CONSTRUCTS AND MECHANISMS OF PERSONALLY-DELIVERED INTERPRETIVE
PROGRAMS THAT LEAD TO MINDFULNESS AND MEANING-MAKING

By

Eun Jeong Noh

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Sustainable Tourism and Protected Area Management – Doctor of Philosophy

2014

ABSTRACT

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Many cultural tourism sites, regardless of the context, provide regularly scheduled interpretive programs and other interpretive materials such as signs, brochures, and audio devices. Interpretation is particularly important in cultural tourism settings because cultural tourism includes historical, cultural and/or heritage elements that can be impacted negatively by human influx and behaviors. Given this, within cultural tourism settings, interpretation is used to impart messages about the cultural resources themselves, their values, and their management (Benton, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to understand tourists' meaning-making processes resulting from their participation in personal interpretive programs by identifying the mechanism(s) of mindfulness and meaningfulness related to cultural resources within cultural tourism settings. Many researchers (Ballantyne, Packer, & Falk, 2011; Ham & Weiler, 2007; Tubb, 2003) have conducted empirical studies about the expected outcomes of interpretation (cognitive outcomes [e.g., tourist knowledge gain], affective outcomes [e.g., tourist satisfaction], and behavioral outcomes [e.g., intention to revisit or engage in prosocial behavior]). However, these outcomes may not be sufficient to explain the value and benefits of the interpretation experience to the visitor. Furthermore, they do not focus on explaining how these outcomes are generated through a visitor's personal experience, and what mechanisms underlie these three categories of outcomes. Thus, this study investigated the underlying mechanism(s) that tourists use to generate meanings and values for cultural resources.

Within a constructivist paradigm, the data were collected through direct observations and 59 in-depth interviews about participants' meaningful experiences gained from the personal interpretive programs at the Secret Garden at Changdeokgung in Korea. Examination of study participants' narratives about their experiences during their guided tour uncovered five themes – *resources*, *personal context*, *program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter* – that included categories associated with the guided tour (*program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*), and other factors not related to the guided tour (*resources* and *personal context*) as facilitators of meaning-making. Among the six categories of elements (themes), only three themes (*program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*) included some elements that were critical to helping tourists become mindful during the tour. The findings showed that meaningfulness about a place or a resource may or may not be generated as a result of the personal interpretive tours, at least not immediately, even if tourists are mindful. The *personal context* theme was highlighted as a crucial cue for study participants to develop meaning during the tour.

This study is one of few to investigate tourists' meaning-making processes resulting from their participation in personal interpretive programs by identifying the mechanisms of mindfulness and meaningfulness related to cultural resources within a cultural tourism setting. Several theoretical propositions were made based on the study results. The implication of this research is that interpretive managers and interpreters who are familiar with the tenets of meaning-making and the process of transformative learning should be better able to create programs that help tourists' have meaningful experiences. Specific managerial implications associated with personal interpretive program within a tourism setting and recommendations for future research are discussed.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
my father, Sung Rae Noh, and my mother, Geum Bin Im,
for their unconditional love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Also, while I cannot name them all, my deep appreciation goes to all my friends with whom I shared my life as a Ph.D. student at MSU. I would especially like to thank Dr. Jonghwan Lee, who was my best colleague, for his time, advice and warm encouragement. Sincere appreciation goes to the best cellist, Prof. Suren Bagratuni, for his time, friendship, and beautiful music. I will never forget the doctoral experiences that we have all gone through together. Special thanks also go to my friends in Korea, who always welcomed me and spent time with me whenever I visited Korea. I especially wish to thank Anna Lee and her husband, Chulhee Lee, for their constant friendship and encouragement.

Finally, but most importantly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Sung Rae Noh and Geum Bin Im, who have been extraordinarily supportive and patient. They have sacrificed endlessly for me. Without their unwavering love, I would not be the person I have become. Father and mother, my biggest fortune was being your daughter. I am also greatly indebted to my two sisters, Eun Mi Noh and Ji Yeon Noh, for their support and understanding. We have shared tears and joy, even though we were separated by a great distance. Sisters, you were my oasis during my long journey. Special thanks are extended to my pretty new family, my brother-in-law, Byung Hoon Jeong, my niece Chaeseung Jeong, and my nephew Jinwoo Jeong. I cannot wait to see all of you in Korea. Family means everything to me. I will do my best to make my family proud.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

According to the National Association of Interpretation (NAI), interpretation is defined as a "mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource" (Brochu & Merriman, 2008). Although interpretation contains information, it does not rely solely on facts, figures, and data. Rather, interpretation conveys information in a way that is relevant and meaningful for the visitors; it provokes visitors to challenge their own ideas and to make their own decisions; and it provides reasons and suggested behaviors or actions for how visitors can help managers meet their resource management goals. Interpretation, as a special kind of communication, takes place in a variety of facilities such as museums, historic sites, parks, nature centers, zoos, and aquariums.

Interpretation is a mission-based form of communication. To ascertain whether intended goals are being met, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness, quality, and impacts of the interpretation. Weiler and Ham (2010) stated that, even though the expected outcomes vary, depending on the reason(s) interpretation is chosen, providers want to achieve some overarching outcomes with visitors, both during their visits and after they return home. These include "…enhancing visitor satisfaction, enriching visitor experiences, strengthening public relations, managing on-site visitor behavior, and impacting the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of visitors" (Weiler & Ham, 2010, p. 187). A considerable amount of research assesses the impacts of interpretation on management goals and learning outcomes, but little research has been

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conducted on the process of meaning-making, which underlies the other more practical and overt outcomes of interpretation.

Many cultural tourism sites regardless of the context provide regularly scheduled interpretive programs and other interpretive materials such as signs, brochures, and audio devices. Benton (2011) stated that tourism providers and interpretation professionals not only want to convey their missions through these interpretive programs and materials, but also want to convey the meaning of the cultural resources and accomplish a resource management goal—preservation. Interpretation is particularly important in cultural tourism settings because cultural tourism includes historical, cultural and/or heritage elements that can be negatively impacted by human influx. Given this, within cultural tourism settings, interpretation is used to impart messages about the cultural resources themselves, their values, and their management (Benton, 2011).

The impetus for my proposed research was my question about the fundamental goals of interpretation in the tourism field. Many researchers have conducted empirical studies about the expected outcomes of interpretation (Ballantyne, Packer, & Falk, 2011; Ham & Weiler, 2007; Tubb, 2003). These outcomes have been studied in three categories: 1) cognitive outcomes (e.g., tourist knowledge gain), 2) affective outcomes (e.g., tourist satisfaction), and 3) behavioral outcomes (e.g., intention to revisit or engage in prosocial behavior). Although earlier studies have identified the positive outcomes of interpretation in these three categories, these outcomes may not be sufficient to explain the value and benefits of the interpretation experience to the visitor. Furthermore, they do not focus on explaining how these outcomes are generated through a visitor's personal experience, and what mechanisms underlie these three categories of outcomes. For example, the amount of information a visitor gains or remembers can explain a learning outcome, which is one of the goals of interpretive programs and one of the motives for

visiting, but most tourists would not visit a place if information and learning were the primary or only goal of the visit (Larsen, 2011). Tourists seek meaningful experiences that are more complex than just knowledge acquisition and learning, although learning can underlie or be a component of achieving other goals/objectives.

Rather than evaluating each outcome (i.e., cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes, and behavioral outcomes) individually, it is necessary to find a way to evaluate the underlying mechanism(s) of interpretation. To do this, I began by looking at multiple definitions of interpretation. The commonly used definitions of interpretation are:

- Freeman Tilden (often called the "father of interpretation") – Interpretation is "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (Tilden, 1959/2007).

- The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) – Interpretation is a "mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource" (Brochu & Merriman, 2008).

- National Park Service (NPS) – Interpretation is a "catalyst in creating an opportunity for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings and significance inherent in the resource" (National Park Service, 2007).

- Suk-Hee Park (the first scholar to define interpretation in Korea) – "Interpretation is comprised of techniques that could be used not just in educational activities for tourists, but in cognitive development activities, activities that create interest, for helping tourists

to understand new environments and to develop insights about those environments, and to promote the preservation of natural resources" (Park, 1994).

- Seo-Ho Um (a Korean tourism scholar who saw interpretation as one way to develop sustainable tourism) – "Interpretation is an activity that contributes to maintaining tourists and resource management by explaining both the characteristics and meaning of a place/resource to visitors to increase their interest, enjoyment and understanding" (Um, 1999).

There is a shared common outcome of effective interpretation within all of the definitions: interpretation can help tourists to generate personal meaning associated with the resources. Although most studies in the field of interpretation (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005) have mentioned that generating meaningfulness about the resources is a desired outcome of interpretation, only a limited number of studies have investigated how meaningfulness is generated within tourists. Nor is there research that attempts to identify the elements that facilitate meaning-making for the visitor.

Statement of the Problem

Within cultural tourism settings, interpretation occurs in numerous places, through various media modes (e.g., signs, brochures, audio devices, personal interpretive programs), and is designed to prompt awareness, engagement, and personal meaning-making that help tourists understand a place or a cultural resource in a meaningful way. However, there is an absence of an operational definition for meaningfulness and there has been limited research devoted to identifying the mechanism(s) that contribute to making tourists' experiences of a place or a cultural resource meaningful as a result of participating in personal interpretive programs.

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Therefore, this study attempts to identify the mechanism(s) for mindfulness and meaningfulness with regard to cultural resources by investigating tourists' personal interpretive experiences within cultural tourism settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand tourists' meaning-making processes resulting from their participation in personal interpretive programs by identifying the mechanism(s) of mindfulness and meaningfulness related to cultural resources within a cultural tourism setting. This research not only will assist interpreters in facilitating such meaningful interpretive experiences, but it also will help tourism providers and/or interpretive site professionals interpret cultural resources in a way that helps tourists generate meanings and values about cultural resources.

Significance of the Study

This study is a first attempt to integrate two theories (the theory of meaning-making and the transformation theory of adult learning) and a construct (mindfulness) to understand the complex process of tourists' meaning-making. This study addresses both theoretical and applied contributions. Although no single theory is tested directly in this study, components of the two theories and the mindfulness construct serve as the basis for investigating the mechanism(s) that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful in personal interpretive programs. This study investigates how tourists become mindful through participation in a personal interpretive program, and how this state of mind leads to meaningfulness. The interrelationships between mindfulness and meaningfulness are explored using in-depth interviews. Results of this study

make a contribution to the growing body of research that aims to understand tourists' interpretive experiences in personal interpretive settings.

In addition, results of this study can make a practical/managerial contribution to the tourism and interpretation fields. Interpreters and interpretation professionals will be able to design and facilitate more meaningful interpretive experiences for visitors by understanding and applying techniques related to the mechanism(s) of mindfulness and meaningfulness.

Research Questions

This research, because it is exploratory in nature and because the constructs being studied are intangible, subjective, and personally developed, uses a qualitative approach. The following research questions are explored:

1. Do personal interpretive programs help tourists become mindful during their cultural tourism experiences?

2. Do personal interpretive programs help tourists generate/enhance meaningfulness about a place or a resource?

3. What are the elements critical to facilitating meaning-making for tourists?

4. What are the mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful, regarding a place or a cultural resource, as a result of their participating in personal interpretive programs?

Delimitations

This study is delimited to the following:

1. This study investigated interpretive experiences of international tourists to Korea engaged in cultural tourism.

2. This study focused on personal interpretive programs conducted in the Secret Garden of Changdeokgung in South Korea.

3. Interviews were conducted only with international tourists who speak English.

4. Data collection was delimited to a time frame of May 1, 2013 through May 14, 2013 for the pilot study, and May 15, 2013 through August 11, 2013 for formal data collection.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined to clarify their use in this study:

Cultural tourism: Tourists' engagement with culture(s) and communities, with the intention of gaining new experiences to satisfy their cultural needs (Smith, 2009).

Interpretation: NAI defines as a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource (as cited in Brochu & Merriman, 2008, p. 16).

Personal interpretive experience: Personal interaction between an interpreter and a visitor that is intellectually challenging, emotionally stimulating, and provokes an emotional response through the delivery of experiences, which take place in a variety of settings (e.g., historic sites, parks, visitor centers, museums, zoos) (Adapted from Barrie, 2001; Marwell & Weiler, 1998).

Mindfulness: Enhanced attention to, and open or receptive awareness of, a current experience or

present reality (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Meaningfulness: A realization of the value, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals,

relevance, or standards, which encourages people to form their own intellectual and

emotional connections (Adapted from May, Gilson & Harter, 2004).

Critical reflection: Rational discourse on what people know from their own history (Adapted

from Mezirow, 1978).

Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation includes five chapters. Chapter one provides the background, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study. Four research questions are proposed to guide this study. Lastly, significance of the study is discussed, along with a presentation of delimitations and definitions of terms. Chapter two, the literature review, discusses relevant theories and constructs to investigate my research questions. Chapter three describes details of my research methods. Selection and description of data collection methods, interview guide development, site description, sampling frame, pilot study, changes as a result of pilot study, on-site procedures, and data analysis are described. Chapter four presents results of data analysis as associated with the four research questions. Chapter five presents conclusions and a discussion of six propositions derived from the study results. Theoretical and practical implications as well as limitations and recommendations for future research in the tourism and interpretive fields are addressed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interpretation

Interpretation is "an informational and inspirational process designed to enhance understanding, appreciation, and protection of our cultural and natural legacy" (Beck & Cable, 2002, p. 1). Since the late 1920s, the term 'interpretation' has evolved. Enos Mills was the first person to use the term 'interpret' to label a job–nature guide–in 1920. Subsequently, the term has been used extensively among the United States and Canadian National Park Services (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 2003). In 1959, Freeman Tilden addressed the term 'interpretation' in his published book *Interpreting our Heritage*, and defined interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (Tilden, 1959/2007, p. 33). He established six principles of interpretation:

- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

- Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

- Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is, in some degree, teachable.

- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man [sic] rather than any phase.

- Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentations to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program (Tilden, 1959/2007, pp. 34-35).

Through the principles, Freeman Tilden provided an interpretive framework for the creation and application of interpretation. Tilden's six principles still are used heavily in the field of interpretation, even though the principles were introduced over fifty years ago (Ivey, 2007). They have remained important guidelines for interpretive practice because subsequent research in numerous fields (e.g., learning, psychology, marketing, brain science) continue to provide support and reasons for their effectiveness.

The Fundamental Roles of Interpretation

Many studies have addressed the fundamental roles of interpretation within various contexts in the conduct of tourism (Ham, 2009; Knudson et al., 2003; Lewis, 2008; Tubb, 2003). They have identified four commonly agreed upon fundamental roles: 1) assisting with visitor and resource management; 2) increasing visitors' knowledge and awareness; 3) enriching the visitor experience; and 4) helping visitors develop a deep appreciation for a place or a resource.

First, interpretation can be used as a visitor and resource management tool (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Knudson et al., 2003; Orams, 1995). Interpretation can be a part of a management

framework[1] in both natural and cultural resource management settings. For instance, visitor movements in both time and space can be controlled partially through interpretation. Providing information can direct visitors to where they can and cannot go, but this type of information is not always effective. On the other hand, Kundson, Cable, and Beck (2003) and Moscardo (1999) asserted that, when used as persuasive communication, interpretation does help to convey information effectively; using such a strategy, destination managers not only can manage an influx of visitors, but also protect natural and cultural resources. Interpretation also can be used as a marketing strategy to attract or detract tourists, helping managers address some of their management goals (Knudson et al., 2003; Tubb, 2003). For example, Reigner and Lawson (2009) found that persuasive interpretive messages were effective in guiding appropriate visitor behaviors, thus minimizing destruction of resources such as native flora, fauna, and cultural resources as well as minimizing negative impacts of overcrowding on visitors' experiences in Haleakala National Park. Interpretation also can assist an organization's administration by informing visitors of regulations, policies, and plans in a way that includes explaining and making relevant the reasons for regulations, policies, and plans (Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005). Such relevant messages can affect visitor experiences positively as well as be effective in persuading tourists to adopt suggested behaviors.

Furthermore, interpretation can elicit behavioral self-regulation by visitors, which in turn helps protect and manage resources. It can help create a stewardship ethic by encouraging appropriate visitor behavior. For example, in the study of visitors' behavior, Reigner and Lawson (2009) investigated whether persuasive messages about moral attitudes toward exploring pools at

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[1] Orams (1995) categorized management techniques for a nature-based tourism setting into three groups: 1) physical controls (in the form of barriers, paths, boardwalks, and the location of facilities); 2) direct controls (in the form of rules, regulations, permits, and charges); and 3) indirect mechanisms (ways to reduce inappropriate behavior on a voluntary basis, such as through education and interpretive programs).

Haleakala National park had impacts on visitors' behavioral intention. They found that interpretive persuasive messages influenced visitors' behavior toward protecting natural resources; in this way, interpretation was helpful for managing natural resources. Vander Stoep (1986) argued that indirect behavioral management techniques – that include facility design, site maintenance, and various communication strategies, including interpretation – can promote voluntary compliance with protective regulations. Through a field experiment at Shiloh National Military Park in the state of Tennessee, USA, Vander Stoep (1986) found that participants who were informed of damage to the park's cultural resources due to personal depreciative activities noticeably reduced their depreciative behaviors when compared with participants who were not informed. Gramann and Vander Stoep (1987) addressed three indirect approaches for protecting cultural resources by reducing visitors' depreciative activities, for which personal interpretive messages served as the delivery mechanism: "First, managers can activate visitors' feelings of moral responsibility to "do the right thing;" second, identification with area staff and goals can be promoted; finally, compliance can be encouraged by offering [relevant] rewards for proper behavior" (p. 251).

Second, interpretation helps visitors to both increase their awareness and gain knowledge (Lewis, 2008; Tubb, 2003). Many studies have illustrated that the use of interpretation can be a central component to increasing a visitor's understanding of, and respect for, a place (Bramwell & Lane, 1933; Tilden, 1959/2007). In addition, increased attention to public lifelong learning has been highlighted within leisure/tourism settings. For instance, Packer and Ballantyne (2002) found that knowledge acquisition and new experiences were the most important reasons for visiting museums and art galleries. Their results show that increasing awareness and knowledge acquisition through interpretation are necessary, not only as fundamental roles of interpretation,

but also for meeting visitors' needs. However, consistent with principles of free-choice learning[2], interpretation is not seen as "teaching," but as "provoking" visitors (Ham, 2009; Tilden, 1959/2007). Interpretation should attempt to provoke visitors by engaging people into an interpretive program while providing information and increasing awareness. Provocation can serve as a tool to trigger mindfulness and help visitors create meaning about resources based on information presented in the program.

Third, interpretation enriches the visitor experience (Knudson et al., 2003; Moscardo, 1999). Moscardo (1999) stated that interpretation helps create an actual experience – providing variety, encouraging participation, and helping visitors make personal links – that visitors usually associate with a number of positive outcomes. Hwang et al. (2005) reinforced this idea by stating that interpretation services in national parks play an important role in enhancing the quality of visitors' experiences by encouraging participation in recreational opportunities and presenting the administration's image. However, to enrich the visitor experience, interpretation is neither simple nor straightforward. Previous research has found that the context of a site experience (Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005), degree of tourist involvement, and place attachment (Hwang et al., 2005) appear to be mediator variables that impact the relationship between interpretation and quality of the visitor experience.

Finally, interpretation helps visitors to develop an appreciation for a place or a resource and its people (Knudson et al., 2003; Lewis, 2008; Stewart, Hayward, Deviln, & Kirby, 1998). Knudson et al. (2003) argued that interpretation helps visitors not only to understand a location but also to identify with a place. Stewart et al. (1998) asserted that interpretation accelerates the process of visitors developing an appreciation for a place or a resource. In Ham's study (2009)

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[2] Free-choice learning is voluntary, self-directed, and guided by an individual's needs and interests (Yamada & Knapp, 2010).

about the theoretical basis of Tilden's definition of interpretation, he also argued that when interpretive programs provoke and satisfy visitors with regard to a specific subject, the positive connections can lead to high satisfaction. In other words, tourists can create meaningful connections that may urge them to take care of that particular object, resource, or story. Given this, interpretation can help tourists develop an appreciation for a place and its people and to support conservation of the place. However, the mechanisms for how interpretation enhances visitors' appreciation/meaningfulness for a place or a resource have not been investigated in previous studies.

The effectiveness of interpretation, therefore, is being recognized as important to achieving any of four broad goals (i.e., assisting with visitor and resource management; increasing visitors' knowledge and awareness; enriching the visitor experience; and helping visitors develop a deep appreciation for a place or a resource). To understand "effectiveness," it is necessary to understand the underlying constructs and processes of meaningful experiences in interpretive settings.

Interpretation in Cultural Tourism Settings

In the United States, the practice now labeled as interpretation began in natural areas such as public parks and protected areas in the United States (e.g., Lake Tahoe, Yosemite Valley, Long's Peak), but soon was applied also to cultural sites such as Mesa Verde, designated in 1906 as the first national park in the United States dedicated to cultural resources (National Park Service, 2013). Interpretation has grown in importance, and gradually has increased its influence in the outdoor recreation and tourism fields (Benton, 2011; Van Dijk & Weiler, 2009). Because

both natural and cultural resources are important tourism attractions, their interpretation has become important to cultural tourism managers and operators.

As a form of tourism, cultural tourism refers to the consumption of experiences and products within a community or a nation that utilize cultural heritage assets (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Cultural tourism destinations and experiences involve a variety of cultural venues and presentations, including historic sites, heritage sites, museums, galleries, architectural sites, festivals, and artistic performances, to name just a few. Ideally, cultural tourism should foster understanding of and support for the host community as well as extend the tourists' experiences to help protect tangible and intangible assets (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). However, McKercher and de Crocs (2002) stated that tourism is hardly good for conservation, nor is conservation necessarily good for tourism. In other words, there can be conflicts between the goals and implementation of tourism and cultural heritage management. Thus, there is a need to find strategies to achieve both simultaneously.

Several scholars view interpretation as a way to harmoniously manage the conflicts between tourism and cultural heritage management (Benton, 2011; McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Benton (2011, p. 96) stated that "interpretive programs may accomplish the dual role of inspiring cultural appreciation and conveying the management goal of preserving cultural and natural resources." He indicated that, as a goal of interpretation, effective heritage interpretation conveys resource management goals and challenges, and connects visitors to both natural and cultural heritage. His study at three National Park Service sites assessed the practice aimed at achieving the interpretive goal – preserving indigenous culture and connecting visitors to cultural resources – through guided interpretive programs (Benton, 2011). His results showed that cultural tourism

managers and operators can achieve their managerial goals while simultaneously providing meaningful experiences using interpretive programs that contain the organization's goal.

Moreover, Van Dijk and Weiler (2009) stated that visitors expect to have an interpretive experience in cultural tourism settings, and think of it as an important part of their tourism experience. Additionally, many motivation studies have found learning to be an important motive for traveling in cultural tourism settings (Falk, 2011; MacKay, Andereck, & Vogt, 2002; Packer & Ballantyne, 2004). As do other types of free-choice learning, interpretive programs offer an educational component to tourism experiences. Numerous studies have assessed the outcomes of visitor learning from interpretation (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Falk, 2009; Prentice, Guerin, & McGugan, 1998). In this regard, interpretation in cultural tourism settings is important, not only for meeting a site's management goals, but also for meeting tourists' needs.

In summary, this section has laid the foundation for understanding interpretation. The following section discusses meaningfulness. As stated above, the meaningful experience derived from using interpretive programs plays a significant role in cultural tourism settings, and these meaningful experiences underlie achievement of the other goals of interpretation: protecting resources; facilitating learning; enhancing visitor experiences; and developing visitor connections with place. Given the increased attention and growing importance of interpretation, investigating meaningfulness as it relates to the tourist experience is crucial. However, there seems to be little discussion of meaningfulness in the tourism literature.

Meaningfulness

According to the Oxford American Dictionary (2010), meaning is defined as "what is meant by a word, text, concept, or action." However, to understand a meaningful interpretive

experience for this dissertation, it is necessary to understand a particular concept of meaning – the psychological cognitive concept of meaning. Within the concept, meaning refers to "our mind's way of making sense of the world" (Falk, 2009, p. 137). That is, meaning is the translation of existence into conceptual form, which relies in part on subjective values. Meaning also is defined as the nature and level of personal significance attached to an experience (Barrie, 2001).

Meaningfulness, as it relates to the psychological cognitive concept of meaning, has been studied in the fields of psychology and nursing. For instance, in an organizational psychology study, meaningfulness was investigated to understand how values affect the human spirit at work, and was defined as "the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards" (May et al., 2004, p. 14). They found that meaningfulness at work was related positively to job enrichment and work-role fit. Meaningfulness also has been studied in the field of nursing. Drew (1997) explored how caregivers experience and recall meaningfulness among a number of caregiver/patient interactions. He found that experiences of meaningfulness were characterized by intense emotion derived from implicit experiencing (a felt-sense), and connection and closeness between caregivers and patients. Drew (1997) asserted that meaningfulness is formed as a connection between the present moment and past experience(s), which is filtered through the present moment.

However, there is little discussion about meaningfulness in tourism settings. Although meaningfulness may not seem to be related to the tourism discipline because of its subjective and abstract conceptualization, Barrie (2001) argued that, as one of the potential outcomes of interpretation within a tourism setting, meaningfulness (a subjective value) should be attached to tourists' experiences. She claimed that tourists are involved in a process of ascribing subjective

values to their experiences during all interpretive experiences. In this sense, it is crucial to investigate meaningfulness in relation to the tourist experience in a tourism setting.

Tourist Experience

The tourism experience has been a significant research topic in the tourism discipline since the 1970s. Tourism marketers and managers also have paid increasing attention to the tourism experience so that they can provide a value-added and memorable experience to tourists (Kang, 2009). Pearce (2007) and Ham and Weiler (2002) argued that understanding the tourist experience is important because it is connected to tourist satisfaction, word-of-mouth advertising, and repeat visitation. Despite the importance and growing attention given to the tourist experience, researchers have yet to reach consensus on a definition of the term 'tourist experience.'

