Emotions within a social context of group adventure holidays: a tourist perspective

By

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

October 2023

Abstract

This thesis examines tourists' emotions within the context of group adventure holidays. Despite extensive research on emotions in tourism and marketing, little is known about the social aspect of emotions in shared consumption contexts. By examining emotions in group holiday, this study addresses previously ignored aspects of the experiential perspective of consumer behaviour. In particular, it explores the ways in which emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in group adventure trips. Adventure tourism as an experiential consumption encounter presents a context rich in emotions, and this study investigates (i) how individual emotions are influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience; (ii) how emotions are communicated in a group tourism experience, and the role of social interaction in this process; (iii) how the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions; and (iv) which emotions tourists attribute to the group tourism experience within an adventure holiday setting.

This thesis adopts an interpretive methodology to uncover the participants' meaningful experience of emotions. The study employs semi-structured interviews with 32 Saudi tourists to develop a detailed understanding of their subjective experiences within a specific social context. Thematic analysis was used to generate themes from the data to answer the research questions.

The findings demonstrate that tourists' emotional experiences are shaped by the interplay between the individual's personal and social processes of emotions. Emotions are expressed and communicated by emotional expression, social interactions, and behaviours, and facilitated by five social context dimensions: group diversity, social escape, supportive environment, socialisation; and the perception that other group members are authentic. The presence of both positive and negative emotions is identified, and the emotional experiences of joy and freedom, fear and thrill, and frustration and annoyance are shown to be both prevalent and attributed to the group adventure holiday. In this context, it is noteworthy that fear and thrill are perceived as pleasant and peak experiences. The study also finds that positive emotional contagion tends to be more evident in group adventure holidays and significantly influences group bonding and cohesion. The findings also show that emotional experiences are complex and interconnected, and their appraisal dimensions differ based on the context in which they occur, with several appraisal combinations contributing to the elicitation of emotions in group adventure holidays.

The main contributions of this thesis are fourfold. First, this study contributes to the experiential perspective of consumer behaviour by providing an in-depth understanding of emotions within a shared consumption context. It focuses on the role of the social context in tourist emotions. Second, it contributes to tourism literature by identifying how emotions are experienced, expressed, and communicated in group adventure holidays, thereby highlighting the significant processes through which emotions are shaped in a specific context. Third, it identifies context-specific emotions attributed to group adventure holidays, highlighting their nuances, and the role of cognitive appraisal in shaping them. Fourth, it contributes to the literature in tourism and marketing by providing an understanding of the forms of emotional contagion and its role in the context of group adventure holidays. This research also has practical implications for the tourism industry. It provides valuable insights to inform tourist experience design and management and enable tourism providers to tailor their offerings to better meet consumer needs. The implications for future research are also considered.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I thank Allah, the most gracious and merciful, for easing the path for me, without which this thesis would not be complete, for his kindness that surrounded me in my most difficult times, and for his blessings that was my companion on this journey.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support of the exceptional individuals around me; to only a few can be named here.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Scott McCabe and Professor Heidi Winklhofer, for their unwavering guidance and invaluable insights throughout every stage of this doctoral journey. Their expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of this research. I cannot thank you enough for the time and effort invested in me. Your kindness and support will always be remembered.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my lovely husband and sons. I have been fortunate to have an amazing husband and best friend who has provided enduring support throughout my doctoral pursuit. He has been my partner in every sense, sharing the triumphs and tribulations of this academic endeavour. To my life partner and confidant, Meshal Alotaibi, thank you for being the silent strength behind the pages of this thesis. I also, lovingly dedicate this thesis to the joy of my life, my champions, my sons Fahad and Waleed; thank you both for your love, patience, and motivation.

I am immensely grateful to my family for their support, love, and encouragement during my journey. My mother Norah Alnashmi and my sisters Asma, Nashmiah, Arwa, and Sarah have been my biggest supporters, and I cannot thank them enough. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my friends and fellow PhD colleagues in the Business School - Hafsa, Reem, and Norah - who have been a constant source of inspiration and support. Our shared discussions and collaborative efforts have enriched the intellectual landscape of my work.

I would like to thank my country the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and my employer Umm Al - Qura University for granting me the scholarship to pursue the doctoral degree at the university of Nottingham.

I extend my appreciation to the participants of this study for their time and contributions, which have been integral to the empirical foundation of this thesis.

To all those whose names may not appear here but who, in various ways, have played a part in this endeavour, I express my heartfelt gratitude.

Last but not least, I would like to thank myself for believing in me despite all the obstacles I have faced.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The tourist experience has been addressed as a primary construct in the academic literature in recent decades (Kim, and So, 2022; Uriely, 2005; Tung and Ritchie, 2011), and emotions are a core component of these experiences, significantly enhancing their value and memorability (Bastiaansen et al., 2019; Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken 2017). In addition, according to widely accepted definitions by Schmitt (1999) and Verhoef et al. (2009), they also play a crucial role in the consumer experience. This thesis examines emotions in the context of group adventure holidays. It concentrates on tourists' emotional experiences and the role of the social context in shaping them, and aims to identifying how emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in group adventure holidays and how they influence the tourist experience.

Adventure experiences are distinctive types of extended service encounters that last longer than other types of holidays, happen in an intimate atmosphere, and are rich in social interactions (Arnould and Price, 1993). As such, they offer a fruitful context within which to examine social interactions and to identify social emotion mechanisms. The setting for this study is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hereafter Saudi Arabia), a large and rapidly developing country, which is currently implementing ambitious plans to develop its tourism sector as part of a national strategy, known as Saudi Vision 2023, to diversify its economy and reduce oil dependency. While the country receives millions of pilgrims a year to participate in the Hajj and Umrah, the government now aims to make the country a major tourist destination for cultural, heritage and ecotourism, and adventure tourism (Abuhjeeleh, 2019). As a result, it provides an opportunity to examine emotions in an emerging market context and from a non-Western perspective, something which is rarely done in tourism literature.

The rest of this chapter introduces the thesis by offering the background and the context for studying the tourists emotions in group adventure holidays. It begins by explaining the research context and focus, then identifies the research aim and objectives and sets out the research questions. It goes on to provide an overview of Saudi Arabia, including its geographic, demographic, and socio-cultural features, and the far-reaching efforts the Saudi government are making to boost the country’s tourism sector.

1.2 Research Context and Focus

Tourist experience creation is a crucial aspect of tourism and marketing. Tourists are consumers, and, through the consumption process, they play a significant role in determining the outcomes of their experiences. Tourists, therefore, have a huge impact on the ways that businesses plan, design and execute experience delivery and, hence, on the outcomes of such experiences. Given that products in tourism are intangible and experiential, the experience economy paradigm (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) has influenced the study of the experience in tourism and marketing literature, shifting the focus away from the concept of service delivery towards experience creation.

Tourism experiences are highly subjective and require significant cognitive processing (Malone, McCabe, and Smith, 2014). Emotions are significant in shaping people's experiences, as they are linked to action tendencies (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer, 1999); therefore, understanding people's emotions is essential to understanding them as a whole (Lazarus, 1991). This study therefore investigates the subjective meanings of emotional experiences within a particular social context in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of those experiences and the role of the context in shaping them.

1.2.1 Emotions in the tourism literature

In tourism, the study of emotions is growing (Hosany, Martin, and Woodside, 2021), and the extant literature has emphasised the importance of emotions in the tourist experience. However, a gap remains in our understanding of how emotions are shaped within a social context. Within tourism literature, emotions are often studied from two perspectives basic emotions and dimensional theories, and quantitative methods of inquiry are often employed (e.g., Bigné, Andreu, and Gnoth, 2005; Hosany and Gilbert, 2010). In addition, research on emotions in tourism has typically focused on their outcomes and links to satisfaction and future intention, while the meaning of emotional experiences and the processes that shape them are often overlooked. Moreover, few studies have addressed emotions as meaningful subjective experiences or considered their complexities. This study, by contrast, examines emotions as subjective experiences from a phenomenological perspective (Goldie, 2002), and is built on the understanding that emotions are subjective experiences shaped by the individual and the social context (Denzin, 1984).

Although the experiential perspective in consumer behaviour highlights the significance of emotions as part of the consumer experience, it has generally often taken a perspective of emotions as individual experiences only. By contrast, this study considers emotions within the social context and part of the social experience. In doing so, it draws on Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) conception of 'the consumption touch points' during the consumption journey, specifically the customer-owned touch points (emotions) and external touch points (social). According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), understanding these touch points is essential to effective service design, delivery, and management of a particular experience in tourism, so this study aims to understand the interplay between those two types of touch points during the consumption journey. As the tourism industry is oriented towards experience creation, a study that contributes to tourist experience design, process, and impact will be beneficial for both tourists and tourism service providers.

1.2.2 The tourist experience as a social consumption journey

The tourist experience is a social consumption journey which is consumed with and influenced by others (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987). However, consumer behaviour literature has often focused on the individual consumption journey, neglecting the shared consumption journey (Hamilton, Ferraro, Haws, and Mukhopadhyay, 2021). This is starting to change, but further research is needed. For instance, recent studies have highlighted the role of travel companions in influencing the tourism experience and evaluating its quality (Park, Woo, and Nicolau, 2020; Su, Cheng, and Huang, 2021). Moreover, Verhoef and colleagues (2009) have noted the importance of the social environment in the customer experience. The study of the customer experience in different types of groups and how group members influence fellow customers experience have been highlighted as an avenue for future research (Verhoef et al., 2009).

Examples of social consumption experiences within tourism include group tours, guided holidays, and adventure tours. Tourists participating in group tourism experiences have many opportunities to meet new friends and engage in social bonding (Liechty, Ribeiro and Yarnal, 2009), and research suggests this is one of the primary motivations for tourists to participate in group experiences (e.g., Fisher and Price, 1991; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Duke and Persia, 1996). Adventure tours provide both social support to group members and the opportunity to share experiences with others and face challenges in a collective atmosphere (Schmidt, 1979). Thus, as Yarnal and Kerstetter (2005) stated, these group experiences enrich the feeling of belonging to a community and are "contagious sources of 'emotional community'" (p. 375).

Group holidays therefore provide a rich context to understand social interactions (Lin, Zhang, Gursoy, and Fu, 2019), hence social emotion mechanisms. However, much of the scholarly research on groups has approached them from an organisational behaviour perspective. This is not always appropriate, as group holidays differs from work groups in a number of ways. For instance, they are a form of travel that lasts for a relatively short duration and, while workgroup participants are often compelled to join the group to meet the organisation's goals, tourists in travel groups typically pursue personal goals and customised experiences that meet their individual needs. Within this context, Scuttari and Pechlaner (2017) called for further research on the role of social interactions in emotions. Therefore, developing upon the limited research addressing emotions within a particular social context, this study focuses on understanding how the social context of the shared consumption experience shapes consumer emotions in group travel experiences.

1.2.3 Adventure tourism as an experiential consumption context

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) has defined adventure tourism as a holiday trip comprising two or three elements: physical activity, the natural environment, and cultural engagement (Rantala, Rokenes, and Valkonen, 2016), and, according to the ATTA, demand for it is rising (ATTA, 2023). Outdoor adventure experiences became a popular option for travel during the pandemic (Lapan, 2021), and a recent survey of 2023 travel trends (Booking.com, 2023) found that 73% of travellers surveyed choose ‘out-of-comfort zone’ vacations, typically adventure tourism. Adventure tourism is, therefore, a growing industry, in that research would yield significant empirical contributions, and it is becoming a popular type of tourism for new destinations, like Saudi Arabia, which aim to capitalise on the tourism sector.

Adventure tourism provides an ideal experiential consumption context to study emotions for several reasons. Adventures often occur in extreme and remote settings where risk, challenge, novelty and strong emotions are evoked (Crompton, 1979; Zuckerman, 1994). Adventure holidays therefore provide an engaging experience that stimulates our emotions and senses, and adventure activities, such as white water rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993) and skydiving (Celsi, Rose, and Leigh, 1993) have been identified as 'powerfully evocative contexts' (Arnould, Price, and Moisio, 2006, p.107). The particular nature of the experience makes adventure tourists selective and often highly demanding consumers (Williams and Soutar, 2009), and it is important for service providers to uncover the processes at play in such adventures, as they typically occur in settings over which providers have little control.

Adventure experiences often occur in groups because they involve risky activities that require specialised equipment and usually necessitate the company of a team of individuals or guides. However, while adventure holidays are designed to be challenging, the level of risk can be controlled. They therefore offer a pathway to study the experience of intense emotions, such as fear, in both controlled and more risky situations (Buckley, 2016). However, despite this, little attention has been paid to the role of emotions in adventure tourism (Scuttari and Pechlaner, 2017). This has led to calls for further research to provide a greater understanding of the psychological processes of adventurers as consumers of such a distinctive consumption context (Schneider and Vogt, 2012). This study responds to these calls by addressing the social and psychological aspects of adventure tourism as an experiential consumption context.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

As noted above, emotions are an essential element in the tourist experience. However, despite the developing body of research on emotions in tourism literature (Hosany, Hunter-Jones, and McCabe, 2020; Hosany, Martin, and Woodside, 2021), the social aspect of emotions has so far received scant attention. As a result, the aim of this study is to explore how emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in group adventure holidays, and how they influence the tourist experience. In order to achieve this aim, three objectives for the study have been developed:

- Firstly, it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of the social context of the group adventure holiday in the experience of emotions;
- Secondly, it aims to understand how emotions are communicated and expressed in group tourist experiences;
- Thirdly, it aims to identify the types of emotions related to group adventure holidays, how they are experienced, and their role in determining group tourist experience outcomes.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives set out above, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?

RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?

RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?

RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?

To best examine tourist's subjective emotional experiences within the social context, a qualitative methodology was adopted for this study. This open, natural approach facilitated the exploration of a potentially sensitive topic, such as emotions, and the individual social experience linked to them. It enabled the research to focus on individuals' descriptions of emotions from a first person perspective, thereby allowing each individual's perceptions of their social environment to be taken into account. The interpretive approach adopted also provided a different perspective to the conventional view of emotions as static responses to stimuli by uncovering participants' subjective experiences of their lived emotions and how they make sense of them. As the data for the study was collected in Saudi Arabia, the following section provides an overview of the country.

1.5 Saudi Arabia as the Research Context

Saudi Arabia is one of the largest countries in the Middle East, constituting 80% of the Arabian Peninsula, and a rising economic and political power. A member of the G20 group of major economies and the world's biggest oil exporter, it is the largest economy in the Middle East by GDP and eighteenth in the world (World Bank, 2022). Neighbouring seven Arab nations, Saudia Arabia is located at the heart of the Arab world geographically, and it also occupies a significant position in the Islamic world. As the home of the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, it attracts millions of Muslim pilgrims each year to perform Hajj and Umrah, and more than two billion Muslims worldwide face towards the Ka'bah in Makkah when they pray each day. The country's economy is still largely dependent on oil, comprising around 68% of total revenues and 45% of GDP (KPMG, 2018); however, in 2016, the government launched Saudi Vision 2030, an ambitious national strategy, which encompasses social, economic and national development with the aim of creating a more diverse economy. The three strategic objectives of the vision are a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation

(Vision 2030, 2016), and the country has seen rapid social change as a result, and the opening up of sectors such as tourism, entertainment, sport, and foreign investments.

1.5.1 Geographic features

Covering an area of about 2.15 million square kilometres (850,000 square miles) (CIA, 2023) Saudi Arabia has much to offer tourists in terms of its geography, especially those seeking adventure. The country enjoys a diverse climate and terrain, including deserts, mountains, such as the Sarwat mountains in the west of the country, and extensive coastlines on both the Red Sea (to the west) and the Arabian Gulf to the east (See Figure 1.1). Saudi Arabia also has 1300 islands, 1150 of which are in the Red Sea, and offer coral reefs, white shores, and abundant wildlife and marine life. The climate varies significantly across its vast terrain, with inland cities like Riyadh and the northern provinces experiencing desert weather, with hot, dry summers and cold winters, while the southern province, which has mild summers and cold winters. The coastal areas enjoy mild weather all year around, making them appealing destinations for tourists, especially during the winter.

Figure 1.1 Map of Saudi Arabia

Source: Geology.com (n.d.)

1.5.2 Demographic and cultural features

Saudi Arabia has a population of around 32,175,224 people (Saudicensus, 2022), and the average age is 29, making it a relatively youthful country demographically. It is also a Muslim country, and Islamic principles impact every aspect of life, including culture, social structures, politics, and finance. Also, many Saudi nationals belong to distinct tribal groups, who have held power and influence in the Arabian Peninsula for generations, either as settled agriculturalists or nomadic Bedouin. As a result, the culture in Saudi Arabia could be described as mainly collectivist (Cassell and Blake, 2012; Mellahi and Wood, 2001), influenced by both the Islamic religion and the tribal system, which also plays a significant role in individuals values and behaviours, and in shaping social norms (Aldraehim, Edwards, Watson, and Chan, 2012). For instance, it is essential to be loyal to one's family and tribe, and this loyalty greatly influences individuals' behaviours and choices (Abdrabboh, 1984). However, the country is now experiencing rapid socio-economic transformation as a result of Saudi Vision 2030, with fundamental changes in all aspects of life, notably in relation to opportunities for women (Pilotti, Abdulhadi, Algouhi, and Salameh, 2021), and, as the country opens up to the world, Saudi society may witness further changes and loosening of previously strict tribal affiliations.

1.5.3 Saudi tourism sector

As noted above, tourism in Saudia Arabia is mainly religious, with Muslims from around the world visiting the two holy cities and performing Hajj and Umrah (Henderson, 2010). While other forms of tourism have been practised domestically to a limited extent, international tourism was severely restricted by very tight controls on tourist visas. However, since the launch of Vision 2030, visa restrictions have eased and electronic permits to visit Saudi have been launched in order to boost the tourism sector. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism contributed 9.7% to Saudi GDP in 2019, and this is expected to increase by an average of 11% annually, making it the fastest-growing tourism destination in the Middle East. The government is also undertaking large scale projects to develop the sector, notably the development of the west coast and the Red Sea islands, with an emphasis on high quality and sustainable offerings that will make the country a major tourism destination (Red Sea Global, n d). In addition, several mega projects are under construction, including Neom, an entirely new smart city, Amaala Resort, Qiddiya, and Wadi Al Disah Natural Reserve (Daye, 2019). These major investments in the sector are forecasted to enhance the country's GDP, attracting millions of visitors each year, and creating thousands of jobs.

While the impact of these developments on the economy is evident, their impact on the culture and society in Saudi Arabia, and on tourists themselves, is less clear. Therefore, a primary rationale for conducting this study in the context of Saudia Arabia is to support the development of the sector, for both domestic and international, tourists by exploring the social context of group adventures and their impact on tourists' emotional experiences as tourism consumers.

The next section provides a summary of the chapters that constitute this thesis.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This study is presented in eight chapters. This chapter has set the scene for the study by introducing the study of emotions in the context of tourism literature, identifying the tourist experience as a social consumption journey, and explaining why adventure tourism provides an ideal experiential consumption context in which to study tourists' emotions in groups. It has also set out the research aim and objectives and research questions. In addition, the chapter has provided an overview of Saudi Arabia, highlighting its geographic, demographic and cultural features, and explaining the efforts being made to develop the tourism sector as part of the country's ambitious plans to diversify the economy and reduce dependency on oil.

Chapter 2 provides a tripartite review of the literature pertinent to this study. Part I focuses on existing research into the tourist experience, the social service experience, and the group tourism experience. It demonstrates the development of the consumer experience from a marketing perspective and of the tourist experience. It then highlights the significance of the social aspect in an experiential consumption context in tourism and marketing literature, and explains why group tourism provides a rich context in which to understand the tourist's social consumption journey. Part II of the chapter examines the literature on emotions, focusing on the major approaches adopted in psychology and social psychology, and demonstrates the complexity involved in understanding a phenomenon such as an emotion within its social context. Part III of the review presents adventure tourism research, demonstrating why this type of holiday provides a setting for rich and meaningful emotional experiences, which facilitates the examination of emotions and their interplay with and within the social context.

Chapter 3, the methodology chapter, provides a detailed description of the qualitative methodology used and the rationale for adopting it in this study. It explains why an interpretive approach to understanding the tourist's subjective experience of emotions within a specific context was adopted. A detailed explanation of the participant recruitment process is provided, and the steps taken in the data collection and analysis are set out in detail.

Chapter 4 provides the first part of the findings and analysis and sets the scene for the following chapters by identifying the social context dimensions that facilitate tourists' emotional experiences in group adventure holidays. This chapter demonstrates the role of the social context of a holiday in the interplay between the individual's personal and social processes of emotions. Chapter 5 attends to the underlying mechanisms of social emotions, highlighting how emotions are communicated and transferred between tourists in group holidays. Chapter 6 focuses on identifying prevalent emotional experiences and how they are experienced in the study context. This chapter reveals the sources of those emotions and their influences on the tourist experience.

Chapter 7, the discussion chapter, connects the key findings from chapters 4-6 to the research questions and the broader literature presented in Chapter 2, in order to answer the research questions and fulfil the research objectives.

Chapter 8 concludes the study by demonstrating how the research questions have been addressed and identifying the main theoretical, methodological and practical contributions the study makes. The research limitations are acknowledged and avenues for future research are proposed. The chapter concludes with the researcher’s reflections on the study.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the thesis by discussing the background and focus and introducing Saudia Arabia as the research context. The research aim, objectives, and questions and the thesis structure have also been presented. The next chapter provides a review of pertinent literature which addresses emotions, the tourist experience, and adventure tourism.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene by discussing the literature on the three main components of this study: the tourist experience, the emotions involved, and adventure tourism. The chapter identifies issues in the literature regarding the study of emotions research in tourism, notably the gap in the research addressing the intersection between emotions and the social context in the collective consumption experience. This chapter is comprised of three parts. Part I reviews the literature on the tourist experience by first introducing the concept from an experiential marketing perspective and highlighting its subjective nature. It then discusses the social aspect of the experience, including the group tourism experience and social interactions.

Part II explores emotions from both individual and collective viewpoints. In particular, it highlights the potential role of the interplay between individual and social dimensions in shaping tourists' emotional experiences, as few empirical studies have examined this intersection to understand the tourist experience in a collective context, such as group holidays. It begins by discussing the major perspectives on emotions in the literature, identifying their potential and limitations in relation to rich, complex and context-specific phenomena, such as emotions (Richins, 1997). Cognitive appraisal theory is discussed as one way to understand the process of emotion elicitation, and the underlying mechanisms of socially induced emotions and the different types of social emotions are examined. This part concludes by discussing the theory of emotional contagion, which is widely used to explain emotional sharing, and the concept of social appraisal as (a type of emotional contagion).

Part III introduces adventure tourism as a research setting that offers an ideal opportunity to study the emotions, the social context, and the social interactions within tourist groups. It identifies prominent concepts linked to adventures, including the dimensions which characterise adventure tourism, and identifies the significant role emotions play in such experiences. The review demonstrates that most of the studies in adventure tourism have focused primarily on the physical environment and the specific types of adventure activities, underlining the need for studies such as this one which foreground the social context of adventure tourism and its role in shaping the psychological experiences tourist go through.

2.2 Part I: The Tourist Experience

Tourism and hospitality are part of the experience economy, and they are among the pioneering service marketing fields in which experience marketing is manifest (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). As Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) note, emotions play a key role in shaping the experiential dimension of the consumer journey through the three F's (fantasies, feelings and fun), with individuals' experiences affected by the emotions and behaviours of those around them. This study builds on consumer research that suggests that the customer experience is experiential and subjective (Arnould and Price, 1993; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) and focuses on its emotional and social aspects. This section aims to provide an overview of the tourist experience, and begins by defining the key concepts involved.

2.2.1 Experience: definitions and background

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term 'experience' in several ways, one of which is "the fact of being consciously the subject of a state or condition, or of being consciously affected by an event". Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) studied consumer behaviour and theorised the experiential aspect as part of consumption, referring to it as 'Hedonic consumption' which is "those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982, p. 99). Later, Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the experience economy paradigm, which shifted the focus of the businesses from service delivery to experience creation. They stated that "An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, p98). Later, Schmitt (1999) introduced the concept of experiential marketing, distinguishing it from traditional marketing on the basis that, while the latter assumes that consumers are rational decision-makers, the former assumes they are both rational and emotional beings. In this context, Schmitt (1999) defined experience as the process of living through things that lead to sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and experienced values.

2.2.1.1 The consumer experience

To better understand the components of experience within a consumption context, Hirschman (1984) identified three factors that motivate consumers to pursue experience: cognition (stimulating thought processes), sensation (stimulating the senses) and novelty (the desire for new stimuli). Furthermore, Pine and Gilmore (1998) proposed four realms of experiences:

entertainment, educational, aesthetics, and escapism. In addition, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) examined the experience as a whole and developed the concept of flow, which focuses on an individual's active participation and immersion in the experience. Flow has been identified as a key component of the adventure tourist experience and is discussed in greater detail in Part III (See Section 0).

Pine and Gilmore's (1998) conceptualisation of the customer experience highlighted the significance of its subjective emotional component, describing it as "inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level" (p. 99). Customer experience has also been described as a journey with several touch points (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), an approach which suggests that the experience can be enhanced by managing, improving, or redesigning the touch points. These ways of conceptualising the customer experience underline the importance of emotions in shaping that experience, something this study builds upon. For instance, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) identify emotions as one of the customer-owned touch points which influence the customer experience. They also acknowledge the social dimension of the journey, highlighting the role played by other consumers, peers, and employees in the customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). This recognises that consumer emotions and behaviour, and, therefore, their experience evaluations, are influenced by the social context of the experience (Wang, Stoner, and John, 2019), signalling the need for scholarly work exploring the role of the social environment in the customer experience to better understand the customer experience journey.

2.2.1.2 The tourist experience

Cohen (1972) is regarded as one of the earliest scholars to study experience in the context of tourism. His approach to conceptualising the tourist experience started by studying international tourists, and his work shifted the view of tourists from seeing them as one large homogenous group to various groups of individual tourists. He argued that what distinguishes a tourist experience from other experiences is the combination of novelty and formality to a certain degree. MacCannell's (1973, 1976) work on authenticity was also pioneering in its attempts to understand the tourist experience. He described authenticity as the tourist escape of modernity to search for reality in other times and places that are untouched by modernity (MacCannell, 1976). An 'authentic' experience has also been defined as "one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a 'real' world and with their 'real' selves" (Handler and Saxton, 1988) (p. 243). The work on authenticity and its types and meanings has

continued to develop; however, it is beyond the scope of the current study to trace this development in detail (e.g., Rickly, 2022).

Although scholars have defined experience in various ways, the nature of the tourism experience is complex, and it is challenging to define and measure because of its various meanings, dimensions, and components (Volo, 2009). Theoretical shifts towards postmodern conceptualisations have influenced the view of the tourist experience as a subjective phenomenon which is influenced by the nature of the tourism context, the individual's perception, and the type of touristic experience (Urry, 2002; Uriely, 2005), all of which play a significant role in determining the meaning of the tourist experience (Uriely, 2005). While postmodernists emphasise the diversity and richness of life (Denzin 1991; Ryan 2002), other scholars have also highlighted the view of the tourism experience as subjective phenomena. For example, Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1369) define the tourist experience as:

> "An individual's subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e., affective, cognitive, and behavioural) of events related to his/her tourist activities which begin before (i.e., planning and preparation), during (i.e., at the destination), and after the trip (i.e., recollection)"

Cohen (1979) definition of the tourist's experience which is "travelling for pleasure (as opposed to necessity) beyond the boundaries of one's life-space assumes that there is some experience available 'out there', which cannot be found within the life-space, and which makes travel worthwhile" (p.182), differentiated the tourist experience from everyday life. However, McCabe (2002) suggests that it is wrong to exclude the daily experience in this way, as the tourist experience consists of both the 'peak experience', which is different from everyday life, and the 'supporting experiences', such as eating, sleeping, and playing (McCabe, 2002). This concept of the peak touristic experience and the supporting consumer experience was further developed by Quan and Wang (2004), who argued that the supporting consumer experience could not substitute for the peak experience, or vice versa. For example, based on their argument, if the primary motivation for a tourist is a specific adventure activity, the transportation or the food cannot compensate for the failure of the adventure; equally, as the peak tourist experience cannot replace the supporting consumer experience, the failure of the latter would cause the failure of the whole experience. Thus, the overall quality of the tourist experience depends on the quality of both the peak experience and the supporting consumer experience (Quan and Wang, 2004; McCabe, 2002).

There are two established approaches in the literature to understanding the tourist experience. The social science perspective investigates the motivations, activities, interests, meanings and attitudes, and the search for authenticity. The second approach adopts a marketing and consumer behaviour perspective and focuses on the typology of tourism activities, the satisfaction or quality of experience, the importance of human interactions, prior knowledge and past experiences, and the role of external stimuli. Mossberg (2007) introduced factors that influence the tourism experience, namely: the effects of the physical environment; the effects of personnel; the effects of other tourists; the effects of products and souvenirs; and the effects of a theme or story. The psychological and social dimensions play important roles in shaping the tourist experience. However, research on consumer behaviour has primarily focused on individual consumption journeys, neglecting shared consumption contexts (Hamilton, et al., 2021), and there is a need for more studies to include both perspectives. Therefore, the following section reviews the extant literature on the social context of the tourist experience, with a particular focus on social interactions within the tourist group experience.

2.2.1.3 The social context of the tourist experience

Social interactions and the presence of others form a vital part of the social environment within a consumer experience or a service encounter. The presence of others in a service experience has mainly been discussed in terms of direct customer-to-customer interactions, which involves an active presence, and the mere presence of others, which involves passive or indirect interactions (Kim and Lee, 2012). Thus, customers may affect one another indirectly by being part of the environment or more directly through specific interpersonal encounters (Bitner, 1992). In an attempt to better understand the social environment in a service encounter, Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) developed a social servicescape model, which incorporates a social aspect into the previous physical servicescape model created by Bitner (1992). Tombs and McColl-Kennedy's (2003) model is built on five components which are: the event context (purchase or experience), the social density (number of people in the space), the social elements (others' emotional display), individual's internal response (customer response), individual's cognitive response (behaviour intention or actual reactions).

The view that customers play an instrumental role in the service process calls for greater understanding of the influence of the presence and participation of other customers in the overall service evaluation or success. According to Pearce (2005), tourists perceive the

presence of other tourists in the experience in several views: they may be seen as a positive influence, such as a potential friend or helper, in a negative light, such as a source of disturbance or a competitor, or as having a neutral influence, part of the background scenery. In tourism, these perceptions of other customers have been found to influence tourists' purchase intentions, including brand attachment (Hyun and Han, 2015). Moreover, the characteristics of fellow customers as part of the experience environment play a significant role in the customer focal experience. For example, customer characteristics have been found to impact satisfaction, hedonic value, and future intentions (Dorothea Brack and Benkenstein, 2014; Line and Hanks, 2019; Nguyen, Ferraro, and Sands, 2020).

The existence of others has also been shown to significantly influence the service experience (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault, 1990; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000), especially in terms of customers' emotional and psychological responses (Miao and Mattila, 2013; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2010) and subsequent decision making (Murphy, 2001). The mere presence of others has been shown to exert a passive influence on an individual's experience, including through their observations of the emotions, behaviours, and characteristics of others (Kim and Lee, 2012; Brocato, Voorhees, and Baker, 2012). This can, potentially, destroy the consumer experience (Hoffman and Bateson, 1997), and this type of social influence has recently received more attention from scholars (e.g., Line, Hanks, and Kim, 2018; Nguyen, et al., 2020; Line and Hanks, 2019). In particular, other customers' emotional displays have been found to affect the emotions and perceptions of the individual customer (Jang, Ro, and Kim, 2015; Mattila, Hanks, and Wang, 2014). For instance, Jang et al. (2015) found that positive emotions displayed in the social servicescape enhanced the perceived image of the service provider, in this case, a restaurant, and Mattila et al. (2014) found that the displayed emotions of others in a service failure influenced observing customers' reactions and behaviour intentions.

The above discussion has highlighted the significant role other tourists play in shaping the tourist experience. This signals the need for research that explains the role of the social environment in shaping the tourist experience (Nguyen et al., 2020; Line et al., 2018). One type of tourism experience that represent a rich social environment for tourists is the group holiday, therefore the following section discusses the literature on the group tourism experience and on social interactions within the tourism context.

2.2.2 Tourist group experience

The group experience provides an ideal context within which to examine the interactions between the social and emotive aspects of the tourist experience. A group is typically regarded as a collection of individuals who share some level of commonality, who interact with each other, and who take each other into consideration (Olmsted and Hare, 1978); groups are, therefore, interactive, and the behaviour of one individual can influence other group members (Crompton, 1981). When we consider this definition, it is evident that tourism activities are often group oriented and social (Urry 1990), and that group behaviours, interactions and emotions influence the individual tourist experience. For instance, group-based behaviour can modify and reinforce individual behaviour (Thornton, Shaw, and Williams, 1997), and research suggests that social influence may significantly modify or reinforce the tourist's psychological processes (Thornton et al., 1997). However, according to reviewed literature in this study the connection between the group tourism experience and emotions is often neglected. The study of the tourist experience has mainly focused on the individual experience, not on his or her experience in a group.

Groups play an important role in tourism and have different forms from a group of family or friends holidaying together to packaged group tours (Vaske, Carothers, Donnelly, and Baird, 2000). Group tours are a well-established type of tourism in which a community is temporarily formed by tour guides and tour members, all of whom live together, so that group member's behaviours, interactions and lived emotions influence the whole group experience (Tsaur, Cheng, and Hong, 2019). Moreover, in the group tourism experience, the individual tourist experience is influenced by the group members' goals, expectations, values, and norms (Crompton, 1981).

Early attempts to study groups in the tourism context focused on understanding group formation in packaged tours (Gorman, 1979; Schmidt, 1979; Schuchat, 1983), and the role of tour guides in these groups (Holloway, 1981). The individual and situational factors that influence group formation were defined (e.g., Gorman, 1979; Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Schuchat, 1983), and later conceptualized as the characteristics of group tours (Quiroga, 1990). These include physical proximity, group size, age, shared experiences, and tour guide actions, all of which play a significant role in tour group formation, socialization, and development (Gorman, 1979; Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Schuchat, 1983; Quiroga, 1990).

As Schmidt (1979) noted, the group experience also provides social support to group members, creating opportunities to share experiences with others and to face challenges in a collective atmosphere. Tourists participating in group experiences have opportunities to bond socially and make new friends (Liechty, Ribeiro, and Yarnal, 2009) and to gain knowledge (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991), and group experiences can therefore enrich feelings of *communitas* and act as "contagious sources of 'emotional community'" (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005, p. 375). Indeed, socialisation with other tourists or group members is considered one of the main motivations to participate in group travel (e.g., Holloway, 1981; Fisher and Price, 1991; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Levy and Getz, 2011), and, in some cases, may be a greater motivation than the destination or the experience itself (Holloway, 1981). Other benefits of group travel for individuals include convenience, safety, an opportunity to relax, save money and time, and to have travelling companions (Schmidt, 1979; Schuchat, 1983; Quiroga, 1990); however, the social benefits are the main reason for participating in group tours (Holloway, 1981; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Levy and Getz, 2011).

Group experiences, such as packaged tours and group cruise trips, are rich contexts of social interactions that significantly shape these experiences (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005; Levy and Getz, 2011). The study of the group tourism experience has mainly focused on packaged group tours (Quiroga, 1990; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005; Levy and Getz, 2011; Yin and Poon, 2016); however, social interactions, escape, and seeking knowledge have been identified as influencing both tourist motivation and satisfaction in group sightseeing experiences (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). In addition, other tourists' appearance, behaviours, and language have been found to influence the tourist group experience (Yin and Poon, 2016). For example, Yin and Poon (2016) found that reports of adverse incidents and misbehaviour among other group members were linked to negative travel experiences, underlining the importance of managing the group tour experience effectively (Tsaur et al., 2019).

As noted above, travel companions can have a powerful influence on the success of the holiday experience (Heimtun, 2011), and friendly interactions between group members have been shown to influence brand loyalty in packaged tours (Hsu, 2000). The tour guide plays a critical role in delivering the group tourist experience and is key in differentiating packaged group tours from other group experiences, such as family or friendship groups (Cohen, 1985; Schmidt, 1979; Quiroga, 1990; Huang and Hsu, 2010). Scholars have identified various responsibilities for tour guides, such as offering information, promoting and fostering group interactions, and providing security and protection, and roles such as guide and mentor,

entertainer, leader and facilitator (Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Schuchat, 1983; Cohen, 1985). Although most studies of group tours have focused on the role of the tour guide, their interactions with other group members as part of the service environment can influence the experience positively or negatively. A recent study by Chang, Tsaur, Yen, and Lai (2020) found that perceived 'fit' among group members and with group leaders influenced the positive emotions, satisfaction, and rapport between them. ''Fit' in this context referred to similarity in characteristics among the group members and between the group members and the guide. In addition, Tsaur and Ku (2019) found that tour leaders' emotional intelligence fostered positive emotions, rapport, and satisfaction among tour members. However, both these studies measured the associations between these constructs quantitatively, hence, they lack in-depth insights into how group members and tour leaders influence the individual tourist experience.

While social interactions are an inherent part of any tourism experience (Morgan and Xu, 2009), they are a particular feature of three activities: group tours, backpacking, and cruise trips. Their varying characteristics facilitate different forms of intragroup interactions: verbal, physical, and emotional (Crompton 1979; Cartwright and Zander 1980), and create different group experiences. Table 2.1 provides an overview of studies of group tour experiences in tourism, highlighting the social interactions which are a central component of such trips.

Table 2.1: Group Tour Experiences in Tourism

Study	Type of groups	Focus of the study	Main themes	Group processes
Quiroga,1990	Packaged group tours	The group formation and group processes	The characteristics of the group, processes (intragroup interaction and group cohesion)	Social interaction (general)*/cohesion
Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991	Sightseeing Tours	Tourists' motivation and satisfaction	Knowledge seeking, social interaction, and escape	Social interaction (general)
Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005	Cruise ship vacation experience	Social interactions in the cruise ship experience	Social interactions, and the role of tourism spaces	Social interactions (general)
Tucker, 2005	Packaged group tours	Tourist social interactions	Social interactions, self-performances of tourists in packaged tours	Social interactions (general)
Wu, 2007	Packaged group tours	Satisfaction	Social interactions and satisfaction	Social interactions (tourist to tourist interactions)
Liechty, Ribeiro, and Yarnal, 2009	Older women's group travel	The benefits of group tour leisure experience for older women	Fun, self-expressiveness, social relationships development	Social relationships (general)
Huang and Hsu, 2010	Cruise ship vacation experience	Cruise experience and satisfaction	Social interactions and satisfaction	Social interactions (tourist to tourist interactions)
Levy and Getz, 2011		Individual and contextual elements that influence positive social interactions and evaluation of the experience	Mood, perceived similar interests, cultural motives, and extroversion	Social interactions (general)

Lin, Zhang, Gursoy, and Fu, 2019		Tourist to tourist interactions	Engagement satisfaction	Social interactions (tourist to tourist interactions), (self-disclosure), perceived cohesion, perceived intimacy

* General social interactions included all the social activities in the group, including direct interactions with the guide and with other tour members.

As these studies suggest, social interactions are a significant part of the group tour experience (Holloway, 1981; Quiroga, 1990; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Wu, 2007), and central to group tours (Holloway, 1981; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Levy and Getz, 2011). The multiple interactions with the physical and human environment influence tourists' lived and remembered experiences (Huang and Hsu, 2010), and interactions with fellow tourists, locals, and tour guides form core components of the tourist experience (Arnould and Price, 1993; Morgan, 2007). Therefore, the next section examines previous literature on social interactions.

2.2.2.1 Social interactions

Social interactions have been examined in the literature in two ways: via a segmentation approach and as tourist interaction types, highlighting their role in various tourism outcomes. The segmentation approach has been utilised to categorise tourists into different segments (Plog, 1974, 2001; Cohen, 1972; Smith, 1989; Pearce and Lee, 2005; Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, and Tavitiyaman, 2017; Kastenholz, Carneiro, and Eusébio, 2018). For example, Fan et al. (2017) employed the six dimensions of social interactions (purposes, determinants, activities, intensity, impacts and attitudes) to describe the multiple social contacts between tourists and hosts. In the second perspective, social interactions have been conceptualised as a component of the tourist experience. The types of social interactions discussed in this context are: (i) tourist-to-local community; (ii) tourist-to-tourism service providers, and (iii) tourist-to-tourist (Huang and Hsu, 2010). Different kinds of interaction, partly shaped by different travel contexts (e.g., purpose and place of stay), may impact visitors differently (Kastenholz et al., 2018). For example, volunteer tourism has been shown to require specific types of social interactions (Chen, 2015), and this suggests that other types of tourism, including adventure tourism, also involve specific types of social interactions.

Kastenholz and colleagues (2018) have suggested that a number of factors affect tourists' social interactions, including "motivations, interpersonal attraction, cultural background, type of destination, travel context, rules of social behaviour, costs and benefits perceived" (p. 404). The first type of social interaction identified in tourism literature involves tourist interactions with the host community. These typically occur in three particular settings: when a tourist

purchases a product, when a tourist and a member of the host community interact in the same environment, and interactions in visitor's information centres or with employees. A stream of research has focused on these social interactions with the host community, and their influence on satisfaction, destination image and intention to revisit in particular has been identified (Pizam, Uriely, and Reichel, 2000; Morgan and Xu, 2009; Choo and Petrick, 2014, Chen, 2015).

Another type of social interaction is that between tourists themselves, also referred to in the marketing literature as the customer-to-customer interaction (Grove and Fisk, 1997; Martin and Pranter, 1989). This type of interaction can be defined as "the direct interaction between unacquainted customers encountered in the servicescape" (Huang and Hsu, 2010, p.83), and typically fall into two types: 'on-site' and 'off-site', with the latter usually referred to as 'word-of-mouth' (Reichenberger, 2017). According to Miao and Mattila (2013) "customer-to-customer dynamics often have a greater impact on customer experiences than provider-to-customer" interactions (p. 92), due, in part to tourists' close physical proximity and the shared experiences. For instance, Cohen (1972) argued that international travellers prefer interacting with travelling companions who share the same culture and language rather than with the host community, and Kastenholz et al. (2018) also found that tourists on organised tours interact more with other tourists than with the host community.

Moreover, tourist-to-tourist social interactions have also been identified as a key part of the process of value co-creation. In this context, the tourists' social and physical context are viewed as one entity, and social interactions are seen as being influenced by personal resources, the interpretation of shared images, and social structures (Warde, 2005). Scholars have also addressed the customer-to-customer interaction in the tourist context to examine the indicators of social interactions and the perceived value gained from co-creating experiences with other visitors (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, and Gouthro, 2013; 2015; Campos et al., 2015; Reichenberger, 2017). Rihova et al. (2015) conceptualised customer-to-customer value co-creation, arguing that value is socially constructed and derived from tourist social practice. Meanwhile, Reichenberger (2017) analysed the components and characteristics of interactions between tourists and identified personal factors and attitudes regarding sociality as influential factors in such interactions.

Tourist-to-tourist interactions have been studied in a variety of contexts, including railway transport (Harris and Baron, 2004), theme parks (Grove and Fisk, 1997), homestays (Pearce, 1990), cruise travel (Huang and Hsu, 2010; Papathanassis, 2012; Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005), backpacking (Murphy, 2001; Sørensen, 2003; Cai, Cohen, and Tribe, 2019), agritourism (Choo and Petrick, 2014) and group tours (e.g. Wu, 2007; Heimtun, 2011; Levy and Getz, 2012; Lin, Zhang, Gursoy, and Fu, 2019), and all confirm that these social interactions are an essential dimension of the tourist experience. Indeed, studies suggest they can have a positive effect, even when those involved are initially unknown to each other. For example, the role of social interactions between unacquainted customers in rail travel was found to have a stabilising effect and to reduce anxiety (Harris and Baron, 2004), and self-disclosure, as a type of interaction, has been shown to impact perceived cohesion and intimacy within a group (Lin et al., 2019). Self-disclosure has been shown to enhance key aspects of interpersonal relationships, notably trust and intimacy (Waring and Chelune, 1983; Derlega, 1984; Waring, 1987; Altman and Taylor, 1973). However, there is a dearth of research on this form of social interaction in the group tourism literature, with only one study, by Lin et al. (2019), conducted on this topic.

As these studies indicate, the social dimension is particularly significant in tourism as it helps to satisfy tourists' practical, social, and psychological needs, and social interactions are influenced by the experience context, and by individuals' characteristics, and other factors. As a result, shared travel experiences, such as group tours, provide a rich environment within which to examine social interactions. Most studies to date have focused on tourist-to-tourist interactions, with tourist-to-group interactions and group social interactions receiving less attention; however, as Choo and Petrick (2014) note, different types of social interactions have different impacts on tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions, and this focus on one type of interaction limits the potential to gain further insights into context-specific types of interactions. As a result, research which generates a greater understanding of the role of the social context in respect of group adventure holidays has the potential to make a significant contribution to the literature on social interactions within the tourism field.

2.3 Part II: Emotions

The experiential perspective of consumer behaviour emphasises the subjective nature of the tourist experience and highlights the role of emotions, mainly hedonic emotions, as an integral part of that experience (Aho 2001; Dube and Helkkula, 2015; Pine and Gilmore 2011). Indeed,

some scholars see emotions as representing the value of a tourism experience (Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken,2017; Williams and Soutar, 2009). This section discusses the definitions associated with emotions and the major approaches to studying them. It then reviews the study of emotions in tourism literature, including the ways they have been measured and the influences both positive and negative emotions exert within the tourist experience.

