

University of Strathclyde

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management

**Conceptualising
Supply-side Seasonality in Tourism:
A Study of the Temporal Trading
Behaviours of Small Tourism Businesses
in Scotland**

Philip John Goulding

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

Seasonality in tourism is one of its most enduring features. During the past half century, the phenomenon has been studied extensively in order to gain insight into its dynamics. However, much of the empirical evidence has been developed from a demand-side perspective, focusing on the temporal travel behaviours and motivations of consumers. Conversely, relatively little attention has been paid to tourism's diverse supply-side elements, especially those at the destination.

This study aims to redress that imbalance. It considers a key element of the destination mix in Scotland, the privately operated small tourism related business, specifically those who operate their business on a seasonal basis. Such businesses epitomise supply-side seasonality, yet their temporal operating behaviours and the underlying motivations and influences of these have evaded systematic examination. The thesis is therefore an attempt to aid understanding of the relationships between tourism seasonality and small business service provision. It represents an inductive, interpretivistic approach to the subject.

In reviewing the tourism seasonality and small business literatures, it is argued that existing constructs of seasonality, entrepreneurialism and growth orientation, family business and 'lifestyle' business fail to shed light on the complexities of temporal trading among small businesses and indeed on the meanings of 'seasonality' from a supply-side perspective. Moreover, findings from an exploratory study and contextual literature reveal a variety of contextual factors that impinge on temporal trading behaviours.

A nationwide survey of seasonally trading Scottish small businesses identifies distinct patterns of behaviour, influences and motivations according to type of business, demographic and contextual variables. Disposition and circumstance are identified as key formative elements in conceptualising supply-side temporal behaviours.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS THESIS

AILLST	Argyll, the Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling and the Trossachs
ASVA	Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions.
ATB	Area Tourist Board
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
BHTA	British Holiday and Travel Association
BHTB	British Holiday and Travel Board
BTA	British Tourist Authority
CHE	Commercial Home Enterprise
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DMO	Destination Management Organisation
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
GGCV	Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HOST	Highlands of Scotland Tourism
HS	Historic Scotland
IRDF	Interim Route Development Fund
LEC	Local Enterprise Company
NTS	National Trust for Scotland
SAC	The Scottish Arts Council
SAOS	Scottish Accommodation Occupancy Survey
SBTB	Scottish Borders Tourist Board

SCOT	Scottish Confederation of Tourism
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SEn	Scottish Enterprise
SEB	Scottish Enterprise Borders
SMC	Scottish Museums Council
SME	Small or medium sized enterprise
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SSC	The Scottish Sports Council
SOID	Scottish Office Industry Department
STB	Scottish Tourist Board
STCG	Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group
STF	Scottish Tourism Forum
STRB	Small Tourism Related Business
SWG	Seasonality Working Group
SYHA	Scottish Youth Hostels Association
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
VAM	Visitor Attraction Monitor
VS	VisitScotland

Chapter 1 Parameters of the Study

1.1 Introduction to and Rationale of the Study

The temporal nature of tourism is held to be among its most distinctive and intrinsic features (Butler, 2001; Hartmann, 1986). According to Boyer (1972) “*le tourisme est né saisonnier*” (p112). The quest to understand tourism seasonality has preoccupied destination managers and policy makers, academics and researchers alike in many parts of the world for a long time, recorded by almost half a century of testament. Indeed, the title of Haulot’s 1963 study (“*L’Établissement des Saisons Touristiques: nouvelle contribution à la solution d’un vieux problème*”) neatly encapsulates the purpose and longevity of this quest.

Paradoxically, it has been argued that the phenomenon of seasonality has been taken for granted as an inevitable feature of the tourism industry (Allcock, 1995). Nowadays, such claims may seem less potent in the light of evolving temporal work-leisure relationships throughout the developed world, the greater role of travel within society at large and the development of an increasingly year round tourism economy across many parts of the globe. Yet temporal imbalances in tourism have proven stubborn and resistant to change, particularly in destination areas that fall within peripheral, cold-climate environments (Baum and Lundtorp, 2001) such as the fringes of northwest Europe. Scotland has been characterised accordingly and indeed retains a significant degree of temporal variation in its tourism, in both demand- and supply-side elements (Scottish Executive, 2006; Morrison, 2002; Smith, 1998; Seaton and Hay, 1998).

Herein lays one of the inherent ‘problems’ in understanding tourism seasonality. The overwhelming emphasis within the literature has been on treating the phenomenon as a facet of demand, especially focusing on causality. While there can be little argument against the centrality of demand-derived causal factors in understanding seasonal variation in tourism, it is, as Butler (2001) contends, rarely a

simple phenomenon. Supply attributes are themselves varied, diverse and sometimes misunderstood.

It is within the broader 'supply-side' dynamic of seasonality that the trading patterns and behaviours of tourism proprietors constitute a key component in understanding temporal imbalances in tourism. Accordingly, the contention of this study is that in areas where there is significant incidence of seasonal trading among tourism businesses, the motivations and influences on such trading behaviours warrant investigation both *per se* and in order to ascertain whether seasonal trading is purely a response to market conditions, or whether seasonal trading fulfils particular roles or purpose.

Unsurprisingly, a considerable body of conceptual and empirical knowledge pertaining to tourism's temporal patterns has amassed over a number of decades within the tourism related literature. Moreover, the growth and increasing maturity of tourism in various parts of the world has spawned a plethora of policy, planning and management structures and institutions, many of which have, at some time or another, attempted to address and indeed rectify the effects of seasonality within their jurisdictions. This is certainly the case in Scotland, where 'seasonality' has been linked to a number of economic and enterprise related policy issues over the past few decades (Scottish Executive, 2006; Goulding and Hay, 2001; Smith, 1998; STCG, 1994; HIE, 1991).

The following study therefore arises from a longstanding interest in a particular field of enquiry this author has noted to be relatively under-represented in the extensive literature and empirical research in tourism seasonality. It also represents a desire to contribute towards the bigger knowledge gaps in understanding the dynamic of seasonality in tourism and towards an understanding of factors influencing the temporal trading behaviours of small tourism businesses. These are discussed in the following study aims and objectives.

1.2 Summary of the Research Topic

This study examines the relationship between the phenomenon of seasonality in tourism and the trading patterns, behaviours and motivations of small tourism related businesses in Scotland which trade seasonally. It therefore adopts a supply-side approach to a topic which is historically and normally assessed from a demand-side perspective.

At its heart, it seeks to investigate whether seasonal trading is a choice or a condition imposed upon seasonally trading proprietors and the reasons for this. Accordingly, it is a motivational study in the traditions of social scientific research, in which proprietors' trading decisions are examined in the context of the nature, characteristics and location of their business and a range of influencing factors or determinants. Recent studies of small tourism related businesses in various parts of the world have suggested links between trading motivations and seasonal trading, in which the latter may confer benefits to proprietors who seek to optimise economic and non-economic goals (Getz *et al.*, 2004; Getz and Nilsson, 2004; Andrew *et al.*, 2001). This study seeks to contribute empirically to that growing debate.

Independent businesses of a small scale nature were chosen as the focus of the research design, in acknowledgement of the fact that the trading decisions of tourism businesses in the public and voluntary sectors are subject to different decision making parameters and influences compared to those faced by independent businesses (Goulding and Leask, 1996). With few exceptions, most seasonally trading businesses in Scotland are thought to be small scale in nature. Therefore the study parameters reflect this constituency.

Despite gradual advances towards a year round tourism economy in parts of Scotland, a significant number of businesses still trade seasonally, especially in the more rural and geographically peripheral parts of the country. This research therefore sets out to delve into a phenomenon which remains empirically largely

unexplored in Scotland and an enigma to policy makers striving for the ideal of a year round tourism economy.

1.3 Development and Formulation of the Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aims and objectives of this study, including those delineating the research questions, design and methodology, were developed in response to a number of investigative activities.

Firstly, a contextual review of the nature of supply-side seasonality in Scotland was undertaken over a number of years prior to and during the current doctoral research process. Although not constituting part of a systematic research process, informal meetings and discussions with tourist board personnel and scrutiny of national and regional tourism strategy documents showed there to be a distinct understanding gap pertaining to behavioural and motivational aspects of seasonal trading in Scotland.

There had been a flurry of institutional activity within the tourism and economic development sectors during the 1990s, seeking to establish inventive ways of 'mitigating' the effects of seasonality in Scottish tourism. Most notable were the actions arising from the 1994-2000 Strategic Plan for Scottish Tourism which raised the issue of seasonality within Scottish public policy by highlighting the problems it caused to the Scottish economy (STCG, 1994). The Plan effectively empowered Scotland's tourism and local economic development agencies and their partners to work collectively in instigating seasonality-tackling initiatives. Some of these initiatives, including the work of the strategic 'Seasonality Working Group' are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, the emphasis of such actions was on marketing responses (the 'Spring into Summer' and 'Autumn Gold' campaigns being among the highest profile) and measures to promote 'best practice' between operators seeking to extend their temporal markets and operating periods. None of the policy initiatives or actions arising seemed to challenge the unmet research needs underlying proprietors' seasonal trading motivations and behaviours.

Secondly, the above described contextual review of seasonality led to the development and implementation by this author of an exploratory study in one area of Scotland (the Scottish Borders) during the period 1999 - 2000. That study effectively formed the first stage of the total research. It aimed to shed light on feelings, attitudes and behaviours towards seasonality, seasonal extension campaigns and seasonal trading among tourism businesses in that region. The study highlighted what appeared to be an inherent paradox. On the one hand there was a distinct emotiveness around the issue of seasonality amongst tourism business proprietors in the Scottish Borders and an importance attached to public agency involvement in helping alleviate what the proprietors considered to be a 'problem' (Goulding and Gunn, 2000; Goulding and Hay, 2001). On the other hand it was apparent from the investigation that there were a range of motivations underlying proprietors' seasonal trading behaviours, not all of which seemed consistent with the expressed concerns of combating a seasonal tourism market. The contributions of the findings from that pilot study are discussed in Chapter Five. Therefore, while acknowledging the exploratory nature of that study, its aims and objectives could be refined and applied to a Scotland-wide research design.

Finally, a literature review representing a range of potential study parameters was necessary to the process of designing and framing the aims and objectives of the current study. Reviews of the mainstream tourism literatures and those pertaining to small business operations, entrepreneurship, geographical peripherality, local economic development and public policy were initially undertaken. The latter three areas proved relatively unproductive in terms of shedding light on seasonal trading, despite providing some contextualisation of tourism seasonality. Therefore, the parameters of the research were subsequently narrowed down to those comprising empirical or conceptual studies of small business trading motivations and behaviours within a tourism or hospitality context. Chapters Two and Three of this study will respectively discuss the contributions of the tourism seasonality and small business literatures to the following aims and objectives and the research questions developed from them.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Research

In light of the influences discussed above, the following aims and objectives frame the research questions and design for this study. They explicitly apply within a Scottish context.

1.4.1 The overall aims of this study are:

- (I) To conceptualise tourism seasonality from a supply-side perspective;**
- (II) To identify and investigate the broad nature of linkages between tourism seasonality and the trading decisions of small tourism related businesses;**
- (III) To determine whether seasonal trading fulfils particular roles within the context of tourism related businesses.**

The first aim was formulated in response to emergent findings from the exploratory study of seasonal small business proprietors' experiences and from the general lack of acknowledgement within the academic and institutional literatures, of the breadth and respective roles of supply-side factors within the causal framework of seasonality. Through critical analysis of seasonality constructs and empirical studies, this aim examines the case for a model of seasonality which emphasises the role of supply-side determinants and influences. It necessitates an exploration of what is meant by 'supply-side' factors and the linkages between supply-and demand factors as they pertain to tourism's temporal characteristics.

The second aim seeks to utilise a social scientific research process in order to help investigate and identify factors determining the temporal trading decisions of tourism businesses. As will be demonstrated through a review of the tourism seasonality and small business literatures, such linkages have remained under-explored, both in general terms (ie geographically and sectorally) and empirically. In recent years there is a growing association between temporal trading and attributes

of 'lifestyle' for small tourism business operators, (for example Getz *et al.*, 2004; Di Domenico, 2003; Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Getz and Carlsen, 2000). However, this study contends that such associations have been mainly tenuous and not central to the aims of the specific studies. Accordingly, this aim identifies a distinct gap in the knowledge between the boundaries of tourism seasonality and the motivations and behaviours of small tourism related businesses.

Arising from the above, the third aim echoes findings from the Scottish Borders exploratory study that pointed to the diverse nature of seasonal trading motivations within a small sample base. Whether different temporal trading motivations connote different roles which are attributable to seasonal trading remains an alluring question and one which carries potential public policy implications in the quest to influence proprietors' seasonal trading behaviours.

1.4.2 Arising from the above aims, the objectives of this study are:

- (I) To explore and elucidate the structural and policy contexts in which seasonality and seasonal trading in Scottish tourism are positioned;
- (II) To quantify and qualify seasonal trading influences and behaviours of small, independent tourism businesses in a Scottish tourism study context;
- (III) To identify and examine relationships between various attributes of tourism related businesses on the one hand and their seasonal trading patterns, behaviours and motivations on the other.

The first of the above objectives seeks to establish the broad context for the investigation. The principal contextual elements are the structure and performance of Scottish tourism and the policy parameters within which seasonality and seasonal trading have been articulated. These collectively provide the backdrop to the study, against which specific findings may be interpreted.

The second and third objectives focus on the empirical findings from the fieldwork stage of the research design. A need for both qualitative and quantitative data to support the overall aims and specific research questions was deemed paramount, given the quest to ascertain both the extent of seasonal trading and the motivational / behavioural elements of proprietors' trading decisions. Furthermore, given the heterogeneity of tourism related businesses and the individualistic nature and circumstances of proprietorship, there was a distinct need to isolate specific variables and associations between trading patterns and proprietorship circumstances.

Collectively, the above aims and objectives reflect the need for a research design that is rooted firmly within the social scientific tradition.

1.5 Introduction to the Research Philosophy

The nature of the study raises various epistemological and methodological quandaries. Although the topic of investigation and the research aims and objectives appear clearly rooted within the management and social sciences, they pose a number of dilemmas to the research design.

First, the challenges of templating the meanings, perceptions and measurements of the phenomenon of 'seasonality' in tourism are significant. This is especially so within a mixed tourism economy in a study area characterised by fragmentation and diversity in its tourism structures and markets. There are ethnocentric connotations to seasonality (Hartmann, 1986; Allcock, 1995) and many of its configurations are inherently subjective in nature. This holds true both on the part of the investigator (for example in determining the parameters of choice of appropriate variables and relationships to study) and on the part of the subjects under scrutiny (for example, proprietors' experience and views of what seasonality means in the contexts of business performance, the wider economy and work-leisure patterns).

Moreover, some businesses serve multiple markets and fulfil important community roles, in addition to hosting visitors. There is also the question of comparability of experience between the different tourism related sectors. Sightseeing, guiding and local tour providers may have a different operational context compared with that of accommodation operators. Even within the accommodation sectors, there may be specific contextual factors that may influence the nature of their operation, such as for example, the degree of capital intensity, subjectivity to legislative controls, the physical setting of the operation within a domestic or non-domestic environment and so on.

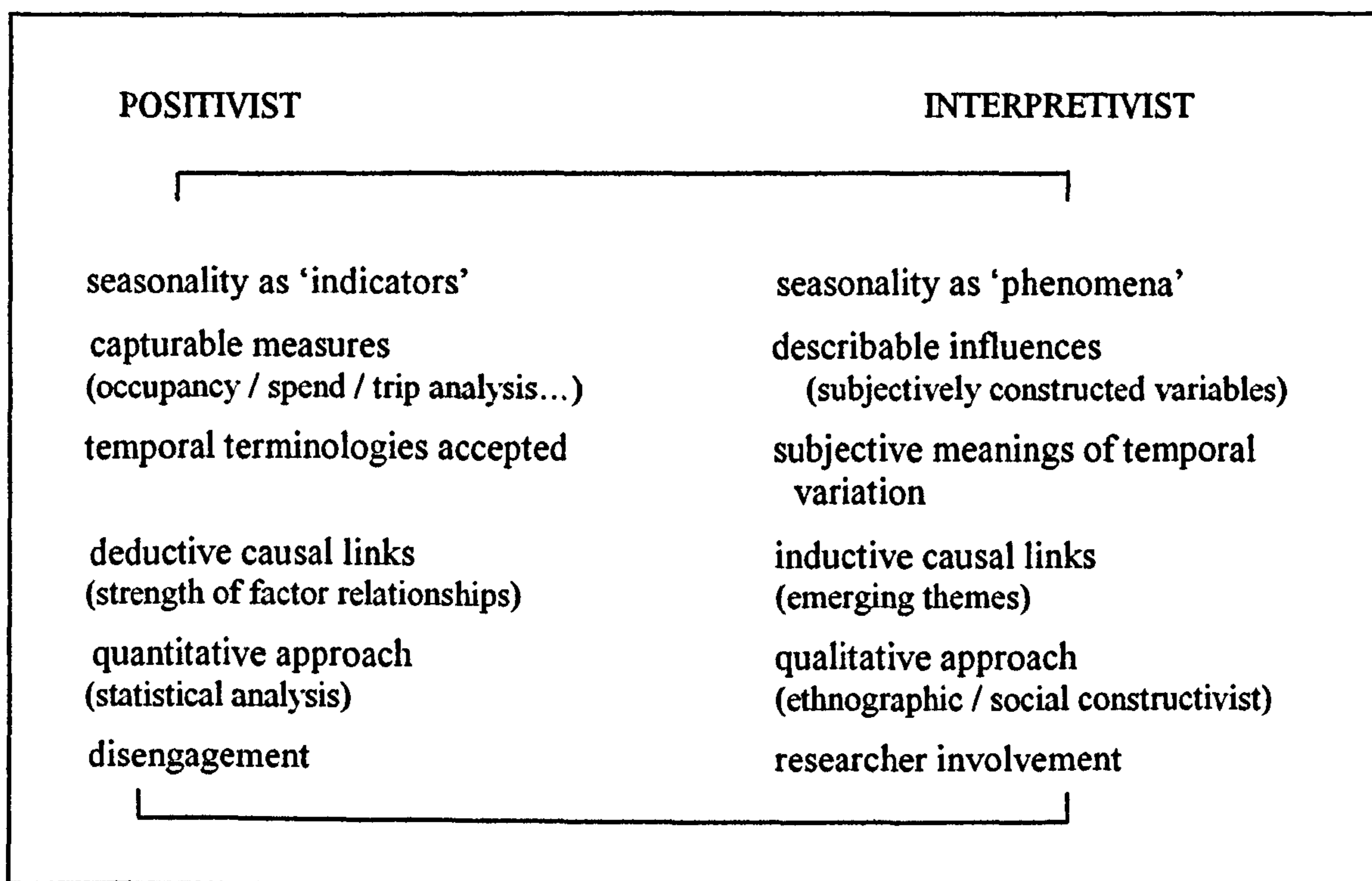
At the heart of the research design is therefore its epistemological starting point, or “...*the relationship between the researcher and the subjects [or] objects*” of the research (Jennings, 2001:34). It is held that the life constructs of the subjects (business proprietors) and objects (the businesses) are highly individualised and are thus open to interpretation by the researcher. The study approach does not see its research subjects and objects in terms of the scientific orthodoxy of strict causality and hypothesis testing.

This therefore raises the issue of whether a positivist or interpretivist approach frames the study and indeed whether there is compatibility between the two. In the positivist tradition, meanings are held to be understood and universally accepted (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991). Measurement variables are easily identified and testable for reliability and validity by various means of scientific authentication (*ibid*). Such a paradigm provides the basis for establishing causal relationships such as whether, in this case, demographic or economic factors are formative influences in seasonal trading. However, the reality is rather more complicated. Constructs of ‘seasonality’ and trading behaviours are viewed by the researcher as phenomenological rather than as indicative; the influences underlying behaviours are approached as subjectively describable and interpretable rather than solely as objectively measurable attributes of causation and association, as are the context of its subjects (place, time, lifestage); and associations are drawn through inductive evidence gathering. An ‘epistemological dichotomy’ of seasonal trading,

highlighting alternatives between positivist and interpretivist/phenomenological stances, is encapsulated in Figure 1.1.

In this study, social, anthropological and ethnographic constructs of the seasonality phenomenon are therefore held to be as important to its understanding as are its traditionally market based constructs. According to Hoover (1990), causal relationships are a property of the underlying and not directly observed data-gathering process. Therefore meanings and perceptions acquire a critical role in understanding seasonality and behaviours contributory to it.

Figure 1.1 Epistemology of Seasonal Trading



The research paradigm of this study incorporates elements from the interpretivist as well as the positivist tradition. The former holds that seasonality is a complex 'phenomenon' as much as a set of indicators. While its influences are describable, arising from subjectively construed variables, tourism seasonality traditionally is captured through indicator measures such as occupancy, temporal trip variation

analysis or spend. These latter, while not constituting the focus of this study, provide a broad context to it.

In the interpretivist tradition, there are subjective meanings of temporal variation, while within the positivist tradition, temporal terminologies are accepted. Both hold true for this study. The study seeks to highlight emerging themes from causal links (ie an inductive approach) as well as determining relationships or associations through deductive enquiry. As Trochim (2004) argues, there are both inductive and deductive reasonings present in most social enquiry. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capturing data are therefore considered pertinent to the study and its research design reflects this.

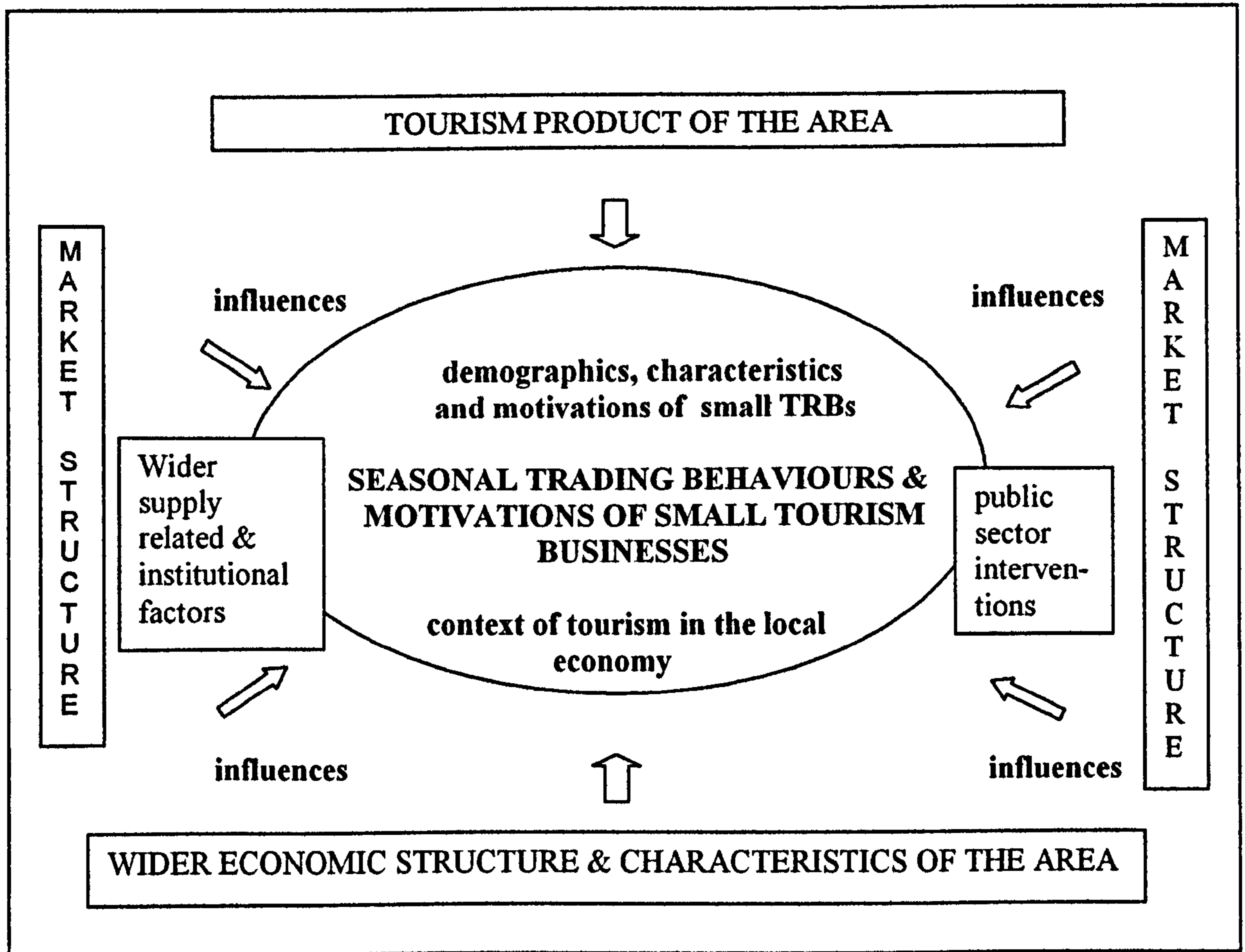
The research philosophy is therefore characterised as one that draws both on the positivist and interpretivist schools within the social and management science paradigm, towards the middle-ground of critical realism (Trochim, 2004). Although building from and inspired by the findings of a limited pilot study, it is nevertheless exploratory in nature, insofar as it remains a starting point for exploring potential inter-relationships between the phenomenon of seasonality and the trading patterns and motivations of small tourism business proprietors. The above epistemological debates are developed within the following chapters.

1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is a quest to understand the trading behaviours, motivations and influences of those small tourism businesses which operate seasonally within Scotland. Achieving such a task necessarily requires an understanding and knowledge of their demographics and ownership, trading contexts and motivations, as well as the broader canvas of tourism in the area within which they operate. Other influencing factors take into account the role of public sector interventions to stimulate seasonal extension in the tourism market economy and wider supply-side stimulants or constraints, such as legislation and accessibility.

These factors in turn are framed by the nature and structure of the tourism market and product in the area or nation at large. Figure 1.2 encapsulates the original conceptual framework for the study, as outlined above.

Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study



The essential components of the above framework form the basis of exploration and refinement in the following chapters.

1.7 Overview of the Structure and Progression of the Thesis

Chapter One has sought to establish the rationale, parameters, aims, objectives and philosophy and of the study as well as providing an introduction to the key concepts of tourism seasonality and seasonal trading in small tourism businesses. Chapters Two and Three respectively develop these two main study themes by means of a literature review. Its purpose is to assess the parameters of knowledge and empirical research pertaining to the above themes and their inter-relationships: ie those between tourism seasonality and the role of seasonal trading motivations in small tourism businesses. The literature review also provides a nexus of ideas from which research questions are formulated, and upon which the aims and objectives have been constructed.

In Chapter Two, (Tourism Seasonality: Theory, Concepts and Constructs), a heuristic 'de-constructivist' approach to the concepts and constructs of tourism seasonality is adopted, in order to assess how the phenomenon has come to be developed within both academic and public policy frameworks. This necessarily entails reviewing various aspects of seasonality, primarily within the broad tourism and hospitality literatures. However, given the inter-disciplinary nature of the phenomenon, and implicit from it being an inherent component of tourism activity, the literature review also encroaches upon fields such as spatial studies and measurement. Accordingly, tourism seasonality is assessed from a number of perspectives. Most fundamentally, meanings and descriptions of what constitutes 'seasonality' in tourism reveal a hidden anthropological perspective to the phenomenon. Examining the literature on the measurement of temporal variation in tourism similarly provokes ontological debate on the question of whose reality tourism seasonality represents and what that reality is. Hence the inherent tensions between accepted definitional truths and the parameters of meaning in respect of tourism's temporal variation.

The treatment of seasonal causation within the literature is fundamental to the construction of the knowledge base. The review aims to contribute to an

understanding of tourism seasonality through dissecting and reconfiguring traditional causal models to reflect a more holistic approach, taking into account the role of demand and supply-side, destination, community and individual business level issues. From the above, a synthesis of tourism seasonality is constructed, providing an emerging theoretical framework upon which the subsequent research design is developed.

Chapter Three (Business Behaviour and Motivations in Small Tourism Related Businesses) contextualises the study through an initial review of the literatures pertaining to business life-cycle and growth theory. From this, various elements of seasonal trading motivations and small tourism related business operations are explored. These include tourism business demographics, family businesses, lifestyle business operation and migration and tourism business proprietorship. The nature of 'motivation' in business formation and operation are key to the study. The contribution of empirical studies of small tourism business motivations is assessed, where seasonal trading is identified as a factor within the methodological construct or findings. An emergent gap analysis from the above parameters provides the basis for a number of research questions pertaining to the relationship between seasonal trading and business motivation among proprietors of small tourism businesses.

A contextualisation of the study is provided in Chapter Four, which focuses on the temporal performance, market structure and seasonal dynamic of Scottish tourism, as well as the policy environment of seasonality within Scotland. In particular, charting the evolution of 'seasonality' in Scotland's institutional and public policy environments helps contextualise any putative relationships between seasonality and small business behaviours.

Having established in the preceding chapters the research questions which this study seeks to address, Chapter Five (Methodological Approach and Research Design) examines the methodology, including the selected research design and the methods employed. It starts with a discussion of the epistemological foundations of the study, picking up from the issues raised in section 1.5 above, in particular how the

epistemological dilemmas and tensions are resolved. Specific research design considerations such as timing, sample frame issues, validity, representativeness and transferability are examined in light of how they impacted on the construction of the fieldwork and vice versa. This leads on to an analysis and discussion of the data collection methods, their merits and limitations.

A rationale for the development of the main fieldwork data collection instrument is then provided, which leads on to an analysis of the sample selection and a description of the fieldwork process. Chapter Five ends with a review and presentation of findings from the first (exploratory) stage of the study.

Chapter Six (Fieldwork Findings: Quantitative Analysis) starts with a discussion of the methods and process used to analyse the data, before going on to provide systematic descriptive data findings from the quantitative element of the research instrument, ie the questionnaire survey. Brief discussion and interpretation of the data is provided as appropriate. This approach is continued in Chapter Seven (Fieldwork Findings: Qualitative Analysis) in which data findings are provided from the qualitative aspects of the survey. A framework of qualitative data forms is outlined and the basis of interpretation discussed. Two separate chapters have been provided for data analysis on the basis of the breadth and scope of both quantitative and qualitative data obtained.

Synthesis of the findings arising from the various elements of the research is provided in Chapter Eight (Discussion of Findings). This is designed to reflect the specific research questions emerging from the literature review and the exploratory study. Variations in the study findings are discussed (eg between quantitative and qualitative data), in particular highlighting the role of influencing and motivational factors on seasonal trading behaviours. An important function of this chapter is to propose theoretical constructions arising from the findings.

Finally, Chapter Nine (Conclusions and Review) draws together the various threads arising from the study. It is structured to reflect back on the aims and objectives

framing the research as articulated in the current Chapter (section 1.4) as well as the research questions arising in subsequent chapters. The chapter addresses the significance of the findings in relation to the knowledge gaps within the literature, including the conceptualisation of tourism seasonality, seasonal trading motivations, influences and behaviours. A *post-facto* evaluation of the research design is provided, reiterating the limitations of the study parameters and process. The chapter then highlights issues and challenges that impinge on aspects of the policy framework for the Scottish tourism economy. The discussion concludes by suggesting on-going research opportunities and directions arising from the study and how they link both with the current study and the policy framework.

1.8 Chapter Summary

Seasonality in tourism has been under the spotlight of academic enquiry and public policy for a considerable period of time and has accordingly spawned a significant literature. Yet there remain many understanding gaps pertaining to its dynamic. One such knowledge gap is the role of supply-side elements within seasonality, among which may be included the trading behaviours, motivations and influences of small tourism related business operators. This study is a detailed investigation into the associations and linkages between seasonal trading and business motivations, seasonal influences and operating behaviours of small tourism related businesses in Scotland. It espouses a phenomenological or essentially interpretivistic approach, acknowledging the social construction of supply-side seasonality, but whose research design necessarily includes mixed survey methods in the quest to examine the above defined associations.

Chapter 2 Tourism Seasonality: Theory, Concepts and Constructs

2.1 Introduction

Seasonality is a phenomenon that has received much attention in the tourism related literatures over several decades, yet it still remains little understood (Butler, 2001). Thus the purpose of this chapter is not to provide a complete review of the voluminous seasonality literature, even though salient contributions to the literature and key issues are necessarily mapped. Rather, its aim is to establish the position of the seasonal tourism business within the wider framework and knowledge base of tourism seasonality and its various constructs, in order to contribute to the aim of developing a conceptual model of supply-side seasonality. The review of the literature is therefore guided by that end. A number of research questions emerge from the literature. These are articulated within the chapter and collectively form the basis of the theoretical framework which in turn informs the fieldwork design, as detailed in Chapter Five.

From the outset, it is pertinent to consider temporal variance in demand and supply behaviours as a generic phenomenon that affects many forms of economic and social activity, an aspect that is often overlooked in the tourism literature. This contextualisation of the condition, both generically and within the wider tourism system, forms a starting point to the discussion (respectively in sections 2.2 and 2.3 in this chapter) from which a 'systems approach' to tourism seasonality is proposed.

The parameters of tourism seasonality are then 'deconstructed' in subsequent subsections of the chapter. In particular, meanings and perceptions of seasonality are reviewed, examining issues of temporal definition, characterisation and periodic variance (section 2.4). Following this, measurement (section 2.5), causation (section 2.6) and temporality and spatial relationships (section 2.7) are reviewed. In each case, the respective 'demand versus supply' dimension is examined in order to establish the relative contribution of the supply-side element to the greater understanding of the phenomenon. Given the particular importance of *causation*

within the broader construct of tourism seasonality, and the potential contribution of supply-side elements within this, this aspect of the broader paradigm is explored in some detail.

From the preceding assessment and analysis of the components of tourism seasonality, the phenomenon is 'reconstructed' from a supply-side perspective (section 2.8) to form an emerging theoretical framework. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings from the above (section 2.9) and sets the scene for the second part of the literature review (which focuses on small business perspectives) in Chapter Three.

2.2 Seasonality as a Generic Condition

Tourism is by no means the only economic activity characterised by temporal variation. Seasonal, cyclical, and periodic variations are endemic to production and consumption across a wide range of economic activity (Kuznets, 1963; Bar On, 1975; Moore, 1989; Hylleberg, 1992), including manufacturing, agriculture (Smith, 1970; Shende *et al.*, 2000) financial flows (Xenakis, 2001) and government finances (Franses and Paap, 2000). In economic terminology, 'seasonal variation' is understood to represent the 'rhythmic annual pattern' (Hirschey *et al.*, 1993:375) of a particular measurement indicator such as output, sales, consumption or profitability. As such, 'seasonality' is a subset of longer term cyclical fluctuation in an economic series exhibiting change (either expansion or contraction) in the overall economy (Frechtling, 2001). In statistical terms, seasonal variation is held to be distinct from irregular or random influences on economic performance (Hirschey, 1993) such as those resulting from natural disasters, epidemics, wars, political instability, strike action or from 'one-off' events (Bar On, 1975). Generically the term 'seasonality' has thus come to denote a descriptor for what Moore (1989) neatly summarises as "...movements in a time series during a particular time of year that recur similarly each year" (p49).

The issue of 'regularity' is taken up by Hylleberg (1992), who posits that seasonality is "... *the systematic, although not necessarily regular, intra-year movement...*" of economic indicators (p4). A regular, as distinct from systematic movement infers *predictability* as a characteristic of seasonal variation within the annual cycle, such as that which may typify the seasonal movements of agricultural production and output, or for example, the annual production and sales time-cycles of seasonal clothing merchandise. If 'seasonality' is a generic concept, its basic constructs and measurements are intrinsically transferable, a point which is supported by Bar On (1975:1) in his caveat to his study on seasonal variation in travel and tourism, thus:

"The examples presented [of seasonal trend analysis methods] relate to tourism, travel and accommodation, but the methods used are applicable to other industries and businesses"

In general, measurement of seasonal variation may either focus on indices of demand (ie sales, consumption, earnings) or supply (output, production). Hylleberg's (1992) definition of seasonality indeed encapsulates both demand and supply-side elements, identifying both production and consumption decisions, endowments and production techniques as contributory to seasonal variation.

However, to limit the conceptualisation of 'seasonality' to a statistical measure or descriptor of temporal variation serves only to conceal its much broader significance and usage. Indeed, the term 'seasonality' characterises the realm of temporal variation in human activity in many diverse manifestations. Not only consumer purchasing patterns such as responses to new product launches (Bar On, 1975) but also sports fixtures (Higham and Hinch, 2002), recreational activity (Hartmann, 1986; Butler, 1994) and even patterns of attempted suicides (Jessen *et al.*, 1999), have been identified among many other human activities as subject to or characterised by 'seasonality'. Consumption decisions are held to be influenced by weather, habit or social custom (Hirschey, 1993) or more generally by "...*the expectations and preferences of the agents [of consumption]*" (Hylleberg, 1992:4).

It is therefore unsurprising that tourism, as both an economic and an intrinsically behavioural phenomenon, should display temporal variation in its many forms and within its market and supply elements. The next section considers the role of seasonality as an inherent characteristic of tourism.

2.3 A 'Systems Approach' to Tourism Seasonality

"Tourism, as such, does not have a real, objective, precise and independent existence that is waiting to be discovered and described. It is, to a significant degree, whatever we decide it will be."

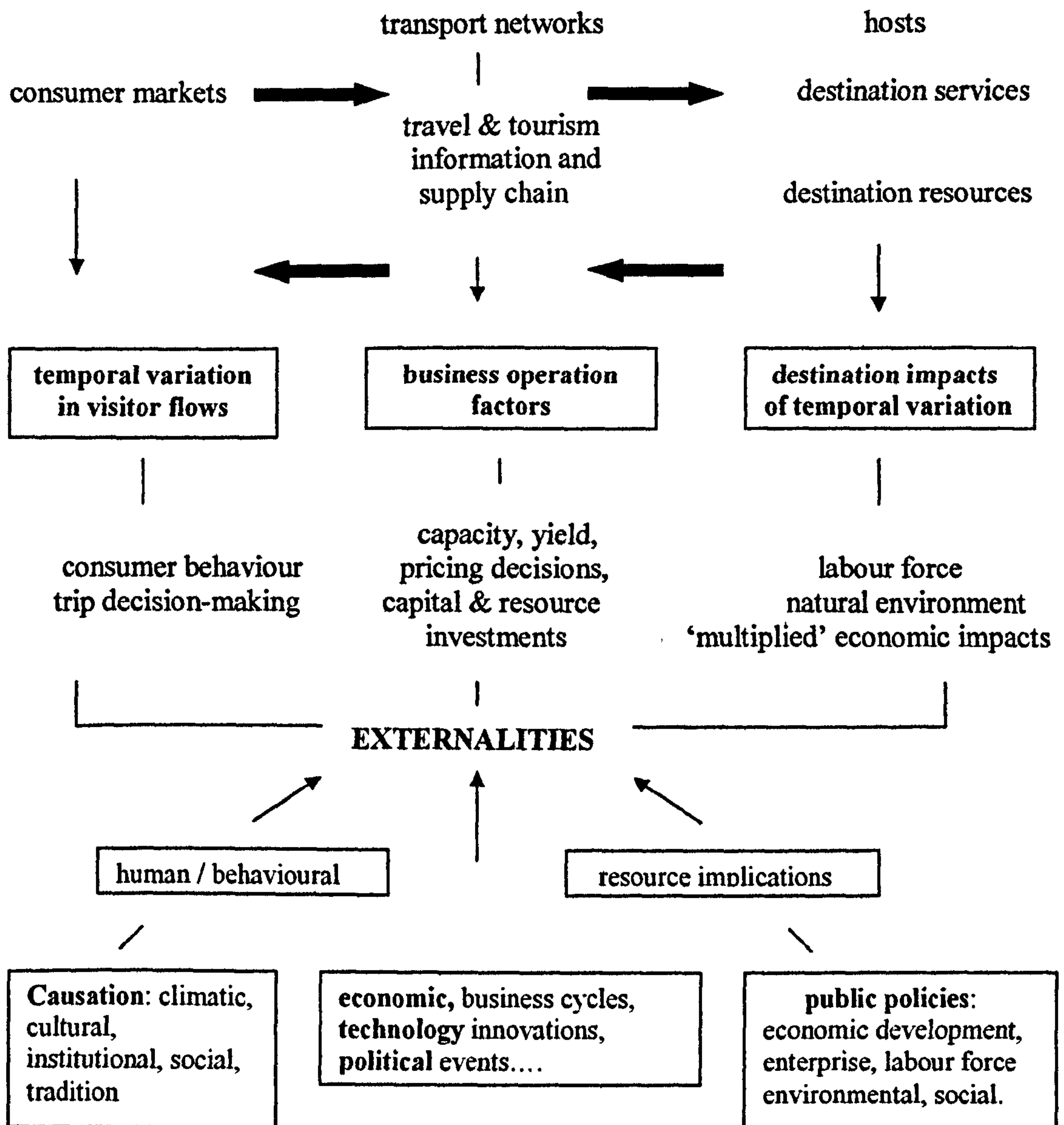
(Smith, 1989:31)

Despite its inherent subjectivity, tourism is acknowledged as a system of inter-related constructs and components (Page *et al.*, 2001; Mill and Morrison, 1998; Gunn, 1994) embracing dynamic, static and consequential elements (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Leiper's (1990) classic 'systems approach' views tourism as a common 'theme' embracing human, spatial (ie generating areas, transit route and destination regions) and industrial elements. If, fundamentally, seasonality represents the temporal variation of activity in tourism (Butler 2001; Bar On, 1975; Hartmann, 1986), then such temporal variation can be viewed as a subset of the tourism system, and accordingly has implications throughout that system.

Just as tourism may be understood through the process of analysing each constituent element of the system, so too the temporal variation or seasonality inherent in the phenomenon is understood through the process of deconstruction. Universally, each aspect of the tourism system operates at variances in the level of demand (through peaking and troughing) and in capacity (through supply variances) with their attendant consequences throughout the system. Indeed, as noted by McEnnif (1992), off-peak capacity under-utilisation and the issues that arise from it are the embodiment of the demand-led seasonality 'problem'. The systems approach is depicted in a simplified form in Figure 2.1, which indicates key forces and implications of seasonality across the origin/destination and distribution

network spectrum. Externalities arise in a number of guises and in turn represent either moderating or exacerbating forces on the temporal functioning of the tourism system.

Figure 2.1 A Tourism Systems Approach to the Study of Seasonality



The parameters of seasonality are therefore arguably as broad as those of the phenomenon of tourism itself. Temporal variation in the scale and nature of tourism

activity manifests generically in numerous ways yet is spatially unique in the dynamics of its impacts and consequences (Butler, 2001) both externally and within the local tourism system. The next sections focus on some of the key facets of seasonality in tourism, as appropriate to the current study. First, it is relevant to consider terminological and perceptual issues arising from the phenomenon.

2.4 Meanings and Perceptions of Seasonality: Nomenclature and Definitional Issues

Although 'seasonality' is an intrinsic feature of tourism and has developed sophisticated tools of measurement, there remains an inherent vagueness in its nomenclature and usage. A number of terminologies exist to describe the patterns and characteristics of temporal variation in tourism at any given time and place.

Hartmann (1986) argues that differences in the language of seasonal terminologies reflect the more fundamental meanings and distinctions of natural 'seasons' which in turn are part of the cultural identity of the user. He cites the use of climatically defined periods such as 'dry' and 'wet', 'rainy' or 'monsoon' seasons, and the terms developed from climatic cycles by inhabitants of the mid-latitudes that describe distinct partitions of the year: spring, summer, autumn and winter. In other words, "*latitudinal and regional experiences of seasonal change*" (ibid, p28) are significant to our understanding, thus suggesting 'seasonality' is partly an ethnocentric concept. Allcock (1995) also argues that there is a cultural perspective to understanding seasonality in tourism, citing differences in the six-season Hindu calendar and the two seasons recognized by some African cultures. Seasons are therefore, he notes, '*socially significant periods of time*' (ibid, p93)¹, rather than natural events, in which time represents a cycle or set of human activity, such as annual cycles of agricultural labour and production. However, the adoption and use of 'seasonality' within the global domain of tourism has developed from a distinctly occidental perspective.

¹ Allcock's own italics for emphasis.

Notwithstanding the role of cultural and historic factors in describing 'seasons', terminologies of seasonality have certainly become embedded in an emerging age of mass tourism, largely through adoption by travel service providers and in turn by the broader tourism sectors and public authorities interested in the development of tourism. In particular, airlines and hotels in recent decades have widely embraced differentiated temporal pricing, which has spawned a language of seasonal terminologies and which span the spatial divides within the tourism system. Similarly, it is commonplace for local destination tourism services to employ the terminologies of essentially demand-derived conditions to denote temporal blocks. However, before discussing these, it is pertinent to start with the most fundamental conceptual aspect, that of temporality itself.

Seasonality and Periodic Temporal Variation

According to Frechtling (2001) in forecasting terms seasonality is a pattern of movements in a time series during a particular time of year that recurs similarly every year. Bar On (1999:437) emphasises that such annual recurrences have "*more or less the same timing and magnitude*". In his seminal work, Bar On (1975) argues that the phenomenon of monthly fluctuation in tourism and transport activity is inherently predictable, although unusual or *ad hoc* events not occurring annually, such as Olympic Games or the Oberammergau Passion Play, will distort seasonal trend analysis in those destinations. Moreover, calendar effects such as the number of weekends in a month and movable festivals such as Easter will add to the distortion of short-term seasonal trends, such as monthly tourist arrival or occupancy analysis.

Bar On also builds trading-day effects and other short-term irregularities (eg a one-off conference or a demand-surge following the opening of a new facility) into his seasonal trend analysis model. Contrarily, the relevance of 'periodic' fluctuations within the wider context of seasonality is rejected by Getz and Nilsson (2004) who posit that seasonality of a calendar year pattern must be differentiated from short-term changes arising from daily and weekly patterns. Accordingly they exclude

these latter from their analysis of temporal variation in Bornholm's tourism economy. Thus the inclusion of 'periodicity', relating to shorter-term fluctuations in demand, such as within the course of a day, from day to day, weekday to weekend and week by week variations, is still far from widespread under the umbrella of temporal performance imbalances in tourism analysis. However Bar On (1975), Hartmann (1986) Holloway (1998) and Lundtorp (2001) provide some rationale for its consideration as part of the broader canvas. The latter author notes that variations in the number of visitors during the course of a week

"can be quite substantial and so of great importance for the actual destination, attraction, hotel etc." (p27)

Temporal 'downtime' may represent a more meaningful descriptor in operational and economic terms and is acknowledged accordingly at the European Union level (Richards, 2006).

Periodic patterns of tourism activity such as visitor numbers, traffic flows and room occupancy rates in a given area are held to be generally less stable than seasonal patterns. Van Wagendonk (1981, as cited in Hartmann, *op cit.*) demonstrates this in his study of recreational use in the Yosemite National Park, where regular year-on-year seasonal patterns of visitation over the summer periods were punctuated by major short term deviations during public holidays. However, this suggests there can be a measure of demand predictability even within periodic trends, a view reinforced by Coppock and Duffield's (1975) seminal study of caravan traffic at selected cross-roads and bridges in Scotland. In that study they noted various daily and weekly cycles of traffic volume during the summer period (Hartmann 1986). While the concept of a 'high' and 'low' season for an hotelier may be seemingly unrelated to fluctuations in business during the course of a day or between two consecutive days in a week, such fluctuations may in themselves form part of a more definable longer-term cyclical pattern of seasonality (*ibid*, p27). Indeed Richards (2006) holds that the effects of such short-term variance should be considered as much a policy issue as the longer term 'seasonal' fluctuations.

Periodicity therefore contributes to an understanding of temporal cycles in tourism. While these may be seen as distinct from longer term patterns of *seasonality*, it is the contention here that periodic fluctuations may themselves influence the supply-behaviour of tourism businesses. Within the Scottish small tourism business context, empirical evidence pertaining to periodic trading fluctuation is scant. It is also acknowledged that many small tourism businesses in seasonal operating environments experience periods of intense work patterns during peak seasons (Getz *et al.*, 2004) which may impact on their trading patterns and behaviours at other times. The nature of periodic operational fluctuation is thus considered a key research question underlying this study, accordingly:

RQ1: How prevalent are periodic fluctuations in trading patterns within Scottish tourism and are there any associations between periodic demand and seasonal trading?

Seasonal Terminologies

A surprisingly under-investigated aspect of tourism seasonality is the terminology used to describe patterns of temporal variation. Such terms as 'high', 'shoulder', 'mid', 'low' and 'off'-season normally reflect climatic or institutional conditions prevailing at the point of origin (Bar On, 1975) even though they are applied to services delivered at the destination or in the intermediary supply chain. On the other hand the perceived 'level' of 'season' at any particular time may be destination-specific, reflecting its wider market mix and degree of peaking or relative emptiness. 'Peak' and 'trough' are thus terms more reflective of destination conditions than to the dynamics of origin markets. The start of the 'high season' in one locality may not be interpreted similarly by operators in the next locality, irrespective of indicators such as occupancy and utilisation levels. Therefore, seasonal comparison becomes clouded by terminological inconsistency and perception, spatially, operationally and culturally.

Transport and distribution channels have made their own contributions to temporal categorisations. For example, historically, when air tariffs were regulated by IATA, pricing bands (high, shoulder and low season tariffs) closely conformed to predetermined time periods across a wide range of routes (eg within the North Atlantic Conference area). The move towards greater deregulation and open skies has enabled airlines to determine their own temporal tariff variations much more freely. Tour operators likewise determine their own seasonal bandings, in consultation with their destination suppliers or according to their own experience of market dynamics. Moreover, since the 1990s, the widespread adoption of yield management has begun to render the notion of seasonal pricing bands less relevant, particularly in civil aviation (Ingold and Huyton, 2000).

The term 'shoulder' period is used extensively in tourism to denote a period of time linking 'peak' demand and periods of least demand, though there is little evidence of criteria used to denote the characteristics of the 'shoulder period'. For Beaver (2005), in his definitive dictionary of travel and tourism terminologies, 'shoulder period' denotes a

'calendar period between a peak and an off-season, to which a promotional fare or rate often applies...' (p282).

The tactical operational response of pricing is thus the clearest manifestation of this temporal condition. Higham and Hinch (2002:182) refer to the '*shoulder season weeks of March-May*' in the case of Dunedin, New Zealand, with reference to the changing travel patterns associated with the development of the rugby union series in New Zealand. However, the term remains unqualified in their analysis with regard to the characteristics of this period. This is also the case in the significant 'All-Season Tourism' desk-research exercise conducted by Fitzpatrick Associates for the European Commission (CEC, 1993), in which the off-, shoulder and peak seasons of a number of European Community countries were compared though not qualified in terms of national or localised differences in seasonal time blocks. In a previous European Commission study, European market profiles are generalised to

the extent of 'winter season' (November-April) and 'summer season' (May-October) (CEC, 1991).

Calantone and Johar's (1984) innovative study of seasonal tourism demand segmentation employs the terminology and temporal classification of the four 'natural' climatic seasons as a basis for measuring benefit segments among visitors to Massachusetts. However, they likewise neither define the periods temporally nor elucidate in their methodology whether 'natural' seasons are commonly perceived and understood by their research subjects.

Similar assumptiveness often applies to the terms 'off-peak', 'high season', 'mid-season' and 'low season' in much of the literature, including that generated by tourism and economic development agencies. This is especially pertinent when public agency intervention or destination wide collaborative initiatives are used to promote seasonal extension policies, 'low season' market growth, seasonal employment etc. Moreover, the 'twin peak', 'non-peak' (Butler and Mao, 1997) or 'multi-peaking' effect of demand may render concepts of a defined shoulder or low/off '*season*' less meaningful as means of describing temporal variance.

However, in contrast to Calantone and Johar's work (*op cit.*), a similar segmentational study by Bonn *et al.*, (1992:52) in South Carolina provides a seasonal category analysis in which 'peak' and 'shoulder' seasons are defined in terms of specific months and quarters. Their study clearly represents a demand perspective, though their terminologies conflict with supply-side performance measures whereby, for example, the winter 'shoulder' period accounts for the highest proportion of room nights and lodging, food and beverage expenditures, compared with other 'seasons' (p53).

In light of the seeming inconsistencies and perceptual subjectivity of seasonal terminologies, a question arising for the current research is:

RQ2: Among the study group of seasonal traders in Scotland, is there evidence that concepts of ‘seasonality’ and operating ‘seasons’ are individually and subjectively perceived?

From the above exploration, it can be seen that the terminology of tourism seasonality often appears vague or at best under-qualified in its application, and certainly represents something of a holy grail in definitional terms. Clearly, seasonality is usually understood to refer to manifestations of temporal variation, whether expressed narrowly as in “*the peaks and troughs of visitor numbers during a calendar year*” (Grant *et al.*, 1997:A-5), or more broadly, emphasising the multi-dimensional variables and forms of activity it encompasses, as is inherent in Butler’s (2001) definition:

“a temporal imbalance....which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admission to attractions” (p5).

If the latter represents a more pertinent approach to understanding the seasonality phenomenon, it is worth dwelling briefly on issues and approaches pertinent to the *measurement* of tourism.

2.5 Measurement of Tourism Seasonality

In posing the question ‘*what is to be measured?*’ Lundtorp (2001:25) effectively acknowledges the continued elusiveness of capturing ‘seasonality’ in any universally agreed format. At the heart of this lies the still wide chasm between statistical measurements and descriptive qualification of the phenomenon. Thus the issue of ‘*how is seasonality to be measured?*’ exacerbates the difficulties for comparative empirical research within this domain.

Early studies by Blass Nogueira *et al.* (1968) and Bar On (1975) did much to establish the statistical foundations of tourism seasonality, with their respective longitudinal analyses of temporal demand inequalities. Blass Nogueira *et al.* used both demand (monthly foreign tourist arrivals) and supply data (transport utilisation and operating season of hotels and apartments) to articulate the links between seasonal patterns in Spain's generating markets and the distorting implications of these on her economic development. In particular the effects on labour force wages, cost of living and price mechanisms were assessed. Bar On's seminal (1975) study of arrivals and accommodation occupancy data in 16 countries over a 17 year period formulated conventions for measuring and forecasting month by month trends across several 'utilisation' variables, using the moving average approach and the economic significance of such trends (such as maximal utilisation, under-utilisation, and seasonal loss concepts). He adapted and applied this approach with respect to seasonal tourism performance in Israel and the resort of Eilat (Bar On, 1999).

Since the early tourism seasonality measurement studies, much empirical work in various parts of the world has developed and/or applied statistical and econometric models in the quest to illustrate and understand the phenomenon. The more basic techniques include indexing approaches to derive seasonal ratios and ranges between highest and lowest monthly measurement indices. From these seasonal coefficients are derived. These are adopted by Yacoumis (1980) in his Sri Lanka study and more recently by Getz and Nilsson (2004) to amplify degrees of 'extreme seasonality' in Bornholm. Drakatos (1987) also employs amplitude ratios and seasonal concentration indices in his study of tourist arrivals to Greece, using a moving average trend-cycle approach. However, he bases his data on tourist arrivals at Greece's frontiers, acknowledging a fundamental limitation in data validity through excluding other measurement variables such as accommodation bednights. Wanhill (1980) argues that such techniques are statistically deficient as measures of inequality between data such as fluctuations in monthly arrivals, in that they

"take no account of the skewness of the distribution and both are influenced by extreme values." (p243)

Another statistical approach to measuring seasonality is that of Snepenger *et al.* (1990), who use regression analysis to determine the strength of independent variables on seasonal sales variation in Alaska. Their study is significant to the demand-supply dichotomy in that it embraces four key seasonality-inducing variables: the type of business, the volume of local customers, the region (within Alaska) and the local climate. While the focus is on 'SOD' (seasonality of demand) at least two of the significant variables are destination based.

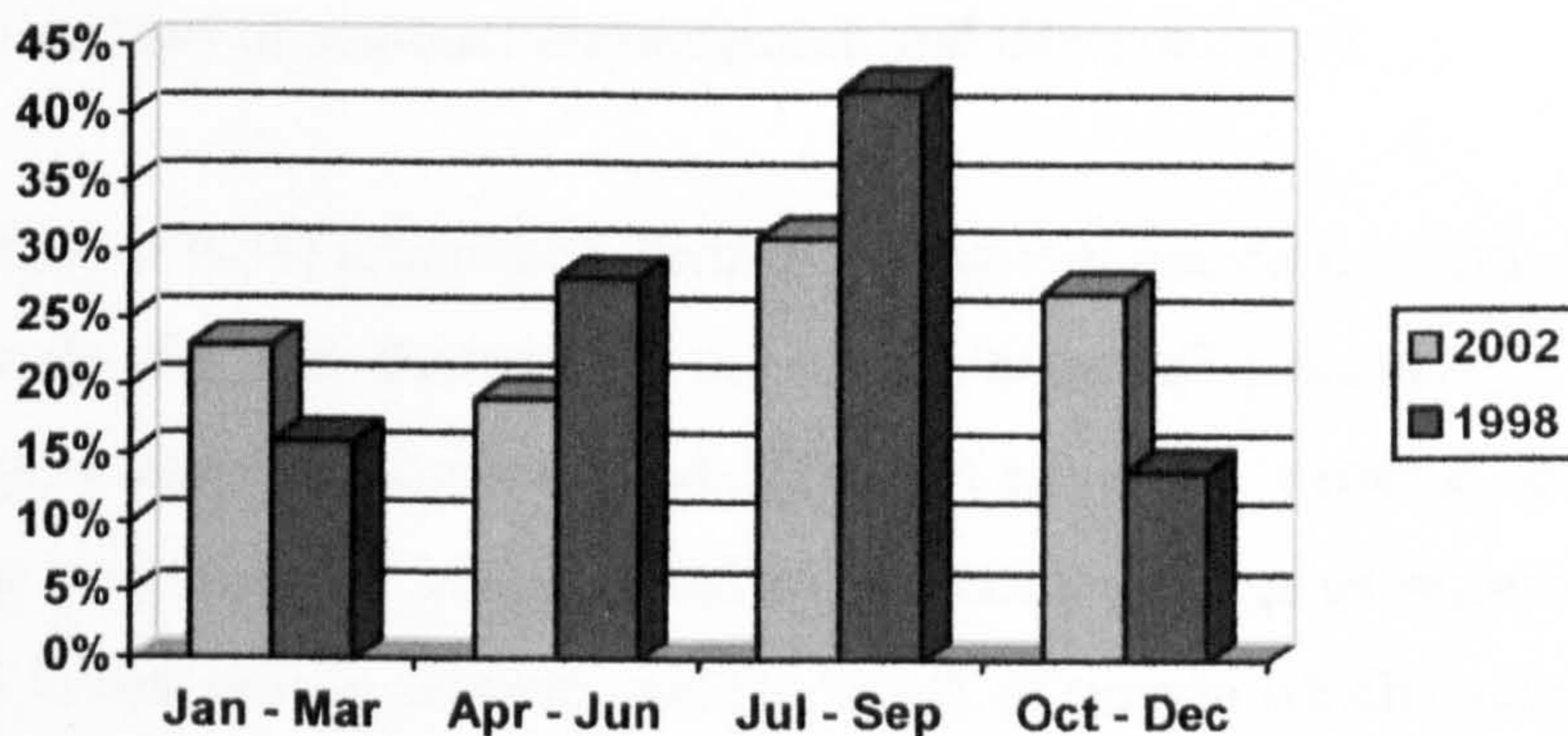
The use of the 'Gini' coefficient is espoused by Wanhill (1980), Wöber (1997) and Lundtorp (2001) and is used with macro-economic variables by Rossello *et al.* (2003) to determine the economic causes of seasonal patterns. Cluster analysis (Bischoff and Koenig, 2003, 2004), stochastic modelling (Sørensen, 2001) and principal components analysis on time series data (Jeffrey and Barden, 2001) provide yet further statistical variations of seasonality measurement, albeit each representing an approach to a distinct research objective and study context. In the latter case, the authors set out to contribute to the field of industry segmentation through identifying and accounting for some of the supply-side factors influencing demand fluctuations in accommodation occupancy levels in Wales over a three year period. These 'performance-dimension factors' include establishment type, size, capacity, location, price, grading and facilities (p375). Their study also acknowledges the methodological challenge posed by establishments closed for part of the year.

Lundtorp (2001) acknowledges that "*the basic unit for measuring tourism seasonality is usually the number of visitors*" (p29). The breadth of seasonal indicators is suggested above in Butler's (2001) definition of seasonality, which includes both demand and supply factors, macro variables (ie pertaining to destination performance) and micro indicators, pertaining to individual operator performance. Herein lies one of the key issues for researchers and destination policy makers alike: 'macro' level seasonal demand patterns do not necessarily mirror individual business performance indicators at the destination. Moreover, different

visitor markets or segments may display quite distinct seasonal patterns in any single destination area, as noted by Calantone and Johar (1984), Bonn *et al.* (1992), Lim and McAleer (2001) among others. The Scottish Borders exemplifies this issue.

In recent years, the seasonal spread of visits to the Borders has ameliorated as the former destination marketing organisation and its member businesses embarked on vigorous temporal segmentation marketing activities. These included identifying temporally-flexible markets such as ‘Terry and June’ (ie empty-nest socio-demographic groups) and products such as short break deals (SBTB, 1998). Visitor arrivals to this destination area in each of the four quarters of 2002 show a relatively even distribution, respectively 23%, 19%, 31% and 27% of total annual UK arrivals (VisitScotland, 2003) whereas foreign visitor arrivals display a very different picture: respectively 3%, 18%, 50% and 30% of the annual total (see Figure 2.2). 1998 data is provided for comparative purposes.

Figure 2.2: Quarterly Distribution of Visitor Arrivals to the Scottish Borders, 2002 and 1998

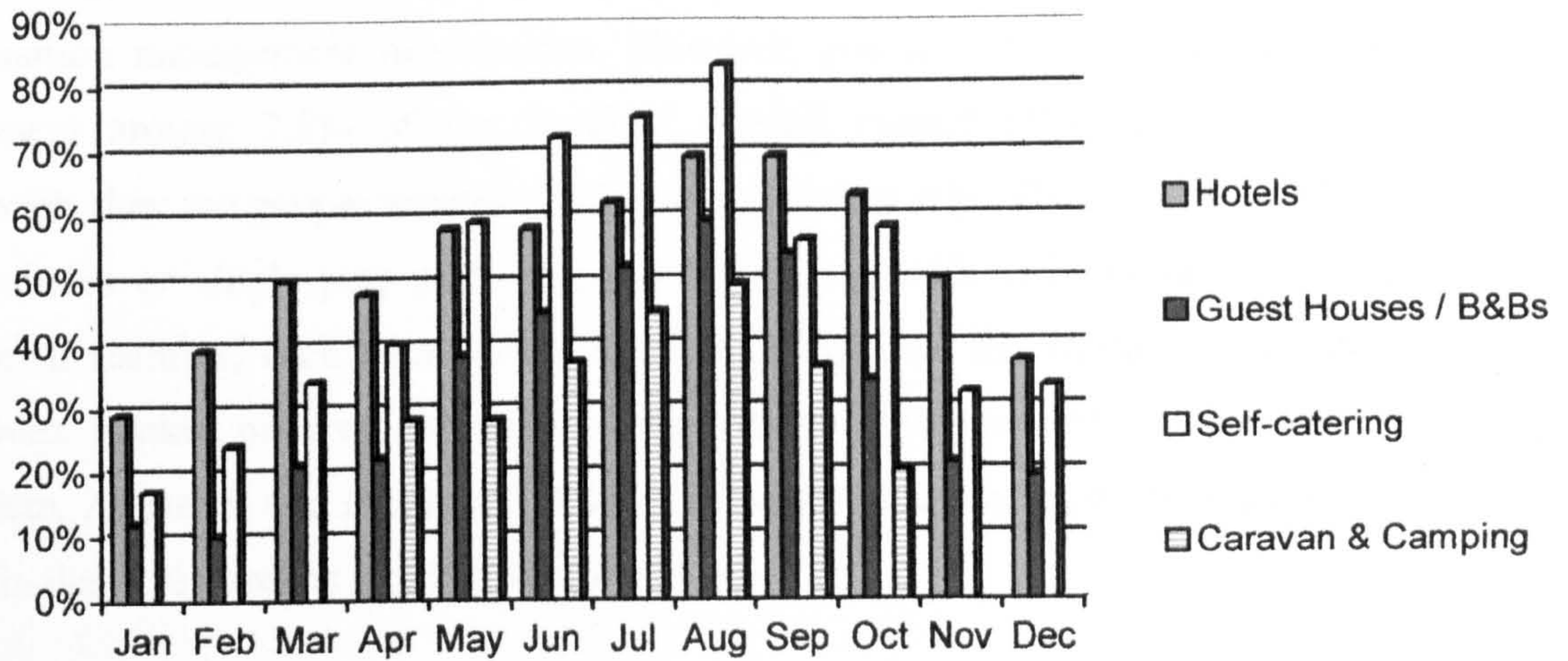


(VisitScotland, 2003)

On the other hand, as Figure 2.3 shows, recorded monthly accommodation occupancy levels provide a more extreme perspective of temporal variation. In 2002, hotel room occupancy vary between a low of 29% and a peak of 69%

(respectively January and August), while the self-catering unit occupancy levels fluctuate between 17% in January and 83% in August (VisitScotland, 2003).

Figure 2.3 : Accommodation Occupancy in the Scottish Borders, 2002



(VisitScotland, 2003)

Thus the issue facing public authorities and analysts alike is ‘whose reality’ best reflects the construct of seasonal measurement and interpretation?

Getz and Nilsson (2004) articulate a further definitional question in their Bornholm study: when do demand fluctuations constitute ‘extreme’ seasonality? Getz and Nilsson suggest three amplitude-related indicators to define ‘extreme seasonality’, including the proportion of total demand experienced in the peak season, the ratio of highest to lowest season demand and the length of time in which cumulative low season demand is recorded at less than 50% of the peak month. Any ‘extreme’ form of temporal variation, such as that experienced in cool temperate peripheral destinations, is likely to activate public policy interventions (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Goulding and Hay, 2001).

For research purposes, different measurement indicators can therefore be utilised to illustrate different seasonal 'problems' or issues, seen through different eyes. In the above Scottish Borders example (Figures 2.2 and 2.3), market disparities appear to be much less pronounced than performance indicators. The more concentrated peak and trough effect in arrivals by foreign visitors presents a challenge to the destination management organisation. However, put in context, foreign arrivals represent around 7.5% of the Borders' overall market (VisitScotland, 2003) although they are proportionately higher spenders per trip. Thus, while such raw time-series or single-year performance data may provide a basis for analysing seasonal realities, such data cannot alone shed light on the causal relationships between market patterns, destination business performance and the impacts of tourism. As Baum and Lundtorp (2001) and Butler (2001) note, more longitudinal and in-depth research is required to achieve this.

The above discussion has attempted to portray some of the dilemmas in the measurement of seasonality and especially its emphasis on demand indicators. The issue of seasonal causation raises similar debates.

2.6 Causation in Tourism Seasonality

The pursuit to understand causal influences in seasonality is long established within the tourism literature. Early approaches to the issue, including studies by Zanetti (1957) in Switzerland, Haulot (1963) and Le Vert (1967) in France and Blass Nogueira *et al.* (1968) in Spain were typically framed within the context of seeking solutions to the seasonality 'problem'. These authors' analyses of causation tended to concentrate on examining the temporal patterns and motivations of major tourism segments and from these, to assess the opportunities and appropriate policies for seasonal extension. In a similar vein, more recent cross-national studies such as those commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs (Markant-Adviesbureau, 1992) and the European Commission (CEC, 1991 and Fitzpatrick Associates, 1993) have stressed consumer segmentation and motivational approaches as the basis for understanding the drivers of causation. Again, the

emphasis of such comparative studies has been to help ‘tackle’ tourism seasonality, within a ‘solution seeking’ term of reference.

The Netherlands study acknowledges the understanding gap of temporal travel behaviours and the ‘blockages’ [bouchons] to off-season travel thus:

“Il existe un besoin de recherche plus approfondie au nivel des corps de recherche, afin de déterminer les raisons pour lesquelles les personnes qui ‘peuvent’ partir en vacances en dehors de la saison haute ne le font pas. Il existe également un besoin de disposer d’analyses plus détaillées sur les flux de touristes et sur l’identification des principaux bouchons”

(Markant-Adviesbureau, 1992:6)

Leisure constraints models have provided an approach to understanding the role of temporal blockages or constraints in consumer travel behaviour. Utilising the twin pillars of ‘natural’ and ‘institutional’ causal factors as the basis of their approach, Hinch *et al.* (2001) set out to explore whether hierarchical (ie sequentially negotiated factors) and non-hierarchical (ie dynamic/interactive and non-sequential factor) models are valid tools to determine temporal travel and visitation constraints. Using a mixed survey and interview methodology at Fort Edmonton Park, Canada, they suggest that the journey from travel motivation to participation may best be understood in terms of a series of constraints - interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural. While their findings point to the general validity of this approach in understanding causation, there are inherent limitations in the applications used within the study, in particular the roles ascribed to both natural (climatically induced) and institutional factors within their analysis (p185).

Even though the need for deeper and more detailed consumer research on seasonality causation continues to be articulated in more contemporary studies (Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001; Butler, 2001; Higham and Hinch, 2002), the breadth of underlying causal factors and their complexity (Butler, 2001) suggests that research

needs transcend consumer behaviours and motivations.

Indeed, the increasing efforts to identify, categorise, and refine understanding of the various causal agents within the seasonality literature have very much defined the development of the paradigm over time, most notably by Hartmann (1986), Butler (1994, 2001), Allcock (1995), Frechtling (1996, 2001) Butler and Mao (1997), Baum (1998), Baum and Hagen (1999) and Lundtorp *et al.* (2001). Each of these has contributed to developing Bar On's (1975) basic categorisations into what is now a more holistic framework of causal influences.

Table 2.1 offers a summary depiction and interpretation of the contributions by the above authors. It deconstructs the treatment of seasonal causation in tourism and summarises some of the key contributions. While there are clearly overlaps and complex inter-relationships between causal variables (Baum and Lundtorp, 2001) the aim here is to provide a framework of analysis which identifies supply-related constructs and specific influences within the broad scope of seasonal causation. The principal causal groups identified are categorised as:

- natural seasonality
- human decisions, actions and policies (incorporating institutional, social and motivational factors)
- supply-side attributes (spatiality, destination resource endowments and supply-constraints)
- modifying actions (including pull vs push factors).

Each of these in turn contains groups of causal variables which are themselves comprised of specific causal items, qualified and contextualised within the Table. Clearly the contents of Table 2.1 are by no means exhaustive of the literature, excluding many other texts and studies which either draw on or reiterate the themes identified.

Table 2.1 Notable Contributions to the Knowledge Base of Seasonality Causation in Tourism

Causal Category / Construct	Variable Groups	Variable Examples	Description / Comment / Application	Author Details and Causal Context
Natural Seasonality	Climate patterns and weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperature : air, sea Sunshine hours Precipitation : rain, snow Monsoon / hurricane / dry seasons 	<p>Maximum / minimum range</p> <p>Intra-year variations.</p> <p>Frequency / predictability of extreme climatic conditions</p>	<p>Bar On, 1975. Coined term 'natural seasonality' in tourism context. Brief description of climatic indicators as influences of temporal variation.</p>
		<p>Climate change / global warming : egs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sea level rise - snow cover - air quality - cloud cover - disease transmission 	<p>Direct and indirect effects on demand and supply (environmental resources)</p>	<p>Hartmann, 1986. Socio-cultural / ethnographic perspectives; geographers / climatologists' contributions reviewed.</p> <p>Butler; 1994. Relates spatial analysis (generating / receiving areas) to natural seasonality.</p> <p>_ 2001. Raises implications of climate change on tourism seasonality.</p>
		<p>Hours of daylight</p> <p>Flora / fauna patterns</p>	<p>Geographical / latitudinal experiences of seasonal change (eg fall foliage tours)</p>	<p>Baum and Hagen, 1999. Relate natural seasonality to transport access in peripheral / remote destination areas.</p>
	<p>'True seasons of the year' (Butler, 2001)</p>			<p>Agnew and Viner, 2001. Ten case studies of potential impacts of climate change on international tourism destinations, including Scotland.</p>

Human Decisions, Actions and Policies	Public holidays	Bank holidays, national holidays, religious observances	“legislated temporal variations in activities and inactivity” (Butler, 1994:332)	Bar On, 1975. Coined term ‘institutionalised seasonality’. Examples of influence of key variable Calendar and trading day effects as seasonal components.
Institutionalised / Institutional Seasonality	Business customs	Fiscal year : budgets / taxes / planning cycle	egs: convention /	Butler, 1994, 2001. Systematic analysis of development of institutional influences, especially the role of public holidays,
		Workplace / industrial / public sector holiday -period traditions	tradeshow seasons;	
			‘trades fortnights’ in Scotland (Butler, 1994; Baum, 1998); political campaign season /	
		Academic year cycles	parliamentary year.	Markant Adviesbureau, 1992. Intra-EC study of school holiday duration, obligated days, timings, legislative foundation, teacher leave entitlement.
	Calendar effects	Traditional calendar of the churches	...influence holidays, student labour market, academic conferences etc	
		Days in month; weekends in month, quarter & year.	lunar (Hajj), fixed (Christmas) and moving (Easter)	Frechting, 1996, 2001. Role of periodic and calendar effects on tourism demand forecasting.
	Sporting Seasons	Hunting, fishing, golfing, football, rugby seasons. Mega sporting event cycles.	‘Normal’ and unusual patterns (Frechting, 2001:55).	Higham and Hinch, 2002. Seasonality and sporting event inter-relationships. (Case study of rugby union season on tourism in southern New Zealand).
			Participative and spectator sports.	
Social Seasonality	Social customs / holidays	Extension of leisure time School holidays. Fairs and festivals Pilgrimage seasons	Long weekends, short breaks Vacation and mid-term breaks Arts and cultural festivals Hajj, holy days, shrines.	Hartmann, 1986. Democratisation of tourism. Noted increasing importance of younger generations as trendsetters in recreational lifestyles.

Social pressure / fashion	Participation / attendance at prestigious events (regattas, race meetings)	Commemorations (eg of war) Travel days "follow an established social calendar" (Hartmann, 1986:26).	Butler, 1994; Frechtling, 1996, 2001. Classification of causal factors identified range of social customs / holidays, pressures and fashion distinct from institutional causal factors. Allcock, 1995. Historic 'trickle down effect' of extension of leisure time as causal factor.
Motivational Factors	Type of tourism demand Economic Factors	Mix of leisure, cultural, VFR, business, health, sports etc demand to destination Air transport pricing Bar On, 1975; hotel pricing, Jeffrey and Barden, 2001; and temporal demand. Retail sales seasons Seasonal pricing of travel / tourism services	Blass Nogueira <i>et al</i> , 1968. Longitudinal analysis of temporal arrival patterns of eight motivational categories to Spain, by country of origin. Calantone and Johar, 1984. Seasonal benefit segmentation study: Massachusetts, USA. Bonn <i>et al</i> . 1992. Ditto - South Carolina. CEC, 1993. Segmentation study of EC tourism markets to promote 'all-season tourism', identifying temporal characteristics and motivations
Inertia / Tradition	Habit persistence Institutional tradition	"...age-old whims or preferences" (Butler, 2001:6). Reasons for habit persistence Vanhove, (2005:14) "psychological vacation pressure" (self-reinforcing) Baum (1998:A-108) "a mindset [of] fixed perceptions of the tourism marketplace".	Butler, 1994; 2001. Influences on inertia and link with generic consumption patterns Allcock, 1995:94. Inertia of institutional temporal traditions. Baum, 1998. Destination inertia.

Supply-side factors and attributes	Peripherality	Distance, time and cost	Destination distance and ease of accessibility from generating areas.	Baum and Hagen, 1999. Inter-relationships between peripherality and tourism seasonality. North Atlantic margin case studies.
	Spatiality	Provision and frequency of public transport infrastructures and services	Climatic conditions and accessibility to remote locations.	Butler and Mao, 1997. Causal factors in urban vs rural seasonality (Ontario study).
		Urban vs rural locations		
Resource endowments	Physical / natural recreational resources	examples include: Mountains Beaches/littoral attributes	Growing range of mountain based sports and recreations Surfing 'seasons' distinct from traditional seaside usage; tropical destinations in the winter, Frechtling, 1996.	Hartmann, 1986. Evolving appraisal of 'climatic resources' (p28) as basis for temporal extension.
	Type of tourism developments	Activity opportunities Events and cultural attractions.		Baum, 1998; Baum and Hagen, 1999. Analysis of role of events and festivals in influencing seasonal dispersion of tourism.
			Counter-season 'peaks' (eg Up Helly Aa; Lapland Christmas tours)	
Supply-side constraints	Labour issues	Competition from other sectors. Availability of seasonal labour. Labour market flexibility	Length of season influenced by student labour : academic year as seasonal determinant Work permit duration for seasonal employees	Mourdoukoutas, 1988. Greek islands study of seasonal employment and employees. Noted preferences for seasonal work by some employees. Baum and Hagen, 1999. Case examples of seasonal peripheral locations and labour market constraints.
	Destination mix	Closure of significant local tourism resources	Lack of critical mass outside main season(s) to support tourists in destination area.	Flogenfeldt, 1988, 1997, 2001. Role of seasonal labour and dual economies in Ottadalen, Norway.
	Dual-use of facilities	Reversion to non-touristic use at end of season.		

(Supply-side constraints continued)	By-laws / legislative constraints	Licensing restrictions Health and safety	Caravan parks eg weather dependent recreations Fishing, game shooting	Goulding and Gunn, 2000; Goulding and Hay, 2001. Scottish Borders study identified exogenous and endogenous supply-side determinants of seasonal operations.
	Resource recovery	Permit seasons Natural parks, heathlands		
	Operating costs	Seasonal closure to limit losses		
	Proprietors' motives	Lifestyle ; personal factors ; tourism business as secondary importance/dual income	Tourist information and visitor centres, historic houses, accommodation	Grant <i>et al.</i> , 1997. Convenience to tourism business proprietors to close at predictable holiday periods.
Modifying Actions	Public sector actions	Taxation Investment in new attractions, improving access Events	Relationships between causal factors and responses. Lack of modifying actions (entrepreneurial inactivity / policy gap) in maintaining seasonal status-quo.	Butler, 2001. 'Modifying actions' as distinct from and influencing both supply attributes and demand factors.
	Private sector actions	Differential pricing Market diversification / Investment / upgrading / all-weather facilities		Baum and Hagen, 1999. Role of event development policies at seasonal, peripheral destinations.
Pull factors vs Push Factors	Strength of generating area forces vis a vis receiving area forces	Climate Institutional factors Calendar Access Facilities and events	Relative mix of causal factors in the above categories.	Butler and Mao, 1997. Generating and receiving area attributes and factors.
				Lundtorp, Rassing & Wanhill, 2001. Relative importance of desire and constraints in causation.

Common to most analyses of causation in tourism seasonality is the role of climatic and institutional factors, spatial and access considerations, sociological, cultural and motivational factors, public policy interventions and resource endowments in influencing the tourism market. Conversely, the actions (or inactions) of the supply chain and destination operators in influencing or reinforcing seasonal patterns of tourism have received relatively little attention. The literature has tended to treat destination based tourism related suppliers in terms of their ability to ameliorate entrenched seasonal patterns, rather than as causal agents *per se*. This raises a fundamental research question for this study:

RQ3: Can seasonal destination operators contribute to or reinforce patterns of tourism seasonality within their destination area?

One of the few direct references to the role of distribution channels and destination operators actively acquiescing to seasonality suggests operational factors (in this case staffing) and inertia as the underlying influencing factors, accordingly:

“Indeed, it suits many businesses to have predictable holidays clustered at convenient points in time which mirror those of their clients and other business contacts. Managers can plan for this and are less likely to experience delays in completing tasks because key people are away on holidays. Hence there may be an institutional reluctance to encourage a more wide-spread adoption of flexible holidays....There is little benefit to visitors or tour operators in changing established patterns of activity if existing patterns are working well”.

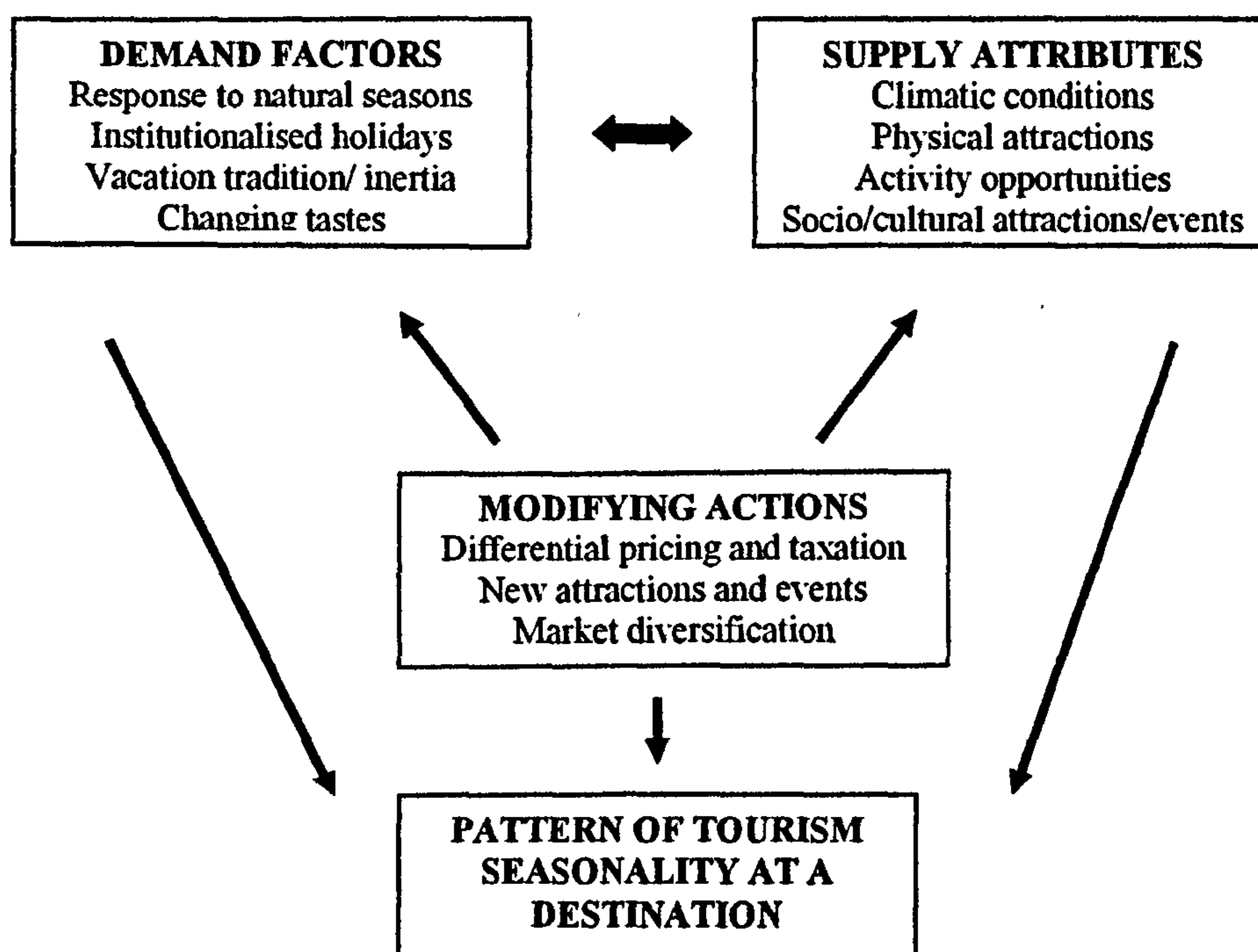
(Grant *et al.*, 1997:A5)

The authors' views are not substantiated empirically. Moreover, 'established patterns of activity' such as staff holiday periods may not necessarily translate into seasonal closure for many tourism businesses. Nevertheless their sentiments resonate with aspects of the small tourism business literature regarding the relationship between business *modus operandi* and the motivations and aspirations of proprietors. These are picked up in the following chapter. In Getz and Nilsson's

(2004) study of seasonal accommodation businesses in Bornholm, operator acquiescence to the condition (for example through seasonal trading or scaling down operations) is characterised as an overt business response to seasonality, rather than as a causal factor.

On the other hand Butler (2001) is forthright in claiming that the actions of the private (and public) sectors more generally contribute to creating patterns of seasonality at specific destinations. His point is that seasonality patterns in tourism are the result of interactions between the main causal elements in both generating and receiving areas, which are in turn modified by the actions of public and private sectors. He illustrates this inter-relationship accordingly, in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 Influences on Patterns of Seasonality



(Butler 2001:9)

As can be seen from his model, *supply attributes* are represented in terms of climatic conditions and as the touristic, physical and natural resources of the destination area (ie both infrastructures and superstructures). On the other hand,

modifying actions are defined in terms of (and exemplified by) pricing, taxation, investment and market developments. Although not specified, it would be fair to assume that in Butler's model, trading decisions based on such factors as proprietor lifestyle motivations and labour supply would count as modifying actions, insofar as, like pricing, they constitute factors that are controllable by the destination business. Indeed the 'modifying actions' by significant suppliers may serve to inhibit the seasonal extension of tourism through restricting capacity or destination amenities. Goulding and Hay (2001) note this phenomenon in the case of visitor attractions in the Scottish Borders, whose restricted seasonal operating periods have collectively been charged with inhibiting the area's potential tourism season.

The nomenclature of 'natural' and 'institutionalised' (sic) seasonality as causal categorisations of temporal variation were established by Bar On (1975). He also explicitly recognised the dual importance of demand-side and supply-side factors in seasonal causation arising from these categorisations. Although natural and institutional factors are assessed as distinct causal features, it is accepted that there is a significant degree of inter-dependence between the two (Baum and Lundtorp, 2001; Butler and Mao, 1997). Both natural and institutional causal influences raise distinct research questions in relation to the current study.

By natural seasonality, Bar On refers to climatic variations during the course of a year, such as sunshine hours, temperature variations, rainfall and snowfall (ie precipitation). Kreutzwiser (1989) extends the list of pertinent variables to include humidity, cloudiness, visibility, wind and both air and water temperatures as "*parameters deemed to be important*" to natural seasonality (p29-30). For Hartmann (1986) such an approach is too simplistic. He argues that characterising natural seasonality is far more complex than utilising specific climatic indicators, that the components of seasonality differ markedly according to latitudes and climatic zones, and that these in turn affect the social organisation of people in different ways in different parts of the world. In other words, natural seasonality is as much an ethnographic construct as is the 'human-decision' construct of institutional seasonality (p28).

Butler (2001) notes that natural seasonality is associated with both climate and “*the true seasons of the year*” (p6). The latter encompass the effect of temporal change in hours of daylight and on flora and fauna, for example during the autumn fall period (Spotts and Mahoney, 1993). Such variations affect business and leisure activities in a similar manner in particular months or periods of each year (Bar On, 1975; Hartmann, 1986). In other words, there is an inherent *predictability* of natural seasonality as exhibited by the annual cycle of climate in a given place. Additionally, there is the *unpredictability* of natural seasonality inherent in unseasonal weather patterns and their impact on leisure activities. Snowfall and skiing conditions are cited as obvious examples here (Bar On, 1975) whereby early or late snowfalls may affect the timing of leisure trips to ski resorts.

More recently, the effects on tourism of increased unpredictability in weather patterns through climate change have been noted by Abegg and Froesch, 1994; Agnew and Viner, 2001; Giles and Perry, 1998; Harrison *et al.*, 1999; McInnes *et al.*, 1999; Perry, 2000; Wall and Badke, 1994, among others. In their empirical study of changing weather patterns in ten diverse tourism destinations around the world, Agnew and Viner (2001) conclude that climate change may directly influence temporal flows of tourism via the consumer decision-making process, both in terms of when and where visitors choose to travel. In the case of Scotland, they posit, higher average temperatures and less snowfall are likely to challenge the viability of the country’s skiing infrastructures (p47). Similarly, Abegg and Froesch (1994) examine the challenges arising from climate change on transport companies serving winter tourism in Graubünden, Switzerland, while McInnes *et al.* (1999) predict more inconsistent seasonal patterns at seaside resorts facing rising sea levels and storm surges.

On the other hand, Butler and Mao (1997) note the commonplace phenomenon of inverse seasonal peaking in destination areas (typically tropical or alpine) whose climates contrast with those of their main generating areas. This, they argue, demonstrates the ability of tourists to overcome real seasonal problems of a climatic

nature to pursue the sun or snow at whatever time of the year best suits them. However, they acknowledge that climatic ‘pull’ coupled with institutional and economic ‘push’ factors to generate demand are part of a complex interaction process, unique to any origin-destination pairing (p10).

Finally, a further perspective of natural seasonality is that it is observed to result in more extreme seasonal peaks and troughs in peripheral areas compared with more accessible locations within a particular climatic zone. Baum and Hagen (1999) note this in reference to the north-Atlantic margins, Getz and Nilsson (2004) in their study of Bornholm, and Snepenger *et al.* (1990) in relation to interior versus coastal regions of Alaska. In such cases, natural seasonality is closely linked to issues of accessibility and transport service provision to and within the destination.

From the above analysis, it could be argued that climate and weather appear ubiquitous as influences in the temporal spread of tourism generation. Less obvious is the link between climate and supply-side factors, except in a broad sense pertaining to destination attractiveness. The link between climate and the seasonal trading decisions of tourism businesses remains under-explored and hence serves as a specific research question within the current study, ie:

RQ4: In what ways do climatic factors influence the trading patterns and provision of destination based tourism businesses?

Institutional Seasonality

Referring to ‘institutionalised’ seasonality’, Bar On (1975) posits that temporal variation in tourism is grounded in ‘institutional’ factors in the generating areas. To Butler (1994, 2001) such institutional factors can best be summarised as the formative role of human actions, decisions and policies, embodying “*legislated temporal variations in activities and inactivity*” (1994:332). Hartmann (1986:27) lays emphasis on the ‘institutionalisation’ of the seasons as social constructs, following “*an established social calendar*” grounded historically in social class and ethnic distinctions. To Hinch and Hickey (1997), institutional causal factors simply

reflect the social norms and practices of society which are based on “*religious, cultural, ethnic, social and economic considerations*” (as cited in Higham and Hinch, 2002:176), while Sylvester (1999) notes that at the heart of institutional factors is a ‘work versus leisure’ perspective of time that stems back to the Industrial Revolution. The sociological development of “*the prevailing mechanical perspective of time*” (Higham and Hinch, 2002:176) is thus central to much of the discussion pertaining to institutional causation in temporal variation in tourism.

Apparent from the above approaches and from the wider literature discourse in general is a two-fold dilemma in the construct of ‘institutional’ seasonality, which may cloud an understanding of seasonal causation in tourism. First, there is a definitional indistinctness in the application of the term ‘institutional’ and secondly is the issue of the sheer breadth of variables embraced within the scope of institutional seasonality, which is apparent in Table 2.1. Indeed the terminology is arguably a catch-all for a range of disparate issues and components which are manifestations of ‘human decisions, actions and policies’, hence the construct utilised in the Table.

Of particular relevance to the current study is whether such factors are in themselves influences in the trading behaviours of Scottish tourism businesses. Accordingly, the question raised is:

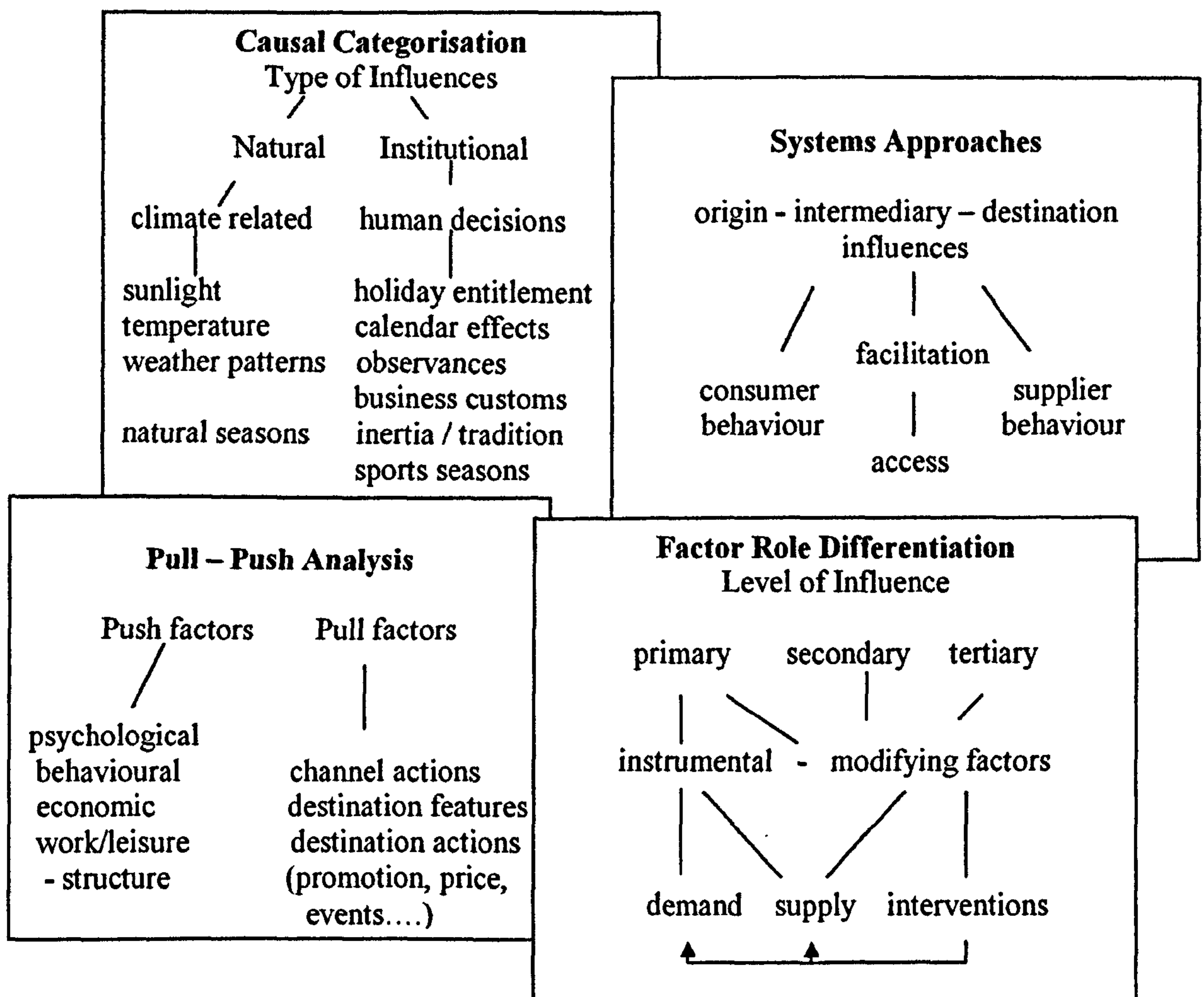
RQ5: To what extent and in what ways are institutional causal factors influential in the trading behaviours of seasonally operating tourism businesses?

Further components of causation as outlined in Table 2.1 include ‘social seasonality’ (Butler, 2001:7), inertia and tradition (Butler, 2001) and the ‘*self-reinforcing system...of psychological vacation pressures*’ by those who don’t need to take their holidays in peak periods (Vanhove, 2005:14). Temporally defined behaviours derived from participation in or spectating sporting fixtures (Butler, 2001) comprises a clear supply-led seasonal phenomenon that can impact profoundly at the destination level. Nevertheless as Higham and Hinch (2002)

demonstrate in their case study of the rugby union season in a region of New Zealand, sporting seasons are not necessarily immutable.

In summary, there are a number of perspectives from which seasonal causation in tourism can be examined. Common to the interpretations or frameworks adopted are the role of climatic, spatial and access considerations, psychological and behavioural motivators, public policy interventions and the actions of the supply chain and destination operators in influencing the market. From the literature, four distinct types of causal construct can be ascertained, comprising causal categorisation, systems models, causal role differentiation and pull and push factor analysis. These are illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Conceptual Approaches to Seasonality Causation



Applying *systems models* to seasonal causation identifies and differentiates generating, intermediary and destination-specific factors. From a structuralist viewpoint, seasonal variation reflects the many disparate forces affecting each of the component parts of the tourism system. Therefore, to understand seasonality as an inherent 'sub-set' of the wider tourism system (Leiper, 1990) predicates the existence of a number of independent variables (elements of influence and causation) and the linkage of those variables. As noted earlier, Butler (2001:8) expresses this as an 'interaction' of forces in both generating and receiving areas, which are modified by interventions and actions from within and outside the system designed to shape temporal patterns of travel and visitation.

With *role differentiation*, a distinction is sometimes drawn between what are considered *instrumental* influences and *moderating* influences or actions on temporal variation. In Butler's model, moderating actions specified include differential pricing, taxation, new attractions and events and market diversification (Butler 2001). To Baum and Hagen (1999) these latter (product and market diversification) are considered as 'responses' rather than causal/influencing factors.

Similarly, there is the role distinction between '*push*' and '*pull*' factors on seasonal causation, in which both destination and channel 'pulls' (marketing promotion, the nature of the product, access) combine with 'push' factors, drawn from a range of economic, psycho-behavioural, institutional and natural (eg climatic) variables to temporally influence consumer travel decisions. For Lundtorp *et al.* (2001), climate is distinctly a pull-factor, while the channel distribution systems (transport costs and access time) represent a pull factor.

Thus, what clearly differentiates seasonal causation from seasonal measurement in investigative terms, is the degree to which subjectivity is possible in the former. In all the above situations, the researcher's interpretation assumes a critical role in how causation typologies are constructed. As an example, a 'moderating' influence in one context might be interpreted as 'instrumental' in another. The form and extent of public sector or partnership interventions to help alleviate or at least understand

the effects of seasonal disparity should be based on a firm understanding of the role, relationship and interactions of different causal agents.

At face value, the study of seasonality would seem to suggest a clear objective reality, reflecting the idea that patterns of travel and visitation are rational, responsive to and bound up with known stimuli and influences, capable of cause and effect analysis through various quantifiable measures. Yet there is a body of opinion that holds that if causal relationships are defined by a set of theoretical assumptions, they may not be 'true' or 'natural' relationships, rather they simulate behaving as if they were causal (Maxim 1999:55).

Added to the previously discussed terminological inconsistencies, it can be seen that the research paradigm is inherently interpretivist and inductive in nature, in which social, cultural and political constructs of the phenomenon are as important to its understanding as are its traditionally market based constructs. Causation is a property of the underlying and not directly observed data-gathering process (Hoover, 1990) and accordingly meanings, behaviours and perceptions acquire a critical role in understanding seasonality. This may be demonstrated in the quest to understand how, if at all, local destination dynamics influence the nature, scale and performance of seasonality.

Finally, in recent years, significant changes have started to occur in post-industrial work-leisure patterns, in which the temporal and spatial boundaries between these two life-constructs, as well as the mental distinctions of 'work' and 'leisure' have started to fuse together (Ateljevic 2000, Getz *et al.*, 2004). Accordingly, there is a case for further refining the causal categories of seasonality, to reflect this changed reality of 'time' and its uses.

2.7. Spatiality and Temporality

Butler (2001) observes that the spatial aspect of tourism seasonality has not been explored to any degree in the literature. The significance of this is compounded given the unevenness of tourism's temporal and spatial spread at all levels, inter-

regionally to the local destination level (Vanhove, 2005). While urban tourism tends to support a more continuous operation than other locational types (Dominicus, 2006; Butler, 2001; Butler and Mao, 1997) different forms of urban setting within the same destination country can exhibit large temporal disparities, manifesting in distinct problems for local and regional economies. This has been demonstrated in the case of seaside resorts in parts of England (Agarwal, 1997) whose declining fortunes during the latter decades of the 20th century were exacerbated by a short peak season (Williams *et al.*, 1989).

