

## Conceptualizing the Tourist Experience as a Form of Consumption.

Auteur 1 : LEMRAMI Elmahdi.

Auteur 2 : CHAREF Fatima.

**LEMRAMI Elmahdi,**

(PhD Candidate)

Faculty of Economics and Management of Kenitra, Ibn Tofail University, Morocco.

Laboratory of Economic Sciences and Public Policy

**CHAREF Fatima,**

(Research Professor)

Faculty of Economics and Management of Kenitra, Ibn Tofail University, Morocco.

Laboratory of Economic Sciences and Public Policy

**Déclaration de divulgation :** L'auteur n'a pas connaissance de quelconque financement qui pourrait affecter l'objectivité de cette étude.

**Conflit d'intérêts :** L'auteur ne signale aucun conflit d'intérêts.

**Pour citer cet article :** LEMRAMI EL M & CHAREF F (2025) « Conceptualizing the Tourist Experience as a Form of Consumption », African Scientific Journal « Volume 03, Num 33 » pp: 0959 – 0977.



DOI : 10.5281/zenodo.17966526

Copyright © 2025 – ASJ



---

## Abstract

This article offers a theoretical analysis of the literature on consumption experience, first tracing the origins of the concept, which emerged from critiques of the utilitarian view centered on consumer rationality. Early approaches emphasize a decision-making logic based on the objective evaluation of benefits, whereas later work introduces an experiential perspective that acknowledges the multisensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social dimensions of experience. The experience unfolds through stages ranging from anticipation to recollection, highlighting that perceived value is constructed before, during, and after consumption. The article then differentiates between ordinary experiences typically routine and functional and extraordinary experiences, characterized by their emotional intensity, memorability, or transformative potential. Consumption experience is also conceptualized as a dynamic interaction between the consumer, the offering, and the physical and social environment. In the context of tourism, this conceptualization becomes particularly salient: travel simultaneously involves immersion, hedonism, learning, and the pursuit of meaning. Finally, various explanatory theories of tourist experience psychological, experiential, and cognitive shed light on the mechanisms through which tourists construct, interpret, and evaluate their experiences.

**Keywords:** Consumption experience, Experiential approach, Ordinary and extraordinary experiences, Consumer–environment interaction, Tourism, Cognitive and psychological theories.

## Introduction

The consumption experience, a central notion in marketing, refers to the set of interactions and perceptions an individual undergoes when purchasing or using a good or service. It encompasses several dimensions : cognitive, emotional, sensory, social, and behavioral. From a rational perspective, the experience is grounded in objective criteria such as quality or price, yet it is enriched by subjective aspects in experiential contexts such as tourism. The contemporary conception of the consumer has diverged from a purely rational and cognitivist approach (Bourgeon & Filser, 1995). By highlighting the affective and emotional dimensions of consumption, the experiential paradigm offers a more hedonistic view of the individual, in which pleasure, emotions, and sensations play a central role (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). From this perspective, consumption becomes a means of organizing everyday life and accessing a form of happiness, particularly in societies characterized by abundance and overconsumption (Baudrillard, 1970). The consumer is thus perceived as an actor seeking well-being and personal fulfillment (Lipovetsky, 2006). This form of « *intimate consumption* » materializes through individual experiences that are embedded within a broader cultural framework (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979). In this context, the focus of this article is on the conceptual analysis of the consumption experience and its specific manifestations within the tourism domain. The study adopts a theoretical approach aimed at examining how the consumption experience has historically developed; how it manifests itself in ordinary or extraordinary forms; and how it can be understood through the main explanatory frameworks mobilized in the literature, particularly in the field of tourism. The central objective of this research is to deepen the understanding of the concept of consumption experience by offering a structured and integrative review of existing studies. More specifically, the study seeks, on the one hand, to clarify the conceptual foundations and constitutive dimensions of the consumption experience, and, on the other hand, to highlight the specificity of the tourism experience by mobilizing the main theoretical approaches that explain its mechanisms and its effects on the consumer. This analysis aims to enrich the conceptual framework of the consumption experience by emphasizing its dynamic, interactional, and contextual nature.

In order to achieve this objective, the article is structured into three complementary sections. The first section is devoted to the conceptual framework of the consumption experience. It revisits the origins of the concept by tracing its evolution in the literature before presenting its main dimensions. This section also situates the consumption experience through an analysis of the rational and then the experiential approaches, highlighting the gradual shift from a utilitarian perspective toward a more hedonic and subjective conception of consumption. The second section offers a conceptual comparison between ordinary and extraordinary experiences. It aims to clarify the distinction between these two forms of experience and to

demonstrate how the consumption experience can be understood as an interactive process resulting from the relationships between the individual, the context, and all the actors involved. Finally, the third section focuses on the study of the consumption experience in the tourism context. It presents the theoretical frameworks mobilized in the literature, notably the experience economy framework, psychological theories, and flow theory, which make it possible to better understand the mechanisms of tourist engagement, immersion, and satisfaction.

