Conceptualising co-created transformative tourism experiences: A systematic narrative review

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ABSTRACT

Transformative tourism experiences (TE) have powerful personal and societal implications due to life-changing capacities when consumers subsume their experiences. Past reviews and conceptualisations of TE have been limited in scope, often emphasising a particular theory or context, and prioritising the consumer perspective. Given an increasing need to understand TE due to its implications concerning tourism sustainability, this study systematically reviews TE in travel and tourism. The study adopts a hybrid systematic narrative approach to build a holistic conceptual framework of TE from a co-created perspective, offering insights for future research. From the 125 studies, the review's findings revealed a massive dominance on qualitative approaches across seven broad experience categories concerning TE. These broad categories are general travel and tourism, educational, voluntourism, cultural, nature-based, wellness, and niche tourism experiences. From these seven broad categories of studies, three identified dimensions of TE were: experience, experience-facilitator, and experience-consumer. The inter-relations between these three dimensions produces four different outcomes to both the experience-consumer and experience-facilitator. While the findings indicate several areas for future research, three areas require greater attention: potential barriers, the role of culture in TE, and the potential for negative transformations.

1. Introduction

Tourism experiences are mentally and physically healthy pursuits for consumers as it recharges consumers from the grind of daily life (Chen & Petrick, 2013; E. Cohen, 1979). It can have transformative attributes, as it pauses routine and allows consumers to reconsider life matters (Lean et al., 2014). Transformative tourism experiences (TE), occur when consumers subsume staged experiences, potentially prompting life-changing actualisations (Pine & Gilmore, 2013). TE is subjective and co-created, derived from interactions between consumers' minds, past experiences, and the staged experience. Pine and Gilmore (2013) predict transformations to be the next wave of economic phenomena. From a practical perspective, how can the tourism industry capitalise on this economic wave and create experiences that have lasting effects on consumers? More importantly, how can tourism scholars understand consumer transformations to inform tourism management practices? The importance of understanding TE is two-fold: it improves consumers' satisfaction, potentially garnering recommendations and, possibly create life-changing positive improvements to a consumer (Prayag et al., 2016; Pung et al., 2019).

J. R. B. Ritchie et al. (2011) identified that experience-related research is under-represented. While there have been notable contributions in tourism experiences since then (Chen & Petrick, 2013; M. J.; Stone & Petrick, 2013), a lack of structured direction in the dimensions of tourism experiences (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2015) and in particular, TE exists. Tourism scholars who reviewed or developed TE frameworks in the past are contextually or theoretically bound, limiting the frameworks' potential for further research in different tourism contexts (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; G. A. Stone & Duffy, 2015). To date, there are two reviews on TE, but both have specific foci which inhibit the overall understanding of TE. One review analysed transformative learning theory (TLT) studies only (G. A. Stone & Duffy, 2015), while the other focused on TE in nature-based experiences (Wolf et al., 2017). Moreover, both studies mostly have a consumer orientation, which is also apparent in many TE conceptual studies. Derived TE models using existentialism and TLT (Pung et al., 2020) and those conceptualising TE as an outcome of tourism also emphasised consumers in their narratives (Brown, 2013; Falk et al., 2012).

Fig. 1. The essence of TE.

The multiple theoretical underpinnings further demonstrate variations in the triggers, processes or outcomes of TE. Kirillova et al. (2017b) view TE through an existential lens where people transform through an epiphanic moment in their travels. Contrary, Walter (2016) adopts an experiential, transformative learning approach for ecotourism experiences and thus, visitors proactively self-examine and develop sustainable behaviours. Hence, although these studies contribute to different conceptualisations of TE, they fragment research on TE holistically as the different theoretical underpinnings contribute to different triggers, processes, and subsequently the changes to consumers.

As interest in TE increases, clearly defining and conceptualising the phenomena is necessary. A specific theory or context should not determine the conceptualisation of TE to enable holistic interpretations (Lean, 2012). Instead, a co-created perspective that emphasises both place and consumer enable implications to both consumer and destination wellbeing— leading to an intersection between TE and tourism sustainability (Pope, 2018). This review aims to develop the conceptualisation of TE by systematically reviewing travel and tourism experience-related literature. It aims to deliver a comprehensive conceptual framework of TE by addressing these questions:

(1) What does the current research offer to the holistic conceptualisation of TE?
(2) What opportunities for further research are there in TE?

2. Literature review

This study draws upon broader literature of transformations in education and philosophy to develop a conceptual understanding of the essence of TE in a tourism space. Mezirow (1978) posits that for meaningful behavioural changes to occur, perspective transformations are necessary. Perspective transformations are fundamental shifts in perspectives when one is exposed to a new challenge, role, or assumption and begins to develop an understanding of self-perspectives and relations to others (Mezirow, 1978). Transformations occur through a process of critical reflection, whereby the person reframes assumptions on a subject matter through different experiences (Kitchenham, 2008). In his seminal work, Dewey (1938) establishes how *an* experience has qualities such as 'meaning', 'purpose', 'unity', 'anticipation', and, like

art, has a moment that marks it 'unique' that builds towards a completion.

Pugh (2011) re-conceptualises Dewey's (1938) work to exhibit that transformations occur when a student 'experience[s] the world in a new and meaningful way' by applying the learned academic curricular concepts into their daily lives (p. 107). *Ideas*, which are the meanings derived from experiences, are suspended in our minds as a possibility for action; and this action – whether acted upon imaginarily or overtly – is only considered worthwhile (transformative) if it cultivates new experiences (Dewey, 1938). Pugh (2011) argues that ideas manifesting from experience are only transformative if they reconstruct and open new experiences for people and communities.

It is necessary to strip away pre-conceived assumptions of the word transformative to understand transformative experiences better. Associating the word transformative to a 'life-changing' experience is common, such as illness or childbirth (Carel et al., 2016; Hole & Selman, 2019). However, *an experience* can also occur in everyday 'mundane' experiences (Dewey, 1938). For example, Allen (2017) discusses how 'commonplace' experiences are also transformative. He explains how "entirely new" experiences are transformative, as they have values that one cannot understand unless they have undergone the experience itself. Although it can be agreed that "entirely new" experiences are personally transformative, Allen's (2017) argument on transformative experiences having to be "entirely new" is disagreeable. Zarhin and Fox's (2017) research on stigma and sex workers illustrate how pre-existing 'whore stigma' surrounding 'unchaste' women transforms sex-workers' cognitive behaviours. Their study depicts the struggles of sex-workers and the pressures they face, transforming them into believing that some aspects of their lives (i.e., healthy social relationships and personal safety) is unattainable and subsequently lower their expectations on these goals. Their research provides insight into how transformations of cognitive behaviour occur through stigmas and provide anecdotal insight into how transformative experiences could adversely impact the person.

To conclude, transformations occur when one undergoes an experience, which generates ideas necessary for new behaviours to occur (Dewey, 1938; Mezirow, 1978; Pugh, 2011); and, tourism experiences provides such opportunities to generate ideas and influence change in consumers to a degree (Bruner, 1991). Fig. 1 depicts the essence of TE in this study. The framework exhibits that tourism experiences are likened
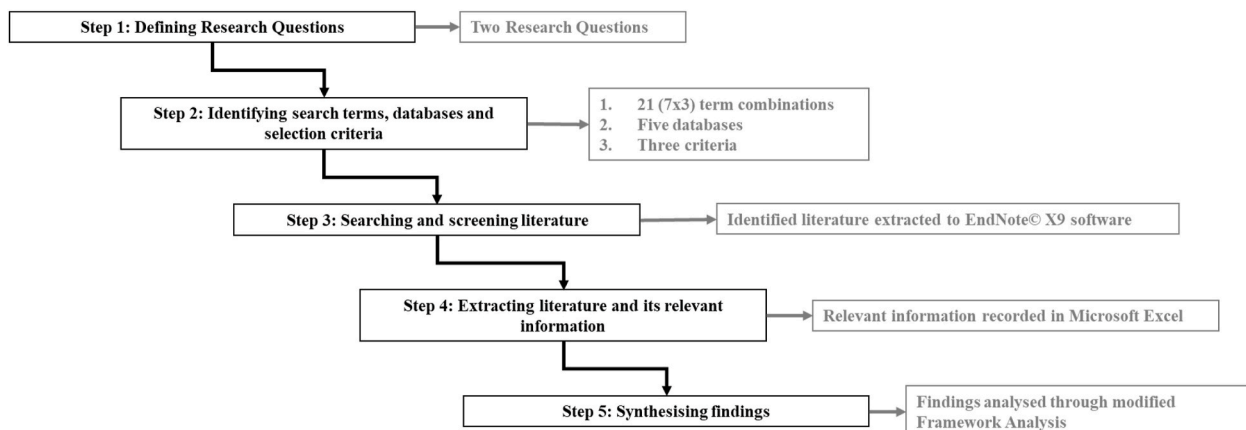

