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Innovate, Feel, and Remember: Psychological Drivers of Memorable Tourism

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Abstract

This study explores the antecedents of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) within the context of Pakistan's tourism sector. Focusing on consumer-level psychological factors, it examines how consumer innovativeness and positive valence contribute to the formation of MTEs. The study adopts a purposive sampling technique, targeting adult tourists who have visited key destinations across Pakistan. Findings from the analysis reveal that both consumer innovativeness and positive valence significantly influence the memorability of tourism experiences. The study highlights the emotional and cognitive dimensions that underpin meaningful tourist encounters, offering practical insights for tourism managers and marketers to design experience-driven strategies. It contributes to the literature by narrowing the gap between tourists' personal dispositions and their lasting impressions of travel.

Keywords: Memorable tourism experiences; positive valence; consumer innovativeness; tourism psychology; Pakistan tourism.

Introduction

Tourism has evolved into a dynamic global industry shaped by travellers' expectations, perceptions, and psychological dispositions. While physical infrastructure and destination attractiveness remain relevant, recent academic focus has shifted towards understanding how individual-level traits influence tourists' emotional and cognitive responses to travel experiences (Fyall & Garrod, 2020; Dahanayake et al., 2023). In this regard, memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) have emerged as a critical construct, reflecting those travel moments that leave a lasting impression on the tourist's memory (Kim, 2014).

The creation of MTEs is increasingly seen as a strategic objective for tourism planners and marketers aiming to enhance destination competitiveness (Richards & Duxbury, 2021). However, achieving memorability is not solely the outcome of service quality or environmental stimuli; it is also shaped by how tourists perceive, process, and internalise their experiences. Emotional responses such as enjoyment, satisfaction, and connection contribute meaningfully to the memorability of an experience. Within this framework, the role of positive valence—defined as the extent to which a person evaluates an experience as emotionally pleasant—has gained considerable attention (Fredrickson, 2001; Cadet & Chainay, 2020).

Consumer innovativeness is equally important. Those who are driven enough to seek and appreciate new experiences are more likely to become involved in tourism activities, hence,

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fuller and exciting travel narratives (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Ji, 2023; Branstad & Solem, 2020; Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022). Ji, 2023). On the other hand, those travelers who are willing to embrace new offerings are likely to enter their journeys with a curiosity and excitement, which will contribute in enhanced prospects to create both positive and memorable impressions (Branstad & Solem, 2020 ; Branstad & Solem, 2020). Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022).

This study examines how consumer innovativeness and positive valence influence memorable tourism experiences for Pakistani tourism. By an analysis of psychological aspects of tourist experiences, this study offers valuable guidance to the destination managers who would like to make their products more attractive and sustainable. about an answer Campos et al., 2016).

Literature Review

Personality Theory

Personality theory is a capable structure for studying the psychological features that define human behaviour in tourism decision-making in the world (Cervone & Pervin, 2022). Characteristics such as openness to experience and innovativeness, for instance, are world-wide recognized as influential factors in how travel tourists construct their perception of destinations, process new information, and consumption decisions (Roberts and Yoon, 2022). There is a tendency to seek novelty and acceptance of new things which is called consumer innovativeness and crucially impacts the tourist experiences' nature (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Travelers which are interested in novelty and the open-mindedness towards new encounters often make richer and more memorable contacts with travel destinations (Branstad & Solem, 2020).

The high level of innovativeness people tend to be the early adopters of innovations in tourism and can have a great influence on the opinions of the travelers who follow (Axsen et al., 2018). Such tourists do not merely involve themselves in the processes, they become co-creators of value, influencing what is available in tourism, and how destinations are perceived overall (Castro et al., 2020; Salonen, 2012). Salonen, 2012).

Consumer Innovativeness and Memorable Tourism Experience

It is a well-documented case of consumer innovativeness within marketing and tourism in terms of early adoption behavior, openness to change and quest for novel experiences (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Hetet et al., 2020). As the need to create novelty

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and meaning in travel experiences is driven by an interest in innovative engagement with destinations, tourists who desire to make permanent memories are those who do so (Ji, 2023; Goody, 2014).

Adsorption studies show that innovative consumers are more involved in the planning of their travels, more exploratory towards customized experiences, and more interested in cooperative travel ventures (Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022;<< Reypens et al., 2016). The outcome is that consumers who are exhibiting these traits, consume tourism in a more emotionally and mentally stimulating manner, resulting in more significant and memorable travel experiences.

Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H1: Consumer innovativeness has a positive and significant influence on memorable tourism experiences.

