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Domestic demand for Indigenous tourism in Australia: understanding intention to participate

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ABSTRACT

In Australia, low domestic visitor participation rates in Indigenous tourism have negative effects on its sustainable development. This lax demand remains under-examined in published research. This study uses an attribution-based theory, the folk-conceptual theory of behaviour explanation, to investigate how domestic visitors describe their intentional behaviour to participate, or not, in two Indigenous tourism activities (rock-art sites and a cultural centre) situated within Victoria's Grampians National Park. Studies in tourism research using attribution theory remain limited; this appears to be the first using folk-conceptual theory. It adopts a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and the photo-elicitation method with 50 domestic visitors. Results indicate that visitors are more inclined to link "beliefs" than "desires" regarding their intention to participate in nature-based Indigenous tourism activities with connections with history, culture, and learning. However, despite Indigenous tourism being linked to a nature-based environment in the study area, "valuings", "enabling factors", and "causal history of reasons" affect participation levels. While these findings relate to previous research on motivations and barriers, participants' explanatory choices enable deeper insights into visitors' judgements that could then inform strategies to facilitate long-term sustainable Indigenous tourism growth. Understanding demand is central to Indigenous communities attaining benefits from sustainable tourism.

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Introduction

Tourism is often promoted as a promising development strategy for Indigenous people. Indeed, there is evidence that supports the claim that sustainable tourism can lead to alleviation of poverty, improvement on the life conditions of communities, and the conservation of cultural heritage and environment (UNEP, 2011). Demand for cultural tourism experiences, such as visiting Indigenous peoples and their tribal lands, is among the sectors of highest growth in worldwide tourism, with a 15% annual growth rate and contributing 37% of all world travel (Sustainable Tourism Online, 2010). In fact, visitors looking for environmental and culturally differentiated destinations are eager to spend more money for these experiences (UNEP, 2011). In Australia, however, Indigenous tourism has experienced a low but generally stable rate of demand over the last 10 years (Tourism Research Australia [TRA], 2014a). According to the National and International Visitor Survey, in 2013 the combined international and domestic visitor participation rate for Indigenous tourism represented around 1.5% of the total visitor numbers in Australia. The survey data shows that 11% of all international visitors, and

only 0.7% of all overnight domestic visitors engaged in Indigenous tourism activities. Domestic day-trip visitor numbers were not included in the calculation due to sample size restrictions in the National Visitor Survey (TRA, 2014a). Domestic visitors in Australia represent more than 96% of total visitors with expenditure being around 70% of total tourism income (TRA, 2014b), yet less than 1% of this market participate in Indigenous tourism. The understanding of demand is important as it is a main driver towards sustainable tourism investment decisions (UNEP, 2011).

Research on Indigenous tourism in Australia, from a demand perspective, first appeared in the 1990s (Moscardo & Pearce, 1999). Visitor attitudes towards Indigenous tourism were investigated by Ryan and Huyton (2000, 2002). Since this seminal work, there has been limited research undertaken into Indigenous tourism in Australia from a demand perspective (Abascal, Fluker, & Jiang, 2015; Jones Donald Strategy Partners [JDSP], 2009; Ruhanen, Whitford, & McLennan, 2015a, 2015b). While previous studies have provided insights into the demographic characteristics of Indigenous visitors, their preferences, awareness, motivations, and barriers to participate in Indigenous tourism, this study suggests a need for a deeper exploration into the mental processes that visitors experience in regard to their intention to participate in Indigenous tourism activities. Therefore, this study suggests an opportunity to understand the domestic market better, with a view to increasing its participation in Indigenous tourism so that this sector may experience sustainable national tourism growth and the accompanying positive social, economic, and environmental development of (mainly) regional Indigenous communities, associated with the concepts of sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). This current study uses a qualitative approach in a case study situation to gain insights into the explanations provided by visitors regarding their attributional processes when describing their intention to participate, or not, in Indigenous tourism. It is expected that these explanatory choices will enable a deeper understanding of domestic visitors' judgments that could then inform strategies designed to facilitate long-term sustainable Indigenous tourism growth. This study also takes into consideration the integration of economic, societal and environmental factors (the triple bottom line) in such a way that a variation in one does not interfere with the optimal functioning of any of the others (Farrell, 1999).

Demand for Indigenous tourism

It is often argued that Indigenous tourism is not considered to be a top priority tourism activity that either international or domestic visitors choose to participate in while travelling within Australia (JDSP, 2009; Ruhanen et al., 2015a, 2015b; Ryan & Huyton, 2000, 2002). Results of JDSP's (2009) study suggested that despite the lack of top-of-mind interest for this type of tourism, latent domestic curiosity exists in aspirational Australian destinations with a strong representation of Indigenous tourism. However, Ruhanen et al. (2015a) pointed out that intentions do not always convert into participation. In their study, they found a big drop between intentions (12%) and actual participation (2%). Interestingly, despite the low domestic participation rate, Ruhanen et al. (2015a) suggested that domestic visitors are more aware of the Indigenous tourism activities available in Australia compared to international visitors.

Features of Indigenous tourism attractiveness have also been identified in different contexts. It appears that "learning", "history", "traditional lifestyles", "contemporary lifestyle", "contact with Indigenous people", "natural scenery", and "authenticity" are the most important features (Chang, Wall, & Chu, 2006; Kutzner, Wrigth, & Stark, 2009; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Notzke, 2004; Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Zeppel, 2002). However, it appears that some of these characteristics are not accurately represented within Indigenous tourism marketing initiatives. For example, Zeppel's (1998a) study, which focused on examining tourism brochures, confirmed the inaccurate representativeness of Indigenous people and the lack of awareness in Indigenous culture around Australia. These findings could be closely linked with the visitor barriers (the perception of authenticity and lack of awareness) identified by most recent studies (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009; Nielsen, Buultjens, & Gale, 2008; Ruhanen

et al., 2015a, 2015b). They are given more detailed examination by local government region in Seiver and Matthews (2016).