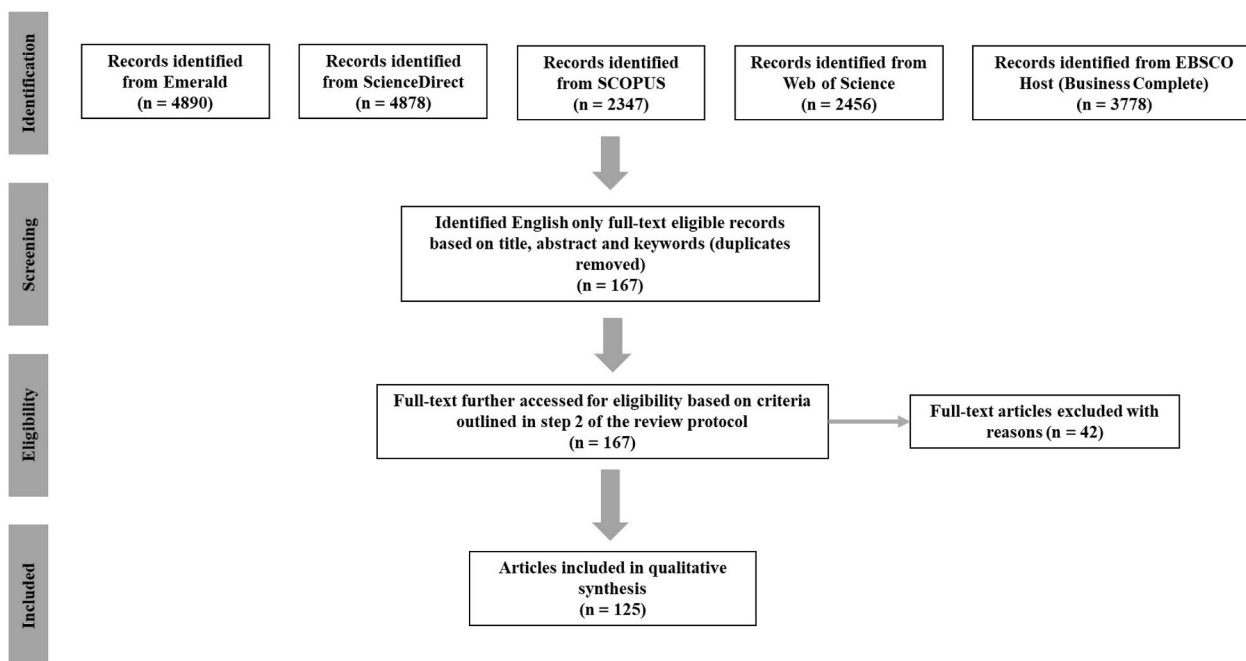**Fig. 2.** Systematic review protocol adapted from Yang et al. (2017).

Fig. 3. The modified PRISMA flowchart to assist the search process.

to the experiences that Dewey (1938) described. These experiences challenge the person's roles and assumptions, formulating ideas that potentially shifts one's perspectives, creating a transformation process (Mezirow, 1978). Finally, if these ideas are acknowledged and applied by the person to their everyday life, they experience changes (Pugh, 2011).

3. Methodology

3.1. Systematic narrative review

Given this study's goal is to develop a holistic conceptualisation for TE, this review employs a hybrid review methodology by combining the systematic quantitative identification of relevant literature, critical analysis, and a narrative outline of future directions (Jin & Wang, 2016). This method is preferred as it bridges the limitations of systematic quantitative and narrative reviews. First, systematic quantitative approaches are instrumental in identifying and mapping out literature trends in a structured, explicit, and reproducible manner (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Pickering & Byrne, 2014). It is the right choice in trans-disciplinary, natural, and social science research (Kamler, 2008; Lee & Kamler, 2008; Pickering & Byrne, 2014). However, while systematic quantitative reviews shine in its capabilities to reproduce findings in a comprehensive and structured manner, it often lacks the qualitative interpretive richness found in traditional narrative reviews. Contrary, traditional narrative reviews have depth and richness about specific subjects through their interpretive qualities. However, are often touted as potentially biased due to its unclear and irreproducible data collection methods (S. A. Cohen & Cohen, 2017; Jin & Wang, 2016; Mays et al., 2005). Using this hybrid method will enable mapping of current knowledge of TE through analysing past methods, experiences and delivering key dimensions. This review uses a five-step review protocol that has gained popularity in tourism research for its succinctness (Le et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2017) (Fig. 2).

The review begins with a general term of 'personal transformations in tourism' using google scholar and [a university's] library search database. After an extensive literature review and identifying common terminologies, 21 term combination (7 × 3) entered across five databases (Scopus, EBSCO Business Source Complete, Web of Science,

ScienceDirect, and Emerald) were established. These terms are 'transformati* experience', 'transformati* potential', 'transformati* process', 'transformati* power' and 'personal transformation'. 'Rite of passage' and 'pilgrimage' were subsequently added into the search term list as literature describes pilgrims' transformations through the concept of rite of passage. The (*) represents a wildcard in database searches that identifies either transformation or transformative. The initial search produced millions of hits as transformation/-ve is a multidisciplinary terminology. Thus, the supplementary keywords of 'travel', 'tourism', and 'hospitality' were applied, resulting in more than thousands of records in each database (see Fig. 3). While adding supplementary keywords reduced the search count from millions to thousands of hits, further screenings still identified studies unrelated to tourism experiences. As a result, the first main criterion for this study is to define a tourism experience, which is: *"… a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes"* (UNWTO, 2020). From this criterion, non-tourism experience related studies were excluded, and duplicate studies were removed. For example, Miles et al. (2019) explore the TE of being a high school dropout to a doctoral candidate. While this study is depicting *a TE*, tourism does not play a role in the author's autoethnographic study of TE and therefore, excluded from the analysis.

Database searches concluded on March 05, 2020, and publications released after this date were automatically excluded from the synthesis, resulting in 167 potentially eligible studies related to tourism. From this point, a second criterion is included such that studies that lack conceptual focus on consumer transformations (Zhang et al., 2008) or studies that fail to acknowledge TE because of travel or tourism experience (Kleiber et al., 2002) were excluded. For example, Zhang et al. (2008) describe the transformations of a destination's calligraphy heritage, identifying how this form of cultural heritage is transformed into means for a destination's tourism development. Correspondingly, with strict scrutiny, Kleiber et al.'s (2002) study were decidedly ineligible from analysis as the study highlights leisure as a resource to transformation but does not specifically outline tourism experience as a leisure resource.