Meanwhile, Shaw and Williams (2002) posit that in places where mass tourism has developed based on temporally defined leisure markets (such as Mediterranean coastal resorts or ski-resorts), such temporal polarisation effectively reinforces spatial polarisation. This, they argue, reflects the fact that institutional and climatic causal constructs mean that tourists purchase access not only to particular places but also to seasonal environments or '*time-space packages*' (p223).

While spatio-temporal studies may be relatively scarce, the evidence suggests there are relationships between relative remoteness or peripherality and degrees of seasonal concentration, albeit still largely untested. Butler and Mao (1997) and Snepenger *et al.*, (1990) in Ontario and Alaska respectively, illustrate that seasonal peaking and troughing increase with distance from the 'core' (urban and coastal) areas, although they approach the spatio-temporal relationship issue from different measurement perspectives. Yacoumis' (1980) seminal seasonality study in Sri Lanka charted seasonality ratios and coefficients of seasonal variation in a number of 'regional types' (coastal, inland, urban and ancient sites) over a four year period. However, the data are restricted to foreign arrivals and guest nights and they exclude domestic travel from the equation. Thus their conclusions relate more directly to the nature of the tourism product and market mix within the respective regions of Sri Lanka, rather than the spatial construct *per se*. Accordingly, while the study throws interesting light on the nature of regionalised seasonality, it is not generalisable.

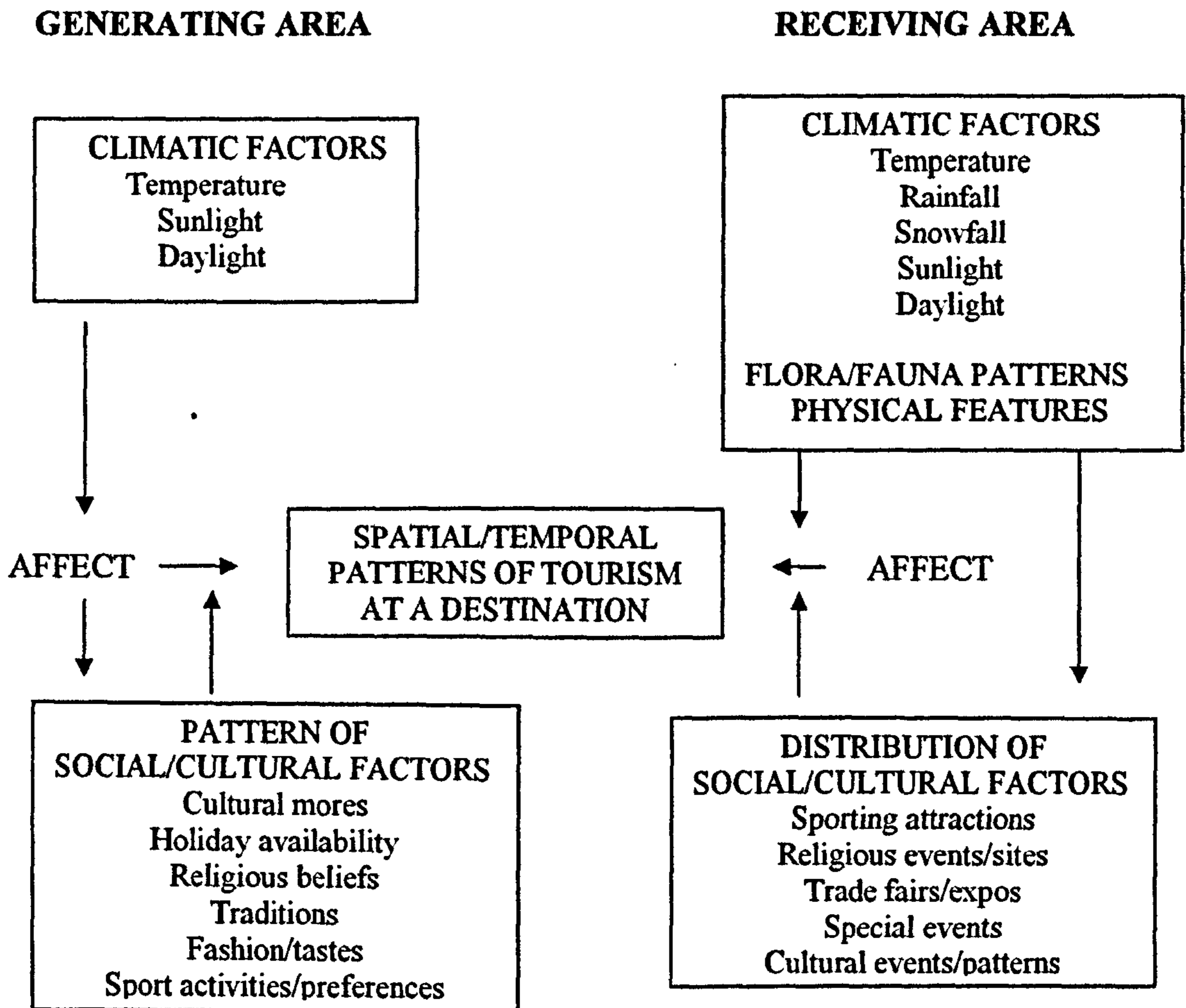
Baum and Hagen (1999), on the other hand, provide a more qualitative study of seasonality in the peripheral, cold water North Atlantic margins, to demonstrate the temporal issues encountered within that region through spatial remoteness, limited year round access and distinct climatic patterns. The methodological focus of their study is a lesson drawing approach on the strategic policy responses that such '*communities, provinces and countries*' (pp301) have developed and implemented to the challenges of seasonal fluctuations and short operating cycles. It highlights events and festivals, market and product diversification and structural and environmental responses as key weapons in the challenges of temporal extension of the tourism operating season, with examples from Iceland, Gotland, Newfoundland and insular and mainland Scotland, among others.

Their study reveals the role of institutional and supply-factors as constraints to temporal extension. Most especially, they identify in several of their study areas labour market constraints as a barrier to extending the period of operation for tourism businesses. Added to this are the restrictions on importing migrant labour to help alleviate local labour shortage problems, an inflexible academic year impacting on the availability of student labour and the impacts on training and service quality from reliance on seasonal labour (p310). While such issues are not necessarily correlational with spatial remoteness, they are seen to exacerbate the existing problems of managing a seasonal tourism economy in a remote location. For the current study, these issues raise a pertinent question for Scotland's spatio-temporal dynamic:

RQ6: Are any distinct spatial patterns apparent in terms of seasonal trading behaviours among Scotland's destination operators?

Thus, turning towards the conceptualisation of spatio-temporal relationships, Butler adapts his model of seasonality influences (Figure 2.4) to take account of the added dimension of spatiality. This is shown in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 Factors Illustrating a Destination's Spatial Pattern of Seasonality



(Butler, 2001:15)

In light of Baum and Hagen's study and findings by Flognfeldt (1988 and 2001) and Mourdoukoutas (1988) on local labour market conditions, there is scope for Butler's model to be further expanded to take into account structural and supply-side factors at the destination which act *de facto* as constraints or limits to the seasonal operating cycle.

2.8 Emerging Supply-side Theoretical Framework

The preceding discussion points to the fact that the role of supply-side factors in influencing tourism's temporal patterns is misunderstood. This situation arises from a number of reasons. First, within the seasonality literature, the parameters of what constitutes the 'supply-side' are indistinct. Conceptualisations of influences on seasonality tend to encompass a broad range of destination based supply attributes, including climatic conditions, physical features and, as illustrated in the above spatio-temporal model (Figure 2.6, Butler, 2001), events, sporting, religious and cultural amenities and facilities. To these, Baum and Hagen (1999) add competition from other economic sectors and the alternative use of touristic resources as '*supply-side constraints*' (p300). Further, a variety of 'actions' such as pricing, taxation and investment have been interpreted as 'modifying influences' on seasonal patterns (Figure 2.4 above). In addition, wider distributional and infrastructural elements such as transport and travel trade components clearly must be included as supply-side influences on tourism seasonality, whether within the supply chain or at the destination. The recent trend in the expansion of low cost airlines in opening up areas served by regional airports is a case in point.

The provenance of the 'modifying actions' can of course include both individual business and collective business 'actions' (for example destination marketing networks), as well as public agency or governmental interventions. In Goulding and Hay's (2001) framework of supply-side responses to seasonality (Figure 2.7), business responses and public policy measures are seen as distinct from each another, though in both cases they might reflect either a prevailing acceptance of the seasonal 'status quo' or the need to 'do something about it'.

Figure 2.7 Supply-side Responses to Seasonality

Business Responses	Public Sector Policy Measures
<p><i>to boost off-season demand :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>seasonal pricing</i> - <i>market diversification</i> - <i>product diversification</i> - <i>promotional activity</i> - <i>distribution mix</i> - <i>service level differentiation</i> 	<p><i>to boost off-season tourism :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>labour force incentives (eg training)</i> - <i>stagger school holidays</i> - <i>business support services such as marketing, financial planning</i> - <i>participation in seasonal extension programmes – eg destination events strategy</i> - <i>fiscal incentives</i> - <i>subsidisation of transport services</i>
<p><i>Acceptance of seasonality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>offer reduced capacity</i> - <i>full seasonal closure</i> - <i>temporary seasonal closure (eg during lowest revenue period)</i> 	<p><i>Acceptance of seasonality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>environmental regeneration initiatives</i> - <i>focus business support on existing seasonal trading pattern</i> - <i>support off-season community initiatives (eg local arts festivals)</i>

(adapted from Goulding and Hay, 2001:18)

Secondly, analysis of supply-side influences tends to concentrate on the ‘macro’ dimension of the destination area or region as a whole. A limitation of this is that there is an implicit assumption that ‘places’ and their communities may share a common experience and a common meaning of ‘the season’, ‘peak season’, ‘seasonal downtime’ and other temporally defined states. While there is a logic that a destination’s seasonal patterns impact on its commercial tourism products in general, the counterview that individual destination businesses and service suppliers’ trading patterns do not to impact on the destination’s aggregate seasonal patterns remains untested, irrespective of the local market dynamic.

However, it is acknowledged that in much of cool temperate northern Europe, rural, peripheral and seaside destinations comprising mainly small scale independent businesses tend to have more seasonally defined patterns of tourism, and higher

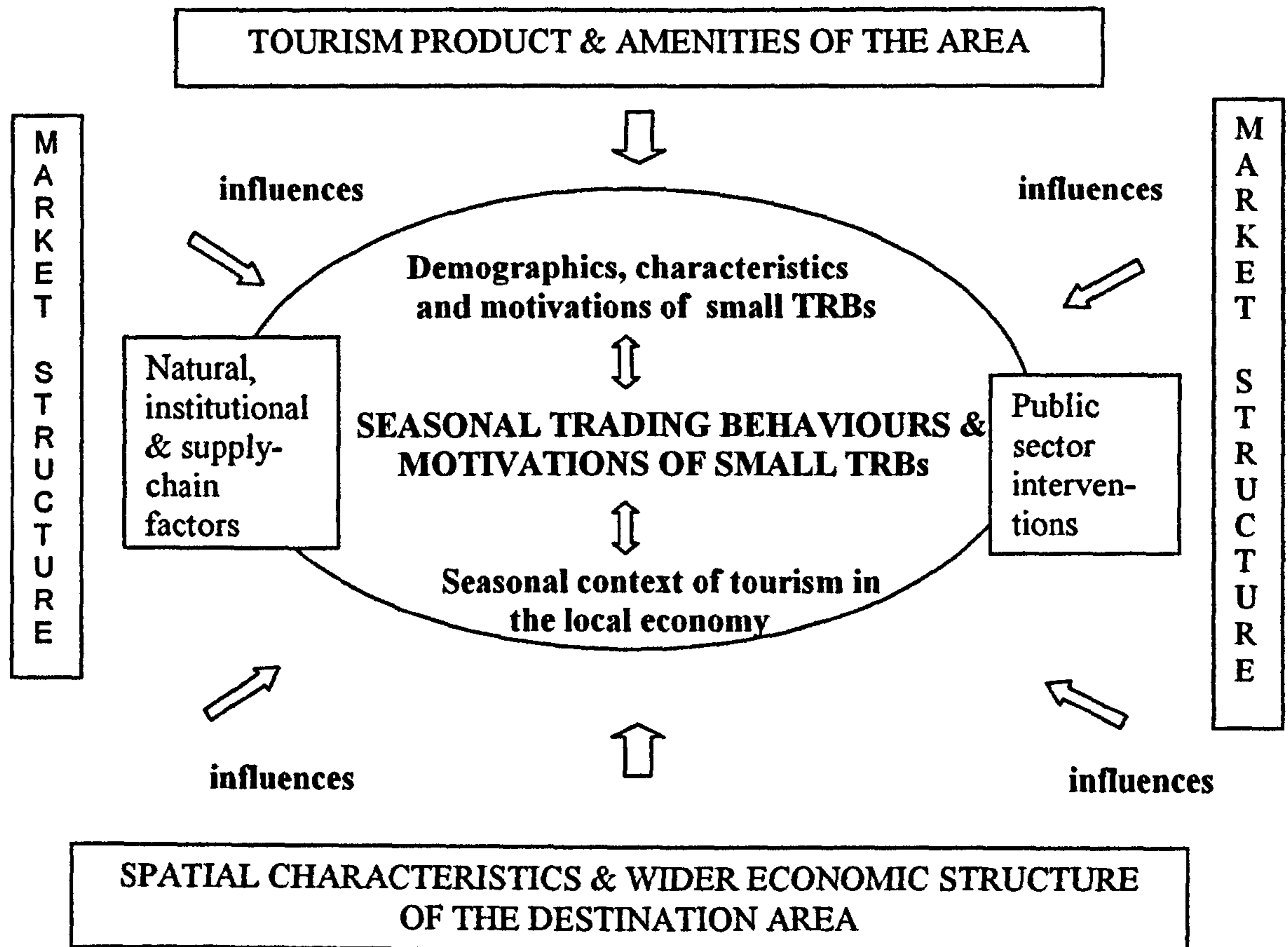
ratios of seasonally closing businesses (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001) than in urban areas or warm temperate climates. Indeed, in such areas, the development of shoulder- or low season niche markets by some individual businesses may exacerbate the differences in local proprietors' trading patterns. Hartmann (1986) and Flognfeldt (2001) have made the point that some local communities may seek a 'downtime' from tourism, while Lundtorp *et al.* (2001) conclude that the island community on Bornholm has effectively learned to accept seasonality as a fact rather than as a problem. Proprietor and community perceptions of seasonal trading therefore constitute a key issue in understanding the wider dynamic of seasonal behaviour.

Finally, at a 'micro' or individual business level, the range of supply-side factors influencing seasonal trading patterns is thought to be wide. For example, it was noted previously how local labour conditions can affect seasonal trading. Baum and Hagen (1999) highlight the degree to which the Åland islands' tourism economy largely shuts down at the start of the academic year because of its dependence on seasonal student labour. They also chart a number of institutional and policy constraints that effectively delineate local labour force mobility. Meanwhile, supply-side 'inertia' is highlighted by Grant *et al.* (1997) and empirically by Ioannides and Petersen (2003) and Getz and Nilsson (2004) among small tourism businesses in Bornholm.

It is therefore argued that appreciating the structure and dynamics of destination areas' tourism economies is vital to an understanding of the manifestations and causation of its seasonality. In other words, 'macro' analysis is meaningless without a profound understanding of the behaviour and motivations of the individual actors.

The emerging theoretical framework of seasonality appropriate to this study is thus reflective of the model expounded in Chapter One of this study and as shown in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8 Reconfigured Conceptual Framework of the Study



While seasonal tourism operations may transcend numerous sectoral and ownership types, the focus of the current study is on the small, privately operated tourism business as a key supply-side component within the seasonality equation. The theoretical construct accordingly mirrors this. However, the 'reconstruction' of supply-side influences acknowledges the role of natural and institutional causal factors and interventions as potential influences on the temporal trading behaviours of such businesses.

2.9 Summary

In reviewing tourism seasonality, a systems approach was adopted at the outset, reflecting the pervasiveness of the phenomenon as a feature of tourism. This provides a basis for deconstruction both of seasonality *per se* and of its causal

influences, which in turn enables key issues and debates to be aired and from which several research questions have emerged. The very nature of the temporal construct has been explored, with the finding that short term periodic variance may be as relevant to trading behaviours and thus 'seasonal' operations as longer term temporal blocks. This accordingly informs the first research question.

In examining the measurement and terminology of 'seasonality' it becomes clear the concept may be subject to interpretation. Moreover, there is a spatial dichotomy pertaining to the language of seasonality insofar as descriptions of seasonal 'levels' may reflect either conditions in places of origin or at the destination. Such conditions may also be perceived differently by operators along the supply chain or within the destination. It thus raises the question to what extent subjective perception of 'seasonality' actually prevails within a study area.

The literature overwhelmingly treats seasonality as a demand-oriented phenomenon. Against this there can be little debate. However, the relative lack of insight into the role of supply-side agents within causal analysis leads to the question of the degree to which such agents, especially destination service suppliers, may exacerbate or reinforce seasonal patterns through such causal constructs as behavioural 'inertia' or response to institutional factors. The role and degree of importance of institutional and natural climatic factors as influences on supply behaviour within the specific study area raise parallel questions.

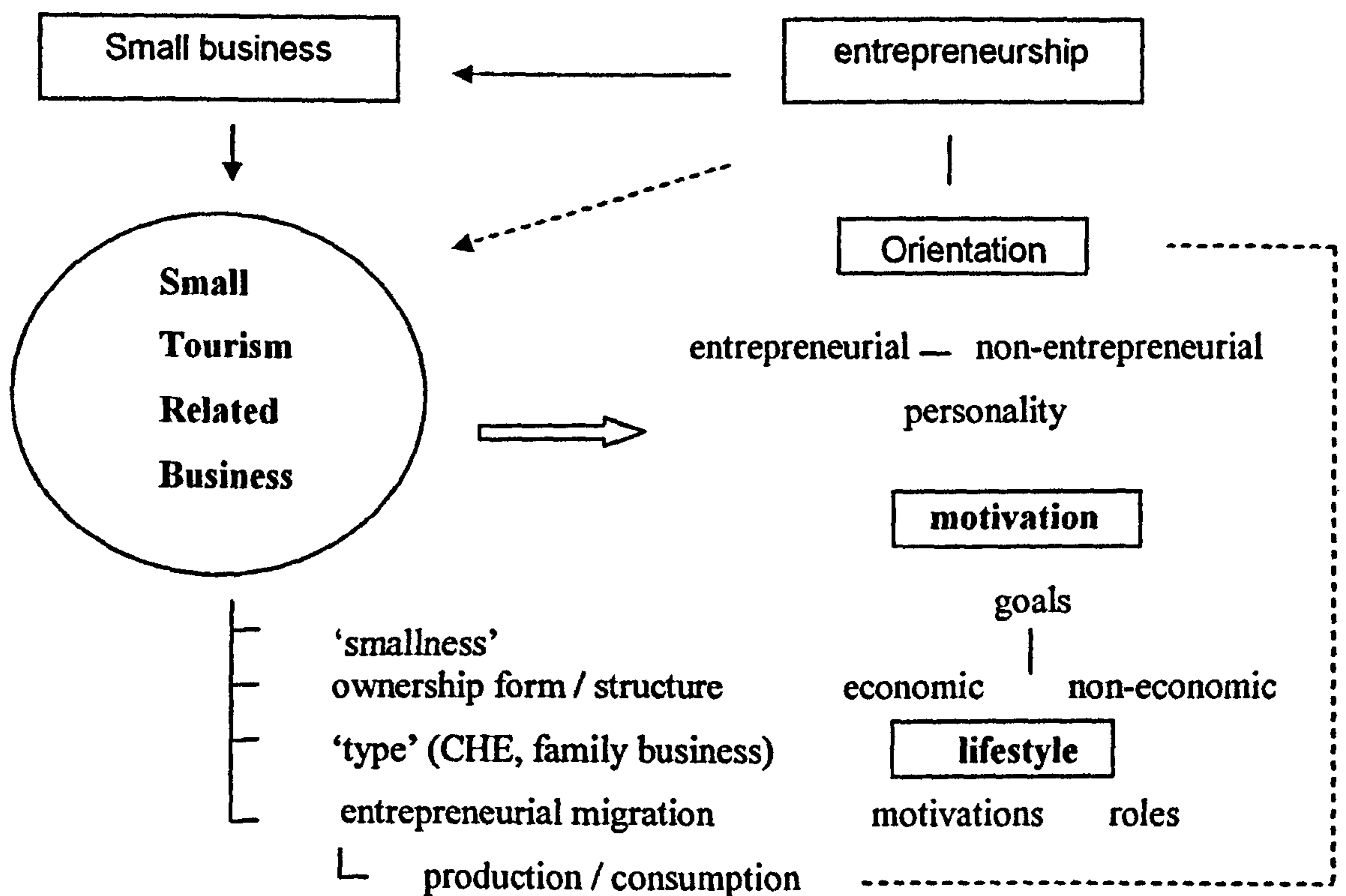
In conclusion, the review of tourism seasonality within the literature exposes numerous knowledge gaps in supply-side influences in the seasonal dynamic of destinations, specifically of small independent destination service suppliers. The extent to which the literature sheds light on the trading behaviours, business aspirations and motivations of such operators is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Seasonal Trading in Small Tourism Related Businesses

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature pertaining to the types of business and proprietorship that form the subject of this investigation. Its main aim is to review the parameters of knowledge relating to the motivations and behaviours of small business operation. From the questions raised in this and in the previous chapter, the context of the investigative gap on seasonality and the temporal trading motivations and behaviours of small tourism businesses will be ascertained. A number of emergent themes from the literature serve to establish and inform the knowledge base and the more pertinent of these provide the basis of the structure of this chapter. A conceptual map of the components of this chapter is represented accordingly, as per Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Map of Chapter Three



First, there is the *definitional debate* of the realm of small tourism related businesses. There is long-standing terminological and definitional discourse regarding what constitutes small business and entrepreneurial behaviour. The chapter proceeds (section 3.2) by addressing some of the key issues, aiming to illuminate the rationale and argument for the distinctiveness of small tourism (and related) businesses from the generic small business literature. In so doing, it explores the theoretical base of some of the competing and converging concepts, in particular the 'commercial home enterprise' and 'family business' constructs, both of which very much resonate with the constituency of this study. Exploring such concepts helps 'place' the type and range of seasonally trading businesses within a theoretical framework.

The focus then turns towards *motivational aspects* of entrepreneurship, small business establishment and growth (section 3.3). It examines the contributions of entrepreneurial personality, intrinsic motivation and the wider framework of goal-related influences within which these two elements operate as stimuli to small business start-up and growth. Motivation is often characterised in terms of a 'pull/push' paradigm, and accordingly the application of this approach is explored. The appraisal suggests that it is pertinent to appreciate the role of 'motivation' with a wider canvas represented by a framework of forces that include sociological and environmental factors in addition to intrinsic factors. Attention is given to the treatment of motivation within individual STRB studies, in particular the works of Lynch (1998), Getz and Carlsen (2000) and Morrison and Teixeira (2004).

The recurrence of '*lifestyle*' related goals and motivations in the literature invites exploration of what is an emerging area of study in the domain of STRBs (section 3.4). Three strands of enquiry are pursued, including the intrinsic meanings and values attached to lifestyle business motivation, role and aspirational attributes of lifestyle enterprise and the relationship between economic and lifestyle-oriented goals. The relevance of 'lifestyle business' at the destination level is also explored in brief, given the perception of the 'lifestyle business' as a potentially

challenging issue in seasonal destinations. This then leads to an appraisal of linkages between lifestyle proprietorship and seasonal trading through examining the limited empirical evidence in this area. It enables the construction of a framework of analysis between business orientation, lifestyle and temporal trading.

Finally, the chapter examines the other main element that links the above themes: the role of *migration and locational preference* (section 3.5). Studies on counter-urban migratory entrepreneurship are well established within the geographic and anthropological literatures. On the other hand, empirical research associating the phenomenon with lifestyle business orientation and temporal trading are much less developed, especially within the STRB domain. There is, in particular, a dichotomy between consumption and production-oriented migrational tourism which manifests in a number of forms such as retirement migration, second home ownership, and entrepreneurial opportunity surrounding these movements.

Each of the above elements plays a part in informing the knowledge gap between STRBs and seasonal trading. It is acknowledged that there is potentially considerable scope to broaden the analysis, for example by examining the literatures on such themes as labour and human resources, gender, ethnicity, business- and demographic lifecycles and indeed operational facets of enterprise. However, a conscious decision was taken to limit the analysis to issues which could subsume many of these (motivation, lifestyle and migration).

The chapter culminates by *reviewing the emerging theoretical framework* from the above literature strands (section 3.6) and accordingly setting the scene for a contextual examination of seasonality within Scotland, which forms the focus of Chapter Four.

3.2 Small Tourism Related Businesses: a Definitional debate

“How, then, should small tourism firms be defined?”

(Thomas, 2000:347)

Small Businesses in Tourism

Definitional and conceptual debates surrounding ‘small business’ are an inevitable starting point in the quest to understand the role of seasonal trading motivations and behaviours in small tourism related businesses (STRBs). As Thomas (2000, 1998) has noted, there remains considerable flexibility of interpretation in the term among academic and policy research studies. This is despite increasing adherence to the European Commission designated terminologies of ‘micro-enterprises’, ‘small enterprises’ and ‘medium-sized enterprises’ which are based on employee numbers (1998, p2). Moreover, the importance of sectoral specificity (Burrows and Curran, 1989) and external contexts of tourism related sectors compared with other service and non-service sectors is proposed as a rationale for treating small tourism and hospitality businesses as a distinct study phenomenon. This may hold true in terms of understanding the motivations and business behaviours underlying small tourism business proprietorship compared with other types of business. However, the very real sectoral differences within the wider amalgam of tourism must be acknowledged as a limitation to any understanding of its small business behaviours. Indeed the operating contexts of bed and breakfast micro-entrepreneurs may be very different from those of similar sized self-catering businesses or self-employed guides within the same locality.

Despite this, there is some resonance in the view that common or generic conditions among small firms support cross-sectoral comparisons. For example, Storey (1994) posits that, compared with ‘large firms’, small businesses are commonly likely to face greater market uncertainties as a result of their small customer bases, that absence of management structures and shareholders reduces an element of potential internal conflict and that they display a ‘much greater diversity of objectives’ and motivations (p11). This latter assertion presents an

intriguing, though as yet largely untested possibility in terms of the common condition posed by temporal trading across tourism and hospitality service providers. To date, Getz and Nilsson's (2004) cross-sectoral seasonality study in Bornholm provides the only known example that has aimed to address consistencies in motivation and behaviour among a small tourism business constituency from a temporal trading perspective.

Burns (1996) provides a further generic characteristic of 'smallness' in respect of the more limited strategic options open to small firms in light of capital constraints. However, as a counter-argument, niche-market development may offer an alternative strategic model to small tourism firms, as demonstrated by Ateljevic and Doorne (2000), Getz *et al.* (2004) among others. Motivational diversity provides one of the most potent and pervasive factors distinguishing small businesses, especially in tourism and hospitality (Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Shaw and Williams, 2002) and is accordingly addressed separately in this review (see section 3.3).

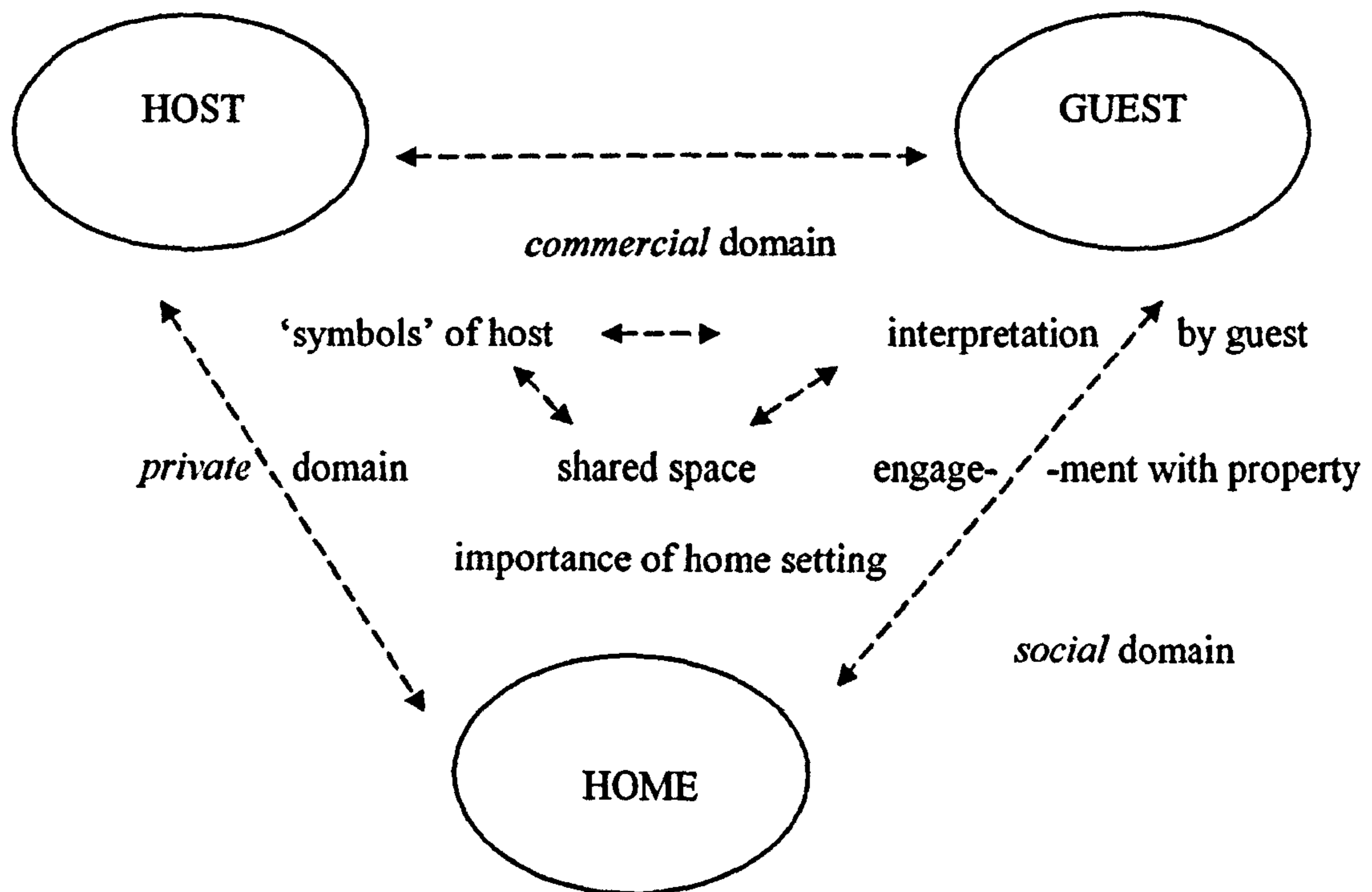
Lynch (2005) argues the case for clearer terminological definition and conceptualisation from an alternative standpoint. He suggests that size is just one element among several dimensions that requires greater consistency of approach. Other dimensions he reviews include ownership-operational type (Lynch specifically highlights 'family business') and the notions of 'entrepreneurship' and 'lifestyle business' which provide distinct motivational perspectives (p534). However, he introduces a further dimension of analysis, specifically within the realm of small accommodation (as opposed to broader tourism) businesses: namely the 'commercial home enterprise' (CHE) concept (Lynch, 2005).

The Commercial Home Enterprise (CHE)

For Lynch, the CHE concept embodies more than a straightforward economic exchange. It encapsulates the added dimensions of host-guest interaction within a private home setting where public space is shared and the importance of the host(s) is emphasised through symbols of emotional attachment to the home.

'Home' is thus represented as a powerful cultural, emotional and temporal construct in addition to its physical facets (Lynch, 2004; Di Domenico, 2003). These aspects are conceptualised and illustrated in Figure 3.2, as adapted from Lynch and Di Domenico.

Figure 3.2 The Significance of 'Home' within the CHE Construct



(adapted from Lynch, 2005; 2004 and Di Domenico, 2003)

Other distinguishing facets of the CHE according to Lynch, are the importance of the 'lifestyle entrepreneur' as a motivational type, of owner-manager values as central to the construct, of personal networks, of family involvement and lifecycle, the significance of gender (with a noted predominance of CHE 'entrepreneuse'), and the sense of embeddedness of the business within the local community and economy (Lynch, 2005:549). Of course, some of these may equally apply to businesses outwith the CHE concept. However, it is, Lynch argues, the holistic application of these facets, of the centrality and meanings of

'home' and the distinctive 'types' of accommodation service setting that give weight to the CHE construct.

For the current study, such a construct is potentially compelling in informing the role of temporal trading behaviours, insofar as 'home' also connotes a place of retreat and privacy. Within the Scottish context, CHEs are represented by B&Bs, guest houses, small hotels, host family accommodation (for example hosting summer exchange students (Lynch, 1998) and in some cases, self-catering establishments such as cottages. It is observed that these types of accommodation are 'small' in terms of letting capacity (mostly less than 12 letting bedrooms, as recorded by Lynch, 2005) although there is by no means consistency in this dimension of analysis among related literatures (for example Slattery, 2002; Morrison *et al.*, 1996).

In practice, businesses that fit the CHE concept occupy a significant place in Scotland's tourist accommodation provision (Di Domenico, 2003; VisitScotland, 2002a; Morrison, 1998). Moreover, published operating information suggests that many of them display tendencies towards seasonally fixed trading periods in Scotland, compared with larger establishments such as country house hotels, branded hotels and motels.

Family Business

Tangential to and partly captured by the CHE concept, the 'family business' provides another major and enduring theoretical challenge, especially within a tourism context. The scope of generic small business studies is both long-established and broad, as highlighted by Birley (2001), Chua *et al.* (1999), Westhead and Cowling (1998) among others. Within a tourism and hospitality paradigm, Getz and Carlsen (2000) contend that though 'small business' and 'family business' concepts overlap in many ways, there are particular distinctions between them. They highlight gender roles, family life cycle implications and inter-generational business succession as key to understanding the family business dynamic. Getz *et al.*'s (2004) comprehensive study of the phenomenon in tourism

and hospitality identifies numerous analytic dimensions. Most especially, their conceptual framework acknowledges the breadth of thematic identification in family business research, addressing the many perspectives of family-proprietorship highlighted by Sharma *et al.*, (1996) in their wide-ranging review of the topic. These include cultural and ethnicity dimensions, gender roles, family work dynamics (harmony, dissonance, rivalry etc), governance, and 'the family in society' aspects of the phenomenon. Moreover, it is acknowledged that 'family development' adds a further dimension to the dynamic of business and ownership growth and evolution (Gersick *et al.*, 1997).

Getz *et al.*'s work is thus pertinent to the current study inasmuch as it embraces a definitional debate and characterisation of family business and highlights the nature of entrepreneurship in such business settings, as well as start-up, growth, development and business/family lifecycle trajectories. Moreover, their analysis utilises multi-sectoral case studies both within and outwith accommodation, thus crossing the sometimes difficult conceptual and practical divide between tourism and hospitality business.

Significantly, their definition of a 'family business' eschews constraints of size limitation (hence the notion of 'small' family business is deemed less important than the 'family business' *per se* in accounting for goals and behaviours), of distinguishing between 'ownership' or 'operation' and of family 'structure' (Getz *et al.*, 2004:5). In the case of 'owner' and 'operator' distinctions, the authors argue that many people in tourism and hospitality manage businesses that they do not fully own, for example through franchise or lease arrangements (*ibid*). A practical example of this in Scotland's accommodation provision is found in the holiday/touring caravan park sector. In this sector, family proprietorship is manifest in owner-managed businesses, franchising arrangements via the UK Caravan Club and through leasing local authority sites. Getz and Carlsen (2000) identify numerous configurations of 'ownership' in their study of Western Australian rural family tourism businesses, including 'owner-operated' and 'one

family owns controlling interest', partnerships of family and non-family members and 'limited company' status (p550).

Meanwhile, Getz *et al.* (2004) interpret 'family business' as embracing sole trader, partner/spouse (copreneur), 'nuclear' and 'extended family' constructions of business proprietorship (p5). Such inclusivity of approach clearly serves to aid theoretical construction and extend the boundaries of the knowledge base. This viewpoint is supported by Chua *et al.* (1999) who review the generic definitional weaknesses of the concept. For them, *behaviour* and *vision* (encapsulated as "*a notion of a better future for the family*", p24) are the two key facets that differentiate family from non-family businesses. Alternatively, Westhead and Cowling (1998) propose a broader framework of 'familyness' variables (p50) as an aid for researchers utilising the 'family business' construct.

However, in the parameters of the current study it is deemed that differences in family composition, ownership patterns and business size may in fact play a part in influencing business motivations, behaviours and goals, within which the nature of temporal trading behaviours are manifest. Therefore, individual facets of the family business demographic are considered important contexts of temporal trading behaviours.

The above issues thus raise a pertinent question for the current study, as follow:

RQ7: Do differences in household 'family' proprietorship structures impact on the propensity to trade seasonally among Scotland's small tourism related businesses?

A further dimension of family business proprietorship in tourism is that of the status of the business within the household. Beaver *et al.* (1998) note the propensity of the venture (for example the B&B) to represent one income source among several to the family, such as accompanying or secondary to a principal household wage income by one or more family member. This phenomenon is also

recorded by Lynch (1998) in his study of female commercial homestay proprietors, by Getz and Nilsson (2004) among their seasonal business sample in Bornholm and by Kousis (1989) in rural Crete. In the latter case, females are seen to run most of the family tourism businesses, while the men work elsewhere. It also more widely reflects the 'pluriactivity' among many farm tourism businesses (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998:76) where the tourism derived income may represent an economic necessity in the face of uncertainties in farming. The status of the tourism business within the family household, specifically where such business is conducted seasonally, thus poses a pertinent contextual issue for the current study:

RQ8: Is there a link between the status of the tourism business within the household economy and the temporal trading pattern in which it is conducted?

A final dimension is raised by Morrison and Teixeira (2004), who report findings by Habbershon and Williams (1999) identifying strategic advantages of family labour within the family firm operating environment, compared with employed non-family staff. Among the advantages cited are more flexible work practices, greater productivity and '*unusual [ie high] motivation*' [sic] (p250). As Morrison and Teixeira record in their cross-cultural survey of small family businesses, reliance on family labour in the context of a 24 hours a day 'on-call' operation such as a guest house or small hotel, serves to constrain non-working personal life and the opportunities for escape (p251). Issues around the composition of staffing therefore potentially resonate in terms of the temporality of operation.

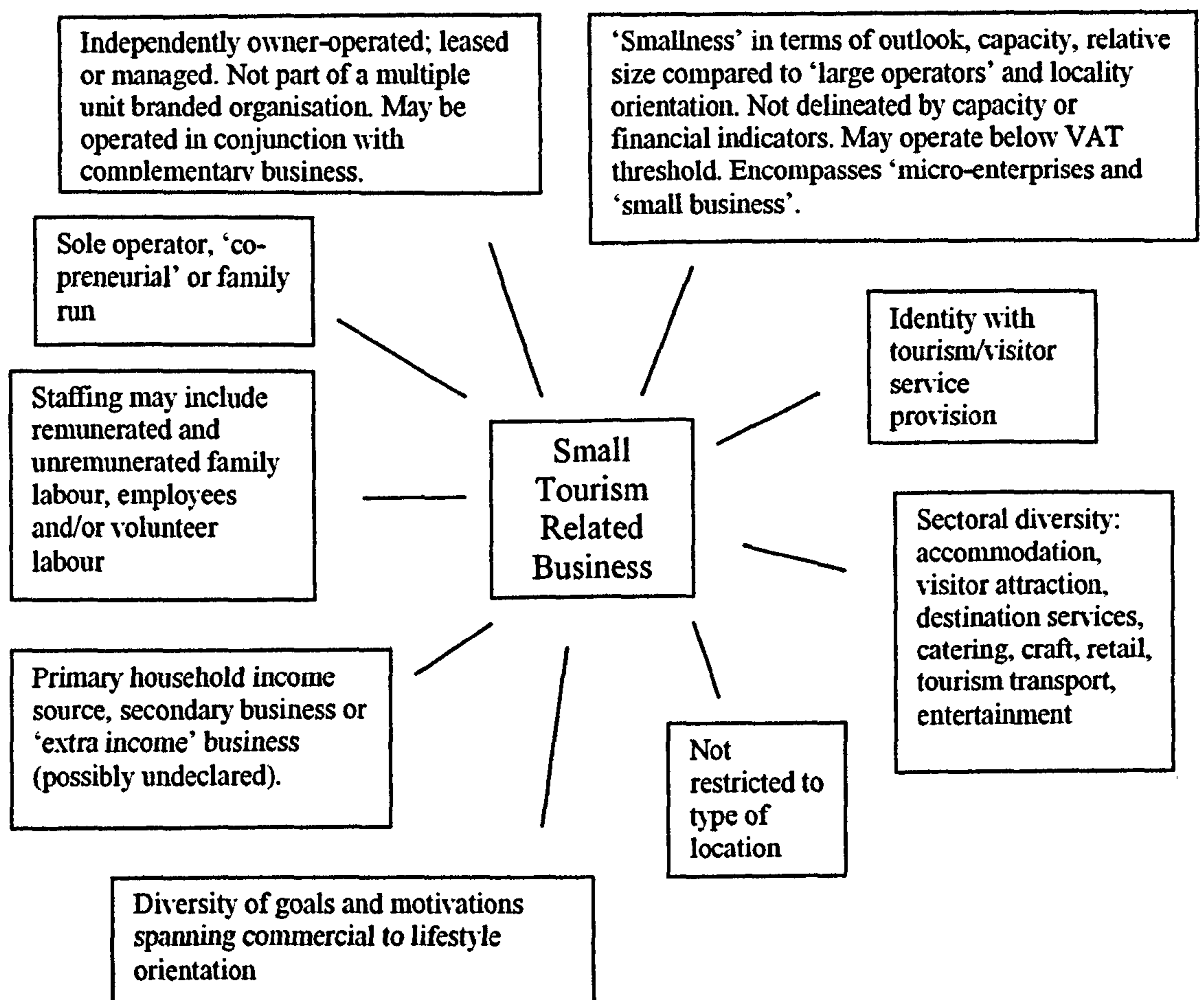
The preceding discussion has endeavoured to address some of the key conceptual issues pertaining to the notion of the small business and its distinctive tourism related sub-classifications. Both 'commercial home enterprise' and 'family business' constructs are thought to represent a significant proportion of Scotland's seasonal trading tourism stock, certainly within the private commercial sector. However, even within this element, some temporally constrained businesses will inevitably fit into neither classification; rather they represent a more generic

notion of 'small business'. For example, it is difficult to conceptualise a privately operated visitor attraction as a family business if it is owned and managed as a partnership including non-family members. Small tourism transport and destination service operations, as well as some accommodation and licensed food and beverage operations may well fall into a similar situation.

'Small Tourism Related Business' Working Definition

The terminology adopted in the current study is therefore that of the 'small tourism related business' (hereafter STRB) within the private sector. It embraces a number of criteria and characteristics, as portrayed in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Conceptualisation of the Small Tourism Related Business



The STRB signifies those types of enterprise which are wholly or mainly geared towards servicing the needs of visitors and which identify as such through the promotion of their services via tourism networks or publications. They are characterised by 'smallness' in terms of the general size and relative capacity of the operation and in terms of the nature of their ownership structure. However, 'smallness' is not delineated in either capacity or financial terms, given the sectoral range of seasonally trading businesses. Facets of the commercial home enterprise converge with those of the 'STRB' insofar as these sectors are represented in terms of seasonal trading. However, the wider characterisation of the small tourism family business embraces service providers beyond accommodation and as well as businesses that might be leased or managed by proprietors, as opposed to outright ownership. These factors align more closely with the STRB as utilised in this study. Moreover, the range of enterprises under scrutiny in this study will inevitably embrace both commercially and lifestyle-oriented businesses, operating to a diverse variety of goals embracing economic and non-economic factors, reflecting a range of proprietor motivations which in turn may benefit from a temporally trading operation.

Having thus established the study constituency, the next section focuses on the motivational literature in respect of STRBs. Generic studies of entrepreneurial goals have established the knowledge base with regard to the motivational paradigm. This is explored in brief in the next section (3.3) followed by a more focussed review of the roles and contributions of lifestyle-orientation (3.4), migration and locational preference (3.5) to STRB proprietorship and temporal trading.

3.3 Motivation as a Facet of Small Business Entrepreneurship

During the second half of the twentieth century, a very large body of literature and empirical research has developed around the study domains of 'entrepreneurship' and 'small business'. The paradigm of enterprise, and as a significant sub-set, small business, is thus well established. Small business

theories have long sought to understand underlying assumptions regarding the dynamic and contribution of such entities within society, the economy and social transformation, whether from policy perspectives (eg Wanhill, 2004; Dewhurst, 1996; Storey, 1994), developmental and spatial perspectives (Curran and Storey, 1993; Blackburn and Curran, 1993), as sociological critique (Goss, 1991; Scase and Goffee, 1987, 1982) or indeed as a challenge to prevailing economic ideology (most famously by Schumacher, 1974).

Despite the wide-ranging literatures, common agreement remains elusive on the role and importance of such fundamental human variables as attitudes, behaviours and motivations that underlie the creation, operation and growth (or non-growth) of businesses. The combined forces of 'entrepreneurial personality' (Chell *et al.*, 1991; Ketz de Vries, 1977; Hornaday and Aboud, 1971) and the motivational stimuli that transact as entrepreneurial behaviour have been portrayed as key elements within the small business canvas. As such they are particularly pertinent for examination to the current study. The following analysis therefore concentrates on these specific issues within the wider 'small business/ entrepreneurship' discourse.

As Goss (1991) notes, the quest to understand 'entrepreneurial personality' is rooted in a psychological tradition and based on the assumption that entrepreneurial behaviour is a function of an individual's personality traits rather than a response to his or her social environment (p48). This line of argument subsumes the role of social experience and environment in explaining entrepreneurial tendencies to that of contexts for shaping personality. This may be through factors such as parental treatment, transacting as 'need achievement' (McClelland, 1987, 1961) or hardship, manifesting as the search for 'non-structured situations' where the entrepreneur can assert his control, independence and distrust of authority (Kets de Vries, 1977:49). Indeed, Goss (1991) reports that contributions from the psychological literature have suggested 'at least twenty different personality characteristics' can be shown to discriminate between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (p49). This would appear to be borne out by

the significant 'popular literature' on entrepreneurial success stories, which identify such traits as drive, determination and survival instincts, albeit normally in the context of large corporation business leaders.

However, such trait-inspired behaviour is acknowledged as contentious in explaining entrepreneurial causality, especially in a small business context and given the very real difficulties in prescribing 'personality traits'. Moreover, it is not known whether there exists any proven psychological consequentiality between personality and motivation (although the author has not delved into the psychology literature). Dewhurst and Horobin (1998) suggest that to be meaningful, the notion of 'personality' needs to be identified in terms of 'constellations of characteristics' rather than individual traits (p21). Moreover, the assumption that personality takes primacy over the conditioning role of social experience/environment is fundamentally challenged by Goss (1991), in light of the lack of any converging empirical evidence to this effect and the counter-intuitive argument that personality variables shape the social context of an individual's world (p50).

Therefore, it would seem to be more appropriate to 'place' personality within a broader canvas of enterprise-motivating factors. This is indeed the conclusion that Cromie (1987) arrives at in proposing 'multiple determinants of entrepreneurship', which include the individual's motives, their career experience, skills, access to information and their last employment experience ('the incubator job', p44). The 'framework of forces' approach finds credence in much of the generic enterprise and small business literatures. It is perhaps best encapsulated by Storey (1994), whose large-scale survey of empirical studies and literature dealing with business formation and growth explores fifteen distinct themes of explanatory factors, of which motivation constitutes just one element. He identifies such themes as social marginality, education, functional skills, family history, gender and stage of life/lifecycle as each having spawned significant enquiry as explanatory factors for entrepreneurial aspiration (p127).

From a small tourism and hospitality business perspective, Getz *et al.* (2004) propose that entrepreneurial behaviour is stimulated by a series of 'cues' which are embedded within the individual psyche as well as in the interaction of a person's social and economic experience. Adapting Naffziger *et al.*'s (1994) framework, they argue that social and economic entrepreneurial stimuli may be positive (such as the existence of a conducive enterprise culture, supportive networks and economic structures that favour business creation) or negative (such as redundancy, limited employment opportunities, dissatisfaction with current circumstances or displacement which may result in business creation). They suggest that psychological cues can spring from either category and comprise essentially aspirational factors. These include a desire for independence, wealth, achievement or social mobility (p25) or indeed any combination of such aspirations. However, it is clear that ascribing 'positive' and 'negative' terminologies to behavioural stimuli imbues subjectivity in interpreting the relevance and meaning of a critical event, circumstance or social construct behind the entrepreneurial decision. For example in the right circumstances redundancy may be viewed by an individual as a positive 'release' enabling a new beginning in which business start-up is a route to self-employment and achievement of motivational goals (eg independence and control). Likewise, the contention by Scase and Goffee (1987) that entrepreneurship offers alternative social mobility routes to those "*excluded from meritocratic achievement*" (p8) may be judged as conferring a positive role in sociological terms, or conversely as a choice-constrained 'only option' by the individual.

In a similar vein, Burns (2001) subscribes to the positive/negative paradigm of entrepreneurial triggers. The former are identified as 'pull' factors, comprising essentially motivational stimuli - again, the need for independence, achievement, recognition, personal development and wealth. These are deemed stronger than the negative 'push' forces (unemployment, not fitting into the current work environment or lack of alternative prospects) which Burns contends may induce self-employment but are far less likely to result in a growth-oriented small business (p71). While this approach may be somewhat mechanistic, it does

nevertheless make a link between motivation and growth-orientation. Meanwhile Storey (1994) circumvents the blunt 'positive/negative' paradigm through qualifying 'push' factors as relevant where they are 'incentivised', as in the redundancy example described above.

Entrepreneurial creation is thus effectively seen as a 'process' bounded by numerous environmental forces, social contexts and intrinsic motivations (Morrison, 2001; Carson *et al.*, 1995; Naffziger *et al.*, 1994). Such a view is attractive, insofar as it provides a very broad framework of analysis that would find application in various cultural, spatial and sectoral contexts. Nevertheless, there remains much debate over the 'boundaries' themselves, especially in delineating goal-induced intrinsic motivation and the extrinsic sociological and environmental forces and factors that impinge on goal-setting and motivation. Accordingly, it is pertinent to consider the utility of intrinsic motivational factors within specific empirical works on small tourism related businesses.

In his study of female micro-entrepreneurs in the host family sector, Lynch (1998) identifies four motivational dimensions - economic, educational (including both host benefits and children benefits), social/psychological and 'female entrepreneurship' factors (p327). These in turn encompass thirty distinct motivational 'components' drawn from the literature that particularly echo the works of Goffee and Scase (1985), Watkins and Watkins (1984) and Cromie and Hayes (1988). In particular, Lynch tests Goffee and Scase's typology of the female family host as 'domestic trader', exhibiting high attachment to conventional gender roles and low attachment to entrepreneurial ideals (p324). 'Female entrepreneurship' factors are split between 'business' and 'resource efficiency' components, such as making use of a spare room and looking after the home at the same time as hosting.

Based on a survey approach using attitude statements with just over 200 respondents, Lynch reports that the main motivations of hosts are educational (eg *'learning about other people and places'*) and social/psychological (*'to meet*

interesting people, *'it makes me feel good*, *'it's fun*') (p330). However, his findings also record that *'not enough income coming into the household'* is the single most popular reason cited for hosting based on a restricted response set (ibid.), thus suggesting a more complex economic/non-economic motivational mix. From his findings, Lynch is able to develop a comprehensive host family motivational model that comprises an inter-relationship of 'push' factors (host exclusion from the labour market, life cycle events and the gap between desired and actual income), mediating factors (family status, the home as resource and host/guest experience) and 'pull' factors (the four motivational dimensions described above) (p338). However, he acknowledges shortcomings in the research arising particularly from the partial or incomplete coverage of motivations and potentially artificial categorisation of some motivations (p339).

In sectoral terms, Getz and Carlsen (2000) provide a broader motivational study in their exploration of Western Australian rural family tourism businesses. Their research focuses on the proprietors' motivations articulated in terms of goal-orientation. Indeed, a premise of their study is that, compared with other (ie non-tourism related) sectors and with non-family businesses, the rural family business is likely to be driven by a distinct set of motives and goals (p548). At the heart of the issue is whether family-related concerns (and by implication, goals) will be given priority over business success or growth. Through a questionnaire-based study of a non-random sample, they first ask respondents to describe why they initially got started in their business, proceeding with a number of statement sets to determine start-up, operational and formal business goals. Utilising a factor analysis approach to quantify the findings, and based on almost 200 valid cases, the authors reveal four distinct groups of goals. These are labelled as 'lifestyle', 'money', 'stimulation' and 'independence'. Collectively, they account for a wide range of motives, most statistically significant of which (as measured by factor loadings and mean scores, p551) are lifestyle related motivations, such as 'enjoying a good lifestyle' and 'living in the right environment' (p552). Interestingly, the authors record an ambivalence of economic motivations, varying between the relative importance ascribed to 'becoming financially

independent' to the low-scoring 'making lots of money'. Thus, in their sample, profit maximisation is subservient to a range of non-economic goals including 'meeting interesting people' [sic], 'being my own boss' and 'providing me with a challenge'. Conversely, 'gaining prestige' is accorded least importance (ibid.).

Broadly similar results are recorded from Getz and Petersen's (2002) conjoint studies of family tourism businesses in Canmore (close to Canada's Banff National Park) and the Danish island of Bornholm. Although with clearly diverse destination contexts and arguably different study aims (to determine the characteristics of growth-oriented family businesses), their methodology closely mirrors the Western Australia study in terms of motivational statement sets.

There is little doubt that the above studies provide a valid contribution to the knowledge base of business start-up and growth motivations among small tourism related firms. In particular, they highlight the importance of 'lifestyle' values in entrepreneurial activity in different locational contexts and across different operating sectors. Indeed, Getz *et al.* (2004) note the greater weighting of lifestyle-related motivators among B&B and craft-based retail operators compared with restaurateurs, especially in Canmore (p54). Their findings also emphasise the tensions within other types of motivating factor, especially those attached to economic and self-esteem related goals.

However, it should be acknowledged that despite the apparently robust methodological construction and analysis of the above studies, they represent a distinctly positivist epistemological approach, they rely on largely prescribed motivational statements, and signify a 'western' cultural context. To take the latter point, Smith (1998) observes in her evaluation of developing 'third world' economies [sic], that a different motivational set from that in developed western countries may prevail. These include, among others, the conferment of a voice in the community, access to expanded networking (ie creating a family legacy or a saleable retirement asset) and the opportunity to employ family members '*who might not otherwise be employable*' [sic] (p207). Meanwhile, Morrison and

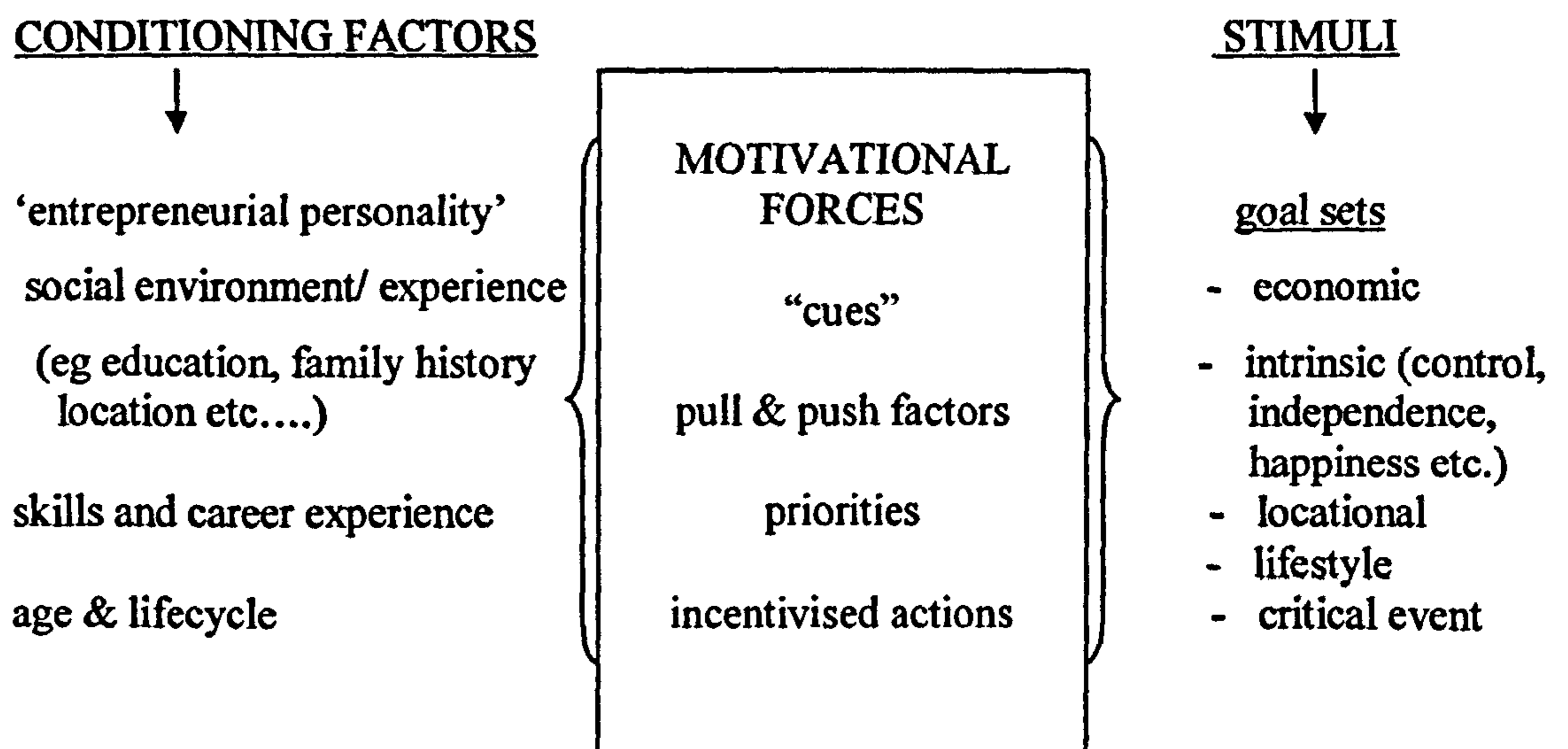
Teixeira (2004) record a similar mix of ‘*personal and business entry considerations*’ between proprietors in Glasgow and Aracaju (Brazil) though with the latter more evident among Aracaju’s accommodation proprietors. They summarise their findings accordingly:

“Thus, motivations between the two locales differ perhaps because of the different stages of the destinations’ development lifecycles, however, business entry motivations that reflect sensitivity to market conditions share similarities”

(Morrison and Teixeira, 2004:249)

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that for the purposes of this study, ‘motivation’ in small tourism businesses may be understood as a synthesis of conditioning factors and goal related stimuli. These may represent ‘push’ or ‘pull’ derived forces which manifest as incentivised actions supported by the relative strength of the conditioning or stimuli ‘cues’. Predominantly lifestyle-oriented goal sets may thus exert different motivational pulls from those reflecting more economic or growth oriented goal sets, which may, in turn, reflect the trading behaviour orientation of the proprietor(s). Figure 3.4 illustrates this motivational paradigm.

Figure 3.4 Motivational Paradigm of Small Tourism Related Business Operations



The empirical case studies examined above point to a complex relationship between 'categories' of motivations (economic, lifestyle, social/psychological etc) and the goals they represent (such as family or business prominence, growth or non-growth). Dewhurst and Horobin (1998) suggest there is in practice a 'taxonomic spectrum' (p30) or continuum of commercially oriented and lifestyle-oriented goals within which small tourism related proprietors may be subjectively placed. It raises a fundamental research question for the current study:

RQ9: To what extent do seasonally trading STRBs in Scotland reflect either entrepreneurial/commercially-oriented or lifestyle-oriented motivations?

This tension between 'lifestyle' and commercial/entrepreneurial orientation is deemed central to the current case study and is focused on next.

3.4 Lifestyle Businesses and Goals

There exist major challenges in ascribing linkages between STRB proprietors' lifestyles and their seasonal or periodic temporal trading patterns. These often arise from the lack of precision and clarity and indeed the degree of subjectivity evident in examining the 'lifestyle' concept. Moreover, the increasingly widespread adoption of the terminologies 'lifestyle business' and 'lifestyle entrepreneur' in both academic and popular media often raises more questions than contributing to an understanding of the phenomenon. While these concepts have assumed progressively higher prominence within the small business literature since the 1980s, they have arguably been applied without sufficient debate on the underlying construct of 'lifestyle' *per se*. Given the claim that 'lifestyle businesses' predominate among all UK small tourism and hospitality firms (Burns and Dewhurst, 1996; Andrew *et al.*, 2001), the need for terminological clarity is paramount (Lynch, 2005).

Growing interest in the 'lifestyle business' phenomenon reflects a widespread acknowledgement that traditional market and economic constructs no longer provide accurate or complete representations of the small firm operating paradigm in post-Fordist western societies. The quest to understand 'lifestyle' business and entrepreneurship is increasingly highlighted within tourism and hospitality studies internationally and is reflected in the growing body of empirical studies that has identified 'lifestyle' as a motivation or condition associated with STRB operations. Ateljevic and Doorne (2003, 2000) in separate studies of Croatia and New Zealand, observe and document the 'lifestyle' entrepreneur and business from an interdisciplinary paradigm, encompassing cultural, historical, psychological and ideological perspectives in addition to 'traditional' economic and market-oriented approaches. In their Croatian study (2003), an ethnographic 'insider' research approach is used to demonstrate that the cultural and value-driven motivational contexts of lifestyle business are as important as understanding the market dynamic within which a tourism business operates. Factors such as inter-generational owner-operation, local community cohesiveness and cultural identity are highlighted in the analysis which the authors claim redefines the 'agency/structure dialectic' (2003:124) of such research approaches. While this may be a valid standpoint, a cautionary note needs to be sounded in respect of any application of the findings to Scotland or elsewhere, given the case-, place- and culture-specific nature of the study.

Moreover, the relationships between economic determinants, market dynamics and entrepreneurial motivation are complex. In their study of New Zealand activity and backpacker hostel operators, 'lifestyle entrepreneurship' is observed by Ateljevic and Doorne to be practiced by non-local settlers who are themselves former 'lifestyle' adventure travellers. The nature of the services they provide offers them opportunities to engage with niche market consumers through common value systems, central to which are "*the sustainability of sociocultural and environmental values*" (2000:379). Thus in this case, notions of lifestyle enterprise are inextricably bounded by 'staying within the fence' of constrained

growth, rejection of corporatism, and “*revisiting core values on an ongoing (sometimes daily) basis*” (p388).

Di Domenico (2003) agrees with the need for an inclusive approach to the concept of ‘lifestyle’. Contextual to her study of urban guest house operators in Scotland, she characterises ‘lifestyle’ as implying a quality of life that encompasses aspects of work, family, gender and status. The latter is manifest through symbolic markers in terms of occupation, housing and consumption patterns (p28). However, there is a considerable difference in the degree of discretion among such variables, hence the overriding subjectivity of ‘lifestyle’ as a concept and disparity in the nature of choices it generates for individuals. Indeed, from a sociological perspective, ‘lifestyle choice’ is considered the essence of individual identity (Giddens, 2001:362), based on the goals that people set for themselves and the means they employ to achieve such goals (Thyne *et al.*, 2004). The choices people make in the way they allocate their time is identified as one such element of lifestyle choice (Craig-Lees *et al.*, 1995; Frank *et al.*, 1972) and as such resonates as a basis of lifestyle segmentation adopted in the marketing and consumer behaviour literatures. However, as Thyne *et al.* (2004) and Scott and Parfitt (2004) note in their overviews of lifestyle segmentation in the tourism and leisure literatures, the emphasis is almost entirely focused on the demand side of the market equation (eg travel behaviours, tourist activity choice, accommodation choice, etc), as measured through attitudes, activities, interests, opinions and values (Scott and Parfitt, 2004:125).

Therefore the quest to develop a supply-side behavioural segmentation model of lifestyle trading remains fertile for exploration! However, from a supply-side perspective, for Bosworth and Jacobs (1989) who report on attributes of small business managers in general, the ‘lifestyle’ construct does not distinguish identifiable behaviours among them, rather is simply a facet of social class:

“It is difficult to generalise, but the owner-managers’ lifestyles divide into two groups: lower middle-class owners and upper middle-class owners”

(Bosworth and Jacobs, 1989:21)

noting that a more ‘entrepreneurial lifestyle’ associated with a higher standard of living is prevalent among the latter (ibid). Such an approach epitomises both the lack of insight into lifestyle attributes within supply-side analyses in general, as well as an historically analytical vagueness of the phenomenon in the small business literature in particular.

In the context of the family hospitality and tourism business, Andrew *et al.* (2001) and Getz *et al.* (2004) consider ‘lifestyle’ as the consequence of a set of values and expectations which are largely self-selected by proprietors. This view may provide a useful starting point in the construction of any potential associations between lifestyle enterprise- or business and the temporal trading behaviours of STRB operators. For example, Burns (2001:11) considers the generic ‘lifestyle firm’ to confer to the proprietor the rewards of enjoyment and comfort as well as an adequate income. The hope of happiness (Heelas and Morris, 1992), personal satisfaction (Andrew *et al.*, 2001) and autonomy, control and independence as ‘primary driving forces’ (Di Domenico, 2003:28) comprise other motivational facets attributed to ‘lifestyle’ business or proprietorship. Thus there is a clear *intrinsic* aspect to the lifestyle motivation construct as applied to small businesses in general and among STRBs specifically.

A further dimension to the above may be identified as ‘aspirational’ or ‘role’ related attributes of lifestyle business proprietorship. In differentiating ‘lifestyle family entrepreneurs’ from other categorisations, Getz *et al.* (2004) signify the importance of place and ‘quality of life’ as aspirational triggers (p28), although this latter is as elusive a concept as ‘lifestyle’ itself. The desire to escape from the ‘rat race’ of urban, city scale living and in so doing move up the property ladder (Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Di Domenico, 2003), gaining the good life without the

encumbrance of “*personnel or growth problems or extensive financial or time commitments*” (Gray, 1986:16), building social relationships and acting in a hosting capacity (Morrison, 2000; Lynch, 2005, 1998) exemplify such aspirational and role dimensions attributed to ‘lifestyle’ business within the literature.

The scope of motivations and goals attributed as ‘lifestyle-related’ is exemplified in Getz and Carlsen’s (2000) study of 198 rural family tourism businesses in Western Australia, as reported previously. Among the sixteen goal statements they asked of respondents, those categorised as ‘lifestyle’ variables include family cohesion, retaining the property within the family, living in the right environment, supporting leisure interests and, generically, ‘*to enjoy a good lifestyle*’ (Getz and Carlsen 2000:551). While they appear to be perfectly legitimate ‘lifestyle’ variables, their breadth does illustrate the looseness and broad parameters of the concept. Moreover, these factors are cumulatively the most important measured responses among the four categories of start-up goals (ibid) in their family business constituency.

A third strand of analysis pertains to the relationships between economic/financial rewards and non-economic benefits of the types outlined above. Indeed, a recurring theme in ‘lifestyle’ business literature generically, and in STRB businesses specifically, is the idea that non-economic attributes are balanced with and sometimes take precedence over economic goals. According to this school of thought, goals pertaining to business growth and profitability will be sub-optimal because of the importance attached to non-economic lifestyle motivations and aspirations, as discussed above. Kuratko and Hodgetts (1998) acknowledge that conventional measures of business success such as sales or profit growth are counter-balanced with the goal of “*...providing a sufficient and comfortable living for the entrepreneur*” (p362). To this end, Morrison (2002) observes that many small tourism business proprietors have multiple sets of goals, wherein the notion of ‘satisficing’ financial returns to support lifestyle ideals is prevalent. Further, such multiple goal sets embracing both financial and non-financial

motivations and aspirations epitomise the lifestyle proprietor. She refers to the quest for 'survival' and

"...securing sufficient income to ensure that the business providesa satisfactory level of funds to sustain enjoyment in their chosen lifestyle"

(p1-2)

as characterising the balance of personal utility. This is a view similarly echoed by Beaver (2002). In some cases, the non-economic objectives appear stronger as motivational forces, as illustrated by Getz *et al.* (2004). In several of their case studies, shared hobbies, leisure interests and values form the rationale for "*making a living for the family - an idyllic mix of business and pleasure*" (p162). Examples given include nature, conservation, gardening, viticulture and snow skiing as shared interests which in each case have informed the vision of the respective family business, thus giving substance to the idea that business and personal lifestyles of proprietors, particularly those in hosting roles, are 'interwoven' (Lynch, 2005:544).

Tensions between the compatibility of 'lifestyle proprietorship' and growth orientation are a source of enduring debate. Thomas (2000) claims that the bulk of small tourism related firms do not aspire to grow, whilst Buick *et al.* (2000) have recorded the opposite finding from their study of small, independent Scottish hotels. They suggest there is an inherent contradiction between the definition of the lifestyle entrepreneur and growth aspirations (p120), a finding that reflects Gray's (1986) 'non-growth' hypothesis. 'Profit and growth-oriented' tourism related businesses are a distinct minority on the Danish island of Bornholm (Getz and Nilsson, 2004:24) in contrast to those with 'lifestyle-oriented' goals. Indeed, in their separate study on the same island, Ioannides and Petersen (2003) characterise the majority of STRB proprietors as either 'constrained-' or 'non-entrepreneurs' (p408) given the lack of innovation they display in their service delivery. They report that

“...the main motivation for starting a tourist business was more a lifestyle choice than an economic one; namely the desire to live on Bornholm.” (p149)

Holmengen and Bredvold (2003) add yet another dimension by suggesting that lifestyle motivations of small tourism enterprises are adjustable, according to what is economically achievable for the business at particular points in time. Such a view recognises the constant flux of factors underlying the ‘work-life balance’ (Lynch, 2005:546). A contrary construct to this view embeds firms as either essentially lifestyle-oriented or commercially-oriented in their goals (Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Andrew *et al.*, 2001).

The above analysis has concentrated so far on the relevance of ‘lifestyle’ in terms of the individual business unit/enterprise and the proprietor/entrepreneur. There is however a further dimension to the lifestyle business debate, which focuses on the relationships between the enterprise and the destination area in which it operates. Lifestyle proprietorship may be deemed problematic within destination areas. For example, in their discussion of the phenomenon within the Scottish tourism industry, Andrew *et al.* (2001) attribute the resource poverty of many lifestyle businesses with a number of concerns relative to inward investment, quality standards, marketing and business development. The implicit assumption is that their widespread presence may effectively retard the development of international standards at the local destination level. This sentiment resonates with Scotland’s economic development agencies, as will be discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

Meanwhile, Di Domenico (2003) postulates that there may also be a competitive element, insofar as at the middle market accommodation levels, profit maximising providers may be unable to compete with the individualised and unique experience, personal attention and value for money offered by lifestyle traders, who furthermore

“are...well integrated into the community and play an important part in boosting the local economy.”

(Di Domenico, 2003:30)

Such an analysis is, however, arguably most pertinent in the case of the hotel sector in Scotland, in which the degree of penetration by commercial, non-locally based profit maximising operations is relatively greater than for other accommodation sectors or types. Moreover, the destinational role(s) of lifestyle enterprises in forms such as business network participation, community involvement and competition remain empirically largely uncharted territory. However, given the focus of this work on the role of seasonal trading, the remainder of this section of the analysis concentrates on temporal operations as a facet of lifestyle proprietorship.

Lifestyle Proprietorship and Seasonal Trading

Surprisingly few direct links have been made between lifestyle businesses/enterprise and seasonal operations, either in tourism related or more general business contexts. Moreover, the empirical and theoretical bases of relationships between seasonal trading and lifestyle proprietorship are still undeveloped, even though in most recent years there have been attempts to bridge the conceptual gap, most notably through the gaze of the family business in Getz and Carlsen's Western Australia study (2000) and the case studies by Getz *et al.* (2004).

As a starting point, 'free' or 'discretionary' time manifested either as short term periodic flexibility or as temporal blocks may represent a facet of 'lifestyle' if based on choice. Andrew *et al.* (2001) propose that temporal trading may indeed represent a 'lifestyle accessory' to the (hospitality) operator, a consequence of which is reduced propensity to invest in marketing, training and quality upgrading. Implicit in such logic, however, is that the use of non-trading or down-

time periods for activities such as business planning, staff development or investment would seem to be inimical to 'lifestyle proprietorship' or orientation.

Getz *et al.* (2004) highlight the tensions between lifestyle and seasonality from a different perspective. They observe that in some locations, the temporal increases in workload caused by seasonal demand fluctuations may actually serve to conceal from proprietors the lifestyle benefits that initially motivated the business start-up. In other words, extremely busy high seasons can counter the lifestyle benefits offered by low-season respite. The antithesis of this view is provided by Andrew *et al.* (2001) who posit that for significant parts of the year, hospitality operators are free to enjoy their chosen lifestyle. Thus the debate on whether or not seasonal trading confers lifestyle benefits is bound up with issues pertaining to physical and mental health and wellbeing arising from the work patterns and associated 'work-life balance'. This raises a fundamental question for the current research:

RQ10: To what extent are physical and mental health and wellbeing manifest as motivational triggers or influencers of seasonal trading?

A related manifestation of this tension is found in the problem of business inheritance, in which the temporal nature of the operation, resulting from seasonal demand patterns, may cause negative perceptions by heirs or next of kin to the prospect of taking over the business. This is recorded by Getz and Nilsson (2004) in their study of seasonal tourism operators in Bornholm, and captured in one interview example thus:

"Our children are not interested in this business because of the long working hours in high season".

(Getz *et al.*, 2004:110)

A further dimension to the seasonal trading and lifestyle relationship is observed by Di Domenico (2003) who suggests that for dual income households in which

the tourism related business “...can be integrated into the family lifestyle”, the off-season period may afford leisure opportunities for the operator (p29). Her view supports that highlighted in Getz and Carlsen’s (2000) empirical study of family businesses in Western Australia, in which seasonality is seen to offer families “...a lull during which pursuit of family and lifestyle goals can dominate” (p555) and fits with ‘family first’ priorities. Interestingly, it is the negative aspect of long high season working hours rather than the potential respite benefits during periods of closure that feature as barriers to business inheritance in Getz and Nilsson’s (2004) Bornholm study.

An “*emotional attachment associated with the physical space*” (Morrison and Teixeira, 2004:247), often the family home (Lynch, 1998, 2005) can be a central motivating factor within the various accommodation sectors. Goulding *et al.* (2004) observe that seasonal trading may represent a key stratagem for achieving such attachment, allowing proprietors to have control over the balance between showcasing their domestic environment to visitors for a certain period during the year and the intrinsic benefits achievable through closure of the business for parts of the financial year: Commercial home enterprise proprietors such as those running bed and breakfast, guest house and on-site self catering businesses are afforded significant flexibility in this respect. A similar rationale may also apply for small-scale independent visitor attraction or museum owner/operators, for whom the periodic display of their collection affords them “*intrinsic satisfactions and recognition within the local tourism community, along with a marginal income source*” (Goulding *et al.*, 2004:218).

More generally, the characterisation of the ‘lifestyle entrepreneur’ as one of a number of entrepreneurial ‘guises’ identifies seasonality as a contextually motivational and aspirational factor for entering or starting a seasonal business. Getz *et al.* (2004) provide as a ‘shorthand’ for lifestyle entrepreneurship the example of the ski instructor who operates his/her business for a four month season to earn enough to live all year round in a mountain retreat (p27). In practice, this represents an extreme case of both the length of a business operating

season and a 'lifestyle' *per se*. More realistically, Brown (1987) as reported in Getz *et al.* (2004:14) concludes that taking a long seasonal break from work is a motivator for some family business owners, albeit a growth-impeding factor. The notion of seasonal trading preference is thus an underpinning factor, though seldom overtly articulated as such. Getz and Nilsson (2004:18) provide a rare acknowledgement of the role of 'preference' for part year closure. However, as Getz *et al.* (2004) note, for some operators the 'off-season'

"...comes as a relief, enabling rest, vacations and time for necessary work around the house and business" (p14)

For more commercially-oriented businesses, incorporating non-operating periods into the trading calendar may serve different preferences, such as business planning and maintenance (Grant *et al.*, 1997:A5), or counter-cyclical earning activities (Flognfeldt, 2001; Getz and Nilsson, 2004). Whatever the basis of seasonal preference, the issue highlights a neglected concern within the knowledge base of temporal trading behaviours and raises two inter-linked research questions for the current study, accordingly:

RQ11: To what extent are seasonal trading and lifestyle orientation discernible among small tourism related businesses in Scotland?

RQ12: Is seasonal trading a lifestyle choice for STRBs in Scotland?

The point is also made that for some small tourism related family businesses, seasonality is seen as a fact of life rather than as a threat (Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001), as has been demonstrated in Getz and Nilsson's (2004) Bornholm study. They surveyed 80 tourism related businesses from a sample frame of 302 in two of Bornholm's four municipalities. Among their survey respondents, 57.5% (n=46) claimed to trade seasonally, ie through closure of the business for part of the year, either by choice ('lifestyle or health considerations') or because of the non-viability of staying open during off-peak times (p28). Most seasonal traders

exhibit what the authors term 'coping' response strategies to the island's extreme seasonality, in which temporal closure is an adaptation to seasonality.

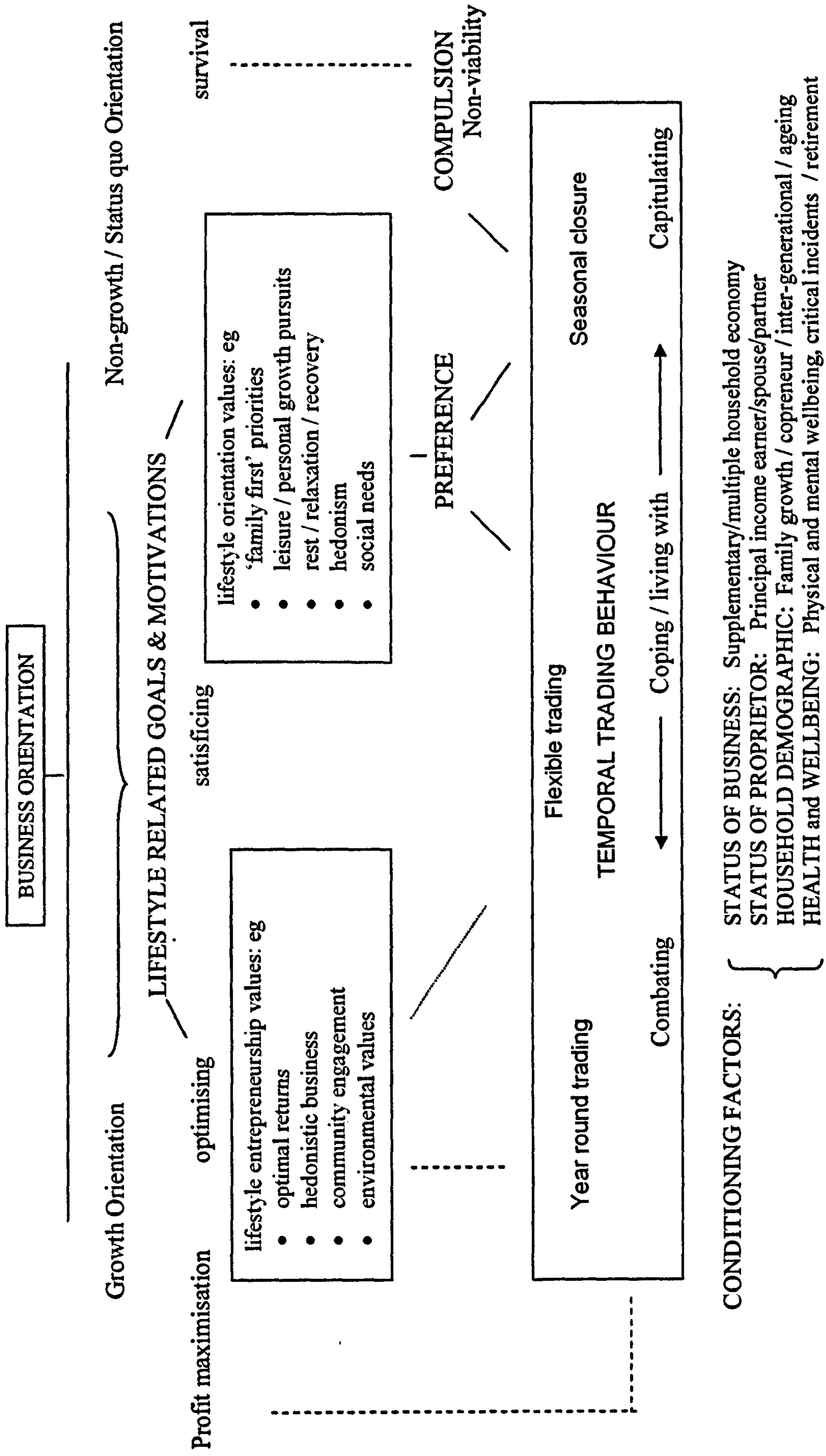
'Coping' business proprietors often seek other income or '*borrow money or go on the dole*' (ibid., p28) to tide them through to the next open season. 'Combating' businesses, on the other hand, actively seek market growth or increased profitability to extend the trading season towards a year round business, while 'capitulating' businesses shrink, sell or terminate, sometimes through the owners' personal preference (ibid.). However, most revealing from Getz and Nilsson's fieldwork is that while there is an element of 'lifestyle-oriented' or 'family first' motivations underpinning the seasonal trading behaviours of family STRB businesses, the majority of business owners prefer a longer, more profitable tourism season (p28). Thus their study reveals that 'lifestyle-orientation' and seasonal trading are seen to coincide *de facto* within this case study area. Albeit with a much smaller survey sample, a different methodology and a separate research objective, the findings of Ioannides and Petersen (2003) reiterate this association. At the same time there is revealed an aspirational divergence among some of the lifestyle-oriented business proprietors, who on the one hand would prefer a longer season, but on the other do not engage in 'combating' response behaviours. Given the paucity of such study foci outwith the Bornholm example, the applicability and transferability of this finding constitute a key question for the current research study, as articulated in research questions RQ11 and RQ12 above.

The foregoing discussion has endeavoured to provide a summary of 'lifestyle' and lifestyle business, enterprise and proprietorship concepts arising from the literature and deemed relevant to the study, ie where they are seen to inform the knowledge base pertaining to seasonal trading behaviours. As a means of summarising the emerging inter-relationships, a conceptual model of lifestyle business and seasonal trading is constructed, as shown in Figure 3.5. Irrespective of whether small family and partner run businesses do or do not seek to grow, 'lifestyle entrepreneurship' and 'lifestyle orientation' form a realistic paradigm in

accounting for temporal trading behaviours. The latter category is most likely to engender preference for seasonal closure or flexible temporal trading (eg periodic closure). Ultimately however, various conditioning factors will influence the nature of the business response to seasonality and whether, in the case of closure, such behaviour is a preferred or compelled course of action. The status of the business and the proprietor within the business household, the household demographic, wellbeing and lifecycle factors represent some of these.

A further dimension to the lifestyle and seasonal trading debate is raised through the inter-related issues of locational preference and migration. These form the focus of the next section.

Figure 3.5 Conceptual Model of Business Orientation, Lifestyle and Seasonal Trading Linkages



3.5 Migration and Locational Preference Issues in Tourism Proprietorship

Business communities generated through patterns and waves of economic migration have long comprised a dynamic development process in many parts of the world. However, what might be termed 'lifestyle business migration' is arguably a more recent or at least 'modern' phenomenon, emerging from a quite distinct motivational paradigm than that of traditional forms of economically motivated migration. Moreover, lifestyle business migration is a phenomenon that particularly favours small scale tourism related enterprise, either through migration to a place with the aim of starting a business or in which such a business emerges as a consequence of the move (Getz *et al.*, 2004; Ioannides and Petersen, 2003; Williams and Hall, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 1989).

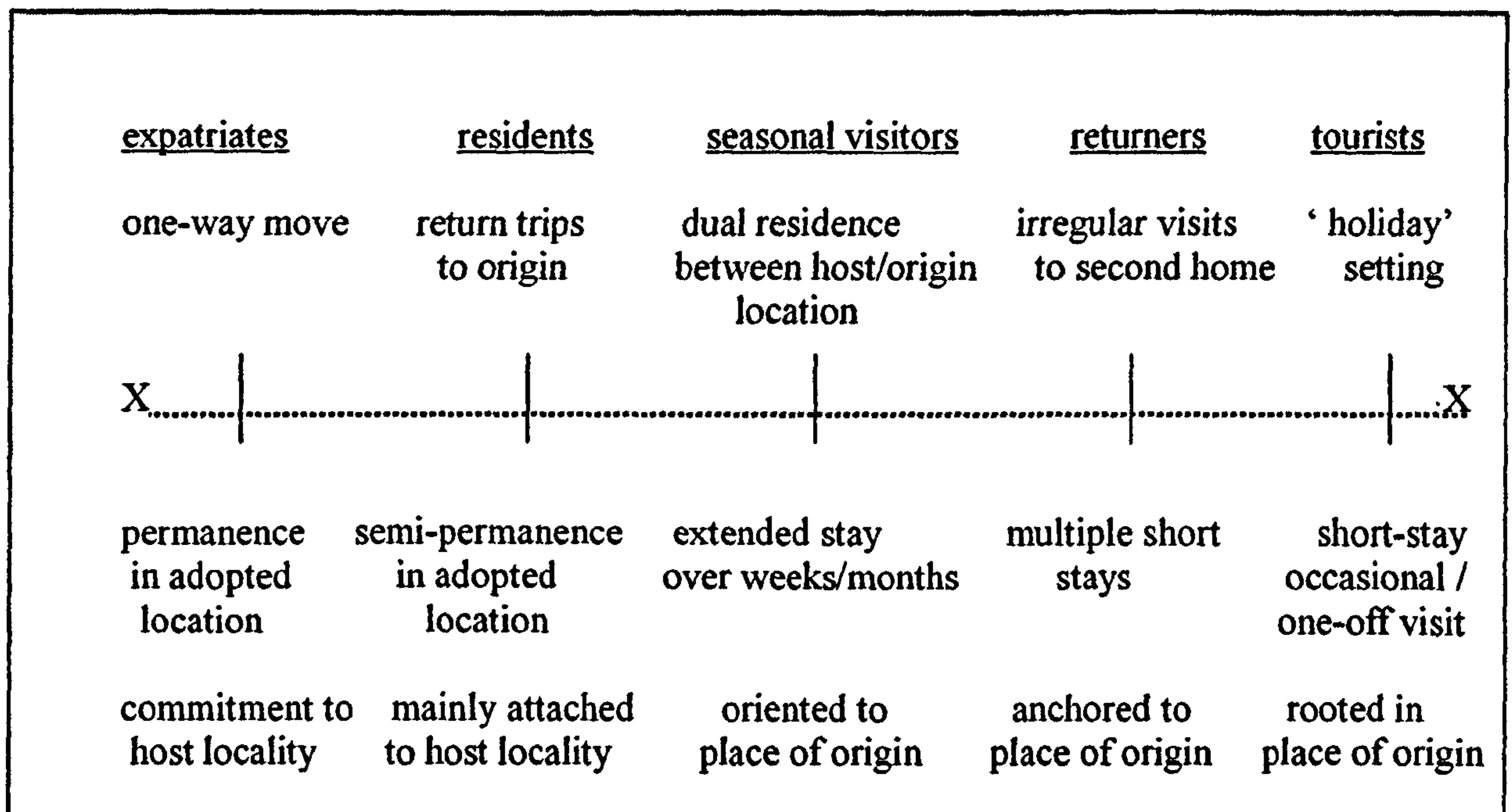
Significant conceptual gaps exist in the literature and knowledge base surrounding the linkages between tourism, migration and small business operations, beyond that of the 'traditional' demand-side view of tourism *per se* being a form of temporary migration. Williams and Hall (2000) suggest a symbiotic relationship between the former pairing, insofar as forms of migration generate tourism flows which in turn can nurture further migration (p7). The geography and small business literatures provide alternative theoretical bases from which potential inter-relationships may be constructed, however the onus is very much on the spatial rather than temporal aspects, and consumption- rather than production-oriented motivations of human movement. Indeed, Bell and Ward (2000) suggest that the literatures on temporal and spatial aspects of tourism induced mobility and migration have developed almost entirely in isolation from each other. Meanwhile, the blurring of consumption-production roles in tourism with the acknowledgement that locationally motivated 'production' may engender consumptive characteristics in producers has only been articulated and developed conceptually since the mid-1980s. Despite the advances, the problem of inadequate conceptualisation of the production-consumption paradigm persists (Williams and Hall, 2000), reinforced by the increasing complexity of contemporary human movement forms and motivations (Bell and Ward, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 2000).

Acknowledging the paucity of empirical evidence, several distinct 'threads' emerge, albeit tenuously, from the literature between the triangulated relationship of migration, lifestyle proprietorship and seasonality. Nevertheless, the few studies provide an analytical construct for assessing the inter-relationships between these phenomena. Classifications of tourism migration and settlement 'permanency' offer a conceptual starting point for placing locational preference as a motivating factor for business formation. Supply-side migration is articulated in a number of forms. However, the concept of 'entrepreneurial migration' (Williams and Hall, 2000) most directly symbolises the production-oriented element within the milieu of human movement and is accordingly examined. No study known to this author has hitherto focused primarily on the temporal trading behaviours of in-migrant STRB proprietors. However, where such associations are evident within empirical work, these form the final element of examination within this section of the current study, in which seasonal trading as a facet of entrepreneurial migration is scrutinised.

Migration and mobility are complex concepts, embracing ideas of permanency versus temporariness, temporal behaviour, frequency, duration and distance among other variables (Longino and Marshall, 1990; O'Reilly, 1995). Bell and Ward (2000) suggest that both temporary mobility and permanent migration can be classified as either consumption- or production-related movement and typologised according to the above variables. As such, they comprise parts of the same pattern of spatial and temporal population mobility (p88). However, fundamental concepts such as 'permanency' or 'usual residence' are challenged (Williams and Hall, 2000) as being less representative in the modern social construct than notions of 'networks of places' to describe spatial and temporal habitation patterns of increasing numbers of people (Bell and Ward, 2000:90). According to Longino and Marshall (1990), migration and mobility most accurately represent a continuum, with permanent migrants and 'vacationers' at either end of the spectrum (p233). O'Reilly (1995), reporting on an ethnographic study of the migration patterns of elderly British people to Fuengirola in the Costa del Sol, provides a similar 'continuum' ordered typology, in which a sense of commitment to a place and the relative degree of orientation to the host and origin country are key determinants of migrational status. In her model, 'migrants' range

from expatriates who have effectively uprooted themselves permanently and psychologically from their place of origin, to entirely consumption-oriented short stay excursionists. Figure 3.6 is an adapted summary of O'Reilly's typology:

Figure 3.6 Migrational Continuum Typology



(adapted from O'Reilly, 1985)

A utility of O'Reilly's construct is its capacity to encompass production-oriented migration in general, within which movements motivated by business start-ups can be accommodated, most specifically among the 'expatriate' and 'residence' categories. However, the spatial context of her study and the dynamics of migrant business formation may not necessarily offer sufficient grounding for generalisation to other locational types (eg rural areas or cities) or migrational processes (eg counter-urbanisation or economic migration).

Tourism generates production- or supply-side migration in a number of forms. Labour migration comprises the most widespread and conceptualised form within the

literature (for example Shaw and Williams, 2004; Paniagua, 2002; Williams and Hall, 2000; Valenzuela, 1998; Hall and Page, 1997; King, 1995). Temporal concentration is recognised as a significant factor in creating demands for labour migrants in the tourism related industries, especially so in large-scale, single peak seasonal destinations (Williams and Hall, 2000:14) though also evidenced in more peripheral locations (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Twining Ward and Baum, 1998). Furthermore, the process of counter-urbanisation is observed to create a dynamic of 'lifestyle-seeking' labour migrants in more rural areas which have developed tourism economies (Valenzuela, 1998; Champion, 1989). On the other hand, the roles of return émigré migration and entrepreneurial migration are much less empirically reported forms of production-oriented migration (Williams and Hall, 2000). In the case of the former, specific case studies such as Calabria (King *et al.*, 1984) and the Greek Cyclades Islands (Kenna, 1993) have demonstrated a preponderance of small business enterprises, including tourism and hospitality services to have been established by return migrants. According to King *et al.* (1984), this reflects the émigrés' greater tendency to have acquired financial and human capital while away, than technical or industrial skills, hence their orientation towards service sector investment and enterprise.

The indistinctiveness between 'consumption' and 'production' motivation in the migratory process is a complicating factor in the analysis of seasonal tourism behaviours. They form a sometimes dichotomous relationship that arguably requires a multi-disciplinary approach in seeking to understand the dynamic (Ateljevic 2000). Such an approach is espoused by Ateljevic and Doorne (2000) in their analysis of small tourism business enterprise among 'incomers' in New Zealand, in which cultural and psychological factors (eg environmental altruism) are deemed more explanatory than economic factors in the settlement decision. An anthropological approach is adopted by Tuulentie (2003) in her study of place attachment and settlement processes of regular nature-motivated vacation visitors to remote northern Finland. Through an ethnographic research process, she explores notions of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' as keys to place attachment, observing that place attached tourists can become seasonal workers or tourist entrepreneurs at the

'destination' (p12) and hence alter their emotional relationship with a place. Kohn (1997) explores a similar theme, drawing on the locational pull of islands, including the Scottish Inner Hebrides, as places generating visitor domicile.

The tensions between the consumption-production migration paradigm are perhaps best observed in forms such as retirement migration and second-home ownership. With respect to the former, there is a significant literature on the seasonal and permanent migrations of retired 'snowbirds' in different parts of the globe (Gustafson, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2000; King *et al.*, 1998; Pollard, 1996; O'Reilly, 1995; Longino and Marshall, 1990; Sullivan and Stevens, 1982). The role of relocation as an economic corollary to such lifestyle motivated movement is implicit within some of the studies, although the extent of retirement motivated business formation remains little recorded. More commonly, retirement migration is associated with the development of small business services, especially leisure and hospitality related, by other ex-patriot communities who serve the needs of the retired migrants. In his study of Swedish retirement migration to Spain, Gustafson (2002) notes:

"In areas with high concentrations of [Swedish] expatriates, a considerable Swedish/Spanish infrastructure has developed...In mainland Spain, a large number of companies owned by Swedes or with Swedish-speaking personnel provide all kinds of goods and services to the expatriates". (p903)

However, Williams and Hall (2000) stress the difficulty of treating retirement migrants as a homogeneous whole, given the diversity of their motivations, residential and property owning status within the chosen area of domicile. It falls to some of the late 1980s studies regarding entrepreneurship in English seaside resorts (for example Shaw and Williams, 1987; Williams *et al.*, 1989) to provide evidence of linkages between retirement motivated migrational tourism entrepreneurship, lifestyle business and seasonal trading, as examined below.

Meanwhile, the other main 'consumption-oriented' migrational phenomenon, second-home ownership, exemplifies the blurring of the notions of 'home' and place attachment (Hall and Müller, 2004; Groves and Timothy, 2001) and clearly illustrates amenity-seeking motivations based on satisfying 'life-style choices' (Williams and Hall, 2000:19). It may also engender an element of enterprise in the form of self-catering operations that comprise a mix of commercial letting on a seasonal basis and personal/family occupation. However, the degree to which second-home ownership generates self-catering or other commercial enterprise in destinations is largely a matter of conjecture, despite the implications for local economic development. Studies by Flognfeldt (1999) in Norway, Timothy (2004) and Roseman (1985) in the USA and Svenson (2004) in Canada have helped elucidate the processes and social roles of second home ownership in rural locations but have failed to qualify or quantify the degree of their commercial enterprise generating propensity within the tourism sector. On the other hand, Groves and Timothy (2001) include 'employment opportunities' among several other factors that cause many people to move permanently to their former recreational home destinations before they officially retire (p146).

The above analysis has so far provided an overview of the significance of production-oriented migration (in the forms of migrant labour mobility and return émigrés) and the main types of essentially consumption-oriented seasonal movement (retirement migration and second home ownership) in terms of their associations with tourism business formation. The remaining element is that of 'entrepreneurial migration' *per se*. According to Williams and Hall (2000), this falls into three identifiable forms.

First, they observe an ethnocentric pattern of migrants setting up businesses in tourism destinations to serve distinctive national tourist groups or expatriot resident populations. As discussed above, Gustafson (2002) notes a similar phenomenon as a corollary to Swedish retirement migration to Spain. Such manifestations of business formation are the focus of Eaton's (1995) study of British entrepreneurial migrants operating bars and restaurants along Spain's Costa del Sol, and likewise Madden's (1999) wider study among British and Irish owned establishments in the same area.

Reporting on Madden's findings, Williams and Hall (2000) note that 'lifestyle' or 'social' reasons are the key motivating factors among the majority of such proprietors for their business start-ups. Conversely only 8% of the study sample record 'good business prospects' as influencing factors (p17).

Secondly, Williams and Hall (op cit.) identify a category of 'amenity seekers' among those more generally attracted to live in destination areas, though not specifically nor pre-motivated to become tourism entrepreneurs. For such proprietors, business enterprise is a consequence of their move to their chosen place of settlement. This is also observed by Snepenger *et al.* (1995) in their Greater Yellowstone (USA) study, who note that the move is more likely to be influenced by a mix of recreational, community and/or natural environmental factors than 'business location values' (such as market growth potential) *per se* (Williams and Hall, 2000:17). Paniagua's (2002) study of urban-rural migration and tourism entrepreneurship in three regions of Spain also spotlights the phenomenon of amenity-led entrepreneurial migration, though rural amenity is the focus of his study. He identifies three distinct motivational-mix categories of migrant tourism entrepreneurs, namely i) 'economic-professional' migrants, motivated primarily by better job/income prospects; ii) 'professional-environmental' migrants (for whom a career or lifestyle change is instrumental in their move); and iii) 'environmental-rural' migrants, motivated by the social and physical aspects of the rural environment (p362). However, what is not clear from Paniagua's otherwise comprehensive analysis is the degree of prior- or post-migratory entrepreneurial motivation among the sample.

Finally, there is the spatial context of mass-tourism or tourism dependent locations, which provide more generalised entrepreneurial migration opportunities, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality or the nature or processes of in-migration (William and Hall, 2000:17). British seaside resorts have provided the focus of various small business motivational investigations since the 1980s, within which in-migration has been an emergent factor. The Cornish study in the late 1980s (Williams *et al.*, 1989) identified a significant degree of migrant business proprietorship among a broad range of tourism and hospitality related firms, including catering, retail, attractions and

accommodation service providers. Asking the own-managers why they established their firms brought to light a high level of non-economic, locational and environmental preference, summed up as “[we] *wanted to live in Cornwall*” (Shaw and Williams, 2002:163). Indeed, they identified that locational and environmental factors accounted for a third of responses relating to business start-up motivations among accommodation operators, and that many had originally come to Cornwall on holiday and subsequently decided to relocate there to ‘try their hand’ in the tourism industry (ibid). At that time, in-migrant proprietorship accounted for 84% of small-scale tourism related enterprises in the village of Looe, and 60% in Padstow (Shaw and Williams, 1997:130). They suggest that such tourism entrepreneurship equates more closely to consumption rather than service production *per se* (Shaw and Williams, 1997; Williams *et al.*, 1989).

The ‘production-consumption’ paradigm in entrepreneurial migration clearly comprises a number of dimensions that distinguish the two ends of the spectrum. Figure 3.7 captures a number of these, most of which have been discussed in the preceding pages.