It has been almost 10 years since Schmiechen and Boyle (2007) identified the issue of “how to increase participation from the domestic market” as a research priority in Australian Indigenous tourism. The domestic participation growth in Indigenous tourism has barely fluctuated during these past 10 years, except for a slight increase in 2006 and 2007 (TRA, 2014a). Recent investigations into the motivations for, and barriers to, participating in Indigenous tourism have drawn special attention from researchers (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009; Ruhanen et al., 2015a, 2015b). While Ruhanen et al. (2015a, 2015b) investigated domestic and international visitors, JDSP’s (2009) and Abascal’s et al. (2015) studies focused on the domestic market. Visitor motivations for, and barriers to, participating in Indigenous tourism have been investigated both from a quantitative approach (JDSP, 2009; Ruhanen et al., 2015a, 2015b) and a qualitative approach (Abascal et al., 2015). Other studies, while not having a particular focus on motivations and barriers, provided insights into this topic from visitor, supplier, and trade perspectives (JDSP, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2008; Ruhanen et al., 2015a, 2015b; Ryan & Huyton, 2000, 2002). The overall results suggest that there is a misunderstanding of the visitor motivations and barriers between visitors, Indigenous tourism operators, and trading organisations. One reason for the discrepancies between the range of motivations and barriers identified within various studies could be the methodological differences between the studies. It is also important to point out that Abascal et al. (2015) only investigated two Indigenous tourism activities that were available at the destination where the research was conducted. JDSP (2009), Ryan and Huyton (2000, 2002), and Ruhanen et al. (2015a, 2015b) investigated various tourism activities and/or attractions that were not necessarily offered at the destination where the research was conducted. Finally, Nielsen’s et al. (2008) study focused on general views of both the mainstream and Indigenous tourism industries in Queensland, and not on site-specific Indigenous tourism activities. Additionally, none of these previous studies have attempted to make the distinction between person/internal (i.e. lack of interest) and situation/external (i.e. lack of awareness) issues. According to Malle (1999, p. 37), not identifying these factors could “lead to a serious loss of information and may distort psychological relevant distinctions among reasons”. Therefore, investigating these factors, through a social psychological lens, may provide a deeper understanding of visitor behaviour.

Social psychological theories

Social psychological theories explore “how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (Allport, 1984, p. 3). Social psychological theories can be classified into four general categories: social cognition, social comparison, social reinforcement, and the self. Social cognition theories have been used “to explain individuals’ mental activities and to support their consequent behaviours in different fields” (Tang, 2014, p. 189). Attribution theory is part of the social cognition category. It suggests that an individuals’ reasoning attributes external and internal influences to generate a causal judgment of a situation or experience (Orth et al., 2012). Social cognition theories in general, and attribution theories in particular, have had limited use in the field of Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM), and their use has been mainly correlated to marketing (Tang, 2014). It is suggested that psychological theories have significant potential in the field of HTM to drive scientific progress and to better meet industry’s research demands. However, they have been disregarded mainly because researchers have been inclined to use more well-adopted theories, such as the social reinforcement category, where measurement scales are immediately available (Tang, 2014).

Heider started to develop the attribution theory in the 1920s; since then there has been subsequent work on attribution theory (e.g. Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Weiner, 1985, 2010) focusing mainly on either how people decide on causal inferences or the consequences of the causal inferences (Curren, Folkes, & Steckel, 1992). Attribution theory is still widely used in current research by social psychologists (Reisenzein & Rudolph, 2008). One of the most recent developments of the

attribution theory is the folk-conceptual theory of behaviour explanations (Malle, 1999, 2004, 2011). This theory aims to capture Heider's attribution theory concepts and to address other theories' weaknesses by using folk psychology (Malle, 2011; Reisenzein & Rudolph, 2008). According to Malle (1999) previous theories have failed to recognise the differences between intentional and unintentional behaviour, and they have applied the person-situation distinction in a limited manner. The folk-conceptual theory of behaviour explanation proposes a multi-level analysis by distinguishing between types of behaviour being explained (intentional or unintentional), modes of explanations (reason explanations [RE], causal history of reasons [CHR], and enabling factors [EF]), and important features of variation within each mode (reason type: beliefs, desires, and valuing; and reason content: the person-situation distinction) (Malle, 1999).

This theory suggests that when explaining unintentional behaviour people use causes; however, when people explain intentional behaviour they either refer to RE, CHR, or EF (Malle, 2011, p. 84). Malle (2004) pointed out that RE capture what participants' weigh and consider when deciding to act (mental states). They are based on beliefs, desires, or valuing. The distinction between beliefs and desires has been deployed in social psychology since the 1950s (Reisenzein & Rudolph, 2008). While desires are regarded as the main influence for motivation that leads to action (Searle, 1984), beliefs usually "describe specific information such as perceived circumstances, anticipated outcomes, and considered alternatives" (Malle, 1999, p. 41). Valuing is linked to appreciation, attitudes, or likings. CHR are defined as the factors that "lay in the background of the agent's reasons, such as in her upbringing, personality, culture, or in the immediate context" (Malle, 2004, p. 91). Participants might not be consciously aware of CHR and may not mention them when explaining their behaviour (Malle, 1999). Finally, it is suggested that intention is not sufficient for a person to perform the behaviour. There should be EF such as skills, preconditions, opportunities, money, and time that enable the person to act (Malle, 1999, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the folk-conceptual theory of intentional behaviour explanations. This theory is applied in the present study as it allows a deeper exploration of the reasons visitors give regarding their intentional behaviour (participating in Indigenous tourism) by bearing in mind three considerations: their modes of explanations, their reason types, and their person-situation distinctions.

