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Exploring efficacy in personal constraint negotiation: an ethnography of mountaineering tourists

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Citation:

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Abstract

Limited work has explored the relationship between efficacy and personal constraint negotiation for adventure tourists, yet efficacy is pivotal to successful activity participation as it influences people's perceived ability to cope with constraints, and their decision to use negotiation strategies. This paper explores these themes with participants of a commercially organised mountaineering expedition. Phenomenology-based ethnography was adopted to appreciate the social and cultural mountaineering setting from an emic perspective. Ethnography is already being used to understand adventure participation, yet there is considerable scope to employ it further through researchers immersing themselves into the experience. The findings capture the interaction between the ethnographer and the group members, and provide an embodied account using their lived experiences. Findings reveal that personal mountaineering skills, personal fitness, altitude sickness and fatigue were the four key types of personal constraint. Self-efficacy, negotiation-efficacy and other factors, such as hardiness and motivation, influenced the effectiveness of negotiation strategies. Training, rest days, personal health, and positive self-talk were negotiation strategies. A conceptual model illustrates these results and demonstrates the interplay between efficacy and the personal constraint negotiation journey for led mountaineers.

Keywords

Introduction

Adventure tourists are driven by a range of motives from relaxation to challenge, socialising to risk-taking, and play to skill development (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2014). Yet, they face tourism constraints, such as time, expense, transport, climate, location, physical ability, limited knowledge about destinations and activities, and lack of co-participants (Albayrak, Caber and Crawford, 2007). Additionally, they encounter adventure-specific constraints, associated with, for instance, activity skills, using technical equipment or coping with extreme weather conditions (Doran, Schofield and Low, 2018; Fendt and Wilson, 2012). Work has mainly examined pre-activity rather than

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in-situ activity constraints, and there has been limited focus on negotiation strategies and their effective implementation. This has prompted calls for more theoretical development which investigates the entire constraint negotiation journey and the interplay of different influences on this (Dimmock and Wilson, 2009; Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell, 2007).

The aim of this paper is to explore the influence of efficacy on the personal constraint negotiation journey for adventure tourists. Self-efficacy is 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce a given attainment' (Bandura, 1997: 3). Whilst this study explores self-efficacy in an adventure tourism context, it impacts on all aspects of human functioning. People's efficacy beliefs influence their motivational, cognitive, decisional and affective processes. For instance, their self-regulation of emotional states is influenced by their beliefs in their coping abilities. Also, their beliefs influence their levels of motivation and perseverance to achieve self-set goals. Efficacy guides people's perceived ability to cope with constraints and implement negotiation strategies (Bandura, 2012). Negotiation-efficacy is 'people's confidence in their ability to successfully use negotiation strategies to overcome constraints they encounter' (Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell, 2007: 22). It stimulates motivation, diminishes perceptions of constraints, facilitates negotiation efforts, and gauges performance in particular tasks. Little is known about the interplay between self-efficacy, negotiation-efficacy and constraint negotiation for adventure tourists. Yet, adventure tourists need high efficacy to deal with core elements such as the challenges, risks, responsibility and uncertain outcomes integral to activity experiences (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003). Understanding this relationship will develop an appreciation of the potentially important role efficacy plays in adventure participation and help adventure leaders to recognise clients' faltering efficacy and to use techniques to bolster this for successful constraint negotiation and goal attainment.

This study investigates participants of a commercially organised mountaineering expedition in the Nepal Himalaya over a one month duration in 2014. Mountaineering comprises a range of activities which span from soft to hard in terms of difficulty and challenge. While soft activities include hill walking and trekking, harder forms such as rock, snow and ice climbing, and high-altitude mountaineering necessitate high levels of stamina, fitness, experience and skill. The commercialisation of mountaineering has led to the categorisation of it as a form of adventure tourism (Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Carr, 2001; Pomfret, 2006). This study is about hard mountaineer tourists as the expedition involved high altitude mountaineering. Prior research mostly examines softer adventure tourism forms (e.g. Elsrud, 2001; Myers, 2010). Such tourists are also known as led mountaineers because they are highly experienced and skilled in mountaineering. We focus on the personal constraints encountered by mountaineer tourists because they were the most prominent from the ethnographic fieldwork data collected for this study, and they were the most strongly influenced by efficacy. Personal constraints dominate decision making because they strongly facilitate people's motivation to participate (Crawford, Jackson and Godbey, 1991) and reflect their beliefs, attitudes and self-perceptions (Wilson and Little, 2005). Accordingly, negotiating these during adventure activity participation is critical to success. The findings from this study present new personal constraints and negotiation strategies, and demonstrate that efficacy, personal

characteristics of the mountaineers, their hardiness and motivation levels all influenced successful negotiation.

This ethnographic study uses participant observation together with interviews and informal discussions to capture social meanings in this context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Scholars are increasingly using ethnography to gain a deeper understanding of adventure experiences (Houge Mackenzie and Kerr, 2013), and in doing so, it is argued that adventure tourism research can gain broader academic recognition and become relevant to, and cited within, other academic disciplines (Buckley, 2014). As we wanted to understand tourists' experiences, ethnography was employed to appreciate their social and cultural setting from an emic perspective. We adopted a phenomenology-based ethnographic approach of 'doing it yourself' and participating in the lives of the people being studied (Pfadenhauer and Grenz, 2015: 599). By using this approach, the study makes important methodological contributions to adventure tourism research, with the potential for ground-breaking findings (Buckley, 2014).

The paper is structured as follows. We initially review the literature associated with constraint negotiation for adventurers and the role of efficacy in constraint negotiation. Next, we consider the study's phenomenology-ethnographical approach, then we present and discuss the key fieldwork findings. These are also summarised in a conceptual model (Figure 1), which is followed by the conclusion.

