

Understanding the tourist-resident relationship through social contact: Progressing the development of social contact in tourism

Abstract: Social contact becomes an essential agenda of tourist-resident relationship research. However, the development of social contact in tourism and how it could influence the tourist-resident relationship is still ambiguous. This conceptual study addresses those research gaps by providing an overview of the current development in tourist-resident social contact; developing a tourist-resident social contact axis to understand different tourist-resident relationship through social contact; and delineating the future research directions of tourist-resident social contact. This research contributes to the theory by clarifying the development of the concept in terms of contact antecedents, contact types and contact impacts, proposing a social contact axis to understand the tourist-resident relationship through four contact scenarios and offering directions to guide the future investigations. Practically, results benefit different stakeholders regarding how to jointly develop a favourable and sustainable tourist-resident relationship.

Keywords: social contact, tourist-resident relationship, value co-creation, value co-destruction, contact theory, social exchange theory

1. Introduction

Tourists are surrounded by the social environment when traveling in a destination and the social interactions have become a crucial part of their overall travel experience (Fan, Buhalis & Lin, 2019). Meanwhile, social contact with tourists can influence residents' wellbeing (Eusébio et al., 2018) and further determine their support level for the tourism development (Tsaur, Yen & Teng, 2018). Practice theory (Echeverri & Skálén, 2011; Yin, Qian & Shen, 2019) suggests that, through various social practices, actors engage with each other to create values. Therefore, social contact becomes an important agenda of tourist-residents relationship research (Yu, Chancellor, & Cole, 2011; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Maruyama, Woosnam, & Boley, 2017). Furthermore, a favourable social contact with tourists could boost residents' positive attitude towards the tourists and the tourism development (Carneiro et al., 2018), whereas an irritating contact experience may intensify the destination social conflict, and reduce the social tolerance and acceptance of the destination society (Pizam, Uriely & Reichel, 2000; Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, understanding the social contact between tourists and residents is essential in achieving the social sustainability of tourism (Zhang et al., 2017).

Tourism provides a natural occasion connecting different groups of people together, such as tourists, hosts, service providers and authorities. Different types of social contact, such as tourist-resident, tourist-service personnel, tourist-destination marketing organisation, tourist-tourist, and resident-resident interactions (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004; Pearce, 2005; Rihova et al., 2015; Wu, 2007) could occur in tourism activities and impact on interacting groups. However, due to its uniqueness in contact context, duration and purposes, social contact in tourism distinguishes itself from the general cross-cultural social contact (Pearce, 1982). Given the importance of

social contact, tourist-resident social contact is not receiving sufficient attention in tourism academia. Specifically, due to the limited exploratory studies focusing on social contact, the antecedents of contact between tourists and residents are not fully investigated. For long, social contact has been treated as a homogenous concept, so the different types of social contact and their diverse impacts on both participant groups are yet to be specified. Furthermore, though the importance of social contact in tourist-residents relationship is acknowledged, the mechanism of transforming different practices into relationships is still mystery. As the formation of a relation needs the engagement and efforts from both participant groups, a paired investigation regarding the tourists' and residents' contact experiences is urgently needed.

To fulfil those research gaps, this conceptual study is guided by the following objectives: to provide an overview of the current development in tourist-resident social contact; to develop a tourist-resident social contact axis to understand different tourist-resident relationships through social contact; and to delineate the future research directions of tourist-resident social contact. This research contributes to the knowledge by providing a systematic overview of the tourist-resident social contact. The consolidated output provides a refined portrait of this concept and its relationship with other relevant concepts. The tourist-resident contact axis innovatively applies the contact experiences of both groups to interpret the tourist-resident relationship. It also offers a blueprint for researchers who aim to apply social contact in different tourist-resident studies. Practically, results could benefit different stakeholders in destinations, such as destination marketing officers, tour operators and the host communities regarding how to jointly develop a sustainable tourist-resident relationship.

2. Overview of the tourist-resident social contact research

2.1 Definitions and measurements of social contact

In general, social contact is an encounter between two or more individuals and is a building block of society (Wey, Jordán & Blumstein, 2019). By contacting others, people set rules, institutions and systems for living. In tourism, cross-cultural social contact describes the encounter between individuals from different cultural contexts in tourism related activities (Yu & Lee, 2014; Fan et al., 2017a).

The measurement of social contact has gained noticeable attention since early 1970s. Cohen (1972, p177) proposed that “the degree to which and the way they affect each other depend largely on the extent and variety of social contacts the tourists have during their trips”. Therefore, the extent of contact, the variety of contact and the impact of contact composed the three aspects of evaluating social contact. Early research adopted the single dimension to measure social contact, such as activity (Rothman, 1978) and frequency of contact (Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013). More studies used multiple dimensions to measure a comprehensive experience of social contact. Fan et al. (2017a) by reviewing all relevant measurements of social contact, concluded that, activity, number of contact points, frequency, quality, strength, influence, valence, intensity, power and symmetry were used in different combinations to measure the social contact. In the

tourism setting, Fan et al. (2017b) argued that both quantity and quality of social contact should be considered when assessing their impacts on tourists' perceptions.

2.2 Antecedents of social contact

Contact activities start with the antecedents of social contact between tourists and residents. As indicated in the hierarchical constraint theory (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991), leisure and tourism behaviour constraints posited three categories, namely intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural barriers. Intrapersonal barriers describe individual psychological states and attributes which interact with leisure preferences. Interpersonal barriers are the results of interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals' characteristics. Structural barriers refer to those intervening and environmental factors between behaviour preference and actual participation. It is argued that constraints are encountered hierarchically, first at the intrapersonal level, then to the interpersonal level and eventually to the structural level. Applying the categories of hierarchical constraints theory in understanding the antecedents of social contact between tourists and hosts, there are three categories of contact antecedents.

As shown in Figure 1, the first category intrapersonal antecedents represent factors that relates to individuals' own evaluation of the appropriateness, personal skills and psychological features. Personality is reported to be an important determinant for the social interactions between two groups of people (Lin et al., 2019; Plog, 1974). In cross-cultural encounters, language skill is also essential for an effective communication (Lin et al., 2019). From a tourist viewpoint, purpose of travel and personal role in travel determines the degree of contact with the local (Fan et al., 2017a). For example, if tourists travel to explore the destinations' culture and lifestyle, they are more likely to interact with the local to fulfill their expectation and to obtain the desired experience and information. If a tourist is depending on his or her travel partners for all travel plans, information inquiries, and on-site decisions, the tourist may not contact the local very much in person during the travel.

