

## Revisiting the Transmodern Model of Authenticity of Transformatory Experience

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**How to cite this article:** Ivanovic, M. (2022). Revisiting the Transmodern Model of Authenticity of Transformatory Experience. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 11(2):494-510. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.238>

### Abstract

The recent advance of transformatory experience into a foremost mega-trend in tourism attracted considerable scholarly interest. Building on Pung et al.'s (2020) model of transformatory experience, the article revisits the statistical results of the original 2013 model of the authenticity of transformatory experience. The results prove the radical theoretical hypothesis that transmodernism, not postmodernism, is the appropriate paradigm for conceptualising current transformatory experience discourse. The model is founded on the transmodern open centre flat ontology, the epistemology of transformative knowledge co-creation, and the philosophy of Speculative Realism. This quantitative study is based on a survey (N=406) using questionnaires, following a theory-building theory-testing sequential research design. The results of multiple regression analysis (MRA) confirmed the goodness of fit and simplicity of the model informed by only two independent variables (objective and constructive authenticity). The *t*-test and Mann Whitney-*U* test results revealed that many respondents are Cultural Creatives identifying transformatory experience as a core experience. The newly proposed concept of ontological transformation best describes transformatory experience as a transmodern phenomenon. The empirical and theoretical validation of the revised model of the authenticity of transformatory experience represents a valuable scholarly contribution to an emerging transformational tourism discourse.

**Keywords:** Transmodernism; Cultural Creatives; transformatory experience; transformational tourism; ontological transformation.

### Introduction

As Ray prophetically predicted in 1996, our civilisation has reached a tipping point. The Post-Fordist economy of scope driven by excessive consumerism, oppressive capitalism, and accelerated rate of technological advances culminated in the age of abundance and globalisation (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). However, the postmodern fallacy in defining sustainability as an unlimited economic growth based on limited (not limitless) planetary resources led to irreversible ecological destruction of the planet and deepening inequalities between the rich and the poor (Ghisi, 2008; 2015; Lean, 2009; Rifkin, 2005). The postmodern experience of life has become confusing and fragmented, "the existential and irremediable aloneness of pumped-up emptiness where the prevalent culture is that of appearance, of having everything now" (Biava, 2013:73). It resulted in an anarchic, anxious, metaphysically and epistemologically shattered world of nihilism and despair (Hicks, 2004:194). With our civilisation at a crossroads, humanity faces unprecedented existential challenges. The future of our planet and humankind can, according to Ray (1996), go either way - things can get better, or things can get worse, but things could not stay the same. And things did not stay the same! Deepening concerns for the survival of the planet and humankind triggered an unparalleled paradigm shift in human consciousness towards a new value system, world views, and lifestyle giving rise to a new world order known as transmodernism

(Ataljevic, 2013; Dussel, 2008; Ghisi, 1999; Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015; Kapoor, 2010; Meconnen, 2012; Raskin, 2016; Rifkin, 2005; Rodriguez-Magda, 1989, 2001).

Even though transmodernism is taking over from postmodernism as a dominant paradigm, it is curiously absent from academic scholarship. Transmodernism might be a challenging and unfamiliar paradigm because of its revolutionary ethos that is explicitly anti-colonialistic, anti-capitalistic, anti-consumeristic, and anti-everything-else that postmodernism, capitalism, and current measures of societal progress stand for (Dussel, 2008). Irrespective, transmodernism should not be mistaken for some sporadic incident led by a few anti-consumerists advocating a minimalistic and spiritual lifestyle that will pass us by. A decade ago, Ghisi (2010:40) already warned that changes brought about by transmodernism are "much more wide, deep and radical than what dominant economists and politicians call globalisation". Ignored or not, transmodernism is the newly emerging world order that is changing the face of the world and silently taking over every sphere of our lives.

Leading the silent revolution towards the new world order is a class of conscious consumers, Cultural Creatives, of whom 66% are women (Ray, 1996, 2008; Ray & Anderson, 2000). They uphold the transmodern value system, world views and lifestyle that directly reject the principles of postmodernism and consumer society (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015; Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2019). They are known for making permanent personal behavioural changes in response to excessive consumerism and an ongoing distraction of the planet. These qualities make Cultural Creatives the most desirable type of tourist on the planet (Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2020).

Cultural Creatives are notoriously difficult to identify by traditional market segmentation methods (demographic profiling) (Ray, 2008). Even though they form part of the subculture accounting for 45.4% (3.6bn.) or almost half of the people on the planet, they remain unaware of themselves as a collective body. Ghisi (2015) estimates that Cultural Creatives grow by 3% annually (240 mil.), three times faster than the 1.05% growth of the world's population, or 81 million per annum (Worldometers, 2022). As a new breed of conscious consumers, Cultural Creatives will soon become a dominant global force most likely to change the course of civilisation for the better. As Mkhize and Ivanovic (2020:718) suggest, "their transmodern values, worldviews and lifestyle choices have the power to influence and disrupt the most advanced capitalist consumer-driven societies on the planet." Their ability to exert fundamental socioeconomic changes globally is already evident in the rising demand for authenticity and transformatory experiences (Kirillova et al., 2017b; Pung et al., 2020; Richardson & Insch, 2021).

