

The influence of geotourism within the marketing strategy of the Lake Constance region

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Abstract

This article deals with the following research question: "How high is the impact of geotourism aspects within the marketing of the Lake Constance region?" The survey with 100 participants from 2022 was analyzed with the methods of descriptive statistics and showed that specifically geotourism in the context of tourism marketing should be placed more strongly than before in the foreground of marketing activities. The analysis of the survey clearly shows that the different aspects of geotourism were put in the foreground by the respondents and thus deserve an above-average level of attention by those responsible for BodenSee marketing.

Keywords: Geotourism, Lake Constance, Tourism Marketing Strategy

JEL Code: A10

1. INTRODUCTION

Geotourism is a relatively recent idea in the field of tourism research. This is not the first time that geotourism's popularity has risen significantly in recent years.

Visitors from all around the world have long been drawn to particular geological structures. For most foreign visitors to Iceland throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the country's geological formations were a primary draw. Geology-based tourism in England, according to Hose, dates back to the late 17th century. In other countries, it's likely to have happened around the same time. However, geotourism is still a relatively new notion. In the early 1990s, the term geotourism was coined by Hose, who described it as:

In order for tourists to learn more about the geology and geomorphology of a site (as well as its significance to the advancement of the Earth sciences), interpretive and service facilities must be provided."

Several scholars in various nations have redefined the idea during the last two decades, and their meanings are far from universal. National Geographic defines geotourism as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the place being visited, including its environment, culture and aesthetics, as well as the well-being of its residents," whereas researchers in the United Kingdom and Australia focus on the geology and landscape. According to this definition, geotourism is a type of sustainable tourism that aims to maintain all of the natural and human characteristics that make a particular region unique. Later, National Geographic published Geotourism MapGuides in collaboration with local organizations, which present over 20 tourist destinations around the world and aim to inform visitors about the more sustainable options available in each area, enhancing the geographical character of the region and contributing to the well-being of locals. According to Boley and Nickerson, these National Geographic publications were crucial in promoting geotourism as a sustainable tourism development approach. At the same time, academics stress the necessity of limiting the definition of geotourism to the study of geology and the protection of its resources, saying that taking a broader view of geotourism could limit its influence. For Newsome and Dowling, this particular definition of geotourism helps establish a targeted approach, which is important to meet the goals of geotourism such as geodiversity protection and visitor education. One of the most popular definitions of geotourism was coined by Newsome & Dowling in 2010.

It is a type of natural area tourism that focuses on geology and scenery in particular.

It encourages people to visit geosites, conserve geodiversity, and gain a better grasp of earth sciences by fostering a sense of wonder and curiosity about the planet. Geosite visitor centers, geo-trails and overlooks, guided tours and geo-activities are all ways to accomplish this goal."

For Dowling, geotourism is seen as a genre or style of tourism by the "geological" definition, whereas the "geographical" definition sees it more as a way of approaching travel, comparable to ecotourism. As Dowling points out, these two viewpoints aren't mutually exclusive and should be brought together in the context of geotourism. According

to Newsome and Dowling, geotourism is "geologically based, ecologically educating, providing tourist satisfaction, sustainable, and being locally useful," which is in line with the ideals of geotourism.

As a result of this, geotourism uses an ABC approach, which states that the Abiotic components (geology and climate) determine the Biotic components (flora and fauna) and in combination with the latter define the Cultural elements, such as people's lifestyles. Because geoheritage and its impact on other characteristics of a place must be considered when building a new geotourism destination, collecting and disseminating this information is critical.

Geotourism's definitions have become increasingly congruent in recent years, with a focus on environmental responsibility.

In this article, we explore the question of whether geotourism should be given even greater attention in the future as part of the Tourism Marketing Strategy, i.e. whether the geotouristic aspects of Tourism marketing in the Lake Constance region should be brought even more into the focus of the marketing strategy. This is carried out as part of a survey followed by statistical analysis.

Before we do this, we should take a look at the Lake Constance region so that it can be captured by the reader.

There are mountains all around the Lake of Constance. From a logistics point of view, it is a disadvantage, but Geotourism helped the area grow into a high-tech place that markets itself. Compared to other places, the Lake of Constance is now mostly promoted because of its high-quality products and events. Apples, wine, fish, the Zeppelin, Cigarette (high-tech boats), the Bregenz Festival, the Seenachtsfest of Constance, a water reservoir for greater Stuttgart, the Reichenau as a UNESCO world cultural heritage site. In this regard it can be concluded the "Lake of Constance" is a trademark that promotes itself.

