



Concept and Measurement of Memorable Tourism Experience

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Abstract: *In the last twenty years scholars and practitioners have shown interest in exploring the concept of tourist experience from different perspectives. However, therefore less attention has been paid to the research on the tourist experience with special emphasis on the concept of memorable experience (MTE). Starting from the above, the purpose of this paper is to present a detailed and systematic quantitative research review aimed at identifying new trends in MTE research and reducing the existing gaps in the experience economy literature. For the purposes of this research, 47 studies on MTE published between 2010 and 2021 were analyzed according to the year of publication, geographic coverage, publication source and forms of tourism. The results of this study suggest that the largest number of studies of MTE were conducted in 2019 (21.28%) in Asia (56.81%) and published in the journal Anatolia (10.64%). Further analysis revealed that the largest number of research were carried out in the context of destination and gastronomic tourism. Therefore, only for these two forms of tourism, the causal relationship of different variables was analyzed, thus gaining an insight into their measurement instruments. In measuring the destination memorable tourism experience the MTE model is the most common one, while in measuring gastronomic tourism the most frequently applied dimensions are novelty, food quality, service environment and atmosphere. From a management perspective, the findings of this study offer practical implications for measuring MTE, especially in the context of destination and gastronomic tourism. Based on the analyzed data, tourism providers can get an insight into the tested and valid instrumentation that can allow them to determine strengths and weaknesses in the existing elements of their offer always focusing on the possibilities for long-term improvement of the whole service.*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is extremely difficult to define the tourism industry as it does not represent one product but, in relation to other sectors, it covers a number of different activities and stakeholders, such as accommodation, transportation, attractions, tourist companies and alike. Most scientific experts define tourism as the phenomenon arising from temporary visits (or stays away from home) outside the normal place of residence for any reason other than furthering an occupation remunerated from within the place visited (Burkart & Medlik, 1981). The importance of tourism globally is evident by the fact that the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in 2020 amounted to approximately 4.7 trillion US dollars (Tourism Worldwide, 2021). Therefore, one can say that tourism is a complex phenomenon and a driver of the world economy (Laškarin et al., 2022). In order to generate more revenue within this industry, providers of its products and services seek to determine the wishes and needs of tourists. What was observed at the beginning of the 21st century is that society as a whole is no longer satisfied with the classic offer of products and services, but tends to create memorable experiences (Marković et al., 2021).

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Experience is a subjective, intangible, continuous and highly personal phenomenon (O'dell, 2007) that exists only in the mind of the individual, engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual or even spiritual level (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In the context of tourism, it consists of people, services and places (Westwood, 2006). It represents a past travel-related event that was important enough to store it in the memory of tourists in the long term (Larsen, 2007). It can be said that it is characterized by a combination of novelty that includes the individual search for identity and self-realization (Selstad, 2007), that is, the search for happiness and well-being (Sharpley & Stone, 2012). According to Chan & Baum (2007), the quality of the tourist experience is characterized as an effective response of tourists to the desired social-psychological benefit.

How the tourist experience is remembered after traveling, with the passage of time, creates the greatest discrepancy between the tourist experience and the memorable tourism experience (Zhong et al., 2017). The process of deciding to resume a trip has a greater impact on the memorable experience in relation to the general tourist experience (Zhang et al, 2018). Therefore, memory is placed an indispensable role because it allows the individual to relive the event that happened (Neumann, 1992). Pleasant memories of such an experience significantly affect tourists thus creating a positive mood and a sense of happiness that often plays a significant role in tourists' life (Hull, 1990). Each individual eliminates unwanted content in his consciousness through the filtering process and thus retains only favored memories (Oh et al., 2007). This is important because these memories become stimulators and main predictors of the return of tourists to the tourist destination (Wirtz et al., 2003).