The final criterion for inclusion and exclusion was that the publishing journal must be cited in the Excellence in Research for Australia
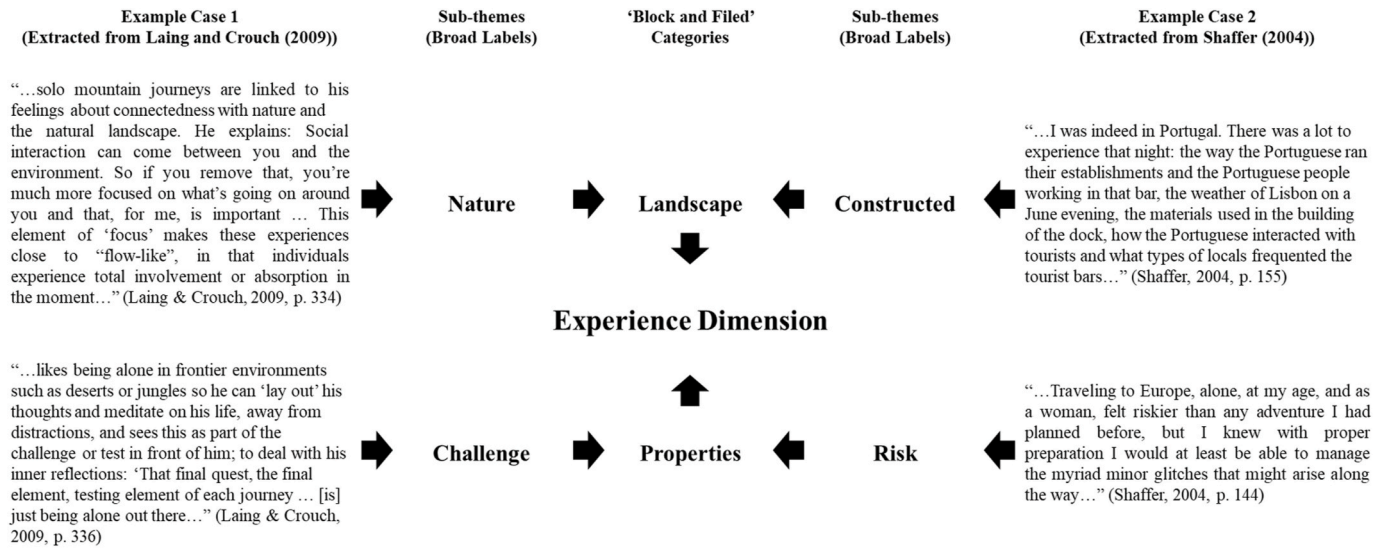
| Example Case 1 (Extracted from Laing and Crouch (2009)) | Sub-themes (Broad Labels) | 'Block and Filed' Categories | Sub-themes (Broad Labels) | Example Case 2 (Extracted from Shaffer (2004)) |

"…solo mountain journeys are linked to his feelings about connectedness with nature and the natural landscape. He explains: Social interaction can come between you and the environment. So if you remove that, you're much more focused on what's going on around you and that, for me, is important … This element of 'focus' makes these experiences close to "flow-like", in that individuals experience total involvement or absorption in the moment…" (Laing & Crouch, 2009, p. 334)

Nature ➡ **Landscape** ⬅ **Constructed**

"…I was indeed in Portugal. There was a lot to experience that night: the way the Portuguese ran their establishments and the Portuguese people working in that bar, the weather of Lisbon on a June evening, the materials used in the building of the dock, how the Portuguese interacted with tourists and what types of locals frequented the tourist bars…" (Shaffer, 2004, p. 155)

Experience Dimension

"…likes being alone in frontier environments such as deserts or jungles so he can 'lay out' his thoughts and meditate on his life, away from distractions, and sees this as part of the challenge or test in front of him; to deal with his inner reflections: 'That final quest, the final element, testing element of each journey … [is] just being alone out there…'" (Laing & Crouch, 2009, p. 336)

Challenge ➡ **Properties** ⬅ **Risk**

"…Traveling to Europe, alone, at my age, and as a woman, felt riskier than any adventure I had planned before, but I knew with proper preparation I would at least be able to manage the myriad minor glitches that might arise along the way…" (Shaffer, 2004, p. 144)

Fig. 4. Example of the modified framework analysis done to develop TE dimensions.

Research Design	Data Collection Method			# of Studies
Qualitative (n = 92)	Single Method (n = 58)	Interviews (Semi-Structured/In-Depth)		27
		Autoethnographic Fieldwork		7
		Participant-Generated (PG) Content	Blogs, Forums and Reviews	6
			Journals	3
			Books	2
		Self-Administered (SA) Open-Ended Surveys (Qual Surveys)		3
		Photo-Elicited Interviews		2
		Memory-Work (Discussions)		1
		Participatory Fieldwork		1
		Written Interviews e.g. Email		1
	Multi-Method *two or more methods* (n = 39)	Participatory Fieldwork (PF) &	Interviews	18
			PG content	2
			Interviews & PG Content	3
			Interviews & Documents	1
			PG Content & Discussions	1
			SA Qual Surveys, Interviews & PG Content	1
			Interviews, Discussions, Documents & Online Promotional Materials	1
		Interviews &	PG Content	4
			Focus Groups	1
			SA Qual Surveys	1
			Focus Groups & SA Qual Surveys	1
			PG Content, SA Qual Surveys	1
		Non-Participatory Fieldwork (NPF) &	Interviews	2
			Interviews & Documents	1
		PG Content &	SA Qual Surveys	1
Mixed-Methods (n = 9)	Interviews, Participatory Fieldwork & In-Person SA Quant Surveys			3
	Interviews & Online SA Quant Surveys			2
	Online SA Qual & Quant Surveys			2
	In-Person SA Qual & Quant Surveys			1
	Online SA Quant Surveys, Interviews & Participatory Fieldwork			1
Quantitative (n = 5)	In-Person SA Quant Surveys			3
	Online SA Quant Surveys			2
Total Studies				**106**

Fig. 5. Research designs and data collection methods used in TE.

(ERA) or Australian Business Deans' Council (ABDC) list. By including all ERA and ABDC cited journals, as opposed to those only ranked A* or A in the ABDC list, articles are ensured for quality through peer-review while negating bias towards journal rankings (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019). A modified preferred reporting item for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flowchart (Moher et al., 2009) assisted the search process (Fig. 3). This review's further limitations focus on English language peer-reviewed studies published in journals as empirical and conceptual papers, research notes, or commentaries. The records were compiled in Microsoft Excel for qualitative synthesis.

Findings were analysed using modified framework analysis, involving familiarisation, block and filing, mapping, and interpretation (Grbich, 2013; J.; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Familiarisation is the repeated examination of articles that generates theoretical hunches within the phenomenon (J. Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Each study was considered an individual case that could produce several broad labels (sub-themes) that were subsequently blocked and filed (Grbich, 2013; J.; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). For example, some identified sub-themes

Methods	Broad Experience Categories		Specific Context
Qualitative (n = 92)	General Travel and Tourism (29)	Activity (17)	➢ Personally Significant Trips (5) ➢ Backpacking (4) ➢ Career Break & Gap Year (3) ➢ Travel Writing & Blogging (3) ➢ Photography (1) ➢ Tourism Providers (n = 1)
		Gender (8)	➢ Female only (6) ➢ Male/Female Comparison (2)
		Nationality (4)	➢ Brazilian tourists (1) ➢ British tourists (1) ➢ Italian travellers (1) ➢ North American & Europe continent (1)
	Educational (18)		➢ Short-term Study Abroad (< 6 months) (8) ➢ Study Abroad (6 months ~ 1 year) (4) ➢ Study Trips and Conferences (< 2 weeks) (4) ➢ International Sojourn (> 1 year) (2)
	Voluntourism (13)		➢ Voluntourists only (6) ➢ Voluntourism Stakeholders, Communities and Guides (6) ➢ Guides only (1)
	Cultural (10)		➢ Indigenous Tourism (3) ➢ Roots and VFR (3) ➢ Dark Tourism (1) ➢ Slum Tourism (1) ➢ Mosque Tours (1)
	Wellness (9)		➢ Pilgrimage (7) ➢ Health Retreats, including Yoga (2)
	Nature-Based (8)		➢ Ecotourism (5) ➢ National Parks (1) ➢ Adventure (1) ➢ Frontier (1)
	Niche Tourism (6)		➢ Counterculture (5) ➢ Couchsurfing (1)
Mixed-Methods (n = 9)	Nature-based (3)		➢ Ecotourism Guides (1) ➢ Frontier (1) ➢ National Parks (1)
	Voluntourism (1)		➢ Voluntourists only (1)
	Wellness (2)		➢ Beauty Spa, Spiritual Retreats and Lifestyle Resorts (1) ➢ Yoga retreats (1)
	Cultural (2)		➢ Indigenous Tourism (1) ➢ Dark Tourism (1)
	Educational (1)		➢ Short-term Study Abroad (< 6 months) (1)
Quantitative (n = 5)	Educational (2)		➢ Study Abroad (6 months ~ 1 year) (2)
	Voluntourism (2)		➢ Korean Voluntourists (1) ➢ Potential Voluntourists (1)
	Wellness (1)		➢ Health Tourists (1)

