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INTRODUCTION

The quality of visitors' on-site experience is an important factor influencing and underlying much sustainable tourism (Yagi & Pearce, 2007). In tourism context, that is the interaction between tourism industry personnel and other tourists who happen to be in the same environment. The interaction might cause the happening the social value or interpersonal conflict, which require tourists adapt different strategies to minimize the uncomfortable feeling and co-create a better memory with their traveling accompany. The coping strategies can help tourists fulfil initial traveling motivation successful because coping strategies include the tourist or customer deciding if and how to deal with, and act in, various situations and also different traveling companions. Vargo and Lush (2004) said that consumer participate in the production of the experience, coping and co-creating seems to be related in terms of fulfilling tourists needs; but co-creating reflects a more active and even an innovative side of participation in the production part of the traveling experience. Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree & Bitner (2000) propose the concept of 'co-creation' to reflect that the host and guest are co-creating the value in experiences jointly. This concept might be also adapted to apply to tourist-to-tourist relationship and people who travel together might need to co-create the positive and value of traveling experience.

In summary, despite being long-noted as an important aspect of the service encounter (Bitner et al., 1990; Grove & Fisk, 1997; McGrath & Otnes, 1995), customer-to-customer interactions has been relatively ignored in the services literature, so as the tourist-to-tourist interactions in tourism industry. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical research that examines the role that the effects of tourist-to-tourist interactions on encounter result: positive or negative. Therefore, this research attempts to explicate the nature of these tourist-to-tourist relationships and the effect of tourists' role typology on tourist reaction to the encounter. In this regard, this study is designed both to respond to recent calls for further research into such issues (e.g. Fullerton & Punj, 1993; Harris et al., 1997; Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Martin, 1996; Moore, Moore, & Capella, 2005) and to advance understanding of these central issues.

This research aimed to examine the encounters and interactions among tourists with different cultural backgrounds (Japan/Taiwan), and also investigate the relationship among tourist-to-tourist interactions, role typology, nationality, and tourist's reaction to encounter (an increase on interaction conflict or decrease the social distance among tourists). Furthermore, this study also investigates whether the tourist's role typology and their nationality could moderate the relationship between encounter level and encounter conflict or its social distance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist-to-tourist interactions

Majority of past studies spend more efforts on understanding the interactions between tourists and local people or the environment but lack focus on the interactions among tourists (Bochner, 1982; Guthrie & Anderson, 2007; Wald, et al., 2001). By way of contrast, how tourists see other tourists at tourist sites or tourist-tourist relations who are in the same social group simply has not received much attention yet, especially the inter-personal tourists-tourists encounter in tourism discipline. Some previous studies compared the cultural difference between Japanese and American (Matsumoto et al., 1999; Matsumoto et al., 2002; Noguchi, 2007; Yrizarry et al., 1998). The differences between American and Japanese on how they manage passing encounters were found significantly.

Yagi (2001) collected 830 articles from 120 Japanese and American from online travelguse and then used content analysis to understand the direct and indirect encounter happening among tourists and also tourists' attitudes towards other tourists and local industry personnel. Overall Yagi's showed that Japanese and Americans see other tourists differently. Yagi & Pearce (2007) found that there were different encounter preferences between Japanese and Western study participants with respect to both appearance and the number of people encountered. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Tourists with different cultural background (Japan/Taiwan) would have different level and preference (attitudes) towards encounter experience with other tourists.

Interaction result - Encounter conflict

Some researchers focused on the interpersonal conflict (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980; Schneider, 2000) and others examined social value conflict (Carothers, Vaske, & Donnelly, 2001). Interpersonal conflict occurs when the presence or behavior of an individual or group interferes with the goals of another individual or group (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980). The interpersonal conflict normally happens between different activity groups and were normally taken place at outdoor recreation setting rather than indoor recreation sites. Another type of conflict is named as social value conflict which occurs between groups who may not have similar norms/values about an activity (Vaske et al., 1995). Social value conflict normally happens when there is no direct contact between the groups (Carothers et al., 2001).

