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Customer Well-being in Tourism

The Feel-Good-Index

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/ Relevance

87% consider **well-being** a **top priority** in their lives

(McKinsey, 2024).

Among Gen-Y and Gen-Z, well-being is a **key purchasing driver**

(Kantar, 2023).

Service providers increasingly focus on well-being in their journeys

(e.g., Tikkanen et al. 2023).

Problem Statement

- Customer well-being (CWB) is an **important outcome** of **service experiences** and customer journeys (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2024).
- Given the multitude of interactions in customer journeys, **single-point measurement of CWB** delivers **limited insights** (Schau and Akaka, 2021; Anderson *et al.*, 2024).
- **Digitization** offers **new measurement opportunities** → human-centered KPIs to complement overnight stays, arrivals, and revenue data.

(1) How does **CWB**, with a service experience, **develop** and change **across the customer journey**?

(2) What is the **impact** of CWB on **WOM** across the customer journey?

Research Agenda

QUALITATIVE

Interviews with DMO-Management

Sample
- 16 Expert Interviews (AT, GER, CH, ITA)

Inhalte
- Status quo performance measurement
- Use of data & digital technologies

Focus Groups with Tourists

Sample
- 9 Interviews, 40 Participants

Inhalte
- Motivation to provide feedback
- Role of incentives
- Use of digital channels

QUANTITATIVE

Multi-Season Survey

Sample
- N = 1.963 (3 seasons)

Inhalte
- Well-being and perception of the destination product along the customer journey.

Longitudinal Study

Sample
- N = 128 (3 waves)

Inhalte
- Well-being and perception of the destination product
- CX dimensions and effectiveness of the customer journey design

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/ Empirical Study

myZillertal.app

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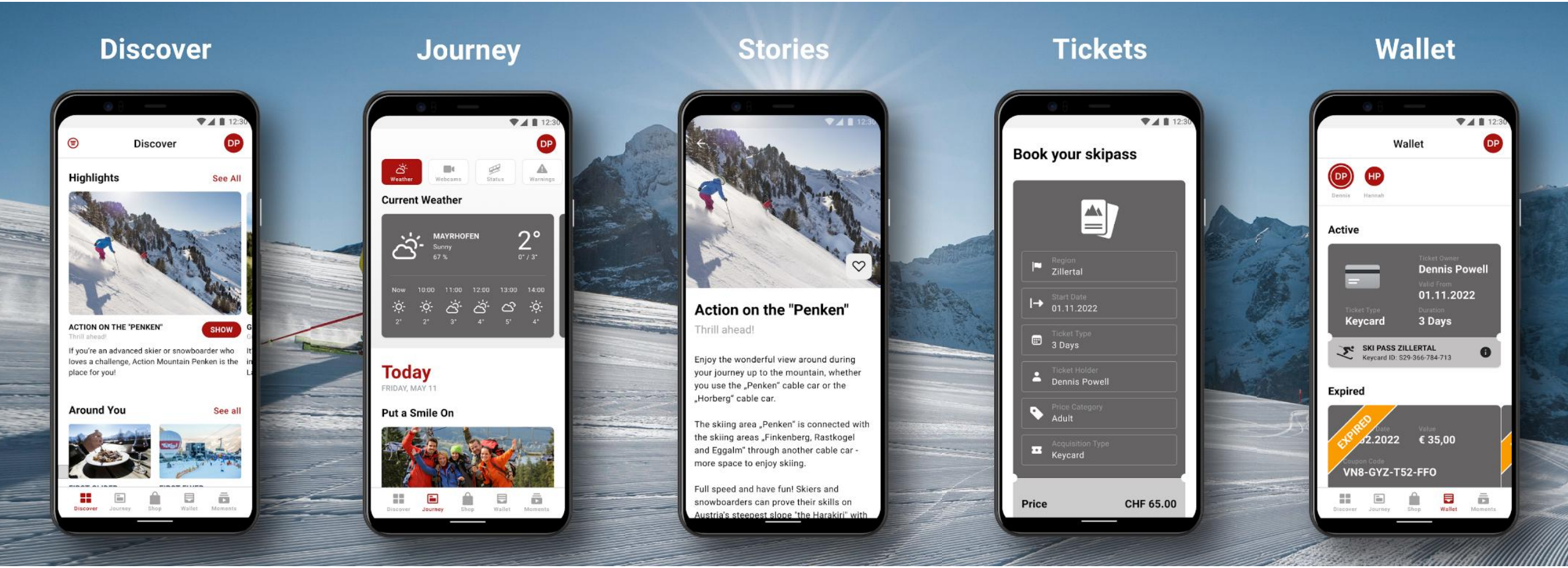