Fig. 6. TE studies, methods and contexts. *Figure is based on *n = 106*, excludes conceptual papers, commentaries, and reviews (*n = 19*).

were nature and challenge in Laing and Crouch's (2009) case, while constructed landscapes and risk were identified in Shaffer's (2004) case. These were correspondingly blocked and filed as landscape and properties. This process keeps case data largely intact and organised, based on sub-themes which were constantly compared (Grbich, 2013). Fig. 4 depicts this process of producing sub-themes and subsequently, the block and file categories. Note: Due to space limitations and visibility purposes, Fig. 4 is dramatically simplified. Sub-themes were mapped, which produced connections between cases and resulted in the TE framework (Fig. 9). The final process involved interpretation, presented in the following section.

4. Findings

4.1. Applied methods and experiences studied

The studies — based on n = 106 — were categorised into seven broad types of experiences: general travel and tourism (29), educational (21),

voluntourism (16), cultural (11), nature-based (11), wellness (12), and niche tourism (6) (Fig. 5). The remaining 19 studies were conceptual papers, reviews, or commentaries. Qualitative methods and interpretive paradigms currently dominate TE research within these broadly categorised experiences. Single qualitative data collection, such as interviews (27), was the most dominant method applied, while participatory observation and interviews (18) formed the dominant multi-method qualitative approach (Fig. 5).

Future research should employ other paradigms and unique methods — such as those applied by Rouzrokh et al. (2017) or Rydzik et al. (2013) — as it provides unique insights into TE. Quantitative and mixed-methods research has only been applied to voluntourism, wellness, nature-based, and educational experiences; and were conducted without a measurement scale specifically designed to test TE. Developing a TE scale presents a significant opportunity in TE research (Knollenberg et al., 2014; Soulard et al., 2019).

Fig. 6 depicts experiences where transformations were achieved and highlights the current fragmentation within the TE context. Qualitative
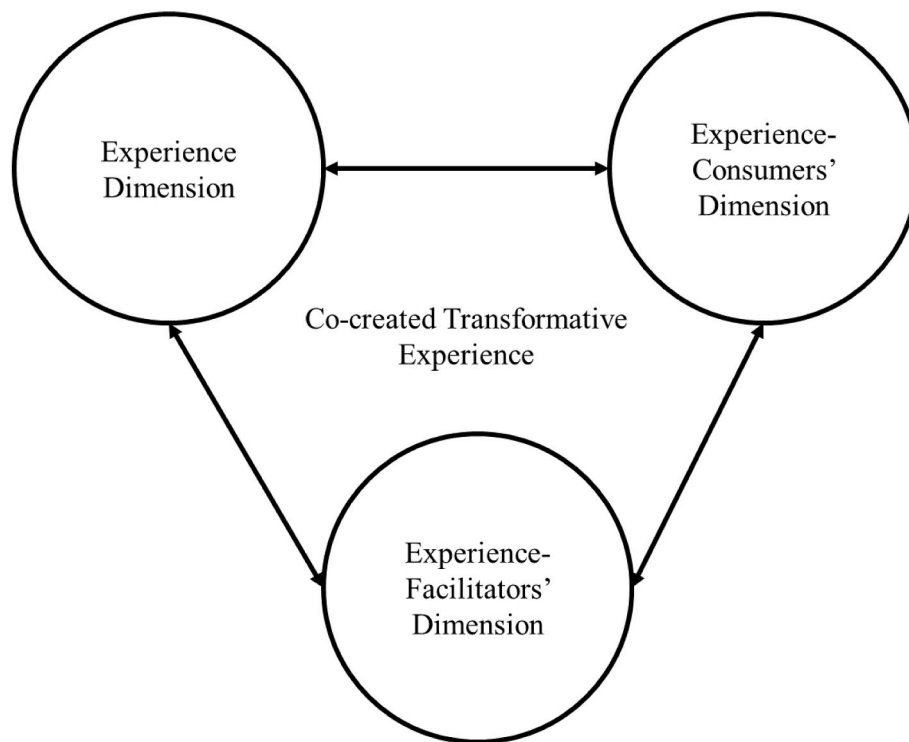
Fig. 7. The co-created base TE framework.

research in general travel and tourism experiences (n = 29) appear the largest. This research area focuses on analysing consumer experiences irrespective of purpose and context and can be broken down based on activity (18), gender (8) or nationality (4). Research would benefit from studies that focused on consumers outside of American and European continents and expanded to other experiences such as cultural or niche tourism.

4.2. Transformations as a co-created experience

The analysis revealed that tourism experiences hold transformative potential as it enables consumers to break away from their comfort zones (Kottler, 1998). Such experiences can also challenge consumers and broaden their knowledge (Young et al., 2017). However, consumers require mindful interpretation of their experiences, which may be conditioned by their intention, motivation, and associations to roles and routines before travel, for transformations to occur (Lean, 2012). Kottler (1998) touted that transformations require a primed state, whereby consumers actively focus on transforming during their experience. Other scholars, however, found that transformations can occur unexpectedly, because of peak experiences or from awe with the experience (Kirillova et al., 2017b).

The following co-created TE framework constitutes three main dimensions: experience, experience-consumer, and experience-facilitator (Fig. 7). Each dimension emphasises a different component. The experience focuses on place characteristics, consumer focuses on cognition and emotion, while experience-facilitator focuses on experience providers and their respective facilitators.

4.3. Experience dimension

The experience dimension contains the characteristics of the experience. These characteristics hold transformative potential and are subject to the interactions with experience-facilitator and/or experience-consumer dimensions for transformations. It is composed of the landscape, social dynamics, and properties of the experience.

4.3.1. Landscape

The landscape can be natural and/or constructed. In many nature-based experiences, natural landscapes trigger transformations (Hitchner et al., 2019; Wolf et al., 2015). Nature may inspire a sense of awe or freedom from everyday life as consumers explore remote areas during their heroic journeys (Laing & Crouch, 2009). Awe is a peak, spiritual, optimal, or extraordinary experience that affects consumers in psychologically dramatic ways, potentially fostering transformations (Powell et al., 2011). Often, consumers immerse themselves in nature as a form of modern pilgrimage, allowing them to complete personal transformational journeys (Hitchner et al., 2019). Awe of wildlife beauty also allows consumers to appreciate their relationship with nature (Moal-Ulvoas & Taylor, 2014).

Constructed landscapes are human-made sites. For example, retreat experiences have carefully designed facilities within nature to foster a sense of serenity (Dillette et al., 2019). Natural and constructed spaces often trigger TE in tandem. In backpacking examples, consumers described romantic imageries of seeing authentic sites off the beaten path; however, constructed landscapes added to their authentic experience (Noy, 2004; Shaffer, 2004). Dark tourism sites have become significant international attractions, constructed within carefully managed natural environments holding significant historical and educational properties (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). Likewise, pilgrimage routes offer healing energies from constructed and natural landscapes, layered with cultural, historical, religious, and spiritual significance (Fedele, 2014).

