Understanding tourists' transformative experience: A systematic literature review

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Tourism Transformative experience Systematic review Quantitative Socio-psychological transformation	Tourism has the potential to trigger lifelong changes through a transformative experience. However, existing tourists' transformative experience (TE) research has been criticized for lacking the embodied dimensions of transformative experiences leading to fragmented and contradictory views on what and where these experiences take place in the tourism context. Considering these criticisms coupled with the important role of transformative experience, this study systematically examines tourists' transformative experience literature to address the current knowledge gap. Adopting a quantitative systematic literature review approach, this paper aims to outline the research trends of tourists' transformative experiences and provide insights for future research. The findings suggest that more research concerning transformative experiences in tourism has been dedicated to volunteer tourism discourses as the context of volunteering offers a 'once in a lifetime' experience. The findings also point to a dearth of appropriate and comprehensive theoretical frameworks in the tourism context. The current study found that while transformative experiences are reflected in four dimensions of behavioral, psychological, social, and spiritual experiences; socio-psychological transformation experiences dominate. A research framework with future research questions unpacking possible theoretical and methodological directions is further proposed.

1. Introduction

Tourism influences the self and others through co-creation and transformation (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011). Such transformational experience in attitude and behavior occurs during the tourism journey both actively and unconsciously. Research has shown that some tourists show more concern over the environment and animal issues in their daily life after visiting wildlife attractions (Ballantyne, Hughes, Lee, Packer, & Sneddon, 2018). Likewise, tourists who participate in rural or agricultural tourism are more inclined to purchase the products of the destination in their daily lives and are even willing to pay a premium for them (Brune, Knollenberg, Stevenson, Barbieri, & Schroeder-Moreno, 2020). Wang, Chen, Shi, and Shi (2021) argue that participating in activities in Buddhist destinations may change the lifestyle of tourists while Shahvali, Kerstetter, and Townsend (2021) suggest that group traveling improves the social relationship between fellow travelers. The above research instances describe some personalized experiential processes where tourists reflect and adjust their views, attitudes, lifestyles, or behaviors that were taken for granted in the past (Soulard, McGehee, & Knollenberg, 2021). Tourism activities are not

just a kind of consumption but can be regarded as a way to meet intrinsic needs (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In this sense, the tourism experience is transformative.

The term transformative experience (TE) of tourists connotes the moment when tourists experience deep changes during travel and also after they return home (Soulard, McGehee, & Knollenberg, 2021). The transformative potential of tourism and the power of transformative experience have been well confirmed in previous literature (e.g., Alahakoon, Pike, & Beatson, 2021; Brown, 2009; Fu, Tanyatanaboon, & Lehto, 2015; Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017b). Mair and Sumner (2017) argue that tourism is pedagogical since tourists' previously uncritical assumptions, beliefs, values, and views are questioned in travel stimulating openness and inclusiveness. Through such an effect of tourists' TE, it can be considered that tourism shapes individuals and societies.

In this vein, transformative experience in tourism research is gaining increasing research interest. For example, Bueddefeld and Duerden (2022) combined the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) and free-choice learning to present the transformative tourism learning model that explained the process of learning in the tourism context. Their study demonstrated that TE could trigger different learning

dimensions, although not all experiences are transformative. Chhabra (2021) presented a transformative perspective of tourism and argued that the focus of tourism research should shift from investigating the tourism experience related to tourism satisfaction, tourism loyalty, or behavioral intention to the outcomes related to real happiness, actualization, and self-transformation in post-trip. Within an ecotourism context, Wolf, Ainsworth, and Crowley (2017) examined TE in ecotourism and summarized motivation, participant characteristics, and experience characteristics that trigger transformation. The authors then argued that transformative travel could improve participants' psychological, physical, social, and economic conditions, as well as satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. However, their study does not offer theoretical explanations of how specific transformation experiences develop in tourism. Moreover, Teoh, Wang, and Kwek (2021) discussed TE in different tourism types and provided a co-creative TE framework consisting of experience, experience consumer, and experience facilitator. Yet, the theoretical basis of this framework remains questionable.

The preceding studies point to three important research gaps that need critical research attention. First, there is a dearth of theoretical frameworks and possible theories for unpacking tourists' TE. This lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework leads to mixed and scattered research conclusions with a blurry conceptual boundary leading to inappropriate use. For example, Mohamed, Taheri, Farmaki, Olya, and Gannon (2020) used the term transformative behavior to refer to the behavioral differences that tourists displayed between the tourism context and daily life, not the changes or transformations that tourists gained in travel. In addition, some studies fail to make a clear distinction between the concepts of TE and well-being (e.g., Dillette, Douglas, & Andrzejewski, 2019; Neuhofer, Celuch, & To, 2020; Pung & Del Chiappa, 2020). Therefore, a systematic summary of theoretical frameworks can facilitate a clearer theoretical path and provide a multi-perspective for TE research. Second, previous literature also ignores the changing research trend. The number of studies on TE is increasing which reflects the growing importance of TE in tourism academia. Therefore, current literature needs a holistic understanding of TE research and its multi-dimensional components to ensure conceptual rigor. Undeniably, a lack of understanding of TE research trends hinders the realization of this goal. For example, Matteucci (2021) pointed out that while many academic studies paid attention to the process, conditions, and outcomes of transformation in the tourism context, few focused on the actual transformation in TE. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize the publication year, sources, discipline fields, and research theme of current TE research to promote more effective knowledge contribution. Third, previous studies ignore the differences in tourists' TE that occur in different tourism settings (such as Teoh et al., 2021; Wolf et al., 2017). However, each tourism context offers a unique experience to tourists (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Failure to recognize such differences means that interventions to acquire unique experiences may fail to render expected outcomes. Although the occurrence of TE involves other destination factors, it has been argued that tourists' reflection and interpretation of experience is the key trigger of TE (see Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017a; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021). Thus, focusing on tourists' TE can more effectively improve the overall understanding of the TE process. The consideration of different tourism settings could facilitate the design of suitable tourism activities to foster and trigger TE.

Given the above gaps, the current study develops five main research questions to guide the systematic literature review. Xiao and Watson (2017) argue that a good systematic review should be guided by clear research questions. This paper, thus, addresses the following five questions:

(1) What are the trends of previous tourists' TE research?
(2) What theories or frameworks have been adopted to explain tourists' TE?
(3) What are the factors that trigger tourists' TE?

(4) What are the different dimensions and specific outcomes of tourists' TE in various tourism settings?
(5) What are the directions for further research on tourists' TE?

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Following this introductory section, the relevant literature on transformative experiences and their triggers are examined. This is then followed by a discussion of the methodological procedures employed to arrive at the findings. This study presents the findings using tables and figures and then discusses the results highlighting their theoretical implications.

2. Literature review

2.1. Tourists' transformative experience and self-transformation

The origin of transformative experience can be traced back to transformative learning or the Transformative Learning Theory proposed by Mezirow (1997) in the field of education. Transformative learning refers to "a process of effective change in a frame of reference" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5), and new habits of mind or views can form in this process. Therefore, personal change is important in transformative learning and TE. Some studies argued that TE is the core of Experience Economy 3.0 which asserts that consumers seek not only simple pleasure (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), but also individual meaning and self-realization (Kirillova et al., 2017a; Pope, 2018). As Reisinger pointed out in one of her fundamental works exploring tourism and transformation, the real potential of tourism lies in creating opportunities for people to reach their full potential as human beings helping them to think and reflect on the transformational nature of their existence (Reisinger, 2013).