Constraint Negotiation for Adventurers

Research on adventure constraint negotiation has focused on female recreational adventurers (e.g. Little, 2002; Wilson and Little, 2005) with fewer studies about female adventure tourists (e.g. Doran et al, 2018; Fendt and Wilson, 2012). Findings reveal that women adventurers in both contexts encounter three interconnected constraint types (Doran, 2016). Personal constraints reflect women's beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of self, and influence the motivation to participate in adventure. They include fear, self-doubt, perceptions of being unadventurous, and feelings of guilt. Socio-cultural constraints are influential before and during adventure activity participation and involve perceived barriers such as social expectations, gender stereotypes and finding friends to participate with. Practical constraints are also experienced before and during activity participation. They include lack of time and money, unfamiliarity with the destination, and limited promotion of adventure opportunities and the associated benefits for women. Female mountain bikers, white-water rafters and solo hikers encounter more socio-cultural constraints, such as gender role norms and the lack of companions to partake in adventure activities with (Albayrak et al, 2007; Coble, Selin and Erickson, 2003). Whereas, female mountaineer tourists encounter more personal and practical constraints, including the high cost of participation, needing specific equipment, not having enough knowledge of the climbing routes, and having concerns about their fitness and climbing ability (Doran et al, 2018). Studies on women adventurers have classified constraint negotiation into three groups (Doran, 2016). First, determination, which reflects motivation, passion and exploitation of femininity to overcome perceived ingrained

barriers associated with certain adventure activities. Second, planning and preparing is a commonly used strategy, including training before adventure activity participation and researching the destination. Third, prioritising participation and compromising, which involves being flexible with time and adjusting, or substituting, the chosen adventure activity.

Few mixed-gender studies explore the constraint negotiation process for adventurers, instead investigating the key influences on this journey. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations impact on the propensity to use negotiation strategies to overcome constraints (Jackson, Crawford and Godbey, 1993). For instance, people deal with feelings of stress from outdoor recreation conflict situations, such as negative visitor interactions, through being strongly motivated to enjoy their hiking experiences (Schneider and Wynveen, 2015). Cultural background affects the constraint perceptions of skiers and non-skiers (Gilbert and Hudson, 2000; Hudson, Hinch, Walker and Simpson, 2010). Chinese-Canadian skiers and non-skiers identify more constraints than Anglo-Canadians. Additionally, previous adventure activity experience is influential with novices encountering more barriers than experienced adventurers. For instance, skilled white-water rafters and mountain bikers express fewer barriers to participation than novices, and the latter are deterred by structural constraints such as the expense incurred by mountain biking (Albayrak et al, 2007). Beginner divers are more constrained by personal discomfort, diver interference and equipment issues, than experienced divers (Todd and Graefe, 2000). Divers enjoy more comfortable experiences when they can overcome physical (e.g. the impact of strong currents), social (e.g. apprehension about new diving buddies) and visual (e.g. impact of poor water conditions on divers' ability to navigate) constraints (Dimmock and Wilson, 2009; 2011).

The Role of Efficacy in Constraint Negotiation

Self-efficacy is a complex concept and individual beliefs influence its strength. These include: task efficacy, relating to one's ability to perform an activity; performance efficacy during the activity; ameliorative and coping efficacy, concerning one's ability to cope with different threats; collective efficacy regarding the ability of group members to organise and achieve successful group actions; and, self-regulatory efficacy, relating to one's ability to exercise control over motivation, emotional states, thought processes and behaviour patterns (Bandura, 1997). Accordingly, people with high self-efficacy perceive themselves to be competent in successfully accomplishing an activity. They are strongly motivated, persistent, set themselves challenging goals, and regard constraints as negotiable (Sheard and Golby, 2006).

There are four sources which develop people's efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Firstly, enactive mastery experiences are the most influential sources. Successful completion of activities while concurrently developing skills enhances judgment efficacy about future activities, while failure diminishes feelings of efficacy. Once people believe they can succeed, based on their prior experience and successes, they become resilient in difficult

situations and overcome setbacks more quickly. Secondly, vicarious experience influences efficacy whereby individuals observe others' performance and then develop their own judgments. Beliefs are enhanced when individuals perceive their performance to be superior to group norms (Bandura and Jourden, 1991). Thirdly, verbal persuasion can affect efficacy through significant others encouraging individuals to maintain efforts despite facing challenges. Vicarious experience and verbal persuasion interplay and enhance efficacy, but only if feedback about participants' ability to succeed is provided and this does not signal any doubts. This is particularly important when people feel unable to judge their own performance as it encourages them to continue and sustain their efforts. Fourthly, physiological and affective states impact on efficacy and while positive frames of mind enhance it, negative moods generally reduce it. For instance, physically challenging activities can be exhausting and painful, and they can incur feelings of physical inefficacy. Similarly, stressful tasks can evoke negative emotional responses and feelings of inefficacy (Bandura, 1997).

These sources of efficacy are pertinent to adventure experiences. Mountaineers often experience emotionally intense journeys replete with feelings of risk, fear and uncertainty (Pomfret, 2012). They put themselves against many challenges to achieve mastery and goal accomplishment, and they benefit from such sources as verbal persuasion and vicarious experience to bolster their efficacy. Their affective and physiological states impact both positively and negatively on their experiences. Accordingly, their vicarious experiences and the verbal persuasion offered by peers and staff can help to overturn any negative feelings and increase the likelihood of success and eventual mastery (Sibthorp, 2003). As beliefs influence perceived success in activities (Bandura, 1997) it is thought that individuals with high self-efficacy are confident in their ability to succeed in their chosen activity. They develop strong negotiation-efficacy skills, which encourage motivation, reduce the perception of constraints and enhance their negotiation efforts to overcome barriers. Contrastingly, those who view adventure's core elements (Swarbrooke et al, 2003) as major constraints are less likely to take adventure holidays because of lower self-efficacy.