4.3.2. Social dynamics

Social dynamics was a characteristic found in most TE, holding the transformative potential to socially bond or draw comparisons. Consumers described encounters with others to connect and bond with during their experience (Brocious, 2017; Morgan, 2010). This characteristic intensified when the experience was in a group setting, such as wellness (pilgrimage), niche (couch-surfing), or nature-based experiences (national parks). Studies on pilgrimage described this as *communitas*, a spontaneous social bond between those sharing a liminal

experience (Luik, 2012). *Communitas* can potentially prime consumers' mindsets towards transformation by providing "appropriate emotional and cognitive support" (Morgan, 2010, p. 263). *Communitas* developed when consumers shared "secrets, worries, and burdens" with strangers while being physically engaged with the environment (Luik, 2012, p. 27). Couch-surfing experiences portrayed it as socialisation (Decrop et al., 2018), while national park tours interpreted it as social connectedness (Wolf et al., 2015). Social bonding induces positive experiences in the destination, fosters positive transformations, and accentuates consumers' place attachment (Decrop et al., 2018; Wolf et al., 2015).

Contrary to social bonding are socio-cultural comparisons, a characteristic that exists in experiences in different cultural contexts (Dass-Brailsford & Serrano, 2011). Contrasts with home life often occur when travelling, creating hierarchical oppositions such as self vs others (Country et al., 2016). In most cases, the other is drawn as the antithesis when consumers narrate their experiences. Consumers often see the world from within their cultural interpretations and, research often emphasises a colonial and orientalised lens (Fordham, 2005). Thus, viewing the other as something exotic or authentic through gazing (Belk & Yeh, 2011; Noy, 2004). Gazing and romanticising others may initiate TE, as consumers begin to draw comparisons (Morgan, 2010; Pung et al., 2019). For example, when transnational migrants or adoptees returned to their birth countries, they compare their social environments resulting in personal transformations (Brocious, 2017; Marschall, 2017). However, comparisons may prevent TE, as well. There was anecdotal evidence of consumers reinforcing their pre-existing conceptions and firmly held perspectives, resulting in failed transformations (Patterson, 2015). Understanding how failed transformations occur in a different cultural setting is an avenue for further research to understand better how culture shapes consumers' TE.

4.3.3. Properties

Properties are distinct conditions that different TE's offer perceived within consumers' minds, including the presence of risk, challenge, novelty, or safety. Many experiences within natural environments have properties of risk and challenge. In the process of triumphing over risky and challenging situations prompts strong emotions and engagement, which triggers consumers' TE (Bosangit et al., 2015; McWha et al., 2018). For example, frontier experience consumers often travel to hazardous locations (e.g., pole trekking, deep-sea diving, climbing the highest mountains) to achieve their heroic journey (Laing & Crouch, 2009). The treacherousness presents significant risks for frontier consumers while also creating a sense of novelty since few would partake in such experiences (Laing & Crouch, 2009). Risk-taking is considered a way to touch the inner spirit, as consumers experience transformation by pushing their boundaries and overcoming their limitations (Myers, 2010). Novelty is a sense where the experience is new or different from consumers' lives (Bergs et al., 2019). Consumers develop this sense when they encounter foreign, exotic, or wild settings and cite previous experiences as reference points (Aquino et al., 2017; Coetzee et al., 2019).

Some experiences provide a sense of safety. For example, counterculture experiences allow participants to freely engage in their ideas and freely explore identities without judgment (Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018). Often, being in the presence of like-minded individuals allows those marginalised within society to feel a sense of relief and can safely enjoy their spirituality, sexuality, community, and activism without alienation or negative judgment (Jones & Mair, 2014). Alternatively, consumers in retreats also tout spiritual safety in their experiences, allowing freedom from unnecessary thoughts and mindful engagement with nature (Fu et al., 2015).

4.4. Experience-consumer dimension

The experience-consumer (consumer) dimension relates to any person consuming a tourism experience (e.g., traveller, student, tourist,

businessperson). This dimension has three aspects: the consumers' pre-trip factors, cognition, and emotion. The cognition and emotion aspects diverge into *in situ (during)* and *post-experience*.

4.4.1. Pre-trip factors

Consumers' pre-trip state of mind is imperative to the transformation process. Depending on their state of mind before their experience, consumers will either purposively transform or encounter transformations incidentally (Marschall, 2017). For consumers who experience TE, travel is connected to moments in their lives when personal circumstances are open to question (Desforges, 2000; Willson et al., 2013). These consumers have purposive intentions, using their experiences as a means to distract themselves from their circumstances (e.g., job loss, marriage difficulties, loss of loved ones) (Bagnoli, 2009; Curtin & Brown, 2018). Travel allows consumers to reimagine themselves, as they immerse in different experiences (Shaffer, 2004). Those with purposive intentions are likely to reflect actively and critically on their experiences. However, although TE often provides positive transformations for consumers, it may also come to the surrounding environment's cost. Brondo (2015) highlighted how some voluntourism consumers overlook their impacts on the local environment and communities due to being engrossed by the vision of saving. Thus, to better develop TE management practices, decolonised insights should be garnered better to understand these experiences' host community's perspectives.

Some consumers seek experiences purely as a means for pleasure but may unexpectedly encounter TE. For example, opportunist couch-surfers want a cheap holiday and do not focus on immersing in the experience (Decrop et al., 2018). However, these opportunists felt re-enchanted with life as they socially bonded with their hosts while navigating their experience off the beaten path (Decrop et al., 2018). E. Cohen (1979) previously noted that typical tourists were those only travelling for entertainment and were far from spiritual, forgoing religious voyages to find their centre (self). However, typical tourists can accept make-believe, the inauthentic, and submerse themselves in experiences without worrying about what is real (E. Cohen, 1979). Consumers were found capable of transforming through these make-believe experiences (Ourahmoune, 2016; Shaffer, 2004).

4.4.2. Cognition

Cognition is the mental processing of the experience, widely known as critical reflections in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991). Cognition triggers consumers' TE when they compare their observations and experiences to past reference points (Bell et al., 2016). Anecdotal evidence showed that potential barriers to transformation occur if consumers do not critically reflect (Foronda & Belknap, 2012). Cognition can occur *in situ*, during the experience, or post-experience (Küpers & Wee, 2018). Although consumers' minds perform cognition, tangible and intangible reflexive actions can facilitate it. Some examples of tangible actions include travel writing or blogging (Bosangit et al., 2015), photo-taking (Belk & Yeh, 2011), or buying souvenirs (Fedele, 2014). Likewise, intangible actions like the narration of experiences to friends and family (Nada et al., 2018), through the general public (using blogs), or even towards researchers during interviews, are forms of reflexivity that occurs post-experience (Mkono, 2016). Narratives illuminate consumers' experiences, as the "narrative and self are inseparable, born out of experiences and give shape to experience" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 19). Therefore, storytelling and autoethnographic accounts are powerful research tools that elucidate TE (Lukoff, 2018; Shaffer, 2004; Tamashiro, 2018). These studies highlight cognition at different points in time, providing an avenue for further research. Understanding the temporal aspects of cognition may strengthen transformative outcomes in consumers.

4.4.3. Emotion

Emotion is another fundamental aspect of consumers' TE. It is

necessary for sensemaking, often depicted through feelings towards the experience (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). Feelings, like awe, serenity, safety, or energy in the experience, link external sensory perceptions to consumers' internal feelings (Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018; Gezon, 2018). Sharma and Rickly (2019) in an analysis of death ritual sites, recanted that the smell of smoke and ashes are analogised as death itself, becoming so powerful that consumers reflected on philosophical debates of life and death. Consumers' interactions with natural, cultural, and social environments often invoke strong emotions and deep cognition; and are evident across many different experiences (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Kirillova et al., 2017b). There are avenues for further research, as gendered differences to embodied experiences are touted (Pung et al., 2019).

4.5. Experience-facilitator dimension

The third dimension in co-created TE is the experience-facilitator. This dimension consists of experience providers and their respective facilitators interacting with consumers. Facilitators play a role in shaping consumers' experience and can be hosts, guides, or even instructors/researchers if the experience is an educational field trip (Llyod et al., 2015). Experience-facilitators are equally capable of TE through cognition and emotion as they are human elements involved in shaping the experience (Walker & Weiler, 2017).

