the findings, the respondents do not associate bucket lists with lavish spending or conspicuous consumption. The latter statement, however, raises an important question as to what is the difference between 'a holiday' and bucket list travel? Moreover, it is important to question whether individuals attach different meanings to their holidays as opposed to bucket list travels. These questions are addressed later in the research.

6.6.2. Bucket lists and FOMO

FOMO (fear of missing out) is a socially and commercially constructed phenomenon which is defined as 'the uneasy and sometimes all-consuming feeling that you're missing out' (Jones, 2020, p. 150). Importantly, this term has been favoured by travel marketers (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 68), with advertisement slogans such as 'FOMO?- Book now for Europe' as a 'call to action'. Travel advertisements are, according to Hodkinson (2019), replete with explicit FOMO campaigns. The concept of FOMO is most popular amongst millennials; as Hall (2020) notes, 69% of millennials have experienced the concept of FOMO and 60% have completed a reactive purchase as a result of FOMO. Nevertheless, despite its popularity amongst millennials, FOMO has the capability to affect people of all ages (Milyavskaya, Saffran, Hope and Koestner, 2018). Moreover, according to Morris (2019, p. 2), 'Bucket lists, faultless Instagram fodder and footless, fancy-free millennials' fuel FOMO. Within this context, it is essential to assess the relationship between bucket lists and FOMO.

As seen in Table 6.10, the majority of respondents (61.5%) strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement 'I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me'. Significantly, then, it can be suggested that the majority of respondents do experience FOMO. What is more important, however, is that there is a

positive correlation between the FOMO statement and the question of 'Do you have a bucket list?', $r_s = .331$, $p < .000$. Potentially, bucket lists can be driven by the novel fear of missing out – the desire to cram as many experiences as possible into a lifetime. Moreover, as predicted, the concept of FOMO is slightly negatively correlated with participants' age, $r_s = -.236$, $p = .000$; thus it is, potentially, likely to indeed affect the millennials more, as suggested by Hall (2020). An important question then, is whether bucket lists are a product of successful marketing combined with an internalised fear of missing out on experiences that life can offer. The data from Table 6.10 suggest that FOMO is present within the bucket list discourse. However, the extent to which it influences the desire to compile a bucket list remains to be explored.

6.6.3. Ever-consuming bucket list

Within the survey it was important to establish the extent to which the financial component plays a part in the completion of the bucket list. It may be tacitly accepted that bucket lists are an amalgam of experiences that require a financial input in order to be completed. What is important to ask, then, is whether the length of the bucket list is commensurate with an individual's financial resources. Does completing a bucket list equate to being rich? Or can bucket lists be completed without any financial input? To answer some of these questions, the respondents were presented with the statement 'If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them'. The majority of respondents (57.5%) strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement, suggesting that an individual's financial resources are proportionate to the bucket list completion. However, whether completion in a sense of finishing the bucket list is possible is another question. As seen earlier (Table 6.2), the majority of respondents (54%) suggested that their bucket list did not have an end. Thus, perhaps, bucket lists are only limited by future financial resources although, if finances allowed, the bucket list would be never-ending and ever consuming. Of importance is the statement 'A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do', for it adds a shopping-list like notion to the bucket list where there are so many experiences that they require to be written down in order to be remembered.

Significantly, 74% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. Therefore, within this context it can be concluded that bucket lists are indeed strongly associated with consumption. In fact, the continuous completion of the bucket list goals depends directly on an individual's finances. Alternatively, bucket lists may be organised and compiled simply because the abundance of desired experiences to achieve is too great to remember.

6.6.4. Consumption and travel

It was established in the previous section that the completion of the bucket list is proportionate to the individual's financial capabilities. However, not all bucket lists comprise only consumption-orientated goals. In fact, many strive towards learning a new language, finding love or spending time with family, all of which do not necessarily require a generous financial input. Why, then, do bucket lists come at a price? One of possible explanation lies in the predominance of travel on the bucket list. Indeed, travel is one of the goals that always requires a certain financial input. To test this proposition, two travel variables were correlated against the statement 'If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them.

The results of these correlations can be seen in the Table 6.11.

Table 6.11: Consumption and travel

Statement (against If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them	'P' value	'r _s ' value
Travel contributes to the majority of things on my bucket list.	.000	.044
What is your travel background?	.035	-.149

Specifically, there is a positive correlation between the statements 'Travel contributes to the majority of things on my bucket list' and 'If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them'. It appears then, that with increased

prevalence of travel on the bucket list, the cost of the list becomes a stronger obstacle to completing it.

However, it could be proposed that if the cost of travel is initially not an obstacle, then the completion of a bucket list will not be subject to financial resources. This presumption was demonstrated between the financial variable outlined above and the questions of 'What is your travel background?'. As is seen in the table, there is a negative correlation between the two variables, albeit subtle. Specifically, those who travel more frequently are slightly less likely to see their own financial position as an obstacle to completing the bucket list. Thus, it can be hypothesised that completion of bucket list goals is dependent on an individual's financial inputs, specifically due to the prevalence of tourism on the lists. However, the extent to which tourism occupies bucket lists is assessed later.

6.6.5. Consumption and identity.

Earlier, in Section 6.5.5., some of the aspects of the relationship between identity and consumption were addressed. Specifically, it was proposed that bucket lists are not merely lists of desired experiences but a carefully selected, internalised anticipated autobiography central to an individual's identity.

However, in this section, the notion of FOMO is examined in relation to identity. With regards to FOMO, it was asserted above that creation of the bucket list may be the result of the fear of not experiencing all the 'right' experiences from a commercial and social points of view. The identity perspective offers another perspective on the phenomenon of FOMO. Specifically, there was a positive correlation between the FOMO statement and the statement 'I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family' (Table 6.12). Since the social environment amplifies the range of experiences that the individual may miss out on (Milyavskaya et al., 2018), sharing bucket list activities may reduce the fear of missing out by endowing the sense that

Table 6.12: FOMO and identity

Statement (against I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me)	'P' value	'r _s ' value
I like to share my bucket list activities with	.000	.240
I like to share my bucket list activities with	.001	.228

one is on track with the 'necessary' experiences. Importantly, there was also a positive correlation between the FOMO statement and the statement 'My life ambitions are on my bucket list'. Significantly then, the concept of FOMO may indeed be synonymic to the individual's ambition, since FOMO is a strong driver of aspirations and achievements. Overall, it is clear that the phenomenon of FOMO is central to the bucket list discourse and may, after all, be the reason why individuals compile bucket lists.

6.6.6. FOMO and death

Surprisingly, no documented study of the relationship between FOMO and death exists, not least because it could be argued that it is the transient state of life that makes the concept of FOMO so urgent. For example, Ilyes (2015) proposes that FOMO may be provoked by fear of aging and dying, be it conscious or unconscious.

In line with previous findings, the concept of the bucket list further amplifies FOMO. Perhaps similar to bucket lists, FOMO is associated with the fear of not having enough time to live life to the full whilst others will have time to experience it. Therefore, to explore the relationship between FOMO and death, two statements were correlated with the FOMO statement (as seen in Table 6.13 below). First, the statement 'If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me' appeared to have a strong, positive and statistically significant correlation with the FOMO statement.

Table 6.13: FOMO and death

Statement (against I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me)	'P' value	'r _s ' value
If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me	.000	.402
I fear dying having not completed everything from my bucket list	.000	.338

Within this context, perhaps, FOMO is salient when perceived lifespan perspective shrinks. Therefore, FOMO can arguably be one of the outcomes of confronting one's own mortality. Second, the statement 'I fear dying having not completed everything from my bucket list' appeared to also have a strong, positive and statistically significant correlation with the FOMO statement. That is, the fear of death prior to completing a bucket list can potentially be associated with the FOMO itself.

As a commercially and socially novel phenomenon, FOMO provides a valuable insight into how individuals manage their experiences and their time, and what emotions that arouses. Significantly, the phenomenon of FOMO is yet to flourish and develop across potentially many disciplines. What is certain, however, is that the concept of FOMO is intricately interrelated with the phenomenon of bucket lists. As proposed earlier, it may be owing to FOMO that bucket list compilation takes place at all, although it is the challenge for further research to establish if this is the case.

6.6.7. Summary

This section aimed to provide a brief overview of the findings relating to the interconnection between bucket lists and consumption. As outlined earlier, it is almost impossible to imagine a bucket list completed without significant financial input. Moreover, as highlighted by Hughes (2018), 'traditional' bucket lists do not come cheap.

Therefore, although bucket lists do not have to be materialistic, more often than not they do come packed with expensive, once in a lifetime experiences. However, the survey questioned the extent to which bucket lists are a form of conspicuous consumption. Specifically, considering that a substantial proportion of respondents enjoyed sharing their bucket list activities with friends and family, it was expected that they would acknowledge the conspicuous nature of the bucket list. Yet surprisingly, 65.5% of respondents disagreed with an idea that bucket lists are about showing off their economic and social status. Nevertheless, despite these findings, it could be asserted that completed bucket lists are a narrative of a financial success.

Furthermore, the majority of participants (57.5%) also indicated that if things on their bucket lists did not cost as much, they would have already completed them. Significantly then, bucket lists are limited and potentially planned in accordance with the future financial perspective. However, it was hypothesised that if completing a bucket list is affordable it will never actually be completed, for the majority of respondents indicated that their bucket list does not have an end (54%). Thus, bucket lists are ongoing lists of consuming experiences, powered by individuals' financial capabilities and, arguably, greed. Another interesting finding arose around consumption and travel. Specifically, it was proposed that it is owing to travel that bucket lists come at a significant price. Indeed, the more travel contributed to the majority of things on individual's bucket lists, the more likely the participants were to agree that financial element was the obstacle to the bucket list completion.

Finally, the concept of FOMO was discussed within the bucket list discourse. Significantly, it was proposed that FOMO may be one of the drivers for creating a bucket list. Since FOMO is associated with commercial as well as social pressure, sharing bucket list experiences with friends and family was positively correlated with the FOMO statement. Specifically, by sharing the bucket list experiences, individuals can mediate their FOMO through asserting their productivity and endowing a sense that they are 'on track' with the necessary experiences.

Strong correlations appeared between FOMO and death variables. That is, FOMO was associated with fears of death prior to bucket list completion. It was therefore proposed that the concept of FOMO may well stem from the acknowledgement of time passing

and thus from confrontation with mortality. These suppositions are a matter of further investigation. However, what is certain is that bucket lists are inextricably linked with consumption and the completion of the bucket list is a matter of people's financial capabilities. Finally, it is also proposed that bucket lists are related, amplified and, to an extent, driven by the concept of FOMO.

6.7. Bucket lists and death

Death is fundamental to the definition of the bucket list, as demonstrated in Figure 6.1. However, it is not known to what extent death influences the decision to compile a bucket list. Perhaps the thoughts of life transience are hidden in the unconscious and, thus, go unrecognised by the bucket-lister. Alternatively, death may, after all, be absent from the bucket list motivations. Furthermore, it can be argued that fateful moments, in Giddens (1991) terms, could only encourage the completion of meaningful activities. The notion of bucket lists as a legacy, illustrated in *The Bucket List* movie (Zackham, 2007), has been known to come true in real life (Scott, 2020), where the bucket list of the deceased would guide his family through once in a lifetime adventures. Within that context, it is important to question whether bucket lists can, indeed, represent a legacy for the bucket list holder.

In order to establish some answers to the above suppositions, the respondents were presented with six death-related questions. The results outlined in the Table 6.14 provide unique insights into respondents' death attitudes within the bucket list discourse.

6.7.1. Death within the bucket list discourse

In order to establish some ideas with regards to death within bucket list discourse, respondents were presented with several death-related questions. First, respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the statement: 'I have no fear of death as such'. As in seen in the Table 6.14, the results were indecisive, with an equal

percentage of respondents (39% of strongly agree-somewhat agree and 39% of strongly disagree-somewhat disagree) agreeing and disagreeing with the statement.

Table 6.14: Bucket lists and death

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have no fear of death as such	16.00%	23.00%	22.00%	19.50%	19.50%
My bucket list does not reflect the worry about dying	5.00%	8.00%	29.50%	27.50%	30.00%
I fear dying having not completed everything from my bucket list	38.00%	26.50%	18.50%	12.00%	5.00%
If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me	8.00%	11.50%	21.50%	31.00%	28.00%
A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy	17.00%	19.50%	24.50%	21.50%	17.50%
I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved	15.00%	20.00%	28.00%	21.50%	15.50%

Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn from these findings. However, as Kastenbaum (2004) observes, in previous research three out of four individuals suggested that they had no fear of death. This finding, however, cannot be taken at a face value, according to Kastenbaum (2004, p. 32), for ‘...most people are in the habit of suppressing their anxieties, trying to convince themselves and others that death holds no terror’.

On a similar note, when presented with the statement ‘My bucket list does not reflect the worry about dying’, 57.50% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. On the one hand, then, it could be concluded that death fear is, in fact, not a catalyst for the bucket list creation. On the other hand, perhaps the fear of death is rather denied, concealed and, thus, unacknowledged within the bucket list context. After all, as outlined by Wong et al. (1994, p. 122) ‘It is commonly believed that fear of death is universal and that its absence may reflect denial of death’. Alternatively, however, death may be present in its acknowledgment whilst compiling the bucket list, but it may not necessarily cause fear, for the careful planning of the bucket list may

effectively conceal it. At this point, it is not established whether death is present within bucket list planning; however, what is certain is that the death dilemma is yet inexhaustible within the bucket list discourse.

6.7.2. Incomplete bucket lists

The next two variables provide very interesting insights into how the respondents felt about dying without completing the bucket list. One of the variables, as seen in Table 6.14, identified the respondents' attitudes towards the statement 'I fear dying having not completed everything from my bucket list'. This statement generally referred to the ultimate death (rather than an untimely death). In essence, this statement aimed to uncover the extent to which bucket lists are important as life tasks for the respondents. Significantly, the majority (64.5%) of respondents strongly disagreed-somewhat disagreed with the statement. Thus, it is fair to assert that the majority of respondents do not fear dying having not completed everything from their bucket list. It is important to note, again, that this statement was concerned ultimate death, often perceived to be chronologically distant. However, the next statement presented a prospect of the imminent, premature death. Specifically, the respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the statement 'If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me'. The change in chronological distance of death perspective revealed a fascinating result. That is, 59% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. Indeed, as suggested by Kramer and Wurzer (2015, p. 132), 'The diagnosis of a disease that you know will kill you only increases the urgency of such a list' (referring to the bucket list).

The bucket list literature is replete with accounts of meaningful adventures started as a result of terminal disease (Granger, 2012, Lavery, 2018, Marshall, 2019, Molloy, 2016, Udell, 2018). For the rest of the bucket list literature, the notions of death are scarce. Perhaps, on the one hand, bucket lists are not concerned with death until a fateful moment, such as a disease, makes the completion of meaningful activities ever more urgent. On the other hand, the understanding of life's scarcity and fragility may be at the core of each bucket list, yet unrealised until the prospect of death becomes salient.

One way or another, the two variables provide unique insights into how the respondents feel about dying without completing their bucket lists. Even more so, they provide interesting questions for the next stage of the research.

6.7.3. Bucket list legacy

As mentioned earlier, a relationship exists between bucket lists and legacy. This relationship was first introduced in *The Bucket List* movie and later occurred in 'real life', when, as mentioned earlier, the bucket list of the deceased Brett Kinloch guided his family on the adventures that Brett, sadly, did not have enough time left to pursue (Scott, 2020). This particular story made it essential for this research to question the notion of legacy within the bucket list discourse. Specifically, the respondents were asked to express their dis/agreement with the statement 'A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy'. A substantial percentage of the respondents (39% as seen in the Table 6.14.) strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement. Similarly, 37% of respondents strongly agreed-somewhat agreed with the statement 'I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved'. It appears then, that there is, albeit a subtle, yet established, notion of legacy within the bucket list. Significantly, this confirms some of the early assumptions in Chapter 3, suggesting that bucket lists could be a means of symbolic immortality, for they can preserve the memory of the most life-defining moments associated with the individual.

6.7.4. Death and identity

The relationship between death and identity is intricate to the extent that death eradicates the personal notion of identity, leaving it either open to interpretation or, in the worst case, forgotten. To mediate the relationship between one's own identity and death, many concern themselves with the notion of the post-self. Indeed, 'The question of how one would like to be remembered after death is one that every person asks himself or herself at some point in life' (Wojtkowiak and Rutjens, 2011, p. 137).

Significantly, the process of negotiating the post-self may be the path to self-actualisation (Wojtkowiak and Rutjens, 2011). Thus, in the face of death, the preservation of one's own name is especially significant for individuals, mainly through the creation of memories. It may be for this reason that the majority of participants (59%) agreed that completing meaningful activities would be necessary for them if they were to have a terminal disease. Specifically, in the study by Portman et al. (2018, p. 1),

Table 6.15: Death and identity

Statement (against If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me).	'P' value	'r _s ' value
I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful	.002	.217
I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me	.003	.203

a terminally ill patient identified his aspirations as 'to live, connect, share unforgettable moments with precious people in my life, and create lasting memories for them' as a part of his bucket list. Importantly then, bucket lists can provide an opportunity to negotiate the post-self. Thus, within that context, the variable 'If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me' appeared to have two positive correlations that support the aforementioned proposition.

Specifically, there was a positive correlation with the statement 'I think that my bucket list could tell others a lot about me' (Table 6.15.). This correlation potentially confirms the possibility for negotiating the post-self through bucket list experiences for they, arguably, represent a selection of the most vivid life memories. Second, there was a positive correlation with the statement 'I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful'. This correlation, again, underlines the centrality of the bucket list to the creation of the post-self, where a criticism of the bucket list will potentially impinge

on an individual's construction of the self. Overall, these data signal the relationship between bucket list identity and death. The use of bucket lists in palliative care has already been acknowledged by some authors (Periyakoil, 2018, Portman et al., 2018). Within this context, a bucket list may be a means for preserving the memory of the individual through pursuing life-defining experiences.

6.7.5. Legacy and consumption

The last variables to be examined through correlations within this chapter concern bucket list legacy and consumption. As mentioned earlier in Section 6.6, the completion of bucket list goals requires a significant financial investment. Importantly, there was a strong positive correlation between the legacy statement and the statement 'A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do', as seen in the Table 6.16. Within the legacy context, then, such a correlation could point towards the need to order, list and remember once in a lifetime experiences, for they will create a valuable account of one's life achievements. Again, of course, this statement highlights the 'greedy' nature of the bucket lists, where the abundance of experiences to choose from have to be noted down.

Another positive correlation appeared between the statements 'A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy' and 'I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me'. As discussed earlier within this chapter, there might be an interrelation between the concept of FOMO and death fears. Because death entails the cessation of individuality, it becomes important to preserve the post-self – the representation of self beyond the lifespan. Therefore, within the context of legacy, the individual may feel an exacerbated urge to collect self-defining experiences to validate the sense of self. In this way, a bucket list is the most useful tool for defining self and constructing the post-self.

Table 6.16: Legacy and consumption

Statement (against A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy	'P' value	'r _s ' value
A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do	.000	.408
I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me	.000	.257

6.7.6. Summary

This section has provided valuable insights into the relationship between bucket lists and death. Specifically, as established by the respondents, death anxieties are not the catalyst for the creation of the bucket list. This, however, is not the ultimate answer to the question of whether bucket lists are concerned with life or death. Rather, these findings suggest that death fear or anxiety may not be at the core of the bucket list creation, yet the peaceful confrontation with mortality may still occur whilst creating the bucket list. Such a perspective would be generally supported by the MMT theory. Alternatively, from a TMT perspective, these findings could be interpreted as a denial, where individuals portray themselves fearless in the face of death. With this in mind, although the presence of death within the bucket list discourse is not excluded at this point, it certainly requires further elaboration.

Interestingly, the chronological distance to death may moderate the urge to complete the bucket list. As discovered within the respondent's attitudes, they generally do not fear dying without completing their bucket list. However, should their death happen prematurely, such as due to a terminal illness, the importance of completing meaningful experiences increases. Furthermore, as discussed within this section, bucket lists can be a means of preserving an individual's legacy – the post-self. The necessity of creating memories as a part of bucket lists in the face of death is widely discussed by Portman et al. (2018). With this in mind, this section currently draws several conclusions.

First, certainly not everyone approaches his or her bucket list creation with death in mind. At the same time, for some, death may be at the core of the decision to compile

such a list. It is clear at this point that there are certain factors that distinguish the extent to which death is present within the bucket list creation. As proposed in this section, one factor might be the perceived chronological proximity to death. However, it is also acknowledged that other factors may play a part in this intricate relationship between bucket lists and death. Therefore, the next stage of the research extends the current discussion and attempts to develop a more substantial understanding of death-related connotations within the bucket list discourse.

6.8. The bucket list experience

This section attempts to further establish some characteristics of the bucket list experience in terms of bucket list goal orientations. For this reason, two sets of descriptive data are presented below with an accompanying explanation of findings and discussion. Importantly, the role of travel is assessed within the bucket list experience, as well as some of the earlier themes outlined within this chapter, returning to the discussion within the bucket list experience context. It is important to acknowledge that although this section addresses the ‘what’ of bucket list goals and orientations, it lacks the ‘why’ of goals, the reasons and motivations. Therefore, the overall ‘picture’ remains incomplete without more discursive, in-depth data, which follows in the later sections of this chapter. Essentially, then, this section attempts to highlight the breadth and depth of bucket list aspirations, providing some unique examples from respondents’ data.

6.8.1. Bucket list goal orientations

As mentioned earlier, there are two sets of data which provide the context for bucket list goal orientations. First, Table 6.17 demonstrates the order in which the respondents prioritised the following popular bucket list activities. Importantly, the following activities were generally inspired by the Bucketlist.net (2020) website; however, they were also selected to represent some of the themes outlined within the literature review. Therefore, Table 6.17 demonstrates 15 bucket list items which were presented

to the participants. The participants were asked to drag each item in order from 1 to 15, where 1 represented the most desired experience and 15 represented the least desired experience. Each item is presented with an average order number that was assigned to it. All items are ordered from the lowest average (most popular) to the highest average (least popular).

Table 6.17: Popularity of bucket list experience selection

Variable	Average
Travel the world	4.06
Learn a different language	5.03
Fall in love	7.02
Throw a dart at a map and go wherever it lands	7.38
Climb a mountain	7.39
Learn to play a music instrument	7.48
Donate a sum of money to a charity	7.99
Ride in a hot air balloon	8.01
Publish a book	8.09
Swim with dolphins	8.21
Plant a tree	9.00
Donate blood	9.02
Win a lottery jackpot	9.07
Run a marathon	9.46
Become famous	12.83

One of the most significant findings from Table 6.17 is the dominance of tourism above all other items. This finding confirms the prevalence of touristic activities on individuals' bucket lists so often proposed in the literature review. Importantly, this is immediately followed by the desire to master a skill which in this case is to learn another language. Falling in love takes the bronze position within this selection of bucket list experience. The rest of the experiences in order of their popularity can be observed in Table 6.17.

Interestingly, the three least popular activities included winning the lottery, running a marathon and becoming famous.

One of the disadvantages of this data set is that it uses pre-selected bucket list experiences, which provides little context. For instance, 'run a marathon' is in the three least desired experiences which, on the one hand, can point to the overall undesirability of this experience within the bucket list concept. On the other hand, however, running a marathon may be popular enough to have already been checked off the majority of respondents' bucket lists, therefore assigning a lower priority to the previously checked off item. As mentioned earlier (Chapter 2), bucket list experiences are, allegedly, once in a lifetime experiences which rarely encourage repetition. Moreover, none of the variables within the table produced a significant correlation with other variables outlined earlier. Thus, lacking the overall context, Table 6.17 provides merely indicative details; however, one of the most significant findings, as mentioned earlier, is the prevalence of tourism.

Therefore, to widen the understanding of bucket list goals and goal orientations, or categories, the respondents were asked to list five bucket list items that they wished to pursue. Overall, 1,000 goals were thematically analysed and grouped into different categories of bucket list goal orientations. Orientations with examples from each category are outlined in Table 6.18. All bucket list goal orientations are listed in order of their popularity, by percentage. Again, this table is limited to the 'what', rather than 'why' of the bucket list. This inevitably results, to some extent, in generalisations.

For instance, 'Travelling to Jerusalem' would be generally placed within 'Tourism' category. However, potentially, the trip to Jerusalem might entail a deep spiritual calling, where the travel element is merely a means of getting to the spiritual centre, rather than the purpose of it. Thus, in that case, it would be more appropriate to place such a goal within the 'Spiritual' category. However, without a contextual background, the variable remains within the 'Tourism' category. Although such examples are the exception, they nevertheless are important to acknowledge for the rigour and transparency of data analysis. Significantly, the process of data coding is influenced by the literature review lens. Therefore, the established categories are recognised significantly with an influence of the literature review.

Table 6.18: Bucket list goal orientations.

Goal orientation	Examples	%
Tourism	Travel to all continents. Travel South America. Travel to as many places as possible (on Earth or even in space).	26.4%
Experience	Seeing wolves in the wild. Build log cabin. Drink a bottle of Barolo 1969.	21.3%
Master a skill	Get better at an instrument. Learn skills of cooking, massages etc. Be able to play a full playlist on my guitar.	13%
Wealth	Win the lottery. See one million in the bank. Be wealthy.	6.2%
Prosocial behaviour	Donate money to charities. To do good for others not as blessed as myself. Give blood.	6%
Publish	Publish a book. Publish academic papers or a text book. Write a novel and get it published.	3.7%
Love	Find my true love. Be in a long-term relationship. Share these with a special person.	3.6%
Spiritual	Elevate higher in spirituality and sixth sense. Memorise the holy Quran. Find a way to die peacefully.	3.4%
Children	Adopt children. To see my children prosper. See my children grow into healthy adults.	3.1%

Friends and family	Spend time with family.	3%
	Reconnect with long lost friends.	
	Visit family and friends I don't see too often.	
Successful career	Get my dream job.	2.8%
	Have a rewarding career.	
	Have a successful art career.	
Other	I've completed most of the things that were on my bucket list, I'm almost done, ahead of schedule.	1.7%
	Sorry	
Legacy	Die knowing I made a difference.	1.6%
	Be present at some political footnote of history.	
	Be remembered.	
Retirement	Retire happy.	1.6%
	Retire early.	
	Retire to Italy.	
Non bucket list	Not to be bothered about a list.	1.5%
	I don't have any!	
	None.	
Health	Overcome back pain.	1.1%
	Be fit and healthy.	
	Quit smoking before I die.	

First, the category of travel involves goals that either mention travel as a part of the goal or mention a specific destination. The defining feature of this category is that travel is the sole focus of the goal. Again, the centrality of travel cannot be assumed, for the 'trip to Japan' can, in fact, entail reconnection with one's family roots or a job conference. However, for the consistency of this category, only variables that entail a specific journey are included within it. Other variables, which include a specific location, for instance, 'Retire to Italy' are attributed to an associated category, such as 'Retirement' in this case. Although this goal will likely include an element of travel, nevertheless, the act of travel is not the sole focus of the goal.

The category of 'Experience' is closely linked to tourism. However, here travel may be perceived rather as a means of facilitating the experience rather than being its purpose. For instance, 'seeing wolves in the wild' or 'ride an elephant' will, most likely, involve some sort of travel to the appropriate environments; however, here, travel will facilitate rather than represent the goal. Essentially, the 'Experience' category constitutes of experiences that contribute to the individuals' experiential CV. As mentioned within the literature review, such experiences are usually novel, collectible, unusual and memorable, which contribute to the sense of accomplishment and progress (Keinan et al., 2019). The 'Mastering a skill' category refers to gaining qualifications and developing a variety of skills, such as learning languages, getting a driving license or playing a music instrument. As seen in Table 6.18, this category takes the bronze across the bucket list goal orientations. At the same time, 'Wealth' orientations include goals that focus exclusively on financial gains by any means possible, be it through employment or by winning a lottery.

Furthermore, prosocial behaviour involves goals that demonstrate compassion, charitability and environmental concerns. In general, these goals include planting a tree, helping those in need and donating to charities. This category, as seen in Table 6.18, concludes the top 5 of bucket list goals. However, despite being less popular, other categories require further explanation. For example, 'Publishing' is one of the very distinct categories which emerged through a trend of goals aiming to publish an article, a novel or an album. Furthermore, the 'Love' category is another distinct bucket list goal orientation which includes goals that express a desire to fall in love, find a soulmate and to get married. The 'Spiritual' category is slightly less distinctive in a sense that it includes a broader variety of goals, linked not only to religious practices, but also to spiritual challenges, such as finding a way to die peacefully. At the same time, the 'Children' category includes the variables that are only concerned with either having children or, seeing them grow up and prosper. Similarly, the 'Friends and Family' category includes goals that concerned reconnection with the closest and dearest. It is important to mention that the 'Successful Career' category only includes goals oriented towards dream jobs, successful positions and career achievements, without specifically financial attributes. For example, whilst seeing one million in the bank may be the result of a prosperous career, it nevertheless is assigned to the 'Wealth' category rather

than 'Successful Career'. Such differentiation is made due to consideration that 'Successful Career' can be characterised beyond a high financial gain.

The 'Other' category includes variables that cannot be attributed to any other category or do not provide any contextual value. Furthermore, the 'Legacy' variable refers to explicit consideration of the postself. In other words, the category includes goals that concern the memory about the individual and what is left of him or her after death. Although the category of 'Legacy' resides 13th out of 16 categories, this does not necessarily mean that the role of legacy is trivial within bucket lists. Quite the opposite: an individual's legacy may be constructed through other bucket list goal orientations, including individual's experiences, love, friends and family, children, prosocial behaviour and even publications. Thus, it is important to note that although the 'Legacy' category takes place further down the list of bucket list goal orientation, this category includes explicit considerations of one's own legacy, rather than the expected means of achieving the legacy. Moreover, 'Retirement' is another distinctive category which arose from the repeating patterns of goals expressing the desire to retire. Importantly, as mentioned in Chapter 2, retirement goals tend to be associated with older individuals. Another category which is worth drawing attention to is 'Non bucket list'. This category includes explicit refusals to list goals or engage with the concept of bucket lists. Importantly, this category is significantly important to the bucket list discourse, for individuals who refute the concept of bucket lists can, arguably, talk about the relation between bucket lists, life and death as much as those who actively pursue their bucket lists. Thus, should it arise, the tendencies of 'non bucket listers' will be carefully traced within the next stage of data collection. Finally, the last category of bucket list goal orientations includes 'Health', which refers to goals of overcoming pains and getting better, quitting unhealthy habits and getting fitter. Surprisingly, out of all categories, 'Health' came last within the bucket list goal orientation categories.

As mentioned earlier, this table (Table 6.18), is subject to some generalisation. However, the purpose of this section is not to establish the rigorous development of categories; rather, it is to demonstrate the breadth of bucket list experiences and their potential goal orientations. As outlined at the start of the section, each 'what' of bucket list goal requires its 'why', which is beyond the scope of the survey. Nevertheless, one

of the most significant findings within this section is that tourism, without a doubt, is one of the most popular goals on individuals' bucket lists. That said, it remains uncertain why tourism is so central to the bucket list discourse. The next stage of research attempts to answer this question amongst other significant questions raised thus far within this chapter so far.

6.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter unfolded by presenting the results from Stage 1 data collection. One of the key findings of this chapter is the confirmation of the leading place of tourism within bucket lists. Secondly, an element of identity creation within the bucket list discourse became salient. Finally, the place of death within bucket lists remains uncertain – whilst death is present, its place and dominance within the bucket list discourse is not asserted.

As mentioned earlier, this chapter aimed to merely discuss establish the 'What?', rather than 'Why?' of bucket lists. The next chapter explores some of the established themes in more detail through the lens of the interviews. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the place of tourism, age, death and motivations for compiling a bucket list. Then, Chapter 8, finally answer the ultimate question: 'Are bucket lists about 'kicking the bucket' or living life to the full'?

Chapter 7

Research findings – Phase 2: Interviews

7.0. Introduction

Building on the outcomes of the survey discussed in the preceding chapter, the purpose of this chapter is to further enhance understanding of the bucket list as a contemporary phenomenon. In particular, new insights into the concept of the bucket list are developed through the lens of semi-structured interviews. As explained in Chapter 5, the results from the quantitative survey informed the development of the interview questions; whilst the quantitative survey established the ‘what’ of bucket lists, the qualitative interviews sought to uncover the ‘why’. However, one additional question was addressed in Phase 2 of the data collection that was not considered at Phase 1: the impact of Covid-19 on bucket lists. Covid-19 did not exist during the first stage of data collection. However, as a result of its unwelcome emergence in December 2019, much of the everyday behaviour and freedom of people was severely restricted. The daily lexicon of the British public was prominently supplemented with words such as ‘lockdown’, ‘tier systems’, ‘coronavirus’ and so on, and numerous leisure activities were prohibited, including non-essential shopping, group sports and holidays. Hence, given this disruption to everyday life, it was logical to consider the effects of Covid-19 on people’s bucket lists or, alternatively stated, it was impossible not to pursue that question during the interviews. Therefore, although most of the data in this chapter extend the discussion from Chapter 6 and the literature review, the consequences of the pandemic are also considered. By way of introduction to the discussion of the interview outcomes, the next section summarises the structure of the chapter, highlighting in particular specific themes, sections and objectives.