Placing ‘lifestyle business’ within the paradigm of entrepreneurial migration raises numerous debates of definition, motivation and context. It has been noted that there may be several constituencies in the lifestyle business ‘mix’ within any locality or locational type, including business start-ups by established local residents, returning migrants and in-migrants, each potentially identifiable as lifestyle business proprietors within the broad parameters discussed in the previous sections of this study. Moreover, the motivational forces between these distinct constituencies can be expected to differ, for example between their respective experiences and perceptions of a location and their emotional attachments to a place.

Figure 3.7 Dimensions of Production-Consumption Orientation in STRB Entrepreneurial Migration

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Production-orientation</u>	<u>Consumption-orientation</u>
Underlying motivation	entrepreneurship	lifestyle
Timing of business/ investment decision	prior decision	post locational
Emotional attachment to migrational destination	permanent move 'lifetime'	temporariness/ rooted in place of origin
Orientation of Business	growth/profit oriented	'pin money'
Role of the Property	home is business (business investment)	'home from home' (property investment)
Resource deployment	human, skills, capital	capital
Networking	business oriented	social goals
Locational significance	market potential of place	aesthetic environment

Within the context of their international cross-cultural studies of family businesses, Getz *et al.* (2004) conclude that research evidence strongly suggests that rural, island and resort settings provide unique opportunities for attracting and sustaining lifestyle-oriented families. This leads them to propose that the unique opportunities for tourism and hospitality businesses in such areas will result in “a preponderance of lifestyle-oriented, family-business owners” (p191). The validity of such a proposal could reasonably expect to depend on a wide variety of external factors, either as constraints or facilitators of human movement. In Andriotis’ (2002) study of hospitality operators on Crete, for example, 40 percent of respondents are identified as in-migrants, though in general are long-established on the island (p337). The influx is attributable to the Greek government’s development policy which used tourism as a tool for rehabilitation and encouraged the return of emigrants. However, the study does not distinguish between enterprise- or lifestyle orientation among either those returning

emigrants or non-Cretan in-migrants who are primarily motivated by business creation, family reasons or 'other reasons' (ibid) for their business start-up. Indeed, ethnicity in migrational flows provides a further dimension to the otherwise complicated picture. Ioannides and Petersen (2003) meanwhile record a distinct 'non-entrepreneurial' motivation among a significant proportion of Bornholm's seasonally trading STRB proprietors, many of whom are in-migrants to the island (p149).

The bonds between place and proprietorship in tourism and hospitality are undeniably strong. This is especially so in rural locations and farming communities (Flognfeldt, 2001; Oppermann, 1997) which provide a distinct context for the creation of a range of tourism related types of business (Paniagua 2002; Long and Lane, 2000; Parrott *et al.*, 1999; Butler, 1998). However, against the counter-urbanisation processes, Getz *et al.* (2004) observe that being '*tied to the land*' is an important theme for many rural proprietors (p5). For them, holding onto land amid pressures to break up farms for raising or releasing capital may exert a powerful inter-generational stimulus for continuity of land ownership and thus a counter-migratory dynamic. Diversifying into farm tourism may provide a solution in such situations in some rural locations (Sharpley and Vass, 2006; Ilbery and Bowler, 1998) especially with the incentive of farm diversification grant funding from the government (p76). However, Slee (1998) suggests that in Scotland farming and the rural land-using industries have not adopted commercial tourism with enthusiasm in comparison with parts of England. Yet within the industrialised world, counter-urban migration to realise the goal of starting a tourism related business appears to be a significant phenomenon, leading to the claim that

“the greatest number of businesses in ...[hospitality and tourism] are created by urbanites moving to rural areas, and not by the farmers who have always lived there.”

(Getz *et al.*, 2004:6)

In a more general rural context, Getz's seminal study of local tourism development in Badenoch and Strathspey (Scotland's Spey Valley) illustrates antecedence for significant in-migrant lifestyle business. From his interviews of tourist

accommodation and facility operators, he noted only 22% of resident owners being born in the Highlands and Islands region (1982:40). A range of non-economic reasons “*rather than work or business opportunities*” were given by many operators as motivations for the business start-up. Indeed, he found a third of the guest house and small hotel owner-proprietors had moved to the Spey Valley for reasons such as the area’s environmental quality (ibid, p40), family reasons, the desire for a better place to live or retirement (p62). However, the finding is counter-balanced by the fact that in-migrant proprietors were the dominant entrepreneurial group encountered among tourism operators in the area (1982, p62; 1986) and by the lack of motivational and attitudinal homogeneity among ‘in-migrants’ as a whole. Sounding a note of caution which casts a long shadow, Getz concluded that

“In reality there are probably as many important differences between types of newcomer [proprietors] as there are between them and locals”.

(Getz, 1982:63)

An enduring aspect of this sentiment is the universal tension between motivational proprietor types and attitudes towards local destination development, in which Getz opines that newcomer ‘retirement proprietors’ can be expected to oppose large developments whilst younger and more entrepreneurial operators are likely to be more favourable to destination investment and growth (p63). Paniagua (2002) also records conflicts of interest between newcomer entrepreneurs and local leaders who feel ‘challenged’ by the in-migrants (p368).

Despite the literature emphasis on rural and coastal locations, Morrison and Teixeira (2004) and Di Domenico (2003) in separate studies record lifestyle business orientation to be present among proprietors in urban settings in Scotland, thus dispelling any suggestion that it is solely an island, resort based, rural or peripheral phenomenon. What remains less well documented, however, is the extent of lifestyle orientated business proprietorship in urban locations generated by in-migration.

The above literature analysis has revealed numerous relationships between migration, locational preference and business proprietorship (entrepreneurial or 'lifestyle-oriented'). Much less well established, however, remains the degree of association between these phenomena and seasonal or temporal trading behaviours. Among the 'new service class' of counter-urban tourism entrepreneur migrants, Paniagua (2002:362) records the importance attached by many of his subjects to having the opportunity of self-organisation, including flexible working hours, contingent with the goal of being their own boss. His findings point to the propensity for long working hours and seasonal duration associated with STRB operations (p365), although they do not allude to seasonal or periodic trading behaviours as such. Moreover, two thirds of those surveyed are in the 40+ age group, and one third in the 50-60 age distribution (p367). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that two of the three regions in his rural study (Guadalajara and Ciudad Real provinces) are conditioned by major seasonal peaks and troughs in their tourism economies. However, he identifies a further group of entrepreneurial migrants ("*a quarter of those interviewed*", p365) whose tourism business is essentially a dual income weekend enterprise, combined with their professional occupation.

On the other hand, the Cornish studies reveal an implicit seasonal trading motivation among one of the two distinct groups of in-migrant entrepreneurs identified. Their reasons for moving to Cornwall and starting the business are often borne of non-economic motivations such as family or personal reasons, the desire 'to live in Cornwall' or as a prelude to retirement (Shaw and Williams, 1987:130). Business growth strategies, especially seasonal extension, are practiced by a distinct minority (around one sixth) of such operators in resorts with high seasonal concentration, generally low accommodation occupancy and lengthy trough periods (p134). However, it is acknowledged that within the intervening two decades, both migrational patterns and investment in the Cornish tourism sector are very likely to have created new dynamics.

Thus, the evidence of associations between seasonal trading and in-migrational business proprietorship remain largely implicit, at best sparse and of questionable

spatial transferability. For the current study this raises a number of key research questions accordingly:

RQ13: To what extent is in-migrant proprietorship evident among seasonal tourism businesses in Scotland?

RQ14: To what extent do in-migrant seasonal proprietors identify as 'lifestyle' oriented? Is there a higher or lower propensity among this group within the total seasonal trading population?

It has been demonstrated that migrational tourism entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon, encompassing a variety of processes, forms and motivations. Moreover, locational attributes and spatial relationships influence the nature of migrational proprietorship. Lifestyle operation forms a key component of the process, characterised by individuals who move to a desired place for its social, physical or environmental amenities and qualities, often more than to achieve economic or business growth goals. Within this constituency, there is likely to exist a population of proprietors for whom seasonal trading equates with fulfilment of their lifestyle-oriented goals. The methodology adopted in this study aims to address this question, along with the other research questions previously raised.

3.6 Summary of the emerging theoretical framework

The review of the enterprise and small tourism businesses literatures has aimed to identify and discuss issues deemed influential or enlightening to temporal trading behaviours. Accordingly, attention has been given to characterising the STRB concept relative to the small business literatures, to the construct of motivation and to the role, meaning and characteristics of lifestyle-business orientation within the domain of STRBs. The contribution of entrepreneurial migration to the lifestyle-business paradigm has also been explored in light of the production-consumption dichotomy revealed by the phenomenon. Moreover, the discussion and analysis within the chapter has endeavoured to bring fresh conceptualisation to the various 'threads' of the literature.

It is clear that despite the significant conceptual and empirically derived knowledge base pertaining to STRB proprietors' motivations and lifestyle constructs, there remain substantial knowledge gaps around the relationships between goals, motivations, lifestyle and temporal trading behaviours. However, it is evident that when placed within the environment of a seasonally constrained tourism marketplace, that there are observed associations between these phenomena, as have been highlighted in the Bornholm, Cornish and Western Australia case studies, among others. What has emerged from the literature review may be summarised as follows:

(i) The concept of the 'small tourism related business' for the purposes of this study largely coincides with and encompasses the criteria determining the family-business, commercial home enterprise and broader characterisations of 'small business'. Most importantly, the STRB concept reflects a diverse range of motivations and goal sets.

(ii) The conceptual continuum between profit and growth-oriented small business on the one hand and 'non-entrepreneurialism' (Ioannides and Petersen, 2003) on the other is indeed very wide. 'Lifestyle' business operation occupies a broad centre-ground within this spectrum, encompassing what has been termed here 'lifestyle entrepreneurship' and 'lifestyle-orientation' values, goals and motivations. Many seasonally trading STRB proprietors may display 'non-entrepreneurship' characteristics, if their trading pattern represents a preference through lifestyle or other pertinent reasons (such as retirement or health). However, the impact of entrepreneurial or lifestyle-orientation on seasonal trading is as yet unproven.

(iii) No empirical work has yet determined whether lifestyle-oriented migrant tourism entrepreneurs are more or less likely to be temporal traders than other resident proprietors.

(iv) The small tourism business literature reveals an almost complete dearth of focus on the motivations and behaviours of temporally trading STRBs, *per se*.

Accordingly, the theoretical contribution of seasonal trading to the motivational, entrepreneurial and migration related literatures is undeveloped. 'Seasonality' is almost entirely treated as a contextual issue within broader motivational studies, of which Getz and Nilsson (2004) provide the only focused study on seasonal trading which explores proprietorial behaviours and, to an extent, goals and motivations.

Having thus explored the characteristics and influences on small tourism related businesses, the next chapter aims to breach the remaining 'gap' within this study, by focusing on the context of the study area, ie parameters of seasonality within Scottish tourism.

Chapter 4

Characteristics of Seasonal trading in Scottish Tourism: Structure, Policy and Strategic Contexts

4.1 Introduction

The broad aim of this chapter is to provide a contextual overview of Scottish tourism. The issue of seasonality is assessed first through a brief analysis of the performance of Scottish tourism in terms of its demand patterns (Section 4.2). This includes both seasonal concentration and occupancy levels, recent demand trends and a spatial perspective of seasonality. This is followed by a supply-side sectoral analysis, addressing the structural and operational characteristics of the main accommodation sectors and other tourism service providers (Section 4.3) which fall into the category of small tourism related businesses (STRBs). This leads on to a review of the key regulatory influences on the trading patterns of Scottish STRBs, with particular reference to local authorities' planning and licensing roles and activities, plus other legislation that also potentially impacts on the temporal operation of STRBs (Section 4.4).

Having thus established the context of seasonality and small business operations in Scottish tourism, attention then focuses on their inter-relationships within the public policy arena. Issues such as extending paid holiday entitlement and staggering school holidays are aspects of 'institutional fixity' which can be traced back over half a century within UK-wide social policy frameworks (Section 4.5). These and local economic development have been central to government attempts to develop a year round tourism economy in Scotland, hand in hand with raising the quality and efficiency of its small tourism businesses who are the backbone of Scottish tourism provision (Scottish Executive, 2000). The analysis goes on to consider relationships between seasonality and local economic development through the role and activities of the regional and enterprise agencies in Scotland.

The chapter then assesses how such policy objectives have been articulated through the strategic plans of key agencies and successive national tourism strategies (Section 4.6). The methodological device used to facilitate this is that of a chronological review, incorporating a content analysis of seasonality and small businesses in Scotland's national tourism strategies since 1994. The analysis illuminates their evolution as policy issues.

Finally, there is a brief review of the main initiatives arising from the strategies, in particular the industry-led Seasonality Working Group and major marketing campaigns and market research (Section 4.7) before conclusions are drawn.

The contextual overview approach thus adopted here aims to provide the 'structure' element within an agency-structure analytical paradigm. In applying this conceptual framework as a means to help understand the context of small firm performance, analyses of seasonal market characteristics and trends, supply-side and spatial characteristics, public policy and tourism strategies are undertaken as these are seen to embody the structural dimension of the STRB environment. 'Agent' dimensions of seasonal small businesses were raised in the literature review in the preceding chapter, and are further expanded within the discussion in Chapter Eight, arising from the fieldwork findings.

4.2 Seasonality in Scottish Tourism: an overview of Performance Measures and Trends

"The greatest single challenge facing Scottish tourism is to generate tourism business outwith the main season."

(STB, 1999)

Historically, seasonality has been considered both endemic to Scottish tourism (STCG, 1994; Snowdon and Thomson, 1998) and disparately manifested (Butler, 1994). Recurring themes in the literature and public agency strategy documents include significant imbalances in visitation and expenditure levels throughout the year across the country, the closure of visitor attractions and amenities (Smith, 1998; Goulding, 2003) and of private accommodation businesses during off-peak months

(Snowdon and Thomson, 1998) and a concentration of revenues into a relatively small number of trading weeks or peak month periods (STCG, 1994; Scottish Executive, 2002). In a definitive attempt to chart the many dimensions of the phenomenon over time and space within the north and west of Scotland, Butler assembled 67 different indexed data sets spanning 20 years (Butler, 1994). These ranged from temporal variation in accommodation occupancy figures, numbers of passengers on public transport, visitor attraction entry figures and variations in employment. Although his study was regionally focused, he was led to conclude that

“the pattern of seasonality, however measured, had not changed appreciably... from the early 1970s to the present day.”

(Butler, 1994:338)

Indeed, as discussed later in this chapter and highlighted in the content analysis of Scottish tourism strategy and action plan documents (Appendix 4.2), the rationale for public sector intervention in ‘tackling’ the phenomenon since the mid-1990s has been broadly based. The continued presence of pronounced seasonal disparities in Scotland’s tourism economy, the many economic, social and environmental impacts associated with seasonality and the resultant spectrum of public policies across which such impacts extend have each contributed to the perceived need for co-ordinated public sector led actions to address it. However, in recent years there are indications that some progress has occurred in alleviating the extremes of seasonal disparities in Scottish tourism, both temporally and spatially. Despite this, it is acknowledged that the phenomenon still particularly affects areas and localities less accessible from market sources, especially short-break markets (Scottish Executive, 2006).

The remainder of this section of the chapter sets out to overview some of the key trends in Scottish tourism seasonality, in particular since 1990. That year is the point from which data collection and measurement was substantially revised in respect of a major part of the total Scottish tourism market, with the advent of the United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS). No attempt is made here to delve deeply into

sectoral trends at regional or area levels, given the size of such a task. Moreover, Butler's 'health warnings' (1994) are taken into account, insofar that relative differences in the size and composition of local tourism economies and of the potentially distorting role of non-touristic and demographic factors render any such comparative analysis problematic.

Temporal Spread of Visits

The degree of the 'problem' of seasonality is very much a product of what is being measured (Goulding, 2004b; Lundtorp 2001). Occupancy data for the main accommodation sectors in Scotland paint a much more seasonally pronounced picture than the distribution of visitor trips. Scotland's main visitor origin market remains the domestic market, accounting for 91% of total trips and 81% of visitor spend, nearly evenly split between Scottish and other UK residents (Scottish Executive, 2006:6). As shown in Table 4.1, total UK visitor trips generated to Scotland have become markedly more temporally spread in the period 1990-2003¹ as measured by quarterly distribution.

Table 4.1 Time of Visit to Scotland: Total UK Visitor Trips

Year	Q1: Jan - Mar	Q2: Apr - Jun	Q3: Jul - Sep	Q4: Oct - Dec
2003	21 %	24 %	30 %	25 %
2002	21 %	25 %	29 %	25 %
1999	18 %	23 %	28 %	30 %
1996	20 %	29 %	33 %	18 %
1993	18 %	27 %	34 %	22 %
1990	19 %	26 %	35 %	20 %

(VisitScotland, 2004, 2003)

(Scottish Tourist Board, 2000, 1997, 1994, 1991)

In particular, the proportion of visitors in the July-September period has gradually reduced from 35% to 30% over the period.² Those in the fourth quarter increased from

¹ 2004 UK data have not been released by VisitScotland due to methodological problems. VS recommends "...that the fact sheets from 2003 are used as a guide for 2004 [data]" (VisitScotland, 2006) www.scotexchange.net/know_your_market/new_methodology.htm Accessed 23/03/06.

² Data for 2003 are based on a three year average for the period 2001-2003 (VisitScotland, 2004)

20% to 25%, and a slight improvement also noted in the first quarter (VisitScotland, 2004).

It is the effect of the combined trend towards such temporal spreading of demand and the gradual increase in overall visitor numbers that impacts favourably on businesses in terms of occupancy rates. However, the same trend is not true for overseas visitors, who comprise 9% of Scotland's total visitor market by volume and 19% by value (Scottish Executive, 2006:6). As depicted in Table 4.2, the quarterly distribution of their visits has not significantly changed in the same thirteen year period. Indeed signs of further peak period consolidation are discernible on the basis of the data presented.

Table 4.2 Time of Visit to Scotland: Total Overseas Visitor Trips

Year	Q1: Jan - Mar	Q2: Apr - Jun	Q3: Jul - Sep	Q4: Oct - Dec
2003	13 %	20 %	52 %	15 %
2002	11 %	24 %	51 %	14 %
1996	10 %	24 %	50 %	17 %
1993	14 %	26 %	45 %	15 %
1990	11 %	22 %	50 %	17 %

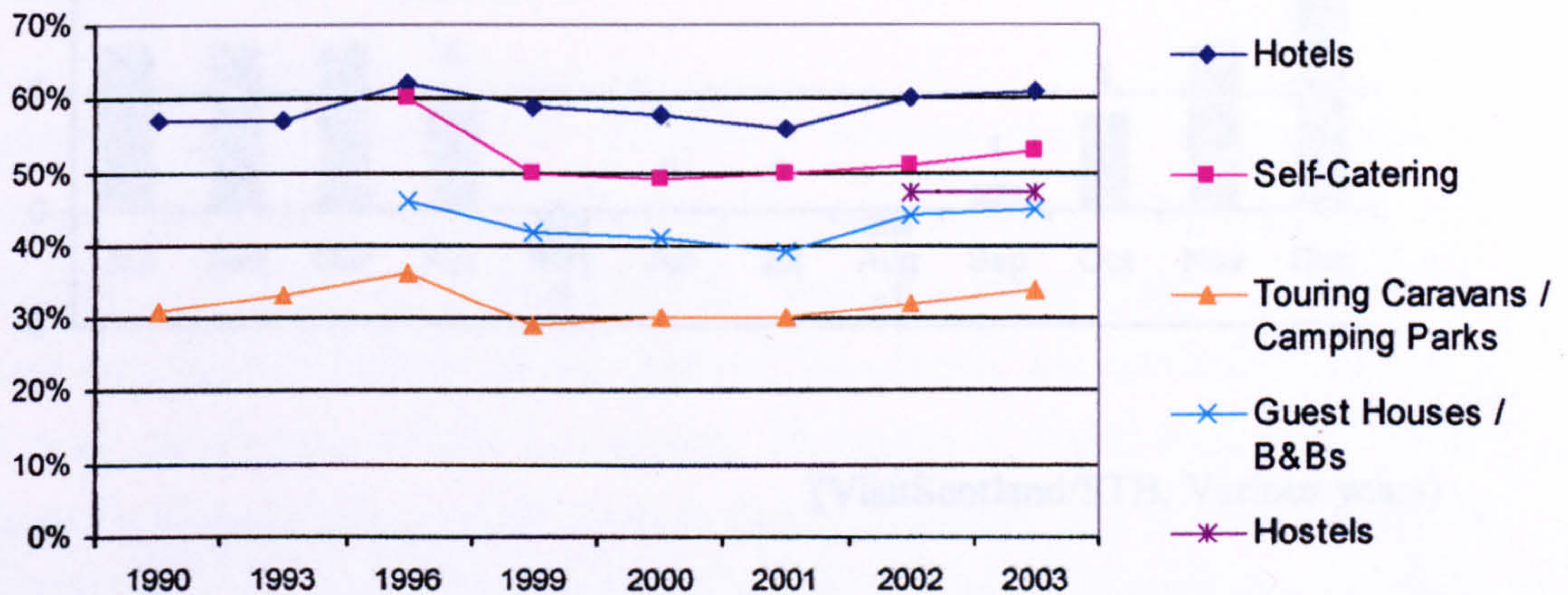
(VisitScotland, 2004, 2003)
(Scottish Tourist Board, 1997, 1994, 1991)

While it is acknowledged that total trips encompass seasonally diverse holiday, business, VFR and various specialist trip motivations, many overseas markets based on generic leisure pursuits are likely to offer less scope to businesses for seasonal extension than UK origin markets. However, strategic emphasis has increasingly been placed on less seasonally constrained leisure markets in recent years, including genealogy, activity breaks and culture (Scottish Executive 2002, 2000). Moreover, city break market development is most recently identified as a key shoulder season extension strategy for European inbound markets, facilitated in particular through the Scottish Executive's Route Development Fund initiative for public transport expansion to and within Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2006).

Sectoral Occupancy Performance

Whereas trip distribution portrays a trend towards an increased seasonal spread of visits fuelled by the domestic market, accommodation occupancy trends during the 1990-2003 period are less clear-cut. Data recorded by the Scottish Accommodation Occupancy Survey (hereafter SAOS) applies mainly (though not exclusively) to tourist board member businesses. It shows that overall annual average occupancy levels among five principal accommodation types have at best fluctuated during the longer term period while having displayed modest growth in more recent years. This can be illustrated in Figure 4.1, which charts comparative room or unit occupancy levels:

Figure 4.1 Annual Average Accommodation Occupancy by Type of Accommodation

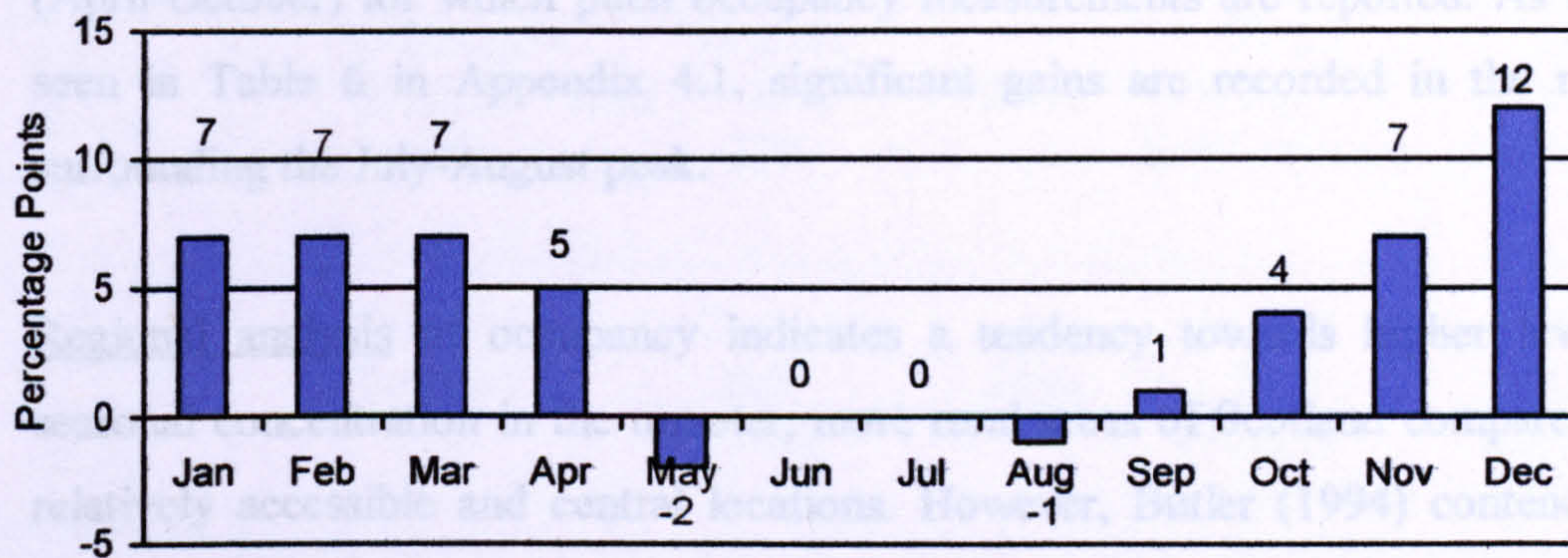


(VisitScotland/STB *Tourism in Scotland*, various years)

Table 3 in Appendix 4.1 shows the annual average occupancy data in percentage terms for the various sectors. Self-catering data prior to 1996 are not included in Figure 4.1 due to differences in statistical compilation. Despite this, unit occupancy in this sector has still a way to go before recovering to its 1996 level (VisitScotland, 2004). However, it can be seen that long term trends reveal static average occupancy levels all sectors since 1996 and modest recovery in more recent years.

A key condition of seasonal spread is the relative difference in growth between peak season and shoulder or low season months in terms of occupancy (Butler, 1994; Getz and Nilsson, 2004) over a statistically significant measurement period. Data from the SAOS illustrates such a trend in Scotland's hotel sector where, for example, percentage point changes in occupancy levels from 1990 to 2004 indicate notably higher occupancy growth in winter months than in shoulder months (April, May and October) and indeed no growth in occupancy levels during the peak summer months:

Figure 4.2 Hotel Occupancy: Absolute Changes in Percentage Point Levels 1990-2004



(VisitScotland/STB, Various years)

However optimistic such trends may appear as potential business extension indicators for hoteliers, it must be remembered that the data represent a Scottish-wide canvas in which much of Scotland's hotel capacity is concentrated in its cities, its urban Central Belt and parts of the Highlands (Morrison, 1998). Moreover, during the period in question, much investment was recorded in adding hotel capacity through new stock, especially in branded budget hotels (STB, 2000b). A further limitation arising from the trend data is that while they chart the picture for year round trading establishments, there is no basis to extrapolate patterns of either temporal occupancy growth or stasis for seasonally closed hotels.

Conversely, SAOS data reveal the lack of a clear pattern of growth in the temporal spread in occupancy levels among the commercial home enterprise sectors, as can be gleaned from the tables in Appendix 4.1. The data suggest that real growth has been confined to the second quarter for guest houses and B&Bs whilst winter months have witnessed occupancy rate declines from what appears to be a high water mark in 1996. Meanwhile, data for the self-catering sector should be treated with caution due to the methodological difference in recording occupancy figures prior to 1996, as noted earlier. However, even since 1996, the trend has been erratic on a month by month basis. Only in the touring caravan and camping park sector is there a discernible pattern of increased temporal spread in demand during the seven months (April-October) for which pitch occupancy measurements are reported. As can be seen in Table 6 in Appendix 4.1, significant gains are recorded in the months surrounding the July-August peak.

Regional analysis of occupancy indicates a tendency towards higher levels of seasonal concentration in the remoter, more rural areas of Scotland compared with relatively accessible and central locations. However, Butler (1994) contends that there is an inherent difficulty in the utility of 'remoteness' as a measure or influence of seasonal disparity within the country. He suggests 'travel time' as a better measure of remoteness (p338) though clearly localities and particularly island communities are subject to greater or lesser degrees of accessibility as route networks and transport infrastructures develop and change over time. Despite this, regional occupancy levels display marked peak and trough disparities between region and sector, as illustrated in Table 4.3, which updates and adapts the schema provided by Morrison (1998:142).

While it is not unexpected that the major conurbations record the highest occupancy levels for serviced accommodation, the importance of recognising localised market patterns is indicative in the case of the self-catering sector in Orkney and Fife and conversely in the caravan and camping sector in the Central Belt.

Table 4.3 Summary of Regional Accommodation Occupancy Levels 2003

Category	Highest Region	Lowest Region	Average	Highest Month	Lowest Month
Hotels (Room Occupancy)	Edinburgh & Lothians 73%	Shetland 42%	61%	August 79% (89% in Ed&Lothians)	January 42% (24% in Dfs&G'way)
Self-Catering (Unit Occupancy)	Orkney 68%	Western Isles 37%	53%	August 89% (95% in Fife)	January 22% (14% in Fife)
Guest Houses / B&Bs (Room Occupancy)	G Glasgow & Clyde Valley 60%	Western Isles 22%	45%	August 77% (87% in Ed&Lothians)	January 20% (10% in S Borders ³)
Caravan & Camping Parks (Pitch Occupancy)	South of Scotland 41%	Central Belt 30%	34%	August 57% (67% in Central Belt)	October ⁴ 15% (10% in Highlands)

(VisitScotland, 2004)

The final general observation is that there still exists a substantial supply of under-utilised visitor accommodation capacity during much of the year in Scotland. Table 3 in Appendix 4.1 demonstrates that around two-thirds of touring caravan and camping park pitch-nights, around one half of self-catering unit-nights and guest house/B&B room nights were unoccupied in 2003 and in previous years. This pattern is predominantly accounted for by low occupancy levels in the winter and shoulder months. By the measures proposed by Getz and Nilsson (2004), much of Scotland's accommodation stock exhibits 'extreme seasonality' (p22). However, Morrison (1998) makes the point that Scotland's visitor accommodation occupancy issue is complex and that broad generalisations have the potential to be misleading, given the degree of factor disparity among accommodation categories, operational

³ Scottish Borders data for February 2002.

⁴ caravan and camping park data is recorded for seven months (April-October).

market levels (ie from luxury to low), establishment size, location and destination characteristics, among others.

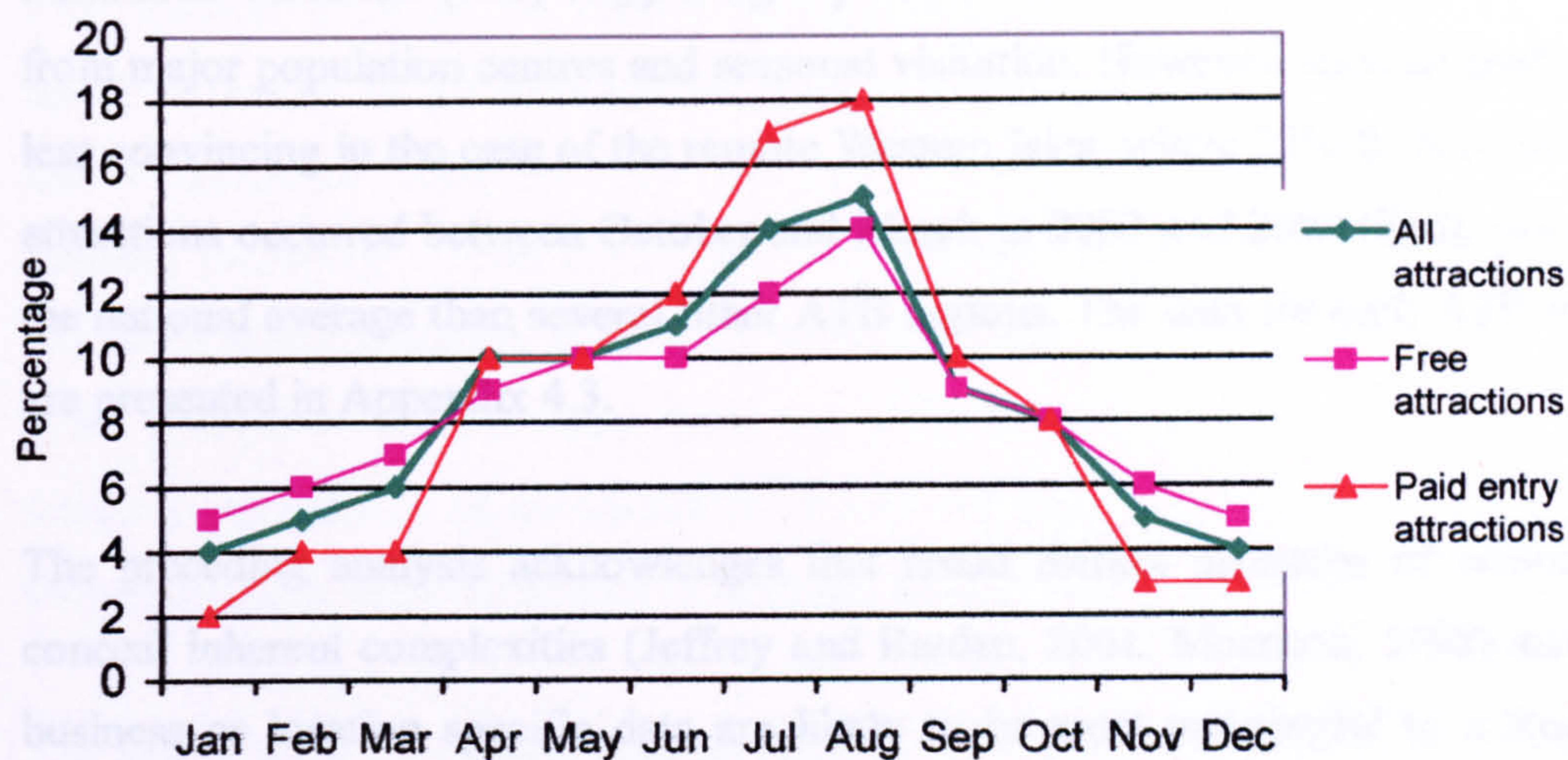
A similar conclusion is also highlighted by Jeffrey and Barden (2001) in their study of English hotel occupancy patterns. Through correlational analysis, these authors identify 32 independent variables across location, accessibility, market profile and contact, hotel attributes, pricing, marketing and management related variables as having 'significant correlations with seasonality' at the 95 percent level or higher (p130). While the potential application to Scotland's hotel sector is appealing, it is debatable whether such generic variable analysis would necessarily 'fit' with other forms of accommodation operating in narrower market confines and at lower capacities. However, Morrison (*ibid*) demonstrates that specific market responses such as practicing micro-segmentation are able to yield highly individualised occupancy patterns for accommodation operations in Scotland.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that different measures of seasonal performance are employed across other sectors, among which visitor attractions occupy a key place within Scottish tourism.

Visitor Attractions

Many of Scotland's visitor attractions have short operating seasons (Smith, 1998). However, active participation by the two largest operators (Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland) and local authority attractions in national season extension marketing campaigns in recent years has served to decrease supply-side seasonality through greater access to attractions in low season periods (Goulding, 2003; Historic Scotland, 2002; Leask *et al.* 2000; STCG, 1997). Notwithstanding, there still remains considerable seasonal disparity in the visitor attractions market, as demonstrated in Figure 4.3 which shows the temporal distribution of visits to Scottish visitor attractions. The data, derived from the 2004 Visitor Attraction Monitor (VAM), include visits to all attractions and a breakdown between free and paid entry attractions.

Figure 4.3 Seasonal Distribution of Visits to Scottish Visitor Attractions, 2004



VAM 2004 (VisitScotland, 2005)

Based on a common sample of 665 returns (ie 2004 and 2003) embracing 14 categories and around 30 types of attraction, the VAM can be considered the single most robust measurement of the visitor attractions market in Scotland. It indicates that in 2004, the third quarter accounted for 38% of entries to all attractions, and 45% to paid entry attractions, a distribution almost identical to the previous year (VisitScotland, 2005). Nine years earlier the peak quarter proportion was 42% of visits to all attractions (Smith, 1998), indicating a trend towards greater temporal spread during the intervening period. Conversely, the three trough months - November, December and January - accounted for 13% of all visits and just 8% of visits to paid attractions in 2004 (VisitScotland, 2005). Visitor attraction data includes a broad visitor mix, including school parties, local residents as well as bona fide 'tourists'.

Even greater temporal disparities in visitation are evidenced among the ATB regions. In Orkney, only 8% of visits are reported during the six months comprising the first and fourth quarters, compared with 39% in the GGCV area during the same period and a national average of 32% for the winter months (ibid). Shetland, the

Highlands and Dumfries and Galloway also exhibit severe seasonal disparity in attractions visitation (ibid) suggesting a possible link between relative remoteness from major population centres and seasonal visitation. However, such an analysis is less convincing in the case of the remote Western Isles, where 22%-23% of visits to attractions occurred between October and March in 2003 and 2004 (ibid), nearer to the national average than several other ATB regions. The data for each ATB region are presented in Appendix 4.3.

The preceding analysis acknowledges that broad market measures of seasonality conceal inherent complexities (Jeffrey and Barden, 2001; Morrison, 1998) and that business or location specific data are likely to be most meaningful to a study of business trading patterns. Nevertheless, on the basis of the main seasonality measures, a trend towards increased temporal spread in demand across Scotland during the past 10-15 years is revealed, albeit not uniformly across accommodation types. It thus raises the question whether seasonally trading operators are receptive or predisposed to the gradual temporal spreading of demand, in terms of their operating periods, even though this may be against a backdrop of continued extreme seasonality in some sectors, ATB regions and localities in Scotland. It also begs the question whether the seasonally trading population reflects the above trends in the seasonal spread of consumer demand:

RQ15: Is there evidence of predisposition by private STRB operators towards seasonal trading extension and if so, how strong is the degree of receptivity?

RQ16: Does the seasonally trading STRB population reflect the wider Scottish trends in terms of temporal demand spread?

The next section provides a brief overview of the nature and characteristics of Scotland's tourism stock within which supply-side seasonality is represented.

4.3 A Supply-side Analysis of Seasonal Tourism Resources

The characteristics of Scotland's accommodation sector impact greatly on the temporal nature of Scottish tourism supply. While small-scale, often family run micro-enterprises comprise 'the cornerstone' of the Scottish accommodation industry (Morrison, 1998a:136), significant changes in the total composition of the country's accommodation stock have taken place during the past decade and a half. What remains much less clear, however, is the degree of structural change in the temporal availability of accommodation over the years, in response to the gradual though sporadic seasonal spread of demand, as discussed previously.

The lack of a comprehensive data set charting the size and composition of Scotland's tourism accommodation stock has long been recognised (Morrison, 1998a, 1998b). Several factors have militated against the existence of a complete market intelligence census of the country's accommodation services 'industry'. These include the voluntary provision for participation in the SOAS by proprietors, the *de facto* absence of compulsory registration of guest establishments, which fosters the survival of a marginal and informal 'pin-money' accommodation economy in some parts of Scotland (Jamieson, 2006) and the continued self-exclusion of many operators from tourist board and other quality assurance membership schemes. Indeed many of the reasons Morrison (1998b) puts forward to account for inconsistencies in small firm statistical information in a general sense resonate strongly in the case of Scotland. Avoidance of fiscal scrutiny and bureaucracy, the scale of operation (many operations falling below the minimum legal letting room limit) and operating below the VAT threshold limit are all factors contributing to the 'fuzzy boundaries' of what constitutes actual or perceived commercial accommodation provision. '*Seasonal and intermittent patterns of operation*' are also proposed as a cause of information deficiency (Morrison, 1998b:134) though at best this latter can be considered as a contributory rather than underlying factor.

Notwithstanding the knowledge gaps, analysis of VisitScotland (and former STB) registered membership establishments provides a definitive source for charting structural changes within the sector, even though there is little consensus on the

degree of participation among the total accommodation stock in Scotland in registration or other formal membership schemes. Table 4.4 condenses the available data by main type of accommodation.

Table 4.4 Changes in Scotland's Tourist Accommodation Stock, 1990-2003

<i>Accommodation Type</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>Percentage Change</i>
Hotels (bedrooms)	49,601	44,317	83,223	+68%
Guest Houses (bedrooms)	7,422	6,567	7,564	+ 2%
B & Breakfasts (b/rooms)	13,139	10,332	6,954	- 47%
Self-catering (units)	9,137	9,319	13,096+	+43%+
Camping/caravanning (parks)	585	440	281	-52%

(VisitScotland, 2004; Morrison, 1998a)

One significant change in measurement in the data is that of self-catering stock. Information for 1996 and earlier years pertain to the imprecise use of 'unit' capacity, whereas more recent data instead highlights numbers of properties and bedrooms, in accordance with serviced sector measurement. On this basis it is likely that 1996 and earlier data underestimate the number of self-catering rooms available for letting. However, it is suggested in light of market growth and occupancy trends that the difference between 1996 and 2003 data still represents a growth in capacity among self-catering forms (eg chalets, log cabins, cottages and apartments).

The most notable structural changes include the decline of registered B&Bs and touring caravan and camping parks and the expansion of hotel accommodation, which has seen much investment activity during the past decade. In terms of registered property numbers, they show changes as follow: hotels increasing from 2,080 in 1996 to 2,285 in 2003 (+10%); B&Bs declining from 4,271 in 1996 to 2,532 in 2003 (-41%) and touring caravan/camping parks declining in number from 440 to 281 (-36%) in the same period (VisitScotland, 2004; STB, 1997b). The degree to which the latter two sectoral changes represent industry contraction or merely proprietors' withdrawal from formalised membership networks remains unclear and exemplifies the problem in defining industry size.

The growth in capital intensive hotel investment is likely to impact positively on the temporal trading trends in that sector in light of the high fixed costs and potential market loss associated with temporal closure, even though it is suggested that seasonal closure may be the most cost-effective option as a solution to pronounced seasonality in some cases (Jeffrey and Barden, 2001). Moreover, increased penetration in Scotland's hotel stock by public limited companies and branded chains tends to favour year round operation, which may have an enhancing effect on visitor demand for other types of establishment.

Similarly, the reduction in caravanning and camping park sites over the years may impact positively on year round operations in that sector, assuming those businesses that have withdrawn from the market are indeed seasonal. However, a potential counter-trend towards seasonal operating arises with the growth of purchases in investment properties that are intended by their owners for dual-use between second homes and commercial enterprises. Investments are thought to impact particularly within the self-catering and commercial home enterprise (small hotels, B&Bs and guest house) sectors as defined by Lynch (2005). The growing trend for investments is recorded thus:

“Some 80% of prospective buyers are coming from south of the border, looking to escape the ‘rat race’ and move to Scotland to purchase a ‘lifestyle’ business opportunity.”

(Serafini, 2004)

In light of the discussion in the preceding chapter, it is contended that the nomenclature of ‘lifestyle business’ may be misleading especially as a descriptor for a form of proprietorship (Buick *et al.*, 2000) or motivation (Di Domenico, 2003).

Other commercial accommodation types not included in the previous analysis are represented mainly by the hostel, educational and timeshare sectors. Collectively, the first two of these account for 298 registered properties in 2003 (VisitScotland, 2004) compared with 92 in 1996 (Morrison, 1998a). Timeshare expansion was rapid in

Scotland during the 1990s, from 10 resorts in 1996 to 17 in 2000, representing 800 units (STB, 2000c). The independent hostels sector in particular has grown quickly in Scotland in recent years, to the extent that back-packer and SYHA establishments collectively now constitute a separate measurement category within the SAOS. Much of the growth has been in urban locations, plugging a market niche for budget accommodation and operating all year round. Contrarily, educational establishment stock is largely composed of halls of residence accommodation, which is by definition normally only available for commercial touristic purposes during academic holiday periods. This sector therefore presents a different seasonal trading context insofar as it is operationally constrained.

The quest to quantify and characterise seasonally operating tourism accommodation in Scotland thus remains an elusive 'holy grail'. The most definitive universe of seasonally operating accommodation establishments is represented by the non-participant component of the SAOS, listed as 'closed' in terms of data returns. However, the nature (eg temporary, long term, one-off) and reasons for closure are not elucidated in the occupancy study. Table 4.5 charts the month by month closure rate of those accommodation units approached to participate in the SAOS for 2004. The data should be accepted as a close indication of relative supply-side seasonality in the main accommodation sectors, though of course subject to the sample limitations of that study.

As can be observed, average annual closure rates vary between 4.4% for hotel stock to 19.6% for hostels. Among the sectors included in the current study, the SAOS data indicates the highest level of closure among guest houses and B&Bs, which are jointly measured in the SAOS.

Table 4.5 Accommodation Units Notified as 'Closed' in the Scottish Accommodation Occupancy Survey, 2004

Months	Hotels		Guest Houses and Bed and Breakfasts		Self Catering		Caravan and Camping Parks		Hostels	
	No. Closed	% of Sample	No. Closed	% of Sample	No. Closed	% of Sample	No. Closed	% of Sample	No. Closed	% of Sample
January	42	13.1	134	41.5	299	26.3			16	30.8
February	40	12.0	130	40.0	312	27.8			14	27.5
March	22	7.2	92	29.1	202	17.0			13	25.5
April	2	0.7	18	5.8	48	3.6	4	5.6	8	15.7
May	1	0.3	6	1.9	30	2.3	0	0	8	15.7
June	1	0.3	2	0.6	30	2.3	0	0	7	13.7
July	0	0	2	0.6	29	2.2	0	0	7	13.7
August	0	0	2	0.6	68	5.0	0	0	7	14.0
September	0	0	6	2.0	45	3.5	1	1.5	7	13.7
October	2	0.7	25	8.8	39	3.3	9	15.8	7	14.3
November	19	7.0	100	34.1	219	19.8			13	26.0
December	26	9.6	117	39.9	208	19.6			12	23.5
Average	13	4.4	53	17.4	127	10.4	2	2.9	10	19.6

(Source: TNS Travel and Tourism, 2005)

As noted in Table 4.5, data for caravan and camping parks are collected for just seven months in the year, reflecting the closure of many sites during the winter months with the resultant low attainable measurement base for the SAOS study.

It should also be noted that the methodology is open to the charge of under-calculation, insofar as the monthly sample size for each sector fluctuates. Closure rates are thus based on the respective monthly return rate rather than as a proportion of the month of maximum sample size. A further 'unknown' element is the degree to which such monthly fluctuation is due to the non-submission of occupancy data due to temporary *ad hoc* or seasonal closure on the one hand or permanent business closure on the other.

Despite the above limitations, the SAOS for the year in question claims a standard error at the 95% confidence level of between $\pm 1.9\%$ and $\pm 5.9\%$ across the various sectors (TNS, 2005). It reflects a commercial accommodation provision largely composed of small, independent businesses that display significant, though varied, degrees of seasonal trading across the sectors. This is most extreme among guest house and B&B operations in which for four months of the year, more than one third of the stock is closed for business. Moreover, this level of closure remains comparable with the 1999 SAOS survey response data (System Three, 2000).

The regional distribution of Scotland's seasonal accommodation stock is not discernible from the SAOS inasmuch as the survey does not break down sectoral analysis of closure rates by region. This is explained by the low returns in some types of stock in various ATB areas, for which statistical analysis would not be deemed reliable. In the absence of such data from official sources, an alternative construct is that used in the formulation of the database for the current study, which is described in Chapters Five and Six and quantified in Table 6.1. The data base of private, commercial businesses identified 1,803 as operating less than a 50 week cycle per annum, 574 of which are B&Bs and a further 143 are guest houses. Deducting non-accommodation based businesses from the total sample gives the following result, as shown in Table 4.6:

**Table 4.6 Regional Distribution of Seasonally Trading Accommodation
Businesses Identified in ATB “Where to Stay” Guides, 2004**

<i>ATB Area (Area Code)</i>	<i>Hotels & Inns</i>	<i>B&Bs</i>	<i>Guest Houses</i>	<i>Self Catering properties & caravans</i>	<i>Holiday/ Touring & Camping Parks</i>	<i>Other Accommo- -dation types</i>	<i>Total</i>
AD	2	12	3	5	9	-	31
AG	5	37	8	33	26	3	112
AL	40	115	35	86	43	11	330
AY	8	26	13	31	14	2	94
DG	9	34	4	26	34	2	109
EL	4	55	10	13	15	-	97
FF	2	16	3	56	13	-	90
GC	1	13	3	1	3	2	23
HL	59	158	44	128	31	4	424
OR	2	6	-	11	-	-	19
PE	13	40	13	36	9	2	113
SB	2	31	6	14	18	4	75
SH	-	-	-	6	3	4	13
WE	4	31	1	22	3	1	62
<i>Total</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>574</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>468</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>1,592</i>

Despite the dual limitations of a likely small degree of business duplication in the above figures countered by the exclusion of businesses not participating in ATB publications, the data in Table 4.6 are held to represent a more realistic yardstick of the degree of seasonal operations than the measurement base recorded in the SAOS. It depicts a largely rural seasonal trading phenomenon, concentrated in the Highland and AILLST areas, Dumfries and Galloway, Perthshire and Aberdeen & Grampian, and represented particularly by B&B and self-catering/caravan hire operations. Although localised data is not analysed in this study, there are concentrations of seasonal trading business clusters in small peripheral urban areas such Oban, Fort William, Rothesay and Dunoon.

Visitor attractions are considered to be a critical component of Scotland’s tourism industry (Garrod, 2003; Leask, 2003). The ubiquity of built attractions across the

country, from small visitor or craft centres and local museums to large themed leisure parks and castles, serves a vital role in the dispersal of visits, spending and the generation of secondary revenues (Smith, 1998). It is also held that visitor attractions play a key role in mitigating seasonality by way of the wet weather facilities that many of them provide (Garrod, 2003), though as has been demonstrated in the discussion in section 4.2, such a role in Scotland is subject to debate when viewed in terms of temporal visitation patterns.

'Attractions' are a heterogeneous concept (Horner and Swarbrooke, 1996) and have generated much deliberation with regard to their parameters and classifications (Leask, 2003; Smith, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1995). It is not the aim to enter into that discussion within the context of this analysis, except to emphasise that all elements of attraction classifications and dimensions as proposed by Leask (2003) and Wanhill (2003) are present within Scotland's visitor attractions sector. In other words, the country contains a diverse array of attractions in terms of ownership types, forms and varieties of attractions, product resource bases (historic, natural, industrial etc), permanency, scale and market orientation. Scotland's visitor attraction 'sector' can thus be characterised as fragmented and has been accused of being over-supplied (Smith, 1998) in the face of low visitor throughput and seasonal concentration in many establishments.

Operating to seasonally defined periods has long been a characteristic of Scottish attractions. The Visitor Attractions Monitor (VAM) represents the closest measure to a national census of visitor attractions within Scotland.⁵ Of the 682 attractions identified in the 2004 VAM, 20.1% (n=137) are categorised as privately owned operations. Within this subset, around 36% (n=49) are recorded as 'seasonal', ie open to visitors for nine months or less per year (VisitScotland, 2005), the temporal cut-off point used in the VAM survey to define 'seasonality' in operations. An extension of the definition to include attractions operating longer trading seasons and having periods of closure would almost certainly increase this proportion.

⁵ The Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA), the professional and trade organisation for visitor attractions cites 'over 400 members' and 'over 500 key sites' in its membership. www.asva.co.uk/index.asp Accessed 27th March 2006

However, in order to comprehend such a high level of seasonal trading by privately run attractions, it is useful to consider the sectoral distribution of such businesses.

The three predominant types of privately operated seasonal attraction are museums and art galleries, gardens and castles or forts, in almost equal measure. They represent potentially very different operating contexts, ranging from trading that may reflect an element of hobby, 'private passion' or 'trophyism' on the part of private museum operators, garden closure that may be attributed to natural resource recovery or the dictates of complementary nursery procurements, to limited visitor seasons in private residential castles and historic houses reflecting a personal or familial preference for seasonal or occasional opening of the private home to the public (Goulding, 2003). Opening may therefore be a response to pressures for public access to historic collections, architecture or artefacts. The phenomenon of short opening periods is witnessed in several establishments in the Scottish Borders, East Lothian and Grampian areas. Furthermore, while most privately run seasonal attractions are commercially operated, around a quarter offer free admission, especially among galleries and heritage centres (VisitScotland, 2005). Thus, for private operators, the diversity in the context of attractions is seen to underpin the diversity of seasonal trading experience which in turn may reflect disparate motivational factors.

However, most seasonally operated attractions are run by charities or trusts, are under local authority management or belong to either of the two large conservation estates, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) or Historic Scotland (HS). Table 4.7 provides a breakdown of seasonal attractions by ownership/operational type. Of the 682 attractions measured, 251, or 36.8% are listed as operating seasonally in 2004. Thus privately owned attractions closely mirror the national picture overall.

As depicted in the table, charities and trusts constitute the largest number of seasonal attractions, representing 43.7% of this operational category (from a total of 167). It should be stressed that 'charities' and 'trusts' as listed within the VAM cover a spectrum of organisational types and legal arrangements (Leask, 2003), ranging

from local community run heritage centres, especially on island communities, to large estates such as some of the Borders and Perthshire historic houses. As with privately run businesses, seasonal operation may therefore reflect specific motivational or influencing forces within the contexts of community, social and environmental objectives as well as revenue generating considerations.

Table 4.7 Seasonally Operating Visitor Attractions by Ownership Type

<i>Ownership Category</i>	<i>Number of Attractions: Paid Admission</i>	<i>Number of Attractions: Free Admission</i>	<i>Total Attractions</i>
Charities or Trusts	51	22	73
Government Department/Agency	2	10	12
Historic Scotland	21	2	23
Local Authority	6	33	39
National Trust for Scotland	34	-	34
Privately Owned	36	13	49
Public Limited Company/plc	1	5	6
Religious organisation	1	7	8
Other (eg educational institution)	4	3	7
<i>Total</i>	156	95	251

Source: VAM 2004 (VisitScotland, 2005)

Local authority run establishments also feature prominently among seasonally operating attractions (25.3% of which are seasonal, VisitScotland, 2005), though as observed in the data, the majority of such properties offer free admission, including local visitor and heritage centres and museums. Thus, as Leask (2003) observes, citing recent empirical studies of Scottish attractions, ownership category impinges greatly on the “*entire approach to attraction management*” (p11). While this may be a fair sentiment holistically, the data suggests there is a broad commonality of representation of seasonal trading across ownership boundaries. Therefore, the ownership category may be less important to seasonal trading than the nature of the attraction itself.

Overlaying the above sectoral and ownership representations is the spatial distribution of seasonal visitor attractions. Varying degrees of regional demand seasonality (ie visits to attractions) were reported in the previous section, which in some cases manifest as extreme peaking and troughing effects. Whether this situation reflects a general over-supply in attractions as noted by Smith (1998) or indeed reflects more on facility management and marketing responses remains unproven and open to investigation. However, the extent of seasonal operation as reported in the VAM varies little from region to region. From a common measurement base of 647 attractions supplying temporal data for both 2003 and 2004, 39.3% (n=254) are recorded as operating seasonally (VS, *op cit*). Table 4.8 displays the spatial breakdown by ATB region, from the highest to lowest relative proportions of seasonal attractions.

Arguably, given the small baseline among many of the ATBs' seasonal attractions stock, the most valid discernible trend is for the more urban areas to exhibit generally lower rates of seasonal operating. However, disparities elsewhere, such as the high proportion of seasonal operation in the Scottish Borders and the correspondingly lower proportion in neighbouring Dumfries and Galloway, suggests that spatial generalisations may be of limited value in accounting for the nature of supply-side seasonality among visitor attractions.

It is thus proposed that a combination of independent variables such as the distance of attractions from sizable population centres, access to attractions and the economic characteristics of local urban-ness or rurality, as well as the nature and mix of attractions may offer better insights into locational supply-side seasonality.

Table 4.8 Seasonal Visitor Attractions by Area Tourist Board Region

<i>ATB Region</i>	<i>Percentage of Seasonal Attractions 2003 - 2004</i>	<i>Number by Admission Status:</i>		<i>Number of Seasonal Attractions</i>
		<i><u>Paid</u></i>	<i><u>Free</u></i>	
Shetland	78.9 %	7	8	15
Scottish Borders	55.8	19	5	24
Western Isles	50.0	4	1	5
Aberdeen & Grampian	48.8	22	19	41
Ayrshire & Arran	47.8	8	3	11
Perthshire	46.7	9	5	14
Highlands	45.5	23	17	40
Orkney	44.0	7	4	11
<i>Scottish Average</i>	<i>39.3</i>			
AILLST	38.6	21	6	27
Fife	35.7	6	4	10
Dumfries & Galloway	30.2	10	6	16
Edinburgh & Lothians	26.4	11	8	19
Angus & Dundee	22.6	5	2	7
GG&CV	19.7	7	7	14
<i>Total</i>		<i>159</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>254</i>

VAM 2004 (VisitScotland, 2005)

The above findings across Scotland's accommodation and visitor attractions sectors underscore one of the main aims of the current study, that of determining the degree and extent of supply-side seasonality in Scottish tourism. However, the above analysis also contributes part of the overall context framing the methodological construction of the study. Another key issue in the equation is that of the role and weight of regulatory forces in seasonal determination, which is discussed next.

4.4 Temporality in Regulation

Appraisals of tourism related public policy often note the existence of numerous types of mechanisms for state intervention (Jeffries, 2001; Davidson and Maitland, 1997; Elliott, 1997, among others). As Smith (1998) and Hall and Jenkins (1995) illustrate, the state regulates and attempts to stimulate tourism through the active involvement of a wide range of agencies, including central and other tiers of government, law enforcement bodies, the judiciary, statutory authorities, para-state

organisations, the public service bureaucracy and local, urban and rural development organisations. However, little analysis has focused on the relationships between the regulatory mechanisms at the disposal of such agencies and the temporality of tourism. Clearly, tourism policy is frequently directed towards seasonal extension amongst many other objectives, especially so in Scotland. Accordingly, policy implementation instruments are created for the purpose and context, as illustrated in the subsequent sections of this chapter. On the other hand, pre-existing statutory and regulatory instruments may have a temporally constraining role which in some cases emphasises the seasonal status-quo of STRBs in operating terms.

The regulatory framework empowered to deal with issues of temporal operation most frequently includes licensing authority and planning consent and control (Davidson and Maitland, 1997; Smith, 1998). To these can be added legislation (Acts) and Statutory Instruments (SIs) that may impact indirectly on the temporal operation of a business through empowerment or prescription of 'regulation' *per se*, mainly through working conditions and health and safety related issues.

Such regulation may be exemplified, in the United Kingdom, by the provisions of the Working Time Regulations, 1998. These define 'working time' and stipulate provisions for calculating employees' maximum weekly working times. They also specify employee rights with regard to periods of annual paid leave and daily rest, exclusions and employee opt-outs, among other provisions (DTI, 2003). The 2002 Amendment of this Statutory Instrument relates specifically to restricting the working time of adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years and includes provisions governing night working (OPSI, 2002). Occupational exemptions apply to 'restricted periods', in which catering businesses, hotels, public houses, restaurants, bars 'or similar establishments' are identified (OPSI, 2002:4). Thus, in the case where a small hospitality or accommodation business may be reliant on a single paid staff member to cover for the temporary absence of its proprietors, the daily periodic pattern of its operation may be circumscribed by the legislation unless the employee contractually 'opts-out' of the working time limit.

Meanwhile, activity operators who count among their clientele children and young people under the age of 18 are the focus of the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 (c.15). This Act applies to "facilities for adventure activities" including sporting, recreational or outdoor activities and where there is some element of instruction or leadership service provided (OPSI, 2000b:2). It empowers licensing authorities to exercise the granting of a license, inspection and revocation and to specify any requirements relating to safety which must be satisfied by a licensee. Constraints on temporal operation are implicit within the powers of the Act, as determined by the conditions imposed by licensing authorities on activity operators. These may stipulate for example, public liability or duty of care pertaining to activities conducted in adverse weather conditions such as mountaineering, diving, sailing etc., where such conditions present a heightened risk to those undertaking the pursuit. For activity operators, trading discretion is therefore underscored through the regulatory system on the basis of health, safety and consumer protection policy, normally induced by climatic considerations. Moreover, self-regulation operates under the guidance of national sports and recreation governing bodies and there has been in existence since 1996 a voluntary licensing scheme under the auspices of the Scottish Activity Holiday Steering Group (McWilliam and Walden, 1998).

As Morrison (1998:140) notes, many Scottish caravan and camping parks are closed through the winter and spring, indeed

"...generally choose to operate for only seven months of the year, in response to tourist demand patterns."

As was highlighted in Chapter Two, there is often a presumption that seasonal closure of tourism amenities is demand induced. In practice, regulatory constraints often determine the length of the operating season within this sector. The regulatory framework is determined by legislation specific to the sector - the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 - and by a raft of

health and safety, environmental, access, water, consumer and employment law (SAC, 2005).

Indeed, many holiday-, touring and camping park operators would be forgiven for believing that there is an apparent dichotomy of interest between public policy relating to tourism and local economic development on the one hand, and the stipulations of local planning and licensing authorities on the other. In the former case, it is acknowledged that there is a continuing need to upgrade facilities and environmental design to enable operators to promote year round business. This is typically enshrined in the development planning framework, which often subjects holiday caravan parks to stringent requirements. As an example, South Ayrshire Council's current Local Plan (2006)⁶ lays down conditions that any new holiday park planning application must adhere to strict environmental screening, landscaping and design requirements and be restricted to holiday use only.

Conversely, operators may face temporal restrictions which are compounded if their site caters for both tourism and residential use and requires a license (typically applying to large scale facilities comprising static caravans or a mix of static and touring caravan provision). Neither are small scale operations exempt from temporal regulation. As noted by SAC (2005), unlicensed and non-certificated properties such as farms accommodating up to three touring caravans are subject to a maximum 28 days caravan occupation within the course of a year.

The example of Aberdeenshire Council licensing authority highlights the tension between temporal growth and regulation accordingly:

“There are separate license conditions for ‘Residential, ‘Holiday’ and ‘Tourer’ Caravan Sites. If the site has mixed use, relevant conditions pertaining to the particular use of the site will apply. Where it is not practical to differentiate the different uses, the more onerous conditions will apply”.

(Aberdeenshire Council, 2006)

⁶ 2006-2010. At the time of writing the Plan is awaiting formal adoption. However, it serves as a basis of ‘material consideration’ for considering cases of planning compliance.

In this case, the 'more onerous conditions' limit the trading season to seven months, from 1st April to October 31st. Provision is made within the planning system for extended seasons of up to 12 months, subject to scrutiny by the Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Service. Additionally, an operator must satisfy conditions pertaining to the protection and maintenance of carriageways and pathways, car parking areas, water fittings, waste pipes and drains over the winter months (Aberdeenshire Council, 2006). While such stipulations and standards are not unusual among planning and licensing authorities, they are by no means uniformly administered. Indeed, regulation through planning control is acknowledged as a complex and location dependent instrument (McWilliam and Walden, 1998).

Finally, the prevalence of prescribed seasons for fishing and certain field sports⁷ may also impact on some STRBs in Scotland, although in practice the latter tends to attract high-spend visitors who will often pay premium prices to stay in luxury accommodation situated within or near the estates in which the game thrives. Moreover, as McWilliam and Walden (1998) observe, field sport estates can support year round activity across the range of hunting pursuits. Fishing, on the other hand, is both seasonally prescribed by local bylaws, Orders or SIs (ASFB, 2006) and is of economic significance in a number of localities within Scotland, such as Tweeddale, Tayside, Deeside and Speyside communities. Table 4.9 shows annual close times for net and rod fishing on a selection of major salmon fisheries, together with the bylaw, Order or SI governing the season.

Recent record catches in a number of Scottish fisheries have buoyed demand for the sport (Urquhart, 2006) which, as illustrated in Table 4.9, is locationally highly season-specific. It is also subject to long-standing regulation, the system for which is

⁷ For example: the grouse season is 12th August to 10th December; the duck and partridge season lasts from 1st September to 1st February; the pheasant season is from 1st October to 1st February, (Myres Estates Ltd 2006).

preserved and reinforced⁸ on the basis of conservation and environmental management principles.

Table 4.9 Fishing Seasons and Regulations in Scotland's Major Salmon Fisheries

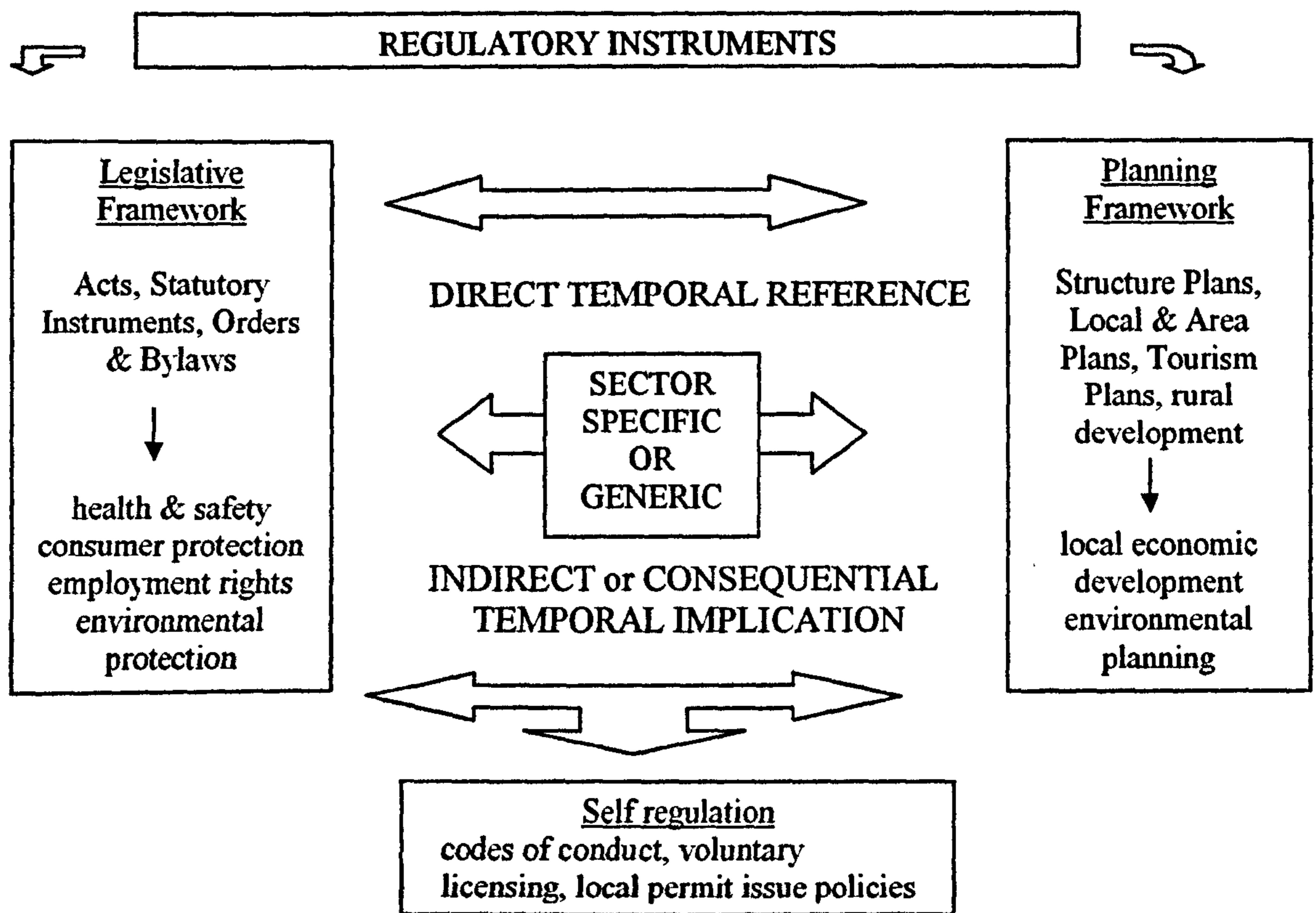
River / Salmon Fishery District	Annual Close Times		Date Bylaw Took Effect or Statutory Instrument/ /Order Number
	Net Fishing	Rod Fishing	
River Dee (Aberdeenshire)	27 Aug-10 Feb	01 Oct-31 Jan	SI 1950/299
River Don	27 Aug-10 Feb	01 Nov-10 Feb	29 Jan 1864
River Esk (North & South)	01 Sept-15 Feb	01 Nov-15 Feb	SI 1988/944 (S.96)
Lochaber fisheries	27 Aug-10 Feb	01 Nov-10 Feb	SI 1999/1382 (S.105)
River Nith	10 Sept-24 Feb	01 Dec-24 Feb	Order 14 Nov 1912
River Spey	27 Aug-10 Feb	01 Oct-10 Feb	SI 1948/275
River Tay	21 Aug-04 Feb	16 Oct-14 Jan	Order 22 Dec 1900
River Tweed	15 Sept-14 Feb	01 Dec-31 Jan	1857 Tweed Fisheries Act

(ASFB, 2006; Tyne & Wear Museums, undated)

This section has briefly demonstrated ways in which regulatory and legislative regimes in Scotland potentially contribute to supply-side institutional seasonality. The instruments either impose direct temporal constraints on the operations of particular types of STRBs or potentially impinge on their seasons through devices such as health and safety measures and the development planning framework. A conceptual model of the temporal regulatory paradigm on STRBs may be represented accordingly, as shown in Figure 4.4:

⁸ most recently through the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Figure 4.4 Conceptual Model of Temporal Regulatory Constraints



While the preceding analysis identifies the roles and scope of legislative and other bureaucratic factors as potential operational constraints, the degree to which they influence STRB proprietors' seasonal trading behaviours in practice is less clear. The issue therefore raises a key research question in this study:

RQ17: To what extent do regulatory and other bureaucratic factors influence the temporal trading behaviours of small tourism related businesses in Scotland?

The remaining sections of this chapter examine the broader tourism policy and strategy frameworks within which relationships between tourism seasonality and the role of small businesses are articulated. The ubiquity of the seasonality phenomenon as manifest both in demand and supply terms raises a key research question:

RQ18: To what extent are linkages between tourism seasonality and small business trading behaviours articulated within Scottish tourism strategies?

The analysis contained in the final sections of this contextual overview aim to address this question.

4.5 Tourism Seasonality in Scottish Public Policy

(i) 'Institutional Fixity' in Public Policy Scrutiny, Post-1945

In various guises, seasonality in tourism has been a longstanding feature of public policy in the UK, significantly predating the statutory tourism policymaking frameworks that later evolved from the 1969 Development of Tourism Act. During the post-war heyday of the domestic holiday boom, British administrations were occupied by elements of the institutional fixity such as school, work and bank holidays that were deemed to influence or reinforce seasonal demand patterns.

The Attlee administration's Ministry of Labour and National Service set up a national committee to deal with the issue of the staggering of school and public holidays, following a report on the subject by the Catering Wages Council in 1945. The tourism and hospitality industry was represented on the Committee by the then British Tourist and Holidays Board (BHTB), which from 1950 evolved into the British Travel and Holidays Association (BTHA, 1960). This was to become the body which intervening British governments supported as "*the chosen instrument*" (Burkart and Medlik, 1981:35; Jeffries, 2001:81) for the overseas promotion of the UK as a tourist destination and supported accordingly with an annual grant-in-aid. However, in the pre-statutory era of UK tourism, characterised by the absence of a comprehensive government policy for tourism, the actions of individual Government departments, collective tourism organisations and other interests were usually

"...without reference to agreed objectives, rarely co-ordinated and sometimes conflicting" (Burkart and Medlik, 1981:274).

Thus it was in this case, when the Ministry subsequently devolved the issue of holiday staggering to the industry association. In 1949, recognising the growth of the BTHB's activities and membership, the Ministry of Labour

“...felt it was desirable that the initiative for publicity and action on the question of the extension of the holiday season should be passed to it [the British Travel and Holidays Board].”

During the 1950s, the ‘ills’ of seasonal concentration of holiday taking were portrayed more as problems for the holidaymakers,

“...who suffer with accommodation, catering and transport difficulties as well as having to meet high season costs”

than as economic issues for the largely seaside based service providers.

In February 1960, a debate in the House of Commons considered the five key obstacles deemed by the BTHA's Holiday Development Committee to be ‘in the way of’ a greater temporal spread of holiday taking. These included:

1. the ‘traditional outlook’ associating holiday makers’ lack of appreciation of the benefits of ‘out of peak season’ holidays in terms of economy, weather and satisfaction;
2. the incidence of bank holidays at that time, principally the influence of the August Bank Holiday “*which sets an artificial pattern for main holidays*”;
3. the difficulties of families with children at school;
4. fixed factory holiday dates, and
5. the temporal period of ‘summer time’ as defined by the changing of the clock.

(ibid)

Despite recognising that the seasonal peaking problem was primarily an issue of social inertia and “*...not capable of solution by legislation or any form of*

compulsion as to dates upon which holidays can be taken" (ibid. p3) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade undertook to set in motion an *ad hoc* committee to review the problem and report on whether there are any further steps the Government might 'profitably pursue' to extend the holiday season. Meanwhile, the BHTA pursued its own separate review process, culminating in a conference representing 57 organisations including travel, tourism and hospitality companies, various trade associations and destination publicity organisations, examination boards, local government and trades unions, among others. Scottish interests were directly represented by the voluntary Scottish Tourist Board and the Association of County Councils in Scotland (BHTA, 1960). Among the motions adopted at the Conference to lobby the Government were proposals for a four-term school year, earlier end of year examinations, regional staggering of school holidays, grant funding specifically to publicise the advantages of non-peak season holidays and legislation to extend British Summer Time (ibid). Only this latter ultimately reached the statute books, bringing the UK into line with much of Western Europe in terms of co-ordinating the clock-change for summer and winter daylight hours.

As the holiday-staggering debate receded from the UK policy arena during the 1960s, the rationale for public sector intervention in tourism swung towards economic factors.

(ii) Seasonality and Economic Development Agency Objectives

Several distinct elements of UK postwar economic policy characterised public sector involvement in tourism until the late 1980s. These included raising foreign exchange earnings to improve the balance of payments, increasing public revenues, economic diversification, regional development, improving income levels and creating new employment (Shaw *et al.*, 1988). The enactment of the UK-wide 1969 Development of Tourism Act is attributed to the first of the above (Jeffries, 2001) while the 1965 Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland) Act was arguably an outcome of the latter three (Hughes/HIDB, 1980). The statutory frameworks established under both Acts created quasi-autonomous public sector Scottish agencies, respectively the Scottish Tourist Board (STB) and the Highlands and Islands Development Board

(HIDB) with powers to develop tourism and therein 'tackle' seasonality. The first post-war elevation of tourism within the public policy arena in Scotland was very much under the aegis of regional economic development. As an enduring characteristic of Scottish tourism, seasonality became increasingly under the policy spotlight for the new economic development agencies.

(iii) Statutory Economic Development Agencies 1965 - 1991

For the Highlands and Islands Development Board, tourism was one of numerous economic activities to which the agency was empowered to provide discretionary financial aid via grants or loans to businesses, to provide promotional work and create tourism projects pro-actively "*in advance of a commercial interest*" (Hughes/HIDB, 1980:4). This latter involved financing infrastructural projects which would benefit tourism, as well as directly undertaking tourism development projects "*...at its own hand*" (ibid. p5). Examples included building hotels in the Outer and Inner Hebrides "*...where shortages of suitable [accommodation] provision were not being met*" (ibid. p5). Tourism was assigned as one of the HIDB's four Operating Divisions, alongside Land Development, Fisheries and Industrial Development (p7), signifying the extent of the perceived importance of the sector.

The issue of seasonality was contextualised by the HIDB in a number of ways. Firstly, the seasonal nature of Highlands' tourism was identified as contributory to the '*distinctive feature of unemployment in the Highlands*' (Hughes/HIDB, 1980:3) even though unemployment rates and characteristics varied widely across the Highlands and Islands area (ibid, p3). Secondly, seasonal tourism contributed to the '*occupational pluralism*' of many Highland households, characterised by two or more part-time employment sources (ibid. p3). Thirdly, the HIDB attributed seasonality to the remoteness of the area from UK population centres, compounded by fuel costs (ibid. p6). Accordingly, lengthening the season and raising occupancy rates were identified as key objectives of the HIDB's Tourism Division (ibid. p7).

The tenth annual report of the HIDB, in 1976, contained the following seasonality related performance indicators:

Table 4.10 Hotel Occupancy in the Highlands and Islands Development Board Area

Year	Average Monthly Hotel Occupancy Rates						
	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
1971	23 %	40 %	70 %	78 %	86 %	66 %	26 %
1975	34 %	52 %	65 %	73 %	79 %	66 %	42 %

(HIDB, 1976:118)

As shown in Table 4.10, these suggest that improvements in the seasonal spread of hotel based tourism were manifest in the shoulder months of April, May and October, although seemingly at the expense of high season occupancy rates. Nevertheless, the HIDB considered its policies as contributory to “...*the relative economic improvement in the Highlands and Islands*” (Hughes/HIDB, 1980:7) of which an enhanced tourism performance was a part.

Meanwhile, in the southern half of Scotland, broadly to the south and east of the Highland fault line, the Scottish Development Agency (SDA) had statutory powers of economic development. From 1975, the creation of the SDA provided the area under its jurisdiction with an economic development mandate similar to that of the HIDB. Although interventionist across a wide spectrum of economic activity, the SDA’s role in tourism development was mainly confined to funding and leveraging large-scale urban renewal capital projects such as the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and the 1988 National Garden Festival, both in Glasgow. However, the economic challenges in the lowlands of Scotland were of a very different nature compared with those of the Highlands (Smith, 1998). Moreover, the Scottish Tourist Board was the *de facto* economic development agency in the Scottish lowlands with statutory powers to provide selective financial assistance to tourism businesses and projects. Accordingly, actions to facilitate extending the tourism season did not generally feature as a priority for the SDA.

It was not until the creation of the enterprise agency networks under the terms of the 1990 Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act that the linkages between tourism seasonality and local economic development were ultimately articulated across Scotland as a whole and in a co-ordinated fashion.

(iv) Statutory Economic Development Agencies: 1991 - Present

The successors of the HIDB and the SDA, respectively Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Scottish Enterprise (SEn), have embraced tourism development as central to their broad economic and social development and training remits. These include developing and strengthening local businesses, enhancing skills and capacities, improving the environment, increasing efficiency and the international competitiveness of Scotland (Smith, 1998). In the case of HIE, community development represents a further strategic objective, reflecting the economic fragility and distinct cultural traditions of the area (HIE, 1991, Smith, 1998). Both agencies developed a strategic approach to tourism development, albeit not in tandem with each other until 1994, when, as partner organisations in the pan-public sector Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group, they were involved in framing the first national Strategic Plan for Scottish Tourism.

The two development agencies also co-ordinate a series of Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) who are responsible for delivering assistance to businesses and providing support for training at the local level, within delegated powers (HIE, 1991, Smith, 1998). The twenty-two LECs throughout Scotland are charged with collaborating with local authorities and the Area Tourist Boards (ATBs) in their areas on all aspects of tourism development within their area (Smith, 1998) through delivering local business development activities that address particular local needs and opportunities (SEn, 1996).

Within its first year of operation, HIE had already drafted a consultation paper for a Tourism Strategy for the Highlands and Islands, in which the first strategic priority was to “...*extend the tourist season and raise occupancy levels*” (HIE, 1991:i). The

document was a landmark in the sense that, for the first time, a Scottish economic development agency articulated the relationships between seasonality and small tourism businesses beyond the 'traditional' language of causal factors and seasonal extension responses. The new paradigm of linkage stressed 'quality standards', in which the report posited that

"...we should no longer be prepared to assist tourism businesses unless they aim to meet – in managerial attitude and all aspects of service – those highest standards".

(HIE, 1991:1)

signalling a departure from the previous HIDB focus on selective funding for investment in seasonal lengthening initiatives, *per se*.

There is clear inference throughout the final strategy document (HIE, 1992) of the extent of the perceived connections between seasonality, occupancy levels and quality, through linking the strategic priority to tackling the industry's competitive position and resource under-utilisation, its market imperfections, achieving balanced development, full time employment, employee training, and even to environmental standards, eg building design (ibid). Acknowledging the role of the newly established Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) in delivering local business support services within a co-ordinated strategic framework, HIE acknowledged that future assistance would be targeted to businesses identifying commitments to raising standards, for example

"HIE and the LECs will insist on the need for...training as a precondition of assistance"

and

“...participation in and progress through classification and grading schemes as a key criterion in deciding on requests for support in business development...” (HIE, 1992:9)

These were reiterated and expanded by the HIE Chairman at an address to the Scottish Hospitality Industry Conference in 1997, who linked business development assistance to four commitment parameters. One of these was commitment to the industry, including the need for businesses seeking assistance to have ATB membership and show *‘evidence of initiatives to lengthen the season’* (Smith, 1998:55). What remained unclear was how the HIE and Highland LECs would benchmark seasonal extension initiatives. Although HIE’s tourism strategy and its subsequent Network Tourism Action Framework (1996) identified specific seasonality targets, these were always framed as demand-side performance indicators, reflecting accommodation occupancy targets, rather than identifying seasonal extension by trading periods or year-round trading targets for private businesses.

Moreover, the HIE Network’s seasonal extension objectives are expressed through destination-wide interventions, as much as one-to-one business advisory and development services. This is perhaps best illustrated through its investment in major infrastructural provision, such as the recent development of the Cairngorm funicular railway *“..to help underpin the Strathspey area’s year-round tourism activity”* (HIE, 2002).

Exemplifying that the two network agencies did not initially work in tandem in terms of economic policy goals, Scottish Enterprise did not develop its own distinct tourism strategy until several years after its northern counterpart. Publication of its 1996 Tourism Action Plan reflected both the 1994 Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan (see 4.7 below) and the overall Scottish Enterprise Network Strategy of the same year. This latter addressed the broad developmental priorities for the wider economy in Lowland Scotland by setting out the seven strategic directions which guide SEN’s operations (House of Commons, 1998). Building business competitiveness is a

recurrent and underlying theme for Scottish Enterprise and is presented as a primary objective in the Tourism Action Plan (Scottish Enterprise, 1996), alongside “...a market driven and co-ordinated approach to tourism development” (ibid., p13).

The Tourism Action Plan identifies a number of constraints on development, and it is in this context where issues of both seasonality and the preponderance of small businesses, whose proprietors

“...take on tourism businesses with little or no previous experience,
often for a mix of lifestyle and commercial reasons”

(Scottish Enterprise, 1996:9)

are articulated. The Plan suggests a link between such businesses and the problems of high turnover, over-capacity and poor management skills. While seasonal traders are not identified as such, seasonality of supply is implicit within Scottish Enterprise’s analysis, as a constraint to business competitiveness. This remains distinct from its analysis of seasonality of demand, in which the emphasis is on the resultant problems of under-utilisation of capacity, leading to inadequate returns on investment in new and upgraded facilities and compounding problems of staff recruitment and development (Scottish Enterprise, 1996). However, both low skilled, lifestyle proprietorship and seasonality are seen as ‘symptoms’ of the same ‘poor business performance’ (ibid., p9). One of the action points arising from the objective of building competitive tourism businesses was to be a joint review, by SEN, HIE and the then STB, of the accommodation sector (ibid., p15) though the objectives of such a review were not articulated.

Obliquely, seasonality is addressed in the SEN Tourism Action Plan through reference to three distinct interventions. The first is the development of Scotland’s activity holiday sector, in which SEN sets out its lead role in co-ordinating the activities of the newly formed Scottish Activity Steering Group. The Plan makes reference to “...significant external constraints in terms of recent package holiday and safety legislation” such as ‘the Young Persons Safety Act’ (sic)⁹ of 1995 (ibid.

⁹ Shorthand for *The Adventure Centres (Young Persons’ Safety Act) 1995*.

p17). The second is an enhanced investment role in visitor attractions and events, in tandem with HIE and the STB (p18) while the third relates to SEN's role in lobbying for the amelioration of transport links to and within Scotland, to support better access (p19).

In summary, seasonality is clearly an issue that underwrites the strategic planning process of both enterprise networks. In the case of Highland and Islands Enterprise, the issue is primarily presented as a demand-phenomenon whose implications manifest in the performance and quality of its tourism businesses. For Scottish Enterprise, there is an additional recognition of the role played by lifestyle proprietors and those whose objectives transcend economic goals, in other words, a distinct supply-side dimension to an under-optimised tourism performance.

Both enterprise networks have been lead players in the development and implementation of Scotland's national tourism strategies since 1994. These form the focus of the next part of this analysis of seasonality and small businesses in Scottish tourism.

4.6 Seasonality and Small Businesses in Scotland's Strategic Tourism Planning Process

I. Background to Strategic Planning in Scottish Tourism

The involvement of central government in guiding the tourism sector's operation and performance in Scotland can be described as essentially non-interventionist from the time between the implementation of 1969 Development of Tourism Act until the early 1990s.¹⁰ However, a steady decline in Scotland's tourism from the mid-1980s prompted a series of investigations into its performance, notable among which were the 1994 Mackay Consultants report and the 1995 Scottish Tourism

¹⁰ The notable exceptions were the Acts establishing the economic development agencies in 1975 and 1991, the 1984 Tourism (Overseas Promotion) (Scotland) Act enabling the Scottish Tourist Board to undertake promotional activities in foreign markets; and Part IV (172-176) of the *Local Government etc (Scotland) Act, 1994*, which, among its many provisions, set out the Secretary of State for Scotland's powers to establish, amend and revoke Area Tourist Boards (OPSI, 2000).

Research Unit study, commissioned by the Scottish Tourist Board (Seaton and Hay, 1998). These studies painted a picture of a loss of competitiveness, with earnings declining in real (ie inflation adjusted) terms, lower growth than most rival destinations and arrivals and bednights declining year-on-year (ibid., 1998) in both holiday and business markets (Snowdon and Thomson, 1998; STB, 1996).

Thus, the Scottish Office-led review of tourism in 1992-93 represented the first active engagement of central government in strategic planning for Scottish tourism. The Scottish Office Industry Department (SOID) effectively instructed the pan-sectoral Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group (STCG)¹¹ to work collectively, under the lead of the Scottish Tourist Board, to draw up and implement agreed strategic objectives, plans of action and performance targets to restore growth, competitiveness and dynamism to Scotland's tourism (Seaton and Hay, 1998).

The role of seasonality within that document and in the ensuing strategic planning processes during the period 1994-2006 is examined in Appendix 4.2 (a Review of Seasonality References in Scottish Tourism Strategy and Action Plan Documents) which comprises a content analysis of the following five documents:

- the 'Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan', 1994, covering the period 1994-1999, inclusive (STCG, 1994)
- the 'Interim Review of the Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan' (STCG, 1999)
- 'A New Strategy for Scottish Tourism', for the period 2000-2005 (Scottish Executive, 2000)
- the 'Tourism Framework for Action', 2002-2005, which is essentially a review of the 2000 strategy (Scottish Executive, 2002). This last was commissioned in light of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) epidemic and the attacks in the USA on the 11th September 2001, both of which had serious impacts on Scottish tourism and impacted on the achievability of the 'New Strategy' (Scottish Executive, 2002).

¹¹ The STCG at that time consisted of the Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, British Tourist Authority, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Historic Scotland, The Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Confederation of Tourism, Scottish Museums Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Sports Council (STCG, 1994).

- the Scottish Executive's 2006 'fresh look' strategy: 'The Next Decade: a tourism framework for change'.

Together, the above represent the main collective published efforts in pan-Scottish strategic planning for tourism until the present. As already noted above, the national strategies have provided the nexus for specific agencies such as HIE and SEN to develop their own corporate plans or strategies based on the vision and targets set out in the 'collective' national strategies.

(ii) Content Analysis of a Chronological Review

Albeit within a short time-scale in this case (ie 1994-2006), the exercise of chronological reviewing serves to map and reveal the changing articulation of a subject in its specific literature domain (Cuba and Cocking, 1994). Successive public sector tourism strategy documents not only employ distinct linguistic characteristics, they inevitably reflect renewed priorities and the desire for 'continuous improvement' within a changing political and organisational framework (Hall, 2000:76). This is seen in the case of how the issue of seasonality and the performance of the tourism sector and its small businesses are addressed at a strategic and national level.

The data presented in Appendix 4.2 thus provide an inventory of references to 'seasonality' within the five documents mentioned above. These are captured by page number and chapter, section or heading within the respective document, under the 'Details of Seasonality Reference' (right hand) column. Issues with which seasonality is associated are text emboldened and italicised for contextualisation and emphasis in the Review. Under the 'Agency, Document Reference and Notes' (left hand) column, the role ascribed to seasonality and/or the key linkage identifier between seasonality and other policy issues is listed. The content review of the strategy documents reveals several notable findings:

- I The breadth and scope in which seasonality is articulated in the published strategies both illustrates and reflects the holistic treatment of the phenomenon in

the academic literature, as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, in the first (1994) national tourism strategy, seasonality was expressed in terms of:

- performance measures: (eg trip concentration, p18; turnover concentration, p18; expenditures, p6; unit occupancy levels, p29)
- elements of causation: natural (the weather, p19); institutional (fixed annual holiday periods and school holidays, p24) and exogenous constraints (public transport tariffs, p40)
- associated problems: economic (under-utilisation, low profitability, lack of investment, p9; extra capital expenditure in peak seasons, p20); labour force (seasonal work and investment in people, p9); destination effects (localised overcrowding, p20)
- ‘overcoming/combating’ responses: marketing (shoulder and off-peak campaigns, p25; pricing, p24); product development (events, conferences, entertainment, p24); sports and activities (p32).

“Programmes to tackle seasonality are a top priority and encompass all...sectors” (STCG, 1994:23)

‘Seasonality’ is thus viewed holistically and depicted as ‘condition’, ‘indicator’, ‘problem’ and ‘objective’.

- II. While both demand and supply elements of the phenomenon are articulated, the emphasis is predominantly that seasonality is demand-driven, for example in the discussion of Scotland’s tourist markets (1994, pp14-18), performance (1999, p4; 2000, p25) and causal influences (1994, p24). Supply-side elements are explored in terms of exogenous constraints (eg seasonal closure of hotels, B&Bs and guest houses, 1994, p29; the issue of government subsidies to stimulate public transport, 1994, p40) and supports (eg extended trading periods in Historic Scotland’s estate, 1994, p49). However, analysis of such modifying actions (Butler, 2001:9) among elements of the supply-chain is given at best cursory treatment in any of the national strategy and review documents. In particular, acknowledgement of the roles of local and planning authorities,

licensing boards, local community and charitable trusts is absent within the strategic analyses prior to 2006. All of these are known to impact on or influence the trading behaviours of small tourism businesses (Goulding and Hay, 2001; Goulding, 2003). The most recent strategy identifies regulation and the planning system as potentially constraining to tourism businesses (pp28-29) although not specifically with respect to hindrances to year-round trading (Scottish Executive, 2006).

III. Linkage between tourism seasonality and a number of associated 'problem' issues is apparent within the strategies, suggesting that there may be an in-built laterality to seasonality within the policy arena. In other words, temporal spreading or concentration-reducing strategies in tourism are seen to contribute to other policy attainments. Seasonality and 'regionality'/visitor dispersal (1994, p14; 2000, p12; 2002, p9), rural areas (2000, p2), transport policy (1994, p40) and employment (1999, p10; 2002, p5; 2006, p38), are cases in point. By contrast, relatively little direct linkage is articulated between seasonality and business efficiency and growth within the collective strategies, even though these are underlying concerns. However, as noted in the preceding analysis, the ensuing enterprise network corporate plans make such linkages explicit.

Additionally, seasonality and sustainability are linked tenuously, for example with reference to the development of budget accommodation along the West Highland Way (1999, p6) and to 'The Natural Environment' (p23). In the 2006 strategy, the link is more explicit, insofar as the analysis on sustainability makes reference to spreading demand both temporally and spatially to alleviate 'hotspots' and thus support local communities (p38). In general, economic and market foci are ascribed to seasonality in the 1999 and the ensuing strategy documents, with no analysis of alternative views (eg Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Murphy, 1985; Flognfeldt, 2001, 1988, etc) regarding the potential ecological, facility or workforce benefits that may accrue from periods of downtime.

- IV. Where sectoral analysis is provided, illustrative data tends to concentrate on the hotel sector, as expressed through hotel occupancy rates (1994, p24: Table 8). Otherwise, statements normally pertain to seasonality-related economic problems inherent within the accommodation sector in general. Specific analysis of the self-catering sector is confined to acknowledgement of the problems of short term lets (1994, p29) while that of the camping and caravan park sector identifies the preponderance of seasonal closure (1994, *ibid*). On the other hand, success factors in seasonal extension among visitor attractions are identified (1994, p20) while these plus indoor sports and recreation facilities (1999, p6) and TICs (1994, p24) are identified in terms of specific opportunities for seasonal extension goals.
- V. The relationship between small tourism businesses and seasonal trading is generally implicit. The 1994 Strategic Plan provides a situational analysis of 'The Industry in Scotland' (pp9-13), recognising the "...*very high proportion of small, family run businesses for which seasonality and quality of service can be problematical*" (1994, p9). This is reinforced in the sectoral analyses (see IV above) with reference to seasonal closure of businesses in most accommodation sectors (1994, p29) and explicitly the B&B sector in the later strategy (2002, p6). However, the strategies do not acknowledge any link between seasonal trading behaviours and underlying business motivations, nor the influences posed by occupational pluralism (Hughes/HIDB, 1980), lifestyle, the age/family demographics of business proprietorship, nor exogenous constraints (Goulding and Hay, 2001). Moreover, seasonality performance targets and achievements, where expressed (1994, p6; 1999, p4) tend not to address seasonal extension uptake by businesses. The exception to this is a supplementary and non-sector specific industry indicator in the 'New' Tourism Strategy which identifies the "...*average number of weeks tourism businesses are open*" (2000, p44) as a target to measure success.
- VI. There is noticeably less direct emphasis on seasonality in each successive document between the 1994 national strategy and the 2006 'framework for action' plan. In the former, 'Seasonality' is identified with 'Marketing' as comprising the

'Key Issues and Priorities' under Objective Two of the strategic plan: "To promote tourism in a more effective and co-ordinated way" (1994, p6). Accordingly, it drives the expressed strategic challenge by which "Scotland must now become an all-year tourism destination" (1994, p18).

The fundamental importance that seasonality is given within the 1994-99 strategy is apparent from the breadth and extent of its coverage, as highlighted in the content review (Appendix 4.2). The strategic challenges thus posed are picked up in the 1999 Interim Review, in which seasonality is one of five 'achievement headings' reviewed in that document in terms of five year performance (1994-1999). In addition to reporting on the attainment of temporal expenditure targets, a number of explicitly seasonality-reducing marketing initiatives are highlighted, including the launch of the two national flagship marketing campaigns, 'Autumn Gold' and 'Spring into Summer' (discussed in Section 4.7 below), plus developments in the promotion of events, festivals, out of season activity holidays, cultural and business tourism and indoor sports facilities designed for all year use (1999, p6). There is also reference to the implementation of a specific seasonality strategy (ibid.) and the work of the Seasonality Working Group of industry representatives (1999, p9) driving forward such initiatives as mentioned above.

By contrast, the role of seasonality as a policy issue is rather more implicit within the 'New' Strategy (2000) and the successor Framework for Action (2002) and 'The Next Decade' (2006). Indeed, it is largely subsumed within the vocabulary of the strategic vision and its success factors. In the former document, the Executive Summary acknowledges that "...More needs to be done to extend the season" (2000, p2) a goal whose achievement "...will increasingly be determined by the marketing effectiveness of individual businesses" (ibid). In such a government publication, this sentiment strongly hints at a policy paradigm shift away from combating seasonality, *per se*, and towards the expressed role and responsibilities of the private, commercial sectors in tourism.

The primacy of the credo of tourism business effectiveness is reinforced throughout the strategy, for example in defining roles for the STB, ATBs and the industry-based Scottish Tourism Forum (STF) to “...*assist tourism businesses [to] make the most of their off-season campaigns*” (2000, p27), to “...*encourage tourism businesses to adopt greater flexibility in servicing visitor needs throughout the season [and] to recognise opportunities for extended opening created by marketing campaigns and to participate in them*” (2000, p28).

The 2002-2005 Tourism Framework for Action provides less direct reference to seasonality than the previous three documents. On the one hand, this could reflect a perceived diminution of the issue as a ‘problem’. A clue here is the statement that “...*50% of overseas and 30% of British visitors [are] coming here during the third quarter of each year*” (2002, p5). Compare this with the first national strategy, which states “*Around 60 per of trips by overseas visitors and about 40% of trips by UK visitors [to Scotland] are in the period July through September*” (1994, p18). The evidence thus presented may be indicative of changing priorities. On the other hand, the ‘Vision and Priorities’ expressed therein include reference to the need to address the issues of extending the season (2002, p9) and the relevance of the action plan to seasonal operators (ibid, p6). Any doubt about the responsibilities of private operators are dispelled in a press release via scotexchange.net, that affirmed

“...the Framework for Action outlines actions that must be taken by all involved in tourism, from the individual operator to the large public agency.”

(VisitScotland, 2002)

Finally, the latest strategy contains the least emphasis on seasonal tourism businesses *per se*, and the greatest emphasis on integrating tourism specific actions with wider policy domains. Social housing, transport development and the planning system are three clear cases in point (2006, p26, p33-37, p29).

The above content analysis highlights the changing emphasis and policy significance of seasonality in successive strategy thinking. It also reveals the nature

of relationships and articulation between the phenomenon and other 'related' policy issues, and charts the increasing emphasis on private sector responsibility to meet, partly through seasonal extension, agreed national goals and aspirations for enhanced quality, professionalism and competitiveness. Implementation of the strategic process has involved numerous direct seasonality addressing initiatives during the past decade. These have taken the form of collective inter-agency commitments, some of which have been specifically targeted towards the focal 'constituency' of small business service providers, and joint public-private collaborations to nurture seasonal market expansion. The major outputs of the process are discussed below.

4.7 Seasonality Initiatives

"...the fragmented nature of the industry militates against co-ordinated initiatives divorced from the interests of other agencies; if the accommodation units in a resort, for instance, close in October, little encouragement exists for the shopkeepers in that resort to remain open throughout the winter months."

(Shaw *et al.*, 1988:174)

The dominance afforded to seasonality in the first national strategic plan for Scottish tourism (1994-1999) created an impetus for action that arguably galvanised its stakeholders to a much greater extent than at anytime in the previous decades of statist interventionism. 'Seasonality' in effect became enshrined *within* the Scottish public policy process through the explicit targets and resultant mechanisms set up to 'tackle' it, rather than continuing to be seen purely in terms of a policy *output*, ie confined to a series of measurement indicators (Goulding *et al.*, 2004). This change in emphasis occurred despite the fact that seasonality was one of a growing number of major issues tourism policy stakeholders were collectively and simultaneously grappling with in order to create a sea-change in Scottish tourism.¹²

¹² Quality assurance, product development, training and skills and the natural environment being other major and inter-related strategic priorities for Scottish tourism in the 1994-1999 strategy.

The individual outcomes of the strategic processes are too numerous to consider here, however they can be categorised into four main ‘types’ of activity. Three of these, a strategic monitoring process on seasonality ‘progress’, the setting up of a Seasonality Working Group (System Three, 1998), and the commissioning of much intelligence gathering and ‘research’ activity, collectively led to the fourth major outcome, the formulation of a Seasonality Strategy for Scottish Tourism (STB, 1999).

The year-on-year review process enshrined a monitoring process which became the *de facto* impetus for partner agencies to be seen to be acting on their commitments to the initial strategy. It also provided a focus for benchmarking and reporting on key performance indicators, specifically occupancy levels and the temporal spread of visits and expenditures. The 1998 progress report for example, highlights the achievements of two partner agencies, Historic Scotland (HS) and HIE in ‘tackling’ seasonality. In the former case, performance measurement identifies extensions to the opening periods of 28 HS properties into the shoulder months (STCG, 1998). In the case of HIE, the report notes:

- the introduction of a new business support scheme criterion specifying “...*a minimum acceptable operating season on a local basis*” (ibid., p17) in order for businesses to qualify for development assistance, in which local definition would vary from LEC to LEC, and
- the introduction of an off-season residential training package aimed at qualifying junior managers, a measure clearly aimed more towards SMEs with employees rather than the many family-centred micro-businesses.

