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RESEARCH LETTER



## Emotions and involvement in tourism settings

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present an extensive content analysis of two major constructs directly related to tourist behaviours (i.e. involvement and emotions), because there are still some critical gaps in the knowledge about tourists' emotions and involvement. An in-depth content analysis of involvement and emotions was adopted as a methodological approach. To address the content analysis, a set of papers published in renowned scientific databases, such as Science Direct, Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, Sage and Wiley were selected and analysed. The major findings state that emotions and involvement demonstrate greater progress and scientific development to the level of tourism, marketing and consumer behaviour, representing an important issue for the integrated tourism experiences. Future studies should analyse and evaluate the role and impact of emotions and involvement in post-pandemic contexts. Hence, there is a growing potential for managers and stakeholders to achieve the benefits derived from the study outcomes.

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analysis

## 1. Introduction and literature review

A literature review, based on an extensive content analysis of involvement and emotions of tourist behaviour, has been under progress with different perspectives, drivers and insights from different researchers. The involvement and emotions are crucial concepts of the research in consumer behaviour (Soscia, 2013; Santos et al., 2017, 2021; Chemli et al., 2020; Albattat et al., 2020; Toanoglou et al., 2021). Furthermore, when we consider an experimental purchase, for example, tourism, it may result in an elevated emotional arousal and pleasure (Su et al., 2020) and connection with involvement (e.g. to a place, person, idea or brand).

However, there are still some critical gaps in the knowledge about tourists' emotions and involvement linked to their visit experience (Sousa & Rocha, 2019) and in specific tourism contexts (e.g. wine tourism, pilgrimage, medical tourism). For instance, according to Pestana et al. (2020), the bridge between the subject and the environment through their positive or negative meanings and tones, and greater or lesser intensity is attributed to particular situations. The interest of the academic community in the development and understanding of these concepts has been extended to increasingly specific segments of tourism and leisure (Amaro et al., 2021). Sousa and Simões (2018) concluded that, in the case of cross-border tourism (Euroregion Northern Portugal and Galicia), the role of emotions seems to be more important in 'non-resident tourists', while involvement seems to have a greater predominance for 'resident tourists' in the cross-border region. The examinations of involvement and emotions (both theoretical and management) are twofold: (1) to explore and

provide some insights into the connection between involvement and emotions, and (2) to contribute to the development of scientific knowledge about a clarification of the concepts of involvement and emotions and their relationship with consumer behaviour in tourism (Baggio & Valeri, 2020; Valeri, 2016; Valeri & Baggio, 2020a; 2020b).

## 2. Methodology

Ever since the content analysis has been described as ‘a vital and popular technique in the consumer researcher’s toolkit’ (Mulvey & Stern, 2004; Valeri & Baggio, 2020c) it may assume different perspectives, for example, bibliographic search can be conducted across different databases like Web of Science, Scopus, SciELO, B-On and Google Scholar (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2019). The content analysis may contribute to a better understanding of a visitor’s experience (de Miguel Molina et al., 2020).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Involvement analysis

The original conceptualization, theoretical and empirical examination related to involvement construct comprising application areas was discovered by Zaichkowsky (1986). Dominant literature points out that the involvement is largely conceptualized in two main ways: one-dimensional concept (e.g. Zaichkowsky, 1985) and multi-dimensional construct (Kapferer & Laurent, 1993). Moreover, the impacts of different facets of involvement in the research results are not always the same (Kuhzady et al., 2020). The main involvement concepts have been summarized by the authors who most contributed (Table 1).

The concepts, in Table 1, show the complexity and scope of the definition ‘involvement’, as well as its relational effect with an object, place or person.

### 3.2. Emotions analysis

Over the last few years, the prominent role of emotions in tourism context has received an increasing attention and recognition in tourism and marketing fields, affirming itself as a driver and trigger of behaviour: ‘emotions establish a strong importance in the comprehension of consumer behaviour and even the definition of experiences and also enhance consumer reactions and on tourist’ (Prayag et al., 2013, p. 119). In addition, it is noteworthy that emotions also provide a conduit to express an amalgam of reality complex forms that move beyond the conventional methodologies used in the tourism research (e.g. Eshun & Gedzi, 2020).

Emotion has a wide scope of definitions proposed by several authors. Table 2 summarizes the main concepts of emotions.

The role of emotions and the type of emotional response are, due to its essence, delicate and somewhat complex nature (Vieira & Sousa, 2020). The concepts, in Table 2, show the applicability

**Table 1.** Main involvement concepts.

Dimanche et al. (1993)	Degree to which consumers <u>engage</u> in different factors of the consumption process: product, service, idea, information search, information processing, decision-making and the act of purchase
Mowen and Minor (1998)	Perceived personal importance and the <u>importance consumers give</u> to the purchase, consumption and disposal of a product, service or idea
Blackwell et al. (2001)	Relationship between a person and a product
Michaelidou and Dibb (2008)	Individual difference variable found to influence consumers’ decision-making behaviours; <u>relationship</u> between an individual, an object and a situation
Di-Clemente et al. (2020)	A <u>connection</u> exists between the involvement with specific activities or lifestyles and the kind of practices that tourists will experience on holidays
Gu et al. (2020)	Involvement <u>moderated</u> the effects of facilitators/constraints on wine tourism experience

Source: Adapted from Santos et al. (2014, 2015).