The second category is interpersonal antecedents, which includes the joint preference regarding the social interactions. Tourists who prefer ingroup contact or seek for interpersonal existential authenticity (Wang, 1999) in their travel may not have much interaction with the local (Fan et al., 2017a). Discriminations and stereotypes could also influence the tourist-host social contact from both sides (Tung, 2020; Ye et al., 2013). Allport's (1979) contact theory offers the earliest reference for the tourist-host contact conditions, which proposes that intergroup contact could reduce prejudice between group members under certain conditions, including common goals, intergroup cooperation as well as personal interactions (Fan et al., 2017a).

The last category of contact antecedents is the structural antecedents, describing those environmental conditions or contexts for social contact. Allport's (1979) contact theory specified that equal status and support of authorities were essential to ensure a positive contact outcome. In the tourism context, various situational factors were reported to influence the tourist-host social contact. Traveling in package tour or individually as well as the length of stay could determine the chance of tourist-host encounters (Cohen, 1972). Cultural differences between tourist and resident groups could distort the meaning in communication and inhibit further interactions (Fan

et al., 2020). People with serious cultural and political sensitivity, such as historical antagonism, religious hostility, and territory conflict, may not have a positive context for tourist-host social contact (Fan et al., 2017a; Tomljenovic, 2010). Moreover, destination maturity, types of attraction and destination security level could also influence the degree of contact between tourists and hosts (Fan et al., 2017a). For example, well developed and clearly directed destinations can encourage self-serviced travel rather than consulting with the local. Metropolis destinations, compared with socio-cultural and nature-based tourism destinations, generate less social interactions.

2.3 Types of social contact

Social contact could occur in different formats. By interacting partners, there are tourist-resident, tourist-service personnel, tourist-destination marketing organisation, tourist-tourist (both ingroup and strangers) interactions (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004; Pearce, 2005; Rihova et al., 2015; Wu, 2007). In the last few years, the online social contact between tourists and hosts before, during and after trips have gained increasing attention (Jansson, 2007; Neuhofer et al., 2012, 2014). Different online and face-to-face contact preferences as well as combination lead to different travel experiences. Fan, Buhalis and Lin (2019) proposed a six-fold tourist typology, namely: disconnected immersive traveller, digital detox traveller, diversionary traveller, dual zone traveller, daily life controller and social media addict. Last, contact can also be categorised by its nature and purposes. Farmaki (2017) stated that there were passive and active forms of contact in travel. Han et al. (2019) proposed three types of social interactions with grounded theory, namely protocol-oriented interaction, help-related interaction, and sociable interaction. Fan et al. (2017b) revealed that social-oriented and service-oriented social contacts performed differently in influencing tourists' perceived cultural distance in travel.

2.4 Impacts of social contact

Social contact in tourism brings different impacts to tourists and residents. The impacts of social contact have been well addressed in tourism activities (Bochner, 1982; Cusher & Brislin, 1996; Yu & Lee, 2014) from either a tourist's or a resident's perspective. Figure 1 summarises the impacts of tourist-host social contact. For tourists, depending on the degree and quality of contacts, social contact with the host is reported to help obtain recommendations for the trip and knowledge about the destinations (Fan et al., 2017a). A series of perception changes could also occur, such as recognising cultural differences, changing destination images, increasing the perceived residents' emotional affinity (Aleshinloye et al., 2020), enhancing experience and travel attitude (Li & Liu, 2020; Fan et al., 2020) and developing personal cultural competence (Altinay & Bowen, 2006; Chen, Lin & Petrick, 2013; Wei, Crompton & Reid, 1989). A deep interaction with residents could lead to further impacts, such as making friends with residents, and changing one's ethnic identity (Cohen, 1972; Moufakkir & Kelly, 2010). Nevertheless, contact without fostering conditions, such as equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, support of authorities as well as personal interaction could lead to negative contact outcomes, such as prejudice, anxiety (Berno & Ward, 2005; Maoz, 2006) and intergroup animosity (Saguy et al., 2009). From a resident viewpoint, frequent social contact with the tourists could lead to a positive attitude toward the interactions (Akis, Peristianis & Warner 1996), enhance the

perceived impacts of tourism on their quality of life (Carneiro et al., 2018; Eusébio et al., 2018), increase the residents' emotional solidarity, reduce the social distance with tourists (Joo et al., 2018; Woosnam & Lee, 2011; Aleshinloye et al., 2020; Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015) and enhance the support for tourism development (Tsaur et al., 2017). On the negative side, too much contact, to the point that residents cannot enjoy their own public resources and environment (Zhang et al., 2017) and are not able to effectively engage in daily activities, may induce the negative effects, resulting in host-guest conflict (Zhang et al, 2017), emotions of burnout, irritation and antagonism as explained by Doxey's (1975) Irridex Model (Joo et al., 2018).