The device of strategy progress reports also enables the public appraisal of numeric targets, as for example:

“...the data seem to show a very encouraging alleviation of seasonality...but the relative improvement in autumn occupancy rates (from 45% to 54%) is exactly what STCG set out to achieve with the various seasonality initiatives”

(STCG, 1998:7)

and, more soberly:

“The 60% target [of the annual share of October-June visitor expenditure] set for the year 2000 may be difficult to achieve and certainly will require additional and sustained marketing resource, targeting short breaks in the off-season...”

(STCG, 1996:13)

Subsequent strategies and action plans have been far less specifically target-oriented in terms of seasonal extension, instead embracing a broader philosophy of commitment to seasonal extension.

A Seasonality Working Group (SWG) was established in 1994 under the aegis of the STB but operating autonomously from the lead body. The Group embodied a key mechanism of tourism policy process and implementation as defined by Hall and McArthur (1998), that of innovation generation and ideas diffusion. Chaired by an industrialist and composed of representatives from a relatively small number of service providing businesses and agencies, the Group conceived and developed two national seasonal extension marketing campaigns, ‘Autumn Gold’ from 1995 and ‘Spring into Summer’ a year later (System Three, 1998). Industry partners ‘bought into’ the campaigns both through the development of price discounted inclusive offers during shoulder periods and through campaign membership, differentiated by levels of partnership status (gold, silver, bronze) (STB, undated). In this respect, the campaign evolved into a quasi-independent entity. Institutional members of the SWG also committed to seasonal extension targets, for example in the extended opening periods and times of TICs, visitor attractions and leisure facilities and by supporting the development of off-season events.

Thirdly, the 1994-99 strategy led to the commissioning by STCG partners of numerous intelligence gathering research studies. Examples include a report on Seasonal Employment in the Highlands and Islands and 'Tourism as a Year Round Activity for Businesses' commissioned by HIE (STCG, 1998). This latter, conducted by consultants Segal Quince Wicksteed, involved a best practice case study methodology of Highland based businesses operating successfully on a year round cycle, using in-depth interviews with proprietors and access to business records (SQW, 1997). Such methodologies clearly have the potential to provide sponsoring organisations with an increased insight into the economics of year round versus seasonal business operations. However, in the case of the Highlands research it shed little light on the non-economic dimensions of the 'operating decision line' between year round trading and seasonal closure (Goulding and Gunn, 2000). Other methodologies have focused on consumers' temporal travel decisions and demographic life-cycle segmentation, attitudes and perceptions and consumer views of the product development opportunities, as for example those studies commissioned in 1997-98 by the SBTB (Lowland Market Research, 1998) and by the STB (System Three, 1998).

As noted above, the various actions and outputs from the first national strategic plan were channelled into the formulation of a Seasonality Strategy for Scottish Tourism (STB, 1999), which was heralded as a starting point for "*much more coordinated, and indeed individual effort...to grow off-season tourism*" (ibid, p1). Under the stewardship of the former STB, this initiative continued the tradition of centralised institutional partnership encompassing the enterprise networks, local authorities, Area Tourist Boards, heritage, sports and leisure agencies - in short the main STCG partners, while extending responsibilities and commitments arising from the strategy to tourism businesses. The seasonality strategy is market oriented and significantly constructed around developing off-peak products to match high yield target segments ('young urbanites', 'grey panthers', 'young activists' etc, ibid., p3). These markets are identified and evaluated through in-depth consumer research based on values, lifestyle and benefit segmentation techniques (ibid., p19-20; Goulding and Gunn, 2000). As such it sets out 'the challenge' to tourism

businesses and identifies “*who should do what to tackle these barriers/grow the markets*” [sic] (ibid., p8). The seven action areas are set out in Appendix 4.4. In five cases, businesses are integral to the actions and in the other two (‘lack of targeted products’ and ‘places being open and things to do’) trade bodies assume the mantle of responsibility on behalf of individual businesses, alongside ATBs and other agencies (ibid., p10).

As was highlighted in the content analysis of successive tourism strategies, the 1994-99 document represents a high water mark in the prominence accorded to the phenomenon as a strategic issue in Scottish tourism. The national seasonality strategy is very much the embodiment of such prominence. The fact that succeeding frameworks and action plans have failed to acknowledge the 1999 seasonality strategy may be considered indicative of the changing market and institutional dynamics and priorities facing Scottish tourism since then. An example of this may be seen in the growing inter-relationship between seasonality and aspects of sustainability, explored in the 2004 study commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, ‘Green Tourism Approaches to Weather and Seasonality’ (Natural Capital, 2004). Alternatively, it may suggest an evolutionary policy process, in which the role of seasonality and in particular the temporal trading behaviours of STRBs are considered symptomatic of other policy issues.

4.8 Summary

The current chapter has set out to chart, characterise and contextualise the degree of seasonal operations in Scottish tourism. It has identified performance discrepancies between visitation data and occupancy levels, sectoral performance disparities and gradual amelioration in the temporal spread of demand in most recent years. Data from the SAOS, the VAM and the current study database have been examined to determine supply-side seasonality. The chapter has revealed that there still exists a significant level of supply-side seasonality among the private, commercial sectors, with different degrees of intensity according to sector and region.

From this it has led on to an analysis of the policy and strategic environment within which such temporal behaviour occurs. Institutional trading constraints are seen to exist in a number of forms within the planning, licensing and legislative systems. The degree to which these, other influences and intrinsic motivations impact on seasonal trading is the subject of measurement and analysis in subsequent chapters of this study. First, the focus of the next chapter considers the methodological approach adopted in order to pursue the study aims, objectives and the various research questions.

Chapter 5 Research Methodology and Design

5.1 Introduction

A particular feature of this study has been the nature of its conception and evolution, from a relatively broad though small scale exploratory case study of seasonality behaviours and attitudes within a particular area, to a Scotland-wide study among a more defined constituency: ie STRB owner-operators who trade seasonally. The progression of the study has involved an epistemological evolution towards a more interpretivist position, recognising that within a broad social scientific tradition, ethnographic approaches may offer a valid alternative view of the seasonality phenomenon from a supply-side perspective. Moreover, its course has spanned a number of years, involving a hiatus between the two stages of the process. The following chapter attempts to account for and deal with these issues.

In the first instance, the underlying research design dilemmas are examined (section 5.2), by way of a contextualisation to the issues involved in the design formulation process. From these, a rationale for the adopted research paradigm is provided. This then leads onto discussion of the research design as originally envisaged (section 5.3) and some of the inherent methodological issues. The following two sections (5.4 and 5.5) respectively focus on the methods employed in the exploratory and main stages of the study, including their objectives and the instruments used to elicit data. The database construction and sampling method employed for the main survey element are considered in section 5.6 followed by an appraisal of the refining process (section 5.7) and an illustration of the various stages of the survey distribution and implementation process (section 5.8). Qualitative data considerations of the main stage of the study are examined in section 5.9, in particular with respect to the role of such data in light of the curtailment of the planned interview activities. This section finishes by revisiting the

research design *de facto*, in the light of changes encountered during its evolution and the nature of data produced.

Finally, section 5.10 provides findings for the two elements of the exploratory study, respectively the initial questionnaire, for which condensed results are presented, and the construction of ‘caselets’ from some of the exploratory interviews. It was decided to position the exploratory data findings at the end of the current chapter given their precursive and informative role to the main stage of the study, and as a link to the more extensive data analyses that form Chapters Six and Seven of this study.

5.2 Research Design Dilemmas

In its broadest definition, the research problem in this study is about how to design a method robust enough to examine, systematically and objectively, the behaviours of small tourism related businesses in the seasonal tourism economy in Scotland. More specifically, the research is designed to explore whether linkages can be made between the characteristics, motivations and influences on the trading behaviours of seasonal operators. The main focus is on private businesses in largely - though not exclusively - rural locations throughout Scotland. This became apparent in the spatial distribution and incidence of seasonally trading businesses in Scotland observed during the construction of the data base.

Within a mixed tourism economy in any defined study area, the challenges of templating the meanings, perceptions and measurements of seasonality are significant. Numerous research dilemmas are inherent within the complexities of tourism proprietorship and operating patterns, particularly in places characterised by a wide mix of proprietorial types and operational goals such as exists in Scotland. For example, as was encountered in Chapter Three, basic definitional problems of *proprietorship* are observed by Getz and Carlsen (2000:548) in their study of the characteristics and goals of family run tourism businesses in rural Western Australia, where the distinctions

between sole proprietors, co-preneurs and extended family managed units impacted on their research design.

To add a further definitional dilemma, *in what circumstances an operation can be defined as seasonal* is a fundamental issue, given that tourism businesses often incorporate more than one trading unit or activity (Getz and Nilsson, 2004), such as separate serviced and self-catering activities or accommodation and restaurant facilities. One of these may be operated seasonally, the other year round or both counter-cyclically (ibid, p28). In the absence of clear definitions, there may also be *perception differences* and gaps between businesses and destination planners as to what constitutes a 'seasonal operation' (Goulding, 2004b). This may apply especially where seasonal operators choose not to benefit from destination wide market diversification strategies that give rise to extended and complementary temporal demand patterns (Baum and Hagen, 1999). Some businesses in peripheral, rural locations perform essential local community roles such as combining a retail, craft or catering service with a visitor information service or tourist accommodation. From a research design perspective this raises the question, among potential subjects, of the degree of self-perception as a tourism business.

Exploratory research revealed many different *subjective meanings* by operators to the concept of seasonality. One operator's 'mid-season' may be another's 'low season'. The start of the 'high season' in one locality may not be interpreted similarly by operators in the next locality, irrespective of indicators such as occupancy and utilisation levels (Goulding, 2004b). Therefore, seasonal comparison may easily become clouded by terminological inconsistency and perception. In addition to this, STRB business and lifestyle goals, motivations and aspirations are fluid and highly individualised (Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000) as was discussed in Chapter Three.

There is also the question of *comparability of experience* between the different tourism-related sectors. For example, sightseeing and guiding operators may have a different

seasonal operating context compared with hospitality operators, insofar as their activity is not necessarily confined to the local destination area nor to an inbound market. This represents a challenge to the construction of the research from the perspective of how to design an instrument appropriate to different types of business operations across the various sub-sectors of tourism.

Even within the range of tourist accommodation, significant operational differences from sector to sector are thought to influence temporal trading patterns and conditions. As was noted in Chapter Four, the constraints arising from local authority licensing restrictions that apply to holiday park operators in various parts of Scotland do not apply to operators in other sectors such as the commercial home enterprise setting. Likewise the non-permanent nature of habitation that often characterises self-catering or caravan units raises different operational issues from those where occupation is permanent. Accordingly, the experience of operators from sector to sector poses challenges in the design of the survey instrument.

Research Paradigm

Many of the configurations are therefore inherently subjective in nature, both on the part of the researcher and on the part of the subjects themselves. For the researcher, the above dilemmas impact on the parameters of choice of what constitute the 'significant variables' to be included in the fieldwork design. Central to the research design is the acknowledgement of the need to generate data that hold independently of the setting and the method and which, while they generate an 'objective reality' (Fielding and Thomas, 2001:140) in turn are also able to support exploration of the 'self-constructed versions of reality' (ie an interpretivist framework, Clarke, 2001:33). Thus the research design needed to reflect the essence of the epistemological debate as was explored in Chapter One of this thesis.

In the positivist tradition, meanings and attitudes (of and towards seasonal trading patterns, motivations and behaviours) are definable by measurement variables which are

testable and tested for validity, reliability and authentication of each attitude variable (Procter, 2001). A positivist approach would provide the basis for causal relationships, such as determining which demographic, attitudinal, exogenous or economic factors are formative in seasonal trading. However, empirical studies of tourism businesses such as those of Getz and Nilsson (2004) and Ioannides and Petersen (2003) in which the motivations and behaviours of seasonal trading have been explored, reveal a more complex reality and one which invites an investigative approach that transcends purely quantitative approaches.

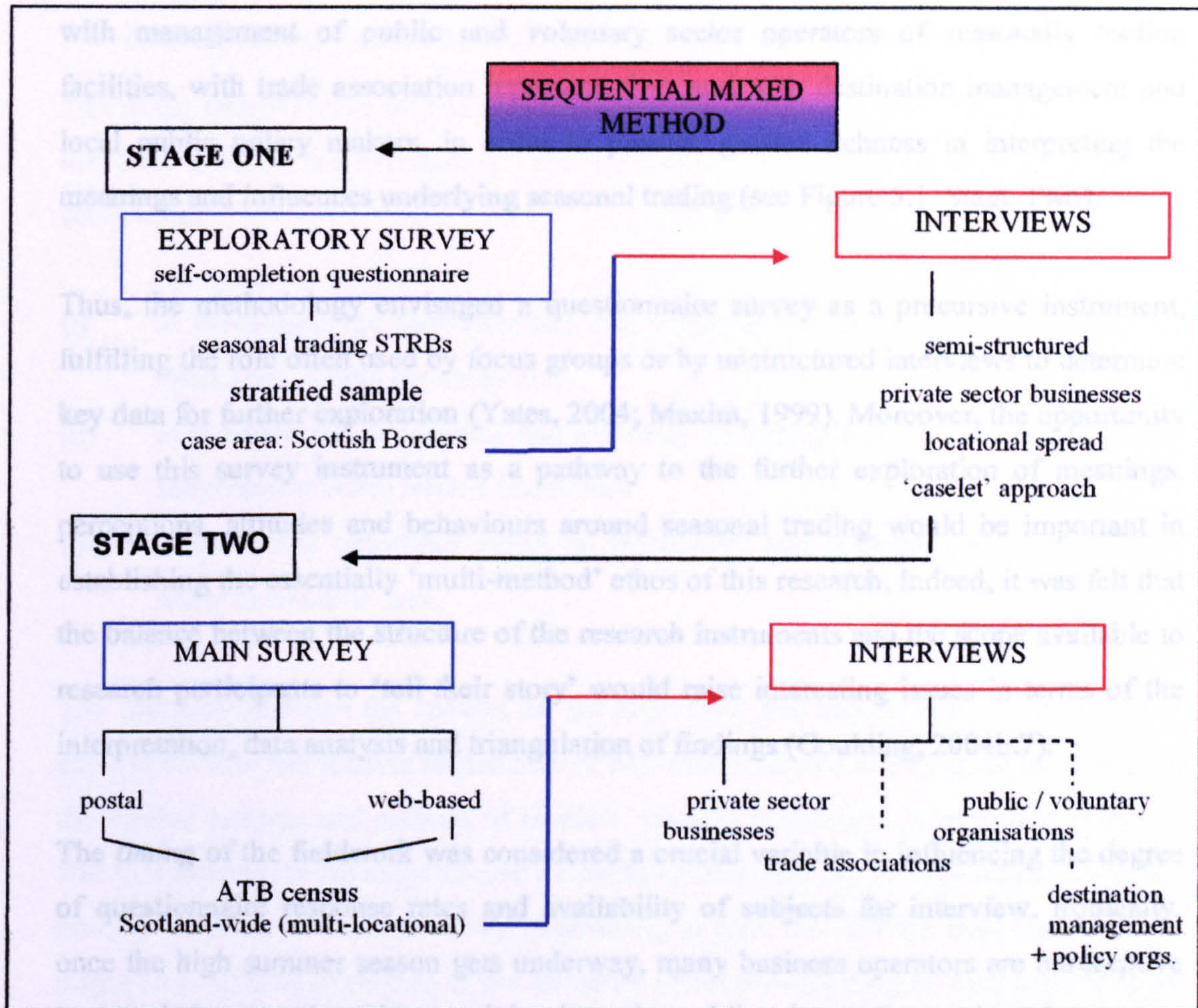
It can therefore be seen that, as much as there is the need to provide objective measures of the incidence, patterns and underlying influences and attitudes affecting seasonal trading, the overall research represents a much more mixed reality. Sociological and spatial constructs of the phenomenon are as important to understanding seasonal trading motivations as are its traditionally market-based constructs. Moreover, this 'multiple paradigm' reality reflects an increasingly common trend in social research in which, as Clarke (2001:33, citing Pawson, 1989) notes, much of contemporary sociological research is essentially pluralistic in nature. Indeed, for Bullock, *et al.* (1995) qualitative studies can be used to illustrate, explain and add depth to the findings of quantitative research.

5.3 Research Design

In light of the above rationale, the research design was initially constructed as a sequential mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative processes (Maxim, 1999) in two main stages. Stage One was a regional exploratory study conducted in 1999 and early-2000, immediately prior to the initial doctoral research registration. It developed and tested a questionnaire-based survey of seasonally trading STRBs and followed this up with interviews with a number of the questionnaire respondents. It was intended that this approach serve as a template for the development of a Scotland-wide study which would effectively form the main fieldwork element (Stage Two) of the

survey. The relationship and composition of the two stages as originally envisaged is as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Original Research Design Formulation



In both stages, the aim of the questionnaire based survey was to capture the incidence and characteristics of seasonal trading, as well as business and proprietors' demographic data. This quantitative approach would be supplemented with open ended questions and some Likert-type scaled attitude statements to highlight the role of a number of variables as influences on trading patterns and probe to the role of seasonal trading.

Findings from the survey would then be used to inform the construction of semi-structured in-depth interviews as the second phase of each stage of the fieldwork. It was also envisaged that in Stage Two, two sets of interviews would be held. The first would comprise proprietors of seasonally trading small tourism related businesses representing either regional or sectoral clusters of seasonal traders. The second set would be arranged with management of public and voluntary sector operators of seasonally trading facilities, with trade association representatives and with destination management and local public policy makers, in order to provide greater richness in interpreting the meanings and influences underlying seasonal trading (see Figure 5.1, Stage Two).

Thus, the methodology envisaged a questionnaire survey as a precursive instrument, fulfilling the role often used by focus groups or by unstructured interviews to determine key data for further exploration (Yates, 2004; Maxim, 1999). Moreover, the opportunity to use this survey instrument as a pathway to the further exploration of meanings, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around seasonal trading would be important in establishing the essentially 'multi-method' ethos of this research. Indeed, it was felt that the balance between the structure of the research instruments and the scope available to research participants to 'tell their story' would raise interesting issues in terms of the interpretation, data analysis and triangulation of findings (Goulding, 2004b:7).

The *timing* of the fieldwork was considered a crucial variable in influencing the degree of questionnaire response rates and availability of subjects for interview. Ironically, once the high summer season gets underway, many business operators are unreceptive to completing questionnaires or giving interviews. Likewise, at the year's end, some are closed for winter and unavailable for interview. Timing was therefore critical in the planning and conducting of fieldwork at both stages and accordingly influenced the timescale of the implementation of the study.

The next two sections explore the methods employed in respectively Stage One and Stage Two of the study and account for why not all elements originally planned were

implemented. The findings from Stage One (the exploratory study) are discussed in the penultimate section of the current chapter (5.10) while Chapters Six and Seven correspondingly focus on the quantitative and qualitative findings from Stage Two (the main component) of the study.

5.4 Stage One Aims and Research Instruments: The Scottish Borders' Exploratory Study

The Stage One research instruments as outlined in Figure 5.1 were designed to reflect the three aims of the exploratory investigation in the Scottish Borders, as originally articulated:

- (i) to investigate the characteristics and extent of seasonality in tourism business operations within the study area**
- (ii) to examine the importance and influence of supply-side factors on the trading patterns of tourism related businesses**
- (iii) to determine proprietor views on seasonality and seasonal closure within the wider destination area.**

The first aim provided the context for the latter two. The second aim was designed to explore the role and relative importance of non-economic and non-demand led factors in the trading patterns and policies of Borders' tourism businesses. A particular objective was to disaggregate the demand-side (ie market based) and supply-side influences in the trading decisions of tourism related businesses. In turn, the findings from the third aim might be evaluated in relation to the influence of supply-side factors. Examples of these emerged from the seasonality and small business literatures (respectively Chapters Two and Three) and the contextual investigation (Chapter Four) and are illustrated in Table 5.1 below. For example, the non-participation of some enterprises in their local destination management organisation sponsored seasonal extension initiatives might have little to do with the perceived costs or revenues resulting from an extended operating season and more to do with any of the following factors:

Table 5.1 Examples of Supply-side Influences on Seasonal Tourism Operations

Labour availability	- academic holidays - competition for labour from other economic sectors
Dual use of facilities	- halls of residence
Health and safety	- activity centres
Local authority licensing	- caravan holiday parks
Staff development	- training courses ; attending travel trade fairs
Lifestyle trading	- closure for holidays, rest and relaxation
Personal commitments	- family businesses : VFR trips, religious observance
Maintenance & repair	- historic buildings ; leisure amenities
Recuperation	- of natural environment, eg country parks,
Secondary business	- tourism enterprise fits around primary business commitments

It would therefore be a key role of the research instruments to explore the strength of these factors as temporal trading determinants or influences.

The Exploratory Study Area

The Scottish Borders was selected as the exploratory study area for a number of reasons:

- (i) it exhibited characteristics of a peripheral region within Scotland, including limited public transport access, no major population centres or sizable local consumer markets (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Wanhill, 1997)
- (ii) it recorded marked levels of seasonality as measured by demand based performance indicators (Goulding and Hay, 2001; SBTB, 1998)
- (iii) it has traditionally 'suffered' from being a transit route between England and central Scotland, and accordingly experiences low average length of stay per visitor (Goulding and Hay, 2001)
- (iv) prior to the exploratory study, it had suffered significant economic difficulties with traditional industries (agriculture and textiles) and newer industries (electronics) (Goulding, 2003)

- (v) as a result of the above, market extension studies had been commissioned by the then Scottish Borders Tourist Board, including consumer preference and business behaviour studies and a nightlife study by Lowland Research (1998a, 1998b, 1999).

Research Instruments

Phase I comprised a structured questionnaire to tourism businesses and organisations operating within the Scottish Borders. The objectives reflected the broader study aims as previously discussed. Thus the questionnaire sought to elicit information on trading patterns including temporal variations throughout the year and the length of the operators' 'open' trading season, the importance of the market and of a variety of operational factors in influencing the temporal trading decision, the proprietors' views on the significance of seasonality as an issue for Borders tourism and their participation in public sector seasonal extension initiatives. It was designed to address the quantification and characterisation of seasonal operations.

A database of around 1,050 tourism related businesses was compiled and from this a stratified random sample of 311 businesses was drawn. The construction was *a priori* determined (Flick, 1998) using a statistical sampling approach (Oppenheim, 1992), based on different sectors of operation, location within the Borders and whether the operation was year round or seasonal as determined by listings in a universe of various promotional materials. These included the 1999 Scottish Borders Tourist Board 'where to stay' guide and Borders entries in the STB's pan-Scotland guide as well as individual leaflets. The sample thus reflected geographical clustering within the study area, the sectoral spread of businesses, their status as members or non-members of the area's DMO (the SBTB) and all known seasonal tourism-related traders in the area supplemented with a core of year round traders. Inclusion of some year round traders was designed to test the validity of individual supply variables (Flick, 1998). The Scottish Borders questionnaire was piloted to twelve randomly selected seasonal businesses during the early autumn of 1999 which resulted in the need for cosmetic

adjustments. The finalised questionnaire used within the exploratory study is shown as Appendix 5.1.

The second phase of the exploratory study comprised semi-structured, in-depth, site based interviews with 19 operators, also representing a cross-section of geographically spread and sectoral operations. Each of them self-defined as a seasonally trading operation. The interview sample was drawn purposively from the questionnaire respondents (Flick, 1998; Sommer and Sommer, 2002) who signified willingness to participate in this phase of the study. These included proprietors of small family run hotels, country inns, holiday caravan parks, activity operators, several B&B establishments, self-catering operators, a tea room, roadside restaurant, private museum, private country house and a garden. The personal experience and unique perspectives of operators across the range of service providers was sought above other considerations. This stage was designed to probe the relevance and relative importance of supply-side factors in determining the length and structure of trading patterns. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes and broadly followed the three main themes of the questionnaire, with an emphasis on the second objective (to determine the influences on seasonal trading). A copy of the exploratory interview questionnaire is provided in Appendix 5.2.

A semi-structured approach was preferred to either an unstructured or structured method as it would allow subjects scope to reveal their concerns and interests within the framework of a rationale (Yates, 2004) or a 'directed conversation' (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996:89). It was envisaged that this stage would elicit both qualification of the findings as well as attempt to determine some measurability of the importance of non-market factors as seasonal trading determinants. However, in this latter respect (measurability) it is acknowledged that the interview design did not provide a valid basis for quantifying interview information.

As previously discussed, a significant period of time elapsed between the exploratory study and the main stage of the research. This time lapse was contributory to the eventual formulation of the main Scotland-wide study, insofar as it necessitated a 'stock-taking' exercise of the original study aims. From the intervening literature reviews and contextual developments (such as the evolving institutional and public policy contexts of seasonality in Scotland and the downturn of tourism in the aftermath of the '11th September 2001' incidents) it was deemed that a different emphasis was required, indeed reflecting the emerging research questions that have been highlighted in the preceding chapters.

Moreover, while the exploratory study exposed a deep emotiveness for the issue of seasonality among Borders' STRB proprietors, the findings could not be extrapolated to a nationwide constituency. Even though they have informed the on-going research agenda, there was presumed to be a degree of localised endogeneity in the data (King *et al.*, 1994) accounted for by the particular characteristics of the Scottish Borders, both structurally and in the region's tourism sector. Importantly too, Phase 1 of the exploratory study represented samples of both seasonal and year round trading businesses. Therefore a revision of the exploratory research tools was implemented for Stage Two.

Findings from Phase 1 of the study are summarised in section 5.10 of this chapter, after consideration of the research instruments employed in Stage Two of the study.

5.5 Stage Two Research Instruments

Questionnaire Survey

For the Scottish-wide stage of the study, the questionnaire was developed in two formats, a paper based and a web-based version. This reflected the desire both to maximise the response rate by offering a choice of response modes, as well as acknowledging that some operators may actually prefer a choice of means in which to

complete the questionnaire. Indeed, during the construction of the initial uncleaned data base, 48.9% (957/1957) of the entries were noted to have a web-site address and 57.5% (1125/1957) had an e-mail address, thus validating the time and resources spent on developing the web-based version of the questionnaire, should any respondents choose to respond electronically. Moreover, the above figures probably under-estimate the extent of access to the internet, given that some businesses not disclosing their e-mail or web-site addresses in promotional materials may have private household access to the internet.

Questionnaire Design and Development

The questionnaire format used in the exploratory study of the Scottish Borders was adapted for this study. The first two objectives of the original questionnaire (*to elicit information on operators' trading patterns and to determine the influences of those trading patterns, Appendix 5.1*) remained intact and accordingly formed the basis upon which the current questionnaire was constructed. A third objective of the original exploratory study had been to test the operators' views on the significance of seasonality as an issue for tourism within the Scottish Borders. For the purposes of the current research, that element of the original questionnaire had been revised to reflect the evolution of the research objectives over time.

In order to address the data and information requirements of the current study, there was a need to elicit more detailed *demographic information on seasonal tourism related businesses and their operators*. Accordingly, the third part of the questionnaire was revised with this objective in mind. The questionnaire used in the Scotland-wide survey, as distributed during October 2004, is shown as Appendix 5.3. It retained the dual function of being a vehicle to collect quantitative data on seasonal trading patterns and demographic data on businesses and proprietors, plus having the function of an attitude gathering instrument.

A further design requirement was to adopt a format that would facilitate electronic analysis of the findings, specifically utilising a software package designed for data analysis of large samples. Accordingly, most of the questions used a closed-ended type approach, to ensure both ease of completion by respondents and ease of coding and data transfer to the analysis software. The questionnaire is assessed in more detail, below.

Part 1: 'Your Business Operating Patterns'

The overall design of the questionnaire sought to address both quantification and characterisation of seasonal operations within Scotland. Although *quantification* of trading periods is observable from a number of sample frames, such as Area Tourist Board 'where to stay' guides, commercially produced guides or the centralised Ossian returns, such information does not necessarily provide empirical evidence of when trading actually occurred, as distinct from operators' trading intentions. Indeed, given that 'where to stay' guide entries are gathered and collated up to a year in advance of the distribution of the publications, there is potentially ample opportunity for changes in the trading intentions and practice of operators to arise during the intervening time. Hence the need to collect primary data to quantify seasonal trading patterns within the enlarged study area, acknowledging the inherent 'time snapshot' essence of the research instrument.

Accordingly, in Part 1 of the questionnaire, the objective of eliciting information on operators' trading patterns sought to determine:

- o which *months of the year* businesses report being open during the current year in question (2004) and the forthcoming trading year (2005). This was addressed in Question 1, '*How seasonal is your business?*' Inclusion of the two years was deemed important in providing data on the most recent (ie current) trading period and anticipated trading. Trading data for previous years was purposely excluded on the basis of issues of response reliability.

- any variation in the *days* and the *hours* of operation/closure throughout the year (if appropriate), ie periodic variation. This was addressed in Questions 2 and 3 respectively, each of which followed a similar ‘Yes/No’ format and, in the case of a ‘Yes’ response, provided ancillary statements offering possible diurnal and periodic variations, against which respondents were asked to mark all those which apply to their trading behaviours.

Inclusion of questions testing periodic time elements such as variation by hour and ‘trading day’ variations (Bar On, 1975:6) was designed to add a further dimension to the data by illustrating short-term trading fluctuations across the calendar year. There is a body of opinion which holds that seasonality in tourism must be differentiated from such short-term changes relating to weekly and daily demand variations (Bar On, 1975; Frechtling, 2001; Getz and Nilsson, 2004). In Getz and Nilsson’s study of family business trading behaviours in Bornholm, the width of the season is measured only according to the months of trading (ibid). This view may be quite rational in terms of understanding temporal *demand* patterns, as is indeed the basis of Bar On’s seminal study and more recent seasonality studies (eg Koenig and Bischoff, 2003; Jeffrey and Barden, 2001). However, from a *supply-side* perspective there is an argument that periodic trading fluctuations within certain types of operation (such as visitor attractions, tour operations, retail and restaurant businesses) may reflect broader influences such as fitting opening hours around family commitments. Accordingly, periodic trading variations may form part of ‘the bigger picture’ of trading pattern characteristics. Therefore capturing the incidence of periodic variation by day of the week and hours of opening (Questions 2 and 3 respectively) was deemed valid to the questionnaire design.

- the *trend* in seasonal and periodic trading periods was the basis of Question 4, ‘Which of the following best describes the trend in your trading pattern?’ This question offered two trend variables for respondents to consider over the years they have traded, namely *the number of months per year* and *the hours of opening*.

Respondents were asked to identify whether their trading pattern had increased, remained much the same or decreased in either of the above temporal trend variables.

- whether seasonal trading has always been the norm, or if not, when and why the operator has adopted seasonal trading. Accordingly, Question 5 was phrased '*Have you always operated this business on a seasonal (ie less than 12 months per year) basis?*' It was felt pertinent to include a broad definition of 'seasonal' in this question, even though it was recognised that some operators captured within the survey might not consider themselves as seasonal traders. In case of a 'No' response to this question, respondents were invited to answer the 'when' and 'why' supplementary questions. It was intended that answers to this question would help identify whether or not there was a discernable 'reverse trend' from year-round to seasonal trading, and if so, the degree of transference between year-round and seasonal trading. It also provided scope to explain the reasons for seasonal trading.
- whether the operator varies his/her trading period after they have been determined and published (ie characterising *behavioural change*). Question 6 asked '*Once you have determined your opening/closing periods, do you ever change them?*' and in the case of a 'Yes' response, offered two possible circumstances for respondents to clarify their operating behaviour. This question was incorporated into the survey in order to try and shed light on the degree of convergence or divergence between published trading behaviour data (as shown in consumer guides and official records) and the actual trading behaviours of operators.

Part 2: 'Influences on Your Decision to Trade Seasonally'

The key objective of this part of the survey instrument was to test the significance of various *influences* on the trading decisions of seasonal tourism related operators. The purpose, as conveyed to participants in the rubric of the questionnaire, was '*...to explore the relative importance of various factors in your decision to operate your*

business on a seasonal basis' (Appendix 5.3). How to capture a valid range of influencing items and record their respective degrees of relevance (through scaling) formed the two key design considerations in Part 2 of the questionnaire. These are considered below.

Scaling

A seven point scaling measure was proposed as an instrument to capture the relative degree of *importance* assigned by respondents to a range of influencing variables. The custom towards seven or even nine response points is often observed in the construction of differential scaling of attitudes and opinions (Burton, 2000, Sommer and Sommer, 2002). However, with due consideration to the requirement for clarity of meaning and the possibilities of misinterpretation afforded by offering a wide semantic response scale (DeVellis, 1991), the questionnaire refining and piloting process reduced the proposed seven points to five. This is consistent with generic Likert-type scaling norms (Procter, 2001, Sommer and Sommer, 2002), even though the measurement of attitudes in this case was not constructed according to true Likert characteristics of monotonic values based on a 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' attitude model (Procter, 2001:112).

Moreover, given that degrees of importance constituted the required unit of measurement for this part of the questionnaire, it was deemed that semantic differentiation in the form of opposing adjectives was unnecessary in this case. Initially, it was proposed to utilise a form of 'magnitude estimation' (Procter, 2001:113), by applying magnitude-related wordings such as 'highly important', 'of significant importance', 'of some importance', 'of little importance' and so on. However, during the pre-piloting refining process, these were rejected and replaced by the use of polar extremes: ie 'highest' and 'lowest' importance, linked by directional arrows on the questionnaire (see Appendix 5.3). Such refining acknowledged the potential semantic difficulties for respondents in differentiating degrees of 'importance', a fact that had been previously encountered in the construction of the questionnaire for the exploratory

(1999-2000) study. Therefore, it was felt that a five-point 'highest to lowest importance' scale would best serve the purposes of this survey from a usability perspective.

A secondary consideration in the breadth of scaling was that of managing and coding the potential responses (Burton, 2000), should a large response rate be achieved from the 1,803 questionnaires distributed.

Influence Criteria

Fifteen *influence criteria* were identified for testing in this part of the questionnaire, which effectively constitutes Question 7. They were mostly issues that had previously emerged from the exploratory study (as noted in Table 5.1) but also drawn from the tourism and small business literatures as having some resonance with STRBs in terms of their seasonal trading patterns. Given the extensive range of potential influencing variables a balance had to be struck between exploring a comprehensive coverage and the need for brevity. Each influencing variable (such as economic or personal factors) could contain a considerable number of statement items. Indeed, as DeVellis (1991:55) notes, the universe of items pertaining to any construct of interest is assumed to be 'infinitely large'. However, in this case brevity was considered preferable to comprehensiveness, for the aim of maximising the potential response rate. Accordingly, this part of the questionnaire was restricted to fifteen scaled statement items, which nevertheless collectively represent a broad range of influence variables.

The drafting stage of the questionnaire involved some experimentation with alternative formatting and layout of the statements, in the quest to provide a rationale for structuring and sequencing ideas. One consideration was to use a form of *concept specifications* for clustering attitudinal or motivational statements, in which each statement contains a separate indicator or component. Questions may be grouped into identifiable themes (around each concept specification) and presented sequentially (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). Such a device is utilised by Lynch (1998) in his study of the homestay sector, in which he developed interview questions to female homestay

operators around four concept dimensions, namely economic, educational, social/psychological and female entrepreneurship. Such a tool would derive clear benefits in the case of a primarily attitudinal or motivationally based questionnaire or indeed as a framework for constructing a structured or semi-structured interview. The apparent potential to adapt the model was recognised, though in this instance it was felt the multiple objectives and relative length of the questionnaire would inhibit the advantages of utilising a detailed concept-specification based structure.

Therefore, Part 2 of the questionnaire took a modified approach, in which six *influence statement themes* were identified among the many potentially influencing variables. These were: market influences; ‘co-supply’ influences; other exogenous influences (natural and legislative); economic influences; resource related influences and personal influences. The questions (alpha-numerically ‘a’ to ‘o’), are represented in their respective themes as shown in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2 Seasonal Trading Influence Statement Themes

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Market Influences	a) ; b) ; c)
Co-supply influences	d) ; e)
Exogenous (natural / legislative) influences	f) ; g) ; h)
Economic influences	i) ; j) ; k)
Resource related influences	l) ; m)
Personal influences	n) ; o)

The inclusion of market influences (statements a) to c) reflects the primacy of demand factors as explanatory to seasonality within the literature (Bar On 1975; CEC 1993; Grant *et al.*, 1997; Kennedy and Deegan, 2001; Koenig and Bischoff, 2003; Lim and McAleer, 2001, among others). They were included to provide a clear context against which other influencing factors may be evaluated. Originally, only statements a) and b) were proposed in respect of market influences (see Appendix 5.3), reflecting ‘micro’ (own market) and ‘meso’ (ie area market) scales. However, during the questionnaire

refining process it was suggested that a 'macro' market perspective (in this case Scotland-wide) might be pertinent, hence the inclusion of a statement on the significance of the wider state of tourism within Scotland as a whole in influencing the trading period (statement c).

Co-supply influences (statements d) and e), defined here as the trading behaviour of other operators and of suppliers, had been raised in interviews by proprietors during the Scottish Borders' exploratory survey as contributory factors to their trading behaviours. In particular, the temporal trading decisions of historic houses in that part of Scotland, the seasonal operation of some coach tour operators and the winter closure of tourist information centres were highlighted by proprietors as factors influencing their own trading behaviours (Goulding, 2003). Such supply-related influences manifest in respectively, reduced visitor circulation within localities (as reported in the Scottish Borders) served by co-dependent small tourism businesses, reduced distribution channels and reduced referral channels for small business proprietors.

Apart from co-supply issues, climate and legislation (statements f) to h) were identified as exogenous trading variables in the exploratory study. Within the tourism literature, the role of climate is a much documented 'influencer' of seasonality and seasonal trading, as discussed in Chapter Two. However, the same is not generally the case for legislative factors, which have tended to be largely overlooked. Two particular categories of 'legislation' were articulated by some small business operators in the exploratory study, namely health and safety and licensing regulations (Goulding and Hay, 2001). Accordingly, statements built to test the validity of these items were included in the questionnaire. Interestingly, since the implementation of the survey, the most recent Scottish strategic plan for tourism has also identified such exogenous factors as impediments to the realisation of year round business potential for STRBs (Scottish Executive, 2006).

The inclusion of statements pertaining to economic factors (statements i) and j) reflect both issues: the significance of the operating 'decision line' and the debate concerning the relative role of economic versus non-economic goals and aspirations prevalent among some small tourism business proprietors (Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Morrison, 2002). Statement k) sought to address an investment-related factor (repair and maintenance) sometimes raised in the literature (see for example Flognfeldt, 2001; Getz and Nilsson, 2004) but which had also been raised by proprietors in interviews in the Scottish Borders exploratory study.

Two particular resource-related influences have been articulated in the literature pertaining to tourism seasonality. Of these, concern for the natural environment was raised by two interviewees in the exploratory study, though it has been subject to a limited degree of scrutiny within the literature as a rationale for seasonal down-time (Allcock, 1995; Butler, 2001; Hartmann 1986). On the other hand, the availability of paid labour for tourism businesses operating in seasonal areas and competition from other industries has been highlighted in empirical studies in Gotland, Sweden (Baum and Hagen, 1999), Jotunheimen, Norway (Flognfeldt, 2001), Shetland (Butler, 2001 citing Nelson and Butler, 1993) and Greek islands (Mourdoukoutas, 1988), among various others. Accordingly, a statement representing each of these influence items was included (l) and m).

Finally, exploring the relative importance of rest, relaxation and personal or family matters was deemed significant to the study, following Scottish Borders exploratory study findings and a growing literature highlighting such motivations in other contexts (eg Getz and Carlsen, 2004 in Western Australia; Getz and Nilsson, 2004 in Bornholm, Denmark). Hence, statements n) and o) were included.

Having assembled the fifteen statement items, it was felt that no clear advantages of data management would derive from ordering the statements into clusters or groups of concept specified statements, identified as such under sub-headings. Moreover, there is

a potential danger that if respondents consider some categories to be irrelevant to their circumstance, they might reject all statements within that cluster. Accordingly, in the final questionnaire draft, statements were laid out in a simple sequence without cluster headings. The nature of the themes was not specified (eg through the use of sub-headings), though the component idea of each question was designed to be self-evident. In this way, it was felt respondents would be more inclined to focus on the individual statement than on any perceived underlying relationship between it and others around it.

Part 3 : 'Your Business and You'

The final part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic data on seasonal tourism businesses and their proprietors. Its purpose, as expressed in the preamble to Part 3, was to '*help build up a picture of seasonal business operators*'. The construction of this section of the questionnaire was drawn from the small business literature, in particular the work of Storey (1994) who, as discussed in Chapter Three, provides a holistic summary of research on aspects of small business formation, growth, objectives and motivations. The data emerging from this part of the questionnaire would be a vital component towards exploring the *role and meaning* of seasonal trading among small tourism related businesses in qualitative responses and in-depth interviews.

The first group of questions (numbered 8-13) focused on *business longevity, ownership status, the form of involvement and experience of proprietorship*. Much of this data is paralleled in many generic studies of small businesses and increasingly applied to the field of small tourism and hospitality businesses (Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 1989). However, little in the way of empirical evidence exists to suggest any link between such demographic variables on the one hand and temporal trading patterns or proprietors' attitudes to temporal trading, on the other, nor within a Scottish context.

Question 8 ('*How long have you been operating this business?*') offers four time categorisations, namely less than one trading year; one or two trading years; three to

five trading years and six or more trading years. Question 9 asks '*On what basis do you own or operate this business?*' offering six possible responses including combinations of family and non-family proprietorship, distinction between ownership and lease/rental or other arrangements as specified by the respondent. This question was intended to explore degrees of association between seasonal trading behaviours, trading influences and forms of proprietorship in order to build a more complete picture of the nature of seasonal traders within Scotland. Following from this, Question 10 asks '*How did you come to be involved in the business?*' offering four possible responses, in order to shed light on business birth characteristics, while Question 11 seeks to ascertain the incidence of '*...previous experience of running your own business*' through a simple 'Yes' or 'No' choice. An affirmative response to this question routes to Question 12, '*...was your previous business a seasonal or year round operation?*' and Question 13, '*Was your previous business a similar or different type of business to your current tourism business?*' Collectively, the above cluster of questions is designed to provide a demographic profile of seasonal small businesses and a basis for analysis of trading behaviours and influences.

Meanwhile, Question 14 was designed to explore the validity of business *migration* as a contributing variable to seasonal trading. While the Williams *et al.* (1989) study of resorts in the south west of England identifies a link between in-migration of proprietors and seasonal trading, the empirical evidence remains sparse, dated, and unrecorded within Scotland. Thus, '*Did you move to the area from another part of the country with the aim of starting this business?*' sought to identify the order of magnitude of such migration among seasonal traders within the tourism and hospitality sectors. A 'Yes' response to this question invites the respondent to specify the type of area (rural/urban/coastal) s/he has moved from, and whether from within or outwith Scotland. It was decided against asking the respondent to specify the exact location, given the anticipated likelihood of a low response base to this question.

The relationship between seasonally operated tourism businesses and other enterprises owned by proprietors formed the basis of Questions 15-17. This theme is highlighted in Getz and Nilsson's Bornholm study (2004) and previously the temporal complementarity of tourism employment with other economic sectors had been observed by Moudoukoutas (1988) and Flognfeldt (2001) in Greece and Norway respectively. While the role of tourism as a secondary enterprise within family and household units has been empirically observed (for example in Lynch's study of the homestay sector, Getz and Carlsen's study of family tourism businesses in Western Australia and Getz and Nilsson's study of seasonal tourism businesses on Bornholm), the temporal inter-relationships between primary businesses or income sources and tourism businesses remains largely undocumented. Similarly, the relative importance of the tourism business as a source of household income was deemed pertinent in helping to explain the role of temporal trading. The findings from this cluster of questions would be important within the construction of the sample base for the intended second phase (in-depth interviews) of the fieldwork.

Thus, Question 15 asks *'Do you own or operate any other business now?'* to which a 'Yes' response seeks identification among one of ten broad sectoral categories or *'other (please specify)'*. A 'No' reply routes the respondent to Question 18 on the basis that Questions 16 and 17 pertain specifically to proprietors of two or more businesses. Question 16 asks *'Does the other main business referred to in Question 15 trade seasonally as opposed to year round?'*, offering a simple 'Yes/No' alternative, while Question 17 seeks to elicit if *'...the trading periods of your other main business coincide/overlap with the trading periods of your seasonal tourism business?'* Four degrees of overlap/coincidence are offered, from a) *'they coincide completely'* to d) *'there is no overlap'*. Although the questionnaire refining and piloting processes did not report any error with the question, in retrospect the wording of the four options is deemed potentially confusing, given the temporal complexity of operating certain types of business, such as mixed production farming, or indeed with the mixed temporal constructs associated with self-employment.

To complete the business demographic, two further questions were included as a consequence of the piloting and refining process. Question 18 sought to identify the incidence and relative importance of paid seasonal employees among seasonal trading businesses, with a simple 'Yes' or 'No' response alternative to the question '*Do you employ paid staff outside of your immediate family on a seasonal basis?*' The most delicate subject, that of eliciting the relative financial contribution of the seasonal tourism/hospitality business, was dealt with in Question 19: '*How important is this business to you as a source of earned household income?*' It was felt imperative to provide an explanation of the researcher's meaning of 'earned household income' (*income derived from this or other businesses you may operate and any salaried employment*) and any exclusions (*other forms of income*) in order to minimise non-completion. Response variables explicitly sought not to quantify income, rather they offered a scale of relativity from a) *the only source of earned household income* to d) *a minor source of earned household income*.

In drawing the questionnaire towards a close, a final group of attitudinal statements were framed in Question 20: '*To what extent do the following statements reflect your situation?*' Using a simple 'agree/neutral/disagree' parameter, their purpose was to elicit *proprietor motivation* according to two distinct concepts: lifestyle/preference, reflecting non-economic priorities; and revenue maximisation/profitability, reflecting economic priorities. Although these two concept areas may not be mutually exclusive in practice (Morrison 2002; Andrew *et al.*, 2001), findings from these statements would form a key part of the construction of the on-going qualitative research.

Finally, Questions 21 and 22 were open-ended. The first of these offered respondents an opportunity to express views on seasonal trading from a business development perspective: '*If you wanted to operate on a 12 months basis, what do you feel would most help you to develop your business to an all year round operation?*' It was anticipated that data from this question could provide an indication of the degree of

openness towards seasonal extension, on the one hand, or of entrenched seasonal trading mindset on the other. The final question was designed to serve as a 'mop-up' (*'Are there any other factors not covered above that influence your decision to operate the business seasonally?'*). Including such a question would provide a chance for respondents to raise issues not dealt with previously, and, importantly, as a place to express any suggestions or comments, a useful 'opening up' device (Yates, 2004; Sommer and Sommer, 2002).

Web-based Questionnaire Specifications

The web-based version of the questionnaire (Appendix 5.4) was constructed after the paper-based version had been pre-tested, so as to mirror it as closely as possible in terms of overall visual representation, structure and design detail. It was developed using ColdFusion software and hosted by Edinburgh University's School of Arts, Culture and the Environment (ACE).

Compared with more generic web-based questionnaire development and hosting facilities (such as Survey Assistant, Survey Wiz), ColdFusion appeared to offer a flexible and comprehensive design capability which served the needs of the questionnaire construction, as described above, and which would allow for ease of access and completion by potential respondents. Two advantageous design features were the ease with which coloured text could be used to differentiate pre-amble text from the questions in each of the three parts, plus the facility for integrating open-ended response boxes with closed-question formats. Testing was undertaken throughout the construction stage, in order to minimise any potential inconvenience for respondents. The facility to directly download or convert completed questionnaires to software analysis packages (Sommer and Sommer, 2002) was a further consideration.

A key usability criterion was the need for a simple, short URL, as in the first instance individuals choosing this response mode would have to type in the web-address to gain access to the questionnaire. Difficulties were encountered with the University of

Strathclyde's web-site hosting facilities, which did not run a ColdFusion server and would have necessitated a long and complicated URL. Furthermore, it proved difficult to create a seasonality directory on the Scottish Hotel School's server into which the accompanying 'html' file could be inserted. Accordingly, after correspondence with the University's IT Services support team, it was decided to take up the offer from an academic staff member of Edinburgh University to have access to their web-hosting facility, which would obviate the technical difficulties.

The URL address for respondents was finalised as: <http://ace.caad.ed.ac.uk/seasonalityQ>. The web-questionnaire design included a link for a participant to view his/her response before submitting it. This was deemed important in order to replicate the facility available to those completing the paper based version of the questionnaire. Once sent, a response would be automatically stored and accessible to the web-manager to view or download, on a separate URL: (<http://webdbdev.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ddm/genQ/Pres/Responses.cfm>).

5.6 Database Construction

Sample Frame

The sample frame used for the construction of the survey was the 2004 'where to stay' guide for each of the fourteen Area Tourist Board regions in Scotland. The guides were chosen on the basis that they collectively represent one of the country's most comprehensive databases of tourism businesses available to the public. Moreover, in most cases (12 out of the 14), the area guides contained systematic and reasonably standardised entries on the trading periods of the businesses and facilities publicised therein. In two cases (Orkney and Shetland) information on individual business' operating periods was discretionary and accordingly the two frames are acknowledged as less representative of the relative incidence of seasonal trading than in the other areas. However, in both cases, the total number of businesses publicised within the guides was relatively small in comparison to most of the eleven mainland ATB regions in Scotland.

Although predominantly geared towards accommodation establishments, many of the area guides also feature supplements, advertisements and/or listings for visitor attractions, local guiding, sightseeing and activity based tour operating companies. Many of these contain information pertaining to their period of operation, though not always in a systematic fashion, compared with the entries for accommodation operators. However, the database was able to capture a varied cross section of tourism related businesses across Scotland, albeit representing a population that is derived from businesses and organisations which were (in 2004) members of VisitScotland.

Herein lies a potential problem pertaining to sample reliability and bias. Private business members of the VisitScotland networks represent only around 40%¹ of the known 15,640² tourism businesses in Scotland at the time (VisitScotland, undated). Although the study population selected in constructing the database in this case was intrinsically consistent (Henry, 1990:11), it nevertheless omitted potential subjects within the larger target population. Moreover, as subscribing members to a national network organisation, they may be more aware of (and thus influenced by) national marketing and market development campaigns, compared with non-members. Ultimately, however, the need for an accessible sample base that met key data requirements overrode the time and cost considerations inherent in trying to reach additional seasonally trading businesses via other sample frames. Furthermore, it was felt that the size of the sample frame, coupled with the chosen sampling method would help reduce the effects of bias and validity arising from the sampling frame construction.

Table 5.3 provides a breakdown of the number of businesses in each Area Tourist Board region in the sampling frame that met the first criterion for inclusion in the database.

With the notable exceptions of Argyll, The Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling and the Trossachs (hereafter AILLST) and Greater Glasgow and the Clyde Valley (GGCV), the

¹ based on listings in ATB publications

² 2003 data.

Area Tourist Board regions broadly resembled the former (pre-1997) regional government boundaries. The fourteen ATB regions are depicted in Appendix 5.5.

Table 5.3 Database Sampling Frame: Breakdown by Area Tourist Board Region

<i>Area of Scotland</i>	<i>Code Applied To Area</i>	<i>Number of Businesses</i>
Aberdeen & Grampian Highlands	AG	125
Angus & Dundee	AD	33
Argyll, The Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling & The Trossachs	AL	355
Ayrshire & Arran	AY	100
Dumfries & Galloway	DG	140
Edinburgh & Lothians	EL	100
Fife & St Andrews	FF	124
Greater Glasgow & The Clyde Valley	GC	24
Highlands of Scotland	HL	542
Orkney	OR	25
Perthshire	PE	155
The Scottish Borders	SB	125
Shetland Isles	SH	36
Western Isles	WE	73
<i>Total</i>		<i>1,957</i>

Sampling Approach and Sample Cleansing

A census approach within the available universe was adopted, insofar as the total number of entries taken from the sampling frames (as shown in Table 5.3 above) included all businesses and facilities identified as operating 50 weeks or less per year. These included businesses professing to close for ‘the Christmas and New Year period’, signifying a *period* of closedown, but excluded those whose entries stated ‘closed for Christmas’, in which the closure might constitute one or two days of non-trading. Such a distinction, albeit subjective on the part of the researcher, was seen as a useful tool for exploring proprietors’ perceptions of what length of temporal boundaries constitutes ‘seasonal trading’.

The sampling approach thus differed significantly from that of the exploratory study in several important ways. First, the sample comprised only those businesses within the total universe that specified a temporally defined opening period, as discussed above. It was acknowledged that some of these may indeed consider themselves as 'year round' tourism businesses. However, no businesses with publicised '52 week' operating periods were included in the initial database. Secondly, there was the desire to capture as many seasonally operating businesses as possible from within the universe, rather than make use of a representative measure such as a random or stratified sampling technique, as had been employed in the original Scottish Borders exploratory study. Thirdly, a 'cleansing' process was employed to remove, as far as possible, any seasonal 'businesses' that were deemed not to be in private ownership or management, or were duplicate or complementary businesses (such as a guest house and a separate self-catering unit). This proved a greater logistical necessity in a nationwide study than within the confines of a single region. Through the cleansing process, the initial sample base of around 2,100 businesses included on the Excel spreadsheet database was reduced to 1,957 potentially valid cases, to which an introductory letter was dispatched.

Data Analysis Management and Data Variables

From a range of potential database software, it was decided that SPSS offered the most flexible data management system for the purposes of analysis. It was preferred over the more common and accessible Excel spreadsheet which was used for the initial database construction because of the range of its computational and output options and the data storage capacity it offered. Moreover, SPSS 'accessories' in the form of online help, dedicated texts and instructional workshops were more available than any other packages, for example Sphinx Survey. A licence for SPSS Version 12 was therefore obtained and an analytic database in the form of an electronic codebook was constructed accordingly.

Prior to data inputting and analysis, a set of standardised area codes was established as shown in Table 5.3 above, as well as a set of sector codes to represent the various types

of business identified in the sample. This was done for reasons of consistency and in order to manage the data more effectively in the analysis. The sector codes are shown in Table 5.4 and testify to the fact that a wide range of business types identify as temporal operations. The SPSS questionnaire response 'codebook' constructed as the first phase of the database is shown as Appendix 5.6. As can be seen, the codebook entailed 99 separate variables and many more data labels and values to take account of each data component inherent in the questionnaire.

Table 5.4 Standardised Business Sector Codes for Database Management

<i>Type of Business</i>	<i>Data Analysis Code</i>
<i>1. Accommodation</i>	<i>AC</i>
Bed and Breakfast	BB
Caravan	CV
Guest House	GH
Holiday Park	HP
Hostel	HS
Hotel / Small Hotel	HO
Inn	IN
Restaurant with Rooms	RR
Self-catering Unit	SC
Touring / Camping Park	TC
<i>2. Visitor Attractions & Centres</i>	<i>VA</i>
Castle	CS
Garden / Park	GD
Historic House	HH
Museum	MU
Nature Reserve	NR
Retail / Private Gallery	RT
Transport Based Attraction	TR
Visitor Centre	VC
Visitor Attraction (Other / Misc.)	VO
<i>3. Tour & Guiding Operators</i>	<i>TO</i>
Activity Operator	AO
Sightseeing Operator	SO

5.7 Questionnaire Refining and Piloting

As is evident in comparing Appendices 5.1 and 5.3, the main survey instrument utilised some common elements from the exploratory questionnaire. Nevertheless, the need for separate information requirements and more comprehensive data (especially in terms of business demographics) had been identified from the exploratory study and the literature. Thus the initial development of the main questionnaire survey entailed refinement and piloting. The process of refinement was both internal (supervisory and peer comment and critique) and external (utilising the expertise of Professor Hay, then Head of Research at VisitScotland, Mr M. Redfern, Commissioning Legal Research Editor at International Thomson Press and Professor Coyne of Edinburgh University). The importance of internal feedback in the development process as well as that from academics in other establishments can also be seen to provide a balance of feedback between design practicality on the one hand and the need to 'adequately address the important debates' (Burton 2000:344) on the other. Both internal and external feedback represented an invaluable injection of commentary and constructive criticism with regards to omissions, areas of confusion, counter-intuitivity, response options and sequencing. Use of personnel outwith the domain of tourism was considered important in providing a greater degree of objectivity to the treatment of the subject matter.

Copies of the revised version of the questionnaire were then produced for a pilot study among small tourism related businesses. Of the eight seasonal proprietors selected from the database and telephoned, six were agreeable to participating in the pilot and four of these subsequently returned completed questionnaires with comments. All four were B&B or guest house operators. The result of this process was the necessity to reword several aspects of the preamble to each section and especially in the case of Question 19 (concerning household income) to provide greater sensitivity in the wording to avoid non-responses.

In retrospect, a limitation is acknowledged that greater attention might have been paid to ensuring both a larger and more sectorally representative pilot sample, given the number

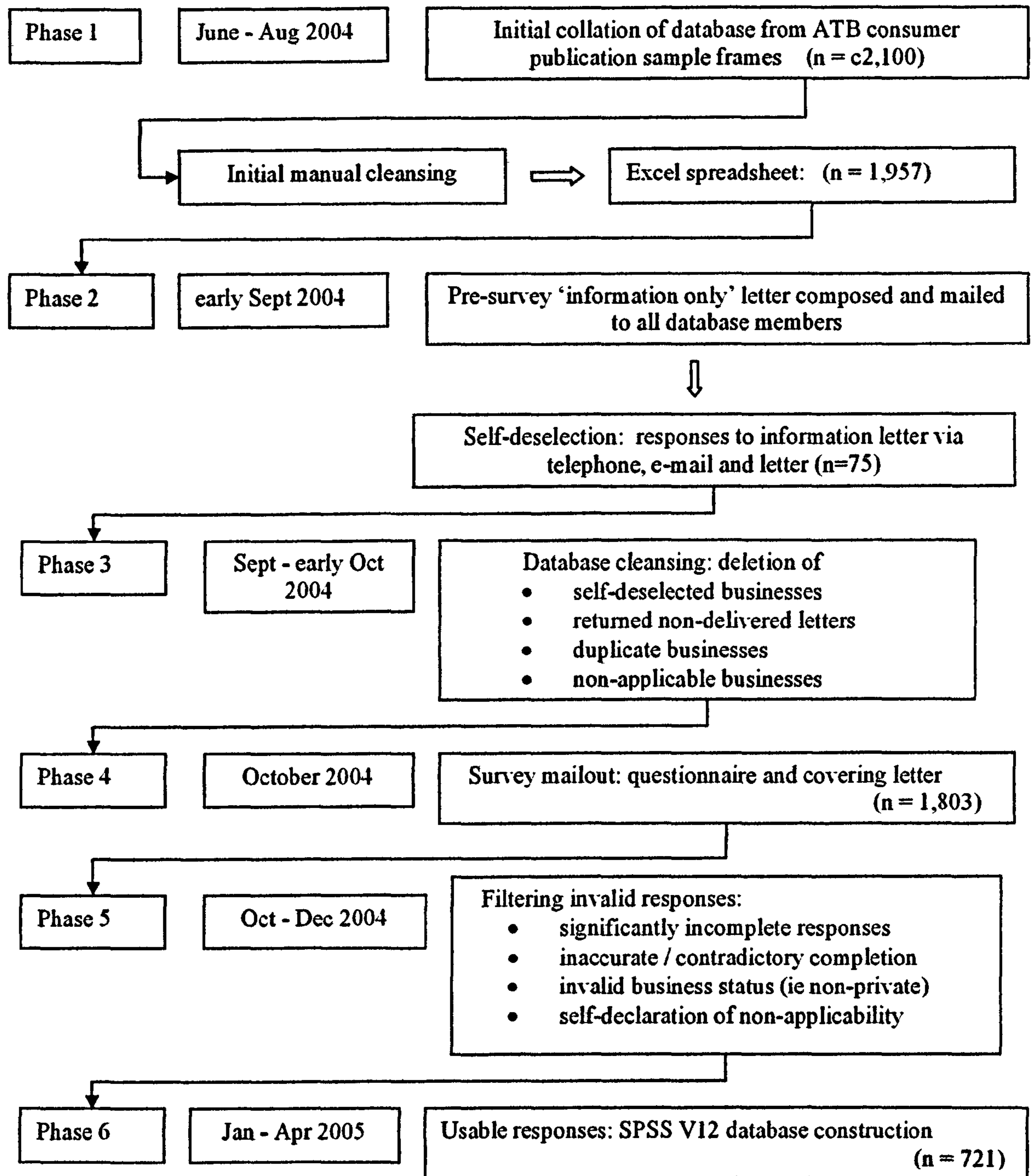
of 'not applicable' responses and observed ambiguities arising from responses to several questions, as discussed in Chapter Six.

5.8 Survey Distribution Procedure

Several stages were involved in the process of survey management. These are captured and summarised in the form of a flow chart as shown in Figure 5.2 below. As can be seen, six phases are identified, from the initial collation of the Excel database during the summer of 2004 to the construction of the SPSS database for response analysis during the early months of 2005.

A pre-survey information letter was composed to the 1,957 potential subjects identified on the initial database. It had the dual aims of alerting them to the nature of the research and being a device to 'massage' the potential response rate. The rubric of the letter invited an 'opt-out' in which case the proprietor would not receive the ensuing questionnaire. Around 100 responses to this letter were received, either as telephone messages, notes and letters or e-mails. Approximately a quarter of these were positive, ie confirming agreement to participate in the survey. The remainder were self-deselecting communications. However, among these latter, 75 provided explanatory qualitative data within their communication (designated for the research as 'extraneous' data), the contribution of which is examined in Chapter Seven. Apart from de-selecting proprietors, some were returned as duplicate (normally where a business was represented in more than one ATB guide) or as non-delivered mail.

Figure 5.2 Stage Two: Main Survey Distribution and Collation Flow Chart



The pre-survey communication therefore enabled a process of filtering and cleansing to take place, in which numerous ineligible cases were brought to light. Thus, when the questionnaire was finally distributed during October 2004, the sample to which it was sent represented a more homogeneous population base than the totality of the original database. The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter on Scottish Hotel School headed notepaper validating the purpose of the communication, and a reply paid envelope. Copies of the pre-survey and survey letters are shown as Appendices 5.7 and 5.8 respectively. The letter alerted potential respondents to the option of completing the questionnaire electronically, though in practice there was a very low uptake in that mode.

In light of the fact that, between late-October and mid-December 2004, a significant volume of completed questionnaires was returned, the response cut-off date of 'early December' as notified in the letter was largely attained. Thereafter only a trickle of returns was received, most of which were able to be incorporated into the SPSS database. Indeed only two responses were excluded on the basis of tardiness, being received after April 2005!

Returns from the main survey mail-out prompted a further round of filtering and cleansing, for example in the cases where respondents declared non-eligibility due to the ownership status of the operation or where responses were significantly incomplete or expressed 'not-valid' to many of the questions. Ultimately, 721 analysable questionnaire returns (representing a 40% response rate) were entered into the SPSS database, as discussed in Chapter Six.

5.9 Stage Two: Qualitative Element

The substantial response rate from the questionnaires precipitated a major dilemma in terms of the original research philosophy and design. As discussed previously and

highlighted in Figure 5.1, the intention for Stage Two of the study was to implement a mixed-method approach of separate quantitative and qualitative instruments to meet the requirements of the research paradigm. Indeed, the role of the questionnaire had been intended as a precursive instrument for a series of interviews. In other words, while the more quantitative tool (the questionnaire) would capture the measures of *incidence* and *relativity* across the various objectives (eg trading patterns, influences on trading behaviours and business demographics) it was originally felt that a separate and more qualitative tool (interviews) would be needed to explore beneath the factual data generated and to elucidate *subjective* data. Indeed, the ethnographic element of seasonality explores subjective meanings of the term, the condition and the place (Allcock, 1995, Hartmann, 1986). Applying this to seasonal trading would include the descriptive contexts of place, time, stage of life, critical events and proprietor circumstance, business, personal and lifestyle aspirations as being equally valid explanatory factors in accounting for behaviours and motivations as those captured deductively by quantitative measures.

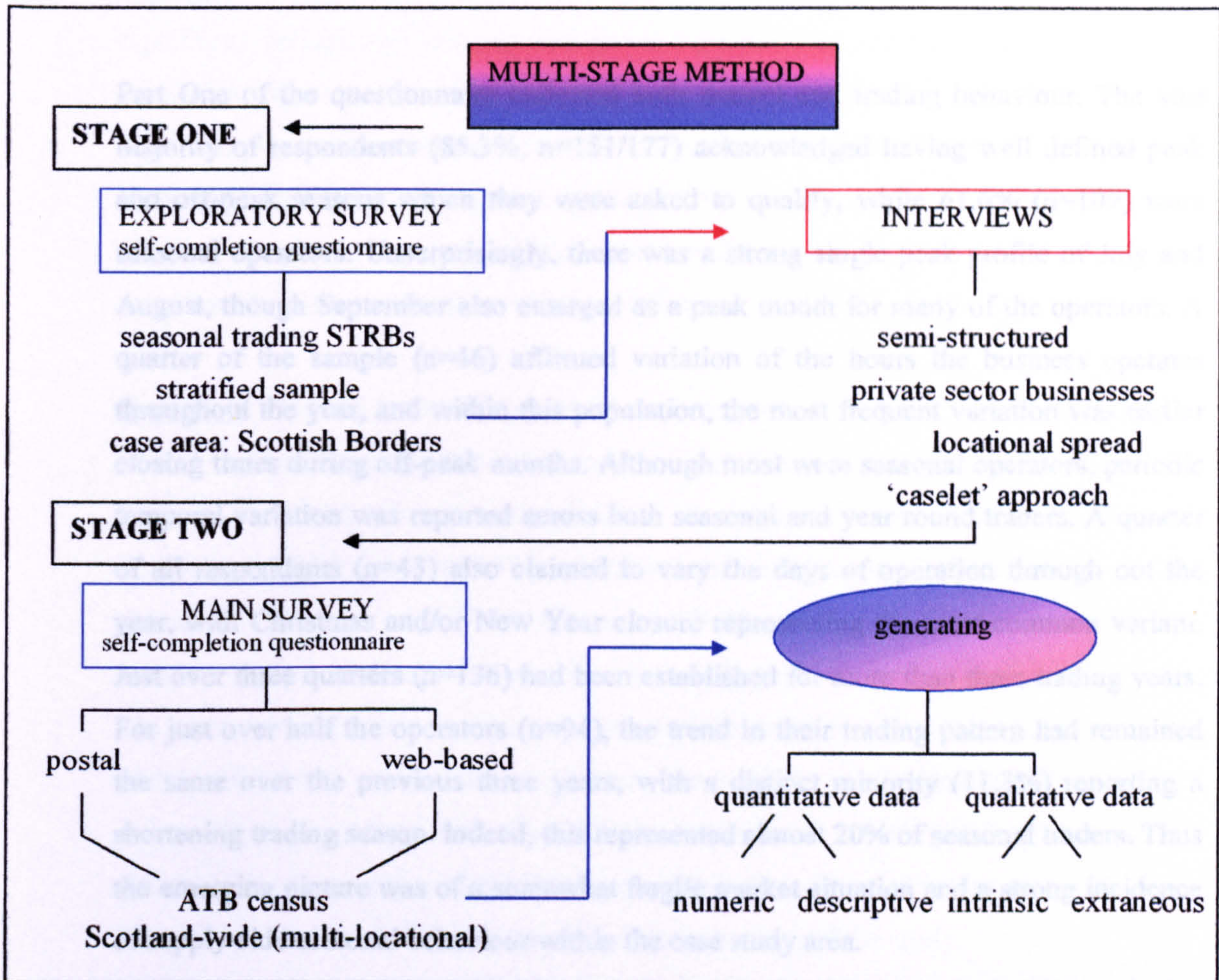
However, it became clear from the depth and breadth of the data generated from Phase 1 of the main study that the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire would achieve some if not all of the goals ascribed to the intended interview stages. In particular, the degree of intrinsic qualitative data generated (in various forms, both within and accompanying the questionnaire returns) and extraneous data (provided by non-participants) was significant. The richness of the data generated from these two qualitative 'categories' is evident from the analysis in Chapter Seven. Therefore, a decision was made latterly to circumvent the original research design. Instead it would concentrate on analysing and presenting in their entirety the two sets of data (quantitative and qualitative) emanating from the questionnaires, in addition to the interview findings from Stage 1, as a basis for assessing the outcomes of the research aims and questions.

A further issue in the decision whether or not to implement a set of interviews was that of time itself! It was felt that an extended timescale would be needed to do justice to the

analysis of the questionnaire, with the result that follow-up interviews with proprietors would not occur until several months beyond their completion of the questionnaire. While the issue of time lapse might not be deemed crucial, it was recognised that in a gap of several months proprietors are likely to be mentally 'removed' from their original involvement in the study. Ideally, it would be beneficial to capture their thoughts while they are relatively attuned to their questionnaire return.

It was also felt that the other proposed sets of interviews (with trade association staff, destination managers or voluntary or public sector agency personnel) would add little to meeting the current research questions. Rather, in retrospect of their conception, such research instruments would be pertinent as a separate study. The data generated from some of the exploratory study interviews (see section below) provides insight into proprietor perceptions of seasonality as well as motivational and influential factors underlying their operating behaviours, albeit within the context of an exploratory study in a defined study conducted several years ago. Accordingly, and given their role in influencing the research design in Stage Two, some of those interview findings from the exploratory study are provided here as contextual indicators. However, before reviewing the findings from the exploratory study, it is pertinent to revisit the *de facto* research design. It can be summarised as illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 De Facto Research Design



The focus of Part Two of the questionnaire was on trading pattern influences. The relative importance of the level of trade as a determinant of the length of the operators' trading hours was rated as 'very important' by 28.8% (n=51), 'important' by 30.5% (n=54). Therefore, the remaining 36% of the responding sample cited it as either of little importance (n=23) or of no importance (n=39).

5.10 Summary of Findings from the Exploratory Study

The Questionnaire

An abridged analysis of the findings is provided here, in light of the exploratory role of the initial questionnaire (Appendix 5.1) and the partial though incomplete overlap of objectives with the main study, as noted in Section 5.4. At 56.9% (n=177/311) the high overall response rate signifies the degree of emotiveness and involvement among

proprietors to the issue of seasonality within the Scottish Borders' tourism economy at that time.

Part One of the questionnaire collected both market and trading behaviour. The vast majority of respondents (85.3%, n=151/177) acknowledged having well defined peak and off-peak seasons which they were asked to qualify, while 61.6% (n=109) were seasonal operators. Unsurprisingly, there was a strong single peak profile of July and August, though September also emerged as a peak month for many of the operators. A quarter of the sample (n=46) affirmed variation of the hours the business operates throughout the year, and within this population, the most frequent variation was earlier closing times during off-peak months. Although most were seasonal operators, periodic temporal variation was reported across both seasonal and year round traders. A quarter of all respondents (n=43) also claimed to vary the days of operation through out the year, with Christmas and/or New Year closure representing the most common variant. Just over three quarters (n=136) had been established for more than three trading years. For just over half the operators (n=94), the trend in their trading pattern had remained the same over the previous three years, with a distinct minority (11.3%) reporting a shortening trading season. Indeed, this represented almost 20% of seasonal traders. Thus the emerging picture was of a somewhat fragile market situation and a strong incidence of supply-side seasonal behaviour within the case study area.

The focus of Part Two of the questionnaire was on trading pattern influences. The relative importance of the level of trade as a determinant of the length of the operators' trading year varied significantly. It was reported as 'most important' by 28.8% (n=51) and 'quite important' by 30.5% (n=54). Therefore, the remaining 36% of the responding sample cited it as either of little importance (n=25) or of no importance (n=39). Although it is acknowledged that there may have been an element of misinterpretation of the terminology ('level of trade'), the degree of the spread of responses was nevertheless unexpected.

In Question 8, ten economic and market related variables were offered for importance ranking as trading period influences. Analysis of the frequency of ranking identified two significant variables as standing out above all others: the number of tourists (ie non-local visitors), ranked by 61.6% (n=109/177) of responding proprietors and operating costs compared with revenues (50.3%). Of intermediary significance was the level of advanced bookings for a particular period of time (ranked by 45.2%) and local trade (42.9%). However, in terms of first place ranking, the first two variables were of considerably greater importance than any other.

Question 9 repeated the ranking exercise among a number of non-economic or market related factors. Three specific variables stood out from the rest: the weather (ranked by 44.1%), the trading patterns of other businesses in the area (42.4%) and maintenance/repair work (40.1%). Of these, the behaviour of other businesses was considered the most significant factor by 19.2%, a higher ranking score than the weather. A particular bone of contention for many small traders in the Scottish Borders was the seasonally prescribed trading period of the seven or eight major historic houses, which collectively command an important place within the Borders tourism economy and product (Goulding and Hay, 2001). The overall results of Part Two of the questionnaire formed the basis of selection for some of the variables that were taken forward into the Scotland-wide survey in the main stage of the study.

The third section of the questionnaire focused on attitudes towards seasonality in the Scottish Borders. This was an issue that was not replicated in the main Scotland-wide study, given the subsequent decision taken to concentrate on proprietorial motivations and behaviours. However, it was revealing that while three quarters (n=130) of the Borders sample population agreed or strongly agreed that there was scope to extend the tourist season in their area, half (n=89) had not participated in any seasonal extension promotional initiatives such as Autumn Gold or Spring into Summer. Moreover, in general, there was a majority feeling (53.7%) that destination-wide seasonal extension campaigns made no difference to off-peak business.

The original frequency breakdown to each of the questions in the exploratory questionnaire survey is provided as Appendix 5.9. The findings influenced the semi-structured approach to the interview design. However, in the execution of the interviews, it was felt that the primary concern was to receive the testimony of the subject, rather than meet specific theme objectives. Accordingly, each interview represented a unique narrative in terms of the degree of discourse and the degree of concentration on any particular element, within the confines of structured themes.

Interview Caselets

As previously noted, 19 in-depth interviews of a semi-structured nature were held with proprietors of a range of business types during the autumn, early winter and early spring period of 1999-2000. In several cases, poor sound quality or tape intermittence limited the value of the transcripts, in which case *post-hoc* evidence relies on hand-written notes taken during the interviews, with the concomitant subjectivity and limits to reliability inherent in such a technique. The remainder represent an important evidence base and platform for reformulating the central hypothesis of the study and the subsequent construction of the Stage Two research instrument.

Some of the interviews were with year round operators and others with seasonal traders. From this population, the findings from interviews with four of the proprietors of seasonally trading businesses are presented below in the form of 'caselets', designed to highlight emerging issues pertinent to seasonal trading and the operational contexts of such behaviour. Those chosen provide examples of personal testimonies by proprietors of a cross section of business types, each portraying different emphases and contributing themes that subsequently informed the construction of the main survey instrument (the Stage Two questionnaire) of the study. As such, the caselets that follow are not considered to be in any way representative of the total interview population.

The format of the caselets includes contextual data (questionnaire respondent number; business type and trading period as identified in answer to Question Two in the exploratory questionnaire) and reference to responses to three specific questions within the previously completed questionnaire (Appendix 5.1), as follows:

Part Two: Influences on your Trading Patterns

Q7: How important is the level of trade in determining when and for how long you operate the business during the year?

Q8: How important are the following [economic and market related] factors in influencing when and how long the business trades during the year? (Items ranked by respondent).

Q9: Which of any of these [other] factors influence when and/or how long the business trades during the year? (Items ranked by respondent).

They then go on to display thematically arranged narrative quotations from the interviewees. In some cases a particular theme re-emerged at a later point in the interview. In that situation, the respective narrative extracts are clustered together under the same heading, as long as they are felt to uphold the 'propriety' of the interviewee's sentiment. Importantly, some of the themes differ among the four caselets. This reflects their role in accruing distinctive evidence of the scope of influences and contextual data affecting the motivations and behaviours of their trading patterns. Gaps in the narratives indicated thus [.....] conceal information that may otherwise compromise the confidentiality and identity of the interviewee or the specific business.

Caselet No. 1

<i>Respondent No:</i> 430	<i>Business Type:</i> Holiday Caravan Park
<i>Interview Length:</i> 48 mins.	<i>Interview Date:</i> 21 st September 1999
<i>Proprietorship Type:</i> Family business (inter-generational)	
<i>Trading Period:</i> April - October inc. (7 months p.a.)	
<u><i>Trading Influences:</i></u>	
<p>Q7: b) It is quite important, but there are other reasons that also determine when and for how long the business operates.</p> <p>Q8: <i>Highest ranked economic/market factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. operating costs compared with revenues 2. number of tourists (non-local visitors) <p>Q9: <i>Highest ranked other factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the weather 2. maintenance and repair work 3. rest and relaxation 4. our own holidays 	
Interview Transcript Extracts: Thematic Analysis	
<p><u>Themes:</u></p> <p>product/service</p> <p>business start-up circumstances</p> <p>antecedence</p> <p>migration</p> <p>experience</p>	<p>“We sell flat plots of grass by the night that you can bring in your tent or touring caravan or your motor caravan and you can plonk it on a piece of grass for the night...We also then sell plots for touring caravans by the seasons, where they bring their caravan up at the beginning of April and they take it away at the end of October. So we sell pitches by the season as well”.</p> <p>“Now why do we operate this [business] for seven months of the year? Um, you must remember the family history ^ (Um) my father and I both worked in the [...] industry...Nineteen years ago we decided to give it up and pulled everything we owned and bought [the current business which] became a family home for us all and, ah, there’s a mum and a dad, there’s a grandmother, there is me and my wife and two strong children. And the son works in the [...] business down south and no doubt in the not too distant future he’ll come back as well. So it is therefore very much a working family business”.</p> <p>“But having worked in the [...] industry and then come to do this everyday something we knew nothing about at the time, um, we had a touring caravan and...lived in [location in southern England] ^ and knew we could get by the by in Scotland so that’s</p>

	<p>the only reason we came to Scotland, but having come here I didn't want to employ a lot of people..."</p>
<p>succession/ inheritance</p>	<p>"I'm very happy to see my son come in with me because I know it's a solid business, he can stand hard work and all the rest of it...I'm now a granddad and I've got another grandchild...so that's another generation installed in [name of the business]. I think there are other family businesses really, perhaps, drifting along, because they are relatively satisfied with what they've got and are quite happy to see it handed onto the family. That may be why some of our little developments of businesses don't leap forward as much as it should be...because we're not desperate to be millionaires...profit isn't necessarily my prime objective with the business that I run"</p>
<p>economic motivation</p>	<p>"In the last three years we've developed further afield at the top [of the site] for more static caravans. So we're actually extending the business because of the need of the family. And it's not for any other reasons. It's not because I want to run around in a bigger car or I want more holidays, more expensive holidays. It isn't that, it's the fact that I have to accommodate another family [member] within the group".</p>
<p>growth motivation</p>	<p>"[I have] satisfaction in what it is...I'll go to work on a Monday morning, I don't go with a long face, a lot of people do...they walk into their office at 8.30am and are miserable and don't cheer up until Friday afternoon. All the people they are dealing with are in the same boat. In my case, especially because I go to work on a Monday morning and all the people I am dealing with are on holiday ...they are actually enjoying themselves. They are relaxed, they haven't got the pressure etc. - worth an awful lot, that....Oh, you know, it's a different working environment. Very pleasant".</p>
<p>intrinsic satisfaction</p>	<p>"The basic labour force is the family...Didn't want to have to pay for a lot of skilled labour etc., because, um, I'm supposedly a [...trade...]"</p>
<p>labour force</p>	<p>"We only operate a seven month year from the first [of April] or Easter, whichever is the sooner. Easter occasionally falls prior to April the first when we open then".</p>
<p>operating period calendar effect</p>	<p>"We're actually licensed for eleven months of the year and I'm not 100 percent certain which month we're not supposed to open, I think it might be January. That has some advantages to us in</p>
<p>license</p>	

	<p>that...with the static caravans, the ones these people are hiring...they can't live in the caravan because we haven't got a license that allows them to live in it twelve months a year, so it cannot become their first home".</p>
<p>maintenance</p>	<p>"You need a period that you can do your maintenance. Maintenance, painting, renovating etc. has to be done sometime and you can't be doing it whilst you're actually working. It's again in terms of minimising the amount of staff you are actually using. So that's one reason to determine whether you wouldn't be open for twelve months in a year".</p>
<p>climate</p>	<p>"The next reason is that it gets damn cold here...a tent is obviously the worst...It's the same with a caravan, it's a metal box, and over the years they get more sophisticated, they have central heating and fires and god knows what else...[It's often] so cold at the beginning of November, into December, it gets cold here and you get snow occasionally and who wants to sit in that sort of facility when the weather is diabolical? Not the same in a hotel obviously".</p>
<p>heating</p>	
<p>destination facilities</p>	<p>"If you've got something on your doorstep that is actually wonderful, an attraction for the winter, like Aviemore, ski-slopes and so forth, people won't put up with the problem of having a caravan. That attraction ^ will cause the demand to increase in the winter, we don't have that, therefore we cannot operate in the winter".</p>
<p>family holidays</p>	<p>"...because we close at the end of October...the family have to have a holiday in November...Holidays are determined by the fact that we are closed and as a family we don't go on holiday significantly during the season".</p>

Résumé: Caselet 1 strongly conforms to the 'family first' model of proprietorship (Getz and Carlsen, 2000) in which economic objectives are coloured by the needs of the welfare of family rather than profit goals or revenue maximisation. Circumstances around the business start-up identify several common themes in STRB formation, as for example highlighted by Williams *et al.* (1989) in terms of migrational enterprise and lack of prior sector experience, by Morrison and Teixeira (2002) in terms of founding entrepreneurial behaviours and by Getz *et al.* (2004:162) in terms of the 'shared hobby

element' of the move, in this case, from caravan ownership to holiday caravan park proprietorship. While 'lifestyle' is not articulated specifically, several factors point to the role of lifestyle proprietorship as expressed through the symbols of intrinsic satisfaction and holiday taking habits, albeit within the confines of demanding work hours during the season. Growth aspirations are expressed as primarily family needs driven.

Finally, seasonal operation is bounded by what appear to be both exogenous and intrinsic factors. Among the former are the temporal constraints of licensing and climate. Conversely undertaking maintenance and repairs during the closed winter period, the limitations imposed from minimising non-family labour and the importance attached to family holidays suggest that intrinsically controllable personal choices are also applied in the temporal operating behaviour of the business. However, the case also acknowledges the role of market conditions and limited off-season destination amenities as constraints to seasonal extension.

Caselet No. 2

<i>Respondent No:</i> 235	<i>Business Type:</i> B&B and local tour operator
<i>Interview Length:</i> 52 mins.	<i>Interview Date:</i> 30 th September 1999
<i>Proprietorship Type:</i> family business (wife and husband, co-preneurial)	
<i>Trading Period:</i> Easter till end of October (6½ - 7½ months p.a.)	
<u>Trading Influences:</u>	
Q7: d) It is not important. When and for how long the business operates is determined by other factors.	
Q8: <i>Highest ranked economic/market factors:</i>	
1. number of tourists (non-local visitors)	
2. operating costs compared with revenues	
3. level of advanced bookings for a particular period	
Q9: <i>Highest ranked other factors:</i>	
1. Things for visitor to see and do - ie visitor attractions staying open	
2. other business(es) that we operate	
3. rest and relaxation	
4. our own holidays	
5. maintenance and repair work	

Interview Transcript Extracts: Thematic Analysis

Themes:

product/service

“We offer overnight accommodation with breakfast with the traditional hospitality you would expect from an overnight stay in Scotland...it’s our house, so it’s our business but actually I just do the bed and breakfast bit on my own. [The other business we operate is an] incoming tour operator, cycle hire; cycling holidays with breakfast accommodation.”

business complementarity

“...they go hand in hand because [tour operating business] often feeds the bed and breakfast because in the present climate the bed and breakfast couldn’t survive without [the other business].”

market profile

“Well, most of our clients are overseas clients...being isolated I don’t get passing traffic. And ah, I’m so dependent on other peoples’ overflow or the Tourist Information Centre. Europe seems to start at the beginning of July and the beginning of August seems to be exit dates, that’s it, and after the Tattoo stops it’s curtains here. If the Tattoo went on for longer we’d be very happy.”

climate calendar effect

“Um, if you get a late Easter and a cold Easter that depresses the whole start of the season [it] becomes so much later. Ah, so it depends on the weather and it depends on when bank holidays are in the spring.”

business start-up circumstance

“Once the economic climate changed, my husband became redundant ...um, a golden handshake at that era when they were paying off the people...[Name of husband] worked for [...] which was part of [...]”

lifecycle/age

“...we’re not in the first flush of youth. ...We’re here like eighteen hours a day in July and August and you get to the stage when you have to get the time off. You can’t keep it up.....”

hours of work

.....We work 18 hours a day and someone who accepts bookings every day through July and August is asking for trouble. I’ve done it when I was younger but, you know, you can’t keep up the pace. And you do have to set aside a day....if it’s the busy season you have to take the odd day, there’s no way you can keep up the pace. It’s not fair to your guests. But that has not been necessary in the last two seasons.”

flexible trading rest and relaxation/ wellbeing

family commitments	“If someone [client] is there when you open ^ Apart from things like Christmas and New Year because you have the family here...that’s important.”
safety environmental factor	“...there’s the question of cycling off-road, particularly if there’s frost, you don’t think it’s safe nor do we think it’s environmentally sound because you know frost raises the top soil; if you’re cycling on that you’re damaging that.”
viability rates	“You really have to think of being a viable business, we would not open till May and we would close at the end of August. Here we do a service because we are here but um, we really must think is it worth it for the number of people we get....one of the problems that we have in Scotland with hotels, is that they operate beyond the viable period as a service...But they have to pay full rates.”
holidays	“...we take our own holidays in November. Not because we want to take them in November but because we find that [people don’t come in November]. I mean, um, sometimes it just depends what’s happening, we sometimes have it late November, early December, it just depends how things fit in. If I wanted to go to the World Travel Market it would have to be a bit later.”
fishing market and fishing licenses	“Now, hotels are different because fishers come and they want somewhere with a license. Because the trade is the Tweed, the last river to close in the fishing season for salmon. So there will be hotel business or licensed premises businesses but not much of the bed and breakfasts running”.
seasonal operations of other attractions	“I think that it would help if there was something to do. Difficult for us to extend the season without them [visitor attractions] extending as well. Well, it’s not worth our while. Now they say it’s not worth [their] while doing it because, um, the heating cost...but until we start doing it [extended opening/trading period] and get a reputation for doing it, we’re not going to build up the trade”.
<i>ad hoc</i> closure	“I say this, there are odd days I take off...to represent the bed and breakfast; I have to close to take days off to go to meetings”.
overheads	“...many of the tourist businesses are mini businesses and as such the overheads are high and we cannot market the way we

marketing costs	really should market...there are many schemes available provided by the Scottish Tourist Board but because of the cost we can't ^ [market] ourselves".
revenue concentration	"...in general we have to make every penny we can in July and August to cover the overheads. It makes it a very expensive market...in theory it would be nice to think that, you know, to bring the price down and then, um, to cover the overheads in other seasons".

Résumé: Caselet 2 represents a co-preneurial husband and wife dual micro-business arrangement. Both businesses operate seasonally and with a degree of market complementarity. The narrative emphasises the market constraints to a longer operating season. However, it is clear that business growth motivations are circumscribed by factors of lifecycle (age, stamina and the importance attached to wellbeing) and the propensity for flexible trading in terms of 'days-off'. Applying the framework of Getz and Nilsson (2004), the strategy of the proprietors resembles one of 'coping', in which the status quo rules, despite the desire for a longer opening season. Despite the pattern of winter closure, viability is a qualified consideration in the length of the operating season, as shoulder months do not recoup operating costs.

A number of exogenous factors are highlighted by the interviewee, in particular the problems posed by the temporal trading practices of 'co-suppliers', especially visitor attractions; the burden of rates and safety. However, a number of choice elements are apparent. In respect of the activity business, environmental concerns are expressed in terms of winter operating. Otherwise, the value afforded to family commitments, personal holidays and rest and relaxation appear to be part of the operating behaviour equation.

Caselet No. 3

<i>Respondent No:</i> 251	<i>Business Type:</i> B&B
<i>Interview Length:</i> 45 mins.	<i>Interview Date:</i> 19 th November 1999
<i>Proprietorship Type:</i> owner proprietor within family (husband and wife) household	
<i>Trading Period:</i> April - October (< 7 months p.a.)	
<u>Trading Influences:</u>	
<p>Q7: b) It is quite important, but there are other reasons that also determine when and for how long the business operates.</p> <p>Q8: <i>Highest ranked economic/market factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. number of tourists (non-local visitors) 2. level of advanced bookings for a particular period <p>Q9: <i>Highest ranked other factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. our own holidays 2. rest and relaxation 3. the weather 	
Interview Transcript Extracts: Thematic Analysis	
<p><u>Themes:</u></p> <p>product/service</p> <p>commercial home</p> <p>dual income household complementary business</p> <p>operating period</p> <p>trading flexibility</p>	<p>“...it’s a bed and breakfast establishment...offering people the opportunity to stay in our own home, which is an 18th century farmhouse, um, and to enjoy the amenities we have here as much part of the family...Easier for us to do it as well, so makes it just a B&B and a country house, really.”</p> <p>[Is the business the main income source?] “No it’s not. Well, no, we don’t have a farm... ...This is my business, um, and my husband is retired...ah, I do have a self-catering cottage on site.”</p> <p>“I’m open from April, well officially April till the end of October, but it’s really shorter than that”.</p> <p>“...if we get enquiries out of our season, um, if it’s worth our while we’ll say yes, basically. It has to be more than one night to make it worth it or it more people want to come two or three nights then that’s great otherwise it’s just not worth it... ...and if it were a couple that we have had during the summer or if we get on with, that we liked...and they would come for a long weekend or something...that would be fine”.</p>

<p>business growth</p>	<p>“...starting from next year, we’re getting a lot of [...] parties but that is organised by somebody else who has basically found us...we’re not providing the [activity] service but we are part of their package. I mean it’s a B&B straight forward, it’s a different type of market.</p> <p>“...April to October are our ...officially opened time but in reality it’s much shorter; saying that, um, with this new [...] contract I’ve got, that’s going to be a lot of business out of season. Out of our official season which is great”.</p>
<p>personal holidays</p>	<p>“I suppose, um, most of the business is in the summer. So we choose that period, we don’t really want to do it out of season because we like to have our holidays, they are very important... ...I mean October is a bad month because, when we first started B&B, um, we were open until I think the end of October. So we didn’t go away on holiday till November. But nothing happened in October. The following year we went away in October. This year we went on holiday in September. Because you get, you know, what’s the point [of staying open] for a few people. We got back from holiday and then actually we had quite a few [guests] in October. You’ve got to play it by ear. You’ve got to be reasonably flexible... ...It’s really, you know, me and my life...we have this and we get back from holiday, we’ve just had one [holiday] this year, you know, I know I was closed at the end of October officially, but when I got back from holiday, that was me, I thought I was finished [for the season] so we kept everything closed; I felt tremendous guilt... ...Yeah, well we usually have a holiday um, in the early spring...when we go skiing ^ and that’s very important. Um, and then we have to have a holiday by, I guess, we want to go and have some warmth...you know, at the end of the season”.</p>
<p>privacy</p> <p>home environment</p> <p>lifestyle</p> <p>inertia</p>	<p>“...And, um, we like to have the house back to ourselves...It’s purely selfish. Yeah, and to be honest the other three people I know, three couples I know doing B&B around here whom I pass business on, we are all in the same boat... ...Out of season the house becomes ours again”.</p> <p>“I mean the season I have now is what I choose to fit in with my life...it [longer season] has to be just sufficient to...just to get me out of my sloth”...</p>

labour	“No, I have help, I mean I have somebody who helps but um, cleaning...”
family commitments	“Things like that [family weddings] we wouldn’t take any bookings...”
values	“...it’s very difficult, you don’t want the place swarming with tourists, it detracts from the beauty of living ^ on the other hand you do want them... ...on the other hand, the way we work, it suits us. Quite well I guess, because we’re happy to have our house back and to have our lives back, if we’re pressured in to do B&B all year round, I probably would feel...yes for everybody else. It’s probably a problem actually”.
work-life balance	

Résumé: The third case illustrates a small business in which there is an apparent dichotomy between goal orientations. On the one hand, a lifestyle-goal orientation is expressed repeatedly in the interview via a number of attitudes and behaviours, principally the importance attached to multiple personal holidays and the temporal fluidity allowed in taking these. There is also a propensity for closure during periods of in-season ‘downtime’ that represents a flexible approach to the operation, plus a value attached to privacy and respite from paying guests and tourists in the locality and an admission of ‘inertia’ and choice in operating patterns. This is within the context of ‘showcasing’ the home as a commercial entity, shared with guests, that epitomises the commercial home entrepreneur as characterised by Lynch (2005). Thus, intrinsic motivational factors are clearly evident in the approach to the business. A second unit of operation and income source (a self-catering cottage) appears to run in tandem, temporally, with the B&B operation. Interestingly, there is very little emphasis on exogenous factors as influences on the trading pattern.

On the other hand, a recent contract entered into by the interviewee to accommodate guests on an activity package represents both seasonal market extension and a business growth opportunity. However, while the interview narrative did not venture into the anticipated growth trajectory arising from this opportunity, it is apparent from the

sentiments expressed that there is a degree of uncertainty in terms of how this will impact on the proprietor's current lifestyle configuration.

This case example illustrates an inherent contradiction between market growth and lifestyle behaviours and the temporal effects of these on the business' trading patterns. The situation thus underlines the difficulty in theorising seasonality response behaviours, such as that proposed by Getz and Nilsson (2004).

Caselet No. 4

<i>Respondent No:</i> 796	<i>Business Type:</i> visitor attraction
<i>Interview Length:</i> 51 mins.	<i>Interview Date:</i> 16 th September 1999
<i>Proprietorship Type:</i> private family business (co-preneurs)	
<i>Trading Period:</i> Easter - September (+-6 months p.a.)	
<u>Trading Influences:</u>	
<p>Q7: b) It is quite important, but there are other reasons that also determine when and for how long the business operates.</p> <p>Q8: <i>Highest ranked economic/market factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. operating costs compared with revenues 2. number of tourists (ie non-local visitors) <p>Q9: <i>Highest ranked other factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. other business(es) that we operate 	
Interview Transcript Extracts: Thematic Analysis	
<p><u>Theme:</u></p> <p>product/service</p> <p>proprietorship</p> <p>staffing</p>	<p>“Our main product has got to be the castle itself. The castle and its services is marketed as an attraction.”</p> <p>“...first of all, ^ we are private, therefore to a certain extent we have been able to do what we like, we don't have a sort of ^ one man at the top that influences everybody at the bottom like the National trust or Historic Scotland for example, you know... ...the other thing into that is there is only two of us here, so in actual fact we're probably the last of a dying breed.”</p> <p>“Staffing, again that is carried out as and when required. No, no [part time staff]. Myself and my good lady. You see I can tell her</p>

	<p>what to do until five o'clock and then she tells me what to do afterwards."</p>
<p>operating period</p>	<p>[I think you did say that you are seasonal] "Yes, Easter until the end of September...</p>
<p>seasonal extension</p>	<p>..."Um, when I first came here, what they used to do in fact was to open the Easter [weekend], ie the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, then close again till the 1st of May. I quickly saw that there was a lot of visitors that would have taken a week and then I saw again more people wanting to come along so we said well, look, advertising helps everybody in fact if we just opened and stay open...</p>
<p>destination seasonal extension initiatives</p>	<p>...Um, we've tried various October openings, ah, days in November ^ but really has been a total waste of time, you know. Even a few years ago, most of the attractions we had a scheme running where each day of the week one attraction was open, so the visitors in the area could each day go and see something and again, there was a poor response to that."</p>
<p>periodic closure/extension</p>	<p>"The other thing we noticed, we all used to have a lunch break from one until two. Now what I also quickly found out the average tourist is not interested in anyone else's lunch break. Not only that, it was ridiculous having to chase people out of the building and we ended up with half an hour gone in an hour's lunch break, so we decided to open an hour later and then remain open throughout the day."</p>
<p>business growth</p>	<p>"...there are plans on-going to expanding the new services that the castle offers, possibly going into banqueting, maybe into weddings or something like that. But as yet no decisions have been made about this... ...or open up a proper pre-booked organised tour. So this is certainly one of the options that we're considering. Sort of condensing your service in one respect and open up in others...</p>
<p>investment</p>	<p>... we know we've got a large bus park which we didn't have before and we've also got that thing going now with [coach tour operator], part of a tour they push out...the grand scenic tour, and that seems to be going on quite well you know."</p>
<p>funding (for school parties)</p>	<p>"...this year there has been a complete dearth of schools, and this appears to be, on checking up, that there is no money there for funding transport...So personally I would like to see more funding towards schools to allow them to get out and about."</p>

licensing	“...the thing now is that if you’re opening a new business, ie an attraction nowadays, um, you have to be graded before the council will let you operate.”
operating periods of other attractions	“There’s only two words they [tourists] look at, it’s ‘open’ and ‘closed’. Another knock-on from this is certain people [attraction operators] have been complaining lately that there has not been as many visitors and when you look into it, you find that they are only open shall we say on a Thursday afternoon and a Sunday afternoon. Now to my mind then you are not really trying any more.”
effect of seasonal closure on other businesses	“But what is interesting, ah, for example when the attraction closed, obviously the bed and breakfasts get upset because they feel that we should be operating something for their guests to visit. Ah, bed and breakfast is something that you can offer, operate throughout the year, it’s no big problem. Ah, when it comes to a larger attraction it tends to be a somewhat different business.”
personal holidays/wellbeing	“...the fact that there’s only two of us operate here, so at the end of six months, you’ve got to have a holiday, you’re becoming stale, you get short tempered, all these things you know... ...[own holiday]...it’s taken outwith the season.”
business planning	“Business planning and development...ah, again that’s fairly basically decided during the year and we react very quickly to anything we think should be put in.”
viability	“...obviously in the winter months there’s going to be very few people. And it all comes down to viability, you know, you can’t open the attraction, pay the staff, have the heating, have the lights on and so on..
fuel costs	...and we only have to look at the fuel costs, um that has been fed back this year by people...Americans have said that ‘the last time I was here, you know, the price has doubled what I paid the last time’. And people from Holland are quite concerned and asking us how do we manage”.

Résumé: The case of a privately operated seasonal visitor attraction provides an interesting counterpoint to the experience and perspectives of accommodation operators. Despite the scale of the business in terms of staffing and proprietorship, the narrative reveals an essentially entrepreneurial outlook, expressed in terms of market and seasonal

extension growth opportunities, recent investment in infrastructure and contractual working with a coach tour operator. There is also narrative evidence of seasonal extension by 'infilling' the Easter - May period. Collectively, such behaviours point to a closer alignment with growth- than with lifestyle-orientation. In Dewhurst and Horobin's (1998) taxonomy, this case would fit within the more 'commercially-oriented small business owner-manager' (p32) and in Getz and Nilsson's (2004) model as a 'combating' strategy. Indeed 'lifestyle-orientation' is less discernible from the evidence of the interview narrative. In particular personal holidays are expressed as necessities for recovery and wellbeing at the end of the season, rather than as valued priorities.

The role of exogenous factors in seasonal operation is articulated in a number of ways, including local authority licensing, funding for school educational visits and the demand-dampening role of seasonal close-down by other destination amenities. Interestingly, as a visitor attraction, the subject acknowledges the impact of his/her own trading pattern on other local destination businesses. On a related theme, the negative impact of periodic closure and the strategy employed to deal with this is raised. Finally viability, influenced in part by the cost of fuel, is a defining characteristic for the business, expressed both in the interview and as recorded as a high ranking economic influence factor.

5.11 Chapter Summary

The above chapter has aimed to chart the methodological dilemmas, rationale, components and development of the study from its inception as an exploratory investigation to the implementation of the main stage of the fieldwork. It has particularly concentrated on the development of the research instruments and implementation of the study. Findings from both elements of the exploratory study have been presented, and these were seen to inform the structure and content of the main survey instrument, especially in the configuration of the main questionnaire and as reflective of the themes of the literature review. The use of interview derived caselets

from the exploratory data provides an interpretivistic counterpoint to the raw data derived from the exploratory questionnaire.

