

**A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE INTERRELATEDNESS BETWEEN
THE FRAMEWORKS OF CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES
IN TOURISM**

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Abstract

The holistic success of Indigenous peoples engaged in tourism stems from focusing on strengthening identities in different contexts, such as political, cultural, economic, or macro, meso, micro, and individual levels. The term 'cultural sustainability' highlights cultural integrity, ecological diversity, and socio-economic progress and advocates that the political discourse of local communities should be a positive framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism. The special political and cultural nature of Indigenous identities should, in turn, give impetus to culturally sustainable developments in tourism. Theoretically, using cultural sustainability as a tourism framework to guide Indigenous peoples should bring positive outcomes to tourism enterprises. However, academic tourism research still lacks focus on the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identity in tourism. Therefore, this study aims to review this issue critically. Accordingly, an overview of the representations of cultural sustainability as a framework in tourism and the different natures of Indigenous identities are made, and the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism is discussed. This paper contributes to tourism knowledge by providing critical insights into this interrelatedness and cultivating the positive role of the interrelatedness in tourism practices.

Keywords: Cultural sustainability, Indigenous identities, Indigenous tourism, Empowerment

Introduction

Indigenous tourism was formed in the early 20th century and is based on travellers' curiosity and interest in the exotic cultures of Indigenous peoples (Hinch & Butler, 2007). In the second half of the 20th century, indigenous tourism was construed as a positive strategy for developing local communities (Hall & Tucker, 2004). The possibility of indigenous tourism attracting investment and creating jobs for socio-economic growth has also led to a growing number of Indigenous communities worldwide engaging with tourism (Warnholtz & Barkin, 2018). However, many authors have described the negative impacts of indigenous tourism, such as cultural appropriation, inauthenticity, and feelings of inferiority caused by Indigenous peoples' disadvantaged and marginalised positions in tourism (Yang & Wall, 2008; d'Hautesserre, 2010; PATA, 2015). Since indigenous tourism is primarily cultural, integrity is very significant for its sustainability. Therefore, to deal with the issues above and promote holistic success for Indigenous peoples in tourism, strengthening Indigenous identities in cultural, economic, and especially political contexts in tourism is proposed as a critical solution in many studies (d'Hautesserre, 2010; Larrakia Declaration, 2012; PATA, 2015).

According to Soini and Birkeland (2014), 'cultural sustainability' highlights the cultural integrity, ecological diversity, socio-economic growth, and political discourse of local communities. The term 'cultural sustainability' should be a holistic framework for strengthening Indigenous identities in tourism. Meanwhile, the special political and cultural nature of Indigenous identities should also promote culturally sustainable development in tourism (Scherrer, 2020). Therefore, the concept of cultural sustainability as a tourism framework should bring positive outcomes to

benefit tourism enterprises and strengthen Indigenous identities. In tourism studies, research on cultural sustainability focused mainly on cultural heritage and intellectual property rights protection or codes of conduct for visitors and accurate site interpretation (GSTC, 2016; Thimm, 2019). The interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism has not received much attention in tourism research. Therefore, this study aims to discuss this issue critically. To achieve this aim, we will first review cultural sustainability and the representations of cultural sustainability as a framework for tourism. We will then analyse the different natures of Indigenous identities and their roles in tourism. Finally, we will discuss the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism. Consequently, we propose suggestions to complement cultural sustainability as a tourism framework to strengthen Indigenous identities holistically.

Methodology

This paper uses a critical literature review method to review studies related to cultural sustainability, Indigenous peoples, and indigenous tourism. A traditional literature review is a written appraisal of the existing knowledge on a topic without a prescribed methodology (Jesson *et al.*, 2011). Jesson and Lacey (2006) posited that to transform existing knowledge into new theories and foster a deeper understanding, literature reviews should take a critical approach. A critical literature review involves analysing positive and negative features, which means thinking critically about the strengths and weaknesses of previous research (Jesson *et al.*, 2011). For example, in a discussion about innovation in sustainable tourism research, a critical analysis called for an unrelenting examination of any form of knowledge and underlying dogmas that have significant implications for developing knowledge and theories (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Accordingly, the subjectivity of this method is inevitably criticised. However, Montero (2005) explained that there could not be an object without a subject or a subject without an object. For example, an objective world and the subject defining it, conceptualising, denying, or affirming it are both real (Montero, 2005). The method of this article comprises three steps based on the guidance of Jesson (2011): first, consultation with a qualified librarian to identify relevant electronic databases to search; second, selecting a dataset of studies by applying appropriate criteria; and third, critically coding and analysing the studies.

