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Tourists' Emotional Experiences with an Event and Their Consequences

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ABSTRACT
Successful tourism marketing requires assessing a tourist’s satisfaction because this satisfaction will influence their destination choices, products/services consumption, behavioral intentions, and quality of life (QOL) to return to the same destinations or events. This study attempts to develop a conceptual framework, based on the Consumption Emotion Set (CES), to identify relationships among consumption emotions, overall tourists’ satisfaction, perceived QOL, and loyalty towards a specific event. The theoretical framework also identifies important emotional factors affecting tourists’ overall satisfaction as well as loyalty and perceived QOL. Furthermore, implications for tourism/destination marketers or event/festival planners and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key Words: Consumption emotions, tourists’ quality of life, tourists’ satisfaction, tourists’ loyalty.

INTRODUCTION
A tourist’s experience is an important factor in tourism marketing. Since service is intangible, experiences play a critical role in influencing an individual’s attitudes. Creating memorable experiences is essential not only to retain repeat customers but also to attract new customers (Yelkur, 2000). Experience marketing is becoming a core marketing strategy to satisfy tourists’ experiential needs when they consume tourism offerings. Generally, experiential marketing concentrates on the creation of customers’ memorable experiences, such as experiences at the moment-of-truth (Schmitt, 1999). According to Williams (2006), hospitality products can always be experiential because customers have experiences and perceive certain emotions from staying at a hotel’s property, dining in a restaurant, or traveling to a certain destination or event. Customers often obtain experiential values, based upon their experiences that occurred when they interact with service providers. These experiential values, in turn, influence customer satisfaction (Ennew and Binks, 1999). For example, when tourists travel to a certain destination or participate in a certain event, their needs and consumptions are engaged with experiences, which influence their overall satisfaction (Richards, 2001).

Successful tourism marketing requires assessment of a tourist’s satisfaction because this satisfaction will influence their destination choices, products/services consumption during their trip, and behavioral intentions to return to the same destinations, events, or festivals (Wong and Law, 2003). Tourism marketing has focused on promoting a certain destination or event, instead of incorporating tourists into a marketing process. Nowadays, tourists play more active roles in the marketing process; thus, destination marketers need to provide tourists with information they need and a memorable experience more people engage in (King, 2002). Destination marketers can measure tourists’ satisfaction by assessing how well a destination responds to tourists’ needs (Meng, Tepanoon, and Uysal, 2008). Tourist satisfaction can be measured by evaluating relationships between pre-perception of a destination (e.g., perceived destination image) and perceived destination experiences (Chon, 1989) or relationships among satisfaction with pre-trip services, services at the destination, and transit route services (Neal and Gursoy, 2008).

Based upon the results of tourists’ satisfaction, destination marketers can modify their marketing strategies by either improving the quality of products and/or services, or maintaining products and/or services that influence positive effects on tourists (Meng et al. 2008). Previous research determined a positive relationship between customer satisfaction with travel and tourism services, and the subjective quality of life (QOL) of the traveler (Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal, 1999), as well as customer loyalty (Oliver, 1997). When travelers are satisfied with their experiences, the travelers’ QOL tends to be enhanced. In addition, tourists’ satisfaction leads to tourists’ loyalty on

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certain destinations or events. Thus, it is essential to determine the consequences of tourists’ overall satisfaction—perceived QOL and tourists’ loyalty toward tourism destinations.

**Purpose of the Study**

Numerous studies have addressed tourist satisfaction related to either destination attributes or motivations (Meng et al. 2008; Yoon and Uysal, 2005) or the relationship between their emotional experiences and their satisfaction with tourism offerings at the destination, including accommodations and restaurants (Han and Back, 2007). However, little research has been documented the relationship among tourists’ consumption emotions, their overall satisfaction, and consequences of their satisfaction, which would be tourists’ perceived QOL and loyalty toward tourism offerings. Thus, this study seeks to determine the applicability of the Consumption Emotion Set (CES), replicating the study by Richins (1997), to the tourism industry, specifically, an event. In addition, this study will discover the dimensions of consumption emotions in the tourism industry and identify important emotional factors that affect tourists’ overall satisfaction with an event. Furthermore, this study will determine the consequences of tourists’ overall satisfaction, which are tourists’ loyalty (e.g., positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and behavior intentions) and tourists’ perceived QOL (e.g., life in general, leisure experience, and non-leisure experience).

