Chapter 7

Tourist Encounters: Discussion, Summary, Conclusions & Implications

7.0   Introduction

The present research explored the tourist-tourist encounter phenomenon.   It was established that this area has not received much attention, despite the fact that an understanding of the topic could assist our knowledge in tourist psychology and lead to practical management implications.   The overall aim of the thesis was, therefore, to examine how tourists see other tourists and to identify the differences in encounter preferences among tourist subgroups.   It was a further aim to analyse the factors influencing those differences.   This concluding chapter summarises all the studies presented in the previous chapters presents the academic achievement and suggests some practical implications arising from the work.   Recommendations for future research are also outlined.

7.1   Review of Study Objectives and Conclusions

To reiterate, there were a number of objectives and associated findings for each study conducted in this thesis.   This section briefly summarises each study.

7.1.1   Study 1 – Objectives and Conclusions

The objective of Study One was to explore the tourist encounter phenomenon expressed by tourists themselves.   It also considered differences between the Japanese and American experiences.   Using existing travelogues produced by travellers, the study sought to determine if there were differences in attitude towards encounter experiences between these two nationality groups.   A summary of the frequently appearing sub-themes in the encounter episodes was also developed.

The findings obtained in this study included the following:

There were differences and similarities between episodes written by Japanese and Americans in their overall attitudes toward other tourists. Some of the major similarities and differences are summarised in Table 7.1

Table 7.1 Online Travelogue Analysis:

Major Findings for Encounter Type and Attitude Reported by Japanese and Americans

	Travelogue Written by	
	American	Japanese
Attitude to Presence of Other Tourists	Positive	Positive
Attitude to Absence of Other Tourists	More positive than Japanese	More negative than Americans
Frequently Mentioned Encounter Type	Direct Encounter	Indirect Encounter
Frequently Mentioned Nationality to Encounter	Other Nationalities (Non-Americans)	Same Nationality (Japanese)
Most Frequently Mentioned Encounter Category	Positive Attitude toward the Direct Encounter with the Tourists of Other Nationalities	Positive Attitude toward the Direct Encounter with the Tourists of the Same Nationality

There were the certain themes of encountering other tourists which frequently appeared in the travelogue episodes. Table 7.2 summarises the dominant themes by attitude and encounter type.

Table 7.2 Summary: Attitude and Type of Encounter

ATTITUDE TO THE ENCOUNTER

		Positive	Neutral	Negative
TYPE OF ENCOUNTER	**Absence**	**Absence of Encounter Positive** Sense of "privileged", appreciation of peaceful and quiet surroundings, destination being unspoiled and non-touristic, relaxing without other's disturbance, enjoyment of spectacular and beautiful nature	**Absence of Encounter Neutral** Simple absence of other tourists	**Absence of Encounter Negative** Lack of excitement and boredom, unwanted attention from the locals, lack of companions and loneliness, feeling lost, insecure, lack of tourist facilities, no help available
	Indirect	**Indirect Encounter Positive** Other tourists as direction to follow, providing excitement, creating "tourist destination" atmosphere, adding diversity, source of secure feeling	**Indirect Encounter Neutral** Simple presence	**Indirect Encounter Negative** Other tourists as creating crowded situation, bringing social conflict, unwanted competition over facility and activity, making the destination too touristic, making one feel as if he /she does not fit in, being noisy, making one feel uncomfortable
	Direct	**Direct Encounter Positive** Other tourists as objects of socialisation and travel-companion, providing helpful hands and source of information, sharing experiences, sharing fees, new friendship, learning about others	**Direct Encounter Neutral** Not applicable	**Direct Encounter Negative** Social value conflict, physical conflict, being nervous, need for privacy and solitude

Encounter themes are often associated with the subjective views of how tourists see other tourists. Figure 7.1 summarises the perspectives of the other tourists.

	Tourists as	examples	
Positive Views	potential new friend	learn about them learn about other culture develop friendship	POSITIVE ↑
	travel companion	do things together socialisation	
	helper	travel information provider kind hand/share fees guidance	
	security guard	security	
	stimulation	"tourist destination" atmosphere excitement marker	
Neutral	scenery	simple existence	
Negative Views	stranger	do not fit "stranger"	
	disturber	noise crowd lack of privacy / isolation social conflict - culture shock	↓
	competitor	physical competition for accommodation, transportation and facilities	NEGATIVE

Figure 7.1 Perspectives on Other Tourists

From this study of the travelogues, there actually is no single answer to the question "Do tourists like to see other tourists?". It is sometimes "yes" and sometimes "no", and mostly depends on who they are, whom they see, what kind of setting is involved, and so forth. While tourists often expect to have contacts with

local people, chances are that they may have more time to be exposed to other tourists, including those from different countries. As the study results show, many travelogue writers are enthusiastic about reporting their contact with other tourists, especially positive ones. At the same time, they expressed their disappointments with negative encounters, especially with very large number of tourists without personal contacts. The results of the study indicated that direct contacst "individualise" other tourists from a "de-individualised" group of strangers (Bochner, 1982a) and thus are accepted positively. Also, the study results indicated that there are slightly different views between Japanese and American tourists: the Japanese seem to appreciate more contact with other Japanese tourists while Americans tend to be open to tourists from other nationalities than their own. Also the Japanese seem to be more conscious and constantly make clear distinctions between Japanese and others when seeing other tourists, while Americans really do not show such a clear line between their countrymen and others when seeing other tourists. The common sub-themes discussed in this study (including the search for comfort, travel companionship and out-of-ordinary travel experience without disturbance from others) demonstrate the complexity of tourist psychology. Overall tourist-tourist encounters do seem to be an important part of the travel experience for many. In particular, such encounters may often influence tourists' travel satisfaction levels.