In the context of tourism, other tourist's presence or behavior might not interfere with other tourists' goals but might cause some unpleasant feeling such as making noise in museum, littering trash in national park (Jackson & Wong, 1982; Rudell & Gramann, 1994). Consequently, tourists may experience aspects of culture shock and conflict from other tourists (Nash, 1996). Robinson (1998)

noted that people from different cultures may not share the same attitudes, beliefs, values and encounter settings. Unfortunately, majority of studies paid attention to investigate the cultural contact a conflict in the context of tourist-host relationship (Brown, 1999; Pearce, 1993) rather than tourist-tourist relationship. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Tourists with different encounter level and nationality background (Japan/Taiwan) would have perceptions towards encounter conflicts including cultural and behavioral conflicts.

Interaction result –Social Distance

Social distance is considered as the cooperative behavior and understanding that exists between people (Bogardus, 1940). Tourism activities do get involved with the interaction between residents and international tourists from various cultural backgrounds. This type of interaction could possibly lead to service encounter failures. This failure could be expressed through encounter conflict. Besides this can also be explained via social distance (Thyne & Lawson, 2001). Previous study identified that social distance is an expression of sympathetic understanding of individual differences and this kind of differences can be understood and also can be managed (Chapman, Gajewska-De Mattos, Clegg, & Buckley, 2008). Thus, positive views of residents regarding tourists and well-functioning relationships between tourists and residents, together with low levels of social distance are key ingredients to sustaining continuous visits, promote return visitation and stimulate demand for tourist destinations (Sinkovics & Penz, 2009). So previous study concludes that the positive views of residents towards tourists and also positive relationship between both parties could benefit the long-term development of tourism and also promote the repeated visitation. There might be a possibility that the low level of social distances among tourists might be very important for repeated tourists if the interaction among tourists is not end up as a negative conflict. Social distance could be considered as a strategy to avoid conflicts. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Tourists with different encounter level and nationality background would be able to decrease the social distance.

Role typology

McGrath and Otnes (1995, p. 263) concentrated specifically on the interaction between strangers in a retail environment and identified that stranger interactions 'accompanied by a variety of external stimuli, stemmed from a variety of motives and resulted in a variety of emotional responses and behaviors'. Parker and Ward (2000) based on the McGrath and Otnes's (1995) study discovered that in

terms of the roles people play when interacting with other customers, both stages of the study supported the findings of McGrath and Otnes (1995) in the USA. UK customers do adopt the role of help-seeker, reactive helper and proactive helper. Also, empirical works by Grove and Fisk (1997) have demonstrated the frequency of customer-to-customer interactions in leisure and retail settings. Some fellow customers can spoil a service experience through 'inappropriate' public behaviors (Hoffman & Bateson, 1997). According to the studies of McGrath and Otnes (1995) and Parker and Ward (2000), the role customer playing interacts with other customers including reactive help-seeker, proactive help-seeker, reactive helper and proactive helper. As the different role typologies that customers play in service contexts stemmed from a variety of product knowledge, personality and motives, the influences of customer-to-customer interactions on customer satisfaction varied when customers play a distinct role typology. For example, when fellow customers present protocol and sociability behaviors, the reactive help-seeker will be the most appreciated than other customers who play different role typologies. Thus, we hypothesized the following:

H4: The role typology of the tourist played in the tourist-to-tourist interactions will moderate the relationship between encounter level and encounter affect: conflict or social distance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study participants

This is a cross-sectional study which used closed-end questionnaire to collect the data from two different study samples – Taiwanese (48%) and Japanese (52%). In total, the research team collected 336 questionnaires from two sites –Taoyuan and Tokyo international airport from September in 2014 to March in 2015.

Study instrument

A three-page questionnaire was designed, comprising their encounter frequency with other tourists, encounter experience, encounter conflict, social distance, their socio-economic information, such as gender, educational background, age, and traveling habit.