2. METHODS

The research question of this study is: "How high is the impact of geotourism aspects within the marketing of the Lake Constance region?"

To answer this coding question, a survey was conducted with 100 participants in the Lake Constance region. The participants in the survey were interviewed by assistants according to a given guideline and their answers were recorded in writing by questionnaire. The survey was conducted in the period from 01.05.2022 to 01.08.2022 in the following cities on Lake Constance. The cities are Constance, Ravensburg, Friedrichshafen and Radolfzell.

Only tourists aged >18 years were interviewed. The participants were asked a total of 33 questions about their holiday. The questions asked include questions about visited places and preferences in terms of perceived overnight stays, as well as above all about the existing reasons for specific touristic decisions of the interviewees, which can give exclusion about the impact of geotourism aspects and thus provide an inference about the impact of the decisions made by the tourists in relation to the tourist marketing of the Lake Constance region. The questions were partly formulated as closed questions, as open questions, as well as in the context of given answers in the Multiple Choice procedure.

Questions about preferences were queried as part of a 7-point Likert scale. The generated data were analyzed using the method of deskriptiv statistical evaluation and the existing relationships were clearly presented in crosstabs.

The available data from the study provide the following picture:

Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	male	44	44,0
	female	55	55,0
	Total	99	99,0
Missing		1	1,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 1: Gender of the Questionnaire probands

As can be seen in Table 1, 99 subjects indicated their gender. 44 subjects were male and 55 female.

What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18 to 25 years	59	59,0
	25 to 35 years	20	20,0
	36 to 50 years	13	13,0
	51 to 65 years	6	6,0
	Total	98	98,0
Missing		2	2,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 2: Age of Questionnaire probands

With regard to the age of the subjects, it can be summarized that the largest age group of the subjects belong to the age between 18 years and 25 years, the next Smaller group is the group of 25 to 35-year-old subjects, between 36 and 50 are 13 subjects and the smallest group represent the subjects between the ages of 51 and 65 years. This last group consists of only 6 participants. It can thus be determined that over 80% of the interviewed subjects are under 25 years old. See Table 2.

What is your occupation?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Self-employed	10	10,0
	Professional	8	8,0
	Teacher/doctor/lawyer etc.		
	Executive, Managing Director	2	2,0
	Manager/middle Management	12	12,0
	Supervisory capacity	3	3,0
	non-employed - housewife/student	33	33,0
	Part time/contract employment/commision based	21	21,0
	retired	1	1,0
	Unemployed	4	4,0
	Total	94	94,0
Missing		6	6,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 3: Occupation of Questionnaire probands

To the category occupation of the subjects it should be said that the largest group consists of non-employed subjects, it can be assumed that this group consists of students, this group is 33 subjects large. The second largest group consists of part-time employees, i.e. 21 subjects. Thus, more than 50% of the test persons are either not working at all or only partially working. The employment thus past to the age indication. See Table 3.

How many years of formal schooling have you completed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Up to Grade 7/primary schooling	1	1,0
	up to 10 years/grade 10	2	2,0
	12 years/grade12/Matric	8	8,0
	13 years/o-Level/Abitur	27	27,0
	15 years. University degree / diploma	46	46,0
	15 years+: Post graduate diploma / degree	12	12,0
	Total	96	96,0
Missing		4	4,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 4: Formal Schooling of Questionnaire probands

Table 4 shows the level of education of the subjects. Here, the largest group, in this case 46 subjects, has a university degree, 12 even a post graduate degree and another 27 have Abitur.