2.3.1 Definitions and key concepts

People often mix up the terms 'emotions' and 'moods'; therefore, a clear differentiation between them is required. In this respect, the definition provided by Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999, p.184) is helpful. They describe emotion as:

> a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; [which] has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it.

This indicates that emotions are expressed at three levels: subjective experience (that is, how people "feel" them), expressive behaviour (how people act them out) and physiology (the bodily changes that accompany emotions, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure and hormonal changes (Bastiaansen et al., 2019). A mood is described as a minor affective state without specific stimuli (Nawijn, Mitas, Lin, Kerstetter, 2013). It differs from an emotional state in that it occurs unconsciously, while the individual is aware of its occurrence in emotions. Moods are also thought to be less intense than emotions but to last longer. Lastly, moods do not necessarily instigate actions, while emotions are usually combined with action intentions (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

The term 'affect' is also used to describe a mental process that includes emotions, moods, and attitudes; however, views about this are divided, with Cohen and Areni (1991) including only emotions and moods while Bagozzi et al. (1999) arguing that attitude is also a part of affect. Other terms utilised in the study of emotions are 'emotion valence' and 'intensity': the valence of an emotional response is usually positive or negative, while emotion intensity is determined by the level of arousal (high or low) (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters, 1998).

2.3.2 Major approaches to studying emotions

There are three major approaches to studying emotions in the psychology literature: dimensional, categorical, and cognitive appraisals. The dimensional approach conceptualises emotions based on valence, usually positive or negative valences (Watson and Tellegen, 1985), and pleasantness and arousal (Russell and Barrett, 1999); however, it does not provide an understanding of the causes of emotions, nor does it explain the differences between different types of positive and negative emotions (Watson and Spence, 2007). So, for instance, it cannot explain why distinct emotions of the same valence have different action tendencies (Lerner and Keltner, 2000). As the name suggests, the categorical approach involves grouping emotions based on their similarities, and defining them in terms of primary or basic sets (Izard, 1977). For instance, in differential emotions theory, Izard (1977) proposed that basic emotions consist of interest, enjoyment, surprise, distress, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame/shyness, and guilt. Another set of basic emotions was proposed by Plutchik (1980), in the circumplex wheel of emotions, who identified eight basic emotions: joy, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, acceptance, and anticipation, and combinations of these primary emotions develop into varying intensities.

Within the basic and discrete emotions categorisation discussed above, another category is self-conscious emotions (e.g., pride, attachment, empathy, embarrassment, shame, and guilt). Self-conscious emotions are based on self-evaluation in relation to values and standards, which is why self-awareness is crucial to experiencing them (Lewis, 1995). Tracy and Robins (2004) identified five characteristics that differentiate self-conscious emotions from basic emotions. First, basic emotions can occur with or without self-evaluation, whereas self-conscious emotions require self-evaluation to be elicited. Self-conscious emotions develop later in childhood compared to basic emotions as they require self-awareness to be elicited (Lewis, 1995). Basic and discrete emotions have facial expressions that are universally recognised and do not change across different cultures (Ekman, 1992).

On the other hand, self-conscious emotions do not have universally recognised facial expressions. Also, they vary across different cultures and are often communicated through language rather than nonverbal expressions. Self-conscious emotions are evoked by complex cognitive processes in which events are evaluated concerning the person's identity and ongoing comparisons of the real and ideal self. Lastly, they facilitate social roles by guiding individuals' behaviour to attain their social needs, and they drive people to behave morally and socially appropriately as they stem from moral backgrounds. Likewise, self-conscious emotions are

significant in regulating individuals' behaviours, emotions, and thoughts (Leary, 2007). Therefore, self-conscious emotions are more apparent in ethical contexts as they involve a high level of self-evaluation in reference to ethical values (e.g., Gregory-Smith, Smith, and Winklhofer, 2013; Malone et al., 2014).

While Richins (1997) argued that consumption emotions differ in character and intensity from those experienced in other areas, so, she generated a list of affective states that would capture the full range of consumption emotions. These emotions can be related to emotional experiences and expressions (e.g., joy, anger, and fear) or to the underlying emotional dimensions (e.g. pleasantness/unpleasantness, relaxation/action, or calmness/excitement (Russell, 1980). The list of consumption emotions by Richins (1997) is frequently used in studies of emotions in the marketing literature (Phillips and Baumgartner, 2002; Wen and Chi, 2013). For instance, researchers have used consumption emotions as a tool for segmentation. An example of this is Bigne and Andreu (2004), who used consumption emotions to test the feasibility of using emotions as a tourist typology method. Thereafter, scholars have utilised emotions associated with destinations as a segmentation approach (Hosany and Prayag, 2013; Kumar and Nayak, 2015). Table 2.2 provides a basic classification of emotions based on common categories; hence, the number of sets or categories is open and not limited to the categories listed below.

Table 2.2: Classification of Emotions

Category	Example Emotions
Basic Emotions	Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Surprise, Disgust (e.g., Izard1977, Plutchik, 1980)
Self-Conscious Emotions	Embarrassment, Shame, Pride, Triumph, Guilt
Consumption Emotions	joy, Excitement, love, Shame, Anger, and Fear (Richins, 1997)

The categorical approach has been criticised for allowing only a limited set of emotions and ignoring complex and various types of emotions (Johnson and Stewart, 2005). While the dimensional approach offers more insight into emotions by enabling the differentiation between emotions based on valence and arousal. However, both approaches are inadequate to provide an understanding of the causes of emotions or how emotion is evoked or its behavioural effects (Prayag et al., 2017). The third approach, cognitive appraisal, overcomes the limitation of the previous approaches by focusing on emotion formation and triggers. This approach enables a more in-depth understanding of emotions in terms of their nuances and variations, why emotions are evoked in a specific context, and it also explains their consequences. It considers that the trigger of an emotional response is not the stimuli itself but rather the evaluation of that stimuli by the individual concerned (Lazarus, 1991; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). This individual interpretation of stimuli induces a psychological process which is called appraisal. The following section provides a detailed discussion of cognitive appraisal theory as it is the employed theory to explain the processes of emotions in this context.

2.3.2.1 Cognitive appraisal theory

The early studies of emotion formation in psychology introduced the term 'emotional appraisal' to describe the cognitive evaluation involved in the emotion elicitation process (Arnold, 1960: Lazarus, 1968). Cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) explains the causes and outcomes of emotions by focusing on the psychological processes of emotions elicitation; specifically, it suggests that the individual evaluations of events and thoughts elicit certain emotions (Lazarus 1991; Watson and Spence 2007). In the context of tourism, this involves tourists evaluating an event based on several primary appraisal criteria, and emotions being elicited as a result.

Scholars have identified a set of preliminary appraisal dimensions, including goal congruence and relevance, certainty, novelty, control, and agency (e.g., Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003; Johnson and Stewart, 2005; Ma et al., 2013). Goal congruence relates to an individual's evaluation of an event in terms of whether it is congruent with their goal or desires, which then determines the elicitation of emotions (Johnson and Stewart, 2005). Goal relevance is the appraisal of an event according to the level of significance of the event to the individual (Lazarus 1991). According to Ma et al. (2013), novelty evaluates the unexpectedness of the experience, certainty refers to the level of confidence in the outcome of the experience, and agency relates to whether a person or object is responsible for the emotional experience

outcome. Among these, goal congruence and relevance are considered core dimensions (e.g., Johnson and Stewart, 2005) and are commonly used when applying CAT in tourism literature (Cai, Lu, and Gursoy, 2018; Choi and Choi, 2019; Jiang, 2020). Scholars in consumer behaviour studies have utilised CAT to study the role of emotions in consumers' future behaviour, such as satisfaction, word of mouth and future behaviour intention (Bagozzi, et al.,1999; Johnson and Stewart 2005; Soscia 2007; Watson and Spence 2007).

In tourism literature, this theory was adopted to understand the antecedents of specific positive emotions in tourism experiences, like joy, love, and positive surprise (Hosany, 2012), delight (Ma., et al., 2013; Jiang, 2020), and fun as an emotion (Choi and Choi, 2019). For instance, Hosany (2012), who is considered the first to apply CAT in the tourism context, investigated the determinants of tourist's emotional responses toward destinations and posited that appraisals of pleasantness, goal congruence, and internal self-compatibility were the causes of feelings of love, joy, and positive surprise in respect of tourist destinations. In a different context, Ma et al. (2013) found that goal congruence, novelty, goal relevance, and agency were antecedents of the emotion of delight in theme park experience. More recently, Choi and Choi (2019) found that the appraisal dimensions of goal relevance and congruence played a role in eliciting fun and influencing tourists' on-site behaviour. While the focus of these studies was on positive emotions, research employing CAT to consider the appraisal dimensions of negative emotions is still emerging (Lee, Kim, Hwang, and Cui, 2021; Otoo, Badu-Baiden, and Kim, 2019). For example, a recent study by Jiang, Li, Huang, and Scott (2020) investigated how anger and worry are evoked in flight delays and found that goal incongruence certainty and other agency lead to worry, anger, and negative intentions. In addition, while most studies have employed quantitative approaches to identify the antecedents of predefined specific set of emotions, researchers are beginning to employ appraisal theory to explore emotional experiences qualitatively is also emerging, notably Pham, Eves, and Wang (2023), who studied emotions in the context of the food tourism experience.

As the definition by Bagozzi and colleagues (1999) provided above suggests, the type of emotions, the process of eliciting emotions and the action tendency of those emotions are all based on the individual's interpretation of the self, the situation, and of others. Moreover, personal, situational (times, environments) and cultural factors play a role in the elicitation process. Emotions are, therefore, context specific, and the study of emotions needs approaches that consider the context in which those experiences occur (Parkinson, Fischer, and Manstead, 2005). While the dimensional and categorical approaches have contributed to the study of

emotions, CAT is the only one to consider the different types of emotions, their nuances, causes, and outcomes. Therefore, appraisal theory offers the most suitable approach to understanding the social aspects of emotional experiences, since they are based on individuals' evaluations of situations in relation to the personal and social contexts in which they occur.

2.3.2.2 Emotions in tourism literature

Recent studies have demonstrated that emotions are central components of the tourist experience (Bastiaansen et al., 2019); they improve our understanding of the whole consumption experience (Hosany et al., 2021; Volo, 2021), play a role in value (co-)creation (Malone, McKechnie, and Tynan, 2018), and contribute to constructing meaningful tourism experiences (Bosangit, Hibbert and McCabe, 2015). Emotions have also been found to influence tourist satisfaction, destination perceptions, and behaviour intentions (Breitsohl and Garrod, 2016; Hosany, Prayag, Van Der Veen, Huang, Deesilatham, 2017; Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, Del Chiappa, 2017). The significance of emotions in tourism has been demonstrated in different contexts, including adventure tourism (Faullant, Matzler, and Mooradian 2011), holidays (Hosany and Prayag 2013), and theme parks (Bigné, Andreu, and Gnoth 2005), and several others. Emotions have also been found to be a motivator for ethical tourism, in respect of hedonic experiences (Malone, et al., 2014).

Scales to measure emotional reactions in each context have been developed, notably in respect of festivals (Lee and Kyle, 2012) and holidays (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010); however, tourism scholars have also identified and explained emotions based on their valence, arousal, and pleasure (e.g., Bigné et al., 2005; Li, Walters, Packer, and Scott, 2018; Su, Cheng, and Swanson, 2020), adopting the dimensional approach to investigate emotions in a tourism context. The study of emotion in the tourism context has largely investigated the role of positive emotions in contributing to satisfaction, future behaviour intention, and loyalty. For instance, positive emotions have been identified as an outcome of both the tourism experience (Coelho, Gosling, and Almeida, 2018), and of the leisure travel experience (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017).

Furthermore, emotions in the tourism experience have been found to influence individual wellbeing (Knobloch et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2018), notably through hedonic enjoyment and the evocation of positive emotions linked to memorable tourism experiences (Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken, 2017; Tung and Ritchie, 2011). In positive psychology, positive emotions enhance individuals' wellbeing by initiating a positive affect which can be recalled long after the evert itself, and reminiscing or talking about past positive emotional experiences

has been shown to evoke pleasant feelings (Fredrickson, 2001), Examples of positive emotions evoked in this way include pride, empathy, and attachment (Bagozzi, 2006). Fredrickson (2001) argued that positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build an individual's physical, social, and psychological resources, later asserting that their influence was much stronger than negative emotions (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005).

While tourists experience both positive and negative emotions, the study of emotions in tourism has mainly focused on hedonic and positive emotions (Cohen, Prayag, and Moital, 2014; Nawijn and Biran, 2019), either overlooking negative emotions completely or examining them only in a non-hedonic context (Nawijn, Isaac, Gridnevskiy, and Van Liempt, 2015). However, as Knobloch et al. (2014) demonstrated, not all memorable tourism experiences are shaped by positive emotions, such as hedonic enjoyment. Indeed, Nawijn and Fricke (2015) argued that specific negative emotions also have the power to broaden-and-build and could have long term influences. For instance, their study of the emotions of visitors to sites associated with death and suffering found that their intensely experienced emotions, both positive and negative, led to behavioural intentions, such as revisit intentions and positive word of mouth.

Although negative emotions are less well represented in the tourism literature, several discrete negative emotions have been studied, notably fear (Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2010; Fennell, 2017), anger (Jiang, Li, Huang, and Scott, 2020; Sánchez-García and Currás-Pérez, 2011), and regret (Jang, Cho, and Kim, 2013). Negative emotions have also been addressed in service literature, specifically in service failure studies. For example, scholars have identified negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, after service failures, and found they affect consumers' future inventions, such as complaining behaviours, switching providers, or generating negative word of mouth (e.g., Le and Ho, 2020; Nguyen and McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Tronvoll, 2011). However, greater knowledge and understanding of negative emotions beyond the context of service failures would be fruitful, especially as they do not always result in adverse outcomes.

Negative emotions, such as anger and sadness, often evoke uncomfortable feelings or dislike toward the self, others, or things, and are often viewed or described as unfavourable. However, they do not always exert a negative influence on an individual's trip. For example, they could be seen as an essential aspect of non-hedonic tourism experiences, especially dark tourism contexts, such as visiting concentration camps and dangerous places, and in volunteering and pilgrimages tourism (Nawijn and Biran, 2019). Negative emotions are also significant in adventure tourism, where danger, risk, and hardships exist alongside the hedonic aspects

(Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2010). Adventurous activities are often physically and mentally challenging and involve risk and fear experiences, yet individuals who participate are not deterred, despite understanding that negative emotions are an inevitable part of the experience. Despite this, few studies have examined the impact of negative emotions in adventure experiences and their causes and effects on the tourist experience in group adventure trips. Further discussion of adventure tourism is provided in Part III of this chapter (See Section 2.4).

Emotions experienced in tourism differ from one context to another (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010) and influence the tourist experience in various ways (Prayag, Hosany, and Odeh, 2013). They also evolve and change at different stages of the tourist experience (Gao and Kerstetter, 2018), and these evolving emotions have been identified as significant indicators of the progress and the benefits of the experience (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010). Scholars have explored the fluctuation of emotions during the trip and the possible causes (Nawijn et al., 2013; Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn, & Mitas, 2014). For example, Lin et al. (2014) addressed the impact of personality on emotion changes, and Nawijn (2010) proposed the happiness curve, which tested the effect of trip length on emotions. However, as this review indicates, most studies in tourism literature have focused on positive emotions as a singular dimension, without considering the differences and similarities between them, nor considering the occurrence of negative motions in hedonic contexts. Thus, more empirical work is needed to investigate how specific types of emotions are evoked and to understand the tourist's role in the process.

Studies also indicate that emotions are significantly associated with attention and memorability (Zimmerman and Kelley, 2010) and that emotional involvement contributes to a memorable experience (Servidio and Ruffolo, 2016). Emotions also contribute to the memorability of an experience not only as a component of the experience but also as a construct that can build or destroy a memorable experience (Malone et al., 2018). Within a behavioural context, Wood and Kenyon (2018) argued that shared emotions in an event experience led to more memorable emotions and, consequently, greater post-consumption satisfaction, referral and loyalty. They also found this type of memorable emotions influenced individuals' self and social identities.

Scholars in tourism often utilise measurement scales to categorise emotions, notably Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance model, or Richins' (1997) Consumption Emotion Set. Although these approaches have established the role of emotions in the customer experience in relation to satisfaction and behaviours, the multifaceted dimensions of emotions and their complexity need to be addressed (Hosany, Martin, and

Woodside, 2021; Volo, 2021). In addition, tourist emotions are context specific, highlighting the need for an approach that considers the context and the role of the individual in the process (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Richins, 1997). However, these tools lack the ability to consider context specific experiences and the individual's voice in describing and expressing their emotions (Scherer, 2005); therefore, a qualitative approach that gives voice to the consumers to choose and express their emotional responses is likely to be fruitful in addressing this complexity.

To conclude, emotions are individuals' reactions to their encounters with the surrounding environment, and both positive and negative emotions affect experience outcomes; thus, any experience which involves emotions is highly subjective. As emotions play a central role in the tourist experience, this too is intrinsically subjective, and understanding the emotions involved is an appropriate way to try to understand the broader experience (Mitas, Yarnal, and Chick, 2012). According to Larsen (2007), different individuals have different experiences based on their psychological processing of the events that happen to them; therefore, examining the psychological processes involved in an experience can be insightful (Larsen, 2007; Scott and Le, 2017). While Noel, Scott and Le's (2017) review of psychology and tourism experience encouraged further investigation of the tourism experience from a psychological perspective, the study of emotions in the tourism and hospitality literature is still developing, and the use of more varied perspectives to understand them is needed (Moyle, Moyle, Bec, and Scott, 2017).

Cognitive appraisal theories assume that emotions occur only within the individual through the process of meaning-making about an event based on a person's goals, values and beliefs (Lazarus, 1999; Gross, 2008). However, the values, beliefs and goals the individual uses in this process are influenced by their own interpersonal, cultural and social context (Denzin, 1984; Ellis, 1991; Burkitt, 2002). Thus, emotions are evoked in specific social contexts that shape them, influence how they develop, and give them meaning (Parkinson, Fischer, and Manstead, 2005). Therefore, the construction of our experienced emotions is the result not only of an event itself, but also our relationship with the event and our interactions with others in the event (Burkitt, 2014). They are subject to social influences, and shaped by both the individual and the social context (Denzin, 1984; Ellis, 1991). Experienced emotions are therefore intersubjective and the result of both cognitive appraisals and social construction. As a result, the next section discusses the literature on social emotions.

2.3.3 Socially induced emotions

Cognitive appraisal theories affirm that emotions are elicited as a result of the individual's evaluation of events which he or she perceives as important or relevant (Frijda, 1986; Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003). However, emotions can also be viewed as social phenomena, which are expressed in the presence of others or because of others (Parkinson, 1996). Indeed, emotions play a significant role in shaping communications and interactions between people, and experiences that induce intense emotions are more likely to result in shared emotional and cognitive experiences (Collins, 2004). Emotions and the social dimension are therefore key factors in hedonic experiences (Arnould and Price, 1993) and in the focal consumption experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009); indeed, interactions with other people and experienced emotions have been recognised as among the values created by the consumption experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009).

The social aspect of emotions has social roots and social consequences (Parkinson, 1996) and is profoundly influenced by others. For instance, the sharing of emotions and the generation of collective emotions enhances group bonds and, therefore, increases the experience value for the individual. Furthermore, as group-based behaviour modifies and reinforces individual behaviour, so social behaviour plays a role in modifying or reinforcing psychological processes (Thornton, et al., 1997). Researchers have recognised the significance of the social and interpersonal aspect of emotions. In particular, Tamminen and Bennett (2017) examined emotions in sport and identified four situations where emotions can be considered as social phenomena: 1) collective emotions that arise because of appraisals based on social relationships and the emotional contagion process; 2) an appraisal that is formed from social interactions; 3) emotions that have social functions in groups; and 4) emotions that are displayed, experienced and managed in social contexts. These provide a comprehensive framework within which to examine social emotions, so literature which explores group emotions, collective emotions, emotional contagion, and social appraisal is discussed below.

2.3.3.1 Group emotions

Scholars who have examined emotions in the social context have emphasised the role of emotions in groups. For instance, emotions influence group formation, group unity, group identity, the maintenance and development of interpersonal relationships, and other aspects of the group (Frijda and Mesquita, 1994; Barsade and Gibson, 1998; Kelly and Barsade, 2001; Spoor & Kelly, 2004; Iyer and Leach, 2008; von Scheve and Salmela, 2013). Kelly and Barsade

(2001) have therefore defined group emotions as resulting from "combinations of individual-level affective factors that group members possess as well as from group- or contextual-level factors that define or shape the affective experience of the group" (p. 100).

In addition, research suggests that group emotions have a role in "the division of responsibilities and the negotiation of power roles among group members; the resolution of problems associated with deviance and defection; and the coordination of collective efforts towards the achievement of shared goals" (Van Kleef and Fischer, 2016, p. 5). As a result, Van Kleef and Fischer (2016) proposed adopting two perspectives on social emotions: the first focused on the role of individual emotions in groups, and the second on the impact of group factors on individual emotions. The first perspective addresses the social role of individual emotions and regards them as a key source of information about both the individual and the situation. In a concept known as 'emotions as social information' (EASI), displayed emotions provide information about the social situation to perceivers and observers (Van Kleef, 2009, 2016). Individuals are both producers and observers of emotions: they feel the emotions and send them to observers, either consciously or unconsciously. These emotions have socially relevant signals (e.g. body posture, nodding, smiling, or crying) which individuals can use as a source of information, depending on the social context (Fernández-Dols and Crivelli, 2013). For example, they give people cues about appropriate social behaviour and can also help individuals in groups to communicate and coordinate more efficiently (Parkinson, 1996). The second perspective focuses on the ways in which group context influences emotions and involves the concept of 'collective emotions', which is discussed in detail in the next section.

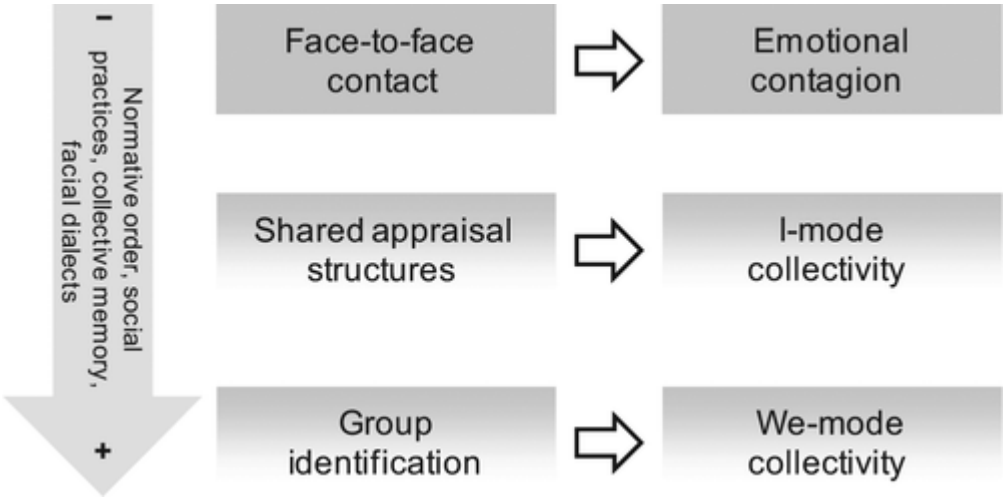
2.3.3.2 Collective emotions

Individual and collective emotions differ in terms of the mechanisms in which these emotions occur and in their influences on the individual's current and future behaviour intentions (Smith, Seger, and Mackie, 2007). Collective emotions have been defined as "the synchronous convergence in affective responding across individuals towards a specific event or object" (Von Scheve and Ismer, 2013, p. 406), and typically occur in three scenarios: during face-to-face encounters, in the existence of shared culture or knowledge, and as a way of identification with a social group. Von Scheve and Ismer (2013) define the emotional convergence that occurs in these scenarios in the following ways:

1. Emotional contagion, which occurs in face-to-face encounters
2. "I-mode collectivity", which is induced in shared social appraisal structures.

3. “We-mode collectivity”, which involves emotions triggered intentionally based on an individual’s self-identification with a social group (See Figure 2.4.1).

These assume that individuals sharing a physical space (face-to-face encounters) are more likely to share the same emotions triggered by a specific event (Le Bon, 1895; Collins, 2004; Von Scheve and Ismer, 2013). They also suggest that a sense of belonging to a group, either a small group (social collective) or large groups (such as a culture or country), can influence the occurrence of collective emotions (Parkinson, et al., 2005). The concept of emotional contagion is discussed in detail in the next section, while the text below considers the impact of individual social identity and group membership on emotional formation.



Source: Von Scheve and Ismer (2013, pp. 412).

Figure 2.1. Collective Emotions

As Von Scheve and Ismer (2013) suggest, collective emotions are based on individual social identity and on membership of a specific group. For instance, a person identifying himself or herself as belonging to a specific culture will apprise events based on that culture and the resulting collective emotions will be based on that culture’s beliefs. Equally, according to the intergroup emotion theory, when a person experiences collective emotion because they identify with a social group, they will appraise events based on that group’s norms or rules (Smith et al., 2007). Thus, group emotions are individual emotions triggered as a result of belonging to a specific group and by the social collective of that group (Smith, 1993). It is important to note

that these emotions do not require physical closeness from the group members but are instead based on shared rules or norms (Branscombe, 2004). Some scholars have argued that group-based emotions differ from collective emotions in that the former are triggered as a response to an event related to the social group, whereas the latter are the sum of emotions the group experienced as a whole (Goldenberg, Saguy, and Halperin, 2014).

Intergroup and group-based emotions share a similar conceptual notion in that they are induced by identification with a social group and therefore built on individual social identity. Thus, they can be called 'identity-based emotions', which Smith and Mackie (2008) defined as "emotions that arise when people identify with a social group and respond emotionally to events or objects that impinge on the group" (p. 428). As noted above, group-based emotions are those emotions that an individual experiences as a response to events related to the social group of which he or she is a member (Kuppens and Yzerbyt, 2012; Mackie and Smith, 2018). Similarly, the theory of intergroup emotions states that emotions triggered as a response to events related to the individual's social group are intergroup emotions (Mackie, Devos, and Smith, 2000; Smith et al., 2007). This view of group emotions incorporates social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and the appraisal theories of emotion (e.g., Lazarus, 1991). The elicitation of group-based emotions is influenced by the degree to which the individual identifies with the group (Smith and Mackie, 2008), and these emotions are also influenced by other appraisals that are determined by the personality, values, and interests of individuals in the group and the type of the event (Mackie et al., 2000). The concept of social appraisal is discussed in more detail below (See Section 0).

2.3.3.3 Emotional contagion

Emotional contagion is a psychological phenomenon that attempts to explain the transfer of emotions between people in social interactions. The concept was first introduced in the nineteenth century by Le Bon (1895), who used the idea of contagion to explain the spreading of an emotion through a crowd; however, it may occur in dyadic interactions as well as in group interactions. More recently, Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) defined emotional contagion as the:

> tendency to automatically mimic and synchronise facial expressions, vocalisations, postures, and movements with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally (p. 5).

They also identified this subconscious transfer of emotions through mimicry and imitation as 'primitive emotional contagion' (Hatfield et al., 1994), a process in which a person mimics another individual's nonverbal expression unconsciously, and then feels the same emotion they felt through physiological processes (Barsade 2002). The occurrence of this type of emotional contagion is conditioned by the level of emotions displayed, so "a greater emotional display by the sender results in higher levels of emotional contagion in the receiver" (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, and Gremler, 2006, p. 59).

Emotional contagion is facilitated by the attentional mechanism that influences the degree of emotional contagiousness (Hatfield et al., 1994). External elements linked to emotions, such as emotion type and energy level, can impact the individual's internal attention. Also, individual attention to others' emotions might be influenced by internal individual differences, such as gender and age, an individual's inclination toward spontaneous mimicry, and their willingness to respond to emotions in others (Barsade, 2002). Moreover, research suggests that emotional contagion is more likely to occur when the individual self-concept or self-image is related to the group (Hatfield et al., 1994). Mimicry is considered the first step in emotional contagion, the process of mimicry being induced by attention, then liking (Byrne, 1961). Scholars have established the role of similarity in predicting interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971) and shown that individuals tend to like others who share similarities with them. This might, therefore, lead to a higher level of mimicry (Hess and Fischer, 2013; Wróbel, Królewiak, and Czarna, 2015).

This link with similarity and attention indicates a possible connection between emotional contagion and the cognitive appraisal theory of emotions. Another type of emotional contagion is built on a more conscious level, in which the individual compares the emotions of the other socially and decides whether to adopt them based on the cognitive appraisal of the social cues of stimuli. Thus, the transfer of emotions in this case is not based on the frequency of emotions displayed, as in the primitive type, but on the perceived authenticity or reality of these emotions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Therefore, the social context in which emotions occur, the level of shared interests, similarities, and personality traits all have an impact on an individual's ability to respond to other people's emotions. This concept of social appraisal in relation to emotions is discussed in more detail below.

Research also suggests that the receiver's perceptions of the expressed emotions may influence their emotional state as a result of emotional contagion. The expression of emotions by one person evokes emotions in the observer, when people mimic each other's emotions and use

other people's reactions as inferences to produce emotions themselves (Hatfield, et al., 1992, 1994). These perceived emotions may also be utilised to draw inferences about the expresser's character or intentions, the situation, the appropriate behaviour, and to regulate the observer's affective reactions (Van Kleef, 2009). However, the inferences drawn from emotions differ based on the context and the situation in which they happen (Lange, Heerdink, and Van Kleef, 2022). Thus, the role of the perceived expressed emotions is to evoke emotional reactions, provide information about the situation or how others feel, and to develop bonding between individuals in the group.

Emotional contagion in groups has been widely addressed in organisational behaviour literature. One of the first attempts was Barsade's (2002) study, which confirmed that group emotional contagion exists in an organisational context and that group members influence each other's emotions and behaviours. Later, Walter and Bruch (2008) examined group collective emotions and suggested that the similarity and sharing of emotions between group members could be explained by a spiral relationship called the 'Positive Group Affect Spiral'. This spiral relationship constantly strengthens emotional similarity among group members and enhances the quality of their interactive relationships (Walter and Bruch 2008). Other studies in this context addressed the emotions in groups conceptually, notably Hareli and Rafaeli (2008), who affirmed that the social presence of emotions occurs when group members imitate each other's emotions. They developed an emotions cycle that illustrates the influence of individual emotions on others' current and future emotions and behaviours, and vice versa, thereby explaining the iterative process of emotional contagion whereby where one group member's emotions influence the other group members (Hareli and Rafaeli 2008).

Barsade (2002) also draws on a model to explain the mechanism by which emotional contagion works. He identifies two factors from Russell's (1980) circumplex model of emotion as influencing emotional contagiousness: the emotional valence (positive or negative) and the energy level of emotions expressed. In Russell's (1980) model, the emotions are organised in a circumplex, where x represents the emotional valence, and y represents the energy level (Russell, 1980). Thus, to understand emotional contagion, it is essential to examine the occurrence of different combinations of emotion due to their different valences and the energy levels accompanying them. For instance, pleasant emotions, such as joy, could become contagious based on the level of pleasantness associated with them. However, as these emotions are expressed mainly through nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language (Mehrabian, 1972), direct interpersonal contact is required for emotional contagion

in groups. Also, higher levels of expression of these emotions leads to higher contagion among group members (Barsade, 2002).

In service literature, emotional contagion has been examined in the service encounter context, with a focus on the role of employees' emotions on customers' responses (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2006; Lin, Huang, and Chiang, 2008; Du, Fan, and Feng 2011; Ustrov, Valverde, and Ryan, 2016; Woo and Chan, 2020). Some studies have identified the role of employees' positive emotional display on customers' emotional levels (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Luong, 2005; Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001). For example, Hareli and Rafaeli's (2008) perspective has been used to examine employee-customer interactions (e.g., Liu, Chi, and Gremler, 2019) and show that emotional labour occurs when employees transfer their positive emotions to customers by emotional contagion (Hochschild, 1983). By contrast, another study highlighted the influence of customers' expressed negative emotions (anger) on employee's emotional reactions (Dallimore, Sparks, and Butcher, 2007). Indeed, a stream of research has focused on the role of emotional contagion in group service failure (Du, Fan, and Feng in 2014; Du, Yang, and Liu, 2019). For instance, Du et al. (2014) found that the emotional contagion of anger influenced complaint intentions in a group service failure; they also found that emotional contagion was more substantial in large groups, but that group familiarity moderated the intensity of anger among the group members.

Emotional contagion is still an under-researched area in tourism literature, and, as the above indicates, most published studies in the service field have examined the emotional transfer between service employees and customers and its influence on service quality, failure, and satisfaction. Moreover, these studies have focused primarily on primitive unconscious emotional contagion and simple mimicry. Nonetheless, within a tourism context, factors such as the physical attractiveness, the positive emotions displayed, and the helpfulness of local people have been found to play a role in building personal connections with visitors, thereby enhancing destination loyalty (Nam, Kim, and Hwang, 2016). In addition, emotional contagion has been identified as a motivation for pursuing dark tourism trips (Podoshen, 2013); however, further research is required to understand how emotions are developed and transmitted within tourist groups.

2.3.3.4 Social appraisal

Social appraisal is one of the key mechanisms underlying the emotional contagion process. It is based on "I-mode collectivity" and involves the 'receiver' using the emotions expressed by

the ‘sender’ as data to include in their individual evaluation of an event and, consequently, their feelings about it (Bruder, Fischer, & Manstead, 2014; Parkinson, 2011). This mechanism occurs primarily at the conscious level, whereas primitive emotional contagion occurs at an unconscious level. Manstead and Fischer (2001) have defined the components of social appraisal theory as the "behaviours, thoughts, or feelings of one or more other persons in the emotional situation [which] are appraised in addition to the appraisal of the event per se" (p. 222). This theory assumes therefore that, in a situation shared with others, evaluation of an event will involve a dual appraisal: the first is an individual appraisal, based on cognitive appraisal theory (See Section 0); the second is social appraisal, where the individual perceives the sender’s expressed emotions and incorporates them into their own evaluation of the situation (Bruder et al., 2014).

In summary, socially induced emotions matter because emotions are inherently social phenomena, often generated interactively or with the existence of others (Burkitt, 2014). Intragroup collectivity has been found to influence individuals' positive overall experience (Hopkins et al., 2016), and personal and collective self-esteem and positive affect (Páez et al., 2015). Also, social emotions play an important part in influencing the development of group cohesion and interpersonal bonds (Kelly and Barsade, 2001; Spoor and Kelly, 2004; Von Scheve and Salmela, 2014), and group emotions play a significant social role in maintaining group ties (Keltner and Haidt, 1999). Shared positive emotions are also viewed as strengthening interpersonal ties between individuals (Fredrickson,1998) by fostering a sense of social connection between individuals, either when experiencing them during social interactions (Baumeister and Leary,1995) or when expressing them (Mauss et al., 2011).

Theories that address collective emotions argue that self-categorization, emotional contagion, and social appraisals are mechanisms in which emotional convergence occurs and produces group emotions. However, elements such as dynamic and mutual engagement with other group members, other group members' emotional orientations, and active participation in group activities are also essential in producing collective emotions (Parkinson, 2020). Therefore, the individual tourist's emotional experience includes social emotions mechanisms, personal psychological mechanisms, and other factors. We cannot, therefore, assume that group emotions are mutual results of emotional contagion or the individual and social appraisal of the event, as other factors in the group experience may also have co-created the tourist's emotional experience. Studies focusing on the social dimension of emotions and how emotional experiences are influenced by the social context are still needed therefore, especially in a

context where a group of consumers jointly experience hedonic trips, such as group adventure holidays. The following section therefore reviews literature concerned with adventure tourism as a context in which group holidays take place and within which tourists' emotional experiences play a particularly significant role.

2.4 Part III: Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism is currently experiencing a boom in popularity due to changes in consumer trends (ATTA, 2023). More people are now seeking healthier lifestyles, which influences their choice of activity-based holidays, and people are also more likely to look for leisure activities that help them escape the routine of everyday life.

2.4.1 Definitions and key concepts

Adventure tourism has been defined by the Adventure Travel Trade Association as a holiday trip that consists of two or three elements which are physical activity, the natural environment and cultural engagement (Rantala, Rokenes, and Valkonen, 2016). More specifically, Buckley (2007) defined adventure tourism as:

> guided commercial tours where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized sporting or similar equipment, and [which] is exciting for tour clients (p.1).

Examples of adventurous outdoor activities include climbing, kayaking, rafting, mountaineering, diving, hiking, skiing, surfing, biking, safari, sailing, and many others. The element of excitement arises because adventure experiences often include challenge, risk, danger, and uncertain outcomes, through activities which offer novelty, stimulation, excitement, escapism, and anticipated rewards, but which require absorption and focus, and which give rise to contrasting emotions (Swarbrooke, 2003). These characteristics are interlinked whereby the occurrence of one of them influences the occurrence of the others.

However, adventure tourism is a highly subjective phenomenon, because the experience is based on an individual's perceptions; hence what one tourist considers an adventure, another might not regard as adventurous at all. 'Adventure' has been defined in the literature as a situation "where participants are voluntarily putting themselves in a position where they believe they are taking a step into the unknown, where they will face challenges, and where they will discover or gain something valuable from the experience" (Swarbrooke, 2003) (p.14); however, even researchers in adventure tourism disagree about its precise nature. For instance,

some consider only risky activities as adventures, while others consider nature-based activities as adventures, especially if they take participants 'off the beaten track'.

2.4.1.1 Concepts and models of adventure tourism

Numerous efforts have been made to develop models to understand adventure tourism. For instance, Mortlock (1984) developed a four-stage adventure education model encompassing play, adventure, frontier adventure, and misadventure. In the play stage, the risk and the physical and emotional involvement are at the minimum level. In the adventure stage, the risk level is a little higher, but the experience is controlled, and the skills required in this stage can be learned during the activity. The third stage, or 'frontier adventure' is when the peak experience occurs, and the uncertainty, risk, and challenge level are high. Mortlock's final stage is that of misadventure, in which the adventure becomes dangerous and may cause injuries or death.

Martin and Priest (1986) subsequently developed a model of adventure experience that used Mortlock's stages and focused on tourists' perceived risk perception and competence. Their model differentiates between five types of adventurers based on their levels of risk and the competency of the participants. In the first type of adventure, the exploration and experimentation type, the risk level is low, and the competence level is high. However, when the risk level is high, but the participants' competence level is low, the adventure, peak adventure, and misadventure types occur. The last type is devastation and disaster, which happens if the gap between the level of the risk and the participants' competence results in injury or death.

Addison (1999), by contrast, differentiated between types of adventure activities based on the level of the adventure (i.e. the danger involved and the skill needed) and on the level of independence of the activity. He concluded that there are four types of adventure activities: high adventure, adventure competition, recreation, and leisure. High adventure is when the tourist is an independent skilled adventurer undertaking an extremely dangerous activity. Adventure competition is an adventure managed and organised by a specific organisation, which requires a high level of skills and contains an element of danger. In contrast, recreation adventure is an independent experience that is not necessarily dangerous nor does it require specific skills. Finally, a leisure adventure is a controlled, safe experience that does not require any prior knowledge. (Addison, 1999).

2.4.1.2 'Flow' and 'peak experience'

Most models developed in the adventure tourism literature have emphasised the importance of 'flow' and 'peak experience' in adventure experiences. Flow is "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992, p. 4). It is considered an intrinsic holistic and positive experience that people achieve in various activities in their life. Flow has strongly been linked to adventure experiences and can occur if the level of risk matches individual competence (Swarbrooke, 2003). A peak experience is a subjective phenomenon constructed in the individual mind based on his or her personal evaluation of the event or the activity (Beedie, 2008). Peak experience has been described as the state in which "moments of great awe, moments of the most intense happiness" occur and "all fears, all inhibitions, all weaknesses were left behind" (Maslow, 1962, p. 9). It was Maslow's (1962) early study of human health which led to the introduction of the peak experience concept, and he identified 19 attributes linked to the experience, including loss of fear, total attention, and awe and reverence.

Maslow (1967) gave an example of a peak experience occurrence in people's connection with nature or while performing sport activities, both of which can be linked to what is currently called adventure tourism (Pomfret, 2006). Thus, peak experience is one of the emotional states that has been linked to adventure tourism. Both Mortlock (1984) and Martin and Priest (1986) confirmed the importance of the peak experience and of flow in achieving the real or optimal adventure that adventurers seek. However, Varley (2006) argues that the experience is more than the flow and peak experience; there are different moments and emotions that are memorable during the adventure experience, so, while flow is a recognisable element in the adventure experience, it is not crucial.

2.4.1.3 Consumer motivations to participate in adventure tourism

A significant thread of research in adventure tourism explores consumer motivations to participate in adventure experiences. These appear to differ based on the type of activity involved, and range from seeking flow, rush, thrill, and excitement to escapism and a change of environment (Buckley, 2011; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). An early study which examined the adventure tourism experience from a marketing and management perspective affirmed that it is mainly based on physically challenging experiential activities that involve high sensory stimulation (Muller and Cleaver, 2000). However, adventure tourism scholars argue that risk

is also a key component (e.g. Millington, Locke, and Locke 2001; Swarbrooke et al. 2003) and one of the main motivations for participation (e.g., Cater, 2006; Varley, 2006). For example, risk-taking, excitement, escapism, personal development, socialising, and self-discovery have been identified as tourists' motivations for participating in mountaineering adventures (Lipscombe, 1995; Pomfret, 2006). In addition, some personal characteristics, notably gender, age, and level of experience, have been identified as affecting motivation and decision-making in respect of adventure tourism (Patterson, 2006; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016).

Hard and soft activities have also been discussed as core values of the adventure which affect motivation (Swarbrooke et al. 2003; Varley, 2006; Cater, 2013). Millington et al. (2001) distinguished between hard and soft adventures, arguing that hard adventure necessitates prior knowledge and experience while soft adventure does not, and Beedie and Hudson (2003) examined mountaineering activity as an emergent version of well-known adventure activities and utilised a soft and hard adventure classification model. Differences in individuals' personalities and the types of outcomes they seek impact their choice of soft or hard adventure. For instance, soft adventurers usually seek knowledge or self-discovery, whereas hard adventurers seek challenge, danger, and risk (Swarbrooke, 2003). Millington et al. (2001) also proposed a third typology within adventure tourism, namely, tourism adventures that are pursued for the purposes of visiting specific destinations or participating in particular activities.

2.4.2 Emotions in adventure tourism

As in other forms of tourism, experiences in adventure tourism are shaped by emotions, and their role has been highlighted in the literature (Beedie and Hudson, 2003, Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2009, Pomfret, 2006, Williams and Soutar, 2009). Robinson (1992) found that risk creation in adventure activities induced "intense levels of cognitive and emotional arousal" (p. 53), and Triantafillidou and Petala (2016) also described the adventure tourism experience as a combination of emotional and cognitive components. Hedonic emotions are integral to the adventure tourism experience (Gyimóthy and Mykletun, 2004; Williams and Soutar, 2009), but various types and combinations of emotional states have been associated with adventure experiences, including flow and peak experiences (Arnould and Price, 1993), fun and excitement (Cater, 2006; Gyimóthy and Mykletun, 2004), joy and fear, as core emotions (Faullant, Matzler, and Mooradian, 2011), fear (Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2009), and fear and thrill (Buckley, 2016; Schlegelmilch and Ollenburg, 2013).

The significance of emotions as motivation to participate in adventure tourism has also been highlighted (Schlegelmilch and Ollenburg, 2013). For instance, positive emotions are considered a primary motivation for older people to participate in adventure tourism (e.g., Patterson and Pan, 2007). As in tourism literature more broadly, the focus has been on positive emotions, with negative emotions in adventure tourism receiving much less attention beyond. However, there is recognition that fear and risk are fundamental to adventures, and Mackenzie and Kerr (2012) argued that uncontrollable risk in adventure activities causes fear and anxiety.

2.4.3 The adventure experience

More recent reviews of the adventure experience have aimed to conceptualise it and identify its components from both a consumer and a product perspective. For instance, Triantafillidou and Petala (2016) identified seven cognitive and emotional dimensions of the adventure experience, which are hedonism, flow, escapism, learning, challenge, and socialization and communitas. Later, Janowski, Gardiner, and Kwek (2021) argued that the adventure tourism experience encompasses three categories: (i) consumer factors that are more related to the experience's psychological aspect, (ii) product factors based on the destination and the physical environment, and (iii) the activities involved. The last of these includes factors from both the product and the consumer side. The dimensions from both reviews are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 2.3: Dimensions of the Adventure Tourism Experience

Experience dimensions	Based on	Overview
Hedonism, fun, enjoyment, play, excitement, fear	Tourist perception	The most common emotions associated with an adventure tourism experience
Risk and danger/ challenge uncertainty	Tourist perception / product type (destination)	The types of challenges and risks include physical, social, emotional, and mental.
Flow	Tourist perception	The level of its occurrence is influenced by the type of activity.
Escapism	Tourist perception / product type (destination)	Influenced by the natural environment, the type of activity and the social context.
Learning/ Exploration	Tourist perception / product type (destination)	Includes exploring and developing physical, social, emotional, and mental skills.
Socialisation Communitas/ camaraderie	Tourist perception / product type (destination)	Includes all types of interactions and relationships with others in the adventure experience.

