Original Article

Memorable Travel Experience Scale in Community-Based Tourism in Vietnam

Huyen Tran

Faculty of industrial economy, Thai Nguyen University of technology, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam

Abstract - Kim et al (2012) developed a valid and reliable measurement scale that will assist in understanding the concept and in improving the effective management of the memorable experience. This scale has been tested in several recent studies and is subject to slight variation in different research contexts. In this study, the author tested the MTEs scale in the context of community tourism in Vietnam on 284 observations. The scale with 24 indicators by Kim et al and one new indicator was tested by Cronbach's alpha reliability method and the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method. The results show that all 25 indicators are significant and converged into 7 groups of factors: Hedonism, Novelty, Refreshment, Meaningfulness, Knowledge, Involvement, Local culture.

Keywords - community-based tourism, travel experiences, memorable travel experiences, MTEs scale, Measurement scale testing.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pine and Gilmore's book "The Experience Economy" (1998) emphasizes that the world economy is transitioning from a service economy to an experience economy. This message has stimulated the interest of researchers as well as managers in consumer experience in many different fields. There are more and more studies on the shopping experience, service experience, online shopping experience, and travel experience.

In the field of tourism experience, memorable tourism experience (a travel experience that is remembered and can be recalled after the event has taken place - Kim et al., 2012) emerges as A topic that has received much attention because there are quite a few studies that show that this is a factor that has a strong impact on the intention, behavior as well as choice decisions of tourists (Kerstetter & Cho, 2004). ; Kim, Ritchie, & Tung, 2010; Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013). Despite this, studies on the impact of memorable travel experiences on behavioral intentions in tourism with the experience scale built specifically (do not use the scales of customer experience, buying experience, etc.) shopping in general) has only appeared from the 2010s onwards.

Among the developed scales, the scale developed by Kim et al. (2012) is the most commonly used and has also been applied in a number of recent studies. These studies were conducted in a variety of contexts, with different survey samples (students, tourists staying at the destination, tourists at the airport, user-generated content...). However, these studies have mainly focused on mass tourism without considering more specific tourism sectors, such as community-based tourism. In this study, the author re-tested the 7-component scale with 24 indicators by Kim et al (2012) in the context of community-based tourism in the northern mountainous provinces of Vietnam.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Early concepts of tourism emphasized the difference between this activity and everyday life. Cohen (1972, 1979) argues that "travel is essentially a temporary reversal of everyday activities. It's a no-work, no-care, and no-thrift situation. Similarly, Smith (1978) also defines a tourist as "a leisurely temporary person who visits a distant place for the purpose of experiencing change". The difference between tourism and daily life is also mentioned in many studies of the same period by McCannell (1973) or Turner and Ash (1975). These interpretations were in turn re-evaluated by subsequent studies. Accordingly, the concept of travel experience, memorable travel experience also changes and is still undergoing a process of continuous updating.

A. Experience

Experience is both a noun and a verb and a rather elusive concept (Jenning, 2006). Experience can be defined as the process of acquiring knowledge or skills through doing, observing, or feeling things around (Oxford dictionary, according to Sharpley and Stone, 2012). In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, the experience began to be understood as "a state of mind" (Mannell, 1984).

B. Tourism experience

The concept of tourism experience is becoming increasingly complicated by the diverse nature of modern tourism: pure tourism, religious tourism, backpacking, a combination of business and tourism, actual tourism Virtual… Similar to each stage of development of the

experience concept, tourism experience also changes, but due to different approaches, there is still no general concept of tourism experience. Over time, the travel experience has gradually been agreed by researchers that it is not any or all of the various events that take place during the travel or any feature of the external environment, although some events (especially social interactions) contribute significantly to the construction of the tourist experience (Larsen, 2007; Ooi, 2005). Otto & Richie (1996), defined tourism experience as "the subjective mental state perceived by the tourist".

C. Memorable tourism experience (MTE)

The link between memory and experience is not new at all, they have been mentioned in the work of Fridgen (1984), Arnord & Price (1993), Noy (2004), Culter & Carmichael (2010). Based on that, Kim, Tung, and Ritchie's research team delved into memorable travel experiences and related issues. They argue that a memorable travel experience is selectively formed from travel experiences depending on each individual's evaluation of that experience. (Kim et al., 2012). A memorable travel experience is a travel experience that is remembered and can be recalled after the event has taken place. Subsequent studies on memorable travel experiences acknowledge and agree with the above concept (Kim et al., 2013, 2014, 2017; Chandaral et al., 2013, 2015; Tsai, 2016; DN Coudounaris and E. .Sthapit, 2017; Stone, MJ, Soulard, J., Migacz, S., & Wolf, E., 2017).