7.1. Presentation of data

Overall, this chapter attempts to unfold as a story, where new protagonists (themes) emerge at the right time and right place. To support, illustrate and provide evidence of

Table 7.1: Summary of Chapter 7 structure and content

Theme	Section within the chapter	Objective.
Bucket list definitions and format	7.2. Conceptualising the bucket list. 7.2.1. Defining the bucket list. 7.2.3. The Bucket List Item. 7.2.4. The format of the bucket list.	To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.
Consumption	7.3. ‘Under the microscope’: consumption and behaviour. 7.3.1. Bucket list and consumer culture.	To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.
Identity and social media	7.3.2. Reverse bucket lists and identity. 7.3.3. Displays of spectacle.	To explore critically the role of socio-cultural motivations for compiling a bucket list.
COVID-19	7.3.4. Bucket lists and COVID-19.	To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.
Motivations for compiling a bucket list	7.2.5. Serious vs casual bucket list. 7.4. Bucket list motivations. 7.4.1. Bucket lists as anticipated nostalgia. 7.4.2. Bucket lists and meaning making. 7.4.3. Fear: to write or not to write? 7.4.4. Completed bucket lists: towards ‘good’ death. 7.5.5. Bucket list as a legacy.	To explore critically the role of socio-cultural motivations for compiling a bucket list.
Death perspectives on bucket lists	7.5. The human condition. 7.5.1. Bucket lists for mortals. 7.5.2. Age of the bucket list. 7.5.4. Death as a birth of bucket list. 7.5.6. ‘Kicking the bucket’ or living life to the full?	To examine bucket lists within contemporary social perspectives on death and dying.
Travel	7.6. Travel perspective on bucket lists. 7.6.1. ‘Escaping and finding’. 7.6.2. Holiday or bucket list? 7.6.3. ‘The worm at the shore’: death perspectives on travel.	Explore to what extent travel features particularly in bucket lists.

the description of the themes, extensive use is made of interviewee quotes throughout the chapter. It should be noted that such quotes are presented in italics and are accompanied by the participant number. Each theme from the interviews corresponds with a specific section and each section corresponds with the research objective. Table 7.1 above summarises the themes, chapter sections and objectives for easier access to a specific discussion.

7.2. Conceptualising the bucket list

I hate the word 'bucket'; it is restrictive. It implies an end point and is 'contained' and when full it spills out. I'd rather have a river list: it's continuous, it is fluid so not restrictive, it's gentle and you can pick up new goals and aspirations along that journey, see different 'views' so you may change your goals and aspirations because of what you encounter along the way and its changeable. I imagine the view in a bucket would be quite boring and limited! It can be influenced by another person dipping their toe in a river, creating that ripple effect so others can influence your river list too and you might merge with another as do rivers, you may get into a collective larger goal with the sea! But still it's always moving. Life doesn't stand still; the Earth doesn't stop moving so why should we? (Personal message from Participant 2 immediately following the interview).

This chapter opens with a quote from Participant 2, who was interviewed at a very early stage of the qualitative data collection. Without a doubt, this statement pointed to the significant challenges and uncertainties in building our understanding of bucket lists. First, it was clear that the bucket list is not a mellifluous, 'liked-by-all' concept. Indeed, as will become evident as this chapter progresses, the term is not favoured by many. Second, at the time of the interview, it was unclear precisely why this participant found the concept of the 'bucket list' so restrictive. And finally, the quote pointed to the ambiguity of the format of the bucket list, with no indication of what form they might

take. Taking these challenges into account, this chapter seeks to uncover the significance and meaning of the bucket list, addressing questions such as: what is the difference between a wish list, a list of countries to go to and a bucket list? And does a bucket list have to be written down? Some of the initial questions that are answered are particularly concerned with the definition and the format of the bucket list. Subsequently, this discussion leads to the emerging theme of the duality of bucket lists, akin to yin and yang, which is consistent throughout this chapter.

7.2.1. Defining the bucket list

All participants were aware of the concept of the bucket list. That said, two paradoxes appeared during the interviews. First, participants were eager to refer to the bucket list as anything but a 'bucket list'. That is, terms such as 'wish list' were more frequently utilised. Second, without exception, those participants who claimed not to have a bucket list nevertheless referred to their bucket lists later in the interview. For example:

But yeah, I mean ultimately, you know, when the, the questions you had, questions for people with and people without the bucket list, then I said I don't actually have a bucket list. But in effect, the more I think about it and the more I realize that I have... I have something like that in my mind. Yeah. So, I mean, I would like to go, if you ask me what I would like, to go to South America, you know, I'd like to go there. Chile...I've heard. It's wonderful. I'd like to go to Peru, Machu Picchu, you know South America. Whether you know, if you said to me a continent to go to, it would be South America. And that would be my wish list. (Participant 20)

I might just change my mind. I think I do have a bucket list, but I haven't written it down. (Participant 19)

One of the most probable explanations for why many participants initially believed they did not have a bucket list lies in the perceived nature of such a list. That is, many believed that a bucket list must be written down – a mental note of a list of things they

wished to do could not be described as a bucket list. However, as the discussion progressed, participants came to terms with their possession of a bucket list, regardless of its format: *'It's not written down, but I have things I want to do. So, I suppose it would be a bucket list then* (Participant 6). The two paradoxes (avoidance of the term and eventual agreement to bucket list ownership) raised the question of whether, regardless of personal acknowledgement, in reality everyone has a bucket list, though disguised by other definitions. Indeed, one interviewee suggested that not only have bucket lists become engrained in contemporary culture, but also that everyone has one:

Yeah, I mean, I, I think everybody probably has one, to be honest. It's just that I mean, in my view, you know, a bucket list is...it's been popularized, as we know by the movie, it's been... the concept of the bucket list has been popularly popularized by, you know, you hear these people who have you know, they're given a terminal diagnosis. So they go online and say, these are the 50 things I want to do before I can't do them. So, it's become a kind of social institution. (Participant 9)

But, if most people do indeed have a bucket list, albeit unconsciously or masked under alternative terms, why is the term 'bucket list' so unappealing to them? It is believed that the answer lies in the overt association of the bucket list with death:

I've never had someone go that 'I'm going to have to fulfil my bucket list this weekend'. But maybe that's because of your social etiquette and nobody really wants to be seen as a weirdo, because if someone said to me, 'I'm going to do a bucket list', you know, I would automatically think, are you dying? You OK? Something terrible happened? Are you going to prison? Are you going to disappear for a while? (Participant 7)

This ambivalence towards the bucket list's death connotations was also shared by other participants:

So, it has crossed my mind. I mean, I think the term itself is a little bit strange. It's what I think everyone knows what it means. Takes you a minute or two to figure out why it's called that. So, it's not a term I

would use. Well. The concept, I wouldn't say I have one as such, but there are definitely places in my mind that I think I really want to go, that I want to do that. So, yeah, I think probably a lot of people you speak to would say they definitely want to do that and they want to do that, whether it's always in the context of before you die, you know, say it like that, I'm not sure. (Participant 8)

If I'm honest, I'm not quite sure why it has to have death in it. If you want to go travelling, why do we have to have this kind of melancholic reference to death? It's a bit like... I saw a Landrover sticker the other day. And they've got, they say stuff like, if in doubt, go flat out and these sorts of lifestyles. I saw one the other day, which was 'adventure before dementia'. And I thought, well, adventure, fine. But, you know, do we need the dementia? Is that going to make you do something more adventurous? The fact that you could you know; you might go into a care home and eventually die? I don't think about death when I make decisions about if I'm going to do something or not, I guess is what I'm trying to say in everyday life. I don't think I do. Not consciously anyway. (Participant 15)

It is perhaps for this reason – the widespread association of the 'bucket list' with life's finality – that several participants used the alternative term: 'wish list' (Participants 1, 15, 20). Yet, what is the difference between a 'bucket list', a 'wish list' and a 'holiday list'? This question was subsequently posed to those participants who used the term 'wish list'. In response, Participant 15 suggested: '*... I would have thought a wish list is just something at the back of your mind. I think that's the thing is there just at the back of my mind that rather than when I think of a list, I think it kind of almost formulated something a little bit more tangible*'. Conversely, Participant 15 suggested that a bucket lists is a more tangible means of organising goals. Participant 20 offered an alternative perspective:

So, I do have a wish list. It's not that important to me because I'm not that driven. I'm not that I have, you know, I'm not somebody who 'I have to do that'! You know, I know there are people who are kind of, you know, if they want something, then they have to have it or

otherwise. I don't have to I don't really feel like that. But there are a lot of things that I would like to do. So, somebody would say, I have a bucket list and I have to accept that. Yeah. So even though I may not like the term, then I'm aware that I have, I do have one essentially, I suppose. Yes. And you don't have anything written down, you know.
(Participant 20)

From this perspective, not only does the bucket list discourse begin to divide into strands of written and non-written bucket lists (for reasons more closely considered later in the chapter), but variations in attitude can reflect differing levels of commitment to the bucket list. Whereas Participant 20 is not 'that driven' towards ticking off bucket list items, Participant 1 is much more determined to complete the list: *'It's what I'm gauging the success of my life, I suppose based on this. This is the stuff I want to do'*. But what does this duality of attitudes depend on? Why are some more committed to the phenomenon of bucket lists than others? This question is considered in later sections but, preceding this discussion, other important questions must first be addressed. In particular: what counts as a bucket list item? And also the initially unexpected question: what formats do bucket lists take?

7.2.2 The bucket list Item

During the interview, those participants who claimed not to have a bucket list were asked whether they had long- or short-term goals instead and, when questioned about the difference between such goals and a bucket list item (BLI), many were unsure about the answer. It was particularly interesting to discover what transforms a goal into a bucket list item. Below are several BLI characteristics that were identified from the analysis:

- i. Cost
- ii. Effort
- iii. Long-term
- iv. 'Tickability'
- v. Meaning making
- vi. Endlessness

As identified earlier in this thesis, bucket lists can be costly and, in the interviews, some participants attempted to 'put a number' on that cost. Although their answers varied from between £200,000 (Participant 1 and 3), to £50,000 (Participant 4), there was consensus that, in general, completed bucket lists do not tend to come cheap. Furthermore, it was acknowledged they also require some degree of investment or commitment, be it financial, physical, emotional or temporal: *'It's going to take time and effort and I'm probably only going to do it once. You know, it's not something that you would do over and over again, maybe because of the cost or if it's far away or something'* (Participant 8). Participants also associated long-term (as opposed to more immediate) goals with bucket list items: *'It's not like... you don't put something on your bucket list if you're going to do it that week or anything or if you are doing it that day. It's just it's more long term, I think'* (Participant 5).

Another interesting characteristic of the bucket list item is its 'tickability' – or the ability to complete or achieve it. However, although this characteristic may apply to some goals, it can be argued that others might lack this precise point of completion, such as learning a language. However, for most bucket list items, 'tickability' is important:

Because that's sort of... I mean, to me a bucket list i... an item on the list would be something very specific you want to do, that you've done it, you know. So, I want go to the Eiffel Tower, you know, to climb Mount Everest or whatever it might be. But I think the kind of things like learning a language or cookery school, you know, those are ongoing life skills, which are not necessarily bucket list items.
(Participant 9)

That said, as revealed in Chapter 6, many survey respondents included 'learning a language' in their top-5 bucket list items. So, at what point can that item be crossed off? Perhaps the ability to hold a conversation with a native speaker would suffice for the item to be ticked off the list? Although this question is beyond the scope of this research, the temporal element of the 'tickability' of the BLI is worthy of further attention.

Significantly, the interviews revealed that even the most superficial BLI is underpinned by a sense of meaning making: *'So, I think it's to do with meaning making. I think that's*

what it comes down to... it's giving life meaning (Participant 16). Even a BLI that enables one to merely keep up with the Joneses through collecting places enhances one's self-esteem: *'You can almost feel a little bit more cultured and therefore more relevant if you'd been to a lot more places, you know'* (Participant 1). More generally, from an existential perspective, bucket lists also differ from ordinary goals in terms of the meaning they bestow upon an individual's life:

You know, I mean, I think there's a difference between just things you want to do because you want to do them and the things that you really, really want to do. Because if you were in the kind of existentialist position to be able to look back on your life at that moment of passing and to have, you know, contentment or regrets, then, you know, I think the sort of things that would be on the list would be those things you say you know, I'm really glad I've done that, you know? I mean, I'm sure you've had them as well... I've had days, for example, you know, walking in the hills, you know, I think, I had to walk, and I get back. And I think, you know, I thought if today was my last day on this planet, I'd be happy. It was a great day and so this because those are meaningful things which say, yeah, it's been good, but then there's just things. Well, I went to see a movie. Did this and did that? So there are different things that have different meaning.
(Participant 9)

Indeed, throughout the analysis of the interviews, meaning making emerged as a dominant theme and, as will be discussed later, is one of the key motivations for having a bucket list.

Finally, the recurring theme (from Chapter 6) of BLI endlessness was identified on numerous occasions in the interviews:

There's no end to life. Life catches up with you and then that's it. But if you live forever, your experiences live forever. If so, if we can live to... if we can live forever, we probably you know, the world changes. People change all the time. So, your bucket list will forever be, I think; I don't think there's ever an end to a bucket list for me. I'm sure some

people would be there and then they'll be happy and satisfied and achieve their goals. But 10 things on the bucket list now and be like, if I can achieve these 10 things before I die, I would have done everything I wanted to. But I'm not I'm not that way inclined. I think the world's too big, too vast to ever know what I really want to achieve or what I want as a goal. But I will always have ideas of places I want to visit and explore, things I want to achieve. So, I think my bucket list is just a flexible mental list of things that evolve with me as I grow up, as I move through life. But like I said, yeah, I'm not as clinical or rigid in my thoughts to what I want to achieve. (Participant 10)

Indeed, the interviewees could not see and, perhaps more importantly, in general did not want to see their bucket lists ending. The meaning of a completed bucket list is also discussed later in this chapter but, for now, it is important to return to the paradox identified earlier. That is, individuals tend to deny the ownership of a bucket list yet, when prompted, they can excitedly name all the goals that they wish to pursue. The issue here lies not only in the fact that the term 'bucket list' may not be favoured by many (owing to its death connotations), but also in the perception that the 'true' ownership of a bucket list requires a physical list with numbered experiences. As Bell (2020, p.48) argues in his 13 rules of bucket list writing, there is a need to 'only claim if written' because it otherwise diminishes the 'Bucket List philosophy'. In reality, however, this is an unhelpful misconception, for several reasons. First, the bucket list is a fluid, ever-changing concept:

So in terms of having, like, an actual definitive thing where I say I want to do this, but now if you ask me to say, right, well, if you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be? I could probably name, you know, a short number of places I really want to go. So maybe five or 10, if I could probably quite easily do that, I suppose I've never really looked at it in the context of having that list because things change over time or whatever. (Participant 8)

Therefore, at times, writing down a list may not contribute to a sense of accomplishment, for items may 'grow old' and become irrelevant to the bucket list owner. Second, a physical bucket list may, as discussed later, be restrictive to the point

that it may cause of sense of fear that would prevent an individual from writing it down. And finally, this common misconception about the form of the bucket list may, in fact, cause some to believe that they do not have one whilst, in reality, they do. This particular dilemma is examined in the next section.

7.2.3. The format of the bucket list

There is without a doubt a link between the format (written or non-written) of the bucket list and personality traits (see section 7.2.5). That is, for some, written bucket lists facilitate their successful completion whilst, for others, the prospect of writing a bucket list down arouses a sense of fear. For this reason, often those who do not write a numbered, linear bucket list do not perceive themselves as bucket list owners. However, as argued within this section, bucket lists can take different shapes and forms. In other words, bucket lists do not necessarily have to be linear, numbered and written down. This particular idea was highlighted during the interview with Participant 20 and subsequently a personal conversation with Participant 6. To illustrate this complex topic, a story must be told.

On occasion, I present guest lectures on the bucket list. During one such lecture the students were, as always, asked if they had a bucket list and only one hand was raised to confirm bucket list ownership. After the talk, the students were encouraged to write down their bucket lists. As expected, those allegedly without a bucket list effortlessly wrote long lists of items they wish to pursue in their lifetime (that again, returns to the idea that, perhaps, everyone has a bucket list, albeit not formalised with paper and ink). However, what was most interesting was the format of students' bucket lists: they were identical. That is, students wrote a 'traditional' bucket list comprising around 10 numbered items, all in linear order. To illustrate, an example of a student's bucket list is provided in Figure 7.1.

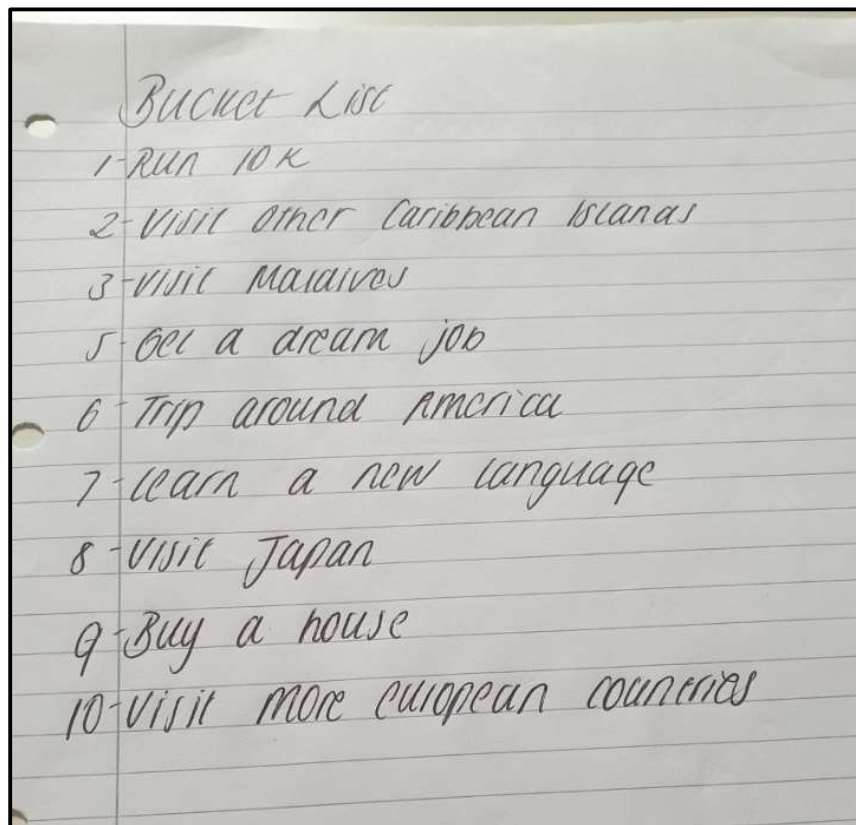
This appeared to confirm the accepted form of the bucket list, until one particular interview. Participant 20 suggested the following:

I would see my bucket list as more like a mind map if you wanted me to visualize it... It is more like a mind map of different things that are happening.

Maybe a bucket list comes in lots of different, many ways, sort of. You perceive a bucket list and it sort of manifests itself in lots of different ways. And so it's not just a typical bucket list, a to do list. It could be something else, it could be something that you always had in the back of your mind or something then you're going to do, you know

Yeah, I would see it as that, that the minute you say list, it kind of makes you think of something linear, doesn't it? You know, almost like these are things I've got to do, as a list. (Participant 20)

Figure 7.1. Student's 'traditional' bucket list.



Later, Participant 20 sent visualisations of their bucket list (please see Figures 7.2.-7.4) alongside a video-recording explaining the motives behind each mind map. As

Participant 20 said: 'My bucket list is just understanding who I am and what I'm interested in'. What is very interesting about the participant's mind map bucket list is that all items on the bucket list are aligned with the participant's personal interests, which supports the argument that bucket lists can be a means of expressing one's own identity. That is, the participant underlined their interest in learning new skills, stories, history (in particular documentaries about the Holocaust), travel, as well as a sense of curiosity: 'I'm a searcher as well, I'm looking for things, I'm looking for answers, I'm curious'. The interest in history is evident in Figure 7.2., where the participant put places like Auschwitz, Ann Frank museum and Dachau on the bucket list.

Figure 7.2. Bucket list mind map. The dimension of history.

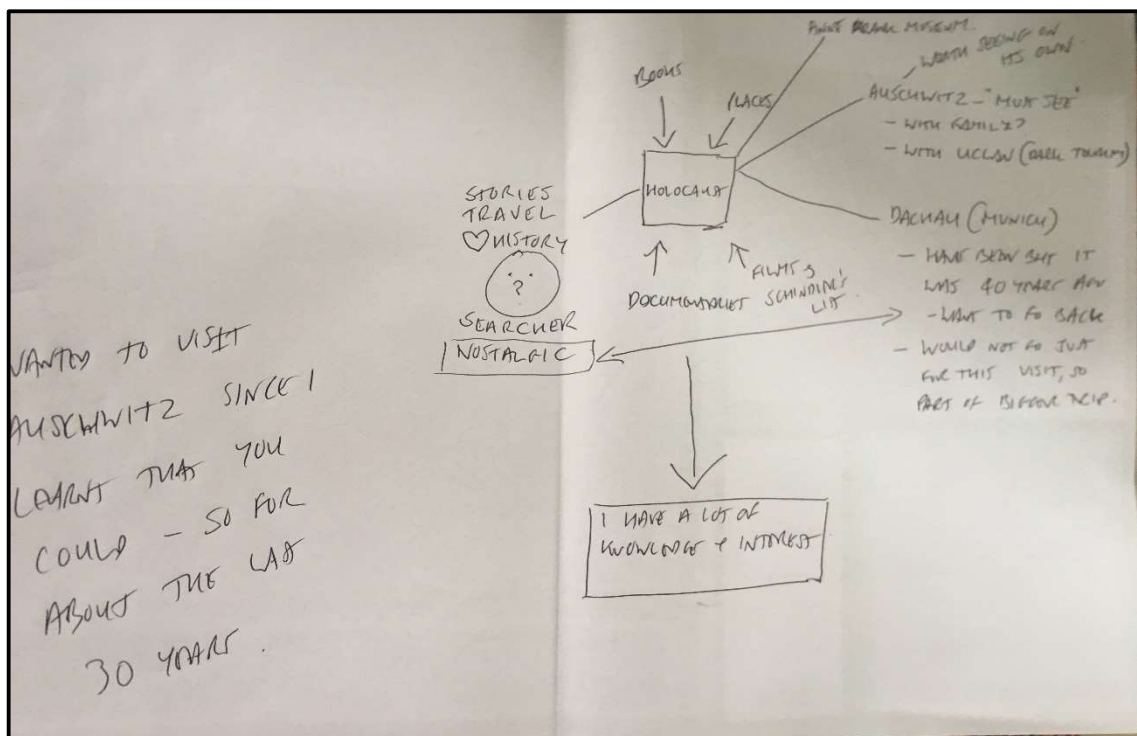


Figure 7.3. highlights the learning dimension, with the goal of making shoes, perhaps locally in the UK or even Italy, which the participant had wanted to learn for the last 10 years. This goal is 'scheduled' for the next 10 years or after the retirement. Another interest concerns sewing classes (which Participant 20 now pursues – one item off the list!), which the participant decided to pursue since their mother's death 3 years ago.

The last mind map (Figure 7.4.) covers the travel dimension with destinations mainly in South America. What is particularly interesting is that all three dimensions: history,

learning and travel, involve an element of travel. Another characteristic of the bucket list mind maps is that they are 'fluid' and 'dynamic', with goals moving 'on and off the radar'. Participant 20 further suggests that, in other words, their bucket list is 'layered' as if the 'plates that are spinning'. These words truly represent the form and the dynamic that bucket lists may take. Although this particular bucket list is written down in the three dimensions, it remains free-flowing, albeit with plenty of interesting information, such as the lengths of the time in the past spent wanting to pursue the bucket list item and the approximate timeline for the future goal achievement.

Figure 7.3. Bucket list mind map. The dimension of learning.

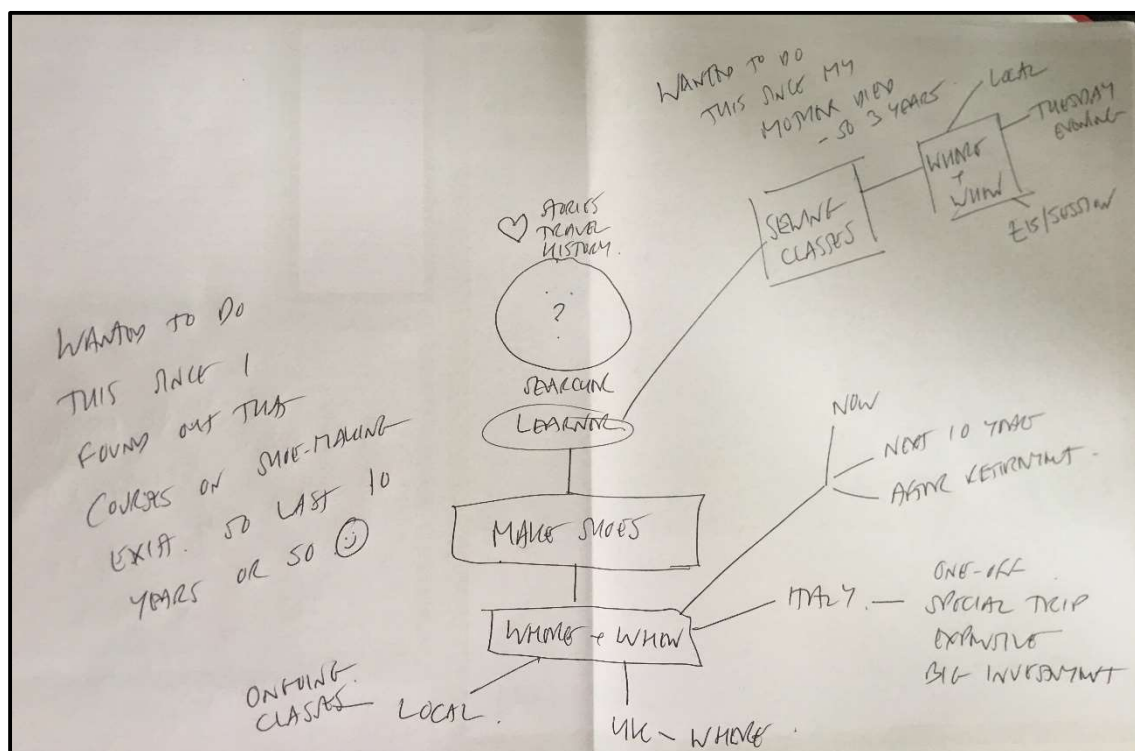
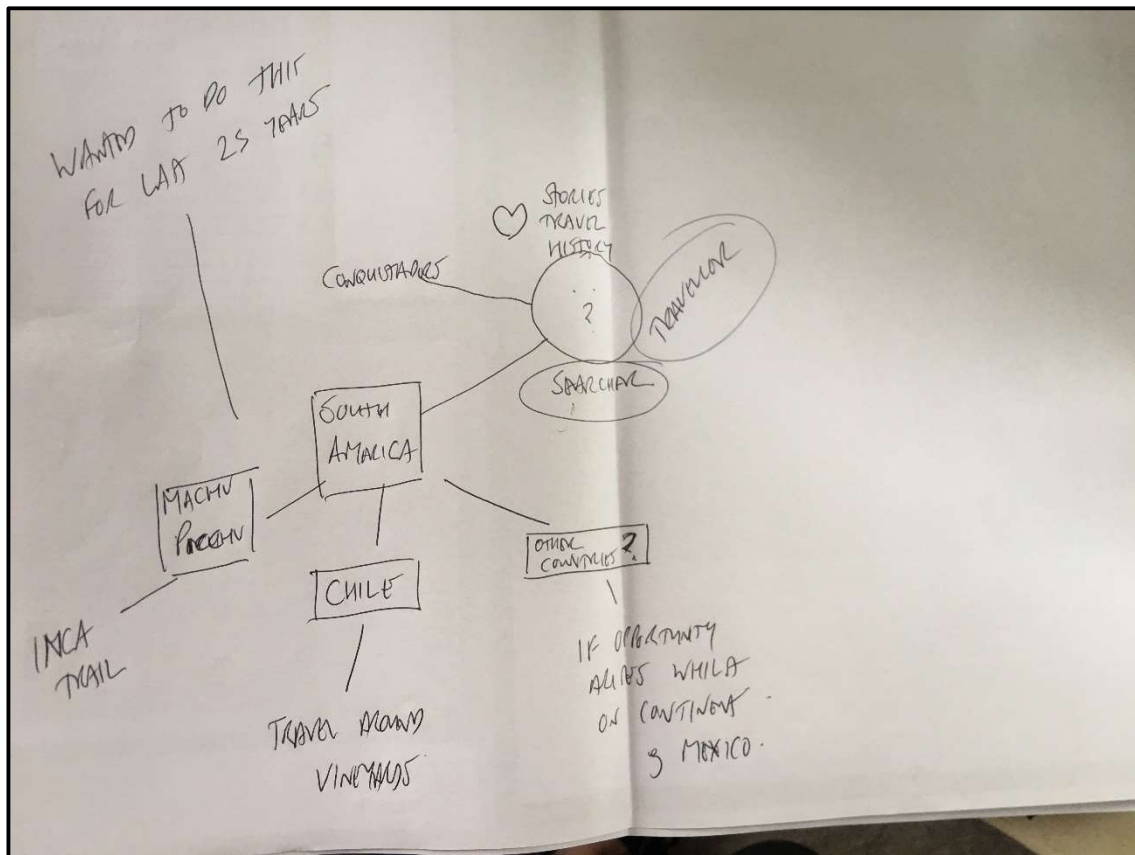


Figure 7.4. Bucket list mind map. The dimension of travel.



At the time, this finding was the only indication of a different format that bucket lists may take. However, a few days later, Participant 6 sent me their bucket list, providing another example of the various formats a bucket list might take (see Figure 7.5.). Therefore, although the specific question of the bucket list format was not pursued in the interviews, it appears that grounds exist for suggesting that a bucket lists does not necessarily only take the form of a linear, numbered list; bucket lists may also be visualised as mind maps, wish paintings or chronological timelines.

Figure 7.5. Bucket list painting. Goals illustrated: having children, walks in Silverdale, buying a Tesla, travel, growing own fruit and vegetables, working in a laboratory.



This finding broadens the scope of what ‘counts’ as a bucket list. In other words, moving beyond a tangible, written ‘the list’, the bucket list can also be a visual or mental representation of life aspirations. This again echoes the idea that, perhaps, everyone has a bucket list, though without formalising it as a ‘traditional’ linear and numbered list. It may then be questioned whether the manner in which individuals visualise their bucket lists is, in some way, linked to their personality traits. Although this issue is beyond the scope of the thesis, there are nevertheless reasons for suggesting that attitudes towards the bucket list may depend on an individual’s personality traits. This is considered in the next section.

7.2.4. Serious vs casual bucket list

By way of introduction to this discussion, it is important to return to the question posed towards the end of subsection 7.2.1. That is, why are some individuals more determined to complete their bucket lists than the others? Alternatively stated, is there a distinction between an 'ambitious' and a 'phlegmatic' bucket list and, if so, what does that distinction depend on? In the interviews, a number of participants began to refer to the duality of the nature of the bucket list:

You know, you talk about having a bucket list. It's not just having a bucket list, maybe it's about experiencing the bucket list, you know, maybe that's two elements to it. Maybe there's like a hard core having a bucket list and there's...another lighter... Maybe there's like two different forms... maybe it has different phases. Maybe, you have a bucket list and then you have something that you think isn't a bucket list, just as with me. But it is really when you start thinking about it...

(Participant 19)

In their interview, Participant 19 suggested that there were two sides to a bucket list: 'hard core' and 'lighter'. The 'hard core' list arguably demonstrates dedication and is easily recognised as a 'bucket list', whereas the 'lighter' version could be disguised as goals, a 'wish list' or another alternative (although is, as confessed by Participant 19, in essence a bucket list). Another participant (16) recognised the difference between the dedicated and the relaxed bucket list, explaining the distinction in the following words:

You can distinguish them between serious and casual. I think there are serious bucket lists [...] which are literally a list, they are written down, you know, and they are ticked off. You know, this is something which people actively pursue. So they have these lists and they actively pursue them. And then there are casual bucket lists, which probably I have and I think we all have to a degree. So when I said I don't have a bucket list, so I don't have a serious formal one, but I probably have a casual list. And these are things where, you know, yeah, we have kind of desires and things, but we don't pursue them. But if the opportunity arises, we'll take it. But we don't actively pursue, so I think there's this

difference between kind of serious and casual, perhaps, which probably links. And I use those terms because I think it links with serious and casual leisure. (Participant 16)

As can be seen, the idea that, to an extent, everyone has a bucket list reoccurs in the findings. What is particularly interesting is that, according to this interviewee, these generally unacknowledged lists can be classed as 'casual' bucket lists whilst more formalised lists associated with 'tickability' or the determination to complete them can be classed as 'serious'. This echoes the work of Stebbins (2007; 2008; 2012) on so-called Serious Leisure, and the comparison between the bucket list and serious/casual leisure is not unfounded. As Participant 8 suggests, bucket list experiences are largely leisure related:

...So, I don't think it's specifically travel. That is a big part of it. But I suppose it focuses on your leisure life doesn't it? You know, you travel, your events, you know, all the people say, like, I want to stay at the Ritz, I want to stay at the Balmoral in Edinburgh. You know, I want to stay because I've been there a couple of times with students. I wanted to stay over there for one night. You know, so that will probably be on my bucket list. The idea of some kind of leisure experience, not necessarily something passive, but something where you're actually experiencing something in that way.

Within that context, it is important to define what is meant by 'leisure'. According to Stebbins (2007, p. 4), leisure is an 'uncoerced activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both), use their abilities and resources to succeed at this'. To this end, it is significant to note that the serious and casual bucket list divide borrows only to a certain extent from the Serious Leisure perspective, in the sense that casual bucket lists are associated with terms such as 'enjoyment' or 'pleasure', whereas 'fulfilment' and 'reward' would be ascribed to a serious bucket list (Stebbins, 2007, p. 40). Hence, the achievement of bucket list items is important, if not essential, to the individual with a serious bucket list. In contrast, the casual bucket list owner is aware of meaningful, pleasurable goals but may not necessarily categorise them collectively as a 'bucket list' and, even if recognised as

bucket list, they are pursued by luck or circumstance rather than by effort and devotion.