Efficacy has palpable links to hardiness, a personality construct which helps people to manage stressful situations by seeing them as challenging opportunities to develop rather than as constricting, uncontrollable experiences. Hardiness instils in people strong feelings of control to change situations and persist with what they are doing rather than withdrawing (Maddi, Khoshaba, Persico, Lu, Harvey and Bleecker, 2002). Given the challenging nature of adventure activities, hardiness is a beneficial characteristic for adventure tourists. Hardiness and high efficacy are particularly important in high-altitude mountaineering as risks such as bad weather, altitude sickness, avalanches, snow blindness, disorientation and frostbite are prevalent. These characteristics are also imperative to successful rock climbing (Chroni, Hatzigeorgiadis and Theodorakis, 2006). Novice climbers with high hardiness and efficacy employ active, problem-focused negotiation strategies to cope with situational demands, whereas those with low hardiness and efficacy doubt their ability and are more likely to disengage from the activity. In essence, efficacy and hardiness contribute towards enhanced motivation,

an improved ability to develop and use effective negotiation strategies to overcome constraints, and continued participation in adventure activities.

Research Methods

Phenomenology-based ethnography (Pfadenhauer and Grenz, 2015), also referred to as experiential or life-analytical ethnography (Honer and Hitzler, 2015; Sands, 2002), emphasises that researchers cannot understand the subjective meaning people attach to their experiences unless they have experienced it themselves. Therefore, it requires the researcher to become a participating member of the culture being studied. Unlike autoethnography, the ethnographer's lived experience is not central to ethnography, but it is combined with other data collection methods to authenticate the experience and behaviour of those being studied. Consequently, researchers may switch between being an emic member of the cultural group to being an etic outsider. This necessitates researchers to be reflexive and to consider their own viewpoints as group members (Honer and Hitzler, 2015; Pfadenhauer and Grenz, 2015; Sands, 2002). Accordingly, in acknowledging they are part of the social world being studied and active participants in the research process (O'Reilly, 2005; Pfadenhauer and Grenz, 2015), the first author of this paper has been written into the findings. In doing so, the intention is not to overpower the voices of the other participants. Rather, the aim is to operationalise the fieldwork by including all ethnographic insights, as advocated by O'Gorman, MacLaren and Bryce (2014). In accordance with the study's ethnographic nature, this includes the first author as an active participant. From herein, first-person pronouns are used in the descriptions relating to the first author's experiences. Additionally, to further operationalise the fieldwork, this study explains how the findings were elicited and illustrates the challenges of conducting fieldwork in an adventure setting, which is often ignored by tourism scholars (O'Gorman et al, 2014).

As suggested by Sands (2002), the research is presented as a narrative to capture the interaction of the ethnographer with the cultural members, and to authenticate the cultural actuality for the readers by using the ethnographer's lived experiences. As mountaineering engages the whole body, I experienced the same kinaesthetic experiences and feelings as the cultural group members. By experiencing the physical hardship and intense emotions associated with trekking for multiple weeks, climbing at altitude, overcoming challenges and summiting mountains, my whole body was immersed in understanding the meanings, and recording an embodied account of a commercially organised mountaineering expedition. These sensations and emotions would have been undetected through observation by a non-experiential ethnographer (Sands, 2002). Instead, this participatory approach to research allowed for an immediacy of insight into the liminal experience, and it facilitated meaningful engagement with the mountaineer tourists (Spinney, 2006).

The study draws on one-month of field research in Nepal, where I participated in a commercially organised expedition to climb Mera Peak (6,476m), the Amphu Laptsa

pass (5,700m) and Island Peak (6,189m) in November 2014. The trip was an introduction to Himalayan mountaineering expeditions and was suitable for mountaineers who had previous experience mountaineering in the Alps or Scotland. Before being accepted on the expedition each participant was required to complete an experience questionnaire, which was screened by the tour operator and the expedition leader. Upon acceptance, participants were advised on how to physically train to develop endurance. This holiday was promoted as an expedition and participants were regarded as led mountaineers rather than guided tourists. Acceptance on this expedition was made possible through the skills I had previously developed as well as the extensive physical training I had undertaken. As I was a fully immersed participant observer, I needed a high level of fitness to maximise my summit chances and to successfully participate in the expedition while making observations, listening to other participants and asking questions. Therefore, training was essential in physically preparing me for the challenge of researching while mountaineering and it became 'equally important to the research and methodology, as both a means and object of sight' (Spinney, 2006: 716). This expedition was selected because, uncharacteristically, it comprised both female and male participants. Many mountaineering tour operators reported that only one or two women participated in similar expeditions. With the inclusion of myself, there were four female and eight male expedition members aged between 33 and 60 years old from the UK, Norway and Australia. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

As we were walking or climbing each day, ethnography allowed me to apply different research methods while living and experiencing the social phenomenon. This approach to data collection was particularly effective as, due to unforeseen circumstances (illness, fatigue, participants leaving the expedition early), I could not interview all participants, which I intended to do. Whilst in-depth interviews are not necessary in ethnography, as people's lived experiences of the world and their constructions of reality are difficult to elicit through this means (Honer and Hitzler, 2015), there are advantages of including these within ethnography fieldwork. By combining participant observation with methods which allow the researcher to talk to the participants and ask questions, data from each can be used to illuminate the other (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). For example, observations can make the analysis of interviews more credible and what participants say can lead us to see things differently in observation, and vice versa. Despite the challenges I encountered, I was able to carry out informal discussions with individuals, small groups and the entire group opportunistically, to ask questions when they occurred to me and observe and experience things happening in real time. Therefore, I was able to learn about events, feelings, rules and norms in this context (O'Reilly, 2005) and add emerging themes to my research questions to explore as the expedition progressed. Consequently, data analysis began in the field with analytic notes which fed into the data collection. Data mainly comprised extensive field notes from informal discussions (recorded during rest breaks or at the end of each day), overt observations of the group members, and transcriptions of my own feelings and comments recorded in a journal and on a dictaphone. Most group members were eager to talk to me about my research, especially during the evening when there was little to do.