Memorable travel experiences, like travel experiences, are influenced by external factors such as the physical environment (natural landscape, sanitation, climate characteristics, etc.), the environment. social (personal relationships, interactions with guides, locals and other tourists...), tourism services and products (souvenirs, transportation, accommodation, infrastructure, internet, etc.) (Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004; Ryan, 2002), as well as factors belonging to individual tourists such as travel motivations, expectations, available knowledge, memory, cognitive ability, emotional response, and personal identity (Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Vogt, 1976).

D. MTEs scale

Most researchers believe that the tourist experience has many components, and only some of these components are retained in the tourist's memory (Otto and Ritchie, 1996; Larsen, 2007; Kim). et al., 2012; Chandaral, 2013). These distinctive components are both the premise and the structural components of a memorable travel experience (Kim et al., 2012l Chandaral, 2013).

Until Kim's (2010) study, there was no study that considered the synthesis of all the components of a memorable travel experience, most of the studies mentioned above indicate or confirm one or a few. memorable component… in the travel experience. Research related to the premise/structure of memorable travel experiences continues to develop with the work of Tung & Ritchie

(2011), Kim et al (2012) and Chandaral (2013), Chandaral et al. (2015). In which, the scale consisting of 7 components and 24 indicators by Kim et al (2012) is most commonly used.

Table 1. MTEs scale of Kim et al. (2012)

Components	Indicators
Hedonism	Thrilled about having a new experience
	Indulged in the activities
	Really enjoyed this tourism experience
	Exciting
Novelty	Once-in-a-lifetime experience
	Unique
	Different from previous experiences
	Experienced something new
Refreshment	Liberating
	Enjoyed sense of freedom
	Refreshing
	Revitalized
Meaningfulness	I did something meaningful
	I did something important
	Learned about myself
Knowledge	Exploratory
	Knowledge
	New culture
Involvement	I visited a place where I really wanted to go
	I enjoyed activities which I really wanted to do
	I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience
Local culture	Good impressions about the local people
	Closely experienced the local culture
	Local people in a destination were friendly

Existing studies have identified several components of a memorable travel experience, but have yet to reach a consensus on this issue. Several studies have also shown that in different travel contexts, with different cultures or travel situations, the components of a memorable travel experience are also different. Therefore, this is an issue that needs further study and discussion.

Recently, Enrique Bigne et al. (2020) argued that the previous scales, although quite useful in identifying the characteristics of a memorable travel experience, are most likely the components of the scale. still present in ordinary experiences. The research team used user-generated content on the social network TripAdvisor - one of the largest travel websites in the world today to conduct analysis and comparison between memorable travel experiences. with common experiences. With the argument that although there are more than 3 components compared to the scale of Kim et al (2012), basically the indicators in the scale of Chandaral (2015) still describe the factors described. Before that, only the unexpected was noticeable, Enrique Bigne and colleagues tested this with components synthesized from both Kim et al (2012) and Chandaral scales. (2015). The newly considered components include 07 components in the scale of Kim et al (2012) and add "surprise" in the scale of Chandaral (2015) with the definition: an unexpected experience is the enjoy unexpected, unplanned positive experiences. The results show that several aspects of the memorable travel experience scale (hedonism, novelty, significance, participation, knowledge, and expectations) are reported both in the worthwhile travel experience memories and common travel experiences, but the rate of occurrence in memorable travel experiences is significantly higher than in conventional experiences.

In his research, the author wishes to clarify the components of memorable tourism experiences in community-based tourism in the context of Vietnam.

III. METHOD

A. Qualitative research

The research conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with many different audiences, including tourists, businesses that also provide community tourism services, guides, travel bloggers... to discover more components of the travel experience that can be deeply remembered. Interviews were conducted mainly by phon

due to the Covid-19 epidemic situation.

Analyzing the qualitative data, the author discovered a new indicator of memorable travel experiences in CBT in Vietnam. That is an inspiration.

"I remember that experience because when I stood up high looking at the sea of clouds and the passes below, for the first time, I really felt that our country was so beautiful and felt so much love for this land.. ." (Interview 3).

"Seeing ethnic minority children following their mother to plant rice, seeing a 14-year-old girl holding a baby in her arms makes me feel deeply my own luck. Since then, I have made more efforts. .."(Interview 9).

"The decorative patterns on the fabrics have inspired me to create my graduation project" (Interview 12).

B. Quantitative research

After comparing the comments about the "inspiration" indicator with the rest of the interviewees as well as consulting a marketing expert, the author ranked "inspiration" as indicator number 25 on the scale to conduct data collection.

An empirical evaluation was performed using data obtained from travelers who had participated in CBT in Vietnam. Observations were selected using convenience and snowball methods. Each participant will introduce 5 people who also have memorable CBT experiences. Responses were collected using a Google form questionnaire.