In its measurement, the most commonly used instrument in research studies is the MTE model. According to the MTE model, the dimensions of MTE are (Kim et al., 2012): (1) hedonism, (2) inclusion, (3) knowledge, (4) local culture, (5) meaningfulness, (6) novelty and (7) refreshment. Hedonism is represented by pleasant feelings that excite tourists, such as fun, enthusiasm and enjoyment (Zhang et al., 2018), while inclusion implies the possibility of tourists to actively participate and enjoy tourist activities (Kim & Ritchie, 2014). Active participation will allow tourists to learn more about the host local culture (Zhang et al., 2018) and to broaden their knowledge and skills. In such a way, whilst doing something significant, tourists will experience the essence of something meaningful and worth of their time and effort where they are able to learn something new about themselves (Rašan, 2021). Such insights and novelties in the form of new knowledge create a feeling of refreshment in their lives.

Based on the above it is possible to see the importance of creating a high-quality experience for tourists that will be stored in their memory in the long run. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to systematically identify and evaluate studies dealing with MTE. The specific objectives of this study are to analyze MTE research studies according to (1) year of publication, (2) source of publication, (3) geographic area of the sample where research was conducted and (4) the forms of tourism where the MTE concept is emphasized. Starting from the set objectives, the basic research question is formulated: "In which selective form of tourism the memorable tourism experience is most strongly expressed?". The conducted research and answers to the research questions will give tourist products and service providers insight into the tested and valid previous instrumentation used to measure MTE. In the future, the most important factors used in previous measurements can serve tourism service providers to measure MTE according to the tourism forms. In such a way they can obtain reliable indicators that can help them determine strengths and weaknesses in the existing elements of the current offer and facilitate the improvement of the product and services they deliver. This review article is structured in a way that the introduction is followed by methodology, results, conclusion and list of references.

2. METHODOLOGY

In the analysis, mapping and synthetization of the relevant scientific literature on MTE a mixed approach was used. More precisely, a systematic quantitative literature review was divided into 5 stages (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2019):

- (1) establishing the review aims;
- (2) identifying search keywords, databases and literature selection criteria;
- (3) searching databases, screening search outcomes against the criteria identified prior and fine-tuning of the inclusion criteria;
- (4) presentation of research results in graphical and tabular form;
- (5) synthesis of the most important factors in measuring memorable tourism experiences according to the most represented forms of tourism.

The intention of this research was to obtain comprehensive and representative picture of the researched topic in order to determine the most important factors in measuring memorable tourism experience applied in various forms of tourism. For the purposes of this research, relevant scientific literature was researched. The scientific papers were collected on world databases: Google Scholar, Emerald insight and ScienceDirect. The following keywords were searched: 'memorable tourism experience' and 'measuring memorable tourism experience'. Mendeley reference management software was used to store and organize the relevant papers. After searching the literature, the following inclusion criteria were applied in the selection of papers for the sample:

- papers should be written in English;
- papers should be published from 2010 to 2021 and
- papers should deal with the memorable tourism experience.

In accordance with the above criteria, the sample included 47 papers. These were subsequently analyzed according to the year, source of publication, geographical area of the sample and the forms of tourism. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to process the data, and the obtained results were presented in graphic or tabular form. In addition to quantitative analysis, a qualitative content analysis of factors used in measuring the memorable tourism destination and the gastronomic experience was carried out.

3. RESULTS

This chapter presents the literature review results of the memorable tourism experience. Descriptive statistical methods were used in the analysis of selected papers according to predetermined parameters such as frequency analysis by year of publication, paper analysis by the source of publication, paper analyses by geographical area of the sample where the research has been conducted, and paper analysis according to the forms of tourism. The initial analysis focused on determining the number of articles on MTE published on an annual basis (Figure 1).

Publications on the MTE concept started at the beginning of the 21st century, but expansive growth has been noted since 2010. Therefore, this review covers studies over a period from 2010 to 2021. From the graph, it is possible to see that the number of publications in the observed period is continuously rising up until 2019. The largest number of papers was published in 2019 - 10 or 21.28%. After 2019 a decline in the number of papers is noted (14,89% in 2020 and 8,51% in 2021). The reason behind such a poor number of papers published on the research topic might be COVID-19 and travel suspension. For this reason, academic experts were hampered and, in some way, prevented from conducting research on tourists immediately after the tourist experience was achieved.