Tourism provides a context for creating and forming TE because tourists often encounter novel things and exotic cultures in their journey causing them to reflect on their past experiences (Alahakoon et al., 2021; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Reisinger (2013) argued that the encounter with an 'other' or 'otherness' in tourism drives the process of transformation for tourists. TE has been observed in many tourism types such as volunteer tourism (Knollenberg, McGehee, Boley, & Clemmons, 2014; Molz, 2016; Pan, 2017), educational tourism (Biber, 2021; Brown, 2009; Wee, 2019), nature tourism (Richardson & Insch, 2021; Sowards, 2012; Walter, 2016), and pilgrimage tourism (Fedele, 2014). These alternative tourism or niche tourism markets provide sufficient time and enabling contexts for tourists to pursue TE (Decrop, Del Chiappa, Mallargé, & Zidda, 2018; Magrizos, Kostopoulos, & Powers, 2021). From this perspective, long-term independent travel provides opportunities to acquire TE which are likely to have a powerful and lasting effect on those who partake in it (Phillips, 2019).

An emerging stream of research has recently focused on the conceptualization of TE. Fu et al. (2015) proposed that the form of catalytic effect in the hospitality and tourism industry for TE was multiple depending on the content of activities participated by tourists. Pung, Gnoth, and Del Chiappa (2020) argued that the transformation of tourists was a comprehensive process, and tourists' TE could be interpreted from the perspective of existentialism, pragmatism, and education. Under the framework of the co-creation experience, the process of TE is also shaped by the interaction among consumers, facilitators, and destinations (Teoh et al., 2021).

While researchers concur with the need to conceptualize TE in the tourism context, however, there exist different conclusions. For example, although many studies demonstrated that TE eventually led to individual behavioral or psychological changes (e.g., Vidickienė, Vilkė, & Gedminaitė-Raudonė, 2020; Wolf et al., 2017), there are differences in how TE is achieved in the tourism context. More specifically, on the question of whether the occurrence of TE needs tourists' reflection. Wolf et al. (2017) and Pung and Del Chiappa (2020) argue that reflection makes TE produce a marked effect, while Lean (2012) holds an almost opposite view that transformation can occur without any formal reflection. In addition, some studies claimed to discuss the

conceptualization of TE, but the conclusion was about the process of TE (e.g., Fu et al., 2015; Teoh et al., 2021), leaving defects in the boundary of the concept and the operationalization of the concept. As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons for these defects is lacking appropriate theoretical guidance, and another reason is that studies often occur in a limited tourism context. Therefore, this study aims to provide a general analysis of TE under different tourism contexts and theories. The purpose is to provide a comprehensive understanding by bridging these differences.

2.2. Triggers and outcomes of a transformative experience

In general, the factors causing TE can be broadly divided into tourists' personal factors and destination factors including factors related to the experience itself, and yet personal factors play a dominant role in the formation of TE. In Mezirow's view, the disorienting dilemma that individuals enter when facing challenges is the beginning of transformation (Mezirow, 1997). Cognition, emotion, and some special experiences may stimulate TE at a certain time (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). Lengieza, Swim, and Hunt (2019) provide experimental evidence that tourists' self-reflection was the key factor to stimulate transformation, and diverse reflective directions produce different results (such as hedonic vs. eudaimonic). Destinations create a favorable environment for personal transformation which provides access to different cultures to escape from the hustle and bustle of the secular world (Bandyopadhyay & Nair, 2019; Morgan, 2010; Neuhofer, Egger, Yu, & Celuch, 2021). Transformational travel could be the motivation of some tourists, while destinations and activities could also provide an environment for unexpected transformation (Fu et al., 2015). Thus, transformation depends not only on the place but also on the tourists themselves and their motivations (Reisinger, 2013).

Notably, the division of factors causing TE into personal and destination factors is not absolute especially concerning experiences. Some special experiences are also considered to trigger TE under certain circumstances. Although the experience is largely personal, it cannot be separated from the activities in destinations. For example, Kirillova et al. (2017b) argue that peak experience, co-created with the interaction between tourists and destinations, can be extended and enhanced into TE through the personal meaning-making process. Although in the TE framework proposed by Teoh et al. (2021), the experience dimension is considered a separate dimension, they argued that the dimension consists of landscape, social dynamics, and property attributes, which are directly related to the destination. Likewise, Pope (2018) also classifies tourism settings factors into the experience dimension rather than the place dimension.

Moreover, the occurrence of transformation is also a highly personalized process as Voigt, Brown, and Howat (2011) argued that even tourists participating in similar activities or settings may achieve very different TE. For example, Decrop et al. (2018) contend that sharing or collaborative accommodation in travel triggers personal and social transformation among tourists, while Guttentag (2019) doubts the transformative potential of sharing experiences via Airbnb for tourists. Knollenberg et al. (2014) reveal that there were notable differences in the tendency and expectation of TE among participants of volunteer tourism with different motivational intensities. Such differential tendencies reaffirm the need to further explore the factors that trigger TE and its different outcomes.

Many studies reported various specific transformational outcomes, under different dimensions, brought about by TE. Although early studies have questioned the role of tourists' self-transformation in tourism (see Bruner, 1991), more and more evidence demonstrates that TE could be found in tourism situations with different formations and degrees. Fu et al. (2015) revealed that the changes brought about by TE can be measured by three spectra including time (temporary vs. enduring), degree (minor vs. major), and form (tangible vs. intangible). According to a longitudinal tracking study, Phillips (2019) argues that independent

travel represents a disruptive life event that can profoundly change tourists' values, attitudes, behaviors, and even life goals. Some existing studies divide the dimensions of TE into personal and social (Coetzee, Liu, & Filep, 2019; Decrop et al., 2018; Magee & Gilmore, 2015). Others such as Xu, Lo, and Wu (2021) argue that the dimensions of transformation include psychological, communicative, and behavioral. Teoh et al. (2021), on the other hand, suggest that transformation includes not only psychological and social changes but also physical and knowledge changes. Although current research presents several types of TE, however, many of them do not cover all dimensions of transformation in previous literature. For example, the changes observed among tourists are more inclined toward spiritual change in the early academic discourse (e.g., Bruner, 1991). However, the spiritual transformation type is ignored or mixed with psychological transformation (e.g., Decrop et al., 2018; Teoh et al., 2021). Additionally, current research does not provide an operational framework to evaluate the outcome of TE leading to difficulties in future empirical research. Although Soulard, McGehee, and Knollenberg (2021) took the lead in developing the scale of transformative travel experience, the dimensions and items are more geared toward evaluating the factors that cause TE rather than the outcomes and context of TE. Thus, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of TE by systematically reviewing the extant literature using a quantitative approach.