7.1.2   Study 2 – Objectives and Conclusions

The second study of this thesis investigated, in a more controlled manner, people's perception of tourists. In particular, it examined opinions about Japanese and American tourists, the preferences for meeting them, and also reasons why and why not fellow travellers want to see them while travelling. In particular, the study investigated stereotypes of the two travelling nationalities, and paid attention to both auto (self) stereotypes and hetero (other-oriented) stereotypes. The delivery method of the questionnaire took advantage of the recent development of the

Internet, and like Study One, tried to explore and use a novel approach to tourist behaviour analysis.

There were some significant findings obtained in this study. In brief, the results are summarised in Table 7.3. Overall, the study results provided some interesting contrasts between auto and hetero stereotypes as well as distinguishing factors that pleased and displeased people when they saw other tourists. There are some general stereotypical ideas associated with Japanese and American tourists, such as Japanese tourists staying with other Japanese rather than mixing with other nationality groups. However, not many survey participants marked negative statements towards either Japanese or American tourists. Encounters with them were perceived as a neutral to mildly pleasant experiences, especially appreciated because of the chance to receive travel information, and with no particularly preferred conditions for seeing others. One exception to this overall positivity was Japanese respondents' having relatively negative opinions about their own image as tourists. Japanese respondents even tended to agree that Japanese tourists destroyed the tourist atmosphere of the destination.

Table 7.3 Perceptions of Japanese and American Tourists: Summary

Japanese Tourists		American Tourists
Staying with own nationality group Quiet Friendly	General stereo-typical image	Mix with other nationalities Noisy Friendly, fun to be with, frank
Relatively negative Not friendly Rude Noisy	Auto image	More positive Friendly Fun to be with
Positive	Hetero image	Less positive
A neutral to mildly pleasant experience	Seeing them is	A neutral to mildly pleasant experience
Less favourable	Auto favourability	More favourable
More favourable	Hetero favourability	Less favourable
Accepted whatever they are doing Friendliness If they were in small groups (particularly by Japanese)	The preferred conditions for seeing them	Accepted whatever they are doing Friendliness
Receiving travel information rather than feeling comfortable, talking to them, or sharing experiences More Japanese tended to appreciate that they can talk to Japanese tourists in Japanese in Japanese than non-Japanese	Reasons for wanting to see them	Receiving travel information rather than feeling comfortable, talking to them, or sharing experiences
Few Japanese tended to perceive Japanese as destroying the tourism atmosphere of the destination	Not wanting to see them	Few

This study also brought to attention that it is difficult to ask survey participants about the reactions and preferences to the tourist-encounter without them actually being present at the tourist site.   It became apparent that an alternative approach to the encounter reaction study is needed which provides further analysis of the encounter settings.

7.1.3   Study 3 – Objectives and Conclusions

The challenge raised in Study 2 was how to provide the appropriate stimulation to the respondents about certain encounter settings without themselves actually being in such an environment.   Study 3 examined Japanese preferences of seeing other tourists at reef and rainforest settings through a visual approach using photographic images.   With the assistance of visual images, Study 3 sought to determine whether there were any patterns of preferences for encountering other tourists by the number and by the appearance of the other observed tourists, and also if there were any internal factors affecting the preferences.

To summarise, there were a numbers of significant findings obtained in this study.   In brief, they were as follows:

Japanese tended to prefer seeing a small number of people, and a large number of people is taken quite negatively at both reef and rainforest settings.

Japanese tended to prefer seeing Caucasian-looking people rather than Asian-looking people both at the reef and rainforest settings.

Internal factors such as the observer's gender, age, travel arrangements, English familiarity, and travel experience did not influence the above patterns.

While these results seem to suggest that there were some interesting patterns of encounter preferences for the Japanese, there again was a need for further investigation with larger sampling and with a comparison group of appropriate size. The visual approach employed in this study was established as a useful method.

7.1.4 Study 4 Objectives and Conclusions

The fourth study extended the examination of tourist-tourist encounter preferences again using the visual approach, but with a larger sample and more systematic data collection. The objective of this study was to examine tourists' preferences towards tourist-tourist encounters in relation to some internal and external factors. More specifically, Study 4 sought to determine whether there were differences in the encounter preferences depending on internal (residence, gender, age, party size, travel companion, and travel motive of the observers) and external factors (appearance and number of the other tourists observed). This fourth study was particularly interested in the international differences in encounter preferences. The findings of the study can be summarised in the Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Summary of Study 4 Results:
Differences in Encounter Preferences

Type of Encounter

	Residency	
	Westerners	Japanese
Appearance of People	No Particular Preferences	Caucasian-looking Rather Than Asian-looking

	Residency	
	Westerners	Japanese
Number of People	Absence or Small Number	Larger or Small Number
	Low-Social/High-Isolation	High-Social/Low-Isolation

Motive Type

7.1.5   Study 5 Objectives and Conclusions

Study 5 was a follow-up study for the previous study, Study 4, and served as a supporting segment to the data gathered in the Study 4.   The major objective of the study was to explore the reasons and interpretation for the international differences in encounter preferences between the two groups (Japanese and Westerners), which were revealed in the results of Study 4.

The findings of the study can be summarised as followings:

Japanese had a positive view of Caucasians' presence at rainforest settings in Australia since they provided the notion of "difference", which Japanese visitors to Australia expect, they can be other international tourists who enhance the atmosphere of popular tourist spot, and also Japanese have "Akogare (respect, enthusiasm and admiration)" for the Western world. These factors seems to underlie the Japanese preference for seeing Caucasian people at rainforest settings in Australia

Westerners have a neutral attitude toward both Caucasian people and Asian people at rainforest settings in Australia because neither of them would add anything extraordinary to their travel experiences.   Also Westerners possibly do not pay as close attention as do the Japanese to those who are around them and what they are doing.

