Multidimensionality of emotions in tourism studies. An approach from **psychological theories**¹

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Abstract | Within tourism, the marketing studies seek to explain the tourist behavior and one of the most explored variables has been the emotion. The evaluation of emotions is an element of multidisciplinary interest applied to different areas of research. Starting from the study of the psychological models and theories applied to tourism marketing as a theoretical support, the objective of this work is to focus the definition and possible conceptualization of emotions in the study of typical marketing variables such as satisfaction and behavior. The results show the need to include a psychological approach to the theoretical framework of the study of emotions in tourism, since it helps to conceptualize and foresee reactions, to design new theoretical models and to identify innovative inputs for experimentation.

Keywords | Tourism management, tourism marketing, psychological theories, experiences, emotion

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1. Introduction

The study of tourism has a multidisciplinary nature that involves diverse sciences for specific investigations. The study of tourism has been closely linked to other social sciences such as geography or history. If the object of study is focused on consumer/tourist behavior, the contributions of greatest interest come from sciences such as sociology, psychology or neurology.

Since the 1970s, psychology and the study of emotions has been a recurring topic in the academic body of marketing research (Ratchford, 2020). In addition, the foundation of the economy of experience by Pine & Gilmore (1998) moved a step forward in the study of service industry, such as tourism, being necessary an analysis of variables underlying the participation and immersion of the consumer in these services (de Almeida, 2007).

Currently, the advancement of measurement technologies and new academic proposals show an incipient interest in understanding consumer behavior with experimental methodologies typical of neurology or psychophysiology (Araújo et al., 2017; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2014). The application of the study of emotions in different fields has defined models and theoretical basis of science such as psychology (Vila, 1996).

This theoretical work aims to cover the study of psychological contributions applied in the field of tourism marketing through the analysis of the different variables and concepts used in scientific production. This work detects theories, models and scales typically used in psychology and referred in high quality academic works for the study of emotions.

2. Methods and objectives

This work is a descriptive study of the use of psychological theories and models applied to the field of tourism marketing. An analysis of the state-of-the-art in the study of emotions in tourism marketing has been carried out by compiling the most relevant academic production. The Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) databases are used with keyword combinations such as emotion*, touris*, psycholog* or experien*. The results of this search and the setting of criteria, focused on the publication of these articles in impact journals in the field of marketing, tourism and even psychology, consolidates a theoretical base of more than 40 multidimensional studies.

In addition, a theoretical study of some terms traditionally used in psychology is carried out, relying on informative books and manuals for a better understanding of the use of certain variables and the construction of specific models.

The main objective of the study is the analysis of the applicability of different psychological theories in tourism marketing for the evaluation of emotions.

To achieve this goal, a series of specific objectives are set: i) to review the multidimensional scientific production of tourism marketing and psychology in the field of emotions, ii) to examine the theories, models and scales of psychological sciences adapted and applied in tourism marketing research on emotions.

3. Main results and contributions

The basis of the study of emotions is set in the cognitive or affective approach (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Rivera et al., 2019; Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Skavronskaya et al., 2017). Damasio (1995) argues that the study of emotions as a process of physical-chemical changes must be differentiated from the study of feelings as a cognitive process.

Several authors refer to a classification of emotions according to their nature and their valence, a very important differentiation according to the research objectives that are set.

It is possible to differentiate between the primary or specific emotions, characterized by being involuntary and indivisible responses and the secondary or discrete emotions, characterized by being the result of the primary emotions as learned responses (Damasio, 1995; Hadinejad et al., 2019; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2014).

In addition, emotions can be studied in relation to their valence divided into positive or negative emotions (Hosany et al., 2017; Jordan et al., 2019; Kreibig, 2010; Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Su et al., 2014). There is a branch of psychology, called positive psychology that focuses on the study of the characteristics and qualities of the human being from a positive approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). In tourism marketing, few authors have studied the consumer behavior from negative perspectives (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). Instead, most publications focus on the study of positive emotions (joy, love, positive surprise, fun, nostalgia) resulting from measurement scales focused on positive psychology (Table 1) (Filep & Laing, 2018; Vada et al., 2019, 2020). The study of positive psychology is related to the affective approach of the emotional analysis, being the object of study the result of the emotions. That is why other authors propose a cognitive approach, more focused on the process that causes these emotions (Skavronskaya et al., 2017).