Empirical Study

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Targeting via App

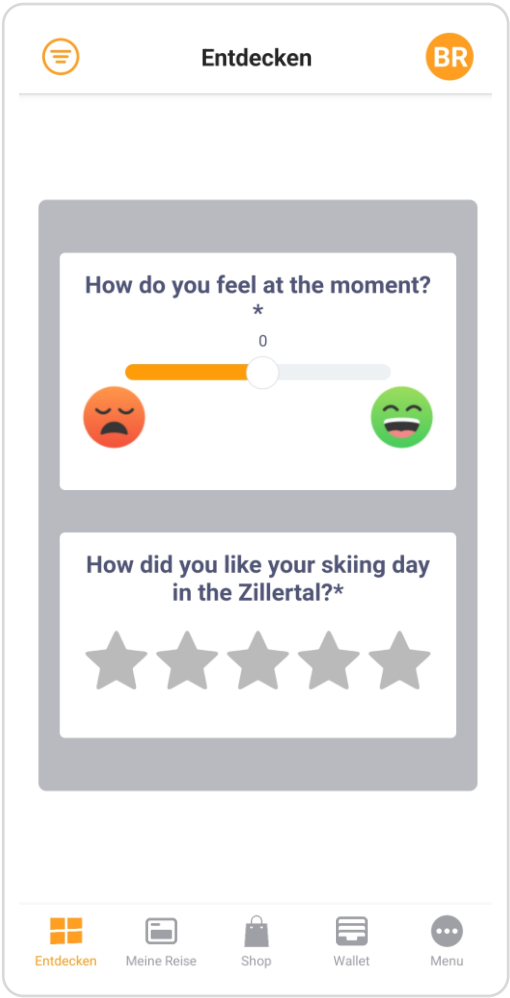
myZillertal.app users receive time-triggered surveys with their experience booking via…

- Push notification (iOS/Android – if enabled)
- Email in German / English

Targeting via Web and QR-Codes

Guests can self-identify their current phase in the customer journey and access the survey via…

- Web banner
- QR code
  - Display stands in the destination
  - Banners in gondolas



Empirical Study

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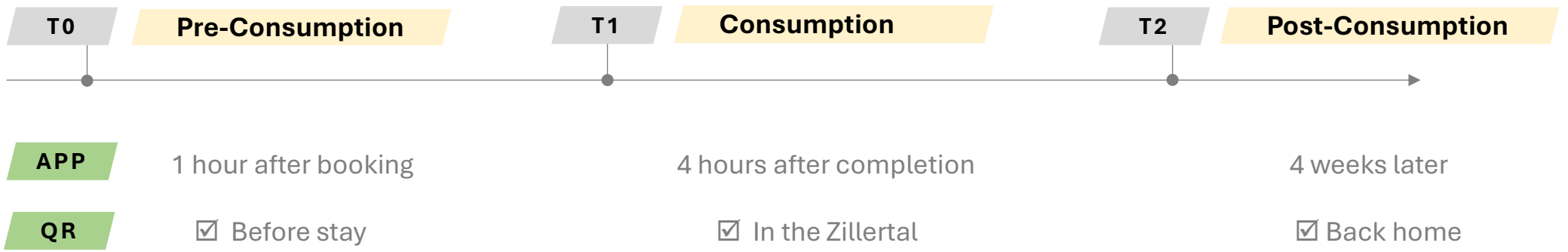
Waves



Design

Multi-season study (Winter 22/23; Summer 23; Winter 23/24)
Between-subjects design