Post-expedition, data analysis initially focused on organising the data into analytic themes based on the constraint negotiation during the expedition. Where possible, each theme included direct quotes. The themes were then sorted into appropriate constraint and negotiation categories and sub-categories. These were then validated by the second author, who read through the transcripts to check that they corresponded with her own interpretation of the data. Where disagreements with the interpretations occurred, these were explored further by both authors and, where needed, reintroduced into the data analysis to enhance its rigor and credibility. For instance, the authors discussed whether altitude sickness was a personal constraint as this is an inevitable consequence of high-altitude mountaineering, although some mountaineers experience it more severely than others. Through analysis and self-reflexivity, behaviour patterns that shaped the mountaineers' experience also emerged. People's perceptions of their capabilities (self-efficacy) and how these influenced their efforts to negotiate (negotiation-efficacy) dominated many personal constraint and negotiation sub-categories. Therefore, despite other constraint categories and negotiation strategies emerging from the data, we focus only on personal constraint negotiation because this is most closely connected with individuals' efficacy.

Results and Discussion

Four sub-categories of personal constraint emerged as prominent themes within the data. These are personal mountaineering skills, personal fitness, altitude sickness and fatigue. Efficacy played an important role in constraint negotiation, yet this did not act in isolation, and the personal characteristics of the mountaineers, their hardiness and motivation levels were also influential. In turn, each of the four constraints and the interplay between self-efficacy, negotiation-efficacy and constraint negotiation for the mountaineer tourists will now be discussed.

Personal mountaineering skills

Despite having the prerequisite experience, some mountaineers were less confident in their mountaineering skills and doubted their ability to successfully summit, as noted by Nicky during our interview:

> 'It is probably a little bit ambitious for me [the expedition], especially not having done anything [climbing] for a while, but you know, give it a go! Everything they asked I have done before, it has just been a long time, so it is just getting my head around that I am fit and strong enough to do it'.

While Nicky recognised that this hiatus might affect her climbing, her previous mountaineering experience and successes strengthened her efficacy judgment and negotiation-efficacy. She was willing to 'give it a go', thus using positive self-talk, a negotiation strategy which involves convincing oneself of the ability to succeed (Feltz, Short and Sullivan, 2008). Contrastingly, Katherine doubted her ability so acutely that

improving it became integral to her pre-expedition training to negotiate this perceived barrier. This included climbing indoors 'as a confidence building thing on the lead up to this trip' and participating in a mountaineering course to refresh her skills and ease her concerns.

> 'I was very conscious that I don't have much in the way of mountaineering skills or experience, so I did this week mountaineering course at Glenmore Lodge in Scotland to kind of consolidate what I learnt on Mont Blanc. Hopefully that will give me just about enough to get through this trip'.

Achieving this enactive mastery experience (Bandura, 1997) through her pre-expedition training should have enhanced Katherine's efficacy, yet she continually referred to her lack of climbing and mountaineering skills during our interview. While I attempted to adopt a researcher-observer role, remaining emotionally distant, unbiased and critical (O'Reilly, 2005), I could not ignore the fact that I was a fully immersed expedition participant. Therefore, I felt obliged as a friend and an expedition team member to reassure Katherine of her mountaineering abilities by reminding her that she would not be on the expedition if the leader was not satisfied with her previous experience. Katherine reluctantly agreed, but it was clear this was still a perceived constraint for her and my positive words of encouragement had little influence on her self-efficacy.

During a group discussion, the other members demonstrated higher self-efficacy, expressing more confidence in their ability to summit. However, they all recognised that their inexperience of using a jumar (a mechanical device that is used to ascend a rope) to climb could inadvertently compromise their chance of summiting. If used inefficiently it could cause fatigue and this would heighten as our bodies acclimatised. Consequently, we focused on practicing this skill during a training session early in the expedition in an attempt to negotiate this potential constraint. This agentic, proactive behaviour supports the proposition that the motivation to participate has a strong effect on negotiation (Bandura, 1997; White, 2008). During this session I observed many of the group members seeking and receiving positive feedback from the leader. Verbal persuasion was used by the leader to convince the group that we had the skills and the strength needed to summit, and this enhanced our negotiation-efficacy. While I also noticed many of the group members providing positive verbal feedback to one another, the persuasive influence of the leader on self-efficacy was much stronger as we considered him to be the expert and more credible in judging our capabilities (Feltz et al, 2008). Group members recounted the positive feedback the leader gave on their individual performance, yet they neglected to talk about feedback from their peers. Scheduling this early in the expedition provided an efficacy-enhancing opportunity and avoided prematurely placing us in a climbing situation that was likely to bring failure (Bandura, 1997). Armed with this positive feedback, our collective-efficacy and motivation were strengthened. In turn, this enhanced our negotiation-efficacy perceptions and reduced our opinion that the jumar inexperience was a constraint, supporting previous research (Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell, 2007; White, 2008).

Summiting Mera, the first mountain on the expedition, provided a further efficacy-enhancing situation as it enabled members to realise their mountaineering capabilities at altitude. Despite successfully summiting and receiving verbal persuasion by group members and the leader, Katherine continued to doubt her mountaineering skills, believing that she was less competent than the others. This comparison with others acts as a vicarious influence on one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). However, she demonstrated hardiness and high negotiation-efficacy, viewing the expedition as an opportunity to develop her mountaineering skills and to overcome challenges. In line with Sheard and Golby's (2006) findings, Katherine's hardiness improved as her ability to perceive difficult climbing situations positively increased. By doing this, Katherine began to develop positive self-talk. Her determination to master the requisite mountaineering skills, combined with observing others' progress in developing these, conveyed that this challenge was achievable. This enhanced her coping efficacy and, consequently, her negotiation-efficacy. Katherine's hardiness, motivation and improved efficacy resulted in her successfully summiting both mountains.

Personal fitness

For some, their personal fitness and the physical exertion needed for the expedition were key perceived constraints and they trained pre-expedition to try to negotiate these. While this worked for several members, others either continued to doubt their fitness or they were not fit enough to endure the expedition.