Many experience providers have established strategies and use various methods to facilitate TE in consumers (Soulard et al., 2019). For example, in an examination of retreats, consumers noted how class flexibility, the packages offered, health regime designs, and the compassionate, friendly, and personable service delivered by experience-facilitators contributed to the relaxing atmosphere that triggered transformations (Fu et al., 2015). Likewise, a study on mosque tours revealed how guides actively bridged cultural barriers by drawing similarities in their religious culture to contemporary society (Becker, 2018). Dark tourism site managers revealed strategies that aimed to convey reconstructed socially symbolic meanings to consumers, from a place of death and suffering to an educational place for the future, such that consumers developed positive perspectives towards others (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). Ecotourism experiences also incorporate local culture, environment, and livelihood aspects taught by local experts to enhance consumers' learning and education (Walter & Reimer, 2012). As ecotourism consumers live with locals for an extended period, they can exchange cultures and learn local ways of life; however, this requires sincerity for TE to occur (Prince, 2017).

Facilitators are known to experience TE, but due to TE's consumer focus, have been understudied. To date, there has been only limited research that explored the facilitators of TE, mostly within nature-based (Sen & Walter, 2020) and educational experiences (Flaherty et al., 2019). However, there was anecdotal evidence of facilitators in other experiences being transformed (Becker, 2018). For example, instructors experienced similar discomfort and uncertainty like their students; however, often figuratively and physically separated and overlooked (Flaherty et al., 2019). Thus, future research could focus on the dual role of facilitators in actively facilitating consumers' and as a transformed participant in TE.

4.6. Transformative outcomes (changes)

The outcomes of TE are known as changes or gains. These can be major or minor changes that vary in endurance (permanency) or transiency (durability). Changes are further characterised as tangible (external bodily appearance changes or skill gains) or intangible (psychological changes in beliefs or attitudes) (Fu et al., 2015). Major changes are more profound psychological changes in beliefs and attitudes, while minor changes can be physical body changes or skill development (Ourahmoune, 2016; Walter & Reimer, 2012). These changes can influence one another, for example, bodily appearance can

affect self-belief and attitude, but further analysis required to identify significance (Fu et al., 2015). From this initial conceptualisation, further literature reviews produced themes of psychological, physical, social, and knowledge gains from TE. Psychological and physical changes are internal personal change, while knowledge and social change have external societal implications.

4.6.1. Psychological

The most profound change, when referring to TE, is psychological change. Consumers often cited improved self-belief and self-perspectives (Brown, 2009) or a sense of peace, freedom, and empowerment (Yang et al., 2018). Some consumers expressed changes to their identity, resulting from improved self-belief or self-perspective (McWha et al., 2018). Consumers felt compelled to change lifestyles to support their new realisations when exposed to alternative modes of existence in culturally different contexts (Lukoff, 2018).

There were also reports of different outcomes when describing identity transformations. The most profound of all psychological change would likely be enduring identity (Ourahmoune, 2016). Enduring identity is a dramatic shift in world view, a life-changing moment of TE, that compels consumers to change their life priorities and sustained behaviours (Willson et al., 2013). Composite identity transformation combines old and new perspectives to create significant depth and breadth to one's current identity (Ourahmoune, 2016). In many educational experiences, students become global citizens as they gain new knowledge of the world that enhances themselves individually and professionally (Grabowski et al., 2017). Both enduring and composite identities highlight the power of TE; however, the literature tends to emphasise dramatic shifts as a transformative outcome (Brown, 2009). This likely stems from conceptual differences in TE and future research should observe this.

Consumers may experience angst when reconciling their routine life with their newly acquired perspectives, as they need to fit these new ideas within social expectations or risk alienation (Brown, 2009; Kirillova et al., 2017a). Alienation anxiety can potentially form barriers to enduring transformations. Further research should seek to understand transformation barriers to better support consumers' post-TE reintegration (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011).

4.6.2. Physical (includes tangible skills)

Physical changes refer to physical change and/or skill development. These are tangible changes observed in consumers' TE, aided by facilitators to some extent (K. Liang et al., 2015). For example, consumers partaking in wellness experiences cite an improved physique (Dillette et al., 2019), while experiences within nature may develop new tangible skills (Bosangit et al., 2015). Some examples of tangible skills include learning to hike, snorkel, kayak, fish, sewing, cooking, and planting (Walter, 2016).

Overcoming personal physical limitations was touted as part of a spiritual transformation, and was often associated with TE (Wolf et al., 2015). Overcoming limitations improves self-efficacy and self-esteem in consumers (Brown, 2009). However, to what extent this affects the consumers' psychological changes are unknown. Likewise, with the prominence of medical and cosmetic tourism, further research is required to understand how these forms of experiences could potentially be transformative, and how physical (e.g., cosmetic surgery) or health changes contribute to psychological transformations (L. J. Liang et al., 2019; Mathijsen, 2019).

4.6.3. Social

Social changes refer to consumers' mindset towards others and potentially impacts consumers' social surroundings when gaining broad-mindedness and tolerance for others. An essential outcome of TE is not only self-actualisation but developing civic attitudes, openness, harmony, altruism, friendship, trust, and cross-cultural understanding (Becker, 2018). For example, backpackers obtained social capital by

Dimensions	Characteristics		Examples
Experience	Landscape	Natural	Community-based ecotourism (Walter, 2016; Walter & Reimer, 2012); Frontier travel (Laing & Crouch, 2009; Powell et al., 2012); Geotourism (Aquino et al., 2018); National parks & protected areas (Wolf et al., 2015, 2017)
		Constructed Architectures	Dark tourism sites (Magee & Gilmore, 2015); Shrines/pilgrimage routes (della Dora, 2012; Fedele, 2014); Retreats (Bowers & Cheer, 2017; Dillette et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2015);
	Social Dynamics	Social Bonding	Couch-surfers (Decrop et al., 2018); National park visitors (Wolf et al., 2015); Pilgrims (Luik, 2012; Morgan, 2010)
		Socio-Cultural Comparisons	Independent tourists & backpackers (Belk & Yeh, 2011; Noy, 2004); Indigenous tourism experiences (Country et al., 2016); Study abroad programs (Dass-Brailsford & Serrano, 2010; Fordham, 2005); Transnational adoptees (Brocious, 2017); Transnational migrants (Marschall, 2017)
	Properties	Risk	Frontier tourists (Laing & Crouch, 2009; Powell et al., 2012); Solo female travellers (Yang et al., 2018); Travel bloggers/writers (Bosangit et al., 2015; McWha et al., 2018)
		Challenge	Career-break travellers (Hirschorn & Hefferon, 2013); Pilgrims (Luik, 2012); Study abroad students (Santoro & Major, 2012); Young travellers (Bell, 2002);
		Novelty	Independent tourists (Kirillova et al., 2017; Pung & Del Chiappa, 2020); Study abroad students (Kupers & Wee, 2018); Wellness tourists (Voigt et al., 2011)
		Safety	Counterculture tourists (Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018; Jones, 2010; Jones & Mair, 2014); LGBTQ tourists (Coetzee et al., 2019); Retreat participants (Fu et al., 2015)
Experience-Consumer	Pre-trip Factors	Purposive	Difficult personal circumstances, finding purpose and meaning (Bagnoli, 2009; Brown, 2013; Curtin & Brown, 2018; Fu et al., 2015; Kirillova et al., 2017; Kottler, 1998)
		Incidental	Leisure and pleasure (Decrop et al., 2018; Ourahmoune, 2016)
	Cognition		Critical reflections (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Kupers & Wee, 2018); Using tangible actions (e.g. Travel writing/blogging (Bosangit et al., 2015; McWha et al., 2018); Photo-taking (Belk & Yeh, 2011); Tokens and memorabilia (Bell, 2002; Fedele, 2014; McWha et al., 2018)); Intangible actions (e.g. Telling friends and family (Nada et al., 2018); Story-telling and autoethnographies (Lukoff, 2018; Shaffer, 2004))
	Emotion		Peak experiences (Bergs et al., 2019; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b); Flow-like, peace and tranquillity (Laing & Crouch, 2009; Pung et al., 2019); Fun (Ulusoy, 2016)
	Transformative Outcomes	Psychological	Improved self-belief and self-perspectives (Brown, 2009); Identity changes (McWha et al., 2018); Freedom and empowerment (Yang et al., 2018)
		Physical	Improved physique (Dillette et al., 2019); Improved tangible skills (Bosangit et al., 2015; Walter, 2016)
		Social	Developing civic attitudes (Becker, 2018); Increased tolerance and awareness of others (O'Reilly, 2006); Kindness and reciprocity (Decrop et al., 2018)
		Knowledge	Developed new lifestyle knowledges (Dillette et al., 2019; Laing & Frost, 2017; Schneller & Coburn, 2018); Cultural, environmental and economic sustainability techniques (Walter & Reimer, 2017; Willetts, 2017)
Experience-Facilitator			Glocalisation (Soulard et al., 2019); Flexible packages and classes (Fu et al., 2015); Drawing similarities and bridging cultural barriers (Becker, 2018); Conveying reconstructed meanings (Magee & Gilmore, 2015); Teaching local lifestyle through local experts (Walter & Reimer, 2012)