Japanese appreciate seeing people at rainforest settings in Australia because they provide "comfort" for them.   People can provide safety and reassurance in a foreign environment and help to reduce uncertainty.   Also, other people act as a marker of the tourist destination to Japanese – other people help constitute a fun environment and provide a sense of visiting a popular spot.   There are very close

links with this idea to major statements about tourist behaviour in the tourism literature (e.g., MacCannel, 1989; Urry, 1990)

To Westerners, other people in rainforest settings in Australia are likely to be viewed as disturbers to their holiday, reduce quality time alone, and devalue private time and space and the individual and special nature of the experience.   Unlike the Japanese, Westerners do not feel the need of helpers to assist their safety, and instead the crowded situation can be rather unfamiliar and annoying.

There are many factors that can influence and change the suggested reasons for the preferences including internal factors (reason for visit, size of travelling group, age, personality, home environment, local language familiarity, expectations, length and stage of the trip and travel experience) and external factors (age of the encountered people, country of the visit, activity type, attraction type, season time and image of destination).

Based on the above findings, models of how the views of other tourists were different between Japanese and Westerners were suggested.   Figure 7.2 illustrates the Japanese and Westerners' view of tourists in general.   Figure 7.3 highlights the different views that Westerners and Japanese have for Asian and Caucasian tourists.
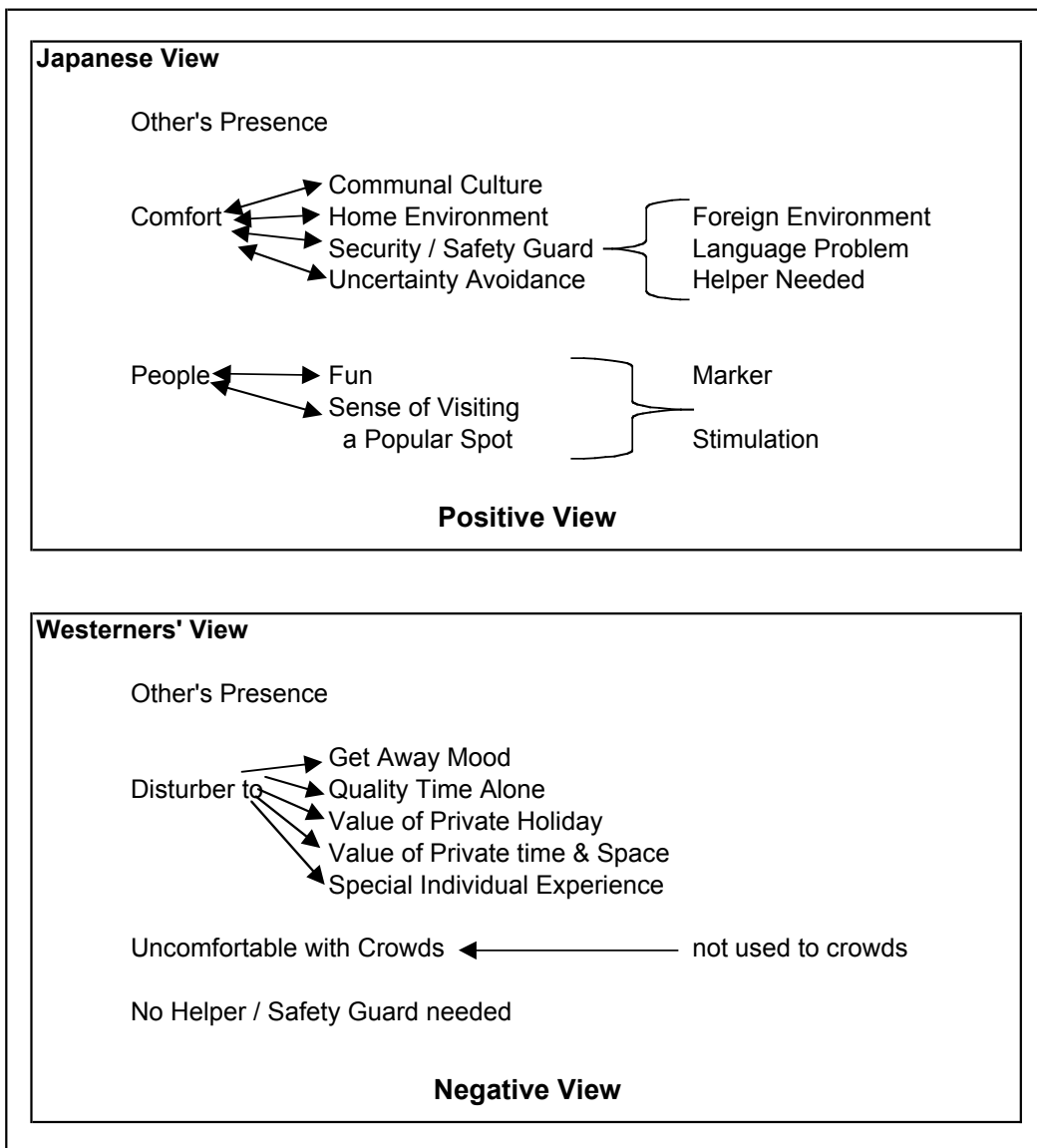
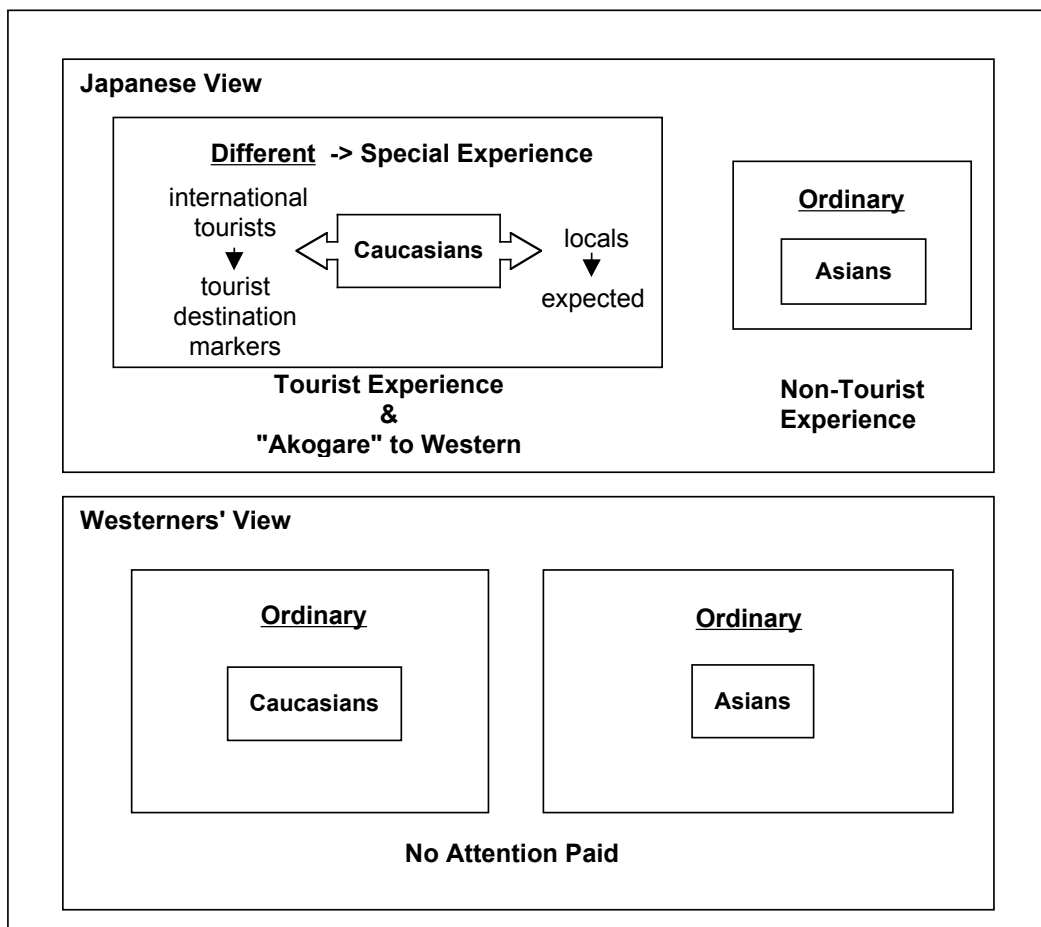**Figure 7.2 What Other Tourists Mean to Japanese and Westerners**