The following quotes exemplify some of the serious bucket list attitudes:

Yeah, I tell myself that I've done it. You know, it's a tick off the list. That's one more step towards my fulfilled life- it's one more job done before I die. (Participant 9)

Yeah, it's that pursuing thing, which is that kind of serious list where you know, this is what I have to do to make my life meaningful. And therefore, I have to then find a way of achieving that. (Participant 16)

By way of comparison, the following statements indicated the ownership of a casual bucket list:

I don't know if it is a bucket list. It's more like some goals, but it's not... If I don't reach them, I'm gonna be okay with that kind of thing. (Participant 2)

I think it's because I'm not too bothered. I think I want it; it would be nice to do those things, but I'm not dead set focused on ticking them off and having to do that before I kick the bucket. It's just like, oh, well, if I manage to do this at some point, that would be cool. But, you know, my life doesn't have to be adventurous and really exciting and known about. So, I'm pretty easy. (Participant 5)

Notably, Participant 16 told two stories that illustrate the difference in determination in the pursuit of goals within the context of bucket lists. The two stories are presented below. The first story unfolds as a serious bucket list pursuit:

Many years ago I was working on a conference and the conference was basically an academic conference based in London. I was picking up the international delegates from the airport, from Heathrow Airport as part of my job, and then I'd take them back to the airport etc. So, I had to pick up this guy who travelled from Sri Lanka. It's quite a long journey and picked him up and he was really grumpy. He was very difficult to talk to and he wasn't happy. So, OK, so I said, OK, look, what I'll do is I'll take you straight to the hotel. No! Take me to Lord's

Cricket Ground. OK, so Lord's cricket ground for the world of cricket is Mecca. It's the Vatican. That's the heart of cricket. It's where it was first played. Still there. And in Sri Lanka, cricket is bordering on a religion. So, he said take me to Lord's. I said, well, there's... I don't think there's a game on. Don't care, take me to Lord's. So, I said, okay, fair enough. So I took him to Lord's, said, OK, well, I'll leave you here and I'll go to the hotel, drop your stuff off, get all the details sorted for you, and then I'll come back in say about an hour and a half, maybe something like that. Yeah, off you go. So, there are tours that you can go. There's a museum there, you know, the usual kind of stuff. And so, I came back, I was waiting outside and then sure enough, out he comes - didn't recognize him. He looked completely different, just looked just a different person and this huge smile on his face. And he just couldn't stop talking about where he'd been, what he'd seen, what he remembered. I was a bit like my golf kind of thing, I suppose. And if I'd said to him, shall I take you back to the airport now, he would have definitely said, Yeah, yeah, yeah, just take me back... So, you could see that it's a weight has been lifted from him. It was so... it made an impact on me because he even looked different to me. And he was interested whether I was interested in cricket, before I couldn't care less about... Have I seen? What did I think? As for the conference, he would always come over and chat. It was always about bloody cricket, you know, nothing to do with the conference itself. So, I remember that that was, oh, goodness knows how long ago. Twenty-five, twenty-six years ago. But it stayed with me, I thought, yeah, that was...his life was okay now you know, for him, you know, it was more than what he expected and you know, he could go to his grave happy now because he'd been there, because cricket is such a fundamental, such an important part of his life, as for lots of Sri Lankans. It's such an important part of who they are and national identity.

Evidently, this story represents a serious bucket list; the traveller from Sri Lanka remained focused, perhaps even tense, until his wish became a reality. The experience

of visiting Lords was epiphanic to the extent that it had changed his whole appearance – his life was now complete. The next story, that of a casual bucket list, is also a positive one. However, there is a significant characteristic that differentiates the two goal pursuits, which is outlined in the subsequent discussion:

I don't have a serious bucket list, but I have kind of probably casual ones, which would be nice, you know, and I kind of think if the opportunity arises, that will be recognised. So I'll give you an example of that. A few years ago, I was teaching in South Carolina in Clemson University and as a child, I was interested in golf, loved golf, and very odd as a child. It's kind of an older person's game. But as a child, I just was fascinated by golf and played quite a bit. And growing up, I used to watch the Masters Golf Competition, which is in Augusta, in Georgia, and it was just the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. And it looked incredibly hard. And all these, you know, and it was just wonderful. I just loved the look of the place. And so I... would be amazing to go to see that, because it was just the most beautiful course, you know, let alone the golf. Just the course is just so beautiful and incredibly difficult and... Yeah, and it was always kind of in the back of my mind – that would be really nice. You can't. You can't you know, it's very difficult to play there unless you're very wealthy. It's a private golf course. But they have this championship once a year. It's probably one of the most famous, I think. And I was a teacher as I say. I was doing some teaching in Clemson and Georgia is the next state to South Carolina, where this event takes place. And it was on while I was there. And of course, you can't get tickets. But the guy I was working with and doing some research, he said, well, apparently we can go there and we can wait outside the gates and the local people, a lot of the local people, get free tickets to keep them happy because there's a lot of disruption to that, you know, to their neighbourhoods. And they just go for a little while and they come out and you can buy their ticket from them. You see. So I thought, oh, OK, so I thought we might do that. So I thought, wow, yeah. So that'd be great. So the

opportunity arose and so we duly went off. It's about an hour and a half, two-hour drive or something like that. And like desperate, desperate beggars we were waiting outside these gates and just asking people as they came out and whether they would give up their tickets and it's illegal. They shouldn't, you know, so it's all a bit... there's police everywhere and all the rest. And we were there for maybe an hour and nothing was happening. And then suddenly this guy went, yeah, go on then, you know, what are you offering me? So I just had fifty dollars in my hands. Well, that's just fifty bucks here if you want it. And he just took it and gave me the ticket and I thought, wow, it's... for the friend who I was with, he doesn't really have an interest in in golf. And so he just said, just go. Don't worry about me. You just go. I was in and there's one hole [...] But this one hole, which is really famous, one of the most famous holes in golf, and it's the twelfth hole in Augusta, it's really small. Looks like it looks really easy, but it's not... stunningly beautiful - look it up afterwards. Twelfth hole, Augusta and I just went straight there. So I just I didn't care about anything else. I needed to get to the twelfth hole because this was this was what I used to watch as a kid. It was... I waited for the 12th hole. It was the most important. And of course, I got there and there was this sense of quite deep emotion, I think. So I was there and I was kind of in connection with when I was a kid, and it was "I've done this for you" kind of thing, it was a really kind of reflective... I mean, it's just golf for God's sake. And I sat there for about, I don't know, maybe half an hour with a huge smile on my face and it was just great. And seeing all the players come up. And then I very casually then went to the rest of the course and walked around. Yeah. And it was just that, you know, it wasn't something I actively pursued, but the opportunity arose. And I'm so pleased that I, I took it. And I think there is a metaphorical tick. It's metaphorical. It's not a literal one. It's a kind of. Yeah, I've done that. But that's... I'm pleased I've got that out of the way. So you don't realize how important these experiences are until afterwards where you kind of think, wow, that was really something that meant more to

me than I realized. So, I think that's why those casual lists, they're dreams, most of them, you know, they're dreams. And you just think, well it would be nice. It would be great. But hey, you know it might happen. It might not. (Participant 16)

As becomes evident, this is a personal story of Participant 16 who admits to being a casual bucket list holder. One of the main characteristics of this casual list is luck and chance. Indeed, the protagonist of this story did not deliberately strive towards witnessing the 'Golden Bell'. Moreover, the whole experience is described in words such as 'great' and 'nice'. However, after half an hour, the participant 'casually' left the course. Although, without a doubt, a very pleasurable experience, it was only pursued because the 'opportunity arose'. Indeed, it is the sense of determination towards the bucket lists that creates the divide between the serious and the casual bucket lists. Moreover, the 'afterwards' of the experience is also significant to the divide; whereas a casual bucket lists provokes merely pleasurable emotions, the serious bucket list experience leads to an existential conquering, sense of achievement and reward. Yet, it remains unclear what dictates whether one holds a serious or a casual bucket list, although factors might arguably include age, a terminal illness and personality traits.

Importantly, age plays a significant role within the bucket list discourse. Although discussed in more detail at a later in this chapter, it can be proposed at this point that the bucket lists of younger and older people will differ in terms of items and the reasons for including them. Hence, age may also reflect the degree of seriousness of a bucket list. Participant 15 explains this divide particularly well:

I think with younger people, say someone in their 20s, for example, I think they're quite likely to have a bucket list because it's quite popular at the moment. It's a form of popular culture, but also a way to justify a fairly extravagant lifestyle or set of choices. But I think for older people, maybe the motivation might be different. And it is actually a bucket list. You know, it's not just justified. This is because they actually want to do it before they die, which I would say is a true bucket list. If it is that that would make more sense to me. So I would say. This sounds like I'm having a go at young people, I'm not, I suspect younger people are just as likely to have a bucket list, but it's going to be a bit

more of a superficial exercise. And for people heading towards that end of their life, they're quite likely to have one. But it's more likely to be more meaningful. (Participant 15)

With this in mind, age, which translates into perceived death proximity, emerges as a variable for predicting the attitude towards (or seriousness of) the bucket list. For younger people, the prospect of death is more distant and, therefore, their bucket lists are more about '*...identity creation, conspicuous consumption, bragging, collecting places, collecting experiences, because that's the world we live in*' (Participant 9). However, for older people, perceived death proximity is much closer, thereby adding to the sense of urgency and determination to complete what then becomes a serious bucket list. However, in some cases, it is possible that perceived death proximity moves closer at a younger age. For instance, the news of a terminal diagnosis may prompt one to rethink the importance of the bucket list and commit to its completion. This then, as suggested by Participant 16, becomes a form of an 'extreme serious bucket list':

Well, I mean, there is a saying, which is that 'the silhouette of the guillotine focuses the mind'. So when you're waiting and you know your time is up, then you can become quite focused. And then again, it's "I want to do this before I die". So it's meaningful. It gives people peace. I would hope that that's what they're doing it for. And so I think it is just an extreme form of bucket list. It's an extreme form. It's an extreme serious bucket list. I can't put it any other any other way than that, I think I think that's that. (Participant 16)

That said, not only personally facing the 'guillotine' can render a bucket list serious; witnessing another person's critical illness might encourage an individual to rethink their goals and determination to complete the bucket list. This idea is further developed in the 'Death as a birth of bucket list' section (7.5.4). Finally, arguably one of the most important determinants of the serious/casual bucket list ownership are personality traits. Without a doubt, bucket lists are a reflection of personality:

It's a reflection of your personality, isn't it, really? You can say that about the leisure experiences that you have. You know, you go and do these things with that money and time that you got. It says something

about it, doesn't it? So, you know, the things that I did ten years ago, you know, every summer I'd go to festivals, I don't really do that now, now all the other things, you know, in ten years' time, I'll do all other things. So I think it's a reflection of your personality, probably at a given time. (Participant 18)

However, it should then logically be asked: what particular personality traits might predict the ownership of a serious/casual bucket list? Although a question undoubtedly beyond the scope of this thesis, one particular finding points towards what might be a plausible explanation:

I think you know that the idea of order and chaos, isn't it yin and yang, you know, in that some people like to live in, you know, the control freaks order and everything has to be in a certain order. And all the people who, you know, may be happy to work in the, you know, the dimension of chaos. And I'm quite happy with that. (Participant 20)

There appeared to be two dimensions: yin and yang. The concept comes from the ancient Chinese philosophy and religion and is defined as: 'two principles, one negative, dark, and feminine (yin), and one positive, bright, and masculine (yang), whose interaction influences the destinies of creatures and things' (Dictionary.com, 2021). Importantly, according to PesonalTao (2021), yin and yang are two halves of one entity, which are chasing each other and seeking balance. Perhaps, in most extreme form, death and life within the context of bucket lists are the yin and yang, in their equal form. However, yin and yang may only represent death; that is, acceptance (yin) and denial (yan). The discussion on death acceptance and denial is more broadly discussed in Chapter 8.

This conceptualising section of this chapter has sought to offer explanations of the nature and definition of the bucket list. In so doing, a number of initial insights with regards to bucket list motivation have been introduced in anticipation of exploring this in more detail in the following sections. However, what has become evident is that the term bucket list is not favoured by all, particularly owing to its negative connotations associated with death. Rather, several participants preferred to refer to the term 'wish list'. However, as suggested by Participant 15: *'I think part is people just making wish*

lists, but just calling them bucket lists because that's the zeitgeist of the moment'. That said, an important finding is the clear indication that, in reality, bucket list ownership is an often-unacknowledged occurrence because a bucket list manifests itself in many ways (be it a 'wish list', a mind map or a painting). Indeed, as the discussion of the interview outcomes proceeded, it became apparent that most if not all participants possessed a bucket list, although often in the form of a casual bucket list. That is, the bucket list is neither written down nor pursued with significant determination; rather a 'what will be, will be' approach is adopted. Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly those for whom the pursuit of the bucket list is a serious matter. The serious bucket list requires order, determination and effort, where nothing is left to chance. This particular divide, as discussed in the latter subsection, can be thought to be influenced by perceived proximity to death (age or terminal illness), as well as by personality traits.

The next section of this chapter now examines the bucket list 'under the microscope'. In particular, it aims to uncover the meaning of the bucket list within the context of consumerism, identity creation, social media and, at the time of writing of writing, the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic.

7.3. 'Under the microscope': consumption and behaviour

I suppose they're (bucket lists) quite popular because we're a sort of a consumption-based society, aren't we in the West. (Participant 1)

As previously established, bucket lists may be costly. More importantly, the findings in Chapter 6 established that bucket lists do not have an end; that is, the non-ending pursuit of consumer goods and services throughout life in general is reflected, according to the survey outcomes, in the ongoing quest to tick off the items on the bucket list in particular. In essence, then, bucket lists have become an integral component of consumer culture, an inherent characteristic of which is the symbolism that fuels the creation of identity or status (Sharpley, 2018). Therefore, the discussion in this section considers not only the element of conspicuous consumption within the context of bucket lists as revealed in the interviews, but also the wider implications for identity creation through the bucket list. Without a doubt, the role of social media platforms

that proclaim and describe the allure of potential bucket list experiences is highly influential to both; thus, the microscope zooms in on the impact of social media on bucket lists. Finally, given the timing of this research, it was impossible to overlook the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the bucket list and, hence, this section concludes with a consideration of the implications of the pandemic on the creation and pursuit of the bucket list.

7.3.1. Bucket lists and consumer culture

Undeniably, as a characteristic of the contemporary era, bucket lists are a part of a wider consumer culture. As defined by Sharpley (2018, p. 154): 'Consumer culture may be defined as the character, significance and role of the consumption of commodities, services and experiences within modern societies'. Moreover, consumption becomes a more prominent feature of everyday life for '...social lives are, in short, patterned, or indeed created, by the acquisition and use (that is, consumption) of things' (Sharpley, 2018, p. 157). The commodification of leisure, and in particular tourism, feeds the never-ending desire to consume tourist experiences. Furthermore, evidence from the interviews suggests that the perishability of the bucket list brings satisfaction accompanied with a greedy desire for more experiences:

Like I said, we're in the age of consumption aren't we. So, once you've done everything you think you wanted to do, you're going to find something else. You're not just going to sit back and retire, are you?

(Participant 1)

Some participants noted in particular the presence of bucket lists as a characteristic of a capitalist society:

And, you know, in capitalism, we're kind of conditioned to feel the satisfaction of consuming something. You know, if you stay in a nice hotel, you feel better about yourself than if you stay in a cheap hotel. If you spend loads of money on something and it's really good, you're going to feel really happy and pleased that you feel like you've made

value out of it. So, yeah, there's that there's a sense of consumption like anything, isn't it? Now, even if you just go to the supermarket, buy some really nice food, then you cook the meal. It's like great, that's really nice. So if you go on a really nice holiday or somewhere really out of the ordinary. Yeah, there's that. There's that sense. You've consumed it. I don't think it's an active feeling. It's a subconscious thing where you've achieved something just from the fact that you consumed something. (Participant 8)

What is particularly important within that context is the nature of bucket list experiences; their perishability, in general, results in an endless quest for more or, as Participant 15 defined it, 'The Wheel of Samsara':

Yeah, logically, if it's about consumerism, you don't decide to consume a number of products and then stop do you? It just keeps going and going and going. So yeah. What is it, the Hindus refer to The Wheel of Samsara? Yeah. Of life that goes round around and it's the same with, with things like greed just goes round, round, round, it never ever stops. Yeah. And the only way to remove yourself completely from that situation through meditation and take a different mindset if you're in that mindset, it's going to continue basically (Participant 15).

Whilst omnipresent consumerism emerged as a central theme of this section, what became apparent from the interviews is that not everyone was inclined to consume and pursue bucket list experiences. Moreover, for some participants, consumption was seen to be related to an individual's social background; specifically, bucket lists items are sought to reflect one's financial position: '*...when you make a bucket list, you make it up based on your financial status anyway*' (Participant 3). In fact, the pursuit of bucket lists based on social class differences was one of the unexpected themes to emerge from the second phase of data collection. The following fragments illustrate this in more detail:

I'm different, I mean, because I'm working class, I don't think people in the working class would have had a bucket list, it would have been to get married, to have a good job and look after your children and the

husband working and we didn't think about doing other stuff. But in a different class of people might have gone completely different, you know. But myself, it was about a means to an end and not thinking about going off, doing things that are going to cost a fortune. When you were saving up to live, really. (Participant 3)

A similar view was also illustrated by Participant 5:

I guess it's, I ...also feel like it's dependent on your circumstance, like, say, if you're more privileged than you, you know, working class, middle class, whatever it might be, I think it depends on your income as well and your environment. If you've got a stable home and a stable income, a bit like you're more likely to create a bucket list to be able to even consider those things than someone who hasn't even got an income or a roof over their head. (Participant 5)

Others went so far as to suggest that the social environment in which an individual is brought also plays a significant role in bucket list ownership: *'Having a bucket list depends on the social environment that you were brought up in, it depends on education and the imagination'* (Participant 11). Such views could lead to a simple conclusion that reflects Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 2013), namely, that esteem and self-actualisation needs can only be pursued once biological, psychological, safety and belongingness needs have been satisfied. In other words, the pursuit of a bucket list, associated with higher order needs, is only viable when individuals have satisfied their primary needs, or as Participant 5, suggested, have got a *'roof over their head'*. Therefore, in principle, the pursuit of the bucket list can signal a stable financial, social, psychological and biological condition.

However, Western consumer society in general is preoccupied with the pursuit of commodified leisure, not only for the pleasure it brings, but also for its symbolism. In other words, *'within postmodern culture in particular, this symbolic process inherent in consumption is considered by many to be its role in creating a sense of identity and status...'* (Sharpley, 2018, p. 157). Therefore, this *'Wheel of Samsara'* becomes a means of evidencing a lavish bucket list lifestyle; that is, becoming a symbol for conspicuous consumption. Whilst the first stage of data collection (survey) did not elicit conclusive

results with regards to the degree or influence of conspicuous consumption in the bucket list discourse (see section 6.6.1), the interviews, conversely, did point towards the role of conspicuous consumption in bucket list creation and completion. In fact, two participants particularly favoured the word 'bragging' whilst discussing the link between identity creation and bucket lists:

It's not that the list itself is popular, it's bragging about the list. You know, what you've checked off it – this is quite popular. It's, you know, the Instagram generation, aren't we? You've not been on holiday unless Facebook and Instagram know that you've been on holiday. So, they're quite popular because it's bragging rights, isn't it? It's not just your own personal list. It's what you can say down the pub, you know, when you're telling everyone about how great you are because you've been to this place and that place, I think that's why they're popular because, you know, that's just the way society is at the moment.

(Participant 1)

What becomes apparent from this fragment is that conspicuous consumption is specifically present in publicised bucket lists; that is, in bucket lists that are shared with others, be it via the social media platforms or through less specific means, such as 'down the pub'. Another participant supports this view in relation to publicised bucket lists:

Well, why do people publicize their bucket list? It's a form of conspicuous consumption, I guess. You know, people always like to tell other people what they're doing. We live in an era now... I mean, the bucket list has become popular in the era of social media. You know, I don't think... it's not coincidental, I don't think. The bucket list has become popular since social media has become popular, whether it's Instagram or FaceTime or whatever. And certainly, younger people and increasingly older people are more and more anxious to tell other people what they're doing. Now, the reason that might be... who knows, it's perhaps because we live in an increasingly uncertain kind of postmodern world where people create their identity through social media or whatever. So, I think the people who create a bucket list, it's about undoubtedly creating a persona and identity amongst their

social group, among society, because why else would you do it? It's, you know, whether that's a sign of confidence or a sign of insecurity that they have to tell people, I don't know. But I think, you know, there's a difference between a publicized bucket list and people just having their own personal moments ... It becomes a little bit more conspicuous consumption, identity formation that its purely people say, well, this is what I'm doing. Aren't I clever? You know, I've done this. I've done that. It's almost contemporary bragging rights to, you know, to have a list which you're then ticking off. (Participant 9)

As evident in from these two responses, bucket lists fuel a claim to 'contemporary bragging rights'. But what is more important is that consumption, and especially conspicuous consumption, not only contributes to an individual's self-esteem; it also facilitates identity formation, as hinted at on several occasions in the above quotes. Inevitably, consumption is interlinked with identity creation where 'pressure to spend comes from symbolic rivalry and from the need to construct our self(-image) through the acquisition of the distinctive and different' (Lyon, 2008, p. 84). Not only does consumption-based identity allow people to understand themselves, but also it 'signals to the world who the person is' (Therkelsen and Gram, 2008, p. 272). In addition, it is important to consider here the notion of identity creation through leisure choices as a 'place and space in which we truly become ourselves' (Gammon, 2014, p. 238). Specifically, tourists consume tourism in order to become themselves or, rather, to escape themselves and to construct a novel persona (Sharpley, 2018). This relationship is particularly noted by Thurnell-Read (2017, p. 58): '...there is a notable correspondence between the rapid emergence of the Bucket List concept and recent scholarly work exploring how tourism and travel are used to construct selfhood and identity'. This intricate relationship between bucket lists and identity creation was discussed in Chapter 6 (see 6.5.1.) but, although it became clear from the survey results that such a relationship exists, little was identified about what exactly bucket lists may reveal about their owners. This question is addressed in detail in the next section.

7.3.2. Reverse bucket lists and identity

One of the consistent themes throughout this chapter is the duality of the bucket list, be it serious/casual or public/personal lists. More such dualities are considered later but this sub-section is concerned with one relevant to the discussion of identity creation in particular – the original bucket lists and the reverse bucket list. In his *Bucket List Blueprint*, Bell (2020, p. 31) mentions the term ‘reverse bucket list’ which refers to a list of completed bucket list items in contrast to that of items yet to be pursued (the original list).

To begin with the original bucket list, a peculiar discussion took place during the interviews. For the most part, participants agreed that bucket lists can be a means of identity expression:

You know, if somebody's bucket list comprises only of mountains that they want to climb, that says something about them. If the bucket list contains lots of stuff about charity work, that says something amazing about them. There's nothing charitable on mine, you know, doesn't necessarily mean I'm selfish. It just maybe tells me, well, that's not my priority. You know, so... I might want to start thinking about putting some charitable things on my bucket list, I'd do a sponsored Kilimanjaro climb... (Participant 1)

Furthermore, participants agreed that bucket lists can be an expression of an individual's personality:

I think someone... like some people, for example, might put on there that they want to bungee jump or they want to climb Everest like whatever it might be. I think that shows that they're quite an adventurous person and they like adrenaline, whereas some people would be very different and they might have more traditional things on a bucket list, like have a family, raise children, get a dog, things like that. So, I think it tells a lot about what their personalities are like. (Participant 5)

Equally, however, some participants were less convinced about the relationship between bucket lists and identity creation:

I would say to some degree, although I would say probably most people bucket lists are probably quite similar. (Participant 4)

The person that was looking at that list...well it would actually, because if you get a list, your list would be like your wish and your dreams and if I actually did one it would be way above my financial thingy, I know it'd be impossible to do – to do a majority of the things that I'd want to do. But somebody with the means to do it... so I could write the same things down. But it doesn't mean I'm the same as another person, that wrote the same things down because I know I won't be able to achieve mine financially, unless there's a sugar daddy somewhere with a big load of money waiting to put in my pocket. I won't be able to achieve all them goals. So, somebody in a better position than me can put the same list down but will be able to achieve them. (Participant 5)

Overall, then, the research suggests that original bucket list may, on the one hand, reflect an individual's personality and contribute to creating their identity, providing that the list correlates with the individual's personal desires and reflects their financial resources. Ultimately, however, the bucket list represents what might be seen as the 'pinnacle of experience' (Participant 8). On the other hand, bucket lists may be exaggerated or 'borrowed' from other people's aspirations and ideas, thus failing to concretise the 'self' of the bucket list owner. Rather, bucket lists can be a means of attaining what is known as 'identity disguised', or the choice of being someone else rather than oneself (Gammon, 2014, p. 241). This, however, is not necessarily the case for the reverse bucket list which is, as explained above, a list of completed bucket list items.

Yeah, it's like well, I mean, when you start looking back on things you've done, you know, on a list, you know, places you've been – the actual doing them is very exciting. You know, inevitably, you know. I do. People do. You know, I get I still get a bit of a kick about talking to people about the places I've been. You know, this is what I guess it's part of the consumption aspect of the bucket list is that it's you know, it's people identify themselves by what might be on their list or the

things that they have achieved on their list. I mean, undoubtedly people identify through that. (Participant 9)

In other words, whilst the original, yet to be completed bucket list leaves a margin of error in constructing an individual's true identity (for whatever reason, be it unrealistic goals or outside influences), the completed journey of the reverse bucket list can be witness to what the individual has actually achieved. And importantly, the element of identity creation within a bucket list may result from the presence of travel-related goals, for 'By exploring the world, the traveller explores his or her own identity, so each new place she or he observes opens enriching possibilities for a new self' (Barker, 2015, p. 79).

To conclude, then, some bucket lists remain unfinished until the end whilst others become reverse bucket lists. Both are capable of bestowing a sense of identity on their owner; however, it is the reverse bucket list – the list of completed goals – that is more likely to be shared on social media or in a circle of friends and family, thus contributing the construction of self-identity. After all, as mentioned by Participant 5, bucket list items are merely dreams. However, reverse bucket list items are in all likelihood well-deserved achievements that allow people to measure and express themselves. One popular platform for enabling identity formation is, of course, social media: 'Whereas the adventurer of the past secured status through achievement, the post-adventurer has no such concerns as their gazing social network recognises and bestows value to displays of spectacle, style and show' (McGillivray and Frew, 2007, p. 74). Thus, in relation of identity formation, the next section examines the role of social media within the bucket list discourse.

7.3.3. Displays of spectacle

Surprisingly, perhaps, over the course of the interviews a significant proportion of participants spoke negatively about social media. Specifically, they were critical of the forceful and staged nature of social media. Although many acknowledged its influence on bucket list choices, some participants emphasised the need to find their own path on the bucket list journey. For example:

And I feel overwhelmed about, you know, you should do this and that and, you know, you should meditate and then you should work out and you should eat certain foods. And, you know, I feel overwhelmed. So I don't think social media sometimes, you know, is good for your mental health and for your bucket list, at least because, you know, in case to achieve it, you know, you look for something similar to your bucket list and how other people have achieved the same thing you want to maybe achieve. And I think, you know, you get the wrong idea. You need to go on your path. (Participant 6)

Furthermore, as a 'display of spectacle' (McGillivray and Frew, 2007, p. 74), social media portrays staged stories, whether through pictures or videos, that seek to validate someone's experiences:

Somebody might have gone 'Oh, I'm climbing this mountain' and they've done a selfie up there just to prove to everybody that they've climbed the bloody mountain and they're gone 'Look at me and this mountain'. There's a beautiful view behind you and you bother doing a selfie. Why are you not just sat on top of your mountain just looking at the glory of everything and really experiencing it. And it annoys me when people do that, you're not getting the value of it. Why are you not taking a picture of that view? It doesn't matter to anyone else; you'd probably show someone that picture and they'd go: 'Yeah, it's just sky', but it won't mean sky to anyone else. To you it will mean 'I was up that mountain and I remember how I felt when I was sat there looking at this scene and what I was thinking about, what it meant to me'. If you're having a picture, that's what you should be taking from it. Not ticking a box- 'I was here- jealous for me! What have you done?' You know, you can't be like that. What is the joy in that? (Participant 2)

However, despite the negative attitudes towards social media amongst participants, there was no disagreement with regards to the significant role it plays within the bucket list discourse. Yet, the question must be asked: why do people strive towards adopting social media bucket lists and, subsequently, sharing their own experiences? To answer

this question, it is necessary to, once again, retreat to Veblen's (1994, p. 24) wisdom: 'In order to gain and to hold the esteem of men it is not sufficient merely to possess wealth or power. The wealth or power must be put in evidence, for esteem is awarded only on evidence'. In other words, social media becomes a playground for the provision of evidence that is aimed at creating a certain identity. Participant 5 illustrates this argument:

I think vanity plays a big part in it as well. I think we... especially in the age of social media, I think we all just really want to show people that we're living a really good life and we're doing really cool things, whether we mean to come across in a vain way or whether it might be that that's a different question. But I think it's just kind of, again, programmed in us a little bit that we want some kind of validation. So I think it definitely makes people want to travel more so they can take the pictures and upload them and, you know, just to have people see it and show them how great their life is. (Participant 5)

However, one of the critical impacts of social media on potential bucket list holders is the capability to convince them to pursue a certain goal. In other words, instead of 'authentic', internalised bucket list goals, individuals consume the displays of vanity and aspire to match them with own displays of spectacle. The dangers of this influence of social media within the bucket list discourse is outlined by Participant 10:

I think we're all socially constructed. We're all influenced by our surroundings. So, I think we're completely influenced by everything that we take in social media, the Internet, all the content overload is all impacting on our desires. The books, the films, talk shows, blogs, photos, just so much content that people are consuming that it's so then they are not even control anymore. Most people, I would say, aren't even in control of their own bucket list. They don't even realize. More than anything, I think that they are so overwhelmingly... or some people have lost control of actually what they want to achieve isn't what necessarily they think they want to achieve. It's been put on them. It's been forced on them through what they've consumed and with the Internet. And as we move into this century, it's going to get

worse, I think, for most people, because as targeted marketing increases, people are going to be even more influenced by... By marketers, by promotional material that's directed to them and there's a lot of power there and data can almost convince people to do things they don't even know they want (Participant 10).

This fragment of the interview conveys a significant argument – people ‘aren’t even in control of their own bucket list’. It is uncertain whether that is the case for many bucket list owners, but what is certain from the above quotes is that the bucket list is susceptible to significant influence from social media which validates and even constructs people’s own or desired identities. More recently, however, as a consequence of Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions on mobility and other freedoms and behaviours, many became deprived of the means to forge identities through vanity projects. Therefore, during the second phase of the research which coincided with pandemic-related restrictions, it was deemed important to consider how Covid-19 has at that time impacted upon individuals’ bucket lists? The next section discusses that question.

7.3.4. Bucket lists and Covid-19

As mentioned earlier, the Covid-19 pandemic emerged after the first stage of data collection and before commencing the interviews at Phase 2. Therefore, beyond the immediate and practical impact on conducting the interviews (see Chapter 5) and to consider fully and critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture (Objective 1), it became impossible to ignore the effect of Covid-19 on bucket lists. Therefore, during the interviews, each participant was asked whether the pandemic had impacted on their bucket list. Whilst most considered a delay in ticking off items as one of the most critical effects, the more underlying effect of Covid-19 was that it enhanced the sense of urgency to complete bucket lists: *‘It gave me a bit of urgency, but it also delayed me starting which in itself has meant that it's made it more urgent’* (Participant 1). The same theme of urgency was evident amongst other participants:

So that seems more urgent to me now. I think if I had it on a bucket list, it would feel the same way as well because I haven't been able to do it and go anywhere. So now it's like, oh, well, hopefully I could do it next year. Yeah, I think it does add a bit more urgency for people.
(Participant 5)

I mean, I think that's the one thing in the current situation as well as in the lockdown. I've missed that, I get itchy feet, for want of a better word. (Participant 20)

As discussed previously (Chapter 2.1), the phenomenon of 'revenge travel' (2.1), that is, a significant increase in the demand for travel following months of being deprived of travel opportunities, may translate into a 'revenge bucket list'. As estimated by Audleyvillages.co.uk (2021), for example, post-pandemic British travellers will spend approximately £3,000 travelling to destinations such as Italy, Japan, Barcelona, New York and Paris. For now, however, the focus of bucket list items has shifted. According to Feneticwellbeing.com (2021), since the first lockdown there has been a trend in bucket list items away from travel and tourism goals towards improvements in people's financial situation and their health and wellbeing. The latter in particular was reflected in several participants' answers: *'But yeah, Covid has sort of really highlighted, put a massive, great big spotlight on the fact that you've got to put your health first'* (Participant 1). This theme of health concerns in the face of the pandemic is supported by Pyszczynski, Lockett, Greenberg and Solomon's (2020) study, which discussed the use of anxiety-buffering responses during the pandemic from the perspectives of proximal and distal defenses. It appears, therefore, that the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a process of reconsideration of values: *'I think this pandemic has shown that things happen for a reason. And I'm not saying it's right, but, you know, it's almost like a re-evaluation of what you, you know, we're supposed to be doing'* (Participant 19). This re-evaluation, inevitably, translates into bucket lists but, more generally, what aspect of Covid-19 has triggered the need to reassess life values? Participant 8 provided a thorough answer to that question:

I think even if it's not too much, the mortality, it's that fragility of life isn't it? So, like all these things that we take for granted, you know, things happen every year, whether it's birthdays, whether it's, you

know, Glastonbury, whether it's these markers that we have. And obviously we've got Christmas coming up. You know, whatever the government says, you know, that is not going to happen in a normal way. These are removed. And, you know, you're missing out on these occasions. And I've heard plenty of people, you know, all the people are saying things like, you know, you don't know how many of these that you've got left, you know, for people you know, our age. Well, you know, we've got lots more to look forward to. But, yeah, certainly if you're older, that probably has a sense of foreboding, doesn't it? And you kind of confronting that mortality on a more regular basis.
(Participant 8).

Therefore, in more Heideggerian terms, the prospect of death creates the 'possibility of impossibility' (Critchley (2009), whereby individuals feel the urge to live a fulfilled life. Potential death, then, becomes a trigger to re-evaluate life's directions and to take control of further actions, albeit in a shape of a bucket list. What is certain is that not only had the pandemic affected everyday lives but also, for many, it had also inevitably put on hold the completion of their bucket lists. This, however, was a catalyst for the creation of other goals, such as financial or health improvements whilst overall, the Covid-19 related confrontation with death had for many participants only added urgency to the principle of living life to the full. Whether this will result in 'revenge bucket lists' remains, at the time of writing, to be seen; however, it is clear that, despite the worldwide limitations on travel, individuals have not given up on their bucket lists.