## **1. Conceptual Framework of the Consumption Experience**

The consumption experience extends far beyond a simple transactional act : it encompasses a set of emotions, perceptions, meanings, and interactions that unfold throughout the consumer's journey with a product, service, or brand. This concept has developed in parallel with the evolution of postmodern societies, characterized by a shift in perceived value from the functional to the emotional and symbolic. Consumption is therefore understood as a social, identity-constructing, and cultural act that surpasses the mere satisfaction of utilitarian needs. This initial exploration highlights that tourism is fully embedded within the broader logic of consumption, reproducing many of its dimensions. To properly understand what is specific to tourism, it is thus necessary to examine first the general concept of the consumption experience.

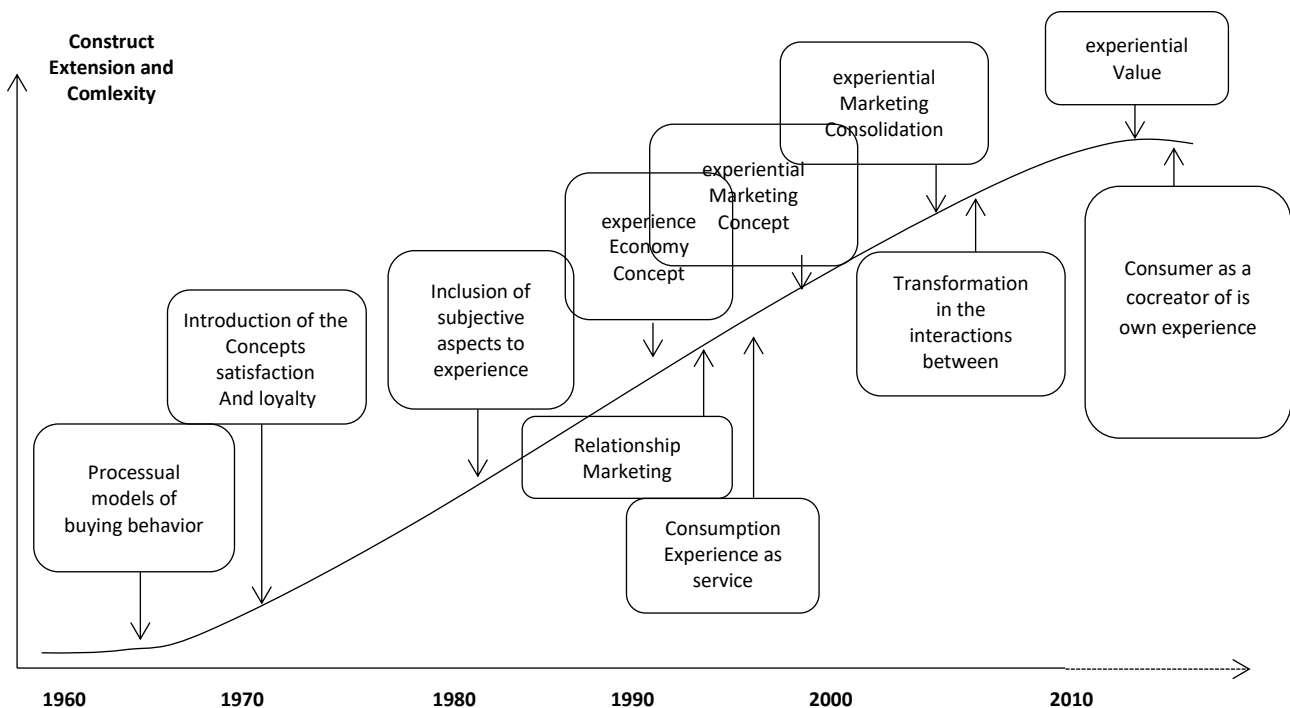
### **1.1 Origins of the Concept of the Consumption Experience**

The concept of the consumption experience emerged from the questioning of traditional and rational models of purchase decision-making, which regarded consumption as a sequence of behaviors driven exclusively by the pursuit of utility and the optimization of resources. In this classical perspective, consumption was reduced to a functional act governed by a cost–benefit logic, downplaying the subjective, emotional, and symbolic dimensions that nonetheless shape consumers lived experiences. As early as the 1940s, scholars began to perceive the need to go beyond the purely utilitarian dimension of goods by exploring what they enable individuals to live and feel. Norris (1941) already emphasized that the true motivation lay less in the object itself and more in the events and experiences it makes possible. This intuition would gradually be confirmed and expanded over the decades, as consumer society became increasingly infused with postmodern values, in which the search for meaning, pleasure, and emotions became a central driver of purchasing behavior (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) are widely regarded as the pioneers of a structured experiential approach, demonstrating that consumption involves « *a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria* ». This perspective marked a turning point by integrating the subjectivity and plurality of meanings experienced by the consumer. Subsequently, the work of Carbone and Haeckel (1994) clarified that the experience results from perception, defined as « *an impression formed from individuals encounters with products, services, or firms, incorporating sensory information* ». The contribution

of Pine and Gilmore (1999) was also decisive: these authors introduced the concept of the *experience economy*, according to which the experience itself becomes a product that engages the consumer in a personal and immersive manner. Similarly, LaSalle and Britton (2002) expanded the definition of experience as a sequence of interactions between an individual and a brand or its representatives, interactions capable of eliciting subjective responses.