3. Methodology

3.1. Systematic and quantitative approach

Based on the research purposes, this paper employed a quantitative systematic literature review approach. This approach is appropriate to analyse how research in the selected field has progressed over time and where these advances are reflected (Snyder, 2019). Other literature review approaches (e.g., meta-analysis and integrative review) were deemed inappropriate to address the identified gaps and the research questions. For example, a meta-analysis which is an alternative approach intends to estimate an effect size and provide reliable conclusions on a contested issue by integrating data from different quantitative studies (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2010). However, current tourists' TE research is dominated by qualitative methods so there are not enough sources for conducting a meta-analysis. Hence, a meta-analysis is unsuitable to summarize TE types, TE triggers as well as future directions. A second alternative approach, the integrative review or narrative review, is dedicated to presenting a theoretical model or framework for a research topic (Snyder, 2019). But this approach generally cannot provide a clear description of the literature selection process and a quantitative description of the results since it is mostly used for more mature topics (Snyder, 2019). Consequently, it is difficult to identify the trends of TE research in a rapidly developing phenomenon by adopting this approach. Therefore, this study adopts a systematic review approach because it is well suited to track comprehensive themes and theoretical perspectives of TE literature. Moreover, it facilitates setting an agenda for future research development which is highly beneficial to the progress of TE research in tourism at the current stage (Moher et al., 2010; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2017).

The quantitative systematic literature review approach involves systematic steps to identify, select and critically evaluate relevant research on a specific research problem (Moher et al., 2010). In addition, it shows the process of literature inclusion/exclusion through a series of clear steps (Le, Arcodia, Novais, & Kralj, 2019). The quantitative method is reflected in the quantified literature pattern which can highlight the research concerns, but it does not mean that only quantitative studies are included (Agyeiwaah, McKercher, & Suntikul, 2017). This study's method follows the definition of the systematic review by Moher et al. (2010) akin to definition of the semi-systematic review process by Snyder (2019).

3.2. Process of systematic review

Similar to previous systematic review studies in tourism (e.g., Le et al., 2019), the present research employed a five-step process evolved from the fifteen-stage proposed by Pickering and Byrne (2014). To be specific, the first step involves defining the research topic, question, and aims. In this first step, the originality and appropriateness of the topic and research question are considered.

The second step focuses on identifying keywords and databases for the literature search. The keywords should be able to identify the literature in the relevant field comprehensively and with precision (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). As part of identifying keywords, this study considered the titles of related articles as well as the terms used in other review articles (e.g., Teoh et al., 2021; Wolf et al., 2017). *Transformative* and *transformation* were finally identified as keywords for the search because the two keywords cover most journal articles on the topic including those in the field of tourism and other disciplines. For the databases, six mainstream databases including Web of Science, EBSCO host, Scopus, Science Direct, Emerald, and Sage were selected.

The third step involved searching, reading, and screening literature by criteria. The criteria were used to identify studies conducted in the tourism context and concerning tourists' TE (although not necessarily published in tourism journals). In this step, the current study made every effort to ensure that only the literature relevant to the purpose of this study is selected. For example, the researchers read the titles and abstracts of all alternative articles for preliminary screening, downloaded all potentially related articles, and read the full text to make a judgment. When it comes to the evaluation of whether a certain study was conducted in the tourism context or whether it concerned tourists' TE, the data source of the study was taken as the main consideration. Other key information such as research aims, main conclusion, literature review of the articles, and some technical standards (such as the number of times "tourist" was used in the article) was also considered.

The fourth step was to extract useful relevant information and produce a summary table. Thus, categories and subcategories were carefully defined according to the research purposes and a spreadsheet was used to record information. Indeed, re-categorization and retrogression are largely inevitable in this step. For example, self-esteem, one of the outcomes of TE reported in the literature, was divided into the psychological dimension in the initial coding, but finally categorized into a newly created spiritual dimension. This was done with other similar concepts, such as self-realization and self-transcendence, which constantly appeared during the process of reading more literature. At this point, other previous coding results were modified according to the newly added dimension. Therefore, the fourth step is a developing step of continuous iteration until all literature is included.

The last step involved organizing and presenting findings. The researchers followed the suggestions of Pickering and Byrne (2014) which stated that the methodology section is drafted first and then the result, and discussion sections follow. The specific process of setting conceptual boundaries and data collection is detailed in the following section.

3.2.1. Setting conceptual boundary and criteria

As mentioned in the introduction, previous related reviews in tourism did not sort out the research on tourists' TE which is largely due to their unclear definition of TE (e.g., Wolf et al., 2017). Considering that the conceptualization of TE in the tourism context is diverse, a reasonable way to define TE is by grasping the essence of the term *transformative*. According to Fu et al. (2015) "… [W]hen an individual feels that she/he has changed as the result of an encounter, a transformative experience takes place" (p. 85). Thus, following existing literature, "change", a unique and inherent component of TE (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 2001), is used to define TE in the present review.

Some previous systematic review literature in the tourism field suggested some criteria to ensure reliable results (e.g., Aladag, Koseoglu, King, & Mehraliyev, 2020; Le et al., 2019) including peer-reviewed articles and publications in academic journals. The criteria of "full-text available" and "English journal articles" were also employed previously. Based on the topic and proposed research questions of the present study, two extra criteria were added to judge the eligibility of literature:

(1) TE must happen in a tourism context and should be considered as a travel/tourism experience; and
(2) The target respondents of TE must be tourists.

Since this study focuses on tourists' TE that is generated in the tourism context, the present study had to address the question - should this study only include those journals or articles in the tourism field? Considering the research questions and purposes of our research, this study included both tourism and non-tourism journals for the following reasons. Firstly, it is observed that some tourist studies were published in non-tourism journals. For example, Patterson (2015) combined tourism perspectives in discussing the transformative potential of education travel and demonstrated that the length of travel, contact with local people, and the role of tour guides were very important to the transformation of tourists. The research questions, samples, main conclusions, and contributions of this article are related to tourism, but this article is published in a journal in the education field rather than in the tourism field. Similarly, one of the early articles exploring the transformative power of tourism used international sojourn students as a sample in the education field (see Brown, 2009). Therefore, the key lies in the researcher's judgment of whether an article focuses on the tourists' TE by carefully reading the full text of the article (as explained in the steps earlier). Although this increases the workload and may introduce some subjective bias, it is worthwhile to improve the comprehensive understanding of TE. Secondly, TE is an interdisciplinary concept. When dealing with interdisciplinary topics, previous reviews also included journals in different fields. For example, Le et al. (2019) include journals in the fields of sociology, culture, food science, business management, marketing, and economics when they systematically reviewed the topic of authenticity in the dining experience. The interdisciplinary analysis enhanced the comprehensiveness of their conclusions. Therefore, for comprehensive purposes, it is pertinent to include journals in different fields. Finally, from the perspective of theoretical contribution, one of the identified research gaps is the lack of research identifying various theoretical frameworks for understanding TE. If only tourism journals are considered, it is hard to fill this gap. Therefore, the current study is committed to improving knowledge contribution to the tourism discipline by absorbing the insights of other disciplines and putting forward more meaningful research directions in this study.

3.2.2. Data collection and analysis

Keywords including *transformative*, and *transformation* were identified to capture related literature. Based on the research questions that guided the study, keywords of tourism or travel were used to limit the research context. The literature searching procedure was conducted in six main databases (including Web of Science, EBSCO host, Scopus, Science Direct, Emerald, and Sage), and advanced research and filtering functions were used to improve the effectiveness. The search work was conducted in March and April 2022. Only articles published before or until December 2021 were included. Finally, 67 studies were included in the analysis. A PRISMA flowchart for systematic review (Moher et al., 2010) with some modifications was adopted to illustrate the research procedure (Fig. 1).