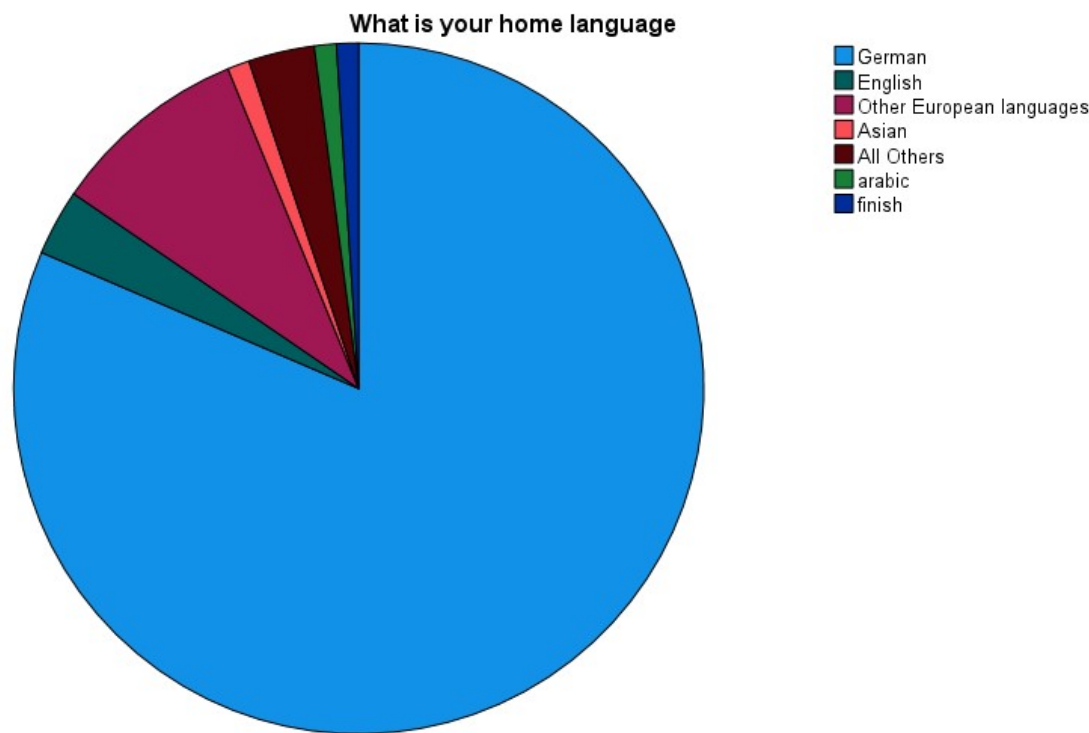
Are you married or single?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Married/living together	22	22,0
	Single/divorced/widowed	68	68,0
	Gesamt	90	90,0
Missing	System	10	10,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 5: Marital status of Questionnaire probands

Table 5 provides information on the family status of the subjects. 68 subjects are single and 22 married, 10 have not indicated family status.

Figure 1: Native Language of Questionnaire probands



For the most part, the subjects speak German as their mother tongue, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Number of adults in household of Questionnaire probands

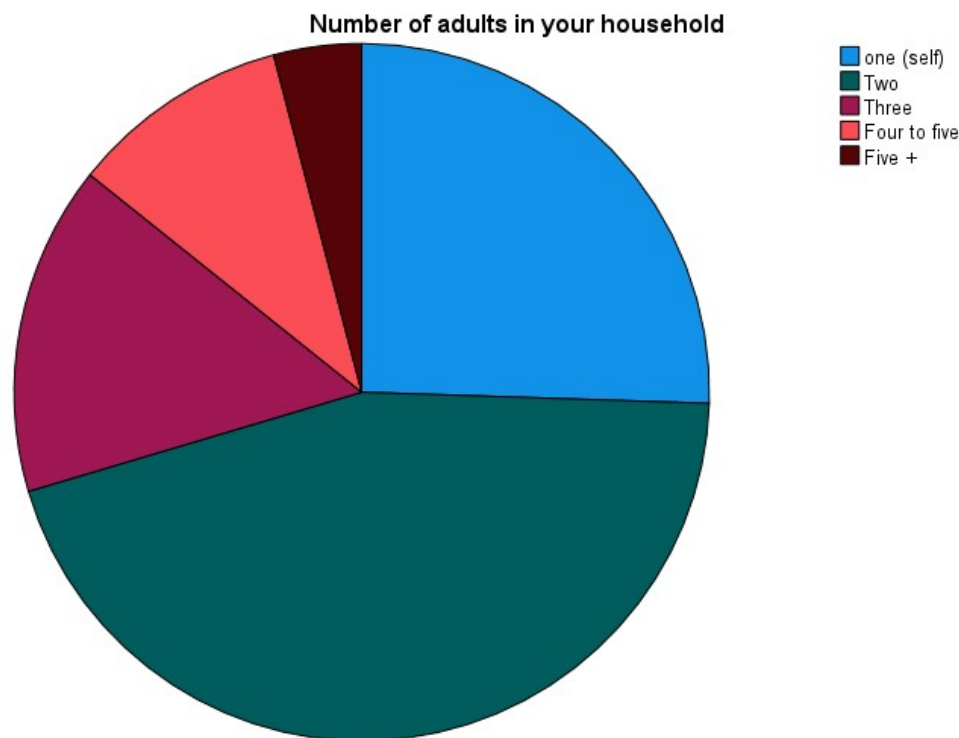


Figure 2 shows that the subjects live mainly alone or in pairs. This life form occurs in about 70% of the subjects.