Revisions to the original research design have also been explained and illustrated in this chapter. Such revisions were made in light of the quantity and nature of the data obtained during the main survey stage and the degree to which these (in addition to the Stage 1 findings) were deemed contributory towards the overall research aims.

Having thus set the methodological scene, attention turns in the next two chapters to the findings emanating from the main survey instrument.

Chapter 6 Questionnaire Survey Data Analysis

Introduction

Following on from the methodological approach outlined in the previous chapter, the aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the quantitative results from the questionnaire based survey.

In the first section (6.1) aggregate response rates to the survey are presented and discussed in terms of analysis of the breakdown by ATB area and regionally, and by type of business. In the second section (6.2), descriptive exploratory data pertaining to each question are then presented in a chronological sequence, reflecting the order of questions and topics within the survey. This takes the form of an SPSS-generated frequency breakdown of responses to each question in tabular or diagrammatic form, accompanied by a discussion of the results pertaining to the particular question. The chapter concludes with a review of the main findings (6.3), before leading into Chapter Seven which in turn analyses the results of the qualitative elements of the questionnaire.

6.1 Aggregate Response Rates

From the 1,803 questionnaires distributed, 721 usable responses were received within the cut-off period (early January 2005). This represents an aggregate response rate of 40%¹ across the sample base, which was deemed satisfactory for the purposes of overall validity and more detailed analysis. Such a response rate is also well within the expectations of a postal-based survey (de Leeuw and Nicholls, 1996; Schaefer and Dillman, 1998). Several more questionnaires were subsequently returned completed, though these were omitted from the analysis as they missed the cut-off point for the completion of data entry. 'Usable responses' are defined for this study as those questionnaire returns in which a majority of questions have been completed as appropriate to the respondent's circumstances and in which data is deemed as un-erroneous or non-contradictory. Where there was a significant degree

¹ 39.99%. All data are hereafter rounded to one decimal place.

of discernable response error or incomplete elements within a return, such questionnaires were discarded from inclusion in the database. However, in the case of usable responses where individual questions were contradictory, such 'user omissions' were identified and coded separately (-18) and thus displayed as discrete items within the SPSS frequency counts.

Table 6.1 provides a breakdown of response rates from each of the fourteen ATB areas in Scotland. Data are recorded by ATB areas as these collectively form the sample frames from which the database was constructed. It is recognised that each area constitutes a distinct tourism product, identity and market dynamic for small seasonal tourism businesses and clearly varies considerably in terms of geographic size and the relative scale of its tourism sector. Nevertheless, until their demise in April 2005, ATBs formed the main basis of collection and statistical comparison for regional tourism performance in Scotland and are hence used in this study as a primary basis of data collation, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 6.1 Frequency and Percentage Response Rates by Area Tourist Board Areas

Area	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Usable Responses	Response Rate (Percentage)
Aberdeen & Grampian	112	46	41.1%
AILLST	342	140	40.9
Angus & Dundee	33	11	33.3
Ayrshire	96	38	39.6
Dumfries & Galloway	120	42	35.0
Edinburgh & Lothians	97	39	40.2
Fife	100	44	44.0
GG&CV	23	6	26.1
Highlands of Scotland	500	212	42.4
Orkney Isles	24	10	41.7
Perthshire	149	54	36.2
Scottish Borders	102	47	46.1
Shetland Isles	35	5	14.3
Western Isles	70	27	38.6
Total	1,803	721	40.0%

A significant degree of consistency was achieved around the 40% response rate from across the Scottish ATBs, a factor that is deemed to strengthen the representativeness of the data overall. Notable exceptions in Table 6.1 are the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley (GGCV) area (26.1%) and the Shetland Isles (14.3%). Both areas provided small sample frames of seasonally trading businesses. In the case of the Shetland Isles, a lack of published information on the trading periods of accommodation operators compounded the problem of identifying the extent of seasonal trading by small tourism businesses and hence the construction of the sample base for those islands. Moreover, several completed Shetland responses were not applicable for collation as they were discovered to be community-run rather than private enterprises. Such low relative and absolute response levels therefore invalidate any meaningful intra-area analysis for these ATB areas, likewise for Angus and Dundee and the Orkney Isles, also recording low absolute response levels.

Aggregation of the above data from fourteen areas into seven broader and geographically distinct regions (Table 6.2) therefore provides a more robust basis for meso-scale (regional) analysis, though with the proviso that any generalisability of the data is subject to limitations at more localised levels.

Table 6.2 Regionally Aggregated Frequency and Percentage Response Rates

Area ²	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Usable Responses	Response Rate (Percentage)
South of Scotland	222	89	40.1%
Central Lowlands	316	127	40.2
Perthshire & Angus	182	65	35.7
AILLST	342	140	40.9
Highlands of Scotland	500	212	42.4
North East Scotland	112	46	41.1
Orkney, Shetland & W. Isles	129	42	32.6
Total	1,803	721	40.0%

² South of Scotland = Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders; Central Lowlands = Ayrshire, Edinburgh & Lothians, Fife, GGCV; North East Scotland = Aberdeen and Grampian; Perthshire and Angus = Perthshire and Angus & Dundee.

The preponderance of the mainly rural Scottish Highlands and AILLST area within the overall sample frame, and in terms of aggregate responses, supports the thesis that there is a strong rural bias in terms of seasonal trading in Scottish tourism, despite the prevalence of seasonal trading clusters in several urban areas within these regions, notably Inverness, Oban and Fort William. However, the data in Table 6.2 show a relatively even distribution of response rates across all seven regions and between relatively urban (Central Lowlands) and highly rural parts of Scotland.

Nine types of tourism related business were identified for the purposes of aggregate analysis. The response rates and proportion of the total response for each of these are provided in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Absolute and Proportionate Distribution and Response Rates by Type of Business

Type of Business	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Proportion of Total Survey Sample (%)	Usable Responses	Usable Response Rate (%)	Proportion of Total Responses
B&Bs	574	31.8%	251	43.7%	34.8%
Guest Houses	143	7.9	71	49.7	9.8
Hotels and Inns	151	8.4	57	37.7	7.9
Self-Catering units / Caravans	468	26.0	212	45.3	29.4
Holiday Caravan, Touring and Camping Parks	221	12.3	72	32.6	10.0
Other Accommodation	35	1.9	1	2.9	0.1
Visitor Attractions	157	8.7	27	17.2	3.7
Tour / Activity Operators	30	1.7	12	40.0	1.7
Other Services	24	1.3	18	75.0	2.5
Total	1,803	100.0%	721	40.0%	100.0%

In terms of usable responses, B&Bs and self-catering units jointly account for almost two thirds of returns (column 4, n=463), representing a response rate of well over 40% in both cases. These two accommodation sectors also yield a higher

proportion of responses (column 6) compared with their respective shares of the total sample base (column 3). Indeed all five main categories of accommodation have recorded robust usable response rates in both percentage (column 5) and absolute terms (column 4). Moreover, they collectively account for 92% of all usable responses, compared with the 86.4% they comprised of the total survey sample (column 3).

Conversely, usable returns from the other non-accommodation types of business account for 7.9% (column 6), or 57 responses. Accordingly, little in the way of detailed analysis is provided for any of these sectors (visitor attractions, tour and activity operators and other/miscellaneous service providers) within the current chapter, given the limited scope of generalisability arising from the low absolute numbers in each category. 'Other services' responding to the survey consists of 'restaurants with rooms', cafeteria, craft shops, galleries and operators of tourism specific transport (narrow gauge railways). It should also be noted that responses from several visitor attractions were excluded from the final data analysis spreadsheet, on the basis that their responses revealed alternative forms of ownership/proprietorship (eg local authority controlled or part of the NTS estate) and hence are subject to a different mix of factors governing their temporal trading behaviours (Goulding, 2004). Similarly a number of replies from youth hostels within the SYHA network were extracted.

Finally, Table 6.4 provides a distribution breakdown of responses by type of business according to each of the seven aggregated areas identified in Table 6.2 above. This data reveals differences in the composition of responses across each of the geographical entities, which in turn partly reflects the limitations inherent in the initial database construction, as discussed in the methodology. For example, the lack of responses from 'other types of business' in the North East Scotland region represents a deficiency in the sample frame used, rather than necessarily reflecting a year-round trading pattern for all non-accommodation operators. A similar situation applies for the lack of returns from Guest Houses in the case of Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles.

Table 6.4 Regionally Aggregated Breakdown of Responses and Response Rates by Type of Business

Aggregated Areas	B&Bs		Guest Houses		Hotels & Inns		Self-Catering & Caravans		Holiday Caravan Touring & Camping Parks		All Other Types of Business		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
South of Scotland	29	11.6%	4	5.6%	3	5.3%	23	10.9%	15	20.8%	15	25.9%	89	12.3
Central Lowlands	41	16.3%	13	18.3%	8	14.0%	45	21.2%	18	25.0%	2	3.4%	127	17.6
Perthshire & Angus	23	9.2%	6	8.5%	8	14.0%	13	6.1%	6	8.3%	9	15.5%	65	9.0
AILLST	55	21.9%	20	28.2%	11	19.3%	40	18.9%	9	12.5%	5	8.6%	140	19.4
Highlands of Scotland	71	28.3%	25	35.2%	22	38.6%	63	29.7%	12	16.7%	19	32.8%	212	29.4
North East Scotland	13	5.2%	3	4.2%	2	3.5%	18	8.5%	10	13.9%	-	-	46	6.4
Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles	19	7.5%	-	-	3	5.3%	10	4.7%	2	2.8%	8	13.8%	42	5.8
Total	251	100%	71	100%	57	100%	212	100%	72	100%	58*	100%	721	100%

* 'All Other Types of Business' includes 1 'other accommodation'

The ALLST and Highland areas collectively comprise over half of the analysable responses from the three serviced accommodation categories (B&Bs, Guest Houses, Hotels and Inns) and almost half (48.4%) of overall returns. The southern half of Scotland (South of Scotland and Central Belt) accounts for close to 30% of all returns. Although the spread of responses among the different types of service operation and the seven aggregated regions provide a numerically robust basis for analysis, it is acknowledged that there is an inherent difficulty in estimating the representativeness of this data set, given the absence of any empirical or estimated figures pertaining to the extent of seasonal STRB trading in Scotland as a whole. External validity is clearly a key issue in any social scientific measurement activity (Sommer and Sommer, 2002) and the lack of data on the prevalence of seasonal businesses operating outwith the membership-based ATB networks is a particular short-coming in this respect. Thus, despite the inherent power of large-scale survey data to generalise and draw inference (Stroh, 2000), any such generalisations made within the following analysis are subject to the above contextual limitation.

Attention is now given to analysis of the questionnaire survey results.

6.2 Descriptive Analysis of Responses of the Questions

Part 1: “Your Business Operating Patterns”

Question 1: *How seasonal is your business?*

Recipients of the questionnaire were asked to indicate the extent of their trading season by marking each month between January 2004 and December 2005 in which their business was open to customers (during 2004) and planned to be open (during 2005). 10.4% of respondents (75) ticked all 24 boxes, indicative of a year round operation, as shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Frequency of Year Round Opening

		Open All Year Round			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Seasonal	646	89.6	89.6	100.0
	Total	721	100.0	100.0	

While a significant proportion of the 75 operators reiterate their self-identification as ‘year round traders’ through annotated comments in their questionnaire response, the total sample had been selected on the basis of some period of closure as indicated in published consumer guides. On the other hand, it is apparent that businesses closing for the Christmas and New Year periods or indeed for any two or three week period, may well trade for all or part of each calendar month within the year. Thus it is acknowledged that in some cases the label of ‘all year round opening’ may well disguise an element of short-term temporary closure. Question Two was designed to explore such an eventuality. A sectoral breakdown of the split between year round versus seasonal traders is provided in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Open All Year Round versus Seasonal Opening by Type of Business

Count

		Business Category (Type)									Total
		B&B	Guest House	Hotel & Inn	Self Catering & Caravan	Holiday Park & Touring Park	Other Accommodation	Visitor Attraction	Tour or Activity Operator	Other Tourism Service	
Open All Year Round	Yes	26	6	9	25	3	0	2	2	2	75
	Seasonal	225	65	48	187	69	1	25	10	16	646
	Total	251	71	57	212	72	1	27	12	18	721

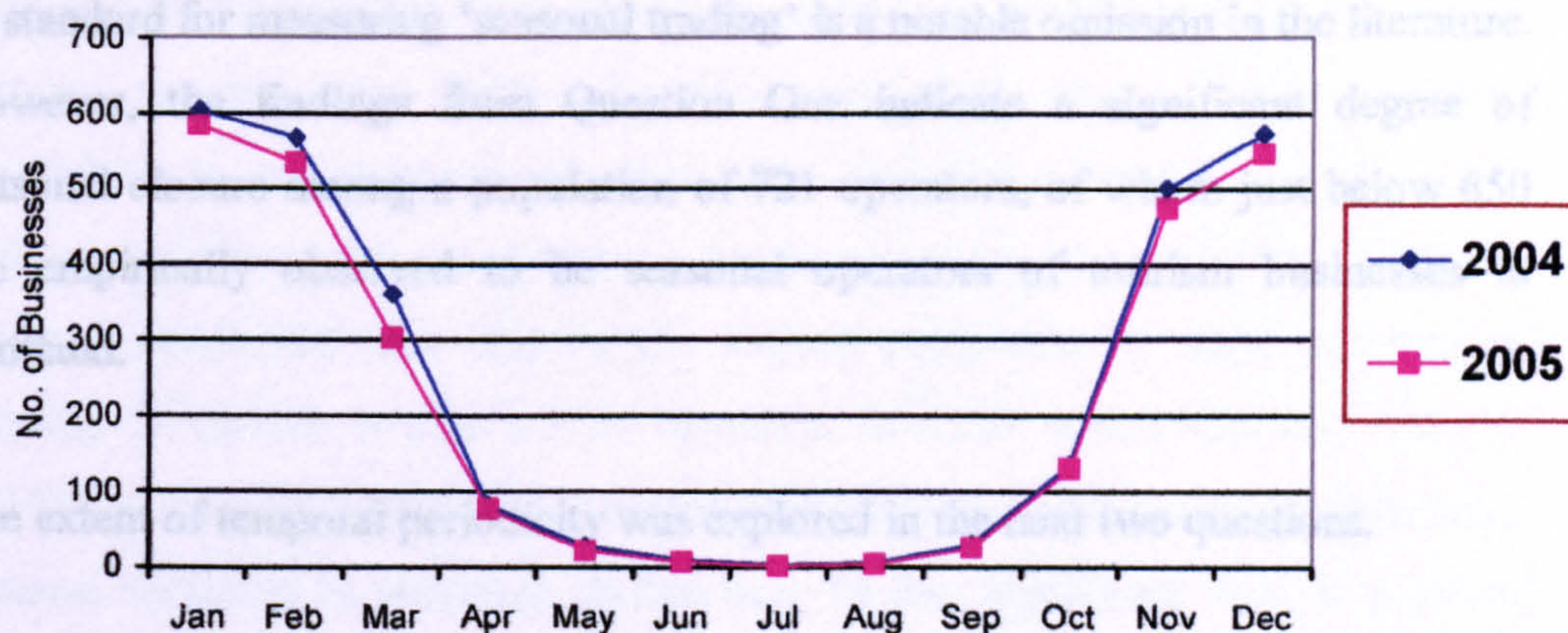
Deviation from the aggregated year round versus seasonal trading split is relatively low across the various sectors within the sample, ranging from 11.8% of self-

catering and static caravan operators (n=25/212) to 4.2% of holiday caravan and touring park operators (n=3/72) claiming to operate during every month in the two year survey period. Bed and breakfast operators (n=26/225) and all other types of business (data columns 6-9, n=6/58) closely mirror the overall split (respectively 10.4% and 10.3%).

Among the ten numerically largest ATB areas in terms of responses, the spread of year round operation within the sample ranges from 5.3% in Ayrshire and Arran to 15.4% in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Appendix 6.1 provides the frequency breakdown for each ATB area within the sample. The largest survey area - the Highlands of Scotland - yields few year round operators, at just 7.5% of the analysable responses.

The main aim of the question was to elicit data on the propensity of seasonal closure during the course of the year. A frequency count for each month of opening and closure is accordingly provided in Appendix 6.2. In the two years measured, the actual (2004) and predicted (2005) trading patterns are very similar, as represented in Figure 6.1 below, which charts the frequency of closure.

Figure 6.1 Frequency of Monthly Closure, 2004 and 2005



The highest monthly rates of closure are in January (84.3% in 2004; predicted 83.6% in 2005), falling month by month to a summer low between June and

August during which a handful of operators claim to close (0.3% in July 2004; predicted 0.15% in 2005), before gradually rising to a year-end closure peak in December (79.9% in 2004; predicted 78.7% in 2005). A striking degree of temporal symmetry is revealed across the year as well as a distinct trading norm from April till October within the sample respondents.

The level of similarity between actual and predicted year-on-year trading patterns is likely to be influenced in part by the requirement for ATB member operators to indicate their operating periods to their ATB several months in advance of the following year, in order to meet publication deadlines. The extent to which trading intentions and actuality coincide or diverge is the purpose of Question Six. However, while 715 operators submitted data for their current operating year (2004), around 20 of these did not provide predictive data for the following year, as shown in the counts in Appendix 6.2.

Although capturing a clear snapshot of temporal trading patterns, the data highlight a fundamental definitional issue of what constitutes either year round trading or conversely seasonal closure. It also calls into question whether '50 or less weeks opening' (the qualification applied in this study for inclusion in the database) is too inclusive to adequately differentiate 'seasonal' from 'year round' operations. As noted in Chapter Two, the lack of a supply-side definitional norm or standard for measuring 'seasonal trading' is a notable omission in the literature. However, the findings from Question One indicate a significant degree of seasonal closure among a population of 721 operators, of whom just below 650 are empirically observed to be seasonal operators of tourism businesses in Scotland.

The extent of temporal periodicity was explored in the next two questions.

Question 2: *Do you vary the days in which you operate this business during different times of the year?*

Table 6.7 **Variation in Days of Operation during the Year**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	122	16.9	17.8	17.8
	No	562	77.9	82.2	100.0
	Total	684	94.9	100.0	
Missing	-18	31	4.3		
	-9	6	.8		
	Total	37	5.1		
Total		721	100.0		

Approximately one in six (17.8%) of the valid responses³ affirm varying the days of operation of their business across the year. Such temporal variation may afford opportunities for time-off from running the business in order to avoid the necessity of closure for a longer period. This may be especially pertinent for single or couple based owner-operators or ‘non-extended family’ run businesses, where staff cover can be a pressing operational issue, as identified for example, in Hall and Rusher’s (2004) study of New Zealand B&B operators’ work patterns.

Disaggregations of daily variation by type of business and by ATB area are provided in Appendix 6.3. A spread of practice is evident among the various sectors, ranging from 9.2% of self-catering and static caravan operators (n=19/207) to one third of ‘all other types of business’ (n=18/54), principally visitor attractions and miscellaneous tourism services. Surprisingly, within the serviced accommodation sectors, the highest proportion of daily variation in opening or closure is claimed by operators of small hotels and inns (32.1%, n=17/53). However, given the seasonal predisposition of the sample, such inter-sectoral variances in temporal closure may be less significant than in a survey comprising a balance of seasonal and year round operators. Regionally, the degree

³ ‘Missing’ values from the above and all following Tables include respondent omissions (‘system omissions’ coded as -9) and invalid or erroneous replies (‘user omissions’ coded as -18, Kinnear and Gray, 2004).

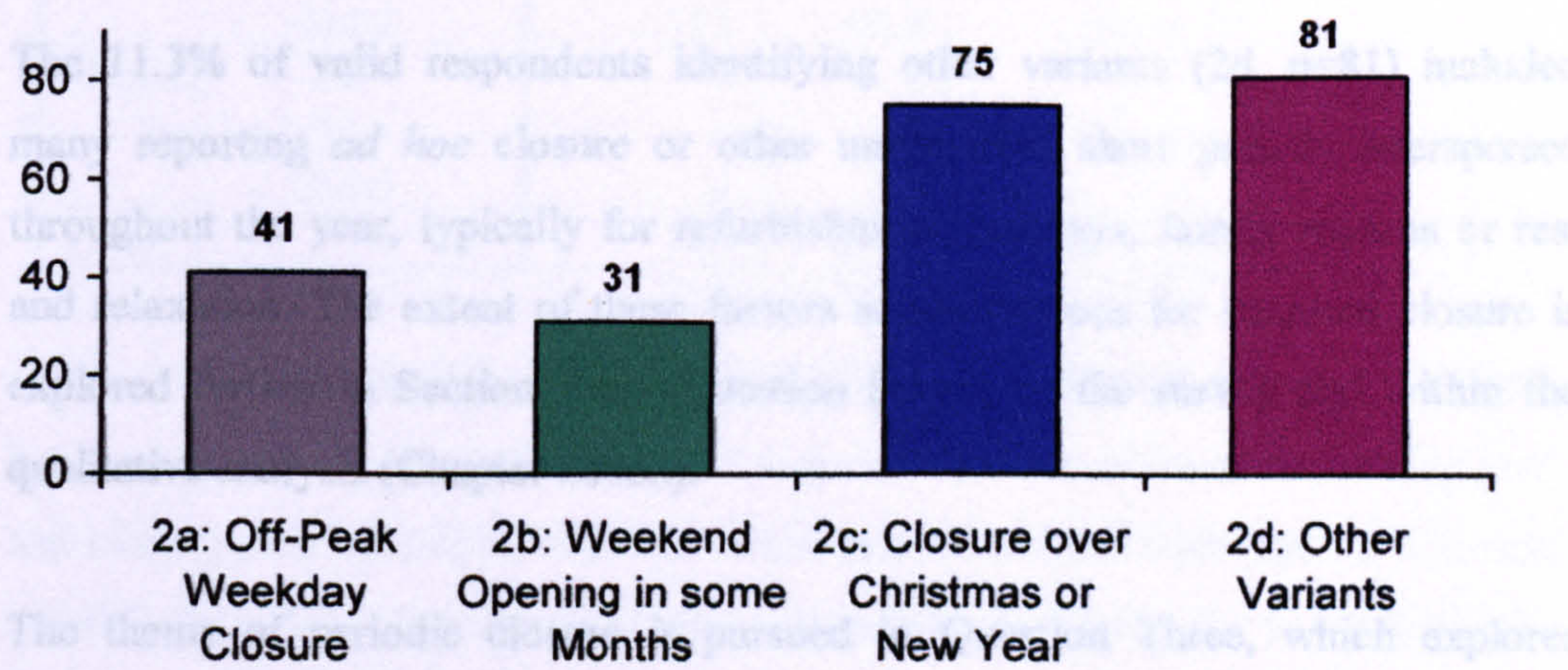
of variation is slightly less pronounced, ranging from 12% of operators in the Highlands (n=24/200) to 28.6% in Perthshire and Angus (n=18/63).

Appendix 6.4 provides frequency breakdowns of the responses from those claiming to vary the days of operation of their business. Three options were offered (2a-2c) with the aim of providing a spread of periodic variants, plus the option (2d) of specifying any other variant:

- 2a) *the business closes on one or more weekdays during off-peak months*
- 2b) *the business opens at weekends during some, but not all, months of the year*
- 2c) *the business closes down over the Christmas and / or New Year period*
- 2d) *other variants (please specify other variants on your trading patterns).*

Respondents affirming any off-season variation in the days of their business operation were asked to mark all that apply, hence 'Yes' frequencies in the four temporal variations exceed the total of 122 'Yes' responses recorded in Table 6.7 above. Figure 6.2 summarises the frequencies of each of the four variants.

Figure 6.2 Variants in the Days of Operating During the Year



5.7% of respondents (n=41) claim to vary the days their business operates during off-peak months, specifically through closure on one or more weekdays. Just over

half of those are B&B operators (n=12) and small hotel and inn operators (n=10) as shown in Appendix 6.5. Only 4.3% of respondents (n=31) claim to vary the pattern of trading through periodic weekend opening, this being the least recorded temporal trading variant. The low incidence of responses to variants a) and b) above suggests a largely regular pattern of trading among seasonal operators, whose opening and closing periods are generally clearly defined within a characteristic seven days per week pattern during the operating season. The high level of 'No' and 'Not applicable' responses to this question further underscores this interpretation.

Unsurprisingly, a larger proportion (10.9%, n=75) of the sample reports closure for the end of year festive season or part thereof (variant 2c). Responses attributed to this category include those proprietors who have indicated closure only during the months of December and/or January, and conversely exclude those who claim to close for the duration of the winter. By manipulating the data accordingly, it was possible to gauge the real degree of short-term festive season closure. Reassuringly, the level of response to this variant closely equates with the incidence of Christmas and New Year closure by otherwise year-round traders as published in the ATB guides and is reflective of the response to Question One above.

The 11.3% of valid respondents identifying other variants (2d, n=81) included many reporting *ad hoc* closure or other unspecified short periods interspersed throughout the year, typically for refurbishment, holidays, family reasons or rest and relaxation. The extent of these factors as motivations for seasonal closure is explored further in Section Two (Question Seven) of the survey and within the qualitative analysis (Chapter Seven).

The theme of periodic closure is pursued in Question Three, which explores flexibility in daily trading patterns.

Question 3: *Do you vary the hours when your business opens and closes throughout the year?*

The structure of this question mirrored that of Question Two, though the choice was not strictly dichotomous, with the addition of a 'Not Applicable' option to the initial 'Yes / No' choice. This response option was added in recognition of the lack of temporal uniformity among the operations of many small tourism and hospitality businesses as well as the irregular daily demands facing proprietors within different types of accommodation operation (Hall and Rusher, 2004, Lynch and Tucker, 2004). Nevertheless, the aim of the question was to capture any discernible daily operating patterns that might characterise differentiation between peak and off-peak months. The overall incidence of such periodic variation is captured in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Variation in Hours of Opening and Closure during the Year

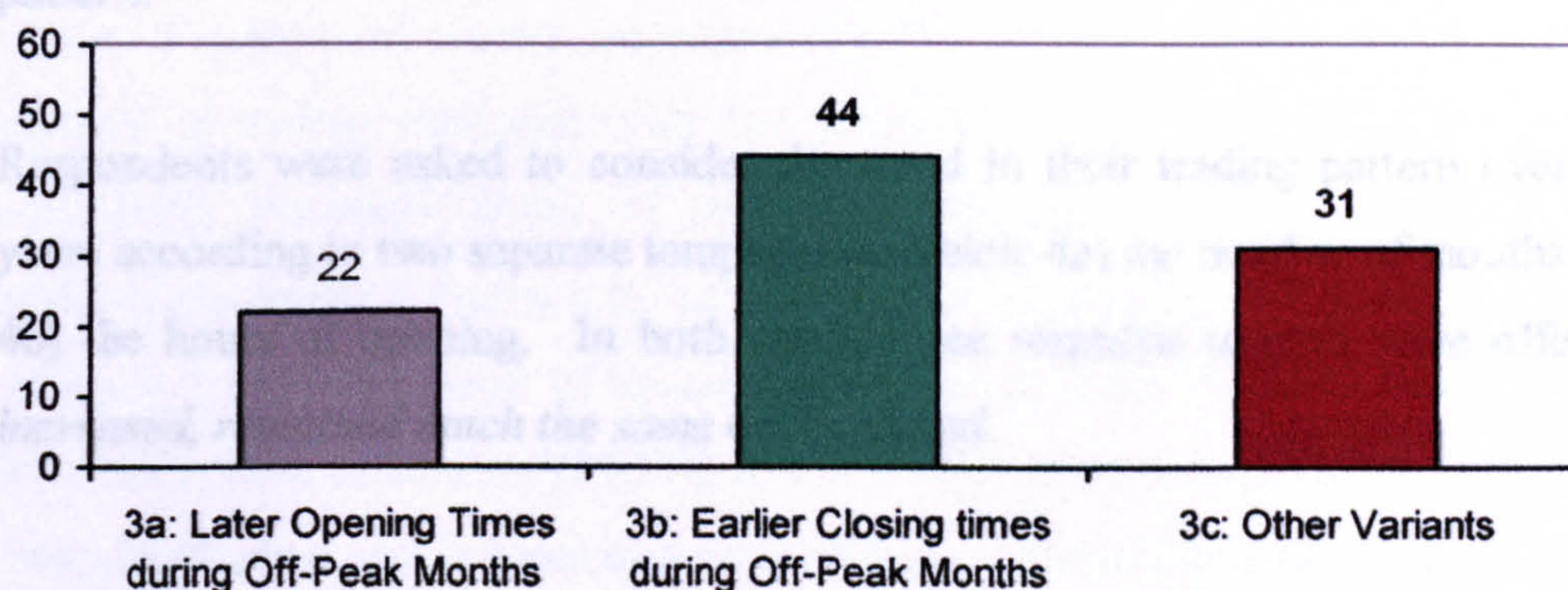
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	72	10.0	10.1	10.1
	No	415	57.6	58.3	68.4
	Not Applicable	225	31.2	31.6	100.0
	Total	712	98.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	3	.4		
	-9	6	.8		
	Total	9	1.2		
Total		721	100.0		

10.1% of the valid sample (n=72) affirm variation in the hours during which their business opens and closes throughout the year. A quarter of these are holiday park and touring park operators, with B&Bs and small hotel and inns (each n=11) next most likely to vary their hours of opening and closure across the year (Appendix 6.6). Almost a third of respondents indicate 'Not Applicable', with the greatest proportion (58.3%, n=415) responding negatively to the question. For those who

responded 'Yes', three qualifying variants were offered, to which respondents could mark all that apply, as follows:

- 3a) we have later opening times during off-peak months compared with the peak months
- 3b) we have earlier closing times during off-peak months compared with the peak months
- 3c) other variants (please specify: eg part of the business closes).

Figure 6.3 Variants in the Hours of Opening and Closure during the Year



The responses of variants a) and b) above suggest that seasonal variation in the hours of opening and closure constitutes a minor variation in business trading patterns, with 96% and 93% responding either 'No' or 'Not Applicable' to 3a) and 3b) respectively. Appendix 6.7 displays the SPSS-generated frequency breakdown. Limitations in the phrasing of variant 3a) are acknowledged *post hoc*, to the effect that differences in respondents' interpretation of the meaning of 'later' (as opposed to 'longer') opening may have guided some of the responses.

Meanwhile, 4.3% of valid responses (n=31) identified other variants in the hourly opening and closure patterns of their businesses across the year. Chief among these are temporal variations arising from operating part of the business or offering specific services seasonally or year round, in contrast to the operating hours of the main service. Examples offered by holiday-park and touring caravan park operators include restricting café/restaurant, self-catering units, shop,

reception area and laundry facilities. Meal times and the provision or non-provision of meals as temporal service differentiators are cited by several guest house and B&B operators, while variances in bar service times are mentioned by several hoteliers and innkeepers. Other aspects of temporal variation are those caused by natural forces (weather/tides), daylight hours (access gate closure), competing work commitments (eg farm office work, studio work), the need for rest and relaxation and accommodating working hours around the needs of guests. Each of these is pursued in the analysis in Chapter Seven.

Question 4: *Which of the following best describes the trend in your trading pattern?*

Respondents were asked to consider the trend in their trading pattern over the years according to two separate temporal variables: 4a) the number of months and 4b) the hours of opening. In both cases, three response options were offered: *increased, remained much the same or decreased.*

Table 6.9 Trends in the Period of Trading

4a) *Over the years, the number of months per year we have traded has:*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Increased	172	23.9	24.4	24.4
	Remained much the same	483	67.0	68.5	92.9
	Reduced	50	6.9	7.1	100.0
	Total	705	97.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	1	.1		
	-9	15	2.1		
	Total	16	2.2		
Total		721	100.0		

4b) *Over the years, our hours of opening have:*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Increased	49	6.8	8.9	8.9
	Remained much the same	489	67.8	88.7	97.6
	Reduced	13	1.8	2.4	100.0
	Total	551	76.4	100.0	
Missing	-9	170	23.6		
Total		721	100.0		

Extension of the trading season is more apparent in terms of the former, with almost a quarter of overall responses (23.9%, n=172) claiming the number of months of trading increased over the years, compared with just 6.8% (n=49) identifying increased hours of opening. Conversely, 6.9% (n=50) of total respondents report a decrease in their months of trading over the years, compared with just 1.8% in the hours of opening. However, the latter variable records a high level of system omissions (23.6%, n=170), often accompanied by the comment 'Not Applicable' and in some cases a qualifying comment that the business is new or that the current proprietorship was recently established.

Appendices 6.8 and 6.9 provide a sectoral and geographic frequency breakdown of the trend data, respectively for months and hours of trading. In terms of *monthly* operating trends, holiday-park and touring caravan park operators report the most positive movement, with 36.6% of the valid responses (n=26) claiming increased months of opening, followed by small hotels and inns (28.6%, n=16) and B&B operators (25.3%, n=62). Somewhat surprisingly, small hotels and inns also record the highest proportion of decrease in monthly opening (12.5%, n=7), followed by guest house operators (10.3%, n=7), while only one holiday- and touring caravan park operator (1.4%) reports a decrease in the monthly opening trend. Regionally there is little variation from the norm, with the notable exception of the Central Lowlands, whose four ATB areas collectively report the lowest proportionate increase in monthly trading (17.4%, n=21). However, it is

acknowledged that many businesses operating in urban areas will measure temporal extension from a longer opening baseline.

The pattern emerging from the cross-tabulated data is one of stability in the temporal trading trends of Scottish STRBs, with two thirds of the overall sample reporting little change (ie 'much the same') on both measures and a larger proportion of positive (ie 'increased') than negative (ie 'decreased') responses.

Question Five: Have you always operated this business on a seasonal (ie less than 12 months per year) basis?

The first part of this question sought to establish whether seasonal trading is an entrenched condition among its constituents, through a simple 'Yes/No' response alternative.

Table 6.10 History of Seasonal Trading

Have you always operated this business on a seasonal...basis?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	606	84.0	85.1	85.1
	No	43	6.0	6.0	91.2
	Not applicable	63	8.7	8.8	100.0
	Total	712	98.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	1	.1		
	-9	8	1.1		
	Total	9	1.2		
Total		721	100.0		

An unexpected limitation arose in light of the findings from Question One, in which around 10% of the sample claim to be year-round traders. Accordingly, some of the 'No' responses were recorded by proprietors as 'Not Applicable', as shown in Table 6.10 above. Thus, for the purposes of collation and analysis, a 'Not Applicable' variable was added.

84% of all respondents (n=606) claim to have always operated their business seasonally. This represents 93.8% of the 646 businesses identified in Question One as seasonal traders.

The second part of the question (5a) sought to gauge the relative longevity among those (n=43) who claim *not* to have always operated seasonally (ie among the 'No' respondents above). Just under 5% of the sample (n=30) specified a year when they changed from year-round to seasonal trading. This represents 69.8% of the 43 valid cases. As evident from 5a) above the data provides a temporal spread from which no clear deductions can be made. Indeed, in the absence of a comparative measure of trading longevity for permanently seasonal businesses (which comprises the bulk of those surveyed), the data in 5a) provides an incomplete picture of entrenchment. The low incidence of value data thus limits reliability and accordingly neither sectoral nor regional analyses are provided. It does, nevertheless serve to reinforce an overall picture of mainly fixed patterns of seasonal trading among operators within the sample.

5a) *If No, when did you decide to start trading on a seasonal basis? (Enter the year __)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2004	2	.3	.3	.3
	2002-2003	7	1.0	1.1	1.4
	1999-2001	10	1.4	1.6	3.0
	1994-1998	7	1.0	1.1	4.1
	pre-1994	4	.6	.7	4.8
	Not applicable	519	72.0	84.8	89.7
Year round trading	63	8.7	10.3	100.0	
Total		612	84.9	100.0	
Missing	-18	88	12.2		
	-9	21	2.9		
	Total	109	15.1		
Total		721	100.0		

In order to qualify the data, part 5b) of the question sought to explore the rationale for seasonal trading among businesses that had changed, at some point, from year-round to seasonal operations. Responses to this question (“*Why did you decide to start trading on a seasonal basis?*”) are analysed qualitatively in Chapter Seven.

Question Six: *Once you have determined your opening / closing periods, do you ever change them?*

This question sought to explore the degree of temporal trading fixity as highlighted in published consumer guides.

Table 6.11 **Changes in Opening / Closing Periods**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	313	43.4	45.3	45.3
	No	378	52.4	54.7	100.0
	Total	691	95.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	13	1.8		
	-9	17	2.4		
	Total	30	4.2		
Total		721	100.0		

Among the valid proportion of responses to this question, a surprisingly high percentage (45.3%, n=313) of proprietors claim to change their periods of opening or closure after previously having determined these. This suggests that the entrenchment associated with seasonal trading, as discussed in Question Five above, is in practice overlain with a considerable degree of flexibility and pragmatism. B&B operators are most predisposed to such flexibility, recording 53.3% 'Yes' responses (n=129, see Appendix 6.10). Guest house and other types of tourism business also record above average propensity to amend their trading period within the sample. On the other hand, holiday-park and touring caravan park operators are least likely to change their pre-determined trading periods (26.1%, n=18), which in some cases may be fixed for reasons outwith their

control. Geographical variances range from a low of 34.2% in the Central Lowlands (n=41) to over half the responding sample in the northern and Western Isles collectively (52.6%, n=20).

Those answering affirmatively to the question were asked to qualify under which circumstance, by indicating from either or both of the following options:

6a) *I sometimes extend the period of opening if there are enquiries or customers outside the published period of opening;*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	268	37.2	38.2	38.2
	No	55	7.6	7.8	46.1
	Not applicable	378	52.4	53.9	100.0
	Total	701	97.2	100.0	
Missing	-9	20	2.8		
Total		721	100.0		

6b) *I sometimes close or do not accept bookings during the normal operating season*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	137	19.0	19.5	19.5
	No	186	25.8	26.5	46.1
	Not applicable	378	52.4	53.9	100.0
	Total	701	97.2	100.0	
Missing	-9	20	2.8		
Total		721	100.0		

A more or less two-to-one disposition towards the first scenario is revealed, with 37.2% of all businesses (n=268) signifying responsiveness to booking enquiries or actual customers outside the published period of opening, compared with 19% (n=137) claiming to close or decline bookings during their normal operating

period. Other types of tourism business (ie non-accommodation) claim to be most amenable to extending the trading period (50.9%, n=29). Among serviced accommodation establishments, B&Bs report the largest proportion of flexible out-of-season traders (41.7%, n=103) in contrast to holiday-park and touring caravan park operators (21.7%, n=15) which may again be a reflection of constraints within the licensing system for such parks. Conversely, guest house (35.7%, n=25) and B&B operators (32.8%, n=81) report the greatest predisposition to close during their trading season, with holiday- and touring caravan park operators again displaying least temporal variation (5.8%, n=4).

Regional variances are relatively minor for both scenarios. However, extending the trading period (6a) is recorded proportionately higher in the Highlands (44.3%, n=93) and northern and Western Isles (45%, n=18) than elsewhere in Scotland, while Central Lowlands operators are most likely to close during the season (24.6%, n=30). Appendices 6.11 and 6.12 show the frequency breakdowns by sector and ATB areas respectively for statements 6a) and 6b).

The findings also reveal that around 30% of operators who profess to change their periods of opening do so by both the above methods, which suggests an even more fluid degree of trading flexibility by this group of operators. Moreover, the data from Question Six combined with that revealed in Question Two, points to a mix of market and non-market factors influencing operators' seasonal trading behaviours. This forms the basis of the analysis of findings in Part Two (Question Seven) of the survey, which are discussed next.

Part Two: "Influences On Your Decision To Trade Seasonally"

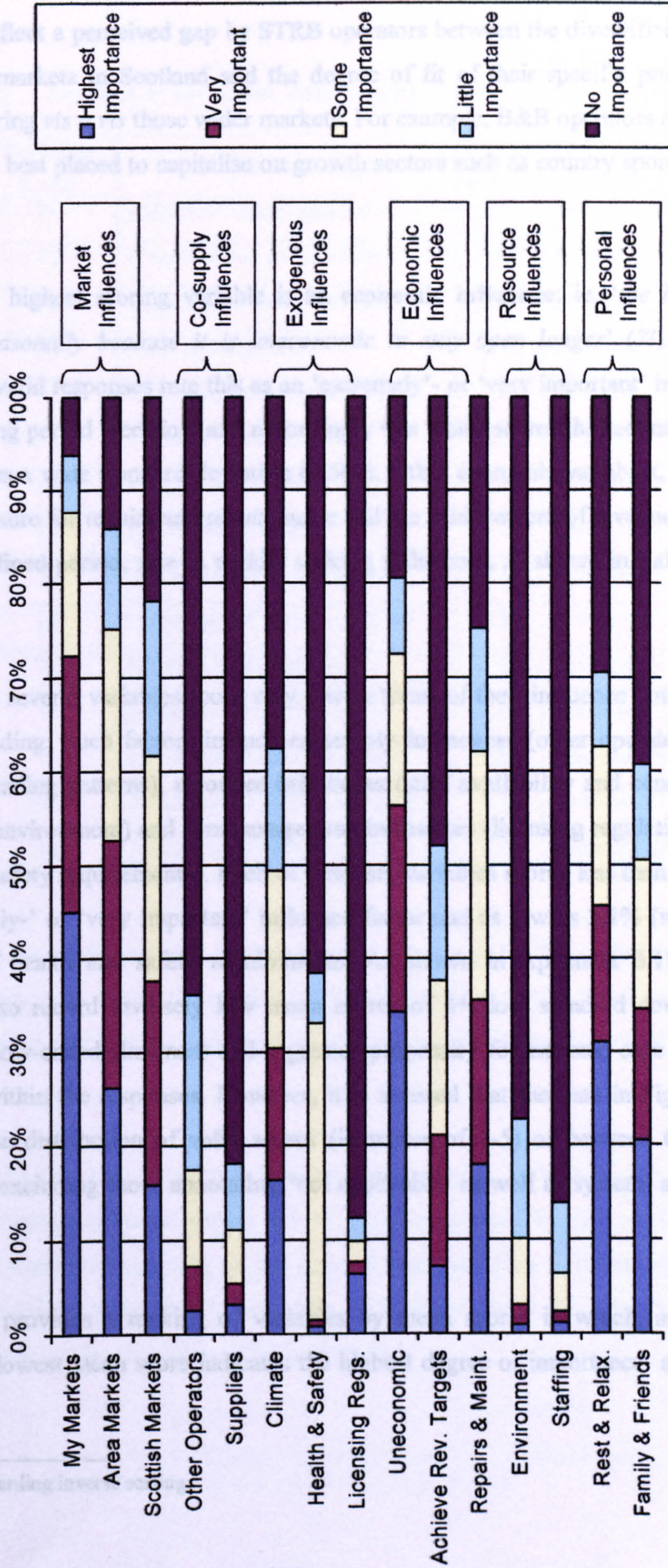
(Question 7): '...There are a number of statements...which reflect different types of possible influences on your trading decisions. Consider each statement in turn, and rate the degree to which it is important (or not) to your decision to trade seasonally'.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, this part of the questionnaire employs a five point importance rating scale, ranging from 1 (highest importance) to 5 (lowest importance). Fifteen influence criteria are measured, based on six broad themes, as set out in Chapter Five (Table 5.1). The results from this question are provided in the form of key descriptive statistics for each variable (Appendix 6.13), including mean, range, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values, as well as distributions of relative importance (Figure 6.4). As an inverse scale has been employed to score each variable against its importance rating (1-5), it should be noted that statistical values in Appendix 6.13 reflect this accordingly. SPSS-generated frequency output tables for each variable are provided in Appendix 6.14.

Perhaps the most striking observation from the frequency distributions displayed in the bar- graph in Figure 6.4 is the degree of disparity in responses among each of the variables. Unsurprisingly, market influences on the whole show the greatest potency as factors affecting proprietors' decisions to trade seasonally, recording the lowest ($7a=2.01$) and third lowest ($7b=2.60$) mean values⁴ across standard deviations greater than 1. Cumulative scores of the first two categories ('extreme/highest importance' and 'very important') among valid responses show 72.3% ($n=463$) citing the characteristics of the markets they serve and 52.6% ($n=341$) citing the state of the tourism market in their area as primary influences on the decision to trade seasonally. The wider state of the tourism market in Scotland ($7c$) is rated lower than the more immediate market dynamic, at 37.6% ($n=239$) in the 'extremely-' or 'very important' categories.

⁴ see comment above regarding inverse scaling.

Figure 6.4 Degrees of Importance of Influence Variables



This may reflect a perceived gap by STRB operators between the diversified nature of tourism markets in Scotland and the degree of fit of their specific product or service offering *vis a vis* those wider markets. For example, B&B operators may feel they are not best placed to capitalise on growth sectors such as country sports based tourism.

The second highest scoring variable is an **economic influence**: ie. *'the business operates seasonally because it is uneconomic to stay open longer'* (7i). 56.3% (n=362) of valid responses rate this as an 'extremely'- or 'very important' influence on the trading period decision, and accordingly this factor scores the second lowest mean⁵ across a wide standard deviation (1.504). Other economic variables, such as periodic closure for repairs and maintenance and the achievement of revenue targets during a defined period, rate as middle ranking influences, as shown in Table 6.12 below.

Conversely, several variables score very low in terms of their influence potency on seasonal trading. Such factors include **co-supply influences** (other operators' and suppliers' trading patterns), **resource influences** (staff availability and concern for the natural environment) and some **exogenous influences** (licensing regulations and health and safety requirements). Each of these six variables scores less than 10% as an 'extremely-' or 'very important' influence factor and as low as 2.1% (n=13) in the case of health and safety requirements. As shown in Appendix 6.13, these variables also record inversely low mean scores of 4+, low standard deviations, significant low-ended skewness and a greater propensity for extreme case scoring (kurtosis) within the responses. However, it is stressed that the data in Figure 6.4 represent the distribution of valid scores (ie scores of 1-5) of between 610-648 businesses, excluding those annotating 'not applicable' as well as system- and user omissions.

Table 6.12 provides a ranking of variables by mean scores in which, as stated earlier, the lowest mean score indicates the highest degree of importance and vice versa.

⁵ ditto Footnote 4, regarding inverse scaling.

Table 6.12 Ranking of Influence Variables by (Inverse) Mean Scores

Ranking	Variable Code	Variable Description	Mean Score	Influence Group
1	7a	Influence of my markets	2.01	Market
2	7i	Uneconomic to stay open	2.56	Economic
3	7b	Influence of area markets	2.60	Market
4	7n	Rest & Relaxation	2.90	Personal
5	7c	Influence of Scottish market	3.07	Market
6	7k	Repairs & maintenance	3.09	Economic
7	7o	Family & friends	3.34	Personal
8	7f	Influence of climate	3.41	Exogenous
9	7j	Achieves targets in season	3.82	Economic
10	7d	Influence of other operators	4.37	Co-supply
11	7e	Influence of suppliers	4.62	Co-supply
12	7l	Concern for environment	4.63	Resource
13	7h	Influence of licensing regs.	4.64	Exogenous
14	7m	Influence of staff availability	4.76	Resource
15	7g	Influence of health & safety	4.77	Exogenous

Market and economic variable groups are seen to dominate the higher rankings, broadly followed by personal variables (rest and relaxation, family and friends), co-supply variables and finally exogenous and resource variables as the lowest ranking groups.

Finally, while the above analysis portrays an emerging pattern of the relative strength of trading influence among the six variable groups, the data results show evidence of variation according to the type of business. This is illustrated in the frequency distribution counts in Appendix 6.15, from which the following brief profile analysis for the six main sectors is extracted.

Bed & Breakfast operators are most influenced in their trading patterns by the characteristics of their specific markets ($7a=73.6\%$ ⁶, where $n=166/227$), closure for rest and relaxation ($7n=61.2\%$, where $n=139/227$), the state of the area tourism market ($7b=58.1\%$, where $n=133/229$) and seasonal closure due to lack of year round viability ($7i=55.5\%$, where $n=127/229$). The needs of friends and family is also significant ($7o=50.7\%$, where $n=114/225$), indeed more so than among any other sector. Overall, market and personal factors predominate as seasonal trading influences.

On the other hand, they ascribe least importance to exogenous factors⁷, specifically licensing regulations ($7h$) with 99.5% ($n=210/211$) scoring this 'of no importance', and health and safety requirements ($7g=89.4\%$, where $n=195/218$). Surprisingly, climate ($7f$) is rated 'of no importance' by 44.7% of the sample ($n=101/226$), the highest proportion of any valid sector. The availability of staff ($7m$) is also of less importance to B&B operators than to any other sector, with 92.9% scoring this least ($n=197/212$), as are two economic variables: achieving revenue targets in season ($7j=54.1\%$, where $n=119$) and closure for repairs and maintenance ($7k=29.6\%$, where $n=67/226$).

Guest House operators display a similar pattern of temporal trading influences to their B&B counterparts, with immediate market ($7a=67.2\%$, where $n=43/64$) and area market characteristics predominating ($7b=53.8\%$, where $n=35/65$) as highly important factors. However, in both cases the degrees of importance expressed are below those of B&B operators. In contrast, the need for repairs and maintenance ($7k$) is rated highly as an influence on closure, by 56.3% ($n=36/64$), more so than for any other sector. A similar situation holds for rest and relaxation ($7n$), with 72.3% of the sample ($n=47/65$) rating this variable highly, also more than any other sector. Indeed, for guest house operators overall, personal factors rate second only to market variables, and slightly ahead of economic variables.

⁶ ie. those indicating 'extremely-' or 'very important', respectively scores 1 or 2 in the rating scale.

⁷ ie. those indicating 'of no importance', score 5 in the questionnaire rating scale.

Conversely, licensing restrictions (7h) and health and safety constraints (7g) prevail as least important influences on trading periods, with respectively 94.8% (n=55/58) and 92.2% (n=59/64) of guest house operators rating such exogenous factors 'of no importance'. These are followed by resource factors (7m and 7l), namely staff availability (85.2%, n=52/61) and concern for the environment (84.1%, n=53/63) and co-supply influences (7e suppliers = 87.3%, n=55/63; and 7d, other business' seasonal trading patterns = 73%, n=46/63). These latter are less important to guest house operators than to any other significant sector within the sample.

Hotel and Inn operators give particular importance to three variables as trading period influences: their immediate market (7a=86.8%, n=46/53) and area market (7b=60.4%, n=32/53) characteristics and out of season viability (7i=77.4%, n=41/53). In each case, the importance attached to these equals or exceeds the relative importance cited by all other sectors in the study. Moreover, there is a marked gap between these and other variables cited by hoteliers and innkeepers, with repairs and maintenance (7k=44.2%, n=23/52), rest and relaxation (7n=43.4%, n=23/53) and Scottish market characteristics (7c=41.5%, n=22/53) the only other variables accorded a degree of high importance.

Consistent with the previous two serviced accommodation sectors, licensing (7h=96.2%, n=51/53) and health and safety factors (7g=94.3%, n=50/53) are the least important influence variables, followed by concern for the natural environment (7l=82.7%, n=43/52) and the role of suppliers (7e=81.1%, n=43/53). Perhaps unsurprisingly, availability of staff (7m) is less unimportant to hoteliers and innkeepers, compared with other types of business (65.4%, n=34/52).

Self-catering and caravan operators provide a much greater spread of scores than those within the above serviced accommodation sectors. There is an overall similarity with hotel and inn operators (market and viability factors), albeit much less prominence is given to them in terms of the degree of importance expressed: 7a=64.9%, n=113/174; 7b=42.2%, n=76/180; 7i=48.1%, n=87/181. The only other variables given significant importance as influences on closure are climate (7f=40.2%, n=72/179) and repair/maintenance work (7k=39.2%, n=71/181).

Personal factors rate third behind market and economic factor groups, though at a lower level of importance than that accorded by the serviced sectors.

On the other hand, self-caterers and caravan operators articulate their least important influences more clearly, with exogenous factors predominating: 7h (licensing) =92.3%, n=156/169; 7g (health and safety) =85%, n=147/173, followed by resource and co-supply influences. Perhaps reflecting different business objectives compared to proprietors of other accommodation types, a higher proportion of self-caterers and caravan operators accord least importance to lack of viability in the off-season as a trading season influence (7i=27.6%, n=50/181).

Finally, among the accommodation based sectors, holiday-park and touring park operators display some distinct influence patterns compared to other sectors. While the characteristics of their immediate markets rate as the most important factor (7a=70.1%, n=47/667), this is followed by economic viability (7i=63.6%, n=42/66), licensing regulations (7h=56.7%, n=38/67) and climate (7f=53.7%, n=36/67), before the other less immediate market factors.

Meanwhile, no operator in this category cites the availability of staffing (7m) as of greatest importance as a seasonal operating influence. Indeed 83.1% afford this factor the least importance (n=54/65). Along with concern for the natural environment, such resource factors are overall of least importance, followed by co-supply factors (7d+e) and personal factors (7n+o). The general picture thus emerging is that holiday- and touring park operators perceive a broader range of influences than purely market factors as important in conditioning their period of operation, significant among which is the effect of licensing regulations.

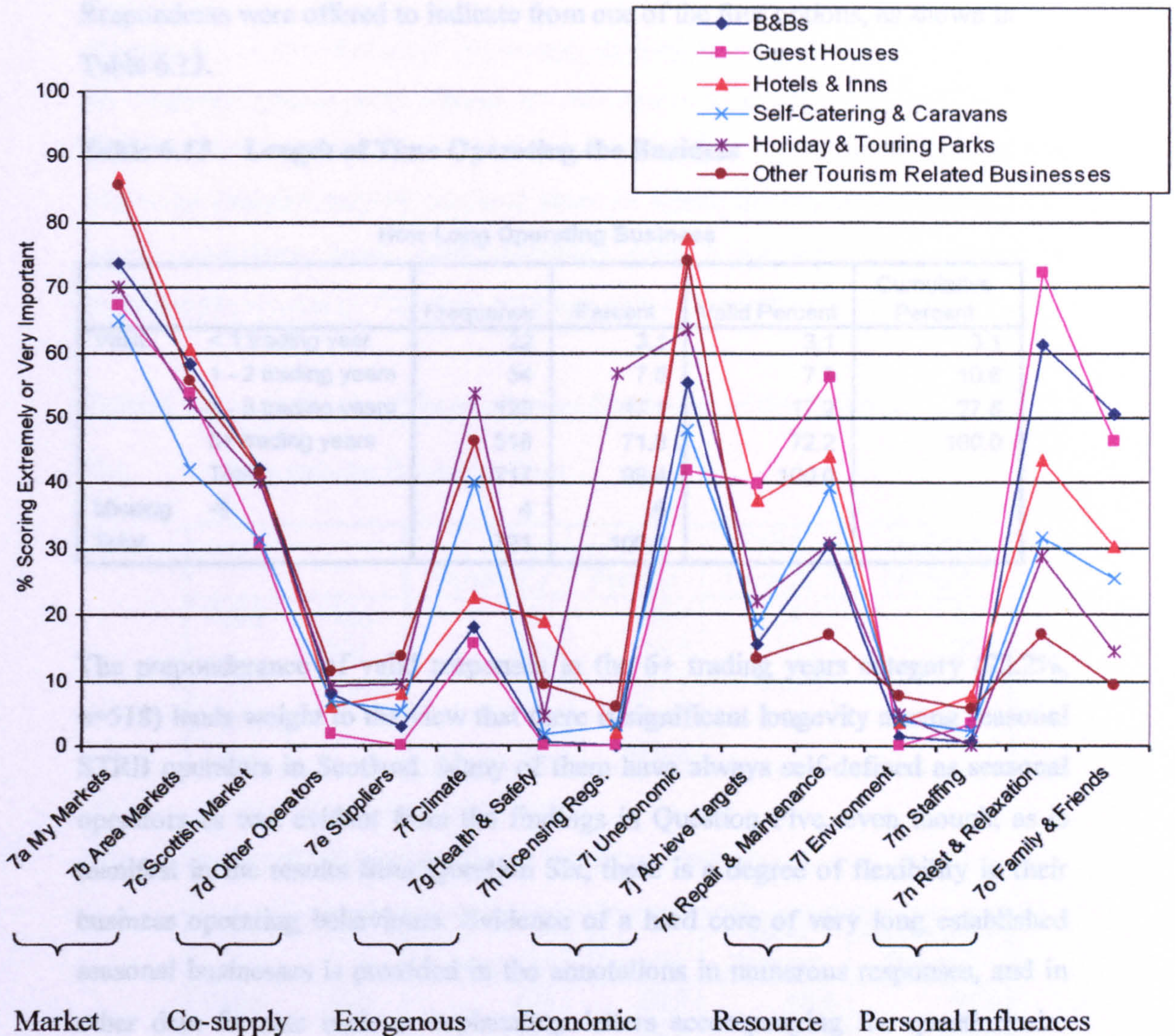
Given the disparate nature and the low absolute numbers of 'other types of operator' within the sample, data reliability is limited in terms of the distribution of results to this part of the questionnaire. Around half the responding businesses are visitor attractions (24-27), a further 11 are tour- or activity operators and the remainder miscellaneous tourism related businesses. In general, their trading periods are most influenced by the state of their immediate markets (7a=85.5%, n=47/55) followed

by wider market characteristics. Apart from these, only business viability ($7i=74.1\%$, $n=40/54$) and climate ($7f=46.3\%$, $n=25/54$) feature with any significance as high importance. Notably, tour- and activity operators are more susceptible than other sectors to the effects of the wider Scottish tourism market ($7c$, $n=7/11$) and to health and safety concerns ($7g$, $n=4/11$) as influences on their operating patterns.

Contrarily, personal factors are of less importance for other types of tourism business than for accommodation operators, with 71.7% ($n=38/53$) rating the needs of friends and family ($7o$) as a least important influence, including 84% of visitor attractions ($n=21/25$). Resource and exogenous factors are also given low importance as trading influences by operators of non-accommodation tourism businesses.

Figure 6.5 illustrates the pattern of highest importance accorded by respondents in the six main business categories to each of the fifteen influence variables. As per the above analysis, 'highest importance' is computed as the aggregated proportion of those scoring 'extremely'- or 'very important' to each of the influence statements. The distributions in Figure 6.5 and the previous sectoral analysis indicate a clear pattern in which market, economic and personal factors predominate as most important influences in the trading period decision. With the exception of climate, the other three variable groups are clearly generally of less importance. Moreover, there are clear disparities in the relative importance of some variables between the different types of business, most notably personal influences, repairs and maintenance and the climate. Elements of this emerging pattern are revisited in Question Twenty (in Part Three of the questionnaire) and in the qualitative analysis in Chapter Seven.

Figure 6.5 Highest Importance Rating of Influence Variables, by Main Types of Business



Part Three: “Your Business And You”

As discussed in Chapter Five, the third part of the survey tool was designed to elicit demographic data on the businesses within the sample and to provide meaningful correlational analysis with trading behaviour and influence data from Parts One and Two of the questionnaire. The following analysis focuses on the first of these two objectives.

Question 8: *How long have you been operating this business?*

Respondents were offered to indicate from one of the four options, as shown in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Length of Time Operating the Business

How Long Operating Business					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	< 1 trading year	22	3.1	3.1	3.1
	1 - 2 trading years	54	7.5	7.5	10.6
	3 - 5 trading years	123	17.1	17.2	27.8
	6+ trading years	518	71.8	72.2	100.0
	Total	717	99.4	100.0	
Missing	-9	4	.6		
Total		721	100.0		

The preponderance of valid responses in the 6+ trading years category (72.2%, n=518) lends weight to the view that there is significant longevity among seasonal STRB operators in Scotland. Many of them have always self-defined as seasonal operators as was evident from the findings in Question Five, even though, as is manifest in the results from Question Six, there is a degree of flexibility in their business operating behaviours. Evidence of a hard core of very long established seasonal businesses is provided in the annotations in numerous responses, and in other data formats such as explanatory letters accompanying the questionnaire returns. These are analysed in Chapter Seven.

On the other hand, a notable minority (10.6%, n=76) of businesses have traded for two years or less, suggesting a certain dynamism within the sample demographic, in terms of business start up. This is particularly evident in guest house proprietors, 21.1% of whom (n=15/71) state they have been operating their business either less than one year or 1-2 years. Holiday- and touring park operators also display a significant propensity for recently created businesses, at 16.9% in the less than two years categories (n=12/71). At the other end of the scale, just over three quarters of holiday- and touring park operators and self-catering/caravan operators in the

sample report operating the business for 6+ trading years. Frequency breakdowns by type of business are provided in Appendix 6.16.

Question 9: *On what basis do you own or operate this business?*

Six response options were offered for this question, as shown in 9a-f) in Table 6.14. Respondents were permitted to mark more than one of these, for example where the business may be operated alone or within the family and also may be leased. Therefore, total valid responses exceed the aggregate number of questionnaire returns (n=758/719) although only by a small proportion (5.4%).

Table 6.14 Basis of Ownership or Operation of the Business

9a) I Operate the Business Alone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	173	24.0	24.1	24.1
	No	546	75.7	75.9	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

9b) I Operate the Business with my Spouse or Partner

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	436	60.5	60.6	60.6
	No	283	39.3	39.4	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

9c) I Operate the Business within the Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	96	13.3	13.4	13.4
	No	623	86.4	86.6	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

Among the three owner-operation categories in a)-c) above, the spouse/partner operated business (9b) is most prevalent, accounting for 60.6% of valid responses (n=436), followed by single person run business (9a=24.1%, n=173). Businesses operated within the family (9c) are ranked third, at 13.4% (n=96). Although the questionnaire did not probe the age distribution of proprietors, it is clear from the nature of qualitative data that a number of single owner/operators are retired, having previously run their business jointly and now operating it alone after the demise of their spouse or partner. This issue is further pursued in the analysis in Chapter Seven.

9d) I Operate the Business with Non-family Business Partners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	14	1.9	1.9	1.9
	No	705	97.8	98.1	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

9e) The Business is Leased or Rented

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	1.4	1.4	1.4
	No	709	98.3	98.6	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

9f) None of the Above. Another Arrangement Applies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other	29	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Not Applicable	690	95.7	96.0	100.0
	Total	719	99.7	100.0	
Missing	-9	2	.3		
Total		721	100.0		

The latter three categories (9d-f) constitute the minority of operating patterns (collectively 7.4%, n=53/719). Leased or rented businesses mainly relate to leasing the site from a local authority, in the case of holiday/touring park operators. 'Other' arrangements specified by respondents generally fall into three broad categories. The first group includes reference to employed staff (n=6), a caretaker (n=2) or a manager (n=8) to run the business on behalf of the owner/operator. Allied to this latter, four respondents make reference to the business being part of a group or larger concern. Finally, some responding proprietors make reference to help from part time employees (n=2), from volunteers (n=2) and *ad hoc* help within the family unit (n=5). The narrative responses are analysed in Chapter Seven.

Appendix 6.17 provides a cross-tabulated breakdown of the ownership/management patterns emerging from the survey, according to type of business. There is, overall, a broad spread of arrangements, though numerically, most respondents are partner/spouse operators (9b) of B&Bs (n=154) or self-catering/caravan units (n=126), followed by sole proprietor B&Bs (n=88). Extended-family based proprietorship (9c) is evidenced across all types of business, with significantly high proportions (30.1%, n=22/72) among the holiday-and touring park operations and visitor attractions (29.6%, n=8/27) sectors. In the case of the former, there may be some linkage between the propensity for extended family business operation and the low priority accorded to staffing as an influence on seasonal closure (Question Seven, 7m). The diversity of ownership/management arrangements also raises a pertinent question with regard to the relative strength of seasonal trading motivations. At face value it would be reasonable to expect that intrinsic (ie. personal) motivators for seasonal trading would be more prevalent among single and especially retired proprietors.

Question 10: *How did you come to be involved in the business?*

As illustrated in Table 6.15, four response options were offered to this question to explore the various means through which proprietors came to be involved in the business they are operating. The first two reflect classic entrepreneurship pathways, as discussed by Goss, (1991) and Keeble, (1993) among many others. Inheritance was added as a third category in recognition of what Hakim (1988:437) refers to as

'involuntary' entrance in family businesses and of the role of 'estate planning' (Getz *et al.*, 2004:112) for succession in family-home based tourism related businesses. The fourth variable ('Other') enabled respondents to elaborate, and accordingly generated a rich range of information on business entrance circumstances.

Table 6.15 Means of Proprietor Involvement in the Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Started from scratch	462	64.1	64.6	64.6
	Bought as existing business	152	21.1	21.3	85.9
	Inherited	58	8.0	8.1	94.0
	Other	43	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	715	99.2	100.0	
Missing	-9	6	.8		
Total		721	100.0		

Nearly two thirds of the responding sample report having started their business 'from scratch' (n=462) with a further 21.3% (n=152) having bought the business from a previous proprietor. Another 8.1% (n=58) inherited the business while the remaining 6% claim to have acquired it through other means.

'Other' means of involvement reflect a very diverse spectrum of responses among the 43 cases. As with the previous question, several distinct themes emerge. These include:

- i) those describing the circumstance of *their position* within the business (n=17), mainly related to being recruited to a management position, or graduation from employee to leasee as entry mode;
- ii) those for whom *the building* was the catalyst for starting the business (n=12) including issues of space, modernisation or conversion, typically for self-catering or B&B operation;

- iii) *lifecycle* circumstances (n=9), mainly involving retirement or spouse bereavement;
- iv) *economic necessity* (n=5), including starting business as a way of combating unemployment, earning a bit extra, paying the mortgage.

These findings are further discussed in the qualitative analysis in Chapter Seven. Such a high proportion of self-start ups among a largely seasonal trading sample might not be unexpected, given the multiplicity of motivations for operating small tourism and hospitality businesses, including quality of life and lifestyle-related factors, locational and social motivations and economic satisficing. In a similar vein, the significant minority of bought seasonal enterprises raises issues regarding the relative importance of these factors underlying purchase transactions. It also raises the question whether there is a match between the trading motivations of the purchasers of seasonal businesses and those of their self-start up counterparts.

Finally, Appendix 6.18 provides disaggregated sectoral frequency data for proprietors' mode of involvement in the business. As evidenced, there are considerable disparities between the various sectors. While 86.7% of B&B operators started the business from new (n=216/249), only 39.4% of responding guest house operators (n=28/71) and 15.8% of hoteliers and innkeepers (n=9/57) claim to have done so. This is likely to reflect the relative economic differences in barriers to entry between the three serviced sectors which, as noted by Getz *et al.*, (2004), Shaw and Williams, (2002) and Westhead and Cowling, (1998) among others, can be low for service operators. Most hoteliers and innkeepers cite having bought the business in its existing state (61.4%, n=35/57) compared with only 9.6% of B&B operators (24/249). For guest house operators (52.1%, n=37/71) and holiday- touring park operators (41.4%, n=29/70) purchase was also the predominant means of entry. This latter displays the broadest spread of involvement among the sample, including 20% (n=14/70) inherited and 10% (n=7/70) through 'other' means, most usually leasing transfer arrangements.

Meanwhile, having explored the relative balance of proprietor involvement, the next question sought to identify the degree of previous proprietorial experience.

Question 11: *Before starting or taking over this business, did you have any previous experience of running your own business?*

This question offered a simple dichotomous ‘Yes / No’ response choice. As observed in Table 6.16, there was a near 40/60 split between those with previous experience (n=287) and those claiming to have none (n=424).

Table 6.16 Previous Experience of Running Your Own Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	287	39.8	40.4	40.4
	No	424	58.8	59.6	100.0
	Total	711	98.6	100.0	
Missing	-9	10	1.4		
Total		721	100.0		

The high proportion of respondents in the ‘No’ category echoes a commonly held observation on the propensity of tourism and hospitality related sectors for first-time business proprietorship. Getz *et al.* (2004) expressed it accordingly, with regard to family business experience in tourism:

“Either they [proprietors] do not require special skills, lengthy experience or large amounts of capital, or entrepreneurs think they do not.” (p13)

Moreover, the sentiment has an empirical base. For example, Shaw and Williams’ 1987 study of 411 Cornish tourism related businesses found only a small minority of owners having had any previous business operating experience: *“For most owners, it was their first business venture”* (Getz *et al.*, 2004:58). A similar finding was reached by McKercher and Robbins (1998) in their study of Australian nature tour operators, who highlighted the deficiency in formal business or marketing by such operators. An alternative interpretation to the data in Table 6.16 might therefore be that the 40.4% of proprietors claiming previous business operating

experience represents a significant proportion of entrepreneurial antecedence, in comparison with other empirical studies.

Appendix 6.19 displays the findings by sector. Focussing on those answering 'No' to previous business operating experience, the range varies from less than half of hoteliers and innkeepers (47.3%, n=41/71) and 'other types of business' proprietors (44.8%, n=26/58) to 64.7% of B&B proprietors (n=161/249) without experience. Interestingly, the two highest 'no prior business operating experience' sectors (B&Bs and self-caterers/caravan operators, 64.3%) are also highest in terms of starting the current business 'from scratch' and the lowest in terms of having bought it as an existing business. This may serve to further reinforce the above noted observed empiricisms regarding low entry barriers as enticements to business start-ups.

Question 12: *If Yes to Question 11, was your previous business a seasonal or year round operation?*

Despite the above analysis of business experience and entry, any link between proprietors operating their tourism business on a seasonal basis and an historic predisposition to seasonal operations is not found to be substantial from the results to this question, as shown in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17 Pattern of Operation of Previous Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Operated seasonally	55	7.6	7.9	7.9
	Year round	223	30.9	32.1	40.0
	Not applicable	417	57.8	60.0	100.0
	Total	695	96.4	100.0	
Missing	-18	5	.7		
	-9	21	2.9		
	Total	26	3.6		
Total		721	100.0		

Only 19.2% of the 287 'Yes' respondents from the previous question (n=55) affirm that their previous business operated seasonally. This equates to 7.9% of the total valid sample, as illustrated in the table.

On the other hand, the majority of seasonally operating proprietors with previous experience of running a business claim their previous business was run on a year round basis (n=223). This equates to 80.1% of those indicating either option 12a) (*my previous business was operated seasonally*) or 12b) (*my previous business was operated on a year round basis*). In other words, around four-fifths of current seasonal traders operated their previous business on a year round basis. This situation may, of course, reflect either a change of business type or sector by such proprietors, or a move to 'downsize' the scope of their business operations within the tourism related sectors. However, no such inference is drawn from the data, although the degree of similarity between the type of previous and current business forms the basis of Question Thirteen. Given the low incidence of successive seasonal business operation, no attempt is made to provide a sectoral breakdown of the results.

Question 13: Was your previous business a similar or different type of business to your current tourism business?

Table 6.18 Similarity or Difference between Previous and Current Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Similar	109	15.1	16.9	16.9
	Different	175	24.3	27.1	44.0
	Not applicable	361	50.1	56.0	100.0
	Total	645	89.5	100.0	
Missing	-18	62	8.6		
	-9	14	1.9		
	Total	76	10.5		
Total		721	100.0		

Of the 287 'Yes' respondents in Question 11 (see Table 6.16), all but three provide details of the similarity or difference between their previous and current businesses,

as shown in Table 6.18. Around one sixth of the total sample (16.9%, n=109) claim similarity between the two. This equates to 38% of those with previous business operating experience (n=109/287). Comparison with other empirical work is fraught with difficulties in this area due to the lack of such data and the methodological differences between studies. Nevertheless, as a marker of proximity, the aforementioned Cornish study (Shaw and Williams, 1987) recorded 12.7% of their proprietor sample as having previously been employers or employees within the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The remaining 175 valid respondents to Question 13 claim to have moved into a tourism related enterprise from a different type of business. They comprise 27.1% of responses or 61% of those with previous business operating experience. The range of previous businesses specified covers an extensive scope of economic activities within the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, and includes former self-employment in micro-businesses to ownership/management of large firms. A more detailed analysis of the responses is provided in Chapter Seven and in Appendix 7.6.

Table 6.18 also reveals a relatively high level of user omissions (recorded as -18) in the results from this question (10.5%, n=76). These account for respondents who have recorded 'No' to previous experience of running their own business (Question 11), but who nevertheless indicate a similar or different type of business in Question 13. *Post hoc* evaluation acknowledges a possible confusion in the wording and lack of clear 'signposting' attached to Question 13 (in relation to Question 11) as limitations, hence the decision to exclude data provided in those particular questionnaire returns. It is clear from the narrative information that some within the sample interpreted the question more broadly, to include 'employment history' in general rather than business proprietorship experience specifically. Notwithstanding, the information furnished by all respondents tends to support the 'observational empiricism' of the role of tourism and hospitality as a 'career change' or lifestyle proprietorship destination, as noted in various geographic and sectoral contexts by Shaw and Williams, (1987), Page *et al.*, (1999), Ateljevic and Doorne, (2000), Andrew *et al.*, (2001), Peters and Weirmaier, (2001), Getz *et al.*, (2004) and others.

Finally, Appendix 6.20 presents a cross-tabulated breakdown of the ‘similar’ and ‘different’ response categories in the above question. Focussing on the latter, a distinct pattern emerges. On the one hand, there is a high degree of change (ie. difference) from their previous type of business among B&B operators (65.9%, n=58/88), self-catering/caravan operators (66.2%, n=47/71) and holiday- and touring park operators (69.7%, n=23/33). ‘Other’ types of STRB also record a high level of change (77.4%, n=24/31). On the other hand, a minority of guest house operators (37.5%, n=12/32) and hoteliers/innkeepers (37.9%, n=11/29) claim their current business to be of a different type from their previous enterprise, possibly suggesting a greater commitment by such operators to their particular sector in the process of successive investment.

Question 14: *Did you move to the area from another part of the country with the aim of starting this business?*

The first part of the question offered a simple ‘Yes/No’ choice. The distribution of valid responses can be seen in Table 6.19, with 31.2% (n=216/692) affirming the start-up of their tourism related business as the motivation for their move to the area.

Table 6.19 In-migration and Business Start-up

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	216	30.0	31.2	31.2
	No	476	66.0	68.8	100.0
	Total	692	96.0	100.0	
Missing	-18	1	.1		
	-9	28	3.9		
	Total	29	4.0		
Total		721	100.0		

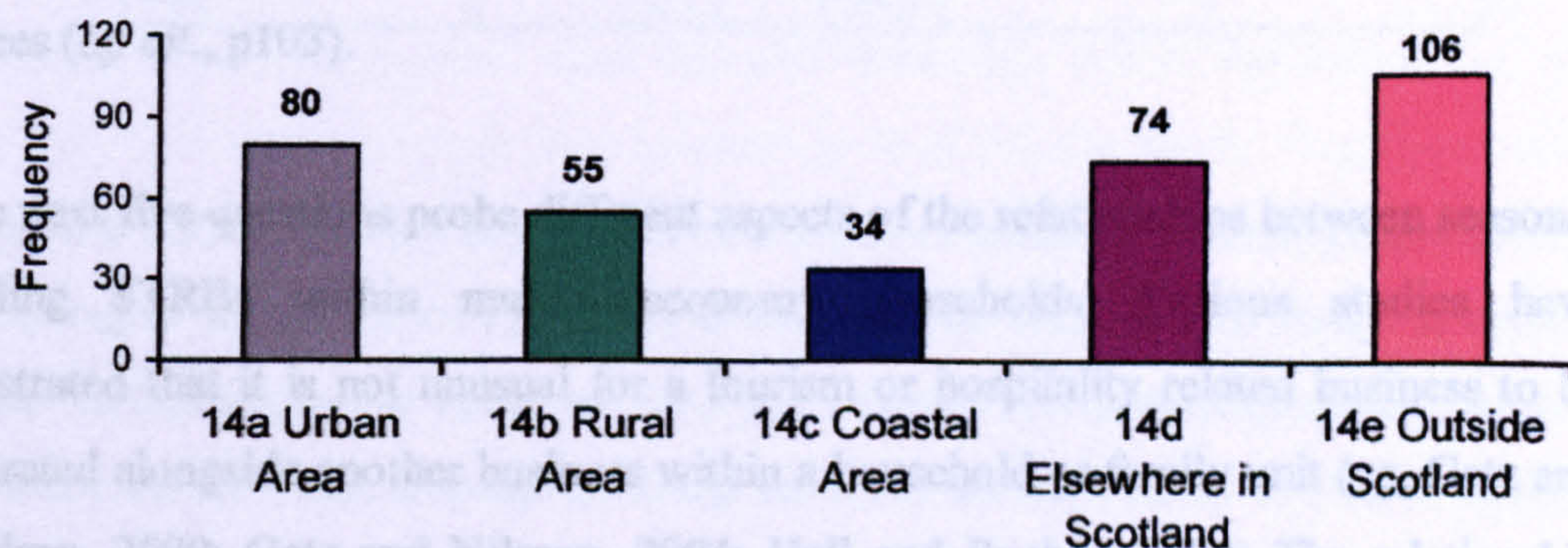
Such a level of business start-up motivated inward migration within the sample is significant in its own right. It echoes findings from Shaw and Williams’ (1987) Cornish study (which found less than one-fifth of owner proprietors were from that county) and more recently Paniagna’s (2002) work on urban-rural entrepreneur migration in Spain that has found significant levels of localised STRB-start-

up/purchase motivated in-migration there. Such studies have highlighted the importance of this phenomenon on the supply-side market dynamic of local tourism sectors. Moreover, where there are significant pockets of STRB entrepreneurs having moved to a rural idyll to escape urban life, there may be issues arising from the inter-relationships and boundaries between tourism consumption and production (Ateljevic, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 2000; Williams and Hall, 2000) of which temporality of service is but one concern. Clearly, the data raises further questions with regard to the demographic and business dynamic, the motivations and longevity/degree of establishment of such in-migration, especially among the more pronounced seasonal operators.

The second part of the question enabled those responding 'Yes' to identify the type of area from which they moved: urban, rural or coastal (14a-c) and from within or outwith Scotland (14d-e). Respondents were asked to mark all that apply, with the expectation that replies would generally feature a choice from the first three variables and a second from variables 14d-e. In practice, a number of respondents marked only one variable among the five, hence the high frequency of system omissions (-9), while a small minority identified moving from an urban coastal or a rural coastal area.

Appendix 6.21 shows the detailed frequency breakdown for each of the five variables, while the incidence of 'Yes' responses to each of these is provided in the bar chart in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6 Incidence of Moving to the Area to Start-up Tourism Related Business



The distribution between the first three locational types shows a predominance of migration from urban areas (37.0% of qualifying responses, where n=80/216). However, a surprisingly high proportion of business start-up motivated in-migrants claim to have moved from rural (25.5%, n=55/216) and coastal (15.7%, n=34/216) areas.

On the other hand, the majority of qualifying respondents report having moved from outwith Scotland to start their tourism related business (49.1%, where n=106/216). A further 34.3% moved from within Scotland (n=74/216) with the remainder not identifying a place of origin. It is acknowledged that the issue is clearly sensitive for some incomer proprietors operating in a few of the more rural and remote parts of Scotland, as noted from several annotations on questionnaire returns. Moreover, as shown in Appendix 6.22, the proportion of in-migrant proprietors displays some variation from the 30% mean across the ATB areas, although the mainly rural ATBs are not uniformly highest in percentage terms. Indeed, the Northern and Western Isles collectively capture the lowest proportion of incomer STRB operators, at 19% (n=8/42) while towards the other extreme the largely rural AILLST region records 38.6% (n=54/140). In contrast, the mainly urban Central Belt records only 21.3% of respondents (n=27/127) claiming to have moved there to start up their tourism related business. However, irrespective of the location, the link between migration and trading motivations among seasonal operators remains a pertinent issue for further inquiry. As Shaw and Williams (2004) note, the limited studies that have been carried out on the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship are largely of rural and coastal locations. They point to migration patterns being '*contingent on cultural factors and types of tourism destinations*' with entrepreneurs' motivations mainly focused on perceptions of high quality environments and the influence of property prices (*op cit.*, p103).

The next five questions probe different aspects of the relationships between seasonal trading STRBs within multiple-economy households. Various studies have illustrated that it is not unusual for a tourism or hospitality related business to be operated alongside another business within a household or family unit (eg, Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Getz and Nilsson, 2004; Hall and Rusher, 2004) The relationship

between agriculture and bed and breakfast or self-catering provision most clearly exemplifies this within farm based households. However, the relative role of the STRB as the primary or ancillary business within the overall household or family economy may have a part to play as an influencing factor in the temporality of its operation.

The first issues explored are the degree of prevalence of multiple business operation and the types of other businesses operated by proprietors of tourism enterprises.

Question 15: Do you own or operate any other business(es) now?

This question was divided into two parts, the first a dichotomous response as shown in Table 6.20. Almost one third of respondents (n=231) claim to own or operate another business in addition to the tourism business disclosed. Despite the fact that the wording of the question was phrased in such a way as to distinguish ‘ownership’ or ‘operation’ from employment, it is acknowledged that the nature of family enterprise may blur such boundaries in practice.

Table 6.20 Frequency of Respondents Owning or Operating Other Business

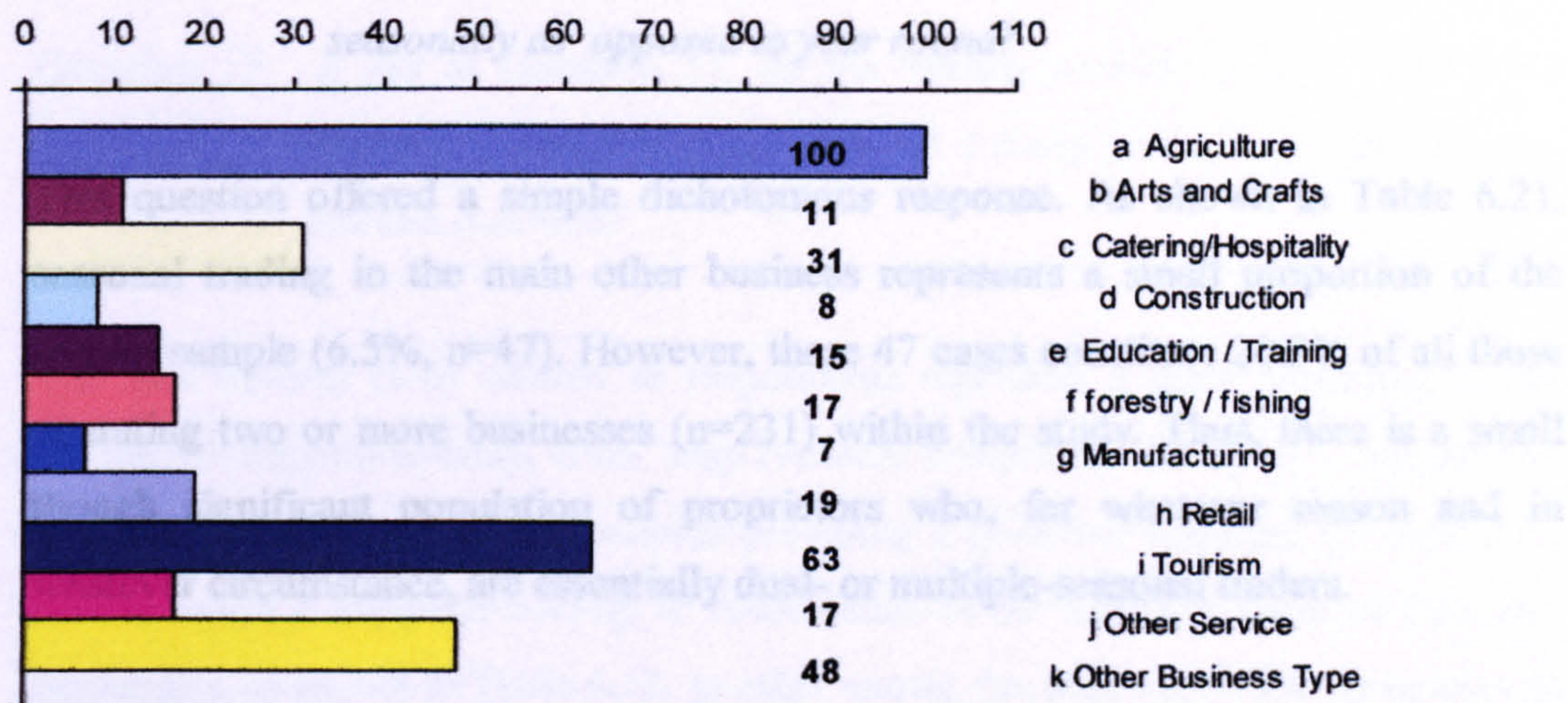
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	231	32.0	32.6	32.6
	No	477	66.2	67.4	100.0
	Total	708	98.2	100.0	
Missing	-18	3	.4		
	-9	10	1.4		
	Total	13	1.8		
Total		721	100.0		

Appendix 6.23 provides a breakdown of second- or multiple business proprietorship according to the sector of the business forming the basis of this study. It reveals major variations in the scope of multiple business ownership/operation. At one extreme, hoteliers and innkeepers within the study are least likely to own or operate another business (12.5%, where n=7/56), while at the other end of the scale, 40.6%

of self-caterers or caravan operators (n=84/207) declare owning or operating another business. The low degree of recorded omission (1.8%, n=13/721) suggests that any sensitivity among respondents to disclose another business is accommodated within the 'No' responses in this question.

In the second part of the question (*If Yes, in what sector(s)?*) nine specified economic sectors were identified (15a-i). Provision was also made for any 'other service' apart from those already listed (15j) as well as any others not falling within the previous categories (15k). The full SPSS-generated frequency print-outs are shown in Appendix 6.24, while Figure 6.7 provides a diagrammatic distribution of responses.

Figure 6.7 Ownership or Operation of Other Businesses by Sector



Agriculture emerges as the largest category (14.1%, n=100/711), which clearly reflects the predominance of rural seasonal businesses within the sample and the generally narrower economic base in many parts of the Highlands, Argyll and other rural areas. Owning or operating another tourism or catering/hospitality business (ie. combining 15c and 15i) is undertaken by 13.1% (n=94/711) of respondents while 'other types of business' (15k) account for 6.8% (n=48/711). In practice, many of the responses to this latter category are other services, albeit a very diverse range

(eg. landscaping, management consultancy, hairdressing, accountancy, recreational facilities and property management).

Proprietors were able to mark as many boxes as appropriate to their circumstance. Total responses to this question exceed the base figure by 45.5% (n=336) thus indicating the degree of multiple business operation within the sample. The complementarity of owning and/or operating related tourism or hospitality businesses in addition to the main business is apparent in a number of response narratives, which are accordingly analysed in Chapter Seven.

A 'No' response to Question 15 routed the respondent to Question 18. The next two questions are thus only appropriate to operators of two or more businesses.

Question 16: *Does the other main business referred to in Question 15 trade seasonally as opposed to year round?*

This question offered a simple dichotomous response. As shown in Table 6.21, seasonal trading in the main other business represents a small proportion of the overall sample (6.5%, n=47). However, these 47 cases constitute 20.3% of all those operating two or more businesses (n=231) within the study. Thus, there is a small though significant population of proprietors who, for whatever reason and in whatever circumstance, are essentially dual- or multiple-seasonal traders.

Table 6.21 Frequency of Seasonal Operation of the Other Main Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	47	6.5	6.7	6.7
	No	178	24.7	25.5	32.2
	Not applicable	473	65.6	67.8	100.0
	Total	698	96.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	3	.4		
	-9	20	2.8		
	Total	23	3.2		
Total		721	100.0		

As revealed in Appendix 6.25, such dual-seasonal operation occurs mostly where the main business is either a B&B (n=17), a holiday/touring park operator (n=11) or a self-catering/caravan unit operator (n=10). Proportionately, operators of holiday/touring parks record the highest degree of dual-seasonal business operations (45.8%, n=11/24)⁸, which may be a reflection of the exogenously 'imposed' season experienced by some of them, as noted in the results of Question 7(h). However, any correlational analysis is subject to limits of data reliability, given the low absolute number of cases involved.

Pursuing the theme of seasonal duality, the next question sought to explore the degree of overlap or coincidence between the trading periods of the tourism business and the other main business:

Question 17: *If Yes to Question 15, do the trading periods of your other main business coincide/overlap with the trading periods of your seasonal tourism business?*

The four options (a-d) offered to respondents represent a scale according to the degree of temporal overlap, from 'they coincide completely' (17a) to '...no overlap at all' (17d). Of the 164 respondents providing a qualified response (17a-d), 47% (n=77) report a complete overlap or coincidence of the trading periods of their two businesses, as shown in Table 6.22. In other words, the seasonal STRB represents an additional temporal commitment to the proprietor(s) in terms of the construction of their working year and in regard of other operational resources. Conversely, 23.2% of proprietors (n=38/164) report little or no overlap between the respective business trading periods.

⁸ From valid holiday- touring park sample, as per Appendix 6.23.

Table 6.22 Degree of Trading Overlap with other Main Business

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Coincide completely	77	10.7	12.1	12.1
	Some overlap	49	6.8	7.7	19.7
	Little overlap	17	2.4	2.7	22.4
	No overlap	21	2.9	3.3	25.7
	Not applicable	475	65.9	74.3	100.0
	Total	639	88.6	100.0	
Missing	-18	2	.3		
	-9	80	11.1		
	Total	82	11.4		
Total		721	100.0		

For such operators, a seasonal tourism business may be seen to dovetail into the temporal work commitment of the other main business, or vice versa. However, within any analysis pertaining to tourism business operating patterns, it is recognised that the notion of 'work' does not necessarily equate with periods of opening or delivering a direct customer service. The out of season demands of year-to-year business planning and pre-season preparations for any temporally defined business are cases in point, irrespective of the underlying trading motivations.

It is interesting to observe a degree of uniformity among proprietors of the two types of businesses (B&Bs and self-catering/caravan unit operators) responding in significant numbers to this question. As shown in Appendix 6.26, in both cases a similar proportion record 'complete coincidence' (17a) with the trading period of their other business: (B&Bs 46.6%, n=27/58; self-catering/caravan units 44.4%, n=24/54) and a broadly parallel spread of responses across the four categories.

However, in retrospect and in the absence of any problems experienced with this question during the development and piloting stage, it is felt that a more qualitative

approach to its construction would have offered greater clarity and meaning to interpreting the data.

Question 18: *Do you employ paid staff outside of your immediate family on a seasonal basis?*

The incidence of employing seasonal staff outwith the family unit is substantial within the sample (40.5%) as shown in Table 6.23. A breakdown by sector (Appendix 6.27) unsurprisingly reveals that the greatest propensity for taking on seasonal paid staff is by hoteliers and innkeepers, 94.6% (n=53/56) of whom answer ‘Yes’ to the question.

Table 6.23 Frequency of Non-Family Seasonally Employed Staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	289	40.1	40.5	40.5
	No	424	58.8	59.5	100.0
	Total	713	98.9	100.0	
Missing	-9	8	1.1		
Total		721	100.0		

Almost 60% of other types of business (non-accommodation, n=34/57) and over half of guest house operators and holiday/touring park operators likewise affirm hiring seasonal staff from outwith the immediate family. At the other extreme, around one in six B&B operators (n=44/248) claim to do so.

However, among a temporally defined and largely family business oriented population, such a relatively high proportion overall provides a useful marker to the extent of seasonal staffing in Scottish STRBs. It may also be seen to challenge the established belief, as noted by Fleischer and Felsenstein (2004) that small tourism enterprises accommodate their extra labour requirements without the need for extra human investment, ie outwith the unpaid domestic labour domain. On the other hand, the issue also raises the converse pertinent question on the extent to which seasonal operators rely on the family labour ‘pool’ to meet their particular staffing requirements throughout the season.

Finally, within this cluster of questions exploring multi-economy households, Question 19 aimed to ascertain the degree of importance of the seasonal tourism business within earned household income. Recognising the sensitivity of probing financial information, the question focused on the relativity of earnings derived from the seasonal tourism business within total household earnings. In order to aid clarity, an operational definition of earned household income was provided, which explicitly excludes non-business derived income such as investments, savings, annuities, rented property and land (see Appendix 5.3).

Question 19: How important is this business to you as a source of earned household income?

The degree of relativity was expressed in four importance statements, accordingly:

- a) *It is the only source of my/our earned household income*
- b) *It is the main, but not only, source of my/our earned household income*
- c) *It is a secondary source of earned household income*
- d) *It is a minor source of earned household income*

Respondents were asked to mark one statement from the above, which most closely reflects their situation. The results demonstrate a fairly even spread of responses among the four gradations of importance, as illustrated in Table 6.24.

Table 6.24 Relative Importance of the Business in Earned Household Income

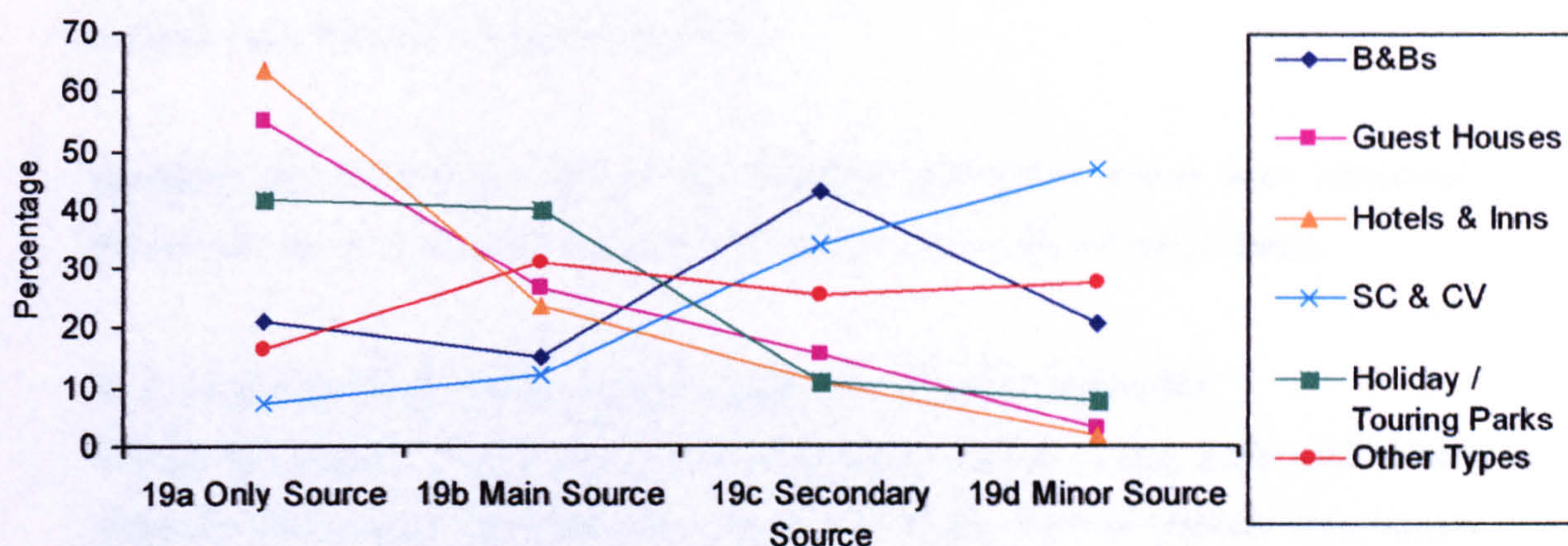
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Only source	177	24.5	25.4	25.4
	Main source	137	19.0	19.6	45.0
	Secondary source	214	29.7	30.7	75.6
	Minor source	170	23.6	24.4	100.0
	Total	698	96.8	100.0	
Missing	-18	2	.3		
	-9	21	2.9		
	Total	23	3.2		
Total		721	100.0		

A quarter of all respondents (n=177) claim their tourism business to be their *only* source of earned household income while a similar proportion (n=170) record being at the other end of the spectrum (ie. a *minor* source). The largest response segment (30.7%, n=214) identifies the tourism business as the *secondary* source of their earned household income. Thus together, the 'secondary' and 'minor' categories constitute over half (55.1%, n=384/698) the valid response population. This may of course represent any number of household circumstances, though it is significant that several of the family entrepreneurship guises, notably 'portfolio', 'serial' and 'social' family entrepreneurs identified by Getz *et al.* (2004:27-29) are characterised by multiple income sources. As Morrison and Teixeira (2004, 2002) note, other earning sources may serve the purpose of cross-subsidising the family or household tourism related business, which in itself serves as a nexus for the stability of the family unit. Indeed, Getz and Nilsson's (2004) study of seasonal tourism businesses on Bornholm also highlights the necessity for many tourism business operators of having other income sources to sustain year round earnings.

Among the sample in this Scottish study, nearly two-thirds of the responding hoteliers and innkeepers (n=35/55) and over half the guest house operators (n=39/71) report the business to be their *only* source of earned income within the definitions offered, in contrast to self-caterers and caravan unit operators (7.3%, n=15/206) and 'other' types of business (chiefly non-accommodation, 16.4%, n=9/55). At the other end of the spectrum, almost half the self-caterers and caravan unit operators (46.6%, n=96/206) claim the business to be a minor source of earned household income. The diversity of experience between the business categories in the sample is illustrated diagrammatically.

Figure 6.8 shows the broadly inverse relationship in the relative importance of the business in household earnings between hotels, inns and guest houses on the one hand, and self-catering/caravan unit operators on the other.

Figure 6.8 Relative Importance in Earned Household Income by Type of Business



These latter are clearly more of an ‘add-on’ enterprise or income stream for most operators of such facilities. Indeed, the financial role of self-catering and caravan accommodation may differ in certain locations and contexts. For example, seasonal holiday rental of an urban property may well complement other forms of letting, as recorded in the high incidence of student letting in St Andrews. In the case of farm buildings, conversion to self-catering affords investment potential through building renovation accompanied by income diversification, a classic form of on-farm ‘pluriactivity’ (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998:75).

The spread of responses to Question 19 raises distinct issues *vis a vis* the inter-relationships between income potential and proprietors’ trading motivations across the various types of business. In many ways, this is close to the heart of the quest to understand the motivational dichotomy of small (and in this case seasonal) tourism business operators, in which a considerable range of economic and non-economic factors have been alluded to in the entrepreneurship and the nascent lifestyle literatures. Accordingly, the final issue explored in this survey is the relative importance of some of these. Lifestyle (20a), revenue maximisation (20b), temporal trading preference (20c) and profitability (20d) were therefore chosen as distinct motivational variables that pertain to or are affected by seasonal operation.

Question 20 thus posed a reflective attitudinal statement relative to each of the above four variables, to which respondents were asked to agree or disagree, or indicate neutrality, as a midway response.

Question 20: *To what extent do the following statements reflect your situation? Please put an 'x' in the box that you feel most closely reflects your feelings.*

a) *I choose the length of my trading season to fit in with my lifestyle.*

Within the context of this survey, the notion of 'lifestyle' is not expressed in any objective definitional paradigm, such as temporal perspectives (leisure time versus work time), economic well-being or psychological attributes (eg work as hobby). It was left to the proprietor to formulate his or her own interpretation of 'lifestyle', which is thus treated as a subjective measure here. As can be seen in Table 6.25 20a), nearly half of all valid respondents (48.7%, n=321/659) and over 44% of the total sample agree with the statement.

Table 6.25 Motivational Perspectives of Operating the Business

20a) I choose the length of my operating season to fit in with my lifestyle

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	321	44.5	48.7	48.7
	Neutral	140	19.4	21.2	70.0
	Disagree	198	27.5	30.0	100.0
	Total	659	91.4	100.0	
Missing	-9	62	8.6		
Total		721	100.0		

Conversely, 30% of the valid sample (n=198) disagree with the sentiment, leaving a minority of 21.2% (n=140) expressing neutrality. The degree of affirmation may suggest that seasonal operation can have a purposive role among many Scottish STRB operators. However, a cautionary note needs to be struck, given the subjectivity of lifestyle and the spread of temporality among the respondents, as previously noted in Figure 6.1. Moreover, 'neutrality' in this respect might indicate

a lesser degree of agreement or disagreement, a 'neither agree nor disagree' sentiment or it may act as a proxy for 'don't know' for some of the respondents.

b) Maximising revenue from my tourism business is not a priority for me

The distribution of responses to the second statement reveals a significantly greater degree of predisposition towards the priority of maximising revenue (47.4% of valid responses, n=306/645) than non-maximisation. Around a quarter of respondents (n=168) agree with the statement and a similar proportion (n=171) indicate neutrality.