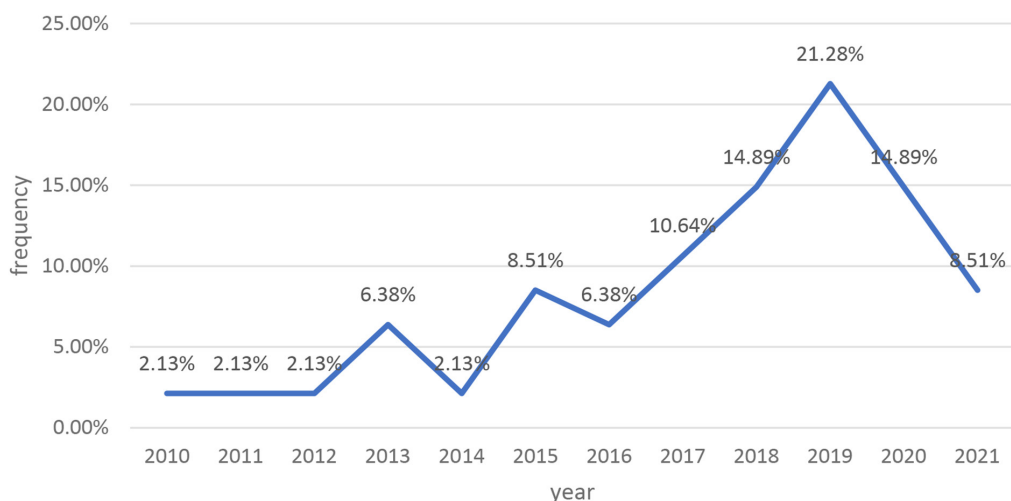


Figure 1. Article analysis by year

Source: Authors' research

In addition to the previously performed analysis, an analysis of the geographical location of the sample of the conducted research was carried out.

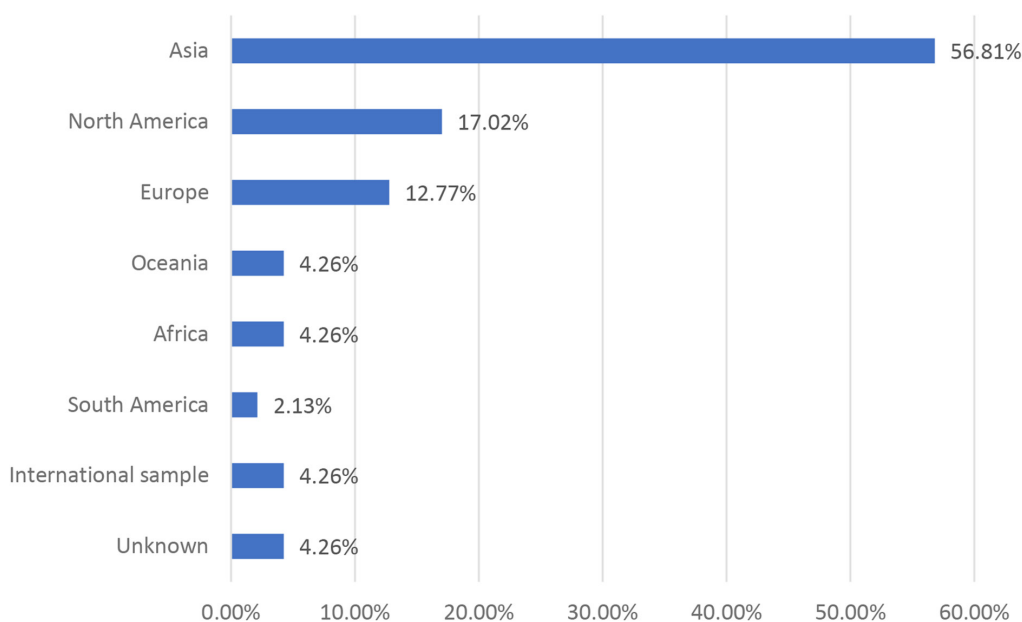


Figure 2. Article analysis by geographical location of the sample

Source: Authors' research

According to the analyzed data, it was found that the largest number of research, namely 56.81% was conducted in Asia - countries such as Taiwan (19.15%), India (10.81%), China (8.11%), Indonesia (8.11%), Malaysia (4.26%), Iran (4.26%) and Vietnam (2.13%). Asia is followed by North America with 17.02% of papers published and Europe with 12.77% of papers published. The lowest number of research was conducted on the sample of travelers in Africa (4.26%), Oceania (4.26%) and South America (2.13%). Two studies had an international sample (4.26%), and only in 4.26% of the research the sample coverage was not specified.