The aim of this paper is to revisit the statistical results of the original model of the authenticity of transformatory tourist experience conceptualised in 2013 as a transmodern phenomenon. The importance of reviewing the original transmodern model lies in its validity, simplicity and relevance in explaining transformatory experience in its current discourse. The model accurately predicted, validated, conceptualised and defined transformatory experience before it attracted scholarly attention. The literature review presents a critical discussion of the main manifestations of transmodernism in informing the original 2013 model and the revised model. These are the authentic economy, theories of authenticity, models of transformatory experience and types of transformative tourism (Ataljevic, 2020; Chabra, 2021; Cheer, 2020; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Ivanovic, 2008; Kirillova, Lehto & Cai, 2017a,b; Nicolaidis, 2014; Pung & del Chiappa, 2020; Reisinger, 2015; Robledo & Batle, 2017; Rodriguez-Magda, 1989, 2001; Ross, 2010).

## Literature review

### *Transmodernism*

Transmodernism is a new dominant world order (Rifkin, 2005) representing the new post-capitalist authentic economy (Gilmore & Pine, 2007), the new paradigm (Rodríguez-Magda, 1989), and the new social metatheory (Lewis, 2011; Overton & Müller, 2012).

The authentic economy denotes the conscious consumers' demand for authenticity in every aspect of their lives, from home, stores, work and politics to travel (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). The new demand for authenticity is directly consequential of the current shift in the world consciousness toward personal transformations seen as the fundamental value of transmodernism. Gilmore and Pine (2007) suggest that what consumers buy (tourists included) must conform to their Self-image, reflecting who they are and who they aspire to be in relation to how they perceive the world. Since what they buy reveals who they are and what they stand for, it is indicative of a new level of consciousness and a deeper understanding of what constitutes reality. The changes in values (fundamental life priorities), lifestyle (how we spend our time and money), and livelihood (in which way we earn a living) resulted in a demand for authenticity, spirituality, and self-betterment as an integral part of personal transformation.

As a new paradigm, transmodernism transcends into a new level of human interactions by taking the best from each preceding paradigm, modernism and postmodernism. As a result, it synthesises the two conflicting realms of reality representing each paradigm (modernism - material/real and postmodernism - experiential/relative), reconstructing reality into a new transformative form. Rodríguez-Magda (1989, 2001) explains this process with the analogy to the Hegelian triads: the thesis (modernism), antithesis (postmodernism) and synthesis (transmodernism). An unprecedented transcending and unifying powers of transmodernism lie in the epistemology of transformative learning and knowledge co-creation, an open centre flat ontology, and the philosophy of Speculative Realism (Harman, 2011).

Speculative Realism (SR) is the new philosophy of science that restores the importance of the material (real) world. It rejects the anthropocentric principle stating that all existence can be reduced to the human experience of existence. It brings back attention to the Logical Empiricism of the Berlin Group, which played a pivotal role in establishing the philosophy of science as a new discipline in the late 1920s (Rescher, 2006). By eliminating the anthropocentric and reinstating the importance of the material world, so fiercely contested by the postmodern ontology of relativism, Speculative Realism brings the two conflicting realms of reality, material and experiential, onto the same ontological level (Harman, 2011). Informed by the philosophy of Speculative Realism, the main theoretical assumption of the original 2013 transmodern model is the equality of objective (material) and constructive (experiential) authenticity in generating the transformatory experience as a qualitatively new type of (transmodern) authentic experiential reality.

Finally, as a new social metatheory, transmodernism embodies a pinnacle of Lewis's (2011) five stages model of societal evolutions and revolutions. The evolutionary moment occurs naturally within the stages, followed by a crisis that triggers dramatic changes in individuals, organisations and societies, preparing them to manage and thrive in the new reality. Ironically, postmodernism's main weaknesses (initially presumed as strengths) created a revolutionary moment that gave rise to transmodernism as a current stage of societal evolution. Even though it was not the paper's main objective, the results show that transmodernism should be recognised as a new social metatheory since it fulfils its two main functions identified by Overton and Müller (2012:19). First, it offers the guidelines to avoid conceptual confusion (i.e. seminal authenticity discourse). Second, it provides a rich source of concepts from which theories and methods will emerge (i.e. transformational tourism discourse).

### ***Theorising authenticity***

A longstanding antagonism between modernist focus on objective-real and postmodern obsession with subjective-relative in informing the authentic nature of tourist experience trapped authenticity into a vicious circle of endless differentiation of individually constructed truths. It resulted in the fragmentation of discourse to such a degree that there are as many definitions of authenticity as authors write about it (Taylor, 2001). Despite numerous definitions, tourism literature still cannot explain what authenticity in tourism truly is. Is it the objectifiable, genuine and fundamental property of the tourist attraction (objective authenticity) founded on the modernist, objectivist causality that if the object is authentic, then the tourist experience of it must also be authentic (MacCannell, 1976)? Is it a perceptual or constructed representation of individually authenticated reality (constructive authenticity) derived from the constructivist premise that even if the object is not authentic, the resultant tourist experience can be (Cohen, 1979)? Or is it an authentic experience of oneSelf through a personal transformation towards Self-actualisation (existential authenticity), which can only be acquired through tourism travel disregarding the objective authenticity (Wang, 1999)? The postmodernist obsession with separating the toured objects from tourist experiences resulted in calls to declare the modernist theory of objective authenticity obsolete and replace it with existential authenticity. It proved problematic for many types of tourism (i.e. cultural) dependent on the uniqueness and authenticity of attractions, activities, and places as the primary motivators for tourism travel and the main source of authentic experiences (Taylor, 2001). Unsuccessful scholarly efforts to resolve the paradigmatic deadlock between objective and existential authenticity led to a crisis of seminal authenticity discourse in tourism. This paper presents theoretical and empirical evidence that transmodernism offers an elegant and lasting solution to resolving phenomenological and theoretical difficulties plaguing authenticity discourse for the past two decades.