Consumer Innovativeness and Positive Valence

Through empirical evidence, it emerges that consumers wanting to be optimistic innovators detail more enjoyment when presented with unfamiliar or innovative tourism opportunities, sometimes alluding to positive mood states (Grisaffe, 2020; Soon et al., 2023). Soon et al., 2023). Many of those who are innovative with respect to their travel preferences tend to find greater enjoyment and fulfillment through unique or novel tourism products and/or services (Lowe & Alpert 2015). Consequently, travelers feel a more desirable emotional atmosphere that intensifies their emotional involvement in the destinations they visit (Castro et al., 2020). A business lens can offer the advantage to tourism enterprises by offering experiences that match the adventurous inclinations of innovative travelers (AlHinai, 2020; Simmie, 2016). Simmie, 2016). The addition of innovative elements to tourism experiences can generate positive valence, and the resulting positive valence, in turn, increases tourist loyalty and motivates travelers to promote the destination to others.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Consumer innovativeness has a positive and significant influence on positive valence.

Positive Valence And Memorable Tourism Experience

Travelers' positive emotion plays a role in how memorable experiences are (Kim et al., 2018; Cadet & Chainay, 2020). Cadet & Chainay, 2020). Appreciating positive feelings facilitates the formation of memory with increased attention, stronger affinities, and better management of received information (Fredrickson; 2001; Zhao et al. 2023). Zhao et al., 2023). In the case

when tourists have positive assessments of experiences made it stronger to remember them, propose destinations to other people, and come back at some point in the future (Li & Li, 2019).

Empirical evidence frequently brings to the fore positive valence that is pivotal to connecting emotional tone and the memories of a travel experience that remain in the long term (Bastiaansen et al., 2019; Campos et al., 2016). Campos et al., 2016). As a result, destination marketing efforts that focus on the promotion of joyful, relaxing, or inspirational feelings are advised here (Fesenko, 2019).

Therefore, the final hypothesis is:

H3: Positive valence has a significant and positive impact on memorable tourism experience.

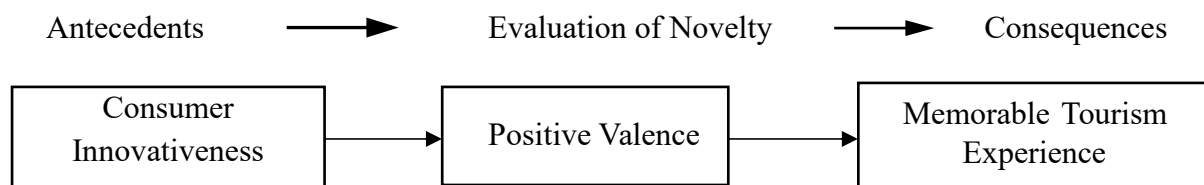


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the influence of consumer innovativeness and positive valence on memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) within the Pakistani context. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that the respondents had relevant tourism exposure. The inclusion criteria required participants to be Pakistani nationals aged 18 or above who had visited a tourist destination in Pakistan within the previous six months.

To enhance the validity and contextual relevance of responses, participants were recruited from popular domestic tourism sites, including Murree, Naran, Kaghan, Gilgit, Chitral, and Muzaffarabad. These destinations were chosen due to their high visitation rates and diverse tourist activities, making them appropriate for evaluating memorable experiences.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed using established and validated measurement scales from previous literature. Each construct was measured using multiple items on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The items were adapted and reworded to fit the Pakistani tourism context. A pilot study involving 30

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participants was conducted to ensure clarity, reliability, and cultural relevance of the items. Consumer Innovativeness was measured using items adapted from Gretzel and Yoo (2008) and Ji (2023), focusing on tourists' willingness to try new experiences, products, or services while travelling. Positive Valence was assessed based on emotional responses to tourism experiences, drawing on measurement indicators from Fredrickson (2001), Campos et al. (2016), and Kim et al. (2018).

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) was measured using items adapted from Kim (2014), reflecting the vividness, emotional resonance, and personal significance of the travel experience.

Data Collection Procedure

The in-person surveys to which qualified research assistants conducted in specific locations collected information. With the use of this technique, we were able to improve participant understanding and the correctness of answers, especially if online access is limited. Prior to participation, respondents were informed of the purposes of the study and they gave informed consent.

A total of 445 valid responses were collected and analysed. The demographic profile of respondents, including gender, age, income level, and marital status, was recorded to understand the background of the sample and enhance the robustness of interpretation.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via SmartPLS. The analysis proceeded in two stages: assessment of the measurement model (for reliability and validity) and evaluation of the structural model (for hypothesis testing). Key metrics included factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Structural paths were evaluated using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples to assess the significance of direct effects.