The analysis by the source of publication of the journal where the relevant paper was published is presented in the table that follows.

Table 1. Articles analysis by sources of publication

Source Title	Authors and year	f	%
Journal title			
ANATOLIA	Kim (2013); Sthapit (2017); Saayman & Van Der Merwe (2015a); Zare (2019); Dias & Dias (2019)	5	10,64%
Journal of Travel Research	Kim et al. (2014); Kim (2018); Kim et al. (2012); Stone et al. (2018)	4	8,51%
Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	Tsaur et al., 2020; Horng and Hsu (2021), Sipe & Testa (2017)	3	6,38%
Current Issues in Tourism	Gohary et al. (2020); Hung et al. (2016)	2	4,26%
Tourism Analysis	Kim et al. (2010); Zhong et al. (2018)	2	4,26%
Sustainability	Chen et al. (2020); Santos et al. (2020)	2	4,26%
Tourism and Hospitality Research	Quadri-Felitti & Fiore (2013); Bruwer & Rueger-Muck (2019)	2	4,26%
Annals of Tourism Research	Lee, 2015; Ritchie & Tung (2011)	2	4,26%
Others	Chandralal et al. (2013); Chen et al. (2021); Coelho et al. (2018); Coudounaris et al. (2017); Dagustani et al. (2017); Ernawadi et al. (2020); Mahdzar et al. (2015); Sthapit et al. (2019); Vada et al. (2019); Yu et al. (2019); Zhang et al. (2018); Tiwari et al. (2021); Saayman & Van Der Merwe (2015b); Park et al. (2021); Kala (2020); Cao et al. (2019); Wei et al. (2019); Castellani et al. (2020); Dagustini et al. (2018); Chen & Rahman (2018); Sharma & Nayak (2019); Bec et al. (2019)	22	46,81%
Conference Proceedings			
Tourism & Hospitality Industry 2018	Horvat et al (2018)	1	2,13%
Innovation and Best Practices in Hospitality and Tourism Research 2016	Mahzdar (2016)	1	2,13%
Book chapter			
The handbook of managing and marketing tourism experiences	Smith et al (2016)	1	2,13%
IN TOTAL	-	47	100%

Source: Authors' research

Almost all publications were published in journals on tourism and hospitality (Table 1), except for the Saayman & Van Der Merwe (2015b) study which was published in the *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*. There is only one study out of the total number of studies that was published in the book, as a special book chapter (Smith et al., 2016) that makes 2.13%. Two research studies were presented at the conference (Horvat et al., 2018; Mahzdar, 2016) that makes 4.26% while the remaining papers were published in scientific journals (93.48%). Therefore, 44 studies were published in 30 different scientific journals. The largest number of articles were published in *ANATOLIA* (10.64%), followed by *the Journal of Travel Research* (8.51%) and *the Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management* (6.38%). Based on the data presented above, in each of the following journals 4,26% of the papers were published - *Sustainability, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Annals of Tourism Research, Current Issues in Tourism, and Tourism Analysis*. Only 2.13% of the studies on the memorable tourism experience were published in the remaining journals.

Lastly, the authors dug deeper into the frequency of the MTE research topic. The results of the research have shown that, predominantly, eight forms of tourism were determined: destination, gastronomic, wine, eco, cultural, health, creative and sports tourism. According to the above, it

is evident that the most prominent form of tourism is the destination (44.68%) and gastronomic tourism (23.40%). Consequently, the models used in measuring the MTE in publications related to these two forms of tourism will be described below in more detail.