As part of the quantitative review, structural coding was used to organize the information about tourists' TE. To minimize subject bias, following suggestions of Pickering and Byrne (2014), the first 10% included articles were used to develop and test the appropriateness of coding and categories by authors. Moreover, coding and categories were rechecked for every new 10 articles entered. Based on the research aims, the aspect of each literature extracted included: tourism settings, research concerns, issues for TE, theory, model or perspective used to
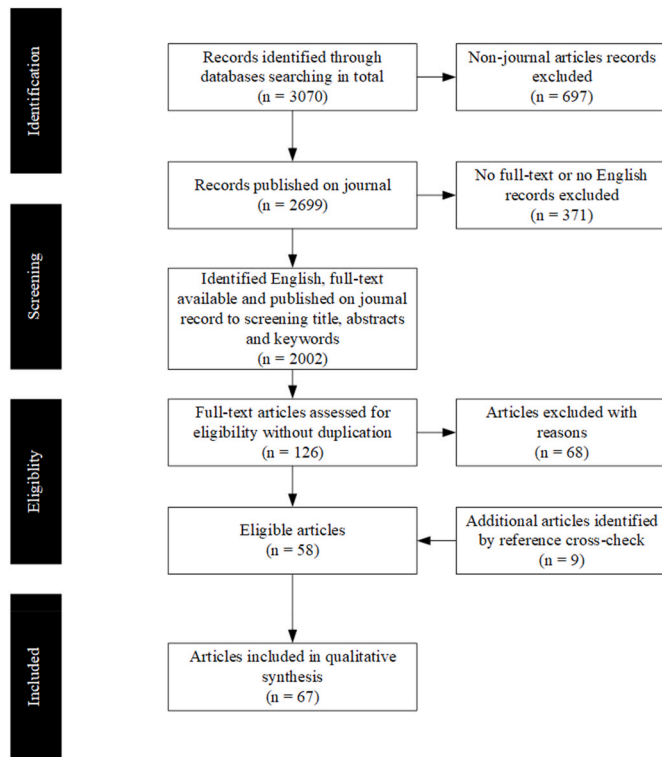
Fig. 1. The PRISMA flowchart.

explain TE, triggers of TE, and types of TE.

4. Findings

4.1. General considerations about years of publication, journals, and field

Fig. 2 presents an overview of the number of publications on the topic of tourists' TE year by year. The results show that it is been three decades since the first related paper discussing tourists' self-transformation was published. Although Bruner (1991) argued that tourists' self-transformation through tourism was exaggerated by tourism marketers, this article explored the occurrence of TE in the tourism context in the early stage. In the subsequent two decades, this
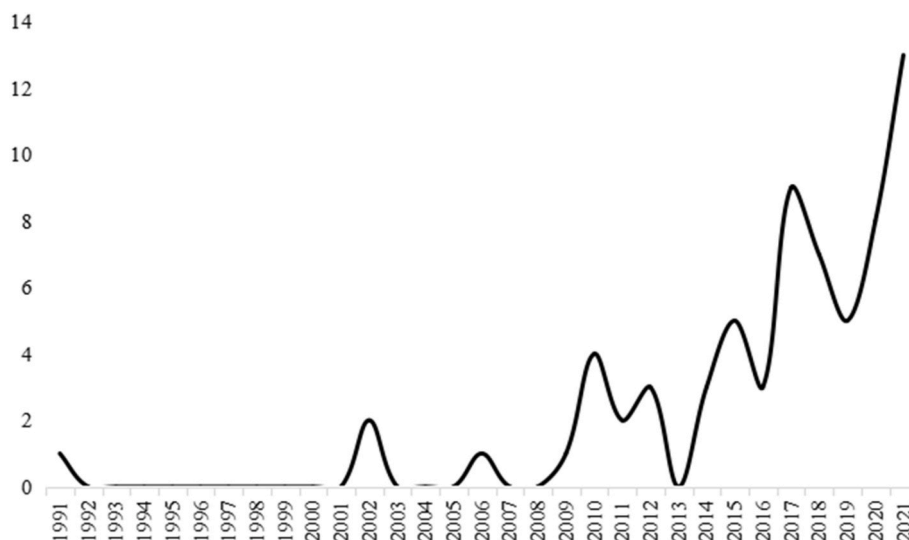
research topic did not receive much attention. Since 2010, scholars began to show immense academic interest in the topic. Since 2017, the number of articles published has increased rapidly from three in 2016 to nine in 2017. Some important and highly cited conceptual articles and researchers have also emerged (e.g., Kirillova et al., 2017a; 2017b). More than 80% of the articles included in the analysis were published within the last decade.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number of journal sources of articles. Unsurprisingly, the number of journals in the tourism field is the largest accounting for 55 out of 67 articles. Various research fields also show interest in the current topic. Of the 67 articles, five were published in the field of business and management journal, four in the field of education journal, and three in the fields of culture, society, and environment. The various fields also reflect the complexity of TE conceptualization.

4.2. Tourism types of TE

Fig. 3 presents the tourism types of the selected articles. It was found that more than half of the research contexts for TE were alternative tourism namely volunteer tourism, ecotourism, and educational tourism. Tourists embark on such types of travel with specific motivations other than for relaxation and fun (Reisinger, 2013). Tourists who choose such alternative types of tourism also may face more challenges and shocks which force them to make changes to overcome difficulties (Müller, Scheffer, & Closs, 2020). Among the studies, the volunteer tourism context is common, and a total of 12 articles explored TE under such context. Given that volunteer tourism often takes a longer time, tourists have full opportunities to understand local culture and lifestyles which are important factors that trigger TE. Similarly, education tourism also meets such characteristics and becomes a typical context for TE. Ecotourism, festival tourism, and indigenous tourism mainly cause the transformation of tourists through some special activities. In addition, some conceptual articles integrate different types of tourists or tourism types.

4.3. Research method for TE

Table 2 depicts research methods of tourists' TE in different year periods. Qualitative methods remain popular in the observed years. Of the 67 articles, 56 used qualitative methods accounting for more than three-quarters of the articles. Articles using quantitative methods and mixed methods began to appear in the recent ten years, but the number

Fig. 2. Years of publication (n = 67).

Table 1

Journal source.

