


Chapter 6

Contributions of Neurosciences to Studies of Well-Being in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The SWB covers individuals' emotional and cognitive assessments and the conceptualization of happiness, satisfaction with one's life, and quality of life. Thus, an exploratory and descriptive study based on a bibliography survey and textual analysis was developed, and it was possible to understand that (1) tourists were the focus of the studies analyzed, so the understanding of their behaviors is essential; (2) emotion is still a gap that can be fill in research on tourism and well-being from the standpoint of the neurosciences; (3) the experience construct is significant but subjective so that the neurosciences can contribute to the understanding of the tourist experience related to SWB; (4) technological advances in neuroimaging can contribute, but this depends on adequate financial and human resources.

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INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being (SWB) resides in the individual's experience, including positive and negative factors, and its measures generally include a global assessment of all aspects of a person's life (Diener, 1984). According to the author, SWB tries to understand what makes people happy and content with life, and it can be acquired when a particular state, for example, a goal or need, is reached. Understanding the tourism phenomenon through SWB is also understanding life satisfaction, quality of life, happiness, hedonism and eudaimonism, positive psychology, among others, through reactions, moods, and judgments of the individual (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003), whether being the tourist, resident of the community or tourism and hospitality worker.

Modern neurosciences originated a new science of mind (Kandel et al., 2014). Important findings opened an avenue for its studies, like Camilo Golgi's discovery in 1873 of the neuron structure and, after it, Santiago Ramón y Cajal's discovery of neuronal doctrine (Kandel, 2020). There is a clear tendency of interdisciplinary cooperation efforts of different and complementary fields to expand the body of knowledge in neurosciences. It is possible to identify one in tourism, which has been called *neurotourism*. For some authors, *neurotourism* is a shift in the travel paradigm, and they discuss the interface between e-tourism and neuroscience (Panyik & Gonçalves, 2017). Other authors question whether *neurotourism* is a current discipline or only a future perspective (Giudici, Detorri & Caboni, 2017).

This chapter explores subjective well-being's emerging literature on tourism and reflects on neurosciences' possible contributions to advancing the studies. It was developed an exploratory and descriptive study, based on a bibliography survey and textual analysis (Salviati, 2017). The methodology adopted in this study allows us to exam how the relationship between subjective well-being, tourism, and happiness is developing in the identified scientific literature. The chapter begins with the definitions of subjective well-being, with a table with its theories and concepts most present in the literature. Following, the explanation about neurosciences and *neurotourism*, the methods, results and discussions. The final remarks show ontological and epistemological challenges within the study fields.

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND TOURISM

The field of subjective well-being (SWB) comprises the scientific analysis of how people evaluate their lives (Diener & Suh, 1997) in moments of the past, the present, and for more extended periods. It includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction, the domains being the fields

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