Table 2. Article analysis by the form of tourism where the MTE concept has been applied

Type of tourism	Authors and year	f	%
Destination tourism	Kim et al. (2010); Ritchie & Tung (2011); Kim, Ritchie & McCormick (2012); Chandralal & Valenzuela (2013); Kim (2013); Kim & Ritchie (2014); Mahdzar et al. (2015); Dagustani et al. (2017); Zhong et al. (2017); Coudounaris & Sthapit (2017); Coelho & Gosling (2018); Kim (2018); Zhang et al. (2018); Horvat et al. (2018); Vada et al. (2019); Wei et al. (2019); Yu et al. (2019); Chen et al. (2020); Castellani (2020); Ernowadi & Putra (2020); Tiwari et al. (2021)	21	44,68%
Gastronomy tourism	Chen et al. (2021); Lee (2015); Sthapit et al. (2019); Sthapit (2017); Tsaur & Lo (2020); Park et al. (2021); Stone et al. (2018); Kala (2020); Horng & Hsu (2021); Cao et al. (2019); Sipe & Testa (2017)	11	23,40%
Wine tourism	Saayman & Van Der Merwe (2015a); Saayman & Van Der Merwe (2015b); Quadri-Felitti & Fiore (2013); Bruwer & Rueger-Muck (2019); Santos et al. (2020)	5	10,64%
Eco tourism	Dagustani et al. (2018); Gohary et al. (2020); Mahdzar (2016)	3	6,38%
Cultural tourism	Chen & Rahman (2018); Zare (2019)	2	4,26%
Health tourism	Dias & Dias (2019); Smith et al. (2016)	2	4,26%
Creative tourism	Hung et al. (2016)	1	2,13%
Sport tourism	Sharma & Nayak (2019)	1	2,13%
Heritage tourism	Bec et al (2019)	1	2,13%
IN TOTAL	-	47	100%

Source: Authors' research

3.1. Destination Tourism

In most studies on the topic of destination tourism, a modified MTE model was used as a measuring instrument. Kim et al. (2010) used 8 dimensions in measuring MTE: hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaning, inclusion, knowledge and future intentions. On the other hand, most authors used MTE seven-dimensional scale (38.10%) meaning that all previously mentioned dimensions were included with the exception of future behavioral intentions (Kim et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013; Degustani et al., 2017; Zhong et al., 2017; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Chang et al., 2019; Tiwari et al., 2021). In 52.24% of the studies, the main focus was on testing the MTE factors' effects on tourist behavior intentions (Sthapit, 2013; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Mahdzar et al., 2015; Degustani et al., 2017; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017; Kim, 2018; Zhong et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Chen et al, 2020; Ernowadi & Putra, 2020, Tiwari et al, 2021). Also, in 9.52% of memorable tourism experience study's authors explored the statistically significant MTE dimensions impact on tourist satisfaction (Zhong et al., 2017; Kim, 2018). Mahdzar et al. (2015), in addition to MTE dimensions and behavioral intentions, added another attribute - destination construct. They concluded that destination attributes that affected pleasant moments could serve as a catalyst for creating MTE and visitors' behavioral intentions. Chen et al. (2020) and Coudounaris & Sthapit (2017) added the importance of emotions as another factor in measuring MTE. In relation to other studies, Ritchie & Tung (2011) applied a qualitative approach, conducting research with an in-depth interview and based theory methods. In doing so, they identified four dimensions of MTE: influence, expectations, consequentiality and recollection. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) also conducted an in-depth interview but with one difference. They analyzed the data obtained by

the inductive method, determining the cognitive and affective domain of MTE. The only study of MTE from the perspective of a tourist service provider was Castellani et al. (2020). The mentioned author added another dimension to the MTE model - the surprise. In conclusion, it can be said that hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaning, inclusion and knowledge were the most applied dimensions of the MTE model. A seven-dimensional MTE model is a valid instrument for measuring the MTE in the context of destination tourism. It has also been proven, on the basis of previous research, that MTE is a great predictor of satisfaction and tourists' behavioral intentions.