Figure 3: Number of Children in household of questionnaire probands

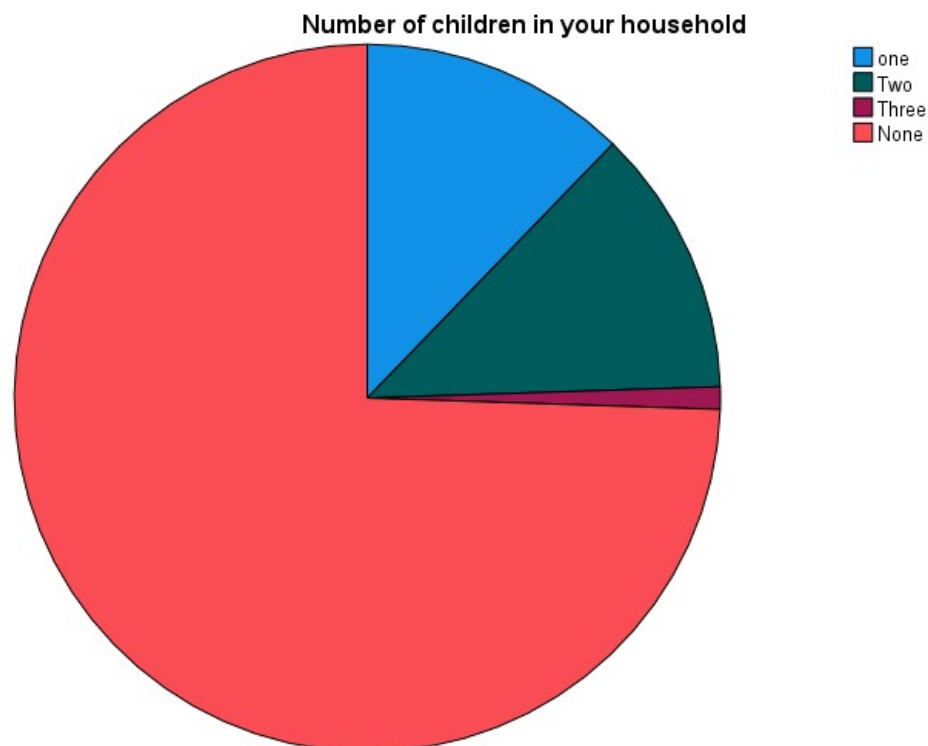


Figure 3 shows that the subjects mainly have no children.

Monthly household allowance

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Up to 450€ per month	9	9,0
	450€ to <600€ per month	7	7,0
	600€ to <750€ per month	10	10,0
	750€ to <900€ per month	7	7,0
	900€ to <1200€ per month	7	7,0
	1200€ to <1500€ per month	9	9,0
	1800€ to <2800€ per month	11	11,0
	2800€ to <4500€ per month	18	18,0
	4500€+ per month	5	5,0
	No income	4	4,0
	Confidential	6	6,0
	Total	93	93,0
Missing		7	7,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 6: Monthly allowance of probands

Table shows us that the subjects mainly have higher incomes between 1800 € and 4500 € per month available, whereby the remaining incomes are distributed quite equally to the other income relationships between 450 € and 1800 € per month.

3. RESULTS

The results of the study presented here show the following picture:

The majority of the people surveyed are first-time visitors or a maximum of second visitors to the Lake Constance region. See Table 7.

How many times did you go on a holiday in the lake constance area in the past 2 years?

	N	%
once	30	30,0%
twice	29	29,0%
Three times	8	8,0%
Four times	8	8,0%
Five times or more	21	21,0%
Fehlend System	4	4,0%

Table 7: Frequency of visits in the past 2 years

Visitors to the region tend to stay in the region for a short time. This is clearly shown in Table 8. Here, 67% of respondents state that they spend one, two or a maximum of three days in the region.