Physical activity natural environment	Product type (destination)	Includes the destination geographical and climate attributes and the types of adventure activities, e.g. kayaking, trekking, or diving

Source: adapted from Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016; Janowski, Gardiner, and Kwek, 2021.

As Table 2-2 indicates, the social context is as essential as the natural environment in the adventure experience (Boyes, 2013). It has been shown to enable factors such as social interactions (e.g., Buckley, 2010; Cheng, 2017; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016), social support (e.g., Patterson and Pan, 2007), and feelings of belongings to a community or camaraderie (e.g., Arnould and Price, 1993; Varley, 2006; Walle, 1997). The role of trip companions in the adventure experience is therefore crucial, and they are one of the trip's main components. However, they can be both a source of challenge and of support within the adventure experience. The challenges associated with trip companions may be mental, arising from a lack of connection and collaboration between them, or physical, for instance, when there is no compatibility between them regarding skills (Tsaur, Lin, and Liu, 2013).

The cognitive and emotional elements of the adventure tourism experience identified by Triantafillidou and Petala (2016) influence tourists in different ways and on various levels. Thus, identifying context specific dimensions for group adventure holidays and pinpointing their role would be fruitful. Moreover, identifying the different facets of the social context related to the tourist's psychological experience is needed to understand the consumer experience with their social environment (Schmitt, 1999). Adventure tourism provides a fruitful context within which to examine tourists' emotions and the social aspects associated with them. It is a context that induces emotions in all its stages, starting from before the trip (excitement, anticipated risk), during the trip (fear, challenge), and after the trip (enjoyment, achievement, and self-development) (Swarbrooke, 2003). Furthermore, this type of tourism often occurs in guided group tours with tour guides or instructors, thereby extending the range of social experiences and interactions available for investigation.

From the review conducted here, it appears that most of the studies in adventure tourism have focused on the physical environment of the adventures, notably the adventure type, such as nature-based (Rantala and Valkonen, 2011), sea-based (Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016), and outdoor (Zhu and Xu, 2022), and the types of activities involved, such as mountaineering (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). Dimensions and motivations related to the psychological aspects have also been prioritised, while the social context of adventure tourism still needs to be explored. A more in-depth understanding of the social environment of the adventure tourism

experience and its role in the psychological experiences tourist go through would enhance experiential perspectives of consumer behaviour and provide valuable data to inform experiential marketing. Therefore, this thesis examines the social context of group adventure holidays and its role in individuals' emotional experiences.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on the tourist experience and its social aspects, offering insights into emotions within the tourist social experience from both consumer behaviour and tourism perspectives. It has demonstrated the link between emotions and the social context in which they occur, highlighting the need to address the intersectionality of such phenomena and noting the potential benefits of approaching the study of emotions from a qualitative interpretive perspective. It has emphasised the role of social interactions in emotions and contended that group holidays, with their rich social experiences, offer many opportunities to further investigate this role. It has further suggested that emotions are context-specific, and that the social context has a role in shaping them. The chapter has concluded by demonstrating that the adventure tourism context provides a rich emotional and social environment within which to examine the intersectionality between emotions and their social context in the tourist experience. The next chapter describes the methodology and methods adopted to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the philosophical underpinnings, the methodological approach, and the research design employed in this study. It discusses the rationale for adopting the research methodology and explains its relationship to the aim of the study, which is to explore how emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in group adventure holidays and how they influence the tourist experience. The chapter begins by outlining the interpretivist paradigm within which the study operates, and the philosophical assumptions associated with it. The use of qualitative methodology is justified, and the data collection method, namely interviews, is described. The sampling process used to select participants is also discussed, along with sample size considerations. The data collection process is then described in detail, and the use of thematic analysis for data analysis and the application of the hermeneutic circle for interpretation are explained. The chapter concludes by addressing researcher reflexivity, the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, and the ethical considerations involved in the conduct of the study.

3.2 Philosophical Underpinnings

The researcher's philosophical stance plays a major role in guiding the research strategy, design, and methods (Crotty, 1998). It is, therefore, essential to understand the philosophical position before conducting the research and to identify the most appropriate research paradigm. 'Paradigm' is a term introduced by Kuhn (1962), and it "represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 200). Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified four main paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Later, they included the participatory paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), and pragmatism was added by Onwuegbuzie, Johnson and Collins (2009b). A paradigm consists of the ontology, epistemology and methodology that guide the research (Sarantakos, 2005). Ontology relates to the nature of reality: it can be objective, constructed or subjective (what we perceive as real); epistemology relates to the nature of knowledge (how we know what we know); and methodology is the process of gathering knowledge (how we gain knowledge)

(Creswell, 2013). In any research project, it is crucial to identify a research paradigm that aligns with the aims and the research questions, as this will shape the research design, methodology, and analysis, ultimately impacting the results and conclusions of the study. The following sections provide a brief discussion of the ontological and epistemological assumptions which underpin the current study.

Ontology

As noted above, the term ontology refers to the nature of reality and whether it is objective, constructed or subjective (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Creswell, 2013). This study aims to understand a social reality (emotions in group adventure holidays) based on people's views and lived experiences; hence, its ontological position is that reality is socially constructed, that multiple realities exist, and that "all human knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations" (Berger and Luckman, 1967, p. 3). Within this ontological perspective, context is understood to play a major role in the construction of reality; therefore, individuals' interpretations of reality differ based on the context, giving rise to multiple realities which are constructed based on individuals' subjective interpretations, interactions and sense-making (Anderson, 1986; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 2009). Therefore, emotions experienced in group adventure holidays differ from those experienced in other contexts, notably in respect of the social environment, people's appraisals, motivations, outcomes and other aspects.

Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it is generated. Interpretivists believe that knowledge is obtained by the researcher's interactions with the participants to generate a thick description of their experiences (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011). They study a particular phenomenon in a specific place at a specific time and focus on subjective experiences related to that context and time. Interpretivists do not seek generalisation because they do not believe in causal relationships or that general laws occur in the social world (Guba, 1990). This research assumes that knowledge is created by the subjective experiences of the participants, and it focuses on their lived experiences, with the researcher playing the role of an interpreter of their experiences and emotions within their group holidays. Therefore, the epistemological position taken is that the research focuses on the participants' lived experiences in group adventure holidays and seeks to understand their meaning.

Having identified the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the research, the next section discusses the research approach and methodology and provides a justification for their adoption.

3.3 Research approach

As noted above, this study adopts an interpretive approach to examine tourist emotions within tour group settings. The choice of this approach emerges from the perspective that understanding knowledge in social sciences differs from doing so in the physical sciences, and that the methods used also differ. For instance, positivism develops research instrument to create knowledge based on the belief that reality exists independently of the person who observes it, and the way of knowing is based on the search for connections between several variables and focusing on cause and effect relationships (Bryman and Bell, 2003). However, this approach neglects the role of human experiences and interpretation that are crucial in understanding in the social sciences (Fox, 2012).

The underlying assumption of the interpretivist argument is that humans rely upon and act upon their interpretations of the world (Hammersley, 2013). The interpretive approach therefore assumes that multiple realities exist, that reality is mentally perceived and socially constructed (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988), and that the context of an event or behaviour influences the individual's interpreted reality. For instance, a study in a laboratory setting will provide different knowledge to a study conducted in the real world. Moreover, this approach focuses on the holistic view of the phenomenon under study, meaning that interdependent systems should not be separated for the purposes of the study. Overall, the aim of interpretivist research is to obtain what Geertz (1973) described as a "thick description" of the phenomena under study, including details related to the context.

The role of the individual in the interpretivist approach is one of a voluntaristic and active creator of knowledge. In adopting interpretivist approaches, researchers seek a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in its context (Creswell, 2007), based on individuals' experiences and the realities they construct (Schwandt, 1994). In this case, the researcher seeks to understand the meaning of tourists' experiences in groups, based on their experiences and interpretations of the realities they construct about themselves and other group members. Thus, the knowledge generated is a result of a co-creation process conducted by the researcher and the participants, and the findings are the result of the interactions between them (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2011).

Interpretivists' primary goal is understanding behaviour; this understanding of meaning is a process that is never complete but is rather an iterative cycle of interpretations (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Therefore, emotion experiences in this study are understood as socially constructed in relation to the social context, based on levels of empathy or *verstehen* (*Weber, 1947). Verstehen* literally means 'understanding'; however, in this context it refers to shared meanings within social phenomena and involves an ongoing process that is created by people's activities (Wax, 1967). Scholars have argued that conducting research in the researcher's own culture and environment allows a high level of *verstehen* to occur (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Thus, the research was conducted in the researcher's home country, Saudi Arabia.

3.4 Research methodology

The interpretive approach applied in the study informed the methodological processes employed to understand the research inquiry. The study aims to understand the participants' subjective experiences, the meaning of their experiences, and how they make sense of them. It employed a phenomenological research approach to explore tourist groups' experiences and emotions by providing a description and an understanding of the participants' experiences and lived worlds. It therefore seeks phenomenological knowledge of emotions that "emerges in some context(s) or, as it is 'lived'" to gain an understanding of the emotions in group adventure experiences that people can access consciously (Thompson, Locander, and Polio, 1989, p. 135).

According to Lazarus (1991), when studying emotions, the theory or the perspective of emotions should be explicitly defined, since each perspective assumes a particular emotional process and results in different emotional states. This study employs a qualitative approach to understand the participants' emotions. It does not propose a specific model or theory but rather a meta-theoretical lens for the research, as Creswell (2009) suggested. The research adopts the phenomenological understanding of emotions as lived phenomena described by individuals (Goldie, 2002; Solomon, 2008). Emotions are personal feelings that should be examined as lived phenomena from the perspective of the individual who felt them, as he or she could attach meaning to these emotions (Denzin, 1984). This phenomenological lens therefore allows for a deeper understanding of emotions and their complex nature in the context of group adventure holidays.

Qualitative research allows the phenomenon under study to be understood in real-life situations and offers flexibility in the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Since this research

adopts a qualitative methodology, it is helpful to provide a definition of qualitative research at this stage. Holloway and Wheeler (2010) defined it as:

> A form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live […] and aim to understand, describe, and interpret social phenomena [...] to explore the behaviour, feelings and experiences of people and what lies at the core of their lives (p. 3).

Interpretivists use qualitative methods for inquiry, such as interviews and observation, and they prioritise the participants' viewpoints when gathering knowledge. Moreover, they focus on describing and understanding the meanings the participants assign to their own experiences (Cheney, 2000). Scholars have argued that interpretive inquiries should be carried out in a natural setting and that the participants' own terminology should be used (Knorr-Cetina, 1983). In a natural setting, the researcher is the instrument for data collection, and the focus is on the meaning of the phenomena to the participants (Creswell, 2014). This study was conducted in a natural setting, allowing for a wide-angle view of a social phenomenon, namely, a tourism experience. Uriely (2005) defined a tourist experience as "the tourist's subjective interpretation of meanings as a determinant of the experience" (p. 206). By adopting qualitative inquiry, which focuses on the meaning of an issue to those involved, the research findings provide in-depth insights into emotions in group adventure holidays from the tourists' perspective.

The following section builds on the discussion of the main methodological approaches to emotions in the tourism literature in Chapter 2 (See 2.3.2). It highlights the widespread use of quantitative methodologies in the field, but explains why a qualitative approach is more appropriate for this study.

3.4.1 Research method

The majority of approaches to studying emotions in tourism literature, such as the basic emotions approach or cognitive appraisal theories, have adopted a positivistic methodology (e.g., Faullant, et al., 2011; Hosany, 2012; Ma et al., 2013; Hosany et al., 2017). However, as argued above, the positivist approach is insufficient for an examination of emotions, such as this study, which includes their context, relationships and dynamics. This is because the nature of the tourist experience is subjective, and it therefore requires an interpretive approach.

In tourism scholarship, quantitative methodologies have used scales and measurements adapted from psychology and tested emotions valences, intensity, or their relationships with various variables (e.g., Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Ma., et al., 2013). For example, the cognitive

appraisal theory of emotions has often been adopted in quantitative methodologies in tourism (See 2.3.2.1). However, this theory of emotions relies on individuals' interpretations of the experienced emotions, and such interpretations have been recognised as a reliable source of knowledge with which to study emotions. Indeed, qualitative methodologies have been used to understand the meanings of emotions in specific consumption contexts, such as in ethical tourism (Malone et al., 2014) and dark tourism (Jordan and Prayag, 2022).

As discussed in Chapter 2, emotions are context-specific experiences that require an approach that considers the role of the context in which they occur and the individual cognitive processes shaping them (Richins, 1997; Scherer, 2005). Qualitative interpretive methodologies provide such types of insights, and the wider use of qualitative approaches to studying emotions is encouraged to achieve more humanistic knowledge about emotions in the tourism experience. According to a recent review of the methodological approaches used to study emotions in tourism by Hosany, Martin and Woodside (2020), examining emotional responses and their complex nature in-depth necessitates a qualitative approach, and scholars such as Denzin (1984), Ellis (1991), Burkitt (2014) and others have affirmed that it is beneficial to adopt interpretive approaches to studying emotions.

Emotions are also complex and difficult to measure. For instance, emotions have various valences and dimensions, and two types of emotions can occur simultaneously, even contrasting emotions. In addition, most of the scales developed to measure emotions in tourism fail to explain how emotions are experienced in a specific context or within a particular social environment; they also fail to understand their influences on the experience's outcomes (Ma et al., 2013). Thus, adopting a qualitative approach to understand emotions in the tourist experience provides an effective tool to understand tourist's emotional experiences within complex social contexts.

This study examines emotional experiences that individuals can access consciously in order to uncover their lived experiences, with a focus on emotions. It employed a semi-structured interview method, and the interviews took the form of informal conversations that revealed experienced emotions. The next section presents and justifies the choice of this data collection method and describes the research sample.

3.4.2 Research instrument

In keeping with the interpretive research design, qualitative interviewing was used to provide rich information and enable the researcher to gather a breadth and depth of knowledge related

to the investigated topic (Yeo et al., 2013). Interviews as a data collection method are suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of people's lived experiences of social phenomena (Seidman, 2013; Kvale, 1983). Semi-structured interviews were selected for this study due to their flexibility, as they are based on prepared questions but allow for emerging ones. For instance, participants were given a safe space to openly discuss group experiences and emotions while ensuring the conversation remained on topic.

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a mix of structured and unstructured formats. They are a form of informal conversation with participants, but at the same time, there is a pre-defined protocol for the study inquiry (Arksey and Knight, 1999). The semi-structured format of the interviews adopted in this study allowed participants to share their experiences and emotions freely, without interruption, enabling the researcher to better understand their feelings. At the same time, the researcher had the opportunity to guide the conversation towards the study topic by employing a pre-determined open-ended set of questions and probes (Patton, 2014).

Moreover, the interviews were phenomenological, exploring how participants make sense of their emotional experiences in the social context of the group adventure holidays (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). This research focuses on subjective emotions that the respondents can access consciously to understand how emotions are expressed, communicated and experienced in group adventure holidays from the tourist perspective. This method allowed the interviewer to uncover rich data about emotions within tourist group experiences and the influence of these experiences on individuals' emotions in the shape of the participants' stories and narratives. It also allowed the participants to describe and assign primacy to the events, activities and interactions in the experience (Akaka and Vargo, 2015).

Scholars have emphasised the importance of establishing a rapport with the participants in qualitative interviews (Kvale, 1996). This is typically easier in semi-structured interviews due to their nature. While structured interviews often prevent participants from elaborating on their emotions, in unstructured interviews, they have greater flexibility to discuss other aspects of the experience unrelated to emotions, such as types of food or transportation, which can help them to relax and build rapport. In addition, this research examined emotions in adventure group holidays, which have not been previously defined (Lazarus, 1995); thus, semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate method for this research. Indeed, several studies that have

examined emotions in tourism have employed semi-structured interviews (e.g. Malone et al., 2014; Malone et al., 2018; Mathisen, 2019; Moal-Ulvoas, 2017).

3.4.3 Sampling

This study aims to generate an in-depth understanding of a particular experience in a specific context. It therefore required the participants of individuals for whom the research phenomenon has significant meaning and who were able to speak about their own experiences within the research context. The sections below describe the sampling strategy adopted for this study, the process used to recruit suitable participants, and the methods used to calculate the sample size. Details of the participants' characteristics are also provided.

3.4.3.1 Sampling strategy

Most qualitative studies that adopt an interpretive research approach use a purposive sampling technique due to the nature of the research, which needs participants who are capable of providing in-depth information on the study topic (e.g., Malone, et al., 2014; Mathisen, 2019; Tamminen et al., 2016). According to Patton (2002, p. 230), "Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations", and purposive sampling is considered to be suitable for qualitative research because it allows the researcher to choose participants and settings that contribute to understanding the research topic (Creswell, 2007). As this study is exploratory in nature, it adopts a purposive sampling approach by selecting participants who are able to answer the research questions (Saunders Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012).

Sampling selection is an essential stage in the research design, and it partly determines the quality of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). In purposive sampling, all participants should meet the pre-defined criteria (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and, although the sample selection in this technique is based on the researcher's judgement, the criteria to determine who is included should be clear (Bryman, 2012). As this study aimed to understand tourists' experiences and emotions within the context of group adventure holidays, participants had to meet two criteria to be included. These were:

1. *To have participated in a group adventure holiday within the last 12 months*

For this criterion, a clear understanding of what qualified as 'a group adventure experience' was needed. Within tourism, group experiences could be any number of tourists holidaying

together, such as a group of family or friends (Vaske, et al., 2000); however, this study focused on group packaged tours. Group tours can be considered as a kind of temporary organisation, formed by the tour guide and tour members, as, during the tour, both guide and members live together in such a way that their individual behaviours, interactions and lived emotions influence the whole group experience (Tsaur, et al., 2019). Decisions regarding whether a group holiday could be considered as an 'adventure' were based on Buckley's (2009) definition of adventure tours as:

> guided commercial tours where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialised sporting or similar equipment, and is exciting for tour clients (p.1).

Moreover, the group adventure holiday had to include at least one night's stay to provide a longer engagement with the experience. In addition, in order to ensure that participants were able to recall their experiences, the holiday should also have taken place no more than 12 months before their participation in the current study; this is a common approach in travel and tourism research (e.g., Sthapit and Jimenez-Barreto, 2018; Tanford, Erdem, and Baloglu, 2011). The second criterion:

2. *To be Saudi nationals aged over 18.*

This study focuses on understanding the experience of emotion, where there is no universal understanding of emotion (Lazarus, 1995). In this context, it is helpful if the researcher and the participants have mutual understandings of cultural expressions and the words used to describe their experiences. Therefore, it was important for the interviewer and interviewees to share the same language and culture. As the investigator is from Saudi Arabia, the sample comprised Saudi tourists who had participated in adventure group experiences, either within Saudi Arabia or internationally. This study collected data from adult participants only; these were defined as individuals aged 18 and over.

Although, this sampling strategy recruited a homogeneous participant set, variations in the participants' ages, genders and types of experiences provided more insights and a deeper understanding of emotions in the context of group adventure holidays. In addition, the selection of Saudi participants only helped build a rapport between the researcher and the participants

because of their shared language and culture. The following section describes the steps taken to recruit participants who met the criteria set out above.

3.4.3.2 Participant recruitment

Firstly, a participation invitation was designed to recruit participants; this illustrated the study's goal, the target audience for participating, the method for conducting the interviews, and the approximate length of the interviews. Then three strategies were adopted to share the invitation and recruit participants. The first of these involved identifying and contacting 11 Saudi tourism companies that offer adventure trips in Saudi Arabia and worldwide to ask if they would share the invitation with their consumers. The companies contacted are the ones that had an online presence (website, social media etc) and their contact information was publicly available. Only two of the 11 were cooperative and agreed to send the invitation to their customers.

Then, to overcome the challenge that only a few tour companies were willing to help, Saudi social media influencers in the field of tours and adventures were contacted to ask if they would be willing to participate in the research and to share the invitation with their followers. This method was more successful in reaching potential participants than the tourism companies. Recruiting participants through social media has proven effective in saving time and resources and reaching diverse and hard-to-reach groups (Whitaker et al., 2017). Adventure tourism in packaged tours has recently gained popularity among Saudi tourists, which makes them hard to reach sample. Thus, social media influencers offer a great opportunity to reach people interested in adventure tourism. Influencers provide space to share interests for adventure and seek connection with people who have similar interests. Also, social media channels allow researchers to communicate their research to people who would not hear about it in other traditional forms (Lang et al., 2023), which has been affirmed in the diverse group of Saudi adventure tourists this research recruited.

Although social media influencers agreed to communicate the research invitation, the vast majority of participants were recruited through a snowball sampling approach, whereby current participants were asked to contact people who met the selection criteria and knew they would be interested in participating. The snowball sampling approach helped reach a diverse and broader scope of participants, including those who do not use or follow social media channels. Therefore, the use of both recruitment methods complemented each other.

3.4.3.3 Sample size

In quantitative research, the sample size should be large in order to achieve generalisable results (Saunders et al., 2016); however, in qualitative research, a small number of participants can deliver detailed information about the phenomenon under study. Hence, there are no specific rules for a sufficient sample size in qualitative studies. For instance, various factors influence the decision regarding the adequate sample size in qualitative approaches, including the research questions, the nature of the inquiry, the study design, the range of people constituting the sample, and the availability of time and resources. For example, Creswell (2013) reviewed previous qualitative study designs and their sample sizes. He found that narrative research usually included one or two individuals, case studies had four or five cases, and ethnography studies typically involved one single culture-sharing group, which may include many more members (Creswell, 2013). However, a key factor regarding the sample size in qualitative research is the concept of data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018).

The decision that the sample size deemed sufficient was based on data saturation, which is the point where new information stops emerging or becomes repetitive (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006). In this study, data saturation was established first when the data represented the diversity and depth needed to collect an individual's experience of emotions, and second when new information stopped emerging. Furthermore, researchers base their decision about sample size on previous studies in their field of study. For instance, Mason (2010) analysed PhD qualitative research and found that the most common sample sizes were between 20 and 30, where saturation was established. Moreover, a brief review of studies that examined emotions in tourism from a psychological perspective and focused on obtaining in-depth knowledge revealed typical sample sizes of between 10 and 21 participants (Malone et al., 2014; Moal-Ulvoas, 2017; Malone et al., 2018; Mathisen, 2019). This common sample size in similar literature was used as a guide when recruiting participants. Also, the sample size was considered sufficient within the timeframe available.

Therefore, based on the above discussion, 32 participants were considered an adequate sample size, and information saturation was consistently evaluated during the data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2021). The participant interviews resulted in 647 pages of transcripts, providing ample information about this study inquiry. The average interview duration was between 60

and 90 minutes; the longest lasted 120 minutes, and the shortest 40 minutes. These durations allowed for detailed conversations about the participants' in-depth experiences.

3.4.3.4 Participants characteristics

The recruited participants were diverse in terms of gender, age, level of experience and place of residence. Participants were diverse to some degree and homogenous in some aspects. Hence, they had differences in gender, age, level of experience, place of residence, occupation, education, and personality, and similarities in culture, language, travel interests, and nationality. Of the 32 participants, 16 were men and 16 women, but this ratio was not planned, and the research did not reveal any differences between the genders regarding their interests in adventure tourism. Ages ranged from 19 to 48 which highlights that the participant's group was from a relatively younger generation, and they had varying levels of adventure travel experiences. Table 43.1: Participants' Characteristics shows the characteristics of the participants, including their age, gender, occupation, destination, level of adventure experience, adventure type, and duration of the holiday. To ensure their anonymity, each participant has been given a pseudonym.

As Table 43.1: Participants' Characteristics shows, most of the destinations the participants visited were in Saudi Arabia; this is explained by the fact that data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, when strict international travel restrictions were imposed. However, some participants shared experiences about holidays which took place shortly before the pandemic started. Also, participants in this study reported their experiences on group adventure trips with strangers, not with family or friends. In terms of adventure types, the most common types the participants reported participating in were trekking and camping, while mountain climbing, diving, and hiking were less reported.

Table 43.1: Participants' Characteristics

#	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Occupation	Education	Adventure Experience Level*	Holiday Type	Destination	Duration
1	Mohammad	42	Male	Engineer	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	7 days
2	Ali	48	Male	Teacher	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	7 days
3	Nora	44	Female	Leadership role	Master's degree	Medium	Diving	Saudi Arabia	3 days
4	Amal	31	Female	Diving instructor	Bachelor's degree	Advanced	Diving	Saudi Arabia	3 days
5	Abdullah	31	Male	IT engineer	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Trekking and camping	USA/ Grand Canyon	7 days
6	Hafsah	27	Female	Administrative role	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Oman	3 days
7	Dana	40	Female	Dentist	Master's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	3 days
8	Hanouf	23	Female	Graphic designer	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Diving	Saudi Arabia	3 days
9	Shahad	48	Female	Housewife	High school	Beginner	Hiking	Turkey	7 days
10	Ramy	24	Male	Accountant	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Mountain climbing	Kilimanjaro summit	7 days
11	Maria	30	Female	Not employed	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	One day
12	Faisal	22	Male	College student	High school	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	5 days
13	Omar	30	Male	IT engineer	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Philippines	10 days
14	Hind	37	Female	English translator	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Mountain climbing	Oman	5 days
15	Monerah	30	Female	Administrative role	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	3 days
16	Ahmed	27	Male	Engineer	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Mountain climbing	Kilimanjaro summit	7 days
17	Adnan	24	Male	Engineer	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	5 days
18	Samar	25	Female	College student	High school	Medium	Trekking and camping	Turkey	3 days
19	Saeed	28	Male	Family doctor	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	3 days
20	Saud	35	Male	Engineer and entrepreneur	Master's degree	Medium	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	3 days
21	Talal	42	Male	Works in insurance sector	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	3 days
22	Sultan	40	Male	Sports trainer	Bachelor's degree	Medium	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	3 days
23	Bayan	38	Female	IT manager	Master's degree	Advanced	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	10 days
24	Maha	44	Female	Manager in banking sector	Bachelor's degree	Advanced	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	7 days
25	Amal	26	Female	Lawyer	Bachelor's degree	Advanced	Mountain climbing	Oman	3 days
26	Bushra	39	Female	Researcher	Master's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Oman	3 days
27	Elaf	28	Female	Administrative role	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Hiking	Saudi Arabia	3 days
28	Hany	24	Male	Medical student	Bachelor's degree	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	5 days
29	Ibrahim	19	Male	College student	High school	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	5 days
30	Mahdi	30	Male	Administrative role	Master's degree	Medium	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	4 days
31	Khaled	21	Male	College student	High school	Beginner	Trekking and camping	Saudi Arabia	5 days
32	Lama	40	Female	Clinical psychiatrist	Master's degree	Advanced	Mountain climbing	Everest Summit	55 days

* Adventure experience level: beginner (has been on one trip); medium (has been on three or more trips); advanced (has been on more than five trips).

3.4.4 Data collection

The data collection started on 10 October 2020 and ended on 21 April 2021. As this study employed semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was prepared and followed. The following sub-sections discuss the development of the interview guide, the pilot interviews, and the main interview processes.

3.4.4.1 Interview guide

The interview guide consisted of pre-defined and open-ended questions based on the study aims and research questions. This study aimed to provide insights into the experience of emotions within the social context of group adventure holidays. Also, it sought to explain how emotions are communicated and expressed in group tourist experiences. Lastly, it aimed to identify the types of emotions related to group adventure holidays and uncover the mechanisms that shaped them. The questions were formulated in a language that was simple to understand and did not include any theoretical concepts or terminologies. Open-ended questions were used to allow the participants to describe their experiences. Also, prompts were used (e.g., immediate clarification and silence) to keep the conversation flowing.

The interviews started with introductory questions about the participants' biographical information, followed by questions about their holidays interests, travel activities, trip characteristics and travel arrangements. The participants were then asked about their group adventure holidays, their experiences and their emotions, covering every element of the experience from preparation to return. Next, they were asked about the activities involved, their fellow group members, and the value of the experience. However, although the interviews were based on pre-defined questions, the researcher did not follow the interview guide strictly but instead allowed natural, informal conversation to occur by responding to verbal cues from the participants. For example, sometimes questions were modified, or asked in a different order, based on the flow of the interview, and additional questions were prompted by the participants' insights (Creswell, 2014; Robson and McCartan, 2016). A copy of the interview guide, showing the interview questions and probes, the aim of each question, and the related research questions, is provided in (see Appendix 4).

The interview guide was initially developed in English and then translated into Arabic. Since the interviews were conducted in Arabic, the interview protocol, along with the participant consent form and the information sheet, were also translated from English into Arabic. Copies of these forms included in the appendices (see Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3). The translation was undertaken by the researcher. To ensure the quality of the translation, it was reviewed by colleagues from the Business School who speak both languages fluently. Reviewing the interview guide was an ongoing process until the researcher and the supervisors achieved consensus. As part of this, pilot interviews were undertaken to ensure the questions and probing were clear and could generate valuable insights. The next section describes the piloting process.

3.4.4.2 Undertaking pilot interviews

After preparing and revising the interview guide, pilot interviews were conducted in two stages. The first stage, testing the wording and the interview questions' understandability, was conducted by interviewing friends and colleagues of the principal researcher, some of whom were Saudi nationals. Then, based on their feedback, the interview guide was slightly revised. The second stage of piloting was conducted with the target participants to ensure they understood the questions. Based on these pilot interviews, slight amendments were made to the questions. The revising and refining of the interview questions was an ongoing process. Moreover, a research journal was used to reflect on each interview after its completion and to make relevant notes about the interview experience and what had been learned about each participant. These notes documented each learned insight from the interviews that should be considered in further interviews. The journal also helped with revision of the interview guide and the techniques used for asking questions.

Pilot interviews are helpful for novice researchers to practice and improve their interviewing skills (Yin, 2013). In this study, they enabled the principal researcher to learn how to manage the flow of the interviews, such as where to pick a line of conversation, where individuals tend to drift, and where repetition of information occurs. They also helped in identifying good times for expanding on some aspects or asking certain questions based on the flow of the discussion. The experience gained during the pilot interviews enabled the researcher to employ the interview guide in a more flexible way during the main interviews, using it primarily to ensure that all the important points were discussed during the flow of conversation. Additionally, during

the pilot interviews, the interview questions were tested in two ways: firstly, to see whether they could generate the data required, and, secondly, to identify which methods of questioning worked well and which did not. For instance, the use of prompt such as 'give me an example of a situation' and 'describe the incident to me' were found to be more effective in eliciting detailed elaboration about participants' emotional experiences than asking 'Tell me how you felt', which tended to generate only simple descriptions of their feelings.

3.4.4.3 Interview process

Although the original plan for data collection involved face-to-face interviews, the social distancing rules introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic made these impossible. As a result, data were collected through virtual interviews (Chen and Hinton, 1999) via online video communication applications (Microsoft Teams and Zoom) to ensure the safety of both the researcher and the participants. Previous studies have reported that the quality of the data obtained from online video interviews is no different from that obtained from face-to-face interviews (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014; Shapka, Domene, Khan, and Yang, 2016). However, a number of challenges associated with data collection during the pandemic were experienced, and these are discussed in more detail below (See Section 0).

32 virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted between October 2020 and April 2021. All the participants had taken part in a group adventure holidays and all were Saudi nationals whose first language was Arabic; thus, each interview was conducted in Arabic. All the interviews were audio recorded with the participants' permission via the online communication platform and recording were stored on the researcher's computer. They were later transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The procedure for conducting the interviews was as follows. Initial communication with the participants was through their emails or social media accounts; however, once they agreed to participate, the communication moved to WhatsApp. The initial screening for interviews therefore happened in WhatsApp. Firstly, potential participants were informed of the study's aim and the participation criteria, that is, if they have been on group adventure holidays in the previous 12 months. The consent form and the participant information sheet were sent to them, and they were asked to sign the consent form (Appendix 3) and send it back to set a date and time for the video call. Participants

were offered a choice of video call platforms (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Skype) depending on which they were most comfortable using.

On the agreed interview day, the invitation link was sent to the participant by email or WhatsApp, and a list of instructions was included to ensure a suitable environment for the interviews (Johnson, Scheitle, and Ecklund, 2019; Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman, 2020). These included finding somewhere with a good internet connection and minimising background noise. When the participant joined the researcher online, they were thanked for their participation and briefed again about the interview goal and their rights as participants. Any concerns were addressed before the interview started and permission to record the interview were sought. From a cultural perspective, establishing a personal connection is crucial for effective communication in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in order to start building a rapport with each participant, the researcher began by introducing herself and attempting to learn a little more about them before the interview. During the interview, active listening strategies, such as showing interest in the participants' comments, were used.

As illustrated in the guide, the interview aimed to focus on and discuss one recent holiday experience; thus, the questions sought to contextualise the conversation around one specific holiday and its characteristics. However, as qualitative inquiry is open and natural, there were occasions when, as the interview proceeded, participants reflected on more than one holiday that had been a significant emotional and meaningful experience for them. Thus, the participants in this study shared their experiences of a collection of memorable group adventure holidays, thereby enriching the data which was collected.

3.4.4.4 Data collection during COVID-19 challenges and opportunities

The original data collection method conceived for this study was to conduct the semi-structured interviews on-site during the holidays, when the participants' experiences were fresh in their minds and not detached from their contexts. However, the lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic made this almost impossible. As a result, virtual interviews were conducted within 12 months of the holiday taking place.

In studies evaluating the consumption experience, interviews are typically conducted as close as possible to its occurrence, so that information "remains fresh in consumers' minds and so that experiential benefits are not 'forgotten' or replaced with more cognitively accessible functional benefits" (Otto and Ritchie, 1996, p.173). For example, several studies examining emotions in adventure tourism experiences conducted on-site interviews, either during or immediately after the activities (Faullant et al., 2011; Knobloch et al., 2017; Mathisen, 2019; Pomfret, 2012). Their approach aligns with Hosany and Gilbert's (2010) view that later retrospective recall of emotions would be less accurate. However, the gap between the holiday experiences and the interviews in this study did not create a limitation because the data analysis did not aim to identify accurate emotional responses but explored remembered emotional experiences.

Although online interviews were not part of the original study design, there were several advantages associated with their use beyond ensuring the safety of the participants and the researcher. For instance, virtual interviews gave participants the feeling of face-to-face connection while still allowing them to remain in their familiar environment (typically their own homes) (Gray et al., 2020; Oliffe, Kelly, Gonzalez Montaner, and Yu Ko, 2021); this helped them to feel more at ease, and comfortable enough to speak about their feelings and share personal experiences. Online interviews therefore contributed to establishing rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees and generated a more detailed picture of their emotional experiences. Moreover, in the researcher's view and based on the participants' statements, this type of data collection increased their willingness to participate in the study (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). Interviewing participants online removed geographical challenges, minimised time constraints, and reduced costs (as no transportation or accommodation was required), allowing for greater flexibility in scheduling and enabling a wide range of individuals to participate, regardless of their places of residence (Drabble et al., 2016; Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, and Cook, 2020; Winiarska, 2017).

Despite the advantages associated with online interviews, technological issues, poor internet connection, and lack of control over the external environment can be challenging. For example, technological issues include lacking access to suitable devices or the skills to use online communication platforms (Lobe Morgan, and Hoffman, 2022). However, during COVID-19, online communications became part of

life for many people, and were widely used for work and study and to communicate with family and friends. Enabling participants to choose the platform they were most familiar and comfortable with further reduced technical barriers, so, in this study, lack of technological skills and access to devices did not impose constraints on the research participants. Nevertheless, several interviews were affected by poor internet connections and noisy environments. To solve those issues, the researcher and the participant agreed to delay the time of the interview or to reschedule it to ensure better quality conversations. Although this solution helped obtain sufficient data, it slightly extended the data collection period. Another limitation of conducting virtual interviews is that the researcher could not observe the participants' physical space and body language (Gray et al., 2020). However, since the research aim and questions focus on something other than observing those aspects, this limitation did not influence the quality of the research data.

Indeed, the findings of this study suggest that, overall, the COVID-19 pandemic had a positive impact on both the level of participation in the study and the insights generated. Although one might have assumed that data collection during the pandemic lockdowns would be problematic, they proved to be fruitful periods to gather examples of meaningful emotional experiences. At a time when non-essential travel was severely restricted, participants were enthusiastic about sharing their travel stories, and their descriptions and reflections of their feelings were particularly rich.

3.4.5 Data analysis

This study employs a phenomenologically orientated thematic analysis to explore the lived experience of tourists' emotions in the context of group adventure holidays. The analysis was employed to identify patterns in data, describe and interpret those patterns, and provide a theoretically informed interpretation of them. This method of analysis was selected to capture the experiential nature of the inquiry and to provide a broad scope of analysis to understand tourists' emotions in the study context. Data analysis began simultaneously with data collection by transcribing the interviews and taking notes in the research journal, reflecting on how each interview went and any recording interesting insights or threads of conversation. The analysis involved exploring and making sense of the research data to better understand the research participants' lived experiences and their emotions in the context of group adventure holidays. The following sections describe the thematic analysis in more detail, describing the role of

the hermeneutic circle in the process of interpretation and defining the phases of the analysis.

3.4.5.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying patterns across the dataset (Creswell, 2014; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Walters, 2016), and it is used to "identify patterns within and across data concerning participants' lived experiences, views and perspectives, and behaviour and practices" (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). As a result, thematic analysis is widely employed in qualitative research in psychology and other disciplines. Within tourism studies, scholars have employed thematic analysis fully as a method of analysis or partially by using some of its techniques to identify patterns and themes in the data (e.g., Filep, Macnaughton, and Glover, 2017; Isabelle, Dominique, and Statia, 2019; Kim and Chen, 2019; Knobloch et al., 2017; Moufahim, and Lichrou, 2019; Wood and Kinnunen, 2020).

Thematic analysis produces rich, complex and detailed data (Braun and Clarke 2019), and it considered a useful approach to interpret complex phenomena, such as emotions, in-depth. As a result, it has been utilised to examine emotions in different tourism contexts, notably as mature adults' experiences (Mitas et al., 2012) and dark tourism (Jordan and Prayag, 2022). Moreover, thematic analysis offers theoretical flexibility because it does not impose a specific theoretical framework or epistemological underpinning. Thus, this study was able to adopt a phenomenological perspective to examine emotions within its social context and to employ a hermeneutical circle of interpretation.

A six phase thematic analysis was undertaken to explore patterns across the dataset: data familiarisation; coding; generating initial themes; reviewing and developing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; and writing up (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2022; Walters, 2016). These phases serve as the basis for the analysis process employed in this research and are described in Table 3.3. Although these phases are presented in a logical sequence, they are not linear, as it is necessary to move backwards and forwards between stages during analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022; Walters, 2016). This iterative movement between the phases in a circle of interpretation resembles a hermeneutical circle (Spiggle, 1994; Thompson, 1997; Walters, 2016), and this concept

is explored in the following section. The six phases of the analysis are also discussed below (See Section 0).

Table 3.2: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description
Familiarization with the dataset	Transcribing the data, reading and re-reading and noting down initial ideas. Full immersion with the data.
Coding	Generating codes that identify interesting features of the data and which are relevant to the research questions across the entire data set and collecting relevant data extracts for each code.
Generating initial themes	Collating codes to identify patterns and potential themes, then collating data relevant to each potential theme.
Developing and reviewing themes	Checking if the proposed themes work in relation to the coded extracts, developing a convincing story of the data which can be used to answer the research questions. Themes in this phase can be refined.
Defining and naming themes	Developing detailed analysis of each theme to define their specifics and to determine their story. Then providing a clear definition and name for each theme.
Writing up the findings	Connecting the analytic narrative and data extracts to contextualise the analysis in relation to the research questions and the literature.

(Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2022; Walters, 2016)

3.4.5.2 Hermeneutic circles

As noted above, the flexibility thematic analysis offers in respect of its theoretical underpinning enabled this study to utilise a hermeneutic circle approach to the data analysis within its interpretive methodology (Hirschman, 1990; Thompson, 1997). The hermeneutic circle is part of the theory of hermeneutics and a central concept in the process of interpretation. It is based on the interplay between the parts and the whole in the sense-making process (Schmidt, 2016) and it can be illustrated using the notion that a text is a whole and contains several parts, such as themes, ideas or sentences. The approach assumes that understanding both the whole and the parts is a cyclical process (Gadamer, 1989). For instance, understanding the meaning of the parts (the individual

words) involves an understanding of the whole (the sentence); however, the understanding of the whole is contingent on the understanding of the parts. Spiggle (1994) suggested that this movement between the part and the whole facilitates the inductive and deductive development of ideas and concepts from the data, helping to achieve a more holistic interpretation. For instance, the hermeneutical circle utilised in this study contributed to identifying both the individual and the shared meanings of the data and, consequently, the individual and group emotional experiences (Thompson et al., 1989)

Following this approach, multiple hermeneutic circles were employed during the interpretation process to reach a comprehensive understanding of the interview data, with the researcher going back and forth between each part and the whole through the different stages of the analysis (Walters, 2016). This involved moving from understanding the whole (the familiarisation of the whole transcript phase) to understanding the parts (the coded sections) and then back from the coded parts to the whole (developed themes). Another circle of interpretation happened by moving from coding each interview to coding shared meanings among all the interviews.

In addition to the circles involved in the thematic analysis, other circles of interpretation related to the data occurred, including the movement between the types of tourist experience involved: the whole (group experience) and the parts (individual experience). For instance, this thesis examined the individual experience within the group; understanding the individuals as parts created the understanding of the whole, which is the group experience. Also, there was a circular process of interpretation between the whole (the social context) and the parts (emotions). These hermeneutic circles are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

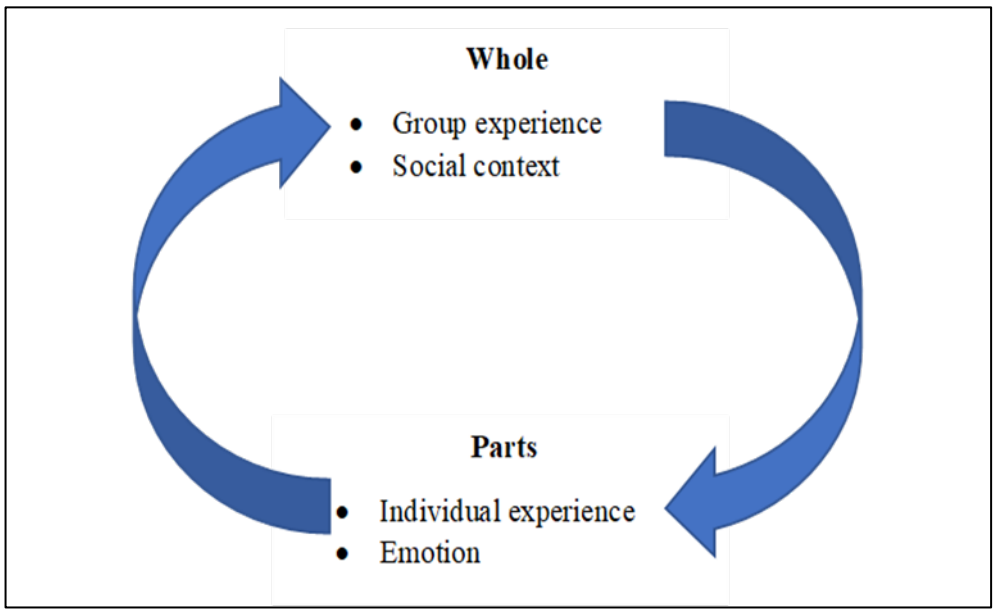


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**.3. The Hermeneutic Circle of Interpretation

3.4.5.3 Thematic analysis phases

The first phase of the thematic analysis is data familiarisation, which means actively engaging with the data, reading, thinking, and taking notes about interesting aspects of the data (Braun et al., 2019). In this study, this first analysis stage involved transcribing interviews, translating them from Arabic to English, and taking initial notes about the data (Creswell, 2014). Adhering to the ethical requirements of anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher transcribed and translated the interviews to ensure that all expressions and meanings were captured for interpretation. In addition, in order to increase familiarisation with the data, the researcher read and reread each transcript, highlighted relevant information, added notes in the margins, and wrote reflexive notes and initial ideas in the research journal. For instance, early thoughts about emotions and what shaped them were noted. This process was done with pen and paper to allow complete immersion in the data, so transcripts were printed, relevant information was highlighted, and more notes were taken.

The second stage of analysis is coding the data. Coding is an important process in interpretive research, which Spiggle (1994) termed the categorisation of data. The coding process began with an iterative, open coding process that included several coding cycles. The first cycle started by labelling the data extracts, with the function of

highlighting and commenting on the transcripts. Emotion terms were identified and whether they were experienced, expressed, or observed by others; another level of coding focused on identifying social experiences including interactions. Since this research is built on a subjective standpoint, the initial coding was inductive, which enabled the identification of emotions from the data without imposing prior ideas or theoretical understandings from the literature and focused on collecting emotional terms. Emotion coding includes labelling emotions that are reported by the participants or interpreted by the researcher about the participants (Saldaña, 2009). Thus, emotion terms were first coded, and explanatory notes according to whether emotions were experienced, expressed, or transferred were assigned. Then, all the data relevant to emotions, interactions, and the social environment, including other group members' behaviours and emotions, were coded into higher-order codes (Axile codes).