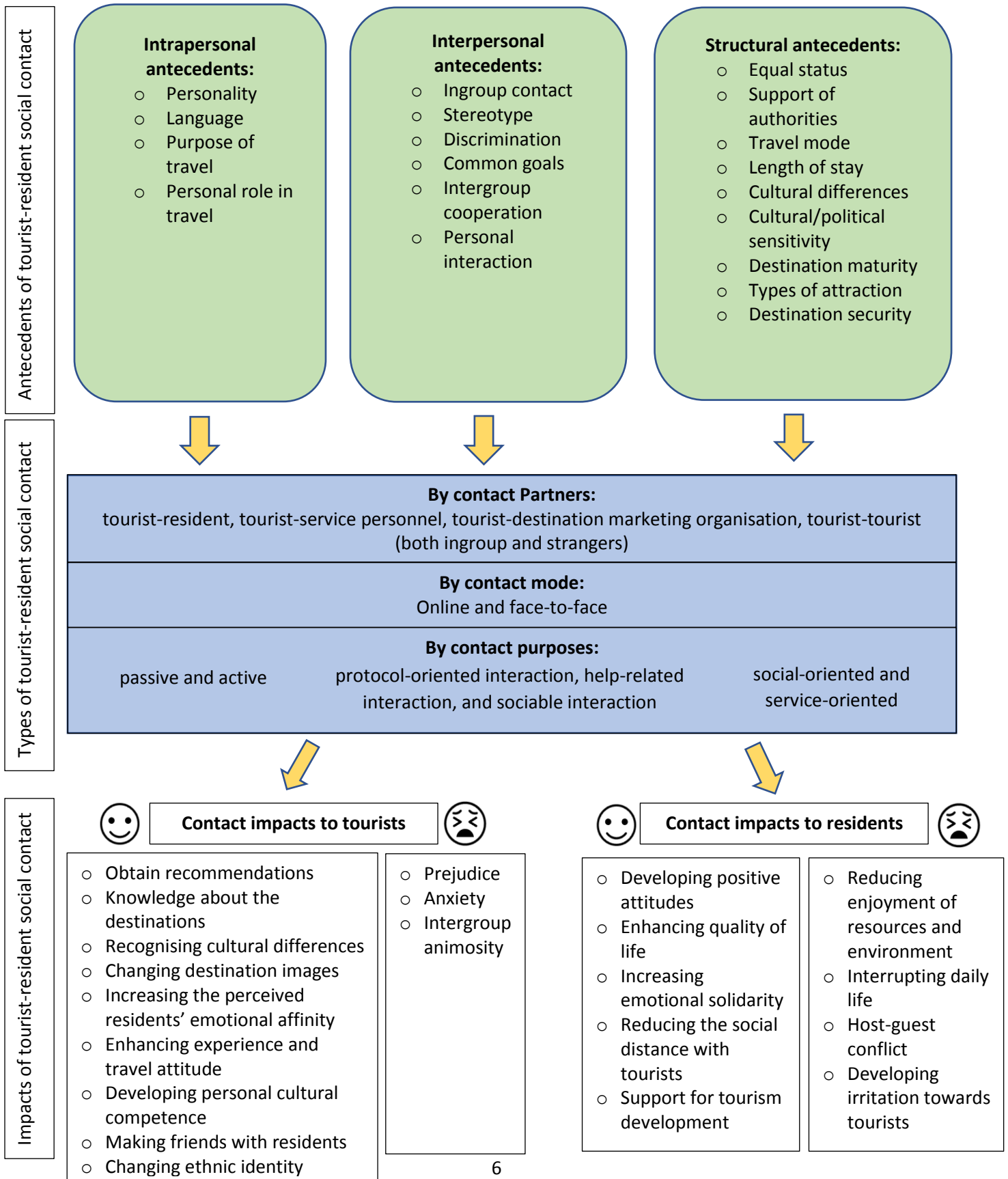


Figure 1. Overview of the tourist-resident social contact development

3. Social contact and the sustainable tourist-resident relationship

Social contact is essential to achieve a sustainable relationship between tourists and hosts with different cultural backgrounds (Fan et al., 2020), however, it is also important to realise that not all kinds of social contacts in all tourism settings could foster positive and favourable tourist-host relationships. Though evidence was shown regarding the general positive and negative patterns of contact, there is a lack of paired analysis illustrating the interrelated and dynamic impacts of tourist-resident social contact. Theoretically, when interpreting the mechanism of social contact, Allport's (1979) contact theory plays a dominating role. A broader and more diverse view is encouraged in explaining the impacts of tourist-host social contact. Therefore, the following section aims to apply the social exchange theory, value co-creation and co-destruction together with contact theory to delineate an overview of tourist-resident relationship with different contact scenarios presented. A brief introduction of different related theories and concepts is provided prior to the contact-relationship analysis.

3.1 Theoretical foundation for analysing the tourist-resident social contact

3.1.1 Social exchange theory and types of residents, tourists and destinations

Tourists' and residents' perceived benefits and costs through social contact play essential roles in determining the tourist-resident relationship. First introduced by Thibaut and Kelley (1959) from the economic theory, social exchange theory emphasises the perceived costs and benefits of a relationship as well as the relationship satisfaction of the participant groups. Exchange is perceived as a social characteristic that occurs during the traveling encounter between the hosts and the tourists (Sutton, 1967). The desire of the hosts in promoting the economic and social development of the destination (Moscardo et al., 2017) is the initiation stage of the exchange, followed by the formation stage where the exchange actually occurs. Transaction evaluation is the third stage, where the hosts assess the benefits and costs from tourism development. At the last stage, two possible outcomes of the exchange exist. If the benefits exceed the costs, the hosts will support the tourism development; otherwise, they may show a negative attitude toward tourism development (Ap, 1992). Such kind of exchange could be social-cultural, environmental, and economic (Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997). In the exchange process, comparison is key to provide the standard for all the relationship judgement (Ward & Berno, 2011). Government plays an essential role in determining the social exchange process in a destination through the interplay between trust to the government and the empowerment of the residents in tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Social exchange theory is widely used in explaining residents' attitude towards local tourism development, however less studies have applied it in understanding tourists' attitude towards tourism and their travel experience (Fan, Liu & Qiu, 2019). Moreover, the theory was challenged by its ignorance of different cultural contexts, the complexity of social relations, and the irrational attitude and behaviours (Matatolu, 2019). Social exchange theory is also used together with other well-established theories, such as Doxey's (1975) Irridex Model and Butler's (1980) tourism area life cycle (TALC) to understand residents' attitude and attitude change in tourism development.

Doxey's (1975) Irridex Model proposes that the attitude of residents to tourists and tourism development depends on the varying social, economic, and environmental impacts on the destination. Residents' attitudes can be categorized into four stages, namely, euphoria, apathy, annoyance (irritation), and antagonism. At the initial stage, the hosts are excited at the potential economic and social benefits generated by tourism development. As the destination develops and the number of tourists increases, host attitudes gradually become apathetic, annoyed and, eventually, antagonistic. This model is widely used in addressing residents' attitude issues in cross-culture (e.g. Akis, Peristianis & Warner, 1996; Fan, Liu & Qiu, 2019), cross-border (e.g. Zhang, Wong & Lai, 2018), overtourism (Cheung & Li, 2019), destination marketing (Kwon & Vogt, 2010) and longitudinal settings (Ma, Dai & Fan, 2020). It represents the attitudinal change induced by the tourist-host social contact on the resident side. Some limitations were discussed regarding the assumption and the representation of the Irridex Model. It is argued that the model assumes the attitude homogeneity in a community and therefore the intrinsic factors influencing the community members are largely ignored. Furthermore, the model also overlooks the structural efforts that could be made by the government or tourism organisations to reduce the negative attitude of residents (Cordero, 2008).

