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Antecedents of Heritage Tourists' Satisfaction: The Role of Motivation, Discrete Emotions and Place Attachment

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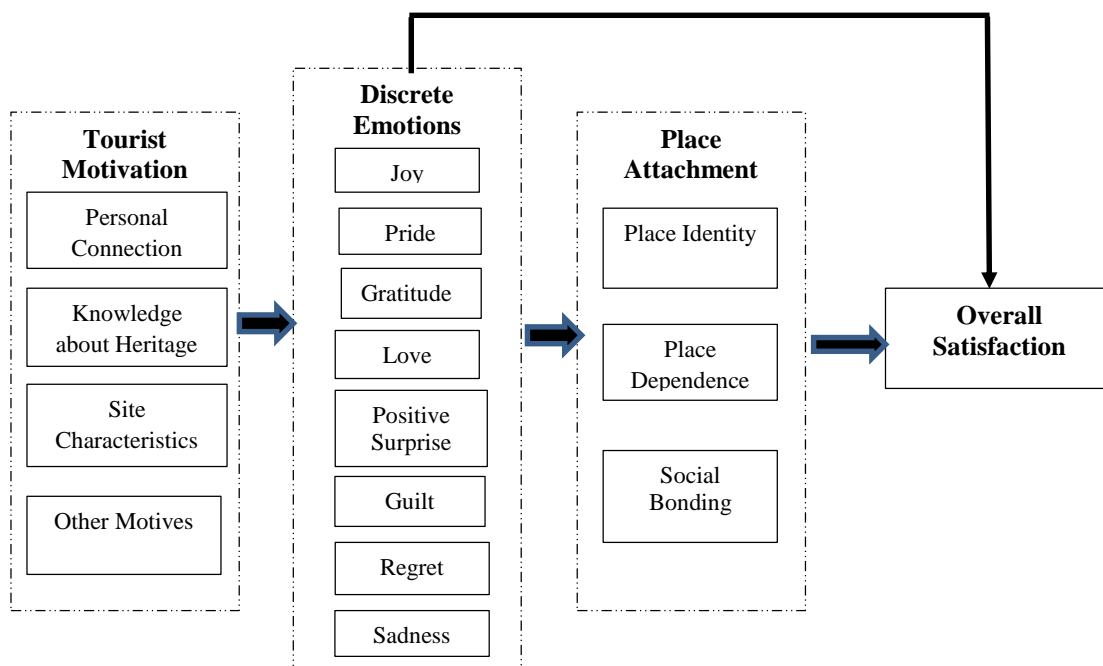
Introduction

Tourist satisfaction has been much debated in the tourism literature. Several antecedents of tourist satisfaction in relation to destinations (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chen & Phou, 2013; Veasna et al., 2013) have been studied but comparatively less in relation to heritage sites (Chen & Chen, 2010; Palau-Saumell et al., 2013; Prayag et al., 2013). Within the literature on heritage tourism, visitors' motivation (e.g., Poria et al., 2004; Poria et al., 2006) and post-consumption behaviours (Chen & Chen, 2010) have been studied but limited attention has been devoted to emotional responses from heritage consumption. The desire of visitors to be emotionally involved in the heritage experience is increasingly recognized (McIntosh, 1999; Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006) but existing studies prioritize emotional responses identified from dark tourism sites (see Buda et al., 2014; Nawijn & Fricke, 2013; Nawijn et al., 2015). Also, limited studies evaluate tourists' attachment to heritage sites (Biran et al., 2011; Ram et al., 2016). Attachment is generally an outcome of strong positive emotions felt towards objects (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Within this context, the study evaluates three important antecedents of satisfaction, namely tourist motivation, emotions, and place attachment among visitors' to the Nuraghe, *Su Nuraxi*, site in Sardinia, Italy.