20b) Maximising revenue from my tourism business is **not** a priority for me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	168	23.3	26.0	26.0
	Neutral	171	23.7	26.5	52.6
	Disagree	306	42.4	47.4	100.0
	Total	645	89.5	100.0	
Missing	-9	76	10.5		
Total		721	100.0		

It is acknowledged that the negative construction of the statement may be counter-intuitive, in retrospect a limitation of the data reliability from this question, although feedback from the survey development and piloting process did not flag this as an issue. Notwithstanding this, the result points to the presence of a distinct constituency of proprietors whose motivations fall outwith purely economic constructs, mirroring findings from other empirical work, such as Getz and Carlsen's (2000) Western Australia study and the Bornholm and Canmore (Canada) studies (Getz and Petersen, 2002). However, it is recognised that non-maximisation of revenue in itself may cover a broad motivational scope, from goal oriented economic satisficing (Morrison, 2002), accepting lower returns or longer paybacks (Dunn, 1995), to occasional or *ad hoc* income supplementing of a marginal nature (Slee, 1998).

c) I prefer to operate the business seasonally rather than year round

The third statement aimed to confront head-on the issue of whether seasonal trading is a preference or an imposed condition among proprietors. A surprisingly high proportion (almost two thirds) of valid responses (n=452/680) profess agreement with the statement with an equal percentage (15.1%, n=109) each expressing neutrality and disagreement. For the purposes of the analysis, a fourth category of response (Not Applicable) was created to reflect annotations to this effect made by those respondents who otherwise did not express an opinion and who are not captured in the system omissions category (n=40).

20c) I prefer to operate the business seasonally rather than year round

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	452	62.7	66.5	66.5
	Neutral	109	15.1	16.0	82.5
	Disagree	109	15.1	16.0	98.5
	Not applicable	10	1.4	1.5	100.0
	Total	680	94.3	100.0	
Missing	-18	1	.1		
	-9	40	5.5		
	Total	41	5.7		
Total		721	100.0		

The preference for seasonal operating thus equates to 70% of those businesses identified in Question 1 as practicing seasonal traders (n=452/646). While the underlying influences on seasonal trading may be diverse, as observed from the results in Question 7, this modus operandi may in fact offer an inherent attractiveness *per se* to proprietors, as noted by Andrew *et al.* (2001) and Goulding *et al.* (2004).

Therefore, the high level of agreement to the above statement is likely to reflect a breadth and diversity of roles and motivations ascribable in part or whole to seasonal operating, compounded with the individual experience and circumstance of sample

respondents. In other words, seasonal trading preference is likely to extend beyond or transcend the traditional economic vs non-economic and family, lifestyle or personal goal paradigms that are characteristic of the small business literature.

d) *I feel I could make the business operate profitably all year round.*

The final statement referred respondents back to economic considerations. Mindful of the distribution of replies to the previous statement pertaining to revenue maximising motivations (20b), it is interesting to note that only one fifth (n=132/645) of valid responses claim to be able to trade profitably on a year round basis.

20d) I feel I could make the business operate profitably all year round

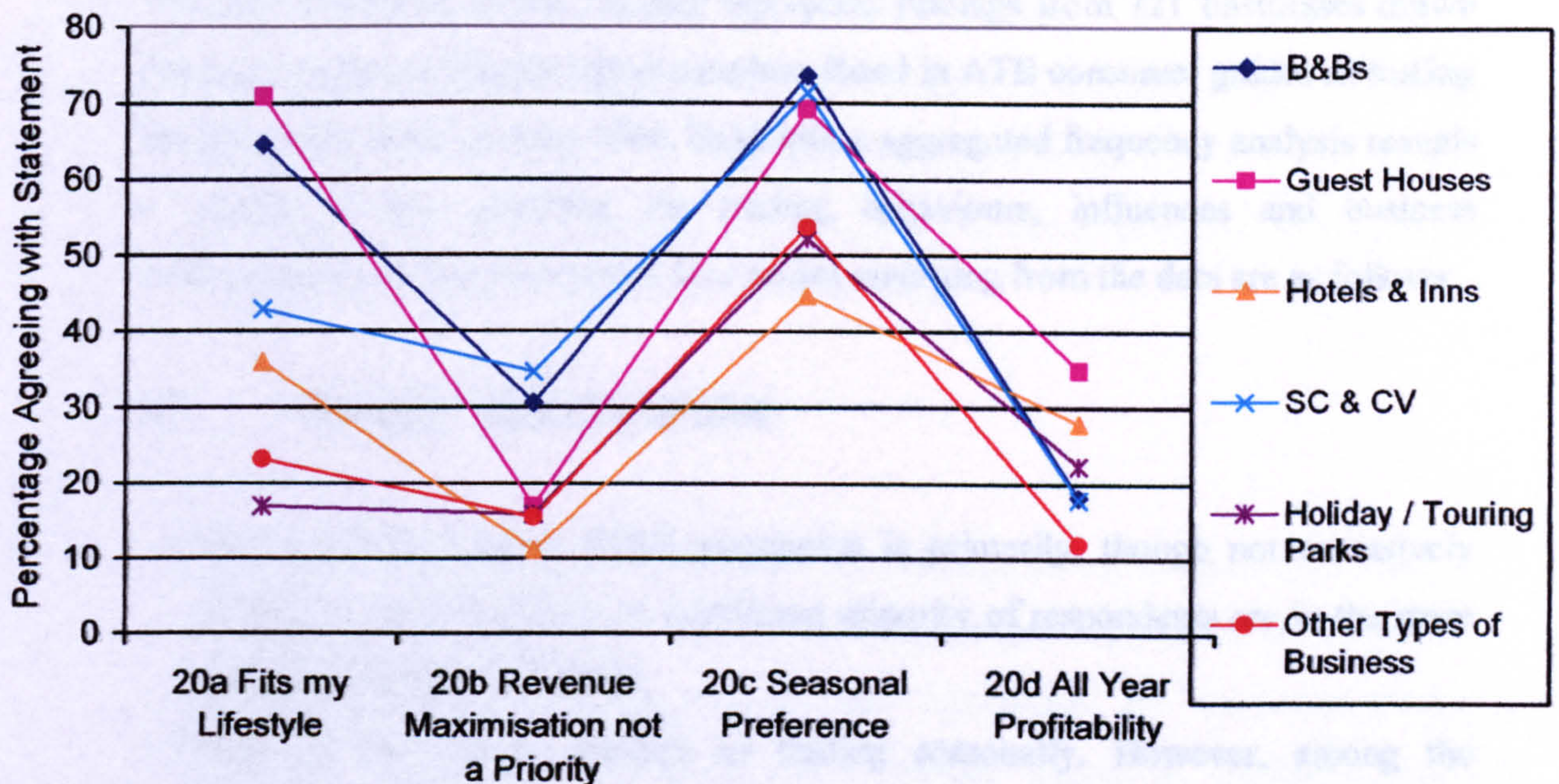
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	132	18.3	20.5	20.5
	Neutral	145	20.1	22.5	42.9
	Disagree	368	51.0	57.1	100.0
	Total	645	89.5	100.0	
Missing	-18	1	.1		
	-9	75	10.4		
	Total	76	10.5		
Total		721	100.0		

While a similar proportion (22.5%, n=145) express neutrality, 57.1% of valid responses (n=368) negate the possibility of year round profitability of their business. Whether such a view is influenced by market, institutional, exogenous or climatic factors or indeed a mix of these will clearly vary according to the trading dynamic of each business. Such analysis forms the basis of Chapter Eight, in which the results of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research are discussed. However, viewed in relation to the results of Question 19 (relative importance of the business to household earnings) a picture emerges in which many seasonal businesses are non-viable on a year round basis and in which some, possibly many, of the same businesses may be deemed as secondary or minor to the household income.

Finally, Appendix 6.29 provides a cross-tabulated breakdown of results for the above four statements according to the type of business. To illustrate the degrees of convergence or divergence among proprietors in the various sectors, the proportions agreeing with each of the statements are represented diagrammatically in Figure 6.9.

Two distinct patterns can be seen to emerge from the sectoral breakdown shown above. First, there is a general consistency in the overall configuration of replies to each of the four statements between the various sectors, in which statements 20a and 20c generally score higher than the two economic variables 20b and 20d.

Figure 6.9 Percentage Agreement with Seasonal Trading Statements by Sector



Only one sector deviates from this pattern, holiday- and touring park operators, for whom the lifestyle fit of their operating pattern is of little relevance ($20a=16.9\%$, $n=11/65$). The second pattern is a relatively similar degree of variance between the sectors in three of the statements: ie 20b, 20c and 20d, which reveal a response variance of 23%-30% between highest and lowest scores, in each case. For statement 20a, the spread of replies was 54% between the two pole sectors.

The findings also reveal that there are two discernible sectoral groups, according to the response patterns. Predisposition to lifestyle and seasonal preference as trading motivations is greater for B&B, guest house and self-catering and caravan unit operators than for the other three sectoral categories. Conversely, hoteliers and innkeepers, holiday- and touring park operators and other types of tourism business (mainly non-accommodation operators) accord greater importance to revenue maximisation than do the other sectors, particularly B&Bs and self-caterers. The pattern is less clear in terms of all year profitability (20d) with the two serviced sectors (hotels and inns and guest houses) reporting the highest degree of year-round profit potential (27.8% and 34.8% respectively).

6.3 Summary

The data presented in this Chapter represents findings from 721 businesses drawn from a universe of VisitScotland members listed in ATB consumer guides as trading for 50 or less weeks during 2004. Descriptive aggregated frequency analysis reveals a wealth of data profiling the trading behaviours, influences and business demographics of that population. Key points emerging from the data are as follows:

(i) Seasonally Trading Behaviours

- the seasonally trading STRB population is primarily, though not exclusively located in rural Scotland. A significant minority of respondents are in the more urbanised Central Lowlands
- 90% of the sample identify as trading seasonally. However, among the remaining 10% there is evidence of temporal flexibility in trading patterns
- B&B and self-catering establishments have the greatest propensity to be operated seasonally among the various types of STRB service operation
- temporal flexibility in trading patterns is widespread, including extending or contracting the operating season or *ad hoc* short term closure
- the trend in trading periods has remained relatively unchanged for most seasonal operators
- there is a considerable degree of tradition or inertia in seasonal trading

(ii) Influences on Trading Patterns

- among all types of STRB, market factors yield the strongest influence on temporal trading patterns, especially the characteristics of markets specific to the business
- lack of viability in low seasons exerts a strong influence across all STRB types
- rest and relaxation is a relatively strong influence on trading patterns for B&B and guest house operators; the needs of family and friends exerts a less, though still significant influence among proprietors in these sectors
- for holiday/touring park operators, licensing regulations are far more important than among other sectors as temporal influences
- the role of climate is variable from sector to sector, and strongest among holiday/touring park and non-accommodation operators
- numerous potential influences that were highlighted in the Borders exploratory survey are shown to have little weight as influences in the main study population at large. These include health and safety, staffing, other operators' and suppliers trading patterns and the physical environment.

(iii) Business Demographics

- most seasonally trading STRBs have been trading for six or more years and in most cases they have always traded seasonally, suggesting a pattern of longevity
- ownership/operation configurations are dominated by co-preneurialism, followed by sole proprietorship and a smaller degree of extended family ownership/operation
- most seasonal STRBs have been started 'from scratch'
- a significant numerical minority of proprietors have prior experience of running their own business
- there is a relatively high incidence (c30%) of migratory business start-ups within the population, mainly urban and from outwith Scotland, though also a significant minority moving from non-urban areas
- around a third of the population operate another business, mainly agriculture or another tourism or hospitality business

- a significant minority of the population employs seasonal staff from outwith the family
- there is no clear pattern of the degree of importance of the seasonally trading business in household income, rather a fairly even spread from major to minor importance
- the survey reveals dichotomies between the degree of lifestyle choice and preference accorded to the trading pattern, on the one hand, and the desire for revenue maximisation on the other.

Many of the above issues are revisited in the following chapter, through qualitative analysis of other data formats.

Chapter 7 Qualitative Analysis

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the qualitative aspects of the main research instrument employed in this study, the survey of seasonal tourism related businesses. The aim of the chapter is twofold. It seeks to present data which are additional or supplementary to those examined previously (in Chapters Five and Six) and which, as discussed below, emanate from a number of sources and take a variety of forms. Furthermore, the chapter provides an analysis of the findings based on codification and classifications of individual data. The rationale and process of such data manipulation are explained and emergent findings are assessed accordingly.

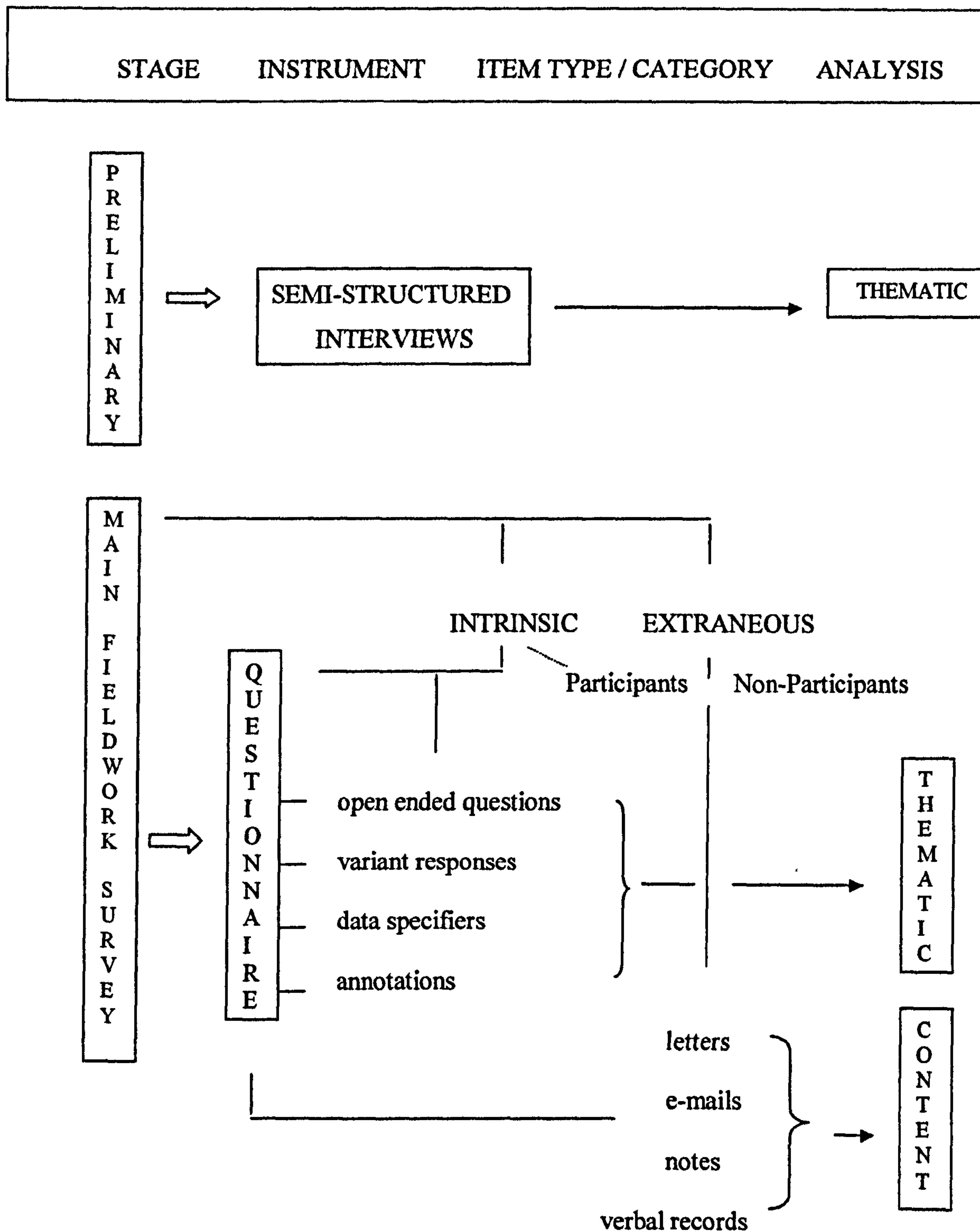
The first section (7.1) contextualises the qualitative data, providing a typology and discussion of the types and sources of data used in this chapter. Next, findings from the two main categories of sources - intrinsic and extraneous - are presented (sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively). Section 7.4 examines the codification and classification and resultant findings arising from these processes, before the chapter concludes (7.5) with a summary of the main points emerging from the chapter.

7.1 Qualitative Framework

The qualitative framework of the study may be described as composite in nature, for a number of reasons. Fundamentally, it draws from two distinct stages of the research process - the exploratory study conducted in 2000 and the main survey carried out in 2004. These two elements employed a different research instrument in each case: respectively semi-structured interviews and a self-completion questionnaire. This latter generated a number of data sources, which can be categorised as intrinsic and extraneous data. Intrinsic data include those which emanate from within the questionnaire in the form of responses to open-ended questions, explanatory or qualifying data (ie. variation responses and data specifiers) and annotations within the questionnaire document. Extraneous data was generated from various e-mail and letter correspondence received from survey participants and

from those de-selecting from participation. A typology of the range of qualitative data sources is provided in Figure 7.1, accordingly:

Figure 7.1 Typology of Qualitative Data Sources



The various types of data identified in Figure 7.1 share an important common characteristic in terms of their usability within the following analysis: each is non-naturalistic or 'artefactual', ie generated through solicitation (Heaton, 2004:5). Extraneous data was therefore included in the analysis for this reason and if it conveyed internal validity (ie. where the respondent met the criteria of being the proprietor/manager of an independent business and verified as a seasonal trader). A further criterion was that its content be deemed pertinent to the survey aims, such as providing appropriate demographic or motivational information. 'Non-participant respondent' data (ie from those self-deselecting from the survey) are treated as a separate category for the purposes of collation and classification, in order not to contaminate findings from participant data analysis.

The next section concentrates on the intrinsic data derived from questionnaire responses.

7.2 Intrinsic Data

As noted in Figure 7.1 above, four distinct types of intrinsic data have been generated from the questionnaire. Firstly, three questions are of the traditional open-ended variety, encouraging free expression (Finn *et al.*, 2000) and without restrictions on the range of permissible responses (Clark *et al.*, 1998). Five questions include a variant response category (typically '*other, please specify*'). A further variation on this is found in two questions, which are classified here as 'data specifiers', requiring the respondent to insert a specific piece of data (eg. year), typically a single word answer. Finally, there are annotations written onto the questionnaire by some of the respondents, normally to qualify the answer given to a closed ended-question. Table 7.1 identifies the questions generating intrinsic data and qualifies the type of data according to the above descriptions.

Table 7.1 Intrinsic Data Types

<i>Question Number</i>	<i>Data Type</i>
2d)	Variant response
3c)	Variant response
5a)	Data specifier
5b)	Open ended
9f)	Variant response
10d)	Variant response
13)	Data specifier
15k)	Variant response
21)	Open ended
22)	Open ended

The above categories clearly cover a spectrum of ‘qualifiability’ in terms of their potential depth and breadth of data yield. For example, open-ended questions in this type of survey can be expected to convey a richer contextualisation of their subjects than other forms of intrinsic data. Accordingly, analysis of results is provided both descriptively and thematically, the latter forming the basis of section 7.4 in this chapter. However, a sequential exploration of the findings from the above questions is provided first. This is designed to complement the analysis previously given in Chapter Six. The first two questions discussed below (2d and 3c) relate to periodicity of trading patterns.

Question Two (d): Do you vary the days in which you operate the business during different times of the year? Please specify other variants on your trading patterns.

As was noted in Chapter Six, 81 respondents comprising 11.3% of the valid sample ticked the box affirming this variant. However, 108 proprietors supplied details qualifying any periodic variation in the operation of their business. The full transcribed responses for these can be found in Appendix 7.1. Two distinct data

categories emerge from a content analysis of the narratives, as shown in Table 7.2. The responses yield 128 individual data items, of which 54 can be identified as underlying reasons given for periodic variation while 74 comprise descriptions of periodic trading patterns. A further 7 respondents negate periodic variation or specify non-applicability. In a number of cases, answers contain more than one category (normally a reason plus a description) hence the data total (n=135) exceeds the number of responses (n=108).

Table 7.2 Analysis of Responses to Periodic Trading Variations (Question 2d)

<i>Response Category</i>	<i>No. of Data Items among all Respondents</i>	<i>No. of Types of Variables or Variants</i>
A. underlying reasons for trading variation	54	21
B. description of periodic trading patterns	74	11
C. negation or non-applicability	7	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>34</i>

A: Underlying Reasons for Periodic Trading Variation: Days of Operation

From the 54 data items in this response category, 21 distinct variables can be identified. These are shown in Table 7.3 which also provides a numerical count for the incidence of each qualifying variable. By far the most frequently cited reason by proprietors is ‘holidays’ (n=15), articulated mainly, although not exclusively, among B&B and guest house operators. Reference is also made in some responses to related ideas, such as taking short breaks, ‘weekends off’, ‘going away’ and ‘time off’, as expressed in such statements as:

- A1: “Close in November and February for annual holidays” (AY075, Guest House)
 “we take 2-3 days off for a break from time to time” (HL475, B&B operator)
 “Close periodically for 1-4 days per month for time off” (FF089, B&B operator)

As noted in Table 7.3, the types of response are classified (loosely) into 8 groups or clusters of reasons, for ease of analysis at this stage (and as a basis for later

refinement). Holiday related reasons (group *A1*) collectively account for 24 data items, or over 44% of qualified reasons (n=24/54).

Table 7.3 Underlying Reasons for Variation in the Days of Operation

<i>Response Group</i>	<i>Reasons for Temporal Trading Variations</i>	<i>Variable Frequency</i>
A1	Holidays	15
	Break	3
	'Away'	4
	Time-off	2
A2	Lifestyle	1
	Suitability	2
	Retired	1
	Personal reasons	1
	Other activities	1
A3	Family (commitments/demands)	5
	Friends	2
A4	Fishing season	2
	Extra demand	3
	No demand/lack of demand	2
A5	Maintenance	1
	Redecoration	1
A6	Part time (employment)	2
	Farm duties	1
A7	Weather	2
	Tides	1
A8	Easter (movable holiday)	2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>54</i>

Those grouped around 'lifestyle' related, family and friends and market related factors (groups *A2-4*) fall in the second order of frequency of articulation, even though the former of these (*A2*) is perhaps more disparate than the others as a cluster, for example:

- A2: "Ours is a 'lifestyle' business, so we trade if and when it suits" (AL246, B&B)
 "Close when we go away or not suitable" (AL034, B&B)
 "Am retired so go away a lot" (SB041, B&B)
 "We close for holidays and for other personal reasons at various times throughout the year" (AL285, B&B)

“Close some days to do other activities”

(EL051, B&B)

Group *A2* respondents are typically B&B operators, as noted from the above narratives. The low number of market-related factors (group *A4*) in this part of the analysis reflects the fact that most such issues are articulated in the narratives mainly as trading behaviours and thus fall within Response Category ‘B’ (Description of periodic trading patterns) which are assessed in the following subsection. However, market-related sentiments expressed as underlying reasons include statements such as:

A4: *“[variations in the days of letting]....to accommodate customers who come for the fishing and fish from Monday-Saturday”* (AG058, self-catering operator)

“If the phone rings and someone wants our service, we operate”
(AL006, tour operator)

“I open outwith the normal May/Sept months if I am specifically asked”
(AD024, self-caterer)

As can be seen from Table 7.3, the remaining response groups relate to premises, climate, employment and the effect of a movable Easter (groups *A5-8* respectively). They comprise the least raised issues in the context of periodic trading variations. The low incidence of weather as a short-term temporal trading variant is somewhat surprising given the prevalence of this factor within the literature as a seasonality causal factor. Examples of responses citing factors from groups *A5-8* above include:

A5: *“We close from the middle of Nov to mid Dec for maintenance each year”*
(HL061, visitor attraction)

A6: *“I teach part time so will regularly not be open for business on different days - no set pattern”* (PE005, B&B operator)

A7: *“If the weather is really bad, the business closes early or does not operate at all (only 1 day this season)”* (SB092, restaurant/ café)

A8: “...close/open different times in March/April, depending on Easter dates”
(AL284, guest house)

As noted in Table 7.2 above, the majority of qualitative responses in Question 2d) comprise descriptions of variations in operators’ trading patterns and behaviours, rather than underlying reasons *per se*. These are examined next.

B: Descriptions of Periodic Trading Variations

Analysis of the 74 narratives containing descriptive/behavioural elements elicits ten identifiable classifications of behaviour, as shown in the following table.

**Table 7.4 Descriptions of Variations in Periodic Trading Behaviours:
Days of Operation**

<i>Response Group</i>	<i>Response Classification</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
B1	unspecified period of closure	12
B2	closed on certain days of the week at certain times of the year (specified)	11
B3	opening / closure period specified	20
B4	part time seasonal operation (no reason given)	2
B5	variation in period/duration of self-catering lets	14
B6	reduction/part-closure of service elements or accommodation at some times of the year	3
B7	Christmas and/or New Year opening/closure (contrasting with general winter trading period)	8
B8	‘one-off’ specified closure	1
B9	ad-hoc opening (unspecified) subject to demand	2
B10	no set pattern	1
	<i>Total</i>	74

Two issues render the classification process difficult and potentially problematic. Firstly, in some instances there is a grey area between what constitutes a description of behaviour and a clear rationale underlying that behaviour. Hence a degree of non-assumptive interpretation was required in the formulation of response classifications, which necessitated a process of on-going refinement to the response classifications. This applies particularly to those statements identifying

market factors as the key explanatory element of temporal trading behaviours. Secondly, it is acknowledged that there is a degree of subjective interpretation underlying the classification of descriptive categories. In particular, allowances have been made for the distinctiveness of self-catering occupancy, compared with other types of accommodation, which results in a variation category specific to that sector, as shown in the table (B5).

Despite the above limitations, the descriptive responses to Question 2d) indicate a wide spectrum of trading behavioural variations among STRB operators, as illustrated in Table 7.4. The data in response groups B1, B3 and B7 serves mainly to reinforce and qualify responses to Question One. For example:

B1: “[we close]...*but only when we have no prior bookings and not every week, nor the same day every week*” (AG001, small hotel)

“*Every 5 or 6 weeks we take three or four days off*” (PE033, guest house)

B3: “*The business closes mid-November – 5 or 6 Feb – beginning of half term week*” (HL542, self-catering)

“*We open last Saturday in March each year + close last Saturday in October or 1st in November*” (AL071, self-catering)

B7: “*Closed Nov-Feb exc. Xmas + NY*” (HL053, holiday/touring park)

As noted before, a significant minority of responses pertain to temporal changes in self-catering lets (category B5). Three distinct patterns are in evidence here, all of which are market related. Firstly, some proprietors specify temporal flexibility in terms of week to week lets and short stay- or weekend lets as high to low seasons operational variants:

B5: “*Usually bookings are Sat to Sat. But during April & October mid-week and part week bookings are accepted*” (OR021, self-catering)

Secondly, a few operators vary their trading patterns more subtly, through moderation of the weekly letting cycle at different times of the year, as opposed to varying the length of let. For example:

“Holiday cottages are normally let from Saturday to Saturday, however in April, May and June we offer Sunday to Sunday booking” (AG058, self-caterer)

A third variant in evidence is the transfer between holiday letting and long-term letting, to accommodate other markets in periods when tourism is not viable. For example:

“I advertise open from April to October so as to allow possibility for a six month winter let. But in reality I’ve not let over winter for a few years & have accepted holiday lets (very few)” (DG050)

In practice this latter is more common in urban touristic locations such as St. Andrews and Edinburgh, where a significant stock of self-catering units exists that can serve the requirements of both tourism markets and academic communities alike.

The final response variant of note, albeit less significant in this question, is where there is a reduction or part closure in services offered during low seasons (B6), such as:

B6: *“Limited availability of accommodation 1st Nov-end March”*
(AG087, self-catering caravan units)

“In the winter months many facilities are closed, but café/restaurant is open on weekends...” (AY002, visitor attraction/historic house)

This latter variant category is explored further in the responses to Question 3c), which deal with deal with periodic variations in the hours of business opening and closure. Full transcripts pertaining to the preceding analysis can be seen in Appendix 7.1. Finally, the handful of responses not examined above is deemed to

fall into the category (C) of either negating seasonal operation or stressing non-applicability of daily variations to the operation. Such responses are advanced for a variety of reasons, including market extension and time intensive working/hosting patterns. For example:

- C: *“Was closed for winter but will open all year in future”* (EL021, B&B operator)
“When the business is your home place you are never closed!”
 (PE093, self-catering operator)

Question Three (c): *Do you vary the hours when your business opens and closes throughout the year? (Please specify: eg part of the business closes)*

The question of periodic variation according to *hours* of trading yielded a low return overall, both quantitatively and in terms of narrative responses. Just 4.3% of the valid sample (n=31) marked the box identifying ‘other variants’, as discussed in the previous chapter. Forty-one respondents qualified their answers, the collated transcripts of which are shown in Appendix 7.2. Four categories of response emerge from the data as shown in Table 7.5, totalling 42 classifiable data items and reflecting a similar narrative pattern to the previous question. Significantly however, the majority of responses pertain to broader temporal variation patterns (category C) many of which are reiterative to Question 2d) or provide a broader canvas of the business’ operating patterns.

Table 7.5 Analysis of Responses to Periodic Trading Variations (Question 3c)

<i>Response Group</i>	<i>No. of Data Items</i>
A. underlying reasons for trading variation	7
B. description of periodic trading patterns	13
C broader temporal trading pattern	19
D. negation or non-applicability	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>42</i>

A: Underlying Reasons for Periodic Trading Variation: Hours of Operation

Seven distinct and disparate factors are identifiable in the narratives as reasons for variation in the daily trading routine. In most cases they qualify or reiterate narratives given in response to the previous question.

A1: Rest. *“If I need a rest during quiet periods, then I take time off”*
(AG046, B&B)

A2: Lifestyle. *“Again, a lifestyle Bed & Breakfast business”* (AL246, B&B)

A3: Access. *“Opening hours restricted...during off-season to limit access as gate is locked”*
(FF060, Holiday park operator)

A4 and A5: *“Weather / tides”* (HL151, tour operator)

A6: Dual work commitments.

“Depending on when I am working in the studio I am open at any time if I am present” (PE141, visitor attraction/craft studio)

A7: Retired. *“As above (Q2d)...(retired)... go away if weather is good”*
(SB041, B&B)

On their own, the above narratives shed limited light into the role of periodic trading patterns in seasonal operations. However, more insight is provided on the nature of short-term trading patterns through the descriptive/behavioural responses provided in category B. These are examined next.

B: Descriptions of Periodic Trading Variations

Thirteen responses describe variations within the operation of the business that are indicative of adaptation to the effects of seasonal trade. These pertain either to service level variations (for example in B&Bs and guest houses) or the range of facilities offered within multi-service businesses such as hotels and inns and holiday/touring caravan parks. Examples spanning the range of sectors include statements as:

- “I may close bar early at off peak times”* (AL008, inn operator)
- “Close mornings off-peak”* (WE020, hotel)
- “I close most days between midday and 4pm, ie not taking telephone calls, otherwise open from early morning to late at night”* (AL028, B&B)
- “Reception open more at peak times”* (AL319, holiday/touring park)
- “Do not offer dinner 1 evening per week”* (HL306, guest house)
- “Open later and close earlier in April, May, June, Sept...”*
(SB116, visitor attraction)

C: Responses Reflecting Broader Temporal Trading Patterns

The nineteen narratives in this category tend to reinforce previously assessed aspects of periodic or broader seasonal trading patterns. They are generally not valid as data within the specific context of Question 3c), however they mostly contribute intrinsically to the broader context of trading patterns and thus are included in this analysis. The responses fall into five content groups:

- a) where ‘holiday’ is mentioned or suggested as a motive for periodic trading variation (n=3)
- b) where service level variation is specified in the context of a longer time span than that specified in group B) above (n=4)
- c) where variants in the days of operation are featured (n=3)
- d) reflecting a self-catering variant, reflective of that in Question 2d), group B5 (n=3)
- e) where the response mainly reiterates seasonal operation (n=3).

An illustrative example from each of the above sub-groups is as follows:

- Ca) *“Close over Christmas + New Year and when I go on holiday”* (GC012, B&B)
- Cb) *“...restaurant and hotel closes, bar operates 12 months”* (WE021, inn)
- Cc) *“Open 6 days p.w. April-June, 7 days p.w. July- end Aug, 6 days per week September”* (HL289, B&B)

- Cd) *“Business changes from weekly lets to long term (8 month) let from October-May* (FF020, self-catering)
- Ce) *“Not open regularly Oct-Mar”* (WE073, visitor attraction)

A further three narratives can best be described as miscellaneous. One of these is of particular motivational significance for seasonal trading, succinctly echoing the work demands for proprietors operating a commercial home enterprise:

“We work all hours when open” (HL085, guest house)

Transcripts of all narratives pertaining to Question 3c) are provided in Appendix 7.2.

In summary, descriptive and qualitative responses relating to short-term periodic trading pattern variations reveal a disparate range of behaviours and underlying motivations. A significant proportion of narrative responses to Questions Two and Three serve to reinforce or qualify patterns pertaining to longer time scales. Attention turns next to the narrative data generated from Question 5.

Question Five: *Have you always operated this business on a seasonal (ie less than 12 months per year) basis?*

This question employed a data specifying format (Q5a) and an open ended format (Q5b) to elicit respectively, the longevity of seasonal trading for operators who had not always traded seasonally, and the rationale for the decision to trade seasonally. The findings and utility of the output for each part of the question is assessed here.

5a) *If No, when did you decide to start trading on a seasonal basis? (Enter the year ___)*

As discussed in Chapter Six, SPSS- generated frequencies provide a very low incidence of valid responses, identifying data from only 30 respondents having changed from year round to seasonal trading at some point in the trading history of their tourism business. Moreover, the findings from those businesses as revealed in

Table 6.10 (5a) show no clear pattern of seasonal trading longevity. However, the reported findings represent a small proportion of the overall sample supplying data on their business lifespan, as can be seen in Appendix 7.3. In total, 126 businesses completed the question, of which 120 provide specific temporal data. These include, apart from the 30 changing from year-round to seasonal operations, 87 permanently seasonally operated businesses and three who claim to have changed from seasonal to year round businesses. Table 7.6 provides a profile of seasonal trading longevity accordingly to the three main trading statuses identified from the data.

A clearer profile of longevity is thus obtained from the first two seasonal trading categories, in which the *Total Seasonal* column in Table 7.6 reveals a near normal distribution of timescales. Several observations can therefore be made from the data.

Table 7.6 Seasonal Trading Longevity

<i>Seasonal since:</i>	<i>Trading Status 1: Formerly year round, now seasonal</i>	<i>Trading Status 2: Always operated seasonally</i>	<i>Total Seasonal</i>	<i>Trading Status 3: Formerly seasonal, now year round</i>
2004	2	-	2	-
2002-2003	7	13	20	-
1999-2001	10	18	28	2
1994-1998	7	25	32	-
1990-1993	3	7	10	-
1980s	1	14	15	1
1970s	-	6	6	-
pre-1970s	-	4	4	-
<i>Total</i>	30	87	117	3
<i>Percentage</i>	25%	72.5%		2.5%

First, it reaffirms the significantly greater incidence of permanent seasonal trading compared with conversion from year-round to seasonal operations, as was noted in

Chapter Six (Table 6.10). The 87 'always seasonal' responses shown above account for just 14.4% of those claiming always to have operated their business seasonally (n=87/606). Secondly, there is a distinct peaking in the 1994-1998 category among permanently seasonal traders, while a great number of 'year round to seasonal converters' (Status 1) are more recent businesses (1999-2001), albeit from a lower response rate. An aggregation of categories 1 and 2 in Table 7.6 reveals that seasonal businesses were most frequently operating for between 3-10 years at the time of the survey. This suggests the phenomenon is by no means entirely historically entrenched, given that a significant minority (n=22/117) of businesses claim to have started trading seasonally within the preceding three years and that two had converted from year-round to seasonal trading most recently, during the year of the survey.

At the other end of the temporal trading spectrum there is a further significant minority of businesses that support the hypothesis of seasonal entrenchment. Just over a fifth of the respondents (25/117) report having traded seasonally since the 1980s or earlier. Three of the four permanently seasonal 'pre-1970s' proprietors cite years within the 1950s decade as the time of commencing trading on this basis.

Aggregation of the above patterns to the total seasonal sample would convey a wide distribution of temporal trading experience, assuming a robust degree of representativeness from the sample size and profile. It suggests that within Scotland, seasonal trading remains an enduring phenomenon in terms of business lifecycles, operational flexibilities and possibly motivationally. The second part of the question explores why a seasonal basis is chosen by proprietors.

5b) *Why did you decide to start trading on a seasonal basis?*

This open-ended question generated 156 narrative responses, the full set of which are presented in Appendix 7.3. Of these, seven negate that the operation trades seasonally and a further 10 provide statements that are not considered valid for analysis for various reasons (for example inconsistency with the question, not

easily categorisable or more open to misinterpretation). Analysis is therefore conducted on the remaining 139 responses.

Content analysis identifies 212 individual data items from those responses, embracing a wide range of factors that contribute to proprietors' seasonal operating decisions. Indeed the breadth of variables raised by respondents is surprising in its diversity and signifies the importance of business context and individual circumstance as catalysts for seasonal operating patterns. The 212 data items are accordingly categorised into fourteen groups for analysis. This process reflects a degree of convenience clustering at this stage of the analysis. It is recognised that some data items cross category boundaries and thus may be subject to alternative interpretation. The following should therefore be seen as a starting point for further thematic analysis. Table 7.7 provides a breakdown of the data extracted from the narratives in response to Question 5b).

Predictably, market related factors are most often articulated as the reason underlying an operator's trading pattern (n=74). Many sentiments in this category are time-specified, such as

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>"...lack of business Nov - Jan"</i> | (AG044, B&B operator) |
| <i>"Oban is busy for B&B mainly from Easter-Sept."</i> | (AL050, B&B operator) |
| <i>"No customer response for Nov - March"</i> | (AL079, self-caterer) |

As observed previously, some self-catering operators present a distinct sub-category with reference to the complementary nature of demand between peak/shoulder season holiday lets and long-stay residential winter lets, as for example:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>"Interest in self-catering is 90% summer months. A 6 month lease is sought for winter"</i> | (AG072, self-caterer) |
|---|-----------------------|

Table 7.7 Reasons for Starting Seasonal Trading: Narrative Variable Groups (Q 5b)

<i>Data Group Label</i>	<i>Narrative Items</i>	<i>Data Item Frequencies</i>
i) Market related	demand patterns; lack of business; nature of letting market (self-catering).	74
ii) Lifestyle related	lifestyle choice; take holidays; personal preference.	15
iii) Health, physical & mental wellbeing	rest; relaxation; recuperation; age; time-off; hours of work; 'enough is enough'.	12
iv) Family & social priorities	time with family; social life; have the house to ourselves.	8
v) Tradition / inertia	'historic pattern'; 'always have'; 'don't know why'.	7
vi) Other work-life commitments	work on farm; other commitments.	6
vii) Staffing related	staffing; labour costs; volunteer labour.	4
viii) Business economics factors	cost of staying open; viability; feasibility; cash flow; overheads; utilities; heating; revenue.	26
ix) Building related factors	maintenance; refurbishment; redecoration; improvements to property.	20
x) Product/service related issues	nature of product; new ideas; location.	8
xi) Destination related issues	closure of visitor attraction; closure of TIC; lack of destination marketing; nature of tourism in area; ferry services.	8
xii) Bureaucracy related issues	VAT threshold; charges imposed; quality inspections; licensing regulations	6
xiii) Climate / weather related factors	climate; weather elements; water supplies - frozen pipes	15
xiv) Other natural factors	daylight hours; darkness.	3
<i>Total</i>		<i>212</i>

The range of business economics/operational cost related issues highlighted in Group viii) above are the next most frequently articulated reasons contributing to seasonal trading (n=26), embracing all types of business within the sample. Responses include broad viability statements and generalised sentiments such as

"The business is not viable during the winter months" (HL483, hotelier)

"...for economic reason" (HL211, B&B operator)

as well as more specific indicators as highlighted in Table 7.7. For example:

- “...guests were too cold and it was prohibiting [sic] to charge extra for heat”*
 (PE086, self-caterer)
- “High cost of fuel, lighting etc., during quiet months...”* (HL455, B&B operator)
- “...costs exceed marginal revenue”* (HL318, hotelier)

In some instances, the link between market factors and operational costs is explicit, such as:

- “...not enough visitors in Orkney over the winter to fund keeping the house open”*
 (OR004, visitor attraction)

Building related issues (Group ix in Table 7.7) provide a surprisingly high cluster of narratives (n=20), almost entirely related to maintenance, refurbishment and redecoration of premises. Most striking is that of a guest house operator, accordingly:

- “MAINTENANCE - this can only be done when the house is closed to guests.”*
 (HL469, guest house: respondent's own capitals)

More generically is the response

- “...to give us time and allow for improvements to the property - for 2004 the property was available through the winter”* (AY095, self-caterer)

recognising that works involving capital development may necessitate *ad hoc* seasonal closure, as opposed to a recurring annualised pattern of closure.

Direct references to climate and weather related factors (Group xiii) account for just fifteen items among the narrative responses to this question, although it is acknowledged that their presence is amplified indirectly through other response variables such as heating, utility costs and vagaries of public transport services. Seasonal operation is expressed either generically, such as

- “Seasonal because [of] poor weather, dark days”* (AL156, guest house)
- “...type of business weather dictated”* (EL096, holiday/touring park)

or contextually, for example:

- “...because water supplies (ie freezing) is a hazard, we would find it difficult to open all year “* (AL071, self-caterer)

*“We do not holiday let during winter because of the risk of frozen pipes
with intermittent letting (big flood 1993)”* (AL126, self-caterer)

Along with climate and weather, issues pertaining to lifestyle (n=15) and health, physical and mental wellbeing (n=12) comprise the next order of narrative data frequency in Question 5b). For the purpose of this element of analysis, a loose delineation of lifestyle related variables is adopted (Group ii), encompassing closure for holidays, personal preference and explicit reference to lifestyle choice, accordingly:

“We need a holiday too!” (AG029, guest house)

“...personal preference and demand” (EL021, B&&B)

“...[it] suits me” (FF019, self-caterer)

*“This decision was taken prior to opening (our first season was 2003)
due in part to lifestyle choice...”* (DG006, guest house)

As illustrated in Table 7.7 (Group iii), issues around personal health and wellbeing encompass a number of themes, most ubiquitous among which are rest, relaxation and recuperation:

“It [seasonal closure] gives us some time to relax and recuperate” (AL009, hotelier)

“...we get pissed off and need a rest [sic]” (EL005, guest house)

From psychological and physiological perspectives, ‘wellbeing’ is acknowledged as a somewhat elusive concept. In the realm of STRB proprietorship, both perspectives have been noted in the literatures, as was discussed in Chapter Three. Thus references to proprietors’ age and long hours of work are interpreted as within those conceptual boundaries and pertain more to a state of wellbeing than lifestyle *per se*, in the context of responses to this question:

“...we are not getting any younger!?” (AL243, guest house)

“Because working 7 days a week for 8 months is enough...” (FF076, B&B)

Perhaps the tersest articulation of a state of mind underlying seasonal trading is found in the following few words:

"[Quiet in winter] also enough is enough" (AL343, B&B)

The other response group worth noting is that labelled 'tradition/inertia' (Group v). This comprises statements expressing variations around that theme, ie. for which no specific catalyst for the trading pattern is apparent. Seven such data items are recorded in this category, embracing various types of business:

"Do not know - it was this way when we took it over" (PE120, visitor attraction)

"Predecessor ran it for 20 years...so don't know" (HL306, guest house)

"...historic pattern for hotel" (DG031, hotelier)

"always have [traded seasonally]" (AG022, B&B)

The significance of these statements is their support of the proposition that there can exist a supply-side element to tradition and inertia in behavioural patterns within the broader context of seasonality causation and that such inertia is manifest at the most localised level, ie. within the individual business.

The above analysis has aimed to identify some of the more prominent themes contributing to seasonal operation by sample respondents within this open ended question. However, as illustrated in Table 7.7, the range of responses encompasses a number of other issues. It is not the purpose to provide *ad nauseam* analysis of these here, although it should be noted that they include other intrinsic factors such as social, family and other work-life commitments, as well as extrinsic or exogenous factors, encompassing destination dynamics, imposed bureaucracy and non-climatic natural facets pertaining to the natural cycle of seasons.

The remainder of narrative responses occur in Part Three of the questionnaire, covering demographic aspects of the business. The first two of these (Questions 9f and 10d) pertain to the nature of involvement in the business.

Question Nine: *On what basis do you own or operate this business? (9f: None of the above. Another arrangement applies (please specify)).*

As a variant response among five other specified options, a low return was anticipated for this data item. In Chapter Six it was noted that 29 respondents identify ‘another arrangement’ to those specified in the question. However, 30 businesses include a narrative response to the variant and a further eight have annotated comments beside other response variables in Question Nine, generating 39 data items in total from valid responses. Appendix 7.4 provides a full list of the narratives. Five categories or data types are discernible from the responses, as illustrated in Table 7.8.

Given the low response rate, the data here is treated as purely illustrative. The first observation is of the broad spread of variation among the narratives, with references to employed managers and other employee labour in equal measure. Management on behalf of owners is predominantly a characteristic of hotels, though the returns show this is also highlighted among holiday/touring park operators and the visitor attraction sector.

There is also evidence that the use of a manager to operate the business transcends ownership type, as in:

“This is a PLC company and I had various managerial positions before becoming MD” (HL061, visitor attraction)

“Family owned but run by a manager” (EL002, hotelier)

Interestingly, even as a small business designated as a public limited company, HL061 operates on an eleven month season, closing for four weeks each year for maintenance.

Table 7.8 Other Arrangements for Ownership/Operation (Question 9f)

<i>Data Type</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Comment /Narrative Detail</i>
Manager	9	distribution: hotels (6) holiday/touring parks (2) visitor attraction (1)
Employed labour	9	includes: • caretaker • employee(s) non-specified position
Part of larger organisation	7	unspecified: (7) specified organisations (2) Caravan Club network; Forest Holidays
Reiterating other forms of owner/proprietorship	9	includes: 5 x self-proprietorship (9a) 1 x run with spouse/partner (9b) 2 x family run (9c) 1 x operated with business partners (9d)
Other Responses	5	includes: • volunteer help • unspecified help • Council site: arrangement unspecified (ie. whether own business on leased site or leased business)
<i>Total Data Items</i>	<i>39</i>	

Another factor apparent from the narratives is the phenomenon of operational flexibility within spouse/partner and family run businesses, as has been observed more widely by Getz *et al.*, (2004). This pertains also to seasonally run establishments, for example,

“I do it but husband help maintain and sons help with phone calls” [sic]
(DG050, self-caterer)

“I run my B&B with some help when needed from my spouse” (HL451, B&B)

Finally, it is apparent from several first person narratives that in some instances the manager or employee has completed the questionnaire on behalf of the owner, as in

“I manage it for the owner” (HL344, hotelier)

“I caretake and do the letting, adverts etc.” (DG067, self-catering)

The above are respectively a seven month and a ten month per annum operation. Although the limitations in response validity restrict wide generalisation here, it is clear that there is diversity in seasonal business ownership and proprietorship and that the phenomenon of the seasonal small business in Scotland is not restricted entirely to sole, partner or family proprietorship. This is further pursued in the next question.

Question Ten: *How did you come to be involved in the business? (10d: None of the above (please specify)).*

The SPSS generated statistical analysis in Chapter Six reported 43 cases responding to this 'other' mode of involvement variant, in which four distinct themes have been identified. However, as with all previously discussed descriptive questions, the number of narrative responses exceeds the statistical response rate. In the case of this question, 55 such narratives are recorded, containing 61 individual data items. Table 7.9 provides a classification and distribution of these.

Among the first category (A), common narrative themes from respondents include statements relating to their employment status in the business, for example

<i>"Working for company who own it"</i>	(HL181, hotelier)
<i>"I applied for an advertised post"</i>	(HL265, visitor attraction)
<i>"employed as manager"</i>	(SB043, visitor attraction)

including short term or seasonal positions:

<i>"maternity cover"</i>	(AG087, self-catering)
<i>"Applied for seasonal warden post"</i>	(AG099, holiday/touring park)

Leaseholdership forms a sub-group within this category, representing, to those in this form of proprietorship, a clear variation from either self-start up or the purchase of an existing business.

Table 7.9 Narrative Responses to Question 10d): Involvement in the Business

<i>Data Categories</i>	<i>Narrative Item Examples</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
A. Employment status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applied for/recruited to job • employee • seasonal employee • maternity cover • promotion • manager • leaseholder 	20
B. Building as catalyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitability of building • empty building • renovation / extension • investment purchase • change of use 	14
C. Lifecycle circumstance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retirement business • inheritance • bought from parents • bereavement • home for growing family • job move / relocation 	12
D. Economic necessity / pragmatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • farm diversification • cashflow • to pay for renovations • income requirement • redundancy/unemployment 	11
E. Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pressure (Tourist Board) • socialisation • council business 	4

“We started to work for [named] Estates but now lease the business”

(PE120, visitor attraction)

“Leased from Ayrshire Council”

(AY045, holiday/touring park)

References to the building as a catalyst for the business form a second distinct category (B) of narrative responses. These include themes around making use of empty or dilapidated buildings,

“It was a run down part derelict building, had been used as B&B in the past and needs to be built up” (DG049, B&B)

the renovation or expansion of an existing habitation to facilitate a business operation

“Availability of a ‘granny’ flat within our own home” (EL073, self-caterer)

“Had upstairs renovated & had rooms extra so could do B&B to pay for work done...” (AL353, B&B)

and investment potential:

“Bought the cottage as an investment then decided to do self-catering” (OR023, self-catering)

Lifecycle circumstances (category C) represent a third set of circumstances distinct within the narratives. Some of these reiterate response option 10c) (inheritance), while others highlight other aspects of the human lifecycle, from family formation and development as involvement factors:

“When children were small could work from home” (HL450, B&B)

to bereavement:

“After the loss of my mother to give me an interest at home...” (HL486, guest house)

and retirement:

“I started the business to give me interest after I retired” (EL036, B&B)

“Bought the house for our retirement but unfortunately my husband died at the very early age of 59” (HL421, self-catering)

The fourth set of variables emerging from these narratives comprises economic necessity or pragmatism (category D), a factor which is undoubtedly implicit in several of the above sentiments. However, eleven explicit economic rationales are articulated, embracing a range of circumstances, as for example:

“As part of a farm diversification scheme” (AL002, activity operator)

“Unable to obtain employment on island so had to let to pay mortgage & upkeep of property” (AY094, self-catering)

“It was a way of earning a little bit while the children were growing up” (HL451, B&B)

It is apparent that several of the above fit clearly into what Burns (2001), Birley (1996), Naffziger *et al.*, (1994) and others identify as negative motivational triggers underlying entry into small business entrepreneurship. Unemployment, forced redundancy, bereavement and illness induced financial hardship are all factors cited in the narrative responses to the above question and which exemplify the 'unfriendly push' syndrome of involvement triggers (Birley, 1996:27). A further intriguing factor expressed in the sentiment of an 'unfriendly push' is evident in the final 'miscellaneous' grouping (category E), where there is reference from one respondent to external pressure as an involvement factor:

"Dragged into it by the tourist board..." (AL117, B&B)

The full set of narratives to Question 10d) is transcribed in Appendix 7.5. Though arguably limited in terms of their representativeness, they nevertheless provide a rich tapestry of factors underlying involvement in the enterprise. In the next two sets of narrative analyses, the focus turns to the type of business operated.

Question Thirteen: *Was your previous business a similar or different type of business to your current tourism business? Different type (please specify).*

Of the 287 respondents claiming prior experience in running their own business (Chapter Six), 237 provide details in this question specifying the type of former operation. However, a data limitation regarding responses to this question was previously highlighted, concerning differentiation between general employment history and proprietorship *per se*. Therefore the analysis herein makes a distinction between the valid cases on the one hand, (ie. where previous proprietorship is reported either for a different type of business, or for a similar type to the current business) and on the other hand, the remaining descriptive responses which are assumed to represent former non-propietorial work positions. The full list of narratives for all three response categories (A-C) can be seen in Appendix 7.6. Each set is discussed in turn.

A: Valid Cases: Entry to tourism/hospitality proprietorship from a different type of business background

The breadth of previous entrepreneurial activity among respondents is evident from the spread of business types as shown in Figure 7.2, showing the distribution of 158 data items in this response category. Most predominantly, the links between farming and tourism are very apparent, with just over a quarter of cases (n=39) having entered tourism via a range of farming/agricultural contexts (poultry, dairy, aqua-culture, hill farming etc). Moreover, as was noted in the previous chapter, where tourism is part of a multiple enterprise household, farming/agriculture represents the most common form of dual activity cited in the narrative responses.

Other primary and land-based enterprises (forestry, fishing and estate management) are also notable in the responses (n=11), reflecting other aspects of the rural economy with which tourism related services and activities find affinity. However, the two most significant categories of business from which proprietors have moved into tourism enterprise include professional services (n=27) and retail/distribution related businesses (n=25). The first of these records a broad spectrum of professions including accountancy/finance, education and training, legal, information technology, design, architecture and a range of consultancy activities. In the latter category, respondents cite newsagent, general stores and post office proprietorship as well as specialist retail businesses (floristry, bakery, crafts, delicatessen etc...).

The remaining significant group of descriptive responses embraces hospitality, catering and tourism services, perceived as a 'different type of business' to their current tourism related business by 17 respondents. For example, from an hotelier:

"...current [hotel] business has no main public bar" (AG001, hotelier)

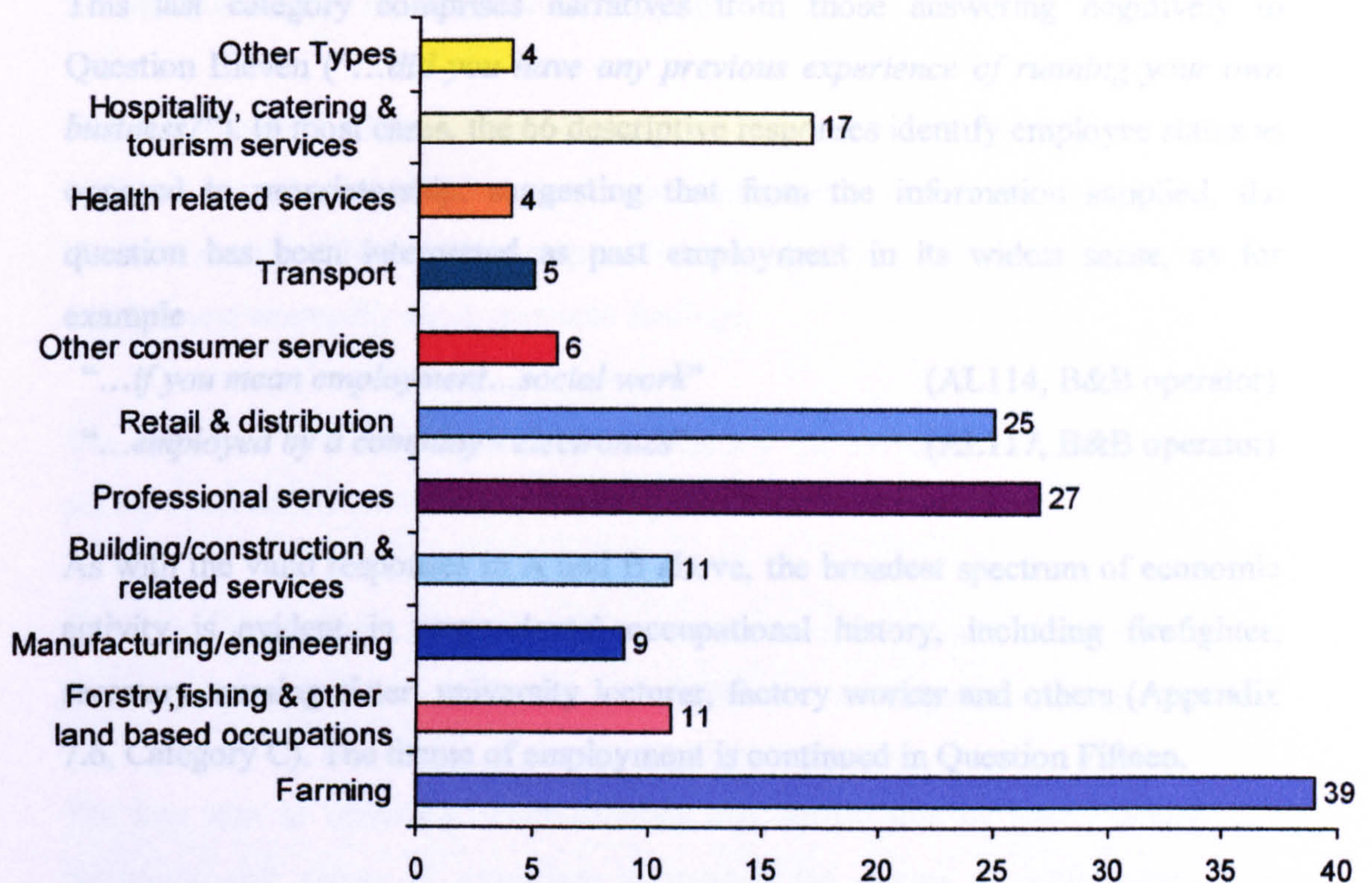
while several others highlight different accommodation types, such as:

- moved from hotel to self-catering business (AL311)
- moved from B&B to self-catering business (HL367)

• moved from country inn to holiday/touring park operation (SB076).

This sub-group of responses suggests the degree of perceived service operational distinctiveness by proprietors already experienced within the broad tourism/hospitality sectors. Arguably, though, they fit more precisely with the next category of respondents.

Figure 7.2 Previous Type of Business where Different from Current Type



B: Valid Cases: Previous type of business similar to current business

Twenty two respondents provide a narrative identifying their current seasonal tourism related business as of a similar type to their previous business, although a few of the data items clearly relate more to category A above (eg. DG001 “*Renting property*”; AG062, “*wine merchant + retail outlet*”). However, as is apparent in Appendix 7.6, most Category 2 responses do indeed confirm cross-sectoral experience within hospitality, catering or tourism.

The aggregated responses from Categories A and B above provide both an empirical marker of the scope of inter-industry proprietorial movement and, more specifically, the extent to which such 'migration' to tourism related business proprietorship is an inter- service-sector phenomenon. In this latter case, it is seen that both professional and trade related services feature strongly within the collective entrepreneurial experience of seasonal tourism operators.

C: Non-Valid Cases: No previous experience of running business

This last category comprises narratives from those answering negatively to Question Eleven (“...*did you have any previous experience of running your own business?*”). In most cases, the 66 descriptive responses identify employee status as opposed to proprietorship, suggesting that from the information supplied, the question has been interpreted as past employment in its widest sense, as for example

“...*if you mean employment...social work*” (AL114, B&B operator)

“...*employed by a company - electronics*” (AL117, B&B operator)

As with the valid responses in A and B above, the broadest spectrum of economic activity is evident in respondents' occupational history, including firefighter, secretary, nursing sister, university lecturer, factory worker and others (Appendix 7.6, Category C). The theme of employment is continued in Question Fifteen.

Question Fifteen: Do you operate any other business(es) now? (k: Other, please specify)

The results of this question were largely dealt with quantitatively, in Chapter Six. However, Q15k) offers a variant response for which 73 respondents provide 80 descriptive data items. Appendix 7.7 provides a full set of narratives for these 'other' sectors (Q15k). In practice, most responses are reiterative in nature and cover the range of activities specified in the SPSS analysis, as shown previously in Figure 6.7. Chief among these are professional services (n=17) such as management consultancy, IT consultancy and insurance, which would be expected

to fit within Q15j) 'other services'. Second in frequency are catering, hospitality and tourism services (n=15), which likewise would be expected to be counted within categories 15c) and 15i) in the questionnaire options.

Property management, rental and renovation are notable (n=8) insofar as they transcend the range of types of current tourism businesses owned. In other words, there is evidence that some B&B, guest house, holiday- and touring park proprietors also operate commercial rental properties and that the phenomenon is not confined to non-resident self-catering operators.

The significantly high incidence and economic diversity of dual or multiple business operation by seasonal tourism business traders was already reported within the total sample. The narrative responses to this question therefore mainly serve to validate and exemplify those previous findings.

The final two sets of narrative data within the questionnaire are generated from purely open-ended questions, Q21 and Q22.

Question Twenty One: If you wanted to operate on a 12 months basis, what do you feel would most help you to develop your business to an all year round operation?

The key aim in including a question of this nature was to elicit, through the frequency and nature of narratives generated, the degree to which there is a predisposition towards year round trading by those proprietors who currently trade seasonally. A qualitative perspective of such information would also serve to validate, negate or shed light on the findings from the attitude statements and influences in particular from questions seven and twenty. A 'not-applicable' box was provided as a device to capture those either not wishing to operate on a year round basis, or for those who claim already to be year round operators. 58.3% of the total responding sample (n=420) record 'not applicable' to this question while a further 12.8% (n=92) are missing variables (Table 7.10). Analysis thus concentrates

on the remaining narratives, which provide a rich information base, as can be seen in Appendix 7.8.

Table 7.10 Question 21: Main Narrative Response Categories

Q21 Help to Develop Business to All Year Round Operation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Climate	50	6.9	7.9	7.9
	Marketing	38	5.3	6.0	14.0
	Other	121	16.8	19.2	33.2
	Not Applicable	420	58.3	66.8	100.0
	Total	629	87.2	100.0	
Missing	-9	92	12.8		
Total		721	100.0		

In total, 221 respondents provide narrative answers to this question, several more than are recorded statistically in the 'not applicable' box, as shown in the Table 7.10. The narratives provide insights not only in terms of the issues considered as key to temporal business development by the respondents, but also in terms of proprietorial motivations and behavioural patterns underlying the sentiments expressed. In the first instance, analysis concentrates on the former, ie. the range of development factors articulated.

During the initial data collation process, it was clear that there are two prominent development themes emerging within the narratives, namely climate and marketing, which are broadly perceived to represent, respectively, constraints and opportunities for year round business development. Additionally, 'demand' represents a pervasive theme among the narratives. It is not analysed hereunder, given that it can be assumed that year round trading is conditional on the temporal spread or growth in visitor numbers and the increased spending and income derived from them. Demand is thus a dependent variable in this context. Moreover, many of the responses voicing 'demand' do so in general terms, as in '*more tourists*' (AG,084), '*an increase in visitors...in winter*' (WE020), '*large increase in tourism*' (HL041) and so forth.

The following analysis thus commences with climate and marketing and follows with the range of 'other' variables identified.

Climate: As shown in Table 7.10, fifty respondents cite climate as the key factor limiting their trading period or temporal market development, although the theme is articulated directly in 60 narratives and implicitly in a number of others. In every case, it is the destination climate that is cited (ie within Scotland or more locally) rather than that of any particular generating area. This suggests a firm linkage in the mindset of respondents, that climate is a key component of the destination mix rather than an origin-related or consumer push factor. The most frequent sentiments expressed are those that generalise climate or the weather as a constraint or in a negative connotation, such as

"Impossible - weather will always dictate operating season"

(AL181, self-caterer/caravan operator)

"Change of Scottish climate! Year round summer weather!" (HL221, self-caterer)

and in the case of an operator articulating specific winter market development,

"Better winter weather. [Proximity to winter sports areas]" (AG072, self-caterer)

In some cases, certain months or periods are emphasised, presumed to coincide with business trading troughs or periods of closure:

"Change in climate to attract visitors in February!?" (HL145, visitor attraction)

"Summer weather all year round...Nov - March is not suitable for our clients"
(HL187, self-caterer)

Specific elements of climate or weather are highlighted by some respondents, including frost, sunshine (lack of), precipitation and storms, such as:

"No gales to blow the caravans!" (AL068, holiday/touring park operator)

while allied to these are the effects of natural seasonal patterns hours:

"...more daylight and sunshine" (HL117, hotelier)

"...longer hours of daylight"

(HL151, tour operator)

Two further facets or associations of climate and weather articulated in the narratives are worth noting. The first concerns the implications of the harshness of Scotland's climate as a constraint to a more extended business season, in which the climatic reference relates to the nature of the product offered:

"If we had a guaranteed water supply that did not freeze at the slightest frost"

(HL463, B&B operator)

"...pipes freezing is an enormous worry!"

(AL323, self-caterer)

Inter-related with this, the second association is where narratives express issues of investment or product development consequential to climatic effects, such as the need for:

"All weather facilities & drier weather"

(AL002, activity operator)

"Considerable investment would be required to modernise toilet blocks to prevent water freezing & more expensive caravans with full central heating"

(PE108, holiday/touring park operator)

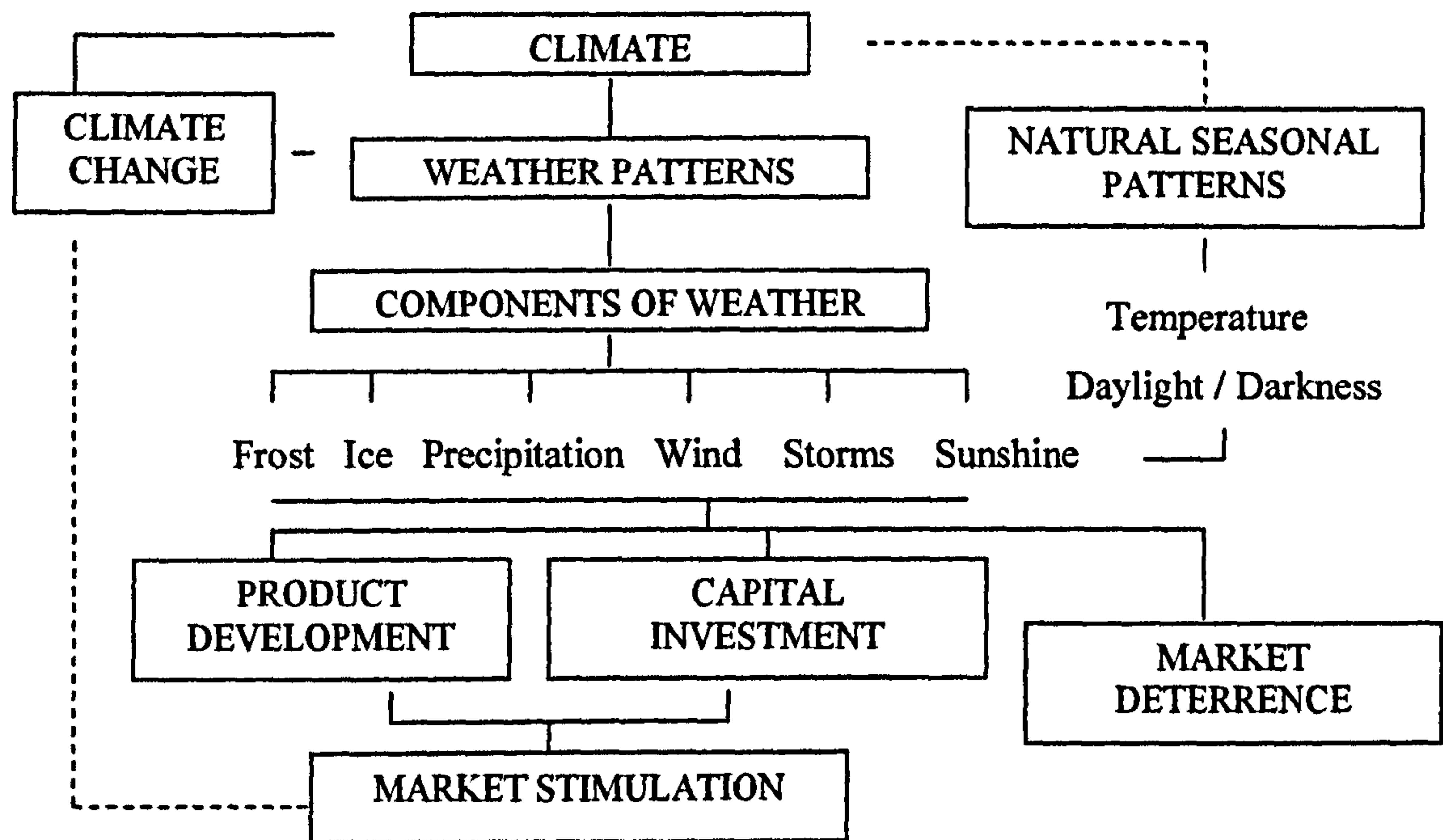
Counter-climatic investment and product development are clearly key issues in the quest to facilitate seasonal market extension, as noted *ad nauseam* in the literature but also observed in the narrative responses of some operators:

"I have decided to operate on a 12 months basis from 2005. Having central heating has enabled me to leave the water on in winter"

(AG055, self-caterer)

Thus, from the narrative responses, the role of climate (and weather) as impediments or catalysts to year round business development can be conceptualised accordingly:

Figure 7.3 Climate as an Issue in Year Round Business Development in Scottish Tourism



Marketing: Comprising the second significant and inevitable issue within the narrative responses to this question, marketing related solutions to year round trading are proposed in 39 cases. While many of these proprietors offer a generic response of ‘increased/better marketing’ or identify components of the marketing mix with statements such as ‘more advertising’, ‘publicity’, ‘discount deals’ or ‘improved promotion’, there is a distinct localised sentiment evident by individual proprietors in a number of areas. Examples include

“More knowledge from Visitscotland.com of Dumfries & Galloway area!”
(DG006, guest house)

“Promotion of my area (East Neuk of Fife) & village...as a weekend / day out destination”
(FF109, visitor attraction)

“Aggressive marketing of Caithness by VisitScotland”
(HL289, B&B)

“...Tourist Board does not promote our area [Sutherland]at all” (HL273, B&B)

In addition to the above, the strategic marketing role of VisitScotland strikes a recurrent chord with proprietors, as in

“Better marketing strategy from Scottish Tourist Board” [sic] (HL188, hotelier)

“A marketing strategy from VisitScotland to get visitors to want to come to a rural area in both the shoulder months and out of season months...”

(AL307, guest house)

although this is not seen solely as a rural issue:

“...improved promotion of city...” (EL021, B&B)

Meanwhile, some operators identify local market development strategies, as in

“Market Aberfoyle as an outdoor pursuit area...making use of surrounding countryside”

(AL282, B&B)

“More advertising + marketing of short breaks...” (AL139, caravan operator)

However, national or destination area responses are by means the only level at which marketing is articulated. A number of proprietors recognise their own marketing deficiencies and opportunities for improvement, for example:

“Internet links plus broader advertisement in various B&B, guest house tourist books”

(FF089, B&B)

“...change in marketing: own website, other advertising”

(EL028, B&B)

“I would open all year if I could successfully attract the right people to come during winter months, that would involve targeting a more active tourist with different needs”

(AL137, self-caterer)

An inference of the above is that, with the right tools, resources and marketing acumen at their disposal, a number of currently seasonal trading tourism operators would pursue a year round or extended trading cycle for their business.

Other Issues: Apart from climate and marketing, a wide variety of other factors emerge as perceived enablers for year round trading. As highlighted in Table 7.10 above, around one sixth of the total sample indicates other factors. Analysis of the narratives in Question 21 sees the emergence of five other identifiable themes, as follow:

1. destination related issues
2. bureaucracy and government related issues
3. staffing
4. investment, product and/or service development
5. cost reduction and viability issues

Most pervasive among the above are *destination related issues*, which broadly manifest as:

- the need for other seasonal trading local amenities, facilities and businesses to open on a more extended basis or year round, to alleviate the dampening effect on year round visitor demand to the area
- the perceived necessity of destination-wide product and infrastructural developments that may act as magnets for off-season tourism
- improvements in public transport services

The first of these is by far the most potent destination related factor raised in the narratives, despite the fact that such co-supply influences are seen to score as a low priority in Question Seven (7d and 7e), as discussed in the previous chapter. Twenty one respondents in the Highlands, Argyll, rural Perthshire and Grampian and the Scottish Borders comment in a similar vein to the following:

“Tourism attractions would have to open all year” (AG050, B&B)

“Other local tourism operations staying open to the public for longer - ie early and late season” (SB065, holiday/touring park)

It is notable that the sentiments are shared by proprietors from across the range of tourism business types within the sample. Moreover, the charge they make relates not only to visitor attractions and information centres, often operated in the public or voluntary sectors and traditionally most culpable of seasonal closure, but also extends to more commercial enterprises within the private sector, for example:

“Visitor attractions/places of interest, shops, restaurants etc need to be open...”
(HL103, guest house)

“Have visitor attractions and hotels open all year round, at least some local options for evening meals”
(HL320, B&B)

Examples of statements illustrating the other destination related factors mentioned above include:

“Better developed outdoor pursuits for winter months”
(AL194, B&B)

“Availability of visitor attractions (other than golf and great outdoors) [sic]”
(AY074, hotelier)

“...some activity or attraction that would attract visitors in the winter”
(AY002, visitor attraction)

“Cheaper, more frequent ferries”
(AL100, hotelier)

“...later ferries on weekends by Calmac”
(AL118, B&B)

“1. a local airport

2. better public transport”
(HL175, B&B)

Whereas signage arguably represents a further destination issue, it is mainly articulated in terms of a planning or bureaucratic constraint and accordingly discussed below.

In summary, the findings from this sub-group of narratives suggests that certain factors within the local destination context are seen by some tourism business operators as impediments to their ability or willingness to engage in all year trading. Such issues are clearly exogenous to operators' own efforts or strategies in

cases where they seek to extend their own trading season. The range of factors is likely to vary from locality to locality, but in many instances the effect of the impediment is felt across the spectrum of small privately run business operations.

Another discernible set of exogenous factors emerging from the open-ended question are those characterised as bureaucracy or government related issues. Among the 24 respondents identifying these, five distinct issues are articulated:

- i. the threshold for value added tax, perceived to be too low by some respondents and acting as a deterrent for further business growth. The findings suggest that such deterrence has a temporal dimension. Sentiments expressed range from the broad:

“Abolish VAT or raise threshold” (AL056, guest house)

to the specific:

“...You may wish to consider that we - and possibly many other self-caterers - trade to the threshold of 58k t/o [turnover] and would suffer a considerable loss of net profit if the threshold was exceeded - there are few set-offs against VAT charges...” (HL411, self-caterer)

- ii. the wider fiscal regime, including business taxes and temporal alleviation, for example:

“...We should get reduced rates in winter months to encourage winter trading ”
(HL510, visitor attraction)

“Reduction in rates during winter months” (HL304, hotelier)

and by inference, levies on fuel:

“Fuel cost reduction incentives during winter season” (DG006, guest house)

- iii. financial incentives for small businesses in general:

“Some sort of ‘help’ as in financial help to a business that has been established for over 40 years instead of to so many new “start up” businesses which appear to ‘disappear’ after a few years” (AY069, guest house)

or to fulfil particular objectives:

*“Tourism grants to upgrade the business to a higher category,
ie sauna, jacuzzi, games room etc...”* (WE038, self-caterer)

iv. local authority and planning agency licensing regulations, which particularly affect the holiday/touring park sector:

*“The demand to open 12 months or at least 10 or 11 months is very strong.
But holiday park licence forbids opening to meet this demand”*

(AY053, holiday/touring park)

“...local planning having some sense” (FF063, holiday/touring park)

“Getting planning consent to replace most of the vans with chalets”

(DG054, holiday/touring park)

“Do away with licensing hours”

(HL046, holiday/touring park)

including restrictions on signposting:

“Sign posts on A1 from Newcastle but not allowed, also from Glasgow”

(EL094, holiday/touring park)

“Being able to put B&B signs on roadside, so people could find us”

(HL201, B&B)

v. other perceived bureaucratic impediments specific to particular types of tourism business, as in:

“...reduction in ‘red tape’, particularly those conditions & costs due to public liability insurance, etc!”

(AL002, activity operator)

Via a number of different perspectives, the above sentiments express common concerns by proprietors regarding the role of government and public agencies in facilitating business operations and in promoting viable year round trading environments for small tourism businesses. One particular response from a holiday/touring park operator neatly encapsulates the broader frustration accordingly:

“Only when the importance of tourism to the local economy is recognised

by the tourist board(s) and local authority - and visitors are successfully drawn to this area, will it be viable to operate touring parks on an all year basis...” (AG118, holiday/touring park)

Arguably, the above sentiment could be applied across the broad sectoral range of seasonal STRBs in Scotland.

A further issue pertaining to facilitating year round trading is that of staffing, which was earlier noted to rank as a low priority influence variable within the statistical results for Question Seven (see Table 6.12). Fourteen respondents cite staff related issues as either impediments or opportunities for achieving year round trading. Narrative themes include staff cost economics:

“...Level of business too low to employ more staff” (HL126, guest house)

especially where proprietors are absent:

“I would need to move nearer my business - at present I live 250 miles away and depend on staff for work I could do myself” (HL220, self-caterer)

Allied to these are the costs and bureaucracy involved in hiring workers:

“Cheap staffing - less admin to employ occasional staff” (AG044, B&B)

Issues around the commitment and quality of employees are also articulated, as in:

“...All year means committed caretaking staff...” (AL126, self-catering)

“[More energy and] reliable staff” (HL452, B&B)

“Bigger talent pool locally for staffing to prevent constant 24/7 working patterns” (HL531, guest house)

Finally, for some rural operators, the availability of staff accommodation may present an additional problem, as noted by an hotelier on an Inner Hebridean island:

“Full year accommodation for staff outside the hotel” (AL092, hotel)

The narratives illustrate that for a minority of respondents, staffing signifies a constraint to achieving year round trading. The issue nevertheless embraces aspects

of service quality, operational viability and manpower availability that figure prominently within the seasonality public policy agendas, as were observed in Chapter Four. Moreover, the findings suggest that for island based operators, staffing issues may take on particular significance, a fact that has been observed within the literature (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Getz and Nilsson, 2004).

The fourth major theme emerging from the narratives is that of the degree of investment, product and service development required to enable year round trading. This resonates with proprietors across all types of business, 22 of whom identify associations between enhancing or investing in the product or service and achievement of an extended season. While linkages between climate and facility upgrading were previously noted, a number of responses identify the need in more generic terms, such as:

“Revamp to hotel” (HL181, hotelier)

“Completion of on-going development program. I am the builder”
(HL311, hotelier)

The aesthetic value of development work is also recognised accordingly:

“Present on-going renovation work should make this possible. Will have better facilities and will be more photogenic” (SB059, self-caterer)

The second main category of responses within this sub-set is where specific examples of either product development or service extension are provided by proprietors. Common factors include upgrading heating, frost proofing and insulation,

“To upgrade the heating system in the house. Current heating inadequate for non-seasonal weather” (HL390, self-caterer)

“Would have to find a ‘frost-proof’ system to insulate the caravan”
(HL367, self-caterer/caravan operator)

which in some cases are seen as part of a more extensive capital investment requirement:

“Considerable investment would be required to modernise toilet blocks to prevent water freezing & more expensive caravans with full central heating”
(PE108, holiday/touring park)

While the above sentiments epitomise climate induced upgrading requirements, other facets of product development are also noted, either as barriers, as in:

“I would require to have en-suite rooms, now I have 2 rooms - they share a bathroom...” (AL353, B&B)

“We would need major investment in hard (not grass) pitches and heating & insulation to toilet block” (AL328, holiday/touring park)

or as opportunities:

“...This ‘off season’ we are putting in a new kitchen + Charnwood log burning stove.” (SB045, self-caterer)

There is also evidence of the recognition for product extension to other service types as a temporal market development device, for example:

“Develop into holiday homes with all year round access”
(AD031, holiday/touring park)

“We are putting in log cabins...” (AL319, holiday/touring park)

“The addition of a studio apartment s-c [self-catering] let for two persons”
(SB014, B&B)

For some operators, such product or service development would be seen to entail other forms of investment, for example in activities and alternative attractions:

“Development of shooting / sport” (DG013, hotelier)

“We’d need another alternative attraction to seasonally replace our temporarily absent [.....]” [distinctive nature based attraction]
(HL512, visitor attraction)

In short, the above narratives illustrate that investment in upgrading and product/service development represents both constraints and opportunities to year round trading for proprietors across the range of STRBs. In some cases, operators convey their commitment to temporal business growth through the examples they provide. However, the extent to which such growth options remain hypothetical for any non-growth oriented proprietors is not proven within this response sub-set.

Cost reduction and viability factors constitute the final distinguishable group of facilitation issues expressed within the narratives. Several operators offer negative responses based on the general lack of viability, such as:

“Tourism in this area [Killin] would never make this financially viable. You would always trade at a loss during the winter months” (PE033, guest house)
and

“Business in this area [Selkirk] would not be viable in the winter months - since foot and mouth it has been sparse anyway” (SB041, B&B)

Certain cost elements have already been raised above, such as staffing and bureaucracy/fiscal policy related issues. Nevertheless, a number of specific overhead cost reducing priorities are articulated in narrative responses as measures to help achieve a longer season. Items include public liability insurance (AL002, activity operator), water costs (AL208, B&B), gas, electricity, heating and fuel costs (OR024, self-caterer; HL085, guest house; HL288, B&B) and tourist board subscription costs (HL531, guest house). One operator provides an insightful assessment of the temporal implications of fixed and variable costs thus:

“...at the shoulder months, the net return as a percentage is much less. Overheads such as cleaning and consumables do not vary as a monetary value but they do as a % of renting income. Electricity charges are much higher in the shoulder months (we include electricity in our rental charges - not all self-caterers do) and this may influence their view towards all year round trading”
(HL411, self-caterer)

The implication that revenue policies pursued by some operators may be non-conducive to market extension or year round viability is indeed a valid issue. Moreover, the fact that the frequency of articulation of viability and cost related issues is relatively low within these narratives may simply signify that other factors such as marketing, investment and bureaucracy are perceived to be more potent as means to achieve the goal of seasonal extension. Indeed, the results previously discussed from the statistical measures of seasonal trading influences in Question Seven (7i) (Figure 6.5) and Question Twenty (20d) (Figure 6.9) show that non-viability remains a key issue for operators in terms of year round trading.

Before finally assessing the role of behaviours and motivations within the narrative responses to this question, it is worth briefly highlighting a few ‘miscellaneous’ issues raised by individual operators. As was noted earlier, localised destination concerns resonate with many seasonal traders. Several generic destination issues were discussed previously, within an area-wide or localised context. However the narratives suggest that *specific* factors also feature in the temporal trading constraints of operators in some parts of Scotland. Mention is made of the foot and mouth outbreak in the Scottish Borders (see SB041, above) which caused major reverberations in the rural south of Scotland tourism economies from 2001. For operators on the Isle of Skye, the level of tolls on the Skye Bridge is seen as a particular concern to the wellbeing of their businesses,

“Skye Bridge crossing free or reasonably tolled ie 60p not £5.40”

(HL233, self-caterer)

“Free bridge crossings...”

(HL189, hotelier)

while access also represents a key issue to an operator in rural Perthshire, thus:

*“...a road going right through to Fort William. Or...a service by
Scot Rail to transport cars on a train from Rannoch to Fort William
or Spean Bridge”*

(PE034, guest house)

In another vein, the thread of localised factors manifests in terms of competitive pressures, as observed by a B&B proprietor on Mull,

“Winter tourists and less operators to take them. There are visitors in winter (Balamory) but not enough for all operators” (AL117, B&B)

and through the provision of market intelligence on tourism flows for a proprietor in rural Aberdeenshire:

“Information regarding quantified flow of customers in and around the area” (AG101, holiday/touring park)

Lastly, the lack of awareness of the importance of tourism as a major industry in Scotland arguably underlies a number of the sentiments expressed throughout this analysis. The issue is perhaps most succinctly expressed in the words of a respondent as follows:

“More awareness in Scotland that tourism is the major industry” (AY075, guest house)

Having provided an exhaustive content analysis of the facilitation factors contained within this element of the questionnaire, and before concluding the analysis of this question, it is appropriate to assess the extent to which attitudes and trading behaviours are articulated by respondents.

Attitudes and Trading Behaviours

A small minority of responses take the form of an attitudinal or behavioural statement. In 17 cases, there is a clear or discernible element of *indisposition* expressed towards the idea of year round business development, as proposed in the question. Three particular scenarios are apparent:

- I. pronounced unqualified negativity, terse in their brevity, expressed in terms such as “impossible”, “not feasible” or “not practical”. In the context of other narrative and descriptive responses by the operators in question, these statements confer a lack of will to trade on a more extended basis.

II. qualified preferential indisposition, in which a negative attitude is rationalised, either behaviourally or through a lifestyle motivation:

“Would require to...give up many social activities in winter months” (FF080, B&B)

“No idea - I operate when I like anyway” (EL032, B&B)

or reflecting a wellbeing or lifecycle related factor, such as:

“Would be too tired” (HL388, self-caterer)

“...could not work at summer level all year round” (PE065, B&B)

III. qualified circumstantial indisposition, where the rationale preventing year round trading pertains to another factor such as maintenance work, location or risk:

“Operate on an 11 month basis for repairs” (AL064, self-caterer)

“Would need to move nearer my business - at present I live 250 miles away”
(HL220, self-caterer)

*“We could extend our season probably to include Xmas/New Year,
but not interested because of risk”* (AL126, self-caterer)

Secondly, while the phrasing of the question is constructed to convey the objective of year round trading as a hypothetical circumstance, a few operators make clear their *predisposition* to such a scenario, through attitudinal and behavioural change or flexibility statements such as:

“I have decided to operate on a 12 month basis from 2005...” (AG055, self-caterer)

*“I could and have operated 11 months of the year [but it is my customers
that determine the length of the season]”* (AG106, holiday/touring park)

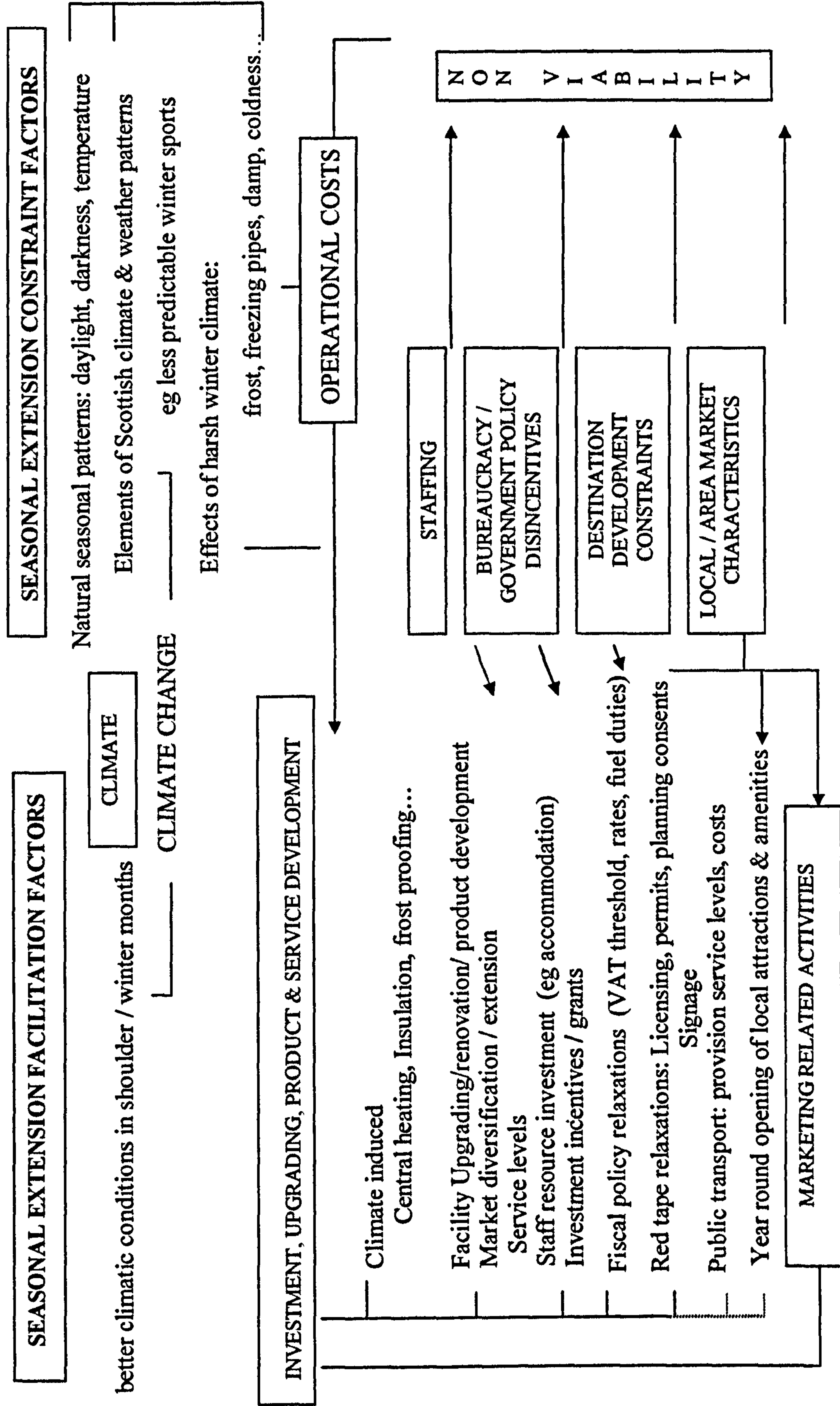
*“I would open all year if I could successfully attract the right people to come
during winter months...”* (AL137, self-caterer)

Finally, five of the respondents claim to be either all year traders in their tourism business or operating on a year round cycle through combining tourism and other markets, as was previously noted in localities such as St Andrews.

The open-ended format of this question has served to reveal the existence of a rich array of facilitational factors and constraints facing tourism related businesses operating, in temporal terms, on a sub-optimal basis. The wide range of variables generated here are formative in the collation and classification of such data items into variable groups and clusters, which is the subject of section 7.4 of this chapter. As a means of summary at this stage, the findings from the analysis of Question 21 are presented as a conceptual map, as shown in Figure 7.4. A number of the constraint factors are exogenous to the operation, most particularly climate and natural seasonal patterns, but also the effects of destination development constraints, particularly access and the trading behaviours of other operators (co-supply factors) and bureaucracy and government policy measures, such as licensing and aspects of the fiscal regime. In the context of year round business development, these latter are considered by numerous growth predisposed proprietors as key facilitation catalysts and the means through which endogenous led growth (especially investment in product and service development and marketing) could be stimulated.

Inevitably, the conceptual model paints the canvas of those largely predisposed to temporal business extension as a form of growth. As was reported above, a number of respondents profess indisposition to the route of market growth via temporal extension. The role and purpose of Question Twenty Two was thus to capture any other factors that may explain such indisposition or indeed the basis of any decision for seasonal trading.

Figure 7.4 Question 21 Conceptual Map of Year Round Trading: Facilitation Factors and Constraints as Expressed by Proprietors



Question Twenty Two: *Are there any other factors not covered above that influence your decision to operate the business seasonally?*

The final open ended question in the survey generated 209 narrative responses, all but one of which provide a valid descriptive response or commentary. This comprises 28.8% of the total sample and 32.2% of all respondents claiming to trade seasonally, from a cross section of business types and locational spread. The full set of transcripts to this question can be seen in Appendix 7.9. Accordingly, it is believed that the emerging themes expressed by proprietors hold a degree of validity and representativeness among the larger population of seasonal traders.

Many of the themes closely mirror the sentiments and issues articulated in Questions 5 and 21 above. Accordingly, it is proposed that the analysis hereunder aims to be neither repetitive nor exhaustive. Rather it will concentrate on capturing the overall framework and dimensions of the emerging themes and data variables and identify any further influences on seasonal trading behaviours or motivations not expressed in previous responses. As a means of data collation, the same format and headings used to capture the data from Question Five (see Table 7.5) are also employed in this analysis. Table 7.11 provides a breakdown of the responses into data groups.

As depicted in Table 7.11, the narratives generate 318 data items which can be classified as seasonal trading influence factors. Thematic analysis of these based on a cross-coding technique identifies thirteen distinct influence groups (data group labels), very similar to the variable groups emerging from the analysis of Question Five (Table 7.7). Indeed only one of the data groups present in Table 7.7 is not represented in the results of the current question, namely tradition and inertia.

Table 7.11 Any Other Factors Influencing Seasonal Trading? Classification of Narrative Data Groups (Question 22)

<i>Data Group Label</i>	<i>Narrative Item Groups</i>	<i>Data Item Frequencies</i>
i) Market related	A: lack of business; sporadic/unpredictable demand;	54
	B: multi-market operations (egs: tourism + long stay lets; tourism + contract workers)	11
ii) Lifestyle related	C: personal preference; 'suitability'; lifestyle choice	6
	D: take holidays; travel; breaks; 'escape'	2
iii) Health, physical and mental wellbeing related	E: health, mental wellbeing; free time valued; rest & relaxation; recovery from workload & hours of work	22
	F: age related; retirement; winding down	12
iv) Family & social priorities	G: time with family; family commitments; close when friends visit;	10
	H: privacy; have the house to ourselves / self-occupancy	8
v) Other work-life commitments	I: operate farm; other employment; mix business with other job;	12
vi) Staffing related	J: staff availability	5
vii) Business economics factors	K: cost of staying open; overheads; repair costs; utilities & heating costs; viability;	27
	L: yield factors: revenue and price ceilings	2
viii) Building related factors	M: maintenance; refurbishment; redecoration; improvements to property	3
ix) Location & access	N: location: remoteness; not near to main visitor centres; distance from main population centres	14
	O: access: weather related; seasonal closure of site (historic house; holiday/touring park)	8
x) Destination related issues	P: other businesses closed out of season; nothing to see or do in area out of season; lack of wildlife	12
	Q: public transport, signage or street lighting deficiencies	6
	R: lack of promotion & recognition; seasonal mentality of public agencies	4
xi) Fiscal policy, statutory and bureaucracy related issues (government)	S: fiscal issues: VAT threshold; community charge; fuel duties; general taxation	10
	T: licensing restrictions (eg non-residential parks, multiple occupancy); seasonal fishing/shooting permits; planning consents; regulations (eg public liability)	12
xii) Climate / weather related factors	U: climate/weather in general; weather elements	38
	V: consequences of weather: frozen pipes; dampness; condensation; slippery roads; flooding	35
xiii) Other natural factors	W: daylight hours; darkness	5
<i>Total data items</i>		318

However, although there is close consistency in the range of factors influencing why proprietors started seasonal trading (Q5) and why they continue to trade seasonally (Q22), it would be anticipated that different patterns emerge in the latter case.

Not unexpectedly, the two most frequently cited items are climate related (n=73) and market related (n=65) factors. The preponderance of these is reflective of the seasonality literature in general, as noted in Chapter Two. In the former case, a significant number of responses highlight the adverse effects of extreme and normal winter climatic conditions on the property that forms the basis of the business, most especially problems arising from freezing pipes, frost damage, dampness, condensation and the cost and difficulties of keeping rooms and property heated (group V). The issues are raised by proprietors throughout Scotland and not confined to exposed rural areas in the northern half of the country. A number of narrative quotations provided above in response to Question 21 exemplify the issues, though some further insights into the detail of weather-induced trading constraints, particularly for self-caterers and holiday/caravan park operators include sentiments such as:

“During winter is not conducive to caravans. Towing a caravan in windy or slippery roads deters customers from travelling” (AG106, holiday/touring park)

“...after suffering burst pipes and huge heating bills, would not do so [open in winter] again!” (AG058, self-caterer)

In the case of market related issues, the majority of operators unsurprisingly claim to trade seasonally because of the lack of business in winter months or during specified periods. However, a minority (group B) has incorporated seasonal trading into a year round multi-market operation, most specifically the long-duration winter rental market for self-caterers, as was observed previously. Within this scenario, the parameters of seasonal tourism trading are crystallised by one proprietor accordingly:

“Flat is rented by students Sept-May inclusive and I have excluded this from my responses because not regarded by me as tourism - if you do then business is not seasonal but more or less continuous”

(FF043, self-caterer)

It is notable that the remaining 55% of data items (n=175) raised in the narratives represent a continuum between either closure because of exogenous factors (other than climatic, natural or market related issues) that are uncontrollable by or imposed on the business, and behavioural choices that are very much within proprietorial control. Examples of the former include the availability of staff (group J), location and access, destination related factors and fiscal policy, statutory and bureaucratic related issues (respectively groups N-T in Table 7.11). They are expressed in such terms as:

J: *“If we had been able to find younger staff on the island in the early days of this business, we might have established a longer trading year”* (AY074, hotel)

O: *“Caravan site closes at the end of October”* (AG085, self-catering caravan)

P: *“...other establishments’ opening times, general impression tourists have of Scotland being ‘closed’ for the winter...”* (PE127, visitor attraction)

S: *“...off-season opportunities too poor to gain other than pushing up your tax bill”* (HL320, B&B)

T: *“...my operation is governed by my license which runs from April - late September”* (SH035, tour operator)

In the latter category (behavioural choice) are lifestyle related factors, decisions based on health and mental wellbeing and family and social priorities (C-E, G and H), such as:

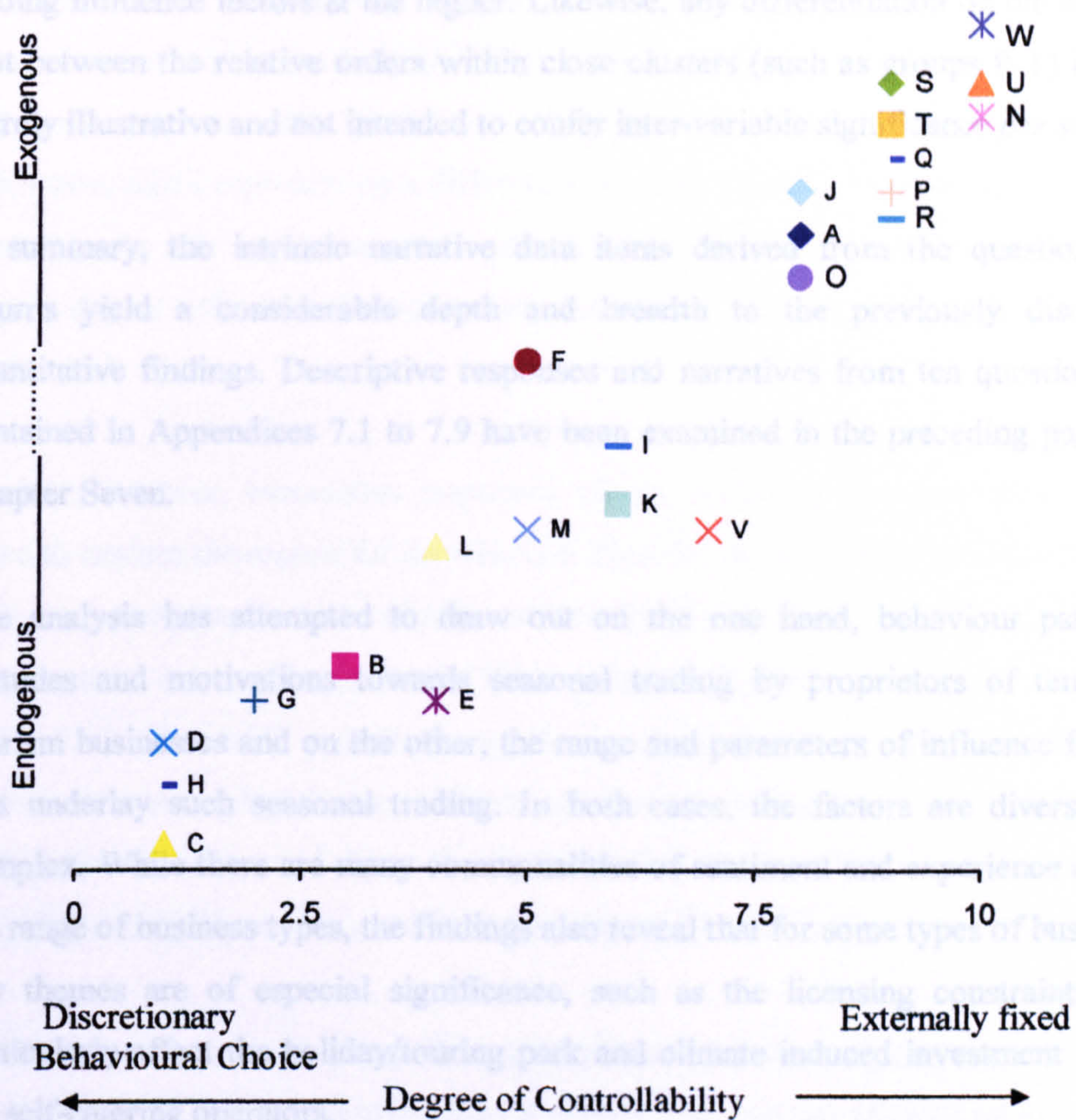
- C: *“[Existing planning consents require we close in November and February each year]. We could probably circumvent this if we wished - we don't !”*
(AL071, self-caterer)
- E: *“Health is a huge factor. We work 16 hours a day, 7 days a week whilst we are open - our mental and physical wellbeing would deteriorate without the break...”* (AL009, hotel)
- G: *“When friends visit I stop trading”* (EL032, B&B)
- H: *“I operate seasonally because our cottage is a family ‘second home’...”*
(FF010, self-caterer)

There is also a middle group of seasonal trading influences, endogenous in nature but in which the degree of behavioural choice exercisable by a proprietor is arguably less controllable. In themselves they do not form a neat group of like variables, however the grey area of the degree of controllability puts them somewhere along the continuum. The effects of age (F), other work-life commitments (I) economic considerations (K and L) and building upkeep (M) exemplify such factors.