Journal Source (Counts of studies)	Counts
Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure (55)	
Annals of Tourism Research	9
Current Issues in Tourism	4
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	4
Tourism Recreation Research	4
Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	3
Journal of Tourism Futures	3
Journal of Travel Research	3
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2
Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism	2
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	2
Tourism Review	2
Tourist Studies	2
African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	1
Annals of Leisure Research	1
European Journal of Tourism Research	1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1
International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage	1
International Journal of Spa and Wellness	1
International Journal of Tourism Research	1
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	1
Journal of Heritage Tourism	1
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	1
Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport & Tourism Education	1
Journeys The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing	1
Leisure Sciences	1
Tourism Management	1
Business & Management (5)	
Human Service Organizations Management Leadership & Governance	1
International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling	1
Journal of Business Research	1
Service industries Journal	1
The International Indigenous Policy Journal	1
Education (4)	
Eurasia Journal of Mathematics Science and Technology Education	1
Journal of Transformative Education	1
Teaching Education	1
Theory & Research in Social Education	1
Culture, Social & Environment (3)	
Environmental Communication a Journal of Nature and Culture	1
Medical Anthropology	1
ReVision A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation	1

is still very small, with six and five articles respectively. Like most other research issues, early research on tourists' TE began with the discussion of phenomena, related concepts, and the definition of boundaries, followed by quantitative inspection and measurement. The change in

research methods by year indicates that this research issue is gradually entering a transitional stage which necessitates the need to conduct a systematic literature review. Interview and observation were the two most used qualitative methods which were often employed to explore the formation process of TE, and many qualitative articles used a combination of two or three methods. Some quantitative articles used factor analysis to construct items and scales (e.g., Soulard, McGehee, & Knollenberg, 2021). It is worth mentioning that other studies employed mixed methods which usually combine interviews and statistical analysis for conceptual development and empirical tests (e.g., Magrizos et al., 2021; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021). This combination of methods shows that research on the general understanding of TE is gradually maturing.

4.4. Research themes and issues

The analysis of research themes and issues further outlines the overall trend of tourists' TE research. The present review identified seven research themes including demonstrating how TE is formed/constructed, assessing TE by narrations/questions, conceptualizing TE, explaining TE, reviewing studies about TE, establishing TE dimensional scale, and testing relationships between TE and other variables.

Table 3 provides a more comprehensive summary of the problems studied under each theme. Under the theme of demonstrating how TE is formed/constructed, there were 31 articles focusing on the factors that influence TE and the process of TE in total. Another eight articles concerning what kind of tourism context can stimulate TE were found. There were also three studies exploring the motivation of tourists to pursue transformative tourism. The theme of assessing TE by narrations/questions covered articles that focus on the outcomes of TE. This theme includes eleven articles for specific outcomes, two articles on TE brought about by tourism activities, and one article on different outcomes. Three studies focused on the theory and conceptualization of TE. This includes studies constructing the conceptual framework of TE or applying an existing theory to explain TE. There were also three articles providing a review of the research on transformative tourism. It was observed that a handful of published studies used quantitative methods to construct TE scales or measure the relationship between TE and other concepts. There is a huge imbalance in the research methods of TE creating unverified and debatable views which need to be addressed.

4.5. Theory, model, and perspective for TE

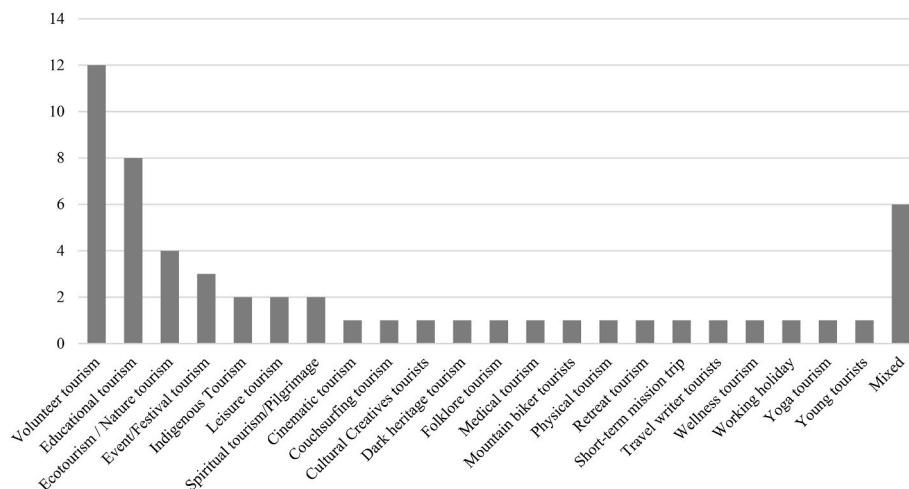Nearly half of the studies adopted specific theories and models while

Fig. 3. Tourism/Tourists Types (N = 54)
Note: 54 articles reported specific tourism context or tourists type.

Table 2
Research methods for TE.

	Counts	%	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015	2016–2021
Qualitative Approach (56)		83.58%	1		2	6	9	38
● *Interview*	18							
● *Conceptual review*	11							
● *Case studies*	5							
● *Anthropology fieldwork*	3							
● *Autoethnography*	2							
● *Content analysis*	2							
● *Virtual ethnography*	2							
● *Observation*	1							
● *Thematic analysis*	1							
● *Mixed qualitative approach*	11							
Interview	5							
Observation	2							
Anthropology fieldwork	1							
Content analysis	1							
Thematic analysis	1							
Virtual ethnography	1							
Quantitative Approach (6)		8.96%					2	4
● *Systematic review*	3							
● *Factor analysis*	2							
● *Mixed quantitative approach*	1							
MANOVA	1							
Cluster	1							
Mixed Methods Approach (5)		7.46%					2	3

Note: The number in brackets refers to the counts of studies adopted such approach.

Table 3
Research themes and issues to TE.

Research Theme to TE (Counts of studies)	Issues Explored (Counts of studies)
Demonstrating How TE is Formed/ Constructed (42)	Factors that trigger or inhibit TE (16)
	Process of TE (15)
	Tourism contexts that creating TE (8)
	Motivation for pursuing TE (3)
Assessing/Measuring TE By Narrations/Questions (14)	Outcomes of TE/transformation (11)
	TE potential of tourism (2)
	Difference of TE for different tourism activities (1)
Conceptualizing/Defining TE (3)	Conceptual framework for TE or transformative tourism (3)
Stating a Explanation of TE (3)	An existing theory/term applied to explain TE (3)
Reviewing studies about TE/TLT (3)	Current research about TE (3)
Establishing TE Dimensional Scale (1)	Scale of TE (1)
Testing Relationships (TE as a variable) (1)	The empirical model and items of TE (1)

Table 4
Theories, models & perspectives for TE.

Theory, Model & Perspective for TE	Counts
Theory/Paradigm	
● *Transformative Learning Theory*	14
● *Consumer Culture Theory*	1
● *Interaction Ritual Chains theory*	1
● *Mobilities paradigm*	1
● *Multiplicity of selves theory*	1
● *Narrative identity theory*	1
● *Theory of integrative cross-cultural adaptation*	1
● *Peirce's theory of experience*	1
Model/Framework	
● *PERMA model of well-being*	2
● *Outcomes-Focused Management Framework*	1
● *Value-Belief-Norm Model*	1
● *Cycle of Experiential Learning*	1
● *Tri-Component Attitude Model*	1
● *Stimulus-Organism-Response Model*	1
Perspective	
● *Existential philosophy*	6
● *Environmental psychology perspective*	1
● *Postcolonial perspective*	1

Note: 30 articles reported specific theory, model or perspective for TE in total, and 5 articles used more than 1 theory, model or perspective.

some combined multiple theories. Table 4 presents the specific theory, model, and perspective adopted in TE research.