Development of Tourist Experience Research

Early researchers attempted to define the tourism experience by focusing on its distinctiveness from daily life. Cohen (1979) stated that the tourist experience refers to "a temporary reversal of everyday activities – it is a no-work, no-care, no-thrift situation" (p. 180). Consistent with Cohen's definition, Smith (1978) defined the tourist experience as a temporary visit to a destination away from home for experiencing differences. That is, a tourist experience refers to an individual's activities or movements to escape from regular daily life patterns. Tourist experience involves a quest for strangeness, novelty, or authenticity (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). However, since the 1990s, the distinction between tourist experiences and the routines of everyday life has been blurred. Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009) stated that

advances in media and technology mean that people do not need to travel physically to experience other cultures. They can learn easily about tourist destinations without traveling to a separate place (Uriely, 2005). Consequently, the early conceptualization of the tourist experience has been challenged. However, this study will focus on the travel-based tourist experience rather than the media-based tourist experience, to investigate tourists who participate in personal interpretive programs.

Quan and Wang (2004) posited that research about the tourist experience can be categorized broadly into two general approaches, namely, a social science approach and a marketing/management approach. The social science approach tends to focus on tourist experiences as subjective psychological processes whereas the marketing/management approach tends to focus on tourist activity based on consumption and spending. Within the social science approach, the tourist experience is disparate from the daily life experience, and includes the understanding of the "pure" or "peak" experience derived from the attractions (Quan & Wang, 2004). Researchers in the social science fields conduct research about "motivations, activities, interests, meanings and attitudes, the search for authenticity, and the focus on subjective experiences" to understand the tourist experience (Volo, 2009, p. 112). Within the marketing/ management approach, on the other hand, tourist-centered consumption and spending are central to the tourist experience (Quan & Wang, 2004). Within the marketing/ management approach, the tourist experience generally is studied to gain a better understanding of constructs such as consumer behavior, service quality, and tourist satisfaction. Research findings are utilized in tourism industries such as hospitality, accommodations, and transportation (Quan & Wang, 2004; Volo, 2009). However, Quan and Wang (2004) argued that neither approach – the social science approach nor the marketing/management approach – could completely explain the whole tourist

experience. They suggested, therefore, integrating both approaches to understand the essence of the tourist experience.

The tourist experience also can be investigated by looking at the entire experience, from beginning to end. Pearce (2007) asserted that, compared with consumer behavior, critical differences in tourist behavior are best described through travel stages. For chronological and interrelated perspectives on tourist experiences, several researchers have described tourist behavior as occurring in three stages: 1) pre-trip; 2) during the trip; and 3) post-trip (Fesenmaier & Jeong, 2000; Stewart & Vogt, 1999; Woodside & King, 2001). This typology is focused on temporal classification. Clawson and Knetsch (1966) more finely divided the tourist experience into five components: 1) anticipation and planning; 2) travel to the actual site; 3) on-site experiences and activities; 4) travel back; and 5) recollection. Not only is Clawson and Knetsch's typology a form of temporal classification, but it also implies what is happening during each stage. They declared that, although it is possible to include more phases in the list, tourists always experience at least these five temporal phases.

When they think of their travels, tourists tend to consider only their on-site experiences, not the other stages. Within the marketing/management approach, the anticipation and planning and the recollection stages generally are not studied as much as other stages, whereas the social science approach assigns these two stages the same importance as other stages. However, to fully understand the tourist experience, researchers and tourism providers should consider all five of these major stages.

In this study, the travel-based tourist experience is investigated within a social science approach focusing on two stages (pre-trip and during the trip) of tourists' experiences to understand the tourists' meaning-making processes.

Dimensions of the Tourist Experience

Numerous studies have categorized the tourist experience based on varying experience characteristics in different contexts. Pekarik, Doering, and Karns (1999) identified four dimensions of a satisfying tourist experience within a museum context: 1) objective experience (seeing "the real thing" from something outside the visitor); 2) cognitive experience (gaining information or knowledge, or enriching understanding); 3) introspective experience (private feelings and experiences, including imagining other times or places, reflecting on one's own meaning, recalling past memories, or connecting spiritually); and 4) social experience (interactions with the travel party, other visitors, or museum staff). These four categorical factors are offered to more fully understand what visitors want and what they value in their activities, from the visitors' point of view.

Kotler and Kotler (2000) agreed that the four dimensions of a tourist experience addressed above are the fundamental dimensions of a museum-going experience. However, to improve the tourist experience in museums, museum managers need to consider additional dimensions. In this vein, Kotler and Kotler (2000) identified six dimensions of the tourist experience in museums: 1) learning experiences; 2) sociable experiences; 3) recreational experiences; 4) aesthetic experiences (visual and sensory); 5) celebrative experiences; and 6) enchanting experiences. Aesthetic experiences are related to intensive sensory perceptions such as through sight, sound, and motion. "Celebrative experiences" and "enchanting experiences" refer to the kinds of events that museums offer. Beyond the traditional experiences[3], celebrative experiences and enchanting experiences help visitors connect with their past or with other cultures, concepts, or resources, and become inspired and awed in the moment.

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[3] The tradition of museums is rooted in gathering, preserving, and studying objects, images and documents (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). Thus a traditional museum experience is simply viewing the objects, images, and documents.

Goulding (2000) categorized four factors of the tourist experience that contribute to a holistic approach to service marketing in a museum setting: 1) social-cultural factors; 2) cognitive factors; 3) psychological factors; and 4) physical and environmental conditions. He indicated that the three fundamental factors (social-cultural factors, cognitive factors, and psychological factors) have been identified in many museum visitor studies. He also added physical and environmental conditions to his study, as an interrelated factor to help explain the quality of an experience. From the tourist's viewpoint, the service encounter in museums is generated during the visit, when tourists directly interact with a service. Physical environment and site conditions affect the delivery of museum products or services within the museum context while tourists visit the place (Goulding, 2000). Goulding (2002), therefore, stated that, in the case of museums, physical and environmental conditions should be taken into account as essential factors to understanding the visitor experience.

Aho (2001) identified several critical core dimensions of tourist experiences within general tourism contexts, including: emotional experiences (getting emotionally affected, or how the emotional impression felt); informative experiences (getting informed or learning); practice experiences (practicing skills such as a language, or sports that tourists learn before a trip); and transformation experiences (permanent changes in the state of mind or body, or in the way of life). Aho (2001) further argued that the role of emotions generated by emotional experiences might affect learning processes, which refer to informative experiences. That is, the dimensions of a tourist experience do not always appear individually. Several dimensions of a tourist experience can be generated simultaneously.

Kang and Gretzel (2012), in their study about the influence of podcasts on tourist experiences, defined the tourist experience as "a constant flow of thoughts and feelings during

moments of consciousness which occur through highly complex psychological, sociological, and cognitive interaction process" (p. 442). Then, they categorized the tourist experience into three dimensions: 1) learning experiences; 2) enjoyment experiences; and 3) escape experiences. Beck and Cable (2002) asserted that interpretation should attempt to entertain tourists while providing information. This indicates that learning and enjoyment are critical components of a tourist experience within a context of interpretation. Pearce (2007) indicated that escaping is the most desired motivation in contemporary tourism. Reinforcing this notion, Kang and Gretzel (2012) included the escape experience as one of the three dimensions of the tourist experience. The studies related to dimensions of tourist experiences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.

Dimensions of Tourist Experiences as Selected Identified in Previous Studies

Researchers	Contexts	Dimensions of Tourist Experiences
Pekarik et al. (1999)	Museums	Objective experiences; cognitive experiences; introspective experiences; and social experiences
Aho (2001)	General tourism destinations	Emotional experiences; informative experiences; practice experiences; and transformation experiences
Goulding (2000)	Museums	Social-cultural factors; cognitive factors; psychological factors; and physical and environmental conditions
Kotler and Kotler (2000)	Museums	Aesthetic experiences (visual and sensory); recreational experiences; sociable experiences; learning experiences; celebratory experiences; and enchanting experiences
Kang and Gretzel (2012)	A national park in the US	Learning experiences; enjoyment experiences; and escape experiences

Among the dimensions of tourist experiences, the cognitive experiences, introspective experiences (often referred to by other terms such as emotional or psychological factors), and social experiences are found to be the most consistent across diverse contexts. In this study, these are considered important dimensions within personal interpretation settings because cognitive and introspective factors, as they relate to the fundamental goals of interpretation, are often

desired outcomes of interpretation: intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meaning of the resource. Group interactions (social experiences) are interrelated with the quality of an interpretive experience within a group in a guided tour setting (Goulding, 2000). In addition, several studies have found that physical and environmental conditions impact on visitors' experiences because these conditions influence "visitors' cognitive, emotional, and physiological response to the environment" (Packer, 2008, p. 34). Therefore, physical and environmental conditions also are considered important dimensions of experience in this study.

Meaningful Interpretive Experience Applied in Tourism Settings

Numerous tourism programs and devices (e.g., audio devices) for tourists have been developed to support the tourist experience. *Interpretation services* are one example (to include both personal interpretation and non-personal interpretation). Barrie (2001) defined an interpretive experience, within the tourist experience, as one's interaction with personal interpretive services (e.g., guided walks, talks, and tours) and/or non-personal interpretive services (e.g., brochures, labels, waysides, and audio-visual presentations). She stated that an interpretive experience provides entertainment, an escape from ordinary life, and even opportunities for imagination and creativity.

Interpretation services can occur in numerous locations and facilities. However, many times, interpretation takes place where cultural and natural resources exist (Knudson et al., 2003). This is because interpretation services are ideally suited for protecting cultural and natural resources, preserving the values associated with them, and provoking a sense of place to visitors (Knudson et al., 2003; Tilden, 1959/2007). Knudson et al. (2003, p. 12) stated that,

if someone comes to an art museum to see the work of a little-known painter, the

interpreters have available signs, labels, references, and docents to make

information available so that visit becomes more meaningful than just a glance at

a picture.

In other words, not only does interpretation contain information such as facts and figures, it also

conveys information in a way that is relevant and meaningful for tourists. This implies the

importance of meaningful experiences through interpretation.

Barrie (2001) asserted that meaningfulness for tourists or interpretive experiences is a

subjective value. She stated that a meaningful interpretive experience has strong personal

significance for the tourists. To promote meaningful interpretive experiences for tourists, tourism

providers and interpreters, Barrie in her study (2001) found three types of recurring elements that

contribute to the creation of meaningful interpretive experiences: personal elements (those that

visitors bring with them to the experience [interests, previous experiences]); site elements (those

over which site managers and interpreters have some control [helping visitors experience the

actual site or item, selection of the topic for interpretation, interpreters' knowledge, site design,

elements that appeal to multiple senses]); and outcome elements (those that emerge for the

visitors as a result of their experiences [a lasting memory, enjoyment, understanding, new fact

acquisition, feeling of awe, having the past brought to life]). What is missing in the literature is

research that explores the process of the interactions among personal and site elements, and that

lead from these two categories of elements to outcome elements.

The importance of "mindfulness" has been emphasized within the interpretive experience

setting (Moscardo, 1999). Mindfulness is a state of mind that derives from novelty and varied

and changing situations that stimulate an individual's active engagement. Mindful tourists are

actively processing new information and reassessing the way they view the world; as a result, mindfulness in tourists can help them achieve more learning, better decision-making, and enhanced enjoyment than if they had not been mindful, or actively engaged in the experience. Although mindfulness may not change and/or improve attitudes or behaviors, it can stimulate tourists to search for and obtain new information to enhance their tourism experience (Moscardo, 1996).

Although both mindfulness and meaningfulness have a positive influence on interpretive experiences in a tourism setting, there is a difference between the two. Mindfulness is about being aware of a place or a resource through stimulation of a tourist's engagement in experiences and their thoughtfulness. Meaningfulness is a realization by each tourist of the personal relevance of both the message and the experience, which together encourage tourists to form their own intellectual and emotional connections. Being mindful can be an important part of the process of creating meaning, and of changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors appropriate in a specific setting.

Mindfulness may lead to a place or a resource becoming meaningful to tourists within an interpretive experience setting. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the differences between, as well as the interrelationships among, mindfulness and meaningfulness in enhancing tourists' interpretive experiences and encouraging their active participation in resource management and/or stewardship behaviors.

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Mechanisms of Meaningfulness

This study is aimed at understanding tourists' meaning-making about resources as a result of personal interpretive experiences. It is based on the assumption that tourists will experience the meaning-making process while they participate in effective personal interpretive programs. This study proposes that, through the meaning-making process, tourists will experience meaningfulness about resources at cultural interpretive sites. Within personal interpretation settings, interpreters would benefit from understanding what will trigger tourists to become mindful while participating in a personal interpretive program, and how this leads to meaningfulness. This section presents two relevant theories that provide support for identifying the mechanism(s) that make(s) tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of participating in personal interpretive services: 1) the theory of meaning-making, and 2) transformation theory of adult learning.

Theory of Meaning-making

The theory of meaning-making, introduced by Robert Kegan (1982), posits ways in which an individual gives meaning to experiences, knowledge, and other events. The theory of meaning-making also explains how people make meaning for themselves and other people. The concept of meaning-making has been developed based on the perspective of constructivism. In the framework of learning and developmental theory, constructivism can be explained as an active process of meaning construction (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Ignelzi, 2000). Erickson (2002) argued that, within the constructivism perspective, knowing is a "process of constructing meaning, making sense or meaning from experience" (p. 7) . Individuals actively construct their own meanings from events and experiences. However,

only certain events and experiences can stimulate creation of meaning. Krauss (2005, pp.762-763) stated that

> … experiencing starts to make sense as [a] person performs his or her
>
> psychological functioning of translating it into how he or she thinks and feels. It is
>
> individuals' subjectivity, or phenomenological world, that forms the very core for
>
> meaning origination and evolvement. People have a freedom to choose meaning
>
> (McArthur, 1958) through their interactive experiencing with various internal and
>
> external contexts (Chen, 2001). As such, meaning is the underlying motivation
>
> behind thoughts, actions, and even the interpretation and application of
>
> knowledge. (pp. 762-763)

Given this, meaning-making is created in how an individual perceives and organizes his/her life experiences (Kegan, 1994).

Abes and Jones' (2004) study used the term meaning-making capacity in relation to identity development. Although in a different context than interpretive tourism experiences, their work sheds light on the process of meaning-making. They argued that meaning-making capacity acted as a filter when it came to constructing students' lesbian identity, between contextual influences (factors such as family background, peer culture, social norms, and stereotypes) and self-perception of the content of lesbian identity. Abes and Jones (2004) claimed that incorporating meaning-making capacity would help to explain the relationship between contextual influences and the self-perception of identity dimensions. Later on, Abes et al. (2007) schematized a conceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity with a meaning-making filter (see Figure 1). The meaning-making filter explains meaning-making capacity. Depending on the depth (thickness) and permeability (size of openings) of the filter, contextual influences

pass through it. For example, if an individual has a relatively less complex meaning-making filter, with thin and wide grid openings, her/his perceptions of identity could be closely connected to contextual influences due to the minimal filtering occurring. On the other hand, if an individual has a complex meaning-making filter, with deep and narrow grid openings, her/his perceptions of identity could be different from her/his contextual influences. Given this, individual identity perceptions and constructions are influenced by their meaning-making capacity, which filters contextual influences (Abes et al., 2007).

Self-Perceptions of Multiple Identity Dimensions, such as race, social class, sexual orientation, gender, religion

Meaning-Making Filter
Depending on complexity, contextual influences pass through to different degrees

Contextual Influences, such as peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions
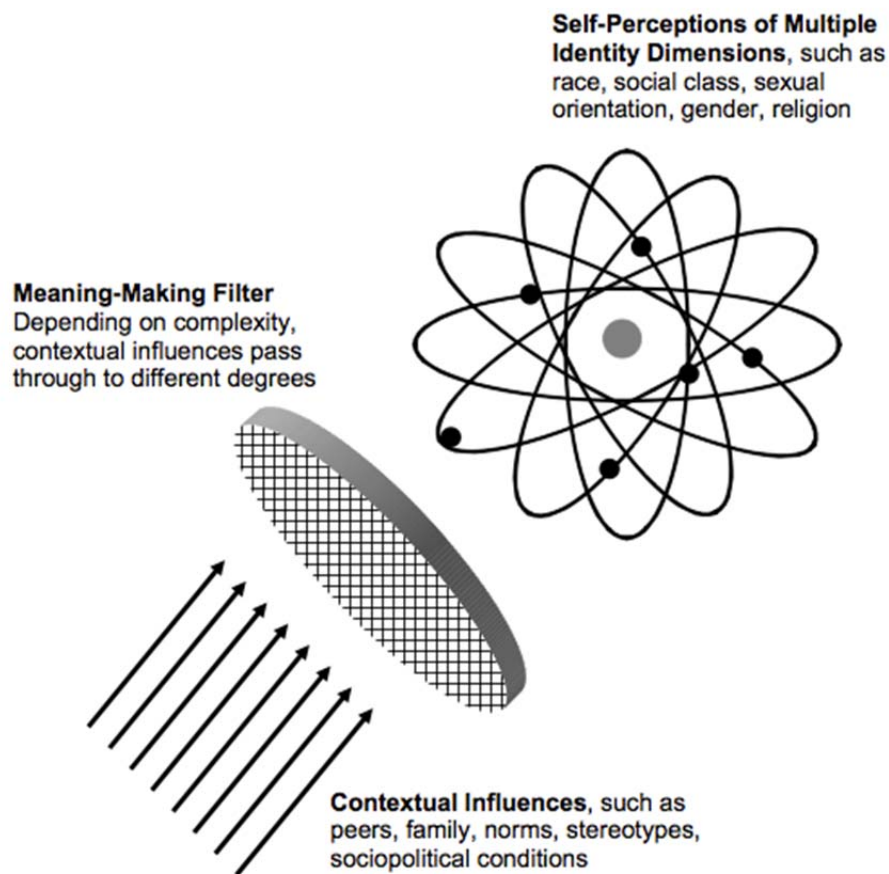
Figure 1. Conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity (Abes et al., 2007 p. 7)

The psychological underpinnings of meaning-making and one's meaning-making capacity can be influenced in interpretation settings, in terms of what people attend to, how they view it, and how they react to it.

Meaning-making in interpretation settings

In the field of interpretation, meaning-making was viewed as a new communication paradigm in the late 1990s (Beck & Cable, 2002). Beck and Cable (2002) argued that, throughout the meaning-making process, information is not simply transmitted, but is created as a negotiation process between senders (e.g., interpreters) and receivers (e.g., visitors). They explained that visitors receiving the information provided by interpreters (or interpretation materials) construct meanings based on their past experiences and knowledge. In a similar vein, a number of researchers in museum studies have emphasized that an important paradigm shift has taken place in museum communication in which museum professionals no longer focus only on 'message transmission,' but now focus on facilitating visitor 'meaning-making' (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Silverman, 1995).

Hein (1998) proposed a constructivist model for museum roles and functions. The constructivist model of a museum, in contrast to a traditional view of a museum, refers to a museum that "present[s] various perspectives, validate[s] different ways of interpreting objects and refer[s] to different points of view and different 'truths' about the material presented" (Hein, 1998, pp. 35-36). Such a museum would help visitors to make their own meanings from the exhibit experience, and to connect unfamiliar things with familiar things. Given this, the constructivist museum encourages visitors' engagement with the meaning-making process while they are visiting.

Falk and Dierking (2000) developed the Contextual Model of Learning (see Figure 2), focusing on the meaning-making process. The contextual model of learning posits that a visitor's learning experience is influenced by three overlapping contexts: a personal context (visitor motivation and expectation, prior knowledge, prior experiences, prior interests, and choice and control), a socio-cultural context (e.g., within-group sociocultural mediation, and facilitated mediation by others), and a physical context (e.g., advance organizers and orientation, design, and reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum). According to the model, a visitor's learning is a cumulative process, depending on the way these three contexts are formed and interact for a visitor over a period of time. Accordingly, it is possible that, no matter what kind of meaning curators' intend to convey, the meaning may or may not be conveyed to visitors. The meaning-making is constructed "as individuals interact with phenomena and cultural knowledge in a social context" (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005, p. 283).
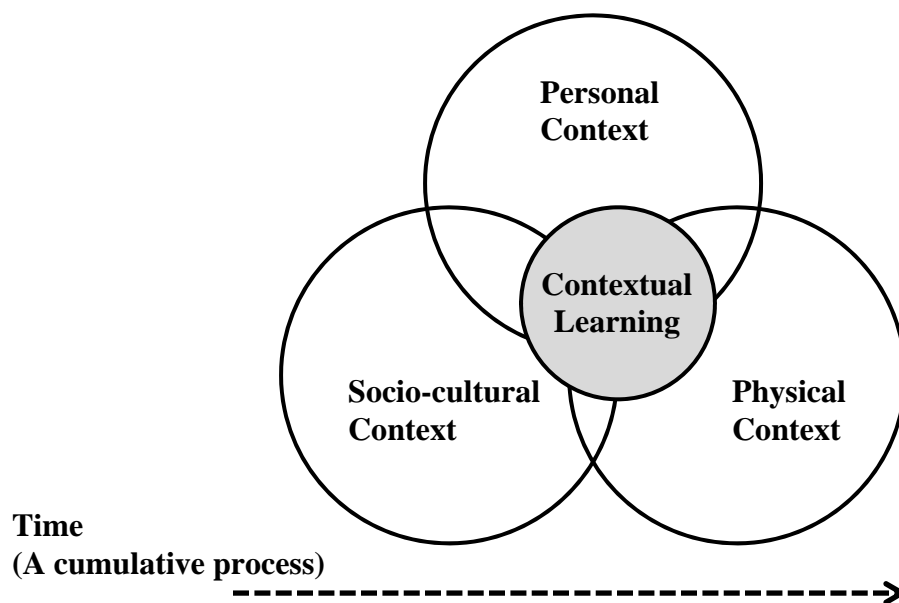
Figure 2. Contextual Learning Model (Adapted from Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 12)

Among the factors influencing visitor's learning experiences within the contextual model of learning, the personal context has been observed to influence visitor's meaning-making; it leads to the recollection of memories. For example, Benton (2008) examined visitors' long-term recollections of a Native American program at the Tusayan Museum and Ruin in Grand Canyon National Park, and found that the majority of the memories recalled were associated with an integration of factual contents that were interpreted using the individuals' personal and modern thoughts. Also, visitors' previous experiences and subjective impressions of the program were incorporated to make a meaning. Benton (2008) found that visitors construct new knowledge "from factors carried forth from the meaning-making process" (p. 297). Accordingly, interpretation should emphasize the ways visitors form their own meanings, based on visitors' past and present experiences. Based on visitors' recollections, and employed words and phrases, Benton (2008) suggested that exhibits, as should other forms of interpretive experiences, should be relevant to a visitor's socio-cultural identity to enhance on-site experiences.

In the context of this study, visitors' personal and socio-cultural contexts are expected to influence how people make meanings while participating in a personal interpretive program. However, these factors do not directly explain which mechanism(s) contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful in a personal interpretive program. In the next section, the transformation theory of adult learning is discussed as a partial basis for explaining the mechanism(s) that will trigger a meaningful experience.

Transformation Theory of Adult Learning

In addressing the nature of adult learning, Mezirow (1996) defined the transformation theory of adult learning as a "process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 162). From the meaning-making perspective, transformative adult learning highlights the necessity for a transformation in meaning perspective when individuals face dilemmas in their lifetimes. According to Mezirow (1978), in dealing with these dilemmas and transforming meaning perspectives, individuals start to develop critical reflection about the fact that they are caught in their own history and are reliving it. Given this, individuals become critically aware of the process of effecting change in a frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997, 2000). Mezirow (2000) stated that

> [People eventually] transform [their] taken-for-granted frames of reference
> (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive,
> discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they
> may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide
> action (pp. 7-8).

A frame of reference refers to "the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences," and contains associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses, to name just a few (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). The frame of reference involves cognitive, affective, and conative components, and is divided into two dimensions: a habit of mind and a point of view (Mezirow, 1997, 2000). A habit of mind is a set of assumptions that are broad, abstract, generalized, orienting, and habitual that generally guides a person's way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Habits of mind, according to Mezirow (2000), become expressed

as a specific point of view. A point of view is a set of immediate specific expectations, the complex combination of feelings, beliefs, judgments and attitudes that "shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects, and attribute causality (Mezirow, 2000, p. 18). To summarize, frames of reference, which are composed of habits of mind and points of view, will filter sense impressions, and shape and delimit "perception, cognition, feeling, and disposition by predisposing our intentions, expectations, and purposes" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 16). The frames of reference work the same as the meaning-making filter, although different terms are used in different disciplines.

Taylor (2007) claimed that, within transformative learning studies, one area given a great deal of attention is the practice of fostering transformative learning. After reviewing nineteen related studies conducted from 1999 through 2005, Taylor (2007) found several overlapping areas critical to fostering transformative learning: 1) the importance of providing direct and active learning experiences; 2) the importance of having diverse media available; 3) the importance of 'pedagogical entry points' (the point where individuals are consciously engaging their personal limitations while simultaneously starting to stretch those limits in a potentially transformative experience); and 4) the nature and importance of support when fostering transformative learning. A limited number of studies have investigated transformative learning as a way to identify specific elements that help foster transformative learning. A majority of the transformative learning studies took place in formal educational settings, but there has been little discussion about transformative learning in non-formal educational settings, such as interpretive settings in tourism.

Transformation theory of adult learning applied in interpretation settings

As stated earlier, Mezirow's (1978, 1994, 1997, 2000) transformation theory of adult learning has been selected as a partial basis for investigating the mechanism(s) that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful in the personal interpretive programs in this study. Mezirow (1997, p.10) argued:

> To become meaningful, learning requires that new information be incorporated by the learner into an already well-developed symbolic frame of reference, an active process involving thought, feelings, and disposition. The learner may also have to be helped to transform his or her frame of reference to fully understand the experience.

