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## From fantasy to reality: Transformation of native visitor experiences☆

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## ABSTRACT

This article is a thesis of a native visitor to Austria. The article illustrates the associated cognitive and affect constructs experienced in a host community during an extended visitation period. The design methodology employed for this article combined the confirmatory personal introspection (CPI) approach (Woodside, 2004) with three methods to elicit a native visitor's view of living in a host country. The methods used for the data collection process are researcher self-introspection, the Zaltman Metaphoric Elicited Technique (ZMET), and inside auditor verification of concepts and the thinking–doing process from an indigenous perspective. CPI was employed to uncover the native visitor behavioral process resulting from an extended visit in a different culture setting. A total of 21 constructs were identified. The mental model of native resident living abroad while participating in a Fulbright academic program was developed. Three themes of a native resident experience were identified. They are quality of the Fulbright program, cultural exchange, and comparison of fantasy with reality. This study reflects the use of CPI in consumer research. The causal relationships among each of the three themes provide insights to understanding different levels of a native visitor experience. This thesis serves to emphasize the substantial value in utilizing CPI to explain the native visitor experience derived from a Fulbright international exchange education program.

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## 1. Introduction

As a native of Taiwan, my first memories of western culture were formed through the eyes of a child gazing upon a Danish cookie tin decorated with wonderful images of castles, snowflakes, and horses representing a faraway foreign culture. The storyline of the *Sound of Music* and the lyrics of the associated theme songs inspired me at a very young age to learn English. That decision opened the door to opportunities beyond my native Taiwan—which led me to become a United States citizen and, years later, visiting Europe as a U.S. Fulbright scholar. Words cannot express the excitement I felt when I first learned that my Fulbright application to teach in Aalborg, Denmark, as a visiting scholar was approved. The experience not only served to satisfy a childhood dream but also motivated me to accept a second Fulbright grant to Salzburg, Austria, several years later. These two grants provided opportunities to experience firsthand the academic theories of the native visitor. This article is a thesis of a native visitor and explores the associated cognitive and affect constructs experienced in a host community during an extended visitation period.

## 2. Confirmatory personal introspection

This study employed the confirmatory personal introspection (CPI) approach (Woodside, 2004) with a syncretic combination of methods to elicit and identify the underlying construct of a native visitor (Woodside & Martin, 2015) as a researcher-introspector (RI) through intercultural interaction while living in a new country for a substantial period of time. The opportunity to act as an RI native visitor presented itself twice: the first time while living in Denmark as a Fulbright Research and Teaching Award program international exchange scholar and the second while teaching in Austria, again as a Fulbright scholar.

The U.S. Fulbright Scholar program is a bi-national mutual educational exchange program between the United States and other participating nations. Sponsoring institution(s) include the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the Department of State–Bureau–Educational Cultural Affairs, the Council for International Exchange Scholar (CIES), the Institute of International Education IIE in Washington, D.C., as well as the Austrian–American Educational Commission (AAEC) in Vienna, with participation from the Salzburg University of Applied Science in Salzburg, Austria. The program requires award recipients to be “responsible for observing satisfactory academic and professional standards and for maintaining a standard of conduct and integrity which is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Fulbright Program which will contribute positively to the promotion of mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and host nations.” The program also requires

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award recipients to propose a project statement related to scholarly activity as well as possess the desire to experience local culture.

Given the objectives of the program and the nature of the education and cultural exchange conditions, living in a new country, combined with a strong desire to integrate into the local culture were two of the criteria needed to qualify as a native visitor. As the Fulbright program term was 5 months, the stay duration criteria of 4 to 12 months needed to qualify as a native visitor (Woodside & Martin, 2015) was also met.

3. Methods

The native visitor-related meaning in metaphors were elicited by the RI through formal self-interviews by applying a combination of several approaches as suggested by Woodside (2004). Building upon the CPI approach, this study relied upon the syncretic combination of three methods: (1) self-introspection by the research-introspector with written description of thoughts and feelings reflecting the visitor resident experience; (2) the Zaltman Metaphoric Elicited Technique (Christensen & Olson, 2002; Zaltman, 1996; Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008) used to uncover unconscious thinking relevant to the visitor resident behavioral process; and (3) inside auditor verification of concepts and the thinking–doing process from an indigenous perspective. Additional details describing this three-stage approach follows.

(1) Self-introspection by the research-introspector (RI)









At this stage, the RI recalled memories and identified salient feelings and thoughts related to living in Salzburg, Austria, during the 5-month Fulbright program stay. According to Woodside (2004), in order to

establish credibility, the self-introspection researcher must conduct formal self-interviews on separate occasions. To this end, the visitation experience was examined over the course of several weeks. This resulted in a list of eight identified salient attributes with key words and written descriptions. These include fantasy, expectation, cultural exchange, involvement, curiosity, lifetime relationship, responsibilities, and appreciation. Table 1 presents a list of attributes generated at this stage of study.

(2) Conscious–unconscious cognitive and affective constructs drawn from Zaltman Metaphoric Elicitation Technique

The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) was adopted to elicit related metaphors from multiple anchors including storytelling, visual image, Kelly Repertory Grid, and sensory images and collage (Christensen & Olson, 2002; Coulter, Zaltman, & Coulter, 2001; Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008). Following the ZMET procedure, the RI selected photos and images representing each of the attributes identified during stage (1). The images and photos were from the RI's personal collection, including two photos given by the host during RI's Fulbright program participation. The descriptions of each of the attributes illustrated by the images were also recorded. This storytelling was based on the RI's self-introspection from stage (1). Storytelling was deemed effective narratively describing post travel experiences to explore the conscious and unconscious interpretation of experience visiting a destination (Woodside & Megehee, 2009). Using the means–end chain approach, the RI elicited related constructs associated with the attributes and images. These constructs were developed using laddering techniques along all steps of the ZMET process. Both ladder-up (i.e., from attributes to consequences to values) and ladder-down (i.e., from values

Table 1  
Salient Attributes and Associated Deep Metaphors of a Native Visitor.

Conceptual metaphor	Image metaphor	Description	Deep metaphor
1. Appreciation		The appreciation of learning local culture as an outsider by viewing a landmark	-Transformation
2. Fantasy		The Sound of Music film site as the fantasy of living in Salzburg formed from literature, media, film, etc.	-Container -Resources
3. Involvement -based on indigenous host's view of RI		An indigenous resident's view of my learning about Austrian culture	-Connection -Transformation -Balance
4. Cultural exchange		The arts, literature, and music representing the depth of cultural exchange fostered by the Fulbright program	-Journey -Transformation -Resources -Connection
5. Realization		The fish tank in an Asia restaurant representing a new interpretation of culture from a non-local's point of view	-Container -Transformation
6. Life time relationship		The sundial on a 14th century building representing the formation of a long-term relationship with the host	-Transformation -Connection -System
7. Curiosity -based on indigenous host's view of RI		The RI's curiosity about local culture. The kitten represents eagerness to learn the local culture.	-Control -Connection
8. Responsibilities -the missing image of vehicle		The responsibility of fulfilling objectives and mission to explore culture (i.e., the bicycle is a metaphor for the Fulbright program).	-Journey -Balance -Resources

Note: The deep metaphors identified following the narrative analysis. The frequencies of deep metaphors associated with native visitor are transformation (5), connection (4), resources (4), container (2), balance (2), journey (2), and control (1).

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