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Let's listen: the voices of ethnic villagers in identifying host-tourist interaction issues in the Central Highlands, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Host-tourist interaction is a core attraction of ethnic tourism. Yet both parties may confront challenges in such interactions because of different cultural backgrounds. This study aims to investigate host-tourist interaction issues in Vietnam's Central Highlands by adopting a qualitative approach wherein 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted with villagers. Results find that villagers interacted with domestic tourists mostly in private houses, tourist attractions and facilities, and on tours. In such settings, the content of interactions varied from low to high intensity. Derived from the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory [Pearce, W. B., & Cronen, V. E. (1980). *Communication action and meaning*. Praeger], *verbal* (language) *and non-verbal behaviour* and *cultural patterns* were the greatest interaction difficulties. While interaction difficulties occurred across different settings, higher intensity interactions resulted in more positive outcomes. This study enriches the existing knowledge on interaction between ethnic hosts and domestic tourists in the intra-national context. The interpretive theoretical and methodological utility of CMM provided insight into interaction difficulties, and opportunities to facilitate positive interactions in ethnic tourism development. Further implications for villagers, tourists, local policymakers, and tour operators were suggested to build long-term sustainability of the host-tourist relationship in the Central Highlands.

Introduction

Ethnic tourism has been identified as a tool for poverty alleviation and ethnic heritage preservation in poor regions (L. Yang, 2016). It is a unique form of tourism motivated by a visitor's desire for first-hand experiences with a distinctive local culture and contrasting way of life (Bott, 2018; L. Yang, 2016). A key to understanding ethnic tourism is the interactions between hosts and tourists (Zhang et al., 2017). These can play a crucial role in contributing to both minority people's socio-cultural life and positive attitudes towards tourism development, and, for visitors, to a rewarding experience and cultural knowledge of an ethnic destination (Armenski et al., 2011; Eusébio et al., 2018; Su et al., 2014). However, due to cultural differences, the host-tourist encounter may lead to negative perceptions, host-tourist friction, and even irritation (P. L. Pearce, 1982; Reisinger, 2009).

Cultural distance is a major reason for interaction difficulties, resulting in inefficient social contact (Fan et al., 2017), perceptions of risk (Lepp & Gibson, 2003), and conflict and tension (Fan et al., 2017). Most existing studies (e.g. Carneiro et al., 2018; Fan et al., 2020; Stylidis et al., 2021) have shown more interest in the inter/cross-cultural interaction between hosts and foreign tourists, meanwhile, the interaction between hosts and domestic tourists has received less attention. Reisinger and Turner (2003) argue that the degree of cultural difference between hosts and tourists varies from very little to extreme. In an ethnic tourism context, tourists interact with ethnic minorities who differ culturally, socially, or politically from the majority population (Cohen, 2001), and these ethnic hosts and domestic tourists see each other as culturally different (Trupp, 2014). Even though residing within the same country, different subcultural groups – hosts and tourists – might generate distinctive responses to observable behaviours in their interactions (Loi & Pearce, 2015). Thus, it is worthy to investigate the interaction between ethnic hosts and domestic tourists in an intra-national context. Moreover, a powerful reason to focus on this domestic–ethnic tourism interaction lies in the simple fact that domestic tourism dominates the market, not just in Vietnam but in many parts of the world.

Very little focused research has been directly undertaken on host-tourist interactions in ethnic tourism, other than the limited research investigating either host or tourist motivations for their interactions (Su et al., 2014), or examining role-playing by hosts during interactions in local homes (Zhang et al., 2017). The characteristics of such interactions (i.e. physical setting and content), difficulties, and how the quality of interactions is related to other factors in the ethnic tourism, remain under-studied.

Although ethnic tourism has attracted increasing research attention in Southeast Asia (Dolezal et al., 2020), very few researchers have studied ethnic tourism in the Vietnamese context. Meanwhile, Vietnam has a diversity of 54 ethnic groups who speak more than 100 different languages (Nguyen, 2021). The dominant group is the Kinh, accounting for 87% of the total population. Each ethnic minority has its own distinct costumes, traditions, and culture that portrays a multi-ethnic picture of Vietnam (Kim & Tam, 2019). It has become an ideal destination for a niche tourism market called 'ethnic tourism' or 'tribal tourism' (Bott, 2018). Cohen (2016) summarised ethnic tourism studies in mainland Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, and argued that despite being a popular highland destination, Dalat – located in the Central Highlands – is not known for ethnic tourism. Most ethnic tourism research in Vietnam has been undertaken only in Sapa (Bott, 2018; Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020) or recently in Hoa Binh province (Ngo & Pham, 2021). Both study sites are located in the mountainous northern part of Vietnam. Until now, research on the specifics of host-tourist interaction in ethnic tourism is lacking, and no ethnic tourism studies have been undertaken in the Central Highlands.

To fill these research gaps, the current study aims to explore what interaction issues exist between ethnic hosts and domestic tourists in the Central Highlands of Vietnam – a multi-ethnic country. This study contributes to the knowledge on host-tourist interaction in ethnic tourism, particularly within the intra-national context. Applying CMM theory (W. B. Pearce & Cronen, 1980) to identify interaction difficulties adds to the utility of CMM in both theoretical interpretive and methodological approaches. Doing so provides insight into such interaction difficulties in order to inform strategies to build sustainable host-tourist relationships in ethnic tourism in the Central Highlands, Vietnam. The following four research questions guided the qualitative study:

(1) In what physical settings do host-tourist interactions occur?
(2) What is the content of these interactions?
(3) What difficulties do hosts face in their interactions with tourists? and
(4) How do ethnic hosts perceive the quality of host-tourist interactions?

Ethnic tourism and nature of host-tourist interactions in ethnic tourism

Ethnic tourism was first introduced by Smith (1977) as 'tourism marketed to the public in terms of the 'quaint' customs of indigenous and often 'exotic' people' (p. 2). In tourism literature, terms such as 'aboriginal', 'indigenous', 'tribal' or 'community-based' tourism are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the phenomenon of 'ethnic' tourism. According to Xie (2011), the use of the term 'ethnic' tourism is to emphasise that ethnic minority people are directly or indirectly involved in controlling and/or providing tourism services based on their unique culture. They may or may not be indigenous to a destination (L. Yang & Wall, 2014). For this study, the term 'ethnic tourism' refers to Xie's definition (2011), more specifically, the ethnic minority groups are the indigenous people in Vietnam's Central Highlands, and the focus is on the tourism activities and interaction with domestic visitors, mainly the Kinh.

The interaction between hosts and tourists has drawn much research attention (Xiong et al., 2021). However, in the ethnic tourism context, there are few studies on the nature and process of host-tourist interaction (Zhang et al., 2017). While in some locations ethnic people are only a supplementary attraction (J. Yang et al., 2013), several researchers confirm that ethnic residents are not only hosts and service providers but symbolise the heart of an authentic destination experience (Wei et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2019; L. Yang, 2016).

The fundamental work of de Kadt (1979) identified three main contexts in which host-tourist encounters occur: tourists and hosts exchange information and ideas face to face, tourists purchase goods and services from the hosts; and tourists and hosts simply find themselves side by side in the same place. According to Reisinger and Turner (2003), host-tourist interaction occurs in a wide variety of physical settings. It takes place at a local resident's home (Zhang et al., 2017), tourism attractions and supporting services/facilities (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2015; Eusébio et al., 2018; Woosnam & Norman, 2010), or natural places (e.g. beaches, protected areas) (Woosnam & Norman, 2010) and in the street (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2012).

Placing more emphasis on the content of interactions, Su et al. (2014) categorised host-tourist interactions into five types, ranging from low to high intensity. The ascending intensity levels include: the presence of hosts and tourists at a destination without active interactions; tourists seeking help or information; business relationships; both actors actively seeking mutual understanding (e.g. chatting, sharing meals, experiencing local customs); and both actors fulfilling long-term social needs (e.g. making friends, exchanging personal contact).