Empirical Study

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Sample

M_{age} = 46.61 years
Sex = 43% female
Average stay = 8.7 days

Response Rate (App) = 1.73 %

Study	Main Study 1	Main Study 2	Main Study 3	∑ TOTAL
Season	Winter 22/23	Summer 23	Winter 23/24	
Begin	22.12.2022	01.06.2023	22.12.2023	
End T1	16.04.2023	08.10.2023	14.04.2024	
End T2	15.05.2023	08.11.2023	15.05.2024	
T0 – Push	25	8	7	40
T0 – Mail	88	19	49	156
T0 – QR/Web	95	82	122	299
T1 – Push	39	20	4	63
T1 – Mail	163	77	60	300
T1 – QR/Web	120	78	178	376
T2 – Push	39	10	8	57
T2 – Mail	114	92	100	306
T2 – QR/Web	117	114	135	366
SUMMARY				
T0	**208**	**109**	**178**	**495**
T1	**322**	**175**	**242**	**739**
T2	**270**	**216**	**243**	**729**
TOTAL	**800**	**500**	**663**	**1963**

Empirical Study

myZillertal.app

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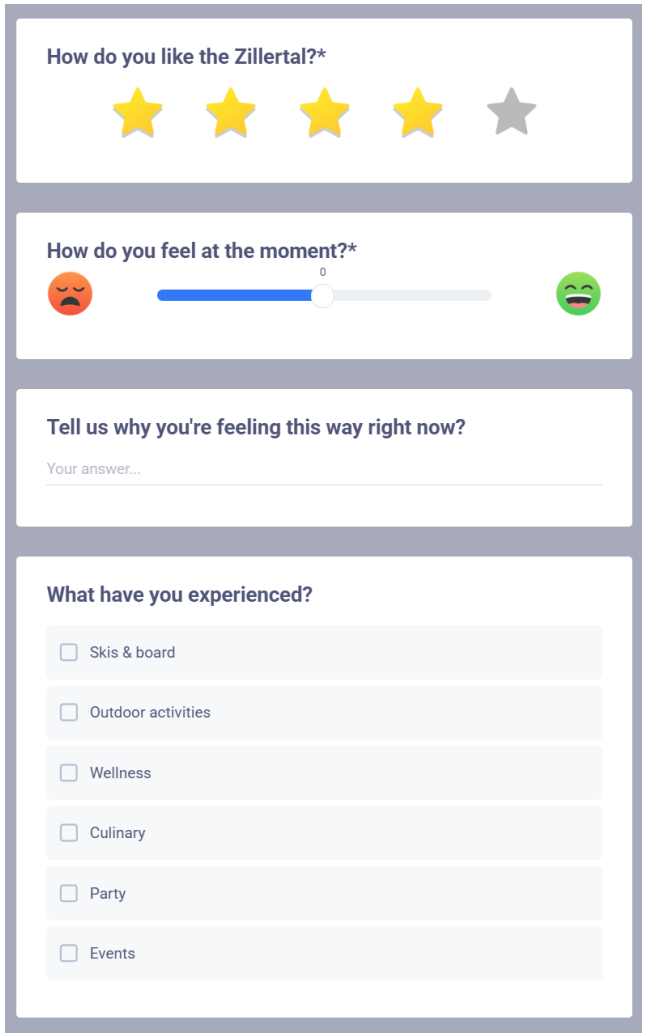
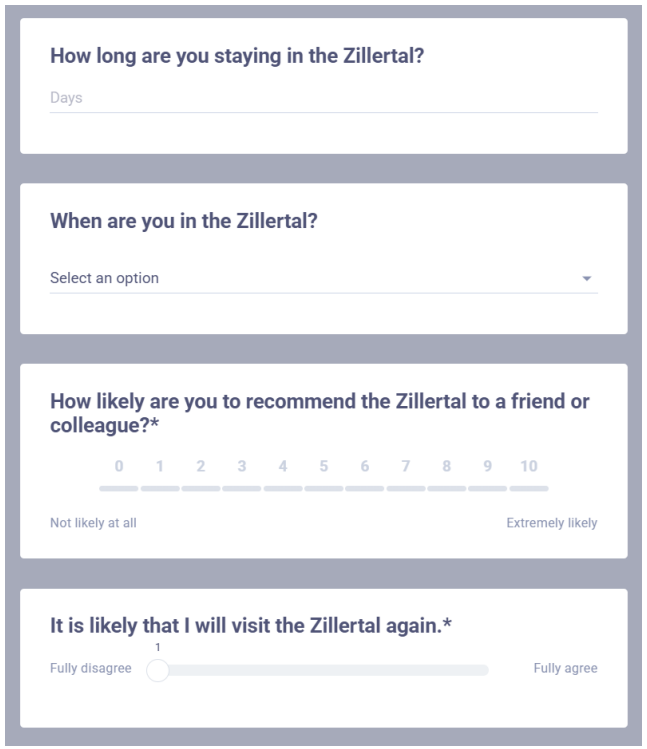
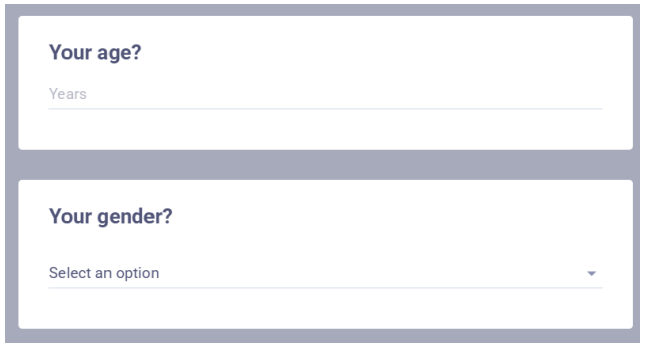
Measures