**Table 2.** Main emotions concepts.

Author	Definition
Frijda (2007)	Short-lived in the field of consciousness, require immediate attention and motivate behaviour
Ouyang et al. (2017)	Emotions are considered to be critical to understanding the underlying reasoning of consumers' behaviours in marketing literature because emotions caution that the situation is problematic, and manifest in opposed responses;
Oren et al. (2020) and Sarkar et al. (2021)	(1) The emotional experience in tourism with regard to positive emotions, while negative emotions are perceived as detrimental to the quality of the experience. (2) In dark tourism, emotions are not at the heart of the experience at sites which present human tragedies, death, and atrocities.
Pestana et al. (2020)	'the bridge between the subject and the environment: through their positive or negative meanings and tones, and greater or lesser intensity are attributed to particular situations'

Source: Adapted from Santos et al. (2014, 2015).

of the construct emotions in the tourist segmentation and in a perspective of niche markets with different individual interests. The emotions construct is particularly studied and explored as a differentiating factor in the management of tourist destinations. Overall, the emotional experience is rich in tourist emotions and tourists are constantly engaged in their own they produce (Amaro et al., 2021). Santos et al. (2021a) also assign an important role for emotions as well as involvement as an antecedent and consequence of them (Santos et al., 2021b).

#### 4. Discussion

The involvement has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct in several studies derived from the dominant literature (e.g., Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Havitz & Howard, 1995; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Wiley et al., 2000). Despite the involvement of multi-dimensionality in its characteristics, there still remain much significant discussion and attention; however, the initial conceptual framework pioneered and argued by Laurent and Kapferer is constant and widely prevalent. To sum up, it can be undoubtedly inferred that the involvement is clearly treated as a multi-dimensional construct. Currently, empirical evidence supports and treats its multi-dimensionality (Santos et al., 2021a, 2021b; Wiley et al., 2000).

A critical content analysis of involvement and emotions gives insights into a critical assessment of the literature. Table 3 shows the content analysis of involvement and emotions constructs most cited by scholars, specifically the most relevant and frequent categories.

The dimensions of each concept presented are those that have a higher frequency and the table attests that dimensions and categories of both concepts are synonymous. This content analysis attests that involvement and emotions are linked and connected. As largely evidenced in this content analysis, emotions and involvement are affective constructs, more intense in

**Table 3.** Main conceptual categories in involvement and emotions.

Involvement	Emotions	Indicative studies
Psychology and sociology	Psychology and sociology	(e.g. Gross & Brown, 2006)
Particular situation	Satisfaction	(e.g. Prayag et al., 2013)
Individual state	Mental states	(e.g. Ouyang et al., 2017)
Cognitive state	Cognitive process	(e.g. Kim, 2012)
Affective state	Valence affective reaction	(e.g. Amaro et al., 2021)
Stimulus state	Feelings	(e.g. Sousa & Rocha, 2019)
Response based	Consumer reactions	(e.g. Pestana et al., 2020)
Personal importance	Personal value	(e.g. Sousa & Rodrigues, 2019)
Product variables	Consumption	(e.g. Gu et al., 2020)
Consumption process	Purchase decision	(e.g. Santos et al., 2017)
Antecedents and consequences	Behavioural intentions and satisfaction	(e.g. Santos et al., 2021)
Interest	Motivation	(e.g. Oren et al., 2020)

Source: Adapted from Santos et al. (2014, 2015).

nature than the mood, and with a closer relationship with the stimuli that cause them (Santos et al., 2014).

## 5. Conclusions and limitations

The findings show that emotions and involvement demonstrate greater progress and scientific development to the level of marketing and consumer behaviour. The emotions and involvement in tourism represent an important issue for the integrated tourism experiences (Io & Wan, 2018). This kind of knowledge is particularly valuable for better understanding the consumer behaviour in tourism.

As a result, involvement and emotions are two key variables in leisure behaviour, because people, who are planning leisure travel, will pay more attention to relevant travel information. This critical analysis demonstrates a significant relationship between involvement and emotions.

The study of the demand behaviour has received the attention of several researchers, specifically in marketing and tourism areas. This research points out that involvement and emotions constructs play a crucial role and directly impact tourists' behavioural intentions on leisure, marketing and tourism settings. A key theoretical contribution of this study is the development of a strictly content analysis inter-correlating these two constructs.

Regarding to the main limitations, it is highlighted in-depth studies on tourists' emotions and involvement linked to their visit experience to the same extent due to remains scarce. Hence, it is noteworthy that the multi-dimensional nature of involvement and emotions concepts within tourism settings also is considered another major limitation.

The consumer behaviour in the tourism sector should focus more on the relationship between involvement and emotions across longitudinal perspectives. It is clear that this field study needs further developments. Future studies should make it possible to understand the role of emotions and involvement in tourist consumer behaviour in post-pandemic contexts. Tourist destinations should be able to develop marketing strategies focused in emotions and involvement (with the local community) as a competitive differentiation and advantage. In future research, it will be pertinent to develop research of a qualitative nature (i.e. interviews and focus group) with stakeholders and the local community.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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