Literature Review

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model, with all the identified relationships having theoretical support from the literature. For example, emotions are elicited by different appraisals (Nyer, 1997), of which goal congruence (i.e. motive consistency) is based on an assessment of the degree to which a situation is or is not conducive to goal fulfillment (Roseman et al., 1990). Goal congruent situations elicit positive emotions and goal incongruent situations elicit negative emotions (Nyer, 1997). Thus, positive and negative relationships can be inferred between the four motivation dimensions and the five discrete positive and three discrete negative emotions respectively.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Model



Method

Tourists were surveyed at the *Su Nuraxi*, UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS), in Sardinia, Italy. The site is the most important monument of the old civilization in Sardinia. The survey instrument consisted of 20 motives ($\alpha=.91$) (Poria et al., 2003; 2006), measured on a 7-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 7= Strongly Agree). Eight discrete emotions of joy (4 items, $\alpha=.88$), pride (3 items, $\alpha=.75$), gratitude (3 items, $\alpha=.81$), love (4 items, $\alpha=.94$), positive surprise (4 items, $\alpha=.90$), guilt (3 items, $\alpha=.94$), regret (3 items, $\alpha=.94$) and sadness (3 items, $\alpha=.93$) were measured (Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010) on a 7-point scale (1=Not at all, 7=Very Much). Place attachment was measured using 12 items ($\alpha=.94$), representing dimensions of place identity, place dependence (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) and social bonding (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015), on a 7-point scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree). Overall satisfaction was measured using three items ($\alpha=.88$) (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Prayag et al., 2013) on a 5-point scale. Trained interviewers approached visitors as they were exiting the main entrance of the site and asked to complete the survey, resulting in 497 useable surveys. The data were analysed using SMARTPLS 3. All results were bootstrapped using 500 samples (95% Confidence Intervals).

Findings

The sample comprised 55% females, with more than half (50.8%) above the age of 45 years old, well educated (56.8% having an undergraduate degree or more), and with almost an equal split between domestic (49%) and international visitors (51%). On this trip to Sardinia, 48.4% had visited only one Nuraghe site and 51% were first-time visitors. The results (Table 1) suggested convergent and discriminant validity for all constructs given that AVE >0.5, C.R.>0.7, and construct correlations were less than the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The structural paths were confirmed using bootstrapping and blindfolding procedures (Hair et al., 2012). Bold figures indicated a statistically significant path between the two constructs and it can be seen that pride, love, gratitude, positive surprise and sadness predict different dimensions of attachment. Only two discrete emotions (positive surprise and regret) predict overall satisfaction. All dimensions of tourist motivation predict pride and positive surprise.

Table 1: Results of structural paths

Structural Paths	Joy	Pride	Love	Gratitude	Positive Surprise	Guilt	Regret	Sadness	Over Sat	R ²	AVE	CR
Personal Connection	.093	.152	.412	.343	.145	.207	.200	.271			.562	.899
Knowledge	.289	.234	.09	.157	.305	-.05	-.06	-.05			.723	.913
Site Characteristics	.121	.221	-.02	.104	.208	-.03	-.01	-.04			.594	.879
Other Motives	.160	.179	.219	.150	.172	.172	.09	.142			.627	.870
Place Dependence	-.02	.188	.164	.06	.219	-.03	.02	.05	.227	.297	.740	.895
Place Identity	-.08	.230	.354	.172	.06	.06	-.11	-.01	-.052	.385	.817	.964
Social Bonding	-.07	.121	.192	.09	.02	-.05	.03	.215	-.046	.200	.734	.892
Overall satisfaction	.043	.049	.047	.072	.277	.147	-.198	-.033		.263		
R ²	.299	.411	.380	.389	.466	.09	.06	.107				
AVE	.739	.796	.842	.732	.775	.90	.893	.878	.804			
CR	.918	.887	.955	.891	.932	.964	.962	.956	.925			

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that different discrete emotions are predicted by different motives of heritage consumption. In turn, different emotions predict attachment to heritage sites. Managers at Su Nuraxi must therefore understand these relationships to improve emotional involvement with the site and facilitate the development of place attachment.

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