During a group discussion Liz, David and Nicky felt constrained by their lack of pre-expedition training. David's work commitments, Nicky's travels in the months leading up the expedition and an injury sustained by Liz prevented them from any pre-expedition training. Despite this, they hoped that their general fitness combined with the trek through the mountains to each base camp would be enough to physically prepare them for the summit attempts. Liz and David saw this as a challenge to overcome and they were determined to summit each mountain. Drawing on their previous sporting achievements and knowing that they have a good general level of fitness, their coping- and negotiation-efficacy were enhanced, and they successfully summited both mountains. By comparison, Nicky showed signs of low fitness efficacy and felt that the gap in training 'may have put me back. Do I have the stamina to keep it going? That is the main thing', but conceded, noting that 'I think I am getting there [referring to her fitness level], but I think I have been a bit behind you guys, hanging out at the back, but plodding.' Comparing her performance with others as a source of efficacy information Nicky commented that 'It is clearly easier for some than it is for others and I feel that I would be down the back end of that.' I was surprised by her comments and I began to experience a shifting of roles - between being a researcher, a mountaineer and a friend. Nicky and I had become particularly close as we shared a tent with one another and during this group discussion I found myself moving away from my researcher-observer role and adopting a participant role as I felt compelled, as did the other group members, to tell Nicky that I had not noticed any signs of fatigue. I said this in the hope that verbal persuasion would increase Nicky's perception of her capabilities and increase her fitness efficacy. I then asked her if she felt fit enough to summit, to which Nicky replied 'yeah, I mean I am not

giving myself 100% success rate of getting up both of them. I am probably around 50/50 at the moment in my own head.' While Nicky dealt with her doubts about her mountaineering ability by showing high negotiation-efficacy, in contrast, she expressed low self-efficacy about her physical fitness and gave herself only a 50% chance of summiting. Despite Nicky's doubts in her fitness, she engaged in positive self-talk and attempted to stop negative thoughts, enabling her to fight fatigue. This proved to be a successful strategy for Nicky and whilst she did not summit any of the mountains, she was able to continue on the expedition.

During this group discussion, Ron also confessed to doing no physical training prior to the expedition. He had climbed extensively in the Alps and using the success of these previous performances, he seemed highly efficacious, believing that he had the experience and knowledge to make his own judgment about the training required. Zweifel and Haegeli (2014) refer to decision making based on an individual's memory of past actions in similar settings as a familiarity heuristic trap. While this can usually be a reliable source of information when decision-making, it becomes a trap when the hazard conditions change considerably, for example climbing at a higher altitude on routes that require different skills and in different weather conditions. Ron's previous mountaineering experiences in the Alps are very different to a Himalayan expedition at higher altitude. Consequently, shortly after beginning the expedition Ron realised that he had overestimated his abilities and he had fallen into this heuristic trap. Signs of fatigue due to a lack of fitness became evident immediately as he struggled with the long days' trekking. Despite a rest day and engaging in positive self-talk to try and overcome his fatigue, Ron was unable to successfully negotiate these constraints, and he was asked by the leader to leave the expedition.

Only five group members had done considerable pre-expedition training and consequently they had high self-efficacy for personal fitness. For example, during an informal conversation Katherine explained:

> 'I tried to follow a marathon training program so that I could be as fit as I could be. I have no idea how I will cope with altitude and I think that when we get onto the tricky stuff that involves ropes and goodness knows what else, I think I am going to struggle. I definitely have less experience than everybody else. So I didn't want to add into the equation being unfit. So I thought that is something I can definitely sort out.'

For these participants, this pre-expedition training proved to be a successful negotiation strategy as it enhanced their fitness efficacy and created high negotiation-efficacy perceptions, thus encouraging them to cope with the physical demands of mountaineering and to fight fatigue.

Altitude sickness

The constraint which everyone most feared was altitude sickness, which is inevitable in high-altitude mountaineering and a less controllable barrier that can resist negotiation attempts. If severe enough, this could prevent someone from summiting or continuing

with the expedition. Although the itinerary was designed to help us acclimatise, maintaining personal health, which included keeping hydrated and eating high-calorie food, could be employed as a strategy to reduce the likelihood of altitude sickness. Despite the group using this strategy, all group members experienced acute mountain sickness (AMS) symptoms including headaches, fatigue, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, nausea and vomiting. Yet, these did not prevent summiting and the group showed high negotiation-efficacy through anticipating and accepting these symptoms. For example, whilst we were walking, David said that 'I was determined to summit (Mera), despite the persistent headache' and Peter said that 'I just fought through it.' The feeling of being unwell and the exertion of summiting were short-lived and soon forgotten once the group had descended Mera. Instead these negative recollections were replaced with positive memories of achievement. The group could appraise their performance in negotiating AMS and strengthen their negotiation-efficacy in preparation for climbing the pass and Island Peak. However, the group was cautious not to become complacent as AMS could still have prevented members from summiting. Therefore, despite successful negotiation, it was still perceived as potentially constraining the next summit attempt. This was true for Liz who, despite not experiencing AMS when climbing Mera, described becoming short of breath, lapsing into 'tunnel vision' and feeling faint when climbing Island Peak. This made her panic and she explained 'I had to take long deep breaths to try and calm myself down.' Being highly motivated and determined to summit, Liz had strong negotiation perceptions and through positive self-talk she successfully negotiated this potential constraint.

In contrast, despite maintaining personal health, Nicky experienced a high resting heart rate when climbing both Mera and Island Peak, suggesting that her body had not acclimatised and it would be unsafe to continue climbing. Unable to negotiate, Nicky had to descend both mountains without summiting. Reflecting on her emotional state while climbing (past performance), Nicky believed that her increased heart rate was due to anxiety rather than altitude. She felt unable to control it, which led to weaker negotiation-efficacy and doubts about her ability to summit. Her low self-efficacy across many of the constraints was evident from the start of the expedition. During an interview Nicky said:

> 'I have never been to this altitude before, so it is a good test for me. Can I handle myself at that altitude? I have no idea. Will I make it up there? But it is a physical and mental test as well. Can I push on when it gets hard? We will see.'

