

3 A Multidisciplinary Approach to Transformative Experiences

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The objectives of this chapter are to:

- ☐ Review transformative experiences from diverse disciplinary perspectives,
- ☐ Discuss the recent development of transformative tourism research,
- ☐ Discuss future opportunities for transformative experience research in tourism.

Introduction

Transformative tourism can nurture positive changes in tourist beliefs and behaviours (Decrop et al., 2018; Pung et al., 2020; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021) and foster social change through sustainability (Wolf et al., 2017) and self-development (Sheldon, 2020). This promise converges with Higgins-Desbiolles's (2006) view of tourism as a social force that fosters social awareness. Tourist transformation has gained much attention from researchers for more than three decades since Bruner's (1991) seminal work. In the last five years, three papers reviewed the broadest and most influential literature on the topic (Nandasena et al., 2022; Teoh et al., 2021; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2023) for prominent journals in our field. Empirical papers developed scales to measure transformation. (Soular, McGehee, & Knollenberg, 2021; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021) while conceptual papers (Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Pung et al., 2020; Sheldon, 2020) tried to explain the process of transformation in tourism or the elements involved.

Researchers evidenced a theoretical dominance in tourist transformation research. Most of the research on transformative tourism is supported by Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory – TLT (Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 1997, 2003,