

Editorial

Emotions in Tourist Experiences: Advancing our conceptual, methodological and empirical understanding

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1. Introduction

The tourism industry has long been hailed as the ‘fun’ industry. Tourism is practiced for its hedonic benefits. We choose to spend discretionary disposable income on holidays and travel essentially for the anticipated pleasure that we will obtain. In that sense, the value proposition for tourism is significantly based on the emotions. This editorial addresses questions linked to the role of emotions in tourist experiences. The theorization of emotion has received much attention in the contemporary tourism literature and among destination marketers. Emotions, episodes of intense feelings associated with a specific situation or event (Cohen and Areni, 1991), play a key role in understanding tourist behavior. Studies have focused for example on positive emotional experiences associated with festivals, shopping, theme parks, holidays, heritage sites and adventure tourism among others, and the links between emotional responses and behavioural outcomes, such as satisfaction and customer loyalty.

At a practical level, tourist destinations around the world emphasize the positive emotional connections they seek to make between visitors and places. For example, Slovenia uses the slogan “I feel slovenia” to convey a sense of warmth, and a deep connection among potential tourists to the country. Other countries highlight the ‘surprising’ component of the tourist experience in their branding strategies. Notable successful country campaigns include “Amazing Thailand” and “Incredible India”, which have been built on associating a sense of positive surprise and delight with tourism visits. Other slogans highlighting positive emotional experiences include “It’s more fun in Philippines”, ‘Beautiful Bangladesh’ and ‘Brunei: abode of peace’. These examples further emphasize the importance attached to positive emotional responses associated with tourist experiences.

However, whilst much of what drives tourist behaviour is a search for pleasure, it is a much more complex picture requiring the need for more detailed and theoretically-driven research. In this respect the literature on tourist’s emotion has been significantly enriched in recent years. Tourist emotion research has drawn heavily on

and applied concepts and measures from the psychology literature. For example, a growing body of studies (e.g. Choi & Choi, 2019; Hosany, 2012; Jiang, 2019) apply cognitive appraisal theories (Roseman, Spindel and Jose, 1990) to understand the antecedents and consequences of emotions to tourist decisions. In terms of measurement, and despite criticisms (see Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), many studies have adapted self-report measures of emotions from psychology and these remain popular in tourism. Emotions influence various stages of the tourist experience (Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013). At the pre-travel stage, emotions play a fundamental role in activating tourist motivations and inputs in destination choice processes. During the trip, emotions can vary in intensity on a day-to-day basis. In addition, tourists' emotional reactions are fundamental in shaping post-travel evaluations such as satisfaction, destination attachment, perceived overall image and behavioral intentions.

Our goal for this special issue is to further expand and enrich the literature on the role of emotions in tourist experiences by soliciting conceptual and methodological contributions that both support but also challenge and develop our understanding of this important aspect of tourist behavior. We were delighted to receive a diverse range of submissions, which contribute an array of original approaches and insights. Our final collection of articles (n=8) helps us to better understand the role of emotions across various settings such as casino resorts, theme parks, leisure and senior travellers, brand advertising and brand communication, and visiting friends and relatives (VFR). We were impressed to see that these papers advance conceptual and methodological approaches, in addition to their empirical contributions. The papers address measurement issues as well as identifying antecedents and outcomes of tourist emotional experiences in a range of novel contexts.

2. The articles in this special issue

Whilst most previous research on tourist emotions has focused on positive feelings, such as joy, love and positive surprise, negative emotions are also possible. Lai, Yang & Hitchcock (2019) provide important insights into the basic, excitement, and performance emotions that influence tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with destination casino resorts. Through the development of a measurement scale consisting of both positive and negative emotions, the overall satisfaction of gaming and non-gaming tourists was determined, contributing to our understanding on how to combine three-factor theory with emotion theory. Arguing that most of the negative emotions generated from gaming will not result in tourist dissatisfaction with destination casino resorts, the authors point us towards further investigations into the effects of negative emotions towards destinations in considering the three-factor theory.

Emotions are complex feeling states that result in psychological and physical changes that influence our behaviour. Our emotions change in response to stimuli and yet most research takes a simple snapshot of these states and reactions at a particular point in time. Stepping beyond the traditional static, cross-sectional approach used

to measure emotions. Lin & Nawijn's (2019) work seeks to advance our understanding of how motivations are related to tourists' emotions, in a longitudinal study for the first time in tourism research on this subject. Questioning leisure travelers in the Netherlands over a nine-month period, results indicate that motivation does not have a significant impact on tourists' emotions over a relatively long period of time. Determining that travel motivations, or a cluster of travel motivations, do not seem to have significant within-subject or between-subject impacts on tourists' emotions reaffirms the complex relationships between tourists' travel motivation and emotions, providing important managerial implications for destination marketers to consider.