This section of the chapter has attempted to put the phenomenon of bucket lists 'under the microscope', seeking to explain the intricate relationship between consumption, identity creation and social media, as well as to identify changes to the bucket lists under the Covid-19 pandemic. What has become more salient as this chapter unfolds is that there is a strong duality to bucket lists, be it serious/casual, publicised/personal or original/reversed bucket lists. Indeed, the bucket list is a complex phenomenon deserving of academic attention that is beyond the scope of this thesis. At this point, however, it becomes more apparent that identity creation is one of the potential motivations why people have bucket lists. Yet this is not the only motivation to compile

and complete a bucket list. In fact, the next section delves in more detail into the reasons why people compile bucket lists.

7.4. Bucket list motivations

Thus far, the research has revealed the positive aspects of bucket list motivations, whether the pleasures of consumption, life-defining dedication, identity construction or social media spectacle sustenance. Based on the evidence from the interviews, this section continues to delve deeper into the reasons why people compile bucket lists, identifying a spectrum from the good to the bad (and continuing with ‘the ugly’ in the TMT findings section to follow). In other words, if bucket lists are concerned with either living life to the full or ‘kicking the bucket’, this section commences with discussions of the former before progressing on to the latter. Moreover, if bucket lists are indeed related to positive psychology, as argued by Peterson (2011), the first part of this section serves to reinforce this supposition. This section goes on to question why people either start or avoid starting their bucket lists and, finally, the contribution of bucket lists towards the notion of ‘good death’ is assessed.

7.4.1. Bucket lists as anticipated nostalgia

Humans possess the remarkable capacity to travel mentally through time in both directions: recollecting past experiences and anticipating as well as planning future ones. (Cheung, Hepper, Reid, Green, Wildschut and Sedikides, 2020, p. 511)

One of the motivations for completing a bucket list, as revealed by the interviews, is a sense of anticipated nostalgia. From the perspective of psychology, nostalgia allows people to cope with existential threats by feeling more connected to the world (Routledge, Arndt, Sedikides and Wildschut, 2008). At the same time, anticipated nostalgia is the ‘the anticipation of feeling nostalgic for life experiences when looking back on them’ (Cheung et al., 2020, p. 512). Earlier discussed as a ‘reverse bucket list’, it allows individuals to solidify their identity and to reminisce on what has been done.

The original bucket list, however, allows people to, in a sense, look forward to looking back and to feel better about themselves, a process referred to elsewhere as 'nowstalgia' (Korin, 2016). The notion of 'nowstalgia' is particularly important here. That is, 'the production and distribution of visual documents with potential future nostalgic value by an individual who becomes increasingly engaged in its documentation and sacrifices her participation in the activity or situation deemed likely memorable in a time to come' (Korin, 2016). With many ticked off bucket lists becoming publicized, it is indeed questionable to what extent the individuals experience 'nowstalgia' whilst capturing the once-in-a-lifetime moment through a means of camera/phone.

But I think it's an excellent idea for many reasons, for example, for me just to look back on something, you know, to help have something to look forward to because looking forward to a holiday can be as pleasant as going on a holiday. (Participant 6)

So out of that, you know, it's good to sometimes make some sort of plans what you want to achieve, because it keeps your spirits up. Sometimes, you know, you are done with the spirit and you feel unmotivated and you feel sad or depressed and the bucket list helps. You know, it returns back your light and flame. You know that you want to do something. So, it's always good to have something to look forward to. That's how I came to a bucket list, because, you know, if you have that mood board with things you want to achieve, where you want to go, what you want to have, you look at it and you're like, oh, you know, I can't feel sad today because, there are so many things that I want, you know? So that's how I came to it, because I had goals. I had dreams. (Participant 17)

But also, there's a kind of you know, when I look back at my own experiences, looking back on the things I've done in the past. And that's the satisfaction of... it's as enjoyable looking back and thinking that I've done it as the actual doing in the first place. Yeah. So that is part of creating this sense of, I guess, a fulfilled life. But of course, what you know, what is a fulfilled life is differs from one person to another. (Participant 9)

Within the context of an anticipated future and, eventually nostalgia, rather positive responses were elicited from participants. Uncompleted bucket lists encourage looking forward to the completion of the items, whereas the reverse bucket list may facilitate nostalgic reminiscence on life's achievements. Either way, the sense of nostalgia, be it existing or anticipated, is present within the bucket list discourse. However, why is a sense of nostalgia important within bucket list motivations? As outlined in Chapter 3, nostalgia fosters a sense of meaning in individuals' lives (Routledge et al., 2011). Thus, meaning making is another important attribute of the bucket list motivations, which is discussed in further detail in the next section.

7.4.2. Bucket lists and meaning making

Since we only go through this life once, we have reasons to wonder how to make the most of it. The worse fear is not death, but the discovery that we have never really lived when the time comes for us to die. We all have the urge to desire to live fully, to do something significant, and to make a difference, so that we don't have to dread the death-bed realization that we have squandered away our precious life. Therefore, we dread a meaningless life as much as we dread the terror of death. (Wong and Tomer, 2011, p. 5).

Similar to anticipated nostalgia, for many participants the bucket list is concerned with meaning making in life or, more precisely, with the meaning of a multitude of opportunities which contribute to the construction of a fulfilling life. For example, according to one participant:

There's probably only a handful of things that you can actually do. So it's probably a sense of people making sense of that and thinking what are the most important things I really want to do? So I suppose it's a way of making sense of all these thousands and thousands of different potential experiences. (Participant 8)

Another suggested that a completed bucket list validates life, and in general, one's existence:

I think, you know, isn't that the point of a bucket list? You know, that validation. You've just taken something incredibly abstract as life. And you've made sense of it all. You found some sort of crazy equation and you come up with your own answers. Congratulations, you made sense of it all. (Participant 7)

Furthermore, Participant 16 linked the meaning making role the bucket list to its capability to narrate an individual's autobiography:

It's that meaning making thing, I think that I was here. I was here and I'm not going to be forgotten. So, I think that part is... So it's that the legacy thing, I guess. But also, there is that sort of sense of accomplishment as well. I think so from a kind of personal perspective. So it's not always about leaving a mark afterwards, but it's creating a mark in their own biographies for themselves. It's something that they can look back and go, you know, I did that and I feel good about myself. And you kind of give yourself a pat on the back, depending on what it is. It's that kind of pursuing something and accomplishing something, depending on what the list item may be. (Participant 16)

However, the concept of meaning making differs amongst individuals, not least depending on their age. As Participant 16 suggested:

And so I think there's a difference between young people's bucket lists and older people's bucket lists. I think when you're younger, a bucket list is about the adventure that's in front of you, what you'd like to do. You know, it's very much looking ahead and what you'd like to do. Where when you're older, the bucket list comes from looking back of what you hadn't done and what you should have done. Yeah. So I think they're very different. You know, they're very different in terms of where they're coming from. If one is quite optimistic and is looking forward to that adventure that's in front of you. And sometimes I think when you're older, it comes from regret sometimes and anxieties of

not of not lived properly and not a life lived. So, I think they I think they serve a very important purpose. I think they give meaning to people's lives. (Participant 16)

Finding meaning is the everlasting quest of humanity. As Cozzolino and Blackie (2013, p. 33) observe:

Humans seek meaning. In the art we view, in the suffering and the joy we observe others experiencing around us, and even in the most simple of daily events, we are in a near-perpetual state of interpreting all that we encounter.

In fact, the fear of meaninglessness is as strong as a terror of death (Wong and Tomer, 2011). Without doubt, bucket lists are meaning-making mechanisms, be it through anticipated nostalgia, travel, narrated autobiography, dedicated life goal or a little project. As Frankl (1946, p. 142) argues:

As to the causation of the feeling of meaninglessness, one may say, albeit in an oversimplifying vein, that people have enough to live by but nothing to live for; they have the means but no meaning.

Therefore, with reference to this quote, a bucket list is capable of bestowing meaning on an individual's life, especially if they have 'the means'. That said, meaning can be also acquired from things that do not cost: *'If you see a beautiful sunset, you can watch it for free, you can admire it for free'* (Participant 11). Furthermore, according to van Tilburg and Igou (2019, p. 544):

Perceiving life as meaningful reflects that one can make sense of life, at least in terms of explaining it according to a coherent frame of reference such as a cultural worldview, political ideology, or religion.

With bucket lists later on being compared to religion (see section 7.5.1), they may indeed become a framework for explaining life's meaningfulness. However, if bucket lists are so positive in their nature, why do so few individuals commit to writing them down? The next section addresses this question.

7.4.3. Fear: to write or not to write?

To understand why people compile bucket lists, it is equally important to seek the perspectives of those who refuse the ownership of such a list. An unexpected theme to emerge during the analysis of the interview data related to fear, pointing to a paradox. In other words, the reasons why people compile or, equally, avoid the process of actually writing a bucket list were found to be nested in a sense of fear. As Wilson (2009) explains, 'There are many things that motivate us. But the most powerful motivator of all is fear'. However, the sense of fear discussed here in terms of both motives (the pursuit and avoidance of writing a bucket list) is, without a doubt, different.

To begin, the fear that is related to the pursuit of bucket lists is, most likely, linked to FOMO – the fear of missing out. As discussed in the preceding chapter, 61.5% of survey respondents strongly / somewhat agreed with the statement 'I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me' (please see section 6.6.2 for more detail). The positive correlation with age also supported the argument that it is the younger generation who are more prone to experiencing FOMO. This was confirmed in the interviews, with many participants referring to the presence of FOMO within the bucket list discourse, in particular for younger people:

...when you're younger you do, you tend to compare yourself to other people, to your peers and if they've achieved this thing: 'Oh, all I want is to do that'! So sometimes it might even be that you're not interested in ticking that off your list, it's because somebody else, your mate has done it and you want to have done it as well. (Participant 2)

Participant 11 more specifically explained their sense of FOMO in relation to seeing different places, agreeing with the proposition that bucket lists are associated with FOMO:

Yeah, I think so, because of the places that I want to go. I really want to see them. And yeah, I think if it came to a point where I knew I was going to die and I couldn't go somewhere, I guess I feel like I would be missing out. Definitely. (Participant 12)

Whilst evidence from the interviews of FOMO was not surprising within the context of bucket lists (not least because of the outcomes of the survey discussed in Chapter 6), it

was particularly surprising that fear also emerged as a dominant factor when discussing why individuals avoid committing to their bucket lists. The difference was that those who committed to bucket lists were, at times, influenced by the fear of missing out, whereas those who avoided bucket lists did so because of a fear of potential failure: *'I think sometimes it can be a bit scary to actually do that. So a bit of fear could stop you from doing your bucket list as well'* (Participant 3). The prospect of achieving the pinnacle of desired experience was also described as *'scary': '...I think maybe I find it quite scary, actually, the concept of the being a peak of the mountain, so to speak...'* (Participant 7). The fear of failure was also evident amongst some participants who did not commit to writing a bucket list:

Or it could be disappointing, you know, to actually sort of write down four or five things that I might want to do. And for whatever reason, if circumstances dictated, you know, that couldn't happen, you know, that could almost be seen as some sort of failure in some way or another... (Participant 9)

It appears, then, that the fear of failure is a common barrier to committing to formalising and pursuing the bucket list: *'Maybe I actually have some sort of fear that or maybe there's a reason I try to avoid it, maybe writing something down and not quite hitting the target or something'* (Participant 7). This fear of commitment is understandable; as noted in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.1), goals that are written down or shared with others are more likely to be completed (Hefferon, 2011). Essentially, then, individuals who avoid formalising their bucket lists are less likely to complete them. That said, the pressure to complete the goals may seem irrelevant as long as no ink or paper has been wasted on the pressurising list. Equally, the fear of failing to get the most out of life is, paradoxically, one driver of completing bucket list. However, is the ultimate completion of the bucket list as much of a desirable outcome as it seems? To examine this question, interview participants were asked what it meant to them to complete a bucket list. Inevitably the responses were mixed; however, a theme can be summarised in the words of Participant 16, who referred to a statement by Eckhart Tolle:

There are two reasons for why we are unhappy. One of them is not getting what we want. The other one is getting what we want. I think

that is the problem. That is the essence of bucket lists is essentially encapsulated in that statement. (Participant 16)

Indeed, although some participants mentioned a sense of achievement and satisfaction, the underlying theme was the feeling of emptiness. This, of course, explains why bucket lists tend to be endless (please see section 6.3.5. for more detail):

I cannot think of anything more depressing than completing your bucket list, to be honest, for lots of reasons. I mean, that would really trouble me. I think that would really, really make me depressed, actually. However, if somebody is desperately ill and they've got, you know, certain things that they need to do before they go, then completing it might give them some contentment and satisfaction that, yeah, I did it, you know, and I can die peacefully and, you know, so but otherwise, yeah, I would imagine that it's it is an eternal list. (Participant 16)

Therefore, it can be questioned whether the prospect of completing a bucket list is a positive experience in the trajectory of life. Certainly, the urge to complete a bucket list may increase in line with perceived increasing proximity of death, as suggested by Participant 16. So, what does a bucket list add to the prospect of dying? More specifically, why is it so important to complete a bucket list when death appears on the horizon? The next section examines this question.

7.4.4. Completed bucket lists: towards 'good' death.

Kastenbaum (2004, p. 501) poses an important question that is central to this section: 'What can we say now about the relationship between a life and its death? Does having lived a 'good life' contribute to ending with a 'good death'?' Meier, Gallegos, Thomas, Depp, Irwin and Jeste (2016) go some way to answering this by concluding that the feeling that life was well lived contributes to the idea of 'good' death. Similarly, research by Block (2001, p. 2900) suggests that 'making meaning of one's life' can also contribute to the concept of 'good' death. It appears, then, that it is no longer (or not only) the

ritualised process of being surrounded by close family during the final moments that constitutes the idea of 'good' death (Kellehear, 2007). Rather, as Kastenbaum (2004) argues, it is, the experience of a 'good' life that contributes to a 'good' death: *'This concept of a good death on one of the, you know, the sign of a good death, apart from you being surrounded by friends and family, but is being content in your own mind that you've had a good life, a fulfilled life...* (Participant 9). Hence, whilst under ordinary circumstances the prospect of completing the bucket list may leave some feeling rather empty, as suggested in the previous section, when death is actually in sight, the bucket list can arguably bestow a sense of life-meaning and completeness, thus contributing to 'good' death:

I think I know, like in India, they have this idea of a good death and a bad death. And if you've kind of led your life well and got old, done all the stuff you wanted to do and then you die in your house peacefully, that's a good death. And then you've got bad death as well. And I think that idea is stronger in some cultures. And it is as we just seem to have death. But actually, it is possible to have a good death because what can...if you do everything you want and you can reach a certain age, you know, what more can you expect? (Participant 15)

As outlined by Participant 2, the concept of 'good' death becomes more of a pressing matter when individuals confront their own mortality, perhaps owing to a terminal illness. In such circumstances, bucket lists can facilitate 'ticking off' of final wishes in order to go 'at peace' (as fictionalised in the movie *The Bucket List*: see Chapter 1). This was explained by Participant 2:

Everyone's got a shelf life. Everyone's gonna die. But they're aware. They know exactly. More or less to the day, at least to the month. They'll know when that's likely to happen. So it puts that extra pressure on them to... You know, make sure they've done the thing, even if it's just like they've had a fallout with somebody, that could be something on that bucket list that they've got a fallout with someone. They've not been speaking to them for years. 'I want to make peace with them. I want to make it right. I don't want to have left this world without sorting it'. (Participant 2)

To summarise, then, the bucket list, as a mechanism for anticipating and experiencing nostalgia, as well as narrating one's autobiography, can bestow a sense of meaning on an individual's life, resulting in the prospect of a 'good' death.

This section has explored some of the motivations for a bucket list to emerge from the interviews, including anticipated nostalgia, meaning making and the fear of missing out, building on the preceding discussions of consumerism, pleasure or devotion (serious/casual bucket lists) and identity creation as drivers of compiling and undertaking a bucket list. However, thus far, these motivations collectively 'belong' to more 'positive' psychology. But, as Wong (2011, p. 1) explains: 'Positive psychology (PP) with its focus on what is good and right with people is Pollyannaish, because it ignores the bleak reality of human existence'. It is for this reason that the next section turns to existential motivations for compiling a bucket lists as considered through the lens of TMT.

7.5. The human condition

In every calm and reasonable person there is hidden a second person scared witless about death. (Roth, 2002, cited Greenberg, Vail and Pyszczynski, 2014, p.94)

Before delving into the more macabre motivations for compiling a bucket list that participants discussed in the interviews, it is important to locate the concept of the bucket list (and the interview outcomes) within contemporary social perspectives on death and dying. As argued in Chapter 3 of this thesis, terror management theory (TMT) offers the most appropriate conceptual framework for doing so. To summarise, TMT can 'be boiled down to a more simple equation: to cope with the problem of death, people convince themselves that they are somehow immortal' (Lifshin et al., 2017, p. 81). Although some may argue that death is absent from everyday thoughts, Wong and Tomer (2011, p. 100) assert that 'Death has invaded our living rooms in grisly detail'; encounters with death are much more common in contemporary Western society owing to the 24-hour coverage of natural and manmade disasters (including, for example, the Covid-19 pandemic). Such exposure may trigger what is known as

mortality salience. Pyszczynski, Lockett, Greenberg and Solomon (2020, p.2) argue ‘that the salience of death brought on by Covid-19 plays a central role in driving the attitudes and behavior of even those who believe that the dangers of the virus have been vastly exaggerated’. Hence, as discussed in Chapter 3, a range of defences are employed to avoid the experience of existential angst, including both proximal and distal defences. ‘Proximally, we want to forestall death and feel safe from it in the short term. Distally, we want to maintain the view that life is meaningful and that we are valuable contributors to that meaningful life’ (Pyszczynski et al., 2020, p. 10). At the same time, individuals may strive towards achieving symbolic immortality – towards having lived and left a mark in perpetuity. However, what is the role of the bucket list within the concept of death and dying? How does age and, inevitably, perceived proximity to death affect bucket lists? Can bucket lists be a product of mortality salience or a fateful moment? Can bucket lists be a means of legacy creation? And finally, are bucket lists concerned with ‘kicking the bucket’ or living life to the full? These questions are addressed within this section.

7.5.1. Bucket lists for mortals

...we are mortal, whether for not being sad or happy or we do have an expiry date, you know, if you don't want to call it death. And I think people imagine that they've lived as many lives as possible within their life. So, it's no different from now. Imagine someone falling off a cliff and desperately grabbing everything they can before they fall off. And I think that's my perception of why people find it necessary to have bucket lists. (Participant 7)

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the findings from the interviews echo some of the themes and issues emerging from the literature review (Chapter 3.4.4.). In particular, Chu et al. (2018) suggest that bucket lists may arouse a degree of mortality salience. To recall, research has demonstrated that mortality salience is ‘awakened’ by encouraging people to ponder the prospect of their death (Lifshin et al., 2017). More subtly, however, even a t-shirt or a flyer with an image of skull is capable of ‘awakening’ mortality salience

(Lifshin et al., 2017). What was particularly interesting during the interviews, however, was that although explicit questions relating to death were purposefully left until the end of the interview and were even 'disguised' within the euphemism 'kicking the bucket', 8 out of the 20 participants began talking about death, or 'expiry date', prior to conversation turning to the specific issue of the relationship between the bucket list and death: For example, early in an interview, one participant observed:

Again, if you've seen somebody, you know, succumb to cancer or Covid or AIDS or anything like that, you think well if it can happen to them, it could happen to me. So let's make the most of it, because I'm going to die at some point. (Participant 1)

Such unprompted 'death talk' during the interviews is arguably evidence that the very concept of the bucket list provokes a sense of mortality salience amongst those who attempt to discuss them. Moreover, it may also be suggested that, apart from the fear of failure, writing down a bucket list will be avoided for this reason – that it will result in confronting one's own death. Hence, there appears to be yet another duality of death denial through the bucket list not previously observed in this research. On the one hand, those who write a bucket list may deny death, as if the 'bus won't hit them tomorrow' because they have put plans in place:

Well, anybody can be, you know, hit by a bus tomorrow, but... It doesn't stop your dreaming. Yes, I think people should have a dream, it makes them, you know, look forward to not being hit by the bus! (Participant 6)

Or more specific to the Covid-19 pandemic, writing a bucket list will become a 'comfort blanket' for those fatigued by its perceived threat:

So if I get these things written down I suppose it's more of a comfort blanket as well, if I've written it down, that's me confirming to myself that this Covid stuff will be over soon and then I can crack on with my list (Participant 1).

On the other hand, people may deny death by simply not writing the bucket list:

And that's why I don't really like that term bucket list, because I think it is that concern about dying. It's almost like a bit of a negative thing where that sort of end point is death. (Participant 8)

Why, then, do bucket list owners and non-owners seemingly deny death in equal measure? Indeed, can it be suggested that there is no difference between the two denials? Yet, they undoubtedly differ, as can be explained by reference to the theory of proximal and distal defences. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, proximal defence is an immediate reaction to death thoughts; its sole purpose is to banish all thoughts of death. Hence, this reaction is most likely associated with those who refuse the concept of bucket lists completely. In contrast, distal defence appears when one 'copes with its knowledge of the inevitability of death by imbuing life with abstract cultural meaning and value' (Strachan et al., 2001, p. 123). Importantly, proximal and distal thoughts work in tandem; although proximal defense may dissolve conscious thoughts of death, nevertheless 'those thoughts linger on the fringes of our consciousness'. This is where distal defense mechanisms activate (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 171). In other words, depending on responses to death thoughts, an individual might deny death immediately (proximal) by rejecting the concept of the bucket list or they might deny death symbolically (distal) by filling their years ahead with meaningful activities in a form of a bucket list.

Interestingly, one of the interview participants perceived bucket lists to be akin to religion:

I think to say, you know, people need to believe in something is the same as... well it's not the same as religion, but people always look for something or believe in something. And then bucket list is something the person believes from within. (Participant 6)

This reflects the wider arguments that, with the acknowledged decrease in adherence to religious beliefs and practices, particularly in Western societies (Gorer, 1955), people create new, secular meaning-making mechanisms of which a bucket list may be one. This in turn suggests, however, that for those with strong religious beliefs the concept of the bucket list is likely to be insignificant: 'You're not going to get a Tibetan monk, you know, with a bucket list' (Participant 1). This points to a potentially fruitful area of

future research, namely, the relationship between different religions and the ownership of a bucket list.

Another interesting finding to emerge from the interviews involves the enhancement of self-esteem through contributing to a shared cultural worldview. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.4), an individual who chooses to pursue a predetermined list of things to do may feel they are contributing to the shared cultural worldview, one where there are things that must be done in order to qualify for worthiness. As one participant suggested:

*You know, people want to be worth. They do want to have a worth [...]
And these people are into, you know, kind of validating their existence.*
(Participant 7)

Moreover, as also proposed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.3), meaningful entertainment, including tourism, may amplify self-esteem owing to its link with identity (Rieger et al., 2015). This idea was also reflected in the findings:

If you're down the pub and one person has been to Magaluf every year for the last 20 years, but somebody else has been to all these different places and seen the modern wonders and all sorts of different sort of cultural hotspots then... They kind of do seem a bit more relevant, don't they? They seem a bit more interesting, I think. So, I don't think it's so much about popularity, it's more about how interesting, well... I suppose they are linked. The one who's more interesting is probably going to be more popular. (Participant 1)

A final issue to be discussed in this sub-section is that meaning making. As mentioned earlier, meaning making is one of a number of motivations for compiling a bucket list. At the same time, 'Meaning, the search for it, and the construction of it are at the core of the TMT' (Tomer, 2014). It is through construction of meaning that individuals can boost their self-esteem (Tomer, 2014, p. 65); equally, it is the cultural worldview that serves as an engine for the construction of meaning (Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2011). And according to Kesebir and Pyszczynski (2014), meaning is closely associated with the awareness of mortality. Thus, those who ponder meaning in life are more likely to resort to experiences that will enhance their sense of being a valuable contributor to a shared

cultural worldview, and therefore, will enhance self-esteem through a sense of achievement:

I think definitely a sense of meaning. But I would look at it more in a sense of, you know, a lot of people want to travel OK, but I suppose it gives you that more and more kind of focus. And it's like a dream, isn't it? You know, that you want to do this and you want to do that. And maybe it gives you a sense of achievement as well. (Participant 8)

Overall, then, as outlined in this section, TMT is of direct relevance to the bucket list discourse. Bucket lists can be a means of death denial. That said, Chapter 8 leads a discussion to suggest the contrary. That is, despite its direct relevance to the bucket list discourse, the TMT does not completely explain the phenomenon of bucket lists. However, the next section examines the impact of age on the bucket list.

7.5.2. Age of the bucket list

As noted earlier in this thesis, should the time horizon be manipulated, the motives for bucket list goals inevitably change (Chu et al. (2018). More specifically, it has been found that self-actualisation goals are more important for those with an open time horizon whereas those who perceive the proximity of death are more prone to pursue emotionally meaningful goals (Chu et al., 2018). This aligns with socioemotional selectivity theory (SST) (please see Chapter 2.3.), which proposes that the more constrained their time horizon becomes (usually associated with older age), the more selective individuals become in terms of these goals.

With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the outcomes of the interviews confirm this theory. Indeed, one of the dominant findings was the fluidity of bucket lists across the lifespan: *'I think age has a lot to do with it. I think your goals change'* (Participant 2); *'So, it's like if I write something on my bucket list now, come back to it in a year's time, that I could feel completely differently about that thing and not have that sense of urgency anymore'* (Participant 5). Importantly, as particular ages tend to be associated

with different stages in life, bucket lists are, without a doubt, conditioned by what has already been achieved:

I feel like when you hit certain ages, you may have already done certain things. So you may have already had children, or you may have already got married or whatever you would normally do or travel. (Participant 5).

Another important finding related to age and urgency. Specifically, it appears that the older people are, the more urgency there is to complete their bucket list:

The older you get, I think, the more urgency there is because like I said, you're going to die at some point. We all are. And so, yeah, I think the older you get, the more likely you want to start thinking about this sort of stuff. That's when you start maybe regretting some of the choices you make when you're younger, when you could have done some travelling. (Participant 1)

I'd say probably as you start to get older and you realise like your time is disappearing you'd think, then, I would like to do this or I'd like do that before my time does end. (Participant 4)

I think probably as you get older, you get more conscious of your mortality. I'm definitely not at that age yet. I certainly don't think about that on a regular basis. But yeah, I would have thought so. Certainly as you get older, you probably feel like you're running out of time a little bit and you have to make more time to do the things that are important to you. Yeah. Whereas when you're younger you probably think I've got all the time in the world to do that, you know. So maybe you think I'll get around to doing it all the time. Maybe as you get older you probably a little bit more concerned about running out of time. (Participant 8)

But I think definitely as you get older then you do, become aware that, you know, that that time is running out and the things that you want to do, then, you know, what is it? Rod Stewart said that life is like a roll of toilet paper. And it runs out more quickly, the closer you get to the

end of it, you know, so it's the idea that, yeah, we're aware of our what's the word, you know, our mortality. (Participant 20)

Furthermore, and reflecting SST, with age, individuals do become more selective with their experiences: *'So the older you get, definitely the more... you think about meaningful experiences rather than just a sunny version of Preston'* (Participant 1). Specifically, the interviews revealed, as Chu et al. (2018) conclude, that older individuals are more prone to the pursuit of more emotionally meaningful goals:

There is this sort of linear progression connected to probably a bucket list of things that we would like to do, things that we would like to see. Because you just become more informed. Yeah, I don't know, because I mean, I'm going to be careful here because otherwise I'm just speaking from my perspective. But I, I'm guessing that whatever list that I may have in here is more subtle now and it's less about doing more about the feeling, I think when you get older and that might be just me, how do I want to feel. There's something, where I think when you're young, you just want to do – that would be great, be brilliant. You don't necessarily reflect too much about how I feel, but I think when you get older, it's more about more subtle. But that might be just me (Participant 16).

This raises the question of why younger participants have less of a sense of urgency regarding their bucket lists; the answer, as explained by Participant 1, is perhaps expected proximity of death (or the lack of it):

I can picture myself in my late teens, early 20s ...The idea of a bucket list would have horrified me, you know, because when you are that age, you think you're gonna live forever anyway. So you've got this idea in your head that anything you want to do, you are going to do it because you got all the time in the world. (Participant 1)

Another interesting finding in terms of age and bucket lists was in relation to the 'extremes' of age. That is, only younger and older people were perceived to have a bucket list whereas for the middle-aged, 'life got in a way':

You get into your thirties and you're probably saying, 'I can't be bothered', you know, just something, you can't be bothered. And then all of your thirties – it's just life, I think. It might not be that you have a family or anything like that or a partner, anything like that, but you get more... Grounded I suppose, you probably started looking at maybe not moving around so much. (Participant 2)

This 'extreme' age dilemma was further explored from a more practical perspective by Participant 15:

Another practical reason for exactly the same thing is that at either end of that spectrum, you've got the possibility of more time, either through gap years or retirement. So what's the point of writing a bucket list if you haven't got any time or the money to do it? Whereas if you got your retirement bonus, you know, your retirement, your pension coming through, obviously you're going to have some time and you can have that gap between you finish working and then being too ill to travel or frail to travel, whatever. And then equally at a young age, you're going to have, you know, possibly university summer holidays or that or six month or one year or two-year gap year. But then again, that is time limited. So I suppose the similarity is the time limited. And you've got to have some time. But the difference is the older one, the other limitation is to do with death, whereas the younger one it isn't (Participant 15).

Finally, one of the most significant findings in relation to age and bucket lists was that the concern about death changes throughout life. That is, according to Participant 16, younger people are more focused on living life to the full, whereas concerns about 'kicking the bucket' increase as life progresses into older age. This suggests that the question of whether bucket lists are to do with living life to the full or with concerns about dying is age dependent:

And you know, it's really fascinating because I'm guessing that what happens is that concern for kicking the bucket is mobile. So, when you're younger, it's barely seen in the distance, you know, it's there.

But when you're younger, you're going to live forever anyway. But when it comes closer to you, then that changes something that changes your perception. It becomes clearer and bigger. It grows, that bucket -it just gets bigger and bigger the older that you get. And that determines, I think, the kinds of choices that you make. That's kind of what we've said before. So, I guess they are related. But that kicking the bucket becomes more significant the older you are. (Participant 16)

Although it is not possible at this stage to conclude as to the position of the bucket list on the spectrum of life and death, the indication emerging from this research that the bucket list (and related motives) is dependent on age is valid. Without a doubt, the motives for compiling a bucket list differ between younger and older people; whilst younger individuals tend to compile a bucket list for carefree joy, a sense of achievement and self-actualisation, older people tend to compile bucket lists with a more focused, meaningful and selective approach owing to the perceived proximity of death. However, death is not necessarily absent from younger people's bucket lists. In fact, it may happen that a tragic fateful moment can trigger the sense of 'memento mori' even amongst young adults. Paradoxically, these fateful moments can be one of the reasons why bucket lists are created or drastically adjusted. This premise is discussed in further detail in the next section.

7.5.3. Death as a birth of bucket list.

Awareness of death can be a positive motivator. According to Vail et al. (2012), awareness of their own mortality can motivate individuals to commit to growth-orientated goals, physical health (as seen in the case of bucket lists and Covid-19) and the development of supportive relationships. Fateful moments, those that make an individual feel more vulnerable, 'are highly consequential, the individual feels at a crossroads in terms of overall life-planning' (Giddens, 1991, p. 142). Moreover, they also inspire people to change the trajectory of their life projects and habits (Giddens, 1991). Even reaching a major life milestone, such as a birthday, can count as a fateful

moment or, in Yalom's (2011) terms, 'awakening experience'. Hence, marketers are prone to targeting consumers who reach a significant birthday or anniversary, or for example their graduation, for it is at these times they are more likely to compile a 'personal checklist' to examine whether they have 'made most out of their lives' (Keinan and Kivetz, 2010, p. 949). In other words, a fateful moment can trigger an existential awakening, the result of which can be the creation of a bucket list or a change in life trajectories; in the latter case, bucket list goal orientations may be changed drastically. More importantly, however, and as described in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.1), fateful moments open up opportunities for meaning making through 'filtering out' what is central to people's life values. The following accounts of the interview participants support the proposed impact of fateful moments on the creation of or changes to the bucket list.