T1







Feel-Good-Index (FGI)

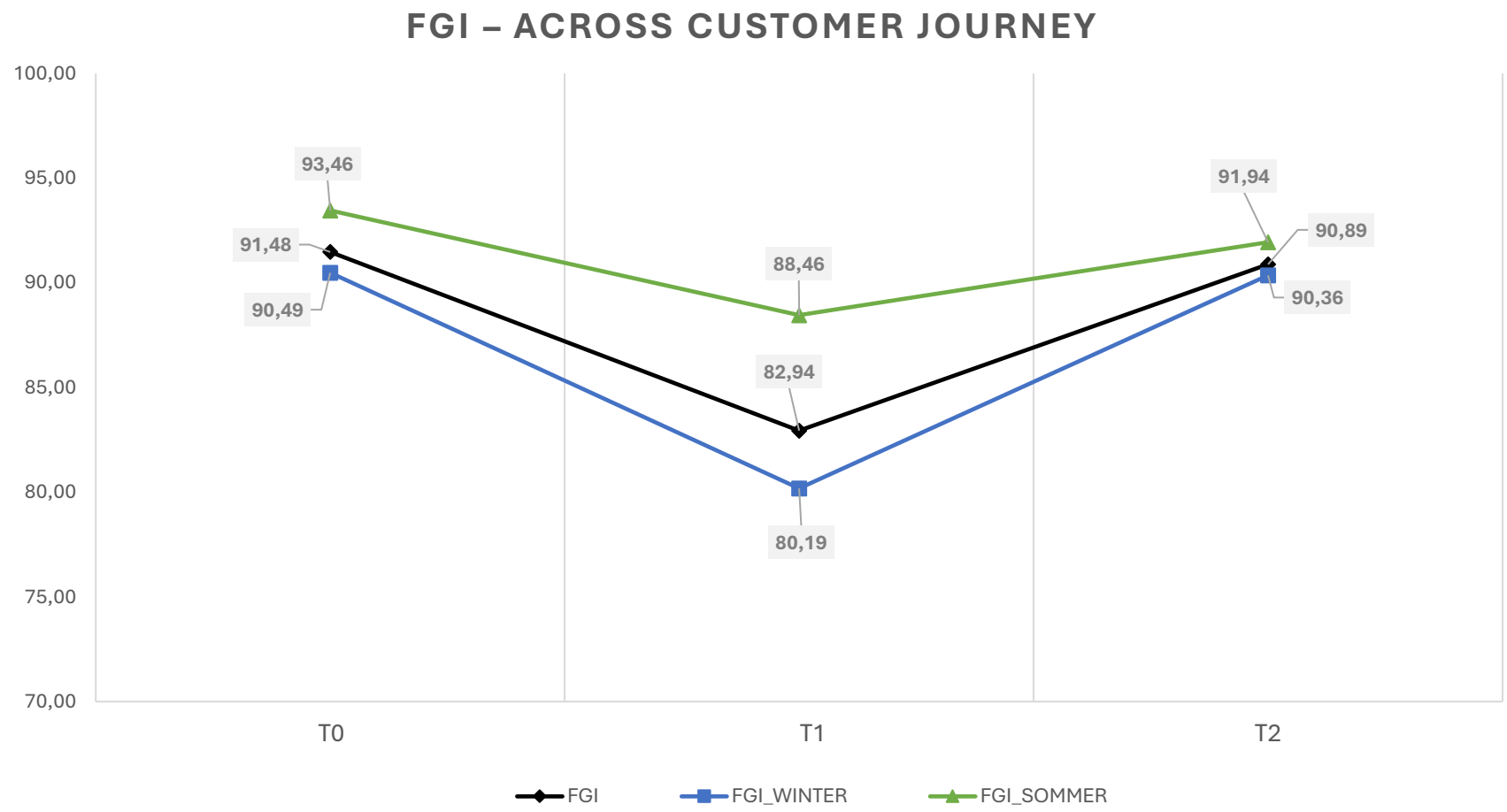
T0 **T1** **T2**

$$\left(\frac{(ASZ_0+50)}{100} * \frac{PF_0}{5} \right) + \left(\frac{(ASZ_1+50)}{100} * \frac{PF_1}{5} \right) + \left(\frac{(ASZ_0+50)}{100} * \frac{PF_0}{5} \right) * 100$$

M1 WINTER 22/23	M2 SUMMER 23	M3 WINTER 23/24
87,90	**91,29**	**86,12**

Note:
PF = Performance Zillertal „How do you like the Zillertal?“
ASZ = Affective Slider Zillertal „How do you feel at the moment?“ (T1) / „How do you feel, when you think about your stay in the Zillertal?“ (T0 / T2)