In brief, different settings allow both hosts and tourists different opportunities for interacting, whereby the content of interactions varies, resulting in different challenges and outcomes. Rather than considering either the setting or the content of interactions, it is the examination of the complex combination of the two that helps us explore 'what is going on' (Zhang et al., 2017) and what interaction difficulties ethnic hosts possibly encounter with domestic tourists in ethnic destinations.

Difficulties in host-tourist interactions

There is a substantial body of research related to interaction difficulties that may occur during host-tourist encounters. Most of the work considers these difficulties in the context of cultural distance resulting from differences in language, customs, values, standards, perceptions of the world, and expectations (Bochner, 1982; P. L. Pearce et al., 1998; Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Tung, 2021). Such differences can lead to misunderstanding, misinterpretation, problematic behaviours, and even offence (Moufakkir, 2011; P. L. Pearce, 2005; Reisinger, 2009; Tung, 2021). The degree of cultural distance might range from very small to extreme, therefore differentially influence host-tourist interactions (Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

Although early literature has studied 'cultural distance' and 'cultural shock' (Bochner, 1982; Oberg, 1960), the bulk of these studies have been concerned only with the phenomenon's negative influences or consequences, or suggested practical interventions. A limited number of studies have clearly

categorised interaction difficulties resulting from cultural differences. For example, P. L. Pearce (1982) indicated three main types of difficulties in host-tourist interactions: interpersonal communication and behaviour (e.g. language fluency, polite language usage, expressing attitudes, and feelings); non-verbal signals (e.g. facial expressions, eye gaze, spatial behaviour, touching, and gesture); and rules and patterns of social behaviours (e.g. greetings, self-discourse, making or refusing requests). This work examined the problems by observing the social and psychological effects of tourist behaviours in the host community, highlighting the need for more empirical research to examine each dimension of the difficulties. In light of this, Reisinger and Turner (2003) pointed out four major determinants of interaction difficulties, namely temporal, spatial, communication, and cultural aspects. Both studies focused on the interaction challenges in inter/cross-cultural contexts. There is a lack of empirical research investigating whether there are any interaction difficulties between hosts and tourists in intra-national contexts, and how such difficulties might be classified.

Quality of host-tourist interactions

Previous research into host-tourist interactions has analysed the influences of interaction quality on resident perceptions of tourism's impact on quality of life (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2015), resident attitudes towards tourists or tourism development (Armenski et al., 2011; Eusébio et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2021), how to measure residents' emotional solidarity via interaction quality (Woosnam & Norman, 2010), tourist experience and travel attitudes (Fan, 2020; Pizam et al., 2000; Su & Wall, 2010), and tourists' destination image/loyalty (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019; Stylidis et al., 2021). However, so far little is known about what determines interaction quality. Recent work by Stylidis et al. (2021) revealed that interaction quality positively affects tourists' cognitive and affective image, leading to a positive impact on destination loyalty. However, that study – as well as the majority of existing studies – used a quantitative research method to test the impact of interaction quality on tourism outcomes without any understanding of what defines and contributes to interaction quality.

Reisinger and Turner (2003) claimed there is insufficient information on how to precisely and successfully evaluate host-tourist contact. Yet, many studies have used different dimensions to measure social interaction in tourism, such as type of contact/activities (Eusébio et al., 2018), intensity (Pizam et al., 2000), environmental settings (Murphy, 2001), the host/tourist gaze (Moufakkir, 2011; Urry, 2002), travel motivations, or tourists' perceptions of tourism impacts (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2012). In addition, Zhou (2011) indicated that interaction quality is influenced by factors originating from both tourists and hosts.

In much of the preceding research, measurement of interaction quality was done from the tourists' viewpoint (Fan et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019; Stylidis et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2020). Research from the host perspective is scarce except for the work of Teye et al. (2002), Eusébio et al. (2018), and, recently, Xiong et al. (2021). These authors developed measurement scales using different criteria to examine the role of interaction quality in resident attitudes towards tourism development. These criteria included whether the interactions were harmonious or clashing, intense or superficial, enjoyable, positive, useful or whether friendships were developed. However, these authors failed to explain the in-depth interaction between residents and tourists.

In summary, most of the previous studies tested models of the relationship between perceived interaction quality and tourists' overall satisfaction, destination image and loyalty, or residents' attitudes towards tourism development and their perceptions of tourism impacts on the quality of life. The amount of research providing detailed insights into host-tourist interactions remains scarce (Eusébio et al., 2018).

Coordinated management of meaning (CMM) theory

The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory is based on the pivotal work of W. B. Pearce and Cronen (1980). Pearce and Cronen start with a basic premise that social worlds

we inhabit are constructed in the many diverse forms of everyday communication we engage in. Communication is a process of *managing meanings* and we manage those meanings through *coordinating* with others. According to CMM, six contextual levels are useful to understand the full meaning of, and to create effective well-managed communication. These levels include:

(1) *Verbal and Non-verbal behaviour* – how clearly people understand one another's speech, gestures, posture, signals, eye movement, and words;
(2) *Speech acts* – the way meaning is attached to forms of address such as status, level of formality, or respect;
(3) *Episodes* – a communication routine that consists of a sequence of speech acts, behaviours, rituals, arrangements for eating, sightseeing, tipping, or gift giving;
(4) *Relationships* – the nature of social bonds, rights, and expectations, responsibilities, formation of friendships, and development of business relationships;
(5) *Life script* – the way people perceive themselves in action, their relationship to others and to the physical environment, social and cultural institutions; and
(6) *Cultural patterns* – the way the larger community is defined, what is perceived as honesty, guilt, justice or equity within a society, freedom of speech, spiritual beliefs, and attitudes to gender.

Despite its origins as a theory of communication, CMM has been successfully applied in multiple disciplines and has evolved considerably over time into an interpretive theory, a critical theory, and a practical theory (Barge, 2004). For the interpretive and critical aspect, CMM is used to explain people's interpretation about the meaning of their communication and the way they evaluate such interactions to react to others in a multi-level context. Shifting to practical theory, CMM as a guide helps practitioners create something different from and better than conventional practice (W. B. Pearce, 2007). Existing studies have suggested different interventions to co-construct new ways of interacting meaningfully, such as community-based parent education programs, training workshop, focus group discussion, reading labels, nutrition intervention messages to prevent childhood obesity (Bruss et al., 2005), and creativity in therapeutic encounters in the online therapy context during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cronin et al., 2021).

In the tourism context, a limited number of studies have employed the CMM approach to investigate different facets of social contact. Early work was conducted by P. L. Pearce et al. (1998) to identify cross-cultural contact difficulties for Australian travellers to Indonesia. To minimise the difficulties and promote sustainable host-tourist encounters, the study suggested the development of an in-flight video, a Culture Assimilator booklet, tourist behaviour codes, sets of visitor rules, or advice from professional guides. There have been later studies inspired by CMM's practical perspectives to propose interventions (e.g. picture, regulatory and social evaluative controls, social influence messages and campaigns) to reduce the flashpoints of tourist-tourist and tourist-host friction in inter-cultural contexts (Loi & Pearce, 2015) or to design websites providing specific destination information for Muslim travellers (Oktadiana et al., 2016).