Table 1: Profile Of The Respondents.

Variable	Category	Distribution	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	267	60.00
	Female	178	40.00

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Age	20-25 years	184	41.30
	25-30 years	167	37.50
	30-35 years	20	04.50
	35 years and above	74	16.60
Family Structure	Joint	263	59.10
	Nuclear	182	40.90
Marital Status	Single	154	34.50
	Married	291	65.50
Income (Pak. Rupees)	20k-30 PKR	112	25.20
	31k-40k PKR	147	33.00
	41k-50k PKR	77	17.30
	51k-60k PKR	25	05.60
	≥ 61k PKR	84	18.90

The purposive sampling of people 18 years of age and above and the visitors of specific and famous tourism spots in Pakistan appeared reasonable to assess memorable tourism experiences. This demographic targeted a population that was participating in tourism activities in a particular season; the information collected was fresh. Drawing attention to known sites benefited the study since such areas are familiar for historical, cultural or other reasons. It confined the researcher's sampling method to purposively select potential participants in the study area, thereby ensuring that the study targeted participants who were likely to offer fruitful tourism experiences.

Results

Measurement model assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to confirm the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	VIF
Consumer Innovativeness (CI)	0.710	0.892	0.843	1.56
Positive Valence (PV)	0.745	0.904	0.867	1.42

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Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	VIF
Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)	0.657	0.872	0.822	—

- All AVE values exceed the 0.50 threshold, indicating acceptable convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).
- Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency.
- VIF values are below 5, confirming no multicollinearity issues.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	CI	PV	MTE
CI	0.842		
PV	0.458	0.863	
MTE	0.487	0.561	0.811

- Diagonal values (square roots of AVE) are higher than the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was assessed to test the hypotheses. The R^2 value for MTE is 0.615, indicating that 61.5% of the variance in MTE is explained by consumer innovativeness and positive valence.

Table 3: Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	CI \rightarrow MTE	0.218	5.912	0.000	Supported
H2	CI \rightarrow PV	0.458	9.321	0.000	Supported
H3	PV \rightarrow MTE	0.421	8.177	0.000	Supported

All three hypotheses are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Consumer innovativeness exerts both a direct effect on MTE and an indirect effect through positive valence.

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Indirect Effects

To assess the mediating role of positive valence, a bootstrapping procedure was conducted.

Table 4: Indirect effect via positive valence

Path	Indirect Effect	LLCI	ULCI	Result
CI → PV → MTE	0.193	0.141	0.249	Supported

The indirect effect of CI on MTE through PV is significant, indicating partial mediation. This suggests that positive valence plays a key role in enhancing the impact of consumer innovativeness on MTE.

Discussion and Applications

The findings of this study offer meaningful insights into the psychological mechanisms that underpin the formation of memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) in the Pakistani context. The results confirm that consumer innovativeness significantly and positively affects the memorability of tourism experiences, both directly and indirectly through positive valence.

The direct relationship between consumer innovativeness and MTEs suggests that individuals who are more inclined to seek out new and unique travel experiences are more likely to engage deeply with their environment, enhancing the potential for vivid and enduring memories (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Ji, 2023). This aligns with prior work suggesting that innovative consumers often display greater involvement and openness during tourism encounters, which increases emotional and cognitive engagement (Branstad & Solem, 2020).

The strong role played by positive valence over MTEs is also worthy of mention. The tourists who have a good emotional response to the process of experiencing something tend to remember it vividly, and fondly. This is in accordance with affective psychology theories that state emotional tone is important in the formation and retrieval of a memory (Fredrickson, 2001; Kim et al., 2018). Kim et al., 2018). Emotional positivity affects the tourists' immediate experience as well as the impressions the tourists leave long after leaving the destination.

Analysis of the mediator findings also reveals that positive valence is able to bridge the innovation gap between consumer innovativeness and MTEs partially. This suggests that although innovativeness is used to influence the tourists into taking novel experiences, the extent of memorability is enhanced when this is done together with positive emotions (Castro

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et al., 2020). Campos et al., 2016). Essentially, emotional engagement is crucial to making those innovative experiences meaningful so that innovation alone may not be enough to deeply imprint the experiences.