Grampians National Park, Victoria: the case study area

The Grampians National Park was chosen as a study area because it represents one of Victoria's premier domestic travel destinations (Ali, 2009). The region has one of the richest Indigenous rock-art sites in south-eastern Australia and a well-recognised Indigenous cultural centre. The Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism Development Strategy 2013–2023 considers the Grampians as one of the main representative Indigenous regions within Victoria (Tourism Victoria, 2013). Interestingly, in 1989 the Victorian Minister for Tourism, Steve Brabb, announced the reversion of name from "the Grampians" to the Aboriginal name "Gariwerd". However, after receiving community opposition, the dual Koori/English name of "Grampians (Gariwerd)" was adopted in 1991 (Birch, 2003). This was considered by some to be a poor attempt at social justice (Birch, 2003). The Grampians National Park is situated

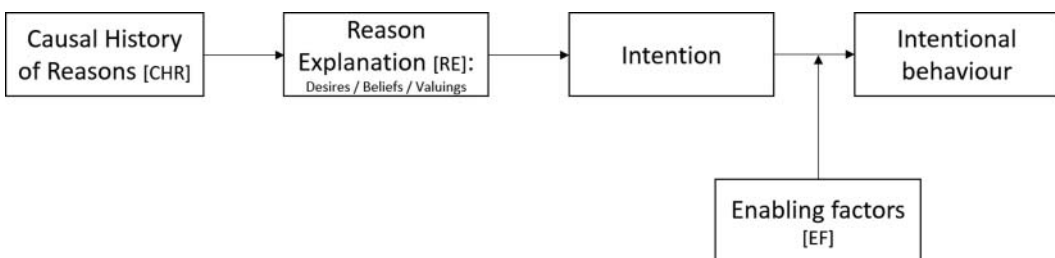


Figure 1. The folk-conceptual theory of intentional behaviour explanation. Adapted from Malle (2004).

about 260 km west of Melbourne, Victoria. The destination offers a range of tourism experiences, but has five specific tourism categories recognised as being part of its primary product strengths: art and culture, food and wine, Indigenous, nature, and touring-self-drive (Grampians Tourism, 2012). The two Indigenous tourism activities available within the Grampians are the “cultural centre” and the “rock-art sites”.

Brambuk: the Indigenous cultural centre

Brambuk is a high-quality Indigenous tourism centre which started operations in 1990 with the assistance of the Victorian Government. Further development was undertaken in 2006 in partnership with Parks Victoria and funded by both State and Federal Governments. Brambuk has been the recipient of government funding, which according to Spark (2002) had shaped representations to promote “a simplified version of a supposedly authentic Aboriginality” (Spark 2002, p. 38). Since 2005, Brambuk and Parks Victoria have worked in partnership to provide services on site such as visitor customer services, cultural advice, education, and supporting park management (Clark, 2014). However, it appears that Brambuk faces challenges such as reduction of funding from Parks Victoria, difficulty accessing other government funds, high operational costs, visitor seasonality, and difficulties in getting staff (Clark, 2014). Brambuk is open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and supplies the following tourism activities: (a) Indigenous exposition and activities such as boomerang throwing and painting, didgeridoo workshop, and dreaming story multimedia show; (b) school camp program; (c) restaurant and gift shop; (d) function and conferences facilities; and (e) bush-food discovery walk and rock-art tours. Brambuk is a well-established and mature Indigenous business (Tourism Victoria, 2013) shared between five Koori communities: The Kirrae, the Whurang, the Goolum, the Gunditjmara, and the Kerrup-Jmara (Ali, 2009). It is claimed to be a 100% Indigenous owned and operated venture (<http://www.brambuk.com.au>). In 2015, the Operations Manager stated that the cultural centre employs 15 staff, of which 9 are Indigenous (Paul Antonio, personal communication, November 2015). While an older reference supported the fact that the cultural centre staff were predominantly Indigenous people (Spark, 2002), this was not reinforced by a more recent study (Ali, 2009). Instead, Ali (2009) claimed that lack of Indigenous staff within the cultural centre actually affected the level of visitors’ satisfaction, as visitors expressed statements such as “I want to see real Aboriginal staff”. This last reference may reflect a stereotypical idea of how an “Aboriginal person” should look. Brambuk aims to challenge misconceptions about Aboriginal people, particularly the idea that there are “none left” in Victoria and to demonstrate that Gariwerd is an Aboriginal place (Spark, 2002).

Rock-art sites

The Grampians National Park is home to 90% of all rock-art sites in Victoria. Visitors can visit rock-art sites where Indigenous people lived some 22,000 years ago. On the walls of these sites, there are paintings representing the life stories of Indigenous people including Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali. There are five ancient sites open to visitors: Billimina, Gulgurn Manja, Manja, Ngamadjidj, and Bunjil (<http://www.brambuk.com.au>). These sites are protected by security cages. Information on how to access the sites is provided at the Halls Gap visitor information centre, at Brambuk, on official websites, and, at the time of the data collection and analysis, through a recently developed (but now defunct) mobile phone application of the region. Now there is a new application which includes a wider region of Victoria but does not present detailed information of the rock-art sites. Logistically, it is relatively easy to access these sites. For example, to access Ngamadjidj (cave of ghosts), visitors can drive from the township of Halls Gap to the nearby car-park and take an easy 100-m walk to the site. Visiting other sites such as Billimina or Manja requires visitors to take a 15–20 minute uphill walk. At the rock-art sites there are signs conveying basic information regarding the spiritual significance of the art and the Koori history of the area. The signs also suggest visitors contact Brambuk for more information on the site (Birch, 2003) and to arrange an organised tour to better understand

and appreciate the art. Visitors can experience these rock-art sites by either exploring it themselves at no cost, or joining one of the two tours offered by Brambuk. Prices range between AUD\$140 and \$280 per person (<http://www.brambuk.com.au>).

Research method

Tremblay (2007) suggested that more inclusive methods, using images and verbal statements, are needed to explore visitor perceptions towards Indigenous tourism in specific context (time and space). However, recent studies have not incorporated these elements (an inclusive method within a specific context) in their methodology. Therefore, this study, by using the photo-elicitation technique, aims to explore Indigenous tourism activities in a specific context. Photographs were used to trigger semi-structured interviews. The advantages of introducing photographs as part of interviews are: (a) to facilitate rapport, (b) to trigger participants' memories, and (c) to facilitate the articulation of ideas (Harper, 2002). When the photographs are gathered or produced by the researcher, the main advantages are: low cost and less time-consuming than other methods, the researcher can control which images are suitable for the research intent, is able to select good-quality photographs (Ray & Smith, 2011), and help to build rapport with the participants (Cederholm, 2004). However, disadvantages such as the researcher missing important features or overemphasizing others are a possibility (Ray & Smith, 2011).