The present study used CMM from both theoretical and methodological perspectives. First, as Reisinger and Turner (2003) stressed CMM is an important theory facilitating the analysis of difficulties in host-tourist interactions. Therefore, six CMM levels were used to conceptualise a framework to guide the investigation of interaction difficulties. Furthermore, as an interpretive theory, CMM was used to interpret the meaning of responses to the questions about interaction difficulties. Second, in terms of the methodological approach, CMM assisted in framing the interview questions regarding interaction difficulties – sensitive issues between ethnic people and Kinh people – that an ethnic villager might encounter in their interactions with domestic visitors, that is, Kinh people. Probing questions guided by CMM assisted the first author, who is a Kinh person, to elicit more detailed responses from participants instead of superficial answers to the overall research questions. CMM allowed the Kinh researcher to engage in mutual discovery, understanding and
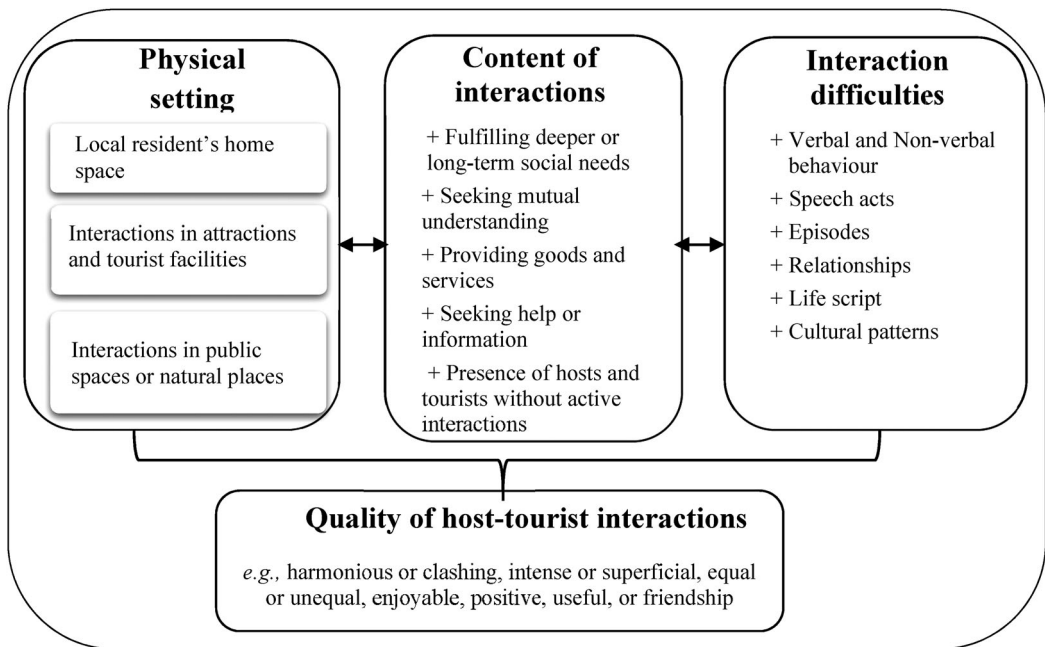
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the present study.

explanation to participants, which contributed to the participants happily engaging in mutual dialogue, reflection, and sharing their experiences with the researcher.

Drawing upon multiple streams of literature and CMM theory, a conceptual framework is provided in Figure 1 to propose a clearer understanding of the nature (physical setting, content), difficulties, and quality of host-tourist interactions. The physical setting refers to the place where the interaction occurs, while the content refers to a range of interactions at varying intensity levels. The difficulties reflect various challenges the hosts face in such interactions with tourists. The interaction quality refers to the subjective perception of the hosts as to whether interactions are positive or negative. It is noted that, by adopting a qualitative approach, the research explores the interrelationship of the nature, difficulties, and the quality of interactions, rather than testing the influences between these elements.

Methodology

This study employed semi-structured interviews as a qualitative approach to obtain insights into host-tourist interactions from the emic perspective of the experiences of villagers in ethnic tourism.

Research context

The Central Highlands in the west and southwest of Vietnam was chosen as the research context for two main reasons. First, the region is home to all 54 of the country's ethnic minority groups (Thái, 2018). This region is aptly referred to as 'upland culture', acknowledging its diverse, exotic minority cultures and stunning mountainous landscapes in which the living and social spaces of ethnic groups are deeply associated with the forest (Kim & Tam, 2019; Thái, 2018). Gong culture[1], an important part of the traditional culture of the ethnic communities in the Central Highlands, was recognised as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005 (UNESCO, 2005). Four ethnic sites (Lac Duong, Lak, Buon Don, and Kon Ko Tu), in three

out of the five provinces in the region, were chosen as study sites (Figure. 2). The potential study sites were selected to ensure diversity and variety across the following criteria: ethnicity, stage of tourism development, level of community participation in local tourism, types of tourist icons, and typical ethnic tourism products on offer (Appendix A).

Second, the region has attracted tourists through a range of visitor experiences focused around ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, leisure and holiday tours, adventurous tourism activities, and more recently agritourism. Among them, ethnic tourism is one of the Prime Minister's informed decisions in developing key tourism products in the region (2013). Between 2015 and 2019, the number of tourist arrivals increased gradually with an annual average growth rate of 11.6%, with the percentage of domestic tourists accounting for 92.5% of the total. The annual regional tourism revenue growth rate was approximately 10.5% (compiled from five Departments of Culture Sports and Tourism, 2020) and tourism revenues accounted for 14,788 billion VND in 2019, equivalent to 5% of the regional GDP (General Statistics Office (GSO), 2020).
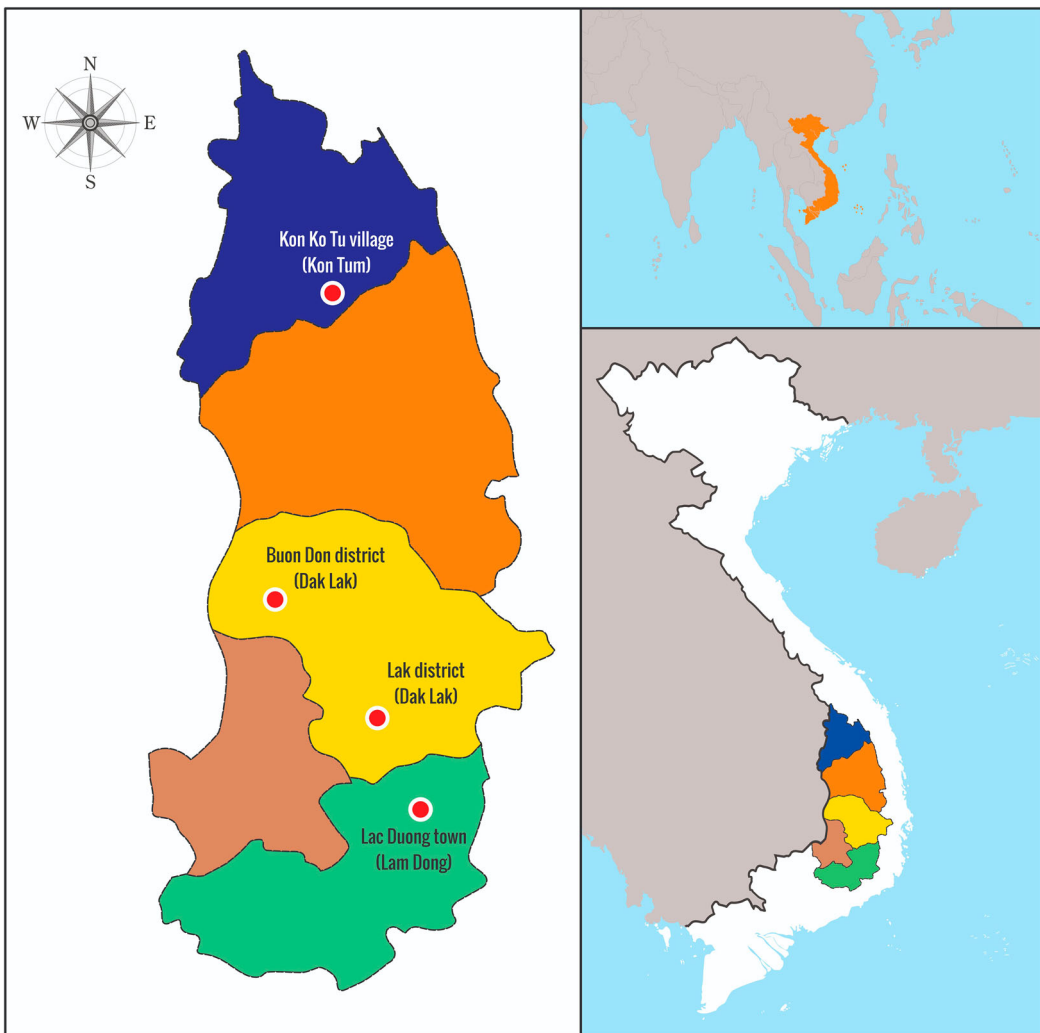

Figure 2. The four study sites in the Central Highlands region.

