Tourism Management 76 (2020) 103969

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Tourism Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tourman

A spectrum of indigenous tourism experiences as revealed through means-end chain analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Indigenous tourism
Ethnic culture
Tourist experience
Means-end chain
Spectrum
Value-led gains

ABSTRACT

Ethnic culture is the special attraction of indigenous tourism, and exotic culture plays different roles in tourists' experiences, reflecting distinctive meanings and values. This study examines the complexity and hierarchical nature of tourists' experiences at indigenous sites and deconstructs experience patterns using a means-end chain approach. Fifty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted and used to construct hierarchical value maps. Three sets of indigenous tourism experiences are identified: enjoying nature and a simple lifestyle, participating in indigenous activities, and experiencing ethnic culture. Two value-led gains are derived: happiness and enrichment. An experience spectrum is proposed from self-oriented, through self and others, to others-oriented, reflecting different orientations of pursuits that are expressed through experiencing indigenous tourism in various ways.

1. Introduction

Indigenous tourism is a global phenomenon that showcases ethnic distinctiveness, attracts tourists to acquire cross-cultural experiences, and provides pleasurable environments for their gaze (Urry, 1990). In the context of indigenous tourism, tourists' experiences reveal much about how indigenous cultures are delivered and consumed, the reasons for visitation, and even how individuals and societies conceptualize indigenous cultures (Pabel, Prideaux, & Thompson, 2017). Previous research has stressed that indigenous culture is indispensable to indigenous tourism experiences (Lin, Morgan, & Coble, 2013); nevertheless, this does not address the wide range of concerns for indigenous culture that are implicated. Indigenous tourism should involve sensitivity to using and changing ethnic cultures, as well as the unique attributes of indigenous attractions. Indigenous tourist experiences should not be treated only as one type of tourist experience; instead, the functions, appreciation, anticipation, associations, and influences of indigenous culture should be carefully scrutinized and strengthened. More research is required to explore the essence and complexity of indigenous tourism experiences as well as changes in indigenous culture.

Indigenous tourism experience is culturally specific and multifaceted in its presentation. Among the motivations and benefits frequently mentioned by visitors as they reflect upon their indigenous tourism experiences are learning something about the indigenes, authenticity, novelty, escape, having fun, and being entertained (Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Notzke, 2004; Pabel et al., 2017), which are subjective, intangible, ongoing and highly personal phenomena (O'Dell, 2007). They can be perceived as a continuum ranging from superficial and hedonic, to enriching, educational, and promoting personal growth and self-identity (Taylor, 2001). In spite of the considerable literature on tourists' experiences (Sharpley & Stone, 2012; Tussyadiah, 2014), the more limited indigenous research only partially unveils how tourists give meanings to their indigenous journeys. Therefore, decrypting the mystery of the meaning-making process would contribute to understanding of tourists' experiences and how indigenous culture contributes to them.

Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken (2017) reported that personal meanings of tourism experiences can better reinforce long-term well-being and quality of life than instantaneous hedonic enjoyment. Thus, not limited to immediate moments or events experienced, the understanding should encompass not only how experiences are evaluated but also the meanings ascribed to them. Tourists' experiences are inherently hierarchical in nature, from the activities in which participation occurs, the resulting sensations and evaluation, to the consequential reactions/benefits perceived by participants (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). This hierarchical quality implies the existence of multiple elements with linkages between them. Research on perceived experiences, including

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.103969
Received 19 February 2019; Received in revised form 9 July 2019; Accepted 19 August 2019

motivations, activities, preferences, values and meanings, is usually undertaken using quantitative methods through which tourists' decision making is expressed simply and explicitly. However, complex choices are often involved in the intricate cognitive structure, as well as the perceptions and evaluations of the attributes of the consumption experience (Lopez-Mosquera & Sanchez, 2011). The use of a qualitative approach, such as means-end chain analysis (see below) can address this challenge by tracing the process in a logical way to **re**veal the personal values/meanings at multiple levels of the consumption experience. By raising the complicated issue of indigenous tourist experiences, the purpose of this paper is to advance knowledge regarding the process of appreciating indigenous tourism, and to give prominence to the contentions embedded in indigenous culture that lie behind them.

2. Literature review

First, the nature of tourists' experiences will be explained in general, followed by consideration of the aspects pertinent to indigenous tourism. Overview of the extensive empirical research reveals the need for a strong conceptual base to support the literature. A means-end approach, which will be introduced at the end of this section, is a way of unraveling the complexities of indigenous tourism experiences and strengthening the conceptual underpinnings of such studies.

2.1. Nature of tourists' experiences

Experience can be defined as the process of getting knowledge or skills from doing, seeing, or feeling things (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). Specifically, experiences arise from undertaking activities and interacting with physical and social environments, in which social meanings embedded in the activities are generated, influencing the internal emotion and psychological states of participants (Ooi, 2005). Therefore, tourists' experiences can be understood as everything tourists go through at a destination, including their behaviors, perceptions, cognitions, and emotions, either expressed or implied (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). The importance of understanding tourists' experiences has long been recognized (Uriely, 2005), and is critical to identify the dedication of travelers to themselves and the destinations (Knobloch et al., 2017; Wearing & Foley, 2017). Serving as antecedents of behavioral intentions and associated with certain outcome variables such as perceived values or satisfaction (Song, Lee, Park, Hwang, & Reisinger, 2015), tourists' experiences are also useful in analyses of impact management (Walker & Moscardo, 2016), product design (Johnston & Kong, 2011), business opportunities and market strategies (Volo, 2009). For the above reasons, tourist experience is relevant to tourism businesses, which place tourists as clients at the center of the tourism supply.