This combined low efficacy possibly contributed to Nicky's anxiety and her disengagement from summiting, both mentally (thoughts of withdrawal) and behaviourally (reduction of effort and actual disengagement from the task), thus supporting earlier findings (Chroni et al, 2006). Other group members demonstrated stronger hardiness and negotiation-efficacy when experiencing altitude sickness and fatigue by believing in their coping- and self-regulatory efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Like other studies (Chroni et al, 2006) they increased their efforts, stopped negative thoughts and focused on the moment to negotiate these constraints and successfully summit.

As a participating ethnographer I also experienced altitude sickness, which prevented me from summiting Mera, therefore I could empathise with Nicky's disappointment. While climbing Mera I began to experience symptoms of high-altitude cerebral oedema (HACE) and was advised by the leader to descend. At base camp I began to feel much better, however, I had to decide whether to continue or to leave the expedition. Performing at the same level as other cultural members is paramount when doing this form of ethnography in performance-based sports such as mountaineering (Sands, 2002). I feared that if I could not acclimatise and summit Island Peak I would miss valuable insights about the group's summit experience. More crucially, they could refrain from sharing their summit experiences with me, because I would not be perceived as 'one of them' or fearing that they would heighten my disappointment in not summiting. Furthermore, if I could not acclimatise I would have to leave the expedition. Consequently, the financial and emotional costs of both the extensive preparation and participation in the expedition, and the potential impact of withdrawal on my research were weighing heavily on my mind. At that moment I felt very alone as a researcher. Yet, once I had reflected, my thoughts about the experience became more positive.

Due to the intensive and embodied nature of participant observation, Hume and Mulcock (2004) advise ethnographers to draw boundaries for themselves and create safety zones. However, this was difficult to do as we ate, walked and climbed together, and we shared tents. Being alone while the others were climbing gave me a rare opportunity to spend time by myself and to reflect on my experiences as an ethnographic researcher. By becoming 'one of them' I was able to truly understand the challenges of a mountaineering expedition. I realised how debilitating AMS could be and how immensely disappointing not summiting can make you feel. I appreciated how the long days of walking, the freezing nights, the poor food, not being able to wash and the constant feeling of being unwell can wear you down and make you want to give up. Additionally, I recognised how friendships develop in such intense environments and how health and safety are at the forefront of the group's mind, providing constant support for each other through verbal persuasion and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997). These reflections defined me as an active group member. I appreciated that being a participant ethnographer is not easy, as noted by O'Reilly (2005). Sometimes I was a mountaineer, a friend and a team member while other times I was a researcher, the person who had designed the study and who would write up my findings. Therefore, I was constantly positioning and repositioning myself (Frohlick and Harrison, 2008). Fortunately, the AMS passed, which increased my efficacy and I felt confident I could continue the expedition and remain a part of the group's lived experience. Mindful that AMS could occur at any time I continued to maintain my personal health by keeping hydrated and eating well, despite feeling acclimatised after successfully climbing the pass without any symptoms. This proved to be an effective negotiation strategy and I successfully summited Island Peak.

Fatigue

Fatigue was felt by everyone and it first manifested itself after summiting Mera. During a group discussion those that summited explained that the ascent was 'a real slog.' Peter

said that 'it took everything out of me to get up there.' Katherine explained that she was on her hands and knees when she reached the summit 'because I was just dead', and Ian noted that he was 'walking like a zombie' as he descended. Rest days were built into the itinerary to negotiate the effects of fatigue. However, these were often cancelled. Consequently, due to limited rest and recuperation opportunities throughout the expedition, they had little impact as a negotiation tool and they did not remove the effects of fatigue. This climaxed one day after an exceptionally challenging walk when many members stumbled with exhaustion and Katherine fainted. As a result, the group's negotiation-efficacy began to weaken, but withdrawing from the expedition was not an option. Recognising this, members responded by employing verbal persuasion to enhance our collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997), to encourage us to persist with our efforts and to respond to this constraint resiliently through positive self-talk to stop negative thoughts to negotiate the effects of fatigue. Like previous studies (Bandura, 1997; Chroni et al, 2006; Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell, 2007; White, 2008), our motivation and hardiness had a positive influence on our negotiation-efficacy and, except for one member, we successfully climbed Island Peak. For Ian, however, his negotiation efforts had little effect and he was unable to overcome his fatigue, which he attributed to a lack of appropriate food. Accordingly, Ian decided not to climb Island Peak.

Climbing Island Peak gave me real insights into the psychological and physical challenges of high-altitude mountaineering, and the strong hardiness and negotiation-efficacy required to overcome them. When I physically and mentally felt I could not take another step, Liz and Katherine encouraged me to dig deeper. They were also tired but showing hardiness and high negotiation-efficacy, they continued to climb, slowly taking one step at a time. I began to emulate their behaviour and through this vicarious experience, combined with verbal persuasion from the leader and these two members, I persisted. These sources of efficacy helped me to believe in myself and to adopt the negotiation strategies of positive self-talk, stopping negative thoughts and focusing on the moment. The sense of achievement in summiting and pushing myself further than I thought possible was overwhelming and it gave me a glimpse into why mountaineers find expeditions so addictive. Without the support of the leader and the other mountaineers to strengthen my efficacy I would not have overcome my self-doubts and I would not have summited.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model (Figure 1) illustrates the key findings which emerged from the fieldwork data and highlights the originality of this research. It demonstrates the interplay between self-efficacy, negotiation-efficacy and the personal constraint negotiation journey for led mountaineers. It is a fluid, holistic model which reveals the complexities of constraint negotiation for this group of tourists. It regards personal constraints as positive, integral elements of the mountaineering experience which, if absent before and during the expedition, would result in an unchallenging, risk-free non-adventure for participants. The journey is influenced by several factors including the personal

characteristics of the mountaineers, efficacy levels and sources of information. The model illustrates that high efficacy is more critical to successful performance in mountaineering compared with other more conventional holidays because tourists on the latter are not challenging themselves in outdoor environments. While focusing specifically on led mountaineers, it can also be applied to other activities, in both adventure and non-adventure settings.