Figure 7.3
How Japanese and Western Tourists See Asians and Caucasians Tourists in Australia

7.2 Limitation of the Studies

A number of limitations in each study can be recognised, though this does not necessarily mean these limitations invalidate the findings. While each study had its own limitations, employing different methodologies to investigate the thesis topic has hopefully, minimised the risk of aberrant results. The limitations of the studies reported here are, therefore, not meant to negate the cumulative effort of the research undertaken, but rather are an acknowledgement of the directions in which the work could be improved on future occasions.

Study 1:   The limitation of this study lies mostly in the nature of the data.   First, the data were not originally provided for examination.   Unlike questionnaire survey, data providers were not asked or required to give their demographic details.   This is limiting because it prevents the researcher from more sophisticated statistical analysis.   In addition, due to the fact that the data were provided though the Internet, the demographic characteristics of the data providers are likely to be biased or at least reflect the reporting of special groups.   It is assumed that the sample was collected from a younger demographic subgroup with better access and knowledge of computers and the Internet compared to the total population of tourists.   Also, the content of the sample data may not be reliable because a homepage is meant to be read and might be written to be "entertaining."   This means that the content of the travelogues may carry the risk of being unfaithful to the facts, that is exaggerated and overstated, or even fictional.   Moreover, the process of data collection may not provide representative samples of the total number (the size of which is unknown) of online travelogues available.   In addition, the coding system was established by the researcher only through directly consulting the sample, which may mean there are coding categories missing when viewed from a larger frame of conceptual or theoretical reference.   Furthermore, comparing Japanese and American travelogues based on the two different languages has the subtle cross-national perils of presentation style and idiom.   Having mentioned all the above, however, the present study, as a rather experimental endeavour, did provide some implications and tourist-tourist contact tendencies for consideration.

Studies 2 & 3:   Due to the nature of Website surveys, there were some uncontrollable factors that limited these studies.   Among other things, the uneven number of participants from Japan and other countries, especially with the limited number of American participants, made the analysis of the data rather difficult.   Also knowing that the sample potentially had some biases in demographic and other

characteristics, limited the applicability of the findings to the tourist population. Another drawback is the analysis of data. While the multiple-choice format made online participation easier, this format reduced the ability of the researcher to investigate causal or explanatory variables. Similar limitations applied to the third study because of the very broad sampling and response styles.

Study 4: For this larger research effort the limitations were mostly related to the simulation methodology. Simulating the different appearance and number of tourists in the photos is practical, but there may be other variables affecting the respondents' attitudes. Some researchers using visual simulations have noticed that positioning people toward the front rather than the back makes viewers feel more crowded (Inglis et al., 1999; Manning et al., 1996, 1999). There are also other influencing factors in the photos such as facial expressions and even the colours of the clothes people wear. While it has been argued that a visual approach is more efficient to assess encounter reactions than descriptive text, it is still passive simulation and may not be able to elicit the full encounter reaction from the participants.