Although his argument was developed within formal, higher education settings, Many commonalities exist between Mezirow's explanation of meaningful transformative learning and the experience of meaningful interpretive programs.

Beck and Cable (2002) asserted that, as free-choice learning activities, interpretive programs that are appropriately developed and delivered can enhance tourists' understanding, appreciation, and protection of cultural and natural resources. By connecting with tourists' previous experiences and knowledge (similar to Mezirow's statement about incorporating new information into an already well-developed symbolic frame of reference), interpretation is able to provoke tourists while providing information and increasing awareness (Batten, 2005; Tilden, 1959/2007). The transformation theory of adult learning may help to explain the mechanism(s) for how tourists build connections and derive a subjective value – meaningfulness.

Based on the meaning-making process as a fundamental perspective in adult learning, the transformation theory of adult learning adds a critical mode for making meaning: critical reflection on meaning perspectives. Mezirow (1994, p. 224) stated that "[r]eflecting on the

content and process of our problems is the way we change our minds and transform our meaning schemes, an everyday phenomenon." That is, while every experience or item learned cannot be a valuable experience, the changes that people go through based on their critical reflections and assessments about the issue become meaningful. Accordingly, it is possible that understanding the process of critical reflection could help researchers to understand the extent to which interpretive programs lead to a meaningful experience for tourists, in a way that transforms their subjective values.

While critical reflection has been emphasized in the transformative theory of adult learning as a key element to understanding the subject's learning behavior, there is little discussion about emotions in relation to transformative learning. An affective way of knowing – based heavily on making emotional connections – should also be considered within the tourism and recreational setting. The stimulation of emotions "provide[s] another way to communicate, to touch [tourists]" (Knudson et al., 2003, p. 293). Farber and Hall (2007) stated that emotions are a key dimension of the quality of the overall experience in tourism and recreational settings. Thus, emotion is a critical component in understanding tourist experiences.

In summary, based on the transformation theory of adult learning, tourists' connections and provocations may be made not only through an awareness of information – provided by an interpretive program, and combined with the context of tourists' knowledge, values, and feelings (frames of reference) – but also through critical reflection about the validity of their assumptions or premises. Therefore, in this study, both emotions, which are missing in the transformation theory of adult learning, and critical reflection are considered in concert with the theory of meaning-making to understand the mechanism(s) that contribute to helping to make tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of participating in personal interpretive programs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Overview

This study explores the meaning-making process and its elements for English-speaking international tourists as a result of their participation in personal interpretive programs about cultural and/or historical resources at a cultural tourism setting in Korea. This study utilized qualitative research methods to assess if and how tourists experienced mindfulness and meaning-making while participating in personally delivered interpretive programs (guided tours).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined a research paradigm as the basic belief system or worldview that guides a researcher. Paradigms shape how researchers investigate their world, and provide basic logical frameworks for individual studies. Accordingly, it is crucial that researchers define a certain research paradigm before undertaking their own research. In this study, I define my research paradigm as constructivism, which is aimed at "displaying multiple constructed realities through the shared investigation (by researchers and participants) of meanings and explanations" (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 12). The goal of constructivism is to uncover a consensual construction of the phenomenon under study, not to find any definitive causal relationships. To explain knowledge construction, constructivists claim "knowing to be an active process of constructing meaning, making sense or making meaning of experience" (Erickson, 2002, p. 55). Because of the exploratory nature of this study and the subjective nature of the concept under study – the meaning-making process as experienced through tourists' participation in interpretive guided tours – the focus of this study is situated within a constructivist research approach.

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Based on the constructivist research approach, this chapter describes the research methods used in this study, and includes discussion of: 1) selection and description of data collection methods; 2) interview guide development; 3) site description; 4) sampling frame; 5) pilot study; 6) changes as a result of pilot study; 7) on-site procedures; and 8) data analysis.

Selection and Description of Data Collection Methods

This section describes the data collection techniques employed in this study. Patton (2002) stated that using multiple methods in qualitative research is preferable to using just one method because it helps researchers to understand the phenomenon in question more thoroughly than if only a single method was used. Moreover, the use of multiple methods leaves the data less vulnerable to errors that are linked directly to a particular method. In this study, to illuminate the inquiry questions and ensure validity of the data, both direct observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as data collection methods. Observations, personal interactions with tour participants during the tour, and interview results all helped me to put a context around, and understand the various factors that contribute to, tour participant meaning-making. Trustworthiness also is discussed as critical to ensuring the validity and reliability of this study.

Direct Observations

According to Creswell (2011) and Ritchie (2003), observation offers an opportunity to understand and capture the context within which people interact. Field notes about the research site as well as the behavior and activities of the people provide a written record of these observations. Ritchie (2003) argues that direct observation is a useful approach "when a study is concerned with investigating a 'process' involving several players, where an understanding of

non-verbal communications is likely to be important" (p. 35). The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the mechanism(s) that contribute to helping tourists have meaningful experiences in a personal interpretive program. The exploratory nature of the research, and the fact that mechanisms and meanings are created during a guided tour, and are influenced by various contextual factors, made direct observation necessary. That is, in this study I made direct observations to generate understanding about the research settings, context factors, interpreter characteristics, and characteristics and interpretive techniques incorporated in the guided tours, as well as the associated actions, reactions, and behaviors exhibited during the tours by those whom I was studying – the program participants (potential interviewees). Observations helped me to understand the complexities of many situations in the study and served to complement interview responses. I conducted site and interpreter characteristic observations at two initially selected research sites (Changdeokgung and the National Museum of Korea) during the pilot-test period, and continually observed program attendees, interpreters, and the interpretive techniques used throughout the entire study timeframe.

To record observations, I kept field notes that included: 1) descriptive information about the site, group size, observable tour participant characteristics, and physical characteristics of the settings; 2) what people said, the questions they asked, and other observable actions/reactions related to the tour; 3) my own feelings, reactions to the experience, and reflections; and 4) my insights and interpretation about what was happening in the setting (an observation record sheet and daily field notes can be found in Appendices A and B).

Furthermore, during each tour I made an initial contact with many of the tourists on the tour. Rubin and Rubin (2005) argue that, when responsive interviews are held within a conversational partnership, relationship development between a researcher and an interviewee is

crucial because it influences the interviewing process. Thus, to develop at least minimal informal relationships with potential interviewees (tourists) before I requested a volunteer and conducted the actual interview, I tried to make initial contact with as many people as possible. However, to minimize bias regarding the phenomenon under study, I did not talk about information such as the place being toured, the site's cultural resources, or Korean culture in general, as that may have influenced interviewees' responses.

Interviews

To gain rich information, I chose to use open-ended, semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Lewis (2003) stated that the in-depth interview provides "an opportunity for detailed investigation of each person's personal perspective, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is located, and for very detailed subject coverage" (p. 58). Thus, the in-depth interview was an appropriate technique to employ in this study to understand tourists' meaning-making processes, which are intangible and subjective. Multiple types of in-depth interviews can be used and differentiated by varying characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses. More detailed explanations of my decision criteria and process for this choice of types follow.

Patton (2002) categorized three basic types (approaches) of in-depth, open-ended interviews for collecting qualitative data. The three types are:1) the informal conversational interview; 2) the general interview guide approach; and 3) the standardized open-ended interview (see Table 2).

Table 2

Variations in Interview Types

Type of Interview	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
Informal conversational interview	Questions emerge from the immediate context; there is no pre-determination of questions, topics, or wording.	Increases the salience and relevance of questions to the respondents; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.	Possible to have different information collected from each interviewee; unsystematic and comprehensive; difficult to organize and analyze data.
Interview guide approach	Topic and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions during the course of the interview.	Increases the comprehensiveness of the data; somewhat systematic data collection; logical gaps in data can be closed; fairly conversational and situational.	Possible to omit important topics; reduced comparability of responses due to different ordering and wording.
Standardized open-ended interview	The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance; all interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order; questions are worded in a completely open-ended format.	Increases comparability of responses; gets complete data related to the topics addressed in the interview; reduces interviewer effects and bias; facilitates organization and analysis of the data.	Little flexibility in relating the interview; standardized questions may constrain naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.

Source: Adapted from Patton 2002, p. 349.

In this study, to explore the many facets of the meaning-making process, I combined two approaches: the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. The interview guide approach fits well with the nature of the meaning-making inquiry, allowing for exploration of a participant's individual interpretive experiences with a natural flow, while the standardized open-ended interview elements ensure that important and salient topics are

covered systematically. To make this research design rigorous, a discussion of how trustworthiness was addressed in this study follows.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research methods emphasize insightful and in-depth analysis of specific situations and/or populations, allowing researchers to uncover hidden meanings and latent structures, and to strengthen the validity of the measure (Lune, Pumar, & Koppel, 2010). Due to these characteristics, qualitative researchers depend on subjective judgments about data and interpretation. This is one of the main criticisms associated with qualitative research methods (Glesne, 2006). Nevertheless, qualitative research highlights the importance of validation and reliability, but in ways different than for quantitative methods. While different terms are used (see below for the exact terms), they are comparable conceptually to the quantitative terms of validity and reliability. To enhance the quality of qualitative research, trustworthiness must be considered.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for minimizing subjectivity and building trustworthiness in a qualitative study. The criteria are represented by four questions:

1. How truthful are the particular findings? (i.e., credibility as an analog to internal validity);

2. How applicable are the research findings to another setting or group? (i.e., transferability as an analog to external validity);

3. Are the results consistent and reproducible? (i.e., dependability as an analog to reliability); and

4. How neutral are the findings? (i.e., confirmability as an analog to objectivity).

The trustworthiness of this study was established by considering these four criteria. The following describe detailed steps taken to enhance trustworthiness in this study:

Credibility

Credibility refers to establishing the truthful value or believability of the data. To accomplish this, I incorporated the following procedures: member checks, triangulation, peer debriefing, and field notes.

Member checks: This technique is used to account for participants' views of the credibility of the raw data, analyses, and interpretations. As the most critical technique for establishing credibility, member checks can play a major role in judging the accuracy and credibility of participants (Creswell, 2007). In this study, interview transcripts were sent to interviewees by email for their review and clarification. Also, a draft of the final paper was sent via email to interviewees who indicated a wish to review it.

Triangulation: This technique is used to measure a single phenomenon or research question using different sources, such as some combination of multiple data sources, investigators, analysis methods, and theories (Patton, 1999). In this study, two data sources (observations and in-depth interviews) were used to increase credibility by providing corroborating evidence from different sources.

Peer debriefing: This technique is used as "an external check of the research process" (Creswell, 2007, p.251). As a "devil's advocate," the peer debriefer keeps the researcher honest by asking hard questions about the methods, procedures, and interpretations of the study. My dissertation committee members and the external auditor played a debriefing role. Their reading of my research proposal and reviewing of the data analysis procedure assisted in identifying

potential biases associated with my research procedures and with myself, as a subjective researcher.

Transferability

Detailed, thick description contributes to transferability because it allows other researchers to evaluate whether it can be applied to similar settings. In this study, I took field notes and recorded the interviews during the fieldwork, which together provided detailed description of the contexts and data. They are available upon request.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1986, p. 77) stated that "that part of the audit that examines the process results in a dependability judgment, while that part concerned with the product (data and reconstructions) results in a confirmability judgment." In this study, to verify my fieldwork and all of the categorized data (transcriptions, code table developed from the entire set of data, categorized coding developed from the data segments grouped by research questions), an external auditor was asked to review my research procedures, code development, and data analysis. The inquiry process and analysis procedures were written in detail to allow other researchers to check on dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which others can confirm the study findings. In this study, an audit trail and a triangulation technique were employed to achieve confirmability. The audit trail was created by using an external auditor who conducted a review of my research procedures, raw data, and code tables. Patton (2002) noted that triangulation refers to a means of confirmability. Therefore, as stated above, two data sources reinforce the confirmability.

Interview Guide Development

An interview guide was used in this study to provide a core set of questions to be asked during the interview and to help the interviewer be systematic and comprehensive by delimiting, in advance, the issues to be explored during the interview. Based on the literature review, interview questions were developed to address research questions as well as to identify the relevant constructs and components (e.g., mindfulness, meaningfulness, and critical reflection) of the interpretive experience. The interview questions were designed to ask about facts first, then ask about abstract or personal matters (e.g., emotional and intellectual responses to the interpretive experiences). This sequencing of questions helps interviewees more easily engage in the interview (Patton, 2002).

Questions were asked in a total of five categories; each category consisted of several probing questions. The five categories were: 1) travel choice and pattern questions; 2) questions about the attended program; 3) questions related to the participant's mindful and meaningful experiences; 4) questions related to meaningfulness of the sites and culture; and 5) demographic questions. A summary of all constructs and components, as associated with the interview questions in this study, is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Initial List of Research Questions (Pre-pilot Test) with Relevant Sources

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Prior experiences: Korean culture; Interpretive experiences	1-d Have you participated in personally delivered tours before, either in your country or in Korea?	Can you briefly describe one that particularly stands out to you? What are the reasons you remember this one so well?	Fesenmaier & Jeng (2000); Woodside & King (2001)
	1-e What other sites or activities have you participated in while in Korea?	How did these activities affect your understanding of Korea?	
	4-a Tell me about your image and impression of Korea before this trip.		
Future intention	4-e Do you think the [most meaningful experience that you mentioned before] will influence your intention to revisit Korea? Would part of the purpose of a future trip be to learn more about Korean culture, or for some other purpose?	If yes, why? Do you want to attend any tours or other personally delivered programs? Why or why not?	Fesenmaier & Jeng (2000); Woodside & King (2001)
Personal context	1-a Is this your first visit to Korea?		Falk & Dierking (2000); Benton (2008)
	1-b What is the purpose of your visit?		
	1-c How long are you staying in Korea?		
	1-d Have you participated in personally delivered tours previously, either in your home country or in Korea? (other than today's experience)	Can you briefly describe one that particularly stands out to you? What are the reasons you remember this one so well?	
	1-f What other things do you plan to do during the rest of your visit to Korea?		

Table 3. (Cont'd)

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Personal context (Cont'd)	4-f If you had a choice between getting information about Korea and its people from personal interpretive programs (such as this tour) and non-personal interpretation (such as print or electronic media, videos, or indoor/outdoor exhibits), which would you usually prefer, especially when visiting a different country?	Why?	
	2-a What was your motivation for participating in this tour?		
	2-b What were your expectations of the tour?	You can talk about program structure, content, or experience elements.	
Cognitive experiences	2-f Was the content of the tour new to you or were you already familiar with some or all of the content?	How familiar were you with the content? What parts did you know? How did you previously know about these parts?	Pekarik et al. 1999); Kotler & Kotler (2000); Aho (2001); Kang & Gretzel (2012)
	3-a What is your reaction to the tour?	What were the main things you learned from the tour? Was it informative? Did you learn something new about Korean history/culture?	
Introspective experiences	2-c Did the tour meet your expectations?	If so, how? If not, why not?	Pekarik et al. (1999);
	2-g What did you like about the tour?		
	2-h What did you not like about the tour?		

Table 3. (Cont'd)

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Introspective experiences (Cont'd)	3-a What is your reaction to the tour?	Was it interesting to you? Was it fun, or did you feel bored during the tour? What else were you feeling during the tour? Did anything in the tour make you think more deeply about Korea or Koreans? Did anything in the tour challenge your previous perceptions of Korea?	Kotler & Kotler (2000); Aho (2001)
	4-d When you were visiting [the place], did you have a sense of interacting with history and/or Korean culture?	Was this because of the tour itself or something else? Please explain [Develop a prompt on the spot, depending on respondent's comments]	
Social experiences	2-d Did you interact with other tour group participants?	Did other people in your tour group seem to be interested/ active/ engaged in the tour and the tour stories?	Pekarik et al. (1999); Kotler & Kotler (2000); Falk & Dierking (2000)
	2-e Please tell me about your tour guide.	[Your comments can address tone of delivery, customs, tour guide's attitude, method or style of presenting stories, or anything else you remember.]	
Physical & environmental context	2-g What did you like about the tour?	Please describe elements of [the physical and environmental context] that you liked.	Goulding (2000); Falk & Dierking (2000)
	2-h What did you dislike about the tour?	Please describe elements of [the physical and environmental context] that you did not like.	
Mindfulness	3-a What is your reaction to the tour?	Were the tour and its stories interesting to you? Was the tour fun, or did you feel bored or disinterested or frustrated during the tour?	Moscardo (1999); Kang & Gretzel (2012)

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Table 3. (Cont'd)

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Mindfulness (Cont'd)		Did you make any judgments about how worthwhile or worthless your experience was? If so, what were they?	
Meaningfulness	3-b Think about the tour from the beginning to the end, and describe the part of the tour that was the most meaningful to you.	Why do you feel that this was your most meaningful experience? Were there any other specific elements of the tour that you liked or remembered?	Barrie (2001); Tilden (2007); Batten (2005)
	3-d How did the [most meaningful experience] here differ from other museum-based experiences/historic site experiences you have had before, anywhere?		
	3-e (If you have had previous interpretive experiences) Did this differ from other guided tour experiences you have had before, anywhere?	If so, what are some of those differences?	
	4-b In general, was [the tour] a meaningful experience to you?	If so, what do you value most about having participated in the tour? Why is this important to you? If not, why not? What could have made it more meaningful?	
Critical reflection	4-a Before you visited Korea, what were some of the main images and impressions you had about Korea?	Did [the tour] you participated in today change your images, impressions, or thoughts? How? Why?	Mezirow (2000); Taylor (2007); Aho (2001)
	4-b In general, was [the tour] a meaningful experience to you?	If so, what do you value most about having participated in the tour? Why is this important to you? If not, why not? What could have made it more meaningful?	

Table 3. (Cont'd)

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Meaningful elements	3-b Think about the tour from the beginning to the end, and describe the part of the tour that was the most meaningful to you.	Why did you feel that this was your most meaningful experience? Were there any specific elements of the tour that you liked or remembered?	Barrie (2001)
	3-c Did having a person present the story to you, rather than having to read signs/ brochures or listen to a podcast, etc., influence this [the most meaningful experience]?	How did the personal interpretation influence this [the most meaningful experience]? Can you explain the specific reasons?	
	3-d How did the [most meaningful experience] here differ from other museum-based experiences/historic site experiences you have had before, anywhere?		
	3-e (If you have had previous interpretive experiences) Did this differ from other guided tour experiences you have had before, anywhere?	If so, what are some of those differences?	
	4-b In general, was [the tour] a meaningful experience for you?	If so, what do you value most about having participated in the tour? Why is this important to you? If not, why not? What could have made it more meaningful?	
	4-d When you were visiting [the place], did you have a sense of interacting with history and/or Korean culture?	Was this because of the tour itself or something else? Please explain. [Develop a prompt on the spot, depending on respondent's comments.]	

Table 3. (Cont'd)

Question Focus	Interview Questions	Follow-up Probes	Relevant Literature
Comprehensive questions	2-c Did the tour meet your expectations?	If so, how? If not, why not?	
	3-e Did this tour differ from other guided tour experiences you have had before?	If so, how?	
	2-g What did you like about the tour?		
	2-h What did you dislike about the tour?		
	3-b Think about the tour from the beginning to the end, and describe the part of the tour that was the most meaningful to you.	Why do you feel that this was your most meaningful experience? Were there any other specific elements of the tour that you liked or remembered?	
	3-d How did the [most meaningful experience] here differ from other museum-based experiences/historic site experiences you have had before, anywhere?		
	3-e (If you have had previous interpretive experiences) Did this differ from other guided tour experiences you have had before, anywhere?	If so, what are some of those differences?	
	4-b In general, was [the tour] a meaningful experience for you?	If so, what do you value most about having participated in the tour? Why is this important to you? If not, why not? What could have made it more meaningful?	
Demographic questions	4-a What is your home country?		
	5-b What year were you born?		
	5-c Are you traveling with family/friends/solo?	(If the participant is traveling in a group) how many are there?	
	5-d What kind of work do you do for a living?		
	5-e What is your highest level of education?		

Site Descriptions

Two cultural tourism destinations in Korea offering personal interpretive programs were selected initially for this study, to include both an outdoor and an indoor site: Changdeokgung (also known as Changdeok Palace), which was constructed in 1405 and designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1997, and the National Museum of Korea (NMK), which is Korea's largest museum in terms of its collections and annual visitation. Changdeokgung represents an outstanding national outdoor interpretive site that provides information about the Josen Dynasty in Korea, and contains historic official and residential buildings within their authentic natural setting. The NMK represents an outstanding national indoor interpretive site that contains Korean cultural assets, as well as national pieces, and offers a number of cultural activities related to relic collection and preservation. Both sites offer regularly scheduled personal interpretive programs in several languages.

Although qualitative research does not require a representative sample of the population, to capture rich data that includes varied aspects of the meaning-making phenomenon being studied, several criteria were used in selecting these two potential study sites. Selected were Korean cultural destinations that:

1. offer interpretive tours that actually incorporate interpretive principles;

2. present Korean historic, cultural stories;

3. offer regularly scheduled formal personal interpretive programs in English for English speakers;

4. host a substantial number of English-speaking international tourists, who are the target audience for this study; and

5. agreed to host a research study that includes direct visitor contacts.

Sampling Frame

Formal data collection was conducted from May 15 through August 11, 2013. Prior to formal data collection, a pilot study was conducted from May 1 through May 14, 2013, to test the sampling procedures, interviewee recruitment procedures and effectiveness, site logistics, observation forms and procedures, and the interview guide.

This study employed a purposeful sampling procedure to select potential interviewees. Creswell (2011, p. 178) stated that "the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question," and to obtain information-rich data to meet the research goals.

The research population of this study comprised tourists who participated in interpretive programs at two initially selected study sites (Changdeokgung, NMK). My target sample was independent tourists who were at least 18 year old. All study participants had to be international tourists who spoke English. Sample selection was made from a group of international tourists who:

1. were at least 18 years old;

2. spoke English as either a native or second language;

3. were independent travelers rather than group-based tourists;

4. participated in one of the identified guided tours at either of the two study sites; and

5. agreed to participate in the study.

Because the target informants were English speakers, the participants could come from a variety of countries (e.g., the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia).

Sampling Procedure

Because my target sample was independent foreign tourists having limited time in Korea, I knew it would be challenging to recruit interviewees who were willing to spend some of this limited free time during their holiday travel to share their experiences. To overcome this difficulty, I used a strategy to develop a relationship with tourists during the tour, explain the importance of the study, and to conduct interviews (as a Korean) in a way that perhaps further enhanced their Korean experience. Thus, I participated in the selected interpretive tours with other tourists at the two study sites rather than just asking individuals before or after the tour to participate in the study. This procedure allowed me to make personal contact with potential interviewees prior to asking for their participation, which helped me build credibility and trust with program participants, at least to some extent.

I asked the tour interpreter to introduce me as a researcher and provide a brief explanation of my study's purpose before the program began. After hearing the explanation, tourists were asked to participate voluntarily in the study after their tour. Potential interviewees were informed about the amount of time they could expect the interview to take (from 30 minutes to one hour). They also were informed that participants would receive a small souvenir from the site they were visiting as a thank you for participating in the interview.

Sample Size

Patton (2000) asserted that, in qualitative research, specifying the minimum number for a sample size is preferable to addressing the exact sample size. This is because the logic of purposeful sampling is different from that of random sampling, which requires a minimum or above sample size to meet a statistical principle. "Purposeful samples should be judged

according to the purpose and rationale of the study" (Patton, 2002, p. 245). In this study, the minimum sample size was 30 people. As addressed above, potential participants were from diverse countries. Different cultural backgrounds of this diverse sample could trigger different mechanism(s) of mindfulness and meaningfulness, as related to experiences within cultural tourism settings. It was determined that at least 30 people were needed to distinguish whether the variety of results was from cultural differences or personal differences. Ultimately, because repetition of perspectives within tourists from single-country background was not obtained with only 30 tourists, data collection continued until no new information was forthcoming from new respondents. The total formal sample size was 59 people.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is used to determine whether a planned approach to data collection and analysis is logical, feasible, and realistic. It gives researchers an opportunity to assess the study logistics, sampling strategy, and informant recruitment. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to collect, review, and analyze preliminary data. Thus, a pilot study was conducted at two cultural tourism destinations (Changdeokgung and NMK) during the first and second weeks of May to determine whether the planned approach to data collection and analysis was logical, feasible and realistic.

To begin, I participated as an observer in the interpretive programs (guided tours) delivered in English at the two initially identified sites to experience the actual tours and the context of the study sites. It was critical to make some assessments about the quality and characteristics of the interpretive programs being given to the tourists whom I would later interview. That is, evaluating the characteristics, quality, and consistency of the interpretive

programs was necessary to assess one of the criteria used in the pilot study – use of interpretive principles in the guided tours. As a result of the assessments, I chose Changdeokgung as my only study site.

After assessing the program appropriateness and selecting one site, I contacted a manager in charge of the Department of Changdeokgung, a branch of the *Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea*, to obtain approval for the on-site study, and received permission to enter the study site with a waiver of my admission fees. As a requirement of this permission, whenever I engaged with visitors as part of my field study, I was required to wear official badges identifying me as either an official researcher or an official government employee. This identifying badge distinguished me from other program participants.

It must be noted that it was impossible to make initial contact with all of the participants in any single tour because each tour served an average of 84 people. Thus, a strategy I employed to increase the likelihood of success in finding appropriate interviewees was to target people who positioned themselves in front of the tour group because they were paying the most attention to the guide's interpretive presentations. I tried to make initial contact with people who were in front as often as possible, and then asked about their willingness to participate in the study. When I asked for their participation, I briefly reintroduced myself as a graduate student at Michigan State University and as a native Korean. These two roles, as a local person and a student, enabled me to appeal for help from the international tourists by making the potential interviewees feel interested and not threatened, respectively.