Figure 1: Conceptual model: The influence of self-efficacy on the constraint negotiation process for mountaineer tourists (2-column fitting)
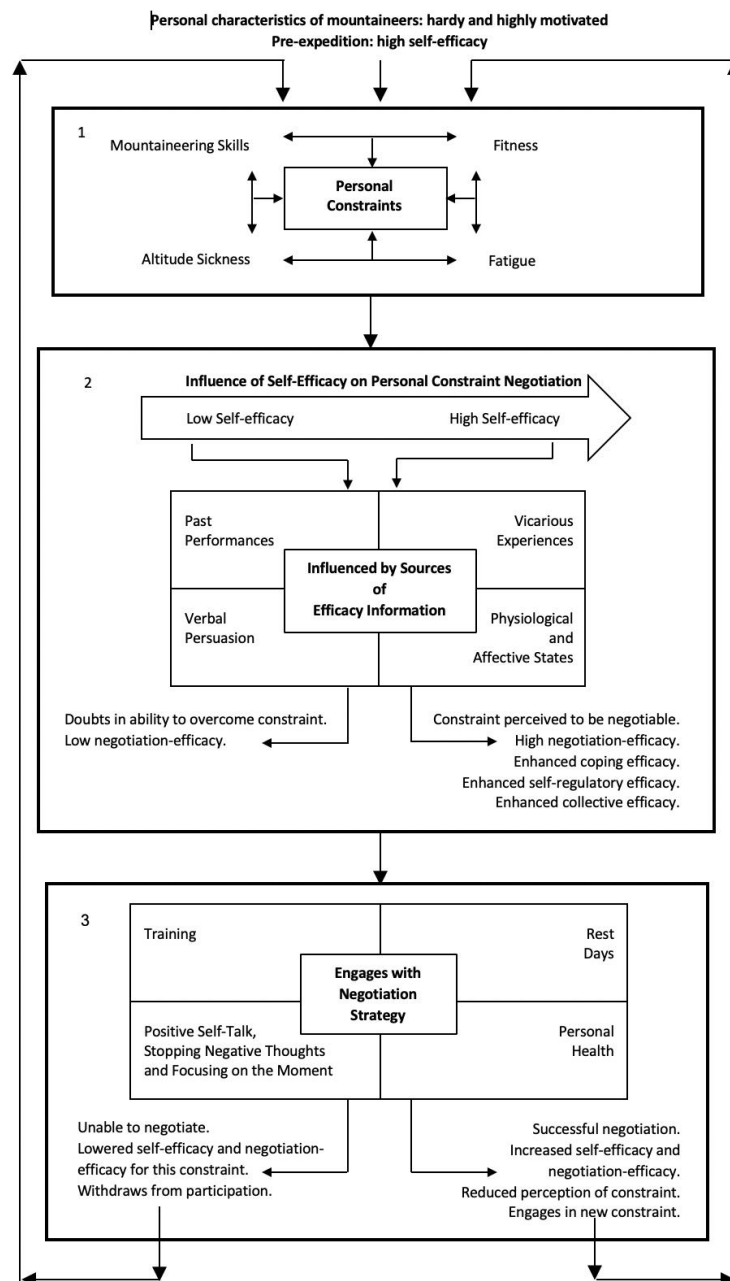
Although developing a conceptual model to illustrate ethnographic findings is different to the norm, we recognise that some researchers, including ethnographers, may not adopt a purely inductive approach. They may enter the field with preconceptions based on previous literature and theories (O'Reilly, 2007). Therefore, they may choose to adopt an interactive-inductive approach, and 'enter into an on-going simultaneous process of deduction and induction, or theory building, testing and rebuilding' (p.27). Taking the stance that analysis and data collection are linked allows for a more flexible, reflexive research design (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Consequently, it is hoped that this model will be a useful tool for others when conceptualising their own research within this area before entering the field. The model is comparable to other socio-psychological theories, such as flow, the adventure experience paradigm, goal-driven behaviour, social learning and cognitive dissonance. These explain people's behaviour in adventure settings where direct experience, risk taking, problem solving and dealing with uncertainty are present (Ewert and Garvey, 2007). While it is not within the scope of this paper to make this comparison, this would make a valuable contribution to adventure literature and aid our understanding of what happens during adventure experiences. It would also enhance practitioners' ability to motivate clients towards their goals.

The first part of the model (1) presents the four types of personal constraint. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, fatigue was experienced by everyone, yet, for some, it was also related to their lack of fitness or a side effect of AMS. Consequently, some mountaineers experienced numerous constraints simultaneously. The second part of the model (2) demonstrates the influence of self-efficacy on the mountaineers' perception that the constraint is negotiable. When faced with constraints, those with high self-efficacy, particularly if enhanced by the four sources of efficacy information, had high negotiation-efficacy. Most group members started the expedition with high self-efficacy and had done considerable training to prepare for the rigours they might face during the trip. Early in the expedition, skills development training facilitated efficacy-enhancing opportunities. Moreover, the use of verbal persuasion and positive feedback from the leader and other group members were particularly effective in strengthening self-efficacy and collective efficacy, resulting in successful constraint negotiation later in the expedition. The latter was contingent on group members' viewing the challenges faced throughout the expedition positively, being confident in their ability to cope with constraints, and dealing with these in a controlled way. Contrastingly, those who doubted their capabilities when faced with a constraint depended more on sources of efficacy information to enhance their self-efficacy and subsequently, their negotiation-efficacy. However, for some, these sources had limited effect and consequently they continued to doubt their ability to overcome the constraint, reflecting low negotiation-efficacy. Although participants did not specifically state this, the data does suggest that, for some, self-doubt in the ability to overcome constraints (low negotiation-efficacy) may have been amplified by a fear of failing the group. This is the case for several group members, who compared their performance to others (as a vicarious source of information) and subsequently felt less competent than others. In practical terms, if these constraints were experienced while climbing and the individual could