How many nights did you spend in the area ?

	N	%
one night/day	16	16,0%
two nights/days	37	37,0%
three nights/days	14	14,0%
four nights/days	4	4,0%
five nights/days	13	13,0%
six nights/days	3	3,0%
seven nights/days	5	5,0%
Fehlend System	8	8,0%

Table 8: Nights spend in area

What makes this place so special?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	beautiful nature	38	38,0
	friendly people	4	4,0
	mountains	4	4,0
	view	9	9,0
	lake	14	14,0
	culture	8	8,0
	watersport	2	2,0
	outdooractivities	4	4,0
	Gesamt	83	83,0
Missing	System	17	17,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 9: Answers to "What makes this place so special?"

With the overwhelming majority (45.8%), visitors to the region state that they have come to the region because of the beautiful nature in the region. Nature is therefore a decisive factor for the tourist decision to visit the Lake Constance region. See Table 9.

How important are the following factors for you? (IF) Improve my knowledge about the location

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	not important at all	4	4,0
	Unimportant	15	15,0
	Neutral	16	16,0
	Important	45	45,0
	Very Important	18	18,0
	Gesamt	98	98,0
Missing	System	2	2,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 10: Factors of impotants for tourists – Knowledge about location

Likewise, 64.3% of respondents state that the aspect of "Improv your knowledge about the location" was a decisive factor in their tourist decision. It can thus be subsumed that visitors to the region want to get to know new things about the region during their holiday. See Table 10.

How important are the following factors for you? (IF) Visit unseen places

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	not important at all	2	2,0
	Unimportant	4	4,0
	Neutral	14	14,0
	Important	39	39,0
	Very Important	40	40,0
	Gesamt	99	99,0
Missing	System	1	1,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 11: Factors of impotants for tourists – Visit unseen places

79% of those surveyed also stated that they wanted to visit previously unknown places during their holiday in the Lake Constance region. This information is clear from the data in Table 11.

How important are the following factors for you? Encounter new life experiences

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	not applicable	1	1,0
	not important at all	1	1,0
	Unimportant	4	4,0
	Neutral	25	25,0
	Important	38	38,0
	Very Important	29	29,0
	Gesamt	98	98,0
Missing	System	2	2,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 12: Factors of impotants for tourists – Encounter new life experience

For 67% of respondents, it is important to have a new life experience during their holiday in the Lake Constance region. This is shown in Table 12.

How important are the following factors for you? Have religious experience

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	not applicable	2	2,0
	not important at all	31	31,0
	Unimportant	7	7,0
	Neutral	34	34,0
	Important	15	15,0
	Very Important	7	7,0
	Gesamt	96	96,0
Missing	System	4	4,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 13: Factors of impotants for tourists – Have religious experience

38% say that it is not important to them to have a religious experience during their visit to the region. See Table 13.

How important are the following factors for you? Engage in wellness and health activity

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	not applicalbe	2	2,0
	not important at all	13	13,0
	Unimportant	21	21,0
	Neutral	34	34,0
	Important	17	17,0
	Very Important	10	10,0
	Gesamt	97	97,0
Missing	System	3	3,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 14: Factors of impotants for tourists – Engage in wellness

Likewise, the vast majority do not have the claim to have a special wellness experience in the region. From this it can be concluded that his active holiday is rather in the foreground for visitors to the Lake Constance region. See Table 14.

When planning a weekend holiday away, I look at the beauty of the place i.e. its geography first, and then establish what there is to do.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	10	10,0
	neutral	24	24,0
	Agree	41	41,0
	strongly Agree	24	24,0
	Gesamt	99	99,0
Missing	System	1	1,0
Gesamt		100	100,0

Table 15: Planning a holiday – beauty of the place, geography

65% of the respondents plan their holidays explicitly on the basis of the geography of the place and the beauty prevailing there, see also Table 9, in which the beauty of the region is clearly named as a reason for visiting. Table 15 clearly shows that visitors to the region cite in particular geotouristic motivations for their holidays in the region.

What do you associate with words "The Lake Constance region"

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	landscape	44	44,0
	water sports	6	6,0
	beautiful	13	13,0
	activities	6	6,0
	weather	2	2,0
	friendly people	1	1,0
	harbour	4	4,0
	vacation	7	7,0
	culture	7	7,0
	Gesamt	90	90,0
Missing	System	10	10,0
Gesamt		100	100,0

Table 16: Association with the Lake Constance brand

In Table 16, 57% of respondents state that the landscape and the beauty of the region are decisive factors that they associate with the Lake Constance brand.