The initial coding was conducted separately for each interview, and then the analysis was carried out across all the interviews. In this stage, codes and related data were moved to a table in Microsoft Word, the highlighted data were placed in the first column, in the middle column, initial codes were assigned to excerpt pieces, and the third column was used for exploratory notes. The coding process was iterative in that each reading of the transcripts initiated new insights that required a new coding cycle to ensure that as many codes were generated for the whole data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Various iterations of coding happened during the different phases of the analysis, and these helped to identify codes that could generate themes. Although an inductive approach was used to generate the themes, part of the iterative process involved codes and themes being reviewed against extant literature. For example, in the process of coding emotions, as initial open coding, all emotion terms were coded, and then, to achieve more consensus on emotional terms, lists of emotions such as Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions were utilised. An example of the process of these coding cycles is provided in Appendix 5.

In the third stage of the analysis, initial themes were developed from the codes. Moving from coding data to generating themes was done by grouping codes into similar clusters, proposing possible themes, and looking for meaningful patterns in the data. Thus, the generated themes were the results of established relationships between codes. By completing this phase, all possible themes and subthemes were generated. Then, in the fourth stage, proposed themes were reviewed and revised to ensure that candidate

themes had a central organising concept that told a coherent story about the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This was achieved by first compiling all the coded data for each theme and ensuring they provided a rich and coherent meaning.

The process of deciding on themes was iterative, moving back and forth between data, research questions and objectives, and the extant literature. Moreover, themes were reviewed back and forth between the researcher and the supervisors, negotiating what best captured the meaning to achieve consensus on themes that provide a coherent story of the data. In this stage, extant theoretical understandings and literature were also visited to make sense of the data and to situate the themes in the broad literature (Creswell, 2014). In addition, a thematic map was developed to visualise the themes and sub-themes and the story they told about the data and to identify any overlapping or inconsistencies. As a result, the thematic analysis (inductive and deductive) identified three main themes: the dimensions of the social context, emotion-sharing mechanisms, and prevalent emotional experiences.

The last two stages of the analysis were overlapping and happened simultaneously. In stage five, themes were labelled with titles that provided meaningful representation, then, each theme and sub-theme were defined, explaining their scope in relation to the research questions. The definition and boundaries of these themes were then finalised in the writing-up of the findings. The write-up stage involved simultaneously reporting the findings and reviewing all the analysis steps and processes. In this stage, the analysis phases were reviewed constantly to ensure that the report provided sufficient details of the complex story of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014).

Having outlined the data analysis process, the next section addresses the researcher's role during the data collection and the importance of reflexivity and an awareness of one’s own positionality, especially in relation to the research setting and the research topic.

3.5 Researcher reflexivity

Identifying the role of the researcher is important in qualitative research. As noted above, in interpretivist research, knowledge about the topic is generated by the cooperative efforts of the researcher and the participants (Reason and Rowan, 1981). Also, in this approach to research, the researcher is considered part of the social reality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, in qualitative research the researcher is not an

impartial observer but is involved in the construction of knowledge (Gray, 2017). The concept of reflexivity is important in qualitative research because it helps to understand the role of the researcher in the research, in the data collection and analysis, and in the findings they generate (Willig, 2013).

Gray (2017) posited that there are two types of reflexivity: one is epistemological reflexivity, which reflects the researcher's assumptions about the research questions, and the other is personal reflexivity, which reflects the researcher's biases. Day (2012) argued that the researcher should be reflexive about identity, positionality, and power in the process of knowledge generation. In conducting this study, the researcher therefore adopted a reflexive attitude and was conscious of personal influences and biases; she recognised the influence of her beliefs and culture on the research, and understood that she was part of the research and that she brought her own subjectivity.

The researcher is a Saudi female who was a doctoral researcher at Nottingham University Business School (UK) during the research period. As this study involves asking people to describe their personal emotional experiences, it was important to consider how this dual identity, as a Saudi female and a doctoral student, might be viewed by the research participants. In a context like Saudi Arabia there are social and cultural norms that prevent people from sharing their personal information and opening up about their emotions, especially with people they don't know. Also, the research topic is regarded as sensitive, because it involves individuals' talking about their emotions, including their personal experience and, in some cases, their weakness. In this context, there were initial concerns that the fact that the researcher was not known to the participants might limit the amount of information participants were willing to share; in addition, it was thought that her gender might generate barriers, specifically for male participants. However, it soon became clear that these fears were misplaced; none of the participants cared about formality, no one saw her as a stranger; instead they recognised her as someone similar to them, an open minded Saudi young woman, who was pursuing a doctoral degree abroad and trying to present their voices. This was clear in the level of rapport developed between the researcher and the participants and the amount of shared emotions and personal experiences in the interviews.

In addition, it was also essential for the researcher to be aware of her position as a doctoral researcher and that this may give participants the impressions that she had more

knowledge of the topic than them, so they would have little to contribute. In order to avoid this, she sought to empower the participants, encouraging them to give voice to their thoughts and feelings by assuring them that she was interested in their personal experience and by explaining the method used and that the process of knowledge production is co constructed.

3.6 Trustworthiness / Evaluation of Quality

This section describes the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this research based on Lincoln and Guba (1985). They identified four criteria to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study is framed within a constructivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is co constructed and contextualised (Creswell and Miller, 2000). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are a number of different strategies to achieve credibility in such studies, including data collection and researcher triangulation, prolonged engagement, and constant observation.

This study involved prolonged engagement with the data, starting from the data collection and continuing throughout the different phases of the thematic analysis. During the data collection, engagement with the data was achieved by three techniques: transcribing the data, familiarisation with the data, and documenting thoughts about potential codes, theories and the process in the reflexive journal. In addition, researcher triangulation was maintained by the constant movement back and forward between the phases. The researcher also triangulated different analysis phases, the previous literature and the reflexive journal during the analysis process. Moreover, credibility was also achieved by peer debriefing, which was ensured by a continuous engagement during the analysis between the researcher and thesis supervisors.

Regarding the transferability of the findings, an interpretive study does not offer generalisability, but instead provides an in depth understanding of a specific phenomenon by a particular group of people and in a specific context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Thus, describing the analysis process in detail, providing thick descriptions of the data and the context, and reporting the methodological and analytical choices in the relevant chapters could be regarded as making the study transferrable. This also helps to enhance the dependability of the research by providing an ‘audit trail’ to ensure that research is traceable and documented (Schwandt, 2001). Therefore, the

researcher provides a clear layout of the methodology and methods used, and the reflexive journal employed to keep track of the process of coding and analysis serves as auditable evidence of the dependability of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Finally, confirmability in the study is connected to achieving credibility, transferability, and dependability within the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1989); therefore, the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process also help to establish the confirmability of the study findings.

3.7 Research Ethics

Part of assuring the quality of a study is ensuring that an ethical procedure is used to conduct the research (Andersen and Corneli, 2018). This study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics of the University of Nottingham, and received ethical approval from the University of Nottingham Business School Research Ethics Committee on 18th September 2020. This research is also informed by the UK Research Ethics Guidance provided by the Social Research Association (SRA) (2021).

The researcher was mindful of the ethical principles expected of social researchers (Denscombe, 2014), and the four main ethical principles: obtain voluntary informed consent, cause no harm, confidentiality, and anonymity (Patton, 2002; Denscombe, 2010) were followed throughout the study. All of the participants were given a detailed participant information sheet prior to their interview, which outlined their rights to anonymity and data protection, and to withdraw from the study at any time (See Appendix 2). Participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions about the interview, and the researcher was then able to address any concerns they had. Prior to starting the interview, each participant was asked to read and sign a consent form to confirm their agreement to participating in the study. The interviews were based on an interview guide, and the participants were assured that their data would only be used for academic purposes.

Care has been taken to ensure that participants' personal information is protected with anonymity and confidentiality. Any identifiable information with the data has been removed or anonymized, and pseudonyms were used to preserve participant anonymity (Grinyer, 2009). For instance, pseudonyms were used in the transcripts to guarantee the anonymity of the participants and protect their identities. All of the data collected from

the interviews were stored on a password-protected personal computer in a secure section of the University of Nottingham's OneDrive, which can only be accessed by the researcher. The recordings of the online interviews were transcribed and translated by the researcher and stored locally on the researcher's computer.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this research. In doing so, it has demonstrated the appropriateness of the interpretivist approach to this study and the use of a phenomenological lens to view emotions. The adoption of a qualitative research methodology has been justified, and the research method and research instruments have been described. The strategy used to recruit research participants has been explained, and details of the participants' characteristics have been provided. The data collection and analysis processes have been described in detail, and the role of researcher reflexivity in this study has been identified. The measures taken to ensure the quality of the research and its ethical conducted have also been set out. The following chapters present the findings of the study and their relationship to the research questions, beginning with analysis of the social dimensions of group adventure holidays and its influence on emotions and emotional sharing in group experiences.

Chapter 4: The Social Context of Group Adventure Holidays

4.1 Introduction

This study examines the experience of emotions in group adventure holidays. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in depth understanding of the role of the social context of group adventure holidays in shaping the emotions experienced by tourists. It seeks to answer the first research question: How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience? In doing so, it understands the group adventure trip environment as providing a temporary social context in which individuals live an extraordinary tourist experience with others, in which they are influenced by others, and, in turn, influence them. Chapter 5 explores the social aspects of emotions by examining the mechanisms in which emotions sharing occurs in group trips, and Chapter 6 identifies the types of emotional experiences which the participants in this study reported and examines their influences on the individual experience within the group.

This chapter sets the foundation for the following chapters by identifying the distinctive dimensions of the social context of group adventure holidays. Arnould and Price (1993) identified three dimensions of the extraordinary tourist experience: closeness with nature; connection with other people, called 'communitas'; and self-growth, and the social environment has been identified as a vital part of the experience (Schmitt, 1999). This chapter focuses on the social context of the group adventure holiday, examining the fellow group members as part of the trip environment and their role in facilitating individuals' emotional experiences and emotional sharing within the group. Drawing on interpretive analysis of the interview data, it explores the ways in which the social context of adventure group holidays influences group members' emotions and identifies five specific social dimensions: individuals on these holidays shared a passion for adventure and are perceived as authentic, group diversity, social escape, supportive environment, socialisation. Each of these are interconnected, and together they shape the social, and hence, the emotional experience of the group adventure holiday.

4.2 The social dimensions of group adventure holidays

As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have identified a number of individual and group characteristics that influence tourist experiences in either group or adventure contexts.

Characteristics that have been shown to influence the tour group's level of socialisation and development include physical proximity, group size, tour guide behaviour, and the group members' age and their shared experiences (Gorman, 1979; Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Schuchat, 1983; Quiroga, 1990). In addition, Levy and Gets (2011) found that three individual characteristics influence the social experience of group travel: mood, personality, and the similarity between group members in terms of their interests, demographics, culture and language. In marketing and hospitality literature, group members' satisfaction, decision making, and behaviours have also been found to be affected by group size, group structure (e.g., family, friends), and group familiarity (Marcevova, Coles, and Shaw 2010; Su, et al., 2021; Xu, 2018). Within adventure tourism, scholars have identified different factors as shaping the adventure experience. Some of these relate to the physical environment and the type of activity undertaken, but a significant role is played by emotional factors, including hedonism, flow, escapism, risk, fear, and challenge (See section 2.4), and social factors such as socialisation, communitas, and camaraderie (Janowski et al., 2021; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016).

This study focuses on group adventure holiday experiences, which combine elements from both group tourism and adventure tourism. However, analysis of the participants' responses in this study indicates that the social environment within such holidays is characterised by a number of context-specific dimensions. These trips, by their nature, involve challenging activities, which require close cooperation between group members, and typically take place in remote locations, which are far removed from group members' everyday experiences. As a result, the adventure trip environment creates an isolated bubble which facilitates closeness between the group members and limits their individual interactions with the rest of the world.

Social context therefore play a key role in group adventure holidays, and it can be considered as part of the environmental attributes that shape the individual's experience on the trip. Thematic analysis of the interview data collected for this study indicates that group adventure holidays are characterised by five dimensions which create rich social environments for group members and thereby contribute to their emotional experiences. These are: (i) individuals in the group share similar interests and are perceived as authentic; (ii) group diversity; (iii) social escapism, (iv) supportive environments, and (v) socialisation. These dimensions are interconnected, with each one influencing the

other, and together they shape the social context of group adventure holidays. This process is illustrated in Figure Error! ***No text of specified style in document.***.4, and the individual components are discussed below.

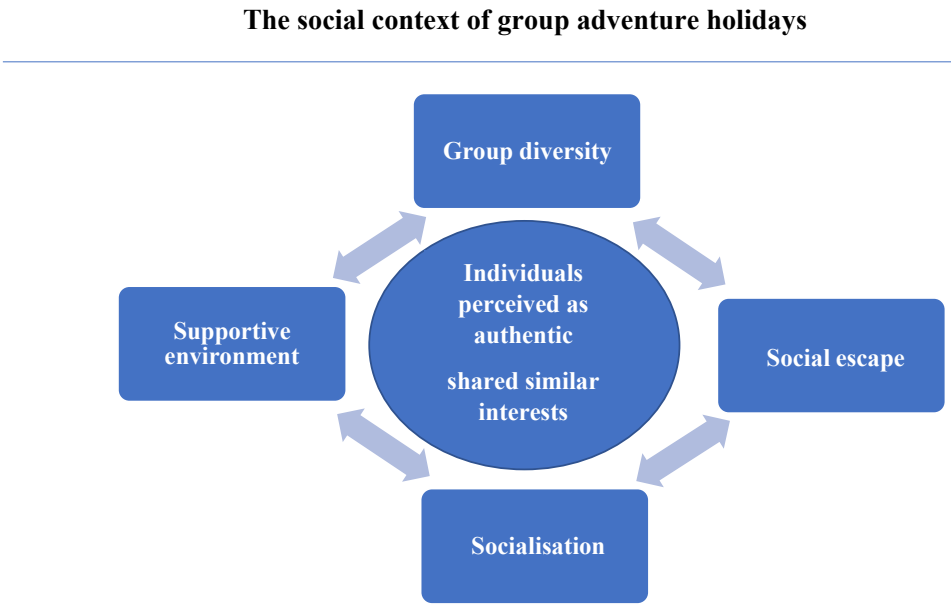


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**.4. The Social Dimensions of Group Adventure Holidays

4.2.1 Individuals in the group perceived as authentic and share similar interests

As Figure Error! ***No text of specified style in document.***.4 indicates, at the heart of the social group adventure experience is the bringing together of individuals who share similar interests and perceive each other as being authentic. The dual aspects of this dimension are explored below.

4.2.1.1 Shared interests

Adventure holidays are a distinctive type of trip that not everyone signs up for or enjoys. However, some people have a passion for this type of holiday, and adventure tourists often consider themselves to belong to a community or a tribe of adventurers (Cova and Cova, 2002; Celsi, et al., 1993). Participants in this study emphasised the significance of being on a trip with others who shared their passion for adventure, who had similar interests, and who enjoyed the same activities. When asked about their relationships with the other group members, they reported that their shared interest in adventures facilitated their interpersonal interactions and aided in developing friendships after the

trip. For example, Samar, a 25-year-old woman, commented on the connection she felt with the other group members:

> *"I felt there were shared interests between us in terms of travel choices, new experiences, and new skills and the activities we do; also, I felt that I might be friends with them, and that has happened. I now know them more deeply and understand them better. Now we have a good friendship beyond the trip."*
>
> (Samar, Participant 18)

As this comment demonstrates, Samar felt that being able to share her passions with the group members influenced her feelings toward them and contributed to building future relationships. This idea was echoed by Maya, a 44-year-old woman who spoke about her experiences on a scuba diving trip on the west coast of Saudi Arabia, and also identified the importance of commonality and communication in developing relationships with the other members of her group:

> *"I usually became friends with them because we had shared interests, liked doing the same things, and could talk and have long conversations."*
>
> (Maya, Participant 3)

The literature indicates that one of the advantages of group adventure trips is that they provide an opportunity to meet and communicate with other adventurers (McLeay, Lichy, and Major, 2019), and some participants identified this as their main objective in joining their adventure holiday. For instance, Hafsah, a 27-year old woman, went on her first trip to Oman with the aim of establishing connections with individuals with similar interests:

> *"I knew that the people who were going on this group trip had the same interest as me, all of them had the same interest. I have friends, but none of my friends has the same interests I have in adventures."*
>
> (Hafsah, Participant 6)

As these comments demonstrate, a group adventure trip is an opportunity to encounter like-minded individuals. Hafsah couldn't find this connection in her existing friendships

and had to meet the other group members in order to be able to share her passion for adventure.

Shared interests can help to build rapid connections between group members, enhancing group cohesion by creating a sense of community. Mohammad, a 42-year-old man who joined a trekking holiday, described the sense of comfort and familiarity he felt when meeting a fellow group member, despite not knowing him before:

> *"I have a passion for adventures; we met one from the west coast and the other from the east coast of the kingdom, and we met for the first time. It was the first time I saw him, but we were like knowing each other a year ago."*
>
> (Mohammad, Participant 1)

Mohammad emphasised the familiarity he felt when he described this encounter, saying, 'knowing each other a year ago'. So, he and the other trekker felt close to each other because they had similar interests, and a bond was created before the trip activities even started. Such connections also affect the other social dimensions, notably when it comes to creating a supportive environment. Having a shared interest in adventure and similar previous experience helped the individuals in the group understand the challenges other group members were facing, meaning they were better able to offer support. This, in turn, played an important role in enhancing the socialisation experience.

Research has demonstrated that the feeling of togetherness from being on holiday with people who share the same interest provides meaningful and rewarding experiences (Matteucci and Filep, 2017). The participants in this study highlighted the positive effects of encountering people who shared their love of adventure, and the role it played in fostering good social interactions during the trip and developing long-term relationships afterwards. This sense of closeness and togetherness also facilitated emotion sharing and contagion between group members. This indicates that the role of shared interests in group adventure holidays enhances interactions between group members, thereby contributing to relationship building, and plays a role in emotional experiences; it also serves to promote a sense of authenticity between group members, as the next section explains.

4.2.1.2 Perceived as authentic

Within tourism, 'authenticity' refers to the perceived realness of the encountered objects or events and to the individual's experience of being able to act as their genuine self (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). Perceived authenticity as discussed in this chapter relates to the ways in which participants in a tour group perceive each other as real and their behaviour as genuine. Participants in this study highlighted the significance of authenticity in their interactions with other group members. In particular, they commented on the lack of 'fakeness' in their behaviour and the sense they were being their true selves. The extreme nature of the adventure trip experience appears to have played a key role in this, freeing group members from their usual social norms and boundaries and enabling them to act in more authentic ways. For example, when asked about the group atmosphere, Bushra, a 39-year-old woman who had been trekking in Oman, directly referenced the nature of the trip:

> *"It was enjoyable for me and one of the main reasons I love hiking in groups is the people we meet; because there isn't any fakeness, no pretending, we are in nature [so] there was no room for compliments or acting, all these things that exist in the civil life or the city vanish, I mean, I just meet the human directly."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

For Bushra, the physical environment and being out in nature facilitated honesty in the feelings and behaviours individuals expressed on the trip. She suggests that escaping '*things that exist in the civil life or the city'* frees them to meet at a human level, without the social expectations that arise when people meet at work or in family gatherings.

Participants also suggested that the elements of challenge and risk in adventure activities played a role in enabling individuals to express their true selves. For example, Maha, a 44-four-year old woman who went on trekking holiday in Saudi Arabia, described individuals in the group as genuine to her because of the challenging nature of the trip:

> *"These people that I met in these situations are the people who I keep the connection with later because, as I told you, there are no expectations, there are no pre assumptions about them, no fakeness, because they have to be in their real personas because of the tough situation. I saw that the one who helps*

others, would be, of course, used to helping others, because, in that situation, the one who is not used to helping others doesn't help, because no one is acting in that situation, no one will act strong while they're facing hardship and cannot continue. I mean, I saw people for who they are."

(Maha, Participant 24)

Maha's perception of these individuals as authentic is illustrated throughout the quote, '*no fakeness…in their real personalities… no one acting… saw people for who they are*', and she assumed they would be real because of the extreme nature of the trip. For Maha and others, perceiving group members as genuine helped to build kinship and long-term relationships; as Maha reported, *'I keep the connection with [them]*'. She also described how their behaviours and interactions felt authentic, facilitating feelings such as trust and liking.

Both Bushra's and Maha's perceptions of other group members as being authentic are based on their own perceptions of what being authentic and real means and their own experiences. For example, if facing hardship or being out of their comfort zone made them act in ways which were more true to themselves, then this is how they perceived others as authentic. They were describing themselves and their emotions on trips in which they felt free to express their authentic selves in the group. So, their perceptions of others in the group were the same as they thought about themselves.

Many of the other participants described themselves as being free to express themselves and be themselves without worrying about others' judgments or perceptions about them. An example of that is Hanouf, a 23-year-old woman who had been on a diving holiday, and explained that she felt more able to be here true self because she was with a group of strangers:

"I felt that when a person is with strangers, they become themselves more than when they are with people who know them and expect them to behave in certain ways. So, on my trip, we went to 'Bayada' island in the Red Sea by boat to go snorkelling. I was comfortable swimming and having fun, but if I had one of my relatives with me, I wouldn't be comfortable expressing myself and having fun the way I did... swimming and dancing on the boat freely."

(Hanouf, Participant 8)

For Hanouf, being with strangers was liberating, enabling her to behave in a way she felt was true to herself without worrying about social expectations. This suggests that, among her family and friends, she is supposed to act in accordance with the norms in her social circle, not according to what she feels is honest for her. She also described the joyful experience she had because the social context provided the freedom for her to be her true self. So, being authentic in this context relates to individuals' subjective feelings that they are away from their usual social boundaries and can behave in ways which are true to themselves without being judged. This sense of freedom was also mentioned by men. For example, Talal, a 40-year-old man who had been on a hiking trip, also felt he could be his authentic self because no one knew him or had any preconceived ideas about him:

> *"No one has one perception of me, I mean, for example, in the family, you know, in my family they see me in a specific way. Those at work interact with me as a superior or subordinate, or whatever position I have, but when I go on a trip like this, I am among these people. They don't know me; they ask 'Who are you? We don't know you'; they see me as a human ... a person, no more than that."*
>
> (Talal, Participant 21)

Talal felt that he was free from any perceptions related to his work or his family membership on the trip. He was simply a human, and nothing was expected of him because of his status or relationships. This subjective assessment of other group members' perceptions of him liberated him from social boundaries and allowed him to express himself freely and feel comfortable with other group members. This sense of freedom as an emotional experience is explored further in Chapter 6.

The participants' responses indicated that this lack of expectations between group members helped to develop rich and deep social interactions and created stronger group bonds. Moreover, participants reported that the perceived authenticity within groups added value to their trips and enabled them to live a unique experience. For instance, Dana, a 40-year-old woman who had been trekking and camping in Saudi Arabia, said that this was an advantage linked to this type of trip:

"The advantage of the trip is that I saw people as they are; I didn't see them in a working context or a professional context. I saw people as they are. I spent every hour of the day with them, so I saw them in all situations. For example, we faced several difficulties during my climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro on the last day. Some group members could not continue due to exhaustion, and the extremely cold weather significantly impacted us. We all had fears and weaknesses, and we showed them, but we also tried our best to help and support each other"

(Dana, Participant 7)

In this example, Dana's perceptions of individuals as being real are based on them being outside of their professional contexts. In her case, she is a doctor; however, as she mentioned earlier in her interview, on the trip she could choose whether to identify herself as a doctor or not, potentially freeing her from the status and behavioural expectations that role confers. Therefore, she links being real with being in an environment where she can introduce herself without using her job title. This, she believes, enables her to see her fellow group members *'as they are'*. This also enables her to form judgments about them based on their behaviour '*in all situations'* rather than preconceived expectations based on their professional role or social status. Also, she referred to the fact that she saw the individuals in the group as they were because she saw them in different situations during the trip, their struggles, happiness, fears, and achievements. Thus, she saw them through their vulnerabilities, and that is how she perceived them as authentic. Furthermore, this perception of individuals' authenticity based on their behaviours, their expressed emotions, their struggles, happiness, fears, and achievements on the trip, appears to operate in two directions: participants perceived others in the group as real and felt others perceived them in the same way.

The value of freedom to act and express oneself and the feeling of being liberated was significant throughout this study, and many participants ascribed this to the nature of the group adventure experience. Such holidays provide a unique social environment that rarely occurs in other contexts, and these participants felt free to be their authentic selves, unconstrained by social and professional status. The fact that they also perceived other group members as being honest in their expressions and emotions because of the nature of the experience positively influenced bonding and kinship within their tour

groups. In addition, the bonding and intimacy caused by the nature of the trip also facilitated emotions sharing between the group members. Furthermore, the perception of authenticity appears to have influenced participants' inclination to engage in different types of social interactions during their trips, including self-disclosure, something which is explored in more detail in Chapter 5 of the analysis and findings. It therefore played a role in providing escape from social expectations and encouraging socialisation, thereby enhancing the group experience Thus, perceiving group members as authentic contributed to a rich social experience for the individuals participating in these group trips. As the discussion so far makes clear, group adventure holidays bring individuals together in isolated environments in ways that enable extensive interactions, connections, and long-term relationships to develop. Although they share a common passion, they are diverse in other ways, and, as the next section demonstrates, group diversity also forms a significant dimension of the group adventure experience.

4.2.2 Group diversity

Numerous participants identified group diversity as significant within the social context of their group adventure experience; for instance, when they were asked to describe their group members, they highlighted the diversity among them. It is important to note that differences among group members were not perceived as detrimental to the group experience. In fact, in these groups, as long as individuals shared a passion for adventures, the differences between them were embraced, accepted, valued, and enjoyed. Again, this may be connected to the nature of adventure experiences, and the expectations of those who participate in them. It is more likely that people going on such trips expect to encounter differences, both in the environment around them and within their groups. Hence, they are mentally ready to accept those differences and view them as a positive outcome of the group trips. For example, Dana, identified the opportunity to engage with different types of people as one of the highlights of her trip:

> *"You know the beauty of the Oman trip is that I met people from everywhere. Especially from the Gulf countries: I met people from Saudi, Kuwait, and Bahrain. The moments when we gathered around the campfire and interacted, I saw people's thoughts and their way of thinking. I liked interacting with different people, from the veiled woman to the one who is not, the person who is not religious to the one who is deeply religious and keeps the prayers on time, to the*

one who doesn't pray at all. It doesn't matter. I met with their souls, the souls of those different people."

(Dana, Participant 7)

In this case, Dana describes diversity in terms of the group members' level of religious belief and adherence. Far from identifying these differences as an issue, she reported positive feelings about them, and an attractive feature of group trips that differentiated them from other holidays. While such differences may be a barrier to engagement and friendship in other contexts, the nature of group adventure trips serves to creates strong connections between individuals, who might have little in common beyond their love of adventure. For Dana, this enabled her to connect with other group members at a deep level, evidenced when she said*, 'I met with their souls, the souls of those different people*.' This suggests that the social encounters within group adventure holidays are distinctive from those in other contexts and engage participants at a profound emotional level.

Other participants also recollected the diversity among the members as a pleasant aspect of their experience and a source of enjoyment on the trip. For example, Khaled, a 21-year-old man, attributed the essence of each group trip experience to the diversity within the group:

"The difference in the characters the members of the group have, that makes each group has its distinctiveness. any group, has a different combination that's make it unique. Honestly, I don't know what the best word to describe it is, but it always has a different flavour."

(Khaled, Participant 31)

In addition, Ahmed, a 27-year-old man who had joined a tour to Kilimanjaro, described the diversity among his group members in almost affectionate terms:

"Their personalities were different, and each person was special. I don't know about other people's trips, but, on my trip, each person was special. Each person was different from the other person; even though our personalities were different, we were in harmony with each other, and we enjoyed together. Our relationship exists until now and we communicate often. I think the best group

experience is when I get to know new people, people who have hobbies and interests that are very different from mine, and its beauty is in building relationships and conversations."

(Ahmed, Participant 16)

As Ahmed explained, diversity is viewed as a contributor to feeling connected and developing long-term friendships between the group members. The kinship developed was highlighted when he said, '*the relationship exists until now, and we communicate*', even though his trip took place almost a year before the interview. He also reported that this diversity did not affect the cohesion in the group when he said, '*we were in harmony with each other*'. Far from impeding group bonding, the diversity of the group members was a source of sense of enjoyment on the trip and added value to the group experience. This idea was echoed by Hanouf, who explained the rich experience she had because of the diversity within her group:

"The experience was lovely and enjoyable. Firstly, is that I got to know new characters, and got to know different people's behaviours and cultures, and observe them. I observed the differences because this really makes me learn a lot."

(Hanouf, Participant 8)

The pleasure generated from these encounters and the learning which took place was a source of joy for Hanouf, an emotion which is also articulated in Samar's description of the friendships she built with various individuals she met on her group trip:

"This way, [through] the exchange of cultures, I add new friendships in my life, this thing I love very much, and thank God, until now I am happy, and I am completely convinced of the people I have met, and I did not regret for a moment knowing those people from the trip. It was joyful in that I met new people, that my relationships with them continued after the trip."

(Samar, Participant 18)

Samar's use of '*happy' and 'joyful'* emphasises the pleasure she found in encountering diverse group of individuals and developing relationship with them. As she and the other participants quoted here demonstrate, group trips provided a rich and stimulating

environment for them to grow their social circle, and the diversity they encountered among group members served to enrich their travel experiences, both during and after their trips.

However, as Hanouf noted, part of the process of acceptance and relationship building involved listening and learning from others. Other participants also indicated that the diversity within their groups provided an opportunity for individuals to improve their social skills and experience acceptance toward others. For some, this was a transformative social aspect of being on a trip with a diverse group of strangers, becoming a source of personal growth and improving their tolerance and acceptance of others. For instance, Amal, a 26-year-old, described the diversity in previous adventure tour groups and how she learned from those differences:

> *"I learn a lot from people around me [on these trips] because I don't meet people from my community, and not all of them are from the same community or sometimes from the same country. I mean different nationalities, especially in the Gulf region, and from diverse backgrounds. So, I met a fresh graduate from high school, a company CEO, and [people of] different ages and positions. I learn something different from every one of them; how all these people were together. So, I learned a lot from every trip I went on, and this has become so inspiring to me, and every time I return with something new."*
>
> (Amal, Participant 25)

For Amal, every person in the group is a source of learning, which made the diversity among the group members advantageous on these trips. She also explained how those trips were transformative for her, not through the adventurous activities but because the people she met on the trip became her source for improvement and change. In being inspired by and learning from her fellow group members, Amal was also more likely to 'catch' their expressed and shared emotions.

The acceptance he experienced was a joyful surprise for Saud, a 35-year-old man, who had been anxious about meeting the group and how the group members would interact with him:

"I was impressed by how welcoming everyone was, and everyone was open to meeting each other and introducing themselves happily."

(Saud, Participant 35)

He went on to describe how his initial fears dissolved and he felt valued and accepted by the other members of the group:

"I was worried about how they would accept me as someone coming from a different background; yes, we were all Saudis, but from different cultures. I mean, the difference between us is there. But to be honest, what I saw during the trip was not as I expected in terms of differences. They were a wonderful young group of people who were highly respectful, accepting, and open to others. I observed this personally, they added to the group, and I believe I added something to the group too; they saw me as someone like them in some things and different in others, and some things we shared brought us together."

(Saud, Participant 35)

Saud reported being surprised by the group members' acceptance because he did not expect that behaviour from the group. This led him to reflect on his experience and the benefits of the diversity within the group:

"Meeting new people sometimes is needed, listening to new voices and seeing new faces, listening to their ideas, we talk together, it all adds to the experience."

(Saud, Participant 35)

When asked why he was initially apprehensive about meeting the group members, he spoke about the cultural traditions of previous Saudi generation, where openness to different others was less commonly exhibited:

"In Saudi Arabia, we have always had a fear of different others. We weren't the type of people that would go to a park with strangers or even interact with them. We've been raised here [to understand] that it wasn't expected or normal to do things like interacting with strangers. [However] When I went on the trip, it was ***very*** *(he put a strong emphasis on this being positive) positive that people*

opened up to each other, we respected each other, and individuals introduced themselves and their interests. Everyone was accepting the other and their differences; we were different, but it did not cause disagreement; no one neglected the other."

(Saud, Participant 35)

Saudi Arabia is a large country, and the differences Saud refers to are the different customs, traditions, language uses, and accents across its various provinces. While Saud's cultural traditions made him apprehensive about encountering others, his experiences on the trip made him see diversity in a much more positive light. The differences in backgrounds and personalities among the group members allowed individuals to practise openness and create an inclusive environment for everyone, thereby enriching the individual experiences in the group and the quality of the collective experience.

Group diversity exists at two distinct levels: surface level or deep level differences (Harrison and Klein, 2007). Surface level diversity includes easily distinguished traits, like age, gender, job, and education, while deep level is related to individuals' beliefs, values, personalities, and backgrounds or culture (Liao, Zheng, and Lin 2022). Group adventure trips include both forms of diversity, bringing people with various backgrounds, ages, genders and personalities together in one place to form a single group. In terms of the potential benefits of diversity within groups, there are two contradictory views: the social categorisation perspective suggests that people are more attracted to similar others, so diversity is perceived to have negative effects on group quality in terms of interactions, cohesion, and bonding (Horwitz and Horwitz, 2007). However, from a decision-making and teamwork perspective, diversity is perceived as positive because it provides a greater range of viewpoints and experiences to inform decision making and enhance team performance (Triana, Kim, Byun, Delgado, and Arthur, 2021).

The participants in this study attributed several advantages to the group diversity they encountered. In addition to creating enjoyable experiences, it expanded their social circles by enabling them to develop long-term friendships with different people. This was a result of the feelings of kinship which developed between group members and created deep and enduring connections. The diversity among the group members

allowed them to interact in with different people in sustained and meaningful ways, adding to their knowledge about others and resulting in greater feelings of acceptance and being accepted themselves. In addition, these encounters gave rise to a range of positive emotions, including enjoyment, amazement, acceptance and joy. Thus, the diversity in this context contributed to rich, and, in some cases, transformative social experiences for the group members. In addition, the type of diversity that study participants discussed most often is deep level diversity in terms of values, personalities, backgrounds, and culture. This type of diversity added value and distinctiveness to their individual experiences, and they reported being stimulated, inspired, surprised, and delighted by the diversity among their group members. Far from weakening cohesion, these differences are perceived as enabling individuals to practice acceptance towards others and widen their social circle by developing long-term relationships. The findings of this study therefore suggest that deep level diversity between group members is enjoyed and perceived as positive inputs within a group adventure context, and contributes to making it a hedonic experience. Indeed, as discussed in Section (0), it is the passion for adventure that group members share which enables them to accept and learn from their differences in other areas.

4.2.3 Social escape

The experience of overcoming fears is significantly linked to adventurous activities, and overcoming social fears is part of the social adventure. Participants reported that being on a group trip with strangers helped them overcome their social fears, especially those associated with encountering unknown people or unexpected things. Participants described putting themselves '*out there'* alone without their social safety nets, such as family or friends, in order to fully experience the social adventure. For example, Elaf, a 28-year-old woman, explained how this affected her decision to go on holiday by herself:

> *"a significant experience in such trips is breaking more social boundaries. So, if I am going with someone, even one person, it is easier to know and interact with new people, and it is less easy to fall into an embarrassing, frightening or difficult situation, even if I have only one person I know. Still, I went alone; I surrendered myself to it. So, I crossed a greater barrier. This is what I wanted to reach; I wanted to do the things that were difficult for me by myself.*

Especially the social aspect. I liked encountering people without worrying about the person with me seeing me being scared or embarrassed in front of them; I met others as me."

(Elaf, Participant 27)

For Elaf, engaging with individuals she did not know on her own enabled her to conquer her fears and cross *'a greater barrier'*. She knew this would be more difficult, yet also more rewarding. It enabled her to interact with others in the group on her own terms ('*I met others as me'*), without the influence of someone close (who knows her personally), which might limit her freedom to express herself. Two other participants, Hind and Maha, also mentioned that a trip with unknown group members took them '*out of my comfort zone*' and required '*bravery*'. For Hind, this was part of the adventure:

"I intentionally wanted to go alone; I wanted to meet people.... I wanted to go out of my comfort zone, yes, I used to travel a lot, but not in the usual way of travel, there isn't much meeting people and knowing them deeply".

(Hind, Participant 14)

For Maha, not knowing what expect added a level of enjoyment to the experience:

" The people I met, I don't have expectations about them, it is always considered a surprise, it is nice when going with people I don't know because I don't know what to expect. [However, to do] this alone [requires] bravery. After all, I am going into the unknown into uncertainty."

(Maha, Participant 24)

Participants reported that being with unknown individuals in the group liberated them and allowed them to express themselves more freely. It also enabled them to see themselves reflected in the eyes of people who didn't previously know them. Thus, it offered a fresh perspective on themselves. For example, Maha described the way her social adventure experience helped her discover new things about herself:

"I heard things about myself, some of them I have never heard from anyone; it allowed me to see myself differently, whether good or not; I viewed myself in another way, other than the usual way. I thought, oh, people could see this or that in me, and they see the good in me that I didn't know about myself. They told me you are kind and wise; they focused on good things because they're good people."

(Maha, Participant 24)

For Maha this was a pleasurable experience within the group, something joyful evoked by the company of group members. Also, their fresh perspectives added to the value she gained. This all contributed to her affective experiences during the trip and the bonding and relationships she developed with the group members. This freedom to be what they want, to experience different identities, and to explore themselves with new others is part of the social adventure individuals experience, something Talal highlighted in his interview:

"I like to see it as a new experience, that I get to know new people, I introduce myself to them without telling them about me, I mean on the contrary I let them know me and I know them without pre-existing information about us, so this experience itself is fun. This adds to the same thing, which is the adventure trip; what I said is part of an adventure in itself."

(Talal, Participant 21)

Here Talal illustrates the fun and enjoyment in experiencing others' perceptions of himself outside of the usual social boundaries, describing it as "*an adventure in itself"*. He later explained the impact this had by comparing his group trip with other holidays he had taken:

"The number of people I met with entirely different backgrounds is substantial. Everyone has something specific in their life, and all come together. I felt at the time that we met with people and helped each other through these trips. On other travel trips, I went to some destinations, enjoying them and taking them off my list and returning to my mundane life and my social circle; in the group trip, I met people who changed my life, and I changed theirs."

(Talal, Participant 21)

He described these social adventure encounters as transformative for the group members. Moreover, he attributed their effect to the group diversity, highlighting the interconnectivity between the social context dimensions discussed in this chapter.

By its nature, the group adventure enables individuals to act in adventurous ways, to enter a context in which fewer boundaries and limits exist, but where risk and uncertainty are part of life. Some participants reported that the freedom to behave and identify as individuals wished caused unexpected things to happen. For instance, Bushra recollected a situation where two male group members identified themselves as dancers and started dancing in a manner which could be considered inappropriate in conservative cultures; however, they acted freely and chose what they wanted to be:

> *"In the group, there were different types of individuals, some who were crazy, I think. Those were two young men, in the time we were asked to introduce ourselves, they said we are dancers. They wanted to make it a joke or what I don't know. Then they started dancing; they danced in a style that was not appropriate. The guide was embarrassed, sweating, and his face turned red; he was standing in the middle and couldn't do anything about it because it was unexpected. If the guides knew [in advance], they wouldn't allow it. The group was a diverse mix; some of the older people maybe didn't like it, some liked it, and for me, it was fun. Everyone was different, so the element of the unexpected is always present."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

The unexpectedness of these group members behaviour illustrates the freedom of expression that such experiences provided. While Bushra suggested that some older group members didn’t like it, others felt it was fun, brave, part of an uncontrolled adventure. Thus, freedom to act and to identify as one wishes becomes part of the adventure activities, part of the group adventure experience and, for Bushra and others, a contribution to the joy of the trip.

Escapism is the "tendency to escape from reality, the responsibilities and routines of real life, especially by unrealistic imaginative activity" (Woodruff, 1985, p. 25). Moreover, Iso Ahola (1983) argued that escape, or seeking separation from one's

personal or interpersonal worlds, is a primary motivation to participate in the tourism experience. Adventure trips are considered rich environments for separation from the everyday world because of the physical environment in which they happen and the type of activities involved. Thus, they provide an escapism experience for those who participate in them (Arnould and Price, 1993; Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Dimmock, 2009; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016). In particular, participants in this study have reported that group adventure holidays provided social escape experiences, enabling them to detach themselves from their customary social worlds. This escapism experience was reinforced by aspects of the adventure experience, notably when participants experienced risk and uncertainty related to the social context.

Adventure trips often involve risk, uncertainty, and challenging activities, and these are fundamental elements in most adventure tourism definitions (Rantala, et al., 2018). While some risks are physical, others are social and psychological (Roehl and Fesenmaier,1992), for example, the risks which arise when individuals encountered their social fears during the trip. In group adventure holidays, a significant part of this risk and uncertainty stems from encountering a group of strangers and spending time with them in isolated places. So, in addition to the planned adventurous activities which take place within the experience, the group members play a role in providing social adventure for the individuals in the group.

To conclude, these participants' responses indicate that the social context of group trips enables individuals to experience social escape by overcoming their social fears, being liberated from social boundaries, and feeling free to behave in ways which they see as being more true to themselves. This social escape enabled individuals to perceive their fellow group members as authentic, and, therefore, to accept their emotions as genuine. Thus, it played a role in promoting the sharing of emotions and contagion between the group members. The risk and uncertainties involved in joining a group of strangers played a role in them perceiving the experience as a social adventure contributed to joy and surprise during the trip. Most of the risk and uncertainty discussed in adventure tourism literature relates to the physical challenges and to individuals' physical capabilities and skills (e.g., Arnould and Price, 1993; Buckley, 2012; Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2010). However, for these participants, overcoming the social risks and

uncertainties, such as encountering strangers, getting along with them, facing struggles with them, brought the greatest reward – the ability to escape their customary social constraints and experience the adventure on their own terms.

4.2.4 Supportive environment

Another dimension to emerge from analysis of the interviews was that of providing a supportive environment. This was illustrated when group members showed care and compassion for each other's struggles, and encouraged and helped each other to accomplish the activities. Travel companions offer different types of support, including informational, physical, and emotional (Schwarzer and Knoll, 2007), and the group adventure holidays facilitated supportive environments by fostering support between individuals. Emotional support is when encouragement, assurance, and empathy towards others are presented, while physical support includes offering physical help, like holding hands or belongings or even supporting another person's body to giving them things like jackets or camping gear.

Participants in this study highlighted the significance of the supportive environment in their trips. When they were asked about the group atmosphere, they often described moments when group members offered support, and most perceived that challenging and difficult adventure activities were achieved because of the support group members provided. For example, Elaf described how the support of her group helped her accomplish something she thought was impossible for her - navigating a stream inside a dark and rocky cave:

> *"I was scared, I wore a life jacket because I was scared, I saw how the place was very narrow and dark and full of rocks, I had to swim and navigate my head between those rocks into a very narrow area to get to the other side, and this was the entrance. So, I said, 'I am not going'. I just saw the view, I said what a loss that I paid and came, and I got tired and camped, and, at the end, I am not going to do the challenge. So, someone from the team, more than one, came and helped me: one held my hand, the other swam with me until we passed that point, and we went and completed the activity. On the way back after completing the activity, we returned to the area that I was struggling to enter, and the team said*

to me 'Look here and remember this rock where you struggled, you did it, you were afraid but now you have completed the challenge.' It was a very pleasant feeling ...happy."

(Elaf, Participant 27)

Elaf received both physical and emotional support from her group members: physical support when someone held her hands, and the other swam with her to help her navigate, and emotional support when they talked with her through the activity and praised her for her accomplishment afterwards. This support helped her achieve her goal and gain more pleasure and value from the experience. The experience of happiness stemmed from her achievement, but she also felt valued and cared for throughout the trip, as she explains here:

"In the beginning of the trip I twisted my ankle. I had a backpack full of things, but, by the end of the hike, I found out that during the hike I hadn't held my bag at all - someone was carrying my bag the whole time. I felt amazing, and it proved to me the nature of the trip which is cooperation."

(Elaf, Participant 27)

It is evident that Elaf perceived the environment of her trip as supportive, and the multiple accounts of the support she received from the group members clearly show its significance to her. In the second quote, she again received physical support from the group, which made her feel valued, cared for, and full of joy.

Adventure trips include challenging activities that require different skills and abilities, so companions' support is fundamental to accomplishing them. As was the case with Elaf, this supportive environment often manifests in the encouragement and assurance group members provide to each other, and other participants reported incidents where the group members' encouragement helped them overcome their fears. For instance, Talal, on his trip to a wild valley in southwest Saudi Arabia, described how the group encouraged him to join them in a parachuting challenge.

"They were saying to me, 'What are you doing, come on get in!', they said 'You can do it, come on!', and [things] like that. I did not feel a thing, suddenly I found myself jumping from the airplane with them. When I saw the video, I said

'Really, I did that?' I couldn't believe it! With the group I forgot myself, I was someone else. We were all together. The group said, 'We are doing everything together', and that's what had happened."

(Talal, Participant 21)

As Talal explained, the group members' emotional support, demonstrated in the encouragement and assurance they provided, helped him to do something he would usually be too afraid to do. The supportive group atmosphere was illustrated in the lines "*We were all together. The group said 'We are doing everything together*"; they delivered the message that they were all together in this and that they would take care of each other. The group's encouragement alleviated Talal's stress and helped him overcome his fear of parachuting, even though he never imagined he would do such a thing:

"If I was alone, it would be impossible to do it; it would be one of the seven impossible things I would [never] do in my life. Parachuting is one of the things that I did not expect I would do in my life, and I did it."