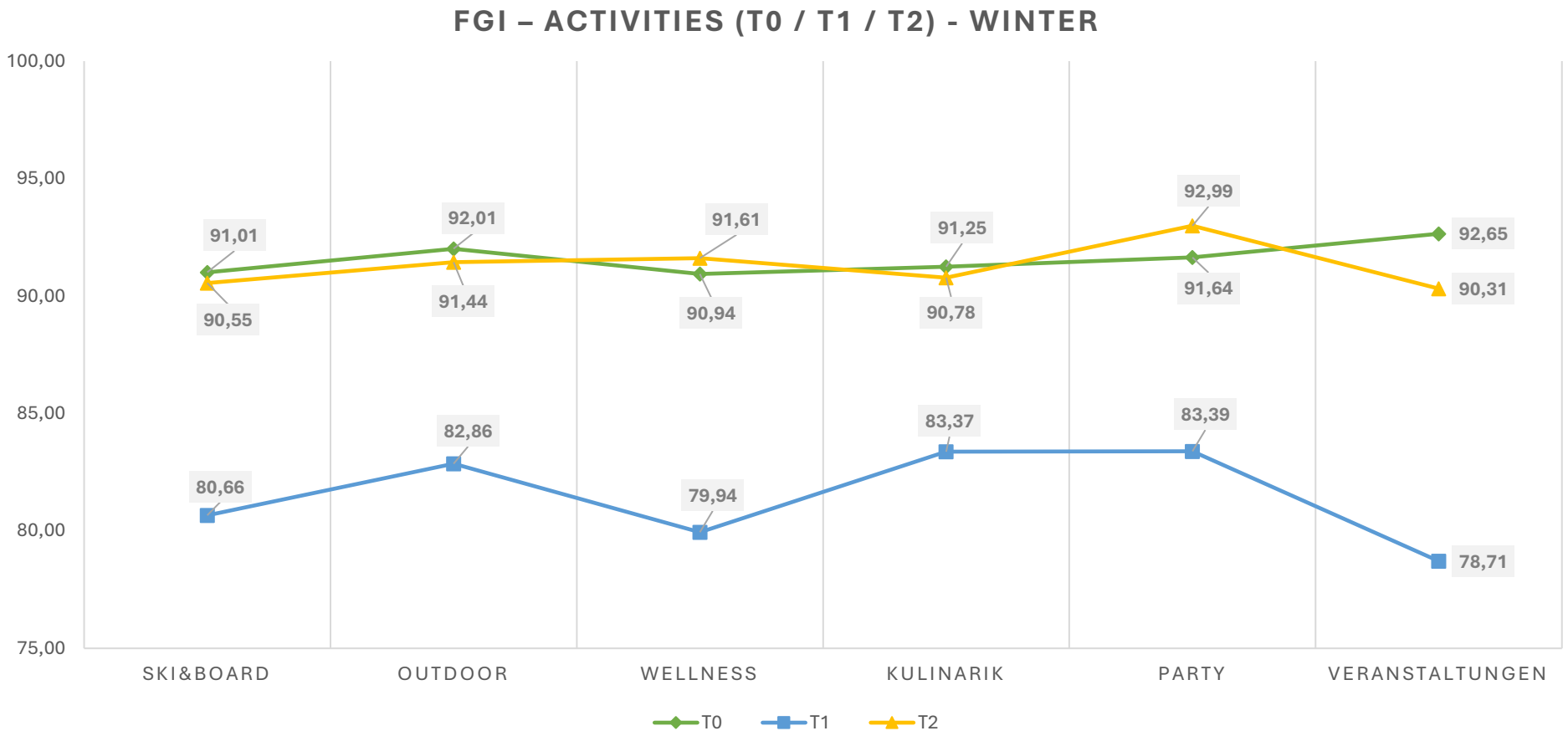
Results – FGI



- **Pre- and Post-CWB** significantly **better than on-site** ($F(2;1751) = 65.59$; $p < .001$)
- Seasonal differences
- **Winter:**