In this study, searches were performed on the Scopus and Elsevier databases and supplemented with the 'Google Scholar' search tool. The keywords used were related to the topic of this article, such as the tourism framework of cultural sustainability, Indigenous peoples, Indigenous identity, and indigenous tourism. The selected procedure included a three-step exclusion procedure based on the filtering criteria. In the first step, studies where the terms related to 'cultural sustainability', 'Indigenous identity,' and 'indigenous tourism' did not appear in the title, keywords, or subtitle section were excluded. In the second step, abstracts were read in detail, and studies that did not focus on 'cultural sustainability' and 'Indigenous identity' but instead mainly discussed cultural policies, socio-economic development, or tourists' experiences were excluded. In the third step, full texts were read, and studies that described a very similar perspective to a companion article were then excluded. As a result, a final set of 46 relevant studies including journal papers, books, book chapters, conference papers, and doctoral theses were critically coded after the three-step procedure of exclusions. These studies were published between 1998 and 2021. The time range is consistent with a longitudinal perspective that facilitates a critical understanding of what has or has not changed the specific study over time by recognising previous studies (Carduff *et al.*, 2015). We also acknowledge that some relevant publications exist that were not included in this review. This is a limitation of the study that it may not have included all relevant literature, and it does not include, for instance, other types of literature beyond English language articles identifiable in the above databases. However, these limitations are consistent with the methodology chosen, which is a value-free selection of a selected epistemological entity.

Cultural Sustainability as a Framework in Tourism

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations (WCED, 1987, quoted in Soini & Birkeland, 2014, p. 213). It is primarily considered an economic, ecological, and social condition, representing three so-called pillars (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Culture is often mentioned as an aspect of social sustainability, and whether to include it as a fourth pillar is an ongoing debate (Axelsson *et al.*, 2013). Cultural sustainability was first mentioned in 1995 and defined as 'inter-and intra-generational access to cultural resources by the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD, 1995 quoted in Axelsson *et al.*, 2013, p. 217). Subsequently, Soini and Dessein (2016) specifically analysed three different representations of culture in sustainable development, from the micro, meso, and macro levels (see Table 1): the first considers culture as a *capital* in sustainability and sees cultural sustainability as a *micro paradigm* and parallel to ecological, social, and economic sustainability; the second representation refers to culture as a *mediating instrument* for achieving economic, social, and ecological sustainability at a meso level; and the third considers culture as a *holistic macro paradigm* of sustainability that broadly incorporates cultural, ecological, social, and economic sustainability. All three representations can be seen as interlinked, both theoretically and practically.

The political dimension is ignored in these three representations. According to Swanson and DeVereaux (2017), empowerment and self-governance are rooted in a culturally sustainable framework. In this framework, decisions are made concerning culture, while culture is embodied in the local peoples' habits, norms, traditions, and beliefs (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017). This means how all individuals in a community can direct decision-making. Hawkes (2001) also specifically pointed out that political advocacy has important implications for cultural sustainability. To achieve community cohesion and maintain cultural identification, communities should have the right and responsibility to engage with the decision-making process (Hawkes, 2001, p. 16). The third representation of cultural sustainability as a *holistic macro paradigm* can easily incorporate this political dimension. Combined with the political dimension, cultural sustainability would be a good holistic macro framework to empower marginalised people such as Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities from cultural, ecological, social, economic, and political contexts (Soini & Dessein, 2016; Hawkes, 2001; Dyer *et al.*, 2003).

In tourism research, cultural sustainability as a tourism framework also focuses on three different representations (see Table 1) and is generally related to community-based tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; Soini & Birkeland, 2014; Johnston, 2006; Thimm, 2019; PATA, 2015). In community-based tourism practices, cultural sustainability is a micro tourism framework that focuses on utilising cultural forms such as traditional arts and cultural heritage as cultural capital to attract global markets (Throsby, 2016). The tourism framework of cultural sustainability aims to underline the importance of reviving cultural heritage and maintaining cultural integrity and diversity through tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; Soini & Birkeland, 2014).