(Talal, Participant 21)

He later revealed that the group members' support in helping him to move out of his comfort zone had contributed to the transformational experience the holiday became:

"After the trip, my parents, who know me well, asked me 'Who are you? We don't recognise you anymore. What are you doing? This is not the type of activity you enjoy.' They saw the change in me. I mean, these trips make one leave the comfort zone. I had wanted to be out of my comfort zone on many occasions previously, but didn't get the opportunity, and no one encouraged me; the atmosphere in my previous holidays before this one did not help me get out of my comfort zone."

(Talal, Participant 21)

Talal ascribed this change in his personality to the supportive environment he encountered in his group adventure holiday, which helped him move beyond his comfort zones. It evident from this study that emotional support in the shape of encouragement and assurance plays a significant role in the individual transformational

experience, enabling people to safely navigate their own challenges and find new ways of being beyond their established comfort zones.

As the experiences above suggest, creating a supportive environment is an essential part of the group adventure experience, in which individuals depend on each other to achieve a common goal. Participants often linked their own achievements to the existence of their trip companions, because, in the words of Khaled:

> *"We needed each other, we needed the support, and we need to be together. An experience like this, when someone does it alone, they cannot finish it. The existence of the group helped in this experience and brought us closer together."*
>
> (Khaled, Participant 31)

As this quote makes clear, individuals cannot complete a group adventure on their own. The type of activities involved and the isolated environment create the need for group members to support each other, whether emotionally, physically or by providing information, in order to achieve the trip goals. A supportive environment also contributes to the social context of the trips by alleviating some of the uncertainty accompanying the tourism activities (Song, Wang, and Sparks, 2018), for instance, by reducing anxiety in stressful situations (Wang, Wu, Xie, and Li, 2019). As the extracts here demonstrate, group members' support played a significant role in these individuals' adventure experiences. For instance, challenging activities were achieved with group members' help and support, and the individuals who received such support felt cared for and valued. The supportive environment therefore enhanced their emotional state and the relationships between group members, and the sharing of emotions between them, thereby creating greater bonding and cohesion. The broader impacts of socialisation within group adventures are presented in the following section.

4.2.5 Socialisation

Socialisation within a group tourism context occurs when tourists meet, talk, and interact with people with similar interests within the group (Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016). The socialisation that occurs in adventure groups is distinctive, because individuals are often compelled to socialise with their group members due to the nature of the trip and the environment where it happened. The group adventure experience

often happens in isolated natural places, with minimal connection to the outside world, and participants may not have access to the internet or phone connection. They also need to stay close to each other, sometimes in confined places, for safety reasons. All of these factors facilitate the socialisation process; therefore, this section considers the role of the trip environment in fostering rich socialisation experiences within trip group.

Analysis of the interviews indicated that the socialisation these participants experienced on their trips happened in different ways, including encountering and getting to know different types of people, daily social interactions, and doing the different activities together. Some of these involved actively interacting with other group members, while others were more passive, such as observing or listening to others in the group. Numerous participants reported that the confined nature of the trip caused them to seek the company of others, their need for socialisation driven by the isolated settings, with no internet or phone connections, as well as the human need to interact with others. For example, Ahmed described his desire to interact with the other group members when he went on his trip to Kilimanjaro alone:

> *"If I got bored when I was on the trip and sitting in my tent alone, just when I heard someone talking outside, two of them sat and were talking, what I did immediately, opened the tent zipper and went out and sat with them. I thought to myself I am not sitting in my tent like this alone, but maybe if I had a mobile phone, I wouldn't join them. [If] I have my mobile phone, I can talk with anyone I know anywhere in the world, even if someone is talking outside. I can sit inside my tent on my phone, but this made me closer to the group."*
>
> (Ahmed, Participant 16)

Without his mobile phone to connect him to the rest of the world, Ahmed felt a greater need to interact with others in the group to avoid feeling loneliness, even if he did not want to. He also mentioned that sharing experiences and physical space with other group members contributed significantly to the socialisation experience:

> *"Because I don't have anyone else, I have to know them and interact with them. I spent a lot of time with them; we ate breakfast and dinner together and spent the entire day climbing together. We would not be silent; indeed, we will be interacting."*

(Ahmed, Participant 16)

Other participants also attributed their primary motivation to interact with other group members to the fact that they came on the trip without companions. For example, Bushra compared the experience of travelling with friends and forming their own small group, with her need to socialise with unfamiliar people when travelling alone:

> *"When I go to the trip alone, there isn't a bubble I am in, but if I go with my friends, I will be protected. So, if I am alone, let's say I am compelled to know people or interact with new people."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

For some participants, the socialisation which occurred as a result of the isolated nature of the trip environment was a key part of the group bonding experience and one of the highlights of their trip. Talal's description of the effects of the confined environment – with no mobile phones or internet connection – provides a clear example of this:

> *"I listen to people talking even if I don't talk with them, but I hear them talking, some share a personal story, play on the oud (a traditional musical instrument). I mean this is best part, honestly, a great time. [It] made us know each other more, made us closer to each other, because no one can go anywhere we are all staying in the same place, no mobile phones because networks are weak in the places we go."*
>
> (Talal, Participant 21)

As Talal's quote highlights, the socialisation experiences can be passive; he simply sat near the other group members without actively engaging in the talk or activity. However, his enjoyment in the experience is evidenced when he said, *'best part honestly'*, and he also mentioned how this brought the group closer to each other. Another participant, Ramy, a 24-year-old-man whose tour group reached the summit of Kilimanjaro, identified the ways in which the socialisation experience on his group adventure contributed to the bonding process:

> *"We were connected; Because there were no mobile phones, you do not have any other communication, humans are social beings, so they need to talk to*

someone, so this forced me to.., no one has a phone, everyone talks to everyone, so that made us bond more, I mean it is a special element of these trips; because the internet doesn't reach even if you want to, the internet won't work."

(Ramy, Participant 10)

As Ramy explains, individuals on such trips are compelled to socialise with other group members because of the isolated environment, and the resulting social interactions contribute to group bonding. He directly attributes the sense of connection which developed among group members (‘*We were connected’)* to the isolated environment, which forms a ‘*special element of these trips’*, meaning adventure group trips. This suggests that the unique context of adventure holidays contributed to building an isolated bubble for the group that nurtured their interactions and encouraged them to create connections, resulting in a significant sense of bonding among the individuals in the group.

Participants also reported that the socialisation experience added to their gains from the trip in terms of enriching their social skills and helping them develop empathy and acceptance towards others. These arose from exposure to groups of strangers in an extreme and isolated environment and the need to interact and live with them for some time. For instance, Maha discussed the social skills she gained from her socialisation experience:

“I learned a lot of skills because I am not in my comfort zone with my friends, [so] I have to deal with different personalities, the angry person, the one who complains all the time, I interacted with different people - women and men, young and older people, so I developed more tolerance and social skills.”

(Maha, Participant 24)

She described the social skills gained because of individuals’ characteristics being diverse in various ways, including gender, age, and personality, highlighting the interconnectedness of these individual dimensions. She also indicated that socialisation with a group of strangers like this was challenging when she mentioned being out of her comfort zone. Still, it taught her social skills and acceptance.

Socialising with other travellers is one of the primary motives for individuals to participate in group travel (e.g., Fisher & Price, 1991; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Levy and Getz, 2011), and confined settings and physical proximity have been identified as significant facilitators of social interactions and relationships in tour groups (Quiroga, 1990). This type of sociability has often been addressed in the context of coach travel, or sightseeing tours (e.g., Quiroga, 1990; Tucker, 2005; Levy and Getz, 2011), and Harris and Barron (2004) identified individual and situational factors that improve tour group development and socialisation in service settings. These include physical proximity, group size, tour guides' behaviour, group members' ages, and shared experiences. However, sociability in adventure group holidays is distinctive because of the particular nature of the context, and the findings of this study indicate that the isolated environment is also a significant contributor to the socialisation process, enhancing the quality of the group experience by promoting connections and bonding between the group members. Thus, the environment facilitated emotions sharing and contagion through social interactions.

The socialisation experience is therefore a key dimension of the social context of the group trips and is facilitated by the trip environment. Moreover, socialisation was identified as a source of pleasure and joy for participants during their trip. As a result, the nuances and roles of socialisation in the experience of emotions are explored in detail in the next chapter.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the social dimensions of the social context of group adventure holidays that facilitate emotions and emotional sharing in group experiences. These dimensions are: individuals perceiving each other as authentic and sharing similar interests, group diversity, social escape, a supportive environment, and socialisation. The isolated nature of the trip environment and the specific skills required played an essential role in enabling these elements. They are also interlinked, each influencing the other, and, together, they represent the social context of the group adventure holiday. For example, feelings of social escape are linked to the diversity among group members, and socialisation and support are enhanced by shared interests and by perceiving

individuals as true and real. These dimensions represent the context in which tourists' emotional experiences shaped and influenced their holiday experience and outcomes.

Section 4.2.1 demonstrated the individual characteristics that influenced the emotional experiences in the group. Individuals perceived as authentic and shared similar interests were identified to be contributing to the emotional experience and sharing of emotions. They were perceived as an advantage and added value to these individuals' experiences with their groups. They also influenced the feeling of joy and positively influenced cohesion and bonding within groups, thereby helping to develop interpersonal relationships between group members.

Section 4.2.2 presented group diversity as a social context dimension that enhances individual experiences within a group. By their nature, group adventure holidays bring together diverse groups of people who share a passion for adventure, and this contributes to rich social experiences. Group diversity facilitated positive emotions, such as enjoyment, for group members, and influenced socialisation and the social escape experience. Social escape as significant element in the social context of group adventure holidays was identified in Section 4.2.3. In addition to providing escape due to the isolated places in which they usually take place in, these adventure trips provided escape related to the social context, as being part of a diverse group of people who live and interact for specific period of time, enabled participants to escape the expectations and constraints of their usual social circles. The risk and uncertainties related to the social context were also found to play a role in the social escape experience.

Section 4.2.4 illustrated how the social context provided a supportive environment for group members. This support played a role in developing bonding in the group, enhanced social interactions, and, hence, facilitated positive emotions. The social context of this type of holiday was also shown to enable a rich socialisation experience. In addition, as with other social context dimensions, the isolated and challenging nature of the group adventure trips nurtured the socialisation experience. Likewise, socialisation influenced and was influenced by the other dimensions and played an important role in group members' emotions and the social sharing of those emotions.

Overall, this chapter has shown how the social context of the group adventure holiday plays a significant role in tourists' emotional experiences. The findings support some of the previously identified dimensions of adventure tourism and group tourism, such as escapism and socialisation (Janowski et al., 2021; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016). However, it has also identified additional dimension, namely group diversity, a supportive environment, and authentic individuals, which are more relevant to the group adventure experience. Together, these dimensions provide insights into specific aspects of the tourist experience in the context of group adventure holidays. This study identifies the social context factors as facilitators of emotional experiences and emotion sharing in group adventure holidays. They could also be considered motivations or push factors to participate in such trips. The following chapter addresses the mechanisms which facilitate the social sharing of emotions and the role of the social context in these processes, illustrating how emotions sharing influences individuals' group experience.

Chapter 5: The Underlying Mechanisms of Emotional Contagion in Group Adventure Holidays

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how emotions are conveyed in group adventure holidays and identifies the underlaying mechanisms through which emotions are transferred within the study context. As outlined in Chapter 2, emotions often occur in the presence of others, influenced by the social and cultural context, and hence cause effects on others (Keltner and Haidt, 1999; Parkinson, et al., 2005; Van Kleef, 2009). The social influence of sharing emotions plays a vital role in a context such as a group adventures, where a group of individuals coexist for some time and consume the experience together. The social influence of the group is the process by which an individual's cognitions, attitudes, emotions, and behaviours are adapted in response to the influence of information from one or more other individuals (Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, and Koning, 2011). This chapter focuses on explaining how this process works in respect of emotions, and the mechanisms through which emotions are communicated between individuals in groups, namely, social interactions, emotional expressions, and behaviours.

5.2 Social interactions

This section focuses on explaining how emotions are communicated in group experience through social interactions. The social interactions considered here are the social encounters that occur during an individual experience with the group. It is important to understand that these are not expressions of emotions by themselves, but instead they convey certain emotional states to other group members. Therefore social interactions in this study are understood as tools through which emotions are conveyed to others. These interactions are a fundamental part of a group experience, and they have been identified as playing a significant role in tourist satisfaction and the quality of the overall experience in group tours (e.g., Holloway, 1981; Quiroga, 1990; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Wu, 2007). Scholars have also identified group trips as rich settings for social interactions (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005; Levy and Getz, 2011); for example, in Chapter 4, the influence of the adventure holiday environment was shown to have

facilitated rich social interactions between the participants both during and after their trips.

When participants were asked about social interactions and their role in their emotions in the group, they explained what they considered the most remembered and influential types of interactions during the trip. Analysis of the interview data identified three main types of social interactions which were used to convey emotions between individuals participating in group experiences. Those are casual conversations during the trip, self-disclosure, and fun interactions, including humour, singing, and group gaming. Each of these is discussed below.

5.2.1 Casual conversations

The first type of social interaction identified is casual conversations during the trip. This includes all the different types of conversations that occurred during the trip, from the start until the finish. However, participants highlighted specific times when those conversations were particularly significant, notably at the end of the day, after finishing the activities, and during meals. These casual conversations communicated pleasant feelings such as relaxation, trust, and enjoyment to the individual during their adventure trip. Participants who described the casual conversations they had with the group members often used words which referred to the perceived emotions communicated by such interactions. Those words described or explained emotional states, for example, ‘enjoying’, ‘comfortable’, ‘friendly’, and ‘no worries’. The following quote from Mahdi, a 30-year-old man who went on an adventure trip to AlUla, an ancient oasis city in Saudi Arabia, provides a clear example of this:

> *“At night, at the end of the activities, everyone was comfortable talking, and they talked openly, about what happened during the activity, and shared their personal life experiences, I saw everyone enjoying that. You would be surprised by the conversations that occur after finishing activities for the day; they came at night, just before the time to sleep - we were all exhausted, so tired that I wanted my bed so much. But yet we discussed what happened during the day and talked a lot .... that time is still in my memories".*
>
> (Mahdi, Participant 30)

Mahdi described the group members' conversations during the trip and explained the feelings he perceived from such interactions. He sensed the joy in spending time talking with the group members and the trust they felt toward each other, which made them comfortable talking with each other. He also reported that the group members were eager to start conversations, even though they all were tired and needed sleep; this illustrated the joy they had together. Engaging in and observing these interactions between the group members communicated to Mahdi the feeling that his group members were enjoying his company. A similar experience was described by Ahmed, who reported that he and the rest of the group were always keen to join any casual conversation which occurred during the trip:

> *"We shared the trip together. It was more enjoyable, and during the trip we were looking for each other. Our talks in the night and the morning hour as soon as we wake up, and this dawn time, the conversations at breakfast, all these things. I feel they are significant parts of the trip... those times and conversations with the group."*
>
> *(*Ahmed, Participant 16)

As both Mahdi and Ahmed reported, such interactions formed a memorable part of the trip. This may be due, in part, to the fact that these interactions communicated to the participants the level of trust and freedom that individuals in the group experienced. For example, participants described their casual conversations with other group members as spontaneous and free from preconceptions or expectations, and freedom was conveyed in the comfort individuals felt in these conversations and the type of topics they discussed.

This sense of freedom appeared to be a distinctive characteristic that distinguished these social interactions from those in other contexts. For instance, when asked if she had shared her feelings with the group or saw someone else in the group do that, Hind, a 37-year-old woman, described the nature of the conversations and her sense that everything was shared, without fear of the judgments of others:

> *"We were talking together openly like my conversation with you now, so there weren't any compliments, or masks - you know, the mask that we wear sometimes when we get together with people... The conversations were like everyone saying*

what they feel without hesitation and without caring about what others think of them or anything like that .... so, everyone shared with the group their feelings, experiences, such as someone was experiencing difficulties in their job, and another talked about her divorce... everyone was talking in a friendly way, no one was worried about what others thought of them or that they shouldn't say that or share this".

(Hind, Participant 14)

Hind was open and honest in her conversations with the group members, and she perceived other group members' conversations as real and honest too. This openness demonstrated how comfortable individuals were in the group, and it communicated a sense of trust and freedom to Hind. Other participants also emphasised the freedom of expression they sensed in the conversations during the trip, as per the following extracts illustrate:

"I met people I don't often encounter in my mundane life, people I don't have previously known or had a relationship with; we met to get to know each other and enjoy we sat together eating, playing, and talking."

(Sultan, Participant 22)

"I talk with the group, they don't know me, and no one can limit what I talk about."

(Hafsah, Participant 6)

The sense of freedom conveyed in these casual conversations provides another example of the way this type of trip enables participants to feel free on different levels. This type of social interaction communicated to the individuals in the group the sense of trust, joy, and freedom that the other group members experienced. The perceived openness and honesty in the conversations also increased the sense of intimacy and bonding between the group members. This led to the next important type of interaction nurtured by the extreme and isolated nature of adventure trips: self-disclosure.

5.2.2 Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure has been identified as a significant type of social interaction which is commonly experienced in group adventure trips. It occurs when group members discuss

personal topics, such as personal information, previous experiences, values, beliefs, and feelings (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, and Margulis,1993). Participants described various episodes where group members practised self-disclosure, and this was mostly recognised as conveying emotions in the group. When participants were asked if they shared their feelings with group members at any point during the trip, they recollected the moments of self-disclosure they had within the group. Different emotions were communicated in these interactions, both from the persons who opened up about themselves and from the receivers. These emotions include vulnerability, sincerity, trust, and intimacy.

For instance, Bushra, an experienced adventurer who went on a mountain hike in Oman, described moments of self-disclosure after a challenging mountain hike the group did together:

> *"The closeness I felt was more after the difficult hike..., we came back at night, at dinner time we started the campfire, and sat down and relaxed. I would say more honest conversations began in the group. I remember I talked to one of them about a few things, like relationships with parents and the treatment by our parents during childhood, such difficult and sensitive conversations about things I went through during my childhood. It was the same thing for him; he opened and started talking about his problems with his father and other things. So, I felt in that moment very deep conversation occurred, something that I would be in five years of friendship [with someone] and still not have with them."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

She described her self-disclosure experience and how one of the group members responded by sharing his personal experience too. Bushra explained the depth of self-disclosure they had in discussing very sensitive topics, like childhood trauma, by comparing it with other long-lasting friendships and noting that it was deeper, saying, '*I would be in five years of friendship and still not have*' such conversations.

Self-disclosure comprises five dimensions: valence, amount, intent, honesty, and depth (Wheeless and Grotz, 1976). Depth is a significant aspect of self-disclosure and relates to the degree of intimacy (Derlega et al., 1993). The degree of intimacy can be identified

based on the disclosed topics, with sensitive and more intimate topics playing a significant role in determining the level of self-discloser and intimacy experienced (Collins and Miller, 1994). Bushra later continued describing the other person's self-disclosure experience, how she perceived his expressed emotional states, and the close connection it created between them:

> *"The person who, like me, talked about his father and their relationship, deep friendship developed with him later, meaning it lasted for a long time. Why? Because I saw the real person. I mean, I love when I see the real person, the person who is in pain and shows it, who suffers and cries and overcomes, and dares to appear weak; this could be one of the first things, I told you, I love about these trips that it makes me see real people."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

The intense nature of the disclosure is conveyed in Bushra's description of the emotional states he expressed during their interactions; words like 'pain ', cry', suffer', and 'weak' reveal the intensity of the self-disclosure and its emotional components. Although the self-disclosure here was between two individuals in the group, it happened around other group members, after the challenging group hike and once the campfire had been lit, which suggests that the group environment played a part in enabling such intimacy and connectedness.

Participants reported that self-disclosure typically happened in certain settings, often at night in the light of the campfire, which were designated as opportunities for group members to get to know each other better. The mechanism by which self-disclosure communicates one person's feelings to the rest of the group is called emotional contagion, and this is influenced by the attention level individuals pay to the expresser's emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson,1992, 1994). The environments when self-disclosure happens during the trips encouraged greater focus on the expresser's emotions and the sharing process, making it more likely for emotional contagion to occur. For example, Monerah, a 30-year-old-woman, recalled one of the group members sharing her sadness and grief at the death of her son and the effect that this had on the group:

"We were sitting on the shore of the sea, and we were sharing our challenging stories in life; then, one of the group members shared a story of how she lost her son; we were all crying as if it had just happened; we were all influenced by the story. She told the story with her feelings that we were all influenced by her sadness."

(Monerah, Participant 15)

As this quote demonstrates, in interactions like self-disclosure, group members pay more attention to the expresser, and, through this process, contagion occurs (Hatfield et al., 1992, 1994). As a result of this close the attention the listeners put themself in the other person's place and, with a high level of empathy, feel what they are experiencing as they tell their story. Thus, in Monerah's words *'we were all crying as if it had just happened… we were all influenced by her sadness'*.

Although most of the reported self-disclosure was in the form of sharing adverse life events or stories of fear or weaknesses, its influence on the receivers was almost entirely positive. Negative self-discloser was not received negatively but instead evoked empathy in the receivers and increased bonding, intimacy, and connection between the group members. However, in a rare case in the study, Shahad, a 45-year-old woman, experienced self-disclosure that was perceived negatively, upsetting both the receiver and the expresser for some time after the disclosure. This happened when one of the group shared her personal divorce story with her, and Shahad put herself in the same situation and perceived it as a sad event:

"I was talking with her, and she told me that she just got divorced two months ago after being married for 32 years. I was shocked and sad. Then she shared details of that divorce experience. I mean, all that day, I was upset. She noticed and said to me: 'I wish I had not told you', because she felt my sadness. She said to me, 'If I knew that what I told you would affect you to this degree, I wouldn't have told you.'"

(Shahad, Participant 9)

The women's story evoked feelings of shock and sadness in Shahad, and these were conveyed back to the expresser. However, this negative emotional effect was temporary in that it did not influence Shahad's enjoyment experience on the trip or affect her

bonding with the group. Overall, although most self-disclosure consisted of negative stories or life events, they often communicated to the individuals' emotions of trust, honesty, and feeling accepted.

It is important to note that culture and gender play a role in the willingness to disclose personal information or feelings. Sharing personal information and discussing sensitive topics and one's own feelings with strangers is not common in a conservative culture like Saudi Arabia. Also, reputation is considered an essential asset for individuals in the Middle East, and protecting the reputation of the person, the family and the tribe often prevents people sharing information about themselves freely. In addition, for religious and cultural reasons, topics such as one's beliefs and romantic relationships are considered too sensitive to be spoken about openly. However, these participants' accounts indicate that the adventure group holiday environment generated high self-disclosure levels. This may be because individuals on these types of trips go through many challenges, starting with being isolated from their usual social circle of friends and family members. Here Sultan, a 40-year-old man, describes his experience of self-disclosure during his trip to a national park in the southwest of Saudi Arabia and how this differed from his usual behaviour:

> *"I usually don't talk much and don't talk about myself unless I have to, on minimal occasions. So on the trip, the guide said, 'Let's start knowing each other more, but we are doing it by asking questions'. So, one of the questions I was asked was 'Why do you do personal training as your main job'? Why...where does your passion come from...why this and that, then why you came on the trip in the first place? So, I found myself talking openly; the questions became so real and intimate in a certain way."*
>
> (Sultan, Participant 22)

As a man from Saudi Arabia, Sultan was even less likely to be open about himself, as he mentioned in the quote above, '*I usually don't talk about myself*'. However, he later explained that his self-disclosure happened because he and his fellow group members went through a lot on their first day together, so some connections had been established already:

"What helped was that these introductions didn't happen on the first day or the first night; they happened the second day, [when] we already knew each other, and we had lived together for a specific time. We did the activity, ate, and laughed together. We knew each other; I had the opportunity to interact with everyone; I was not shy with anyone."

(Sultan, Participant 22)

Like the participants in Chapter 4 who were surprised by the level of openness and acceptance they had experienced during their trips, which were enabled by the social context, Sultan was surprised by his ability to reveal personal information about himself. He later described times where he and others shared their personal stories as '*sessions of honesty*', and how the self-disclosure communicated a sense of empathy, intimacy, and bonding:

"So these sessions of honesty, I mean, there is a kind of comfort, one feels the situation of people, and it is true that we are all coming to have fun, but everyone has a story behind him or her, so I appreciate people's stories."

(Sultan, Participant 22)

Scholars have argued that individuals tend to go through self-disclosure with strangers because they feel secure that what they share will not become known to the people in their life who have a direct influence on it (Derlega and Chaikin, 1977). This creates a sense of freedom from the responsibility of considering how one's own words and actions might affect those close to you. For instance, Elaf, a 28-year-old woman who had been on her first adventure trip to Oman, described how she felt free to disclose her feelings to the group and observed another person doing the same thing, and the bonds this created:

"I talked about my fears and that I wanted to make this trip for me. I mean not thinking about who is with me or what they need. I came alone not to be worried about anyone and wanted not to think about their feelings or opinions. And I talked about how worrying about others was putting pressure on me in my daily life. Another group member talked about losing her father this year and that she came on this trip because she decided after that event that any opportunity, she

would be given to live her life more, she wouldn't say no to it. So, there was bonding in that; everyone talked about certain things; it was nice and warm."

(Elaf, Participant 27)

Elaf illustrated the freedom she experienced in the interactions she had with the group. She described what self-disclosure communicated to her and the group, suggesting emotions like closeness, empathy, and tenderness in the phrase '*it was nice and warm'*, all of which contributed to the bonding experience.

In the literature on intrapersonal relationships, self-disclosure has been identified as influencing the development of personal relationships (Altman and Taylor, 1973) and enhancing trust and intimacy in relationships (Waring and Chelune, 1983; Derlega, 1984; Waring, 1987). Regarding self-disclosure in groups, scholars have found that interpersonal interactions contribute to group members' sense of cohesion (Abu Bakar and Sheer, 2013), and that positive interactions contribute to improving group members' emotional connection and cohesion (Levy, 2010). Self-disclosure has also been shown to play a role in the level of perceived cohesion and intimacy in the context of tourist-to-tourist interaction in the tourism experience (Lin et al., 2019). Self-disclosure was also shown to influence the experience of bonding and closeness between group members in this study, confirming the findings in the literature.

However, the experiences of the participants in this study indicate that revealing personal information and feelings to group members is a crucial type of interaction within a group adventure tour, and that the freedom experienced in this context contributes to the willingness to practice self-disclosure among group members. In addition to confirming the role of social interactions and self-disclosure in developing long term friendships between group members, the finding of this study identified self-disclosure as a significant type of social interaction in group adventure trips. In this context, it serves as a tool to communicate with other group members at a deeper level and to convey heartfelt emotions. These were communicated via self-disclosure interactions, often with high levels of emotional expressions, in environments which intensified emotional sharing.

In contrast to the serious nature of self-disclosure, fun interactions were also found to convey positive emotions and play a role in group adventure trips, and these are discussed in the following section.

5.2.3 Fun Interactions

Participants reported several types of fun social interactions that were significant to them, notably humour, singing, and group games. Humorous interactions were identified as an important type of social interaction that communicated emotions like excitement and joy to others in the group, and participants described various episodes during their trips where they sensed joy and excitement in the atmosphere during such interactions. These typically involved group members behaving in ways which were considered to be funny or sharing jokes with the group members. For example, when Talal was asked to describe the group members' influence on his experience, he spoke about the fun interactions he had with them that communicated enjoyment and contributed to spreading positive energy:

> *"There was someone in the group that I liked because the talk with him was very nice and he was funny; he was talking like he was our father; I mean, he was the oldest one of us at the time. There was another woman - she was funny, and she liked to sing, and she sang loudly, she brought people together and encouraged them. She said like... 'Look... here is a cow.... let's sing to the cows', then we all started singing with her to the cows, we laughed, she was funny."*
>
> (Talal, Participant 21)

Talal illustrated the role of humour in communicating joy when he described the group's response to the woman's funny behaviour by saying *'we laughed'*. He also explained the role of this interaction in improving engagement and bonding in the group, saying *'she brought people together'*. Samar also described this influence when she recalled her team's engagement in a group game because of humour:

> *"One of those who were with us on the trip was very funny; he was explaining the game to us, we were in his team, he was so funny; his way of saying things and behaviour were so funny, he was joking, we were laughing, so I think he*

transferred his feeling to us, everyone started laughing and trying to understand what he was explaining."

(Samar, Participant 18)

As Samar explained, this person expressed humour verbally by sharing jokes and in his body language, in *'his way and behaviour'*.

Both Talal and Samar described the influence of humour on the whole group, not only on themselves, and humour's role in communicating joy was evident in the participants' laughter. Bushra and Hany also mentioned that humour was transferable in their groups:

"There was a group of funny individuals on the trip from Kuwait, and they came together; they were joking all the time; the guides were also the same - funny and light-spirited – so the group's chemistry was so engaging. They refreshed the atmosphere."

(Bushra, Participant 26)

(28) "Someone funny, make me laugh, I sensed it spread to the whole group."

(Hany, Participant 28)

Humour within the tourism experience is believed to enhance individuals' engagement with the experience (Pabel and Pearce, 2015). Engagement in this context is the tourist's active participation in the tourism setting activities and experiences (Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, & Probert, 2015). Moreover, it has been identified as being positively contagious and improving individuals' moods, whether they participated in it or just observed it (Provine, 2000). Participants often noticed and reported the influence of humour on the group atmosphere; that it was contagious in conveying joy to others, and it was clear that humorous interactions communicated joy and excitement to others group members. Engaging in humour during tourism experiences has been shown to benefit both tourists and tourism providers. According to Pabel and Pearce (2015), the humour (i.e., sharing funny stories) helps tour guides interact and amuse tourists, creates a pleasurable experience atmosphere, and helps to alleviate tourists' anxiety and fears, while, for tourism providers, it positively influences tourists' word of mouth and intention to revisit.

Another type of fun interactions that participants reported was singing. It communicated both joy and excitement to the group members. Participants described situations during their trips where some of the group members started singing casually, which was positively contagious. For instance, Sultan described one of the group members (referred to in the quote as A) singing as reflecting his high positive energy, and the way this inspired the group:

> *"On the trip, A was energised and always singing, suddenly while we are walking, he sings loudly. So, from his energy we started to sing together even in any situation, for example, we walk in a valley suddenly, so we start singing together when he notices our mood is down, or we are tired, he starts singing, he changed the atmosphere, it becomes pleasant memories later that we often remember when we meet."*
>
> (Sultan, Participant 22)

Sultan described singing as a tool to ease the stress of challenging activities during their hike. He also explained how A sensed the low mood in the group and started singing to change it when he said, '*when he sees our mood is down, or we are tired, he starts singing, he changed the atmosphere*'. So, here the act of singing together changed the negative energy in the group, and thereby facilitated positive emotional contagion. Another participant, Ramy, also reported that another person's singing improved the atmosphere in his group:

> *"She always enlivened the group, you know if they say that one person enlivened the group, she was that person singing while walking, enjoying and her joy influenced the whole group."*
>
> (Ramy, Participant 10)

He perceived the woman as experiencing joy because she sang during the hike and her feeling was communicated to the whole group. Monerah also confirmed that singing conveyed joy to one of the tour groups she had participated in:

> *"There was one of the groups, it was hike and camping trip, so one of the guys brought with him a 'darbouka' a type of drums and started singing, it changed the atmosphere, and spread joy in the group."*

(Monerah, Participant 15)

So, singing in these groups is a type of interaction that communicates to other group members the feelings of joy and excitement of the person who is singing and this positively influences the mood of the wider group.

Group games were also identified as a type of fun interaction that conveyed positive emotions during the group experience. Group games found to be a form of social interaction that is linked to group trips, and study participants reported that they communicated excitement and joy between the group members. So, participating in group games is a form of engagement with group activities and it also contributes to enhancing engagement between individuals. For example, Samar described the shift in her feelings after participating in the group games from being nervous and distant from the group to being engaged, excited, and enjoying the experience:

> *"I was a little closed on myself, shy, and anxious, but after seeing them interacting, I started interacting with the members. We went down the hill then up to the camp, started talking and started group games, and then we broke all the barriers between us. All the group members were able to talk to each other, and no one was sitting alone; I mean, everyone was participating in the game. Everyone was excited and tried to participate in the game with all they could do, they were all enjoying the game."*
>
> (Samar, Participant 18)

Samar described herself at the beginning of the trip and how her attitude shifted because of the group members' behaviour. Also, when she said, '*everyone was excited and tried to participate in the game with all they could'*, she highlighted the high level of engagement in the group. She went to describe the joy and happiness the game generated, even though the participants were strangers from different parts of the country:

> *"In the group game time, everyone was interacting with each other and was participating with their full energy in the games, I sensed joy in the atmosphere, and they were all happy during the games. So, at that moment I was so happy in how we all were strangers from different places from the south and north from*

the east of the country and enjoying together. Group members were of different ages and jobs; their job may be influenced their skills to play the game, so they started participating in the game based on their knowledge, so it was funny, and everyone was enjoying."

(Samar, Participant 18)

Group games communicated joy and excitement among group members, and this was reflected in the whole group atmosphere. Thus, they were a mechanism through which positive emotional contagion occurred. The more the group members participated in the group games, the more evident the joy they were experiencing, and the stronger the links between them became. Sultan also linked the bonding established within the group to the group games:

"What has exactly brought us together? Games, the night came, we didn't know each other, the whole group was harmonious… except we were not talking, we did not know each other. Then, group games helped break down the barriers between us; even those shy or isolated people participated in the game. When we sat in a game board session, all the secrets came out, and we got to know each other. If those people who were with me on the trip come to me and say let us go on a trip again, I will go every single time, because I want the fun atmosphere, the atmosphere of getting to know new people; talking to each other, joking and knowing each other very well. "

(Sultan, Participant 22)

For Sultan, games were the key to breaking down barriers and establishing bonding between the group members. He also suggested that the group games helped individuals in the group know each other at a deeper level when he mentioned the secrets shared while playing. Saeed, also identified group games as playing a role in the sense of bonding developed between him and the group.

"And then [at] dinner time, there are activities that helped in connecting with the group members, the group games, we played shooting, I mean, it was fun, very joyful."

(Saeed, Participant 19)

Emotional contagion underpins the communication of joy and excitement from interactions like humour, singing and group games. The contagion occurrence and its outcomes are influenced by the valance of emotion and the energy level when it is expressed. Fun interactions are usually combined with a high level of positive energy, which makes it more likely for contagion to occur and affect the whole group. Fun interactions were therefore found to have played a significant role in communicating positive emotions, influencing the group atmosphere and improving bonding among the group members, thereby improving the participants' overall engagement experience during the trip.

Overall, social interactions provide a way to convey emotions to others in group trips, and the types of interactions most often reported by the study participants were casual conversations, self-disclosure, and fun interactions. Each type of interaction communicated a number of different emotions related to the nature of the interaction. So, casual conversations between individuals communicated feelings like joy and trust, self-disclosure conveyed intimacy, trust, vulnerability, empathy, and feeling accepted, while fun interactions, including humour, singing, and group games, communicated joy and excitement to the group members and significantly contributed to the enjoyment experience individuals had in the group.

Social interactions in the context of group adventure holidays were freely experienced and facilitated greater engagement in the group activities. The transfer of emotions through emotional contagion also helped to develop empathy and understanding between group members. Thus, emotion sharing through social interactions contributed to group bonding and cohesion building, the pleasurable experiences individuals had on their trips, and the long-term relationships that developed from them. The following section presents another powerful mechanism whereby emotions were shared in the group experience: emotional expressions.

5.3 Emotional expressions

The second social mechanism of emotion sharing identified in this study is emotional expressions. These are the observable signs that show the emotional state of the expresser, and comprise facial, vocal, verbal, and bodily expressions (Keltner and Haidt, 1999, Van Kleef, 2016). Through these expressions, an individual gets access to the expresser's emotions, for example, laughter typically reflects internally experienced

joy, and crying may reflect internal sadness, joy, or fear, depending on the situation. Whether the expressed emotion reflects the true internal emotional state is a question beyond the scope of this study; instead, it focuses on individuals' perceptions of others' expressed emotions in order to explore the social role of emotional expressions within the group adventure experience.

Participants in this study expressed emotions like enjoyment, excitement, and happiness, and these emotions were also communicated to them through the positive emotional expressions of their group members. Thus, emotional expressions of others were an integral part of the individual experience in the group. Participants described individuals in the group who they perceived as communicating joy and excitement through their facial expressions and the attitudes of other group members. This communication was through emotional contagion, in which the feelings evoked in the observers were like those of the expressers (Hatfield et al., 1992). For example, Ahmed described the way one of the group member's conveyed his positive attitudes through his facial expressions:

> *"He was very nice, he was smiling all the time even on the summit day, he was funny and nice, he was always excited and shared jokes. You see, everyone in the group had some time that they felt tired or quiet, but he was always energetic and full of energy and excitement that is always translated in the form of a smile on his face."*
>
> (Ahmed, Participant 16)

Ahmed described his fellow group member's joy and positive energy when he said, '*smiling all the time, a smile on his face'*. The facial expressions and attitude highlighted the positive energy that the man was spreading in the group. Mariam, a 40-year-old woman, also described her perception of one of the group member's positive attitude and how this affected the group:

> *"It's his outlook on life, and his way with his wife and children, his questions, you always feel he wanted to learn, excited, even if he disagreed with you. His way in expressing his interest was unique. I honestly learned a lot from him, and he enthused everyone."*

(Mariam, Participant 32)

She perceived his enthusiasm in his attitude, his perspectives in life, and his interest in others in the group, and captured the way he communicated his attitude to the group members when she said, '*he enthused everyone'*. The positive attitude some of the group members exhibited was contagious, which was observed in the energy individuals showed. Here Sultan perceived one of the group members as full of joy based on his expressed feelings, his energy, and his attitude.

> *"The first attractive thing is that he was about fifty-five years old and full of energy, I mean, despite his age, but he was energised, active, full of enjoyment and happy, so that just spending time with him was fun. Is not what he did or didn't it is his personality happy man and showing it."*
>
> (Sultan, Participant 22)

He reported that the man expressed joy and excitement and communicated those feelings to him when he said, '*spending time with him was fun*,' which shows the man's positive attitude was contagious. Also, as illustrated in both Mariam's and Sultan's quotes, their perception of each individual's expressed emotions helped them develop an understanding of the individual's nature (Van Kleef, 2009).

Emotional contagion has been identified as playing a role in changing individuals' and groups' moods, either positively or negatively (Barsade, 2016). The valence and the energy level of expressed emotions influence the level of contagion between individuals, so different emotions have different contagion outcomes (Barsade, 2016). For instance, positive emotions that are often evoked with high energy when expressed are more contagious than negative or low-energy emotions. This insight is supported in the current study results in which more positive emotions like joy and excitement were reported to be contagious and positively influenced the group's bonding. This was especially true when positive emotions were expressed by the group as a whole, rather than being a single individual's expressed feelings. For instance, Khaled described a situation where the group's overall positive energy was more substantial than one person's negative emotional expressions:

"The enthusiasm was among all of us, but I remember there was someone grumpy because he was annoyed by the hot weather. He expressed his annoyance, and said 'I don't want to be here; let me go back; I am done with all of this', and like that. But his negativity did not influence us; on the contrary, the positivity in most of us overpowered his negative energy. With our enthusiasm and the energy, we had, we were saying 'No, don't go, please stay'. So, we influenced him, and he decided to stay. His negative feelings did not influence us, but we all changed his mood."

(Khaled, Participant 31)

Here the whole group positive mood alleviated the one-person negative emotional experience. Despite the negative emotions the man expressed when he said '*I don't want to be here; I am done with all of this'*, the positive energy of the rest of the group persuaded him to stay. This therefore suggests that negative emotions expressed by one individual in the group are less likely to influence the whole group's mood when the group's positive energy is higher.

In Khaled's story, the group's overall positive energy was more contagious than one individual's expressed negativity; this could explain why the group's overall energy was stronger than an individual negative emotional state. Also, the nature of a group adventure trip means there is usually an expectation that some things will be challenging and uncomfortable, so negative emotional responses were rarely reported to be contagious among group members. However, when such emotions were expressed, they could be damaging to group cohesion, as this quote by Bayan, a 38-year-old woman, about a disruptive woman in her group illustrates:

"She was annoying individuals in the group; she was acting weird and rude to everyone. That I felt it created tensions in the group, I didn't like it, and [through] these things I was conscious of it. The group were 16 people, and because there were some annoying individuals, small groups within the group have developed".

(Bayan, Participant 23)

Bayan ascribed the formation of small groups within the main group to the existence of individuals who clearly expressed their negativity. Hence, it impacted the quality of the

group experience. Participants explained that they could detect negative emotional contagion and avoid it, but it would often influence group cohesion and bonding.

Although the negative emotions were not often reported to be contagious, the situation where the emotions were expressed and the energy level involved influenced their contagiousness. For example, Amal reported that one of the members of her group expressed fear and frustration and this caused contagion to occur, with frustration spreading throughout the group:

> *"Since the first time we entered the valley that took us about 18 hours until we came out of the valley, she was screaming, complaining, and saying I don't want to be here, help me, I am not moving one step until someone hold me, I shouldn't have come. She was saying all of that while she was the one who chose to be there. The trip was long and difficult, and we were already tired without dealing with her. The guides were tired of her and couldn't deal with her anymore".*
>
> (Amal, Participant 25)

Amal's perception of the women who expressed fear influenced the transfer of frustration. She felt that the woman's reaction was exaggerated. This was evident when she said that the woman complained from the time, they entered the valley until they finished. The woman expressed her fear and frustration by screaming, complaining, and asking for help. It appears from the description that the high energy level when these emotions were expressed caused the contagion to occur. A similar scenario was reported by Elaf when a man in her group expressed fear and communicated annoyance to the group members; however, when their perception of the individual changed, their negative feelings changed to empathy towards him:

> *"While we were in the canyon, and the canyoning was very difficult, and there was someone who was singing and whistling all the time, and when he sang songs, he made different sounds, the situation was so annoying for all of us, that even the guides started to feel annoyed, then we asked him to stop and he told us that this was his way to help himself in fear moments, then our thinking changed, and on the contrary, we tried to help him and show support more."*
>
> (Elaf, Participant 27)

The desire to express fear and frustration during challenging adventurous activities is inevitable and shared between the group members. Indeed, the participants in this study did not typically perceive the expression and sharing of negative emotions as something negative, but rather as part of the recollected thrill from the trip experience. The concept of thrill in relation to pleasant emotional experiences is examined in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Overall, emotional expression provided a mechanism to communicate emotions between individuals within groups. The most commonly reported expressions were facial expressions, words, and attitudes. Positive emotions, like joy and excitement, were often expressed in individuals' positive attitudes, narratives, and facial expressions like smiling and laughing, and these positive emotional expressions improved group bonding and cohesion. This finding is supported by the literature; for instance, scholars have demonstrated that when two or more individuals within a group express positive emotions, such as smiling, it helps to build connections and trust among the group members (Homan, Van Kleef, Sanchez-Burks, 2016; van Kleef and Côté, 2022). Negative emotions, such as fear and frustration, were also communicated, in words, facial expressions and in sounds, including crying; however, these were much less commonly reported. This may be because negative emotions are typically less contagious than positive ones, although the energy level in which the emotion is expressed, the situation where it was expressed, and the individual's perception of these emotions also determine their contagiousness between individuals in groups. Overall, most participants expected to encounter challenges on their trips, so the expression of negative emotions did not detract from their positive experiences. Indeed, in situations where such expressions evoked empathy, they actually strengthened group cohesion. The following section explores the ways in which showing support and care for others acta as a significant emotion sharing mechanism that communicate positive emotional states to others.

5.4 Support and expressed care

As the discussion above demonstrates, individuals' behaviours play an important role in communicating their feelings to others. However, individuals' perceptions of the behaviours of others in the group and their responses to them also convey various types of emotions. Support is one of the primary tools individuals utilise to express care to others in the group, and several participants in this study described episodes where their group companions showed support. This supportive behaviour was contagious in a positive way; it shifted the negative tiredness and fear individuals experienced, making them feel strong, capable, and full of positive energy. For example, Faisal, a 22-year-old man, recollected a moment when group members' supported him when he was injured during a hiking trip:

> *"When I was injured, everyone offered me help; everyone tried to help. In that moment, I wasn't feeling pain; I was happy. I saw all the group members near me. Even though each of them had a goal in the trip and wanted to have fun but, they all stopped what they were doing to check on me and offer help. I was very pleased with the destination in the first place. Then I was happier seeing the group respond to my injury like that."*
>
> (Faisal, Participant 12)

Group members expressed their care for Faisal by showing support and offering help. This communicated to him that he was important, valued, loved, and felt like part of the group. Hafsah also described the supportive environment her group provided when she had to jump from a high cliff into a pond, even though she had fears about deep water and drowning:

> *"The whole group was calling my name ... 'Come on, you can do it ...yes ...come, jump'. They were enthusiastic and encouraged me a lot. Even though I had zero energy, they enthused me, and their positive energy was huge with their energy I could've done anything. When I jumped, everyone clapped as if I had reached the summit of Everest (laughing); they prepared oranges, water, and other things for me. And they were saying, 'Wow, you did it ... good job', and like that... one of them was patting my shoulder and had candy with him and opened one for me."*

"I felt their kindness and that they were happy for me."