Data collection

The interview guide consisted of three sections focusing on host-tourist interaction issues, in addition to each interviewee's socio-demographic profile. The first section aimed to explore the physical setting and content of the interactions. The second section aimed to identify difficulties the hosts encountered in their interactions with visitors, using questions drawn from CMM theory to probe the six contextual levels of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, speech acts, episodes, relationships, life scripts, and cultural patterns (Reisinger, 2009). The third section explored how villagers perceived the interaction quality. The interview script was initially designed in English and then translated into Vietnamese for the fieldwork. To ensure that each question was properly translated, the back-translation technique was adopted.

As being an outsider to cultural settings, the first author initially spent two to five days in each village before conducting formal interviews with ethnic minority participants. She observed the local way of life, consumed tourism products, and randomly chatted with villagers to gain familiarity and develop rapport with the community. These actions help to absorb characteristics of cultural settings, social information, and local daily life in order to generate a comprehensive understanding of the community (Nguyen, 2021). Additionally, research engagement with indigenous communities needs to be rooted in cultural elements of trust, respect, and friendship according to the Melanesian Research Framework (N'Drower, 2020).

A total of 31 interviews were conducted with villagers in the four ethnic villages of the Central Highlands from December 2020 to March 2021. The number of interviews conducted in each village ranged from 7 to 9, depending on when saturation point was reached (i.e. no new information was uncovered) (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The participants were representatives of four typical ethnic groups (i.e. M'nong, Ede, Bana, and K'Ho) in the region but varied in age, family income, and marital status. They included villagers who were involved in different forms of ethnic tourism and those who were not. These participants had more opportunities to get involved in host-tourist interactions at different intensity levels (Appendix B). While both convenience and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants for this study, in the case of Kon Ko Tu village, which was completely new to the researcher, a more specific approach was needed. This began with a Letter of Introduction (LoI) originating from Dalat University (DLU), where the first author is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Tourism, and a request to officially meet a person in local tourism administration. The local tourism official then recommended potential participants.

Face-to-face interviews usually took place in the private houses of the locals, tourist attraction points, coffee shops, gong venues, or on tours. Interviews ranged in length from approximately 26–90 minutes. All interviews were tape-recorded for transcription and record storage. Interviews were transcribed verbatim into Vietnamese and subsequently translated into English for the data analysis step. There was no need for a translator as the first author speaks both English and Vietnamese fluently. However, in some instances, several participants could not speak Vietnamese fluently during interviewing. The first author needed assistance from the participants' family members, who were proficient in both their ethnic language and Vietnamese, to translate the responses into Vietnamese.

Data analysis

Content analysis of the textual data from the 31 interviews was conducted with the aid of Leximancer 4.5, a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software, which measures both the presence of defined concepts in the text as well as how they are interrelated. The automated 'default' settings of Leximancer help to reduce subjective bias and increase reliability due to key concepts and visual maps being generated automatically based on the presence of words or concepts and their semantical relationship (Phi, 2020), thereby allowing the exploratory analysis of a considerable body of text (MacLeod, 2021). There are three important units in Leximancer: word, concept, and

theme. The textual analysis is performed using word occurrence and co-occurrence frequency to generate a word co-occurrence matrix from which concepts are identified (Wu et al., 2017). The size of the circles in the visual map has no bearing as to its importance in the text, the circles are merely boundaries; instead, the colour of the themes demonstrates their prominence. Hot colours (e.g. red, orange) represent the most important themes (Leximancer, 2023; MacLeod, 2021).

In this study, depending on the research questions, several technical operations were carried out to improve the validity of the concept maps (Wu et al., 2017). Removal of irrelevant or frequently occurring words that hold weak semantic information was done, such as 'immediately', 'usually', 'example', and 'other'. Furthermore, for a particular research question about physical setting and content of interactions, words that were repeated frequently such as 'guests', 'interact', 'tourists', and 'visitors' needed to be removed because respondents often repeated question content, leading to over representation in the content analysis. For other research questions, the research team merged or collapsed words which have similar meanings or were used interchangeably (e.g. 'visitors', 'guests', and 'tourists'; 'word' and 'words'; 'group' and 'groups').

To increase the credibility of the research results, manual content analysis was used to validate the efficacy of Leximancer analysis and assist in comprehensively interpreting the meaning of the outputs, particularly for the interaction quality. To analyse the interaction quality, text transcript was carefully re-read by the first author to derive smaller meaning units, supported by CMM theory, as mentioned earlier. A meaning unit is the smallest unit of words or sentences related to each other (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Each meaning unit was highlighted in three colours accordingly to three themes identified to answer the research question. The remaining authors then double-checked the entire procedure. Lastly, all authors revisited the results multiple times, discussed differences, and interrogated actual responses to better understand and illustrate the meaning of the themes and concepts.

Results

Two concept maps were generated from the responses. The first was based on participant responses to the questions focusing on the physical settings and content of interactions. The second was generated from the discussion of interaction difficulties. The third section summarises key emotive themes about quality of interactions.

Physical settings and content of host-tourist interactions

Eight dominant themes represent the physical settings and content of host-tourist interactions (Figure 3). While the 'house' theme identifies the most common setting in which interactions occurred, the most important theme was 'culture' – which highlights the interaction content of visitors with hosts to 'learn' 'ethnic' 'culture' or experience the 'local' way of life. In these interactions, villagers were often willing to 'share' the meaning of 'stilt' house architecture, local customs, and the legends of an ethnic area. During some home visits, the hosts invited visitors to taste ethnic 'traditional' 'wine', called *Cần* wine, 'traditional' cuisine, enjoy a meal or share their 'culture' (Figure 4). As one participant explained;

> Due to my old age, I cannot trek or climb, presently I only welcome visitors to visit my traditional house, talk, and enjoy local meals together with my family. I invite them to have a seat in my 'house' to listen to our customs, the legend of Lang Biang mountain, then taste *Cần* wine made by my daughter (LD03).

According to respondents, closer interactions occurred when tourists actively 'asked' local people about their 'family' circumstance, livelihood, current jobs, local food, and local daily life. It is important to note that, in a few cases, hosts had limited interaction with visitors who just passed by their 'house', observed handicraft-making procedures, or had a short 'talk' about local tourism
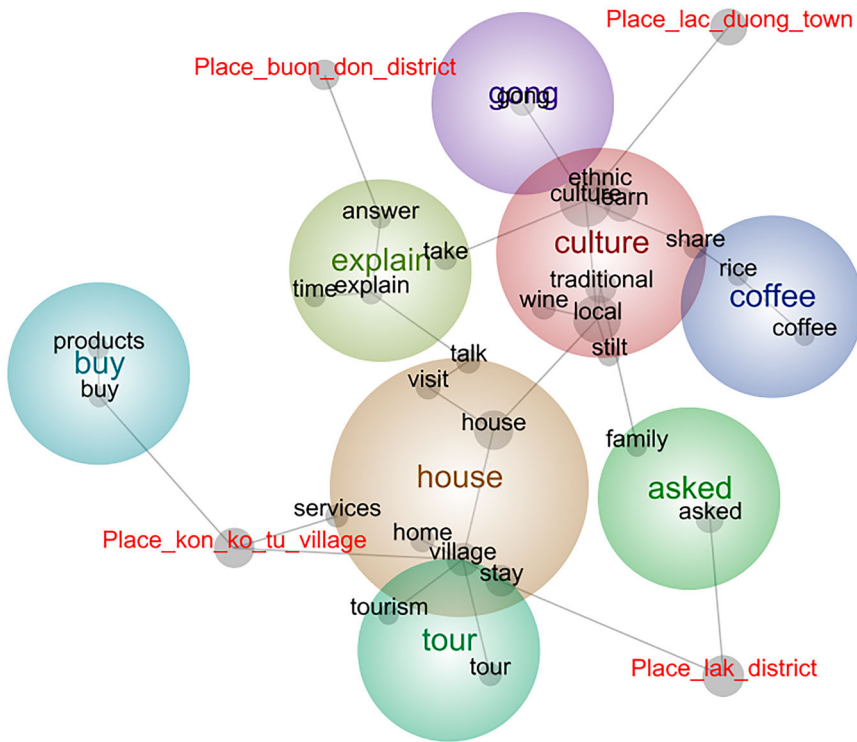
Figure 3. The nature of host-tourist interactions in ethnic villages.