For theory, as mentioned in the literature review, TE originates with the term transformative learning in the field of education. Therefore, it is expected that TLT is also the most used theory in the research of tourists' TE. Some theories from cultural and social psychology provide support for exploring the formation of TE, such as consumer culture theory, interaction ritual chains theory, and multiplicity of selves theory. In addition, the mobilities paradigm in tourism was adopted to explain the process and long-term impact of TE (Lean, 2012). Some studies used existing models in behavior research such as the Stimulus-Organism-Response model, Value-Belief-Norm model, and Tri-component Attitude model. Some studies regarded TE as well-being and used the PERMA model of well-being (e.g., Dillette et al., 2019; Neuhofer et al., 2020). The existential philosophical perspective was first adopted by Kirillova et al. (2017a) and Kirillova et al. (2017b) to explain TE in tourism. Pung, Gnoth, and Del Chiappa (2020) and Pung, Yung, Khoo-Lattimore, and Del Chiappa (2020) considered TLT and existential philosophy as two paths of TE and argued that they represent different ways. According to these authors, transformative learning

leads to outward-directed TE through the integration of new knowledge and skills, while existential perspective formed self-directed TE through the integration of values.

In general, the theoretical exploration of tourists' TE is still in the early stage. From the perspective of quantitative distribution, except TLT, the adoption of other theoretical perspectives is scattered. The theoretical defect was not only the lack of a theoretical perspective but also that some of the current theories were not well-suited to the tourism context. Xu et al. (2021) pointed out that TLT is mainly for formal education settings and it is difficult to provide conditions like the formal learning process in tourism activities.

4.6. Triggers for TE

The present research further summarized the factors that trigger tourists' TE. This study divided these factors into two dimensions

namely personal and destination (see Table 5). Some articles argued that TE was a personalized experience such that the occurrence and formation of TE were mainly due to personal factors (Soulard, McGehee, Stern, & Lamoureux, 2021; Taylor, 2008). Tourists with different experiences and different demographic characteristics may have great disparities in TE even if they experience similar tourism activities (Fu et al., 2015; Pung, Yung, et al., 2020; Voigt et al., 2011). Indeed, the classification reflected the theoretical perspective on TE. The two most mentioned triggers were cognitive (22 counts) and facing challenges of the unknown (19 counts). Such triggers were both important concepts in Mezirow's TLT and key factors that evoked transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997). The influence of special tourism experience (such as peak experience) in TE received attention in recent years and these factors were applied in the studies adopting an existential philosophical perspective to TE (e.g., Kirillova et al., 2017a; 2017b). Some articles focused on explorative behaviors that can stimulate or strengthen TE, and most of them also originate from TLT (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). Tourists' emotional factors were also considered to be triggers for TE, especially some strong emotions that could often bring impressive experiences. In addition, personal situations or characteristics can also

have an impact on TE although only three studies reported this factor.

The factors in the destination dimension usually triggered tourists' inner TE through the atmosphere, context, condition, setting, or tourism attraction. The activities that tourists participated in, or services received at the destination could also trigger TE particularly when tourists actively interact with local residents or establish a good relationship with them (Decrop et al., 2018).

4.7. Types of TE

More than two-thirds of the articles reported tourist personal transformation. Four dimensions of transformation namely physical/behavioral, psychological, social, and spiritual were identified as major dimensions of specific outcomes of TE (Table 6).

The most observed transformation was in tourists' psychology where 26 articles (38.8%) reported psychological transformation. Such psychological changes occurred in their attitudes and views towards others resulting in their inner personality changes often related to their specific experiences in tourism. These changes usually develop through encountering difficulties and challenges when entering a new cultural environment (Brown, 2009; Müller et al., 2020). This was followed by

Table 5
Triggers of TE.

Dimension	Trigger (Counts of studies)	Counts
Personal	**Cognition (22)**	
	● *Reflection & Examination*	12
	● *Meaning making/Making sense*	2
	● *Acquire knowledge*	2
	● *Reintegrate*	2
	● *Build competence*	1
	● *Heightened cognition*	1
	● *Expectation*	1
	● *Memory*	1
	● *Assessment & Alienation*	1
	Facing challenges and unknowns (19)	
	● *Disorienting dilemmas/Dis-orientation/Dissonance/ Existential dilemma*	8
	● *Challenging experiences/Challenges/difficulty*	4
	● *Unusual/Unexpected/Unfamiliar situations*	3
	● *Culture shock*	2
	● *Feeling broken*	1
	● *Negative life events*	1
	Special tourism experience (9)	
	● *Peak experience*	2
	● *Connection to something grand*	1
	● *Flow experience*	1
	● *Immersiveness*	1
	● *Intense sensory experiences*	1
	● *Live the moment*	1
	● *Mindfulness*	1
	● *Slow, simple, authentic experience*	1
	Certain behaviors (8)	
	● *Exploring & demarcation*	2
	● *Plan for action/engagement*	2
	● *Travel writing/Document*	2
	● *Sharing*	1
	● *Try new roles*	1
	Emotions (7)	
	● *Intense/Strong emotions*	3
	● *General emotions*	2
	● *Positive emotion*	2
	Personal situation/characteristics/Inner sphere (3)	
Destination	**Settings/Environment/Surroundings/Sphere/ Conditions (8)**	
	● *General settings*	4
	● *Architecture*	1
	● *Culture conditions*	1
	● *Natural surroundings*	1
	● *Retreat environment*	1
	Service & Activities (3)	
	Interaction with people & Trust building (2)	
	Authenticity (1)	

Note: 35 articles reported identified triggers for TE.

Table 6
Types of transformation.

Dimension (Counts of studies)	Specific outcome type	Counts
Physical/Behavioral (15)	Engagement or taking some action	8
	New or improving skills/capabilities	8
	Lifestyle change	5
	Bodily change (health, appearance etc.)	3
	General behavioral change	2
	New/changed travel pattern	2
	Career development	1
	Indulgence	1
	New habits	1
Psychological (26)	Attitude/Awareness/Perspective/View change	11
	Personality/Inner change (becoming independent, peaceable, humbler, enriched, marketable etc.)	7
	Identity	6
	Self-awareness/confidence/belief/perspectives	4
	New knowledge	3
	Positive emotion	3
	Inner peace, escape & relaxation	3
	Open-mind	2
	General psychological change	2
	Self-efficacy/Inner power	2
	Self-control	1
	Travel perceptions	1
	Cultural sensitivity	1
Social (17)	Enhancing/Changing/Creating social relationships (with family, friends and lovers etc.)	10
	General social change	2
	Social responsibility	2
	Citizenship	2
	Reciprocation	2
	Changing roles/outlook on others	2
	Increasing tolerance and awareness of others	1
	Sense of belonging	1
Spiritual (16)	Self-discovery/Self-inquiry/Self-acknowledgment/Authenticity of self	8
	Self-fulfilment/Self-actualization/ Accomplishment	5
	Self-transcendence	3
	Meaning of existence/life	3
	Freedom	2
	Religious faith/Proselytism	2
	Self-esteem	1
	General spiritual change	1
	Escapism	1

Note: 46 articles reported outcomes of TE of which 21 articles reported more than 1 types of outcomes.

transformation at the social level (25.4%) reflected in the interaction with others. Many studies reported that tourists have improved their social relations with local residents (Decrop et al., 2018) or family members due to TE (Molz, 2016). TE caused by contact with other cultures can also enhance tourists' understanding and tolerance of multiculturalism and further enhance their social responsibility and citizenship (Fordham, 2006; Molz, 2016). TE could also bring about enduring changes at the spiritual level and guide tourists to explore the meaning of self-existence whose outcomes and process are similar to the pursuit of existential authenticity proposed by Wang (1999). In the dimension of physical/behavioral change, engaging in specific actions and improving one's skills were the most mentioned changes. The current study identified more long-term behavioral transformations such as lifestyle changes (Soulard, McGehee, Stern, & Lamoureux, 2021) and the formation of new behavior habits (Pung, Gnoth, & Del Chiappa, 2020). It is also found that physical transformation was mainly reflected in bodily changes such as health or appearance (Voigt et al., 2011).