  - More pronounced U-shape
- **Summer:**
  - Flatter U-shape
  - CWB on-site is significantly better than in winter (Δ +8.5%)

Results

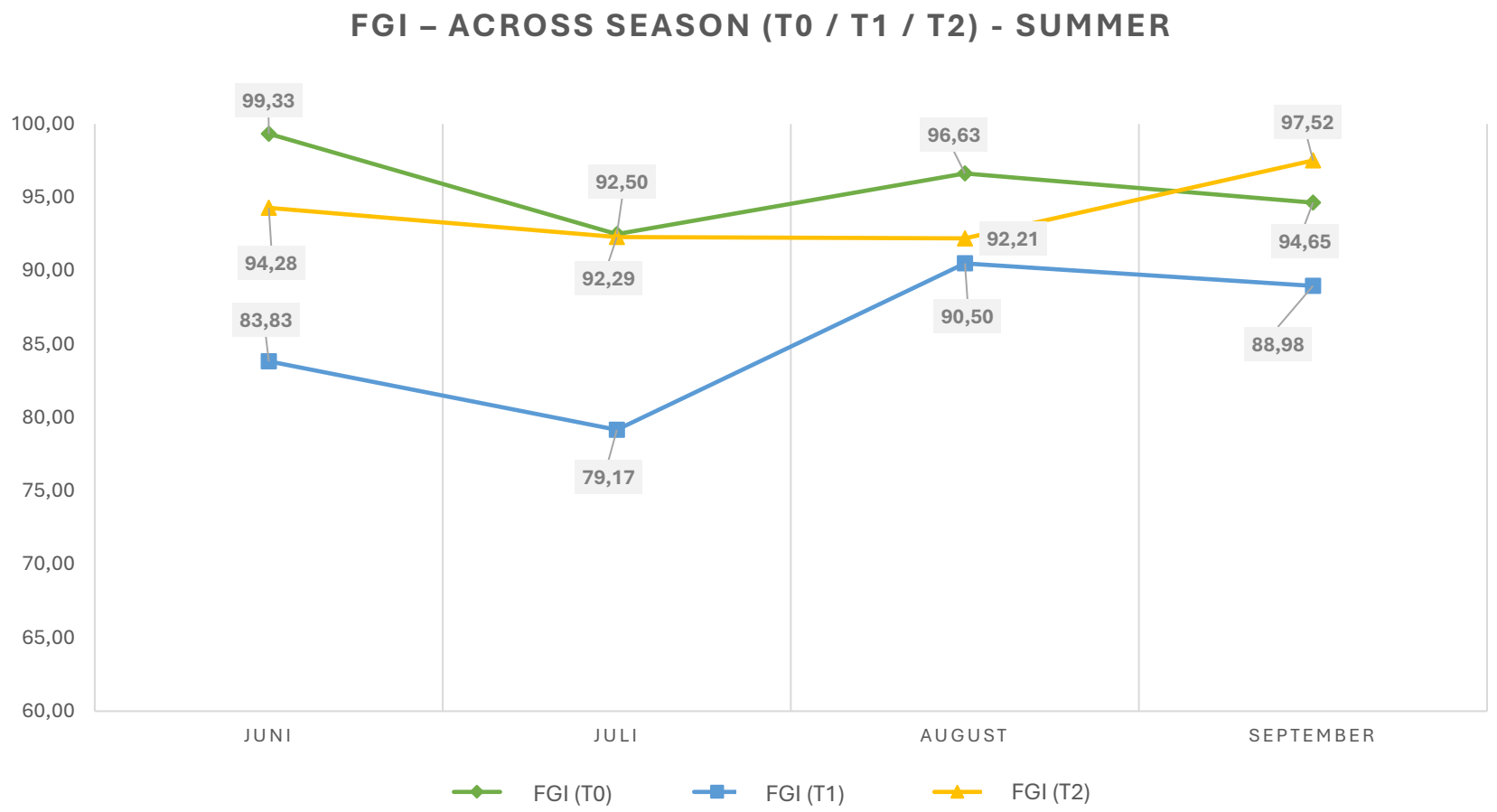
Multiple answers!