According to the degree of social contact in travel, Cohen (1972) characterized tourists into four roles: organized mass tourist, individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. The first two tourist types are further called as institutionalized tourists and the other two are named non-institutionalized tourists. In brief, the organized mass tourists are largely confined to their home environment and habit when traveling. Individual mass tourists carry less home elements than the organized mass tourists, but still within their familiar zones. Different from mass tourists, explorers arrange their trips by their own, and try to avoid those staged attractions in a destination. Though they seek novelty in their trips, they do not entirely immerse themselves in the travel and tend to observe and experience through their own cultural lens and make judgments according to their own standards. Drifters venture further away than the explorers. They make their trips flexible, share the same way of living with the locals and wholly immerse in the host culture.

Another tourist typology which relates to the social contact is Plog's tourist psychographics. Plog (1972) discovered six psychographic groups of tourists, which are dependable, near-dependable, centric-dependable, centric-venturer, near-venturer and venture groups. A traditional tour destination would be appealing first to venturer and last to dependable. In general, venturers first discover a new travel destination and begin to talk about their experience with people around them. Such trend will be followed by near-venturers. Near-venturers' arrivals to the destination bring the development of local tourist facilities. As the destination becomes more popular and mature, the mid-centric tourists will take over the market. The huge increase in number of tourists leads to further development of the destination. When the tourist volume reaches or exceeds the maximum capacity of the destination, it will bring destruction to the destination. Meanwhile, the appeal of the destination gradually passes the magic mid-point in the population curve of tourists, and tourist volume begins to decrease. The tourist market shifts from mid-centric to near-dependable, and finally to dependable tourists.

Last, Butler's (1980) TALC states that, the development of a tourism area normally goes through six stages, namely, the exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and post-stagnation stages. Based on the original TALC, Agarwal (1997, 2002) proposed one more stage, "reorientation," between the stagnation and the post-stagnation stages to represent the dynamic process of restructuring. Zimmermann (1997) revealed the co-existence of multiple cycles of different forms of tourism. As for the post-stagnation stages, there are five more possible situations proposed, including rejuvenation, reduced growth, stabilization, decline and immediate decline (Butler, 1980). However, the last stage in TALC is challenged due to the difficulties to identify and to measure (Getz, 1992). It is argued that the natural or human-induced changes could interrupt the proposed developing trends in TALC and could also result in emergent destinations and industries (Baum, 1998). Moreover, no consensus has been reached regarding the specific reasons that could lead to the decline, stabilization, or rejuvenation of tourism in an area (Fan et al., 2019). Despite the criticism, the TALC model is one of the earliest tourism models originated in the tourism field and has been broadly applied to assess the tourism development and to determine the carrying capacity of destinations (Butler, 2019). TALC is also discussed together with Plog's tourists' typology and Doxey's Irridex Model to comprehensively understand the tourists' psychological change and residents' attitudinal change along with the tourism development (Fan et al., 2019).

3.1.2 Contact theory

When exploring tourists' attitude towards and outcomes of social contact, Allport's (1979) contact theory was broadly used in different studies (Farmaki, 2017; Fan et al., 2017a; Tomljenovic, 2010). Contact theory by Allport (1979) originally offered a way to minimise stereotyping and discrimination between two culturally different regions (Yu & Lee, 2014). It suggests that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice between group members under certain conditions, such as equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities. In other words, the impacts of contact depend on the kind of contact, and the situation in which contact occurs. There is also an agreement that under certain unfavourable conditions, contact could generate adverse effects, increase prejudice and distrust rather than leading to mutual respect and liking (Tomljenovic, 2010). Furthermore, unpleasant, involuntary or tension laden contact could promote competition and frustration, such as political conflict (Guo et al., 2006; Kim & Prideaux, 2003; Zhang et al., 2017) and economic recession (Anson, 1999).

3.1.3 Value co-creation and co-destruction

Tourism naturally brings tourists and residents to encounters. The experiences of their encounters may affect their satisfaction, wellbeing, future behaviors (Sharpley, 2014), and lead to mutual benefits or conflicts between the two groups (Bimonte & Punzo, 2011, 2016). Therefore, what kinds of benefits as well as costs could be jointly developed is key to anticipate the contact outcomes. Value co-creation and co-destruction could be useful theories to understand the benefits and costs generated during the tourist-resident social contact. According to the practice theory, an action is only feasible and understandable in relation to shared practices and that social order is comprised by practices (Echeverri & Ska'le'n, 2011; Foucault, 1977;

Giddens, 1984). Practices involve a temporally unfolding and spatially discrete link of behaviours that include practical activities, performances, and representations or talk (Warde, 2005). Practices act as background coping skills that simultaneously limit and enable interactions between different groups (Echeverri & Ska°le'n, 2011). Based on the practice theory, social contact provides a natural occasion allowing the value formation process between tourists and residents. In the tourism encounters, different interactions lead to diverse experiences for both groups, which may further lead to distinct value formations both positively and negatively.

Value is understood as “the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given” (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 14). The concept of value co-creation emphasises the collaboration between multiple stakeholders to co-create value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo, Koskela-Huotari, & Vink, 2020) and the core of such co-creation activities is to determine the value that needs to be co-created. There are several logics facilitating the understanding of value. Good-domain (G-D) logic (Cetin, Akova & Kaya, 2014) highlights goods-related values from the firm’s standpoint and emphasises the value-in-exchange, where value is realised at the point of exchange (Kotler 1967). Introduced by Vargo & Lusch (2004), the service-domain (S-D) logic emphasises customers’ active role in co-creating value and valuable experiences with the service organization, stressing the provider-to-customer co-creation. The S-D logic perceives value as value-in-use, meaning “the value for customers, created by them during their usage of resources” (Grönroos & Gummerus, 2014, p. 209). Comparatively, by putting customers at the centre of the quest, the customer-domain (C-D) logic emphasises the importance of value created within experiences and practices in customers’ own social contexts. Thus, the value co-creation from a C-D logic provides a suitable perspective on tourists’ value co-creation though social contact with the residents. In the C-D logic and tourism context, value co-creation is identified as “the tourist’s co-creation practices and experience that takes place in his or her own social context” (Rihova et al., 2015, p. 358). Similarly, when putting the residents at the centre of the quest and considering the value co-created for the residents, it focuses on the value formatted within experiences and practices in residents’ own social contexts. Value co-creation provides collaboration opportunities between different parties in the condition that both could benefit from the activity; willingly participate in the activity; and understand their own and the other party’s role as contributors to the process (Gummerus, 2013). Though a few studies have applied value co-creation in the tourist behaviour and experience research (Binkhorst & Dekker, 2009; Rihova et al., 2015, 2018;), the development of this concept in understanding the relationship between tourists and residents is still scarce (Chen, Cottam & Lin, 2020; Lin, Chen & Filieri, 2017), especially in investigating the interrelated relationship from both sides simultaneously.