Table 1 | Measurement scales for positive and negative

Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)	
Differential Emotions Scale (mDes)	
Destination Emotion Scale (DES)	
Consumption Emotion Scale (CES)	
Festival Consumption Emotion (FCE)	
Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW)	
Consumption Emotion Set (CES)	
Plutchik Based Model	

Source: Own Elaboration adapted from Hosany et al., 2015; Lee & Kyle, 2012; Plutchik, 1980; Richins, 1997; Sacharin et al., 2012.

Some academic papers make a review of different psychological theories to focus the object of study prior to outline the model of analysis (Filep & Laing, 2018; Li et al., 2015; Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Wai Lai et al., 2020). This conceptualization is necessary since the study of emotions uses technical terms, typically used in psychological and psychophysiological sciences, which must be described and contextualized.

There is a series of psychological theories fo-

cused on tourism. This is the case of the Stendhal Syndrome proposed by Magherini in 1990 related to the disproportionate emotional and sensory reaction of the tourist to great artistic resources associated with a destination (Guerrero et al., 2010). Table 2 shows the different psychological theories that are developed for the study in the field of tourism marketing in order to evaluate different variables.

Objective of the study	Psychological theory
Behavioural studies	Elaboration Likehood Model
	PAD Dimensional Model
	Integrated Behavioral Model
	Stimulus-Organism-Response Model
	Value-Expectancy Theory
Satisfaction studies	Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm
	Travel Career Ladder
	Cognitive-Affective Model
	Self-Determination Theory
Characterization of emotional episodes	Component Process Model
	Somatic Markers Hypothesis
	Appraisal Theory

Table 2 | Psychological theories applied in tourism marketing studies

Source: Own Elaboration

1. Basic psychological theories for the study of emotions

The Stimulus-Organism-Response-Model (SOR) by Mehrabian & Russel (1974) conceptualizes emotional states (emotions) as the result of spatial stimuli that directly affect the behaviour and responses by intensity of visits (Lee, 2014; Yeh et al., 2017).

For the measurement and description of these emotional states, Russell & Mehrabian in 1974 also proposed the PAD Dimensional Model, one of the main theory of reference in the field of marketing for the study of emotions (Lee, 2014).

This theory differentiates three interconnected variables: Pleasure that measures the degree of enjoyable environment; Arousal that estimates the absence or presence of energy in front of a situation; Dominance that refers to the control one has over the situation.

This model has had a large number of proposals in the academic literature (Hadinejad et al., 2019; Hsieh et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2017; Li et al., 2015).

One of the most relevant psychological theories for the study of emotions is the Damasio's Somatic Markers Hypothesis (MS) (1995), defining a decision-making flow is defined in which secondary emotions, after past events, help the reasoning of feelings for decision-making, being somatic markers (positive or negative) in charge of evaluating the situation based on past events

to specify the final evaluation (Damasio, 1995). The somatic response of emotions had also been studied in the James-Lange Theory (1884) that analyzes the emotional action in the autonomic nervous system and the somatic nervous system (Vila, 1996).

As a basis for studying emotions, the Cognitive-Affective Model, defined by Oliver (1980), must be examined. It enunciates a model for the evaluation of the process of consumption and satisfaction.

Two elements are inquired: cognitive evaluations by studying the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations and positive or negative emotional evaluations. Both affect satisfaction and the consumption process (Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008).

In accordance with this theory, Bagozzi (1999) raises the Appraisal (Cognitive) Theory that studies the antecedents of emotions. The evaluation of the excitement prior to the emotion is carried out based on a comparison between the real state and the desired state (expectations, motivations, preferences, among others). The results are emotions, positive or negative that may lead to the achievement or change of attitude.

In 1986, Petty and Cacioppo established the Elaboration Likehood Model (ELM) that characterizes the consumer according to their attitudes towards messages and persuasion. It differentiates two processing routes: the central, argumentative and reasoned route that shows the motivation and good understanding of the consumer, and the peripheral route, with heuristic nature, characterizes a less motivated and trained audience. Each of these routes will produce different attitudinal changes in the short term (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Coghlan & Carter, 2020; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015).

Other authors, such as Lajante and Lux (2020) develop the Component Process Model (CPM) where emotional episodes are evaluated, defined as continuous changes in the physiological response, from the analysis of their characteristics. This model studies four characteristics of emotional episodes: relevance, implication, coping and normative significance (Lajante & Lux, 2020).

2. Motivational psychological theories

The Travel Career Ladder (TCL) is a model enunciated by Pearce in 1991 and lather integrated by Ryan in 1998. It is a pyramid of hierarchical steps that affect the behavior of tourists through internal and external variables. These links, from the base to the top, refer to: relaxation, simulation, relationship, self-esteem / development and fulfillment (Pearce & Packer, 2013; Ryan, 1998).