Note: Data from Main Studies 1 and 3

- **FGI** with activities during **pre-/post** stages is **more positive** than **on-site**.
- T1: **Party**, **outdoor**, and **culinary activities** generate the **highest FGI** scores **on-site** – skiing / snow-boarding and events fall short.
- **Parties** lead to the **best retrospective FGI**.

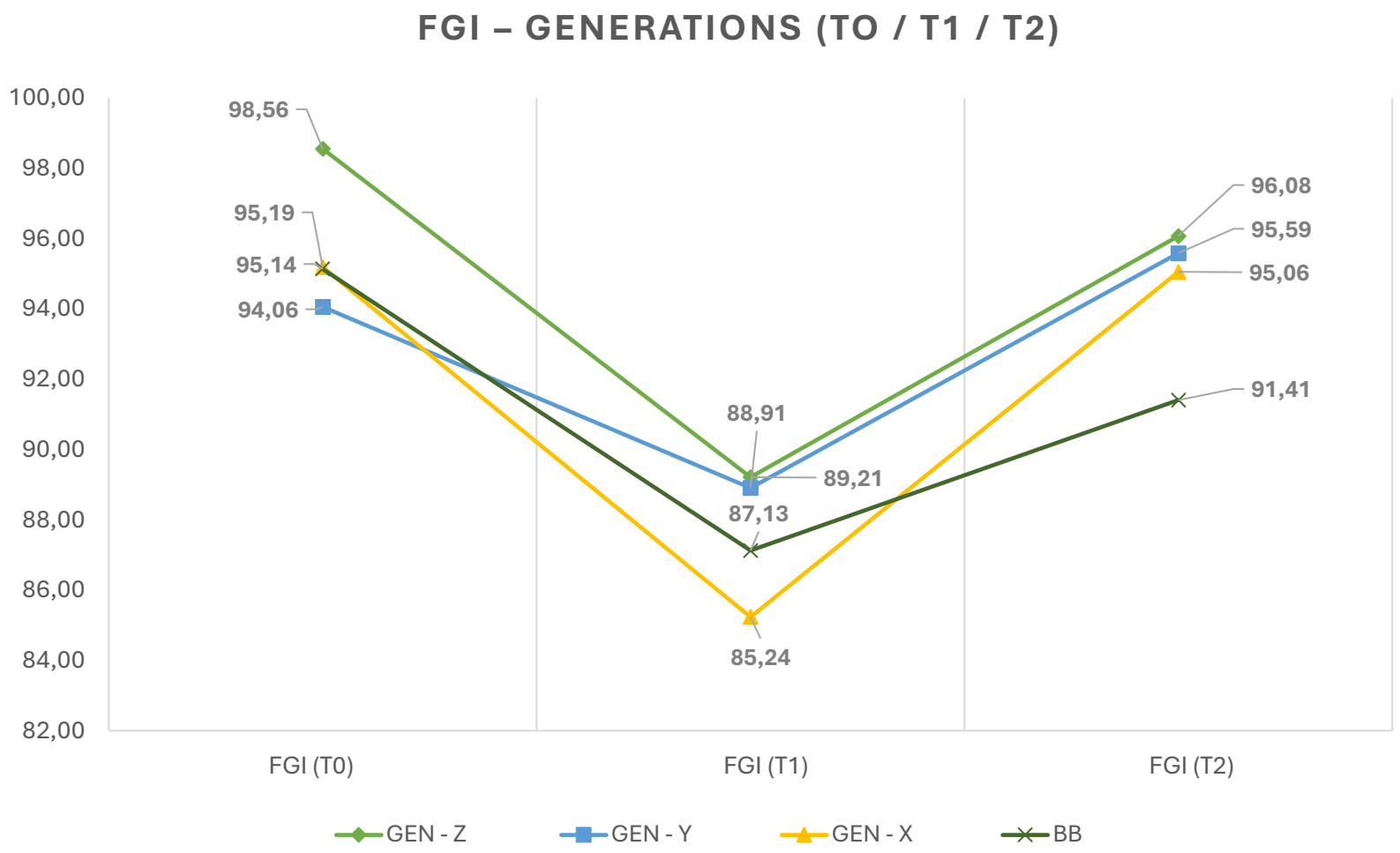
/ Results



Note: Data from Main Study 2

- **On-site FGI: positive trend** towards the end of the season.
- **August** and **September, on-site FGI** is able to **keep up with T0 and T2.**
- Smaller differences between post-visit retrospection and on-site FGI.

/ Results



Note: Gen Z = 1996 – 2010; Gen Y = 1980 – 1995; Gen X = 1965 – 1979; BB = 1946 – 1964

- **FGI lowest on-site** across all generations
- Biggest "drop" in T1 among Gen-X and Gen-Z
- BUT: **Gen-Z** has the **strongest pro- and retrospection** moment of all
- Expectation-Performance Gap (T0 – T1) lowest for Gen-Y
- **Boomers** show second-best CWB in T0, **"benefit" the least** from vacation in T2

Results

TIME	DV	IV	Main Study 1 Winter 22/23	Main Study 2 Summer 23	Main Study 3 Winter 23/24	∑ 3 Studies	∑ WINTER	∑ SUMMER
T0	**WOM**	T0_FGI	**.640****	**.440****	**.503****	**.546****	**.561****	**.416****
T1	**WOM**	T1_FGI	**.431****	**.560****	**.531****	**.525****	**.511****	**.560****
		T1_CROWDING	-.074	-.092	.014	-.044	-.029	-.092
		T1_RAINH	-.004		-.025	-.062	-.009	
		T1_SUNH	-.035	-.122	-.114	-.003	-.026	-.122
		T1_TEMP	.037	.150	-.044	-.052	-.069	.150
		T1_SNOW	-.048		.020		-.001	
		T1_RAIN		-.044		.084°		-.044
T2	**WOM**	T2_FGI	**.629****	**.536****	**.444****	**.570****	**.585****	**.546****

Linear Regressions with SPSS 28
Table contains standardized regression coefficients
Significance levels: ** = $p < .001$; * = $p < .05$; ° = $p < .1$