While co-creating values in the tourist-resident social contact, value co-destruction can exist simultaneously (Smith, 2013). Echeverri and Ska°le'n (2011) identified four roles that actors could play in the interaction, including value co-creator, value co-recoverer, value coreducer and value co-destroyer. Though it is evident that not all resources are value-adding but can be value-destroying (Echeverri & Ska°le'n, 2011; Neuhofer, 2016; Yin, Qian & Shen, 2019), the notion of value co-destruction is still seen as implicit compared with value co-creation (Ple´ & Ca´ceres, 2010). Value co-destruction is defined as an interactional process between participants that

results in a decline in at least one of the participants' wellbeing (Ple' & Ca'ceres, 2010). Value co-destruction can result from accidental or intentional misuse of resources (Ple' & Ca'ceres, 2010). The concept of value co-destruction was applied in the tourism field to understand the tourist experience (Neuhofer, 2016), information and technology use (Dolan, Seo & Kemper, 2019; Sthapit & Björk, 2020), service quality (Luo et al., 2019) and sharing economy (Buhalis, Andreu & Gnoth, 2020; Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017; Yin et al., 2019). For example, Neuhofer (2016) revealed value could be diminished and destroyed in the following three ways when information and communication technology (ICT) comes into play, namely: barrier to escapism from everyday life and relaxation; interference of 'living' the experience; and pressure and addiction. By exploring different stakeholders in the Airbnb ecosystem, Buhalis et al. (2020) argued that value co-destruction occurred due to uncontrolled and rapid expansion. For guests, co-destruction included expectations not met, overmarketing and safety/security issues, whereas for the residents, the co-destruction was reflected in noise pollution, traffic, crime, inflation etc.

3.2 A tale of four tourist-resident relationships through social contact

Though tourists and residents could generate both benefits and costs during their interactions, such kind of value-formation is not necessarily guaranteeing a mutually beneficial or harmful outcome. Therefore, the tourist-resident relationship can be dynamic and heterogenous. This section aims to delineate four scenarios, illustrating different tourist-resident relationships generated from different types of social contact. As shown in Figure 2, by dividing the social contact into both favourable and unfavourable experiences, this axis presents the four possible tourist-resident relationships through social contact, namely co-creating relationship, egotistical relationship, scripted relationship and co-destructing relationship.

3.2.1 Co-creating relationship

The first scenario is co-creating relationship with the contact being favourable for both groups. Such kind of desirable relationship is a result of co-creation with efforts from both sides, and these efforts result from a mutually recognised benefits from such interactions. The co-creation relationship can be normally found at three stages of destination development in Butler's (1980) TALC, namely exploration, involvement and continuous growing (rejuvenation, reduced growth and stabilization) in post-stagnation stage. In the initial stage of tourism development and facing a small number of tourists, residents are generally welcoming the tourists and exciting about the future tourism development. The social interactions with tourists could also fulfil their sense of pride by sharing and touring, and their altruism spirit to provide quality and interactive experience to tourists (Moyle, Croy & Weiler, 2010). It also corresponds to the first stage of euphoria in Doxey's (1975) Irridex Model, where residents are euphoric at the potential economic and social benefits brought by tourism development (Fan et al., 2019). From a tourist viewpoint, this group of tourists could be the venturers and near-venturers in Plog's (1974) tourist psychographic group, while drifters and explorers in Cohen's (1972) tourist typology. The value co-creating contact could also occur in a stabilised and well-maintained destination, where tourists and residents, after periods of imbalanced and extreme relationship adjustment, come to a sustained and positive relationship through social contact. Moreover, to ensure a win-win contact situation, contact theory provides references to foster a favourable contact for both

parties. Since equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities are necessary conditions for positive contacts to take place, efforts should be made jointly from different stakeholders to ensure the favourable contacts. According to the social exchange theory, the supportive and favourable contact comes from the perceived benefits from both parties. From the tourist side, contacting with the local could bring both short-term and long-term benefits, such as enriching the trip, gaining knowledge about the destination, enhancing the travel experience, changing/reinforcing destination image, changing identity, and establishing social connections (Fan et al, 2017a; Lin et al., 2019). From a resident viewpoint, by interacting with tourists, they could develop a sense of pride as the local, share local knowledge, provide quality experience for tourists, enrich their social capacity and enhance their overall wellbeing (Eusébio et al., 2018; Moyle et al., 2010). Such kind of interactions with tourists also lead to a positive attitude toward the tourism development (Tsaour et al., 2017).