Over time, the literature has structured a comprehensive approach in which experience is understood as an extended process, encompassing the pre-purchase phase, the act of purchase, and the post-purchase stage, and integrating not only choices and decisions but also memory, imagination, and symbolic meaning (Carù & Cova, 2003). Meyer and Schwager (2007) continued in this direction by describing experience as « *the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company* ». Thus, contemporary literature presents the consumption experience as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes far beyond a commercial interaction : it unfolds over time and mobilizes the senses, emotions, and cultural meanings. These developments are illustrated in Figure 1, which traces the progression of theoretical contributions on the consumption experience, and in Table 1, which synthesizes the major definitions proposed by leading authors.

**Figure N°1** : Advances in the literature on consumer experience



**Source** : Scussel, F. B. C., Fogaça, N., & Demo, G. (2021)

**Table N°1:** Definitions for experience in the field of consumption

Definition	Authorship
The experience is a subjective state of the individual, encompassing a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria	Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)
It is the impression formed through individuals' encounters with products, services, and firms a perception produced as individuals absorb sensory information	Carbone and Haeckel (1994, p. 9)
Experiences are events that engage consumers in a personal manner.	Pine and Gilmore (1999)
Experience consists of learning from consumers about the various elements of a context created by the service provider.	Gupta and Vajic (2000)
Experience is an interaction, or a series of interactions, between a consumer and a product, a company, or its representative, capable of eliciting a response.	LaSalle and Britton (2002)
The consumption experience comprises a series of activities and decisions occurring throughout the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase processes, extending over a period of time and being inherently personal.	Carù and Cova (2003)
The consumption experience is the internal and subjective response consumers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company.	Meyer and Schwager (2007, p. 3)

**Source :** Scussel, F. B. C., Fogaça, N., & Demo, G. (2021)

## 1.2. Dimensions of the consumption experience

The consumption experience cannot be reduced to an isolated transactional act; rather, it unfolds as a comprehensive and multifaceted process that encompasses the full range of emotions, perceptions, and interactions experienced by the individual. This perspective emerged as a critical response to traditional utilitarian models by integrating the subjectivity and complexity of personal experiences. A review of major contributions in the literature (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holt, 1995; Holbrook, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Palmer, 2010; Akaka et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Jain et al., 2017; Keiningham et al., 2017; Kranzbühler et al., 2018) highlights six essential dimensions that structure contemporary understandings of the consumption experience. The **emotional dimension** constitutes a fundamental pivot of the experience: it encompasses the feelings, emotions, and affective responses elicited through interaction with a product or service. This dimension is strongly connected to pleasure-seeking, escapism, and the

meaning that individuals project onto the consumed object. As demonstrated by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), the consumer is a « *fantasy player* »: their choices are shaped by pleasure, sensory stimulation, and imagination. The **cognitive dimension** refers to the mental processes mobilized by consumers as they process information, develop perceptions, store memories, and evaluate experiences. This dimension explains how prior learning, cultural norms, and marketing stimuli influence perception and overall satisfaction (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Jain et al., 2017). It contributes to the structuring of preferences and the orientation of future decisions. The **utilitarian dimension** represents the functional evaluation of consumption: consumers expect products or services to satisfy concrete needs, often tied to rational or practical objectives (Abbott, 1955; Addis & Holbrook, 2001). This dimension remains central even in hedonic contexts, as it ensures the relevance and perceived value of the offering. The **material dimension** encompasses all tangible aspects of the experience: the product, the physical environment, the atmosphere, social interactions, and even digital interfaces. These elements form a concrete backdrop that shapes the lived experience while fostering value co-creation among individuals, other consumers, and the brand (Schmitt, 1999; Addis & Holbrook, 2001).

The **contextual dimension** highlights that the experience is always situated: it depends not only on the spatio-temporal environment but also on the social and cultural structures in which it takes place. Palmer (2010) emphasizes the effect of contextual variables that shape both the perception and the quality of the experience. These contexts establish specific interpretative frameworks, contributing to the uniqueness of each experience (Akaka et al., 2015). These six dimensions, far from being compartmentalized, intertwine to form a comprehensive, coherent, and nuanced understanding of the consumption experience. They provide a valuable analytical foundation for studying contemporary consumer behavior and for apprehending the multidimensional value that consumers attribute to their experiences. After highlighting the richness and complexity of these dimensions, it is useful to note that more classical approaches, grounded in rationality, continue to shed light on consumer behavior.

### 1.3 Consumption Experience within the Rational Approach Framework

The consumer experience is a central theme in marketing and consumer behavior research. Among the perspectives that analyze it is the rational approach, which conceives of the consumer as a logical, calculating agent oriented toward utility maximization. This perspective is based on the idea that consumption decisions result from a deliberate process grounded in systematic information processing, cost-benefit analysis, and optimization-seeking behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Simon, 1955). Rooted in the tradition of classical economic theory and rational choice theory, this approach posits that individuals structure their decisions to derive maximum satisfaction from available resources (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Accordingly, the

consumption experience is viewed as a sequence of logical steps: need recognition, information search regarding possible solutions, evaluation of alternatives, selection of the optimal option, and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Within this framework, the consumer is perceived as capable of objectively comparing alternatives in order to select the one that maximizes expected value or satisfaction. Herbert Simon (1955) notably influenced this approach by introducing the principle of utility maximization, asserting that individuals tend to seek the highest possible satisfaction through their choices. However, Simon (1955) also highlighted the limits of this ideal rationality by developing the concept of consumers are constrained by cognitive capacities and access to information, limiting their ability to reach a perfectly optimized decision. Despite this limitation, the rational approach continues to consider decision-making as generally structured, coherent, and goal-directed (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). The rational model conceptualizes the consumer experience as a linear sequence of five fundamental stages:

- problem recognition,
- information search,
- evaluation of alternatives,
- purchase decision,
- post-purchase evaluation.
- This framework remains a reference point for modeling purchasing behavior in environments where information and choice conditions are considered relatively stable and predictable.