### ***Transformatory experience and transformational tourism***

The current mega shifts towards authenticity and transformatory experiences did not go unnoticed by mainstream tourism scholars (Kirillova et al., 2017a\b; Pung & del Chiappa, 2020; Pung et al., 2020). Transformatory experience is defined as an enduring personal transformation in opposition to peak, temporal experiences of postmodern tourism (Brown, 2013). The role of transformatory experience is to lead to Self-discovery as confirmation of authentic, real Self. The real Self is experienced as authentic when it conforms to the transmodern worldview already integrated into everyday personal value systems and lifestyles. Consequently, transformatory experience is redefined by Ghisi (2010) as the highest order need beyond Maslow's self-actualisation.

An overview of available literature has shown that the definitions of transformational tourism are twofold (Melo et al., 2021). The first group identifies the essence of personal transformations: its processes, dimensions and triggers. From a transmodern standpoint, even though transformatory experience is inward-directed, various tourist attractions and activities serve as unique, personal, ontological triggers capable of unlocking desired transformatory experiences. The second group of definitions take the opposite direction. They explore the influence of various types of transformational tourism on individual transformatory experiences. Examples are yoga (Ponder & Holladay, 2013), spiritual (Bhalla et al., 2021), wellbeing (Lindell et al., 2021), volunteer tourism (Wearing et al., 2017), nature-based (Richardson & Insch, 2021), wellness (Smith, 2013), celestial (Weaver, 2011), 4WD (Four-wheel drive) tourism (Narayanan & Macbeth, 2009), Aeromobile or tourism from above (Rink, 2017), and extreme sports tourism (Brymer, 2013). It also includes transformational festivals (Bottorff, 2015), such as Burning Man and the matric rage festivals. The fact that

transformational tourism branches into different niches depending on types of attractions, proves a correlation between the authenticity of attractions and the authenticity of transformatory experiences.

### ***Modelling transformatory experience***

Of most interest to this paper are Kirillova et al. (2019, 2017a/b) concept of existential transformation and Pung et al.'s (2020) conceptualisation of the new model of transformatory experience. Kirillova et al. (2017a) concept of existential transformation denotes a synergy between existential authenticity and personal transformation founded on the modernist philosophy of existentialism (Kirilova, 2019). Existential transformation is a self-directed process of inward introspection triggered by a peak experience (in contradiction to Brown's 2013 definition). It prompts tourists to reevaluate their held values and priorities in life by opening a path of transformation to achieve existential authenticity, seen as the existential state of Being (Nicolaidis, 2014).

Building on Kirilova et al. (2017a) concept of existential transformation, Pung et al. (2020:4) adopted a hermeneutic approach to identifying the two key dimensions in conceptualising the new transformative experience model. The first dimension denotes a self-directed existential transformation (as defined by Kirilova et al., 2017a) that integrates all the held values and gives new meaning to life and a sense of personal authenticity. This dimension resonates with a transmodern open centre flat ontology. The second dimension implies outward-directed transformative learning resulting in an integration of knowledge, acquisition of new skills and heightened cross-cultural and environmental awareness. Pung et al. (2020) suggest that transformative learning takes many different routes exerting a more significant and heterogeneous effect on personal transformations than what can be achieved through inward reflection and existential transformational behaviour (Pung et al., 2020:9). The transmodern epistemology of transformative knowledge co-creation corresponds with the second dimension.

Interestingly, Pung et al. (2020) confirm that knowledge obtained through transformative learning can only be derived from the material/real realm of reality or the authenticity of the place. Furthermore, the central premise of the Pung et al. (2020) model is that transformation (including its permanency, depth, etc.) depends on the stimuli arising from the authentic characteristics of the place. It represents an undeniable proof of the role of objective authenticity in informing the transformatory experience making it ontologically impossible for existential authenticity to be the source of transformatory experience resulting in existential transformations. It becomes evident that the current ontological impasse between transformatory experience and existential authenticity cannot be resolved by retaining postmodernism and existentialism as the principal paradigms. It can only be resolved by delinking existential transformation from the Pung et al. model and redefining the transformatory experience as a transmodern concept.

### ***The transmodern model of authenticity of transformatory experience***

Lau's (2010) reconceptualisation of objective authenticity into an autonomous construct, non-parasitic upon other related seminal constructs, is the primary assumption of the original 2013 model. Pung et al. (2020) provide the most recent justification for the initial inclusion of objective and constructive authenticity as independent variables in the 2013 model presented in Figure 1 below. Interestingly, the transmodern conceptualisation of the model defies postmodernism in two significant ways. Firstly, the demand for objective authenticity is expected to inform the intrapersonal existential authenticity without being rejected, as would be expected based

on the postmodern ontology. Secondly, contrary to expectations, in the process of ontological integration of objective authenticity with other variables (demand for authenticity as a reconfirmation of authentic-Self, Self-discovery through the acquisition of new knowledge and adoption of a new value system), intrapersonal existential authenticity is expected to acquire a new transformative experiential form underpinned by a new type of authenticity, ontological authenticity.