Prat and Aspiunza (2012), in line with other researchers, asserted that the understanding of tourist experience should not be biased by the perspectives of tourism industries. How tourists experience their journey is "a complicated psychological process" (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010), and most research on experience has tended to focus on the evaluated experience and the emotional, psychological, spiritual, cognitive, or sociological expressions (Bosangit, Hibbert, & McCabe, 2015). In addition, the personal subjectivity of tourists' experiences is highlighted in Volo's study (2009), in which similar activities can be experienced very differently. Research by Knobloch et al. (2017) reported the intricate psychological transitions that involve emotions, personal meanings and values, and inform the relationships among activity, experience context and outcomes. Within these discourses, more research has been devoted to the search for meaningful experiences, such as mindfulness or memorable experiences in tourism experience studies (Bosangit et al., 2015; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), and attention has been shifted to how individuals actively interpret tourism events and attach their own meanings to them. Furthermore, emotional affections or psychological appreciation of experiences, like excitement, surprise, the unexpected, and once in a life time events, are perceived to be meaningful, remembered, and selectively reconstructed by tourists when describing a particular travel experience (Knobloch et al., 2017).

One of the pivotal subjective aspects of tourists' experiences is related to value insights. Values are persistent beliefs that guide attitudes, perceptions, lifestyle, decision making, and behaviors (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The values induced from tourism experiences represent both the internal and external rewards resulting from participation (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001), and these are important to the design and delivery of experiences (Tussyadiah, 2014). More importantly, tourists' experiences tend to display different aspects with respect to distinct value systems. In the study of Song et al. (2015), emotional values were found to be connected with aesthetic experiences, while functional values (trade-off utility) had a greater impact on educational experiences. Knobloch et al. (2017) further contrasted eudaimonic and hedonic experiences, and the results proved the latter governed momentary enjoyment, pleasure, or comfort, whereas the former presided over psychological well-being beyond the temporary experience of participation. Eudaimonic well-being plays an important role in guiding meaningful and valuable experiences, evoking a sense of inspiration or enrichment at a higher or broader level of functioning when tourism activities and events are experienced and perceived (Huta & Ryan, 2010).

The constructivist approach provides another perspective with which to comprehend the complexity and dynamics of tourists' experiences. In the early work of Clawson and Knetsch (1966), tourism or recreation experiences were considered as a logical sequence of phases, spanning from anticipation, travel-to, onsite, travel-back, and recollection. Similarly, Park and Santos (2017) adopted a sequential approach (pre-, during and post-travel) to explore the experiences of Korean backpackers to Europe. Ruhanen, Whitford, and McLennan (2015) examined the progressive narrowing of the choice set in decision making throughout experiences. Lin et al. (2013) employed means-end structure to examine the ultimate meaning and personal relevance to the tangible attributes of heritage. It is obvious that the identification of hierarchical sequences of experiences, especially those corresponding to tourists' psychological process, facilitates the understanding of the nature of tourists' experiences.

The great variety of hierarchical presentations of tourist experiences necessitates the creation of a rigorous conceptual framework to enhance comprehension of the complicated phenomenon. However, only a limited number of researchers have developed conceptual models or typologies of tourists' experiences. One example is the work of McKercher and du Cros (2002), who argued that cultural tourists' experiences can be segmented into purposeful, serendipitous, sightseeing, casual, and incidental ones based on the importance of cultural tourism in the travel decision and the depth of experience sought. Also, Cohen (1979) proposed a comprehensive framework for the phenomenology of tourists' experiences grounded upon structural-functionalism. He argued that tourists' experiences can be endowed with theoretical significance by relating them to an individual's quest for the center and the nature of such a center, referring to their own society as well as the centers acquired by visiting places. His conceptualization resulted in a five-fold typology of experiences: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential. Such frameworks are designed to capture systematically and logically the pluralities in the practice of tourists' experiences.

2.2. Indigenous tourism and tourists' experiences

Indigenous tourism began with pursuit of the exotic "other," differentness, and authentic experiences (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016). Commonly regarded as part of cultural tourism, a form of recreation combining cultural and natural resources, it is marketed to the public in terms of "quaint" customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples with indigenous culture placed in the center of the attraction. The increasing

interest in indigenous tourism has many causes, ranging from supply factors (such as heritage planning, economic needs and cultural revival) to demand factors (such as tourists' desires for creative, cultural, and authentic experiences or entertainment). It is assumed that an indigenous tourism site should offer a rich, accurate, and entertaining understanding of the cultural resources (Pabel et al., 2017), and tourists' experiences and comments on visiting sites provide managers with feedback to improve services and, meanwhile, bring up evaluations of the degree of commodification of indigenous culture.

The extant research on tourists visiting indigenous destinations has been concentrated on describing and understanding their motivations (McIntosh & Thyne, 2005; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999) and the normative issue of whether tourists' involvement is beneficial or detrimental to the hosts (Wu, Wall, & Tsou, 2014). Perspectives on indigenous tourism have varied from the host-guest nexus of tourism impacts (Ryan, Chang, & Huan, 2007), the conflicts and tensions between indigenous values, interpretation and tourism encroachment (Walker & Moscardo, 2016), to debates about contemporary tourist experiences (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). Hughes (1995) explained, from a broader viewpoint, that post-industrial and postmodern tourists have distinctive foci and the post-industrial segment is susceptible to the influences on the host population and is concerned with behaving responsibly in ethnic contact situations, whereas the postmodern segment enjoys contrived spectacles while remaining aware of their inauthenticity. Furthermore, Chang's study (2006) of the Rukai indigenous cultural festival in Taiwan demonstrated that tourist segments are diverse and the appeal of cultural otherness is a motivating factor even though it possesses an elusive nature. She argued that tourists within the groupings of "aboriginal cultural learners" and "active culture explorers" are more likely to be interested in experiencing backstage indigenous customs.