To illustrate, Participant 10 not only emphasises the fluidity of bucket list goals but also highlights the impact that fateful moments may have on the trajectory of bucket list experiences:

I think as we grow older, our bucket list changes. As time runs out, we have less time to achieve our goals. So we might prioritize various experiences more than others. [...] Over time I... even now my experiences have changed and there's always the chance of a wildcard, something massively coming and changing who we are, what we are, what we think that could completely, drastically change how we behave and act. And I think a lot of people are experiencing that now through coronavirus, they're being challenged like they have never been challenged before – losing their jobs, being asked questions of themselves that they may not have wanted to ask. And then in great difficulty, there can be great opportunity and great change. So there's always that potential at any stage in anyone's life or people passing away, losing loved ones can have a massive influence on who we are and what we believe and what we how we act. So, I'm open to all of that. I'm open to be ready to change if I have to, I guess. (Participant 10)

On a sadder note, Participant 12 recalls how experiencing a family member's death actually influenced the creation of the bucket list:

Probably as I was growing up and, you know, you lose family members, your grandma, your great grandmas, granddads, and then you think of like the life that they had and what they've achieved or what maybe what they hadn't achieved. Obviously, living in different time frames to us. But I think. It's an ongoing process of losing people and then thinking, oh, I would like to achieve that before I die, or, you know, like what a shame that they didn't get to go to such and such a place. So, I think it comes from that for me. (Participant 12)

The story of Participant 19 is particularly illustrative of how life trajectories change in the face of a fateful moment. Participant 19 highlights how their values shifted from materialistic to spiritual after a death-bed conversation with their grandmother:

Well, maybe it was something... maybe that's when my grandmother died. [...] I think my grandmother actually had a lot of... I think she had a lot of sort of influence in my life. [...] And so she said to me towards the end, she said something like, here, take, take. You know, she was wearing some jewellery as my culture does. And she said, here, here, take whatever you want from, you know, did you want the bracelet? Do you want my ring, do you want my necklace? You know, she wanted to give me something which is really quite interesting. And I thought why is she doing that? And she said, so you'll remember me. And I said, I don't need that to remember you. So yeah, that was really moving. That was really moving. So I remember her giving me and I though goodness, that was out of the blue and it was just... and the other thing I did was I used that time I had with her to find out everything about her, how she met my grandfather, what the wedding was like, you know, what they did in the early days, all the little nuances that you would never learn. And so, I yeah, it was something that really stuck in my mind. So, when she's trying to give me a materialistic offering for something that, you know, I could have sold quite nicely for a little tiny sum. I said, no, I don't need that, you know,

because, you know, you're my heart. I don't need something materialistic. And maybe that was a validation that I didn't need materialistic. I went to more spiritual, but that might have been the turning point. I've not really thought about this before. So, it's interesting what this interview is doing. It's allowing me to really think back, say, when did it switch from materialistic to non-materialistic.
(Participant 19)

Whilst the above examples focus on the tragic events that had/can have an effect on the creation of or changes to the bucket list, the following example discusses a milder, self-inflicted fateful moment as a result of a personal existential crisis:

I think it's more life cycle based where there is a moment of reflection and calm where you think and then you do really start thinking about what have I done, what have I achieved, what has my life amounted to? And then there may be, you know, certainly people that I know have sort of had these kinds of existential crises where they think, oh my God, I just haven't done anything. I've left no footprint. I've done nothing like I've been either a mother or a father or I've just worked, and I just haven't done anything. And people usually say the usual things. Oh, you know, I brought up my children, all those kinds of things, which is a great achievement. They try to justify their lives, but there does come a moment, I think, when the kids are gone and you kind of think, oh, what have I done? Where have I been, you know, what can I ...? Have I left a mark as well? So I think some of it is to do with how I lived, but also have I left a mark? (Participant 16)

On a similar note, even a 'mild' (in comparison) fateful moment, such as a relationship breakup, can be an awakening experience (Yalom, 2011) which changes the outlook on life. Participant 5 particularly highlighted the change of life values in the face of a breakup:

...But once that relationship ended and I had time to myself, I was like, oh, actually I'm not sure I want any of those things. Like, I don't think I want them, you know. So, then I thought and rethought things and my

opinions on everything, children and marriage and all those sorts of things are very different to what they used to be. So, I had myself on a bit of a time scale, like I have to do this by this age. Now, I don't have that as much anymore. (Participant 5)

In contrast, Participant 6 described a change in life values following the start of a new relationship: *Well, I have my little family now. I have my boyfriend and I'm happy now. So, I think that made a change and made me look at life differently* (Participant 6). Thus, it appears that however big or small they may be, 'fateful moments' (Giddens, 1991) or 'awakening experiences' (Yalom, 2011) can have a tremendous impact on the concept of the bucket list. That is, a bucket list can be created in the face of a fateful moment, as well as significantly adjusted in terms of goals and values. It is therefore important to consider that it is not merely age that dictates the motivations for compiling a bucket list, but also a specific circumstance that may shake the protective cocoon of the individual's ontological security. Furthermore, bucket lists can bring solace in darker times for the individual, in particular as a form of legacy. To recall, as described in Chapter 6, an unexpected and substantial 39% of respondents to the survey agreed with the statement 'A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy'. With few existing accounts of bucket lists being utilised as a means of legacy creation (see Scott (2020)), it was necessary to pursue this thread further in the interviews. The results are discussed in the next section.

7.5.4. Bucket list as a legacy.

Atop the can he lays the nearly completed Bucket List. All of the items have been crossed off, save for one: 'WITNESS SOMETHING TRULY MAJESTIC.' He crosses it off with Edward's red pen, places the worn list on top of the cans, then replaces the rock over the cans. (Zackham, 2007, p. 99)

In *The Bucket List*, the final scene ends with Edward's assistant placing the urns containing the ashes of the two friends together atop a mountain. All bucket list items

are crossed, but one: 'Witness something truly majestic'. In this forgotten place of serenity and beauty, the assistant leaves the two friends in perpetuity and, in awe and admiration of the moment, he crosses off Edward's and Carter's final bucket list item in their name...

To an extent, it is unsurprising that many interviewees recognised bucket lists as a means of creating a legacy for an individual. What was, however, surprising, was the abundance of stories they told where trips were made in a memory of a deceased loved one. It was proposed in Chapter 3 that bucket lists can be a means of achieving symbolic immortality, preserving as they can the memory of the most life-defining moments associated with the individual. However, not only can completed bucket lists be retraced in memory of a loved one but also an incomplete, deceased person's bucket lists can be fulfilled as a tribute to their life. Importantly, the interviewees demonstrated a strong agreement with that idea:

Yeah, I suppose, I mean, if I wrote a definitive list of everything I wanted to do before I die, if I didn't manage to finish it, you know, that could be something my family could do to sort of honour me is to finish it off for me. (Participant 1)

Like it's some sort of experience that you've never done before and you never got round to doing it, then maybe your children would think 'Well, my parent never did it, never managed to do it so we will go and do it in their memory maybe', yeah. (Participant 4)

I think I think I've come across somebody who was doing something like that, where they were trying to visit every something, you know, on a list with a loved one. And then the other person passed away. So they completed their memory. It's like it's like a formatted memorial, isn't it, like a kind of memorial pilgrimage then? Absolutely. And I think that's really interesting. It kind of becomes like a kind of a ritual of memory. It's I think that's fascinating. And like, I can see that being a really powerful thing, actually, and taking on this kind of ritual quality. (Participant 17)

Furthermore, in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.4), it was proposed through the words of Kearn and Jacobsen (2016, p. 74) that 'with fully checked-off bucket lists, we have a tangible measure of completeness to share at funerals'. This premise found agreement with the participants:

That's what people are gonna be talking about at a funeral or you know, your wake and everything. And in the years to follow that.
(Participant 1)

I think people just want to feel like they've achieved something, that they want to have made a mark, you know. That they haven't just existed and that's it. They want to... They want somebody to remember, when they've been and gone, you know, they died, moved on. They don't want to just be insignificant. You know, they want to feel like they've done something like, 'Oh, do you remember when that person did this, this and you know, they did this'. (Participant 2)

According to Participant 7, utilising bucket lists (be it merely through remembrance or retracement) is a comforting activity in grieving:

You know, I think that's a fantastic way to grieve and if that brings solace and comfort and finally allows family members to not necessarily put down the book. But perhaps just turn the page and start a new chapter. I think that's an incredible thing. And I would employ that. (Participant 7)

Interestingly, one of the participants referred to the term 'metempsychosis' : '*But when you said that, I'm just thinking metempsychosis, it might be something that you want to look into, although it's actually relevant to what you did it. That idea of retracing a journey*' (Participant 8). This term came unexpectedly to the interviewee, although examples of metempsychosis (without specific mention of the term) are provided in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.3) in the form of the reference to Marco Polo' adventures, Pheidippides's Athens Marathon and the Dyatlov Pass Journey. In essence, 'metempsychosis in travel comprises behaviour in which a tourist knowingly repeats a noteworthy journey made previously by a named person or groups of people' (Stone, 2019, p. xiv). Although normally described as a 'secular pilgrimage' in the footsteps of

someone famous as well as to significant spaces, such as battlefields (Stone, 2019, p. xiv), in the context of bucket lists, metempsychosis presents itself as a retracement of significant life steps (regardless whether they are completed or merely anticipated) of a loved one (family, partner, friend or colleague). The following examples provide accounts of a 'personal metempsychosis' in bucket lists:

I was talking to this lady whose husband died, and I think it was his desire for his ashes to be spread on all continents of the world. So she's fulfilling that for him. (Participant 10)

You know, the matter of this is that I know how it can be. Well, I've got very tender feelings about my grandmother, and she used to live in Riga and she used to tell me about it, about her childhood, about her mother that is my great grandmother and about the place where she was brought up. I don't know how it happened. Probably it is in our genes. And I felt that one day that I wanted to see all those places that she had told me about and the urge to travel and see them was great. I just couldn't get rid of it. And one day I packed my bags and my husband and I drove nine hundred kilometres to see the place. And from now on every year we go there. I always go along the streets where my great grandmother and my grandmother used to go. And I'm really immersed in this atmosphere of the past. And it's just very important. It is very important to me because I know that there is a connection between different generations. (Participant 11)

Yeah, I went to...it was a good 15 years ago now when I went to Las Vegas with my partner at the time. And one of the reasons we went there was because my partner's mother had died and she'd always wanted to go there. So that meant for my partner. It was almost like. You know, some kind of tribute. (Participant 20)

...this friend, he passed away and that was the one trip that they hadn't been on yet. And so, the rest of us have been talking about kind of getting together to do it in their memory. (Participant 17)

As has become evident, bucket lists can be a means of narrating an individual's autobiography, as well as of leaving a legacy for them (either as a memory or an active tribute). Importantly, bucket lists can help the process of grieving, for they are evidence that one 'has truly lived'. Finally, as 'personal metempsychosis', bucket lists allow the retracing of the footsteps of a loved one, or the completion of the 'incomplete goals' of the deceased one. Although the idea of legacy in bucket lists was initially influenced by the movie of the same name, it has taken an interesting turn in the development of this thesis and could certainly be considered for more active utilisation within palliative care as a mechanism for meaning making and memory creation.

Having explored bucket lists from a contemporary death perspective, the question that now must be asked is whether bucket lists are really influenced by death? This ultimate question is addressed in the next section.

7.5.5. 'Kicking the bucket'?

I don't think, you know, there is a certain reason for everybody. It's the same as like life meaning, you know, you can ask many people and you will have a lot of different answers. (Participant 7).

During the interviews, many different responses were received to the question: 'Are bucket lists concerned with living life to the full or 'kicking the bucket?'. Some suggested simply that the bucket list about life, whilst others claimed that it was about death. Interestingly, however, one participant suggested that those who say that it is about life are, in reality, denying death: *'I think everyone will justify it by saying it's living life to the full, but really they're thinking 'I've not got long – let's get on with it'* (Participant 1). Many also suggested that life and death are, simply, *'two sides of the same coin'* (Participant 9). Others continued on the same note:

The two go hand in hand. I do think, I think living life to full. But in most cases, again, you know, it seems that death is certainly a factor or some sort of limitation or time limit. (Participant 7)

Oh, I would say wanting to live life to the full before you kick the bucket. (Participant 12)

Well, I guess they're related, aren't they, so they're connected because why wouldn't you want to live life to the full? (Participant 16)

For me, I think it', I think it's probably living life to the full well and kicking the bucket, because once you kick the bucket, you know, there's nothing, you can't control that, but you can control wanting to live up to the full. (Participant 19)

Thus, it appears from the interviews that the prospect of living life to the full cannot be achieved without being under the shadow of the prospect of death, or as Kears (1990, p. 7) put it more laconically: 'Life cannot exist without death, and vice versa; therefore, death can be understood as an indicator of life'. However, a more ambivalent answer to the question is that 'it depends'. Indeed, this has been one of the underlying themes thus far in this chapter; the involvement of death depends on many factors, be it an individual's motivation (e.g. legacy), age (perceived proximity to death) and fateful moments (illness, witnessing death, relationship breakup). As mentioned earlier, '*concern for kicking the bucket is mobile*' (Participant 16). In other words, death can appear in the context of bucket lists at different times in life and equally, disappear from the horizon when individuals are ontologically secure. However, it is never absent.

In short, bucket lists are as much about living life to the full as about 'kicking the bucket'. Death is always present within bucket lists, albeit at various intensities depending on individual's motivation to compile a bucket list, their age and life circumstances. From a TMT perspective, bucket lists are meaningful (distal) ways of denying death, for individuals believe that they will live long enough to complete all the planned items. At the same time, those who ignore or reject the concept of bucket lists deny death in a sense of proximal defence (an instant block to death though accessibility). However, as mentioned earlier, TMT does not exhaust the phenomenon of bucket lists. Whilst denial was one of the themes generally developed in the interviews, some participants also spoke of accepting death: '*I would say that's accepting death but before that happens trying to do as much as you can while you still got a chance*' (Participant 4). Where does

acceptance and denial lie within the bucket list discourse? Perhaps right in the middle of the yin and yang. This discussion is further developed in Chapter 8.

7.6. Travel perspective on bucket lists

Phase 1 of the research (the survey) confirmed the omnipresence of tourism within the bucket list discourse (see Chapter 6); however, it did not contribute to a deeper understanding of why tourism is so central to the trajectory of bucket list experiences. Therefore, this final section seeks to compensate for the shortcomings of the previous chapter in the sense that it attempts to explain the motivation for including travel experiences in the bucket list. Undoubtedly, travel is important to bucket list owners: *'They'd [bucket lists] be barely worth mentioning without travel. If there's no travel on it, then...What's left? Married, house, kids. Same as everybody else'* (Participant 1). The question is, then, what exactly does travel bring to a bucket list owner? The next sections address this question.

7.6.1. Escaping and finding

One of the themes in terms of the motives for the inclusion of travel on bucket lists was escapism. The notion of escapism has long been the focus of tourism academics (Crompton, 1979, Dann, 1977, Iso-Ahola, 1982), as outlined in Chapter 4. Crompton (1979, p. 416) went so far as to suggest that the attempt to escape the 'mundane' was one of the main motives driving tourist behaviour. However, in line with Iso-Ahola's (1982, p. 259) subsequent arguments, both 'seeking' and 'escaping' were evident in the interviewees' responses, although the latter was more prominent. To illustrate, the following accounts reveal the 'seeking'/'escaping' or just 'escaping' motives:

Escape from your real world I suppose as well. For me, I think it was just experiencing new things really. I'm seeing how somebody else lived because even just hearing somebody speak differently- it's

fascinating for me. You know, I like problem solving, I like interpreting things and working things out. So learning a language is like a secret code or something, you know, like a code breaker: 'Oh I can work out what you're saying now, so I'm going to learn this language' or seeing how somebody socializes as well, you know, just how they used to... I don't know what it's like now but just the differences in how they do the same sort of things to us, like when they eat out and they go out and everything. (Participant 2).

When you travel to somewhere new ...like a new country it also provides opportunities to do stuff that you wouldn't normally do... (Participant 4)

But I mean I think travel, if you include tourism as that, it's about having a change from your normal routine. I think that's really important. It's got to be different from normality in some way. (Participant 15)

It appears then, that the escape from personal environments, from normality, is one of the underlying reasons for including travel on the bucket list. However, besides escapism, travel is also linked to identity creation and transformation, identity validation and, perhaps, ego-enhancement (see Chapter 4). This then pre-validates tourism as a form of (conspicuous) consumption:

What drives my motivation? A desire to see the world, see different people, different cultures, see how other people live, and then with the idea that it makes me a different person. I guess the idea that opening myself up to new challenges and different ways of being and living and existing open me up to question my own ways of being, living and existing and to challenge me, to make me stronger, to give me stories to remember. (Participant 10)

The reason I've sought those experiences is because I've always felt that one of the things which gives me satisfaction, a sense of who I am and a sense of connectedness is through traveling, you know, I always felt also quite alive when I'm traveling and being places, you know, it's

who I am that's why those things are so it's fulfilling for me who I want to be really, you know (Participant 9)

Indeed, more prominent motivation for compiling a bucket list is ego-enhancement, which refers to a 'status deprivation in the individual' (Dann, 1981, p. 191). The bucket list holiday then, may offer the enhancement of self-esteem (as discussed earlier) through a means of trip-dropping (conspicuous consumption). As Participant 9 put it:

... whether it's a marker of identity or a marker of a lack of identity which is being sought through that list, I don't know. But those who publicized it, there has to be a very strong reason for compiling and then actually publicizing that list, which is all about identity and consumerism and everything else (Participant 9).

Therefore, not only do the participants seek escaping, but also they seek finding – the status, self-esteem and conspicuous consumption, that will make them feel better about themselves.

It was particularly interesting, that nothing negative was mentioned in relation to travel itself as opposed to the concept of the bucket list (bragging rights, consumerism, fear etc.). Thus, it appears that travel is, indeed, the brighter side of bucket lists. However, it is important to acknowledge some fuzziness in the question of travel within bucket lists. That is, the participants, inevitably, spoke about their reasons for tourism more generally, rather than travel on the bucket list. The reason for that is that, perhaps, the popularity of tourism in bucket lists merely reflects the wider popularity of tourism as a form of consumption. But is travel merely a part of bucket list or are bucket lists essentially lists of different countries to visit? The next section examines this question.

7.6.2. Holiday or bucket list?

During the interviews, there initially appeared to be little consensus on the difference between a list of countries and a bucket list. For instance, whilst some participants saw little difference between the two: *'I think some people's bucket lists probably do just*

look like a list of countries (Participant 5), others recognised the distinction between a bucket list trip and a holiday:

A bucket list would be sort of a once in a lifetime kind of experience that you'd probably say, well, you know, it's going to be physically challenging or it might be financially challenging or it be something that I want to try once but I wouldn't go every year and do it. Whereas I guess a holiday, so well, yeah, I like going to the south of France, I go every summer so that, you know, a holiday becomes well, just the holiday part of your annual social existence, then that's not a bucket list item. It's it depends on the nature of what you're doing.
(Participant 9)

Another participant went as far as to call bucket lists a 'travel CV':

Yeah, it's almost like a travel CV, I'd say. When you send a CV off to someone, or you make your own CV, you do it knowing... Well what CV stands for? Curriculum Vitae. It means life list, like a living list, doesn't it? So you know, it's going to change - it's going to grow over time. So my travel CV, my bucket list is going to grow over time. I'm gonna do stuff on it. I'm going to get some experiences to put on there and then I'm going to want to add to it all the time. (Participant 1)

However, a common theme emerged during the analysis in relation to the distinction between bucket list travel and a holiday. Specifically, those who had no financial constraints were more unlikely to see a difference between their bucket list travel and holidays, for they would not be limited in the distance or exoticism of their trips. Alternatively, those who were from an admittedly more modest financial background could recognise the distinction between a general holiday and a bucket list travel:

Because a holiday you'd have, your normal, family holiday. You'd have that every year. But then it could be still on your bucket list, because it might be a one-off adventure holiday like a safari and that is something that's take a lot of years to save up for, or even a Disney holiday. To me, that's not a normal family holiday. A normal family holiday would just be a week in a caravan somewhere. Or a week in a

hotel in this country or even Europe, Spain or whatever. But to go on a big holiday like a cruise...that would be something that would be on a bucket list and not just a normal holiday. No beach and walks and markets and normal things. To go on a safari or a cruise or a big massive holiday would be a bucket list. So, it can still be on both. But say them ones that are not easily achievable... For me, they would be on the bucket list because of my financial situation, but for somebody that's better off, that might be a normal holiday for them. (Participant 3)

With this in mind, therefore, it can be concluded that the difference between a holiday and a bucket list travel experience depends, to some extent, on the individual's own financial background. However, regardless of their financial background, individuals do, in general, view travel as a positive aspect of life:

Oh, I think in this modern age, we see travel as being very positive. And I think it is I think one of the most exciting things you can do. And there's a reason holidays are popular. [...] But, you know, when people have the holidays, generally speaking, they enjoy them, that they relax, generally speaking, which is also beneficial. But also, it's time with family and friends, isn't it? Or possibly time away from family, friends in some cases. (Participant 15)

This, however, raises a question of why people view travel as '*being very positive*'. Many reasons have been discussed already, including hyper-realistic image validation, escapism and identity creation and transformation – the list could continue beyond the scope of this thesis. However, on a final note, this section now seeks to merge the discussion with that in section 7.5 to consider death perspectives on travel.

7.6.3. 'The worm at the shore': death perspectives on travel

As asserted in Chapter 2 (sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2), tourism fulfils a role as meaningful entertainment. According to Biran and Buda (2018, p. 523) 'meaningful entertainment may function, for some—at least for some of the time—as a death anxiety-buffer by activating our cultural worldview defence'. However, beyond the links between identity creation, meaning making and consumption as a part of a Western cultural postmodern worldview, little was established on the relationship between death and tourism, apart from the publication by Pratt et al. (2019). However, the interviewees pointed to another interesting element of this intricate relationship. As mentioned earlier, travel in general is established as a positive activity: *'You know, I've never travelled and had unpleasant experience. So, traveling overseas associates, for me, with something pleasant...'* (Participant 6). These positive connotations of travel can, arguably create a deathless environment. That is not to suggest that death does not happen on holiday, Instead, the proposition of tourist sites as deathless environments is based on the idea that tourists are experiencing such as sense of fulfilment and control that death is no more. As Graburn (1989, p. 28) wrote: 'The tourist journey is a segment of our lives over which we have maximum control' and thus death is an event that can be delayed until the journey is over. It is, perhaps, for that reason that even those at the sunset of their lives go on lengthy cruise trips:

Well, if you look at the passengers of cruise ships, they're mainly not young people, they're mainly rich or elderly, old people, because some of them are older eighties and nineties. And why are they doing it, what makes them go to foreign countries? Well, because they understand they know for sure that life is rather short, and they are facing the end of the story. And if you talk to the service people who are in the service, who are in the staff of this ship, they will tell you endless stories of their guests who actually died while traveling and for different reasons like heart disease, cancer, what not. (Participant 11)

Participant 14 also supported the idea that holidays are deathless environments:

Oh yeah. It is a way of escaping reality, when there's a person for example, if he's travelling, he's going to bed somewhere in a hotel and he's thinking about people which he met and about nice stuff which he seen today, so out of reality. And he doesn't think about death.
(Participant 14)

Subsequently, being on holiday is also associated with feeling most alive: 'I always felt also quite alive when I'm traveling' (Participant 9). Indeed, touristic activities in their excess, be it entertainment, eating or drinking, are not perceived as a risk:

People who take very little exercise expose themselves to activities requiring considerable exertion. In addition, they tend to eat and drink too much on holiday, and to eat and drink things they are not used to
(Barker, 2015, p. 117).

Perhaps, it is for the reasons, as discussed in Chapter 4, that tourism is a meaning making activity. And only those who lack meaning in life are prone to anxiety in the awareness of death (Juhl and Routledge, 2016). Another, more prominent perspective on tourism as a deathless activity, is dependents on tourism association with self-esteem. On many occasions, within this chapter, it was argued that tourism is a subject to enhances status, ego-enhancement and conspicuous consumption. Besides, the bucket list became a cultural symbol against which, one can measure oneself, be it with a sense of pride or disappointment:

By 30, in my bucket list I expect to be married, I expect I have a house and stuff like this. And I think by having those social values is a good way of measuring oneself (Participant 7).

Such measurement of own success, through a means of bucket list, may bestow a sense of ontological security on the individual, or, in other words, buffer existential anxieties.

Whilst these ideas are merely speculative, upon further inspection (beyond the scope of this thesis), they may, perhaps, provide further insights into the intricate relationship between tourism and death. It is, however believed, that the enhancement of self-esteem, particularly through consumption of travel within bucket lists, may implement its anxiety buffering capabilities.

7.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has sought, based upon the findings of the second phase of the research (interviews) to further the understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of the bucket list. In so doing, a number of key themes have emerged.

First, as has become very apparent, the term 'bucket list' is not favoured by all, primarily because of its death connotations. Indeed, many of the participants did not have a bucket list (which was later justified as a proximal form of the denial of death). This was largely explained by the fear of failure; that is, the participants were afraid of compiling a bucket list only to leave it unaccomplished. Despite not having a bucket list, however, non-bucket list owners' perspectives were nonetheless valuable. Some of the most unanticipated findings concerned the duality of bucket lists, akin to yin and yang: serious/casual, original/reverse, publicised/personal. In relation to the serious/casual divide in particular, it was proposed that, to an extent, everyone has a bucket list, even though it may not be formalised as such. In these cases, individuals are the owners of the casual bucket list – pleasurable, occasional and serendipitous – whereas those interviewees who explicitly had a bucket list portrayed the traits of the serious bucket list owner. That is, they devoted time, efforts and money to pursue their bucket list; nothing was left to chance. It was, furthermore, proposed that the distinction between a serious and a casual bucket list is largely influenced by factors including age, health (a terminal illness) and personality traits.

The discussion further progressed to present the bucket list as an element of consumer culture, where conspicuous consumption and vanity play an important role. Surprisingly, the effects of class on the ownership of the bucket list were identified during the analysis. A further link between bucket lists and identity was highlighted in particular in relation to reverse bucket lists. In addition, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, it was deemed essential to appraise the impact of Covid-19 on individuals' bucket lists. The findings indicated that the pandemic only added urgency to the completion of the bucket list, which may result in a 'revenge bucket list'. Furthermore, mirroring Pyszczynski et al. (2020) work, health orientated goals emerged on bucket lists in the face of pandemic.

Apart from identity and conspicuous consumption, other motivations for compiling a bucket list were identified. For instance, anticipated nostalgia, or looking forward to looking back, was present within the bucket list discourse. Meaning making was outlined as another motivation for compiling a bucket list, as was fear of missing out (FOMO). Finally, the prospect of 'good' death was appraised as an outcome of a completed bucket list, although it is acknowledged that, for some, it may also be a motive for compiling a bucket list.

From a death perspective, particularly through a TMT lens, it was established that bucket lists arouse a feeling of mortality salience. Furthermore, in a discussion the relevance of age to the bucket list age, its influence at either end of the age spectrum was highlighted. That is, young and older adults that were more likely to have a bucket list, whilst the middle-aged were more likely to be preoccupied with everyday responsibilities. Younger adults were more likely to pursue self-actualising goals, whilst older adults were selective with their goals, mainly focused on meaning making. The importance of fateful moments within bucket lists was appraised, where 'death' or other fateful moments were identified as a 'birth', that is, formation, of the bucket list.

Finally, the chapter concluded with examination for the motives for travel on bucket lists. As suggested, collection of gazes and escapism were the most common motivations for travel. A final section presented a new potential relationship between travel and death, appraising travel as a 'deathless' activity. Although that section is merely speculative, it may point towards new, hitherto unexplored relationships between death and travel.

Overall, many unanticipated findings emerged from the research, if anything rendering the concept of the bucket lists ever more complex. However, one of the key outcomes of this study is the proposition that everyone has a bucket list, regardless of whether they are aware of it or not. That is, many people are unaware of bucket list ownership owing to the lack of a formalised (written) or publicised bucket list that is linear and numbered. However, as established in this chapter, bucket lists take many forms (mind maps, paintings, reverse bucket lists) and do not necessarily need to be written down to be counted as bucket lists. After all, the bucket list is a very fluid, dynamic concept that progresses and transforms reflecting different stages in life. Furthermore, a detailed study into bucket lists and personality traits may open new insights into the

nature of bucket lists. Finally, the relationship between leisure, in particular tourism, and death (beyond the context of dark tourism) is still in its infancy and deserves further academic attention.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.0. Introduction

This chapter invites the reader to review and summarise the findings of this thesis. Just like every tourist journey, it may be argued, a thesis is a journey itself – from the exhilaration of beginning to familiarise oneself with a topic, to travelling to new locations of literature, arriving at the destination by gathering and analysing data and, of course, coming back home and reflecting on the journey. To illustrate the journey of the bucket list research, this section unfolds by going through each stage of this expedition into the unknown. Indeed, as mentioned in the next section, the concept of the bucket list was merely an echo of the movie of the same name prior to undertaking the research. Today, however, the meaning of the bucket list has evolved. As argued later, the bucket list has become a cultural symbol – not only because of its wide application in marketing, media and books, but also owing to its wider meaning. What does it mean to have a bucket list? Does it entail confronting mortality, being organised or just planning upcoming holidays? The answer is much more complex. As mentioned in Chapter 7, the majority of respondents who denied having a bucket list went on to describe their dreams and aspirations later on in the interview. Some even changed their minds in the middle of the interview, realising they had a bucket list. To some extent, then, it may be argued that everyone has a mental representation of a bucket list – of things they would like to ‘tick off’. The message of the bucket list is far from suggesting using ink and paper to write down desired experiences. Rather, it is to dream, to aspire, to value one’s own time on Earth and, if possible, to achieve. With this positive message, the next section invites the reader to trace the journey back to the first days of the bucket list research.

8.1. The start of the journey: 'The bucket what'?

Little was known about the bucket list at the time when the idea to research it emerged during an early supervisory meeting. The appeal of the subject was quite evident; despite the interconnection with tourism, the bucket list had, with one notable exception (Thurnell-Read (2017)), been largely overlooked in tourism literature. But more importantly, the allure of the topic lay its playful macabre quirkiness. Immediately, the question of why people have bucket lists was spawned – is it about living life to the full or the fear of death? Besides, many other questions were raised: where did the term come from? Who compiled the first bucket list? Why does travel feature in bucket lists? What is its cultural significance?

Many of these initial questions were answered in the literature review. For instance, it was established that the term originated from the idiom 'to kick the bucket' which first appeared in the 17th Century (Goldstein, 2019). Today, however, the term is defined more broadly as 'a set of meaningful goals that a person hopes to achieve before they die' (Chu et al., 2018, p. 151). Here, death is present, but the focus shifts towards 'seizing the day' whilst remembering the Grim Reaper – 'memento mori'. It was furthermore established that the first documented bucket list, or 'Life List', was written by John Goddard in 1939, consisting of 127 goals. What is particularly interesting about Goddard's 'Life List' is that he compiled it at the age of 15. His motivation, according to Woodbury (1972, p.66), was to avoid later life's regrets and to have 'life of excitement and fun and knowledge'. Although far from macabre concerns, Goddard was already at the age of 15 'holding a dialogue with time' (Giddens, 1991, p. 77) by anticipating later age and the potential for regrets that may come with it.

One of the very important early literature findings concerned a survey of 2,000 Americans conducted by ProvisionLiving (2019) which revealed that 95% of respondents had a bucket list. Interestingly, however, the survey did not specify whether the bucket list was written down (as becomes apparent later, the importance of the mental bucket list should not be undermined in comparison to the written bucket list). Secondly, the survey established that 77% of bucket list goals were travel related, followed by financial goals and personal development goals. Again, the survey did not specify why travel featured so prominently on the bucket list. Finally, the survey stated that, on average, respondents were ready to spend around £2,225.00 on their bucket

lists. At the same time, it was financial restrictions that, according to ProvisionLiving (2019), prevented individuals from checking off items from their bucket lists. The survey itself provided a great insight into the 'what' of bucket lists rather than the 'why'. That is, the format (written or mental) of the bucket list was overlooked, the reason why travel features so prominently was missing and finally, the question of whether bucket lists are essentially a shopping-like accessory for the rich was omitted. The issue of the role of travel was even more important, not least because other surveys (Smith, 2013) and studies (Chou et al., 2005, Periyakoil et al., 2018) confirmed its prevalence on the bucket list. Additionally, despite the large percentage (95%) of respondents in the ProvisionLiving survey admitting to having a bucket list, it was still not known how the bucket list features within contemporary culture. That is, not only was it not known how familiar individuals were with the term 'bucket list', but also what form the bucket list might take. Moreover, although the literature review highlighted the prevalence of fateful moments as a catalyst for compiling a bucket list (for example, terminal illness), it contributed little to the debate about whether bucket lists are concerned with living life to the full or 'kicking the bucket.' Most importantly, however, the question of why individuals compile bucket lists remained unanswered. Therefore, this research set out to answer the abovementioned questions by pursuing the following objectives:

Objective 1: To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.

Objective 2: To examine bucket lists within contemporary social perspectives on death and dying.

Objective 3: To explore critically the role of socio-psychological motivations for compiling a bucket list.

Objective 4: To explore to what extent travel in particular features in bucket lists.

The next section of the chapter overviews objectives in relation to the findings from the survey and interviews.

8.2. The adventure: Understanding the bucket list

Overall, four objectives were established to be achieved as a result of this research. Along the journey however, multiple unexpected findings arose, further contributing to knowledge and understanding of the bucket list, and these are also presented within this section. Therefore, this section commences by outlining the separate findings from phases 1 and 2 of the data collection, though it is important to re-emphasise that the second phase of data collection sought to build on and develop the findings from the first phase. As this chapter is written to evolve as a journey, the process of knowledge creation is therefore illustrated by separately providing insights into the findings from each stage of data collection. In so doing, it seeks to paint a picture of how the information and knowledge snowballed from one stage to another to what it has become. Similar to the survey by ProvisionLiving (2019), this study's survey aimed to establish the 'what' of bucket lists, whilst the interviews aimed to shine light on the 'why' of bucket lists. Therefore, the next subsections illustrate a dialogue between the two stages of data collection.

8.2.1. Objective 1: To consider critically the significance of the bucket list in contemporary culture.

Survey:

One of the first and most unanticipated findings revolved around the ownership and format of bucket lists. Overall, a surprising 52% of respondents claimed to have a bucket list in one form or another; however, only 5.5% of respondents had a tangible, written down bucket list. This finding immediately raised the question of whether a mental representation of a bucket list counts as one. Furthermore, despite having an idea of a bucket list, why did respondents not write it down?

The second important finding concerned the popularity and longevity of the phenomenon. Over the 13 years since the release of movie that coined the term, the bucket list has entered the world of books, travel guides, films, media and even

advertising. When participants were asked whether they agreed that the bucket list is a trend that will pass, an impressive 62.5% disagreed with the idea. That is, the participants perceived the bucket list to be a phenomenon of both the present and the future. But again, the question arises, why do so few individuals have a physical bucket list, despite the belief in the longevity of the phenomenon?

Another unanticipated finding concerned the personal longevity of the bucket list. In other words, the participants were asked whether their bucket list had an end. Significantly, more than half (54%) disagreed with the probability of ending/completing their bucket list. Suddenly, the question of why not to conclude a bucket list arose. Is the bucket list a cultural symbol of the ever-consuming society? Indeed, similar to the findings by ProvisionLiving, finances appeared to be the main obstacle to completing the bucket list (57.5% agreement). So, what is the relationship between consumption of the bucket list and its ending?

Finally, one of the most significant findings to emerge concerned identity. With 69.5% of respondents agreeing that the bucket list could reveal a lot about themselves, the question that arose revolved around the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption. To that, however, respondents disagreed that the bucket list is a means of showing off their economic and social status. However, it was questioned whether this response was altogether genuine or honest, particularly given that respondents indicated their agreement with fear of missing out (FOMO) – which is generally induced by envying what is done by others but not oneself – as an influential factor in compiling a bucket list. Collectively, these significant findings contributed much to the understanding of the bucket list, though leaving many unanswered questions to be addressed in the interviews.