not negotiate them, the constraints could have prevented both the individual and the group members they were climbing with from continuing and summiting. This is because two or three group members are attached to each other with a rope. However, if constraints were experienced while trekking and the individual could not negotiate these, they only affected that person's ability to continue with the expedition. This is what happened to Ron. There is because there were opportunities along the trail to employ a local resident to guide individuals back to Lukla, where they could return to Kathmandu, while the group continued. In addition to the practical implications, some may have experienced feelings of incompetency compared to other group members, feeling that they were unsuited to this type of expedition, although no-one openly admitted this. Regardless of efficacy levels, each member demonstrated strong motivation and determination as they engaged with one or more negotiation strategies in attempts to overcome constraints. The negotiation strategies are presented in the third part of the model (3): training, rest days, personal health, and positive self-talk (stopping negative thoughts and focusing on the moment when climbing). Successful negotiation positively influenced self-efficacy and reduced the perception of constraints. Unsuccessful negotiation negatively affected self-efficacy, resulting in several mountaineers failing to summit and for one, it meant leaving the expedition early. Overall though, participants' perceived personal constraints generally diminished during the expedition as their self-efficacy developed and negotiation strategies worked, reflecting White's (2009) findings.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to understanding how efficacy and related factors influence the personal constraint negotiation process for led mountaineers. While previous work has mostly considered pre-activity constraints, often neglecting to consider if and how people overcome these (e.g. Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell, 2007), this study explores the constraint negotiation journey both before and during the adventure holiday. Furthermore, whereas existing research has predominantly focused on women (e.g. Doran et al, 2018; Fendt and Wilson, 2012; Wilson and Little, 2005;), this is a mixed gender study. The findings reveal four new types of personal constraint and negotiation strategy which have not been identified in previous studies. They show that high levels of efficacy, personal characteristics, motivation and hardiness are critical for successful personal constraint negotiation.

Adopting a phenomenology-based ethnographic approach facilitated more in-depth insights into the mountaineers' expedition experiences than a detached observer could gain. A small expedition party was beneficial in generating rich data and the first author immersed herself into the group, spending considerable time with the mountaineers. The dynamic tension of the lived experience encouraged the development of a rich reflexive narrative of the participants' cultural experience which accurately represents their cultural reality. She grappled with her roles as researcher-observer, expedition team member and friend to other group members, often switching frequently between the three. It was difficult to disengage and remain emotionally distant, and she

regularly found herself reassuring others and using verbal persuasion. No social group remains static and when one enters or leaves the field is arbitrary, as it provides a limited snapshot of a moment in time documented by the ethnographer (Frohlick and Harrison, 2008). Furthermore, different research strategies may produce different data and, perhaps, different conclusions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, we are mindful that another expedition with another group of mountaineers and a different research methodology could reveal an alternative experience and reality.

When analysing the data, the authors presupposed that all group members had high self-efficacy because of the expedition's challenging nature and the pre-expedition screening process, which required them to declare their previous mountaineering experience, ability and fitness level. What convinced us further was that they had to negotiate time off work and away from their families, as well as incurring a high financial cost for the trip. However, efficacy levels varied, and some doubted their fitness and mountaineering skills from the start. Low efficacy was most prominent amongst those who had not fully engaged with the pre-expedition training programme, although fortunately their performance did not hinder others' experiences. These variations could be why some members experienced more severe personal constraints than others. Likewise, gender might explain why two female group members experienced constraints more acutely than the others, reflecting previous studies (Doran et al, 2018; Fendt and Wilson, 2010) which have identified women's self-doubt in their physical ability and technical skills as key barriers to their participation. However, the other two females demonstrated high efficacy and fewer constraints. Therefore, we cannot conclusively confirm that gender influenced efficacy particularly given the small sample in this study.

Except for altitude sickness, the identified personal constraints might be applicable to other types of adventure activity participation, although further research needs to examine specific constraint negotiation journeys for particular activities (Nyaupane, Morais and Graefe, 2004). This study's findings have implications for commercial mountaineering and the wider adventure tourism industry. They can assist adventure organisations in appreciating the complexity of constraint negotiation, which can facilitate development of the soft skills and emotional intelligence of their guides. They can also help organisations to manage their clients' expectations and recognise when they need encouragement through verbal persuasion to enhance their efficacy. Guides may detect more easily low efficacy during activity participation and whether this reflects reduced motivation, weaknesses in ability or hardiness, or a lack of confidence. The findings may also be helpful to other types of tourism, for instance, those working within social tourism who want to understand how holiday experiences enhance efficacy for disadvantaged individuals. These findings may not apply to independent mountaineers or other types of adventure tourists, who differ as they manage their own experiences, which are sometimes unguided. Guides encourage mountaineers to feel safer because they are highly skilled and experienced, can anticipate and manage potential risks, and exert a degree of control over the entire mountaineering experience (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2014). Independent mountaineers on unguided expeditions are compelled to take on these roles therefore the strength of their efficacy may be more critical to their successful personal constraint negotiation.

While this study has helped to address a research gap, more work still needs to be done, particularly as adventure tourism experiences are enjoying strong growth. Investigations should explore other constraint types faced by mountaineer tourists, and the negotiation strategies they employ on expeditions. The roles of efficacy, hardiness, motivation and personal characteristics in constraint negotiation need further investigation given their importance to successful negotiation. Such traits are likely to manifest themselves in everyday life and improve participants' well-being, although further research is needed in this area. Additionally, research should ascertain the applicability of the study's findings to tourists on other types of adventure holiday. Further work should undertake comparative analyses of the constraint negotiation process for male and female adventure tourists. These studies should adopt a phenomenology-based ethnographic approach to gain rich insights into the constraint negotiation process for adventure tourists.

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