Part of the data collection process involved the use of 10 photographs depicting site-specific tourism activities. These photographs were selected and acquired from the official Grampians Tourism and Visit Victoria websites and chosen through a validation process. The process began with the researcher choosing 17 images that provided a sense of good fit with the five tourism categories previously mentioned. The images were printed in colour and presented to a panel of 22 participants, each of whom had a level of expertise in the broad subject area of this study. Each participant was asked to place and rank (from most representative to least representative) each of the 17 randomly sorted and numbered (on the reverse side) images into five labelled columns, each representing one of the tourism categories. The two images from each category that were most commonly identified as being the most representatives were then cross-checked against the official websites to ensure that they did indeed belong to the selected categories. The images were then used in the in-field data collection stage. The images can be viewed in Supplemental Data on the web based version of this paper.

Data collection process

This study adopted a qualitative approach using the photo-elicitation method and semi-structured interviews with domestic visitors at the Grampians & Halls Gap Visitor Information Centre. The data collection process was conducted during April 2013. A convenience sample of domestic visitors entering the Visitor Information Centre was invited to participate in the study using the mall intercept technique (Butler, 2008). During the data collection process, participants were first asked to answer a survey designed to collect demographic (age, gender, employment status, education level, state of residency, and household) and travel behaviour (travelling party, time spent, mode of travelling, and type of accommodation) data. Participants were then asked to sort and rank the 10 photographs depicting tourism activities available in the area according to their intention and preference to participate. A semi-structured interview followed by asking participants to explain the reasons for their choices, using the photographs as prompts. The interviews focused on understanding the visitors' reasons for participating, or not, in the range of tourism activities. To avoid biasness or politically correct answers, participants were not aware that the focus of the study was on Indigenous tourism. A total of 52 participants answered the survey and completed the sorting and ranking of photographs, and 50 of them participated in the additional semi-structured interview. The interview process was terminated when either no new information was being obtained, or the participant chose to finish

the interview. The sample of 52 respondents was determined based on data suggesting the saturation point had been reached. Interview data was audio-recorded (subject to participant's consent), transcribed verbatim, and then managed using thematic analysis techniques. The coding used follows the folk-conceptual theory of behaviour explanation framework. The data analysis process started first by classifying the answers given into either: (a) when participants intended to engage/had engaged in the Indigenous tourism activities while in the area, or (b) participants did not intend to engage. Second, categories were generated based on the modes of explanations. Third, each mode of explanation was then classified according to reason type and reason content. The next level of analysis involved the search, reviewing, and naming of themes. The final phase involved a second round of verification to compare results and get an agreement on discrepancies.

Results and discussion

This paper focuses on reporting the results from the semi-structured interviews using the photo-elicitation technique. Additionally, a descriptive analysis of the 52 participants involved is illustrated in Table 1.

The results suggest that not all the reason types were mentioned equally by the participants. For example, Table 2 shows that while "beliefs" was the overall largest type of response (representing 46% of the total) given by participants when explaining their willingness to participate, or not, in Indigenous tourism, CHR and in particular EF accounted for an important proportion (17% and 21%, respectively) when explaining their intention not to engage in this type of tourism.

Once the data was coded, a list of themes and commonalities was created. This framework proposes different levels of coding for the five modes of explanation. Table 3 summarises the themes identified in the present study.

The following sub-sections present the results in the light of previous studies and are organised by the three different modes of explanations: RE, CHR, and EF.

Reason explanations (RE)

As previously mentioned, RE are based on three mental states: desires, beliefs, and valuings. The results suggest that when explaining intention to participate in Indigenous tourism, visitors tended to link their intention to participate with their beliefs about, and desires for, a connection with history and culture, and learning. Participating, or not, in Indigenous tourism in a nature-based environment

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the participants.

| Characteristic | Group | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Gender | Female | 50 |
| | Male | 50 |
| Age group | 18-33 | 25 |
| | 34-40 | 23 |
| | 41-47 | 17 |
| | 48-60 | 25 |
| | Over 60 | 10 |
| | Young adults | 8 |
| Life stage | SINK/DINK | 21 |
| | Young family | 42 |
| | Older family | 19 |
| | Empty nesters | 2 |
| | Retirees | 8 |
| | Alone | 6 |
| Travel party | With my partner | 29 |
| | With my family | 56 |
| | With friends | 10 |

Table 2. The impact of reason type on intention to participate in Indigenous tourism.

| | Intention (%) | Not intention (%) | Total (%) |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Beliefs | 52 | 36 | 46 |
| Desires | 22 | 17 | 20 |
| Causal history of reasons (CHR) | 5 | 17 | 10 |
| Enabling factors (EF) | 4 | 21 | 11 |
| Valuings | 16 | 10 | 14 |

Table 3. Codes and themes identified in the study using the folk-conceptual theory of behaviour explanation.

| Mode of explanation | Reason type | Reason content | Theme identified in the study | Number of participants |
|---------------------|-------------|--|---|------------------------|
| RE | Beliefs | Agent | <i>Learning – personal growth</i> | 11 |
| | | Agent + situation interaction | <i>Learning – about our culture</i> | 3 |
| | | Other person | <i>Learning – for other people</i> | 8 |
| | | Situation | <i>I am not the target audience</i> | 4 |
| | | Agent + other person | <i>Uniqueness</i> | 8 |
| | | + situation interaction | <i>Authenticity</i> | 4 |
| | | | <i>Nature-based environment</i> | 4 |
| | | | <i>Connection with history/land</i> | 20 |
| RE | Desires | Agent | <i>Learning – personal growth</i> | 7 |
| | | Agent + situation interaction | <i>Learning – about our culture</i> | 2 |
| | | Other person | <i>Learning – for other people</i> | 3 |
| | | Agent + other person interaction | <i>Learning – about another culture</i> | 3 |
| | | Situation | <i>Nature-based environment</i> | 9 |
| | | Agent + other person + situation interaction | <i>Connection with history/land</i> | 8 |
| RE | Valuings | Other person | <i>Positive attitude: history, art, culture</i> | 20 |
| | | | <i>Negative attitude: General statements</i> | 8 |
| CHR | | Agent behaviour | <i>Previous participation</i> | 6 |
| | | Agent perception | <i>Saturation</i> | 3 |
| | | Other person behaviour/ | <i>Parents' influence</i> | 5 |
| | | Agent passive behaviour | | |
| EF | | Agent propositional state | <i>Awareness</i> | 7 |
| | | Situation | <i>Type of activities offered</i> | 8 |
| | | Other person behaviour | <i>Activities for children</i> | 4 |

was also linked to both, beliefs and desires. However, uniqueness, authenticity, and the perception of not being the target market were only identified as beliefs for participating, or not, in Indigenous tourism. The valuings captured refer to either positive or negative attitudes towards Indigenous tourism.