As part of the pilot study, I conducted in-depth interviews with four participants at Changdeokgung. Those who agreed to participate were interviewed on site, using the draft interview guide (see Table 3 for the initial set of all interview questions). I then analyzed the

interview transcripts and made minor changes in the interview guide based on their interview

responses and suggestions. Responses from these four participants provided feedback about each

specific question; helped to verify the appropriateness of questions for answering the research

questions; clarified word choice, definitions of terms, and question order; and verified that the

research protocol was realistic and workable. Even though the time frame was tight, it was

feasible because I made some of the changes based on what had happened in earlier interviews,

during the pilot test, and was mostly looking for the ways people responded to my questions as I

worked through the logistics process.

Changes as a Result of the Pilot Study

Through the pilot study, I was able to test many aspects of the proposed research. I made

several changes to meet research criteria and to make the research protocol realistic and

workable. First, as stated above, I chose Changdeokgung as my only site. To connect this study's

results with 'interpretation,' it was crucial to evaluate the quality and consistency of the

interpretive programs. I assessed the interpretive programs at the two sites and subsequently

decided to drop the NMK as a study site for two main reasons: 1) limited number of international

tourists participated in the NMK tours (first attempt: none; second attempt: three people

including one Korean; third attempt: six people including four Koreans); 2) the content and

quality of the program was not consistent or good, based on the use of interpretive principles and

elements, which varied depending on the interpreter. Changdeokgung, on the other hand,

provided a consistent quality of interpretive program across all interpreters, and many

international tourists participated in the tours. Thus, NMK was not an appropriate study site

based on the research criteria, so I ultimately chose Changdeokgung as my only site.

Changdeokgung offers two types of regularly scheduled guided tours (the Palace tour and the Secret Garden tour) in several languages. Detailed information about the guided tours is presented in Table 4. Between the Palace tour and the Secret Garden tour, the latter was chosen as my target interpretive program because it offered a logistical advantage for selecting a sample. The Secret Garden can be accessed only if tourists participate in the guided tour. Also, they had to remain with the interpreter throughout the tour, in contrast with many other tours in which tour participants often drift in and out for a variety of reasons. Given this, all of the participants automatically met one of the criteria: tourists who participated in an identified guided tour at the study site.

Table 4.

Schedule and Fees for Guided Tours

Attributes		The Palace Tours	The Secret Garden Tours
Admission fees		Adults ₩ 3,000 Children ₩ 1,500	Adults ₩ 5,000 Children ₩ 2,500 (Required to purchase a palace ticket)
Languages for regular programs	Korean	09:30 – 10:30 11:30 – 12:30 13:30 – 14:30 15:30 – 16:30 16:30 – 17:30	10:00 – 11:30 11:00 – 12:30 12:00 – 13:30 13:00 – 14:30 14:00 – 15:30 15:00 – 16:30 16:00 – 17:30 16:30 – 18:00
	English	10:30 – 11:30 14:30 – 15:30	11:30 – 13:00 13:30 – 15:00 16:30 – 18:00
	Japanese	12:30 – 13:30	10:30 – 12:00 14:00 – 16:30
	Chinese	16:00 – 17:00	12:30 – 14:00
	Closed on Mondays		

Note: ₩ 1,000 (Korean Won) ≈ $0.93 (US Dollar)

Second, minor changes in the sampling procedure were made for practical reasons. During the data collection period, five English-speaking tour guides were allocated to the English tour programs, with their tour schedules assigned on a weekly basis. However, I participated in programs given by only three of the designated experienced-interpreters because of the permission I received from the Department of Changdeokgung. Additionally and for the most part, I participated in only one tour and drew one participant per day; however, when the schedule allowed for it, I participated in two tours and drew two participants.

Finally, several minor changes were made to the interview guide, based on results of the pilot test. First, I shortened transition words and deleted repetitive, similar sub-questions to allow enough time for an interviewee's responses. Second, to clarify questions and focus responses on my research objectives, I added a few words, thereby clarifying questions (e.g., "What are the main things you want to see and experience when you are traveling?"; "How did you get tourism information about Korea?"; and "Did you learn about and experience Korean historical and cultural resources from the tour?"), and sub-questions (e.g., "Did other tourists in the tour influence your experiences?"; "Do you think the parts you already know about influence your experiences in Changdeokgung"; "Is there anything you liked/disliked about the physical and environmental contexts?"; "Was the guide's explanation informative?"; "Was it fun?"; and "Did the tour guide grab your attention at that moment?"). The revised final version of the detailed interview guide can be found in Appendix C.

On-site Procedures

The direct observations and in-depth interviews were conducted with participants on tours given in the Secret Garden, based on the purposeful selection of tours offered from Tuesday through Sunday during the formal data collection period of May 15 – August 11, 2013.

The original plan was to interview one participant at a time. However, practical issues associated with tourist behavior and preferences influenced a decision to conduct dual interviews occasionally. Sometimes the companions of interview volunteers, who accompanied the originally selected interviewee to the interview site, decided they would also like to participate. To maintain differentiation of the interviewees, even when there were multiple participants in an interview session, each person was asked each question. Consequently, I was able to collect all of the responses to all of the questions from each interviewee. It is possible that each person's responses might have been influenced by the other's responses. However, because each participant was asked specifically to describe meaningful experiences based on his/her personal participation on the tour, the interaction influence was minimal. In addition, while listening to participants' responses, I was able to observe more than just their responses, such as voice tone, facial expressions, and gestures, which helped reinforce my understanding of the meanings underlying the responses. The dual interviews took much longer than a single interview, but participants tended to take sufficient time to answer questions when both could be engaged rather than one of them hurrying to complete an interview because a companion was waiting. Thus, responses from the dual interviews were included in my sample.

During the field interviews, cool drinks were offered. All interviews were conducted immediately after the interviewee had finished his/her tour. Venues for the interviews varied, but were selected based on the following criteria: 1) a place where an interviewee was comfortable;

2) a place quiet enough to record the voice; and 3) a public place with other people nearby to provide safety for the interviewer. Coffee shops (inside and outside of the palace) and a restaurant were used as venues.

Before each interview, I received written consent (see Appendix D) from the participant and asked each person to give an additional verbal consent at the beginning of the recorded interview. The interviewee then was given a copy of the consent form so s/he had all of the relevant information about the study as well as contact information for me and for the Michigan State University IRB office. Every interview except one was recorded using a digital voice recorder, and was then transcribed. One interviewee objected to having the interview recorded, so I took written notes. The interviews lasted from 25 minutes at minimum to 90 minutes at maximum, depending on the length of interviewees' responses and whether one or two tourists were being interviewed.

The interview guide was open-ended and semi-structured. During the interview, after providing all the requisite human subjects language, explaining the interview procedures, and obtaining voluntary agreement to participate, I asked the interviewee a series of semi-structured questions. The interview guide, which included broad questions that were developed to address each research question and build on the concepts presented in the literature, was used at Changdeokgung, with question language tailored to the study site, as needed.

Each study participant was asked for his/her email address so a transcription could be sent for interviewee review and to ensure that nothing that s/he talked about had been missed and/or misunderstood. Also, participants were informed that if they did not respond within a week, I would assume that the transcription was accurate. Finally, each study participant received an incentive, a souvenir of the cultural site (Korean traditional bookmarks valued at

approximately five dollars each), as a thank you for their participation (See Appendix E for photos of incentive gifts).

Data Analysis

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), qualitative data "analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining material from the interviews to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative" (p. 201). Through the data analysis process, researchers are able to answer their research question(s), which allows them to draw broad theoretical conclusions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Creswell (2007) denoted three processes of data analysis in qualitative research:

1) preparing and organizing the data (text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis;

2) reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes; and

3) representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.

Undoubtedly, there are many different types of processes in qualitative data analysis. However, coding the data, combining the codes, and displaying/making comparisons in the data are core elements of all data analysis (Creswell, 2007). To do so, researchers must first decide whether to use a set of existing codes with their data (called a priori codes) or to develop codes that examine the data directly (inductive codes).

In this study, the purpose was to understand tourists' meaning-making processes due to their participation in personal interpretive programs by identifying the mechanism(s) of mindfulness and meaningfulness related to cultural resources within cultural tourism settings.

Given the purpose of this study, I chose to use inductive codes; data analysis occurred through the following processes:

1) familiarizing myself with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts;

2) open coding of transcript content and concepts to "emphasize the importance of being open to the data" (open coding) (Patton, 2002, p. 453);

3) sorting and clustering of the data into related categories (axial coding);

4) identifying of core categories underlying the coded categories (selective coding);

5) searching for patterns and themes by identifying the theoretical relationships among all of the categories;

6) comparing patterns and themes with concepts and constructs presented in the literature.

I completed my own transcription of 59 interviews (935 pages single-spaced) first, then native English speaker reviewed the transcriptions to make sure the contents and help clarify not understanding and unclear parts by matching with audio record files. When transcriptions were complete, interview transcripts were sent to interviewees by email for their review and clarification. When I sent an email, I noted that if I did not hear from the interviewee within a week, I would assume everything was okay with the transcripts. Five days after sending the initial email, one reminder was sent. Among 59 interviewees, 16 interviewees confirmed the accuracy of and/or made minor edits to their interview transcripts and rest of them did not respond. No one added to the transcripts.

After the transcripts were confirmed by interviewees, I read the full transcripts of the interviews twice to familiarize myself with my data. I also read field notes and memos that I had taken during the data collection period to clarify the context of each respondent's comments.

Additionally, I used *NVivo* (version 10), a qualitative analysis software package, as a tool to organize the data and facilitate the coding process.

Several further readings of my data were done while coding. The first reading was done to develop open coding. The goal of open coding is to record topics that appear frequently, and that are important to research questions. This process is based on "grounded theory," the purpose of which is to "demonstrate relations between conceptual categories and to specify the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerge, change, or are maintained" (Charmaz, 2002, p. 675). This study, therefore, analyzed data using "grounded theory" analysis to identify emerging concepts and themes without reference to the literature (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Every interview was reviewed carefully to identify themes and develop meaningful conclusions.

When the open coding was complete, the coding table was sent to an external auditor to help assure the validity and the quality of data analysis. Dr. Hyounggon Kim, who is an assistant professor in the College of Hospitality of Tourism Management at Sejong University in Korea, served as the external auditor for this study. To familiarize him with the study, the research proposal and the extended abstract were given to Dr. Kim. After reviewing the manuscripts and the code table, Dr. Kim suggested two things:

1) Use in vivo coding. In vivo codes can provide a significant check on whether you have a grasp on what is crucial for the study participants. Carefully selected in vivo codes can reflect condensed meanings of a general term and show a study participant's perspectives. Furthermore, using study participants' own terms (in vivo codes) for their experience allows you to develop a deeper understanding of what is happening and what it means, which coincides with the general logic of grounded theory.

2) Try to preserve actions in your open codes by using –ing forms of verbs, and try to stick to the data when naming the segments of your data.

Based on the comments by Dr. Kim, additional reading of the data was done to develop in vivo coding and action coding. The reason for in vivo coding was to capture the participants' voices by taking the data directly from their own words during the interview; action coding (process coding) was used to "search for ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems" (Saldana, 2013, p. 96). Specifically, in vivo codes were extracted throughout the entire transcripts when information appeared to be important. In vivo codes then were categorized based on data's meaning. Using this process, I was able to double-check the validity of the code categories because selected in vivo codes reflected condensed meanings of the general categories. Action coding was used when it implied a sequence or process in action, to capture stages or phases in relation to the meaning-making process, based on the participants' responses.

Categorization of data was based on the language used by the respondents. For example, *Getting knowledge*, *Learning*, and *Understanding* were categorized under the primary code of cognitive experiences. Because these three codes are difficult to differentiate at first glance, decisions about placement in a specific sub-category was based on the word used by the respondent. The categorized code table is presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Categorized Code Table without In Vivo Coding

Name	Description	#References	#Sources
Accessibility	Ability to access the Secret Garden was the reason for attending the guided tour.	9	9
Appreciation	The tour triggered an appreciation of culture, and of preserving natural and cultural resources.	55	27
Appreciate culture and history	Tourist appreciated Korean culture and history.	5	5
Showing the history of the country	Presenting the history of the country can be done partly by using preserved cultural resources.		
Appreciate preservation	Tourist appreciated the preservation of natural and cultural resources and the Korean people who continue efforts to preserve their culture.	50	26
Change & Realization	Tourist expressed his/her cognitive or affective changes and realizations s/he had during the tour.	16	11
Cognitive gains from the guided tour experience	Tourist gained information, learned, or enriched his/her understanding of Korean culture from the guided tour.	169	42
Gaining information	Tourist gained information from the guided tour.	83	35
Explaining the resources	The tour guide explained the resources.		
Getting information	Getting information was a valuable thing that s/he got from the tour.		
Additional information	Guided tour provided additional information such as stories and personal insights that non-personal interpretive services did not provide.	16	12
Acquiring more knowledge	From the tour guide, the tourist could acquire more knowledge than from other forms of interpretation.	2	2
Learning	Tourist learned from the guided tour.	57	31

Note: Highlighted in ▓ is primary code; ▒ is 1st level of sub-code; ░ is 2nd level of sub-code;
No color signifies an action code.
References: How many times is used; # Sources: Number of documents

Table 5. (Cont'd)

Name	Description	#References	#Sources
Understanding	Tourist explicitly expressed his/her understanding of a place, including history, culture, and cultural and natural resources, as a result of the guided tour.	29	18
Coming together	When the tour guide gave explanations, multiple elements of the site and story made sense and were connected.		
Understanding the Secret Garden's history	Tourist understood about the history of a place.		
Convenience	Guided tour was an efficient/easy way to look around while simultaneously listening and observing.	18	14
Following the tour	Tourist followed the guide while listening to the guide's explanation.		
Engagement	Tourist was engaged in the site experiences during the guided tour.	6	6
Group interaction	Tourist was affected by other tour group member(s) during the tour.	46	28
Importance of tour guide's ability	The quality of a guided tour depends on the ability of the tour guide.	5	5
Intention to learn more	Tourist expressed an intention to learn more about Korean culture and history in the future as a result of participating in the guided tour.	11	11
Willing to learn more about Korean culture	Tourist addressed his/her willingness to learn more about Korean culture as a result of the guided tour.		
Introspective experiences	Tour triggered tourist's introspective experiences.	106	39
Alive	Tourist expressed a feeling of being alive (invigorated) due to participating in the guided tour.	4	4
Emotion	Tourist experienced personal emotions in reaction to the tour.	36	24
Impressions	Tourist mentioned that essential impressions are more important than getting specific information.	2	2
Feeling of awe	Tourist felt awe during the guided tour.	3	3
Enjoyment	Guided tour triggered a sense of enjoyment.	6	6
Developing excitement	Tourist was excited about learning new things during the tour.		
Imagination triggered	Tourist was able to imagine other times and places, or to insert his/her own meanings into places, resources or stories that were delivered by the tour guide.	23	16
Picturing historical time	The tour helped the tourist to picture/ imagine historical times.		

Table 5. (Cont'd)

Name	Description	#References	#Sources
Interesting	The information and stories that were delivered by the tour guide were interesting.	22	17
Developing interests	Tourist was able to develop interests by knowing specific details about the place.		
Peaceful	Tourist felt peaceful in the Secret Garden.	5	2
Relaxing	Tourists felt relaxed in the Secret Garden.	4	3
Feeling special due to access to the Secret Garden	Tourist felt special because not everyone can access the Secret Garden.	5	4
Urban location	The urban location of the Secret Garden enhanced tourists' experiences.	4	4
Negative impression	Tourist had negative experiences during the guided tour.	55	27
Not forming an opinion	Following the tour, the tourist didn't have time to form a personal opinion about the sites.		
Wanting to go off by myself	Tourist sometimes felt that s/he wanted to go off by herself/himself.		
New and different experience	Tourist valued new and different experiences (e.g., new and different culture, place, and knowledge) during the tour.	24	19
Objective experiences (Physical immersion in the site)	Tourist had physical and interactive experiences in the Secret Garden.	14	9
Authentic immersion	Seeing "the real thing" and visiting the place influenced the tourist's experience.	6	5
Being in the garden	Tourist enjoyed being in the Secret Garden.		
Physical activity	Tourist emphasized the importance of physical or active experiences (e.g., going into a pavilion).	8	4
Personal connection	Tourist was able to connect something in the tour experience to his/her interests in everyday life.	14	10
Personal interest	Tourist's personal interests enhanced his/her guided tour experiences.	32	22
Physical setting	A specific element of the physical setting influenced the tourist's experience.	29	20
The size of the Secret Garden	Tourists were impressed by the size of the Secret Garden	2	2
Walking	The tour involved physical walking	16	9

Table 5. (Cont'd)

Name	Description	#References	#Sources
Previous knowledge	Tourist's experiences in the Secret Garden were influenced by his/her previous knowledge.	17	12
Program features	A specific program feature influenced the tourist's experience in the Secret Garden.	79	32
Appropriate amount of info	The amount of information that the tourist got from the tour was an appropriate amount (not too much and not too little).	11	10
Costume	Tour guide's costume enhanced the tourist's experience in the Secret Garden.	24	20
Value of fee	The tour was perceived as a good value for the fee charged.	9	8
Free time	Having free time during the guided tour positively influenced the tourist's experience.	10	9
Korean guide	Having a Korean guide enhanced the authenticity of the experience.	5	4
Length of tour	The length of tour positively influenced the tourist's experiences in the Secret Garden.	9	7
Microphone	Tour guide's microphone enhanced the tourist's guided tour experiences.	9	9
Organized	The tour was well organized.	2	2
Recognition of Korean culture	Tourist was able to recognize the uniqueness of Korean culture and to differentiate Korean culture from other cultures.	16	14
Recognize culture	The tour helped tourist recognize cultural elements unique to Korea.	9	8
Recognize differences	The tour helped tourist differentiate between Korean culture and other cultures.	7	6
Remembering	The guided tour helped tourists to more easily remember something than does a non-guided tour.	3	3
Resources (natural/cultural)	Tourist identified specific natural and/or cultural resources in the Secret Garden experienced during the tour.	100	33
Combination of natural and cultural resources	Combination of natural and cultural resources enhanced tourists' experience.	7	6
Seeing old buildings/gardens	Tourist wanted to see the mix of old buildings and garden.		
Cultural resources	Tourist identified specific cultural resources in the Secret Garden experienced during the tour.	28	22

Table 5. (Cont'd)

Name	Description	#References	#Sources
Natural setting	Tourist identified specific natural resources in the Secret Garden experienced during the tour.	65	30
Seeing the forest	Tourist was amazed to see the forest within an urban area.		
Stories	Stories told by the tour guide enhanced the tourist's experiences in the Secret Garden.	76	32
Telling the stories	The stories had a strong impact in helping people remember the tour.		
Tour guide	Tour guide's skills and abilities enhanced the tourist's experience.	194	44
Effective group management	The tour guide had the ability to manage the tour group effectively.	5	5
Enthusiastic	The tour guide was passionate and enthusiastic about what she was doing.	8	8
Fluent English	The tour guide spoke clear English.	34	26
Guide's engagement	Tourist specifically mentioned tour guide's engagement during the tour, with the stories, sites, and people (tourists).	6	5
Verbal interaction	The tour guide created verbal interactive experiences for the tourist.	21	19
Knowledgeable	The tour guide was knowledgeable.	24	18
Personable and friendly	The tour guide was personable, friendly, polite, and kind.	25	15
Provided options	The tourist had positive feelings about the options that the tour guide gave to him/her during the tour.	7	7
Skills for presenting information	The tour guide had a skill for presenting information effectively and interestingly.	14	9
Injecting her personality	The tour guide injected her personality while she interpreted the Secret Garden to tourists.		
Using voice inflection	The tour guide's effective use of voice inflection influenced the tourist experience.		
Use of humor	The tour guide used humor to help tell stories of the Secret Garden.	49	21
Weather	The weather affected the tourist's guided tour experiences.	20	17

Note: Highlighted in [   ] is primary code; [   ] is 1st level of sub-code; [   ] is 2nd level of sub-code; No color signifies an action code.
References: How many times is used; # Sources: Number of documents

Axial coding was done next, with another reading of the transcripts, to group the codes into conceptual categories. While reading open codes, researchers need to figure out "causal conditions (what factors caused the core phenomenon), strategies (actions taken in response to the core phenomenon), contextual and intervening conditions (broad and specific situational factors that influence the strategies), and consequences (outcomes from using the strategies)" (Creswell, 2007, p. 86). In this study, I reviewed my original labels and codes iteratively, and categorized information depending on its association with research questions and existing literature.

The final process of coding – selective coding – identifies core categories underlying the coded categories. After axial coding is completed, researchers should review data and codes to identify a higher conceptual level, called the "core categories." Creswell (2007) stated that during this process, researchers may form a "story line" that connects the categories. Consequently, the story line explains the predicted relationships that are being studied.

In summary, based on grounded theory, this study analyzes the data using inductive coding procedures. Open doing, axial coding, and selective coding were done sequentially. Several themes were identified and developed along with each research question. Lastly, consensual constructions were found to identify potential theoretical relationships.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study is to understand tourists' meaning-making about cultural resources as a result of their experiences with interpretation delivered in person by an experienced interpreter. This study is delimited to English-speaking international tourists to Korea who participated in the Secret Garden tours. A combination of direct observations and 59 interviews was used to investigate the constructs and mechanisms of interpretive programs that lead to mindfulness and meaning-making. This chapter summarizes the information collected during the field research, and includes three sections. The first section describes the participants' characteristics, which will help to characterize the group of people that I interviewed. The second section describes emergent themes and concepts in relation to research questions. The last section describes linkages among emergent themes that are intertwined in this study.

Participant Characteristics

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Formal interviews were conducted during the field research period in the summer of 2013. Forty-eight interview sessions involving 59 participants were conducted. A purposeful sampling procedure was applied in the study, with target samples chosen based on the selected criteria. Even though I asked potential participants about screening criteria such as age and purpose of trip in order to eliminate tourists younger than 18 years old and Korean residents, four interviewees were Korean residents. Despite completing full interviews with each of them, I deleted these four interview cases from the analysis because the purpose of this study is to

investigate international tourists. Thus, 55 interviews were analyzed. Table 6 displays selected socio-demographic characteristics of each participant.

Table 6

Selected Socio-demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Education (highest level attained)	Occupation
P-1	M	30	India	Undergraduate	Flight Attendant
P-2	F	25	Canada	Undergraduate	Urban Planner
P-3	F	25	Canada	Graduate School	Student
P-4	M	60	New Zealand	High School	Retired
P-5	F	51	New Zealand	Undergraduate	Administrator
P-6	F	24	USA	Undergraduate	Teacher
P-7	M	30	Netherlands	Undergraduate	Engineer
P-8	F	27	Netherlands	Undergraduate	Medical Doctor
P-9	F	23	USA	Undergraduate	Marketer
P-10	F	32	Italy	Undergraduate	Flight Attendant
P-11	F	27	USA	Undergraduate	Officer and Student
P-12	F	20	USA	High School	Student
P-13	M	44	USA	Undergraduate	Administrator
P-14	F	38	Portugal	Undergraduate	Lawyer
P-15	M	29	Germany	Some College	Accountant
P-16	M	65	USA	Graduate School	Professor
P-17	M	36	Germany	Undergraduate	Artist
P-18	M	32	USA	Graduate School	Professor
P-19	F	33	USA	Graduate School	College Administrator
P-20	F	34	Denmark	Undergraduate	Chiropractor
P-21	M	40	Canada	Graduate School	Medical Doctor
P-22	M	26	Germany	Some College	Officer
P-23	M	28	USA	Graduate School	Musician
P-24	F	27	UK	Undergraduate	NGO (unspecified)
P-25	M	34	Belgium	Undergraduate	Logistical Manager
P-26	F	27	UK	Graduate School	Editor
P-27	F	48	UK	Undergraduate	Meeting Organizer
P-28	F	28	USA	Graduate School	School Teacher
P-29	F	25	UK	Undergraduate	Dentist
P-30	F	46	Australia	Undergraduate	Dentist
P-31	M	49	Germany	Undergraduate	Dentist
P-32	F	63	Ireland	Graduate School	Education Consultant

Table 6. (Cont'd)

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Education (highest Level Attained)	Occupation
P-33	M	66	Ireland	Graduate School	Education Consultant
P-34	M	29	Germany	Undergraduate	Engineer
P-35	F	58	Hong Kong	Graduate School	Retired
P-36	M	-	USA	Graduate School	Retired
P-37	M	74	England	Undergraduate	Supervisor
P-38	F	39	New Zealand	Graduate School	Student
P-39	F	66	USA	Some College	Officer (unspecified)
P-40	F	35	France	Undergraduate	Officer (unspecified)
P-41	F	56	Mexico	Undergraduate	Small Business (unspecified)
P-42	M	52	Germany	Graduate School	Professor
P-43	F	45	Australia	Graduate School	Professor
P-44	M	33	Romania	Graduate School	Researcher
P-45	F	24	USA	Undergraduate	Student
P-46	F	27	UK	Undergraduate	Doctor
P-47	F	55	UK	Graduate School	Researcher
P-48	F	25	Uruguay	Undergraduate	Officer (unspecified)
P-49	M	27	Austria	Graduate School	Student
P-50	M	48	Canada	Undergraduate	Account Manager
P-51	F	48	Canada	Graduate School	Project Manager
P-52	M	40	USA	Graduate School	Teacher
P-53	M	-	Colombia	Graduate School	Officer
P-54	M	18	England	High School	Student
P-55	M	61	Canada	Undergraduate	Diplomat

As indicated in Table 6, the participants of this study included 30 (55%) females and 25 (45%) males. Although no statistics are available indicating the socio-demographic characteristics of visitors to the Secret Garden, there is a shared impression by staff at Changdeokgung that there is equal gender distribution among the participants in guided tours.

The interviewees represent diverse ages ranging from 18 through 74 years. Two interviewees declined to answer the question about their age. Of the remaining 53 participants, 20 were aged 18-29 years, 12 were aged 30-39 years, nine were aged 40-49 years, five were aged 50-59 years, and seven were 60 years old or older. Thus, over half of the study participants were 18 to 39 years of age.

The participants were of diverse nationalities. Among them, 25 interviewees were from Europe, 20 were from North America, five were from Oceania, three were from South America, and two were from Asia (not Korea).