Study 5: Limitations of the study include the sample sizes of the focus group. More data could have been collected if there were more participation in the sessions. Also the sample was limited to the Japanese and Australians: opinions from other Westerners could have added further insight.

7.3 Thesis Conclusion

Figure 7.4 summarises what the studies examined and found in the different stages of tourist-tourist encounter/contact. Study 2 examined the pre-contact stage where people held stereotypical images of tourists. Static contacts or indirect contact stage is where tourists are aware of the presence of the other tourists but do

Stage of Contact

	pre-contact	Static Contact (indirect contact)	Interaction (direct contact)
Examined in	Stereotypical Idea of Tourists (Study 2)	Indirect Contact in Travelogues (Study 1) Visual Simulation (Studies 3, 4, 5)	Direct Contact in Travelogues (Study 1)
How Tourists are Viewed	not very negatively rather vague images	tend to be neutral or negative ○ Scenery ○ Stranger ○ Disturber ○ Competitor can be positively viewed (especially by Japanese) ○ Stimulation / Marker ○ Security Guard	tend to be viewed positively ○ Potential Friend ○ Travel Companion ○ Helper ○ Security Guard ○ Stimulation / Marker
Nationality Differences	Japanese: negative auto-stereotype American: positive auto-stereotype	encounter preference (residency)	encounter preference (nationality)

encounter preference (residency):

preference	appearance	number
Japanese	Caucasian	Larger/ small * (Small not large)**
Westerners	No Preference	Absence / small

encounter preference (nationality):

nationality	
Japanese	Japanese
Americans	No Preference

Note: * results from Study 4 / ** results from Study 3

Figure 7.4 Summary of Study Results: Overview through the Stage of Contact

not have any interaction with them. Studies 1, 3, 4 and 5 explored this stage through travelogue analysis or surveys with visual stimulation. The third stage is tourist interaction or direct contacts, and Study 1 also dealt with this stage. Because the results of the individual study have been already discussed in the previous section, repeating the same points here shall be avoided. Instead, some bridging points shall be mentioned here and the implications from this overall summary and from each study produce some propositions for the tourist-tourist encounter phenomenon under the next heading.

At the pre-contact stage, people appeared to have not very strongly negative images of tourists, yet the images were rather vague. Also it was observed that some nationalities such as American has relatively positive auto-stereotypes while other nationalities such as Japanese hold relatively less positive auto-stereotypes as tourists. Japanese's having less positive auto-image seems to continue in the form of preferring to see tourists whose appearance is non-Japanese, Caucasians. Westerners, including Americans, do not show such distinct preferences by the appearance of tourists. However, at the interaction stage, image and preference held by Japanese change; when it comes to time to make an actual contact, they prefer people from the same nationality, the Japanese. Americans/Westerners, on the other hand, appeared to be rather constantly showing no particular preferences regarding the nationality to encounter throughout the static contact and the interaction stages. This tells at least two things: Japanese are constantly making in-group/out-group evaluation, while Americans/ Westerners are not; and the state of in-group favouritism changes depending on the stage of contact as well as the nationality. These are summarised in Figure 7.5.
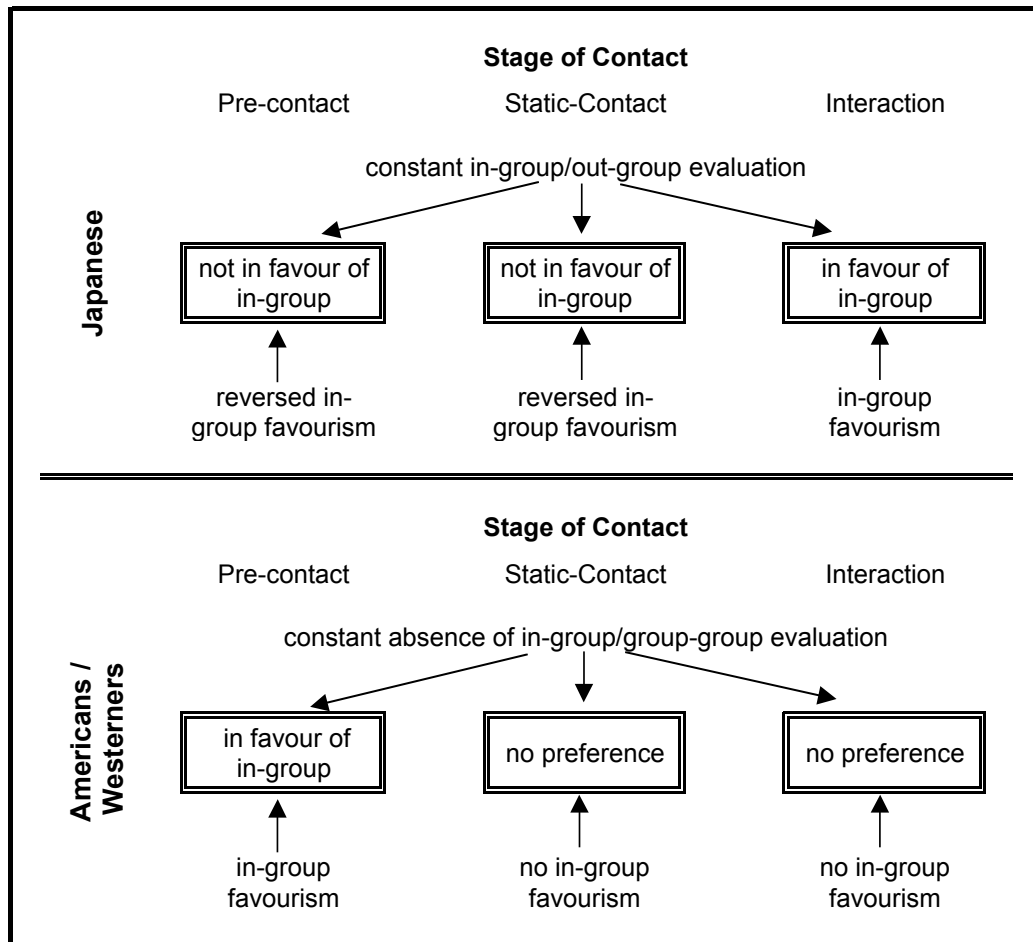
**Figure 7.5 Study Results through Stage of Contact:
in Relation to In-group/Out-group Evaluation**