Tourists' perceived benefits and values regarding indigenous sites will eventually exert effects on future tourism development. In particular, tourists' responses, generated from reports on their experiences, are crucial in deciding upon the quality and display of indigenous culture (Smith, 1989). Their preferences for indigenous activities influence destination development and culturally acceptable products can thus be created. In contrast to the study by Xie and Wall (2002) in which a majority of tourists did not know indigenous cultures well and therefore judged service quality by stereotypical images, Wu, Liu, and Yu (2012) reported on tourists' seriousness towards indigenous tourism and classified them into three meaningful subgroups: "expert", "interested" and "apathetic." Their findings suggested that cultural valorization should incorporate tourists' perceived values regarding local identity within tourism offerings. Moreover, Wu et al. (2014) further emphasized that visitors with a serious attitude towards indigenous tourism will likely give stronger economic support to indigenous culture by spending on culture-related products and services and will pay greater respect for indigenous culture by seeking authentic experiences and donating for cultural conservation.

The preceding review demonstrates the substantial literature on tourists' participation in and evaluations of indigenous tourism, but seldom is the extensive empirical work conceptualized beyond the profiles of the tourists and characteristics of their participation. The attributes of tourists' cognitive processes regarding their indigenous tours still remain unclear, and how tourists' values guide the process of acquiring their indigenous tourism experiences needs unveiling.

2.3. Means-end chain method

MEC was originally developed to provide a theoretical structure linking values to human behavior and attitudes (Gutman, 1982) under the assumption that perception of a product or service is the result of associations between its attributes ("means") and more abstract cognitive schemata, including personal values underlying behaviors ("ends"). MEC represents three levels of cognitive structure (McIntosh & Thyne, 2005): the first is the attributes used to describe the physical or observable characteristics of the product or service; the second, which is more abstract than the first, refers to the consequences of using the product or service; and the final level is the enduring beliefs in the desired end-state existence which represents the personal values that are centrally held.

MEC has been well developed in the marketing discipline (Aurifeille & Pierre, 1995). For example, Kaciak and Cullen (2006) examined different analytical methods and Bagozzi and Dabholkar (2000) critiqued the ontological and psychological assumptions underlying the MEC method. They showed that the MEC encompasses stylized descriptions of how respondents react to products in terms of their internal cognitions. This method is being adopted increasingly in tourism and recreation research to disclose the cognitive structure of experiences by relating the attributes of tourism products and services to higher-order personal benefits and values (Thyne, 2001). The MEC enables a hierarchical link between constructs to be investigated and related inductively, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of tourists' experiences through an expression of valued outcomes that are personally meaningful (McIntosh & Thyne, 2005). The method will be used to reveal the nature of indigenous tourist experiences, their subjective evaluation, hierarchical processing, and value-led transitions.

3. Methodology

In this section, first, the acquisition of data required for the means-end chain (MEC) method and the attributes of the respondents are described. Then, the analytical procedures are presented.

3.1. Data

The most widely utilized information-gathering technique for MEC is "laddering," which was first developed by Hinkle (1965). A one-on-one, in-depth interviewing technique was implemented to elicit information on how an individual transforms product attributes into meaningful personal associations (Bourne & Jenkins, 2005) in a three-stage process. In the first stage, respondents were required to name the main attributes of the product on which they focused. These key attributes were the starting point for the second stage, in which respondents explained the relevance in terms of their perceived associated consequences and then personal values. This led to the creation of sequences of concepts or "ladders." After performing the procedures outlined above, further questions on respondents' demographics and prior travel experiences were posed. Then the focus was turned to the most recent indigenous travel experiences. The respondents were first requested to specify at least three activities in which they participated at the destination. Secondly, they were asked about the consequences they perceived from each activity mentioned, and encouraged by questions like "What is important (the consequence) to you?" Then, the response was used for the next question, such as "Why is it important?" The interviewer continued this process until all the responses were completed. The series of responses forms a ladder of meaningful themes linking a particular tourist activity with one or more resulting senses/benefits and, ultimately, with one or more values of importance to that individual. Afterwards, hierarchical linkages among attributes of on-site activity participation were identified, along with the perceived benefits of participation and the personal values (meanings) induced from their indigenous tourism experiences.

Given the focus on indigenous tourism and the diverse indigenous tourism developments in Taiwan (Ryan et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2012), it was decided to examine tourists who had visited indigenous nations in Taiwan for the purpose of indigenous tourism within a month prior to interview. Taiwan's indigenous tourism has unfolded since around the 1960s. The expressions of indigenous tourism have evolved overtime. Stage dancing and singing performances and theme parks were favored in the early days, while ecotourism, volunteer tourism, and mini-voyages in the indigenous communities have become popular lately. In

order to stimulate the economic development of the indigenous communities, Taiwan Council of Indigenous People has recently designated 11 indigenous demonstration zones, aiming for the establishment of sustainable tourism industries, and has claimed that 1.04 million tourists were attracted in 2017 (Taiwan Council of Indigenous People, 2018). Sixteen indigenous nations were officially recognized in Taiwan in 2018 (only 9 were recognized in 2001). They are widely dispersed and mostly located in mountainous settings that are costly and time-consuming to access. Bloggers from the internet were considered to be able to provide rich insights on the transformational effects of their experiences (Bosangit et al., 2015), and travel blogs, as tourists' narratives on social media, are becoming more influential in shaping the expectations of other potential visitors (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Thus, bloggers who met the study criteria were interviewed and data were elicited through phone or internet communications (i.e. SKYPE or MSN).

In this study, bloggers were first filtered from two popular blog platforms (Pixnet and Xuite) in Taiwan through examining their travel blogs. Three main principles were used to select interviewees: (1) bloggers had visited indigenous nations for a vacation within a month prior to interview and participated in at least one indigenous tourism activity; (2) only one blogger was selected from the same travel group; and (3) interviewees agreed to be engaged in 40–60 min recorded interviews. The interview time and device (phone or internet communications) were determined according to the interviewee's convenience. Questions and the laddering procedures discussed in the previous section were used. In the interviews, laddering enabled participants to define personal values and attitudes in their own terms and contexts instead of forcing them into predetermined categories as in most survey approaches. The meaningful associations were thus self-defined. In this way, laddering facilitated an inductive or tourist-oriented perspective to understand personal values and decisions.

