Psychology and the tourist experience

Course Code: DSV290_1, Credits: 5 credits
Offered by: Faculty of Social Sciences, Norwegian School of Hotel Management
Semester tuition start & duration: Autumn, 1 semester
Exam term: Autumn
Language of instruction: English

Course staff
Svein Larsen (Course coordinator)

Introduction
This course highlights the relationship between psychology and the other social science disciplines, particularly highlighting the particularities of psychology as a social science within the behavioral disciplines in general (i.e. psychology's methodological, epistemological and substantial particularities), and within tourism and hospitality research in particular. The psychology of the tourist experience will be highlighted first through focusing on expectations (including motivation and intuitive judgments) and a discussion of how such expectancies contribute in forming impressions before, during and after tourist trips.

Learning outcome

Learning Outcomes: Knowledge, Skills and Competences.

Knowledge:

After completing the course the student should have knowledge of:

- How to understand the concept of tourist experience and how psychological theories can shed light on the phenomenon
- How theories of social thinking can contribute to understanding of tourists' actions and attitudes.
- Methods to measure and map the tourist experience

Skills:

- Students will be able to reflect on and discuss different perspectives on tourism experiences and be able to assess the research work done in this area.
- Students will learn to use psychological theories to study current issues in psychological research tourism.
- Students will be able to distinguish between trustworthy tourism research, and which have
limited value.

General competencies:

- The student should be able to reflect on and discuss the social sciences, particularly psychology with reference to tourism.
- Students will learn to identify and reflect on psychology’s contribution to tourism investigation, as distinct from the other social sciences’ contribution.

Content

**General description:** This course highlights the relationship between psychology and the other social science disciplines, particularly highlighting the particularities of psychology as a social science within the behavioral disciplines in general (i.e. psychology’s methodological, epistemological and substantial particularities), and within tourism and hospitality research in particular. The psychology of the tourist experience will be highlighted first through focusing on expectations (including motivation and intuitive judgments) and a discussion of how such expectancies contribute in forming impressions before, during and after tourist trips. A second focus will be on problems pertaining to the concept of ‘destination’ and ‘events during travelling’, including models for understanding the meeting between the tourist and other people who populate the tourist arena, such as for example other tourists, tourism- and service workers, local people. This meeting between various individuals will be analyzed through a focus on social cognitive aspects of social interaction, including the issue of how tourists are perceived, how they perceive themselves, how people perceive services and emotional work, and other psychological aspects of working under the tourist gaze. A third important aspect of the tourist experience is constituted by memories, which is why central perspectives on memory (particularly memory as a constructive process) will be discussed with respect to tourists experiences.

**The student is expected to know, and be able to discuss:**

- Psychological contributions to tourism research, particularly concepts of expectations, intuitive judgments (intuition), motivation, social cognition, memory as a constructive process.
- The particulars of psychology as a social science, its level of analysis and its methodological diversity. Measurement and other methodological problems relating to psychological studies within tourism and hospitality research.
- Various forms of tourism and various forms of tourists and how one may describe the differences?
- Perspectives on tourist motivations, tourists’ judgment of risk, tourists’ worries, and how such individual factors in tourism can be operationalized and measured.
- Perspectives on social cognition and perception, particularly social perception.
including tourists‘ self-presentations and self-understanding.
- Characteristics of the ‘service stage‘ and the ‘dramaturgical model‘ of ‘emotional labor‘ and some management consequences of these characteristics.

Define the concept of ‘the tourist experience‘.

Teaching methods
The course will be offered as an ordinary course with lectures, discussions and student presentations if there is sufficient number of participants. If few participants the course will be offered as a supervised reading course with some meetings between professor and the participants.

Required prerequisite knowledge
None

Exam

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Individual term paper, 4000-5000 words.

Paper presentation.

Open to
PhD candidates that have chosen the Major in hospitality and tourism or candidates from other similar research training programs.

Participants should be accepted as PhD students within the Major of Hospitality and Tourism, or similar research education.

Course assessment
Early dialogue and end evaluation.

Literature


Research, 28, 597-617.


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