Encounter experience

This research studied the frequency of the study participants' encounters with other tourists at the same attraction sites and the quality of those encounters. The encounter frequency was measured by a 7-point scale and defined as "how often they had "direct" encounter/interactions with other tourists at attraction sites". The bigger the number is, the more often they have encounter with other tourists.

Furthermore, study participants were asked about their attitudes towards three type of other tourists after having certain encounter/interactions ("positive", "neutral" and "negative"). Besides the study participants also were asked to provide the perspectives of the other tourists based on the subjective views of how they see other tourists with different nationality and they are potential new friend, travel companion, helper, security guard, stimulation, scenery, stranger, disturber or competitor (Yagi, 2001).

Encounter conflict

The study designed ten items to evaluate their agreement to different encounter conflict by using 7-point Likert scale. The bigger the number is, the more serious the study participant consider the encounter conflict is. The question is designed as "I had conflict with other tourists because other tourists had strange looks at my clothes". Except the clothes, other items are such as "my skill color, language, living habits. Besides, other questions are designed as "Because other tourists shouted loudly, other tourist's improper behavior (littering, spitting, smoking and ect.)".

Social Distances

A questionnaire was developed, building on Bogardus (1933a) multi-item, multi-dimensional 'Social-Distance-Scale', which was applied in Thyne and Lawson (2001) and subsequent work (Thyne, Lawson, & Todd, 2006; Thyne & Zins, 2004). The study participants were asked to provide their agreement to different statements. The statement was such as "I am willing to "make friends" with Japanese". Another seven items to measure the social distance are "to conduct volunteering service", "to get married", "to live in same neighbor", "to be work colleagues", "to participate in religious activities or in same religion club", "to conduct tourism activities", and "to support friends to marry Japanese". The social distance of study participants is measured by the total amount of the agreement level towards eight items. The higher the social distance number is, the more open minded the study participant have towards other tourists with different nationalities.

RESULTS

Of 336 study participants, 26 study participants said that they did not have any encounter experiences with other tourists at attraction sites while traveling abroad. Except those study participants (around 7.7%), majority of study participants (92.3%) still had certain level of interactions with other tourists at attraction sites. The level of encounter is around 3.56 out of 7 (referred to always had interactions experiences with other tourists). For encounter conflict, the study participants rated 10 items which were identified for the factor analysis: *Cultural aspect* and *Behavioral aspect of encounter*

conflict. All of the factors had eigenvalues greater than one and explained 68.25% of the total variance. The cultural encounter conflict has six items. It's average score is 20.44 of 42. It seems that study participants experienced middle level of cultural conflict. For behavioral conflict factor, the average score is around 21.43. Study participants experienced higher level of behavioral conflicts compared to cultural conflicts. Average score for social distance is 41.93. This number showed that study participants are open to have certain levels of relationship with other people who have different nationality background.

Encounter experience by nationality

The study hypothesis 1 is to examine whether tourists with different nationality background (Japan/Taiwan) would have different level and preference (attitudes) towards encounter experience with other tourists. According to the T-test result, there is no significant difference existing between Taiwanese and Japanese. The encounter feeling by their nationality was examined by Cross-Tab analysis. There is no significant association between encounter feeling and nationality background. Majority of study participants had neutral feeling towards their encounter experience (56%), which is higher than positive feeling (44%). Then eight possible options were categorized to three groups: positive, neutral and negative. The positive feeling included potential new friend, travel companion, helper, security guard, and stimulation; the neutral feeling is to consider other tourists as scenery; and the negative feeling is they consider other tourists are stranger, disturber or competitor to themselves. Cross Tab result showed that there is a significant association between encounter feeling and nationality (χ^2=22.451; ρ =0.000). For three types of encounter feeling, Taiwanese tourists have higher level on positive and negative feeling towards other tourists compared to Japanese study participants. However, Japanese tourists have higher level of neutral feeling towards other tourists