Cultural sustainability as a meso-tourism framework refers to the role of cultural mediation in tourism. This is manifested in the ability to utilise cultural values and intellectual properties to achieve socio-economic and ecological sustainability in tourism (Dyer *et al.*, 2003). This ability is also related to the intrinsic values of local culture and local education. For example, a Maori worldview can be seen as a cultural mediation that provides positive tourism planning approaches in response to the influence of COVID-19 (Carr, 2020). However, these two representations of tourism frameworks do not only have positive effects but might also have a negative influence on local communities and local people. For example, the demise of the local language, vanishing local customs, and traditional ways of life are caused by inevitable tourism marketing and unjust power relationships in tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; d'Hautesserre, 2010; Dyer *et al.*, 2003).

Table 1: Three representations of cultural sustainability

	Micro levels	Meso levels	Macro levels
Cultural sustainability	Culture as capital in sustainability	Culture as a mediating instrument for sustainability	Culture as sustainability
Cultural sustainability as a tourism framework	Cultural forms used as cultural capital to attract tourists and thus revive culture in tourism	The ability to utilise cultural value as a mediating instrument to achieve socio-economic, and ecological sustainability in tourism	A holistic framework to empower local people in tourism from different contexts and levels

The third representation of cultural sustainability is a macro tourism framework that focuses on promoting holistic success for local people and communities in tourism (Al-Hagla, 2005; PATA, 2015; Thimm, 2019). As an earlier scholar who researched cultural sustainability in tourism, Al-Hagla (2005) stated that cultural sustainability could be seen as a conceptual framework to resolve the conflict between empowering local communities and pursuing economic growth in tourism. Furthermore, the report of indigenous tourism and human rights in Asia and the Pacific region further complemented many different elements of the tourism framework of cultural sustainability, such as respect, protection, empowerment, consultation, business, and community to guide tourism stakeholders to empower Indigenous peoples (PATA, 2015). The tourism framework of cultural sustainability in these sources focused on imploring developers of indigenous tourism to include and empower the local community in their planning. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities' self-empowerment in tourism. Thimm (2019) created criteria and indicators of culturally sustainable tourism aspects that apply to the self-empowerment of Indigenous peoples, which features good self-governance, human rights, control of the land, and control of tourism products. However, Thimm (2019) mainly focused on strengthening Indigenous identities in tourism. This was done from a macro-level perspective of human rights to a meso-level of land and self-determination rights, and finally to a micro-level of controlling tourism products. How Indigenous peoples exercise these powers from the individual level in tourism has not been discussed in detail.

Indigenous Identities and Specific Rights

Many terms are used interchangeably to refer to Indigenous peoples according to geo-historical contexts, such as *Aboriginal* in Australia and Canada and *Ethnic Minority* in China (Dyer *et al.*, 2003; Yang & Wall, 2008). 'Indigenous' is from the Latin word '*indigenous*' and refers to being born or produced naturally in a land or region; it is primarily used to describe indigenous inhabitants or natural products (Waldron, 2003). 'Indigenous people' refer to descendants of the original inhabitants of specific land who have not migrated after the entrance of invaders (Waldron, 2003). However, Kingsbury (1998) first pointed out that the requirements for being Indigenous people are cultural identification and close connection with ancestral land, rather than being associated with the land or territory for countless generations. Additionally, there is a disagreement about whether having a 'European colonial history' is a necessary condition for 'being' Indigenous peoples. Since there are descendants of the original inhabitants of a land, such as the Naxi people in China and the Maasai in Tanzania (Yang & Wall, 2008; Melubo and Carr, 2019), while there is no substantial European colonial history in these regions. When discussing the rights of Indigenous people, there are also discrepancies between theoretical and practical rights. Theoretically, Indigenous people should have general human rights and specific Indigenous rights, such as the right to land (PATA, 2015). However, in practice, many governments worldwide only recognise a fraction of land as formally or legally belonging to

Indigenous peoples (The World Bank, 2020). This section discusses Indigenous identities in general and their role in the tourism field to address these inconsistencies.