Interviews:

Initially it was hoped that the interviews would clarify why so few people write down bucket lists. However, matters were complicated even further. Some may ask, how many out of the 20 participants had a bucket list? The answer is impossible to establish, for several reasons. Some participants admitted to having a ‘wish list’ rather than what they perceived to be a more macabre ‘bucket list’. Others denied having a bucket list

yet proceeded to talk about dreams they wanted to fulfil before they die, whilst yet others realised during the interview that they did in fact have a bucket list. This inevitably leads to the question: what in fact is a bucket list? Typically, a bucket list is considered to be a written list of things someone wants to achieve before they die. From the evidence of this research, however, a bucket list is, first and foremost, a mental (that is not necessarily written or prioritised by numbers) representation of dreams and aspirations that a person wants to achieve in response to what they have already done in their lifetime. In essence, it is a reflection of a person's desires at a given moment in time. This is a fundamental point; as a very fluid concept, bucket lists tend to be not only never ending, but also ever-changing. Therefore, the outcomes of this research support the argument that, to an extent, everyone has a casual bucket list (see discussion on casual/serious bucket lists in section 7.2.5.). But, why do individuals tend not to write down a bucket list?

There are two reasons for not doing so – the two faces of fear. That is, on the one hand the fear of not completing the bucket list and, on the other hand, the fear of completing it. In the interviews, several respondents raised their concerns about experiencing a sense of failure if some of their bucket list items remained unticked. This fear of failure, however, did not manifest itself if their bucket list remained fluid and without the witness of ink and paper. The second fear was more peculiar. The interviewees suggested that the prospect of peak experience, of having achieved a bucket list, would leave them feeling quite empty. Thus, there are two reasons for not completing the bucket list- - the fear of commitment and potential failure, and the fear of depressive emptiness. Rather, individuals prefer to 'play' with their mental bucket list, to add and remove items as they wish without the commitment. This finding was sufficient to explain why only 5.5% of the survey respondent claimed to have written down bucket list.

The 'endlessness' attribute of the bucket list followed the same explanatory fate as the earlier questions. There are three reasons why people do not wish to/cannot end their bucket lists. First, from a TMT perspective, bucket lists offer a negotiation with time by means of perceived longevity. In other words, by compiling a list of 50 items, people believe that they will live long enough to experience these goals. If these items are completed, then the list will grow longer to reinforce the belief that they will live long

enough to undertake and complete new goals. From another perspective, however, it may be explained by the 'Wheel of Samsara' of consumerism or, in other words, greed. More simply stated, the 'endless' list reflects the desire amongst members of a consumer-oriented society to make ever more material and experiential purchases. And finally (and more pragmatically) some individuals are unable to bring an end to their bucket list because of a lack of financial resources.

The question of identity was central to the interviews, and what was revealed was unexpected. Although many interviewees agreed that the content of a bucket list can point to the personality of its 'owner', it became evident that the reverse bucket list, tends to solidify an individual's identity. In other words, anything can be included in the items on a bucket list, but not everything can be done; It is, however, the goals that have been achieved that have a more concrete effect on identity creation. Moreover, contrary to the survey findings, the interviews pointed to the overt presence of conspicuous consumption within the bucket list discourse. In particular, the bucket list pre-validates tourism as a form of (conspicuous) consumption, where a list of countries visited becomes a *'travel CV'* (Participant 1).

Finally, the effect of Covid-19 on bucket lists was questioned. The overall consensus was that, although the pandemic delayed the completion of bucket list items for many, it added urgency to the list. It was therefore speculated that the phenomenon of the 'revenge bucket list' may emerge. At the same time, having confronted mortality during the pandemic, many experienced a re-evaluation of goals in relation to bucket lists.

Without a doubt, then, bucket lists have become a cultural symbol capable of reflecting a individual's aspirations and dreams as well as fears (as discussed earlier, and more broadly later on). They are fluid, ever-changing and never-ending collections of an individual's desires, often unrestricted by a priority number, ink and paper. But do bucket lists have to be filled with confrontation of death? Or, can death be eliminated from the bucket list discourse. The next section answers that question.

8.2.2. Objective 2: To examine bucket lists within contemporary social perspectives on death and dying.

Survey:

The results from the survey exploring the relationship between the bucket list and death were conflicting. On the one hand, 57.5% of respondents suggested that their bucket list does not reflect their worry about death; on the other hand, however, 59% of respondents expressed the view that completing meaningful activities (implicitly on a bucket list would be important to them if they received a terminal diagnosis. Consequently, clear conclusions with regards to the relevance of death to the compilation of a bucket list did not emerge from the survey. This then demanded the question: is the bucket list less related to death than might be assumed?

Interviews:

Death was often a central topic of conversation during the interviews. But more importantly, however, discussions about death within the context of the bucket lists tended to occur more often than not spontaneously. In other words, the interviewees frequently began to introduce and ponder on of the topic of death without being prompted to do so by the researcher. The premise that a bucket list is a means of denying death was, at times, agreed with: *'They could have a bucket list because they know death is about to happen and they could have a bucket list to push death away from them to think, well, actually, the death isn't going to happen because I've got this bucket list and I've got all these things to achieve before I die. So I'm not going to die until I've done them all'* (Participant 10). In other words, there was general consensus that compiling a bucket list allows an individual to mentally extend their longevity, in the belief, that they will live long enough to witness the experiences on their list. In this context, the question of age and its relevance to the bucket list was clarified during the interviews. First, it was reported that older age may increase the urgency to have a bucket list. Second, in line with Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (outlined in Chapter 2), the interviewees suggested that as people age, they become more selective with their experiences in their meaningfulness. In addition, several interviewees reported

death being 'the birth' of the bucket list, where a fateful moment triggered the desire to compile a bucket list. The notion of bucket lists as anticipated nostalgia also confirmed the proposition made earlier in Chapter 3. That is, Tomer and Eliason's (1996) death anxiety model, discussed in Chapter 3, suggests that self-transcending processes may mediate the meaninglessness of death by eliminating past-related regret. In this sense, a bucket list may provide meaning to life and a sense of fulfilment both through the anticipated nostalgia of achieving goals on the list and a consequential lack of a sense of regret when they have actually been achieved. The conclusion must be, then, that bucket lists only exist and have their meaning because humans are mortal. Death is central to the bucket list discourse. However, how we treat death differs and that translates into whether individuals are concerned about 'kicking the bucket', or 'living life to the full'. As for TMT, it is pivotal to understanding the phenomenon of bucket list. However, one may ask, does TMT explain the concept of bucket lists fully? The likely answer is not. This idea is more broadly discussed in section 8.3.

8.2.3. Objective 3: To explore critically the role of socio-psychological motivations for compiling a bucket list.

Survey:

The survey provided little indication as to why people compile bucket lists. However, the notion of identity-related questions was clearly hinting at an intricate interrelationship between bucket lists and identity creation as one of the motives for compiling a bucket list. A strong emphasis on consumption in the survey data also led to questioning whether bucket lists are merely more sophisticated shopping lists, bereft of any deeper meaning or significance. The interviews, however, rejected that idea. Yet, they did not ultimately answer the question as to why people compile bucket lists.

Interviews:

Several motives were outlined during the interviews as to why people compile bucket lists. These included the construction of identity, ego-enhancement, anticipated nostalgia, meaning making, FOMO, the pursuit of a 'good death' and legacy. Whilst all these motives are justified, they do not in any way exhaust the myriad of other potential reasons for compiling a bucket list. The notion of compiling a bucket list is itself complicated, not least since this thesis has arrived at the conclusion that the majority of bucket lists are not physical, written-down lists but, rather, mental constructs. But the motivation for compiling a bucket list, arguably, varies from individual to individual. Evidently, the finality of life renders the compilation of a bucket list a pressing matter. That said, however, the outcomes of the research suggest that not everyone confronts death (at least consciously) whilst creating a bucket list. Some compile a bucket list in response to a fateful moment; others just want to summarise a list of places that they want to visit, whilst yet others just want to simply enjoy whatever is left to live on Earth. In other words, it is impossible to identify and embrace the innumerable reasons why people compile a bucket list. Nevertheless, the underlying premise of each list is that people must make the most of their life since they are inevitably destined to die. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to recognise all the possible motivations (although those motivations outlined above arguably provide a good insight. Nevertheless, as discussed throughout this thesis, behind each prospective bucket list lies the shadow of death and, therefore, Section 8.3. considers how confronting death (mortality salience) impacts on the creation of the bucket list and its goal orientations.

8.2.4. Objective 4: To explore to what extent travel in particular features in bucket lists.

Survey

The survey did not point towards the reasons why travel features particularly in bucket lists. This was not, however, an aim of the survey. Rather, it was deemed essential to establish that tourism is a central goal orientation within bucket lists as suggested in the literature. This was achieved, with 72.5% of respondents agreeing with the statement 'Travel contributes to the majority of things on my bucket list'. Moreover, as seen in Table 6.17 (Chapter 6), travel was chosen as the most prominent activity on the bucket list whilst finally, the analysis of bucket list goal orientations (Table 6.18) also revealed that tourism was the most mentioned goal orientation in bucket lists. This however, raised the question of why travel features so prominently in bucket lists? The interviews attempted to explore this phenomenon.

Interviews

The interviews brought an unexpected fuzziness to the answer as to why travel features on bucket lists, the reason being that, when interviewees discussed their reasons for travel on bucket lists, they tended to explain their motives for tourism more generally. That obstacle translated into another proposition. That is, the popularity of tourism in bucket lists reflects the wider popularity of tourism as a form of consumption. However, bucket list travel and a holiday are not the same in their meaning. As interviewees explained, bucket list travel is distinctive from a holiday in that requires more money and effort and is different in the sense that it is a unique, a once-in-a-lifetime experience compared with 'repeatable' holidays. Interestingly, however, it was proposed that for those from a more privileged background, the distinction between bucket list travel and a holiday may be blurred.

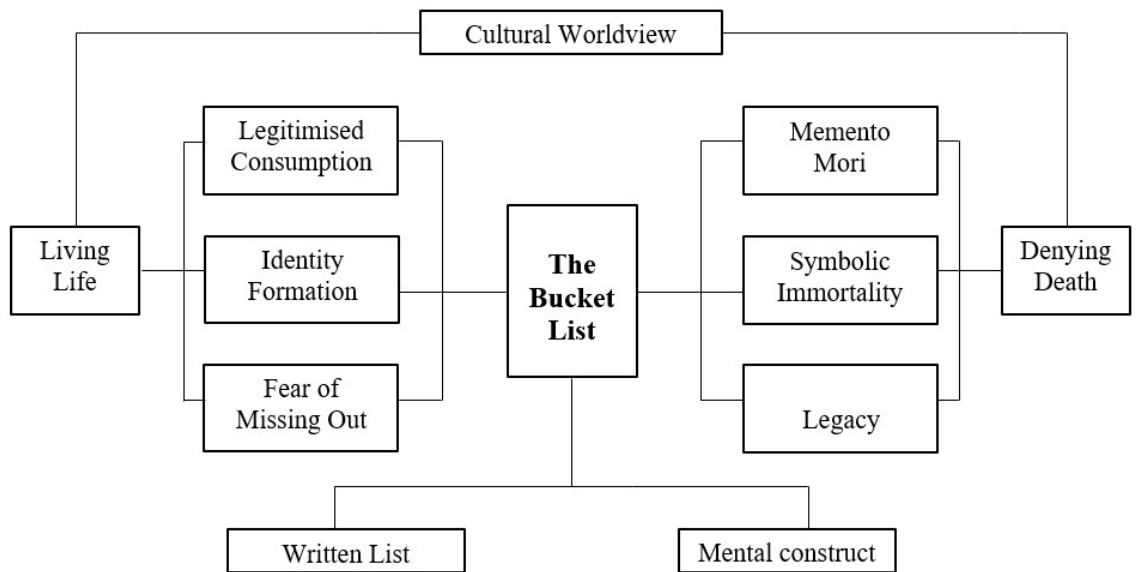
Generally, though, there is undoubtedly more to a bucket list than being a list of countries to visit, for these visits are assigned a special meaning – a special motive. First is the escapism from the personal environment (push factor); second is the desire to

see new cultures, to listen to another language, or to try new cuisine (pull factors). But more important is the objective of or need for ego-enhancement; that is, the need for self-recognition, consolidation of identity, status and self-esteem. Since travel is so interconnected with the (increased) sense of self-esteem, it was subsequently proposed that the act of travel can foster a deathless environment. In other words, since individuals feel better about themselves in the act of travel, they are more likely to feel as 'significant beings rather than material creatures destined to be obliterated' (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 9). Indeed, a sense of self-esteem has anxiety buffering capabilities (Davis, 2012). Therefore, it may be argued that bucket lists are a means of strengthening self-esteem, particularly in the form of travel.

8.3. The destination: Kicking the bucket or living life to the full?

This section of the chapter aims to provide a unique insight into how bucket lists (as reminders of death - mortality salience) may impact the creation/avoidance of such lists. Ultimately, this is the destination of the research, where the question of whether bucket lists are about kicking the bucket or living life to the full is answered. Unavoidably, this section, as mentioned earlier, extends the discussion on Objective 2 by examining the contemporary perspectives on death and dying within the context of the bucket list. Many themes relevant to both death/dying and life/living have been introduced throughout the thesis; Figure 8.1 below, developed predominantly through the literature review, draws on these to offer a conceptual summary of the significance of the bucket list.

Figure 8.1. Significance of the bucket list.



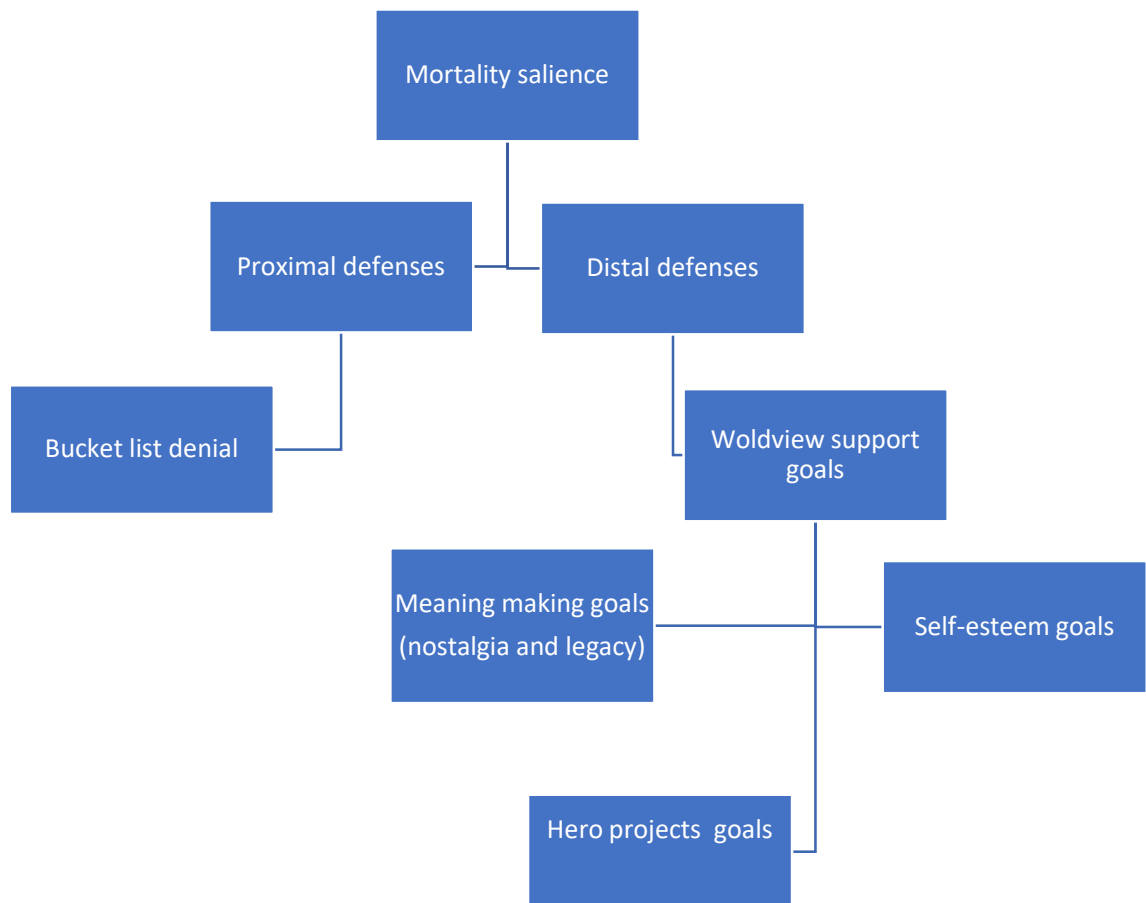
This figure illustrates the duality of the bucket list between living life and denying death – attitudes towards both being influenced or determined by an individual’s cultural worldview – as well as between a written and mental construct of the bucket list. The dimension of life is focused predominantly on consumption, identity formation and the fear of missing out, whereas the dimension of death represents the general awareness of death or ‘Memento mori’, symbolic immortality, and, of course, legacy. Importantly, as this section proceeds, the distinction between life and death becomes blurred. For instance, even the behaviours outlined in the dimension of life can, in their extreme form, become mechanisms of death denial. Is it, then, possible to answer whether bucket lists are about life or death? The answer is complex, for life gains meaning from the inevitability of death. In other words, life and death are truly inseparable. Nevertheless, this thesis comes to the conclusion (through both the literature review and from the outcomes of the empirical research) that bucket lists are, indeed, about ‘kicking the bucket’. However, more explanation is required to justify this conclusion and to explain the role of death within the bucket list. To commence, the next section discusses the Terror Management Theory perspective.

8.3.1. The Terror Management Perspective on bucket lists

Without a doubt, bucket lists can be a form of death denial. As proposed in the literature review and later confirmed in the interviews, in compiling a bucket list a person demonstrates the belief that they will live long enough to experience the goals they have set. In other words, they negotiate life longevity by pushing death away, for they cannot die whilst the bucket list is incomplete. Moreover, an enhanced sense of self-esteem, particularly supported by travel, is another significant buffer against death anxiety. The element of meaning making and legacy creation is another dimension for creating a sense of symbolic immortality. After all, the story of the bucket list and the consequent memories will continue living in the minds of significant others. However, there is a paradox; some people tend to choose not to compile a bucket list. However, this is arguably another form of death denial, for the creation of bucket list may result in confronting one's death. This phenomenon (avoidance/creation) is explained by the defence mechanisms of TMT.

Proximal defenses are immediate reactions to thoughts of death aimed at pushing the idea out of sight, out of mind (Strachan et al., 2001). Conversely, distal defence deals with the thought of death more carefully and symbolically by convincing the individual that they are an active contributor to a cultural narrative that they ascribe to. Thus, it appears that the effect of mortality salience on both defenses can result in different bucket list reactions. To summarise this point, Figure 8.2, adapted from Cote, Ross, David and Wolfe (2017), illustrates the effect of mortality salience on bucket lists. Importantly, mortality salience refers to direct reminders of death, of which the proposition to compile a bucket list may be.

Figure 8.2. Denial of death through bucket lists.



Source: Adapted from Cote *et al.* (2017)

First, one of the reactions to mortality salience is proximal defence, taking the form of ‘rational cognitive manoeuvres’ that allow the individual to push death thoughts from their consciousness. Within the bucket list context, this is manifested in either the denial of a bucket list or the need to compile one. Even as a term, the bucket list has, as discussed in Chapter 1, a macabre association; to ‘kick the bucket’. Hence, the thought of engaging in the compilation of a death-reminding concept may be, for many, an unpleasant one. In essence, the term bucket list, becomes itself a reminder of impending death - mortality salience. Therefore, to deny death one may engage in the denial of bucket lists by rejecting the concept or refusing to write or mentally construct one. To illustrate, some survey participants wrote: ‘Not to be bothered about a list’, ‘I don't have any!’, ‘I don't know’. The denial of the bucket list is, arguably, itself a denial

of vulnerability to or current risk of personal death. Instead of confronting mortality, proximal defenses allow one to proceed with business as usual. In particular, Participant 10 referred to that as 'behaviours':

We rarely change our behaviors. We rarely change who we are. You could do with anything, smoking, drinking. It's just, you know, we are creatures. We do habits that hurt us without even realizing but we still do them. And only when something comes back at us and says enough is enough that we then start thinking about changing. I think that's what forces people to suddenly create a bucket list because they realize that it's now or never.

Only when individuals meaningfully confront death or fateful moments, though not necessarily consciously (not through proximal defences), may they develop a need to compile a bucket list. Importantly, as Solomon *et al.* (2015, p.171) suggested, proximal and distal defences 'work in tandem'. That is, proximal defences dispel of immediate thoughts of death. Subsequently, distal defences activate once the thought of death lingers on the fringes of consciousness. In other words, distal defences prevent individuals from forming conscious thoughts of death.

Unconsciously then, individuals engage in distal defences which, within the context of bucket lists, translate into worldview support goals, meaning making goals, self-esteem goals and hero project goals. Worldview support goals are those that 'give us a sense of meaning, an account for the origin of the universe, a blueprint for valued conduct on earth, and the promise of immortality' (Solomon *et al.*, 2015, p. 8). To illustrate, these can be (as gathered from the survey): 'Memorise the holy Quran', 'Elevate higher in spirituality and sixth sense' and even 'Find a way to die peacefully'. Self-esteem goals and hero projects are somewhat similar in their nature, as Solomon *et al.* (2015, p.215) suggest: 'to avoid self-awareness and the coincident recognition of their finitude, people squander their lives in trivial pursuits, or are obsessed with greedily accumulating money and stuff or blindly lusting for power and honor'. However, whilst self-esteem goals have somewhat negative connotations, hero goals may bring meaningfulness through such achievements as parenting or volunteering, rather than merely achieving fate. Some of the self-esteem goals identified in the survey could include: 'Drink a bottle of Barolo 1969', 'Get a tattoo', 'Drive a Range Rover'. Hero

project goals, according to Wolfe and Tubi (2019, p. 569), 'may include anything from philanthropy and fame to parenthood or policies, providing individuals with social recognition and a sense of importance that will extend beyond their biological existence'. To illustrate, the following bucket list goals from the survey can be considered to be hero projects: 'Perform in front of 10,000 people', 'Write and publish a book' or 'Reconnect with stepdaughter'. Finally, meaning making goals entail goals associated with nostalgia and legacy. According to the survey, these might include: 'Die knowing I made a difference', 'Do something that will be remembered', 'Plant a tree whose shade I will never enjoy'. According to the typology of death denial goals on the bucket list, the presence of the abovementioned goals on the list may signal to one that, perhaps unconsciously, they are trying to deny the fact of death. However, does denial of death completely explain the concept of bucket lists? In other words, can TMT grasp fully the phenomenon of bucket lists? The likely answer is no. As Wong (2007, p.79) commented in relation to TMT: 'it cannot be the whole story about how humans cope with the reality of death'. The next section therefore provides an alternative view to death denial.

8.3.2. The Meaning Management Theory perspective on bucket lists.

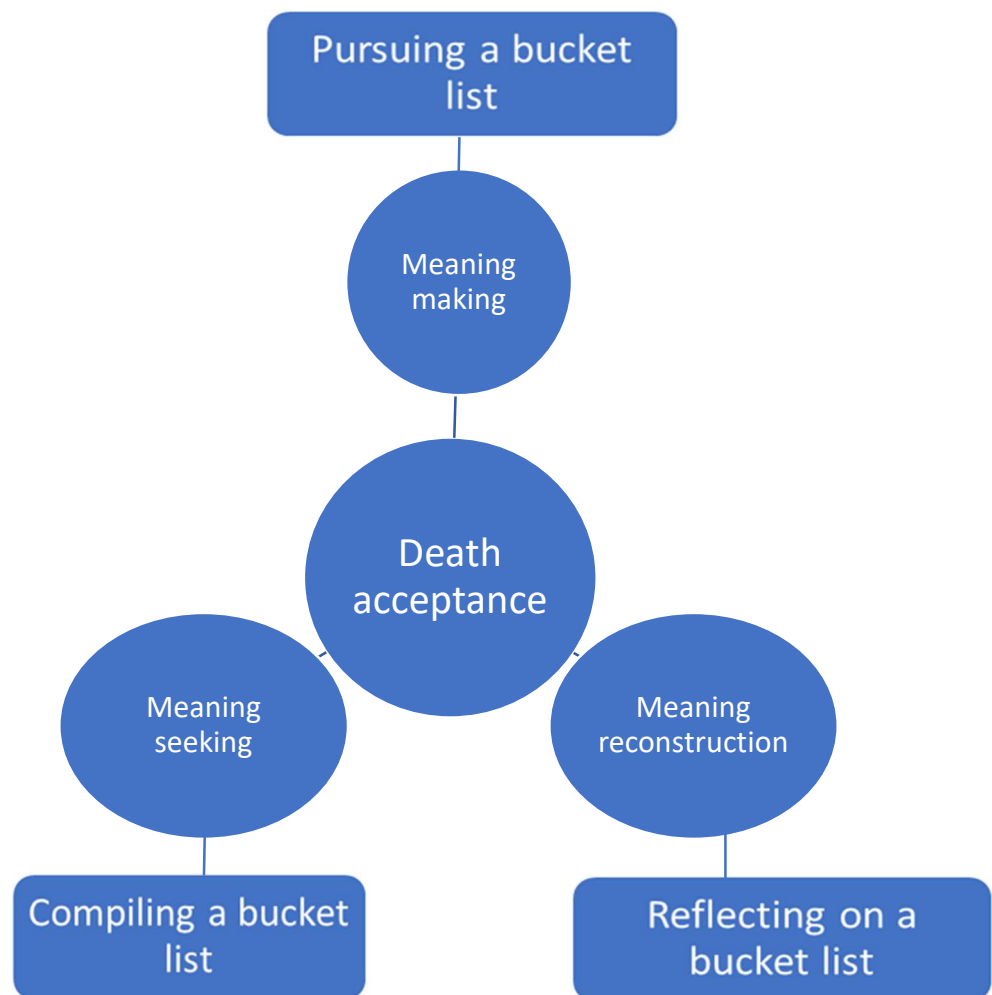
By way of a reminder, MMT refers to:

...the need to manage meaning-related processes, such as meaning-seeking and meaning-making, in order to understand who we are (identity), what really matters (values), where we are headed (purpose), and how to live the good life in spite of suffering and death (happiness).

In essence, MMT proposes that the inevitability or fact of death can be accepted, resulting in authentic living. In the context of this study, bucket lists can, arguably, imbue life with meaning, fulfilling the three processes of accepting death: meaning seeking, meaning making and meaning reconstruction (Wong, 2007). Therefore, the creation of the bucket list may be a means of death acceptance and self-actualisation. In particular, several sections in Chapter 7 refer to the processes outlined by MMT, namely: section 7.4.1. 'Anticipated nostalgia', which refers to meaning seeking; section

7.4.2. 'Meaning making' which refers to meaning making as a part of MMT and finally section 7.4.5. 'Completed bucket lists: towards 'good death', which is relevant to the dimension of meaning reconstruction. Figure 8.3. illustrates how bucket lists can facilitate death acceptance. In particular, a decision to compile a bucket list is aligned with meaning seeking. The active pursuit of a bucket list and the subsequent creation of memories contributes to meaning making. Finally, reflection on a bucket list journey – the experiences and memories – may facilitate meaning-reconstruction.

Figure 8.3. Acceptance of death through bucket lists.



Source: Adapted from Wong (2007).

It appears, then, that bucket lists can be a means of both accepting and denying death, depending on an individual's circumstances, age and life experiences. In fact, perhaps

people do accept death, yet practice some of the goals from the distal defence dimension. As one participant put it:

Can some people practice both? Possibly. You can accept death and try and deny it as well, except that you have to accept that you're going to die to some extent. We're all going to die eventually, I guess, unless something changes. But you can still try and deny it by doing extra things, by being more healthy, by changing your habits and your personality. People do try to deny or at least push death back.

8.3.3. Concluding thoughts

Initially, this thesis set out to investigate the phenomenon of the bucket list – to conceptualise it, to understand it to the smallest possible detail. However, although several conceptual avenues have been explored, it is impossible to speak of the bucket list in concrete terms. That is, many people (and all research participants) were aware of the term, yet it has proved impossible to reach a consensus on what ‘bucket list’ means. For some, it is a list of places, for others it concerns legacy or personal interests. And as revealed in Chapter 7, bucket lists are even more fluid in their representation; they can be written down as a list, painted as a collage or summarised as a mind map. Moreover, owing to the many manifestations of the bucket list (written, mental, drawn etc.) as well as a myriad of motivations, it is not possible to establish for sure why people compile bucket lists. Nevertheless, the conceptual frameworks of death denial/acceptance of the bucket list (Figures 8.2. and 8.3.) have explained the presence of death within the bucket list discourse. These details are, however, not as significant as one of the most important questions that this thesis has addressed: What influences the creation of a bucket lists? Is it about (living) life or (denying) death? Whilst there exist innumerable possible motives, be it memory making, ego-enhancement or legacy creation, one of the most important attributes of the bucket list is death.

That said, the role death within the context of the bucket list can take two distinctive forms. On the one hand, there is death in the form the grim reaper holding the scythe over people’s perceived longevity. This death inspires people to write down as many

experiences as possible on their bucket list in a sorrowful attempt to convince themselves that they will live long enough to enjoy these experiences. Moreover, this death touches upon the most threatening part of dying – becoming insignificant. Consequently, people embrace religion, consumption, legacy making, enhancing self-esteem and other behaviours outlined more generally by TMT (see Chapter 3).

But there is also another death – peaceful death (not to be confused with the concept of ‘good death’). The premise of such death within the bucket list context is straightforward; it will, undeniably happen to everyone. But many are able to prevent this thought from entering their consciousness or at least, to acknowledge its presence with dignity. Such death spawns the desire to live life to the full – death here is what gives life meaning. For those who experience a peaceful attitude towards death, the concept of the bucket list may not be a pressing matter. They may well also engage in the consumption of travel, in spirituality and memory making, but only to live their lives in the way they desire. In other words, everyone is aware of the finality of life, but the way they deal with it differs. One may ask then, what determines an individual’s attitude towards death? Although this is a difficult question to answer (and many have attempted to do so), in most simple terms it may be argued, once again, that ‘how we live determines how we die’ (Kogan, 2010, p. 124). That is, the way we make sense out of our life through our cultural systems and personal values contributes to how we treat our own death. This, then, translates into a bucket list.

From the literature review, survey and interview findings, it becomes apparent that the motivations for compiling a bucket list depend largely on how we confront mortality. Some choose not to confront mortality at all (denial) by not writing a bucket list. Some write a bucket list, but confront the prospect of death peacefully, without much thought. Some experience a fateful moment such as, as seen with some participants, the death of significant other. This itself becomes a reason for compiling a bucket list or drastically changing goal orientations. To complicate matters even further, the divide between the grim reaper and peaceful death may fluctuate throughout life, as mentioned in Chapter 7. Therefore, to answer the question once again, motivation for compiling a bucket list depends on the attitude towards one’s death, the variables for which can be, amongst other things, an overall sense of ontological security, age or fateful moments. It is, indeed, the question that is never meant to be answered, for it

is unique and very personal to each individual. This, however, is the appeal of the bucket list.

The bucket list has, without a doubt, become a cultural symbol. It is present in advertising, TV, media and books. However, its scope reaches further than that. Bucket lists have become not only a measurement of a life worth living, but also a reflection of life at a given moment in time. Even those who would never consider writing a bucket list have moments of wishes and dreams that change throughout life. This thesis goes as far as to speculate that the mental (not written) concept of bucket lists is present in all individuals to some extent. The fluid nature of the bucket list is one of the reasons why it is, indeed, so fascinating, yet so challenging to research. Although all of the objectives of this research were met, this thesis has shone a light on a very small surface of the phenomenon of bucket lists. This, however, does not undermine the work done; rather it invites further research into various aspects of the bucket list. First of all, the question of religion within the bucket list discourse requires further attention. That is, will the concept of the bucket list be as relevant to a devoted Christian or a Buddhist monk? Given that bucket lists are reflections of individuals' attitudes to death, how does one feel towards a bucket list when believing in Heaven, Nirvana or any other type of afterlife? Secondly, the bucket list remains an appealing marketing concept (unless done thoughtlessly, as was the case with Malaysia Airlines (see section 2.1.)). The appeal of the concept lies in its 'memento mori' or 'YOLO' undertone, which can have an impact on consumer decision, swaying individuals towards impulsive consumption (Kasser and Sheldon, 2000). Finally, the element of positive psychology within the bucket list can, as mentioned in Chapter 7, contribute to the idea of 'good death'. Therefore, the concept of bucket lists may also be applicable in palliative care research. The next section of the final chapter considers research limitations as well as reflects on the bucket list research journey.

8.4. The return home - research limitations and personal reflections.

Like in every journey, there comes a bittersweet feeling of returning home. This section of the chapter takes a step back and reflects on the journey so far. In particular, it focuses on the contribution of this thesis to knowledge, the research limitations and concludes with personal reflections on the bucket list journey.

8.4.1. Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has made a contribution to knowledge in several ways. First, more generally, it has examined in depth the phenomenon of the bucket list. Without a doubt, books such as 'My Bucket List Blueprint' (Bell, 2020) existed prior to the commencement of this research, but they provided little reference to the history of the term, the relationship between bucket lists and age, consumerism, tourism, life or death... Indeed, such books are inspirational and motivational, yet they add little to the understanding of the bucket list as a contemporary phenomenon. Therefore, this thesis has gone beyond the typical description of the bucket list (predominantly from a perspective of positive psychology), and has delved into the macabre, historical and contemporary side of bucket lists.

Second, this thesis has made a contribution in terms of establishing and solidifying the role of travel within bucket lists. Previously, only the paper by Thurnell-Read (2017) had examined the relationship between tourism and bucket lists. However, this thesis has established the leading role of travel within the bucket list discourse as well as, to some extent, presented bucket lists as formalised expressions of travel aspirations.

Finally, this thesis has dedicated much attention to the very unique relationship between tourism and TMT. Only a couple of studies (see Chapter 3) has previously examined the relationship between tourism and TMT. What is mainly proposed is that tourism, due to its capabilities of expression and inflated self-esteem, provides a 'deathless' environment, where concerns about death are no more. In other words, whilst tourists do not necessarily chase a sense of immortality during their tourist experiences, they nevertheless may experience a sense of invincibility whilst on holiday, which may translate into excessive drinking, extreme sports and other daring activities. However, further research is needed to solidify and develop this idea.