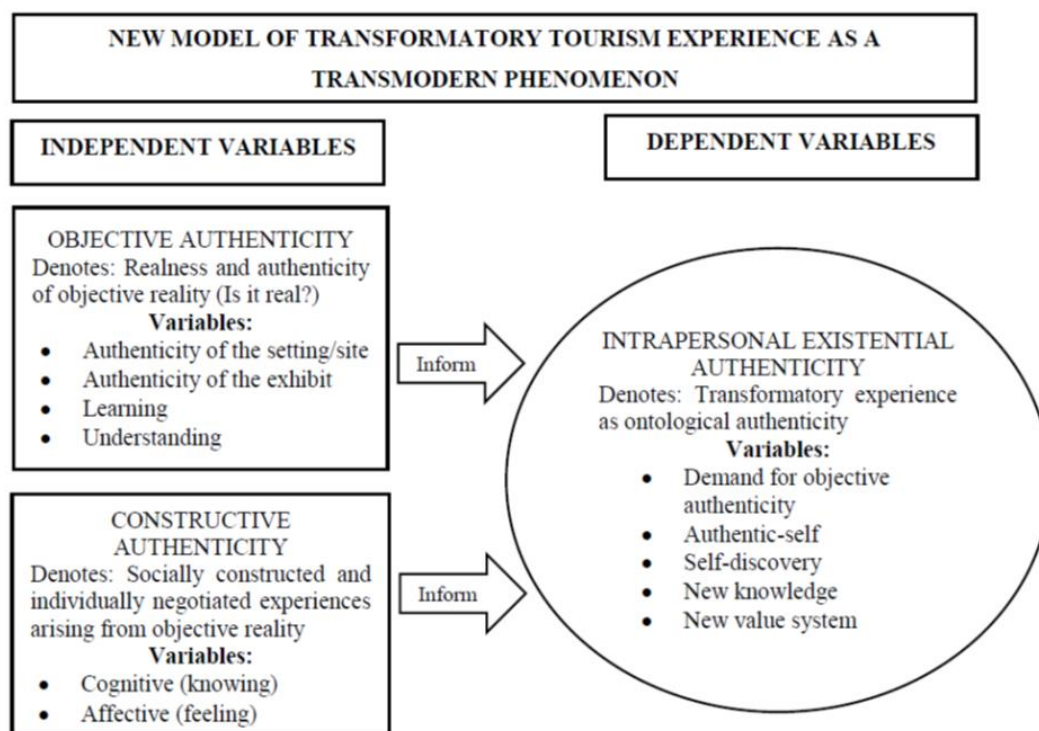


Figure 1. The transmodern model of authenticity of transformatory tourist experience

The two latest theoretical concepts, the immediate experience (Sa'id, 2021) and the existential hapax (Matteucci, 2021), are added to the discussion to strengthen the theoretical validity of the original (2013) model.

### *The underlying concepts*

The concept of immediate experience builds on the philosophical premise that there is no distinction between consciousness (subject) and between that of which our consciousness is aware of (object) (Sa'id, 2021:5). The mind understands the relation between subject and object as more than a mere feeling. It is a fully conscious experience solely contained within a single state of undivided consciousness or sense, which is why it becomes immediate. The synthesis of material and experiential forms of reality presented in Figure 1 mirrors the immediate experience as it creates a new form of transmodern reality, a transformatory experience. It reinforces the main assumptions of the selected philosophy of Speculative Realism as a foundational transmodern philosophy.

Matteucci's (2021) concept of the existential hapax identifies a degree of intensity of personal transformation felt beyond Self-change as it fosters altruistic and charitable behaviours. It is not a mild transformation as conceptualised by Pung et al. (2020) but the eudemonic permanent change that does not happen regularly. The precondition for any personal transformation to become permanent is for all three human structures, the ego, the mind and the body, to transform simultaneously. In the original (2013) transmodern model, existential hapax corresponds with the proposition that the transformatory tourist experience

can acquire permanency when experienced in the ontological sense, as transmodern ontological authenticity.

### ***The underlying assumptions***

The underlying theoretical assumptions of the original 2013 transmodern model of the authenticity of transformatory experience are:

1. Objective and constructive authenticity are independent variables informing the intrapersonal existential authenticity as a dependent variable.
2. Equal variance is assumed for two independent variables.
3. The proposed model is not influenced by any mediating variables and remains a simple model.
4. The model is supported by transmodernism as the underlying paradigm and Speculative Realism as its new founding philosophy. In transmodern ontology, intrapersonal existential authenticity acquires a new form as a transformatory experience.
5. Transformatory experience is a recognisable type of authentic experience underpinned by a new type of transmodern authenticity, the ontological authenticity.
6. Cultural Creatives are the identifiable class of tourists.

### **Methods**

The study assumes the position of an exploratory quantitative study based on a theory-testing theory-building approach employing a survey by questionnaires. The 406 valid questionnaires represented a sample for this research study; 205 were collected during April 2011 at Constitution Hill (CH) and 201 at Hector Peterson (HP), ensuring greater access to tourists and a better tourist mix. Both sites are National Heritage Sites in Johannesburg, playing a significant role in South African post-apartheid national identity building. The sample size for both sites  $N=398$  was based on the annual visitation of 50 000 tourists for a confidence level of 95% (Yamane, 1973). A non-probability sampling strategy and convenience sampling method were used for the survey. The local and international tourists were approached at the exits of both sites after finishing the tour. An equal number of questionnaires were distributed on weekdays and during the weekends. The data was captured in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

The questionnaire consisted of a demographic section, a section measuring dimensions of objective, constructive and existential authenticity, and the tourist assessment of the authenticity of their experience on a scale 1-10. All the scales were at the ordinal level of measurement at a five-point Likert scale from least important (1) to most important (5). The value of Cronbach's alpha for scales reliability was  $\alpha < 0.80$ .