Another point needing to be mentioned is about the preference in number of people encountered. Only the static stage was examined in this regard, however, it became apparent that Westerners prefer an absence of other tourists while Japanese prefer other people's presence. Note that there was a slight inconsistency between the results of Study 3 and Study 4, regarding Japanese preferences. While Study 3 reported that the participants tended to prefer a small number of people but not a large number, the outcome of Study 4 indicated that the

Japanese survey respondents tended to prefer a larger number of people followed by a small number of people. This is a little puzzling at first glance, however, the characteristics of the Study 3 participants are the reason for the altered results. While the participants of Study 4 were relatively representative of the population (Japanese overseas tourists), the ones of Study 3 were not: as already discussed, they were predominantly younger females who had more experience in overseas travel and more familiar with the English language than average Japanese. These internal characteristics could alter the encounter preferences especially the number of the people to encounter. In fact, those issues were raised in the focus group discussions. Nobody in the focus groups thought the results of the Study 4 was not reflecting the preference of majority of Japanese, instead many focus group participants suggested that younger generation is becoming more "individualistic" with more travel experiences and language abilities and may prefer fewer tourists around.

All these points mentioned above need to be considered in the context of the present studies. It already has been mentioned elsewhere, but the point that the most of the data were limited in the case of natural settings in Australia should not be overlooked and thus should not be overgeneralised in another context. Figure 7.6 shows the possible influential factors to the encounter preferences, which include the very issue of the settings and also the characteristics of the observer tourists such as travel experiences and language familiarity. As illustrated in the figure, "who" meets "whom", "where", "when" and "how" all influence the encounter preferences. Each item listed as possible individual factors of influence is mostly propositional, except nationality/residency and motive as internal factors and appearance and number of encountered party, which have been explored in the present research.
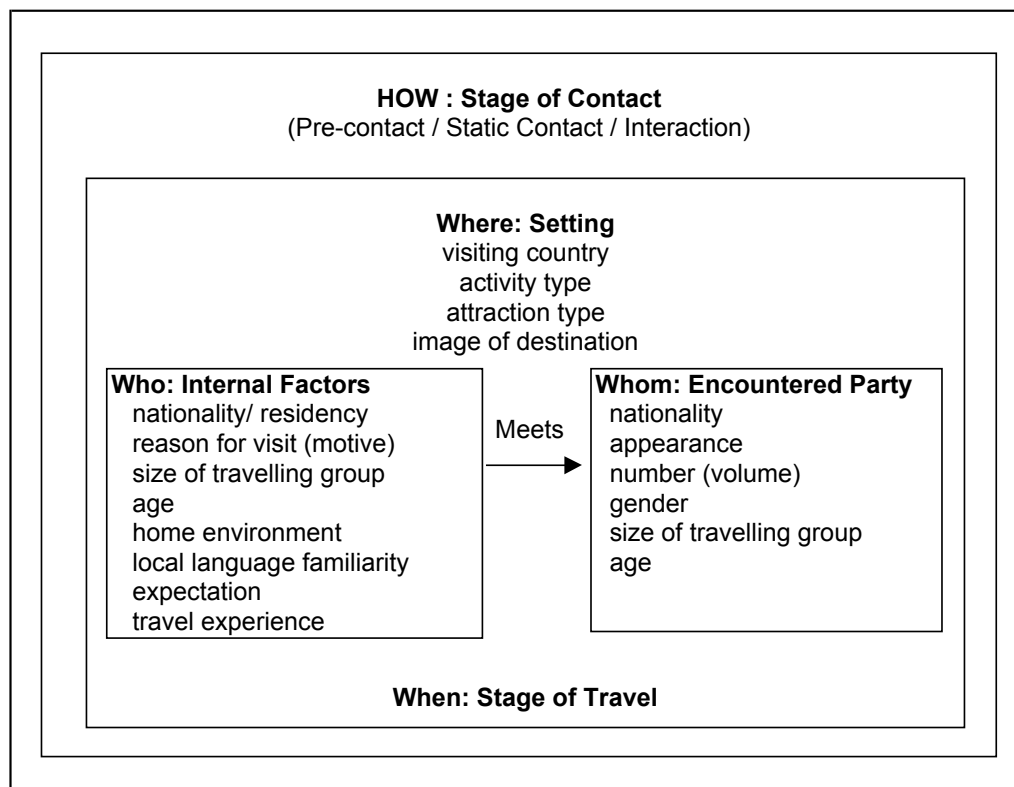
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ │
│ │                    HOW : Stage of Contact                        │ │
│ │              (Pre-contact / Static Contact / Interaction)        │ │
│ │  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐│ │
│ │  │                     Where: Setting                          ││ │
│ │  │                     visiting country                        ││ │
│ │  │                      activity type                          ││ │
│ │  │                     attraction type                         ││ │
│ │  │                  image of destination                       ││ │
│ │  │  ┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐ ││ │
│ │  │  │ Who: Internal Factors    │      │ Whom: Encountered    │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   nationality/ residency │ Meets│        Party         │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   reason for visit       │─────▶│   nationality        │ ││ │
│ │  │  │        (motive)          │      │   appearance         │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   size of travelling grp │      │   number (volume)    │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   age                    │      │   gender             │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   home environment       │      │   size of travelling │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   local language familia.│      │        group         │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   expectation            │      │   age                │ ││ │
│ │  │  │   travel experience      │      │                      │ ││ │
│ │  │  └──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘ ││ │
│ │  │                  When: Stage of Travel                      ││ │
│ │  └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘│ │
│ └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘ │
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**Figure 7.6 Influential Factors to the Encounter Preferences: Summary
-- Who Meets Whom, Where, When and How? --**