'Indigeneity' generally as a characteristic attribute of Indigenous peoples, has two meanings (Merlan, 2009). The first meaning is used to describe the global identity of 'First People' or 'People of the Land', while the second meaning refers to a strong sense of belonging and close local connections (Merlan, 2009). As a holistic representation of Indigenous identities, this characteristic provides a theoretical foundation for Indigenous peoples' specific political rights, cultural identification, and Indigenous knowledge. Specifically, the characteristic of 'indigeneity' lies in Indigenous peoples' close connections with their land, language, and ceremonial life (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Therefore, Indigenous peoples should have the right to land and self-determination. This is because priority to land rights is specifically granted to those whose ancestors have occupied the land (Fresa, 2000), and the right to self-determination is based on land rights (Cambou, 2019). As mentioned before, these specific Indigenous rights are political issues that rely heavily on government recognition (The World Bank, 2020).

Some regions intentionally use different terms to refer to Indigenous peoples to avoid political challenges. For example, the Naxi people in China are called an ethnic minority (Yang & Wall, 2008), and for the Maasai in Tanzania, the term 'pastoralists' replaced 'indigenous' (Melubo and Carr, 2019). These terms both cloud the special relationship between Indigenous identities and land. The strong cultural identification of Indigenous peoples stems from their valuable Indigenous knowledge that, in turn, can enhance Indigenous peoples' political discourse. As Mercer (2010) pointed out, Indigenous knowledge is an outcome of diachronic observation accumulated over generations of detailed observation and interactions with local ecosystems. It has great value in preserving ecological integrity, biodiversity, and environmental health and can act as a cultural capital for self-empowerment (The World Bank, 2020). For example, Guna, a Latin American Indigenous community, created Guna Tourism as an indigenous tourism mode. They have a thorough knowledge of the region's environmental capacity according to their diachronic observation. Therefore, they can respond to growing visitor numbers and ultimately decide on providing accommodation, activities, and retail development. In this example, Indigenous knowledge contributed to the Guna people, leading to the planning and monitoring of the visitor sector and being in a dominant position in tourism (Pereiro, 2016).

According to Hinch and Butler (2007), Indigenous people are engaged in tourism either as the controller of tourism resources or as the essence of the attraction. In tourism, when Indigenous identity is merely an attraction without control rights, cultural appropriation and feelings of inferiority can occur. This is the case of the Kayan 'long neck' people, who are refugees from Myanmar in Thailand and lack capital control; instead, they are being marketed as exhibits in a 'human zoo' in which much of their cultural dignity is lost (PATA, 2015). Moreover, Indigenous people can also play the role of managers in tourism businesses. This will break the anti-growth stereotype of Indigenous peoples and provide them with a positive economic image in the global market (Bunten, 2010). Thereby, there is a viewpoint that indigenous tourism enterprises are considered successful if Indigenous communities can control tourism (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). However, this viewpoint is questioned by the ongoing failure of tourism programs. For example, in New Caledonia, Kanak people control cultural resources to indigenise tourism productions with the support of local governments. However, it is still difficult for Kanak to make a positive connection between Indigenous value systems and tourism businesses (d'Hautesserre, 2010). According to Warnholtz and Barkin (2018), the failures of these cases are caused by the neoliberal economic policy of governments, which puts the sustainability of tourism businesses above the sustainability of communities' cultures. Consequently, for indigenous tourism to be sustainable, Indigenous peoples should control tourism enterprises' management at the micro-level and tourism policies at the macro and meso levels (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). Scherrer (2020) demonstrated that Indigenous identities, which carry special political power and cultural

identification in tourism, can facilitate culturally appropriate business models in indigenous tourism contexts.

Interrelatedness of Cultural Sustainability and Indigenous identities in Tourism

If the goal is to strengthen Indigenous identities for holistic success in tourism, then a holistic tourism framework that includes all contexts of culture, socio-economy, ecology, and politics is necessary. When cultural sustainability functions as a holistic framework to guide indigenous tourism, Indigenous peoples should be the ultimate decision-makers and beneficiaries of tourism development. Indigenous peoples can be a driving force in tourism and bring positive outcomes to tourism enterprises (UNWTO, 2019). However, at times, this may result in hindering tourism development. Therefore, we focus on discussing the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability and Indigenous identities in tourism practices. Consequently, we present suggestions to complement the current cultural sustainability framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism.