Fig. 8. Summary of TE dimensions, the characteristics, and some examples.

receiving tangible (social networks and connections) and intangible (shared norms and ideas) change which ultimately improved their tolerance and awareness of others (O'Reilly, 2006). Social changes also occur in other experiences like couch-surfing, where consumers socialise and acculturate in a disconnected world (Decrop et al., 2018). Ultimately, couch-surfing consumers reciprocated their received kindness

by becoming more engaged in couch-surfing communities, a sign of how consumer transformations can potentially lead to societal transformations (Decrop et al., 2018).

In an era where constant turmoil and conflict occur due to a lack of cultural understanding, developing openness and understanding for others is extremely important. A study of mosque tours demonstrated
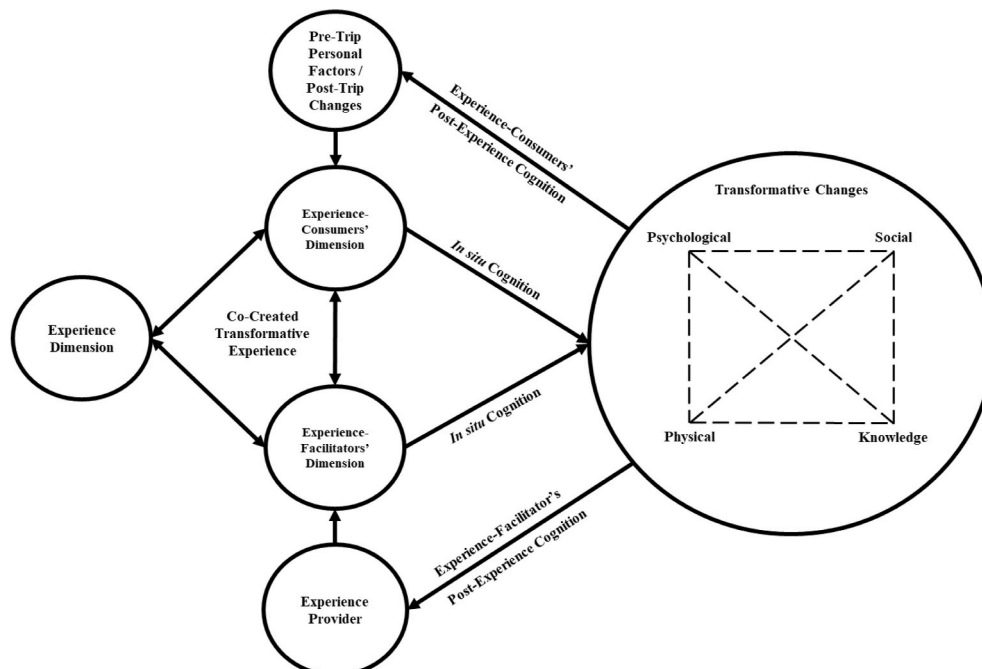

Fig. 9. The TE framework and its transformative outcomes.

how guides were actively trying to bridge differences in their local communities by educating the public about their religion to foster a place within the broader society (Becker, 2018). These guides voluntarily gave up their time, hoping for consumers to be transformed (Becker, 2018). Although current TE research exhibits this link from personal to societal transformation, research has yet to explore TE consumers' impact on their society upon returning home, which suggests another fruitful avenue for future research.

4.6.4. Knowledge

Literature thus far has acknowledged, to some degree, the importance of knowledge about the consumer (psychological) or about other people (social changes). Knowledge gains consist of epistemic changes that allow consumers to instil development in themselves or society, which has personal and societal implications. Such knowledge gains were apparent in wellness and nature-based experiences (Dillette et al., 2019; Schneller & Coburn, 2018; Walter, 2016). Experiences allow consumers to develop new knowledge on better lifestyles or skills that fostered improvement in individuals they would not otherwise know (Laing & Frost, 2017).

In nature-based experiences, on-site experiential learning activities about the natural environment, sustainable harvesting and cultural exchange foster environmental awareness, cultural, and economic sustainability in consumers (Walter & Reimer, 2012; Willetts, 2017). Consumers then use their newfound knowledge to participate in other environmental conservation initiatives (planting trees), community development (teaching children or fair-trade initiatives) and participate in political activism for environmental sustainability back home (Walter, 2016). In many cases, consumers may return multiple times, maintain healthy relationships post-visit, become involved in pro-environmental activities, and experience increased volunteerism rates in their home environment (Schneller & Coburn, 2018).

Like social change, many studies highlighted the outcomes of consumers and were less focused on experience-facilitators. Christie and Mason (2003) previously contended that guides could also critically reflect on their own and organisational values. Future research should aim to look at knowledge change in facilitators as it could prove useful in redeveloping management or facilitation strategies, especially if experience providers were seeking to improve services for consumers. Fig. 8 summarises the findings section of this article.

5. Conclusion

This article systematically conceptualised the TE process by holistically and interpretively plotting the findings into different dimensions and outcomes as summarised in Fig. 9.

Tourism experiences hold transformative potential through the landscape, social dynamics, and its properties. When consumers encounter these characteristics, the experience may prompt their cognition and emotion, which results in psychological, physical, social, or knowledge changes. While some consumers may have *in situ* cognition, which creates immediate acknowledgement of their experience's significance, others may require post-experience cognition to identify impacts on their lives. In specific experiences, consumers interact with experience-facilitators, resulting in co-transformation for both consumer and facilitator (Rydzik et al., 2013). While consumer transformation results in changes to their circumstances in most cases, transformative outcomes in facilitators may impact on how the overall experience is managed or provided. However, this would require further exploration given a consumer focus within the literature to date.

5.1. Academic and practical implications

This review and framework capture a multi-angled approach to TE through a co-created perspective. Current research is contextually fragmented, which potentially results in the dominance of the consumer

Table 1
Additional future research directions on TE.