(Hafsah, Participant 6)

Hafsah described the support the group members offered and how their energy affected here. She was uplifted by the way the group expressed care for what she was going through. They communicated to her understanding and care and that she was valued. Both Faisal and Hafsah indicated that the expressed care exhibited in the form of support caused them joy, demonstrating that the supportive behaviour by group members communicated positive emotions to the individuals receiving the support.

The participants' narratives indicate that expressing care for others is an important behaviour in interpersonal relations, and it also underpins supportive behaviour. It is expressed by offering support and help to others through actions and words and expressing feelings like compassion and empathy towards them. Care is also expressed by recognising others' needs and feelings. Expressed care by group members is a significant way to communicate emotions to care receivers, such as safety, trust, warmheartedness, and joy. As a result, it contributes to group bonding and cohesion and the overall positive experience individuals have during their trips.

The guide's expressions and behaviours are also essential in communicating feelings to the group members. For example, participants reported that the expressed care by the guides was critical in communicating positive emotions to them and other group members. Here, Talal describes how the guide's expressions conveyed a level of care for the group which made him feel secure:

"He was cautious and a bit worried; he considered everything; he was like, saying 'Come here' and 'Don't go this way', like he was guiding a trip for the first time. Managed the time accurately. Always considered the adverse scenario. He told us not to waste time, like saying 'Don't be late' when we go somewhere, 'We have only fifty minutes'. I liked his way, and his behaviour assured me."

(Talal, Participant 21)

Talal perceived that the guide was 'cautious' from his strictness and expressed worry; however, this communicated a feeling of safety and reassurance to him, because he felt

that the guide ‘considered everything’. Hafsah also recollected the level of care the guide expressed when she struggled to jump into the pond:

> *"He was nice and helped me a lot. He said I will wait for you and held my hand; he said trust me, don't be afraid. He was the biggest supporter I had during the trip; He acted like someone close to me or had known me for ages."*
>
> (Hafsah, Participant 6)

She perceived the guide's supportive behaviour as expressing the level of care she would expect from a close friend or family member, suggesting a level of intimacy was communicated to her by the guide's expressed care. Support and expressed care are behaviours exhibited in response to the expressed feelings of others, so they demonstrate that the other person’s emotions have been recognised and understood. In the context of adventure trips, where group members often depend on their guides, the guides’ expressions and behaviours exert a significant influence on group members’ experience and emotions. The role played by the guide in the experience of certain emotions is explored further in Chapter 6.

In some situations on trips, the communication of emotions is indirect, and participants reported cases where the physical appearance and behaviour of the guide inspired feelings of security within their groups. For example, Bayan spoke about the way a young female guide’s physical presence and conduct made a strong impression on her:

> *"On that trip, the guide was a young lady, I think she was in her twenties, and her weight maybe 40 kilograms; but the control and strength in guidance that I saw in that lady, I haven't seen in very experienced and advanced older guides. I was extremely impressed by her and the way she led the trip. How she was calm, collected, and stable; the trip was difficult, and she was confident and capable. I was honestly extremely impressed that she is a Saudi woman (as it is not common to encounter Saudi woman as adventure activity guides)".*
>
> (Bayan, Participant 23)

For Bayan, the guide communicated control, strength, calmness, and stability through her appearance and behaviour, and this gave her confidence in the guide’s abilities, even though it is uncommon for Saudi women to take on such roles.

Support and expressed care are significant behaviours where emotions are communicated between individuals in the group. These behaviours transmit positive feelings like intimacy, value, and safety to the observers and receivers. The individual's physical appearance can also be significant, as appearance communicates various emotions to the observers and affects their perceptions, feelings and behaviours. Supportive behaviour and expressed care are essential in communicating positive emotions, such as trust, safety, and feeling valued, to the receivers of support, and creating feelings of intimacy, empathy, and care among group members. Supportive behaviour is therefore fundamental in shaping the group dynamic during adventure holidays and communicating emotions during the group experience.

5.5 Conclusion

Social interactions are a vital part of group adventure holidays and play important roles in shaping the tourist experience. This chapter has focused on the role other group members play in shaping individuals' emotional experiences in group trips. In particular, it has demonstrated how emotions are transferred between group members via three social mechanisms: social interactions, emotional expressions, and supportive behaviours toward others. Figure 5.1 shows how these mechanisms operate in group adventure holidays, identifying the different types of emotions communicated by each mechanism and the influences they exert at the individual and at the group level. It therefore illustrates the key findings from this chapter, which are also summarised below.

Section 5.2 illustrated the role of social interactions in communicating emotions between individuals in a group and highlighted the type of interactions that are significant in group trips. The analysis in this section highlighted the types of social interactions used to communicate emotions between individuals, from simple everyday conversations to deeper conversations in the form of self-disclosure. Fun interactions, including humour, singing and group games, were also identified as distinct characteristic of group trips that communicate positive emotions and enable positive emotional contagion to occur between group members. Building on Lin et al. (2019), who found that social interactions influenced perceived cohesion and intimacy within packaged group tours, it demonstrated that social interactions and the feelings they

conveyed facilitate greater engagement in the adventure trip experience and played a crucial role in building intimacy and bonding among the group.

Section 5.3 presented the types of emotional expressions that often communicate emotions and play a role in emotional contagion within the group. These expressions, including words describing emotions, facial expressions, and attitudes, have a social influence on individuals, whereby one person's emotions are expressed verbally or by facial expressions and influence other individuals' emotions, behaviours, and perceptions (Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, and Koning, 2011). It explained the factors which make some emotional expressions more contagious than others, namely, the level of attention and energy and the contextual factors where expressions occur (Hatfield et al.,1992, 1994), and the way these shaped individual and group responses, especially to expressions of negative emotions.

Section 5.4 identified support and expressed care as behaviours which play a key role in conveying positive emotions on group trips. It demonstrated that supportive individuals express feelings of belonging, liking, and intimacy to others, and that these behaviours foster interpersonal relationships between individuals and improve the group dynamics. As discussed in Chapter 4, support is a vital part of the experience in a context like adventure group trips, and the challenging settings and activities require and encourage mutual support. Thus, care can be expressed in various forms, like offering physical or psychological support and encouragement or experiencing empathy towards group members.

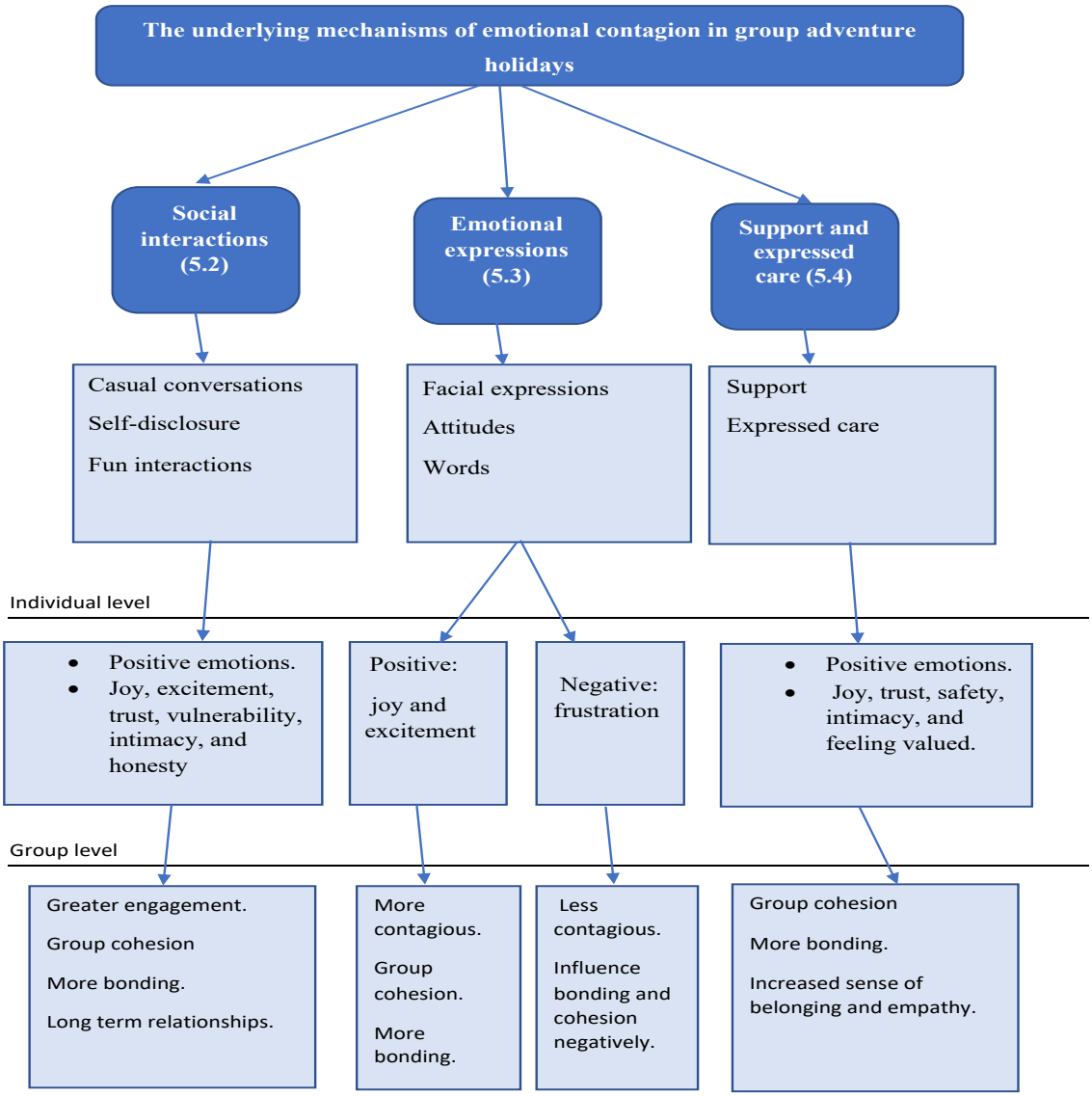


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**.5. The Mechanisms Through Which Emotions are Transferred between Individuals in Group Adventure Holidays

This chapter has provided insights into the ways emotions are evoked within a specific social context, thereby highlighting the social role in the elicitation of emotions. The following chapter builds on this one by investigating the role of the individual in shaping emotional experiences and their personal evaluation of their holiday experience. It also identifies the prevalent emotional experiences in the context of group adventure holidays.

Chapter 6: Tourists' Emotions in Group Adventure Holidays

6.1 Introduction

To complement the preceding discussion of the role of social context in shaping emotions during group adventure holidays, this chapter explores the role of the individual in emotion formation within this context. While Chapter 4 established the role of the social context in facilitating emotions and Chapter 5 identified the mechanism by which they are transferred between individuals, this chapter examines the most prevalent emotions attributed to the group adventure context, their causes, and the processes through which they occur. It aims to provide an in-depth understanding of group adventure tourists' emotions by exploring their nuances, drawing on cognitive appraisal theory to identify the determinants through which they are evoked and the psychological mechanisms that play a role in evoking them. Previous studies have utilised cognitive appraisal theory to understand emotions and have often linked specific emotions with specific appraisals; however, as this study is a qualitative enquiry, the participants' emotional experiences are examined without considering pre-defined sets or scales in order to allow the dimensions of appraisal associated with them to emerge from the analysis. Together, the findings in this chapter address the fourth research question: What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?

Emotions, as represented in this study, are understood as the subjective experience of emotions accessed through participants' descriptions of 'what it felt like' and 'how it felt' (Frijda, 2005). Although the human experience involves an almost unlimited number of emotions and mixed emotions, this chapter focuses only on the most prevalent emotional experiences that the participants remembered and attributed to the context of their group adventure holidays. As scholars have argued that both positive and negative emotions are part of a hedonic tourist experience (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010), the chapter explores both in detail, and comprises two main sections: *Pleasant emotional experiences*, which addresses joy, freedom, and fear, and *Unpleasant emotional experiences*, which examines frustration and annoyance. Although fear is usually understood as a negative emotion, the experience of fear in this study was that it was a positive and productive part of the adventure for most participants.

6.2 Pleasant emotional experiences

Participants in this study reported three different types of positive emotions as prominent in their group adventure holidays: joy, freedom, and fear. While the previous chapters discussed the role of the social context in the process of inducing positive emotions, this section focuses on identifying the forms of joy and freedom the participants reported and the psychological mechanisms which underpinned their occurrence. The ways in which fear was experienced in the adventure context and how it influenced the participants is also discussed.

6.2.1 Joy

Joy is a primary emotion and a fundamental part of the hedonistic tourist experience (Knobloch, et al., 2017). As such, it is a significant emotion in the context of this study, and participants discussed joy extensively throughout their shared stories of group adventure holidays. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 5, positive emotions like joy often underpinned the social encounters and positive emotions experienced throughout the tourists' experience. The analysis which informs this chapter suggests there were different sources and forms of joy. For instance, participants reported various appraisal dimensions for eliciting joy, including goal congruence, goal relevance, and novelty. Also, different forms of joy were experienced, with the type of travel and the type of trip companions significant factors in how joy was experienced.

Participants described the joy they experienced during their holidays, and frequently linked it to a sense of personal achievement and the fulfilment of goals. Adventure holidays are intense experiences, full of challenges and risks, and group members often have specific personal goals in mind, such as challenging the self or overcoming fears, as well as accomplishing group aims. In this context, joy is evoked by the sense of accomplishment when these goals are achieved, indicating that the appraisal dimensions of goal congruence and relevance play a significant role. Goal congruence occurs when participants' goals are achieved during their trips, and all the activities help in achieving their desires. For instance, Maya, described her joyful emotions when she participated in her first ever diving adventure trip in the Red Sea, and overcame numerous obstacles to achieve her aim:

"I felt grateful and happy that I could see this place and make the diving trip. I changed many things in my life to live this moment……., I appreciate myself for changing my way of thinking to make the trip, and I love how I enjoyed these activities. Amazed I did them, happy and grateful. I felt satisfied and fulfilled; I was full of positive energy from the trip experience; the encounters, the people I talked with, all of that filled me with positivity."

(Maya, Participant 3)

As Maya went on to explain, participating in such a trip had been an ambition of hers for some time, but she had to work hard to achieve it. So, her goal was of a high level of relevance to her, and she experienced a more profound sense of joy because of the efforts involved to reach that point. This was illustrated when she said:

"I changed many things in my life to live this moment, and I worked on many aspects of my life to be able to do it, not only financially and physically, but by changing how I travel and working on my mentality toward travel."

(Maya, Participant 3)

Maya also talked about '*the encounters, the people'* on her trip, and said that she associated part of her enjoyment and pleasure with sharing experiences and achievements with like-minded people. Indeed, she later said that participating in group adventures had now become a preferred way of holidaying for her. The joy experienced on these trips can be intense, and it contributes to the level of fulfilment group members feel. It is similar to the enjoyment that O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2002) described as an experience that involves psychological development and fulfilment compared to quick, pleasurable events. For Maya, the personal, cultural, and environmental contexts around the trip influenced her evaluation of the event, the intensity and the length of the joyful experience, and its influence on her. It was clear that the joy she described was a long-lasting feeling, as it was remembered and talked about with others, and it had a long-term effect on her future holiday intentions.

Mahdi also described the feeling of joy he experienced after his first ever parachute jump:

"When I did the parachuting on my trip, I would say if there were a drug they could make from the adrenaline that comes out of this activity, we would be the happiest people in the world. I can describe it to you in many ways, as people do it, but I describe it in my way. If I'd died, I mean if I fell and died, I would still have felt happy; because it was the best feeling in the world."

(Mahdi, Participant 30)

Mahdi went on to explain that parachuting was an important goal for him and the primary reason why he signed up for the trip. His joy therefore arose both from the intense nature of the activity and the achievement of a goal that was relevant to his desires. Thus, goal congruence and relevance were the primary elicitors of the intense joy he experienced.

As discussed above, in the context of adventure holidays, individuals often experience a profound sense of belonging to such activities and set specific goals to achieve. A significant portion of the joy experienced during these holidays stems from personal achievements and the fulfilment of these goals. Consequently, joy in such settings encompasses emotions like pride and triumph. This connection was evident in the findings when participants described their experiences of joy. For instance, Maya detailed her achievement in participating in a diving trip in the Red Sea for the first time, expressing self-pride when she said, '*I appreciate myself*'. Similarly, Mahdi described the immense sense of triumph he felt after completing a parachute jump. These findings demonstrate that emotions of pride and triumph are key contributors to the lived experience of joy during adventure holidays.

Novelty and the element of surprise also emerged as sources of joy. These are a significant part of the tourism experience that individuals often seek in hedonic trips, and they have been identified as one of the primary appraisals to elicit positive emotions (Ma., et al., 2013). The unexpectedness in group adventure trips stems from the destination itself, the social encounters with other group members, and from the individuals' capabilities in the adventure activity. For example, Faisal described the joy he experienced on a climbing and camping trip in Wadi Al Disah, a beautiful, remote valley surrounded by massive sandstone cliffs in the northwest of Saudi Arabia, which was little-known at the time:

"I enjoyed the difficulty and roughness of the mountain. It was something new to me. It was the first time I went to a place that is hard to navigate, that I needed to focus on where I put my hand and what to hold on, and that I needed to walk on the tip of my fingers. The place was stunning - I saw untouched beauty. I didn't expect to see that beautiful nature in that area."

(Faisal, Participant 12)

Faisal articulated that he experienced joy in the hardship of the activity, not because the activity was difficulty, but because it was novel, '*something new to me'* which he did for '*the first time'*. The fact that the beauty of the site was also unexpected added to his joy, indicating that novelty also arose from unexpected or surprising elements. He also mentioned needing to focus his full attention during the activity, which highlights the underpinning joy of the flow experience. As discussed above, the concept of flow relates to participants' active absorption and immersion in an experience, and previous studies have found that it is common in adventure trips, such as river rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993).

Novelty and surprise were also significant factors in the feelings of joy Hafsah reported. She had chosen a more difficult trip over easier options, without really knowing what to expect, but she was surprised by how much she enjoyed it:

"If I had done the easier one, I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much as I did the difficult one. I didn't think I would enjoy the difficult adventure trip that much. I told myself I would try it, to see if I would like it, but I enjoyed it very much. I loved it."

(Hafsah, Participant 6)

Hafsah was surprised by the activity, as it was new and unexpected to her, and also by her ability to enjoy the difficulty so much. Although studies in other tourism contexts have also found that novelty evokes joy (e.g., Ma. et al., 2013; Mitas and Bastiaansen, 2018), Hafsah's experience suggests that the joy experienced in adventure trips also arises from challenging the self in new and unexpected ways.

Another important distinction in the joy experienced in group adventure trips is that it is evoked by sharing the adventure trip with others. A great deal of the enjoyment

participants reported arose from sharing activities and achievements with other group members and guides, and they explicitly associated the joy they felt on their trips with sharing it with their companions. They also reported that sharing their joy in this way intensified it, as Ramy's description of his joy in reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro demonstrates:

> *"I enjoyed it at that moment, but after descending from the mountain, I thought, what happened, (talking to himself) what have you done? The moment I realised what I had done, the joy was more; I talked with group members about it, saw their reactions, and felt the joy more. So, the enjoyment was more after the activity because it was climbing a difficult summit and that was challenging and exhausting."*
>
> (Ramy, Participant 10)

Ramy's joy from the achievement intensified when it was shared with the other group members, so, they played a direct role in the level of joy he experienced. This joy in sharing achievements and struggles may be the joy evoked by goal congruence, as individuals joining group trips have an implicit goal of sharing the trip with others. Ramy also highlighted another important distinction, namely that joy during challenging adventure activities is often experienced afterwards. Ahmed and Monerah also reported that sharing their achievements and feelings with other group members enhanced their own feelings of joy:

> *"When I reached the summit. I enjoyed this achievement very much by sharing it with the team. I shared this joy with them. I felt it is part of the main achievement which is reaching Kilimanjaro's summit."*
>
> (Ahmed, Participant 16)

> *"The joy in the trip was from the enjoyment and fascination experienced by the people with me. It was a beautiful time; we expressed joy, one said a word, and the other responded better or on the same level. Joy was present in us; it was enough for us all to be happy."*
>
> (Monerah, Participant 15)

Participants also described the value of having companions who witnessed their experiences and achievements and how this brought greater joy. For instance, Bayan reported that being with her group, with people who witnessed her experiences, intensified her joy:

> "*It's fun for me, and more joyful and it enriches my network of people. The quality of conversation, jokes, simplicity. I remember a saying that can describe what I mean 'Having a witness to your life is what makes it worthwhile and valuable*."
>
> (Bayan, Participant 23)

These quotes indicate that a considerable portion of the joy experienced on group adventure trips comes from sharing the activities, struggles and achievements with other group members. This confirms the role of the group members in the individual's joy and suggests that the sense of togetherness is integral to the overall joy experienced on these trips. In this way, gathering individuals who share interests, passions, and challenging experiences adds value to group adventure trips, creating a sense of togetherness that is one of the facets of joy in group trips.

Lived positive emotions, like joy, have been linked with memorable tourism experiences and future intentions in the literature (Kim, Ritchie, and Tung, 2010; Tung and Ritchie, 2011; Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken, 2014, 2017). As the examples above demonstrate, joy is a positive emotional experience in group adventure holidays, which arises from achieving one's goals and intense and shared experiences. Joy is also manifest in this context in a collective form, which can be described as a sense of togetherness, and sharing joy with others intensified its influence on the study participants. Indeed, for many, it was an inherent part of their peak experiences (Lazarus 1991). The psychological mechanisms influencing the occurrence of joy were goal congruence, relevance, and novelty; thus, according to CAT theory, these tourists experienced joy when they appraised the events during the trip as significant to them, the trip gains were consistent with their personal goals, and the experiences were new and unexpected.

Joy is a fundamental part of hedonic tourist experiences, and it occurs in different forms and through various events in adventure group trips. Indeed, joy underpinned most of

the feelings experienced and described by the study participants. The following section discusses freedom as a prominent emotional experience and one of the manifestations of joy in this study and examines the way some emotions underpin others within tourists' emotional experiences.

6.2.2 Freedom

Numerous participants described their feelings of being free from the mundane routine of daily life, their familial obligations, and their social circles, including the limits and expectations they impose. For instance, social encounters were often described as free because individuals in the group felt liberated from the need to conform to the pre-ordained standards of their social circles. Participants reported the sense of freedom they experienced because they felt that everything about themselves was under their control, such as how they identified themselves, expressed themselves, how they behaved, and what they chose to share about themselves. This indicates a greater sense of agency, which was exhibited in the individual's perception of their ability to control the situation and its outcomes (Lazarus, 1991b; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). For example, Hafsah described how being able to express herself to other group members without prejudgment caused a lived sense of freedom:

> *"During the trip, I talk about my interests with people I don't know. No one argues with me, saying you can't do it. They even can't because they don't know me. And the group members who did not knew me said: 'You can do it, go for it!' I felt free. I wasn't afraid to say things or behave in a certain way. I felt that freedom as if I was flying and light. I wasn't surrounded by people who would discourage me from what I loved. On the contrary, all the group has the same interest, or most seek the same things I desire."*
>
> (Hafsah, Participant 6)

Hafsah sense of freedom is evident throughout the quote, not just when she says, '*I felt free'*, and it arises from being with people who shared her passions and didn't try to discourage her from doing the things she loves. This was made possible by the nature of the adventure holiday, which brings enabled her to find companionship and support beyond her usual social circle. This emotional experience of freedom is an important part of the hedonic aspect of these group trips, and is manifest in individuals' ability to

be themselves without feeling obliged to adhere to established social norms or expectations. For example, Bushra described the freedom she felt in being able to choose her ‘adventure identity’, the chance to represent herself as something beyond her role as a mother and a wife:

> *"I liked that I could create the identity I want, meaning that I am now at home, a mother of two children and a wife, I live in a certain way, but when on the trip, I can choose not to say those things about me. I can create my adventure identity, so anything I want to represent me, I would say it. For example, If I say I am a yoga trainer, I will be the yoga expert on the trip. I said I am a novel writer, so they called me the writer; nothing else is known about me. I enjoyed this feeling of being able to choose what I am. It is enjoyable to experience, so everyone could choose which side of them to show."*
>
> (Bushra, Participant 26)

Bushra's sense of freedom was evoked because of the control she felt over the way other group members perceived her and the ability to choose what represents her, something it would challenging for her to achieve in another context.

Another form of freedom experienced by the study participants is escapism, arising from being disconnected from daily routines, from stressors in individuals' lives, and from the feeling of being in another world. The isolated nature of the trip and the social environment of the group experience contribute to this sense of disconnection, as does the total immersion in the adventure, creating what Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) described as ‘flow state’, that is, being entirely absorbed in activities. Pomfret (2012) identified flow as a key emotional component of mountaineering holidays, and the desire to disconnect from the outside world and become absorbed in the adventure was also evident in this study. For example, Faisal described the joy he felt at being separated from his social and work responsibilities:

> *"I loved the feeling that I am disconnected and don't have any obligations toward anyone. I look forward to this feeling, and I always prefer to go on trips without an internet connection as much as I can. Sometimes I use the phone to hear music, but I don't like to communicate with people who are not on the trip while I am on the trip. Because I did not go out to a new isolated place to stay*

in the same routine. I wanted a change. I love the feeling of being away and be with other people without personal life matters related to family phone calls or work-related communication. in the end, we all come without ties."

(Faisal, Participant 12)

Disconnection in the form of escape is often a goal for individuals participating in tourism experiences, and the opportunity to get away from '*personal life matters*' was something Faisal particularly valued '*Because I did not go out to a new isolated place to stay in the same routine'.* This feeling of being disconnected also stemmed from being in control of his time and his life for a short period. Therefore, goal congruence, relevance, and agency were primary appraisals that evoked a sense of freedom for him. Elaf also talked about her sense of disconnection, but ascribed a more profound meaning to it:

"I felt I was in another world, without any of the obligations and rules in my current world, a break from everything around me. I felt like going on a break from everything. The mobile network did not reach, and everything I did was different; I did not eat at a table, and I did not wake up and check my phone immediately, you know? I felt we were meant to live on this planet, but we were not. We live on cement, aluminium, plastic, iron, and one type of a way of living does not change, interacting with one social circle of people. This opened a different world to me; I used my feet to climb, used my hands and body, and sat on the sand. I felt like I was in the place I was meant to be."

(Elaf, Participant 27)

Elaf's separation from her current world was highly significant to her and influenced the positive disconnect she experienced. She experienced freedom by liberating herself from everything in her everyday world, by breaking away from '*everything around me'* and, instead, living the life '*we were meant to live'*.

The consumption experience has been described as the pursuit of "escape from reality" (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982, p. 98), and escapism is an inherent part of the tourism experience (Arnould and Price, 1993). It has also been identified as a motivation to participate in adventure experiences (Buckley, 2011; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). In this study, the escapism facilitated by the group adventure context contributed to the

sense of freedom the participants expressed, notably the sense of escaping into another world. This escape from reality created a sense of liberation which was underpinned by feelings of joy.

Another distinctive factor is that this sense of liberation was intensified by the existence of other group members. While some might consider being obliged to fit into a group might limit an individual's sense of freedom, it enabled these participants to feel the freedom of behaving and expressing themselves as they wished in an open and supportive environment and helped them to disconnect. For example, Hanouf reported that the other group members helped her to switch off from everything else:

> *"I felt the existence of the group members helped me disconnect from my life and interact with them. I used to go on trips alone, and my brain was always working; every half hour I would check Twitter or What's App or think about my work, but with the group, I felt disconnected from everything."*
>
> (Hanouf, Participant 8)

Her quote underlines the idea that the separation from one's social circle is a huge contributor to feeling free. It has a long-term impact, influencing the enjoyment, the memorability of the experience, and the intention to repeat. The group atmosphere also plays a role in the feeling of freedom and disconnectedness which individuals experienced, providing a supportive social environment which did not limit the individual's sense of freedom. The social context of the group adventure holidays has enabled individuals to experience their freedom without affecting other group members' freedom. This idea suggests that individuals' perception of limited freedom of expression is primarily within their own social circle and among acquaintances.

Freedom as an emotional state is not often discussed in emotion studies; for example, it is not part of the consumption emotions identified by Richins (1997), nor basic emotions (Izard, 1977). However, freedom could be considered a complex emotion underpinned by joy which causes feelings of liberation, and by agency, which is the individual's ability to control the situation. Thus, the findings of this study add to the previous research by identifying freedom as a positive emotional experience in group adventure holidays and demonstrating how it is evoked in such a context. Overall, the occurrence of positive emotions in group adventure trips is influenced by the individual's perception

of the situation as being aligned with their goals for the trip, the level of significance to them, the novelty of the situation, and their level of control over the situation. The following section examines the way that fear, which is often categorised as a negative emotion, was perceived as meaningful and positive in this study and part of the adventure experience.

6.2.3 Fear

Fear has been identified as a primary emotion in adventure tourism experiences (Cater, 2006; Pomfret, 2006; Carnicelli-Filho. et al., 2010; Faullant, et al., 2011). This type of holiday involves various level of risks, from extreme activities, like climbing Everest and Kilimanjaro, to more moderate activities, such as camping and hiking, and fear is often evoked in situations perceived as risky or threatening, and that may result in possible harm, including suffering, pain, injury, or even death (Plutchik, 2001). Participants reported that the experience of fear was prevalent during their adventure holidays; however, while it had an unpleasant effect at the time of its occurrence, and individuals disliked experiencing it, it often had a positive impact later. Therefore, within the context of this study, fear could be regarded as a negative emotion which yields positive outcomes, giving rise to meaningful experiences in adventure trips that influence individuals in the long term and change their perspectives.

According to cognitive appraisal theory, fear is appraised in uncertain situations where the individual cannot control or avoid unpleasant outcomes (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). Thus, when tourists cognitively evaluate the situation outcome as uncertain, fear is evoked. Participants in this study described frightening experiences during high-risk activities, such as climbing along the edge of mountains with a high chance of falling, and all they thought of was surviving. For example, Bushra reflected on her experience climbing 'Jebel Shams' in Oman, and the way her fear and uncertainty affected her, leading her to focus on simple survival:

> *"There was a part of the hike that was climbing a cliff, and we had only a small space where we could put a hand or and foot, and, in that place, if I fell, I would die because it was 15 meters high. That day I felt that if I slipped, I would die, thinking of safety, solutions or why they didn't put a safety net or something did not exist, And it became like a kind of pause in time, because I no longer felt the time; it became very focused at that moment, just hand and foot, hand and foot.*

I was thinking of finishing and being at the top of the summit. It was a moment of fear and focus, out of my comfort zone, a life or death situation."

(Bushra, Participant 26)

Bushra perceived the situation as full of risk and requiring intense focus. This risk perception played a role in her imagining adverse outcomes, like falling and dying, that led her to focus on placing her hands and feet in just the right places in order to complete the climb safely. However, the quote also suggests that her fear was not experienced in the moment of the fearful situation but only later when she reflected upon it, '*It was a moment of fear and focus'*. Instead of expressing an overt sense of fear, Bushra describes her intense focus, which created '*a kind of pause in time*', and Hind (in the following quote) says, '*I felt nothing at that time*'. Buckley (2016) described this as an emotionless state in intense focus moments, and for Bushra and Hind, the feeling of fear came in the reflection stage, so was combined with the thrill of surviving such situations. Hind's quote below describes her episode of fear, both how it was lived during its occurrence and how she remembers it:

"A terrifying moment for me was when I fell. But at that moment it happened. I felt nothing; I froze and held my hiking bag. I froze while I was holding on to a rock with one hand, then the guide gave me his hand, and he was scared too, I saw it on his face, but he was trying not to express it because he didn't want to scare me. I remember I looked with a cold look, held his hand, and he asked me, are you okay? I said nothing. It was a moment I remember very well with all the details like I am living it again."

(Hind, Participant 14)

Hind emphasised that it was a memorable experience for her, something '*a moment I remember very well*', and it became more intense when she reflected on it in the interview, saying she felt, '*like I am living it again*'. However, she seemed to feel a thrill when she remembered it, her positive sentiment evident in the excitement in her voice and in her smile. Hind also perceived the fearful incident as a meaningful experience in the form of a life-changing moment, something the following quotes from Maya also expresses. Her group were stranded for hours up a mountain as night fell

making it difficult to navigate safely, and this had a profound and enduring effect on her. The first quote describes the incident, the second the way it affected her:

> *"We got stuck in the mountain, we were supposed to get down from the mountain within six hours, and we were stuck there for about 12 hours, it got dark and hard to navigate, of course it was about poor organization, poor planning of the path and poor communication from the guides."*

> *"I felt that all the things in my life that were significant to me, things like disagreements between my partner and me, things that I wanted at work, or things I did not get, like a specific income, or ... all became insignificant at that time. All I wanted at that moment was to get out of that place; I didn't have any problems with anything; I reconciled with all my current problems, and those would happen later, but I wanted to survive; I just wanted to reach the land in one piece. Before something happened to us, there was a moment in which there was a strange mixed feeling. The place was beautiful, but it was scary..... it was a milestone in my life after descending that day that I always remember and talk about with others."*

(Maya, Participant 3)

She described the experience as a milestone in her life, illustrating fear's significance and how memorable an event it was for her. Part of this significance appears to derive from the individuals perceiving these fearful experiences as a source of thrill when reflected upon. For these participants, a distinction in the fear experience that made it a thrill is the presence of imagined scenarios, so not actually experiencing negative outcome, but instead experiencing what if '*I fell from a high mountain or airplane'* or *'I could've died'* moments. So, it was imagined adverse outcomes, which did not actually happen, that made fear a thrill when remembered later.

Participants often perceived their lived fear during the experience as something to be conquered, and felt a sense of achievement in doing so. Maya referred to surviving her frightening experience as a significant achievement in her life *'a milestone…. after descending that day'.* Bushra also described her sense of achievement after conquering her fear and making her way down a high mountain:

"I was afraid of it and was very tense and nervous that I had to descend from a very sharp cliff; but, when I got down, I was so happy with my achievement, it was a big one for me".

(Bushra, Participant 26)

Overcoming fears is an inherent part of adventure trips, and individuals often perceive overcoming fears as a self-achievement that causes joy when remembered. It is linked to the transformative experience that individuals live on adventure trips.

It is clear from the participants' narratives that uncertainty within the situation was the primary appraisal dimension for the fear they experienced. This was often linked to uncertainty about what could happen to them and whether they would be able to survive or not; thus, the elicitation of fear was influenced by the perceived risk that stems from the uncertainty of the situation. This is clear in Samar's description of her experience of fear in her trip to a mountain in Turkey, when she had to navigate steep, rocky pathways which seemed dangerous to her:

"On the top of the mountain, the path was mixed of sand, mud, rocks, and stones, and the descending path was very steep; all of the ways to descend were like that. I told them, 'I am afraid I cannot go down. I didn't want to go down'; I was screaming, saying 'I am scared every minute while walking down the path because any wrong step I make, I might fall from the top to the bottom of the lake'. I was terrified of it, nervous and tense moments. The distance was around one kilometre. It was scary to the point I was saying to the guides 'Find a way to get me down that doesn't involve me doing it."

(Samar, Participant 18)

Samar's fear was coming from imagining the potential negative outcomes, '*any wrong step I make, I might fall from the top to the bottom of the lake'*, and it was so powerful that she initially refused to go down these paths under any circumstances. However, with the guides and group support, she overcame her fear, and making the descent became a memorable experience.

The narratives suggest that fear is identified as a pleasant emotional experience because it is often perceived as a thrill, regardless of whether it is part of the nature of the activity or due to sudden accidents. Moreover, it is perceived as a memorable and meaningful

experience in the long term. Thus, it is a memorable emotional experience and a significant part of the individual trip. Although peak experience is a state often conceptualised by emotions like awe and happiness, fear is similar to peak experience in respect of its intensity and the fulfilment which arises from overcoming it in the reflection stage (Maslow, 1967). Thus, while Pomfret (2006) established a connection between the emotional states in mountaineering and peak experience, this study demonstrates that fear is also a component of an individual's peak experiences in adventure trips more broadly.

This study has also demonstrated that uncertainty is the appraisal dimension for fear, and that fear in adventure group trips arises from imagined scenarios or uncertainty about outcomes. However, fear is not perceived as a negative feeling or the cause of adverse behaviour intentions; on the contrary, it added thrill to the experience and eventually joy arose from it. Indeed, participants often remembered specific fearful moments as the highlight of their holidays. Fear is therefore a negative emotional experience identified to have a positive long-term effect. This may be a context-specific effect, as fear might not be perceived or evaluated as a positive outcome in another context, it. However, as Nawijn and Biran (2019) argued, some negative emotions are good and contribute to positive psychological outcomes in both hedonic and non-hedonic contexts. Moreover, individuals were often able to regulate the unpleasant feeling of fear by perceiving it as conquered. In contrast, other negative emotions were perceived as negative and unpleasant when lived and remembered, and the following section discuss the impact of frustration and annoyance on individuals' emotional experiences.

6.3 Unpleasant emotional experiences

Participants reported experiencing negative emotions, such as frustration and annoyance, when facing adverse situations, such as when their goals were blocked or their expectations were not met. These were described as unpleasant emotions, which individuals disliked experiencing and which resulted in negative outcomes. The key appraisal dimension for these emotions which emerged from this study is goal-incongruent events; however, other related types of appraisals, like uncertainty, lack of agency and lack of control, were also involved.

6.3.1 Frustration

Frustration is a negative feeling experienced when failing to meet expected achievement (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), and participants reported experiencing frustration and disappointment when they failed to achieve their goals from the trip. This feeling is linked to the adventure trip context, as individuals often participate in these trips seeking specific physical goals, like reaching a summit or finishing a challenging hike. Participants also reported experiencing frustration when encountering adverse situations, manifested in anger toward others or situations for not meeting their expectations. For example, Ahmed described his intense frustration on his trip to Kilimanjaro when he was asked to return to the base camp despite being close the summit:

> *"[I felt a] strong feeling of frustration. Beyond the idea that I paid a lot of money and travelled hundreds of miles, it was also a new challenge that I had wanted to do for a long time, climbing the mountain, and I wanted so badly to reach the highest peak in Africa. It is very important for me because it measures my endurance and ability to achieve my goals. The feeling was intense because, at that time, I had finished the six days of the journey and only had 200 meters left. The last day they call the day of hell, from the severity of the exhaustion, and I saw myself so close, [but] they told me you must go down because my health deteriorated; I felt furious anger and frustration. Because this is possibly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I may not be able to repeat it. Honestly, sometimes it occurs to my mind to repeat it, and I feel I should repeat it and reach the summit."*
>
> (Ahmed, Participant 16)

Reaching the summit was an important goal for Ahmed, and he attributed the intensity of his disappointment and frustration to the fact that he was unable to achieve it despite his best efforts. He also felt that the responsibility for this adverse situation was not on him, but others, in this case, the guides, who told him he had to go down. Negative emotions are evoked in an adverse situation when the negative outcomes are attributed to others or to uncontrolled conditions (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), and the element of responsibility plays a role in eliciting frustration and how it is manifest. So, Ahmed felt frustrated because the negative result of not reaching the summit was out of his control,

and the guides were responsible for making him go down. However, his story suggests that he also blamed the uncontrolled situation, namely, the deterioration in his health, so his anger was not directed toward the guides.

Other participants also reported experiencing frustration when their expectations regarding the trip or themselves were not met. Frustration was sometimes evoked by anger toward the self for not meeting certain expectations; however, the intensity of this frustration appeared to be less intense than when it was attributed to an uncontrolled situation. For instance, Ramy articulated his feeling when they left one of the group members behind because he was slowing the group down:

> *"I was upset that we did not complete the summit, all eight of us. Only six continued from the eight. One of us was slow, so we left him with another guide, and we told him we would meet up at the summit. Unfortunately, he didn't reach the summit; he stopped a little before it. I was frustrated because he did not get to the summit with us, and that we did leave him because he was slow. "*
>
> (Ramy, Participant 10)

This suggests that Ramy expected the whole group to reach the summit together and was upset by the idea that they left him because he was slow, so, he blamed himself for his teammate not reaching the summit. His frustration was evoked because of not meeting the expectation and attributing the adverse outcome to himself; however, Ramy rapidly found a justification for his action by saying *'because he was slow'* as an alleviating or coping strategy for his negative feeling (Lazarus, 1991). Another example of being frustrated by oneself, which is common in the context of adventure, is when the person's physical ability is not as he or she expected and less than the rest of the group. This was the case for Hamad, who became frustrated with himself over his level of fitness:

> *"I wasn't at the same fitness level as the rest of the group. I was frustrated with myself. But eventually, I tried my best to continue that hike. "*
>
> (Hamad, Participant 1)

The feeling of frustration directed towards oneself often arises from shame and guilt. As shown in the above examples, Hamad felt deep shame when he didn't meet his

physical goals, viewing it as a personal failure. Similarly, Ramy felt intense guilt when he left a group member behind, feeling personally accountable for the situation. However, not all negative events lead to feelings of shame and guilt; only those that individuals attribute to themselves. As a result, these emotions are considered self-conscious emotions.

The intensity of frustration evoked by not meeting the trip expectations or achieving significant goals is influenced by the lack of control over the situation and who is responsible for it. When the responsibility for a negative outcome is attributed to others or to uncontrolled circumstances, the feeling of frustration is more intense, and when it is attributed to the self or controlled by the self, it becomes less intense and less lasting. For instance, Hamad suggests that his frustration did not affect his trip significantly. Overall, most participants reported that their experience of frustration did not influence their perception of the trip's success, pleasantness, or memorability; however, another negative emotion, namely annoyance, was found to have a more significant effect. Therefore, the ways in which annoyance impacted the group adventure experience are explored in the following section.

6.3.2 Annoyance

Annoyance is evoked when individuals feel angry, and this anger is attributed to someone or something. The level of annoyance study participants experienced was influenced by multiple factors, such as their expectations, level of control over the situation, and the conditions in which the annoyance was evoked; however, numerous participants reported annoyance attributed to their tour guide's behaviour. The expectations of the tour guides are often high, and individuals expect them to be professional in their trip management, interactions, and behaviours, and this annoyance typically arose when tour guides exhibited behaviours which the participants perceived as unpleasant.

Participants reported multiple tour guide behaviours that were perceived negatively and influenced the elicitation of negative emotions during the trip. These included negative interactions with group members, being unprofessional, or strict to some level that hindered their individual freedom, and being careless about group members'

needs, abilities, emotions, and struggles. Conversations that were perceived as not professional or personal beyond a certain level were also described as annoying and negatively influencing individuals. For instance, Noura, described her annoyance with the behaviour of the guide on her diving trip:

> *"He was very rude and talked about sensitive things with us that he shouldn't say. I mean, as someone working with strangers, he shouldn't talk about some aspects of his life; we felt his talk was off-limits. He didn't talk about us but shared stories we thought inappropriate; this negative situation frustrated me all day on that trip, and I felt annoyed days after it."*
>
> (Noura, Participant 4)

She described this type of interaction as unprofessional and negatively affecting her feelings, making her annoyed and frustrated. Her annoyance was evoked because the guide's behaviour did not meet her expectations; also, the situation was beyond her control, so the annoyance was too intense for her to control it, and it affected her for days. Many participants reported their guide's negative behaviours as the primary cause of their negative emotions in their group adventure trips, including being too strict and not accommodating the group's needs. Here Dana, a forty year old woman, described a situation where the guide's strictness was annoying and negatively influenced her experience:

> *"I encountered a silly guide who treated us like we were on a school trip, not adults came to have fun. He said, "Come on from here, don't go this way". I felt like, "Come on, let us enjoy nature while walking," and everyone was annoyed by him; we were saying, "Come on, we came to enjoy, not to race". He was like, "Let's go here" and "Come here quickly", and "Don't sit down, don't be late, don't talk." I mean, it was annoying, and he ruined my trip."*
>
> (Dana, Participant 7)

It appears that the guide's behaviour was not what Dana expected; he over-controlled them and influenced the joy of the trip. From her quote, it appears that, for this guides, there is a little distinction between managing the group efficiently while allowing some room for freedom to enjoy and between over-controlling the group to the level

it becomes annoying. Another example of a guide's style of guiding being perceived as negative was given by Maha:

> *"I hated the saying 'It is all in your head' because of him. We were so exhausted, and he was neglecting our pain and tiredness, and he said you are not using your full abilities. He wasn't sympathetic at all. So, he made me hate the trip and the company that provides it; I didn't go with them for two years, and then later, I decided to go with them but with different guides because I wanted to delete that bad memory and give them one more chance. So now they became my friends, and last year I went on four group trips with them and obviously with other guides than the previous one - imagine how a guide can make us hate something to this level."*
>
> (Maha, Participant 24)

She described how the guide neglecting her struggle and not considering her abilities negatively influenced her and made her feel annoyed and frustrated. This feeling stemmed from anger toward the guide; she felt he was responsible for that negative experience. Also, as Maha described, the guide's behaviour negatively influenced her future intentions and she chose not to go on that type of trips and not with that company for two years. She illustrated the shift in her feelings towards the company as a result of the guide's behaviour by contrasting the number of trips she did later and saying she and the company became friends when she gave them another chance and went on other trips with other guides from the same company. Maha was surprised by the level of influence the negative behaviour of the guide had when she said, *'Imagine how a guide can make us hate something to that level*'. Another example of a situation involving a guide which caused annoyance was Bayan's experience during her trip to Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe and Russia:

> *"when I hurt my foot, I told the guide I could continue: 'I know myself. I'm the fastest going down usually; please, let me continue'. He said a word I won't forget in my life; he told me it's more important for him to get as many people as possible to the top. He said I couldn't risk it because you are slower. So, he left me there because his evaluation and payments depended on the number of people who reached the summit. He didn't care about me. I supposed we had*

built strong bonding throughout the trip; we were together all that time; I told him only 150 meters, I could do it, but he left me so he could get other people on the summit". "I lived this horrible experience because he didn't allow me to reach the summit."