**Research Questions**

Tourists’ emotions during their trip or events are usually from the general atmosphere of destinations, other tourists, or impressive attractions. Identifying consumption emotions is a critical issue to both tourism practitioners and academic researchers in the sense that consumption emotion is a key predictor of tourists’ satisfaction, followed by tourists’ loyalty, and the perceived QOL of tourists. Based on the literature review, this study will address the following research questions:

1. Is CES applicable in the tourism industry?
2. What are the dimensions of consumption emotions in the tourism industry?
3. What is the relationship between consumption emotion factors and tourists’ (dis)satisfaction with the event?
4. What is the relationship between tourists’ overall satisfaction with the event and the perceived quality of life?
5. What is the relationship between tourists’ overall satisfaction with the event and tourists’ loyalty?

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Studies on Consumption Emotions**

Emotion refers to a complex set of interactions leading to emotional experiences, such as pleasure and happiness (Dubé and Menon, 2000). For example, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) developed the pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) scale to assess consumers’ emotional responses influenced by the external environment stimuli, such as ambience or architectural layout. This scale was more applicable to assess consumers’ responses to the physical environment of retail stores, such as music, scent, or light effects, while customers are shopping. Consumption emotions occur when consumers have emotional responses, such as happiness or anger, while experiencing products and services. Consumption emotions were defined as the affective response to one’s perceptions of a series of attributes that composes a product or service performance (Dubé and Menon 2000:288). Izard (1997) examined emotions by measuring facial muscle responses. Izard’s Differential Emotions Scale (DES) measured ten emotions—interest, enjoyment, surprise, distress, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and guilt. Even though Izard’s DES measures have been one of the most popular consumption emotion measures, several researchers (i.e., Mano & Oliver, 1993) determined that Izard’s measures focused more on negative emotions, which lack in positive emotions in his measurement.

Richins (1997) determined a set of emotion descriptors, which represents frequently-used experiences, especially when people purchase a product or service. Richins defined rules to assess consumption emotions. The measurement should 1) cover the range of emotions most frequently experienced in a wide range of consumption situations, with an acceptable level of reliability; 2) be brief for use in surveys or field studies; and 3) include words familiar and easy to understand by consumers (Richins 1997:129). Based on the six empirical studies (i.e. an initial exploratory study for study 1, identifying similar meanings emotion descriptors for study 2 and 3, reducing the number of emotion descriptor items for study 4, comparing the efficacy of the CES with other measures for study 5, and examining predictive validity of the CES for study 6), Richins determined the CES as one of the most useful measures, identifying consumers’ most frequently experienced emotions in consumption situations. It is important to understand consumption emotions because there is a positive relationship between consumption emotions and
customers’ satisfaction, resulting in positive word-of-mouth, positive attitudes, and behavioral intentions to repeat the purchase (Oliver, 1980).

Emotional responses play important roles in influencing consumers’ satisfaction and post-consumption behaviors (Mano and Oliver, 1993). Many researchers identified emotions may be one of the most important components affecting satisfaction (Dubé and Menon, 2000). In addition, Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999) identified emotions might influence decision-making. Their study determined that positive emotions were related to the customers’ return intentions towards a certain activity or event. Bigné and Andreu (2004) applied this relationship (e.g., satisfaction and post-consumption behaviors) to the tourism industry by identifying effects of tourists’ emotions on their satisfaction and loyalty in theme parks and museums in Spain. In addition, Chang (2008) identified Taiwanese tourists’ satisfaction in a guided package tour, investigating the relationships among three consumption behaviors—emotion, equity, and attribution—and tourists’ satisfaction.

**Satisfaction as an Important Indicator of Tourists’ Emotions**

Many hospitality organizations consider customer satisfaction an essential goal under the highly competitive market share. According to Kotler (1999), satisfying customers’ needs and desires has been the only constant standard in the hospitality industry. In addition, customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty and an organization’s profitability (Barsky and Nash, 2003). Satisfaction can be viewed as four different perspectives (Oliver, 1997). The first perspective is from the consumer’s vantage point, when satisfaction occurs after purchasing or consumption of a product. The second perspective is a company’s viewpoint. Companies view a customer’s satisfaction imperative because satisfied customers repeat business and maintain long-term relationships, resulting in profitability. Third, from the industry’s perspective, many countries, such as Sweden, Germany, and the United States, supervise industry satisfaction for regulatory policy. Fourth, from the societal perspective, a government aims to improve outcomes of its people’s lives favorably and life satisfaction. Based on these four different perspectives of satisfaction, Oliver (1997:14) defined satisfaction as follows:

Satisfaction is the consumer’s fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service itself provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment; including levels of under- or over-fulfillment.