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical implication

This study bridges the current knowledge gap on TE by examining research trends, research approaches, and research themes of tourists' TE. Overall, tourists' TE research is in a phase of active exploration, as evidenced by the rapid growth in the number of studies. There is a huge imbalance in research methods (favoring qualitative methods), and research themes that focus mostly on the constructing processes and influencing factors of TE. Hence, a framework for illustrating tourists' TE is needed to better understand tourists' TE in the current stage based on the findings of this study (Fig. 4).

Although some studies asserted that not all travelers report experiencing transformation through tourism (e.g., Pung & Del Chiappa,

2020), the findings of this study seem to support the view that TE can occur in various kinds of tourism contexts. But there are indeed some tourism types that are more likely to trigger TE namely volunteer tourism, educational tourism, and ecotourism. These types of tourism usually have special features such as more opportunities to interact with locals, longer stays, and more unexpected challenges to provide enabling contexts (Reisinger, 2013). Moreover, various forms of tourism may trigger TE depending on various personal and contextual factors.

The analysis of the theories and frameworks used for TE supports some research claiming that TLT and existential philosophy are the two main theoretical perspectives in current research on TE (Pung, Gnoth, & Del Chiappa, 2020; Pung, Yung, et al., 2020). However, other theories and frameworks were also identified. The diversity of theories reflects the complexity of the concept of TE and the interdisciplinary characteristics of TE research. In their review, Stone and Duffy (2015) pointed out the wide application of TLT in educational tourism as well as other forms of tourism. However, some studies criticized that TLT is not suitable in all tourism contexts (see Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Xu et al., 2021). While recent studies have adapted TLT to the tourism context (e. g., Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022), the findings of this paper show several attempts to explain TE using other theories. Generally, this study serves as a reminder of the theoretical imperfections in the research of tourists' TE and calls for more exploration of the theoretical dimensions of this phenomenon. Hence, the present study proposes a unified framework as a starting point for understanding tourists' transformation experiences (see Fig. 4).

To explain tourists' TE, the main research questions and findings of this study were used to construct a framework. This framework focuses on the relationship between TE and its various triggers as well as the type of transformation within different tourism contexts. Triggers include both personal and destination factors which can be used at certain moments to stimulate the tourists' TE. Tourists' TE has the ability to engender different types of transformations some of which
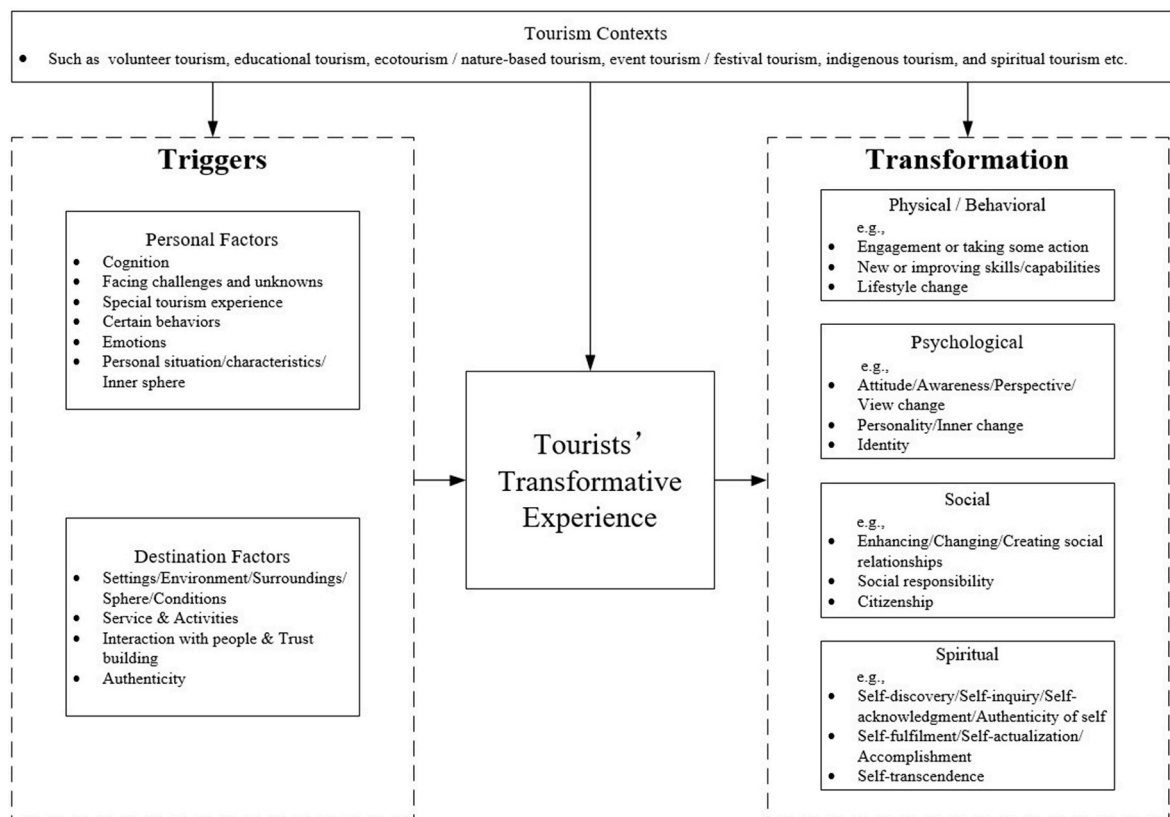

Fig. 4. Framework of tourists' TE.

could have a profound and enduring effect. Tourism settings provide unique scenes for the whole process by creating contexts that differ from daily life. Traveling puts people outside their comfort zone and brings them to face aspects of the world and themselves that were previously beyond their consciousness (Phillips, 2019). Tourism, as an informal context, offers a different kind of process for transformative learning, and one of the true potentials of tourism lies in creating opportunities for people to reflect on their existence and reach their full potential (Reisinger, 2013). In this framework, the relationship is graphically illustrated based on the results of the present study. For example, the categories and items of triggers are taken from Table 5 to represent the antecedents in the proposed framework (Fig. 4). The types of transformation (see Table 6) represent the consequences of TE in Fig. 4 where both dimensional and specific outcome indicators are presented. Fig. 4 also shows the various tourism contexts derived from Fig. 3. Thus, Fig. 4 contributes to a comprehensive understanding of tourists' TE through the formulation of a framework that coalesces different research questions to explain TE.