#### **1.4 .The Experiential Approach to Consumption**

The experiential approach offers a renewed perspective on consumption by defining it as a subjective and multidimensional experience that goes beyond the mere satisfaction of utilitarian needs. According to this approach, consumption is not solely a rational act aimed at optimizing a choice, but also a lived moment imbued with meaning, emotions, and pleasure. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) introduced the notion of hedonic consumption by exploring the playful, sensory, and emotional dimensions of the consumption experience, particularly within the leisure domain. Their contribution expanded the study of consumer behavior beyond classical models, emphasizing the importance of subjective and aesthetic reactions to products and services. They thus define the experience as: « *a subjective state of consciousness accompanied by a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria, highlighting that the consumer is a sensitive and active agent in the interpretation and construction of their experience* ». This approach also highlights the central role of the experiential context, i.e., the environment in which the experience occurs. Carù and Cova (2006) define this context as: « *an assemblage of product and environmental stimuli conducive to the occurrence of the experience* ». They stress that

companies do not create the experience directly, but rather provide a framework favorable to its emergence. The experience remains fundamentally subjective and depends on the individual perception of each consumer. The redefinition of consumption beyond a purely utilitarian framework is explained not only by the contributions of experiential scholars (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Marion, 2003; Cova & Cova, 2009) but also by the growing awareness of the central role of experience in understanding consumer behavior. Consequently, the consumer appears less rational, more hedonic, and oriented toward the pursuit of meaning and pleasure.

Continuing this line of thought, Carù and Cova (2006) describe the consumption experience as: « *a personal, often emotionally charged, lived experience based on interaction with stimuli (products, services) made available by the consumption system* ». This definition incorporates the personal, contextual, and affective dimensions of the experience. Moreover, other authors have adopted a conceptualization of the consumption experience that goes beyond its hedonic aspect. Filser (2002), for instance, proposes to consider it as: « *the entirety of positive and negative outcomes that the consumer derives from the use of a good or service* » encompassing perceived value both at the functional and emotional levels. Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2002) adopt a temporal approach to experience, arguing that it extends beyond the mere moment of consumption. For them, the experience encompasses four phases:

- anticipation,
- purchase,
- actual consumption,
- and memory,
- each of which may constitute an experience in itself. However, this segmentation has been criticized for being overly rigid, as it risks oversimplifying a phenomenon that is fundamentally fluid and non-linear. To synthesize these contributions, the literature also proposes structuring the consumption experience into several key stages, as illustrated in the following table.

**Table N°2:** The stages of the consumer experience

Anticipation experience	Shopping experience	The experiment itself	Experience of memory
Searching, planning, dreaming, stimulating, budgeting, or fantasizing about the experience.	Choice, payment, packaging, interaction with personnel, atmosphere	Sensation, satiety, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, irritation, transformation.	Photographs to relive past experiences, storytelling, and discussions with friends about past events.

**Source :** adapté d'Arnould, Price et Zinkhan (2002).

Beyond these general principles, it is essential to distinguish the different forms of experiences that consumers undergo, particularly in terms of their intensity and exceptional nature.

## **2. Conceptual Confrontation Between Extraordinary and Ordinary Experiences**

Building on experiential approaches, it is useful to differentiate the various forms that the consumption experience can take. Indeed, not all experiences possess the same level of intensity or the same capacity to disrupt everyday life. Some appear as exceptional, highly memorable moments, while others are more subtly integrated into routine and the continuity of daily life. This conceptual distinction between extraordinary and ordinary experiences helps to better understand the diversity of consumer experiences and illuminates how each contributes, in its own way, to the construction of meaning, identity, and consumer satisfaction.