Dimension	Characteristic	Future Research Directions
Experience	Landscape	This review acknowledges the importance of both natural and constructed landscapes. Destination managers and TE providers may find it useful to have data that identifies inefficiencies in landscape resource use and how it triggers TE. Future research may incorporate quantitative analysis to test the effect of landscape on consumers' transformation.
	Social Dynamic	Consumers enacting cross-cultural comparisons may reinforce their pre-existing conceptions and firmly held perspectives, resulting in failed transformations (Patterson, 2015). Thus, there is a need to understand how culture shapes consumers' TE and identify factors to improve the potential of TE in a different cultural setting. Future research could employ a cross-cultural lens, using a multi-method qualitative approach to understand: 1) the role of culture in TE of a different cultural environment and 2) the key triggers, barriers and outcomes in different cultural environments.
	Properties	This literature review has exhibited importance to four properties, including risk, challenge, novelty, and safety. Future research can further explore different properties that exist within different tourism contexts. For example, Magee and Gilmore (2015) indicated that site authenticity is an essential factor within the servicescape, particularly to create transformative value in dark tourism sites. Future research may qualitatively explore whether authenticity plays a role in consumers' transformative process, and if so, to what extent. TE providers may find this useful, particularly those managing a tourism site, to identify if authenticity is essential for consumers' TE.
Experience-Consumer	Pre-Trip Factors	TE facilitators may need to understand the motivations and profiles of TE consumers to design better TE marketing materials, products, and services (Robledo & Batle, 2017). Future research could employ mixed methods approaches to 1) identify the motivations and TE consumers' profile of a particular tourism experience, 2) understand how existing TE marketing materials in a particular tourism experience is promoted in terms of its transformative power and 3) potentially measure the impacts of marketing materials in enticing potential TE consumers.
	Cognition	Cognition can occur *in situ*, during the experience, or post-experience (Küpers & Wee, 2018; Pung et al., 2020). Many studies on TE highlight cognition at different points in time, providing an avenue for further research. Understanding the temporal aspects of cognition may strengthen consumers' transformative outcomes, as TE providers may provide support via interpretation during crucial moments of disorienting dilemmas (Pung et al., 2020). Future research could employ a longitudinal experimental study to identify when cognition is triggered, its barriers, and identify consumer actions during

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Dimension	Characteristic	Future Research Directions
	Emotion	cognition processes. This may assist in identifying suitable interpretation and support strategies for TE consumers. Current studies on the emotional aspects of TE is predominantly qualitative (e.g., Fu et al. (2015), Kirillova et al. (2017b) and Laing and Crouch (2009)). While qualitative methods explored the different range and intensity of these emotions in the transformative process, future research into consumers' emotion in TE may consider utilising a combination of psychophysiological and traditional quantitative techniques to understand how emotions are elicited (Moyle et al., 2019). This may be useful for TE providers for developing promotional materials and provide additional visual stimuli that can enhance TE both *in situ* and post-experience.
Transformative Outcomes	Psychological	Future research should investigate the potential barriers of consumers' re-entry into home environments. Consumers may experience angst reconciling their routine life with newly acquired perspectives as they need to fit new ideas within existing social expectations or risk alienation (Brown, 2009; Kirillova et al., 2017a). Research into post-TE psychological transformation barriers through qualitative approaches may bring insight into different ways TE providers can assist consumers long-term.
	Physical	Overcoming physical limitations, undergoing a physical transformation, or acquiring a new skill was touted as part of a spiritual transformation as it improves self-efficacy and self-esteem in consumers (Bosangit et al., 2015; Brown, 2009; Wolf et al., 2015). However, to what extent physical transformations affect psychological changes are unknown. Future research may employ quantitative techniques to measure the effect physical transformations have on psychological changes. For example, post-cosmetic surgery during a cosmetic tour is a physical transformation and may impact an individual's self-confidence (psychological transformation).
	Social	Current TE research exhibits this links from personal to societal transformation (Becker, 2018; Decrop et al., 2018), research has yet to explore the impact of TE consumers on their society upon returning home. Future research may use qualitative methods to explore consumers' post-experience social transformative outcomes as it will indicate the potential of TE beyond the consumer.
	Knowledge	Christie and Mason (2003) previously contended that guides could also critically reflect on their own and organisational values. Future research should aim to look at knowledge change in facilitators as it could prove useful in redeveloping management or facilitation strategies, especially if experience providers were seeking to improve services for consumers.
Experience-Facilitator	TE Facilitation Strategies	Consumers who have experienced TE may return home extremely dissatisfied with their existing life, including pre-departure studies, work or career (Brown, 2009). Thus, how can TE providers

Table 1 (*continued*)

Dimension	Characteristic	Future Research Directions
		improve on their service and provide facilitation to TE consumers, post TE sustainably and strategically? Future research could employ a case study approach to 1) understand the issues faced by post-TE consumers in their home environments and 2) identify the resources and challenges faced by experience-facilitators in facilitating consumers post-TE. Adopting a consumer orientation and focusing on the total consumer experience may improve consumer satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, recommendations through word of mouth (Kandampully, 2000; Kandampully et al., 2018).
	Cognition & Emotion	Facilitators are known to experience TE, but due to TE's consumer focus, have been understudied. For example, instructors experienced similar discomfort and uncertainty like their students; however, often figuratively and physically separated and overlooked (Flaherty et al., 2019). By understanding the facilitators' dual role, TE providers may better manage and support TE facilitators and assist in their needs. Future research might employ a qualitative study to identify and understand: 1) the dual role of facilitators being both an active participant in facilitating consumers' TE and as a transformed participant in TE, 2) the transformation processes (both cognition and emotion) and different transformative outcomes of facilitators, and 3) how facilitators contribute or not contribute to their roles post-TE.

Note. This table suggests future research directions based on the different sub-themes identified within each dimension in this TE framework.

dimension. As this framework does not prioritise a theory or context, it may be useful to adapt this in different positivistic research designs. For example, quantitative research can test relationships between natural landscapes, emotion, and psychological change.

The framework also allows the intricacies of TE to be analysed. This framework's feedback loop (*in situ and post-experience links*) highlights a continuous process of TE. This framework assists in the analysis of temporal aspects of TE. In many free and independent travel experiences, consumers often encounter different facilitators (tour guides) that may assist with transformation at different points in time. Thus, rather than viewing the entirety of the experience as TE, scholars may pinpoint specific points in time that trigger consumers' TE. Future research might investigate how shorter tours (e.g., packaged tours employing different tour guides at different local destinations) facilitate consumers' TE. Perceiving TE, as a continuous process, allows further research on understanding the endurance of transformative outcomes post-experience, which is an avenue that is considered necessary but relatively understudied (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018).

These findings show that TE research has been dominated by qualitative studies and highlights how methodology affects TE conceptualisation. While qualitative methods are useful, there is a need for research using post-positivistic and quantitative approaches. Moreover, current TE research relies upon general travel and tourism, educational and voluntourism experiences. It is also consumer biased. Emphasising consumers undermines the significance of experience-facilitators. Future research could apply decolonised and critical perspectives to tackle social issues and create better management strategies for facilitators of TE (Brondo, 2015). Likewise, scholars should take their

positionality into account when examining TE as the research can alter how consumers perceive their experiences. There is also a need for more unique methods to be applied, as these methods may uncover new insights like co-transformations (Rouzrokh et al., 2017; Rydzik et al., 2013).

Several research areas require further attention. Further research is needed to understand transformation barriers as current studies depict different barriers occurring in different contexts and different stages of the experience (e.g., lack of cognition during the experience (*in situ*)) (Foronda & Belknap, 2012) or failing to readjust back home (post-experience) (Ourahmoune, 2016). There is also a need to understand the role of culture in TE, as anecdotal evidence suggests that non-transformations can occur, or negative perceptions reinforced due to strong-held beliefs (Patterson, 2015). Likewise, while TE has remained mostly hopeful in identifying consumers' positive transformations (Pope, 2018), there are also issues with such optimism. Some studies have uncovered cases of value conflicts between facilitators and consumers, resulting in negative transformations. Consumers may leave their experiences with doubt, uncertainty, and even frustration towards the culturally different others (Prince, 2017; Sharma & Rickly, 2019). Thus, scholars must begin exploring negative transformations in consumers or experience-facilitators to understand better how to prevent such outcomes from occurring. Table 1 provides an additional range of future research directions in TE.

As the transformation economy and the necessity for sustainable practices continues onward, scholars will need to examine TE dynamically. Implementing and adapting various theoretical or methodological approaches achieves this. For TE to truly transform consumers and their societies, research needs to extend and consider the different perspectives in play. This proposed conceptual framework attempts to provide a starting point but is limited by its capabilities to elucidate the subtle nuances that each of the reviewed studies offers. However, it does provide a foundation for those wishing to build on this co-created perspective.

Acknowledgements

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