The majority of participants (89%) had achieved at least an undergraduate college degree. One plausible explanation for this overrepresentation of a highly educated population may be related to the study site. Changdeokgung is known as a famous cultural tourism destination in Korea. As have numerous researchers, Silberberg (1995) indicated that one of the common characteristics of cultural tourists is a higher education level than tourists among the general public. This characteristic of cultural tourists may have resulted in an overrepresentation of a highly educated population among Changdeokgung tourists, and, therefore, among the study participants.

Travel Behavior Characteristics

Participants' travel behavior characteristics collected during this study included visit frequency to Korea, travel purpose, length of stay in Korea, type of travel group, and number of companions, as presented in Table 7. Also, the type of interview (individual or small group) is included in the table. The majority of participants (84%) were first-time visitors to Korea and 16% were repeat visitors. Of the 55 participants, 19 were pleasure travelers, 10 were business travelers, 10 were convention or meeting participants, nine were visiting friends and relatives, and seven of them visited for other purposes. Participants' length of stay in Korea ranged from one day to more than 18 days, with the highest percentages staying 7 to 14 days (58%, n=32), and 4 to 6 days (27%, n=15). Nine percent (n=5) stayed more than 18 days, and five percent (n=3) stayed only 1 to 3 days. One participant, who stayed only one day, was a flight attendant, so did not have much time to travel in Korea. The average length of stay in Korea was 10 days. Approximately half of the sample population came from Europe and North America, which are geographically distant from South Korea. So tourists stayed for several days to make the travel time worthwhile.

Interviewees were traveling in several different types of groups. The majority of participants were solo travelers (47%, n=26), while about 45% (n=25) had one accompanying person. Only three interviewees came to the Secret Garden in a group of three people, and only one interviewee came to the Secret Garden in a group of four people. Of the 55 participants, about 42% (n=23) traveled to Korea with family or with family and friends, and nine percent (n=5) of them traveled with friends.

Table 7

Participant's Travel Behavior

Participant ID	No. of Previous Visits to Korea	Purpose of Visit to Korea	Length of Stay in Korea (Days)	Travel Group Type	Group Size	Interview Type
P-1	0	Business	1	Solo	1	Individual
P-2	0	Pleasure Travel	14	Friend(s)	2	Group
P-3	0	Pleasure Travel	14	Friend(s)	2	Group
P-4	1	Pleasure Travel	4	Family	2	Group
P-5	1	Pleasure Travel	4	Family	2	Group
P-6	0	Pleasure Travel	3	Solo	1	Individual
P-7	0	VFR	12	Family	2	Group
P-8	0	VFR	12	Family	2	Group
P-9	0	VFR	12	Solo	1	Group
P-10	0	Business	3	Solo	1	Group
P-11	0	VFR	5	Family	2	Group
P-12	0	VFR	5	Family	2	Group
P-13	1	Pleasure Travel	4	Solo	1	Individual
P-14	0	Pleasure Travel	14	Solo	1	Individual
P-15	0	Pleasure Travel	5	Solo	1	Individual
P-16	0	Seminar	4	Solo	1	Individual
P-17	2	Business	6	Solo	1	Individual
P-18	0	Honeymoon	14	Family	2	Group
P-19	0	Honeymoon	14	Family	2	Group
P-20	1	Pleasure Travel	14	Solo	1	Individual
P-21	0	Business	6	Solo	1	Individual
P-22	0	Pleasure Travel	5	Solo	1	Individual
P-23	0	Seminar	14	Solo	1	Individual
P-24	0	VFR	12	Solo	1	Individual
P-25	0	Pleasure Travel	14	Family	2	Individual
P-26	0	Business	10	Solo	1	Individual
P-27	0	Business	7	Solo	1	Individual
P-28	0	Pleasure Travel	-	Friend(s)	2	Group
P-29	0	Seminar	7	Friend(s)	2	Individual
P-30	0	Seminar	7	Solo	1	Individual
P-31	0	Seminar	8	Family	2	Individual
P-32	0	Business	7	Family	2	Group
P-33	0	Business	7	Family	2	Group
P-34	0	Pleasure Travel	11	Solo	1	Individual

Note. VFR = Visiting Friends and Relatives; Group Size: includes the interviewee.

Table 7. (Cont'd)

Participant ID	No. of Previous Visits to Korea	Purpose of Visit to Korea	Length of Stay in Korea (Days)	Travel Group Type	Group Size	Interview Type
P-35	0	Wedding	7	Family & Friend(s)	3	Group
P-36	2	Wedding	7	Family & Friend(s)	3	Group
P-37	2	Wedding	7	Family & Friend(s)	3	Group
P-38	0	Pleasure Travel	7	Friend(s)	2	Individual
P-39	0	VFR	14	Family	2	Group
P-40	0	VFR	21	Solo	1	Group
P-41	0	Pleasure Travel	5	Solo	1	Individual
P-42	0	Seminar	14	Family	2	Individual
P-43	0	Seminar	5	Solo	1	Individual
P-44	0	Business	10	Solo	1	Individual
P-45	0	Education	56	Friend(s)	5	Individual
P-46	0	Seminar	7	Solo	1	Individual
P-47	0	Seminar	6	Solo	1	Individual
P-48	0	Business	7	Solo	1	Individual
P-49	0	Seminar	14	Solo	1	Individual
P-50	0	Pleasure Travel	4	Family	2	Group
P-51	0	Pleasure Travel	4	Family	2	Group
P-52	0	VFR	35	Family	2	Individual
P-53	0	Pleasure Travel	7	Family	2	Individual
P-54	0	Travel Pleasure	10	Family	2	Individual
P-55	2	Wedding	18	Family	2	Individual

Note. VFR = Visiting Friends and Relatives; Group Size: includes the interviewee.

Mindfulness during Cultural Tourism Experiences

To investigate their mindfulness as a result of the guided tour at the Secret Garden (research question 1), study participants' narratives were examined. Mindfulness, considered one type of state of mind, refers to an individual's active engagement: attending to an experience both physically and mentally (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Within a tourism setting, mindfulness in tourists can help them learn more, make better decisions, and enhance their tourism experiences (Moscardo, 1996). That is, being mindful can be an important part of the process of creating meaning about the tourism experience, and of changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors appropriate to a specific setting. However, mindfulness also is an abstract concept, so asking participants about it directly is difficult. Also, the term may impose predetermined responses on the part of the participants. To avoid these issues, and to investigate whether the personal interpretive program (the Secret Garden tour) helped tourists become mindful during their cultural tourism experiences, the participants of this study were first asked an open-ended question about their reactions to the tour, and then were asked specific prompt questions, which were derived from previous literature (Kang & Gretzel, 2012).

All participants responded positively to the question about their reaction to the tour. They all started descriptions of their guided tour experiences with affirmative words and praise. They said things such as: "It was good." (P-2), "I really, yeah, I really like it. I would do it again." (P-3); "Very positive"(P-55); "It's fantastic. I like it. Very pleased that I did it." (P-43); and "I enjoyed it. Um… I was glad I came. I wish my friends had been able to come with me. Other than that I'm glad I came and did it" (P-45). Overall, they were satisfied with their guided tour experiences.

Participants were asked the prompt questions, which encompass three sub-dimensions of mindfulness: attention, present-focus, and awareness. The overwhelming majority of participants said that they were able to pay attention to the tour, and were aware of and focused on the moments when the interpreter gave explanations. The interviewees also mentioned that the tour was very informative, interesting, and fun. Only a handful of exceptions were presented by respondents. Three interviewees mentioned that there were some times when they were not able to pay attention to the interpreter. One participant (P-6) said:

> …there were a few moments when, like, the area was so big, so I wanted to look at other parts, but the tour guide was still talking. So, sometimes I, like, went and looked, but then I couldn't hear her very well. Um, or maybe there was like a plaque to read, so I read it. But during, when I was reading, I couldn't hear what she was saying. So, and those times, I couldn't, yeah, I couldn't pay attention to what she was saying.

Also, two participants stated that they felt bored when they were waiting for other tourists after the breaks. However, right after giving these responses, they also stated that it was just for a moment, and that they were able to walk around during that time. One participant (P-52) said:

> …simply because the moments I disengaged with what the tour guide was saying was more because I was getting distracted by the beauty of the building or just looking at other kind of aspects of it. So, for me, there was a nice, there was always something around me.

That is, even though a few exceptions exist, it appears that most participants were able to be mindful during their guided tour experiences by enjoying and paying attention during the tour

and processing the experience. What, then, are the specific elements that trigger tourists to be mindful within a personal interpretation setting?

Elements that Trigger Tourists to be Mindful

To identify specific elements that triggered tourists to be mindful in the Secret Garden, I reviewed the entire data set of responses rather than just those responses related to specific questions. This is because the entire interview was about participants' guided tour experiences, so specific evidence or elements appeared ubiquitously. To identify emergent concepts or categories, the data and existing literature were constantly compared, using the grounded theory approach.

Research question one explored whether the guided interpretive programs helped tourists become mindful during their cultural tourism experiences. Based on the accounts of study participants, the following themes emerged: *program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter* (tour guide) (See Figure 3.).

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Program features	Costumed interpreter
	Value of fee
	Korean interpreter
	Stories
Interpreter (tour guide)	Enthusiasm and engagement
	Verbal interaction
	Personable and friendly personality
	Provision of options
	Use of humor
	Speaking tone

Figure 3. Elements that triggered tourists to be mindful

Program features

Within the data, the *program features* theme encompasses six elements (*appropriate amount of information*, use of traditional *costume*, *value of fee*, *free time* allowed during the tour, use of *Koreans as interpreters*, physical *walking* involved in the tour, and *use of a microphone*). Among these *program features*, three specific elements – *costumed interpreter*, *value of fee*, and *Korean interpreter* – emerged as critical elements that helped tourists to become mindful during the Secret Garden tour.

Costumed interpreter. It was noted that interpreters' costumes enhanced the participants' experiences in the Secret Garden. During the tour, all interpreters are required to wear the uniform. The interpreters' uniform is a traditional Korean dress, called Hanbok. One of the study participants (P-23) stated, "I think it's the place but, yes, also having the guide in the traditional, uh, what is it, the Hanbok, yeah, it kind of, it adds to the experience, definitely." Another participant (P-9) said that "[The costume] made it more authentic and appealing." A majority of the participants gave credit to the interpreter for wearing a costume, and expressed that the costume helped to create a small level of mystic feeling and novelty. Participant 45 said, "I think it gives, like…it gives it more [of] that old feeling. Like the palace… it gives kind of that… I don't know. It adds to the…what's the right word? ….the feeling." It was found that the interpreter's costume first grabbed their attention when the guided tour started, and, consequently, it helped to heighten their conscious awareness throughout the tour. This is consistent with Timmerman's (2002) statement that, within a communication situation, novelty is a factor that causes mindfulness. Likewise, this study shows that, by creating a feeling of novelty, the costume enhanced the tourists' experiences and served as an element that triggered tourists to be mindful in the Secret Garden.

Value of fee. Several participants mentioned the entrance fee. There was an additional entrance fee for the Secret Garden, but there is no extra charge for the tour. One participant (P-27) said,

> I don't think you have to pay very much money to visit [the Secret Garden], and to have a free tour [included in the visit] is very good. I like the way that it's not touristy.

> [Interviewer: So, you like that?] Yes, I like that, which has not been ruined by touring.

Participant 32 also indicated, "I value the fact that the tickets were a modest price." The participants did not seem to think that the price of the ticket was too high.

A few participants also indicated that the entrance fee made them pay attention to the tour. Participant 1 stated, "I thought that when you go anywhere in the world, and you pay something, that means it is something special. So, that's what I am interested to go inside and see the garden. If it's free, I'm sure I won't take it so serious to go inside. Yeah." That is, since he paid an additional fee to get into the Secret Garden, he felt some kind of duty to actively join the tour. Given this fact, the modest fee for visitation helped elicit mindfulness.

Korean interpreter. The participants pointed to the interpreter's nationality as an element that triggered them to be mindful. All of the interpreters in this study were Korean females. Similar to their reason for valuing the costume, the participants felt having a Korean interpreter lent authenticity and novelty. Participant 45 stated, "I like having, like, a local person talking about their country." One participant mentioned that it was hard to have a chance to talk with local people as an international tourist. That is, the participants were interested in meeting the Korean interpreter. Furthermore, they valued the Korean interpreter because they believed they received more information from local people. The participants said things such as: "you can read about [culture], but I think you learn more of, like, the fun, interesting facts when it's coming

from a local guide" (P-45); "I thought she did a good blend of trying to relate to an English speaker but also having her own culture behind it" (P-50). Having a Korean interpreter enhanced the authenticity of the experiences, and, as a result, the participants became mindful during the tour.

Stories

Stories told by the interpreter were clearly indicated as an important element that triggered tourists to be mindful. *Stories* can be classified as a program features, but I categorized this element separately as a theme also because it was specifically mentioned by so many participants. In addition, the characteristic of the element is slightly different from the program features. To be specific, while the interpreters do not have much control of the other three elements of *program features*, they can manage the element of *stories* during the tour. Not only did the stories bring additional information to the participants, they helped stimulate the participants' imaginations. Given this, the *stories* helped tourists to be actively processing new information:

> I already mentioned about that, that, story about the king's wife, so that's
> probably something I'll remember because it's not something I expected. I
> thought the king would have more power than that. It was really eye-opening,
> new information. (P-13)

> It was nice, [the] tour guide told us [a] story about the king, and just to get the
> impression [of] how [it] was back then. And, you know, when you look at all the
> buildings, now it's all different point of views…It's something you can read, of
> course, somewhere, but someone is telling the stories, I think it's very nice. That

tour guide, she was very traditional, that made, yeah…It was combined
everything together. (P-14)

The anecdotes. Those helped it seem more real. I think that the tour and the
stories help to put you in the shoes of actual people living in the different time
periods, which is hard to do just looking at things. (P-18)

One participant, who is a university student, pointed to a story when I asked about the part of the
tour that was the most meaningful experience for her. She said,

…I could connect to the most, I think, was at the end, when [the tour guide] was
talking about the drinking game because, being in a university setting, that
happens more often in my life than some of the other things that she was
describing, so it was something I could connect to, um, I thought it was quite
interesting, too. It, it, really personalized the, the, lives of, you know, the king and
his noblemen. (P-26)

From her response, I was able to see how a story that related to her life (a fundamental
interpretive principle) triggered her to be mindful during the tour. I also found that each story
might appeal to different tourists, based on their personal backgrounds and interests. However,
even without linking directly to individuals' personal attributes, the majority of the participants
stated that the stories helped to "bring [the place and resources] to life, and give them more
meaning" (P-24).

Interpreter (tour guide)

The last theme, composed of several elements that trigger tourists to be mindful, is the
interpreter. Within the data, the *interpreter* theme includes eight elements (*enthusiasm and*

engagement, *verbal interaction*, *personable and friendly personality*, *provision of options*, *use of humor*, *speaking tone*, *fluent English*, and *knowledge*). Among these *interpreter* features, six elements – *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *personable and friendly personality*, *provision of options*, *use of humor*, and *speaking tone* – emerged as elements critical to helping tourists to become mindful during the Secret Garden tour.

In her book "*Making Visitors Mindful: Principles for Creating Sustainable Visitor Experiences through Effective Communication*" Moscardo (1999) described basic principles for encouraging mindfulness in tourists. She addressed three important components that elicit mindfulness: providing variety, offering participation, and making personal connections with tourists. Likewise, the following specific elements show similar characteristics that helped the participants in this study to be mindful.

Enthusiasm and engagement. Several participants in this study expressed that the interpreter was very engaging and enthusiastic about what she was doing. One participant (P-6) mentioned, "If the person talking seems like they're very interested in the material, then the [audiences] also get interested in [it]." Likewise, other participants also said that they were more interested in participating in the tour after they sensed the guide's enthusiasm and engagement. The participants said things such as:

> You have to see the person look like [she is] enjoying doing her work. So, she projected the image of someone who was happy, had a good smile, had eye contact with each of us, and so…what you could feel was that she was making an effort to make this personal, something personal. (P-55)

She actually seemed enthusiastic and engaged, and, actually, as if she wanted to

communicate what she was talking about, so but that was, yeah, sometimes when you go

on a tour it can feel like you have a robot in front of you who's said something a hundred

times, but she really seemed that she wanted to communicate what she was talking about.

(P-52)

By seeing the guide's enthusiasm and engagement, the participants not only became interested in

the tour but also experienced personal feelings that made them mindful and, subsequently, the

information meaningful.

Verbal interaction. One participant gave credit to the guided tour by saying, "I think a

guided tour is more… you know, you have interaction with the tour and you can ask a question"

(P-50). Many participants in this study pointed out the importance of verbal interaction with

interpreters. One German participant (P-15) explained, "when you meet someone and you have

conversation, then it's little bit deeper. [The conversation made a] personal connection." Many

participants thought that the tour was very interactive because the "[tour guide] was very open,

so [people] could ask questions all the time, and she was answering them" (P-18). By having a

chance to ask questions or joining in a little activity that the interpreter provided, they felt more

engaged in the tour experiences, which made them feel mindful. Furthermore, several

participants mentioned that they would remember the moments when they communicated with

the interpreter. "[A guided tour] is always more interactive. When you start reading and you

think, ok, and you go quickly through it. But, if [there is] some explanation with some questions,

it stays longer in your memory, I think" (P-25). Not only does the verbal interaction make

tourists feel mindful by actively engaging them in the tour, it also helps tourists keep the memory

longer.

Personable and friendly personality. As Moscardo (1999) indicated in her book, making a personal connection appeared as an important element that triggered tourists to be mindful in this study. Many participants mentioned that they felt a personal connection during the tour because the interpreters were personable and friendly. One participant said,

> Maybe when you just read something, it's like, 'Yeah, okay I know.' But when someone tells you, like, she had a smile on her face, and you see, that was very, um, I was able to have a better connection to what she was telling. (P-15)

One participant, who joined the tour in the middle of the tour while it was raining, shared his experience,

> …Someone who didn't have an umbrella, she offered that, too. She asked if he wanted to share her umbrella. It was very nice of her to, uh, it was sort of a personal connection and sometimes tour guides are a little more removed, but she was very friendly and personal, and she smiled a lot, so she was very engaging. (P-16)

Many participants in this study appreciated the interpreters' personal interactions, and, as a result, they had positive impressions and made personal connections.

Provision of options. The participants had positive feelings about the options that the interpreter gave them during the tour. The interpreter provided interactive experiences, through which the participants were offered the opportunity to participate during the tour, such as going into a pavilion or being challenged to find a unique chimney. Moscardo (1999) strongly suggested that tourist destinations should provide a variety of activities because they have a great impact on visitors in terms of encouraging them to be mindful. In this study, providing various activities appeared to be an important element that elicited mindfulness. One participant said,

There was very active participation. We were able, even taking off your shoes, a very

Korean practice and going into the…… So you're in the participation mode and I do

think, on many tours, more opportunities you have for active participation, the better. (P-

33)

Use of humor. The majority of participants in this study pointed to the use of humor as

an important feature that kept them interested during the tour. Examples of *use of humor* includes

such as: "[the tour guide] was funny. She had many jokes that kept you interested, but she also

gave, uh, nice information, so it was good." (P-23); "She does in a really animated way so it's

not feeling boring." (P-25); "She made things more memorable. Like, maybe if we had a

different tour guide maybe we wouldn't remember as many things, like, if she didn't use humor

as much." (P-12). Given these types of comments, humor helped the participants to be interested

in the tour.

Furthermore, one participant said, "Without being too much information, because some

tours can do too much information, and you're, like, 'Ahh'…but this was, like, enough of, like,

entertainment and historical information… I just keep coming back to [the tour guide] was

funny. Appreciate the humor. She was light hearted about it" (P-45). When I asked about her

meaningful experience, Participant 39 said,

…I though it was kind of fun where we went down to the park, [the tour guide] said

either you see a small waterfall or a big waterfall. Yeah, I liked that. I though that was

good. I like that. And then, that area down there I though was really pretty. And I thought

it was really funny…

Before arriving at the Jade stream, the tour guide said that if you are good person, you will see a

big waterfall in the Jade stream, but if you are not a good person, you will see a small waterfall.

Due to the environmental changes, compared to Josen era, only a small waterfall remains today. To help tourists picture the much larger waterfall of several centuries ago, the tour guide used humor. To keep tourists interested and mindful, interpreters should consider appropriate *use of humor* when they present information, and not present so much factual information that they overwhelm their audience.

   Speaking tone. A few of the study participants pointed to the interpreters' way of speaking as one of the elements that facilitated meaning-making. One participant (P-2) said that "[my tour guide] created drama" when she presented information. Most of the participants who attended tours organized by a specific interpreter made a positive comment on her intonation. They stated that her tone was dramatic, which helped them to concentrate on the stories. For example, participant 10 said, "…the tone of voice was normal. I mean it was not flat. So, it was interesting. So, you didn't fall asleep." Her inflection enabled the participant to linger and pay attention, listening to her explanations. In other words, her way of speaking triggered mindfulness in tourists.

Meaningfulness Related to Cultural Resources

   To investigate whether the guided tours at the Secret Garden helped participants generate meaningfulness about the place or resources (research question 2), the study participants were sequentially asked indirect and direct questions as related to their guided tour experiences. To avoid imposing predetermined answers, the participants of this study were first asked questions that indirectly tried to get at elements of meaningfulness. For example, they were asked to describe the part of the tour that was most meaningful to them. This question was based on their responses to previous questions, which indicated that the tour was meaningful. This was

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followed by several prompt questions designed to learn how the guided tour influenced tourists'

meaningful experiences. From their responses to these questions, I was able to distinguish

whether the meaningful experiences were related to the guided interpretive tour or to other

elements of the experience Finally, I asked a direct question to confirm their perceptions of

meaningfulness about their experiences in the Secret Garden: "In general, was the tour a

meaningful experience for you?"

All study participants answered that their overall experiences in the Secret Garden were

meaningful. Of the 55 participants, 48 picked one or two specific experiences in the Secret

Garden, describing them as being the most meaningful. The rest of the study participants

answered that the overall experience in the Secret Garden was interesting or good. They said

things such as: "I don't know that there was any one particular. No, it was as a whole really." (P-

5); "I think in general, like, I don't think there was one moment where I was, like, Oh this is, you

know, but it was just, interesting throughout" (P-19); "It was all good. I have nothing special.

[Interviewer: Really? Why do you think you cannot choose one of them?] It was all good. There

was nothing I would say is better than the rest. It was all interesting" (P-34). Even though they

were directly asked to respond with a specific meaningful experience, they expressed that the

entire experience was interesting or good rather than expressing that one experience or part of

the tour was most meaningful.

Among those participants who described their one or two meaningful experiences, 37 of

them had experiences directly related to the guided aspect of the tours. They said things such as:

I really liked the part when [our tour guide], when we were at the building where

the men and women were that, [Interviewer: Separated?] yeah, yeah, and I think

she talked about that…So, it's very different… Because she explained about the

higher entrance for the men and the lower [entrance] for the women, and the difference between that, so yeah, it was fun and meaningful. (P-8)

Hmm…Oh yeah, I think I liked hearing about the architecture the most. That was interesting to me, yeah.…Because it kinda, it brings the buildings to life, gives them more meaning, yeah.…I didn't get the sense she was just reading, but she was, yeah, telling a story that was good. (P-23)

I think for me, it was actually when she was explaining, when we were in the first house, in the shelter, we were looking at the square space on the island. I think that explanation put these little isolated pagodas or separated pagodas, it made sense. (P-32)

Eleven participants described meaningful experiences that were not related to the guided component of the tours, but to some other element of the experience, such as the view, the aesthetics, and the physical elements of the place. One male participant said,

I think the first [stop] when you first get in, you know. It kind of opens up and you've got some sculptures and you've got a pond there. You know, because you're first getting into it; that was your first impression. Right? So, kind of getting in it. I would say when you first enter it. I would have almost been impressed had that been the entire garden right? But then there was much, much, more after. (P-50)

Even though the tour included many stops, several participants echoed participant 50's comments by expressing the first stop as their most meaningful experience. It was the first thing

they saw after entering the Secret Garden. They said that this first image created a first impression that grabbed their attention and had an effect on their meaningful experiences. Several participants described specific places in relation to their meaningful experiences. Each place they chose was because of the natural beauty found in that place. A few participants also chose specific meaningful experiences related to their personal interests. One male participant said,

> To me, just, uh, the hiking bits in-between the different, uh, that's my favorite bit. So, like what you mentioned, going up those stairs, I mean, to me that's nice. [Interviewer: Why did you feel that was your most meaningful experience?] I guess it's because I generally like, I like being a bit more active and seeing things, in a more active manner, I think. (P-7)

He chose the experience of hiking between the stops because he responds more to physical activities than passive ones. Another female participant said,

> I liked the buildings that weren't painted, the, the, not the, the normal buildings that they lived in…. [Interviewer: So, why did you feel that was most meaningful to you?] Because I felt it was, um, I think one of the things about Korea which I've sort of picked up just today, really, is how you like kind of simple; you don't overdo things, and I think [unpainted buildings] are very Korean in that way. They are not decorated. They're very plain but they are very elegant. (P-27)

She liked the unpainted nobleman's building because she thought it represented Korean beauty and style. Thus, personal interests influenced meaningful experiences for some visitors to the Secret Garden.

Meaningful Experiences because of the Guided Tours

As stated above, study participants mentioned that they had meaningful experiences in the Secret Garden as a result of guided elements of the tours. Data analysis showed that several elements – *stories*, interpreters' *personable and friendly personalities*, as well as their ability to share their *knowledge* – helped participants generate meaningfulness.