### **2.1. The Distinction Between Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences**

Research on the consumption experience has primarily highlighted its emotional and subjective dimension, describing it as a vector of rupture and transformation for the consumer. This perspective emphasizes that consumption today is leveraged to generate strong and memorable emotions. Consequently, a successful experience is often described as « *extraordinary* » and unforgettable, particularly when it stimulates multiple senses and occurs in a highly themed and controlled environment (Cova & Cova, 2006). This reflects the evolution of contemporary consumer expectations, which seek intensity, escapism, and exceptional moments (Lipovetsky, 2006). In this regard, Lipovetsky (2006) stresses that it is no longer sufficient to merely sell a product or service; rather, it is necessary to offer the consumer an emotionally charged experience capable of fostering social and symbolic connections. This trend is situated within the broader notions of hyperreality and enchantment characteristic of postmodern society (Baudrillard, 1992), where the consumption experience must stand out through its spectacular and immersive qualities (Ritzer, 2005). Accordingly, the design of these carefully orchestrated experiences aims to transport the consumer beyond everyday life and evoke a sense of wonder (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Carbone, 2004). However, Cova and Cova (2003) warn against the risk of total manipulation of the experience by the brand, which could deprive the consumer of the freedom to appropriate the experience. To mitigate this risk, some managerial strategies deliberately leave room for consumer agency, allowing individuals to construct their own interpretations and derive personal meaning. In contrast to these spectacular experiences, the literature highlights the existence of so-called ordinary or infra-ordinary experiences (Badot & Filser, 2013 ; Barth & Antéblan, 2011). These experiences, rooted in daily routines, concern the consumption of goods and services perceived as mundane, yet they remain carriers of significant meaning. Carù and Cova (2006) argue that these ordinary experiences possess their own symbolic value, often overlooked by marketing, while fully contributing to identity construction and the sense of continuity in the

consumer's life. The distinction between ordinary and extraordinary experiences highlights two forms of pleasure: on the one hand, daily, simple, often subtle pleasure; on the other, exceptional enjoyment, more intense and enduring (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002; Cova & Deruelle, 2010). Roederer (2012) emphasizes that this intensity is conditioned by the exceptional nature of the interaction and its perceived rarity. However, Bruckner (2000) reminds us that human existence cannot consist solely of extraordinary moments: it is essential to preserve « neutral » or « empty » periods in order to appreciate contrast and maintain the pleasure of the extraordinary when it occurs. As he writes: « *One must rigorously preserve the uneven densities of existence, if only to enjoy the delight of contrast* »(p. 142). This perspective is accompanied by a recognition of ordinary experiences as acts of freedom, detached from market constraints and lived spontaneously (Bromberger, 1998). Numerous sociological studies also emphasize the intensity and depth that these ordinary experiences can embody (Goffman, 1949 ; Certeau, 1980; Kaufmann, 1997; Javeau, 2013). These everyday consumption moments, although seemingly banal, contribute to the re-enchantment of life, giving rise to forms of personal and social fulfillment (Bromberger, 1998). As Ladwein and Ouvry (2007) note, it is not necessarily the rarity or theatricality of an experience that gives it value, but the intimate meaning the consumer attaches to it within the course of their life.

Thus, whether classified as ordinary or extraordinary, the consumption experience is above all defined as an individual and subjective experience, whose value lies in its relationship with the consumer's everyday life.

## **2.2. Consumption Experience as Interaction**

Adopting an interactionist perspective (Lewin, 1939; Punj & Stewart, 1983), the consumption experience is based on the idea that consumer behavior results from a process involving multiple variables that interact at different levels (physical, psychological, sociological, etc.). While each factor in isolation may influence human behavior, it is essential to consider the interaction of these variables as a determining factor. Building on this principle, the POS (Person-Object-Scenario) model (Belk, 1975) is used to explain the decision-making process by defining the experience as the interaction between a Person (the consumer), an Object (of consumption), and a Situation (of consumption). Consequently, consumer behavior during the consumption experience appears to be influenced both by individual variables, task-related variables, and, most importantly, by the interaction between these two types of factors (Punj & Stewart, 1983). The term « *task* » refers to situational variables (Belk, 1974; 1975) as well as other variables related to the problem the consumer seeks to solve.

Punj and Stewart's (1983) study is underpinned by cognitive approach focusing on the consumer's choice and decision-making process. From a more experiential perspective, the interactionist

approach provides a framework for defining the consumption experience as an interaction among a person, an object, and a situation (Filser, 2008), with this interaction being « *value-generating* » for the consumer. Within this dynamic, the relationship between the object and the situation forms the experiential context, a concept often examined independently of the consumer's direct presence. Similarly, Bouchet (2004) describes the context of experiences as « *the set of organizational principles that give meaning to a situation* ». These conceptions of experience now lead us to analyze more specifically how they manifest in the tourism sector.

### **3. Consumption Experience in the Context of Tourism**

We will first examine in greater detail the definition of the consumption experience in tourism, while highlighting its relevance. Next, we will present the different phases of this consumption experience and then outline the factors that influence it. The tourism sector constitutes an experiential field where consumption is not limited to the acquisition of goods and services, but extends to the full range of sensory, emotional, cognitive, and symbolic dimensions of the traveler's lived experience. The tourist experience encompasses the entirety of interactions, perceptions, and emotions that a tourist undergoes before, during, and after the trip (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; 1999). This experience unfolds across different phases: anticipation, planning, participation, and recollection, all of which contribute to the perceived value and overall satisfaction of the traveler. From the anticipation phase, the tourist engages mentally with the experience by seeking information, projecting mental images of the destination, and imagining associated emotions (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). This stage is crucial, as it shapes expectations that will influence ultimate satisfaction. During the participation phase, the traveler interacts directly with the tourism offering, generating multisensory and affective experiences, often described as hedonic and eudaimonic (Kim et al., 2012). Finally, the post-experience phase is characterized by recollection and sharing, notably through photographs, narratives, and tangible souvenirs, reinforcing the identity-related and mnemonic dimensions of the journey (Morgan et al., 2010). From the perspective of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), the added value of a tourism offering lies in its capacity to evoke emotions, foster co-creation of experiences, and generate meaning for the individual. Consequently, tourist consumption is constructed through dynamic interactions between the traveler, tourism stakeholders, and the hosting context. The traveler is not a passive recipient but an active participant in shaping their own experience (Prebensen, Chen & Uysal, 2018).