(Bayan, Participant 23)

Bayan's annoyance arose from her sense that the guide failed to recognise her capabilities, needs and expectations during the trip. She felt the guide was abandoning her; he didn't care enough to show empathy or support, and he neglected her feelings for his personal gain, making this a *'horrible experience'* for her. The guide's attitude made Bayan experience intense frustration and annoyance, unpleasant feelings which she attributed directly to him. From her narrative, it appears that this experience had a long-lasting influence, something she said she *'won't forget in my life'*. His words were memorable because he failed to manage her needs and emotions during the climb, and she ascribed her negative feelings to the guide's behaviour.

Agency and locus of control appraisal dimensions are when the adverse situation is attributed to the self, others, or the circumstance (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), and they have been found to be more related to negative emotions than positive ones (Peeters and Czapiniski, 1990). For example, the primary appraisal for the examples of annoyance reported above is agency, as the unpleasant incidents were attributed to the tour guide. The annoyance emotion was elicited because of failure to meet the participants' goals and expectations of the trip and the lack of individual control over the situation. It also occurred when the responsibility or the blame for the negative situation was attributed to the tour guide. The literature has confirmed that people often attribute negative feelings to the business provider, in this case, the tour guides. Previous research has demonstrated that the service provider is responsible for negative emotions when their behaviour contradicts the consumer's goals and expectations (Kahr, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, and Hoyer, 2016), and that, when the service or tourism provider is responsible for negative emotions, their intensity and influence are greater (Keltner et al., 1993). Therefore, it is clear that tour guides and their behaviour played a prominent role in the annoyance individuals experienced during their trips.

The study findings highlight the tour guide's primary role in influencing negative emotional experiences affecting the participants in the long run. The annoyance

attributed to the tour guides was distinctive in that it often influenced the individual's evaluation of the whole trip, leading them to evaluated it as a negative experience and directly influencing their future behaviour intentions, such as choosing not to go with the same provider or guide again.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the most prevalent emotional experiences in group adventure holidays as reported by the study participants, including both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It has highlighted the role of the individuals in the emotion elicitation process and identified a number of appraisal dimensions which affect their evaluations of their situations, namely, goal congruence and incongruence, goal relevance, novelty, agency, and uncertainty. All the emotional experiences discussed in this chapter are memorable emotions that were reported in as being vividly remembered by participants. Section 6.2 examined pleasant emotional experiences, including joy, freedom, and fear. It explained the forms of joy and freedom in adventure group holidays and the interplay between them; it also highlighted the context specific processes through which these emotions were evoked. The insights generated confirmed that joy is an essential emotion experienced in hedonic consumption. Freedom was also identified as a complex emotional experience attributed to group adventure holidays. In addition, fear was also identified as a pleasant emotion in the context of adventure trips and part of the peak experience.

The chapter provides an insight into how joy and freedom are evoked and the role of the tourist in the process. Joy is elicited when highly relevant goals are achieved, and novelty greatly contributes to its elicitation. A sense of togetherness is also identified to be one of the facets of joy in the group adventure context. Sharing and being with others is a highly relevant goal in joining group trips, so it is a major contributor to joy. Freedom is an emotional state influenced by the individual's level of control over the situation and their agency; it is also manifest in the positive disconnect or escape experience the trip provides for the individuals. In addition to identifying freedom as a complex emotional experience, the chapter also drew on CAT theory to identify agency as the appraisal dimension of freedom, something which, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has not been previously identified. Fear was also shown to be a transformative experience within the adventure holiday context, with individuals remembering fearful episodes as life transforming moments. In addition, if the

emotional experience evoked because of a situation was consistent with an individual's goals and highly relevant to them, it was perceived as positive in the long term. This insight explains how experiencing negative emotions during the trip could positively influence the individual in the long term, contributing to both their physical and mental development (Nawijn and Biran, 2019). Fear in this context is also linked to the pursued risk and thrill of adventure experiences.

Section 6.3 identified and explained the occurrence of negative emotions, namely frustration and annoyance, and their appraisal dimensions in group adventure holidays. Frustration and annoyance stem from anger toward someone or something, so these external factors are blamed for the negative emotion (Roseman 1991). Although frustration as it stems from anger is one of Richins' (1997) set of consumption emotions, it is rarely addressed in tourism literature, and only a few marketing studies have identified it in the context of service failure (Le and Ho, 2020; Tronvoll, 2011). While some studies have identified other negative emotions in tourism experiences, such as shame, distress, regret and sadness (Zhang, Prayag, and Song, 2021), this study identifies frustration and annoyance as the most prevalent negative emotions within adventure tourism, and traces their different influences based on their causes. In particular, it identifies annoyance attributed to the tour guides (as the service provider) as having the most significant impact, creating negative experiences that were not easily forgotten and which impacted both tourists' lived experience and their future intentions.

It has also indicated that certain self-conscious emotions are more prominent in the context of adventure holidays and are linked to specific emotional experiences. For example, feelings of pride and triumph are associated with joy when achieving personal goals during adventure trips, while feelings of shame and guilt are part of the frustration related to adverse events attributed to oneself. Pride and triumph represent the positive spectrum of self-conscious emotions, while shame and guilt fall within the negative spectrum. These emotions are deeply connected to one's self-perception and the internalization of responsibility for specific outcomes (Tracy and Robins, 2004).

This chapter provides qualitative, in-depth insights into how individuals cognitively appraise situations and connect them to specific emotions. Firstly, it identifies the various forms of emotional experiences and explains their complexities, highlighting how one emotion can influence and be influenced by another. Secondly, it identifies the

significant appraisal dimensions that play a vital role in eliciting specific emotions. These insights help us understand the significant factors influencing tourists' emotional experiences in a particular consumption context. Understanding how these emotions are evoked and how they affect tourists is beneficial in designing and managing the tourist experience. The following chapter discuss the key findings from the three empirical chapters in relation to the research questions and extant literature.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the key findings of this study in relation to the research questions and the literature review presented in Chapter 2, illustrating how tourists' emotional experiences are shaped within the social context of a group adventure holiday. The significance of the interpretive approach adopted in this study is also discussed. The chapter concludes by presenting a conceptual framework which summarises the main findings and represents the primary research outcomes of this thesis.

7.2 Discussion of the key findings

The findings discussed in the previous chapters demonstrated that tourist emotions in group adventure holidays are shaped by the interplay of three mechanisms or factors: the role of the social context of groups in tourists' emotions (See Chapter 4); the mechanisms that underpin emotion transfer in groups (See Chapter 5), and the type of emotions and the role of the tourist in evoking them (See Chapter 6). Overall, these chapters have identified the social and personal mechanisms that play a role in eliciting tourist emotions within a social context, and the following sections seek to explain these key findings by discussing them in relation to the research questions and the broader literature (See Chapter 2).

7.2.1 The role of the social context of groups in evoking emotions

This section focuses on the first research question, which seeks to ascertain the role of the social context of the group experience in shaping individual emotions:

> RQ1) How are individual's emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?

Building on Verhoef et al. (2009), who highlighted the significance of the social environment in the customer experience, this study aimed to extend this significance by linking it to tourists' emotions. Thus, while some scholars refer to the social environment as the social interactions in the service setting (Garg, Rahman, and Kumar, 2012), the social context in this study was understood as encompassing any part of the holiday related to the presence of others in the setting of the trip. The pivotal role of the

social context in determining tourists' social interactions, the value of the experience, and tourists' emotional experiences, has been demonstrated in the literature; hospitality management literature has shown that the existence of companions influences people's behaviours (Huang and Wang, 2014; Huang, Wu, Chuang, and Lin, 2014; Miao and Mattila, 2013), and, in tourism, scholars have found that the presence of travelling companions affects an individual's emotional arousal depending on the types of tourism activities (Su, Cheng, and Swanson, 2020). The findings of this study extend those studies by confirming the significant role of the social context in the adventure tourist experience. In particular, this study contributes to the literature by looking at how travel companions influence tourists' emotional experiences in group adventure holidays.

The findings suggest that the social context is a rich environment for emotions in this context, and Chapter 4 highlights several social dimensions that shape the adventure tourist experience. In particular, shared similar interests, perceiving group members as authentic, group diversity, and social escape were identified as factors which play significant roles in facilitating emotional experiences within group adventures. The analysis showed that these dimensions are interconnected, each of them influencing and influenced by the others, creating an interactive environment that facilitates tourists' emotional experiences. For example, group diversity, perceiving other members as authentic, and sharing the same passion for adventures were found to play a role in the group experience being a social escape. Previous studies have identified different characteristics that influence the social experience, notably Quiroga (1990), who found that the shared setting, the proximity of members during the trip, and shared conditions and experiences influenced the social experience in groups, and Levy and Gets (2011), who identified similarity, mood, and personality as influencing factors. However, these studies examined packaged or sightseeing tours and focused on the social aspect only, so this study extends the knowledge regarding the group tourism experience by highlighting the social context factors that influence the tourist emotional experience and the transfer of emotions within the group adventure setting.

The importance of the social setting in shaping the tourist adventure experience or determining its outcomes has also been confirmed in the literature; for example, Gstaettner, Lee, and Rodger, (2018) showed that perceptions of risk in the adventure tourism context were affected by the social context, among other factors. The findings of this study also demonstrate the significant role of the social context of the adventure

group holidays in the tourist's emotional experience, and the impact of the four main factors are discussed in the following sections.

7.2.1.1 Travel companions perceived as authentic

Numerous participants described their fellow group members as authentic and real and linked these perceptions to the extreme and outdoor nature of their trips. Adventure tourists have been described according to attributes like age, gender, and level of experience (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016), and they have also been referred to as 'sensation seekers' (Breivik, 1996). However, the current study findings identified another dimension that describes adventure tourists, namely, that they are perceived as authentic by their group members and share a passion for adventure. Sensation seeking is "the seeking of varied, novel, complex and intense sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences" (Zuckerman, 1979, p. 10), and, while Breivik (1996) used this term to describe mountaineering tour groups in particular, it captures the shared passions which unite adventure tourists. It also illustrates how this affinity is related to the extreme nature of adventure trips.

In her ethnographic research, Sharpe (2005) described outdoor adventure space as encouraging the experience of "the real and to feel genuine emotions and encounter the essence of our true selves" (p. 47), something which the findings of this study confirm. The participants perceived their outdoor environments as more authentic than urban areas, describing their experiences as being away from civilisation, and confirming the idea that humans perceive nature as more authentic than their everyday world (Fine, 1992). They also reported perceiving themselves and other group members as their true selves and their behaviours, personalities, and emotions as genuine, ascribing this, in part, to the hardship, risk, and challenges inherent in their adventure trips. The environment for outdoor adventure differs from everyday life, as people are often outside their comfort zones and free of usual social roles found in work or family contexts (Sharpe, 2005), and the nature of the adventure contributed to the lived sense of freedom and joy in this study, because people perceived themselves and others as authentic and free from regular life roles and expectations.

Perceived authenticity refers to the perceived realness of the encountered objects or events and the individual's experience of being more genuine, free and acting as their

true self (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006a). In the tourism context, the quality or success of the experience is connected to the perceived authenticity of destination, and scholars have identified that destination authenticity is linked to satisfaction (Lu, Chi, and Liu, 2015) and loyalty (Yi, Lin, Jin, and Luo, 2017). However, group members are also part of the tourist experience, therefore the perceived authenticity of the group members plays a significant role in enhancing the overall experience. Also, perceiving other group members as authentic could be linked to the fact that tourists have experienced intrapersonal authenticity that reflects their perception of others. Lin and Liu (2018) defined intrapersonal authenticity as "tourists' experience of being more real and relaxed than usual and free to show genuine emotions." (p. 2137). Thus, this dimension of the social context facilitates richly experienced and expressed emotions, resulting in greater emotional transfer.

In addition, the findings of this study indicate that the sense of escapism participants experienced within the adventure holiday environment helped them to perceive their fellow group members as authentic and genuine. They also suggest that this facilitated interactions, bonding, and the development of long-term relationships between the group members. This perception therefore played a significant role in shaping individuals' experiences with others in a group. Perceiving group members as genuine is a significant part of an authentic experience, and, here, it contributed to tourists experiencing genuine emotions, and feeling free to express and share them. For instance, perceiving group members as authentic facilitated trust and intimacy that contributed to deep interactions, including self-disclosures. This perception of genuineness also contributed to the lived sense of freedom as an emotional state. Within the concept of social presence, perceived similarity, homophily, and congruency are significant components of the social servicescape (e.g., Hanks, Line, and Yang, 2017; Line, Hanks, and Kim, 2018); these findings therefore contribute by identifying the perception of others as authentic as playing an important role in the adventure tourism experience.

7.2.1.2 Group diversity

The analysis revealed that group diversity is also an important social context dimension in tourists' emotional experiences in group holidays. Specifically, this study demonstrates that deep-level diversities between group members are a source of joy and perceived as positive inputs to the trip. The deep level diversity this study discusses

encompasses differences beyond physical characteristics, like gender and age, to include variations in personalities, ideas, beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes. Literature in hospitality management has confirmed that perceived similarity and homogeneity among consumers is valued and influences the evaluation of fellow consumers and satisfaction (Wu, 2007), and future intentions, like word of mouth (Line, Hanks, and Kim, 2018). This stream of research in service encounter management is built on the idea of compatibility management (Martin and Pranter, 1989), which involves attracting customers with similar characteristics and preferences and managing their interactions to improve satisfaction. Martin and Pranter (1989) suggest that guest compatibility enhances customer-to-customer interactions. Thus, a more homogenous group of consumers in the social servicescape contributes to positive outcomes. For instance, grouping customers with similar traits improves customer-to-customer interactions and influences satisfaction (e.g., Wu, 2007). However, the findings of this study challenge the management compatibility principle, as the participants described diversity within their groups as a joyful experience and an advantage of the trip. This could be explained by the fact that part of the attraction of such trips is the opportunity to encounter the unknown and the unexpected, so being part of a diverse group of people is perceived as part of the adventure.

Although the study participants perceive group diversity as an important dimension in facilitating positive emotions, sharing common interests was important for this diversity to be embraced and appreciated. As noted above, sharing a passion for adventure is significant for the participants in this type of holiday, and this study demonstrates that it contributes to group cohesion, a sense of connection between the group members, and the development of enduring relationships. This supports Sørensen's (2003) finding that shared interests regarding the destination play a role in building relationships between tourists, and the study of group emotions in football fans by Stieler and Germelmann (2016), who found that individuals experienced bonding and connectedness toward others who shared their passion for the team.

However, in demonstrating that group diversity enhanced enjoyment of the group experience, this study questions other research which suggested that similarities boost cohesion and harmony in groups. For example, similarity in personal characteristics, such as gender, age, and values, have been found to support connections and harmony in the group (Lin et al., 2019; Tsaur and Ku, 2019), and Torres' (2016) study of the tour

group experience in a Greek island adventure found that similar demographics and shared experiences contributed to creating a cohesive environment. The findings of this study, by contrast, revealed that diversity in personal characteristics enhanced interactions and joy and did not negatively affect bonding, cohesion, or the development of long-term relationships among the group members. This suggests that diversity within such groups is perceived positively because group members share a passion for adventure and encountering the unknown which transcends their differences.

7.2.1.3 Social escape

The findings of this study also identified social escape as a significant dimension that facilitates emotions and emotion sharing in group adventure holidays. Group adventure holidays can be considered as social adventures where risk, uncertainties, challenges, and overcoming fears related to the social context are experienced; for instance, being with a group on an adventure holiday in a remote area can result in lived uncertainties and risks from both the destination and the trip companions. The risk and uncertainty in adventures are often attributed to the destination and the physical activities involved (e.g., Carnicelli-Filho et al., 2010); however, other risks have a more social dimension, such as experiencing and expressing fears in front of others, and are linked to concerns about feeling humiliated or losing face (Mackenzie and Kerr, 2012; Walle, 1997). While the perception of risk is subjective, in that what some people perceive as risky is not viewed in the same way by others, in this study, risks linked to the social context emerged as greater concerns than physical risks. These included the fear of travelling and interacting with strangers, of not getting along, or being negatively impacted by the presence or behaviour of others. Thus, these participants perceived the uncertainty related to the other group members to be particularly risky. It may be that part of this perception of risk is linked to the cultural perspective of the study sample: in a collective and conservative society like Saudi Arabia, close interactions and travelling with strangers are uncommon, so social fears and risks are more evident in this study's findings. It may also explain why overcoming these fears generated feelings of escapism among these participants.

Escapism has been identified as the main component of tourism and adventure experiences (Arnould and Price, 1993; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). The escape experience in tourism spaces is typically manifest in individuals feeling free from everyday life stressors, and it facilitates bonding between group members

(Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Matteucci et al., 2022). The findings of this study indicate that group adventure holidays not only provide a social escape experience in removing social norms and boundaries of everyday life, but they also emphasise the sense of escape. For instance, the participants reported that having the opportunity to socialise with a diverse group of strangers, thereby overcoming their social fears, strengthened their sense of social escape. Social escape also provides a rich context for support to be offered and received, generating more emotional transfer. However, according to Triantafillidou and Petala (2016), not all types of adventure provide an escape experience, especially if they last for just an hour or two, as this makes it challenging to live the sense of escape. A number of factors played a role in the escape experiences in this study, namely, the remote locations where the holidays took place, the group trip format, and the relatively long duration of the trips, supporting the idea that a differentiation between adventure experiences, whether holidays or short activities, is required in order to fully experience social escape (Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016).

In addition to contributing to the tourist's emotional experience, social escape and the other social context dimensions contributed to the lived communitas and camaraderie during the adventure experience, and camaraderie and communitas also enhanced those dimensions. Communitas and camaraderie are recognised as an integral part of adventure experiences (e.g., Arnould and Price, 1993; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016), and scholars have found that confined spaces play a role in developing connections between friends (Matteucci, Volić, and Filep, 2022). In this study, the remote locations and the physical proximity between group members contributed to communitas, supporting the idea that the adventure experience strengthens the ties between individuals (Celsi et al., 1993). Moreover, as communitas occurs "when individuals share a common passion, devotion or experience" (Keaveney, 2008, p. 452), the shared interest in adventure among participants also played a role in enhancing it. Similar interests have also been found to enhance the feeling of bonding (Stieler and Germelmann, 2016), and the link between bonding and the quality of the group experience has been established in the context of group tours (e.g., Berdychevsky, Gibson, and Bell, 2013; Quiroga, 1990; Trauer and Ryan, 2005). Therefore, it is clear that the social context and the physical environment contributes to the experiences of bonding, camaraderie and communitas within adventure tour groups, and this significantly enhances the overall experience.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to describe the social context of group adventure holidays as a social adventure and to identify the social context dimensions through which positive emotions and emotion transfer are facilitated. It has demonstrated that, the social adventure experience enables participants to overcome social fears and experience the freedom of self-expression and self-identity with others. It therefore contributes to the joy they experience and increases their sense of the adventure in this type of holiday. Moreover, this study has shown that the social context dimensions are interconnected, each influencing the other to create a loop of interplay, which results in a rich social context for emotions and contributes to the success of group adventure holidays. The following section discusses the findings regarding the process of emotional transfer between the group members.

7.2.2 The underlying mechanisms of emotional contagion in group adventure holidays

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, participants reported that their adventure holidays were rich in emotions and emotion sharing, indicating that they were a fertile context for emotional contagion. The findings of this study also demonstrate that emotions in group adventure trips are transferred through social interactions, behaviours, and emotional expression, with numerous participants reporting that emotional experiences had been transferred to them from other group members. This section therefore focuses on explaining the transfer of emotions in group adventure holidays and elaborates on the role of social interactions in this process. In doing so, it addresses the following research questions:

> RQ 2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?

> RQ 3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?

The first mechanism to communicate and transfer emotions to others identified was social interactions; as such, it is the first mechanism discussed below, with a particular focus on self-disclosure and fun interactions. This is followed by social support and emotional expression.

7.2.2.1 Social interactions

The participants reported that their social interactions communicated mainly positive emotions, and the role of social interactions to convey emotions and to play a part in soothing, comforting or engaging with other group members has been clearly illustrated in the research findings. This study therefore adds to existing literature which has shown that social interactions are not only a source of emotions as they occur but also a channel to communicate positive feelings to others (Choo and Petrick, 2014). In addition, the analysis has demonstrated that specific types of interactions are more prevalent in the transfer of emotions, highlighting the importance of differences between the type of interactions and their quality. This supports the notion that, in the tourism experience, the quality of the social interactions is more significant than the quantity (Huang and Hsu, 2010). However, previous studies have paid less attention to social interactions in the context of adventure holidays and especially their role in the tourist emotive experiences. The findings of this study therefore provide new insights into social interactions in the context of adventure tourism, demonstrating that the quality of social interactions is influenced by the social context of the group experience and emphasising the significance of social interactions in a context, such as adventures, that often consist of high intensity emotions, risks, and the need to face one's fears (Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016). Moreover, the qualitative nature of this study allowed several types of social interactions that are specific to this type of tourist experience to be identified, and self-disclosure and fun interaction were found to be particularly significant in the transfer of emotions between group members. As a result, these are discussed separately below.

7.2.2.2 Self-disclosure

The analysis showed that self-disclosure, that is, when tourists revealed feelings, and personal information, is a significant type of social interaction within the group adventure context. This supports previous studies which found that self-disclosure in tourist-to-tourist interactions provides engagement, cohesion, and intimacy in the tourism experience (Lin et al., 2019). However, the findings of this study have shown that self-disclosure in group adventure holidays occurs both in tourist-to-tourist and tourist-to-group interactions, thereby extending Lin et al.'s (2019) findings. This study has also identified self-disclosure as an interaction that conveys emotions between group members. While Lin et al. (2019) examined self-disclosure by utilising a scale

that measured the depth of the interactions, this study offers examples of disclosure stories, including what sort of information was shared, to what level, and what type of emotions were conveyed.

Self-disclosure in this study is similar to what Rihova et al. (2018) refer to as *confiding* in their study of the social practices that contribute to the co-creation of value for tourists. In this study, it was a practice experienced with strangers, and the participants confirmed that it resulted in feelings of joy and a greater sense of connection. Additionally, the findings show that self-disclosure communicated positive emotions, such as trust, honesty, and intimacy, regardless of the content of the information disclosed, which is congruent with findings from previous studies (Levy, 2010; Lin et al., 2019). However, it has also pinpointed the influences of disclosure stories on the focal tourist experience beyond individual's emotions, including the way they affect perceptions about other group members, and their longer-term effects. As demonstrated in the quotes in Chapter 5, these stories were well remembered and vividly recalled during the interviews, indicating that they were memorable social interactions for all those involved. Therefore, it cannot be denied that the nature of the trip and the social context facilitated this type of interaction.

7.2.2.3 Fun interactions

The findings of this study also identified a specific type of interaction related to play and entertainment, namely, fun interactions, including humour, singing and group games. These were described as a type of social interaction because they typically require two individuals or a group of individuals to occur. In addition, Barnett (2016) defined play as behaviour that induces enjoyment, pleasure, and freedom and causes engagement, and, within this study, these types of interactions conveyed positive emotions and promoted engagement and participants described them as fun. These fun interactions are similar to the concept of 'interpersonal play', which Zhu and Xu (2022) discussed in their study of the novice adventure tourist experience; for instance, they found that interpersonal play helped to regulate tourists' risk perception during an adventurous activity, and hence made risky adventures more enjoyable (Zhu and Xu, 2022). Although previous studies have identified different forms of fun and play as components of tourism and adventure experiences, this study adds to the literature by demonstrating that these behaviours and interactions convey positive emotions to others in the social servicescape.

The conceptualisation of humour as a type of social interaction aligns with Cooper's (2005) definition of humour as social interaction that causes amusement. It has been acknowledged to promote interpersonal relationships and pleasurable experiences for tourists and providers (Pearce, 2009), and this study also demonstrates that humour from tour guides and tour members communicated positive emotions to others in the group. Although there are different sources of humour in tourism, including tour guides, tourists, the community, and others, most studies in tourism literature have focused on tour guides' humour (e.g., Tsaur and Teng, 2017; Tu, Guo, Xiao, and Yan, 2020; Pabel and Pearce, 2015; Pabel and Pearce, 2016). For example, Pabel and Pearce (2015) found that humour helps tour guides interact and amuse tourists, creating a more pleasurable experience and alleviating tourists' anxiety and fear. They therefore argue that humour is a helpful strategy for tour guides to manage group trips. The findings of this study therefore validate previous literature on the role of tour guide humour in the tourist experience; however, they also suggest that tour members' humour provides the same benefits as that of tour guides. For instance, in this study, individuals acting in humorous ways transferred joy and excitement to others, thereby creating a pleasant environment and enhancing group bonding.

In addition, this study also points out that humorous interactions can communicate positive emotions, whether group members are part of them or were just observers. While Mitas et al. (2012) identified humour as a source of positive emotions in the tourism experience, participants in this study reported that joy was often transferred to them through humour, when the individual who was the source of humour was perceived as experiencing joy and cheerfulness and those feelings were transferred to the viewer. Given the prevalence of emotional experiences, like anxiety, fear, and struggle, in adventure trips, the role of humour in regulating negative emotions, like alleviating anxiety or surviving difficult situations (Pabel and Pearce 2015), is also prominent in this research. Previous studies have also identified the role of humour in altering negative emotions (e.g. Sharpe, 2005; Pearce, 2009), explaining the process illustrated in this study, whereby positive emotions communicated by humour replaced negative ones. This, while humour has received little attention in the context of adventure tourism, these findings indicate that it is a significant social mechanism in group adventure holidays and provide further evidence that it plays an important role

in managing tourist emotions and in developing interpersonal connections (e.g. Pearce, 2009).

Another type of fun interactions identified in this study is group games. This type of interaction increased engagement and communicated positive emotions to the group members, and could be considered as a play experience that the trip provides. Zhu and Xu (2022) described different forms of interpersonal play, such as games, role-playing, prosocial physical play and several others; however, this study is the first to identify group games as a type of social interaction in group holidays rather than simply as a trip activity. In doing so, it build on Oh and Pham (2022), who recently defined a fun experience as "an experience of liberating engagement—a temporary release from psychological restriction via a hedonically engaging activity" (p. 46). Their description is relevant to the conceptualisation of group games during adventure holidays as a form of social interaction because they take place between group members and evoke a psychological feeling of fun, communicating emotions like fun, joy, and enthusiasm to the group members and thereby increasing engagement.

Humour, group games, and singing are all forms of fun interactions in the tourism setting that are inherently linked to increasing engagement, which, in turn, enhances the tourist experience. The role of social interactions in the development of a sense of bonding between the group members as confirmed in previous literature (e.g. Lin et al., 2019) is supported by this study's findings. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that the level of emotional transfer influenced the level of immersion in social interactions and the experience of escape or liberation. To conclude, social interaction is an emotion-loaded social sign that influences an individual's emotional experience; thus, it is clearly one of the mechanisms which contributes to the transfer of emotions.

7.2.2.4 Support

Support is considered a primary benefit of participating in group experience (Schmidt, 1979), and the findings of this study suggest that support and expressed care are behaviours through which positive emotions are communicated to other group members. Previous studies have affirmed that supportive behaviours, like offering encouragement or comforting gestures, play a role in alleviating anxiety, fear, and uncertainty, and that social support in groups helps individuals to face the unknown circumstances of the trip. (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Lucia-Palacios, Pérez-López,

and Polo-Redondo, 2018; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007; Song, Wang, and Sparks 2018; Wang, Wu, Xie, and Li, 2019). This study extends this knowledge by identifying support as a mechanism via which group members communicated their emotions to their companions, emotions like caring, empathy, and liking.

Social support has been defined as "the experience that one is loved and cared for, esteemed and valued, and part of a social network of mutual assistance and obligations" (Taylor et al., 2004, pp. 354-55). The participants in this study reported numerous moments where their group members' caring and supportive behaviour communicated specific positive emotions to them. For instance, perceiving positive emotions such as intimacy and feeling valued made them feel supported by their group companions. This recalls Liechty et al.'s (2009) study of women's group tour experiences, which highlighted the significance of the social support the group members provided for each other, and the way it contributed to their self-growth. This definition is aligned with how the study participants described their feelings in response to the support they received from their group members, and underlines how received support communicated feelings of being cared for and valued and contributed to bonding in the group.

Although group tourism literature acknowledges the role of the group experience in providing social support (Schmidt, 1979), this aspect is often overlooked by comparison with socialisation and interactions. This could be related to the idea that support is a type of interaction or an expected behaviour from tour guides or tourism providers. However, as the findings of this study highlight, in group adventures, peer support is an integral part of the survival experience and key to the success of the trip. Support communicated emotions between these group members, either as receivers or observers of the behaviour, expressing individuals feelings toward others and communicating positive emotions to them. Emotional expressions are identified by the literature to be contagious, but behaviours are not often. While group tours often provide social support, this is frequently discussed within socialisation and social interactions, and seldom highlighted as a behaviour contributing to emotions sharing. By contrast, participants in this study described the social context of the group experience as providing support, suggesting that the behaviours they experienced provided a mechanism for the expression and communication of positive and supportive emotions to them.

Social support is a context-specific concept in that its forms, resources, and effects vary based on the situation. The principle forms of emotional support identified in this study are expressed care, encouragement and empathy; however, the analysis also confirmed that support is a form of nonverbal interaction that communicates positive emotions. While previous studies have shown that social interactions provide social and emotional support for 'backpacker' travellers (Reichenberger, 2017), this study's findings reveal that support, in its different forms, and expressed care are mechanisms for communicating positive emotions between the group members, and that support, as a type of behaviour or social interaction, also plays an important role in group adventure holidays .

7.2.2.5 Emotional expressions

This section discusses the findings relating to RQ3, which aimed to demonstrate how the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions in group adventure holidays. The findings reported in Chapter 5 revealed that these emotions interact through emotional contagion; they also highlighted the social influence of emotions, showing that emotional expressions influence other individuals' emotions, perceptions, behaviours, and the whole group experience. This section therefore extends the discussion of social interactions and behaviours in the previous sections by examining emotional expressions, including facial or verbal expressions, and how they serve to communicate emotions to others.

The findings of this study showed that emotional contagion episodes are prevalent in group adventure holidays. This level of contagiousness has several explanations. Firstly, according to Hatfield et al. (1994) an individual is more likely to 'catch' other group members' emotions when the individual's self-image is aligned with the group. So, for example, in the tourism context, emotional contagion could result from the social identities associated with dark tourism, volunteer tourism, or musical event tourism (Podoshen, 2013). In the case of this study, individuals were passionate about adventure holidays, so group members shared the self-image of adventurers. Secondly, previous studies have confirmed that group familiarity fosters emotional contagion between group members (Du et al., 2014), and this study's findings highlight the role of the social context in developing group familiarity, thereby contributing to emotional contagion between the group members. For instance, group familiarity in this study was achieved by grouping individuals with a similar interest in adventures and the shared experiences

they had together. It has also been suggested that the level of contagion is highest when emotional expressions are more frequent, more noticeable, and more intense, suggesting that emotional contagion is more likely to occur in adventure trips, where highly intense emotions often occur (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006).

This study investigation also supports the idea that people are more likely to catch others' emotions when they interact face to face (Smith, et al., 2007). The close physical and emotional proximity among group members in group adventures, makes such interactions more likely; thus, more contagion occurs. Moreover, the literature on service employees' displayed emotions suggests that the perceived authenticity of these emotions has a significant influence on customers' emotions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Woo and Chan, 2020), and, in group tours, perceiving the guide's emotions as authentic was found to play a role in transferring their emotions to the group (Buzova, Sanz-Blas, and Cervera-Taulet, 2022). Interestingly, this study found a similar connection between perceiving displayed emotions as authentic and emotional contagion: participants reported perceiving other group members as authentic and their behaviours and emotional expressions as genuine, and emotional contagion episodes were prevalent. This study therefore demonstrates that a high level of emotional contagion occurs through emotional expressions and social interactions and behaviours.

The findings also suggest that the contagiousness of emotions is influenced by the valence of emotions and the level of expressions. For instance, participants reported that positive emotions were more contagious than negative emotions. This aligns with the idea that different types of emotions vary in their level of contagion (Barsade, 2016), and the greater contagion of positive emotions could be explained in two ways; the first is that the energy level of positive emotions is higher than negative ones, and the second is that individuals' perceptions and goals influence their evaluations of emotional contagion. Emotional contagion in this context is influenced by the intensity of expression, valence, attention, and other factors, for instance, the social context where emotions are expressed, and the individual's personal evaluation of the situation plays a role in emotional transfer.

Emotional contagion in groups explains the convergence of emotions among the group members. The analysis showed that jointly expressed positive emotions were more contagious than one individual's negative emotional expression; for instance, the whole

group's positive atmosphere was more contagious and held higher energy than any single tourist's expressed emotions. This result is consistent with the findings of Du et al. (2014), who reported that the transfer of negative emotions in group service failure was greater than in individual service failure. The current study adds to their findings by demonstrating that the positive emotions displayed by the group significantly transfer positive emotions to the individuals in the groups. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the emotional contagion among the different groups did not vary significantly according to group composition or size, as has been reported in previous studies on group service failure (Du et al., 2014; Huang and Wang, 2014). What is significant in the occurrence of emotional contagion in group adventure holidays is the social context of the holiday and the individual perception of the expressed emotions.

This study findings support research in organisational behaviour literature on emotional contagion in confirming that individuals in the group influence each other's emotions (e.g., Barsade, 2002; Walter and Bruch, 2008). However, while most studies of emotional contagion have examined the role of employees' displayed emotions on customers' responses (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Ustrov et al., 2016; Woo and Chan, 2020), this study is the first to examine emotional contagion in the context of group adventure holidays. The analysis reported here demonstrates that emotional contagion develops emotional convergence, and emotional sharing contributes to the development of emotional ties. Both contribute to the collective emotions that are found to influence group cohesion, engagement and bonding experiences. In addition, there is an interlinked relationship between these concepts of collective emotions and group cohesion and bonding. These findings are significant because they provide meaningful insight at an empirical level. For instance, previous literature has identified the role of displayed positive emotions in group bonding and trust when two or more group members express positive emotions (Homan, Van Kleef, Sanchez-Burks, 2016; Nam, Kim, and Hwang, 2016), and this study also suggests that emotional contagion contributed to greater bonding. However, the findings also demonstrate that the opposite is true, as displayed negative emotions were found to reduce the level of bonding and cohesion between the group members.

This section has discussed the prominent mechanisms through which emotions were transferred in group adventure holidays. It has highlighted the role of the social context in the elicitation of emotions resulting in socially induced emotions. In addition, it has

demonstrated the interplay between the social context and the mechanisms through which emotions are transferred, in that the former facilitates the latter and vice versa. The following section delves further into the emotional experiences of tourists and examines how cognitive appraisal contributes to the elicitation of emotions.

7.2.3 The emotional experiences that tourists attribute to group adventure holidays

This section builds on insights from previous sections regarding how emotions are influenced by certain social context dimensions and the influence of the group companions. It draws on the findings and analysis presented in Chapter 6 and discusses the emotions participants experienced within their group adventures and the mechanisms involved in their elicitation. In particular, it considers joy and freedom, fear and thrill, and frustration and annoyance and aims to address the last research question:

> RQ4) What emotional responses do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?

As the previous sections have explained, tourist emotions in group holidays are influenced by the social context, including the expressed emotions of others and their behaviours; however, other personal mechanisms also play a role in the elicitation process. As the application of cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) provides insights into the psychological processes of emotions elicitation (Lazarus 1991; Watson and Spence 2007), this section also discusses these emotions in relation to CAT.

7.2.3.1 Joy and freedom

This study identified joy and freedom as prominent positive emotions in group adventure holidays and highlighted the pivotal role of joy as an emotional experience in this context. Participants described feelings of joy in relation to the achievement of personal goals, overcoming challenges, the intense nature of the trip, and to shared experiences, suggesting that the forms of joy experienced in group adventure holidays are linked to a sense of achievement and collective enjoyment. This reflects other findings in the literature: previous measurements and scales have identified joy as a prevalent consumption and tourist emotion (e.g., Hosany, 2012: Prayag et al., 2013), and studies of adventure tourism have shown that joy is a core emotion (Faullant et al.,

2011) and part of the hedonistic experience that influences satisfaction and future intentions (Triantafillidou and Petala,2016).

Joy is one of the basic emotions in most of the lists of emotions, notably Plutchik (1980), Izard (1977), and Richins (1997), and it is often equated with a hedonism that encompasses various positive emotions, such as enjoyment, excitement, pleasure, delight, happiness, fun, and awe (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2002). Indeed, this study identifies joy as a pleasant emotional experience within the adventure holiday context. However, scholars have affirmed that activities yielding positive outcomes, like achieving goals or personal growth, are considered eudemonic experiences (Huta and Ryan 2010), and the findings of this study suggest that the joy experienced in adventure group holidays is more eudemonic than hedonic. This is because participants often described joy as a meaningful positive experience related to fulfilled goals and achievements.

In addition, scholars in tourism have identified different appraisal dimensions which play a role in evoking positive emotions, notably novelty, goal congruence, goal relevance, pleasantness, and agency (Ma., et al., 2013; Mitas and Bastiaansen, 2018; Hosany, 2012). The types of appraisal dimensions and evoked emotions vary according to the context of the study and the type of emotions; however, novelty, goal congruence, relevance, and agency were identified as particularly significant in the context of this study. Participants attributed joy to the novelty, goal congruence and relevance of the group adventure experience; moreover, the novelty was not solely related to the destination and the activities but also to the group members. In addition, agency or locus of control was identified as the main contributor to the sense of freedom they experienced. This is consistent with CAT, which posits that emotions with the same emotional valence are not necessarily evoked by similar appraisal dimensions.

Participants often reported that part of their experience of joy came from sharing their pleasant experiences with their group members. This was manifest in the sense of togetherness or collective joy, which emerged as a significant type of joy in this study's context. This echoes studies in psychology that have demonstrated that joy is often experienced collectively (e.g. Hoffman, Kaneshiro, and Compton, 2012; Robbins, 2006). This study also confirms that the experience of joy is enhanced when shared with others, not only by sharing the stimuli itself. This supports studies in a consumption context which have affirmed that consumers sharing pleasant experiences contributes

to the experience of collective enjoyment (Ramanathan and McGill, 2007) and that, in certain circumstances, a sense of belonging increases the enjoyment of shared experiences (Oh and Pham, 2022; Raghunathan and Corfman, 2006). The collective joy illustrated in the sense of togetherness is also similar to the communitas that occurs in shared experiences (Turner, 2012); thus, this study clearly demonstrates that the group experience often facilitates a sense of togetherness and collective joy.

This study also identified freedom as an emotional state as a key component of the experience of joy and vice versa, highlighting the fact that each one is part of the other. This is similar to Malone et al.'s (2014) findings that freedom as an emotional state is a source of hedonic enjoyment in ethical tourism. Freedom as an emotional state is rarely addressed in tourism literature, but the escape experience, that is escaping from routine and life stressors, is often highlighted; for instance, escape as an experience out of ordinary life has been identified as a motivation to participate in group tours (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Although escape has been identified as a significant part of adventure tourism (Arnould and Price, 1993; Kane and Tucker, 2004; Triantafillidou and Petala, 2016), a sense of freedom as an emotional state is not considered. However, the escapism experienced by these participants played an important role in their lived sense of freedom: they often described their feelings of freedom and how the context of the holiday contributed to it, revealing that, far from restricting their sense of freedom, the group context enhanced it. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, this study is the first to identify the appraisal dimension influencing the elicitation of freedom as an emotion in a group adventure holiday context. The findings therefore offer novel insights by establishing the link between freedom as an emotional experience and agency as an appraisal dimension in the elicitation process.

7.2.3.2 Fear and thrill

While fear is typically viewed as a negative emotion, the analysis of the interview data showed it was a prominent emotional experience which was perceived as pleasant and memorable and part of the thrill experience. As thrill is an emotive experience that participants often pursue in adventure activities (Schlegelmilch and Ollenburg, 2013), it is unsurprising that fear allied to thrill would be perceived positively. The findings of this study give further credence to studies that have identified fear and thrill as basic emotions in adventure experiences (e.g. Cater, 2006; Pomfret, 2006; Carnicelli-Filho.

et al., 2010; Faullant et al., 2011). Moreover, the findings also demonstrate that fear in group adventure holidays is linked to perceived risky situations, where uncertainty and lack of control are present. This aligns with Cater (2006), who found that fear in adventure experiences is related to locus of control, with less control over uncertain situations causing fear, and with CAT, which suggests fear is evoked in uncertain situations over which one has minimal control (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

Fear is often categorised as negative emotion as part of basic sets of emotions (Izard, 1977; Plutchik, 1980; Richins, 1997), and is similar to other negative emotions in that it is appraised in situations of uncertainty and lack of control. However, this study demonstrates that fear in the group adventure context is perceived as a positive and meaningful experience. The findings therefore confirm Carnicelli-Filho et al.'s (2010) findings that fear in the context of adventures is perceived as positive and part of the attributes of the experience. They also suggest that much of the fear in this context is caused not by real events but by imagined worst scenarios, which also corresponds with Carnicelli-Filho et al.'s (2010) study. However, in addition to fear being a pleasant emotional experience, the findings also identify it as memorable and peak experience. Although adventure activities have been identified as having various emotional peaks, the types of peak experiences have not been explained (Pomfret, 2012). The findings of this study therefore contribute by demonstrating that fear is a memorable peak experience in adventure holidays.

7.2.3.3 Frustration and annoyance

Negative emotions are a significant part of tourism experiences and services encounters (Faullant., et al., 2011; Nawijn and Biran, 2019; Zhang, Prayag, and Song, 2021) and have been found to influence individuals' future intentions, including complaining, negative word of mouth, and changing providers (Hosany, Prayag, Van Der Veen, Huang, and Deesilatham, 2017). However, they have also been shown to be valuable in that they provoke actions and coping strategies to alleviate the negative situation which causes them (Lazarus, 1991). This study identified two prominent unpleasant emotional experiences in group adventure holidays, namely, frustration and annoyance, and found a significant difference in their causes. Frustration was typically attributed to the self or the circumstance and less intense, while annoyance was attributed to others, specifically to the tour guides, and had an enduring effect. Indeed, the analysis identified the tour guide as playing a pivotal role in the level of tourists' annoyance and its long-term

significance. As this study is the first to identify frustration and annoyance and their elicitation processes during group adventure trips, these findings add to the literature on negative emotions in the context of hedonic tourism (Nawijn and Biran, 2019).

The participants in this study reported experiencing frustration when the negative situation they encountered was attributed to uncontrollable situational factors. This indicates that frustration in group adventure holidays is anger toward the self-regarding one's inability to complete the activity or failed expectations that are due to circumstances beyond the individual's control. This confirms previously identified theoretical process of appraisal theory (Roseman, 1991). Frustration is less often addressed in tourism and marketing literature, although a few studies have found it can predict complaint behaviour and future intentions in the service failure context (Le and Ho, 2020; Tronvoll, 2011). However, the frustration identified in this study differs from service failure scenarios that emphasise the context-specific variations between emotions because the findings suggest that it did not influence the perceived quality of the adventure experience. This could be because its causes were perceived as beyond the control of the tourist and the tourism provider, thus, they resulted in less anger. Therefore, although frustration has already been identified in the set of consumption emotions, this study's findings provide more insight into how it is evoked in a specific consumption context (Richins, 1997).

In contrast to frustration, the findings of this study showed that annoyance, as a negative emotion attributed to the tour guide, was a far more an intense emotion and exerted a stronger negative influence on the experience. This supports previous literature which has found that negative emotions are often more intense when attributed to tourism providers (Breitsohl and Garrod, 2016; Kahr et al., 2016). In addition, the finding that annoyance attributed to the tour guide influences the perceived quality of the experience aligns with the idea proposed by Wang, Hsieh, and Huan (2000) that the tour guide can make or break a trip. Moreover, in the case of annoyance, the attribution of blame is a form of agency; this appraisal dimension has been identified to be more relevant in negative emotions (Roseman, 1991; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), so this study also supports this finding. Overall, the findings identified the prevalent negative emotional experiences within group adventure trips and showed how they were experienced; they also demonstrated that not all negative emotions exert the same influence on the tourist experience and future intentions.

The use of cognitive appraisal theory to examine tourist emotions in group adventure holidays in this study has highlighted key distinctions between the various types of emotional experiences and the individual's role in the mechanisms in which they occur. Few other studies have applied cognitive appraisal theory to tourist emotions in adventure experiences (Faullant et al., 2011), and this study is the first to identify context specific emotions in group adventure trips utilising cognitive appraisal theory. The findings reported here support previous studies that highlight the significance of cognitive appraisal theory in understanding tourists' emotions (Cai et al., 2018; Hosany, 2012). In addition, the analysis has highlighted the interconnectivity of pleasant emotional experiences, in that joy and freedom both influence each other and both are forms of the other. By contrast, while the unpleasant or negative emotions discussed here both stemmed from anger, they had different impacts depending on the attribution of the adverse events.