Objective authenticity signifies the authentic setting of the place, exhibits and level of learning (Refer to Table 1, variable 1). The two variables of constructive authenticity (Table 1, variable 2) are the cognitive (Moscardo & Pearce, 1986) and affective (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999). They reinforced the affirmation of authentic-Self by channelling the perceptive ("What the site makes me think about") and emotional stimuli ("How the site made me feel") triggered by a particular objectively authenticated site.

The variables associated with transformatory experience denote intrapersonal existential authenticity in its new transmodern form. The extent of transformatory experience was measured by six statements (Refer to Table 1, Variable 3). They explore the variables reflecting the extraordinary emotional and thought-provoking experience and life-changing realisations which confirm the authentic-Self as an appreciation of life. Of particular interest to this research study are intellectual development and self-discovery. Intellectual development refers to acquiring knowledge as transformative learning in a specific, authentic destination. As a result, the tourist experience of Self-discovery denotes an expanded perspective on life



and permanent transformation in personal worldview (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Both concepts match Pung's et al. (2020) proposed synergy between inward and outward dimensions of personal transformations resulting in a change of attitudes, adoption of temporary habits, and permanent behavioural changes upon tourist return. In the original (2013) transmodern model, transformatory experience assumes permanency in the form of the existential hapax defined by Matteucci's (2021). This assumption is based on the rising numbers of Cultural Creatives who have already attained transformative characteristics as conscious consumers. Consequently, transformatory experience acquires permanency as a confirmation of authentic-Self.

## Results and discussion

### Summary statistics

Table 1: Demographics of the general sample and the core sample representing Cultural Creatives

Profile characteristics	The sample %	The core %
Age groups		
>15	13.1	1.1
16-19	13.4	16.1
20-29	28.8	17.2
30-39	17.2	9.2
40-49	19.0	26.4
50-59	8.6	13.8
60>	12.3	16.1
Sex		
Males	43	36
Females	57	64
Place of residence		
Domestic	46.1	50.6
Abroad	53.9	49.4
Highest education		
Pre-tertiary	31.6	38.4
Bachelor	41.4	40.7
M & D	27.1	20.9
Type of holiday		
Cultural holiday	17	18.4
Creative/educational holiday	14.6	17.2
Touring holiday	26.6	25.3
City trip	9.9	6.9
	<b>N=399-406</b>	<b>n=87</b>

Of the total sample N=406 collected at two sites (CH=201, HP=205), there were slightly more females (229 or 56.4%) than males (173 or 42.6%) (N=402) and more foreign (215 or 53.9%) than domestic tourists (184 or 46.1%) (N=399). Refer to Table 1 for the demographic characteristics of the core Cultural Creatives. The two groups were differentiated based on the level of authenticity of their experience (see independent *t*-test).

### Confirmatory factor analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis (refer to Table 2) was conducted to validate the factor loadings of already developed scale items on three factors measuring the main variables of the model, objective and constructive authenticity and transformatory experience. The factor loadings on the pattern matrix with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser Normalisation confirmed the factors loading of the unique contribution of the variables on each of three predetermined



factors of 51.57%. The inter-item correlation of all factors between 0.25 and 0.48 confirms the internal consistency of the factors. Recorded Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is >0.7 for objective and constructive authenticity and >0.8 for transformatory experience, which according to Field (2009: 659), are 'good' and 'great' values, respectively. Furthermore, high values of the Bartlett test of sphericity (at  $p < 0.001$ ) confirm the existing correlations between variables that should be included in the factor analysis.

Table 2: Results of the factor analysis

<i>Authenticity factors and items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Mean value</i>	<i>Reliability coefficient</i>	<i>Average inter-correlation</i>
<b>Variable 1: Objective authenticity</b>		3.49	0.617	0.25
<i>Authenticity (genuineness) of the site</i>	0.347			
<i>Authentic exhibits, photographs, videos</i>	0.398			
<i>How much I learned</i>	0.437			
<i>Understanding of the country's history – the 'bigger picture'</i>	0.413			
<b>Variable 2: Constructive authenticity</b>		3.20	0.643	0.43
<i>How the site makes me feel</i>	0.483			
<i>What the site makes me think about</i>	0.483			
<b>Variable 3: Transformatory experience</b>		3.39	0.814	0.43
<i>What was presented on the site increased my understanding of the history of Apartheid in South Africa</i>	0.603			
<i>It was a very emotional experience</i>	0.611			
<i>It was a thought-provoking experience</i>	0.614			
<i>The experience made me appreciate my life even more</i>	0.575			
<i>I learned more than I expected</i>	0.566			
<i>In the future, I want to help those less fortunate than me</i>	0.509			
<b>Total variance explained</b>	<b>51.75%</b>			

Three variables with factor loadings <0.3 were excluded, and the remaining variables presented in Table 2 are those used in multiple regression analysis. The values of Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha > 0.6$  indicate that items in each factor have acceptable internal consistency pointing to the reliability of the scales.