8.4.2. Research limitations

Overall, this research has met its established aim as well as most of its objectives. It is also believed that this research has made a contribution to knowledge, despite some significant limitations.

It is acknowledged that this research has a number of limitations, in particular relating to the non-probability sampling, the skewed age groups of respondents, as well as the completely online method of data collection. These limitations can, perhaps, be justified by the challenging times in which this research was conducted. In particular, Covid-19 became a significant barrier to face-to-face data collection which, in the case of interviews, would have fostered a more open discussion. Secondly, as the pandemic progressed, the list of interview participants had to be actively amended and adapted as several participants had to drop out owing to personal circumstances. Finally, a question of replicability of data is difficult. For instance, the way interviewees spoke about their travel plans as part of the bucket list was bittersweet. In other words, they desired travel experiences, yet they could not pursue them, as travel was not advised. This, of course, would have been different if the research had taken place three years earlier. That said, this research had attempted to shine light on a lockdown bucket list. That is, it assessed the effect of Covid-19 on the meaning of bucket list. As the data showed, although Covid-19 put a stop to a majority of bucket lists (which perhaps made a discussion about them more challenging), it also resulted in a re-evaluation of goals, more concerns about health and even a stronger desire to pursue a bucket list, which, in future, may result in a 'revenge bucket list'.

As outlined in section 8.3.3., there are plenty of opportunities to extend the existing knowledge surrounding bucket lists into different disciplines, be it religion, marketing or palliative care. It is believed, then, that the phenomenon of the bucket list reaches far beyond the scope of this thesis; although it has shone light on some perspectives on the bucket list, the future of bucket list research is limitless.

8.4.3. Personal reflection on the bucket list journey

This section will lead the discussion in the first person, to provide an insight into what the bucket list journey meant for me. In some sections, I, with honesty, recognise how my own beliefs could have influenced research had I not made an effort to stay as impartial as I possibly could. Since bucket lists are a conscious/unconscious means of confronting mortality in a way of denial/acceptance of death, I would like to share my own bucket list story. In particular, I want to focus how this bucket list research changed my life (without any exaggeration). The journey started in summer 2018, prior to applying to study a PhD, in one of the informal meetings with Richard Sharpley. Having turned up with a handful of my successful (in terms of grading and overall enjoyment of writing) assessments, I wished for the impossible – to establish a topic that I would dedicate my life to for three years in a matter of one meeting. Many assessments covered tourist motivations, dark tourism, tourism futures and the search for immortality – a topic inspired by and researched with my future research supervisor Daniel Wright (who also massively contributed to my decision to pursue a PhD). At least an hour was gone, but the topic didn't arise. By then, however, I think Richard Sharpley (who was to become my Director of Studies), recognised my interest in the unusual and the morbid. Suddenly, something happened. Professor Sharpley said: 'bucket lists'! I instantly knew that we were onto something. He straight away asked a question that became central to my research: 'Are they about life or death?'. He then drew a diagram of bucket lists and dimensions of death, life, tourism and consumerism. That moment was magical - not only did I realise that we had found the topic of my research, but also, I knew that it ticked all the 'morbid boxes'. Soon after that, Richard Sharpley and Daniel Wright became the supervisors of the bucket list research.

'Living life or kicking the bucket'? Of course, it was about kicking the bucket, I kept telling myself from the start. In fact, I got annoyed with the dimension of 'living life to the full'. Here, I must be honest with my reader and explain where such a predisposition came from. As long as I remember myself, I was always terrified of death. Perhaps, it is for this reason that I was always interested in the morbid and dark- it was a way of mediating and rationalising death, but it never helped me conquer my fears of impending or sudden death. It is likely that, for that reason, that I became interested in the Terror Management Theory, to explain the concept of bucket lists. As the theory

suggests, all humans who are aware of death are incapable of accepting it. Rather they hide their fears behind superfluous pursuits, the support of a cultural worldview or increased self-esteem. I couldn't agree more, due to my own relationship with death. At the time, I believed that my research participants would all confirm that bucket lists are about death, and those who would say otherwise would simply be denying death. But as a researcher I knew that such a presupposition could affect how I lead my research. There and then, I promised myself to separate my own insecurities from the research and to appraise TMT within bucket lists without any exaggeration.

Then, during my literature review, I came across the works of existential psychotherapists such as Irvin Yalom and Viktor Frankl. Their literature opened my eyes to understanding death from different perspectives. Eventually, I discovered Meaning Management Theory (MMT), that opposed the views of TMT. I remember, it made good sense in terms of the bucket list application, but still, I was hesitant to give it its due attention. It was during the interviews when things started to turn. Having discussed death and bucket lists with 20 individuals, I realised that not only is there a place for death denial, but also for death acceptance. Many spoke of death, their rational views of it, their attitudes towards it. The conclusion of my research was, of course (without any prejudice), that bucket lists are concerned with the prospect of death. But I refused to suggest that all are (just like myself) afraid of death and in denial. I saw a different prospect, where death is what gives life its meaning, where death can be accepted with dignity, rather than fear. But the story did not end there.

It was during the write up of the final chapter, when I realised that, for a while, death bothered me no more. The research process that I endeavoured on, had cured me of my personal fears of death (which in fact, impacted my everyday life more than I imagined at first). To be clear, I do not in any way welcome death, rather I accept it as a fact of life, that makes life even more unique. Therefore, unexpectedly, this research has been an existential transformation for me. As my supervisors told me in the early days, every thesis is a story, with a beginning and the end. I consider this to be a happy ending, for which I will be forever grateful to the kind 200 individuals who took part in my survey, the 20 individuals who responded to my invitation to conduct an interview, those who supported me on this journey, and of course, my supervisory team, Richard

Sharpley and Daniel Wright, who guided me without any pressure, listened to my crazy ideas and supported me through each step of this magical journey. Thank you.

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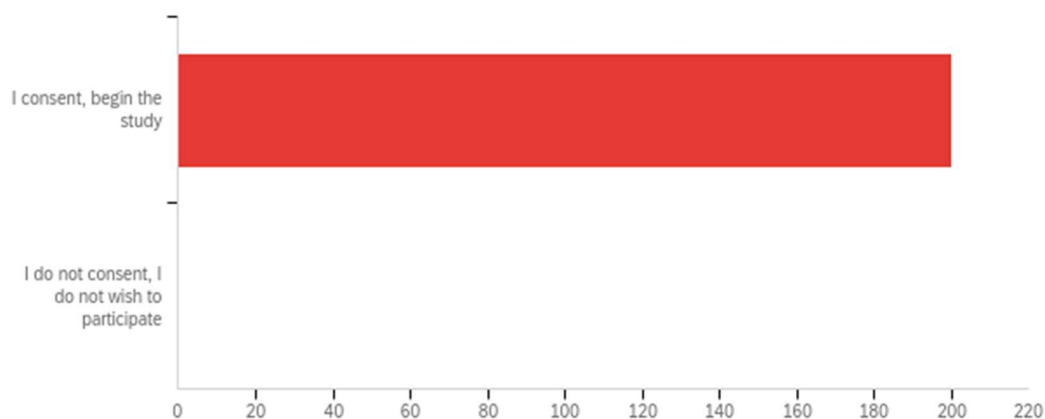
Appendix A. Survey report.

Welcome to the research study!

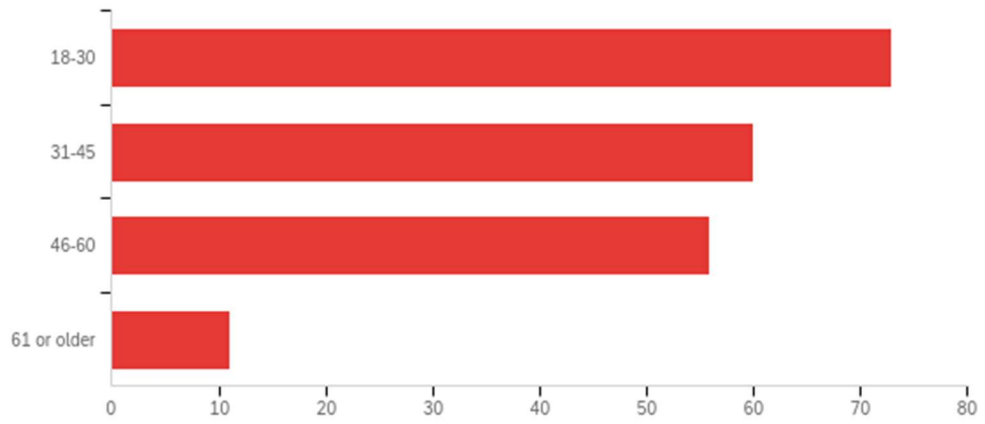
We are interested in understanding the motivations for compiling a bucket list that involves an element of travel. We further want to examine the relationship between bucket lists, travel, identity, age, existential anxiety and the desire to live life to the full. You will be presented with information relevant to your understanding of bucket lists and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that there is no intention to collect personal information that would allow us to identify you, and anonymity will be prioritised when processing data.

The study should take you around 5 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you decide to do so, simply close the browser by clicking the "X" button in the top right corner. If you would like to contact the researcher for more information on this study, please email on szascerinska@uclan.ac.uk

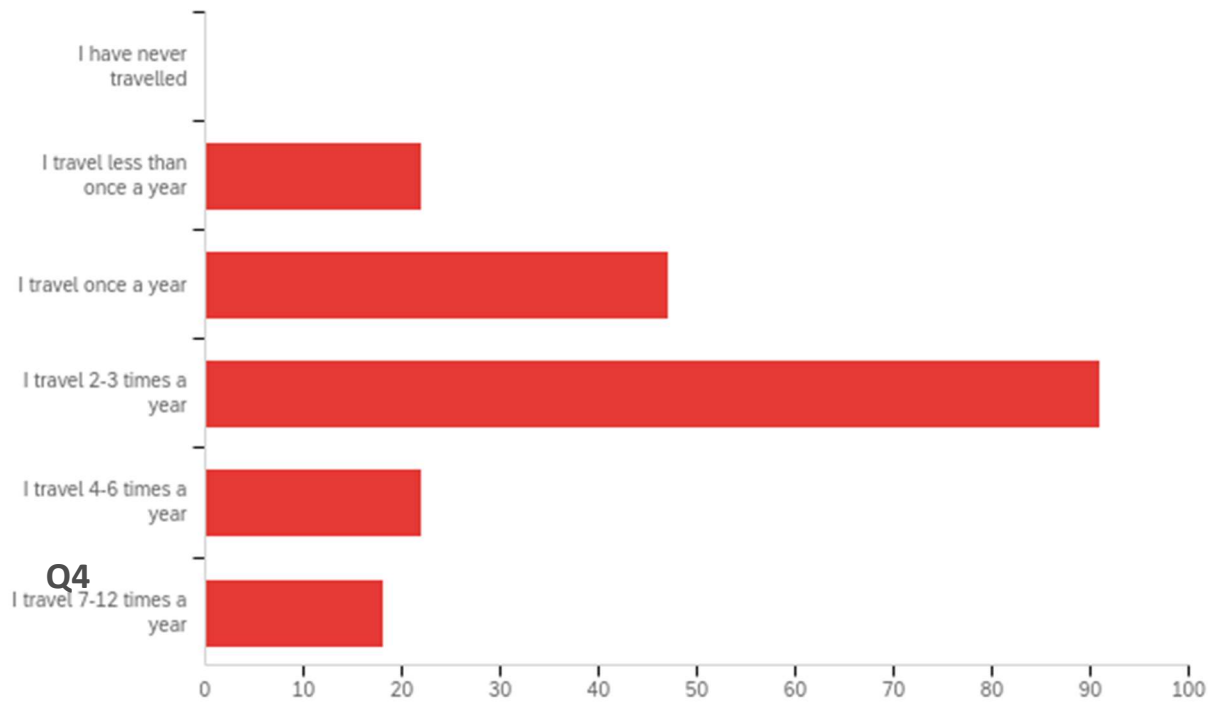
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are at least 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.



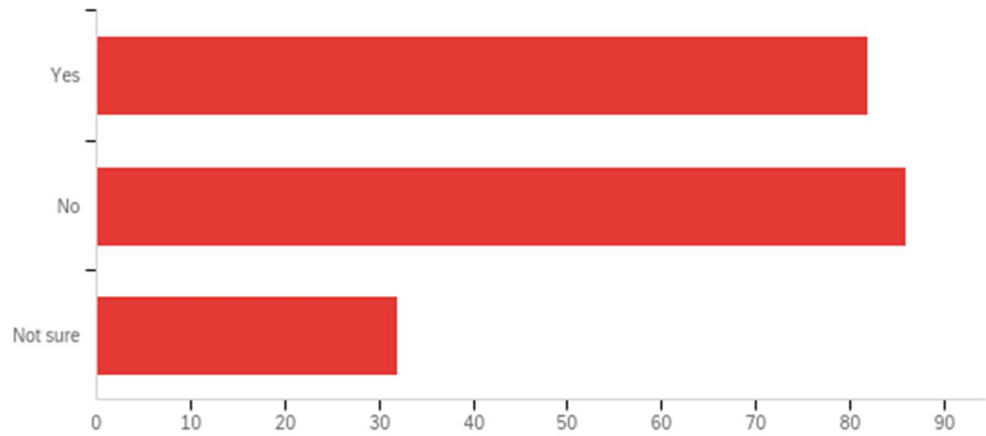
Q2 - What is your age group?



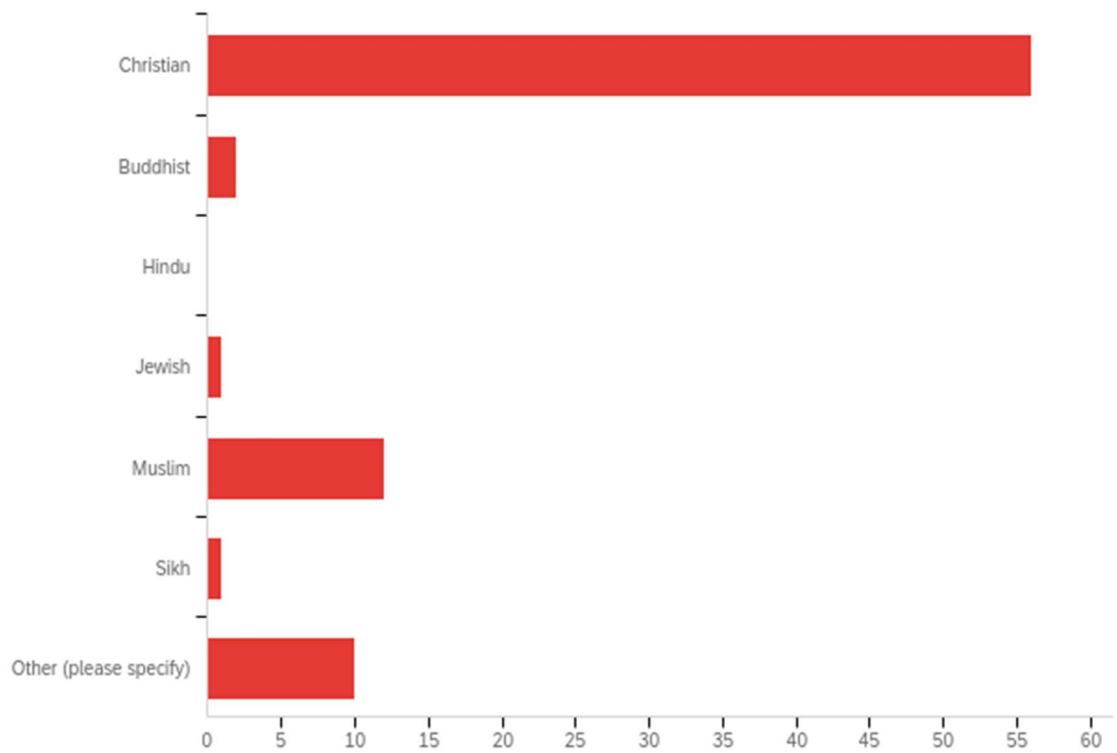
Q3 - What is your travel background?



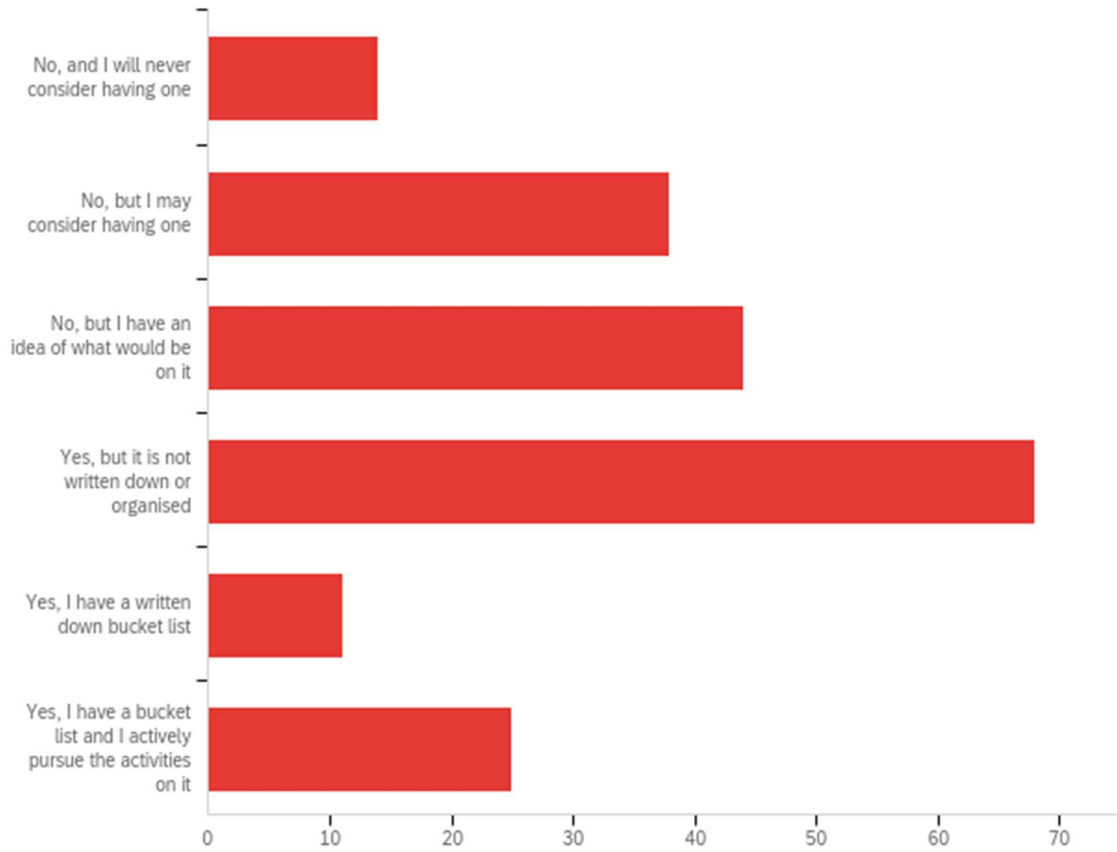
- Do you have a faith?



Q5 - What is your religion?



Q7 - Do you have a bucket list?



Q8 - Please select the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1	A bucket list is a list of things that I want to do in my lifetime.	81.00 %	162	15.00%	30	2.50%	5	1.00%	2	0.50%	1	200
2	A bucket list gives me the freedom to choose meaningful experiences for myself.	40.50 %	81	33.00%	66	19.00 %	38	5.50%	11	2.00%	4	200
3	A bucket list involves things that I would like to do before I die.	79.50 %	159	14.50%	29	4.50%	9	0.50%	1	1.00%	2	200
4	I think that a bucket list is about living life to the full.	41.50 %	83	31.50%	63	13.00 %	26	9.50%	19	4.50%	9	200
5	I think that my bucket list could tell others a	27.50 %	55	42.00%	84	19.50 %	39	8.50%	17	2.50%	5	200

	lot about me.											
6	A bucket list could help me remember things that I want to do.	37.00 %	74	37.00%	74	12.50 %	25	8.50%	17	5.00%	10	200
7	My life ambitions are on my bucket list.	17.50 %	35	27.50%	55	26.50 %	53	16.00%	32	12.50 %	25	200
8	I think that the bucket list is a trend that will pass.	5.50%	11	9.00%	18	23.00 %	46	35.00%	70	27.50 %	55	200
9	I think that a bucket list is about showing off your economic and social status.	6.00%	12	11.00%	22	17.50 %	35	26.50%	53	39.00 %	78	200
10	I believe bucket lists encourage individuals to embrace spirituality through life-changing experiences.	8.00%	16	23.00%	46	33.50 %	67	19.50%	39	16.00 %	32	200

Q9 - Please assign these activities in order of your preference. If you had a bucket list (or already have one) the following activities would be ranked according to your preference from 1 to 15 where 1 is the most desired and 15 is the least desired (please drag the options as appropriate).

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
1	Learn a different language	1.00	15.00	5.03
2	Run a marathon	1.00	15.00	9.46
3	Swim with dolphins	1.00	15.00	8.21
4	Ride in a hot air balloon	1.00	15.00	8.01
5	Climb a mountain	1.00	15.00	7.39
6	Learn to play a musical instrument	1.00	15.00	7.48
7	Donate a sum of money to a charity	1.00	15.00	7.99
8	Throw a dart at a map and go wherever it lands	1.00	15.00	7.38
9	Donate blood	1.00	15.00	9.02
10	Fall in love	1.00	15.00	7.02
11	Win a lottery jackpot	1.00	15.00	9.06
12	Travel the world	1.00	15.00	4.05
13	Plant a tree	1.00	15.00	8.99
14	Publish a book	1.00	15.00	8.09
15	Become famous	1.00	15.00	12.82

Q10 - Please select the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1	Having a bucket list makes me feel less guilty about spending money or needing a holiday.	7.50%	15	13.00%	26	36.00%	72	25.50%	51	18.00%	36	200
2	My bucket list has an end.	6.50%	13	7.00%	14	32.50%	65	29.00%	58	25.00%	50	200
3	I have no fear of death as such.	19.50%	39	19.50%	39	22.00%	44	23.00%	46	16.00%	32	200
4	I am afraid of missing out on meaningful experiences that life can offer me.	24.00%	48	37.50%	75	17.00%	34	12.00%	24	9.50%	19	200
5	I like to share my bucket list activities with my friends and family.	17.50%	35	30.00%	60	25.00%	50	20.50%	41	7.00%	14	200

6	Travel contributes to the majority of things on my bucket list.	32.00 %	64	40.50%	81	13.00 %	26	9.00%	18	5.50%	11	200
7	I enjoy sharing my unique experiences through social media.	9.50%	19	27.00%	54	18.50 %	37	17.00%	34	28.00 %	56	200
8	My bucket list does not reflect the worry about dying.	30.00 %	60	27.50%	55	29.50 %	59	8.00%	16	5.00%	10	200
9	I would be unhappy if someone saw my bucket list as distasteful.	9.00%	18	17.00%	34	32.00 %	64	15.00%	30	27.00 %	54	200
10	Majority of my bucket list activities involves doing things on my own.	15.00 %	30	23.00%	46	31.00 %	62	19.00%	38	12.00 %	24	200

Q11 - Please select the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1	I fear dying having not completed everything from my bucket list.	5.00%	10	12.00%	24	18.50%	37	26.50%	53	38.00%	76	200
2	If things from my bucket list did not cost as much, I would have already completed them.	29.50%	59	28.00%	56	17.00%	34	19.50%	39	6.00%	12	200
3	If I was to have a terminal disease, completing meaningful activities would be necessary for me.	28.00%	56	31.00%	62	21.50%	43	11.50%	23	8.00%	16	200
4	A bucket list can, in a way, be a part of my legacy.	17.50%	35	21.50%	43	24.50%	49	19.50%	39	17.00%	34	200

5	My bucket list can be associated with the motto 'You only live once'.	21.50 %	43	42.00%	84	19.00 %	38	10.50%	21	7.00%	14	200
6	I would never engage in socially frowned upon activities, no matter how much I would like to experience them.	13.00 %	26	18.00%	36	21.50 %	43	28.50%	57	19.00 %	38	200
7	A bucket list is a product of my wanderlust.	12.00 %	24	41.00%	82	32.50 %	65	10.50%	21	4.00%	8	200
8	My bucket list can be associated with the phrase 'Memento mori' which translates to 'Remember that you have to die'.	11.00 %	22	17.00%	34	36.00 %	72	20.50%	41	15.50 %	31	200
9	I want to always be remembered by things that I have achieved.	15.50 %	31	21.50%	43	28.00 %	56	20.00%	40	15.00 %	30	200
10	Bucket list is	25.50 %	51	35.00%	70	22.00 %	44	8.50%	17	9.00%	18	200

Appendix B. The interview guide.

Criterion 1 – Interviewees have a bucket list.

Question	Follow-up questions
1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?	How old are you? Where do you work?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents? Or What was your financial situation growing up?	What kind of work do they do?
3. What are your travel experiences?	How often? Where? Why?
4. What do you think of bucket lists?	Are they a good idea? Why are they so popular?
5. Do you have a bucket list?*	Is it written? If not, why? Is it important to you?
6. What's on your bucket list?	Why? Would you perform them alone/with family?
7. How did you come to compile a bucket list?	Is there a particular reason for you having a bucket list?
8. In your opinion, does age impact the creation of a bucket list?	If so, how? If no, why not? Are bucket lists created at a certain age or in certain circumstances?
9. Does travel play a big part in your bucket list?	Why? Would your bucket list be less substantive without travel?
10. Does bucket list travel differ from a holiday?	If so, how? If not, is bucket list, essentially a travel list?
11. How important is your financial position to your ability to complete your bucket list?	How much money would your bucket list require to be completed? Is this mainly due to the amount of travel on your bucket list? Are there any items on your list that don't require a financial input?
12. Do you envisage yourself completing your bucket list or is it an ongoing process?	Why? Why not? Is it a lifelong project? By what age do you expect to have completed your list?
13. Would you say your bucket list is associated with FOMO- the fear of missing out?	Do social media and television create a certain urge to complete these experiences?

14. Would you say your bucket list can tell others a lot about you?	Why? Why not? How can your bucket list describe you as a person?
15. Has Covid-19 changed your bucket list?	In what way? Why is that? How do you feel about that?
16. A lot of bucket list stories stem from terminal illness. Why do you think that is?	In your opinion, does confrontation with mortality further the need for a bucket list?
17. There are stories of families completing bucket lists in memory of a deceased loved one. Would you say that bucket lists can be a means of legacy creation?	If yes, how? If not, why not? Can bucket lists narrate an individual's life story?
18. Is the bucket list associated with wanting to live life to the full or the concern about 'kicking the bucket'?	Why? Do you think that's the case for others?
19. What does completing a bucket list mean to you?	Why? How will you feel if you haven't completed everything by a certain age?

Criterion 2. Interviewees do not have a bucket list.

Question	Follow-up questions
1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?	How old are you? Where do you work?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents? Or What was your financial situation growing up?	What kind of work do they do?
3. What are your travel experiences?	How often? Where? Why?
4. What do you think of bucket lists?	Are they a good idea? Why do you think they are so popular?

5. Do you have a bucket list?	Is it written down? If not, why? Why is it not important to you?
6. Do you have an idea of your future goals?	How would you say it is different from a bucket list?
7. Have you ever considered writing a bucket list?	If yes, when? Why not?
8. In your opinion, does age impact the creation of a bucket list?	If so, how? If no, why not? Are bucket lists created at a certain age or in certain circumstances?
9. Why would you say people's bucket lists consist of travel experiences?	In your opinion, are bucket lists insufficient without travel?
10. Do you see bucket list travel as different to a holiday?	Why? Why not? If not, is a bucket list, essentially a travel list?
11. In your opinion, does one need a good financial position to complete a bucket list?	Why? Why not? Is it mainly due to the amount of travel on the bucket list? How much money would you require to complete your dream goals?
12. Would you say that people strive towards completing a bucket list or towards continuously living bucket list experiences?	Why is that the case?
13. Has FOMO- fear of missing out got anything to do with a bucket list?	If yes, to which extent? If no, why not? Do social media and television create a certain urge to complete these experiences?

14. Do you think bucket lists speak for their owners?	Why? Why not? Do your goals define you in any way?
15. Has Covid-19 had an impact on individual's bucket lists?	Has it impacted your long-term/ short-term goals?
16. A lot of bucket list stories stem from terminal illness. Why do you think that is?	In your opinion, does confrontation with mortality further the need for a bucket list?
17. There are stories of families completing bucket lists in memory of a deceased loved one. Would you say that bucket lists can be a means of legacy creation?	If yes, how? If not, why not? Can bucket lists narrate an individual's life story?
18. Is the bucket list associated with wanting to live life to the full or the concern about 'kicking the bucket'?	Why? Why not? Do you think that's the case for others?
19. What does completing a bucket list entail for the individual?	Is it important? Why? Why not?

Appendix C. Participant information sheet.

The Bucket List: 'kicking the bucket' or living life to the full?

Participant information sheet.

Purpose of the study.

The overall purpose of the study is to explore the concept of bucket lists. Specifically, the research focuses on the role of bucket lists within contemporary culture, and also appraises the role of tourism within bucket lists. The study further examines the location of the bucket list concept within a 'life and death spectrum', questioning whether bucket lists are compiled because of the lust for life or the concern of death. Overall, the aim is to broaden knowledge about the hitherto overlooked concept of bucket lists.

What do you have to do?

The aim of the interview is to develop a dialogue surrounding the topic of bucket lists. Data collected from the interview is then thematically analysed to develop insights into the concept of bucket lists. The format of interviews is semi-structured, which means that the researcher will gently direct the course of the conversation; however, there are no restrictions on what topics can be raised. What matters most is that you have the opportunity to express your thoughts and opinions on the matter. The interviews will take place via Teams. In the unlikely event that the call terminates, the researcher will attempt to call you again. Although some sensitive topics may be raised during the interview, it nevertheless is expected that, overall, you should find the interview to be a very positive experience. The interview should not last longer than an hour, including introduction and verbal consent to participate in the study.

Confidentiality.

All data collected during the interview will only be stored on a secure password protected personal computer. Moreover, all data will be anonymised, with the exception of the researcher alone. Importantly, data will be handled strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988). If you wish, you can withdraw from the interview at any time without the need for explanation. In that case, all data collected from you will be immediately and permanently deleted. The data from completed interviews only will be analysed and presented within the thesis.

Contact details.

If you have any questions with regards to the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Santa Zascierinska either via szascierinska@uclan.ac.uk or 07717793158. Thank you.

Appendix D. Verbal consent form.

The Bucket List: 'kicking the bucket' or living life to the full?

Verbal Consent Form.

Consent form details.

The following consent script will be read out to each interview participant prior to interviews taking place. The participants will receive the participant information sheet. Participant's verbal consent will be recorded and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Consent script.

Hello again, my name is Santa. I am currently doing my PhD research at the University of Central Lancashire and I would like to ask you to participate in my study. Can I tell you more about my study? (Await confirmation to proceed).

In my study I aim to investigate the concept of bucket lists. In particular, I'm interested to know why people compile bucket lists. However, you don't have to have a bucket list to participate in this study. If you choose to be a part of this project, here is what will happen; I will have an approximately one-hour long conversation with you where I will ask you questions about bucket lists. Your answers will form the basis of my thesis. Your name will be changed for the purpose of anonymity, and only I, as a researcher will be able to locate your data. I will store your data safely and confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. At the same time, I would like to be able to use your anonymised data in future studies, and to share this data with other researchers. Do I have your consent for that? (Await confirmation to proceed).

In any publications a pseudonym will be used. You may find some of the topics raised around the subject of bucket lists sensitive, as I will be asking your opinion on the place of death within the bucket list discourse. In order to reduce any potential risks, I encourage you to let me know if you find the subject uncomfortable for you and I will ensure that it does not appear throughout the discussion again. Is that okay for you? (Await confirmation to proceed).

You don't have to agree to take part; you can ask me any questions you want before or throughout; you can also withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be erased immediately and permanently. With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of our discussion to make sure I'm getting an accurate record of your thoughts. Should you have any concerns, please contact me on 07717793158, or alternatively via my email which is szascerinska@uclan.ac.uk. You can also find my contact details in your participant information sheet.

Finally, do I have your permission to interview you and audio record you? (Await confirmation to proceed).

And do you give me permission to quote you using a pseudonym? (Await confirmation to proceed).

Appendix E. Example of interview transcript.

Santa 00:01 OK. Should I start with the interview?

Participant 1 00:06 Yes.

Santa 00:07 Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Participant 1 00:13 Yeah. I'm approaching 40. I'm sort of at that point in my life where I'm changing career a little bit, I've had quite a varied life, I suppose you might put it that way. Sort of working class upbringing- brought up on various council estates. Joined the army for a while. And since then, I've been a student. I've been a subcontractor. And now I'm back to being a student again alongside being a health and wellbeing coach. So that's what I'm doing at the moment. Is that what you wanted?

Santa 00:53 Yeah. Yeah. Perfect. And can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

Participant 1 01:00 Yeah. Again, working class. Or I suppose maybe one step below working class. Both brought up in the social care system and that's where they met. And so since then, they've both been working class and so my mum worked the civil service for a while, but now she's a care worker now that she's knocking on a bit and my dad was always a sort of manual labour, he worked for the water board, worked in various factories and things. He passed away a few years ago. But they both kind of tried to do what was best for us, had a fairly sort of modest upbringing. But it was a caring environment. So no complaints, really.

Santa 01:57 Yeah, I see, I see. Thank you for sharing that with me. Now, as you know, we're talking about bucket lists today and you may agree that a lot of bucket lists are associated with travel. So because of that, I'd like to ask you, what are your travel experiences?