Since satisfaction is an important indicator to measure customers’ consumption emotions, researchers (i.e., Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1993) attempted to identify the relationship between consumption emotions and satisfaction. Westbrook (1987) investigated the effects of positive and negative consumption emotions on satisfaction and other consequences of satisfaction, such as positive word-of-mouth or complaints. The results of his study determined a strong relationship among positive (negative) emotions, customer satisfaction (dissatisfaction), and other consequences of satisfaction. In addition, Oliver (1993) identified a significant relationship between consumption emotions and consumer satisfaction. His study included cognitive as well as affective factors when measuring customer satisfaction. These studies determined positive consumption emotions increased satisfaction. On the other hand, negative consumption emotions decreased satisfaction (Oliver, 1993; Westbrook, 1987). Dubé and Menon (2000) also examined the relationship between various aspects of emotions and satisfaction, based on the two-dimensional views of the relationship between consumption emotions and customer satisfaction. Therefore, identifying consumption emotions with various dimensions is critical to assess the level of customers’ satisfaction.

In the hospitality industry, customer satisfaction is of great importance to determine the survival and future of any tourism-related products and services (Gursoy, McCleary, and Lespiro, 2007) and to predict tourists’ behavior (Kozak, 2001). Research on customer satisfaction has assessed satisfaction, employing one of expectations and disconfirmation, equity, norm, and perceived overall performance models (Oliver, 1980; Oliver and Swan, 1989). The expectation-disconfirmation model explained that consumers tended to make expectations about a product before they purchased or used it (Oliver, 1980). Consumers compare between the actual products and their expectations after using the product. If the actual product performs better than consumers’ expectations, consumers tend to have a positive disconfirmation. As a consequence of a positive disconfirmation, consumers are satisfied; thus, they tend to purchase the same product. Adopting equity theory, Oliver and Swan (1989) investigated consumer satisfaction as a result of the relationship between time and money spent, and the results they experience. For example, if an event’s attendees perceive they obtain valuable and unique experiences compared to the efforts and costs they spent to attend the event, they tend to perceive event experiences as satisfactory.

Latour and Peat (1979) examined customer satisfaction by applying the norm theory. This theory approached satisfaction the same as the expectation-disconfirmation model. In this theory, norms served as a standard
point when consumers assess the product. Consumers tend to be satisfied when these norms are confirmed with the product. For example, Chon (1989) identified tourist satisfaction by comparing between tourists’ previous expectations of the destination and their actual experiences, such as what they see, feel, and achieve during their trip. Yoon and Uysal (2005) determined that tourists tended to compare their experiences at the destination with other alternative destinations or previously visited destinations. Tourists were inclined to rely on past experiences to develop a norm, that influences their satisfaction on the present destination or experiences. The tourism experience, a multifaceted and mixed experience, takes place in phases, such as pre-trip experiences, at the destination, and return trip services (Neal and Gursory, 2008). Thus, the following proposition is proposed:

**Proposition 1:** There will be a positive interrelationship between tourists’ emotional factors and their perceived satisfaction.

**Quality of Life (QOL)**

Customers’ travel experiences are believed to affect the individual tourist’s overall QOL through their satisfaction with these experiences (Diener and Suh, 1997; Sirgy, 2002). QOL includes an individual’s well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction. When an individual evaluates his/her life, QOL can be determined (Ferrans, 1990). Research in QOL is generally divided into two categories—objective or subjective research (Neal, Uysal, and Sirgy, 2007). Objective QOL studies measure social indicators (Phillips, 2006), while subjective QOL studies assess individuals’ perceived satisfaction, based on experiences in their lives (Diener and Suh, 1997). Examples of objective QOL studies include income level or crime rate research. However, Sirgy (2002:10) defined subjective QOL as follows:

Subjective well being is an enduring affective state that is made of a composite of three components: actual experience of happiness or cumulative positive effect in salient life domains, actual experience of depressions or cumulative negative effect in salient life domains, and evaluations of one’s overall life or evaluations or salient life domains.

Subjective QOL is usually studied in tourism marketing, based on the bottom-up theory. Bottom-up theory explains satisfaction with four major areas in life, such as leisure, work, health, and family life, can determine an individual’s overall life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Previous QOL research in the tourism industry determined travel and tourism services have many direct and indirect advantages for tourists (Diener 1984; Sirgy, 2002). These benefits include happiness, improved health conditions, increased self-esteem, and increased overall life satisfaction. In addition, Jeffers and Dobos (1993) determined the relationship between QOL and leisure satisfaction of travelers. Neal et al. (1999) also examined the positive relationship between tourists’ satisfaction with tourism services and subjective QOL of the tourists. Thus, the following proposition is considered:

**Proposition 2:** There will be a positive relationship between overall tourists’ satisfaction and the perceived quality of life.