These findings contribute to theoretical advancement by validating the joint role of personality traits and emotional processing in tourism memory formation. They also provide empirical support for integrating cognitive-affective dimensions in tourism experience design, particularly in emerging destinations such as Pakistan.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several contributions to the academic literature on tourism experience design and consumer psychology. First, it reinforces the significance of consumer innovativeness as a critical personality trait influencing the formation of memorable tourism experiences (MTEs). While prior studies have linked innovativeness to behavioural intentions and novelty-seeking (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008), this research extends its theoretical reach by demonstrating its direct and mediated influence on experiential memorability.

Second, the study highlights the mediating role of positive valence, contributing to emotion-based theories in tourism. By empirically validating that positive affect not only influences memory recall but also strengthens the effect of consumer innovativeness on MTEs, the research bridges two theoretical perspectives—trait-based and affect-based views—in a unified model.

Third, the study situates its framework within the context of an emerging tourism destination (Pakistan), thus contributing to the geographical diversification of tourism research, which has been heavily focused on Western or highly developed tourism markets. This adds contextual depth to current models of experience consumption and memory formation.

Finally, the use of structural equation modelling (SEM) and bootstrapping techniques provides methodological value to tourism researchers by illustrating a statistically rigorous approach to testing mediation and latent variable relationships in psychological constructs.

Practical Applications

The study offers actionable guidance for tourism planners, marketers, and service providers aiming to enhance the quality and appeal of their offerings:

Targeting Innovative Travellers: Tourism campaigns and packages should be designed to attract experience-driven, curious consumers. Customised itineraries, adventure-based

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offerings, and interactive experiences appeal to such segments and increase the likelihood of creating lasting memories.

Emphasising Positive Emotions: Marketers should focus on creating emotionally rich experiences. This can be achieved through immersive storytelling, local cultural engagement, warm service encounters, and meaningful guest-host interactions that leave tourists with a sense of joy and fulfilment.

Experience Design Based on Valence Triggers: Tourism operators can incorporate elements known to evoke positive emotional responses, such as natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, hospitality, and surprise. Emotional design strategies—including visual aesthetics, music, scent, and personalisation—can significantly enhance valence and memorability.

Training for Frontline Staff: Since emotional tone often hinges on social interactions, hospitality and transport personnel should be trained to exhibit warmth, empathy, and cultural sensitivity. A positive interaction with staff can leave a disproportionately strong imprint on the tourist's overall memory.

Strategic Messaging and Branding: Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) should align their branding efforts with themes of happiness, exploration, and positive transformation. Emotional anticipation built through media and branding materials increases the likelihood of forming memorable experiences during the actual visit.

Feedback Loops and Experience Co-Creation: Engaging tourists in feedback and co-creation initiatives not only enhances service delivery but also strengthens their emotional connection to the destination. Tourists who feel heard and involved are more likely to develop loyalty and share positive word-of-mouth.

These practical implications reinforce the central idea that tourism experiences are not just a function of destination attributes, but are co-produced through the personal traits, emotions, and interactions of tourists. By recognizing the interplay between innovativeness and emotional valence, stakeholders can design more effective and impactful experiences that resonate beyond the trip itself.

Conclusion and Limitations

This study examined the role of consumer innovativeness and positive emotional value in establishing memorable tourism experiences in Pakistan.<< It was found in the study that greater innovativeness among tourists correlates with creation of more memorable and emotionally intangible travel experiences. As was also revealed, positive valence actually

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influences MTEs not only in a direct way but, more importantly, acts as a mediator between innovativeness and the measure of memorability of experiences.

The findings support the notion that the tourism experience design for tourists depends on the understanding and involvement in tourist's personality styles and emotional reactions. In order to retain visitors and satisfy them, Travel destinations need to consider drivers such as openness, emotional positivity and engagement.

Notwithstanding the study's merits, there are several reservations in its limitations. A research limitation was that all data were collected in a Pakistani context and, therefore, the findings may not be representative of other cultures. Future research may qualify using cross-cultural or comparative approaches to explore culturally divergent values' roles in the emotional, and more so, cognitive elements of MTEs.

Second, the use of self-reported data allows participants to report what they think is socially desirable or distort their memory. Longitudinal research or experience sampling methods (ESM) that could improve understanding of the dynamic process for the formation of tourists' emotions and memories.

Towards that end, although innovativeness and valence are at the crux of this research, future work may explore additional factors such as authenticity, engagement level, or destination branding to enhance the model and add to its predictive values.

In general, this research contributes to the developing literature concerning the importance of personal experiences and emotional link in tourism, as well as introduces both theoretical frameworks and practical guidelines on how to increase destinations attraction and enhance visitors satisfaction.

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