A majority of the participants who said they had meaningful experiences during the tour described how stories were related to making those experiences meaningful. One student participant said,

> I think [the most meaningful experience] was the part when [the guide] described
>
> the crown prince's education because it was just so much. [Interviewer: Why do
>
> you feel that was the most meaningful experience?] It was just really interesting
>
> to hear about it, and how much effort they put into his education. And, I didn't
>
> realize that it was that, like obviously he has to be smart, but I didn't know that it
>
> was that extensive, his education. So, and then it also makes you think about… I
>
> don't know… just putting yourself in their shoes in that time? (P-11)

In front of the crown prince's studying room, the interpreters explained that the crown prince had to be an expert in almost every subject – writing, mathematics, archery, horseback riding, and more – so his schedule was always filled with lectures. He also had exams frequently, and twice a month he had to recite what he had learned in front of all the government officers and his father. The student participant expressed that hearing about the crown price's education was her most meaningful experience because it was new and interesting to her.

Furthermore, stories are inextricable from places. Study participants expressed that their meaningful experience was influenced by a combination of stories and the resources' aesthetics. One participant said,

> I really like the [Jade stream]. Something about the water, I don't know. Just, I like it and I always like to picture the king just sitting there in the middle. [Interviewer: So, did you imagine the olden times?] Yeah, so that was kinda cool, 'cause when [the guide] was saying [the story], I could picture it. (P-9)

This participant's meaningful experience was the very last stop of the tour, at the Jade stream. She said that when she saw the place, and after hearing the story about a drinking game that was played between the King and his noblemen during the Joseon dynasty, she was able to picture the olden times. She liked how the guide's story helped her to imagine what people had been like in the Joseon dynasty.

One male participant chose a story about why the nobleman's[4] house was built as his most meaningful experience. He said,

> When the guide came to the noble house introduction, and tried to say that [the] king wanted to live like the people, so he had built the house like the noble. And I thought immediately, it was like Marie Antoinette in the history of France at the end of the Bourbon dynasty. The queen wanted to experience the life just before the revolution, the life of the common people, and so she had a farm built at the Versailles palace. And I said how interesting, why is it that kings want to experience the life of the people, feel that they have to replicate rather than actually (incomprehensible) ended badly for the king. So that was a good moment.

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[4] In the Joseon era, the royal family considered noblemen as commoners.

[Interviewer: Why did you feel that was the most meaningful to you?] Because I

could relate this to the history of Europe… (P-55)

The nobleman's house, the only unpainted building, was built in the middle of the Secret Garden.

In the Joseon era, only palaces and temples could be painted. The nobleman's house in the Secret

Garden was intentionally not painted, so the king could experience a commoner's life. In

listening to the story told by the interpreter in the Secret Garden, participant 55 was able to think

about and connect this with his previous knowledge of European history, which made his

experience meaningful.

In addition to the stories, many participants mentioned the interpreters' personality.

Participant 15 stated,

I think because [the tour guide] had a very nice way to tell the stories that because

listening…I know, but when someone tells you, like [my tour guide] had a smile

on her face and you see, that was very, I was able to have a better connection to

what she was telling. (P-15)

That is, the interpreters' friendly personality helped participants generate meaningful experiences

because they could more easily identify the guides, and, as a result, they could concentrate on the

stories.

Furthermore, the interpreters' ability to convey their knowledge helped the participants

generate meaningful experiences. Participant 29 stated,

The best part, I probably liked the bit with the talking about the segregation of the

men and women. That was the most interesting. [Interviewer: Why?] Uh, just

because it probably gave it a bit more insight into the culture, and your previous

history, and how it's different from ours. So, that was interesting. (P-29)

The story about the segregation of men and women was delivered at the nobleman's house. Typical of a Joseon nobleman's house, the men's and women's quarters were separated, but they are connected inside. When the interpreter gave an explanation about the building, rather than just explaining the structure of the building in relation to the segregation, she also introduced how culture was changed by this social structure in the Joseon era, and how this culture is still in place today. The participant said that the interpreter was knowledgeable, so she shared interesting information that was not obtainable from the brochures.

In summary, study participants were able to have meaningful experiences as a result of both the interesting stories and specific elements of the tours or the interpreters. One participant said,

> When you just [go] there, you don't, you maybe forget about the fact you read about before. But when you have someone telling you, like, look over there, you see the difference, what [it] could mean. Then, you have an experience. Not just like when you learn something, it goes away after time. Now, I can remember the moment where I stay there. (P-15)

That is, the participants were able to remember the place and the cultural resources better because of the combination of being in the place, hearing the stories, and having the guided tour.

Furthermore, a few of the participants directly expressed that the fact that Koreans care enough about their culture and heritage to actually preserve and take care of their cultural resources contributed to their meaningful experiences. When I asked whether the guided tour was a meaningful experience, participant 9 said,

> I think it's cool how [Korean people] kept it so long. Like, the buildings. The upkeep, they look very good. I feel like…I don't know, how they kept it; it's

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really well preserved. [Interviewer: Why is this important to you?] Because I

think it's important to preserve the culture and to show, like, the history of your

country. So, I think the tour was great; that it's respected so much. It's well kept.

So that's good.

Another participant, who expressed that his initial reason for attending the Secret Garden tour

was to see places that were not degraded because of high visitation, said that the first stop, with a

square pond and an island, was the most meaningful experience. He said,

Just the view, how they put everything together, and how they are saving it…so

that a, so that [the pond and buildings] will be in 100 years there as well. So that.

They save it. And I really like that they put on every little house I noticed fire

extinguishers, and, like, cameras everywhere, so that they are really looking to

save it. So, I liked it, how they care about it. (P-22)

Although many participants did not directly address how their experiences in the Secret Garden

generated meaningfulness about the place and cultural resources, the context of the discussion

indicated that, because of their overall guided tour experience, they were interested in the place

and the cultural resources to some extent.

Critical Elements that Facilitated Meaning-making

To understand factors that contributed to tourists creating meaning within a cultural

tourism setting, this study examined tourists' descriptions of their experiences during their

guided tour at the Secret Garden. To be specific, to investigate the critical elements that

facilitated meaning-making (research question 3), study participants were asked questions that

both indirectly and directly solicited responses about their meaningful experiences during the

guided tours. To identify whether the guided tour helped participants generate or enhance

meanings, participants first were asked an open-ended question about their reactions to and most

meaningful experiences during the tour. After listening to a participant's narrative, a direct

question was asked about the critical elements that helped the participant to generate meanings.

Based on the accounts of study participants, five themes emerged as facilitators of meaning-

making: *resources*, *program features*, *stories*, *interpreter* (tour guide), and *personal context*.

These include elements associated with the guided tour, but also include other factors. A

summary of the themes is presented in Figure 4.

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Resources	Natural setting
	Cultural resources

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Personal context	Personal interest
	Previous knowledge
	New and different experience

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Program features	Costumed interpreter
	Value of fee
	Korean interpreter
	Appropriate amount of information
	Free time
	Walking
	Use of a Microphone

THEMES	ELEMENTS
	Stories

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Interpreter (tour guide)	Enthusiasm and engagement
	Verbal interaction
	Personable and friendly personality
	Provision of options
	Use of humor
	Speaking tone
	Fluent English
	Knowledge

Figure 4. Elements that facilitated meaning-making for tourists

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Resources

Within the data, the *resources* theme comprised two elements – *cultural resources* and *natural setting* – both critical to facilitating meaning-making. As a cultural heritage site, Changdeokgung is located in the middle of a metropolitan area at the base of a mountain. A part of Changdeokgung, the Secret Garden is located behind the area's buildings. The Secret Garden contains small hills and natural forests as well as cultural resources such as pavilions, ponds, and buildings. One female tourist (P-2) said "…You know, the, 'cause sometimes tourism, you, it's already half done for you because the place is so preserved and so beautiful; sometimes just being there is enough." Her statement shows how cultural and natural resources are important within a tourism setting. Most of this study's participants also expressed the importance of the combination of beautiful cultural and natural resources as an element critical that generated or enhanced their meaningful experiences.

Cultural resources

Many study participants addressed the importance of *cultural resources* in helping create meaningful experiences in the Secret Garden. Participant 14, who said her most meaningful experience was the first stop, expressed,

> …the first set of buildings, and it was just absolutely gorgeous, with the square
>
> pond and the island in the middle. That setting was just stunning, uh, and
>
> beautiful. Again, more than the other parts of the palace, this part and the other
>
> parts of the palace that I saw; it was just very beautifully constructed.

Other participants said things such as: "What I like about this [is the] interior designing, and architecture, and the way they build" (P-1); "…I love old buildings, like, cultural buildings…So,

it was perfect" (P-6). Many study participants mentioned being impressed by the tangible *cultural resources*.

Natural setting

A majority of study participants were amazed to see a forest within an urban area. They said things such as: "…I've never been to a historical site like this that is within a huge city and done a tour in this manner. So, it was completely different." (P-2); "The fact that we were in a garden inside the city, the history as well, of the garden, this is what I like most in the tour." (P-14). They also expressed being impressed by the natural beauty of the place: "Nature. That's special about this place." (P-1); "Just, like, seeing the natural beauty of Korea, and I think that's a good representation of its beauty" (P-44).

Combination of cultural and natural resources

Many study participants who had addressed either a *cultural resource* or a *natural setting* as an element that helped them create a meaningful experience in the Secret Garden also blended both when I asked about their meaningful experiences during the guided tour. Participant 8 said, "Meaningful is just seeing the nature and buildings. Yeah, that's the main reason for me. That's why I enjoyed today." As participant 8, most study participants who identified cultural resources as their most critical element facilitating meaning-making also valued natural resources. That is, many study participants valued their experiences in the Secret Garden because of seeing the combination of cultural and natural resources. One participant said,

> It's probably one of the ones with the most extensively…where the architecture is
>
> in nature. It's like an hour and a half of basically walking through a natural park.
>
> Usually I find, if it's an architectural tour, you don't get that much nature as you
>
> do in the garden. You don't see that very often. (P-51)

Another participant said,

> Even though the tour is an hour and a half, I think, the mix of the history as well
>
> as the change in the terrain engages your mind in a different way, so if you get
>
> tired of hearing about the history, you can just enjoy the terrain and the different
>
> aspects of nature on the site. (P-21)

That is, the participant was able to engage and enjoy the cultural heritage tour partially due to the natural setting.

Not only did the participants address the importance of the cultural and natural resources, they also mentioned their appreciation of the site's preservation. They said things such as: "I think just being in the garden and appreciating the views, and the setting, and the beautiful trees, and paths, and buildings" (P-43); "…buildings and nature [are] a nice combination, and it's the iconic image you have of Korea, of these pagoda-like buildings, and seeing them so nicely preserved, is probably what made it" (P-49).

Given this, study participants were able to think about their appreciation of culture, and of preserving natural and cultural resources together as a result of participating in the tours. It shows how cultural and natural resources influence tourists' experiences, and, furthermore, that these elements in combination help tourists generate meaning about their visit or the place.

Personal Context

Personal context emerged as an element critical in facilitating meaning-making for study participants. Among the five themes mentioned above, *personal context* was the theme most closely related to generating or enhancing meanings for study participants. It provided a crucial cue for the participants to develop meanings during the tour. In the literature, the importance of personal contexts, such as previous knowledge and experiences acquired prior to the visit, is

highlighted in relation to tourist meaning-making (e.g., Benton, 2008; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Silverman, 1995). Silverman stated that meaning-making is created through individual's previous knowledge and previous experience. Participant comments in this study supported these research findings, which indicate that *personal context* influences meaning-making. Within the data, *personal context* comprises three elements: *personal interest*, *previous knowledge*, and having *new and different experiences*.

Personal interest

Participants in this study frequently mentioned their *personal interests* when I asked about their meaningful experiences, and why they felt those experiences were meaningful to them. When I asked why someone chose a given experience as the most meaningful, one participant, whose most meaningful experience was the first stop, adjacent to a square pond and an island, said,

> I am very interested in how people from the past looked at the world, and how
>
> they take that, take those, their, like, ideas about the world and put that, like, into
>
> something physical. So, that, yeah; I, that was just very interesting. (P-6)

The square pond and the island represented how the Koreans looked at the world in the Joseon era. Back then, people believed the earth was square and the sky was round. Participant 6 found meaning during at the first stop because she found she was interested in what that location and site design represented.

One female participant said, "I think our background is very influential and our interest in that. 'Cause we're studying cross-cultural and international education, so by default we love everything cultural and travel related…" (P-28). She thought her background and interest influenced her meaningful experiences in the Secret Garden. Similarly, a male participant

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addressed that he liked the Jade stream because he likes gardening, so he was expecting to get some ideas about the garden's composition and its design for his garden. These comments show how strongly *personal interest* was related to their experiences, when they thought about meanings. To make connections between the place and the tourists' experiences, *personal interest* should be considered because tourists' personal interests are influential in engaging their attention during a tour.

Previous knowledge

Previous knowledge also appeared in the participants' accounts. Several study participants specifically addressed how their previous knowledge helped facilitate meaning-making during the tour. Participant 15 said,

> …when you visit [historical sites], and you just walk through the building and you finally imagine, 'Okay, think about how it would be back then or how [it] was back then.' To be very honest, when I was over walking down the place, I remembered some Korean movies; some old movie from, like, there were warriors, and [an] old king back then. It looks so similar, like the history channel I saw before. That's something, when you have a connection, like, (incomprehensible) actually walk thru buildings, to feel them, like old details.

When the participant visited the site, he was able to connect it with his memories of a place he had seen in a movie. Furthermore, the *previous knowledge* helped him imagine life in olden times in this place, and enriched his experience. Another participant also discovered a similar connection between books he had read prior to his visit and the actual place. He said,

> Reading history books about the country, so I can actually put pictures and mental images on the words that I read; so now I've got a better idea of what the dynasty

was, after visiting the palace…Taking the tour and reading gave me the mental

preparation to actually enjoy the palace much more…and I could relate this to the

history of Europe. (P-55)

 Not only did previous reading help him to prepare mentally, but it also made him think of the

similarities between Korean culture and European culture during the tour. Because he was aware

of some Korean history, he was able to instantly make a comparison when he visited the Secret

Garden. Given this, the participants' knowledge acquired prior to the visit became a critical

element in facilitating meaning-making for them.

New and different experience

The last personal context element is the *new and different experience*. Compared to the

other two elements (*personal interest* and *previous knowledge*), this one may not have as direct

an influence in helping tourists make meanings of their experiences. In other words, a *new and*

different experience may not by itself create connections between the place and the tourists'

experiences. However, many of the study participants conveyed that new and different

experiences in the Secret Garden made their overall experiences more interesting, and that was

their reason for developing meaning from the tour. The fact is that *new and different experiences*

also triggered mindfulness, which underlies meaningfulness. Participants in this study said things

such as: "Maybe we've never been [to] a place like that before, that's really old, so, it was our

first, it was our first kind of experience like that" (P-12); "What made it extra special here was

that it's a culture so different from my own. So, learning about it was that bit more interesting"

(P-26).

One male participant, who chose an anecdote as his most meaningful experience, said,

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Maybe because I didn't have an idea, when the guide asked us about the [stone,

which was located in front of the nobleman's house], I was just thinking it's a

block to do a speech or something. But then it's, it's for the horse, getting on the

horse, yeah. It was interesting and funny. (P-25)

That is, the participants valued the new and different experiences, things they had not

encountered before. Even though the *new and different experience* element did not directly

influence these tourists to make meanings, it enhanced their meaningful experiences. More

fundamentally, it helped them to be mindful and interested, which, consequently, facilitated

meaning-making.

Program Features

 Program features emerged as a category of elements critical in facilitating meaning-

making for study participants. As stated above, *program features* comprised seven elements

within the data – *appropriate amount of information*, *costumed interpreter*, *value of fee*, *free time*,

Korean interpreter, *walking*, and *use of a microphone*. Among them, three elements (*costumed

interpreter*, *value of fee*, *Korean interpreter*) triggered tourists to be mindful. Kegan (1994)

argued that meaning-making is the process of how an individual perceives and organizes his/her

experiences. No matter what kind of meaning the interpreters intend to convey, what tourists

retain are those things that are meaningful to them. Given this, tourists should first be mindful of

the experience to engage actively in constructing their own meaningful experience. Thus, use of

traditional *costume*, *value of fee*, and use of *Korean as interpreters* should be included as

elements that facilitated meaning-making for study participants. Detailed descriptions related to

these three elements were provided in the section describing results related to mindfulness.

Additional *program features* critical to influencing tourists to be mindful, and facilitating meaning-making are described below.

Appropriate amount of information

Several participants pointed to an *appropriate amount of information* as an element that facilitated meaning-making for them. When I asked about their overall reaction to the tour and what they liked about it, many participants said things such as: "She was telling enough but not too much, so that's good" (P-22); "I think it was a good balance because you don't want too much. Yeah, I think it was a good balance" (P-24). Packer (2006) argued that within free-choice learning settings, people normally come to have a look and enjoy the process of learning more than they come to learn something and look for lots of factual information. This corresponds with the *appropriate amount of information* element that emerged in discussions with participants in this study. Some participants said that they liked to get information, but not too much, because they did not want to be bored, and would not be remember everything anyway. Participant 49 said, "I think tours are very hard balance to strike, 'cause very often they take too long and they are boring…"

Another participant said,

> …I'm walking around experiencing the space, experiencing the feeling of it, and there was enough information to help that experience. And I think there is a point of, kind of information overload, where I think it may detract from that. So, I felt happy with the amount of information I had, and didn't really want any more than that. (P-52)

Given this, the participants were able to concentrate on the stories provided because there was not so much information that it overwhelmed them. Consequently, what was perceived as the

right amount of content enabled study participants to be interested and mindful, which leads to meaningfulness.

Free time

It was noted that the *free time* allowed during the tour enhanced the participants' experiences in the Secret Garden. Even though there were a few participants who wanted more free time during the tour, a majority of them expressed that they were satisfied with having some free time during the tour because it gave them a chance to walk around and explore the Secret Garden on their own. They said things such as: "…normally, if you have guided tours you have to rush all the time and there's never enough time to see all you want to see. But, [this tour] was quite nice because we have time to look around" (P-17); "I think, maybe, other tours, there is just talking all the time, and not as much chance to look around. Yeah, so that was a nice part about this tour" (P-23); "She gave us enough time to have a look properly" (P-26).

Not only does having *free time* give participants a chance to explore a little bit on their own, it also gives them an opportunity to form an opinion about what they saw and heard. Often, when the participants talked about their most meaningful experiences, their statements did not list specific items. Instead, it was clear within the whole narrative around certain questions, they were able to look more closely at what they were interested in during the free time, and they had a chance to ponder those things. Some participants said they were able to ask questions during the *free time*. This element, therefore, gave study participants an opportunity to think about the place or stories, either by having their own time and/or asking questions. To have a meaningful experience, Meizrow (1978) argued that people should develop critical reflection about the fact that they are caught in their own memories. From the comments of some of this study's

participants, it appears that the free time allowed during the tour made it possible for them to develop critical reflection, which is closely related to facilitating meaning-making.

Walking

Several participants made positive comments on the physical walking involved in the tour. The expansive natural setting of the Secret Garden meant that study participants had to move constantly during the tour. Many participants mentioned that they liked walking (some people expressed it as hiking). For example, when asked why a given experience was the most meaningful experience, participant 8 said that "being a bit more active and, uh, seeing things in a more active manner" was his main reason for choosing that experience as his most meaningful one. Also, one participant (P-40) mentioned that, due to the physical setting (walking environment), she felt she had a "real experience." These comments are consistent with Goulding's (2000) and Falk and Dierking's (2000) studies, which found that physical and environmental conditions influence visitors' experiences. Likewise, this study shows that the physical walking involved in a tour, related to the physical and environmental conditions, helped tourists to be active. This, in turn, led them to become mindful, which led to some degree of meaningfulness.

Use of a microphone

The last element of program features is *use of a microphone*. All interpreters used a microphone during the tour. Most of the tours that I attended during the data collection period had the maximum number (n=100) of tourists, so a microphone was necessary to enable tourists to hear the content clearly. Several tourists mentioned that they were able to hear the interpreters' explanations even though there were many people. One participant (P-21) said, "She had that little loud [microphone] on. It helped a great deal in being able to hear her." Although this

element did not directly influence the creation of meaning, looking at the whole narrative around certain questions indicated that the microphone helped study participants hear the stories delivered by interpreters so they were able to concentrate on and understand the tour. Thus, it appears that physically being able to hear the interpreter is an underpinning element necessary to allow generation or enhancement of meaning as a result of participating in the guided tour.

Stories

Stories told by interpreters were important in triggering tourists to be mindful. Not only did stories help spark study participants' interest in the tour, they also helped to stimulate the participants' imaginations. Even though use of *stories* was a single theme, it was classified as a separate element due to its importance when it comes to personal interpretive programs. Also, *stories* were mentioned by many participants in this study. Detailed descriptions with study participants' comments related to this element were provided earlier. Although there are individual differences in how much participants were influenced by a story, a majority of study participants expressed that *stories* were the critical element in facilitating meaning-making for them. In addition, when I asked a direct question about identifying specific elements of the tour that the participant liked or remembered, use of stories was the most frequent answer given by study participants. McGregor and Holmes (1999) stated that stories or narratives told by someone influence shaping memories and impressions. This corresponds with the stories element that emerged in discussions with this study's participants. Therefore, *stories* are included as both a theme and an element critical in facilitating meaning-making.

Interpreter (tour guide)

The last theme, or category of elements, that emerged as facilitating meaning-making is the tour g uide. This theme comprises eight elements, including six elements also related to mindfulness – *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *personable and friendly personality*, *provision of options*, *use of humor*, and *speaking tone*. Detailed descriptions with the study participants' comments related to these elements are provided in the section describing elements that triggered tourists to be mindful. The following describes how the remaining two elements – *fluent English* and the guide's *knowledge* – facilitated meaning-making in this study.

Fluent English

The majority of study participants addressed the interpreters' English fluency. They said things such as: "She spoke really clear, so that was good. And, her English was also good" (P-7); "I noticed that she understood people with different English accents and that's good because she could respond to people who were, you know, whether they were from [England] or Australia, or the U.S…" (P-16); "I was very impressed with [my tour guide's] English. She spoke English very well" (P-49). The content and stories are the main elements that interpreters can control during a tour. To do so, the content must be delivered clearly.

One participant (P-53) said, "If the person [who] guides the tour does not have a good English or [does] not know the subject well, the guided tour will become a nightmare." This comment illustrates the importance of the element *fluent English*. When I asked about the difference between the Secret Garden tour and any other tour she had attended before, one female participant pointed to the guide's level of English skills. She said,

Well, I've been, I've been on several tours where the language has not been very
clear…I didn't understand anything and so it was probably the worst tour I've

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been on. So the clarity of the language matters, and I thought [the tour guide at the

Secret Garden] was very clear and articulate, and that helped, so it was better in

that, my experience was better in some, in that regard because I could understand

what she was saying. (P-28)

That is, fluent English matters because it helps participants understand the content delivered by

interpreters during the tour and, as a result, allows other factors, or elements, to become active,

thus influencing participants' experiences. Even though it is not directly influential in generating

meanings, the clarity of the language, therefore, was included in the category of interpreter (tour

guide) in this study.

Knowledge

Participants in this study frequently appreciated the guides' *knowledge*. During the tour,

interpreters provided additional information, such as stories and personal insights, that non-

personal interpretive devices such as brochures and signs could not provide. One participant said,

"I often have questions that aren't answered in the pamphlet, [and] I'm sure many people do.

And, [my tour guide at the Secret Garden was] very knowledgeable so [she] did answer

questions." Another participant stated that it was an advantage to have a interpreter by speaking

expressly about the interpreter's knowledge:

She was quite knowledgeable because I was able to ask her some questions aside

from what she was telling the group, and she definitely had plenty of answers and

knowledge about details about the tour and about some of the artifacts. So she

was quite good. (P-21)

Thus, not only did the guides' *knowledge* provide additional information, it also led to quality

personal interactions between the interpreter and the participants.

Participant 11 said, "She knew a lot, and it was more interesting kind of things she was sharing with us too." From the comments of many of the study participants, it appears that they were able to understand and notice little things about topics such as Korean culture and cultural resources, which they would not have known without the guides' additional information. Given this, by providing insights and additional information, the interpreters' *knowledge* helped facilitate meaning-making.

Linkages between the Elements that Facilitated Meaning-making

Examining study participants' narratives allowed several elements that facilitated meaning-making to be categorized into five themes: *resources*, *personal context*, *program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*. Among these themes, some of them frequently were linked together when study participants' explained their creating or having meaningful experiences. The previous sections explored some of the linkages between critical elements within each theme. This section, investigates how the linkages across multiple themes occurred by looking at the totality of study participants' narratives, and how the linkages contributed to making study participants' experiences meaningful. Among the five themes, *program features* is included as of collection of elements necessary in helping tourists be mindful. By helping participants concentrate on the tour, they allow the generation of, or enhancement of, meanings by tour participants. In this section, this theme – *program features* – is excluded, not because it is not relevant or important, but because it underpins the other themes. Five sets of linkages that frequently were *expressed* in this study are: *personal context* and *resources*; *personal context* and *stories*; *personal context* and *interpreter*; *personal context*, *resources*, and *stories*; and *personal context*, *stories*, and *interpreter*.

Personal Context and Resources

Of those study participants who indicated that natural and cultural resources made their experience meaningful, a majority of them also stated that their *personal interests* are in natural and cultural *resources*. When I asked whether the Secret Garden tour was a meaningful experience, one participant said,

> Just being able to experience natural Korea, and to be able [to] see a natural forest
>
> in the middle of, of a very busy city. It's quite an experience. And that's rather
>
> special isn't it…[Interviewer: Why is it meaningful to you?] Uh, it's our interest.
>
> And, we, we love, natural landscapes and I think they should be preserved. (P-4)

His experience in the Secret Garden was meaningful because he was able to see a natural area, which is his area of personal interest. Another participant said,

> What was most meaningful. Uh, probably the library was the most meaningful
>
> because I'm an academic, which is very interesting to see about the, uh, the sort of
>
> focus of the, the king and the intellectual activities. [Interviewer: Why did you
>
> feel seeing the library was the most meaningful experience?] Because I'm a
>
> professor. Because I spend a lot of my time in libraries and intellectual activities.