Also, how tourists are viewed is another important aspect the present research has explored.   Figure 7.7 summarises the views of other tourists in the static contact stage and the interaction stage.   It appears to be the case that negative and neutral views are dominant in the static contact stage, except that Japanese tend to gaze other tourists positively as stimulation or a marker of the tourist destination and a safety guard.   In the interaction stage, however, the vast majority of the encounters were received positively.   This indicates that "individualisation" (Bochner, 1982a) occurring through the direct and personal contact and thus the other tourist are viewed as an individual not a stranger.   It also corresponds to the literature that indicates that direct interaction breaks down stereotypical ideas and brings mutual understanding.
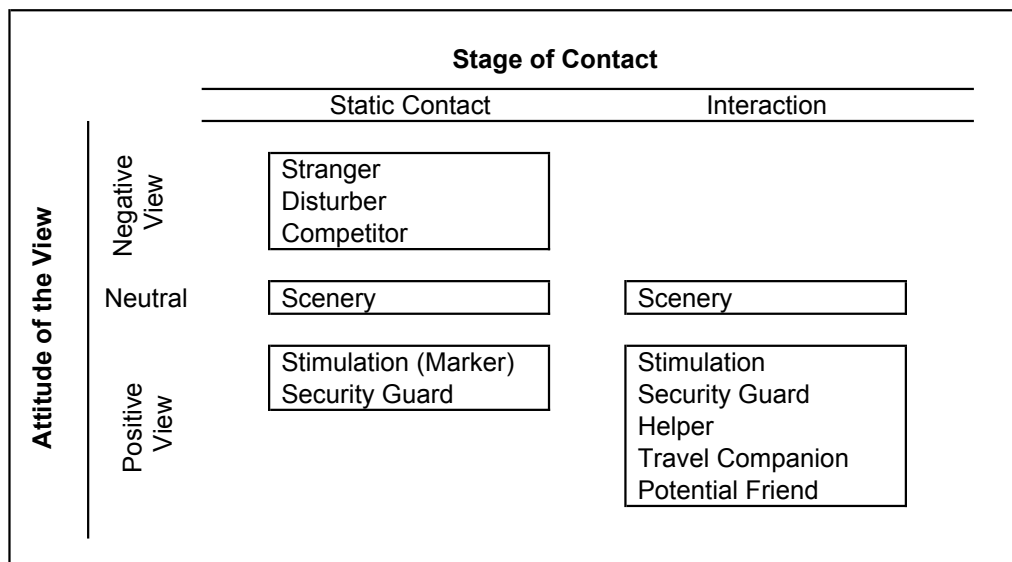
Figure 7.7 How Tourists are Viewed: Static Contact and Interaction Stage

7.4   Conceptual Advances

One of the major academic contributions of this research lies in its challenge to existing knowledge, most clearly discussed in Chapter Six but also partly supported by Study One in Chapter Three.   This is in addition to the initial contribution of this research to add some knowledge to the existing understanding of tourist psychology and behaviour.

There are some established concepts that were confirmed, which were probably examined in the tourism context for the first time.   One of the concepts in this regard is the collectivist characteristic to make a clearer distinction between in-groups and out-groups, compared to individualists.   More specifically, Japanese tourists (from a collectivist culture) make a clearer distinction between their in-group (Asian) and out-group (Caucasians) than Westerners (from an individualistic culture) do between their in-group (Caucasians) and out-group (Asians) when considering

the appearance of other tourists.   This phenomenon is consistent with the general understanding of collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Ward et al., 2001).   Also the concept of "individualisation" of "de-individualised" individuals through the direct contact with them (Bochner, 1982a) appeared to apply to tourism settings.   While the reactions to the other tourists at the static contact stage were somewhat neutral to negative, actual interaction seemed to have brought the "indivisualisation" effect and such encounters were received positively.

In a tourism setting, however, the concept of in-group favouritism (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Tajfel, 1981) based on ethnic appearance may not apply when tourists are making impersonal or indirect encounters.   Japanese showed the reverse preference: they prefer seeing their out-group (Caucasians) rather than their in-group (Asians).   Westerners, on the other hand, did not show strongly marked preferences.   Also, tourists' tolerance levels for the number of other people visible in a setting were found to differ between Westerners and Japanese.   For Japanese in particular, the commonly accepted premise of "less density, the better", which is often followed by visitor encounter investigation in leisure studies (Hall & Shelby, 1996; Patterson & Hammitt, 1990), simply did not apply.   Existing literature in recreation encounter studies are mostly conducted in Western countries and seem to have missed out on studying cases from other part of the world as Kim and Lee (2000) pointed out.   Nationality differences in such studies have also been limited, and this thesis has, arguably, provided one starting point to investigate more of these differences.

