Seed Grant Application Cover Page

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Amount Requested: Proposal Title:	\$ 12,000 Discovering and Voicing Indigenous Macri		
PROPOSAL CHECKLIST: Abstract Narrative (2 single-spaced pages) Budget Page Biographical Data Publications/Exhibits/Performances (5 years) Proposals Submitted/Funded (5 years) Summary of Previous Seed Grant(s) – N/A Applicable animal/human requests for approval are attached: The IRB request for approval will be submitted upon notification of 2012 Seed Grant award outcome.		, 	IBILITY: Early career faculty establishing scholarly program (5 years or less employment at UI) Established faculty transitioning into a new scholarly area
Has seed grant previously been awarded? No			

Discovering and Voicing Indigenous Perceptions of Adventure Recreation: Maori Perspectives

Abstract

Western research has demonstrated the value of adventure activities in promoting wellbeing and healthy development. Further, adventure tourism has been promoted as a panacea for common crises facing indigenous peoples (e.g., loss of land and culture; marginalization; poor health care; economic instability). However, the majority of studies within adventure recreation and tourism have adopted euro-centric participants, models and perspectives. Due to recent growth in adventure tourism products featuring indigenous people, western and indigenous people are increasingly interacting in adventure contexts. Given indigenous peoples' lack of representation in the adventure recreation and tourism literature, this project will investigate indigenous perceptions of: adventure; values and benefits associated with adventure; and representations of indigenous culture within adventure tourism. Qualitative data will be collected and triangulated via in-depth interviews with Maori participants (indigenous to New Zealand) and participant observation of indigenous-based adventure tourism products. This pilot study will address critical knowledge gaps and expand dominant psychological theories in the adventure literature. It will also be used to leverage external funding for study replication and expansion (e.g., in India, South America, Africa, the U.S.); inform Idaho state recreation and tourism policies; and enhance teaching, learning, and outreach conducted through the University of Idaho.

Seed Grant Narrative

Introduction

In fall 2011, after ten years as an adventure guide in the southern hemisphere and five years as an academic researcher and lecturer of adventure tourism management, I accepted my first faculty position in the UI Movement Sciences department. My research investigates psychological aspects of adventure in recreational, educational, and global tourism contexts; it focuses on refining and expanding theories of optimal experience, well-being, and basic psychological needs fulfillment through adventure. The **goal of the proposed pilot study** is to advance these theories by investigating indigenous peoples' perceptions of the value, meaning, and representations of adventure recreation and tourism, with a focus on the Maoris of New Zealand. Of particular interest is *how* and *why* these perceptions may differ from well-documented "western" perceptions and experiences of adventure, particularly in light of cultural differences.

Context & contribution to the PI's field and professional development

Global adventure recreation and tourism activities have increased significantly in the past two decades. Concurrent with this trend, adventure tourism products featuring indigenous people and activities have also risen steeply, partly due to tourists' desire for increasingly novel, interactive, and culturally-rich products, and due to the euro-centric perception that such activities support indigenous peoples' autonomy and economic development (Xola, 2010). Numerous studies (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990a; Sibthorp, 2003; Sibthorp, Paisley & Gookin, 2007, West & Crompton, 2001) highlight the importance of adventure recreation activities as a context for promoting health and well-being by engaging in meaningful activities that satisfy universal psychological needs (e.g., autonomy, competence, connection to others). However, although purported benefits are universal, the *value and meanings of adventure activities are culturally constructed*.

Notwithstanding this increasing interaction of western and indigenous and people in adventure contexts, the majority of studies within adventure recreation and tourism are eurocentric, focusing on Caucasian, western perceptions and cultures; thus far, indigenous peoples' perspectives are underrepresented in the literature. My pilot study will begin to address the gaps in the adventure literature by discovering and voicing indigenous perceptions of: (1) adventure, (2) the potential value and benefits of adventure, and (3) representations of indigenous culture within adventure tourism. The project will advance the theoretical paradigms in my field and expand my research to encompass indigenous peoples, an underrepresented population. The development of more authentic and culturally correct understandings of adventure activities involving indigenous peoples will also inform mandated Leisure Sciences curriculum revisions.