'services'. For example, one villager explained that '*visitors only pass by my 'house' on their village tour. I do not talk or interact with them*' (KT05).

The 'gong' and 'coffee' themes reflect different physical settings and interaction content. Some coffee shop owners shared how tourists simply stopped by their shop, had a look, and then tasted a cup of coffee as they casually passed by. Another K'Ho man (LD07) commented on low-intensity interactions at his gong venue: '*I found that visitors here just want to watch gong performances, drink Cần wine, and play games that make them happy enough*'. By contrast, some hosts referred to the opportunities to talk, drink *Cần* wine, and 'share' 'gong' or 'coffee' 'culture' with tourists at a 'gong' venue (Figure 5), local 'coffee' shop (http://www.khocoffee.com), or on 'coffee' tours. These situations allowed hosts to 'share' their traditional cultivation practices (e.g. wet 'rice' and 'coffee') and local specialities (e.g. bamboo tube 'rice'; green sticky 'rice' cake) as representations of ethnic 'culture'.

Hosts also encountered tourists at local 'tourism' accommodation (i.e. local resort, Lak Tented Camp), on specific 'tours' (e.g. dugout boating, elephant riding (Figure 6)), and during other 'tourism' activities in the 'village' (e.g. sightseeing, watching local daily life, or cultivating). A gardener at Lak Tented Camp said: '*When [guests] see the way I do gardening, some guests asked, 'why you mix soil with cow manure?' […] They asked about family background, go to school or not? If I have not, they will send volunteers to my house to eliminate illiteracy, e.g. they will open a small class to do charity work*' (LK05). In such settings, the villagers '*interacted closely with them [visitors] and shared about our [villagers'] culture. We chat, sing, drink, and share to understand each other … Some visitors become my friends until now*' (LD03).

The 'buy' theme seems to primarily reflect business relationships when the villagers provided local tourism 'services' and different 'products' (e.g. souvenirs, handicrafts, or groceries). For instance, a Bana man (KT03) shared, '*They [tourists] look at wooden masks and wooden statues*

Figure 4. Host-tourist interaction at a local house.

hanging in front of my house, as a result they are curious to come in to see, take pictures, and ask about those products; if they like, they will buy them'. Sometimes, tourists sought information '*[…] places to eat, travel information services, or souvenir shops'* (LD01) and advice from the villagers on their way to 'buy' products.

The last theme, 'explain', represents the most superficial interactions. Villagers passively 'answered', were unwilling to 'explain' what visitors asked, or even had no interaction because tourists just came to 'take' photos. For instance, in the peak season, an elephant tour shortened its itinerary to 3–5 minutes, therefore mahouts at Buon Don tourist attraction point did not have 'time' to 'explain' about the elephant culture during the tour. Even a souvenir shop owner did '*not actively invite or introduce about [her] products; only 'answered' to visitors in cases they asked'* (BD03).

Host-tourist interaction difficulties

The 'language' barrier is the biggest challenge identified by hosts in their interactions with tourists in the Central Highlands (Figure 7). Language difficulties exist because Vietnamese (Kinh language) is the official language, yet 'ethnic' 'villagers' (especially elderly) living in remote areas either do not fluently 'speak' 'Kinh' or are unable to communicate in the 'Kinh' 'language'. Consequently, the locals sometimes found it difficult to 'understand' what tourists were saying, as illustrated in the following comment;

> Honestly, I want to meet and talk with tourists, but I am afraid of interacting because I am not fluent in Kinh language, I do not know how to express, explain. (KT03)

Figure 5. Host-tourist interaction at a gong venue.

The 'ethnic' villagers were likely to 'feel' shy, be afraid of interacting, or even avoid communicating with the visitors in the 'village'; '*sometimes, we even did not 'understand' what domestic tourists said in Kinh language, we kept quiet*' (KT01) or 'feel' embarrassed due to domestic tourists' dialects, or regional accents. A Bana man (KT09) shared:

> My wife and I wondered many times why it felt difficult to understand what the domestic visitors asked while all of us are Vietnamese. Honestly, their accent is very different from ours. To reply to the visitors, I might think slowly and guess their gestures.

The term 'dân tộc' can be considered a derogatory slang term that is sometimes used by Kinh people to address ethnic minorities. Most of the ethnic 'villagers' disliked or even hated this 'word'. According to respondents, using 'dân tộc' in interactions implied visitors' disdainful attitudes and ethnocentric perspectives towards ethnic people. Hence, the villagers felt '*annoyed*', '*irritated*' (LD07) or '*hurtful*' and even '*do not want to answer in such interactions*' (LK05). Further, a M'nong man (LK02) spoke sadly;

> I feel there is racial discrimination in several host-tourist encounters, for example; visitors saw a kind of exotic pigs raised in the village and said – *Oh! Con heo mọi* (Oh! A nigger pig), or they called us *mọi* (savages, Montagnard), *mấy thằng dân tộc này* (some ethnic minority guys), or *mấy thằng dân tộc* (ethnic guys, jerks). These words reflect the Kinh's disdain for us. (LK02)

> Similarly, when visitors wondered; '*why you are an ethnic minority – 'dân tộc', but you speak the Kinh language so well?* That question normally makes our pride hurt. (LK01)

'Group' as a theme explains three different facets of interaction difficulties; inadequate capabilities, unequal relationships, and cultural distance. Firstly, 'group' included references to the villagers'

Figure 6. Host-tourist interactions on an elephant riding tour.

limited capabilities and/or 'tourism' skills to properly serve a large 'group' of visitors at the same 'time'. For example, a Bana homestay owner (KT04) said, '*Many guests demand 'tourism' facilities or amenities during their 'tour' which are beyond our capacity*'. Even staff of the tourist attraction points had different manners towards visitors in different 'time' slots. An Ede woman working at an ethnic clothing rental shop shared; '*At first, I was irritated […] I could explain once, twice, or three times. I cannot say forever. I am bored to explain or reply*' (BD02).

Secondly, the way ethnic villagers perceive themselves or their unbalanced relationship with the Kinh social and cultural institutions led to unfavourable emotions. The respondents stated that ethnic people constitute 53 out of the total 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam – a multi-ethnic country – while the Kinh is only one group of the total (Open Development Vietnam, 2020). An Ede woman (BD08) emphasised with a rough voice:

> The Kinh do not recognise themselves as the Kinh people among 54 ethnic groups, they stressed *why did you call us the Kinh? What is the Kinh*? *We are Vietnamese, Vietnamese* … If so, who are all of us – the rest of ethnic minorities in Vietnam (53 ethnic minority groups)? *We are not Vietnamese, are we?* We are experiencing racial discrimination. (BD08)

Thirdly, the concept of 'culture' within the theme 'group' reflects the notion of cultural distance as one of the reasons for interaction 'difficulties'.