- F: *“One would need to run the business for ourselves for the 4 winter months and as we are both near to retirement we do not want to do this”* (HL304, hotel)
- I: *“Because dairy farming is our main business we close during the winter months due to pressure of work”* (AY036, self-caterer)
- L: *“...It is not viable for us, for example, to keep our central facilities centrally heated 24 hours per day...(at low season prices). We may receive say £10pn for 2 adults - providing five star facilities!”* (AG118, holiday/touring park)

The above quotations across the various narrative item groups aim to give a flavour of the range of factors cited by proprietors along the exogenous-endogenous influence spectrum. The continuum may be represented diagrammatically, as per Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5 Parameters of Seasonal Trading Influences and Behavioural Choices



The plot labels (A-W) correspond to the group identifiers in Table 7.11. Thus, for example, 'C' represents the personal preference/suitability/lifestyle choice cluster of variables within Data Group ii) (Lifestyle related factors), the most endogenous variable cluster in terms of trading behaviour formation. At the other end of the spectrum, 'W' represents 'other natural (seasonal) factors' such as daylight hours and darkness, as shown in Data Group xiii) within Table 7.11. The 0-10 value scale used in the 'x' axis in Figure 7.5 is a scale of order based on the relative degree of controllability, rather than on any mathematically derived value range. Thus the values are illustrative in nature and derived from subjective interpretation of the

narratives. As such, the scores accorded to each variable group should be treated as *indicative* along a continuum from completely endogenous/discretionary trading influence factors at the lower end to totally exogenous/externally fixed- or imposed trading influence factors at the higher. Likewise, any differentiation on the scatter-plot between the relative orders within close clusters (such as groups P-T) is also merely illustrative and not intended to confer inter-variable significance *per se*.

In summary, the intrinsic narrative data items derived from the questionnaire returns yield a considerable depth and breadth to the previously discussed quantitative findings. Descriptive responses and narratives from ten questions, as contained in Appendices 7.1 to 7.9 have been examined in the preceding pages in Chapter Seven.

The analysis has attempted to draw out on the one hand, behaviour patterns, attitudes and motivations towards seasonal trading by proprietors of temporal tourism businesses and on the other, the range and parameters of influence factors that underlay such seasonal trading. In both cases, the factors are diverse and complex. While there are many commonalities of sentiment and experience across the range of business types, the findings also reveal that for some types of business, key themes are of especial significance, such as the licensing constraints that particularly affect the holiday/touring park and climate induced investment issues for self-catering operators.

Moreover, the findings in the current chapter have revealed some of the behavioural complexities associated with periodic trading as well as casting light on longevity patterns among Scotland's seasonal trading operators. In this latter case, the data draws the suggestion that while seasonal trading is endemic within the sample, it is also a continuing phenomenon for more recently established STRBs, either of choice or imposition.

Before moving onto the final qualitative data collation and codification process which aims to synthesise all elements of the narrative/descriptive responses, it is pertinent first to consider the extraneous data generated from the survey.

7.3 Extraneous Data

As noted in section 7.1 of this chapter, three forms of extraneous narrative correspondence provide data pertinent to the study, namely e-mail correspondence, letters and notes from survey subjects. Notes taken by the researcher and from administrative staff in the Scottish Hotel School in response to telephone messages and conversations with putative survey subjects add a further extraneous dimension, albeit representing a different form (and arguably non-narrative) of data recording. In this latter case, it is acknowledged that such note taking entails a larger degree of data interpretation compared with a first-person written testimonial.

Broadly, however, extraneous responses via all modes of communication either serve to explain the reason for de-selection from the survey or are confirmatory and seek to contextualise or clarify information provided in the proprietor's questionnaire return. The former of these scenarios is more prevalent, as shown in Table 7.12. The table provides a synthesis of all forms of extraneous data. It includes the emerging themes yielded and their context corresponding to themes within the literature and from the intrinsic data. Meanwhile the full transcript records from all 99 extraneous data documents are shown in Appendix 7.10.

By far the most common group of reasons given for non-participation in the survey revolves around business termination (n=30/de). In a number of cases an indication is given of the context within which closure has or is set to occur, such as retirement, being 'too old', selling the property, moving location or business type.

For one respondent, a shortened trading season is articulated as part of the termination strategy, accordingly:

"...I am considering making this coming season my last and have already shortened the length of my 'open' season" (AL080, self-caterer)

Table 7.12 Analysis of Participant and Non-Participant Extraneous Data

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Data Frequency</i>	<i>Participation (pa) or De-selection (de)</i>	<i>Data Context</i>	<i>Relevant Code(s)</i>
All year trading	5	2 (pa) 3 (de)	Year round operation	AYT
Multi-business/market operation; diversified seasonal mix; market growth; growth trends; product/service quality growth	8	6 (pa) 2 (de)	Business lifecycle (growth)	MMO STU, MGH TRD, SER PRD
Ceased trading as tourism business; winding down towards closure; 2004/2005 to be last year of operation; retired; advanced age limiting operations.	32	2 (pa) 30 (de)	(decline/ termination)	END, RTD, AGE
Micro-scale business.	5	5 (de)	'Business' status	(micro-scale)
Proprietor deceased; death of partner.	7	2 (pa) 5 (de)	Critical incident, Health & wellbeing	DCD
Health issue; physical/sensory disability; stress.	6	1 (pa) 5 (de)		HLT, MWB
Workload; other work commitments.	7	1 (pa) 6 (de)	Work-life balance, & lifestyle	WKL, OWC
Holiday; travel; going away; preference / suitability.	23	11 (pa) 12 (de)		HOL, TRV, SUT
Live away from property; non-resident proprietors.	4	1 (pa) 3 (de)		(live away)
Home and social priorities: time with family; family commitments; family home; family/friends use of property, local community.	7	4 (pa) 3 (de)	Home, family & community	TWF, FAC, SOY, LCM
Cost of staying open; overheads; tourist board costs; income to cover expenses	4	4 (pa)	Economic issues	CSO, OHD TBD, INC
Staffing issue; volunteer run operations; availability/quality of staff.	3	2 (pa) 1 (de)	Staffing	STA, VOL
Location; access; public transport; air services; other amenities closed.	8	6 (pa) 2 (de)	Destination factors	LOC, AXP, PTR, AIR, OAC, DST
Fiscal, statutory and bureaucracy: licensing; regulations; government	3	3 (pa)	Exogenous	BUR, LAR, FSC, GOV
Climate (aspect of); unspecified non-availability; dissatisfaction/ withdrawn from tourist board; large company.	8	5 (pa) 3 (de)	Miscellaneous	CLI, TBD, VSC, TPC
<i>Total Data Items</i>	<i>130</i>		<i>Number of Data Categories</i>	<i>43</i>
Total de-selecting respondents providing narrative or verbal data:				75
Total participating respondents providing narrative or verbal data:				24
<i>Total respondents providing extraneous data:</i>				<i>99</i>

Bereavement and other critical incidents pertaining to health and mental wellbeing form a distinct subset of business closure related factors (n=10/de). Business termination and wind-down from these and the above circumstances thus represents over half (40/75) the recorded cases of non-participation in the survey and 2.2% of total returns from the original mailing list (n=1,803). If representative of Scotland's total seasonal trading STRB population, it provides an indicative yardstick for the rate of business turnover among that constituency.

Work-life balance and associated lifestyle related factors provide the other main reason for non-participation, as shown in the above table, with 21 respondents declining to partake in the survey on these grounds. The single most cited category, travel and holidays and 'going away' for periods of up to two months, points to a distinct role for seasonal trading as a facilitator of such activity, although it is not assumed here that all unspecified travel (ie 'going away') is motivated by leisure. Given the 'end of season' timing of the survey, time availability is a pertinent factor, as proprietors adjust from the routine of the 'open' season to other tasks and priorities, including travel! Within the same 'work-life balance' context, workload and other work commitments (such as farming) are given by six respondents as reasons for de-selection.

Finally among the broad spread of other factors, five proprietors give the small scale of their operation as a reason for not participating, possibly suggesting an inherent issue of perception among such micro-scale proprietors regarding the status of the business.

On the other hand, extraneous data generated by survey participants, largely in advance of receiving and completing the questionnaire, tends to support many of the issues raised subsequently by them (and reported in Section 7.2 above). Notably, destination specific and other exogenous factors (such as licensing), staffing, economic, lifestyle, social and family issues are proposed as contributory to the nature of the operation, whilst the role of climate is particularly under-represented in the extraneous data forms.

As evident in Table 7.12 above and in the various qualitative appendices, all descriptive and narrative data¹ has been coded in preparation for thematic analysis in order to ascertain the relative strength of data items. The following section focuses on the coding and classification process to this end and the findings arising from the next stage of the analysis.

7.4 Thematic Analysis: Coding, Classification and Findings

On completion of transcribing all descriptive and narrative responses, a process of data codification and collation was undertaken, as previously discussed in Chapter Five. A grounded approach was adopted for both elements of the analysis, whereby the codes and subsequent variable groups 'emerge from the data', rather than being predetermined (Stroh, 2000:210), thus eschewing the traditional system of survey pre-coding. It was considered essential to adopt such an approach in light of the breadth and richness of the data and particularly because of the nuances of meaning and contexts within which many data items occur. As an example, the issue of value added tax might be raised by a respondent either in the context of an operational cost or as a bureaucratic impediment or imposition. Accordingly some data items are double-coded such as, taking the above example, VAT (ie. to denote VAT as an operational cost) and FSC (ie. 'fiscal' issue) being jointly accorded to the same data variable, to reflect the context.

Highlighting key words and phrases in the questionnaire text narratives resulted in the generation of 116 individual and codifiable issues, or variable descriptors. These are listed in Appendix 7.11. It was deemed that four of the recurring items² reflect trading behaviours rather than influence or motivational factors *per se* and thus do not fit neatly into categorisable groups. The remaining 112 trading influence/motivational variables were then coded as shown in the Appendix. The next stage was to identify and briefly describe the parameters of similarity, difference and relationships in respect of each variable and in accordance with the various contexts in which they arise within the narratives. The result of this process is conveyed in the 'Variable Categories and Descriptions' column in Appendix

¹ excluding that generated by non-participants.

² ATS: always traded seasonally; AYT: all year trading; END: ceased/ceasing trading; VDO: vary the days of operation

7.11. Five broad variable groups were seen to be emerging from the data, as follows:

Economic: variables related to economic considerations of operating the business. These essentially represent either a direct operational cost of a fixed or variable nature or are related to yield or the structure of work/employment within the business. As such they are broadly endogenous variables.

Exogenous: variables broadly representing external impositions on the business of a largely or entirely non-controllable nature by the business. These include destinational and 'institutional' factors as reflected in the literature.

Intrinsic Personal: variables reflecting intrinsic motivations and/or personal circumstances of the proprietor

Market: variables related to or describing the market, its constraints or facilitation

Natural: variables, reflective of climate and weather in the seasonality literature (Bar On, 1975; Hartmann, 1986; Butler, 2001 etc..) but also including issues related to or derived from such 'natural' phenomena such as *the effects of climate*.

The process of variable description includes cross referencing, recognising that many variables are in practice inter-linked. As an example, "Cost of Access" (CAX) is described in the narratives in terms of access to a specific destination area. It is cross-referenced with Air and Ferries, the two contextual factors with which the issue is associated in specific narratives. Similarly 'Retired' (RTD), cross-linked with the variable 'AGE'. This process is replicated throughout the variable categories.

The coding represents a form of interpretivistic narrative deconstruction, from which it is possible to gauge the raw frequency of influence factor citation. Of the 1,292 individual data items coded from 459 valid questionnaires (and predominantly generated from the three open-ended questions), there emerges a clear pattern of magnitude, in which the 'lack of business' (n=113) and 'climate/weather' (n=111) far outweigh any other data variables.

'Market growth' factors are third most frequently expressed, though at less than half the rate of the two above mentioned data items (n=48). Table 7.13 below identifies, quantifies and ranks the 25 most frequently articulated data variables. The variable group listing (Column 4) shown is according to the primary allocation of the variable within a particular group. It is acknowledged that individual variables may indeed fall into more than one variable group in some instances. Using the example given previously, VAT is allocated as an 'Economic' variable group item on the basis that it represents a business cost. However, as an item of fiscal policy, it is subsumed within the 'FSC' coded items in 'Exogenous' group.

Observable from the results in Table 7.13 is the domination of 'Market' and 'Economic' group data variables in the highest ranking positions, the sole exception being climate/weather as the main 'Natural' factor. This pattern bears a clear resemblance to the magnitude of importance of seasonal trading influences measured quantitatively in the results of Part Two of the survey (Question Seven) and which have been depicted in Figure 6.4, Figure 6.5 and Table 6.12 previously. The pattern of narrative data frequency also reflects the dominance of the three factor groups - natural, market and economic - within the seasonality literature. However, among the other more frequently articulated issues featuring in Table 7.13, a number of 'Intrinsic Personal' and 'Exogenous' issues are apparent. The use of seasonal closure for holidays and breaks is the sixth most frequently expressed item within the narratives (n=38), while the closure of other destination amenities (n=34), the lack of the destination facilities (n=27), other locational factors (n=25) and fiscal issues (n=23) provide a cluster of exogenous seasonal trading influences. While this pattern is less pronounced in the findings from Question Seven, it diverges more significantly from the treatment of such factors as explanatory or causal to seasonal trading within the seasonality and small business literatures.

The next step in the narrative analysis procedure was to construct a cohesive framework from the individual data items in order to render the main influence themes more meaningful. To this end, a process of variable clustering was undertaken, from which the relative weight of such clusters could be determined and applied as a more meaningful indicator of importance of trading influence or motivation than the individual data item frequencies outlined in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13 Most Frequent Data Variables in the Questionnaire Narratives

RANKING	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	VARIABLE GROUP**
1	Lack of business	113	Market
2	Climate / weather	111	Natural
3	Market growth	48	Market
4	Cost of staying open / viability	43	Economic
5	Heating	39	Economic
6	Holiday / break	38	Intrinsic Personal
= 7	Other amenities closed	34	Exogenous
= 7	Marketing related activity	34	Market
9	Staffing / labour	33	Economic
10	Destination facilities	27	Exogenous
11	Location	25	Exogenous
= 12	Product development	23	Market
= 12	Fiscal issues	23	Exogenous
14	Refurbishment / redecoration	22	Economic
15	Maintenance	21	Economic
16	Open to request	20	Market
= 17	Other work commitment(s)	18	Economic
= 17	Water (supply)	18	Economic
= 17	Suitability / preference	18	Intrinsic Personal
= 17	Time with family / friends	18	Intrinsic Personal
= 17	Multi-service operation	18	Market
= 22	Overheads	16	Economic
= 22	License	16	Exogenous
= 22	Free Time (valued)	16	Intrinsic Personal
= 22	Student lets	16	Market

**** Variable Group according to primary allocation. Some variables may cross more than one variable grouping.**

Such a process is clearly subjective and this is acknowledged as a possible limitation to the findings, insofar as alternative methods and interpretations in clustering variables may be applied and which may otherwise have yielded potentially different results. Notwithstanding this, the output of the process is shown in Appendix 7.12 which details the variables and clusters emerging within each of the five principal variable groups and their respective frequencies.

As can be seen from the Appendix, and from the summary in Table 7.14 below, four of the five variable groups each contain an even distribution of the 112 identifiable variables, indicative of the breadth and spread of influencing and motivational factors emanating from the survey constituents in terms of their temporal trading. Moreover, the emergence of 30 distinct variable clusters from the dis-aggregation of these data serves to reinforce this finding.

Table 7.14 Variable Groups and Clusters: Summary of Data Distribution

<i>Variable Groups</i>	<i>Frequency of Data Items in the Narratives</i>	<i>Number of Different Variables within each Group</i>	<i>Number of Main Clusters Within each Variable Group</i>
Economic	317	25	6
Exogenous	248	26	6
Intrinsic Personal	191	24	8
Market	374	25	6
Natural	162	12	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,292</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>30</i>

Among the economic factors, the general expression of viability and the cost of keeping the operation open on an all year round basis form the most commonly articulated sentiments within this narrative group (n=43). For the purposes of data clustering, generic viability is separated from detailed cost issues, which collectively form the cluster 'Operational Cost Variables'. Indeed, overhead costs including heating, water, utilities in general and insurance costs, as well as maintenance, repairs and investment costs (upgrading, refurbishment) comprise the single largest economic trading influence cluster (n=137). 'Work Related Variables' (n=51) are attributed as economic factors insofar as they express or

imply cost recovery or income earning, while 'Staffing' is appropriated as a separate cluster (n=36). This includes the issue of volunteer labour where the implication is that non-paid labour is pursued as an economic necessity.

'The Role of Public Agencies' (n=80) and 'Local Destination Related Issues' (n=74) comprise the bulk of the data within the clusters in the exogenous variable group. As has been evidenced in the preceding narrative analysis, the former of these is often deeply felt by proprietors as an unnecessary constraint on their trading season. The cluster identifies nine separate data variables, ranging from 'government' and 'bureaucracy' in general to the specifics of the perceived lack of public sector recognition for tourism and financial assistance and the limitations imposed through licenses. However, the closure of other local amenities (n=34), destination facilities (mainly the lack of, n=27) and location specific factors (n=25) dominate the exogenous variables in terms of frequency of expression.

'Work-Life Balance Related Variables' (n=79) form the most significant cluster among the Intrinsic-Personal variable group, the need for and taking of holidays and breaks accounting for almost half the total. Unqualified 'preference' and 'suitability' of temporal closure and the value of free time provide other strong motivational forces by proprietors within this cluster. However, 'Lifecycle and Health Variables' (n=46, including 'rest and relaxation') and 'Social Priority Variables' (n=31) are noteworthy complementary factors expressed within the narratives.

As noted previously, market factors are dominated by expressions pertaining to the lack of business (n=113) as influential trading season influencers. This, along with related market issues such as the type and nature of the tourism market in the area and visitors' perceptions of tourism, constitutes a large cluster (n=143) interpreted as 'Factors Relating to the State of the Market'. Sentiments associated with market growth (n=48) such as for example, attempts to extend business into the shoulder seasons, comprise a second distinct variable cluster, ie 'Business Response Variables' (n=102), while clusters comprising marketing responses, the configuration of the business and seasonal aspects of the specific product offered (such as golf, fishing and shooting 'seasons') complete this variable grouping.

Finally, natural variables are inevitably dominated by generic references to ‘the weather’ or climate (n=111). However, such generic expressions are differentiated from ‘Individual Climatic Elements’ (n=31) like frost, rainfall and extreme cold, as these latter typically pertain to the specific operational circumstances of businesses, for example self-catering caravans, chalets and holiday parks. The group also includes a cluster encompassing ‘Intrinsic Natural Seasonal Variables’ (n=14) most notably daylight, darkness hours and tides, the other main aspect of ‘natural seasonality’ propounded in the literature. Interestingly, this seems to resonate far less with proprietors than climate or the effects of weather.

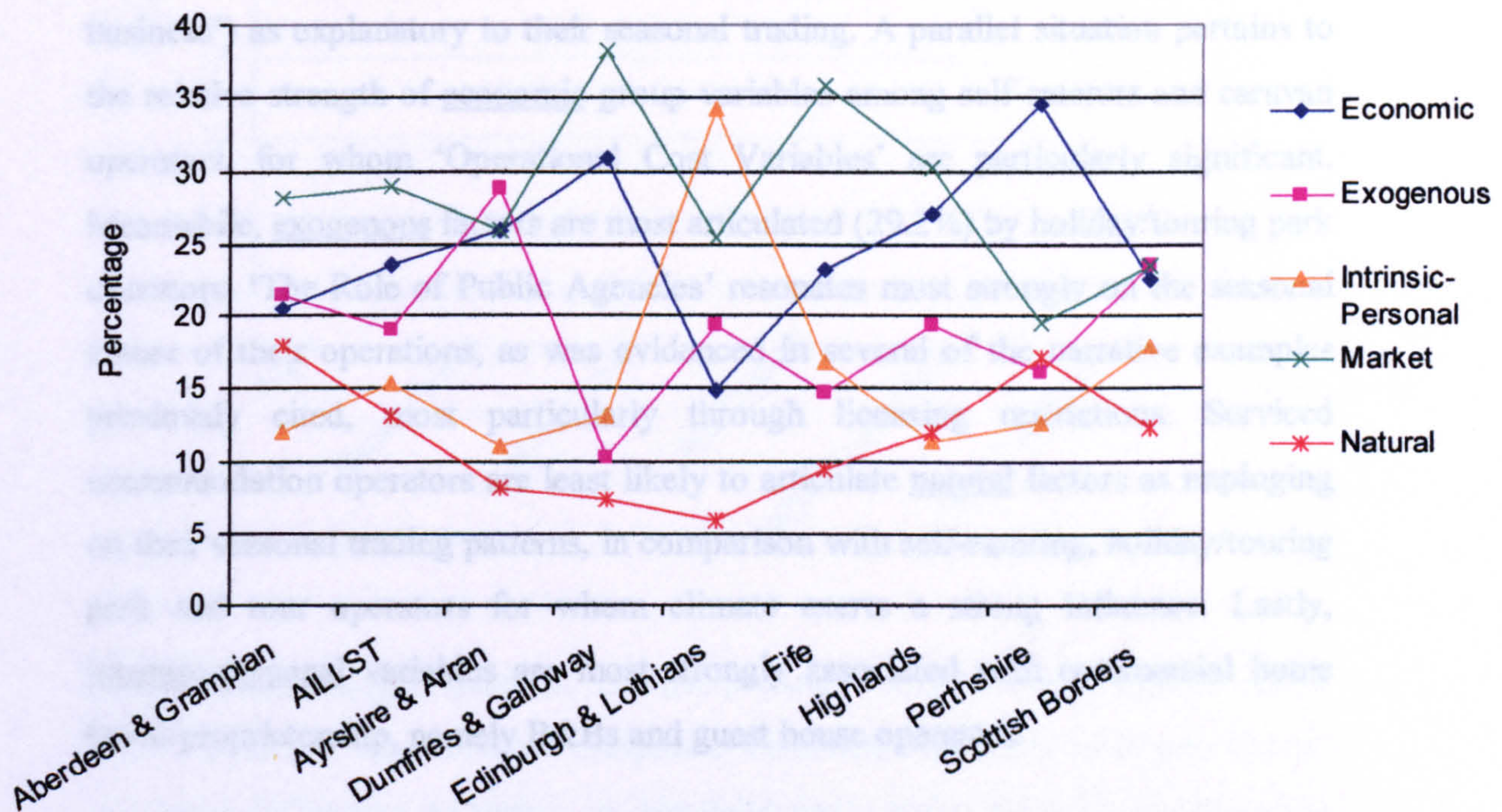
The extent to which variable group and cluster patterns either differ or display similarity geographically and according to the type of business is illustrated respectively in Appendices 7.13 and 7.14. While market (28.9%) and economic related variables (24.5%) are dominant in the overall Scottish context, intrinsic-personal factors are a strong force among Edinburgh and Lothians proprietors (34.3% - albeit from a low count, n=67) among whom work-life balance and social priorities are significant. This seems to indicate the relatively greater degree of personal disposition for seasonal trading among that particular sample constituency, who are largely located within or close to Edinburgh, a city which hosts a diversified year round tourism market.

Natural variables are generally of a lesser order of weight across the total geographical spread of narratives (12.5%) though unsurprisingly in some of the areas with harsher climates (Aberdeen and Grampian, Highlands and Perthshire) they feature more prominently. Meanwhile in Aberdeen and Grampian, Ayrshire and Arran and the Scottish Borders, exogenous factors are revealed as especially significant, though for different reasons. In the case of Ayrshire and Arran (28.8%), there is a strong expression among proprietors against the role of public agencies, including licensing, the fiscal regime and the lack of effort by government and tourism authorities alike in raising the profile of the area. Interestingly, such sentiments are not confined to specific sectors (such as holiday/touring park or self-catering operators), rather are spread across the constituent base. In the other two regions, local destination factors assume a higher degree of significance,

particularly the closure of other amenities. This was previously seen to be of some importance in the Scottish Borders pilot study, in which the primary role of seasonally operating historic houses was perceived to impinge greatly on the region's other STRBs' capacities to develop an extended season (Goulding, 2003).

A diagrammatic summary of the geographic narrative variance among the five variable groups is shown in Figure 7.6. As with the above analysis, regions providing low narrative bases (eg the northern and Western Isles, Angus and Dundee) are excluded.

Figure 7.6 Regional Variance of Variable Group Narratives



The relative divergence of variable group narrative patterns among the regions is at once apparent, especially the distorting effect of the relative importance of Intrinsic-Personal factors in Edinburgh and Lothians proprietor responses and conversely the relative unimportance of Economic factors therein. Appendix 7.13 provides the data from which the patterns are derived.

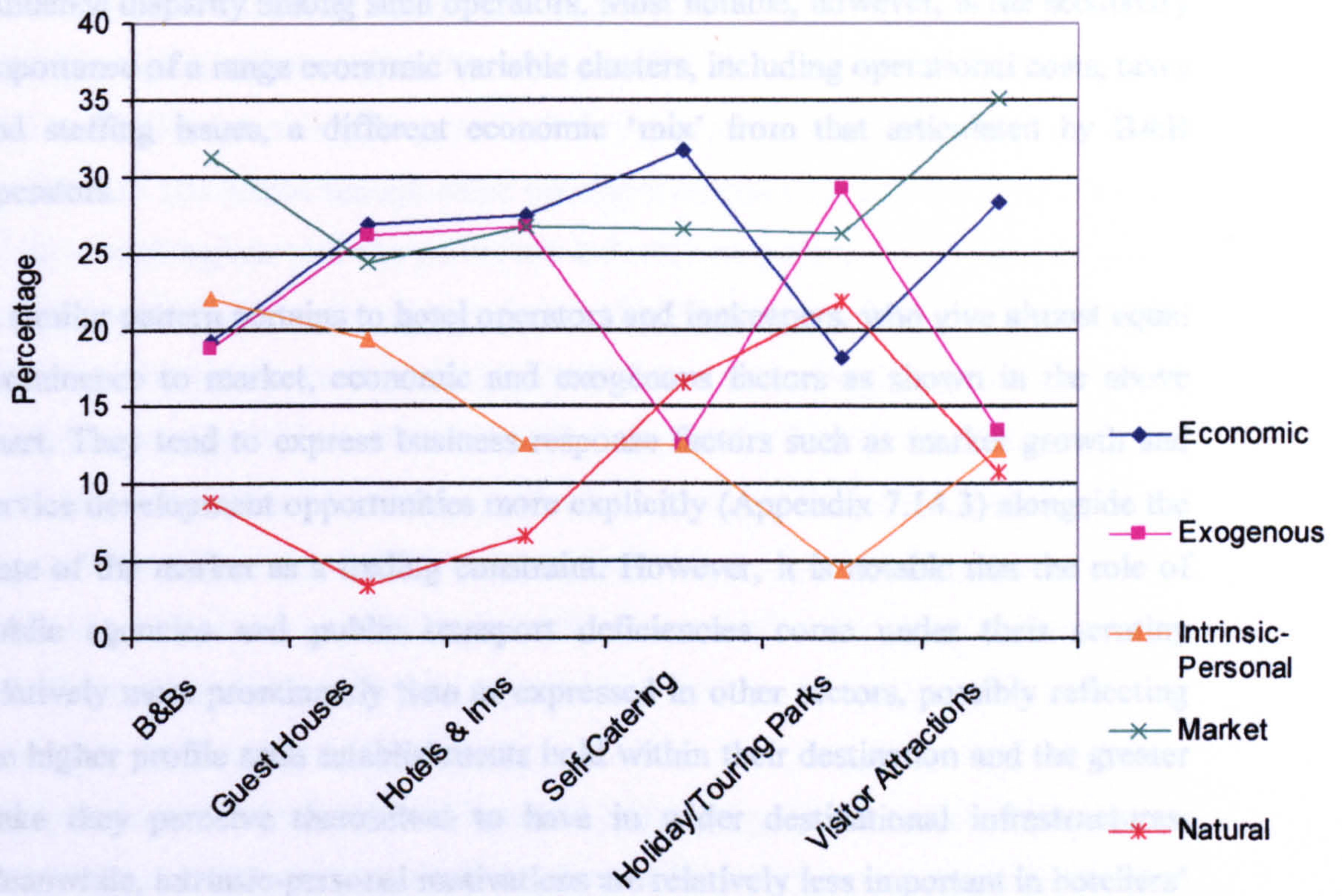
The similarity and divergence of narrative composition according to type of business can be gleaned from the data in Appendix 7.14, which highlights the patterns of eight specific service types. In addition to the five principal accommodation sectors surveyed, data are provided for self-catering caravan operators, visitor attractions and tour/sightseeing and other related destination service operators, representing 456 businesses and 1,280 variables.

Either market related or economic factors dominate the narratives of each business type, with the exception of holiday/touring park operators. The gap between market and other variable groups is largest in the case of bed and breakfast operators, with 31.3% of proprietors from the 140 B&B businesses citing such factors. They principally include 'Factors Relating to the State of the Market' (especially 'lack of business') as explanatory to their seasonal trading. A parallel situation pertains to the relative strength of economic group variables among self-caterers and caravan operators, for whom 'Operational Cost Variables' are particularly significant. Meanwhile, exogenous factors are most articulated (29.2%) by holiday/touring park operators. 'The Role of Public Agencies' resonates most strongly on the seasonal nature of their operations, as was evidenced in several of the narrative examples previously cited, most particularly through licensing restrictions. Serviced accommodation operators are least likely to articulate natural factors as impinging on their seasonal trading patterns, in comparison with self-catering, holiday/touring park and tour operators for whom climate exerts a strong influence. Lastly, intrinsic-personal variables are most strongly associated with commercial home based proprietorship, namely B&Bs and guest house operators.

Most striking from the narrative compositions is the different variable group balance between each main business type, as portrayed in Figure 7.7. From a qualitative perspective, the narrative variance across different business types suggests that the influences and motivations underlying seasonal trading patterns are to a degree driven by the internal operating dynamics of the specific sectors rather than by cross-sectoral uniformity in the external trading environment.

This in turn has potential implications on the nature and framework of public policy interventions towards seasonal trading, especially from the perspectives of local economic development and enterprise policy.

Figure 7.7 Sectoral Variance of Variable Group Narratives



For bed and breakfast operators, intrinsic-personal factors are expressed in almost equal measure to economic and exogenous variables, suggesting a complex spread of trading influences secondary to, but collectively twice as much articulated as market related factors. Such inherent motivations (I-P variables) are mainly represented by 'Work-Life Balance Related Variables' (11.4%, n=49), however these may also reflect the lifecycle and health circumstances of proprietors on the one hand and the often family based social priorities of proprietors on the other (see Appendix 7.14.1).

In the case of guest house operators, the variable group mix is more evenly distributed albeit within a smaller measurement base. Economic, exogenous and market variables are of almost equal importance in guest house proprietors' narrative responses, followed closely by intrinsic-personal factors. The influences are dominated by work-life balance factors, state of the market and dissatisfaction with the role of public agencies (see Appendix 7.14.2), indicative of a degree of influence disparity among such operators. Most notable, however, is the secondary importance of a range economic variable clusters, including operational costs, taxes and staffing issues, a different economic 'mix' from that articulated by B&B operators.

A similar pattern pertains to hotel operators and innkeepers, who give almost equal prominence to market, economic and exogenous factors as shown in the above chart. They tend to express business response factors such as market growth and service development opportunities more explicitly (Appendix 7.14.3) alongside the state of the market as a trading constraint. However, it is notable that the role of public agencies and public transport deficiencies come under their scrutiny relatively more prominently than as expressed in other sectors, possibly reflecting the higher profile such establishments hold within their destination and the greater stake they perceive themselves to have in wider destination infrastructures. Meanwhile, intrinsic-personal motivations are relatively less important in hoteliers' and innkeepers' narrative responses.

A different variable pattern emerges among self-catering operators, for whom economic variables (principally operational costs) are the key concern regarding the length of the trading season (31.8%, n=109). This is closely followed by a mix of market factors (Appendix 7.14.4). In this sector the phenomenon of complementary seasonal tourism and non-tourism markets, mainly expressed as student lets, is an important consideration in certain locations as noted previously. Moreover, the influence of climate and weather is of greater significance to self-catering operators, to the extent that natural variables are articulated more than either exogenous factors or intrinsic-personal motivations.

This reflects for many operators the location of their establishment(s) in exposed, remote or harsher climatic areas and their non-permanent residency at what may be a second home or investment property. For this sector, intrinsic-personal motivations and exogenous factors constitute equal though lesser importance as seasonal trading influences.

As noted above, holiday and touring park operators place greatest emphasis on raising exogenous factors (29.2%), among which ‘The Role of Public Agencies’ is paramount. Temporal licensing restrictions in the period of operation are especially pertinent to this sector though some operators extend their comments to elements of the fiscal regime and the perceived lack of recognition by governmental and tourism authorities on the economic benefit the sector generates. As with self-caterers, climate is a particularly pertinent factor and accordingly features as the second highest individual cluster identified (Appendix 7.14.6). For holiday/touring park operators, intrinsic-personal motivations are least important by a significant degree. Thus, from the variable mix and individual narratives it is indicative that seasonal extension is generally externally constrained rather than an intrinsically disinclined condition.

Lastly, narrative evidence from 31 private visitor attractions presents a clear pattern of dominance of market-related variables followed by economic variables as seasonal trading influence factors for this sector (Appendix 7.14.7). The other three groups figure more or less equally as secondary sets of influences.

The above analysis has aimed to provide an overview of the main factors emerging from the narratives according to the five data variable groups identified. While it has been acknowledged that the thematic processes of variable group and cluster formation are inherently subjective, there is nevertheless an empirically rich canvas of variables influencing seasonal trading behaviours across the board that have emerged from the textual information provided by 456 valid survey respondents. The final part of this chapter briefly summarises the qualitative process and its evidential role in the wider research paradigm of this study.

7.5 Chapter Summary

The current chapter has endeavoured to provide a framework of qualitative analysis from the survey stage of the research process. Given the nature of the data forms and sources generated from the survey instrument, it was felt pertinent that the analytical framework should take into account both intrinsic and extrinsic data, for which a typology was constructed. Intrinsic data has been examined at length within the chapter, while extrinsic data has provided useful supplementary and contextual data in the case of participating and non-participating respondents.

Within the narratives and descriptive responses, five significant data fields have been analysed, each yielding formative information on seasonal trading influences and behaviours. First, periodic trading variations are seen to be influenced to a significant degree by holiday, lifestyle and family related factors among others, in essence intrinsic motivational forces for proprietors. Periodic variation emerges as a flexible concept in its own right, encompassing service level differentiation, specified and unspecified or *ad hoc* closure. Secondly, it is observed that while there is an inherent longevity in the pattern of seasonal trading by such businesses, the phenomenon is by no means entirely historically entrenched, with around half the responding sample having commenced their seasonal trading tourism business within the ten years prior to the survey. Thirdly, a convenience clustering technique identified fourteen distinct groups of reasons why proprietors start seasonal trading. From these a discernible pattern emerges which contributes towards the subsequent formation of thematic variable grouping and clustering.

Descriptive data exploring business demographics points to the significance of positive and negative triggers for involvement in the business, in which lifestyle circumstances, economic pragmatism, the nature of the physical resource and previous employment or entrepreneurial history each play a part. There is a strong association between the tourism business and farming activity, while a number of other economic sectors, notably professional services, retail and distribution feature significantly as 'migration routes' into a seasonally operating tourism business.

Lastly, while the quest for seasonal extension is seen largely in terms of climatic constraints and market related opportunities, a number of other key variables emerge as significant, including destination factors, bureaucracy and government, staffing, cost reduction, viability and investment/service enhancement. Twenty three response clusters emerge from 14 data groups in response to the final 'any other influence factors' question. Narrative responses also identify an element of 'constraint mentality' which encompasses degrees of negativity, including preferential and circumstantial indispositions of some proprietors.

The broad canvas of emerging patterns summarised above enables the process of conceptual mapping of constraint and facilitation factors and endogenous/discretionary - exogenous/imposed influence and behavioural parameters. It also enables a process of thematic analysis construction to be applied holistically to the data, in which five principal variable groups transpire: economic, exogenous, intrinsic-personal, market and natural. In turn, these are disaggregated into numerous variable clusters to allow more meaningful analysis. Thematic exploration highlights that while market and economic factors predominate among the narratives, there are considerable regional and sectoral variations in terms of the relative factor weightings.

From all the numeric and narrative evidence amassed, Chapter Eight aims to synthesize the qualitative and quantitative findings and their application in light of the literatures, the Scottish tourism research context and the research questions pertaining to this study. It also aims to advance the theoretical constructs of seasonality and the temporal behaviours of STRBs.

Chapter 8 Discussion of Findings

8.1 Introduction

A primary aim of the current chapter is to provide a synthesis from the wealth of quantitative and narrative data generated and discussed so far. It also aims to identify and account for dichotomies as and where these present themselves. In so doing, the chapter seeks to address the implications of this study in the context of the literature and findings from other empirical studies. From this, a further aim is the conceptualisation of seasonal trading STRB business from the data, in acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the population and of the lack of theory that currently exists.

The discussion proceeds (in section 8.2), with an examination of the emergent concepts of seasonality and the nature of temporality in operating patterns from a small business perspective. This provides a context to the subsequent synthesis of the emerging business demographics (section 8.3), in which a number of distinct demographic perspectives are examined. This leads on to a discussion of the influences on seasonal trading in which the main influence variable groups are highlighted (section 8.4) and in which a re-conceptualisation of the seasonality influence paradigm, from an STRB supply-side perspective, is proposed. In section 8.5, relationships between seasonal trading, motivations and lifestyle are examined, drawing from both quantitative and narrative elements of the study. Section 8.5 concludes with the presentation of a motivational and influence paradigm, providing a holistic overview of the variables raised within the study. Next, a sectoral overview of the findings is discussed (section 8.6) for each of the main accommodation based categories and for the 'other' (ie non-accommodation) businesses category, acknowledging the limitations of generalisability in this latter case.

From the above elements, the chapter seeks to draw together the various threads to provide a typology of the emerging attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of

seasonal STRB proprietors. It proposes a five-category model centred around the inter-relationships of trading disposition and circumstance. The proposed model cuts across existing STRB behavioural approaches as propounded by Getz and Nilsson, (2004) and Getz *et al.*, (2004), Dewhurst and Horobin, (1998) among others. The chapter is then summarised before leading into the Conclusions and Research Implications which form the final chapter.

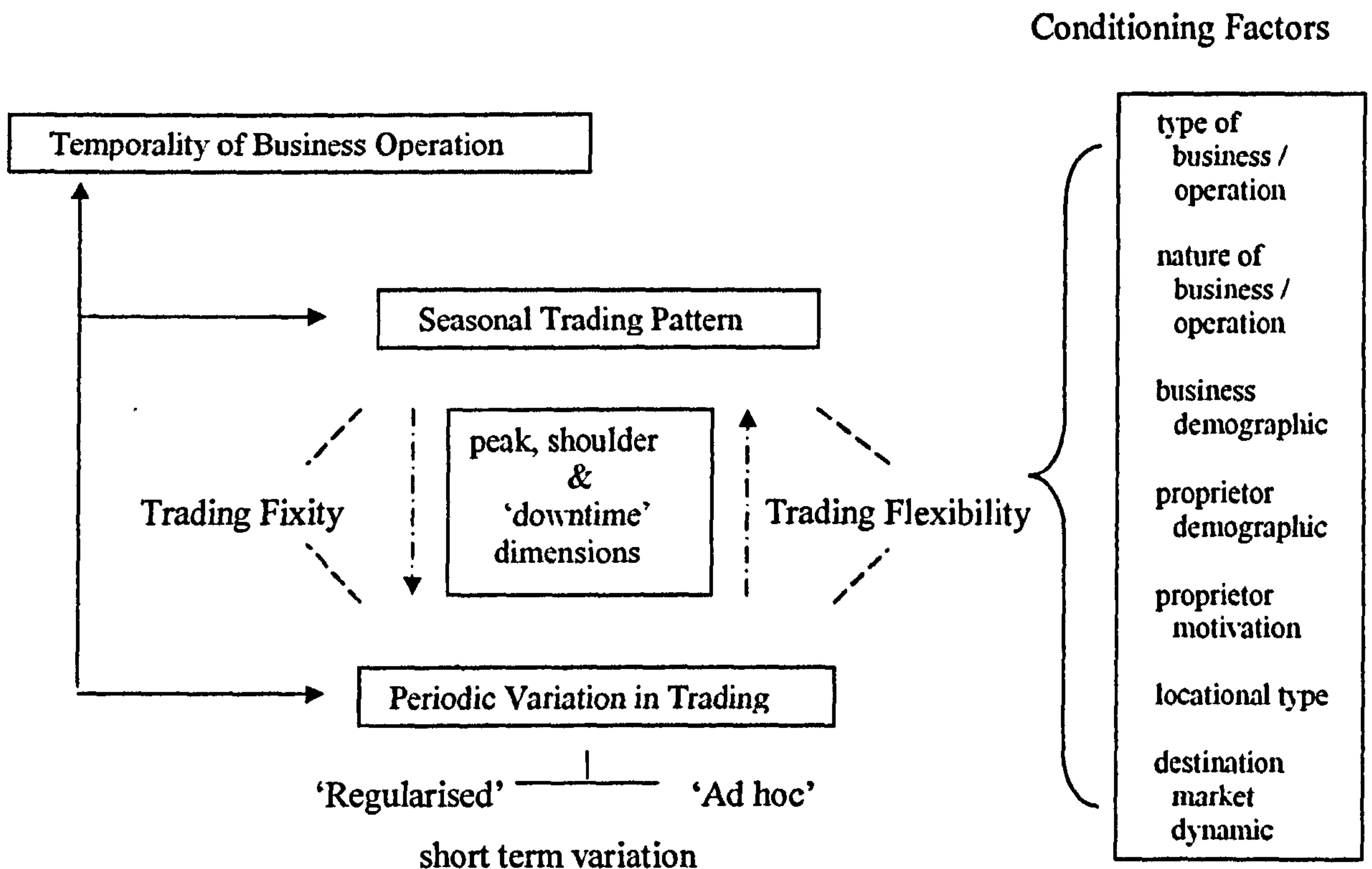
8.2 Seasonality and The Nature of Temporality in Business Operating Patterns

Findings from this study identify a complex thread of relationships between the constructs of seasonality and STRB temporal trading patterns. Most significantly, from a supply-side operational perspective, they challenge the depiction of 'seasonality' as explainable and analysable only through a demand-induced, temporally defined lens. Indeed, it is clear that the characterisations and definitions of the phenomenon of 'seasonality', as employed in the literature, do not entirely fit with its conceptualisation from an individual destination operator perspective, certainly within the context of this study. Thus while conceptual contributions such as those of Butler (2001), Frechtling (2001), Baum and Hagen (1999) and Butler and Mao (1997) rightly incorporate a supply-side dimension into their seasonality frameworks, the dynamic and nature of business,-sector- and destination-specific factors in such frameworks needs to be examined more closely.

This investigation has concentrated on a particular component of the destination mix, namely STRBs, as conceptualised in Chapter Three. These businesses often constitute a central component of destination tourism economies and service offerings in numerous localities within Scotland, (Scottish Executive, 2006, 2000; Lockyer and Morrison, 1999; Morrison, 1998a; STCG, 1994). Accordingly their operating behaviours constitute an important element of the overall 'temporal dynamic' of their destination area. The findings from this study suggest that such behaviours collectively provide a temporal framework that embraces, yet goes beyond, the notion of a defined pattern of 'seasonality'.

There are several contributory factors arising from the study that support this assertion, each of which effectively constitutes a dimension or characteristic of trading temporality. Figure 8.1 illustrates the emerging conceptual framework of temporality, followed by a discussion of the various elements.

Figure 8.1 Conceptual Framework of Supply-Side Temporality



First there is the issue of the nature and extent of operating periods that constitute the *seasonal trading pattern*. As has been highlighted in Chapter Six, a predictable and regular pattern of monthly closure is exhibited collectively among Scotland's seasonally trading STRBs, ranging from very low levels of operational closure during the months of April to September to high incidences of closure among the sample during the four winter months (November to February). Indeed, the findings reveal a very high degree of *trading fixity* and entrenched patterns of temporal operating behaviour among the study constituents, with around five-sixths of the valid sample claiming to have always operated the business on a seasonal

basis. This is most evident where the respondents represent a retired or near-to-retirement proprietorial demographic. The demand-side parallel to this condition is characterised in causal terms as travel timing 'inertia' (Butler, 2001; Allcock, 1995; Hartmann, 1986) or consumption habit persistence (Osborne, 1992).

There is no reason to believe that the actual and anticipated trading patterns reported for the two years measured in the study represent irregular patterns from other recent years, though clearly a longitudinally-based method would be required to confirm or discount this. Moreover, this aggregated pattern of trading behaviour closely reflects the patterns and variations in Scottish accommodation occupancy levels and visitation levels, as observed in Chapter Four. Thus, there is a distinct aggregate 'seasonal pattern' of operation among Scotland's seasonally trading STRBs, which does indeed mirror overall variations in demand. However (and as is discussed in more depth in sections 8.4 to 8.6 of this chapter), the *conditioning factors*, including motivations, influences and stimuli for such closure at individual business levels manifestly transcend operator responsiveness to the peaks and troughs of demand.

The survey findings and qualitative data also point to a degree of *periodic variation* in trading behaviours. Both *fixity* and *flexibility of temporal operation* are evident within the sample as is the sometimes indistinct nature and patterns of opening and closure 'periods' within the STRB operating context. This is revealed in a number of ways, such as closure over the winter festive season or part thereof, individual days off and short breaks in which the business is closed to custom. Such behaviours are likewise subject to and influenced by a series of conditioning factors, including the nature of the operation, the demographic of the proprietor(s), the motivational factors underscoring the business and the range of non-operational demands on proprietors' time.

The findings reveal a lack of consistency between published operating periods and the actuality of trading periods as reported in the sample, particularly evidenced from the responses to Questions One and Six in the questionnaire. Such behaviour

seems to be symptomatic of the time lapse between business planning and advanced publicity of trading periods on the one hand and unforeseen or re-prioritised factors within proprietors' life circumstances on the other.

For a small though significant minority (roughly one-sixth) of the sample, temporal trading flexibility is manifest in terms of *regularised short term periodic variation*, either by proprietors varying the days of operation across the trading year, or the hours of daily operation. It is tempting to make a parallel analysis with demand concepts of temporal periodicity, as expounded by Lundberg (2001), Holloway (1998), van Wagendonk (1981) and Bar On (1975) and previously discussed in Chapter Two. However, the findings from the survey indicate that such temporal variation by STRB operators is often counter-intuitive to demand patterns.

Variations in periodic trading may stem from market or climatically induced 'downtime' or are a response to the pressures of peak operation. In the latter case they are largely occasioned by intrinsic personal factors that relate to needs stemming from mental and physical well-being or the desire for recreational or personal release from the business for short periods. Examples from the qualitative analysis are provided in Chapter Seven, illustrating the range of underlying motivators and circumstances. Emerging prominently among these are 'holiday/break' related reasons.

'*Ad hoc*' trading flexibility provides a further variant to the supply-side analysis of seasonality. As noted in Chapter Six, the sample reveals a significant proportion of proprietors (over one third) claiming to engage in either temporal extension through opening or operating the business outwith publicised periods, or temporal reduction (around one fifth) by closing to business during publicised trading periods. Within the sample, bed and breakfast and guest house operators are most predisposed to such flexibility. At face value, such trading behaviours suggest responsiveness to market conditions. However, when overlain with other behaviours as discussed above, it may be more realistic to suggest that, within the study constituents, temporal trading behaviour is imbued with pragmatism. Escape

from the long and intense working hours and uninterrupted time blocks that characterise peak season STRB operations (Getz *et al.*, 2004; Morrison and Teixeira, 2004; Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001) offer such a rationale for temporal flexibility, especially during shoulder and low season periods, as is evident from some of the narrative responses in Chapter Seven. Even among the professed year round traders, there is evidence of a disguised seasonal effect through engagement in *ad hoc* trading flexibility, especially pertaining to short term periodic closure.

The findings therefore suggest that the temporality of supply among small business operators at a localised level, and in particular among those predisposed to seasonal trading, is in part a function of the service operation itself. On the one hand, temporary closure may be a response to the intensity of the peak season operation, in which such intrinsic factors as proprietors' mental attitudes, stamina, physical health and wellbeing provide the stimuli for the behaviour. On the other hand, flexibility in the operating period may reflect a multi-service operation, in which part of the business remains open while another closes, as also identified in Bornholm by Getz and Nilsson (2004). Another variant of the service operation/temporality relationship is represented by the dual household economy, such as agricultural and tourism service pluriactivity (Sharpley and Vass, 2006; Ilbery and Bowler, 1998). Indeed, in the study, a third of respondents acknowledge operating one or more other businesses within the family household, in addition to their seasonal tourism business.

In summary, the temporal dynamic of STRBs provides the basis for reassessing the supply-side construct of 'seasonality' by taking into account both the longer term (seasonal) and shorter term (periodic) temporal variances they exhibit. When added to the temporal trading behaviours of public and voluntary sector businesses and amenities (which include many visitor attractions, tourist information centres, museums and galleries, which are beyond the scope of this study), it can be seen that they comprise a key part of a destination's supply attributes and of its larger, more complex trading dynamic.

The following sections of this discussion focus on the demographics, influences and motivations that condition or underlie the seasonal dynamic. First is a review of the main elements of the business demographic highlighted within this study.

8.3 The Demographics of Seasonally Operated Businesses

The data gathered in the current study pertain more to the business demographic than to the personal demographic of the proprietor(s), reflecting the research objectives and questions raised. However, this is acknowledged as a limitation of this study, insofar as a deeper enquiry into personal demographics would have provided a firmer foundation for comparative analysis with some of the other studies mentioned in this Chapter.

The sheer paucity of studies that concentrate specifically on seasonally defined STRB operations poses a challenge to the quest for comparative analysis and discussion in this area. While the small tourism business and family business literature frequently identify 'seasonality' as an issue within the broader remit of their investigations, the spotlight is seldom turned towards the characteristics of temporal operators *per se*. Thus it is that the detailed demographic profiles of small tourism family businesses obtained by Hall and Rusher (2004) in North Island New Zealand, by Getz and Petersen (2002) in Bornholm and Canmore (Canada) and by Getz and Carlsen (2000) in Western Australia, do not provide a strictly comparative base for the current study, despite the 'highly seasonal' nature of many of the businesses in their studies (Getz *et al.*, 2004:53; Hall and Rusher, 2004:92).

Likewise, commissioned seasonality studies in Scotland such as those conducted by SQW (1997) for HIE, by Lowland Research (1998) for the SBTB and by System Three (1998) for the STB have elicited little in the way of demographic profiling on seasonally defined operators. As noted previously, Getz and Nilsson's (2004) investigation into Bornholm's seasonal operators is arguably the closest comparable source of business demographics for the current study, in light of the seasonal behaviour oriented objectives of their work. However, even their sample

is fairly evenly split between year round (42.5%) and 'part-year' (ie seasonally defined) traders (57.5%), thus somewhat limiting the validity of close comparison. Moreover, temporal flexibility and periodic variation are not highlighted as aspects that define trading behaviours in their study.

A key element of the business demographic is the seasonal trading profile, which has been discussed above. Table 8.1 summarises the remaining key variables, which are then examined below.

Table 8.1 Demographic Variables of the Survey Sample

1	Trading longevity and business lifespan
2	Trends in period of operation
3	Operation and ownership
4	Means of entry into the business
5	Previous business experience
6	Migration to start business
7	Types of other business operated
8	Paid employees
9	Importance in earned household income

(1) Trading Longevity and Business Lifespan

Analysis of the data in Chapters Six and Seven has revealed significant longevity among the sample of seasonal STRBs in Scotland, with over 70% of proprietors claiming to have operated their business for more than six years and around five-sixths of valid respondents claiming always to have operated on a seasonal basis. While the idea of what constitutes a 'long established' tourism related business remains definitionally elusive, a time span of more than six years affords entrepreneurially oriented proprietors ample opportunity to embed the operation and the market growth of their business.

Getz and Nilsson's (2004) Bornholm study distinguishes between the time of establishment of the business and the period of the proprietor's involvement in it. Around two-thirds of businesses in their survey were established for more than 10 years, which they suggest is unsurprising in a 'mature resort area' (p24). On the

other hand, with over 60% of their sample involved in the business for less than ten years and a third for up to five years, they conclude that a fairly high turnover of ownership is prevalent (ibid.).

The current study does not provide a basis for differentiation between the length of business establishment and the length of proprietor involvement in it, thus rendering problematic any precise comparison with the Danish findings. Nevertheless, with over one-tenth of operational involvement being within the previous two years, the Scottish study does highlight a significant degree of recent entry to the sector which may indeed include an element of business turnover (ie in addition to new business start-up). However, narrative responses from seasonal traders depict a hard core of very long established seasonally operating firms whose business lifespans in some cases cover several decades. As is evident from the data in Table 7.6, there is a degree of behavioural entrenchment among seasonal operators, whose number is augmented by a smaller proportion of 'seasonal converters' who have changed their operating patterns from year round to seasonal operation.

Numerous examples of lifestage related domestic circumstances are evident through both narrative responses and extraneous data. The latter particularly expose the degree of business closure through bereavement, infirmity or simply advanced age, which collectively represents 2% of the initial, pre-cleansed sample. The proportion is most probably nearer 2.5-3% when taking into account the element of near retirement articulated by proprietors in the responses. Conversely, references to family lifecycle circumstances are more diffuse, though it is evident that most categories as identified and characterised by Getz *et al.* (2004), such as young business families, working families and 'empty nesters', are present in the survey findings.

Trading longevity in itself represents a one-dimensional perspective of the business lifecycle dynamic, as expounded by Gersick *et al.*, (1997), Getz *et al.*, (2004) and others. As noted previously, a limitation of the current study is the lack of

systematic gathering of personal demographic data, which otherwise would have offered a potentially greater insight into the lifecycle characteristics of seasonal traders. Despite this, the current study reveals that, among seasonal traders, there is on the one hand a degree of long term behavioural entrenchment in their operating patterns, while at the other extreme there is evidence of seasonal operation and conversion by recent entrants. Thus, in terms of the STRB operational lifecycle, seasonal trading appears to prevail among firms from the point of business start-up through growth and maturity to closure or exit.

(ii) Trends in Period of Operation

As reported in the discussion in Chapter Six, the trend pattern for operating periods both in seasonal and periodic terms is largely one of stability, two thirds of the sample reporting 'little change' in both measurement dimensions. This is accompanied by a tendency more towards temporal extension than contraction in overall trading periods among the remainder of the responding sample. Some discrepancy in these patterns is evident between the various types of STRB, though less so in regional terms.

In one sense, the finding of relative trading stability appears surprising, in light of market developments and the recurrent seasonal extension initiatives implemented by the former STB (now VisitScotland) and partner DMOs across much of Scotland, as highlighted in Chapter Four. The expansion of regional air routes, facilitated by the Scottish Executive under the European Union's Interim Route Development Fund (IRDF) initiative, is claimed to increase opportunities for business and short break leisure markets across the year (Scottish Enterprise, 2004), although at the time of this survey the scheme had been recently implemented and its market impacts arguably not manifest. Likewise public sector support for the development of off-season niche markets through activity breaks, festivals and cultural events has a similar underlying strategic objective in increasing the year round business sustainability of STRBs (Scottish Executive, 2000, Baum and Hagen, 1999). In some cases (for example as evident in the analysis of Questions 21 and 22 in Chapter Seven), proprietors acknowledge

predisposition towards such market development opportunities, indicative of a growth-oriented population among the seasonal traders.

On the other hand, slow recovery from the effects of the FMD outbreak and the incidents of 11th September 2001, in tandem with macro-economic indicators such as exchange rate induced price uncompetitiveness (Northrop, 2002) may have impeded the pace of seasonal extension during the survey period. Gilmour (2001) suggests that the effects of FMD will lead to a 'shakedown' within Scotland's already underperforming rural tourism economy, while Eugenio-Martin *et al*'s (2005) analysis of the 'FMD effect' on foreign visitor arrivals and receipts to Scotland shows deep declines across all major non-domestic markets. Meanwhile Pagliari (2005), examining the effects of the IRDF on Scottish air networks, suggests their impact has been limited, both spatially and in terms of new route uptake. Thus, the trading pattern trend exhibited in the survey should be interpreted as a 'snapshot' arising from a combination of recent externalities.

From another perspective, the overall stability in STRB operating periods is more likely to reflect the complex demographic and broad motivational spread of the seasonal trading sample (as discussed in section 8.5 below). However, it is clear that while demand-side data suggest a gradual amelioration in the temporal market spread of Scottish tourism, as examined in Chapter Four, the market and business demographic of the seasonal traders within the current study point to a different market reality, in terms of supply-side behaviour. While the findings mirror to a degree Getz and Nilsson's seasonality 'combating' behaviours (2004:26) by proprietors, in relative terms the current study reveals this to be among a minority of seasonally trading Scottish STRBs.

(iii) Operation and Ownership of Seasonally Trading Businesses

Numerically, the sample of seasonally trading Scottish STRBs is dominated by a pattern of 'co-preneurial' ownership/operation, ie between spouses or familial partners (Getz *et al.*, 2004:27), followed by a significant proportion (roughly one quarter) of singly owned and run businesses and beyond that, extended family

ownership/operation (c.13%). All three of these variations fit the descriptor of 'family business' as adopted by Getz and Nilsson (2004) insofar as each is a form of 'closely held ownership' that allows for other formal or informal intra-family proprietorial patterns as and when appropriate (p24). Indeed, such a situation is revealed in some of the narrative responses in the current study, in which it is apparent that within a family unit context there can be blurred boundaries and operational flexibility in owner-operating patterns, for example where single run operations are sometimes supplemented with help from a spouse/partner or other family members. Overall, and given the scope to generalise from the sample, it is clear that, among Scotland's STRBs¹, the seasonally trading business is overwhelmingly a family-business phenomenon.

This broadly conforms to Getz and Nilsson's findings from their sample of seasonal (though not limited to seasonally operated) STRBs on Bornholm. However, in their study, the sole proprietor emerges as the dominant owner/operator type (at around a half of the sample), with 'joint ownership by a couple' accounting for a further quarter (ibid, p24). This represents a reverse situation from the Scottish survey. Reporting on their findings of ownership patterns among STRBs in Cornwall, Shaw and Williams identify "70 per cent of businesses being owned by single individuals rather than companies" (Shaw and Williams, 1997:129). While they do not elucidate on the proportion of seasonal traders within this sample, it is clear from their analysis that at the time of their study the Cornish tourism economy was highly seasonal, and characterised by a significant degree of 'lifestyle' proprietorship' among its tourism entrepreneurs (p131).

It is not the purpose of this discussion to account for the above discrepancies, given the differences in construct and objectives between the Scottish, Bornholm and other studies. Nevertheless, what emerges among Scotland's seasonal traders is a distinct proprietorial profile in which decisions underlying the temporally defined trading period (whether through preference, economic necessity or other reasons)

¹ The sample excludes other forms of ownership (ie public sector, charitable trusts, military or ecclesiastic ownership etc).

are in most cases mutual or shared. On the other hand, while the situation of the sole trader responsible for his or her own temporal trading decisions is also apparent, this appears to represent a minor scenario.

Clearly, seasonal trading raises a number of concerns and implications for family units, such as income generation, cost reduction, inheritance and continuity, as expounded variously by Getz *et al.*, (2004), Getz and Nilsson (2004), Andrew *et al.*, (2001) and Morrison (1998). However, given the predominantly co-preneurial profile of Scotland's seasonal businesses (and supplemented by an element of seasonally operated extended family firms), such concerns are deemed to be 'dealt with' within a family unit decision frame.

As was noted in Chapters Six and Seven, other arrangements including leasing or rental are relatively minor within the sample. They are, though, of some significance among holiday/touring park operations, where 'proprietorship' may be manifested in managing a park for the Camping and Caravanning Club or leasing from a local authority. However, those represented in the sample are a small proportion among all Scottish holiday park operators and this suggests that seasonal operation within this sector is significantly an independent owner-proprietor phenomenon. Among the narrative responses, several others allude to 'managing' a property seasonally on behalf of the owner, evident for example in a few hotels, visitor attractions and self-catering establishments in the sample. While such incidences represent the exception, they nevertheless indicate that seasonal trading intersects ownership/operational boundaries within the private, commercial sector.

(iv) Means of Entry into the Business

The means by which seasonally trading operators come to be involved in their business broadly reflects the modes of entry for STRB operators generally, as identified in the small tourism business literature. The sample reveals a predominance of self-start-up (around two thirds) and purchase of an existing business (around 20%) with a small minority inheriting (8%) or renting or taking

over a lease. While the proportions are loosely in the region of those reported by Getz and Petersen (2002) and Getz and Nilsson (2004) among family tourism business owners in Bornholm, the current Scottish study reveals a higher proportion of self-started businesses ('from scratch') and a higher proportion inheriting than is evident in the Danish studies. Moreover these differences are apparent within a much larger survey population in the current study. Table 8.2 presents the data for comparison.

Data from the Canmore (Canada) and Western Australian studies are also included for reference, since their sample populations are family businesses and similarly include a range of STRB types, although they provide a less complete picture because of data omissions. As can be seen, a clear lack of consistency characterises the business entry demographic of these latter studies, compared with the distributions in Scotland and Bornholm.

As observed in the Scottish sample in Chapter Six, there is considerable difference in entry mode among the various types of operation. Such differences are likely to reflect relative barriers to entry, in particular the generally higher initial capital and investment costs associated with starting a small hotel or a holiday/touring park operation, compared with other forms of accommodation. Indeed, the findings show that these two sectors exhibit the highest proportions of involvement through inheritance as well as the lowest rates of self-starting. Thus, issues of estate planning and ownership succession (or 'passing the baton' to the next generation, Gersick *et al.*, 1997) are particularly relevant, even to a seasonally trading population of hoteliers and park operators. This is illustrated in narrative responses from the exploratory study (see Caselet No. 1 in Chapter Five) and in the main study as recorded in Appendix 7.5.

Table 8.2 Comparative Means of Entry from Recent STRB Studies

Study Details	Self-start up %	Purchased an existing business %	Inherited the business %	Other (rental, lease..) %
Scotland, STRB seasonal traders Current study (Goulding, 2004 survey) n = 715	64.6	21.3	8.1	6.0
Bornholm, family STRBs Getz and Nilsson (2004) n = 80 Getz and Petersen (2002) n = 84	56.3	40.0 38.1	2.5	1.2 1.3
Canmore, Canada, family STRBs Getz and Petersen (2002) n = 100	25.5	74.5	-	-
Western Australia, family STRBs Getz and Carlsen (2000) n = 198	83.0	?	4.2	?

Of particular note is that bed and breakfast operators display the greatest propensity for seasonal operation and the highest degree of business ‘self-starting’, at 86.7% of the sub-sample (n=216). Conversely, all other forms of entry mode are less prominent for B&B operators compared with other types of accommodation and tourism service providers, and indeed inheritance represents just 1.6% of the B&B sample. This may reflect what Hall and Rusher (2004) characterise as the ‘risky lifestyle’ embodiment of B&B proprietorship, in which ‘seasonal trading entrance and exit strategies’ are built into the business pattern (p90). In such cases, the attraction for purchasing or operating an inherited seasonal business is reduced. In this latter scenario, there is resonance with Getz and Nilsson’s (2004) findings that some ‘next-generation’ family members are unwilling to succeed their parents as proprietors of seasonal STRB businesses, especially if located in a remote setting (p27).

The current study also reveals the breadth of circumstance surrounding entry to the business. It is apparent from the narratives that entry modes reflect both positive and negative triggers of the types expounded by Naffziger *et al.*, (1994), Storey, (1994), Birley, (1996) and Burns, (2001) among others, as discussed in Chapter Three (3.3). Conditioning factors recorded in the analysis point to the diverse social environments, age and lifecycle demographics and career experience of seasonal proprietors. As previously noted from the findings, unemployment, forced redundancy, bereavement and illness-induced financial hardship each represent incentivised actions underlying business entry, while on the other hand opportunities afforded by temporal or flexible trading serve as economic and lifestyle-related stimuli.

A final element of business entry circumstances in the case of accommodation based STRBs, is the importance of the building and its revenue generating potential as a catalyst to the business formation, particularly in the case of B&B and self-catering opportunities. Unused and unproductive space within the family home, unused building(s) within the property as a whole, opportunities for income generation through building extension and purchase of 'investment property' are all recorded as stimuli for business entry, within a largely commercial home context. Interestingly however, the low rate of business purchase among B&Bs (9.6%) suggests that property-enhancing investments in private houses are not in themselves sufficiently strong triggers for the purchase of an existing seasonally trading STRB. On the other hand, seasonal guest houses and small hotels and inns appear to represent more attractive purchase options, with over half of all business entry in these two sectors via the purchase of established businesses.

A related aspect of the seasonal trading demographic is the previous business experience of proprietors within this study.

(v) Previous Business Experience

The lack of previous business experience and entrepreneurial skills among STRB proprietors entering the sector is a much reiterated sentiment in the literature (for example Morrison, 2002; McKercher and Robbins, 1998; Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Williams and Shaw, 1989). Other empirical studies (eg Shaw and Williams, 2004; Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000) assert that different pathways of experience, particularly around lifestyle pursuits, can create successful tourism entrepreneurs. For the current study, demographic objectives are confined to the capture of the degree and nature of business antecedence data among seasonally trading STRB operators, and determination of whether seasonal trading is a behaviour inherited from previous business experience. Despite these foci, the data yield some insights into proprietors' business experience and point to a wide range of employment circumstances preceding current proprietorship.

As outlined in Chapter Six, the findings reveal a substantial degree of entrepreneurial antecedence at just over forty percent. This is within the range of 'previous business ownership' reported in Getz and Petersen's (2002) Bornholm (31.2%) and Canmore (43.4%) studies (Getz *et al.*, 2004:51) though significantly higher than that reported by Shaw and Williams (1987) in their study of STRBs in Cornish coastal resort towns. In the latter case, the locational and structural contexts and time lapse between that study and the current Scottish study render any such direct comparison of limited applicability.

What is apparent, however, is that entrepreneurial antecedence among the seasonal sample, supports Shaw and Williams' findings that such experience may be brought to proprietorship either through previous employer status or through previous employee status. This is highlighted in the narratives and analysis in relation to Question Thirteen, which reveal almost four in ten of previous business proprietors having operated a 'similar type' of business (ie an STRB). The findings evidence some cross-sectoral proprietorship (ie moving from a different type of tourism related enterprise to their current business) which may represent 'downsizing' or simplification in terms of operational complexity, though not

always so (eg from a country inn to a holiday/touring park operation). Moreover, the narrative responses suggest that while some proprietors perceive operational similarity between different types of accommodation related business, for others the move represents a distinctively different business experience.

Meanwhile, the residual majority claim to have entered tourism/hospitality proprietorship from a different type of business background (Chapter Six, and Chapter Seven). As demonstrated in the data, three particular issues emerge. Firstly, there are strong links between proprietorship in farming/agriculture/land management and tourism and secondly, the occupational pathways to STRB proprietorship are very wide among seasonal operators (Figure 7.2 and Appendix 7.6). Moreover, affirming Williams *et al.*'s (1989) findings on the predominance of previous employee status in other economic sectors as a precursor to STRB proprietorship, the current study identifies nearly 60 such occupational examples. While the survey did not seek data on access to capital or qualifications, the findings suggest that the former was available to facilitate the transition to STRB proprietorship in many cases, particularly among those purchasing an existing business.

It should also be acknowledged that the study reveals significant circumstantial differences among the various types of STRB, in which B&B, self-catering and caravan operators are least likely to have had any prior business operating experience (as well as representing the most seasonally constrained operational business types).

Finally, with regards to the second antecedence objective, the study reveals that around four-fifths of previous business proprietors who are also current seasonal traders have operated their previous business on a year round basis. This clearly refutes any charge that seasonal trading behaviour is to any degree 'inherited' from a previous business and passed on from that experience to the current enterprise. Moreover, the range of occupations represented among the spread of previous employment or ownership/operation do not (with the possible exception of some

forms of non-livestock based farming) suggest inherently 'seasonal' or temporally defined work patterns. Thus, seasonal trading is an intrinsic behaviour, fitted to the nature of the STRB operation. A further dimension of antecedence is that of migration and the location of the business.

(vi) Migration to Start the Business

In-migration to operate an STRB is a significant factor among Scotland's seasonal tourism business population. In just over 30% of valid cases, proprietors claim to have moved from another part of the country with the aim of starting the business. As noted previously, this echoes other empirical work, such as Shaw and Williams' Cornish study (1987) and more recently Andriotis' (2002) study of hospitality proprietors in Crete and Paniagua's study (2002) of internal Spanish entrepreneurial tourism migration. Likewise, Ateljevic and Doorne's (2000) study in New Zealand points to significant local clusters of in-migrant entrepreneurs, albeit motivated by 'lifestyle enterprise' orientation within a specific locational environment. Meanwhile, no clear evidence of the degree of internal migration is apparent from the previously cited Canmore or Western Australian studies, while in Bornholm, Getz and Nilsson (2004) simply note '*high levels of local ownership and control*' (p20) among seasonal businesses, many of whom, according to Ioannides and Petersen (2003), are indeed in-migrants.

This is at the heart of the twin difficulties in equating the current Scottish results with other empirical works. On the one hand, each study is contextualised by the distinct spatial, physical, environmental and ethno-cultural dynamics that underlie counter-urban or counter-rural movements or indeed those between the economic core and periphery. On the other hand, the very nature of 'migration' is in itself a complex and heterogeneous concept, as argued at length in Chapter Three (3.5). Moreover, the current study is limited to the objective of establishing whether or not there is a fundamental relationship between seasonal trading and migrant-established businesses. As such, it does not expose the underlying triggers for the migratory moves that result in setting up an STRB in Scotland, nor does it provide the basis for in-depth qualification of migratory entrepreneurship, such as the

ability to determine dichotomous ‘production/consumption’ orientation in proprietorial behaviour (Williams *et al.*, 1989).

However, the study records a predominantly urban to rural occurrence among its in-migrant population, although with a notable ‘second tier’ of rurally-generated migration. As most locations in the study comprise rural settings or small townships in rural areas, the pattern of human movement is unsurprising, although rural to rural STRB-motivated migration remains a little observed phenomenon elsewhere. Most in-migrant STRB seasonal proprietors in the study are from outwith Scotland, while there is also a substantial element of intra-Scotland migration. The dominance of English buyers in Scotland’s hotel and guest house property market has recently been highlighted in the financial pages of the consumer press, characterised, for example as

“often realising substantial cash gains on their homes to follow their plans for lifestyle change”

(Serafini, 2004)

and looking to escape the ‘rat race’ by moving to such places as Oban, rural Argyll, rural central and southern Scotland and the Clyde estuary islands (*ibid*), many of which are inherently seasonal destinations. Indeed, from a responding population of 140 in the largely rural and scenic AILLST region, almost four in ten of its proprietors claim to have moved to the area to start their business.

The extent to which in-migration can be equated with ‘lifestyle proprietorship’ among the seasonally trading sample is considered in section 8.5. Meanwhile, the next element of discussion considers the ‘multi-entrepreneurial’ demographic among the sample.

(vii) Types of Other Business Operated

Dual- or multiple-business households account for one third of STRB seasonal traders. The most common arrangement of this type occurs among Scotland’s self-catering and caravan operators and is least prevalent among its small hotel sector.

Furthermore, among the dual business population the findings indicate a substantial proportion to be multi-economy households, ie with more than two separate income generating enterprises. Within the multi-economy household, two distinct scenarios are apparent from the findings. One is the extent and complementarity of the dual farming and tourism household economy, which represents a classic form of pluriactivity (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998) and which has been encouraged in recent years via rural development and agricultural diversification policies (Sharpley and Vass, 2006; Slee, 1998). The second is the prevalence of the dual- or multiple STRB operation in a non-farming household context, embracing for example a B&B and separate trading entity such as a self-catering operation or a linked accommodation and tour or transport operation, among various service combinations. Hence there is evidence at a 'micro'/household level of vertically and horizontally linked operations run on a seasonal basis. In some cases there is also evidence of a multiple STRB operation within a larger farming dominated household economy.

Such business configurations have been examined in a variety of peripheral, rural and agrarian contexts (Getz and Nilsson, 2004; Hall, 2004; Flognfeldt, 2001; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Baum and Hagen, 1999; Butler, 1998; Slee, 1998, among others). For example, citing Bessi re (1998), Hall (2004) notes the potential for rural food producers to garner the development of 'visitor product' through rural tours, direct purchasing from the farm, specialised restaurant menus and home stays on the property (p168). Narrative findings from the current study provide some examples of such entrepreneurial service mix in farming contexts. However, even more apparent among the seasonal trading population is the temporal co-existence between farming/agrarian activity and tourism service provision. This suggests a complex inter-relationship between the two economies, in which the temporality of the latter represents a complementary and convenient, rather than marginal or uneconomic activity in some households. Thus, Getz and Nilsson's (2004) characterisation of the 'coping' seasonal STRB enterprise (p26) can be seen to represent a valid reality for many of the current study sample, when

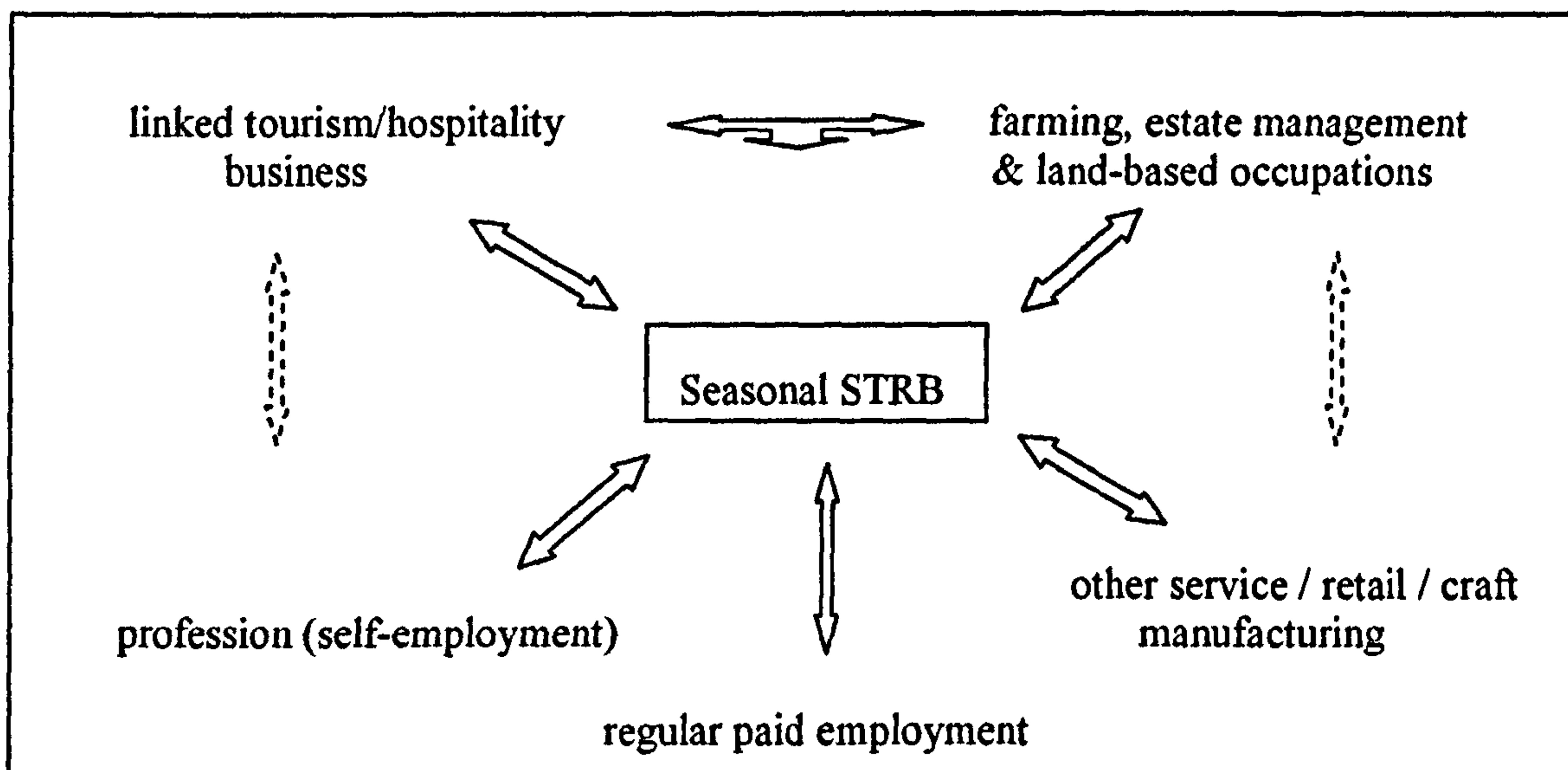
contextualised against the demands and indeed the objectives of the wider agrarian household economy.

The 'hobby farm' represents a further dynamic in the agrarian/tourism relationship, in which the purchase of a rural property frequently results in the conversion from agricultural use to personal recreational use (Butler, 1998:218). However, as observed by Getz and Carlsen (2000) and Hall *et al.* (2000), developing and showcasing an agricultural product and its setting as a 'hobby' can stimulate both tourism and agrarian economies within the family business milieu, although this does not appear to be particularly widespread within the Scottish seasonal trading STRB farming population.

Although predominant, farming is but one occupation carried out alongside a seasonal tourism related business within the survey population. Apart from the propensity to operate other tourism and hospitality related services, 'other business types' include a diverse range of professional services operated by proprietors or other members of the household. Land management, construction and property related businesses, retail and education related occupations are also in evidence (Figure 6.7 and Appendix 7.7). A summary of the major relationships between seasonal STRB operation and other enterprises as discussed above is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

Thus the seasonal operation of many tourism related businesses, whether through preference or temporally dictated by market or other factors, appears to afford opportunities for other business enterprise to be conducted. Indeed the seasonal STRB may be conditioned by the operation of such other enterprises or in some cases by the principal self-employed occupation in the household. Narrative responses supporting such scenarios include the occupations of farming, forestry, land management, crafts, teaching and public health, among others. Moreover, examples are drawn from proprietorship of all accommodation types, activity tour operation, visitor attractions and private galleries.

Figure 8.2 Configuration of the Seasonal STRB in the Dual- or Multi-Economy Household



What can be ascertained from this is that, for some proprietors, seasonal trading fits with other occupational commitments within the household. This seems to apply both at the micro-enterprise scale of operation as well as in the larger family based farming operation. The degree to which such business inter-relationships depend on the relative size and scale of the seasonal STRB business within the overall household economy is the subject of the final demographic perspective, in section 8.3 (9) below. In the meantime, the importance of non-family employment is discussed.

(viii) Paid Employees

Getz and Nilsson (2004) highlight the distinct economic benefit for family based firms in not taking on paid employees, namely the avoidance of payroll costs during periods in which variable costs are greater than guest revenues. Getz *et al.*, (2004) make the point that owner-operators in STRBs often have to hire staff seasonally but fall back on family members during 'low demand periods' (p8). In their Bornholm study, 35% of Getz and Nilsson's sample (n=31/89) reported employing non-family paid staff, although the breakdown of this between

seasonally defined (ie 'part year') and full year operators is not made clear. Moreover, a significant proportion of their year-round businesses (n=25/34) report dismissing employees during the 'low season'. Such behaviour typifies what they categorise as a seasonality 'coping' strategy (ie 'adapting to seasonality', p28), though in practice seasonal staffing is a widely recognised business response among tourism related firms (Getz *et al.*, 2004; Shaw and Williams, 2002; Baum and Hagen, 1999; Baum, 1999).

In the current Scottish study, the propensity to employ seasonal staff outwith the family unit is significant, at just over forty percent of the sample. This is broadly similar to the level observed in Getz and Nilsson's (2004) comparative Bornholm sample, although embracing a much higher proportion of 'part year'/seasonally trading firms. Among Scotland's seasonal STRB operators however, the practice of employing non-family staff is sectorally very varied, ranging from the vast majority of small hoteliers and innkeepers in the sample (94.6%) to least common among B&B operators (around one-sixth). For other types of operation (guest houses, holiday and touring parks and self-catering operators) the incidence is around half the valid sample.

There is therefore a great divergence of practice which, in the case of B&Bs (many of whom have short operating seasons and an older age demographic) may be symptomatic of operational resource poverty. Nevertheless, while seasonal operation may in itself constrain the employment of non-family/domestic paid staff, it would be simplistic to generalise the condition or behaviour, *prima facie* as a symptom of resource poverty (Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2004; Andrew *et al.*, 2001), among *all* STRBs.

(ix) Importance of Seasonal STRB in Earned Household Income

For nearly three quarters of the survey population, the seasonal tourism business is not the only source of earned household income (as defined by the parameters of 'income' specified in the questionnaire). This is in keeping with the findings previously discussed, that many proprietors are operating in a dual or multi-

economy household. However, there is clearly not a single household demographic 'type' among the sample. Indeed, the different sectors and the spread of responses across the spectrum of 'relative importance' of earnings reveal wide variations. Yet while the overall profile for small hotel and guest house operators indicates the business to be a main income source, it is also apparent that for many self-caterers and operators of individual caravans, the business constitutes an 'add-on' to the basic household finances. Indeed a number of self-catering providers identify as not living on or near the property, which for them represents a remote income stream and part time or occasional residence. Meanwhile, the term 'pin money' is used in the narratives by more than one farm based caravan proprietor to describe the relative unimportance of that business. Similarly, in Scotland's B&B sector, Slee (1998) identifies

'many *seasonal/amateur*² occasional providers of overspill bed and breakfast provision for neighbours' (p103)

for whom such business represents additional income of a speculative, chance nature.

However, it is evident that seasonally operated businesses cannot be generalised as economically marginal to the household, even though they clearly are in some specific contexts. While the non-viability of year-round trading is much articulated in the study, numerous proprietors highlight the success of their business within a temporally constrained operating season. Thus seasonal trading, where it represents an attainable supplementary income source, seems to equate with several of the entrepreneurial guises characterised by Getz *et al.* (2004), most particularly being compatible with the 'portfolio' and 'social' guises of STRB entrepreneurialism (p27).

Nevertheless, no direct comparison can be made between the current study and other studies in terms of the relative importance of income from seasonally trading business. Getz and Nilsson's (2004) research does not directly address the issue,

² Slee's own italics

though around a third of their Bornholm respondents cite multiple-income activities, such as a campground and shop, or food produce and accommodation. On the other hand, around two thirds of their year-round traders claim to supplement their income from other sources, in light of the extreme seasonality recorded in the island's tourism market (p25).

Yet even within seasonal market contexts, gaining financial independence from the business may typify or characterise trading objectives of STRB proprietors, as is demonstrated in Getz and Carlsen's (2000) study. Nearly three quarters of their Western Australian family business sample identifies this goal as either important or very important, even though for around six out of ten, the business is viewed as 'highly seasonal' (p554). Thus, there exists a dichotomy between the financial expectations of the business and the revenue limitations inherent in a temporally constrained operation. For many such proprietors, an explanatory factor is the 'lifestyle' trade-off afforded by the seasonal operation. Discussion of this is amplified in section 8.5.

To summarise, seasonal trading imparts a complex and often dichotomous business demographic among STRB operations in Scotland. Temporal flexibility is widespread, yet is not confined to non-growth oriented businesses and indeed appears to fit in with the household circumstances of some self-acclaimed successful enterprises. While seasonal trading represents an entrenched behaviour associated with business longevity, it is also practiced by recent entrants, many of whom have started their business 'from scratch'. Thus, the seasonally trading business is conducted across the whole family lifecycle spectrum, not only by those proprietors working towards retirement. Where proprietors have previous enterprise background they are likely to have formerly operated a year round business. The current seasonal STRB often operates within a dual- or multi-economy household and its trading pattern may well be conditioned by the demands of other household enterprises or principal employment. Thus, in many cases, seasonal trading may represent an intrinsic behaviour. However, the nature of and extent to which such behaviour is preferred or conditioned is discussed in

the next sections of this chapter, which focus respectively on the influences and motivations for seasonal trading.

8.4 Influences on Seasonal Trading

As previously discussed, causal influences on demand play a major role in understanding the seasonal dynamic of tourism. They have been much articulated in the literature, typically constructed as ‘natural’ and ‘institutional’ in nature and refined according to the review presented in Chapter Two. One of the primary aims of the current study has been to identify and examine from a supply-side perspective the role of causal influences on the trading behaviours of seasonal STRBs. A number of factors emerged from the exploratory study and have been examined and presented thematically within the main study. Moreover, narrative analysis (Chapter Seven) has served to contextualise those influences according to the business demographic, sectoral, locational and market related factors that pertain to individual firms and proprietors.

The lack of comparative supply-side influence studies against which to benchmark or at least qualify the current research data, presents a significant challenge. Where the role and importance of particular influencing factors in STRB temporal behavioural patterns is discussed within the literature, it largely lacks empiricism. As a fundamental example, the role of climate in deterring visits at certain times of the year is well established and documented, even within cool temperate destinations. However, the current study reveals that, from a supply-side focus, climate may yield a very different influencing role, one which for many proprietors is associated more with the viability, investment requirement or access to their STRB than to market deterrence *per se*. Such relationships are largely absent empirically and within literature analyses.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of empirical work around the operating goals and aspirations of STRB proprietorship that explores ‘lifestyle’ as a motivating factor, even though most of those studies are not drawn specifically from seasonally trading populations. Thus, a distinction is made between

‘influencing’ and ‘motivational’ factors for the purposes of this discussion. The implications of each of the four emerging thematic influence groups (market, economic, intrinsic personal and exogenous factors) are discussed below, while motivational factors are considered later (in section 8.5).

(i) Market Influences

What clearly emerges is that market demand factors are, on the whole, the most potent influences on temporal trading behaviours. Where the seasonality literature explores STRB temporal trading patterns in similar locational and climatic types (especially Getz and Nilsson, 2004 and, to an extent, Baum and Hagen, 1999; Flognfeldt, 2001 and Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001), this finding is generally consistent with the experiences in those other places.

The primacy of market demand factors seems to apply both to determining the length of operating seasons across the year and to short term periodic variation. The latter is characterised by daily and weekly flexibility in terms of extending opening during otherwise closed periods and conversely in influencing spontaneous closure behaviours. Moreover, the more immediate market(s) which are either specifically targeted by the business or prevalent within the destination area are those which hold greatest influence on proprietors’ temporal behaviours. Examples from the narrative responses that support this include fishing, shooting and business tourism. On the other hand, the state of the wider tourism market within Scotland constitutes a less potent force for influencing trading behaviours, even though some operators articulate ‘declining markets’ or ‘less visitors around in general’ as affecting their business. Absent from the findings are positive references to shoulder and low season event and festival generated markets in influencing trading behaviours, although the potential for such market-extending initiatives within local areas is articulated in the narratives on numerous occasions.

Finally, among those proprietors who started their business on a seasonal basis, market demand factors appear to exert a strong influence on their temporal trading patterns, certainly compared against other types of trading influence. This is

particularly apparent in the narrative analyses. Apart from any distinct motivational factors underlying the business start-up, such a relationship may signify acceptance by proprietors of the risks and challenges to be faced in a temporally defined operation. If this were the case, it would broadly mirror Hall and Rusher's (2004) findings among B&B operators in New Zealand, for whom economic gain and business growth are not the greatest priorities, albeit that study focuses on the lifestyle goal orientation of their study subjects.

(ii) Economic Influences

Collectively, economic issues exert the next strongest set of influences on STRBs' seasonal trading behaviours. The overarching issues of non-viability and revenue attainment emerged as key influencing factors from the exploratory study, along with the investment related issue of repair and maintenance. In the main study, the first of these ranks as a very potent behavioural influence, in terms of importance ratings (Table 6.12). However, analysis of narrative and open ended responses identifies many generic and specific economic factors that underlie viability and financial shortfalls. As illustrated in Chapter Seven, heating, fuel and utility costs figure highly for many STRB proprietors as issues constraining seasonal extension, particularly where marginal revenues accruing from extended operation are likely to yield less than ongoing operational costs. Added to the regular fixed costs of operation, unplanned overhead and repair costs from climatically induced conditions (especially frozen and burst pipes, flooding, extra heating) are frequently cited as influencing the operating decision line for STRB proprietors, particularly for owners of caravans, self-catering establishments and holiday/touring park operators in more peripheral parts of Scotland. For many such businesses, the sporadic nature of demand in shoulder and low seasons represents an insufficient market opportunity to warrant permanent availability of services, leading to the decision to close essential services such as water and heating, which in turn can precipitate problems in extreme winter climates. Thus, the predictability of seasonality *per se* (Bar On, 1975; Frechtling, 2001; Getz and Nilsson, 2004) needs to be differentiated from the unpredictability of seasonal climatic effects and

resulting cost implications, which impact on the ability to sustain services in some cases.

Indeed the prevalence of such sentiments in the findings questions Jeffrey and Barden's (2001) assertion that seasonal closure is a more cost effective solution than staying open where seasonality is extreme. Although their conclusions are drawn from studying the small hotel sector in parts of England, for some of Scotland's self-caterers, caravan operators and some holiday/park operators, such a tactic seems to offer a false economy.

Insurance and liability, 'red tape' and staffing constitute further costs identified by proprietors that affect the operating decision line. On the other hand, competition induced pricing constraints adversely affect cash flow and income yield for the seasonal business, as also experienced by proprietors in Bornholm (Getz and Nilsson, 2004). Thus the prevalence of other household income sources from employment and business suggests a relationship between the economic limitations of the seasonal STRB and the household occupation/income earning structure. However, Getz and Nilsson reveal a further behavioural response among some operators, who exist through the off-season by subsidising their seasonal business from savings and credit arrangements (p19). While such behaviour is not articulated in the Scottish study, its prevalence is most likely.

(iii) Personal Influences

In the exploratory Scottish Borders study, the need for rest and relaxation and the demands of family and friends appeared as recurrent seasonal trading themes. Categorised as 'personal influences' in the main survey, both of these rank in the top half of factors within the numeric results (Figure 6.4 and Table 6.12), alongside market and economic variables.

The phenomenon of proprietors taking rest and relaxation breaks as a characteristic of STRB trading behaviour is both generally accepted (Getz *et al.*, 2004; Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001) and empirically recorded (Getz and Nilsson,

2004; Morrison and Teixeira, 2004) although seldom 'tested' against other criteria. On the other hand, the strength of broader 'leisure time' opportunities for STRB proprietors as a business aspiration has been measured in Western Australia (Getz and Carlsen, 2000) among family STRB businesses and in North Island New Zealand (Hall and Rusher, 2004) among B&B operators. In both cases, it scores highly against other business goals.

In the current study, 'rest and relaxation' is prominent in influencing the operating period and pattern in particular among proprietors in commercial home settings. This is in contrast to the findings from proprietors of other types of STRB operation. Characteristics of the commercial home enterprise (CHE) model offer a plausible explanation in this respect. The essence of sustained interaction between the resident host/family and their guests, with the resultant sharing of familial space that effectively becomes 'public' (Lynch, 2005:534) combined with long working hours during 'the season' effectively act as triggers for proprietors to 'withdraw' during periods of low demand. For some, the need for such withdrawal also manifests during the high season from time to time in the form of periodic breaks or trading variances, as discussed previously and recorded in numerous narrative responses.

The need to spend time with family and friends also resonates with STRB proprietors as a temporal trading influence, most especially B&B and guest house proprietors. Again, the construct of the CHE is likely to exert a pull for periodic temporal withdrawal, given its focus on the domestic household as a hub of private social (as well as public) space. Other empirical work similarly highlights the importance of family socialisation, notably the studies by Getz and Nilsson (2004), Getz and Carlsen (2000) and Warren's (1998) New Zealand rural tourism business study, cited by Hall and Rusher (2004:86). While this latter measures the importance of 'loss of social contact with family and friends' (ibid, p86) it does not cast light on temporal trading behavioural change as a means of achieving greater social contact.

However, most revealing among the Scottish survey population is the diffusion and breadth of 'personal' factors evident as influences on trading behaviours, either directly or indirectly and to a greater or lesser extent. Content analysis of the narratives identifies twenty-four personal variables of an intrinsic nature, which form seven distinct variable clusters (as shown in Appendix 7.12). Chief among these is the motivational work-life balance (discussed in section 8.5 below and impinging on issues of lifestyle) followed in almost equal measure by two distinct personal influence groups: lifecycle and health variables and social priority variables.

The study therefore contends that intrinsic personal factors act either as motivators or as *bona fide* influences on proprietorial trading behaviours. In the latter case, their role is largely supportive of primary influencers such as market related or economic factors; however for some proprietors, especially of advanced age, their role may be primary.

(iv) Exogenous Influences

It was clear from the exploratory study that STRB proprietors in the Scottish Borders felt constrained in their trading patterns by factors outwith their direct control and beyond the scope of their immediate market and the financial wellbeing of their business. However, such factors were acknowledged as having a bearing on the business performance and indeed shaping the dynamic of the destination and/or the trading environment at large. Arising from the Borders findings, two sets of influences were tested in the main survey: 'co-supply' influences, encompassing the role of suppliers (eg the seasonal nature of coach tour operators and the TIC network within the supply chain) and the availability of other operators/service providers in the area as 'drawcards' for the destination. This latter reflects strong feelings expressed with regard to the seasonal closure of the major historic houses in the Borders (Goulding, 2003). A second set of factors was collectively entitled 'exogenous' influences, including health and safety, licensing regulations and, for convenience, climate.

With the exception of climate, all other factors score low as comparative trading influences in the main Scotland-wide survey. This disparity may reflect the uniqueness of the Borders' tourism structure as well as the timing of the exploratory study, which coincided with a period of economic malaise in the study area (Goulding and Hay, 2004). However, for the wider Scottish holiday/touring park business community, licensing regulations pose an important constraint to the trading period, as discussed in the survey results.

On the other hand, analysis of the narrative responses reveals a more complex picture and one in which underlying issues of a 'non-controllable' nature play a rather more fundamental role. As shown in Appendix 7.12, twenty six different variables are identifiable as broadly 'exogenous' in nature, from among 250 narrative items cited by respondents. Two groups of influencing issues stand out among proprietors' concerns. First is dissatisfaction with *the role of public agencies*. Central to this is the perception that regulatory instruments including the legislative and planning frameworks (as defined in Chapter Four), along with aspects of government policy (especially fiscal policies, the VAT threshold in particular) and 'red tape' collectively counteract the potential to achieve or sustain a year round trading environment. Among some proprietors, there is criticism of the activities of DMOs and a perceived lack of recognition given to seasonal extension in promotional work at a Scottish-wide level. This suggests the various ongoing strategic and policy initiatives as outlined in Chapter Four have not been recognised as successful by seasonal operators, if indeed they are aware of such initiatives.

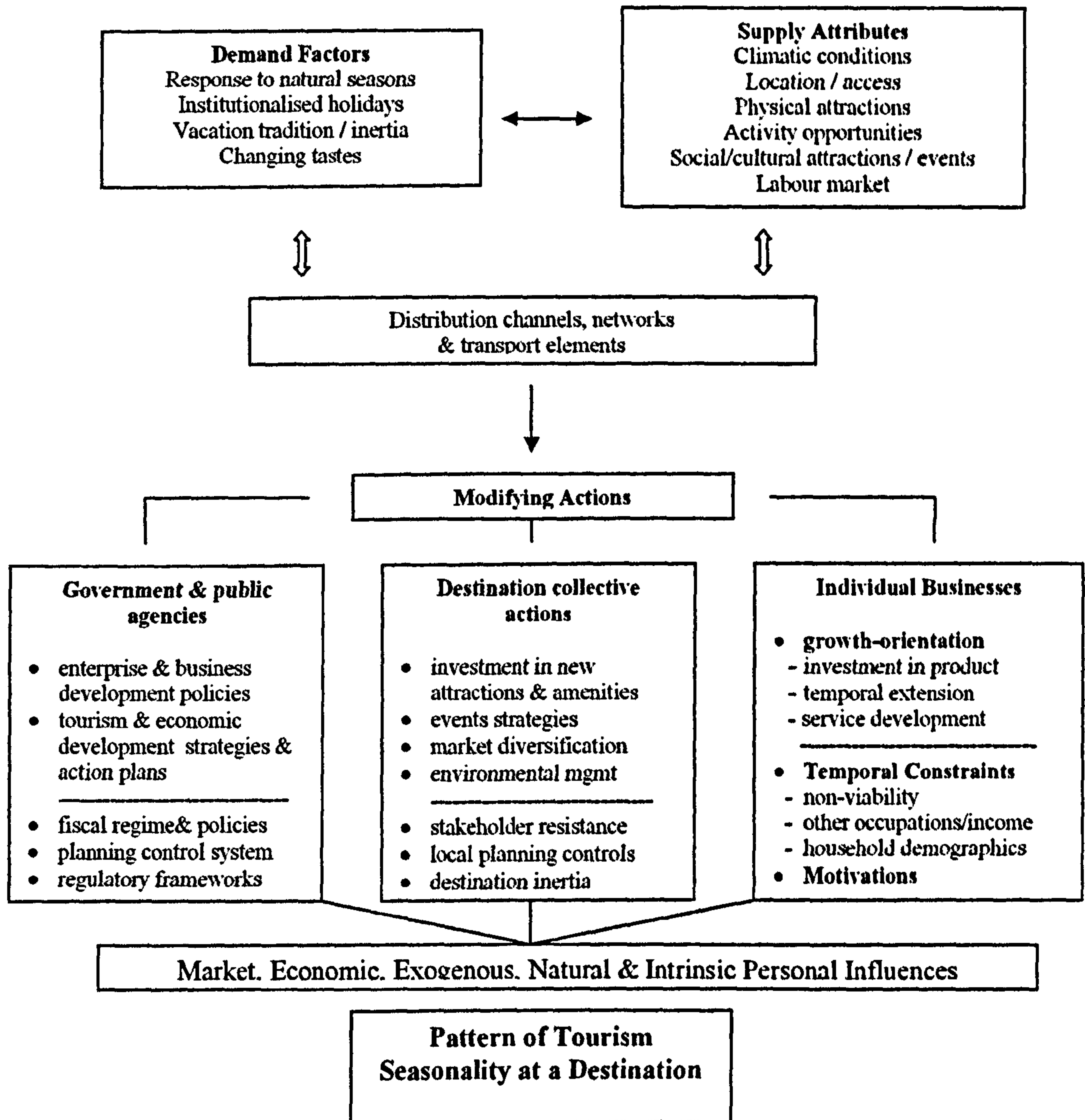
Secondly, there are *local destination related issues* across the country, both generic and specific in nature. Interestingly, 'co-supply' influences are accorded greater recognition within the narrative responses. Indeed, the seasonal closure of other existing amenities is the single most cited issue, in addition to a lack of suitable year-round destination facilities. In the more geographically peripheral areas, limited public transport infrastructure, service frequencies and costs have greater potency among respondents in terms of seasonal constraints. This mirrors findings

in comparative locational types within the North Atlantic periphery (Baum and Hagen, 1999) and Bornholm (Getz and Nilsson, 2004).