Focused on pyramidal models of motivation based on the Maslow's model, two theories have been developed: the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Reversal Theory (RT).

The SDT, enunciated by Deci & Ryan in 2000, focused on the analysis of satisfaction depending on the performance of consumers. They can act on their deepest motivations or under duress and pressure. The satisfied needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) lead to well-being and selfmotivation (Huang et al., 2019; Slak Valek & Fotiadis, 2019).

RT was enunciated in 1982 by Apter who analyzed the information on the dynamic motivational and emotional states related to an experience. There are 4 domains with bipolar states: Meansends (outcome-oriented vs. process-oriented), Rules (rule-abiding vs. rebellious), Transactions (domination-oriented vs. Relationship-oriented) and Relationship (self-focused vs. other-focused) (Filep & Laing, 2018; Houge & Kerr, 2013, 2016).

For the study of individual motivational factors prior to behavior, Fishbein in 1967 enunciated the Integrated Behavioral Model formed, in turn, by variables from two theories: the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TRA refers to the attitude measured in beliefs and evaluation of behaviors (behavioral beliefs and evaluation of behavioral) and normative social perceptions (subjective norm) measured according to the motivations and normative beliefs. The TRB considers the perceived control as the main factor over the behavior performance through the control beliefs and perceived power. The integrated model includes these three variables that lead to intention of behavior and behavior (Pearce & Packer, 2013).

3. Expectation-focused psychological theories

The Value-Expectancy Theory, applied in various fields of research, equates expectations with the probability that a profit (positive or negative) will be created with an action. This benefit will be the cause of decision-making and consumer behavior (Crosby et al., 2013; Liao & Chuang, 2019).

The Cognitive-Affective Model (1989) already made reference to expectations through the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm, widely used in scientific production in the tourism field. This concept focuses on the subjects' judgment and the comparison with their expectations. The confirmation of expectations occurs when they are fulfilled; instead the disconfirmation results from the perception of a difference with the consumer's expectations. This disconfirmation can be positive (positive disconfirmation) if the actual act improves expectations, or negative (negative disconfirmation) if the actual act is worse than expectations (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008).

A cognitive theory arises to explain the satisfaction that includes this disconfirmation and its study. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) shows three variables that lead to satisfaction as a marketing result: Expectations, such as actions in anticipation of action, Perceived Performance and Disconfirmation of Beliefs (Oliver, 1980).

Other psychological theories that state models about expectations and disconfirmation are the Assimilation Theory (1961) and the Contrast Theory (1957) but they have been less used in tourism studies (Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008).

4. Research limitations and conclusions

A certain number of limitations were identified in the study. The analysis of psychological theories and models is complex due to the use of variables with different conceptualisations in each research field.

In the psychological sciences, the role of emotions has been explored from different perspectives. The theoretical models have been applied in specific research fields as education or persuasion. For this reason, the applications of these psychological models in tourism marketing imply an adaptation of different modelling process, so the terms must be adapted to the specific research line of tourism marketing. This leads to the definition or redefinition of new variables and to the use of terms as satisfaction, well-being and happiness in marketing. The researcher is the responsible for defining and conceptualising these variable based on the most appropriate psychological theory to be applied in each study.

The specific study of psychophysiology is also proposed as another relevant transversal science for the study of emotions in tourism marketing.

In order to study the emotion variable, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of this concept in different fields. Tourism marketing area includes this term from the 1970s onwards, but scientific production around this variable has changed over the years, partly due to technological improvements applicable to the tourism field.

The investigation of emotion needs to cover different study fields such as psychology, psychophysiology, neurology or philosophy, among others. For a better understanding and use of this variable when making theoretical models, it is necessary to know its conceptualization in different areas.

In psychology, emotion has been studied since the 1970s as a physical reaction to different stimuli. That is why the first challenge arises for the development of this research is to identify the differences between emotions and feelings, traditionally assessed in tourism marketing by means of traditional tools such as questionnaires.

Within the specific study of emotions, three branches of study are proposed from psychology: the causes, the emotion itself and the consequences. Each one of these branches of study develops a series of variables, characteristics and elements to which applicability in marketing must be sought in order to study the experiences.

It is necessary to adapt these purely theoretical models to the realities presented by the tourism sector and the particularities of its services.

The analysis of emotions must be linked to the motivations and previous judgements and expectancies of the consumer, but it can also be focused on the changes that these emotions cause in tourist behaviour.

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