Several scholars have sought to operationalize and measure these tourist experiences. Oh et al. (2007) developed a scale based on the « four dimensional experiential » mode proposed by Pine and Gilmore (2011) to assess experiences in the hospitality sector. Other studies have focused on specific contexts, such as religious sites (Bond et al., 2015), museums and botanical gardens

(Packer & Bond, 2010), or hiking trails (Uriely, Yonay & Simchai, 2002). Moreover, the emotional dimensions of tourist experiences have been thoroughly analyzed, particularly in tourist attractions (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany et al., 2015; Li, Deng & Moutinho, 2015). It should be noted that the tourist experience is shaped by both internal and external determinants. Internal determinants include personal motivations, values, expectations, and the traveler's cultural framework (Cohen et al., 2014). External factors encompass service quality, site staging, social interactions, and marketing communications. This combination of individual and contextual factors explains the highly subjective and individualized nature of tourist experiences. To deepen the understanding of these tourist experiences, it is also relevant to draw on various theoretical frameworks, which we now present.

### **3.1 Explanatory Theories of the Tourist Consumption Experience**

The tourist experience, due to its multisensory and emotional nature, cannot be explained by a single theory; rather, it draws on multiple conceptual frameworks from psychology, marketing, sociology, and management. These contributions help elucidate the complex processes through which tourists construct, interpret, and share their experiences. In this section, we present the theories most commonly employed to understand the tourist consumption experience, emphasizing their ability to illuminate the subjective, social, and cultural dimensions of this phenomenon.

#### **3.2.1 The Experience Economy Framework**

The concept of the experience economy, introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999), constitutes one of the cornerstones of contemporary analyses of tourist consumption. This theoretical framework highlights the progressive transformation of economic offerings from tangible products and standardized services toward meaningful and memorable experiences. From this perspective, consumers no longer seek solely a functional service but aspire to live a unique moment, emotionally and symbolically engaging. In tourism, the experience is co-created by both the service provider and the tourist, who plays an active role through interpretation and participation. This framework encourages industry actors to design experiential offerings that stimulate emotions and generate lasting attachment.

#### **3.2.2 Psychological Theories**

Psychological theories complement this perspective by explaining the underlying motivations that drive tourists to seek particular experiences. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) illustrates how expectations for personal fulfillment, esteem, or belonging can influence the choice of a destination or activity. Similarly, the «push-pull» theory (Dann, 1977) identifies internal drivers (e.g., desire for escape, need for relaxation) and external attractors (e.g., specific qualities of a destination) that shape the decision to travel. These motivational dynamics influence tourists final perceptions and satisfaction, thereby contributing to the quality of the experienced tourism encounter.

### **3.2.3 Flow Theory**

Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) provides a complementary perspective by describing the optimal state of immersion and engagement that tourists may experience during an activity. Flow occurs when there is a balance between the challenges encountered and the skills mobilized, resulting in intense concentration and profound enjoyment. In the context of tourism, this experience is often observed during sports activities, cultural explorations, or immersion in nature (Kim, 2021; Zátori, 2016). Promoting these flow conditions represents a strategic objective for designing engaging tourist activities that generate memorable experiences.

## Conclusion

This article has examined in depth the concept of consumption experience, highlighting its complexity and the plurality of perspectives addressed in the literature. The contrast between viewing experience as an offer shaped by the firm and as a subjective experience lived by the consumer illuminates the persistent tension between marketing control and individual interpretive freedom. In this research, we adopt a decidedly subjective conception of consumption experience, considering the brand primarily as a facilitator a framework that fosters the development of a unique and personal experience (Semprini, 2005). Such an experience is above all the result of a meaning-making process, in which emotion arises from the personal interpretation that the consumer assigns to their journey, perceptions, and interactions. Applied to tourism, this concept proves particularly relevant: the tourist experience emerges as a multidimensional process, engaging emotional, cognitive, sensory, and social dimensions at each stage of the journey. These dimensions are critical for tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

The major contributions of this research lie in clarifying key theoretical contributions, structuring an as-yet fragmented conceptual field, and linking explanatory models applicable to tourism. It thus provides an integrative foundation for researchers seeking to analyze the complexity of the tourist experience, both in its subjective and contextual dimensions. However, several limitations should be highlighted. On the one hand, the study remains primarily theoretical and does not involve empirical validation. On the other hand, the diversity of conceptual approaches makes it difficult to establish a unified model. Finally, certain dimensions, particularly those related to culture or immersive technologies, warrant further investigation. These limitations open promising avenues for future research. Empirical studies could examine how tourists experience and interpret ordinary and extraordinary experiences across different cultural contexts. Moreover, the evolution of immersive technologies, such as virtual or augmented reality, represents a fertile ground for analyzing new forms of tourist experiences. Finally, an integrative modeling approach, accounting for rational, emotional, and interactive dimensions, would constitute a significant advancement in the comprehensive understanding of consumer experience.