Participants were first asked to recall the MTE and rate all 25 items on a 5-point Likert-style scale, where 1 representative strongly disagreed and 5 representatives strongly agreed. A total of 335 responses were obtained and 284 usable, representing an overall response rate of 84.8%. As reported in Table 2, female participants were more than male participants but not significantly. The sampling frame is designed to collect data from 18 years of age and older, across all income levels.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Category	Distribution
Gender	Male	110 (45.8%)
	Female	154 (54.2%)
Age	18 to less than 25	74 (26%)
	25 to less than 35	90 (31.7%)
	35 to less than 50	96 (33.8%)
	more than 50	24 (8.5%)
Income (Million VND)	Less than 5	52 (18.3%)
	5 to less than 9	86 (30.3%)
	9 to less than 14	115 (40.5%)
	14 to less than 27	20 (7%)
	More than 27	11 (3.9%)

Note: The percentages were rounded up to one decimal point. Therefore, the percentage may not add to 100.0 because of rounding errors.

Collected data is used to preliminarily evaluate the scale in terms of reliability coefficient and scale value. The two methods used are the Cronbach's alpha reliability method and the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method on SPSS25.

IV. RESULTS

A. Evaluate the reliability of the scale

The results of Cronbach's alpha show that the scales are reliable. The variable-total correlation coefficients are all high (the smallest is the indicator NOVELTY3 = .574 > .30). Cronbach's alpha of all scales is high, the smallest is the Refreshment scale (.837 > .70).

Specifically, Cronbach's alpha of hedonism scale (HEDONISM) is .885; of the Novelty scale (NOVELTY) is

.876; of the Meaningfulness scale (MEANINGFULNESS) is .868; of the Knowledge scale (KNOWLEDGE) is .867; of the Involvement scale (INVOLVEMENT) is .852; of the Local culture scale (LOCALCULTURE) is .946 (see Table 3). Therefore, all observed variables will be used for subsequent EFA analysis.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha results of the scales

Components	Number of Indicators	Cronbach's alpha
Hedonism	4	.885
Novelty	4	.876
Refreshment	4	.837
Meaningfulness	4	.868
Knowledge	3	.867
Involvement	3	.852
Local culture	3	.946

The factors' Cronbach's Alpha Indices are almost higher than .700. These results show that those factors are significant enough for research. In the other hand, all factors which have Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient,the popultion's Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0,300 and Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted, therefore they corralate to other factors and are kept in the model.

B. Exploratory factor analysis

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.791
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10863.7
	Df	465
	Sig.	.000

Then, EFA was conducted on 25 retained entries using orthogonal rotation method (VARIMAX) to determine the direction of the MTE. 186 cases were randomly selected from the sample for EFA.

The suitability of factor analysis was first determined by testing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling relevance and Bartlett's Sphericity Test. Bartlett's demand test is 10863.7 (p = .000 < .001), indicating that factor analysis is appropriate. The KMO value = .791 > .500 was described as meritorious by Kaiser (1974).

The results of EFA analysis show that there are 9 factors extracted at eigenvalue = 1,038 > 1 and the total variance extracted is 83.587% > 50%. The load coefficients of the indicators on each factor are presented in Table 5.

Out of 25 extracted items, 24 items converge to the original scale. Item Inspiration loads up the Meaningfulness factor with a load factor of .835. With the current analysis results, it can be seen that the Inspiration indicator is meaningful in the scale of memorable travel experiences in the context of community-based tourism in Vietnam.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LOCALCULTURE3	.929						
LOCALCULTURE1	.883						
LOCALCULTURE2	.838						
HEDONISM2		.848					
HEDONISM4		.807					
HEDONISM1		.804					
HEDONISM3		.679					
MEANINGFULNESS1			.934				
INSPIRATION			**.835**				
MEANINGFULNESS3			.822				
MEANINGFULNESS2			.777				
NOVELTY2				.934			
NOVELTY1				.898			
NOVELTY4				.852			
NOVELTY3				.629			
INVOLVEMENT 3					.863		
INVOLVEMENT 1					.808		
INVOLVEMENT 2					.502		
REFRESHMENT3						.761	
REFRESHMENT1						.698	
REFRESHMENT2						.592	
REFRESHMENT4						.558	
KNOWLEDGE3							.644
KNOWLEDGE2							.596
KNOWLEDGE1							.521

V. CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to establish the dimensions needed to measure MTE and to develop an instrument for measuring MTE that achieves a high degree of reliability and validity in community-based tourism. The study again confirmed a total of seven dimensions for MTE and 24 metrics were found. This study also successfully developed 1 item (inspiration) of the component "Local culture" on the MTE scale.

This finding requires further investigation and further evaluation of evidence in the previous literature and from relevant theories. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic conditions, the process of collecting qualitative and quantitative data is still limited, the number of observations is not enough to conduct a comparative analysis between different groups. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to expand the observations, collect more data to conduct the analysis again to confirm or refute this finding.

On the other hand, the current study only examines the factors in the scale proposed by Kim et al (2012). In further studies, it is possible to screen some factors in the scale of Chandaral (2015) to include in the test in the context of community-based tourism in Vietnam.

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