Research Questions and Methods

The project will be piloted in New Zealand, which has a relatively more developed and indigenous-controlled adventure tourism industry than other counties. Through my research and experience in New Zealand, and my consultation with the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism in their recent adventure tourism review, I have working knowledge of and access to Maori indigenous populations and indigenous adventure tourism operators, including Ngai Tahu (one of the largest tribes that owns and operates a sizeable tourism empire).

Two robust theoretical frameworks from positive psychology, which have been validated across work, educational, and physical activity settings, i.e., self-determination theory (Deci &

¹ Indigenous peoples comprise non-dominant sectors of society which retain links to pre-colonial societies, and consider themselves distinct from other post-colonial societies now prevailing on ancestral lands; they are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations ancestral lands, ethnic identities, cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems (United Nations, 2004).

Ryan, 2000) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990b; Heo et al., 2010), will guide the research design. Due to the exploratory nature of this pilot, a qualitative design is most appropriate. Findings can then be used to develop culturally valid quantitative measures for larger follow-up studies. The proposed study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1. How is 'adventure' conceptualized and experienced among indigenous peoples?
- 2. What are the perceived values, meanings, and benefits associated with adventure among indigenous peoples?
- 3. How do indigenous peoples perceive representations of their traditional activities and culture in adventure tourism products?
- 4. How are indigenous adventure tourism products characterized and marketed to tourists? Data collection will consist of:
 - **In-depth interviews** with 10-20 indigenous participants theoretically-sampled to represent a cross-section of age, gender, and experience levels. *Fifteen interviews are considered a reasonable estimate to achieve 'theoretical saturation,' the point when new data brings no additional insights. Head-mounted camera footage recorded by participants during their activities will be replayed during interviews, when possible, to facilitate recall.*
- Participant observation data collected in tourism settings via: audio recordings, headmounted camera footage, field notes, diaries, and 'experiential diagramming' (a technique I developed for visually mapping thoughts, motives, and emotions). Participant observation is a common method to develop a holistic understanding of phenomena and increase validity. All transcripts will be transcribed verbatim. Data will be analyzed for key themes across cases, and triangulated with participant observation data, using Nvivo qualitative analysis software.

Proposed Project Timeline:

June-Sept 2012: Apply for IRB; Organize visit logistics with individuals and operators. Sept.-December 2012: Purchase technologies and software. Pilot study methods, research design, technologies (e.g., head cams), and data analysis software. Create database.

Jan.-April 2013: Hire/train student assistant. Send letters of intent to editors and draft papers (intro/methods) & abstracts for journals & conferences. Reconfirm data collection logistics.

May 2013: Data collection (*Participant access will be easiest to secure during this 'slow' fall season (versus December, their mid-summer) and travel will be more economical.*)

June-Aug 2013: Analysis & write-up (Sept.-Dec. 2013: Write/submit articles & grants; outreach)

Expected Outcomes & Deliverables

This pilot will **lay the groundwork for larger research projects** in other countries, including the US. **Dissemination of findings in professional venues** (e.g., *Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI)* committee) will inform Idaho state development initiatives by incorporating indigenous perspectives on meaningful engagement in adventure recreation, tourism, and education programs. Research will also result in: **2-3 adjudicated publications** in high-impact recreation and tourism journals (*Journal of Leisure Research*; *Tourism Management*); **1-2 adjudicated research presentations** with published abstracts (*ANZALS*; *The Leisure Research Symposium*); **1-2 external funding proposals** (e.g., to *IRTI (Dept. of Commerce)*; *National Park Service Tribal Projects*; *American Express*® & *National Trust Partners*; *Ngai Tahu Fund*, *Australian Research Council*); **improved teaching and learning** across Leisure Sciences curriculum by enhancing content regarding "indigenous interpretations of natural areas and adventure activities"; and **improved UI service and outreach** (e.g., via contributions to the new UI *International Engagement Advisory Council*, of which I am a member).

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