Note: WOM = Word-of-mouth; T0_CWB = Customer well-being in T0 (setting-specific); T1_CWB = Customer well-being in T1; T1_CROWDING = Number of customers initially accessing the ski resort through a lift gate or turnstile per day; T1_RAINH = Precipitation per day; T1_SUNH = Sunshine hours per day; T1_TEMP = Average temperature per day; T1_SNOW = Average snow height per day; T1_RAIN = Precipitation duration per day; T2_CWB = Customer well-being in T2 (setting-specific); MFQ = Memory Frequency

- FGI is in **all stages** and **all studies** a strong **driver of WOM**.
- **Overall**: light **U-shape** tendency, more pronounced in winter
- **Summer: inverted U-shape**, on-site CWB performs best
- **Crowding** and **weather** have **no significant impact** on **WOM**.

Discussion

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Findings

- **FGI** as a **new KPI** to **evaluate service experiences along the customer journey**
- '**U-shape**' → Pre- and post-phases show significantly higher FGI scores than the on-site
- **Differences** between **seasons**, **months**, and **activities**
- FGI as a **strong driver of WOM**
- **Weather** and **crowding** play a **minor role** in WOM intentions

Implications | Theory

- Extension of previous research on **discrepancies** in **temporal perception of CWB.**
- Static measures of CWB fall short – use dynamic, longitudinal tracking
- Pictorial scales and **short** digital surveys work well for this purpose

Implications | Practice

- 'U-shape' → **identify causes for low on-site FGI**, improve to create a favorable basis for post-core FGI.
- **Tailor customer journey design** to **seasonal** and **contextual factors** affecting FGI → The **magic** is in **personalization**!
- **Continuous FGI monitoring** to refine service delivery and boost loyalty outcomes.

/ Thank you.

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