About 80% of the bloggers who were contacted accepted and completed the interviews. A total of 58 subjects participated, who had visited various indigenous nations (Amis, Atayal, Tsou, Paiwan, Bunun, Rukai, Puyuma, Saisiyat, or Tao) in Taiwan as their main travel destinations. Their attributes are summarized in Table 1. More than half (53%) are students, predominantly aged between 20 and 29 (85%), as one might expect given the need for bloggers to be familiar with information technologies. Most (81%) traveled primarily to experience indigenous culture. Only about a quarter (28%) were on a package tour, and the majority (76%) stayed within the indigenous community for at least one night.

Table 1
Profile of subjects (N = 58).

Variables	%	Variables	%
Gender		Indigenous Culture as Travel Motive	
Male	51.7	Yes	81.0
Female	48.3	No	19.0
Age		Company	
Under 19	1.7	Group tour	27.6
20-29	84.5	Friends/relatives	63.8
30-39	12.1	Alone	3.4
40-49	1.7	Other	5.2
Education		Days in indigenous community	
Junior high or lower	1.7	Day trip	24.1
Senior High school	1.7	1 night	24.1
College or University	70.7	2 nights	27.6
Graduate or above	25.9	3 nights	8.7
Occupation		4 nights or more	15.5
Student	53.4	Transportation	
Public servant	5.2	Motorcycle	29.3
Teacher	12.1	Car	34.5
Businesses	12.1	Bus	25.9
Labor	8.6	Others	10.3
Others	8.6	Experience of indigenous tourism	
Marital status		First time	36.2
Single	94.8	2–4 times	24.1
Married	5.2	5–7 times	17.2
		8–10 times	8.7
		11 times or above	13.8

3.2. Analytical procedure

Three main stages of the MEC analysis suggested by Reynolds and Gutman (1988) were put into play. The first stage aimed to elicit terms (codes) from the interviews related to the classifications of activity attributes (A), consequences (S), and values (V) through content analysis by three reviewers (coders). Analytical codes were not predetermined; instead, relevant terms generated from previous studies (Chang, Wall, & Chu, 2006; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Notzke, 2004; Ryan & Huyton, 2000) and values from the Rokeach Value Survey, which is often employed in MEC analysis (Thyne, 2001), were listed for coding references. However, reviewers were allowed to develop new themes while transcribing the expressed statements. Coder reliability of 0.90 indicates consistent and reliable classification for this content analysis. The second stage was to document the hierarchal sequences of participation experiences from tangible unit (activity) to abstract unit (consequential benefit), and to a further abstract unit (value outcome). The “end” in each ladder (participation experience) was expressed in the interviewee's own words; therefore, it did not necessarily reach the level of end-value, or it might be obtained after more than one consequential benefit (McIntosh & Thyne, 2005).

At the final stage of the MEC, the identified themes were displayed on an implication matrix. This matrix was used to construct a hierarchical value map (HVM), which is a tree diagram that maps a respondent's thinking process through various levels of abstraction (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). It is also a summary that depicts graphically the key links among the ACV (activity attributes/consequences/values) concepts contained in the implication matrix. An issue to be taken into account when constructing a HVM is where to fix the cut-off point, i.e., the number of links registered before a connection ceases to be shown on the map. A high cut-off level simplifies the map at the risk of loss of important information. Gengler and Reynolds (1995) recommended setting the cut-off point at 5% of the sample size, which has been widely adopted in empirical studies. Accordingly, in this study, the cut-off level is configured at 3, and links with frequency of above 3 are shown on the HVM.

4. Findings

In this section, some major themes in indigenous tourism experiences derived from the narratives of the 58 informants are presented and discussed. First, the properties of indigenous tourism experiences and the structural patterns extracted are illustrated. Then three activity-based sub-patterns of indigenous tourism experiences are identified and enunciated, followed by the proposition of an experience spectrum. Afterwards, the issues of meaning-making and the role of indigenous cultures in tourists’ experiences are addressed.

4.1. The mix of indigenous tourism experiences

Experiences arising from engagement in tourism activities and the surrounding environment are often depicted with tangible and intangible attributes to elucidate the emotional and psychological states of the participants. In this study, 38 attributes were identified, which were referred to by the 58 interviewees 424 times in total (Table 2). Thirteen of them are activity-related and demonstrate tourists’ plural selections. Similar to the findings from previous indigenous tourism research (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999), the favorable activities are often connected with indigenous culture, such as joining in traditional activities (e.g., hunting or weaving) or interacting with indigenous people (e.g., chatting or dining with them). The other 25 attributes are rather

Table 2
Activities, consequences, and values of indigenous tourism experiences.

Activity Attributes	n[a]	Consequences	n[a]	Values	n[a]
A1. Interpretation	3	C1. Primitiveness	22	V1. Freedom	11
A2. Performance	13	C2. Novelty	29	V2. Treasuring	6
A3. Dance	6	C3. Openness	4	V3. Sharing (Love)	9
A4. Lifestyle	6	C4. Solidarity	5	V4. Exciting life	5
A5. Natural landscape[b]	14	C5. Delicacy	2	V5. Peace of world	21
A6. Culture symbols	9	C6. Integration	5	V6. Enrichment	30
A7. Indigenous cuisine	9	C7. Culture learning	16	V7. Optimism	14
A8. Legends	1	C8. Contentment	7	V8. Salvation	9
A9. Handmade objects[c]	15	C9. Homeyness	3	V9. Happiness	24
A10. Traditional activity	27	C10. Sincerity	16	V10. Accomplishment	3
A11.Indigenous people[d]	17	C11. Relaxation	29	V11. Aesthetics	3
A12. Events/festivals	2	C12. Closeness	13	V12. Safety	4
A13. Personal involvement	8			V13. Self-respect	4