Cultural sustainability is difficult to define and measure (Throsby 2016). It can be seen as a fluid, and evolutionary term. This means that the representation of cultural heritage is not in a fixed form for perpetuity, but rather a constant change by intertwining past and new values (Suntikul, 2018). Cultural authenticity is also difficult to determine because it can be understood from many different standards, such as objectivity, subjectivity, existentialism, negotiation, authentication, and compromise (De Bernardi, 2020). The current tourism framework of cultural sustainability has set two criteria for determining cultural authenticity: Indigenous communities decide on marketable cultural assets, and only community-approved tourism products are on the market (Thimm, 2019). These two criteria are subjective, making it challenging to correct current tourism products that may lead to culturally unsustainable practices. For example, the local people in Cheung Chau Island, Hong Kong, self-determined to use plastic buns to replace edible steamed buns (made of flour) used in the past. Subsequently, they market plastic buns as talismans and traditional trademark images of the Bun Festival (Chew, 2009). This replacement should not be criticised as inauthentic, whether this was done from the tourism framework of cultural sustainability or an environmentally friendly and hygienic perspective. However, this is eclipsing a heritage (past) dimension that threatens the cultural sustainability of tourism in the future.

In modern society, some Indigenous peoples embrace neoliberal discourses, claiming that success is mainly driven by economic growth (Jamal *et al.*, 2010). Some Indigenous peoples would prioritise economic development over cultural preservation and trust that the economic benefits would help them self-gentrify their identities in tourism (Ranasinghe & Cheng, 2018). In this social context, cultural sustainability in tourism practices can be alienated to primarily consider economic aspects, where culture is seen as an asset for economic development (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Indigenous peoples are, in this sense, willing to pursue commercialisation and commodification in tourism that may hurt cultural authenticity. This may even alienate the direction of cultural sustainability to another economic extreme, such as the money-driven tourism model in the Vedda community in Sri Lanka (Ranasinghe & Cheng, 2018). However, the profits resulting from commercialisation may flow largely to local entrepreneurs and people.

According to the political advocacy of cultural sustainability, local communities can self-determine who is qualified to participate in the local tourism business (Thimm, 2019). The political dimension of Indigenous identities, which is related to colonial history and ancestral land, also brings challenges for sustainable tourism development and Indigenous rights. Indigenous tourism is generally more attractive to international tourists than domestic travellers (Vermeersch, *et al.*, 2016). This may be because some non-Indigenous domestic travellers prefer to remain ignorant of Indigenous cultures in their home country, allowing them to cope with feelings of shame or guilt about their colonial history (Travesi, 2018) and increases the likelihood of developing culturally sustainable tourism. For example, many indigenous tourism enterprises

are becoming victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, as their main international markets have effectively been shut down by border restrictions. One specific case, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park— a foundation product in Australia preserving Indigenous culture and educating people to be proud of their identities—is reported to be closing its doors for good (Cluff & Rigby, 2021). Moreover, Indigenous peoples' special relationship with the land seems to imply that the state's sovereignty is now superseded or at least questioned (Hathaway, 2016). This is also why many governments worldwide recognise only a fraction of Indigenous rights or use other terms to name Indigenous peoples (The World Bank, 2020; Melubo and Carr, 2019; Yang & Wall, 2008).

There seem to be forces outside the Indigenous peoples' control, such as the immeasurability of cultural sustainability, the neoliberal ideology in society, or the sensitive political dimension of Indigenous identities. However, this does not mean that Indigenous people cannot face these forces positively, based on the tourism framework. The critical factor is to develop Indigenous peoples' capabilities at an individual level. This issue has not been discussed in detail in the current tourism framework of cultural sustainability.