Another theoretical contribution is providing a multidimensional perspective to understanding TE. Previous articles questioning the existence of TE in tourism may explicate TE only as intense spiritual change ignoring other dimensions (see Bruner, 1991). The conceptual model proposed by Teoh et al. (2021) demonstrated the possibility that different dimensions of transformation have the potential to transform each other, and this study further suggests that TE-induced outcomes may shift from minor and transient changes to major persistent changes. However, the exact process needs to be further explored. Moreover, the summary of specific outcomes of transformation extracted from other literature in this study also provides helpful guidance for developing measurements for TE. In terms of the triggers of TE, the findings extend the conditionality of Mezirow's TLT. Unlike the structured phase of TLT, this article considers disorienting dilemmas and reflection as important but not necessary triggers for TE. Bueddefeld and Duerden (2022) argued that even memorable experiences do not necessarily create reflection while some studies that argued against reflection as a necessary condition for TE emphasize the individual travelers' unique understanding (e.g., Kirillova et al., 2017b). This study's analysis of triggers is more supportive of a co-creation perspective consistent with previous studies (e.g., Pope, 2018; Teoh et al., 2021) where individual tourist factors, interactions with the destination, and the tourist's interpretation of these experiences facilitate the occurrence of TE.

5.2. Future research directions

Based on the findings, four types of research directions are identified including theory, context, methodology, and phenomenon. Each of the research gaps and future research directions for tourists' TE is elucidated in the following sections. Table 7 highlights the types of gaps and some research questions for future exploration.

The first type of gap concerns theory. At present, the research on tourists' TE is facing the predicament of a lack of an appropriate and comprehensive theoretical model. Although some conceptual studies have been published, they rarely extend the theory of TE. The existing theories expose some defects when applied to the tourism research context. Typically, TLT, from the education field, is suitable for a formal learning environment (Xu et al., 2021) albeit tourism activities rarely meet a standard learning process. Coghlan and Gooch (2011) found that tourists' TE can occur even if they do not fully meet the transformation process stipulated by TLT. There are some attempts to adopt new conceptual models to explain TE, but these models still lack empirical testing. These phenomena point out the defects of the existing classical theories, and it is necessary to revise and verify the existing theories in the tourism context. Moreover, it implies that a theory or framework on TE in the tourism context should be put forward - a solution offered in this study as a starting point (Fig. 4).

The second gap is related to context. For cultural context, the

Table 7
Future research questions.

Type of gaps	Exemplar research questions
Theory	How to explore TE by integrating different perspective and theory?
	How to promote Transformative Learning Theory through TE of cross-national voluntourists?
Context	How do different types of destinations influence on TE?
	How does TE change in different culture background?
	How does TE construct in other different travel and tourism contexts?
Methodology	How to analyse TE using an empirical approach and innovative methodologies?
	How to conduct a large-scale, longitudinal study to analyse TL?
Phenomenon	How do the socio-demographic background and prior event experiences influence TE?
	How do the pre-trip self-reflection, involvement, co-creation during the experience and post-trip reflection enhance TE?
	How to capture and evaluate benefits of TE in a long-term?
	How does the TE change in different time frames?
	How does the transformative travel influence local communities and the environment?
	How does the negative TE happen?

samples and destinations used in studies are mainly from Western backgrounds. Most articles are still Western-centric. Some studies suggested that the differences in TE in various cultural backgrounds should be given consideration and a cross-cultural comparison of TE in future research is needed (e.g., Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018). Besides, it is also beneficial to compare the differences in the occurrence and evolution of TE in various tourism contexts for a holistic understanding.

The third gap pertains to methodology. As mentioned earlier, there is an imbalance in the research approaches used which limits the research exploration of some valuable questions. Future research can use more mixed methods to both expand the conceptual or theoretical framework and provide empirical evidence. Many studies used small sample interviews to explore TE which is suitable for the initial stage of the research field. Future research could use questionnaires to measure TE or big data to test and expand the existing conclusions. In addition, the longitudinal research design is very helpful to investigate the actual change brought about by TE. By tracking the participants, researchers can understand how their TE changes during different travel periods and the duration of the transformation effect.

The fourth gap is associated with the phenomenon being investigated. In this vein, the factors that facilitate and inhibit TE require further exploration. Previous research mainly points out two types of factors worth exploring. The first factor is socio-demographics (such as gender, age, education, and income) which may affect the way individuals interpret and reflect on TE. The second is the characteristics of travel such as travel length, past tourism experience, and tourism motivation. The outcomes of TE, especially exploring how to capture or evaluate the long-term changes brought by different types of TE and how to sustain the beneficial effect of TE, are also meaningful directions. In addition, the tourists' transformation may also have an impact on the destination's local community. Future research should focus on how to achieve a win-win situation where tourists' transformation and the sustainability of the destination conflict.

6. Conclusion and limitations

Tourism is often touted as an industry that enhances cultural communication and understanding, promotes personal well-being, and even contributes to world peace (Pritchard et al., 2011). However, not much research has attempted to explore at the individual level how these positive outcomes are achieved in tourism. Contemporary tourism researchers have been encouraged to focus on what tourists gain from travel and how the changes are maintained and developed in everyday life. TE provides a suitable entry point for exploring this question. However, there is a dearth of research providing a deeper rigorous

analysis of existing studies that address the lack of theoretical perspectives integrated within different tourism contexts. Considering these gaps and the growing research interest in TE among researchers, a clear summary of the current state of TE studies would be beneficial in promoting more meaningful research to follow.

By conducting a systematic review of the literature on tourists' TE, the results echo the findings of previous studies and provide evidence for some pending questions. The findings demonstrate that research on tourists' TE is in the exploratory stage with most studies being qualitative. The data prove that TE is receiving increasing attention (Tasci & Godovykh, 2021). This is shown by the rapid growth of related publications in the last five years. TLT is the most widely adopted theory to explain TE although some scholars argue that it has some inappropriateness when applied to tourism contexts (e.g., Xu et al., 2021). Furthermore, despite tourism possessing a transformative potential, there is disagreement on whether all types of tourism inspire TE equally in literature. The results seem to reinforce the idea that there is a typological advantage (see Reisinger, 2013). Results found that TE is more easily observed in some tourism types such as volunteer tourism, educational tourism, and ecotourism. In the process of TE formation, personal and destination factors can trigger TE. Personal factors were emphasized more by previous studies including cognition, facing challenges, special tourism experience, certain behaviors, emotions, and personal characteristics. On the other hand, destination factors include the environment, service or activities, interaction with locals, and authenticity which create more opportunities for TE. As Teoh et al. (2021) argued, TE may be co-created. Moreover, TE can cause individual transformation in tourists through physical/behavioral, psychological, social, and spiritual changes. These different kinds of changes support the argument that the impacts brought about by tourism can be very long-lasting (Phillips, 2019). A framework integrating contexts, triggers, and transformation types of TE is proposed to explain the tourists' TE process (Fig. 4).

While this review article has provided insights into current tourists' TE research, it is also bound by certain limitations. First, although some of the fundamental works on this topic are published in book or chapter form, this review includes only English-language articles published in journals and excludes other studies from non-journal sources. Second, this study adopted *transformative* and *transformation* which are undoubtedly the most representative terms used as keywords for searching. However, it is necessary to clarify that some relevant terms may have been excluded in the process. Third, the reading and coding of articles are done manually which inevitably has the possibility of subjective bias although measures have been taken to minimize subjective bias.

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