[a] n = the number of times mentioned by 58 interviewees.
[b] Natural landscape means perceived natural landscape by tourists.
[c] Handmade objects include do-it-yourself activity.
[d] Indigenous people means opportunities to be with indigenous people.

abstract. They are used to delineate the complicated psychological perceptions experienced in indigenous tourism. Among them, 12 attributes pertain to the perceived benefits (consequences) of activity participation, with relaxation and novelty seeking most often mentioned, and the latter identified as the most important motive for indigenous tourism (Chang et al., 2006). The other 13 psychological traits reveal the values pursued, among which enrichment and happiness are the two most evident in the present study. They are also prominent in previous indigenous tourism studies (Lin et al., 2013; Ruhanen et al., 2015). The psychological features, such as enrichment or happiness, describe personal perceptions and evaluations of travel experiences; however, these terms are often very subjective and need to be understood in the context of the tourists. The psychological terms used in this study are self-defined by tourists. Our informants indicate that, through their experiences, they expand their visions or become creative, reflecting the value of enrichment; they also enjoy happiness recollected in the sense of pleasure or spiritual well-being.

The cognitive process discloses how tourists transform their participation and perceptions of events at indigenous tourism destinations into valuable experiences that are personally meaningful. The psychological transition of indigenous tourism experiences involves intricate and dynamic interrelationships among features recounted by individual tourists. In this study, the cognitive process of experience transition among activity attributes, benefits/consequences, and values is specified in the HVMs, which display both direct and indirect links and give a visual portrayal of the conceptual structure of indigenous tourism experiences (Fig. 1). Two sub-patterns are found: the first is based on groups of activities; the other sub-pattern is led by values. These sub-patterns will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2. Three patterns of activity-based indigenous tourism experiences

Tourists take part in a variety of recreational activities on indigenous trips (Pratt, Gibson, & Movono, 2013). In this research, 13 types of activities were found and grouped into 3 distinct activity-based patterns: (1) pleasure derived from enjoying nature and a simple lifestyle, (2) pleasure derived from participating in indigenous activities, and (3) pleasure derived from enjoying indigenous culture. Each will be examined in turn.

(1) Pleasure Derived from Enjoying Nature and a Simple Lifestyle

The context of consumption responding to or interacting with the external world constitutes the milieu for experience. In the case of indigenous tourism in the communities, it is the indigenous living environment, their natural landscape (A5) and lifestyles (A4) that increase tourists' relaxation and happiness. While tourists experience the indigenous lifestyles (A4) on their vacation, the indigenous situation is perceived to be primitive or natural (C1) and less tense (C11), providing a feeling of contentment (C8), especially compared with the bustle of modern lifestyles. Taking the opportunity to sample such a lifestyle, tourists indulge themselves in the relaxing situation and values of happiness and optimism are evoked. The induced feeling of contentment with reduced desires is associated with values of treasuring resources and respect for others. One respondent indicated, "*Sometimes I just wander around the village, quiet and peaceful; a thatched cottage is sufficiently pleasant in comparison with life surrounded by advanced technologies.*"

Alternatively, while enjoying the natural landscape (A5), such as forest and streams, tourists seem to return to a primitive natural situation (C1) and are relaxed (C11) or broad-minded (C3). These feelings are rewarded with the sense of happiness (V9) (pleasure or spiritual well-being), and the belief of optimism (V7) (no need to worry about tomorrow). An informant stated, "*There is a disturbing pace of life in the big city. I feel annoyed and tired all the time. While in this mountainous environment, away from the shackles of civilization, my body and mind are relaxing and I feel genuine happiness.*"

(2) Pleasure Derived from Participating in Indigenous Activities

Participating in and gazing at the traditional customs embedded in the cultural spirit of indigenous nations are very unique and first-hand experiences. Tourists enjoying performances (singing or dancing) by locals (A2) or participating in traditional activities (A10), such as making rice cakes or weaving, are likely to feel the emotions of heart-to-heart personal relationships (sincerity) (C10) or intimacy (closeness) between individuals (C12). These feelings further bring about the values of peace of world (V5), freedom (V1) and happiness (V9). Personal experiences in the indigenous activities make tourists feel close to their hosts (indigenous people), and having warm and genuine interactions with local people in sincere host-guest relationships nurtures their sense of freedom (freely to interchange with "others") and intensifies their beliefs in harmony/peace. One informant explained, "*I really enjoy the truth revealed in their singing. It is full of emotions, rather than focusing on singing skills at all. In the world of Chinese society, people are conservative and usually hide their real feelings.*" "*Very casual, not deliberate at all.*" "*That evening, we sat around the fire (their tradition), barbecued pork, made mochi (rice cake), and drank millet wine …. We were chatting and laughing about everything, I mean everything. All of the people played together, like a family, even though we are from the outside and only stayed for two nights.*"

(3) Pleasure Derived from Enjoying Indigenous Culture

The various indigenous "flavors" of culture are provided in the opportunities of savoring native cuisine (A7), the presentations containing cultural symbols (e.g., tribal totem, indigenous apparel, and local arts) (A6), service from local guides or workers (A11), and handmade attribute (A9), which, together, constitute another source of enjoyment. The consumption of tourist products/services prepared in indigenous styles meet tourists' longing for the novelty of "others" (C2). These experiences respond to their intent to enrich their life (V6) or have an exciting life (V4). Moreover, indigenous food and artifacts different from accustomed forms also enhance their life experiences, as the informant recounted: *"The ingredients and ways of cooking are unique, wild, and rustic. Bamboo rice is yummy … using a bamboo cup to drink millet wine. I tried and enjoyed almost all of them, except for grilled mouse meat." "Wearing traditional apparel is fun and everyone looks like an*