The concept of customer mix is also addressed and to some extent developed from the set of studies in this thesis.   The customer mix is the combination of customers that use or are attracted to a specific hospitality and travel organization (Morrison 2002:588) and is considered to be very important in the management of

better customer satisfaction. The results of the studies in the present thesis strongly support the point. It was apparent that international tourists were affected by the presence and/or absence of other tourists. Such visitors expressed their satisfaction both when actual contact was made and when just the presence or absence of other tourists was recognised. Moreover, while Wearne and Morrison (1996:58) listed homogeneity as one of the criteria for customer mix assessment for the tourism industry, the present thesis found that homogeneity might not always be preferred by international tourists. More specifically, while Wearne and Morrison stated that "it is mostly sorted out by the customers who will chose the property that has a customer mix with similar lifestyle values to themselves", some nationality groups, such as Japanese, appreciate being surrounded by people from other nationalities which seems to enhance their international tourist experience. Rather than "homogeneity", other criteria such as "preferences" or "compatibility" may need to be added to the criteria for customer mix assessment to complete the list.

7.5   Practical Implications

From the findings of the research, there are some implications for tourism management. In a broader sense, this research demonstrated that tourist-tourist encounters weigh quite heavily in the tourists' experiences. This means that managers of tourist attractions and destinations have to consider quite seriously how to manage tourist density and the tourist mix to ensure visitors' satisfaction.

Generally, this study may bring an awareness to tourism practitioners that there are nationality differences in encounter preferences. As international tourism becomes more popular than ever, managers of tourist attractions, hotels and transportation systems need to be aware of these existing differences that may affect their customers' satisfaction. This research particularly found that there are nationality differences in encounter preferences regarding both the number and

appearance of the people encountered. It should be of use for the tourist industry manager to learn of their prospective clients' preferences. The current industry practice in this regard seems to be based on practical convenience rather than the actual responses to customers' preferences. For example, the present researcher constantly hears complaints of Japanese tourists visiting popular overseas destinations and being placed among other Japanese tourists at one corner of the restaurant separated from other Western or local customers.

Some specific practical implications for tourism management particularly in natural environment settings like the rainforest examined in this study can be drawn from the study findings. For example, since Japanese tourists prefer seeing Western tourists and Westerners do not have particular preferences, mixing people from different international backgrounds in passive or limited contact situations may not produce any significant management problems. It may be better to have an international mix if possible, rather than isolating Japanese as a separate group from others. Japanese and Westerners showed different preferences in the number of people they preferred to see at rainforest settings. Therefore, care should be exercised concerning where they are taken. To be specific, taking Japanese to isolated remote places may not be seen to be positive, while taking Westerners to crowded places may not be seen to be positive. Also, a large group of a single nationality, if not the local nationality group is not favourably viewed, so it is not recommended to form such large size of groups.

Unique aspects of the psychology of tourists and nationality differences will need to be understood and extended to other environmental contexts to further consider tourist-mix management because knowledge from the basic social interaction literature may not be directly applied to tourism settings. Caution should be taken, however, because there are many factors that may influence and change

the preference patterns as the study with the focus groups seem to have suggested. It is anticipated that the above advice is less likely to apply to the settings in Asian countries and at man-made attractions.

7.6   Future Research Direction

Many issues have arisen from the present research effort to investigate tourist-tourist encounters.   Although this initial effort could not possibly reveal the entire picture of the complicated tourist-tourist encounter phenomenon, several notions appeared to be core factors to the tourist encounters, especially encounter preferences.   There are countless opportunities for future research concerning tourist-tourist relationships.   Initially, some extensions to the present study can be recommended in the following areas.

Firstly, an examination of various factors assumed to affect the encounter reactions are recommended.   As illustrated in Figure 7.6, there are five categories of influential items: "Who" Meets "Whom", "Where", "When" and "How".   Regarding "Who" and "Whom", first of all, an examination of other nationality and other appearance type groups are recommended both as observing and observed tourists. Other Asian people such as Chinese and Koreans, as well as subdividing people from Western countries are needed.   Another area needing extended examination is the characteristics of travelers.   Age, appearance and interests are a few of the items that may be interesting to focus on first. This may include different travel styles such as budget and luxury seekers, older couples and young budget travelers.   As for "Where", examination of different settings or environments is also a critical area to investigate.   Different countries and different attraction types may bring different encounter reactions.   It is also interesting to examine "When", meaning the observer's stage of the travel.   Figure 6.17 outlined a hypothetical stage base mode of the encounter reactions which suggested differences according to a pre-contact,

static contact and interaction framework. This model could be tested with more systematic data to confirm the applicability of a U-curve pattern (Figure 7.4).

Methodological advancement is another set of challenges that future research needs to face. The visual approach with photographic images appeared to be a reasonable method for providing simulation to the survey participants, however, the improvement of the techniques and the strong evidence of the validity of the study could be explored in more detail. Analysis of online travelogues as an unobtrusive approach in the present research brought valuable data. Whereas this type of data unfortunately lacks the information such as demographics of the sample to fully utilise the value of it, it is still powerful data especially when the study collected other data with the multi-method approach. It is admitted that the use of the Internet as a questionnaire delivery tool was a little troublesome. Web-site based questionnaires depends on the volunteer participation without much push and this was the cause of the small sample size as well as the somewhat biased sample characteristics. Yet, use of the Internet is becoming a part of many individuals' lives and there should be some opportunities to exploit this technology for data collection. Searching for innovative approaches for tourism studies is another challenge.

7.7 A final Note

Despite being the one of the first in-depth studies in the topic of tourist-tourist relationships, the results from this research do show some consistencies and may help shape the directions of further work. In particular, a new understanding of tourist psychology was suggested in Figure 7.1, which is a revised model of perceptions of tourists initially introduced in Chapter Three.

Also, this set of studies employed some novel methods and established that a

visual approach is an effective approach to this type of research.   The total strength of this thesis lies in the combination of it findings and these methodological directions.

Overall, the fact the findings of this research have contradicted the implications and directions of other social science research is an indication of the importance of "tourism studies" as a unique and distinct field of academic work.