He chose the moment when he saw the royal library in the Secret Garden as his most meaningful experience because libraries are closely related to his personal interests and his job. That is, study participants indicated that one reason they chose a place or a building as their most meaningful experience was closely related to their personal interests.

Compared to other participants who chose specific interpretive experiences as their most meaningful experience, most study participants who expressed the linkage between *personal context* and *resources* were not affected by the guided aspect of the tours in relation to their

meaningful experiences. Also, their motivation for participating in the Secret Garden guided tours was to see the cultural and natural resources, or to enter the garden. Although all of the participants said the interpreters' explanations were helpful and informative, when it comes to their most meaningful experiences, they picked what they felt was meaningful in relation to their personal interests, including one or both categories of natural and cultural resources.

Personal Context and Stories

Stories was the element most frequently mentioned as helping to generate meaning-making. Some of the participants indicated that the reason the stories were meaningful was because they could connect their *personal contexts* with the stories being introduced. The most popular story in the Secret Garden tour was about the drinking game at the Jade stream. In the Joseon era, during leisure time, the King and his subjects went to the Secret Garden and enjoyed drinking games. They floated small Korean wine cups in the manmade carved stream and wrote poems in the time before the cups fell down the small waterfall. People who did not finish composing the poems within a time limit had to drink the Korean wine. Study participants said that not only was the story interesting and funny, they could connect with their own life experiences as related to the story. One participant said, "Drinking game and poetry, just, is universal. Drinking games [are] universal." That is, the familiar game in the story helped tour participants assimilate the story and to better understand the time period. Study participants said that when interpreters talked about the drinking game, they "could picture what it would have been and what it was like" (P-30). It seems that the study participants may have related the stories to their personal contexts to generate their thoughts (meaning-making) or identify their meaningful experiences during the tour.

Stories and Resources

During the Secret Garden tours, interpreters provided stories when the tour groups arrived at certain places or in front of cultural resources. This is the reason stories are inextricably linked to places. Several participants indicated that the combination of seeing a particular place or a *cultural resource* and hearing the related *stories* helped them generate meaningful experiences. When I asked about her most meaningful experience during the guided tour, participant 39 said, "The meaningful experience is…the area down there I thought was really pretty. And I thought it was really funny with the little wine cups set up on the water and they float down." Her most meaningful experience was at the Jade stream because of the natural aesthetic and the related story the interpreter told. Another participant also said,

> I think what interested me was the learning about how, like, [Koreans in the
>
> Joseon era] live their lives… Looking at the buildings and the heating system, the
>
> stuff like, that information and some stories about, what everyday life would have
>
> been like for people. That was really meaningful… (P-26)

Seeing the actual buildings while listening to the stories affected her experience. Participant 16 also said, "[the tour guide] really drew my attention to the very specific aspects of it; of the buildings. She referred to, the tour guide referred to 'lot of imagination with the stories." Namely, when the interpreters gave explanations, the cultural and natural resources together with the stories, made much more sense to study participants, and they were able to develop an interest in the experience. Consequently, physical immersion combined with the stories may help tourists develop personal meanings about their experiences.

Personal Context, Resources, and Stories

By examining study participants' complete narratives, it was noted that the mix of *personal context*, natural and cultural *resources*, and *stories* told by interpreters helped study participants generate or enhance meaningful experiences. Before asking about their meaningful experiences, study participants were asked their reason for participating in the Secret Garden tours. Participant 45 replied:

> Uh, I previously got a history degree. [Interviewer: Oh, really?] Yeah, so I really like historical things. Like, that's why I choose the palace today. And I like natural things as well as, so I enjoy hiking and seeing, kind of, the natural beauty of countries as well. So, historical and natural beauties are my top two, I guess.

Moreover, she also mentioned that she likes Korean drama and Korean pop music. Because of her interests in Korean culture, she knew a little about Korea – things such as the traditional clothes and the buildings. Later, when I asked her about her most meaningful experience, she picked a building.

> I liked the straw huts and the rice to, like, to feel like, to kind of feel the burdens of the people. I liked that because it was just very representative of, like, I don't know, like most kings don't do that I guess. But the fact that he kind of built this atmosphere that symbolized what the people, the laborers of the nation did, I think that. [Interviewer: Why did you feel that was most meaningful experience?] …I don't know… I just thought that was, like, beautiful, that area. So, beauty, I think that was my favorite, but then most meaningful was the story behind the hut, the straw hut or straw pavilion.

In the Secret Garden, a pavilion was built with materials from the rice paddies. To experience the commoners' life, the king farmed at the palace every year during the Joseon era. After harvesting, rice straws were used to build the roof of the pavilion. The purpose of the pavilion was to promote awareness of the commoners' lives, even during times when the royal family took a rest in the Secret Garden. She noted that the beauty of the place and the story behind it were the elements critical for her choosing that experience as her most meaningful. Thus, for Participant 45, the Secret Garden tour fit her personal interests (nature lover), and the mix of the cultural and natural resources, combined with the story, stimulated the participant. She further indicated that, due to her experience in the Secret Garden, she wanted to learn more about the Joseon dynasty afterwards.

Personal Context, Stories, and Interpreter

Some study participants addressed the importance of interpreters in generating or enhancing meaningful experiences. As indicated above, the links between *personal context* and *stories* helped study participants generate meaningful experiences. A few participants said they had a meaningful experience as a result of their *personal interests* and *stories* told by the interpreter, as well as the interpreter's *personable and friendly personality*. Participant 15, who is interested in culture, said that hearing the story about the segregation of men and women while seeing the structure of the nobleman's house was his most meaningful experience. This is because the culture, which was contained in the story, was very different from his culture, but he was able to connect himself to the story. He said,

> I think because [the tour guide] had a very nice way to tell the stories…when
>
> someone tells you, like, she had a smile on her face, and you see. That was very, I

was able to have a better connection. I can see the people from her eyes, doing

things like sitting on the floor having tea or talking to each other. It's better to

take a picture. (P-15)

That is, he was able to make a better connection with the story because the interpreter helped him

to imagine the Josen era by inserting her personality into the story. Consequently, within the

personal interpretive setting, interpreter's characteristics, along with other elements, are critical

to helping tourists spark their imaginations, and, as a result, have meaningful experiences.

In summary, based on the study participants' narratives, diverse elements emerged and

were categorized into five themes: *resources*, *personal context*, *program features*, *stories*, and

interpreter. Also, study results showed that linkages across the five themes occurred, and

illustrated how these linkages contributed to making study participants' experiences meaningful.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to understand tourists' meaning-making processes resulting from their participation in a personal interpretive program at Changdeokgung, which is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. The Secret Garden tour was chosen as the target program, and qualitative data were collected during the summer of 2013. Specifically, the focus was to identify the mechanisms of mindfulness and meaningfulness related to cultural resources interpretation within a cultural tourism setting. Within the constructivist research approach, qualitative research methods were utilized to investigate the research problem in this study. Both direct observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews were used for data collection from May 1 through August 11, 2013 at Changdeokgung in South Korea. The collected data were analyzed using grounded theory analysis.

This chapter consists of a summary of the study results, followed by a discussion of key findings. The results derived from this study have important theoretical implications as well as practical implications for interpretation and tourism practices. Finally, study limitations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Conclusions based on a Summary of Study Results

I analyzed 59 in-depth interviews about participants' meaningful experiences gained from the personal interpretive programs at the Secret Garden. The study results led to diverse elements being categorized into five themes – *resources*, *personal context*, *program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*. The broad research questions that guided the inquiry were:

1) Do personal interpretive programs help tourists become mindful during their cultural tourism experience?

2) Do personal interpretive programs help tourists generate/enhance meaningfulness about a place or a resource? If so, how?

3) What are the elements critical to facilitating meaning-making for tourists?

4) What are the mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful, regarding a place or a cultural resource, as a result of their participating in personal interpretive programs?

Making Tourists Mindful

For the first research question, I asked study participants for their reactions to the personal interpretive tour. All of them indicated that they were satisfied with their guided tour experience. I then asked specifically about their state of mind as it related to mindfulness, based on three sub-dimensions (attention, awareness, and present-focus). A majority of the study participants said they were able to pay attention to the tour, and were aware and focused when the interpreters were providing interpretive messages. Of the 55 study participants who responded and whose comments were analyzed, only three participants responded that they were not able to pay attention to the interpreters. However, the reasons had more to do with external factors competing for their attention than factors associated with the guided tour or the interpreter. Competing factors included the natural beauty of the garden and other personal activities, such as taking photos and reading signs. Two participants said they felt bored while waiting for other tourists after the free time, although they also stated that it was just for a

moment. Consequently, it appears that the guided interpretive tour helped study participants become mindful during their experiences at the Secret Garden.

Specific elements that triggered tourists to be mindful were identified as a result of reviewing the study participants' entire narratives. Among the five categories of elements (themes), only three themes (*program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*) included some elements that were critical to helping tourists become mindful during the tour. From the *program features* theme are *costumed interpreter*, *value of fee*, and use of *Koreans as interpreters*. As the most frequently mentioned element by study participants, *stories* is the singular theme that most often helped study participants become mindful during the tour. The *interpreter* theme encompasses six elements of interpreter characteristics, including their *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction* with tourists, *personable and friendly personality*, *provision of options*, *use of humor*, and *speaking tone*.

Generating Meaningful Experiences

To investigate the second research question, I asked study participants to describe the part of the tour that was most meaningful to them. Analysis of their specific experiences reveals that their meaningful experiences were related both to aspects of the guided interpretive tour and to other elements of their experiences. Of the 55 study participants, seven of them did not specify whether or not their personal interpretive experiences were meaningful. Rather than identifying any single specific experience as meaningful, they responded that their overall experience in the Secret Garden was interesting or good. Of the 48 remaining study participants, 37 of them had experiences directly related to the guided aspects of the tours, whereas 11 of them did not identify any of the guided components of the tours as influencing creation of their meaningful

experiences during the tour. Eleven participants said that some other element of the experience, such as the view, the aesthetics, and physical characteristics of the place, helped them have meaningful experiences.

Among the 37 study participants who described one of their meaningful experiences as related to the guided aspects of the tours, a majority of them indicated the importance of the elements of *stories*, interpreters' *personable and friendly personalities*, and interpreters' *knowledge*. They stated that these elements helped them to generate or enhance their meaningful experiences. Also, the combination of these elements helped them remember the place and the cultural resources better. Furthermore, a few of them indicated that, because of the guided interpretive experiences in the Secret Garden, they were able to learn that Koreans care about their culture and heritage enough to preserve significant symbols of that heritage.

Elements Critical to Facilitating Meaning-making

Figure 4 (in chapter 4) presents a summary of critical elements that facilitated meaning-making for tourists (research question 3). Examination of study participants' narratives about their experiences during their guided tour uncovered five themes that included categories associated with the guided tour (*program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*), and other factors not related to the guided tour (*resources* and *personal context*) as facilitators of meaning-making. Even though the themes include elements that trigger tourists to be mindful, additional elements appear to provide underpinnings necessary to allow the generation of meaning as a result of participating in the guided tour (e.g., *appropriate amount of information*, *free time* allowed during the tour, physical *walking* involved in the tour, *use of a microphone*, and the guide's *fluent English* and *knowledge*) about the Secret Garden.

Within the data, two factors – *resources* and *personal context*, which are not directly associated with the guided aspect of the tour – emerged as important themes that facilitate meaning-making. The *resources* theme includes the *natural setting* and *cultural resources*. Many study participants indicated that both the *natural setting* and the *cultural resources* helped them create a meaningful experience in the Secret Garden. Moreover, these are the elements critical to helping tourists to think about their appreciation of the culture, and of preserving natural and cultural resources, as a result of attending the tour. The *personal context* theme included *personal interests*, *previous knowledge*, and engaging in a *new and different experience*. As a crucial cue for the participants to develop meaning during the tour, *personal context* was highlighted when study participants explained the reason why a given experience was their most meaningful one. This study result is consistent with previous literature as well as a primary interpretive principle – "Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile" (Tilden, 2007, p. 33).

Results in this study also found that some of the elements frequently were linked with each other in contributing to study participants' meaningful experiences. Five sets of linkages are: *personal context* and *resources*; *personal context* and *stories*; *personal context* and *interpreter*; *personal context*, *resources*, and *stories*; and *personal context*, *stories*, and *interpreter.*

Mechanisms that Contribute to Making Tourists' Experiences Meaningful

The last research question investigates mechanisms that contribute to making the tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of their participating in the guided interpretive tour. To investigate this question, it was necessary to explore responses to research questions one, two, and three, and to understand them thoroughly. This is because mechanisms are developed based on the relationships among and linkages between all the elements to create mindfulness and meaningfulness. That is, the last research question attempts to explore the big picture by linking concepts emerging in response to each of the other research questions. Based on understanding results across the entire study, research question 4 is discussed below.

<div align="center">

Propositions Emerging as Key Findings

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Study results reveal several distinctive elements. Based on grounded theory, consensual constructions (recurring mechanisms) of tourists' meaning-making resulting from the personal interpretive program at the Secret Garden were that uncovered multiple contributing and interacting elements. Glaser (1978, p. 56) argued that, based on grounded theory, researchers should "generate a set of categories and their properties which fit, work and are relevant for integrating into a theory" to achieve an analytic goal within qualitative research. Therefore, recurring mechanisms derived from this study's results are discussed below, in the form of six propositions, which can be the basis for testing in future studies.

Proposition 1: Personal interpretive programs help tourists to be mindful, but they may or may not lead tourists to generate meaningfulness about a place or a resource in the short term.

This study identifies multiple aspects of personal interpretation that helped study participants become mindful during the Secret Garden tour. Several elements (e.g., *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *stories*, *Korean interpreter*) emerged as critical to helping tourists become mindful during the tour. To investigate mechanism(s) that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful, I analyzed both the entire narratives and responses to specific questions tailored for examining tourists' state of mindfulness, which previous literature has shown is a critical construct for enhancing the quality of tourists' experiences (Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Moscardo, 1996). Examining only the questions related specifically to tourists' state of mindfulness to figure out the mechanisms (if these exist) was not helpful in this study. This is because all of the participants responded to the closed, or polar, question only with the bipolar answers of yes or no, without giving any specific reasons for their answers. This made it impossible to investigate the mechanism. Analyzing entire respondent narratives, however, revealed a pattern about how study participants incorporated their state of mindfulness into their meaningful experiences.

While they were explaining their meaningful experiences, a majority of the study participants indicated how they began paying more attention to the tour, and became altogether more aware of and focused on the parts of the program that they identified as their most meaningful experiences. For example, when I asked Participant 45 about her most meaningful experience, she said,

I think, well, because [the tour guide] was explaining about all the different

pavilions, so, that was…that got my attention because I wanted to know about

them. You can see something, but it means nothing until it's explained to you.

And so, when she started explaining it, that's when I caught my attention and

that's the one that stuck out in my mind…

She indicated that when the interpreter gave information about what she wanted to know, she

started to pay closer attention to the interpreter's explanation, and, as a result, those experiences

became her most meaningful at the Secret Garden. From her narrative, I learned that mindfulness

allows tourists to pay attention during a specific moment by noticing what is happening, and,

consequently, this mindfulness influences the generation of a meaningful experience. Study

participants' accounts of mindfulness about the personal interpretive experiences provided

empirical evidence supporting Moscardo's model (1996), which asserts that mindfulness

enhances the quality of tourists' experiences. This suggests that mindfulness can be an important

precursor to experiencing meaningfulness at heritage sites. So, does mindfulness lead tourists to

develop meaningfulness about a place or a resource within a personal interpretation setting?

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, some of the study participants had meaningful

experiences in the Secret Garden as a result of the personal interpretive aspects of the tours,

whereas a few of them either did not have meaningful experiences or had meaningful

experiences unrelated to the personal nature of the interpretive tours. For instance, when I asked

participant 5, who did not know very much about Korean culture before visiting Korea, to

describe her most meaningful experience, she said, "I don't know that there was any one

particular. No, it was as a whole really… Because it was all new to [my husband and me] and

we've learned things." Later, when I asked a question about whether she had a sense of

interacting with the history or Korean culture during the tour, in relation to her meaningful experience, she said,

> Um, [my husband and I] hadn't really had a problem not interacting because we, we sort of went straight from the guide… so we didn't sort of deviate from the guide; we, we could see the buildings and they looked very impressive. Yeah. We haven't really had a chance to form an opinion on that one. We haven't had a close look. (P-5)

She was one of a few participants who indicated directly that she was not so sure whether the experience was meaningful at least not in the short term. Rather than committing to having had a meaningful experience, she said that it was good and was a learning experience. She stated that she had not had time to develop her own opinion on the experience because she was busy following the tour while listening to the interpreter's explanations. Consequently, the findings showed that meaningfulness about a place or a resource may or may not be generated as a result of the personal interpretive tours, at least not immediately, even if tourists are mindful. This led to the first proposition addressing the linking mechanism between mindfulness and meaningfulness within a cultural tourism setting.

Proposition 2: To generate meaningfulness about a place or a resource as a result of participating in personal interpretive programs, interpreters should find ways to help the tourists relate the meaning of the resources to their personal contexts.

Among the study participants who said they had generated meaningfulness about a place or a resource as a result of participating in the personal interpretive tours at the Secret Garden, all of them mentioned that something within their *personal context*, such as *personal interest* and *knowledge* acquired prior to the visit, was the most critical cue (theme) to developing their own meanings related to cultural resources during the tour. When I asked about their most meaningful experiences, study participants tended to recall their knowledge, perspective, or past experiences, and interwove those with the interpretation delivered by the interpreters. For example, when I asked why listening to the story of a drinking game was her most meaningful experience, Participant 28 said,

> I think, it's just, I feel like it could connect. [Interviewer: Connect to you?] Yes,
>
> connect to my [university] life but, also, I could connect to the person that lived,
>
> you know, that many years ago. I think that's mainly, yeah, mainly it.

That is, she was able to recall her university life while listening to the story of the drinking game, and to picture an earlier time. Furthermore, according to the meaning-making perspective, she was expanding on her university life by attaching new meanings to the place where the story was delivered.

Analyzing study participants' most meaningful experiences at the Secret Garden also showed that many study participants were more interested in listening to stories about personalities, and how people lived in the Joseon era, than they were in listening to stories about the buildings or the royal family. As reflected in statements by participant 28, this is because

study participants could easily project their lives into stories of how people were living, which, in turn, led them to imagine or understand the stories, or expand their meanings from the stories.

According to the transformation theory of adult learning (Mezirow, 1994), to generate meaningfulness, people need to develop their own meanings by critically reflecting their own memories. This implies that critically reflecting on one's own memories and experiences is an essential requirement for generating meaningfulness. This is consistent with my study results that reflecting *personal context* (considering one's own memories in the transformation theory of adult learning) is closely related to generating meaningfulness about resources in personal interpretive settings.

Proposition 3: Specific elements in the *program features* category – *appropriate amount of information* and *free time* – emerged as factors critical to helping tourists form their meanings of resources (critical reflection).

When I asked what they liked about the tour, study participants identified several elements of the tour (e.g., *cultural resources*, *natural setting*, *interpreter*, *stories*). Two additional distinctive elements – *appropriate amount of information* and *free time* – were mentioned by several study participants who had a meaningful experience as a result of participating in the guided interpretive tours at the Secret Garden. They said things such as:

> Very informative, I'm glad it didn't [go] into too much detail because the more
> names that come out, especially when for me they are foreign, the more difficult it
> is to remember them, so they become meaningless to me in the end. (P-21)

I think it was nice that we have 5 minutes just to wander a little bit so it's not as

rushed, uh, and the second one pointing out little anecdotes… I think, it's these

little personal descriptions that make it nice. Together with having time, to be able

to slow down and appreciate it rather than rush through the entire place. (P-49)

Participant 21 said that, even though he appreciated getting information during the tour, he did

not want to be overwhelmed by too much information. That is, he liked the Secret Garden tour

because it delivered the right amount of information. Participant 49 mentioned that having free

time during the guided tour was what he liked about it.

Appropriate amount of information and *free time* were critical *program features* that

helped tourists to generate or enhance meaningfulness about a place or a resource. As stated

above, in order to develop meaningfulness about cultural resources at cultural heritage sites,

tourists need time to reflect on their own memories so they can generate their own meaning-

making. When I asked about the reason free time was important, Participant 23, who liked the

free time allowed during the tour, said, "Because it gives you a chance to think about the

information and it's not just constant talking…" Similar to this, when it comes to generating

meaningfulness, having what tourists perceive as the right amount of information allows

interpreters to provide both new information about the resources and an opportunity for tourists

to think about the information without being overwhelmed. That is, it is reasonable to assume

that study participants have a chance to form their own meanings during the free time allowed

and based on an appropriate amount of information. This led to development of the third

proposition, which addresses the importance of physical time management to facilitate meaning-

making for tourists.

Proposition 4: Interpreters' program delivery contributes to helping tourists become mindful.

Many studies (e.g., Ap & Wong, 2001; Min, 2012) have highlighted the fact that tour guides, as front-line service providers, play a significant role for tourism destinations because their performance not only influences tourists' satisfaction and travel experiences, but also the destinations' images. Results of this study indicated that interpreters' performance impacts on tourists' experiences within the personal interpretive setting, but may or may not have an influence on destination image. In this study, many participants mentioned that, because of their interpreters, they were able to understand the resources and to have a better connection with the resources. Furthermore, some participants in this study stated that they were able to remember the resources better because of the interpreters and how they delivered the program. That is, study results show that interpreters' program delivery contributes to shaping tourists meaningful experiences to a considerable extent.

Study participants' narratives showed that they ascribed a wide range of meaningful experiences to characteristics of interpreters. For instance, when I asked about identifying specific elements of the tour that they liked or remembered, *stories* delivered by interpreters was the most frequent answer; the second most frequent answer was something about the *interpreters* themselves and how they delivered the program. In addition, six elements of the theme *interpreter* (*enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *personable and friendly personality*, *provision of options*, *use of humor*, and *speaking tone*) were found to be critical aspects for helping tourists become mindful. That is, it is reasonable to assume that, depending on the quality and characteristics of the interpreters' program delivery, tourists can be either mindful or mindless (proposition 4).

Proposition 5: Elements that influence tourists' emotional experiences are critical to facilitating meaning-making for tourists.

> When I asked whether the Secret Garden tour was informative, participant 17 said,
>
> [The tour] was very informative, but, uh, I wasn't mainly looking for information, mostly for impression and feelings. I am more like, kind of, uh, emotional memory… Because normally I don't, yeah, for me it's not so important all this data. [What is important] for me [are] essential impressions. (P-17)

Although a few people, such as participant 17, stated directly that they participated in the Secret Garden tour for emotional experiences rather than gaining information, all study participants expressed emotional reactions rather than describing their learning experiences when they described their most meaningful experiences. They said things such as: "I thought the garden was very peaceful and beautiful" (P-23); "it was nice and interesting" (P-34); "Just the excitement of what was going to come next. You know, what will you see next? This is great, and it was fun to see it all" (P-39).

Thus, among elements in the *interpreter* theme, the most critical elements that facilitate meaning-making for tourists are factors that can elicit the tourists' emotions or affective experiences. These elements are the interpreter's *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *personal and friendly personality*, and *use of humor*. This is consistent with Kuo's (2002) statement that tourists are not touched by factual interpretive information, but they are attracted by an interpretative program that interweaves with their beliefs, worries, and sense of humor. Likewise, this study shows that study participants tended to be mindful when they had interactions with the interpreters, or they felt things were funny, interesting or were highlighted by the interpreter's own engagement; consequently, participants started to generate meaning. For

example, Participant 26 said, "[the tour guide] was enjoying it and things, and I think that's really, it passes on to us. You know, make us more enjoy it, if, I, she's enthusiastic and things." Participant 26 experienced the feelings she had during the tour because of her interpreter's enthusiasm, which helped her to engage with the actual tour. From these examples, it can be argued that an emotional experience is more influential in facilitating meaning-making for tourists than a learning-only experience.

Proposition 6: Several elements emerged that are not directly related to the guided aspects of the tour, and should be considered when identifying contributors to tourists' meaning-making.

When it comes to tourist's meaning-making, it is critical to investigate other elements that are unrelated to the personal interpretive aspects of the tours. As stated in the study results, *resources* was a theme critical in helping tourists generate or enhance their meaningful experiences. Although *resources* is not the element that related directly to the guided aspect of the tour, a majority of the study participants indicated the importance of *resources*. A few of them also said that, because of the natural aesthetic, personal interpretive elements were not critical for them even though they were satisfied with the personal interpretive tour. Some of the study participants mentioned the importance of the brochure and taking pictures during the tour as helping create their meaningful experiences. That is, it seems reasonable to consider other elements that are not directly related to the personal interpretive aspects of the tours to fully understand the tourists' meaning-making process.

In summary, this study investigated the mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of their participating in personal interpretive programs, and

generated six propositions derived from the study results. Results show that personal interpretive programs help tourists to be mindful, and they may lead tourists to generate meaningfulness about a resource if interpreters provide ways to help tourists relate the meaning of the resource to their personal contexts. Additionally, it was found that specific elements such as *appropriate amount of information*, *free time*, interpreter's *enthusiasm and engagement*, and *verbal interaction* were factors critical to facilitating meaning-making for tourists. *Resource* elements, which are not directly related to the guided aspects of the tours, also emerged as considerations when identifying contributors to tourists' meaning-making.

Theoretical Implications

In this study, two theories (the theory of meaning-making and the transformation theory of adult learning) and one construct (mindfulness) were integrated to investigate research questions. To do this, the present study has several theoretical implications for the tourist experience and interpretation research.

First, this study is one of few to investigate meaningfulness as a component of outcomes of tourists' experiences. Literature investigating interpretation in tourism and museum contexts has paid a great deal of attention to the evaluation of interpretation impacts. It has focused on interpretation's role in tourist satisfaction (e.g., Ham & Weiler, 2007; Hwang et al., 2005), participants' knowledge gains (e.g., Powell & Ham, 2008; Tubb, 2003), impact of tourist's prosocial behavior (e.g., Gramann & Vander Stoep, 1987; Ward & Roggenbuck, 2003) and environmental conservation intentions as a result of interpretive programs (e.g., Ballantyne et al., 2011; Jacobs & Harms, 2014). Even though many scholars have mentioned the importance of meaningfulness as a desired outcome of interpretation, few studies have actually investigated

meaningfulness. By analyzing study participants' narratives, this study investigated how tourists generated or enhanced meaningfulness about the resources as a result of participating in personal interpretive programs.