### **Testing the original model**

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in the order determined by the following questions: How well the assumptions of linear regression have been satisfied? How well are the two independent variables able to predict the transformatory experience? Which of the two independent variables better predicts transformatory experience? How much of the unique variance does each independent variable explain?

The reliability of the results of multiple regression analysis depends on the preliminary analysis assuring there are no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007). Since the distribution of data sets for all three variables was asymmetric and non-linear, dependent and independent variables were transformed to achieve a more symmetric distribution of data and a more linear relationship. Spearman Rho correlation coefficient ( $r_s$ ) reveals a bivariate relationship between the transformed variables. Moderately strong, positive and statistically significant linear relationships exist between independent variables of objective ( $r_s(405) = 0.489, p = 0.001$ ) and constructive authenticity ( $r_s(405) = 0.463, p = 0.001$ ) with the outcome variable of transformatory experience. The intercorrelation between two independent variables is moderate and positive ( $r_s(405) = 0.429, p = 0.001$ ). The Pearson Correlation coefficient ( $r^2$ )



revealed a positive and strong relationship between the variables at  $p \leq 0.001$ , so the Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that the probability of linear relationship between variables is due to a chance was rejected. The bivariate correlation between independent variables is 0.448, below 0.8, a cut-off for multicollinearity (Meyers, Gamst & Guarino, 2006). Furthermore, the evidence of a moderately strong and positive correlation between the variables confirmed the main assumptions of the proposed new model of transformatory experience. A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well objective and constructive authenticity predict the transformatory experience.

Table 3: Summary of the multiple regression analysis

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>SIG.</i>
(Constant)	0.254	0.35		7.26	<b>0.00</b>
Constructive Authenticity (Transformed)	0.261	0.40	0.305	6.57	<b>0.00</b>
Objective Authenticity (Transformed)	0.372	0.50	0.345	7.42	<b>0.00</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.307</b>				
<b>F</b>	<b>88.838</b>				

The model summary reveals the multiple correlations (*R*) between transformatory experience and two predictor variables, objective and constructive authenticity, is strong ( $R = 0.554$ ). The results presented in Table 3 further revealed that the coefficient of determination is  $R^2 = 0.307$ , which is the amount of shared variance of objective and constructive authenticity in explaining the transformatory experience. It means that two independent variables explained 30.7% of the variances in the model.

The  $\beta$  values indicate the unique contribution of each independent variable in the multiple regression model. The  $\beta$  values for constructive authenticity  $\beta = 0.305$ ,  $t = 7.26$ ,  $p = .000$  and objective authenticity  $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $t = 7.42$ ,  $p = 0.000$  indicate that each variable explained 30.5% and 34.5% of the variance in the model respectively. Squared semi-partial correlations indicate the unique variance predicted by each independent variable, which is  $sr^2 = 0.0745$  for constructive and  $sr^2 = 0.1204$  for objective authenticity.

The F test proved the significance of the regression model as a whole. The summary of variance for regression shows a significant F value,  $F(2,402) = 88.838$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , therefore rejecting the  $H_0$  that the dependent variable has no linear relationship to independent variables. F value ( $F$ )  $p < 0.001$  indicates a significant relationship between the weighted linear composite of the independent variables and dependent variable, as specified in the model, which is not a result of chance (Meyer et al., 2006).

Multicollinearity is a unique assumption of multiple regression analysis which ensures that independent variables do not overlap by explaining the same variances in the dependent variable, making the model not generalisable. The assessments of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value (satisfy the requirement as it is close to 1 and far below 10) and tolerance level (far above 0.2) confirmed there was no multicollinearity in the data (Meyer et al., 2006). In addition, tolerance level (0.799) is above 0.693 ( $1 - R^2$ ). The assumption of no multicollinearity was further tested by the eigenvalues of the scaled, cross-product matrix, condition indexes, and variance proportions. The results have shown that each independent variable has most of the variance loading on different dimensions (constructive authenticity has 94% of variance loading on dimension 2, and objective authenticity has 92% of variance loading on dimension 3). The high percentage of variance loadings of independent variables on different dimensions within small eigenvalue and values of condition indices below 15 confirms the main assumption of multiple regression of no multicollinearity of data in the sample. It can be concluded that the model of transformatory tourism experience satisfies all the assumptions of multiple regression analysis.

### ***Retesting the model for mediating variables***

The additional statistical tests were carried out to establish if any other predictor variable would significantly increase the variance of the model already explained by two independent variables. The forced entry method was used to simultaneously enter the seven independent variables with the potential to act as moderating or predictor variables in the model (Field, 2009: 212). The results in Table 4 show that the multiple correlations (R) between transformatory experience and seven predictor variables are strong (R = 0.574).