3.2.2 Egotistical relationship

Egotistical tourist-resident relationship occurs when there are imbalanced benefits and costs perceived by both groups. This type of relationship results from a favourable tourist contact experience, however an unfavourable resident contact experience. Due to such imbalanced situation, values could not be co-created as the residents could not reciprocally gain benefits from the contact with tourists. Instead, they perceive costs from the tourism encounters. Therefore, the tourist-residents relationship generated from this kind of social contact is egotistical as it only fulfills the willingness from the tourist's perspective. Such kind of contact situation could be found in the development stage in TALC, where destinations experience a rapid development and a dramatic increase in tourist numbers. As the development going on, residents start to feel overwhelmed at the tourism induced impacts and the interactions are more than they have expected or could cope with. Therefore, the residents enter the apathy stage and start to feel irritated towards the tourists in Doxey's Model. Meanwhile, as the residents' apathetic emotion is still implicit, tourists maintain a passionate attitude towards the destinations and attempt to interact with the local. They can be categorised into the centric-venturers tourists in Plog's typology, and explorers and individual mass tourists in Cohen's (1972) model. Referring to the contact theory, the unhealthy relationship could be an outcome of lacking proper government regulations in terms of tourism development. Monitoring and controlling the volume and quality of tourists can help avoid the uncontrollable situation. Unequal status could also be an important reason behind such situation. For instance, the Dharavi slum in Mumbai became the favourite tourist experience of 2019 in India and even higher than Taj Mahal (Telegraph UK, 2019). Tourists visiting slum tourism destinations mainly want to meet their curiosity and experience the inequality of living conditions. However, residents' negative feelings brought by the tourist gaze, unrespectful inquiries and irresponsible disruption in their daily life could be treated as a sacrifice to exchange for the tourists' "interactive" and "informative" travel experience. Such kind of imbalanced relationship could be intensified in those interactions between groups of people with historical, cultural and religious differences or even conflicts, for example the rise of dark tourism in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in Ukraine and Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. To respond to the social exchange theory, in this contact process, tourists may obtain different benefits as described in scenario 1, such as earning local

information, new knowledge, change or reinforce destination image and experiencing differences. However, as such kind of social contact misses the collaboration from the local, the benefits for the tourists could be limited and superficial (Fan et al., 2017a). For the residents, unfavourable social contact with the tourists could bring costs, such as disruption of daily life, overwhelmed entertaining for tourists, and sometimes, offenses from disrespectful interactions (Joo et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2017).

3.2.3 Scripted relationship

Alternatively, the third scenario presents another possibility of the imbalanced relationship with happy residents but disappointed tourists. In this relationship, as the tourism number going up, residents become skillful and experienced with receiving tourists, meanwhile, they become apathetic with the tourists with limited excitement, enthusiasm, and hospitality. Tourism gradually become a result of commoditization (Cohen, 1988). However, such kind of standardised tourism social experience could not encourage tourists to co-create values with the host through social contact as they are exhausted with the commercialisation atmosphere and scripted conversions. Tourists are traveling to pursue authenticity, though the representation of it can be diverse, such as objective, constructive and existential (Wang, 1999). In this relationship, local people seek to minimise intrusion by tourists by providing tourism experiences based on “staged authenticity” (MacCannell, 1976; Cohen, 1979). However, tourists travel all the way to the destination for a real authentic experience, but not a staged authenticity. This mismatch results in a negative social contact experience, and this is consistent with the contact theory, which pointed out contact without a common goal could generate unfavourable outcomes (Allport, 1979). Scripted relationship could happen in consolidation and stagnation stages in TALC as the tourist increasing rate starts to be stable or declined. Residents’ attitude towards tourism development in this relationship is apathy in Doxey’s Irridex Model. Tourists in this relationship belong to the centric-dependable tourists in Plog’s model and institutionalised (both organized and individual mass tourists) tourists in Cohen’s contact typology. Referring to the social exchange theory, though residents could benefit from such interactions with tourists regarding the economic profit and minimising the tourism intrusion (MacCannell, 1976), tourists tend to lose the authentic experience, personalisation, meaning of social communication in the meanwhile (Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003; Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Frochot & Batat, 2013).

3.2.4 Co-destruction relationship

The last relationship in this axis is the co-destruction tourist-resident relationship through social contact. In this process, tourism encounters serve as catalysts for severe intergroup conflicts. Both sides contribute to this holistic and tensive relationship and neither of them get favourable outcomes from such co-destruction. The co-destruction relationship could normally be found among the over-tourism destinations, where the local can no longer bear the negative impacts of tourism development and the unpleasant social interactions with mass tourists. Their daily life has been adversely influenced by the huge number of tourists. Therefore, they participate in this co-destruction to drive away the tourists and to express their dissatisfaction towards the uncontrolled tourism development. Hong Kong and Venice are two typical examples that we could refer to and there are many more in the world. Residents boycott tourists by abusing,

bullying, anti-tourism protests and even physical conflicts. Some of the negative contacts are intensified by the perceived stereotypes, discriminations, cultural differences as well as political sensitivity. Tourists co-destruct the relationship by performing badly in the destinations, such as unethical and illegal behaviours (e.g. jumping the queues, destroying the natural environment, and crime) and disrespecting the local cultures and social norms (e.g. speaking loudly, not following the social rules, disrespecting the local religions and breaking the hygiene standard) (Seraphin, Sheeran & Pilato, 2018; Shen, Luo & Zhao, 2017; Ye et al, 2013; Zhang et al., 2017). This scenario corresponds to TALC's stagnation and possibly lead to the decline track in the post-stagnation stage if no government/official interventions are taken place. Residents' attitude towards tourism and tourists are becoming antagonism in Doxey's Irridex Model, whereas tourists are mainly following into the near-dependable and dependable psychocentric categories in Plog's typology and the organised mass tourists in Cohen's typology. Considering the costs brought by the value co-destruction in social contact, residents may develop negative emotions, such as disrespect, offense, inequality, conflict, competition, anger and antagonism (Fan et al., 2020), get disrupted for their lifestyle (Moyle et al., 2010), and boycott further tourism development (Tsaur et al., 2017). Tourists could feel various negative emotions, such as hostility, discrimination and unwelcome, have unpleasant travel experience, spread negative word-of-mouth, and boycott the destinations (Luo & Zhai, 2017).