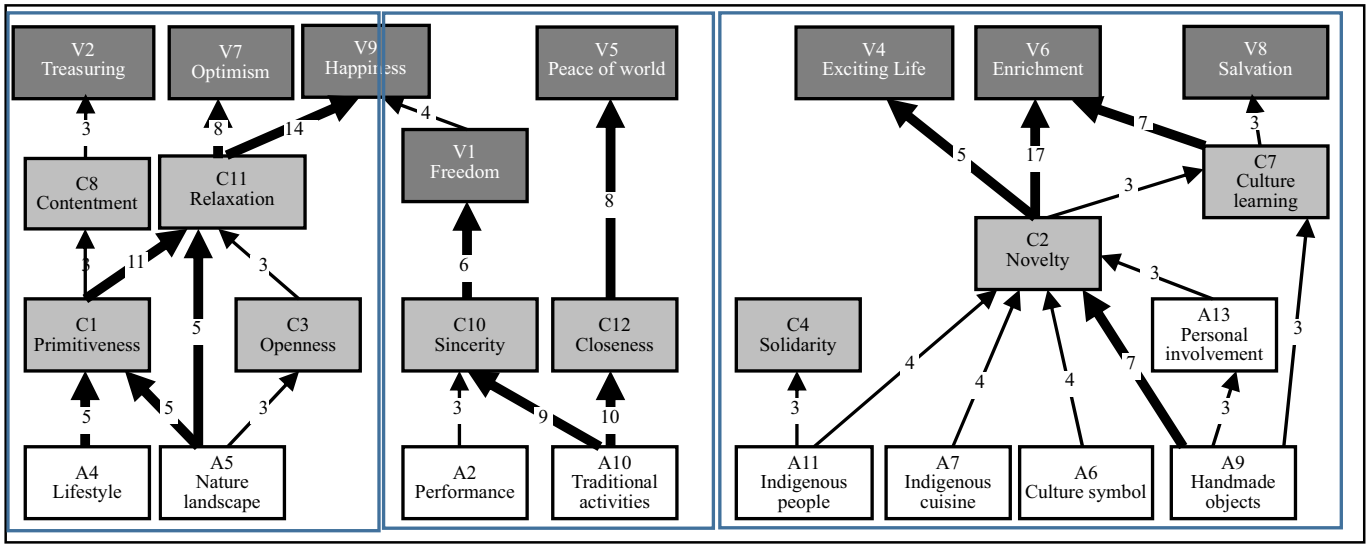

Fig. 1. HVMs of indigenous tourism experiences.

indigenous princess and prince."

Besides novelty-seeking, the activities of do-it-yourself or making handicrafts (A9) not only give tourists special perspectives on cultural learning (C7) but boost altruism for the indigenous nation, which also illuminates the authenticity of indigenous culture and facilitates visitors' desires to learn about it. Learning more about others encourages care for others (V8) while enriching the self. According to the informant, *"I enjoy pounding mochi (rice cake) most. Although I could purchase ready-made mochi in the stores, the on-site setting of the pounding … warm and soft, super fresh … makes it very indigenous and delicious." "Indigenous women began by scraping out the ramie fiber … putting the fiber on the shuttle … We are sitting on the ground and using their traditional wooden machine to sew clothes …. I am amazed at their weaving process, their traditional weaving skills, and knowledge about using and coping with nature."*

Personal service featured on tourism programs creates unique opportunities for visitors to have close contact with local people and come into contact with their temperament. Apart from satisfying curiosity (C2) about the indigenous world, the opportunities to have personal contact with indigenous people (A11) (especially the local guide) initiate tourists' personal perspectives toward "solidarity" (C4) with indigenous people, who may be different from the stereotypical images. Visitors are surprised, moved or educated by such experiences: "*After a successful hunting trip, the hunters submitted their prey to the tribal leader. Almost all residents came and celebrated. The leader performed a celebration to thank and give blessings to God and to commend the bravery of the young hunters. The leader then began to distribute the prey to all households. The largest portion was given to the elder; the young hunters took it to the elder's house and donated it with great respect. I was so moved by their earnest seriousness about their people, their nation, and their philosophy of living in this remote mountain."*

4.3. A spectrum of indigenous tourism experiences

Just as indigenous tourism activities are provided in varied ways, the tourists visiting indigenous destinations also experience them in distinctively. It is desirable to have a comprehensive framework grounded in theoretical constructs, to provide a logical underpinning for the comprehension of the diversity of indigenous tourist experiences. The three activity-based indigenous tourism experience patterns described in the previous section are arranged in a continuum as an experience spectrum.

The three activity-based indigenous tourism experience patterns are called "self-oriented," "self and others," and "others-oriented." The first pattern (pleasure from enjoying nature and a simple lifestyle) is mainly related to enjoying the natural landscape or indigenous lifestyle, feeling relaxed and meeting the fundamental value of happiness, and being positive and treasuring what exists. The focus is on the visitor's own general well-being through being in and gazing at the indigenous natural and living environment, which is essentially a "*self-oriented*" experience. The second pattern (pleasure from participating in indigenous activities) reflects greater engagement in indigenous authentic traditions, with their songs, dances and events (e.g. hunting) deemed traditional, so that they feel embraced by and in harmony with the genuine indigenous "others," and free from the constraints of their own world. These experiences are much deeper than superficial tourist-host contact and may be regarded as a "*self and others*" fusion. The third pattern (pleasure from tasting indigenous culture) is associated with tourism supply such as dining, shopping, lodging, and recreations packaged with an exotic charm of indigenous culture, which fulfills the motives of novelty-seeking or cultural learning, thereby satisfying the values of enrichment (through experiencing aspects of others), exciting life (variety-seeking through respecting other cultures) and salvation (caring for the existence of others). Such an experience is construed as *"other-oriented."*

The three patterns of indigenous tourism experiences identified in this study can be arrayed from "self-oriented," through "self and others," to "others-oriented," forming a spectrum of experiences oriented towards happiness. Within the context of indigenous tourism in the indigenous sites, exotic others and cross-ethnicity (self-others) act as prominent impulses in seeking pleasure/happiness, while self-centered happiness is common in many other types of vacations. Each type of indigenous tourism experience encompasses its own groups of activities, perceived feelings, and values (Fig. 1), which lead to aspirations of individually defined ("self-others" orientations) happiness/pleasure. The activities to values transitions of experiences of each type have been detailed in the above discussion.