> Visitors' culture is definitely different from our [M'nong] culture that is for sure. Consequently, interaction difficulties or misunderstandings will sometimes occur in the interaction between visitors and us [M'nong villagers]. (LK02)
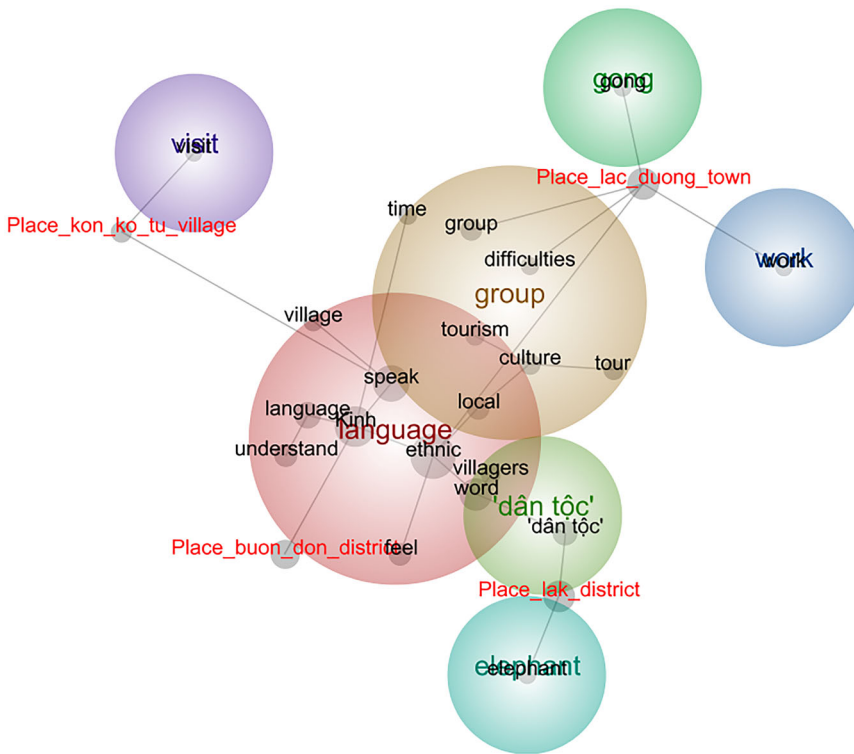
Figure 7. Host-tourist interaction difficulties.

Additionally, an issue causing serious obstacles in the interactions is that a few local ethnic villagers have forsaken their cultural roots. An Ede woman (BD08) expressed her concerns, '*Gradually, native people no longer remember their cultural roots, their origins*'. Consequently, some ethnic people lacked the knowledge or motivation to explain or introduce their traditional culture to the visitors.

'Gong' and 'elephant' as themes refer to verbal and non-verbal difficulties (e.g. gestures, sexual harassment) ethnic villagers encountered in gong performances or elephant riding tours. For instance, '*female dancers or performers in our village sometimes experienced some forms of sexual harassment in gong performances*' (LD06). A mahout (BD04) in Buon Don district experienced self-pity and annoyance by visitors' bad manners during elephant tours.

> Several visitors require to ride male (bull) elephant while others like to ride female elephant […]. Requiring a male elephant is like gender discrimination … , similar to discriminating against women … We feel unhappy and even annoyed. (BD04)

In work-related contexts or home visit, the locals were confronted by some visitors' lack of respect. More specifically, a K'Ho waiter (LD02) said, '*Sometimes customers disparage our outfits or appearance because of our casual clothes while working at the restaurant.*' Another Bana homeowner (KT04) said:

> There is no taboo here when you visit our house. However, guests must respect our private space during their stay. For example, guests should not come in the family's living space. If they need something else, they should notify us in advance. […] Sometimes visitors come randomly in my house to take pictures without any request.

Regarding difficulties at the management level at 'work', gong venue managers occasionally found themselves in an awkward situation when tour operators asked them to modify their gong performance to match visitors' preferences. '*Some visitors are so harsh and demanding; the tour guide required: 'I want you to do this, do that or Bro! Do something exciting, funny or move to singing session; otherwise, my visitors leave', they did not respect our programme's order*' (LD06). Additionally, several local entrepreneurs struggled to organise their staff and run their business due to a lack of punctuality and sense of responsibility from ethnic villagers working as seasonal staff or casual basis earners.

> Gong performers are seasonal staff and freelancers, whoever pays higher, they will go to work for them. That is our difficulty. Moreover, the performers are used to being unpunctual due to farming habits; consequently, the customers complained about their lateness […] They are freelancers – if they like, they come on time, if they do not like, they come late or even do not come. It is so difficult to handle. (LD02)

Quality of host-tourist interactions

When asked about their level of enjoyment and feelings associated with their interactions with tourists, responses demonstrated a range of emotions from negative to positive associated with various host-tourist interactions. Three main themes '*dislike', 'feel normal*', and '*like*' represent three different emotional nuances: negative, neutral, and positive of villagers about the host-tourist interactions.

According to respondents, they '*disliked*' interacting with those visitors who '*showed off',* were '*disrespectful*' (BD02) or were '*impolite, noisy*' (LK06). In some instances, the way visitors behaved made villagers uncomfortable and irritated by creating feelings of inferiority. As a waiter (LK06) at a local restaurant shared:

> 'Other visitors often show how rich they are, their discrimination against us, e.g. they consider us just a waiter. I am a bit sad. Although I know I am working in the hospitality industry, I feel less motivated in my work when interacting with such kind of guests like that.'

In another case, a local tour operator (LK02) commented: 'serving domestic visitors is very tiring, extremely complicated […]. Domestic visitors were often demanding … and simultaneously complained, criticised, asked for more'.

With superficial interactions, visitors simply made a visit, looked around, or used local tourism services as a part of recreational tours to the Central Highlands. They had limited interaction with villagers; consequently, the villagers '*feel normal*' in such interactions (LK01). They even said: '*seeing tourists, it just looks like normal as strangers come to visit our village*' (BD05). Another villager disclosed his neutral feelings: '*We feel so so in our interactions*' (LK03).

Conversely, some villagers '*liked to interact with several tourists who are nice, friendly, outgoing*' (BD02). They felt happy when having intense interactions with friendly, polite tourists in various settings such as gong venues, work-related establishments, or local houses in which they shared their ideas and learned about ethnic culture. These participants '*liked to see visitors visiting our village because our villagers can meet, talk and learn more from them. For those [visitors] who are friendly, we consider them our relatives or family member*' (LK07). In the same vein, a gong performer (KT08) shared: '*I like to participate in gong team and perform gong shows for visitors. I like to see visitors visiting our village […]. After watching and exchanging gong performances, visitors look happy and satisfied*'. A Bana woman (KT09) described how long-term relationships can develop;

> They [visitors] come back to visit our village, give gifts and clothes to villagers, or donate meat to cook porridge for the entire village's children once or twice annually. During their stay, they cooperated with us, were intense in the interaction.

In summary, the quality of host-tourist interactions was perceived to be positive by most participants with responses including descriptors such as; 'intense', 'friendly' 'happy', 'satisfied', 'equal',

'harmonious', 'willing to assist', and 'like' to interact. Although negative emotions were not prominent in the discussion of overall interaction quality, those sentiments that were expressed (e.g. 'superficial', 'frustrated', 'complicated', and 'demanding') certainly require some thought and consideration in efforts to ensure sustainable host-tourist relationships.

Discussion and conclusion

This study highlighted the diverse content of host-tourist interactions, from low to high intensity, in three main physical settings: local private house, tourist attractions and facilities, and on tours. In such settings, the villagers confronted a variety of difficulties aligned with CMM theory. The key findings are visually summarised in Figure 8 to illustrate the interrelationship between physical settings, content, difficulties, and the perceived quality of interactions.