Rate the Region on the following scale: Rate from 1 to 7 for Unattractive/Ugly region to Attractive/beautiful region

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	3	3,0
	3	6	6,0
	4	4	4,0
	5	9	9,0
	6	21	21,0
	7	50	50,0
	Gesamt	93	93,0
Missing	System	7	7,0
Total		100	100,0

Table 17: Region rating for attractiveness and beauty

71% of respondents rate the region as attractive or particularly beautiful, see Table 17.

Adverbs associated with the LC Region

	N	Answer Percent
Acceptance	22	5,9%
Acknowledgement	16	4,3%
Adventure	42	11,4%
Affection	12	3,2%
Balance	37	10,0%
Belonging	13	3,5%
Calmness	34	9,2%
Care	24	6,5%
Caution	12	3,2%
Certainty	10	2,7%
Challenge	8	2,2%
Change/Variety	23	6,2%
Cheerfulness	16	4,3%
Clarity	10	2,7%
Confidence	21	5,7%
Competitiveness	12	3,2%
Courage	17	4,6%
Credibility	14	3,8%
Creativity	20	5,4%
Depth	7	1,9%
Total	370	100,0%

Table 18: Adverb description of region

As the respondents should indicate terms that they should associate with the region, the majority of respondents have listed the term adventure, which is with 11.4% the highest value that a term has achieved as a description of the region. Other terms were balance and calmness. The highest rated terms were marked in green in Table 19 for better lessability.

4. DISCUSSION

This article uses a current survey of 100 tourists to clarify the question of whether the tourist marketing of the Lake Constance region should focus more strongly on geotourism or whether other tourist aspects such as wellness, religious whale trips or adventure holidays in the sense of party tourism should be given greater priority in the marketing considerations of the Lake Constance region.

The advantage of the present survey is thus the topicality of the survey conducted, as well as the realisation of the concretisation of the opinion of a rather young and agile part of the tourists of the Lake Constance region. Previous studies of the marketing of the Lake Constance region, see here in particular Gerner 2009, examine numerous aspects of the marketing of the Lake Constance region, but do not show any results based on a survey of the relevant target group. This article and the results presented here thus bring an unprecedented practical relevance to the discussion on the orientation of marketing in the Lake Constance region.

The majority, in this case more than 60%, of the respondents were under the age of 25. The result shown here is all the more surprising. If one would expect the results to be more oriented towards partying and going out, on the contrary, the results show a very different picture.

The majority of respondents associate the Lake Constance region above all with the beauty and uniqueness of nature that can be found in the region. The majority of respondents tend to stay in the region for a short time and would like to experience unique new experiences in nature in this short time, whereby the lake and its geological aspects should play a decisive role in these short holidays.

Lake Constance is strongly associated by the respondents with the terms Adventure, Balance and Calmness, which clearly indicates a tendency towards experience-oriented geotourism. This image is reinforced by the statement of the respondents in which 71% describe the region as particularly attractive in terms of landscape. The direct question about religious or wellness aspects of their tourism decision was flatly denied by the majority of respondents.

It has to be said that the answers of the 100 interviewees are not representative and therefore the results cannot be completely generalised. Nevertheless, it must be assumed that the results would also show similar or identical results in a larger and representative sample. A more comprehensive study was not possible for the authors due to limitations of time and resources. It is desirable that future research can increase the sample size and establish representativeness to confirm the results of this study.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This article deals with the following research question: "How high is the impact of geotourism aspects within the marketing of the Lake Constance region?" The survey with 100 participants from 2022 was analyzed with the methods of descriptive statistics and showed that specifically geotourism in the context of tourism marketing should be placed more strongly than before in the foreground of marketing activities. The analysis of the survey clearly shows that the different aspects of geotourism were put in the foreground by the respondents and thus deserve an above-average level of attention by those responsible for BodenSee marketing.

The present study is not representative and the number of participants is too small to generalize the results. Nevertheless, the study shows a tendency towards geotourism in the Lake Constance region, which must be confirmed by future, broader studies. The present study thus forms the starting point of an ongoing investigation into the geotourism aspects of the Lake Constance region and shows the increasing importance of geotourism for the Bodensee region.

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