Connection with history/land

From the data analysis, it was evident that connection with history and land is one of the most important reasons for participating in Indigenous tourism (see Table 3). This concept is a motivation previously explored in other studies (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009). However, a deeper exploration of this motivation suggests that the proportion of respondents who believe that participating in Indigenous tourism will lead to a connection with history/land is larger than the proportion of respondents who desire to be connected with history/land. The distinction between desires and beliefs is important as the former is the primary influence for motivation that then leads to action (Searle, 1984). The following quotes suggest that participants believe that by participating in Indigenous tourism they will get connected with Australian history.

I think it would be beneficial because you can see things that are so old. There is not a lot of that here in Australia, artefacts and everything are so old, that is our old history. (Participant 13)

I find the cave painting interesting... how long they have been there and the history behind them... to find out the foundation of Australia. (Participant 30)

The majority of the answers regarding connection with history and land show an interest in understanding a traditional past “before colonisation”. This could have an impact on the perception of authenticity (Galliford, 2011; Weaver, 2010).

They <rock-art sites> show part of the evidence of the Aboriginal culture and history of the area and gives you a sense of the ancient experience that was here before colonization and before western civilization came to Australia. That was the culture of Aboriginal people long time ago, painting and using this area to tell their stories. So, I feel I will understand a little bit of what it was like to be an Aboriginal person living before the colonization. (Participant 50)

If you want to find out the way of living, thinking, feeling of the people that were originally in this country, to some extent you just have to engage with the art. These things are pretty old, so it is interesting to know what significance the original inhabitants attached to the artwork, a kind of history. (Participant 1)

Some participants indicated that connection with history, as a belief, could lead to appreciation. This is a powerful concept that Galliford (2011) links with “national identity” and “reconciliation”. These are examples of the social benefits that a sustainable Indigenous tourism industry could achieve. The following quotes indicate an appreciation, recognition, and/or respect for Indigenous culture:

Just appreciating the ageing I think. Being in the presence of something that was done hundreds of thousands years ago. (Participant 36)

It is still there after all these years. And it is pretty amazing to have the opportunity to see them. And then the next step is to know how they made it, what they used to make it. (Participant 44)

Upon analysing this theme from the desire perspective, two different approaches appear to exist when people link desire and connection with history and land. One was related to the appreciation of Indigenous people’s connection with the land (environment) and the other was related to learning about the history of Australia. For example, the first quotation below shows how Participant 2 understands the connection of Indigenous people and nature, and that she wanted to both understand and feel connected with Indigenous culture. The second quote illustrates how some participants were only interested in the history of Australia:

They are so connected to the land, so I just want to add to my understanding of their story, the dreamtime, and the people who originally lived here. (Participant 2)

It is the history of Australia, I want to see what was here before we came here. (Participant 4)

Additionally, the quote below illustrates that while some participants also expressed their desire to feel a connection with the history, and they appreciated it, they did not integrate the Indigenous history as part of Australian history.

I just wonder about the heritage of the world; what was here before us. And I like to learn and imagine how their social media was back then, just beautiful. (Participant 49)

Learning

One of the most important themes identified was learning. Learning is another motivation that has been investigated before (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2008; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Ryan & Huyton, 2000). This study expands the discussion of this concept by identifying four aspects of learning: personal growth, learning about one’s own culture, learning about another culture, and learning opportunities for other people. These distinctions appear important as they highlight the current perception whether “Australian/Aboriginal culture/history” are linked or not. While learning for personal growth, about their culture and learning opportunities for other people were identified both as a belief and a desire, learning about another culture was only identified as a desire. Each is detailed below.

The belief that participating in Indigenous tourism will allow for personal growth was very important for the willingness to participate in Indigenous tourism. However, only a small number of participants mentioned it as a desire. The following quotes illustrate the participants' belief that by participating in Indigenous tourism they will learn, gain cultural exposure, or have a spiritual experience.

I think it is a good experience to learn. (Participant 45)

I think we will gain cultural exposure. Because we don't have Aboriginal connections so it would be nice to be aware of it. (Participant 15)

I think that is almost spiritual art... I think everyone has certain amount of spirituality. (Participant 35)

The quotes below illustrate the desire of personal growth as part of learning and appreciation:

I want to know more and appreciate it. (Participant 3)

I like to pick up interesting information, things I can tell others. (Participant 27)

Participants linked the belief and desire of participating in Indigenous tourism as a strategy to learn about Australian culture. It is interesting to note that participants were aware of their own lack of knowledge in regard to Indigenous culture in Australia. They also recognised the importance of learning about it:

Not many Australians know about the culture in the country. (Participant 3)

I suppose this one <rock-art sites> is an educational experience, you need culture in Australia. Australia has a rich culture and we know very little about it so I think the more we learn the better. (Participant 7)

Participants travelling with children mentioned more often their belief about, and desire for, their children to learn or experience Indigenous culture. Interestingly, the majority of the parents that mentioned learning as an opportunity for their children did not mention their own desire for learning. The following quotes show that this belief had a positive impact on the intention to participate in Indigenous tourism.