Table 4: The results of standard multiple regression analysis for all independent variables

<b>Transformatory experience</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	0.253	0.40		6.29	0.000
Constructive authenticity (transformed)	0.239	0.42	0.280	5.71	0.000
Objective authenticity (transformed)	0.378	0.52	0.350	7.31	0.000
Gender	-0.39	0.19	-0.088*	-2.03	0.043
Place of residence	0.03	0.02	0.065	1.43	0.153
Connect with culture	0.02	0.02	0.052	1.20	0.229
Ed. level Pre-tertiary	0.02	0.03	0.045	0.83	0.410
Ed. level Bachelors	-0.002	0.02	-0.005	-0.10	0.923
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.330</b>				
<b>F</b>	<b>26.125***</b>				

The coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.330$  indicates the amount of shared variance of predictor variables in transformatory experience. It means that seven independent variables combined explained 33% of the model's variances compared to 30.7% explained by only two variables (objective and constructive authenticity  $R^2 = 0.307$ ). The results clearly confirmed the validity of the original 2013 model not being mediated by any other independent variables. Gender was the only variable that made a unique and statistically significant contribution to the model ( $F(7,372) = 26.125, p < 0.001$ ), but it only explained a small variance. The negative sign in the gender ( $\beta = -0.088, p = 0.043$ ) (the variables were transformed, 0=F, M=1) suggests that females are more inclined to have a higher value of transformatory experience than males.

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted to determine which independent variables are the best predictor of the outcome variable of transformatory experience when controlling for all remaining variables in each step. Without going into details, gender explained only 1.8% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.018$ ) ( $F(1,399)$ ), therefore did not influence the model. The results of hierarchical regression analysis on the remaining four variables (bachelor's degree, pre-tertiary degree, place of residence, and connection with culture) confirmed that no other mediating variables influenced the model. The results clearly validate the initial model comprising of only two independent variables.

### ***The independent t-test for transformatory experience***

The independent sample *t*-test was conducted to test if a significant difference exists in the means of transformatory experience scores for most authentic (n = 87) and less authentic groups (n = 308). The two groups were distinguished based on their rating (1-10) of how authentic their experience was from the site. The first group rated the authenticity of their experience the most authentic (10 on a scale of 1-10). In the second group, the rest of the sample rated the authenticity of their experience 1-9. This differentiation between the two groups on

authenticity scores is justified by the fact that the rating 1-6 accounts for only 13.1% of the total sample. Interestingly, there was a visible difference between the 8 and 9 scores accounting for 28% (111) and 19.1% (76), respectively. Since the last three scores (from 8 to 10) did not increase linearly, it justified a differentiation between a choice of 10 or 9. The result of Independent Samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference for transformatory experience  $t(395) = -13.677$ ,  $p = 0.000$  between the means of two groups (equal variances not assumed), those with most authentic experience ( $n = 87$ ,  $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ) and those with less authentic experience ( $n = 308$ ,  $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ). Since the magnitude of difference in the means (mean difference =  $-0.591$ , 95% SI:  $-0.68$  to  $-0.51$ ) was very small (Cohen's  $d$  or eta squared =  $0.07$ ), the Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to determine a difference in ranks between the two groups. The results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test reveal a significant difference in the levels of transformatory experience  $U = 4327.5$ ,  $z = -9.729$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , between most authentic ( $Md = 4.0$ ,  $n = 87$ ) and less authentic ( $Md = 3.33$ ,  $n = 308$ ). There was a significant double difference in ranks between the two groups: 302.26 for the most authentic and 168.55 for less authentic.

### Discussion and conclusion

The statistical results confirmed the main theoretical assumption of the 2013 model as follows: In answer to the first theoretical assumption, the multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to test the 'goodness of fit' of the model and determine the variance explained by objective and constructive authenticity as the predictor variables in informing the transformatory experience as the outcome variable. The results of MRA revealed that a linear combination of objective and constructive authenticity was significantly related to transformatory experience ( $F(2,402) = 88.838$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The multiple correlation coefficient  $R^2 = 0.307$  indicated that 30.7% of the total variance in the model is accounted for by two predictor variables, objective and constructive authenticity.

In answer to the second theoretical assumption, unexpectedly objective authenticity explained more of the variance, 34.5%, in the model compared to 30.5% explained by constructive authenticity ( $\beta = 0.345$  and  $\beta = 0.305$  respectively). The results also support the theoretical, philosophical, and ontological viability (and strength) of transmodernism as an underlining paradigm of the new authenticity of transformatory tourism experience. In answer to the third theoretical assumption, the standard, stepwise and hierarchical linear regression analysis confirmed that the two potential mediating variables, gender and place of residence, explained an extremely low variance of 1,8%. Therefore, the 2013 model of transformatory experience was not influenced by any mediating variables confirming the model's underlying assumption of the equality of material and experiential realms in generating transformatory experience. In answer to the fourth theoretical assumption, the results provided the following undeniable empirical proofs of the validity of transmodernism as a new founding paradigm: a) the statistical validity and replicability of the new model; b) the theoretical validity of Speculative Realism in supporting ontological, epistemological and philosophical properties of transmodernism as the underlying paradigm; c) the ability of transmodernism to transcend the two preceding paradigms without negating either of them d) the ability of transmodernism to synthesise the two opposing levels of reality, material and experiential into qualitatively new transmodern experiential form, transformational experience. In answer to the fifth theoretical assumption, the result of the Independent Samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference for transformatory experience  $t(395) = -13.677$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , between the means of two groups with the most authentic and less authentic experience. Mann-Whitney *U* test demonstrated that the value of transformatory experience is statistically identifiable in the ranks of two groups of tourists (see Tables 1 and 3). The results identified Cultural Creatives as a

core group of tourists whose transformatory experience was much more authentic (302.26) than the rest of the sample (168.55). The evidence of the authenticity of transformatory experience confirms the role of ontological authenticity in affirming the authentic-Self. This presents another significant contribution of this paper to transformatory discourse. In answer to the sixth theoretical assumption, the tourist rating (1-10) of how authentic their experience was from the site revealed that in 2013, 35.4% (n=87) of the total visitors (N=395) had the most authentic experience.