Table 1. Role play by Nationality

Role play	Nationality		Total
	Taiwan	Japan	
Positive(Friend)	112	95	207
	54%	46%	62%
Neutral(Scenery)	19	66	81
	23%	76%	24%
Negative(Competition)	35	13	48
	73%	27%	14%

Encounter Conflict

The study hypothesis 2 is to examine whether tourists with different encounter level and nationality background (Japan/Taiwan) would have significant difference on their perceptions towards encounter conflicts including cultural and behavioral conflicts. According to one-way ANOVA, the tourists with different encounter feeling and also nationality background would have different evaluation on cultural conflict factor. Tourists having negative encounter feeling towards other tourists had highest level of cultural aspect conflict, and tourists with neutral encounter feeling with other tourists had the lowest level on the same factor. For behavioral conflict, the mean difference only existed between tourists having negative and neutral encounter feeling. Tourists having higher level of negative feeling reported higher level of behavioral conflict compared to tourists having neutral encounter feeling. The T test said Taiwanese tourists experience higher level of cultural and behavioral encounter conflict compared to Japanese.

Table 2. Mean difference of encounter conflicts by Nationality and encounter feeling

	F/T value	P value	comparison
Cultural conflict	8.39	0.000	Negative>Positive>Neutral
	7.50	0.000	Taiwanese>Japanese
Behavioral conflict	4.06	0.018	Negative>Neutral
	9.59	0.000	Taiwanese>Japanese

Social distance

The study hypothesis 3 is to examine whether tourists with different encounter level and nationality background had significantly different level on the social distance. Tourists having positive feeling towards encounter experiences are higher level on social distance compared to tourists with negative feeling. The same result also happened between tourists with neutral and negative feeling. Besides, tourists who have higher level encounter experience with other tourists also have higher level of social distance. The higher level of social distance meant that they are more willing to increase the frequency and intensity of interactions between or among different tourists. They might perceive that the more the members of two groups interact, the closer they are socially.

Table 3. Mean difference of Social distance and conflict by Nationality

	F/T value	P value	comparison

	23.89	0.000	Positive>Negative, Neutral>Negative
Social distance			
	-2.109	0.000	High encounter>Low encounter

The examination of the moderating effect

Two-Way ANOVA was used to evaluate the study hypothesis four, which is "The role typology of the tourist played in the tourist-to-tourist interactions will moderate the relationship between encounter level and encounter affect: conflict or social distance". So three dependent variables were "cultural and behavioral conflict" and "social distance". The independent variable is nationality (Taiwanese and Japanese). Two moderating variables are encounter level (high and low encounter) with other tourists and subjective encounter feeling (Positive, neutral and negative) In total, six studies were conducted for study hypothesis four.

As shown in Table 4, the Two-Way ANOVA test reveals significant interaction between encounter level and study participant's nationality with respect to social distance level [F value=5.801, p=0.01]. Figure 1 shows that the encounter level moderates the relationship between study participant's nationality and the result of social distance. For Taiwanese study participants, the relationship between encounter level and social distance level is positive. However, for Japanese tourists, the result is totally oppositely and the relationship between encounter level and social distance level is negative. This meant the interactions might shorten the distances between Taiwanese and other tourist but extend the distances between Japanese and other tourists.

Table 4. Two-way ANOVA tests on Social Distance by participant nationality and encounter level

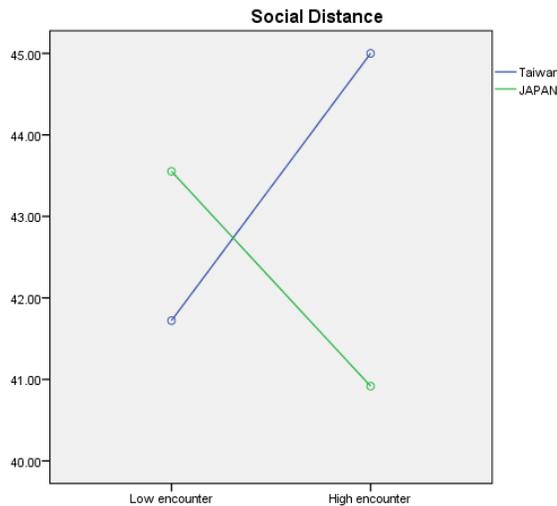|	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Main effects				
Encounter	1	5.597	0.069	0.79*
Participant Nationality	1	68.66	0.084	0.36*
Interaction effect	1	473.38	5.801	0.01*
Error	218	81.61		
Corrected total	222			