They <children> get taught things at schools, but actually seeing things that they've created and looking at the history of Aboriginal culture would be good... I think they <children> found it <the cultural centre> very interesting; they had demonstrations on how they made the tools and the boomerangs. (Participant 16)

Because we have kids probably they will be interested in doing some of the local Indigenous arts and that sort of things, mainly for the kids' point of view rather than mine... They will be interested probably because these are things that they are seeing at school, so I suppose it is interesting to see it in the wild sort of speak. (Participant 32)

These quotes illustrate the parents' desire for their children to learn.

And this is more cultural, so I want them to experience culture. (Participant 14)

I like the idea of this one <rock-art sites> for them to get education, not for me. They need to learn about history. I want them to learn. (Participant 33)

Learning about Indigenous culture and history was the only theme identified as a desire. The following examples highlight the perception of the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous history and the lack of integration into a common Australian culture/history.

Learning more about their history. I am interested in hearing more about the Aboriginal culture. (Participant 23)

I like learning about culture that it is not my culture. (Participant 38)

Uniqueness

The results also suggest that Indigenous tourism in a nature-based environment is associated with the beliefs of uniqueness and authenticity. The belief that the rock-art sites are unique to Australia in general, but to the Grampians in particular, had a positive impact on the intention to participate in Indigenous tourism while people are travelling within a particular destination. The following quotes illustrate this statement:

This one <rock-art sites> is about culture, seeing things unique to Australia. (Participant 7)

Because this one is in a cave and is something that you cannot see necessarily everywhere you go, so if I am here, that's something that I will see. (Participant 19)

I guess just seeing different types of art, there are so many types of art, and it is obviously something that is specific to this area. (Participant 48)

However, the following quotes suggest that the "uniqueness" belief had a negative impact on the intention to visit the cultural centre. Some participants believed that there is a disconnection between the place (the National Park) and the uniqueness of the activity (the cultural centre). This belief could also be the result of the over-commercialisation of traditions, which can threaten cultural survival (UNEP, 2011). It appears that this perception could limit the sharing of Indigenous knowledge regarding the National Park, which is an important benefit of Indigenous tourism.

This <pointing to the photo of the cultural centre> is something that you can see in a museum in the city. (Participant 19)

You can see this <pointing to the photo of the cultural centre> anywhere. (Participant 29)

Authenticity

Previous studies suggest that habitat is the most important element for the perception of authenticity (Johansen & Mehmetoglu, 2011). In fact, cultural authenticity appears to be the largest single element of demand for more sustainable tourism (UNEP, 2011). However, it is important to point out that authenticity is an evolving concept based on individual perceptions, or beliefs, of reality (Notzke, 2004; Xie & Lane, 2006). In this particular study, authenticity has been questioned in regard to place – Victoria is not perceived as an Indigenous region. While the majority of participants associated rock-art sites with nature, a small number of participants explained their lack of interest due to their perceived inauthenticity of the location. There was the belief that authentic Indigenous culture is limited to remote areas in the Northern Territory (Hinkson, 2003).

I don't know, I can't associate Victoria with Aboriginal culture. I think about the North, yes, we definitely think about that. In Uluru with all its rocks and big Aboriginal sacred sites, and areas where you expect to see a lot of their culture and their nature. I don't expect to see that in Victoria, I don't think there is much. (Participant 8)

I am not the target audience

Participants' belief that Indigenous tourism is for a specific niche market had an impact on the intention to participating in Indigenous tourism. For example, as mentioned before, participants travelling with children had a positive belief about, or desire for, their children to participate in Indigenous tourism. Yet, some other participants believed that Indigenous tourism is for senior people or international visitors. This concept has been identified in previous studies as a barrier for participation (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009). A probable cause of this belief is that "much of the focus of Indigenous tourism in Australia has been centred on developing economic self-sufficiency and capacity-building" (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010, p. 480) which appears to be not appealing to a younger or more adventurous target market.

Maybe senior people will be interested. (Participant 18)

I think that is for tourists, international tourists that like rock paintings and things like that. (Participant 24)

Nature-based environment

The desire to participate in Indigenous tourism was also linked to the situation (being in a traditional land within a National Park). This link between Indigenous tourism and a nature-based environment has been previously explored (Chang et al., 2006) and closely linked to ecotourism (Buultjens, Gale, & White, 2010; Fuller, Caldicott, Cairncross, & Wilde, 2007; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). The quotes below illustrate how this desire had a positive influence on participating in Indigenous tourism. The second quote in particular shows the preference for nature-based Indigenous tourism activities (linked to the land).

Seeing and perhaps participating in activities that I haven't done and which are important to this area. (Participant 37)

I am interested in Aboriginal sort of natural things that I just come across. I would rather do that than go to a place and see it. See it in nature rather than in a gallery" (Participant 35)

However, when participants explained their lack of intention to participate in Indigenous tourism, they tended to link their beliefs and desires for participating in outdoor activities while travelling to the Grampians (National Park). They also perceived Indigenous tourism as a cultural activity. Therefore, some participants did not appear to make the link between the National Park and cultural activities.

Well see if we do history while we are there. We are more interested in the scenery, the views; we just enjoy that. We really enjoy outdoors... we were only probably going to see that if it was nearby something like this <pointing to the photo of the waterfalls> ...I will be more likely to go for a long walk to see a waterfall than for Aboriginal history. (Participant 28)

These ones seem too cultural and I didn't come to the Grampians to do cultural things. (Participant 29)

I don't think you come to country to see that. (Participant 8)

Valuings

Valuings include appreciation, attitudes, or likings. While participants' statements related to valuings did not provide in-depth information, it allowed researchers to identify attitudes towards Indigenous tourism. Attitudes have been previously linked with intention to participate (Ajzen, 2011; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The positive valuings are focused on an interest of Indigenous history, art, or culture; while negative valuings relate to general lack of interest on Indigenous issues.