**Tourists’ Loyalty**

Many researchers confirmed a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Colgate and Stewart, 1998; Taylor and Baker, 1994). Loyalty occurs when a customer is deeply committed to a certain product or service (Oliver, 1997). As a loyal customer to a certain product or service, he/she tends to repurchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service repeatedly in the future as well as refer the product or service through positive word-of-mouth (Oliver, 1997). In addition, loyal customers tend to purchase more products and services than non-loyal customers, and stick to their preferred product or services even in highly competitive markets (Oliver, 1997). Customer loyalty has two dimensions—behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). Loyalty can be indicated by a customer’s repeat purchase frequency or relative volume of the same brand purchasing in the behavioral dimension. On the other hand, customers can show their loyalty through psychological commitment toward the brand or store in the attitudinal dimension. This attitudinal dimension is more suitable to measure customer loyalty because a customer tends to have a strong loyalty to certain products or services when he/she is truly committed, has strong intentions to repurchase, and recommends to his/her acquaintances (Getty and Thompson, 1994).

Customer loyalty is measured with positive attitudes, behavioral intentions, and positive word-of-mouth. People tend to formulate their attitudes toward specific products after they experience them. For example, if customers have a positive experience with tourism events or festivals, they tend to have a positive attitude toward them and vice versa. In addition, when customers are satisfied, they intend to revisit a certain festival or participate in the event. There is a linear relationship between emotions and outcomes (Barbin and Barbin, 2001). Word-of-
mouth occurs when customers favorably recommend a certain product or a destination to their acquaintances after they have experienced it (Oliver, 1997). Yu and Dean (2001) determined that positive word-of-mouth was the most highly correlated with customer satisfaction and was identified as the highest reliability of the loyalty dimensions among word-of-mouth, complaining behavior, switching behavior, and willingness to pay more. Thus, the following proposition is proposed:

**Proposition 3:** There will be a positive relationship between overall tourists’ satisfaction and tourists’ loyalty.

**Methods**

**Theoretical Research Framework**

Based on the literature review, a proposed theoretical research framework is depicted in Figure 1.

![Proposed Conceptual Framework in Tourists' Emotional Experiences](image)

**Figure 1**

**A Proposed Conceptual Framework in Tourists' Emotional Experiences**

**Procedures and Sample**

This study will contact participants attending the Iowa State Fair held every August in Des Moines, Iowa to assess participants’ overall event experiences, their satisfaction, quality of life, and their loyalty to the State Fair. The sample will be selected, based on the convenience sampling method. In this study, only visitors from out-of-town, who stay overnight in Des Moines or nearby communities, will be included as valid participants. The researchers and three trained research assistants will administer this survey by attending the State Fair for its duration—two weeks. After State Fair goers agree to participate in this survey, they will be asked to complete a self-administered paper and pencil survey. On-site self-administered survey be employed after potential respondents agree to participate in this study. Before the actual survey is conducted, pilot tests will be employed with potential travelers and experts in tourism management to validate and clarify the survey’s measurement items. The survey questionnaire will be modified, based on the pilot study’s results.

**Measurements**

The survey questionnaire will consist of five sections. The first part is State Fair goers’ experiences with the event they are currently attending. The second part examines participants’ consumption emotions with the event. This study will replicate the study of Richins (1997) to determine effects of emotions on tourists’ satisfaction for their event experiences. Richins identified a set of consumption emotion descriptors, based on six empirical studies, assessing the domain of consumption emotions to determine suitable measures for consumption-related emotions. Richins (1997) suggested some emotion descriptors in CES may not be applicable in certain situations; thus, requiring possible revisions of CES, even though CES has been validated with six empirical studies. In other words, the emotion descriptors may not be the same, depending upon industries or situations. In the tourism industry, consumption-related emotions are critical to understanding tourists’ behaviors, as well as to assess overall tourists’ satisfaction.