*P<0.05

Figure 1

Table 5 said that the Two-Way ANOVA test reveals significant interaction between encounter level and encounter feeling with respect to behavioral conflict [F value=3.529, p=0.01]. Figure 2 shows that the encounter feeling moderates the relationship between encounter level and the level of behavioral conflicts. For tourists having lower level of encounter experience with other tourists, there is a significant difference on behavioral conflicts among tourists who have different result of encounter feeling with other tourists. However, for study participants who have high encounter experience with other tourists, their behavioral conflict is the same no matter how they felt about the encounter: positive, neutral or negative.

Table 5. Two-way ANOVA tests on behavioral conflict by encounter level and encounter feeling

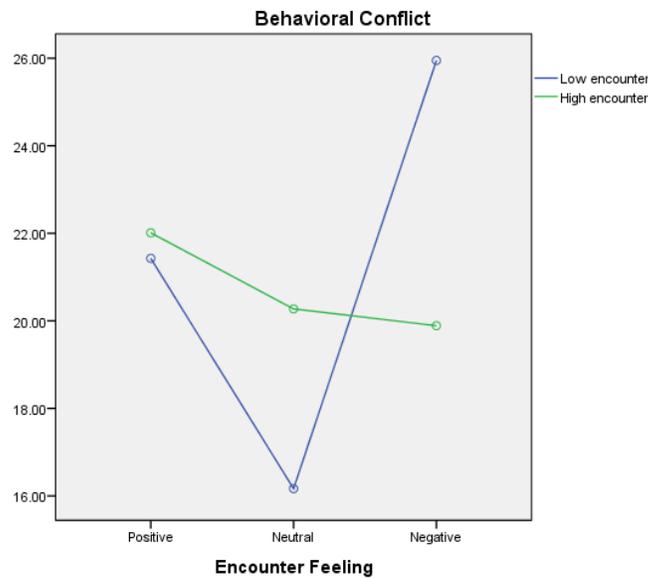|	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Main effects				
Encounter level	1	1.083	0.012	0.91
Encounter feeling	2	118.37	1.298	0.28
Interaction effect	2	321.94	3.529	0.01*
Error	309	31.227		
Corrected total	317			

*P<0.05

Figure 2

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that Taiwanese have more experience on encounter conflict than Japanese; higher level of Tourist-to-Tourist encounter could shorten the social distance; and different perception of role play would affect the encounter reaction: conflict and mutual understanding. Finally, the tourist's role typology moderates the relationship between encounter level and encounter conflict; and the nationality moderates the relationship between encounter level and social distance. On study limitation exists with respect to interpreting and generalizing the research finding reported in this study. First, this study only collected the data from Taiwanese and Japanese and compared the difference between this two groups, rather than collected the data from tourists with other countries such as China, USA, or others due to the research budget.

Taiwan and other countries in Taiwan have closer relationship. People are very similar in terms of looks and language, but different in many ways. The majority of tourism attraction sites in Taipei are located in residential areas and also mixed residential and commercial areas. So the tourism attraction site is always full of people including tourists from different countries, and also local residences. This points to the importance of this study, which provide more understanding of the encounter and interaction matters among tourists with different nationality backgrounds. The findings of this and other studies suggest that the nature of social interaction among tourists may be influenced by different senses of nationalism, with implications for the outcome of tourist-tourist encounters. This finding provides valuable information for the local planners, policymakers and business operators.

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