With diverse functions, the local private house is a space in which ethnic hosts not only dwell but also make or show handicrafts, provide gong performances, sell local food and beverages or souvenirs and/or groceries, or even share meals and their private spaces for homestay arrangements. The interaction intensity in this setting varied. At the lowest level, visitors just passed by the house, had a look, or took photos without interaction with villagers. The villagers saw their *relationship* with the visitors as host-stranger. Consequently, the interaction quality in these instances was perceived as neutral or even negative. The finding demonstrates that some host-tourist interactions in local houses did not necessarily seem to be as close as previously found (Domenico & Lynch, 2007). At a more intense level, the hosts interacted with visitors when providing local tourism information, gong performances, local food and beverages, handicrafts, or souvenirs/groceries. In such interactions, some villagers just considered their *relationship* with the visitors as seller-buyer. Others,
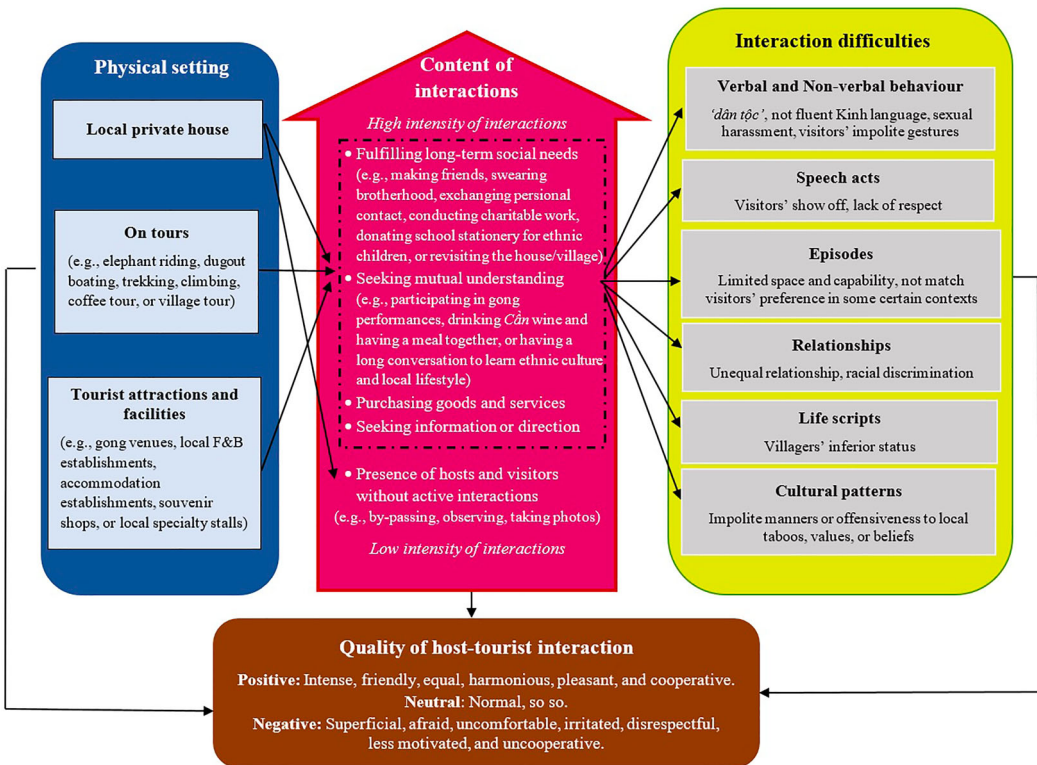

Figure 8. The interrelationship of physical setting, content, interaction difficulties, and the quality of host-tourist interactions.

particularly the older generation, sometimes could not understand Kinh (Vietnamese) very well, resulting in difficulty in *verbal behaviours* with visitors. The villagers felt shy and often afraid of communicating. Another challenge is about *episodes* (spatial and temporal) in which the villagers' house was too limited in *space* and capacity to serve a large group of tourists at the same *time*. Therefore, the resulting interactions tended to be brief. At the highest level, the hosts intensely interacted with visitors by sharing meals, providing extended visit services or homestay. In this case, despite *language barriers* and *cultural differences* (e.g. eating practices, daily routine), both parties could fulfil long-term relationships (friendship, brotherhood) when they had enough time to mutually understand each other and develop empathy, making the hosts feel more cooperative and more engaged in the interactions.

On tours with tourists who were either part of a package tour or simply followed other tourists, the villagers found the interaction quality superficial. For those with whom the villagers closely interacted, the quality of interaction was sometimes negative due to interaction difficulties. Once again, *verbal behaviour* is a challenge for the villagers in their host-tourist interactions. The inappropriate usage of '*dân tộc*' by the tourists caused serious offence to the ethnic hosts. The hosts also faced challenges in *episodes,* there were challenges in adapting tour times and lengths in attempts to fit into the tourists' schedule, in some cases leading to limited interaction and more superficial outcomes. Due to *cultural patterns*, the locals often felt uncomfortable and irritated with visitors' impolite manners or offensiveness in relation to local taboos, values, or beliefs. This study reaffirms that while 'exotic' culture and 'quaint' people may be important pull factors attracting tourists to ethnic destinations (Qian et al., 2018; L. Yang & Wall, 2014), they are perhaps one of the main causes of interaction difficulties.

At tourist attractions/facilities, villagers encountered visitors while providing information or selling goods and services in which their *relationship* with visitors simply was seller-buyer. Hence, villagers found such interactions superficial. By contrast, close encounters occurred when both villagers and visitors participated in gong performances, exchanged information and ideas, drank *Cần* wine, and exchanged gifts that made villagers feel intense and harmonious. This point refutes previous research (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2012; de Kadt, 1979) which claimed that only superficial host-tourist interactions occur at tourism attractions/supporting services. It may also indicate a difference between host-tourist interactions in ethnic vs. mass tourism contexts.

In other cases, like some instances on tours, despite intense interactions at tourist attractions/facilities, the quality of interaction can be negatively influenced by difficulties. *Non-verbal behaviours* engendered extreme annoyance in the villagers when intoxicated male visitors made inappropriate gestures towards female dancers at gong performances. Villagers reacted angrily to impolite tourists who showed off or performed disrespectful *speech acts* towards ethnic people. Regarding *life script*, many villagers perceived themselves as inferior to visitors in the interactions and therefore shy when interacting with visitors. Others found that some visitors were disdainful or had stereotypes in mind of the ethnic people they met. These incidents can lead to an invisible gap between hosts and visitors and cause detrimental effects on their face-to-face interactions. It seems to remain a gap and unequal social position between the ethnic minorities and the Kinh majority (Nguyen, 2021).

To sum up, the study demonstrates a diversity of interaction content in each physical setting. We suggest to simultaneously consider both the setting and content to evaluate whether or not the interaction is intense. We need to consider three elements: physical setting, content, and difficulties to evaluate the quality of interaction. Closer interactions may lead to more positive outcomes, but this statement is only true if the hosts encounter few interaction difficulties. In other words, the more difficulties villagers encountered, the more negative they perceived their interaction experiences, regardless of intensity.

Interestingly, the study found that the gap between hosts and visitors can be narrowed, whereby negative outcomes can be reduced in a particular setting (i.e. local house) which offers both parties the opportunity to make an effort to understand each other. With respect to CMM theory, there are

consistent difficulties across the three settings. Among these, *verbal and non-verbal behaviours* and *cultural patterns* are the most challenging for villagers in host-tourist interactions. This study expands our understanding of language issues in social contact, and contradicts previous findings (Su et al., 2014; Su & Wall, 2010) which found that there were no major linguistic barriers in local resident-domestic tourist interactions. Further, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to highlight the language issues of ethnic host-domestic tourist interactions in Vietnam's Central Highlands.