Examples of some of the positive valuings mentioned by participants include:

I am interested in aboriginal culture; therefore, I would like to visit the Aboriginal centre. (Participant 2)

I am just interested in any history. I think that culture is really interesting. (Participant 34)

I just like it, I like the style of art. (Participant 43)

Examples of negative valuings include:

It doesn't interest me at all. I am not really interested in doing things like that... Aboriginal sort of things don't really interest me that much to be honest. (Participant 17)

I am not fussed about aboriginal things. (Participant 24)

Causal history of reasons (CHR)

CHR could have an impact on beliefs, desires, and valuings that affect participation in Indigenous tourism. Although participants usually do not mention CHR (Malle, 2004), the data from the interviews suggested three CHRs: previous participation, saturation, and parents' influence. While

“previous participation” and “parents’ influence” are either constraining or enabling the identified intentional behaviour, “saturation” is only constraining intentional behaviour.

Previous participation

Previous studies have pointed out that participant satisfaction in Indigenous tourism participation is high (Galliford, 2011; Notzke, 2004). However, other studies suggested that previous participation is a barrier to engage in Indigenous tourism (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009; Ruhanen et al., 2015a). This study highlights that previous participation could be a positive or negative CHR. It appears that some people repeatedly participated in activities they enjoy; while others were looking for new experiences.

Here is an example of a positive influence resulting from previous participation in Indigenous tourism (Participant 34):

I've been in many aboriginal sites in the NT. I've been to the Grampians one several times. Every time we come to Grampians we visit the Aboriginal history, we just enjoy it. (Participant 34)

The following quotes show the negative influence stemming from previous participation in Indigenous tourism, when Indigenous tourism activities are perceived as being too similar. This suggests that by highlighting the differences within Indigenous groups in Australia, there could be an increase in the attractiveness for this type of tourism, to both first-timers and repeat visitors, in different locations around Australia. This is supported by Amoamo and Thompson (2010) who suggested that, within the Maori context, the homogenised images limit the richness and diversity of the culture.

I think, we probably won't do Aboriginal tourism right now. It is not that we are not into Aboriginal art but we spent a week in an aboriginal community in the Northern territory, so we have done things like that before with the Aboriginal people in the town. So, it is not that we are not into it, it is just that we have done it in other places. (Participant 40)

I'm interested in aboriginal art but I've already seen all that. I have seen it in Melbourne and around Melbourne. Also, I have been in Mildura, there is a good Aboriginal Centre there. (Participant 21)

Saturation

It appears that one reason for saturation (when the participant feels that they have been over-exposed to Indigenous culture) is previous participation. Saturation had a negative impact on the intention of domestic visitors to participate in Indigenous tourism. The following quotes illustrate how saturation restricted the willingness to participate in Indigenous tourism in general.

We did a lot of that sort of stuff growing up so now it is not our interest. I grew up in an area that has lots of Aboriginal paintings and history, so all our school camps related to those sorts of things. So you kind of, like you appreciate it, but you've seen lots. So, when I go to a new area I enjoy seeing it but I prefer seeing things that I haven't seen myself. (Participant 28)

You feel like you are forced to, I mean at school one of the main elements is to know how Aboriginal and Australian heritage come true, which is good, we should do that, but you force some people. You can get sick of it. (Participant 46)

Just because we have seen it everywhere. (Participant 46)

Parents' influence

During the interviews, it became apparent that there were two opposite situations (positive and negative) when the parents interacted with their children on this matter. Theories on psychology and social learning suggest that parenting practices can have a major impact on children acquiring stereotypes and attitudes towards other people (The Australian Psychological Society, 1997). While the present study does not aim to explore this generational attitude bias, it is suggested that the

influence that parents have on their children's possible future perception of Indigenous tourism appeared to be important.

Positive influence in regards to Indigenous tourism (Participant 20):

I: why are you interested in the rock-art sites?

P: < Looks at the kids and asks: you are interested in aboriginal stuff aren't you? The girl kids smile and says yeah!!>

P; why do you think is interesting?

P: <KID: Because we are learning about it in school> <Participant looking at the kid: They are really old aren't they?, the kid nods and smiles>

Negative influence in regards to Indigenous tourism (Participant 8):

I: have you ever done Indigenous tourism activities?

P: um <Participant turns to his children and asks: so, have you done that in the school... The kid nods> it is just probably something that we are not interested in.

I: who do you think would be interested in doing Indigenous tourism activities?

P: Probably the kids at school <turn to the kid again: Have you done something like that or not really? The little girl answers: we have to do it> but it is something that doesn't interest you right?

Enabling factor (EF)

As previously mentioned, EFs are factors that clarify how participants are able to complete an intended action (Malle, 2004). The present study suggests that there were three EFs enabling translation of an intention into an intentional behaviour regarding the participation in Indigenous tourism at the Grampians: activities for children, awareness, and type of activities.

Activities for children

The cultural centre's offering of hands-on activities focused designed for children (other person behaviour) was an EF that had positive implications on visitor intentional behaviour regarding Indigenous tourism. The below quote illustrates this.

Because they get their hands-on and they will be feeling things or experiencing local Indigenous culture. They will be interested probably because these are things that they are seeing at school, so I suppose it is interesting to see in the wild, so to speak. (Participant 32)

Awareness

Awareness, or in this case lack of awareness, was identified as being one of the main EFs limiting domestic tourists participating in Indigenous tourism. This barrier has been previously identified (Abascal et al., 2015; JDSP, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2008; Ruhanen et al., 2015b). Some studies have pointed out the importance of visitor awareness (information) about local Indigenous groups and their relation to the area (Carr, 2004; Staiff, Bushell, & Kennedy, 2002). In this case study, there were two types of lack of awareness. The first was regarding the existence of Indigenous tourism activities in the region (see quotes below).

To be honest I didn't even know that there are these activities <pointing to the photos of the cultural centre and rock-art sites> at the Grampians. (Participant 29)

I have to admit I didn't even know that we have cave-painting in Victoria and I have been here my entire life. (Participant 7)

The second type of lack of awareness related to the availability of different tours, information, and activities offered by the cultural centre. At the moment, the cultural centre offers information regarding the National Park as well as the history and culture of the local Indigenous groups. It also offers tours and activities during the day (see the study area section for more detail). It appears that many domestic visitors were not aware of these opportunities.