The proposed spectrum of experiences is developed within the "self-others" orientations of happiness in the pursuit of indigenous tourism, while Cohen's phenomenological modes distinguish differences in the relationships of perceived center(s) in tourists' own or others' societies. Comparing and contrasting with Cohen's typology would further enhance understanding of the complexity of indigenous tourist experiences. In our study, some tourists depict the perceptions and meanings of their travel experiences through reflecting and contrasting with their current state of life. Therefore, we are able to observe Cohen's three

modes respectively: “recreational mode,” restoring their energy and perceiving a general sense of well-being, “experiential mode,” looking for their own meaning in the life of others, and “experimental mode,” establishing new relationships and acquiring new meanings of themselves and others. The recreational and experiential modes can be found in the descriptions of “self-oriented” and “others-oriented” experiences, while the “experimental mode” is close to the explanation for “self and others” fusion experience. However, Cohen's “diversionary” (meaningless to both) and “existential” modes (becoming others) are absent in our cases perhaps because his perspective of “between society centers” is too abstruse for some tourists to think of when recounting their experiences. In our findings, the pursuit of happiness is omnipresent in all travel even though happiness can be determined and comprehended differently. Thus, happiness orientations are more pertinent to the comprehension of tourism experiences from tourists' perspectives, and the “self-others” nexus can provide additional value for indigenous tourism experiences.

4.4. Meaningful experience: happiness and enrichment

The transformative details of indigenous tourism experiences present what values are rewarded and how tourists' actions and perceptions make meanings to themselves. Thirteen distinct values were retrieved from respondents’ indigenous tourism experiences, among which happiness and enrichment are the two most desired values (Fig. 1). These two values will be highlighted in the following sections.

(1) Happiness-led Indigenous Tourism Experiences

Happiness-led linkages show how visitors gain happiness through indigenous tourism experiences (Fig. 2). In one approach, tourists appreciate the natural landscape, share the indigenous lifestyle, and then generate feelings of enjoying pristine nature and a sense of open-mindedness and relaxation, which contribute to the achievement of happiness. In the other scenario, getting involved in traditional activities and watching indigenous performances can lead to happiness through perceived freedom and the close heart-to-heart relationships established with the hosts.

(2) Enrichment-led Indigenous Tourism Experiences

The reward of enrichment is generated from undertaking activities programmed with strong indigenous cultural delight (e.g. contact with locals, indigenous cuisine, cultural symbols and hand-made objects) and motives of novelty-seeking and culture learning (Fig. 3). This

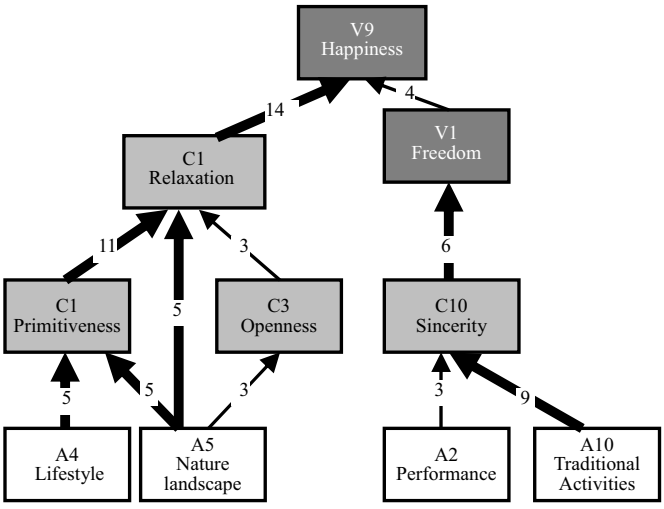

Fig. 2. Happiness-led indigenous tourism experiences.

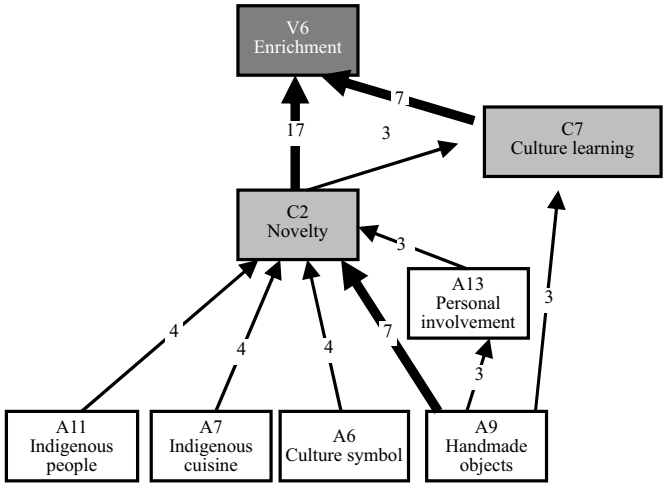

Fig. 3. Enrichment-led indigenous tourism experience.

parallels the argument that experiencing authentic aspects of indigenous culture is an essential appeal of indigenous tourism (Waller & Lea, 1999); so is novelty-seeking (Chang et al., 2006). Novelty-seeking can be regarded as the motivational converter between culturally appealing activities and enrichment. Culture learning, especially engagement in “handmade” attribute, is another motivation that contributes to the value of enrichment.