To some businesses, locational and access related issues including street lighting, signage and road surfaces signify constraints of a more direct nature, although clearly their role is subordinate to other primary influence factors. Meanwhile for independent owners of caravans in some holiday/touring parks, seasonal closure of the main site poses a direct barrier to the temporal spread of income generation.

Few of the above issues are acknowledged to any degree in the tourism seasonality literature, even though the narratives indicate that such factors are frequent concerns among STRB proprietors. However, the revelation of widespread and diffuse exogenous variables supports the importance of recognising destination, supply chain and 'modifying' influences within the framework of seasonality. Therefore within a Scottish-specific context, it is pertinent to re-conceptualise Butler's (2001) influence model as illustrated in Figure 2.4 (Chapter Two), by recognising the range of supply-side influence factors and their temporal extending or constraining roles. Figure 8.3 accordingly depicts the contribution of exogenous and other influence groups to the seasonality paradigm.

Figure 8.3 Influences on Patterns of Tourism Seasonality: a Reconceptualisation



(Adapted from Butler 2001:9)

8.5 Motivations and Lifestyle

The degree to which motivational factors condition seasonal trading behaviours among Scotland's STRBs is key to interpreting the current study and operates in tandem with causal influences.

In Chapter Three, it is noted that ‘motivation’ is a somewhat enigmatic concept with regard to STRB operation. Fundamental to the debate is whether the essential dichotomy between growth and non-growth business orientation is sufficient to explain the motivation to trade seasonally, or whether temporal trading is a behaviour that can exist across the motivational spectrum.

For some STRBs, operational and growth motivations cannot always be explained from a purely economic rationale (Hall and Rusher, 2004; Holmengen and Bredvold, 2003; Morrison, 2002; Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Williams *et al.*, 1989). This applies when their motivational equation encompasses such factors as physical and psychological comfort, personal health, socialisation and even environmental awareness, alongside revenue generation. ‘Lifestyle entrepreneurship’ and ‘lifestyle orientation’ in business proprietorship are thus considered pivotal components of the spectrum, as conceptualised from the literature and as illustrated in Chapter Three (Figure 3.5). Such constructs in turn may be reflective of numerous ‘work-life balance’ conditioning factors that are in themselves adjustable over time (Holmengen and Bredvold, 2003).

In the current study, motivation is assessed in the survey mainly in terms of economic goals and performance, though in numerous cases qualitative response data provide broader insights into proprietors’ goals and priorities. As noted previously, ‘lifestyle’ is deliberately not defined in the formulation of the attitude statements, given the inherent subjectivity of the concept. The potentially wide interpretation and personal meaning attached to the term by survey respondents may therefore contribute to the relatively high degree of behavioural self-determination among seasonally trading proprietors, nearly half of whom concur that they *choose* the length of their trading season to fit their respective lifestyle. Indeed ‘choice’ in the construction of the work-life balance itself represents a key component of lifestyle (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000).

However, among the ‘lifestyle-affirming’ survey respondents there is a wide diversity of circumstance, including among them farming households, near-to-

retirement proprietors, long established and more recently started businesses, as well as the spread of business types within the sample. Thus for some, seasonal trading more closely represents a purposive role within a particular work-life or demographic balance, such as fitting in with farming or other business commitments or with the requirements or contingencies of health and wellbeing, than simply a 'lifestyle preference' *per se*.

This also reflects the pattern emerging from the exploratory study narratives from the initial Scottish Borders' study group. In that study phase, narrative analysis of the taped transcripts identifies a number of distinct *roles* attributed to seasonal trading among the cross-section of interviewed proprietors. In some cases these roles are established through a process of sensitivity probing (Oppenheim, 1992) of specific variables such as family commitments or holiday taking, while elsewhere such roles emerge through unprompted discourse. Table 8.3 provides a summary of such seasonal roles from the interview transcripts.

There are acknowledged inter-linkages between some of the above roles and indeed each is the interviewer's own interpretation derived from the context of the individual narrative. For example, attributes of stability and control (No. 2) afforded to operators by seasonal trading may be prerequisites to enable them or their partners to undertake other remunerated work. Moreover, such work-life balance attributes of seasonal trading assume different ethnographic meanings and validity (De Laine, 2000) according to individual proprietors' personal circumstances.

Table 8.3 Purposive Roles of Seasonal Trading

<i>Role of Seasonal Trading</i>	<i>Examples of Statement by Exploratory Study Interviewees</i>
1. as an inherent motivation for entering the tourism / hospitality trades	“we decided to give it up [former trade] and bought the [holiday home park] which became a family home for all of us. We only operate seven months a year”.
2 provides a framework for living – eg stability, predictability, control	“we are private, therefore to a certain extent we have been able to do what we like...”
3 complements other business interests	“the season I now have is what I choose to fit in with my life”
4 complements time related lifestyle goals	“normally our holidays are taking groups ...away on trips abroad...so we’re not actually on our holidays...”
5 enhances emotional attachment to physical space, the home, material possessions, hobby	“out of season the house becomes ours again”
6 balances proprietor’s environmental concerns / values	“you don’t want the place swarming with tourists [all year round]..it detracts from the beauty of living...”
7 fulfils social roles / allows family commitments	“...nor do we think it’s environmentally sound...if you’re cycling on that you’re damaging that”...[referring to off-road cycling in the winter months]
8 ‘downtime’ allows physical and mental rest and recovery	“at Christmas and the New Year you have the family here, grandchildren here, that’s important”
	“the staff can’t wait for the end of the season so they can have a rest”
	“at the end of six months you’ve got to have a holiday....you’re becoming stale, you get short tempered”

(Goulding *et al.*, 2004)

A range of attributes are revealed pertaining to mental health and personal welfare, both of the proprietor and his/her family, and also relating to employees. Articulation of the need to 'escape' or rest at the end of the season echo other previous empirical studies of seasonality and destination communities, such as Jordan's (1980) work in Vermont and more recently Flognfeldt's (2001) study of seasonal workers and proprietors in Jotunheimen, Norway. In the latter study, the author notes the incidence of seasonal employees and employers taking long holidays during low seasons. In the main Scottish study, such variables are much in evidence in the 'work-life balance' cluster within the intrinsic personal variable group, comprising the largest cluster of such variables (Appendix 7.13). These clearly represent a key motivational element of temporal trading behaviours among a certain constituency of proprietors.

Also within the exploratory study, connections between temporal trading and the home environment are observed on two levels. First, there is the aspect of emotional attachment to the physical space as 'home', which embodies Lynch's CHE concept (2005, 1998). Several proprietors offer the opinion that temporal trading allows a sense of peace and ownership to be restored at the end of 'the season'. This is much reiterated in the main study, through the expressed importance of free time, privacy and self-occupancy of the property, clustered as 'internalised' variables within the intrinsic personal category.

Secondly, a small minority of interviewees express sentiments relating the benefits of seasonal tourism to the state of the physical environment. Such views add support to the debate on the role of post-seasonal recovery as described by Baum and Hagen (1999), Butler (2001) and Flognfeldt (1988). Moreover they provide an interesting perspective on Morrison's (2002) assertion that STRB owner-managers can be committed to sustaining the local environment and community for a range of moral and lifestyle, as well as commercial motivations. However, in the main study, altruistic variables including conservation, local economic benefits and

positive impacts derivable from seasonal trading constitute minor intrinsic motivations (Appendix 7.12).

A further factor underscores the 'purposive role' argument for seasonal trading. A *general preference* for seasonal trading emerges as an even stronger motivational force than *lifestyle choice* among the seasonal population, 70% of whom are inclined to operate the business accordingly rather than year round. Such proprietors span both the demographic spectrum and the divide between growth- and non-growth orientations. This suggests that such operational preference transcends the traditional paradigms of lifestyle, family-lifecycle and economic vs non-economic goals.

Moreover, such a broad consensus among a diverse proprietor population casts into question the very notion of 'lifestyle' as a homogeneous analytical category or typology. Indeed, the high degree of seasonal preference among proprietors lends weight to the argument that 'lifestyle', while clearly contributory to the motivational rationale, is in itself an insufficiently robust concept to explain seasonal trading preferences within the parameters of the current study. This seems to contrast with Getz and Nilsson's (2004) Bornholm findings, as those authors claim that the 'lifestyle goals' of the majority of their study group impact on their seasonal operating behaviours, even though such goals are disparate, where evidenced. On the other hand, the broad parameters of 'lifestyle' included in the construction of Getz and Carlsen's (2000) family STRB study offer a rationale for 'family-first' goal setting, including but not confined to temporal trading behaviours.

Finally, the current study identifies a dichotomy between seasonal operation, economic goals and lifestyle orientation. This is apparent in the finding that nearly half the valid sample places importance on revenue maximisation, whilst operating seasonally through preference or choice. Indeed, this is broadly supportive of Morrison's (2002) observation that within Scotland, many STRB proprietors have multiple and sometimes contrasting sets of goals. She posits that in order to realise

these, the notion of 'satisficing' financial returns to support non-economic goals is prevalent. The balance between business growth and profit/revenue targets, on the one hand, and non-economic lifestyle related goals on the other, thus epitomises an aspirational divergence.

However, the current study takes issue with Morrison's analysis in two respects: first her inference that such lifestyle choice ('*to sustain enjoyment in their chosen lifestyle*') is necessarily a positive, satisfying experience (2002:1-2). Indeed, this highlights a particular limitation in the treatment and application of 'lifestyle' within much of the STRB literature. Secondly, the assertion that access to lifestyle benefits is associated with having sufficient financial reserves (Morrison, 2002; also noted by Alexander and McKenna, 1999). This cannot be proven in relation to the roles afforded to non-trading or trading down-time periods. Narrative evidence from seasonal operators suggests a rather more complicated situation, in which intrinsic personal factors transcend 'lifestyle benefits', are not always articulated in positive terms and are not necessarily supported by financial means.

From the analysis in the preceding sections it is clear that the influences and motivations underlying seasonal trading behaviours are both disparate and complex and that they go beyond the scope of a simple economic versus lifestyle or a market versus non-market analysis. Moreover such influences and motivations reflect highly individualised circumstances that pertain to the nature of the business and the proprietor's household demographic and which are contextualised by the local and national tourism market structures and dynamics. The scope of narrative responses reveals a multiplicity of variables which, through a process of thematic analysis, has enabled a variable clustering 'map' to emerge. This represents a motivational and influence paradigm of seasonal Scottish STRBs, as illustrated in Table 8.4. As discussed previously, the process of defining and clustering variable groups is inherently subjective, albeit based on an iterative content and thematic analysis procedure. The emergent paradigm is therefore a reflection of Scotland's seasonally trading STRB population at large. The extent to which it reflects specific sectors and geographical areas is discussed in the following sections.

Table 8.4 Motivational and Influence Variables on Seasonal Trading

Variable Type				
Economic	Exogenous	Intrinsic Personal	Market	Natural
Variable Clusters				
<p>i) Viability</p> <p>ii) Operational Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overheads • utilities • maintenance • upgrading <p>iii) Fiscal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community charge • VAT threshold • Business taxes <p>iv) Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • labour investment • volunteers <p>v) Yield Related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turnover • return on capital • pricing propensity <p>vi) Work related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home as workplace • hours of work • workload • other work commitments 	<p>i) Institutional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calendar effects • the school year <p>ii) Role of Public Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bureaucracy • financial assistance • licenses <p>iii) Location related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location • site closure • cost of access to destination area <p>iv) Access related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • access to property <p>v) Transport related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transport infrastructure • frequency • ferry services <p>vi) Local destination issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other amenities closed • destination facilities <p>vii) Other factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public health (epidemics) 	<p>i) Work-Life Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lifestyle specified • free time • rest/relaxation • escape/get away <p>ii) Social priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friends visiting • family commitments • meet people <p>iii) Internalised variables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • privacy • self-occupancy <p>iv) Lifecycle & Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age • retirement • energy • mental wellbeing <p>v) Migration</p> <p>vi) Altruism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservation • local community benefits • local economic impacts <p>vii) Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quest for standards 	<p>i) State of the market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of business • type/nature of tourism • competition • tourist perceptions • market trend <p>ii) Product related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • season specific recreations • golf • fishing • flora/fauna/wildlife resources <p>iii) Business configuration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-service operation <p>iv) Student lets</p> <p>v) Marketing responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising • web/internet • market data/information <p>vi) Business responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open to request • service development • product development • market growth 	<p>i) Climate/weather</p> <p>ii) Intrinsic natural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seasonal variables • daylight hours • tides <p>iii) Individual climatic variables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frost • extreme cold • rainfall/wet • snow • sunshine • wind <p>iv) Climatic/weather consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dampness • flooding • safety
<p>Total Clusters : 6</p> <p>Total Variables : 25</p> <p>Total Data Items: 317</p>	<p>Total Clusters : 7</p> <p>Total Variables : 26</p> <p>Total Data Items : 251</p>	<p>Total Clusters : 7</p> <p>Total Variables : 24</p> <p>Total Data items : 190</p>	<p>Total Clusters : 6</p> <p>Total Variables : 25</p> <p>Total Data items : 372</p>	<p>Total Clusters : 4</p> <p>Total Variables : 12</p> <p>Total Data items : 162</p>

8.6 Sectoral Variation in Temporal Trading Behaviours

The analyses of primary data in Chapters Six and Seven have revealed there to be distinct sectoral variations among Scottish STRBs, both in temporal trading behaviours and their underlying influences and motivational dynamics. The following discussion synthesises the key issues for each of the six analytic STRB groups.

Small Hotels and Inns

Among the various accommodation types within the study, small hotels and inns operate at the highest annual average occupancy rate (at around 60%³). As noted in Chapter Four, Scotland's hotel sector in general has witnessed the highest degree of room capacity expansion since the mid-1990s, though much of this has been generated by growth in purpose-built budget and medium grade branded units in the more urban areas (Morrison, 1998), where for small hotels, competition has been greatest. In the 2004 SAOS report, a seasonal closure rate of between 7% and 13% is recorded for participating hotels during the four winter months, modest in comparison with other serviced accommodation sectors.

Though numerically low within the current study (c8% of the total sample), small hotels and inns account for a relatively high degree of short term periodic variation among their sub-sample. One third of proprietors claim to vary their operating periods and the nature of their operation accordingly. As observed by Baum and Hagen (1999) in the Baltic islands, by Lundtorp *et al.* (2001) in Denmark and Getz and Nilsson (2004) in Bornholm, this can be manifest by temporary or seasonal closure of part of the service operation rather than complete closedown of the establishment.

In Scotland, such seasonal hotel establishments are most commonly co-preneurial operations, having been purchased by the current proprietors, many of whom have had prior entrepreneurial experience within the sector. For two-thirds of such

³ although the SAOS does not disaggregate the data between 'small' establishments and hotels in general.

businesses, the revenue from the business represents the only source of earned household income.

The pre-eminence of market and economic influences on seasonal operation is combined with relatively low 'lifestyle choice' trading behaviour, 'seasonal preference' and intrinsic-personal motivators. Conversely, the sample places high importance on revenue maximisation. The emerging profile therefore points to a relatively distinguishable behavioural group, for whom temporal trading represents a conditioned response to market conditions. This is underscored by a high propensity to employ seasonal staff, for flexibility that is focused on short-term temporal variation rather than seasonal closure and, in the latter case, for such closure to be relatively short. Thus, 'seasonal' small hotels and inns are primarily *preference-indisposed* towards temporal trading, while for some proprietors *temporal pragmatism* reflects a more accommodating approach to seasonal trading. However, the trend towards a reducing length of season, articulated by a minority within the group, also illustrates that the population is not homogeneous in its operational behaviour.

Guest Houses

While bedroom capacity in this sector has remained virtually static during the past decade (VisitScotland 2004, 2002a; Morrison, 1998), guest houses display a greater propensity for seasonality and temporal trading than small hotels. Indeed, average annual room occupancy rates have remained in the region of 40-45% during the past few years and usually below 30% during the four months between November and February period (VisitScotland, various). Although guest houses represent around 10% of the study sample, a 30-40% closure rate is recorded in the 2004 SAOS during the four winter months for 'guest houses and B&Bs'. It can be presumed that the closure rate is lower though not dissimilar in magnitude to that of the B&B sector, with which guest houses share many characteristics as forms of commercial home enterprise (Lynch, 2005).

Seasonally operated guest houses are mostly co-preneurial and in the main are purchased as an existing business rather than started 'from scratch'. Moreover, previous experience is likely to have been gained in the guest house sector, signifying a chosen entrepreneurial pathway. In these above respects they share characteristics with small hotels rather than B&Bs. However, the household economy of the seasonal guest house is rather less reliant on revenue from the business than in the case of the small hotel or inn and similarly is much less inclined to employ staff outwith the family unit.

On the other hand, proprietors are on the whole quite disposed to opening and closing the business outwith published trading periods, both at the edges of the operating season and interstitially. The motivations for such behaviours are often intrinsic in nature, in particular a desire for rest and relaxation, breaks and holidays, which concurs with the high predisposition to fit the operation around lifestyle choice and a similar propensity towards seasonal preference. However, the sector also presents a dichotomy in that the strongest influences on seasonal trading are evenly spread between economic constraints, market variables and exogenous considerations. In the latter case, the emphasis is towards the role of public agencies rather than co-supply or other local destination issues.

In summary, while some of Scotland's seasonally trading guest house operators exhibit characteristics of *temporal pragmatism* in common with many small hotel and inn operators, in the main they conform to a greater degree of *preference-predisposition* in their attitude toward a temporally defined trading cycle.

Bed and Breakfasts

B&Bs are numerically the largest seasonal population within the study, comprising 35% of usable responses. They are typified by substantial demand seasonality (average occupancy across Scotland falling to below 30% during the winter months, VisitScotland, various) and significant variation in temporal trading patterns. In the 2004 SAOS report, a closure rate of between 30-40% is recorded

for 'guest houses and B&Bs' during the four winter months and it is likely that within this twin category B&B closure lies towards the upper end of the spread.

Against this is a backdrop of declining capacity in what is often perceived as a marginal sector. B&Bs are frequently a secondary enterprise or income source within households (Getz *et al.*, 2004), much associated with farming diversification (Sharpley and Vass, 2006) and sometimes operated on an *ad hoc* basis to earn pin money (Slee, 1998). Unsurprisingly, the B&B sector has typified issues of service quality deficiency that have been articulated in consecutive national tourism action plans and strategies, as highlighted in Chapter Four.

Most seasonal B&B operations have been started 'from scratch' within the family home, sometimes representing a property purchase with prior intent to operate as a B&B, though often started as a sideline sometime later. Accordingly, the B&B is at the heart of the CHE concept. While most are partner/spouse operations, there is a substantial element of sole proprietorship evident in the sample. B&B proprietors also display the least prior entrepreneurial experience compared with others in the survey, reflecting the low barriers to entry and exit within the sector (Thomas, 1998; Hall and Rusher, 2004) and a high propensity for entry to the sector from other types of business or employment background. This latter concurs with findings from Shaw and Williams (1987) and Williams *et al.*, (1989) among proprietors in Cornwall and the south coast of England.

Although gender demographics have not been captured in the current study, it is apparent that many are female sole proprietors. The demographics of ageing are also associated with seasonal B&B operation, insofar as the nature of the business can provide a small income, interest and social opportunities for a surviving partner, as witnessed in a number of narrative responses. The sector accordingly records the greatest seasonal trading longevity, as highlighted both in the survey and in qualitative findings. Moreover, for a fifth of the B&B sample, revenue from the business represents the only source of earned household income.

Of the various STRB types, B&Bs operate the most flexibly in terms of *ad hoc* opening and closure, both periodically and across the length of the season. While market and viability variables rate highly as influence factors, the sector is notable in the degree of magnitude accorded both to physical and mental wellbeing and to social considerations. In other words, intrinsic personal motivators exert an important influencing force on the B&B operation in terms of its temporality. This is borne out in the high level of expressed lifestyle-oriented trading choice (c. two-thirds) and preference to trade seasonally (around three quarters), and the relatively low growth-orientation and belief in market development as a means towards achieving year round viability. Getz and Nilsson (2004) characterise such traits as typical of coping or capitulating behaviours, while for Ioannides and Petersen (2003:408), they amount to 'constrained' entrepreneurs.

Thus, among all types of seasonally operated STRB, the B&B proprietor most predominantly exhibits the behavioural/attitudinal traits of *preference-predisposition* towards temporal operation.

Self-Catering

While B&B capacity has fallen, there has been a marked growth in self-catering unit capacity in Scotland during the past decade. This trajectory may indeed have contributed to the lack of growth in average annual unit occupancy rates, which have hovered around the 50% level in recent years and averaged between 30-40% between November and January, excluding the festive period (VisitScotland, various). However, across the various forms of self-catering accommodation, seasonal closure rates are significant, between a fifth and a quarter of all properties in the four winter months, according to the 2004 SAOS survey, and indeed representing almost 30% of the Scottish seasonal sample.

Self-catering establishments are not disaggregated according to type in the current study, with the exception of caravan units. However, responses highlight a particular temporal market feature in the case of apartments and flats in university towns and cities, which generate a distinct trading pattern built around long-term

commercial letting during the academic year and a short visitor letting 'season' in the summer. Thus the seasonal characteristics of the self-catering sector as a whole are not homogeneous compared with those of the commercial serviced sectors as discussed above.

However, seasonal self-catering businesses are mostly co-preneurial and are sometimes under sole proprietorship, though this latter is less pronounced than in the case of B&Bs. Moreover, most proprietors have previous entrepreneurial experience, usually in different business backgrounds and unsurprisingly their self-catering unit (or units) typically comprise a secondary or supplementary income source within the household, often in tandem with another tourism service. Indeed, self-catering is linked with B&B provision in many UK farming households (Sharpley and Vass, 2006) and there are clear associations and references among some of the responding survey households to the provision of both service types.

A further distinguishing feature is the propensity for remote ownership of the self-catering property, which represents a second home and/or an investment property. Evidence of this is manifest in the survey database, in which around a quarter of such properties are separate locations from the proprietor's place of residence, mainly in England or in other regions of Scotland. The nature of temporal variance in many such properties is thus accounted for by the temporary residence of owner, family or friends, if not by long-term letting to non-tourism markets.

The above scenarios are important in explaining a particular dichotomy in the spread of temporal trading influences for self-caterers. On the one hand, while around a half of proprietors are highly influenced in their letting period by the lack of year round viability for their self-catering property(ies), a further quarter rate this as a 'least important' factor governing their trading behaviour. Many of those in this latter category report the property to be out of commission to visitor markets for part of the year, particularly among the St Andrews cluster, for whom long-term commercial letting represents the norm. This and the prevalence of temporal

withdrawal of the property for personal use accord with the high level of seasonal trading preference evidenced among self-catering proprietors/owners.

Climatic ('natural') factors and repairs and maintenance are of relatively more importance to self-caterers' trading patterns than recorded among most other STRB types. The narrative evidence is strongly supportive of the numeric scores in the survey and collectively this provides a rationale for what can be described as qualified *circumstantial predisposition* by proprietors towards a temporal trading pattern in terms of tourism markets. However, self-catering clearly represents a broad spectrum of service provision among individual operators, in terms of investment, capacity, scale of service, economic and social contexts. Thus it is difficult to generalise towards a composite sectoral profile.

Holiday- and Touring Parks

According to SAOS data, Scottish holiday- and touring parks achieve an annual average pitch occupancy rate of around one-third of their total capacity, falling to a low of around 10-20% in October (VisitScotland, various), traditionally the last month of opening for many parks. The high incidence of closure over the winter period equates with the proportionately large representation of the sector in the current study. Indeed, 10% of respondents are holiday- or touring park operators. However, the sector is declining in terms of the numbers of businesses and sites within Scotland recorded over the past fifteen years (VisitScotland, 2004, 2002a; Morrison, 1998).

Against this backdrop is a trend towards longer opening periods for a relatively higher proportion of holiday/touring park businesses compared with other sectors. Indeed this can be seen as indicative of a growth-orientation, in which seasonal extension is achieved through capital investment in upgrading, modernising and diversifying site amenities and on-site accommodation units. Proprietors' narrative responses identify improvements to heating and utilities as primary among such investments. Thus within the sector, there are clear signs of seasonality 'combating' behaviours and attitudes, according to Getz and Nilsson's (2004) criteria.

Holiday- and touring park operators are mostly co-preneurial family units, though the sector evidences a higher proportion of inter-generationally and extended family-run businesses than do other seasonal STRB types. However, there is also a higher proportion of leasing operators, either managing local authority owned sites or on behalf of other owners. Despite the seasonal nature of the businesses within the survey and the high capital costs and investment needs associated with the sector, the biggest entry mode is through purchase of an existing operation. Inheritance plays a relatively more important mode than among other sectors, reflecting the inter-generationality as noted above. While many proprietors have entrepreneurial antecedence, there is a high degree of change from the previous career or work path, in part reflecting what Getz *et al.*, (2004:43) refer to as the 'hobby business' element, in this case ardent caravanners. This phenomenon had been clearly articulated in the exploratory interviews with holiday/touring park operators as illustrated in Caselet No. 1 (Chapter Five).

Despite the degree of seasonal closure and the relatively fixed temporal nature of the operation across the year, for around 40% of proprietors the business represents the *only* source of earned revenue within the household. It is also the *main* source for a similar proportion. However, a 'lifestyle' analysis provides a less appropriate explanation to the temporality of the seasonal holiday/touring park operation compared with other sectors. Several motivational and influencing factors point to this. Firstly, the proprietors give little credence to 'lifestyle choice' as a determining factor in shaping the temporality of their operation, indeed scoring lowest among all types of operation. Secondly, 'seasonal preference' is also less relevant as a motivational factor. Conversely, proprietors give much greater emphasis to the goal of maximising revenues, despite the temporal constraints of their market dynamic. Indeed, among the influencing factors, the temporality of markets and lack of year round viability exert the strongest pulls on trading decisions. Such indicators add up to a latent growth-orientation among many holiday- and touring park proprietors.

However, uniquely for the sector, licensing regulations and the planning system (as expounded in Chapter Four) provide significant limitations to the operation, while exogenous variables in general play a major role. On the other hand, intrinsic personal factors hold very little influence or strength as motivators in explaining the trading behaviours of holiday/touring park sector. 'Lifestyle' in particular is neither articulated directly nor is evident implicitly through importance to socialisation, rest and relaxation or any other intrinsic variable set. Therefore, the profile emerging for the sector may best be described as *circumstance constrained*, with an element of *temporal pragmatism* among those less affected by year round licensing restrictions.

Other STRB Types

The non-accommodation sectors in the survey collectively comprise a diverse range of service operations, lacking homogeneity in operational characteristics and representing a small element of the survey response (c.8%). Generalisation among a population of visitor attractions, retail, craft and gallery operators, sightseeing tours, transport, guiding and catering establishments is therefore fraught with difficulty. However, comparatively, Getz and Nilsson (2004) draw behavioural inferences from a broad spectrum of service types in their Bornholm study.

Unsurprisingly, a wide experience of temporal variation is evident among non-accommodation based operators, in particular periodic flexibility in opening and closing times and, to an extent, seasonal extension. Retail, craft and gallery operators have much leeway in this respect, especially when the attraction operates alongside or is based on a productive enterprise thus enabling occupational diversity. For visitor attractions, many of which have a highly peaked demand pattern, a parallel temporal flexibility is afforded by seasonal extension or infill to non-touristic markets such as media or film locations, weddings and corporate events. Among the exploratory interviews and main sample narratives, there is some evidence of such market development activities employed as counter-seasonal strategies.

The non-accommodation STRBs are typically co-preneurially operated, though with a notable element of other family business configurations including sole- and extended family proprietorship. Most owners claim to have previous entrepreneurial experience and many have entered tourism proprietorship from a different business background. Aside from hotels, visitor attractions in the survey have the greatest propensity to employ staff on a seasonal basis, while the non-accommodation sector as a whole displays the least degree of reliance on the business as a source of earned household income (one sixth of proprietors claiming it as their only income source).

The various strands of evidence therefore suggest that lifestyle proprietorship is not a construct that can be applied with any degree of rigour across non-accommodation based STRBs. For most proprietors, seasonal trading is seldom a 'lifestyle choice' nor a preference. Clearly this varies according to the service type and role of the enterprise within the household, where, for example, leisure interests and business opportunities may converge, such as tour guiding or craft based enterprises. However, market factors and business viability dominate the spectrum of temporal influences for such proprietors. In some cases, specific factors apply, such as the relative importance of health and safety requirements as temporal constraints for some activity based operators.

In conclusion, it would be difficult to categorise temporal trading according to any single behavioural type for the 'other'/non-accommodation group as a whole. Rather, elements of *circumstance constraint*, *circumstance indisposition* and *temporal pragmatism* are evident among the seasonal trading population.

The next section synthesises the above analyses into a typology of seasonal traders, in which the above identified behavioural characteristics are illustrated.

8.7 Emerging Typology of Seasonally Trading Businesses

The preceding demographic and sectoral analyses have highlighted a number of distinct behavioural and attitudinal categories among Scotland's seasonal trading

STRB population. Such behaviours and attitudes are framed by a range of influences and motivations, as depicted in Table 8.4 above. The following typology characterises the previously identified attitudinal types among the proprietor population, in respect of seasonal or temporally constrained trading behaviours. The approach centres around *disposition* and *circumstance* as conditioned by motivational and influence factors, and as such cuts across other behavioural or lifestyle-centric STRB constructs such as those proposed by Getz and Nilsson (2004), Getz *et al.* (2004), Ioannides and Petersen (2003) or Dewhurst and Horobin (1998). The five emergent categories are:

i) the 'preference-predisposed' owner/operator is someone for whom a defined operating season is a fundamental characteristic of their work-life balance. The trading season is likely to follow an Easter-October pattern, maybe longer, though typically leaving a distinct period of closure of several months. Periodic trading flexibility during the operating season is also a key characteristic, including closure for short breaks, rest and relaxation or family commitments, though they are just as likely to extend the operating season for a short period at its very margins in response to demand. The 'preference-predisposed' operator is most likely to run a guest house or a B&B or another form of commercial home enterprise; to have operated it seasonally for a long time; to be disinclined to undertake significant investment in the property that would otherwise benefit seasonal extension (such as frost proofing pipes or water supply specifically for paying guests); to be approaching or already in retirement and most likely to operate the business on a satisficing or marginal income basis, either within a single or dual income household economy. Accordingly, the 'preference-predisposed' operator represents one end of the business-orientation spectrum as outlined in Chapter Three (Figure 3.5). In Getz and Nilsson's (2004) typology, their behaviour inevitably falls within either the 'capitulating' or 'coping' categories;

ii) the 'circumstance-predisposed' operator may share some or many of the above traits, though his/her predilection towards a temporally defined operation is typically circumscribed or reinforced by exogenous factors (such as planning or

licensing constraints, location or accessibility) or by particular economic or domestic priorities during the 'off-season' which impinge on the work-life balance. Some agricultural households feature within this category, where a desire for and practice of seasonal downtime in terms of hosting visitors (either on serviced or self-catering bases) fits into the wider cycle of household economic activity. Economic optimisation from the tourism business is not a priority. Although the characteristics of the 'circumstance-predisposed' operator transcend STRB sectors (with the general exception of hoteliers), they are particularly evident among self-caterers for whom the property represents a dual holiday letting investment and second-home and some holiday/touring park operators for whom intrinsic-personal goals and motivations are expressed;

iii) being 'preference-indisposed' towards a temporally defined operation indicates a different balance of priorities from the above two categories, typically towards lifestyle-entrepreneurialism in which business goals veer between economic satisfice and revenue optimisation and the orientation or goal set is growth-seeking. While a 'lifestyle choice' may characterise the proprietor's approach to their operation (and, for example, manifest in some short term trading variation during quiet periods), market and/or economic factors limit the realisation of a year round trading cycle. These are considered as negative triggers. A particularly resonant limitation for proprietors of smaller operations such as B&Bs, self-caterers, activity- and tour operations is the VAT threshold, seen as a disincentive to growth and thus to seasonal extension. Similarly, non-viability and/or an unstable market environment in which the costs of remaining open outweigh the revenue benefits typically presage a reluctant closure choice for the operation. 'Temporal trading preference' is therefore conditioned by a lack of positive triggers and does not represent an intrinsic desire to operate on a seasonally constrained basis;

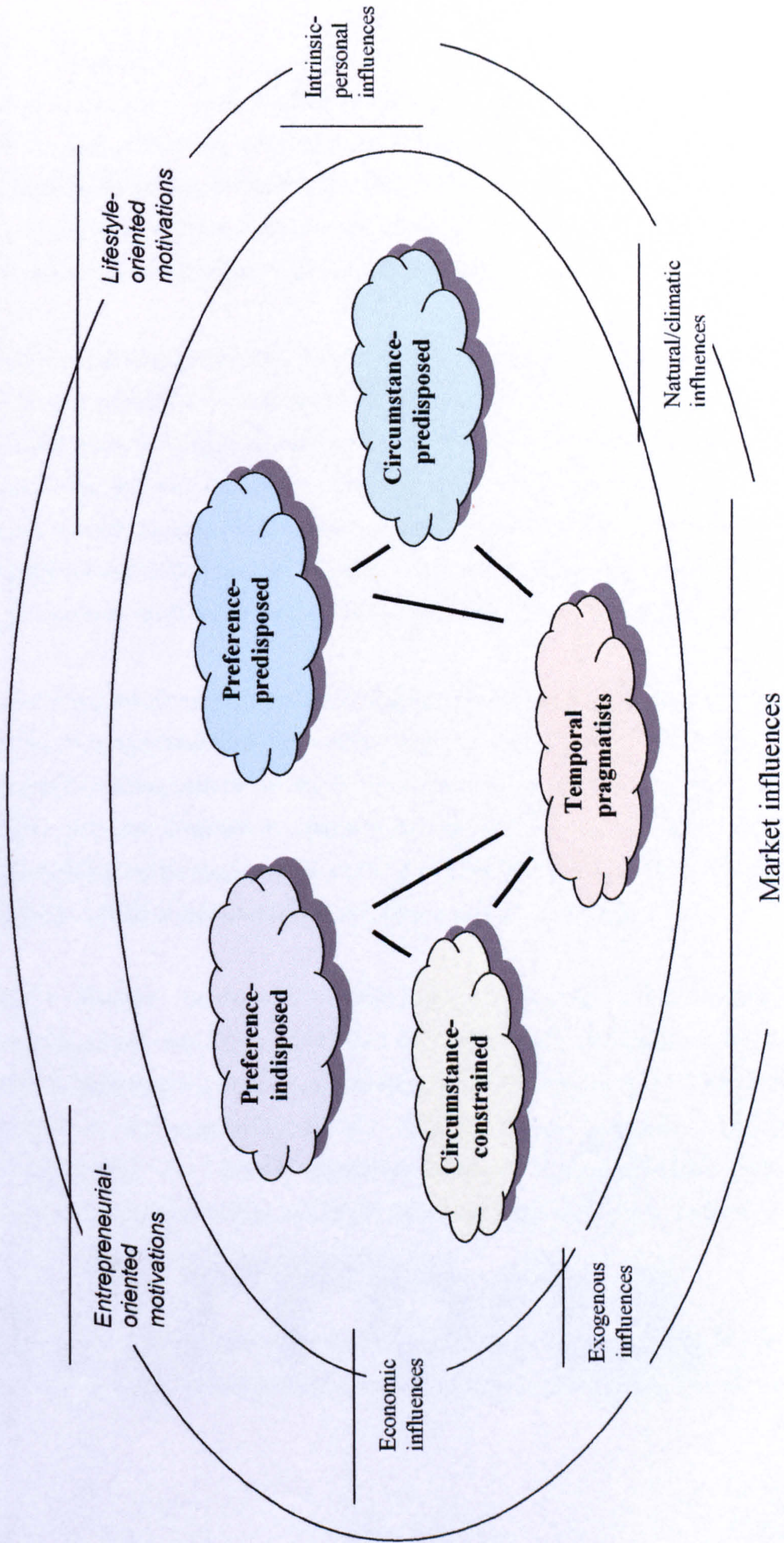
iv) the 'circumstance-constrained' seasonal proprietor similarly aspires to extending the business temporally. However the decision to operate across the year generally reflects exogenous factors of a largely or totally uncontrollable nature.

These typically include temporal licensing constraints in the case of holiday/touring park operators (whose permitted operating season may extend to eleven months per annum), health and safety regulations for activity operators, natural- or climatically induced factors for businesses with particular locational constraints (eg island access) or where access to the business facility is restricted through, for example, closure of another facility such as a major visitor attraction. A variation includes the constraint of human resources to expand the business temporally, such as in a dual- or multi-income household in which the seasonal STRB represents the secondary or minor operation. Such circumstances transcend the range of occupational households as identified in the previous demographic discussion from the data findings, and are more likely to prevail among younger co-preneurial enterprises or sole proprietors.

v) *'temporal pragmatists'* best encapsulate some of the inherent dichotomies revealed among the seasonal population. Generally unconstrained by exogenous or endogenous factors (such as non-viability) they operate to the boundaries of their temporal limitations, following the vagaries of the market. This often extends to a near year-round operation characterised by short periods of closure for property repairs, maintenance, building works or for intrinsic personal reasons (such as family commitments, a fixed annual holiday, recuperative breaks, etc) and which may represent a closure choice. The 'temporal pragmatist' seeks or accommodates market opportunities which may fall outwith the scope of tourism and will deploy their resource (eg the commercial home, visitor attraction or craft centre) to benefit accordingly. The dual student/visitor letting regime of self-caterers in academic centres typifies such pragmatism, which serves to achieve a near twelve month income. The use of seasonal downtime by visitor attractions to engage in local community and school events, private functions, filming locations etc., is a parallel response signifying market diversification, while for B&B and guest house operators, taking in longer term contract residents fulfils a similar exigency. While displaying growth-oriented behaviours and expressing the desire to maximise income from the business, the temporal pragmatist may perceive the nature of his or her operation to be a 'lifestyle choice'.

Figure 8.4 provides a conceptual relationship diagramme of the attitudinal/behavioural types and the influence and motivational sets that frame them. The outer core represents the wider influence categories and motivational groups identified from the study, which in turn condition the inner core of attitude/behavioural types as discussed above.

Figure 8.4 Seasonal STRB Attitude-Behavioural Types in Respect of Temporal Trading



8.8 Summary

In the current chapter, essential concepts and inter-relationships between trading patterns and behaviours, seasonal STRB business demographics, influences and motivations have been reviewed and examined. A number of factors have emerged which throw new light both on the dynamic of Scotland's seasonal STRB population and the nature of supply-side seasonality.

First, in synthesising the data pertaining to trading patterns, it is clear that the concept of 'seasonality' is of greater complexity than the generalised regular and predictable cyclical patterns that form the bases of analysis from macro-level demand-side perspectives. Rather, individualised trading patterns and behaviours paint a broader canvas in which seasonal trading is often temporally flexible, both interstitially and at the edges of 'the season', and encompasses both regularised and *ad hoc* periodic variation as well as longer term variations in trading patterns.

In examining the demographic data emerging from the study, it is revealed that the paucity of comparative data from other empirical studies renders problematic any comparative extrapolations to the Scottish seasonal population. However, where relative data are obtained it appears that the Scottish sample yields distinct characteristics in, for example, the mode of entry to the business, the nature of immigration and the degree and nature of entrepreneurial antecedence.

Thirdly, 'lifestyle' emerges as a diffuse concept in terms of the breadth of circumstance and characteristics of the temporally trading population on the one hand, and dichotomous in terms of the temporal work-life choices and preferences afforded by the temporality of the business to the proprietor. 'Lifestyle entrepreneurship' and 'lifestyle orientation' concepts, as proposed earlier, offer a more generic construct within which the inter-relationships between 'lifestyle' and seasonal trading might be accommodated.

The findings enable a re-conceptualisation of the existing seasonality influence model, propounded by Butler (2001), which recognises the diversity of influences

on STRBs in terms of temporal trading and the different levels of supply-side modifying and response behaviours.

From a synthesis of the quantitative and narrative responses, a motivation and influence paradigm emerges which encompasses five broad types of influence variables containing thirty distinct 'clusters' and 112 individual data variables. Intrinsic-personal factors are more motivational in nature, while economic, market, exogenous and natural variables exert more distinct influencing roles on temporal trading behaviours. Moreover, it is revealed that natural (climatic) factors often condition STRBs' economic influence variables as well as being closely related with market variables.

Finally, a sectoral synthesis of temporal behaviours, business demographic factors, influences and motivations reveals five distinct attitudinal types among proprietors to temporal trading, based around disposition and circumstance. While some clearly relate to specific sectors, the findings suggest that the identified attitudinal types in the main transcend any sectoral characteristics.

The implications of these and other issues arising from the study are considered in the final chapter.

Chapter 9 Conclusions and Study Reappraisal

9.1 Introduction

The rationale of this study has been to make a valid contribution to the understanding of supply-side dynamics of tourism seasonality, specifically in the domain of small tourism related businesses. From the outset, an interpretative epistemological stance in the social-scientific tradition has been adopted. Arising from the study aims, reviews of the literature and an exploratory study, a number of research questions have been identified, from which a survey-based methodology has been employed to capture pertinent data. Thus the purpose of the present chapter is essentially four-fold, as follows:

- i) to review the degree to which the study aims have been achieved and the concomitant research questions addressed;**
- ii) to synthesise and reiterate the conclusions of the study;**
- iii) to critically review the methodological approach and summarise the limitations of the study; and**
- iv) to discuss the contributions of this study to the academic knowledge base and in terms of policy implications and potential future research directions.**

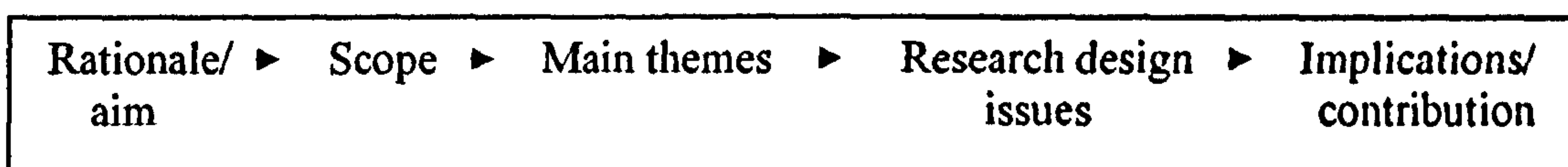
The chapter proceeds with a brief synthesis of the previous chapters (9.2), summarising and highlighting principal themes and issues that have emerged throughout. Such a review process enables the research aims and questions to be discussed systematically (9.3) and conclusions drawn accordingly. The extent to which the study has contributed to knowledge gaps is then assessed (9.4). This extends to the conceptual nature of seasonality, the degree to which the study findings are generalisable in terms of trading influences, motivations and behaviours of the seasonal STRB traders and the contribution to the knowledge gap within Scotland's tourism economy. From this, the limitations of the study are examined (9.5), embracing a reflection and evaluation of the overall research approach, its methodological construction, the data yielded, analytic approaches and interpretation

of the data. Finally (in section 9.6), pointers for further research directions and implications for Scottish tourism in terms of policy domains and actions are put forward.

9.2 Chapter Synopsis and Study Synthesis

The following comprises a brief summary of each chapter in turn. Its purpose is to provide a basis for reviewing, in the next section, the overall aims within which the study is framed and the research questions arising therein. The format of each chapter synopsis can be illustrated thus:

Figure 9.1 Chapter Synopsis Format



The role of Chapter One is essentially scene-setting for the study proposal and its parameters. The introductory chapter provided a background and rationale to the research, introducing the conceptual domains, the premise for any potential inter-relationships and the unexplored territory between them. In particular the notion of ‘supply-side seasonality’ is articulated as a conceptual starting point and within this broad concept, the quest to shed light on the trading behaviours and motivations of small businesses forms the basis of the study aims and objectives duly set out. A key element of the first chapter was to explain the philosophy and epistemological stance of the study, and from this the construction of an initial conceptual framework. It was seen that focusing on the realm of small business proprietors’ trading behaviours allows for an interpretivistic approach to the study of seasonality, alternative to the positivist and deductive traditions of many small business focused studies.

The rationale for Chapter Two was to examine the tourism seasonality related literatures in order to establish the current knowledge base and gaps therein, in particular pertaining to the supply-side of the phenomenon. It framed seasonality as

a generic social and economic condition, an oft-overlooked reality, and it conceptually advanced a systems approach to the appraisal of tourism seasonality, insofar as the phenomenon is inherent throughout the tourism system. A de-constructivist approach was taken in examining themes within the seasonality literature, including meanings, perceptions and definitional issues (which exposed cultural dimensions to the underlying notion of seasonality); conceptual and practical differences between concepts of 'seasonality' and 'temporal variation'; measurement of the phenomenon; spatiality and temporality relationships and causation in tourism seasonality. This latter particularly afforded an insight into the relative paucity of supply-side investigation. Each of these elements exposed specific research questions (assessment of which is contained in section 9.3) and which in turn guided the methodological construction of the study. The emerging supply-side theoretical framework enabled a reassessment and reiteration of the initial conceptual framework as proposed in Chapter One. The overarching contribution to the thesis was to reinforce the validity of an alternative to the positivist paradigm tradition as an investigative approach.

A review of the small business literature provided a basis for determining the nature and extent of inter-relationships between seasonality, the temporal behaviours of small tourism related businesses and the characteristics and motivations of such entities. Indeed, determining whether or not such inter-relationships have been addressed at all was a key task for Chapter Three. From an examination of entrepreneurship themes, small businesses in tourism and hospitality, family business and commercial home enterprise constructs, a conceptualisation of the 'STRB' as an object of the study was established. Given the centrality of 'motivation' as an underlying factor in seasonal trading, appraisal of this within the small business literature was undertaken at length, enabling as an outcome the formulation of a motivational paradigm. A similar breadth of review was afforded to 'lifestyle' business and goals, in order to help provide a platform for assessing lifestyle proprietorship and seasonal trading inter-relationships. From the above literature reviews, a conceptual model of business orientation, lifestyle and seasonal trading linkages was proposed, the purpose of which was to help focus the ensuing

research design. Finally, attention turned towards locational preference and proprietorship migration as potentially contributory motivators or influences on seasonal trading. Each of the above chapter elements generated research questions for the study to address. The contribution of this chapter was therefore formative in the subsequent research design.

The role of Chapter Four was to examine the Scottish tourism context of the study, which was necessarily broad in scope. Firstly, it provided insights into the performance and trends in tourism demand that highlight aspects of temporal spread within the country and across various operating sectors of the tourism economy. The emerging profile revealed gradual improvement in average occupancy and visitation levels across most sectors, though a more opaque picture was apparent in terms of any improvement in the quarterly or month by month performance of tourism. A supply-side examination revealed both significant trends in the structural composition of accommodation stock and the prevalence of seasonally operating businesses among accommodation units and visitor attractions, as recorded respectively in the national performance monitoring studies for those sectors. A further contextual element explored was the nature and scope of temporal regulation affecting Scotland's tourism sector. This highlighted direct and indirect impacts of regulation on tourism, through the legislative, planning and licensing regimes. The chapter also examined the relationships between seasonality and public policy within Scottish tourism, charting the development of policy-making institutions, instruments and initiatives, specifically through the lens of seasonal amelioration. It became apparent that successive national tourism strategies and action plans have articulated seasonality less overtly as a 'problem issue' and increasingly, in recent years, as an disguised symptom of under-achievement and/or quality deficiency. Little evidence emerged at the policy and strategy level to suggest engagement with the underlying business goals, trading influences and motivations of proprietors within the STRB sectors.

The research methodology and design chapter (Chapter Five) fulfilled several functions. While its primary aim was to provide a systematic, sequential account of

the research design and implementation processes, it necessarily entailed confronting fundamental dilemmas inherent in the philosophical approach. These included the role of quantitative research instruments in an interpretivistic paradigm, subjective terminologies within the instruments and the use and interpretation of data. Thus, the initial discussion in Chapter Five served to bring together numerous methodological issues arising from the preceding chapters. The chapter charted the exploratory phase (Stage One) of the overall study which had been conducted in the Scottish Borders during the 1999/2000 period. Summary results from the initial survey and the use of caselets from the semi-structured interviews revealed a range of influences, motivations and contextual circumstances pertinent to proprietors in respect of their seasonal trading behaviours. Accordingly, these influenced the further research design and analytic processes, in particular the validity of applying thematic analysis to qualitative data. Finally, the chapter identified and explained revisions to the original research design and assessed limitations from a circumscribed fieldwork programme.

The aim of Chapter Six was to provide an analysis of the quantitative results from the main Scotland-wide survey of seasonal STRB operators. This was achieved first through an overview of the distribution of responses regionally and by type of business, in order to establish the basis of data validity. It was seen that the high proportion of usable responses reinforced this, although in some regions and business types low absolute response frequencies served to limit the generalisability of findings for the area or sector as a whole. Results from each part of the questionnaire were assessed in turn and limitations in the data identified where appropriate. In many cases, clear patterns emerged with respect to the trading patterns, influence mix and business demographic among the population at large. However, distinct sectoral variations were also revealed, particularly in terms of influence patterns. Accordingly the quantitative results would be examined later against those of the qualitatively derived findings.

The wealth of qualitative data generated from the main survey necessitated a separate analytical chapter. Thus the aim of Chapter Seven was in parallel to that of

the preceding chapter. A qualitative framework was developed to take into account the various formats and types of data and the forms of analysis (content and thematic) employed. Analysis proceeded first with intrinsically generated data (ie from within the questionnaire) which was conducted sequentially. This was followed by extraneous data from correspondence, verbal records and notes. What emerged was a breadth of data variables encompassing influence and motivational attributes that enabled the assembly of numerous categorisations and conceptualisations of influences and behaviours. From these it was possible to codify and classify thematically distinct groups and clusters of influences and undertake sectoral and regional analysis of these. The findings from this exercise, combined with those of the preceding quantitative analysis, proved instrumental to the construction of analytical profiles of seasonal influences, trading behaviours and motivational/attitudinal proprietorial types.

Finally, Chapter Eight provided a platform for synthesising and discussing the findings from the previous two chapters with reference to the key literature and empirical evidence from other studies where appropriate. Given the scope and quantity of the data amassed in this study, the discussion developed several themes. These included the nature of temporality in business operating patterns; various dimensions of the business demographic; trading influences and motivations and the dichotomies between lifestyle- and growth orientation among proprietors. Sectoral profiling was undertaken from the data findings, highlighting both commonalities and distinctiveness among and between the sectors. From the preceding discussions, a typology was proposed, identifying five temporal behavioural types among proprietors, based upon personal disposition and operational circumstance, as conditioned by the influencing and motivational factors previously examined. A further outcome of the chapter was the proposal of a re-conceptualisation of supply-side influences in tourism seasonality.

Many of the above raised themes and issues resurface in the conclusions to the study aims (section 9.3), the study contributions (9.4) and implications (9.6).

9.3 Conclusions to the Aims and Research Questions

Conclusions to Aim 1: Conceptualisation of Tourism Seasonality from a Supply-side Perspective

It was apparent from the knowledge gap addressed by this research that existing conceptualisations of tourism seasonality have been developed from demand-driven market perspectives. This is understandable and remains an entirely valid approach in furthering enquiry into the demand dynamics of the seasonality phenomenon. A key conclusion of this research however is that, within the study context, the dynamics of the supply-side of the seasonality equation do not necessarily mirror the causal triggers and behaviours that pertain to the generation of consumer demand. At the destination level, the influences, motivations, attitudes and behaviours of private, small scale tourism service suppliers have been shown to be often asynchronistic to those of the potential or actual tourism market(s) they are servicing. This has been clearly demonstrated in the study through a diverse range of motivational, attitudinal and behavioural testimonies and measurements.

Although the paucity of parallel studies has been noted, this conclusion reinforces the Bornholm and Danish findings of Getz and Nilsson, (2004) and Lundtorp *et al.*, (2001), insofar as their respective interpretations of supplier behaviours uncovered a substantial element of ‘capitulation’, ‘adapting to’ or ‘living with seasonality’ behaviours. When amplified with more generalised evidence of operator attitudes and behaviours from studies in other places such as Norway (Flognfeldt, 2001), Greece (Kousis, 1989), New Zealand (Hall and Risher, 2004) or southwest England (Williams *et al.*, 1989), it is clear that contextual economic and socio-cultural factors exert pervasive influences on the supply-side seasonality dynamic in destination areas. Therefore, existing conceptualisations of ‘seasonality’ provide an incomplete depiction of the phenomenon, either from causal or spatio-temporal perspectives. In both cases, the role of the supply-side is under-conceptualised.

The contribution this study makes to the knowledge gap is prescribed. It has set out to explore the dynamic of a particular destination-based constituency (the seasonally operating STRB in Scotland), rather than embracing an examination of all STRBs

or of the wider supply chain within or beyond the destination. The theoretical advancements of this study therefore reflect this prescription. Notwithstanding this, the implications of the behaviours of Scotland's seasonal STRB traders are generalisable. The study has exposed their importance as *modifiers* of the overall seasonal dynamic within destinations at a number of levels: directly, in terms of the service provision they represent (which, in the case of clusters of seasonally operating businesses, may impact on a local destination's service capacity or choice); collectively, in terms of an area's potential loss of appeal during periods of facility closure, and the collective responses (or lack of) to this state of affairs; and finally at the public policy level, via the regulatory, fiscal, planning and other policy arenas that may impact adversely on an area's temporal dynamic. In Scotland there is seen to be a spatial element to the dynamic, insofar as the incidence of supply-side seasonality is relatively greater in the country's peripheral, rural areas and certain temporally constraining exogenous influences are apparent or perceived important in some local areas while absent or of less significance in others.

The study also asserts that, in view of the trading pragmatism, flexibility and individualism displayed by Scotland's seasonally operating STRBs, 'temporality' may offer a more appropriate conceptual framework than 'seasonality' for characterising the supply-side of the phenomenon. This is certainly apparent from behavioural and attitudinal perspectives among the STRB population, in which traditionally held boundaries between 'year round' and temporally defined (or 'seasonal') operations are in practice often blurred. Numerous variants of temporal flexibility and a high degree of motivational ambivalence towards an extended operating period are prevalent among the 'seasonally trading' population. Even within the population, substantive differences are prevalent between the temporal flexibility among some ostensibly almost year-round operators and the relative rigidity of entrenched seasonally defined operators.

This supply-side complexity further underscores the validity of separate conceptual approaches, (ie from demand and supply perspectives), to the study of tourism 'seasonality'. The contention here is that it is vital to recognise the different sets of

motivational triggers, spatial and contextual factors in the respective behaviours of consumers, on the one hand and supply-side (service provider) elements on the other.

Conclusions to Aim 2: The Nature of Linkages between Tourism Seasonality and the Trading Decisions of Small Tourism Related Businesses

The study has explored a range of influence factors, operational behaviours, proprietor motivations and business demographic attributes that may be associated with or colour the individual trading decisions of Scotland's seasonally operating STRB population.

Through the application of descriptive quantification, content and thematic narrative analysis of multiple data, five distinct though inter-related types of variables emerged as formative to the trading behaviours of that constituency. From these an influence and motivational paradigm was constructed. These variables collectively condition the trading behaviours of Scotland's temporally operating population. However, their respective relevance has been shown to vary widely according to the type of business and other contextual issues, although in each case market factors are seen to be of fundamental importance. Thus, the study demonstrates that it is impractical and unrealistic to attempt to isolate market from non-market factors when accounting for STRB proprietors' trading behaviours. Moreover, the general state of Scotland's tourism market is shown to exert a weaker influence on trading behaviours than the more immediate markets of the businesses. While such findings are explicit in the case of the seasonal STRB population, it is not suggested that they represent the same reality in the case of all year round trading businesses.

Inter-relationships between the different influence and motivational variables add to the complexity of understanding the supply-side temporal dynamic. The role of climate as a 'natural' influence variable is strongly associated with the economic rationale for temporal trading, more or less in equal measure to its role as a market-deterrent variable. Individual elements of climate are as important to some

proprietors as the generic application of 'weather' as a trading deterrent, particularly where they impact on maintenance, repair and investment needs. 'Exogenous' variables, encompassing destinational, public policy and other institutional factors are revealed as reinforcing the temporal trading behaviours for many operators. Importantly, most 'exogenous' issues are beyond the direct control of proprietors. In some cases, their role is of relatively greater impact, as was demonstrated among holiday/touring park operators. 'Intrinsic personal' variables also play an important role in the trading behaviour of many operators, especially where the business is operated as a commercial home enterprise. Fundamental to the motivational rationale are the twin pillars of work-life balance and health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally.

However, the influence and motivational paradigm provides one dimension to the understanding of STRB temporal behaviours. The study has shown that various aspects of the business and household demographic are critical in understanding the trading dynamic. Prominent among these are the occupational structure of the household in which the seasonal STRB operates; the status of the business within the household income structure and the structure of the family unit itself. Although the survey did not provide an exhaustive demographic exploration, it is clear that age and the personal lifecycle or lifestage of proprietors represent further critical factors in the seasonal trading equation. Despite this, the degree and characteristics of seasonal trading longevity demonstrate that temporal operation is endemic among Scotland's STRB population and cannot be isolated to individual demographic variables.

The overriding conclusion therefore is that the linkages between seasonality and STRB trading decisions are both intricate and diffuse. Moreover, while such 'decisions' are underscored by a complex mix of influences and contextual characteristics, in some cases temporal trading is an imposed rather than chosen behaviour. Indeed the emerging typology of proprietor behaviours acknowledges this.

Conclusions to Aim 3: Does Seasonal Trading Fulfil Particular Roles?

Of the three principal aims of the study, this represents the least conclusive. Findings from the exploratory stage exposed several indicative and potential attributes offered by temporal trading, as portrayed in Table 8.3. In the main stage of the research some of these attributes have proven substantive while others were not amplified among a larger population. Among the former category, it is evident that seasonal and flexible trading offers a degree of temporal occupational complementarity within a dual- or multi-income household economy. This is particularly observed within the co-preneurial family unit, in which each partner or spouse has their own occupation, either running their own separate business or where a salaried occupation is also involved. Less conclusive, though discernible to an extent, is the role afforded by seasonal trading in temporal enhancement in the domestic space, ie in which proprietors are able to retain their privacy and personal lives during periods of closure. Thus, the study has identified associations between temporal trading flexibility and facets of the commercial home enterprise, as propounded by Lynch (2005). What the study is unable to determine is whether such associations are distinct to seasonal traders, or whether year round operators exhibit similar attachments.

While 'lifestyle' enhancement also resonates to a degree, the study concludes that it is more pertinent to associate temporal trading behaviours with attainment of wider work-life balance objectives and priorities. (This is further discussed below in the conclusions to research questions). Encompassed within the work-life balance framework are the roles of physical and mental rest and recovery and the fulfilment of social interactions, commitments and aspirations with family and friends. The study indicates that seasonal downtime, interstitial breaks and flexible operating periods - all facets of temporal flexibility - enable attainment of both sets of intrinsic personal motivators.

Conversely, the wider study finds little evidence that temporal trading is favoured by STRB proprietors as a way to demonstrate either environmental or social concerns at

the community level. While it is acknowledged that these roles may shape or inform the operation of specialist nature based businesses such as gardens or wildlife tour operators, they are insignificant motivators among the largely accommodation based sample.

Finally, the study reveals an interesting dichotomy with regards to the role and rationale of seasonal trading. The primacy of market influences and viability suggests a potential predisposition among many operators for temporal extension. The study revealed many manifestations of growth-orientation among the population, including market development, product development and investment in premises upgrading and modernisation. Yet in the face of this, for some of the same proprietors, seasonal trading and temporal operational flexibility unambiguously offer a preferred *modus operandi*. The remainder of this section addresses the conclusions to each of the research questions raised during the literature review.

The Research Questions (RQ 1 to 18)

A feature of the construction of this thesis has been the developmental nature of research questions generated through the literature reviews and the contextual overview of Scottish tourism. Summarised conclusions for each of the research questions are provided in the following narrative. Where the evidence emerging from the research has not been sufficiently conclusive to provide a definitive response, this is acknowledged appropriately. For reference, Table 9.1 lists the eighteen research questions.

Table 9.1 Summary of the Research Questions

RQ 1:	How prevalent are periodic fluctuations in trading patterns within Scottish tourism and are there any associations between periodic demand and seasonal trading?	Section 2.4
RQ 2:	Among the study group of seasonal traders, is there evidence that concepts of 'seasonality' and operating 'seasons' are individually and subjectively perceived?	Section 2.4
RQ 3:	Can seasonal destination operators contribute to or reinforce patterns of tourism seasonality within their destination area?	Section 2.6
RQ 4:	In what ways do climatic factors influence the trading patterns and provision of destination based tourism businesses?	Section 2.6
RQ 5:	To what extent and in what ways are institutional causal factors influential in the trading behaviours of seasonally operating tourism businesses?	Section 2.6
RQ 6:	Are any distinct spatial patterns apparent in terms of seasonal trading behaviours among Scotland's destination operators?	Section 2.7
RQ 7:	Do differences in household family proprietorship structures impact on the propensity to trade seasonally among Scotland's small tourism related businesses?	Section 3.2
RQ 8:	Is there a link between the status of the tourism business within the household economy and the temporal trading pattern in which it is conducted?	Section 3.2
RQ 9:	To what extent do seasonally trading STRBs in Scotland reflect either 'entrepreneurial/commercially-oriented' or 'lifestyle-oriented' motivations?	Section 3.3
RQ 10:	To what extent are physical and mental health and wellbeing manifest as motivational triggers or influencers of seasonal trading?	Section 3.4
RQ 11:	To what extent are seasonal trading and lifestyle orientation discernible among small tourism related businesses in Scotland?	Section 3.4
RQ 12:	Is seasonal trading a lifestyle choice for STRBs in Scotland?	Section 3.4
RQ 13:	To what extent is in-migrant proprietorship evident among seasonal tourism businesses in Scotland?	Section 3.5
RQ 14:	To what extent do in-migrant seasonal proprietors identify as 'lifestyle' oriented? Is there a higher or lower propensity among this group within the total seasonal trading population?	Section 3.5
RQ 15:	Is there evidence of predisposition by private STRB operators towards seasonal trading extension and if so, how strong is the degree of receptivity?	Section 4.2
RQ 16:	Does the seasonally trading private STRB population reflect the wider Scottish trends in terms of temporal demand spread?	Section 4.2
RQ 17:	To what extent do regulatory and other bureaucratic factors influence the temporal trading behaviours of small tourism related businesses in Scotland?	Section 4.4
RQ 18:	To what extent are linkages between tourism seasonality and small business trading behaviours articulated within Scottish tourism strategies?	Section 4.5

RQ1: Prevalence of Periodic Fluctuations in Trading Patterns

The research has demonstrated that periodic fluctuations in trading patterns are widespread within the seasonal trading STRB community. While around a sixth of the surveyed sample acknowledges varying their days of operation across the year and around ten percent vary the hours of opening and closure, wider temporal flexibility is relatively commonplace among STRBs. This manifests in the lengthening or curtailing of operating seasons as well as *ad hoc* periodic and interstitial closure. Such behaviours extend to proprietors who claim to trade all year round as well as those with defined trading periods, especially among those operating in a commercial home environment.

A sense of operational pragmatism is strongly associated with market conditions, both specific to the business and more generalised, though it has been shown that a variety of other factors are influential in underscoring temporal flexibility.

RQ2: Perceptions of Seasonality and Operating Seasons

The study has not provided a statistical evidence base from which to measure perceptions of 'the season' at a destination-wide level. However, the various trading patterns and behaviours of STRB proprietors within local areas, as ascertained from the construction of the database and from narrative responses describing trading patterns, point to an individualised rather than common outlook in setting periods of opening and closure. In some cases, narratives highlight recognised 'seasons' in specific terms, as for example, among self-caterers in University towns and among holiday/touring park operators who are subjected to standard temporal licensing restrictions. Thus defined 'seasons' confer both market (demand) and exogenous (supply-side) connotations. On the other hand, for many operators the concept of 'the season' appears fluid, reflecting either motivational individuality and/or behavioural flexibility.

It is recognised that such seasonal perception might equally apply in the case of year round operators, although the basis for determining this was not established in the study design.

RQ3: Contribution of Seasonal Operators to Patterns of Seasonality

A definitive response to this question would require much greater insight into localised or destination specific market dynamics than has been achieved in this study. Yet there are discernible clusters of seasonally operating STRBs, especially so in Scotland's more peripheral rural areas. The study identifies significant degrees of seasonal trading longevity and inertia or entrenchment among operators and additionally identifies continuity of seasonal trading in the behaviours of more recently established businesses. Thus the conditions for seasonal reinforcement are most likely in areas where such behavioural clusters are significant within a destination's overall supply dynamic. Where seasonal STRBs operate alongside seasonal amenities and facilities run by voluntary, community or public sector organisations, the reinforcing effect will be greater. This was both apparent and a manifest concern in the Scottish Borders during the exploratory phase of the study and is also expressed in various forms and manifest among exogenous constraints in the main study.

RQ4: Influence of Climatic Factors

Climate is a central causal element of what is termed 'natural' seasonality in the literature. The study challenges the prevailing treatment of climate, from a supply-side perspective, in that there is strong evidence to support its role both as a direct influence on temporal trading and also as a contributory factor to other influence types. Most significantly, the study highlights that severely adverse climate is seen to impact negatively on the economics of seasonally defined STRB operations, rendering year round operation less viable, due to further costs of maintenance, repair and upgrading. Such impacts are most frequently articulated by proprietors of self-catering and holiday/touring park operators, though not exclusively so. Moreover, for some proprietors, adverse climate provides a 'push' trigger to intrinsic personal motivators, particularly those associated with mental health and wellbeing such as the need for escape.

RQ5: Influence of Institutional Causal Factors

Although embedded in the literature as an explanatory construct of tourism seasonality, 'institutional' causality is conceptually diffuse. The study has highlighted elements within the wider institutional framework that have relevance to trading behaviours. Under the umbrella of exogenous influences, governmental policies and regulatory regimes are recorded as impacting either as direct temporal constraints (in the case of temporal licensing) or as intrinsic demotivators to extended trading (eg the VAT threshold or generalised 'red tape'). In some cases, the institutional structure of work impacts on the temporal operation of a secondary seasonal STRB, for example in dual economy and full-nest family households. However, the study has not revealed this to be a major characteristic of the total seasonal trading demographic. Furthermore, the study does not offer a basis of comparison against year round operations, in this respect. Nevertheless it can be concluded that institutional causal factors have greater resonance in market generation than in the supply-side of the equation, certainly from an STRB perspective.

RQ6: Spatial Patterns

Seasonally operating STRB clusters are apparent in Scotland, especially within the Highlands and Argyll regions and more generally in the country's rural areas. The highest incidences of temporal operations observed in the study have been among bed and breakfast and self-catering businesses within the two aforementioned regions. However, as spatial analysis has been of limited scope in the study, generalisation of the findings within and between areas displaying similar STRB compositional characteristics is of limited value.

In a few localities, a distinct market dynamic is seen to impact on the destination-wide pattern of seasonal trading, such as recorded among self-caterers in St Andrews. Yet such cases are exceptional. Furthermore, the political geography of licensing authorities is recorded to impact upon the holiday/touring park sector specifically. While the economic and household demographic of farming communities offer further dimensions on supply-side spatio-temporal patterns,

their impact is more widespread across rural areas, rather than specific to certain rural 'types'.

RQ7: Household Family Structures

Data obtained from the study has focused on the business demographic of ownership/operation rather than on the intrinsic human structure of the household (ie the household demographic). It revealed the seasonal trading STRB to fit many of the theoretical confines of the 'family business' and most particularly emphasised the primacy of the co-preneurial owner/operator family unit among Scotland's seasonal STRBs. The sole proprietor also constitutes a significant minority among the seasonal STRB population, possibly more prominent than within the wider STRB population as a whole. While inter-generational and extended family proprietorship forms are also present, particularly in the holiday/touring park sector, the data does not enable comparison with the wider STRB business community in Scotland. Therefore, the conclusion drawn is that there is indeed a link between seasonal trading and the owner/operator demographic, though the nature of the association is likely to encompass other dimensions of the household structure and economy.

RQ8: Status of the Seasonal Business in the Household Economy

Sectoral differences, above all else, define the degree of importance of the seasonally operated STRB within the household economy. The study has revealed that major patterns of variation are evident between the more capital intensive sectors (hotels/inns and holiday/touring parks) on the one hand and the least capital intensive and/or marginal service activities (B&Bs, self-catering and caravans) on the other. In general, however, the seasonal tourism business occupies a secondary or minor source of income to a majority of STRB households. In some cases the income derived is marginal insofar as the service offered is confined to a relatively short operating season (typically six to eight months per annum). There was much narrative evidence to suggest that in farming households especially, the nature of the main occupation necessarily constrains the income derivable from the seasonal

tourism business. Therefore the link between trading temporality and the relative economic status of the business is subject to other contextual factors.

RQ9: 'Entrepreneurial/commercial' versus 'Lifestyle' Orientation

It is evident from the study findings that delineation between these two dimensions is artificial, despite attempts within the wider literature to isolate 'lifestyle' business orientation as a distinct psychographic phenomenon. 'Lifestyle-oriented' motivations are subjectively identified by proprietors to a very small extent in the findings, although the narrative evidence assembled suggests a degree of 'lifestyle-orientation' among proprietors, in terms of the nature and plurality of trading motivations expressed.

On the other hand, 'entrepreneurial/commercial orientation' is more apparent among Scotland's seasonal traders. This is evidenced through testimonies stressing plans and ambitions for product development, market development and investment and the aspirations for revenue maximisation directly expressed by around half the sample. Thus, dichotomies between disparate lifestyle-orientation and entrepreneurialism are clearly manifest among Scotland's seasonal STRB traders. Although untested within the study aims and design, such a dichotomy may not be unique to seasonally operating businesses.

RQ10: Mental Health and Wellbeing

A broad range of intrinsic personal variables contribute to the operational temporality of Scotland's STRBs. Within this motivational category, issues attributable to proprietors' mental health and wellbeing are articulated in various forms. Where narrative evidence is provided, needs such as rest, relaxation, recuperation, escape, free time, family and privacy feature repeatedly. For many proprietors, these are conditional to their work-life balance, contingent to their personal demographic and lifecycle and symbolise fulfilment of social, family and personal priorities. The study highlighted the relativity of such factors among the different business types, noting in particular the greater relative importance

attached by commercial home based operators in using temporally defined operating periods as a facet of achieving mental or physical wellbeing.

RQ11: Lifestyle Orientation

In practice, this research question largely reiterates RQ9. As a motivational or influence construct, 'lifestyle' most closely associates with intrinsic personal variables. As concluded above, it is explicitly evident to a small degree within the sample, though is more generally discernible in the attitudes, priorities and aspirations of a large minority of the population, for whom seasonal operation represents a trade-off in the work-life equation. On the other hand, the strength of lifestyle 'choice' is reported in RQ12 below. However, caution is suggested in equating lifestyle orientation with lifestyle 'choice', *per se*.

RQ12: Lifestyle Choice

While the study has revealed a strong general predisposition among STRB proprietors towards seasonal trading (see RQ15 below), the evidence to support it as a facet of 'lifestyle choice' is also compelling, though to a lesser degree. Approximately half the survey population affirmed a lifestyle construct to the temporal basis of their business operation. Many of the intrinsic motivators and testimonies identified in the study support the validity of 'lifestyle' as a contributory and explanatory factor in temporal trading decisions and construction. However, on the basis of the wider findings, the study argues that 'lifestyle' is a loose construct, it is laden with subjectivity and may not provide adequate insight into the intricacies of work-life balance in the temporal construction of social activity, including STRB operation. Yet despite this limitation, it is evident that 'lifestyle' plays a contributory motivational role for many seasonally operating STRB proprietors.

RQ13: Extent of In-Migrant Proprietorship

Migrational entrepreneurship, as defined by the goal of business start-up, is a prevalent feature of Scotland's seasonal STRB population. Thirty percent of the sample claim to have moved to the area specifically with the aim of starting the

business, numerically greatest from outwith Scotland. The study has also revealed there to be a substantive minority migratory path from non-urban areas. While detailed local analysis has not been undertaken, it is evident that the more accessible rural areas have witnessed greater influxes of in-migrational seasonal traders compared with Scotland's urban and more remote/peripheral rural areas such as the outer isles. What the study cannot determine, however, is the extent to which such migratory entrepreneurship among seasonal traders reflects the characteristics of the country's year-round operating STRB population as a whole.

RQ14: Lifestyle-Orientation among In-Migrant Proprietors

Any relationship between in-migrant proprietors and lifestyle business orientation was not established, due primarily to the limited statistical analysis undertaken. Moreover, the vagueness of what constitutes 'lifestyle-orientation' in business proprietorship, as discussed previously, further limits the degree to which firm conclusions could be made in this respect. A key component of 'lifestyle migration' examined in other empirical studies has been the importance of the physical and natural environment as a pull for the move. It is therefore worth noting that, in the current study, areas with high scenic amenity such as Argyll, Perthshire and Dumfries and Galloway have witnessed higher than average rates of in-migration among the seasonal STRB population.

RQ15: Predisposition towards Seasonal Trading

A significant level of predisposition towards seasonal trading has been revealed among Scottish STRB operators, both through attitude statements and in the narrative responses. Indeed, two thirds of the valid sample admits preference for operating seasonally and various types of justification for this have been presented. This proprietor constituency cuts across operating sectors and business types as well as different degrees of business longevity. The strength of the finding has been formative in the development of a behavioural/attitudinal typology of seasonally trading businesses, in which disposition is a core characteristic.

Importantly, the study findings lead to the conclusion that predisposed attitudes to temporal trading among proprietors must challenge the relationships between seasonal trading and business growth-orientation as they have been presented hitherto in the small tourism/hospitality business literatures. The implications of this are pursued further in section 9.6.

RQ16: Seasonal STRBs and Temporal Demand Spread

The study was not constructed to capture detailed market profiles or patterns of seasonal operators, or indeed the degree to which they mirror the performance trends of year round operators in terms of temporal demand spread. Nevertheless, it is evident that market patterns represent the single greatest influence in determining operators' trading periods. This holds true across all types of STRBs measured in the study and likewise across the regions of Scotland. The lack of customers in 'off-seasons' is expressed prominently among the narratives as an underlying influence on the decision to curtail the operating season.

It may be surmised that seasonal closure negatively impacts on the propensity to generate year round business, for example through loss of marginal revenue to invest in product or market development. However, it is clear from the study that many seasonal operators are growth-oriented and pragmatic in their operational flexibility. Therefore it is likely that such 'temporal pragmatists' and 'circumstance-constrained' operators will reflect the market patterns of the wider STRB population, although it is again acknowledged that the study does not provide a basis for such comparative measurement.

RQ17: Influence of Regulatory and Other Bureaucratic Factors

The study has revealed these to be of varying degrees of importance as influences on STRBs' temporal trading behaviours. Scotland's holiday- and touring park operators are most affected by temporal licensing restrictions (the rationale for which concerns the status of on-site customer residency) while private activity operators are most affected by health and safety regulations that condition the scope of their operations with regard to risk and public liability. However 'red

tape' and bureaucracy in general are common concerns across the spectrum of seasonally operating STRBs. Employment legislation, fiscal constraints, planning controls and public liability provisions have been expressed widely as exogenous factors, entirely as operational disincentives which in some circumstances may impede proprietors' motivations and initiatives to extend their period of trading.

RQ18: Scotland's Strategic Tourism Planning Process

A systematic content analysis of national tourism strategy documents has revealed an evolutionary approach to tourism seasonality as a public policy issue. The 1994-99 Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan was the high water mark for the articulation of seasonality as a defining condition of Scottish tourism. In terms of policy linkage it represented a largely one-dimensional approach, which gave greater emphasis to the structural characteristics of the phenomenon rather than its wider policy ramifications. In-built policy laterality was confined to the 'traditional' realms of rurality, transport and employment. Nevertheless, that strategic planning process set off a train of seasonality initiatives and co-operative working among Scotland's public agencies and private sector representative bodies that have since led to a greater acknowledgement of the direct linkages between seasonality conditions and the operating environment of STRBs.

The current (2006) strategy recognises regulation and the planning systems as growth constraining factors, though not overtly in temporal terms. However, while some recognition is afforded to quality and performance deficiencies among STRBs, there remains no focus on the underlying motivations, attitudes and demographic characteristics of non-growth oriented seasonal traders.

9.4 Contributions of the Research

While each of the conclusions to the study offers an individual insight to the wider knowledge domain, a thematic appraisal of the overall contributions is offered here. It identifies and discusses five broad areas of contribution, as follow:

The 'Seasonality' Paradigm

The quest to understand the phenomenon of tourism seasonality has been approached traditionally from the demand-side of the market equation. Conversely, few studies have set out to observe or measure its characteristics and manifestations from a supply-side perspective. This study has aimed to contribute to redressing that imbalance, albeit in a limited and particular way. Furthermore, where studies have spotlighted the supply-side within a broader frame of enquiry, they have tended to generalise the phenomenon at the destination-wide level rather than explore specific aspects of temporal dynamics within the destination. Even fewer studies have taken an empirical stance in undertaking such exploration. Therefore in focussing on the behavioural characteristics and perceptions of a key destination constituency (the STRB), this study has brought together two distinct fields of enquiry, the linkages between which were hitherto almost entirely unexplored. Importantly, this study formally establishes the strength and diversity of linkages between tourism seasonality and STRBs within Scotland, albeit not comparatively against those of year round trading businesses.

The findings have provided legitimacy for re-conceptualising the 'seasonality' construct. From a supply-side perspective, temporal trading behaviours are seen to be more complex and seasonal 'boundaries' of operation less precise or indeed rather more blurred in practice than previously recognised or acknowledged, certainly among a heterogeneous business population trading within a largely 'seasonal' tourism environment. Thus a contribution of this research is the theoretical advancement of a core element of the study domain. While a few authors (notably Hartmann, 1986, Allcock, 1995 and Flognfeldt, 2001) have identified an ethnographic dimension to the seasonality phenomenon, this study stimulates that debate, insofar as the meanings, perceptions and roles ascribed to temporal trading are clearly individualised and socially constructed. This is likewise a hitherto largely unexplored domain, either from demand or supply-side perspectives. The study has also cast new light on the theory of causality in tourism seasonality, synthesising the various approaches and overall roles ascribed to seasonal causation thus far within the literature.

Wider Theoretical Advancement

Theoretical advancement is also provided among a number of other components of the study, relating both to the second core element - the STRB - and to contextual elements within the conceptual framework. Findings have illuminated the temporal roles of climate, regulatory frameworks, destination dynamics, business demographics and 'lifestyle' motivation, among others. In each case, evidence is presented that provides new insights into the inter-relationships within and between such factors in the temporal dynamic of the small tourism business. For example, for many small tourism businesses in Scotland, the study has revealed that the 'natural' causal construct of climate is meaningful in terms of its economic and exogenous influencing roles, rather than purely as a market-determinant. The seasonal business demographic has been revealed to contain characteristics of both longevity as well as continuity among more recently established STRBs. In the case of 'lifestyle' and business proprietorship, the study has revealed dichotomies that challenge prevailing views on the relationships between temporal operation, 'lifestyle' and growth orientation. It therefore casts doubt on the reliability of generalising 'lifestyle' as a social construct in terms of the temporal behaviours of STRBs.

Meanwhile, the motivational and influence paradigm effectively brings into sharp focus a wide variety of otherwise disparate variables and indeed reveals the breadth of factors underlying causality from a supply-side perspective. Thus, the study offers scope for new appraisals of many of the concepts and constructs inherent within it.

Application to Other Disciplines and Cognate Areas

Apart from their intrinsic empirical worth, findings in respect of the above aspects also have a role to play in contributing to the theoretical advancement of other disciplines and developing cognate areas within the tourism related literature. As an essentially behavioural study, the frame of reference and findings are rooted within the wider domains of sociology and management science. Some spatial insights have also become apparent to the extent that, with further analysis, the data could meaningfully shed light on aspects of local human geography and community

development dynamics. More immediately, among the tourism related cognate areas, family business, the commercial home enterprise, migratory entrepreneurship and the wider tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship literatures are clear cases in point. The study also provides a basis for further integration with the knowledge domains of rural and agro-tourism and the dynamics of rural economies more generally. The role of temporality is seldom examined in these bodies of literature and wherever references are made to 'seasonality' and/or temporal operations, customarily little appraisal is offered. Thus a contribution of this study is as a potential springboard for such enquiry, as is discussed further in section 9.6.

Contextual and Policy Contributions

In providing a systematic chronological review of the role of seasonality in recent Scottish tourism policy, the study has identified significant paradigm shifts in policy development. Moreover, the inter-relationships between seasonality and other key issues articulated in the various strategy and action plan documents, point to a considerable degree of policy complexity inherent in tourism's temporal nature. Whereas traditional supply-side approaches to seasonal amelioration have stressed such elements as festival and event strategies, destination facility development and transport enhancements, this study has identified the relevance of a further cornerstone of supply, namely the underlying temporal constraints and motivations of the small tourism related business within the destination mix.

The implications of this are indeed significant to the wider research community as well as to destination management and the various policy-making constituencies in Scotland. As the tourism economy in many parts of the country gradually extends temporally, 'seasonality' might be viewed as a phenomenon of decreasing importance. In contrast, this study has revealed there to exist a substantial residual element of temporality, the dynamics of which have been shown to be complex. There are both sector specific and location specific factors in addition to more generalised constraints. Moreover, the study has alluded to degrees of marginality among the seasonally trading tourism population, typically among B&B and caravan operators for whom the service provided is peripheral within the household

economy or to the work-life balance. In consequence, there exists a significant gap between operator motivation and behaviour and policy frameworks in creating a market environment to facilitate seasonal extension. Therefore, the study offers the statutory bodies, their partner organisations¹ and the Tourism Knowledge Scotland network an evidence base and platform for further enquiry in unravelling temporal constraints and behaviours, within a broader framework of public policy.

Study Gaps and Complementarity

The paucity of parallel empirical work has been noted in the relevant literature review and discussion chapters. Therefore a primary contribution of this study has been to address fundamental gaps in the knowledge base of STRB seasonal trading. No other study of this nature known to the author has been undertaken in the United Kingdom, let alone in Scotland. While the seasonal characteristics of some sectors in the UK have been empirically studied (for example Jeffrey and Barden, 2001; Koenig and Bischoff, 2004), they have provided a positivistic examination of performance within a specific sector (ie hotels) rather than a behavioural or motivational appraisal of their subjects. The various Bornholm studies have revealed specific insights into their subjects, such as entrepreneurial characteristics (Ioannides and Petersen, 2003), behavioural responses (Getz and Nilsson, 2004) and social adaptation to seasonality (Lundtorp *et al.*, 2001) among the STRB population. The Scottish study intersects each of these three perspectives within the limitations of its aims and objectives. Moreover, in achieving high absolute and relative levels of participation among a large population base, its findings have an inherent strength.

9.5 Reflection, Evaluation and Limitations of the Research Process

As discussed above, the research has achieved the task of addressing the aims of the study and also, to a greater or in some cases a lesser extent, the research questions arising from the literature and study context. Moreover, it has been possible to arrive at a number of unequivocal conclusions as a result of the

¹ Target 1 of the Scottish Executive's newest action plan for tourism identifies the establishment of a tourism research network "...involving the industry, culture and heritage organisations, the enterprise agencies, academics, local authorities and VisitScotland to ensure that appropriate... ..research takes place, is disseminated appropriately and meaningfully to all stakeholders and is used to drive innovation and product enhancement" (Scottish Executive 2006:18)

investigative process, as well as identifying implications relating both to further research opportunities and policy arenas arising from the findings. Such implications are outlined in the following final section. However, it is clear that the overall contribution of this work to the knowledge domains of tourism seasonality and STRB trading behaviours needs to be framed within the study approach and its inherent limitations.

Fundamentally, the interpretivist stance adopted has driven a particular mode of enquiry and methodological approach which in turn have yielded a set of results derived from a subjective rather than objective reality. Indeed, a more positivist, deductive approach that emphasises the quantitative elements and statistically validated causal relationships may have produced a rather different set of findings from which to interpret and develop behavioural types. On the other hand, a positivist approach would render more problematic the task of conceptualising supply-side seasonality, which is a primary aim of this study. Likewise, it is acknowledged that adopting more grounded and qualitative approaches to the study design might have produced different findings. However, despite such epistemological debates, the influence and motivational parameters that have emerged reflect the subjective realities of the study population at large, and their validity is derived accordingly.

A number of limitations to the research design process and implementation have been noted throughout. Inherent in them are potential issues of data reliability, validity and representativeness. Of paramount importance, it is stressed that the study design has been limited in its construction. Primarily, while the study has provided a basis to explore the trading behaviours, motivations, influences and business demographics of temporally operating STRBs, the findings cannot be measured or 'benchmarked' against similar attributes among the wider STRB population. Moreover, within the data gathering phase, there was a danger that reliance on sample frames reflecting membership of local DMOs (and by extension of VisitScotland) may introduce a bias among the population, for example in terms of predisposition towards market- or growth-orientation. In practice, the data

gathered have reflected a wide range of attitudinal and behavioural orientations among proprietors. Conversely the exclusion of 'marginal' businesses not affiliated to DMOs or to other tourism networks, particularly among the B&B and self-catering sectors, could be thought to represent a lack of internal sample validity. However, it is probable that their omission is counteracted by that of other seasonally trading STRBs likewise not captured (or not participating) in the study.

The time gap between the initial exploratory study in the Scottish Borders and the main phase of data gathering could be construed as a weakness, insofar as the possibilities of contextual change in the intervening period might have rendered the study terms of reference obsolete. This was not seen to be the case in actuality, given the adverse impact of external events on Scottish tourism during those intervening years, which effectively dampened its market dynamic, as evidenced in the trend data in occupancy and visitation levels.

Related to the above is the question of the validity of findings from a study that has been a 'temporal snapshot' rather than a longitudinally constructed methodology, such as the pioneering seasonality works of Bar On (1975) and Butler (1994). In practice, the time constraints of the research process have dictated the temporal parameters of the current study, which has been a primary data gathering exercise. However, an attempt has been made to mitigate any 'short-termism' in approach by the inclusion of inquiry into temporal trends within the research instruments.

With regard to determining the temporal limits of 'seasonal trading', it is acknowledged that an arbitrary limit was set. Indeed, among a more temporally constrained population (for example of up to ten months per annum trading), a different balance of attitudinal, motivational and behavioural characteristics may have become apparent, though again it is contended that any such differences are more likely to reflect weight than substance. Indeed a strength of the sample base is its size and temporal heterogeneity, in terms of reinforcement of the themes and issues within the findings. Moreover, the findings have pointed to the fact that temporality in business operation is more complex than, and not confined to fixed

operational 'seasons'. With hindsight, a 'control group' of year round operated businesses could have provided a useful point of comparison!

A further limitation is inherent in the 'gaps' that emerged through the omission of certain data during the survey design. While the objectives of brevity and focus are valid criteria in the construction of any research instrument, in retrospect more personal demographic data could usefully have been incorporated into the questionnaire without compromising the survey aims. Three particular data sets deemed worthy of inclusion in this respect are:

- i) gender, reflecting the increasing emphasis on inquiry into female STRB entrepreneurialism as examined by Getz *et al.*, (2004), Komppula, (2004), Lynch (1998) and Kinnaird and Hall (1994) among others;
- ii) age, reflecting related motivational studies by Getz and Petersen, (2002) and Getz and Carlsen, (2000) and which would have enabled further exploration of inter-relationships between temporality and lifestage phenomena (including retirement);
- iii) family composition, in order to shed more light into relationships between temporality and the work-life balance, family involvement and succession (Getz *et al.*, 2004, and as discussed in the above cited works).

Despite the generally non-problematic questionnaire development and piloting processes, some instances of ambiguity were realised during the data analysis and interpretation phases. An example was the interpretation of temporal coincidence and overlap in the dual- or multiple business household. However, data reliability limitations arising from these have been highlighted in the analyses and discussion of findings where appropriate. In retrospect, a larger piloting sample and more robust evaluative process may have helped reduce any anomalies, though the difficulties in achieving perfection in questionnaire design are acknowledged. Importantly, it is contended that overall data corruption through ambiguity or interpretation has been kept to a minimum, particularly through limiting the

employment of any such data and by the adoption of systematic content and thematic qualitative analyses.

It is acknowledged that a descriptive approach to the analysis of the quantitative data presented in Chapter Six places limitations on the statistical reliability of such data. While opportunities for analysis of variance and strength of association between variables are clearly present, such approaches are deemed to be beyond the scope of the present study and its philosophical foundation. Moreover, the extent of the data generated from the many respondents provides a rich foundation and evidence base for the construction of the findings. However, it is recognised that the current SPSS database holds opportunities for further statistical examination and analysis of the captured data, particularly within specific business types or sectors, in which there are common operational characteristics.

Limited regional or local analysis has been undertaken in light of low absolute frequencies in a number of ATB areas and in recognition of the fact that ATB boundaries, which have defined the geographical parameters, are to an extent artificial in nature. Moreover, even predominantly rural ATB areas contain urban and suburban seasonal clusters, and vice versa. Thus, for example, it has been deemed more valid to generalise findings among a larger Scottish rural population, wherein 'rurality' yields certain proprietorial profiles, than among localised subjects in specific ATB areas.

Finally, it is acknowledged that circumscription of the original data gathering plan, as discussed in Chapter Five, presents a particular issue in terms of the triangulation or verification of evidence. The evidence base for the study has been accumulated from a two stage process, including interviews and a questionnaire in a regional exploratory study followed by a main nationwide (Scottish) survey yielding intrinsic and extraneous data forms. These have been built upon secondary data in the form of published trading period information and cross-referenced with business closure rates from the national accommodation occupancy surveys. It is therefore contended that the measurement instruments and data forms employed

within the study have offered a basis of triangulation. Nevertheless, had interviews with a national sample of STRB proprietors, with trade association personnel and representatives from destination management and policy organisations taken place as initially planned, it is acknowledged that a different perception towards influence variables, motivational and behavioural characteristics among seasonal STRB operators may have emerged. However such a venture remains a future and additional study opportunity, the aim of which would be to further, using Oppermann's (2000) terminology, methodological triangulation.

While it is accepted that the above issues constitute limitations to the study, the underlying research philosophy, its process and findings set out a distinctive platform for assessing temporal variance in tourism from a supply-side perspective. It has drawn upon and interlinked wide bodies of literature and has provided new insights into the phenomena of seasonal trading and the motivations and attitudes of STRB proprietors that underlie the behaviour. Accordingly, the final section of this chapter considers the research and policy implications arising from the study, the latter both specific to Scotland's tourism economy and of wider application.

9.6 Implications of the Study

(1) Further Research Directions and Opportunities

In many ways, the study serves as a potential springboard for avenues of further investigation in various directions, at individual business unit/proprietor level, at destination level and at wider public policy levels. More immediate fields of on-going research opportunity embrace destination dynamics (particularly in terms of competitiveness, image and temporal-market matching), spatio-temporal relationships in comparative tourism regions and locational types (the research needs for which are advanced by Butler, 2001), visitor management, the seasonal economy as an aspect of local economic development, and of course small tourism business governance.

Moreover, the scope for deeper insights into existing associations exposed within this study is acknowledged, especially employing more sophisticated quantitative

analysis, where appropriate, to establish the statistical strength and validity of such inter-relationships. Accordingly the on-going research agenda could be driven by the relative inconclusiveness among several of the research questions, as discussed earlier. Yet despite the existing parameters, a number of specific research issues, interwoven throughout this study, stand out as a result of this work. Foremost among these are:

(i) The family business dynamic: while the theoretical knowledge base of family tourism businesses is now firmly established, the role of the temporal trading dynamic within the family demographic requires further analysis. The current study has not explored gender, proprietor age and lifestage or inter-generational succession in any depth, yet each of these constitutes a key component of the family business dynamic and each may yield specific insights into temporal trading behaviours and motivations. In particular, the strength of temporal flexibility as a motivator for retirement proprietorship remains an under-researched area, even almost two decades beyond the 'Exeter studies' of proprietor demographics in English seaside towns. Within Scotland, the issue remains largely untouched (to this author's knowledge) and, in light of ageing population trends, is of potentially increasing significance as a social phenomenon.

Getz *et al.* (2004) identify numerous research agendas within the arena of entrepreneurial/proprietor market entry and exit, familial work-life balance and growth barriers. In each case, the relationships with temporality offer important dimensions for further investigation into the family business dynamic. A more quantitative and attitudinally based socio-cultural investigation into work-life roles of temporal trading, for example paralleling the studies of Getz and Carlsen (2000) and Getz and Peterson (2003) would also offer scope for theoretical advancement as well as understanding the dynamic of family businesses within their respective destination(s).

(ii) The commercial home enterprise, meanwhile, is an embryonic construct. While a significant proportion of the current Scottish study population fits the

criteria of CHE proprietorship as propounded by Lynch, (2005, 2004), there remains plenty of scope to assess the contribution of temporal flexibility as a defining (or indeed peripheral) aspect of the CHE construct. Indeed, within this construct, there are clear contextual differences between the 'home' as accommodation unit (ie its residential visitor function) and as historic or cultural visitor attraction (ie non-residential). Each offers different sociological, motivational, resource and operational influence contexts within which temporal trading and flexibility are conducted.

(iii) 'Lifestyle proprietorship': tensions and dichotomies between seasonal trading, 'entrepreneurial-' and 'lifestyle' orientations among proprietors have surfaced in the study in numerous ways. It has contended that 'lifestyle proprietorship' remains under-conceptualised and vague as an academic construct for small tourism business operation. Therefore important investigative avenues are exposed in the role and behaviours associated with 'seasonal trading' as a 'lifestyle' construct, issues which previous empirical studies (such as Andrew *et al.*, 2001; Morrison, 2002 and Shaw and Williams, 1997, 2004) allude to, though which require more focused scrutiny in order to disentangle. On the other hand, the associations between 'entrepreneurialism' and seasonal trading as a choice or preference for small tourism or hospitality businesses have been thus far largely antipathetic. However by identifying the phenomena of 'pragmatic' and growth-oriented yet 'preference-predisposed' seasonal trading, the study opens the way to increase further understanding of 'lifestyle-entrepreneurialism' within the tourism economy.

Nature based tourism, organised outdoor activities and extreme sports tourism represent current forms of diversification and growth in Scotland's tourism product. Proprietorship of such niche market operations offer intriguing motivational research opportunities, in which constructs of 'work' and 'lifestyle' may yield new insights into temporalities of business operation.

(iv) The destination mix: Finally, there is a fundamental theoretical research implication arising from this study, insofar as the presented supply-side 'seasonality' construct has been derived from the study of independent, small tourism related businesses. Parallel study opportunities exist in the behaviours of other elements of the destination mix, specifically attractions and amenities in public sector, voluntary, charitable or community trust or 'other' categories of ownership or management. Earlier work by this author in Scotland has focussed on the temporal decision making structures, processes and motivations of the major heritage 'estates' (Goulding and Leask, 1997; Leask *et al.*, 2000) which have been shown to generate distinct market dynamics within local destinations. Added to this is the role of other elements in the supply chain, particularly low cost airlines and ground operators, as influencers or modifiers of supply-side seasonality and local market dynamics. These are of current relevance to Scottish tourism, in the light of growing policy tensions between moves towards greater environmental taxation on the one hand and market liberalising initiatives such as the interim route development fund on the other - both of which have potential implications on the temporal constraint or extension of tourism activity.

The links between the research and policy implications for Scottish tourism and beyond are thus manifest. The final section highlights some of the key policy implications raised by this study.

(2) Implications for Scottish Tourism: Policy Domains and Actions

Seasonal extension plays a key role in achieving the 50% 'real term' revenue growth target for Scottish tourism, as established by the Scottish Executive in the current tourism framework strategy. It is also evident that it is viewed as performing a local community development role:

"If we are successful in extending our season beyond the peak months, this will benefit our smaller communities which rely on the tourist trade"

(Scottish Executive, 2006:15)

The current study has demonstrated that among a substantial proportion of Scotland's seasonal and near year-round STRB traders, seasonal market extension is indeed desirable both at the destination level and for their own business. Yet it has also highlighted a clear ambivalence by many towards participation in such growth, specifically from a temporal perspective. With such a significant degree of operator response favouring temporal preference or choice in the configuration of their operation, the potential divide between policies for tourism and small business development and some of the constituent base, is apparent. There are several policy ramifications to this, accordingly:

- involvement in *marketing initiatives* that emphasise seasonal extension is likely to be self-selecting by proprietors and may not deliver the level of local or destination participation desired by DMOs. This may be especially pertinent if temporal targets, goals and wider destination benefits run counter to the personal motivations of proprietors. The national 'Autumn Gold' and 'Spring into Summer' campaigns, run successfully since the mid-1990s, demonstrate the difficulties in bringing micro-business operators on board in participant 'buy-in' schemes of this nature, as similarly witnessed in Northland, New Zealand (Commons and Page, 2001);
- seasonal extension is equated with *labour force* quality, retention, development and providing 'more career opportunities' (Scottish Executive 2006:25), issues that have also been highlighted in other studies (Baum and Hagen, 1999). The study has shown that many seasonal proprietors employ non-family staff. Conversely, there are perceived benefits of seasonal employment among such staff (Lee Ross, 1999; Mourdoukoutas, 1988). Thus, an implication for the study is whether, in labour market policy terms, the contribution of seasonal operators to labour force objectives is necessarily negative or neutral;
- in not recognising or appreciating the intricacies surrounding the choices or preferences for temporal trading, there is the potential for *marginalisation* of temporally predisposed operators from national networks and from embracing a

common vision for tourism development. The 2006 Scottish framework strategy makes clear that growth is not necessarily achievable or desirable through extra capacity, rather through 'redeveloping or enhancing our current products' (p15). Since 2005, the institutional structure of tourism has evolved away from a general membership basis, towards a more 'open network' of relationships between businesses and VisitScotland and its institutional partners². These are increasingly based around focused initiatives such as product development and e-technology networks. Thus the potential for marginalisation among 'non-growth oriented' seasonal traders from a common vision is real.

The study has recorded a plethora of policy related 'exogenous variables' which act as constraints to the extended operation of Scotland's small tourism related businesses. These include fiscal policies, employment legislation, planning controls and increasingly the potential for environmental regulation. The Scottish Tourism Forum (the 'umbrella' lobbying body for Scottish tourism businesses) and certain trade associations (such as the British Holiday Parks Association and the Scottish Destination Management Association) have recently lobbied government for the relaxation of such constraints. Indeed, the STF is charged with

"..consult[ing] the industry to identify any regulations which cause particular problems for tourism businesses"

(Scottish Executive, 2006:28)

and submitting these to the appropriate channel within the public policy framework. This study has highlighted the extent to which such issues are contributory to the temporal operation of Scotland's tourism 'industry'.

In summary through its research aims and objectives, this thesis has endeavoured to provide a fresh perspective to the domains of seasonality and factors underlying the trading behaviours of small businesses. In so doing, it offers a platform for further investigation and debate.

² The ATBs were replaced in April 2005 with area tourism 'hubs' with a more marketing and less developmental focus.

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