## References

- Abbott, L. (1955). *Quality and competition: an essay in economic theory*. Columbia University Press.
- Addis, M., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). On the conceptual link between mass customisation and experiential consumption: an explosion of subjectivity. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 1(1), 50-66.
- Akaka, M. A., Vargo, S. L., & Schau, H. J. (2015). The context of experience. *Journal of service management*, 26(2), 206-223.
- Arnould, E. J., Price, L. L., & Zinkhan, G. M. (2002). *Consumers*. McGraw-Hill.
- Badot, O., & Filser, M. (2013). Re-enchantment of retailing: Toward Utopian islands 1. In *Consuming experience* (pp. 166-181). Routledge.
- Barth, I., & Antéblian-Lambrey, B. (2011). *Les petites histoires extraordinaires des courses ordinaires: vous ne retournerez plus faire vos courses de la même façon après la lecture de cet ouvrage*. Éd. EMS, Management & société, DL 2011.
- Baudrillard, J. (1970). *La société de consommation: ses mythes, ses structures*. Gallimard.
- Belk, R. W. (1974). An exploratory assessment of situational effects in buyer behavior. *Journal of marketing research*, 11(2), 156-163.
- Belk, R. W. (1975). THE OBJECTIVE SITUATION AS A DETERMINANT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR. *Advances in consumer research*, 2(1).
- Bond, N., Packer, J., & Ballantyne, R. (2015). Exploring visitor experiences, activities and benefits at three religious tourism sites. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(5), 471-481.
- Bouchet, P. (2004). L'expérience au cœur de l'analyse des relations magasin-magasinier. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition)*, 19(2), 1-19.
- Bourgeon, D., & Filser, M. (1995). Les apports du modèle de recherches d'expériences à l'analyse du comportement dans le domaine culturel Une exploration conceptuelle et méthodologique. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition)*, 10(4), 5-25.
- Bromberger, C. (Ed.). (1998). *Passions ordinaires: du match de football au concours de dictée*. Bayard (USA).
- Bruckner P., *L'euphorie perpétuelle : essai sur le devoir de bonheur*, Grasset, Paris, 2000.
- Bruckner, P. (2000). *L'Euphorie perpétuelle*. Grasset.
- Carbone, L. P., & Haeckel, S. H. (1994). Engineering customer experiences. *Marketing management*, 3(3), 8-19.
- Carbone, V. (2004). *Le rôle des prestataires logistiques en europe-Intégration des chaînes et alliances logistiques* (Doctoral dissertation, Ecole des Ponts ParisTech).

- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2003). Revisiting consumption experience: A more humble but complete view of the concept. *Marketing Theory*, 3(2), 267–286
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2006). Expériences de consommation et marketing expérientiel. *Revue française de gestion*, 162(3), 99-113.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2006). How to facilitate immersion in a consumption experience: Appropriation operations and service elements. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 5(1), 4-14.
- Cohen, G. L., & Sherman, D. K. (2014). The psychology of change: Self-affirmation and social psychological intervention. *Annual review of psychology*, 65(1), 333-371.
- Cova, B., & Cova, V. (2009). Les figures du nouveau consommateur: une genèse de la gouvernamentalité du consommateur. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition)*, 24(3), 81-100.
- Cova, B., & Cova, V. (2009). Les figures du nouveau consommateur: une genèse de la gouvernamentalité du consommateur. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition)*, 24(3), 81-100.
- Cova, B., & Deruelle, V. (2010). A la recherche du plaisir dans les études consommateurs: le cas des Orange Labs. *Management & Avenir*, 31(1), 14-30.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Csikszentmihaly, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (Vol. 1990, p. 1). New York: Harper & Row.
- Dann, G. M. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement and tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 4(4), 184-194.
- De Certeau, M. (1980). *L’Invention du quotidien, tome 1: arts de faire*, UGE, Paris, coll 10/18.
- Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. (1979) *The World of Goods*. Basic, New York.
- Douglas, M., & Isherwood, B. (1979). *The world of goods* ‘, New York, Basic Books.
- Filser, M. (2002). Le marketing de la production d’expérience: statut théorique et implications managériales. *Décisions marketing*, 28(4), 13-22.
- Filser, M. (2008). ÉDITORIAL: L’expérience de consommation: concepts, modèles et enjeux managériaux. *Recherche et applications en marketing*, 1-4.
- Goffman, E. (1949). Presentation of self in everyday life. *American Journal of Sociology*, 55(1), 6-7.
- Goffman, E. (2023). The presentation of self in everyday life. In *Social theory re-wired* (pp. 450-459). Routledge.
- Gupta, S., & Vajic, M. (2000). Nature of Experiences. *New service development: Creating memorable experiences*, 33.