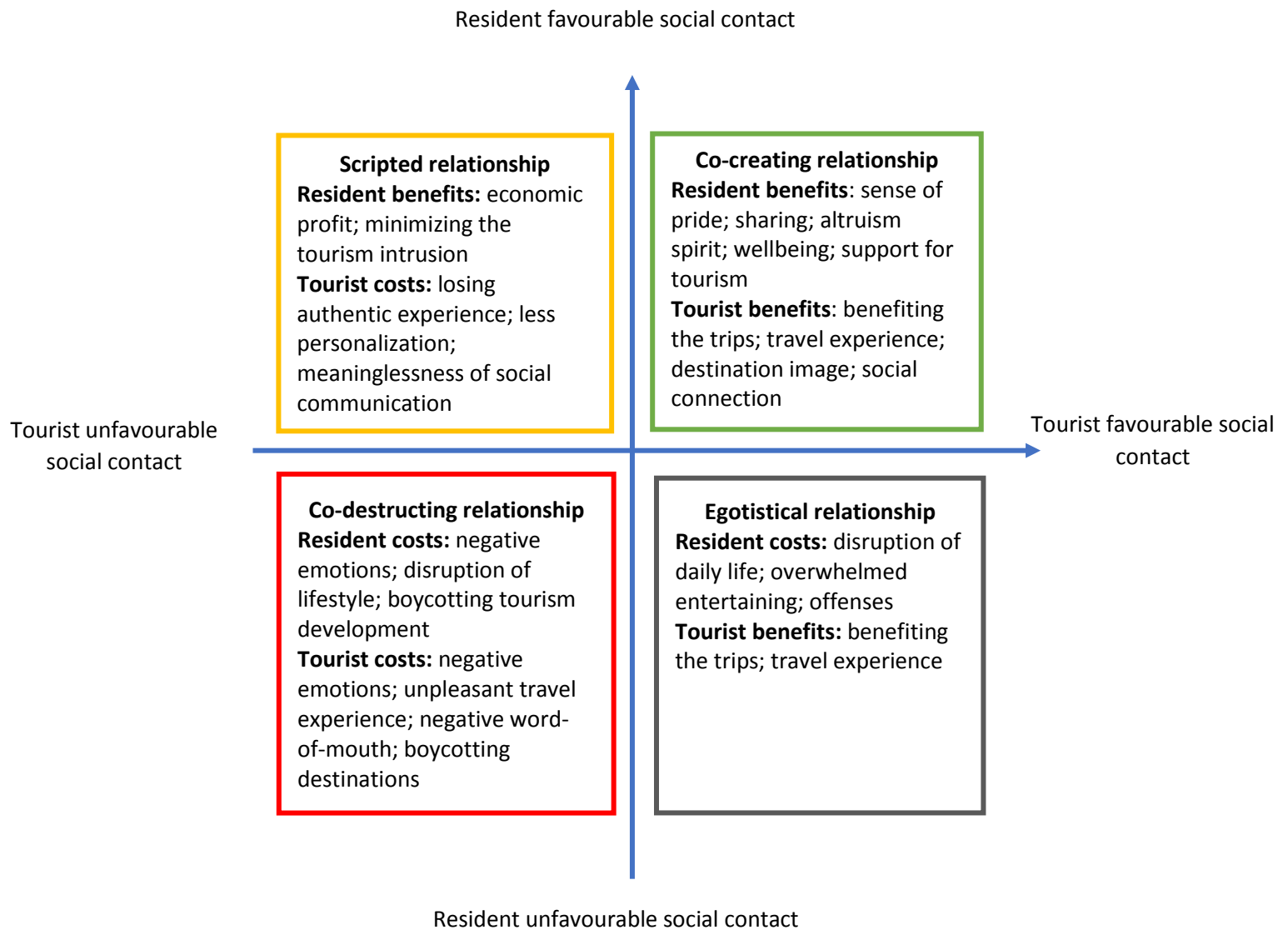


Figure 2. Social contact and tourist-resident relationship axis

The above-discussed four tourist-resident relationships delineate four typical outcomes of different social contact encounters in tourism. In different relationships, tourists and residents tend to hold different perceived benefits and costs from the interactions, which determines the outcome of social exchange in this interactive process. It is noticed that tourists and residents could co-create as well as co-destruct values through social contact as long as they have the same or similar goals towards the contact, which is the reciprocal benefits, or alternatively mutual costs. However, tourists and residents are not always holding the similar perceptions towards the contact experience, and this leads to the rest two types of relationships, namely egotistical and scripted relationships. Four relationships do not have a sequence to follow and it is not necessary that one destination should go through all the four stages. Moreover, a destination's relationship type could change over time depending on the ongoing situation and the overall destination development. For example, the egotistical relationship could become the co-destruction relationship if the perceived costs from the residents continue to increase and limited structural intervention are implemented. Similarly, if destinations of scripted relationship could recognise the unsatisfied tourists and make changes accordingly to enhance tourists' experience, they could move to co-creation relationship afterwards. The corresponding categories of destination lifecycle, resident attitude and tourist types in each scenario only represent the typical cases of a destination development and may not be inclusive for every single destination. In addition, as in reality, one destination could have several main tourism markets simultaneously, it is possible that residents could develop different tourist-resident relationships with tourist groups with diverse cultural backgrounds, social distance and political intimacy. Moreover, destinations' developing level (Fan et al., 2017a) and tourists' socio-demographics may also influence the contact outcomes. In that case, several tourist-resident relationships could co-exist in one destination. Therefore, this four-fold tourist-resident relationship through social contact should be understood as dynamic and interrelated, rather than static and dominating.

4. Progressing the research agenda

Based on the overview of social contact research and the four-fold tourist-resident relationship through social contact, several research directions are proposed to guide the future investigations in social contact.

4.1 The diversity of social contact research

Tourist-resident social contact involves the efforts from both parties and the contact can be dynamic and diverse. For instance, as illustrated in Figure 1, tourist-resident social contact can be actualised in both online and face-to-face formats. Though some studies have touched the online social contact realm (Fan et al., 2019, 2020; Jansson, 2007; Kirillova & Wang, 2016; Neuhofer et al., 2014), more efforts should be made to further develop the understanding of the digital connection between the two parties, for example, what kind of technologies could facilitate or inhibit such kind of social interactions, and what kind of online and offline contact combination could maximise the tourist experience in different stages of travel. Furthermore, social contact can hold different purposes and occur in different situations, but existing studies

mostly treat tourist-resident social contact as homogenous and ignore the nuanced differences across different types of social contact. For example, social-oriented and service-oriented social contacts between tourists and residents could generate opposite impacts on tourists' travel attitude (Fan et al., 2017b).