The empirical results presented in this paper challenged the foundation of the authenticity of transformatory experience discourse in tourism underpinned by the postmodern paradigm. Ironically, the main proofs of the power of transmodernism lie in the proof of weaknesses of postmodernism. It becomes clear that without substituting postmodernism with transmodernism as the underlying paradigm, any attempts to build a new sound transformative discourse will remain fruitless. Furthermore, postmodernism will remain a major structural weakness in solidifying the contemporary transformatory tourism discourse in the future. In the revised model presented in Figure 2, existential authenticity is conceptualised not as a hybrid experience but as a qualitatively new type of transmodern experience, the transformatory experience. It is underpinned by a new type of transmodern authenticity, the ontological authenticity. Ontological authenticity is defined as a (re)confirmation or/and extension of the authentic-Self through increased planetary conciseness, demand for authenticity in everything, spirituality, lifelong learning, a confirmation of authentic-Self, and transformatory knowledge. The ontological authenticity does not lead to nor shape the authentic-Self; only the authentic-Self can acquire (lead to) the ontological authenticity. As a transmodern construct, the ontological authenticity assumes the permanency of transformation in the form of the existential hapax (Matteucci, 2021), resulting in ontological transformation. An ontological authenticity is a unique tool in directing the source of transformatory experience as permanent ontological transformation. The evidence presented so far clearly shows that the ontological transformation is a more fitting concept for explaining the transformatory experience than existential transformation (Kirillova et al., 2017a).

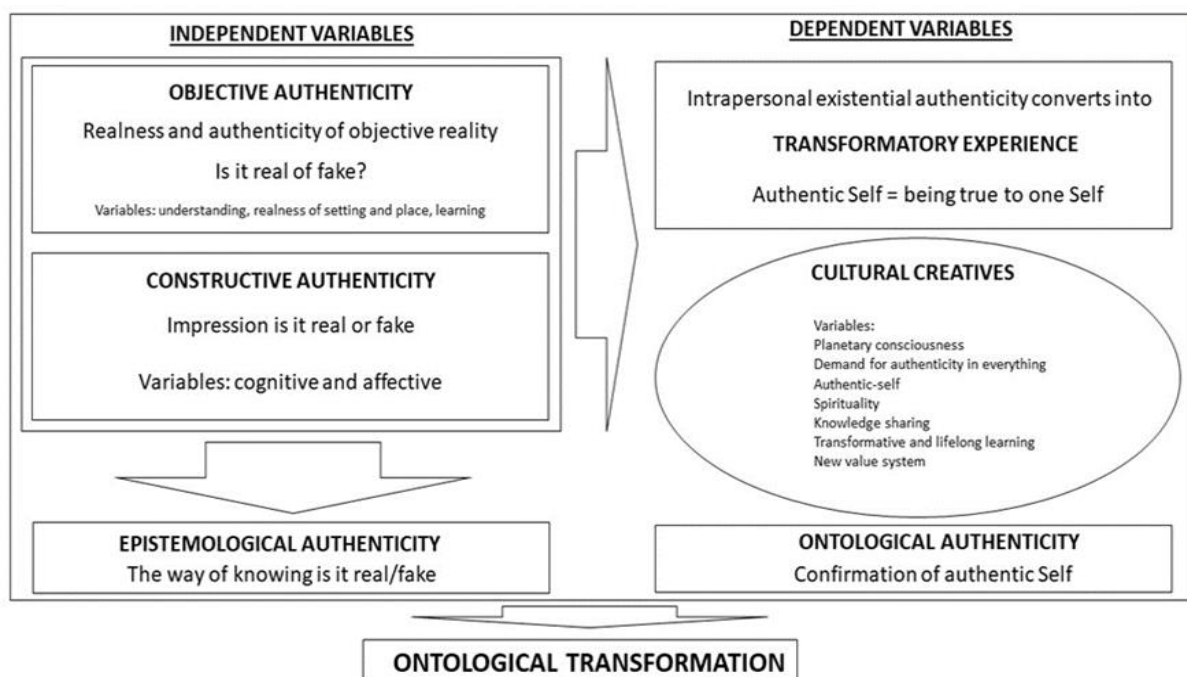


Figure 2: A revised transmodern model of authenticity of transformatory tourism

The revised transmodern model provides an invaluable theoretical, conceptual, and empirical blueprint for the future development of new types of transformational tourism globally and in South Africa. The simplicity of the conceptual model consisting of only two independent variables makes it easily adaptable, replicable and applicable to many new types of transformational tourism. The groundbreaking results presented in this paper will enrich the academic understanding of the transformative value of authenticity of tourist sites and facilitate future research on the exact nature of personal transformations in new emerging types of transformational tourism. The prospects for future research resulting from the new model are endless. The future success of every country's strategy for the post-COVID 19 Great Tourism Reset will depend on an understanding of the Cultural Creatives' demand for *authenticity in everything*. It is what half of the world's population wants.

### Acknowledgement

I unequivocally acknowledge the valuable contribution of the late Prof Melville Saayman to this work. I am entirely grateful for having had an opportunity to learn from a wise mentor, an extraordinary academic, and a prolific researcher.

### Dedication

In memory of Prof Melville Saayman.

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