- Hirschman, E. C., & Holbrook, M. B. (1982). Hedonic consumption: emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *Journal of marketing*, 46(3), 92-101.
- Holbrook, M. B. (1999). Consumer value. *A framework for analysis and research*, 5-14.
- Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2), 132–140.
- Holt, D. B. (1995). How consumers consume: A typology of consumption practices. *Journal of consumer research*, 22(1), 1-16.
- Hosany, S., & Gilbert, D. (2010). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations. *Journal of travel research*, 49(4), 513-526.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Caušević, S., & Odeh, K. (2015). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences: Further validation of the destination emotion scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(4), 482-495.
- Jain, R., Aagja, J., & Bagdare, S. (2017). Customer experience—a review and research agenda. *Journal of service theory and practice*, 27(3), 642-662.
- Javeau, C. (2013). *Sociologie de la vie quotidienne*. QUE SAIS-JE.
- Kaufmann, J. C. (1997). Le monde social des objets. *Sociétés contemporaines*, 27(1), 111-125.
- Keiningham, T., Ball, J., Benoit, S., Bruce, H. L., Buoye, A., Dzenkowska, J., ... & Zaki, M. (2017). The interplay of customer experience and commitment. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 31(2), 148-160.
- Kim, H., Koo, C., & Chung, N. (2021). The role of mobility apps in memorable tourism experiences of Korean tourists: Stress-coping theory perspective. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 49, 548-557.
- Kim, J. H., Ritchie, J. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel research*, 51(1), 12-25.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kranzbühler, A. M., Kleijnen, M. H., Morgan, R. E., & Teerling, M. (2018). The multilevel nature of customer experience research: an integrative review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 20(2), 433-456.
- Ladwein, R., & Ouvry, M. (2007). Entre recherche et production d'expérience dans les environnements commerçants: l'expérience vécue. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 33(6), 271-295.
- Ladwein, R., & Ouvry, M. (2007). Entre recherche et production d'expérience dans les environnements commerçants: l'expérience vécue. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 33(6), 271-295.

- LaSalle, D., & Britton, T. A. (2003). Priceless: Turning ordinary products into extraordinary experiences. *(No Title)*.
- Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of marketing*, 80(6), 69-96.
- Lewin, K. (1939). Field theory and experiment in social psychology: Concepts and methods. *American journal of sociology*, 44(6), 868-896.
- Li, Z. F., Deng, S., & Moutinho, L. (2015). The impact of experience activities on tourist impulse buying: An empirical study in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 191-209.
- Lipovetsky, G. (2006). Le bonheur paradoxal. *Essai sur la société d'hyperconsommation*, 377.
- Marion, G. (2003). Le marketing "expérientiel": une nouvelle étape? Non de nouvelles lunettes. *Décisions marketing*, 30(2), 87-91.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396
- Meyer, C., & Schwager, A. (2007). Understanding customer experience. *Harvard business review*, 85(2), 116.
- Morgan, M., Lugosi, P., & Ritchie, J. B. (Eds.). (2010). *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives*. Multilingual Matters.
- Norris, R. T. (1941). The Theory of Consumer's Demand. New Haven CT: Yale Satisfaction Decision. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17, 460-469.
- O'Shaughnessy, J., & Jackson O'Shaughnessy, N. (2002). Marketing, the consumer society and hedonism. *European journal of marketing*, 36(5/6), 524-547
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications. *Journal of travel research*, 46(2), 119-132.
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications. *Journal of travel research*, 46(2), 119-132.
- Palmer, A. (2010). Customer experience management: a critical review of an emerging idea. *Journal of Services marketing*, 24(3), 196-208.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). The experience economy. *Harvard business review*, 76(6), 18-23.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage. *(No Title)*.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Prebensen, N. K., Chen, J. S., & Uysal, M. S. (Eds.). (2018). *Creating experience value in tourism*. Cab International.

Punj, G. N., & Stewart, D. W. (1983). An interaction framework of consumer decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 181-196.

Ritzer, G. (2005). *Enchanting a disenchanted world: Revolutionizing the means of consumption*. Pine Forge Press.

Roederer, C. (2012). Contribution à la conceptualisation de l'expérience de consommation: Émergence des dimensions de l'expérience au travers de récits de vie. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition)*, 27(3), 81-96.

Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. (2019). *Consumer Behavior TWELFTH EDITION Global Edition*. Pearson Education Limited.

Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(1-3), 53-67.

Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(1-3), 53-67.

Scussel, F. B. C., Fogaça, N., & Demo, G. (2021). Consumption experience: proposal for a unifying concept. *REMark*, 20(1), 175.

Semprini, A. (2005). *La marque, une puissance fragile*. Vuibert.

Simon, H. A. (1955). A behavioral model of rational choice. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 99-118.

#### [The Effect of Experience Value on Private Brand Purchase Intention](#)

Tung, V. W. S., & Ritchie, J. B. (2011). Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences. *Annals of tourism research*, 38(4), 1367-1386.

Uriely, N., Yonay, Y., & Simchai, D. (2002). Backpacking experiences: A type and form analysis. *Annals of tourism research*, 29(2), 520-538.

von Neumann, J., & Morgenstern, O. (1953). *Theory of games and economic behavior*. Princeton University Press.

Von Neumann, J., & Morgenstern, O. (1944). *Theory of games and economic behavior*. Princeton University Press.

Zátori, A. (2016). Experiential travel and guided tours: following the latest consumption trends. In *Tourist behaviour: An international perspective* (pp. 115-123). Wallingford UK: CABI.