For Indigenous people, education is increasingly becoming a critical tool for developing personal and community capabilities. In this process, the representation of education embedded by Western norms and values is criticised and contested (May & Aikman, 2003). Indigenous education proponents argue that Western standards of knowledge are devaluating, denying, or misunderstanding Indigenous knowledge (Wotherspoon, 2015). However, inclusive education systems embracing both formal and informal learning respect Indigenous heritage and Indigenous peoples' self-education (May & Aikman, 2003). This can contribute to a sense of self-worth, confidence, and other essential bases of individual and cultural identities by cultivating mentorship and related social and communication skills (Wotherspoon, 2015). In Indigenous communities, informal education enables youths in Indigenous groups to learn from their elders (Scherrer, 2020; Kunasekaran *et al.*, 2017). This enhances the authority of elders as cultural advisers and teachers and facilitates intergenerational culture transfer. Consequently, Indigenous people can interact culturally and educationally with tourists (Sharma, 2015). These cultural interactions contribute to intimate encounters and deepening non-Indigenous guests' understanding of Indigenous practices (Travesi, 2018). This contribution is significant since there can be no reconciliation except based on a deeper understanding of colonial history and the Indigenous lived experiences (Smallwood, 2015).

Moreover, formal learning has dominated the experiences of childhood and youth in contemporary societies (Wotherspoon, 2015). Integrating formal and informal education carries significant promise for strengthening Indigenous identities and promoting tourism sustainability (Sharma, 2015). Indigenous entrepreneurship as a holistic outcome of an integrated education system respects ecological and cultural integrity, embraces economic wealth, and advances political identification (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017; Peredo *et al.*, 2004). From the analysis, a good educational experience is an important factor for Indigenous individuals to harness their political rights in tourism effectively. As in the case of the Dambeemangaddee peoples mentioned above, their cultural and political identification enables them to exercise their rights well in tourism, making tourism serve the community and aligns with the state's interests and matters of sovereignty (Scherrer, 2020).

Sustainable tourism is a subset of ethical tourism with its core value (Tribe, 2002). The ethical value of cultural sustainability in indigenous tourism aims to develop tourism as a powerful tool to further enhance Indigenous peoples' self-empowerment (Thimm, 2019). However, for Aristotle, a man could not attain moral excellence if he merely thought noble thoughts and did not put them into practice (Ackrill, 1973 quoted in Tribe, 2002, p. 313). In other words, ethics are embedded in the action itself (Tribe, 2002). Hence, making ethical principles for guiding action is significant in indigenous tourism. The report of indigenous tourism and human rights in Asia and the Pacific region has proposed ethics principles for guiding tourism stakeholders (PATA, 2015).

All stakeholders must respect and protect traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and cultural heritage in tourism. Indigenous people are suggested to develop their management capacities through opportunities for tourism training and related vocational training. The opinions of Indigenous peoples should be fully consulted when making tourism policies. Moreover, establishing representative organisation has proven effective for Indigenous peoples to enhance economic development and exercise political rights (UNWTO, 2019).

Conclusion and Implications

In this study, we first considered how cultural sustainability as a framework guided tourism. We then queried the role of Indigenous identities in promoting the sustainable development of tourism. Finally, we critically discussed how cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism practices interrelate.

The concept of cultural sustainability can be a holistic framework to empower marginalised people from cultural, ecological, social, economic, and political contexts. The special nature of Indigenous identities constituted in history, land, culture, and politics can make Indigenous peoples a driving force in tourism, facilitating culturally sustainable development. Theoretically, it should produce positive outcomes for tourism and Indigenous peoples in the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism. However, by critically reviewing the interrelatedness, we found in tourism practices, some Indigenous people may not always exercise these special powers well to self-empower and to facilitate tourism's cultural sustainability. The development of Indigenous individuals' capacities should be considered in the tourism framework of cultural sustainability to better guide Indigenous peoples in tourism. This would make the framework more holistic, not only in different contexts but also at different levels. Specifically, accepting inclusive education and compliance with ethical principles complement the framework at the individual level.

This paper contributes to tourism knowledge concerning the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identity in tourism from an epistemological perspective. By critically reviewing this interrelatedness, our paper also complements some operable suggestions at the individual level by promoting a holistic application of cultural sustainability as a framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism. This stems from cultivating the positive role of interrelatedness, which could resolve issues like cultural appropriation and inauthenticity in tourism practices and contribute to a more holistic success for Indigenous people engaged in tourism.

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