4.5. The role of indigenous culture in tourists’ experiences

The importance of ethnic culture to indigenous tourism experience is commonly recognized (Harron & Weiler, 1992; Smith, 1989), but its role in various contexts has remained unclear. Most of the 38 themes depicting tourists’ indigenous experiences in this study, as expected, are infused with indigenous culture; however, the relevance of indigenous culture is presented differently. On the one hand, indigenous culture is considered as a product element embedded in the activity or event, such as dancing and singing performances, traditional activity, indigenous cuisine, and consumption of cultural symbols. On the other hand, indigenous culture is treated as the vacation context for enjoying the natural landscape and local lifestyle. While the first is well documented in previous literature (Moscardo & Pearce, 1999), the contextual role of the indigenous living environment (including natural landscape and lifestyle) has been understated (Abascal, Fluker, & Jiang, 2016). Pabel et al. (2017) pointed out that tourists are significantly motivated by nature-based activities in an indigenous tourism destination, and not necessarily by indigenous tourism activities, as is often assumed. Walker and Moscardo (2016) also argued that, in indigenous regions, providing access to natural environments through the lens of traditional cultural values is the most effective and sustainable option for tourism development. The present study shows that the contextual character of indigenous culture has mainly enriched the “self-oriented” experiences, while the role of indigenous culture, as product ingredient, comparatively supports the “others-oriented” and “self-others” experiences. It seems that tourists evaluate the natural landscape and lifestyle in an indigenous destination against the modern society from where they come and then generate the consequential benefits, such as primitive, relaxing, open or contentment experiences.

5. Conclusions and implications

The rise of indigenous tourism has gained a good deal of attention from academics and also caused much debate. The nature of visitor experiences, intricately intertwined with complicated issues related to indigenous culture, has required more in-depth and multifaceted research on indigenous tourism experience. Adding insights to the

existing knowledge of indigenous tourism experiences, this paper contributes to the conceptualization of indigenous tourism experiences, by uncovering the hierarchical transition of the psychological process and the dynamics behind a typology of the experiences. Through disclosure of each tourist experience episode, how tourists participate in destination activities, perceive consequences, and respond to internal values are exposed and analyzed. Exposition of the intricately entwined emotional and cognitive projections of those visiting indigenous communities are in due response to the enrichment of indigenous tourism experience and to the contexts between indigenous culture consumption and tourist experiences.

Indigenous tourism experiences are plentiful and diverse, and their contents can be depicted by various activities, benefits, motives, desires and values (Moscardo & Pearce, 1999). A hierarchical transition of experiences demonstrates how activity participation links with perceived benefits and associated values, leading to a more profound understanding. Deconstruction of the psychological process of experiencing provides insightful understandings that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of management, planning, and policy-making for indigenous tourism. For instance, while in previous literature culture learning has been recognized as an important characteristic of indigenous tourism experiences (Altunel & Erkurt, 2015), the hierarchical process discloses the possibility that culture learning can facilitate tourists' care for indigenous people, reflecting tourists' salvation value,. In addition, tourists' experiences are a process of meaning-making that mirrors their desires and values (Walker & Moscardo, 2016), in which tourists transform their involvement and perceptions of events at destinations into experiences that are personally meaningful (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013). In this study, tourists are most likely to attain happiness and enrichment from experiencing indigenous tourism in indigenous communities through staying in the indigenous environments and participating in indigenous cultural activities. Thus, this study confirms the complexity and personal nature of tourists' experiences, and also sheds lights on the cognitive process of meaning-making and the importance of happiness and enrichment to indigenous tourist experiences.

This study proposes a framework that provides a logical underpinning for comprehension of the diversity of indigenous tourist experiences: a spectrum of indigenous tourism experiences. The three patterns of indigenous tourism experiences are arrayed within "self-others" orientations of happiness. The insights help to unwrap the complexity of tourists' experiences. While almost all travels are a search for some kinds of happiness, the "self-others" nexus can be used to concurrently address core issues of indigenous tourism, such as the manifestations and changes of indigenous culture. The three patterns of experiences are related to and cater differently for cultural authenticity and commodification in indigenous tourism destinations. This spectrum of indigenous tourist experiences incorporating indigenous culture in various roles could support discussion and debate concerning the possible influences of tourists on indigenous people.

Methodologically, the means-end chain method with laddering was implemented successfully to explore the experiences of visitors to indigenous sites. Although the hierarchical structure provides a visual portrayal of indigenous tourism experiences, undeniably, overemphasis of the construction of ACV (activity attributes/consequences/values) links thins out the abundant connotations of the indigenous situation, including the environmental context. Future research may consider adopting phenomenological investigation (Russell & Levy, 2012) along with the spectrum of indigenous tourist experiences proposed in this study. Besides, the purposeful sampling process used in this study may have skewed results towards those with a particularly strong interest in indigenous culture. Although all respondents in the study had visited indigenous nations and most stayed overnight, they only represent one type of indigenous tourism. The experience spectrum, activities undertaken, benefits received, and values associated with other types of indigenous tourism, such as indigenous theme parks, are likely to be different and are worthy of exploration in future research. In addition, in this study bloggers acted as informants, and, as a result, younger well-educated people are probably over-sampled due to their greater familiarity with the internet and high willingness to share their stories on the web. Also, no foreign tourists were recruited in this research because very few foreigners post travel blogs on the two Taiwanese blogger platforms. Thus, the experience patterns reported in this study may differ from those with different age, education, and nationality attributes. Such visitors merit further examination in future research.

Author contribution

Tsung-Chiung (Emily) Wu is the leading author conceiving of the presented idea of using means-end chain Analysis and devising the research on the main conceptual ideas of a spectrum of indigenous tourism Experience. Yu-En Lin had collected data.

Geoff Wall and Philip Xie help shape the research, literature review, analysis and presentation, and provide critical feedback. All four wrote the manuscript together.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the R.O.C. (Grant number: MOST 102-2410-H-259-057-MY3).

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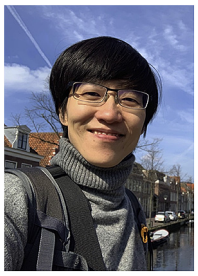

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