4.2 Value co-creation vs. co-destruction through social contact

As contact theory (Allport, 1979) suggested, intergroup contact may not necessarily lead to a positive outcome if certain situations are not presented. Existing literature dominantly explored the positive impacts of social contact, however, the negative side of contact is still largely overlooked and in an implicit manner. There is an extensive literature investigating the impacts of both positive and negative intergroup social contacts in social psychology and communication disciplines (Graf, Paolini & Rubin, 2014; Árnadóttir et al., 2018), however, its application in tourism field is still in its infancy. Considering the importance of understanding the working mechanism of social contact between tourists and residents, it is in urgent need for tourism scholars to conduct relevant studies to address the research gaps. Moreover, as tourist-resident social contact offers a natural occasion for both parties to co-create or alternatively, co-destruct values, more empirical studies are encouraged to unlock such process. It is also noticed from Figure 2 that, there are situations that an imbalanced relationship takes place between tourists and residents. Such kind of imbalanced and unsustainable relationship could potentially lead to an adverse outcome for the two groups if limited regulations, strategies and monitoring systems are carried out. Therefore, more attention should be paid to such kind of tourist-resident relationship.

4.3 Taking social contact conditions into consideration

Though a considerable number of studies explored the social contact in the tourism field, limited research has specified the contact conditions in the study design. Contact antecedents can be categorised into intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural aspects, corresponding to different layers of conditions for social contact. Allport (1979) in the contact theory proposed that “intergroup contact can effectively reduce prejudice between group members under certain conditions, such as equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities” (Fan et al., 2017a, p. 358), however, those propositions need to be examined by empirical studies. Though some studies have applied cultural differences (Lin et al., 2019) and political sensitivity (Fan et al., 2017a; Guo et al., 2006; Kim & Prideaux, 2003) to interpret their research findings relating to contact, contact conditions are not getting sufficient attention from the tourism academia. Therefore, more contact conditions in different tourist-resident relationship settings should be investigated in either direct or indirect manners (e.g. mediating effect and moderating effect) to reduce the ambiguity of the various contact effects. Furthermore, different research methods can be involved, such as experiment design and longitudinal studies, to capture the dynamic nature of different contact conditions in tourist-resident relationship.

4.4 Paired tourist-resident social contact

When it comes to tourist-resident social contact, it always involves two groups of people, namely tourists and residents. However, the majority of the existing studies only employed one group for

investigations and ignored the paired and interrelated nature of social contact (Tsaour et al., 2017). Indeed, judging a relationship from merely one participant group may not obtain a holistic and comprehensive view as different participant groups hold different benefits and costs during the social contact. Thus, studies involving two contact participant groups or more can advance in the social contact research agenda. Methodologically, advancing analytical approaches, such as multi-level analysis could be applied to deal with the data collected from paired data sources in different levels (Liu, Hsu & Fan, 2020).

5. Conclusion and limitations

This conceptual research flags the importance of understanding the tourist-resident relationship through social contact. Rich theoretical contributions can be identified. First, this study offers a systematic and comprehensive overview of the tourist-resident social contact based on the existing literature. It outlines the development of the concept in terms of contact antecedents, contact types and contact impacts. Particularly, this overview is the first attempt to categorise different social contact antecedents into intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural levels according to the hierarchical constraint theory (Crawford et al., 1991). Such clustering deepens our understanding of different contact antecedents and clarifies the direct and indirect influences on social contact. Meanwhile, the study also compares the different impacts of social contact on tourists and residents, respectively. Results indicate that social contact could bring in different impacts to tourists and residents in both positive and negative manners. It challenges the traditional goodwill towards contacts and peace, which is, social contact could always bring positive consequences for both contact groups. The dark side of social contact and the contact impacts on residents are spotlighted. Second, by applying the social exchange theory, contact theory, and value co-creation concept, the study proposed a social contact axis to understand the tourist-resident relationship through different contact scenarios. Four types of relationships were identified with different combinations of tourists and residents contact experiences, namely co-creating, egotistical, scripted and co-destructing relationships. This axis suggests a paired analysis of different tourist-resident relationships through social contact. It pioneers in establishing a linked framework between social contact and intergroup relationship in tourism. It also emphasises the importance of building a balanced and sustainable relationship from a social practices and exchange perspective. Last, the outlined future research directions raise the awareness of the current research topic within and beyond the tourism discipline, facilitate scholars with understanding this niche area, and foster more meaningful research to push forwards the progress of social contact studies.

Positioning social contact and tourist-resident relationship at the centre for quest, this research offers practical implications for different stakeholders in destinations. The overview of the tourist-resident social contact provides the government officials in charge of tourism development with a clear understanding of the causes and consequences of different types of social contacts, which could facilitate them to make proper policies and strategies to cultivate a pleasant tourists social experience, whereas maintaining a favourable community environment and wellbeing. For example, government support is needed from the destination through

recognising the importance of tourism development and aligning it with the country's strategic development. Among the tourists and residents, an equal status should be presented to allow a favourable contact. Therefore, cultural competence and mutual appreciation should be promoted, whereas stereotypes and discriminations should be avoided. In addition, if tourists and residents hold common goals, such as protecting the environment (in sustainable tourism) and cultural heritage (in cultural tourism), it is more likely that a mutually favourable contact could be formed. Furthermore, as a favourable and sustainable tourist-resident relationship could only be co-created with the joint efforts from all stakeholders involved in this process, it is essential for different parties to take their own responsibilities, rather than blaming each other for a negative outcome. For example, government led education about the cultural competence, tolerance and respect as a tourist and a host could minimise the negative emotions during tourism encounters at an individual level. Furthermore, tour operators should consider about the hosting communities' carrying capacity, attraction types, and tourists' preferences when designing their product itineraries. In addition, destinations which are already holding a negative tourist-resident relationship could diagnose itself according to the social contact axis and take out proper solutions to improve the situation.

This research should be considered with the following limitations. First, due to the conceptual and theoretical nature of this study, results are inferred from the existing literature and different destinations. Therefore, the generalisation of the proposed framework should be examined by empirical studies. Second, in reality, it is possible that one destination has several tourist markets, and residents could develop different relationships with different tourists. Thus, the observed tourist-resident relationship can be more complicated. Third, as tourists or residents could simultaneously form benefits as well as costs during social contact, the proposed contact axis and the four scenarios only reflect the salient and dominating impacts of social contact. The implicit benefits and costs as well as the offset effect between them deserve a further investigation. Fourth, the social contact axis does not include the possible tourist-resident relationship with no social contact between two groups. Last, there are many other factors that could influence the tourist-resident relationship, and social contact is only one of them. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to take other factors, such as economic structure, exchange rate and marketing approach into consideration to explore their effects on tourist-resident relationship.

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