Implications and limitations

This study empirically enriches the existing body of knowledge on host-tourist interaction in the ethnic tourism context, particularly ethnic hosts-domestic tourists, by examining the interrelationship between physical setting, content, interaction difficulties, and the perceived quality of interaction. The descriptive framework of our discussion provides a helpful guide to understanding host-tourist interaction issues and to guide further research. Both physical setting and content help to explore 'what is going on' in the interactions.

Applying CMM theory helps to interpret and understand more thoroughly the themes of interaction difficulties aligned with the six CMM components across the three settings. This study is the first to employ CMM to explore interaction difficulties in the ethnic tourism context. This study has contributed back to both CMM theory and tourism studies by revealing the relationship between physical setting and content in more complex ethnic host-domestic tourist interactions in contrast to previous applications to more structured and/or one-on-one social interactions, for example between parent-obese children (Bruss et al., 2005), professional/consultant-client (W. B. Pearce, 2007), or therapist-client (Cronin et al., 2021).

Notably, we strongly believe CMM is meaningful in exploring the root causes of interaction challenges during cultural contact. Even within the same country, the hosts still confront varied interaction difficulties with domestic tourists of different socio-cultural backgrounds. Further, this theory can be practically applied to design interventions to minimise interaction difficulties in future research.

The study suggests that local policymakers and tour operators promote a diverse content of interactions in different settings, which visitors can experience when travelling to the Central Highlands' ethnic villages. Local villagers should give visitors a chance to learn ethnic culture and improve their interaction quality by being more actively engaged in the interactions. Interventions for both parties such as workshops, culture assimilator booklet, ethnic cultural interpretation (Bruss et al., 2005; Loi & Pearce, 2015; P. L. Pearce et al., 1998) based on the utility of CMM can be considered to minimise interaction difficulties.

Further investigations are strongly recommended on how to minimise interaction challenges and on assessing the extent of their effects on hosts' perceived interaction quality and attitudes towards local tourism development. Subsequent publications from this data will investigate the influence of supply-side indicators (lifecycle stage of the locality, cultural and social capital, and community participation levels in tourism) on the quality of interaction. Further research is also underway which analyses the interaction quality from the perspective of visitors (demand-side) to the villages.

The present study has four limitations. First, the language barrier was an unavoidable challenge for the researcher while interviewing ethnic villagers in Vietnamese. Obviously, those ethnic villagers not proficient in Vietnamese had difficulties in thoroughly expressing their views, whereas the researcher sometimes struggled in elaborating on the questions, or understanding the way participants were responding. This challenge was identified in previous studies (Ngo & Pham, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Su et al., 2014).

Second, a limited number of villagers were involved in the interviews. Thus, the reported results cannot be taken as representative of the whole picture of host-tourist interactions, despite rich

information acquired in each interview as well as data saturation. Third, ethnic households that were involved in local tourism and preferred to interact with foreign visitors for many years before the COVID-19 pandemic, usually had more positive emotions about their interactions with foreign rather than with domestic visitors. Yet, due to the second wave of the pandemic in Vietnam, these households had to serve the domestic; therefore, the result of overall interaction quality may have been impacted by these participants' bias. Lastly, the usage of Leximancer software in data analysis may have certain limitations, for example, visual concept maps may not entirely illustrate the meaning of the data. Therefore, the researcher's role in interpreting the results is key (Engstrom et al., 2022).

Elephant riding tours, in which villagers interacted with domestic visitors, are an important but contentious ethnic tourism product and cultural heritage of the Central Highlands. How to manage elephant focused tourism experiences is a controversial issue in sustainable tourism practice and a subject of much debate among local tourism stakeholders. More discussions need to be undertaken to find ways to preserve cultural heritage, secure local household income, and achieve long-term sustainable tourism. Addressing N'Drower's indigenous research framework (2020), it is important that the study results will be taken back to villages for further discussion in order to develop practical solutions. In this way, the research outcomes provide value to local villagers through application.

Note

1. https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-642

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Appendix A. Brief profiles of four study sites.

Study site	Location	Ethnicity	Tourist icon	Popular ethnic tourism activities/services						
				Homestay	Gong performance	Communal house	Carving wooden sculptures	Handicrafts	Traditional cuisine	Local tour
Kon Ko Tu	is about 14 km from Kon Tum city, administered by Kon Tum province.	Bana	Traditional communal house and village landscape	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Buon Don	is about 40 km from Buon Ma Thuot city, administered by Dak Lak province.	Ede	Elephant riding		X				X	X
Lak	is about 60 km from Buon Ma Thuot city, administered by Dak Lak province.	M'nong	Dugout boating and elephant riding	X	X	X			X	X
Lac Duong	is about 12 km from Da Lat city, administered by Lam Dong province.	K'Ho	Gong performance		X	X		X	X	X

Appendix B. Summary of participants' characteristics.

	Code	Study site	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Level of Education	Length of residence	Tourism (non)involvement
1	KT01	Kon Ko Tu village	Bana	Female	53	Primary school	Since born	Handicraft woman
2	KT02			Female	57	Primary school	Since born	Gong dancer
3	KT03			Male	57	Primary school	Since 1969	Local sculptor
4	KT04			Male	31	Bachelor	Since 2012	Homestay owner and local guide
5	KT05			Female	36	High school	Since born	Grocery shop owner (not involved in tourism)
6	KT06			Female	68	Secondary school	Above 40 years	Formerly homestay owner for more than 20 years (currently not involved in tourism)
7	KT07			Female	30	Diploma	Since born	Homestay owner
8	KT08			Male	58	Secondary school	Since born	Gong performer
9	KT09			Male	67	Primary school	Since 1959	Formerly homestay owner for more than 20 years (currently not involved in tourism)
10	BD01	Buon Don district	Ede	Male	42	Bachelor	Since 2011	A member of local administration (not involved in tourism)
11	BD02			Female	29	High school	Since born	A staff of the ethnic clothing rental store based at Cầu Treo tourist attraction point
12	BD03			Female	46	Secondary school	Since born	Souvenir and local speciality vendor based at Cầu Treo tourist attraction point
13	BD04			Male	47	Primary school	Since born	Mahout at Cầu Treo tourist attraction point
14	BD05			Female	29	Diploma	Since born	A grocery shop owner next to Cầu Treo tourist attraction point (not involved in tourism)
15	BD06			Male	50	Secondary school	Since born	Gong performer (sometimes involved in tourism) and farmer
16	BD07			Male	67	High school	Since 1975	Village head (not involved in tourism)
17	BD08			Female	63	Bachelor	45 years	Cultural researcher and NGOs project consultant (sometimes involved in tourism)
18	LK01			Female	42	Primary school	Since born	Gong dancer and restaurant staff at Lak resort
19	LK02			Male	36	Diploma	Since born	Mahout, local guide, and souvenir shop owner
20	LK03			Male	63	Primary school	Since 1964	Farmer (not involved in tourism)
21	LK04	Lak district	M'nong	Male	44	Bachelor	Since born	Former Lak resort staff for more than ten years (currently not involved in tourism)
22	LK05			Female	45	Primary school	Since born	Gardener (horticulture department) at Lak Tented Camp
23	LK06			Male	24	High school	Since born	Waiter and tour guide at Lak Tented Camp
24	LK07			Female	49	Secondary school	Since born	Handicraft woman and farmer (not involved in tourism)
25	LD01	Lac Duong town	K'Ho	Male	28	Bachelor	Since born	Jeep driver at Langbiang tourist attraction point
26	LD02			Male	30	Diploma	Since born	Restaurant staff and Gong performance supervisor at Langbiang tourist attraction point
27	LD03			Male	79	Diploma	Since 1952	Formerly local guide and interpreter more than 30 years (currently not involved in tourism)
28	LD04			Female	34	Graduate	Since born	Local coffee shop owner
29	LD05			Female	38	Undergraduate	Since born	Homeowner and local guide
30	LD06			Male	48	Diploma	Since born	Gong venue and restaurant owner
31	LD07			Male	63	High school	Since born	Gong venue owner and MC at Gong performance