7.3 Implications of conducting an interpretivist inquiry

This study adopted a qualitative interpretive methodology to investigate emotions; thus, the resulting findings describe emotional experiences and processes. This section discusses the key findings regarding the methodological approach and the insights it provided. Firstly, the qualitative open approach to the enquiry has aided in generating new and different types of dimensions to describe the social context. Approaching the participants with predefined characteristics or factors would not have facilitated the exploration of new aspects of and ways to view the social context of group adventure holidays. However, in this study, the dimensions of the social context identified are based on the participants' perceptions regarding their holidays. Therefore, approaching the investigation of the social context with an open inquiry enabled the research to reach a new understanding of the social aspects involved and which aspects are most significant in shaping tourist emotions in this context.

Secondly, the emotional contagion identified and discussed here involves the consciously evaluated episodes of transferring emotions between individuals within a group. The study participants were able to discuss how they experienced the displayed emotions of others and how this influenced their emotions and their experience and to what degree. Thus, the type of emotional contagion discussed in this study is the one based on social appraisal (Parkinson, 2011). Therefore, the process of emotional

transfer involves the individual interpretation of the emotional expression in a specific social context. Emotional contagion is often measured utilising various scales (Nam et al., 2016) or experiments (Du et al., 2014); by contrast, this study offers a different perspective on emotional contagion by providing descriptive episodes of the experience of emotional contagion and to what degree. Moreover, the methodological approach facilitated the identification of a specific type of emotional contagion that differs from previous studies, namely, the consciously evaluated emotional transfer, rather than simple mimicry. These were also remembered emotional contagion episodes that influenced the tourists' evaluation of the experience and their future intentions.

Lastly, regarding the qualitative approach adopted allowed for more emotional states to be identified. The quantitative approaches often used in studying tourist emotions limit the range of emotions identified in one study (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010); however, the open inductive approach to emotions this study adopted allowed multiple emotional experiences with different valances and attributes to be identified. The inductive approach to analysing emotions also enabled context-specific ones to be recognised (Richins, 1997), and, as this approach also recognised individual's interpretation of their emotions, the findings extend our understanding of those emotional episodes.

Previous perspectives have often tended to consider adventure tourists as young, male, and risk seeking (e.g., Cater, 2006; Pizam et al., 2004); however, this research suggests that adventurers encompass a broader range of characteristics. This study was conducted with a heterogeneous sample of men and women of different ages, not only young age but also middle aged, and not all were risk seekers. Although this study did not focus on their motivation for participating in such trips, participants described their motivation and intentions, and several key motives emerged. These included self-growth, exploring new ways of travel, socialising, and developing friendships, among others.

Another distinction of this study's findings is that the sample were all Saudi adventure tourists, so they provide a non-western perspective on the experience of group adventure holidays. Western perspectives dominate most studies in tourism and adventure literature, and very few studies have addressed non-Western adventure tourists (Cheng, Edwards, Darcy, and Redfern, 2018; Wang, Liu-Lastres, Ritchie, and Pan, 2019). However, the cultural background of a group of individuals influences their perceptions

of their surroundings, of others around them, and the interpretation of their own emotions, and cultural expectations therefore play a significant role in shaping their experiences. For instance, some cultures are regarded as more collective and social-oriented than others, such as Asian cultures compared to Western cultures (Hofstede, 2001), and this perspective is demonstrated in the participants' narratives, which powerfully convey the importance of the group in shaping their adventure experiences.

7.4 A Conceptual framework illustrating the key findings

This chapter concludes by presenting a conceptual framework for the key findings of the study, which is illustrated in Figure Error! ***No text of specified style in document.***.6. This figure explains that tourists' emotional experiences in group adventure holidays are shaped by three factors: the social context of the holiday, the social sharing of emotions, and emotions that tourists evaluate as being linked to their holidays. At the heart of the framework, emotions and emotional expressions are identified as being influenced by various social and interactive dynamics (Parkinson, 1995), which is the central idea upon which this thesis builds. This study has identified the mechanisms by which emotions are transmitted, highlighting the interplay between them and the evolving nature of the process. Finally, the social context has been shown to play an overarching role, facilitating the transfer of emotions and shaping the participants' lived emotional experiences.

The context around emotional experiences in tourism is essential because it helps us to understand how they are evoked and which social aspects contribute to shaping them. Thus, in this study, a narrative of the emotional experience in the group adventure holiday was created from the participants' stories about their own experiences, showing how they started and what nurtured and intensified them. The diagram showcases the range and variety of tourist emotions during group adventure holidays, emphasising the complex nature of these emotional experiences. It highlights how various factors influence emotions, particularly within the social context of a group adventure holiday. It emphasises the importance of the social context in shaping the emotional experience of tourists, and sheds light on the wide spectrum of emotions, including joy, freedom, fear, and frustration, and how they are shared socially. Understanding these dynamics can lead to more fulfilling and memorable holiday experiences. Various empirical and

practical opportunities for such knowledge are discussed in the next chapter (see section 8.3).

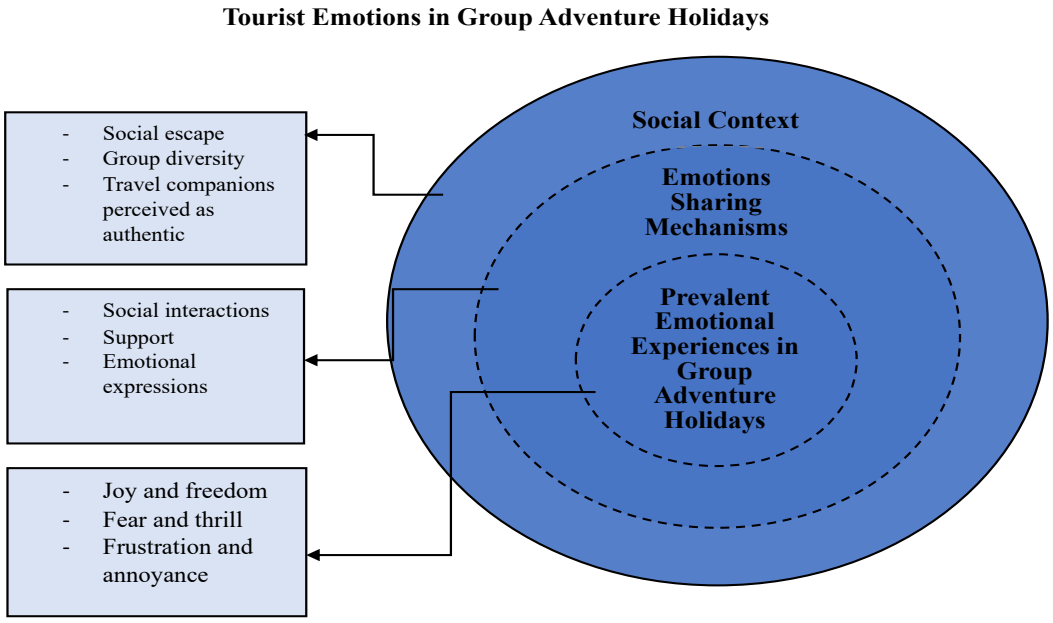


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**..6. Conceptual Framework for the Key Findings of the Thesis

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the main findings from chapters 4, 5, and 6 and discussed them in relation to the four research questions and the literature identified in Chapter 2, showing how this study build on previous research and contributes to knowledge. It has also presented a conceptual framework which summarises the key findings and demonstrates the interplay which shape tourists' emotional experiences in group adventure holidays. The next chapter provides a conclusion to the study, showing how the research questions have been addressed, identifying the contributions the study

makes and its limitations, and suggesting directions for further research. The researcher's personal reflections on the study are also provided.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study aimed to examine tourists' emotional experiences within group adventure holidays, revealing their complexities and how emotions are shaped in this context, and determining the role of the social context in the construction of these experiences. The perspective on emotions adopted was the phenomenological lens of emotions by Goldie (2002). This is less widely represented in the marketing and tourism literature, and few studies have adopted it when examining emotions (e.g., Malone et al., 2014; Malone et al., 2018). In addition, the social aspect of emotions is significant, as they are influenced by the context in which they are evoked (Carù and Cova, 2006: Parkinson et al., 2005). While studies have often neglected this aspect of emotions when examining them in consumption contexts, most consumer experiences in tourism are fundamentally social; thus, the group adventure holiday experience examined here provided a fruitful context for the study of tourists' emotional experiences in group settings.

Although this study views emotions from a little used perspective, it is firmly grounded in the literature. The first part of the literature review (See Chapter 2, Part I) set the scene for the study by presenting the main streams of research in customer experience literature, namely hedonic consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1998), and experiential marketing (Schmitt,1999), highlighting its subjective and hedonic aspects. As the experiential marketing perspective views consumers as seeking "fantasy, feelings and fun" (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) and focuses on the emotive aspect of the experience (Schmitt 1999), it is more relevant in service-oriented industries, such as tourism and hospitality. However, consumption experiences often occur in shared or joint contexts; therefore, the relational aspect is also integral (Tynan and McKechnie 2009). Thus, the

discussion of the literature in Chapter 2 also included prominent scholarly views on the social service experience (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003). This section concluded by highlighting the significance of the social service setting in the customer experience, which includes other customers' emotional displays and individuals' emotional and cognitive responses (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003).

The literature review then moved on to examine group tourism experience literature, as group tourism provides an excellent context in which to examine the social aspect of the tourist experience. It showed that the literature on group tourism is typically more attuned to the socialisation which takes place in group tours and its relationships to constructs like motivation and satisfaction (e.g., Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Wu, 2007). This socialisation is mainly discussed in terms of social interactions, with the social interactions in tourism divided into different types depending on the goals, characteristics, and parties involved (Huang and Hsu, 2010; Reichenberger, 2017). Socialisation is also considered to be context-specific, with different travel contexts yielding different outcomes (Kastenholz et al., 2018). This part of the literature review established that the emotional aspects of the group tour experience have received relatively little critical attention, especially by comparison with satisfaction, and that the role played by emotions in such a context was not well-understood. Research in group tourism experiences has often neglected their hedonic aspects, particularly the intersection between emotions and the social context of the group. In addition, consumer behaviour research has often focused on the individual consumption journey, while shared consumption has received far less attention (Hamilton, Ferraro, Haws, and Mukhopadhyay, 2021).

The next part of the literature review (See Chapter 2, Part 1I) presented previous research on emotions. It identified the most significant approaches to emotions in psychology. It also demonstrated that emotions are an inherent part of the tourist experience (Pine and Gilmore 2011) and one of the customer-owned touch points that shape it (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). Although research on emotions is widespread in tourism and marketing literature, this tends to be from a positivistic perspective (e.g., Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Prayag et al., 2013). However, emotions are meaningful subjective experiences, an example of the complex and diverse phenomena that require

an interpretive approach to understand them (Richins,1997). Therefore, this study examined emotions within a specific context, group adventure holidays, in order to generate a deep understanding of tourists' emotional experiences in group settings.

8.2 Addressing the Research Questions

Guided by the themes identified in the literature and the research aim, three objectives for the study were developed as follows:

1) To provide in-depth understanding of the role of the social context of the group adventure tourism experience in the emotions experienced by tourists;
2) To understand how emotions are communicated and expressed in group tourist experiences;
3) To discover the types of emotions related to group tourist experiences and their antecedents, and to investigate their role in determining group tourist experience outcomes.

In addition, four research questions were formulated:

RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?
RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?
RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?
RQ4) What emotional responses do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?

This section serves to illustrate how these research objectives and questions have been addressed by this thesis.

Firstly, this study has fulfilled the first objective by explaining the role of the social context in tourist emotions. It has identified five significant dimensions which facilitate tourist emotions and emotions sharing in adventure group holidays (RQ1) and demonstrated out that the social context of the holidays provides a) a social escape, b)

a supportive environment, c) a socialisation experience, d) perceptions of authenticity, and e) group diversity.

Secondly, this research has shown how tourists expressed and communicated their emotions through social interactions and behaviours (RQ2). It has highlighted the role of context-specific types of social interactions (i.e., self-disclosure, fun interactions, humour) in communicating emotions within the group. It has also demonstrated how tourists perceive their companion's emotions and the process of emotional contagion in this context (RQ3). Thus, the second objective has been fulfilled.

Thirdly, the analysis conducted for this study pinpointed the types of emotional experiences attributed to group adventure holidays (joy and freedom, fear and thrill, and frustration and annoyance) (RQ4). It also generated insights into the causes, forms, and consequences of those experiences. This was achieved by incorporating cognitive appraisals of emotions with the social context of the holidays. In addition, the methodology adopted facilitated the interpretation of the experience of emotions as described by the research participants.

The empirical findings presented in chapters 4 to 6 have shown how emotions are experienced within the wider social context in which they occur, highlighting the significant social and psychological mechanisms that shaped them. These findings show the important role played by the individual, the travel companions, and the group social experience in tourists' emotions.

Overall, this study has demonstrated how emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in group adventure holidays. The main contributions of this thesis, including its theoretical, methodological, and practical implications, are discussed in the next section.

8.3 Contributions of Thesis

The main contribution of this thesis lies in the improved understanding of emotions in the tourist experience, taking into account the social context of the experience. This study progresses from the view that consumer emotions are purely individualistic responses to regarding emotions as experiences shaped by both individual and social factors. In doing so, it makes contributions to knowledge in respect of theory, methodology, context, and in practice.

8.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The literature on emotions in marketing has mainly focused on the impact of emotions on consumer behaviour, and phenomenological approaches to understanding emotions in a consumption journey are less commonly adopted. This study, therefore, extends the knowledge of emotions by exploring how emotions are evoked and shaped in group adventure holidays. The approach adopted in this research helped capture the phenomenological richness of emotions and the context in which they were evoked. This study therefore provides a different perspective than most positivistic research, which neglects the meaning of emotional experiences in a holiday context; this enables it to contribute to the theory of emotions by providing greater knowledge about the processes that shape emotions in group adventure holidays as a hedonic consumption context.

Drawing mainly on service marketing and tourism literature, the current study contributes to knowledge in three areas. Firstly, it responds to researchers' calls for studies that identify tourists' emotional experience touchpoints during the consumption journey (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2015; Malone et al., 2018). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) have highlighted the importance of various touchpoints of the consumption journey, and this study has examined the experience of emotions, which Lemon and Verhoef (2016) have identified as a customer owned touchpoint in all the stages of the consumption journey. Secondly, this study has provided a deeper understanding of emotions in the tourist experience by demonstrating how emotions in group holidays are expressed, communicated, and experienced. Thirdly, the finding of this study have highlighted the interplay between emotions and the social context of the tourist's group holiday experience.

Although the role of the social aspect of hedonic experience consumption has been recognised (Arnould and Price, 1993), the emotive dimension is often neglected. Thus, this research contributes to the literature on consumer behaviour and tourism by integrating the interpersonal view of emotions, which stresses the dynamic role of the social context in emotions (Parkinson, 1996). This view provided a broader understanding of emotions as social and communicative by incorporating the role of the interpersonal processes in shaping the emotion episode (See Chapter 4). It, therefore, highlighted the dimensions of this social context that played a significant role in tourist emotions and identified how those emotions were communicated between tourists. This

extends to social emotions theories, including emotion sharing (Rimé, 2009) and emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994). This study has also identified distinct and context-specific social dimensions relevant to group adventure holidays as influencing emotions. It has identified their interconnectivity, in which each one influences and feeds into the other, as a loop of connected social experiences, as illustrated in Figure (4.1). For instance, the perceived authenticity of the group members was shown to enrich the supportive environment, and, this, in turn, improves the socialisation between the group members.

Emotional contagion theory explains the emotion transfer between individuals in social encounters. It assumes that individuals are often inclined to mimic each other's expressed emotions (facial, vocal, postures), and this convergence is linked to the expresser's level of display and the level of the receiver's attention. Emotional contagion in groups is mainly discussed in organisation behaviour literature (Barsade, 2002), while, in marketing, studies have focused on the contagion of service employees' emotional displays (e.g., Du et al., 2011; Ustrov et al., 2016; Woo and Chan, 2020). This study provides a theoretical understanding of emotional contagion in a tourism consumption experience, thereby contributing to tourism literature and consumer behaviour in this domain. In providing an understanding of emotional contagion among tourists in group holidays, this study contributes to the literature in the following four ways:

Firstly, this study has highlighted the rich occurrence of emotions transfer between individuals that could be attributed to the context of the holidays. In particular, it has identified social factors in the context that facilitate contagion in addition to the physical proximity, such as perceived similarity. Scholars have affirmed that individual self-image influences the tendency of emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994), and this study has demonstrated that the perceived similarity which arose from the shared passion for adventure facilitated contagion among the group members. The challenging nature of the adventure also contributed to group members perceiving their reactions as authentic, resulting in more emotional transfer.

Secondly, in addition to highlighting the contribution social context makes to emotional contagion, this study also contributes to the literature by identifying the social mechanisms which transfer emotions to others, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Three prominent mechanisms facilitating emotional contagion were identified in Chapter 5, namely, social interactions, support, and emotional expressions. Specific types of social interactions and support were found to contribute to positive emotional contagion, while negative emotional contagion is mostly through negative emotional expressions.

Thirdly, the findings of this study confirmed the role of positive emotional contagion in enhancing bonding and cohesiveness of the group. Previous studies have confirmed that positive emotional contagion improves interactions and relationships (Walter and Bruch, 2008); however, scholars have tended to consider only positive emotional contagion in this context, while this study has documented the occurrence of negative emotional contagion too. This research found that negative emotions were less contagious than positive ones, but they still exerted a significant negative influence on group cohesion and bonding.

Fourthly, most studies of emotional contagion were conducted in experimental designs. However, experimental studies that measure the occurrence of emotional contagion based on imagined scenarios or planned stimuli fail to capture the lived emotional contagion. The reported contagion in these approaches is detached from the individual experience; it captures the occurrence of contagion, but not the whole experience. Also, experimental studies typically examine contagion in limited pre-defined emotions, such as anger in service failure (Du et al., 2014). By contrast, this study has provided real-life consumption experiences of the transfer of emotions episodes taking into account how individuals perceived them; hence it contributes to the qualitative meaning of emotional contagion. The qualitative approach adopted facilitated the identification of lived and remembered episodes of emotional contagion. It not only enabled the capture of the emotional responses or the level of contagion, but it also provided a context around how contagion occurs. In addition, the qualitative methodology provided insights into how the context around contagion plays a role in its occurrence.

In addition, the use of cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) enabled this research to contribute to the adventure tourism literature by enhancing our understanding of the mechanisms that shape emotions in a particular consumption context, such as group adventure holidays. The findings of this study demonstrate that emotions are not only determined by the tourism offerings, the physical space, or the destination attributes,

but also by the individual's perception of the social context. They also explain how one stimulus or event can elicit different emotional responses in two customers based on their perceptions. For instance, the application of CAT enabled the differentiation between the appraisal of two emotions with the same valence, frustration and annoyance. This study has also been able to pinpoint the significant appraisal dimensions in the context of group adventure holidays. It has also offered new contributions to our knowledge of the elicitation process of emotions such as freedom, annoyance and frustration, which have not been previously considered in tourism literature. For instance, this research has established the link between freedom, as the predominant emotion experienced in group adventure holidays, and agency, as the primary appraisal that brings joy into the sense of freedom.

Moreover, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to offer insights into tourists' emotions using CAT in the context of group adventure holidays and to emphasise the social aspect of this process. CAT has been used within consumer behaviour literature to examine the antecedents of emotions and their relationship with other factors, like satisfaction and future intentions (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Watson and Spence, 2007), and in tourism literature; however, tourism scholars have often focused on one or two positive predefined emotions (Hosany, 2012), such as delight (Ma., et al., 2013) or fun (Choi and Choi, 2019), whereas this study considers a range of positive and negative emotions. Adopting CAT to understand individuals' perceptions of how emotions are evoked qualitatively also contributes to the literature on emotion in adventure tourism. The previous studies that utilised CAT to examine emotions in tourism literature adopted a positivist approach that started with pre-defined specific appraisal dimensions and lists of emotions (e.g., Choi and Choi, 2019; Hosany, 2012; Ma. et al., 2013), limiting the possible insights about other types of emotions or appraisals. By contrast, the qualitative approach this study employed allowed for an open investigation of emotional experiences and their causes as described by the participants without pre-empting emotion terms, specific emotion scales, or appraisal dimensions.

As indicated above, a further theoretical contribution is to negative emotions in tourism. In their editorial review of emotions in tourism, Hosany, Hunter-Jones, and McCabe (2020) highlighted the need to improve the understanding of negative emotions, and most studies of negative emotions were in non-hedonic contexts, while research

considering negative emotions in these contexts is scant. The findings of this study explain how negative emotions are experienced in group adventure holidays and, in particular, extend our knowledge about fear in a hedonic consumption context by highlighting its complexity in that it is perceived as an emotion with negative valence but it yields a positive one later on. Fear has also been identified as a memorable peak experience in the adventure holiday context. Moreover, this study has offered a differentiation of appraising emotions with the same negative valence, as frustration and annoyance were shown to involve different appraisals and consequences. It has also highlighted the significance of the social context in appraising negative emotions and the prominent role of the tour guide in individual experiences of annoyance, which were shown to have a long-term negative impact on their overall experience.

8.3.2 Methodological and contextual contributions

As noted above, the predominantly positivist approach to studying emotions of extant research measures the emotional states and their relationship to other constructs. Hence it fails to capture the nuances of the experience of emotion and the context in which it is evoked. Approaching emotions from an interpretivist viewpoint is less utilised in consumer behaviour and tourism studies; however, the phenomenological lens adopted in this study (Goldie, 2002) allowed for understanding emotions as a lived experience and from a first person perspective. This extended beyond collecting the emotional responses of tourists to examining the experience of these emotions, including their causes, forms, and consequences. This study aimed to understand and explain the interplay between tourist experience, emotions, and its social context; the interpretive approach helped reach contextualised insights into those concepts.

Regarding the contextual contribution, this study contributed to the tourism literature by providing an insider view of a less-represented population, namely Saudi adventure tourists. Research in tourism and adventure tourism has mainly been based on Western populations and contexts, whereas this study offered a different angle by exploring Saudi tourists' experiences in mostly Saudi destinations. Thus, it provides greater insight into tourism in the Gulf region. This holds significance for two reasons. Saudi Arabia is now implementing ambitious plans to develop its tourism industry as part of Vision 2030, its national development plan, and this is increasing demand for tourism in the region (Carmen, 2022; Ministry of Tourism: Saudi Arabia, n.d.). In addition, it

has also opened the country up for international tourists and investors looking for opportunities in the tourism sector.

8.3.3 Practical contributions

This research has demonstrated the complexity of tourists' emotional experiences within a specific social context, and its findings should be of specific interest to tourism policymakers, providers, marketing managers, and stakeholders. Tourism is considered one of the largest industries in the world, constituting 10% of global GDP in 2019 (the year before the COVID-19 pandemic) and contributing to around seven per cent in 2022 (WTTC; 2023). The industry is fast recovering from the impact of the pandemic, with international tourism reaching 65% of its pre-pandemic levels within a year (UNWTO, 2022); however, further efforts to improve the sector are required. The following sections discuss how this study provides potential contributions in three respects: to tourism providers, policymakers and industry, and to tourists.

8.3.3.1 Contributions to tourism providers

The sector's competitiveness highlights the need for tourism businesses to provide distinguishable services for customers that meet their needs while providing extraordinary experiences. The needs and aims of consumers in adventure trips are distinctive compared to other tourists, and a better understanding of their consumer psychology would enable tourism providers to offer them extraordinary experiences, which meet their specific needs. For instance, the study's findings indicate that adventure tourists often seek risk and challenge, but they also want the risk, challenge, and fear to be managed to a certain extent. So, while they enjoy travelling in groups, they still value the sense of personal freedom to some level. This study's findings have identified and pinpointed these complexities and the interplay between emotions and the social environment. In addition, understanding emotions can help tourism operators design and develop tourism experiences that can improve the attractiveness of their offerings. For example, tourism providers could utilise the insights from this study to adjust their promotional material to include the meaningful aspects that tourists seek in such holidays.

The findings also have implications for tourism providers when training their tour guides. In group adventure holidays, guides are a primary contributor to the quality of the adventure experience, as they lead the activities, often in challenging contexts and

for an extended period of time. In managing such trips, it is essential for them to find an appropriate balance between managing the group efficiently and allowing group members freedom to behave and act authentically; however, the level of freedom allowed should never impact individuals' safety. The need to show empathy and care about what tourists need and want should also be highlighted, including by providing illustrations and explanations for their requirements. Also, a careful treatment of negative emotions is warranted because some negative emotions are to be expected in the adventure holiday context. While in service management would often seek to minimise negative emotions and optimise positive ones, fear in this context has been shown to contribute to the joyful risk and thrill experience.

This study therefore provides beneficial insights for tourism providers to improve the design and management of group adventure holidays. It offers an understanding of the individual and collective aspects of emotional experiences in a group holiday and the interconnected nature of experiences in this context. Although tourism providers should accept that group dynamics cannot be fully controlled (Carù and Cova, 2015), the findings of this study suggest that they can be managed and influenced and by different factors. Tourism managers seeking tools to influence the individual experience and their psychological states during the group experience can use this knowledge to help find approaches to channel and enhance tourists' emotions and interactions.

Understanding the psychological processes tourist go through during their trips help us address and manage them efficiently. Moreover, knowing which emotional terms tourists use to describe their experiences gives us an indication of the language they use in their word of mouth about their holidays. Hence, these insights could be used in two ways: first in utilising approaches to stimulate such emotions, and second in the advertising materials for such trips. In addition, the knowledge generated here about how situations are evaluated, the level of responsibility and control which should be allowed, and their role in evoking emotions helps guides to manage and interact with the group for a better tourist experience.

Finally, most studies of emotions in tourism literature have highlighted their role in the outcomes of tourism offerings; however, understanding how emotions are caused and shaped is imperative when designing the tourist emotional experience in a holiday. Therefore, the findings above offer practical insights which can inform training

programmes for tour guides and adventure providers. Secondly, when designing adventure activities and group holidays, it is helpful to consider what will be most enjoyable and engaging for participants, as this will ultimately lead to a more successful and fulfilling experience for everyone involved.

8.3.3.2 Contributions to the adventure tourism industry and policy makers

This study has depicted the transformative impact of group adventure holidays, including their role in transformative emotions and socially transformative experiences, such as bonding and friendship. This demonstrates that such consumption contexts play a role in people's well-being and should encourage policymakers to establish policies that facilitate access to such holidays. Improved awareness of how consumers experience adventure tourism should encourage policy makers to implement strategies to advertise this type of tourism for its transformative benefits and its contribution to wellbeing and physical health. Another implication for policymakers is regarding the management of the sector. For instance, this study has highlighted the significant role guides play in influencing the tourist experience, and this suggests that a more careful approach to training and licencing guides may be required. Therefore, additional action may be required at policy level to address the need for the tourism industry to enforce a code of conduct for adventure providers and tour guides.

8.3.3.3 Contributions to tourists

As noted above, in order to improve the tourism industry, it is essential to meet the needs of tourism consumers; the findings of this research therefore have the potential to benefit tourists by enhancing their holiday experience. The findings indicate that understanding tourists' emotions and needs helps to optimise their experiences, and that taking their views into account demonstrates to them the primacy of their voice in their holidays. Thus, showing an understanding of the factors in the social context that matter most to them, notably the significance of the supportive environment, of social escape, and of group diversity, enriches their holiday experience. This study will therefore facilitate enhancements in the design of holidays to ensure that tourists benefit from the emotional outcomes of their experiences.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

Although this study has offered many insights and contributions, there are some limitations to the research which must be considered. The first is the use of a qualitative approach which limits the generalisability of the findings. While this approach offered in-depth insights into the tourist's psychological mechanisms, it cannot provide generalisable outcomes. However, instead of aiming for generalisability, this study has provided individual accounts of a specific phenomenon in a specific context, indicating that it offers transferability of outcomes to similar contexts rather than generalisability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In addition, this research methodology did not allow for capturing real-time emotions or emotional expressions during the experience; however, this study did not aim to capture real-time emotions but rather recalled memorable emotional experiences that play a role in word of mouth and future purchase intentions. Another limitation of examining emotions and the influence of other group members in this way is the risk that it might have led to socially desirable responses from participants; however, this is a common limitation in researching social phenomena. In order to minimise the influence of this limitation, the researcher assured the participants that their contributions would remain confidential and that there were no right or wrong answers or preferable views.

Another limitation is that this study did not investigate the causal relationships between the group compositions and social emotions mechanisms. This would have yielded more evidence of what specific group characteristics influence social emotions. Moreover, the study did not interview the tour guides; exploring their perceptions of group members' emotions and the role of the social context of the experience in the process would also have generated greater insights; however, both these things were beyond the scope of this study.

Lastly, the study was conducted during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this may have influenced the findings, such as the type of holidays shared, or the emotions experienced. For instance, most of the trips the participants discussed took place in Saudi Arabia because of the travel restrictions at that time. This provided a wealth of insights into the abundance of such experiences in Saudi Arabia; however, efforts were also made to broaden the scope by including travel experiences which took place up to

12 months before the interviews, thereby enabling experiences in other countries, for example, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, to be included.

8.5 Directions for future research

The findings of this study provide in-depth insights into the role of the social context in emotions and demonstrate the role of the context in which emotions are experienced. This highlights the need for more interpretive studies to extend our knowledge about emotions as subjective meaningful experiences. For instance, in the case of emotional transfer, much enquiry has been in the form of experimental designs, either confirming emotion transfer occurrences or its links to intentions and behaviours, while the personal meaning of the transfer is missing. Thus, further studies that take into account the context specific social experiences that facilitate emotions transfer in different social service contexts should be encouraged.

Another fruitful avenue of research is to investigate whether the social context dimensions of group adventure holidays and social emotions mechanisms would apply to other types of tourism contexts, such as volunteer tourism and religious or spiritual tourism. Further research should build upon the findings of this study and incorporate tour guides' perspectives on the role of the social context of group holidays in emotions, as this would provide an additional perspective and further enrich our understanding of tourists' emotions.

Observational methods might also allow the researchers to identify emotional expressions and sharing mechanisms that would support the interview findings. In addition, future research could implement a case study design that compares different types of group adventure holidays, possibly categorised based on the activities (soft or hard), group size, or type of companions and the experience of emotions. Such a study would show whether there are links between the type of adventure activities, the type or the size of the group, and the resulting emotions.

Future research could also evaluate the causal relationships between group compositions and the various dimensions of the social context identified in this study. Furthermore, a recent review of emotions in tourism and hospitality by Tuerlan, Li, and Scott (2021) has highlighted that most emotions studies in tourism use measurement scales adopted from psychology, so they do not consider the different attributes of the

tourism context. Therefore, the findings of this study could be utilised in developing context-specific scales to examine emotions.

More broadly, in today's era of extensive digitization, people are looking for more genuine and spontaneous human interactions and connections. For example, a recent report by Mintel (2023) forecasting the global consumer trends of 2024, identified an increase in consumer anxiety arising from having to interact with AI technologies instead of humans in the services sector, highlighting the deep-seated need for human connections and interactions. Research has shown that group adventure holidays can provide such opportunities, and this study reveals that social interaction plays a significant role in shaping group members' emotions and promoting unique experiences beyond building interpersonal connections. However, it is essential to conduct further research into social interactions, not only in the tourism industry but also in other service settings, such as financial and health services. Future studies could build on this one by focusing on examining various types of social interaction, their influences, and their role in shaping emotions in the customer experience in such settings.

8.6 Concluding remarks and reflections

This thesis has examined tourists' emotional experiences in group adventure holidays, addressing their complexities and how emotions are shaped in such context and determining the role of the social context in the construction of such experiences. As adventure tourism continues to enjoy great growth, drawing attention to the role of social and psychological aspects in the experience of this sector is critical, and this study has particularly highlighted the need to include the social aspect in the understanding of emotions.

Examining emotions from a social perspective and exploring how they are shaped by society is personally important to me. My cultural background has influenced my choice to study emotions within a social context. Coming from a socially oriented culture, such as Saudi Arabia, I know that the tribe, community, and family play a central role in our experiences, our feelings about ourselves, our choices, indeed, almost every aspect of life. I also wish to support the tremendous efforts the government of Saudia Arabia is making to create a unique destination for international and domestic visitors by offering

more insights about the needs and expectations of Saudi tourists and the adventure tourism sector within the country.

Doing a PhD is a challenging and lonely experience, especially during a pandemic. The emergence of COVID-19 caused a delay in my progress at the beginning of my studies, and I lost hope. However, this did not last long, and we eventually saw light at the end of the tunnel. I believe the fundamental human need for survival played a role in this. The pandemic later became a strong motivation for me to continue my research, as people's feelings about holidays and travel became more significant in light of the widespread travel restrictions. This also helped with the data collection, as reminiscing about their previous holidays and hoping for more post-pandemic became a kind of survival mechanism for participants during the lockdown periods. I am immensely grateful to all the participants who made this journey possible - their words, stories, and experiences were invaluable. It was heartwarming that they trusted me, shared their emotions, and opened up about sensitive personal experiences. I learned a lot from them, and their adventure holiday experiences became transformative for me too, as I completed my own challenging yet rewarding journey.

I have always believed that emotions are the foundation of our experiences, decisions, motivations, and needs; this makes them a powerful tool in the design and management of the optimal tourist experience, especially where consumers seek personalised experiences. I therefore hope that this research will contribute to our understanding of emotions in the context of adventure holidays and the role groups play in the tourist experience, and provide tangible benefits for all concerned, both within Saudi Arabia and beyond.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello, my name is Somaiah Alotaibi; I am a PhD student at the University of Nottingham, the United Kingdom (UK); I'd like to thank you once again for accepting this invitation to participate in the interview aspect of my study.

As the email mentioned, my study seeks to understand the adventure group experiences. It aims to understand your experience as tourist in this type of experiences. Sharing your stories of group adventures into this study will help me to better understand how to improve the group tour experiences for tourists.

Prior to the interview you were sent an Invitation email, an Information Sheet, and a Consent Form to sign and return.

If you have not read them yet, please take your time to look through them.

Our interview today will take approximately 90 minutes and will follow a designed interview protocol. As a participant in the research, you have the right to ask questions at any time, to decide if you would prefer not to answer some questions, to receive a copy of the findings, and to withdraw from the research at any time. Please note that your responses will be confidential to the research team.

As indicated in the Consent Form, I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you ok with me recording our conversation today?

- [Check whether respondent has any questions about the interview, if none, ensure that they have signed the consent form and sent it back]

Before we begin the interview, If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

For the questions I'm about to ask you, please answer in as much detail as possible, and share any associations or connections that may occur to you while you are speaking

- [If the participant has agreed to interview being recorded, turn recorder on and note that it is now on.]

- At the end of the interview, thank you for your contribution to the study and for your time, if you have any questions, please ask and I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Somaiah Alotaibi

Nottingham University Business School

Business School south building. Room B26

Jubilee Campus

Nottingham, NG8 1BB

Information for Research Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may change your mind about being involved in the research at any time, and without giving a reason.

This information sheet is designed to give you full details of the research project, its goals, the research team, the research funder, and what you will be asked to do as part of the research. If you have any questions that are not answered by this information sheet, please ask.

This research has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Nottingham University Business School Research Ethics Committee.

What is the research project called?

The Role of Emotions in adventure tour group holidays

Who is carrying out the research?

I am conducting this interview as a part of my PhD study. My supervisors are Scott McCabe and Heidi Winklhofer.

What is the research about?

The study aims to understand how emotions are expressed, communicated, and experienced in adventure tour groups and how they influence the tourist experience. It examines the role of emotions, interactions, and tourist perceptions about fellow tourists and how these shape the tourist experiences in an adventure group setting.

What groups of people have been asked to take part, and why?

Adults, based in Saudi Arabia, who have participated in a group adventure holiday in the last 12 months.

What will research participants be asked to do?

The interview will approximately take up to 90 minutes and will follow a designed interview protocol.

You will be asked to talk about your group adventure experience. The researcher will ask then about your feelings and motivations. With your permission, I will audio record our conversation.
I cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from this study may help to understand in more depth the tourist experience.

You have the right to decide if you would prefer to answer the questions, not to answer some questions and to withdraw from the research at any time without your legal rights being affected.

What will happen to the information I provide?

I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

If you join the study, the data collected for the study will be looked at by authorised persons from the University of Nottingham who are organising the research. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this duty.

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept **strictly confidential**, stored in a secure and locked office, and on a password protected database. Any information about you which leaves the University will have your name and address removed (anonymised) and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be recognised from it. Anonymised data may also be stored in data archives for future researchers interested in this area.

With your permission, I may include selective quotes from the interview to support points in my thesis and any resulting publications. The quotes will be anonymised and great care will be taken to ensure that you cannot be identified.

What will be the outputs of the research?

At the end of the study, the results will be included in my PhD thesis. The results may be presented and published in business and management conferences and journals. Information that identifies you will not be presented and will be kept strictly confidential.

Contact details

Researcher: Somaiah Alotaibi. Phone: +44 7988121259. Email: Somaiah.Alotaibi@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors: Professor Scott McCabe. Phone: +44 (0) 115 8466683. Email: Scott.McCabe@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 3: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Somaiah Alotaibi

Nottingham University Business School

Business School south building. Room B26

Jubilee Campus

Nottingham, NG8 1BB

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that I will be audio/video recorded during the interview.

- I understand that data will be stored in a secure and locked office, and on a password protected database. Any information about me which leaves the University will have my name and address removed (anonymised) and a unique code will be used so that I cannot be recognised from it. Anonymised data may also be stored in data archives for future researchers interested in this area.

- I understand my data will be looked at by authorised persons from the University of Nottingham who are organising the research. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics

Coordinator of the School of Business, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ……

Print name …….…… **Date** ……

Contact details

Researcher: Somaiah Alotaibi. Phone: +44 7988121259. Email: Somaiah.Alotaibi@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors: Professor Scott McCabe. Phone: +44 (0) 115 8466683. Email: Scott.McCabe@nottingham.ac.uk

Complaint procedure

If you wish to complain about the way in which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the research, then in the first instance please contact the researcher's *supervisors*.

Or contact the School's Research Ethics Officer:

Davide Pero

Nottingham University Business School

Jubilee Campus

Nottingham NG8 1BB

Phone: 0115 84 67766

Email: Davide.Pero@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 4 Interview guide

#	Interview Guide Questions	Aim	Related Research Question (RQ)
1	**Could please confirm your name, age, and occupation?**	Sample socio-demographic information	General (G)
2	**To start with, could you please tell me about your interest in adventure holidays? When did it start? What types of adventures have you tried? How many times have you been on adventure trips? where? with whom solo / groups / commercial guided/ friends / family?**	Background	G
3	**Have you been in group adventure experience in the last 12 months? when was your last trip?**	Verify inclusion criteria (participated in group adventure experience in the last 12 months)	G
4	**Where did you go? What type of adventure? What were your reasons for choosing this destination and the type of adventure?**	Contextualise the talk to be about specific recent holiday, not collection of experiences	G
5	**Did you go alone or with someone else? with whom?** (If answered with someone who made the choice)?		G
6	**Can you tell me what your motivations were for going on a group adventure trip?** (i.e., new experiences, meeting new people..... etc.)		G
Questions about emotions ……			
7	**Can you describe to me your adventure group experience? How was it? How did it make you feel** (try to collect more than one emotion, e.g., happy, excited... etc.)? **What made you feel that way** (ask about the specific feelings stated by them)?	Understand the influence of group adventures on individual emotions / seek to identify what shapes their emotional experiences/ identify the appraisal and	(RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an

		outcomes of group adventure holidays.	adventure holiday setting)?
8	**Have you felt more than one emotion at the same time? What were they? Why do you think you felt that way?**	Searching for contrasting emotions and simultaneously occurring emotions	(RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?
9	**Before going on the trip, what emotions did you expect to feel? Why** (i.e., is it because of the trip advertisement, previous experiences, shared friends and family stories .....etc.)?	Anticipated emotions	(RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?
10	**Tell me about a situation in which you experienced emotion / what made you feel that way / how this or these feelings influenced you and your experience?**	Insights about emotion characteristic within the group setting looking for aspects where emotional contagion occurs among the group members	RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience? (RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?
11	**In what ways the experience of group adventure trip influenced your feelings during the experience? could you give me examples?**		RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience? (RQ4) What emotions do tourists attribute

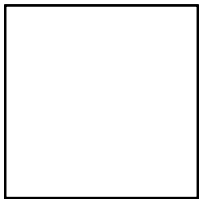
			to a group tourism experience (within an adventure holiday setting)?
Let's talk about the group			
12	**Can you describe the group to me? How many group members? who are they (**couples, friends, or family members)? **Can you tell me about their (physical appearances, behaviours, and expressed feelings?)** **What was the atmosphere like?** Probe, did it change over time, why? **How do you think the group connected?** **Were there any dominant characters?** Probe, how did he influence the group dynamic, why?		RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience? RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?
13	**In what ways did the group influence your feelings during the experience? Could you give me examples?** **were there groups within the group, If yes, why? Which parts of the group did you connect with, why? How did the others make you feel?**	Insights about emotional characteristic within the group environment.	RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?
14	**Did you have any expectations about the group members you**	Expectations	G

	will meet before the trip? What were they? Can you explain why? after meeting them, were your expectations correct?		
15	**How was the tour guide? What do you think was his or her role in this experience? Can you describe to me his or her behaviour, expressions, and interactions?**	Identify the tour guide role as it is considered an inherent part of the group experience.	RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?
16	**Could you give examples of incidents (positive or negative) between the guide and you?** Probe, what was the incident? who started it? How did you respond to it? How do you feel about it? **Could you give an example of an incident (positive or negative) that occurred between the tour guide and another group member?** Probe, what was the incident? who started it? How did the tour guide and the individual respond? How do you feel about it?	Identify social interactions in the group	RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?
17	**Did you make friends? With whom and why do you think you started a friendship with this or those individuals?**		G RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?
18	**Tell me about the ways in which one of the group members has influenced your feelings?**	To uncover the role of expressed emotion in group adventures/ looking for aspects where emotional contagion occurs among the group members.	RQ1) How are individual emotions influenced by the social context of a group tourism experience?

			RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?
Let's talk now about the social interactions in the group			
19	**How do you think the interaction between the group members affected you?**	Identify communicated emotions through social interactions	RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process? RQ3) How do the expressed emotions of others interact with an individual's own felt emotions?
20	**Can you tell me about an interaction with one or several other group members that you remember well, what was it, with whom (describe the individual to me), what was their expressed emotions?**	The process of the social construction of emotions / communicated emotions in group adventure holidays.	RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?
21	**How did you feel about the interaction or after it and how did the interaction influence your experience?**		RQ2) How are emotions communicated in a group tourism experience – what is the role of social interaction in this process?
22	**Can you describe to me how your emotions and feelings influenced your holiday experience?** (i.e., satisfied, memorable, engaging.....etc.) (allow them to describe it without probing or giving any examples)	This question is to enrich the insights about the participant's emotions and expands on what they reported earlier.	G

23	**I think that is everything I needed to ask you about, have you got anything you would like to say or any final thoughts?**	Wrap up question to end the interview	G

Appendix 5: An Example of open and axial coding for the sub theme 'self-disclosure'

Interview Extracts	First round of open coding (emotions codes)	Second round of open coding (codes)	Axial coding	(
(26) "more honest conversations began in the group. I remember I talked to one of them about a few things, like relationships with parents and the treatment of our parents during childhood, such difficult and sensitive conversations about things I went through during my childhood. It was the same thing for him; he opened and started talking about his problems with his father and other things"	vulnerability	Personal stories	Openness/ open to others	
(22) "I found myself talking openly; the questions they were asking became so real and intimate in a certain way. These sessions of honesty, there is a kind of comfort, one feels people trust and understand them more"	Trust	Personal information	Openness/ open to others	
(26) "I would be in five years of friendship and not have them"	Intimacy	Deep conversation	Bonding	
(23) "we had amazing conversations, and many times, especially when we are tired gathered around the campfire. These moments very deep conversations occur very intellectual topics, and those people became friends later... I mean unbreakable friendships	Sincerity	Deep conversation	Kinship	
(26) "There was a group of funny individuals on the trip from Kuwait, and they came together; they were joking all the time; the guides were also the same, funny and light-spirited, so the group's chemistry was so engaging. They refreshed the atmosphere	Joy 'transferred joy'	Funny, Engaging	Humour	
(28) "Funny, make me laugh, I sensed it spread to the whole group"	Joy 'transferred joy'	Funny, laugh		
(21) "She said like...look... here is a cow.... let's sing to the cows, then we all started singing with her to the cows, we laughed, she was funny."	Cheerful Joy 'transferred joy'	Funny	Singing	
(15) "There was one of the groups, it was hike and camping trip, so there was 'one of the guys brought with him a 'darbouka' type of drums and started singing, it changed the atmosphere, and spread joy in the group"	Joy 'transferred joy'	Entertaining		
(18) "everyone was interacting with each other and was participating with their full energy in the games, I sensed joy in the atmosphere, and they were all happy during the games. So, at that moment I was so happy in how we all were strangers from different places from the south	Joy Excitement 'transferred joy'	Engaging Togetherness Engaging	Group games	

and north from the east of the country and enjoying together".