3.2. Gastronomic Tourism

Gastronomic tourism was identified as the second most common form of tourism for which the MTE was measured (23.40%). This statement is not surprising given the importance of gastronomy in generating economic benefits for tourist destinations. This is further proved by the estimated tourists' consumption of food and beverage - 25% of total expenditures (Wilkinson, 2016). For the mentioned reason, there is a need to create a memorable gastronomic experience for tourists. In his study of the exploration of the gastronomic experiences that tourists remembered in the long term, Lee (2015) used a modified MTE model of five dimensions: hedonism, local culture, meaning, knowledge and refreshment. The authors also wanted to establish the relationship between motivation, nostalgia and MTE in restaurants. Finally, the research proved that nostalgia has an indirect effect on personal feelings about MTE. In fine dining restaurants, the measurement of a memorable dining experience was analyzed by Tsaur & Lo (2020) applying four factors: excellent staff behavior, excellent and delicious food, high perceived value and pleasant atmosphere. Their research results have proved that guests prefer traditional cuisine because of the feeling that the *chef* has done his best for creating the atmosphere in the restaurant. According to an in-depth interview with tourists, Sthapit (2017) developed a model for measuring a memorable gastronomic experience that includes the following dimensions: local specialties and attributes of food (taste), authenticity, novelty, togetherness and social interaction, hospitality, service environment and gastronomic souvenirs. Also, the aforementioned author, Sthapit in collaboration with his associates (2019) revised his model by creating dimensions of novelty, co-creation experience, service environment, overload of choices, memorable gastronomic experience, experience enhancement and hedonistic well-being. The research has proven that the memorable gastronomic experience was mostly influenced by the following factors: co-creation of the tourist experience, the service environment and the intensification of memories. If one compares the last two models with the original MTE model, the novelty dimension is the only matching dimension. Referring to all of the publications analyzed, the only exception is the Chen et al. (2021) study. These authors used the original MTE model in measuring the MTE from the gastronomy point of view. Given this knowledge, it can be concluded that the original MTE model is not the most accepted one in the studies performed, particularly, for the conclusion is valid for gastronomic tourism. However, its modified versions are used in measurements and serve as a good basis for creating new scales and models.

4. CONCLUSION

These days, most probably also due to the strong impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, various tourism stakeholders are fighting fiercely for survival in the market. It is possible to achieve a competitive advantage whilst ensuring MTE. Therefore, the importance of this article review arises in the form of determination of the most important tourism forms of special interest where it is possible to realize an experience that tourists will remember in the long run. The research results have shown that the largest number of research on this topic was carried out in the

context of destination and gastronomic tourism. Having this in mind, the research was carried out on the causal relationship between different variables with respect to the identified forms of tourism which gave an insight into their measurement instrumentation. In destination tourism, the MTE model is most used in measuring a memorable experience whilst in the case of gastronomic tourism various scales have been applied to focus on the dimensions of novelty, food quality, service quality, and atmosphere. Also, based on the review of the selected 47 scientific articles, this study has identified and reduced the gaps in the literature at the same time presenting new directions for future research.

From a management point of view, the contribution of this research is extremely important for suppliers of tourism products and services. In accordance with the analyzed data, they could obtain information on tested and valid tools that could be used in the future to measure the memorable tourism experience with regard to the form of tourism they are engaged in. With this approach, major tourism stakeholders could obtain relevant results for determining strengths and weaknesses in the existing elements of their offer whilst focusing on their long-term improvement.

Despite the fact that this review provided insight into the current state of MTE, it also has certain limitations. An example of this is the fact that in this literature review, only articles published in English in the period from 2010 to 2021 were considered. For this reason, future research should cover a wider time frame and also include articles in languages other than English in the sample. Likewise, the proposal for future research is: (1) to include a larger sample in the review due to the representativeness of the results; (2) to include other relevant scientific databases whilst searching relevant research papers; (3) to apply cluster analysis by keywords and (4) in addition to the field of destination and gastronomic tourism, future research should focus more on measuring the memorable tourist experience of eco, sports, wine, health and heritage tourism.

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