Chapter 14
Elements to Design an Active Sports Tourism Experience and a Nature–Based Tourism Experience:
The Role of Sensorial, Emotional, and Memorable Models

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of the study was to understand and clarify the role of the senses, emotions, and memories model (SEMs) in the active sports tourism experience and the nature-based tourism experience. The research aimed to identify and assess the sensorial stimulus, the emotional states, and memorable elements within the nature-based tourism experience and active sports tourism experience creation. Second, it aimed to design and establish a relational model between SEMs in the nature-based tourism experience and active sports tourism experience construction. The research findings show that SEMs positively impact active sports experience and nature-based experience construction. The SEMs model describes two paths to the nature-based tourism experience creation and one path to the active sports tourism experience.

INTRODUCTION

The current evolution of tourism has driven researchers and practitioners to different types of tourism and an ever-expanding conceptualisation development, such as, sports tourism, adventure tourism,

apitourism, ecotourism, astrotourism, film tourism, nature tourism, agritourism, horti-tourism, space tourism, etc., (Decroly & Diekmann, 2018; Tureac & Turtureanu, 2008). These types of tourism are dynamic, varying according to time, tourists' needs, stakeholder's proposals, touristic products existing and available facilities (Bakhtiyorivich, 2020; Ghete, 2016; Tureac & Turtureanu, 2008). Furthermore, these new and differentiators of tourism products are essential to improve the economic growth of the destinations/regions, tourism supply development, and tourism diversification (Ghete, 2016). The innovation presented in the new types of tourism appears to be critical in keeping tourists motivated to embrace new experience journeys (Ghete, 2016; Pomfret, 2021). Investigating how tourists perceive, usufruct, and encode the nature-based tourism experience and the active sports tourism experience is crucial to understanding the experiential journey at the destination.

Establishing memorable experiences is the leading economic value proposition that the tourism industry holds (Pedro et al., 2021). The tourism experience construction is the result of multi-sensory stimuli and perception, positive emotions, high emotional states, surprising events, extraordinary moments and pleasant and positive memories (Pedro et al., 2020). Thus, the senses play an essential role in experiential stimuli perception; the emotional states are vital to the stimuli interpretation and meaning achievement, and memories are crucial to coding, storing, and anticipating the experiential information.

Accordingly, this research aims to understand the role of senses, emotions, and memories in the nature-based tourism experience and the active sports tourism experience. First, it identifies and assess the sensorial stimulus, the emotional states, and memorable elements within the nature-based tourism experience and active sports tourism experience creation. Second, design and establish a relational model between SEMs in the nature-based tourism experience and active sports tourism experience construction.

BACKGROUND

Active Sports Tourism Experience

According to Mongkhonvanit and Meadows (2015), sports tourism can be a leisure activity to observe as a fan or a player with physical involvement. Thus, sports tourism can be an active or a passive activity in terms of the tourism experience, non-elite tourist participants/competitors and tourist event spectators, respectively (Hillman et al., 2021; Lamont, 2014). However, "… sports tourism is motivated by the desire to practice some tourist activities…", biking, bootcamp, golf, fitness retreats, canoeing, running, etc. (Ghete, 2016, p. 317). In this study, the researchers analysed the tourists' participation in organised sports activities with active physical involvement.

Active sports tourism experience is all about the triple interaction between tourist, destination and activity (Perić et al., 2019). Experience interpretation and usufruct are often related to individual motivation and personal participation (DeSalle, 2018; Knowles, 2019). A tourism experience in a sports context is a "…subjective emotional journey full of personal, social and cultural meanings" (Morgan, 2007, p. 361). Nevertheless, in times of rapid changes, the need for rethinking and readapting tourism products and different types of tourism appears to be crucial in delivering new services, new products and different living experiences at the usual destination (Perić et al., 2019). "In recent decades, people in developed countries have spent an increasingly large portion of their leisure time travelling and engaging in physical activities and sports" (Fraiz et al., 2020, p. 2) because active sports tourism is related to modern lifestyle, holistic health state, feelings of revitalisation and positive energy (Malm et al., 2019).

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