Participant 1 02:17 Ehmm... not a great deal when we were growing up. Well, again, I can't complain. It's not like we were confined to Preston. Our main travel areas were... we'd go to Morecambe once a year, we liked it, there was a caravan park. It is good fun. Every now and again we'd go down to Kent. And that was quite exotic for us and we'd go down to the south coast where there was a bit of sunshine every now and again. Again, caravan parks. As I reached my teenage years, we went to Majorca once, that was fun. And the bulk of my travel experience has been as an adult and where, obviously, in the army, as you can imagine I travelled a fair bit then, but that was work related rather than leisure. So I saw quite a bit of Europe: Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Italy and various places in the Middle East. But again, I said it wasn't leisure. That was far from it. It was work related. That's one way of putting it. And so since I've left the army, it's just been... standard British holidays, really - couple of city breaks here

and there. And so recently, I think Prague, Berlin are particular highlights, like the occasional visit up to the Lake District or even down South to visit old army friends, things like that. So there's still a lot of places I want to see. I can't say that I've missed out. I don't think.

- Santa 04:15 And what would you say is the main purpose of your travels today?
- Participant 1 04:21 And In what respect? Why do I travel now?
- Santa 04:27 Yeah, yeah.
- Participant 1 04:28 So my sort of short haul travel... I suppose I mean, I travel to work, you know. And because I'm not allowed to drive anymore for medical reasons, so I tend to use public transport. I'm on the train quite a lot. And anytime that I travel without work is again just trying to get our Preston for a bit, you know. So it's up to Lakes. Maybe up to Scotland occasionally, down South or the occasional city break and short haul flights just to sort of central or almost Eastern Europe. That's about as far as it takes me at the moment.
- Santa 05:14 Have you made any travel plans in future, places you want to conquer?
- Participant 1 05:20 I've got quite a lot of travel plans for the future, you know. I want to see a lot more of the world or to go a bit further afield. Like I've said the furthest afield that I've gone at the moment is a Middle East, and that wasn't exactly fun. And so there's still quite a lot, there's other continents, I'd like to see. So I've got a lot of plans, nothing too concrete but theoretical plans, I suppose.
- Santa 05:46 Mm hmm. Mm hmm. I see, I see. And in your opinion, what do you think of bucket lists, are they a good idea? What do you think about them?
- Participant 1 05:59 Yes, I suppose they're a good idea. It's a wish list, isn't it, really? And yes I'd say they're a good idea just to have it... You're more likely to do it, if you've got it written down, I'd say. So, yeah, I think that they're nice, that they're almost...I'd even go as far as to say they're a fantasy wish list, you know. And I'm not sure what else I can say about that, to be honest. I think they are a good idea. I think everybody should have one, you know. If you want to do these things get them written down, you can start checking them off then, can't you? So I like the idea of them.
- Santa 06:46 So why do you think they're so popular, especially in the Western culture I'd say?
- Participant 1 06:55 I suppose they're quite popular because we're a sort of a consumption based society, aren't we in the West. It's not that the list itself is popular, it's bragging about the list. You know what you've checked off it- this is quite popular. It's, you know, the Instagram generation, aren't we? You've not been on holiday unless Facebook and Instagram know that you've been on holiday. So they're quite popular because

it's bragging rights, isn't it? It's not just your own personal list. It's what you can say down the pub, you know, when you're telling everyone about how great you are because you've been to this place and that place, I think that's why they're popular because, you know, that's just the way society is at the moment.

- Santa 07:49 It's almost like establishing your popularity through bucket list, would you say?
- Participant 1 07:55 Yeah, in a way. Yeah, I suppose I could go along with that. I suppose it makes... you can almost feel a little bit more cultured and therefore more relevant if you'd been to a lot more places, you know. Obviously it doesn't take rocket science to book a flight and fly somewhere. But if you're down the pub and one person has been to Magaluf every year for the last 20 years, but somebody else has been to all these different places and seen the modern wonders and all sorts of different sort of cultural hotspots then... They kinda do seem a bit more relevant, don't they? They seem a bit more interesting I think. So I don't think it's so much about popularity, it's more about how interesting, well... I suppose they are linked. The one who's more interesting is probably going to be more popular. But, yeah.
- Santa 08:51 And do you have a bucket list?
- Participant 1 08:55 As in have I written a bucket list?
- Santa 08:57 Yeah. Yeah. Have you written it down?
- Participant 1 09:00 No I've not written it down, but I mean I could write one down right now. I know where I want to go, you know. And so I could write one down. I just haven't at the moment, you know, it almost feels at the moment I'd be punishing myself to write it down now because financial situation is not great and what with everything that's going on at the moment, we COVID and everything. If I was to write down a list of everything I want to see now, I know I can't do any of it right now. So I'm just gonna be looking at it and thinking, 'Wow, there's a list of things I can't do'. Does that make sense?
- Santa 09:41 Of course. Yes. Yes. Everything has changed with COVID I suppose... So we'll talk about that as well very soon. But your bucket list- is it quite important to you would you say?
- Participant 1 09:55 Yeah. Yeah. It is.
- Santa 09:56 Yeah, yeah. And why is that?
- Participant 1 10:02 Because it's things I want to achieve, you know. It's what I'm gauging the success of my life, I suppose based on this. This is the stuff I want to do it. Nothing should stop me doing it other than me. So if I don't do it, then I can judge myself to have failed in some way. So it's important that I do these things. They're important enough for me to think about. So they should be important enough for me to do them.
- Santa 10:34 I see, interesting! And what is on your bucket list?

- Participant 1 10:40 Quite a few things to be honest. There's quite a lot of places that I want to see. Do you want specifics?
- Santa 10:48 Yes, that will be great.
- Participant 1 10:50 Yeah. OK. So in terms to travel, I want to go to America. I'd like to visit a couple of the countries in South America as well. So just to clarify, the first, America I was on about United States. I want to go to New York. I'd like to see California and I'd like to look at Canada as well. Although that's fairly low down the bucket list. South America, I'd like to go to Brazil and have a look around there, maybe I'd like to go to Machu Picchu. I know it's a bit of a cliché thing, but I do like, you know, hiking and trekking and things and that's, you know, quite popular destination for that sort of thing. I want to visit everywhere in Europe at least once every country in Europe, everywhere. And I've never been to Africa. I'd like to go there. So I'd like to climb Kilimanjaro while I'm there. Go on a proper safari. I want to see Japan and South Korea, you know I'm a big fan of technology. And so I'd like to see... I'm interested in the culture as well. But mainly based on the technology side of it. I'd like to go to Russia. And I'd like to go somewhere in the Middle East, but for leisure purposes, not for other reasons, and I'd like to visit Australia as well. So that's in terms of travel those are sort of... They're probably quite popular clichéd sorts of things to want to do, but that's what I want to do, so I don't care. And there's a few other things, you know, I want to get my doctorate at some point. I want to continue my personal development study and I want to get qualifications that I want in terms of coaching, as I said, I'm a coach in my sort of employment. Personally, you know, I'd like to get married again. OK. You know but this... A proper one this time. And I want to raise my daughter and any other kids I may have, to make sure they're raised properly. You know, the general ticklist. I want to own my own house. I want to make sure that I've got something to leave behind when I do eventually sort of move on or to make sure I've got something to leave behind for my family. I want a dog as well!
- Santa 13:27 Of course, not a complete bucket list unless you have a dog!
- Participant 1 13:32 Exactly. Everyone should have a dog!
- Santa 13:35 And in terms of your travels that you've mentioned-the great amount, would you perform them on your own or with your family?
- Participant 1 13:45 A mixture. I'd like to have my family with me. It depends what... Which things I'm talking about. You know. In terms of Kilimanjaro, that's probably either a solo effort or maybe a couple of experienced sort of mountain climbers, whatever, with me. So it's not something I'm going to take, you know, the missus and kids along with me for because it's not going to be particularly safe or more easy. I know that my sort of family unit all are interested in going to Japan for various different reasons, so that's something that we do together. I had this idea of doing like a European road trip or even lack of Route 66 road

trip in America. That's probably something I do on my own- one of those things. Or maybe do it twice, once with the family, once on my own. I think it'd be quite... Almost therapeutic, you know, thing to do on my own, get on with some work I want to do while I'm travelling. I had an idea of going on a coach trip around Europe and whether I did on my own or not, I don't know, it's something that I toyed with, but I'd say for the majority of it... It wouldn't be on my own, it'd be with, you know, one or more members of my family. I promised my mom when I was younger that I'd drive her around the world and so I want to at least drive to Folkestone, I want to at least drive her somewhere, when I'm allowed to drive again. So one or more of my family members would come with me to most of these destinations, just not all of them.

Santa 15:36 That's nice. And how did you come to compile your bucket list?

Participant 1 15:43 I sort of built up over time, you know, when I've developed an interest in something either about, you know, watching documentary, reading a book, watching a film, playing computer games, you know, and... So over time I've sort of added more things to it. So, for example, I remember a few years ago watching a film Lost in Translation, Bill Murray, Scarlett Johansson and I'm fairly confident they're in Tokyo. I saw some of the, you know, things that they were getting up to and the way that it looked so different over there and add to that technology that I'm into... So that's probably the moment when Japan ended up on my bucket list. And recently, even though I've been to Greece before, but only to one of the islands where it is more like a club 18-30 thing, when I was a bit younger so it's just about... I may as well have been in the UK still. But recently I have one of the video games I play-it's called Assassin's Creed. And you're running around Greece. And it's really sort of detailed- you looking at the landscape of sort of mainland Greek. If there is such a thing, you know, the main parts of Greece and it looked really beautiful. It just reminded me of places I've been in Scotland, you know, with all the hills and things like that. And it looked really nice. So although I've been to Greece before and my sister's worked in Greece, I've never really been there and appreciated it properly. So I'd like to go back there. So Greece is one of the sort of highlights of my thing as well. And my dad's been to New York when he went to New York and came back and showed us the videos of everything. I promised myself I'd go there and I'll take my family with me. You know, to appreciate it with me. And it's quite an eclectic sort of mix of all these different things I want to do travel wise. You know, I've been adding to it constantly throughout the years.

Santa 17:53 I get the ideas that you notice beautiful sites through pictures and films and your families members memories. And, you know, like you said, your dad went to New York and showed you pictures and that's what really sparked the interest to go these places. Am I right?

- Participant 1 18:10 Yeah, you're right. I mean, if I'm enjoying looking at it on a TV screen or, you know, online or something, like that, if I'm in awe of all of its beauty just looking at it digitally, I can't imagine what it's going to be like when I'm actually there. That's the reason why I need to do there and actually see it. Yeah, we're in the virtual reality age, aren't we? Could quite easily put on, you know, some sort of virtual reality goggles and go to these places anywhere. But will it be the same? I don't think so. I'd like to be there.
- Santa 18:46 I know you've highlighted lots of reasons, but just to kind of summarize one particular reason for having the bucket list, if you could maybe define one -what's your ultimate reason for having the bucket list?
- Participant 1 19:03 It's like...I like to have this list because, again- cliché time -these are things I want to do before I die. OK, because I know I'm not gonna last forever. You know, as much as I'd like to, I'm not going to. So I feel like if I don't do all these things while I'm alive, is that a life wasted? So before I die, I need to get these things ticked off.
- Santa 19:33 Yeah, I see. Got a different question for you. In your opinion, does age impact the creation of a bucket list?
- Participant 1 19:46 Absolutely!
- Santa 19:46 Yeah?
- Participant 1 19:47 Yeah. Cause when younger you just sort of... I can picture myself in my late teens, early 20s. The idea of a bucket list would have horrified me, you know, because when you are that age, you think you're gonna live forever anyway. So you've got this idea in your head that anything you want to do- you are going to do it because you got all the time in the world. But the older you get, obviously, with myself, when I've seen other generations of my family sort of, you know, move on. Now, my grandparents, they've all passed away and my dad... My dad was next and then with COVID as well... You know, being older puts you in more vulnerable age bracket. And I'm not quite in the vulnerable age bracket yet but it's only a matter of time. I'm 40 next year. You know, so I'm not going to get any younger. The older you get, I think, the more urgency there is because like I said, you're going to die at some point. We all are. And so, yeah, I think the older you get, the more likely you want to start thinking about this sort of stuff. That's when you start maybe regretting some of the choices you make when you're younger, when you could have done some travelling. But, you know, you went to Benidorm instead. And again, I'm not slating Benidorm. I'm sure it's lovely, but it's not my idea of travelling, you know. So the older you get, definitely the more... you think about meaningful experiences rather than just a sunny version of Preston.
- Santa 21:19 Mm hmm. So do you think it's more age than circumstances that impact the creation of the bucket list?

- Participant 1 21:28 I think that depends on the circumstances. Can you clarify what you mean by circumstances, you mean health circumstances or financial circumstances or... Any of them or?
- Santa 21:45 Health, yes.
- Participant 1 21:47 Yes. Again, with age in mind, if you've got a cancer diagnosis, you were given six months I don't think it'd matter whether you were 20 or 40 or 60. If you've got given six months, you'd want to do as much as you can in them six months. So a bucket list would be even more sort of pressing I'd imagine. Does that make sense.
- Santa 22:09 Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And does travel play a big part in your bucket list? I know you've highlighted so many destinations, but would you say it's at the top of your list?
- Participant 1 22:25 Yeah, travel's probably 95 percent of my bucket list.
- Santa 22:27 And why is that?
- Participant 1 22:33 Because all the other stuff on my bucket list. Education. Get married. Buy your house. Have some money to pass on to my kids. Anyone can do that. You know, these are things that most people are kind of expected to do anyway. But travel. You know, you get to choose, don't you? You get to sort of personalize your bucket list if it's travel stuff. Whereas if it's buy a house, everyone's gonna buy a house, well not everyone obviously, but, that's the goal, isn't it, in terms of where you live, you'd like to own your own house. It's really too much of a cliché, I think. It's on my bucket list but whether I do or don't buy my own house I think it's... It's not a priority, I'd like it, but it's not a priority. Whereas seeing as much of the world as I can- to me is a priority.
- Santa 23:35 And certainly you've said that it's unique so you can choose it and decide where you're going. That's playing a big part...
- Participant 1 23:41 I mean, like like I said, I'm not going to disrespect anyone who wants to go to, you know, Magaluf or Benidorm every year - if that's what you want to do then who am I to say that's wrong. But I can choose the areas I want to go to. I can tailor my own experience when I'm there. I get to decide how I do this and my bucket list will help me to do that. Once I actually commit to writing it down and ticking things off it.
- Santa 24:10 So with this in mind, would you say that your bucket list would be less substantive without travel?
- Participant 1 24:17 Absolutely. They'd be barely worth mentioning without travel. If there's no travel on it, then...What's left? Married, house, kids. Same as everybody else.
- Santa 24:32 Yeah. Yeah. And a bit of a different question I'd say here, a bit of a tricky one maybe. Does bucket list travel differ from holiday?
- Participant 1 24:52 I suppose in a way, yeah. Because it's new. I mean, if I'm right in thinking how you're defining the holiday... So if I'm just going away for

a couple of weeks just to get away from Preston, get away from the office, get away from the missus or whatever... so you go in there to relax only. You're not going there for a specific reason...That's how I'd interpret a holiday anyway. You just go in there just to relax and might even take the missus with me. OK. And you know, you led on a beach, you get in cocktails brought, all that stuff. That's a holiday. But bucket list travel it's more...You want to try something new. You're gonna get your teeth into the local culture. And, you know, you seen something new... I try to think of a way to express it... You taking it in more. I think you appreciate it more because it's new, because it's on your list, because you're probably only gonna do it once. You know, I'm only going to go to Japan once. I'm only going to go to Machu Picchu once or climb Kilimanjaro once. That's not gonna be my annual holiday. You know, let's have a break from the office and quickly go climb a mountain in Africa. These are once in a lifetime experiences, I think, where the holiday is an every year experience, maybe, if you're lucky.

- Santa 26:21 So do you think if you were to go somewhere for your bucket list it would be just once in a lifetime, you wouldn't go there again?
- Participant 1 26:28 Well, you never say never. You know, again, this is this is the danger with it. What if I've planned out a bucket list, you know, where I'm traveling somewhere new every year, well what if I go to Tokyo next year and decide that it's so good that none of the rest of my bucket list matters and I'm just going to go to Tokyo every year. You don't know. You can't really sort of foresee that. And for the majority of us, I would expect that I'd probably only go there once, just to say that I've done it. Just to tell myself that I've done it.
- Santa 27:07 So that's all a bit about self, almost self-assurance?
- Participant 1 27:17 More self-indulgence. Yeah, tell myself that I've done it. You know, it's a tick off the list. That's one more step towards my fulfilled life- it's one more job done before I die.
- Santa 27:38 And how important is your financial position to your ability to complete your bucket list?
- Participant 1 27:43 Oh very important! But again, at the moment with COVID and the financial sort of hit that everyone's taken, I'd struggle to finance my caravan park holiday in Morecambe, let alone all these other things I want to do. So yeah financial situations are vastly important. You know, it'd cost me a lot of money to complete everything on my bucket list!
- Santa 28:10 How much would you say would that be if you had to put an amount on it?
- Participant 1 28:20 I wouldn't even like to guess, probably at 200 thousand pounds for everything I wanted to do it. Spread across the next, you know, 20 or 30 years, if I've got that long left, you know, probably anywhere between 150 to 200 thousand pounds for everything.

Santa 28:39 Yes. And is that mainly due to travel on your bucket list?

Participant 1 28:43 Yes!

Santa 28:45 Are there any items on your bucket list that don't require a financial input?

Participant 1 29:00 Ehm... Again, I mean, just the travel side of it is about, as I said, about two hundred thousand pounds. You can probably double that again to buy a house, that I'd happy with. Ehm... education. For me to get the education I want- it is not going to have a direct financial cost for me, obviously, I'll have to pay student loans back in time, you know, or not, you know, as most people would argue. And get married, that would probably have a fairly significant cost to do it properly. And I'd say the only thing on my bucket list that won't physically cost anything will be what I mentioned. I want to raise my kids right, you know. And if you need money to raise your kids right, then you're doing it wrong. And I'd argue anyway. You know, I'm talking about values and morals rather than, you know, obviously it's going to cost to feed them and clothe them and things like that. But that's just sort of part of the course, isn't it? That's probably the only thing that doesn't require... in terms of the travel it all costs!

Santa 30:09 Yeah, the bucket list cost doesn't it?

Participant 1 30:12 Yeah. It's going to cost a fortune. You know, I'd suggest this is why... That's probably the main reason why many people don't finish a bucket list because it costs so much and travel is only going to be more expensive in the future, I'd imagine.

Santa 30:33 So it's a very expensive list to have, isn't it?

Participant 1 30:39 At least if you write it down- you can almost prioritize it, can't you? Do the cheapest ones first if you're in a position to do so and save up for the... Again without me writing it down I can say that mine is gonna cost at least two hundred thousand pounds. If I was to write it down, then I could itemize it and maybe get a better idea. So having a written bucket list, would probably be an advantage for me in time, thinking of it logistically anyway.

Santa 31:07 And do you envisage yourself completing a bucket list? Or is it an ongoing process forever?

Participant 1 31:13 Oh. Absolutely. It's an ongoing process. Again, if I wrote 20 things on a bucket list now and did all 20, I think, well, I'm great at this and I'll probably throw a few more things on there. You know, it's a big world isn't it? You know, travel... I don't know about anyone else, but for me, travel is a big part of it. If I've seen everything I want to see, I'm going to notice something else I want to see. Maybe want to go there again or maybe commit to showing other people... Taking some people along on things with me. No, you're going to think of something else you want to do. Like I said, we're in the age of consumption aren't we. So once you've done everything you think you

wanted to do, you're going to find something else. You're not just going to sit back and retire, are you?

- Santa 32:10 So it's like a lifelong project, isn't it?
- Participant 1 32:13 Yeah, it's almost like a travel CV, I'd say. When you send a CV off to someone, or you make your own CV, you doing it knowing...Well what CV stands for? Curriculum Vitae. It means life list, like a living list, doesn't it? So you know, it's going to change - it's going to grow over time. So my travel CV, my bucket list is going to grow over time. I'm gonna do stuff on it. I'm going to get some experiences to put on there and then I'm going to want to add to it all the time.
- Santa 32:50 So you don't have a certain age by which you'd like to complete your bucket list?
- Santa 32:54 No, I want to have it done...Again, this is a tricky one. I'd like to do most of this stuff whilst I'm still relatively young and relatively healthy so that I can get the most out of it. So I'm not relying on other people's support to do it, but I fully expect that once I'm incapable of doing it myself... Like I said, I'm raising my kids, right. So once I'm too old to do it myself, I fully expect them to be dragging me around the world to show me places. OK. You know, so I'd like to have it done while I'm still able to do it myself. So at what age that might be -who knows. I suppose I'll know when it's time to hang my knapsack opened and not continue travelling anymore.
- Santa 33:45 And would you say your bucket list is associated with something called FOMO, which translates to a fear of missing out?
- Participant 1 33:53 No, not at all. If I was afraid of missing out, I'd be in Benidorm every year with the rest of my neighbours. I want to do things that are important to me. I don't care what people are doing, and I don't mean to sound like sort of in an arrogant way, but other people are doing things. Yeah, I know my dad's been to New York, so I want to go as well, but I don't want to go just because he went. I want to go because it looked good. OK. Yes, so I suppose in a way I would be afraid of maybe not doing it. I don't feel like I'm missing out. I want to do it because I want to do it. I don't care what anybody else is doing.
- Santa 34:32 Yeah, yeah...And do you think that social media and television create a certain urge to complete these experiences?
- Participant 1 34:46 Yeah, I think it's sort of widely regarded that consumption is based on fear. You know, that's some of the wording they use on adverts and things. I mean, this term you used a minute ago, FOMO, I remember vividly seeing that on an advert for a credit card I think it was. So it's like, you know, don't you miss out on this, make sure you've got our credit card in your pocket so that if everyone else is doing something, you can join in? Yeah, social media, you know, and, you know, traditional media. I think they are gearing you to... They want you to

go and do these things. Obviously not for your own benefit, but because, they know, you're going to be spending.

- Santa 35:29 And you mentioned the word fear in there as well. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?
- Participant 1 35:36 Yes, it's almost everything is designed...And I don't want to sound like a mad conspiracy theorist here, but a lot of this stuff is designed to make you afraid, to remind you that life's short and could end at any minute. You know we've always been told about terrorism and COVID and wars and this and that, you know, we get told, you know, life is fragile. So you need to make the most of it while you... while you're here. You know, it's technically true, I suppose. But I think they put a lot more urgency on it than it's absolutely necessary.
- Santa 36:16 And do you think that could be behind the creation of somebody's bucket list?
- Participant 1 36:22 Maybe. Yeah. I suppose if you see other people, you know...Again, if you've seen somebody, you know, succumb to cancer or COVID or AIDS or anything like that, you think well if it can happen to them, it could happen to me. So let's make the most of it, because I'm going to die at some point. If you see somebody and someone who's...I mean, there's a lot of people who're gone before their time, particularly with the COVID and things like that. Maybe they had plans to do stuff when they retired, but they've never got to work that out, cause they never got a chance to retire, you know. So I think if you're afraid of dying, you're going to be in more of a rush to get these things done, cause life's not guaranteed, is it?
- Santa 37:21 Certainly not.. On a more positive note would you say that your bucket list can tell other a lot about you?
- Participant 1 37:28 Yes. I suppose it's back to what I was saying earlier on. You know, about the group of people in the pub- one's interesting and one isn't. You know, if you're doing all these cultural things, it is going to make people maybe think that there's a bit more to you, you know, than perhaps somebody who does the same thing year in, year out. And again, there's nothing wrong with that, if that's what you want to do, but it doesn't say that there's a an emotional depth to you. You know, if you just want to go to Benidorm every year or Magaluf, whereas if you want to experience all these different cultures, you know, even little things like, you know, if you know somebody who's going to Greece or Russia or Japan and they try and learn a little bit of language before they go. You know, it shows. I mean, that's one of the things that I would possibly even say would be on my bucket list would be to learn another language properly. I think not enough British people learn a second language. You know, I can roll a lot of languages off that I know a little bit of I don't ...I can't... I'm not fluent in another language. And I'd like to be fluent in another language to go and visit that place. And that'd say a lot about someone I thin. You know, if somebody's bucket list comprises only of mountains that they want to

climb, that says something about them. If the bucket list contains lots of stuff about charity work, that says something amazing about them. There's nothing charitable on mine, you know, doesn't necessarily mean I'm selfish. It just maybe tells me, well, that's not my priority. You know, so... I might want to start thinking about putting some charitable things on my bucket list, I'd do a sponsored Kilimanjaro climb

Santa 39:21 So how do you think your bucket list describes you then?

Participant 1 39:29 Ehm... adventurous maybe... greedy, I suppose. You know, if I've said it's not going to end, if you know, if most of my... I'd say it certainly doesn't say free spirit I don't think. Because I want to get the house and get married and things like that. But the fact that I've got these things that I want to look after my family and raise them properly, I think that says that I've got a little bit of moral substance to me. But yeah, there's probably a little bit that says ... I wouldn't go so far as to say selfish, but I wouldn't... I don't know how to say it...It probably says that I want quite a lot. But provided I'm willing to work for it, I wouldn't suggest that that's necessarily a bad thing provided I'm willing to work for it and earn it. You know, if someone says... if someone's got winning the lottery on their bucket list, then... All that says is you want to do a lot of stuff, but you don't want to work for it, you want it handed to you. And that's not a bucket list anymore. That's a shopping list. You know, it's a freebie list.

Santa 40:52 It's quite interesting what you said, well, what's the difference between shopping list and the bucket list?

Participant 1 41:00 OK. So your bucket list is these things that you want to do once, it's experiential shows, it's things that you want to do to maybe enhance your own personal sort of portfolio. Whereas a shopping list is just a list of things you need. But if you've got...if you're going to win the lottery and then go to all these places, you're not doing it because you've earned it and you deserve the right to do that thing. You're doing it because you've got the money to burn. Why not? It takes the... It's not as special, I don't think. It's more just things you're buying because you can. You know, does that make sense?

Santa 41:36 Absolutely, yes, yes! On another note, very current note, has COVID-19 changed your bucket list?

Participant 1 41:46 No, it's delayed it, it's not changed it though. Well, it's delayed me starting to cross things off, but I think I'll get things crossed off a lot sooner because it's giving me that little bit more urgency.

Santa 42:03 So COVID-19 gave you urgency did you say?

Participant 1 42:06 It gave me a bit of urgency, but it also delayed me starting which in itself has meant that it's made it more urgent. It's made me think more about the health of myself and my family as well. Also making

sure that everyone's healthy and I'm raising people right and able to look after themselves. I'd say, maybe that's a little bit down to COVID.

- Santa 42:32 And that's why it makes it bit more urgent, just the health?
- Participant 1 42:39 In what way? What do you mean?
- Santa 42:40 So you mentioned that your bucket list is a little bit more urgent now. Is that due to the fact that you've noticed that your health is more important now due to COVID?
- Participant 1 42:52 No. No, I'm not. Well, yeah, definitely. I've always valued my health anyway, but that maybe didn't show when I was a bit younger. When you're a little bit less responsible. And yeah now, I'm more sort of acutely aware that my health is really important, not just my health, but I've got to be healthy enough to look after my family and keep them healthy. But yeah, COVID has sort of really highlighted that on a massive, great big spotlight on the fact that you've got to put your health first. And so again, I could still go do some travelling now. It's going to be inconvenient, it's gonna be expensive. But I could still do it you know, there's nothing stopping me from flying to probably most of the world while the rules are still allowing a bit of travel. But, would I risk my health to do it? Just to check a few things off a list. No, absolutely not. I've got to put mine and my family's health first.
- Santa 43:50 So have you not got any new goals just because of COVID, because some people decided to make their dream gardens or make their new type of bread whilst in lockdown. Have you had anything new like that come up in your bucket list?
- Participant 1 44:04 Nothing new has come on my list, but my general outlook on life has changed. I try to be a bit healthier and, you know, try to look after monies so I can save up to do my bucket list. Try to develop myself personally. You know, I think maybe doing some of the educational stuff that's on my bucket list I've started that earlier than I maybe would have because I'm doing it online so it's easier- I've not had to change my work patterns or anything like that. So maybe a couple of things have been moved forward a little bit. But no, I don't think there is anything new on there because of COVID, it's just made me think about it a bit more. Almost even tempted to write it down.
- Santa 44:51 So COVID made you feel a bit more like you would try to write it down?
- Participant 1 44:56 Yeah.
- Santa 44:57 Okay. Just because of that, the fact that, you know, you've got to be a little bit more in control perhaps of the bucket list?
- Participant 1 45:07 Yes, it does help, I mean, there's a lot of anxiety problems associated with COVID. I know that if you commit yourself, you feel a bit more in control. Anxiety is not as bad, you know. So if I get these things written down I suppose it's more of a comfort blanket as well, if I've

written it down, that's me confirming to myself that this COVID stuff will be over soon and then I can crack on with my list.

- Santa 45:31 Something to look forward to as well, isn't it?
- Participant 1 45:34 Yeah it gives a little bit of hope for the future. Everything's gonna be okay, so I might write it down.
- Santa 45:41 Oh, great.
- Participant 1 45:42 Maybe.
- Santa 45:43 Okay. A lot of stories about bucket list stem from terminal illness. Why do you think that is?
- Participant 1 45:54 Again, it's that awareness that... we all know we're gonna die. And I think we'd all just think a little bit more differently if we knew when we were going to die. I don't know when I'm going to die. But if I got told I've got a terminal illness, then suddenly I got a much better idea of when I'm going to die, so I've got a specific timeframe to work in. Whereas right now I don't have that time frame. Like I've said, I'm forty next year. What is the average? Somewhere around about 70s, 80s. You know. So if I do live until I'm 80, I've got 40 years to tick a few things off a list. If I develop cancer, you know, touch wood that's not gonna happen. But if I was diagnosed with cancer, then that 40 years is suddenly six months. So it's time to get your backside into gear and start working on that list.
- Santa 46:54 So in your opinion, does confrontation with mortality further the need for a bucket list?
- Participant 1 47:00 Yes, absolutely.
- Santa 47:08 And there's a question on the kind of similar note, there are stories of families completing bucket lists in memory of a deceased loved one. Would you say that bucket lists can be a means of legacy creation?
- Participant 1 47:25 Yeah, I suppose, I mean, if I wrote a definitive list of everything I wanted to do before I die, if I didn't manage to finish it, you know, that could be something my family could do to sort of honor me is to finish it off for me. Maybe if they wanted to.
- Santa 47:49 So would you say bucket lists can narrate individual's life story?
- Participant 1 47:54 Yeah, it's like I said before, it's your life CV isn't it? It's not your work CV, it's your life or travel CV. So I'd imagine anything big that you do like that, anything significant. That's what people are gonna be talking about at a funeral or you know, your wake and everything. And in the years to follow that. You know, maybe some people might, if it was a good bucket list, people might want to follow in your footsteps or follow your example. If your bucket list was uncharitable, people might carry on work in your name. So yeah, it could absolutely be your legacy.

Santa 48:36 So would you say you could anticipate your autobiography whilst completing your bucket list?

Participant 1 48:42 I think in your head you'd like to, you know. But then it all up to other people isn't it, what they choose to remember. But yeah, I think you'd like to say, you know, as you're climbing Everest or whatever, you're going to think, well, people are gonna be talking about this for a while, whether they are or not it's up to them.

Santa 49:02 Yeah. So would you say that the bucket list is associated with wanting to live life to the full or the concern about kicking the bucket?

Participant 1 49:18 Again, it's a tough question... that, I'd say to justify doing it maybe to yourself or to other people. You might say it's because I want to make the most out of life. But in reality, I think in the back of your mind, it's because you know that at some point you are going to die and you're on a very sort of limited amount of time. So I think it's... To justify it you might say it's about, you know, you're just one of those guys living life to the full it, grasping life by the scruff of the neck and all that sort of stuff. But really, it's because you know, you're gonna die, and you haven't got an infinite amount of time to do these things.

Santa 50:03 And do you think that's the case for others? Like you said, some may say it's not about death at all?

Participant 1 50:09 I think it's the same for everyone. I think everyone will justify it by saying it's living life to the full, but really they're thinking 'I've not got long-let's get on with it'.

Santa 50:20 So it's something at the back of the mind, you'd say?

Participant 1 50:22 Yeah, absolutely.

Santa 50:24 Maybe it's not conscious to some extent?

Participant 1 50:29 Maybe. Yeah, I'd say subconscious, almost instinctive, you know, sort of thirst for more knowledge and things like that. So yeah, definitely.

Santa 50:46 Right. Final question then. What does completing a bucket list mean to you?

Participant 1 51:02 Completing the bucket list doesn't mean a great deal to me. Having one and working through it and the experience of working through it means a great deal. But actually completing it- it's not really that important to me as long as I'm trying.

Santa 51:19 Yeah. Yeah. So what does it mean for you to actually try and have a goal of your bucket list? What does that mean to you? You said it's a great deal, but why that is?

Participant 1 51:32 I think it's just important. Like I said, you're only here once, aren't you? So it means a lot to me that I at least try and I'm sure other people in my life that you know, that they should try as well. You know. They should try and get out there and experience some new

things. You don't know what's gonna happen in the next life do you?
Or if there is a next life?

- Santa 52:05 Absolutely. Well, it was a brilliant interview with you. Have you got any questions you'd like to ask me or any other points you'd like to elaborate on?
- Participant 1 52:16 No I think I pretty much said everything that you need to, I think.
- Santa 52:21 Was it okay for you?
- Participant 1 52:23 Yeah. Yes. Interesting to talk about this sort of stuff. I am debating writing that list though.
- Santa 52:33 Well maybe that's something for you to do tonight with a cup of tea.
- Participant 1 52:37 Yes, I'll think about that.
- Santa 52:39 I'll pause the recording for now.

Appendix F. Interview sample characteristics

Participant	Age Group	Gender	Occupation
1	31-45	Male	Health and wellbeing coach
2	31-45	Female	IT specialist
3	61 and over	Female	Care assistant
4	61 and over	Male	Supervisor at a factory
5	18-30	Female	Administrator
6	18-30	Female	Quality inspector at a factory
7	18-30	Male	Senior marketing manager
8	31-45	Male	Lecturer
9	61 and over	Male	Professor
10	31-45	Male	Lecturer
11	61 and over	Female	Teacher
12	31-45	Female	Student
13	31-45	Male	Supervisor at a factory
14	46-60	Female	Call centre assistant
15	46-60	Male	Senior Lecturer
16	46-60	Male	Reader
17	18-30	Male	Writer
18	31-45	Female	Student
19	46-60	Female	Student
20	46-60	Male	Senior Lecturer