The third part of the survey questionnaire asks questions related to the participants’ satisfaction. This study examines participants’ overall satisfaction with the event. Overall event attendees’ satisfaction/dissatisfaction will be measured to determine which consumption emotion dimensions influence tourists’ overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This dimension will be measured, based on studies by Clawson and Knetsch (1971), Neal et al. (2007), and Neal and Gursory (2008). The fourth section contains questions regarding participants’ loyalty, as well as the perceived tourists’ QOL. Travel and tourism services can be under the leisure life domain, so this study will measure only subjective QOL influenced by the overall participants’ satisfaction. Subjective QOL measures perceived overall life satisfaction. This study examines QOL in three categories of satisfaction with leisure experiences at large, non-leisure life, and life in general, based on the studies by Neal et al. (1999) and Neal et al. (2007). Customer loyalty will be measured by assessing customers’ positive attitudes, customers’ behavioral
intentions to attend the same event in the future and recommend it to others. Loyalty measurements are adapted by Taylor and Baker (1994), and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). A 7-point Likert-type scale will be employed from the second part through the fourth section. The fifth section asks about their demographic information, such as gender, age, income level, and background.

**Potential Data Analysis Plan**

Data will be collected to determine the relationship among tourists’ consumption emotions affected by their emotional experiences, tourists’ satisfaction, their perceived QOL, and loyalty. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) and LISREL will be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics will be used to examine individual participants’ characteristics, such as gender, age, income, and respondents’ background. Additionally, an exploratory factor analysis and reliability tests will be conducted to apply CES to the tourism industry, generating modified emotional dimensions. An exploratory factor analysis and reliability test, utilizing Cronbach’s alpha, will be conducted to reduce items of CES applied to the tourism industry, as well as satisfaction, loyalty, and quality of life measurement items. In addition, a regression analysis and structure equation modeling will be used to test the study’s propositions and overall relationships of the model.

**IMPLICATIONS**

This paper will provide important implications for both theoretical and managerial perspectives. First, although previous research determined the importance of consumption emotions, satisfaction, QOL, and loyalty as separate dimensions in the tourism industry, little research has examined the relationship among consumption emotions, overall tourists’ satisfaction, perceived QOL of tourists, and tourists’ loyalty towards a specific festival/event. This study also examines tourists’ satisfactions, as well as different domains of tourists’ QOL. Thus, the results of this study will provide a more in-depth understanding of tourists’ emotional and behavioral responses. Therefore, this study will fill the existing gap in the tourism literature. Second, results of this study will give practical implications to tourism marketers or event/festival planners. Based on the results of this study, tourism/destination marketers or event/festival planners can modify their strategies or develop effective marketing strategies, recognizing what consumption emotion dimensions satisfy tourists’ overall satisfactions and the consequences of them, such as perceived QOL and loyalty. This study can reveal the significant role of satisfaction, QOL, and loyalty after tourists attend the events. By doing so, the results of this study may also influence an economic impact, increasing travel and tourism services, and encouraging more events or festivals.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on thorough reviews of previous research in the field of emotional experiences, this study has developed a conceptual framework to identify the relationships among consumption emotions, tourists’ satisfaction, the perceived QOL of tourists, and the tourists’ loyalty toward a certain event. In addition, based upon the exploratory factor analysis, this study anticipates identification of a new consumption emotion set for the tourism industry. Based on these new factor constructs, this study can identify the emotion factors that satisfy and dissatisfy tourists. Tourists’ satisfaction is believed to be affected by their emotional experiences with a tourism destination, a specific event, or festivals. It is also posited that tourists’ satisfactions influences tourists’ QOL, including life in general, leisure experiences, and non-leisure experiences, as well as loyalty, comprising recommendations, and return intentions. Therefore, it is assumed that tourists’ overall satisfactions positively relate to tourists’ perceived QOL and loyalty. Identifying key factors that affect tourists’ emotional experiences will benefit tourism destination marketers in developing marketing programs and promotional materials in a sense that tourists’ satisfactions with the tourism destination and return intentions will be highly influenced by their emotional experiences with the destination.

For future research, longitudinal studies might be conducted to test the endurance of loyalty from satisfaction after tourists participate in a certain festival or event. In addition, demographic backgrounds can be considered as moderate variables, such as gender and social status (Winer, 1999). Cultural differences also can be considered to determine different beliefs and behaviors (Winsted, 1997). Furthermore, length of stay can be considered as a moderator affecting tourists’ satisfaction (Neal et al., 2007). If tourists stay longer on vacation, they tend to be more satisfied with their leisure life (Buchanan, 1983). For example, if an event attendee stays for the full event periods, he/she might engage with more services and experience more stimulating activities, increasing his/her satisfaction level.
REFERENCES