Emotions can also be recalled and associated with particular events in the memory. Since holidays and travel are often intense experiences that linger in the memory, it is important to look beyond the immediate, visceral emotional state to advance our understanding of the role emotions play in future decision making. Akgün, Senturk, Keskin & Onal (2019) provide important empirical insights into the relationships between nostalgic emotions, destination image and tourist behavior within the particular destination context of Istanbul. Two studies are utilized to help shift debates into an understanding of the importance of post-visit experience on destination image. In the first study, the cognitive image of Istanbul was found to be a multi-dimensional construct composed of attractions, infrastructure, atmosphere, and value variables. In the second study, nostalgic emotion is found to positively relate to affective destination image, and to every component of the cognitive destination image of Istanbul. Conclusions indicate that destination image may partially mediate the relationship between nostalgic emotion and intention to revisit and recommend.

There is a greater need for cross-fertilization of theories and approaches to advance our understanding of the affective relationships between places and people, specifically visitors. Cabanas's (2019) paper seeks to better understand the interplay between emotions and space applying theory of sociology and the production and consumption of space, and experience, to experiences at theme parks. It applies symbolic interactionism to a critical literature review of research on experiences of theme parks, such as atmosphere design, experience control, and visitors' engagement and in so doing highlights the need for allowing greater agency amongst visitors to develop their own emotional narratives of their experiences of these experiences settings, which can be overly scripted and staged. Visitor's experiences can be explored from a deeper qualitative perspective, such as symbolic interactionism to draw out meaning-making processes, the situated and mixed emotional register of experience that takes place within theme park spaces, and that goes beyond simple evaluation of satisfaction and repeat behaviors. These novel approaches can add real value to the design of emotional experiences in a range of visitor settings.

Emotions form an important consideration in how destinations position and market themselves. For Lalicic, Huertas, Moreno & Jabreel (2019), understanding the emotional brand communication of 10 of the most popular DMOs in Europe

according to TripAdvisor (2017) was a key objective. Through an analysis of user responses across Facebook and Twitter, this study identifies a matrix of successful and promising values that DMOs should integrate into their social media communication strategies regarding their destination brands. It visualizes a set of values that DMOs should either not include or try to avoid when aiming to successfully engage with their users. It identifies differences between the two social media platforms, providing DMOs with guidelines on how to effectively communicate their brands using specific emotional brand values on social media. In a related paper, Tercia, Teichert and Soehadi (2019) apply a generic experience economy framework to better understand advertisements in evoking emotions and communicating specific experience dimensions. Travel experiences are differentiated between passive and active participation, as well as between those with immersion and absorption experiences. Findings suggest that travelers' emotional response to advertisements has a partially mediating effect on their effectiveness, dependent in part on the specific type of envisioned travel experience.

Finally, two papers examine emotions within specific consumer contexts. Ramer, Zorotovich, Roberson, Flanigan and Gao's (2019) study looks at emotions within a specific type of tourism experience, linking together two relatively understudied areas in travel research: the intersections between Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and emotional experiences in the travel context. It does this by questioning the effects of pre-existing family dynamics on the emotional experiences of emerging adults traveling to visit families during the fall break. Findings uncover a significant impact of family dynamics on emotions during VFR trips, with positive emotions following a linear decline during the travel period, and negative emotions following a pattern consistent with the Holiday Happiness Curve. Secondly, Pestana, Parreira & Moutinho's (2019) work provides us with important insights into what motivates the senior tourism market, distinguishing between younger and older seniors. A model explaining the mediation role played by satisfaction in the relationship between motivation, emotion, and behavioural intentions is developed and tested through the application of structural equation modelling. Satisfaction is found to mediate the relationship between motivations and emotions, and behavioural intentions, simultaneously strengthening the positive association between push and pull motivations. Previous experience has a moderating effect. Managerial implications include questioning the usefulness of the model developed in different geographical settings.

3. Concluding Remarks

Emotions are ubiquitous in tourist experiences and the papers in this special issue offer novel insights that advance this field of research. Despite much progress, several methodological-theoretical design considerations remain. For example, how best to measure emotions in tourism? A limited number of emerging studies have moved away from self-reports and embrace novel approaches such as Corpus Linguistics (Rahmani, Gnoth & Mather, 2019) to extract and analyze tourists' emotional experiences. Still, additional research is needed to, for example, directly compare verbal, non-verbal and indirect qualitative emotion measures. In addition,

with some exception, tourism research predominantly focuses on positive emotional experiences. Recent evidence however suggests, in non-hedonic contexts, tourists purposely seek negative emotions (Knobloch, Robertson and Aitken, 2017; Nawijn & Biran, 2019). Negative emotions can lead to positive outcomes such as happiness (Nawijn & Biran, 2019) and ethical choice formation (Malone, McCabe & Smith, 2014). More research is needed to expand our understanding of tourists' negative emotional experiences in a post Covid-19 era. At the theoretical level, little is known about the interplay and hierarchy of cognitions and emotions in tourist behaviour models. Tourism researchers are encouraged to develop and test competing models. Emotion can be either an independent variable or a mediator between cognitions and outcome variables such as intention to recommend and perceived image evaluation.

We hope that articles in this special issue will encourage tourism scholars move this field of research forward. We would like to express our appreciation to Professors Alan Fyall, Brian Garrod and Youcheng Wang for the opportunity to guest edit this special issue in *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*. Last but not the least, we would like to thank the reviewers for providing constructive feedback during the review process. The authors and special issue guest editors appreciate their efforts for providing timely reviews.

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