If they could have a tour or stories of what happened here, who lived here, how they lived here, so what is at the moment, I mean, you need to know the rocks to go, there is no guides to explain things to you and tell you the stories of it. (Participant 8)

If you have an aboriginal ceremony, like aboriginal people doing the touching and doing the performance or showing how they make the artefacts; and also how they use them in a traditional way... If we can find an aboriginal tour-guide, they can make us feel a lot more respect for the culture because it is very complex. (Participant 50)

Type of activities offered

Another EF affecting the attractiveness to participate in Indigenous tourism was the perception towards the cultural centre. Some participants considered the cultural centre as an indoor and passive activity where visitors only “see” and do not actually participate in activities. A restructure of existing activities at cultural centres has been suggested previously (Abascal et al., 2015). However, the change has to be carefully managed and aligned with Indigenous values and traditions (Xie & Lane, 2006). The quotes below illustrate this concept:

If that activity is indoor then I probably wouldnt be interested. So if it happens to be outdoor and someone is showing, I dont know, how to play the didgeridoo or something, I would be interested in it. But I wouldnt go to a gallery to see that. (Participant 35)

If they explain me to me and they explain me the story behind it, then I will be interested, but just to see the artefacts is not that exciting for me. (Participant 30)

This one <cultural centre> you are a passive observer and you just watch other people do something. (Participant 33)

To summarise the findings presented in this section, Figure 2 shows how the themes identified have an influence on the intentional behaviour to participate in Indigenous tourism at the Grampians, and how these concepts relate to each other.

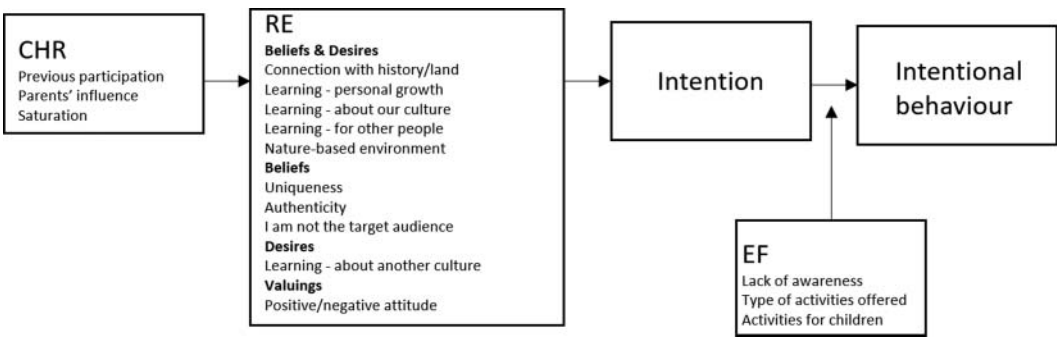


Figure 2. Elements influencing the intentional behaviour regarding Indigenous tourism at the Grampians.

Conclusions and implications for sustainability

As previously mentioned, understanding tourism demand is important to attain benefits that sustainable tourism could bring to Indigenous communities. This study investigated how visitors explain their intentional behaviour to participate, or not, in Indigenous tourism activities while travelling within the Grampians. It has also discussed how these explanations relate to, and extend, previous theory. The level of depth in the study may be constrained by time availability for interviews because the sample was made up of actual visitors travelling. However, the theoretical framework and methodology used has provided a deeper exploration not only on the intentionality of participation in different Indigenous tourism activities in a nature-based context, but also on the concepts that could inform strategies to facilitate increased sustainability for the Indigenous tourism sector. First, this study identifies not only types of reasons (RE, CHR, EF), but also different RE categories (beliefs, desires, and valuings) and reason content. This is important when developing appropriate strategies designed to increase the economic benefit of tourism by increasing the domestic participation rate in Indigenous tourism in Australia.

Second, it appears that there are different concepts associated with the sociocultural benefits of participating in Indigenous tourism (connection with history and land, learning, authenticity, and uniqueness). These could lead not only to the conservation of Indigenous culture and traditions (UNEP, 2011), but also to the strengthening of national identity and reconciliation (Galliford, 2011) derived by the domestic visitors' appreciation of the history and traditions of the local Indigenous people. However, it appears that there is lack of information and awareness regarding Indigenous culture and history in the Grampians area. To assist in this process, Birch (2003) suggests that names of landscapes in the region should be fully restored to the Indigenous language. This would not only increase the perception of the area as an important Indigenous area, but would also acknowledge the long history of the Indigenous people. This is aligned with Whitford and Ruhanen's (2010) study that claims that within government policies, little emphasis has been placed on the conservation, enhancement, and promotion of Indigenous culture.

Regarding the environmentally sustainable aspect of Indigenous tourism, this study identifies the awareness that domestic visitors have of the relationship between Indigenous culture and the natural environment. While, there are some strategies designed to restrict access to the Indigenous heritage at the Grampians (e.g. only five sites are open to the public and have security cages on them), there are limitations regarding other environmental aspects that are important for a sustainable tourism approach. These include community control of tourism, government support, and reclaiming natural or cultural resources (Zeppel, 1998b). For example, outdoor signage explaining Aboriginal heritage within the park appears to be limited to the five rock-art sites; and apparently significant government and Parks Victoria support for Brambuk, the cultural centre, has declined (Clark, 2014). Parks Victoria, Grampians Tourism, and Tourism Victoria are developing the "Grampians Peaks Trial", a 144 km long walking trail in the National Park. The plan includes conservation of the natural and cultural values of the Grampians (Parks Victoria, 2015). This project may represent an opportunity for the local Indigenous tourism industry to develop sustainable tourism strategies clearly linking Indigenous experiences with the natural environment. However, according to Whitford and Ruhanen (2010) it appears that Indigenous tourism policies have often displayed a top-down, narrow approach to Indigenous tourism development instead of strategies to identify and address community needs and priorities.

While this study focussed on increasing the sustainability for Indigenous tourism by including the voice of domestic visitors, further research considering the Indigenous tourism supply side of the equation, including the voice of the local Indigenous community, would be beneficial. Future research could focus also on replicating this study in different locations in Australia, each with different cultural, geographical, and visitation characteristics in order to get a wider understanding of visitors perspectives on Indigenous tourism.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Supplementary material

Supplementary data for this article can be accessed [here](#).

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