In Barrie's (2001) study, personal elements, site elements, and outcome elements were categorized as types of elements for meaningful interpretive experiences. The present study, however, focused on two stages: pre-trip and during the trip. It closely investigated the site elements and found two important themes – *program features* and *interpreter*'s characteristics. The themes of *resources* and *stories* also were added as critical elements that facilitated meaning-making for tourists. These results do not necessarily contradict Barrie's (2001) findings, but provide additional insights about tourists' meaningful experiences resulting from participating in personal interpretive tours.

Second, this study is the first attempt to investigate the mechanisms that facilitate meaning-making for tourists within a personal interpretive setting. Related to mindfulness and the theory of meaning-making, this study identifies critical elements that facilitate meaning-making during personal interpretive programs for tourists. It also shows that mindfulness can be an important precursor to experiencing meaningfulness at cultural heritage sites. One interesting finding is that quality interpretation makes tourists mindful, yet meaningfulness about a place or a resource may or may not be generated, even though tourists are mindful.

Third, this study utilizes the transformation theory of adult learning as a basis for investigating the mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of personal interpretive programs. Mezirow (1978) argued that, in order to generate meaningful learning, people need to reflect critically on what they know from their own history, as part of the process of transformative learning. The accounts of participants' meaningful

interpretive experiences in this study provide empirical evidence supporting Mezirow's theory. Study participants who had generated meaningfulness related to resources after participating in a personal interpretive tour engaged in critical reflection by recalling their personal knowledge or memories, and then reflecting them onto the site or stories told by interpreters. Given this, the study lends support to the fact that transformative learning does occur in informal educational settings (interpretive settings).

Fourth, this study's findings show the importance of various elements of *personal context* as crucial cues for tourists to develop meaning during the tour. Accounts of participants' meaningful interpretive experiences in this study repeatedly support one of Tilden's six fundamental principles of interpretation, which asserts the importance of relating new experiences and information to something in the previous experience or personality of the participants. That is, this study confirmed that tourists generate meanings about a place and a cultural resource as a result of participating in a personal interpretive tour when tour elements help them relate the tour experience to their personal context. This is consistent with Barrie's (2001) study and Falk and Dierking's (2000) contextual learning model, which indicated that personal elements, including tourist's interests and previous experiences, were found to be a typology of the elements of meaningful interpretive experiences. Furthermore, this study is meaningful in that it is one of few studies to provide empirical evidence that identifies a fundamental principle of interpretation as important to quality interpretive experiences.

Fifth, the findings of this study confirm the importance of emotional experiences in generating meaningfulness. Several researchers (Aho, 2001; Faber & Hall, 2007; Kuo, 2002) have highlighted that emotions are a key dimension of the quality of overall experiences in tourism settings. Benton (2008) also argued that a subjective impression of the interpretive

programs helps tourists to create meaning during their experiences. Although there is agreement about the importance of emotional factors, a limited number of studies have focused on how this factor influences tourists' experiences, especially in personal interpretive settings. Several elements that can influence tourists' emotional experiences were found in this study (the interpreter's *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, and *personable and friendly personality*). Therefore, this study extends support for the importance of the emotional experience by empirically investigating tourists' descriptions of their personal interpretive tour experiences. Additionally this supports the inclusion of emotional connections in NAI's definition of interpretation: "a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource" (Brochu & Merriman, 2008).

Finally, this study is one of only a few to investigate tourist experiences by analyzing tourists' narratives. It supports the idea that guided tour experiences are multi-dimensional and include cognitive experiences, learning experiences, introspective experiences, and social experiences. These findings are consistent with those of other studies (Aho, 2001; Goulding, 2000; Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Pekarik et. al., 1999). In addition, this study provides evidence of tourists' transformation experiences. Aho (2001) argued that tourists can experience permanent changes (transformation) in their lives while visiting tourism destinations, in either their state of mind or body. From this study, I found that some tourists transformed their understanding and appreciation of the resources by participating in personal interpretive tours.

Practical Implications

This study investigates the mechanisms of tourists' meaning-making as a result of participating in personal interpretive programs at the Secret Garden at Changdeokgung in Korea. Because of the qualitative nature of this study and the small sample size, study results are limited in their generalizability; nevertheless, results have much to offer in the way of practical implications for both tourism and interpretive professionals.

First, although study results show that meaningfulness may or may not be generated from the personal aspects of interpretive tours, critical elements that facilitated tourists' meaning-making were mentioned repeatedly. The critical elements were categorized into five themes (*resources*, *personal context*, *program features*, *stories*, and *interpreter*). Interpreters can incorporate these critical elements into their presentations to help tourists generate meaningfulness about the resources during personal interpretive tours. Whether these elements will be useful in generating meaningful experiences will depend on tourists' motives and attention. At the very least, these elements comprise a useful checklist of factors that are considered to be important elements in an interpretive guided tour program to facilitate and encourage tourists' meaning-making.

Interpretive program planning, requires a specific focus on increasing authenticity. This is especially important for heritage sites. Program planners should consider hiring and training local interpreters and having front-line employees at these sites wear traditional clothing relevant to the time period. Also, beginning with early program planning, program planners should research and understand their target audiences. *Personal context* emerged as the most critical theme for generating study participants' meaning in this study. Therefore, even though it is impossible to get statistical information about the average audience (Brochu & Merriman, 2008),

at the very least, conducting a market survey would provide an overall sense of what people want

from interpretive programs and what their backgrounds might be. In addition, a plan to

periodically conduct research about audience's perspectives, knowledge, and preferences as

related to a cultural site or context prior to their participating in an interpretive tour would help

interpreters understand their audiences and develop programs accordingly. In turn, they may be

able to positively and successfully impact tourists by providing meaningful experiences that

relate to the personal interests or knowledge the tourists expressed before the tour.

The critical elements that emerged from study participants' narratives in this study should

be integrated into the design of interpreter training programs. Interpreter training programs

should not only develop an enhanced level of knowledge about the resources, but also work on

interpretation delivery skills. Furthermore, educating about environmentally responsible

behaviors often is overlooked during training (Randall & Rollins, 2009); however, such content

should be covered in training because interpretation's role in preserving natural and cultural

resources is an essential for resource management. Interpreters should consider providing tourists

with an opportunity to explore resources on their own as long as it doesn't damage the resources.

During the training, trainers need to make sure they discuss appropriate personality elements that

will influence tourists' emotions, such as being enthusiastic, and demonstrating a personable and

friendly attitude toward tourists. Moreover, while language skills are important communication

skills, so are eye contact, hand and body gestures, and smiling. The value of these, too, should be

included in the training.

Second, this study shows that interpretive managers and interpreters need to understand

the importance of emotional experiences and, thus, deliberately include them in programs.

Interpretive managers have overemphasized increasing tourists' knowledge and awareness as one

of the fundamental roles of interpretation. They often overlook the importance of tourists'

emotional satisfaction, especially when it comes to training professionals. However, as the NAI

definition states, interpretation should "[forge] emotional and intellectual connections between

the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resources" (Brochu & Merriman,

2008). The importance of tourists' emotional experiences is clearly stated in this definition. In

this study, a majority of the study participants indicated that *use of humor* was a critical element

in generating their meaningful experiences. They also repeatedly mentioned that the experience

was meaningful because it was "interesting," or "fun," which are expressions of their emotional

engagement with, or reactions to, the interpretive tours. Therefore, to increase tourists' attention

and satisfaction, interpreters should think about how they can entertain and engage tourists while

also meeting their organizations' goals and telling accurate, authentic stories. For example,

interpreters might think about using a game or a pop quiz in which tourists can engage. They

should also think about the best ways to include organizational goals using an interesting story.

Interpreters should keep in mind that program participants are often in the middle of their

vacations. Rather than delivering instructions, interpreters should try to engage tourists and bring

them into an interpretive experience by entertaining them. This is important because emotion is

a critical precursor to engaging tourists in personal interpretive programs. In this study, the

interpreter's *enthusiasm and engagement*, *verbal interaction*, *personal and friendly personality*,

and *use of humor* emerged as critical elements in activating tourists' positive emotions.

Therefore, interpretive managers and interpreters should take these elements into account when

they planning their programs and training their interpreters.

Third, interpretive managers should encourage interpreters to develop their programs

using stories. A story is defined as a narrative presentation of a series of actions or events that

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usually affect humans (Moore, 1973). As a basic element of memory formation, a story creates vivid images that hold tourists' attention (Knudson et al., 2003). A story also "shapes memories and impressions of events over time." As a result, tourists' retain stories in their minds for a long time (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1378). In this study, the results show that the *stories* theme was the most frequently mentioned by the participants, and was the most frequently linked with other elements in helping participants create or have meaningful experiences. Study participants also stated that stories helped them to visualize earlier times, to bring a place or a resource to life, and to give more meaning to the tour. This is consistent with the statement by Hughes, Bond, and Ballantyne (2013) that stories help interpreters put tourists into the context and 'make sense' of the physical, historical, and spiritual aspects of the sites. Thus, it would be beneficial for interpreters to actively utilize storytelling in their personal interpretive programs. As an interactive art that uses words and actions, storytelling reveals the elements and images of a story while encouraging the audience's imagination (National Storytelling Network, n.d.). Therefore, interpreters should create and deliver a story line that also incorporates characters to help activate tourists' imaginations.

Fourth, elements under the theme of *program features* may assist tourists in generating their meaningful experiences during interpretive tours. As they design programs, interpretive managers and interpreters should aim to find a balance between enough information and too much information, so that tourists can achieve understanding about a place or a resource. Interpretive managers and interpreters also should consider allocating free time during a tour, even if it is just a few minutes, so that tourists have time to explore, think about, and form their own opinions about, and take advantage of, the actual resources by physically and cognitively

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interacting with what they have seen and heard. These elements help tourists to generate or enhance their meaningful experiences during personal interpretive tours.

Fifth, interpretive managers and interpreters may need to incorporate some kind of extension (e.g., encouraging tourists to buy books, videos or other souvenirs related to the site and its story, sign up for an organization's homepage or Facebook page, or donate to a site for its restoration) to help tourists generate meaningfulness about a place or a resource after they return home. As stated previously, tourists need time to form their own meanings about resources after participating in personal interpretive tours. In this study, some of the participants were unable to generate meanings about resources due to a lack of time. By encouraging tourists to take home relevant souvenirs or brochures, for example, interpretive managers and interpreters can help tourists recollect their experiences at destinations and share them with others. Thus, it is possible that tourists who do not form meanings about resources during a site visit will have time to think about the resources further, and form their meanings at home by recalling their on-site experiences through the extensions (e.g., using souvenirs, reading books or brochures, or becoming more engaged with the topic). This use of program extensions also relates to the recollection phase of the tourism experience (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Gunn, 1997).

Finally, interpretive managers and interpreters need to be familiar with the tenets of meaning-making and the process of transformative learning to understand tourists' meaningful experiences. From this study, we are able to see how tourists created meaning during the tours. No matter what kind of information an interpreter intends to deliver, the meaning may or may not be created by tourists. To have a meaningful experience as a result of participating in personal interpretive tours, tourists must first be mindful during the tour, so that they are actively engaged in the tour and are processing the information. Mindful tourists then should be able to

develop their own meanings by critically reflecting on their own memories and previous experiences. Interpretive managers and interpreters also should consider and incorporate various mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful as a result of their participating in personal interpretive tours. It may give them ideas for developing programs and training their front-line employees.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study's results contribute several theoretical and practical implications to the fields of tourism and interpretation, it also has some limitations that must be discussed. This final section discusses study limitations as well as recommendations for future research.

First, to verify the study's credibility, an external auditor reviewed coded results to assess whether there were any biases associated with my research and data analysis procedures. However, I was the only one who engaged in the coding process for all of the raw data (interview transcripts and field notes). Because of budget and time constraints, it was difficult to hire another coder. However, using another coder would have increased the study's credibility (internal validity) by providing an opportunity to compare two coders' results and to identify any discrepancies in code labels and code assignments between the two coders.

Second, as a qualitative case study, this study revealed numerous aspects of tourists' meaningful experiences that resulted from participating in personal interpretive tours at the Secret Garden. However, this study's results may not be relevant to other tourism contexts because other contexts have different characteristics such as different program topics or objectives, different geophysical settings, and different cultural contexts. Also, different tourists and groups of tourists might have different responses as a result of differences in ages, social

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groups, countries of origin, and different cultural and experiential backgrounds. Therefore, the relevance of the present research findings should be explored in other tourism and interpretive contexts.

Third, the sampling has inherent biases. There was an average of 84 tourists on each tour, and I was the only researcher. Due to the difficulty of making initial contact with every individual on the tour, I targeted those who positioned themselves in front of the tour group as my potential participants, and then selected who to approach from this group. This might have hindered my ability to get diverse opinions about the tours. Therefore, it would be beneficial to have several more researchers when engaged with a large group, so they can help reach out systematically to all of the tourists.

Fourth, the target sample was English-speaking tourists. Although sample selection was made based on several criteria, and potential interviewees were asked several screening questions prior to participating in the interview, it was difficult to evaluate their level of English skills before conducting the interviews. Study participants had diverse level of English skills because some of them were native English speakers and some were not. Although I informed them that the interview was being conducted in English, and study participants approved their participation, a few of them did not speak English well. My interview questions contained many subjective questions that required them to explain their in-depth thoughts and feelings. Their lack of English skills meant that it was difficult to collect rich data from them. They also may have been challenged by differences and nuances in the meaning of words and concepts. This is often a challenge in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research (Cha, Kim, & Erlen, 2007; Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé, & Schotsmans, 2007). Therefore, it would be beneficial to either target only native English-speaking tourists or have interviewers who can speak other languages.

Fifth, I was the only interviewer involved in this study. It was plausible that being a young female Korean researcher affected interviewee participation, and that it caused a range of impacts. I had an advantage in being a young Korean female because non-Korean tourists were curious and interested in me. For example, it was difficult to intercept study participants who were in the middle of their holiday travel. However, my nationality was an advantage in contacting potential interviewees and building at least some credibility and trust. Some tourists came to me and asked questions before I approached them. Thus, I was able to conduct the planned number of interviews. On the other hand, there were a few study participants who did not have any interest in my study, even though they joined the interviews. They were more interested in talking with a native Korean rather than participating in the interview. In some cases, I had a hard time leading the conversation and making interviewees concentrate on the interview questions.

Sixth, several of the prompt questions solicited forced responses. To be specific, when I asked about an interviewee's state of mindfulness, prompt questions were structured as closed, or polar questions, thus soliciting only yes-no responses. It would have been more effective to find a way to ask questions with an open-ended format so that I could have solicited richer data. For a future study, researchers should consider developing more appropriate prompt questions by finding ways to ask questions requiring complex rather than simplistic responses.

Seventh, this study focused on investigating the mechanisms of tourists' meaning-making as a result of participating in personal interpretive tours. However, I observed that tourists had different reactions to the tour, depending on the interpreter, and it influenced their meaning-making during the tours. Several previous studies have examined ways in which interpreters' personal characteristics such as communication competence (e.g., Ryan & Dewar, 1995; Yu,

Weiler, & Ham, 2002) and voice (e.g., Kang & Gretzel, 2012) influence tourists' experiences. Thus, it would be interesting to explore how and which elements of individual interpreters affect tourists' meaning-making within personal interpretive settings.

Eighth, this study only investigates personal interpretive service. However, interpretation has two broad types – personal interpretation and non-personal interpretation. Non-personal interpretation involves the communication of a message without physical interaction or discourse. Signs and brochures are classic examples of frequently used non-personal services. Thus, it would be interesting to compare how different types of interpretation (personal interpretation and non-personal interpretation) affects tourists' meaning-making within a tourism setting.

Finally, by analyzing study participants' narratives, six propositions are proposed in this study. Future research could benefit from this study by examining each proposition. This could make it possible for researchers to confirm the mechanisms that contribute to making tourists' experiences meaningful within personal interpretive settings. Additionally, to fully understand tourists' meaning-making within a personal interpretive setting, a future study might consider diversified research methods (e.g., quantitative methods, mixed methods), depending on the research questions and study context.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Observation Record Sheet

Table 8. *Observation Record Sheet*

DATE: _____
Site description:

Interpreter:

Physical Setting:

APPENDIX B: Daily Field Notes

Table 9. *Field Note Sheet*

❑ Changdeokgung	Date_____
Weather: Cloud/Sun Wind Rain Other Total # in Group: _____ Tour Start Time: _____ Tour End Time: _____ Guide's Name: _____ Total time of guided tour: _____	
Visitor interaction with interpreter (check for each occurrence) Orientation Question: General Conversation: Weather Question: Cognitive information Question: Relating Question: Critical reflection: Others:	**Interpreter** (check for each occurrence) Orientation: General Conversation: Information: Relating: Connection: Stories: Provoking:

Note. Narrative comments were written on this form, and sometimes, additional space was needed.

Table 9. (Cont'd)
(Back space of Daily Field Notes)

Visitor Quotes:	My thoughts, reactions:

Note. Narrative comments were written on this form, and sometimes, additional space was needed.

APPENDIX C: Consent Form for Interview

Interview Participant Information and Consent

Dear Interview Participant:

Overview:
I am a PhD student in the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies (CARRS) at Michigan State in the USA. I am conducting a research study about the meaning and other outcomes that tourists get from their participation in interpretive tours at cultural sites in Korea. You are being invited to participate in the study because you participating in a guided tour at Changdeokgung (all participants must be 18 years of age or older). The purpose of this study is to understand 1) how helpful the guided tour in which you participated today was for explaining Changdeokgung; 2) what were the things that the tour guide included in the tour experience that most helped create a meaningful experience for you; and 3) if there were other things—such as others in the group, activities, discussion—that helped make the tour meaningful. Your experiences and comments are important for improving the interpretive tours, facilities and other programs here at Changdeokgung.

What You Will Do:
You are being asked to provide comments, reactions, and thoughts about your guided tour experiences at Changdeokgung. This interview will take approximately 30-to-60 minutes. To make sure I record your comments accurately, the interview will be recorded (audio only) and then transcribed for later analysis with the comments of other tour participants. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate at all, refuse to answer certain questions, or stop your participation at any time without any consequences. After completing the interview, you will be given a small souvenir ($5 value).

Privacy and Confidentiality:
Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your interview data will be kept confidential, and you will be asked to provide a secret code name (pseudonym) for your comments. Your real name will never be used in either the final report or in any other subsequent publications or presentations. After the interview is transcribed, and the transcription sent to/approved by you, the record of the interview will be destroyed. Thereafter, only your pseudonym and a code number will be used. All documents, including signed consent forms and transcriptions, will be kept in a secure place where only the researcher has access to them. Handwritten notes and audio recordings will also be kept at a secure location and destroyed after all analysis, report, and publications have been completed.

Questions?
If you have any questions and concerns about the study, please contact one of the following:

Eun Jeong Noh (interviewer)	Dr. Gail Vander Stoep
Email: noheun@msu.edu	Email: vanders1@msu.edu
Phone (011) 366-4155 (Korea) or	Phone (517) 432-0266
(415) 816-6565 (USA)	Michigan State University, CARRS
	480 Wilson Road, #131
	East Lansing, MI, USA 48824

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact (anonymously, if you wish) Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at

Phone: 011-517-355-2180	Regular mail at
Fax: 011-517-432-4503	Michigan State University
e-mail at irb@msu.edu	408 West Circle Drive, #207
	East Lansing, MI, USA 4882

_____   _____
Participant's Name   (date)

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.   I voluntarily agree to have this interview audio recorded.

_____   _____
(signature)   (signature)

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide

[Recording Date, Time]

Okay, let's get started.

Hello, I'm Eun Jeong Noh and we met at Changdeokgung. First of all, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. You have already read and signed a written consent form, but for our legal records, I want to ask you for an additional verbal consent.

Do you consent to participate in this interview?

                    YES (continue)   NO (Thank the participant and end the interview)

I want to know your reactions and thoughts about the guided tour that you participated in today. My study purpose is to understand tourists' experiences with the guided tour so that I can help tourism providers and the sites themselves create programs in a way that reflects a better understanding of tourists' experiences. So, please feel free to talk about any experiences, feelings, and thoughts you've had regarding the guided tour.

You may choose not to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you don't want to answer. Also, you may stop your participation at any time without any consequences.

1. **First, I would like to ask you about your general travel choices and patterns.**

   a. Is this your first visit to Korea?

   b. What is the purpose of your visit?

   c. How long are you staying in Korea?

   d. Have you participated in guided tours before, either in your country or in Korea? (Other than today's experience)

       Prompts: Please briefly describe one that particularly stands out to you?

                         What are the reasons you remember this one so well?

   e. What are the main things you want to see and experience when you are traveling?

   f. In addition to attending this Changdeokgung guided tour, what other sites or activities have you participated in while in Korea?

   g. What other things do you plan to do during the rest of your visit to Korea?

Additional prompts questions were asked when necessary.

h. How did you get tourism information about Korea?

2. **We've been talking about your general travel patterns. Now I'd like to move on to some general questions related to the Changdeokgung tour you participated in today.**

a. What were your reasons for attending the tour?

b. What did you expect to get out of the tour? (It can be structure, content, or experience elements.)

c. How did the tour meet those expectations?

    Prompt: Did it? If so, how?

d. Did you interact with other tour group attendees?

    Prompt: Did other people in your tour group seem to be interested/active? What were things that made you think this?

                   Did other tourists in the tour influence your experiences? How?

e. Please tell me about your tour guide. (It can be tone, custom, his/her attitude, or anything you remember.)

f. Was the content of the tour new to you or were you already familiar with some of the content?

    Prompt: How familiar were you with the content?
                   What parts did you know?
                   Do you think the parts that you already knew about influenced your experiences in Changdeokgung? If so, how?

g. What did you like about the tour?

    Prompt: Is there anything you liked about the physical and environmental contexts?

h. What did you not like about the tour?

    Prompt: Is there anything you disliked about the physical and environmental contexts?

3. Now, let's talk about your experiences related to the guided tour you did today.

a. In general, what is your reaction to the tour?

    Prompts: What were the main things you learned from the tour?
                      Was it informative? Why?
                      Did you learn something new about Korean history/culture?
                      Was it interesting to you? Why?
                      Was it fun, or did you feel bored during the tour? Why?
                      What else were you feeling during the tour? Why?
                      Did the tour grab your attention during the tour? How?
                      Were you able to be aware of what you are doing/listening?
                      Were you able to focus on the moment when guide gave explanations?

b. Think about the tour from the beginning to the end, and describe the part of the tour that was the most meaningful to you.

    Prompts: Why did you feel that this was your most meaningful experience?
                      Was the guide's explanation informative?
                      Was it fun?   Did the tour guide grab your attention at that moment?
                      Were there any specific elements of the tour that you liked or remembered?

c. Did having a person present the story to you, rather than reading signs/brochures or listening to a podcast, etc., influence your most meaningful experience?

    Prompts: How did the personal interpretation influence your most meaningful experience?
                      Can you explain the specific reasons?

d. How did the most meaningful experience here differ from other historic site experiences you have had before, anywhere?

e. Were there any differences from other guided tour experiences you have had before, anywhere, if you had previous experiences?

    Prompt: If so, what are some of those differences?

4. Next, we'll talk about your thoughts about Korean historical and cultural resources, as a result of participating in the tour.

a. Before you visited Korea, what were some of the main images and impressions you had about Korea?

b. Did you learn about and experience Korean historical and cultural resources from the tour?

   Prompts: Did the tour you participated in today change your images, impressions, or thoughts?
   How?   Why?

c. In general, was the tour a meaningful experience to you?

   Prompts: If so, what do you value most about having participated in the tour?
   Why is this important to you?
   If not, why not?
   What could have made it more meaningful, if you have recommendations?

d. Did the tour today make you think differently about anything? (It can be your country, Korea or anything.)

   Prompt: Was there anything that made you think of yourself?
   What were your personal reactions to [the tour]?

e. When you were visiting the palace, did you have a sense of interacting with history and/or Korean culture?

   Prompts: Is it because of the tour itself, guided tour, or something else?
   [Develop a prompt on the spot, depending on respondent's comments.]

f. Do you think the [most meaningful experience that you mentioned before] will influence your intentions to revisit Korea to learn more about Korean culture?

   Prompts: If yes, why?
   Do you want to attend any guided tours?
   Why?
   What made them more effective and meaningful experiences for you?
   If not, why not?

g. If you have a choice between guided tours and non-guided tours, which do you usually prefer, especially when in a different country?

Prompt: Why?

5. **The last few questions I have are demographic in nature. If there are any you don't want to answer, just say so and we'll skip it.**

a. Wher is your home country?

b. What year were you born?

c. Are you traveling with family/friends/solo?

Prompt: (If the participant is traveling in a group) how many are there?

d. What kind of work do you do for a living?

e. What is your highest level of education?

I really appreciate your time and sharing your experiences. All reports and publications resulting from this discussion will be written and shared using a pseudonym and code number. Your personal information will be protected.
Once transcription is completed, I would like to share the transcripts with you to ensure that I haven't missed anything and that I correctly understood what we talked about.
   o Do you want to check my transcripts?
   o Also, would you like to see the study results?
   o If so, please give me your name and email address.
   o If I don't hear from you within a week, I will assume everything is okay with the transcripts.

Thank you so much. (The incentive will be given to the interviewee.)

APPENDIX E: Photo of Respondent Incentive

Figure 5. Changdeokgung souvenir: Korean traditional bookmark

APPENDIX F: Interviewee Tracking Form for Member Checks

Table 10. *Interview Tracking Form*

Date	Time of Tour	Code #	Code Name	Name	Email address

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REFERENCES

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